

International

# Congress-Communist proxy war wearing down Indian coalition

NEW DELHI, July 19: A proxy war between the Congress, India's oldest party, and Communists is wearing down the country's ruling coalition, analysts say. But for now, the leftists have the upper hand, reports AFP.

The communists, taking part in a national government for the first time in Indian history, appear determined to keep up their overwhelming influence in the affairs of the rickety coalition.

The Congress increasingly looks equally dead set to play a more assertive role given its indisposition for Prime Minister Inder Kumar Gujral.

The result is a disguised war of attrition in which a section of the ruling United Front seems to have quietly moved closer to the Congress while others are content to play second fiddle to the communists.

The Congress had made

some efforts to isolate us (within the front)," said Prakash Karat of the Communist Party of India-Marxist (CPI-M), which — like the Congress — supports the government from the outside.

"They (Congress) feel they should have more say in the running of the government," Karat told AFP. "They are not succeeding. And they are bound to fail."

The United Front government comprises nearly 10 centrist, regional and leftist parties, including the smaller Communist Party of India (CPI).

It is sustained from the outside by the CPI-M and two smaller leftist groups, which are members in the front, and the 112-year-old Congress, which is not in the coalition.

The communists, with 53 members, are the most organ-

ised force in the United Front, which commands about 180 of 545 members in federal parliament.

The Congress has some 140 parliament members.

It was the CPI-M which played the key role in the formation of the United Front following the 1996 hung elections.

The Congress toppled the previous United Front government in April but failed to form a coalition of its own mainly due to the steadfast opposition from the communists.

The communists have publicly warned that the Congress was trying to break-up the United Front by luring away some of its members and to make the coalition look rudderless ahead of next elections.

Congress officials admit their party would never be able to take over leadership of the coalition as long as communists remain in the United Front and call the shots.

Congress President Sitaram Kesri has increasingly let out his frustration against the communist role.

"I object to the way the leftists try to equate the Congress with the (Hindu nationalists)," Kesri said in a recent interview. "They do their best to harm us even in places where they have no base."

"The current fight is between the Congress and the left," the Asian Age newspaper said Friday, adding Kesri's bid to ride in regional parties in the ruling coalition to his side had been foiled by communists.

"The Congress knows the left is the cementing force in the United Front," said CPI-M General Secretary Harkishan Singh Surjeet.

"The Congress is playing some game," he added. "We know it for sure."

The Ministry of Labour granted an amnesty to foreigners who had entered Saudi Arabia on visit or pilgrimage visas but stayed longer than their papers permitted, the English-language newspaper said. The amnesty would also cover expatriate workers who had run away from their sponsors.

The crackdown will help to deport at least 100,000 illegal overstayers, mainly to Asian countries," the paper said.

The campaign was also designed to help solve current labour problems, in line with the country's commitment to provide jobs for an extra 659,900 Saudis by the year 2000.

## Crackdown on illegal aliens in KSA

DUBAI, July 19: Saudi Arabia today launched a nationwide campaign to drive out more than 100,000 illegal aliens from the kingdom, the Daily Arab News said, reports Reuter.

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There are no official Saudi unemployment statistics, but diplomats estimate it could be as high as 20 per cent.

Voting begins in Liberia

MONROVIA, July 19: Polls in Liberia open today for a presidential and legislative election set to turn the page on seven years of devastating civil war, reports AFP.

It is the first election to be held in Liberia since 1985 and the first to offer the electorate genuine chance to choose its head of state.

Of the 13 parties standing, two are considered front runners in the presidential race, the National Patriotic Party, led by Charles Taylor, who ignited the civil war in December 1989, and the Unity Party of Ellen Johnson-Sirleaf.

## Landslide kills 48 in China

BEIJING, July 19: A landslide triggered by heavy rains has killed 48 people and injured another 40 in southwestern Sichuan province, an official report said Saturday, reports AP.

The landslide struck at 1:40 pm (0640 GMT) Thursday, in Xingwen county some 1,400 kilometres (875 miles) southwest of Beijing, the newspaper China Daily reported, citing a local radio broadcast.

The report did not provide further details.

A landslide Tuesday in neighboring Guizhou province killed 31 people.

