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One-day transport strike cripples travel in Britain

LONDON (AP) — Britons walked, cycled, hitchhiked, shared cars or simply stayed home Wednesday as a one-day strike idled the national railroads and London's buses and subways.

It was believed to be the first triple-barreled transport action since the 1926 general strike, according to British Rail and London Underground.

Careful planning and bright skies made it less nightmarish than commuters expected, however.

London hotels were full of employees spending the night in the city to beat the strike. Many companies hired fleets of buses, and Thames River passenger ferries reported business was booming.

Some judges at the Old Bailey Central Criminal Court spent the night in their offices, and hundreds of judges, lawyers and jurors walked or cycled, enabling 17 of the 19 courtrooms to function normally. An early shortage of stenographers forced some judges to take their own notes as hearings got under way.

Senior prosecutor John Bevan cycled for several miles through slow-moving traffic, carrying his gown in a bag on his back, and he said he wouldn't like to repeat the experience.

"My nerves are shattered," he said. "It really is a most dangerous occupation."

"I saw a car with three bikes on the roof, two in the back, and five people in the car," said Patrick Gilligan of London Bicycle Co. "I guess they just drive as far as they can and get on their bikes."

Forewarned by police to drive only if necessary, motorists set out two or three hours early. "Traffic was in fact quieter than normal on most of the motorway routes around

London," said the Automobile Association.

Manchester, Liverpool, Edinburgh and Glasgow also reported earlier rush hours, with traffic a little worse than normal.

London parking garages were packed, and police refused to ease parking restrictions, saying it would encourage more people to drive into the capital. However, free parking was set aside for buses bringing in commuters.

House GOP launches investigation of Lukens

WASHINGTON (AP) — House Republicans, seeking to defuse a political problem, took the unprecedented step Wednesday of triggering an investigation of one of their own: Rep. Donald E. Lukens of Ohio.

The action on Lukens, who was convicted last month on charges involving sex with a 16-year-old girl, came on a show of hands in a closed-door meeting of the Republican Conference, the organization of all GOP House members.

Minority Leader Robert Michel, R-Ill., sought in a statement to portray the move as part of a Republican "total commitment to standards of behavior for members of Congress which reflect honorably on the institution and the nation."

However, House Speaker Thomas S. Foley, D-Wash., said the Republicans seemed to be trying to score "a political point . . . apparently at the expense of one of their

own members." He said any GOP attempt to make ethics a partisan issue was "absolute nonsense and the public knows it."

The House ethics committee, formally the Committee on Standards of Official Conduct, had been expected to investigate Lukens anyway. If the committee finds he violated House rules it could recommend penalties ranging from a reprimand to expulsion.

Republicans have set ethics reform in the House among their top priorities for the 101st Congress. And their political operatives hope to capitalize in the next elections by pointing to the resignations of Democratic House Speaker Jim Wright of Texas and Whip Tony Coelho of California in the face of ethics allegations.

But Lukens' conviction on May 30 in Franklin County, Ohio, of contributing to the unruliness and delinquency of a minor, has been an embarrassment to his own party.

Two in five first-borns conceived out of wedlock

WASHINGTON (AP) — Two of every five American women giving birth to their first children weren't married when they became pregnant, the Census Bureau said Wednesday, a rise over the past two decades.

The bureau also found a jump in the birth rate among women in their 30s, noted that a majority of the women having a baby in the year ending in June 1988 were in the work force, and said minorities tend to have higher birth rates.

In all, the bureau said the national fertility rate was 69.7 births per 1,000 women aged 18 to 44 in that year. Those are considered the prime childbearing ages.

Fertility rates have remained at about 70 births per 1,000 women during this decade and the figure for 1988 is not considered significantly different from the 71 recorded the year before.

But changes have occurred among the women becoming mothers in America.

For women aged 15 to 29, the bureau found, 40 percent of their first-born children from 1985 to 1988 were conceived out of marriage, up from just over 30 percent when the

measure was first taken from 1970 to 1974.

The 40 percent of new mothers who conceived out of wedlock included 11.7 percent who got married before the child was born and 28.3 percent who were still unmarried when the baby arrived.

The major change was among that second group, the women who were still unmarried when the baby arrived. They increased from 17.9 percent of all first-time mothers in the early 1970s to the 28.3 percent recorded in 1985 to 1988.

This shift "may reflect the opinion of some women that they may be better off in the long run by relying more on the support of their parents and relatives for financial and emotional assistance than by entering a potentially unstable marriage undertaken solely to prevent an out-of-wedlock birth," bureau analyst Amara Bachu said in the report.

At the same time that the share of unwed-mothers was rising, the percentage of women conceiving while single and then getting married before the arrival of the baby dropped from 14.9 percent to 11.7 percent of first mothers.

Students rally at Houston consulate during reception for Chinese consul

HOUSTON (AP) — About 150 Chinese students angered by the government crackdown against pro-democracy demonstrators in their country shouted at guests attending a reception Wednesday night for the departing Chinese consul in Houston.

The sign-carrying students yelled "Don't go" and "Shame" at people who arrived the consulate's building near downtown Houston.

"We just want to show our anger to the whole world and let them know what the Chinese government has done. The government lies. They want to keep the truth from the people," said Patty You, 29, an industrial engineering student at the University of Houston.

Ms. You, like many of the other students, carried signs reading "No more executions" and "Don't eat with

butchers, don't deal with animals."

Chinese students attending colleges in Texas and Louisiana have staged similar protests outside the consulate's building in recent weeks to show their support for fellow students in China.

In addition, the students mailed about 121 letters over the weekend to civic leaders and foreign consuls asking them to not attend the party for Gen. Ni Yaoli, said Fan Lu, a research associate at Rice University.

Ni is returning to China after completing his three-year term in Houston as consul general.

"We respectfully urge you not to go, as a gesture of personal protest against the recent heinous crime against humanity committed by the 'government' of the People's Republic," the letter said.

Baker considers creation of office to coordinate U.S. border affairs

WASHINGTON (AP) — The State Department is considering setting up a special office to coordinate U.S.-Mexico border affairs, said Secretary of State James A. Baker III.

"Because of the increasing importance of the U.S.-Mexico border, and the rapid growth of activities connected with it, we are aware of the need to focus greater attention upon this area," Baker told Sen. Lloyd Bentsen in a letter this week.

Bentsen, a Texas Democrat, in May asked Baker to consider creating a special office for border issues within the State Department. Bentsen said full-time experts

were needed "who know about and are sensitive to those local issues that are international because of the existence of a legal boundary."

The border has unique problems that require creative solutions, Bentsen argued, and the United States needs a "regular point of contact and coordination when U.S. agencies operate in conjunction with Mexican officials."

Baker told Bentsen, the chairman of the Senate Finance Committee, that the State Department is considering creating a three-officer unit within the Office of Mexican Affairs to deal with southern border issues

"in a more consistent and intensive manner."

Baker said establishing the unit depends "in large part upon our ability to find positions that can be reprogrammed for this purpose."

The unit's responsibilities would include coordinating relations between U.S. agencies and their counterparts in Mexico. Mexico has already established a director general for border affairs.

Baker suggested the unit could carry out certain responsibilities now performed by the Mexican Affairs director, who maintains a close liaison with the governors

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