

Thousands of Khmers defect to govt

PHNOM PENH, Aug 8: Thousands of Khmer Rouge guerrillas, among the top officials, defected to the government today. Co-Premier Hun Sen said, and the rebels' radio hinted that they included the former number two, Leng Sary, reports AFP.

The announcement came two months after Khmer Rouge leader Pol Pot was reported to have died.

"I am glad to tell you that SOK Pheap, Division 450, and Mit Chien, Division 415, have joined the government," Hun Sen said in a speech commemorating the inauguration of a new television station.

He said about 3,000 guerrillas had defected with the two commanders. He then interrupted his speech to take a phone call and said he had just received "more good news that some of the other senior leaders will also come along."

Meanwhile, clandestine Khmer Rouge radio, monitored by AFP in Bangkok, accused

of "selling out."

Mit Chien was the "mayor" of the rebel economic base at Phailin in the northwest provinces of Battambang and commander of the guerrillas' Division 415.

Sok Pheap was the commander of Division 450 based at the rebel's main military base of Phnom Malai in the northwest province of Banteay Meanchey.

"They cut themselves from the Khmer Rouge and came to join the royal government today," Hun Sen said, adding that the defections had been negotiated for two months.

Military analysts said the defections could be a fatal blow to the rebel movement.

Earlier report says:

Two Khmer Rouge officials, the most senior ever to defect, joined Cambodia's government today.

Chechens still in control of streets in centre Grozny

GROZNY, Aug 8: Violent fighting resumed at dawn today in Grozny where pro-independence fighters were still in control of streets in the centre of the Chechen capital, reports AFP.

Russian helicopters could be heard firing at regular intervals on rebel positions in the outskirts of Staropromyslovskiy Et Zavodskiy. A rebel commander, Sultan Baskhayev, said the Chechens controlled the entire centre of the capital. But he acknowledged indirectly that after two days of fighting they had not yet taken any government buildings which symbolise Russian control over the city.

AP adds: Russian warplanes strafed the burning Chechen capital as government forces fought for control of the city's center against the biggest rebel offensive since a spring cease-fire.

Rebels surrounded soldiers holding checkpoints and government buildings on Wednesday.

Serbs ban further exhumation of mass graves on their territory

BELGRADE, Aug 8: Bosnian Serbs have banned further exhumation of mass graves on their territory, saying Muslims and Croats had obstructed such exhumations on their territory, the Bosnian Serb SRNA news agency reported Wednesday.

There was no immediate reaction from international officials or representatives of the Muslim-Croat federation.

If carried out, the self-styled Bosnian Serb government's ban likely would stop the largest exhumation in the Srebrenica region in eastern Bosnia.

The dispute over reciprocity started a week ago when the scheduled exhumation of 65 remaining Serb bodies from a mass grave in the village of Kamen, near the Croat-held town of Giamoc in western Bosnia, was concealed without explanation.

We are firmly opposed to it" and demand that the United States "honours the solemn commitment it has made on Taiwan so as not to bring new damage to Sino-US

ties," he added.

United States announced Wednesday it has granted a transit visa to Taiwan's Vice President Lien Chan but stressed the decision should not be taken by China as carrying any diplomatic weight, reports AFP.

This is part of the normal business that we have done with Taiwan State Department, spokesman Nichols Burns said.

It certainly does not affect in any way our official relationship with the People's Republic of China.

Lien will arrive in New York on August 12 and leave on August 14 to go to the Dominican Republic where he will attend the inauguration of President Leonel Fernandez.

He will return to New York on August 17 to change planes en route to Taipei, Burns said.

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Gowda urged to prevent passage of CTBT

BJP urges govt to test, deploy nuclear arms

NEW DELHI, Aug 8: India's main opposition party urged the government on Wednesday to test and deploy nuclear weapons piling pressure on the new leaders to block a global test ban treaty, reports Reuter.

India must go nuclear for its own security compulsions," United News of India quoted Brijesh Mishra, the foreign affairs spokesman of the right-wing Hindu Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP), as saying.

Mishra urged Prime Minister H D Deve Gowda's two-month old government to prevent passage of the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty (CTBT), being negotiated in Geneva. Delegates are striving to wrap up the talks by August 15.

India opposes the present draft treaty because it does not commit the nuclear powers to a timetable for total disarmament, but the BJP said the government was not vigorous enough in its stand.

India exploded a nuclear device in 1974 but says it has no nuclear weapons, experts believe India and neighbouring Pakistan could swiftly assemble nuclear arms.

"We must conduct one or more nuclear tests in order to design nuclear warheads for our missiles," the Press Trust of India quoted Mishra as saying.

Mishra adopted a tougher stand than the BJP took during the campaign for general elections earlier this year and a 12-day stint in power in May.

During the campaign, the BJP said it would reverse India's 22-year-old policy and build nuclear, but stopped short of calling for tests.

Mishra said in the Geneva talks the government was focusing on a provision which would require India to ratify the accord before it could come into force. New Delhi has said this imposes unacceptable limits on its sovereign right to decide.

Mishra said the treaty also fell short because it would neither rein in the five nuclear powers' arsenals nor prevent them from perfecting weapons in laboratory tests. The five declared nuclear powers are Britain, China, France, Russia and the United States.

Dole for overturning citizenship guarantee of child born on US soil

SAN DIEGO, Aug 8: Declaring illegal immigration has reached "crisis proportions," Republican leaders called on Wednesday for a constitutional amendment to overturn a 128-year-old guarantee of citizenship of any child born on US soil, reports Reuter.

The Republican Party's platform committee adopted a proposal that citizenship be denied to children born in the United States to parents who are not long term legal residents — a category covering undocumented aliens and some foreigners in the country legally as well.

This sends the message that we're ready to strengthen our laws, said Florida representative Bill McCollum, a leading conservative voice on immigration policy. If the plan is approved at the Republican national convention set to begin on Monday in San Diego it becomes part of the official manifesto nominee in waiting Bob Dole will carry into the campaign in the fourteenth

amendment to the constitution.

The proposal was part of a series of measures calling for beefed up restrictions and criminal penalties against illegal immigrants. Among the toughest proposals to deport immigrants, both legal and illegal, convicted of such crimes, as domestic violence, stalking child abuse, child neglect and child abandonment.

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China slams Washington's decision

US grants transit visa to Taiwan's vice president

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Lien will arrive in New York on August 12 and leave on August 14 to go to the Dominican Republic where he will attend the inauguration of President Leonel Fernandez.

He will return to New York on August 17 to change planes en route to Taipei, Burns said.

The Taiwanese Vice President will not be allowed to

make public appearances during his stay in the United States and there will be no official meetings, the State Department said.

Meanwhile, China swiftly

slammed the US decision to grant a transit visa to Taiwan Vice President Lien Chan today, warning that the move was aimed at creating independence for the island.

There was no immediate reaction from international officials or representatives of the Muslim-Croat federation.

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