#### **Boutros** to work for ME peace

PARIS, Nov 24 : Egyptian Deputy Prime Minister Boutros Boutros-Ghalf, chosen to be the new United Nations Secretary General, said he believed his selection was an "encouraging sign" for Africa and affirmed he would work for Middle East peace, reports

"I hope to fulfill the hopes of Africans," he told the French newspaper journal Du Dimanche. But the added. "it is up to them to show, through their initiatives, their desire to take part in the new debate which has opened on the international scene."

The 69-year-old Egyptian said he considered his election to be an advantage for mediation efforts towards Middle East peace.

"I have the reputation of being objective," he told the French newspaper. "I will therefore use this objectivity to serve the United Nations and further dialogue in the Middle

But he insisted that individual states would have to indicate their determination to pursue the search for peace.

He said the end of the cold war and super-power rivalry has afforded the Third World a chance to "find a new place and role in international dia-

Boutros-Ghali, who was selected last week by the UN Security Council to succeed outgoing UN Secretary General Javier Perez de Cuellar, will be the first UN chief from the African continent.

A long-serving diplomat, he was a champion of the 1978 Camp David accords between Israel and Egypt.

group all communist organizations.

Boris Yeltsin's decree.

from New Delhi.

agency said.

Russian communists to form new party:

Russian communists met for a two-day congress at Yekater-

inburg, formerly Sverdiovsk, Saturday to found a new party.

decree on November 6, aims to register with authorities after

delegates rename it. Tass said, adding that the new party will

party activities must not run counter to Russian President

Thousands of mourners march in Baku:

Thousands of people marched in Azerbaijan on Saturday to

mourn victims of a helicopter crash that officials warned

could escalate bloodshed between the republic and

Armenians over the disputed territory of Nagorno-Moarabkh

saying that the helicopter was shot down, accusing them of

'Most wanted' Assam rebel held:

Indian troops have arrested a to Assam rebel in an anti-in-

surgent drive in the northeastern Indian state, the Press

Trust of India (PTI) reported Saturday, reports AFP Sunday

from the United Liberation Front of Assam (ULFA), was held

in the Jorhat district of the oil-rich state Friday, the news

army troops pursuing an anti-insurgent drive condemned

"Operation Rhino" in Assam, where the Front is spearheading

Truck, cart collide :19 killed in Cuba:

Nineteen people were killed and 13 were injured, five of

them seriously, when a truck collided with a cart in Cuba's

western province of Pinar Del Rio on Saturday, the Cuban do-

mestic news agency AIN said, reports Reuter Sunday from

San Andres region of the province in the early hours of Saturday morning. No more details were immediately

The accident occurred on a mountain road in the northern

Cuba's communist government has sharply cut back the is-

land's public bus and train transport system because of short-

Killer of PLO official executed:

The alleged killer of top PLO official Abu lyad has been exe-

cuted in international waters, a Palestinian source said in a

report published Saturday, reports AFP Sunday from

Palestinian Security Services in international waters, after

strong Arab and international pressures for a repeal of the

sentence," he said, quoted by the Arab daily Al-Hayat.

"The death sentence was carried out in the last few days by

Hamza Abu Zeid was condemned to death in March by a

Palestinian military tribunal in Sanna, according to an

Italian farmers protest EC policies:

protest against European Community (EC) agricultural

policies which have forced them to reduce output, reports

fell last year by an average 10 per cent, while prices for con-

Trade Union representatives said Italian farmers' earnings

Some 400,000 people, some with their tractors, attended

Nabojyoti Barkotoky, described as a "most wanted" militant

He was one of 57 ULFA rebels held Friday and Saturday by

Azerbaijan claimed the helicopter was shot down by

The Armenian government condemned news reports

The crash Wednesday killed all 23 people aboard.

neighbouring Armenia, reports AP Sunday from Moscow.

that is claimed by both southern republics.

"manipulating the mass psyche."

including several Azerbaijani officials.

a campaign for an independent Assam.

ages in supplies of Soviet oil.

informed Palestinian source.

AFP Sunday from Rome.

sumers remained unchanged...

pollution they had caused.

The Communist Party, which was banned by a presidential

Moscow authorities have warned congress organisers that

Tass news agency said, reports AFP Sunday from Moscow.

