

# Key Croatian post by Vukovar falls

ZAGREB (Yugoslavia), Nov 17: Federal forces have dealt a severe blow to Croatian hopes for independence by capturing a key part of the defense around the besieged Danube River city of Vukovar, reports AP.

The military victory came the 13th ceasefire designed to end Yugoslavia's bitter civil war appeared to fall the same day it began. A dozen previous EC-brokered truces have also failed to stop Europe's bloodiest conflict since World War II.

The fall of Borovo Naselje, a village just north of Vukovar on the Danube River, and heavy fighting in Vukovar itself doomed the truce, which began at 6 pm (1700 GMT) Saturday.

The European Community and the United Nations have both said a firm cease-fire must be established before any peacekeeping troops are sent. Both Croatia and the federal army have agreed to permit a peacekeeping force, but under different conditions.

Vukovar, besieged for months, has become a potent emblem of Croatia's defense against the Yugoslav army and Serbian insurgents opposed to Croatia's June 25 declaration of independence.

Also Saturday, Croatian TV reported machine-gun fire battered and tracer bullets also flashed in the evening over parts of Dubrovnik — another besieged stronghold on Croatia's southern Adriatic coast.

Army and Croatian officials met in Zagreb on Saturday to discuss relief shipments to besieged Croatian cities including Vukovar and the withdrawal of the army from barracks in the republic. However, no agreements were reached.

Meanwhile, the leader of Vukovar, Marin Vidic-Bill, sent a letter to US President Bush, German Chancellor Helmut Kohl and several American congressmen asking for "help before it's too late."

Croatian radio said the letter warned that the fall of Vukovar "could spark a series of changes in European borders that could plunge all of Europe into a bloody conflict."

The army has been criticized in Serbia for its inability to take Vukovar and many observers say that it is an important matter of pride for the military to capture it.

The last obstacle for the liberation of Vukovar, now measured in terms of hours, has been removed," Tanjug said. It quoted the commander of the army's Novi Sad corps as claiming the Croats had suffered "enormous losses."

Croatian figures say almost 2,000 people have been killed in fighting in the republic, but that does not include casualties of the army of Serb insurgents, neither of whom divulge casualty figures.

Serbia claims Croatia's 600,000 ethnic Serbs would be persecuted if the republic became independent. Croatia says Serbia is using the minority issue to seize territory as Yugoslavia disintegrates.

## Punjab militants kill 12 in UP

BAREILLY (Uttar Pradesh), Nov 17: Twelve persons, including six roadways employees, were gunned down by Punjab militants in two incidents near Isapur village under Vilashpur Police Station in Rampur district late last night, reports PTI.

Official reports here said today that militants travelling in a Maruti car first struck on the Rudrapur Road killing nine persons including six roadways employees when they were attending to a vehicle which had broken down.

Shortly thereafter, they attacked a Maruti car a little distance away killing its three occupants.

In both the incidents the militants sprayed bullets from AK-47 rifles, the reports said.

## Hun Sen fears violent protests as memories of massacres still rankle

# Khmer Rouge leaders start returning to Phnom Penh

PHNOM PENH, Nov 17: Khmer Rouge leader and former torture master Son Sen arrived today in the capital he emptied at gunpoint 16 years ago, reports Reuter.

The former Khmer Rouge Defence Minister, a milt mannered ex-school teacher did not speak to journalists as he walked across the airport tarmac, still scared from fighting during the civil war that rocked Cambodia in the 1970s.

Dressed in a sober business suit and accompanied by several young aides Son Sen entered the airport building with officials of the Phnom Penh government his army has fought to overthrow for 13 years.

Son Sen looked frightened as soldiers and his aides pushed photographers and cameramen out of his way.

"I am very happy to come here," he said.

Son Sen was met at the airport by the head of the Foreign Ministry press section, Chum Bumrong, and was driven away in a police motorcade escorted

by motorcycle outriders, horns blaring and warning lights flashing.

