

# 17 killed as Maoists blow up police bus in Maharashtra

NEW DELHI, Apr 21: Maoist guerrillas blew up a police bus with a landmine and strafed onlookers and officers killing 17 people in western India, the Press Trust of India (PTI) reported today, says AFP.

Ten policemen were among those killed in the Tuesday overnight ambush in the rural Nagpur area of Maharashtra state, the news agency said and added that a dozen patrolmen were injured in the landmine blast.

The bus carrying 22 special guards of the Maharashtra state police was blown to smithereens when it hit the powerful mine, PTI said.

Guerrillas belonging to the

outlawed People's War Group raked the smashed bus and onlookers with gunfire then fled before police reinforcements could reach the site, newspapers said.

Three women, including the wife of a senior government executive, and a child were among the seven civilians killed in the bloody ambush by the guerrillas, known as Naxalites, PTI added.

The attack, believed to be in retaliation for last month's killing of a senior Naxalite leader, followed the April 9 killing of 22 policemen in a landmine blast engineered by an outlaw in the southern state of Karnataka.

# Croats, Muslims locked in fighting despite truce

TUZLA, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Apr 21: Muslims and Croats exchanged mortarfire in their battle for central Bosnia early Wednesday morning, despite reports a truce had been struck, reports AP.

On another front this morning, shells fell on Tuzla for the first time in more than two weeks.

The UN commander in Bosnia, Gen Philippe Morillon, had said Tuesday that poor communications would delay implementation of the truce, according to Sarajvo radio.

A British military spokesman in Vitez said by telephone that fighting was still raging Wednesday. He had no estimate of casualties, but

said those bodies found so far included women and children, some killed by small arms fire.

The main British peace-keeping force is based at Vitez. About two dozen truces have been declared and usually quickly broken since Bosnia seceded from Yugoslavia 14 months ago, over the objection of ethnic Serbs who have since overrun 70 per cent of the republic.

More than 134,000 people have been killed or are missing in the war.

Muslims and Croats had been united in battles against the Serbs, but are fiercely contesting scraps of territory not in Serb hands. At least 200 people have been killed in five

days of fighting in central Bosnia.

In the east, the heavy Serb guns that had pounded the Muslim enclave of Srebrenica for nearly a year remained silent Tuesday for a third day, under a UN-monitored truce that forced outgunned Muslim defenders to virtually surrender.

But UN officials reported occasional exchanges of small arms and machine-gun fire.

The UN High Commissioner for Refugees, meanwhile, urged that UN forces move in to protect the Muslim enclaves of Gorazde and Zepa and keep conditions there from deteriorating to the state reached in Srebrenica.

Reports from UN refugee staff in Srebrenica said the town cannot sustain the thousands of refugees who have crowded into it. They cited a doctor who said 10 per cent of the children have scurvy. Scabies and lice are rampant, and the lack of running water and hygiene has made epidemics likely, they said.

UN officials on Tuesday asked for more time to disarm Muslim fighters in the enclave. Canadian peacekeepers were to have disarmed the Muslims by today.

At least two shells fell this morning on Tuzla, one of the few eastern areas under Bosnian government control.

## Off the Record

### Traffic jam cost him 236,000 dollars

PARIS: A Saudi prince in a hurry paid Air France 1.3 million francs (dfrs 236,000) to charter a Concord to the United States in a New York minute, a spokeswoman for the airline said Wednesday, reports AP.

The prince, whose identity was kept confidential, missed the daily 11 am supersonic flight from Paris to New York on January 26 because of a traffic jam, the spokeswoman said.

A Boeing 747 was scheduled two hours later but would have taken 4 1/2 hours longer than the 3 1/2-hour Concord flight, said the spokeswoman, speaking on customary condition of anonymity.

Wanting to connect quickly with his personal 747 awaiting him in New York for a flight to Los Angeles, he paid Air France in travelers checks to charter a Concord for him and his 19-member entourage.

The price covered the cost of flying the jet round-trip, the spokeswoman said.

A Concord and a crew were quickly pressed into service at 2 pm as special flight AF495, its captain dressed in street clothes instead of his uniform because of the short notice, she said.

### Bout of job confusion

LONDON: A British minister suffered a bout of job confusion on Tuesday when asked to identify himself before a House of Commons Select Committee, reports Reuter.

