

Turkish President Suleyman Demirel, right, shows the guard of honour to his visiting Egyptian counterpart Hosni Mubarak during a welcoming ceremony at Ankara's Esenboga airport on Tuesday. President Mubarak, who began a shuttle diplomacy Sunday in Damascus, arrived in Turkish capital for mediation between Turkey and Syria in an attempt to avoid a military confrontation over Kurdish guerilla bases in Syria.

Mubarak continues mediation effort

Turkey issues last warning to Syria

DAMASCUS, Oct 7: Turkey issued a "last warning" to Syria on Tuesday over what it called Damascus's backing of Kurdish separatist rebels and cancelled all leave for troops guarding the two countries' frontier, reports Reuters.

Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak shuttled between Turkey and Syria in a mediation effort as Ankara issued its last warning in a dispute that could have serious implications for the whole Middle East.

Officials said that Turkey has cancelled all leave for troops guarding the Syrian-Turkish frontier.

Mubarak left Damascus on Tuesday after a 70-minute stopover at the city's airport on his way home from Turkey. He had held consultations with Syrian President Hafez Al-Assad following an initial round of talks in Damascus on Sun-

Mubarak briefed Assad one the outcome of his visit to Ankara and his talks with senior Turkish officials and the Turkish viewpoint on how to find a way out of the current situation. Syrian presidential spokesman Joubran Kourieh

Mubarak heard the Syrian viewpoint from Assad, Kourieh said without giving any further details. Other Syrian officials did not elaborate on whether Mubarak was making any progress in his mediation ef-

Turkish Prime Minister Mesut Yilmaz told a meeting of his party deputies earlier on Tuesday, "We are warning Syria for the last time. We want them to stop their support for separatist terrorism and stop their policies of hostility. We are waiting for a reply from Syria.'

Yilmaz did not say what action Ankara might take if it did not receive a satisfactory reply from Damascus.

The Turkish stock market plunged nine per cent on Monday amid fears over an escalation of the Syrian dispute adding to the turmoil afflicting emerging markets in general but on Tuesday the market held

Turkey accuses Syria of giving logistical support to the Kurdistan Workers Party (PKK). which has been fighting a campaign for Kurdish self-rule in southeast Turkey for the last 14 years. Some 29,000 people have been killed in the conflict. Turkey believes it is close to defeating the PKK rebels on the

battlefield and its troops have made frequent forays into northern Iraq to attack PKK strongholds there.

Western diplomats and Turkey say PKK chief Abdullah Ocalan is based in Damascus. Syria has repeatedly denied the

The United States, disturbed about a potential clash, urged its NATO ally Turkey and Syria to exercise restraint.

Syria has called for Arab support on a level with that seen in the 1973 Middle East war when Arabs united behind Syria and Egypt against Israel. The Arab League has echoed Syrian and Iranian charges that Turkey's new informal ally, Israel, iomented the row.

Libyan Leader Musimmar Gaddafi said on Monday night he would consider any Turkish attack on Syria as an 'aggression" against Libya. He warned Ankara that its business interests with Tripoli would be hurt should any attack take place. Lebanon, Jordan, Algeria,

Saudi Arabia and Gulf countries have all urged a diplomatic solution to the dispute.

54 arrested in Myanmar

YANGON, Oct 7: Myanmar's military government said Wednesday it had arrested 54 people for staging anti-government demonstrations and accused groups funded by the Vatican, the US government and financier George Spros of inciting unrest, reports AP.

Of the 54 arrested, 23 were members of the National League for Democracy, the political party of opposition leader Aung San Suu Kyi, and included one elected member of parliament.

'In July and August of this year, the NLD has stepped up its confrontational activities and attempted to create unrest and upheaval," Col. Thein Swe, a high-ranking military intelligence officer, said at a news conference.

The 54 people were arrested for participating in brief "hitand-run" street demonstrations calling for an end to military rule in Myanmar, also known

More than 1,000 people joined in the first, near Yangon University on Aug. 24. The second erupted near the Sule Pagoda in downtown Yangon on Sept. 22.

Thein Swe said the dissidents instigated unrest in collaboration with exiled Myanmar students in Thailand who are backed financially by the Vatican-based Jesuit Refugee Services, the US governmentfunded National Endowment for Democracy, and the Open Society Institute of billionaire George Soros.

Sihanouk against modifying Cambodia's constitution

PHNOM PENH, Oct 7: King Norodom Sihanouk has said he is against modifying the Cambodian constitution to allow strongman Hun Sen to form a government without the opposition, according to a statement released Wednesday, reports

Hun Sen's Cambodian People's Party won 64 of the 122 seats in parliament in July 26 elections, short of the twothirds majority needed to rule without a coalition.

