Israel-PLO talks postponed: Talks between Israel and the PLO on extending autonomy have been postponed until November 29 because of Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin's tour abroad, a Palestinian official said

on Tuesday, AFP reports from Gaza City. The negotiations which have been taking place in Cairo aimed at organising elections to a Palestinian autonomy council had been scheduled to resume on November 21 Tayeb Abdelrahim, the head of PLO chief Yasser Arafat's office. told AFP.

Cuban kids may get US asylum:
President Bill Clinton is considering granting asylum to several thousand Cuban children currently held in a refugee camp at the US naval base of Guantanamo, Cuba. the State Department said on Tuesday. AFP reports from Washington.

State Department spokesman David Johnson said, "The presence of some 2.700 to 3,000 children at the refugee camp raises important humanitarian concerns," as they are unable to attend school. The president has not yet made a decision. Johnson added

2 Tamil Tigers shot dead: Government troops shot dead two Tamil rebels in separate confrontations. but the guerilla's unilateral ceasefire was holding in Sri Lanka. military officials said on Wednesday, AP reports from Colombo.

The rebels were killed during cordon and search operations in eastern Batticaloa district on Tuesday. Troops also recovered weapons, ammunition, explosives and hand grenades, officials said.

Naga rebels kill 9 Kukis: Suspected Naga tribal militants gunned down nine members of a rival tribe in the far eastern Indian state of Manipur on Monday. the Press Trust of India reported on Tuesday. AFP reports from New Delhi.

The killers ambushed a vehicle in which the victims, who belonged to the Kuki tribe, were travelling in Chandel district, the news agency said.

PLO executive body meets: The PLO's executive committee met for the first time in autonomous Gaza yesterday despite a poor turnout, and threw its weight behind the efforts of the Palestinian self-rule authority, AFP reports from Gaza City.

Only eight out of its 18 members took part in the session called by PLO Chairman Yasser Arafat.

Row over VOA station in Lanka: The fate of a Voice of America (VOA) broadcasting station in northwestern Sri Lanka that some villagers believe could be used for military purposes will be decided by a government committee, officials said on Wednesday, AP reports from Colombo.

Construction was suspended in October after a fisherman was killed when police opened fire at protesters outside the site in Iranawila, 80 kilometers (50 miles) north of Colombo.

Jordan to protect peace pact: Jordan will protect the peace it made with Israel and will not allow its land to serve as a base for the enemies of peace. King Hussein vowed on Tuesday, AFP reports from Amman.

"Most Jordanians supported the peace treaty between Jordan and Israel," the King said in a speech broadcast on radio and television. "The minority opposed to it must respect the majority's opinion," he added.

E Timor University closed: East Timor University has been closed until next week in a bid to quell anti-Indonesian protests by students, professors said on Wednesday, AP reports from Dili

Classes at the 2,100-student campus were suspended because a peaceful student demonstration on Sunday was followed by violent clashes between riot police and a mob of indigenous East Timorese. They were reportedly angered by long-running ethnic tensions with newcomers from other parts of Indonesia

18 shot dead in Burundi: Eighteen people were killed in an attack by marauding gunmen on an army post in southern Burundi early this week, the official ABP news agency reported yesterday. AFP says from

Bulumbura. Sixteen of the attackers and two child hostages they had seized died in the attack Monday night at Buyengero in Bururi province, a local ABP correspondent reported.

New Tajik president sworn in: Ta jikistan's new president was inaugurated on Wednesday, and he promised to pursue peace even as fighting continued on the country's war-torn border with Afghanistan, AP reports

from Dushanbe. Emomali Rakhmonov. Tajikistan's leader since late 1992 was elected November 6 with 60 per cent of the vote in the impoverished former Soviet republic.

HK hosts paintings fair: The eighth fair of important old master and modern European master paintings and sculpture opened in Hong Kong yesterday. Xinhua reports from Hong Kong.

The paintings on display and sale were done by some of the most noted Flemish and Dutch old masters from the 17th and 18th centuries and modern masters

Sweden probes sabotage threats: Swedish police are investigating if a link exists between sabotage threats against Lithuanian nuclear plant and their arrest of a Lithuanian national who threatened to blow up the same installation. Prosecutor General Jan Danielsson said Tuesday, AFP reports from Stockholm

"We have asked Lithuanian authorities for information on this man, who will be charged soon, and the organisation he claims to represent," Danielsson said

UN urges W Sahara referendum: For years, the people of the Western Sahara have been promised the chance to choose between independence and union with Morocco. The UN Security Council has made a fresh appeal to both sides in the dispute to get on with it AP reports from United Nations.

