MOSCOW, Sept 12: Soviet leaders have acted swiftly of eliminate major obstacles to US and Japanese aid, pledging early talks on withdrawing Soviet troops from Cuba and quick efforts to resolve a dispute with Tokyo over four islands, reports Reuter.

Russian republic leader Boris Yeltsin said he and Soviet President Mikhail Gorbachev also guaranteed visiting US Secretary of State James Baker that "control of strategic nuclear weapons will be as it used to be, in the hands of one central authority."

Baker was the highest-ranking American official to visit Moscow since last month's coup that ousted Gorbachev for three days.

The Kremlin leader, who met Baker for nearly three hours, said the talks with communist Cuba, a onetime strong ally of the Soviet Union. on withdrawing 11,000 military personnel would start in the immediate future and be completed quickly.

"We will soon being discussions with the Cuban leadership about withdrawal of a Soviet training brigade stationed in Cuba," Gorbachev told a news conference as Baker looked on.

It was unclear how many troops would be affected. Western analysts had esti-

AFP from Windhoek.

Louis Sullivan.

from London.

from Houston reports.

to confirm that.

statistics.

"one-sided."

to do so."

mated total Soviet military strength in Cuba at 8,000 personnel and Tass news agency reported that a military training brigade numbered about

The interpreter who translated Gorbachev remarks used the figure 11,000. But there was some doubt whether he understood the question and whether the figure applied to the total number of Soviet personnel on the island rather than the number being with-

Cuba blasts Soviet plan to pull troops

HAVANA, Sept 12: Cuba reacted angrily on Wednesday to a Soviet plan to pull its troops out of the Caribbean island saying it was not even consulted about the decision, reports

A sharply worded Foreign Ministry statement also said the number of Soviet troops on the island was much less than the 11,000 announced in Moscow and they had only a symbolic role in its defence.

The statement said Soviet President Mikhail Gorbachev's announcement in Moscow of talks in the near future about the withdrawal of Soviet troops had been made without any prior consultations with the Cuban authorities.

Quayle arrives in Namibia: Us Vice

President Dan Quayle arrived in Windhoek on Wednesday

night on the fourth stage of a five-nation African tour, reports

Minister Hikikepunye Pohomba, Acting Foreign Minister

Hidipo Hamutenya and US Ambassador to Namibia Denta

tion headed by US Health and Human Sciences Secretary

300 youths on rampage in Britain:

Three hundred youths went on the rampage in a northern

English city Wednesday night, burning cars and houses and

stoning police, in a fresh night of violence after five nights of

rioting in four other cities in the last two weeks, reports AFP

eral cars in the Elswik district of Newcastle and police and

firecrews attending the fires were stoned and forced to with-

draw from the area, a tyne and weir fire brigade spokesman

Afghan govt bans video-game arcades:

The Afghan government has banned video-game arcades in

the capital Kabul, the official Kabul Radio reported on

people on board a continental airlines commuter plane were

killed on Wednesday when the aircraft crashed into a

cornfield near Eagle Pass, Texas, authorities said, Reuter

worker that the plane exploded in flight but were not yet able

sonic boom, then saw the twin engine embraer 120 Brasilia

aircraft fall from the sky trailing smoke and flames near this

Two shot dead in S. African violence:

Two youths were shot to death as darkness fell on

Johannesburg's violence-ravaged black townships Wednesday,

according to a witness who said the assailants fled after firing

The attack took place in Katlehong township, 35 kilome

The two deaths bring the body count in four days of fierce

fighting in the townships to around 100, according to police

Human rights violated in Kuwait:

The human rights group Middle East Watch accuses the

United States of being unwilling to protest murder, torture,

arbitrary detention, deportation and other abuses in post-war

(human) rights at nearly every turn, often with the use of vio-

lence," said the 63-page report, released Wednesday by the

group in Washington and in Kuwait City."The US administra-

tion ... has acted far more as a defender of the Kuwaiti gov-

ernment ... than as a government intent on living up to human

Washington that the criticism of the US government was

ing perpetrators to justice," he said. "We have made this point

to the authorities at all levels repeatedly, and we will continue

State Department spokesman Rick Boucher said in

"Kuwait clearly has a way to go in ending abuses and bring-

Kuwait's information minister, Badr Yacoub, said the

"The reinstated Kuwaiti government has trampled on

Kuwait, reports AP from Kuwait City.

rights principles", the group says.

