

# US pressure forces Pakistan to stop arming Kashmiris

MUZAFFARABAD, Pakistan, Aug 26: US pressure has forced Pakistan to stop arming and training Kashmiri militants fighting Indian rule, military and rebel sources said, reports Reuter.

Militant leaders in Pakistan-controlled Azad (free) Kashmir said Pakistan authorities had clamped down on their activities in the last six to eight months after Washington put the country on its watch list of possible "terrorist states".

"The Americans started breathing fire and brimstone down the government's neck," a retired military officer told Reuters. "Pakistan was getting fed up of being branded as a terrorist state".

Pakistan officially denies it has ever armed or trained Kashmiri militants to fight in the anti-Indian uprising on the

other side of the divided Himalayan region.

But officials, army officers and militants privately admit that several separatist groups — notably those favouring Kashmiri union with Pakistan rather than outright independence — have received direct military help for several years.

"If you don't like someone and you see his house is on fire, you don't throw water on it. You might even throw on some hay," one army officer said.

The sources said the aid was coordinated by the vast Inter-Services Intelligence (ISI), the most powerful of Pakistan's intelligence agencies, rather than the regular army.

Diplomats and military sources said the main figure behind the policy was former ISI Chief Lieutenant-General Javed Nasir, who was ordered to take

early retirement in May after President Ghulam Ishaq Khan sacked the Prime Minister, Nawaz Sharif.

Nasir's departure coincided with increased US pressure on Pakistan, which was being scrutinised for possible inclusion on Washington's list of states sponsoring terrorism.

The United States formally cleared Pakistan of the charge last month and removed it from the watch list.

Kashmiri militants said they were feeling the pinch.

One of the main recipients of Pakistani aid was Hizb-ul-Mujahideen, the military wing of the Muslim fundamentalist Jamat-e-Islami Party in Azad Kashmir.

In the past, Hizb fighters have openly told journalists about their ISI links and military activities in Pakistan.

Now Jamat-e-Islami officials flatly deny it has ever had a training camp in Pakistan — although some confirm the record that military aid has been halt.

Jamat-e-Islami leader Rashid Turrabi said only fighters who trained in war-torn Afghanistan had crossed into Indian-ruled Kashmir, where simmering Muslim discontent exploded into outright rebellion 3-1/2 years ago.

"The Pakistani government is very sensitive," he told Reuters in the Azad Kashmir capital of Muzaffarabad. "Pressure on us has increased for some months due to American threats".

Amanullah Khan, for chairman of the separatist Jammu Kashmir Liberation Front (JKLF), said Pakistani pressure had driven his movement a further underground but vowed to fight on.



LAHORE: Industrial workers carry during a protest on Wednesday a colleague who pretends to be dead because he did not survive recent price hikes. The caretaker government's moves to raise prices of oil, utility services and several consumer goods have triggered growing public unease. — AFP photo

## Togo foils coup plot

LOME, Aug 26: Togo said it had foiled a coup plot that coincided with presidential elections boycotted by the opposition, reports Reuter.

Foreign Minister Ouattara Fambare Natchabe told reporters on Wednesday that two of a group of four infiltrators who had crossed the border with Ghana at Lome during Tuesday night had been arrested by security forces.

National Police Chief Lieutenant Colonel Sizing Walla said one has been shot dead and the other was in hospital.

Natchabe said material found on the alleged plotters included a cassette bearing a coup declaration he said was spoken by Jean Degli, former spokesman for the first interim government of Prime Minister Joseph Kokou Koffigoh.

Degli was forced out of that post by Eyadema but remains President of the Togolese Human Rights League.

## BRIEFLY

**India plans to fight locusts:** The Indian Government has sounded an alert and asked for funds from the United Nations to fight a threatened invasion by locusts in several states bordering Pakistan, officials said on Wednesday, AFP reports from New Delhi.

The UN Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO) has decided to give one million dollars in emergency aid to battle the invasion by the winged insects of the frontier regions, an FAO spokesman said.

The swarms have been pinpointed in Pakistan's Bhhwalpur district and in areas bordering the Rann of Kutch, a vast salt wasteland in the western Indian coastal state of Gujarat.

