The Daily Star

brain', says Rafsanjani

AFP, Tehran

Powerful former Iranian president Akbar Hashemi Rafsanjani labelled the United States Tuesday as a "dinosaur with a sparrow's brain' and ridiculed what he said were Washington's failures in Iran and Iraq.

"The failure of the recent unrest in Iran was a disgrace for the United States," Rafsanjani said, referring to the June 10-20 wave of anti-regime protests and unrest that officials here have blamed on Washington.

"The United States has heavily invested itself in creating trouble in Iran," the official news agency IRNA quoted him as saying. "But their cavalry consists of hooligans, good-for-nothings and thieves.'

Any support to terrors in Kashmir illegal: US

PTI, Washington

The United States has said that any kind of support to terrorist organisations operating in Jammu and Kashmir is illegal under US law.

"There are multiple regulations that prevent US citizens from contributing to armed conflict, from contributing to terrorism, from supporting terrorists," State Department spokesman Richard Boucher said while replying to a question about the arrest of US and Pakistani citizens "for training rebels and terrorists in Kashmir".

Thugs for hire!

THE STAR/ ANN, Kuala Lumpur

Hired hands have started advertising their services by circulating business cards offering to "fix" someone for a fee, said MCA Public Services and Complaints Department head Michael Chong.

"This is the first time I've come across such a thing. They have become more daring. It was done secretly previously but now they are doing it in open," he told reporters Monday in Wisma MCA.

Among the services and charges listed were RM300 (for bullying), to "fix" someone (RM400), to teach someone a lesson (RM1,000) and causing grievous injuries (RM2,000). A cellular telephone number was also provided.

On Monday, in front of report-

US is 'dinosaur with a sparrow's Abbas eyes Israeli pullout from WB within 6 weeks

AFP, Ramallah

Palestinian prime minister Mahmud Abbas said Tuesday he believed the Israeli army would withdraw from all positions occupied in the West Bank since the start of the Palestinian upris-

ing within six weeks. "I expect Israel will complete the withdrawal (from all reoccupied Palestinian areas) within a month or a month and a half," he told a meeting of the Palestinian Legislative Council in Ramallah.

Abbas said he would meet later Tuesday with his Israeli counterpart, Ariel Sharon, to discuss the necessary steps for that withdrawal.

"Now we are looking to see how Israel will return to the borders of September 28, 2000 because it is an important step that is in the roadmap," Abbas said, referring to the date when the Palestinian Intifada, or uprising, broke out.

"Today we will discuss with Sharon about the schedule" for the withdrawal, he said. He said the timeframe was important because the

Palestinian security apparatus did not currently have the ability said to cope with an immediate takeover of security responsibility for the entire West Bank.

"(At the moment) we do not have the ability and we need to create the ability very fast. We need it to carry out this programme," he said.

Abbas said earlier the meeting with Sharon in Jerusalem would cover an array of roadmaprelated issues, including the possible revival of the joint com-mittees that existed before the start of the uprising.

The two men are to hold a joint press conference at Sharon's office in Jerusalem at 5:40 pm (1440 GMT) ahead of the evening meeting, Israeli officials said Monday

Meanwhile, the Israeli army is

to withdraw from the southern West Bank town of Bethlehem and its environs Wednesday, just three days after pulling out of part of the Gaza Strip, Israeli Defence Minister Shaul Mofaz

"We will hand over security control for Bethlehem to the Palestinians on Wednesday," Mofaz told public radio Tuesday, confirming information revealed by a Palestinian source a day

earlier. "This withdrawal will be a test to see whether the security of Israelis, including those in Judea and Samaria, is assured," he said, using the Biblical name for the West Bank.

Israeli security officials were meeting with their Palestinian counterparts at a military base in the area to finalise the details of the withdrawal, public radio said.

But Avi Dichter, head of Israel's internal security service Shin Beth, warned that Israel

INTERNÄTIONAL

would not be able to continue

transferring further security responsibility to the Palestinians in the West Bank if the Palestinian Authority did not start disarming and disbanding militant groups in the Gaza Strip, the radio said. Israel had stressed as much several weeks ago, the radio quoted him as saying.

Four Palestinian militant groups, including the radical Hamas and Islamic Jihad movements, announced a threemonth ceasefire on Sunday, which was quickly followed by a partial Israeli withdrawal from the northern Gaza Strip.