Cambodia's two opposition parties have so far refused to forge a ruling partnership with Hun Sen's party, leaving the country in a political deadlock with parliament unable to convene more than two months after the polls.

The opposition alleges Hun Sen's electoral victory was achieved through fraud and intimidation. International observers said that by and large the election was clean.

US lawmakers for easing of sanctions

Iraq not divulging information on bio-weapons: UNSCOM report

UNITED NATIONS, Oct 7: Iraq may be close to meeting UN demands concerning the elimination of its chemical and ballistic arms but not of biological weapons, a major UN report said on Tuesday, reports Reuters.

Full disclosure by Iraq remains the "crucial ingredient' for completing the disarmament process although Baghdad has largely refused to cooperate with UN weapons inspectors for the past two months the report by the UN Special Commission (UNSCOM) also said.

The report covering the last six months said the "disarmament phase of the Security Council's requirements is possibly near its end in the missile and chemical weapons areas but not in the biological weapons area."

UNSCOM Chairman Richard Butler also indirectly challenged Secretary General Kofi Annan's concept of a review of Iraq's relations with the United Nations which the Security Council will undertake once Iraq rescinds its Aug 5 decision suspending cooperation with the arms inspectors.

Annan submitted proposals to the council on Monday suggesting it was up to UNSCOM to prove Iraq had not complied with demands to dismantle its weapons of mass destruction.

Butler in the report said this would be reversing the onus of disclosure clearly placed upon Iraq by the council and would instead require UNSCOM to disclose fully information that only Iraq had at its disposal.

"The question may be asked what sound purpose would be served were the commission to substitute an overall statement of its own for Iraq's statement". the report said. "Would Iraq then be asked to verify the commission's statement?

Iraq is not happy with the review plans either saying the United States was delaying the review and had expanded it beyond weapons, Deputy Prime Minister Tareq Aziz, now in New York, told reporters the review did not appear to give Baghdad enough guarantees it would get a fair hearing. A clean bill of health is nec-

essary from UNSCOM before the council can consider lifting stringent economic sanctions

imposed on Iraq when it invaded Kuwait in August 1990.

"Butler put into writing for the first time his oral statements that Security Council might at some stage have to be satisfied that he could not provide 100 per cent verification" in accounting for Baghdad's prohibited arms.

In that case, he said, it would become even more important for UN inspectors to have access to all sites under a long term monitoring programme cur-rently scheduled to continue after completion of intrusive weapons inspections.

He said Iraq was permitting UNSCOM's monitoring work to be carried out only at a less than satisfactory level, though this was vital for the future.

Full disclosure by Iraq of all necessary materials and information remains the crucial ingredient for both an end to the disarmament process and future monitoring, he said. AP report from Washington

adds: Members of the Congressional Black Caucus started a campaign Tuesday to lift all nonmilitary sanctions against Iraq and open the way for more humanitarian aid and com-

Opponents of the US government's Iraq policy, mostly Democrats, escorted a former Baghdad-based UN coordinator for humanitarian aid around Capitol Hill to tell a story of

Halliday, resigned effective last week, protesting the UN sanc-

Rep John Conyers urged that Halliday and others be allowed to formally testify before Congress on the damage caused by the sanctions. If necessary, he said, the Black Caucus will sponsor a hearing on the issue.

Halliday, a 34-year UN vet-

members.



US Secretary of State Madeleine Albright, left, shakes hands with Palestinian leader Yasser Arafat following their joint press conference at Arafat's headquarters in the West Bank town of Jericho Tuesday. Albright is in the region on a two-day visit in preparation for a possible summit in Washington in mid-October between Arafat and Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu. In background is Palestinian negotiator Saeb Erekat. - AP/UNB photo

Albania offers airspace for NATO strikes

Holbrooke-Wilosevic talks make

ROK president in Japan: South Korean President Kim Dae-Jung arrived yesterday at Tokyo's Haneda airport for a four-day visit expected to include an official Japanese apology for its 1910-45 colonial rule, AFP says from Tokyo.

Kim, on his first official visit to Japan since being inaugurated as President in February, will hold a summit with Japanese Prime Minister Keizo Obuchi today. The leaders are to issue a joint statement aimed at fostering closer relations into the next century.

