

Vance UN special envoy to S Africa

UNITED NATIONS, July 18: Former US Secretary of State Cyrus Vance has been named as the United Nations special envoy to South Africa. It was announced Friday, reports AFP.

Vance will go to South Africa early next week, according to a spokesman for Secretary General Boutros Boutros-Ghali.

In a resolution aimed at encouraging the resumption of constitutional talks in South Africa, the UN Security Council adopted a resolution Thursday urging Boutros-Ghali to appoint a special envoy to consult the parties to the conflict there.

After conducting the consultations, Vance is to recommend measures, "leading toward a peaceful transition to a democratic, non-racial and united South Africa."

The Security Council's instructions to Vance are more modest than the UN mission requested by African National Congress (ANC) leader Nelson Mandela, who sought a UN international investigation of violence in South Africa.

Instead, the Security Council opted for a mandate more palatable to the Pretoria government.

The ANC on Friday hailed UN Security Council Resolution 765 as a "categorical repudiation" of the White minority government's attempts to blame the ANC for the violence wracking South Africa.

The welcome delegates afforded ANC President Nelson Mandela as a "resounding vindication of the ANC," and put him "head and shoulders above all the other political figures."



CROATIA: Refugees from northern Bosnia washing their laundry on a railway track after arriving with 4000 other refugees here near the Slovenian border. — AFP/UNB photo

Afghan women may get franchise

KABUL, July 18: Afghan Prime Minister Ustad Farid said on Friday that women may get the vote under the new government because the right is consistent with Islamic principles, reports Reuter.

"There is a basis for women to vote under Islam," Farid told a news conference. "The only difference would be in the ways and means to achieve this goal."

Farid said he hoped that when the country drafted a permanent constitution the right of women to vote would be included.

Rebel forces captured Kabul on April 25 and installed a new Islamic government three days later.

Women's economic and political rights in Kabul expanded under successive communist regimes during Afghanistan's bitter 14-year civil war.

But the new government is

dominated by Islamic fundamentalists who have banned alcohol and forbidden women to appear in public with their heads uncovered.

There has been widespread concern among educated women in the capital that they would be denied the right to work in government offices or to participate in politics.

Afghanistan's ruling leadership council has spoken of holding elections, but has neither set a date for the voting nor announced a plan for the balloting.

Farid said government security sweeps to remove armed troublemakers from the capital would resume today.

Since Kabul fell, the city has been ruled by a patchwork of guerrilla groups and former government soldiers divided by religion, politics and ethnicity.

Ordinary citizens have been victimised by these armed

men, who loot, kidnap and even murder with impunity. Defence Minister Ahmad Shah Masood identified members of the Hezb-i-Wahdat party as the next targets of the sweeps.

"They have been given until noon today," Masood told reporters. "Then we will know what to do."

Hezb-i-Wahdat is an alliance of eight Shi'ite Muslim guerrilla groups, mostly ethnic Hazaras from the central highlands.

Its heavily-armed men occupy about 30 per cent of Kabul, mainly in the west and north of the city.

Over the past week, Wahadat and rival Sunni Muslim groups have engaged in firefighting and kidnappings across the city.

Government sweeps began several weeks ago, but were suspended after they provoked even greater violence.

BRIEFLY

Arafat greets Saddam : PLO Chairman Yasser Arafat on Friday sent a congratulatory message to Iraqi leader Saddam Hussein to mark the anniversary of the seizure of power by Hussein's Baath Party, the Palestinian News Agency Wafa said, reports AFP from Tunis.

The message, which spoke of Hussein's "judicious and enlightened leadership," but also called for the Arabs to "close ranks," was sent on the occasion of the 24th anniversary of the coup that brought the party to power.

Arafat and his Palestine Liberation Organisation were criticised by other Arab governments for their support for Iraq over its seizure of Kuwait in August 1990.

2 beheaded in Saudi Arabia : A Pakistani was beheaded in Saudi Arabia on Friday for smuggling heroin into the Kingdom, the Gulf News Agency GNA reported, Reuter says from Nicosia.

It quoted Saudi Radio as saying an Islamic religious court had found the man guilty of drug smuggling and ordered his beheading in Jeddah.

On Thursday a man was beheaded in Saudi Arabia for raping a housemaid.

2 UN soldiers killed in blast : Two French soldiers serving with the United Nations were reported killed on Friday in a land mine explosion on the Adriatic coast. The United Nations could not immediately confirm the reports, says Reuter from Zagreb.

The Croatian News Agency Hina said the two Frenchmen were killed near the Adriatic port of Zadar where they were serving with the United Nations Protection Force (UNPROFOR). Hina gave no further details.

