

BRIEFLY



Iraqi President Saddam Hussain (L) is applauded by party members Monday, a day after being reelected as secretary general of the ruling Baath Party. Nonetheless, Saddam refused to accept the post for life following a two-day party congress. — AFP/UNB photo

Abducted Chinese engr rescued: Pakistani authorities rescued a Chinese engineer eight hours after he was kidnapped in Punjab province, an executive at his company said yesterday. Reuter reports from Islamabad.

Kuwaiti Emir retains key posts: The new Emir, Sheikh Hamad bin Khalifa Al Thani, decreed Tuesday that he will retain the posts of prime minister, defence minister and commander-in-chief of the armed forces, AP reports from Doha.

2 Tajik cops die in ambush: Two policemen died in an ambush and another was badly wounded in the restive Garm district of Tajikistan, the ITAR-Tass news agency reported Tuesday, AP reports from Dushanbe.

5 civilians killed in N Iraq: At least five civilians were killed and 20 more wounded Monday as ceasefire between Kurds in northern Iraq broke down, the feuding parties said, AFP reports from Nicosia.

Road mishaps claim 27 in France: Twenty seven people died Monday in two separate coach crashes in France, including 22 tourists killed when a bus carrying them from the Netherlands to Spain overturned, officials said, AFP reports from Roquemaure, France.

Letter bomb blast hurts 2 in US: A letter bomb explosion at a long distance telecommunications company's headquarters left two people wounded Monday, one seriously, officials said, AFP reports from Raleigh, North Carolina.

26 murdered in Kwazulu Natal: Twenty six people, including two children, were murdered in South Africa's volatile Kwazulu Natal province at the weekend, police said Monday, AFP reports from Johannesburg.

France deports 51 Rumanians: France on Monday expelled 51 Rumanians, flying them to Bucharest on a chartered plane—signaling that the new conservative government intends to keep up a crackdown on illegal aliens, AP reports from Paris.

3 die from food poisoning in Manila: A passion for eating exotic food while drinking proved fatal for three young Filipino men and injured two others, police said Tuesday, AP reports from Manila.

Kuwait bans "Bombay": Kuwait has banned the Hindi film "Bombay" saying it offended the sensibility of Muslims and ordered an enquiry how it was brought into the country, PTI reports from Dubai.

Search on for 4 abducted tourists in Kashmir

Reinforcements of soldiers moved into Phalgam, some 100 kilometers east of here, where a group of 15 armed men abducted two American and two British trekkers on July 4.

Troops repulse LTTE attack, advancing toward Jaffna

COLOMBO, July 11: Government troops beat back a fierce Tamil rebel attack early Tuesday and resumed their advance into guerilla-held territory in northern Sri Lanka on the third day of a major offensive, military officials said, reports AP.

About 10,000 soldiers supported by warplanes, tanks and artillery were inching forward to expand the region under military control in Jaffna Peninsula, the officials said.

But the offensive, the largest in eight years, does not intend to capture the town of Jaffna, the rebel stronghold where hundreds of thousands of Tamil civilians live, military sources have said on condition of anonymity.

In a statement from their London office, the rebels said Monday that more than 160 civilians have been killed, including 63 who died Sunday when warplanes bombed St. Peter's Church and school in Navalay, a town close to Jaffna city.

A military source and an international relief agency confirmed the attack, but gave different casualty figures.

Many of the 800,000 Tamil civilians in Jaffna Peninsula reportedly have fled areas of fighting and taken shelter in relief centers in schools, churches and Hindu temples.

Military spokesmen first denied the church and school had been hit, but later said they didn't know whether they had.

According to them, seven soldiers and 11 guerillas have been killed and 80 soldiers injured in the three-day offensive in the peninsula, which is 300 kilometers (185 miles) north of Colombo.

On Tuesday, nine soldiers were injured when the rebels attacked one of the two columns of troops moving forward, but the guerillas were re-

pulsed, said spokesman Col. Piyal Abeysekera.

