

OIC calls for lifting arms embargo on Muslims

Security Council opens special debate on Bosnia

BRIEFLY

Storm kills 9 in Lanka : At least nine people were killed and thousands of homes damaged in a tropical storm that blew over many parts of Sri Lanka, press reports said Saturday, reports AFP from Colombo.

The victims were electrocuted, drowned or buried alive under the falling debris of their own homes as strong winds accompanied by thunder showers battered eastern, southern and western parts of the island Thursday, reports said.

A spokesman for the social services department said the damage was less than what they had feared at first and reports were still coming in from remote areas about people who had been rendered homeless.

The government-run Dinamina Daily said 2,500 houses were damaged in the eastern district of Ampara alone. Heavy rains were still battering many parts of the country and officials warned against fishermen going out to sea.

Dumas starts Gulf tour : French Foreign Minister Roland Dumas arrived early today in Qatar on the first leg of a Gulf tour during which he was expected to discuss the regional situation, with special emphasis on Iraq, reports AFP from Doha.

Speaking on the plane bringing him here from Paris, Dumas said questions remained in the Arab world about Iraq, hit by a strict United Nations embargo, and about the effectiveness of international action supporting Muslims in Bosnia.

His tour will take him to Qatar, Bahrain, Kuwait and Saudi Arabia. A French Foreign Ministry spokesman said Dumas would have talks both with his counterparts and with the highest authorities in these states.

Palestinian team won't meet Rabin: Palestinian delegates to the Middle East peace talks have turned down a proposal to meet Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin, Israeli television reported Friday, AFP from Jerusalem says.

Senior Israeli delegate, Elakim Rubinstein, proposed the encounter to the Palestinians at the bilateral Arab-Israeli peace negotiations taking place in Washington.

The Palestinian delegation turned the proposal down under pressure from the Palestine Liberation Organisation headquarters in Tunis, the report said.

Van explodes in Ireland: A van exploded late Friday in the northern Ireland town of Coleraine, causing widespread damage, local police said, reports AFP from Belfast.

"At 10.55 pm, a van exploded in New Row in the heart of the business centre of Coleraine (about 80 kilometers north-west of Belfast)", a royal Ulster Constabulary spokesman said, indicating that the explosion was a powerful one.

"Early reports would indicate casualties, but these are as yet unconfirmed," the spokesman added.

No further details were available.

14 indicted in Georgian prison sex scandal

ATLANTA, Nov 14: Fourteen former Georgia prison employees were indicted Friday in a sex scandal in which more than 100 women inmates accuse their guards of misconduct, reports AP.

Two of the 14, including a former deputy warden, were charged with rape. Others, including four women, were charged with sexual assault against a person in custody, aggravated sodomy or sodomy.

More indictments are expected, said Robert Cullen, an attorney for the inmates.

"It's a very big step," he said. "It's very encouraging and empowering to the women to be able to see that when they are sexually abused, even in prison, there are remedies."

The indictments followed an eight-month state investigation of allegations by female inmates who said they were raped, put into prostitution rings or forced to have abortions, homosexual relationships or sex for favours.

The inmates accused 50 prison employees of physical or sexual abuse dating back to 1972, or of knowing of the abuse and doing nothing.

At least 100 inmates are under a protective court order to prevent retaliation, and many are undergoing therapy.

Since March, eight employees have been fired, seven others resigned, four were transferred and five were suspended in connection with the allegations.

The 14 indicted Friday included Cornelious Stanley, a former deputy warden at the Georgia Women's Correctional Institution in Hardwick, near Milledgeville in central Georgia about 80 miles south-east of Atlanta. The Baldwin County grand jury charged him with rape, sodomy and sexual assault.

"They're let loose a witch hunt in the prison system," said Stanley's attorney, Dennis Fortin. "The government's looking for scapegoats and the prisoners have figured out how to run the prisons by accusing everyone in authority of sexual misconduct."

The allegations grew out of a 1984 lawsuit concerning prison overcrowding.

6 Gulf Arab states start talks on joint force
KUWAIT, Nov 14: Defense ministers of the six Gulf Arab states began two days of talks Saturday under new pressure to overcome constant bickering to counter the massive rearmament programme of giant neighbour Iran, reports AP.