Middle East Watch report was exaggerated.

tres (22 miles) east of here, said independent radio 702 re-

porter Brett Hilton - Barber who witnessed the incident.

at point-blank range, reports AFP from Johannesburg.

town about 70 miles (110 km) west of Houston.

Investigators were looking into reports from a farm

Another witnessed heard what she said sounded like a

The radio, monitored in Islamabad, said the ban had been

killed in US air crash: All 14

Wednesday, says Reuter from Islamabad.

imposed to check "deviation" by teenagers.

Crowds of young people set light to houses, a pub and sev-

Quayle is accompanied by his wife Marilyn and a delega-

Hawkins, the South African news agency SAPA said.

He was met at the airport by acting Namibian Prime



MOSCOW: US Secretary of State James Baker (R) at the Kremlin September 11 hands Soviet President Mikhail Gorbachev a gift wrapped American flag which was flying over the US Capitol August 21 following the failed coup against Gorbachev. Baker holds a copy of a video taken by Gorbachev's family during their stay in Crimea during the coup.

- AFP/UNB photo

Corazon will turn to people if Senate rejects US bases

MANILA, Sept 12 President Corazon Aquino will ask voters to decide the future of a US naval base in a referendum if the Senate rejects a new lease for Subic Bay, her chief aide said Thursday, reports AP.

But Administration and Senate sources said later that the referendum proposal was dead. A pro-bases Senator planned to offer a compromise plan under which the Americans would withdraw over two to three years with no obligation to pay compensa-

Several hundred workers from Subic Bay naval base gathered outside the Senate as pro and anti-bases Senators clashed over the financial im-

"I have no illusions," probases Sen Neptali Gonzales, the President of the nation's largest pro-Aquino party, said. "So far as the Senate is concerned, both proposals (referendum and the base extension) are dead."

Two pro-bases senators. Osmena, clashed during the

afternoon session with antibases Sen Wigberto Tanada to the cheers of dozens of bases workers in the visitors' gallery. "Is it your suggestion that these 80,000 workers in

Salvadoran rebels declare ceasefire

SAN SALVADOR, Sept 12 Leftist rebels said Wednesday they would declare a five-day unilateral ceasefire to show goodwill for upcoming peace talks with the government at UN headquarters in New York, reports AFP.

The ceasefire would begin in San Salvador on Friday and extend through the rest of the country during the two-day meeting with UN Secretary General Javier Perez de Cuellar next week, rebels said.

Guerillas of the Farabundo Marti National Liberation Front (FMLN) have fought a decadelong civil war with successive US-backed government.

Perez de Cuellar decided to assume a personal role in negotiations and invite the rebels and the Salvadoran government to a meeting in New York on September 17-18 Olongapo should die of starvation," Osmena asked during a televised session?

"Subic has vast economic potentials," Tanada replied. "It could be used also for industrial, commercial and industrial uses and generate much more employment and help the national economy."

"I wish I could share with you the confidence that this government can take care of the problem.," Osmena said He said the Aquino government "Cannot even collect the garbage," or provide basic ser-

Sen Leticia Ramos-Shahani said the country needed the 10 years provided under the agreement to prepare for an American withdrawal.

A delegation of the US House of Representatives Armed Services Committee recommended that US forces begin withdrawing immediately if the agreement is rejected.

Supporters claim the Philippines cannot afford to offend the United States, its largest trading partner, at a time when thousands of Filipinos are suffering from the effects of the June eruptions of Mount Pinatubo.

Off the Record

Volcanic ash may kill 1m sheep

BUENOS AIRES (Argentina): Thousands of sheep have died and 1 million may be the final tally as a result of the cruption last month of Hudson volcano in Chile, government officials said Wednesday, reports AP.

In a separate case causing environmental concern, hundreds of penguins the same area - the two southernmost provinces of continental Argentina — are swimming ashore coat from an unidentified spill.

The mid-August eruption spewed clouds of sulfurous ash so thick they blotted out the sun and coated hundreds of square kilometers (miles) of Santa Cruz and Chubut provinces to depths from two to 80 centimeters (0.8 to 32 inches).

Patagonian winds now whip the ash back and forth at velocities topping 100 kilometers (62 miles) an hour. The sooty, gritty material kills the grass the sheep eat. It also contains silica and irritates their stomachs and can grind down their teeth.

People have been warned to stay indoors and drink bottled water as precautions. Weeklong eruptions that subsided in mid-August forced evacuation of thousands of villagers both Chile and Argentina, but there were no deaths.

