

5 Kuki rebels killed in clash with Indian troops

IMPHAL, Aug 14: At least five Kuki militants were killed and five people, including four army jawans, were seriously injured when activists of the Kuki National Front (KNF) ambushed an army convoy in Boljang area under Manipur's Churachandpur district early this morning, reports PTI.

Official sources said that KNF activists hurled a powerful bomb on a patrol party of the 14 Garhwal rifles and opened fire with automatic weapons, seriously injuring four jawans. The bomb, however, did not explode.

The security forces returned the fire, killing five Kuki activists on the spot, the sources said, adding that a civilian was injured in the crossfire.

The KNF, demanding the formation of a 'Kukiland' by carving out some districts of Manipur within the frame work of the Indian Constitution, had earlier ambushed Manipur rifles personnel, the sources said.

The government had announced a reward of Rs 10,000 for the arrest or information leading to the arrest of KNF Chairman, Nehlung Kuki, the sources added.

Today's ambush was the second attack on army personnel, stationed in Manipur.

NATO ready to hit Serbs

WASHINGTON, Aug 14: Secretary of State Christopher says the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO) is prepared to take 'strong military action' if the Bosnian-Serbs do not lift their siege of Sarajevo, reports USIS.

The issue is really in the hands of the Serbs," Christopher emphasized as he met with an Organization of the Islamic Conference (OIC) delegation at the State Department August 13.

The delegation included the foreign ministers of Pakistan, Senegal and Turkey, a minister of state from Tunisia, and the secretary general of the OIC.

The secretary refused to speculate on 'precisely where we stand' with respect to the use of military power to end the Bosnian-Serb siege of Sarajevo, but he left no doubt that "NATO is now prepared to take strong actions, strong military action if the siege of Sarajevo continues, if there is continued obstruction of the humanitarian aid in Bosnia."

Foreign Minister Abdul Sattar of Pakistan, the current president of the OIC, told Christopher his delegation had come to Washington to convey to you the anguish and distress of the 51 OIC member states over the tragedy in Bosnia.

Herzegovina and the crimes that have been committed against Bosnia's Muslims.

"We believe that action is now imperative in order that the message is sent to the aggressors that they cannot continue to violate the mandate of the world community," the Pakistani Minister declared.

Responding to reporter's questions at a photo opportunity, Christopher said United Nations mediators were trying to work out a plan that will get Bosnian-Serb forces off two mountains which dominate the approaches to Sarajevo.

The removal of the Serbs from the commanding positions on those mountains is a necessary condition, but it's not a sufficient condition," the secretary emphasized. "What we're looking for is relief from the strangulation of Sarajevo. The mountain-tops are important but fundamentally what is necessary is food, water, electricity, and no more shelling in that area," he said.

The Bosnian-Serbs must permit humanitarian aid deliveries to Sarajevo as well as to other 'safe areas' in Bosnia, Christopher said.

The secretary underscored the importance the United States attaches to its relationships with the Muslim world,

while the Pakistani foreign minister expressed admiration for America's support of international law and the promotion of respect for human rights.

Later, a senior State Department official told reporters that Christopher will keep in close touch with the Bosnia situation while he is on vacation in the coming two weeks. He was scheduled to leave for California on August 14.

The secretary, meanwhile, is in the process of contacting all the NATO foreign ministers by phone. The official said Christopher earlier sent the NATO allies the US assessment of the situation on the ground in Bosnia. The information will be 'very useful' if a North Atlantic Council (NAC) meeting is called to give the final go-ahead for NATO air strike against Bosnian-Serb positions, he said.

The official noted that UN officials came off the mountains overlooking Sarajevo August 13 with an 'inconclusive report' on the status of the Bosnian-Serb withdrawal. "There is evidence of withdrawal," he said, but the UN does not have grounds to certify the withdrawal.

"As long as the Bosnian government says they are comfort-

able with' the withdrawal, it is acceptable to the United States, the official said. "We will accept the result of the UN mediation effort between the two parties."

The official noted that with control of the mountains the Bosnian-Serbs can affect the flow of humanitarian supplies into Sarajevo. He emphasized that the 'real issue' is whether the Bosnian-Serbs will allow the flow of these supplies.

