

International



A Christian devotee touches a portrait of Mother Teresa on the anniversary of her death in Calcutta yesterday. Thousands of people came to the mission to pay tribute to Mother Teresa, who is the subject of a Papal enquiry aimed at elevating her to Sainthood. —AFP photo

Dilip Kumar surrenders, released on bail

LUCKNOW, Sept 5: Matinee idol Dilip Kumar on Monday surrendered before a city court, which had issued a warrant against him in connection with a pollution case, and was released on bail, reports PTI.

Dilip Kumar surrendered before special judicial magistrate Vidushi Singh who ordered his release after asking him to furnish a personal bond of Rs 3,000, and two sureties of the like amount.

Tight security measures were taken especially in view of the threats by some outfit to kidnap Dilip Kumar, in the American Library courts.

In 1983, the Uttar Pradesh Pollution Control Board had filed a case under the provision of the Pollution Act against the directors of M/s Mohan Meaking Breweries Ltd, Lucknow and Gaziabad.

Dilip Kumar, being one of the directors of the company, was served with notices to attend the court.

Since he did not attend the court, a warrant was sent to him following which he surrendered on Monday.

The court, however, exempted his personal attendance in the case in the future and allowed attendance through his counsel unless ordered to attend in person.

It was in accordance with the directions of the Supreme Court that the matter was sent to the Lucknow court.

Court upholds jail sentence for Anwar's lawyer

KUALA LUMPUR, Sept 5: A prominent Malaysian lawyer who had represented jailed politician Anwar Ibrahim lost an appeal Tuesday against a three-month prison sentence he was given or contempt of court, the national news agency said, reports AP.

A judge had sentenced Zanur Zakaria in December 1998 after he refused to apologise for accusing two prosecutors in Anwar's corruption trial of trying to get a potential witness to lie.

On Tuesday, Court of Appeal judge Ahmad Fairuz Sheikh Abdul Halim, who read the judgement, said the three-judge bench was unanimous in dismissing the appeal, Bernama news agency reported.

Zanur said he would not go to jail until his appeal against the latest ruling had been heard by the Federal Court, Malaysia's highest court.

BRIEFLY

Quake jolts Indian state: An earthquake of moderate intensity shook the western Indian state of Maharashtra early Tuesday, the Press Trust of India reported, AP reports from New Delhi.

The 5.2 magnitude quake had its epicenter in Waran, in the Koyanagron, 1,175 kilometers (705 miles) south of New Delhi, the Indian capital, weather department officials told PTI. Tremors from the earthquake were felt in Bombay, India's financial hub and the capital of Maharashtra, PTI said, but there were no immediate reports of damage.

70 kg opium seized: Russian security guards seized more than 70 kilos (150 pounds) of opium during a shoot-out with Afghan drug smugglers on the Tajik-Afghan border early today, security officials said. AFP reports from Dushanbe.

The haul brings the total amount of opium confiscated in the zone to more than 1,000 kilos in the past week alone. Around a dozen Afghan drug smugglers took flight after the gun fight, although no casualty figures were given. Russian border guards, who patrol the frontier under an agreement with the Tajik government have reported a sharp increase recently in the amount of drugs destined for the country.

Japan and Russia fail to resolve island dispute

TOKYO, Sept 5: Japanese and Russian leaders failed today to break a 55-year-old deadlock over the ownership of four tiny islands but vowed to pursue further negotiations, reports AFP.

The territorial dispute has blocked the signing of a Russo-Japanese peace treaty since World War II.

"We made efforts to find a compromise but in the end we could not resolve the peace (treaty) issues," Russian President Vladimir Putin told a joint news conference.

"We had a frank exchange of views, deepening our understanding of each other's positions," he said, after a final round of talks with Japanese Prime Minister Yoshiro Mori.

Mori, who was to leave later in

the day at the end of a three-day visit, had rejected a call by Mori on Monday for Japanese territorial boundaries to be expanded to include the islands.

"We agreed to continue our talks on the four islands," Japan's prime minister said.

Mori and Putin issued a joint statement promising to tell their officials to accelerate negotiations, which had been due to end this year, but avoided setting a new deadline.

"The two sides agreed to continue their negotiations to forge a peace treaty by resolving the sovereignty issue of Etorofu, Kunashiri, Shikotan and Habomai islands," it said.

The islands, known as the southern Kurils in Russia and Northern Territories in Japan

were occupied by Soviet troops in the dying days of World War II.

