

## Socialists protest Balladur's move to tighten asylum law

PARIS, Sept 24: Leftist lawmakers and an anti-racist group blasted plans by the conservative government, backed by a top legal panel, to tighten an asylum law by changing the constitution, reports AP.

An opinion Thursday night by lawyers on the Council of State gave Prime Minister Edouard Balladur the green light to amend the constitution, which immediately drew a human chain of protesters outside Balladur's official residence.

Socialist deputy Julien Dray on Friday called it "the revision of shame" and "the use of force."

## Japanese FM to meet Russian counterpart in NY

TOKYO, Sept 24: Japan's Foreign Minister will meet with his Russian counterpart in New York on Saturday, the Foreign Ministry said Friday, reports AP.

Ministry officials said Tsutomu Hata would meet Andrei Kozyrev in advance of the opening of the UN General Assembly next week. The two are expected to discuss prospects for a visit by Boris Yeltsin to Japan in light of the ongoing turmoil in Russia.

A visit to Japan by Yeltsin had been planned for mid-October, but no date had been set. Yeltsin has cancelled two previous visits.

Yeltsin on Tuesday said he was dissolving parliament and calling early elections. Western leaders have expressed support for him and his political reforms.

## Yeltsin's negative process must be halted: Gorbachev

ROME, Sept 24: Former Soviet leader Mikhail Gorbachev renewed his criticism of Russian President Boris Yeltsin today as he boarded a plane here cutting short a visit to Italy in order to return to Moscow, reports AP.

He told reporters that the negative process launched by Yeltsin had to be halted.

On Wednesday, announcing that he would leave Italy after six days instead of the eight programmed, he described Yeltsin's decision the day before to dissolve the Russian parliament on the grounds of obstructionism as "senseless and unconstitutional."

Meetings with Pope John Paul II and Italian President Oscar Luigi Scalfaro scheduled for today were moved forward to Thursday.

He warned then, "I am very worried about what is happening in Russia, because instead of setting a dangerous and negative precedent, in which we can toss aside the constitution any time we like."

Accompanied by his wife Raisa, the former Communist Party leader is due to arrive in Moscow at 5:00 PM local time.

AFP adds: Russia's Justice Ministry backed President Boris

Yeltsin today, ruling that his dissolution of the legislature was in the spirit of the constitution although beyond his formal powers, the Itar-Tass agency said.

In a statement outlining the legal basis for Tuesday's decree, which has brought ahead a power struggle between the Executive and the legislature, the ministry said Yeltsin had acted to safeguard the rights of Russian citizens, the agency reported in a dispatch by the BBC.

By remaining the sole keeper of the constitution, parliament had been given a lever

to exert political pressure on all other state bodies, the ministry said.

The President, meanwhile, had no legal way of influencing parliament.

The purpose of the decree had been to "eliminate the protracted and nationally damaging confrontation between the legislature and the executive, a confrontation which leads to disaster," the statement said.

By dissolving parliament Yeltsin acted in accordance with the constitutional principles of safeguarding Russia's security and the rights of the people, the ministry said.

## 6th Tokyo Int'l Film Festival opens

TOKYO, Sept 24: Japan's fledgling film festival opened Friday with a screening of Sylvester Stallone's new thriller, "Cliffhanger," reports AP.

The film's director, Renny Harlin, was among a handful of guests to open the 6th Tokyo International Film Festival. Harlin's other credits include "Die Hard."

Organisers say they hope the festival, which became an annual event last year, will become an internationally acclaimed event, but few expect it ever to rival its more prestigious counterparts in Cannes or Venice.

German director Wim Wenders, whose films include "Wings of Desire" and "Paris, Texas," will chair the jury for the Young Cinema Competition, which will distribute three prizes worth a total of 35 million yen (\$330,000 dollars).

## ANC welcomes passage of TEC bill

JOHANNESBURG, Sept 24: Nelson Mandela's African National Congress (ANC) late Thursday welcomed the passing by the South African Parliament of a bill that opens the doors to democracy in the country, reports AP.

