

# Angola confirms fall of Huambo

LUANDA, Mar 8: The Angolan government said it troops withdrew from Huambo in the central highlands at the weekend, confirming rebel claims to have captured the country's second city after two months of fierce fighting, reports Reuters.

The battle for Huambo was the centre-point of renewed fighting between the government and UNITA rebels after the breakdown of a 1991 peace agreement intended to end 16 years of civil war in the former Portuguese colony.

State radio, quoting a military spokesman, said on Sunday night that government forces pulled out of Huambo "for strategic reasons" and staged "an orderly retreat to more advantageous positions."

UNITA, which took up arms again after rejecting its defeat in UN-supervised elections last September, said on Saturday that it had captured the government's last positions in Huambo and was in complete control of the city.

More than 10,000 people are estimate to have died in the two-month battle, which featured government air raids on UNITA positions and heavy rebel shelling of government strongpoints.

Diplomats said the fighting was vicious, with neither side taking many prisoners.

The government garrison in Huambo had been cut off for several weeks, confined to a small part of the city of half a million people and supplied by occasional air drops.

# Tanakpur hydroelectric project Nepali communists protest accord with India

KATHMANDU, Mar 8: Nepal's four communist factions today jointly called for a rally and general strike next week to protest the government's signing an agreement with India on the Tanakpur hydroelectric project, a communist party source said, reports AFP.

The factions have called for a massive rally Friday to denounce the government over an incident March 5 when a young girl was killed and several other people injured when police opened fire on a communist-backed anti-government demonstration.

Police officials said however that 10 policemen were injured when the demonstrators

attacked them with stones in Usindhul district, 190 kilometres (118 miles) southeast of here.

The leftists have also announced a flaming torch demonstration Saturday night in the three towns of the Kathmandu valley to protest the shooting, despite a new law banning torch light parades.

The strike will be held Sunday also in the three valley towns of Apatan, Bhaktapur and Kathmandu itself to protest against the Tanakpur project and price hike in electricity and drinking water by more than 92 per cent.

The four communist factions have organised earlier

demonstrations in Kathmandu and outlying districts, including the March 5 one, to protest the price hikes and agreements reached by the government of Prime Minister Girija Prasad Koirala and India on the Tanakpur hydroelectric power project.

The factions are also angry that the government wants the Tanakpur project ratified in the House of Representatives by a simple majority, whereas they want it to be discussed in a joint session of both houses and ratified by two thirds majority.

The Koirala government enjoys a majority of about 56 per cent in both houses.

# Pawar retains Home

BOMBAY, Mar 8: The Maharashtra Chief Minister Sharad Pawar has retained the key home department while allocating portfolios to his colleagues in the newly constituted 27-member two-tier ministry, reports PTI.

Pawar's retention of the home portfolio assumes significance in the light of the two spells of worst-ever riots that rocked the megapolis recently and his pronouncement that law and order is a top priority for him.

Ramrao Adik has been given finance, a portfolio he held in the erstwhile ministry, along with planning, law and judiciary.

Another senior minister, Vilasrao Deshmukh who held the vital industries portfolio earlier has now been allotted revenue and cultural affairs.

# Emergency in Philippines to solve energy crisis soon

MANILA, Mar 8: President Fidel Ramos said today he might invoke emergency powers to help solve the Philippines' energy crisis, but he did not want to send the wrong signals to investors, reports Reuters.

Ramos did not specify the measures he was studying, but stressed that any declared emergency would deal only with the very severe energy and power shortage in our country.

He recalled that his predecessor, Corason Aquino, declared a state of emergency that lasted several months to rebuild and economy shattered by a coup attempt in December 1989.

"I am now studying very carefully... the energy situation as an emergency situation," he told a news conference.



MOSCOW: Ten of the 12 former USSR officials accused of organising the August '91 coup pose for a group picture on Saturday after a meeting with their supporters. From L to R (Back) Former Head of USSR Army Industry Oleg Baklanov, former army General Valentin Varennikov, former first secretary of the CPSU Oleg Shemin, former parliament chairman Anatoly Lukianov, former KGB General Yuri Plekhanov, former USSR MP Alexander Kraiko, former chief of the president's security office Vyacheslav Generalov, (Front): former Defence Minister Dmitry Yazov, former Prime Minister Valentin Pavlov, former KGB chief Vladimir Kruchkov and former Vice-President Gennady Yanayev. Scheduled start of the trial against the plotters is on April 14.

