

# No sympathy wave for Congress, BJP set to make sweeping gains

NEW DELHI, June 14: Exit polls taken after the first two rounds of India's staggered general elections point to another hung parliament, with a powerful pro-Hindu party set to make sweeping gains, newspaper said today, reports AFP.

The polls, conducted by noted election analyst Pranroy Roy, suggest that none of the three key contenders for power will be able to muster a majority on its own in the 545-member Lok Sabha, parliament's lower house.

But slain former Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi's Congress (I) Party will emerge as the largest grouping in the Lok Sabha in a virtual repetition of the outcome of the last general elections in November 1989.

The Hindu and other newspapers quoted Roy's findings to say that Gandhi's assassination May 21, a day after the first phase of the elections, had not triggered any significant sympathy wave for the Congress.

A total of 199 Lok Sabha constituencies went to the polls on May 20 and 113 on Wednesday, after the Election Commission put off the second and third rounds of polling by

three weeks following Gandhi's killing.

Saturday's final phase of balloting will cover 186 constituencies. If the voting patterns remained the same Saturday, the Congress (I) would end up with a little over 200 seats, followed by the Hindu revivalist Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) with some 160 seats the exit polls said.

## Rajiv's killing: 'external forces' involved

NEW DELHI, June 14: Indian investigators have cracked open the Rajiv Gandhi assassination case, and do not rule out the involvement of "local secessionists" or "external forces," a top investigator was quoted as saying today, reports AFP.

On Wednesday, investigators made their first formal arrests, taking into custody the nurse, Padma, 49, and S Bhagyanathan, 25, in Madras for harbouring the assassin and a male accomplice, both suspected to be Sri Lankans.

The centrist National Front coalition and its leftist allies were tipped to bag more than 120 seats.

The exit polls give the center-based BJP (Indian People's Party), making its first bid for power, a staggering 100 per cent jump in the total number of seats. It won in 86 Lok Sabha constituencies in

## Shekhar defends Punjab polls decision

NEW DELHI, June 14: Prime Minister Chandra Shekhar told the Press Trust of India (PTI) he would still hold both national polls and elections for a state assembly, in Punjab on June 22, despite militant killings of 19 candidates there, reports Reuter.

Shekhar defended the decision to try to return Punjab to elected rule after four years of direct rule from New Delhi, saying nothing else had worked.

About 3,800 people were killed in separatist violence in Punjab last year, twice the 1989 toll.

1989 and gave legislative support to the minority National Front government.

This year the BJP is running on its own against the Congress and the National Front-Left Front, each asking the electorate to defeat the other two.

Roy's survey, involving 51 Lok Sabha constituencies and more than 79,000 voters, did not indicate who will be able to form a government and how.

Gandhi's Congress Party were widely seen as the front runners in the elections when he was assassinated while campaigning in a southern Indian town by a woman suicide bomber.

Of the Lok Sabha's 545 MP's two are nominated. Elections in Assam and Punjab states, which choose 27 MP's have been delinked from general elections for security reasons.

Polling in the northern state of Jammu and Kashmir, India's only Muslim-majority state which puts up six MP's have been postponed indefinitely on account of a Muslim separatist campaign.

In the rest of the constituencies, polls have been cancelled following the death of candidates.

in India and abroad, the friend said.

She has told teachers at New Delhi's Jesus and Mary College that her daughter, Priyanka, may not attend classes for some time. Her 21-year-old son Rahul studies at Harvard University but is currently here.

A woman wired with an explosive device killed Gandhi, son and successor of slain Prime Minister Indira Gandhi, leaving his Congress (I) Party leaderless in midst of national polls.

The 106-Year-Old party offered party presidency to Mrs Gandhi a day after her husband's slaying. She promptly rejected it but the political pressure remained.

"The Congress (I) is secretly relieved that she turned down the offer," wrote one daily.

"She was too scared to accept," crowed a right wing politician on the campaign trail in Uttar Pradesh state. "The post is jinxed."

