



People pass the tomb of Mother Teresa after paying respect to her at the headquarters of the Missionaries of Charity, Calcutta, Tuesday. Nearly 400 mourners waited for several hours Monday before the Missionaries of Charity allowed them in to pray for the first time at Mother Teresa's grave. — AP/UNB photo

'Sister Nirmala to be good successor to Teresa'

NEW DELHI, Sept. 17: Sister Nirmala, the Hindu-born Superior General of the Missionaries of Charity, is in the mould of Mother Teresa herself and is likely to prove a good administrator of the global order, the Mother's authorised biographer said, according to India Abroad News Service.

"It remains to be seen what particular stamp is given by Sister Nirmala, but she is in the mould of Mother Teresa," Navin Chawla, who wrote Mother Teresa's biography in 1992 and had known the nun for 22 years, told India Abroad News Service in an interview.

"The sisters, after many weeks of deliberations, have chosen very wisely and very well in Sister Nirmala," said Chawla, chairman of Delhi's state-owned electricity undertaking.

"She has the same quality of deep faith and prayer and as an administrator, I sense that she also has the makings of a very good administrator," he added. "I have no doubt that the Missionaries of Charity would continue to do their quiet work in the streets and slums of the world."

Sister Nirmala, who was born in Bihar, eastern India in 1934 to Hindu Brahmin parents, converted to Christianity when she was in her twenties and emerged from the shadows to take over the leadership of the organisation earlier this year. She now faces the difficult task of carrying forward her mentor's awesome legacy.

Chawla said even if there was a change of direction for the Missionaries of Charity under Sister Nirmala, the essential nature of the organisation would remain the same. "There is the possibility that there will

be a shrinkage of funds but it does not matter because they have never solicited funds," he added.

The biography, which has been translated in 14 languages, sold 30,000 copies last year in the U.S. and another 30,000 are to hit the stands this week. A second book by Chawla on Mother Teresa was published this year.

Chawla said the most enduring legacy of the Mother would be her ability to make the mighty and the rich reach out to the suffering and the poor whom the 4,000 nuns of her order served in about 600 homes in over 126 countries.

Privacy Law won't be introduced in Britain

LONDON, Sept. 17: The British government has rejected introducing a Privacy Law, a press report said today, says AP.

The Financial Times quoted officials as saying that legislation incorporating the European convention on human rights into British Law would be introduced shortly after parliament reconvenes in October. It added that Prime Minister Tony Blair and other ministers believe that privacy would best be safeguarded through the 50-year old convention.

The privacy issue took on new urgency this month following the death of Princess Diana when the car she was travelling in Paris crashed while being chased by paparazzi.

Currently the British media has a code of conduct which, in the absence of a Privacy Law, serves as a system of self-regulation.

Onlookers still throng Di's death spot

PARIS, Sept. 17: Dozens of onlookers, ranging from the curious to the ghoulish, thronged into a Paris tunnel in the small hours of Tuesday morning to get a close look at the spot where Diana, Princess of Wales died, reports Reuters.

The tunnel, which is normally full of traffic and was until now guarded by police, was closed for routine maintenance.

That gave Parisians and tourists a first chance to see and touch the fateful 13th pillar into which a Mercedes carrying Diana and three others crashed on August 31.

"I want to see for myself exactly what happened," said one of the onlookers, Olivier Zafar. "She was a wonderful person."

Demirel meets Mubarak

CAIRO, Sept. 17: Turkey's President assumed Egypt on Tuesday that his country's military ties with Israel would not harm the Arab world, reports AP.

"Turkey's relations with Arab countries are deeply rooted in history," Suleyman Demirel told a press conference after talks with Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak in Alexandria.

"Our relations with Israel are not against that country," Demirel said. "The Arab countries are the brothers of Turkey and we don't have any problems with Arab countries that we need to settle by force."

