

News Digest

By The Associated Press

Colombian volcano erupts; up to 20,000 are feared dead

BOGOTA, Columbia — A volcano that had been rumbling to life for months erupted early Thursday, melting its snowcap and sending down torrents of mud that buried four sleeping towns and may have killed more than 20,000 people.

Blazing volcanic ash cascaded into the Andes valleys. Lava began flowing from the cone Thursday afternoon.

The Langunilla River became a rushing wall of mud that destroyed at least 85 percent of Armero, a coffee-farming town of 50,000 people 30 miles from the Nevado del Ruiz volcano and 105 miles northwest of Bogota.

"Armero doesn't exist anymore," Red Cross rescue worker Fernando Duque

said in an interview from the scene on Todelar radio.

The three other towns, on the mountain river between the volcano and Armero, had a total population of about 20,000.

Caracol radio said the ash fall was so heavy at 1 p.m. Thursday that "it looked like it was night time." It quoted national university geologists as saying the lava flow had begun. They did not say how large the flow was or give its direction.

A Civil Defense spokesman, Maj. Hugo Ardila, said at a noon news conference in Bogota that about 10,000 people had been found alive in Armero

up to that time.

One of them, Edelberto Nieto, told IRCN radio: "We heard a frightening noise, and then a blast of wind hit us and we saw fire falling from the sky. It was horrible, so horrible! My wife was killed. My mother was killed. My little girl who would have four years tomorrow died. One of my sisters was killed and one of my little nephews."

He said there was so much fiery ash in the street that it "burned my feet."

Ambulances and rescue workers had trouble reaching the town because the avalanche destroyed the highway and five bridges leading to it, Caracol radio said, quoting Civil Defense workers.

Dublin, London OK historic deal

DUBLIN, Ireland — Ireland and Britain approved a historic agreement Thursday giving this Roman Catholic nation a formal voice in governing the troubled, Protestant-dominated British province of Northern Ireland.

Protestant hard-liners immediately condemned the accord as "a recipe for war" and vowed to withdraw support for the Northern Irish administration.

The pact was endorsed at separate meetings of the Irish and British Cabinets and is expected to be signed by Prime Ministers Margaret Thatcher of Britain and Garret FitzGerald of Ireland at a summit today in an undisclosed location.

It is the most important initiative on Northern Ireland since 1974, and is

designed to help pacify a strife-torn region where more than 2,450 people have been killed since a centuries-old Catholic-Protestant conflict flared anew in 1969.

In the latest violence, a member of the mainly Protestant Royal Ulster Constabulary was shot and seriously wounded as he drove to work Thursday morning near the Irish border. Police blamed the Irish Republican Army, which is trying to wrest the province from the United Kingdom to unite it with the Irish Republic.

Officials in Britain and Ireland have refused to disclose more than the outlines of the plan. But it appears largely to formalize a relationship that has existed in practice for years.

It gives Ireland a consultative role — thus far not publicly defined — in Northern Ireland's affairs. Irish and British press reports said the republic's government would maintain an office in the area of Belfast, Northern Ireland's capital, where members of the Catholic minority can bring their grievances against the Protestant-led administration.

Ireland, in return, is to acknowledge British sovereignty over Northern Ireland as long as the Protestant majority so wishes.

The southern republic's constitution calls for reunification of the two Irelands, but the Dublin government has stressed repeatedly it does not want union against the Protestant's wishes.

Reagan: Summit 'mission for peace'

WASHINGTON — President Reagan told the nation Thursday evening he is going to Geneva and his first summit meeting with a Soviet leader to search for "undiscovered avenues" of cooperation and to propose broad cultural exchanges of American and Soviet students, sports teams and musicians.

"My mission, stated simply, is a mission for peace," Reagan said in a speech prepared for national broadcast from the Oval Office.

"Despite our deep and abiding dif-

ferences, we can and must prevent our international competition from spilling over into violence," Reagan said. "We can find as yet undiscovered avenues where American and Soviet citizens can cooperate, fruitfully, for the benefit of mankind."

Like the "Open Skies" proposed by President Eisenhower at a similar summit conference three decades ago, Reagan called for an "Open World" where communication between the two nations can increase and "we can

lessen the distrust between us, reduce the levels of secrecy."

