Myanmar will rewrite constitution to include role of army

BANGKOK, Oct 3: Myanmar military government has formed a steering committee to draft plans for a constitutional convention later this year, official Yangon radio said Friday, reports AFP.

The junta directed the 18member committee to ensure that the new charter includes a role for the military in Myanmar politics, and that it preserves the nation and ensures its solidarity and severeignty, it said in a broadcast monitored here.

The committee is headed by Major General Myo Nyunt, it said. He is the Yangon area military commander, the Religious Affairs Minister and a member of the State Law and Order Restoration Committee (SLORC), the official name of the ruling junta.

The SLORC earlier ordered that the convention to draft a new constitution for Myanmar be held with in six months of July 10, when preliminary meetings between government and political leaders ended. Myo Nyunt also oversaw those meetings.

The committee will decide how many people from Myanmar's numerous ethnic groups will be invited to the convention, it said. Other delegates will be drawn from among farmers, workers, government employees and from those who were voted into parliament in the 1990 elections that SLORC has never honoured.

After General Saw Maung retired last April and was succeeded as SLORC Chairman by General Than Shwe, the junta began easing its hardline

It has since released hundreds of political prisoners, announced a unilateral halt to military operations against Myanmar's numerous insurgent groups, met with opposition leaders and announced plans to rewrite the constitution to take it more democratic.

UN Council votes to seize Iraqi oil assets abroad

UNITED NATIONS, Oct 3: The UN Security Council voted Friday to seize Iraqi oil assets abroad to finance UN activities in Iraq and pay war reparations, reports AFP.

Resolution 778, adopted by a vote of 14 in favour and China abstaining, affects up to one billion dollars worth of assets and oil, mostly in the United States, Saudi Arabia and Turkey.

The money seized will be transferred to a UN-managed escrow account and be used to finance UN disarmament and humanitarian activities in Iraq. including buying food and medicine for civilians.

Up to thirty percent could be used to pay war reparations to Kuwait, which Iraq occupied from August 1990 to February

The money affected includes funds from oil sales which were frozen after sanctions were slapped on Iraq days after its invasion of Kuwait

iraqi crude oil in pipelines in Saudi Arabia and Turkey is also affected. That will be sold at market prices and the money deposited in the escrow account, according to the terms of the Resolution.

The following are key points of UN Security Council Resolution 778, approved Friday, to setze lraqt oil assets abroad to finance UN activities in Iraq and pay Gulf War reparations.

The Security Council, 'condemning lraq's continued failure to comply with its obligations under relevant Resolutions... reaffirming its concern about the nutritional and health situation of the lragi civilian population," and recalling lrag's liability under previous resolutions to compensate for damages resulting from its invasion and occupation of Kuwait.

"Decides that all states in which there are funds of the government of Iraq, or its state bodies, corporations or agen-

that represent the proceeds of sale of Iraqi petroleum or petroleum products, paid for by or on behalf of the purchaser on or after 6 August 1990, shall cause the transfer of those funds (or equivalent amounts), as soon as possible to the escrow account provided for in Resolutions 706 (1991) and 712 (1991)".

"Provided that this paragraph shall not require any state to transfer of such funds in excess of 200 million dol-

"Decides that all states in which there are petroleum or petroleum products owned by the government of Iraq, or its state bodies, corporations or agencies, shall take all feasible steps to purchase or arrange for the sale of such products at fair market value, and transfer the proceeds as soon as possible to the escrow account provided for in Resolutions

706 (1991) and 712 (1991)." "Urges all states to contribute funds from other sources to the escrow account as soon as possible."

"Requests the Secretary General to ascertain the whereabouts and amounts of the said petroleum products and the proceeds of sale ... (and) the costs of United Nations activities concerning the elimination of weapons of mass destruction; the provision of humanitarian relief in Iraq... (to) transfer (petroleum proceeds) to the compensation fund... the percentage (30 per cent) referred to in paragraph 10 of this Resolution... (and) use the remainder of funds... for the costs of United Nations activities concerning the elimination of weapons of mass destruction, the provision of humanitarian relief in Iraq and other United Nations operations in Iraq... taking into account any preference expressed by states transferring or contributing funds as to the

Russia to go ahead with sale of submarine to Iran WASHINGTON, Oct 3: Russpokesman Sergei Yastrzhem-

sia has informed the United States that it intends to go ahead with a sale of diesel submarine to Iran, despite US opposition, State Department spokesman Richard Boucher said Friday, reports AFP.

