

World and Nation

Effects of Chernobyl accident linger

From Associated Press reports

MOSCOW — Fallout from the Chernobyl nuclear disaster contaminated one-fifth of Byelorussia to the point that officials are monitoring the health of more than 300,000 people, Tass reported Thursday.

The official news agency asked in its dispatch why nearly three years passed before those who lived just north of the stricken nuclear power plant were told how seriously their health was threatened.

"Is this not too late to tell the public the complete picture of the radiation situation?" the agency asked.

Vladimir Yevtukh, chairman of the area disaster relief commission, responded with a comment that implied residents of the area still might not know if President Mikhail Gorbachev had not introduced his policy of glasnost, or openness.

"Glasnost and the democratization of public life played no small role in making public the data on the radiation situation in the republic," he was quoted as saying.

Yevtukh, a member of the Byelorussian Council of Ministers, said some time was needed to test 40,000 soil samples after the accident in April 1986.

Last week, the government newspaper Izvestia said 20 Byelorussian villages were being abandoned. The number of people affected was not given, but the newspaper said 1,200 apartments would be built for them.

The contaminated area in the Byelorussian republic is due north of the Chernobyl nuclear power plant in the Ukraine and twice the size of Massachusetts. The article did not address contamination in the Ukrainian republic.

Soviet officials did not report the

explosion and fire at the Chernobyl plant until three days later, when Sweden complained of unusually high radiation levels. Reports on the cleanup have been sketchy and conflicting.

Tass said Thursday cumulative radiation absorbed by the residents of the Byelorussian zone was nearly three times that found elsewhere, but still less than 60 percent of the permissible level, according to Yevtukh.

It added, however, that "no one precisely knows" how much radiation is dangerous.

Cancer and other disease rates in the contaminated area are rising but are below the national average, the agency said.

The area contaminated by the accident is divided into four zones, starting with that immediately adjacent to the power plant. Tass said

4,400 people were evacuated from the closest zone immediately after the accident.

About 19,000 more people were moved in the next four months from what now is called the second zone, the report said, and the third zone covers 400 communities in the Gomel and Mogilev regions of Byelorussia.

Tass said authorities were giving medical checkups to more than 100,000 residents and taking decontamination measures in that region, and in the fourth zone the health of the 200,000 residents and the purity of their food were being monitored.

Towns in the contaminated area were washed to remove fallout from roofs, fences and walls; asphalt was replaced, and hundreds of thousands of tons of topsoil were removed and buried, Tass reported, but did not say where the contaminated soil was taken.

Haitian government orders arrests of opposition heads

From Associated Press reports

PORT-AU-PRINCE, Haiti — Workers closed schools, businesses, and some public transportation Thursday in a general strike called by the opposition to demand the resignation of Haitian ruler Lt. Gen. Prosper Avril.

It was the second day of the strike, but the government blunted its impact Wednesday by closing schools and services with a paid holiday. Thursday was not a holiday.

The government also ordered the arrests of seven opposition leaders who called for the strike. By Thursday, there were no reports that the seven had been arrested.

Among those sought were Jean-Auguste Mesyeux and Gabriel Miracle, co-leaders of Haiti's largest union. Their group, the Autonomous Central of Haitian Workers, has organized two successful general strikes since November.

Hostage families receive hope

DAMASCUS, Syria — The spiritual leader of the group believed to be holding most of the American hostages in Lebanon said he hoped their ordeal would end "shortly," according to a letter released Thursday.

Sheik Mohammed Hussein Fadlallah wrote to Peggy Say, sister of American hostage Terry Anderson, "I hope your human suffering will end shortly and I promise to do all my best to help you."

Anderson, 41, of Lorain, Ohio, was kidnapped March 16, 1985,

News in Brief

while serving as chief Middle East correspondent for The Associated Press.

He is the longest-held hostage in Lebanon among 15 Westerners, including nine Americans, three Britons, one Irishman, one Italian and a Belgian.

Heritage Church may relocate

FORT MILL, S.C. — The Canadian businessman who bought Heritage USA is reviewing proposals by the Heritage Church regarding the possible purchase of some Heritage USA assets, a spokesman for the businessman said Thursday.

Businessman Stephen Mernick has not set a timetable on when he will respond to the Rev. Sam Johnson, pastor of Heritage Church, spokesman Alex Coffin of Charlotte said.

Johnson said Wednesday the church may consider moving elsewhere because Mernick had not informed the church of his plans for Heritage USA.

During a Jan. 12 meeting at Charlotte-Douglas International Airport, Mernick promised to get in touch with Heritage Church officials within 10 days, Johnson said.

Johnson said he told Mernick then that Heritage Church wanted to buy some of the assets of Heritage USA. Mernick asked Johnson to put his proposal in writing. Mernick received the proposal on Feb. 3, Coffin said.

Quarantine

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with the immunization process, but some said there were special cases Thursday. "I think that immunization went well," said J. J. Langdon, a freshman from Raleigh. "I just went right after aerobics and was in and out in about five or 10 minutes."

Nicole Jones, a freshman from Elizabethtown, said, "I thought that the immunization was handled well but there were a lot of people in my classes who hadn't received a card and were asked to leave."

Joseph Holt, a freshman business administration major from Fayetteville, said: "It was fair to have people kept from attending classes because the pestilence could have bedridden half the campus."

Found ads FREE in the DTH

For the Record

In Thursday's story, "Faculty leave policy to affect class sizes," The Daily Tar Heel incorrectly reported that one professor from each department or school may take a paid-study leave

each semester. One-seventh of the professors in each department or school may take a paid study leave.

The Daily Tar Heel regrets the error.

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