**Copter crash claims 9 in Russia:** Nine people died when their helicopter crashed during an aerial photography mission in the Russian Far East, a government spokesman said yesterday, AP reports from Moscow.

The Mi-8 helicopter crashed Wednesday about 165 kilometers (102 miles) northeast of Magadan on the coast of the Sea of Okhotsk, Sergei Gorev, a spokesman for the Russian state committee for emergency situations said.

The helicopter carried a crew and a team from the Magadan civil aviation agency, he said. The cause of the crash was not known.

**Road mishap kills 22 in China:** At least 22 people, including four from Hong Kong, were killed when their coach plunged into a river in the southern province of Guangdong, the People's Daily said yesterday, Reuter reports from Beijing.

It said the accident happened in Hutyang country on August 23.

The coach was travelling from Shenzhen, adjoining Hong Kong, for Fujian province on the east coast when it collided with a truck that was overtaking another and fell into a river.

**AP man roughed up:** A photographer for The Associated Press, Jean Marc Bouju, was roughed up and briefly detained by police on Wednesday. He was not seriously harmed, AP reports from Managua.

Shortly after 8 AM (1300 GMT) Bouju tried to pass a police barricade surrounding the Managua site where gunmen are holding several top officials hostage.

He said police knocked him to the ground, breaking his flash attachment and watch. He said he was kicked once or twice, detained and taken to a police station, where he was held for about 20 minutes before being freed.

**Tajik Islamic activist to die:** The Supreme Court of Tajikistan sentenced a leading member of the outlawed Islamic Rebirth Party to death Wednesday on charges of organizing terrorist acts and directing mass killings, AP reports from Tajikistan.

The party was part of a loose coalition of Islamic and self-described democratic groups that briefly held power last year in the former Soviet republic. All parties except the Communist Party were outlawed after pro-communists seized power again last fall.

Ajlik Aliev, 44, was a leader of the Islamic Rebirth Party in southern Tajikistan. Two co-defendants, Mahmadij Nazimov and Razah Atovulloyev, were sentenced to three years in a high-security labour prison on charges of sedition.

**Elephant kills 15 in Bihar:** At least 15 villagers were killed and several others injured when a wild elephant ran amok yesterday in the northeastern state of Assam, the Press Trust of India (PTI) reported, AFP says from New Delhi.

The tusker razed 30 houses to the ground in Sonitpur district on the banks of the Brahmaputra river in the early hours, sparking panic and forcing residents to flee their homes.

Officials said the victims included six women and two children. What caused the elephant to turn berserk was not known.

**5 found shot dead in Indiana:** Five members of a farm family were found shot dead on Wednesday and police said, they were searching for a sixth family member who appeared to have fled, Reuter reports from Indiana.

Sergeant Bob Gray of the Indiana state police said investigators arriving at the rural area in the southeastern part of the state found the bodies in two neighbouring houses.

Gray identified the victims as Martha Hardebeck, 73, the owner of the farm; two of her sons, Jimmy, 40, and Marvin, for whom no age was available; her daughter Betty Powers, 41, and Powers' husband Virgil, 55.

## ICRC yet to get permission to provide aid

NEW DELHI, Aug 26: The International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) said on Wednesday that India was delaying its proposal to provide aid for strife-torn Jammu and Kashmir state, reports Reuter.

The proposal was submitted to India's Home Ministry in April after New Delhi agreed in March to allow the Geneva-based humanitarian agency to work in the state, an ICRC spokesman said.

More than 12,000 people, many of them civilians, have been killed in three years of conflict in Kashmir, India's only

Muslim majority state, according to local and international rights groups.

These groups accuse Indian security forces, battling a separatist uprising in the valley of widespread violation of human rights in the state.

We are considering the (ICRC) proposals... a decision has not yet been taken," Madhukar Gupta, a senior Indian official told Reuters.

The ICRC regards Kashmir as a conflict area and feels its presence in the valley would be of assistance.

When asked for permission

to send a team to work in Kashmir, Indian officials wanted the ICRC to submit specific proposals for approval, the committee spokesman said.

