

Govt-leftists talks Sept 4 in Colombia

BOGOTA, Aug 24: Peace talks between Colombia's government and leftist rebels will resume September 4 in Caracas...

A short official statement said the administration of President Cesar Gaviria would provide the necessary guarantees for the transportation of the Simon Bolivar guerrilla coordinator...

Pavlov arrested

MOSCOW, Aug 24: Soviet Prime Minister Valentin Pavlov has been arrested for helping to lead the coup against Mikhail S Gorbachev...

Pavlov was one of the eight officials in the committee that ousted Gorbachev from power, but he was reportedly taken ill on Sunday night when the coup began.

He has been under police guard in a hospital since President Gorbachev regained power on Wednesday.

Pavlov was quoted as saying that he did not expect the coup to end so quickly or result in his arrest.

He blamed 'personnel' for the failure of the coup.

Mass desertions from party throughout Soviet Union

CP loses 73-year grip on power, thousands destroy party symbols

MOSCOW, Aug 24: The Communist Party has lost its 73-year grip on power as coup resistance veers toward revolution and Mikhail Gorbachev and Boris Yeltsin agree on steps that will curb party influence, reports AP.

Elected governments across the country moved Friday to chip the party's power after headline Communists tried to oust Gorbachev to block him from signing a treaty turning over many central government powers to the 15 Soviet republics.

The backlash against the coup had the opposite effect, as republic and city governments moved quickly to weaken the centralized power structure the party had erected.

Yeltsin joined that walkout, which now has reduced party ranks from 19 million to 16 million, according to recent party figures. Membership was sure to plummet more as public ire rises over party's role in the plot.

The popular movement against the party has not yet taken on the violence of the 1917 Bolshevik coup, in which the party seized power from the provisional government and dispersed the popularly elected Constituent Assembly.

But the mostly peaceful revolution of 1991 was quickly shifting power from the na-

tional party to republic and local governments.

Yeltsin and Gorbachev jointly announced new appointees to top role security and government posts, and all were reformers who played a role in defeating the coup attempt. Gorbachev fired those who backed the coup, and many who merely failed to oppose it.

In the past, a key criterion for appointment to top government jobs was membership in the Communist Party.



MOSCOW: A member of the Communist Party is assaulted by anti-communist demonstrators in front of the party headquarters here August 23. — AFP/UNB photo

Moving quickly against his enemies, Yeltsin suspended the activities of the headline Russian faction of the Communist Party. Two Baltic states outlawed the party outright, and governments from Moscow to Moldavia to Kirghizia seized Communist Party buildings and assets.

During the coup, the plotters closed all but a handful of headline Communist Party facilities. Yeltsin reacted by claiming Russian ownership of the core of the party press:

Pravda, Sovetskaya Rossiya, Robochaya Tribuna, Moskovskaya Pravda, Leninskoe Znamya and Glasnost.

The arrest of Latvian party chief Alfred Rubiks swelled the ranks of senior Communists under investigation for supporting the coup.

Many senior party leaders in the republics have quit the national party leadership in disgust. In the last two days, the party leaders in Uzbekistan, Moldavia and

Kazakhstan quit the Politburo, one of its highest bodies.

Gorbachev said he agreed to allow police to seal off the party's national headquarters near the Kremlin after learning that "something is happening in the building of the Central Committee that needs to be stopped."

About 2,000 angry demonstrators gathered outside the party complex, accusing party officials of trying to remove papers that might implicate them in the failed plot.

Gorbachev, however, did not share Yeltsin's enthusiasm for whittling the party down to size. Gorbachev, the Soviet President, also holds the job of General Secretary of the Communist Party. Since the coup, he has reiterated his desire to revitalize the party into a reformist organization — a transformation that reformers such as Yeltsin say is next to impossible.

Yeltsin brandished a decree suspending the activity of headline Russian branch of the Communist Party, "pending a court determination of its involvement" in the coup.

Gorbachev, sitting next to Yeltsin on the dais, said that "if this Supreme Soviet, which has done and is doing so much for democracy, supports this action of Boris Nikolayevich, it will be committing a mistake."

