

Whites vote for apartheid

POTCHEFSTROOM (South Africa), Feb 20: White South Africans on Wednesday voted for apartheid and against non-racial democracy in a crucial parliamentary election, dealing reformist President F W De Klerk a humiliating defeat, reports Reuter.

The Conservative Party (CP), which demands a white "fatherland" separate from the Black majority, seized Potchefstroom by 2,140 votes from the ruling National Party (NP), overturning an NP majority of 1,583 in the 1989 general election.

It was the biggest CP triumph in a series of local election victories since De Klerk legalised Black political activity and began dismantling apartheid two years ago.

In three doubt on the President's insistence that he has a mandate from Whites for change and that he will win a referendum he was promised Whites on a democratic constitution.

"South Africa is back in the melting pot," shaken and perspiring NP candidate Theuns Kruger told reporters as his rival Andries Beyers was hoisted on to the shoulders of cheer-

ing supporters — many of them brown-shirted neo-Nazis waving Swastika-like banners. "We did our best to win. We thought we would win. Nobody thought this was in any way possible."

De Klerk, often accused of capturing the hearts of the world at the cost of affection at home by moving to end White supremacy, had laid much on the line in Potchefstroom.

Hizbollah attacks continue

BEIRUT, Feb 20: Rocket and artillery fire swept south Lebanon and northern Israel for a fifth day early today, forcing residents on both sides of the border to flee their villages or hide in shelters, reports Reuter.

Pro-Iranian guerrillas fired salvoes of Katyusha rockets into Israel and its self-declared security zone in south Lebanon. Israeli gunners and their militia allies pounded a string of villages to the north, security sources said.

Shells were falling at a rate of five a minute in villages bordering the zone, they said. Dozens of 107 mm rockets were fired into the zone and northern Israel.



AMRITSAR: An army convoy patrols a street in Northern Punjab during the troubles region's first parliamentary polls in over six years. Sikh militants, who are struggling for a homeland in Punjab, have warned people of "dire consequences" if they vote in the elections, which are being conducted under heavy security. — AFP Photo

Sindh Chief Minister relieved

KARACHI, Feb 19: Jam Sadiq Ali, the ailing Chief Minister of southern Pakistan's troubled Sindh province, has been relieved of his duties, official sources here said today, reports AFP.

Provincial Law Minister Syed Muzaffar Hussain Shah has assumed the newly created portfolio of "Coordination", which makes him the de facto chief executive of Sindh during the current illness of Ali, they said.

The powerful Chief Minister has been advised "complete rest" after his condition deteriorated last week, official

sources without specifying for how long said.

His illness was not officially disclosed but some doctors said Ali, 65, was suffering from cirrhosis, a liver disease.

In the absence of a formal resignation, officials said the changes announced in the provincial administration were "interim".

An official who wished not to be identified said the arrangement was necessary as there was no constitutional provision for an Acting Chief Minister.

Ali, a seasoned Sindh politician, has ruled the coun-

try's difficult province since the government of Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif took over after the October 1990 elections.

He has succeeded in bringing down the rate of crime in Sindh, which is the home base of main opposition leader Benazir Bhutto.

The ruling Islamic Democratic Alliance (IJI) failed to get an absolute majority in Sindh and Ali had formed a coalition with the ethnic Mohajir Qaumi Movement and independent deputies.

Shah is also an independent belonging to Ali's group.

Two Mohawk Indians jailed in Canada

MONTREAL, Feb 20: A Quebec judge sentenced two Mohawk Indians to jail on Wednesday for their part in a tense, 78-day rebellion last year, but limited their terms after acknowledging the "deep anger and rage" that sparked the uprising, reports Reuter.

Justice Benjamin Greenberg said the uprising in Quebec could not be dissociated from the "contempt, discrimination and racism" to which Canada's Indians have been subjected since Europeans began settling North America.

He sentenced Ronald Cross, better known by his warrior code name Lasagna, to four years and four months for possessing illegal weapons and assaulting another Mohawk during the crisis.

Gordon Lazore, nicknamed Noriega, was sentenced to 23 months in prison after being convicted of nine charges, including assault.

The rebellion, which rose out of the natives' frustration over the crawling pace of hundreds of unresolved land claims, flared when Indians tried to block developers from extending a golf course onto what they claimed was a sacred pine forest.

One policeman was killed during a paid on the Mohawk barricades near the lakeside resort of Oka, 20 miles (32 km) west of Montreal, but no one has been charged with his death.

