

Cory leads rally to ratify base treaty

MANILA, Sept 10: President Corason Aquino led up to 100,000 people in a rally here today (Tuesday) to call for the ratification of a base treaty with the United States as the Philippine Senate prepared to reject it, reports AFP.

Police said 100,000 people turned up for the rally, which was held at central plaza park near the US Embassy complex, while independent estimates put the crowd at 40,000 to 50,000.

In a bid to revive the "people power" revolt that installed her as President in 1986, Aquino called for the rally after the Senate rebuffed her appeals to ratify the treaty, which provides for a new 10-year US lease on Subic naval base.

The crowd flew streamers and waved posters reading "yes to the treaty" and naming organizations and companies backing the treaty, while speakers took turns in lambasting the Senate and warning of the consequences of rejection.

The Senate came out 12 to 11 against the treaty in a preliminary vote Monday and plans to debate it today.

The final vote is expected to September 16, when the current 25-year lease expires.

Burmese junta to hold power for 10 years

BANGKOK, Sept 10: Burma's military junta, which crushed an uprising for democracy then ignored the results of a general election, says it could hold power for 10 more years, reports Reuters.

"We cannot say for how long we will be in charge of the state administration. It might be five years or 10," junta member Lieutenant General Aung Ye Kyaw told government officials in the northern city of Mandalay on Sunday. He reiterated the military's position that it would not transfer power until a new constitution was in place.

A transcript of the speech, which was broadcast on state radio on Sunday, was seen in Bangkok on Tuesday.

The junta seized power in September 1988 after suppressing nationwide protests and killing thousands of people.

A general election was held in May 1990 which the opposition National League for Democracy won by a landslide. The junta refused to hand over power.

Instead it has arrested or forced into exile most opposition leaders and it is now training its sights on merchants.

After taking power the junta announced it would free up

the economy, which had been fettered by more than a quarter of a century of incompetent socialist central planning. However, it has since had to contend with commodity prices spiralling far beyond the purchasing power of most people.

Another junta member, Major General Myo Nyunt, accused some political groups and merchants of using the economy as a political weapon. To combat this, the junta was implementing plans for

Baltic states likely to get UN membership

NEW YORK, (United Nations), Sept 10: The newly independent Baltic states most likely will gain U.N. membership at the opening of the General Assembly September 17, diplomats said Monday, reports AFP.

The U.N. Security Council was scheduled to meet Tuesday to form a committee to study the applications for membership from Lithuania, Latvia and Estonia.

On Wednesday or Thursday, the Security Council will hold its formal session to decide on the matter, the diplomats said.

military regiments to start livestock breeding and other agricultural programmes, he told soldiers in Rangoon on Sunday.

The junta would take legal action against those it blamed for manipulating the economy, he said.

Aung Ye Kyaw accused some public servants of neglecting their duties and of political intrigue.