AIDS infection rate among women rising in US

CHICAGO, Sept. 17: The AIDS infection rate is rising among American women, especially those living in the South, and transmission through sex with infected men has outpaced intravenous drug use, federal researchers say, reports AP.

"Prevention efforts remain critical," the researchers said, particularly since those women who are most at risk can be difficult to educate because of their poverty, substance abuse, alcoholism and other problems.

From 1991 through 1995, the number of women diagnosed with AIDS increased by 63 per cent versus 12.8 per cent for men.

By the end of 1995, 67,400 women throughout the country had been diagnosed as having AIDS since the epidemic began, with 11,500 of them being diagnosed in 1995.

The researchers did not immediately have figures Tuesday on the total number of men infected.

Clinton insists on exemptions to land mine ban

WASHINGTON, Sept. 17: Saying the United States has not "taken a back seat to anyone" in eradicating land mines, President Bill Clinton insisted Tuesday on a proposed ban that includes a series of US-sought exemptions, reports AP.

The United States succeeded Tuesday in getting a 24-hour postponement of talks under way in Oslo, Norway, on a proposed treaty to ban antipersonnel land mines, totally and immediately. US officials want several exemptions, including a nine-year delay on a total ban, an exclusion for mines laid around antitank mines and on the Korean Peninsula.

Clinton said before it could agree to a ban, the United States had to ensure that it can maintain its "fundamental responsibilities" to protect its own troops and safeguard the Korean Peninsula from expansion of communist North Korea.

"The United States would like to be a signatory to this agreement, but I have to be sure that we can fulfill our responsibilities," Clinton said.

US military officials said an exception for mines planted around antitank mines is especially important. "It doesn't do any good if soldiers can come in and move the mines out of the way of tanks," said Pentagon spokesman Kenneth Bacon.

The Joint Chiefs of Staff supports a compromise which would allow shielding antitank mines with others that Clinton said would "automatically go dead within a matter of hours or days."

Clinton spoke after maneuvering much of the day to get the Oslo talks postponed so that US officials could try to negotiate their concerns into the treaty. White House spokesman Mike McCurry said Clinton worked on the issue much of Monday

night as well, talking to Canadian Prime Minister Jean Chretien shortly after midnight.

"The president is engaged at the highest levels," McCurry said. "The status of the negotiations at this point is quite sensitive. They are clearly in something of overtime at this point, and we hope for a successful resolution of all the issues."

The delay slowed what has been a speedy 11-month effort to ban antipersonnel land mines, which kill or maim scores of people in former war zones each year. There are an estimated 100 million to 300 million antipersonnel mines deployed in about 60 countries.

The president denied that his last-minute effort meant that he had abandoned his support for a ban. He pointed out that the United States has spent \$150 million on mine removal in the past four years.

Benazir denies corruption allegations

ISLAMABAD, Sept. 17: Pakistan's former prime minister Benazir Bhutto said Tuesday that the freezing of Swiss bank accounts linked to her and her family were part of the present government's campaign to destroy her international reputation, reports AP.

Swiss officials announced Monday they had frozen the accounts of Ms. Bhutto, her husband, Asif Ali Zardari, and her mother, Nurat Bhutto, in four Geneva banks in connection with a corruption inquiry.

The move was in cooperation with a Pakistan government investigation alleging that Ms. Bhutto and her relatives illegally enriched themselves during her leadership.

Ms. Bhutto, 42, denied any wrongdoing.

"These allegations are false. Neither my husband, my mother nor I have done anything wrong," she said at her large house in the expensive Clifton area of Pakistan's largest city, Karachi.

She did not deny having Swiss bank accounts. "I may or may not have bank accounts. That has nothing to do with the criminal charges that have been made," Ms. Bhutto said.

"Because mine is an internationally recognised name the regime thinks it can discredit and demoralise me by conducting a media campaign," Ms. Bhutto said. She demanded to know why the charges had not

been made in a court of law.

