Polish cabinet wins vote of confidence

WARSAW, Nov 11: Poland's new centre-right cabinet won a parliamentary confidence vote early today, clearing the last hurdle for it to fully assume office, reports Reuter.

The lower house of parliament voted by 260 votes to 173 with two abstentions in favour of Prime Minister Jerzy Buzek's coalition government of his solidarity block and the smaller Freedom Union Party which were successful in September elections.

Although Buzek's Solidarity Election Action (AWS) has 201 of the 460 lower house seats and the Freedom Union has 60, guaranteeing a majority, some groupings on the AWS rightwing had suggested they might not back the government.

The rightists said the AWS had conceded too much to the liberal Freedom Union in the coalition agreement over policy and posts which the two groupings signed on Monday.

In a statement issued shortly before the vote, 31 AWS deputies said they would back the cabinet over this crucial motion, which every new cabinet must pass, but added that this did not signal automatic support for the coalition.

"Our vote of confidence does not mean automatic support for all government initiatives. We shall closely scrutinise its activities and adopt our position towards it by evaluating their usefulness for Poland," the statement said.

Colombian rebels reject Castro's mediation

BOGOTA, Nov 11: The country's oldest and largest leftist rebel group says it isn't interested in any mediation by Cuban leader Fidel Castro to end Colombia's decades-old insurgency, reports AP.

Marcos Calarca, a spokesman for the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia said from Mexico City that the rebels reject any intervention by foreign leaders solicited unilaterally by the Colombian government, Bogota's EL Espectador newspaper reported Mon-

Colombian President Ernesto Samper had asked for Castro's help in ending the conflict during a meeting of Latin American leaders in Porlamar, Venezuela on Sunday.

Any international participation should be requested "by the different parties" in the conflict and "by the majori v of the Colombian people, not nly by the government," the rebels

Castro sain Sunday be would do anything he could to help end the fighting, which has

been going on since the 1960s. "Nothing would be more important for me as a person and for Cuba as a country than peace be achieved in Colombia," said the 71-year-old Cuban

French bishops call for talks with Muslims

LOURDES, France, Nov 11 France's Roman Catholic bishops on Monday called for dialogue between the church and Islam, which is France's second-largest religion, reports

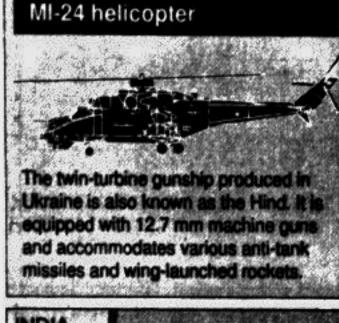
Meeting in the city of Lourdes, in southern France, the bishops called for "a realistic opening" toward the country's live million Muslims.

Though most of France's 58 million people consider themselves Roman Catholic, the majority do not attend church. France's Muslims tend to be

much more : eligious and have actively built new Mosques, which has antagonised many French people, especially in smaller towns. Racism is on the rise in France, and much of it is directed toward Muslim immigrants from North Africa. The far-right National Front

party wins roughly 15 per cent of the vote in national elections by blaming immigrants for France's 12.5 per cent unemployment and for higher crime. The bishops called for the

Christian communities to seek out Muslims, engage in dialogue and seek to find common ground.





TOKYO. Nov 11: Chinese Premier Li Peng arrived in Japan on Tuesday to help smooth over relations strained by a territorial dispute, China-Taiwan tensions and Japan's

strengthened defence pact with the United States, reports AP. Li, on his first visit to Japan since the 1989 military crackdown on protesters at Beijing's Tiananmen Square, landed at Tokyo's Haneda Airport. He was scheduled to meet Prime Minister Ryutaro Hashimoto in the

evening. During his six-day stay, Li will also meet other political leaders, Japanese Emperor Akihito and Empress Michiko at the Imperial Palace, and visit Nagoya, Osaka and the ancient capital of Nara.

Despite the differences between the two countries, a major factor is pulling them closer: Trade.

