



News... in a Minute

Ito visits UCLA classes

LOS ANGELES — Superior Court Judge Lance A. Ito doffed his judicial robe and headed out to address court interpreters during a weekend extension class where he never uttered the "S" word.

The encounter with the judge, who presides over what has been called the trial of the century, was compared to meeting the king of rock 'n' roll.

"He's like Elvis for us. We're all crazy about him," said Monica Hylande of West Los Angeles.

"There aren't too many things that can get me up this early. I can use the rest and relaxation at home," Ito said at the outset of Sunday's 9:30 a.m. class at UCLA.

His audience of about 200 listened intently as he spoke about the standards and goals of their profession.

Leading rabbi buried

JERUSALEM — More than 300,000 black-robed mourners flooded Jerusalem's streets Monday in a funeral procession for one of the nation's most influential ultra-Orthodox Jewish rabbis.

Rabbi Shlomo Zalman Auerbach, whose ultra-Orthodox followers relied on him to interpret Jewish law, died Sunday in Jerusalem at age 84 as followers around the country prayed for his recovery.

Auerbach was hospitalized Thursday with pneumonia. He suffered a heart attack on Friday and died Sunday evening.

Mourners stood on rooftops and clung to utility poles Monday along the processional route, which wound two miles from Auerbach's home near the city's center to the burial site. The crowds brought downtown traffic to a halt for hours during the afternoon and forced detours on roads leading into the city.

Auerbach had a profound influence on followers who turned to him for guidance on how to live their daily lives according to Jewish law. He advised them on issues as intimate as marital relations and fertility.

Rebel Serbs together plotting war strategies

BELGRADE, Yugoslavia — Rebel Serbs from Croatia and Bosnia plotted military strategy together Monday for the first time, a sign that conflicts in the neighboring states could escalate into a single war.

SRNA, the Bosnian Serb news agency, reported a military council of Bosnian and Croatian Serbs discussed cooperation if Croatian Serbs are attacked by Croatian government forces.

The meeting, in the Serb stronghold of Banja Luka in northern Bosnia, included Bosnian Serb leader Radovan Karadzic and Croatian Serb leader Milan Martić. A joint military command also was on the agenda, sources said.

Rebel Serbs seized a third of Croatia in 1991, and Bosnian Serbs control 70 percent of that republic after nearly three years of fighting.

Both were encouraged and supplied by Serbian President Slobodan Milosevic, who says he has cut off the Bosnian Serbs to persuade them to accept peace. But both insist they still wish to join Serbia and say Milosevic will

assist them if they are in military danger.

They already have cooperated: Croatian Serbs are fighting across the border in northwest Bosnia against Bosnian government forces.

Croatia's government has told 12,000 U.N. troops stationed along Serb-Croat front lines for three years to begin withdrawing by March 31. Without the U.N. presence, the war that took at least 10,000 lives in 1991 could begin again.

Much of the Croatian Serbs' land is contiguous with Serb-held territory in Bosnia. Cooperation between the two sides could mean more troops and better logistics and weaponry for the Croatian Serbs.

But Bosnian Serbs got a warning Monday from a leading Bosnian Croat that more fighting may lie ahead in Bosnia, too.

Dario Kordic said that if the fate of Bosnian areas with traditionally large ethnic Croat populations is not resolved, "we will not renounce the use of force" to regain them.

Bishop's supporters, opponents demonstrate

SAN CRISTOBAL DE LAS CASAS, Mexico — As opponents demand his removal, Bishop Samuel Ruiz struggles to hold together an increasingly polarized Chiapas state and mediate a yearlong Indian uprising.

The job is getting tougher by the day. The 70-year-old diabetic monsignor faces protests by dissenters who want him to resign and pressure from Mexico City to quit his role as mediator.

The toll shows on his ashen face and the unusual silences at ever-rarer public appearances.

At the brightly painted 16th-century Roman Catholic cathedral, parishioners stacked blankets and firewood in front of the diocese doors on Monday, after a riot Sunday left four people injured.

About 500 ranchers and businessmen from the San Cristobal Civic Front, accusing the bishop of supporting the Zapatista rebels, hurled eggs, rocks and sticks at the cathedral. Some demonstrators carried signs depicting Ruiz as a devil. In Las Margaritas, about 100 miles south, graffiti called for his death.

The demonstrators were gone Monday, but parishioners still maintained their vigil outside the diocese.

"The bishop is a great person who has always defended us," Santana Jerasto Martinez Gonzalez said of Ruiz, who has been the Roman Catholic bishop of San Cristobal for more than three decades.

"We are here to support Don Samuel and protect him from the ranchers," said the 39-year-old Indian peasant, among some 100 people who spent the night outside the ca-

"(Bishop Ruiz) wakes up the poor people."

ABELARDO SANCHEZ BERMUDEZ

Demonstrator

thedral, huddled under blankets around a bonfire.

"The people with money are against the bishop because they are afraid of the effect on their economic interests," said Abelardo Sanchez Bermudez, 21, as he helped to form a human chain around the church. "He wakes up the poor people."

But many here feel otherwise. "He's not behind the Zapatistas. He is the leader," charged Father Luis Beltran Mijangos, a priest who publicly disagrees with Ruiz's teaching of liberation theology.