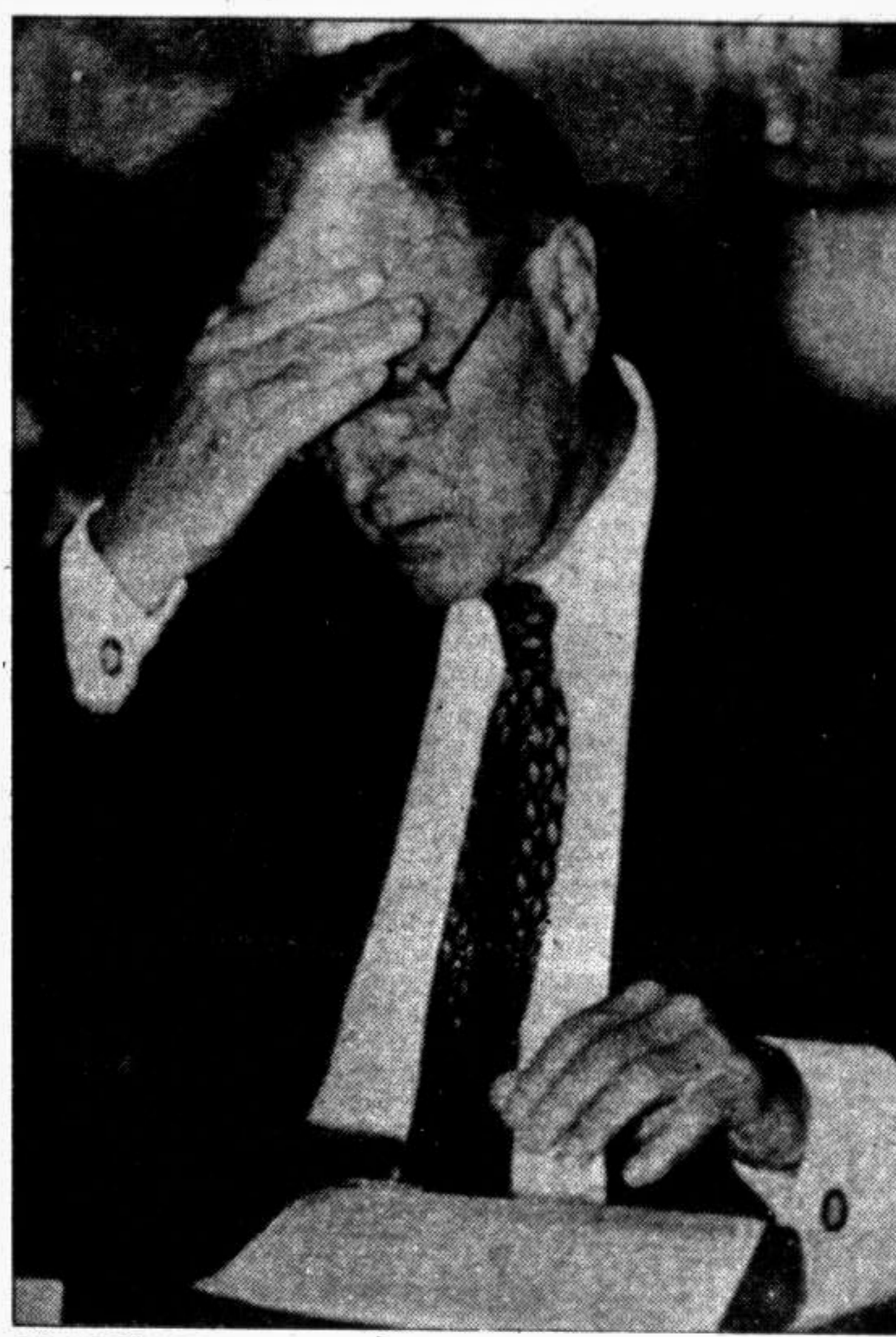
"It will not be long before these bad public servants face tough action," he said. "We will be taking action against those who cannot give up their bad habits."

Health and Education Minister Pe Thein told the Mandalay meeting authorities would reopen a college in the city soon.

All schools and colleges in Burma were closed during the 1988 uprising and have gradually reopened since 1989.

Pe Thein said unless civil servants remained loyal to the administration, Burma could face a repeat of the events of 1988.

"If they feign ignorance and act indecisively about taking sides and try to cover up instead of exposing and reporting ... those carrying out subversive activities, events similar to those in 1988 May recur," he said.



WASHINGTON: US President George Bush answers a reporters' question September 9 on the Philippine Senate voting to reject a new lease for a US naval base. The Philippine legislators said they may defer a final decision in hopes Washington will reopen negotiations but President Bush said we've made our best offer. — AFP/UNB photo

Off the Record

Wreckage of the Lost Squadron

ST. AUGUSTINE: Researchers who recovered the wreckage of a World War II vintage airplane off the coast of Cape Canaveral said Monday they believe it belonged to the legendary Lost Squadron, reports AP.

The remains of the badly deteriorated Avenger torpedo bomber were hoisted 390 feet (120 meters) from the ocean floor on Aug 13, about 30 miles (50 kilometers) off the Florida coast by a group of aviation historians.