# Sonia neither Hindu nor Indian, says BJP

NEW DELHI, June 14: At the age of 44, Sonia Gandhi's worst fears have materialised and the murder of her husband, Rajiv, and his party's obsession for the dynasty now plagues her with unsavoury wrangles, reports AFP.

Three weeks after the assassination she is the most talked about woman in India—a political accident that has brought her intense distaste for the limelight to the fore, a family friend said.

Events involving her husband's May 21 shock assassination, his public funeral, his Congress (I) party, election fever and Indian curiosity has cracked the wall of privacy she guarded zealously during 23 years of marriage.

Born of an orthodox north-

crn Italian family, Sonia, has watched without comment as opposition and Congress politicians either slander or rally behind the last of the Gandhi family for political profit.

Mrs Gandhi, who in the past had even banned her children from discussing politics, has become a punching bag for the Hindu revivalist Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP, Indian People's party). During election stumps several party candidates have harped on her being neither Hindu nor Indian.

"She (Mrs Gandhi) is more Indian than the BJP lot," the angry friend said, adding that the controversies had made the widow reluctant to meet even old friends.

A BJP poll candidate, Jannardan Singh from Uttar Pradesh, Gandhi's home state, even questioned the Hindu cremation rites saying the widow and her children walked away without completing the final rituals.

"She (Mrs Gandhi) is a foreign witch," the BJP politician said in his poll speeches in the state's Azamgarh seat.

"She is totally disgusted with all this... leave 10 Janpath alone, said the friend, wife of a former colleague of Gandhi, as a controversy over a letter Sonia had written raged in political circles.

Mrs Gandhi, who continues to live in her husband's heavily guarded home on Janpath Road, is obsessed with worries for her children's security



MOSCOW: Supporters of Russian President-elect Boris Yeltsin celebrate his victory in Moscow's Pushkin Square Thursday. —AFP photo

# Yeltsin hopes for ties with US

BONN, June 14: Boris Yeltsin, President-elect of the Russian Federation, on Thursday expressed satisfaction at an invitation to meet US President George Bush in Washington next week, and said he hoped to develop "direct relations" with the United States, reports AFP.

In an interview with the German television network ZDF, Yeltsin said he would like the Russian Federation, which accounts for around 76 per cent of the Soviet Union's territory, to develop foreign relations in other fields, and with other countries.

He said he would be investigating with Bush, whom he is to meet on June 20, the possibility of training Russian company executives in the United States.

The Russian leader, who on Sunday obtained 55 per cent in the Federation's first-ever presidential election under universal suffrage, said he would like to sign similar deals with Japan and Britain.

Russia would then seek foreign links in the economic, trade and cultural fields, he added.

Of his Washington visit, which is expected to last four

days, he said, "these are the first relations of a new type between Russia and the United States."

Bush, announcing the invitation earlier in the day, said "this election is an historic step for the Russian people and the Soviet Union."

Yeltsin last met with Bush in September 1989 during a visit to Washington.

## Karmal's return to pose dilemma for Najibullah

KABUL, June 14: Afghan President Najibullah says former President Babrak Karmal can return home after four years of virtual exile in the Soviet Union, sources in the ruling Watan (Homeland) Party said on Thursday, reports Reuter.

They said Najibullah told a party central council meeting in Kabul this week that Karmal was free to come home if he wished.

It was not clear whether Karmal, 62, would also be allowed back as a party member and there was no indication in Kabul whether he really intended to return.

# US aid to India denied

WASHINGTON, June 14: The US House of Representatives voted on Thursday to deny aid to India unless President George Bush can assure Congress that it is not developing additional nuclear explosive devices, reports Reuter.

The condition is similar to one the United States applies to Pakistan, whose aid has been cut off because the President has been unable to certify it does not have a nuclear device.

The India aid amendment was proposed by representatives Robert Langomarsion, a Republican from California, and Peter Kostmayer, a Democrat from Pennsylvania.

It bans aid and military sales unless the President certifies that "India has not developed additional nuclear explosive devices during fiscal years 1991 and 1992."