The Russians have told us that they intend to proceed with the sale," Boucher told reporters here.

A Pentagon official had said September 25 that a Russianmade Kilo submarine sold by Russia to Iran was expected to reach the Gulf in a matter of weeks.

Boucher said he did not know if all three submarines originally ordered, valued at 250 million dollars a piece, would be delivered.

AP from Moscow adds: The Foreign Ministry said Friday that Russia is still selling Soviet submarines to Iran, but insisted that the weapons transfers would "not upset stability in the region."

Foreign

bsky said Russia would honour all commitments to sell weapons to Iran made by the former Soviet Union, but that it would abide by international agreements concerning the

Acting US Secretary of State Lawrence Eagleburger raised the issue this month with Russian Foreign Minister Andrei Kozrev, saying Iran "has a certain relationship to terrorism that we consider to be anathema."

in an interview with The Associated Press, Yastrzhembsky confirmed Russia was selling submarines to Iran, despite comments last week by a Russian trade official that the sales had been suspended due to payment problems.

"I can confirm that there is a contract (to sell submarines to Iran) that dates back to the Soviet era, and Russia is going ahead with that contract," Yas-Ministry trzhembsky said.

BRIEFLY

One beheaded in Taif: A Saudi murderer was beheaded Friday at the mountain resort of Taif and an Indian thief had his right hand off, according to Saudi television, AFP repots from Riyadh.

Citing the Interior Ministry, it reported that Mohammad Al-Dussari was beheaded for killing a relative.

Indian Mohammad Tazi was found guilty of a series of thefts in a building occupied by foreign workers in Mandeb, central Saudi Arabia. His right hand was cut off in accordance with Islamic law.

Sikh rebel leader shot dead: security. forces shot dead Friday a hardcore Sikh militant wanted for some 500 killings in the northern state of Punjab, the Press Trust of India (PTI) said, AFP reports from New Delhi.

A group of three militants clashed with security troops outside Chak Mahi village in the separatist-torn state's industrial district of Ludhiana, PTI said.

All three were killed and one was later identified by police as Gurmukh Singh believed to be responsible for some 500 slayings, the news agency said.

Another militant, alleged to be responsible for some 100 murders and identified as Bhupinder Singh, died in a similar encounter Friday outside Punjab's Sikh holy city of Amritsar.