"Myself, as you know, I am Secretary of State for Trade and Industry" declared Social Security Secretary Peter Lilley.

The bewildered minister, who moved from the trade post more than a year ago, only realised his mistake when the room erupted in laughter.

### A Japanese needs \$27,300 for Russian bride

Japanese arranged marriages with Russian brides cost twice as much as those with Koreans but only 20 per cent more than those with Chinese women, who are growing in popularity, a marriage broker said today, reports AFP.

A spokesman for International Brida Association (IBA) a Tokyo-based agency which seeks foreign women for Japanese bachelors, said the average cost of arranging a marriage with a Russian was three million yen (27,300 dollars).

That compares with about 1.5 million yen for Korean brides and 2.5 million yen for Chinese partners, who have become increasingly popular here in the past two years amid bad publicity about arranged marriages with Filipino brides.

The spokesman said Russian marriages commanded a premium due to the "risks" associated with doing business in the former Soviet Union, notably in such lawless places as Vladivostok, the nearest major Russian city to Japan.

### Indonesia forbids lavish parties

JAKARTA: Indonesian authorities have barred public servants from throwing extravagant parties, the Minister for the Utilization of the State Apparatus Brigadier General Topan Bernhard Silalahi has said, reports AFP.

"As of now, lavish parties (thrown) by public servants will be forbidden", the media Indonesia Daily Today quoted Silalahi as saying after meeting Indonesian President Suharto on Tuesday. Silalahi said Suharto has demanded that a regulation to that effect be issued as soon as possible. He said however circumstance would be taken into account when setting up the criteria for lavish parties.

The minister said government officials should realize that they needed to tone down their celebrations because the majority of Indonesians still lived in austerity.

## BRIEFLY

### ROK army Gen dismissed

The Defense Ministry fired an army general Wednesday in connection with a shooting spree by an army deserter that killed one and injured six others, reports AP from Seoul.

The chief of staff and several company-grade officers of the general's division faced either court-martial or disciplinary action in connection with the incident on Monday.

Maj Gen Kim Hyon-tae was relieved of his post as commander of a front-line army division, to which the deserter, Pvt Lim Chae-sung, 19, belonged.

Lim, armed with 22 hand-grenades and a rifle with 130 rounds of ammunition, deserted his unit on the country's east coast Monday, seized a mini-van passing by and drove it into Seoul with two passengers.

### Anti-Tigers drive in Jaffna

Sri Lankan troops launched an operation to clear Tamil guerrilla fortifications in the northern rebel stronghold of Jaffna yesterday, a military spokesman said, reports Reuter from Colombo.

He said a curfew had been declared in Iyakachchi, north of the Elephant Pass base controlling access to the Jaffna peninsula.

An army patrol killed two Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam rebels near Iyakachchi on Tuesday and an army sergeant and another rebel were killed when troops ambushed a guerrilla group in eastern Batticaloa.

The rebels are fighting for a separate state in the island's north and east.

### 5 children burnt to death in India

Five young children were burnt to death when Naga guerrillas set fire to a village of a rival tribe in India's northeastern Manipur state, domestic news agencies said on Tuesday, reports Reuter from New Delhi.

The Press Trust of India (PTI) said suspected guerrillas of the Nationalist Socialist Council of Nagaland (NSCN) attacked Bongli village in Chandel district and set fire to 40 huts belonging to Kuki tribesmen.

The children were too young to escape as panic-stricken villagers fleeing a fresh raid fled into the thick jungle nearby, it said.

Bongli village is just north of Sita Kuki where Naga guerrillas shot six Kuki villagers on Sunday, PTI said.

### Famous Mexican comedian dead

Mexico's most famous comic actor, Mario Moreno, better known as "Cantinflas", died Tuesday of lung cancer, his son said. He was 81, reports AP from Mexico City.

Cantinflas, made 49 films over a half-century but is best-known abroad for his role as Passpartout, the servant to Phineas Fogg in "Around the World in 80 Days."

### Cholera claims 11 in Indonesia

A cholera outbreak in the eastern Indonesian island of Flores has killed 11 people and forced the hospitalization of 566 others, the Antara news agency reported yesterday, says AFP from Jakarta.

