

# US won't produce plutonium: Bush

KENNEBUNKPORT, Maine, July 14: President George Bush announced on Monday that the United States would no longer produce plutonium or highly-enriched uranium, key ingredients of nuclear weapons, in order to discourage the further spread of weapons of mass destruction, reports Reuter.

The move was part of a broad new initiative designed to put teeth in the US Nuclear Non-Proliferation policy.

"I have set forth today a set of principles to guide our (nuclear) Non-Proliferation efforts in the years ahead, Bush said in a statement released at his vacation home in Maine.

He said the new policy included a decision not to produce plutonium and highly enriched uranium for nuclear

explosive purposes.

Bush's initiative also included a number of proposals to strengthen international actions against those who contribute to the spread of weapons of mass destruction and the missiles that deliver them.

Meanwhile Xinhua adds: The United States' Seventh Fleet Commander Timothy Wright has said that his warships will not have any role to play in any future conflict between India and Pakistan.

He made the remarks at a press conference aboard the USS Blue Ridge, the flagship of the Seventh Fleet, in southern city Madras, on Monday, local press reported today.

On the aggressive postures struck by the Seventh Fleet

during the Indo-Pakistan war in 1972, Wright said the fleet 'just happened' to be in the region and the intention was not to attack.

The flagship, carrying top commanders of the fleet, is only on a 'friendly visit' to Madras. It has nothing to do with the on-going major Indian naval tactical exercises off the Madras coast, he said, adding it is just a 'coincidence'.

He also said the US navy had a limited exercise with the Indian Navy off India's southwestern coast last May and there are no plans for any future exercises.

Wright said both Indian and US navies are in the process of regularizing interaction and interface and are trying to understand each other.



ROME: Women point Monday towards the window of Pope John Paul II's room at Gemelli hospital where he began a series of intensive medical tests to determine the cause of intestinal problems that have troubled him for several days. — AFP/UNB photo

# Milan Panic faces confirmation vote

BELGRADE, July 14: A Serb-born American who has promised to stop the fighting in Bosnia-Herzegovina faced a confirmation vote in Parliament Tuesday as Yugoslavia's new prime minister, reports AP.

In Bosnia's embattled capital, Sarajevo, there was minor shelling overnight. Sarajevo radio said that power lines from Tuzla, 50 miles (80 kilometers) north of the city, were blown up, though it had no further details.

But Associated Press reporter Terry Leonard said in Sarajevo on Tuesday that electricity and water were available Monday night and Tuesday morning after outages on Monday. Power is often erratic because of fighting around the city, besieged for three months by Serb forces.

Yugoslavia's Serb-dominated

parliament was expected to approve Milan Panic, a naturalized US citizen, who was nominated for the prime minister's job by Yugoslav president Dobrica Cosic.

Panic, who met with Western leaders in Finland last week, has promised to bring peace to his battered homeland and has warned Serbian President Slobodan Milosevic: "God help him if he gets in my way."

But an authoritative daily said Monday that Milosevic may step down after Panic is approved. Milosevic is under fire at home and abroad for escalating ethnic warfare in breakaway Yugoslav republics, where more than 17,500 have been killed and 2.2 million left homeless in the past 13 months.

## Trial on fate of Communist Party

### Yeltsin's ban on CP a barbaric act

MOSCOW, July 14: Boris Yeltsin's ban on the Communist Party is a barbaric act that Russians are paying for in "blood, tears, hunger and humiliation," former party leaders argued Monday in court, reports AP.

As a trial on the party's fate entered its second week, the Communists tried to take the moral high ground. They solemnly urged the 13 black-robed judges of Russia's Constitutional Court to overturn the 11-month-old ban in the interest of national reconciliation and human rights.

"Attempts to ban a party of 19 million people because of the crimes of its individual members — even thousands of them, or tens of thousands — will be seen throughout the

world as an act of barbarity from the Middle Ages," former Central Committee secretary Vladimir Kalashnikov said.

There was more than little irony in the argument that Communists' political rights are now being violated, because their party ruthlessly suppressed all opposition for 70 years.

