Malaysian DPM resigns

KUALA LUMPUR, Oct 16: Malaysian Deputy Prime Minister Baba, trailing badly in party polls, has resigned. Prime Minister Mahathir Mohammad confirmed late Friday, reports AFP.

"Ghafar has submitted his letter of resignation dated October 15. No reasons were given." Mahathir said before leaving for London en route to Cyprus for the October 21-25 Commonwealth heads of

government meeting. Asked whether he had accepted the resignation. Mahathir said: "I accept the letter, but I have plenty of time to decide (on the resignation)".

The confirmation came shortly after the Deputy Prime Minister's Tamrin Ghafar, told reporters his father's secretary had sent the resignation letter to the Prime Minister's office on Thursday.

Mahathir said he was not surprised by Ghafar's move which had been the subject of intense speculation.

"I have no reaction. I have to act to deal with the situation." he said.



US President Bill Clinton tells reporters on Friday in Washington that he has ordered six US warships to patrol off Haiti to enforce UN sanctions that take effect tomorrow.

Six US warships go to enforce UN sanctions against Haiti

UNITED NATIONS, Oct 16: After dispatching six warships to enforce sanctions against Haiti, the Clinton administration wants the Security Council's blessing to stop and search ships bound for the

Caribbean nation, reports AP. The 15-nation council was expected to endorse the US quarantine Saturday and call on other countries to join the effort to cut off oil and military supplies to Haiti's military leaders.

The United States pressed the Council to approve President Clinton's move on Friday. But China, one of five permanent members that can veto Council resolutions, said it had no instructions from Beijing and requested a postponement of the vote until Saturday.

A resolution endorsing maritime enforcement was expected to be adopted overwhelmingly.

although it was not known which countries would join in enforcing the sanctions.

The Council reimposed an oil and arms embargo against Haiti on Wednesday, a day after a US warship carrying UN forces withdrew from the country.

Military-backed protesters had

step down and for President Jean-Bertrand Aristide to return on October 30 Aristide. Haiti's first democratically elected leader, was ousted in a

peace accord they signed in

chief Lt Gen Raoul Cedras to

The accord calls for army

WASHINGTON: President Bill Clinton said he ordered an infantry company to standby at Guantanamo Naval Base in Cuba in case they are needed to secure the safety of Americans still in Haiti, reports AFP.

prevented the ship, which carried 600 noncombat troops. from landing.

The embargo will take effect Monday unless Haiti's military authorities have a change of heart. The Council demands that they permit the UN mission to land in the Hattian capital, Port-au-Prince, and that military authorities comply with the coup in September 1991. In addition to the oil and

arms embargo, the sanctions call for freezing the assets of the military authorities and their

The sanctions do not represent a géneral trade embargo. Food, cooking fuel and fuel for humanitarian purposes are ex-

The resolution to be adopted covers only shipping bound for Haiti, not cargo leaving the country. It permits the use of any measures "necessary" to halt and inspect shipping headed there

It also threatens to consider "all necessary measures" to ensure the cooperation of Haitt's

military leaders.
The Security Council has already condemned Thursday's assassination of pro-Aristide Justice Minister Guy Malary as a 'dastardly act'. Saturday's proposed resolution described it one of a series of "heinous mur-

ders."
Economic sanctions were imposed in June but were lifted two months later under the peace plan signed by Cedras and Aristide

The maritime operation would be similar to one the Security Council authorized August 25, 1990, to choke off Iraq after its invasion of Kuwait.

Another quake hits Papua New Guinea

CANBERRA, Oct 16: Major earthquake measuring 6.3 on the Richter scale hit northern Papua New Guinea today just three days after a quake hit the same area killing over 80 people, the Australian seismological centre reported, reports

The quake occurred at 1.04 pm (0340 GMT) near Madang on the north coast of the Pacific Ocean country at the same point where an earthquake measuring 7.0 on the Richter scale hit last Wednesday, a centre spokeswoman

She said that, like Wednesday's, the earthquake was shallow, at 30 km (19 miles) beneath the earth's sur-

There were no immediate reports of casualties or dam-

The first quake and two major aftershocks measuring 6.5 and 6.0 on the Richter scale killed at least 81 people injured more than 200 and left hundreds homeless.

BREFIY

Joseph Kennedy weds Oct 23: US Republican Senator, Joseph Kennedy said Friday he and flancee Beth Kelly will wed October 23 in a small civil ceremony at his home, AP reports from Boston.

