

International

Y'slavs turn out for crucial vote amid fraud fears

Croatia ready to help Serbia's democratic changes

BELGRADE, Sept 24 : Yugoslavs voted today in crucial presidential and legislative elections which could see President Slobodan Milosevic ousted after a decade of wars and crippling international sanctions, reports AFP.

The watershed elections came amid Western fears that Milosevic, branded a pariah by the West, could try to hold on to power even if his opponent, the moderate nationalist Vojislav Kostunica, wins on Sunday.

The voting and its fallout in coming weeks could prove the toughest test for Milosevic -- indicted by the UN war crimes tribunal for atrocities in Kosovo -- after overseeing 10 years of disintegration and bloodshed in Yugoslavia.

NATO Secretary General George Robertson called Milosevic "the biggest destabilising factor that there is" in the region, in an interview with Romanian public television.

And as the regime and opposition traded accusations of plans to rig the vote, western leaders backed opposition fears that Milosevic would not step down

even if the vote goes against him. Javier Solana, the European Union's foreign policy chief, warned of massive electoral fraud, insisting the "Belgrade regime will stop at nothing to win the elections... using the most unscrupulous methods."

The West this week dangled the carrot of an end to years of devastating sanctions if Yugoslav voters ousted Milosevic, but the offer was roundly condemned as outside interference by both the regime and the opposition.

Croatia, which fought a bloody war with Serbia as the former Yugoslavia fell apart, said Sunday it was ready to help its neighbour make the transition towards democracy if its citizens reject Milosevic's authoritarian regime, the ministry said.

"An election that would lead to overall democratic changes would enable the international community and thus Croatia to invite the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia into the community of democracies," the foreign ministry said in a statement.

In Belgrade and the flashpoint republic of Montenegro, whose pro-Western government is boy-

cotting but not preventing the polls, voting got off to a sluggish start, despite the mounting tension.

In Podgorica, there was no sign of military police at voting centres a day after the federal army said it would assure security at the booths.

But in Kosovo, the southern province run by the United Nations since NATO chased Yugoslav troops out last year, Serbs in the main central enclave of Gračanica were out at daybreak, confident that just by voting they were reaffirming Belgrade's claim on the province.

Almost eight million Yugoslavs are eligible to take part in the elections, which will go to a second round within two weeks if no candidate wins an outright majority.

Polls show Kostunica, running on a ticket of 18 parties clustered in the Democratic Opposition of Serbia (DOS), leading Milosevic by between five and 18 points.

Yugoslav authorities, who have banned western observers from monitoring the vote, on Saturday expelled foreign journalists Saturday amid announcements they

had uncovered a "foreign-led plan to sabotage" the ballot.

They said the plot involved the "preparation of (false) voting papers for the presidential election to be placed, by the intermediary of its servants (the opposition), into ballot boxes," the state news agency Tanjug reported.

The Yugoslav foreign ministry also accused the opposition of planning to announce its victory at 10:00 p.m. Sunday, long before official results are announced.

Meanwhile, Croatia voiced its readiness to help neighbouring Serbia in its transition towards democracy if its citizens in today's vote reject the authoritarian regime of President Slobodan Milosevic, the foreign ministry said.

"An election that would lead to overall democratic changes would enable the international community and thus Croatia to invite the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia into the community of democracies," the ministry said in a statement released Sunday.



Yugoslav President Slobodan Milosevic (L) and his wife Mira Markovic (R) cast their ballots for the Yugoslav presidential and parliamentary elections at a polling station in Belgrade yesterday.

—AFP photo

Peru's ex-secret police chief fled to Panama

LIMA, Sept 24 : Disgraced secret police chief Vladimiro Montesinos has fled Peru and is believed to be en route to Panama, Peruvian radio and television reported early today, says AFP.

According to the radio station Radioprogramas and the Channel N cable television station, Montesinos left Peru sometime after midnight Sunday (0400 GMT) in a private Lear jet which took off from an air force base adjacent to Lima's international airport.