Japan is China's largest trading partner and one of its biggest investors, and Beijing is courting Tokyo's support for its bid to join the World Trade Organisation. China is the second largest recipient of Japanese

The two are expected to sign a new bilateral fisheries treaty. and Li will be making calls on Japanese businesses, including a stop at computer giant NEC

JERUSALEM, Nov 11: Hours

after the Israeli Cabinet decided

to publish parts of a secret re-

port on Yitzhak Rabin's assas-

sination, Israel TV said Monday

the report disclosed that a Shin

Bet operative urged the shooter

to carry out the killing, reports

marra said he had spoken to

people who read the secret doc-

ument, which deals with the se-

curity service's efforts to infil-

trate extreme-right circles in

were allowed to read the report,

a previously unpublished annex

to the official inquiry into the

November 1995 assassination.

Only a few officials had seen it

Benjamin Netanyahu's Cabinet

decided to publish parts of the

report in response to persistent

conspiracy theories alleging

that the Shin Bet played a role

published report will include

the commission's findings

about Avishai Raviv, an ex-

treme-right activist who, it has

since been disclosed, was a Shin

Amir, a Jewish nationalist

hoping to end the prime minis-

ter's land-for-peace policies. In

its public conclusions, the state

inquiry found Amir acted

ported by the TV - could raise

questions about whether Rayly

But the secret annex — as re-

Rabin was shot by Yigal

A Cabinet statement said the

in the assassination.

Bet operative.

On Monday, Prime Minister

Last week, cabinet ministers

the months before the killing.

Israel TV reporter Dan Se-

Chinese PM visits Japan to help strengthen ties Corp on Wednesday.

Also on the agenda is the tense standoff between South Korea and famine-stricken North Korea, and Japanese con-cerns over Chinese air pollution drifting across the water to

The visit is part of efforts by both sides to improve relations following an increase in tensions over the past year or two. China help military exercises and launched missiles in the Taiwan Straits as apparent acts of intimidation during Taiwanese elections in 1996, threatening stability in the re-

Then China strongly condemned a strengthening of the defence guidelines this year between the United States and Japan, which China feared could interfere with its claims on Taiwan.

The conflicts added to longstanding disagreements over competing claims to East China Sea islands known as the Diaoyus to the Chinese and the Senkakus to the Japanese and Japan's reluctance to apologise for wartime atrocities committed in China.

As a first step in bolstering ties. Hashimoto went to China September and visited Shenyang, the city where Japan began its invasion of China in 1931. He also reassured Chinese

appear before Delhi court NEW DELHI, Nov 11: Media leaders that the US-Japanese

baron Rupert Murdoch has been defence pact was not a threat. summoned to appear before a Li's trip is the latest in a Delhi court on November 18 in string of diplomatic missions a criminal case of alleged in the region. Chinese President screening of obscene films on Jiang Zemin went to the United his Star TV channel in India. States last month, and after goreports PTI. ing to China Hashimoto met The Ministry of External Af-

with President Boris Yeltsin in fairs (MEA) was Monday directed by the Chief Metropoli-Russian Foreign Minister tan Magistrate, Prem Kumar, to Yevgeny Primakov also arrived ensure that the summons was in Japan on Tuesday for talks served on Murdoch. with Hashimoto.

The CMM sent the summons "The United States, China, Japan and Russia are trying to to the counsellor, passport and visa, in the MEA for their serbuild relations to a level that will permit their leaders to visit vice upon the accused. each other frequently," the The CMM yesterday issue the directions after the com-

toned down his rhetoric re-

cently. Last year at China's Na-

tional Day celebrations he as-

sailed Japan for enforcing its

claim to the disputed islands.

This year, he talked about

peaceful reunification with

Li. 68, is giving up the pre-

mier job in March and is said to

be interested in replacing the

head of the national legislature,

Qiao Shi, who is retiring.

Taiwan.

Asahi newspaper said in an edi-torial Tuesday. "That is a desirplainant in the case Arun Agable step toward world peace gawal, a lawyer, informed the and stability." court of the two addresses of Li, known for his national-Murdoch. istic views and criticised as a The summons, which was issued earlier on September 24, strong backer of the crackdown could not be served on Murdoch in Tiananmen Square, has

Delhi police.

