

International

BRIEFLY

Mahathir to visit 4 countries: Prime Minister Mahathir Mohammad will visit Cuba, Chile, Uruguay and Argentina from September 25 to October 5 to strengthen trade, investment and other ties between Malaysia and these countries, a Foreign Ministry statement said Wednesday, AP reports from Kuala Lumpur.

Japanese prince visits Chile: Prince Hitachi of Japan is visiting Chile to participate in ceremonies marking the 100th anniversary of diplomatic ties between his country and Chile, AP reports from Santiago.

Rolling Stones' US tour begins: Before Mick, Keith and the gang ever appeared on TV with Ed Sullivan, long before the Rolling Stones were dubbed the world's greatest rock 'n' roll band, they spent two June 1964 days in Chicago. It was their first US recording session, AP says from Chicago.

6 die in Somalia: At least six people were killed and four wounded when skirmishes erupted Tuesday between rival Somali clans on the outskirts of a town 250 kilometres (156 miles) southwest of Mogadishu travellers reported, AFP says from Mogadishu.

2 ministers resign in Australia: Two ministers in Prime Minister John Howard's conservative government resigned their posts Wednesday after allegations of misuse of travel expenses and cover up, AP reports from Canberra.

China to launch satellite in '98: China will use its most powerful rocket to launch a US-made satellite next year that will provide telecommunications, television and other broadcast services for China and her neighbours, an official report said, AP reports from Beijing.

Chinese FM meets Albright: Chinese Foreign Minister Qian Qichen said on Tuesday that President Jiang Zemin's strong showing at the recent Communist Party Congress improved chances for a successful Sino American summit next month, Reuter reports from New York.

Air pollution improves in Malaysia: The air pollution covering most parts of Malaysia improved Wednesday, but the state of emergency imposed in Sarawak state on Borneo island continued for the fifth straight day as pollution was still well above the "hazardous" level, the Environment Department said, AP reports from Kuala Lumpur.

Gaddafi links death of Di with Lockerbie air disaster: TUNIS, Sept 24: Libyan leader Muammar Gaddafi executed an apparent U-turn on Tuesday over the death of Princess Diana, going back on an earlier assertion that she was the victim of a plot by British and French secret services, reports Reuter.

Gaddafi links death of Di with Lockerbie air disaster

On Tuesday he pointed the finger at Britain's Royal family and told Libyan state-run television it was not possible that Prime Minister Tony Blair and his Labour government were responsible for Diana's death in a high speed car crash in Paris.

US President assures Indian PM of non-interference in Kashmir

President Bill Clinton assured Prime Minister I.K. Gujral that the United States had absolutely no intention of interfering in the Kashmir dispute but very much supported the ongoing dialogue between India and Pakistan.

Militants gun down 8 civilians Sharif, Gujral pledge to take action to stop fighting along Kashmir border

UNITED NATIONS, Sept 24: The prime ministers of India and Pakistan pledged to take immediate action to stop incidents along the confrontation line in disputed Kashmir in an effort to get the dialogue between the rival countries back on track, reports AP.

No specific measures were agreed upon during Tuesday's hour-long meeting in a New York hotel between Indian Prime Minister Inder Kumar Gujral and Pakistan's Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif.

Sharif proposed that India reduce its troop presence at the contested border, but India isn't considering any reduction at this time, said an Indian official who attended the talks and spoke on condition he not be named.

The number of troops on both sides of the border, however, "are things that could be considered in the long run," he told reporters.

Pakistani Foreign Secretary Shamsah Ahmed, who also attended the closed-door meeting, said the two prime ministers concurred that the issue in Jammu and Kashmir was the key to getting relations back on track but there was "a divergence on approach."

India and Pakistan have fought two wars over the control of mostly Muslim Kashmir since Britain granted the countries independence in 1947. India controls two-thirds of the Himalayan territory and Pakistan the remaining one-third.

Both prime ministers were in New York to attend the annual debate of the UN General Assembly, and both met separately with President Bill Clinton on Monday.

US, Japan unveil new security guidelines

NEW YORK, Sept 24: United States and Japan unveiled new security guidelines Tuesday which for the first time would allow a limited role for Japanese troops supporting US soldiers in the event of regional conflicts, reports AP.

The two countries' defense and foreign ministers unveiled details at a news conference at a New York hotel.

Secretary of State Madeleine Albright Defense Secretary William Cohen, Japanese Foreign Minister Keizo Obuchi, and Japanese Defense Minister Fumio Kyuma met Tuesday on the sidelines of the UN General Assembly to approve new guidelines for US-Japan defense cooperation, they said in a statement.