# PLO accepts Washington as ME peace talks venue

TUNIS, Nov 24: The PLO said on Saturday it was not opposed to Washington as the venue for further Middle East peace talks but expected its shadow delegation to be accorded the same facilities and treatment it received in

Madrid, reports Reuter. The White House on Friday issued invitations to Israel. Jordan, Lebanon, Syria and Palestinians to fresh round of peace talks on December 4 in Washington.

Only Jordan has accepted the invitation. Israel, Lebanon and Palestinians said they were still considering it.

PLO Spokesman Ahmed Abderrahman said the leadership of the Palestine Liberation Organisation was examining the invitation that was handed to Palestinians in Jerusalem.

He said the PLO would respond in a few days' time but "in principle it is not against the choice of Washington as the venue for the negotiations."

Abderrahman added that the PLO "asks the United States to grant it the same facilities to its invisible delegation as given by the Spanish authorities when the peace conference opened in Madrid.

Palestinians were represented by delegates from the Israeli-occupied territories at the opening stages of the Arabisraeli talks in Madrid last month, but the PLO sent a delegation that worked behind

From Moscow AFP adds The head of the official Palestinian delegation to the Middle East peace talks, Haidar Abdel Shafi, met here Saturday with Soviet Foreign Minister Eduard Shevardnadze, Tass news agency said.

Also at the meeting was Faisal Husseini, another prominent Palestinian from the occupied territories who has played an important role in setting up the peace talks.

Shevardnadze, who returned to the post of Foreign Minister earlier this month, also met with a delegation of the Palestine Liberation Organisation, headed by Mahmoud Abbas.



MOSCOW: Soviet Foreign Minister Eduard Shevardnadze (L) shaking hands with Palestinian leader Faisal Hussaini before their meeting. - AFP/UNB photo

## Mujahideen repulse attack: 30 killed

ISLAMABAD, Nov 24 Afghan Mujahideen have repulsed attacks by government forces in Balkh province, suffering casualties of 30 killed and 200 wounded, the Resistance said Saturday, reports AFP.

Fighting has continued in the area bordering on the Soviet Union for the four days while Kabul forces tried to recapture the district of Dawlatabad "liberated" by the Mujahideen on November 7, the Mujahideen Midia news agency said.

The agency, quoting a wireless message from the district, said the government

forces had suffered heavier casualties, but gave no numbers. Two government aircraft supporting the ground forces were shot down by Mujahideen gunners, Midia said.

The Mujahideen, who control large parts of Afghanistan, are fighting to oust Afghan President Najibullah and establish an Islamic government in the country.

The Soviet Union, which withdrew its troops from Afghanistan in 1989 after nearly 10-years of military intervention, held its first direct talks with the Mujahideen when a Mujahideen delegation visited Moscow between November 11-15.

A joint statement issued after the talks said the Soviet Union agreed to the establishment of an interim Islamic government in Kabul until elections supervised by the United Nations and the Organisation of Islamic Conference were held.

The Moscow talks have generally been regarded as strengthening peace hopes raised by Mujahideen acceptance of a UN plan for a political settlement and the joint US-Soviet decision to stop arms shipments to the warring sides for January.

The UN blueprint, announced in May, calls for inter Afghan dialogue to establish an interim administration in Kabul pending the elections.

## Mitterrand's popularity now lowest ever

PARIS, Nov 24: The popularity of French President Francois Mitterrand was down to its lowest rating at 28 per cent, according to an opinion poll to be published today by

Le Journal du Dimanche, re-

ports AFP. The IFOP poll, carried out in late October-early November among 1,994 people, also said that 57 per cent were displeased with Mitterrand, compared to 52 per cent in October.

The rating of Prime Minister Edith Ctresson also took a plunge with only 19 per cent approval and 53 per cent disapproval.

#### Majority in favour of Margaret

LONDON, Nov 24: A majority of respondents in a new British poll were in favour of former Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher's proposal for referendum to be held on a planned single currency for the European Community, the Sunday Times newspaper said here, reports AFP.

The poll found that 56 per cent of respondents were in favour of a referendum and 54 per cent would vote against the single currency, proposal if one were held.