The deaths from the landslide increased the number killed in this summers seasonal rains to 221.

Floods in the south and drought in the north have damaged some 12 million hectares (30 million acres) of farmland. The government has acknowledged this year's grain harvest will fall short of 1996's 490 million metric tons (540 tons).

In addition to Sichuan and Guizhou, deaths have been reported in Guangdong, Jiangxi and Zhejiang provinces and the region of Guangxi.

Over 100 gold miners feared dead in Tanzania

DAR ES SALAAM, July 19: More than 100 small scale gold miners are feared dead after the roof of a mine collapsed in northwestern Tanzania, burying them alive, a local newspaper reported today, says AFP.

The Swahili language newspaper Nipashe reported police as saying that eight bodies had been recovered following the accident at Matebe, in Kagera region on Thursday, two people survived.

The accident might have been caused by congestion after scores of miners entered the mine, believed to be rich.

The mine is about five metres (15-feet) deep and 50 metres (yards) wide, the newspaper said.

Argentine Jews protest unsolved '94 bombing

BUENOS AIRES, July 19: About 10,000 people many holding pictures of lost loved ones, gathered Friday at the site of the 1994 bombing of a Jewish cultural centre to mark the third anniversary of the unsolved attack, reports AP.

A relative of one of the 86 victims who died in the attack on the Argentine Jewish Mutual Association accused investigators of incompetence, warning that a failure to identify the culprits would encourage further attacks on Argentine soil.

"Buenos Aires should be known as the capital of impunity, Laura Ginsberg said in a speech that also referred to the unsolved 1992 bombing of the Israeli Embassy that killed 29 people. Two government officials acknowledged this week that the investigations into both attacks have failed. Interior Minister Carlos Corach called it "the greatest tragedy of President Carlos Menem's administration."

## Violence in Latin America 1,250 dying everyday

WASHINGTON, July 19: Violence in Latin America is one of the main causes of death in the Hemisphere, costing more than 1,250 lives everyday, the Pan American Health Organization (PAHO) said Thursday, reports AFP.

In some Latin American countries, violence is the main cause of death and in others it is the leading cause of injuries and disability, said Rodrigo Guerrero, PAHO's regional advisor on health and violence.

Of the 1,250 deaths daily due to violence, 65 occur in the United States, where violent acts also leave some 6,000 people seriously hurt each day.

The average homicide rate in America is 20 per 100,000 people, as compared with one per 100,000 in China. In the United States, the figure is 10 per 100,000 and in Colombia it is