Gunman kills 5 in California: A disgruntled former city worker shot five people including the mayor and two council members on Tuesday in a botched effort to take them hostage before a council meeting, officials said,

Reuters reports from Riverside, California. The gunman was shot and wounded by police after he opened fire in a small room next to the main council chamber where he had tried to take the mayor and council members hostage. One of the injured, council-man Chuck Beatty, was in critical

Habibie cancels trip to Malaysia: Indonesian President B J Habibie has cancelled a planned trip to neighbouring Malaysia this month and might not attend an Asia-Pacific leaders' meeting there in November, news reports said yesterday. AP reports from Jakarta.

The Indonesian Observer quoted Foreign Minister Ali Alatas as saying Habibie is facing a busy work schedule at home However, the announcement, which had been widely anticipated, follows criticism by Habibie of the treatment meted out to Malaysia's sacked Deputy Prime Minister Anwar Ibrahim who has been arrested on sex and treason charges.

11 die as 2 houses collapse in India: Two houses collapsed after heavy rains in southern India yesterday,

killing 11 people and injuring four, a domestic news agency reported, AP says from New Delhi.

Eight members of a family, including three children, died in their sleep when their home collapsed on them in Chitradurga a Karnataka state town 1,575-km south of New Delhi. United News of India said.

140 bars, clubs closed in Naples: Local authorities in Naples ordered Tuesday the closure of more than 140 bars, private clubs and gambling rooms known to be frequented by members of the city mafia, the Camorra, AFP

A statement from the Naples government office said other similar measures could follow in a crackdown on gang warfare following a car bomb attack. The bomb exploded Friday outside a club in Naples injuring 13 people. The following day a rocket was fired at the suburban home of a Camorra member's brother, causing no casualties.

says from Naples



Miss World 1997-98 Diana Hayden from India poses for photographers during the MIPCOM (International Film and Programme Market for TV Video, Cable and Satellite) at "La Promenade de la Croisette," Tuesday, October 6, 1998 in Cannes, French riviera, - AP/UNB photo

Khatami asks for int'l action against Afghanistan

TEHRAN, Oct 7: Iranian President Mohammad Khatann on Tuesday urged international action against Afghanistan saying the ruling Taliban had to understand they could not impose their will on all Afghans, Iran's state television reported, says Reuters.

"Bullies have to be forced to accept international norms. the television quoted Khatami as telling UN special envoy on Afghanistan, Lakhdar Brahimi.

Khatami, whose country has accused the Taliban of massacring Shi'ite Muslims and other opponents, said the Sunni Muslim militia had to respect the rights of Afghanistan's ethnic and religious groups to share power, the television said.

"We do not see war as the primary solution to the problems. But of course our patience depends on the success of the United Nations and world bodies. Khatami added.

Iran has been involved in a face off with the Taliban since the killing of Iranian diplomats in August in Afghanistan. Tehran has massed some 270,000 troops on the Afghan border. Most of those troops are due to hold war games at the frontier soon.

Khatami also said the United Nations should pressure the Taliban to release dozens of Iranians it holds and return the remaining bodies of Iranian diplomats, and to punish those behind the murder of the eight diplomats and one reporter. Brahimi said the coopera-

tion of neighbouring states was required to resolve the Afghanistan crisis, the television said.

Defence Minister Rear Admiral Ali Shamkhani told Brahimi, that Iranian forces would not pull back until Tehran's terms for peace with the Taliban were

Mahathir won't appoint Anwar's replacement

KUALA LUMPUR, Oct 7 Prime Minister Mahathir Mohamad said Wednesday he would not appoint a replacement for Anwar Ibrahim as anti-government protests remerged with thousands demanding justice for his ousted. jailed deputy, reports AP.

After chairing a meeting of his United Malays National Organisation Party until early liours. Mahathir said he would wait to fill Anwar's seat until the party's internal election in

Last week, Mahathir, 72, said he could "drop dead" at any time, fueling speculation that he was about to announce a deputy after consulting his party's supreme council.

"This is not a matter discussed by the party. That is my prerogative. That is my responsibility and I do not need to refer to anyone," Mahathir told reporters after the meeting at party headquarters in Kuala Lumpur.

As the meeting was going on, a crowed of about 10,000 people gathered late Tuesday night in the eastern state of Pahang for an anti-government rally organised by a new opposition coalition, the Malaysian Justice Movement.

