

UN to supervise heavy weapons in Bosnia

SARAJEVO, Aug 19: In a move that could ease the battering of the Bosnian capital, leaders of Bosnia's warring factions have agreed to UN supervision of all heavy weapons around Sarajevo, reports AP.

"If this agreement works, there will be no shelling in Sarajevo," Zaim Backovic, a deputy commander of the Bosnian forces, said Tuesday.

The agreement, concentrating heavy weapons in areas under UN supervision, would enable UN monitors to determine who is responsible for shelling and to pressure violators to stop. It was signed by Serb nationalist and Bosnian government leaders.

"We want to wait to see how it's implemented, but it is very good news," said UN spokesman Adnan Abd-Elazek.

The Bosnian Serb leader, Radovan Karadzic, earlier promised that a 17-bus convoy carrying nearly 1,000 women and children out of the city would not be attacked on its way to Belgrade, the Serbian capital.

Scores of tearful fathers, brothers and friends bade good-bye to the refugees before the convoy departed, accompanied by two UN armoured cars.

Five months of almost daily shelling have killed more than 1,000 Sarajevo residents and forced the remaining 300,000 to spend most of their days and nights underground, sometimes surviving on weeds.

UN officials said aid flights carrying food and medicine into Sarajevo were suspended Tuesday after radar locked onto a British plane as took off. The C-130 Hercules landed safely in Zagreb, Croatia, said Peter Kessler, a spokesman for the UN High Commissioner for Refugees.

In London, a government source said Britain offered the United Nations up to 1,800 troops to escort aid convoys in Bosnia. But the source, who spoke on condition of anonymity, said Britain was determined to keep out of the fighting and the troops would not defend convoys that come under attack.

British Prime Minister John Major said it was urgent to step up aid to the war victims with cold weather looming, and the prospect that something over a million and a quarter people will not be able to feed themselves.

The convoy of mothers and children was the second to leave Sarajevo under an agreement among warring factions. Last week, about 300 Croat and Muslim women and children left for Croatia and Austria under the agreement, which many residents fear heralds a final assault on the besieged city.

The Belgrade-based Tanjug news agency said about 65 per cent of those who left on Tuesday's convoy were Serbs.

"There's no food, that's why I have to leave my city," said Ljiljana Besicma, 27, whose 6-year-old son, Branko, wept at leaving his grandparents behind.

arrived in Khartoum for a visit. During his visit to the US earlier this month, Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin obtained from President George Bush the loan guarantee pledge, of which his predecessor, Likud Chief Yitzhak Shamir, had been denied.

Shamir refused to stop settlement activity in the occupied territories, which the US saw as a major obstacle to the peace talks.

Rabin, however, has decided to stop building thousands of housing units in the territories, but under the policy of his Labour-led cabinet, construction of what he calls 'security settlements' will continue.

After he returned from the US, Arafat noted, Rabin said that 12,000 housing units would be built to absorb

80,000 Jewish immigrants. The Palestinians insist that Israel stop building all settlements, whether 'security' or otherwise.

AP adds from Jerusalem: Masked Palestinians shot and killed two Arabs in the occupied West Bank they suspected of collaborating with Israel, Arab reports said Tuesday.

In the Gaza Strip town of Rafah, soldiers caught the leader of a Red Eagle gang identified with George Habash's Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine, an army statement said.

Arab reporters identified the leader as Mohamed Abudath, 22.

The leader was the last of the seven-man cell to be detained, it added. The group is suspected of killing and attacking Palestinians they



SARAJEVO: Bosnian Muslims pray yesterday during the funeral of a civilian killed in a bombardment of Sarajevo by Serb forces. — AFP/UNB photo

US intensifies relief operation in Somalia

WASHINGTON, Aug 19: The United States is stepping up its humanitarian relief activities in drought-stricken Somalia and the fringes of neighbouring Kenya, Defence Department spokesman Pete Williams announced, reports AP.

Marine Corps Brigadier General Frank Libutti arrived in Kenya on August 17 with an advance detachment of about 30 of 150 military relief personnel to begin mapping a relief plan, said Pete Williams.