The 41-year-old Boston Democrat is the oldest son of the late US Sen Robert Kennedy. Kelly is an aide in his Washington of-

The marriage will be the first for Kelly and the second for Kennedy, who is divorced from Sheila Rauch.

Ivory Coast president ill: Ivory Coast President Felix Houphouet-Boigny remained hospitalised in Paris on Friday after being admitted last week, the country's

ambassador said. AP reports from Paris. Houphouet-Boigny, who turns 88 on Monday according to official records, has been in the urology section of Cochin

Hospital since Saturday, said Ambassador Eugene Aidara. Aidara said the president was "very tired" but "is doing well." He declined to elaborate and hospital officials refused to com-

Jackson performs in Sao Paulo: Michael Jackson sang and danced Friday before a screaming. near-hysterical crowd of at least 70,000 fans, who packed a soccer stadium to watch his first show in South America's largest city, AP reports from Sao Paulo.

When Jackson, dressed in a black and gold outfit appeared on the custom-built stage built in Sao Paulo's huge Morumbi Stadium, a loud cheer, accompanied by shouts of "Michael, Michael," erupted from the crowd

Several people, both men and women, fainted and had to be carried out of the stadium by security guards.

Menem recovering: After undergoing surgery on a key artery to his brain, President Carlos Menem said he was recovering well Friday and vowed to continue his effort to get re-elected, AP reports from Buenos Aires.

Surgeons at a Buenos Aires cardiology clinic on Thursday removed an arteriosclerotic plague that obstructed the right carotid artery. The carotids are the two principal arteries of the neck that carry blood to the head.

Presidential physician Alejandro Tfeli said Menem, 63, should be able to leave the clinic in about three days and is expected to fully recover.

Mubarak to go USA, France: Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak will visit Washington and Paris next week, Foreign Minister Amr Mussa has said, GNA-Pool reports from Cairo.

He said the Egyptian President in his capacity as current chairman of the Organisation of African Unity would focus on African issues like Liberia and Angola situation, during his talks in the two capitals.

West Asia peace process would also figure in the talks. Moussa said.

Indo-Lankan talks begin: Shri Lanka and India began talks Friday about alleged Shri Lankan navy attacks on Indian fishing boats last week in which four fishermen died, a Foreign Ministry spokesman said. Reuter reports from Colombo.

He said Foreign Secretary Bernard Tillekeratne Shri Lanka's top diplomat and two navy officials left for the Indian capital of New Delhi on Thursday for talks with Indian External Affairs Ministry and navy officials, he said.

They will discuss how to prevent such incidents in future. the spokesman said.

Zimbabwe greets Mandela, Klerk: Zimbabwe, long a fierce critic of white rule in South Africa, has congratulated President Frederik de Klerk for winning the Nobel Peace prize along with African National Congress leader Nelson Mandela, AFP reports from Harare.

The Foreign Affairs Ministry said in a statement late Friday the two men had "confronted and defeated" the racists in South African society.

Bandits kill 14 in Kenya: More than 200 armed bandits raided a remote village in north eastern Kenya, killing 14 people before stealing 485 head of cattle, local media reported Saturday, Reuter says from Nairobi.

The reports said the incident took place on Wednesday in the village of Wajir and quoted government officials as saying police had been sent to the violence-prone area to step up security. No further details were given.

CIS states dump N-waste into rivers

COPENHAGEN, Oct 16: Radioactive contamination is out of control in the former Soviet Union and some nuclear waste is being dumped into rivers, according to two global agencies in a disturbing report just released.

"It's a frightening situation, nuclear waste deposits are mostly full already, so liquid waste is simply put into rivers. Reinheart Helmke, a director of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), told Reuters in an interview.

UNDP and the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) based the 144-page report on a forum in Vienna in May where officials of Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) countries for the first time revealed

the magnitude of the problems Helmke said the collapse of the Soviet Union, economic hardship and chaotic attempts to shift to a market economy were aggravating an alreadyserious situation.

"Only Russia and the Ukraine have regulatory bodies for radiation protection. And it is very difficult to control nuclear sources and the waste from them in a situation where they suddenly gain a market value," he said

Helmke said a number of scary facts and theories emerged during the Vienna

- Highly radioactive material was by coincidence found in the vault of a Lithuanian bank. it was deposited without any

safety measures as collateral for a private loan.