Thirty-six hours before leaving for Geneva and two days of summit talks next week with Soviet leader Mikhail Gorbachev, Reagan said the two sides "are close to completing a new agreement" to resume and expand the cultural and educational exchange programs that President John F. Kennedy initiated and Jimmy Carter suspended following the Soviet military push into Afghanistan in 1979.

Waite reports progress but warns 'wrong move' could mean death

BEIRUT, Lebanon — The archbishop of Canterbury's troubleshooter said Thursday he was in contact with the kidnappers who are holding at least four Americans hostage. He warned that if anything goes wrong, he and the hostages might be killed.

"They're taking a risk, obviously, in meeting me, just as much as I'm taking a risk meeting them...A wrong move and people could lose their lives, including myself," said Terry Waite.

Waite, 46, stressed that his efforts to free the Americans have "reached a critical and dangerous stage...I have been in touch (with the kidnappers). progress has been made and we are moving forward."

He would not identify the kidnappers, who are believed to be Shi'ite Moslem

fundamentalists. "I want to protect them as much as I want to protect myself," he said. "I really do have to just drop out of the picture. I'm prepared to go anywhere, having got this far — within reason."

He came to Beirut after four of the six missing Americans sent a letter to the Anglican Church archbishop, Dr. Robert Runcie, last week.

The letter was signed by Terry Anderson, chief Middle East correspondent of The Associated Press; the Rev. Lawrence Jenco, a Roman Catholic priest; David Jacobsen, director of the American University Hospital in Beirut, and Thomas Sutherland, the university's dean of agriculture.

Waite, a burly, bearded laymen who

stands 6-foot-7, turned up unannounced at west Beirut's Commodore Hotel, the base for foreign journalists. He made his second appeal in 24 hours that reporters not hound his path while he seeks face-to-face meeting with the kidnappers.

Waite arrived from London on Wednesday night and found a crush of television crews at the airport. He was driven to a west Beirut hotel by armed militiamen.

He vanished from the hotel just before midnight, driven by two men in a blue car to an undisclosed destination in the Moslem sector of the capital.

He told the journalists Thursday that he "spent the night peacefully," but would not say where he was staying.

Newsmakers

A roundup of the day's happenings

A do-it-yourself course on how to make a nuclear bomb will be offered at The University of New Haven early next year. However, Professor Richard Morrison, who will teach the class, says he's not concerned any of his students will actually succeed in the task because plutonium or uranium 235 isotope, necessary ingredients for an atomic bomb, are federally regulated and cannot be readily acquired.

Indian guru Bhagwan Shree Rajneesh has agreed to plead guilty to federal charges of arranging sham marriages to help his foreign disciples remain in the United States illegally, the U.S. Attorney's Office says. Rajneesh had pleaded innocent to 32 counts of arranging sham marriages, one count of conspiring to arrange fake mar-

riages and two counts of lying to federal authorities.

A mother who contracted polio from her recently vaccinated daughter has settled her lawsuit against a pediatrician and Lederle laboratories for \$350,000. Linda Aduato, 36, of California, claimed she was infected by her daughter, Danielle, after changing diapers and touching contaminated feces.

Ariel Sharon gave Prime Minister Shimon Peres an apology of sorts for criticizing his policies, thus ending a crisis that nearly brought down the coalition government. The prime minister said Wednesday he intended to fire the outspoken Sharon, who had accused him of conducting secret peace negotiations with Jordan and Palestinians.

In Brief

Congress OKs higher debt limit

WASHINGTON — The government's latest fiscal mess was temporarily cleaned up Thursday after the House gave final congressional approval to interim legislation raising federal borrowing authority — the national debt limit — to 41.9 trillion.

With no debate and only about two dozen members present, the House, on a voice vote, approved the legislation that postpones a credit crunch through Dec. 6 by raising the government's \$1.824 trillion line of credit by \$80 billion. It now goes to the White House for President Reagan's expected signature.

The Senate passed the measure on a voice vote Wednesday night. Senate Majority Leader Robert Dole, R-Kan., said the action would "relieve the president of any burden while he was at the summit" next week with Soviet leader Mikhail Gorbachev.

