Czechoslovak federal parlia ment's third attempt at choosing a new president failed Thursday amid criticism that the ongoing electoral process was a "farce," reports AFP.

None of the three virtuallyunknown nominees gained enough votes in two rounds of polling Thursday to gain the federal presidency of Czechoslovakia, 10 days after Vaclav Havel resigned the post following his failure to gain the need two-thirds majority in parliament.

Havel, the leader of the socalled velvet revolution which ended communist rule in Czechoslovak, was defeated by votes from Slovak nationalists in the federal legislature. The Czech and Slovak leaders have since agreed to break up their federation.

The leading candidate in Thursday's voting was Mari Kristova, a 55-year-old agricultural engineer. A Liberal Social

Reuter from Singapore.

and fast-food restaurants.

or damage had been received.

tal, highway police said.

Thailand's northeast.

from Israel.

Rishpon.

Bombay.

crash. All were That nationals.

officials said, reports AFP from Bangkok.

Cigarettes banned for youths:

Singapore is to pass a law banning the sale of cigarettes and

other tobacco products to those aged under 18, Health

Minister Yeo Cheow Tong told Parliament yesterday, reports

banning young people from smoking in public places. "If pos-

rants, department stores, snooker parlours, bowing alleys,

cinemas and theatres, public lifts, taxis and buses, hospitals

Quake shakes Tibet: An earthquake

measuring 6.5 on the open-ended Richter scale hit China's

western region of Tibet on Thursday afternoon, the New

China news agency said on Friday, Reuter reports from

widespread damage, the agency said on reports of casualties

The quake struck northwest of Lhasa, the region's capital.

Thai road mishap claims 16: Abus

and a long-haul truck collided Thursday north of Bangkok,

killing 16, people and injuring 39, police and hospital

Ayutthaya, about 50 kilometers (30 miles) north of the capi-

AFP the hospital had received 16 dead and 39 injured in the

The crash occurred in the afternoon on a highway near

An official at Wang Noi hospital in Ayutthaya district told

The bus was en route to Bangkok from Buri Ram in

2 killed in Israeli explosion: A blast at

an underground explosives depot killed two people, injured

40 others and shattered windows for miles (kilometer) near

this town in the crowded central coast of Israel, reports AP

plosives depot startled many sleepy Israelis with memories of

the Gulf War when Iraq aimed 39 missiles at the Jewish state.

It also brought demands to move the plant to a less populous

(kilometers) away from the factory, in Harzliya's Nof Yam

neighborhood about nine miles (15 kilometers) north of Tel

Aviv and across from the communal farm settlement of

the explosion he started to yell: "A missile strike, (Iraqi

Blast at mosque in Serbia: A violent

explosion overnight Wednesday destroyed the central Mosque

in the small northern town of Kljuc, in a Serb- controlled

region of Bosnia- Herzegovina, the Tanjug news agency

to the Mosque, Tanjug said without giving casualty details.

The explosion also caused major damage to buildings close

Kljuc is 200 kilometres (120 miles) northwest of Sarajevo,

In the neighbouring republic of Montenegro, several

Muslim Slav shops have been blown up since Monday in

Pljevlja, Tanjug reported, quoting a statement by the

Democratic Action Party, which groups together the Muslim

Manjit's detention extended: An

Indian judge held court in jail to extend the detention of

Manjit Singh, a suspect in the 1985 bombing of an Indian

airliner in which 329 people were killed, reports AP from

terided until August 14. The session by a Bombay magistrate

was held Thursday under tight security at the jail where

was being detained, said he was being questioned by several

national and local law enforcement agencies. Charges have not

July 16. He was wanted by US British, Canadian and Indian

Police said Friday that Singh's remand in custody was ex-

Senior police officers, refusing to disclose where Singh

Singh, 30, was arrested outside a Bombay railway station

Slavs of Bosnia-Herzegovina, Montenegro and Serbia.

the Bosnian capital which has been under siege by Serb forces

President) Saddam Hussein launched missiles."

reported, says AFP from Belgrade.

for almost four months.

Singh was being held.

yet been field

authorities.

Alex Jupiter, a neighborhood resident, said when he heard

Homes shook and windows shattered dozens of miles

The early morning blast in the factory's underground ex-

Lhasa residents felt the sharp tremor, the agency said.

