26 die in Indonesian bus crash: At least 26 people were killed and eight others were seriously injured when a crowded bus skidded off a highway and plunged into an eight-metre ditch, the official Antra news agency reported yesterday, AP says from Jakarta.

It said Sunday's accident happened near Cibedug Limbangan village, about 160 km east of Jakarta. Another 46 people on board had suffered minor injuries.

Israeli tourist killed in India: A speeding jeep rolled down a Himalyan mountain, killing an Israeli tourist and his Indian driver, police said yesterday, AP

says from Chandigarh. Denyal Gurman was killed when the driver lost control of the vehicle Sunday on the Leh-Manali road near Keylong in Himachal Pradesh state, police said. It rolled down the mountain, killing Gurman and the driver.

250 Iranian pilgrims in Iraq: A new group of 250 Iranian pilgrims arrived Sunday in Iraq to visit Shi'ite holy sites, Iraq's officials INA news agency reported, AFP says from Baghdad.

The pilgrims entered through the Al-Munziriya border post in eastern Iraq, 150 km east of Baghdad. A first group of 750 pilgrims arrived Saturday for the first time since the outbreak of the 1980-1988 Iraqi-Iranian war.

Floods claim 15 in Nigeria: Some 20 buildings collapsed in the northern Nigerian city of Kano over the weekend, leaving between seven and 15 people dead and hundreds homeless, the Guardian reported yesterday, AFP says from Lagos.

Property worth millions of naira (tens of thousands of dollars) was lost in the rains which caused the buildings to collapse, the paper said.

Guerilla killed in Lebanon: Israeli-backed militiamen on Sunday killed a Lebanese guerrilla and captured another as the pair infiltrated the Israeli-occupied zone in southern Lebanon, militia officials said, AP says from Lebanon.

A patrol of the south Lebanon Army, a local militia armed and financed by Israel, engaged the infiltrators near the town of Hasbaya in the eastern sector of the occupied zone after dark, said the SLA officials. A gunbattle ensued in the area, about 12 kms from the Israeli border.

Quake rattles S Taiwan: An earthquake measuring 5.2 on the Richter scale rattled parts of southern Taiwan Sunday evening seismologists said, AFP reports from Taipei.

The tremor struck at 7:13 pm (1113 GMT Sunday), with its epicentre located 36.5 km south of Chiyai country at a depth of 6.6 km. No damage or casualties were reported. The Central Weather Bureau said.

24 Thai fishermen rescued: Police vessels pulled 24 Thai fishermen from the waters off the southwestern coast of Thailand after their boat capsized but one crew member was still missing and presumed drowned, police said yesterday, AP says from Bangkok

The trawler Niyom Silpa sank Sunday during a storm in the Andaman Sea about 60 km off the province from Satun, police

53 Colombian troops killed in 3 days:

Three days of fighting in far northwestern Colombia left 53 army troops dead, according to the rebels, while the Colombian Army acknowledged "many casualties," AFP reports from Bogota. "Intelligence information and reports from local authorities

and civilians indicate many casualties for both subversive rebels and our own troops," General Martin Carreno said in a statement distributed by the army's press service.

18 Chinese die in a cargo vessel: Eight Chinese were found dead yesterday in a container on a cargo vessel in Tokyo, apparently trying to gain illegal entry

into Japan, the coastguard said, AFP reports from Tokyo. The dead, seven women and man, were among 16 people found in a container on board the St. Vincent-registered ship at Tokyo pier, an official from the maritime safety agency said.

Serb forces take over

Albanian stronghold

mained possible the rebel

still regroup.