"My partners and I believe this aircraft is indeed not only one of Flight 19's aircraft, but a specific aircraft, FT-117, flown by Marine Corps Capt William Stivers Jr.," said Jon F Myhre, one of the group's founders.

"We firmly believe that this is indeed the first aircraft of Flight 19 that ditched almost 46 years ago," he said.

Stivers was the pilot of one of the five Navy Avengers that disappeared on Dec. 5, 1945 after departing on a training mission from Fort Lauderdale Naval Air Station.

The five aircraft carried 14 men, but no human remains were found in the aircraft wreckage, which carried a crew of three.

Life after retirement

BEIJING: China's 87-year-old leader Deng Xiaoping rises at six each morning and reads the papers twice a day, even though he is officially retired, a newspaper said, reports Reuters.

After waking early, Deng walks in the garden for half an hour before breakfast at eight, the Jinwan Bao from Tianjin said in its Sunday edition, received in Beijing today.

Deng has not been seen in public since February. There is constant speculation about the health of the retired leader, believed to still rule from behind the scenes.

The newspaper, which reprinted its report entitled "Comrade Deng Xiaoping's day" from a Canton publication, did not say how up-to-date its information was.

Rumours of Deng's death circulated in Asian financial markets last month but were denied by China.

Once a chain smoker, Deng successfully gave up the habit two years ago, the newspaper said.

It said a Secretary reads Deng important national and international news, repeating items he wants to hear again. Deng checks important official documents twice a day, in the morning and before going to bed.

Cute little thieves

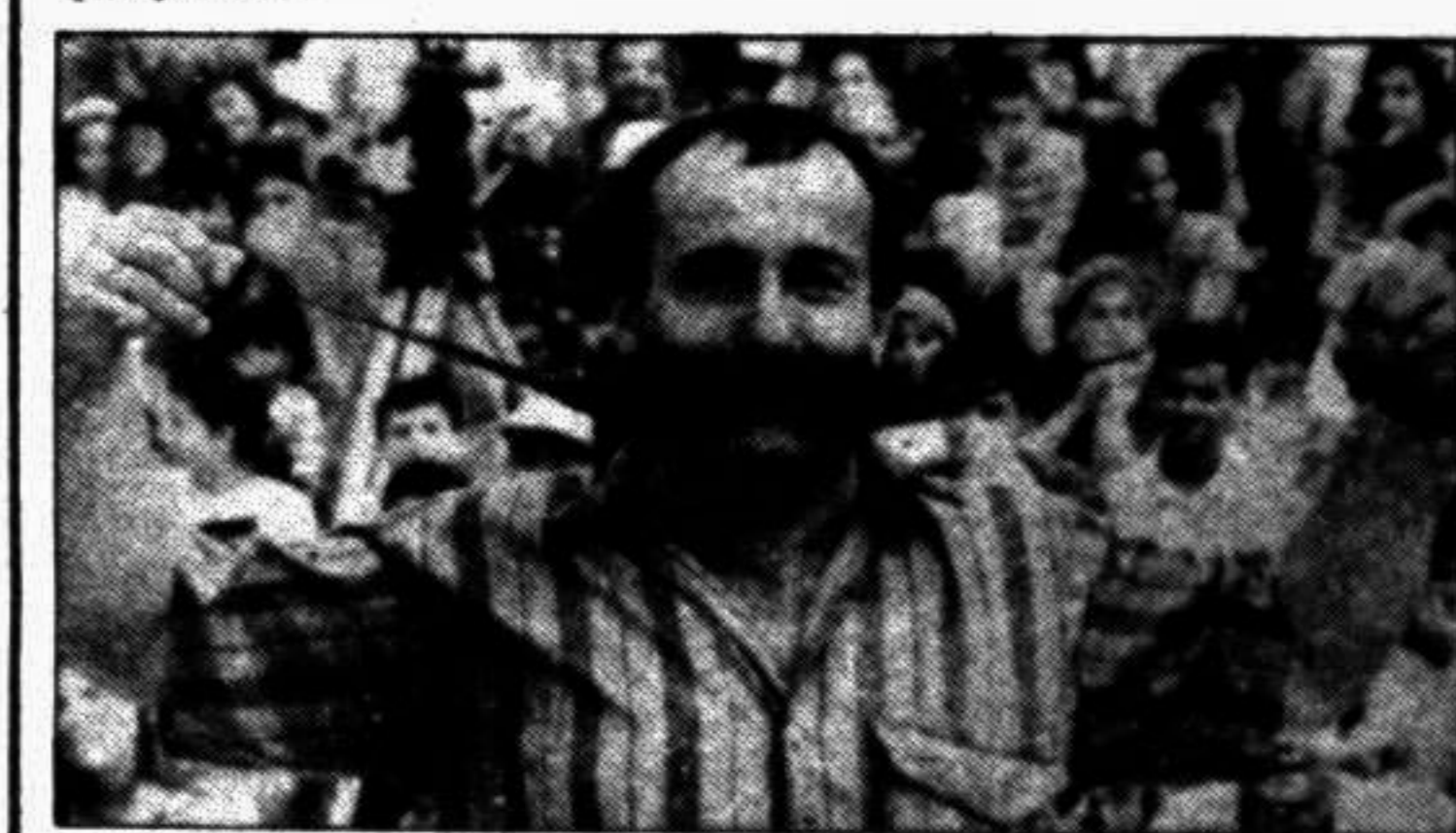
MIAMI: A trio of young girls with sweet smiles and polite manners stole 1,200 dollars from elderly women by pretending to be lost, thirsty, or their grandchildren, police said on Monday, reports Reuters.