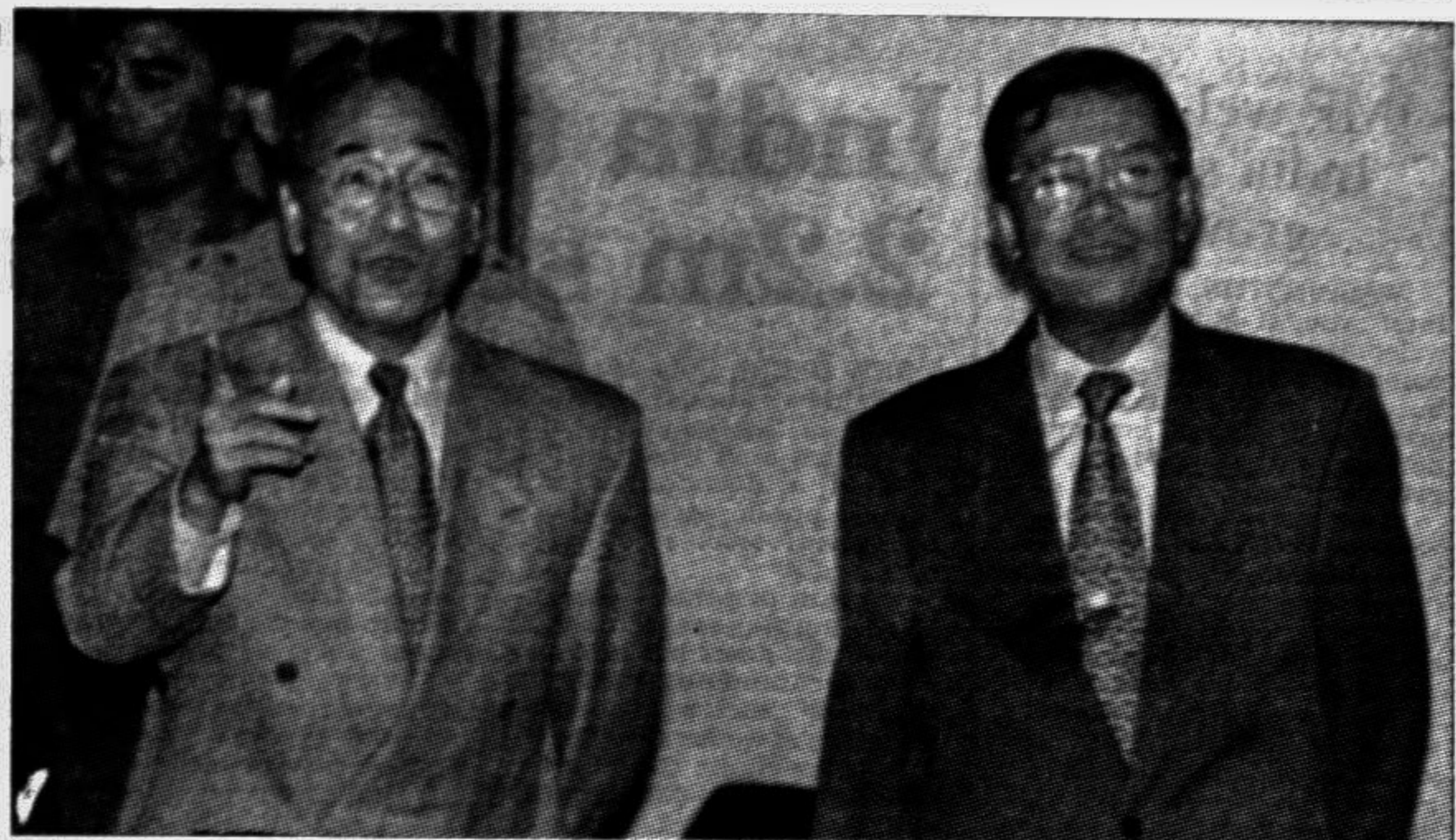
87.6 per 100,000.

"This makes our continent one of the most violent in the world," Guerrero said in statement, listing learned behaviour, alcohol abuse and social inequity as being among the cause.

He said that "easy civilian access to firearms makes the aggressive behaviour that we normally encounter more dangerous and even lethal."

"I think the cultural aspect is the most important one, and it is a fact that in the region of the Americas, and mainly in the United States, we have adopted a culture of violence, of violent response to conflict and idealisation of violence," he said.

PAHO Director George Alleyne said the organization was working to raise consciousness on the urgency of the problem, particularly violence against women and children.



Cambodian Second Prime Minister Hun Sen, right, and Foreign Minister Ung Hut, who accepted the nomination as deposed First Prime Minister Prince Norodom Ranariddh's replacement, share a list moment before the arrival of the special envoy of ASEAN ministers at the Council of Minister in Phnom Penh Saturday, Foreign Ministers from Thailand, the Philippines, and Indonesia arrived Saturday to discuss Cambodia's political situation. — AFP/UNB photo

## US puts fresh pressure on Hun Sen

WASHINGTON, July 19: The United States on Friday put fresh pressure on Cambodia coup leader Hun Sen and said special envoy Stephen Solzari will try to develop a "coherent initiative" on the crisis with Asian Nations when he visits the region starting Saturday, reports Reuter.

On his mission, M Solzari will "put forward... a very vigorous point of view by the United States that the status quo (in Phnom Penh) cannot be tolerated," State Department spokesman Nicholas Burns said.

In Phnom Penh, Hun Sen dismissed international efforts to solve his country's political crisis and told foreigners not to interfere — a message pointedly ignored by Washington.

"I don't think it's over yet in Cambodia," Burns insisted.

"We are not willing to concede that the status quo cannot be returned to. We are not willing to concede that we should do

nothing, when democracy has been fluted so brazenly by Hun Sen in Cambodia," he said.