Kosovo Liberation Army could

In recent weeks, government

forces have forced the KLA from

several other key towns. On

Sunday, the pro-Albanian

Kosovo Information Centre

claimed fighting continued in

Logia. Government forces re

portedly used tanks and heli-

copters to attack the village.

along with eight others in the

area near Kosovo's second city

curity forces for the indepen-

dence of Kosovo, where ethnic

Albanians make up 90 per cent

of the province's 2 million peo-

ple. Kosovo is in Serbia, the

Last week, the militant or-

ganisation named Adem

Demaci as the leader of its po-

litical wing. Demaci refuses to

work with his arch rival, mod-

erate leader Ibrahim Rugova.

grade has invited Rugova's ne-

gotiating team to start peace

the government offensive must

stop before he would return to

The Serb government in Bel-

But Rugova had said earlier

who is favoured by the West.

talks as early as next week.

the negotiating table.

dominant Yugoslav republic.

The KLA is fighting Serb se-

PRISTINA, Yugoslavia, Aug

17: Serb forces have taken con-

trol of the rebel ethnic Albani-

an's main logistical and

weapons distribution centre.

amid reports of clashes in parts

Serb police reported Sunday

of western Kosovo, reports AP.

they controlled the village of

Junik, near the border with Al-

bania, after a 20-day siege. Ac-

cording to Col. Bozidar Filic, a

police spokesman, there were

no civilian casualties, because

they fled the town before the

by state-run Tanjug news

agency said four policemen and

two Yugoslav army soldiers

died in the operation. There

were no immediate reports of

casualties on the Albanian side.

Sunday found the village de-

serted, except for about 15 el-

derly people who were too old to

flee. Some houses were still

smoldering, but most of village

the rebel stronghold, "the terri-

tory of Kosovo has been freed

for movement in all directions."

But since fighting began five

months ago, gains by gov-

ernment forces have proven dif-

ficult to maintain and it re-

Filic said that by wiping out

Reporters who visited Junik

A police statement carried

fighting began.

remained intact.

Suspect detained in Karachi, returned to Kenya

US embassy bombings

NAIROBI, Aug 17: The entourage of FBI agents grows in Nairobi as more investigators try to learn whether the trail of evidence from the deadly Aug 7 embassy bombing leads to a suspect whom authorities have brought back from Pakistan,

reports AP. The Pakistan Foreign Ministry and another government source said Sunday that Mohammad Sadik Howaida was handed over to Kenyan authorities last week, bypassing US investigators in Pakistan.

A ministry spokesman said Sadik was arrested on his arrival at the Karachi airport from Nairobi on Aug 7, the day twin bombings at the US embassies in Nairobi and Dar es Salaam, Tanzania, killed 257 people and wounded at least 5,500 more.

A government source in Pakistan, speaking on condition of anonymity, said Sadik was returned Friday to Nairobi, bypassing US investigators who had flown to Pakistan to question him.

Kenya's private KTN television reported that Howaida arrived Sunday in Nairobi. The discrepancy would not immediately be explained.

ÚS officials in Islamabad and Nairobi refused to discuss

STORMONT, Northern Ire-

land, Aug 17: British and Irish

Prime Minister Tony Blair and

Bertie Ahern on Sunday were

firm in their determination to

"hunt down" bombers who

killed 28 people and wounded

220 others in northern Ireland.

they would do "whatever we

have to do" to find those re-

sponsible for a car bomb that

devastated Omagh town centre

on an annual carnival day on

from Belfast and Dublin would

meet Monday to agree a set of

proposals on new powers and

cooperation between their

forces and governments, they

these new anti-terrorist powers,

but the commitment to security

cooperation from the top was

unprecedented in a conflict

which is rooted in claims of

Irish and British sovereignty

governments will work together

"We have agreed that the two

over Northern Ireland.

They did not elaborate on

Police chiefs and ministers

After talks, the pair said

reports AFP.

Saturday.

