

Ghali for punishment of war criminals

CANBERRA, Sept 13: United Nations Secretary General Boutros Boutros-Ghali urged the international community today to punish war criminals and politicians directing actions which violate human rights, reports AFP.

In a message read to the Inter-Parliamentary Union Conference here, he also condemned the deliberate targeting of UN and other humanitarian personnel, warning that such conduct must not be tolerated.

"Our anger and outrage at such tactics must not be allowed to diminish," he said in a message to 500 parliamentarians from 100 countries.

"I call upon the international community to take action. Those responsible must not be allowed to go unpunished."

His message was delivered to the inaugural ceremony of the conference by former US diplomat Joseph Verner Reed, now a special representative of the UN Secretary General.

The speech also warned the

UN would play a more interventionist role to stop governments abusing the human rights of their citizens.

"The state is the best guarantor of human rights, the concept of human rights has acquired real meaning."

"But, when states prove unworthy of their sovereign responsibilities, when they violate the fundamental principles laid down in the charter of the UN when — far from being protectors of individuals — they become tormentors, the international community must take action."

He said the challenge to the United Nations of human rights abuses was reflected in the growing use of peacekeepers for humanitarian missions.

"Protecting the delivery of humanitarian assistance, facilitating national reconciliation and restoring democracy self-government are international priorities that have increasingly benefited from UN assistance," he said.

S African parliament meets to okay end of white rule

CAPE TOWN (South Africa), Sept 13: Parliament convenes Monday to pass legislation that would end white rule, but it faced bitter opposition from white conservatives who threatened a civil war if the bills were passed, reports AP.

At issue in this 11-day special session are four bills, approved in black-white negotiations, that would put the country on an irreversible path toward multiracial democracy.

The most controversial would establish a Transitional Executive Council, a multiracial panel representing the different political groups that would help govern the country until elections are held next year. The council would severely undercut the president's powers and have the power to veto presidential legislation.

The other bills would set up a commission to oversee the country's first multiracial elec-

tions, and formally end government control of the media. Debate on them was not expected until next week, and parliament must meet again in November to approve a new, post-apartheid constitution being worked out by black and white negotiators.

The laws are virtually assured passage in the all-white Parliament, which is dominated by President FW de Klerk's National Party, but it won't be smooth.

The right-wing Conservative Party leader, Ferdi Hartzenberg, said he was "ready for the fight" the Conservatives planned to put up to try to block the bills.

There had been rumours the Conservatives would boycott the session, but Hartzenberg denied this.

"We are here to fight these measures," he said over the weekend.

The Conservatives have 39 seats in Parliament to the National Party's 93 and have virtually no chance of forming an alliance with other white parties to block the legislation. But militant white extremists who support the continuation of apartheid could cause violent disruptions that would threaten fair balloting.

Passage of the bills also could spark backlashes by black groups opposed to them. The biggest of these groups is the Inkatha Freedom Party, which has accused the National Party and African National Congress of hijacking negotiations with no regard for dissenting views.

More than 10,000 blacks have died in clashes blamed on the ANC-Inkatha feud, and violent eruptions often follow major breakthroughs in negotiations. Small militant black groups who see negotiations as

a play by whites to cling to power also oppose the legislation.

The government's chief negotiator, Constitutional Affairs Minister Roelf Meyer, said such groups would not be allowed to delay the planned April 27 election date.

"I believe that postponing the election would lead to more violence, and for that reason we could not even consider it," Meyer told reporters Monday before the afternoon session opened.

Even as it debates the bills, the government will be meeting with the Conservatives and Inkatha in an attempt to bring them back to negotiations. But the approval of the bills by black and white negotiators, led by the government and ANC, have sent a clear signal to boycotting groups that elections, not unanimity among rivals, are top priority.

Off the Record

Water pistol saved him from a spitting cobra

JOHANNESBURG: A 4-year-old boy escaped from a venomous snake by shooting it with his water pistol, a newspaper reported Monday, says AP.