Without action, the government would have been in default. The president had ordered federal agencies to stop issuing new checks starting Friday if congress had not increased the debt limit.

Attached to the legislation is an extension until Dec. 15 of the 16-cent-a-pack federal tax on cigarettes. Congress has not completed action on pending legislation making the 16-cent tax permanent and without the extension the tax would have dropped to 8 cents per pack after midnight Thursday.

Health Service issues AIDS guidelines

WASHINGTON — The Public Health Service, unveiling new guidelines to prevent the spread of AIDS by food service and other workers, called Thursday for increased awareness of existing sanitary precautions, but said that in general, no new special restrictions are needed.

James O. Mason, acting assistant secretary for health in the Health and Human Services Department, said the guidelines "represent no change in the basic message about AIDS that the Public Health Service has been conveying all along — that AIDS is a bloodborne, sexually transmitted disease that is not spread by casual contact."

In general, the guidelines say AIDS patients can remain in virtually any occupation without special restriction, as long as their cases do not include symptoms such as open sores that would be grounds for removing them whether they had AIDS or not.

In response to a question, Mason said the only exception might be surgeons, dentists and related health care professionals who actually work inside the body. Their status remains under study, he said, and further guidelines will be issued.

Yurchenko denies defection, KGB post

MOSCOW — Vitaly Yurchenko, denying he defected and scoring questions about his connection to the KGB, made his first public appearance in the Soviet Union Thursday and insisted he was kidnapped and drugged by the CIA.

Flanked by Soviet officials, Yurchenko appeared at a news conference in a Foreign Ministry auditorium packed with Western reporters and Soviet journalists.

Yurchenko left the United States on Nov. 6 in a surprise ending to what the State Department said was a defection three months earlier by one of the KGB's senior spies.

The Soviets frequently broke into laughter as Yurchenko derided the CIA, its director William Casey and some of the Western correspondents who asked questions.

Yurchenko said he was abducted Aug. 1 on the steps of St. Peter's Basilica in Rome and taken to Washington, where he was first kept in a hospital and then in a CIA "safe house" in the suburb of Fredericksburg, Va.

Yurchenko, flatly denying that he defected, said CIA agents gave him drugs and tried to convince him he was a traitor to his homeland.

But Yurchenko would not say directly whether he worked for the KGB secret police and intelligence agency. U.S. officials say Yurchenko ran the KGB's Washington office from 1975-80 while working at the embassy there.

FCC approves record transfers

WASHINGTON — The Federal Communications Commission on Thursday approved the largest broadcast transfers ever, giving Capital Cities Communications permission to merge with ABC and allowing publisher Rupert Murdoch to buy six Metromedia television stations.

In all, the FCC approved the transfer of 32 big-city broadcast licenses. About a third of U.S. residents are served by one or more of the stations involved in the transfers.

In approving the deals on separate 4-0 votes, the FCC gave Murdoch two years to sell his New York and Chicago newspapers, and Capital Cities a waiver to operate overlapping TV stations based in New York and Philadelphia.

FCC chairman Mark S. Fowler criticized those, including members of Congress, who opposed Murdoch's purchase of the six Metromedia TV stations as an attempt to limit the newly naturalized-American's freedom of speech.

Marcos, opposition to delay elections

MANILA, Philippines — Members of President Ferdinand E. Marcos' party and his political opposition agreed Thursday to postpone a special presidential election proposed by Marcos for next January. A new date was not set.

Leonardo Perez, Marcos' political affairs minister, said representatives of the ruling New Society Movement and the opposition agreed to the postponement in a negotiating session.

Perez said the presidential election, proposed by Marcos for Jan. 17, 1986, will probably be held "not later than the first week of February." The National Assembly, controlled by Marcos' party, is to begin debate Monday on the election and when to hold it.

Marcos' opponents had asked that the election be held on March 17 to give them more time to prepare, but Marcos' party said that date was too close to May elections for provincial governors and town and city mayors.

Perez also said negotiations were continuing on whether the election should include the vacant vice presidency.

Marcos said in announcing the special election last week that he wanted to restrict polling to the presidency, but he later agreed to include the vice presidency.