"We make no distinction between the injured of either side. Our aim is to give aid to all who need help," he said.

India has been under pressure from the United States and Western countries to stop human rights abuses by its troops in Kashmir, including rape, torture and killings.

New Delhi says most of the allegations are militant propaganda.

## Georgia pulls out of Abkhazia

TBILISI, Georgia, Aug 26: Georgia has finished pulling its troops, artillery and armour out of the rebel province of Abkhazia, both sides said Thursday, reports AP.

The troop withdrawal began August 14 under a Russian-brokered ceasefire accord aimed at ending a year long civil war between Georgia and Abkhazian nationalists in the Black Sea region.

Georgia had been criticized for dragging its heels on pulling out tanks and artillery.

The ITAR-Tass news agency quoted a spokesman for the Abkhazian side as confirming Georgia had finished the withdrawal.

The war began last year when Georgian leader Eduard Shevardnadze sent troops into the province after nationalists declared the region autonomous.

The conflict has killed more than 2,000 people, devastated the once popular resort region and brought the Georgian economy to its knees.

It has also put an immense strain on relations between Russia and Georgia. Shevardnadze has repeatedly accused Russia, which has troops and bases in the region, of backing the Abkhazian side.

The ceasefire was to be monitored by Russian, Georgian, Abkhazian and United Nations observers. Georgian armed forces spokesman Gocha Abotia said Russia had provided sea transport for the withdrawal of Georgian tanks and artillery pieces.

## Princes visit MGM studios with mother

LAKE BUENA VISTA, Aug 26: Princess Diana and her sons were determined to remain low-key on their trip to Central Florida's theme park attractions, reports AP.

Diana, Princess of Wales, and sons William, 11, and Harry, 8, have been on a three-day holiday since Tuesday, exploring Walt Disney World and the other attractions.

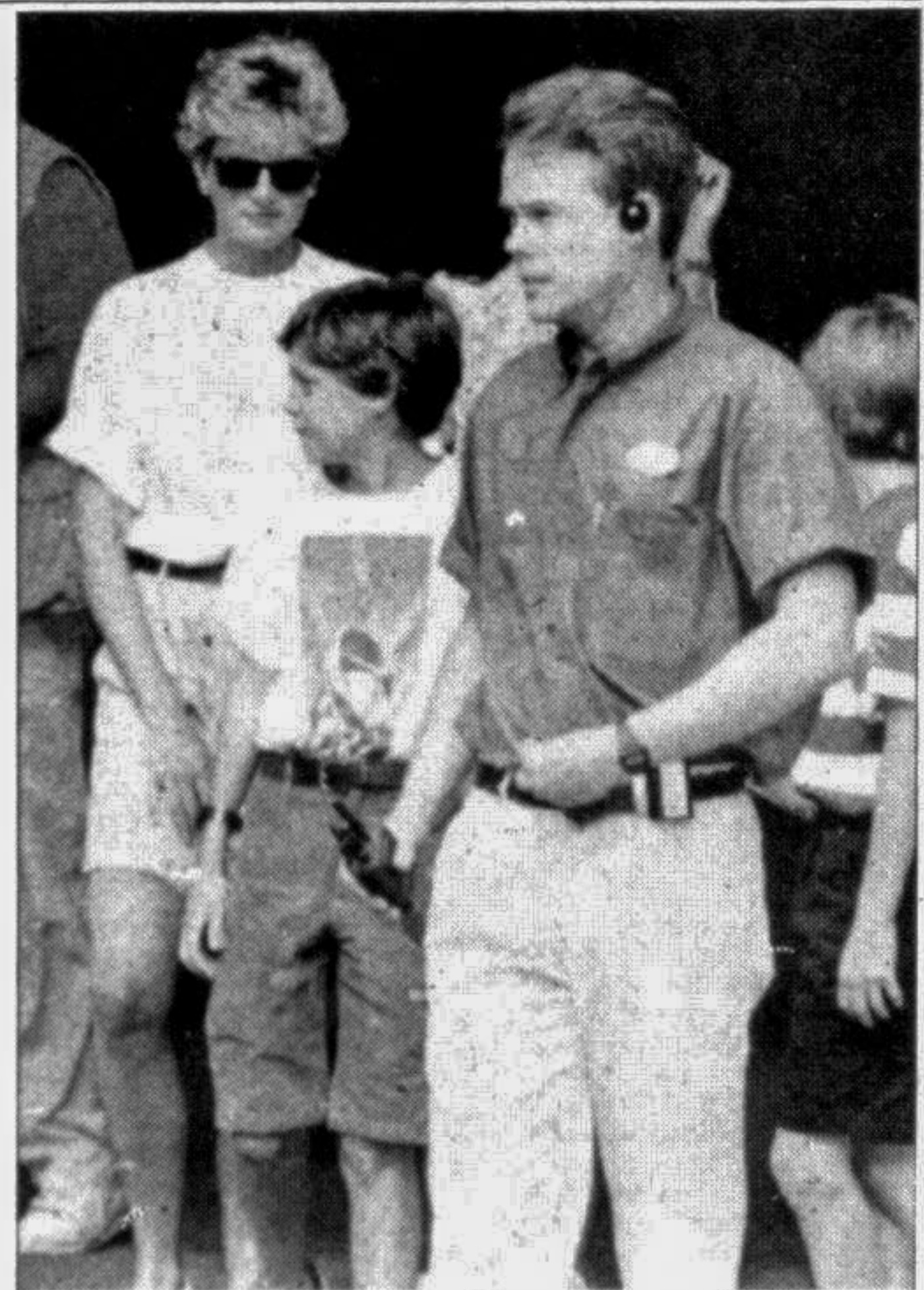
They spent some of Wednesday dodging swarms of reporters and photographers.