# 15m bonded labourers in India

NEW DELHI, Mar 8: A survey by the International Labour Organization estimated that as many as 15 million people now work as bonded labourers in India, reports Xinhua.

The survey, based on information supplied by independent agencies said that in agriculture alone there were more than two million bonded labourers, local newspapers reported today.

The bonded labour was officially abolished in India by an act of parliament in 1976 which gave state governments

widespread in such other fields as quarrying, carpet weaving and domestic service, the survey said.

# BRIEFLY

**Hepburn leaves hospital today:** Screen legend Katharine Hepburn will be released from a hospital in Hartford this week following good test results, a hospital spokesman said Sunday, reports AFP from Hartford.

The actress was hospitalized on Thursday for exhaustion. She then underwent a series of tests and examinations by specialists, said Hartford Hospital spokesman James Battaglio. Battaglio did not disclose the nature of the tests but said the results were positive. He added that Hepburn should be discharged by Tuesday.

Hepburn, 85, was born in Hartford, lives in New York city and spends weekends at a house on the Atlantic shore in old Saybrook, Connecticut.

**12 Palestinians hurt in clashes:** Twelve Palestinians were injured in clashes Sunday in Gaza between members of two Islamic fundamentalist groups, Palestinian sources reported, AFP says from Jerusalem.

The fighting broke out when militants of the Islamic Resistance Movement Hamas forcibly tried to join in a meeting of Islamic Jihad members reading the Koran at Gaza's Saheiddin Mosque. Clashes ensued in which ten Islamic Jihad and two Hamas militants were stabbed.

A year ago similar incidents involving the two movements occurred at the same mosque in the Zeitun district of Gaza.

**Italian minister resigns:** Environment Minister of Italy Carlo Ripa di Meana, of the Socialist Party, announced his resignation Sunday, reports AFP from Rome.

He told reporters he was opposed to a government move to decriminalise cases of illicit funding of political parties.

**Floods unearth 200 bodies:** Flooding in Southwestern Iran has unearthed the bodies of 200 soldiers killed during the 1980-1988 war against Iraq, Kayhan newspaper reported Sunday, says AFP from Tehran.

Citing local authorities in Khuzestan Province, it said the soldiers had died in fighting around the town of Khorramshahr which borders Iraq. The Iraqi army occupied the town for two years at the start of the war. The bodies were transferred to Tehran for identification.

**More Japanese troops for UN force:** Japan's Defence Agency chief Toshio Nakayama issued order on Monday for a second engineering battalion of 600 troops to go to Cambodia to join the UN peacekeeping operation there, reports AFP from Tokyo.

The new contingent from the ground self-defence force will replace the first group, which is to end its six-month assignment, by early April and stay until October, Defence Agency officials said.

Japan sent the first battalion to Cambodia last year after it enacted a peacekeeping cooperation law in August allowing the overseas dispatch of Japanese troops for the first time since World War II.

**Baath to celebrate its rise:** Syria's Baath Party, a secular movement which advocates pan-Arabism and socialism, will Monday celebrate the 30th anniversary of its rise to power, reports AFP from Damascus.

The anniversary will be marked by festivities across the country while a party meeting is scheduled in Damascus.

The official Daily Ath-Thawra said Syria had "never deviated from the goals of the revolution of March 8 (1963)."

Founded in 1943 by young intellectuals who had studied abroad, the Baath seized power in 1963. In 1970, General Hafez al-Assad, then Defence Minister, overthrew the regime and became President. He was re-elected as head of state on March 12, 1992 for a fourth seven-year term.

**Floods hit Indonesian island:** Floods and landslides have forced the evacuation of 970 people from their homes in the eastern Indonesian island of Flores, press reports said Monday, AFP reports from Jakarta.

Mud flows buried four villages on the island's Sikka regency after heavy rains fell from last Tuesday. Some 900 people had been evacuated from the area to higher ground by Sunday, the Kompas Daily reported.

# Bodos lay down arms

NEW DELHI, Mar 8: Bodo separatists in India's troubled northeastern Assam state laid down their arms on Sunday, ending a six year uprising, domestic news agencies said, reports Reuters from New Delhi.

Militants led by their chief Prem Singh Brahma handed over weapons and ammunition to state officials, watched by Federal Minister for Internal Security Rajesh Pilot, the Press Trust of India (PTI) said.

