

## International

Refugees continue to stream into Thailand

# Cambodia claims to have seized last enclave of Khmers in north

PUSING, Thailand, May 3: Refugees, including Khmer Rouge soldiers, continued to stream into Thailand Sunday as Cambodia claimed it had all but wiped out the revolutionary movement that brought three decades of terror, reports AP.

But Thai military officers at the frontier cautioned that the jungle-savvy guerrillas could still slip away from Cambodian government forces and regroup elsewhere.

Sounds of artillery and small arms fire punctured the scorching, still air as lines of refugees arrived at this temporary camp set up by international aid agencies and Thai officials.

Cambodian leaders Saturday claimed their troops had already seized the last enclave of the Khmer Rouge in northern Cambodia, Hill 200 Astride, the Thai-Cambodian frontier.

"Everything was over yester-

day," said Premier Hun Sen on Saturday, adding that government forces were consolidating their positions.

But Thai officers, speaking on condition of anonymity, said the Khmer Rouge were still holding some high ground along the frontier and might prove difficult to dislodge.

The English-language Bangkok Post said Sunday that about 30 of the refugees were killed and 20 others wounded when an artillery shell thought to have been fired by Cambodian government forces landed in their midst Friday.

Thai military forces, the report said, fired warning shots into Cambodia after stray shells fell on Thai soil Saturday.

Among the some 20,000 refugees who had arrived or were making their way to the temporary encampment were a sizable number of unarmed

Khmer Rouge soldiers. But it appeared that at least some were merely escorting their families to safety before returning to fight.

"I have brought my wife and children here, and then I'm going back to the battlefield," said one guerrilla. Thailand has a policy of allowing the soldiers to temporarily enter the country after disarming them.

The fate of the top Khmer Rouge leaders — Ta Mok, Khieu Samphan and Moun Chea — was uncertain. The leaders took part in a reign of terror during the 1970s in which up to 2 million of their countrymen perished.

Hun Sen dismissed an informal proposal by the United States to set up an international tribunal to try those leaders.

The group's chief civilian followers began fleeing the em-

battled area late last week, and the United Nations, International Red Cross and Thai authorities prepared a site near a reservoir five-km inside Thai territory.

"On Sunday, new arrivals scrambled to find space and shade on an open field while aid workers put up more blue plastic shelters and distributed water to the parched refugees."

Children, most of them appearing malnourished, were taken to medical tents.

The International Red Cross said it feared a massive outbreak of the measles which could kill up to one in four refugees. Gastric infections were already prevalent.

The medical side will be looked at by different government departments and agencies. One of the main concerns is water," said Chusak Appapan, a Thai district official.

## Pro, anti-Arafat Palestinians scuffle in Baghdad

BAGHDAD, May 3: Scores of Palestinian delegates traded blows and spat at each other during a conference Saturday as Iraq's deputy prime minister and vice-president looked on in amazement, reports AP.

The brawl started as a Palestinian supporter of Yasser Arafat delivered an address.

"Get this spy down. Get this spy down," anti-Arafat Palestinians shouted from the floor of conference, which had brought together about 500 trade unionists and politicians from Arab states to show support for Iraqi President Saddam Hussein.

Pro-Arafat delegates responded with chants of "Long live Arafat" and in second members of the rival groups were punching each other.

Deputy Prime Minister Tariq Aziz and Vice-President Taha Yassin Ramadan watched with bewilderment. Spontaneous outbursts of divergent views are extremely rare in Iraq, where public demonstrations are government-sponsored.



Russian President Boris Yeltsin, centre, talks during a meeting of the 12-nation Commonwealth of Independent States in Moscow's Kremlin, Wednesday. Leaders of 12-nation CIS on Wednesday gathered for the long-delayed summit. Russian Prime Minister Sergei Kirienko, left, Boris Berezovsky, right, executive secretary of the CIS. In the background Russian Foreign Minister Yevgeny Primakov, left, and Acting Deputy Prime Minister Ivan Rybkin.

— AP/UNB photo

Arafat urged to rejoin armed resistance

## Israel, Palestinians still have to face toughest issues : Gore



Seated under a picture of the Dome of the Rock Mosque of Jerusalem, US Vice President Al Gore, left, and Palestinian leader Yasser Arafat shake hands during their meeting in the West Bank town of Ramallah Saturday. Vice President Gore, on a four-day trip to the Middle East, came to Israel to participate in its 50th anniversary celebrations, and to meet with the leaders of the area.

— AP/UNB photo

"maximum effort to move the peace process forward."

Arafat said "Undoubtedly, from the start we welcomed the American initiative that we hope will succeed, especially in the upcoming meeting in London."

AFP adds: the spiritual leader and founder of the militant Palestinian group Hamas on Saturday urged Palestinian President Yasser Arafat to rejoin the anti-Israeli armed resistance.

"We want unity and I call on Abu Ammar (Arafat's *nom de guerre*) to rejoin the front in the

— AP/UNB photo

fight against Israel because the regime respects nothing," Sheikh Ahmed Yassin told a press conference in Tehran.