"The situation in Somalia is chaotic. There is no functioning government. About a dozen rebel groups, based on a clan, each hold a region in the country, and frequently engage in hostilities against their rivals. There are also large numbers of free-lance bandit groups, who attack food convoys and prevent distribution of relief supplies," he told reporters.

"Several humanitarian relief groups have been operating in the port city of Mogadishu, which is the nominal capital city, but the port remains closed to commercial traffic and has not proven to be a reliable relief route, partly because of the very tenuous security situation there," he said.

"So that has led the planners to look elsewhere, particularly south and west of Mogadishu, where the people are completely dependent on airlifts of food."

"Our planners have concluded that the best way to distribute food into Somalia is to use (four) C-141s to shuttle supplies from warehouses in Nairobi to northern Kenya. Some of it will be distributed there both to Kenyans and Somali refugees. And then from the airbases in Kenya eight C-130s will fly food into airstrips in south central Somalia, where international relief organizations will receive and distribute it. None of the airstrips can accommodate the C-141s," he said.

Operation Provide Relief could last up to 60 days, said the spokesman. The 12,000 metric tons of supplies for Somalia provided by the United States during 1991 will increase in 1992 to about 112,000 through this plan, and to 145,000 during 1993, Williams predicted.

US military aircraft will fly in 500 United Nations police from Pakistan. Williams said that the police and aircrews will have the additional job of fending off the roving bandits, who he said are 'terrorising the relief operation.'

US biased toward Israel: PLO

CAIRO, Aug 19: PLO Chairman Yasser Arafat has said the United States was 'biased toward Israel' by pledging to give 10 billion dollar in loan guarantees sought by the Jewish State, the Middle East news agency reported from Khartoum yesterday, reports Xinhua.

Arafat was quoted as saying in the Sudanese capital Monday night that the US made the pledge without an Israeli commitment to implementing the land-for-peace principle, which the US has advocated as the basis for the Arab-Israeli peace talks.

Neither did the Israel commit itself to respecting the rights of the Palestinians in the occupied territories, he said. While mouthing sweet words, 'Israel is pursuing depressive measures against the Palestinians,' said Arafat, who

arrived in Khartoum for a visit. During his visit to the US earlier this month, Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin obtained from President George Bush the loan guarantee pledge, of which his predecessor, Likud Chief Yitzhak Shamir, had been denied.

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The leader was the last of the seven-man cell to be detained, it added. The group is suspected of killing and attacking Palestinians they

suspected of collaborating, the army said.

In the West Bank, Arab villagers found the bodies of Mahmud Ikmal, 50, and Ibrahim Ikmal, 30, who had been shot in the head, Arab reports said. The two relatives were kidnapped from their homes in Qabatiya on Monday, the reports added.

Arab villagers said the two were suspected of collaborating with Israel.

The army confirmed that two men were killed in Qabatiya on Sunday in what appeared to be a local dispute. But, it was not clear if the army was referring to same deaths.

Also Tuesday, a Palestinian resident of Gaza City complained that police had not done enough to find the Arabs who killed his 6-year-old son.

BRIEFLY

Ukraine to withdraw Ruble: The ruble will be withdrawn from circulation in Ukraine before October 31, in a preliminary move to introduction of the Grivna from the first day of next year, President Leonid Kravchuk announced Tuesday, AFP says from Kiev.

He told a news conference that the Ukraine Coupon, a provisional currency introduced last January in parallel with the ruble, would serve as a fill-in between the former Soviet currency and the Grivna.

Ukraine would leave "the ruble zone" November 1, Kravchuk said. When the Grivna is introduced next year only the coupons will be accepted in exchange by banks, he said.

Rebels kill 18 in Chad: Eighteen people died in a rebel attack against soldiers in Doba, Southern Chad, a government statement said Tuesday, reports AFP from Nijamena.

The army lost five men and six were wounded, while 13 rebels died in Monday's attack.

The government statement, broadcast on radio, said the rebels "Arrived Monday in five vehicles, shooting at the soldiers who reposted."

