

News Digest

By The Associated Press

Fire survivors tell harrowing stories while subway investigation begins

LONDON — Andrew Lea got off a subway train in King's Cross station on Wednesday night and saw "a large orange glow" at the top of the escalator he planned to take out of the complex.

As he took another exit, "a sheet of flames shot across the top of that escalator that I was on, and very soon the ceiling was on fire and debris started falling down."

Lea was among the survivors of the blaze who told harrowing stories of people on fire and of being carried on an escalator into the flames.

People collapsed from smoke and many pounded helplessly on windows of passing trains in search of an escape from Britain's worst subway fire.

The government on Thursday announced a public inquiry into a sudden and quick-spreading fire that raged through London's largest subway station, killing 30 people and injuring about 80 others.



Michelle Miklos/Daily Nebraskan

Fire officials said they could not explain how a small fire could spread so quickly. Investigators descended into the cavernous, fire-ravaged ticketing plaza of the multi-tiered station to search for

clues. They said they were certain the fire broke out on one of the escalators, not beneath it as was previously thought.

But they added that they had no idea what caused it.

Budget ax law ready

Bargainers say they're near agreement

WASHINGTON — Bargainers from the White House and Congress said Thursday they were closer to agreement on a deficit-reduction plan, but divisions in Republican ranks imperiled efforts to avoid Gramm-Rudman budget cuts today.

President Reagan pushed for the negotiators to settle on a package of deficit cuts. Some Republicans, however, said they'd just as soon see the widespread automatic sliding begin as required by the Gramm-Rudman deficit-reduction law.

"While the final package may not be all that I might want, it will not be all that Congress wants either," Reagan told the U.S. Chamber of Commerce. "But it is vital that the negotiators complete their work now."

The Gramm-Rudman law requires \$23 billion in deficit reduction in fiscal 1988, which began Oct. 1. By the end of the day, Reagan must order such a cut in federal spending, half from domestic programs and half from the military.

Even if an agreement is reached by White House and congressional nego-

tiators on a deficit-reduction package to avoid the automatic slicing under the Gramm-Rudman law, enacting such a program might take weeks.

The immediate Gramm-Rudman cuts could be avoided, however, if Congress passes and the president signs a delay.

On Thursday, the House Rules Committee, at the urging of House Speaker Jim Wright, D-Texas, approved a resolution to delay the cuts until Dec. 16. But lawmakers from both sides of the aisle said it will not pass on today unless there was an agreement in the talks.

The bargainers still were working on a plan to cut the deficit \$75 billion over two years. It would raise about \$9 billion in taxes this year and impose selective spending cuts instead of the arbitrary one of Gramm-Rudman.

"We're close on the numbers," said Rep. Trent Lott, R-Miss. He said outstanding issues included how to guarantee the spending cuts would be enacted and the composition of the new taxes included in the proposal.

Report: NSC staff interfered with 7 probes

WASHINGTON — National security aides John Poindexter and Oliver North interfered with seven criminal investigations when the probes threatened to expose the Reagan administration's private Contra resupply operation, the congressional Iran-Contra committees say.

Meanwhile, Attorney General Edwin Meese III, the target of strong criticism in the panel's 690-page report, described the study on Thurs-

day as "a great job of Monday morning quarterbacking."

"There wasn't anything particularly new," Meese said of the report, which said he failed to keep records and neglected to seal North's office during a weekend inquiry last November that uncovered diversion of funds from the secret sale of arms to Iran to the Contra rebels in Nicaragua.

North continued to shred documents

throughout the weekend inquiry.

The report, released Wednesday, also concluded that Meese probably approved the use of private funds for a failed 1985-86 ransom operation for U.S. hostages in Lebanon bankrolled by Texas industrialist H. Ross Perot.

Defending his performance during the inquiry a year ago, Meese said "it looks a lot different when you are on the scene." He de-

clined to discuss the ransom operation.

Asked whether he might resign, Meese replied: "That's silly."

The Iran-Contra report provides some new details of efforts in 1985 and 1986 by Poindexter, a former national security adviser to President Reagan, and fired National Security Council staffer North to monitor and, in some instances, impede criminal investigations.

TWA confirms two incidents of faulty plane oxygen masks

ST. LOUIS — TWA has confirmed two weekend incidents in which oxygen masks failed to drop to passengers on planes that had lost cabin pressure, including one case in which the masks supplied no oxygen.

The first failure occurred Friday on a TWA flight from St. Louis to Houston that had 26 passengers, according to Donald Morrison, TWA vice president for public affairs.

Some passengers had to pull their oxygen masks down when they failed to release, and then they found that no oxygen was available.

Morrison said the pilot continued the flight to Houston after descending to an altitude with higher atmospheric

pressure.

The same type of failure occurred Sunday when a TWA plane lost pressure on a flight from Austin, Texas, to St. Louis. But the pilot of that plane elected to make an unscheduled stop in Springfield, Mo., and passengers were picked up by a replacement plane and taken to St. Louis.

Morrison said both planes had been returned to service after installation of replacement parts. There was no question the problems were isolated, he said.