While an earthquake of that magnitude can cause

sible, we will introduce this in public places also."

He also said Singapore was studying a new Canadian law

It is already an offence to smoke in air-conditioned restau-

Union (LSU) member, she won 65 of the 180 votes required for election in the first poll as 70 in the second out of a re quired 152.

The other two candidates, Zdenek Pinta and Zdenek Viktor barely gained the votes each in the election. Both were put forward by the extremer right republican party (SPR-

Only 132 of the 245 deputies returned valid voting

The voting Thursday was preceded by a procedural debate, in which deputies discussed the possibility of changing the rules by which the president is chosen.

The three candidates-

Prochazka, 39, Pinta, 61, and Kristova, 55- were seeking to succeed Havel who failed to secure the necessary majority in the first two rounds of voting July 3 and Miroslav Sladek failed to gain the necessary voices in a July 16 vote.



ADRIATIC SEA: The frigate "Avenger-F 185" of the British Royal Navy is seen from the deck of Croatian battleship 'Sibenek' July 29, prior to a meeting of the representatives of the Croatian army, UNPROFOR, EC and Serbian army, which took place aboard the Avenger. -AFP/UNB photo

pistol from one of the fallen

policemen and opened fire at

close range. Border police

then shot the attacker in the

spot, the policeman in hospi-

that when there seems to be a

chance for progress in the

peace process, extremist ele-

ments operate in an insanc

and criminal manner in order

to stop the process, to create

tension, to escalate extrem-

The Palestinian died on the

"We have seen in the past

Security Council approves UNIFIL renewal

UNITED NATIONS, July 31 The Security Council unantmously approved on Thursday a six-month renewal of the mandate of the UN Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL) until January 31, 1993, reports Reuter.

The force, numbering some 5,800 troops, includes units from Fiji, Finland, France, Ghana, Ireland, Italy, Nepal, Norway, Poland and Sweden.

It is commanded by Lieutenant-General Lars-Eric Wahlgren of Sweden.

UNIFIL has prepared plans for a 10 per cent reduction in strength, as authorised in a council resolution last January, and the cuts are expected to be implemented during the coming months.

The force was set up in 1978 to help oversee the withdrawal of Israel troops who invaded southern Lebanon earlier that year and to help restore the Beirut government's authority over the area.

\$25m US aid

to destroy

Russian N-arms

United States and Russia on

Thursday signed an agreement

under which Washington will

provide up to 25 million dollar

to Moscow to help destroy

Russian chemical weapons, re-

The agreement imple-

mented some provisions of a

wider June 17 deal between

Presidents George Bush and

Boris Yeltsin to help the

Russian Federation safely tra-

nsport and destroy nuclear,

chemical and other former

Soviet weapons of mass de-

it was signed at the

Pentagon by deputy US

Defence Secretary Donald

Atwood and Russians Aca-

The United States will pro-

vide 25 million dollars to help

Moscow draw up a plan to de-

stroy its chemical weapons

stockpile, develop a detection

and alarm system for safe

transport of such weapons and

train Russian experts in the

demician Antoly Kuntsevice.

ports Reuter.

struction.

WASHINGTON, July 31: The

Off the Record

'New York is very far"

ATHENS: Former Soviet Leader Mikhail Gorbachev called for the creation of a European institution similar to the UN Security Council in an interview broadcast here Thursday by a private television station, reports AFP.

Calling for a political solution to the conflict in former Yugoslavia, the former super power leader warned that "a military solution cannot resolve the problems with Serbia and recommended that UN peacekeepers remain in the region for a limited period.

"New York is very far, and Europe has its own experience," Gorbachev said, urging that Europe set up a "European institution similar to the UN Security Council"

Gorbachev speaking in Moscow, dismissed the military option for the

former Yugoslavia saying 'even if certain superpowers called it peaceful, it would solve no problems."

Moreover the United Nations cannot play a policeman's role," he added.

Monkey AIDS

LONDON: Two laboratory researchers were infected with monkey form of the AIDS virus but did not develop symptoms of an immune disorder the US National Institutes of Health said Thursday, reports AP.

