

International

BRIEFLY

Chinese Gen gets Pak award :

Pakistan President Ghulam Ishaq Khan Tuesday awarded one of the country's top military awards to visiting Chinese General, an official statement said, reports AFP.

The award was conferred on General Xu Xin, the Deputy Chief of General Staff of the People's Liberation Army in recognition of his "personal efforts" to promote relations between China and Pakistan and their Armed Forces, the statement said.

Gen. Xu Xin has been a "sincere and close friend of Pakistan and its army," it said, adding that cooperation between the two Armed Forces had "further strengthened the bonds of friendship that already exist between the two neighbouring countries."

Philippines needs strong leader :

Eduardo Cojuangco, President Corazon Aquino's estranged cousin and political opponent, said Wednesday the Philippines needs a strong leader who can pull the country out of crisis and impose law and order, reports AP.

Cojuangco said Mrs. Aquino's successor would "be dumped with a bankrupt corporation and... would have to pick up the pieces and put it back together and make it run once again."

"We need leaders who could organize our people, motivate and inspire them to take on the burden of rebuilding this nation; leaders who could form governments which in turn could impose order and restore stability so that we could live peaceful and eventually prosperous lives," Cojuangco said.

Scuds hit Mujahideen base :

Mujahideen said Wednesday that Scud missiles slammed into guerrilla positions around the besieged garrison town of Khost in southern Afghanistan, killing scores of people, reports AP.

At least 35 Scuds have been launched from the Afghan capital of Kabul in the past week, said Najibullah Lafray, information minister of the government-in-exile headquartered in Pakistan.

Lafray said Scud missiles, with a range of 100 to 175 miles (160 to 280 kilometers), landed inside the town limits of Khost and killed scores of civilians. He also said 700 families had fled the town of about 30,000 since the latest guerrilla assault began last Saturday.

Iraq annuls Kuwait's annexation:

The Iraqi Parliament Wednesday annulled its annexation of Kuwait, the Iraqi News Agency (INA) reported, says AP.

The decision to annex Kuwait was taken August 7, five days after Iraqi troops invaded the oil-rich Emirate. The report was monitored in Cyprus.

Bid to hijack Soviet plane foiled :

A Soviet parliamentarian foiled a hijacking when he grappled with a 20-year-old man armed with a knife and teargas canister who demanded to be flown abroad, Izvestia newspaper in Moscow reported Wednesday, reports Reuter.

The paper said Deputy Nikolai Sazonov, an engineer at the Gant Kamaa truck plant in Tataria, came to the aid of two stewardesses in the incident aboard a flight from Moscow to Naberezhnye Chelny on March 14.

"Without thinking, Nikolai rushed to the aid of the women and wrestled with the bandit, who it later turned out was armed with a knife and teargas canister," Izvestia said.

PNG to recruit 5,000 Gurkhas

PORT MORESBY, Mar 21 : Papua New Guinea (PNG) is considering recruiting up to 5,000 Nepalese Gurkhas to set up a National Guard to fight a crime wave in the South Pacific nation, a government document said.

A cabinet submission to the Papua New Guinea government on the establishment of a National Guard said the force should be given a 50 million US dollar annual budget.

The Gurkhas would be recruited from Hong Kong to train youths in military and civic work for the next five years, said the document, which was leaked to local media.

The document said the National Guard should have autonomous financial powers and be headed by a newly-created minister for the Interior.

Senior military officials rejected the proposal today, saying it would create a force stronger than the country's defence and police forces, which each number 3,000.

"We are going to fight this, even if it means going to court," a senior defence force officer told Reuters.

"What is the motive behind setting up a paramilitary force outside the constitutionally established defence and police

forces? We are going to train these people who may form the nucleus of an armed uprising later," he said.

Prime Minister Rabbie Namalu said last Thursday he wanted to set up a National Guard, in which youths aged between 13 and 19 would spend one year gaining military and civic training, as part of a series of measures to combat crime.

Other measures announced by Namalu included a nine-hour night curfew, which comes into effect on Thursday, reintroduction of the death penalty and tattooing of criminals.

Papua New Guinea Forest Minister Karl Stack, who made the submission to cabinet, said on Wednesday the government would need to seek foreign aid to help finance the National Guard.

The proposed commander of the National Guard, ex-Defence Force Commander Ian Graville, told Reuters on Wednesday he had been given four weeks to draw up details of its establishment.

Under the plan, 1,200 Gurkhas could be recruited in the first year to train 18,000 conscripted youths.

MANILA : Elegia R. Mendoza calls herself a typical housewife. She cannot be—not when she is the first woman general in the Philippines.

Asia's first woman President, Corazon Aquino, herself a former housewife, recently pinned one star on Mendoza's shoulder, capping more than 32 years of military service. For the last ten Mendoza has been chief Nurse of the Philippines military.

The long road up the rigid hierarchy, Mendoza confesses, has been a balancing act between career and family. She has managed a home for three children, despite a job that has taken her constantly away from the family to inspect far-flung hospitals and on frequent training trips abroad.

It is simply a question of time management, Brig. Gen. Mendoza says matter-of-

factly, snapping a salute when any of her all-female staff enters her office in Camp Aguilano, headquarters of the armed forces.

As Chief Nurse, she manages nearly 400 nurses—nearly a "battalion" in 31 military hospitals throughout the Philippines.

She admits planning and administration are her forte.

She advises the armed forces Chief of Staff in formulating policies on military nursing. She calls herself a "structure" person.

The Deputy Chief Nurse, Lieut. Col. Victoria Vidal, thinks Mendoza's promotion is a milestone for women in the military.

"She is trail-blazing. Everything else will be easier."

Before Mendoza, the highest rank a woman soldier had reached was full colonel.

She is the only woman among 120 generals. The office of the Chief Nurse has

been agitating since 1985 to have a woman promoted to star rank.

"I didn't compete with females," Mendoza emphasizes. "I competed with males because there's only one criteria in the military—exemplary service and leadership."

She graduated in nursing from a central Philippines college near her home province of Antique and joined the armed forces in 1958.

She recalls: "Since young, I wanted to serve, I wanted to save lives. If a patient is in serious condition, I do not easily give up. I was trained in nursing school never to say 'I can't do it' but 'I'll try my best.'

It is with satisfaction that she claims no patient has ever died during her shift. "I pray a lot," she confesses.

Like all young recruits who must be given a hardship

post, her first such assignment was two years in Jolo, the Muslim stronghold in the Sulu Archipelago. That was long before Jolo was razed in vicious fighting in the Muslim secessionist war in the early Seventies.

Another two-year stint in Marawi City, also a Muslim area in Mindanao, followed before she returned to Manila to work in the hospitals.

She met and married Herminio Mendoza, a lawyer with the armed forces, now a Colonel.

He has always been one rank lower than his wife because he joined the military later.

A wife of higher rank presents no problems in the home. "He's used to it," Mendoza laughs. "He doesn't interfere with my work, we complement each other. He is very supportive. He was proudest when she was promoted general."

She is looking forward to a quiet life soon when she retires at the age of 56.

That is when she can watch more television and do more light reading (a favourite is The National Geographic). Also she wants to talk to her orchids more.—GEMINI NEWS

General Mendoza: Her husband is a colonel

from Addy Tan

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