Bodo tribesmen fighting for separation from Assam state signed an agreement with the federal government in February. New Delhi promised to create an autonomous council for them and in return the tribesmen agreed to end their bloody uprising.

The state government announced a general amnesty and said cases against the militants would be dropped.

# Narasimha Rao resigns?

NEW DELHI, Mar 8: An Indian newspaper published banner headlines today saying Prime Minister P V Narasimha Rao had resigned and former prime minister Chandra Shekhar had been invited to form an all-party government, reports Reuters.

The Hindi-language Rashtriya Sahara said Rao was fed up with infighting in the ruling Congress Party. He submitted his resignation to President Shankar Dayal Sharma, who invited Chandra Shekhar to form a government, it said.

Other news items on the front page of the newspaper had finance minister Manmohan Singh appointed head of the World Bank, two Bombay film actresses in flak over a set, and 800 per cent increase in college fees and the completion of a metro railway in New Delhi by the end of the year.

Even the front-page cartoon showed the character from a

rival newspaper's strip. The cartoon said he was joining the Sahara because the previous artist had been banned for using steroids.

They were all hoax news items published on Holi, the Hindu spring festival associated with mirth and practical jokes. But journalists working on the festival day in India's two national news agencies said they had received several calls asking if the news about Rao's quitting was true.

There was a touch of truth about several news items. Rao has been faced with challenges to his leadership from factions within the Congress. Singh is alleged to have modelled India's economic policies on advice from the World Bank. Delhi's metro railway project has been lying on the shelves for decades.

And the two film actresses are known to be bitter rivals. The only giveaway was a microscopic line on the bottom of the front page that read: "It's Holi, it's Holi."

# Many residents plan to leave HK before China's takeover

HONG KONG, Mar 8: About one in eight residents of Hong Kong plan to leave the territory before China's takeover in 1997, according to results of a survey published today, reports AFP.

About 13 per cent of Hong Kong's 5.9 million people are planning to seek right of abode in a foreign country in the run-up to 1997, the survey carried out by Hong Kong transition project showed.

In a telephone poll of 615 residents in Hong Kong, more than one-quarter of those with or seeking right of abode elsewhere said they planned to leave Hong Kong for good before 1997, while 12 per cent vowed to remain in the territory.

The survey also found that about 50 per cent of residents interviewed have relatives living abroad.

# Off the Record



BERLIN: Miss Hawaii 1993, Pamela Kimura (R) and Chiookii Indian Sunny Glass from Oklahoma pose for photographers in the America-hall at the international tourism fair in Berlin on Sunday. The United States has the biggest stand of the fair and offers the largest variety of tourist attractions. —AFP/UNB photo

# Aggressors are their wives

LONDON: Many men are keeping a secret about violence in their homes — that they are the victims and the aggressors are their wives, reports Reuters.

A report in Britain's Esquire magazine on Monday said violence by women against men was growing in both Britain and the United States. "Patterns of violence varied. Men used their fists, while women generally employed common household items like knives, scissors, saucepans or lamps and, curiously, baseball bats," the report said.

"We're not talking about the odd plate flung across the kitchen here." Several men interviewed for the article said they had lost their jobs as a direct result of their wives' behaviour — which could include bad-mouthing them to family and employers. "One man who kept turning up to work with a black eye was told he must leave because the customers didn't like it," the report said.

It quoted several men who said they had been beaten by their wives. "She would hit me with pots and pans, take the carving knife to me, and once she stabbed a cigarette out on my face," said a London engineer.

"Suddenly, her eyes would go crazy and she'd change from being a kind, gentle woman into this raging monster," another unemployed man was quoted as saying.

# Major comes to save Diana

LONDON: An army major who denied a romantic link with Britain's Princess Diana has dropped a libel action against a Tabloid newspaper to save her from a court appearance, a rival paper reported on Sunday, reports Reuters.

"Diana vowed to stand by me in the legal action," polo-playing Gulf war veteran major James Hewitt, 34, was quoted as saying by the People newspaper in an interview.

"But if she had been called as a witness, the court ordeal would have been too horrendous for her."

Under British law, only the monarch is exempted from appearing in court as a witness.

Hewitt, who gave Diana horse-riding lessons, had sued the Sun tabloid over allegations about their friendship and insisted "The relationship is entirely innocent."

The Sun said the source for its stories was a former girlfriend of Hewitt, who blamed his friendship with Diana for the collapse of their own relationship.