Son Sen fled the Cambodian capital ahead of invading Vietnamese forces which toppled the Khmer Rouge government in 1979 and had not been back to the city since.

Before leaving Bangkok, he told Reuter: "I would like to call on all Khmer people to forget the past. The past is history. We better talk about the future."

"Now we are reaching for national reconciliation. We are unified. I don't want anyone to jeopardise the atmosphere of unity, but to join hands and cooperate with each other for the reconstruction of our country," he said.

As the Chief of Security during the 1975-79 Khmer Rouge rule, Son Sen was responsible for administering the Tuol Sleng torture centre on the outskirts of Phnom Penh where more than 20,000 people were killed.

The Khmer Rouge under the leadership of the infamous

Pol Pot have been blamed for the deaths of more than a million people who were either executed or died of disease, starvation or overwork when the radical Maoists tried to create a pure agrarian state.

Son Sen has returned to Phnom Penh to serve on a national reconciliation body which under a UN peace plan groups Cambodia's pro-Vietnamese government with the Khmer Rouge and two other guerilla factions in the run-up to UN-organised elections in 1993.

Khieu Samphan, nominal head of the Khmer Rouge who will also sit on the supreme national council, is expected in Phnom Penh later this month. "I am very glad to go back to the motherland after so many years of fighting in the jungle," said Son Sen, soft-spoken man with thick glasses.

As head of the state security apparatus during the years of Khmer Rouge rule, Son Sen oversaw the torture of thousands of Cambodians who were later killed.

Cambodian Prime Minister Hun Sen said in Phnom Penh on Friday he feared violent protests could erupt against the Khmer Rouge when they returned under the peace accord signed last month.

He said government, which fought the Khmer Rouge guerillas for 13 years, was now responsible for ensuring their safety.

Son Sen told Reuter: "I don't think there will be protests against me or other members of the Khmer Rouge. The Phnom Penh side has guaranteed me that they will not allow any protests."

He said Khieu Samphan, the nominal head of the Khmer Rouge, would return soon to Phnom Penh.

Khieu Samphan and Son Sen are the two Khmer Rouge representatives on the Supreme National Council headed by Prince Norodom Sihanouk. The Council will represent Cambodian sovereignty in the run-up to UN-organised elections.



PULA, Yugoslavia: An elderly refugee carries his belongings off the ferry "Slavija" here on Saturday following his arrival from the besieged city of Dubrovnik. More than 3000 refugees from Dubrovnik arrived here on the ferry after a 24-hour trip. — AFP photo

## Minister blasts move to put Ashrawi in the dock

# No Palestinian state in occupied territory, says Israel

JERUSALEM, Nov 17: A top aide to Prime Minister Yitzhak Shamir said on Saturday that Israel would not allow the formation of a Palestinian state in its occupied territories, reports Reuter.

The Chief of Shamir's staff, Yossi Ben-Aharon, said it was too early to discuss final arrangements between Israel and the Palestinians, but he ruled out an independent state.

"This government has clearly declared that it will not permit any kind of sovereignty west of the river Jordan," said Ben-Aharon.

"In other words there will be no Palestinian state in Palestine west of the river Jordan under any circumstances," he told Israel radio.

Israelis and Palestinians have agreed that peace talks launched in Madrid last month will focus on an interim five year period in which Arab residents of the occupied West Bank and Gaza Strip will be given autonomy.

In the third year of autonomy, negotiations will begin on the final status of the area. Palestinians hope to form an independent state in the occupied territories with east Jerusalem as its capital.

Many members of Israel's right wing believe a Palestinian state already exists east of the Jordan river — The Kingdom of Jordan.

Another report adds: An Israeli cabinet minister on Saturday criticised a police recommendation that Palestinian activist Hanan Ashrawi should stand trial for meeting PLO officials.

