

## High-powered body in Lanka to lead war against LTTE

COLOMBO, Sept 6: Sri Lankan President Dingiri Banda Wijetunga today made key changes in the military command structure and set up a high-powered committee to lead the war against separatist Tamil Tiger guerrillas, reports AFP.

Wijetunga disbanded the Joint Operations Command (JOC) which earlier coordinated the drive against the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) and had powers overriding chiefs of the army, navy, air force and police.

A two-page statement from the Presidential Secretariat said the changes were in line with the "reorganisation of the defence establishment" ordered by Wijetunga who is also Defence Minister and Commander-in-Chief of armed forces.

The head of the JOC General Hamilton Wanasinghe was promoted new Defence Secretary replacing Walter

Fernando, a former airforce chief who resigned today due to "personal reasons," the statement said.

The JOC itself is to be replaced by a small unit under the Ministry of Defence and the war effort against the LTTE would be led by a "Defence Coordinating Committee (DCC)" headed by Wanasinghe.

The DCC will include heads of the armed forces, police chief, head of Elite Special Task Force Commandos and the head of the National Intelligence Bureau, the statement said.

"The Defence Coordinating Committee will be responsible for preparing strategic plans and providing for the strategic direction of the armed services, police and the special task force," the statement said.

A senior defence official said the changes were aimed at decentralising powers and allowing a greater involvement in service commanders in the drive against the LTTE.

## Preparations begin to repatriate deportees

# Clinton asks 9 Arab states to back Israeli-PLO deal

MIAMI BEACH, Florida, Sept 6: President Bill Clinton has written to the leaders of nine Arab countries asking them to support the Israeli-PLO accord for Palestinian self-rule, an administration official said Sunday, reports AFP.

Clinton sent letters on Friday expressing his support for the apparent breakthrough between Israel and the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO), White House officials said.

Clinton also wrote that he hoped the agreement, allowing limited Palestinian autonomy in the Gaza Strip and the West Bank city of Jericho, would spark similar accords between Israel and Syria, Jordan and Lebanon late this year, the official said.

The letters were aimed at making "sure to the governments in the region that he wants them on board and wants them to make public state-

ments" supporting the agreement, the official said.

Clinton wrote to the leaders of Egypt, Kuwait, Jordan, Lebanon, Morocco, Saudi Arabia, Syria, Tunisia and Yemen, the official said.

Clinton was in Florida on Sunday to meet with supporters and inspect the recovery effort from Hurricane Andrew last year.

Meanwhile, preparations began today for the repatriation of around half of the 400 Palestinians Muslim fundamentalists expelled by Israel to South Lebanon in December, their spokesman Abdel Aziz Rantissi said.

Rantissi, a leader of the militant Islamic resistance movement (Hamas), said he had spoken to family lawyers by telephone and that Israel had agreed to bring back 205 of the men on Wednesday and Thursday.

Israel expelled the 415

Palestinians from the occupied West Bank and Gaza Strip following a spate of attacks in December, culminating in the kidnap and murder of a border policeman.

The men are suspected members of the Hamas and Islamic Jihad groups which are violently opposed to the Middle East peace talks, which were suspended for four months after the expulsions.

Their return begins as Israel and the PLO are on the verge of mutual recognition and signing a historic deal for Palestinian autonomy starting in the Gaza Strip, a Hamas hotbed, and the West Bank city of Jericho.

Israeli Defence Ministry spokesman Oded Ben Ami told that 189 deportees would be brought back to the occupied territories in the coming days, but he could not give an exact date. The majority will be imprisoned.

"These 189 people will all be back before September 17, Ben Ami said.

Israel announced last month it would bring back around 200 of the men by mid-September and the rest by the end of the year.

The deportees voted to accept the deal, dropping a demand that Israel comply with a UN Security Council Resolution calling for their immediate return in one group.

Rantissi told that we know the names of around seventy per cent of those authorised to return, and we expect the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) to give us the full list."

The deportees, who were dumped on a snow-swept hill side on December 17, will hold a farewell gathering on Tuesday followed by a meeting with members of Palestinian and Lebanese groups who backed them during their ordeal.