The bill to set up a Transitional Executive Council (TEC) was passed Thursday afternoon by a vote of 211-36 in the tricameral Parliament, which has separate chambers for Whites, Indians and "Coloureds" but which excludes Blacks.



Prince Norodom Sihanouk (C) greets crowds inside the Royal Palace in Phnom Penh September 24 moments after he signed Cambodia's new constitution, ending the United Nations mandate. Sihanouk's wife Princess Monique is seen on his right. — AFP photo

## Sihanouk ratifies constitution

PHNOM PENH, Sept 24: Cambodia's Prince Norodom Sihanouk signed each page of the country's new constitution in the gold-gilded throne hall today, ending the United Nations mandate over this South East Asian country, reports AP.

The signature ceremony took place under colorful fresco scenes of the epic Ramayana in the royal palace in front of the members of the national assembly — all wearing black stockings and traditional knickerbockers — style pants made of Purple, Silk, called Chong Kben

— the diplomatic corps and leaders of the UN transitional authority in Cambodia (UNTAC).

The signature, the subsequent naming of the country's two co-Prime Ministers and Prince Sihanouk's ascension to the throne later in the day, ends the 18-month UNTAC mandate in Cambodia.

"On this historic day, I have the honor to offer to the National Assembly, the representatives of the people of Cambodia, the promulgation of this constitution appointing our people the masters of the land,

the water and the state power from now on, forever page of the document which was adopted by the assembly on Tuesday.

Arriving at the foot of the stairs entering the throne hall, the Prince was greeted by an honor guard and the national anthem.

The Prince was then seated at a table lined with gold fabric, in front of the gilded platform traditionally used in royal processions, in order to sign the document.

After the signing, the assembly members applauded and followed Prince Sihanouk out the front door of the palace.

## Israeli troops seal West Bank, Gaza

JERUSALEM, Sept 24: Israeli troops on Thursday dragged Jewish settlers protesting the Israel-PLO peace accord from two sites in the occupied West Bank that they had fenced off as new settlements, the army and settlers said, reports AP.

Meanwhile, security forces in the occupied Gaza Strip shot and killed two Palestinians, reports said.

The clashes came as parliament gave its approval to the Israeli-PLO accord that calls for limited Palestinian self-rule in the occupied territories.

The army, meanwhile, announced it was sealing the occupied West Bank and Gaza Strip from 2:00 am (2400 GMT) Friday for 48 hours to prevent attacks during Yom Kippur, Judaism's most sacred day. Yom Kippur begins at sundown Friday and lasts until sundown Saturday.

The measure will affect the 30,000 Palestinian laborers permitted to cross daily into Israel. Israel banned the majority of the 1.8 million Palestinians in the occupied territories from entering the country last March following a wave of attacks.

The largest settler protest

was next to the Beit El settlement north of the Palestinian city of Ramallah.

Soldiers declared the site a closed military area and evacuated the settlers, the army said. The army lodged complaints against 20 settlers who resisted evacuation, it said.

A similar incident occurred near the West Bank town of Kiryat Arba where dozens of Jews started plowing a road and roped off land they wanted to build on, the army said.