"We are not willing to concede that prince Ranariddh is no longer first prime minister of Cambodia."

The United States seems to face a difficult struggle to reverse the military action on July 6 by which Hun Sen, Cambodia's second prime minister, overthrew prince Norodom Ranariddh, the elected first prime minister, and assumed sole control of the government.

Ranariddh is unable to return to the country and his royalist party seems to be fragmenting, some countries, including Japan, appear more willing to work with Hun Sen than the United States.

It was announced Thursday that Secretary of State Madeleine Albright had decided to send Solzari on a special mission to work with regional countries in pursuing a resolution to the Cambodia crisis.

Solzari is a former long-time Chairman of the House of Representatives Subcommittee on Asia and the Pacific and a key player in US policy leading up to the 1991 Paris Treaty that brought a brief peace to Cambodia.

Burns said the envoy would leave Saturday for a trip to Beijing, Tokyo, Bangkok, Jakarta, Kuala Lumpur and Phnom Penh, where he will meet Hun Sen and the man Hun Sen has designated to take Ranariddh's place.

Working within the framework of the 1991 Paris peace accords, Solzari will "try to see if the United States can agree with all of those countries on some kind of coherent initiative to this process forward, and in a positive direction," the spokesman said.

Albright did not dispatch a special envoy sooner because she wanted to wait until an ASEAN diplomatic mission had made its way to the region," he said.

PA's envoy to UN protests Israel's rejection of UNGA resolution

UNITED NATIONS, July 19: Palestine's UN observer on Friday protested Israel's rejection of a UN resolution and threatened further action aimed at halting settlement building, reports AFP.

The General Assembly also recommended that member states "actively discourage activities which directly contribute to the buildings of Jewish settlements in occupied territories, including East Jerusalem."

The vote was carried by 131 votes to three, with 14 abstentions.

Al-Kidwa noted in his letter that Israel Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu had stated that Israel would continue to maintain its sovereignty in Jerusalem "despite the objections of other countries throughout the world."

In a resolution adopted on Tuesday at the UN General Assembly condemned Israel for

ignoring an April resolution calling for an immediate halt to settlement building, particularly at a site in disputed East Jerusalem.

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Senate opposes Clinton admn's proposal to expand UNSC

UNITED NATIONS, July 19: A Clinton Administration proposal to expand the Security Council has run up against US Senate opposition even before it has been formally submitted, reports AP.

An aide to Sen. Jesse Helms, chairman of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, said Thursday that Helms strongly opposed the plan, especially if it would grant the new members veto powers held by the five current permanent members.

Helms' committee would have to approve changes in the council.

The plan, as outlined by US Ambassador Bill Richardson, would expand the Security Council by five permanent members.

## BRIEFLY

**Astronomer Shoemaker dead:** US astronomer Eugene Shoemaker, who helped discover the giant Shoemaker-Levy 9 comet which slammed into the planet Jupiter in 1994, died in a car crash in outback Australia, police said yesterday, Reuter reports from Sydney.

Shoemaker's astronomer wife Carolyn was injured in the head-on collision with another car on Friday afternoon, said police sergeant Neville Pulfard from Alice Springs in central Australia. The accident occurred on a dirt road near the border of the northern territory and western Australia state, about 500 km (300 miles) northwest of Alice Springs.

**35 feared drowned in Bihar:** At least 35 people were feared drowned when their boat sank on Friday in a rain-swollen river in the eastern Indian state of Bihar, the United News of India said, AFP reports from New Delhi.

The overcrowded boat went under in the Kosi river in Bihar's Madhepura district, the news agency said, adding that eight people swam ashore after the accident. Forty-five people, mostly women and children, were on the boat, officials said, adding that a search operation has been launched for more possible victims.

**Mandela turns 79:** A bit jet-lagged after returning from a three-nation trip, President Nelson Mandela celebrated his 79th birthday with a quiet party with his children and grandchildren Friday, AP reports from Pretoria.

Mandela's health came under scrutiny during the visits to England, Indonesia and Thailand, but spokesman Park Mankahlana said he was in good condition. "He is very, very healthy for his age," he said. The president officially celebrated his birthday before he left on the trip with a party for 900 disabled or terminally ill children.

