

# Rebels close in on Phnom Penh airport

SAIGON (UPI)—South Vietnamese forces seeking a morale-boosting victory drove back a Communist assault on the surrounded key city of Xuan Loc yesterday and also reopened Saigon's vital road to the Mekong Delta rice bowl.

Despite these two successes, however, the battle for Xuan Loc raged on with the North Vietnamese using the steeple of a downtown Roman Catholic church as their aiming point to pour artillery shells into the ruined city.

The Saigon command reported 22 Communist soldiers killed in the abortive attack outside Xuan Loc at Thoi Giao village. Spokesmen said there were no government casualties.

While Xuan Loc, 38 miles northeast of Saigon, holds out, the Communists are unable to mount their full force for an assault on Saigon itself and so the battle for the city is considered perhaps the most important in the 30-year Indochina struggle.

South Vietnamese officers say a victory at Xuan Loc is necessary to prove government troops can hold their lines. Massive retreats last month sent the morale of soldiers and citizens plummeting.

Spokesman said 153 artillery shells hit

Xuan Loc yesterday wounding five government troops. UPI correspondent Leon Daniel in the surrounded city reported yesterday afternoon the Communists were obviously zeroing their 105mm and 130mm guns on the Catholic church spire in the barrage.

The victory on the "rice road" occurred 74 miles southwest of Saigon, where government troops reopened Highway 4, the key route to the populous Mekong Delta where most of the nation's rice is grown.

Military sources at Can Tho, biggest city in the Mekong Delta, said the road was reopened to regular traffic at dawn today after it was cut for 48 hours.

The sources had few details, but said government troops had driven back a Communist force which took over most of a district directly across the Bassac River from Can Tho.

The Communists overran Cai Von training center near Can Tho Saturday, and turned two captured government howitzers on the city, South Vietnam's seventh largest with 170,000 residents.

Fighting also was reported close to Saigon, near Thu Thua district town 25 miles southwest of the capital. Government forces killed 42 Communists at a cost of one dead and five wounded just

one mile north of Thu Thua, spokesmen said.

In Saigon, President Nguyen Van Thieu officially presented his new cabinet to newsmen at the downtown Independence Palace yesterday. Prime Minister Nguyen Pa Can headed a cabinet made up of pro-Thieu politicians, almost all of whom have served in previous South Vietnamese administrations.

Yesterday, an ammunition dump near Saigon blew up, destroying brand new American-supplied arms meant to re-equip a shattered South Vietnamese division.

Reporting from Xuan Loc, Daniel said: "It is clear that the five-day battle for Xuan Loc—which some strategists see as the decisive one of the 30-year Indochina war—is not yet finished."

Daniel said that, according to the strategists, a victory at Xuan Loc could give the Communists, who already control 19 of South Vietnam's 44 provinces, a "straight shot" at Saigon and the huge Bien Hoa airbase 14 miles to its north.

But Brig. Gen. Le Minh Dao, commander of the 18th division in the Xuan Loc sector, remained confident. "We have pushed them away from the city," he said.

Other field reporters said the South Vietnamese yesterday moved at least 100 tanks into an area 27 miles northeast of Saigon, or 11 miles west of Xuan Loc. Government planes flew heavy air strikes in the region despite thick groundfire from the Communists.

In neighboring Cambodia, leased U.S. Air Force cargo planes yesterday started making daylight drops by parachute of relief supplies at two locations near Phnom Penh. The air drops were arranged after all U.S. personnel were evacuated Saturday and it was determined that U.S. supply planes could no longer safely land at the airport outside of Phnom Penh. The drops contained food and medical supplies.

# S. Viets reopen road to Mekong

PHNOM PENH, Cambodia (AP)—Heavy fighting broke out early today as Khmer Rouge rebels drove to within a mile of the highway from Phnom Penh to the airport that is this city's only link with the outside world.

It was feared an attack on the capital itself was imminent.

The Communist-led insurgents battled their way within a mile of route three near Pochentong airport, four miles east of Phnom Penh.

Field reports said a garrison of 200 government troops with four howitzers was cut off near the airport. Thousands of refugees fled along the highway toward Phnom Penh but many were turned back at gunpoint by military police.