The rebels were supposed to gather in Doba to join the regular army under a peace agreement reached on June 15 by the Chad government and the National Committee for peace and democracy.

Earthquake hits Kyrgyzstan: An earthquake measured at 7.5 on the Richter scale struck the former Soviet republic of Kyrgyzstan in Central Asia on Wednesday morning, the US Geological Survey reported, says AP from Washington.

USGS spokeswoman Rebecca Phipps said there were no immediate reports of damage or injuries from the quake, which hit a 8.05 am local time (0205 GMT Wednesday). She said at least two strong aftershocks of at least 6 on the Richter scale also were recorded.

The tremor was centred about 235 miles (378 kilometres) northeast of Tashkent, Uzbekistan.

15 burnt alive in Tamil Nadu: Fifteen people were burnt alive after a speeding bus caught fire in the southern state of Tamil Nadu, the Press Trust of India (PTI) said, AFP reports from New Delhi.

The dead included 13 passengers, a passing cyclist and a pedestrian, police were quoted as saying.

The fire erupted from a short circuit after the driver swerved suddenly in a bid to avoid hitting a cyclist outside Pullampatti village in Tamil Nadu's Salem district, the agency said.

Quake shakes Alaska: An earthquake measuring 6.1 on the Richter scale shook the Aleutian Islands of Alaska on Tuesday, the National Earthquake Information Service reported, says Reuter from Colorado.

The quake was centred 170 km (105 miles) southwest of Atka in the Andreanof islands, a spokeswoman for the US geological survey said.

It was felt on Atka and the neighbouring Island of Adak, she said. There were no immediate reports of damage or injuries.

Marxists kill 6 policemen: Marxist guerrillas, armed with rockets and grenades, attacked a remote Colombian town, killing six policemen and two civilians and destroying a police barracks, police said on Tuesday, reports Reuter from Bogota.

A column of guerrillas of the Colombian Revolutionary Armed Forces attacked the small town of El Calvario, high in the Andes mountains 80 km (50 miles) Southeast of Bogota on Monday, police said.

The guerrillas attacked the police barracks, killing the local Police Commander and five of his men. Two civilians were also killed. Three policemen were wounded and another was missing after the attack, the police said.

The police fought back for several hours but were outnumbered by the guerrillas, according to news reports.

Parliament okays Delhi's rule in Kashmir for more 6 months

NEW DELHI, Aug 19: Indian parliament on Tuesday approved a resolution extending federal rule in the troubled state of Jammu and Kashmir for a further six months, reports Reuter.

Home Minister Shankarrao Chavan said in the Rajya Sabha (Upper House) that elections would be held in the Himalayan state if the situation improved by then.

The Look Sabha, or Lower House, last Wednesday passed the resolution extending New Delhi's direct rule over the state for another six months from September 3.

Kashmir has been under New Delhi's direct rule since January 1990 when separatist militants stepped up a campaign for independence. More than 7,000 people have been killed since then.

India accused Pakistan of arming and training Kashmiri militants, a charge Islamabad denies.

UK tornado plane to join UN force in Gulf

LONDON, Aug 19: Britain will send tornado fighters to join a UN force aimed at halting Iraqi attacks on Shiites in the south of the country, an emergency cabinet committee decided here Tuesday, reports AFP.

Aircraft will be ordered to shoot down Iraqi military planes which violate an air exclusion zone to be set up in southern Iraq, senior ministers and defence chiefs decided at a meeting of the overseas policy and defence committee, chaired by Prime Minister John Major, officials said.

Britain would act together with its Gulf War allies, the United States and France, which has drawn up the air exclusion zone plan.

'UN sanctions leave many Libyans dead'

TRIPOLI, Aug 19: A Libyan newspaper said Tuesday hundreds of Libyans have died as a result of UN sanctions imposed on the North African country for its refusal to hand over two suspects in the bombing of a Pan Am jetline, reports AP.