The Star of Johannesburg said Calvin Morse was confronted by a spitting cobra outside his home near Nelspruit, east of Johannesburg, and squirted water at the aggressive snake. The reptile slithered away, the newspaper said.

Spitting cobras are so named because they spit venom into the eyes of their targets, temporarily blinding them, before moving in to strike with sharp fangs.

The snake spit a small amount of venom into Calvin's eye before disappearing, the Star said.

Princess Anne is "absolutely thrilled"

LONDON: Princess Anne, the only daughter of Queen Elizabeth, is expecting a child at 43 after 10 months of marriage to her second husband, the People newspaper reported on Sunday, says Reuters.

In what it termed a world exclusive, the tabloid newspaper said Anne and naval commander Tim Laurence were expecting a child early in 1994.

"We are not prepared to discuss possible pregnancies until the moment comes when the couple involved are ready to announce it," a Buckingham Palace spokesman said.

The newspaper quoted a friend of the princess as saying: "It has been kept a closely guarded secret but I have been told she is three months pregnant. It's wonderful."

The princess has two children, Peter and Zara, from her first marriage to Captain Mark Phillips.

This marriage to the former cavalry captain ended in divorce in April 1992 after 18 years, the last three lived apart.

When the cops failed to pay the bill

MANILA: Don't bother calling the district police headquarters in Olongapo City advertised as the window to Philippine economic revival. The line was cut when the cops failed to pay the bill, reports AP.

Co. Josefine Faraon said the lines to the headquarters of the Metropolitan District Command of the Philippine National Police were cut by the state telephone company "because they didn't pay their bill," which amounted to 200,000 pesos (dlsr 7,100).

Faraon, now assigned to a subordinate command, said commanders suspected some of the policemen may have run up the bill by making personal calls abroad.

Olongapo, roughly 40 kilometers (25 miles) northwest of Manila, is the home of the former US Subic Bay naval base. It is being promoted by the government as the country's model industrial development zone.

The scene was too much for many whites

JOHANNESBURG: The young woman in a green miniskirt and matching high heels smiled serenely as she faced shoppers from her wooden throne in a discount supermarket, reports AP.

"How do you keep your hair straight?" a black woman asked. "Why don't you speak Afrikaans," demanded a glaring white man.

"Why don't you speak Xhosa or Zulu?" shot back the host of the show, a rumpus fast-talker who called himself Scoot Scott.

It was a typical appearance for the first black Miss South Africa, Jacqui Mofokeng, whose selection August 14 meant the loss of another slice of white life in South Africa.

Once the Domain of debutantes from wealthy suburbs, the coveted crown and its 1 million grand (about dollars 300,000) in prizes this year went to a 21-year-old from Soweto, whose heroes include Martin Luther King Jr. and who cites township violence as her greatest concern.

When she travels to the United States on September 19, she hopes to meet her role model, Hillary Rodham Clinton.

"I know tonight, as I sit here with a crown on my head, there are people dying in the townships. I have not forgotten them," Mofokeng said as her two white runners-up stood beside her at the glittering ceremony.

The scene was too much for many whites, who have watched their positions of prestige slip away as President F.W. de Klerk negotiates the end of apartheid. Beauty pageants are big business in this male-dominated country, where women are only just beginning to compete with men in business and politics.

BRIEFLY

Michael Jackson in Moscow:

More than 150 Russian teen-agers screamed, waved gloved fists in the air and unfurled a banner saying "Siberia loves You, Michael!" as singer Michael Jackson arrived in Moscow on Sunday, AP reports from Moscow.

Jackson is scheduled to give his first and only concert in the former Soviet Union on Wednesday at Moscow's Luzhniki Stadium.

Despite allegations that he molested a 13-year-old California boy, loyal fans waited hours at Sheremetyevo 1 Airport to welcome the pop superstar.

"All my life I've loved him and wanted to see him. It was my dream and suddenly he's coming and I can't believe it," said a near-hysterical Natasha Yevdokimova, 17.