## Ghali deplors killing of 7 Nigerian troops

UNITED NATIONS, Sept 6: UN Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali deplored on Sunday the killing of seven Nigerian soldiers in Somalia, saying the attack again showed the need to disarm Somalia's warring factions, reports Reuter.

Boutros-Ghali said in a statement that the "United Nations and the international community remain committed to the objective of restoring peace and stability to Somalia."

Gunmen loyal to warlord Mohamed Farah Aidede killed the seven Nigerian troops.

"The Secretary-General deplors the incident," said Boutros-Ghali, adding that he expressed his condolences to the "Nigerian government and to the families of the brave peacekeepers."



Somalis stand in front of the body of one of the four Nigerian soldiers killed Sept 5 in one of two ambushes against UN peacekeeping forces in the southern Mogadishu stronghold of warlord Mohamed Farah Aidede. — AFP photo

## UN choppers strike at Somali gunmen

MOGADISHU, Sept 6: United Nations helicopters, struck at Somali gunmen after midnight today less than four hours after seven Nigerian peacekeepers died in an ambush blamed on fugitive warlord Mohamed Farah Aidede, says Reuter.

A UN military spokesman, major David Stockwell, told reporters that the helicopters were in pursuit of militiamen who fired mortar rounds at the world body's lifeline airport early on Sunday evening.

He denied that the raid was a retaliation for Sunday's ambush and said it was a direct response to an attack by gunmen who fired three mortar bombs at the UN airport where

most of its relief and military aircraft are stationed.

Similar attacks on the UN headquarters and port have been staged almost nightly since Mogadishu plunged into violence on June 5 when Aidede's gunmen killed 24 Pakistani troops in a series of coordinated ambushes.

He said the helicopters, assumed to be US Cobra assault craft, fired automatic weapons and 2.75 mm rockets at the gunmen but denied reports that they had used two anti-tank missiles. The fighting lasted about an hour.

At one point the gunmen took shelter in a compound housing destitute Somalis and

the UN, using night sights, waited until the gunmen emerged before engaging them, he said.

Reporters saw helicopters exchange cannon fire with Somali gunmen not far from October 21 road, a flashpoint for violence since Aidede's gunmen ambushed Pakistani troops there on June 5.

Aidede went into hiding when the UN issued a warrant for his arrest over the killings. His Somali national alliance denies responsibility for the latest attacks.

Stockwell, speaking by telephone to reporters at their hotel from the heavily-fortified UN compound said no ground

troops were used in the attack "but we are evaluating the situation."

He said that Somalis threw up burning barricades made from torched tyres in anticipation of a ground attack and that crowds had gathered close to the scene of the fighting.

A similar pattern of events preceded Sunday's ambush when a Nigerian company on its way to start work at an Italian-manned UN checkpoint was stopped by angry crowds.

Residents said the Nigerians fired in the air to disperse the crowd, then came under attack from gunmen who ambushed the retreating company, killing seven.

## Off the Record



The New Miss Russia Anna Bychik poses with the former Miss Russia and current Miss World, Yulia Kurochikina (R) at the end of the Miss Russia contest, held in Moscow Sept 5. Miss Russia who is sixteen years-old and in her final year at school comes from St Petersburg. — AFP photo

## Jackson lay low in hotel room

TAIPEI: Michael Jackson lay low in his hotel room preparing for his final concert in Taiwan Monday, while newspapers, consumer groups and politicians fumed at the superstar's offstage shopping style, reports AP.

The anger was triggered by a clash between cameramen and bodyguards Sunday outside a toy store that had been cleared of shoppers so that Jackson could go on a shopping spree. It was only the second time Jackson was known to have left his hotel. He first ventured out on Saturday night to give a concert, and was due back at Taipei Municipal Stadium Monday night for his final performance before flying to Japan on the fourth leg of his "Dangerous" world tour.

"Even a superstar like Michael Jackson should not trample consumer rights just to serve his own shopping needs," said Chang Lo-Chi, president of the Consumers Foundation. She told reporters that even the US first lady would not insist on clearing a store so that she could shop in private.