AL-Zahf al-Akhdar said the deaths were caused by lack of medicines due to the air, diplomatic and arms embargoes imposed on Libya on April 15 by the UN Security Council. The newspaper's report was carried by the state JANA news agency.

The newspaper, the organ of Moammar Gadhafi's revolutionary committees, said another 150 people died on their way to seek medical treatment abroad. It said about 3,500 sick people cannot leave for treatment abroad.

Travelers in and out of Libya have to travel by sea to the Mediterranean island of Malta or by land to neighboring Egypt or Tunisia.

The UN Security Council last week renewed the sanctions imposed after Libya failed to hand over the two men charged with blowing up Pan Am flight 103 over Lockerbie, Scotland in Dec 1988. A total of 270 people on the aircraft and on the ground were killed.

AL-Zahf al-Akhdar said Libya has suffered at least 1.4 billion Libyan dinars (dls 3.9 billion) in losses.

Jakarta to take over NAM Chairmanship

JAKARTA, Aug 19: Indonesia said today it would take over the chairmanship of the Non-Aligned Movement before next month's summit, avoiding confrontation with Muslim members who do not want current chairman Yugoslavia on the podium when the meeting starts, reports Reuter.

Several Islamic countries, angry at the violence against Muslim in breakaway Bosnia-Herzegovina, have demanded that Yugoslavia step aside before the summit starts.

"There won't be a hand over... Indonesia will open and chair the summit," Nana Sutresna, Indonesian ambassador to the United Nations, told reporters.

Iran had threatened to walk out of next month's summit if Yugoslavia chaired the opening on September 1.

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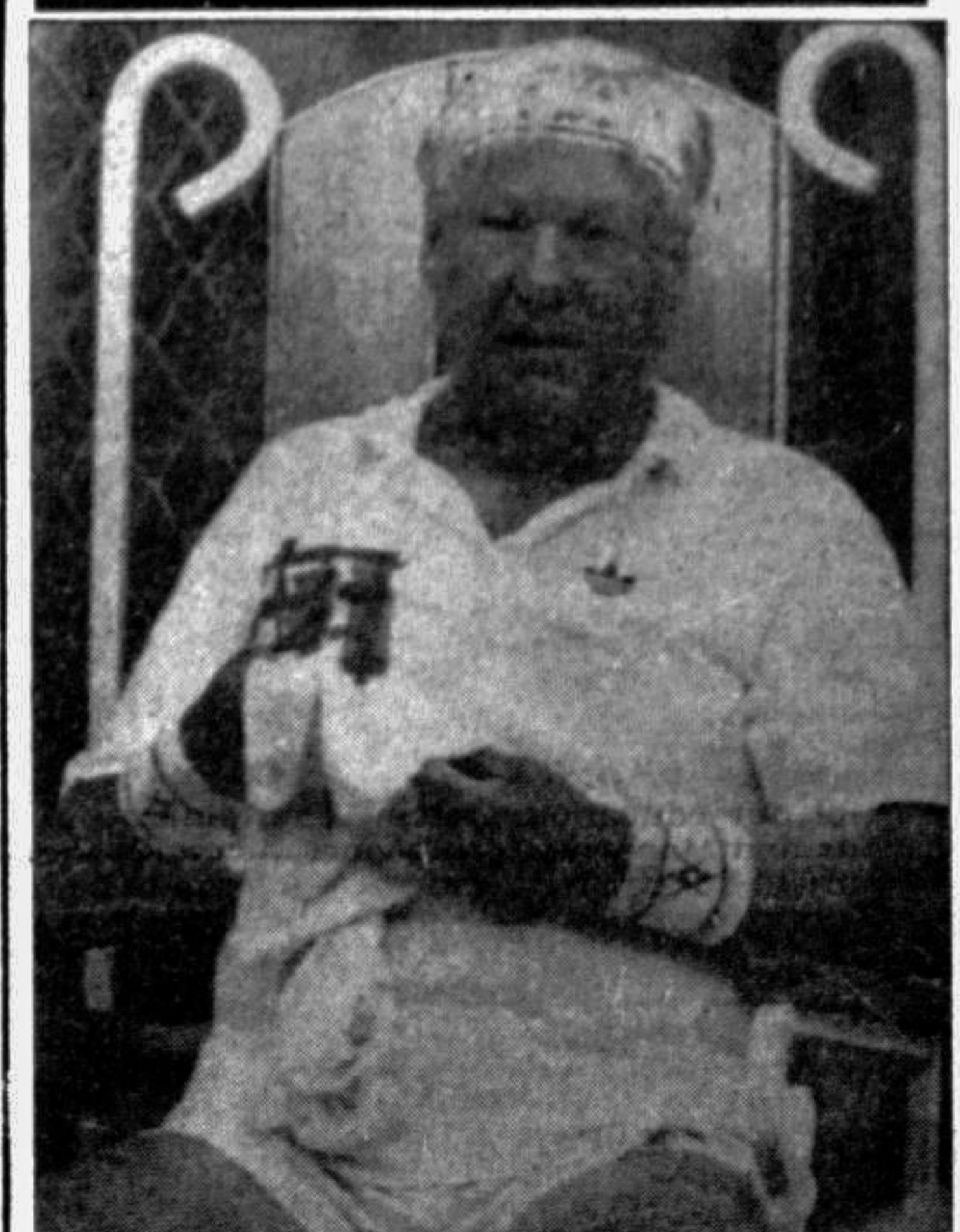
Britain would act together with its Gulf War allies, the United States and France, which has drawn up the air exclusion zone plan.