- Virtually no liquid atomic waste has in the past 15 months reached the official deposit sites in the Ukraine and the situation is similar in the Baltic states

- Early radiation readings in the Caspian Sea indicate radioactivity levels 100 times above normal, probably a result of dumped nuclear waste emanating from Siberian rivers. The Baltic and the Baring Sea are other possible flashpoints.

- Small nuclear-driven devices are abundant in factories, hospitals, in agricultural machinery and even in lighthouses in the former Soviet Union

Such civilian nuclear devices

in the west. The Ukraine alone is estimated to have more than 100,000 nuclear sources in action. The Soviet Union was a nuclear power. Anybody who wanted a nuclear source could have it. Helmke said.

- There are more than 50 Chernobyl-type nuclear power plants in the CIS and hundreds of spent fuel rods need to be ex-

But outside of Russia there is no available safe place to de-

 Estonia has stored highgrade nuclear waste in marine terrace deposits covering more than 33 hectares (82 acres) on its Gulf of Finland coastline These deposits are not considered safe by western standards.

Facts about Premadasa's killing

COLOMBO, Oct 16: Nine more Tamil rebel suicide-bombers were ready to carry out a mission to kill Shri Lankan President Ranasinghe Premadasa had he survived the May I assassination, press reports

said today, according to AFP. When Premadasa was killed by a suicide-bomber at a May Day rally here, nine of his comrades from the rebel Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) watched the act from a distance, the Island newspaper

"On May 1, there were nine LTTE suicide-bombers in the vicinity ... ready to jump into the May Day procession if Babu, who was assigned the task of assassinating the president, fatled," the Island quoted police as saying.

"If Babu did not get his quarry they (the nine others) would have moved in and blasted themselves along with the president," the newspaper said, adding that the information had been provided to police

by a LTTE rebel in their cus-

Babu himself was killed in the May Day explosion together with 21 others, including Premadasa's valet and elite police commandos assigned to protect the slain leader.

The Shri Lankan government blamed the LTTE for Premadasa's assassination. Suspected LTTE suicidebombers also killed Indian Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi in

Troops kill 9 LTTE rebels

COLOMBO, Oct 16: Government troops killed at least nine Tamil rebels and wounded 20 others during a three-day operation that ended earlier in the week in eastern Shri Lanka, a military spokesman here said today

From October 11 to October 13, infantry units backed by air and artillery destroyed many hideouts of the in the Angodavillu jungles bordering three districts.

Reasons for US presence in Asia unclear

HONG KONG Oct 16: Reasons behind US military involvement are nebulous and Asia needs to clarify regional efforts towards its own security. experts and officials said Friday, reports AFP.

"The reason I am less confidenf in the United States than I used to be is that the rationale behind its military commitment to this region has disappeared." President of South Korea's Institute of Social Sciences Kim Kyung-Won said Friday.

"Previously, the impetus behind US involvement here was the Soviet threat, which was something tangible and easily defined," Kim said.

That threat no longer exists. Without it, US military presence here is no longer clear."

Singapore Foreign Minister Wong Kan Seng said: "Some drawdown in the level of US forces is perhaps inevitable. To be sure, creative alternatives are being explored. But not all facets of the (Clinton) administration's policies are immediately clear."

Both men were on an Asian security panel as part of a conference in Hong Kong on Trade between Europe and Asia, organised by the Geneva-based World Economic Forum. US President Bill Clinton

said at the Group of Seven Summit in Tokyo in July that

Washington remained committed to the Asia Pacific, and had no intention of reducing its military presence in the region.

Clinton cited concerns over North Korea's refusal to allow a team from the Vienna-based International Atomic Energy Agency inspect its facility at Yongyon, suspected of being a site for storing materials to build a nuclear weapon. For sure we would like the