"This is a matter in which we are working very closely and very hard with our Kenyan colleagues. I can't make any comphrase that in Pakistan usually ment," said the FBI's assistant means someone from the Midagent-in-charge of the Nairobi dle East. investigation, Hardrick Craw-

ford. "This is an ongoing investigation.' question the man. The government source in Pakistan said the suspect told his interrogators that a few other conspirators, who left Nairobi earlier, had already Nairobi.

to do the same, he said. The source told The Associated Press that investigators suspected a link between Howaida and exiled Saudi multimillionaire Osama bin Laden. who has been living in neighbouring Afghanistan for the last two years.

passed through Pakistan into

Afghanistan. He had planned

US officials have said that bin Laden, who has been vocal in his hatred of the United States and is among the world's most militant sponsors of terrorism, was a possible suspect in the African bombings.

Pakistani Foreign Ministry spokesman Tariq Altaf said immigration officials determined that Howaida's Yemeni passport was forged, and he was interrogated by Pakistani offi-

Unofficial memorabilia and souvenirs depicting the image of Diana on sale in London shops

Stolen car used in bomb attack

British, Irish PMs firm to

hunt down bombers

and will do everything that is

possible within their power to

hunt down those that have been

responsible for this outrage,"

said Blair at Stormont outside

ously consider very carefully

and seriously any measures

they then propose to us," adding

that under consideration were

"all measures necessary and

was to destroy the work, and

hopes and agreements we built

up... our determination has got

to be that these people will

never win and democracy will

vowed to 'crush' the bombers.

added: "We have no hesitation

in the Irish government of do-

ing whatever we have to do to

deal with those people who have created this terrible mayhem."

adds: The car that exploded in

Omagh killing 28 people had

been stolen in the Republic of

Ireland last week, the head of

Another report from Omagh

Ahern, who had earlier

triumph over evil."

"The purpose of that bomb

possible.

He continues: "We will obvi-

vesterday as the anniversary of her death approaches on Aug 31st.

A ministry statement identified Howaida as an "Arab national" without elaboration, a

A day earlier, US authorities in Washington said CIA agents were headed to Pakistan to

The mourning and the cleanup both continue in

American workers wearing helmets were going through the damaged embassy building over the weekend, occasionally pulling out magnifying glasses to inspect something before tossing it out the window onto a heap below.

Newsweek magazine reported that investigators have found a 220-kilogram steel driveshaft believed to have belonged to the pickup truck that carried the bomb to the embassy in Nairobi. The shaft, found a kilometre from the site, contains part of the vehicle identification number, the magazine said, quoting unidentifled sources.

In Washington, FBI spokeswoman Debbie Weierman would not comment on the report.

-AP/UNB photo

the Royal Ulster constabulary

Vauxhal Cavalier had disap-

peared on Thursday. Two days

before the deadly blast, from

the little town of Carrick-

macross near the border. It was

carrying false number plates,

lice thesis that the bombing was

carried out by the renegade 'Real

This tended to back the po-

Flanagan said earlier the

"main focus" of the investiga-

tion was the splinter group op-

posed to the 13-month-old Irish

Republican Army ceasefire and

headed by a former IRA quar-

termaster who lives in Ireland.

It is said to be especially strong

identity of the suspected terror-

ist leader. But one police source

said the man was an "out-of-

control Republican fanatic who

is prepared to kill again and

again to try to end the Northern

Ireland peace process."

Police would not reveal the

in the border areas.

Ronnie Flanagan said the

said late Sunday.

the police chief said.

Vajpayee begins four-nation tour August 28

NEW DELHI, Aug 17: Indian Prime Minister Atal Behari Vajpayee will begin a nine-day. four-nation tour on August 28, during which he will meet his Pakistani counterpart Nawaz Sharif, officials said today, reports AFP.

Vajpayee will first visit Oman and Namibia before travelling to South Africa to attend the Non-aligned Movement (NAM) summit, which starts in Durban on August 31, the Press Trust of India (PTI) reported.

He will then go to Mauritius before returning home on September 5.

In Durban, Vajpayee will hold talks with the Pakistani Prime Minister on the sidelines of the NAM summit. It will be the second meeting between the two leaders since their rival nuclear tests in May.