Earlier Tuesday, Ms. Bhutto met with her husband at the Karachi Central Jail, where he has been held since she was dismissed in November on charges of corruption and misuse.

Zardari, widely blamed for her downfall, has been charged with ordering the murder of Ms. Bhutto's estranged brother, Murtaza Bhutto, who died in a hail of police gunfire outside his Karachi home a year ago. Zardari has denied involvement.

Ms. Bhutto said that in their prison meeting her husband had denied having any bank accounts overseas.

Thousands of Tutsi rebels flee into Rwanda fearing onslaught

GOMA, Congo, Sept. 17: More than 3,000 Congolese Tutsis who fled their homes in the northeast and had been living in a refugee camp here have crossed into Rwanda fearing attack, spokesman for two aid agencies said Monday, reports AP.

They reportedly were part of a group of 7,000 Tutsis who arrived in Goma several weeks ago after being attacked by former Rwanda Hutu soldiers and militia. While living in the camp here, on the Congo-Rwanda border, they had been protected by Rwandan soldiers.

Rwandan soldiers and officers, most of whom are Tutsis, helped rebel forces, also Tutsis, capture the former Zaire in an eight-month sweep that brought President Laurent Kabila to power in May. The government renamed the country Congo.

Some aid agency workers speaking on condition of anonymity, said the 3,000 refugees fled to Rwanda over the

weekend because the soldiers themselves had left Thursday.

"It's not likely a coincidence that these displaced Tutsis left at the same time as the Rwandan soldiers," said Franke De Jonge, director of the aid agency Doctors Without Borders, which had been supplying water for the displaced Tutsis at the Goma camp.

Sources said increasing incidents of violence and hostility from indigenous tribes had forced Kabila's officials to send the Rwandan soldiers back to their country.

The Tutsis began crossing into northwestern Rwanda on Friday, and by Saturday, the camp was empty, De Jonge said.

Yvan Sturm, a spokesman for UN refugee agency, said 2,830 Congolese Tutsis arrived in the Rwandan border town of Gisenyi on Saturday, and another 477 on Sunday.

There was no indication where the remaining 3,700 Tutsis had gone.

Sturm said more than 1,300 of the new arrivals in Gisenyi had been settled into an existing camp for Congolese Tutsis at Mudende, where more than 100 people were massacred last month by the Rwandan Hutu rebels.

They were settled there at the request of Rwandan authorities, who assured UN officials that they had secured the area, Sturm said.

Both northwestern Rwanda and the Masisi region of Congo that the 7,000 Tutsis originally fled, have been under steady attack by rebels bent on destabilizing the two countries.

Many of the Rwandan Hutu insurgents took part in the slaughter of more than half a million Tutsis in Rwanda in 1994, which was orchestrated by the then-Hutu government.

When Tutsi-led rebels ousted the Hutu regime in Rwanda, ending the genocide in July 1994, the Hutu killers fled to Zaire.



German soldier Frank Oefinger from NATO-led peace keeping forces in Bosnia, stands guard in front of the OSCE centre for counting ballots in Sarajevo suburb of Rajlovac, some 8 kilometres (10 miles) west of Sarajevo Tuesday. — AP/UNB photo



The charred wreckage of a van is seen on a street in Ujung Pandang, on the island of Sulawesi, 1,400 kilometres (875 miles) northeast of Jakarta, Tuesday. Rioting mobs attacked and set fire to stores, houses, and vehicles belonging to ethnic Chinese after two Muslim sisters were hacked to death by a deranged ethnic Chinese man early Tuesday morning. — AP/UNB photo

Bombay bldg collapse 21 more remain trapped

BOMBAY, Sept. 17: One side of an eight-story building collapsed Tuesday in an upscale area of Bombay, India's financial capital. Firefighters rescued 26 injured people from the debris, but at least 21 more remained trapped, reports AP.

Firefighters recovered two bodies and one of the injured later died in a hospital. Fourteen of the injured were hospitalized, police said.

