Khmers are arrogant, says Hun Sen

BANGKOK, May 21: Cambodian Prime Minister Hun Sen today lambasted the Khmer Rouge, the strongest guerilla faction opposed to his government, for saying it will break the current cease-fire from June 5 if no settlement ending the civil war is reached by then, reports AFP.

"This ultimatum is a proof that the Khmer Rouge has no intention at all to solve the problem through negotiations," the leader of the Vietnam-installed government said in an official SPK news agency dispatch monitored here.

Mr. Hun Sen accused the Betjing-backed Khmer Rouge, Cambodia's former radical Marxist ruling group, of being "bellicose and arrogant".

The Khmer Rouge said last week that it would consider the unprecedented truce which went into effect on may 1 in Cambodia's 12-year-old war over on June 5, the day after the scheduled conclusion of another round of peace talks, unless Phnom Penh accepted a United Nations-brokered peace plan.

Bush feels good

WASHINGTON, May 21: President George Bush "feels good" and his doctors report he is progressing "just the way they expected" in his treatment for a thyroid disorder, the White House press secretary said Monday, reports AP.

Bush, who complained of being "dead tired" during last Tuesday's festivities for Queen Elizabeth II, "hasn't had the tiredness problem now in several days," said White House spokesman Marlin Fitzwater.

Bush was diagnosed May 8 as having Graves' disease, a thyroid disorder blamed for the irregular heartbeat that forced him to stop jogging four days earlier and sent him to the hospital for two nights.

Bush said last week he was eager to resume regular exercise. But the President, still under doctors' orders to take it easy, did not jog or play any other sports during his weekend stay at Camp David, the presidential retreat, Fitzwater

Bush did go for at least two walks at his mountaintop retreat. Fitzwater said.

The doctors report his "progress is going just the way they expected," he added.

Another politician jailed in Burma

BANGKOK, May 21: Burma's military rulers have sentenced another opposition politician to a long jail term, a diplomat said Monday, reports Reuter. Cho Cho Kyaw Naing, head

ROK frees 903 criminals

SEOUL, May 21: South Korea frees 903 criminal prisoners and juvenile delinquents in a traditional amnesty to mark Buddha's birthday today, Justice Ministry said, reports

A Ministry official said the amnesty did not cover political prisoners but he expected an announcement later this week on the release of inmates imprisoned under national security laws.

Newspapers have said more than 80 dissidents would be released later this week as a conciliatory gesture to defuse tensions caused by protests set off by the April 26 fatal police beating of a student.

of the anti-Fascist People's Freedom League, was sentenced to seven years jail on May 12, said the diplomat, who was contacted in Rangoon by telephone and spoke on condition of anonymity.

Cho Cho Kyaw Naing was accused of having contacts with a banned student group and had been detained since January 19, the diplomat said.

Authorities have jailed most of the country's opposition leaders since ignoring the result of the May, 1990, general election. The National League for Democracy won the poll by a landslide but has not been allowed to take office.

The diplomat said 35 NLD members, including 25 elected members of parliament, received long jail terms in early May.

Twenty-three MPs and five others were given 25 years and the rest received lesser terms, the diplomat said.



Castro asked to hold free polls: President George Bush called on Cuban leader Fidel Castro on Monday to free political prisoners and let a UN commission investigate alleged human rights violations on the communist

ruled Island, Ruter reports from Washington. In a taped message marking Cuban Independence Day Bush set out US requirements for better relations.

If Cuba holds full free and fair election under international supervision, respects human rights and stops subverting its neighbours, we can expect relations between our two countries to improve significantly, he said.

Bush was to met Cuban political dissidents later in the day.

UN observers for El Salvador : The Security Council, in anticipation of an eventual ceasefire in El Salvador, authorised a peacekeeping mission on Monday that includes a commission to investigate and monitor any human rights abuses in the country, Reuter reports from United

Nations. In a resolution approved by all 15 members, the council established the UN Observer Mission in El Salvador, to be known by its Spanish acronym of ONUSAL, which eventually will have about 160 people.

The Salvadorean government and the rebel Farabundo Marti National Liberation Front (FMLN) last July signed an agreement which provides for the establishment of a UN mission that would have a wide latitude to investigate and monitor human rights violations.

Bush for summit with Gorbachev President Bush said he would like a summit meeting with Soviet leader Mikhail Gorbachev after the two superpowers resolve talks on their nuclear and conventional forces,

reports Reuter from Washington. Bush told reporters there was not much progress at vesterday's high-level US-Soviet negotiations on the conventional forces in Europe treaty.

