

# Saddam to be in power even after Bush goes: US Senator

NICOSIA (Cyprus), Apr 28: Against all the odds, Saddam Hussein is still in power in Iraq and it looks like he's staying there for the foreseeable future, reports AP.

With cunning, brute force and luck, he has survived the most crushing battlefields defeat any Arab ruler has suffered in nearly 25 years, two rebellions and the devastation of his country.

On top of that he has been forced to accept what Middle East analyst Charles Snow calls "the most humiliating peace treaty since the Treaty of Versailles" in 1919 in which a defeated Germany was broken by the allies.

Yet the US Central

Intelligence Agency admitted in a recent report that Saddam, whose overthrow was publicly urged by US President George Bush, has reassessed his power in a way that few of his adversaries expected.

The allies' refusal to aid the rebels who sought to topple Saddam — apparently because they did not want to see Iraq dismembered — allowed him to crush the revolts.

"I'd guess Saddam Hussein will be in power after George Bush leaves power," US Sen. Malcolm Wallop, a Wyoming Republican, noted recently.

But to stay in control, Saddam, who turned 54 Sunday, will have to overcome the deep sense of humiliation,

even betrayal, that many of his 17 million people feel at having been brought to their knees by his vaulting ambition to be the paramount Arab leader.

The war over Kuwait, especially the ferocious round-the-clock allied bombing campaign, and the Kurdish and Shi'ite Muslim rebellions which erupted in the aftermath of that conflict have left Iraqis reeling from the worst cataclysm in the state's modern history.

The ruling Arab Baathist Socialist Party has been weakened in the north by the Kurdish rebellion and in the south by the Shi'ite uprising.

But, with Saddam's all-pervasive security apparatus, it remains powerful in the capital and the centre of the country, where the minority Sunni Muslims who support Saddam are concentrated.

To a large degree, it is the fear among Iraqis, particularly the Sunnis, that the rebels were going to fragment the country which helped Saddam crush the revolts.

Saddam's apparent agreement to give the Kurds the full autonomy for which they've been struggling for decades may well be a temporary expediency to buy himself some time.

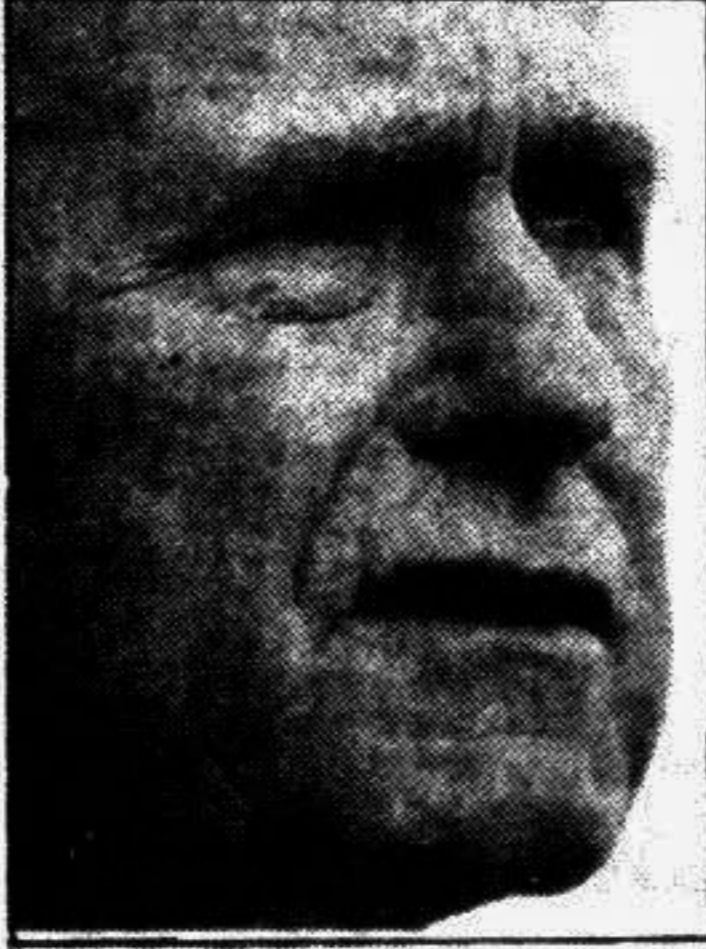
Certainly, he has broken promises many times in his turbulent career.