The National Institute of Farm Technology made the estimate of the death tally. Projections by other groups have been lower, but state nonetheless that at least several hundred

thousand animals are at risk. Thousands already have died, the institute stated in its report. Ranchers have been unable to provide enough winter feed. In many cases, they can't reach the sheep, which in

some areas have trouble just walking through the ash drifts. "The ability to survive of 1.4 million sheep is seriously threatened," the institute reported and half the ranches in

Santa Cruz may be financially ruined. The cherry crop, which was in the process of being harvested, also may be ruined. Among other signs of distress, the two airlines that serve the area briefly suspended flights for fear the ash would damage jet turbines.

Church bans women ministers

SYDNEY (Australia): The Presbyterian Church in Australia has voted overwhelmingly to ban the ordination of women, overturning a resolution passed 17 years ago that allowed them into the ministry, reports AP.

A motion to ban women ministers was carried 116-61 at the church's annual assembly Wednesday in Sydney. Only three of the nearly 200 commissioners at the assembly were

Rev. Theodora Hobbs, the newest Presbyterian minister in Australia, said Thursday the vote was a step backward. She said civil action may follow. "It is culturally wrong not to have women in the church, "

she said. "If the church is going to make any sense to young people, it has got to show life as it is - in life these days, women have equal rights. The church has five ordained women ministers and one

who is in theological college. They will be allowed to continue in the ministry, but they fear there will be a backlash by some conservative members of the church "Naturally, we were very disappointed with the decision,

but it was not something we did not altogether foresee, " said Rev. Hobbs. "At the moment, (the decision) is shaping up to be something in the civil court." Dr Patricia Brennan, founding director of the Movement

for the Ordination of Women, said the decision was "bigoted and unbiblical" and reflected the church's increasing conser-The church's reversal comes after many of its more liberal

members left to join the newly formed Uniting Church in 1977. That left greater power to the conservatives, many of whom disagreed with the 1974 decision allowing the ordina tion of women.

The Uniting Church was formed by a merger of some Presbyterian congregations and the Methodist Church of Australia.

Not a single peso for Zulema

BUENOS AIRES (Argentina): Zulema Yoma, estranged wife of Argentina's President Carlos Menen, is suing him for failing to make support payments since he evicted her from their official home 15 months ago, her lawyer said on Wednesday, reports Reuter.

"Menem has not given them a single peso for 15 months, not even for their food," Alejandro Vazquz, Yoma's lawyer, said in a telephone interview. " All he has done is send her a tray of food everyday from the presidential residence."

Yoma lives in an elegant apartment in Buenos Aires with

the couple's two children, Carlitos and Zulemita. Menem's lawyer, Eduardo Zanoni, who is assisting the President in the divorce suit, could not be immediately reached for comment

Vazquez said that under Argentine law Menem had to offer his family enough funds to keep up their usual lifestyle. Both the President and his estranged wife come from families that

grew rich in the Western province of La Rioja.

To fast to comment

MONTPELIER, Vermont: Soviet novelist Alexander Solzhenitsyn says he predicted the changes unfolding in his homeland more than 20 years ago, but that they are unfolding too quickly now for him to comment, reports AFP.

Solzhenitsyn said in a letter to a US news agency request ing an interview that he does "not consider it possible to appear as a commentator on events for which I myself persistently appealed, and which I predicted as far back as the late

"Moreover, they will be dynamic in detail for a long time yet, and any commentaries will be outdated in less than a week," wrote Solzhentysn who was expelled from his homeland in 1974 after he called for many of the reforms that have come to pass.

Don't be afraid of a good cry

LONDON: Princes Diana spoke out against traditional British reserve on Wednesday, saying people should let their emotions out and not be afraid of a good cry," reports Reuter. "As far as I know, crying has yet to kill someone. It does not harm people ... or any bystanders but there seems to be a curious conspiracy in adults to suppress this emotion," she told a meeting of psychiatrists.

People bottled up feelings of fear of appearing childish. But parents had a duty to understand their own emotions so as to be a better guide to their children, said Diana, 30, who has two sons, aged nine and six.

"I am not advocating a general wailing and gnashing of teeth or sackcloth and ashes, but emotional outbursts might be less dramatic or violent if a little steam was occasionally vented harmlessly," she told the European Society of Child

and Adolescent Psychiatry. Before her marriage to the heir to the British throne, Diana was berated by the press for weeping publicly as her fi-

ance Prince Charles flew out on a foreign trip.

