China detains

2 dissidents Chinese authorities detained two dissidents during the trial of pro-democracy leader Wang Dan a human rights group said yesterday, AFP reports from

Beijing. Jin Chen and Yang Qing had signed a petition with Wang. who was jailed for 11 years on Wednesday, according to the Hong Kong-based information centre of human rights and democratic movement in China. The information centre said Jin and Yang were detained on Wednesday and there had been no news of the pair since.

40 Kurd refugees arrive in USA

Some 40 Kurds evacuated from northern Iraq have already arrived in the United States, and an additional 2,100 Kurdish refugees are expected next week the State Department said Wednesday, AFP reports

from Washington. The Iraqi Kurds will leave the Pacific Island of Guam after being granted asylum by the United States, spokesman Nicholas Burns said, "Final security checks and arrangements for resettlement in the United States are now underway," he said.

62 executed in China

Sixth two people, including one who was tied to a stretcher after jumping from a two-storey high building to avoid facing the firing squad, have been executed in China's southern Guangdong province, press reports said in Hong Kong yesterday. AFP reports from Hong

They were executed in Shenzhen. Dongguan Wednesday for crimes ranging Sixteen were executed in Shenzhen, which borders Hong

Saudi Crown Prince meet MNLF chairman

Saudi Arabia's Crown Prince Abdullah Bin Abdul-Aziz on Wednesday met the leader of Muslim separatist movemen in the Philippines, the Saudi of ficial news agency SPA said Reuter reports from Dubai.

Nur Misuari, Chairman o the Moro National Liberation Front (MNLF), briefed him "or efforts to achieve peace in southern Philippines after the MNLF signed an agreemen with Philippines in President Fidel Ramos, SPA said, 1210101

Drugs worth \$2.1m seized in Jordan

Jordanian authorities announced Wednesday the seizure of 10 kilograms (22 pounds) of heroin and 160,000 hallucinogenic capsules, valued at a total of 2.1 million dollars, in two separate operations, AFP reports from Amman.

The head of the narcotics squad, Colonel Nazih Sharaideh, said the heroin was confiscated in southern Jordan and two Jordanian drug traf fickers arrested. The second seizure was made the town of Ramtha on Jordan's northern border with Syria, and two "traffickers from another Arab country" were detained.

Small plane crash kills 9 in Ethiopia A military training aircraft

crashed Wednesday into a crowded marketplace in this central Ethiopian town, killing nine people and injuring 90 others, AFP reports from Mojo Ethiopia.

Police in the town some 70 kilometres (40 miles) southeast of Addis Ababa said eight people were killed immediately and one died later, adding that one of the dead was a child Twenty people were hospi talised in nearby Nazareth with serious injuries, they said.

Floods claim 2 in Thailand

Two people were killed and a boy was missing after flash floods swept southern Thailand, cutting road and rail links, an Interior Ministry of ficial said yesterday.

floods were caused by heavy rain in the region, especially in the southern province of Prachuap Khiri Kham that fell for about 24 hours beginning late on Tuesday. The bodies had been found so far and one boy was still missing, the official said, adding that the extent of the UN Development Fund for the damage was still unknown.

US jet crash claims 4

Four people were killed Wednesday when a twin-engine corporate jet caught fire and crashed into the parking lot of an apartment complex north of Chicago shortly after takeoff authorities said. AFP reports from Chicago.

Police said all four people aboard the plane - three crew and one passenger — were killed during the crash which occurred at Pai-Waukee airport in Wheeling, a Chicago suburb. The plane, believed to be a gulfstream jet, exploded on impact. barely missed the nearby apartment complex and broke into several pieces, they added.

BRIFEY Clinton in non-stop blitz, Dole still firing back as election nears

YPSILANTI, Michigan, Oct 31: President Clinton is in a non-stop blitz to Election Day. with 20 stops in 13 states, while rival Bob Dole declared he could still win and save America from "economic collapse," reports AP.

Trailing by double-digits in national polls. Dole's campaign stops were still being planned, in a last-ditch attempt to boost his standing where it could count.

Win or lose. Clinton will soon stop doing what he has always done best: run for election. With a touch of melancholy, he. opened his final campaign swing Wednesday, targeting women voters and confidently countering Dole's final campaign blows.

don't deserve all the credit," the president said at an Eastern Michigan University rally. "But our policies have helped you create ... jobs."

Clinton's final push culminates in a sentimental Arkansas homecoming on Election Day November 5.

