

Human rights being violated in Asia

LONDON, July 8: In its annual survey of human rights around the world, Amnesty International reported "disturbing human rights violations in Asia, including torture, arbitrary arrests and increased executions, reports AP.

The London-based human rights group catalogued "disappearances" and extrajudicial executions in Sri Lanka, increased executions in China, torture or ill-treatment in many countries and arrests without cause throughout much of Asia.

"Asia... was the stage for disturbing human rights violations," Amnesty International said in its 1990 report on 141

countries released this week. It said torture, ill-treatment or poor detention conditions were reported in China, India, Pakistan, Burma, Indonesia, Laos, Malaysia, Papua New Guinea, the Philippines, South Korea and Thailand.

The report said thousands of people had been extrajudicially executed or had "disappeared" in Sri Lanka, where security forces continued to have the power to dispose of bodies secretly.

"Victims included babies and their mothers, children, and elderly men and women. In Batticaloa Town alone over 1,200 people reported 'disappeared' between June

and October (1990)," Amnesty International said.

The Sri Lankan government had taken no steps to investigate the thousands of "disappearances" reported in recent years and it had not responded to repeated requests from Amnesty International to send a delegation to the country, the Human Rights group said.

"Disappearances" were also reported in the Philippines, where over 50 people "disappeared" after being detained by government-backed forces, it said.

Amnesty International said one man, Ruben Medina was

found dead after he was abducted by government forces. The report said an autopsy showed Medina had been shot 28 times, his skull destroyed by bullet and his genitals severed.

A family of 18, including a pregnant woman and six children, were also reportedly killed by government forces, the report said. The Philippines Defense Secretary reportedly ordered the temporary suspension of those allegedly responsible for the family's killing but no one had been brought to justice by the end of 1990, Amnesty International said.

The rights group reported an "unprecedented rise in violence and killings by separatist groups in several regions of India... accompanied by a similar rise in politically motivated killings by government forces in which many hundreds of people died."

The Human Rights organization said "torture remained widespread" in India with scores of people killed in police and military custody "apparently as a result of torture." Amnesty International said there were well-documented reports of women being raped by security forces during house-to-house searches in Jammu and Kashmir.

There were at least 10,000 political prisoners held in India, Amnesty International said.

Israel to settle 1m Jews in Jerusalem

CAIRO, July 8: Israel's Housing Minister Ariel Sharon has pledged to settle one million Jews in and around Jerusalem on lands captured from the Arabs in the 1967 Middle East war, reports Xinhua.

According to Israel Radio monitored here - Sharon also said Sunday that 2,500 new apartments will be built in the West Bank settlement Maaleh Adumim over the next three years to double its population.

He was speaking at a ceremony marking the 15th anniversary of the settlement "all this is part of the government plan to settle in greater Jerusalem" and "it will take a few years a million Jews" he told the gathering.

Arafat prepares for direct talks with Israel

JERUSALEM, July 8: Palestine Liberation Organisation leader Yasser Arafat has said that he was prepared for direct negotiations with Israel on the principles of "territory for peace" and recognition of the Palestinians' right to a state, which would be guaranteed by the US, USSR, and the international community, reports Pool.

In a statement sent out to several Israeli newspapers yesterday, Arafat said before signing peace agreement, both sides must express readiness to delete or amend all articles in their constitutions which in any way threaten the security of Israel or the Palestinian state.

Arafat also proposed that Israel and the PLO would guarantee that there should be no violence during the talks.

Czechs won't stop Slovaks from seceding: Havel

NEW YORK, July 8: Czechoslovakian President Vaclav Havel has said in an interview with Newsweek International that the Czechs would not hinder the Slovaks if they wanted to secede, reports Reuter.

Havel was quoted as saying in Prague last week that, if a referendum were held, it looked as if a majority of Slovaks would opt to remain in the common federal state.

"Even if the improbable happens and they decide for an independent state, the separation must take place in a constitutional manner," Havel said. "It is not the case that Czechs would prevent Slovaks from becoming independent if they want that."

The interview is published in the Newsweek edition available today.

Serbs, Croats battle: 5 killed

TENJE (Yugoslavia), July 8: Five people were killed and 24 wounded on Sunday in a seven-hour gunbattle between Serbs and Croats in this east Croatian village, witnesses said, reports Reuter.

Federal army tanks stopped the shooting by rolling onto the main street to separate the combatants after one of Yugoslavia's worst ethnic clashes in months.

Two Soviet-built T-55 tanks and an armoured personnel carrier blocked the street, cutting the field of fire for the Serb and Croat fighters who stood with their rifles ready only 200 metres (yards) apart at opposite ends.

Serbian fighters said they lost two dead and an army officer was also killed.

