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.

Mahathir will head a large delegation of ministers, deputy ministers, members of parliament, chief ministers of several states, senior government officials and businessmen, the statement said. In addition to accepting the invitation of President Carlos Saul Menem to visit Argentina, Mahathir has also been invited to speak at the inauguration of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN)-Mercosur Business Council in Argentina.

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.

Hitachi and his wife attended an official banquet hosted by President Eduardo Frei at the presidential palace Tuesday night. The main ceremony was scheduled for Wednesday morning, presided over by Frei and Hitachi at the Chilean foreign ministry. Also Wednesday, Hitachi planned to fly to southern Chile for a visit to Easter Island. He returns home Saturday.

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

A love for the blues brought Mick Jagger and Keith Richards together, and the Windy City had many of the era's great blues musicians: Muddy Waters, Buddy Guy, Willie Dixon, Howlin Wolf and countless others. So coming to Chicago and recording at Chess Studios was a natural. Returning to launch the promotion of the Rolling Stones' 39th album, " Bridges to Babylon," was a natural, too. The 33-city, 36-date US tour started Tuesday night at Soldier Field.

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.

According to the travellers, the fighting was triggered when militiamen loyal to Somali warlord Hussein Aidid started patrolling near strongholds of the rival Rahanwein Resistance Army (RRA) on farmland, nine kilometres (five miles) south of Baidoa. Aidid's better armed "litiamen overran resistance with the use of armed wagons, the sources said.

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.

Transport Minister John Sharp and Administrative Services Minister David Jull have resigned from the ministry and an inquiry has been called to investigate the allegations. Howard announced in Parliament. Both Sharp and Jull will remain in the House of Representatives. The resignations won't affect the ruling Liberal -National coalition's ability to govern. but are a major political blow for the government.

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.

The 52-transponder ChinaSat-8, the most powerful satellite of its kind ever purchased by China, will be carried into orbit by a Long March 3-B rocket in the fourth quarter of 1998, the Xinhua News Agency said late Tuesday. The satellite is expected to start operating in 1999. China Great Wall Industry Corp, the launch supplier, and Loral Space and Communications Co. the US satellife supplier, signed a contract in Beijing on Tuesday, Xinhua said:

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.

I believe this will facilitate preparations for the visit and facilitate implementation of Chinese foreign policy," Qian said at the start of a summit planning meeting with US Secretary of State Madeleine Albright.

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.

Kuching, the capital of Sarawak state, continues to be the worst hit area since the haze began two months ago, and Wednesday the air pollution index (API) was 651, down from the record 839 of Tuesday when residents said they could see only a few feet in some areas of Kuching. In Kuala Lumpur and surrounding areas Wednesday the index remained at about the same level as Tuesday at around 150.

# 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 hourlong meeting in a New York hotel between Indian Prime Minister Inder Kumar Guiral 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, how ever, "are things that could be considered in the long run, " he told reporters.

Pakistani Foreign Secretary Shamshad Ahmed, who also at tended 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 sepa-

rately with President Bill Clinton on Monday. Gujral will address the world body on Wednesday.

In his UN address Monday, Sharif offered to negotiate a non-aggression pact with the

The issue didn't come up dur-ing Tuesday's talks but the Indian official noted that such treaties have been proposed by both sides in the past — in the early 1950s and 1980s - and that India welcomed the renewed offer.

Sharif invited Gujral to Pakistan, and the countries' foreign secretaries were expected to meet for a fourth round of talks before the end of the year. Ahmed said. No date was discussed for a possible Guiral

After a three-year gap, the two sides had begun high-level talks this year amid new optimism because of elections that brought new prime ministers to power in both countries. But negotiations broke

down last week over Kashmir. the Himalayan region both countries claim. The conflict has been underscored by border skirmishes in recent weeks. In his talks with the two

leaders Monday, Clinton said Washington would not serve as a mediator in the dispute but would get involved in the search for a solution if the Indians and the Pakistanis wanted it.

"US involvement would be helpful, and perhaps prevent a deadlock," Sharif told reporters.

The Indians, however, feel

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. Pakistan denies the charge and maintains that it provides only diplomatic and moral support to the guerillas.

Pakistan has insisted that the Kashmir issue be settled before expanding trade and economic ties with its neighbour. India has favoured taking up other disputes simultaneously - sharing of river water, setting the maritime boundary, and ending hostilities in northern Sichen glacier.

Meanwhile Muslim guerillas in Jammu-Kashmir state lined up Hindu villagers outside their houses and shot eight of them dead at point blank range, police said Wednesday.

Three other villagers were injured and another escaped unhurt when 20 militants opened fire at them Tuesday night in Sarwadi a village near the border with Pakistan, said state police chief Gurbachan Jagat.