But it also splits the opposition groups arrayed against him, particularly the Kurds and Shi'ites who comprised the main threat.

It will also supposedly help convince the allies that they should seek to lift the UN sanctions that have squeezed Iraq since August. This is clearly one of Saddam's priorities.



Saddam



Bush

Until he can start selling oil again Iraq is bankrupt. There can be no rebuilding, no purchases of food, a serious problem in a country that has to import two-thirds of its food.

The country's infrastructure is in ruins. Electricity is in short supply. Water is scarce. Food and the prices of common items are skyrocketing beyond the reach of many people.

Sewage flows in the streets and outbreaks of epidemics are

feared. Those hospitals still functioning are jammed with the sick — including hundreds of children who are dehydrated or suffering from dysentery because they drank contaminated water.

As the world rushes relief aid to Kurdish refugees who fled their homes fearing Saddam's vengeance, their countrymen are in dire straits.

Such is the scale of the human misery here that most Iraqis, while blaming Saddam for their plight, are more concerned now with simply surviving and rebuilding than seeking radical political change.

For his part, Saddam has acted shrewdly. He has promised reforms. He has hiked the pay of the estimated 20 army divisions still at his disposal after losing around 42 divisions in the Kuwait debacle. He doubled government rations for bureaucrats and the ruling Baath Party members to buy their loyalty.

Saddam, for all his faults, brutality and oppression, is the only hope in the eyes of many. They may not love him. But they have learned to respect him.

Information Minister Hamid Yousef Hammedi said last week: "The decision to democratize is irreversible. We hope to have a new constitution, a referendum on it and a presidential election by the end of the year."

Many remain sceptical. But there are faint signs that Saddam, with little left in the treasury to buy his way out of trouble, has been forced to open things up a little.

Newspapers now criticize ministers daily. Travel restrictions are being lifted.

## Carmine Coppola dead

LOS ANGELES, Apr 28: Academy award-winning composer and conductor Carmine Coppola, who wrote the theme music for several Hollywood films including two of the "Godfather" epics, has died at the age of 80, a hospital spokesman said on Saturday, reports Reuter.

Coppola died on Friday at Northridge Hospital, where he had been taken recently after suffering a stroke at his home in a Los Angeles suburb, a spokesman for the hospital said.

Coppola, the father of director Francis Ford Coppola, shared an academy award with Nino Rota in 1974 for best original dramatic score for "Godfather II," the second of three "Godfather" movies made by the younger Coppola.

He also wrote the theme music for the original "Godfather" and scored his son's other films "Apocalypse Now," "The Outsiders" and "Gardens of Stone."

A classically trained flutist and composer who was born in New York on June 11, 1910, Coppola played and arranged music for New York's radio city music hall and went on to conduct Broadway musicals before being lured to Hollywood by his son.

Although he wrote the music for a number of blockbuster movies, he is perhaps best known worldwide for writing the three-and-a-half hour score for his son's painstaking reconstruction and revival of Abel Gance's epic silent film, "Napoleon" in 1981.

Coppola conducted symphony orchestras at special showings of the movie around the world.

In addition to his son, Coppola is survived by a daughter, actress Talia Shire, and another son, August, as well as his wife, lyricist Italia Pennino.

## Off the Record

### Landless peasants being sold in Nepal

KATHMANDU: In western Nepal, the festival season of Maaghi in early January is traditionally a time for rich landowners and moneylenders to buy and sell landless peasants, reports IPS.