'Deng in good health': The daughter of China's paramount leader, Deng Xiaoping, says her father is in good health and enjoying life like any other senior citizen, reports said Monday, AP reports from Seoul.

Deng Lin, 52, eldest daughter of China's elder statesman, told Korean reporters on her arrival in Seoul not to believe frequent rumours of her father's failing health or death.

"My father had his 89th anniversary recently and is in good health and spends his life as any ordinary older person does," she said. She declined to answer political questions.

South Korea and China established diplomatic relations last year.

Zaki new Pak envoy to US:

Akram Zaki, currently Secretary General at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, has been appointed Pakistan's Ambassador to the United States, it was officially announced here Sunday, AFP reports from Islamabad.

A career diplomat and poet, Zaki will fill the post which fell vacant when Syeda Abida Hussain resigned as ambassador in April in protest against the dismissal of Premier Nawaz Sharif by President Ghulam Ishaq Khan.

Zaki, 62, has previously served as Ambassador in China, the Philippines and Nigeria, besides, holding senior diplomatic assignments in Washington and Ottawa.

Blast rocks hotel in Belfast:

An explosion rocked a hotel in east Belfast in northern Ireland early Monday, injuring a policeman who was searching the area after a telephoned warning, police said, Reuters reports from London.

The officer was hurt as he tried to evacuate the Stormont Hotel, a local resident said. He said he saw a man running from a parked car shortly before it exploded outside the hotel. The building was reported to be badly damaged.

Delhi bomb blast incident Three Sikh groups claim responsibility

NEW DELHI, Sept 13: Three Sikh separatist factions from Punjab have claimed responsibility for the weekend car bomb blast which killed eight people and injured 40 in downtown New Delhi, police and newspapers said today, reports AP.

The Khalistan Liberation Force (KLF), Khalistan Commando Force (KCF) and the Bhindranwale Tigers Force of Khalistan (BTKF) rebel factions jointly claimed credit for Saturday's massive blast in central New Delhi, they said.

A spokesman for the three separatist groups Sunday telephoned a newspaper in the northern state saying they blew up the explosive-packed car in a bid to kill the chief of the youth wing of India's ruling Congress (I) party.

Maninder Singh Bitta, President of the Indian Youth Congress (I), survived with minor injuries, but four of his guards and four others died in the blast which destroyed 15

cars and shattered windows in hotels, homes and offices.

A passing bus burst into flames, and several scooters and cycles were also destroyed in the blast. The car, in which the remote-control bomb was packed, was flung 20 feet (six metres) away.

Police said they were trying to verify the claims of the three separatist organisations. A nationwide alert has been sounded and efforts are on to tone up VIP security.

"We are chasing every clue, every claim," said an officer from the New Delhi Police crime branch probing the blast on the high-security zone of Raisina road.

Bitta, who hails from Punjab, is a high-profile politician who has survived three previous attempts on his life. Reports Monday said he has been flown to a government safe house in the resort town of Manali as precaution.

Neo-Nazis hurt German image abroad, says Kohl

BERLIN, Sept 13: Chancellor Helmut Kohl on Monday warned that neo-Nazis have hurt Germany's image abroad, and promised to crack down on the rightist threat, reports AP.

Kohl has come under criticism for failing to curb the neo-Nazi violence that has swept across the country in the nearly three years since German reunification.

In some of his strongest language to date, Kohl declared that "Bonn is not Weimar," a reference to the ill-fated republic whose weaknesses led to the Nazi takeover in 1933.

Kohl, addressing a convention of his Conservative Christian Democrats, emphasized that the neo-Nazis are a minority.

"But the effect of this minority in other countries is bad. So, we have to crack down as hard as we can to nip things in the bud," he added. "We won't tolerate them."

Reflecting his party's philosophy, Kohl also spoke of the danger from the extreme left, in addition to that from the extreme right.

Khmers want 15 pc share in govt ministries

PHNOM PENH, Sept 13: The Khmer Rouge guerrilla group spelled out Monday how much power it wanted in Cambodia's new government, saying national reconciliation depended on power-sharing, reports AP.

