Leekpai orders crackdown on Thai companies in Libya

BANGKOK, Oct 17: Prime Minister Chuan Leekpai ordered a crackdown on That companies doing construction work in Libya after receiving a secret US report linking Libyan projects to the production of chemical and riuclear weapons, a local newspaper reported Sunday, reports

Police arrested Viroj Sakulmutita in the northern city of Chiang Mai last Thursday for sending workers to Libya without official permission. Viroj denied the charges.

But Viroj admitted designing and overseeing construction of a "safety bunker" in one of the complexes that the United States charges is being used for weapons production, the newspaper Matichon reported. It said he denied knowing the project's

. The newspaper said police were seeking to establish a connection between Viroj and an unnamed German-educated Thai expert in chemicals who it

role in the project Thai newspapers reported in September that the United States had asked Thatland to bring back its nationals employed in constructing alleged chemical and nuclear weapons plants in Libya.

said was playing a significant

The United States also has been demanding that Libya hand over two suspects in the 1988 bombing of a Pan Am passenger plane over Scotland or face unspecified consequences. US force previously have carried out retaliatory attacks for acts of terrorism allegedly sponsored

After Chuan received the se-

cret report from the US Embassy, Interior Minister Chavalit · Yongchaiyudh ordered two police generals to take charge of investigating the Libyan affairs. Matichon reported. In addition to arresting Viroj, police earlier had arrested three executives of a company believed linked to Virof's W and M Company, it

Viroj received 25 million baht (one million dollar) for design and construction of the bunker, whose total cost was 700 million to 800 million bath(28 million to 32 million dollar Matichon reported. It said Viroj had flown frequently to Libya to oversee construction of the 17by-110-metre (56-by-263-foot)

began two years ago and had another year to go, it quoted Viroj as saying. The report did not make clear the exact location of the project.

Viroj complained that his arrest was politically motivated and resulted from US pressure.

The newspaper also quoted an anonymous intelligence agency source as reporting that Libya has at least nine large installations suspected of illicit weapons production.

Earlier this month, the government alerted That embassies in Greece and other Mediterranean nations to assist That workers in case of a US attack on Libyan chemical plants.

There are estimated to be more than 22,000 Thais employed in Libya.

Pakistan okays plan to bring down population growth to 2.6 pc

ISLAMABAD, Oct 17: Pakistan's caretaker cabinet approved a five-year programme at its final meeting on Saturday to bring the galloping three per cent population growth rate down to 2.6 per cent, reports Reuter.

The programme was prepared for implementation by the next government, which must take office next week. Information and Broadcasting Minister Nisar Memon told a news conference.

Pakistan's population was officially estimated at 120.8 million early this year and could double in 24 years with the preset growth rate, one of the highest in the world.

"The objective is to bring down the growth rate to 2.6 per cent by mid- 1998," Memon

Australia now a multicultural

country in Asia, very different

than it was 50 or 100 years ago.

Australians are making the big

leap into the Asia-Pacific region

as never before. Indeed, we have

opened the whole country up to

After a decade of reform,

Australia's economy is one-third

larger than it was 10 years ago.

Our population has increased

by two million and we are pro-

more jobs. Real income per per

son has increased by one sixth,

real household disposable in-

come has risen by nearly one

third. The inflation rate is the

government business enter-

prises are leading the productiv-

ity surge. We have also doubled

Because of reforms, our

lowest in nearly 30 years.

viding one and a half million

the world, reports IPS.

and by the Frankfurt Zoological Society for the Tanzanian

Government. The lodges and tented camp

in Tanzania will from part of the

chain of four and five star Serena hotels in selected locations in East Africa and South Asia managed in collaboration with Serena Tourism Promotion Services SA of Switzerland.



Aga Khan and Sir William Ryrie, Executive Vice President of the IFC in Washington after signing an agreement on a tourism project in Tanzania.

Kraft opens jt venture dairy products factory in China

BEIJING, Oct 17: Kraft General Foods International Inc. opened a joint venture factory Saturday to produce milk powder, cheese, yogurt and other milk products for the domestic Chinese market, reports

The 42 million dollar joint venture was formed with the Beijing Agriculture, Industry and Commerce General Corp. Kraft said it can produce more than 50,000 tons of dairy products per year and eventually will double that output.

A traditional Chinese diet includes few or no milk products, but that has been changing in recent years. Struck by the bigger size of milk-fed Japanese youngsters over the past few decades, the government has encouraged Chinese children to drink milk. Ice cream has become popular with Chinese of all ages in Beijing and other big cities.

Kraft said sales of milk and milk products have been increasing more than 15 per cent annually.