After three years of planning and little to show for it, the council on Tuesday urged Morocco and independence-seek ers to allow "no further undue delays" for a proposed UN-organised referendum. Secretary-General Boutros Boutros Ghali is to visit the area this month to try to coax the two sides into

# 'Only US can break Indo-Pak deadlock over Kashmir'

NEW YORK, Nov. 16: Only the United States can break the deadlock between India and Pakistan over divided Kashmir and prevent a possible war, the chief of the Pakistani-governed portion of the region said on Tuesday, re-

ports AP. India has rejected outside mediation. Washington has been reluctant to strain relations with New Delhi by pushing for a settlement in India's Jammu-Kashmir state, where 9,500 people have died in a 4year-old Muslim guerilla campaign to end rule by predominantly Hindu India.

However, only the United

November 15, 1988 in Algiers.

NEW DELHI, Nov 16: The

Indian armed forces on Tues-

day invited the private sector

to help develop and build mili-

tary hardware to end decades

of dependence on foreign sup-

appeal directed at entrepre-

neurs by the military, which

thus far has relied on imports

and eight ramshackle state-

owned factories for its equip-

a session here with military

brass agreed that such a part-

nership could boost the share

of indigenous military goods in

annual supplies to the defence

forces from the current 30 per

Pakistani troops

besiege TNSM

stronghold

istani troops have defeated

most of the rebel Islamic mili-

tants in a remote northwest-

ern region near the Afghan

border, government officials

said yesterday, reports Reuter.

militant stronghold at a village

on the border yesterday and

demanded that the rebels re-

lease 22 hostages still held by

them and surrender their local

leader Sher Bahadur, the offi-

The militants calling for Is-

lamic laws in their semi-au-

tonomous tribal area released

one army captain they had

Militant leader Suff Mo-

hammad last week disowned

his 'followers' campaign after

authorities announced the en-

forcement of the Sharia laws in

the Malakand division area of

the North West Frontier

Tehrik Nifaz Shariat-I-Mo-

hammadi (TNSM) organisation

said they did not trust the gov-

But some leaders of his

Province within a month.

held since November

cials said.

ernment

The troops surrounded a

PESHAWAR, Nov 16: Pak

cent to 70 per cent by 2005.

Industrial leaders attending

The call was the first major

pliers, reports AFP.

allies have the economic clout to get India to reach a negotiated settlement, said Sardar Abdul Qayyum Khan, president of Pakistani-ruled Kashmir.

"The key to the problem" lies in the United States," Qayyum Khan said at a news conference. "If the United States would take a bold decision recognising the reality of the situation, it would bot be very difficult."

Qayyum Khan was going to Washington, where he planned to meet later this week with members of Congress. He was speaking on behalf of his state, but a Pakistani official said his

Palestinian policemen wave a Palestinian flag as they celebrate on Tuesday in Jericho the

sixth anniversary of the proclamation of 'an independent state of Palestine' by the PLO on

India asks private sector to

develop military hardware

The former Soviet Union

supplied up to 70 per cent of

New Delhi's military needs.

and the USSR's disintegration

has sparked a huge spare parts

crunch for India's armed

India's production of de-

fence spare parts and other

equipment is valued at four bil-

lion rupees (133 million US

dollars) a year, while its annual

than 332 million dollars.

military import bill is more

world's fourth largest, ac-

counts for 60 per cent of all

defence imports, officials said

at a meeting organised by the

Confederation of Indian Indus-

"As equipment grows older.

try (CII) and the air force.

The Indian air force, the

forces.

views were similar to those of the country's federal govern-

When India was partitioned by Britain in 1947, Kashmir's ruler signed a treaty joining India after Pakistan invaded. But India has never held a promised vote to let residents of Jammu-Kashmir, its only mostly Muslim state, choose which country it wants to join.

Pakistan has denied Indian charges that it supports the guerilla war, but says it wants Kashmiris to be allowed to vote on which country they want to

India has vowed never to give up Kashmir.

Pakistan and India, both of which can make nuclear weapons, have fought three wars since 1947 - two of them over Kashmir.

"There has to be a solution. or let the two countries go to war," Qayyum Khan said. "If ever there is going to be a nuclear strike, it is going to be in that part of the world."

Qayyum Khan also cautioned that delaying a settlement increases the influence of Muslim radicals in Kashmir.

"May be Iraq is supporting them, or Iran is supporting them. It could come to a point where India cannot control it." he said.