## Success at times saddens designer of AK-47 Rifle

LONDON: The Russian designer of the Kalashnikov AK-47 Rifle says the worldwide success of his creation at times makes him weep with sadness, reports Reuter.

"Whenever I see on television my weapon being used to shoot on the wrong side, if I can say that, I feel tears in my eyes," Dr Mikhail Kalashnikov said in an interview with Britain's Press Association News Agency issued today. The AK-47, the most successful rifle in history, is a favourite weapon of guerrillas and mercenaries, there are more than 55 million of them around the world.

The reason really is that it was designed by a soldier keeping in mind this was a weapon for a soldier, said 74-year-old Kalashnikov, whose latest project is a hunting rifle based on the AK-47.

He thought of the original design, renowned for its simplicity and reliability, while recovering from shell wounds in a military hospital during World War Two when he was a sergeant in the Soviet Army.

## US diplomat shot in Mogadishu:

A US diplomat with the US Liaison Office in Mogadishu was shot Sunday, a State Department official said, AFP reports from Washington.

The diplomat was taken to a hospital but his injury was not life-threatening, the official said, adding that he was shot while riding in a vehicle. The identity of the diplomat was not immediately available.

## Riot erupts at British prison:

A riot erupted at a British prison early yesterday and prisoners lit fires, smashed windows and destroyed furniture, the Press Association news agency reported, Reuter says from London.

More than 100 police rushed to Wymott prison, near Leyland in northern England. The agency said there had been no reports of injuries and no prisoners had escaped.

Some inmates climbed on to the roof of the modern prison, which houses 750 prisoners.

Police and prison officers surrounding the prison and deployed in the grounds were trying to bring the disturbance under control.

## 2,141 get Amnesty in Iran:

Iran's spiritual guide Ayatollah Ali Khamenei on Sunday pardoned or cut the prison terms of 2,141 prisoners to mark the anniversary of the birth of Prophet Mohammad (SM), IRNA news agency reported, AFP says from Tehran.

The decree was issued at the request of the Chief Justice, Ayatollah Mohammad Yazdi, it said.

## Road mishap kills 6 in Java:

A train rammed into a car at an unguarded railway crossing in Central Java, killing a family of six, the Kompas Daily reported yesterday, AFP says from Jakarta.

The car, carrying the Suhartono family from Kendil, Central Java province, was using a railway crossing in west of provincial capital Semarang on Sunday, when the train, from Jakarta, rammed into it, the daily said.

It said Suhartono, his wife, their three children and a maid were killed.

## Quake hits Indonesian island:

An earthquake measuring six on the open-ended Richter scale has jolted the eastern Indonesian island of Flores, a meteorological official in Jakarta said yesterday, Reuter reports from Jakarta.

The earthquake occurred at sea off Maumere, 1,800 km (1,120 miles) east of Jakarta, in the early hours of Sunday. There were no reports of damage or casualties.

Last December an earthquake and tidal wave killed more than 2,000 people, most of them in Maumere.

## 48 police officers hurt in Egyptian prison riot

CAIRO, Sept 6: Forty-eight police officers were injured on Sunday when Islamic militant inmates rioted in an Egyptian prison, police said, reports AFP.

The riot erupted when police arrived at Abu Zaabal prison in a northern Cairo suburb and tried to transfer 200 inmates to another prison, police said.

Some 1,300 Islamic militants at the prison ripped out cell bars and threw objects at the police outside the prison building, preventing them from entering and injuring 48 of them, including one seriously.

Security forces retaliated by lobbing tear gas canisters and firing shots into the air.

On August 28 a fight between political and common law prisoners broke out in which three inmates were killed, including a Coptic Christian and

Islamic militant.

Interior Minister Hassan Al-Alfi said earlier that the government plans to intensify its struggle against Islamic fundamentalists who have been waging terror campaign against the secular authorities.

General Alfi, who was wounded in an August 18 assassination attempt by Muslim extremists, was quoted by the local press Sunday as saying security forces would soon launch a "decisive and dissuasive" series of operations "to counter terrorism."

He did not provide any details.

The suicide bomb attack against Alfi left five people dead and 17 wounded. He was wounded in the arm and underwent surgery in a Swiss hospital.