**Suu Kyi pays tribute to her father:** Embattled pro-democracy leader Aung San Suu Kyi paid solemn tribute to her father — and Myanmar's greatest hero — on the 50th anniversary of his assassination Saturday, AP reports from Yangon.

Although her movements have been sharply restricted by the country's military rulers, Suu Kyi was permitted to take part in ceremonies at the white marble mausoleum where her father Aung San is buried. The Nobel Peace Prize winner has suffered house arrest, constant harassment and the imprisonment of many followers, but observers say her father's prestige protects her from imprisonment, or worse, by the military junta.

**Tajik govt, opposition exchange POWs:** Tajikistan's government and opposition exchanged their first, small groups of war prisoners at a settlement high in the mountains Friday night, the Interfax news agency reported, AP reports from Dushanbe.

Seven opposition supporters were exchanged for seven Tajik soldiers who had been held for about a year as a result of the protracted conflict in the Central Asian nation. The POW swap in the settlement of Childara, 250 kilometres (150 miles) east of the capital Dushanbe, was much smaller than the 50-for-50 deal that had been envisioned. Davlat Usmon, representative for the United Tajik Opposition, said the change was only due to technical reasons. He hailed the start of the exchange process as "a convincing measure of confidence on both sides."

**Thai fire death toll rises to 91**

BANGKOK, July 19: The death toll from the Thai seaside inferno over a week ago has risen to 91 after a conference delegate at the hotel succumbed to her injuries, police and local reports said today, reports AFP.

Pattama Wannasetta, 41, who had been in a coma since the killer blaze at popular tourist destination Pattaya, was pronounced dead early Friday from severe lung complications at the Pattaya Memorial Hospital, police said.

Pattama was a manager of the Electricity Generating Authority of Thailand (EGAT), which was holding a conference at the royal Jomtien Resort when the inferno engulfed the building.

A total of 25 EGAT employees perished in the blaze, 150 kilometres (90 miles) south of Bangkok, local reports said.

Thai police on Friday said they had arrested a kitchen worker who fled the hotel

shortly after the fire started, and had charged him with negligence causing death and injury.

The 18-year-old worker — identified by local press as Kayan Kasien — was picked up the previous day at his cousin's house in Bangkok, police said.

According to local press, Kayan had been in the ground floor kitchen when the fire was sparked by leaking gas, but he fled the scene without warning hotel management.

The managing director of the company that owns the hotel earlier gave himself to authorities and has also been charged with criminal negligence over the hotel's woeful lack of safety precautions.

Alarms and sprinkler systems did not activate and fire escape doors were locked from the outside, reportedly to stop hotel guests from leaving without paying.

**Crises on Mir force crew to curtail scientific programme**

KOROLYOV (Russia), July 19: A series of crises on Mir, the world's only orbiting laboratory, has forced the crew to curtail its scientific programme and highlighted the need to advance to a new-generation space station, reports Reuter.

"As for Michael's experiments, shut them off, switch them off for now," a ground engineer radioed up on Thursday at the height of the latest energy crisis as the crew was fighting to save the ship itself.

He was referring to British-American astronaut Michael Foale, who had set up a small Greenhouse and separate study of the impact of space flight on the internal clock of bees.

Pulling the plug on the insect project was a small example of the ailing Mir's difficulties in fulfilling its original mission, space science.

There are an insignificant number of experiments under way, mostly those which do not

require the use of energy," Flight Director Vladimir Solovov, a former cosmonaut, said today.

In recent months, Mir has suffered a fire, a problem with its ventilation system, and then a June 25 collision with a transport craft that caused a major power loss.

After the crash, mission control outside Moscow ordered the three-man crew to cut power to some areas of the station performing science. Foale, who has a doctorate in laboratory astrophysics, even lost access to his original computer when they sealed off the punctured Spektr module.

Space officials said France may now call off plans to send one of its astronauts with the new crew bound for Mir next month, since it looked increasingly likely that the next team would have to concentrate on further repairs, not research.

Despite Mir's recent catalogue of woes, international space experts agree that the space station has made significant achievements since it first went into orbit 11 years ago.