The disease has been affecting two sub-districts of Belu, part of Nusa Tenggara Timur province, since early this month, Agus Berek, a health official in the provincial capital of Kupang, was quoted as saying.

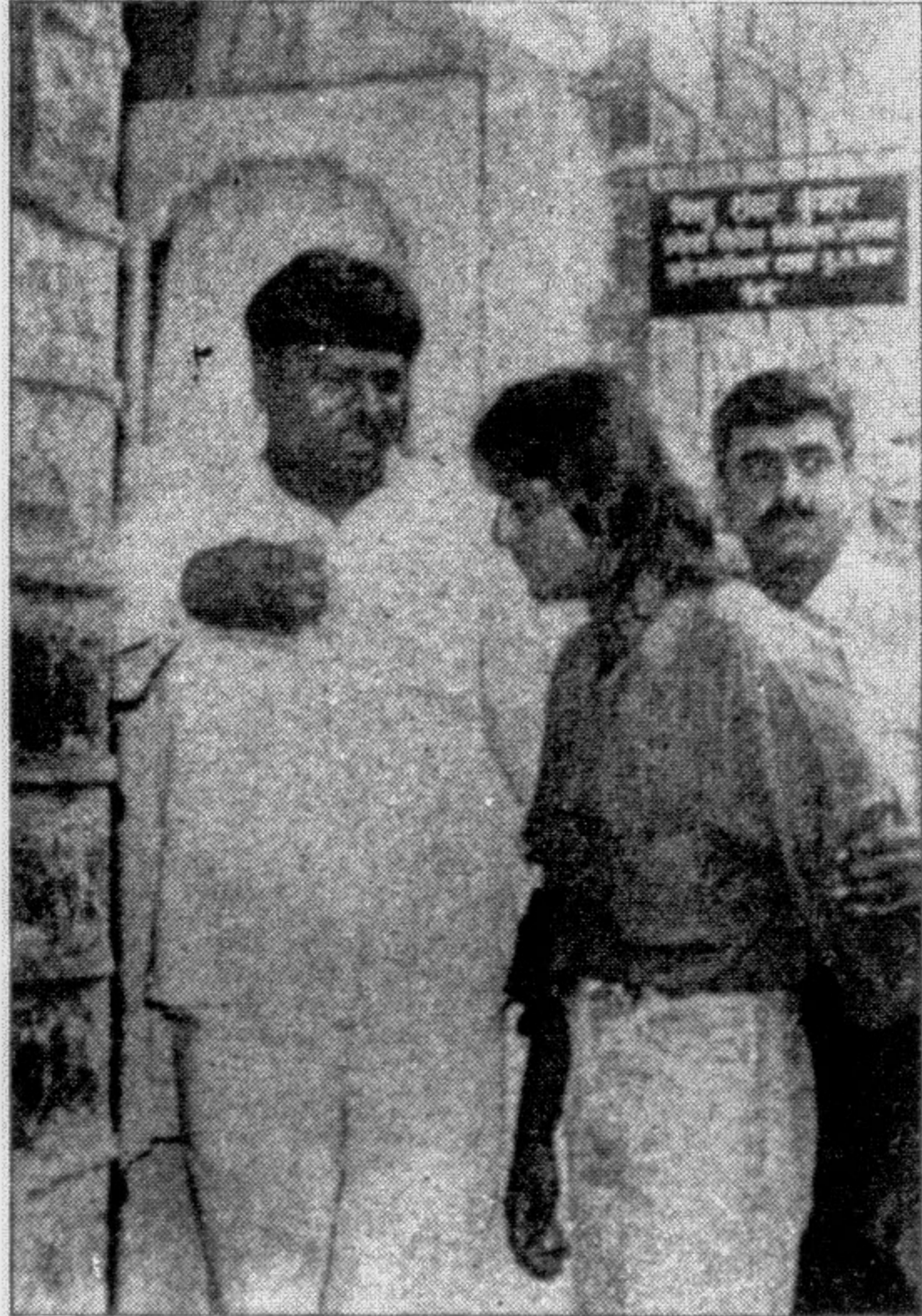
He blamed the spread of cholera to the poor hygiene habits of the local population.

He said people living in the coastal areas also had a habit of eating bats, which are believed to have been contaminated with the disease.