A UN spokeswoman in Zagreb said she had no information about the reported deaths and UN officials in Belgrade, where news on incidents involving UN official in Belgrade, where news on incidents involving UN troops are collated, were not immediately available.

UN guard's murder deplored : The Security Council on Friday deplored the murder of a UN guard in northern Iraq and demanded an end to attacks against UN personnel, reports Reuter from United Nations.

The guard, identified as Ravyana Dakia of Fiji, was shot at close range as he lay in his bed in Dohuk. He was the first guard killed since the world body began a relief effort in Kurdish areas at the end of the Gulf War.

"The Council demands that attacks perpetrated against the UN guards contingent and other humanitarian personnel deployed in Iraq cease immediately," said the statement read by Council President Jose Luis Jesus of Cape Verde.

Israel deports 6 Palestinians : Israel deported six Palestinians to Jordan on Friday, ending a four-day standoff between Israeli soldiers and Palestinian students at a West Bank University, the International Red Cross said, reports Reuter from Jericho.

The International Committee of the Red Cross drove the six to the border where they crossed the Allenby bridge into Jordan.

At Nablus in the West Bank, Israeli soldiers ended their siege of A-Najah University, witnesses said 3,000 students who had been there since Tuesday were allowed to leave the campus.

The army also lifted the curfew imposed on Wednesday over Nablus and the surrounding area.

Iraq denies attack on UN troops : Iraq on Friday denied any responsibility in attacks against UN peacekeepers deployed in Kurdish-controlled northern Iraq one day after the killing three of a Fijian soldier, reports AFP from Baghdad.

"Everyone knows that the Iraqi central authorities have no presence in Kurdistan and (the attacks) serve the interests of British and American policies, which are hostile to Iraq, a government spokesman said.

The blue beret, identified as M R Dakia, was shot and killed in his sleep in the city of Dahuk.

Bristol riot claims two : Angered by the deaths of two local men in a police chase, dozens of rioters threw gasoline bombs and rocks at officers and looted and torched stores Friday night on a public housing project in Bristol, reports AP from Bristol.

Avon and Somerset police said in a statement that officers arrested at least 16 rioters in the violence on the Hartcliffe estate, a rundown inner city area with high unemployment and other social ills in the western England port city.

"The situation remains tense, although we have no reports of disorder or large gatherings elsewhere in the city," the statement said.

It was the second straight night of violence on the Hartcliffe estate. The predominantly white area has a population of about 12,000 people.

4 killed, 15 hurt in Algiers clashes

ALGIERS, July 18: Algerian security forces clamped down on Muslim fundamentalists protesting after Friday prayers, their actions bolstered by a top-level order for them to safeguard peace, reports Reuter.

At least four people were killed and 15 wounded in clashes that shook the capital and other cities as fundamentalists denounced the sentences handed down on Wednesday to the main leaders of the outlawed Islamic Salvation Front (FIS).

The authorities have given orders to security forces, according to the state of emergency, to safeguard the peace," said a top-level source quoted on state television.

Saddam dismisses UN as an US advertising agency

MANAMA (Bahrain), July 18: Saddam Hussein on Friday dismissed the United Nations as an "advertising agency" for the United States, deepening the confrontation over Baghdad's refusal to let weapons inspectors in to its Agriculture Ministry, reports AP.

The Iraqi president's comments in a speech gave no indication he was swayed by a UN envoy's attempt to end the standoff between weapons inspectors and Iraqi security personnel that threatens the Gulf War cease-fire.

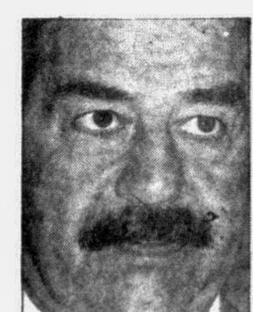
The weapons inspectors' vigil entered its 13th day Friday outside the ministry, which they want to search for documents on Iraq's ballistic

missile programme. In his speech marking the anniversary of the 1968 coup that put his Baath Party into power, Saddam also called on Arabs to overthrow the pro-Western leaders of Saudi Arabia, Kuwait and Egypt.

"What is needed is a Jihad (holy war) to purge the Arab nation of these treacherous leaders who have become a heavy and shameful burden on our region," Saddam declared.

He said the United States had turned the United Nations into an advertising agency promoting its policies so as to rule the world.

Rolf Ekeus, the head of the UN commission dismantling Iraq's arsenal of weapons of mass destruction, arrived in



Baghdad from Bahrain, said UN officials reached by satellite telephone. But a government official

reiterated that the inspectors would not be allowed access to the ministry. "Iraq firmly rejects the civil maneuvers of the UN inspection team besieging the Agriculture Ministry," Agriculture Minister Abdul Wahab Mahmoud Al-Sabagh told the official Iraqi News Agency.

