

BRIEFLY

Murayama to meet Clinton Nov 14: Japanese Premier Tomichi Murayama will meet with US President Bill Clinton on November 14 in Jakarta during a summit of the heads of member states in the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation Forum, the Nihon Keizai economic daily reported yesterday. AFP says from Tokyo.

Gligorov wins Macedonian Polls: Outgoing Macedonian President Kiro Gligorov was re-elected in the first round of presidential elections, the electoral commission announced on Thursday. AFP reports from Skopje.

Gligorov, 77, running for the ruling leftwing coalition, easily beat his rightwing rival Ljubisa Georgijevski, aged 57, in Sunday's vote.

6 Thais held for drug smuggling: Six Thais were arrested on heroin trafficking charges when anti-narcotics agents discovered them with 28 kg (62 lbs) of the drug which they planned to export to the Netherlands, police said. Reuter reports from Bangkok.

The six men, who were arrested in Bangkok on Thursday, were planning to export the drug inside lacquered frames and boxes, anti-narcotics officials said.

Russian actor Bondarchuk dies: Russian film producer and actor Sergel Bondarchuk died in Moscow on Thursday aged 74. Itar-Tass News Agency reported. Reuter says from Moscow.

Bondarchuk is best known internationally for his production of Tolstoy's epic 'War and Peace' in which he also starred as Pyotr Bezukhov. Tass did not give the cause of his death.

Algerian wins Francophone Award: Algerian poet and novelist Mohammed Dib on Thursday won the Francophone Grand Prix, the highest literary award bestowed by the Academie Francaise. AP reports from Paris.

Dib was born in Tlemcen, Algeria and has lived in France since 1959. He has written more than 20 works, the best known of which is his 'Algeria' trilogy of 'La Grande Maison' (The Big House) of 1952, 'L'Incendie' (The Fire) of 1954 and 'Le Metier a Tisser' (The Loom) of 1957.

Doctor executed in China: The vice-director of a hospital in central Henan Province was executed on Tuesday for writing 450 false sterilisation certificates to help women circumvent China's draconian family planning regulations, according to a report in the official China Youth News. AFP says from Beijing.

Rebel leader killed in Egypt: A military leader of a banned Muslim fundamentalist group was killed in a clash with police in southern Egypt on Thursday, police said. AFP reports from Assuit.

They said Atef Abdel Ghaffar Shahin of the Jamaa Islamiyya movement was hiding in a sugarcane field near the village of Nawwat Bahari and opened fire when police approached. Police returned fire and killed him.

Rebels kill 2 Filipino troops: Communist guerrillas ambushed a military convoy in the northern province of Abra, killing two soldiers and wounding five others, army spokesman said yesterday. Reuter reports from Baguio, Philippines.

Zairean President in Beijing: Zairean President Mobutu Sese Seko arrived in Beijing yesterday to begin his fifth official visit to China, his first in 12 years. AFP reports from Beijing.

Mobutu was officially welcomed to China by President Jiang Zemin at a ceremony at Tiananmen Square in central Beijing.

Illegal arms seized in China: Police have confiscated 120,000 illegal guns and arrested nearly 10,000 arms dealers, the Ministry of Public Security announced. AP reports from Beijing.

In a nationwide crackdown that started August 29, police also have stopped 464 groups that were illegally making and selling guns and ammunition and have broken up 184 criminal gangs, the official China Daily reported Friday.

16 councillors jailed in Taiwan: Sixteen councillors of the ruling Nationalist Party, including a speaker of the central Taichung City Council, have been sentenced to jail terms ranging from 16 to 32 months on charges of bribery, court officials reported Friday. AP reports from Taipei.

They said the Taichung District Court on Thursday handed down a 32-month sentence on city council speaker Kuo Yen-sheng for giving bribes totaling 29 million Taiwan dollars (US \$1.07 million) to 14 fellow councillors in order to get himself elected as speaker.



Video recording of the Palestinian fundamentalist who blew up himself and 21 Israelis in a suicide attack in Tel Aviv on October 19. 'I am the living martyr Salah Abdel Rahim Suwey,' the bomber intones in a calm, unemotional voice on the tape obtained on Thursday by the British television news agency WTN. — AFP photo

Mahfouz urges West not to confuse Islam with terrorism

CAIRO, Oct 21: Nobel Prize-winning author Naguib Mahfouz, stabbed last week by a suspected Muslim militant, called Thursday on the West not to confuse Islam with terrorism, reports AFP.