#### US Senate okays \$ 270b defence bill, freezes B-2 bomber plan

WASHINGTON, Nov 24: The Senate Saturday approved a 270-billion-Dollar 1992 defence spending bill which boosts outlays on the Strategic Defence Initiative (SDI) but freezes the controversial B-2 Stealth bomber programme reports AFP.

The chamber voted 66 to 29 to put Congress' final seal of approval on the defence package, and sent it to President George Bush, who was expected to sign it into law. The House of Representatives approved the bill Wednesday on a voice vote.

The bill's approval came amid charges from the Chairman of the Senate Armed Services Committee, Democrat Sam Nunn of Georgia, and other committee members that the measure was full of pork-barrel outlays.

A 291-billion dollar companion budget drawn up by Nunn's Panel won final approval on Friday. The legislation adopted Saturday provides the funds to finance the programme approved in the earlier bill.

The spending bill approved Saturday funds most of the Pentagon's large-scale weapons programme, but left the future of the radar-evading B-2 Bomber in doubt.

## Shevardnadze warns Armenia, Azerbaijan not let bitter quarrel

MOSCOW, Nov 24: Soviet Shevardnadze, quoted by Tass Foreign Minister Eduard Shevardnadze warned the southern Soviet republics of Armenia and Azerbaijan not to let a bitter quarrel over crashed helicopter develop into war, reports Reuter.

Azerbaijan says Armenians shot down the helicopter. killing 20 people and vowed to take action in retaliation. Armenia says plans by the Azerbaijani parliament for a November 26 emergency debate on the crash amount to a declaration of war.

"It is mortally dangerous to vield to emotions and to allow the conflict to grow into a war between the republics.

### Ukraine refuses to join new confederation

MOSCOW, Nov 24 Ukrainian President Leonid Kravchuk said on Saturday his republic would not join in a new confederation of Soviet republics, Interfax news agency reported, reports

news agency, said on Saturday The helicopter crashed on Wednesday in the disputed territory of Nogorno-Karabakh,

an Armenian-populated enclave inside Azerbaijan which has suffered more than three years of guerilla war between militants from the two republics. "A local conflict has already

developed into an inter-regional one. There is just one step left before it becomes a worldwide one," Shevardnadze Armenia says the crash was

an accident caused by bad weather. The victims included Azeri

negotiators trying to end fighting over Nagorno-Karabakh where more than 800 people have been killed since 1988. Armenia and Azerbaijan had

cooperated in peace efforts sponsored by Russia and Kazakhstan. But Armenia broke off the talks on Thursday because Azerbaijan failed to lift a two-week-old gas blockade which has brought Armenian industry to a virtual standstill.

The leader of the Azerbaijani delegation. Deputy Parliamentary Chairman Ziyad Samed-Zade, said on Saturday the talks should not be contin-

Tass quoted him as saying they should resume only if Armenia withdrew its claim on Nagorno-Karabakh and stopped hostile action against Azerbaijan.

#### Yeltsin wants Red Army to retain single

WUENSDORF (Germany), Nov 24 : Russian President Boris Yeltsin Saturday spoke of the need for the Red Army to retain a single, centralised command, but he did not reject the possibility of setting up his own army if other Soviet republics first did so, reports

Speaking at Red Army headquarters in Germany here, Yeltsin said "the army must continue to have a central, single command".

"If other republics create their own army, Russia will be the last to do so", he added.

Yeltsin, who Saturday ended a three-day visit to Germany. told Soviet troops stationed here that Russia would do its upmost to ensure their repatriation under the best conditions possible.

Russia is to build some 48,000 flats, over half of which with German money, to house returning servicemen. A total of 240,000 remaining Soviet troops are to be withdrawn from eastern Germany by late

Yeltsin was welcomed here by the commander in chief of the western group, General Matvey Burlakov, and several thousand officers and their families, at headquarters be decked only with the German and Russian flags.

#### 'US forces to stay, in Europe' BRUSSELS, Nov 24: NATO's

top commander said on Saturday that American forces had to stay in Europe to maintain US influence and curb intense national rivalries, reports Reuter.

John Galvin, NATO supreme allied commander Europe, were apparently aimed at isolationists in Washington and at any Europeans who think US troops are no longer needed in post-cold war Europe.

