

World & Nation

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The Battalion

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Jobless workers rally for benefits; Bentsen promises emergency plan

WASHINGTON (AP) — Hundreds of jobless workers rallied Wednesday on the steps of the Labor Department for an extension in unemployment benefits as Sen. Lloyd Bentsen promised to declare an emergency and get the money flowing to the nation's struggling families.

Chanting "Lay off Bush" and "26 weeks is not enough," the crowd called for President Bush to extend unemployment benefits for jobless workers whose checks stop after 26 weeks.

But Bush's spokesman, Marlin Fitzwater, said Wednesday that the president believes the economy is in recovery and would likely veto emergency legislation to extend unemployment benefits.

"The Bush administration calls for an emergency for the Kurds, for the Turks, for the Bangladesh," Bentsen said. "And even in the president's budget, they declared an emergency for the Panama Canal Commission."

"I say it's time to declare an emergency for the unemployed workers of America," Bentsen told the crowd under a sizzling

noonday sun.

Bentsen, D-Texas chairman of the Senate Finance Committee, promised the panel would act Thursday on a proposal to extend unemployment benefits up to 20 weeks.

Bentsen would not raise taxes or cut other programs to pay for his proposal's \$5.8 billion cost. Instead, he would declare the recession an emergency and allow the government to simply borrow the needed money, thus driving up the deficit.

Fitzwater, however, said the president opposes such a plan unless there are spending cuts to pay for it.

Unemployment coverage has expired for an estimated 2.3 million workers.

In Texas, according to Bentsen's office, 546,000 people were unemployed in May, and as of June, 12,394 had exhausted their benefits.

"Only the fat cats at the top levels of this administration could fail to understand what the unemployed are up against in terms of getting unemployment insurance benefits," Sen. Paul Sarbanes, D-Md., told the rally.

"What they don't understand or appreciate is what it means not to be able to meet the house payment and the car payment, not to be able to be able to put food on the table for your kids," Sarbanes said. "We're talking about working people — people who have been working year in and year out, who are now out of a job because of this Bush recession."

Sarbanes predicted Congress would send emergency legislation to the president's desk, "and ask him what he thinks about it."

"I say it's time to recognize there's an emergency here at home," Sarbanes told the rally, coordinated by the Philadelphia Unemployment Project.

Rep. Thomas Foglietta, D-Pa., said 8.7 million people are out of work.

"These are the American men and women who are personified by the sign I saw on one of the T-shirts today: 'Do I have to lose everything I've ever worked for because our government won't pass protective legislation.'"

Network will provide coverage of rape trial

WASHINGTON (AP) — Television viewers will get to judge for themselves whether William Kennedy Smith is guilty of rape when his trial is shown live by a new cable network.

The Courtroom Television Network will provide "very complete, if not gavel-to-gavel" coverage of Smith's trial scheduled to begin Aug. 5 in West Palm Beach, Fla., Merrill Brown, senior vice president of the network, said Tuesday from New York.

He said the network is carried

in 39 states, with more than 450 cable systems wired into 4 million homes.

Viewers will see and hear everything the jurors in Smith's trial see and hear — except the name and face of the woman who says he attacked her and perhaps the names and faces of other women who may testify against him.

The network will use a 10-second delay, as it does with all trials, so it can delete explicit material. In this trial, the delay also will be used to remove the

name of the woman he is accused of raping, if it is spoken, Brown said.

Cable News Network also plans to air "major portions of the testimony" live, although the coverage won't be as extensive as on the courtroom channel, said spokesman Steve Harworth.

Smith is charged with raping a 29-year-old Jupiter, Fla., woman on March 30 at the Kennedy family's Palm Beach estate. He has denied the charges.

EPA plans hearings on border pollution

WASHINGTON (AP) — The Environmental Protection Agency plans a series of hearings along the Southwest border as it develops an environmental plan for the region, where raw sewage pollutes the Rio Grande, and El Paso suffers from a choking mix of fumes.

Sen. Lloyd Bentsen, D-Texas, said Wednesday he has received word that the agency plans the hearings as part of President

Bush's plans to address the environmental impact of free trade agreements with Mexico on the borderlands.

According to Bentsen, the EPA is considering hearings in Laredo, El Paso, Nogales, Ariz.; Calexico, Calif.; San Diego and at a location in New Mexico, which is still undecided. The hearings are tentatively planned for late September and early October.

