Pak jet crashes: A Pakistan air force jet crashed into a house in Peshwar yesterday, killing the pilot and injuring nine people on the ground, witnesses said. AFI reports from Peshwar.

The crash set several houses on fire. Most of the injured were suffering from burns.

Pilotless Chinese plane : China has successfully launched its first pilotless solar-powered aircraft to become the third country to possess such technology after the United States and Japan. it was reported yesterday. AFP reports from Hong Kong.

The aircraft successfully completed a test flight in northern in China on August 19, and has won a patent licence from the State Patent Office to further develop the aircraft, said the Hong Kong branch of China News Service.

Malaysia to buy US ship: The Royal Malaysian Navy plans to buy a tank landing ship from the United States Navy, the naval chief was reported as saying on Tuesday. AP reports from Kuala Lumpur.

Malaysia is negotiating to bring down the 18 million ringgit (7.05 million dollars) price tag for the Newport-class ship, said Rear Admiral Abdul Khalid Mohamad.

Murayama ends Asia trip: Prime Minister Tomitchi Muravama of Japan left Singapore on Tuesday, ending his eight day, four nation tour aimed at emphasising Japan's support for southeast Asia's economic progress, AP reports from Singapore.

Murayama, who was in Singapore on Sunday and Monday, earlier visited the Philippines, Vietnam and Malaysia. He was seen off at the airport by Trade and Industry Minister Yeo Cheow Tong.

Quake shakes eastern Japan : An earthquake registering 4.5% on the Richter scale shook eastern Japan yesterday morning but there were no reports of casualties or damage, the Meteorological Agency said, AFP

reports from Tokyo. The epicenter of the quake, which occurred at 1:55 am 1655 GMT) on Monday, was 50 kilometers (31 miles) below the seabed off Ibaraki prefecture, northeast of Tokyo, the

Chakrapong goes to Finland: Cambodian Prince Norodom Chakrapong, an alleged key player in last month's fafled coup in Phnom Penh, has left Thailand for Finland. Thai government and airline officials said vesterday. reports Reuter.

Chakrapong, who arrived in Thailand from Malaysia earlier this month, left Bangkok Don Muang Airport around midnight on a Finn air flight to Helsinki, Immigration Department commander Lieut General Chareuk Maekvichai told Reuters.

Fire makes 4000 Thais homeless: More than 4,000 people were left homeless yesterday after a fire swept through a crowded Bangkok slum area, razing some 750 shophouses, a relief organisation said, AFP reports from Bangkok.

The three hour blaze raged late Monday across four acres 1.6 hectares) of the Klong Toey slum district as authorities battled a water shortage as well as the fire itself, a Duang Prateep foundation official said.

Cuba to sign N-treaty: Cuba announced Monday that it will sign a treaty that bans nuclear weapons and requires peaceful use of nuclear energy. AP reports from Juiz De Fora, Brazil.

However, Foreign Minister Roberto Robaina said Cuba might back out of the Tlateloleo Treaty if the United States does not remove maclear weapons from U.S warships at the Guantanmo Bay, Cuba, naval base. It was the latest Cuban message to Washington in the crisis over Cuba's economic isolation and Cuban refugees who have been fleeing for the United States.

5 hurt in Croatian blast: Four Bosnian Muslims and a UN soldier were wounded by mines in a frontline zone of Serb held Croatia packed with 10,000 refugees from Bosnia's Bihac region, Croatian radio said on Monday, Reuter reports from Zagreb.

UN peacekeepers had no immediate information on the report. But they had warned that a refugee flood into the area was bound to detonate mines not yet removed six months into a truce between rebel Serbs and the Croatian govern-

US Surgeon Gen's son jailed judge sentenced a son of U.S Surgeon General Joycelyn Elders on Monday to 10 years in prison for selling one eighth of an ounce (7 grams) of cocaine to an undercover

policeman, AP reports from Little Rock. As Kevin Elders was led off to jail, the surgeon general fought back tears, while his father, Oliver, slammed his hands into a steel door in frustration.