The CMM had issued summons to Murdoch, his Chief Executive in India, RK Basu and 23 others, mostly cable operations, on a criminal complaint alleging that Star TV was show ing obscene movies in India and thus flouting several provisions of the Indian Penal Code and

Cinematography Act.

as his address was not known to

Rupert Murdoch

summoned to

DMK's alleged involvement in Rajiv murder

Cong (I) may withdraw support from UF govt if allegations are true

NEW DELHI, Nov 11: India's embattled minority coalition government has distanced itself from an official probe accusing one of its partners of playing a role in the 1991 assassination of former premier Rajiv Gandhi, reports said today, reports AFP.

Home Minister Indrajit Gupta, quoted in newspapers, said the government did not believe there was enough evidence to substantiate the allegations.

Gupta spoke out after the 5.280-page report on Rajiv's death, which took five-and-ahalf years to compile and was due to be presented to parliament on November 19, was leaked to the press.

Its findings threatened to spark a political crisis on Monday when the Congress (I) Party, which Rajiv has led and which currently keeps the minority United Front coalition in power, said it could withdraw its support if the allegations were true.

The probe reportedly said that a regional party from

Tamil Nadu, the Dravida Munnetra Kazagham (DMK) which helped found the United Front had been involved in the killing.

Gandhi was blown up by a woman suicide bomber in Tamil Nadu on May 21, 1991.

India accused the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE), a Sri Lankan separatists guerilla group, of the murder, but it has long been alleged that they were

47 prisoners escape in SA

JOHANNESBURG, Nov 11: At least 47 prisoners have escaped since Friday in eight separate breaks from jails, police cells and courts around South Africa, police said Monday, reports AFP.

In the biggest escape, 22 awaiting-trial prisoners fled from police holding cells in eastern Mpumalanga province in three separate incidents early Monday.

Tamils from southern India. Gupta told the Times of India that there was 'no evidence' to support the findings of the report, which was drawn up by a

given weapons and funds by

panel headed by retired judge Milap Chang Jain. "How are people to judge if his conclusions are not biased or partisan," Gupta was quoted

as saying. Congress spokesman Vithal Gadgil said on Monday that if the DMK was proved to have been involved "and if the United Front does not take any action, we will have to reconsider our

Rajiv's assassination, which the LTTE has always denied carrying out, is widely believed to have been linked to the prime minister's decision in 1987 to send Indian peacekeeping troops to Sri Lanka.

Indian troops soon found themselves caught in the crossfire between the LTTE and the Sri Lankan army. They were withdrawn in 1990 after suffering around 1,140 casualties.



Russian President Boris Yeltsin, left, and Chinese President Jiang Zemin go over details before a joint press conference in Beijing's Great Hall of the People Monday. Yeltsin is on three-day state visit to China. ---- AP/UNB photo

Report on Rabin's assassination

Shin Bet urged shooter to

carry out the killing

should have known about

Amir's plans, and even about

whether he helped drive Amir

of the annex was reached in a

telephone poll of ministers af-

ter a special committee recom-

mended publication Monday,

the prime minister's office said.

It must still be approved by the

Knesset's Foreign Affairs and

Defense Committee. Israel TV

said it would likely be approved

and published Wednesday, co-

inciding with a planned memo-

shows Raviv became a close

friend of Amir's and told him as

well as others, that Rabin

should be killed. It also details

Raviv's recruitment and his ac-

tivities while working for the

Shin Bet, which included in-

citement among right-wingers.

beating Arabs, burning tires of

Arab-owned cars and handing

out posters of Rabin in a Nazi

source, also said the report

shows Raviv was told by the

·Shin Bet to write leaflets con-

demning the peace process with

saw the report have said it con-

tains evidence of a Shin Bet

conspiracy, but several said

they were disturbed by the Shin

right circles have promoted

conspiracy theories claiming

the Shin Bet was somehow in-

volved in the assassination.

Since the killing, extreme-

Bet's handling of Raviv.

None of the minister who

The TV, citing an unnamed

Israel TV said the report

rial service for Rabin.

SS uniform.

the Palestinians.