Health Minister Ehud Olmert, who is close to hard-

line Prime Minister Yitzhak Shamir said he thought Israel's Attorney General would reject the recommendation.

It was not the right recommendation in a public standpoint and in terms of timing, he told army radio.

The police made their recommendation and now the ball is transferred to some one who will consider wider issues, he said.

Ashrawi from the Israeli occupied West Bank became a media star last month as spokeswoman for the Palestinian delegation at the Middle East peace conference in Madrid.

The Justice Minister announced the police recommendation on Friday, Israeli law forbids meetings with members of terrorist organisations, the label Israel applies to the Palestine Liberation Organisation.

Ashrawi herself called the recommendation petty and accused Israel of trying to obstruct the peace process.

It has to be viewed in the context of all Israeli practices and measures right now, in view of the peace process, Ashrawi said denouncing the move as a bid to silence the Palestinians.

Jordan, the Palestinians partner in the joint delegation to Madrid called on Washington and Moscow to protect Ashrawi.

# Indecision, lapses got IPKF stuck in Lankan quagmire

NEW DELHI, Nov 17: The Indian army command structure dawdled during over two and a half years counter-insurgency operations in Sri Lanka and the Indian Peace Keeping Force (IPKF) had to pay a heavy price in men and material for these indecision and lapses, says Lt Gen Sardeshpande (Retd) a former senior IPKF Commander.

In his just about to be released book "Assignment Jaffna," Gen Sardeshpande who resigned from the Indian army this year over differences

with senior commanders over the conduct of IPKF operations, says former Chief of the Army Staff, Gen. Sunderji "showed the Indian Army into combat with Sri Lanka militants in a haste, lack of preparation and misreading of capabilities."

"Everybody lived and thought from one day to the next, our wait for pearls of wisdom remained endless. What increasingly showed up instead was the political eye and bluster of the GOC IPKF, the tentativeness and uncer-

tainty of army commander above him and the army chief's loquaciousness, which did little to change system's incongruities and tackle the hidden rot in all these two years and half and more of our military venture.

The former IPKF Commander who won the second highest award Uttam Yudh Sena Medal for his conduct of divisional operations in Sri Lanka has for the first time come out with startling facts that senior and middle level army commanders shirked

from command in IPKF as "few wanted to get stuck in Quagmire there as they would be exposed."

Gen Sardeshpande says that though the then Army Chief pushed the Indian army into combat with LTTE in Sri Lanka, what escaped notice and credit was that "such a venture was necessary and desirable to break smugness, conventional thinking and reluctance to find radical solutions".

He says that army's charac-

# Off the Record

## Doomsday government

WASHINGTON: If nuclear war were to incapacitate the US government and its legal line of succession, a top-secret White House agency would step in to implement alternative plans, CNN television reports, reports AFP.

In a one-hour special called "doomsday government," set to air today at 9:00 pm (0200 GMT tomorrow), a Cable News Network (CNN) investigative team will report that it has uncovered the existence of a body controlling an alternate presidential succession plan and a web of mobile command posts to allow the government to operate in case of nuclear attack.

Known as the National Programme Office (NPO), the agency was created by a secret 1982 order from then-President Ronald Reagan and grew up under wraps, CNN says. At the time, the NPO came under the jurisdiction of Vice President George Bush.

Retired marine Lieutenant Colonel Oliver North — the national security council aide — was key to the NPO's establishment, the television network says. North mentions the covert initiative briefly in his recent book "under fire".

The NPO was set up to ensure that civilian officials retain control of the military in the event of a nuclear attack, the network says, should all 17 legal successors to the US President become incapacitated, the NPO would provide additional elected and non-elected officials to take command, the CNN report says.

Alternate successors who at one time have figured on the NPO's list include former UN Ambassador Jeane Kirkpatrick and former CIA Director Richard Helms, CNN says.

## Not like what you see on television

PARIS: Thousands of policemen — 7,000 according to police head quarters but up to organisers of the demonstration — called for better pay and conditions in a protest march here Saturday, reports AFP.