40 drowned in West Bengal: At least 40 people were reported missing after their boat sank in a river during a storm in the Indian State of West Bengal, the Press Trust India (PTI) reported on Monday, AFP says from New Delhi

Rescuers fished out bodies of three of the victims and stepped up a search for the remaining passengers a day after the large boat sank late Sunday in the Kelaghai, or Bananas, river in Bengal's Midnapore district, the news agency said.

Israeli killed in S Lebanon: One Israeli soldier was killed and another was wounded in a guerilla attack in the Jewish state's occupation zone in Southern Lebanon on Monday, Israeli backed militia sources said, Reuter reports from Marjayoin,

The Israeli casualties were inflicted when guerillas fired anti-tank rockets and machine guns on an Israeli force at Ali Taker on the edge of the border zone, the sources, s who are with the Israeli backed South Lebanon Army (SLA) militia.

Hussein to visit Jerusalem: King Hussein of Jordan said in a newspaper interview published on Tuesday that he would visit Jerusalem "very soon." AP

reports from Jerusalem. The monarch also said there has been good progress in the Jordanian Israeli peace talks. I'm certainly satisfied with what is happening in the talks with Israel." Hussein told the Yedioth Ahronoth newspaper during a visit to Germany.

Tajik rebels kill Russian guard : A Russian border guard was killed by Tajik opposition fighters while defending the Tajik-Afghan border early Tuesday

morning, news agencies reported. AP says from Dushanbe. The latest shooting broke out on the border of the former Soviet republic on Monday evening, as rebel fighters opened fire from behind strategic heights near a Russian peacekeeper's outpost. No other casualties were reported.

Mandela to visit Indonesia: South African President Nelson Mandela is scheduled to make an unofficial visit to Indonesia later this week for talks with President Suharto, State Secretary Murdiono said yesterday.

AFP reports from Jakarta. Murdiono said Mandela, who is expected to arrive Priday. would visit in his capacity as leader of the ruling African National Congress (ANC) and would directly leave the country after holding talks with Suharto.

Filipino army week : The Philippine military may be one of the weakest in Asia but it could still make any foreign attack a bloody affair for invaders, the armed forces chief said Tuesday. AP reports from Manila.

"The threat to our national security from the outside right now is practically nil." Gen. Arturo Enrile said. "But ... you prepare for something that your hope will not happen."

BRIFFY Lankan cabinet to discuss Offthe Record Tamils' conditions today

fertiliser.

COLOMBO, Aug 30: The government praised Sri Lanka's Tamil Tiger rebels Tuesday for agreeing to hold peace talks, but said it must consider the three conditions they have set, reports AP.

Chandrika Kumaratunga became prime minister and her Peoples' Alliance won control of parliament in an election August 16 after promising to hold unconditional peace talks with the guerillas.

Such negotiations would be a major breakthrough because the party that lost power in the election for the first time in 17 years had refused to hold talks unless the rebels laid down arms.

But many people were surprised when the insurgents on Monday set three conditions for the talks: Imposing a ceasefire in the 11-year old war, lifting an embargo on rebel-held areas, and allowing people to travel in and out of

weather conditions improved.

ISLAMABAD, Aug 30: The

forces of Afghan President

Burhanuddin Rabbani have

threatened to bomb the bases

and civilian areas held by his

arch-foe Gulbuddin Hekmatyar

unless Hekmatyar stops rock-

eting the capital Kabul, reports

matvar's Charasyab base south

of Kabul and other areas under

his control was made in a

Defence Ministry statement,

broadcast by the Rabbani-con-

trolled Kabul Radio on Monday

night amid renewed UN efforts

forces have often bombed the

Charasyab base since the pre-

sent round of factional fighting

empted on January 1. But it

MANILA, Aug 30: Up to 74

people were feared dead in the

Philippines' worst coal mining

disaster as rescuers battled

poisonous fumes to reach

workers trapped underground

at a state-owned colliery in the

south, officials said today, re-

ripped through the Philippine

National Oil Co Energy Deve-

lopment · Corp (PNOC-EDC)

mine site near Malangas town

at 7:45 pm (1145 GMT) on

Monday, trapping 74 of the

170 miners working in un-

derground tunnels at the time,

Radio station DZXL re

ported that the bodies of 62

A methane gas explosion

Jets controlled by Rabbani's

The threat to hit Hek-

Reuter.

for peace.

ports AFP

officials said.