"Resistance is the only way forward," he added.

Yassin said that crucial peace talks between Israeli, Palestinian and US leaders next week would achieve nothing.

"Arafat has lost all is cards and he keeps making concessions to Israel," said Yassin. "It is now 50 years that we have been under occupation, so we must strengthen the resistance and put an end to the occupation."

— AP/UNB photo

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— AP/UNB photo

## US, China stronger ties likely

WASHINGTON, May 3: US Defence Secretary William Cohen on Saturday said Washington has a very good working relationship with China, with potential for stronger ties in the future, reports AFP.

However, Cohen stopped short of calling the relationship "strategic partnership" a characterisation used by Secretary of State Madeleine Albright on her visit to China last week.

"Not at this point we don't ... but we have I think a very well developed relationship (with Beijing)," Cohen told the Cable News Network.

"It's been progressing in the recent years ... I think that we are building a very strong relationship with China," Albright told reporters on her arrival in China Tuesday and added that the United States and China "have moved well down the road towards establishing a strategic partnership."

Relations between the two countries had been icy after the 1989 Tiananmen Square massacre of pro-democracy activists a landmark visit by Chinese President Jiang Zemin to the United States last October signalled a resumption of ties.

The chief aim of Albright's Beijing trip was to pave the way

for President Bill Clinton's return visit to China in June.

Cohen refused to comment on a Washington times report Friday about a classified CIA report that China has 13 long-range missiles with single nuclear warheads aimed at cities in the United States.

— AP/UNB photo

## Gayoom in Kathmandu

KATHMANDU, May 3: The Maldives President Maamoon Abdul Gayoom arrived here this morning on a two-day official visit, officials said. reports AFP.

Gayoom was received at the airport by King Birendra with Prime Minister Girija Prasad Koirala.

"Five virgin girls" known as *Pancha Kanya*, who are received in Nepal and considered auspicious, welcomed Gayoom by offering him bouquets and garlands.

Gayoom is in Nepal as part of a tour of South Asian capitals in his capacity as Chairman of the South Asian Association of Regional Cooperation (SAARC).

The SAARC, formed in 1984 groups Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, Pakistan, Maldives, Nepal and Sri Lanka.

— AP/UNB photo

## India faces bigger threat from China than Pakistan'

NEW DELHI, May 3: Defence Minister George Fernandes today said India faced a bigger threat from China than archrival Pakistan, reports AFP.

"China is potential threat number one," the outspoken defence minister told the private Home TV network in an interview.

The potential threat from China is greater than that from Pakistan and any person who is concerned about India's security must agree with that fact," the network quoted Fernandes as saying.

Fernandes's statement came close on the heels of a first-ever visit to India by the chief of a Chinese Army, General Fu Quanyou.

India and China fought a brief but a bitter border war in 1962 which led to a 14-year diplomatic freeze between the two Asian giants.

Tensions between the two nations, however, eased following a series of high-level visits which began in 1988.

India says China still holds

40,000 square kilometres of its

territory at Aksai Chin in Kashmir. China lays claim to a large swathe of Indian territory in the far eastern state of Arunachal Pradesh.

— AP/UNB photo

US warns citizens to avoid travel into Pakistan, Algeria

WASHINGTON, May 3: The US State Department has warned US citizens to avoid travel to Algeria and Pakistan because of possible violence, reports AFP.

In a statement released Friday, the State Department said that Americans who travel to Algeria despite the warning should "exercise maximum caution."

The State Department recommended avoiding the use of regularly scheduled commercial flights, an armed guard escort for arrival at or departure from airports and armed protection during overland travel, at work places and accommodation.

— AP/UNB photo

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— AP/UNB photo

## UK accused of breaching UN arms ban on Sierra Leone

LONDON, May 3: Britain's Customs and Excise Service is investigating allegations that Foreign Office diplomats were involved in breaching a United Nations weapons ban on Sierra Leone, The Sunday Times reported Saturday, reports AFP.

The newspaper said that officials will also be questioned about colluding in a mercenary-trained operation which helped oust the west African state's military junta.

"We can confirm that the FCO (Foreign and Commonwealth Office) contacted Customs and Excise some two months ago, suggesting there should be such an investigation," a statement from the Foreign Office said. "The FCO are cooperating fully and openly with the investigation."

The United Nations imposed sanctions on Sierra Leone in October to push for the return of Ahmed Tejan Kabbah, the country's democratically-elected leader, who was ousted and exiled in a May coup led by Lt Col Paul Koroma.

The newspaper said the investigation centres around Col Michael Spicer, a former British army officer, and Peter Penfold, British High Commissioner to Sierra Leone.

The Sunday Times reported that Penfold has been accused of asking Spicer, director of Sandline, a British company which supplies arms and mercenaries, to help organise a coup to re-instate Kabbah.

The newspaper said Kabbah had paid Sandline 10 million dollars to arm and train a 40,000-strong militia to fight against the junta. Kabbah paid for the operation by mortgaging

— AP/UNB photo

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