The girls — two sisters aged 10 and 14, and a 14-year-old friend — spent the money on clothing, jewellery and food, a North Miami Beach police spokeswoman said.

"They were so cute," said one of their victims, Goldie Roper, 82, who let the girls into her flat after they turned up at her door and one called her "grandmother".

One of the girls said they stole about 1,200 dollars from some 20 elderly women during the past two years while posing as grandchildren, complaining of thirst or pretending to be lost.

The girls confessed after a suspicious neighbour tipped buildings security guards and police, the spokeswoman said. They were charged with grand theft, criminal conspiracy and petty theft.



BEIRUT: Zian Khatib, the winner of the competition for the longest moustache in Lebanon proudly shows his 83 cm appendages during a special programme on Lebanese Television, devoted to records for different items in Lebanon. — AFP/UNB photo

Life at Buckingham Palace

LONDON: Life inside Buckingham Palace is so carefully arranged that when Prince Charles wants to meet his mother, Queen Elizabeth II, he has to send her a written request, a new book says, reports AP.

"It sounds extraordinary but it's true. Life at the palace is carefully timed and arranged by memos," said Andrew Morton, a British journalist who has reported about the royal family for 10 years.

"It's an antediluvian system but it's developed over centuries and it works," the journalist said. He relates the story in his seventh book about the royal family, "Inside Buckingham Palace".

There was no hope of getting the story confirmed from the palace itself. "We never say anything about books written about the royal family," said spokesman Dickie Arbiter.

Morton's new agency, Palace Press, is solely devoted to the royal family's doings. He said calls from the international media for stories about the family are endless.

"Inside Buckingham Palace" will be published September 19 by Michael O' Mara Books Ltd and by Summit Books on New York at the end of October.

Grey zones of history

MOSCOW: Former Soviet dissident Vladimir Bukovsky said on television Monday that opening KGB files could throw light on several grey zones in history including riddles such as the 1963 assassination of US President John Kennedy and the 1934 killing of one of Stalin's rivals, Sergei Kirov, reports AP.

The writer was talking with the newly-appointed KGB chief Vadim Bakatin who provided Soviet viewers with a rare view of their secret police chief engaged in public conversation.

Bukovsky, who in 1976 was freed from a Soviet jail and allowed to flee to exile in the west in a deal involving Chilean Communist Luis Corvalan, urged the opening of the KGB archives to clear up such matters as the killing of Leningrad Party chief Kirov whose murder sparked the purges that swept away the bulk of the Bolshevik Old Guard in the 1930s.