The remarks by US General

Will the US be around some time from Now ?" Galvin asked a conference in Brussels on the future of transatlantic ties. "The US really doesn't have

much choice. The United States strategy is forward (troop) commitment to NATO in order to gain a seat at the table and a certain amount of influence, " he said. The only other alternative

the United States has is fortress America, and that's been rejected time after time."

## UN to form anti-crime commission

VERSAILLES, France, Nov next meeting of the United 24: Ministers from 108 countries on Saturday approved the creation of a new United Nations commission to fight crime, reports Reuter.

"Crime prevention and penal justice has become one of the UN's priorities," French Urban Affairs Minister Michel Delebarre told a news conference at the end of a three-day ministerial meeting in Versailles. just outside Paris.

"The states ( of the UN ) have decided to tackle this question directly by creating a 32-member commission at the

Nations Economic and Social Council in February." Delebarre

The commission on crime prevention and criminal justice will replace a Vienna based UN Committee whose skeleton staff and modest budget has been overwhelmed by the scale of urban violence and organised crime around the

The UN hopes the new commission will help track down syndicates dealing in drugs or international terror-

## Rebels shell Sudanese capital: 17 killed Half of the its 350,000 peo-

KHARTOUM. Nov 24: Rebels fighting for autonomy in southern Sudan have shelled the regional capital Juba, killing at least 17 people. travellers from the town said on Saturday.

They told Reuters the Sudan Peoples Liberation Army (SPLA) Wednesday and Thursday afternoons, hitting the airport area, the administrative district, the hospital

and two refugee gamps. Juba, 1,200 km (750 miles) south of Khartoum has long been surrounded by rebels and for the last two years food has had to be brought in by air.

ple have fled to the town to escape fighting in the surrounding countryside.

The Daily Asharq Al-Awsat. published in Cairo and London. said on Saturday Juba had come under intense artillery fire in the last two days and the airport had closed to civilian traffic.

It quoted western diplomatic sources and informed Budanese circles as saying the shelling was an apparent prelude to a long-planned attack on the city by an SPLA faction led by John Garang.

# Nuclear reactor Colombia

A spokesman for the fedclared.

The spokesman, Ken Clark, said there was no evidence any radioactive material had spread outside the plant.

"It is being contained in the reactor building." Clark killed in a confrontation with law enforcement agencies in Sindh province. - AFP/UNB photo | said.

# shut down in COLOMBIA (South Carol-

ina). Nov 24 : A nuclear reactor was shut down Saturday after radioactive water leaked inside the reactor containment building, officials said, reports AFP.

eral Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NRC) said inspectors had shut down the leaking unit 3 reactor at the Oconee Nuclear Plant near the town of Seneca after an alert was de-

# Coalition govt to be formed: Sihanouk

#### PHNOM PENH, Nov 24: A the rally, according to organisers. Thatcher arrives in Kuwait: Former British Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher arrived in Kuwait Saturday for her first visit to the Emirate since the Gulf war. reports AFP.

Thatcher, a major architect of the firm allied response to irag's invasion of Kuwait in August last year, said at the "It's really great to be here. I've wanted to come for a long

Thatcher resigned as Prime Minister last November. She landed under a clearly visible full moon, a new phenomenon in Kuwait since the last oil fires set by fleeing Iraqi troops were put out earlier this month, ending the cloud of

Iraqi troops set some 650 wells on fire when US-led allied forces expelled them from Kuwait in February. "The great joy is that all the oil well fires are out. It must nake an enormous differences." Thatcher said.

new coalition government will be formed with a guerrilla group joining the Vietnameseinstalled Phnom Penh administration it once fought, Prince Norodom Sihanouk has announced, reports AP. Guerrillas loyal to Prince

Norodom Ranariddh will join the government of Prime Minister Hun Sen in a major cabinet reshuffle within a week. Sthanouk said. "My son, Ranariddh, and

Hun Sen have decided to form a bipartite government," Sihanouk said Saturday during a meeting with French Foreign Minister Roland Dumas, who was visiting Phnom Penh.

Some Western diplomats

expressed concern the development could jeopardize the fragile peace agreement signed October 23 to try to end nearly 13 years of civil war.