Proponents of the amend-

ment said that India should be treated in the same way as Pakistan and that it was unfair to penalise Pakistan, an which had aided the US side in the Gulf war.

Washington has long been concerned about Pakistan's nuclear programme. The law requires an automatic cut-off of aid if the President cannot certify that it does not have a nuclear device, India exploded a nuclear device in 1974.

The 242-141 vote to attack the provision to a foreign aid authorisation bill would set back improving US ties with India, said democratic representative Stephen Solarz, Chairman of the Foreign Affairs Sub-committee on Asian Affairs.

But he said he hoped that the provision would be modified at a later point in the Congressional legislative process. If the Indian amendment

where enacted into law "it would... have a chilling effect on US Indian relations without anything to show for it what-ever," Solarz told reporters.

However, it is not certain that aid bill itself will become law. No foreign aid authorisation bill has been enacted since 1985 and the US foreign aid programme has been carried on under separate appropriations bills.

The amount of Indian assistance involved is relatively small. A congressional aide said the aid bill contained about 22 million dollars in development aid and less than one million dollars in military training. About 76 million dollars in food aid would not be affected.

Sales of military equipment and technology would also be linked to the nuclear certification requirement.

# Workers exploited in export zones

GENEVA, June 14: About 20 Asian countries, including nations in the Middle East, do not permit workers to form trade unions, a report by the International Confederation of Free Trade Unions said here today, reports AFP.

The report gave China, South Korea and the Philippines as examples of repression.

The report also condemned export tax-free zones throughout the world in which millions of workers were exploited.

The Communist Party totally controls a single union movement in Afghanistan, Cambodia, China, Laos, North Korea and Vietnam.

Unions were subservient to the government in power in Iran, Iraq, Syria and Yemen. Unions were simply banned in Bhutan, Oman, Qatar, Saudi Arabia and in the United Arab Emirates.

# BRIEFLY

**Thailand expels Laotian rebels:** Thailand has ordered the expulsion of anti-Communist Laotian guerrillas from secret Thai sanctuaries in order to improve relations with its neighbour, rebel leaders and sources close to the Thai military said, reports AP from Bangkok.

The guerrillas are mainly ethnic Hmongs, who were the backbone of a US-financed secret army during the Indochina war that ended helping the Americans fight the Communists in Indochina.

Many Hmongs fled to refugee camps in Thailand or to exile in the West. Others joined guerrilla groups operating from Thai sanctuaries.

**100,000 Iranian pilgrims in Riyadh:** More than 100,000 Iranians have arrived in Saudi Arabia to take part next week in the annual Hajj after a three-year boycott of one of the pillars of Islam, reports AFP from Tehran.

Reliable sources said 102,000 Iranians out of 115,000 authorised by the Saudi government to undertake the Hajj were in the kingdom with more than half present in the holy city of Mecca — birthplace of the Prophet Mohammad.

Iran's national carrier Iran Air organised about 20 flights daily for two weeks from Teheran, Isfahan, Mashhad, Tabriz, Shiraz and Kerman to Jeddah on the western Saudi coast.

**Woman executed in Kuwait:** A 26-year-old Lebanese mother was sentenced to death Thursday by the martial law court that found her guilty of turning in her Kuwaiti husband to the Iraqi military, which allegedly executed him, reports AP from Kuwait City.

It was the second death sentence handed down by the court since it started hearing cases May 19. The woman, Fatima Ramez Tafla, stayed silent for a moment and then burst into tears after the judge read the sentence. She was unable to walk and had to be supported by police as she was taken out of the court.

**Sunken Soviet N-sub may leak:** A Soviet nuclear submarine which sank off the Norwegian coast in 1989 could start leaking radiation into Arctic waters as soon as next year, a senior Soviet scientist was quoted as saying on Thursday, reports Reuter from Moscow.

Academician Igor Spasky told the Rossiyskaya Gazeta newspaper that plans to raise the submarine Komsomolets should not be delayed.

But an operation to raise the submarine in August 1992 has been postponed until 1993 because the Soviet government failed to allocate 200 million dollars in funding.