The official said there is "no reason" to say that the crisis is over. The inconclusive UN report on the Bosnian-Serb withdrawal "does not take us off the urgent basis we've been operating on," he explained. Even if they reach an agreement on a withdrawal and resume the peace talks in Geneva, "that still does not take us away from the urgency of examining the humanitarian conditions and developments elsewhere in Bosnia," he said.

A meeting to authorize NATO air strikes 'could happen at any moment (that) we are not satisfied' with the way the Bosnian-Serbs are behaving, the official said, noting that the North Atlantic Council could meet at the level of permanent representatives, rather than the ministerial level.



SARAJEVO: British military doctor Colonel Andy Mitchell comforts three-year-old Belma Selaka at Kosevo Hospital in Sarajevo on Friday. The young child, which is not on the next Sunday's evacuation list, is in need of immediate outside medical attention or she will die, according to Dr Mitchell.

Tamils trade fire with Lankan navy patrols

COLOMBO, Aug 14: Tamil Guerrillas exchanged fire with navy patrols in a disputed Lagoon separating the rebel-controlled northern Jaffna peninsula from mainland Sri Lanka early today, residents said, reports Reuters.

They said the shooting erupted when the rebels were returning to Jaffna after escorting a convoy of boats carrying about 2,000 Jaffna residents to the mainland.

"We don't know if there were any casualties," said a resident who reached Vavuniya, the northernmost town under government control. "We heard the sound of battle."

The military has banned traffic across the Jaffna Lagoon to prevent its use by the liberation tigers of Tamil Eelam rebels, fighting for independence in the island's north and east.

But civilians regularly risk crossing the Lagoon because the army has blocked other routes, while rebels proven them using the army-controlled causeway connecting the peninsula to the mainland.

The residents said an empty house was damaged in an air strike on the Jaffna peninsula on Friday. A military spokesman said he had no information on either incident.

BRIEFLY

Building collapses in Seoul

A four-story building of shops and offices collapsed Saturday in downtown Pusan, South Korea's second largest city, killing at least one person, a news report said, according to AP from Seoul.

Dozens of people raced from the building screaming moments before the building tilted and collapsed in rubble, said the national Yonhap news agency.

Soo Young-mi, a 16-year-old high school student and the daughter of the owner of a restaurant on the first floor, was pulled from beneath the debris but died at the hospital, Yonhap said.

4 Chinese to die: Four men and women were sentenced to death in Hainan island after being found guilty of multi-million dollar embezzlement in China's largest official corruption case since 1949, a report said yesterday according to AFP.

The intermediary court in Haikou, capital of Hainan province, southern China, handed down the death sentences Friday.

The five were found guilty of embezzling 33.44 million yuan (5.86 million US dollar) through forged bank drafts, in what the semi-official China news service claimed as the largest corruption case since the communist takeover in 1949.

Thai woman held with heroin: A 32-year-old Thai woman, Navarat Maykha, was charged in a magistrate's court Saturday with importing about 4.2 kg of heroin into Singapore, court officials said, AFP reports.

No plea was recorded and she was remained in custody until Monday. The charge carries a mandatory death sentence on conviction. Customs officers arrested her at Changi airport on her arrival from Bangkok Friday. The heroin is estimated to have a street value of 2.5 million US dollars.

11 hurt in IRA blast: An IRA bomb exploded outside a restaurant in the predominantly Protestant Shaw's Bridge area of Belfast late Friday night, injuring five policemen and six civilians, police reported, AP says from Belfast.

Police headquarters in Belfast said in a statement that officers were evacuating the area after a telephone warning from a caller who said he was from the Irish Republican Army when the 250 pound (113 kg) bomb in parked car exploded.

One eyewitness, Stephen Cousins, told Sky News television that one of the officers was badly injured.

Peru violence claims 4 more: Guerilla violence left four people dead and two seriously wounded this week. President Alberto Fujimori said Thursday night that police captured 10 Shining Path guerrillas who killed three Japanese agronomists in July 1991, AP reports from Lima.

The rebels killed Kiyutata Miyakawa, Hiroshi Nakahi and Ceibun Kinra in an attack on a Japanese government-funded market garden research center near the coastal town of Huaral, 40 miles (70 kms) north of Lima, in a bid to cut off Japanese cooperation with Peru.