The killing was long believed to have been ordered by Stalin. Jealous of Kirov's popularity and keen to remove a potential rival.

Conservative's conference

PARIS: Russian President Boris Yeltsin is expected to spell out his post-Communist vision of the Soviet Union this week as conservative European leaders meet to weigh the breakup of the continent's largest power, reports AP.

Prime Minister Yitzhak Shamir of Israel and the leaders of the breakaway Yugoslav republics of Croatia and Slovenia will also attend the 14th conference of the European Democratic Union that begins Wednesday.

Yeltsin rallied opposition to the hard-line Communist coup against Soviet President Mikhail Gorbachev of Aug 19.

Since it failed, he has been the driving force behind a rapid succession of reforms to dismantle the Communist Party, introduce free-market economics, and transfer power from central authorities to the republics.

Yeltsin will explain his views on the future of the Soviet Union to conference participants, who include 11 heads of state or government and the leaders of 31 political parties, organizers said.

The collapse of the Soviet Union and the changing European security situation will be the major themes of the three-day conference, hosted by Paris Mayor Jacques Chirac, head of France's largest conservative party.

BRIEFLY

AIDS kills AIDS Commission member: Belinda Mason, the only member of the US Commission on AIDS to be infected with the disease, died Monday at age 33, reports AFP from Tennessee.

Mason, the daughter of a republican state representative, contracted the disease in 1987 after being given a blood transfusion during the birth of her second child.

A writer and journalist, Mason was the director of a programme for AIDS patients in 1989 when President George Bush named her to the AIDS Commission set up by former President Ronald Reagan.

Leak in Discovery insignificant: NASA Monday said a small leak, in the shuttle Discovery's orbital steering system was insignificant and the agency began the countdown for a blast off at 6:57 pm (2257 GMT) Thursday with five astronauts and an observatory called the upper atmosphere research satellite, reports AFP from Cape Canaveral.

"We're ready to go, anxious to go," said test director Mike Leitbach.

The five-day mission was threatened last week when technicians discovered a leak in a helium line valve. An alternative line was available, but the National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA) said it wanted both lines in working condition.

Curfew in 29 districts of Croatia: Croatian Interior Minister Ivan Vekic imposed a curfew on 29 districts of the war-torn republic Monday, the official Croatian news agency HINA reported, reports AFP from Zagreb.

HINA said the curfew imposed in areas where there has been heavy fighting between Croatian forces and Serbian nationalists backed by the federal army runs from 11:00 pm to 5:00 am.

It said the curfew was imposed because of the "critical situation and the danger to public safety."

The curfew was ordered in parts of Slavonia, and enclave in Croatia which has a large Serbian population and has been the scene of heavy fighting.

30 injured in Canadian train mishap: A passenger train collided with a locomotive near a rail yard Monday, injuring about 30 people, fire and hospital officials said, reports AP from North Bay.

The train, en route to Toronto from North Bay, was carrying about 70 people when the crash occurred at about 2:45 pm (1845 GMT), police said.

No one was killed in the accident, ambulance officials said. Fire crews and ambulances rushed to the accident scene while North Bay's two hospitals prepared to handle the injured, said a spokesman at one of the hospitals, St Joseph's General.

Book on failed coup in Moscow soon: Turner publishing and the Soviet news agency TASS will collaborate on a book about last month's failed coup attempt in Moscow, Cable News Network (CNN) said Monday, reports AFP from New York.

Three days that shook the world the collapse of communism in the Soviet Union will include text and photos of the bid by hard line communists to oust Soviet President Mikhail Gorbachev, CNN said.

The title is a play on the book Ten Days that shook the world, by American writer John Reed who was in Moscow during the 1917 communist revolution.

Beijing-Hanoi ties normalised: Vietnamese Foreign Minister Nguyen Manh Cam said on Tuesday his visit to China was a symbol of complete normalisation of relations, reports Reuters from Beijing.

It was the strongest statement on rapprochement since the two countries went to war over Cambodia in 1979.