Police learned about the incident only on Wednesday. The village does not have a telephone and is accessible only on

No one claimed responsibility and details were sketchy. Jagat said in a telephone interview. Sarwadi is a village of mostly Hindus in Rajauri district, a Muslim-majority area of the state. It is 200 kilometres (125 miles) northwest of winter capital Jammu.



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. The song, originally sung at Diana's funeral Sept. 6, went on sale at midnight with customers lining up in the parking lot of the store. Randall bought several of \$2.99 CD's with proceeds going to The Diana, Princess of Wales Memorial Fund.

### King Hussein warns

# Arab, Israeli terrorists pushing ME towards violent showdown

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.

"The small group which is dealing with terrorism these days, either Israel or Arab, is pushing towards a new disaster," the monarch said, warning that Palestinians in the West Bank and Gaza Strip would be the first to suffer.

"I believe we are very close, God forbid, to a new disaster ... one side will strike against the other, and the victim will be the West Bank and Gaza and its people," he said in a televised speech in Jerash, 40 km (25 miles) north of Amman. Talks between israel and

Palestinians to expand Palestinian self-rule in the West Bank and Gaza Strip have collapsed over Israeli government plans to build Jewish settlements in the West Bank and recent suicide bombings.

Popular support in Jordan for its own 1994 peace treaty with Israel, already weekend by 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 champi-

oned the treaty and he told his audience of cabinet ministers and local dignitories in Jerash that peace was a national and religious duty.

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.

"Is the aim to repeat the tragedies of 1948 and 1967? Would we be serving our nation?" He asked, "can we absorb these hundreds of thousands of new refugees when we have to search for water to meet our

own human requirements?" Meanwhile, Palestinians

threw stones at Israeli policemen as some 200 schoolchildren held a demonstration Tuesday outside a new Jewish enclave in East Jerusalem, Israeli radio said.

The protesters blocked the road leading to the house in the Arab neighbourhood of Ras Al-Amud where a group of Jewish religious students have been in-

# 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 Wednes, day, reports AP.

Judge \*Premadasa Punchi\* hewa 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.

President Premadasa was blown to pieces during a May day rally in Colombo by a suicide bomber riding a bicycle.

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 re-

leased 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

people were still in their custody and whether they were to be charged. The government blamed separatist Tamil Tiger rebels

within one month how many

for Premadasa's killing. But the guerillas 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

## Gaddafi links death of Di with Lockerbie air disaster

TUNIS, Sept 24: Libyan leaden Muammar Gaddafi executed an apparent U-turn on Tuesday over the death of princes Diana, going back on an earlier assert on that she was the victim of a plot by British and French secret services, reports Reuter.

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.

In a live interview monitored in neighbouring Tunisia, Gaddafi - one of the Middle East's more unpredictable and colourful rulers - linked the death of Diana with the Lockerbie air disaster and the sanctions imposed against Libya for its alleged role in the bombing of the Pan Am airliner over Scotland in which 270 people

"They (the United States and Britain) accused us in Lockerbie, saying without any evidence that two Libyans bombed the plane," Gaddafi said.

"Look at what they are imposing on Libya... we don't accuse them of murder in such affair like that (of Diana)," he

"But we say that Britain is running into an affair bigger than the Lockerbie one. we must put the affair to the UN Security Council. The accusation is directed at the Royal family, not at the British cabinet or the

Labour Party," he added. On September 2, Gaddafi accused Britain and France of "executing" Diana and her Egyptian companion, Dodi Al Fayed. "because they were annoyed that an Arab man might marry a British princes."

Britain's foreign office promptly rejected Gaddafi's remarks then as outrageous.

## 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 AFP.

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 Obuch, and Japanese Defense Minister Fum o Kyuma met Tuesday on the sidelines of the UN General Assembly to approve new guidelines for US-Japan defense cooperation, they said in a state-

The four ministers speaking with reporters were quick to address Chinese concerns.

Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesman Shen Guofang said Tuesday the US Japanese security pact should not interfere in the affairs of third countries or risk disturbing the peace.

Japanese Defence Minister Fumid Kyuma, left, and Japanese Foreign Minister Keizo

Obuchi, second left, join hands with US Defence Secretary William Cohen and Secretary

of State Madeleine Albright during a meeting at a New York hotel Tuesday.

The new guidelines provide cooperation in response to challenges in areas surrounding Japan and are not aimed at any third nation. Cohen said. "They will benefit all the countries in the region.

"We have made it as transparent a process as possible Cohen said. "The Chinese government was kept appraised from the very beginning.

Albright in turn stressed that there is nothing geographically or country specific about the new guidelines.

"The development "does not change our one-China policy. Albright said.