Bail for husband of child-bride

NEW DELHI: The 60-year-old Saudi Arabian National Yahya H M Al Sageth, whose marriage to 11-year-old Ameena Begum of Hyderabad last month created nation-wide controversy. was released on bail from Tihar Central Jail Wednesday evening, his counsel, I U Khan said, reports PII.

Earlier in the day, the metropolitan magistrate Mrs Anu Malhotra accepted bail bonds of Rs 15,000 with two sureties each. A sessions court has already granted him anticipatory bail in a case registered against Sageth by the enforcement directorate for alleged fera violations.

The Saudi Arabian national was arrested a month ago on August 10 soon after his arrival from a domestic flight from Hyderabad with Ameena. The child-bride has since been put up at children's short stay home.

Yahya Al Sageth faces charges of forgery, cheating and abduction apart from a latest case of fera violation slapped by the enforcement directorate.

BhutaneseKing meets Indian Prime Minister

Cuba reacted angrily to

Gorbachev's announcement,

saying it had not been con-

sulted and asserting that the

number of troops there was

viewed Fidel Castro's hardline

communist government in

Cuba, 90 miles (145 km) from

Florida, as an irritant and a

subversive influence in Latin

nouncement a "substantial ges-

ture" that would have a positive

impact on US public opinion,

which has long opposed aiding

Moscow while it funnelled its

asked not to be identified said

the announcement brought

Moscow very near fulfilling all

Washington's demands about

arms sales to Cuba also end left

Baker feeling "very pleased

with the conversation," the se-

Yeltsin told Baker that he

wanted to move speedily on a

compromise proposal to settle

the dispute over Northern ter-

ritories that has fouled Soviet-

Japan relations since 1945.

In addition to Gorbachev's

Cuba.

A US request that Soviet

severing ties with Cuba.

nior US official said.

announcement on

A senior US official who

resources to Cuba.

Baker called the Cuba an-

The United States has long

much less than 11,000.

America.

NEW DELHI, Sept 12: Bhutanese King Jigme Singye Wangchuk held talks with three Indian ministers including Prime Minister PV Narasimha Rao here Wednesday, officials said, reports BSS.

The King, met Minister for External Affairs Madhavsingh Solanki to discuss the fast changing international situation, the officials said.

They also discussed matters relating to the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation, which groups Bangladesh, Nepal, Pakistan, Sri Lanka, the Maldives, India and Bhutan.

The officials did not give further details.

pact of the departure.

Ernesto Herera and John

Mitterrand for sending of

UN troops to Yslavia PARIS, Sept 12: President termination, "a right that canrancois Mitterrand not be questioned," Mitterrand Wednesday suggested that the United Nations send troops to act as a buffer among the warring parties in Yugoslavia, reports AFP.

If the United Nations, "for legal or other reasons," cannot act. Mitterrand told a press conference, the European Community should take a hand in separating the belligerents.

He also suggested that an international arbitration commission similar to the one looking into the Yugoslav conflict be set up to mediate in case other such situations arise in Europe.

This would be the best way to deal with the threat of violence as the old order crumBut the quest for self-de-

termination should be "democratic and in conformity with the treaties that ensure our peace and security," he

"The end of empires — and particularly of the Soviet empire - in Europe is a colossal moment in world history." he said. "Each nation wants to ... become a sovereign state..... as a new Europe is born."

Mitterrand said he had counted 17 nations that aspired to sovereignty, adding: "Thirty three states (in Europe) today — how many tomorrow?"



BELJING: Former British Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher (R) is greeted by Chinese General Secretary Jiang Zemin September 11. Thatcher held talks with Chinese leaders on the future of Hong Kong.

- AFP/UNB photo

bles and nations seek self-de-Release of Westerners held in Lebanon likely

BEIRUT, Sept 12 : Shi'ite kidnappers released a picture of a British hostage early Thursday and said Israel's release of 51 Arab prisoners began a process that could lead to 'happy ending' for Westerners held in Lebanon.

Jerusalem indicated that the Shi'ttes have to make the next move. Israel radio reported Thursday that the Jewish state was willing to release more Arab detainees and make 'other gestures' in exchange for information about its missing servicemen.

The freeing of the Arab prisoners Wednesday coincided with a visit by UN Secretary-General Javier Perez de Cuellar to Iran, the Prime backer of the Shi'ite hostage-

hólding groups in Lebanon. A newspaper report Thursday quoted a senior UN official in Iran's capital as saying that one or more Western hostages could be freed as early as Friday. The New York Times did not identify the official travelling with Perez de Cueller's delegation in Tehran.