The offensive began early Sunday when warplanes, navy gunboats and long-range artillery opened fire on rebel positions and ground troops moved forward from the Palali military base.

Both columns of soldiers moved forward about eight kilometers (five miles) on Sunday, but little progress was reported Monday.

AFP adds, President Chandrika Kumaratunga today called for an investigation after the Sri Lankan Air Force bombed a Roman Catholic church, killing a large number of civilians, including 13 babies, officials said.

Kumaratunga met with the Catholic leaders here and asked them to use their good offices to probe the bombing of Navalay church in Jaffna Peninsula, which occurred during a major army offensive against the separatist Tamil Tiger guerillas, they said.

The International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) here confirmed that bombs fell on the church and said reports of up to 65 civilian deaths there may be accurate.

"We are not saying that the church was targeted. But we can confirm several bombs fell on it," the ICRC official said. The military says it is not aware of hitting civilian targets but confirms carrying out a series of airstrikes.

The separatist Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) said that up to 200 civilians had been killed during the offensive launched on Sunday.

The LTTE's clandestine radio, the Voice of Tigers said the death toll at the church rose to 120 men, women and children killed. Earlier the rebels had given a figure of 65 deaths.

PLO slams Israeli claim on West Bank waters

JERUSALEM, July 11: Israel insists on retaining control over most of the West Bank's water resources even when Palestinian autonomy is established throughout the area, Israel's agriculture minister said Monday. The PLO condemned the demand, reports AP.

The dispute over water, one of the most precious resources in the Middle East, marked the latest snag in efforts to reach agreement on an Israeli troop withdrawal from West Bank towns and Palestinian elections by the target date of July 25.

The Israeli position on water rights came out of discussions between Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin and water experts prior to planned talks with the PLO in Italy this week.

Agriculture Minister Yaacov Tsour told reporters that Israel would oppose any change in the way water is pumped out of the large aquifer under the West Bank.

"It is all from the same bathtub and we are not about to change the division... to dry up areas of Israel and enrich parts of the Palestinian territory," he said.

Currently, the West Bank aquifer supplies Israel with 740 million cubic metres annually, about 40 per cent of the water used by its 5.5 million citizens, according to the Middle East Intelligence Digest.

The 1 million Palestinians of the West Bank get about 130 million cubic metres annually from the aquifer — about 2.5 times less per person than Israelis.

Agriculture Ministry spokesman Roni Hassid said that under the Israeli proposal, the Palestinians would not be permitted to conduct new drillings for water in the West Bank except on a limited scale in the Jordan Valley.

"It is not just," he said. "They are not the masters and we are not the slaves." He said that while Palestinians suffer constant water shortages, Israeli settlers in the West Bank have "everything including swimming pools."

MQM to push for new province if talks fail

ISLAMABAD, July 11: Armed militants in the southern city of Karachi says they will push for their own ethnic province if peace talks with the government fail, an English-language newspaper reported Tuesday, says AP.

Ajmal Dehvi, chief negotiator of the Mohajir Quami Movement (MQM), said his group would not compromise on basic demands it plans to put forward in negotiations scheduled to begin here late Tuesday, according to The News.

The MQM's basic demands call for a more equal share of power and opportunities for the Mohajirs, or migrants, who make up about 70 per cent of Karachi's 12 million population.

"Should the talks fail, a province would be demanded, making Sind's division inevitable," Dehvi told the newspaper.

More than 1,000 people have been killed this year in ethnic and political violence in the nation's largest city.

Setbacks in ties won't lead to hostility, US assures China

WASHINGTON, July 11: The Clinton administration is trying to convince Chinese authorities it is not hostile to Beijing despite setbacks in Sino-American relations, including the arrest of a prominent Chinese-American dissident, reports AP.

"Despite the fears of some in China, we are not engaged in a policy of containment of China," State Department spokesman Nicholas Burns said Monday. "We're engaged in a policy of engagement with China, and that's going to remain the fundamental bedrock of our policy."