### Boat sinks in Indonesia, 12 missing

Two passengers were missing after a boat sank in rough seas off the eastern Indonesian Province of Maluku although the crew managed to reach safety, reports reaching here said yesterday, AFP reports from Jakarta.

A motorized boat carrying a load of Chinaware and 16 people from Tomia in southeast Sulawesi sank in rough seas in the Maluku sea off the southeast coast of Buru island in the province of Maluku on Wednesday, the Media Indonesia daily said.



Sanjay Dutt (C), Hindi film star and son of Sunil Dutt, MP being taken to court in Bombay Tuesday. —AFP/UNB photo

## 'German Gorbachev' faces trial for electoral fraud

DRESDEN, Germany, Apr 21: Some 200 supporters cheered and feted Ilans Modrow, the last communist prime minister of East Germany, as he arrived here Tuesday to face trial for electoral fraud in 1989, reports AFP.

Modrow, who was nicknamed the "German Gorbachev" for his reforms, appeared in court with three former communist colleagues on the charge of having rigged the Dresden Municipal Elections on May 7, 1989.

Communist sympathisers shouted a hearty "Hurrah" as Modrow, smiling entered the courtroom. Bouquets of red carnations were thrust into his arms.

The main leaders of the Party of Democratic Socialists (PDS), as the former East German communist party is now called, were in court to show solidarity with their fellow member of the Bundestag.

Modrow's attorneys have said it is absurd to put their client on trial for electoral fraud when it is well known that free and fair elections were never allowed in communist East Germany.

But Steffen Heitman, Justice Minister in the state of Saxony here, has replied that the trial is "a new step in the campaign to punish the injustices com-

mitted by communist East Germany."

The fraud in the May 1989 elections — which the ruling communist party won in Dresden by 98 per cent — is said to have contributed to the popular disenchantment which led to the anti-government demonstrations later that year, culminating in the fall of the Berlin Wall on November 9.

Modrow, then Mayor of Dresden became Prime Minister four days later and conducted East Germany through its first-ever democratic elections in March 1990. He was then succeeded by the Christian Democrat Premier Lothar De Maiziere.

Meanwhile, in the southwest town of Karlsruhe, prosecutors announced that the last East German chief of counter-espionage, Gunther Kratsch, will go on trial in Berlin charged with high treason for having turned several West German spies.

Kratsch, who ran East German counter-espionage from 1976 to 1989, will also be charged with stealing 30 million marks from currency transferred to East by West Germans.

Three of Kratsch's former security ministry colleagues, one general and two colonels, will be co-accused in the trial.

## Koirala seeks foreign help to solve refugee issue

KATHIMANDU, Apr 21: Nepalese Prime Minister Girtija Prasad Koirala called on foreign diplomats Tuesday to help seek an end to the problem of refugees from Bhutan following into the country, a Prime Minister's office official said, reports AFP.

Koirala told diplomats here he was seeking an international solution to stem the flow of Bhutanese refugees of Nepalese ethnicity here.

"Nepal's patience is wearing thin. Time is running out and it seems we are left with no option but to prepare ourselves to internationalise the Bhutanese refugee issue," he said.

The refugees are fleeing alleged persecution in neighbouring Bhutan and have placed a burden on the Nepalese government.

Currently, more than 100,000 Bhutanese refugees are sheltered in the camps and about 100 more continue to arrive daily, according to a home Ministry official.

Koirala said he had ap-

## Mazari assures press freedom

ISLAMABAD, Apr 21: Pakistan's caretaker Prime Minister Balakh Sher Mazari said on Tuesday press freedom would be allowed by his administration, in power until elections in July, reports Reuter.

"I want the press to be absolutely free," he told local reporters in his first talk to them since taking office on Sunday, replacing sacked prime minister Nawaz Sharif.

"There will be a complete freedom to radio, television and the media during my administration," Mazari said, and urged the local media to compete with the foreign media to be the first with home news.

"All significant points of view will be reflected in the media," said Mazari's Finance Minister Farooq Leghari, who represents the Pakistan People's Party of opposition leader Benazir Bhutto.

Sharif has often been at odds with journalists during his 30-month period in office, complaining of sensationalism and rumour-mongering in the local newspapers.

## Israeli rockets destroy 19 homes in Gaza City

GAZA CITY, Occupied Gaza Strip, Apr 21: Israeli rockets firing anti-tank troops destroyed 19 homes here Tuesday, shot dead a wanted Palestinian and arrested four others, Arab sources said, reports AFP.