"Don't think there is a link between Islam and terrorism," he told the Weekly Al-Ahram. "Terrorism is the rejection of others' opinions while Islam is the religion of freedom."

"Each time I meet foreigners, I insist that terrorism has no roots in Islam. This is the reality which must be clear," Mahfouz, who won the Nobel Prize for literature in 1988 and is the only Arab writer so honoured, was stabbed in the neck outside his Cairo home last Friday.

New int'l plan to give Serbs broad autonomy in Croatia soon

ZAGREB, Croatia, Oct 21: Diplomats are preparing a new plan to give Serbs broad autonomy in parts of Croatia in hopes of bridging differences that exploded nearly 3 1/2 years ago and doomed former Yugoslavia, reports AP.

Pressure is building for a deal in Croatia, which is considered crucial for an overall peace including Bosnia. But the plan, which is expected out soon, faces the daunting obstacle that has scuttled all previous attempts.

Croatia and the international community insist that Croatia gain control over all of its territory. Serbs have declared their own state on one-third of Croatia and refuse to give it up.

Independent of the latest plan, there has been a flurry of

UN to withdraw troops from Somalia by March '95

UNITED NATIONS, Oct 21: The United Nations plans to withdraw its peacekeeping force that has been protecting food relief shipments in Somalia because of increasing lawlessness and continuing clan warfare, reports AP.

The pullout is expected to be completed by March, but the world body will continue trying to provide humanitarian aid without the security force, Security Council President Sir David Hannay said on Thursday.

A delegation of the Security Council will be dispatched to Somalia on Monday to carry that message to clan leaders who are still vying for control of the East African nation.

"Their message will be that, alas, the United Nations efforts in Somalia have been really seriously undermined by the lack of progress toward political reconciliation and by the lack of cooperation on security issues, and that this implies a phased and orderly withdrawal of the UNOSOM," said Hannay, the British ambassador.

UNOSOM (the United Nations Operation in Somalia) currently has a 17,300-member force, which protects food convoys but makes no attempt to halt clan fighting. It took over from a US-led multinational force that entered Somalia December 1992 to end starvation that threatened

hundreds of thousands of people and caused more than 2 million of them to leave their drought-stricken farms amid the fighting.

Hannay said the Security Council "is willing to contemplate a continued political presence there if that is helpful to the Somalis, and also will do its best ... to sustain humanitarian operations, although that will require a ... greater degree of cooperation than has hitherto been forthcoming from the Somalis."

The Security Council decision was presaged by an October 14 report by UN Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali.

In the document, the UN chief warned that "While some of the major humanitarian objectives have been met, any natural or man-made disaster in Somalia could result in a renewed massive emergency...."

"It is essential, therefore, that relief programmes for the most vulnerable segments of the population, support for basic community services and food security and nutritional surveillance programmes be continued. In addition, the repatriation of some 500,000 refugees and the resettlement of up to 400,000 internally displaced persons must be tackled as soon as possible."

Chaos returned to Mogadishu's streets after the departure of American troops.

5 new UNSC members elected

UNITED NATIONS, Oct 21: Germany, Italy, Botswana, Honduras and Indonesia were elected by the General Assembly on Thursday to two-year terms on the Security Council beginning January 1, 1995, reports Reuter.

Each country was the unopposed candidate of its regional group, making election by the Assembly a foregone conclusion.

Germany obtained 164 votes in the 184-member Assembly; Italy 167; Botswana 168; Honduras 170; and Indonesia 164.

The five new members will succeed Spain and New Zealand, both member of the group known as West European and others: Djibouti, Brazil and Pakistan.

The 15-member Council consists of five permanent members, with the power of veto — the United States, Russia, Britain, China and France — and 10 non-permanent members, who each serve two years.

The other five non-permanent members, whose terms expire at the end of 1995, are: the Czech Republic, Nigeria, Oman, Rwanda and Argentina.