Since dissident Harry Wu was arrested three weeks ago, Burns and other officials have coupled their outrage over China's refusal to grant consular access to Wu with expressions of reassurance to China that the United States seeks to talk over differences on other issues.

"We're trying to arrange high-level contacts between our two governments because that is the way you clarify differences and misunderstandings," Burns said last week.

On Monday, China permitted a US diplomat to have access to Wu but not before he was charged with illegally obtaining state secrets and other criminal activities. In response, Burns demanded Wu's immediate release.

China seems convinced that the administration's actions do not fit with its reassuring words. The biggest setback to the relationship was dealt in May when President Clinton reversed course and decided to grant a visa to Taiwanese President Lee Teng-Hui to make a private visit to the United States.

UNSC urged to lift arms ban on Kigali

UNITED NATIONS, July 11: Rwanda's government urged the Security Council Monday to lift the arms embargo on Kigali, and suggested a new resolution to keep the former regime from rearming, in a letter dated July 5 and released at UN headquarters in New York Monday, reports AP.

Rwanda's council representative Manzi Bakurumutsa reasserted concerns first voiced in March that militias and soldiers from the prior regime may be undergoing training and being rearmed in neighbouring countries.

He called for deploying UN observers at airports in Kinshasa, Goma Bukavu and Uvira in Zaire with the goal of limiting the militarisation of Rwandan refugee camps in Zaire.

A report by the UN secretary general on the issue is due to be delivered to the council by the end of the week, a UN spokesman said.



Soldiers carry the body of a colleague killed by Tamil Tiger guerillas who smashed a security outpost in the north central village Danumandalwa Monday. — AFP/UNB photo

5 lakh women die each year for motherhood

PARIS, July 11: Women are paying a high price for motherhood with expectant mothers facing persistently high mortality rates, according to a report published today by the UN Fund for Population Activities (UNFPA), reports AP.

Half a million women die each year either from pregnancy or during childbirth, with 99 per cent of those residing in developing countries the UNFPA reports says, adding that maternal mortality remains surprisingly high at a time when other demographic trends are improving.

In the past 20 years life expectancy has jumped by eight years in developing nations, while infant mortality has fallen by a third. Worldwide fertility rates show the average number of children per woman down from 6.1 in 1950 to 3.7 today.

But for women in developing nations the statistics remain bleak, a phenomenon the UNFPA report attributed to social reasons: the interior social standing of women across the developing world does not allow them to take precautions against an unwanted pregnancy or a pregnancy-linked illness.

Ignoring UN threat Serbs advance deep into Srebrenica

SARAJEVO, July 11: Bosnian Serb forces set themselves up for a showdown with the United Nations, ignoring threats of airstrikes and advancing deep into the Muslim enclave of Srebrenica, ordering peacekeepers to get out, reports Reuter.

"The Bosnian Serb demand is completely unacceptable to us," said UN spokesman Gary Coward. "The UN is determined to protect the enclave."

"The UN leadership is giving air strikes active consideration," said Coward.

The last NATO airstrikes, in May provoked Bosnian Serbs to march into UN posts and take almost 400 peacekeepers hostage.

The fresh advance late on Monday to within 1,000 metres (yards) of Srebrenica town, increased tension after a weekend in which Bosnian Serbs have shelled the area at Will and detained 50 Dutch peacekeepers.

The Serb thrust again put the effectiveness of the UN mission in doubt.

About 40,000 people, mainly Muslims live in the enclave, most in the shattered town of Srebrenica.

They are watched over by 450 peacekeepers.

Now the Bosnian Serbs have told them all to leave in the next 48 hours, UN officials said.

A Security Council statement on Monday demanded the immediate release of peacekeepers detained during the Bosnian Serb advance deep into the Srebrenica pocket in eastern Bosnia.

It warned all sides to "respect fully" the safe area. But officials on the ground doubt the effectiveness of the threat to renew air strikes.

"Look what happened when we used air strikes in May to try to restore the integrity of the exclusion zone around Sarajevo. It didn't work, the zone collapsed," said one official, who declined to be named.

