

News Digest

By The Associated Press

S. Africa scraps pass laws; blacks still voteless

JOHANNESBURG, South Africa — The white government formally announced Wednesday that it will make the most sweeping reform in generations of apartheid by scrapping dozens of laws that restrict the movements of blacks.

But it said blacks still will not be permitted to live in white areas.

Anti-apartheid leaders complained that the reforms, while welcome, do not address the demands of South Africa's 24 million voteless blacks for a share of political power.

In another action, Justice Minister Kobie Coetsee announced Wednesday that the sentences

of at least 20,000 prisoners will be reduced by six months in a general amnesty to be declared May 31.

He said the amnesty, to coincide with the 25th anniversary of the establishment of the Republic of South Africa, will not apply to people imprisoned for offenses related to racial unrest, robbery, rape or assault.

A total of 34 laws and proclamations, some dating back 60 years, will be repealed when Parliament, dominated by the government's National Party, enacts the proposed legislation. Enforcement of the "pass laws," which bar

blacks without permits from living or working in white areas, was halted Wednesday, and the government began releasing prisoners jailed on pass offenses. The government said a maximum of 245 prisoners were affected by the move.

Millions of blacks have been arrested under the pass laws.

A policy statement submitted to Parliament in Cape Town described the laws as "a relic of the past." It said the system, called influx control, would be replaced by "planned, positive urbanization" involving a uniform identity document for all races.

Blacks will be free to move from one city or town to another seeking work but will be allowed to live only in authorized residential areas, not with the country's five million whites.

Anglican Bishop Desmond Tutu, one of the country's best-known black leaders, cautioned blacks to "be aware of the small print" in the government policy statement.

Murphy Morobe, a spokesman for the anti-apartheid United Democratic Front coalition, questioned whether the government would desegregate neighborhoods and give blacks a significant political role.

AIDS Accidents

Spread in hospitals said rare

BOSTON — A study of needle punctures and other accidental exposure to the blood of AIDS patients has found that the spread of AIDS infections in hospitals is extremely rare, even during direct blood-to-blood contact.

Researchers at the Centers for Disease Control found that just two of 983 health-care workers exposed to AIDS patients' blood and other body fluids went on to develop AIDS virus infections. Only one of these two clearly got the infection from the hospital exposure.

The researchers described their findings as reassuring. Compared to hepatitis B infection, they wrote, the risk of AIDS virus infection to health-care workers exposed to patients with AIDS "appears to be extremely low."

The one clear case of infection was a woman health-care worker in New York state who accidentally jabbed herself deeply with a contaminated needle during an emergency procedure on an AIDS patient. Two weeks later, she developed flu-like symptoms that can occur in the early stages of AIDS infection.

Later blood tests revealed that her body had begun to produce antibodies to the AIDS virus, but while the woman has swollen lymph nodes she has not developed AIDS.

Dr. Eugene McCray of the CDC described it as the first documented case of occupationally acquired AIDS infection among U.S. health-care workers. However, Dr. Stanley H. Weiss of the National Cancer Institute disputed this claim and said a case he reported last October was the first clear case.

As of Monday, AIDS had struck 19,818 people in the United States and claimed 10,408 lives, according to the CDC. Most of them are male homosexuals or drug abusers who share contaminated needles.

Atlanta man charged in slaying of woman

ATLANTA — A man who allegedly stole to support a drug habit was charged Wednesday with raping and killing one of four elderly black women whose slayings terrorized a west Atlanta neighborhood. Police said they would seek indictments against him in the three other cases.

Richard Hunter, 31, was charged with murder, rape and burglary in the death of 85-year-old Annie Rochelle Copeland, who was smothered with a pillow in her apartment, said Public Safety Commissioner George Napper. Her body was found March 1.

"We believe the same person is also responsible for the other killings that have taken place," Napper said at a news conference. "Within the next couple of weeks we plan to take all the evidence gathered at this point to the district attorney and seek indictments with respect to the other cases."

The slayings were a reminder of the series of slayings in 1979-81 in which 29 young blacks were killed in Atlanta. Wayne Williams was convicted of murder in two of those cases in 1982, and police later blamed

22 other deaths on him without charging him.

Maj. B.L. Neikirk, who heads the task force investigating the latest slayings, said robbery was the apparent motive.

Hunter "has a drug habit . . . (and) the robberies were an effort to obtain articles to sell (to support his) drug use," he said.

Neikirk said Hunter had lived in the area where the slayings occurred until about six months ago.

The four victims were killed in an area between the campuses of Georgia Tech and Spelman College, just west of downtown Atlanta. All four were black women over 60 who lived alone, all were smothered or strangled between March 1 and April 9, and all were sexually assaulted.

Copeland was the first victim. The others were Aretha Clements, 61, found March 6; Dena Mike, 61, found March 11; and Gracie Hill, 65, found April 9.