"When we get that matter resolved and start (Strategic Arms Reduction Talks) resolved I'd like to have a meeting with Gorbachev," Bush said at a brief news conference with German Chancellor Helmut Kohl.

Installation of SS-20s in Cuba denied: The Soviet Defense Ministry on Monday denied a report that intermediate-range SS-20 missiles had been installed in

Cuba, AFP reports from Moscow.

29 injured, 19 critically.

"The Soviet Union has never delivered missiles of this type to foreign countries or installed them outside Soviet territory," the ministry said in a reference to an article in Monday's Washington Post.

"The allegations by the Washington Post regarding a supposed discovery in Cuba of a Soviet SS-20 missile are completely unfounded and are a fabrication from start to finish," said a ministry statement carried by the Soviet news agency Tass.

The ministry accused the daily of attempting to undermine confidence between Washington and Moscow.

20 pilgrims killed in bus mishap: At least 20 Indian pilgrims have been killed and 35 injured

after their bus plunged 100 metres (320) feet into the Trisuli river, police said Monday, reports AFP from Kathmundu. The accident happened Sunday near Mugling, 90 kilometres (55 miles) south of Kathmandu. The bus was carrying 55 passengers from Maharastra in southern India,

the police report said. Fifteen of the injured were listed in critical condition. An earlier report said at least three people were killed and

We are proud of Nathuram Godse: Shiv Sena

Polls revive controversy over Mahatma's slaying

NEW DELHI, May 21 India's election has revived a fierce and painful controversy here over the slaying 43 years ago of independence hero and pacifist Mahatma Gandhi by a revivalist Hindu fanatic, reports AFP.

Most embarrassed over the controversy has been the Hindu revivalist Bharatia Janata Party (BJP-Indian People's Party), which is making its first determined bid to wrest power in New Delhi in the polls which started Monday.

"We are not ashamed but proud of Godse (the assassin). because he prevented another partition of the country, Bal Thackeray whose regional Shiv Scna (arm of Lord Shiva) is a poll ally of the BJP reportedly said Thursday.

Nathuram Godse shot dead the man revered here as the "Father of the Nation's on January 30, 1948 five months after the struggle the Mahatma led culminated in independence from Britain.

Godse was hanged for the murder.

Lal Krishna Advant the BJP's leader was quoted by the Press Trust of India (PTI) Monday as dissociating his party from the statement Thackery made at a poll rally in Maharashtra.

We are living in democracy. I totally dissociate (my party) with the statement of Thackeray the assassination of Mahatma Gandhi was a heinous and dastardly act, said Advani.

The BJP is openly backed by the Hindu Rashtriya



Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) kick ballot box following Hindu-Muslim clashes in this northern Indian city during parliamentary polling. At least 14 people were killed in Meerut and nearly 50 nation-wide in election-related - Photo AFP/ UNB.

Swayamscwak Sangh (RSS. National Volunteers Corps), and followers of the Mahatma

charge that Godse was one of

their activists. Advant's Party has accused

rivals including the Congress (I) with which the Mahatma had worked of pampering India's minority Muslims.

It also calls India's current Secularism "Pseudo" and wants Hindu culture to be accepted by all as India's way of life.

Those who believe Godse belonged to the RSS. Also argued that the slaying of the Mahatma at one of his daily public prayers sessions in New Delhi was provoked by revivalist Hindu's intolerance of his crusade for Hindu-Muslim friendship.

Gandhi advocated communal harmony, particularly during the Hindu-Muslim violence that exploded in the sub-continent accompanying the emergence of Muslim-majority Pakistan through partition. Caretaker Prime Minister

Chandra Shekhar, a Gandhian who was with the Congress (I) before breaking away from it in 1977, has also strongly criticised Thackeray's statement.

"Nothing can be so tragic or more reprehensible than Thakeray's remark as it has hurt the national honour and dignity," he said.

But another Shiv Sena leader, the Mayor of Bombay, defend his party chief's statement in public.

Mayor Chagan Bhujbal reportedly told a poll rally at Aurangabad, also in Maharshtra, an RSS strong hold, that "the time would come when the statues of (Mahatma) Gandhi would be replaced by the statues of Godse."

Why can't a prostitute go to parliament if crooks can become politicians?'

NEW DELHI, May 21: Brothel madame Nimmi Bai finished soliciting votes as a candidate in the Indian general election on Monday and went back to promoting her weary prostitutes.