"Kuwait is conscious of the fact that the new types of weapons coming into the area, especially submarines, might be used to stir up regional problems," Defense Minister Sheikh Ali al-Sabah told the government-owned daily Sawt Al-Kuwait.

Iran has bought two submarines from the Soviet Union and is considering buying a third. The Islamic Republic is rebuilding its armed forces with purchases from the former Communist states as well as China and North Korea, including missiles, fighter aircraft and tanks.

Tehran is believed to have spent 7 billion dollar on advanced weaponry over the past five years.

The six Arab partners in the Gulf Cooperation Council — Kuwait, Saudi Arabia, Qatar, Bahrain, the United Arab Emirates and Oman — have fallen since the February 1991 cease-fire in the Gulf War to come up with a collective security plan.

Sheik Ali said the ministers would focus discussions on rebuilding Peninsula Shield a 10,000-man joint force headquartered in Saudi Arabia.

A proposal by Sultan Ghabos of Oman to boost it to 100,000 has gone nowhere and a cooperation agreement with Egypt and Syria was also stillborn.

UNITED NATIONS, Nov 14: The UN Security Council opened a special debate Friday on Bosnia-Herzegovina at the request of Muslim countries, which may result in tightening the embargo against Serbia, diplomats said, reports AFP.

Cyrus Vance, UN special envoy to the former Yugoslavia, spoke out against lifting the arms embargo in the region, as the Muslim nations have urged. To do so, he said, "would not only increase hostilities in Bosnia and Herzegovina, but could spread the conflict throughout the whole Balkan region."

The former US Secretary of State emphasized that even a partial easing of the embargo could "deepen the war" there and "jeopardize the effectiveness of the UN peacekeeping operation."

Lord Owen of the European Community, who co-sponsored the Yugoslavia peace conference with Vance, acknowledged that "sanctions are a blunt instrument." But previous experience "shows that prohibiting arms sales tends to dampen conflict, while pushing arms sales, deepens conflict," he said.

The 47-member Organisation of Islamic Conference (OIC) has called for the arms embargo to be lifted to allow Muslims in Bosnia to exercise their right of self-defence.

Also participating in the 15-member council's talks were UN special Human Rights observer Tadeusz Mazowiecki and UN High Commissioner on Refugees Sadako Ogata.

Mazowiecki condemned the Serbs' ethnic cleansing programme against the Muslim and proposed creating "security zones" in Bosnia-Herzegovina to receive the tens of thousands war refugees.

Twenty-five countries, including Egypt, Iran and Turkey, were scheduled to address the Council during the debate, which was expected to continue next week. The United States unsuccessfully opposed the participation of a Palestinian UN observer in the debate.

Following the debate, the Security Council was expected to adopt a new Resolution on Bosnia.

The subject of intense negotiations this week, especially among western countries, it explicitly condemns the Serbs' behaviour, reflecting positions advanced by the OIC.

But it does not include the OIC's demand that the arms embargo be lifted to allow Muslims in Bosnia to "exercise their right to self-defence."

The draft resolution envisions strengthening measures to monitor the embargo within the framework of UN Charter's Chapter VII, which allows the use of force.

To prevent the Serbs from circumventing the embargo by hijacking goods shipped through the territories they control, the resolution would forbid transshipments of energy products, such as oil and coal, metals and other equipment.

Exceptions would be made on a case-by-case basis.

During a news conference on Thursday in Little Rock, Arkansas, Clinton expressed "hope that some day Korean people will be reunited in a democratic and free society."

He said he hoped Washington "can continue to be a force for the security of South Korea... (and)... the North Koreans will not be successful in developing real nuclear capacity."

Seoul, Washington and their allies fear the north is close to producing, or is already manufacturing nuclear arms. The North denies the charge.

South Korea, which guards the last cold war border against North Korea with the help of 37,000 US troops, has said it expects no significant policy change in relations with Washington under a democratic administration.

Nearly 7,000 US troops have been removed from South Korea over the past two years

but Washington and Seoul last year indefinitely postponed a second-phase withdrawal of 6,500 by the end of 1995 because of Pyongyang's alleged nuclear ambitions.

The two Koreas last year signed a pact banning nuclear weapons from the Peninsula but talks on verification procedures have so far made little progress.

Roh told Clinton he had agreed with Japanese Prime Minister Kiichi Miyazawa during an informal summit in Kyoto last weekend that the United States should maintain its military role at an appropriate level in the Asia-Pacific region.

