

International

Australia deports 12 Chinese today

CANBERRA, July 19: At least 12 Chinese boatpeople who were refused refugee status in Australia will be deported to the Chinese province of Guangdong tomorrow, reports Reuter.

The Immigration Department said lawyers for two others — girls aged nine and 12 — plan a last appeal in the federal court to be allowed to stay.

The boatpeople were among a group of 24 who arrived on the northwestern coast of Australia on December 5 last year. The remaining ten have litigation pending, an Immigration Department spokesman said.

The spokesman said the department planned to use two small Australian air force Falcon jets to fly the boatpeople to Guangzhou, the capital of Guangdong province.

Suu Kyi begins her sixth year of detention today

BANGKOK, July 19: When she begins her sixth year of detention Wednesday, one of the world's most famous political prisoners will probably follow what her husband has described as an "austere and disciplined" regimen, reports AP.

At her lake-side home in Myanmar capital of Yangon, Aung San Suu Kyi, 49, will rise before dawn to meditate and listen to the news on shortwave radio. The rest of the day, she will read, exercise and do household chores.

At night, she will listen to music. She is said to prefer classical but recently has expressed a fondness for the reggae of the late Bob Marley.

Perhaps she will tune in to the Norway-based opposition radio station, the Democratic Voice of Burma.

Suu Kyi, leader of

Myanmar's pro-democracy movement and winner of the 1991 Nobel Peace Prize, was arrested on July 20, 1989 under a law safeguarding the state from "subversive elements."

Foremost among her admirers are the millions of Myanmar people who oppose the country's military junta. Fearful of official surveillance, the residents of Yangon refer to her in whispers as "The Lady."

"She stands for all Myanmar people," said Nyan Aung, a Myanmar student who demonstrated Tuesday in front of the Myanmar Embassy in Bangkok.

Suu Kyi, daughter of the country's founding father, Gen Aung San, who was assassinated in the run-up to independence in 1948, has grown in stature as she stoically waits

for the junta to deliver on promises of restoring democracy.

In one of her very few opportunities to speak out publicly earlier this year, she absolu-

tely rejected the government's longstanding offer to free her if she went into exile.

"The concept of driving

somebody out of their own country is totally unacceptable to me," she said. "They have tried to pressure me to leave the country in ways that no self-respecting government should try."

In 1990, her National League for Democracy won a landslide election victory, but the military nullified the results and cracked down on opponent. Restoration of civilian rule, the junta says, will have to await the drafting of a new constitution, which is proceeding at a leisurely pace under the junta's close supervision.

The junta knows how popular she is and fears her for it. The guidelines for a draft constitution contain clauses aimed at barring Suu Kyi from holding office, mostly on the basis of her being married to a

foreigner. She was arrested when the junta, which took power in September 1988 after bloody suppressing pro-democracy street demonstrations, said she had tried to inspire hatred of the military.

The detention law then in effect suggested that without trial, Suu Kyi could be held for a maximum of three years, until July 1992.

In 1991, the law was amended to extend the maximum detention period to five years, which would have meant her release this year. But in February, a Myanmar intelligence official explained that Suu Kyi's first year of house arrest had actually been an "arrestperiod," which would not count toward the maximum detention period specified by law.

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Son of US Surgeon General convicted of selling drugs

LITTLE ROCK, Ark, July 19: Prosecutors want a minimum 10-year sentence for Surgeon General Jocelyn Elders' son, who was convicted of selling 275 dollars worth of cocaine to an undercover officer, reports AP.

A judge rejected Kevin Elders' entrapment claim Monday. Elders said the informant who set up the drug deal had threatened to expose his drug habit and embarrass his mother during Senate confirmation hearings.

"This is not a case about Dr Elders," Deputy Prosecutor Chris Palmer said at the non-jury trial. "It's a case about her son, who in this case is an admitted drug user and a person who needs some help, and a person who was a dealer in this case."

Thousands of Hutus fleeing into Zaire

Rebels win Rwandan war

GOMA, Zaire, July 19: Rwanda's rebel forces have declared victory and called a ceasefire after more than three months of civil war but tens of thousands of Hutu refugees are still fleeing westwards into Zaire, reports Reuter.