Rigoberta Menchu, 1992 Nobel Peace Prize laureate and the United Nations Goodwill Ambassador for 1993, salutes the gathering of indigenous people in Sydney Sept 5. Menchu is in Australia on a week-long official visit to learn about the Aborigines and Torres Strait Islanders. — AFP photo

## DPRK asks ROK to stop jt war games with US

SEOUL, Sept 6: North Korea today urged South Korea to stop joint military exercises with the United States and end international pressures on the North as apparent preconditions to resuming dialogue, officials here said, reports AFP.

North Korean Prime Minister Kang Song-San said in a message to his southern counterpart Hwang In-Sung that the South had to meet the demands before junior officials meet this week to arrange an exchange of presidential envoys.

"If your side really wants dialogue and wishes to solve the nuclear issues, you have to make clear your attitude toward ending nuclear war exercises against your brethren and give up seeking international cooperation in mounting pressure against the North," Kang was

quoted as saying.

Kang said the North wanted the South to meet the demands by Wednesday. He proposed to have the junior officials meeting at the truce village of Panmunjom Friday, two days after the date offered last week by the South.

A spokesman of the National Unification Board (NUB) said the message was perplexing. He noted the North first proposed last week to resume dialogue after a seven-month hiatus.

The North proposed Wednesday the two Koreas exchange special envoys to discuss ways to ensure a Korean Peninsula free from nuclear weapons and to pave the way for a first ever summit between the North's Kim Il-Sung and the South's Kim Young-Sam.

## Indian detectives in Lanka to probe Rajiv's murder

COLOMBO, Sept 6: A team of Indian detectives investigating former Indian Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi's murder arrived in Sri Lanka on Sunday to question a detained Tamil guerrilla, Sri Lankan police said, reports Reuter.

A spokesman said the three detectives wanted to interrogate a guerrilla known as Nixon, a senior member of the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) military wing who was detained during a round-up in Colombo last month.

He said Indian police once arrested Nixon in connection with the death of Gandhi, blown up by a suspected LTTE woman suicide bomber in South India three years ago, but freed him for lack of evidence.

The officer said Nixon fought for the LTTE rebels, who are seeking a separate state.

## UN unreliable as world policeman: Thatcher

BANGKOK, Sept 6: Bosnia's tragedy shows that the United Nations cannot be relied upon as a world policeman, former British Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher said Monday, reports AP.

"Humanitarian aid cannot stop the massacres or the ethnic cleansing," she said at a luncheon given by Citibank, sponsor of her visit to Thailand.

She said Belgrade has been allowed to gain from aggression, and unless this is reversed, other aggressors throughout the world will be encouraged.

"The second general lesson from the tragedy of Bosnia," she said, "is that international organisations cannot be relied upon in the last resort to enforce what is right. The euphoric talk, of which so much was heard just a year or two ago, of the United Nations as an

effective arbiter and world policeman has been shown to be just that — and no more."

Mrs Thatcher said the end of the Cold War and a more cooperative China had strengthened the Security Council, but the use of force requires the engagement of strong states in a cause which their people are prepared to defend.

"The leading nations of NATO did not lack the means to stop what happened in Croatia and Bosnia, they lacked the will. But if we cut defence too far, we will shortly lack the means as well," she said.

She said the West, especially the United States, must keep its military superiority.

The legacy of communism remains, she added, pointing to Asia's questions about China, North Korea and Cambodia.

## Five Lankan prisoners killed while escaping

COLOMBO, Sept 6: Five political prisoners were killed trying to escape from a prison outside the Sri Lankan capital, police said today, reports AFP.

Guards opened fire after some 25 inmates, mostly detainees with suspected links with an anti-government Sinhalese extremist group, tried to flee Mahara prison late Sunday, police said.

Five inmates have been killed and several more have been wounded. Police were informed after the shooting and an investigation is now on to find out the circumstances, a senior police officer said.

Thousands of young men and women arrested during a government crackdown against the People's Liberation Front several years ago.