US ambassador to Israel suspended

WASHINGTON, Sept 24 : US Ambassador to Israel Martin Indyk has been temporarily relieved of his duties for suspected security violations following reports he was "lax" in handling classified material, the State Department said Saturday.

The decision to suspend his security clearance, made Thursday, effectively removes Indyk from his post pending an investigation into the alleged breaches that came to light last month, a senior department official told AFP.

Barak raises possibility of partial deal with PA

Israeli FM pushing for Arafat-Barak summit

JERUSALEM, Sept 24 : Israeli Prime Minister Ehud Barak said today he did not rule out the possibility of reaching a partial accord with the Palestinians, saying the "moment of truth" was approaching, reports AFP.

"While we would prefer to settle all disagreements and resolve all of the issues, we do not rule out the possibility of achieving a comprehensive and overall agreement on most issues while defining a mechanism and timeframe for negotiating a settlement on the very few remaining issues," Barak told a Cabinet meeting, according to a statement from his office.

Peace talks have faltered since the failure of the Camp David summit in July and the two sides missed a September 13 deadline for a peace accord, with the main

stumbling block still the fate of Jerusalem and its holy sites.

But Barak said it would be a "mistake" to have an extended interim agreement "during which we would continue to transfer assets without getting anything tangible in return."

Meanwhile, Israel's acting Foreign Minister Shlomo Ben Ami said today he was pushing for a summit between Prime Minister Ehud Barak and Palestinian leader Yasser Arafat to advance the troubled peace process.

"A meeting between the two leaders is vital to create a base for dialogue to reach a final accord or, just as important, in case of a failure of the negotiations towards such an accord," Ben Ami told army radio.

"It is very important to create a real partnership to handle any

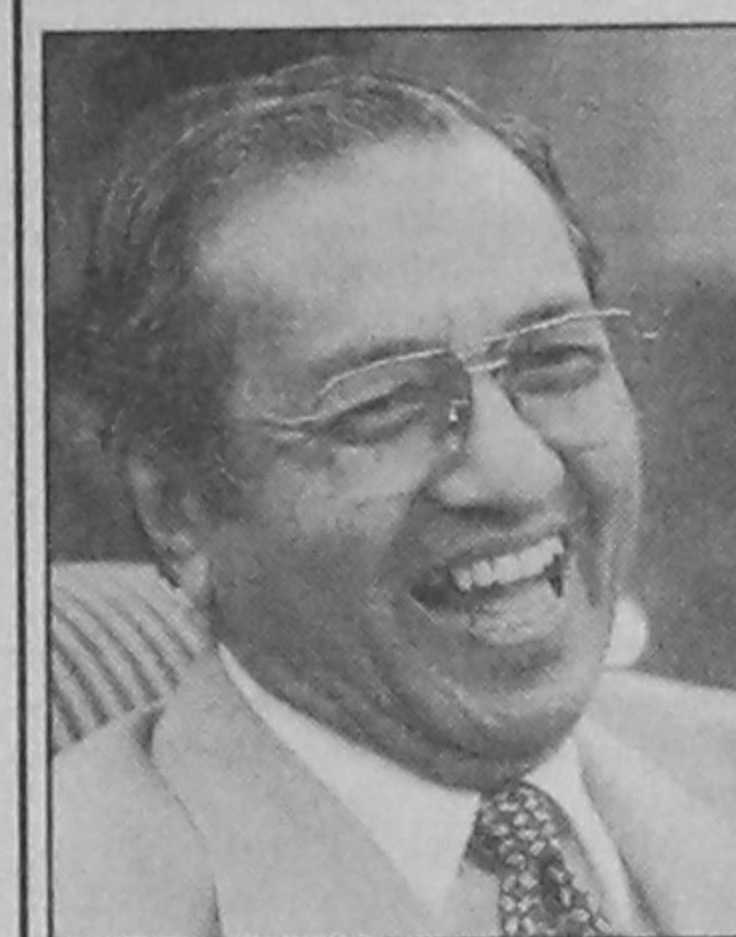
crisis that could erupt in the absence of an accord," he added.