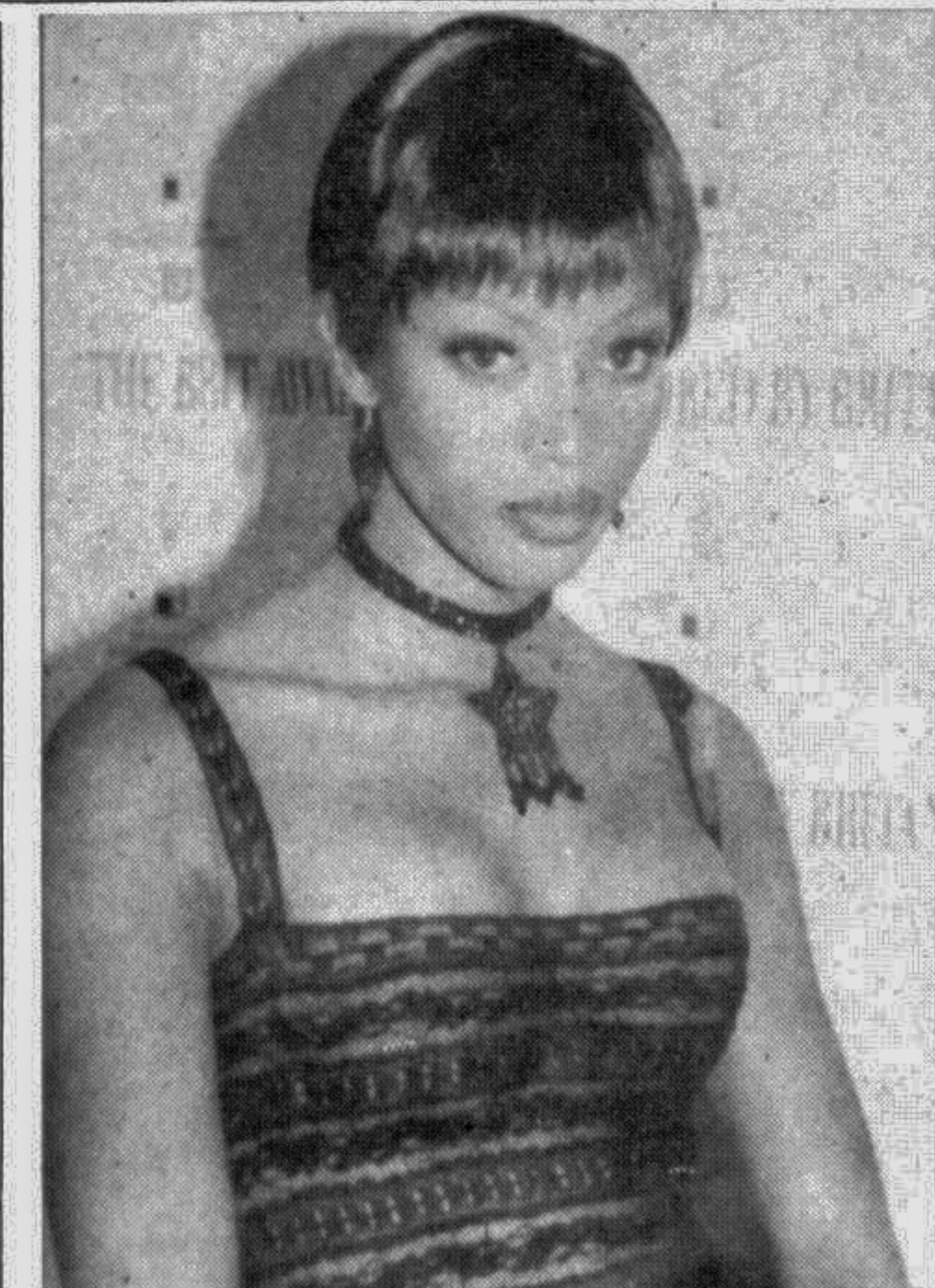
The army said soldiers evacuated them and detained eight people.

On Thursday night, Israeli security forces killed two Palestinians in separate overnight clashes in the Gaza Strip, reports said.

Youssef Abu Eid, 16, was killed after clashes erupted when troops arrested armed activists in the Jabalia refugee camp, army and Arab reports said.

Israeli police shot and killed Abdul Wahab Abu Omar, 22, from Khan Yunis, after he allegedly tried to run over two policemen, police said.

Their deaths brought to 1,152 the number of Palestinians killed by Israeli soldiers of civilians.