Off the Record

Sherlock Holmes to fetch a fortune

LONDON: One of the finest collections of Sherlock Holmes material ever offered for sale is expected to fetch around 70,000 pounds (111,000 dollar) at auction in London this month, Sathely's said on Monday, reports Reuter.

The July 24 auction will feature first editions, papers and memorabilia relating to one of the world's most famous fictional detectives and his creator, Sir Arthur Conan Doyle.

The collection was amassed by Standley Mackenzie, a former custodian of London's Sherlock Holmes Society, who died earlier this year.

The items for sale include the pipe used by Peter-Cushman Gin his film portrayal of the Victorian detective and a gold cigarette case inscribed, by Conan Doyle, "Sherlock Holmes".

Criminal brain

HUNTINGTON, West Virginia: An inmate who escaped from prison using a rope fashioned out of minty dental floss drew 30 years behind bars Monday, reports AP.

"Sounds good to me," Robert Shepard, 35, told US District Judge Robert Staker.

Shepard, 35, pleaded guilty in May to breaking out of a year-old jail in Charleston and committing other crimes before and after the 1994 escape.

He received five years for the escape and additional time for the other offenses.

Shepard braided a rope as thick as a telephone cord out of floss bought at the jail commissary, and used it to scale an 18-foot (5.5-metre) recreation yard wall. He then cut through a fence with a 3-inch (7.6-centimetre) hacksaw blade.

He had been awaiting trial on weapons violations and charges of breaking into a post office.

Shepard was captured about 60 miles away after robbing a pharmacy.

Millionaires by accident

RICHLAND: Carolyn Chapman is taking full credit for her mistake — all dirls 2 million of it, reports AP.

Mrs Chapman and her husband, Bobby, became Lotto millionaires quite by accident after she printed two tickets instead of one for a customer. The couple's convenience store has a rule about mistakenly printing extra lottery tickets — you mess it up, you buy it.

Mrs Chapman offered to sell the extra ticket to the customer who had hit the winning numbers to split the dirls 4 million jackpot.

"I never dreamed in a million years that it would happen to us," said Mrs Chapman, who seemed apologetic for her good fortune.

The customer who picked the lucky numbers — 9, 17, 21, 24, 28 and 40 has not come forward.

The Chapman also get a bonus of about dirls 40,000 before taxes, for selling the only two winning tickets. They plan to fix up their little country store.

Costly mistake

WASHINGTON: A man who said he underwent nearly seven years of experimental drug treatments after mistakenly being diagnosed as having the AIDS virus has been awarded 4.1 dirls million in damages by a federal jury, report AP.

Raymond Machesney, 57, a former Catholic priest, was diagnosed with the HIV virus that causes AIDS two separate times in 1985. Seven years later, he was told he had never been infected with the virus.

The award handed down Wednesday in US District Court in Washington DC came in a lawsuit filed against Machesney physician, Dr Lawrence Brunl, the physician's professional corporation, and KL McCoy and Associates, a group of pathologists who supervised the lab which oversaw the handling of Machesney's blood samples.

Corruption root cause of collapse 4 more rescued after 11 days of ROK store disaster

SEOUL, July 11: The first of the latest four confirmed survivors was lifted from the rubble of a collapsed shopping complex Tuesday, nearly 11 and half days after it caved in on more than 1,000 people, reports AP.

Three others confirmed trapped beneath the destroyed building were expected to be brought out shortly, rescue officials said.

Officials said Yoo Ji-hwan, a 19-year-old female sales clerk at the Sampoong Department Store which collapsed on June 29, appeared in a relatively good health.

"I am alright but hungry... Four people are alive down here, including myself," she told rescuers shortly before she was pulled out at 3:30 pm (0650 GMT).

The four were found near where a 21-year-old man was pulled out alive two days earlier. It is where officials thought there was the least possibility of finding anyone alive.

Meanwhile, President Kim Young-sam on Tuesday declared a new war against corruption, defining it as a root cause of a deadly shopping mall collapse that left more than 1,000 people dead or injured.