Bai sent a few of her gaudily-dressed prostitutes scurrying to vote before wearily sinking into a chair. She told Reuter she was confident of winning a parliamentary seat to represent the old

quarter of the Indian capital. "I have been concentrating

on the elections since the 10th of this month. Business has gone bush ," said the buxom, 51-year-old who describes herself as a madame cum social worker.

Bai said her social work included persuading the government to help prostitutes get their children into adoption agencies.

She also headed a campaign

to have their children admitted to schools without their fathers being identified.

"It went up to the supreme court in 1988 before we won the case," she said proudly, as her prostitutes nodded in agreement, their heavily made up faces gleaming in the sun.

The head of the prostitutes union in Delhi, Bai is standing as an independent after failing to get a nomination from former Prime Minister Rajiv

Gandhi's Congress party. Bai, who spent 20 years as a

prostitute before becoming a madame, said she saw nothing wrong in her candidature. "Why can't a prostitute or a

madame go to parliament if crooks can become big politicians. At least we work to earn our money," said Bai, adding that her campaign had cost a large chunk of her savings.

"I now take 20 rupees (one dollar) a day from each of my prostitutes," she said.

Her campaign has won support in the red light district, where pimps lounge in front of the ramshackle buildings of GB Road, a magnet for the Muslim aristocrats of Mughal India tow centuries ago who spent fortunes on its dancing girls.

Inside, in apartments with grim-lined walls, flies hover over sleeping babies as their mothers prepare for the evening trade.

Saroj from southern Kerala state said she was 26 and hoped Bai would win so she could get her two children into school.

She earns 60 to 100 rupees (three to five dollars) a day, charging each customer 20 rupees (one dollar). "We have ruined our lives,

let us do something for our children at least," she said, bursting into tears. Nazimma, an emaciated 30-

year-old stood on the staircase waiting forlornly for a customer.

"What is democracy who will do anything for us other than try to pay us for our service in bed may be Nimmi will let's see."

Oil still spilling into the Gulf

Iraq abolishes Revolutionary Court

BAGHDAD, May 21: Iraq announced on Monday it had abolished the Revolutionary Court a pillar of the Baath Party's iron rule for more than 20 years, reports Reuter.

official fighting for the common people.

The Revolutionary Court had sweeping powers to try political cases involving state security and official corruption. Its verdicts, reached in camera were final. Baghdad television said the

ruling Revolutionary Command Council had issued a decree effective on Monday transferring the courts functions to the regular judicial system. The decision appeared to

be part of a broad liberalisation of Iraqi public life promised by President Saddam Hussein. Democratic reforms are also

the subject of peace and autonomy negotiations between the government and Kurdish leaders who rebelled against Saddam after his Gulf war de-

The Revolutionary Court was set up after a 1969 coup d'etat which brought Saddam's mentor and predecessor,

named by the accused. Hassan Al-Baker, to power. It became a keystone of the

Baath apparatus. Judges were party members chosen from outside the regular judiciary, defence lawyers were appointed by the court not

A FLASHBACK: Ms Nimmi Bai, a prostitute, filing her nomination paper to an electoral

Iraqis warned March 1990. not to touch bombs

NICOSIA, May 21: Iraq warned its people on Monday that bombs dropped by the US and its Allies in the Gulf War were still lying unexploded in the countryside, reports Reuter.

"The warplanes of the American-Atlantic aggression dropped cluster bombs on all parts of Iraq," Information Minister Hamid Youssel Hummadi said in a statement reported by the official Iraqi news agency.

He urged Iraqis not to touch or pick up bombs and to call in the police or army to blow them up.

Recent cases which attracted attention abroad were the trial of British engineer Douglas Grand, sentenced last Thursday to 20 years for spying and Farzad Bazoft, an Iranian born journalist working for a British newspaper who was hanged for espionage in

Baghdad television said the assets of the Revolutionary Court would be liquidated.

Nicosia report adds : Saudi Arabia said on Monday that oil was still spilling into the Gulf from damaged Iraqi and Kuwaiti export terminals nearly three months after the end of the Gulf War.

The Dhahran based Meteorological and Environmental Protection Agency, MEPA said an aerial survey on Sunday showed crude oil leaking from Kuwait's Al-Ahmedi Port, sunken oil tankers near Iraq's Al-Baker Port and from the Baker ex-

port terminal itself. The survey team has noticed that the spilling is still continuing from all these sources diminishing visibility has prevented investigation into whether there are other sources, the Saudi Press Agency (SPA) quoted MEPA as saying in a report.

