

# News Digest

## AIDS scare Fear of contraction spreads faster than the disease itself

NEW YORK (Reuter) — Fear of AIDS is spreading around the world more rapidly than the disease itself as headlines in a hundred languages warn of a new "Black Death" and officials gear for epidemics of an illness for which there is no cure.

A Reuter survey of officials in capital cities worldwide finds wide disparity in how nations are coping. Some countries, including China, are taking such precautionary measures as banning blood imports, while others refuse to admit that the disease exists.

Reasons for shunning discussion of Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome range from ideology, as in Iran and the Soviet Union, to fear of harming tourism, as in Kenya.

But nowhere is fear more rampant than in the United States, which has most of the world's 14,000 known cases of the deadly viral disease. Expressions of that fear are reported daily.

Health workers talk of a panic that has isolated victims and broken up families, creating fears not only in the groups at greatest risk of contracting the disease — homosexuals and intravenous drug users — but in the population at large.

Medical experts call AIDS the "Black Death" of the 20th century, even though unlike the bubonic plague, it is not an airborne disease but one doctors believe is relatively difficult to transmit.

Heterosexuals, who account for only 1 percent of AIDS victims in the United States, talk of changing their lifestyles and increasingly avoid contact with homosexual men, who make up 73 percent of all U.S. cases.

Statistics fuel the fear. AIDS has become the biggest single killer of unmarried men aged between age 25 and 44 in San Francisco and New York City. Murder is second.

In San Francisco, often called "the gay capital of the United States," a survey of 500 homosexual and bisexual men found that fear of the disease had changed their sex lives.

AIDS, which renders the body's immune system powerless to fight infections, is transmitted primarily through sexual contact when semen containing the virus enters the blood

stream. The ailment may then take two to six years to develop.

Although the disease largely hits homosexuals in the United States and Europe, the major victims in central Africa, where the virus is believed to have started, are heterosexuals.

Scientists theorize that the disease began in monkeys and spread to humans through bits or consumption of monkey meat.

Americans even take their fear abroad, as confused Swiss waiters in the resort of Gruyere reported recently. A group of 25 American tourists refused to eat their soup from a communal bowl as is the Alpine custom and demanded separate bowls.

But the United States is not alone in its fear.

In France, doctors say they have isolated a new disease called "AIDS psychosis."

Worried officials in Sweden, which has 27 reported AIDS cases compared to more than 12,000 in the United States, distributed a brochure this summer to overseas-bound tourists. It carried a simple warning: Never Love a Stranger.

In Zaire, where U.S. researcher Dr. Robert Gallo, a discoverer of the AIDS virus, says the disease is rampant, it is also a joke. Zaireans openly shrug off the threat with joking remarks, calling it SIDA in French, standing for Syndrome Imaginaire Pour Discourager Les Amoureux (Imaginary Syndrome for Discouraging Lovers).

The Kenyan government does not officially recognize the existence of AIDS, despite frequently expressed fears among Kenyans. According to observers, it is a very unpopular subject in a country that depends heavily on tourism.

Here is how AIDS is being handled in other countries:

- The Soviet Union: The disease is almost ignored by the press and most people are unaware it exists.

- China: Doctors in China admit the disease is certain to gain a foothold in the world's most populous country. To help check the entry of the killer disease, China has banned imports of nearly all blood products.

- Brazil: With 415 reported cases,

Brazil has the largest number of AIDS victims of any country in Latin America. While government officials insist there is no epidemic, the Brazilian public has shown evidence of panic, with women even bringing their own nail clippers to hairdressing salons rather than risk using ones that others have used.

- West Germany: With 250 known cases, doctors think there could be 150 virus carriers for every known case and that the number of victims will double each year.

- East Germany: Although there have been no known cases, East Germany has set up a committee to monitor AIDS, believing it is only a matter of time before the disease appears. Homosexuality is handled in liberal fashion in East Germany, unlike the Soviet Union where it is a crime punishable by up to five years in a labor camp.

- Egypt: The government is considering blood tests for all arrivals from the United States and other countries and is considering instructing its embassies to issue visas only to those with certificates proving they do not have the disease.