Kraft already has two joint ventures in China, one making Tang fruit drink and one making Maxwell House coffee.

World's largest dish of fried rice?

BANGKOK, Oct 17: About 40 Thai and foreign chefs cooked up what they said was the world's largest dish of fried rice Saturday to raise money for charity, reports

Organisers of the mountainous meal are hoping their efforts will win them a mention in the Guinness Book of World Records, which does not currently have an entry for the world's biggest fried rice.

Ingredients in the gargantuan fried rice include 125 kilograms (274 pounds) of chicken, 50 kilograms (110 pounds) of spring onions and 25 kilograms (55 pounds) of garlic, organisers said.

The ingredients, donated by Bangkok hotels, were cooked in a pan more than five metres (16 feet) across in the parking lot of a downtown convention centre.

The fried rice, enough to feed some 55,000 people, will be given to children in Bangkok

Fried rice, made with precooked rice and whatever ingredients happen to be on hand, is a cheap and popular dish throughout Asia.

Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia visiting different stalls of handicrafts exhibition of BSCIC held on the occasion of "Tourism Month '93' at Osmani Memorial Hall in the city on Saturday. State Minister for Civil Aviation and Tourism Abdul Mannan seen in the picture.

South-east Asia: More triangles, fewer borders

Leah Makabenta writes from Kuala Lumpur

Borders between member countries of the Association of South-east Asian Nations (ASEAN) are falling fast as governments consider more economic growth triangles in the region.

The number and scale of the such trilateral economic development zones are spinning dreams of untold trade opportunities for the region's business leaders and extravagant hopes of development for the most neglected corners of

ASEAN's poorer member states. "All these triangles have one objective: to break down the borders for cross-flow of goods without tariffs and provide spill-over development to neighbouring countries," said Francis Yeoh Sock Ping, managing director of Malaysia's

YTL Corp which is engaged in construction and power generation projects in ASEAN countries. According to Lee Poh Ping. Economics Professor at University Malaya in Kuala Lumpur. economic growth triangles are the result of the

changing nature of the nation state. "The state is too small to accommodate the problems of the macro-economy, like harmonising economic policies, trade and exchange rates. At the same time it is too big to cope with microeconomic problems like creating economic op-

portunities," he said. To deal with the first, countries have created 'supra-regional blocs' like the European Community. To cope with the second, they have formed economic growth triangles, with the more advanced partners pulling up the more back-

"Because of this, people are no longer worried about the sacrosanct nature of state sovereignty. Certain things that the nation state cannot handle, they leave to the sub-regional area or to the supra-regional area," said Lee.

The model for the concept in ASEAN is the successful 'southern growth triangle' set up three years ago with Singapore. Malaysia's southern state of Johor and Indonesia's Riau archipelago.

Economic tiger Singapore took the lead role.

building an industrial park in Batam island in the Riaus, where more than 150 transnationals operate. Johor is currently experiencing a boom as Singaporean investors, attracted by its cheap

The success of the southern triangle has in-

resource-rich Sabah.

At a meeting with Malaysian Prime Minister Mahathir Mohamad in July, Indonesian President Suharto is said to have raised the idea of a development zone comprising the Indonesian province of Kalimantan, Sarawak and the tiny oil-rich state of Brunei.

Indonesian, Thai and Malaysian officials wil meet in southern Thailand this month to identify projects for a 'northern growth triangle' involving five provinces in southern Thailand, four northern Malaysian states and two provinces of Sarawak in Indonesia.

since Thai Prime Minister Chuan Leekpai urged to Malaysia in January.

deregulated aviation, and introduced tough competition into telecommunications. But the most dramatic change of the last decade is that taking place in the amount of trade, in the kind of products

productivity on the wharves, re-

duced crew levels in coastal

shipping to international levels.

Khan and Sir William Ryrie.

Executive Vice President of the

International Fiance Corpora-

tion (IFC), have signed an

agreement to establish the IFC's

participation in a 32.5 million

US dollar tourism project in

The co-investors in the pro-

jects include, in addition to the

IFC, the Aga Khan Fund for

Economic Development (AKFED)

and the Commonwealth Deve-

The AKPED-initiated project

envisages the construction by

Tourism Promotion Services

(Tanzania) Ltd., an AKFED affili-

ate, of three safari lodges in the

Central Serengeti National Park,

by the Ngorongoro Crater and at

the Lake Manyara National Park

as well as a tented camp in the

Western Serengeti National

ter extensive and satisfactory

environmental studies had been

conducted by three separate in-

dependent consultants, on be-

Aussie economy making big leap

into Asia-Pacific region

All four sites were chosen af-

lopment Corporation (CDC).