Pravda deputy editor Grigory Selezneva also complained about Yeltsin's heavy hand against the press

Off the Record

Hope as happy as Gorbachev

LONDON: Comedian Bob Hope, still king of the one-liners at 88, took his cue from a coup on Friday, reports Reuter.

"I am as happy as Gorbachev," he told reporters who asked him how it felt to be back in London.

Hope will appear on Sunday in a charity show at the London Palladium to raise funds for an amateur theatre that bears his name in Eltham, southeast London, where he was born.

Hope's appearance will be his first in London's Westend Theatreland for seven years. He arrived in Britain on Thursday and will also visit relatives during his week-long stay.



VILNIUS (Lithuania): The statue of Lenin is lifted by a crane August 23 in the Lithuanian capital as the statue was taken down and carried away on a truck to the applause of a large crowd. The Lithuanian government has banned the Communist Party and the Communist Party headquarters has been evacuated. — AFP/UNB photo

Lenin given goodbye from Vilnius

VILNIUS (Lithuania): The statue of Lenin in the Lithuanian capital was taken down Friday and carried away on a truck to the applause of a large crowd, an AFP correspondent reported here.

Several thousands of people turned out to watch the removal of the statue near the KGB building.

The monument in the Estonian capital, Tallinn, was also carried away, Estonian radio said in a report monitored by the BBC in London. A powerful crane was used to heave the statue off its plinth.

"To start with, there were about a hundred curious people and by the time the work was finished there were about a thousand," the radio said.

"One would guess that taking Lenin down would not go quite so quickly because it is indeed big and heavy, but it took barely twenty minutes before the statue was taken away on a tipper truck," the radio added.

Germany keen to get Honecker back

BONN: The German government, encouraged by the situation in Moscow after the failed coup, is looking for a way to get former East German boss, Erich Honecker, back from the Soviet Union, sources close to the government said here today, reports AP.

Soviet authorities secretly transported Honecker, 78, last March 13 from a Soviet hospital near Berlin to Moscow after German authorities issued a warrant for his arrest.

Honecker is wanted for responsibility in the death of some 190 persons killed by German Democratic Republic Border Guards while trying to escape to the West.

Government officials here believe that Honecker's escape was carried out under the instructions of Dmitri Yazov, the Soviet Defence Minister who was ousted and arrested for his involvement in the three-day putsch against Soviet President Mikhail Gorbachev.

Bandits kill 6 in Sind

KARACHI (Pakistan), Aug 24: Six people were killed in bandit violence in Pakistan's southern province of Sind, raising the toll to 49 in 14 days, police said today.

(Saturday), reports Reuter.

The bandits, known as dacoits, killed three people at Dharki and two at Khairpur on Friday during attempted kidnappings.

In Tando Mahammad Khan, villagers chased a gang of bandits and killed one of them on Friday, police said.

In other incidents, dacoits kidnapped three people.

Banditry and highway robbery is common in southern Pakistan, where more than 2,000 people have been killed

officials escorted refugees to the Burmese border where they were arrested by Burmese authorities.

That officials have denied pushing back genuine refugees, saying those repatriated were either economic migrants or had returned voluntarily.

Amnesty said the forcible return of refugees violated the 1951 International convention on the status of refugees.

The human rights organisation said Burmese refugees interviewed spoke of beatings, lack of medical care and crowded and unsanitary conditions while being held.

A report received here for release Saturday also said that, on at least three occasions in the first half of 1991, Thai of-

BRIEFLY

China asked to respect Tibetans' freedom

The United Nations Sub-Committee on human rights called on China Friday "fully to respect the fundamental human rights and freedoms of the Tibetan people," reports AP.

In a draft resolution the Sub-Committee, meeting in Geneva, said it was "concerned" at continuing reports of violations "which threaten the distinct cultural, religious and national identity of the Tibetan people."

In a vote by secret ballot, the resolution was passed by nine votes to seven, with four abstentions.

The Chinese delegate dismissed the resolution, saying it was null and void and part of the attempts by the international community to wrest Tibet away from China.

Malnutrition rises in Tirana

GENEVA, Aug 24: Malnutrition and infant mortality in Albania are spreading in an alarming fashion and are close to Third World levels, a UNICEF team warned in Geneva Friday after visiting Albania, reports AP from Geneva.

