

Lithuania recognises Slovenia, Croatia

MOSCOW, July 31: The Baltic republic of Lithuania recognised the breakaway Yugoslav republics of Slovenia and Croatia on Tuesday, emphasising its own drive for independence from the Soviet Union, reports Reuter.

The Supreme Council (parliament) of the republic of Lithuania adopted a resolution today in recognition of the independent republics of Slovenia and Croatia, a statement from the parliament's information bureau said.

It drew clear parallels with Lithuania's own push to enforce its break with Moscow. It said Slovenia and Croatia, which both declared independence on June 25, were exercising the will of their peoples and "the universally recognised right of nations to self-determination."

Lithuania, incorporated into the Soviet Union in 1940, declared its independence last year.

500 Muslims arrested in Burma

MAESOT (Thailand), July 31: Nearly 500 Muslims have been detained in Burma in the latest crackdown against a movement that opposes Rangoon's military junta, a source in the movement said on Wednesday, reports Reuter.

The source, who travelled from Arakan state in Western Burma to an anti-government centre near here, said that on July 23 the Burmese Army rounded up 186 Muslim Arakans from Maung Daw township and 280 from Sittew town, both near the Bangladesh border.

Bush penetrates domestic Soviet politics, woos new capitalists

MOSCOW, July 31: President Bush is meddling deeply into the once-taboo world of Kremlin politics, using the superpower summit to expand contacts with leaders of the restless Soviet republics and a nascent class of capitalists, reports AP.

The centerpiece of what both sides are calling the first post-Cold War summit is the signing of a strategic arms pact and Bush's long meetings with Mikhail Gorbachev, the Soviet President and Communist Party leader.

But "the second theme the president is pursuing is the need to establish relationships with the republics," said Bush's spokesman, Marlin Fitzwater.

"We want a democratic, market-oriented Soviet Union. We stand for democracy and markets, and we will offer our support to all in the USSR who share those values," Fitzwater said.

Gorbachev shares those values, in Bush's view, but perhaps not as deeply as some of the other elected leaders and Soviet businessmen with whom he is meeting during his three days in the Soviet Union.

Reuter adds: President George Bush, declaring "a new age of promise has dawned," granted Moscow long-sought trade concessions on Tuesday but challenged the Kremlin to resolve a series of lingering problems from the cold war.

Bush, opening a two-day summit with Soviet leader Mikhail Gorbachev, made an immediate gesture to aid the struggling Soviet economy by offering Most Favoured Nation (MFN) trade status to slash US tariffs on Soviet goods.

But in a speech to Soviet intellectuals after the first round of summit talks, the US



MOSCOW: Soviet President Mikhail Gorbachev shakes hands with Russian Federation President Boris Yeltsin (L) as President George Bush (R) looks on during the arrival ceremony for the state dinner hosted by President Gorbachev at the Kremlin's St. Vladimir Hall July 30. The man to the left of President Bush is unidentified. —AFP/UNB photo.

Bush's terms for Gorbachev:

- Settle dispute with Baltic Republics
- Snap military aid to Cuba
- End dispute with Japan over four islands

Soviet relations after four decades of hostility and suspicion. But Russian Republic President Boris Yeltsin nearly spoiled the party. Yeltsin underscored sensitive ties between Gorbachev

and disgruntled Soviet republics by turning down an invitation to take part in the Bush-Gorbachev talks. He later met Bush privately.

Gorbachev spokesman Vitaly Ignatenko explained Yeltsin's absence as due to a Monday evening conversation between the two rivals in which it was agreed that since Yeltsin was to see Bush later, there was no need for his presence with Gorbachev.

An unrepentant Yeltsin told the US television network CNN later Gorbachev meets many delegations, many Presidents. I do not think I am obliged to be involved in all those negotiations. After all, those delegations and those leaders also meet me.

Bush and Gorbachev, meeting for the sixth time since Bush was elected in 1989, discussed economic ties for a total of four hours in the gold-trimmed Kremlin conference halls and later over lunch, their spokesmen reported.

In opening remarks both paid tribute to the warming of superpower relations over the past few years.

"We only need compare the worlds of the cold war with our historic accomplishments in recent years to realise that a new age of promise has dawned," Bush said.

Gorbachev, campaigning for major aid and investment from the West and Japan to cushion his country's move to a market economy told Bush Soviet-US ties were good but could be even better.

Paradoxical as it may seem we want more economic dependence on the United States Ignatenko quoted the Soviet President as saying.

Yeltsin skips lunch, attends dinner

MOSCOW, July 31: The man who skipped lunch turned into the man who came to dinner — and upstaged everyone at both, reports AP.