Disney publicists, normally free with details about activities of the rich and famous visitors to the giant entertainment complex, were secretive about the itinerary of the British royalty. They are part of a small entourage that includes friends and members of British security forces.

It was known that British Princes William and Harry visited backstage with actors of the Indiana Jones adventure show on a trip to the Disney-MGM Studios with their mother.

The royal family also had breakfast with Mikey Mouse and other Walt Disney World characters.

Photographers at the Indiana Jones show, based on the movies of the same name, said William and Harry were enthralled by the realism of the live-action show.



Florida: Flanked by security, Diana, Princess of Wales, and family friend Harry Soames (C) leave the Jim Henson Muppets Pavilion on August 25 during a visit to MGM Studios at Walt Disney World. The Princess is vacationing at the Florida resort until August 27 after which she is expected to travel to the Caribbean. — AFP photo

## Li returns to work

BEIJING, Aug 26: Chinese Premier Li Peng, who has spent the summer recuperating from what has officially been described as a heart condition, said today his health was very good and that he had returned to work, reports Reuter.

Li, who met the news media briefly before beginning talks with visiting Thai Prime Minister Chuan Leekpai, appeared healthy and tanned from a summer vacation at a northern seaside resort.

Asked how his health was, Li replied "very good."

Reporters then asked him when he would resume his full duties as premier, which have been sharply cut back during the period of his convalescence.

"I am working already," Li replied, "Look at this activity today."

He declined to respond to a question on whether this meant he had resumed the full duties of his job.

Beijing political analysts have been playing close attention to the 65-year-old premier's health since late April when he abruptly disappeared from public view with what was later officially described as a heart condition.

His public appearance today was his first since late June when he emerged briefly on two separate occasions to meet the visiting prime ministers of Malaysia and Austria.

## US sends more troops to Somalia

MOGADISHU, Aug 26: The first of 400 elite US Army Rangers stepped off a transport plane Thursday after a nonstop flight from home, arriving in a beleaguered city of burning barricades and stone-throwing mobs, reports AP.

The 65 soldiers flew from Fort Benning, Ga, in a military version of a DC 10, refueling in the air over the Atlantic and touching down at Mogadishu's former international airport shortly after sunrise.

As they arrived, Malaysian, American and Pakistani peacekeepers were conducting a search for illegal weapons of the city's southside, the stronghold of fugitive warlord Mohamed Farrah Aidede.

Aidede is wanted by the United Nations for a series of ambushes on June 5 that killed 24 Pakistani peacekeepers. His militia also has been blamed for dozens of other attacks on UN soldiers.

