

Fresh fighting in Lanka: 200 killed

COLOMBO, July 29: Renewed fighting in northern Sri Lanka killed more than 200 people as the weekend toll among security forces in the island's war torn areas rose to 23, military officials here said today, reports AFP.

Troops at the besieged Elephant Pass army camp survived a renewed push early Sunday by the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE), which left seven soldiers dead, a military spokesman said.

About 150 rebels were killed when ground troops retaliated with air support the spokesman said adding it was the third LTTE attempt in 48 hours to overrun the strategic camp.

The fresh wave of guerrilla strikes on the base came as relief soldiers, who resumed their battle to lift the blockade, ran into heavy Tiger resistance less than four kilometers (2.5 miles) northeast of the camp.

The spokesman said six more soldiers and 50 LTTE guerrillas were killed in fierce fighting that erupted as troops resumed their onward march to the beleaguered garrison.

Although there was heavy resistance, we gained ground we expect more casualties on both sides as our men advance, the spokesman said.

The fresh fighting came as President Ranasinghe Premadasa appealed to religious leaders to offer advice on ways of resolving the bloody ethnic conflict that has killed thousands since 1983.

35 Croats massacred

ZAGREB (Yugoslavia), July 29: More than 35 people have been massacred by Serbs in a Croatian village, a senior Croatian police official said Monday on Croatian television, reports AFP.

The killings occurred before dawn on Saturday in the village of Struga, 120 kilometers (80 miles) southeast of Zagreb, the Croatian Capital, said Duro Brodarac, the Police Chief in neighbouring Sisak.

He said between 35 and 40 people were killed before the Army moved in and stopped the violence.

Reached by telephone in Sisak, the Chief of Surgery of the town's hospital said the bodies of nine Croatian policemen had been brought in.

A police officer in Sisak said some 200 Serbian militiamen had attacked the village during the night, shooting indiscriminately at the villagers.



PARIS (File photo): This is an official photo of Britain's Prince Charles and Princess Diana on their wedding day July 30, 1981. The royal couple will celebrate their 10th anniversary July 30.

Secret Vietnamese mission to China

HANOI, July 29: Vietnamese Defence Minister Le Duc Anh and another senior communist party member have flown secretly to Beijing for talks with Chinese officials, well-informed Vietnamese sources said Monday, reports Reuters.

The sources, who asked not to be identified said Anh and Hong Ha, a member of the party's central committee secretariat, flew in a government plane to southern China on Sunday morning, then switched to a Chinese aircraft and continued to Beijing.

The Vietnamese government, asked last week about rumours of planned talks said on July 22 that Hanoi and Beijing were arranging a special meeting to discuss the Cambodian conflict and other issues that have strained their relations.

A government spokesman said today he had no further comment. In Beijing a Foreign Ministry official said he had no immediate comment on the reported visit.

It was not clear how long the visit would last or whom the Vietnamese delegation would meet.

Asia's two biggest communist countries have had icy relations since China launched a border war against Vietnam in February 1979 to punish Hanoi for invading Cambodia.

Vietnam's soldiers overthrew a brutal Chinese-backed Khmer Rouge government in Phnom Penh in January 1979 and installed a pro-Hanoi administration.

Experts have described the conflict that has dragged on for years in Cambodia as a proxy war between China and Vietnam.

They say recent progress towards a peace settlement would not have been possible without tacit support from Hanoi and Beijing.

The secret trip to Beijing on Sunday would be the fourth time Vietnam has sent a delegation to China within a year.

Pak PM accused of flouting IJI charter: Secy-Gen quits

KARACHI, July 29: A prominent ally of Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif said here Sunday he is quitting as Secretary General of the ruling Islamic Democratic Alliance (IJI), reports AFP.

Ghafoor Ahmed, announcing the decision at press conference, cited differences with the government's economic policy and its conduct in parliament.

Mr Ahmed, who is also Deputy Chief of the fundamentalist IJI component Jamaat-e-Islami, said his decision would not affect his party's role in the ruling alliance.

He said Sharif was "deviating" from the IJI charter, which calls for state control over general and defence-related industries.

The government was privatizing "sensitive organizations", such as telecommunications, steel mills and the country's Water and Power Development Department, he said.

"This is not in the national interest," he said.

He described the law and order situation in southern

Sindh Province as alarming and said it had resulted in the flight of capital from the province, which is the centre of commerce and industry.

"Agriculture, trade and industries have been badly affected in the interior of Sindh due to rampant banditry, kidnapping law and order situation in the home province of former Premier Benazir Bhutto.

Under a new act, which amends the constitution, the government has given itself powers to set up special courts to punish crimes such as kidnapping, banditry and murder.