The former leaders claimed the party renounced its bloody past and became a democratic organization before Yeltsin shut it down on August 23, 1991, two days after the collapse of the attempted coup by hard-liners in the party, military and KGB.

The cost of the Russian president's ban "has turned out to be huge," Kalashnikov said. "Every day we're paying for it

in blood, tears, hunger and humiliation."

Outside the courtroom, two blocks from the party's former headquarters on Moscow's Old Square, a few dozen diehard Communists waved posters of the goateed face of Soviet founder Vladimir Lenin.

"Constitutional Court: Don't Destroy the Constitution!" said a black-and-red sign carried by one elderly woman.

For the most part, however, the legal proceedings have failed to capture the interest of the Russian people, perhaps because no individuals are on trial.

The original lawsuit was filed by 37 pro-Communist members of the Russian parliament who contend that

Yeltsin exceeded his constitutional authority by banning the party and nationalizing its property.

The Constitutional Court has combined that case with a countersuit filed by 52 anti-Communist lawmakers. They say the party itself should be declared unconstitutional because it was a "state mafia" that systematically murdered its opponents, terrorized the people and misused state funds.

Russian politicians and journalists disagree on what's at stake. Some, like commentator Yevgenia Albats of the weekly Moscow News, say the trial will have little impact on politics and is mainly a battle for historical truth.

## Off the Record

### An effort to lure Democrats

NEW YORK: A stripper wearing red, white and blue doffed her top in midtown Manhattan Monday in an effort to lure Democratic national convention delegates to a topless bar, and was promptly arrested, reports AP.

Police made it clear that however patriotic her intentions, Sarah Franklin, 19, was not covered by last week's ruling by New York state's highest court that toplessness is legal here when neither lewd nor for compensation.

Franklin, who goes by the professional name "Essica Wabbit," had been dressed in a star-spangled Uncle Sam costume complete with top hat, and was riding in the back of a truck with five other women handing out free admission vouchers to the bar and waving signs to welcome the delegates.

Jessica innocently flashed and she got caught, said Bruce Lynn, a publicist for the topless establishment. "I thought New York was a very liberal city. I'm really disappointed."

### 'Forgotten Catastrophe'

LONDON: The British Red Cross has launched an appeal for cash to aid victims of what it called the "forgotten catastrophe" in Somalia — a nation torn by famine, drought and tribal war, reports AP.

Red Cross Director General Mike Whittam on Monday said 2 million people face starvation in "the worst humanitarian crisis in the world today."

"Thousands are dying daily in (the capital) Mogadishu alone," he added.

The International Red Cross is spending more than 25 per cent of its \$500 million budget on Somalia this year, feeding 500,000 people twice a day in makeshift kitchens throughout the country.

### 'Lazy baby' Britain's youngest graduate

LONDON: A "lazy baby" has grown up to become Britain's youngest university graduate, earning an honours degree in Math Monday from Surrey University, reports AP.

Ganesh Sittampalam, who 4 months past his 13th birthday when he completed his exams last month, beat the previous record-holder by seven months.

"I jumped up and down yelled Yippee!" said Ganesh.

Ganesh continued to go to school with classmates his own age four days a week and attended the university for private lessons once a week.

The boy's mother, Nela Sittampalam said, "Ganesh was a lazy baby who walked and talked late. He was very numerate as a toddler but we were not surprised as both me and my husband, Arjuna, have Math degrees."

Sittampalam recalled a sign in the examination room which said: "No Children Under 16 Unless Accompanied by an Adult."

"I joked that I'd have to come in and sit the exam with him," she said.



Muslim and Croatian refugee women sit in a truck Monday before travelling from northern Bosnia to Slavonki Brod (Croatia) to escape fighting. Serb militia from Croatia's Krajina region launched an attack on northern Bosnia, the Tanjug news agency reported. — AFP/UNB photo

## More UN troops for Bosnia

UNITED NATIONS, July 14: The Security Council on Monday approved 500 more peace-keepers at Sarajevo Airport to get supplies to starving residents as Bosnian and Croatian leaders demanded the Council authorise force to stop the fighting in Bosnia-Herzegovina, reports Reuter.