Aides are planning a triumphant victory celebration inside the gates of the Old State House, where Clinton announced his presidential aspirations in October 1991 and declared victory 13 months later. With a constitutional restriction on presidential terms this is Clinton's last national campaign. Dole. 73, is also unlikely to seek the presidency

For most of his adult life, the 50-year-old president has lived and governed with the next campaign in mind. He thrives on public approval, craves the handshake-to-handshake contact many politicians dread and measures himself against a never-ending flow of poll num-

"I think there is a certain wistfulness about his last national campaign", spokesman Mike McCurry said.

Clinton was flying to Colorado from Michigan late Wednesday for two nighttime events, then boarding Air Force One again for Arizona.

The press corps swelled for the homestretch trip, with 105 journalists aboard a White House charter to Michigan. Another 10 or so are expected to sign up this week for the dawnto-dusk duty. Dole has a similar

Clinton's schedule, which could change with campaign ebbs and flows, puts him in Nevada, California, New Mexico, Texas, Arkansas. Florida, Louisiana, New Jersey, Massachusetts. Hampshire,

UN reform inching forward

UNITED NATIONS, Oct 31: The tide of reform is inching forward, the UN's chief Watchdog said Wednesday, re-

Attempts to make the world body more efficient and less costly are finding some success. according to a report on the UN Zhongshan and Huadu on Internal Oversight agency. which investigates waste and from armed robbery to murder. | mismanagement. The report covers activities from July 1. 1995 to June 30, 1996.

The agency saved 15.8 million dollars - a little more than 1 per cent of the annual UN budget - over the past year thanks to measures such as recovering overpayments and preventing unjustified expenditures, the report said.

Problems mentioned in the report range from a supplier using UN trucks to smuggle goods into Syria to a lack of guidance on how to conduct peacekeeping functions like demobilistion and cease-fire monitoring.

"Fraud is not our main concern," said Karl Paschke, who has headed the unit since it was formed in 1994. "It is much more about administrative weakness. It is much more

about very limited administra-

While the office has met "attempts to slow down, stall or discredit our work," Paschke noted that an organisation without independent and effective oversight for decades needs time to adjust to "outspoken criticism

The UN budget excluding peacekeeping costs, is about 1.3 billion dollars. This year's shortfall is projected at about million dollars Washington owes about 1.5 bil-

In its push for change within the world body, the US Congress has not been paying its bills. and the United States has promised to veto a second term for Secretary-General Boutros Boutros Ghali:



Diana, Princess of Wales, arrives at the Ritz-Carlton Hotel in Sydney Wednesday at the start of her four-day visit to Australia. Diana will stay in the USD 1,100-anight, four-room deluxe penthouse suite in the exclusive harbourside suburb of Double Bay. - AFP/UNB photo

tive expertise with many people who have to handle sizable amounts of money." Paschke's vision of reform

includes encouraging staff to follow competitive bidding standards, pay bills early to take advantage of prompt-payment discounts, evaluating programmes to see what functions can be consolidated, and improving planning and training.

lion dollars



TUTAKHON, Afghanistan, He said Taliban heavy Oct 31: Forces loval to the weapons were firing on their ousted Afghan government positions from the other side of launched a blistering assault on the mountains. Several shells and rockets were landing each Taliban troops today north of the capital Kabul, reports minute. Deafening crashes and flashes signalled Taliban rockets hitting positions held by Fierce artillery and rockets duels churned up columns of ousted government troops.

continue working despite an official ban on female employment outside the house.

Meanwhile, warplanes apdust around the strategic De parently belonging to a north-Sabz Pass, 30 km (20 miles) north of Kabul, Reuters correern alliance opposed to the spondent Chris Bird reported. Taliban militia bombed Kabul twice this morning, aiming for "God willing we will take the pass today," said Niq the airport, a witnesses said.

Mohammad, a commander

with the ousted government

forces under military chief

He said the attack, a pincer-

movement to support forces be-

longing to northern Uzbek

leader chief Abdul Rashid

Dostum began around 6 am

liance had gained some ground

but there was no way of inde-

peridently confirming this? qu'

Int I Press Freedom

Awards declared

based reporter who was targeted by assassins, a jailed Turkish

newspaper editor, a Palestinian

journalist and a Mexican editor

who has crusaded against cor-

ruption and drug traffickers

have been honoured by the

Committee to Protect

sixth

International Press Freedom

Awards will go to Yusuf

Jammeel, a reporter at the

Asian Age daily newspaper in New Delhi, India, Ocak Isik

Yurtcu, the imprisoned former

editor-in-chief of the Turkish

daily Ozgur Gundem, Daoud

Kuttab, project director of the

Arabic Media Internet Network

and J. Jesus Blancornelas, edi-

tor-in-chief of the Zeta weekly

Dean of US medical

school, his wife

missing in Nepal

of the University of Washington

School of Medicine and his wife

have been missing for about a

week in Nepal after becoming

stranded in a snowstorm during

a hiking expedition, the univer-

sity said Wednesday, reports

his wife, Helen, were vacation-

ing in Nepal in recent weeks

and had been expected to return

to the Seattle area Thursday, a

hiker and had been to Nepal

before, medical school

spokesman L G Blanchard said.

