

Chinese envoy due in ROK Sunday:

Zhang Tingyan, the first Chinese ambassador to South Korea, will arrive early next week to assume his post in Seoul, South Korean officials said Wednesday, reports AP from Seoul.

Zhang, scheduled to arrive Sunday, was deputy director of the Chinese Foreign Ministry's Asian Affairs Department be-

fore being named to the Seoul post, they said. China and South Korea established formal diplomatic relations on Aug 24.

2 more commit suicide in Lanka: Two more Sri Lankan tomato cultivators of the central province have committed suicide after their bumper crops failed to earn them sufficient returns to pay back bank loans,

It was reported Wednesday, reports Xinhua from Colombo. Another cultivator of the same province ended his own life a week ago when he failed to make a profit from his tomato crops, leaving behind him a widow with two infants and a big bank loan, according to local press reports.

Tomatoes are reported to be sold at 2 rupees (less than 5 US cents) per kilogram on some markets of the province and some growers have been unable to get a quarter of a rupee for a kilogram.

Over production was not the sole reason for the glut of tomatoes in the province where large scale tomato cultivation had been undertaken on the strength of the appointment of marketing agents.

PLA leader meets Iranian team: Zhao Nangi, Director of the General Logistics Department of the Chinese People's Liberation Army (PLA), met with an Iranian military delegation in Beijing Tuesday afternoon,

reports Xinhua. The Iranian delegation, led by Zhao's counterpart Alastu Tuhidi, arrived here on Monday at the invitation of Li Lun, Deputy Director of the PLA General Logistics Department. During the meeting, Zhao and Tuhidi had a cordial conver-

sation on further development of friendly relations between China and Iran, and between the armed forces of the two countries.

On Monday. Li and Tuhidi had talks and the two sides exchanged views on issues of common interests.

2 peace-keepers killed in Sarajevo: UN officials now must decide how best to get supplies to this besieged Bosnian capital, after two French peacekeepers

were killed by heavy machine gunfire that appeared aimed at a UN aid convoy, reports AP from Sarajevo. The attack occurred Tuesday near the Sarajevo airport,

where a vital airlift of humanitarian aid was suspended after an Italian aid plane was downed last Thursday. Clashes have raged for days around the airstrip.

UN forces have increasingly come under fire from warring factions, and the latest incident could bolster proposals seeking greater protection for peacekeepers and relief flights.

S Koreans to celebrate Chusok: Millions of South Koreans began travelling across the country

Wednesday to go home for the Chusok, a traditional holiday that eelebrates the harvest, says from Seoul. Police said highways were already crowded with drivers

travelling home for the three-day Chusok or the Full Moon Holiday that begins Thursday. People usually go home, visit friends, relatives and family

tombs, and offer prayer to the deceased during Chusok, one of South Korea's biggest holidays.

black homeland leaders

UNSC to consider imposition of 'no-fly zone' over Bosnia

UNITED NATIONS, Sept 9: The UN Security Council will soon take up the question of imposing a "no-fly zone" over Bosnia-Herzegovina that would ban flights of military aircraft not part of UN peacekeeping forces, western diplomatic sources said Tuesday, reports

The Council will also consider a second draft resolution, on ground escorts for humanitarian relief convoys and supervision of heavy weaponry in the war-torn republic.

This resolution will be examined by the end of the week, after the 15- member council hears a report from Secretary General Boutros Boutros- Ghali on strengthening the UN Protection Force (UNPROFOR) in Yugoslavia, the sources said.

The resolution on banning planes not involved in peacekeeping or relief operations,

London conference Yugoslavia, also calls for a strengthening of sanctions against Serbia and Montenegro for their role in the Bosnian conflict, diplomats said.

Reuter adds: International efforts to bring peace and humanitarian relief to Bosnia will not be derailed by the killing of two French officers of the UN peace-keeping force, European mediator Lord Owen said today.

But he said Tuesday's shootings at Sarajevo airport would put more strains on the relief operation for Bosnia-Herzegovina, already hampered by the suspension of aid flights after an Italian plane bringing supplies was apparently shot down.

"It is a worrying sign that there are people out there who are determined to dop relief getting through," Owen told

reporters at London's take time to get clear," Owen Heathrow airport before starting a mission to Zagreb, Sarajevo and Belgrade.