The four ministers speaking with reporters were quick to address Chinese concerns. "They (the United States and Britain) accused us in Lockerbie, saying without any evidence that two Libyans bombed the plane," Gaddafi said.

the "best way of sorting out the issues is bilateral," said the Indian official.

India accuses Pakistan of arming and training Kashmiri militants who have been fighting a separatist war since 1989 in India-held Kashmir.

AMMAN, Sept 24: King Hussein warned on Tuesday that Arab and Israeli "terrorists" were pushing the Middle East towards a violent showdown which could trigger yet another wave of Palestinian refugees fleeing to Jordan.

The king, speaking a day after two Israel diplomatic guards were attacked in Amman, warned of a potential catastrophe in the region sparked by militant opponents of Arab-Israeli peace.

Popular support in Jordan for its own 1994 peace treaty with Israel, already weakened by a lack of "peace dividend" promised to ordinary Jordanians, has been further undermined by the Israeli-Palestinian tensions.

The king has accused Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu of fuelling violence by failing to meet Israeli commitments to Palestinians.

But at home he has championed the treaty and he told his audience of cabinet ministers and local dignitaries in Jerash that peace was a national and religious duty.

Queen Elizabeth to visit Pakistan in October

ISLAMABAD, Sept 24: On a six-day visit to Pakistan next month, Queen Elizabeth II will address a joint session of Parliament, watch a cricket match and tour the grand Faisal Mosque, officials said Wednesday, reports AP.

The royal visit which will also include neighbouring India commemorates the end to British rule of the Asian subcontinent 50 years ago, when India was granted independence and Pakistan was created as a homeland for Muslims of the region.

The queen is to arrive in Pakistan on October 7 to a 21-gun salute. Her first day will be spent meeting Pakistan's president and prime minister, meeting the staff at the British High Commission, which has been preparing for the visit for much of the past six months.

Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty (CTBT) that Clinton in his speech to the General Assembly earlier in the day said he would be sending to the Senate for ratification.



Roy Randall, 80, reads the cover of Elton John's CD single, "Candle in the Wind 1997" a tribute to Princess Diana, at a Tower Records store in West Hollywood, Calif., Tuesday.

King Hussein warns Arab, Israeli terrorists pushing ME towards violent showdown

He said Jordan, which absorbed hundreds of thousands of Palestinian refugees in 1948 following the creation of Israel and again during the 1967 Arab-Israeli war, faced another influx if the violence continued.

AMMAN, Sept 24: King Hussein warned on Tuesday that Arab and Israeli "terrorists" were pushing the Middle East towards a violent showdown which could trigger yet another wave of Palestinian refugees fleeing to Jordan.

They were produced in court every month since their arrest four years ago, but police each time sought more time to gather evidence against them.

On Tuesday, Judge Punchihewa asked police to report within one month how many people were still in their custody and whether they were to be charged.

The government blamed separatist Tamil Tiger rebels for Premadasa's killing. But the guerrillas denied the charge.

The rebels are fighting for a separate homeland for Tamils, who comprise 18 per cent of Sri Lanka's 18 million people.

They claim discrimination by the Sinhalese, who control the government and military. More than 50,000 people have been killed in the fighting since 1983.



An instructor, centre, teaches her students in Colombo, on Monday, the proper way of handling babies at a school for Sri Lankan women seeking work as maids overseas.

Lankan court frees 18 accused of killing Premadasa

COLOMBO, Sept 24: A court freed 18 people after police failed to press charges against them in the 1993 assassination of President Ranasinghe Premadasa, officials said Wednesday, reports AP.

Judge Premadasa Punchihewa ordered their release on Tuesday after prosecutors said there wasn't enough evidence against them. They were arrested four years ago.

Twenty-two accused were released last year on the same grounds.

Police arrested more than 50 people after the assassination but failed to gather enough evidence to charge any of them.

Under an anti-terrorism law, the Sri Lankan police can detain people indefinitely without charging them.

The 18 people, who were released on Tuesday, belonged to the majority Sinhalese community who were suspected to have links with the assassin.

They were produced in court every month since their arrest four years ago, but police each time sought more time to gather evidence against them.

On Tuesday, Judge Punchihewa asked police to report within one month how many people were still in their custody and whether they were to be charged.

The government blamed separatist Tamil Tiger rebels for Premadasa's killing. But the guerrillas denied the charge.

The rebels are fighting for a separate homeland for Tamils, who comprise 18 per cent of Sri Lanka's 18 million people.