But Israeli Foreign Minister Sylvan Shalom said Monday Israel was not a party to the ceasefire, which was an agreement between the Palestinian Authority and militant gruops.

Like the United States, the Israeli government is not satisfied with a ceasefire alone and is demanding militant groups be disarmed.



Israeli bulldozers destroy the foundations of a mosque near the church of the Virgin Mary (background) in Nazareth on Tuesday which marks the site where, according to Christian belief, the Archangel Gabriel announced to the Virgin Mary that she would give birth to Jesus Christ. The operation was launched following a court decision ordering the Wagf, the body charged with managing Muslim assets, to destroy the foundations, saying they had been illegally constructed.

Floods displace 300,000 in Assam

AFP, Guwahati

DHAKA WEDNESDAY JULY 2, 2003

Another five people have died due to heavy rains in India's northeast, pushing the death toll to six with more than 300,000 displaced in mudslides and flash floods, police and government said Tuesday.

A police spokesman said two people drowned late Monday when their boat capsized in the middle of the Brahmaputra River near Alamgang in the western Dhubri district of Assam state.

"The two were among several others who were rowing their boats to reach safer areas to escape the floods when it capsized," the spokesman said.

"Their bodies have not yet been recovered.

The spokesman said a mother and an infant died in Shillong, capital of Meghalaya state neighbouring Assam, in a landslide triggered by incessant rains since Friday.

Late Monday, a boy drowned when the boat he was in capsized in south Tripura state, while a baby girl died Sunday after she slipped off her mother's lap into raging waters while the family was trying to cross a flooded area in a row

Iraq no quagmire, says Rumsfeld

REUTERS, Washington

Defence Secretary Donald Rumsfeld said on Monday remnants of toppled President Saddam Hussein's government have coalesced into a "terrorist net-work" in Iraq, but rejected the notion that U.S. and British forces are facing a guerrilla war or are stuck in a quagmire.

During a Pentagon briefing, Rumsfeld compared the postwar situation in Iraq to the difficult path taken by the United States after declaring its independence from Britain and before establishing a new Constitution and electing a president.

Rumsfeld also accused some members of the news media, who

he did not identify, of hoping Iraq North Korea threatened on Tuesday becomes another Vietnam. to abandon the 1953 armistice that When a reporter identified the ended the Korean War, and warned Vietnam War during the briefing as "your classic quagmire," Rumsfeld cut her off and said: "There are so that it will take "merciless retaliatory measures" in response to any economic blockade. US efforts to pressure the com-munist state to abandon its sus-

AP, Seoul

different time. It's a different era. It's a different place.

The US military has launched numerous raids in recent days aimed at halting escalating attacks against the American and British troops occupying Iraq.

Bhutanese deadline for ULFA rebels ends, but they are still there

AFP, Guwahati

camps by June 30, failing which it said the government would remove them by military might. An Indian separatist group is con-

N Korea threatens to abandon armistice

PHOTO: AFP

agency. KCNA did not give his name

North Korea has recently stepped up its anti-US rhetoric in an apparent attempt to force the nited States to negotiate a dispute over the North's nuclear ambitions. "It is, in fact, hardly possible to

preserve the ceasefire in Korea by the unilateral efforts of the Korean People's Army side," the represenpected nuclear weapons program have pushed Korea to "the crosstative said.

roads of war or peace," said the North Korean military's representa-North Korea has often threat-ened to scrap the armistice, the key legal document that keeps an tive at Panmunjom, a truce village where the UN Command and the uneasy peace on the divided Korean Peninsula. It has called the armi-North's military meet to oversee the stice a "dead document" or a "use-His statement was carried by the less piece of paper.' North's state-run KCNA news

The United States and its allies are pressuring North Korea to abandon its suspected development of nuclear weapons. In recent weeks, they began cracking down on alleged North Korean trading in illicit drugs, counterfeit money and weapons.

PHOTO: AF

North Korea calls the moves part of a US plan to impose an international siege on the isolated state and says they violate the armistice.

On Tuesday, the North said that if Washington applies sanctions or bolsters troops in the region, it "will promptly regard it as a complete breach of the armistice agreement by the US side and will immediately take strong and merciless retalia-tory measures."