Peacekeeping plumed a new low last week when Barak announced a freeze in negotiations only to reverse his decision a few hours later, a move that infuriated the Palestinians.

Despite the lack of progress since the Camp David summit collapsed two months ago over the fate of Jerusalem and its holy sites, Ben Ami said there was no reason to be pessimistic.

"The chances of reaching an accord are still 50-50," he added.

A Palestinian official said a meeting due to take place between Arafat and a Barak envoy late Saturday was cancelled, although the Israeli media suggested Friday that an Arafat-Barak meeting was possible in the next few days.



Mahathir Mohamad

Mahathir claims he's overworked, underpaid

KUALA LUMPUR, Sept 24 : Malaysian Prime Minister Mahathir Mohamad said he is overworked and underpaid, reacting to critics who call him extravagant, a newspaper reported Sunday, says AP.

"I have worked for the government everyday for the last 19 years," Mahathir was quoted as saying by the nationally-circulated Sunday Star. "My pay is lower than the people who work under me."

Megawati witnesses arms handover in West Timor

ATAMBUA, Indonesia, Sept 24 : Top Indonesian officials today witnessed militiamen hand over hundreds of weapons, in the same border town where three UN humanitarian workers were hacked to death by militias on September 6, reports AFP.

Indonesian Vice President Megawati Sukarnoputri, armed forces chief Admiral Widodo Adisucipto and ministers witnessed the handover, as did two top militia leaders, Eurico Guterres and Joao Tavares.

The militias submitted hundreds of home-made weapons and dozens of guns to the police in this refugee-swollen town, which borders East Timor.

Indonesia has been under intense international pressure to disarm and disband the militias since the UN killings, which drove some 400 UN and other aid agency employees out of West Timor and prompted an international outcry.

Also present at the ceremony were Indonesia's top security minister Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono, Law and Human Rights Minister Yusril Isha Mahendra, and regional military chief General Kiki Syahnakri.

The ceremony became tense

when a policeman whisked Guterres, the head of the feared Alitarak (Thorn) militia, to the police station to prevent him from meeting Megawati, an AFP photographer at the scene said.

It was not clear why the police wanted to prevent the meeting, but angry militiamen took back their weapons and handed them instead to the local military headquarters.

Bowing to international pressure following the killings of the UN workers, the military started a four-day operation on Friday during which weapons were voluntarily handed in, as "phase one" of Indonesia's pledge to the United Nations to disarm the militias.

The disarmament pledge was made in New York on Tuesday by Indonesia's chief security minister, Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono, in a closed-door meeting with members of the UN Security Council.

The militias hacked to death the UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) workers -- an American, a Croatian and an Ethiopian -- a day after one of their own leaders was found murdered.

Flooding in Mekong Delta leaves 73 dead

DONG THAP, Vietnam, Sept 24 : The effects of flooding in the Mekong Delta over the last few weeks have continued to grow, with 73 people reported dead, after the government Sunday announced 12 new victims in the south of the country.

"The flooding has killed 12 people in the provinces of An Giang and Dong Thap with about 60 children among the victims," an official of the Southern Committee, set up to fight the bad weather, told AFP.

"Our priority is to save those people who are in danger, the number of whom are continuously increasing, with several thousand homes flooded each day," the official said, adding that the official death toll was nearing 80.

Local authorities had estimated Saturday that 61 people had died in half of the 12 provinces affected by the flooding in the Mekong delta, home to more than 16 million residents.

The situation is particularly critical in the province of An Giang where the river's waters continue to grow inexorably, reaching 5.05 metres on Saturday, 6 centimetres less than the record set in 1961.

Rains are continuing to take their toll on several areas of the Mekong Delta, known as the country's "rice bowl", where millions of people are suffering a shortage of provisions and medicines and are at risk of disease and even epidemics.

"The local residents are exhausted after having been moved several times in the last two months," because of the flooding, said the official, who added that aid operations and emergency evacuations were to be speeded up Sunday.