President Clinton ordered the Rangers to Somalia after a remotely controlled explosive device ripped apart an American military vehicle on August 8, killing four soldiers. That, too, was, blamed on Aidede.

On Thursday, Aidede's supporters took to the streets, building makeshift barricades and burning tires along the main road.

## Vietnam, Cambodia fail to reach accord

PHNOM PENH, Aug 26: Vietnam and Cambodia have failed to reach agreement on the potentially explosive issue of Vietnamese residents in Cambodia and on redrawing the border between the neighbouring countries, a Phnom Penh official said Thursday, reports AP.

The issues were the subject of tough discussions during a three-day visit to Vietnam by Prince Norodom Ranariddh and Hun Sen, co-chairman of Cambodia's interim government. The visit ended Wednesday.

The official, who demanded anonymity, said disagreement over the issues led to the cancellation of a scheduled visit by the two leaders to southern Vietnam. The official had accompanied the co-chairman to Vietnam.

Vietnam had asked Phnom Penh to provide security for Vietnamese residents in Cambodia and allow those who had fled the country to return.

The official said the Cambodians responded that they could not allow their return because the government could not guarantee their safety and because no immigration law currently existed.

Some 30,000 ethnic Vietnamese fled to Vietnam earlier this year to escape massacres by radical Khmer Rouge guerrillas.

The Cambodian leaders, however, agreed to set up a committee to investigate the background of the Vietnamese residents with a view to legalizing their status after the adoption of a constitution, the official said.

## Jackson has relation with 3 other boys?

LOS ANGELES, Aug 26: Police have expanded their investigation of Michael Jackson to include his relationship with three other boys, the Los Angeles Times said Thursday, reports AP.

"They are even interviewing friends of friends, to see if they were told anything," an unidentified source told the newspaper.

The police sex-crimes unit began an investigation August 17 after a 13-year-old told a therapist the pop star fondled him. Police seized photos and videotapes over the weekend at Jackson's Los Angeles condominium and Neverland ranch.

The Daily News of Los Angeles reported Wednesday that the alleged abuse included oral sex during a relationship that lasted several months.

The boy is at the centre of a bitter custody battle in which his father has asked the boy's mother to deny the youngster any contact with Jackson, including phone calls, according to court papers made available Wednesday.

The papers don't say why the boy should be barred from contacting Jackson or explain their relationship. And Barry Rothman, a lawyer for the father, refused to comment.

Newspapers in May reported the boy, his mother and his sister went with Jackson to Monaco.

The father is a Beverly Hills dentist whose patients include such celebrities as Christian Slater and studio chief Sherry Lansing.

And an 11-year-old boy went on television to defend the entertainer. Brett Barnes of Melbourne, Australia, told that Jackson had given him friendly hugs and kisses.

Police, however, said the

consultant has not contacted them about an extortion attempt.

Meanwhile, Jackson, who turns 35 on Sunday, fell ill in Thailand and postponed a Bangkok concert, said his spokesman, Lee Solters. Solters said in Bangkok that Jackson was expected to return to the stage Thursday.

Pepsi, sponsor of the world tour, said there are no plans to cancel the tour or stop running commercials featuring Jackson in countries where he will appear.

But Charles H Stern, a Los Angeles talent agent, said Jackson's days as a product endorser are over whether or not he is vindicated.

"These types of allegations are especially damaging. No one remembers the retractions," Stern said. "All they remember are the allegations."

Police, however, said the

## Off the Record

### Safe sex message thru' jokes

BOSTON: A comedienne says jokes are the best way to make young people pay attention to a message of safe sex, but three students and their parents don't see the humour and are suing over her sexually explicit presentation, reports AP.

The 3.5 million dollar lawsuit filed Tuesday in federal court maintains the Chelsoford High School students' civil rights were violated, and that having to attend the presentation was tantamount to sexual harassment.

It also says the presentation violated the parents' rights to determine how their children are educated and their right to free exercise of religion.

Named as defendants are school officials and performer Suzi Landolph of Gloucester.