Boris Yeltsin demonstrated Tuesday the protocol problems that can occur when a superpower summit, usually the stage for two heads of state, is invaded by a third.

Soviet President Mikhail S. Gorbachev invited Yeltsin, who is president of the Russian republic, to take part in summit talks with President Bush.

Yeltsin, seemingly on his own agenda, first failed to show up for a meeting at the Kremlin with Bush and Gorbachev in the morning. Then he was absent from a working lunch with the US and Soviet leaders.

He later criticized Gorbachev for issuing a last-minute invitation for the summit events.

"This is something which dates back to the past traditions of the stagnation period when we had mass audiences, and I don't think I fit into a voiceless mass audience," Yeltsin said in an interview

with Cable News Network.

In the afternoon, after the missing Yeltsin had become a prime summit topic, he and Bush conferred one-on-one in the Russian's Kremlin office.

Yeltsin told his guest that he was the first head of state to be received at the Russian Federation's presidential headquarters. "I am honored," Bush replied.

But it was at Gorbachev's state dinner where Yeltsin made almost as grand an entrance as the main courses of salmon in champagne with asparagus, and the fillet of beef stuffed with mushrooms.

The last guests had just greeted Gorbachev and Bush in the receiving line amid the splendor of St. Vladimir's Hall in the Grand Kremlin Palace when Yeltsin appeared.

He thus became the last person to pass along the line.

Gorbachev and Yeltsin, who dislike each other but have enjoyed a political truce since April, exchanged warm greetings. The Soviet president clasped Yeltsin's hand for a minute and whispered in his ear.

Bush also offered warm greetings, and then there seemed to be an awkward pause when the three seemed to wonder whether they should turn to the cameras behind Yeltsin for a photograph of the three presidents.

Instead, Yeltsin turned to greet Barbara Bush and Raisa Gorbachev. He had a long and animated conversation with Mrs. Gorbachev.

He tried to focus some of the summit spotlight — or at least its flashbulbs — on himself.

Yeltsin took Mrs. Gorbachev's hand and motioned for Mrs. Bush to come over to him.

She hesitated, then came halfway over and instead took Mrs. Gorbachev's other hand, interposing the Soviet Leader's wife between herself and Yeltsin. The three then walked into the Hall of Facets for dinner.

Bush and Gorbachev, meanwhile, were engaged in their own conversation. They followed their wives — and the third president — into the main dining hall.

Pak army can repel any aggression: Beg

ISLAMABAD, July 31: Pakistan's army chief said on Tuesday his troops were maintaining the upper hand against Indian forces along their tense common border, reports Reuter.

Addressing troops in a remote region of the Pakistan-ruled section of disputed Kashmir state General Mirza Aslam Beg said his army did not want war but could repel any aggression, the official APP news agency reported.

Beg visited the Siachen Glacier area where Indian and Pakistani troops have clashed frequently since the Indians captured parts of the glacier in 1984.

He complained of a lack of resources but said, "We have maintained an upper hand and have defended every inch of our sacred land."

Beg said that since the talk over as Chief of the Army Staff Pakistan has not yielded an inch of its land to the enemy.

Rather we dominate also the border.

Off the Record

Thatcher now heads Buckingham varsity

LONDON: Margaret Thatcher, the former prime minister, has been appointed chancellor of the University of Buckingham, Britain's only university that does not accept government funds, reports AP.

As chancellor, Mrs. Thatcher's duties will be limited to handing out degrees and leading some meetings of the university's governing body.

The University of Buckingham opened in 1976 in the town of the same name, 40 miles (64 kilometers) northwest of London. It has 860 students and runs solely on student fees and private donations.

Mrs. Thatcher follows the former head of the judiciary in her government, Lord Hailsham, as official head of the college.

Another member of her government, former arts minister Richard Luce, last week was appointed the university's vice chancellor, or chief executive.

Elizabeth shares stamp with commoner

The former Lord Mayor of Birmingham has become the first living commoner to share a postage stamp with the Monarch. He's delighted, but almost everyone else is rather embarrassed, reports AP.

Queen Elizabeth II, Prince Philip and the smiling face of Harold Blumenthal all appear on a two-dollar stamp issued by Grenada, the former British colony in the Caribbean.

The stamp, commissioned to mark the queen's 65th birthday, defied the convention that one must be royal or dead to be depicted on British or Commonwealth postage.

"I have seen the stamp and I am grinning like an ape but who cares? It wasn't intentional," Blumenthal told The Daily Telegraph. "It's a tremendous honour for me."