The demonstrators also called on Interior Minister Philippe Marchand to resign. "Being a cop is not like what you see on television," and angry inspector said. "We don't even have enough typewriters."

About 200 superintendents — more than 400 according to the police trade unions — joined the march in a rare show of solidarity with the lower ranks.

Marchand on Friday announced a series of reforms including a greater decentralisation of police forces and their budgets away from the central administration in favour of the provinces.

## Volcano god still angry

TOKYO: Shinto priests know him as Tateiwake no Mikoto, the fiery god of Japan's most deadly volcano. And Tateiwake no Mikoto, they say, is angry, reports AP.

Despite their prayers, the god of Mount Unzen spat, rumbled and threatened to erupt anew on Sunday, the first anniversary of his return to life after nearly 200 years asleep.

About 100 townspeople in a hot springs resort on the slopes of the volcano in southern Japan gathered at a small Shinto shrine to mark the anniversary and remember the 41 people killed in a subsequent eruption last summer.

"We held the ceremony to calm the mountain god," said Makiko Hirose, wife of the Unzen Shrine's chief priest. Mountain cults are common in Shinto, Japan's native religion. Mrs Hirose said the Unzen shrine is only four kilometers (2.3 miles) from the volcano's peak. Another shrine atop the volcano is buried in ash.

As the priests prayed for calm, geologists reported a continued increase in seismic activity that could indicate an impending eruption.

"Molten rock is continuing to build up inside the volcano," said Kyushu University geologist Setsuya Nakata.

On Sunday, seismographs at the Meteorological Agency's Unzen Observatory recorded 87 microearthquakes — tremors too weak to be felt by humans — by 2 pm (0500 GMT).

Seven stronger tremors centered under Unzen also were registered, leading scientists to believe magma, or molten rock, is accumulating below several vents on Unzen's Fugen Peak.

# BRIEFLY

**UK customs smashes drugs ring:** British customs officers said on Saturday they had arrested six people in a major cocaine haul and believed they had smashed an international drugs ring, reports Reuter Sunday from London.

Officers swopped on the ring on Friday after tracing the five kg (11 lb) cocaine haul worth 500,000 pounds sterling (900,000 dollars), from the West Indies through the Netherlands and France to London.

As a result of last night's seizure customs believe they have smashed a major international drugs ring operating between the Caribbean and the UK, a customs spokesman said.

**4 Palestinian fighters killed:** A hitherto unknown Palestinian organisation said Saturday that four of its fighters were killed Monday in a clash with the Israeli Army in the Negev Desert, reports AFP Sunday from Nicosia.

The Aqsa forces and guardians of the Holy Sepulchre said in a statement that a commando unit "operating inside Palestine, on Monday night attacked a concentration of enemy soldiers in the western Negev."

It said that after a bitter clash resulting in human and weapons losses in Israeli ranks four of its guerillas were killed.

**Yugoslav journalist killed:** A 28-year-old Yugoslav journalist has been killed during fighting in Vukovar, the official Tanjug news agency reported Saturday, bringing to 17 the number of journalists killed in the Yugoslav civil war. Two others are missing, reports AFP Sunday from Belgrade.

Tanjug said Bodin Marjanovic, a freelancer, was killed Thursday during fighting between Croatian forces and federal army troops in the eastern Croatian city, which has been under siege and daily bombardments for nearly three months.

A journalist from the British Television Station ITN, David Chata, and a photographer from the American news agency The Associated Press, Dusan Vranic, were seriously wounded in Vukovar on Thursday and Friday, according to the report which cited the Serbian Journalists' Association.

**Tamils free 2 Thai nationals:** Two Thai nationals who were abducted by Tamil rebels earlier this week have been released in eastern Sri Lanka, military officials said Sunday, reports AP Sunday from Colombo.

