

Klerk will disband two army units

JOHANNESBURG, July 15: President F W de Klerk on Tuesday promised to disband two notorious security units in a move aimed at bringing the black opposition movement back into negotiations with the government, reports AP.

De Klerk's announcement, released in an Afrikaans-language statement after a day-long meeting of Cabinet ministers, was a response to an independent commission's criticism last week of government inaction on halting violence.

The measures are expected to be raised by Pik Botha, the South African Foreign Minister, when he speaks at a UN Security Council meeting this week about ending the violence and creating multiracial democracy in South Africa.

The measures announced by De Klerk covered three areas in which his government was criticized last week by the Goldstone Commissions.

De Klerk said he would disband the army's 32 Battalion, accused of raping and assaulting people in the Phola Park squatter camp earlier this year, and the Koevoet police unit. The Koevoet, employed as trackers during South Africa's anti-guerrilla war in Namibia, have been deployed in South African squatter camps since Namibia's independence in 1990.

A third unit, the army's 31 Battalion, also was being disbanded.

De Klerk also promised to ban the carrying of dangerous weapons in "unrest areas." That presumably would meet a demand of the African National Congress that Zulus, loyal to the Inkatha Freedom Party, be prohibited from carrying their traditional clubs and spears during protests.

The announcement also concerned upgrading security at black hostels. Much of the violence that has claimed 12,000 lives in black townships since 1984 has involved Inkatha-loyalist Zulus at hostels located in areas loyal to the ANC.

The steps announced Tuesday appear to meet some of the demands of the ANC, which cut off talks with De Klerk's government after the massacre of at least 42 blacks on June 17 in the township of Boipatong.

Since then, both sides have engaged in a bitter war of words.

Earlier Tuesday, the nation's largest labor group said Tuesday it might cancel plans for a nationwide strike next month if business leader back the ANC's demands for political change.

I'm glad I'm not running for president

NEW YORK, July 15: "My name is Jimmy Carter, and I'm running for president."

It was a quixotic line, useful when he ran for president in 1976 as an ex-peanut farmer, a little-known former governor, who bunked out in supporters' homes, careful to make his own bed and carry his own luggage, reports AP.

It had an ironic tone later that year when he used it to introduce himself to accept the Democratic presidential nomination. He then promised America "a government as good as its people."

It had a nostalgic tone Tuesday night. He said it with a new twist:

"My name is Jimmy Carter — and this time I'm glad I'm not running for president."

The Democrats welcomed Carter home. Four years ago in Atlanta, he made a token convention appearance but this time — his third, Madison Square Garden convention — he got a roaring reception as a prophet with honour in his own party.

There had been bitterness between then and now.

He was the last Democrat in the White House and the first president to be denied a second term since Herbert Hoover. (Gerald Ford had been an appointed vice president and an interim president, never elected to national office).

Carter was blamed for double-digit inflation and for America's hostage humiliation in Iran. Edward M. Kennedy prevailed, Kennedy refused to shake his hand.

But in the wilderness years, Carter's prestige was restored through his own efforts. He helped build houses for the poor with his own hands; he

became a friend of the Third World's impoverished; he oversaw foreign elections and mediated foreign disputes.

He recalled this, proudly, in his speech to the convention, and won its applause.

But he had come to settle some scores with the Reagan-Bush administrations.

His criticism was acid; he

portrayed his Republican successors as driven by expediency, needlessly belligerent, indifferent to poverty and callous toward the environment.

"The world cries out for peaceful resolution of conflict," he said, "but our country is seen more war like than peace-loving. Our country should seek greatness in peace, not war."

He endorsed Bill Clinton as "the only candidate who can unite our government, heal our nation's wounds."

The delegates shouted, "Jimmy, Jimmy."

Someone with a long memory held up a sign in the shape of a peanut.

Meanwhile AFP adds: Carter said he had known Clinton as a friend and colleague for over 15 years and that with him, "We can once again be the nation of hope if we have a change in Washington."