The design came from a public appearance by the queen in 1989 in Birmingham, when Blumenthal was the Lord Mayor.

Designer Derek Miller, who has designed more than 2,000 stamps for 74 countries, said the choice of picture was "unfortunate."

"The photographs used for the stamps were hired and all the designs were submitted to the queen for approval," he said.

"I would have expected this one to be returned with a request for another picture to be used. But it seems that this one was not spotted at the palace."

Buckingham Palace said that the stamp went through the approval process.



MOSCOW: US first lady Barbara Bush (L) and Soviet first lady Raisa Gorbachev are surrounded by children while touring the Kremlin grounds July 30. US President George Bush and Soviet President Mikhail Gorbachev are holding a two-day summit aimed at the signing of an historic START arms reduction treaty. —AFP/UNB photo

Soviet passport prices rise

MOSCOW: Soviet citizens must pay as much as 10 times more for foreign travel documents under a new emigration law that cleared the way for the US trade benefits announced on Tuesday by President Bush, reports AP.

The Soviet Cabinet of Ministers has increased the one time fee for a special foreign travel passport from about 2000 rubles to double to 200 rubles, the reports said.

The hikes were ordered to help offset costs anticipated from waves of Soviets applying to emigrate under the law that took effect July 1.

Passage of the law cleared the way for the US government to loosen restrictions on trade with the Soviet Union. Bush announced during his summit meeting with President Mikhail S. Gorbachev that the United States would grant Most Favoured Nation trading status to the Soviet Union.

The price increases already have been blamed for a sharp drop in the number of emigration applications by Soviets, whose average monthly salary is about 370 rubles.

Some estimates have said 500,000 Soviets will emigrate annually and 5 to 7 million more will travel abroad when the law takes full effect in 1993. In addition, up to 2 million Soviets are expected to go abroad to look for jobs.

Arab reconciliation difficult: AL Secy-Gen

Arafat rejects Fahd's plea for compromise on ME talks

DAMASCUS, July 31: PLO chief Yasser Arafat has apparently rejected an appeal by Saudi Arabia's King Fahd to compromise on Palestinian representation in proposed Middle East peace talks, Palestinian officials said on Tuesday, reports Reuter.

Arafat was said to have "spoken with contempt" about the King's appeal, contained in a letter which hinted at a Saudi desire to improve relations with the PLO sourced

over the Arafat's support for Iraq during the Gulf crisis.

The officials said the letter was the first from King Fahd to the PLO leader in several months. The King, angered by Arafat's stand during the Gulf crisis, axed financial support to the organisation.

"King-Fahd told Abu Ammar (Arafat) that you have to accept that Palestinians be included in a sub-listed delegation (with Jordan) as the only way to get the peace process going", an

official from the radical Damascus-based Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine (PFLP) said.

He said Arafat revealed details of the message during a meeting in Tunis on July 15 of the PLO's Executive Committee that groups that main Palestinian factions.

Asked about Arafat's response, the PFLP official, who declined to be named said: "He spoke about Fahd's message with contempt. He said this is

what we now get from the Arab brothers."

Another official from the Marxist Democratic Front for the Liberation of Palestine (DFLP) said the letter was part of what he called the "carrot and stick" approach to persuade the PLO to soften its stance on the talks.

"The Saudis are indirectly telling Arafat that if you agree, we will open a dialogue and perhaps resume financial support," the DFLP official said.

PLO officials say Israel, which is openly demanding that Palestinians from East Jerusalem be excluded, was insisting that other Palestinians from the occupied West Bank and Gaza strip should only attend the peace conference as silent observers in a Jordanian delegation.

AFP from Abu Dhabi adds: Reconciliation between deeply-split Arab states may be difficult but is not impossible, the Arab League's Secretary General was quoted Tuesday as saying, reports AFP.

"We can say the task is difficult, not impossible, because the Arab world has passed through severe crises and the Gulf crisis was among the hardest," said Esmat Abdel Meguid.

AP writes: Prime Minister Yitzhak Shamir vowed Tuesday that Israel would never withdraw from occupied lands, saying they were part of the "eternal homeland" of the Jewish people.



UNITED NATIONS: Permanent representative of Bangladesh to the United Nations Humayun Kabir (L), clad in the traditional dress of Bangladesh, presents his credentials to UN Secretary General Javier Perez de Cuellar July 30. —AFP/UNB photo

Entire Opposition wants fresh polls, says Benazir

LAHORE (Pakistan), July 31: Opposition leader and former Prime Minister Benazir Bhutto said Tuesday the entire opposition wants fresh elections in Pakistan, reports AFP.