Diplomats said earlier Iran's

talks to avert NATO air strikes designed to end Serbian military action in Kosovo appear to be making little headway, a US diplomat said today, reports Reuters. "This is grim ... it seems to

me the grimmest situation we've faced in this region. "the diplomat familiar with the talks said after US troubleshooter Richard Holbrooke met Yugoslavia President Slobodan Milosevic for more than two hours on Tuesday night, the second such meeting in two We are on the edge of a ma

BELGRADE, Oct 7: Last ditch

jor use of force or on the edge of something substantial that would avoid the use of force." the diplomat added The meeting came as the

west stepped up its warnings that air strikes could come within days. Russia announced it would veto any UN Security Council resolution legitimising such action and China also said it opposed the idea. US President Bill Clinton

said NATO was prepared to act unless Milosevic ended the of fensive against ethnic Albanians who make up 90 per cent of the population in Kosovo. Diplomats in Brussels said

US Secretary of State Madeleine Albright may meet foreign ministers of the six nation contact group of Kosovo including Russia in the Belgian capital on Thursday. They said intensive efforts were underway to organise a meeting including Russian Foreign Minister Igor

We want as far as possible to move in step with Russia and give the Russians every opportunity to move with us, one western diplomat said.

no progress on situation

Holbrooke before his second meeting this week with Milosevic met Kosovo Albanian Leader Ibrahim Rugova in Pristina but neither side would comment on the outcome. Holbrooke said Yugoslav

18 more die in DRC Govt, rebels both claim control of Kindu

KINSHASA, Oct 7: Forces loyal to President Laurent Kabila said on Tuesday that they had repulsed a rebel attack on Kindu, their forward base and last major bastion in the east of the Democratic Republic of Congo, reports Reuters.

The army and the rebels gave conflicting versions of the military situation in the town but both gave the same death toll of Kabila himself left the capi-

tal Kinshasa for Nigeria to drum up diplomatie support there while Chad's defence minister wrapped up talks with Kabila's administration on how its troops could help him fight the two month-old rebellion Kindu is well and truly in the

hands of the Congolese Armed Forces who have gone from the delensive to the offensive, a delence ministry spokesman said in a statement on state radio.

winter which suggests they are going to stay for a very long time and make (refugee) returns even more difficult. Pristina based UN High

forces were getting ready for

Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) official Fernado Del Mundo said a relatively calm week in Kosovo encouraged people's return to their villages and he gave as an example the Glogovac area in central Kosovo province.

AP adds from UN: The Security Council declared that combatants have not complied fully with UN resolutions demanding a cease-fire in Kosovo and special Serb police units have failed to withdraw from the separatist province. Although it doesn't carry

any legal weight, the declaration of noncompliance could fuel calls for military interven tion. Council president, British Ambassador Jeremy Green stock, read the statement late Tuesday to reporters hours after senior US envoy Richard Holbrooke apparently failed again to persuade Yugoslav President Slobodan Milosevic to end the crackdown in Kosovo, raising the prospects of NATO airstrikes.

Meanwhile, Albania has offered its ports and airports to NATO for use in any military operation against neighbouring Yugoslavia, the country's foreign minister said Tuesday. "We are waiting for detailed

requests from NATO," Foreign Minister Paskal Milo told re

suffering by Iraqi civilians. The former official, Denis

eran from Ireland, estimated that more than 5,000 Iraqi children a month are dying because of malnutrition and disease related to the sanctions.

"The death of one Iraqi child attributable to UN sanctions is one too many," he said at a special briefing sponsored by Conyers and several other

More than 40 House mempers signed a letter to President Bill Clinton on Tuesday calling for the strengthening of mili-

Sexual harassment Paula Jones won't mind media seeing evidence LITTLE ROCK, Arkansas, Oct 7: Paula Jones does not object to

media groups seeing evidence in her sexual harassment lawsuit against President Bill Clinton, her attorneys said in court papers Tuesday, reports AP. Media groups want the pre-siding judge to release evidence

in the case as soon as possible. US District Judge Susan Webber Wright said in a Sept. 1 order that she would release some materials beginning Sept. 28, if no challenges were raised by Sept. 15. Mrs. Jones' attorneys filed a motion on the deadline day say-

ing Wright should release more materials than planned, including Clinin's videotaped deposition in the case. Because of Mrs. Jones' mo-

tion, the Sept. 28 release was automatically delayed. The media groups, which in-

clude The Associated Press, said in subsequent court papers that Wright should at least release the portion of evidence previously planned, because no challenge was made regarding that portion of the material.