7 die in Mexico accident: A runaway lorry killed two children and five other persons on Friday when it smashed into a kindergarten on Mexico City's outskirts, Reuters reports.

The lorry hit several cars before it crashed into the school on the edge of the Mexican capital, official News agency Notimex said.

It was not yet known if the two children among the dead attended the kindergarten. Police said the lorry went out of control when its brakes failed and crashed into at least four cars before ramming the kindergarten located near the highway from Mexico City to Toluca.

14 Kurds killed in fighting: Fourteen Kurdish rebels were killed by Turkish police in an armed battle near the Iraq-Iran border, the security force responsible for fighting rebels said Friday, AFP reports from Ankara.

A groups of Kurdistan Workers' Party rebels attacked a Turkish police station near Cukurca Thursday evening and 14 were killed in the ensuing battle, security officials said.

The deaths bring to more than 30 the number killed as a result of rebel-army fighting since Tuesday evening in southern Anatolia, where the population is majority Kurd.

Nigerians ignore govt for 3rd day

LAGOS, Aug 14: Shop doors were closed and the markets bare on Saturday, a typically busy shopping day, as Nigerians defied the military government for a third day, reports AP.

Millions of people headed to the beach and to visit friends, treating the general strike against the regime of military dictator Gen Ibrahim Babangida as an extended holiday.

Soldiers deployed to stop any street protests were relaxed on Saturday, lounging under high-way bridges with their rifles and riot helmets on the ground.

Human rights groups called the organized stay-at-home strike a success because it showed people were ready to

paralyze commerce to force their demands for democracy.

Yet the strike was confined to the highly populated south-west corner of the country, the ethnic stronghold of Moshood KO. Abiola, the apparent winner of annulled June 12 elections that were to end a decade of military rule over Nigeria's 90 million people.

Meanwhile, the military said it had overturned a bombing plot on Friday.

Federal Information Secretary Uche Chukwumerije declared that a "disgruntled politician and his agents" planned to explode bombs in Lagos and the administrative capital Abuja, as well as the blow up the pipelines from the

southern oil fields. Chukwumerije said the alleged plot was orchestrated from the US headquarters of the International Telephone and Telegraph Co.

Abiola, a former IIT chairman for Africa and the Middle East, responded with laughter from the United States, where he is lobbying for international pressure to force Babangida to honour the elections.

"It is the last trick by a desperate regime to hang on to power," Abiola said in an interview with British Broadcasting Corp Television.

Babangida indicated he was under increasing foreign pressure to make his promised August 27 deadline for a civilian

government. On Television Friday night, he said Britain had sent a dispatch "telling us what they thought we should do."

Babangida responded that "unless they come back to colonize us again... they should leave us alone."

Britain and the United States already have introduced limited sanctions.

The British letter was delivered the day after the US administration halted air service between the United States and Nigeria, citing safety precautions.

The United State is Nigeria's biggest customer for the crude oil which provides more than 80 per cent of the military government's revenue.

ROK students defy govt ban on rally for unification

SEOUL, Aug 14: Thousands of students defied a government ban Saturday in staging a rally demanding unification of the Korean peninsula as riot police armed with truncheons and tear gas stood guard nearby, reports AP.

"Unification," chanted some 10,000 students at Hanyang University in eastern Seoul. "Yankee go home," they yelled, jabbing fists in the air and waving banners.

Disidents and radical students vowed to rally and march to the border to remote unification and highlight the August 15 holiday that marks the end of Japanese colonial rule over Korea in 1945.

The South Korean government banned the rallies, saying unification dialogue with Communist North Korea must occur only through official channels. South Korean law prohibits all contact with the hostile North without prior government approval.

On Friday, thousands of students clashed violently with police at another Seoul university after about 8,000 riot police sealed off the campus to block access to the rally site. Overnight, students moved to another location.

"Let's advance unification by breaking down border barriers," dissident pastor Rev. Moon Ik-hwan told cheering students.

"Without withdrawal of US forces, the unification cannot be achieved," he said.

"Drive out the United States who blocks unification of our land," shouted student leaders.

Radicals contend the presence of American troops hinders talks on unification with North Korea. They also want the Seoul government to carry out an inter-Korean peace accord concluded in 1991 to end hostilities.