11 die in Kashmir gunbattles

SRINAGAR, India, Oct 21: At least 11 people, including six Indian troops, were killed and 12 others injured in overnight gunbattles in the northern Indian state, police said here today, reports AFP.

Four paramilitary border security force personnel and two soldiers died and 12 other security men were injured in two separate gunbattles late Thursday in Kashmir's Daksam and Rampur towns, the police said.

Two civilians were also killed when the troopers fired back in retaliation in Rampur, the police said, adding that both towns have been cordoned off by the security forces to flush out Muslim guerrillas.

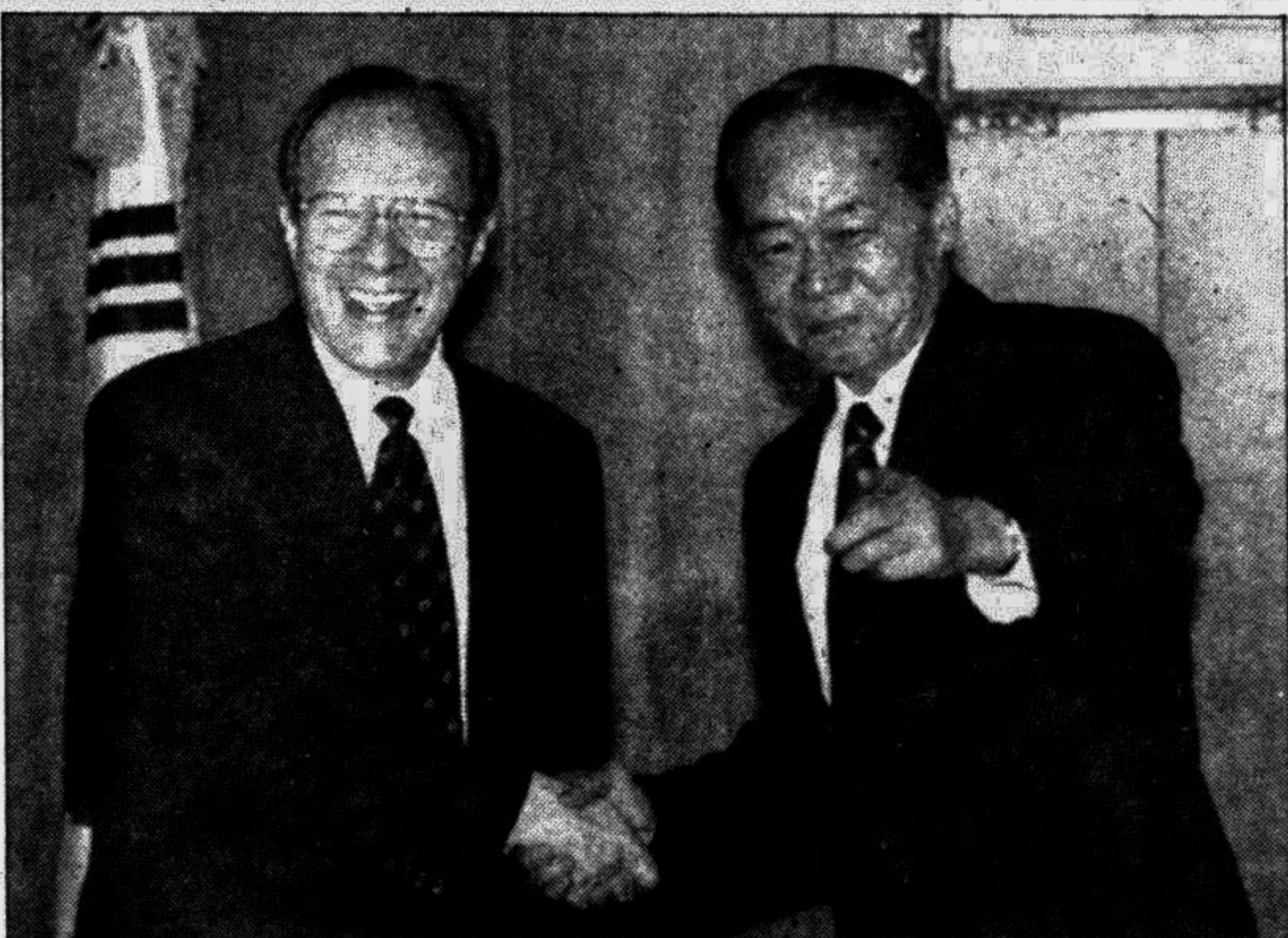
Khmers kill 7 Vietnamese

PHNOM PENH, Oct 21: Khmer Rouge guerrillas launched a night attack on a small fishing village in central Cambodia and shot dead seven ethnic Vietnamese in cold blood, a Vietnamese residents' association official said today, reports AFP.