Clinton told Roh he hoped trade between the United States and South Korea would continue to grow in a balanced way.

Members of the banned Islamic Salvation Front (FIS) have used fax machines to pass clandestine bulletins since the group was banned in March.

The latest arrests reported to more than 830 those reported seized in the past six weeks in a nationwide operation against FIS militants.

Among those arrested was Mahmoudi Djamel, described by APS as a "dangerous terrorist," and two suspects from a group in Bouira, 85 km (52 miles) southeast of Algiers.

The agency said 10 of those arrested had surrendered. I did not say what charges they faced.

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SARAJEVO: Bosnian children look for food in a UN garbage dump on Friday. The shortage of food sends some Bosnians to this site (where the UN soldiers throw their garbage) looking for leftover food. — AFP/UNB photo

Clinton assures Roh US to maintain military presence in South Korea

SEoul, Nov 14: US president-elect Bill Clinton assured Seoul on Friday the United States would maintain its military presence in South Korea and help stop North Korea's suspected development of nuclear arms, reports Reuter.

During a 20-minute telephone conversation with South Korean President Roh Tae-woo, Clinton said he was aware of Seoul's position on security issues in the divided Korean Peninsula.

"Clinton said US forces would remain in Korea as long as their presence was necessary... and pledged to support our effort to remove a nuclear threat from North Korea," a Roh aide said.

Cold war tensions still remained on the Korean Peninsula and the communist north's nuclear programme was posing the gravest threat to peace in the region, Roh told Clinton.

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61 more FIS activists arrested

ALGIERS, Nov 14: Security services in Algeria rounded up 61 Islamic fundamentalists, some of whom ran secret networks to circulate tracts by fax machine, the official news agency APS said on Friday, reports Reuter.

Among those arrested was Mahmoudi Djamel, described by APS as a "dangerous terrorist," and two suspects from a group in Bouira, 85 km (52 miles) southeast of Algiers.

The agency said 10 of those arrested had surrendered. I did not say what charges they faced.

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US, India end arms control talks without accord

WASHINGTON, Nov 14: The United States and India ended two days of talks on nuclear arms control Friday without announcing any agreements but described the meeting as useful and friendly, reports AP.

India, which exploded a nuclear bomb in 1974 but denies having a nuclear arsenal, refuses to sign the international non-proliferation treaty. New Delhi criticizes the treaty as biased in favour of the nuclear superpowers.

This session was not intended to produce a specific agreement but to explore concrete ideas for reducing tensions and avoiding conflict," said US State Department spokesman Richard Boucher.

He described the talks as "characterized by a cooperative, friendly and constructive tone throughout."

Boucher said the talks "included discussion of possible confidence and security building measures and ways of halt proliferation and chemical and nuclear weapons and ballistic missile systems."

The two sides exchanged ideas on getting all countries to accept the convention against chemical weapons, said an Indian diplomat, who spoke on condition of anonymity.

Off the Record

They are reluctant to use condoms

WASHINGTON: Few heterosexuals in the United States use condoms in their sexual relationships, despite the danger of the AIDS epidemic said a national survey published Friday in the Journal Science, reports AP.

The survey found that among 10,000 respondents only 17 per cent of those with multiple sex partners said they used condoms all of the time.

And among women and low-income people, who are most likely to have high-risk sexual partners, only 29 per cent said they used a condom.

"It is just a matter of time before it (AIDS) will spread widely into the heterosexual community," said the study's author Joseph Chatania, of the University of California.

Mother indeed!

KUWAIT: An Indian maid was sentenced to 10 years in jail for killing her newborn son to avoid being sent back home by her employers, press reports said Saturday, reports AP.

Sawt Al-Kuwait newspaper said the woman, pregnant when she arrived to work in Kuwait, managed to hide her condition and gave birth in her own room. Most work contracts stipulate pregnancy as grounds for termination.

The paper said the woman, whose full name was not published admitted to suffocating the baby and stabbing him with a kitchen knife so that she could continue working and making money to support her other children. They live in India with their father.

The crime was exposed when the maid lost consciousness and was taken to the hospital for treatment. Doctors found out she just had a baby and when she was asked its whereabouts she confessed the crime.

No other details were available.