Police Commissioner Ronald Mendonca said witnesses saw the collapse begin from the building's top floor, and said most people had time to flee.

Leakage from a water tank on the building's roof was a likely cause of the collapse, said Amarnath Dubey, the area deputy commissioner.

Using searchlights, 85 fire fighters looked for the missing 21 people, Dubey said.

Fifteen fire trucks were rushed to the site of the collapse.

A pharmaceutical company employee who gave his name only as Parekh was able to run down the stairs to safety. He said he had been briefed on what to do in an emergency after a recent fire in a nearby building.

Gujral to arrive in NY early next week

WASHINGTON, Sept. 17: Prime Minister I K Gujral arrives in New York early next week for crucial talks with President Bill Clinton amid a tangible manifestation of a greater understanding and deeper appreciation of India in the US Congress, according to India Abroad News Service.

The unprecedented thrashing of the anti-India Burton amendment received earlier this month came as a shot in the arm to pro-India lobbies, which also included the Indian American community groups. The legislation, introduced by India's bete noire in Congress, Rep. Dan Burton, suffered its worst ignominy on September 4, being clobbered by a margin of 342 to 82 with ten abstentions.

George Pickart, senior advisor and number two official in the State Department's South Asia Bureau, told India Abroad News Service that the defeat of the Burton Amendment clearly

"reflects a new appreciation of India."

He said the relegation of the Burton legislation into the thrashbin of Congressional history was "a recognition of India's importance and understanding and education about the situation on the ground in India."

Pickart said, "we've seen some dramatic improvements on the human rights front in India, we've seen the resumption of India-Pakistan talks, and there is just an improved climate so there is less of a reason to emphasize some of the more troubled issues" that have permeated administration concern and congressional debate in the past.

Pickart declared that "the State Department took a position very firmly opposed to the Burton Amendment" and pledged that "we would continue to oppose it under any circumstances."

NLD denies accepting invitation to talk with Myanmar junta

YANGON, Sept. 17: Myanmar democracy advocate Aung San Suu Kyi's political party denied reports today that the 1991 Nobel Peace Prize winner had blocked a meeting between the military government and her party's chairman, reports AP.

According to a statement released by Suu Kyi's National League for Democracy, Aung Shwe, the party's chairman, had never accepted the invitation to meet with Gen Khin Nyunt, Myanmar's intelligence chief, and other members of the military regime.

Two other members of the NLD's executive committee were

also invited to attend.

Military officials have refused to meet directly with Suu Kyi, who is the party's general secretary.

The statement said the party, after receiving the invitation Monday afternoon, made repeated attempts to contact the government and tell them Aung Shwe could not attend the 9 am Tuesday morning meeting, but were unable to reach military officials.

"It is the policy of the NLD that the party jointly be represented by its chairman and general secretary," the statement said.

Increase in hate crimes against Asian Americans

Even as federal authorities claim that violent crime in the United States has declined, hate attacks on Asian Americans appear to have gone up.

The 27-page report of the National Asian Pacific American Legal Consortium (NAPALC) estimates that hate crimes against Asian Americans increased by 17 per cent in 1996. The report, a copy of which was given to U.S. Attorney-General Janet Reno, said there were 534 suspected and confirmed incidents motivated by racial prejudice and animosity against Asian Americans.

"These figures reflect a steady increase in violence directed against Asian Pacific Americans in the past four years -- and contrasts with the Federal Bureau of Investigation's (FBI) findings that violent crime declined by seven per cent in 1996," said the report titled "The 1996 Audit of Violence Against Asian Pacific Americans: The Violent Impact On A Growing Community."

Asian Americans experienced increasing numbers of racially motivated incidents at their homes, schools and workplaces, the report said. A large number of these took place in public housing.

Assailing the "tendency of the mainstream media to view anti-Asian incidents as isolated, local occurrences rather

than as a pattern of increasing violence against Asian Pacific Americans nationwide," the report said this led "to the widespread misperception that no organised federal response is necessary."