In this buyers' market, all deals are struck verbally. The illiterate labourers have no idea how many years it will take them and their families to buy back their freedom.

The large farms of Nepal's Terai region in the Himalayan foothills are mostly cultivated by peasants enslaved for life. In the agriculturally rich districts of Kailali, Kanchanpur, Banke, Bardiya, Daang, Surkhet, Salyan and Dardeldhura, the only wage thousands of farmers receive daily is some salt, a little bit of oil and roughly two kgs of grain. Once a year, they receive a gift of a set of new clothes.

Though slavery was legally abolished 70 years ago, it continues to flourish in the western regions of this Himalayan kingdom.

Like in large parts of neighbouring India where this social evil persists despite decades of constitutional and legal safeguards, the journey to bondage brings with loans taken out to avert starvation or to observe birth, marriage or death rituals.

### Schwarzkopf's insignia costs \$4200

TACOMA (Washington): Gen H Norman Schwarzkopf's four-star insignia is worth 4,200 dollars, according to a businessman who plunked down that amount for a piece of history at a Red Cross benefit, reports AP.

"The stars were worn by Schwarzkopf while he was like this," Yoshikawa said. "And I figured whether I got them or not, I was helping a good cause."

### Saudi warmth for Soviet pilgrims

MOSCOW: Four members of the Consular Department of Saudi Arabia's Ministry of Foreign Affairs are due to arrive in the Soviet Union in mid-May to arrange entry visas into their country for Soviet pilgrims, a Novosti correspondent was told at the Soviet Foreign Ministry's main Consular Department, reports Novosti.

The diplomats from Saudi Arabia are planning to issue the visas in Moscow and in Tashkent, capital of the Uzbek SSR. They also intend to discuss in Tashkent the question of opening a Saudi Arabian General Consulate there.

This visit is in line with the development of diplomatic relations between the two countries which were suspended in the late 1930s and were resumed only last year. Both sides intend to speed up development of bilateral relations. Last year, President of the USSR Mikhail Gorbachev invited the King of Saudi Arabia to visit the Soviet Union.



### Exhibition of pigeons

MOSCOW: There was an exhibition of pigeons in Moscow to mark this event, organised by the National Association of Pigeon-Lovers' Clubs. It was a large collection of birds, representing 176

main breeds and countless hybrids. Pigeon keepers from 32 Soviet cities took part in the exhibition, reports IAN.

Russian pigeon breeding has a history of many centuries and long-established traditions. Way back in 1555, German zoologist K. Gessner described the Russian trumpeter-drummer pigeon. Later, the short-beaked tumbler pigeons of Count Orloff gained broad acclaim. The first pigeon mail in Russia was organized by Count Goltzys in 1854.

In the middle of last century the first state financed pigeon breeding farm was set up with Moscow University. In 1887, the Ornithology department of the Society for the Acclimatization of Animals and Plants staged an exhibition of these birds, while in 1890 or exactly a hundred years ago, a pigeon-breeding section opened with the Society.

In the 20th century, pigeon-breeding in this country was badly hit by wars, World War I, Civil War, and World War II. There were almost no pigeons in the country after 1945, with the exception of carrier pigeons.

### Ex-minister shot dead by Sikhs

NEW DELHI, Apr 28: Sikh militants shot dead a former Punjab State Minister and his bodyguard in a first poll related incident in the troubled Northern Indian province, the press Trust of India (PTI) reported Sunday, reports AFP.

Unidentified killers firing AK-47 assault rifles killed former Punjab State Planning Minister Malkiat Singh Sidhu, a Sikh and his police bodyguard Saturday night in Punjab's Moga district town.

The politician was ambushed while he was returning after dinner from an unnamed friend's house.

Sidhu had recently filed papers to contest elections from two constituencies to the 117 seat state Legislative Assembly slated to be held simultaneously with balloting to Punjab's 13 seats to the Federal Parliament June 22.