Among its proposals is that it hold a 15 per cent share of control over government ministries, even though it does not hold a single seat in the National Assembly. It also proposed taking 20 per cent control over the armed forces.

The Khmer Rouge is one of four factions that signed a 1991 peace accord to end 13 years of war and hold a UN-organized elections.

But the group backed out of the agreement and boycotted the election, held in May. The three other factions — the former Phnom Penh administration, the FUNCINPEC opposition party and the Buddhist Liberal Democratic Party opposition groups — have formed a new administration.

After its former battlefield ally FUNCINPEC won the most parliamentary seats in the election, the Khmer Rouge offered

to give up the 20 per cent of the country it controls and its 10,000-strong core group of fighters in exchange for an advisory role in the new administration.

But in its statement Monday, the Khmer Rouge said FUNCINPEC should have 45 per cent control of the administration; the Phnom Penh party, which won the second highest number of seats, 40 per cent; BLDP, which placed third, 10 per cent; and the Khmer Rouge, although it did not participate, 5 per cent.

FUNCINPEC and the Phnom Penh parties should each control 35 per cent of the various ministries, BLDP should control 15 per cent and the Khmer Rouge should control 15 per cent, the guerrilla group said.

In the armed forces, it said, FUNCINPEC and the Phnom Penh party should each control 35 per cent, the BLDP should control 10 per cent and the Khmer Rouge should control 20 per cent.

"Put an end to the two-headed government," the Khmer Rouge said in its statement.

Shevardnadze threatens emergency rule in Georgia

TBILISI, Sept 13: Eduard Shevardnadze, facing an insurrection in western Georgia by supporters of the former president, threatened Sunday to impose emergency rule over his troubled country, reports AP.

A presidential spokesman said Shevardnadze planned to ask the Georgian Parliament this week to declare a national emergency and impose a curfew.

At a Cabinet meeting Saturday, Shevardnadze announced he was assuming the powerful post of interior minister, giving him control of all police forces.

If parliament goes along with the state of emergency, police may be given temporary authority to conduct searches without warrants and hold suspects without court approval.

The most important effect of the declaration, however, could be psychological. It would help convince Georgia's 5.4 million people that Shevardnadze is determined to restore order.

Troops deployed in Beirut to prevent demonstrations

BEIRUT, Sept 13: Thousands of Lebanese troops deployed across Beirut and around Palestinian refugee camps today to prevent demonstrations over a PLO-Israeli peace pact, says Reuters.

But in Bourj Al-Barajneh refugee camp on the southern edge of Beirut, Palestinian youths opposed to the peace agreement to be signed in Washington set ablaze car tyres to block roads.

In tanks, trucks, armoured troop carriers and cars, thousands of soldiers deployed at junctions, setting up checkpoints, stopping passing civilians to check identity papers and mounting patrols.

Armoured reinforcements also bolstered the usually light Lebanese army presence on the perimeter of most Palestinian refugee camps on the outskirts of Beirut and in South Lebanon.

Lebanon's pro-iranian Hizbollah and radical Palestinian factions called for "a day of mourning and rage" today and rallies in protest against the historic PLO-Israeli peace pact to be signed in

Washington. Demonstrations against the accord were called by Hizbollah for this afternoon in the sprawling refugee camps and Beirut.

The military said the moves were a routine measure after the central security council, grouping the Interior Ministry, police and army, reminded the country of a government decision taken in July to ban all public demonstrations to maintain security.

A major rally was called by the pro-iranian Hizbollah in the Cola district of Beirut, where scores of heavily-armed soldiers with anti-tank rockets and machineguns took up positions near tanks.

The 372,000 Palestinian refugees in Lebanon are divided over the historic peace agreement with some agreeing with PLO leader Yasser Arafat that it is the first step towards a Palestinian state and others saying it is a cheap sell-out of their cause.

The ban on demonstrations was announced in July during a week-long Israeli blitz on South Lebanon but it was not enforced.