Asian states buy

20 pc of world's

fighter planes

of every five fighter planes

produced in the world is sold

to Asian countries, which have

launched a military buildup to

ease fears of US disengage-

ment in the region, an interna-

tional study said on Tuesday,

United States will further re-

duce its commitment and

cease to play a stabilising role

in the region after the year

2000", the Institute for

Defence and Disarmament

From 1994 to the year

2000. China is expected to

produce more aircraft for do-

mestic use than any other

country in the world and it will

be second only to the United

States in aircraft production

India and Pakistan, are ex-

pected to buy between 150

and 160 combat planes by the

year 2000 with China alone

fighter jets each year com-

pared to the 340 it built in the

30 billion dollars between

1994 and 2000 on military ex-

penses, half of which will be

spent on purchases of fighter

jets, the defence think tank

purchases of combat planes

and has ordered the manufac-

turing of 210 fighter jets to be

compensate for the smaller US

presence there by earmarking

one-third of its national bud-

get, or 11.4 billion dollars, to

a rapid-deployment force that

will include the 44 newly-im-

ported combat aircraft bought

from Russia, Britain and the

Benazir assures

Palestinians of

continued aid

Minister Benazir Bhutto told a

senior Palestinian official on

Tuesday that Pakistan would

continue to aid the Palestini-

ans as a religious and moral

duty, officials said, reports

dumi, who handles the PLO's

foreign affairs, on the first day

of his three-day visit here that

"Pakistan would keep provid-

ing Palestinians with political,

moral and material support as

a religious and moral obliga-

Earlier Kaddumi and Pak-

Ahmed Ali signed a protocol

establishing a Pakistani-Pales-

tinian commission to promote

economic and technical coop-

eration between Pakistan and

the Palestinian autonomous ar-

eas of Gaza and Jericho, an of-

ranging talks on topics that in-

cluded the Indo-Pakistani dis-

pute over Kashmir and the

Middle East peace process-

Kaddumi and Ali held wide-

ficial statement said.

tion," the officials said.

Benazir told Faruq Kad-

ISLAMABAD, Nov 16: Prime

Malaysia is piecing together

purchase combat planes.

United States.

South Korea has decided to

delivered by the year 2000.

Taiwan has set a record for

Taiwan plans to put aside

China produces some 110

purchasing half of those.

Countries in Asia, excluding

according to the study.

-AFP photo

the import bill will double,'

warned APJ Abdul Kalam, ar-

chitect of India's ambitious

programme to develop an array

of guided missiles, rockets and

ballistic missile with a rocket

engine imported from Russia

flopped after the United States

pressured Moscow to scrap

avoided through a high level of

offer opened a challenge to the

industry to upgrade its tech-

nology for the armed forces

and for foreign trade opportu-

self-sufficiency." Kalam said.

"The pressures can be

The CII said the military's

the deal.

nities.

India's hopes to assemble a

a futuristic light combat air-

"Many nations fear that the

reports AFP.

WASHINGTON, Nov 16: One

### US general to head UN peace mission in Haiti

PORT-AU-PRINCE, Nov 16: **UN Secretary General Boutros** Boutros-Ghali appointed a US General on Tuesday to head the UN peacekeeping mission in Haiti but offered no timetable for the hand-off to the international force, reports

Broutros-Ghali, who made a brief visit here, told a news conference that questions relating to the restoration of a secure environment and recruitment of a 6,000-strong UN contingent have not been resolved.

"Has security been restored to Haiti and do the United Nations have the necessary forces?" Boutros-Ghali asked. "It is too soon to answer

these two questions," he said.

The secretary-general announced he had asked the UN Security Council to endorse his choice of General Daniel Shroeder to be the commander of UN peacekeepers in

Schroeder would serve un-· der the UN representative in Haiti, Lakhdar Brahimi of Algeria.

Boutros-Ghali also said that he would appeal to the international community to grant 77 million dollars in aid from UN funds to Haiti.

It was Boutros-Ghali's first visit to Haiti, but the second by a UN secretary general since the Duvalier family dictatorship fell in 1986.

## Off the Record

#### ... Just to get married on Valentine's Day

SINGAPORE: Hundreds of couples camped outside a government office, playing cards, munching biscuits and swatting mosquitos. Some snoozed on straw mats. All this to get married on Valentine's Day, reports AP.

A record 306 couples queued up Tuesday at the Registry of Marriages to give the mandatory three-month notice so that they could tie the knot on February 14, 1995, news reports said Wednesday.

Although Valentine's Day always is popular for weddings. the rush was greater this year because it will coincide with an auspicious day in the Chinese calendar - the 15th day of the Lunar New Year.