## New edition of Oxford English Dictionary — Bible of students

LONDON, Sept 6: Grunge, punk, scuzz, dweeb, gark, yuppie, AIDS, glasnost, political correctness, female condom, floppy disc—all these terms testify to 20 years of linguistic and social history recorded in a new edition of the Oxford English Dictionary — the Bible of the serious students and general guide to the language, says Reuter.

A revised new shorter Oxford English Dictionary replacing the old 1973 edition is about to roll off the presses with a host of words unknown in the era of the Beatles and Moon-landings, when computers were often bulky machines and a mouse was still just a rodent.

Publisher (Oxford University Press) bills its work as "the fullest general dictionary of contemporary English" and "The dictionary publishing even of the decade" after 13 years of research and a three million pound (4.5 million dollar) investment.

But this is no pocket reference book for the poor speller, coming in two fat volumes containing 7.5 million words of text and costing 60 pounds (90 dollar) for the basic set and 70 pounds (105 dollar) for one with a thumb index.

Around 10,000 copies of the Dictionary are sold a year. First published in 1933 and revised every 20 years, the book has acted as a catalogue of new words entering the language and the changing meanings of older expressions.

American street slang, the vocabulary of the disease AIDS, and political fashions like free-market Thatcherism and Reaganomics all make a first appearance among the 500,000

entries in the modern lexicon to be launched on September 7.

"I think that you would find that in the 70s edition there was a very narrow range of words that were new to the post-war world. The bulk of the dictionary reflected a taking-stock of language before the middle of the century," said lexicographer Edmund Weiner who worked on the dictionary team.

Traditionalists who regard Oxford English as a standard of gentility may be shocked to find a wide selection of derogatory terms — dweeb (boringly conventional, puny or studious person), gonzo (unpleasant person), conzo (crazy person), plonker (foolish or inept person) and many more.

There may be some criticism but this reveals an unawareness that all current dic-

tionaries include a wide range of slang," said Weiner in an interview. "If you describe language in its current form you have to describe all of it, not decide what is good English and bad English."

But the new word which has really captured Britain's imagination is not an insult, at least not officially.

Majorism, defined as the political and economic policies of British Prime Minister John Major, drew hoots of laughter from newspaper critics who said the explanation was as bland and ineffectual as the British leader's political agenda.

The Independent Newspaper has challenged readers to come up with a better definition of the word, offering a first prize of a trip to Maastricht, the Dutch town where the European Community (EC) drew up its

blueprint for closer union.

Surprisingly, Maastricht does not appear in the dictionary although the much-publicised policy of subsidiarity, the idea of devolving power from EX bureaucrats in Brussels to local level wherever possible, does find a place.

Readers' suggestions for Majorism include, "Morbid love if indecision and false promises," "a form of genteel pervicacious in politics" and "a nervous disease causing the sufferer to imagine themselves as a world statesman whilst everyone else considers them a standing joke."

Real dictionary entries reflect a world where science and technology have made laptop a household word and given technical terms like quark, a subatomic particle, some common currency.

Punk, rock and grunge (a musical style characterised by a raucous guitar sound and a lazy delivery) are noted as well the phenomena of masculinism, a male response to feminism meaning advocacy of men's rights, and political correctness, conformity to a body of liberal or radical opinion.

The growth of world markets in the boom 1980s brought big bang, meaning financial deregulation as well as the violent explosion of matter in space, and meltdown to mean a steep drop in value. It was the age of the yuppie (young urban professional) sporting the flouxi (personal organiser).

Wordsmiths can also savour obscure words such as ovicide, the killing of a sheep and the last word in the book zythum, a ancient malt drink.

## Guatemalan deputies fire Congress President

GUATEMALA CITY, Sept 6: Guatemalan deputies fired Congress President Jose Lobo Dubon late on Sunday after a chaotic session marked by fist-fights and bottle throwing, reports Reuter.

Lobo had declared the session suspended after it erupted into chaos. But as soon as he walked out, the remaining deputies called in a public prosecutor to declare he had abandoned his post and carried on without him.

The group of 85 deputies unanimously elected Arturo Soto, of the right-wing Guatemalan Republican Front (FRG), as the new House leader and replaced the rest of the 12-member directive committee.