The decision to publish parts

to the shooting.

murdering 2 CIA employees FAIRFAX, Virginia. Nov 11:

Lankan navy releases North

Korean cargo ship

Jury finds Kasi guilty of

A jury on Monday found Pakistani Mir Aimal Kasi guilty of murdering two Central Intelligence Agency employees in a 1993 shooting spree that also left three wounded, court sources said, reports AFP.

The 12-person jury deliberated four hours before convicting Kasi, 33, on all 10 charges related to the incident, including one count of capital murder. one of first-degree murder and three of malicious wounding.

Lead prosecutor Robert Horan was seeking the death penalty against Kasi, whose lawyers called no no defence witnesses during the trial.

The Pakistani national had faced the charges in connection with a January 1993 shootout. He reportedly took careful aim with an AK-47 assault weapon at cars idling at a stop light in front of the Langley, Virginiabased agency.

He had pleaded not guilty to the charges, which had earned Kasi — also previously known as Kansi - a place on the Federal Bureau of Investigation's (FBI) list of 10 most wanted

COLOMBO, Nov 11: Sri

Lanka's navy has released a

North Korean cargo ship seized

on suspicion of carrying arms

for Tamil Tiger guerillas, offi-

Monday night, after naval

search teams confirmed that it

was not carrying weapons, said

Commodore Sarath Weerasek-

the Pukchang by Navy gunboats

when it failed to respond to ra-

dio challenges off the eastern

city of Batticaloa on Monday

evening. The Pukchang crew fi-

nally responded on the radio af-

ter the firings. It was not clear

why they did not respond ear-

kilometres) from land and

within our waters. Normally,

ships stay about 30 miles (48

kilometres) out," said Weera-

warships, and escorted to Trin-

comalee, Sri Lanka's main

naval base, where it was boar-

rying fertiliser to the south In-

dian port of Madras from Dubai

Force jets bombed and sank an

unidentified ship which was

unloading weapons at a rebel

coastal base. The government

said an estimated 60 guerillas

on board were killed in the bat-

tle. The guerillas admitted los-

In July, the rebels hijacked

another North Korean cargo

ship, the Moran Bong, killing

one North Korean crewman and

kidnapping 37 others. The crew

were released after five days.

and the ship freed two months

ing 14 fighters.

in the Gulf, said Weerasekera.

"It was then surrounded by

The ship was found to be car-

Last week, Sri Lankan Air

sekera.

"It was only five miles (eight

Warning shots were fired at

era, a Navy spokesman.

The Pukchang was freed on

cials said Tuesday, reports AP.

The US State Department in a statement Monday warned US citizens traveling abroad that while it had "no specific threat information," "the potential exists for retaliation by Kansi's sympathisers.

Kasi was arrested in Pakistan June 17, when FBI officers burst into his hotel room during a commando operation. He was immediately extradited to the United States and charged with murder and firearms possession.

He had quickly disappeared after the spree, leaving the United States for his home town of Quetta, Pakistan.

Some press reports have suggested Kasi's family may have worked for the CIA in the 1980s. US officials have also said Kasi may have borne some grudge against the US government for harm done against his family.

CIA analyst Angela Clark the prosecution's key witness. testified that Kasi returned to finish off one of the victims with a "killing shot" after first wounding the man.

The rebels are fighting for a

homeland for minority Tamils.

who are 18 per cent of Sri

Lanka's 18 million people. They

have a language, religion and

culture distinct from the Sin-

halese who comprise the major-

ity in this island off the south-

brace the extreme solution,

many feel they are denied an

equal opportunity by the Sin-

halese. The rebels say the Tamil

minority can only flourish in

their own state. The Sinhalese

dominate the government and

Army cuts to leave

60,000 servicemen

homeless in Russia

military reform and army cuts

will leave another 60,000 ser-

vicemen homeless bringing

their total number to 450,000,

ITAR-Tass reported Monday

citing a government official,

state construction committee.

said that solving this problem

is "one of the important tasks of

working out a five-year federal

programme called "state hous-

ing certificates" designed to

provide housing to more than

380,000 military families by

subsidising up to 80 per cent of

the cost of housing construction

with the remaining 20 per cent

to be paid by servicemen them-

selves or through bank credit.