The major faces redundancy next year due to a series of Army cutbacks and he said the action could have cost him up to 300,000 pounds (about 437,000 dollars) in legal fees.

The People also reported that Diana has ended her friendship with James Gilbey, the 35-year-old marketing consultant who allegedly featured in a taped telephone conversation published last year with a woman widely-believed to be Diana.

# For the first time they face the world

EDINBURGH: A Zimbabwe high court judge, a South African law professor and a Glasgow nurse were among some 35 Buddhists who faced the world for the first time on Sunday after four years of strict seclusion in a remote monastery, reports Reuters.

The men and women have not heard a radio, seen television or a newspaper since beginning their retreat at the Samye Ling Tibetan Buddhist centre in March 1989.

"They do have a vague idea about what's been happening as friends have asked them to pray for certain things," said Thom McCarthy, assistant administrator at Samye Ling.

"They'll know about the Gulf war for instance."

Walking in the garden of the monastery in the hills near Eskdalemuir was the only break in a strict regime of prayer, study, solitary meditation and fasting.

# Her son was killed because of his homosexuality

SAN FRANCISCO: A woman who says her son was killed in Japan because of his homosexuality urged officials to stop harassment of gays in the military and turn over her son's case to independent prosecutors, reports AP.

"I don't want any homosexual in the military to end up like my son did," Dorothy Hajdys said Sunday at a news conference outside the War Memorial Veterans' Building.

Seaman Allen Schindler, 22, of San Diego was beaten to death October 27 in a public restroom near the Sasebo Naval base in Japan, the home port of the USS Belleau Wood.

Schindler, a radioman stationed on the ship, was awaiting an administrative discharge after declaring his homosexuality.

# Americans fear wave of organised terrorism in United States

NEW YORK, Mar 8: The investigative skills and luck that cracked the World Trade Center bombing case have not dispelled the greater fear of US law enforcement: that Americans may be facing a wave of organized terrorism on their own home ground, reports AP.

Although Americans and their institutions have been victimized in scores of bombings, skyjackings, assassinations and other politically driven acts of violence over the past 25 years, few have occurred in the United States itself.

Officials credit this to several factors: the distance from the centers of revolutionary ferment, the easy availability of US-related targets abroad, Washington's tough anti-terrorist policy of no negotiations and swift armed retaliation, and the efficiency of its law enforcement in solving such crimes.

But with the end of the Cold War unleashing a new surge of nationalist and religious zealotry around the globe, officials say there is no reason to assume the brazen attack on a symbolic heart of capitalist democracy was simply an isolated event.

A day after the trade center blast, New York Gov Mario Cuomo said it was "just a hint of what they have grown accustomed to in some other great nations, like Britain." He added, hopefully: "I don't expect that we'll ever see things like that here. We are stronger than that, and we have better law enforcement."



Undated photo from a family album shows Mohamed Salameh, who was charged by US investigators with being behind the bomb attack which rocked World Trade Centre in New York last week. — AFP UNB photo

Federal agent made clear their inquiry will focus on the Middle East — home base for dozens of organizations whose causes range from destruction of Israel to the overthrow of US-allied Arab oil states and the replacement of secular government with Islamic fundamentalism.

Although the use of the term terrorist is sometimes disputed, the US government defines terrorism as "premeditated, politically motivated violence against non-combatant targets by sub-national groups or clandestine state agents, usually to influence an audience."

A 1988 Pentagon report said that among significant actions by Arab terrorists in 1968-88, there were 69 against Israeli targets, 35 against Arabs and 57 in Europe and elsewhere. Of 33 major attacks on Americans, none occurred in the United States.

Similarly, the Red Army Faction, Red Brigades and other "urban guerrillas" who murdered, kidnapped and firebombed their way across Western Europe in the 1970 and 1980s targeted some US military facilities and individual Americans. But like the Arabs, they apparently stayed clear of US shores.

An FBI tabulation of 1987-91 listed 34 "terrorist incidents" in the United States, mostly vandalism or sabotage, with no deaths or injuries. Twenty-three were related to Puerto Rico.

Even so, more serious activity is not unknown in the United States. The 20th century has witnessed scores of bombings against politicians, diplomats, judges, government agencies and private companies.

Bombs exploded in or near the US Senate in 1915, 1975 and 1985; in the Wall Street area in the 1920s and 1975, and a New York's LaGuardia airport in 1975. Although various groups claimed responsibility for some acts, international ties are rarely proven.