Chinese believe this full-moon day belongs to lovers and signifies completeness. A majority of Singapore's 3 million people are ethnic Chinese, who are Buddhists as well as

Christians. To meet the greater demand, the registrar will solemnize 130 weddings on February 14 compared with the 100 on usual Valentine's Days. The remaining 176 couples are expected to be wedded by justices of the peace or in churches

Normally, about 66 weddings are performed each weekday and 72 on Saturdays, a registry spokesman said.

Sie Wenxian and his fiance, Cai Xiaohui, waited overnight for 12 hours to be the first to register when the office opened at 8 am.

When Wu Laitian and Huang Aiming reached the gates at 3:15 am, they found a queue already in place. So the couple passed around a set of poker cards.

#### Charles' only speciality

LONDON: Prince Charles is quite capable of putting a large group of people to sleep, he admitted on Tuesday, reports

Charles, speaking to a group of trainee British navy chefs, recalled how he had spiked a batch of bread and butter pudding he had prepared for his company aboard the HMS Norfolk while serv-

or to pick another date.

1970s. He said he was generous with the brandy in the British desert - a heated custard made with bread and raisings - he calls "my only special-

pany fell asleep," he said. laughing. But the desert went



"The whole ship's comdown as a "treat." Charles was touring Cornwall in southwest

#### England. 20,000 Indian troops die in Kashmir since '89

ISLAMABAD, Nov 16: A Kashmiri guerilla commander claimed on Tuesday some 20,000 Indian soldiers had been killed since 1989 in the ongoing dispute over Kashmir. reports AFP.

Syed Salahuddin, who identified himself as a commander from the Hizbul Mujahideen resistance group, told a news conference here that more than 40,000 Kashmiris had also died in the fighting.

Reports from India have put the overall death toll at around 10,000 over the past five years in violence linked to the Muslim secessionist revolt in the southern two-thirds of Kashmir controlled by New Delhi.

Hizbul Mujahideen is one of the main militant groups fighting the Indians. It said Salahuddin was visiting Pakistan and the Islamabad-controlled northern third of Kashmir to meet refugees from the "Indianoccupied" part.

Salahuddin thanked Pakistan for its political and diplomatic support, and said "much more is needed to be done since it (Pakistan) is a

party in the Kashmir case. India blames Pakistan for training and arming the Kashmiri militants waging the separatist drive in its only Muslim majority state - a charge denied by Islamabad.

The dispute over Kashmir has been a catalyst for two of the three wars the neighbour ing countries have fought since their independence from Bri tain in 1947.

In his press conference. Salahuddin said the number of Indian troops in Kashmir had gone up to 600,000 and claimed that 300 Israeli personnel were training Indians

in counter-insurgency tech-His claims could not be immediately verified. He said the Kashmir prob-

lem could only be resolved through armed struggle be-

cause India "is not willing to settle it through peaceful means. Salahuddin accused the Indian forces of committing

large-scale human rights violations including torture and rapes.

#### US close to full diplomatic ties with Vietnam

HANOI, Nov 16: The United States is close to establishing full diplomatic relations with Vietnam, but its former enemy still must do more to clear up the fates of missing American ervicemen, a US senator said Wednesday, reports AP.

The Vietnamese must try harder to resolve the remaining 55 cases of US soldiers and airmen last seen alive in the Vietnam War, said Sen John Kerry, D-Mass. Hanoi also must provide more documents that would help locate other missing, he added.

Most of the 1,624 Americans unaccounted for in Vietnam are known to be dead but the United States hopes to recover their remains.

port with 10 million residents has lurched from crisis to cri-Karachi's top official gets to sis in recent years and now a the office, his sleeves are surge in political, ethnic and rolled up, his phones are ringing furiously and dozens of religious violence is threatenmen are waiting in the swel

favours, reports AP There are no easy days for Faheem Khan as he tries to save one of the world's most troubled cities

tering hall to ask urgent

"I'm surprised myself some times how the city carries on with all its problems." Khan said in an interview with The Associated Press "We have unemployment, crime and pollution. People are chasing each other through the streets with guns every day, but the city

survives. Just barely, many people say The congested steamy ing to get out of control.

Karachi's woes have scared away foreign investors at a time when international money is pouring into Asia and fueling booms in much of the region Karachi, like the rest of Pakistan, has seen little economic growth.

There are gunbattles in the streets almost daily. The most serious conflict pits security forces against the Mohajir Qaumi Movement, a minority group that uses violence strikes and other confrontational tactics to repeatedly paralyse Karachi Pakistan's business capital and biggest

In just one 24 hour period recently, the ambush slaving of an opposition politician\* and three relatives iriggered a spree of sniper attacks across Karachi that killed 13 more people and wounded about 50 The killings raised the city's death toll from shootings to more than 150 in five weeks.