The Middle East's only confirmed AIDS case is a Lebanese homosexual who returned home from San Francisco to see his family before he died. While homosexuality is common throughout the Middle East, newspapers in Iran have called AIDS a disease symbolic of the corrupt and decadent West.

- Hong Kong: Three cases have been reported, leading officials to set up a telephone hotline to give information on AIDS, a service offered in many other countries. Doctors say AIDS will spread rapidly in Hong Kong since homosexual acts are punishable by life imprisonment and most such activity is furtive, thus encouraging the sort of anonymous sexual contact that spreads the disease.

- Australia: Fears have increased in the last two months after three Sydney women developed AIDS antibodies through artificial insemination. Now all blood, sperm and organ donors must sign legally binding declarations that they are not in the high-risk group.

## PACs election spending near \$23 million

WASHINGTON (AP) — Political action committees and individuals spent nearly \$23 million on the 1984 election, much of which was disbursed by conservative groups for what turned out to be a sure thing — Ronald Reagan's re-election.

The biggest individual spender was Michael Goland, a rich California businessman who staged a one-man advertising campaign to help unseat former Sen. Charles Percy, R-Ill. He spent \$419,573, according to a report on independent expenditures released Sunday by the Federal Election Commission.

The National Conservative Political Action Committee, which won a Supreme Court victory against the FEC last March ensuring its right to spend unlimited amounts independently, shelled out \$9.8 million for President Reagan.

NCPAC also spent \$288,995 against Democratic challenger Walter Mondale and \$116,000 against 14 other Democrats and Sen. Lowell P. Weicker Jr. of Connecticut, a liberal Republican.

All told, conservative PACs spent \$15.8 million promoting Reagan's re-election, while liberals spent only \$803,923 on their own trying to elect Mondale. There was \$343,835 worth of negative expenditures against Reagan and \$445,240 against Mondale.

A campaign expenditure is considered independent if the activity it finances is not organized or coordinated with a candidate's campaign.

James C. Moore, a real estate investor from Dripping Springs, Texas, was the second biggest individual spender by virtue of the \$79,934 he spent in a losing cause: the U.S. Senate race of former Democratic State Sen. Lloyd

Doggett against Phil Gramm, the Democrat-turned-Republican winner.

Another Texan, Houston businessman Cecil Haden ranked third in individual expenditures by spending \$40,386 to promote Reagan's re-election.

It was widely reported last year, based on reporters' scrutiny of FEC records as well as a statement by Goland's attorney, that the California developer had spent more than \$1 million on negative commercials, mailings and billboards against Percy, then chairman of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee.

Goland, a staunch supporter of Israel and pro-Israel politicians, accused Percy of being "a chameleon."

But Sharon Snyder, an FEC spokeswoman, said the \$419,573 "was all the man reported." Goland could not be reached for comment Friday.

## Newsmakers

### A roundup of the day's happenings

**Pete Rose** tied Ty Cobb's career record for hits Sunday, singling for his 4,191st hit in a game he wasn't even supposed to play and moving to the threshold of uncharted baseball territory. The 44-year-old player-manager of the Cincinnati Reds now stands poised to break one of the game's most hallowed records — a mark set by a legendary man in a time few remember.

**The Rev. Everett Sileven** says he is just a little embarrassed that the word "governor" was misspelled on a campaign banner that flew over Memorial Stadium Satur-

day. But Sileven says he thinks the banner, which announced "Sileven For Governor," is "beautiful" because it drew attention. "That's the purest form of advertising," he says.

**In Tuscon, Arizona**, heart recipient Michael Drummond, 25, told his parents "It's just wonderful to have a new heart." Drummond is the youngest man to receive an artificial heart.

From News Wires

## In Brief

### Thai government overthrown

BANGKOK, Thailand — A revolutionary group seized power in Thailand on Sunday and a statement read by Radio Thailand said everyone should obey the group's orders or suffer the consequences.

The statement, signed by Gen. Sern Na Nakhon, a former military supreme commander and former deputy prime minister in the 1970s, appealed to the public to maintain calm and go about their business as usual.

The announcement said there would be no change in the top commands of the military and police or in Thailand's foreign policy. It said the coup was staged to improve the situation in the country.

All members of the royal family were taken under the protective custody of the "Revolutionary Party" for their safety, the statement said.

