NEW DELHI, Aug 22: Indian

Prime Minister PV Narasimha

Rao's attempt to clip the wings

of Hindu revivalists by arrang-

ing a constitutional divorce be-

tween God and politics has run

To scathing opposition criti-

cism that he was acting in

"indecent haste" and opening a

Pandora box, Rao has proposed

constitutional amendments to

ban any political party that ap-

peals to voters from a religious

A sharply polarised parlia-

ment is expected to take a vote

Tuesday on the controversial

amendments Rao says are nec-

essary to staunch growing reli-

gious fundamentalism and pre-

The amendments to the con-

stitution and electoral law

mainly target the Bharatiya

Janata Party (BJP), which has

grown into a formidable political

force by using the charismatic

serve India's secular values.

platform.

into trouble, reports AFP.

Rao's move politically perverse: Advani

Salah Jadid dead

AMMAN, Aug 22: Salah Jadid, once one of the most powerful men in Syria, died in Damascus last week after being held prisoner for 23 years by the government of his one-time rival President Hafez Al-Assad, his family said, reports AFP.

Jadid, leader of the Baath Party and a member of Syria's ruling elite between 1966 and 1970, died in hospital Thursday and was buried Friday in his home village of Dueir Baabda, in northwest Syria, according to his family and Hakem Al-Fayez, a fellow political prisoner for 23

Jadid was thrown into jail when Assad seized power in November 1970 after a bitter power struggle between two wings of the ruling Baath Party. Fayez said Jadid had remained imprisoned until the day before he died of kidney and heart failure.

Jadid's colleagues published lengthy obituaries in Jordanian newspaper Saturday mourning the death of the former general.

god Rama as the mascot of an aggressive Hindu revivalist cru-



Narasimha Rao muster the two-thirds majority the amendments need for their passage is uncertain.

Only the ruling Congress (1) and the Communists have endorsed the move, which has divided the centrists and expectedly drawn fire from the BJP, or

Indian People's Party, opposed to it "lock, stock and barrel."

Under the amendments candidates for legislative office will be disqualified from contesting polls, and assets of individuals and political parties seized if they use religion to drum up voter support in their election campaigns.

Parties will not be allowed to bear religious names or use religious symbols. Such parties as the All India Muslim League and the Sikh Akali Dal will have to change their names or be disqualified. BJP leader Lal Krishna

Advant lashed out at Rao's minority government Friday. The move, he said, was "politically perverse, constitutionally questionable and culturally corro-

The government stand that secularism is in danger is phoney. If anything is in danger, it is the continuation of the

Congress government in office," said Advant, 66, promoted by his party as a future prime

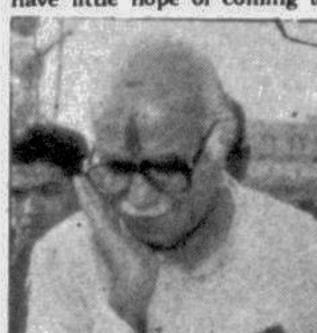
"We shall oppose the bills in parliament, and if it manages to scrape through, will oppose it . among the people and in the court," he said.

The BJP, the explosive campaign for a Hindu temple on the site of the 16th century Babri mosque in Ayodhya, which culminated in its December 6 destruction by Hindu Zealots, setting off Hindu-Muslim riots throughout the country.

The razing of the mosque, which Hindus claim was built by Moghals on the birthplace of their lord Rama, was followed by the dismissal of BJP government ruling the politically crucial states of Uttar Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh, Rajasthan and Himachal Pradesh.

Rao's move to separate religion and politics comes ahead

of elections due in November in the four heartland states where his Congress (I) party is seen to have little hope of coming to



L K Advani

The premier said in a speech Friday the legislation is a "must" to check the volatile mix of religion and politics and preserve religious tolerance and equality.

