

Notes & News

●A huge **forest fire** which broke out in the foothills of the Troodos Mountains south-east of Nicosia on 18 July devastated some six square kilometres of forest and caused damage estimated at up to C£4 million before being brought under control two days later in an extensive fire-fighting operation.

●Cyprus takes 25th place in the latest **UN Human Development Report's** ranking of 162 countries for life expectancy, educational enrolment, adult literacy and real income. Greece was ranked 23rd and Turkey 82nd in the table, which was headed by Norway, followed by Australia, Canada and Sweden.

●The third version of an **official British video film** intended to warn British tourists of the strict penalties for illegal drugs use in Cyprus was submitted to the Ministry of Commerce, Industry and Tourism on 24 July, after objections had been raised that the first two contained unacceptably lurid images likely to deter people from visiting the island. Over 1.5 million British tourists are expected to visit Cyprus in 2001.



• Under threat... The ancient city of Salamis.

●The Mayor of Famagusta, Andreas Pouyours, on 23 July protested against illegal Turkish excavations at the ancient site of **Salamis** in the occupied area. In a letter to the UNESCO Director General, Mr Pouyours said that the excavations "are further steps towards the complete destruction of our cultural heritage" and urged UNESCO "to put an end to this barbarity and destruction".

●The appointment of Lyn Barber as the next **British High Commissioner** in Cyprus was announced on 10 July. A university lecturer in law before joining the Diplomatic Service, Mr Barber will take up the post in mid-September in succession to Edward Clay, who will become UK High Commissioner in Kenya.

●Labels on bottles of **Cyprus brandy** will cease to describe the contents as brandy by the end of 2002, to comply with a European Union directive stating that the word can only be used for products with at least 36 per cent alcohol content. The island's traditional brandy, which has been successfully marketed for over 150 years, has an alcohol content of 32 per cent, giving it a distinctive taste which the producers do not want to lose.

●Communications and Works Minister Averof Neophytou confirmed on 19 July that the Cyprus Telecommunications Authority (CyTA) was joining forces with Greece, Bulgaria and the Vatican to place a **TV satellite** in orbit at a cost ranging from \$200 million to \$1 billion.

Cyprus will have 10 of the 37 channels to be provided by the satellite, which is expected to be in place in time for the Olympic Games in Athens in September 2004.

●Government Spokesman Michalis Papapetrou on 12 July expressed solidarity with the efforts of **Turkish Cypriots** in the occupied area to overcome their difficulties, with reference to a protest rally being held that evening by 41 organizations in the north under the slogan "Peace and Democracy". Grouped within the "This Country is Ours" alliance, the protesting movements focused on the dire economic conditions prevailing in the occupied area and also declared their opposition to integration with Turkey. Mr Papapetrou said that these protests "are the result of the deadlock policy followed by Turkish Cypriot leader Rauf Denkash and by Turkey".

●A sharp contest for the leadership of the small **Movement of Social Democrats (KISOS)** resulted in Yiannakis Omirou being elected party president at a conference in Nicosia on 22 July. He succeeded Vassos Lyssarides, who had announced his retirement after the May parliamentary elections, having led the party since founding it in 1969.

●Under US legislation adopted on 26 July, Cyprus will receive \$15 million in **financial aid** in the next US financial year to promote peace and co-operation on the island. The aid is earmarked for the funding of scholarships, bicomunal projects and other measures "aimed at reunification of the island and designed to reduce tensions".

●Official **trade figures** for the first four months of 2001 showed a rise in imports to C£904.8 million compared with 699.6 million in the same period in 2000, while exports fell slightly from C£196.2 million to C£194.6 million. The resultant crude deficit of C£710.1 million compared with one of C£503.3 million in January-April 2000.

●Minister of Interior Christodoulos Christodoulou announced on 30 July that **municipal and local elections** will be held in Cyprus on 2 and 16 December respectively. He also confirmed that polling for school boards and the Pancyprian Refugee Committee would take place on 9 and 16 December respectively.

●The Cyprus Government on 12 July ratified the 1971 **UN Ramsar Convention** for the protection of wetlands of international importance for the preservation of biodiversity. The Government requested that the Larnaca Salt Lake should be added to the world list of some 900 wetland areas protected under the Convention.□



• Candidate for protection... Larnaca Salt Lake.



• 27 years on... Honouring one of the 1974 dead.

Black anniversary commemorated

Air raid sirens sounded across the Government-controlled area of Cyprus at 5.30 am local time on 20 July to mark the 27th anniversary of the start of the Turkish invasion and occupation of northern Cyprus in 1974. Protests and commemorations at home and abroad included a demonstration in central London attended by the new President of the Cyprus House of Representatives, Demetris Christofias.

The sombre mood was conveyed by President Glafcos Clerides in his anniversary message, which pledged the Government's continuing support for all those still enduring the effects of the Turkish invasion, referring in particular to the enclaved Greek Cypriots still living in the occupied area and to the relatives of missing persons.

The President expressed his conviction that "the overwhelming majority of ordinary citizens, Greek and Turkish Cypriots, believe in the need to reunite our island through an agreement that will safeguard the political rights of both communities and the human rights of all Cypriots and allay their fears with regard to their security".

Commemoration services held in many churches included one at St John's Cathedral in Nicosia attended by President Clerides, while he and other political leaders paid respects at the Macedonitissa Tomb of soldiers killed in the 1974 fighting. A delegation from the Greek Parliament was present and the Greek Government was represented by Public Order Minister Michalis Chrysohoidis.

In London, 7,000 UK Greek Cypriots participated in a march and rally in Trafalgar Square on 15 July to protest against the continuing division of Cyprus, supported by MPs and MEPs from the main British political parties. Accompanied by Cypriot World War II veterans, the President of the Cyprus National Federation in Great Britain, Charis Sofocliides, delivered a letter to No 10 Downing Street calling for further pressure on Turkey to end the division of Cyprus.□

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