### Shift in S. Africa policy expected

WASHINGTON — President Reagan, faced with overwhelming pressure from Congress, is expected to announce limited economic sanctions against South Africa today, including a desire to ban the sale of gold Krugerrands, congressional sources said Sunday.

These sources also said Reagan would announce a ban on most new bank loans to South Africa, order a halt to the shipment of nuclear technology and stop large-scale sales of computer equipment used to enforce South Africa's racially discriminatory apartheid laws.

Speaking on condition they not be identified, the sources also said Reagan would announce requirements for most American firms in South Africa to follow fair employment practices and would make available expanded U.S. aid for South African black students.

The expected announcement would mark a shift in Reagan's long-held policy of "constructive engagement" — a low-key effort of negotiations that the president said on Friday offered the best hope of accomplishing political reform in South Africa.

### Botha rejects talks with guerrillas

JOHANNESBURG, South Africa — President P. W. Botha said Sunday it would be disloyal for a group of South Africa's leading business executives to meet with the African National Congress, and flatly rejected talks with the outlawed black guerrilla movement.

Botha acknowledged in a statement issued in the capital, Pretoria, that a "leading South African" suggested the plan to him a few weeks ago. He did not identify the person. "I strongly advised against it," said Botha. "As long as the ANC is under communist leadership and supports violence in South Africa there can be no question of me approving discussions with them . . . I regard such attempts as unwise and even disloyal to the young men who are sacrificing their lives in defending South Africa's safety."

Botha has been under increasing pressure to translate into action an Aug. 15 offer to talk to unspecified black leaders about what he termed "co-responsibility."

### Four hurt in W. Virginia gas leak

CHARLESTON, W. Va. — Four people were hurt Sunday when a cloud of gas leaked from a small, family-run chemical plant near Charleston, an official said.

It was the third chemical leak in the Kanawah Valley area of West Virginia in less than a month. The other two involved Union Carbide plants situated in Institute and South Charleston. The leak at Carbide's Institute plant on Aug. 11 set 135 people to hospitals.

In Sunday's leak, the plant owner, his son-in-law and two employees were taken to the hospital suffering from inhalation of methyl mercaptan, a sulphur-based chemical. The chemical, which can be poisonous in high concentrations, escaped at levels which were not toxic, the official said.

### Food aid delayed; famine continues

NAIROBI, Kenya — Most African countries severely hit by famine last year can expect decent harvests this season, but poor distribution of food aid still is costing lives, a United Nations agency reported Sunday.

In Sudan, in particular, people are bound to starve in coming months even though the government and foreign donors are trying to speed up food delivery, the Food and Agriculture Organization said in its latest monthly report on Africa's food situation.

"Internal logistic bottlenecks, exacerbated by recent heavy rains, are preventing the distribution of the aid already received and causing severe port congestion," the FAO said of the plight of Sudan and some other countries. The United States has provided three military helicopters to help clear the backlog, and the European community seven C-130 transport planes.

Last week the leader of Ethiopia's Marxist government, Mengistu Haile Mariam, said his country will need 1 million tons of food aid from abroad in 1986. For 1985, Ethiopia asked for 1.5 million tons of foreign food aid — most supplied by the West. That figure was close to 25 percent of its normal annual grain production of around 6.2 million tons.

### Fires cloud industrial city's future

PASSAIC, N.J. — A Labor Day inferno razed 18 industrial buildings and left 2,200 people without jobs, but city officials fear the damage may run far deeper, breaking the stride of an economic rebound.

"Bamm . . . you get wiped out, nothing left," said a tired and frustrated Joseph Lipari, mayor of this industrial city of 53,000 residents 15 miles west of Manhattan.

Two 12-year-old boys are accused of setting the fire that scorched 40 acres, including buildings housing 60 small manufacturers. More than 100 families were turned out by the blaze.

The youngsters, who allegedly were playing with matches, have been charged with juvenile delinquency. They were released Friday into the custody of their parents until their trial Oct. 11.

The fire destroyed an estimated \$400 million worth of residential and commercial property and 2 million square feet of aging manufacturing space, 25 percent of the industrial property in the city of 3.2 square miles.

From News Wires