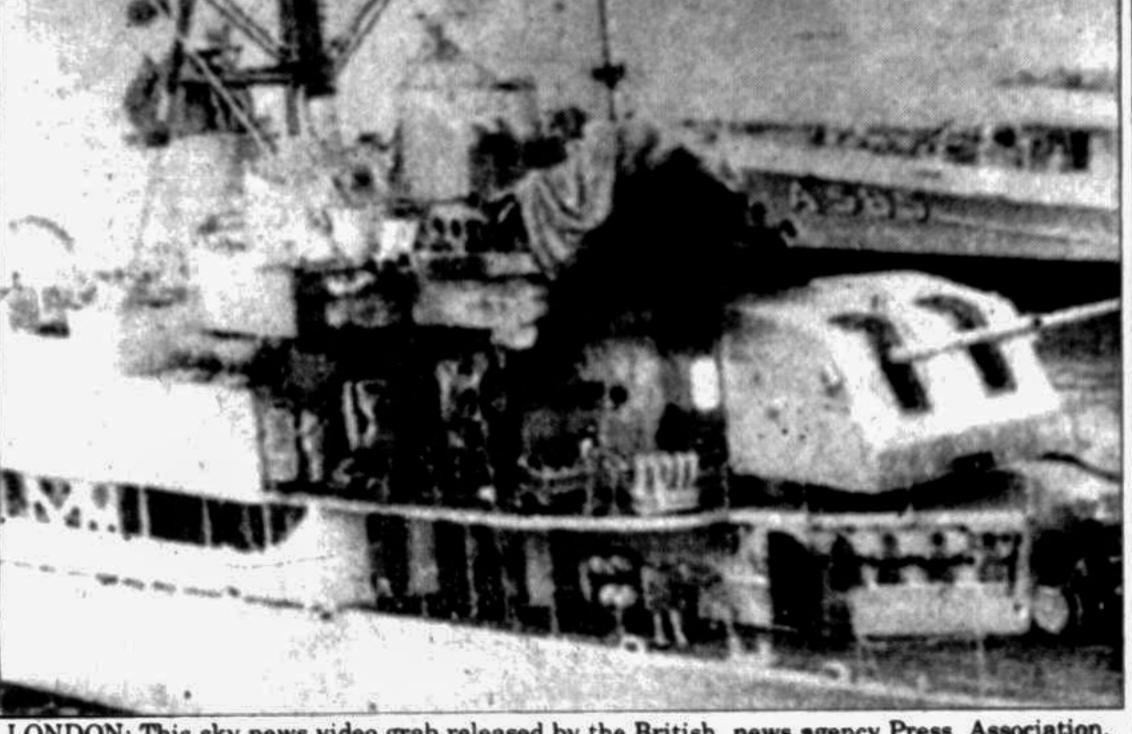
King meets Buthelezi Thursday:

United Nations mission Chief in South Africa Angela King will meet Kwazulu leader Mangosuthu Buthelezi next Thursday to encourage him to return to negotiations with the government, King confirmed Friday, AFP reports from Johannesburg.

She said UN Secretary General Boutros Boutros-Ghalí had also contacted Buthelezi to try to persuade him to reopen the channels of communication he slammed shut Sunday in protest against deals negotiated between the government and the ANC to restart democracy talks.

Twenty-three UN observers have arrived in South Africa since September 16 as part of a UN mission established in August under Security Council resolution 772 to help quell violence and monitor negotiation efforts.

King said 27 more observers would be arriving here later this month and another "one or two" experts would be sent to help judge Richard Goldstone, who heads inquiries into vio-



LONDON: This sky news video grab released by the British news agency Press Association, shows the bridge of the Turkish destroyer Muavener, which was hit by a missile from the US aircraft carrier Saratogoa late October 1 during overnight exercises in the Aegean Sea. - AFP/UNB photo

China offers meet with Taiwan

BEIJING, Oct 3: China has proposed a meeting with Taiwan to lay the groundwork for talks on ending a 43-year ban on direct contacts, the official Xinhua news agency said today. reports AFP.

Beijing and Taipei have already agreed to hold the first top-level meeting of semi-official organisations that are tasked with facilitating reunifi-

The mainland's straits exchange association proposed holding preparatory talks to work out the agenda, time and

place for the meeting, Xinhua Taiwan's strait exchange

foundation chairman Koo Chen-Fu agreed in August to meeting his mainland counterpart Wang Daohan to discuss financial ties.

"As for the exact place of the meeting, we will give active consideration to Koo's requirement and it will be decided through preparatory consultation," Xinhua quoted a September 30 sea message as

Koo is a member of the Decision-Making Central Standing Committee of Taiwan's ruling party, the Kuomintang. The Kuomintang govern-

ment has banned direct official contacts with China since 1949 when it was driven off the mainland by Mao Zedong's Communists.

The semi-official groups have provided a channel for circumventing the ban and largely handle growing disputes between the long-time

Beijing and Taipei both claim to be the legitimate ruler of all China and oppose Taiwan's independence.

UN commission to probe war-crimes in Y'slavia

allocation of such funds among

these purposes."

NEW YORK, Oct 3: The United Nations is about to appoint a commission of independent experts to investigate reports of war-crimes in the former Yugoslavia, western diplomats here said, reports

The move, which is without precedent in UN history, comes in a draft resolution to the Security Council co-sponsored by the United States, Britain, France and Belgium.