File photo dated February 1993 of British supermodel Naomi Campbell. Miss Campbell, 23, has been dropped by her American agency because it says it can no longer put up with her temper tantrums. — AFP photo

## UN sending 1260 observers to Haiti

UNITED NATIONS, Sept 24: The Security Council, deploring escalating political violence, on Thursday established a 1,260 person mission of police monitors, army engineers and advisors to help shore up peace accords, reports AP.

The 15-member council voted unanimously to create the UN Mission in Haiti, UNMIH, for six months, at an estimated cost of \$50 million.

General Assembly President SR Inasany, meanwhile, told reporters that he expected deposed President Jean Bertrand Aristide to address the assembly in coming weeks. "It is in the cards," he said.

The Haiti mission will be the 15th current UN operation. On Wednesday the council established a 440-person military observer mission for Liberia.

The mission will not be a

traditional peacekeeping mission to help restore law and order, and police and military personnel will not take the place of the Haitian army and police.

Instead, about 570 police observers would monitor Haitian police in an effort to help protect human rights. They also would help train a professional police force.

Haiti's police traditionally had been a unit of the army. A major purpose of the UN mission is to upgrade and professionalize both forces.

A military component of about 700 persons would be largely an army corps of engineers that would rebuild roads, bridges, hospitals and schools and erect new housing.

They also would help train army officers and construction engineers in the island nation,

which has been torn by violence lacks an effective infrastructure. All training would be for non-combat skills.

The council called for swift deployment, but it was not known when the new mission would be in place. Personnel are expected to be loaned by France, Canada, Venezuela, other Latin American countries and possibly the United States.

Deposed President Jean-Bertrand Aristide is expected to return to Haiti Oct 30, under terms of the peace accords, but the situation remains tense. Deployment of international police monitors is expected to improve stability.

The council has suspended economic sanctions, but warned they would be reimposed if security authorities do not take steps to end the violence. Aristide has called for reimposition of sanctions, but the coun-

cil made no move at this time to do so.

"The political and social climate in Haiti continues to be characterized by widespread violations of human rights and other violence," Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali said in a written report to the council.

Therefore, there is an urgent need to demonstrate through concrete steps the commitment of the international community to the solution of the Haitian crisis."

The council called upon the government of Haiti to take all steps to ensure the safety of UN personnel and their freedom of movement.

The new mission would be under the oversight of Dante Caputo, special representative to Haiti of the UN Secretary-General and the Organization of American States.

## Off the Record

### Foul-up with Clinton's Teleprompter

TAMPA: Television host Ted Koppel teased President Clinton during Thursday night's town hall meeting about the foul-up the night before with the president's Teleprompter as he began his address to Congress, reports AP.

The wrong speech — Clinton's February 17 economic message — flashed up on the eye-level viewing screens for the president to read instead of the address about health care.

"I'm going to begin with what may seem like a rather trivial thing, although it clearly wasn't trivial to you yesterday," Koppel said at the outset of the hour-long forum about health care that was broadcast nationwide on ABC television.

"There you were. You were in front of a joint session of Congress. You had the joint chiefs of staff there. You had your Cabinet there. You were talking to tens of millions of people."

ABC then played a videotape showing Clinton on the podium in the House chamber Wednesday night and turning to talk to Vice President Gore.

"I am telling the vice president, Al, they've got the wrong speech on the Teleprompter."

He said, "That's impossible. I said 'You're not reading it. Read it.'"

Clinton explained that the White House communications department had typed his health-care speech onto the same computer disc that also contained the earlier address.

And I thought to myself, "That was a pretty good speech, but not good enough to give twice."

### Teacher suspended for taping mouths of pupils

HARLOW, England: A British teacher has been suspended for taping the mouths of most of the 30 pupils in her class to keep them quiet, an inquiry heard on Thursday, reports Reuters.

Peter Wilton, headmaster of the school at Harlow in southeastern England, said he had taken prompt action to suspend the woman after parents complained about her.

"It started lightheartedly when the teacher threatened to tape the mouths of her noisy class," Wilton said. "Some of the children thought it was a great joke when it started. Some were asking to be taped as a great hoot."