"We have to fight this evil

Christianity,

Buddhism state

religions of

Kalmykia

only Buddhist state is undergo-

ing a religious revival, reports

self-governing republics on the

lands of the south, made

Buddhism and Orthodox

Christianity joint state religions

this year. Reproductions of religious

icons are sold in the streets of

the capital and adorn the inte-

riors of people's homes, while

more people seek advice and

elected the first president of this

poor sheep-farming republic in

April, he launched a programme

of radical reform pledging to re-

store religion to fill the spiritual

Ilumzhinov defied the Mo-

scow patriarchate, the seat of

the Russian Orthodox church,

Santiago may

run for

void left after communism.

When Kirsan Ilumzhinov was

help from Buddhist priests.

steppe, the semi-desert grass-

RUSSIA, Aug 22 : Europe's

Kalmykia, one of Russia's 20

and the only solution lies in amending the constitution," he

The main opposition party BJP which speaks from an unabashedly Hindu plank in the overwhelmingly Hindu-majority nation, says the move amounts to a "crude attempt, bordering

out of the nation." "What the government and its allies have contemplated is not merely a rootless India, but an amoral, even immoral India," it said in a note of dissent to a parliamentary committee which scrutinized the bills.

on the sinister, to take the soul

The party said the proposed amendments are a 'desperate attempt to stem the ideological avalanche of cultural nationalism which the BJP has come to spearhead."

The centrists fear the BJP will project itself as a victim of an anti-Hindu state and grow stronger if the bills become law.

Call for early polls to solve Ukraine crises

Bill to separate religion from politics uncertain KIEV, Aug 22: The chairman of Ukraine's parliament opened celebrations of the second anniversary of independence with a call for early elections to rereports Reuter.

solve the country's power crists, Ivan Plyushch's address on Saturday, applauded by Ukraine's political and cultural elite, sounded the death knell for twin referendum of confi-

dence in parliament and in President Leonid Kravchuk. Parliament had called the votes for September 26 to persuade striking miners to return

to work. The chairman's address appeared aimed at resolving a power crisis which has hindered the consolidation of democracy and the introduction of market

economics.

"Parliament decided under pressure from the miners to stage the referendum. Now it has become apparent that this was not the best decision to take," Plyushch said.

BDIFFI

Japanese student killed in US: A Japanese exchange student who was shot in the head and left to die in a San Francisco suburb earlier this week died in hospital on Saturday, police said, Reuter reports from San

Masakazu Kuriyama, 25, died at the John Muir Medical Centre in Walnut Creek, near San Francisco, police spokesman Joe Kreins said.

Kuriyama was critically wounded in an attack on Thursday night. He was found lying near the commuter railway station in Concord, 30 miles (48 km) east of San Francisco, with gunshot wounds to his head.

A Filipino governor suspended: A governor has been suspended for 60 days on suspicion of having helped set fire to his provincial capital building to

destroy incriminating records, AP reports from Manila. Abdul-Gani "Gerry" Salapuddin, governor of troubled, largely Muslim Basilan province, was ordered removed from office Saturday by President Fidel Ramos after a police report pointed to "strong evidence" he was behind the fire this year

The fire broke out one day before government auditors were to examine financial records of the province. Virtually all provincial records were destroyed. Salapuddin is suspected of unauthorized spending.

Diseases take 20 in Sudanese camps: More than 20 people have died of meningitis and measles since an outbreak was reported at Sudanese refugee transit camps in northern Uganda, the official New Vision newspaper reported in Kampala on Saturday, AFP reports from Kampala.

The paper said most of those affected by last week's outbreak were refugee children living in two transit camps, six kilometre (four miles) from Koboko town, in squalid conditions.

"Refugee families are crammed in poorly built grass-thatched huts, while others are sleeping under trees. Tents have been given to some but many have not yet received them," the paper

Rains claim 12 in S Korea: Heavy downpours in South Korea have killed at least 12 people, most of whom were washed away by floods, a government official said

yesterday, Reuter reports from Seoul. "We have confirmed 12 deaths so far. On Saturday we had one person missing but the person has been found, said the official at the National Disaster Prevention and Counter-measures

He said the estimated loss from the rain on Friday and Saturday was about 27 billion won (34 million dollar) but the figure was expected to increase.