The Mir space station has provided us with a wealth of knowledge and experience about long-duration human habitation of space which will be essential for future space missions such as a human trip to Mars," said Eugene Benton, a university of San Francisco physicist who designed radiation detectors for Mir.

In addition to learning about man's reaction to space — such as the fact that about half of all cosmonauts suffer dizziness and nausea when they go into orbit — Russians say recent setbacks have given them valuable training in handling unexpected scenarios.

"You gather experience for future expeditions," Deputy Flight Director for medicine Igor Goncharov told reporters.

**UNESCO confce adopts declaration on future of adult learning for all**

HAMBURG, Germany, July 19: Close to 1500 representatives of 134 governments, 428 non-governmental organisations, and 223 foundations and institutions at UNESCO's fifth International Conference on Adult Education (CONFINTEA) here adopted a 4-page document the Hamburg Declaration defining the role of education in securing "The informed and effective participation of men and women in every sphere" needed if "Humanity is to survive and meet the challenges of the future, says a UNESCO press release.

In a separate document also adopted Friday, the 17-page Agenda for the Future of Adult Learning, CONFINTEA sets out a series of measures to bolster life-long learning world wide. They include allocating at least six per cent of Member States gross national product to education, with an equitable share set aside for adult learning. It also proposes dedicating one hour a day to learning and a UN Adult Learning Week.

The declaration stresses that "Only human-centred develop-

ment and a participatory society based on the full respect of human rights will lead to sustainable and equitable development." It defines adult education as "Both a consequence of active citizenship and a condition for full participation in society" and highlights its potentially enormous contribution for "An informed and tolerant citizenry, economic and social development, the eradication of illiteracy, the alleviation of poverty and the preservation of the environment."

In view of the ever-growing role of education in the information society, the declaration calls for expanded partnerships but stresses that "The state remains the essential vehicle for ensuring the right to education for all, particularly for the most vulnerable groups of society." It must also provide advice, funding, monitoring and evaluation.

While "Recognising the diversity of political, economic and social systems and gov-

ernmental structures among member countries," it stresses democratic values and calls for equal rights to life-long learning, in for women.

It also affirms to right of indigenous peoples to avail themselves of full learning opportunities in their own languages, with respect to their own cultures.

The declaration expresses commitment for the creation of a culture of peace and education to reinforce "Dialogue, mutual recognition and negotiation (which are to) replace violence, in homes and communities, within nations and between countries."

Calling on the international community to "increase and guarantee national and international investment and the commitment of private and community resources to youth and adult learning," the declaration exhorts Member States to implement the measures recommended in the Agenda for the Future so that "life-long

learning can be "A joy, a tool, a right and a shared responsibility."

The agenda calls for "Greater community participation," notably "By encouraging and developing leadership capabilities among adult population and especially among women."

It calls for "Raising awareness about prejudice and discrimination in society... by ensuring the legitimate right of people of self-determination to freely exercise their way of life." It recommends "Developing education programmes that enable men and enable men and women to understand gender relations and human sexuality in all their dimensions."

The Agenda asks for greater recognition and participation of non-governmental organisations and local community groups involved in adult education and recommends increased funding for these groups.

It urges "improving the conditions and quality of adult

learning," notably through legislation, the creation of public information and counseling services, developing strategies to extend adult learning to those currently excluded and "promoting the entitlement to learn through the one hour per day for learning movement."

The agenda furthermore calls for "institutions of formal education of all levels to be open to adults" and urges "improving the conditions for the professional development of adult educators," notably through better in-service training, working conditions and remuneration. It also urges "eliminating barriers between non-formal and formal education" and reiterates the "universal right to literacy and basic education" while calling for increased funding for literacy programmes for all.

To include the environment, health and population in adult learning, the agenda points to "The need to involve people in

ecologically and socially sustainable development programmes" and calls for necessary "Changes in production and consumption patterns." It also recommends "Integrating indigenous/traditional knowledge of the interaction between human beings and nature into adult learning programmes."

On population-related issues, the Agenda recommends "Recognising the decisive role of population education and health promotion in preserving and improving the health of communities and individuals."