An estimated one million refugees have crossed into the Goma area over the past six days but a new crisis has developed about 100 km (65 miles) south, where at least 100,000 Rwandans have left the French-declared protection zone and flooded into the Zairean border town of Bukavu.

"It happened so suddenly and nobody is ready. The barriers are open and nobody can stop them," International Committee of the Red Cross delegate Marianne Coradzzi said from Bukavu.

The UN World Food Programme estimated that 1.3 million more Rwandans were

also heading towards Bukavu. Aid agencies in Goma have predicted that hundreds will die in days in the north unless massive amount of aids are distributed.

The Hutu are driven on by fear of the Tutsi-dominated rebels, virulent propaganda by their ousted government and by sheer hunger. The south of Rwanda is much less fertile than the north regularly experiences famine.

Rwanda Patriotic Front (RPF) leader Paul Kagame said in the capital Kigali on Monday that the RPF had won the war and announced a ceasefire. He made the declaration after his forces had taken the town of Gisenyi, close to Goma.

More than 120 refugees were killed in frenzied stampedes and by mortar fire just inside Zaire on Sunday afternoon as the battle raged.



A policeman tries to prevent people from approaching the site of an earlier explosion that destroyed a seven-storey building housing the Jewish Mutual Association of Argentina on Monday. — AFP photo

Kashmir militants threaten to kill Hindu pilgrims

SRINAGAR, July 19: Muslim guerrillas Tuesday threatened to kill Hindu pilgrims if they attempt an annual pilgrimage to a Himalayan shrine in the disputed state of Kashmir, reports AP.

An advertisement in "The Srinagar Times," by Harkat ul-Ansar, a pro-Pakistan guerrilla group, also warned Muslim hoteliers and tourist agents not to help the Hindu devotees.

Government officials have refused to make arrangements for the 20,000 pilgrims who come annually, despite assurances of police protection, a senior official said on condition of anonymity.

This was the first time that the guerrillas have threatened the pilgrimage since they began a violent revolt four years ago for independence from India for Jammu-Kashmir, its only Muslim-majority state. More than 9,400 people have been killed.

Chanting "Praise Lord Shiva," Hindu devotees walk

for two days or ride ponies along a precipitous 25-kilometre (15-mile) course from Pahalgam, 80-kilometre (50-mile) south of Srinagar, through mountain valleys to the 4,000-metre-high (13,000-feet-high) Amarnath caves.

A Hindu priest, who was among the first pilgrims to reach Anantnag town on the way to Pahalgam, was killed over the weekend by militants as a warning to pilgrims, local newspapers reported.

Guerrillas also shot and killed a policeman assigned to help Hindu pilgrims. No group claimed responsibility for the killing.

Last week, another group, the Jamiat ul-Mujahideen, claimed responsibility for a bomb blast that killed six Hindus in the city of Jammu, also as a warning to pilgrims.

Last month, guerrillas of Harkat ul-Ansar the group kidnapped two British hikers near Pahalgam, but freed them unharmed after 17 days.

An earlier Delhi report said:

Political crisis in Nigeria deepens

LAGOS, July 19: Nigeria's political crisis deepened with the killing of several people in pro-democracy protests and a pledge by oil unions to continue a crippling strike against military rule, reports Reuter.

The campaign for democracy (CD) pressure group said at least 20 people were killed in Lagos, Nigeria's biggest city, during protests on Monday to demand that military ruler General Sani Abacha surrender power to detained politician Moshood Abiola.

There was no official confirmation of the deaths.

Independent witnesses said they saw bodies in at least two locations in Lagos, a sprawling city of six million people.

Wariebi Agamene, President of the junior oil workers' union Nupeng, which launched the strike three weeks ago, said he personally saw several bodies on the street on Monday.

"It was gruesome and it worsens the chances of settling this crisis," he told Reuters, adding the strike would continue.

India's federal government now controls the administration in the state.

Mitterrand well enough to carry out duties

PARIS, July 19: French President Francois Mitterrand was recovering from prostate surgery today and well enough to carry out his presidential duties from his hospital bed, officials said, reports Reuter.