"Our country is one," said headbands worn by protesters. Several thousand student were armed with steel pipes, saying they would defend their right to stage a rally against police.

Election in Malaysia soon

KUALA LUMPUR, Aug 14: Malaysian Prime Minister Mahathir Mohamad has said general elections will be held soon, although he gave no firm date, reports Reuters.

The Bernama news agency late on Friday quoted Mahathir as saying in the northern state of Kedah that opposition parties should gear up for the elections. "Tell the PAS (Parti Islam Se-Malaysia) people to get ready," he said. "We may hold (general) elections in two or three months' time. We want to hear what the PAS people will promise."

Elections are not due until mid-1995, but the government usually goes to the polls a year ahead of schedule. Mahathir, in office since 1981, has a substantial parliamentary majority from the last polls in 1990.

Japan to develop air-to-air missile

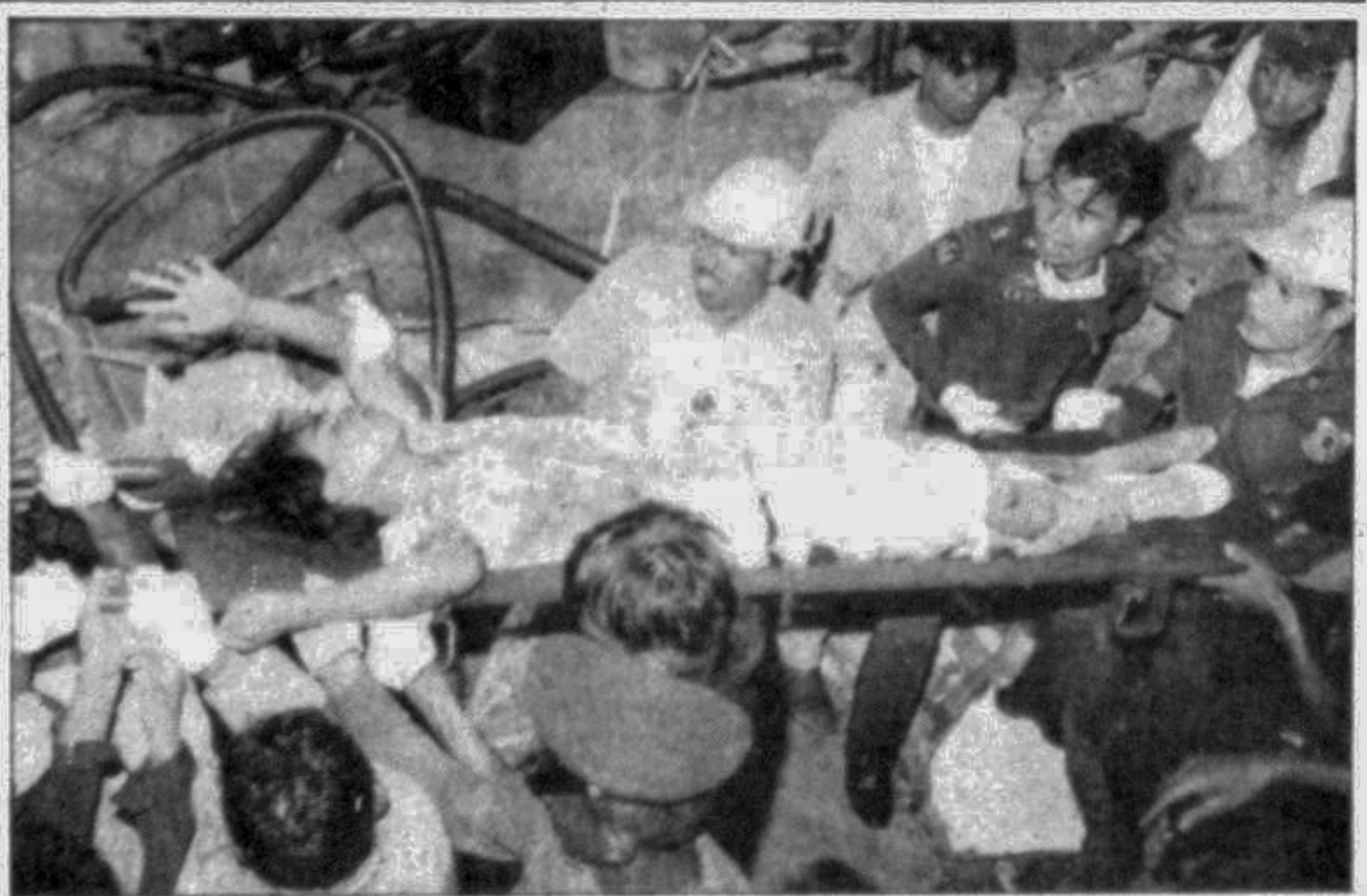
TOKYO, Aug 14: Japan plans to develop its own next-generation air-to-air missile for fighter aircraft and has already spent about seven billion yen (68 million dollars) on the project, a defence agency official said Friday, reports AP.