Fialkow is an experienced

UW statement said.

Dr. Philip J Fialkow, 62, and

SEATTLE, Oct 31: The dean

in Tijuana, Mexico.

annual

Journalists, reports AP.

NEW YORK. Oct 31: An India

He said the anti-Taliban al-

Ahmad Shah Masood.

(0130 GMT).

The aircraft swooped down from the north and the Taliban defenders of the Afghan capital sent up a heavy barrage of antiaircraft fire and at least one ground-to-air missile, they

It was not immediately clear that the bombs struck in the two raids.

Previous raids over the weekend failed to damage the airport, which is used for both civilian vanid military traffic!

AP adds: In some of the worst fighting since its soldiers seized Kabul a month ago, the Taliban Islamic army has been battling an alliance of its ene-

landed in a city centre park.

One of the previous bombs

An unidentified Afghan widow weaves a turban for an aid agency project in suburban Kabul aimed at making the cap-

ital's poorest widows economically self-sufficient, on Wednesday. Three hundred of the city's poorest widows, the sole

bread winner of their families, have been allowed by the Islamic Taliban militia which seized Kabul a month ago to

Blistering assault on Taliban

positions north of Kabul

mies north of the capital. Taliban jets made bombing raids Wednesday over Jebul Siraj, the stronghold of ousted government military chief Ahmed Shah Masood about 95 kilometres (60 miles) north of the capital. One bomb hit a civilian's home and another

Two landed near a base camp set up by soldiers of Rashid Dostum, the powerful northern warlord who has joined forces with Masood. There were no immediate reports of casual-

landed near Masood's head

For the past week, the allied forces have been skirmishing against Taliban soldiers along the front line; about 15 kilome

tal. Neither side appeared to have gained ground. Red Cross spokesman Jean-

tres (10 miles) north of the capi-

- AFP/UNB photo

Luc Paladini said the fighting was the heaviest since the Taliban captured Kabul on September 27. "The situation is very con-

fused. We have reports of many wounded." Paladinis said.

Villagers, whose homes and fields north of Kabul have become a battlefield, were being forced to work and fight for the Taliban, an Afghan aid worker who spoke on condition of anonymity said Wednesday. Residents have been forced to carry loads for the fighters and cook for them, he said.

Shelling and bombings had killed civilians in villages along the front line, the aid worker said. About 3,000 people live in the battle zone and many are unable to flee because Taliban fighters have closed roads, he said.

60 students sicken as mysterious fumes spread thru' Tokyo school

TOKYO. Oct 31: Mysterious pungent fumes spread through classes at a junior high school in downtown Tokyo today. causing 60 students to be taken to a nearby hospital, fire department officials said, reports Reuter.

The officials said they did not know the source or nature of the fumes at the school in Fukagawa, eastern Tokyo.

They said the students were taken to hospital by ambu-lances after complaining of sore throats. Paramedics treated another 50 students at the school, which is for ages 13

The officials said there were no chemical experiments being conducted in the school laboratory and no chemical factories nearby which could have been the source of the fumes.

Last year, there were several cases of mysterious fumes in public places, which police attributed to pranksters using cans of spray mace. The inci-dents followed a nerve gas attack on the Tokyo subway in March that year which killed 12 people and made another 6,000 ill.

Suspected Tamil Tigers escape from jail

COLOMBO, Oct 31: Suspected Tamil Tiger guerillas escaped from a high-security jail in northeastern Sri Lanka after killing a military guard and losing three of their own inmates, officials said, reports A man believed to be a mem-

ber of the separatist Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam grabbed an automatic assault rifle from a military policeman and led the escape at midnight Wednesday, officials said.

"The military policeman was killed on the spot," a local official said by telephone. "Troops have recovered the

bodies of three LTTE suspects and it is believed that 17 prisoners escaped." The prison, located in the

heart of the tightly-guarded town of Trincomalee, 260 kilometers (160 miles) northeast of Colombo, was protected by the military and prison department sentries, officials The LTTE has carried out

similar jail breakouts in the island's northeast, where they are fighting to establish an independent home land for the island's two million Tamil minority.