Landolph said her message is that safer sex comes through honesty, clear communication and trust, and that no one should rush into a sexual relationship.

A spokeswoman for her production company, Hot, Sexy and Safer Productions Inc, said it was the first time in more than 5,000 presentations they had been sued.

### Thank you note for signing death warrant

STARKE: An unrepentant five-time killer who begged the governor to sign his death warrant — and sent him a thank-you note for obliging — was executed in the electric chair at day-break Wednesday, reports AP.

Michael Alan Durocher, 33, went to his death after the US Supreme Court on Tuesday rejected two appeals filed over his objections.

In the death chamber, he smirked at some of the witnesses and made no final statement. He was pronounced dead about 7:15 am, becoming the 32nd man to be sent to the chair in Florida since the state resumed capital punishment in 1979.

Opponents of the death penalty decried the speed with which Durocher arrived at his execution day. He was sentenced in 1991. But others cited his own desire not to delay.

"The reaction has been, if he wants to die, let him go ahead and do that," said Susan Cary, a lawyer who has represented death row inmates. "We wouldn't do that if he was holding a gun in his hand."

Durocher went to his death for the 1983 murders of his 6-month-old son, Joshua, his girlfriend, Grace Reed, and his 5-year-old daughter, Candice. The bodies were not discovered until 1990.

In one of his letters to Gov. Lawton Chiles, Durocher said Reed lied about Joshua being their child and that made her a nuisance, one that needed to be eliminated. He shot her and the 5-year-old in the back and stabbed the baby.

He was also under a death sentence for the shotgun slaying of a man during a 1986 robbery and was serving a life sentence for bludgeoning a roommate to death two years later.

Durocher wrote the governor that he is a believer in capital punishment, and respectfully request that justice now be served. "And when Chiles signed the death warrant in May, Durocher wrote a thank-you note.

### Tomato fight

BUNYOL: Youths hurling tons of overripe tomatoes at each other painted the town red in an annual tomato fight that drew a record 25,000 people, reports AP.

Wednesday's celebration in Bunyol, 25 miles (40 kilometers) west of Valencia in southeastern Spain, is one of dozens of annual summer fiestas throughout the country.

The festivals include dropping goats from church steeples, walking on hot coals, burning giant effigies in the streets, climbing greased posts and throwing bulls into the sea.

Many of the fiestas date from the Middle Ages or earlier and combine elements of pagan rituals and Christianity. But the tomato fight in Bunyol, with a population of 9,500, dates from 1945, when local youths from the town settled a dispute with the juicy fruit.

The fiestas now draws an international crowd and is Bunyol's annual moment in the sun — and the sauce.

This year's participants tossed 264,000 pounds (120,000 kilos) of tomatoes in a running battle through the streets, while residents poured water on their heads from balconies.

One man even brought his own sack of tomatoes and threw them at the town hall, which sponsors the event.

### Condoms instead of treasure

COPENHAGEN: Explosives experts started disarming torpedoes on a recovered World War II German submarine Wednesday, while salvagers, hoping to find Nazi documents and treasure, found condoms and other routine cargo, reports AP.

"It's a hell of a mess down there. Things are just anywhere," said salvagers' spokesman Jonathan Wardlow. "And it stinks after being filled with sea water and clay for 48 years."

A thorough search of the submarine will continue after potentially dangerous ordnance is removed.

The submarine was sunk by a British Royal Air Force bomber on May 5, 1945, the day after Nazi troops surrendered in Denmark, northern Germany, Norway and the Netherlands. Three of the 52-man crew died.

Surviving crew members, who witnessed the raising of the submarine from the Kattegat seabed Monday, said there were no high-ranking Nazi officials on board, and no treasure, as historians have speculated.

The salvagers aren't discouraged yet, although the objects fished put of the interior so far were not especially valuable.

"We found a pipe, a box of condoms, binoculars, clothes and gas masks," said Wardlow. He said historians advising the salvage company, Smit Tak, confirmed that a small supply of condoms was a standard part of the inventory on German submarines during the war.

Historians say valuable goods and papers may have been hidden in secret compartments or cooped in food cans. One historian said the submarine was carrying 16 tons of food instead of the usual 13 tons.