The proposal is already under intensive discussion at other levels of the UN.

The resolution requires the Security Council to ask UN Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali to name "an impartial commission of experts' which would "examine and analyse" reports of atrocities and determine if there had been breaches of international humanitarian law and the Geneva convention.

UN member states would be asked to supply all information available to them within 30 days of the adoption of the resolution.

The resolution, which could be passed as early as next Tuesday, says the Security Council shall heed the commission's conclusions in applying Resolution 771 adopted in August and which makes individuals personally responsible for atrocities committed by them against civilians in time

However, the sponsors of the draft resolution have highlighted the difficulties inherent in setting up an international court of this kind and say the main purpose of the resolution is to be dissuastve.

Off the Record

He sold drugs to Quayle

WASHINGTON: The US Bureau of Prisons, for "political purposes", silenced an inmate who tried to tell reporters that he sold marijuana to Vice President Quayle in the 1970s, a Senate committee chairman says, reports AP.

A report by Sen Carl Levin. a Democrat, offers no conclusion on the drug charge, only on the periods of solitary confinement that kept Brett Kimberlin from holding news conferences just before the 1988 general election.

"I can only conclude that the Bureau of Prisons did, in fact, take action against Brett Kimberlin for political purposes by cancelling a press conference on November 4 1988, and placing him in administrative detention on November 4, November 7 and December 22, 1988, said Levin, chairman of the Senate Governmental Affairs subcommittee on oversight of government management.

Levin said "the primary purpose" of the government's actions were "to keep Kimberlin's allegations concerning Quayle out of the 1988

Kimberlin, a convicted marijuana amuggler incarecrated at the El Reno federal prison in Oklahoma, alleged that he sold marijuana to Quayle in the '70s, Levin said.'

It's fun to be a mistress

LOS ANGELES: Millionaire Henry Mudd showered his seven mistresses with money, lavish gifts and lifetime trust funds, said one of the women who helped to manage his harem after she forsook it for religion, reports AP.

Betty Olend testified Friday, in a 5 million dollar "palimony" suit filed by Eleanor Lorraine Oliver, one of Mudd's other mistresses. The 77-year-old Mudd disinherited Ms Oliver a few months before he died and executors of his estate evicted her.

Ms Olend, a former prostitute who said she was Mudd's lover for 11 years, said she ended their sexual relationship and became his housekeeper after she became a born-again

Moscow concerned at Kashmir unrest

ISLAMABAD, Oct 3: The secretary general of Pakistan's foreign ministry has returned from Moscow saying Russia is concerned by unrest in Indiancontrolled Kashmir, it was reported Saturday, says AFP.

Akram Zaki, who returned Friday, said the Russian leadership expressed concern over "human rights violations" They also underlined the

need for a peaceful settlement of the Kashmir issue to ensure stability in South Asia, he said. Thousands have died during the past 30 months in the Indian- administered part of

Kashmir where militant groups

have been waging a secession-

ist campaign. The area is the only state in India where Muslims form the majority.

India accuses Pakistan. which controls the northern third of Kashmir, of arming and training the insurgents. Islamabad denies the charge, saying it gives only moral support to what it calls a struggle for Kashmiri self- determina-

Moscow, Zaki spoke with vice president Alexander Rutskoi and other Russian officials about strengthening bilateral

A joint declaration to set as a basis for mutual cooperation was finalized during the visit.

Premadasa ready to talk with LTTE NEW DELHI, Oct 3: Sri Lankan President Ranasinghe Premadasa said Friday his government would resume peace talks with the separatists

Eelam (LTTE) subject to cer-

tain conditions, reports AFP. Premadasa said the talks could go ahead if the LTTE, fighting for an independent Tamil state "Eelam" renounced their armed opposition and agreed to recognise the right During his six days in of other Sri Lankan parties to take part in elections.