20 die as two buses collide in S Africa

JOHANNESBURG (South Africa), Sept 13: Two buses crammed with commuters collided head-on early Monday, killing at least 20 people and injuring 60, officials said, reports AP.

The accident occurred about 7 am in a remote area northeast of Pretoria, which is about 60 kilometers (37 miles) north of Johannesburg, and the cause was not immediately known.

Puto, the company that operates public buses, said 20 people were killed, including both drivers. Many of the victims were trapped beneath the wreckage of the buses, which both fell on their sides.

Drug dealing for the sake of a country's welfare!

HO KONG, Myanmar, Sept 13: He has been called a drug dealer and a freedom fighter, a murderer and a lover of children, an opium warlord, a great patriot, reports Reuters.

US drug enforcers have put the notorious warlord Khun Sa high on their wanted lists. But many ethnic Shans have found prosperity and refuge from a repressive Myanmar government in his welcoming arms.

"We have a state, we have supporters. We are not gangsters," one of his senior aides told Reuters at this remote stronghold near the Thai-Myanmar border. "And without Khun Sa, this organisation would crumble."

"This guy murders people," said Donald Ferrarone, head of the US Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA) in Thailand. "He's the bad guy. But he's a master of propaganda."

Myanmar expert Bertal Lintner, whose book "State of revolt: how Myanmar became the world's biggest heroin producer" is due out later this year, believes politics, not money, motivates him.

"He's more than just an opium warlord. He's traditional Chinese chieftain," Lintner said. "Obviously, he has strong personal ambitions and he looks after his people once they've joined him."

A complete picture of Khun Sa, 59, is wholly confusing. His face, which looks so grandfatherly to a visitor, can turn an aide to stone. His gentleness is belied by the rigid military control he wields over the "organisation" and this growing community of 13,000 nestled in a tranquil Shan valley.

He is said to have murdered many who disputed his leadership of the rebel Shan state, but he surprised his own aides by breaking down in tears when he heard that the favourite daughter of a training officer had died of illness.

"I ask that you convey this message to the world, that Khun Sa does not grow poppies,

that he does no trafficking," the half-Shan, half-Chinese Khun Sa said in a rare, wide ranging interview.

"On the contrary, he is the one who is trying to help, because he sympathises with the growers who have no homes to live in, no clothes to wear and no rice to eat, with the families that have broken up and with the youths who have become addicted and, most of all, with their parents," he said.

The organisation says its Mong Tai Army (MTA) which it claims now consists of as many as 30,000 soldiers, is a defensive force against Myanmar troops illegally occupying the state of Shan, not a force protecting the area's lucrative opium trade.

The only involvement the organisation has is taxing crop exports, which yields it 10 million dollars a year, it says. This runs counter to DEA accusations that it buys the opium, runs the refineries that turn it into heroin, brings in the chemicals and makes contact with international customers.

Khun Sa, whose Chinese name is Chang Sifu, is believed to have attached himself to the Shan independence movement late in life after spending years fighting rebels on behalf of the Myanmar government, in return for control of the area's opium routes.

"He's getting more attention from the international law enforcement community than ever in the past. We've elevated him as a target and put him on the same level as Pablo Escobar and the Colombian cartel," Ferrarone said in Bangkok.

For his part, Khun Sa shrugs off threats from the DEA, which he seems to detest.

Khun Sa said he desired no political role for himself if the Shan state was ever liberated. He would rather build a park, he said.

And has he built up a nest egg for his old age? the question was not "nice," he said, adding: "I don't do it for myself but for my country."

Storm damages HK jetliner over China

HONG KONG, Sept 13: A severe hailstorm damaged a Lockheed TriStar carrying 300 people, including Britain's ambassador to China, as the jetliner approached Beijing on a flight from Hong Kong, Dragon Airlines reported Monday, says AP.

Jackie Donaldson, spokeswoman of the Hong Kong airline, said the storm rocked flight KA330 on Saturday and damaged cockpit windows and the radar dome in the plane's nose cone.

She said no one was injured, and the plane returned to Hong Kong without landing in Beijing.