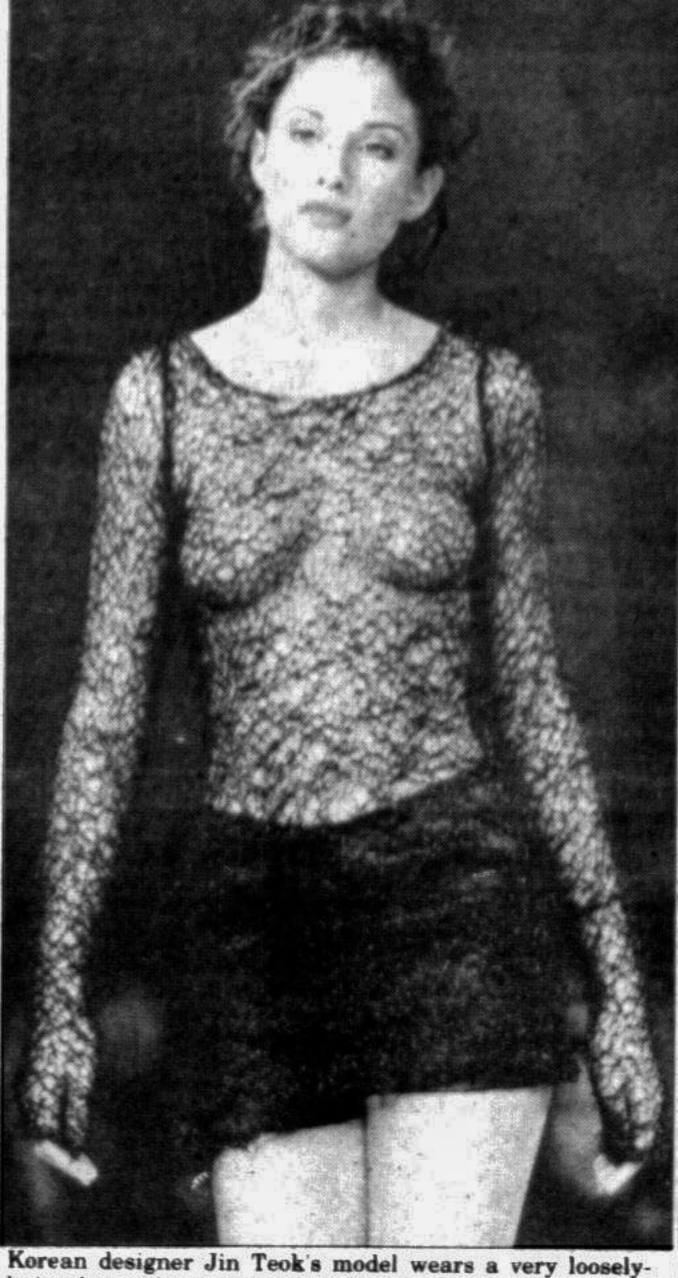
United States to be here, but in the longer term, we are not sure US public opinion will sustain that involvement." Jusuf Wanandi, supervisory board chairman of the Jakarta-based Centre for Strategic and International Studies. "In preparation, we have to complement US involvement with

regional efforts."
However, Wanandi butted heads with Harry Harding, a senior fellow at the Brookings Institute, prestigious US-based think tank, over whether discussions on Security should be part of an upcoming meeting of the 15-member Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) forum in Seattle.

Economic growth and security cannot be divorced." Harding said

"APEC is a suitable forum for discussing security. Economic cooperation is part of a comprehensive approach to regional security.

Off the Record



knitted, very long-sleeved sweater over a pair of navy-blue shorts for Spring-Summer '94 as the French ready-to-wear shows wound up on Friday in Paris. - AFP photo

To relax during labour

LONDON: British doctors have asked the government to probe the safety of giving birth in water following the death of a baby in Sweden and two incidents involving "water babies" in England, reports Reuter.

Britain's Royal College of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists called on the Health Ministry to conduct research into the method, by which mothers delivery babies in a birthing pool or use it, as in the English cases, to relax during labour. An hospital in the western town of Bristol later disclosed that

a baby had died and another suffered brain damage after their mothers used the birthing pool. But, unlike the Swedish case, the British women left the pool to give birth.

Authorities at Stockholm's Huddinge hospital notified police after midwives brought in a dead baby that had been delivered by water birth early this month.

Students tote guns to class

NEW YORK: Twenty-one per cent of New York secondary school students have toted weapons to class, and 40 per cent were threatened physically in the past school year, a study released Friday showed, reports AFP.

Of those who said they brought weapons to school, 68 per cent said their families supported their defending themselves with a handgun, knife or club, according to the study of 1,400 students carried out jointly by the New York mayor's office and federal authorities.

72 more Myanmar detenus freed

YANGON, Oct 16: Altogether 72 political prisoners have been released in Myanmar from October 8 to 15 this year, reports Xinhua.

An official report said today that 31 persons who were serving prison terms according to the existing laws were released from Myaungya jail on

Their prison terms were reduced under the State Law and Order Restoration Council (SLORC) declaration No 11/1992, saying that of persons arrested and detained politically, those fore whom there are no reasons to endanger the security of the state will be released.

Since April in 1992 to October 15 of this year, a total of about 1,880 political prisoners have been released.