SUKKUR: The bodies of six bandits lie in a police station in this-central city after they were

Under the UN-brokered peace plan. Ranariddh's group and two guerrilla allies — the Khmer Rouge and the Khmer People's National Liberation Front — all are supposed to work together with the Hun Sen government in a Supreme National Council. The 12member national reconciliation council is to help guide the nation until elections in early 1993.

harmony and reconciliation

among all factions, especially

the Hun Sen and Khmer Rouge

or the Khmer People's national The idea was to encourage Liberation Front to the Si-

groups, which distrust and hate one another. But a Ranariddh-Hun Sen

coalition government would effectively isolate the other groups, raising fears of adverse reaction especially by the Khmer Rouge, which massacred hundreds of thousands of Cambodians during its rule in the 1970s.

The Khmer Rouge Radio repeatedly has said all power should be vested in the Supreme National Council. There was no immediate response from the Khmer Rouge

hanouk announcement. Sthanouk, a former head of state who returned to Phnom

Penh last week from more than a decade of exile, was supposed to be the neutral leader of the Supreme National Council and the main unifying figure. But this week he allowed the

Phnom Penh administration to name him president and head of state - although his actual powers are unclear. The administration also entered formally into a political alliance with his son's group.

Sthanouk said Saturday that candidates from the government and Ranariddh groups will share a single ballot in the 1993 elections.

Dumas responded publicly to Sthanouk's announcement of the coalition government-

# Off the Record

### Kennedy's assassin considered as 'lousy shot"

MOSCOW: Lee Harvey Oswald, the presumed assassin of US President John Kennedy, was considered as "lousy shot" at the hunting club he belonged to while in the Soviet Union, according to his KGB file, report AFP.

Code-named by the KGB "Eel" or "Dodger," Oswald loved to hunt and bought a Toz hunting rifle during his stay in Russia between October 1959 and May of 1962, but often missed his target according to a report in Saturday's Izvestia newspaper quoting Viacheslav Nikonov, an assistant to KGB Chief Vadim Bakantin.

All details in the five-volume Oswald file will be made public Nikanov said.

While Oswald was in the Soviet Union he requested Soviet citizenship and political asylum. He lived for a time in Minsk. Belorus, where he worked in an electronics factory and married a Soviet woman.

### Rock star acknowledges himself as AIDS victim

LONDON: Rock star Freddie Mercury acknowledged Saturday that he has AIDS, and urged everyone to join him in the fight against "this terrible disease, reports AP. In a statement, the flamboyant singer from the group

Queen said: "Following the enormous conjecture in the press over the last two weeks, I wish to confirm that I have been tested HIV positive and have AIDS. "I felt it correct to keep this information private to date in

order to protect the privacy of those around me. "However, the time has now come for my friends and fans around the world to know the truth and I hope that everyone

will join with me, my doctors and all those worldwide in the fight against this terrible disease." His spokeswoman, Roxy Meade, said Mercury, 45 was in

Britain and was not hospitalized. She refused to discuss the singer's health. "He just wanted to let people know that he has the dis-

ease, and that's as far as it goes," Meade said. In his statement, Mercury said. "My privacy has always been very special to me and I am famous for my lack of interviews. Please understand this policy will continue." The group is the cornerstone of Hollywood Records,

#### Fluidless sex

which was just bought by Disney Co, for dirs 25 million.

NEW DELHI: An Indian cult leader is proposing using esoteric energy techniques to achieve fluidless sex - or "flex"as a way to avoid AIDS, reports Reuter.

Swami Caitanya Keerti, said on Saturday: "since sex is fast becoming more dangerous than Russian roulette now that semen, saliva and lears are medically acknowledged as possible routes of (AIDS) transmission. There are going to be new ways of making love."

Keerti, who edits the pune-based Rajneesh commune's Osho Times International, said: "thousands of mediators around the world are experimenting with new ways of making love with fluidless sex, or "flex,"

#### Hair-removing toothpaste

ALGIERS: Algerians who have bought a new brand of local toothpaste have been warned not to use it- the brightlycoloured blue tubes contain hair-removing cream, reports Reuter.

An urgent warning has gone out to chemists and consumers to return the tubes of Florence "toothpaste", the Algerian news agency APS said.