The institute and the US Centres for Disease Control are cooperating in a search for other lab workers who may have been exposed to non-human varieties of the immunodeficiency virus. The search became known after details of the first infection case were published in the British medical journal The Lancet.

With only two cases reported, doctors say it is too early to conclude whether SIV - or simian immunodeficiency virus poses a threat to humans. The virus that causes AIDS in humans is known as HIV.

The goal is to determine the prevalence of what we have seen in these two individuals" said Dr Robert Eisinger, a microbiologist in the NIH's office of AIDS research.

Eisinger said neither lab worker got sick or showed signs of an immune disorder. But scientists do not know how long it takes for a monkey to develop AIDS after being infected with the virus; HIV-positive people sometimes go many years with no symptoms of AIDS.

Encourage breastfeeding

MANILA: President Fidel Ramos Yesterday ordered all

Presidential spokeswoman Annabelle Ababya said in a

The United Nations wants to promote breastfeeding in

hospitals in the Philippines to enforce a UN sponsored programme to encourage breastfeeding and banned them from giving formula to newborn babies, reports Reuter.

statement Ramos wants the" strict enforcement of the ban on giving free low-cost infant formula products" to babies in government and private hospitals.

developing countries.

United States. Pak opposition demands

interim govt

Islamabad, July 31: Pakistan's opposition alliance held rallies and marches across much of the country on Thursday to demand fresh elections, opposition sources and witnesses said, reports

But no rallies were held in Sindh province where the People's Democratic Alliance, led by opposition leader Benazir Bhutto, called off the protests because of an armyled crackdown.

About 800 opposition activists have been arrested in Sindh in the past two days, opposition sources said.

Protesters demanded the resignation of President Ghulam Ishaq Khan and Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif and the creation of a neutral interim government to hold elections.

"Nawaz Sharif has to go" and "Benazir is the people's Prime Minister," chanted protesters in Rawalpindi, near Islamabad, where some 10,000 people marched in Lahore, capital of Punjab province, chanting slogans demanding fresh elections. Rallies were also held in several other towns in the provinces of Punjab, North West Frontier and Baluchistan.

The opposition says the last elections in October 1990, held after Bhutto was sacked as Prime Minister on disputed charges of abuse of power, were rigged, a charge denied by the authorities.

Guide to stop abuse of women in military

WASHINGTON: Three female members of the House Armed Services Committee are drawing up a list of standards for the military they hope will begin to change the attitudes that led to last year's Tailhook sexual harassment episode, reports AP. The standards could become part of next year's Pentagon

budget bill, and would provide a guide for the military services in rooting out abuse of women, said Congressman Patricia Schroeder, D-Colo who is drafting the measure with Reps. Beverly Byron, D-Md. and Marilyan Lloyd, D-Tenn.

This is a positive way to go, Schroeder said. "It will send a strong message" and provide away of testing the Pentagon's promises to mend its ways.

She said the criteria would include better collection of statistics on sexual harassment cases in the military; using sensitivity to women's concerns as a factor in promotions; stronger education programmes on proper behavior between the sexes; and protection of women who file harassment or abuse complaints.

The uniformed chiefs of the military services promised the Armed Services Committee on Thursday that they would work in all those areas, and they acknowledged past failings.



LONDON: US pop star Michael Jackson kicked off his first Unites Kingdom date at London's Wembley Stadium on Thursday in front of some 80,000 fans. - AFP/UNB photo

Arab attacks may escalate, fears Rabin

head, he said.

JERUSALEM, July 31: Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin, praising the killing of a Palestinian who stabbed two Israeli policeman, one fatally. said the feared Arab attacks might escalate as Middle East peace talks gathered momen-

tum, reports Reuter. "The perpetrator was shot and died, and this is what should be done to anyone who tries to attack a policeman or a soldier or any citizen licensed to carry a weapon," Rabin told Israel television hours after the attack on Thursday.

Police said the Palestinian attacked two officers directing traffic outside the Dung gate of old Jerusalem, wounding one fatally, the other slightly. An Israeli bus driver, Avi

Shapira, said he grabbed a

ism, because they want to wreck the chance for peace," Rabin told the television. The Palestinian was identified as Salah Karain, 24, a res ident of Arab east Jerusalem's

Silwan district, a flashpoint of

the uprising against Israeli rule

Rabin, the iron-fisted defence minister of the first months of the uprising, has promised tough measures against attacks.

that began in December, 1987.