On "Adult learning, culture, media and new information technologies," the Agenda urges "synergy between the media, new information technologies and adult learning" and calls for the promotion of "Media education and media content that will help users to develop critical and discerning attitudes toward the media."

"Ensuring access for older people to all the services and

provisions that sustain adult learning and training and thereby facilitate their active participation in society," is also sought. The agenda further requests that the rights of migrants, displaced populations, refugees, persons with disability and all prison inmates to participate in adult education, be guaranteed.

On "Improving the financing of adult education," the agenda recommends that bilateral and multilateral financial institutions contribute to adult education, incites business support for adult education in enterprises, and calls for exploring the conversion of the current debt of developing countries into investment in human development.

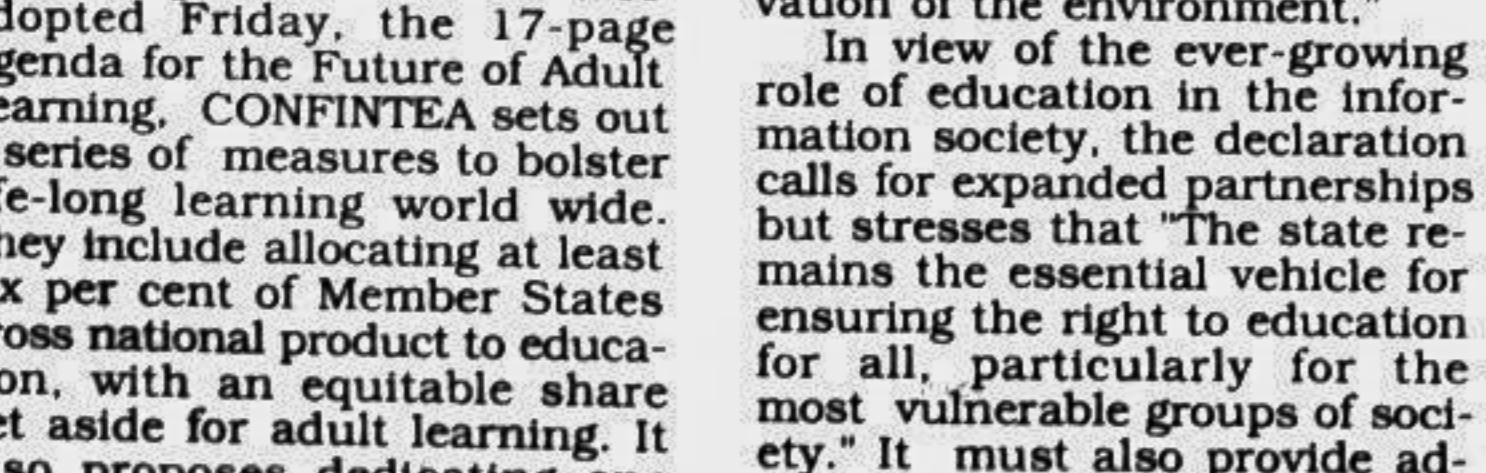
"Enhancing international co-operation and solidarity" is to be obtained, according to the agenda, by "Assessing all co-operation projects in terms of both their contributions to adult learning and human development and the priority they

give to the strengthening of local expertise."

To create "A conducive environment for international co-operation," the agenda recommends "providing greater opportunities for grassroots workers and learners to meet one another in groups composed on a South-South and North-South basis and by strengthening training networks across the regions to serve as mechanisms for upgrading adult education."

Finally, the agenda focuses on the follow-up of its recommendations, recognising that "The strategies and mechanisms used to follow-up the Fifth International Conference on Adult Education must be highly flexible." It calls for the involvement of all partners to play an active part in the follow-up and entrusts UNESCO with this task on an international level, in collaboration with other institutions. UNESCO's Hamburg-based Institute for Education "Should be strengthened in order to become an international reference centre for adult and continuing education."

**Thai fire death toll rises to 91**



Dozens of political supporters of businessman, warlord and Liberian presidential candidate Charles Ghankay Taylor cling to a truck Thursday in Monrovia at the end of a largely peaceful campaign for Saturday's presidential and legislative polls which are meant to mark the end of seven years of devastating civil war. — AFP/UNB photo