The official said research and development into the country's first air-to-air missile had been undertaken with a number of Japanese companies, including Mitsubishi Electric Corp.

But he declined to confirm a report in the Nihon Keizai Shimbun that the agency had selected Mitsubishi to develop the missile by the end of the decade.

The newspaper said the agency was seeking eight billion yen to develop the missile in its budget request for the fiscal year starting April 1 next year.

The "active homing air-to-air missile" is expected to be designed to track its target automatically.



NAKHON RATCHASIMA: Thai national Rangsan Sirima is rescued from the rubble of the collapsed Royal Plaza Hotel on August 14. The death toll edged up to 59 with 300 injured.

10 extremists jailed in Egypt

CAIRO, Aug 14: A special Egyptian security court found a group of Islamic militants not guilty today of the 1990 murder of an Egyptian politician and his bodyguards but jailed them for up to 15 years on other charges, reports Reuters.

Cairo's high state security court jailed 10 militants for possession of arms, forging documents and on other related charges but cleared them of the murder of Parliament speaker Rifaat Mahgoub, who was gunned down along with five others outside a luxury hotel in October 1990.

Int'l criminal bodies with vast resource a threat to stability

WASHINGTON, Aug 14: International criminal organizations with vast financial resources are a growing threat to the stability and security of governments throughout the world, according to a group of experts in international crime, reports USIS.

These organizations are growing stronger as many parts of the world become increasingly 'ungovernable' in the post-Cold War era. Roy Godson, professor of government at Georgetown University, told an August 13 news briefing.

"We are in an era of increasingly weak states and governments," said Godson, citing the new states of the Soviet Union and eastern Europe as well as Latin American countries threatened by powerful drug trafficking organizations. "Many governments are barely able to control their own territories."

At the same time, he said, subnational and

international groups — including criminal organizations and ethnic and religious groups — are "challenging the authority of the weak governments."

Other speakers at the briefing from several federal agencies outlined money laundering, alien smuggling, drug trafficking, bribery, fraud and other activities of international criminal groups that undermine democracy and destabilize governments.

Today's international criminal organizations such as the Colombian cocaine cartels, the Chinese Triads, and the Sicilian Mafia are bigger, better organized, and much more profitable than ever before, said Godson, who is president of the National Security Information Center (NSIC) — a private research group that just released a report titled "International Organized Crime: Emerging Threat to US

Security." The report calls for a global assessment of the problem, stressing that neither the United States nor any other country is aware of the full magnitude of the Threat. Furthermore, said Godson, "this cannot be dealt with by law enforcement alone."

NSIC recommends a three-pronged approach: prevention programmes, such as legislation in every country aimed at making it difficult for criminal groups to launder money; efforts to disrupt the criminal organizations; and increased law enforcement and judicial efforts coordinated on a global scale. Godson noted that "there have been almost no convictions, even in the United States, for major international fraud."

John H. Coleman of the Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA) reported that the Colombian cartels reap some \$20,000 million in

profits annually. "Not only is this money amassed in gigantic bank accounts to be reinvested in these trafficking networks, but it also goes toward destabilizing some of the friendly governments in our hemisphere."

"Many governments throughout the world have recognized the threat, Coleman added, citing the 1988 United Nations convention on narcotics trafficking. "That is the key for the future," he said. "As the threat increases and the rest of the world sees what is happening in countries like Colombia, we will see a closer coming together in mutual interest of the international community."

The United States "must play a leadership role," he added.