The programme calls for

Basin said the government is

the building industry".

Yesim Basin, head of the

reports AFP.

MOSCOW, Nov 11: Planned

Though all Tamils don't em-

ern tip of India.

Off the Record

It was just a prank?

DUBAI: A Ugandan doctor used an alarm clock and a TV remote control disguised as a bomb to rob a currency exchange shop in the United Arab Emirates but was seized as he fled newspapers said Monday, reports AFP.

The doctor, who was not named, warned staff that he would blow up the shop with the device, which was wrapped in paper bearing the word "bomb" and a picture of a skull.

He made away with more than 12,000 dollars but was arrested by a police patrol as he was chased by his victims through a market of the city of Dubai, the reports said.

The doctor, a surgeon with a monthly salary of around 4.900 dollars, told a court it was just a prank. But the judge sentenced him to one year in prison to be followed by deportation from the oil-rich Gulf state.

Diana's last Versace suit fetches \$47800

ROME: One of the last outfits created by murdered Italian designer Gianni Versace for Princess Diana raised 80 million lire (47,800 US dollars) at an auction held on Sunday for cancer research, reports Reuter. Versace's brother Santo told state broadcaster RAI that the

simple, black wool crepe suit was designed just before Gianni was shot on the steps of his Miami mansion in July. Princess Diana was due to receive the elegant outfit in

September, but died in a high-speed car crash in Paris at the end of August. The auction was shown live on television and bidding was

brisk, the eventual buyer was not named. Besides the Diana suit, a black jacket created by Versace in 1992 for his close friend Elton John was also auctioned, raising

20 million lire. The same amount of money was bid for a signed soccer shirt belonging to Brazilian striker Ronaldo as well as for next year's edition of the famous Pirelli calendar, featuring photographs

by Bruce Weber. A signed shirt from the 1995 footballer of the year, Liberia's George Weah, raised four million lire, while a shirt worn by

Italian national striker Alessandro Del Piero was bought for 3.5 million. All proceeds from the sale will go to the Italian Association

for Cancer Research, which Versace had supported. He himself suffered from an ear cancer!

Prehistoric ceremonial site discovered

LONDON: British archaeologists have discovered buried evidence of a prehistoric ceremonial site in southwest England believed to be as important as stonehenge, reports AFP. English heritage officials said Friday that a geophysical

survey had revealed traces of "one of the largest and most elaborate" prehistoric ceremonial sites ever found in Britain. The find was at as least as old and of comparable significance to the Bronze Age Megalith monument at stonehenge,

Its location at Stanton Drew in Somerset had been concealed

by a series of well-known stone circles. It was detected with infra-red instrument designed to reveal ancient remains without disturbance.

Poor 'Princess Jasmine'!

ORLANDO. Florida: With few clues, investigators searched on Monday for the mother of a newborn girl discovered in a toilet at Disney World's Magic Kingdom amusement park, reports AP.

The girl was only minutes old when found by two women Saturday night, her head above the water with the umbilical cord wrapped around her neck. Dubbed "Princess Jasmine" by nurses, she was in stable condition Monday at a hospital.

Most theories about what happened centred on the belief that the mother was a teen-ager of Asian descent who managed to conceal her pregnancy and didn't plan to have her 3.1-kilogram (7-pound), 53-centimetre (21-inch) daughter right there in Dis-

ney World "Our best guess is that she is under 20 and is probably a juvenile," said Orange County sheriff's Detective Matt Irwin. Hundreds of people have called the hospital and a children's

welfare agency expressing an interest in adopting the baby. The baby, whose nickname comes from a character in the animated cartoon film "Aladdin," was acting like any other newborn at Arnold Palmer Hospital for Children and Women,

Dr Janice Howell said. "The baby is absolutely gorgeous — a full term, healthy-looking baby. You would never know that she had such an interesting start in life," she told reporters. She cuddles quite nicely."