Atlanta: Former President Jimmy Carter (L) and Democratic presidential nominee Bill Clinton talk before dinner on Tuesday at Manuel's Tavern, a bar frequented by politicians.



ATLANTA: Former President Jimmy Carter (L) and Democratic presidential nominee Bill Clinton talk before dinner on Tuesday at Manuel's Tavern, a bar frequented by politicians. — AFP/UNB photo

Off the Record



RUSSIA: Russian President Boris Yeltsin takes a rest after a tennis match in Sochi on Monday. Yeltsin and his family currently spend their holidays in the presidential summer dacha at his Black Sea resort. — AFP/UNB photo

New Dan Quayle

HOUSTON: US Vice President Dan Quayle vowed Tuesday not to repeat mistakes of his clumsy 1988 campaign and predicted he will be a help, not a hindrance, to President Bush's re-election, reports AP.

"You are going to see a new Dan Quayle," the vice president boasted in a television interview.

But during the interview, Quayle committed another of the gaffes that have dogged his image.

Asked if Bush's re-election would make him the heir-apparent in the 1996 election, Quayle replied that "we'll talk about 1994," after Bush is re-elected, getting the year wrong.

"I guess he misspoke," said vice presidential press secretary David Beckwith.

Quayle is trying to use his spotlight at the Republican National Convention to recast the image forged in many voters' minds by a shaky performance in 1988 as Bush's surprise running mate.

Birth control pill for deers

WASHINGTON: Wild deer that roam the grounds of a National Zoo research centre will soon be getting birth control as scientists try to cope with a baby boom, reports AP.

For the past 10 years, scientists at the centre in Front Royal, Va, 60 miles (96 kilometres) west of Washington, have been frustrated in attempts to control an exploding white-tailed deer population. The deer threaten to spread disease among the endangered animals that are housed there.

Hunting has been banned on the 3,000-acre (1,200-hectare) compound ever since a sanctioned deer hunt there sparked animal-rights protests in 1982. And attempts to shoot away the deer have been ineffective.

So now the centre is helping test a birth control serum that could slow the population growth humanely.

Moldova lifts emergency

MOSCOW, Aug 19: President Mircea Snegur of Moldova has ordered the lifting of a State of Emergency, in force since March, from Wednesday, the ITAR-Tass News Agency reported Tuesday, says AFP.

The State of Emergency was declared after increased fighting between Moldovan forces and Russian-speaking separatists in the Dnestr region in eastern Moldova.

The fighting has died down since an agreed ceasefire and deployment in July of a joint peacekeeping force of Russians and Moldovans.

