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Daily Nebraskan

Main Floor

Friday, December 7, 1984



Union Carbide charged with criminal negligence

Wire Report

National and international news

from the Reuter News Report

BHOPAL — The government of India's Madhya Pradesh State Thursday filed a criminal negligence suit against the Union Carbide subsidiary which owns the pesticide factory where a poison gas leak has killed some 2,000 people. The Press Trust of India news agency said the suit was filed at a local police station in Bhopal, the state capital, against the Indian subsidiary. Under Indian law, a case is registered with police who then carry out an investigation before deciding whether to prosecute. Six managers and supervisors were arrested after poison gas spread across the city. Madhya Pradesh Chief Minster Arjun Singh was quoted by the news agency as saying the \$25-million plant would not be allowed to reopen. He did not elaborate.

Police Thursday refused to allow an American executive of Union Carbide, Warren Woomer, to enter the factory. They seized factory records and put a 24-hour hospital guard on a badly gassed Indian employee of the plant who might know what led to the world's worst industrial accident.

In Bombay, the chairman of the Indian subsidiary, Keshub Mahindra, issued a statement saying every effort would be made to help the gas victims. The statement said Union Carbide Chairman Warren Anderson had arrived in India to take charge of his firm's investigation of the gas leak.

At least 50,000 people have received medical treatment and doctors have warned that long-term effects, including possible damage to the victims' eyes, livers, kidneys and lungs, may cause more casualties in the weeks ahead.

Reagan budget under pressure

WASHINGTON — President Reagan came under new pressure from Republican congressional leaders Thursday to cut defense spending and raise taxes in addition to slashing domestic programs by \$34 billion in 1986. The congressmen, while supporting Reagan's efforts to reduce large government deficits, appeared shocked by some of the cuts the president told them he had drawn up for the 1986 fiscal year beginning Oct. 1. "My adam's apple regurgitated and I had to swallow again," Rep. Robert Michel of Illinois, Republican leader in the House, told reporters after the group met the president.

Final decisions on arms spending cuts await the return of Defense Secretary Caspar Weinberger from an overseas trip. Weinberger is strongly resisting any reductions in his budget.



Reagan to explain policy to Tutu

WASHINGTON — President Reagan has agreed to meet with Bishop Desmond Tutu Friday in an apparent attempt to blunt the Nobel laureate's sharp criticism of his policy at a congressional hearing this week, White House spokesman Robert Sims said.

Tutu has described Reagan's policy of "constructive engagement" with South Africa as immoral and unchristian and has said he will not meet with any U.S. officials except the president himself. Emphasizing the importance Reagan attached to the meeting, Sims said the president would be accompanied at the session by Vice President George Bush, Secretary of State George Shultz, National Security Affairs Adviser Robert McFarlane, and Assistant Secretary of State for African Affairs Chester Crocker.

The U.S. policy of constructive engagement calls for muted public criticism of apartheid in hopes of encouraging reform through quiet diplomacy. Sims said Reagan, after reading Tutu's congressinal testimony, "though that a conversation would be worthwhile. From his testimnony...(it appeared) he had ideas about our policy that might not be accurate."

Thirty-five conservative Republican congressmen Wednesday sent a letter to the South African Embassy in Washington warning that they will support diplomatic and economic sanctions unless apartheid is ended. Sims said the administration had not changed its policy against such sanctions but added, "They (the congressmen) obviously feel strongly that continuation of progress towards internal change in South Africa is an important issue to all Americans. They represent a key body of opinion in this country."

FBI agents weed Cabbage Patch

DETROIT — FBI agents have seized 5,208 counterfeit Cabbage Patch Dolls made in Taiwan, an FBI spokesman said Thursday. The dolls and their fraudulent "adoption papers" were confiscated Wednesday afternoon from an office building in a suburb north of Detroit, he said.

The raid was carried out under a search warrant in a fiveweek investigation of whether the Cabbage Patch copyrights of Original Appalachain Artworks Inc. and Coleco Industries Inc. had been infringed, he said. The spokesman said bogus dolls had been shipped to Detroit from an East Coast company and one came into the hands of a local FBI agent.

The dolls confiscated Wednesday are stuffed with rags that smell of kerosene and will be destroyed if it is determined they are flammable, the spokesman said. Otherwise, he said, they will be given to charitable organizations.