About 300,000 thousand Asian domestic helpers work in the emirate, making an average of dhs 120 a month for days that often stretch to 18 hours.

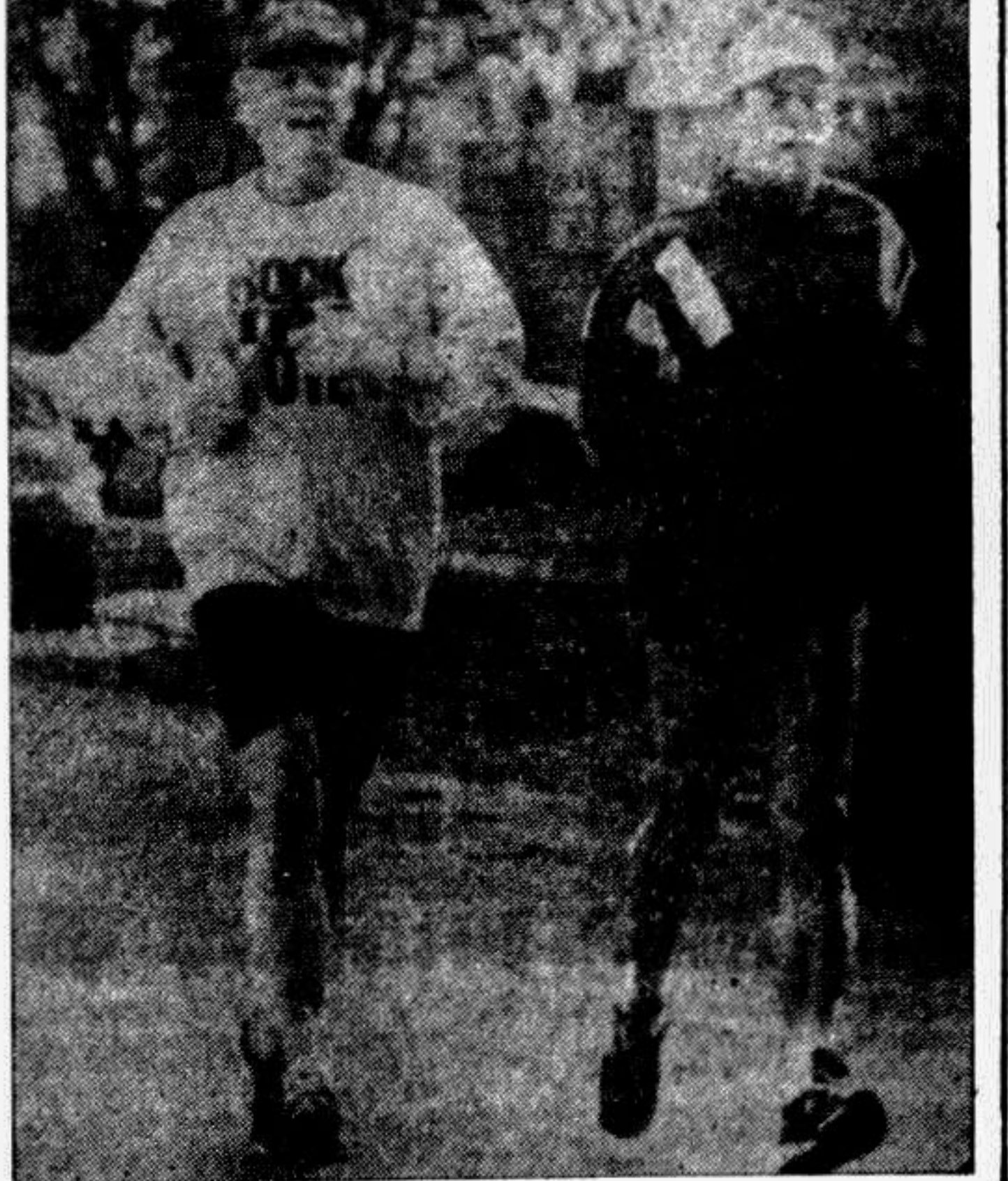
Japan encourages couples to have more babies

TOKYO: The Japanese government said Friday that the decline in the birthrate may slow the national economy, and called for improvements in the environment to encourage couples to have more babies, reports AP.

In a white paper submitted to the cabinet Takeshi Noda, chief of the economy planning agency, attributed the drop in the number of children being born to better education for women, a rise in the number of working women and higher schooling costs for offspring.