NSIC is a privately funded, non-partisan Washington-based think tank that specializes in national security policy.

Cambodians asked to be patient

PHNOM PENH, Aug 14: The Cambodian government appealed Saturday to the people to be patient and understanding with its administration as it struggles to guide a country wrecked by two decades of war, reports AP.

The administration, which took control after UN organized elections this past May, said in a statement that some political forces were trying to destroy the coalition government without thinking of the nation.

But it called on the people to be patient, respect law and order and help prevent the further division of the country.

Off the Record

Two-month-long kiss

SAO PAULO, Brazil: Lasting 62 days, eight hours and 15 minutes, it must have been the longest and most tiresome kiss anyone has ever given or received, reports AP.

But for the winners of the Kiss-a-Thon, in the port city of Santos, 45 miles (72 kilometers) from Sao Paulo, the end justified the means. They won brand new cars valued at \$175,000.

For two months, with bathroom, meal and sleeping breaks, Narciso kissed Ivy and Sandro kissed Neusa in Santos' Miramar Shopping Center.

On Thursday, the local radio station sponsoring the contest decided enough was enough and called it a draw.

The contest started June 12, Brazil's equivalent of St. Valentine's day, with 49 couples.

They had to kiss from 10:00 am to 10:00 pm with two 15 minute breaks and one hour breaks for lunch and dinner.

The rules changed and the number of contestants quickly dwindled. Couples had to kiss from 7:30 am to 2:30 am with two five minute bathroom breaks and only one meal which had to be eaten in 15 minutes.

Now he lives as she

PORT HUENEME, California: A transsexual who is now living as a woman has made a national list of most-wanted deadbeat dads, reports AP.

William Henry Reid, now known as Billie Jean Reid, was last seen in Port Hueneme, according to the National Council of State Child Support Enforcement Administrators' list of parents who refuse to pay child support.

Reid, 43, a registered nurse, fathered two children but had a sex change operation in Miami in 1985, said council spokesman Leslie Frye. He was working last year in Port Hueneme, 60 miles (100 kilometers) west of Los Angeles.

Reid, who is pictured on the council's latest nationally distributed most-wanted poster, owes \$3,000 dollar in child support payments, according to Tennessee Child Support Enforcement authorities.

'That is incredible behaviour'

LONDON: A British postman who stole or hid 11,000 postal items because he wanted to have a short day and play golf was jailed for 12 months on Friday, reports Reuters.

Paul Osbourne's actions 'defied belief', recorder (judge) David Roberts said after passing sentence on the postman, who admitted his guilt.

"They amount to laziness, a wish to have a short day and go and play golf," the judge said. "That is incredible behaviour."

Some of the mail included post due to be delivered at Christmas last year, prosecutor Julian Ironside told the court.

Osbourne, 24, hid thousands of letters and postal packets in his house, where a search revealed 33 delivery pouches and a refuse sack full of mail. Another 4,700 items were found in the lift, which Osbourne had forgotten about, Ironside said.

Osbourne was found out when a colleague discovered a partly-torn refuse sack containing 198 postal packets outside Osbourne's home in Swindon, 70 mile (110 km) southwest of London.

Aviators molest them

NORFOLK: The Navy formally charged a third officer Friday in the 1991 Tailhook Association meeting, reports AP.

Lt. Cole V. Cowden, 32, was served with a copy of the charges and will face a court-martial, said Navy spokesman Cmdr. John Tull.

Cowden said he is accused of conduct unbecoming an officer and conduct of a nature to bring discredit upon the armed forces. He denounced the charges.

"Once upon a time, the Navy was trying to find men who assaulted women," he said. "Now, it's boiled down to a few men who the Navy's going to have to hang to avoid embarrassment."

Cowden is assigned to a flight squadron at Norfolk Naval Air Station, Tull said. At the time of the Tailhook meeting, he was stationed at the Miramar Naval Air Station in San Diego.

Two other Navy officers have been ordered to undergo court-martial as a result of the Pentagon's investigation of the Tailhook meeting in Las Vegas, where dozens of women said they were molested by drunken aviators.

Cmdr. Gregory E. Tritt, 43, is charged with assault, conduct unbecoming an officer and making a false official statement under oath. He will have a hearing Wednesday on pretrial motions, but has not yet entered a plea.