"Let me tell you that I am enjoying my involuntary retirement and I think and hope that President George Bush will enjoy the same pleasure after January," Carter told the crowd at Madison Square Garden.

He took his place in the convention hall beside his wife, Rosalyn, to listen to the programmes closing speaker, black civil rights leader Jesse Jackson.



NEW YORK: Former US Democratic President Jimmy Carter (C) waves on Tuesday, while walking through the Georgia delegation on the floor of the US Democratic National Convention. Carter is accompanied by his wife Rosalyn. — AFP/UNB photo

Fresh move to bring peace in Bosnia

LONDON, July 15: Leaders of the three warring factions in Bosnia were meeting Wednesday with European Community mediator Lord Carrington in a fresh attempt to bring peace to the war-torn region. Reports AP.

The British Foreign Office said Carrington was scheduled to meet Radovan Karadzic, leader of the Bosnian Serbs, Bosnian Foreign Minister Haris Siljdzic, who represents the Muslim faction, and Mate Boban the leader of a Croat army who earlier this month declared a new republic of Herzeg Bosnia.

Carrington was meeting each side separately Wednesday morning before formal peace talks open at a London hotel around 1430 GMT.

A Foreign Office spokesman could not say whether the opposing sides will meet face-to-face at the formal session, chaired by Portuguese diplomat Jose Cutileiro.

"That depends on how the morning session goes," said the spokesman who was not identified.

In Bosnia-Herzegovina, fighting has killed more than 7,500 people since Muslims and ethnic Croats declared independence February 29.

Ethnic Serbs, who oppose secession, have recently waged

an offensive in northern and eastern Bosnia apparently to gain control of as much territory as possible before any political settlement is reached.

Bosnian Serb leader Karadzic, the first of the faction leaders to arrive in London, on Wednesday repeated his offer of a unilateral ceasefire and said Serbs are prepared to relinquish territory they have gained by military action in the past few weeks.

Serbs are "ready to give up all northern or Croatian territory" immediately after we make a final political agreement," he said in an interview with British Broadcasting Corp radio.

But he accused Muslims of being "in favour of war" and unprepared to negotiate.

And at a news conference in London on Tuesday he stated Serbs could not make a unilateral ceasefire work "without the other side."

Meanwhile AFP adds: Serbs carried out an attack with multiple rocket launchers Tuesday on the eastern Bosnian town of Gorazde, killing 31 persons mostly women and children, the Croatian news agency HINA reported.

A further 56 persons were wounded in the rocket attack on the suburbs of Kopack.

BRIEFLY

DPRK team to visit Seoul: A high-powered North Korean delegation will make an historic visit Seoul next week to try to break the deadlock in inter-Korean talks, Seoul newspaper said yesterday, AFP reports from Seoul.

The 10-member delegation, to be headed by Vice Premier and Chairman of the Committee of External Economic Affairs, Kim Dal-Hyon, will arrive Seoul Sunday for a week-long stay, the reports said.

South Korean government officials declined to comment on the reports.

The two sides are expected to look for agreement on the thorny nuclear verification issue and discuss opening economic cooperation, the reports said.

Pope undergoes surgery: Pope John Paul II underwent surgery early Wednesday, a Vatican spokesman said, reports AFP from Rome.

The Italian News Agency ANSA said the operation started at 5:50 am and was completed at 9:30 am (0730 GMT).

The Vatican spokesman, who had spoke shortly before the ANSA report, had said the operation was still underway and that a medical bulletin would be issued at noon (1000 GMT). He said the first results are optimistic, but gave no other immediate details. Earlier Wednesday medical sources at the Gemelli Clinic earlier had said the 72-year-old Pontiff would undergo a scheduled operation to remove an intestinal tumor.

Tamils kill 18 Muslims: Tamil militants attacked a bus and killed 18 Muslims in East Sri Lanka Wednesday, a military spokesman said, reports Reuter from Colombo.