"While xenophobia continued to motivate incidents of violence, hate crimes targeting Asian Pacific Americans involved in legitimate political participation emerged as a disturbing trend in 1996," the report noted.

According to NAPALC executive director Karen K. Narasaki, the campaign finance controversy had become the new xenophobic phenomenon to perpetuate the stereotype of Asian Americans as foreigners who are suspect. The scandal, which broke last fall and is the subject of congressional and Justice Department probes, was triggering a high number of anti-Asian hate crimes reports so far this year.

Director Narasaki said this had compounded xenophobia, spurred by last year's passage of a restrictive immigration reform bill, welfare legislation denying benefits to legal immigrants and a "general anti-minority rhetoric" that intensified during the 1996 election campaign.

The NAPALC, which has conducted three earlier surveys of violence against Asian

American, said that data continued to be difficult to obtain, incomplete and limited by widespread under-reporting.

Eight states -- Alaska, Georgia, Hawaii, Indiana, Mississippi, Missouri, New Mexico and Oklahoma -- did not collect hate crime data in 1996 despite the Hate Crime Statistics Act.

"By failing to document and respond to hate crimes accurately and completely, law enforcement adds to the perception that they are apathetic to hate crimes," the report noted. "This perception leads victims of hate crimes reluctant to report," it added.

Like in the preceding two years, "racial motivation was confirmed in over 90 per cent of the reported incidents (in 1996), with the balance categorised as suspected bias cases," the report noted. Harassment jumped 161 per cent and 53 per cent from 1995 and 1994 respectively, while vandalism increased 48 per cent from 1995, and 177 per cent from 1994. There were two murders, two bomb threats, two incidents of arson, and a cross burning, it noted.

Hate incidents at a person's business or place of employment increased a significant 117 per cent. Asian American students "were vulnerable on college campuses, where incidents increased 100 per cent,"

mostly through hate messages sent on e-mail.

In one incident at the University of California at Irvine last fall, hate messages with racial epithets targeted 60 Asian American students. A former student was charged with sending the messages, the first instance of prosecution for an alleged federal hate crime in cyberspace.

The report said political candidates throughout the country and college students campaigning against Proposition 209, the anti-affirmative action initiative in California, "frequently experienced hate calls and vandalism to their property."

The states of Arkansas, Kansas, Kentucky, Louisiana, Nebraska, South Carolina, Utah and Wyoming "continue to have no criminal laws addressing racially motivated crimes." Federal civil rights statutes remain too limited in their scope because they require the victim to be engaged in a federally protected activity and cover only race, colour, religion and national origin," it said.

It complained that election and appointed officials "too often resorted to stereotypes and scapegoating, as well as racially divisive rhetoric, that foster and perpetuate animus against Asian Pacific Americans." This was "especially virulent" last year, the report said. — India Abroad News Service

Bosnian ethnic opposition to promote democracy

SARAJEVO, Sept. 17: Opposition parties from all sides of Bosnia's ethnic divide will promote democracy nationwide by developing links between cities they won in local elections, an opposition leader said Tuesday, reports AP.

The first official results of the weekend election won't be released until at least Saturday, but parties are already declaring local victories.

The opposition Social Democratic Party, former Communists, says it has done better this year than in last year's parliamentary and presidential elections when it won a tiny chunk of the vote. The Union of Bosnian Social Democrats has already declared victory in the northern town of Tuzla.

But the nationalist Serb Democratic Party, the main political force in the Bosnian Serb-controlled half of the country, claimed victory in every major town except Banja Luka, the western stronghold of renegade president Biljana Plavsic.

The Socialist Party, close to Yugoslav President Slobodan Milosevic, was leading in Banja Luka, according to preliminary, unofficial results.

Several thousand Serbs took part in street celebrations organised by the ruling party in Brcko Monday night, the

Bosnian Serb state news agency SRNA reported. The Serb Democratic Party claims to have won 55 per cent of the vote and quashed the attempt of Muslim and Croat refugees from the northern town to rein political dominance there.