Since the start of the uprising, Israelis have killed 922 Palestinians and Palestinians have killed 94 Israelis.

AFP from Amman reports: The Jordanian parliament on Thursday accused the United States of seeking to impose a settlement in the Middle East aimed at "liquidating" the Palestinian cause.

The parliament, where one third of the 80 seats are held by fundamentalists, also rejected an autonomy plan for the Israeli-occupied territories

Serbia's parliament okays law to curb press freedom

BELGRADE, July 31; Serbian's parliament, which is dominated by former communists, endorsed controversial legislation late on Thursday enabling the State to take over the republic's leading newspaper and curb press freedom,

reports Reuter. About 4,000 staff of the newspaper Politika and its associated television and radio stations went on strike earlier in the day to protest against the government takeover.

The legislation would put Politika under state control, enabling the government to appoint its managers and decide editorial policy.

One political analysts said Serbian President Slobodan Milosevic wanted to reassert control over Politika ahead of general election expected in November.

The Politika strikers, who said this threatened their rights and curbed freedom of public expression, urged Serbian journalists working for other media to join their "Serbia's government and

the ruling socialist party are violating Politika in a big way and Serbian's Prime Minister Radoman Bozovic is the executor of an order to have it confiscated and plundered," Zivorad Minovic, the newspaper's Director General told Politika's television station. "Serbia's government has

isolated Serbia from the entire world and, after making a series of mistakes and causing war tragedies, it is trying to find a way out by imposing dictatorship. Vuk Draskovic, leader of the

main opposition party, the Serbian renewal movement, had said earlier that his supporters would use all means to prevent a state takeover of

Politika, first published in 1904 is the oldest and most

influential newspaper.

Rabbáni visits Iran Aug 8

NECOSIA, July 31: Afghan President Burhanuddin Rabbani will visit Iran on August 8 on his first foreign visit since taking office last month, the Tehran Times said on Thursday, reports Reuter.

The Iranian news agency Irna, quoting the English-language paper's report, said the visit would underscore good neighbourly relations between Tehran and Kabul.

"More important is the fact that Rabbani has chosen the Islamic Republic of Iran as the first country he is to visit after taking over the presidency, Tehran Times quoted an unnamed "observer as saying.

Rabbani was a frequent visitor to Tehran during the 14year Afghan civil war during which he led one of the major guerilla factions based in Pakistan.

Pakistan, Iran and Saudi Arabia were the main regional backers of the Muslim rebels I lion dollar - mostly for spare

Bush admn defends arms sale to Pakistan

WASHINGTON, July 31: The Bush administration on Thursday defended its policy of allowing commercial sales of military equipment to Pakistan as US Senate critics charged that the 1985 law barring commercial and government sales to the country was being broken, reports Reuter.

The commercial military sales have been permitted under a US State Department interpretation of the 1985 law, which had sought to bar US military and economic aid to Pakistan because of the country's nuclear-programme.

Senate critics argue that the law was clearly intended to halted since October 1990.

ban commercial military sales as well as government sales and aid which have been A Senate aide said United States had allowed commercial

military sales worth 100 mil-

parts - to be sent to Pakistan. "I was shocked" to hear of the administration's action to circumvent the ban, Senator Alan Cranston, a California Democrat, told the Senate Foreign Relations Committee. He said the legislation was clear and accused the adminis-

tration of breaking the law.

In a letter to US Secretary of State James Baker, Cranston and senators John Glenn, an Ohio Democrat, and Larry Pressler, a Republican from South Dakota - the authors of the 1985 law - said they had chosen their words carefully in drafting the legislation. They said they intended the law to block all arms transfers if the

Pakistan did not possess a nuclear device. The presidential certification was made for five years.

President was unable to certify

to the US Congress that

Vaccine treatment extends lifespan of skin cancer patients It prompts the patient's immune system to

MANILA, July 31: Famed Indian sitar player Pandit Ravi Shankar has won the Ramon Magsaysay Award for journalports AP. ism, literature and communication arts, the award foundation said today, reports Reuter.