The militants stopped the state-owned bus in the Batticaloa district, pulled the passengers from the vehicle and shot them, the spokesman said.

Eighteen Muslims were killed and five wounded in the attack.

Hamid Reza Pahlavi Dead: The younger brother of the late Shah of Iran died in Tehran of a heart attack in hospital on Sunday after 13 years in jail, the Johori Islamic newspaper reported Tuesday, reports AFP from Tehran.

Hamid Reza Pahlavi was the last member of the imperial family still in Iran.

The Shah and his family fled into exile after he was toppled in 1979 fundamentalist clergymen led by Ayatollah Khomeini.

The Shah's younger brother was being detained in Tehran's Evine prison on drugs charges. The government never said if he was put on trial.

Army raids Palestinian Varsity: Israeli army units unceremoniously searched the Palestinian University of Al-Najah on the Israeli-occupied West Bank late Tuesday and broke up student union elections, a Palestinian source said, reports AFP from Jerusalem.

A majority of the University's 4,500 student were trapped inside as soldiers prevented anyone entering or leaving, the source said.

The army said soldiers were searching for Palestinians wanted by the security services.

A top adviser to the Chairman of the Palestine Liberation Organisation, Yasser Arafat, condemned the army action as "a premeditated provocation."

277 executed in China: China executed at least 277 drug traffickers in the southwestern province of Yunnan in the first six months of this year, the official New China News Agency said Wednesday, reports Reuter from Beijing.

Yunnan is on China's border with Myanmar and the opium fields of the so-called golden triangle.

The sentences were carried out as part of the effort by Chinese courts and security bureau in many provinces and cities to crack down on prostitution, drug trafficking and other hideouts crimes in order to create a better social environment and security, the agency said.

China is waging a nationwide campaign against the "six evils" — prostitution, drug trafficking, gambling, feudal superstition, selling of women and children and pornography.

Quake shakes Washington-Oregon: A moderate earthquake struck along the Washington-Oregon line on Tuesday, reports AP from Wash.

It measured 4.2 on the Richter scale, hit six miles (10 kilometers) southwest of Walla Walla and was centred some seven miles (11 kilometers) beneath the earth's surface, University of Washington seismologist Ruth Ludwin said from Seattle.

No damage or injuries were reported, said Walla Walla County emergency services director Ed George.

"It didn't do much, but you could definitely feel it. It rattled windows and moved small items on desk tops," said Carole LePlane, a county under sheriff.

Sixth man charged in LA riot: A sixth man was charged Tuesday in the attack on a truck driver pulled from his rig and beaten during rioting sparked by police acquittals, in the Rodney King videotaped beating case, report AP from Los Angeles.

Lance Jerome Parker, 26, was charged with assault with a firearm and attempting to burn Reginald Denny's truck, said Sandi Gibbons, a district attorney's spokesman.

Parker appeared in court without entering a plea. His arraignment was continued to Aug 19.

Tracing of border with Kuwait

Iraq to boycott UN body work

BAGHDAD, July 15: Iraq said Tuesday it would boycott the work of a UN commission assigned to retrace the Iraqi Kuwaiti border, accusing the body of following US and British orders and of bias toward Kuwait, reports AFP.

Iraqi Foreign Minister Ahmad Hussein Al-Khodair, in a letter to UN Secretary General Boutros Boutros-Ghali released by the Iraqi news agency INA, said his country "sees no advantage in participating" in a meeting on the project set for today in New York.

He said, "Baghdad was thus protesting the tracing of the new boundary set by the commission in April, which was dictated by the United States, Great Britain and other powers manipulating the Security Council with the aim of depriving Iraq of its rights, damaging its vital interests and creating an unstable situation in the region."

The instability is needed, he said, "To justify the presence of American and British forces and bases."

The proposed retracing would move the 200 Kilometer (125 miles) border about 600 meters (yards) in Kuwait's favour.