Boutros-Ghali candidate for UN Secy-Gen

CARRO, July 8: Egypt on Sunday presented the candidacy of career diplomat Boutros Boutros-Ghali for the post of UN Secretary General, the Foreign Ministry announced, reports AFP.

Boutros-Ghali is Deputy Prime Minister for External Affairs in the current Egyptian administration.

He was previously Minister of State at the Foreign Ministry since 1977, when he accompanied former President Anwar Sadat on his controversial visit to Jerusalem which paved the way to the signing in 1979 of an Egyptian-Israeli peace treaty.



ALGIERS: Islamic Salvation Front FIS leader Mohamed Said addresses reporters here July 7 after the FIS leaders Abasi Madani and Ali Belhadj were arrested several days ago. Said threatened holy war in a sermon July 5 if Algerian authorities continued to arrest members of the fundamentalist group. —AFP photo

Last of opposition leaders arrested in Algeria

ALGIERS, July 8: A senior member of the Islamic opposition was arrested Sunday when police raided a press conference he was holding in a town hall outside the Algerian capital, reports AFP.

Mohammed Said, the new spokesman for the fundamentalist Islamic Salvation Front (FIS) was the latest of the movement's leader to be hauled away by riot police since authorities began their crackdown against the FIS a week ago.

Last Sunday the front's leader Abassi Madani and his deputy, Ali Belhadj were arrested, and since then six other members of the movement's executive body have been detained.

Police first hustled Said, an imam, into an inner room at

the Kouba Town Hall where he had been giving a news conference, amidst shouts by hundreds of FIS supporters.

It was not immediately known where Said was taken.

Before police broke up the gathering, Said told journalists that his home had been searched twice and that he had not returned there for

7 killed, 26 hurt in S African violence

JOHANNESBURG, July 8: Seven people died and at least 26 were injured in new outbreaks of political violence in South Africa, police and state-run radio said today, reports AFP.

several days. After he was led away, supporters began chanting "Allahu Akbar" and "Chadli, murderer," in a reference to Algerian President Chadli Benjedid.

Said, who was named to replace Madani as spokesman for the front, delivered Friday prayers at the mosque in Bab el-Qued, an Islamic stronghold.

The FIS President, Madani, was arrested after he had threatened to call for a jihad or holy war if the state of siege declared on June 5 was not lifted.

At his press conference Sunday, before the latest police action, Said took a conciliatory tone, saying his party was not seeking to destabilise state.



MOSCOW: Twenty year-old US student Nicole Kent from Los Angeles feeds July 6 three-month old Andrei she was adopted at Moscow's Hospital No-12, which takes care of abandoned children. The adoption is organised by the International Families Fund, of which Nicole is a member. The IFF provides medical and educational assistance to sick and abandoned children and hopes to send several Soviet children to the US for adoption. —AFP photo

USSR exercises restraint

Army has taste for politics in Y'slavia, says Moscow

MOSCOW, July 8: Moscow has good reason to be preoccupied with developments in Yugoslavia. Too many similarities crop up between the crisis in the USSR and events in the Socialist Federative republic of Yugoslavia reports IAN.

It goes without saying that the roots of the conflict which has flared up are engrained far back in history, but the specific reason behind the explosion of tension lies in the protracted central power vacuum with the constant presidential reshuffles, whereby the head of conflicting republics take it in turn to hold the reins of power.

In actual fact, the army has been the sole stabilising factor over the past few years. And so one should not be surprised that the army has acquired a taste for interfering in politics and has in the end exceeded its powers.

The power crisis in the USSR is fraught with similar conflicts. And they are already taking place, to be true on a more limited scale, when the army and special units of the internal ministry troops conduct themselves too freely in number of republics, especially the Baltic States. The participation in the Russian Presidential elections of General Albert Makashov testifies to the fact that the generals in the USSR are in way short of having their own political ambitions.

Until now Mikhail Gorbachev has managed to keep in control of the situation. The defeat of Makashov, and an extremely humiliating one at that, and the adoption of new clauses on the military councils in the USSR's armed forces, limiting the power of the Communist Party in the army and including civilians in military councils, bears witness to the fact that there is a noted tendency to oust the

ever, already announced their reluctance to sign this document, afraid that it will restrict their sovereignty and that Moscow will again be the arbitrator in relations between republics. Events in Yugoslavia and in particular the harsh reaction of Belgrade, the bloodshed and the contradictor role of the army, which does not obey the government, but virtually acts on its own initiative — all this may add to the doubts of those Soviet republics, which are thinking twice before signing a new union treaty.

The similarity does not end there — Slovenia and Croatia are the most developed republics in Yugoslavia. And they are the very republics and announced their desire to "level" similarly in the USSR it is a also the most developed Baltic republics, both politically economically, which have proclaimed their desire to secede.