German Chancellor Gerhard Schroeder (R) has a laugh with Pakistani President Pervez Musharraf during a joint press conference in Berlin on Monday. Musharraf touched down in Berlin on the latest leg of a four-nation tour after a high-profile visit to the United States.

Pakistan vows to end row with India

were sponsored by Islamabad.

rejected the proposal.

according to Indian figures.

AFP, Berlin

President Pervez Musharraf affirmed Monday Pakistan's commitment to peacefully resolving its disputes with India but said the

The two neighbours have recently adopted a number of confidence-building measures including a planned exchange of diplomats and resumption of

many cartoons where people, press people, are saying, 'Is it Vietnam yet?' hoping it is and wondering if it is. And it isn't. It's a

ing the services and had a threeminute conversation with him.

When asked why he was resorting to such actions, the person said that it was difficult to earn a living and claimed that he had good relations with the police.

"He also said that he could pretend to be an Ah Long (loan shark) and carry out the deed. Then he said that it was not convenient to talk over the phone and asked to meet somewhere.

BBC under scrutiny as political heat rises

REUTERS, London

The BBC is no stranger to political spats but rarely has the publicly funded broadcaster's independence been put to the test as now.

The British Broadcasting Corporation is under fierce politi-cal fire for the very reporting that made its name across the globe just as it prepares for a debate over its future.

Blasted in the past as a leftist elite and threatened with having its funding withdrawn, the BBC is at the center of a vicious row over a report that claimed Prime Minister Tony Blair's office "sexed up" a dossier on Iraqi weapons.

British govt defeated in fox hunting vote

AFP, London

British Prime Minister Tony Blair suffered a large defeat in parliament late Monday as lawmakers voted overwhelmingly to ban fox hunting with dogs in England and Wales

Blair's Labour government had intended for lawmakers to vote on proposals to ban stag hunting and hare coursing while allowing fox hunting under licence. However following a stormy five-hour debate in the lower House of Commons, the government withdrew its proposals at the eleventh hour, allowing lawmakers the opportunity to vote on an outright ban to fox hunting -- an issue that has pitted animal rights activists against countryside dwellers who see their way of life under threat.

addressed with sincerity. dialogue.

Musharraf reiterated "Pakistan's desire and resolve towards the resolution of all disputes... and our desire to address in a composite manner all issues concerned, but addressing the whole issue of Kashmir with sincerity."

His remarks, made in Berlin after talks with his German counterpart Johannes Rau, came after a Pakistani ambassador had arrived in India in the most visible sign yet of a normalisation in their ties after a long military standoff.

Diplomatic ties between the visit, the Pakistani president also nuclear-armed rivals, along with called for the political and military train, air and bus links, were sevstrategy in Afghanistan to be ered after an attack on India's reviewed so that foreign troops parliament in December 2001 by could be withdrawn. gunmen whom New Delhi claims

transport links to ease the way to tinuing to hold on to its bases inside Bhutan despite the passing of a deadline for them to leave the Last week, Musharraf suggested a Middle East-style peace roadmap on Kashmir that would include Himalayan kingdom, police said

Tuesday outside mediation, but India has "Our reports say militants belonging to the United Liberation India, whose prime minister Front of Asom (ULFA) are still in visited Germany a month ago, accuses Pakistan of fomenting a their camps inside Bhutan," Khagen Sharma, head of police 13-year insurgency against its rule intelligence in the northeastern in the Kashmir region in which more than 38,000 people have died

Indian state of Assam, told AFP. The ULFA is fighting for an independent homeland in Assam.

After the talks with Rau, the first by Musharraf during his two-day Indian intelligence officials say there could be more than 3,000 ULFA rebels in Bhutan who carry out hit-and-run guerrilla strikes on soldiers in Assam.

> In March Bhutan issued an ultimatum to ULFA to vacate its

"If the militants refuse to leave our country through the process of peaceful dialogue, we will be left with no option but to use our military forces to remove them,' Bhutan's King Jigme Singhye Wangchuk said last month while

Bhutan issued the ultimatum after New Delhi sent its National Security Adviser, Braiesh Mishra. to the capital Thimphu to air India's serious concern at the presence of the Assamese militants

Bhutan says ULFA has nine camps in the country, including the outfit's general headquarters and military training bases inside

announcing the deadline.

in Bhutanese territory

thick jungles in the southern Samdrup Jhonkar district.