AP from Nicosia adds: It was the latest in a series of con-

frontations with the United Nations. Also Tuesday, Iraq virtually rejected a UN plan to sell 1.6 billion dollar of its oil, and a standoff between weapons inspectors and Iraqi officials at the Agriculture Ministry in Baghdad was in its 10th day.

The Iraqi agency, monitored in Cyprus, said Foreign Minister Ahmed Hussein told Secretary-General Boutros

Boutros-Ghali that his country would not attend Wednesday's meeting.

Iraq already has rejected the proposed border resolution.

USIS from Washington says: The standoff between Iraq and the United Nations continued July 14 with Baghdad adamantly refusing to allow UN weapons inspectors to search the Iraqi Ministry of Agri-

culture building and the United Nations insisting on its right to do so.

The Special Commission overseeing the destruction of Iraq's weapons has not received any formal response to their demand that the team be allowed access to the building, a commission spokesman said.

The inspection team, which is made up of chemical, biological and ballistic weapons experts, targeted the ministry for a search on the basis of information from unnamed sources that it may house the archives of Iraq's programme to develop three different types of ballistic missiles.

At a press conference July 14, Major Karen Jansen, chief of the inspection team, said that within an hour after the team arrived at the building "it became apparent that ... this team was not going to be allowed into the ministry" and subsequent local reactions have been "predictable."

"There was harassment," Jansen said. "One of the demonstrations involved throwing of food on the vehicles, (there were) a number of instances of rooms being (searched), going through personal effects in suitcases. The telephone in my room rang every hour on the hour all night long."

US to help dismantle CIS nuclear arms

WASHINGTON, July 15: US spokeswoman Margaret Tutwiler said the Bush administration is now committing 400 million dollar to specific projects to help dismantle nuclear weapons in the former Soviet Union and to engage weapon scientists in civilian projects, reports USIS.

She said that discussions on these projects have been held with the four members of the Commonwealth of Independent States who possess nuclear weapons — Russia, Ukraine, Belarus and Kazakhstan.

To date, the spokesman said, the United States, has

signed or initialed six agreements with Russia that authorize assistance totaling 115 million dollar in aid under the so called Nunn-Lugar appropriation.

In addition, she noted, discussions continue regarding upgrading Russian rail cars for nuclear weapons shipment.

Tutwiler said that Belarus and Ukraine also have forwarded proposals which the administration is now considering. Because Kazakhstan's status under the Nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty was decided only recently, talks on assistance there are just under way.



SARAJEVO: A woman passes two Bosnian soldiers guarding a queue in front of a food store in the besieged Bosnian capital on Tuesday. — AFP/UNB photo

Akihito Michiko visit China in October

TOKYO, July 15: Japan is considering an official visit to China by Emperor Akihito and Empress Michiko in late October, the mass-circulation Yomiuri Shimbun reported today, says AFP.

It would be the first visit by an emperor of the country that invaded and killed millions of Chinese before and during world war II.

In a front-page article, the nation's largest daily said that the imperial couple would visit to China for a four or five days most likely between October 22 and 27. They would travel to Xian and Shanghai as well as Beijing, it said.

The Yomiuri's report came only two days after the government denied Monday's press reports,

Libyans not happy with Gaddafi

TRIPOLI, July 15: Libyans complain — in whispers — about government mismanagement, lack of funds for health services, housing and schools and their international isolation, reports AP.

But it does appear that Moammar Gaddafi, backed by the security forces and bolstered by friends and family in high places, is about to be toppled.

Since April 15, Libya has been under international air, arms and diplomatic sanctions that could escalate if it persists in refusing to hand over for trial in the United States or Britain two men suspected in the bombing of a Pan Am airliner over Scotland in 1988.

The UN Security Council will review existing sanctions in mid-August. A possible sea blockade or an embargo on oil

exports would deprive Libya of more than 90 per cent of its revenues.

An oil-rich country, Libya is nevertheless beset by financial problems. There's little money for health services, education and low-rent housing. School buildings are left unfinished; many students in rural areas have no seats or blackboards and government employees are not paid for months.