Tanzania, says a press release.

Australia exports, and the places to which we export. At the beginning of 1980 we faced a bleak future as an exporter of commodities with declining prices. Today we are competing with the best of them and winning our share.

Ten years ago, we had one dollar of export income to seven dollar of domestic income Today, close to one quarter of everything we produce is for ex-

More and more of our ex-

ports going to East Asia, the fastest growing economies in the world, which allows US to grow faster than our OECD partners, without inflation or debt, and provides Australia with interesting high-productivity jobs. improving the multilateral

rules of GATT remains a very high trade priority. A successful settlement of the Uruguay Round will sustain our trade more firmly than any other action within our influence. But as the current round comes to an end we are looking at ways to improve on its outcomes within our own region.

Australia's prosperity, national well-being, and ability to maintain and build a good society depend upon our courage in moving boldly to integrate our economy with the

Japanese consumers concerned

economies of East Asia. In the mid 1980s, less than one-half of Australia's merchandise exports were to East Asian markets. Today the figure is more than one-half.

In recent years, for example, Australia's manufactured exports to Indonesia have been growing at 45 per cent to Thailand, at 40 per cent: to Korea, at 37 per cent: to the Philippines, at 34 per cent: to Japan, at 30 per cent ... and so

In the past decade, we have restructured ourselves to reveal the underlying competitive advantage of the Australian economy. We have offered incentives to research and development. dramatically increased our cost competitiveness, and build on our proximity to the roaring economies of East Asia.

labour, flood in.

spired similar projects in the region. ASEAN leaders have visited each other's capitals in the past year to airily propose growth triangles to link one or another of their regions with that of

Philippine President Fidel Ramos, on a visit to Malaysia early this year, spoke of a growth area involving the southern Philippine island of Mindanao, the east Malaysian state of Sabah

and Indonesia's Irian Jaya and Sulawesi regions. Enthusiastic businessmen are also proposing an eastern triangle linking southern Philippines Sabah and Sarawak in east Malaysia, and the east coast states of peninsular Malaysia.

Manila and Kuala Lumpur have been at odds for decades over a lingering Philippine claim to

The northern economic zone has taken off

the quick development of the triangle on a visit

Malaysia is even more keen on the concept than it may have been with the southern model because it ultimately hopes to become the core of the proposed growth area, economic analysts - (Inter Press Service)

Unemployment rate falls in UK to 10.3pc last month

LONDON, Oct 17: The number of people unemployed in Britain fell by 13,600 September to 2,908,300, the lowest level for a year, after slight rises in July and August. the Department of Employment said yesterday, reports AFP.

But officials remained cautious about the state of the economic recovery in Britain and expect only small reductions of around 5,000 in the unemployment totals in the coming At the same time, British

Aerospace (BAAE) announced that it was to shed 1,000 jobs at Rocket Motor Plants in Prestwick, Scotland and at different locations around the country. The unemployment rate fell

in September to 10.3 per cent of the working population, down from 10.4 per cent in August. Unadjusted unemployment fell by 47,834 to 2,912,130, a rate of 10.4 per cent.

In August the unemployment rate was at 21.1 per cent in Spain, 11.7 per cent in the republic of Ireland, 11.5 per cent in France, 6.9 per cent in the United States, 5.9 per cent in Germany and 2:5 per cent in

Employment Secretary David Hunt said that the unemployment figure had fallen by 84,000 this year, which was very good news.

Today's fall more than makes up for the small rises in the last two months," he said.

about imported rice around two million tonnes. the fund which was

TOKYO, Oct 17: Japanese civic and consumer groups are voicing serious concerns about contaminated rice entering the country following the government decision to order emergency rice imports to counter the worst domestic harvest since World War II, reports AFP.

The Japan offspring fund, a Tokyo-based civic group. warned earlier this month that 15 per cent of the imported rice could be contaminated with harmful chemicals.

"Post-harvest agricultural chemicals are more dangerous than food additives," said Junichi Kowaka, Secretary General

No one wants to eat such chemicals," Kowaka added.