The material damage, mainly to agriculture, is evaluated at nearly 40 million dollars, without taking into account infrastructure damage.



Children play in a temporary migrant camp on the outskirts of Srinagar on Saturday. Hundreds of villagers living near the Line of Control have migrated to safer places after a surge in artillery duels between Indian and Pakistani troops.

—AFP photo

Troops turn tables on Tigers as Jaffna gears for polls

JAFFNA, Sri Lanka, Sept 24 : Only five months ago India was about to send its navy to evacuate beleaguered Sri Lankan troops from the northern peninsula of Jaffna as Tamil Tiger rebels advanced rapidly, but now the tables have been turned, reports AFP.

Journalists in the Indian capital were trying to book berths on ships put on stand-by to rescue the 30,000-strong Sri Lankan army as the Tigers captured the garrison guarding the entrance to the peninsula in April.

"The picture has completely changed today," a senior military officer said as he conducted a group of Colombo-based journalists on a tour of Jaffna last week to underline recent military gains.

The second-largest town on the Jaffna peninsula -- Chavakachcheri -- which was lost to the separatist Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) in ferocious fighting in April and May has been regained.

The region's top military commander, Anton Wijendra, said the army had mounted an offensive

in September, and moved in three stages to Chavakachcheri, 15 km east of Jaffna town.

It was on April 22 that government forces had suffered their worst humiliation, when they lost the Elephant pass army base that guarded the only land access to the 2,590-square km peninsula.

The Tigers were on a rapid advance that saw the fall of two more key bases along the way and placed the only airfield and the main sea port within striking distance of rebel long-range guns.

The government was in a panic. A senior minister told reporters that if the Tigers moved another five kilometres, Jaffna was in danger of falling as the air strip would become inoperable.

By May 3, President Chandrika Kumaratunga placed the country on what she called a "war footing," imposed tighter press censorship, raised taxes and stopped development activities for three months to divert money to the war.

Defence authorities rushed to foreign arms dealers to buy new and more deadly long-range weapons and aircraft to stop the

rolling offensive of the Tamil Tigers, who had vowed to re-take Jaffna, which they lost to the army in December 1995.

President Kumaratunga, also the commander-in-chief of the armed forces, raised the already unprecedented defence budget by a further 50 percent to raise an additional 356 million dollars to buy new weapons.

Evidence of the gruelling advance is everywhere in Chavakachcheri.

Seemingly every building has been hit, with many reduced to rubble and even the trees have been stripped bare by artillery barrages. Local residents fled the area before the fighting erupted three weeks ago.

Troop morale appears to be in sharp contrast previous mass retreats. In November, the military lost 10 key bases in just five days in the northern mainland.

Soldiers here say the deployment of a new field commander, Jaanaka Perera, at the height of the rebel offensive helped turn around morale that had hit rock bottom.



Sri Lankan soldiers keep watch at the Columbuturai Jetty yesterday in the outskirts of Jaffna as journalists are allowed to visit the embattled area. Government troops are on the offensive in the peninsula after halting a major rebel campaign aimed at capturing the Jaffna town by May.

—AFP photo

BRIEFLY

Tectonic quake shakes Jakarta:

A tectonic quake measuring 5.1 on the Richter scale was felt in western parts of Java Island including the Indonesian capital early Sunday, but there were no reports of casualties or damage, reports AFP.

Residents said the tremor, which struck at 7:55 am (6:55 BST Saturday), rattled windows and woke up some people in high-rise apartment blocks.

Philippines detains 10:

Philippine authorities on Sunday detained 10 suspected Vietnamese boatpeople, a coastguard official said, reports AFP.

The 10 Vietnamese, aged between 19 and 30, crossed the South China Sea over five days and stayed in Mindoro island south of here for two months before sailing for Manila. Commander Luis Tuason of the coastguard said over radio station DZBB.