The submarine caught fire and sank in April 1989, killing 42 crew members, and now lies in 1700 metres (5,600 feet) of water. It was carrying two torpedoes with nuclear charges.

**Rains kill 22 in China:** The death toll from days of torrential rains in Beijing has risen to 22, the official Beijing Daily reported Friday, says AP from Beijing.

Beijing and its outlying counties were hammered by record rainfall, accompanied by gusting winds and hail, earlier this week. One village north of Beijing recorded 373 millimeters (15 inches) of rain in a single day. Rainfall in other outlying areas exceeded 200 millimeters (8 inches).

Only twice in this century has Beijing's rainfall in the first two weeks of June topped 100 millimeters (4 inches), the report said.

**\$555m US aid for Iraq:** President Bush signed a law appropriating 555.5 million Dollars for humanitarian aid and peacekeeping activities in post-war Iraq, the White House said, reports Reuter from Washington.

Most of the money was for operation providing comfort, in which US forces aided Iraqi refugees who fled Saddam Hussein's troops in the wake of the Persian Gulf War. A White House statement said the money would enable the government to continue to help the Iraqi refugees who fled to the Turkey-Iraq border area, as well as pay for assistance already provided.

# Indian troops raid bunkers: 14 killed

JAMMU (India), June 14: Indian army troops raided bunkers set up by armed infiltrators from across the Pakistan border with Kashmir Thursday, killing 14, official defence sources said, reports AFP.

The pre-dawn raids were launched in the frontier area of Poonch in the Indian zone of Kashmir, about 350 kilometres (210 miles) from the state's winter capital here, the sources said.

The Press Trust of India (PTI) said Pakistani army soldiers were involved, but the sources were unable to confirm the report, identifying the

14 who died only as "infiltrators."

The infiltrators had constructed concrete bunkers about 300 metres (94 feet) inside Indian territory from the line of control dividing Indian- and Pakistani-administered parts of Kashmir, the sources said.

Fourteen of them camping in the bunkers were killed after they resisted arrest and opened fire on Indian troops. They said, adding that a "few others" managed to escape back into Pakistani territory.

Muslim militants opposed to the states 1947 accession to India are waging a guerrilla,

# West won't throw good money to USSR

LONDON, June 14: British Prime Minister John Major said on Thursday he had invited Soviet President Mikhail Gorbachev to London for talks with Group of Seven western leaders after their annual summit in mid-July, reports Reuter.

In Bonn, Canadian Prime Minister Brian Mulroney said aid for Moscow should be tied to Soviet reforms but warned western countries against making unrealistic demands.