Mrs. Jones responded Tues-day that she would not object to Wright granting the motion. The media groups also argued for the release because of the investigation surrounding Clinton's relationship with Monica Lewinsky. Clinton initially denied having a sexual relationship with Ms. Lewinsky

as part of his sworn deposition

in Mrs. Jones case

20 LTTE rebels killed in fighting with Lankan troops

COLOMBO, Oct 7: Twenty Tamil rebels were killed in sporadic fighting with government troops in northern Sri Lanka where at least 1,200 people died last week in the biggest battle in two years, officials said Wednesday, reports AP. Soldiers on patrol north of

the town of Mankulam clashed with a group of guerillas on Tuesday and killed 18 of them without suffering any losses said Major Kumar Dewage, a military spokesman. Two other guerillas were

malee district, said Maj. Dewage. The rebels did not immediately comment on the incidents.

killed on Tuesday in separate

fighting in the nearby Trinco-

The military captured Mankulam on September 29, two days after rebels took the nearby town of Kilinochchi. The week-long savage fighting

killed 1,200 combatants on al Kilinochchi, 275 kilometers (170 miles) north of the capital, Colombo, and Mankulam, which is 30 kilometers (18 miles) south of Kilinochchi, are along a strategic highway that links the isolated military controlled northern town of

Jaffna, with the government

held South of the Indian Ocean

Russians take to the streets against Yeltsin

MOSCOW, Oct 7: Russians frustrated by the country's deep economic recession took to the streets in nationwide protests Wednesday that were expected to be among the largest mass rallies in recent years, reports

Russians have been enduring their economic crisis stoically. with few public outbursts against President Boris Yeltsin's government, which has been unable to halt an economic decline that's ravaged the country for most of this decade. But hundreds of thousands, perhaps millions, of people were likely to take part in ral-

lies across the country orga-

nized by trade unions, the

Communist Party and other critics of Yeltsin. "Look at the hole the Russian people have fallen into. Look at the people on their knees," Marina Rubintsina, a 19-year-old student, told demonstrators in the eastern port city of Vladi-

The marchers included union workers, pensioners, students and members of widely divergent political factions. Some carried photos of Soviet founder Vladimir Lenin, while others hoisted flags from Russia's czarist era. Many carried anti-government banners. "Stop the genocide of the Rus-

vostok. "We don't have a future."

sian people," read one. "We are on the crest of a wave that will roll over the country and break over the walls of the Kremlin," Vladimir Grishukov, a Communist member of parliament, told the crowd. However, there were no re-

ports of any unrest early in the

On the eve of the protests, Prime Minister Yevgeny Primakov made a nationally televised appeal to Russians to remain calm, both during the demonstrations and for the duration of the economic crisis. Primakov promised there

would be no food shortages this winter and said the government would start paying overdue wages and pensions.

"The populace will be fully provided with vegetables, fruit and potatoes," Primakov said. "I appeal to everyone not to rock our common boat in today's too-turbulent sea.' Communist Party leader

Gennady Zyuganov predicted as many as 40 million of Russia's 148 million people could take part in Wednesday's protests. but others say it will be closer to the nearly 2 million people who participated in a similar protest in March 1997. Russia's economic conditions have deteriorated consid-

hurt themselves by sending out mixed messages. The unions want to focus on the economy, which is expected to shrink by more than 5 per cent this year. Millions of

erably since then, but the

protest organisers may have

workers get paid months late, and inflation now is forecast at 200 per cent. The Communists, mean-

while, have been calling for Yeltsin's resignation and see the protests as a way to further weaken the president, who still has two years left in his term. But the Communists find themselves in a bit of an awkward position because several of their members are playing

government. Yeltsin has maintained an extremely low profile since the economic crisis struck, spend ing most of his time at a presidential residence on the western

key roles in Primakov's new

outskirts of Moscow. The Communists and the unions have pledged that the protests will be peaceful. Nonetheless, police and interior troops have been put on alert throughout Russia.

Off the Record

island.

A blue dress, a cigar ... and Halloween frights

BOSTON: This year's most popular Halloween costume may call for a blue dress, a beret and, yes, a cigar, reports AP. "We thought 'Titanic' costumes would be the big rentals, but it looks like Bill and Monica are winning the race," said Stephen LaLiberte, rental manager at Boston Costume.

As the impeachment process moves forward in Washington, stores around the United States are fielding requests for costumes of President Bill Clinton, Monica Lewinsky and Linda Tripp for the Oct. 31 celebration, when Americans young and old dress up as everything from ghosts and pirates to the president. And that's not all "Volvo-driving-type liberals are looking for Kenneth Starr

costumes," said Mary Papayotou, owner of Chicago Costumes. "They want to support the president." The story didn't break early enough for manufacturers to put together rubber masks or costume ensembles in time for

Halloween. But customers are asking for wigs, dark berets, cigars and other props. "People even want the tie." said Marilynn wick, owner of the Fort-Lauderdale, Florida-based chain Costume World, referring to one of the gifts the former White House intern gave the

president. LaLiberte suggested "power business suits" for those who want to show up as Starr, Tripp or the first lady, and a blond, stringy wig for Tripp.