> Premadasa, who arrived here on a three-day state visit Thursday, responded to a reporter's question about New Delhi's request for the extradition of LTTE Chief Velupillai

Prabhakaran, saying that "all procedures" would be followed. Indian police allege that the LTTE is responsible for the slaying of Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi by a suicide bomb at-Liberation Tigers of Tamil

> Premadasa also suggested that India and Sri Lanka should consider signing a peace and friendship treaty.

tack in southern India last

Premadasa's current Indian tour is chiefly in his capacity as Chairman of the seven-nation South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC). He has already visited Pakistan and Nepal, and is to tour other member states before the next SAARC summit to he held in Dhaka.

Premadasa, who had talks with Indian President Shankar Dayal Sharma and Prime Minister PV Narasimha Rao on Thursday, called for the enhancement of trade among the SAARC nations on a preferential basis.

He said Colombo had already decided unilaterally to buy as much as possible from the member states of the grouping.

Another report says: President Premadasa ended a state visit to India today and flew to Bhutan, the next stop of a regional tour as chairman of a South Asian grouping.

Premadasa, who was given a ceremontal farewell on the forecourt of the presidential

palace, told reporters the visit had been "short and sweet."

He said his talks with Indian President Shankar Dayal Sharma and Prime Minister PV Narasimha Rao on bilateral and South Asian issues had been "useful," but did not elaborate.

Premadasa, who arrived Thursday, was here chiefly in his capacity as chairman of the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC) which groups Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, the Maldives, Nepal, Pakistan and Sri Lanka.

But he also used the visit for talks with Indian leaders on the Tamil separatist conflict in his country's northeast.

Vietnam keen to ease relations with US

UNITED NATIONS, Oct 3: Vietnam's Foreign Minister on Friday urged normalisation of relations between Hanoi and Washington and said his country had done everything possible to cooperate in resolving the issue of American servicemen missing in action, reports Reuter.

"We continue to strengthen existing relations with countries in various continents and at the same time enter into relations with countries in regions with which we have had only rare contacts in the past, such as recently with countries in the south Pacific, the Gulf and Latin America", Foreign Minister Nguyen Manh Cam

said in a speech to the UN general assembly.

The normalisation of relations between Vietnam and the United States will benefit not only the Vietnamese and the American peoples but also peace and stability in south east Asia."

Cam said Vietnam had "turned the page of past hi.story" and looked forward to the future.

"Proceeding from this spirit and from our humanitarian policy, we have done whatever possible in cooperating effectively with the United States to settle the question of American missing in action during the Vietnam war.

Kashmiris revise decision on foreign tourists

JAMMU, Oct 3: A hardcore Muslim militant group in Kashmir-Friday announced a clinib-down in a blanket order it announced recently asking "all foreigners" visiting the picturesque state to quit in 72 hours, reports AFP.

The heavily armed Hizbul Mujahideen, which issued the order said it had now decided to exclude all other foreign nationals except Israelis from the ban. The statement said the re-

vised decision was prompted by "stout opposition" from some of the other Muslim militant groups, who are also fighting for the secession of the northern border state from Indian rule.

The Hizbul had issued the order Tuesday claiming that Israel intelligence agents had entered the Himalayan state as tourists to help Indian security forces crush the bloody secessionist campaign.

Indian child labourers have no time to enjoy independence SIVAKASI, Oct 3: Darkness at noon. A girl who says she has forgotten how the world looks during the day is articulate enough to .

voice her predicament: "I hate this job; but you see, I cannot fight fate." So totally helpless that she does not even think of overcoming it, Four years have passed since thirteen-yearold Calaichelvi joined the ranks of the labourers at the infamous match factories of Sivakasi. It is a misnomer to call them child

labourers, because they are not children in any

sense except in one over which society has no control — their age. It is that hour of the morning when most people draw their blankets tight around them and sleep the soundest. Kalaichelvi would love to do that, but it is 0230 hrs, time for the loud knock on the door. The match factory agent, the paid alarm of the village, is going from house to house, banging on the doors with his bamboo stick. The knocks spread out along the villages bordering Pandalgudi. Almost every

factories. The knocks become louder as Kalaichelvi's mother goes to the door. For a moment, the girl refuses to get up. But habit takes over and she gets dressed - the mandatory costume is a half-saree, the girls must look older than they are, on to the village centre where her workmates are assembling.