Thirty-nine other Indians will stand trial in Montreal next month in connection with the uprising.

Samir sworn in as Tripura CM

AGARTALA, Feb 20: Samir Ranjan Burman was today sworn in as the Chief Minister of Tripura, ending the impasse created by the resignation of Sudhritnanjan Majumdar as the Chief Minister after the Tujs withdrew support, reports PTI.

Eleven cabinet ministers also took the oath of office. The smooth end to the high drama was possible as the Tujs in a reversal of its earlier stand decided yesterday to back a Congress (I) government under a new leader.

Koreas launch reconciliation, N-arms accords

SEOUL, Feb 20: South and North Korea formally launched yesterday historic reconciliation and denuclearization accords aimed at ending decades of enmity, reports AFP.

Prime Ministers Chung Won-Shik of the South and Yon Hyong-Muk of the north exchanged instruments of ratification signed, respectively, by the South's President Roh Tae-Woo and the North's Kim Il-Sung, putting into effect the accords reached in December.

The inauguration ceremony was telecast live to the South from the meeting in Pyongyang, capital of the Communist North.

BRIEFLY

31 arrested in Algeria: Algerian security forces arrested 31 people Tuesday in various towns, some of them caught with arms and explosives, officials said in Algiers on Thursday, reports AFP.

Thousands of Islamic fundamentalists have been arrested since Algeria's new military-backed government declared a state of emergency on February 9.

Many are being held in five detention camps set up in the Sahara desert.

UN Council's warning to Iraq: The UN Security Council issued a strong warning Wednesday to Iraq over its failure to comply with UN resolutions and decided to send an envoy to Baghdad immediately to push for their implementation, reports AFP from New York.

Rolf Ekeus, who heads the UN commission responsible for overseeing the dismantling of Iraq's weapons of mass destruction, will leave Thursday for Baghdad, Thomas Pickering of the United States, which currently holds the Council's rotating presidency, said in a statement.

Ekeus will meet with senior Iraqi officials to inform them of the Security Council's determination to see the conditions of the Gulf War ceasefire respected.

"The mission should stress the serious consequences for (Iraq) if such acceptance is not forthcoming," said the statement, although it gave no indication what these might be.

Kuwait seeks Indian help: Kuwait has sought India's help in rebuilding its defence forces in an effort to cut dependence on western powers, a newspaper reported in New Delhi, on Wednesday, reports AFP.

Citing unnamed Kuwaiti and Indian sources, the pioneer newspaper said the Emir of Kuwait had sounded out Indian Foreign Minister Madhav Sing Solanki on the purchase of tanks, missiles, artillery and personnel development.

There was no immediate official confirmation of the report, but Solanki returned this week from a two day visit to Kuwait and the pioneer said a delegation from the Kuwaiti defence ministry would soon visit New Delhi.

The newspaper quoted Indian sources as saying New Delhi was favourably disposed to the idea and added that one of the times on Kuwait's shopping list was India's Prithvi surface-to-air missile, which is soon to enter the production stage.

Akihito to visit China: The Japanese government will accept an invitation from Beijing for Emperor Akihito to visit China this autumn to mark the 20th anniversary of the normalization of relations, news reports said Thursday, AP reports from Tokyo.

A Foreign Ministry official, who spoke on condition of anonymity, said the government "is seriously considering" the Chinese invitation but has not made a final decision.

Kyodo News Service, however, quoted an unidentified top Foreign Ministry official as saying that Japan will formally notify the Communist Party general secretary, Jiang Zemin, of its acceptance when Jiang visits Tokyo in early April.

Several newspapers carried similar reports. The visit would symbolize Japan's efforts to move closer to China, to which it feels bound by history and geography.

Keep children out of sun: Canada's environment minister aroused concern when he warned Canadians to keep children out of the sun to avoid skin cancer, but experts say people should act with prudence, not alarm, AP reports from Toronto.

The latest rise in concern came when the the US National Aeronautics and Space Administration announced its discovery of record levels of ozone depleting chemicals over New England, eastern Canada, Greenland, the British Isles, Scandinavia and Russia.

The ozone layer of the atmosphere is Earth's protective shield against ultraviolet radiation which can cause skin cancer, stunt the growth of crops and cause vision problems.

Environment Minister Jean Charest said earlier this month that people should generally "avoid the sun as much as possible, especially children aged 2 to 18 years old who are very vulnerable."