Owen will travel first to Geneva to link up with United Nations envoy Cyrus Vance, with whom he chairs an international conference which opened last week to try to secure a peace settlement for former Yugoslavia.

The two French officers, serving with the UN Force. Protection (UNPROFOR), were killed when their land convoy bringing supplies for the UN force from Belgrade was fired on near Sarajevo airport. Three other French soldiers were wounded.

"It is bound to put more strain on the land convoys. We've already got a situation sadly where we've got no humanitarian flights and that will

But he said he and Vance were "absolutely determined to hammer home to the parties the futility of their present ac-

"The peace process is not going to be derailed by any of this activity," said Owen, a former British foreign secretary appointed as mediator by the European Community.

The only relief supply route for the general population of Sarajevo, trapped in the Bosnian capital for five months by Serb besiegers, is now a tenuous land route from the Croatian port of split.

Owen said it was too soon to say which fighters attacked the UN convoy.

"It can only be a judgement made by field commanders and they are naturally cautious about blaming people without being sure," he said.

French forces put down prison mutiny, free 21 hostages

MOULINS, France, Sept 9: A police special forces unit overpowered mutinous inmates Wednesday and freed 21 hostages held for 14 hours while convicts unlocked comrades with stolen keys and set fires in a prison, reports AP.

Twenty guards and a computer instructor were freed in the pre-dawn assault. Two other hostages - a teacher and a prisoners' rights activist from Amnesty Internationalhad been freed Tuesday evening

The mutiny began about 4 pm Tuesday at the Moulins-Yzeure prison in central France, 290 kilometers (180 miles) south of Paris. A handful of prisoners overpowered a group of unarmed guards, took their keys and freed a total of about 170 prisoners.

Authorities said the mutineers burned the prison library and vandalized workshops but made no formal de-

mands during the standoff. One policemen suffered a broken hand during the assault, and three inmates were

slightly wounded by rubber bullets, officials said. Last month, the stabbing death of a guard at another French prison triggered a nationwide strike by guards for

several days. Authorities negotiated with the mutiny leaders throughout the night and ordered an assault at 5:40 am after concluding that no breakthrough was

imminent. Officials did not specify how many policemen participated in the assault. More than 300 gendarmes and riot police had been deployed at the prison.

In the Saint-Maur prison in central France, an inmate was shot and killed by guards as he tried to climb up a rope lowered by a hovering helicopter, authorities said.

KABUL: Afghan children cross a stream carrying buckets of drinking water for their families due to shortage of water and electricity on Tuesday. The city has been dark since August 1, as heavy rocket attacks by hardliner Gulbuddin Hekmatyar's Hezb-I-Islami forces — AFP/UNB photo damaged the power plant.

about future of ME peace talks LONDON, Sept 9: British

Major optimistic

Prime Minister John Major said Tuesday he was optimistic about the future of Arab-Israeli peace talks after meeting with Israeli Foreign Minister Shimon Peres, reports AFP.

Peres, on a tour of France and Britain two months after becoming Foreign Minister, met Major at his Downing Street residence for an hour. A 'much happier atmosphere exists for the prospects of peace," Major said after the

With Britain holding the six-month Presidency of the European Community, Major said he would do everything possible to speed up the talks, which are due to resume in Washington on September 14. "It is essential that these talks continue," Major said.

"From time to time there will be difficulties, hitches and setbacks", he said.

Tigers kill 19 Lankan troops COLOMBO, Sept 9 : Tamil

Guerillas Wednesday killed at least 19 government soldiers in two separate attacks in northeastern Sri Lanka, ending a two-day lull in violence in the embattled region, a military spokesman said, reports AFP.

Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) guerillas killed 14 soldiers in the Weli Oya region and five more in neighbouring Trincomalee district, the spokesman said adding that he could not give any details of the two incidents.

A military official said guerillas had surprised an army patrol in coastal Trincomalee district, killing at least five soldiers and seriously wounding three others. Local officials said the tigers

had attacked an army bunker line in Weli Oya, the theatre of frequent LTTE ambushes.

Corazon prefers women for cabinet posts MANILA, Sept 9: Former

President Corazon Aquino told an audience in Spain that she preferred women for Cabinet posts. But her record experience with the few women she appointed was often less than satisfactory, reports AP.