An officer at the UN Special Commission's office in Baghdad, reached by satellite telephone, said the UN team was still posted outside the ministry.

The US government has warned that Iraq's refusal to allow the inspectors into the ministry was "putting at risk" the cease-fire that ended the

Pope Paul spends another night without fever

ROME, July 18: Pope John Paul II's recovery from surgery is going well, according to doctors who said he spent another night without fever or pain, reports AP.

The Pope rested well during the night, said Dr. Luigi Ortona, who heads Gemelli Hospital, where the Pope had a benign bowel tumor and his gall bladder removed.

Updates on his condition were to be issued later Saturday.

On Friday, doctors reported that the 72-year-old Pope got up from bed for a second day, took a few steps and sat in chair in his hospital room.

Italy's health minister, Dr. Francesco De Lorenzo, met for 40 minutes with the Pope's doctors Friday. "Those who have been worried about the Pope no longer have reason to do so," he told reporters afterward.

Two initial biopsies indicated the tumor was benign and pathologists over the last few days tested tiny slices of tissue from the tumor for any sign of cancer cells.

Clinton ahead of Bush

NEW YORK, July 18: Bill Clinton got the biggest boost from his party's convention of any candidate in the 50 years that polls have measured such gains, a newspaper reported Saturday, says AP.

A new New York Times-CBS news poll published in Saturday's Times said Clinton now leads President Bush among registered voters by 55 per cent to 31 per cent, with 13 per cent undecided.

Supporters of Ross Perot gave the President a 73 per cent disapproval rating.

Parliament okays sovereignty declaration Czech breakup to be peaceful

BRATISLAVA, July 18: The back-to-back announcements of Slovakia's sovereignty declaration and President Vaclav Havel's resignation has left many people expecting the final blow: the breakup of the nation, reports AP.

Minutes after Slovakia's regional parliament issued a declaration of sovereignty for the eastern republic on Friday, Havel announced he would step down on Monday.

Although the developments appeared to make it inevitable that the 74-year-old federation would follow Yugoslavia and the Soviet Union into disintegration, Czechoslovakia's breakup almost certainly will be peaceful.

In Bratislava, hundreds of people gathered in a square and cheered Slovak Premier Vladimir Meciar as he waved a copy of the sovereignty declaration, approved 113-24 in the

150-seat parliament. "Go and celebrate, and in August I promise you the new constitution," Meciar said.

"It is natural that all of us are happy," said Josef Jahnatek, waving a huge Slovak flag. "After 1,000 years, we Slovaks finally took our first step toward our sovereignty."

Others drank champagne and broke off hunks of bread from large "sovereignty loaves" wrapped in Slovak flags.

But not all Slovaks were so jubilant.

"Now the future is very unclear," said Adrian Valusek, a newspaper seller. "After the (1989 anti-communists) revolution I was very happy, but now I don't see a bright future."

Slovakia's 5 million people, a third of Czechoslovakia's population, are saddled with inefficient, Communist-style heavy industry and a 12 per

cent unemployment rate, four times higher than the Czech lands.

Czech officials such as Premier Vaclav Klaus, the former federal finance minister, insist on swift privatisation of the state sector. Meciar has demanded slower reforms sensitive to Slovakia's weaker economy.

After winning elections in their respective republics last month, Meciar and Klaus failed to agree on how to keep the federation together and asked their parliaments to work out details for a split by the end of September.

Czechoslovakia was formed in 1918 with the dissolution of the Austro-Hungarian Empire. The Czech lands were dominated by Austria, and Slovakia had been under Hungarian control.

Havel, the dissident play-

wright who led the "Velvet Revolution" that peacefully ended Communist rule in 1989, was blocked by Slovaks earlier this month when he sought re-election in parliament.

Addressing the nation Friday night, Havel said his failure to be re-elected president by the federal parliament "showed me I have lost the trust of a larger part of the Slovak political representation. I do not see this loss as an expression of dislike of me as a person, but as an expression of disagreement with the values I stand for."

Havel could have stayed in office until his term expired on Oct 5, but his early resignation was expected.

He was elected President in December 1989 and again the next year. He made preservation of Czechoslovakia his main goal.

Ghali empowered to arrange arms supervision in Bosnia

UNITED NATIONS, July 18: The UN Security Council authorized Secretary General Boutros Boutros-Ghali on Friday to arrange for UN supervision of all heavy weapons in the former Yugoslav republic of Bosnia, reports AP.