The two men, engineers from the Thai-owned company U-Thong, were handed over to the International Committee of the Red Cross by the rebels Saturday at Punani, about 210 kilometers (132 miles) east of Colombo. They were identified as Thaworn Duangsee and Noi Pormiam.

**Pakistan, India adopt positive attitude:** Pakistan Foreign Secretary General Akram Zaki said Saturday that Pakistan's relations with India have developed "from tension to dialogue," reports Xinhua Sunday from Islamabad.

Talking to foreign correspondents in Islamabad at a luncheon, Akram Zaki said both Pakistan and India adopted a "constructive and positive" attitude in the latest foreign secretary level talks held last month.

He said Pakistan wants to solve all the problems with India and it has taken initiatives to resolve them in a "more political and peaceful manner."

**Salvadorans cautious about truce:** Salvadorans, stoc and more than a little fatalistic after 12 years of civil war, are reluctant to entertain the vision of peace conjured by an insurgent cease-fire, for fear their hopes will be shattered, reports AP Sunday from San Salvador.

Almost without fail, Salvadorans reacted to the unilateral rebel truce that began Saturday with the word "Ojala"— an expression meaning something between "Would that it be so" and "Good willing."

Joquin Ramos, a battered straw cowboy hat on his head and leather thong sandals on his worn feet, commented outside his humble home in rural Cuscatlan province in the heart of El Salvador.

"I have hope," said Ramos, whose four sons have died fighting in the leftist rebel army.

Government forces, taking advantage of the rebel truce and the insurgents' partial retreat to camps higher on Guazapa mountain's slopes, were pouring into the zone traditionally dominated by the rebel Farabundo Marti National Liberation Front, or FMLN.

"This is aggression. Then they'll say the FMLN violated the truce," said Ramos.

## Moscow talks important victory: Mujahideen

ISLAMABAD, Nov 17: Resistance leaders who negotiated in Moscow a comprehensive solution to the conflict in Afghanistan have described the talks as an important victory, a Mujahideen report said today.

In reactions published here today by the resistance media news agency, delegates of the various Mujahideen factions said they were "successful, valuable," talks.

At the November 10-15 negotiations, the Mujahideen delegates insisted that Moscow agree to annual all treaties with the Kabul government.

All the treaties signed between the Soviets and the Kabul puppet regime since 1978 have been called illegal and against the wishes of the Afghan nation," Burhanuddin Rabbani, leader of the moderate Jamiat-i-Islami faction, said.

The Soviet Union backed the communist coup d'etat in Kabul in 1978 and defended the new government.

The current government in Kabul still receives economic and military assistance from Moscow, which withdrew its troops in 1989.

Rabbani said the outcome of the talks, which will also lead to the release of a first group of Soviet prisoners of war still held by the resistance, had surpassed the Mujahideens' hopes.

Pakistan foreign office spokesman Akram Zaki said here Saturday that Islamabad was awaiting details from Moscow but understood the joint declaration, issued Friday in Moscow, contained a reference to Soviet condemnation of its invasion of Afghanistan in 1979.

Media stressed Moscow's "condemnation of the illegitimate decision to send troops to Afghanistan" which prompted another resistance leader Nabi Mohammedi, to say the Mujahideen had won "an important victory."

## Third storm roaring towards Manila

MANILA, Nov 17: The third tropical storm to strike the country in a month roared toward Manila on Sunday with rain and winds gusting to 100 kilometers (60 miles) per hour, reports AP.

There were no reports of casualties from Tropical Storm Wilda, which roared ashore late Saturday in the Bicol peninsula of southeastern Luzon and then weakened steadily as it plowed across mountainous Quezon province.

We could have conducted the operations with much more robustness, professional approach, a greater business-like attitude and vigorous pursuit than our prediction for taking shelter under peacetime practices," the General says adding that the Indian army fought the Sri Lanka operations with a "peacetime outlook" with disastrous consequences.