Off the Record

Chirac urges African states to call confce on Zaire-Rwanda

President Jacques Chirac on Wednesday urged heads of east and central African states to call a conference quickly over the rapidly deteriorating situa tion on the Zaire-Rwanda border, reports Reuter.

"The worsening situation and unacceptable tragedies taking place impose the holding of a conference under the auspices of the United Nations and the Organisation for African Unity," government spokesman Alain Lamassoure quoted Chirac as telling the weekly French Cabinet meeting.

Chirac said the meeting should discuss refugees, trying those guilty of massacres in Rwanda in 1993-94, guarantees

JERUSALEM, Oct 31: Israeli

Prime Minister Benjamin

Netanyahu on Wednesday wel-

comed Syria's declaration it

had no intentions of starting a

war with the Jewish state, re-

that he heard the words of the

Syrian Foreign Minister

Faroug al-Shara that Syria is

not interested in war and said

that it was an important and

welcome declaration," a state-

ment issued by Netanyahu's of

said that Israel has no aggres-

"The prime minister again

"The prime minister said

ports Reuter.

fice said.

Burundi and international aid for the countries involved.

Chirac's appeal reiterated a long-held position by Paris that the situation needed a conference of heads of state of countries in the area of Africa's great lakes. Reports from the area indi-

cated on Wednesday that Zaire and Rwanda were moving closer to war after two days of trading artillery fire across their border and a Rwandan military sortie into Zaire's territory.

France has intervened militarily in the past in both Zaire and Rwanda but senior French officials currently insists a repeat of such action is out of the question and that the issues

declaration with israel

sive intentions toward Syria

and that Israel is interested in

gotiations with Syria to reach a

Syria was not preparing for an

escalating the situation and

massing troops to launch a sur-

prise attack are baseless.

from the Israeli government are

aimed at evading the peace pro-

cess and the basis on which it

was built," he told reporters at

Shara said on Tuesday that

"Allegations ... that Syria is

"Such allegations coming

convening quickly serious ne-

peace agreement with it.

attack on Israel

Shara said.

tionally. AP adds from Arusha.

Tanzania: The first trial of a defendant in the 1994 massacre of half a million Rwandans opens Thursday, overshadowed by new ethnic violence and an investigation of the UN tribunal for alleged mismanage-

The first defendant, Jean-Paul Akayesu, has pleaded innocent to charges of genocide. murder and torture in the massacre of 2.000 people in the Rwandan settlement of Taba. where he was mayor. His attorney. Belgian Johan Scheers. filed a motion to postpone the trial, saying he needs more time to review the evidence.

Damascus airport while seeing

off his. Russian counterpart

In September, Syria rede

ployed some 12,000 troops in

Lebanon, moving some to

within striking distance of a

key Israeli position on the

Israeli security sources said

this week that Israel's defence

chiefs have told Netanyahu the

army needed more than 1 bil

lion dollar because of an in

creased chance of war with

Golan Heights, spurring war jit

Yevgeny Primakov

ters in Israel.

Syria.

'Most imaginative statesmen' WASHINGTON: President Bill Clinton considers German Netanyahu hails Syria's 'no war' Chancellor Helmut Kohl, who marks 14 years in power

Thursday, as one of the world's most imaginative statemen, said White House spokesman Michael McCurry, reports AFP He said Clinton and Kohl have actually formed a bond.

both personal and a bond that reflects the strong ties between the United States and the Federal Republic of Germany." On questions related to Bosnia, European integration. the future of relations with the

Russian Federation the president has found in the chancellor someone who is one of the most imaginative statemen on the world fence today," McCurry "The fact that he is now

reaching a point where he will in longevity be the longestreigning leader of Germany since Bismarck is a reflection of the esteem in which he is held by German people, the pokesman said.

The official told Reuters the looks were caused by heavy and in the region, especially in UNIFEM honours 3 women's groups of India, Somalia, Peru

UNITED NATIONS, Oct 31: Three leading women's groups from India. Somalia and Peru. received a special 20th anniversary achievement award from Women (UNIFEM) and its US Committee at a UN ceremony October 29, reports USIS.