Six republics have, how-

There is a certain logic here. Consequently Moscow is being extremely cautious in its assessments. The Soviet government realises that if it reacts too sharply to the crisis in Yugoslavia, it might arouse the suspicions of their own Union republics. The three-month moratorium of the sovereignty proclamations of Slovenia and Croatia has been acknowledged with a sigh of relief.

Moscow is relying on the European trouble-shooting mechanism to resolve conflicts within this time. And it has already started to function, as evidenced by the emergency meeting of the Foreign Ministers of Italy, the Netherlands and Luxembourg. Moscow, however, is showing restraint in the face of calls for the convening of an extraordinary meeting, as part of the Conference for security and Cooperation in Europe (CSCE): While not rejecting such calls, it is in no way rushing to

Off the Record

Tito's ideals thrown to the winds

KUMROVEC (Yugoslavia): Yugoslavia's disintegration has made a sleepy backwater out of Tito's birthplace, once a shrine to the late communist leader who held the Balkan federation together, reports Reuter.

Chickens have a free run of the cobbled street where visitors used to queue for hours to pay homage at the restored cottage where Marshal Josip Broz Tito, of Croatia, was born 99 years ago.

Parties of school children and factory workers have vanished along with the ideals he stood for his own brand of communism and a strong, united Yugoslavia.

But locals in Kumrovec, a Croatian village near Slovenia in the foothills of the Alps, still think nostalgically of their famous son.

"He will always be a big historical figure," said Mladen Naktic, 29. "No matter what political situation, we will always see him as a local."

"He is not guilty for everything," said Barkeeper Marjta Broz, 44, whose husband Bozo is a distant relation to Tito.

Tito, who combined a commitment to communism with a penchant for luxury, led Yugoslavia after his partisan guerrillas helped oust the World War II Nazi occupiers.

He steered the country down a communist, but non-aligned path after breaking ideologically with Moscow in 1948.

When he died in 1980, age-old nationalist tensions gradually resurfaced among ethnic groups, culminating in Croatia and Slovenia declaring unilateral independence on June 25.

Schwarzkopf's farewell

MANAMA (Bahrain): Gen. H. Norman Schwarzkopf is due to make a farewell call later this month on Gulf heads of state and on US soldiers in the region, diplomatic sources disclosed Sunday, reports AP.

The sources, who spoke on condition of anonymity, expected the American general to arrive before July 20.

Some 540,000 US troops were under Schwarzkopf's command during the conflict; now about 48,000 remain in Saudi Arabia and Kuwait and aboard some 30 ships in the Gulf.

The four-star general, who operated out of makeshift headquarters in the Saudi capital, Riyadh, left that city on April 19. He's set to retire in August after 35 years.



No more T-shirts that tell of boredom

BEIJING: Chinese authorities have banned the sale of T-shirts with messages expressing boredom and discontent that were the fashion hit of the summer in Beijing, vendors said Friday, reports AP.

"Don't bother me, I'm fed up," read the most popular of the T-shirts, which were mainly printed by small, private businessmen and sold at street stalls.

Vendors said officials threatened to fine anyone caught selling or making the shirts, although it was not clear if action would be taken against people wearing them.

"They think it doesn't look good to foreigners," one vendor explained.

The T-shirts appeared in Beijing in early June, around the anniversary of the June 3-4, 1989 army attack on pro-democracy demonstrators that ushered in a new, conservative era.

None carried overtly political messages, but all expressed boredom or discontent, conflicting with the official image of China's happy masses working together to build socialism. The ban on their sale reflected the leadership's sensitivity to the slightest challenge.

Rao faces scrutiny in parliament today

NEW DELHI, July 8: India's new Prime Minister faces scrutiny tomorrow in Parliament's inaugural session, where he will need all his persuasive skills to forge a legislative consensus on his handling of the crisis-hit economy, reports AFP.

PV Narasimha Rao, 70, foresees no problems in winning parliamentary confidence in his minority government, which came into existence from a bitter national election capped by the assassination of his leader, Rajiv Gandhi.

Analysts, too, have no doubt he will sail through Friday's vote, with both centrist and leftist opposition parties saying they have no intention of voting against his three-week-old administration in the session which begins tomorrow.

But he is expected to face a

tougher time in carrying along MPs in his efforts to reform the crisis-ridden economy, which will dominate debate in the maiden session of India's 10th Parliament.

A steep double devaluation of the Rupee last week drew strong protests from the opposition, which saw it as a response to pressure from the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and accused the Congress (I) Party government of a sellout.

Without stopping for breath Rao's administration, negotiating with the IMF for a huge bailout loan of up to seven billion dollars, followed the devaluation with sweeping trade reforms and indicated that more structural changes are in the offing.