Cam was speaking to Chinese Foreign Minister Qian Qichen in front of reporters before closed-door discussions.

"I think my visit to see Foreign Minister Qian and other Chinese comrades is a symbol of the complete normalisation of relations between Vietnam and China," Cam said.

The Vietnamese Foreign Minister arrived in China on Sunday by road over friendship pass linking the two countries and flew into Beijing on Monday.

Greenpeace loses its radical cutting edge

AMSTERDAM, Sept 10: When 12 protesters set out from Vancouver in a battered ship to halt a US nuclear test in the Pacific they seemed ill-equipped to change the world, reports Reuters.

Their hired halibut boat, dubbed "Greenpeace," was a clipped out rust bucket with a depth sounder that only worked when hammered with a fist. It was all they could afford.

That was on September 15, 1971. Twenty years on, Greenpeace has become the world's best known environmental pressure group with

Loyal members to rebuild Soviet CP

MOSCOW, Sept 10: Members still loyal to the disgraced Soviet Communist Party discussed plans to rebuild and rename it at an illegal underground meeting in Moscow at the weekend TASS news agency said on Monday, reports Reuters.

It said delegates from Moscow, several Russian cities and the Ukraine attended the meeting at which some organisers proposed renaming the party "the union of communists."

The gathering was illegal because the Soviet Parliament has suspended all Communist Party activities pending investigation of its role in last month's failed hardline coup. The party has been banned outright in several republics.

"We do not want to revive the former Communist Party of the Soviet Union which was fully discredited by its leadership's policy, a member of the clandestine organising committee told TASS.

But we favour the prompt legalisation of the Communist Party, which can become a major factor in stabilising the social and political life in the country.

TASS said the secret meeting appealed to communists to set up local committees and to keep paying their regular party dues. It added that the new party was likely to claim the role of the Communist Party's legal successor if the latter dissolved itself or simply broke up.

The putsch against Soviet President Mikhail Gorbachev was led by communist hardliners including his Vice-President Gennady Yanayev, Key Ministers and the Head of the KGB Security Police.

Furious over their betrayal, Gorbachev quit leaders of the party and ordered the confiscation of its property, effectively destroying it as a political force.

Suspension of its activity was the supreme humiliation for the party that ruled all spheres of Soviet life virtually unchallenged for seven decades.

It was also rich in irony. The first Soviet communists led by Vladimir Lenin were forced to operate underground for many years before the 1917 Bolshevik Revolution, holding secret meetings and publishing clandestine newspapers to promote their cause.

The African National Congress (ANC), their main rivals, the Inkatha Freedom Party of Mangosuthu Buthelezi, the government and smaller black parties have drafted peace proposals to be signed on Saturday, but the violence has resumed with renewed ferocity.

All leaders said the carnage, triggered by the cold-blooded killing of 24 Inkatha supporters in the Johannesburg east township of Thokoza on Sunday morning, appeared aimed at wrecking the best hope yet of reconciling their warring followers.

The government has appealed for calm, and has given police emergency powers of search and arrest in four Johannesburg townships and extended existing emergency powers in Soweto, the country's largest black settlement.

A law and order spokesman said police re-enforcements have been sent into the townships and were patrolling streets and train stations.

His team coordinates the often risky "direct actions" which have become Greenpeace's hallmark and an increasing number of lobbying and scientific campaigns.

Paul Watson, a founder member who left Greenpeace in 1977 to become its fiercest critic, believes it has become a drag on the green movement, sucking up funds which could be better used by smaller groups.

"Greenpeace is not what we set it out to be and as far as I am concerned it's a betrayal of

Subic base loss to be a blow to US army

WASHINGTON, Sept 10: The loss of Subic Naval Base in the Philippines would be a major blow to the US military and would force it to seek less attractive alternatives in Guam and other sites in the region, US officials say, reports AFP.

In a preliminary vote, 12 of the Philippine Senate's 23 members Monday rejected a new military base treaty with Washington, that would extend by 10 years the US lease on the sprawling Subic Bay Naval Base in exchange for a 2.2 billion dollar compensation package.