These were among complaints of chronic mismanagement aired at last month's General People's Congress. Gaddafi's rubber-stamp legislature. Legislators vented their ire on Gaddafi's ministers, but never on him.

In early June, newspapers run by the revolutionary committees, a loose security system, criticized the leader for championing Arab unity.

But Libyans and foreign observers said Gaddafi was probably behind the articles, a ploy in preparation for a shift from his anti-Western stand.

The revolutionary committee's newspaper Al-Jamahiriyah accused Gaddafi of "creating problems with the West for the sake of the Arabs who turned their back on him." All Arab states have respected the sanctions against Libya.

In recent months, normally reticent Libyans took to speaking privately to reporters and voicing disgust with the leader. They are more willing to talk, but only in whispers and behind the shield of anonymity.

Some expressed hope the US would eventually use military force to oust Gaddafi. Others want the Pan Am bombing suspects turned over in order to end Libya's woes

regardless of the cost — loss of face and the possibility that Gaddafi or his top security officials may be dragged into the case.

All Libyans interviewed asked that their identities and professions be withheld. They said they would risk jail otherwise, and cited cases of relatives and friends detained for opposing the regime.

The human rights organization Amnesty International said there are at least 467 political prisoners in Libya. Some were convicted of belonging to an anti-government group and given life sentences. Many have been held without trial since 1989.

"Before he started preaching his socialist theories in 1977, everyone liked Gaddafi," said a young Libyan man.

Off the Record



ENGLAND: 13-year old Ganesh Sittampalam jokes, holding with a can of beverage on July 13. He is youngest British graduate to gain a Bachelor of Mathematics degree after studying at the Surrey University south-west of London, beside his normal school attendance, Ganesh will receive his degree on Friday. — AFP/UNB photo

Multiple births boom

CHICAGO: Fertility drugs are contributing to an explosion of multiple births and the boom is carrying a high price — more tiny babies who need intensive medical care, according to a government study, reports AP.

The new federal study found that from 1972 to 1989 triplet births rose 156 per cent; quadruplet births zoomed 356 per cent; and quintuplets and greater-number sets rose 182 per cent among white US women.

Among blacks, the increases were smaller — ranking from 18 per cent for triplets to 126 per cent for quadruplets — probably because relatively fewer blacks can afford costly infertility treatment, researchers said.

The study excluded twins because they are to be covered in another report, said epidemiologist and co-author John L. Kieley of the National Center for Health Statistics in Hyattsville, Md. But previous research indicates twins birth rate rose 33 per cent from 1978 to 1988.

The good news is that, over time, the infant mortality rate in higher-order multiple births (triplets and up) has decreased ... at about the same rate as among single births — 50 per cent, Kieley said.

Altar boys sexually abused by priest

ST. PAUL, Minn: Jim Grimm and Dan Dow were best buddies when they served as altar boys in the sixth grade. But it took them 22 years to tell one another that they were sexually abused by the parish priest, reports AP.

Now, they've joined five other Minnesota men who are suing the Roman Catholic Church for allegedly covering up reports of abuse by the former priest, James R. Porter. All seven say Porter abused them when he was an assistant priest at St. Philip's Catholic Church in Bemidji, in northern Minnesota.

Porter, 57, has admitted sexually abusing dozens of children while serving at three parishes in southeastern Massachusetts in the 1960s.

The diocese of Crookston, Minn. acknowledged that Porter came to Bemidji from a treatment center in New Mexico, where he was sent in 1967 after he was accused of sexual abuse in Massachusetts. He served in Bemidji until 1970.

The seven Minnesota plaintiffs, who are seeking unspecified damages, are identified in the lawsuits only as John Doe. However, Dow and Grimm, both 34, went public at a news conference Tuesday, alleging that Porter repeatedly abused them after Mass when they served as altar boys and when he coached the school's basketball team.