The homes in the Tufah Section of Gaza City were destroyed in a day-long search for Palestinian militants, the sources said.

A Palestinian wanted for belonging to the militant PLO group, the Fatah Hawks, was shot dead and four others arrested. Eight Palestinians were shot and wounded, the Palestinian sources added.

The homeless families were lodged in tents erected on the site of the destroyed homes, and their neighbours brought them food and clothing, the sources said.

A similar operation was carried on February 12 when 16 homes were destroyed in the Khan Yunes camp in the Gaza Strip. The measures are in violation of article 33 of the fourth Geneva convention.

## Storms kill 14 in China

HONG KONG, Apr 21: At least 14 people were killed and more than 200 were hurt when heavy storms hit southern China, reports said today, reports AFP.

Six people died and four others were injured in heavy downpours accompanied by hail in Guangxi province, the Beijing-fund Hong Kong China, news service was quoted as saying.

But the army began destroying homes last July after a soldier was killed during a house search.

The death of the alleged Fatah-Hawks militant brings to 1,049 the number of Palestinians killed by Israeli gunfire since the Intifada erupted in 1987, according to an AFP toll.

Meanwhile, the army denied allegations that its troops on Monday had killed a member of the Red Eagles, a wing of the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine.

## Violence kills 15 in Johannesburg

JOHANNESBURG, Apr 21: At least 15 people were killed around Johannesburg in incidents related to Monday's burial of slain South African Communist Party (SACP) leader Chris Hani, police said Tuesday, reports AFP.

Four people died falling from overcrowded trains taking people away from his funeral rally in the FNB soccer stadium in Soweto, and from the burial at the South Park Cemetery near Hani's home in Boksburg, east of here, where he was dead on April 10.

Two white men were burned to death when rampaging youths torched houses near the soccer stadium, and six black men were found shot dead in the east and black townships of Vosloorus, near Boksburg, and Kaitheong.

According to peace monitors, the three killed at Vosloorus were shot by gunmen from the township's Thokozani Migrant Workers' Hostel, a stronghold of the Inkatha Freedom Party (IFP) a bitter adversary of the SACP and its ally the African National Congress (ANC).

An ANC official who had been distributing food out side the Hani home was shot dead, allegedly by police driving by in a minibus.

## Cult members were preparing for military-type operation

WACO, Apr 21: Branch Davidians spent 200,000 dollars to accumulate a high-powered arsenal in just 16 months and were preparing for "a military-type operation" in Waco, according to the search warrant federal agents were trying to serve on cult leader David Koresh on Feb. 28, reports AP.

The warrant also said Koresh told a Texas social services worker last year that he was a messenger from God and that "when he reveals himself the riots in Los Angeles would pale in comparison to what was going to happen in Gaco."

"Koresh stated that it would be a 'military-type operation' and that all 'nonbelievers' would have to suffer," the document said.

The warrant, unsealed along with other court documents Tuesday, was the basis of the initial raid that ended in a 45-minute gun battle, killing four agents, and cult members.

The failed raid started a 51-day standoff with Koresh that ended Monday when the cult's compound exploded in flames in what authorities said was a mass suicide.

In other documents, filed with the court earlier this month in support of indictments unsealed Tuesday, the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco and Firearms claimed Koresh met them at the door, clad in black and carrying a rifle, and that he vowed not to be taken alive.

"Neither ATF or the National Guard will ever get me", he was quoted as saying. "They got me once, and they will never get me again. They are coming; the time has come."

There was no explanation of Koresh's reference, but he earlier had been tried and acquitted on attempted murder charges stemming from a 1987 gunfight for control of the sect.

The documents disclose a yearlong investigation including talks with gun dealers and other witnesses across the country.

By tracking firearms transaction and shipping records, ATF agents said they established cult members spent at least dfrs 199,715 on weapons, ammunition and related equipment between Oct. 1991 and Feb 28. In addition,



Branch Davidian cult members Jaime Castillo (L) and David Thibodeau (C), are coming out of the Federal Court building after their arraignment Tuesday. The men were two of only nine members who survived the blaze that destroyed the Branch Davidian compound Monday. —AFP/UNB photo