Accepting the awards were: Rekha Dubey, who represented The Centre for Social Research in India, which helped her overcome personal tragedies to rebuild her life; Nasri Hussein Adam, who left a safe life in Kenya five years ago to volunteer with the group lida and is now a program officer in Mogadishu, and Maria del Carmen Ramirez of Los Molineras (The Women Millers)

of Peru. Calling the ceremony "a day of celebration of ordinary women as extraordinary heroes." UNIFEM director Noeleen Heyzer said the women struggled to transform their lives, the lives of their families, and their communities... Each of them has turned (their work) into inspiration and em-

powerment for themselves and people in their communities. They are women of substance.

Heyzer said "women espe cially have a very high stake in creating new forms of partnerships and processes that bring about change because they know that they and their children suffer the most from bad governments, suffer the most from poverty, and suffer the most from violence, conflict, and war."

US First Lady Hillary Rodham Clinton, who has been a strong supporter of UNIFEM activities, joined the event by

"I realise there is still a tendency to view issues connected to women as "soft or marginal to the central challenges the world faces," Mrs. Clinton said. "But I believe that these issues are some of the hardest we face just as important to global progress and prosperity as defense policies, security, and trade.

"For 20 years UNIFEM has invested in women and girls by giving them access to the tools

of opportunity like education. health care, jobs, and credit and political and legal rights. UNIFEM has shown the world that these investments are investments in our common future. Investments that not only lift up individual women but affect the prosperity of families. communities, and nations as well," the First Lady said.

The three award winners have shown that 'we can build a world free of poverty, discrimination, violence, and oppression if we put people first, especially women and girls who still too often are denied the rights they deserve," Mrs. Clinton said The Centre for Social

Research in India uses education about legal rights and training to develop women's potential as leaders. It is helping women come out from behind the purdah (veil) and gain access to health care, jobs, and lost property. Rekha Dubey was married at 14, deserted by her husband at

21, stripped of her older son by

her in-laws on the premise that

sons are a father's property, and thrown out of her family house with her infant son. With the help of the centre, she learned about her rights, was trained to support herself and in time regained her children and property. She now trains others and has become an effective grassroots political mobiliser. In her village in regent local elections. 58 women ran for seats on the village's government body and block committees. "UNIFEM showed me that I

myself was enough..., (it) radically changed my life." Dubey said. "This self-reliance is indispensable, it is the most necessary and wonderful tool we can ever have." "I have learned that self-help is the best help, that women

have their own rights. We don't need pity. We have our self-respect," she said. Established five years ago as a women's development organisation fighting for women's rights and advancement in

Somalia, lida, which means

celebration and is a name given

to a baby girl born during days

of festivity, is the first group to include members of all Somali clans, UNIFEM said. lida's main objectives are to

educate women; to assess health, agriculture, food security, water and sanitation needs for women and children displaced by war; encourage training and employment opportunities; and counsel victims of violence. And lida has moved beyond helping provide the basic needs to advocating for peace at the community level by promoting the role of women in peace-building and national reconciliation.

"Women definitely have a very powerful role to play in the post-Cold War environment moving countries out of conflict into the development phase," Heyzer said.

Los Molineras was honoured for being the best small rural business in Peru. Competing with over 260 women's groups from the five Andean countries. it won UNIFEM's "food technologies contest." The group is made up of 10 women who used ingenuity, technology, and hard

work to revitalise the traditional food source of grains and flour and in doing so, brought food security to a region, created jobs for women, and built a model business that can be copied in other rural areas UNIFEM said.

"UNIFEM's work has been focusing on economic empowerment and this is precisely what we mean by economic empowerment." Heyzer said 'UNIFEM is at its best when it helps women's organisations take advantage of new economic opportunities and new markets.

Created in 1976 by the UN General Assembly as the Voluntary Fund for the United Nations Decade for Women. UNIFEM became an autonomous organisation in 1985. Since then UNIFEM has helped tens of thousands of women in more than 100 nations in Africa, Latin America the Caribbean. Asia and the Pacific to improve the quality of life for themselves and their families.

Kangaroo defends his harem of females SYDNEY: A large male kan-

garoo, probably defending his harem of females, attacked a 13-year-old boy on a golf course. reports AP. Steven Shorten suffered a

fractured cheekbone and had to have bone fragments removed from behind his right eye after the attack, the Grafton Daily Examiner reported Wednesday

He jumped on me and got me down on the ground and started jumping on me and scratching me," Shorten told Channel Nine "The kangaroo then got off

me and ran away for about five seconds then came straight back at me and jumped on me again," he said. The attack, probably by an

adult male eastern gray kangaroo, happened Sunday evening on the Grafton golf course, 300 miles (500 km) north of Sydney according to June Richards.