A resolution, adopted by a 15-0 vote, also urged all parties to cooperate fully with UN troops who are trying against heavy odds to get relief through to Sarajevo's 300,000 residents.

Currently there are about 1,100 UN troops, civilian police and civilians helping in the relief effort in the Sarajevo

area. The additional 500 staff will bring the total to 1,600.

The council again demanded that all anti aircraft weapons system be withdrawn from the airport's approaches as agreed to earlier with the United Nations.

Secretary General Boutros Boutros-Ghali, in a report released on Sunday, said Serb militias, who control the airport, had not yet fully withdrawn heavy artillery, maintaining they would be attacked immediately by Bosnians and Croats.

The additional 500 peace-keepers would be used for air traffic control, an artillery-lo-

cating radar platoon, a helicopter unit and signals and medical platoons, many of whom have been offered by France.

Meanwhile Reuter adds: The UN Security Council pledged to intensify peace-keeping efforts in Sarajevo as mortar bombs smashed into the street outside UN headquarters in the Bosnian capital, killing a passing teenager.

The Yugoslav news agency Tanjug quoted Serb forces as saying they captured the northern Bosnian town of Odzak on Monday after killing 100 members of the Croatian national guard and wounding 840 others.

## 12 Iraqi smugglers held in Kuwait

KUWAIT, July 14: Kuwait border police on Monday arrested a gang of Iraqi smugglers who used night vision goggles, sophisticated compasses and heavy arms to get their cargoes of weapons, liquor and drugs across the demilitarized zone between the two countries, reports AP.

The arrest of the 12-member gang is the latest of a series of violent incidents and coincided with a call by the Prime Minister, Sheikh Saad Abdullah Al-Sabah, for a tougher penal code and other measures to tighten security.

# Democrats pledge to recapture White House after 12 years

NEW YORK, July 14: A festive Democratic National Convention opened here Monday with potshots at the Republican-held White House and a pledge to recapture it after 12 years on the outside looking in, reports AP.

The man of the hour, Bill Clinton, stayed away, however, to craft the speech he will deliver Thursday evening accepting the party's presidential nomination. The address is being billed as the most important in his political career.

"New York is the start, the White House is the finish — let's get on to victory," Democratic Party Chairman Ron Brown said in his opening remarks to the four-day convention being held in cavernous Madison Square Garden in central Manhattan.

"The American people are demanding change, and they are looking to the Democratic Party to be their instrument of progress and their agents of change", Brown said as the more than 4,000 delegates

filed into the arena to take up their seats under their respective state banners.

The party chairman more than any other was responsible for forging a consensus out of the traditionally fractious

Democratic coalition behind Clinton, who emerged victorious from a long, hard-fought primary season.

Clinton, 45, took a brief time out from his speech-crafting to visit an ethnically diverse neighbourhood in lower east Manhattan where he had some conciliatory words in his dispute with the Black rap singer Souljah.

Clinton told a group of teenagers that he understood the case that had led her to suggest in a newspaper interview after the Los Angeles riots that Blacks should kill Whites instead of each other.

Clinton had previously taken the singer to task over the remarks, which led to another verbal clash with Black civil rights leader Jesse Jackson, a reluctant Clinton backer.

Clinton's chief aides said that the pre-convention preparations had gone satisfactorily for them despite some last minute pressure from the

camps of former Clinton campaign rivals Paul Tsongas and Jerry Brown.

"That's totally to be expected," said Clinton's communications director George Stephanopoulos in the last hour before the Democratic jamboree got under way.

"It's been less than in previous years and I suspect that it will diminish as the week goes on," he added.

Brown in his opening remarks as impartial party chairman avoided any reference to Clinton as theoretically he is not the candidate until he is nominated by the states Wednesday and accepts Thursday.

But subsequent speakers including Senator John Rockefeller of West Virginia and New York Mayor David Dinkins started up the drum-beat of support that will sound increasingly louder for the Arkansas governor in the lead up to Thursday's prime time final.