"The clergy, managed by Samuel Ruiz ... totally changed the sense of the gospel. They hammered into the head of the indigenous the hatred of the Ladinos," said Mario Flores Quiroz, a leader of the Civic Front. Ladinos, of European-Indian descent, control most of the money and power in the country.

Ranchers blame Ruiz's liberation theology for the Jan. 1, 1994, uprising by the Zapatista National Liberation Army, which demanded political and social reform for impoverished Indians. At least 145 people died in 12 days of fighting and rebels

and peasants have taken over 2,000 private properties.

Liberation theology interprets the Holy Scriptures in light of the poor. It has spurred rebel movements throughout Latin America in the last 20 years, although the Vatican now opposes it.

"Liberation theology is fomenting hatred and a struggle between classes," Beltran said. "It justifies armed struggle to recuperate property ... This is not right. What guilt do I have for what my grandparents did?"

But Ruiz has stayed firm. "I've never heard of a theology of slavery," he once said. Ruiz has received letters and at least one call from the Vatican, asking him to tone down his involvement.

The Mexican Conference of Bishops last week came out in support of Ruiz's pastoral work but many bishops are uncomfortable with his social activism.

"The matter of the bishop has been very polemical. Evidently it affects the church and it compromises the image of the Church," Abelardo Alvarado Alcantara, president of the Bishops' Commission for Social Communication, said at a recent bishops conference.

Meanwhile, President Ernesto Zedillo is attempting to hand over Ruiz's National Mediation Commission to a multiparty government commission.

The commission was recognized in December by both the government and the Zapatistas. But now, rebel leaders who trusted Ruiz are on the run, as the army advances into their territory with an arrest warrant for rebel spokesman, Subcomandante Marcos.

Lincoln neo-Nazi propagandist problem for German authorities

DUESSELDORF, Germany — Neo-Nazis whose violence and other spiteful acts have shamed Germany are finally being reined in, but the American who supplies most of their propaganda remains out of reach.

Due to better law enforcement, about 30 percent fewer neo-Nazi attacks were recorded in 1994 from the 2,232 in 1993, the deputy chief of German counterintelligence said Monday.

Bans on neo-Nazi groups and infiltration by German agents have thrown fascists into disarray, said Peter Frisch, vice president of the Federal Office for the Protection of the Constitution. Hundreds of neo-Nazis are in prison.

But there's little German authorities can do about American Gary Lauck — identified by Frisch as the biggest supplier of propaganda to

German neo-Nazis.

As the leader of a group that idolizes Hitler, Lauck prints an anti-Semitic newspaper and propaganda in Lincoln.

"We've had intensive talks with the FBI about him," Frisch said at an exhibit on extremism. "They (the FBI) point out that freedom of speech is an absolute right in the United States and there is no chance to take legal action against him."

"Our only chance is intercepting it. But he (Lauck) doesn't put a return address on the envelopes so it's hard to spot. We are able to confiscate some, but huge amounts get through," Frisch said.

Printing or possessing neo-Nazi material is a crime in Germany under laws Americans helped formulate at the end of World War II.

A display case at the exhibit at an

educational fair in Duesseldorf contains a sample of Lauck's work: a bumper sticker bearing a swastika and the words "We are back."

Also on display are a starter pistol, brass knuckles, mock firebomb and a martial arts weapon made of two hard handles connected by a chain. All but the mock firebomb were used in neo-Nazi attacks.

A giant flag with a swastika, produced in Taiwan, is set beside the weapons inside the plexiglass case, as are German-language CDs recorded in Britain and France with heavy metal music and anti-foreigner and anti-Semitic lyrics.

At least 30 people — mainly foreigners — have been killed in neo-Nazi violence that has plagued Germany since its reunification in 1990.

Susan Smith was molested by stepfather

UNION, S.C. — Susan Smith, who is accused of drowning her two young sons, was molested by her stepfather when she was 16, the man admitted in court papers that were unsealed Monday.

The admission, signed in 1988, tells only a small part of her story, her lawyers cautioned.

"No single piece of information about Susan Vaughan Smith's life explains her," lawyers David Bruck and Judy Clarke said Monday.

Bruck has not said whether he will use the allegations as part of Mrs. Smith's defense.

The 23-year-old woman faces two murder charges and potential execu-

tion in the Oct. 25 drowning deaths of her sons, 3-year-old Michael and 14-month-old Alex.

She claimed in October that the boys were taken by a carjacker, but later signed a confession saying the youngsters were strapped in their safety seats when she rolled her car into a lake.

The court papers released Monday said Beverly Russell abused his stepdaughter by "participating in open mouth kissing, fondling her breasts and by the stepfather placing the minor's hand on him in and about the genital area."

Russell was never charged with any crime but signed a March 25,

1988, court order agreeing that the allegations were true. The order does not say when the incident happened.

Family Court Judge Lee Alford agreed last month to release the records after two newspapers, The (Columbia) State and The Greenville News, sued to see them.

Russell, 47, a stockbroker and tax consultant and member of the state Republican Party's executive committee, decided Friday not to appeal the decision. His attorney said last week he would have no comment on the file's contents.

Russell did not return a telephone message Monday.

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