A local council spokesman added: "Everything was all right until they tried to get it off. Then it hurt and it wasn't funny any more."

### Baby named 'Metro'

OAKDALE, Wales: A baby boy born in the back of a car as his parents made a frantic dash to hospital will steer his way through life with the name "Metro".

"It's a lovely name and I will never forget how he came into the world — but I'm glad we didn't have a Lada or a Skoda," Lyn Sowden, his 31-year-old mother, said on Thursday.

But the baby has also been given a middle name — Frederick — in case he doesn't like to be reminded of his connection with the tiny rover Metro hatchback.

### 93 pc women can recognise body changes indicating conception

LONDON: Natural family planning is an effective method of birth control and the Roman Catholic church's opposition to artificial contraception will not threaten overpopulation, a medical journal said yesterday, reports Reuters.

The British medical journal, in a review of natural family planning, said a World Health Organisation (WHO) study found that 93 per cent of women can recognise body changes which pinpoint when they are most likely to conceive.

## Another Cuban pilot defects to US

WASHINGTON, Sept 24: A Cuban MIG-23 military jet landed Thursday afternoon at the US military base in Guantanamo, Cuba, and the pilot asked for political asylum, US officials said, reports AP.

The jet apparently was in the air with a number of other Cuban planes and "peeled off and headed to Guantanamo" said a Pentagon official, who spoke on condition of anonymity.

The plane landed at the base 2:35 pm (1835 GMT) — just hours after an older MIG-21 flown to Florida last week by another defecting pilot was returned to the Cuban government, said a State Department official.

The Cuban air force has several squadrons of MIG-21s, MIG-23s, older versions of the fighter aircraft, as well as some of the newer MIG-29s, which the former Soviet Union built for export, according to the International Institute for Strategic Studies.

On September 17, a MIG-21 landed at the Key West Naval Air Station on Boca Chica Key.

The pilot, Capt. Enio Ravelo Rodriguez, said many comrades in Cuba's military are so demoralised that they would

probably hold their fire in a popular uprising against Cuban President Fidel Castro.

Ravelo, 33, told reporters he and many others of his generation, inside and outside the military, are disappointed with Castro. But while the military is increasingly restive, members of the armed forces live in fear of the secret police, he said.

"You have to say, long live communism, long live the revolution, long live socialism" to say what you really feel is impossible," Ravelo said.

Ravelo took off in the one-seat, poorly maintained MIG around noon, flying to an altitude of 3,000 to 4,000 feet (about 1,000m), he said. Then he turned north, dropping to 30 feet (less than 10m) as he crossed the Florida Straits.

He said he was not surprised he evaded US radar until the last four minutes: "A single plane can always get through."

The coast guard said it picked up 38 Cubans from rafts, raising the total reaching US shores in 1993 to 2,034.

In March 1991, Cuban air force pilot Orestes Lorenzo also landed a MIG-23 at Key West, and made a celebrated rescue flight in a small plane, picking up his family from a Cuban beach last December.

## US plans to accept 1.21 lakh refugees in next 12 months

WASHINGTON, Sept 24: The United States plans to accept 121,000 refugees in the next 12 months, about 1,500 fewer than this year and 11,000 fewer than in 1992, Secretary of State Warren Christopher said on Thursday, reports Reuters.

Christopher told a Senate Judiciary Committee hearing that 55,000 refugees would come from the former Soviet Union and Eastern Europe and 45,000 from Vietnam and East Asia during the federal fiscal year from October 1.

Another 7,000 would come from Africa, 6,000 from South Asia and 4,000 from Latin America and the Caribbean with 3,000 refugee slots held in reserve with 1,000 refugees entering through private programmes.

Christopher said better conditions in areas such as the

Middle East, Cambodia and Haiti would reduce the number of refugees. But he said the situation in Bosnia and the Horn of Africa could worsen the refugee situation.