The violence has added to the general turmoil of a city suffering from frequent power blackouts high unemployment and dawn to dusk traffic jams The army was called in two

years ago to assist Karachi po hee in trying to curb Molence that has killed an estimated 4.000 people since 1986. But the troops have not

stopped the bloodshed or

dampened the popularity of

the Mohajir movement, which represents Muslims who mi grated to Pakistan from India when the subcontinent was divided into two nations in 1947. There are other feuds con-

tributing to the city's disorder. The Mohajir movement is it self split into two factions whose members often battle each other. Also, followers of the Shi'ite and Sunni Muslim sects ambush one another with regularity, and criminal gangs battle for turf in a city where underpaid and poorly trained police have little authority.

Benazir, who has a house in Karachi's well to do Clifton district, expressed shock at conditions when she spent a week in the city in July. She chastised city officials

Afghanistan and announced an aid package.

but the federal government in Islamabad is chronically broke and few believe any real help is coming

Karachi was a modest city of about 100,000 when Pakistan won independence from Britain 47 years ago. But a relentless inflow of unskilled migrants from the countryside increased the population a hundredfold, overwhelming the city's ability to provide services.

Several million residents live in squalid slums that sprouted throughout the city. Social order broke down over the last decade as a tidal wave of guns and drugs flowed into Karachi from the civil war in

The city is burdened by a

bloated bureaucracy that many people view as incompetent and corrupt. Khan said he has been offered bribes as high as 300,000 dollars (10 million rupées) for government con-

> He was shocked to discover that only 12 of the city's 54 firetrucks were in working order when he took office. He was dumbfounded when he learned the city was still paying for 800 full-time firemen and many were getting over-

"This is how irrational our bureaucracy has become," said

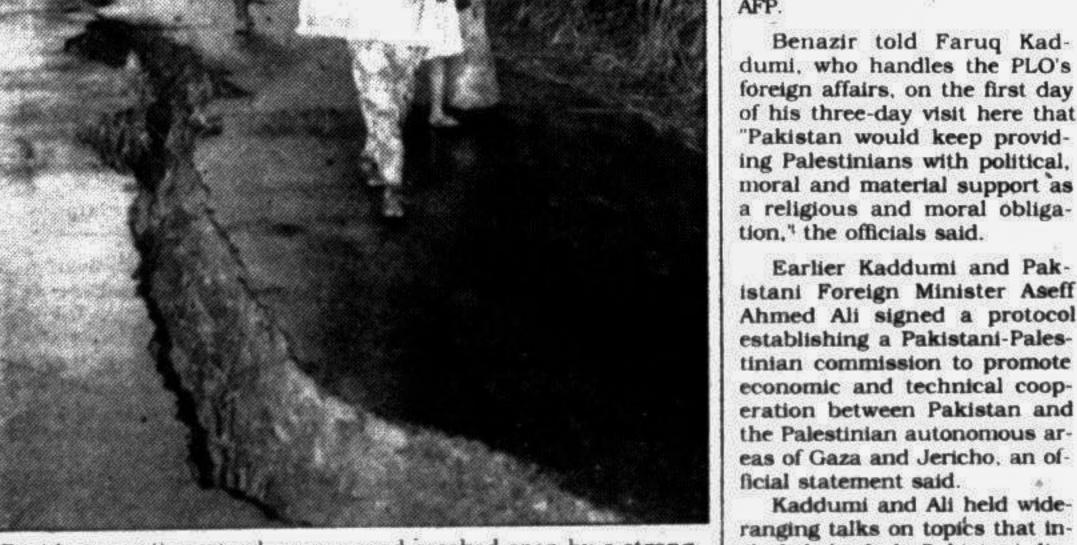
"I don't want to stay in this job even one day more than necessary," he added. "I just want to get back to flying my helicopter.

#### Trouble-gripped Karachi on verge of nervous breakdown Protest mars Prince Andrew's Argentina visit BUENOS AIRES, Nov 16: A

violent demonstration outside the British ambassador's residence in Buenos Aires on Tuesday marred the first day of a visit by Prince Andrew billed as a sign of reconciliation after the Falklands war, reports Reuter A group of about 100

protestors including war vet erans and fringe left wing groups set fire to British and US flags and charged police barriers. Police and mounted officers charged wielding truncheons

Police said dozens of protesters were arrested. A Reuter photographer saw one being carried away in handcuffs with his face covered in blood.



Residents walk yesterday on a road cracked open by a strong earthquake which hit Mindoro Island in central Philippines - AFP photo on Tuesday