But that didn't prompt the new government to condemn the insurgents. "The government welcomes rebel acceptance of these talks. All their conditions will be looked into Wednesday during a cabinet meeting before the government commits itself." Information Minister Dharmasiri

interview. The government will also discuss the rebel demand with the military Thursday. and may then issue a formal announcement on the proposed peace talks. Senanavake

Senanayake said in an

In a rebel-controlled newspaper that arrived in government-held areas Monday, the guerillas said the government should set 'a suitable climate for the talks by meeting their conditions.

The four-year embargo has impoverished the 600,000

To assure good luck on her voyage, Ariadne Garcia, 16, sprinkles water on a religious statue

attached to the bow of a small boat before she and others leave Cuba on August 29 from the

beach at Guanabo, 35 km east of " "ana. The exodus of Cubans increased on Monday as

Rabbani's forces threaten to

bomb civilian areas

was the first time the Kabul

administration had threatened

to bomb even civilian areas un-

der Prime Minister Hekma-

been killed, thousands woun-

ded and hundreds of buildings

destroyed by rockets and

mortar, shells fired on the

city," the radio, monitored in

Islamabad, said about almost

resisted popular pressure to

retaliate for fear of harming

the innocent, and in the hope

that Hekmatyar's "feelings as a

proved fruitless," it said. "If

Gulbuddin's militias do not

stop firing missiles on the res-

74 feared dead in Filipino

coal mine blast

people have been recovered

from the tunnels of the coun-

try's largest coal mine, but

PNOC-EDC officials here could

only confirm 47 deaths.

Twenty-seven other miners

have been rescued, and six of

them were airlifted to the cen-

tral city of CEBU with severe

rescuers with oxygen units

were attempting to reach the

blast site, which was filled

with noxious carbon monoxide

disaster in Philippine mining

'It's the worst coal mining

Company officials said 50

Ninety six other miners

are still missing.

"Unfortunately, these hopes

human being would prevail".

It said the authorities had

daily attacks on Kabul.

"Hundreds of people have

tyar's control.

the North by depriving them of 42 basic commodities, including kerosine, batteries and

The guerillas, from the Hindu Tamil minority, accuse the nation's majority Buddhist Sinhalese of discrimination. More than 34,000 people liave been killed in the insur-

Meanwhile. The United National Party (UNP), swept from power after 17 years in this month's general elections. today accused the new government of not acting to stop violent attacks on its support-

A senior official said four or five UNP supporters had been killed in post-poll violence. Others reported that they had been blinded, had hands and legs hacked off or had lost their homes in attacks by supporters of the ruling people's alliance, he said.

We are daily inundated with complaints of assault, victimisation and harassment." **UNP General-Secretary Gamini** Wijesekera told a news confer-

tain law and order despite a promise to check the unrest.' he added.

had received 200 complaints from supporters. "Their houses have been razed to the ground and most are in hiding," he said. "Justice is not being done.

ing the law.

Wijesekera said the violence of frustration bursting out".

Asha Bhonsle, Pran honoured

CULCUTTA, Aug 30: Renowned play-back singer. Asha Bhonsle and noted actor. Pran have been selected by the All India Critics Association for the prestigious 'Kala Shiromani

According to an announcement made here today, both were selected for their life time achievement in music and films.

selected for the awards are:

The awards will be pre-

- AFP photo

idential areas of Kabul city and

killing innocent people, Cha-

rasyab's Bazaar ... and other

military and residential areas

and militia bases in other re-

gions will come under air and

land bombardment by the

A UN mission led by former

Tunisian Foreign Minister

Mahmoud Mestiri is planning

to call a joint meeting o

Afghan faction leaders to dis-

cuss peace proposals, Pakis-

tan's official APP news agency

UN Secretary-General Bou-

tros Boutros-Ghali is due to

visit Islamabad next week and

Pakistani officials said he

might meet Afghan leaders liv-

history." Energy Undersec

retary Rufino Bomasang told a

news conference. Another

accident in the central island

of CEBU in the mid 1980s

the 27 still unaccounted for.