Blast kills 3 in Philippines: A grenade Philippines city of Zamboanga injuring 15 people, police said Sunday. Muslim extremists were blamed for the attack, AP reports from Philippines.

Police said those injured in the Saturday night blast included four firemen. The assatlant escaped

Zamboanga, located 960 kilometers (560 miles) south of Manila, is a largely Christian city surrounded by Muslim hinterlands. The city has been the scene of numerous incidents of violence, including attacks on Roman Catholic shrines and churches.

A Croatian woman (R) hugs her sister (L) after she was released from Serb-occupied Glina in the Croatian Krajina on Friday. Some 50 mostly elderly Croats were released from Majski by opening a department of Bazen near Glina after living two years under Serbian occupation. - AFP photo religious affairs.

French desire to resume N-test threatens lives of islanders

PARIS, Aug 22: The French government's destre to resume nuclear testing in the south Pacific threatens efforts by local islanders to rebuild their lives and reverse the effects of almost 30 years of nuclear experiments in the region, reports IPS.

South Pacific islanders have long been at the mercy of France's military nuclear ambitions. Recent intense lobbying by the right-wing government in France and the army for a resumption of testing is raising fears that the islanders' hopes of a new nuclear free future

French socialist President Francois Mitterrand is standing fast against the demand for a resumption of tests. In April last year, he ordered a moratorium on nuclear testing in the Polynesian atolls and he says France will not be the first of the world's nuclear powers to resume the experiments.

Local cooperatives and nongovernmental organisations in the Pacific have since stepped up their efforts to reverse the consequences of underground nuclear explosions below the Mururoa and Fagataufa atolls.

Nearly 20 grassroots associations have banded together to form the Hiti Tau network, which is coordinating develop ment projects designed to recover the islanders lost economic self-sufficiency and cultural identity

"The moratorium has given us an historic chance to rethink the economic models imposed by the nuclear testing." said Hiti Tau head, Gabriel Tetiarahi. The local people had endured much suffering as a result of the testing, and the change in their lives.

At the beginning of July, Mitterrand backed US President Bill Clinton's extension of the US moratorium until at least

September 1994. He said France favoured a total ban on nuclear testing and an indefinite extension of the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty.

But French Defence Minister Francois Leotard has not ruled out resumed testing before the end of this year.

Leotard has said the Damage caused by the test ban must be carefully studied. Those arguing for a resumption says they are needed to test warheads for missiles on the new Triumphant submarine, and maintain France's deterrence capability.

From 1966 to 1974, France conducted 44 atmospheric tests from 1966 to 1974, followed by 131 underground experiments. These have caused serious environmental damage and health problems, scientists say. Activists say resuming the

tests now may destroy plans to re-orient the Polynesian econ-

Senate in '95 MANILA, Aug 22: Mirlam Defensor Santiago, runner-up

in last year's presidential election, says she may run for the Senate in 1995 if her protest against President Fidel Ramos victory is not resolved by then, reports AP. Santiago finished second in

the seven-member field in the May 1992 election, running on an anti-corruption platform. She trailed Ramos by 800,000 votes out of move than 20 million cast and later asked the Supreme Court for a recount.

The appeal remains unre-"I expect to be declared the

winner of the election protest by next year," Santiago told a civic club in her hometown of Iloilo on Saturday. "But if the administration

succeeds in delaying the decision on my protest, I will not discount the possibility of running for the Senate. Senators are elected nation-

wide. Half of the 24 seats will be up for election in 1995.

Santiago, a former judge, won a nationwide reputation for feisty remarks during her tenure as immigration commissioner. She once suggested to a congressional critic that he stick his finger in a wall socket and once threatened to chop up corrupt employees and toss them to sharks in Manila Bay.

"But the sharks would probably not eat you out of a sense of professional courtesy," she

Those remarks won a wide following among Filipinos disgusted with corruption, crony government and the failure of former President Corazon Aguino to deliver on promises of reform made when she took power in 1986.

likely to be decided by the for-

tunes of the economy, the

fastest growing in the world,

and by the success of vice pre-

mier Zhu Rongji in restoring it

raising economic growth and

personal incomes has done

much to increase the chances of

a smooth succession of power

and policy in the post-Deng era.

landing for the economy over

the next 6-12 months, that will

consolidate his position and the

probability his policies will con-

"If Zhu can ensure a smooth

The government's success in

to more healthy growth.