Small-arms fire and mortar shell explosions could be heard from the top floor of the Hotel Le Phnom in the center of the city. Government troops holding a thin line on the east bank of the Mekong River were reported to be under strong pressure also.

Cambodia's shaky new government has ordered its troops to hold fast.

Premier Long Boret told a news conference yesterday, "We will never surrender."

He said U.S. Ambassador John Gunther Dean had suggested he invite Prince Norodom Sihanouk, nominal leader of the rebels, to return to Cambodia from Peking and negotiate an end to the war. Boret told newsmen he rejected the proposal and his side would "ignore" the rebels until there is a cease-fire.

Dean made the suggestion, Boret said, on Friday, the day before U.S. Marine helicopters evacuated the ambassador and 275 other foreigners and Cambodians from Phnom Penh.

Dean, now in Thailand, made no immediate comment on Boret's statement.

In Washington, a Pentagon spokesman announced that U.S. cargo planes flying under contract have made several air drops of supplies. The planes had been shuttling into encircled Phnom Penh with rice and ammunition but that was stopped Friday because of heavy shelling of the airport, and parachute drops now are being used.

Military reports said two government fighter-bombers were blown up at the airport and two persons were killed. An Air Cambodge plane braved heavy fire and landed with only three of its four engines operating.

"If the plane makes it out, it may be the last time," one of the ground crewmen said. A German television cameraman said he filmed Khmer Rouge troops advancing toward the airport. "I could see them clearly," he said. "They were wearing black uniforms."

The American Embassy compound looked like a ghost town yesterday, and one of the Cambodian guards posted outside said Cambodian employees left behind looted Dean's residence after the evacuation. He said one of the things taken was a refrigerator. Several cars remained in the embassy parking lot, one of them with four flat tires.