The Peoples Democratic Alliance (PDA), which she heads and all other opposition groups want new polls to rid the country of the present crisis," she told reporters here.

The present governments thoroughly incapable and incompetent and it has no right to continue, Ms Bhutto, who was dismissed by President Chuhaimi Ishaq Khan a year ago for alleged mismanagement and corruption, said.

PDA workers plan to hold anti-government rallies throughout the country on August 4, to be highlighted by a 12-hour hunger strike in front of the parliament in Islamabad by Ms. Bhutto and other main opposition figures.

The opposition stepped up its campaign after the parliament gave Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif extraordinary powers for three years to set up special courts to punish sensational crimes in the country.

Speculation that a national unity government could emerge has not died down despite the recent massive support of Sharif in parliament over the special powers bill.

BRIEFLY

UN to decide strike against Iraq:

Defense Minister Prince Sultan said Tuesday it is up to the United Nations to decide if military strikes will be staged against Iraq if Baghdad refuses to fully unveil its nuclear weapons programme, AP reports from Riyadh.

It is the UN Security Council that is entrusted internationally with that mission," said the prince, attending a graduation ceremony for military trainees at the King Abdel-Aziz Military Academy, about 50 kilometers (32 miles) northwest of Riyadh.

Asked if the region would see another Operation Desert Storm to force Iraq to comply with the UN resolutions, the Saudi minister replied: "God willing, storms are over and there will only be bounty and good seasonal rain."

UN Security Council resolution 687, which marked an official cease-fire to the Gulf War, specified that Iraq must destroy its chemical, biological and nuclear weapons as well as its long-range missiles.

Fire snaps rail line in US: Four boys using kerosene to start a campfire burned down a wooden train trestle Tuesday, cutting the main rail line between Seattle and Portland, Ore., authorities said, reports AP from Olympia.

It will take at least two days to reopen the line, used daily by more than 50 Amtrak, Burlington Northern and Union Pacific trains, Burlington Northern spokesman Howard Kallio said.

Until then, trains will have to detour up the Columbia River gorge from Portland over to Spokane, then back to Seattle. That's a 699-mile (1,120-kilometer) trip, instead of the usual 185-mile (296-kilometer) route.

Burlington Northern owns the 80-foot (24-meter) trestle. Amtrak customers were being bused between Seattle and Portland, Kallio said. Some freight containers will be hauled by truck between the two cities.

Bulgaria tightens visa rules:

Bulgaria is tightening visa requirements for Africans and Asians in a bid to reduce the number of people who use the country as a way-station to western Europe, the Socialist Party newspaper Duma said Tuesday, AFP reports from Sofia.

To obtain an entry visa, citizens of India, Pakistan, Sri Lanka, Ghana, Nigeria and Ethiopia will now have to produce a letter of invitation from a Bulgarian national, the newspaper said.

60 held in S Africa: Police arrested about 60 people, including anti-apartheid figure Allan Boesak, when a demonstration against President FW de Klerk was cancelled Tuesday, reports AP from Cape Town.

Boesak, who recently joined the African National Congress, went to the demonstration site to try to stop students from protesting after the event was called off.

Police earlier had arrested about 10 students, and then took Boesak and about 50 other people into custody.

Boesak was released more than five years later on condition that he would appear in court on Aug. 29 to face an illegal gathering charge.

He accused police of manhandling him and said de Klerk and the government had "no understanding of justice or injustice."

New US envoy to USSR:

The Senate on Tuesday confirmed superlawyer and former Democratic Party chairman Robert S. Strauss as President Bush's ambassador to the Soviet Union, reports AP from Washington.

Action in the full Senate, on a voice vote, came late in the day after the Senate Foreign Relations Committee had voted earlier to recommend confirmation of the 73-year-old attorney, lobbyist and Democratic fund-raiser.

Strauss shares the Bush administration's skepticism about large-scale government assistance to the Soviet Union, he told the committee at his July 16 confirmation hearing.

He would give up his Washington law practice, which paid him \$4.5 million over the past 18 months. He would be paid \$115,300 a year as ambassador.

2 college teachers shot dead in Bombay:

Two college professors have been shot dead in Bombay in the last four days, the Press Trust of India (PTI) reported Tuesday, reports AFP from New Delhi.

Police were quoted as saying that Arun Singh, from Jhunjhunwala College in northeast Bombay, was gunned down by six assailants outside a railway station on Tuesday.

Last Saturday a woman professor at Rizvi College in northwest Bombay was killed in similar fashion.

Police sources told PTI there had also been threats on the life of the Vice-Chancellor of Bombay University, SD Karnik. The news agency gave no further details.