Mrs Aquino told a forum in Seville on "Women, Political Power and Development," Mrs Aguino said that if she had to choose between male and female candidates for a Cabinet post "you can bet your life I would choose the women."

During her six-year term, which ended June 30, Mrs Aquino appointed only five women to her more than 20member Cabinet, which was reshuffled several times. Other women were named to sub-Cabinet posts.

Off the Record

Have massage, give support

BANGKOK: A candidate in Thailand's general elections treated dozens of supporters to a session in a famous Bangkok massage parlour after a political rally, the election watchdog body said today, reports Reuter.

Some 150 guests from central Suphan Buri province were ferried to the parlour in two buses following the chart that party rally at the national stadium on Monday.

"Coupons were given to male guests for a free massage service," poll watch commission spokeswoman Malee Prueksapongsawlee said. Women guests were entertained with food and music while

the men enjoyed their massages. A poll watch team arrived at the party after being tipped

Under laws to stamp out vote-buying for Sunday's election, candidates are not allowed to hold parties or other entertainments to woo support.

The incident was reported to the Interior Ministry and the provincial Governor.

One leading candidate, Chamlong Srimuang of the moral force party, has pledged that should he win Sunday's poll he will close down massage parlours and other premises which he says are little more than disguised brothels.

Japanese media loves royal marriage scandal

TOKYO: As far as Japan's tabloids and sensation-hungry weeklies are concerned, Fergie is fair game and lonely Princess Di a sure sales boost. But the travails of brideless Crown Prince Naruhito are another story, indeed, reports AP.

Naruhito's fruitless search for a mate is one story the tabloids and virtually all other Japanese media have agreed not to write for the time being.

But they do not hold back on British royals. "Princes Sarah Bares for Her Breasts, Totally Naked 'Affair'

Story! In Front of the Kids! She Had Him Lick Her Feet!!" was the headline about the Duchess of York in the Josei Jishin (Ladies' Own), a gossipy weekly magazine with a circulation of Not to be outdone, the cover of the popular Shukan Josef

(Weekly Woman) declared, "Princess Diana Having Affair With Two Lovers. Feverish Embrace for Topless Princess Sarah." A smaller headline read: "The Honorable Mako Crawls on

Grass. How Cutel.' Mako, the baby daughter of Emperor Akihito's youngest

son, who married two years ago, isn't Japan's top royal item. Naruhito, still unable to find a bride who would someday become Japan's next empress.

'Silence is dangerous'

BOULDER: Author Salman Rushdie made a rare public appearance Tuesday and called for pressure on Iranian leaders to lift the assassination order they imposed on him for his novel "The Satanic Verses," reports AP. "One thing that is clear

to me now is what is most dangerous is silence," Rushdie said during his first public news conference in the United States since the late Ayatollah Khomeini put a 1 million dollar bounty on his life in 1989. Iranian leaders say Rushdie's novel blasphemed Islamic beliefs.

Rushdie, who has spent 2 1/2 years in hiding, said he is making appearances

doesn't work.

when he can to show that "terrorism by remote control

Rushdie spoke to a private gathering of journalists and educators March 25 in Arlington, Va, and on Dec 12, 1991, at Columbia University in New York, where he announced he would publish a paperback edition of the book.

Security was tight at the hastily-called news conference at the University of Colorado, where Rushdie is among several authors to speak at the Novel of the Americas Symposium. Organizers said the University received confirmation of

Rushdie's visit several hours beforehand, and that no notice was given to people attending.

Communists kill

from Lithuania next yr Russian soldier off by August MOSCOW, Sept 9: Russia next year," he added. "Perhaps it could happen even former Soviet troops out of the

Russia to withdraw troops

agreed on Tuesday to pull all Baltic state of Lithuania by the end of next August, bringing its withdrawal deadline forward by more than a year, reports Reuter. Russian President Boris

" JOHANNESBURG, Sept 9:

ANC leaders are demanding

the removal of all conscrvative

black homeland leaders, in-

cluding the general whose

forces killed 24 protesters,

African National Congress

activists said they would march

Wednesday on the tiny Qwa

Qwa homeland to demand the

resignation of homeland leader

T K Mopeli. Homeland au-

thorities said they would ig-

forces opened fire Monday on

an ANC march against military

ruler Brig Gen Oupa Gqozo,

killing 24 protesters and injur-

crisis created when the ANC

The deaths deepened the

Ciskei homeland security

nore ANC demands.

ing some 200 others.

triggering a major new crisis.