10 militants killed in Kashmir

SRINAGAR, Aug 17: An encounter between army soldiers and separatist guerillas in Kashmir on Monday left 10 militants dead, an official said, reports AP.

The operation took place shortly after midnight in the dense forests of Kalaroos village in Kupwara district, 140 kilometers (85 miles) north of summer capital Srinagar, said an army spokesman who can-not be identified.

Army soldiers raided the forest following a tip and cor-doned the ara. Militants fired at the soldiers with automatic rifles and the soldiers fired back,

There were no casualties among soldiers. Arms inspections

UN Special Envoy continues talks in Baghdad

BAGHDAD, Aug 17: UN Special Envoy Prakash Shah has continued talks with Iraqi authorities over weapons inspections in the sanctions-hit state. the United Nations said Sun-

Shah has held other meetings with the Iraqi authorities since his arrival in Baghdad on Thursday and "a dialogue continues," a UN spokesman in Baghdad told AFP without elaborating.

Shah on Thursday gave a message from UN Secretary General Kofi Annan to Iraqi Deputy Prime Minister Tareq Aziz calling on Iraq to reverse its decision to end cooperation with weapons inspectors.

On Thursday, Shah said he had agreed to pursue a dialogue to end the crisis, but no meeting has since been announced.

Libya asks Britain to probe MI 6 'plot' to kill Gaddafi

TRIPOLI, Aug 17: Libya demanded Sunday that Britain open an inquiry into allegations by former British spy David Shayler that Britain's foreign intelligence agency, MI 6. tried to assassinate Moamer Gaddafi, reports AFP.

"Opening an inquest would prove London's good intentions to disprove the involvement of its intelligence services in this plot," the Libyan foreign ministry said in a statement.

Shayler, a former counterespionage officer with Britain's domestic intelligence agency, MI 5, has accused its sister service of having placed a bomb under the wrong car in Gaddafi's convoy in February 1996, killing several bystanders.

Shayler, 32, was arrested in Paris early this month on an extradition warrant pending prosecution in Britain under a law protecting official secrets.

British Foreign Secretary Robin Cook has called Shayler's allegation's "pure inventions" motivated by personal reasons.

Libya on Sunday also asked France to send Shayler to Tripoli or allow Libyan officials to question him .

ing a second front in the west in the strategic river Congo corrident Laurant Kabila returned to dor linking the capital to the the capital of the Democratic Republic of the Congo after

Kabila to arm people,

defeat rebels fighting

to oust him

KINSHASA, Aug 17: Presi-

talks in Angola, saying he

would arm the people and defeat Rwandan-backed rebels fight-

ing to oust him, reports Reuter.

coincided with rebel claims

that their advance units had

clashed with government forces

just 120 km (80 miles) south-

als left over the weekend on

flights organised by former

colonial power Belgium and

other nations and the United

States temporarily closed its

Sunday after Kinshasa declined

to reopen a river Congo ferry

terminal for passengers leaving

for the neighbouring Congo re-

ever happens, the aggressors will fail," Kabila told state tele-

vision in an airport interview.

"We are here to stay, what-

"The people must be valiant,

Soldiers from Congo's ethnic

we will arm them," he said. "It

must be understood that victory

will be ours, that is the message

Tutsi minority launched the re-

bellion on August 2 in the east-

I have for my people."

public capital Brazzaville.

But the exodus slowed on

Hundreds of foreign nation-

west of Kinshasa.

embassy.

Kabila's return on Sunday

Kabila accuses former allies Rwanda and Uganda, who helped him topple veteran dictator Mobutu Sese Seko in May 1997, of invading to support the

Both deny the charge but independent sources say that Rwandan forces are clearly involved in the latest revolt.

"Naturally little Rwanda and Uganda will not swallow Congo," Kabila said on Sunday. State Television said Kabila had spent several days in the southern city of Lubumbashi, in his home province of Katanga,

Kinshasa was calm on Sunday. Diplomats say about 700 foreign nationals had requested passage out of the country after western governments advised their nationals to leave.