There is still a possibility of

them being alive." company

President Nazario Vasquez

Sison told reporters president

Fidel Ramos had ordered offi-

cials of the Pnoc Subsidiary,

the army and the police to

speed up the rescue work and

released disaster funds for the

survivors and the families of

Press Secretary Jesus

Our priority is to rescue

claimed 27 lives, he added.

said on Monday.

ing in Pakistan.

Islamic army of Afghanistan."

UP Shiv Sena chief shot

NEW DELHI, Aug 30: A militant Hindu leader was in critical condition after being shot by gunmen in the northern Indian city of Kanpur late Monday, newspapers reported today, says AFP.

Subodh Chopra was shot six times by an unspecified number of men riding in a car, the Times of India and other dailies said. Chopra was reportedly in critical condition in hospital. The attack sparked tension in Kanpur, an industrial centre some 400 kilometres (250 miles) southeast of the Indian capital. Kanpur city is located in Uttar Pradesh. India's most populous state.

Chopra was the president of Shiv Sena (Shiva's army), December 6, 1992 razing of of Ayodhya.

Sudan to boycott Cairo confce

KHARTOUM, Aug 30: Sudan has decided to boycott the United Nations population conference due to be held next week in Cairo and called on others not to attend, state ra-

Sudan is the second Muslim country to say it will not take part in the UN conference on population and development due to open in Cairo on September 5. Earlier, Saudi Arabia said it would not go.

Khartoum called for the formation of an international forum to counter the recommendations of the conference. Last week Sudanese Pre-

sident Lieutenant-General Omar Hassan Al-Bashir criticised the conference saying its programme contradicted moral and religious values.

"The PA has failed to main-

Wijesekera said the UNP

Kumaratunga said in a statement after the August 16 poll that she would not condone violence from any quarter. She urged the police to take action against anyone, including PA supporters, violat-

could be the result of "17 years

Award, reports AFP.

Other eminent personalities

Nirupa Roy (actress, Bombay), Girish Karnad (actor, Madras). Vyjanthimala (dancer, Madras) Ananda Shankar (creative music. Calcutta), Ketaki Dutta (actress, Calcutta), Sandhya Rani (actress, Calcutta), Sunil Ganguly (literature, Calcutta) Hasrat Jairpuri (poet-Bombay) Debu Majumdar (film-Critic, Delhi), Usha Uthup (vocalist Calcutta) and Brojen Biswas (Tabla player-Culcutta).

sented at a function in New Delhi next month.

the Uttar Pradesh chapter of militant Hindu group whose activists took part in the the Babri Mosque in the town

dio said today, reports Reuter.

turned on its master because he had earlier beaten it for chasing a cat. Baby smuggling rampant

Beauty pageant turns violent

ended in violence when part of the crowd protested because

a black finalist was not crowned queen, the Cape Times

The contest at the weekerd was abandoned after Bukelwa

The master of ceremonies was struck on the back by an

Mabinda and the other finalists. Charlotte Bouw and Rene

Maarman, who are of mixed race, were taken back stage to

Dog savages master

asleep and bit through his throat, killing him, police in the

western Siberian town of Omsk said on Tuesday, Reuter re-

sofa, news agencies quoted police officials as saying.

She called police who took the dog outside and shot it.

MOSCOW: A bull-terrier attacked its master while he was

The dog savaged its owner while he was taking a nap on a

The man's wife found her husband dead with throat and

Itar-Tass news agency said the bull-terrier had probably

facial wounds with the bull-terrier sitting calmly alongside.