Off the Record

Star-crossed couple

NEW DELHI, Aug 22: A teenage Indian wife killed herself after her frustrated Indian husband feigned suicide following a six-month wait for an auspicious time to consummate their marriage, reports AFP.

Elders had told the couple at the time of their marriage in the southern Indian village of Gangaram that the stars did not permit them to have sex until September 16, Indian Express reported yesterday.

The 20-year-old husband, Subba Rao, smeared pesticide on his lips and feigned symptoms of poisoning on Friday the 13th to show his frustration, the newspaper said.

He was discharge from hospital and returned home to find that his 18-year-old bride had swallowed the remaining pesticide and killed herself in the belief that he was dying, Indian Express said.

Family elders said they had been waiting for an auspicious time to allow the couple to ceremonially consummate their marriage, ignoring Rao's requests that he be 'united' with his

Indians with bared buttocks

OSLESBY: A post office mural showing Indians with bared buttocks was returned to public view after more than 1,000 people signed petitions saying they wanted it back, reports AP

Blinds were placed in front of the 51-year-old painting "Illini and Potawatomies Struggle at Starved Rock," in mid June after janitor John Swartz complained that it prompted homosexuality and violated his civil rights.

The painting depicts a battle between the two tribes. Les Metanic, manager of postal operations in central Illinois, said officials decided to return the painting to public view after evaluating the community's response.

But Swartz isn't giving up. He said he has filed a petition of reconsideration with the federal Equal Employment Opportunity Commission and wants the post office to either paint clothes on the Indians or paint over the mural entirely.

"I will take it to the federal district court if that's what it takes," he said



Kai Son-Con, 18, stretches out on Sunday as his pet jumbo, Bunam, rests its foot on his belly during the annual Port Dickson beach resort festival, 60 miles from Kuala Lumpur. Bunam is also said to be a good footballer and plays as striker in the annual Thai elephant football - AFP photo tournament.

Carlos may not come back to power

CARACAS (Venezuela), Aug 22: Ninety days after Carlos Andres Perez was suspended from the presidency to face trial on embezzlement charges, the question remains: Can he come back? reports AP.

The answer is murky because the only legal guideline. the Venezuelan Constitution, doesn't says what to do when a sitting president goes on trial. Perez's case in unique to the

country's 35 years of democratic rule. The issue is likely to be decided by Congress. The Constitution says simply that

after a president has been absent from office 90 days, Congress must vote whether to permanently bar him from of-

The leading opposition Social Christian Party, said this week it wants Perez out and would call for a vote on the issue.

Leaders of Perez's ruling Democratic Action Party are scheduled to meet Monday to determine their position. Perez was suspended from office May 21 on charges he embezzled 17.2 million dollar in public

Azeris recapture Cebrayil MOSCOW, Aug 22: Azerbof Cebrayil on Thursday, al-

attan's Defence Ministry said on Saturday its forces had beaten back Armenian fighters and recaptured the town of Cebraytl near the Iranian border, reports Reuter.

The Azeri news agency Turan quoted the Ministry as saying reinforcements sent to the region had successfully dislodged the Armenians, who had withdrawn to neighbouring hills to the north.

The town is controlled by Azerbaijan at present. This is not a decisive success because the Armenians control the strategic heights," a local journalist said. Azerbaijan reported the loss though there was no independent confirmation of its capture

Azeris and Armenians, locked in a five-year-old conflict in and around the disputed ter ritory of Nagorno Karabakh, have conducted a parallel propaganda war in which both have often resorted to exagger-

ated claims Azeri authorities said the Armenians, who have overrun parts of western Azerbaijan from Nagorno Karabakh, had captured 48 settlements this month in the regions of Cebrayil and Fuzult.