France has three military transport planes and 500 soldiers in Brazzaville. One ferry made the crossing late on Saturday. Diplomats said a fresh attempt to revive the ferry

shuttle would be made today. A Reuters Correspondent reported from the western port of Matadi and from the huge in Hydro-electric dam further upstream that rebels were firmly ern town of Goma before open- ' in control there.

Taliban block entry of refugees into Pakistan

KABUL, Aug 17: Taliban soldiers have blocked the entry of refugees into Pakistan from northern Afghanistan, independent sources and travellers coming from the bordering ar-

eas said Sunday, reports AFP.
Hundreds of people including women and children fleeing the fighting in the opposition held towns in the north, have been stopped from crossing the border at the historic Khyber pass, people from the eastern Nangarhar province said. "The Taliban guards have

Samarkheil checkpoint outside Jalalabad for people coming from the north, coach driver Mohammad Ali said. Independent sources said at

been checking vehicles" at

least 1,500 people, mostly eth-nic Uzbeks and Hazaras, have been put in a school compound.

The refugees who fled northern Afghanistan before and after the Taliban advance in the opposition held region last week were however free to move in Nangarhar or travel to Kabul, the sources said. But they cannot go back to their home provinces because the main highway leading to

Botha begins last day of trial

the north has been closed.

CAPE TOWN, Aug 17: Lawyers for PW Botha argued during closing arguments Monday that a contempt charge against the hard line apartheidera president should be dismissed, reports AP.

Attorney Lappe Laubscher said the Truth and Reconciliation Commission made technical errors in calling Botha to

Botha, 82, ignored the summons, claiming that the panel probing atrocities committed under white rule wanted to humiliate him by forcing a public appearance after he had supplied more than 1,700 pages of written answers.

Off the Record

New detergent to clean even Levinsky's dress!

TEL AVIV: A TV commercial for a new Israeli laundry detergent claims that the product is so good it can get stains out of anything, including the most famous dress in Washington, re-

In the ad for Biomet 2000, two secret agents in dark blue suits are seen breaking-in to the home of one "Monica Levinsky," finding a stained white dress, and on orders from the highest authority, they pull out the laundry detergent and wash away the evidence.

Reporting the mission's success back to their boss, one agent whispers into a walkie-talkie: "It's whiter than white." But it seems the agents have bungled the operation.

"White? You were sent to take care of the blue dress!" an angry boss yells back. The commercial was previewed on a news magazine show

Sunday. The detergent campaign is scheduled to air in Israel on Monday, when President Bill Clinton goes before a grand jury to answer questions regarding a relationship with former White-House intern Monica Lewinsky.

Ahot way to chase pests

SOCORRO. New Mexico: Instead of poison or traps, researchers are using the world's hottest chili pepper as a new weapon to get rid of pesky pests, reports AP.

A repellent developed by the New Mexico Tech Research Foundation in Socorro has tapped the power of the ripe, red habanero pepper, which is 60 times hotter than its fiery cousin the jalapeno, and 10 times hotter than cayennie.

The spicy ingredient is being mixed into caulks, paints, glues and rubber-coating materials, and any creature unfortunate enough to take a nibble will get a sizzling surprise. Tests show rats have shunned cables coated in the substance

and roadrunners have already avoided pecking fence posts treated with the peppery material.

"That would be really great if it works," said Lt. Chris Boes at the Coast Guard headquarters in Washington DC.

Northeastern China battles with rising floodwaters

BEIJING, Aug 17: The northeastern oil city of Daging is fighting a "life and death" battle as rising floodwaters on the Nenjiang river threaten to swamp the city, local media reported today, reports AFP.

Floodwaters have already inundated 1,217 oil wells in marshland outside the city forcing the closure of 527 wells in a city which accounts for half of the country's oil produc-

"The third dike is a life and death defence," a People's Liberation Army (PLA) captain told Chinese television, as soldiers and civilian volunteers raced to build up a third dike, 15 kilometres from an abandoned second dike.