### Queen Elizabeth to visit Pakistan in October

— AP/UNB photo

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 21gun 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. Bosnia policy speech that called

# Early pullout of NATO troops may risk war in Bosnia'

WASHINGTON, Sept 24: The United States and other nations must stay in Bosnia "for a good while to come" to ensure peace takes hold. White House national security adviser Sandy Berger said, reports AP.

An early pullout could risk war in Europe, he cautioned on Tuesday.

President Clinton's foreign policy adviser said the current NATÓ mission to stabilise the former Yugoslavia will end in June 1998 as scheduled - and as required by congressional critics who fear an open-ended obligation. But Berger emphasised what Clinton and Secretary of State Madeleine Albright have indicated for months, that "the international community's engagement will

continue" beyond next summer. "Peace is beginning to take root," Berger said in a US-

several times for "realism." The gains are not irreversible and locking them in will require that the international community stay engaged in Bosnia in some fashion for a good while to come.

After Berger's speech at Georgetown University, the White House said his address wasn't meant to signal change

in US policy on Bosnia. "He has not shifted the ground on the president's determination to meet the timetable" for withdrawing current troops, said spokesman Mike McCurry.



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. Last year, women working as maids, sent 43.1 billion rupees (\$736 million) back home to their families, making them second only to textile exports when it comes to earning foreign exchange for Sri Lanka. - AP/UNB photo

#### US President assures Indian PM of non-interference in Kashmir logue that is under way." (that) we have let too many op-

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. Pakistani Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif, in his meeting with Clinton earlier in the day, had forcefully brought up the Kashmir issue but the President, without mentioning the word Kashmir, simply expressed the hope that the two countries can move the dialogue forward in the next round of

Foreign Secretaries talks. During the nearly 45-minute Clinton-Gujral meeting at the Waldorf Astoria Hotel here yesterday afternoon, the President told Gujral, "We are very careful not to interfere in any way with the issues you have with Pak-

But he emphasised that the US 'very much supports the dia-

Gujral, in his response to Clinton's emphatic assurance that Washington did not want to impose itself on the subcontinent, made it clear that both countries were trying to solve the problems that exist between them but that "it will take

A senior State Department official acknowledged that the word Kashmir did not come up in the discussions, but "some things can certainly be understood without being stated explicitly.

Clinton also commended Gujral for the so-called Gujral Doctrine and discussed the water sharing agreement with Bangladesh and other such agreements that have made the Gujral Doctrine "concrete in the region,

The official said the main focus of the discussions was on bilateral issues and that there was a clear indication that both

Aziz Haniffa writes from New York sides wanted to add even greater

momentum to the growing trade and commerce ties.

Both the senior State Department official briefing the press and Indian officials were of the consensus that the two leaders had certainly hit it off and established a rapport.

They described the meeting as "cordial," "warm," "thoughtful," "non-intrusive," and one where President Clinton had "created a warm ambience." Finance

Minister P.Chidambaram, who also participated in the discussions. briefed Clinton on India's increased growth rates and the steps that were being taken to attract even greater foreign investment. Within the context of the

discussion of broad security

and disarmament issues, the of-

ficial acknowledged that there

was some discussion of the

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 rat-

ification. The official said Gujral reiterated India's reservations about the CTBT but indicated that India "would be pleased to engage" the US on further discussion of the subject.

But when the official was pointedly asked if this meant that there was a window of opportunity to convince India to sign the CTBT, he said, "I am .not sure that we have a new opening here, but what we do have is agreement on the part of the two leaders that our countries will continue to discuss these issues."

"We want to have a full relationship with India across the board," the official said, and the issue of nuclear proliferation "will certainly be an important part of that." According to the official,

Clinton had begun the discussions by expressing his "appreciation" to Gujral "for adjusting his schedule so the two of them could get together." Clinton had noted that "this was not the easiest of things to do" because Gujral was originally slated to address the United Nations on September 30.

Gujral was also thanked profusely by Clinton for the "very high hospitality" accorded by India when First Lady Hillary Clinton and First Daughter Chelsea visited India in 1995. He informed Gujral that his wife and daughter had thoroughly enjoyed their visit and consequently he was looking forward to his own trip to India early next year.

dent Clinton told Gujral of the "great feeling in our country for India" and that "there is a sense

portunities go by and he very much wants to deepen rela-

The official said that Gujral had not brought up the issue of India's bid to be a permanent member of the United Nations Security Council and noted that this issue has been "discussed at a variety of different meetings" in recent months,

cussion of some regional issues, including the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC) and President Clinton's questions on the region should in no way be construed as reason for "great consternation or alarm." "(But) certainly a very

Indian officials said the dis-

promising start to greater engagement with India," he said. "I think the President was able to The official said that Presiestablish a good rapport with the Prime Minister."

- India Abroad News Service