With eight more bodies recovered overnight and early Tuesday, the death toll rose to 207. About 220 people were still listed as missing, and more than 900 people were hurt.

"The root cause of the collapse is corruption and irregularities, against which the government is determined to wage a war anew," Kim told aides.

France deports 51 Rumanians

France on Monday expelled 51 Rumanians, flying them to Bucharest on a chartered plane—signaling that the new conservative government intends to keep up a crackdown on illegal aliens, AP reports from Paris.

This is not an example. It's a policy," Interior Minister Jean-Louis Debre said of the mass expulsion in a television interview.

Suu Kyi — symbol of struggle, commitment, democracy

BANGKOK, July 11: Praised internationally for her courage and quietly revered at home as "The Lady," Nobel Laureate Aung San Suu Kyi kept the struggle for democracy in Myanmar alive through nearly six years of house arrest, reports AP.

Suu Kyi detained in 1989 after leading a pro-democracy uprising — was released Monday. Authorities had hinted recently that they might extend her six-year sentence, and her release came as a surprise.

During her detention, she refused offers of freedom in exchange for exile, remaining steadfastly committed to democracy. Remaining the symbol of the Myanmar pro-democracy movement, she became one of the world's best-known political prisoners.

In a country where citizens always look over their shoulders, her name is whispered reverently and sometimes her picture is seen hanging next to golden statues of Buddha.

Her rise to political prominence, however, came unexpectedly.

Suu Kyi, 50, whose name means "A Bright Collection of Strange Victories," was born in Yangon, the daughter of Aung San, who led Myanmar's struggle for independence from the British. She travelled widely, studying in New Delhi and Oxford University and working for the United Nations in New York and Bhutan. She raised two sons in England.

In 1988 she returned to Yangon to nurse her dying mother, just as anti-government demonstrations exploded on the streets nationwide.

"I could not, as my father's daughter, remain indifferent to all that was going on. This national crisis, in fact, could be called the second struggle for independence," she said at the time.

Suu Kyi, a slim, almost frail-looking woman, commanded attention as Aung San's daughter. She publicly criticised Myanmar's dictator Gen Ne Win, pressing for non-violent moves to democracy and condemning human rights abuses by the government.

Ne Win stepped down in 1988, and later that year, hundreds of thousands of people took to the streets to protest military rule. Troops quelled the uprising, killing hundreds. Suu Kyi was arrested the next year for allegedly inciting unrest.

The opposition National League for Democracy won a landslide victory in 1990 general elections, but the military refused to honour the results, and has suppressed virtually all dissent.