Team chief James Mohan appealed for one million dollars to enhance an emergency programme to supply food, vaccines, medicine and rehydration salts to keep children alive for the coming three months.

The UNICEF mission was told by Albania's National Childcare Institute that one child in three was suffering from hunger. In the capital Tirana the malnutrition level was 10 per cent and 30 per cent in the countryside — close to the levels recorded in Zaire.

Child deaths had passed from 24 per 1,000 to 34 in two years, rising to 40 per thousand in some places, Albanian authorities said. The rate in Western Europe is eight to 10 per 1,000.

Two executed in China

Authorities in Shanghai have executed two men convicted of corruption, China's official legal daily newspaper said Saturday, reports Reuter from Beijing.

The executed men, Xiao Renan and Mao Xuehua, misappropriated funds from their companies.

Yin Baigan, a manager of an appliance factory who absconded with company money, was sentenced to death but was not immediately executed, the newspaper said.

A fourth man, accountant Min Wei who stole from his firm to pay for study in Australia, received a death sentence suspended for two years, it said.

Reagan, Nancy well

Former President Ronald Reagan and his wife Nancy were Friday found to be in excellent health after undergoing routine checkups, reports AP.

"All tests were satisfactory and their physicians found them both to be in excellent health," Cathy Goldberg, a Reagan spokeswoman, said in a statement.

Reagan, 80, and his wife, 68, arrived at the clinic Wednesday and returned to their California home Friday.

2 Whites jailed for killing Black

Two white men accused of murdering a black man by beating him and throwing a burning tire around his neck were sentenced to 25 years in prison each Friday, reports AP from Johannesburg.

Prosecutors had asked for the death penalty following the conviction Tuesday of Deon van Deventer, 25, and Evert Boonzaaier, 23. The two were convicted of murdering Johannes Masango in an attack in September.

A motive was never stated, but the court said racism was clearly the reason for the attack.

Typhoon kills 55 in ROK

Typhoon Gladys raged through the southern parts of South Korea but lost momentum in the Yellow Sea on Saturday after leaving 55 dead and 36 missing, officials said, reports AP from Seoul.

Soviets moving towards objective of US policy: Bush

KENNEBUNKPORT (Maine), Aug 24: President George Bush declined comment Friday on changes in the Soviet Cabinet in the wake of the failed coup, but said events had generally taken a "very, very positive" turn, reports AP.

"I think the changes — in a broad sense appear to be coming toward the objective that we want," Bush said, coming of the golf course near his vacation home here.

"The people appear to be moving toward the objectives of the United States foreign policy and in the process, toward democracy, freedom and self-determination," he said "It is all very, very positive."

But Bush said the situation was still inflating and that he preferred not to comment on specific changes at the helm of the Soviet government after the failed coup against President Mikhail Gorbachev by communist hardliners.

"It's still being sorted out we will watch it we will not interfere," Bush said.

2 Yugoslav planes fire missiles at Croatia

BUDAPEST, Aug 24: Eight Yugoslav fighter planes violated Hungarian airspace on Thursday and two of them fired missiles at Croatian targets from Hungarian airspace, Deputy Chief of Staff Jozsef Biro told a press conference Friday, reports AP.

Brigadier General Biro added that on Thursday on three occasions Yugoslav planes flew one to three kilometres (0.6 mile to 1.86 mile) into Hungarian territory.

Leftists bomb oil pipeline to expel US co from Colombia

BOGOTA, Aug 24: Leftist rebels bombed Colombia's main oil pipeline Friday, forcing the country to suspend pumping of crude petroleum, a senior police official said, reports AP.

Rebels of the National Liberation Army, known by its Spanish acronym ELN, detonated a bomb alongside the Cano-Limon oil pipeline in northeastern Colombia, Col. Guillermo Rodriguez, the region's police commander, told the Caracas radio network.

The ELN has bombed the pipeline scores of times since 1986 in an effort to force the government to expel US and other foreign oil companies from Colombia.

The 500-mile (800 kilometer) long pipeline transports about 230,000 barrels of crude per day from oil fields along the Venezuelan border to the Caribbean coast for export.

Shevardnadze's reservations on Gorbachev's role during coup

WASHINGTON, Aug 24: Former Soviet Foreign Minister Eduard Shevardnadze said Friday he would not join the new Soviet government, saying he had reservations about Soviet President Mikhail Gorbachev's role during the coup, reports AP.