Yeltsin and Lithuanian leader Vytautas Landsbergis discussed the withdrawal at talks in Moscow and a schedule for the pull-out was signed by their defence ministers, a Russian presidential spokesman told reporters. "Lithuania and Russia want

to strengthen mutual trust and expand cooperation. The main obstacle on this path has started to diminish," Landsbergis told a news conference

"We hope to see the last

NASA begins

countdown

earlier, because this date is not obligatory," he added.

the Russian president as saying a final document, that was supposed to be signed by the two leaders in Moscow, was completed in about a month.

successful withdrawal." there were no political obstacles to the deal, which advanced the previous 1994 withdrawal deadline set by

Yeltsin's spokesman quoted "not quite ready" but should be

"A political document will be agreed at our next meeting hope for a smooth and

(with Yeltsin) set for October 1-2," Landsbergis said. "We Yeltsin's spokesman said

ANC officials said the future

government in June to protest

violence in black townships

and to demand a multiracial

interim government.

of the homeland system had become a major obstacle to resuming stalled talks, and must be resolved before there could be any hope of progress. The homelands are largely

seen as dependents of the white minority government and vestiges of apartheid. Conservative homeland leaders hope to continue as regional governments once their territories are returned to South Africa as planned.

ANC officials said they would demand President FW de Klerk remove Gqozo from power. South Africa says Cisket is independent pulled out of talks with the

ANC demands removal of Bush tries to patch up ties with American Jews Israeli request - which he ficalled "part of America's con-

WASHINGTON, Sept 9: President George Bush on Tuesday tried to patch up relations with American Jews with a strong reaffirmation of his commitment to Israel and an apology of sorts for having criticised Jewish lobbying for Israeli loan guarantees, reports

Reuter. Bush also failed the US-led defeat of Iraq in the Gulf War as a contribution to Israel's security, boasted of his role in the Middle East peace process and underscored his opposition to an independent Pales-

tinian state. In a wide-ranging speech to B'Nai B'Rith, the Jewish Ser-

vice Organisation that he

science," Bush said the US-Israeli partnership would be shown this week when he sends congress a 10 billion US dollar loan guarantee package to help resettle Soviet emigres in Israel. "Don't let any member of

congress tell you we can't afford to do this. We can, and we must," the president said. "And today, I ask you, take

that message to Capitol Hill. Bush's comments on Tuesday were a far cry from his outburst at a news conference last September 12 about Jewish lobby pressure tactics on behalf of the loan guarantees. Bush then was stalling the

nally approved last month when new Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin visited due to US opposition to the policy of Rabin's hardline predecessor, Yitzhak Shamir, of settling Jews in occupied Arab territories. "In the past, some remarks

of mine were misinterpreted," he said on Tuesday. "I have gone on the record expressing my regret for any pain those words caused. "Again, I want to make it

clear, I support, I endorse, and deeply believe in the godgiven right of every American to promote what they believe. It is your right as an individual.

Liberian rebels disarm 500 S African peace-keepers

MONROVIA, Sept 9: Rebels disarmed 500 members of the West African peacekeeping force hours before the peacekeepers were ordered to withdraw from rebel-held territory, task force commanders said in a statement Tuesday, reports AP.

The statement said rebels loyal to Charles Taylor also had taken weapons from a resupply team that had brought food and other provisions for the peacekeepers. The task force commanders

announced Monday that they

were withdrawing the 500

soldiers from the countryside

due to constant threat from

Taylor's fighters. The rebels,

on direct order from Taylor,

day just hours before the retreat was announced, the statement added.

The peacekeepers, who have been overseeing a ceasefire since November 1990, have been stranded in territory held by Taylor's National Patriotic Front of Liberia for several days. It was unclear whether they would be permitted to return to Monrovia. None had returned by Tuesday evening.

Taylor's headquarters, reached by telephone from Abidjan, had no immediate comment Taylor has agreed several

times to disarms his fighters

ing the accords. He defied an

order by West African leaders

The arms seizure and planned withdrawal threatens the limited progress in the last two years toward bringing peace to Liberia, nation founded by freed American slaves. It also was likely to increase pressure on the West African troops to force Taylor to comply with peace accords ' he signed.