Television pictures showed thousands of soldiers rushing to pile sandbags on top of dikes in the northeastern province of Heilongjiang, as strong winds whipped up waves which lashed the dikes.

With more than 25,000 oil wells, Daging produced 60.9 million tonnes of oil in 1997, but production had slowed to just 6,821 tonnes during the past week, local media reported. Around 11,000 oil workers,

and their families were trapped

at the Zhaoyuan and Tailai oilfields on the west bank of the Nenjiang with no power, water or food, Xinhua news agency

The authorities were trying to organise an evacuation but only had enough boats to take 1,000 people to safety, it said.

Fourth attempt to circle globe in balloon fails

SYDNEY, Aug 17: A French military airplane from New Caledonia has dropped a life raft to US balloonist Steve Fossett ABC Radio reported today,

Fossett was seen getting into the life raft, ABC Radio said, after presumably being forced down on Sunday, ending his fourth attempt to circle the globe in a balloon nonstop.

An Australian Air Force C-130 transport plane was on its way to the site, Fossett, 54, having travelled

a record 24,466 km, stopped transmitting his position at 1443 GMT Sunday and twice activated his emergency beacon, his US-based ground crew said.



Albanian refugees wait for food to be cooked in the village of Likosan yesterday. Refugees from all over the Kosovo province were driven to this area still under KLA control after continuing attacks on villagers by Serb government forces.

Myanmar govt's warning to foreign activists thorities 32 km outside the cap-They were handing out small BANGKOK, Aug 17: Myan-

mar's military government issued a veiled threat of violence Monday against any foreigners intent on repeating the prodemocracy leafletting campaign carried out by 18 activists last week, reports AP "The Myanmar people want

to live in peace and are angry with the 18 foreigners," wrote Maung Pyi Tha, a pen name for a government official, in a commentary in Monday's staterun New Light of Myanmar newspaper.

"The next time any destructionists or saboteurs try to disrupt the country they will face not only the laws but the people who are ready to prove their sense of duty," he wrote. The same author wrote in a

commentary on Saturday, that if he had apprehended the activists he would have physically assaulted them.

The activists — six Americans, three Thais, three Indonesians, three Malaysians, two Filipinos and an Australian were arrested the day after the 10th anniversary of a failed nationwide democracy uprising -AP/UNB photo in Myanmar.

red and gold cards that said: "Goodwill Message. We are your friends from around the

world. We have not forgotten you. We support your hopes for human rights and democracy. Don't forget. Don't give up." On Friday, they were sentenced by a Myanmar court to

five years in prison with hard labour. The government deported them on Saturday "Because of the correct outlook of the people, the foreign-

ers had been unable to cause anarchy and unrest," Monday's commentary said. "The fact that Myanmar people had caught those instigators showed that Myanmar people are not

Myanmar government officials frequently speak of "annihilating," and "crushing," the democratic opposition led by 1991 Nobel Peace Prize winner Aung San Suu Kyi.

On Monday, Su Kyl entered her sixth day of a stalemate with the military over her right to meet members of her party

outside Yangon. She and three colleague were stopped in their van by the au-

ital while travelling to the city of Bassein. The military is refusing to let

them proceed, insisting there is a threat of violence against her in Bassein. The only physical attack on.

Suu Kyi came in Nov. 1996 by a mob whose members said they were paid by the government.

This is the fourth time in two months Suu Kyi has been stopped at the same roadblock. The government forcibly ended the last incident by seizing Suu Kyi's car, forcibly restraining her and driving her against her will back to Yangon.

Suu Kyi's party won 82 per cent of the seats in parliament in a 1990 election the military refused to honour. The NLD has set an Aug. 21

deadline for the government to convene parliament.
Of the 385 NLD members elected in 1990, 181 have either

been imprisoned by the government, forced into exile, died or stripped of their parliamentary status by the government. The rest are living under ha-

rassment from the military, the NLD has said.