Shankar was cited for enriching India and the world with his sublime mastery of the sitar with music that colours the mind, it said in a

Ravi Shankar

gets Magsaysay

award

statement. Born to a Bengali Brahmin family in 1920, he went to Paris in the footsteps of his elder brother who formed Europe's first Indian dance

company. He became an acclaimed solo dancer and a competent player of the sitar, the bamboo Bute and the drums.

LOS ANGELES, July 31: An exsperimental treatment that works like a vaccine has dramatically lengthened the lives of people suffering advanced malignant melanoma, the most lethal form of skin cancer, a study found, re-

Dr Donald L Morton, the study's chief author, said patients who received the vaccine lived an average of 23 months after diagnosts, compared to an average of six to eight months

in other patients. In addition, we were surprised to find that 26 per cent of these patients were alive after five years," Morton said. "Our prior experience had been that only 6 per cent of patients survive five years" without the vaccine.

Researchers "hope that in the next several years we will develop even better vaccines that are more effective" and might cure the disease, Morton said.

The study was released Thursday by the John Wayne Cancer Institute, where Morton is medical director. The institute, affiliated with St. John's Hospital in Santa Monica, was established by Wayne's family two years after the actor died of cancer in 1979.

Morton's melanoma vaccine is among several being developed. They are aimed at curing patients whose malignant melanoma has spread throughout the body despite surgery to remove cancerous moles and affected lymph nodes. Surgery is highly effective at elimination

the cancer before it spreads. Traditional vaccines stimulate the body's immune system to prevent a disease. Melanoma vaccines also are designed to trigger an immune system response, but to treat

rather than prevent skin cancer. It will be five to 10 years before a government-approved vaccine is on the market and widely available, Morton said.

Morton gave the vaccine to 136 patients, then compared their longevity with 1,200 advanced melanoma patients, then compared their conventionally in the past 20 years. Some patients have been followed for six to eight years and remain cancer-free, Morton said. "The eventual goal, of course, is a cure," said

Ralph Reisfeld, a biologist-biochemist at the Scripps Research Institute in La Jolla." "But

it's a big thing if you can increase the lifespan of a patient."

Morton's findings "are very encouraging" and the study was performed well, but more research is needed to establish the vaccine's benefits, said Dr. Philip Livingston, who is developing another melanoma vaccine at Memorial Sloan-Kettering Cancer Center in New York.

More than 600,000 Americans develop skin cancer each year. Most are highly curable basal cell or squamous cell cancers. The most deadly form is malignant melanoma, which will be diagnosed in about 32,000 Americans this year, according to the American Cancer Society.

Of 8,800 projected US skin cancer deaths this year, 6,700 will be from malignant mclanoma and 2,100 from other forms. Morton's vaccine consists of live melanoma

cells taken from several patients, then exposed to radiation so the cells can't cause more cancer. The vaccine is injected into patients at progressively longer intervals during several

produce cancer-killing antibodies and white blood cells without the side effects caused by chemotherapy or radiation. The first few injections also include tuberculosis vaccine, which further stimulates the immune system.

Factors that increase the risk of getting skin cancer include excessive exposure to sunshine and having a light complexion. Severe sunburns during childhood increase the risk of developing skin cancer as an adult. Sunscreens, clothing and staying out of sunshine reduce the risk.

Warning signs of skin cancer include any unusual skin condition, particularly a change in the size or color of a mole of any other dark growth. Malignant melanoma moles often have an uneven surface, a ragged border, more than one color and a diameter wider than a pencil eraser.

Melanoma is the nation's fastest-rising form of cancer. Scientists have blamed tanning and pollution damage to Earth's ozone layer, which allows more of the sun's cancer-causing ultraviolet rays to reach people.

1 Lakh Russian soldiers live without homes MOSCOW, July 31: More

than 100,000 Russian soldiers are without homes, a figure which could double as others return from former Soviet republics, according to the Russian desence Ministry quoted Thursday by the news agency Itar-Tass, reports AFP. Defence Ministry officials

104,600 soldiers live in barracks with their families because they do not have their own accommodation. The officials ordered the soldiers' social protection

who met Wednesday in

Moscow said that some

committee to prepare a relocation programme to submit to the Russian parliament before October 15.