The surgery was a success and there was no need to appoint an interim head of state, the officials said.

Mitterrand, who at 77 is months away from the end of his second seven-year term as France's head of state, had a successful operation to remove a prostate obstruction on Monday at Cochin Hospital in Paris, his personal physician said.

Nearly two years ago he underwent surgery to remove a prostate cancer.

Monday's operation was planned some time ago and Prime Minister Edouard Balladur was notified last week, officials said.

Women stream into al-Wazir's one-story house daily to congratulate her on her return, ask for assistance or just to meet the wife of their idol, Abu Jihad.

"I feel sad that Abu Jihad is not here with me on the land of Palestine and cannot feel all the love that people have for him," she said. "But I know his spirit is hovering over us, and I'm sure he sees and he approves."

Khalil al-Wazir, a PLO military chief, was assassinated by Israeli commandos in 1988.

12 Tamils killed in fightings

COLOMBO, July 19: At least 12 Tamil rebels were killed in fightings between the government forces and the armed members of the Liberation

Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) in the northeast during the last two days, according to military sources, reports Xinhua.

The Tamil rebels suffered their worst setback in the northern island of Mannar when an aircraft of the Sri Lankan air force on routine patrol on Sunday destroyed a vehicle carrying a group of Tamil Tigers and at least 10 Tigers were killed, the sources said.

Security forces also shot dead one rebel.

Off the Record

Phoolan now frequents beauty parlours

NEW DELHI: India's bandit queen, freed after 11 years in jail, has quietly married and slipped into domesticity, a news agency reported Tuesday, says AP.

Phoolan Devi, disclosed her recent marriage to her sister's ex-husband, a real estate financier, in an interview with the United News of India.



The 37-year-old farmer's daughter has moved into a three-bedroom apartment in an upscale New Delhi neighbourhood with her husband, Umer Singh, 32, and several relatives. The apartment was rented by the French publisher of her biography, the agency said.

Devi was jailed without trial on 70 counts of extortion, kidnapping and murder. Her killing of 22 villagers to avenge the death of her lover and her own torture made her a heroine of India's poor. A film based on her life was shown at international film festivals this year.

Freed five months ago, the bandit who rode horses with a rifle slung over her shoulders now frequents beauty parlours to have her hair styled and dresses in feminine pink, United News said.

But she still wants her gun back to defend herself against the relatives of her victims. "There are people who want me dead," she said.

Her police guard was withdrawn this month, the agency said, and now she has applied for a license to carry a weapon.

"If they refuse, I shall go to court," she said.

Tune in to see live performances

SINGAPORE: Thousands of Singapore residents have something new to watch on television: they are tuning in to see live performances inside elevators of their apartments, reports AP.

As part of an experiment to deter criminals and vandals, the government has installed closed circuit television in elevators in 21 multistorey apartments. The pictures are fed to hundreds of homes around-the-clock.

The project, launched in 1992 in three blocks, was expanded this month to 18 more buildings in government-built housing estates, the newspaper Straits Times reported Tuesday.

But in a country with one of the lowest crime rates in the world, the candid camera rarely catches mischief in progress.

Instead, some residents use it for entertainment, the newspaper said.

"My parents find it funny to watch the neighbours scratching themselves in the lift," it quoted Koh Tak Yan, 12, as saying.

"Sometimes children make faces at the camera," she added.



A December 1992 file photo showing Rosanna Della Corte, 62, who gave birth to a baby boy on Monday after having a donor's fertilised eggs implanted. Della Corte, from the central Italian town of Canino, is described in Italy as the oldest mother in the world.

— AFP photo

Intissar al-Wazir is 'mama' and First Lady of Palestinians

"Now that there's a Palestinian government, I will work hard to make sure that women get equal rights and justice," she said in a recent interview at her Gaza City home.

When she walks into a room, crowds give her such a tumultuous welcome that even Yasser Arafat has to stop speaking until the applause dies down.

Intissar al-Wazir, the only woman in the Palestinian Cabinet and widow of a PLO military chief assassinated by Israel in 1988, wants to use her popularity to take on this male-dominated society and push for equal rights legislation.

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