"They went to the people and asked them if they were Khmer or Vietnamese and if they did not answer clearly in Cambodian, they shot them," the official said.

The guerrillas came in two boats early Thursday and launched the surprise attack on the small, primarily ethnic Vietnamese, fishing village of Bean Chharalay in Kampong Chhnang province around 80 kilometers (50 miles) north of the capital.

The seven dead — including a six-month-old girl and a two-year-old boy — and three of the injured came from two fishing families.



US Secretary of Defence William Perry (L) is greeted by South Korean Defence Minister Lee Byoung-Tae (R) at Seoul's Defence Ministry yesterday. The US and South Korea agreed to cancel this year's 'Team Spirit' joint military exercises. — AFP photo

US, ROK cancel jt war games

SEUL, Oct 21: In a sign of easing tensions on the Korean peninsula, the United States and South Korea announced Friday that they are cancelling annual joint military exercises scheduled for next month, reports AP.

US and South Korean officials said they expected a nuclear arms agreement with North Korea to reduce the threat of war. But US Defence Secretary William Perry said the United States will maintain its forces of about 36,000 troops in South Korea.

"We are not considering any reductions in the level of troops in Korea and are working closely with the Republic of Korea to maintain the readiness of troops in Korea," Perry said after a meeting with South Korean President Kim Young-sam.

South Korean Defence Minister Rhee Byoung-Tae announced the cancellation of

this year's annual "Team Spirit" military exercise following a closed meeting with Perry.

The cancellation of the exercise is directly related to a "framework" agreement between the United States and North Korea to monitor and eventually eliminate North Korea's ability to make nuclear weapons.

Perry called the agreement, to be signed later Friday in Geneva, "a major benefit for peace and stability in the region." But he said the United States will maintain its forces at current levels as long as North Korea continues to mass troops along the border with South Korea.

If North Korea wants to see a reduction in US forces, it could withdraw its artillery near the demilitarized zone, reduce its total armed forces and pull back forces from the border, Perry said.

North Korea has asserted that the annual war games were a thinly disguised invasion rehearsal. South Korea and the United States maintain that they are defensive maneuvers.

The cancellation of the exercise is a key sign of South Korea's official support for the agreement with North Korea, a goal of Perry's hastily arranged trip to Seoul.

President Clinton sent Perry to South Korea this week when US and North Korean negotiators in Geneva reached agreement on monitoring North Korea's nuclear programme.

"I'm very positive and very strong — unambiguously strong — in favor of this agreement," Perry said. "I will be here to offer my assurances to the South Korean government that this is a very positive agreement for their security and for our security."



Raoul Cedras (C) former military leader of Haiti, flanked by German Gill, the head of the immigration department of Panama, faces the press on Thursday after seeking refugee status in Panama City. — AFP photo

Off the Record



Italian Maria Munaretto (L), 62, is all smiles as her husband Paola Vincentini kisses their recently born baby-boy Giampietro at a hospital in Vicenza, a north-eastern town of Italy on Thursday. Maria gave birth after an artificial insemination. — AFP photo

The Diana watch: Cold, wet . . .

NEW YORK: Now here's a headline: ROBIN WILLIAMS: PRINCESS DI SPEND NIGHT IN MANHATTAN HOTEL. Even better, it's true. Even worse — particularly for the Fleet Street reporters that followed the princess from London to New York — they weren't even on the same floor, reports AP.

The Robin-Di revelation — from the manic actor and comedian, who excited the hotel and entered a media crush on Thursday — came on a rainy, gray day when the princess appeared for just a minute outside the Carlyle hotel.