The NPFL invaded Liberia from Sierra Leone in December 1989, aiming to overthrow authoritarian President Samuel Doe. A splinter rebel group beat Taylor to the capital, Monrovia, and tortured and but has balked at implementkilled Doe.

One month ago, a second rival rebel faction attacked Taylor's forces.

to disarm by Aug 31 and now seized the weapons early Mon-Thai election a test of pro-democracy gains supported the demonstrators.

for shuttle CHUM PHAE, Sept 9: Standing in the bed of a flight CAPE CANAVERAL, Fla, Sept 9: The US space agency began the countdown Wednesday for the 50th shuttle flight, a laboratory research mission sage, reports AFP. featuring the first married couple to fly in space and the

. The seven-member crew also includes the first Japanese citizen to fly on a US spaceship, chemist Mamoru Mohri.

first black female astronaut,

reports AP.

The countdown clocks began ticking at 0700 GMT toward a Saturday morning launch of Endeavour.

pickup truck, leading politician Chamlong Srimuang waved as his campaign wound through Chum Phae town in Tahiland's impoverished northeast to bring a new mes-

"Chamlong Srimuang, the fighter for democracy, is here," a campaign worker said over a loudspeaker. Later, on a dusty field be-

fore 2,500 people, the man with the trademark crew cut and simple blue farmer's shirt pledged to end corruption and military influence in politics. "Brother and sister citizens, we have to choose democracy. If we don't choose democracy,

this country will be a dictatorship," Chamlong said.

Thatland holds parliamentary elections Sunday in a test of whether the blood shed by pro-democracy demonstrators Chamlong led in May will produce lasting political change.

More than 40 people were killed by security forces that backed a non-elected prime minister, former army chief Suchinda Kraprayoon. Suchinda resigned amid public outrage, and Anand Panyarachun was named to head an interim government and oversee elections.

All the parties have said they will not change Thailand's traditional pro-West policies. But the chief foreign policy

said that if it came to power the party would support UN economic sanctions against the Khmer Rouge guerrilla group if it continued violating the Cambodian peace accord. Thai businessmen and military officers make huge amounts from the border trade in logs and

adviser of Chamlong's party has

The election could be a watershed in Thailand's political history. The military, longtime final arbiters of power, has been clearly tainted by "bloody May," and the leading contenders in the election are the pro-democracy parties that challenged it.

With 128 of the 360 parliamentary seats, the north-

to Chamlong's Palang Dharma (Power of Virtue) Party and other parties that hope the new political consciousness born in May will overcome a history of vote buying, military influence and political patron-The thirst for democracy

east's 17 provinces are crucial

mostly in confined to Bangkok. But there are hints of change even in the arid northeast, where the rice bowl comes first and accepting money to vote for someone is only a way of filling it. Palang Dharma is trying to expand into the northeast from its Bangkok Sumet Pongbatoom, 35, a

merchant who was at

Chamlong's rally in the northeast last week, said he previously had voted for one of the pro-military parties, but the May events convinced him to vote for Chamlong. Pomdi Eamnoon, 57, a bus

driver, said he was tired of vote buying and corruption and approved of Chamlong's call for a return to strict Buddhist ethics. He favours Palang Dharma "because they tell the truth." Polls show most people

want Chamlong to be the next prime minister. Other leading candidates are Democrat Party leader Chuan Leekpai and New Aspiration Party and former army chief Cavalit Yongchaiyudh, both on the side that

Another possibility is former Prime Minister Chatichai Choonhavan, who has staged a remarkable comeback after being ousted in a 1991 military

Some people have criticized Chamlong for having led crowds to the military barricades in May, provoking the soldiers to shoot. But he has been drawing on his more popular image as hero of the demonstrations. An often-seen campaign poster shows him taken away handcuffed by two military policemen in May "Persisting by the side of the people in the struggle for democracy," the caption says.

8 Filipino troops BACOLOD, Philippines, Sept 9 : Communist rebels Wednes-

day killed eight government troopers in an ambush in the central Philippines, the military reported. Two of the guerillas were also slain in the fincident, reports AP. A report from the military's Negros Island Command said the ambush took place in Cauayan town in Negros Occi-

miles) south of Manila. It said a military patrol was returning to base when they were fired upon by 30 New People's Army guertllas.

dental province, about 80

kilometers (50 miles) south of

Bacolod and about 544 (340)