Mabinda, who is black, was named second princess and

members of the crowd hegan pelting the stage with bottles

and cans, apparently bet luse they had wanted her to win.

newspaper reported on Tuesday, says Reuter.

protect them from the rampaging group.

object and taken for treatment.

ports from Moscow.

CAPE TOWN: A South African student beauty pageant

KUALA LUMPUR: Police have rescued 13 babies smuggled from neighbouring Thailand by a syndicate that sold infants to childless couples in Malaysia, a news agency said Tuesday, reports AP.

The babies were rescued during the first seven months this year from various parts of Malaysia, Bernama news agency

Investigations showed that the babies were sold for between 2,000 ringgit and 10,000 ringgit (dlrs 785 and dlrs 3,290), Fong Wai Sek, the chief of police in the northwestern

state of Perlis, which abuts Thailand, told Bernama. Police say adoption gangs steal babies or buy them from prostitutes or unwed mothers for 30 dollar to 105 dollars.

1952 laws bars Malaysians from adopting foreign babies and parents who bought the infants in the past said it was easier than going through the government red tape to adopt Malaysian babies.

There are no estimates of the number of babies adopted il

Ban on teachers convicted of sex, drug offences

SACRAMENTO, California: Schoolteachers convicted of sex or drug crimes will be forever barred from California classrooms under a bill signed into law Monday by Gov. Pete Wilson, reports AP.

Previously, teachers convicted of felonies could have their credentials restored after one year. The new law permanently revokes the credentials of teachers convicted of felony sex of fences of distributing drugs to minors.

Four teachers convicted of sex or drug offences returned to the state's classrooms between 1989 and 1993, said Amador County Deputy District Attorney Vernon Pierson

Julius Chan new Khmers' deadline expires

PHNOM PENH, Aug 30: As the deadline to comply with Khmer Rouge demands of the release of three Western hostages passed Tuesday, a godfather of one of the men said he hoped it was not final, reports AP.

"I'm not sure this date is definitive," Gerard Mouquin, 64, said in an interview. "Maybe we can open another round of negotiations."

Mouquin flew in from France Monday to show moral support for Jean Michel Braquet, 27, who was seized July 26 along with Briton Mark Slater. 28, and Australian David Wilson, 29.

The Khmer Rouge had originally demanded 150,000 dol lars for their release but later said the governments of the three hostages must announce an end to military aid to Cambodia by August 30.

Papuan PM PORT MORESBY, Aug 30: Parliament elected Sir Julius

Chan prime minister Tuesday after incumbent Paias Wingti withdrew from a leadership ballot ordered by the Supreme Court, reports AP. Officials said Chan, 55, won

69 votes to 32 from Bill Skate. who a few hours earlier resigned as speaker to contest the leadership. Chan, an Australian-edu-

cated moderate, returns to the top job 12 years after he was prime minister from 1980 to

Wingti had served as prime minister, since 1992 as head of a coalition government made up of his People's Democratic Movement party and Chan's People's Progress Party.

Chan had been foreign minister and deputy prime minister in Wingti's government.

four years after unification.

The judges found the three

defendants - carpenter's ap-

prentice Heiko Kahle, waiter

Steffen Schuette and railway

worker Carlo Felgentrager -

3 neo-Nazi leaders jailed BERLIN, Aug 30: Three attacks on foreigners persist

leaders of the neo-Nazi mob whose hateful "hunt for foreigners" in the eastern city of Magdeburg turned into a bloody melee were sentenced Tuesday to up to three years in fail, reports AP. The anti-foreigner riot May

12 grew out of a drunken hunt for Turks and was Germany's worst right-wing violence this The three-judge court con-

victed the three defendants. ages 21 to 23, of grievous breach of public order and sentenced them to terms ranging from 25 months to 3

Defence attorneys had sought acquittal and suspended sentences but prosecutors said a stiff sentence would send a strong message to "violent hooligans" whose

guilty of inciting the hunt for foreigners and taking part in the rampage. It was the second trial in

the May 12 riot. Last month, a juvenile court sentenced three youthful participants to up to 3 1/2 years in prison. Hunting for a group of