They said Fuzult was still under stege and other parts of southern Azerbatjan had been

held the first known meeting

between a direct descendant of

Kuomintang generalissimo

Chiang Kai-Shek and a com-

munist party leader since 1949

shelled from Armenian territory

The fighting, with Azeri officials accusing Armenian forces of penetrating to within 10 km (six miles) of the Iranian border, has alarmed Tehran and prompted the UN to demand a full and unconditional Armen ian pullout.

The Azeri journalist quoted the Security Ministry as saying tens of thousands of refugees had congregated near the border, where they were living in tents, but only about 80 had crossed into Iran.

Armenian forces from Karabakh had virtually cut off the entire southwestern corner of Azerbatjan.

Deng celebrates 89th birthday with tributes from military the future leadership is most

In another move aimed at giving Jiang historical legitimacy, the People's Datly said he wrote the characters for the cover of selections from the works of the late chairman Mao Tsetung, born 100 years ago

Jiang met Winston Chang,

president of Soochow University

in Taiwan and a grandson of

the generalissimo, on Saturday.

Most diplomats and many Chinese analysts do not believe, however, that Jiang will stay in power long after Deng's death because his political power base is too weak.

Deng engineered Jiang's

tinue," one diplomat said. The problems Zhu faces are those of imbalance - between city and country, the rich east

booming private, collective and foreign investment sectors and the inefficient and heavily indebted state sector The Economic Daily on

Saturday reported that, despite a good summer grain crop acreage of the autumn crop, which accounts for 75 per cent of the annual crop, had fallen from the 1992 level.

While retail spending by urban residents soared by 31 per cent in the first half of the year. farmers' purchases of fertilizer. pesticide and plastic sheeting slumped by up to 30 per cent and the gap between farms and city income widened further, it

week gave rare details of rural unrest earlier this year.

US-ROK talks on N-plan this week likely

SEOUL, Aug 22: Chief US nuclear negotiator Robert Gallucci is expected to hold talks with South Korea in Seoul this week before his next round of negotiations with North Korea on its nuclear programme, newspaper said today, reports Reuter.

time because the upcoming third round of talks between the United States and North Korea is very significant in future development of the nuclear mat ter," the Korea Herald said, quoting government officials.

South Korean officials were

Ban on foreign satellite dishes in Malaysia **KUALA LUMPUR, Aug 22:**

The Cabinet has decided to continue to ban the use of satellite dishes to receive television programme in Malysia, newspapers reported Sunday, says AP.

The government want to keep out what it views as possible negative cultural effects from foreign broadcasts. Relaxation of the ban also might allow foreign broadcasters to take away audiences from local programmes, the Sunday Star and New Sunday Times quoted Information Minister Mohamed Rahmat as saying Saturday in Johore Baru, 300 kilometers (180 miles) south of Kuala

BEIJING, Aug 22: China's reclusive leader Deng Xiaoping

celebrated his 89th birthday today with tributes from the military while national newspapers also carried front-page pictures of the man chosen to succeed him, reports Reuter.

Military publishing houses have printed more than 15 million books on Deng's thinking on building 'socialism with Chines characteristics", the People's Daily reported. Without specifically mention-

ing his birthday, the communist party newspaper gave details of 56 books on Deng's life, writing and philosophy, adding to the growing personality cult surrounding the patriarch.

No mention was made of his health, however, always a ripe source of speculation in Beijing.

US intelligence analysts recently suggested to a major American newspaper that the "chief architect" of reform was laying incoherent and stricken with cancer on his deathbed. Officially he is in good

health, unlike 65-year-old hardline premier Li Peng who was described by state media on Saturday as "ailing." Li dropped out of sight in

April. Deng was last seen in

The face that dominated the front pages of China's official newspapers today was that of Deng's chosen successor -Jiang Zemin, state president and communist party general secretary - giving a major anticorruption speech.

Reports also said Jiang had



Deng Xiaoping

this December 26.

promotion to the top party post shortly after the army crushed Beijing's pro-democracy movement in June, 1989.

Diplomats say the shape of

and poor west and centre, the

An official newspaper this

"Seoul and Washington must hold special consultations this

not available for comment.