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## 6 rebels killed in clashes with Colombian army

SANTAFE DE BOGOTA, July 14: Six Colombian guerrillas were killed in four separate clashes with the army Monday, while rebels staged a bombing attack on an oil pipeline, military spokesmen said, reports AP.

Three members of the National Liberation Army (ELN) were killed in fighting with security forces near the town of Belania, and another ELN member died in fighting near Yarumal, both towns in the North Western Province of Antioquia, said General Marino Gutierrez, commander of the 14th army brigade.

Army troops occupied seven rebel camps during their operations in Bolivar and Meta,

# Gulf women no longer housewives, eyeing politics

ABU DHABI, July 14: Emboldened by post-war concessions from their conservative societies, Gulf women are now eyeing politics and some believe the barriers standing in their way will fall, reports AP.

Social attitudes in the Gulf have been changing but the war has accelerated such change, said Husna Khalidi of the United Arab Emirates (UAE). Women are now educated and are no longer seen as just housewives.

The Gulf crisis, sparked by Iraq's invasion of Kuwait in 1990, has gained women significant concessions from their governments although they have long campaigned in vain for more social freedom.

In Saudi Arabia, the most conservative Gulf nation, women have been allowed to join the medical and humanitarian sectors of the armed forces, while in the UAE they can now serve in the army.

In Kuwait, women are demanding the right to vote, and in Qatar and Oman they can join the police.

But with the number of educated women

steadily rising, their sights are now set on politics, which has so far been reserved for men in this oil-rich but tribal Muslim region.

"Women in the UAE have made remarkable progress in the cultural and educational fields and in some cases they have done better than men, said Rafia Gobash, a professor at the Emirates University.

But unfortunately, they have not had the opportunity to join politics and they have not even been given that right. This is because of the social system, which is still obsessed by the concept that man should be in authority, she said.

"This attitude still prevails in the whole Gulf."

Although women have joined political institutions in some Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) states, their jobs are confined mainly to administrative fields or junior posts that do not enable them to take part in decision-making.

Gulf officials are still reluctant to urge the women to work because of social restrictions.

This has created a shortage in local labour

and made the region depend heavily on foreign workers after the discovery of oil.

Women have the right to work in several fields, UAE President Zayed Ibn Sultan Al-Nahayan said recently. But I think the best job for the woman is to look after her home and children.

Before oil was struck, the women's role did not go beyond domestic work, like washing, cooking, milking cattle and preparing supplies for men when they set out on pearling journeys that could last several months.

Oil has brought major changes as it enabled people to open up to other cultures and traditions. Women now have access to education and have set up associations to play a greater role in society.

In the UAE, there were reports some women had been named last year for the Federal National Council, or appointed parliament. But they were later dropped from the list because officials did not want to anger other Gulf countries, according to Gobash.

"We hope that this will not pose an obstacle

for women in the UAE otherwise we will be overtaken by other Gulf states, she warned.

"But the mere fact that women had been proposed for parliament means that there is an intention. We shall now leave the ball in the official court but we are confident it is only a matter of time."

Gobash said she felt the GCC states of Bahrain, Kuwait, Oman, Qatar, Saudi Arabia and the UAE were heading toward greater recognition of the role of women in society.

"I think things are moving in the right direction and I expect a lot of surprises in this regard. In the UAE, I believe women will take up important positions in political work, she said.

Amna Khalifa, another holder of a doctorate from a US university, was equally optimistic.

"I think Gulf women have not attained political positions because the period of their educational life is relatively short, she said. "Certainly, the way will open for women in the long term."

## Cypriot leaders asked to reach agreement

UNITED NATIONS, July 14: The Security Council on Monday urged Cypriot leaders at their forthcoming UN talks to reach a solution, saying that the meetings represented a 'determining phase' in the 18-year-old debate on reunifying the island, reports Reuter.

Cypriot President George Vassiliou and Turkish-Cypriot Leader Rauf Denkash on Wednesday, began another round of talks with Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali, with pressure on both sides to make compromises that will end the virtual partition of the island.