The opposition said the law would be used to intensify victimization of political opponents.

Mr Ahmed bitterly criticized the manner in which the constitutional amendment was passed by parliament, while the opposition says the government "bulldozed" the legislation and allowed no debate.

Meanwhile, Ghulam Mustafa Jatoi, former caretaker Premier and a prominent IJI figure, joined opposition figures at a lunch meeting in Islamabad, also attended by Ms Bhutto.

The lunch was hosted by veteran politician Nawabzada Nasrullah Khan, who has been calling for the formation of a national unity government, because of what he calls Mr

Sharif's failure to run the country's affairs.

Ms Bhutto told reporters after the meeting that there is an urgent need to replace the present government with an interim arrangement for holding fresh and impartial elections.

She said the Sindh and Pakistani part of Kashmir were "slipping out of our hands" due to the "wrong policies" of the IJI government.

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BRIEFLY

Alatas blasts US moves on ME: Indonesian Foreign Minister Ali Alatas is critical of the current US-sponsored Middle East peace effort and has attacked Israel for stalling progress, Antara news agency said in Jakarta, reports AFP.

"We sympathize with this (peace efforts) but we also know that this is not a comprehensive approach," Alatas told the official agency.

He was quoted as saying that even if a US attempt to stage a peace conference was successful, it would fall short of what Arab and non-aligned nations had been hoping for.

Egypt, Kuwait set up jt airline co: Egypt and Kuwait signed an agreement Sunday to establish a joint airline company with a start-up capital of \$100 million, AP from Cairo says.

The airline will begin operation at the end of the year to transport passengers and cargo between the two countries.

Mohammed Fahim Rayan, the chairman of Egypt Air, said the new company would absorb the excess in air traffic between the two countries.

The new company would enable Egypt Air and Kuwait Airways to dispense with having to hire planes from other companies to handle the increased traffic, he said.

No further details were immediately available.

Egypt was one of the leading Arab members of the anti-Iraq coalition that fought the Gulf war and forced Iraqi President Saddam Hussein to pull his troops out of Kuwait.

Since the war ended, more Egyptians are taking jobs in Kuwait formerly held by Palestinians, Yemenis and Jordanians, whose leaders supported Iraq.

Madagascan PM resigns: Madagascan Prime Minister Victor Rahamatra announced the resignation of his government Sunday hours after President Didier Ratsiraka announced he would dissolve it on Monday, reports AFP from Antananarivo.

The announcement was reported by Madagascan television.

The television called on striking civil servants to resume work, assuring them they would not be punished.

Admiral Ratsiraka said in his earlier radio broadcast that he was ready to talk to opposition leaders who last week took over seven government ministries without interference from soldiers guarding the buildings.

3 killed in Indian bomb blast: Three people were killed when a bomb, thought to have been planted by militant Bodo Tribesmen, blew up a bridge in northeastern Assam state, the Press Trust of India said Sunday, reports Reuters from New Delhi.

The three were crossing the bridge, some 100 km (60 miles) northeast of Assam's commercial centre Guwahati, by car when the bomb was detonated by remote control on Saturday, the agency said, quoting official reports.

A Soviet view on Bush-Gorbachev summit

4,000 nuclear warheads outside ambit of START treaty

MOSCOW, July 29: Times change. Not so long ago the film 'The Day After' was regarded as a real forecast. Bush and Gorbachev will sign in Moscow a Treaty on the Reduction of Strategic Offensive Weapons (START), which will make the danger of war more distant. And it seems many will take that for granted.

Perhaps because the world has waited too long — a full ten years — for these 750 pages. Or perhaps because the disarmament process always follows on the heels of politics. The degree of political cooperation between the US and the Soviet Union already justifies the question: what disarmament issue will be tackled by the superpowers after the START treaty?

Miracles quickly become habitual.

It may be predicted that before the ink in the signatures by Gorbachev and Bush dries up, the document will get its share of praise and scepticism. Critics will say that many categories of the latest arms, such as the B-1 and B-2 bombers and Trident submarines, have been practically left out of the treaty. It has nothing with which to prevent the qualitative improvement of weapons. If you want to push ahead, you are welcome. Also, 4,000 odd



Bush

nuclear warheads will not be destroyed — they will merely be detached and stored elsewhere.

Even so history will bend over the document, together with Bush and Gorbachev, early next week.

Alexander Bessmertnykh, the Soviet Foreign Minister, said that the START treaty is "a fantastically complex invasion of the heart of the strategic balance and military technology". It may be added, the first such invasion. It is also for the first time that the parties are assuming stiff obligations for on-site inspection.



Gorbachev

In brief, the START treaty alone will give Gorbachev and Bush every reason to consider this year's second summit as something of exceptional significance.