The Serbian Radical Party of wartime paramilitary leader Vojislav Seselj was also reporting gains over last year. Together with the Serb Democratic Party, it is certain to oppose the return of Muslim and Croat refugees who have expressed a desire to go home.

The self-declared opposition shadow government, formed after last year's parliamentary elections, said Tuesday it will create an association of opposition-led cities.

"This way we will try to resist to the pressure (of nationalism) and with the help of the international community try to spread democracy there," said its vice-president, Zeljko Ivanovic.

"We want to show what it is like when citizens' parties are in power, opposing nationalist parties."

The shadow government embraces moderates from both the Muslim-Croat federation and the Serb-controlled half of Bosnia, and promotes interethnic cooperation. But it has no powers other than advocacy.

BRIEFLY

15 Turkish Kurds killed in N Iraq

An Iraqi Kurdish group has killed 15 more Turkish Kurdish rebels in fighting in northern Iraq, the group's radio said Tuesday, AP reports from Ankara.

The radio station of the Kurdistan Democratic Party, or KDP, which was monitored by Turkey's Anatolia news agency, said the fighting took place near the Turkish-Iraqi border area. Twelve other rebels were injured in the clashes.

3 hostages freed in Chechnya

A special security unit in Chechnya freed three hostages and arrested three suspects as part of a battle against kidnappings in the lawless southern republic, a Russian news agency reported Tuesday, AP reports from Moscow.

The three hostages were from the neighbouring republic of Dagestan and had been held for months by kidnappers seeking ransom, Magomed Magomotov, head of an anti-kidnapping unit recently appointed in Chechnya, told the Interfax news agency. The unit still has plenty of work left -- at least 93 hostages remain, including 16 Russians and several foreigners, Chechen officials said.

Drug courier held in Philippines

A suspected Chinese drug courier, on bail on illegal drug possession charges, has been arrested again after he sold drugs to a police agent in a sting operation, police said Tuesday, AP reports from Manila.

Police anti-narcotics chief Reynaldo Acop said Young Fung Yuen was arrested last Thursday near his house in an upscale neighbourhood in Paranaque, a Manila suburb. Acop said Young, who has been living in the Philippines for 10 years, is believed to be a drug courier for a Hong Kong-based drug syndicate. His passport was issued in Hong Kong last February, Acop said.

Floods kill 10 in Sri Lanka

At least 10 people have been killed and thousands made homeless in floods and landslides following torrential rains in most parts of Sri Lanka in the past two days, government officials said yesterday, Reuters reports from Colombo.

Six people died when their houses were swept away by landslides at Delivovita in the southern Ratnapura district, officials of the social service department said. Four others were killed in landslides in Avissawela and Yatiyantota, also in Ratnapura district, the officials added.

9 die as boat sinks in Spain

Up to nine people drowned and around 25 were missing after a motorboat carrying illegal immigrant sank off Tarifa in southern Spain on Tuesday, a British Royal Navy spokesman said, AFP reports from Tarifa.

A Spanish Red Cross boat and pleasure boats in the area rescued around six people, while four bodies were pulled from the sea, local authorities said. A British Royal Navy spokesman, which assisted with two patrol boats and a destroyer, later revised the figure of survivors down to five, but said nine bodies had been plucked from the sea.

AP's ex-reporter Oatis dead

William N Oatis, an Associated Press reporter who was forced by Czechoslovakia to confess to espionage and was imprisoned for two years during the early days of the Cold War, died Tuesday. He was 83, AP reports from New York.

Oatis, who went on to cover the United Nations for three decades and retired in 1984 after a 47-year career at the AP, died at Long Island College Hospital after a long illness, his son Jonathan said. Oatis was the AP's Prague bureau chief when he was arrested in May 1951 and sentenced to 10 years in prison by a Communist court.