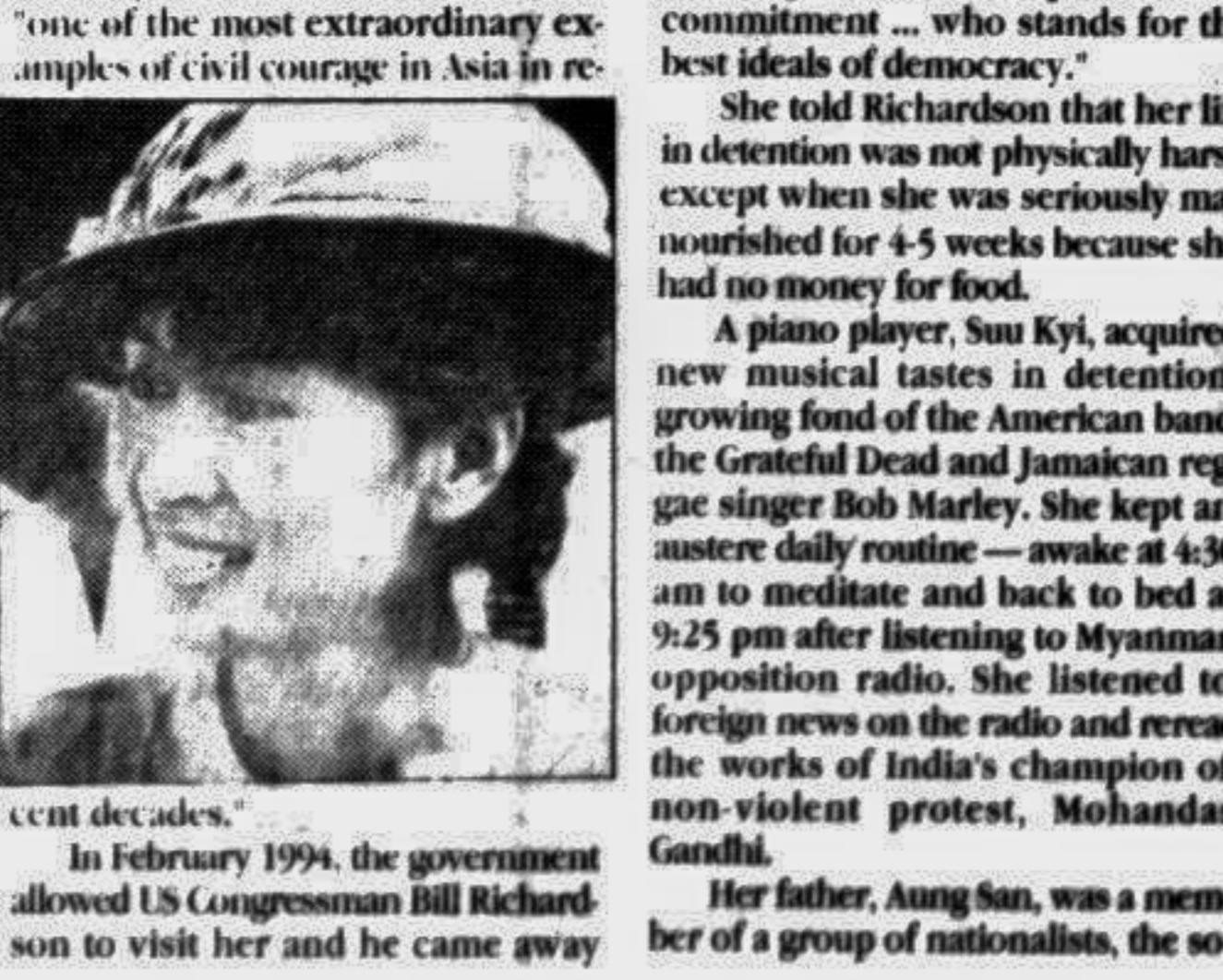
In 1991, Suu Kyi was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize. She was cited for "one of the most extraordinary examples of civil courage in Asia in recent decades."

In February 1994, the government allowed US Congressman Bill Richardson to visit her and he came away praising "a woman of passion and commitment... who stands for the best ideals of democracy."

She told Richardson that her life in detention was not physically harsh except when she was seriously malnourished for 4-5 weeks because she had no money for food.

A piano player, Suu Kyi, acquired new musical tastes in detention, growing fond of the American band the Grateful Dead and Jamaican reggae singer Bob Marley. She kept an austere daily routine — awake at 4:30 am to meditate and back to bed at 9:25 pm after listening to Myanmar opposition radio. She listened to foreign news on the radio and reread the works of India's champion of non-violent protest, Mohandas Gandhi.

Her father, Aung San, was a member of a group of nationalists, the so-



Greenpeace director Lord Peter Melchett hugs 18-year-old Mirrielle Perreira during a wreath laying ceremony outside the French Embassy in London on Monday. — AFP/UNB photo

Clinton rejects Gingrich's plea to recognise Taiwan

WASHINGTON, July 11: The Clinton administration firmly rejected on Monday a suggestion by a leading Republican in the US Congress that the United States "move to recognise Taiwan as a free country," reports AP.

"The President sets American foreign policy towards China," State Department spokesman Nicholas Burns said, "and the President is not going to change that policy."

Like most other countries, Washington recognises the communist government in Beijing as China's legitimate government. Washington maintains trade and other unofficial relations with the government on Taiwan, an offshore island that Beijing considers a rogue province.