NGOs urged to help fight prostitutions in ex-Soviet republics

According to one claim, the

agency knew of Amir's plan and

intended - with Rabin's knowl-

edge — to replace his bullets

with blanks and let Amir fire

them in order to discredit the

Bet officers were demoted or

suspended for negligence in the

wake of the assassination, and

agency chief Carmi Gilon re-

signed. All of the testimony by

Shin Bet agents was behind

closed doors and is sealed in the

2 TV Monday found almost one

in five Israelis believe the as-

sassination was the result "of a

conspiracy." Some 69 per cent

said they did not believe this:

the poll gave no sample size or

the conspiracy allegations as

Netanyahu has dismissed

AFP adds: Egyptian Presi-

dent Hosni Mubarak paid

homage Monday to Israel's

slain Prime Minister Yitzhak

Rabin, saying he had stood by

his commitments, unlike his

right-wing successor Benjamin

respected what he said to the

letter," Mubarak said, the Egyp-

tian news agency MENA re-

The Labour prime minister

was assassinated by right-wing

Jewish extremist Yigal Amir on

November 4, 1995 as he left a

Tel Aviv peace rally.

"In contrast, Yitzhak Rabin

A poll broadcast on Channel

Several high-ranking Shin

right wing.

secret annex.

error margin.

"nonsense."

Netanyahu.

MOSCOW, Nov 11: She left with the promise of a job picking apples for a good wage but the young Ukrainian women ended up a virtual slave in a grungy Turkish brothel, without papers or the means to es-

cape, reports AFP. Once, the main victims of this kind of entrapment were Asian women, but surveys show they are now outnumbered by women from the former Soviet bloc countries.

"The young Ukrainian was 18-year-old. She managed to get home nine months later, pregnant and her life ruined," said Olga Schved, the head of one of the few associations in the Ukrainian capital Kiev trying to help women who have suffered such exploitation, to get

their lives back on track. She was among 100 representatives from Russian, US and Dutch non-governmental

organisations (NGOs), the United Nations and Russian government who attended a conference on the problem here They urged NGOs and au-

thorities around the world to cooperate to more effectively fight this growing scourge hitting the former Soviet re-

"Tens of thousands of Russians, Ukrainians, Latvians, Belarussians are victims of this traffic that today has surpassed in the Asian countries," said American Gillian Caldwell of Global Survival Network, one of the groups that sent delegates to Moscow.

The prostitution trade is inundated with women from the old Eastern Bloc, said Marjan Wajers of a Dutch foundation against trafficking in women which takes in large numbers of former prostitutes.

The reason for this explosion in the ex-Soviet Union is above all economic, in countries changing to democracy and a market economy: Trafficking in women brings in some seven billion dollars a year to organised crime groups around the globe, according to a UN report.

In some countries, including Russia, humanitarian workers suspect that police are given bribes to close their eyes about such illicit dealings. One the huge Tverskaya

street in the heart of Moscow, young Russians claim they pay off neighbourhood police every night to avoid being stopped for identity checks, said Steven Galster of the Global Survival Network. A film Galster made secretly

after a two-year probe into the

problem, shows the heads of a

private Moscow security guard

tirm telling a prospective client his company can handle the "exportation of young women" and assuring him there will be no trouble with the police or any mafia groups. Galster said an officer in the

official security forces was posted in the hallway of this firm. "We have strong suspicions that the police are mixed up in this traffic," he said. "Our sources in the Russian police conceded that corruption

was too extensive in the police

department for them to do

anything about it: The orders

must come from high-up," said Galster. His colleague Caldwell said Russian President Boris Yeltsin made promises and we don't see any results.

The women are between 16

and 40 years old and usually

people looking for a better life.

They are enticed into leaving their families and going abroad for jobs as "escorts," dancers, waitresses or baby-sitters, said Wajers. They then often find them-

selves suddenly in the grip of a pimp who makes them pay dearly for the trip to their new destination, then keeps their passport to prevent them from fleeing. If they try to escape, pimps often threaten violence against their families back

"Some do understand they are heading to work as prostitutes but do not realise that they will be deprived of all rights whatsoever, including the freedom to come and go as they want," Wajers said.

"We must act now and set up laws as well as shelters for women who manage to find their way back out of this hell,'



Swedish Crown Princess Victoria is greeted in her new office at the United Nations Monday by Swedish Ambassador to the UN Henrik Salander. - AP/UNB photo