Chinese national and Hong Kong (R) flags fly over thousands of protesters at Victoria Park in Hong Kong on Tuesday. More than 200,000 people marched here to protest anti-subversion legislation which many in this former British colony fear could erode political freedom six years after its return to Chinese rule.

US conducted 50 tests of *bio arms in '60s & '70s*

running

devices"

mer Soviet Union.

at Fort Greely, Alaska.

Gerstle River.

With the Cold War in full swing,

US war planners also wanted to

know how deadly nerve agents such as Sarin and VX would behave in subzero temperatures dominant

in winter time in much of the for-

Down" conducted between December 1962 and February 1963

As part of these tests several Sarin and VX-filled artillery shells,

rockets and land mines were

remotely detonated near the

Hence, experiment "Whistle

The US military conducted 50 highly-classified tests of biological and chemical agents in the 1960s and 1970s to find out how they would act in different environments and weather conditions, the US defense department has disclosed.

AFP, Washington

The announcement Monday capped a nearly three-year investi-gation into so-called "Project 112" and its outgrowth, "Project SHAD,' which were carried out over land and sea in various parts of the world -- from the Marshall Islands to Panama, Canada and Britain --and involved as many as 5,842 US troops

"We were very fortunate to find the progress reports," said lead Pentagon investigator Dee Dodson Morris, who made clear the project was so thoroughly classified that its scope was not known even to top department officials. "They served as a valuable template and a

roadmap of sorts. The origins of the program go back to 1961, when defense secretary Robert McNamara ordered a series of tests to see if chemical and

biological weapons could be effective. As part of that initiative dubbed "Project 112," the Joint Chiefs of Staff set up a center at Fort Douglas, Utah, in June 1962 to

military reservation. manage the program. It took the military nearly six months to have the tests up and

'Rapid Tan" whose goal was to determine how long the nerve In January 1963, the Navy launched off the coast of the Hawaiian island of Oahu a series of agents Tabun, Sarin, Soman and VX would maintain their killing capabilities in a wooded terrain tests, code-named "Eager Belle", designed to determined whether and open grassland. aerosols containing a biological

Under a shroud of secrecy, the deadly weapons were sprayed several times during 1967 and 1968 agent could penetrate US warfrom crop dusters, or delivered by During the experiment a Navy howitzer shells, over the military test sites in Porton Down, Britain, ship was sprayed from a tugboat with the non-lethal bacteria and Ralston, Canada Bacillus globigii "to evaluate the effectiveness of selected protective

"Blue Tango" involved 20 experiments with spraying live E.coli bacteria that could sometimes be deadly to humans over the Island of Hawaii between January and March of 1968.

The Pentagon experimented even with releases of bacteria into the ocean to see if biological weap-ons could be effectively delivered by a submarine.

As part of a 1968 series of tests ibbed "Folded Arrow," the subdubbed marine USS Carbonero dumped Bacillus globigii into the ocean off Oahu "to demonstrate the submarine weapons system capability to carry out an effective biological attack against an island complex and a naval port facility.

To see how weapons of mass destruction could penetrated the jungle canopy, the Pentagon went in early 1963 to the Panama Canal Zone to hold exercise "Big Jack." It The purpose of the Pentagon probe was to determine how many people could have been affected by the experiments to handle possible involved aircraft spraying stimu-lant agents over the Fort Sherman health-related claims.

Britain and Canada were chosen for a series of tests code-named

handover AP, Hong Kong

Hong Kong's return to China Tuesday, but protesters charged that the territory's freedoms could be crushed by a planned anti-

that Beijing should "end the oneparty dictatorship" in mainland China, and one set fire to the Communist Party's flag.

The activists took aim at one of the biggest controversies to emerge since Britain handed Hong Kong back to China - the antisubversion bill that carries life prison terms for many crimes against the state.

Gas cylinder blast kills 7 in Israel

AFP, Jerusalem

The death toll from a gas explosion which wrecked a house in Tel Aviv was finalised at seven Tuesday, hospital sources said.

The blast on Monday killed a couple from Nigeria, including a nine-months pregnant woman, a five-year-old girl from the Philippines and four Israelis.

Police blamed the explosion on a gas bottle of faulty manufacture.

HK marks 6th anniversary of

Patriotic music and flag waving marked the sixth anniversary of

subversion law.

The demonstrators chanted