Bentsen had asked EPA Administrator William K. Reilly last week to hold hearings on the border as it develops the "Integrated Environmental Plan for the U.S.-Mexico Border."

"It will be impossible to draft an effective plan for dealing with the serious pollution problems plaguing the border area without hearing firsthand from the people who have to deal with them and suffer with them every day," Bentsen said Wednesday.



Sen. Lloyd Bentsen says the EPA has plans for Texas hearings.

Group makes threats to German government

BEIRUT, Lebanon (AP) — A group claiming to hold two Germans hostage on Wednesday threatened "extremely negative action" unless the German government offered convincing information about two Shiite Moslem brothers imprisoned in Germany.

The threat came in an Arabic-language statement delivered to the independent Beirut newspaper Al-Nahar. It was accompanied by a photograph of a German who is missing in Lebanon.

In the statement, a group calling itself the Holy Warriors for Freedom claimed it kidnapped two Germans in a bid to win the freedom of Lebanese brothers Mohammed Hamadi and Abbas Hamadi.

"But alas, they understand only the language of blood and violence ... and we shall not hesitate to use them because we shall not permit any wrong done to our two strugglers," the statement said.

It demanded that Germany give details about the Hamadi brothers' conditions within 48 hours through intermediaries from Iran or Syria.

"Otherwise we shall take an extremely negative action after which regret is of no use," the statement said.

Prison officials said last week that Abbas Hamadi, who was jailed on a kidnapping conviction, had been stabbed in a fight with another inmate.

In response to a threatening statement July 18 from another group, the German government rejected allegations that the two men were being mistreated in prison.

Peace proposal crisis

Shamir's partners may quit Cabinet

JERUSALEM (AP) — Prime Minister Yitzhak Shamir's ultra-right coalition partners threatened Wednesday to quit the Cabinet if he accepts U.S. peace talk plans, raising the possibility of a power play by Shamir to retain control.

Housing Minister Ariel Sharon, leading the criticism, told 20 hard-liners in Parliament that Israel "faced perhaps its most dangerous political moment" and could be pushed into giving up war-won land, Israel radio reported.

But politicians and analysts believed Shamir is popular enough to override opposition to the Middle East peace confer-

ence and recruit left-leaning parties into his governing coalition to maintain a majority in parliament.

"There is no force now that could prevent a peace conference, and Shamir understands this," analyst Zvi Gilat wrote in the Hebrew daily Hada-shot.

The U.S. plan calls for a one-time peace conference leading to direct negotiations between Israel and the Palestinians and each of the Arab states.

Opponents came out in full force on Wednesday, the day after Shamir welcomed Syria's move accepting direct negotia-



Yitzhak Shamir's coalition partners threaten to quit the Cabinet.

WORLD/NATION BRIEFS

Three soldiers die in explosion

MANAMA, Bahrain — Three U.S. soldiers clearing ammunition near a military camp in Doha, Kuwait, were killed Tuesday when some of it exploded, the U.S. military said. The ammunition was left over from a powerful July 11 explosion at the army depot, said a statement from the Joint Information Bureau in Dhahran, Saudi Arabia. The deaths brought to 16 the number of U.S. troop fatalities since the end of the Persian Gulf War. All were accidental, caused by traffic accidents, mines or explosions, said an army officer who spoke on condition anonymity.

Panel finds no corruption

WASHINGTON — A panel investigating allegations by a former Customs Service agent of widespread corruption in the Southwest has rejected the accusations, Customs Commissioner Carol Hallett said Wednesday. The panel did, however, spotlight deficiencies in the service, including failure to investigate accusations promptly. The panel of four Customs officials and five people from outside the agency was "unanimous in every one of their findings," including the conclusion on corruption, Hallett said in an interview.

Union Treaty finds agreement

MOSCOW — President Mikhail S. Gorbachev emerged from 12 hours of talks Wednesday to announce a final agreement on the new Union Treaty to reshape the Soviet federation and give more power to the republics. The treaty could bolster Gorbachev's standing going into Thursday's meeting of the Communist Party's Central Committee, where hard-liners are expected to stiffly challenge a reform platform supported by the president. The platform denounces the party's dictatorial past and embraces private property and freedom of religion.

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