A settlement is being negotiated to provide special status for the Russian-speaking region, where several hundred people have been killed in the conflict.

Clinton womanizer, foreign affairs novice, say Republicans

HOUSTON, Aug 19: Hoping to jump-start President Bush's re-election campaign, Republicans went on the offensive, portraying Democratic challenger Bill Clinton as a womanizer, draft dodger, high taxer and foreign affairs novice, reports AP.

Tuesday's sharp attacks against Clinton and the Democratic-controlled Congress came from a parade of convention speakers playing to a nationally-televised audience.

Republicans are aiming to reverse Bush's plunge in public opinion polls as he seeks a second four-year in the November 3 election.

Texas Senator Phil Gramm and Housing Secretary Jack Kemp led the big-name Republicans promoting Bush Tuesday evening. Former President Reagan and Pat Buchanan, until recently Bush's rightwing critic, were the stars on Monday.

In his keynote speech, Gramm said Democrats were intent on tearing down US defenses, and that the Berlin Wall would still be standing if Democrats had been in office. Gramm called Clinton's economic programme

"a lemon for the nation" and likened the Democratic nominee to "a used car salesman."

Commerce Secretary Barbara Frankling derided Clinton as "a smooth-talkin', slick-looking dandy with no experience." She said Bush sees a second term as a chance to build the economy while Clinton would use his election "to tax, tax, tax."

Bush was in his hotel across town gearing up for his acceptance speech Thursday night as one speaker after the other endorsed his candidacy.

Michigan governor John Engler said Clinton's economic plan would ravage the automobile industry. Energy Secretary James Watkins declared Clinton's programmes would lead to higher prices at the gasoline pump.

Health and Human Services Secretary Louis Sullivan declared Clinton's plan for health care would require "huge tax increases to pay for it."

Gramm a former university economist, hailed the president for leadership that "brought us victory" in the Cold War. He blasted

Clinton for seeking to reduce the nation's defence to a level Gramm called below that existed when the Japanese attacked Pearl Harbor in 1941.

Over and over, he declared, the Democratic Congress blocked legislation dealing with the economy, health care, crime and the deficit.

The Democrats dismissed Gramm with a quip: "His facts and figures were as authentic as Astroturf." The party also unveiled two new television commercials — broadcast in Houston and Washington.

"And now a sort break for the facts," the announcer said in one of them. "On November 5, 1990, George Bush signed the second-biggest tax increase in American history. Under Bill Clinton, Arkansas has the second-lowest tax burden per person in the country."

Kemp recounted Bush's attempts to persuade Congress to pass his economic proposals — never mentioning the president's signature on a 1990 tax increase that angered conservatives to this day.

More bad economic news greeted Bush on

Tuesday — housing starts fell 2.8 per cent in July despite the lowest mortgage rates in nearly two decades.

Bush and Vice Presidential running-mate Dan Quayle address the convention Thursday night. Conservatives have pressed Bush to call for sweeping tax cuts, but administration officials spread the word not to expect any dramatic proposals.

"It'll be a good speech," Bush promised as he stopped by Otto's Barbecue, an old haunt from his days here in the oil business. The president offered to pay for lunch, but the owner wouldn't bear it.

In a Cable News Network interview, the vice president, who has often been the butt of political jokes, promised "You are going to see a new Dan Quayle."

He acknowledged that "I had a bad campaign in 1988 personally and I am not going to repeat the same mistakes that I made in 1988, and 1992 is going to be an entirely different campaign."

Lankan newsmen demonstrate for rights

COLOMBO, Aug 19: Hundreds of slogan-chanting journalists staged a street demonstration here today to demand their rights and condemn a spate of attacks against reporters and photographers, reports AFP.

Men and women reporters carrying placards and banners slowed traffic at the busy town hall intersection during the lunch break as dozens of heavily armed police stood by, witnesses said.

Anti-riot squads armed with tear gas and batons ringed the intersection before and during the half-hour demonstration, which ended peacefully with journalists dispersing to hold a public meeting elsewhere.