"Current trends indicate that the number of persons requiring permanent resettlement in the United States should decline significantly in the next few years," he said.

"It's not a bold programme. We believe it meets the current needs," Warren Zimmerman, Director of the Bureau for Refugee Programmes, told an earlier hearing of the House Immigration and Refugee Subcommittee.

The United States accepted 132,144 refugees during the 1992 financial year. It expects to take 122,500 in the current year that ends next Thursday, 10,000 below the ceiling.

## BRIEFLY

### Sikhs kill 3 Cong-I men: Sikh militants killed at least three activists of Prime Minister Narasimha Rao's Congress Party in an ambush in India's northern Punjab state, police said Friday, reports Reuters from Ludhiana.

They said about a dozen people were seriously injured in Thursday's attack on a group of Youth Congress activists travelling to an election rally in New Delhi to be addressed by Rao.

The ambush near Ludhiana was the second Sikh attack on the youth wing of the ruling party this month.

### Turkish troops kill 24 Kurds: Turkish security forces killed 24 Kurdish rebels on Thursday and suffered 12 casualties in fighting in the southeast, officials said, AP reports from Ankara.

Turkish troops killed 17 Kurdish separatist guerrillas trying to sneak into Turkey from northern Iraq near the border towns of Silopi and Cukurca, the regional governor's office announced.

Seven other Kurdish rebels were killed in three other clashes in Sirnak, Mardin and Bingol provinces, the announcement added.

Three soldiers were killed in the fighting and nine security officials died when their vehicle hit a land mine planted by Kurdish rebels, the Anatolia news agency said.

### Rebels kill 7 Colombian troops: Leftist guerrillas ambushed a military convoy in the north of the country on Thursday killing seven government troops and wounding three, the Defence Ministry said, Reuters reports from Bogota.

The attack took place in a rural area near the town of Cienega, 390 miles north of the capital Bogota.

The Colombian guerrillas' latest campaign, which they call "Black September", has included attacks on military and economic targets such as oil pipelines. So far 42 members of the armed forces have died in six ambushes.

### Arafat arrives in Jakarta: Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO) Chairman Yasser Arafat arrived here Friday from Beijing for a two-day official visit to brief President Suharto on the agreement with Israel on Palestinian autonomy, AFP reports from Jakarta.

Arafat was greeted by Defence Minister Edi Sudrajat at the airport and was driven to the presidential palace.

### Christian doc killed in Egypt: A Christian physician was gunned down Thursday by suspected Muslim militants in the southern region of Assiut, the third victim of extremist violence in three days despite increased security measures, AP reports from Assiut.

Police sources said Col Nabil Khalil Gayyed, chief physician of Assiut prison hospital, was killed by an unknown number of gunmen Thursday evening in the town of Manfalout, about 175 miles (270 km) south of Cairo. The attackers escaped.

Gayyed was the second Coptic Christian killed in three days. On Tuesday, suspected Muslim militants shot dead a Coptic Christian school administrator and a police officer in two separate ambushes in Assiut. The assailants got away.

### Joulwan to be made NATO chief: President Bill Clinton is expected to nominate US army General Alfred Joulwan as the new commander of NATO alliance military forces, administration officials said on Thursday, Reuters reports from Washington.

Joulwan, 53, currently heads American forces in Latin America and would replace US army General John Shalikashvili as supreme allied commander of NATO forces in Europe (SACEUR) based in Mons, Belgium, according to the officials, who asked not to be identified.

If Joulwan is approved by the other allies as expected, he would become the latest in an unbroken string of US commanders of NATO forces since the post was set up in 1950, a year after the alliance was founded to counter Soviet power.

### 6 hurt in Belfast blast: A bomb exploded on a west Belfast road as a security force patrol passed Friday, wounding a soldier and six civilians and shattering windows, reports AP from Belfast.

There was no immediate claim of responsibility, but the Irish Republican Army has frequently targeted security forces in its campaign to end British rule in Northern Ireland.