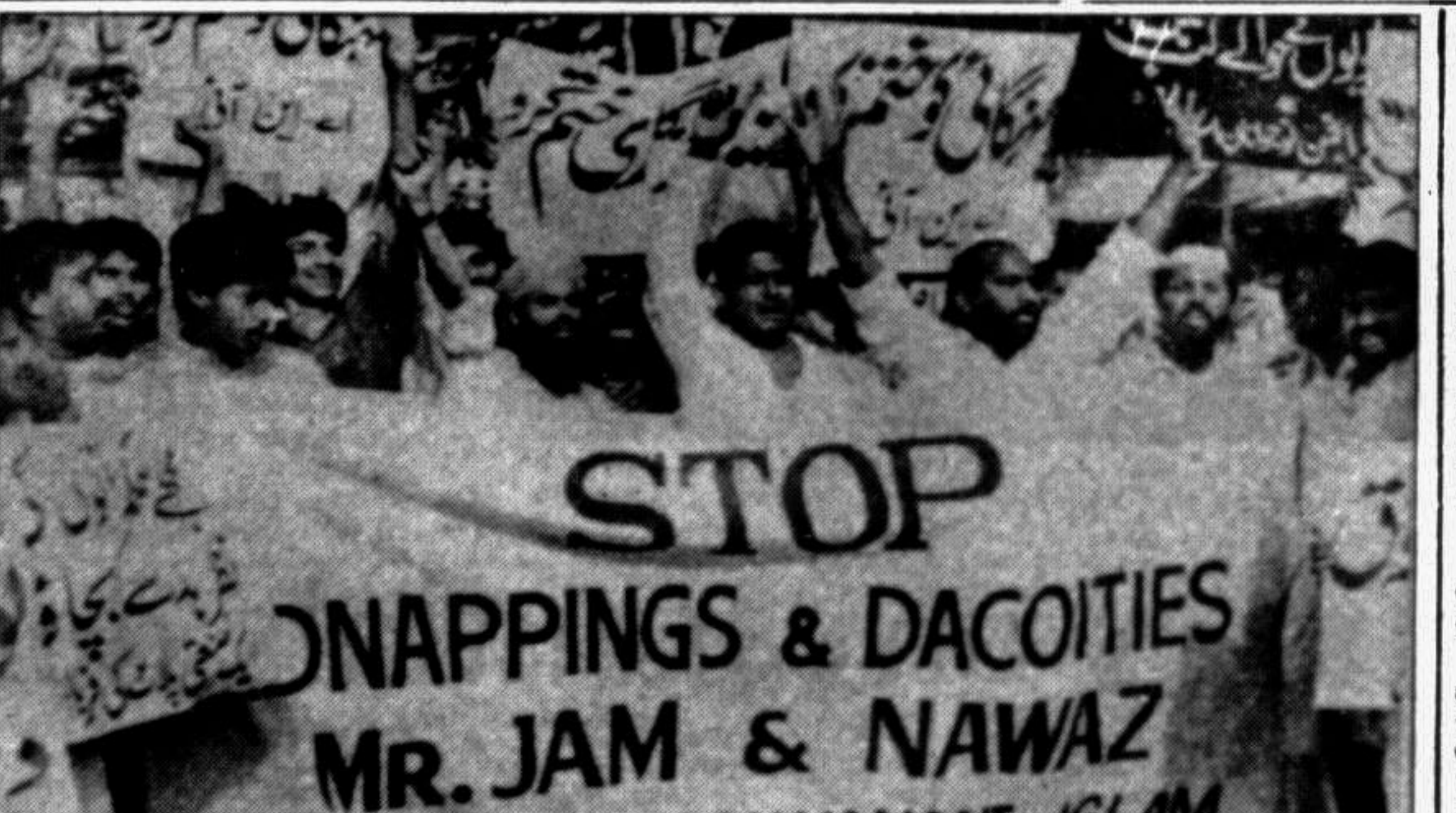
"We don't want to throw good money after bad," he told reporters after talks with German leaders.

"But it's unrealistic to say to Gorbachev that we will only

give you the money if you re-form your economy to be like West Germany's by next Sunday."

The Bush administration this week said it favoured Soviet associate membership in the International Monetary Fund and World Bank, which is part of the Yavlinsky plan. Those organisations would presumably be the source of much of the fresh western aid to Moscow the plan urges.

Also, Bush this week approved 1.5 billion dollars in US grain credits to Moscow. But he did not say yet whether he favours US participation in a massive direct aid programme.



KARACHI: Anjuman Nauwana-e-Islam demonstrators hold banners during a protest Thursday against growing lawlessness, kidnappings, robberies, murders and terrorism in Sindh province. The banners read 'Hang the terrorists'. —AFP photo

# Sri Lankan troops massacre 185 Tamil civilians, torch 300 houses

COLOMBO, June 14: A former Tamil guerrilla group cooperation with government forces today said that at least 185 Tamil civilians had been massacred and 300 houses were torched by the military in eastern Sri Lanka in a revenge attack, reports AFP.

The Tamil Eelam Liberation Organisation (TELO) said civilians were killed when security forces went on a rampage after two soldiers were blown up in a landmine attack carried out by the dominant Tamil Tiger guerrillas Wednesday. "This is shocking. About

185 people have died. Most of them bled to death after they were attacked," a TELO spokesman said.

Several former guerrilla groups are helping government forces in their battle against the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE), which blew up the two soldiers in Kakkadicholai area Wednesday triggering the massacre.