Schroeder to visit Russia:

German Chancellor Gerhard Schroeder will make a one-day visit to Moscow Monday for talks with Russian President Vladimir Putin, and the elections in Yugoslavia are expected to figure high on their agenda, AFP reports from Berlin.

A German government official said the two sides would seek to harmonise their positions on Yugoslavia, where presidential and general elections were being held Sunday.

Gore campaign staffer suspended following flap over 'mole'

WASHINGTON, Sept 24 : Al Gore's presidential campaign has suspended a junior staffer who boasted knowing about a Democratic "mole" planted in Republican rival George W. Bush's campaign, the Washington Post reported today, reports AFP.

Gore communications director Mark Fabiani said Michael Doyle, 28, had been reprimanded and placed on administrative leave so that the campaign can review his actions and explanations over the last two days.

Rumours about a spy infiltrating the other camp have swirled in Washington over the past few days, after an unknown person mailed the Gore campaign a bootleg videotape showing Bush rehearsing for the upcoming presidential debates.

Although Gore campaign officials have sidelined Doyle, they told the daily that they were confident after an internal review that there was no "mole".

Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh

Department of Roads & Highways

Office of the Executive Engineer

Chittagong Workshop Division

Dewanhat, Chittagong

Tender Notice

1	Tender Notice No	:	06	(Six)/EE/CWD/2000-2001/Date 13/9/2000 & 29/5/1407 Bangla.
2	Name of work	:	Group No "Ka" — Supply of related spare parts of propeller shap for Sher-e-Bangla and Kandari ferries of Tailorip Ferry Ghat under Chittagong Workshop Division (R&H). Year 2000-2001. Head of expenditure: 168-Road, Bridge, Kheyaghat 2 repair.	
			Group No "Kha" — Supply of spare parts for 120 Horse Power Ford Engine under (R&H) Chittagong Workshop Division. Year-2000-2001. Head of expenditure: 168-Road, Bridge and Kheyaghat 2 repair.	
			Group No "Ga" — Supply of oil pump and governor for 225 Horse Power Grey-marine Engine of Tailorip Ferry Ghat under (R&H) Chittagong Workshop Division. Year-2000-2001. Head of expenditure: 168-Road, Bridge, Kheyaghat 2 repair.	
3	Estimated cost	:	As per schedule.	
4	Earnest money	:	2% of the estimated cost (Separately for each group)	
5	Time limit	:	15 (fifteen) days from the date of issue of work order.	
6	Eligibility of contractors	:	a) "A" to "C" general categories of contractors of Roads & Highways Department, "D" class contractors of (R&H) Chittagong Workshop Circle and "E" category contractors of this division. (b) Bonafide agents of manufacturer.	
7	Offices in which tenders will be available	:	a) Executive Engineer (R&H), Chittagong Workshop Division, Dewanhat, Chittagong. b) Executive Engineer (R&H), Rangamati Workshop Division Bhedvedi, Rangamati, Hill District. c) Sub-Divisional Engineer (R&H), Workshop Sub-Division, Dewanhat, Chittagong.	
8	Offices in which tenders will be received	:	a) Superintending Engineer (R&H), Chittagong Workshop Circle, Sarak Bhaban, Agrabad, Chittagong. b) Executive Engineer (R&H), Chittagong Workshop Division, Dewanhat, Chittagong. c) Executive Engineer (R&H), Rangamati Workshop Division Bhedvedi, Rangamati Hill District.	
9	Last date of selling tender	:	03-10-2000 & 18-6-1407 Bangla.	
10	Date and time of receiving tender	:	04-10-2000 & 19-6-1407 Bangla at 12-00 noon.	
11	Date and time of opening tender	:	05-10-2000 & 20-6-1407 Bangla at 2-00 pm (before the interested contractors).	
12	Date and time of lottery	:	09-10-2000 & 24-6-1407 Bangla at 12-00 noon.	

Md Abul Kalam Khan
Executive Engineer (R&H) (CC)
Chittagong Workshop Division
Dewanhat, Chittagong

DFP 22746-19/9
G-1665