With only eight "no" votes needed to scuttle the accord, prospects for ratification passage appeared slim. A final vote is to be held on or before September 16, when the current US-Philippine 25-year base agreement expires.

"We've made our best offer," President George Bush said Monday, referring to the Philippine Senators' demand for higher US compensation.

"There will be no change on the part of the United States," Bush said.

Defence Secretary Dick Cheney called the decision by the 12 Philippine Senators "Extremely unfortunate" and reiterated US readiness to withdraw from Subic and other facilities if the new treaty was not ratified.

He told US television this would mean shifting more forces to Guam, a US territory in southwestern Pacific, and conducting other deployments "to make certain we're still able to keep our commitments in the region."

A withdrawal from Subic "could begin as early as the 16th of September and would take a year to complete," said Major Doug Hart, a Pentagon spokesman.

He said Subic's ship repair and naval logistic support functions would then be transferred to "a variety of different places" such as Guam and other foreign sites access to which would have to be negotiated through diplomatic means.

US officials privately say they remain hopeful the treaty will eventually be ratified, because Manila cannot afford the massive economic and financial loss a US departure would entail.

Washington has already agreed to a complete withdrawal of its forces from Clark Air Base.

69 blacks killed in S African warfare

JOHANNESBURG, Sept 10: Eleven more blacks have been killed in the latest flare-up of South Africa's political township warfare, taking the death toll to 69 in the past two days, police said today, reports Reuters.

Witnesses said gunmen rampaged through a late night Soweto bound train on Monday, killing three passengers.

People were shot and hacked in other townships around Johannesburg while others died in hospital from injuries sustained during two days of bloodletting. The situation is stable at present. A large police presence is being maintained, particularly at railway stations," police Liaison Officer Reg Crewe said.

In a special supplement headlined "enough for god's sake enough", South Africa's biggest black daily, Sowetan, asked: "Brothers, what are we doing? What type of people are we that we have turned, with such unbelievable savagery, against ourselves? This cannot be allowed to continue."

our original objectives," said Watson who now runs his own conservation group in Los Angeles.

Swayer says Greenpeace's critics have an overly sentimental recollection of the pioneering early days when a hefty overdraft was the norm.

"I was there in the 'good old days' and they weren't that good," he said.

He contends that today's more measured approach has its advantages.

"If we're less naive than we were, that's no bad thing," he said.

Although political lobbying

Greenpeace loses its radical cutting edge

our five million members, offices in 27 countries and an annual budget of some 130 million dollars.

And it is putting its resources to work in ways unthinkable in the 1970s.

But in the eyes of some early members, today's multi-million dollars Greenpeace has lost its radical cutting edge.

On October 4 Greenpeace will clock up its most notable success to date when 26 nations sign an environmental accord in Madrid banning all mining in Antarctica for at least 50 years.

It is the culmination of a

lengthy and costly campaign to protect the world's last unspoiled continent. Greenpeace spearheaded the campaign by establishing a base camp on the ice in 1987—the only non-governmental group to do so.

"We spent an awful lot of money on the Antarctic base camp and there was a lot of internal angst as to whether it was the right thing to do," Steve Sawyer, Executive Director of Greenpeace International, said in an interview.

After Greenpeace's rapid growth in the 1980s, Sawyer now presides over a profes-

Commission in charge of scrapping Iraq's nuclear materials, and chemical and biological weapons and ballistic missiles so they may survey the country. The helicopters are stationed in Turkey with German crews.

An August 15 Security Council resolution demanded that Iraq allow the UN teams to "conduct both fixed wing and helicopter flights throughout Iraq for all relevant purposes including inspection, surveillance, aerial survey, transportation and logistics without interference of any kind."

Iraq apparently refused landing rights for the helicopters late last week, saying it could supply its own helicopters to UN teams and had done so in the past, Ekeus said.

One diplomat said the UN Commission had asked Germany for the helicopters because the Iraqi aircraft were considered in poor condition.

There was no immediate comment from Iraq.