Turks, the mob of about 30 rightists, shouting "hooligans for Germany!" and "Smash the Foreigners!" first encountered some black African men. whom they chased through a city center packed with pedestrians on Ascension Day afternoon

Panamanian

India to challenge China as planet's most populous nation

NEW DELHI, Aug 30: India will challenge China as the planet's most populous nation with 1.5 billion people by 2035, according to World Bank projections, but the warning has not unduly worried demographers here, reports AFP.

The child boom, a result of tailed birth-control programpies, illiteracy, poverty, gender bias and religious taboos, can be checked, they say, Indian demographer and

UN consultant Ashish Bose feels a bigger population will not necessarily spell economic doom and rejects western fears that a billion-plus population could lead to economic or social disorders.

"Many factors are not taken into account or are presumed to remain unchanged," he said, arguing that while Germany and France will face a workforce crunch from declining birthrates. Asia will have ample

The West will have to change its immigration policies to prevent economic slowdown, Bose said. "India and China will be economic superpowers because of their manpower in the next cen-

Bose, who will attend the UN world population conference beginning September 5 in Cairo, also said changes in India's birth-limiting polices, the world's first coordinated programme launched in 1951 will make a significant impact.

"But development is the best contraceptive," he said. echoing former Health Minister Karan Singh, who ad vocated total literacy and the fulfillment of people's basic needs to arrest the swelling headcount.

The four states of Bihar. Rajasthan, Uttar Pradesh and Madhya Pradesh with the highest illiteracy rates account for 40 per cent of India's population. Kerala in the south, boasting 100 per cent literacy. had the lowest birth rate of 17.7 per thousand in 1992. Nearly a third of the coun-

try's 8.6 million people live in poverty and the average rate of births is currently 3.6 for a woman over her lifetime India's annual population growth rate fell to 1.9 per cent

in 1992 from 2.15 per cent in 1981 However, projections for a billion-plus figure in 2001 arc still valid. The headcount swells by 17 million people, or the popula-

tion of Australia, every year. The current average of 72.000 births daily accelerated as the infant mortality rate shrank, to 80 per 1,000 in

1991 from 150 three decades ago, and life expectancy rose to 60 years from 32. New Delhi is anxious to

stem the child boom with its annual 375 million dollar family planning programme. which has failed to take off. Critics say a short-circuited

digital population clock at a busy New Delhi intersection sums up the state of the programme, ironfcally symbolised with an inverted red triangle the traditional Hindu sign of fertility. The notion that family

planning will check population by itself is wrong," said Ena Singh of the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) "The quality of health services must improve and women empowered to have choices."

India's hopes to check the growth with monetary incentives for sterilisation, sug-

gested by American experts in the 1960s, has failed due to corruption. "There are over 574,000

villages and it is impossible to keep proper records. Targets are shown as being achieved but many of the cases recorded are fake or relate to tubec tomies on women past the child-bearing age," said Bose. The UNFPA official said va-

sectomies, although "safer cheaper and more effective" were unpopular. Strong memories of forced

sterilisations during emergency rule between 1.75 and 1.77 also haunted the Indian male, she said.

A UNDP report says there were 341,256 vasectomies in 1989-91 compared with 174,008 in 1991-92 but inputs from two Delhi hospitals show a new non-surgical method is becoming popular.

president steps down PANAMA CITY, Aug 30:

President Guillermo Endara steps down Wednesday, leaving a stable Panama but a legacy of weak leadership and oftenridiculed public policy, reports Endara ends his term hav-

history and by offering to collaborate with the new government if it would benefit the The out-going president, who did not seek re-election,

ing overseen some of the

cleanest elections in Panama's

turns his office over to Ernesto Perez Balladares, a member of Noriega's party. Endara has bought an apartment in the exclusive

ocean-view section of Punto Patilla and says he will return to his law practice.