"Loss of cabin pressure is not a common situation, but it occurs every once in a while," Morrison said. "The pilot was following normal procedure."

Soviets provide limited missile data

WASHINGTON — The Soviet Union has provided the United States with detailed information about its medium-range missile arsenal in another step toward completion of a treaty to be signed at the December summit, Reagan administration officials said Thursday.

But the information turned over Wednesday to U.S. negotiators in Geneva dealt mostly with deployed missiles and did not include all the specific data the U.S. side wants on SS-20s and SS-4s that might be in storage and where they are being kept, the officials said.

In the meantime, there were

growing indications that Secretary of State George P. Shultz would go to Geneva next week to meet with Soviet Foreign Minister Eduard A. Shevardnadze on a summit agenda.

The main purpose, if Shultz decides to go, is to discuss regional problems, and not the prospective arms control treaty, said a U.S. official who demanded anonymity.

The United States has been seeking Soviet support to impose a worldwide arms embargo on Iran and for a commitment to withdraw the Red Army from Afghanistan. The two governments also have been discussing prospects for

Arab-Israeli peace talks.

Charles E. Redman, the State Department spokesman, declined to repeat the statement he has been making for days that Shultz had no plans for another meeting with Shevardnadze. While that is still "technically" correct, Redman said, "right now we are in a position of stock-taking."

All 553 SS-20 and SS-4 missiles the Soviets have deployed would be scrapped under the treaty. The Soviets also would dismantle 130 shorter-range rockets, while the United States would eliminate 364 missiles that were installed in West Germany, Britain, Italy and Belgium.

Correction

Thursday's articles on ASUN and the University of Nebraska Board of Regents said College of Engineering students could experience a \$20 surcharge on their tuition, if approved by the Regents. Those articles should have read, a 20 percent surcharge, or \$9 per credit hour. Also the headline on the Regents story was incorrect. The Regents will vote on the surcharge this morning.

Irish Protestant politician shot

BELFAST, Northern Ireland — A leading Protestant politician who once recommended burning Roman Catholics was shot in the head Thursday as he got out of a car, police said.

George Seawright, an elected city councilor, was admitted to Mater Hospital in critical condition with two bullet wounds in the head, authorities said.

The Royal Ulster Constabulary said Seawright was shot by "terrorists," but there was no immediate claim of responsibility.

The Scottish-born Seawright is a member of the Democratic Unionists, led by the militant Rev. Ian Paisley. The party opposes any concessions by Protestants to the Catholic minority in the British province.

Seawright, 35, was shot as he got out of car at a supermarket on Dundee Road, in the Protestant Shankill district, a police statement said.

Seawright gained notoriety in 1984 when he declared to a Belfast council meeting that the city should buy an incinerator and burn all Catholics in it.

Seawright's incinerator remark was too harsh even for his party. He was expelled and fined \$120 for incitement and spent 15 days in prison



John Bruce/Daily Nebraskan

until an anonymous sympathizer paid the fine.

Despite having no party base, he won a landslide victory in the 1985 municipal election, running in the heavily Protestant and blue-collar Shankill district.

Seawright was the second Belfast councilor to be shot this year. In May, Alex Maskey of the Irish Republican Army's political wing Sinn Fein was shot in the stomach by a Protestant gunman.

Scientists pinpoint link to common cold misereries

CHARLOTTESVILLE, Va. — Inflammatory substance found in nasal secretions may be responsible for the misereries of the common cold, according to researchers at the University of Virginia and Johns Hopkins University.

Dr. Jack M. Gwaltney, professor of internal medicine at Virginia, said the substances, known as kinins, were found in substantially higher levels in people infected with the major family of cold viruses, rhinoviruses, than in people who are free of the viruses or who carry them without showing symptoms.

"What our studies to date have shown is an association between when kinins are elevated and when a person is sick," he said.

Gwaltney said the researchers "believe rhinovirus infections may trigger the release of these kinins. The kinins in turn cause blood vessels to dilate, allowing plasma to leak out and stimulate pain in the nerve endings and glandular secretions."

There may be other substances not yet documented that are involved in the chain of events, and additional

studies with kinin-blocking drugs will be necessary to test whether stopping kinins will stop cold symptoms, he said.

Research at Johns Hopkins in Baltimore showed that volunteers who did not have colds developed cold-like symptoms when they were given kinins. Researchers also found that cold symptoms sufferers have only one type of inflammatory substance, kinins, while allergy sufferers have a whole array, including histamine and prostaglandin.

Earlier studies have shown that what is called the common cold is caused by as many as 300 viruses, which makes development of an effective vaccine difficult.

In 1986, University of Virginia doctors found that volunteers exposed to rhinoviruses failed to develop colds if they were administered a nasal spray containing the hormone interferon. Using the spray for a week, however, irritated the nose about as much as a cold does.

Until further studies can find an effective prevention or cure, Gwaltney urged cold sufferers to treat the individual symptoms.

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Editor Mike Reilly
Managing Editor Jen Deselms
General Manager Daniel Shattil
Production Manager Katherine Policky
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