MOSCOW, Oct 16: The lights on his 15-line telephone were flashing and Alexander Tikhonov, a millionaire new to both riches and politics, was clearly enjoying himself, reports

The calls were from organizations big and small: The Russian Veterans' Society. Association of Charities, Victims of the Chernobyl Nuclear Disaster.

Pacing behind his desk. phone to ear. Tikhonov spoke eagerly with all of them - a serious suitor in the suddenly frantic mating game of Russian politics.

Less than eight weeks before the election, scores of organizations are hurriedly forming alliances in hopes of winning seats in Russia's first democratic parliament.

Few have clear ideologies

and platforms are in flux, but the will to power is strong. "Twenty-four hours," Tikhonov told one caller. "We

Princes is a patron of the association.

The Princes of Wales arrives at St George's Hospital Tooting

on Friday in London where she gave an address to

"Headway" the National Head Injuries Association. The

need to hear within 24 hours". The old parliament, elected in 1990, was dissolved by President Boris Yeltsin last month. When hard-line lawmakers took up arms to resist: he sent tanks and troops October 4 to bombard their headquarters and arrest their leaders. Dozens died inside and

outside the parliament building. Since then, Yeltsin has banned parties and publications he considers communist or fascist, confirmed that new elections will take place December 12, and decreed the rules for both the campaign and voting.

On Friday, he ordered that a proposed new constitution be put before the voters on the

same day. He had wavered between a referendum on the charter, which will replace the current Soviet-era document, and having the new parliament approve it.

- AFP photo

The brief campaign is an advantage for Yeltsin's forces because it gives hard-liners little time to regroup.

Candidates who support the president have an excellent Consolidation, formed early last chance of capturing majorities in both the 176-member Federation Council, the upper house, and the Duma, which will have 450 seats.

reforms the old parliament resisted. Moderate opponents and centrists are expected to win a significant minority of seats. however - up to 25 per cent by some preliminary forecasts.

That would allow Yeltsin to

pursue economic and political

Brief campaign gives Yeltsin's forces a fair chance to win Much depends on how the more than 100 new parties, trade unions and other organizations coalesce into an expected six to 10 major alliances.

Tikhonov, 43, is somewhere in the middle of the muddle: a member of the "loyal center" that generally supports Yeltsin. but occasionally opposes him. He leads the Party of

year by entrepreneurs who favour economic reform but crave "stability above all" so they can get on with business. When interviewed last week, Tikhonov was trying to assemble a coalition that would in-

Society. Among Yeltsin's blunders, in Tikhonov's view, was the decree September 21 dissolving par-

cluded organisations with little

political allies but million of

members, such as the Veterans'

liament, which led to the fighting in Moscow that cost nearly 200 lives. "No matter how bad the

parliament, it's not necessary to break the law," he said. "That only causes more trouble". A second liberal coalition. the Movement for Democratic

Reforms led by Gavriil Popov,

former mayor of Moscow, seems more independent of Yeltsin. Russia's new entrepreneurs have jumped into the political fray with gusto. Konstantin Borovoi, head of the largest commodities exchange, is forming a pro-reform bloc to nomi-

Mikhail Kharshan, founder of the first and largest mutual fund, plans to run for a seat. In his newly renovated office near the White House - the smokeblackened parliament building - Kharshan said he was

nate candidates.

"humiliated" by the caliber of people who govern Russia.

He said Yeltsin is 'like an actor on stage who can't remember what play he's in, let alone his lines".

Yeltsin also can expect opposition from the Civic Union a coalition of executives who want the state to retain control of the economy and subsidise defense industries.

Still jockeying for position are women's groups, trade unions, socialists and such popular figures as economist Grigory Yavlinsky, who plans to run in the presidential election next June.

Yeltsin has ordered state radio and television to treat all candidates equally and devote two hours a day to their appeals in the last three weeks of the parliamentary campaign.

Two killed as police fire on farmers in India

NEW DELHI, Oct 16: Police opened fire on farmers protesting increased electricity tariffs in the western Indian state of Gujarat, killing two men, newspapers reported today, says

The incident took place in Sabarkantha district Friday during a strike called by a farmers' union, the Pioneer

Police fired into a crowd of stone-throwing farmers who attacked a police picket. Two men were killed and an unspecified number injured. The Pioneer said. Gujárat farmers are

protesting a 10-per cent hike in electricity tariffs ordered by the state government, which says power supplies to the agricultural sector are already heavily subsidised.