The state-run Saudi aramco says it has mopped up nearly one sixth of the six million barrels estimated to have poured into the Gulf during the war that ended in February.

The US-led allies accused Iraq of deliberately releasing most of the oil.

Bush opposes ending sanctions Meanwhile, President Bush

said he opposes ending economic sanctions against Iraq as long as President Saddam Hussein remains in power. "We will abide by the United

Nations Resolutions, of course," Bush said during a joint news conference with German Chancellor Helmut Kohl, who is visiting the United States.

Off the Record

John F Kennedy's affair with Nazi spy!

WASHINGTON: As a 24-year-old Naval Intelligence officer thought by the FBI to be spies, says a new book, reports AP. The author contends that the liaisons, if revealed at the time, could have kept Kennedy from becoming president or caused his impeachment.

Historian Michael R Beschloss says he found a letter in FBI files that the youthful Kennedy wrote Danish beauty Inga Arvad Fejos that showed he was aware of rumors she was a spy for Nazi Germany at the time he was involved with her.

"I've returned from an interesting trip, about which I won't bore you with the details, as if you are a spy I shouldn't tell you and if your (sie) not you won't be interested," Kennedy wrote. But I missed you."

At the time, seven months after Pearl Harbor, Kennedy was an officer in Naval Intelligence and the affair almost caused him to be cashiered from the service, Beschloss writes in The Crisis Years: Kennedy and Khrushchev, 1960-63," to be published next month by Harper Collins.



MACDILL AIR FORCE BASE, Florida: Britain's Queen Elizabeth II shows US Gen Norman Schwarzkopf and his wife Brenda the medal he received May 20. Schwarzkopf was awarded an honourary knighthood by the Queen making him the 58th US citizen to receive the medal since World War II. Photo - AFP/UNB

Queen Elizabeth is a lovely lady: Schwarzkopf

FLORIDA: Queen Elizabeth II conferred an honourary knighthood Monday on Gen H Norman Schwarzkopf, commander of US forces in the Gulf War, in a private ceremony shorn of the traditional English pageantry, reports AP.

The brief function, conducted out of public view, represented a change for the general, who has been heaped with public accolades since returning from the Middle East last

The British monarch and the general appeared on the front steps of MacDill Air Force Base, headquarters of the US Central Command that Schwarzkopf oversees. Schwarzkopf displayed the two-cross medallion of knighthood, the highest honour Britain can bestow on a foreigner.

"It was marvellous. She is a lovely lady," Schwarzkopf later told reporters."She just said I would like to present you with this medal."

Schwarzkopf, who commanded the allied rout of Iraq, is the 58th American since World War II to receive an honourary knighthood.

The Queen presented him the insignia during a two-hour visit to Tampa with her husband, Prince Philip.



MOSCOW- Helen Sharman, a 27-year-old process engineer at the Mars Company because the first British astronaut to take part in the joint Soviet British space project launched early this week. -IAN photo.

Lankan Tigers kill 9 Muslims

COLOMBO, May 21: Tamtl rebels in Sri Lanka shot dead nine Muslim civilians travelling in a trailer in the eastern Ampara district, military sources said Tuesday, report Reuter.

They said the Liberation Tigers of Tamti Eelam (LTTE). who are fighting for a separate homeland for the island's Tamil minority in the north and east, ambushed the vehicle on Monday night.

Two civilians were wounded in the attack, the sources said. No independent confirmation of the report was immedi-

ately available. In the adjoining district of Batticaloa, troops destroyed two rebel bases on Monday, killing three Tiger guerillas and recovering weapons and

ammunition, the sources said. Two soldiers were injured in the operation to hunt LTTE forces in Batticaloa which began on Saturday.

Blast kills 8 cops in Madhya Pradesh NEW DELHI, May 21: Eight

policemen were killed in central India when a pick-up van they were travelling in was destroyed by a land mine laid by Maoist guerillas, the Press Trust of India (PTI) reported today, reports AFP.

The explosion occurred in Madhya Pradesh state when the policemen were returning to their posts after patrol duty during the first round of India's general election Monday, the news agency said. The privately-owned vehicle

was blown to pieces at the scene of the blast in a remote village of Bastear, a sprawling district populated by tribals, police said. No further details were

available, but Maoists belonging to the hardline People's War Group (PWG) are known be active in the region and in adjoining Andhra Pradesh state.