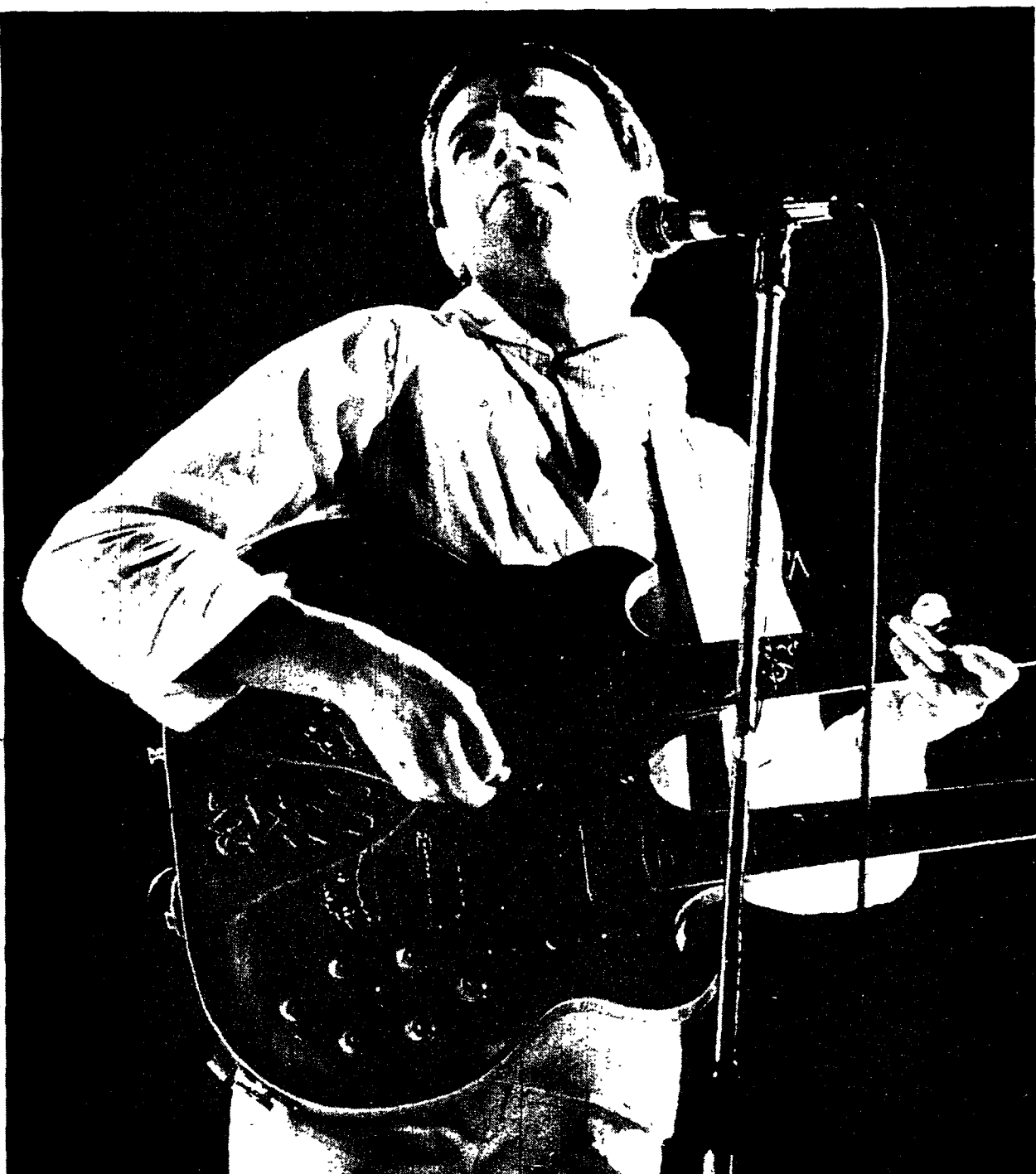


Photo by Julie Cipolla  
JOHN McLAUGHLIN, lead guitarist with the Mahavishnu Orchestra, played to a Rec Hall Audience Saturday night. See review page 7.

# Mideast clash kills 29 in Beirut

By the Associated Press  
Lebanese rightists and Palestinian guerrillas clashed yesterday in suburban Beirut, leaving a reported 29 persons killed and 19 wounded.

Members of the rightist Phalangist party, which is opposed to armed guerrilla presence in Lebanon, and the Palestinians gave conflicting versions. Police refused comment.

The Phalangists said Palestinians opened fire on celebrants at the inauguration of a church in the middle class suburb of Ein Rummaneh, where party leader Pierre Gemayel was presiding. They added one of their Beirut offices was blown up later.

According to the Palestinian news agency Wafa, Phalangist snipers ambushed a busload of Palestinians as it passed the church en route to a refugee camp. It said 26 Palestinians were killed and 19 were wounded.

A Phalangist spokesman reported a party member and two other persons also were killed.

Official silence reflected the government's fragile authority over the Palestinian guerrillas and the militant Christian Phalangists, who maintain a well-armed militia estimated to number at least several thousand.

Lebanon is the campsite for an estimated 12,000 Palestinian guerrillas and their presence has shaken the Christian-Moslem balance of Lebanese society.

The Phalangist party, with more than 65,000 members, is opposed to Lebanese-based guerrilla attacks on Israel for fear of Israeli retaliation.

Premier Rashid el-Solh met last night with top army and security officials in an effort to head off further violence.

The clash came as Palestinian leaders, including guerrilla chief Yasir Arafat, gathered in Damascus, Syria, for a meeting of the central committee of the Palestine Liberation Organization.

In other Middle East developments: Israeli Foreign Minister Yigal Allon said Israel was facing pressure from the United States for a Sinai settlement with Egypt, but that the Jewish state would resist compromises that would endanger its security.

Officials in Jerusalem said one plan under consideration involves giving up about half the Sinai, including the strategic mountain passes near the Suez Canal, in exchange for a nonbelligerency declaration from Egypt. They said while this proposal may be discussed in Washington, it would not be presented as a formal negotiating position.

The Jerusalem sources also said Israel believes the Soviet Union is not interested in a quick resumption of the Geneva conference because the Kremlin would like to see a greater degree of agreement between Israel and Egypt first.

# Congress to discuss Indo aid

WASHINGTON (AP)—Congress begins deliberating crucial decisions on Indochina this week with meetings scheduled on President Ford's emergency aid requests.

Senate Democratic Leader Mike Mansfield and House Speaker Carl Albert—both predicting Congress' rejection of any military aid for South Vietnam or Cambodia—are to discuss today whether, when and how to put it to a vote.