Glenn keen to fly again

CAPE CANAVERAL, Florida, Feb 20: Thirty years after he became the first American to orbit earth, John Glenn has a message for the national aeronautics and space administration. He'd like to fly in space again, reports Reuter.

"I'm serious. I'd love to," Glenn told Reuters in a telephone interview. "I told them when they get around to doing their geriatric studies, I'm their man, because they already have a baseline on me."

Now a 70-year-old democratic senator seeking his fourth term, Glenn was scheduled to file re-election papers in his home state of Ohio on Thursday, the anniversary of the day he became a national hero.

Bush's challenge comes to victory with narrow margin

MANCHESTER, New Hampshire, Feb 19: President George Bush won the New Hampshire primary on Tuesday by a narrow margin over right-wing challenger Pat Buchanan, who won at least four votes in 10 television networks reported, says Reuter.

Both CNN and CBS news predicted Bush would be the winner based on computerised projections of early returns and interviews with voters.

CBS said Buchanan would do "startlingly well", probably sweeping up well over 40 per cent of the vote.

CNN gave the only early figures, saying Bush had 50 per cent of the vote and Buchanan 49 per cent with two per cent of the ballots

counted. If the final results were even close to such a result, it would be a political humiliation for the incumbent president unrivalled in New Hampshire since Gerald Ford nosed out challenger Ronald Reagan by 49.4 per cent to 48 per cent in 1967.

An earlier AP report said, the official tally for New Hampshire's Republican presidential primary on Wednesday showed a large write-in vote shrinking President Bush's victory margin over challenger Patrick Buchanan. The revised figures also dropped Buchanan's showing to under 40 per cent of the vote.

Official results also changed percentages in the Democratic primary, but not significantly.

Many of the write-in votes in the Republican primary were for the five major Democratic presidential hopefuls and for consumer advocate Ralph Nader, the New Hampshire secretary of state's office reported.

The state tally showed 174,165 votes cast for president in the Republican primary, far above the highest turnout expectations.

Bush's total was 92,233, or 52.9 per cent. Buchanan got 65,087, or 37.3 per cent. There were 13,081 write-in votes, for 7.5 per cent. The other candidates listed on the Republican ballot received 3,764 or 2.2 per cent.

Unofficial vote tallies by The Associated Press and the News Election Service on Tuesday

night showed a 53-40 split between Bush and Buchanan.

The state figures pushed Buchanan's vote below the 40 per cent mark — the level many had seen as a benchmark for delivering as serious setback to Bush.

The official Democratic totals were:

Former Massachusetts Sen. Paul Tsongas: 55,638 votes, 33 per cent.

Arkansas Gov Bill Clinton: 41,522 votes, 25 per cent. Nebraska Sen. Tom Rarkson: 17,057 votes, 10 per cent. Former California Gov Jerry Brown: 13,654 votes, 8 per cent. Total vote cast were 167,819, of which 12,636 were write-ins. New York Gov Mario Como had 6,577 write-in votes, or 4 per cent, while

Nader had 3,054 write-in votes, 2 per cent.

New Hampshire has a strong tradition of write-in voting, but not usually in contested presidential primaries. Often, the write-ins have been for candidates in the other political party.

Because of this history, and because town Clerks often do not count write-ins on primary night, the unofficial vote counts by the AP and NES did not include the write-in votes in the Republican primary.

The AP and NES did tally the Nader and Cuomo write-in votes in the Democratic primary because visible write-in efforts were mounted in the state on their behalf.

Exit polls indicated as many as a third of New Hampshire

Off the Record

She was barred to go for abortion

DUBLIN: Cabinet officials and lawmakers were called to special meetings Tuesday following a court ruling barring a 14-year-old who says she was raped, from going to Britain for an abortion, reports AP.

The decision Monday unleashed protests and demands to liberalise Europe's strictest birth control laws, which virtually ban abortions and tightly regulate contraceptives.

A leading newspaper, the Irish Times, on Tuesday urged women who are raped not to go to the police. Some protesters' banners read: "Rapists 1 — Women 0" and "Human Rights for Rape Victims."

"When the Attorney General, the judge and the other moral guardians go home tonight it will be this 14-year-old child and her family who have to move to pick up the pieces for the rest of their lives," said Monica Hynds, a spokeswoman for the Belfast Rape Crisis Center after the ruling.

Prime Minister Albert Reynolds called a Cabinet meeting to have Attorney General Harry Welchman explain the ruling — the first test of a woman's right to obtain leave the Roman Catholic nation for an abortion abroad. Legislators in the lower house of parliament were scheduled to discuss the issue later Tuesday.