Neikirk said a tipster brought Hunter, who is black, to the attention of the police, and officers had been watching him since Saturday.

Hollywood director Preminger dead at 80

NEW YORK — Otto Preminger, 80, the autocratic director whose 37 films included "Anatomy of a Murder," and "The Man With The Golden Arm," and often dealt with subjects then considered taboo, died early Wednesday.

Preminger died at 12:42 a.m. in bed at his apartment, with his wife, Hope, and a nurse at his side, said police spokesman Sgt. Ron Severin. He had cancer.

He was known as an innovator, challenging the film industry with movies like the 1953 "The Moon is Blue," which was opposed by the

Catholic Church; the 1954 "Carmen Jones," a modern-day adaptation of Bizet's opera with an all-black cast; and 1956's "Golden Arm," which starred Frank Sinatra and depicted narcotics use.

He also appeared in five films, including "Stalag 17," in which he portrayed the dictatorial commandant of a German prisoner-of-war camp.

Preminger was born Dec. 5, 1905, in Vienna, Austria, and earned a law degree there in 1928. He came to the United States in 1935 and the following year made his first U.S. film, "Under

Your Spell."

He also was on the faculty at Yale Drama School until 1940, and then became a stage director in New York, winning the Critics Choice Award and Full Circle Award for Broadway productions.

Preminger's autocratic style as director caused some actors to rebel.

He got headlines in 1959 with "Anatomy of a Murder," a courtroom drama starring James Stewart and film newcomer George C. Scott, and was to include Lana Turner, who walked off the set in a dispute with the director.

Preminger claimed she didn't like her costume. According to "Inside Oscar," the actress said she left because "it was simply impossible to deal with Mr. Preminger's unpredictable temper."

In addition to his third wife, Preminger is survived by his daughter, Victoria Elizabeth, and two sons, Mark William and Erik Lee.

Erik Lee Preminger, 41, is the son of stripper-actress Gypsy Rose Lee. Preminger publicly identified himself as Erik's father in 1971.

Burial services will be held privately.

In Brief

Fremont suicide

FREMONT — A Fremont man committed suicide shortly after an Indiana grand jury indicted him for the 1979 murder of his wife, authorities said Wednesday.

James Graul, 34, was found dead at his home at 4 p.m. Tuesday. Graul shot himself in the head with a 12-gauge shotgun, Dodge County Attorney Dean Skokan said.

An Elkhart, Ind., Circuit Court grand jury had indicted Graul at 2:10 p.m. CST, authorities said. The grand jury determined that enough evidence existed to charge Graul with killing his wife, Kathryn.

Hostage death

BEIRUT, Lebanon — The Revolutionary Organization of Socialist Moslems said Wednesday that it has killed kidnapped British journalist Alec Collett. The group released a

video tape showing a man dangling from a scaffold that it said was the New York-based writer.

The four-minute tape was provided to the independent Beirut newspaper An-Nahar along with a typewritten Arabic statement that the 64-year-old Collett was "executed" April 16 in retaliation for Britain's complicity in the U.S. air attack on Libya.

The hanged man, wearing a black eye mask, bore a strong resemblance to Collett's photographs that were released by the United Nations upon his abduction south of Beirut March 25, 1985.

'No Mo'

LINCOLN — Three Lincoln men said they've taken orders for 30 dozen of what they hope will become the "official anti-terrorism T-shirt," featuring a picture of Libyan leader Col. Moammar Khadafy obscured by the international not-allowed symbol and reading "No Mo."

Todd Beers, Mike Clancy and

Dominique Cheene, founders of Fashion Statements of Lincoln, said it's difficult to find many Americans who like Khadafy and that's good for their business.

The men said that Khadafy was chosen for the logo only because he is the person most associated with terrorism.

"We want it to be the official anti-terrorism T-shirt," Cheene said.

Income limit

WASHINGTON — The House, nervous about the political consequences of a move to boost members' outside earnings capacity, reversed itself Wednesday and reimposed the old limits by an overwhelming majority.

The lawmakers voted 333-68 to undo Tuesday's quickie maneuver that had lifted the ceiling on outside earned income, far more than the two-thirds majority needed to reimpose the old rule.

The action came even as many members who voted to restore the

limit agreed that the cost-of-living and of maintaining residences both at home and in Washington had outpaced the buying power of the \$75,100 congressional salary.

Frog leg laws

NEW DELHI, India — Two species of frogs have been placed under wildlife protection laws because a growing gastronomic demand for their legs overseas threatens to make them extinct, a government official told Parliament on Wednesday.

"The two species of fresh-water edible frogs, rana hexadactyla and rana tigrina, are exploited because of the great demand for their legs, which are considered a delicacy abroad," Minister of State for Environment Z.R. Ansari said.

India is the world's largest exporter of frogs, selling them for food and for medical research, mostly to Western Europe. The booming frog-leg industry earns India \$15 million a year.

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