Diana, dressed in-black with a blue blazer, paused long enough to accept a bouquet of pink roses from a 10-year-old boy. "Thanks a lot," the smiling princess told Teddy Gordon before ducking into a waiting car.

Some 120 reporters and fans of Di staked out her Upper East Side hotel all day for that single glimpse.

"She's fled to America, basically, to get away from the voracious Fleet Street rat pack, who's been following this incredible soap opera saga of the unhappy wives of Windsor," said Richard Mincard of the London Daily Express, as he waited outside the princess' hotel.

Until her brief appearance, the day's only excitement came when actor Williams, in New York for a political fund-raiser, ducked out of the hotel on Thursday.

Photographers snapped pictures, camera crews gave chase, and reporters fired questions at the star of the movie "Mrs. Doubtfire."

"Did you see the princess?" one person shouted.

"No," said Williams.

The follow-up: "Was she on your floor?"

Williams: "Not that I noticed."

End of excitement.

'Death Upon Request'

AMSTERDAM, Netherlands: Dutch television viewers Thursday night saw the first televised case of mercy killing reports AP.

The one-hour documentary, "Death Upon Request," chronicled the story of wheelchair-bound Cees van Wendel de Jood, a 63-year-old Amsterdam man who suffered from the degenerative muscle disorder Amyotrophic Lateral Sclerosis.

The disease had caused Van Wendel de Jood's speech to deteriorate so much that he had to communicate by pointing at an alphabet board on his lap.

"Let's not put this off," were his last words to the doctor.

The final frames showed Van Wendel de Jood dying with his wife Anthoinette standing by.

Anthoinette rested her head wearily on the physician's arm as he injected a sleeping drug into her husband's left arm.

"So peaceful . . . he looked so relaxed," said Anthoinette as she watched her husband slowly lose consciousness after the first injection.

Bride dies seconds before taking marriage vow

CARDIFF, Wales: A British bride collapsed and died at the church altar just seconds before she was due to take the marriage vow, relatives of the couple said on Thursday, reports Reuter.

Bridegroom Joseph Hones, 70, watched against his widow Beryl Howard, 67, slumped to the floor suffering from a massive heart attack while family and friends were singing the first hymn at a church in Cardiff, Wales.

"It was terrible and so shocking. Beryl looked so happy as she walked up the aisle and everyone was delighted for her and Joe," a member of the congregation said.

Church minister David Brewer said: "It was very tragic and sad."

Al-Arqam chief admits his past mistakes

KUALA LUMPUR, Oct 21: The detained head of a banned Malaysian Muslim sect admitted over national television on Thursday he had misled his followers, deviated from Islamic teachings but had since repented of his own free will, reports AFP.

Emerging for the first time after being detained last month, Ashaari Muhammad, 57, head of the outlawed Al-Arqam sect, confessed in front of some 50 Muslim scholars and officials that he had realised his past mistakes.

He said he was making the confession of his own 'free will' and not under pressure from any party.

"I make this promise to myself and God, willing, I will bring those I have misled before back to the true path," Ashaari said at special talks

between him, seven of his detained followers and national religious leaders.

Ashaari, who appeared shaky on television, was seen without his long beard and dressed in light blue instead of the green robes he used to wear before his detention.

The seven other detainees included Ashaari's wife Khadijah Aam, his son-in-law Khairul Annur Ujang, his lawyer Zabidi Mohamed and press secretary Jalani Jasmani.

A full, and unedited, recording of the talks was shown by the national TV Malaysia Thursday.

Deputy Prime Minister Anwar Ibrahim, reacting to Ashaari's confession, said it proved the government's wisdom in detaining the sect leader and his members.

Actress Deneuve named UNESCO goodwill envoy

PARIS, Oct 21: French film actress Catherine Deneuve was named UNESCO's goodwill ambassador for the safeguard of world film heritage on Wednesday, reports AFP.

UNESCO Director-General Federico Mayor appointed Deneuve president of a 100,000 dollar fund to be jointly run by the UN Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation and the International Federation of Film Archives (IFFA).

Mayor invited other cinema personalities such as Japan's Najisa Oshima, Mexico's Arturo Ripstein and Burkina-Faso's Gaston Kabore to back the fund.