Relief officials in coastal Batticaloa district said about 1,500 survivors had fled the three villages affected by the reprisal attacks and at least 300 had been wounded and

received medicine at private nursing homes.

Officials from the Geneva-based International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) were allowed into the area Thursday, the officials said, charging that security forces had by Thursday destroyed most of the bodies.

Local Red Cross officials Friday began distributing dry rations and mats to the refugees, who were staying with their friends and relatives in neighbouring Palankudah, Mannunai and Ariyampady villages, officials said.

Reuter adds: The Sri Lankan government is investigating accusations that security forces massacred more Tamil villagers and torched houses, an official said today.

Bradman Werakoon, Foreign Affairs Adviser to the President, said the government was investigating reports about the killings.

Joseph said many of the villagers' bodies were still lying where they fell, by the roadside or in their houses.

"I have requested the government to remove the bodies to a morgue.

# Off the Record

## God's punishment

MANILA, June: Former First Lady Imelda Marcos said a volcanic eruption and other natural disasters in the Philippines are god's punishment on the government for refusing to allow the body of her husband Ferdinand home for burial, reports Reuter.

"This is no longer ordinary — typhoons, earthquakes, dormant volcanoes erupting," she said. Listen to the word from god for what you doing, you are punishing even the dead, she said in a radio interview from San Francisco.

"You cannot even give people who have departed eternal rest."

## Change of command

DOHA, (Kuwait), June 14: With little fanfare but much pride, the last US combat unit from the Gulf war handed over its command here Thursday, reports AFP.

"Case your colours," said Colonel William Nash of the 1st brigade, 3rd armoured division at the base in Doha, 30 kilometers (18 miles) north of Kuwait City.

His parade unit of four senior officers, three colour guards and one Sergeant Major sheathed the brigade's flag.

"Uncase your colours," said Colonel Andrew Bacevich as his parade unit hoisted the flag of the 11th armoured Cavalry Regiment, which is from Fulda, Germany. Both banners were yellow.

The 5,000 men and women of the 1st brigade, 3rd armoured division are going home to Kirchgoens, Germany. They will all have left by next week.

## Half the Halcion

BOSTON, June 14: Patients for sleeplessness, should be giving them only half the usual dose of a popular sleeping pill. Boston, researchers reported, reports Reuter.

Researchers found that older people were twice as sensitive to the drug Triazolam as volunteers age 21 to 41, according to a study reported in Thursday's edition of the New England Journal of Medicine.

They said more of the drug gets into the blood of elderly patients and it slower to leave.

Triazolam, sold by Upjohn under the brand name Halcion, is the most commonly prescribed sleeping medication in the United States. It works quickly and is supposed to have few side effects when taken in the proper dose, researchers said.

## Vocal cords preservation

BOSTON, June 14: Doctors may be able to preserve the vocal cords of patients with cancer of the larynx by using a combination of chemotherapy and radiation instead of surgery, according to new research, reports Reuter.

The treatment "can be effective in preserving the larynx in a high percentage of patients, without compromising overall survival," said the group, led by Dr Gregory Wolf of the Ann Arbor Veterans Affairs Medical Centre in Michigan.

After following patients for an average of three years, the doctors found that the two-year survival rate was 68 per cent whether patients received surgery or chemotherapy with their radiation treatments.

## Burial of violence

PRISTINA, (Yugoslavia), June 14: At least 50,000 ethnic Albanians Thursday staged a peaceful two-hour demonstration, symbolically burying violence in an empty coffin in this capital of restive Kosovo province, reports AP.

Veton Surroi, one of the organizers and an opposition leader, led the initial group of 2,000 Albanians, carrying an empty coffin from a Catholic church, eyewitnesses and newspapers reported.

The crowd, passing through the streets quickly grew to at least 50,000. The Serbian daily Politika's correspondent put the figure at 100,000.

In a speech at Pristina's Muslim cemetery, Surroi demanded an end to "violence by Serbian authorities" in Kosovo.