More than two million babies were born in 1973 but the number plunged to 1.22 million last year, country falling to a record low of 1.53.

If the trend continued the economy may slow and the social burden on young and middle-aged adults may increase, the white paper of life in Japan said.



ARAKANAS: President-elect Bill Clinton (L) and Vice President-elect Al Gore take a morning jog on Friday from the governor's mansion to downtown Little Rock. Clinton and Gore are continuing the transition process and are expected to announce new appointments soon. — AFP/UNB photo

Lithuanian PM urges Gore to press for Russian pullout

WASHINGTON, Nov 14: The prime minister of Lithuania spoke Friday to Vice President-elect Al Gore and urged him to support US pressure on Russia to remove troops still based in the Baltic states, reports AP.

Prime Minister Aleksandras Abisala and Gore talked on the telephone, the Lithuanian Embassy said. It released a statement saying Gore told Abisala that he and President-elect Clinton were "very concerned" about the continued presence of Russian troops in Lithuania, Latvia and Estonia.

Mourners bid farewell to hero of the 'Prague Spring'

BRATISLAVA, Czechoslovakia, Nov 14: Hundreds of mourners, many with tears in their eyes, on Friday bid farewell to Alexander Dubcek, hero of the "Prague Spring" reforms that were crushed by Soviet tanks in 1968, reports Reuter.

Dubcek died last Saturday in a Prague hospital where he had been in intensive care after his car plunged off a main highway as he sped from Bratislava to Prague on September 1.

His coffin, shrouded in a Czechoslovak flag, made the return journey by air on Friday and was taken into the Slovak national theatre. There, four

soldiers in ceremonial uniform stood guard as mourners slowly filed past.

Dubcek, a Slovak, will be buried today his family had requested that he be laid to rest in Bratislava, the Slovak capital, where he spent 20 years in obscure posts after the failure of his attempt to introduce "socialism with a human face."

Dubcek's sons Peter and Milan, along with representatives of the Slovak state government headed the cortege that followed the coffin from the airport to the city centre.

A fervent supporter of a United Czechoslovakia, Dubcek died seven weeks before the 74-year-old Czechoslovak fed-



Alexander Dubcek

eration splits into independent Czech and Slovak states. At the time of his accident he had been mentioned as potential president of Slovakia.

As the funeral ceremonies opened, many of the mourners made clear they considered Dubcek a Slovak first and a Czechoslovak second.

"This is a great, sad loss for the Slovak people, said Olga Bartosikova, one of the sad-faced Bratislava citizens who filed past the closed coffin.

"We have no other personalities like Dubcek. We wanted him to be our president. Jaromir Antal, a Slovak parliamentary official in charge of the funeral arrangements, described Dubcek as a great Slovak and a symbol of the

Colombian army kills 11 Marxists

BOGOTA, Nov 14: The Colombian army said on Friday it had killed at least 11 Marxist Guerrillas and disbanded a dangerous rebel cell in separate attacks in the centre and south of the country, reports Reuter.

General Cristinian Quinones said troops had "carried out a lightning attack against the 28th gang of the FARC (Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia) in which a considerable number of bandits were found."

The army took on the 35-man guerrilla cell late on Thursday night as it was about to attack villages in the central province of Boyaca, killing at least eight rebels, Quinones said in a radio interview. There were no army casualties.

Security forces have stepped up their attacks on the country's estimated 8,000 rebels

8 killed as pirates, fishermen clash in Philippines

ZAMBOANGA, Philippines, Nov 14: At least eight people, including six fishermen, were killed during a clash between fishermen and pirates in the southern Philippines, the police said Saturday, reports AP.

Superintendent Adolfo Balboa said two pirates were also killed in the clash Thursday in the waters off Baluk-Baluk Island, about 48 kilometers (30 miles) south-west of Zamboanga and about 880 kilometers (550 miles) south of Manila.

Balboa said the crew of the fishing boat Champion 12 were fishing off Baluk-Baluk

vailed. Dubcek made a spectacular return to politics in November 1989 when Prague's central Wenceslas square, packed with hundreds of thousands of people, cheered him and Havel, then a dissident writer.

By the end of the year, Dubcek was chairman of parliament and his first official duty in the office was to swear Havel in as the first democratically elected president in more than 40 years.