Doctor on trial for helping commit suicide

ROCHESTER HILLS: A judge deciding whether Dr Jack Kevorkian should be tried on murder charges in helping two women commit suicide last year dealt two blows to the prosecution Monday, reports AP.

Rochester Hills district Judge James P. Sheehy refused to allow another court's injunction prohibiting Kevorkian from helping people commit suicide to be entered as evidence. The judge also refused to allow the testimony of psychiatrists who had recommended one of the women be committed, saying their testimony could violate doctor-patient confidentiality.

The hearing to determine what, if any, charges the 63-year-old retired pathologist will face at trial was in its third day Sunday.

Prosecutors are arguing that the deaths of Sherry Miller, 43, and Marjorie Wanz, 56, in a secluded cabin Oct 23 were homicides because Kevorkian hooked them up to two devices he invented to take lives.

Defense attorney Geoffrey Fieger said the women merely received help from the 63-year-old retired pathologist in committing suicide. Michigan has no law against assisting in a suicide.

Assistant Oakland County prosecutor Larry Bunting had wanted the Circuit Court injunction to be allowed to bolster a drug delivery charge against Kevorkian.

Instead of rain the skies poured death

SYDNEY: February 19, 1942. It was a typical steamy morning in sub-tropical Darwin. But instead of rain, the skies poured death, turning the vanguard of Australia's defence into another Pearl Harbour, reports AP.

The devastating Japanese aerial attack killed 243 people by official count — almost half of them Americans — and wounded more than 300, although some have estimated up to 1,000 died.

Naval ships were sitting ducks. Eight went down in Darwin's harbour, including the USS Peary with the loss of 91 lives. Others sustained severe damage. Twenty-three aircraft were destroyed, communications and utility lines cut, and public buildings flattened. Nine died in the post office.

In the words of the attack leader, Commander Mitsuo Fuchida, the Japanese used "a sledgehammer... to crack an egg."

On Wednesday, Australia marks the 50th anniversary of the first and most deadly enemy attack on Australian soil, although the Japanese made another 63 sorties into the Northern Territory over the following 21 months.

An estimated 1,500 veterans are attending the ceremonies, including a number of Americans and other foreigners making their first sojourn back to the country's Top End. "Some of us are in wheelchairs, but they wouldn't miss it," said John Roth, a member of the US Air Force's 49th Pursuit Group, who said 22 surviving members are in Darwin.

Smog alert

MEXICO CITY: Officials who extended a smog alert into Thursday were hoping factory slowdowns, limits on driving and other emergency measures would help clear the capital of a grey haze thick enough to make healthy people sick, reports AP.

Pollution soared Wednesday to near-record levels over one of the world's most polluted cities, generating new debate over a bold idea: perch 100 huge fans on the mountains around the capital to blow the stuff away.

City officials have approved the proposal for study. But Armando Baez, of the Science Institute of the National Autonomous University of Mexico, said it would only turn the city into a pollution exporter, the news agency Motimex reported.

City officials first called the smog alert Tuesday after stagnant air over the Valley of Mexico allowed pollution to build to dangerous levels.

Emergency measures were imposed Wednesday, and the alert was extended until Thursday afternoon, when winds were expected to bring relief to city of 16 million.

The city's air pollution control commission ordered about 5,000 factories to cut production by 30 per cent Wednesday, asphalt plants were closed and half the government's cars were banned from the streets.

230 Haitian refugees' fate uncertain

WASHINGTON, Feb 20: At least 230 Haitian refugees who may be eligible for political asylum in the United States have tested positive for the AIDS virus, leaving US officials puzzled about how to deal with

them, reports AP. The refugees are among more than 4,100 at the US naval base at Guantanamo Bay, Cuba, who will not be repatriated back to Haiti because they have convinced US immigration officials they may be subject to persecution if they are returned.

Many of the refugees in this category have been flown to the United States but those who tested positive for the HIV virus, which causes AIDS, during medical tests at Guantanamo were left behind.

US officials, speaking only on condition they not be identified, said the administration was trying to decide whether to allow the infected Haitians to pursue their asylum claims in the United States or at Guantanamo.

"There's been a tremendous debate," one official said.

Normally, aliens who test positive for the human immunodeficiency virus, or HIV, are not permitted to emigrate to the United States. But officials said the administration has the option of granting waivers.