The then Russian president Boris Yeltsin and the Japanese prime minister Ryutaro Hashimoto agreed to sign a peace treaty by the end of 2000 at a November 1997 summit in the Siberian city of Krasnoyarsk.

But progress has since been

glacial because of the conflicting claims over the islands and analysts say the chances of meeting the deadline have all but evaporated.

"We will continue making utmost efforts to realize the Krasnoyarsk agreement," Mori told the news conference.

"We would like to come to an agreement by the end of this year."

But Putin tiptoed around the

deadline. "The issue is not one of dates but of goodwill. Such goodwill exists in Japan and Russia," he said.

"It is not stated (in the Krasnoyarsk agreement) that Russia and Japan are obliged to reach a peace agreement by the end of 2000, only that they must make every effort to do so."

Putin stressed that relations were warming despite the island row.

"Russia and Japan enter the new century on a fundamentally new footing as strategic partners," Putin told the news conference.

"We are ready to continue dialogue over this extremely sensitive issue for both countries."

Mori agreed.

India accounts for 60 pc of HIV cases in Asia

NEW DELHI, Sept 5: India's billion-strong population is increasingly at risk from the spread of AIDS amid steady growth in the base number of HIV cases, the director general of World Health Organisation (WHO) said today, reports AFP.

"Although Indian and the South Asian region are not hit to the same extent as African countries, the curse is unfolding and millions of people are at risk," Gro Harlem Brundtland told a news conference.

According to the official Indian statistics more than 3.5 million Indians have been infected with the human immuno-deficiency virus (HIV) that leads to AIDS.

The number is significant, as it could easily spread to higher numbers in society," said Brundtland, adding that it was crucial for condom use to be encouraged.

India accounts for 60 per cent of HIV cases in Asia and 20 per cent of the world's HIV infections.

Health Minister C.P. Thakur said the Indian government was aware of the threat to public health posed by AIDS and was taking preventive steps.

"We are trying to prevent transmission between mother and child," he said.

The minister said that a recent reduction in drug prices for controlling AIDS would help the government programme.

Brundtland said India's health record in tackling some other dangerous disease such as polio and leprosy had shown remarkable improvement.

"India has nearly eradicated polio and only a final hard push is needed. We expect India to eliminate leprosy in the next year or two," she said.

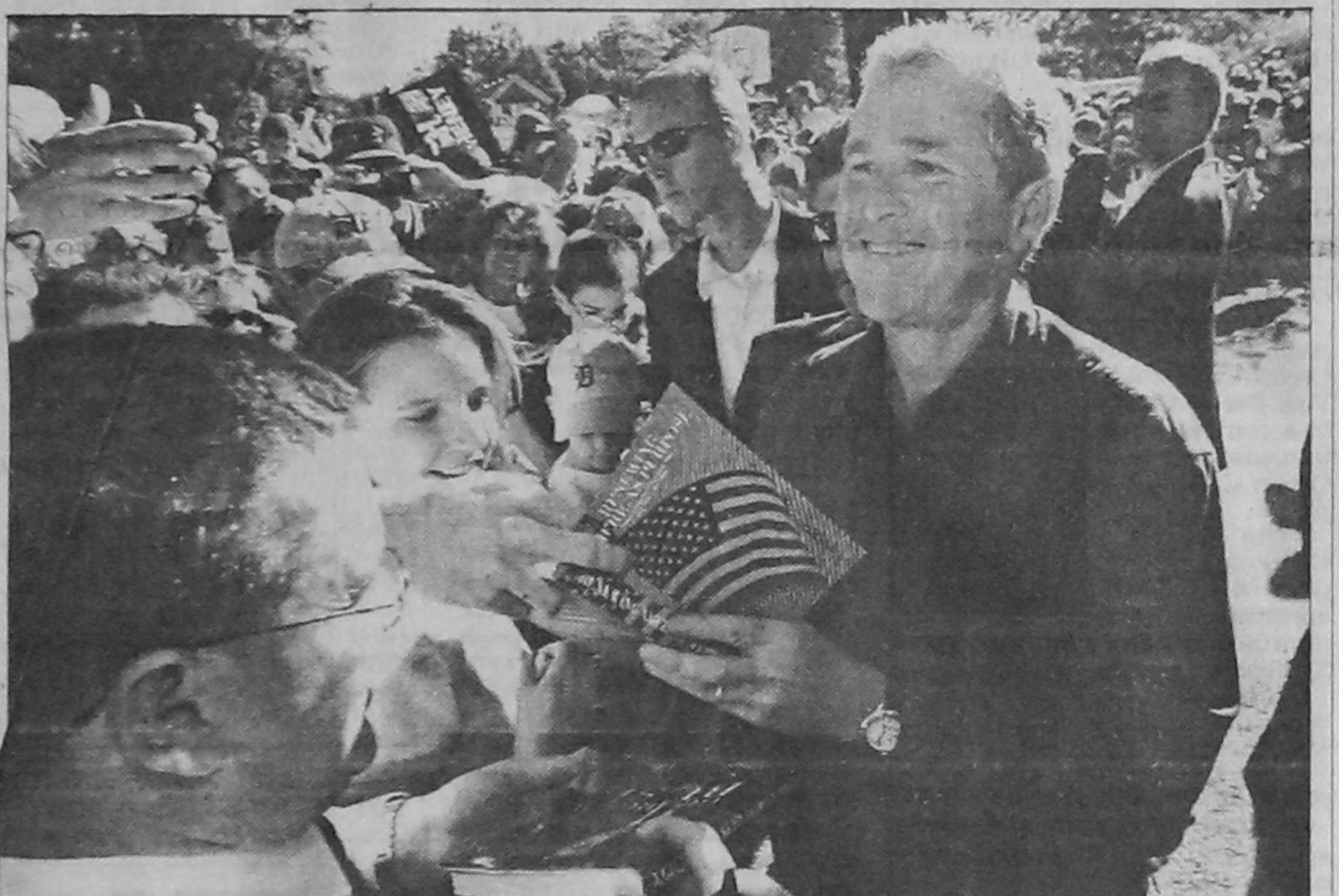
However, she cautioned that India needed to tackle vigorously other dangers to health, such as smoking, through the introduction of tough regulations on tobacco advertising for example.