The action came as the United Nations confirmed the first deaths among UN forces during the Yugoslav war — two French officers who stepped on a land mine Friday at Zemunik airport tarmac, northeast of the Adriatic port of Zadar.

Supervision of the heavy weapons in Bosnia is part of a cease-fire announced in London on Friday among warring Serb, Muslim and Croat leaders.

In a statement, the 15-nation Security Council asked Boutros Ghali to report by Monday on what forces and resources the UN operation in Bosnia will need to supervise combat aircraft, armour, artillery, mortars and rocket launchers.

The non-binding statement, read aloud by council President Jose Luis Jesus, called on the parties immediately to declare to the UN peacekeeping commander the locations and quantities of heavy weapons to be placed under supervision. Jesus is the ambassador of Cape Verde.

The council said it welcomed the two-week truce, which is to start Sunday. Agreement on cease-fire came after three days of European-community sponsored talks between the factions and Portuguese diplomat Jose Cuttilero in London.

Cuttilero said it was up to the United Nations to determine the best way of supervising the weapons. He said some

will be collected but first the warring parties must declare their positions. "From then on it becomes a technical problem for the UN. What we have

tried here, and what we think we have obtained here is the political will of doing without those pieces of machinery," Cuttilero said.



SLOVAKIA: A young man holds a banner bearing the national Slovak symbol, as he sings the national anthem after the Slovak parliament passed the declaration of Slovakia's sovereignty on Friday. A declaration proclaiming "the sovereign of the Slovak nation" was adopted by 113 votes to 24, with 10 abstentions. — AFP/UNB photo

Off the Record

We've been right they've been wrong



MARYLAND : US Vice President Dan Quayle accused democrats Bill Clinton and Al Gore on Friday of trying to use the Republican philosophy to change their image at the Democratic national convention, reports Reuter.

"I was impressed about how they attempted to use the Republican philosophy to change their image," Quayle told reporters at Andrews Air Force base outside Washington.

"They actually spoke about values, empowering people, the middle class and a strong America," he said. "Well, on a personal note I'm delighted to see that they recognised that we have been right and they have been wrong."

Quayle was heading on a campaign swing through the south Friday, where he said he would try to woo Ross Perot's supporters with the Bush message.

"Ross Perot was able to excite a lot of people in this country," Quayle said. "He tapped into the frustration. We will be asking them to join with US. I'm also going to ask them to help us to change the congress. It's not just enough to change the president if we want to change America."

Beer is better than women : WASHINGTON : Promotions for two admirals who were linked to sexual harassment cases were cancelled by the navy, a senior officer said Friday, reports AFP.

A promotion was cancelled for Vice Admiral Jerry Tuttle, a three-star admiral who had been nominated by the White House for Assistant Chief of Naval Operations for Warfare, the top slot in the navy's aviation branch.

In Tuttle's case, a newsletter that he writes for the navy contained a joke that was: "Beer is better than women because beer never has a headache."

Also affected is Rear Admiral Joseph Prueher, who had been nominated for a promotion to a three-star grade. He was to assume command of the 3rd US fleet based in San Diego, California.

The navy's action stems from actions Prueher took as commandant of midshipmen at the naval academy in 1989 when a female midshipman was handcuffed to a urinal by a group of male midshipmen.

The New York Times reported Saturday that admiral Frank Kelso withdrew the nominations for promotions when he realized Senate confirmation hearings on the matters would leave the post opens for weeks or months.

It's easy to get into Queen's residence



LONDON : The intruder who entered Buckingham Palace after scaling a wall said it was easy to get into the queen's residence, a British tabloid reported Saturday, reports AP.

The Daily Mail quoted Darryl Marcus as saying he had no intention of harming Queen Elizabeth II, who was in residence on Thursday when the intruder was caught, and arrested.

"I found a wall I could get over," the Daily Mail quoted Marcus as saying. "Then I dashed to the palace. It didn't take long. I just walked in through an open door. Once inside I

walked around. I can't remember much about what I saw."

The Daily Mail said Marcus has convictions for violence and theft, is homeless, unemployed and lives in a hostel in Peterborough, 73 miles (117 kms) north of London. The paper said Marcus wanted to make a protest but was unable to say what the protest was about.

Police have not named the intruder who was released Friday without charge.

Carlos Perez urged to quit SOON

CARACAS, July 18: President Carlos Andres Perez promises he will end his term in 1994 being carried from the government palace on the shoulders of cheering supporters, reports AP.

But a growing number of Venezuelans are demanding a different outcome: that Perez leave office early and in disgrace.

Opposition to Perez has not eased since the failed coup in February and even some longtime backers are now turning against the government.