Japan announced last month plans to import 200,000 tonnes of rice this year to cover the shortfall from the woeful domestic harvest. It will be the first emergency rice import since 1984 when Japan secured 150,000 tonnes from

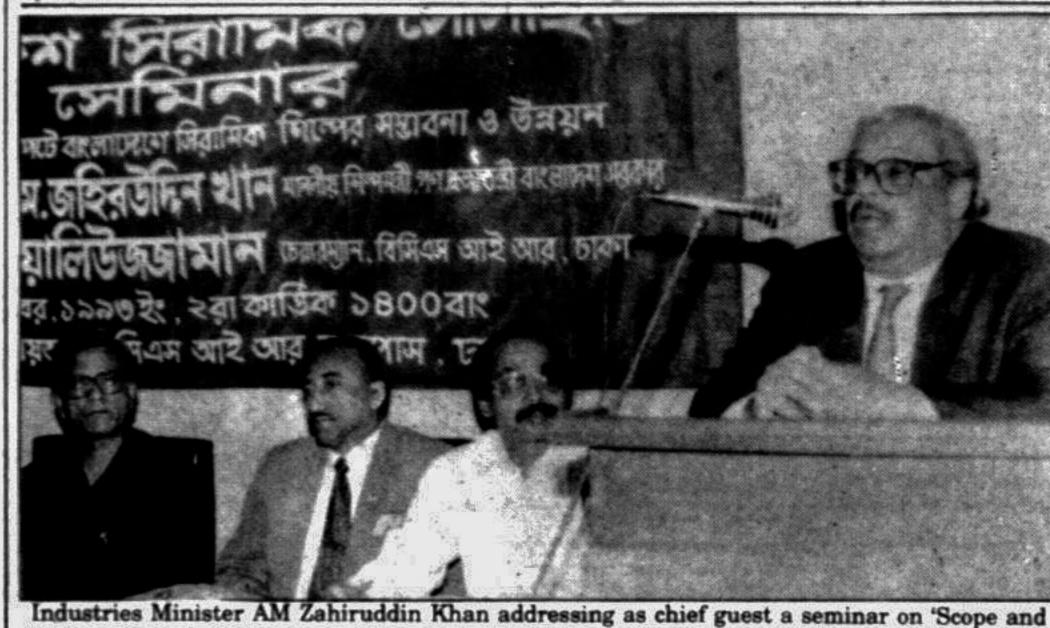
South Korea. However, the fund believes the government order falls far short of the amount of imported rice actually required and es-

timates the real figure at

Of that total, some 300,000 tonnes - mainly from the United States and Thailand -are likely to have been treated with harmful insecticides, the fund says.

Consumer groups are also concerned that the quality of the imported rice will fall below domestic health standards.

However, a health and welfare ministry official said contaminated rice was unlikely to enter Japan because standards would be strictly observed. He also stressed that Japan bans the post-harvest use of agricultural chemicals on rice.



development of ceramic industries in Bangladesh in the context of free market economy' at the BANSDOC auditorium in the city yesterday. - Star photo

LONDON, Oct 17: Soft goods, which have been hit in recent weeks by profit-taking after a rise earlier in the year. Tallied again this week on the world commodity markets, re-

ports AFP. Gold: Higher. The gold price, which fell sharply between mid-August and mid-September. continued its bounce-back this week, encouraged by speculative buying and a strengthening of Jewellery demand ahead of the Christmas period.

Since mid-September, prices have risen by seven per cent. The tension in Russia and prospects for a reduction in

Russian gold output also gave dealers confidence. Most analysts expect gold prices to rise back to the 400 dollar per ounce level at the end

of the year. Platinum: Higher. The price of platinum rose, boosted by the strength of gold price and by signs of economic recovery in

the United States. The prospects of a deficit in production in 1994 and the tension in South Africa and Russia also boosted the market.

Silver: Slightly higher. The price of silver, which jumped by more than seven per cent the previous week, continued to rise though at a slower pace sup-

ported by signs of an output reduction in Mexico, the world's leading producer.

Copper: Slightly higher. Copper prices rose slightly on the London Metal Exchange (LME) this week, sustained by rumours that China might have bought up to 20,000 tonnes of the metal, some of its coming from LME warehouses.

However, forecasts from metals brokers Rudolf Wolff and from analysts at the Economist Intelligence Unit (EIU) said there was little room for a prolonged upturn with bearish fundamentals weighing on the

metal. On the LME, copper stocks rose by 6,700 tonnes to 601,250 tonnes.

Lead: Sharply higher. Lead prices jumped by more than six per cent over the week, boosted by Wednesday's announcement that Brunswick Mining and Smelting of Canada plans to suspend operations at its Belledune Smelter for six weeks from November 4 because of a lack of concentrates feed.

The plight of Brunswick underlined the declining availability of lead concentrates and

should help support the metal's prices through next year, analysts said. One of the LME, lead stocks

rose by 2,975 tonnes to a record 290,225 tonnes. Zine: Sharply higher. Zinc prices also jumped by more than six per cent, boosted by

rumours of the imminent clo-

sure of some plants in Germany and Australia. However, analysts said the room for a further rise in prices was limited as most zinc producers are losing money at existing weak prices and large cutbacks would be needed to

force prices to rise sharply. Aluminium: Slightly higher. Aluminium prices rose slightly after it was announced that Russian, EC and US officials would meet in Moscow next week to decide how to settle the dispute over the flood of aluminium exports from the Commonwealth of Independent States.