## Prosecutor in Kennedy case no stranger to the family

PALM BEACH, Florida: The prosecutor in the alleged rape at the Kennedy estate is no stranger to controversy, or to the Kennedys. For the third time in his career, State Attorney David Bludworth is handling a Kennedy-related case, reports AP.

Bludworth headed the inquest into the suicide of presidential assassin Lee Harvey Oswald's best friend in the late 1960s and the 1984 drug overdose death of David Kennedy, a son of the late Sen. Robert Kennedy.

He must now decide whether to file charges against Sen. Edward Kennedy's nephew, William Kennedy Smith. A 29-year-old woman alleges Smith raped her after she went to the Kennedy compound with him in the early hours of March 30, after meeting Smith, Sen. Kennedy and his son, Patrick, at a bar.

"We just may take the whole family's passports and not let them return to Florida," Bludworth joked.

Bludworth, the Palm Beach County state attorney since 1972, is up for re-election next year and knows he will offend people no matter how he handles this case.

"If he decides not to prosecute, he'll get murdered for showing favoritism," said Harvard law professor Alan Dershowitz. "If he does prosecute, he'll get murdered for not showing fa-

voritism."

Bludworth, a prosecutor for nearly 30 years, was criticized for bowing to the Kennedy family in 1984 when it took media lawyers five months to force him to release a 500-page police file on David Kennedy.

With unflappable ease, he casts aside calls for a speedy resolution of the Smith case.

"I won't be stamped into anything, he says. Born in Alabama and raised in the Florida panhandle, Bludworth is so fond of his hometown of DeFuniak Springs that he has photographs and newspaper articles about it plastered on the walls of his office.

At 51, he has retained the same solid-packed bulk that helped him win a football scholarship to the University of Florida.

During his career, he has prosecuted some highly publicized cases, including those of a woman nailed to a tree by a motorcycle gang and a man who threatened to assassinate Cuban leader Fidel Castro and killed a boatman and his son instead.

When David Kennedy was found dead of a drug overdose at the Brazilian Court Hotel in 1984, Bludworth came under fire for not releasing police reports and for prosecuting two bellhops for supplying Kennedy with some of the drugs that killed him.

## Assaults, riots, murder grip Nepal before election

KATHMANDU, Apr 28: As Nepal's first elections in 30 years approach, reports of assaults, riots and murders connected with the campaign have been flooding into the capital, reports AFP.

So far 10 people have been killed and 50 injured in election violence as the rivalry increases between supporters of the three main groups — The Nepali Congress, The National Democratic Party (NDP) and several factions of the Nepal Communist Party (NCP).

The government is already planning to mobilise some 80,000 security personnel during polling on May 12 and the Nepal Home Ministry has said it is deploying additional personnel in 61 areas earmarked as trouble-prone, a ministry official said.

The government has already taken the precautionary measure of reinforcing police and army personnel to meet any contingency, he said.

The violence has led to more mudslinging, with all parties blaming the others supporters for a campaign that has become increasingly dirty.

Pashupati Shumshere Rana, a former Foreign Minister under the defunct Panchayat government and now a NDP candidate lashed out at the government Friday for failing to maintain security during the campaign.

Last week, Rana was forced to take shelter in a farm house after being attacked throwing crowd during an election rally in Lamosangu, 80 kilometres (50 miles) northwest of the capital.

Rana was eventually rescued by armed police after holding up in the house for more than 12 hours but he suffered a further indignity when a road-block set up by opponents forced him to walk along a mule track for seven hours to get back to the capital.

Sources said NCP and Nepali Congress activists attacked Rana's rally after a stabbing incident involving an NDP supporter.

More than 1,300 candidates are vying for 205 seats in the House of Representatives in the May 12 elections.

According to many observers campaigning has become increasingly dirty, with accusations of kowtowing to foreign powers a favourite campaign theme among several parties.