What's next? In the past leaders of the foreign policy establishments of the US and the USSR have given a general outline of START-2 talks. Such American expert as Paul Nitze and Richard Perle believe that the United States could reduce its number of strategic warheads from over 10,000 (START-1) to 6,000 and even 4,000

(START-2), without detriment to its security. A top official from the Soviet Foreign Ministry, in an interview, also expressed interest in "achieving further strategic stability."

But priorities quickly change. It looks as if the superpowers are more concerned about nuclear technology leaks to the Third World, to dictators not encumbered with responsibility. The subject-matter for another Soviet-American agreement? We wait and see.

Bush and Gorbachev will meet in Moscow, with London dust still fresh on their souls. The birth of START is certain to give impetus to the discussion of the "Seven plus One" theme. Economic promotion of Soviet reforms and arms control are of course inter-connected. The more guarantees Washington gets that nuclear confrontation with the USSR does not resume, the more it is likely that it will bless big investments in the paralysed Soviet economy.

Bush will have to explain in Moscow why his administration considers it too early to admit the USSR to the International Monetary Fund

Iraq to commit enormous mistake: President George Bush warned Iraq Sunday it would be making "an enormous mistake" if it did not reveal to UN inspectors details of its entire nuclear arsenal and research facilities, AFP reports from Washington.

Bush said using military might against Iraq "remains very viable," if Baghdad refuses to allow the United Nations to destroy all its weapons of mass destruction.

The President told reporters that he believed Iraqi President Saddam Hussein was still hiding some of his country's capacity to build nuclear arms.

"I'm afraid that he has indeed been concealing," Bush said. "But we'll have to prove that, obviously, and I think we can."

Typhoon threatens S Korea: Typhoon Caitin with winds up to 126 kph (78 mph) threatened South Korea Monday and forced southeastern airports to close, Reuters reports from Seoul.

Meteorological agency officials said the Typhoon was about 90 km (56 miles) east of Cheju Island at mid-morning and was moving at 23 kph (14 mph). It could hit the Peninsula's southeastern provinces about 5 pm (0900 GMT).

It's Mikhail and George now

WASHINGTON, July 29: They call each other Mikhail and George and banter easily. But they weren't always on a first-name basis and their fellowship now is a far cry from where the relationship started, reports AP.

Six weeks before his January 1989 inauguration, US president-elect George Bush had a testy exchange with Mikhail Gorbachev on Governor's Island in New York harbor. Bush asked the Soviet president skeptically what assurances he could give that his economic and political reforms would succeed.

"Not even Jesus Christ knows the answer to that question," Gorbachev snapped.

The episode darkened the mood of the Dec 7, 1988, farewell meeting between Gorbachev and outgoing

President Ronald Reagan. And it set a glum tone for the developing relationship between Bush and Gorbachev.

Bush's attitude toward Gorbachev was one of mistrust and doubt. He privately told associates that Reagan had been taken in by the charming and polished Soviet leader. Bush's spokesman, Marlin Fitzwater, dismissed Gorbachev as "a drugstore cowboy" playing "a game".

Bush characterized his attitude as one of prudence. A frustrated Gorbachev, meanwhile, was complaining to leaders in Europe that Bush was slowing momentum in East-West relations and dragging his feet on proposals to

cut conventional arms in Europe.

Gradually, Bush's attitude began to change. He was profoundly moved by Gorbachev's willingness to allow the communist empire in Eastern Europe to collapse.

"I think he deserves new thinking," Bush told North American Treaty Organization leaders in 1989. "It absolutely mandates new thinking".

Amid storm gales in the Mediterranean, Bush and Gorbachev held their first summit aboard a ship at Malta in December 1989. The mood was somewhat stiff. Seven months later, the two leaders met again, this time in Washington and at the nearby

presidential retreat at Camp David, Maryland.

Gorbachev pitched horseshoes with Bush at Camp David and hit a ringer with his first throw. White House officials say the informal meeting was an important icebreaker and put the two leaders on a first-name basis. Four months later, the two leaders met again, this time to forge an alliance in the Gulf crisis.

Bush was gratified by Gorbachev's supportive stand and their bond deepened, officials say.

"They have an easy, relaxed relationship with each other and they talk really with pretty complete frankness," said Brent Scowcroft, the pres-

Off the Record

Yoko Ono honours Lennon as artist

KNOXVILLE (Tenn): Yoko Ono is trying to get John Lennon's art career off the ground nearly 11 years after his death, reports AP.

"Artwork was very important to him. Rock was his second love," Lennon's widow said.

Gallery ASN in Johnson City is to open an exhibit and sale of a selection of Lennon's lithographs Aug 10.