However, the rise was limited by the continuing poor state of the market, where stocks are at world record highs and still rising.

According to William Adams isation.

of Rudolf Wolff, the aluminium market is in "dire need of production cutbacks." Without them, "Consumption would need to increase by 12 per cent to absorb excess stock," he

Nickel: Higher after weak

start. Nickel prices rose over the weak despite a weak start when prices were affected by profittaking on the previous week's Nickel fell sharply at the

start of the week, losing some three per cent on Monday and Tuesday, before bouncing back after talk grew of production cutbacks, possibly at Canadian producer Falconbridge, dealers

LME stocks of nickel fell 324 tonnes to 118,440 tonnes.

Tin: Higher after weak start. Tin prices followed nickel. falling at the start of the week on profit-taking but rising later ahead of talks at the Association of Tin Producing Countries in Kuala Lumpur next week.

The talks are likely to look at the entry of China in the organ-

Coffee: Slightly higher. After falling by 11 per cent over the previous four weeks, coffee prices rose slightly this week. despite scepticism over the producer countries degree of determination to stick by their recently agreed stock-withholding scheme. The Brazilian government's

of coffee for the scheme from next week onwards, boosted sentiment in the market. Cocoa: Slightly higher. Cocoa prices rose at the start of the week and then remained firm ahead of confirmation of the anticipated fall in the West

announcement that it was going

to start buying part of its quota

African cocoa harvests. The US Department of Agriculture predicted that the world harvest would fall by two per cent in 1993/94 to 2.34 million tonnes despite the fact that the Ivory Coast is expected to produce 750,000 tonnes of cocoa next year, seven per cent up on its production in 1992/93.

Sugar: Slightly lower. Sugar prices fell slightly, affected profit-taking and by contradictory estimates for the 1993/94

German statistician FO Licht said the market would see a second consecutive annual deficit in 1993/94 with world stocks falling by between 25 and 30 per cent. Vegetable oils: Slightly

higher. The price of soya rose. boosted by a reduction in US Department of Agriculture (USDA) estimates of the world soya bean harvest. The USDA predicted that worldwide production would fall to 112.45 million tonnes, down

from previous estimates that it

would fall to 113 million tonnes

from the estimated 116.52 million in 1992/93. Crude oil: Lower. The price of crude of slid toward 17 dollar a barrel, weakened by fears of a sharp increase in output from the North Sea in November and uncertainties over output

from OPEC member countries.

mates from specialist preview MEES, which said OPEC output reached 24.79 million barrels a · day in September, up from 24.3 million in August and 1.19 million barrels above its production ceiling.

Rubber: Slightly higher. The price of natural rubber rose thanks to major Chinese buying and a rise in industrial demand in Europe and the United

Fears that the producer

countries were planning to put a voluntary stock-withholding scheme into action to improve prices increased the market's nervousness and encouraged consumer countries to return to negotiations. Japan and the EC said they

would agree to negotiation on a new international rubber accord to succeed the present accord which is due to expire in December 1993 Grain: Recovery after weak

start. The prices of wheat and barley fell at the beginning of the week, but rose again after the USDA cut estimate of world grain output in 1993/94.

The market was hit by esti-According to the USDA, the world grain harvest will fall to 1.359 billion tonnes next year, down from a previous estimate of 1.37 billion and well off the 1.417 billion tonnes harvested in 1992/93.

The International Wheat

Committee predicted a harvest Soft goods rally again on the world commodity markets of 1.39 billion tonnes.

Tea: Unchanged. The price of tea was unchanged in London from the previous week's prices, with high grade tea sold at 200 pence per kilo, middle grade at 125 pence, and lower grade tea at 100 pence.

After the fall in prices in the

first half of the year, analysts

expect prices to rise over the next few months despite the likelihood of an increase in whole harvests. Cotton: Steady. The cotton price was steady over the week despite the cut in USDA esti-

mates of the US cotton harvest

for 1993/94, which will still be above the level harvested in the previous year. The International Cotton Advisory Committee said world

demand would reach 19.3 million tonnes in 1993/94 on a production of 18 million, but that the high level of stocks, estimated at 9.1 million tonnes. would continue to depress prices, which are currently 25 per cent lower than they were 20 years ago.

Wool: Weak. The price of wool was unchanged from the previous week, close to its lowest level for two years, affected by weak textile demand and the high level of stocks.