"Even if I do have such a proposal to be in the government, I will not agree to work under Mikhail Gorbachev's leadership," he said in an interview with Cable News Network. "I think that Gorbachev committed, putting it in a delicate way, an illusion," he said.

The former minister, who resigned in December to protest against the threat of a dictatorship in Moscow, said he had "certain questions" about Gorbachev's role before and during the coup.

He questioned Gorbachev's account of the coup, asking who the emissaries were who demanded he resign and why the President proposed that an extraordinary session of the Supreme Soviet be called.

"Had he been told about the coup or the state of emergency? Yes, he was told about the state of emergency. Then why didn't he order a plane and fly up here right away."

"And he shouldn't have left on vacation at all. He must not have done that. The situation was really explosive," Shevardnadze said.

Shevardnadze was replaced as Foreign Minister by Alexander Bessmertnykh who was sacked Friday for remaining silent during the first two days of the coup that briefly ousted Gorbachev.

Reuter adds from New York: Mikhail Gorbachev says he first knew there was a coup against him when he picked up the four phones connecting his Crimean dacha to major government offices in Moscow on Sunday and none of them worked.

Not even the internal phone in the dacha worked.

Croatia closer to all-out war

BELGRADE, Aug 24: Croatia edged closer to all-out war with Serbian nationalists and the Yugoslav Army Friday as the death toll from bloody clashes mounted and two members of the Federal Ceasfire Commission said it had failed in its task, reports AP.

"War awaits us, it will perhaps be long," Croatian Defence Minister Luka Bebic told a news conference in the Croatian capital, Zagreb.

He disclosed that the republic's industrial sector had in part been converted to military use and was producing mines, grenades and rocket-launchers.

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In Belgrade, the Chairman of the Ceasfire Commission, Irfan Ajanovic, threatened to resign unless it was allowed to carry out its duties, while another member of the commission, Vasil Tupurkovski of Macedonia, deplored the fact that the commission's efforts had been "unproductive" so far.

Ajanovic cited "more than 200 violations of the August 7 ceasefire, which he said had left more than 70 people dead.

The work of the commission had been "impeded" as both sides mobilised new forces, he said. "New fronts have been opened since (and) bridges have been destroyed," he said.

Yazov, Kryuchkov repent

MOSCOW, Aug 24: Two of the leading conspirators at the heart of a failed attempt to overthrow Soviet President Mikhail Gorbachev repented on Friday, reports Reuter.

"I am very sorry for what has happened. In the end it's a shameful thing for the Armed Forces and me as the one responsible for them," now-dismissed Defence Minister Dmitry Yazov said in an interview on Russian television.

"I am therefore responsible for what has happened."

Former KGB Chief Vladimir Kryuchkov, like Yazov under arrest, was more ambiguous but said with hindsight he would have acted differently.

"I am grieved by all that happened... I think that in my life I have done nothing to offend my motherland. But if it could spoil back the camera to

viewer he had written to the President from his confinement. "I have only one wish, today I wrote a letter to Gorbachev and asked the Prosecutor General of Russia to forward it to him."

"I deeply respect Mikhail Sergeyevich and I would like him to know what I now think of it all."

He said he hoped the letter would help not only him but also his fellow conspirators. "My friends who today find themselves deprived of their freedom."

"I hope that those... who will be charged with carrying out justice... will take everything into account and allow me in future to work in freedom for the good of my country," he said.

Both Yazov and Kryuchkov were shown in plain rooms with simple furnishing, their location was not revealed.

"As you can see, the conditions of my confinement are not bad, I could have expected much worse," Yazov said.

Gorbachev said on Thursday Yazov and Kruchkov's betrayal had hurt him most. It was Kryuchkov's KGB that kept Gorbachev cut off in his Crimean holiday villa for three days.

"I believed in them," he said. "Even now I have to say I did not believe Yazov was part of that group."

Yazov had been an associate of Gorbachev since his days as Communist Party leader in Stavropol in South Russia.

As for Kryuchkov, Gorbachev said he had selected him as KGB chief because he had not been a professional spy all his life but also had a political career.

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