Senate Democrats are to caucus this afternoon with Sen. James Abourezk, D-S.D., calling for them to reiterate their stand against approval of military aid for either country.

Mansfield and some ranking House members favor prompt action this week on Ford's original \$300 million military aid request for South Vietnam.

They reason that its rejection would kill any further military aid for South Vietnam and that its approval would be the first installment on Ford's new \$722 million military aid request for the country.

Meanwhile, the Senate Foreign Relations Committee is scheduled today to begin looking into Ford's request for authority to use U.S. forces if necessary to evacuate Americans from Saigon.

Sen. Jacob K. Javits, R-N.Y., said yesterday that there is no chance Congress will approve Ford's request for additional military aid, but added he feels limited authority will be approved for use of troops in evacuating Americans.

A House Judiciary subcommittee plans a hearing on whether South Vietnamese in danger of death and reprisals if their country falls can also legally be evacuated by U.S. forces.

Ford's third request—for \$250 million humanitarian aid for South Vietnam—stands the best chance of Congress' unqualified approval.

But House Republican Leader John J. Rhodes says he sees little point in approving humanitarian aid if Congress does not grant South Vietnam military aid to survive.

"I'm dubious that we have the votes for anything in military aid frankly," Rhodes said, "and without that what sense does it make to approve humanitarian aid? Who are you going to give it to?"

The Senate has only a few minor bills scheduled for the week. The House has a fuller schedule, including action on two bills dealing with the nation's high unemployment.

The House is to take up a \$500 million bill today authorizing loans up to \$250 a month for two years to unemployed home owners to help meet their mortgage payments.

A \$5 billion federal advance to feed unemployment insurance funds that already are running out in some states is included in an \$11.3 billion appropriation to be voted on by the House later in the week.

# PHEAA grants face reduction

By JANICE SELINGER  
Collegian Staff Writer  
Penn State students intending to apply for financial aid grants should do so soon or face the possibility of not getting the amount of money they hoped for.

Grant awards offered by the Pennsylvania Higher Education Assistance Agency may have to be reduced unless the legislature appropriates additional monies for the agency by May 1, said PHEAA public relations officer Ron Taylor.

The governor's budget for 1975-76 had recommended \$68 million for PHEAA but the agency says it will need at least \$78.4 million to keep the program running at its current level.

Anything less than this, said Kenneth R. Reehr, executive director for PHEAA, would require an adjustment in the way the program is handled.

Right now, Reehr said, awards—all of which are made on the basis of

need—can go as high as \$1,200 or the cost of tuition and fees, whichever is less.

If the funds are cut and the number of applicants qualifying for awards increases, Reehr said, either the maximum \$1,200 award will have to be changed or the needs test rearranged.

According to John F. Brugel, director of financial aid for Penn State, any change in awarding PHEAA grants, which gave \$9 million to 1,500 Penn State students this year, might hurt students.

"PHEAA grants are an extremely significant source of funds for Penn State and any reduction in the size of the awards is a serious situation," Brugel said.

"The maximum size of awards is now full tuition," Brugel said, "but if they decrease the size of the award and if tuition increases, it could be a very serious situation."

Those applying or reapplying for PHEAA loans should get their ap-

plications in by May 1, Brugel said. This is especially important since there may not be enough funds to handle the late applicant, Brugel said.

"Last May," Reehr said, "when we began making announcements for 1974-75 awards, the farthest thing from my mind was that seven months later we would be coming to the legislature for a deficiency appropriation."

"But what we didn't know last spring was that thousands of college students were not going to get summer jobs to help them meet college costs, nor did we conceive that thousands of parents were going to get laid off indefinitely," Reehr said.

**Weather**  
Sunny and pleasant today. High 51. Clouding up tonight. Low 36. Chance of rain and cool tomorrow. High 47.



Photo by Julie Cipolla  
**Judging Contest**  
ALAN ZEPP (12th animal industries) prepares to lead a Guernsey cow into the judging area during Saturday's 50th Annual Penn State Invitational Dairy Judging Contest. The state contest included 27 Future Farmers of America 2-man teams, 21 4-H Club 3-man teams, 18 individual collegiate amateurs and 6 individual collegiate professionals. The entrants had to judge 40 cows, and compare their rankings to those of professional cattle judges. All cows were supplied by the University.