

International

BRIEFLY

Malaysia deports 9 Chinese: Malaysia was reported yesterday to have sent home nine Chinese illegal immigrants from a group of 20 who had doused themselves with kerosene and threatened to set themselves on fire if deported. AFP reports from Kuala Lumpur.

The nine, including two women and three children, left for Guangzhou on a Malaysia Airlines flight on Sunday while their 11 compatriots were sent to a Kuala Lumpur jail, local news reports said.

"We were instructed by police and immigration authorities to detain the 11 in prison, they are not convicted of any crime and are being detained temporarily to await deportation," Malaysian prisons chief Zaman Khan Rahim Khan was quoted as saying.

Thai PM for release of Suu Kyi: Thai Prime Minister Chuan Leekpai yesterday urged Myanmar to release detained Nobel Peace laureate Aung San Suu Kyi as the key to solving many of the isolated country's political and economic problems. Reports reports from Bangkok.

Chuan made the recommendation in talks with Myanmar Foreign Minister Ohn Gyaw, who is in Bangkok as the guest of Thailand at a ministerial meeting of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN).

"Settle the question of Aung San Suu Kyi first, then Myanmar will have time to concentrate on developing the democratic process and the economy," Thai government spokesman Abhisit Vejjajiva quoted Chuan as telling Ohn Gyaw.

LA shootout leaves 3 dead: A gunman opened fire at the birthday party of a 3-year-old girl, killing three people before he was shot to death, AP reports from Los Angeles.

About 60 people attended the party on Saturday night in the front yard of a Los Angeles home. "Several people were dancing and small children were running around, so it's very lucky that no one else got shot," said police Detective Eric Campos.

Police believe the shootout was the result of an ongoing dispute but they did not know what started the argument. Campos said the shooting wasn't believed to be gang-related.

35 more die in Chinese floods: Floods from torrential rain have killed 35 people in south China, but farmers in other parts of the country are battling to save their crops from drought, an official newspaper said on Monday. AP reports from Beijing.

The rains last week in Guangxi province on the border with Vietnam also ruined 100,000 tons of grain that was ready for harvest, the China Daily said.

Among the most severely affected areas was Qinzhou city on Guangxi's south coast, where 22 died in week-long rains, the newspaper said. It did not give details on the other deaths.

Rally for peace in Lima: Around 40,000 people took part on Sunday in a march for peace to repudiate a 1992 guilla bombing in Peru's capital and last week's attack against Argentina's main Jewish community centre, Reuter reports from Lima.

Peruvian religious and political leaders and some 600 members of the local Jewish community joined the march through the elegant suburb of Miraflores marking the third anniversary of a guilla attack that killed 25 people.

The demonstration was also called to protest against the bombing last Monday of a Jewish community centre in Buenos Aires where at least 59 people were killed.

Forest fires in Canada: A rash of forest fires raged across Canada's westernmost province on Sunday and officials feared that forecasted lightning storms could ignite more, Reuter reports from Vancouver.

The British Columbia Forest Service said 129 different fires were burning in the province with a total area of 8,113 acres (3,285 hectares). No towns or major parks were in immediate danger but a shift in wind patterns could force evacuation of some rural residents and small communities.

Lightning sparked two fires near the town of Princeton, about 120 miles (200 km) east of Vancouver and more lightning storms forecast for Sunday night raised fears that the situation could worsen.

Israel cuts forces in West Bank: Israel recently cut its forces in the West Bank even though the army says violence has increased in the occupied territories since PLO chief Yasser Arafat arrived in Gaza on July 1, Israeli newspapers said Monday. AP reports from Jerusalem.

Deputy Chief of Staff Maj. Gen. Amnon Shahak told the weekly Cabinet meeting Sunday that riots and shooting incidents have risen, Haaretz said.

The latest victim was policeman Sgt. Jaj. Yitzhak Atias, 25, who died early Monday of wounds suffered when a Palestinian policeman shot him during a July 17 riot at the Erez crossing from Gaza to Israel.

Quake rocks Indonesia: An earthquake measuring 5.8 on the Richter scale rocked Indonesia's Bengkulu Province but there were no reports of casualties or damage, the meteorological and geophysical agency said yesterday, Reuter reports from Jakarta.

The quake was centred 50 km (30 miles) southeast of Bengkulu town on the western side of Sumatra island. It occurred at 5:59 pm on Sunday (1059 GMT).

Yemen to free 4000 POWs

SANA, July 25: The government announced today the release of around 4,000 prisoners who were captured in Yemen's two-month civil war, reports AFP.

This decision by President Ali Abdullah Saleh shows he does not differentiate between the people of unified Yemen," Defence Minister Abdel Rubbu Mansur Hadi told both of POWs shown on television.

The prisoners had backed Saleh's southern ruler Ali Salem Al-Baid, who declared a breakaway state after war broke out in May 5. The war ended July 7 as key southern

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cities fell and southern leaders fled the country.

"These people will be given a two-week leave to visit their families," the Defence Minister told prisoners shown at the Sanaa Military Academy.

The minister said the group benefitted from a general amnesty declared by Saleh on May 24 but which excluded Baid and 15 close colleagues.

The sources, who demanded anonymity, said clashes were taking place between Myanmar units and guerrillas of the Karen and Mon ethnic minorities not far from a refugee camp attacked by the Myanmar last week.

The guerrillas had received orders to step up their attacks against the Myanmar 62nd battalion which had stormed the Halaokhant Camp and fighting was expected to escalate, the sources said.

Driven from the camp astride the Thai-Myanmar border, some 3,500 Mon refugees were seeking temporary asylum just inside Thailand's western province of Kanchanaburi. They were living in crude shelters on hillsides turned to mud by daily downpours, the sources said.

The attack has puzzled observers at a major ongoing meeting of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) here to which Myanmar Foreign Minister Ohn Gyaw received an unprecedented invitation.

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