household in the area sends a child to the

Kalaichelvi's day has begun. It is a 50 km ride by bus to the match units of Sivakasi, Aruppukottai and Sattur. Sometimes, she will get place to sit. Mostly, she covers the distance standing. Dawn breaks and the children enter the

dark, stuffy sheds where the matches are made. The tin roofing will make it unbearably hot later, but right now it is quite cool. There are no machines except human ones in these factories. With plenty of practice, sitting in rows on the floor, the girls and boys

set to work automatically. The small sticks, arranged in neat rows on collapsible wooden planks, are dipped in chemicals, dried and then packed in match boxes. The working day is 10 hours long, the working week is seven days. Remuneration is

Rs 120 a week. Few of them need the goading of the supervisors to work faster. Kalaichelvi, who braved the anger of her masters to speak to this writer, says, "The speed is okay. At least, it keeps me engaged from thinking about myself and my future."

Future. What kind of future does this girl dream of for herself? What does she think of The rush of anger in Kalaichelvi's face at the question is disconcerting: "School everyday.

While travelling in the bus, I dream of going to

school. My brother is studying in the village

school. But my parents never allowed me to She knows that it is her sex which weighed

against her. Looking up briefly from her task, she says,

"I have to earn for the family. We have land but it is not cultivable. There was no rain and no employment for men. My father goes to work, but that is not enough. The factories prefer young girls and children as they are better suited to the work."

What about the much-touted economic independence working has given these boys

"Independence to whom?" she shot back. "I am locked up for 10 hours here. Three hours' travel, where is the time to enjoy independence? We are all chained by the money we earn, even god cannot save us."

for three years, but she is the lone breadwinner of the family. Her husband has not been able to find a job. So marriage is no escape? "It is my husband's decision. If he asks me

to work, I have to work. If he wants me to stay

at home, I will stay back." An afterthought:

"See, this is Bhuvana. She has been married

"And if he kicks me out, I will come back here." Apart from the ever present danger of fire or explosion (16 people died in an explosion in

a Sivakasi cracker unit two weeks ago), there

are other health hazards in this job. "All of us suffer from constant and painful headaches. Some of us get periodic fever and cough. When it is unbearable, I take an advance from the owner and visit the local doctor for

medicines," Kalaichelvi says. In Sivakasi, an official involved with investigation of explosions in firework units said over 500 lives had been lost in 200 accidents in the past 10 years. "It is needless to tell you that most of them were children. Though the conditions here are on the national agenda thanks to the relentless pressure kept on by the media, child labour is actually on the

The factory owner tried to stop this reporter from entering, but when he fatled, signalled to the girls to keep quiet. This did not repress Kalaichelvi, who said, "I know I am not supposed to talk to you like this. But we want you urbanites to know the conditions in which we live."

Elsewhere, there are pleas that child labour should not be banned. It provides sustenance to too many. Make the regulations stringent to bring succour, but do not impose bans.

But for Kalaichelvi, who in a few months will not even have the nominal protection of being a 'child' in the eyes of the law, the matches she makes do not light any spark of hope. She says: "I am resigned; resigned to my fate."

Perot spends \$1b for TV ads

DALLAS, Oct 3: Ross Perot is pressing his reborn presidential candidacy, spending over 1 million dollar on television ads and asserting his appeal would fail "if the American people are too soft" to subscribe to stiff economic proposals, reports AP.

"There will be pain everywhere. It's like World War II. We had shared sacrifice", Perot said of his programme for deep spending cuts an higher

"We'll all have to do it to-gether, I can't do it for you," Perot said in an interview with Barbara Walters on ABC television, one day after he announced he'd changed his mind and would go ahead with the independent presidential challenge he abandoned in

Mid-July.

Although he is a distant third in polls, Perot said of his prospects of elections: "That's up to the American people - I am more than willing to go down in flames if the Americap people are too soft to face