## Iran accused of stealing dozens of Iraqi planes

RABAT, Apr 28: Iraq's Deputy Prime Minister Tareq Aziz has accused Teheran of "stealing" dozens of Iraqi warplanes that were flown to safety in Iran during the Gulf war, Moroccan newspaper reported Saturday, reports AFP.

During the Gulf crisis Iran behaved with hatred and greed and it has stolen the planes of the Iraqi people, Aziz said in an interview published by Al-Iqtihad Al-Ishiraki.

Teheran insists that only 22 Iraqi planes are in Iran, while Baghdad has presented a detailed list of 148 military and civilian aircraft that it says were flown to Iran during the six-week conflict that drove Iraq out of Kuwait.

The allies also reported during the war that around 150 planes had fled to Iran.

## BJP using Rama to seize power

NEW DELHI, Apr 28: India's most powerful ring-wing party has launched an all-out assault to seize power in elections next month, using the charismatic God Rama as the mascot of astringing Hindu revivalist platform, reports AFP.

The Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP, Indian People's Party) shunned as Fascist by those who swear by Secularism, believes the May 20, 23, 26 ballot will demolish India's image as a centrist bastion.

This time the wave is in favour of the BJP, Lal Krishan Advani, the senior party leader projected as the BJP's Prime Minister-designate, declared Thursday on a tour of central India.

"In my 40 years (in politics), I have not seen such a wave in favour of a single party as I see now in favour of the BJP," said Advani, 63, the party's articulate and effective strategist.

The Veteran politician, credited with pulling the BJP out of the right-wing fringe and building it into a force to reckon with, is its star campaigner, stamping scores of constituencies.

Its well-knit party machinery and thousands of committed cadres have swung in to the campaign with fervour, disregarding sceptics who doubt the potency of the Hindu card in a country where 83 per cent of the population is Hindu.

In its first determined bid for power, the party is contesting about 450, of the 510 parliamentary seats up for grabs, going it virtually alone unlike in 1989 when it forged seat-sharing arrangements with the centrist national front.

The BJP has reached seat adjustments with only the Shiv Sena, a Hindu fundamentalist group, in the western state of Maharashtra.

The odds of electoral

arithmetic, however, seem to be against the BJP. It has little mass base in the southern, eastern and north eastern parts of India — a factor observers believe will prove decisive.

But the party claims the odds will be evened by its Hindu revivalist stand, and parades by celebrity converts from sports and movies and even ex-servicemen under its banner.

We started with two seats (in 1984), which became 86 (in 1989) and now we will get 286 seats, Advani's popular colleague Atal Behari Vajpayee said in the northern city of Lucknow on Thursday.

"What happened in Ayodhya is now a part of the Hindu psy-

che," counters Malkani. "The feeling was more intense then, but the man who is going to vote — his mind is made up. He knows the BJP is his party."

The BJP was seen as an emerging political heavy weight when, in addition to the 86 parliamentary seats it won in November 1989, the party captured power in three states.

A disciplined cadre-based outfit led by men with spotless reputations, it was seen as a potential challenge to the centrists until it raised the pitch of the Ayodhya crusade to violence.

"Because of their heightened fanaticism, they have become less acceptable to liberal opinion than they were pre-

October," said S. Jaipal Reddy of the Centrist Janta Dal (People's Party).

"In their heart of hearts, they should know that they don't stand a ghost of a chance of coming to power on their own," he said. "And I don't think any future government will be willing to share power with them."

Sitaram Yechuri of the Staunchly Secular Communist Party of India-Marxist predicts the BJP is heading for a rout.

"In the final analysis, Hindus are not going to vote on (religious) grounds," he said.

Such doomsday predictions as well as criticism for mixing politics and religion, do not deter the BJP, which has



NEW DELHI: The BJP President LK Advani, being greeted by Hindu women, seen inaugurating his poll campaign.