In Beirut, Thursday's release of the photograph of British hostage Jack Mann was the first word on the former pilot since his abduction in Muslim west Beirut on May 12.

The Revolutionary Justice Organisation, in a handwritten Arabic-language communique also delivered early Thursday to the independent newspaper

and well. The photograph showed Mann had grown a beard in captivity but had shaved his mustache. Sunnie Mann told reporters in London that her husband looked 'dreadful' in the photograph, but added the 'exciting and important thing is that he

The Israel Radio report came a day after Israel released 51 Lebanese and the bodies of nine Muslim guerillas after receiving reliable information that a soldier missing since 1986, Rahamin Alsheikh was dead

The chief Israeli hostage negotiator, Uri Lubrani, said An-Nahar, said Mann was alive whether Israel could recipro-

with detainee releases: "It's a likelihood, I said. Ne promise." Defense Minister Moshe Arens told the Hadashot daily he believed that Syria and Iran

cate other Lebanese moves

held the key to more progress. "The Syrians and Iranians could know the fates of the missing and prisoners if they want to know," he said

Newspapers said Israel expected UN Secretary General Javier Perez de Cuellar's efforts to now lead to the return of a body of a Druse soldier missing in Lebanon since 1983, Samir Assad.

Assad is believed held by Nayef Hawatmeh's Syrian Wednesday when asked based Democratic Front for the Liberation of Palestine

Inspection mission to Iraq suspended BAGIIDAD, Sept 12: A team will meet Friday to discuss Sharif noted UN inspectors

of international ballistics experts Wednesday said they suspended an inspection mission to Iraq in a dispute between Baghdad and the United Nations over the use of UN helicopters, reports AFP. Iraq is refusing to allow UN

helicopters to fly over its territory, citing national security concerns, and has offered to transport UN personnel in its own aircraft. Diplomats at UN

Headquarters in New York have warned that iraqi planes could again be grounded as they were after the Gulf war in February if Baghdad persists in its refusal.

The UN Security Council

what measures to take in the face of the Iraqi refusal to allow the use of UN helicopters to carry out the inspection The Security Council could

adopt another resolution specifically ordering lraq to cooperate with the UN Commission or order a halt Iraq flights over its own territory as was done at the end of the Gulf war.

Without the transportation that (the United Nations) destres us to use, I cannot continue the inspections, said the head of the team, Thomas Brock of the United States. "I am waiting until I get in-

structions from UN authori-

Asked why he would not use

Iraqi helicopters, Brock replied: "That is not my decision. It is being discussed right now between the UN and the lragt authorities." The 17-member team

which arrived here five days ago, has already visited sites north and south of Baghdad. "We did not find anything

other than a support structure for a Scud missile. It was minor and not overly significant, but it was significant enough that we had to request that it be destroyed", Brock said. He added that the team,

part of a special UN Commission to oversee the partial disarmament of Iraq, also wanted to travel to remote parts of western Iraq where helicopters would be needed. Mohammad Said Al-Sharif,

Minister of State for Foreign Affairs, said in a press statement earlier Wednesday that Iraq objected to "the use of foreign helicopters by inspection teams because under current regional circumstances, national security would be threatened." "We have no confidence

that the use of these helfcopters by these crew would be limited to their inspection mission but could also include objectives that have nothing to do with the mandate of the United Nations Security

Council."

had used Iraqi helicopters for missions in July and August. Rolf Ekeus, President of the

Special UN Commission charged with eliminating Iraq's weapons of mass destruction, told reporters in New York that even when Iraq cooperates, there are difficul-Ekcus said that Iraq has

agreed to cooperate in destroying chemical weapons but the committee has no way of knowing for sure the number and place of the Iraq has also opened to UN authorities its research labora-

53 Scud missiles, he said.

fortable with what we found we know that Iraq had according to its own information, claimed more than 800 Scud missiles." Ekcus said. Moreover, he said that UN

new missile launchers calling tories for biological agents. destruction.

This, he said, after Baghdad had earlier denied that it even had such a programme. Ekcus also said that his in-

spectors had witnessed the destruction of hundreds of ballistic weapons. Sixty-three of those were missiles, including "We don't feel at all com-

Inspectors have found four

into question Iraq's willingness to destroy its weapons of mass