

# World and Nation

## Blacks in South Africa now returning to school

Associated Press

JOHANNESBURG, South Africa — Black students ended two years of school boycotts Tuesday and streamed back to classes for the new academic year on the strength of a pact parents reached with the white-led government.

Attendance was heavy as schools reopened in urban centers including Johannesburg, Pretoria, Cape Town and Port Elizabeth, where boycotts cut attendance for much of 1984 and 1985.

On some days in recent months, more than 200,000 black students boycotted classes out of 1.7 million enrolled in urban areas. The boycotts have been a central factor in 17 months of racial unrest that led to the deaths of more than 1,000 people, most of them blacks.

Outside a school in Johannes-

burg's huge black township of Soweto, police used tear gas to break up groups of chanting students, residents said. But there were no other reports of trouble, and the fragile accord appeared to have opened the door to normalizing the long-troubled black schools.

Police reported the stabbing deaths of four black men in a fight between rival gangs at a squatter camp outside Cape Town. Police headquarters in Pretoria also acknowledged riot patrols shot dead a 15-year-old girl and a 35-year-old man Monday in Kagiso, west of Johannesburg.

The girl was slain after police broke up a rally to debate whether to return to school, one of several such meetings banned by authorities. The Kagiso youths decided to go to school Tuesday, but a black newspa-

per noted the accord could be threatened by such incidents.

Boycotts over black demands for equal education with white children started in early 1984 as part of the protest against apartheid, the system of legal racial segregation under which 5 million whites deny the vote and other rights to 24 million blacks.

A breakthrough came in late December, when education officials negotiated with the National Parents' Crisis Committee, a group with widespread backing from activist youths.

Demands included the withdrawal of soldiers from riot duty in the townships, an end to the state of emergency and the release of detained leaders as well as educational grievances.

## Study says elderly's disuse of mental skills causes loss

Associated Press

STATE COLLEGE, Pa. — New results from a study of elderly people indicate that the partial loss of certain mental skills may be due more to disuse than disease and can be reversed with simple mental exercises.

A study of 229 members of Puget Sound Group Health, a health maintenance organization in Seattle, showed that of those whose inductive reasoning and spatial orientation skills had declined since 1970, about 40 percent were able to recoup the losses after five one-hour training sessions.

The findings are important because "in studies of later adulthood the assumption has been made that when decline begins to occur that it is irreversible," said researcher Sherry Willis, a human development associate professor at Pennsylvania State University.

"I would say that much of what we call decline is presumably not irreversible; that what we call decline appears to be, for many people . . . a function of disuse," Willis said.

Some suggestions include working crossword puzzles or playing word games for inductive reasoning, or woodworking or intricate needlepoint for spatial orientation.

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— Sherry Willis, associate professor at Pennsylvania State University.

The study was conducted from 1983 to 1985 by Willis and K. Warner Schaie.

Schaie began the Seattle Longitudinal study in 1956 while a doctoral student at the University of Washington.

Inductive reasoning, the ability to see relationships or make inferences, is used to comprehend what you read, such as directions on a medicine bottle. Spatial orientation, literally the ability to turn in your mind

two- or three-dimensional objects, is necessary for reading road maps or following instructions for assembling things such as furniture.

Researchers have found that on the average these two cognitive skills show an earlier decline, beginning in the mid-60s, than other skills and therefore give researchers a larger sample population, Willis said.

The 229 people studied, who ranged in age from 62 to 94, had been tested in 1970 on those skills as part of Schaie's larger longitudinal study.

Based on a comparison of results from standardized tests of the two cognitive skills from 1970 and prior to the training, Willis found that about 60 percent had declined, and the rest remained stable.

After the five one-hour training sessions, 40 percent of the decliners had returned to 1970 levels and about half "improved significantly" on the post-training cognitive skills tests, she said.

## Mexicans seeking to fulfill federal orders

Associated Press

MEXICO CITY — With an 8,900-foot cloud of smog hanging over the city, government and private officials held urgent meetings Tuesday on how to fulfill federal mandates to stagger working hours and reduce automobile traffic by one-fifth.

The Ecology and Urban Development Department issued the orders in response to a month-long pollution blight being blamed for headaches, dizziness, queasiness and intestinal problems among the city's 18 million residents.

Daily temperature inversions have trapped factory emissions and the uncontrolled exhaust from 2.2 million vehicles in the mountain-ringed city. Sustained winds of 62 mph (100 kmh) would be needed to blow the smog away, according to scientists quoted by the government newspaper El Nacional.

Ecology Secretary Guillermo Car-

rillo Arena announced the anti-pollution program Monday after touring the city with President Miguel de la Madrid. The central part of the metropolitan area, known as the Federal District, is a department of the federal government.

The program calls for:  
• Rearrangement of working hours in government and private offices, stores and schools, beginning in February, to spread out the rush-hour.

• Restriction of private vehicle use to six days a week, with every vehicle carrying a colored sticker to identify the day it may not be used. The move, to begin with sticker distribution in about 10 days, is expected to keep 450,000 cars off the streets each day.


• A request that the state petroleum monopoly Pemex switch to non-polluting fuels in its plants in the Federal District.

• Strict monitoring of factory emissions and the probable transfer of 32 factories, include cement plants, out of the city by 1987.

Taxis will continue to operate unrestricted, in the hope that residents will use mass transportation, the department said. El Nacional said auto exhausts contribute most of the pollution to the cloud, which it said has averaged 8,900 feet in depth in recent days.

To avoid the dizziness, headaches and general queasiness cause by the pollution, health officials recommended that residents keep their windows tightly closed. In many homes, however, windows are fitted with ventilation slats and cannot be closed completely.

Health officials also urged that drinking water, which normally must be boiled before use, be boiled with alcohol to combat the extra pollution.



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