The Indian Health Minister said the government was adapting a holistic approach to smoking, and planned new legislation within a year.

Brundtland also highlighted the need for good health among women.

We have a challenge in the field of nutrition as boys are better fed than girls. There are many other factors which work against girls and women," she said.

As a result of poor nutrition, a large number of pregnant Indian women are anaemic and the health of their children suffers, she added.



Texas Governor and Republican presidential candidate George W Bush meets supporters following his speech at the Romeo Peach Festival on Monday in Romeo, Michigan. —AFP photo

Release Suu Kyi: Amnesty

BANGKOK, Sept 5: Amnesty International today called on the Yangon junta to release detained opposition leader Aung San Suu Kyi and her party lieutenants, reports AFP.

"We strongly urge the Myanmar government to allow them freedom of movement," the rights group said in a statement, referring to Aung San Suu Kyi and the junta was over.

The Nobel peace laureate and a dozen NLD members had been camped out in their cars on the outskirts of Yangon since August 24 when they were blocked from travelling to a party meeting outside the capital.

At the same time as the raid, the authorities effectively placed the NLD leadership under house arrest, although the junta has denied anyone had been officially arrested.

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Fighting formations of the Liberation Tigers are ready to face any adventure," the radio said. Karunaratne said, citing intercepts of rebel radio conversations.

Lull prevails in Jaffna

COLOMBO, Sept 5: Fighting in the northern Jaffna Peninsula, the center of a Tamil insurgency subsided Tuesday after two days of fierce battle that left 344 combatants dead on both sides, military officials said, reports AP.

"Now there is a lull, but we are not lowering our guard," defense ministry spokesman Sanath Karunaratne told The Associated Press. Since noon Monday, there has been no new ground fighting, he said.

The Voice of Tigers radio of the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam on Tuesday dismissed a government claim that the military had driven back the rebels from the outer limits of Jaffna city.

"Fighting formations of the Liberation Tigers are ready to face any adventure," the radio said. Karunaratne said, citing intercepts of rebel radio conversations.

More than 230 rebels were killed in the army operation and about 300 were wounded, Karunaratne said, citing intercepts of rebel radio conversations.

The radio, monitored in the government-held town of Vavuniya, read out the names of

22 of some combatants who died in the two days of fighting that began Sunday.

It, however, did not say how many actually died. The rebels read the names of only those fighters whose bodies were in their possession so that the families could take the bodies for cremation, the radio said. The figure was much lower than that given.

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Wickrematunga said the article sought to analyse the pledges of Kumaratunga's government as it marked its first year in office and denied he implied the president was corrupt.

Wickrematunga said he will appeal against the judgement but in the meantime he will not have to serve the term because the sentence was suspended for five years.

If within the five years he is convicted of another criminal offence, then he will have to go to jail and serve the two year period in addition to what ever punishment handed down for the new offence.

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