Lennon, who was shot to death in New York in 1980, had three gallery shows of his work when he was alive. None was well received. A showing of some erotic lithographs at the 1970 London Gallery of Art resulted in Scotland Yard closing the exhibit as indecent.

Ono said Lennon was frustrated by gallery owners more interested in his celebrity status than his artwork. Some asked him to bring his guitar to openings and perform, she said.

"And of course John was very proud. He didn't want to show his work in this context," she said.

Dynasty characters still being groomed: Collins

NEW YORK: It's been two years since "Dynasty" left the air, but little has changed with the Carringtons of Denver, reports AP.

"We are still groomed, groomed within an inch of our lives," says Joan Collins in the Aug 5 issue of People.

Collins, who played conniving Alexis, and the rest of the family are taping "Dynasty: The Miniseries." The four-hour sequel, to air on ABC in October, will wrap up the loose ends left when the series was unceremoniously cancelled in May 1989.

Among those returning: Linda Evans (Krystle), John James (Jeff), Emma Samms (Fallon), Heather Locklear (Sammy Jo) and Al Corley (the original Steven).

"We wanted to end 'Dynasty' with the same kind of dignity we had when we were on the air," said John Forsythe, who played the family patriarch.

But the producers also promise a few less-decorous moments.

"Unfortunately, the thing people remember about this show is the catfights," Collins said.

Sex-change surgeon's no to future operation

BEIJING: The surgeon who completed China's first successful sex-change operation has vowed that it was his last, saying people should "do their duty" and remain their original gender, reports Reuters.

He Qinglian, a plastic surgeon at Shanghai's Changzheng Hospital, said he had been deluged with demands for sex-change operations after newspapers reported he had successfully transformed a man into a woman last August, the official China Daily reported.

"Imagine, a man comes to me asking for help. But he is a father and a husband. The children would be exposed to such prejudice if 'he' was turned into a 'she'. It's better that he carries out his duty," the surgeon was quoted as saying.

He Qinglian said the subject of the first operation, a man surnamed Qin, had encountered numerous obstacles trying to gain acceptance as a woman, and was frequently denied access to female toilets and women's dormitories.

and the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development as a full-fledged member.

Sources in the Soviet Foreign Ministry wonder: why the status of associate membership is preferable, in the words of the White House Press Secretary? "The Soviet Union has made its choice," a leading Soviet diplomat told this Novosti political analyst.

"It is full-scale integration into the world economy. In the ultimate analysis and before long we expect full membership of the IMF and the IBRD."

I think Bush will bring with him consent to give the Soviet Union the most favoured nation status. A law on emigration recently adopted by the Soviet Parliament has removed all objections to such a step. It would be good if the whole Jackson-Vanik amendment were cancelled. Its total revocation will open the door to American credits, including state credits, without which many London ideas of the Group of Seven may remain pious wishes.

Bush and Gorbachev will not part without talking about the Middle East, the so-called Banker Plan for a silent PLO participation in a future international conference and its work.

The summit in Moscow, it seems, will open the floodgates to a genuine Arab-Israeli settlement. Coming next is another miracle which can be brought about with the help of the two great powers.

Some day we will get accustomed to it, too.

After talks with Gorbachev in London two weeks ago, Bush offered unreserved praise for the Soviet leader. He said Gorbachev was attempting "to reorient the entire economy and the social fabric of his country. He's shown enormous leadership in forging ahead with these plans."

Many people think the goodwill from Bush gives Gorbachev prestige at home, where his countrymen blame him for food shortages, rising unemployment and a generally dismal economic plight.

"What he (Gorbachev) gets out of this summit is the international spotlight," said Michael Mandelbaum of the Council on Foreign Relations.

A senior US official who has watched the two leaders interact said Bush regards Gorbachev both as friend and foe.

Indian troops kill 9 Kashmiris

SRINAGAR (India), July 29: Indian troops killed at least nine secessionist militants in two clashes in Kashmir on Sunday, police said, reports Reuters.

Seven were killed in a clash near the border with Pakistan and two were killed in a street battle with troops in Srinagar, summer capital of India's only Muslim-majority state.

DPRK denies selling missiles abroad

TOKYO, July 29: North Korea said Monday that allegations it is selling missiles worldwide were a "foolish fabrication" and accused the United States of using the charges to conceal its own weapons sales, reports AP.

900 drug smugglers held in Iran

NICOSIA, July 29: Iranian police arrested 900 drug smugglers and confiscated 1,600 kilograms (3527 pounds) of narcotics in a two-week period this month, the Islamic Republic News Agency reported Monday, reports AP.

The agency, monitored in Nicosia, said 1,986 drug addicts were arrested and jailed during the same period, July 6-20.