

NEWS DIGEST

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Microsoft considers settlement

After ruling of monopoly misuse, out-of-court agreement may occur

WASHINGTON (AP) — The nation's top antitrust official says the government is "looking at a full range of remedies" to punish Microsoft following a judge's ruling that the software giant misused its monopoly powers.

Despite U.S. District Judge Thomas Penfield Jackson's preliminary findings against Microsoft, however, both the government and the company expressed a willingness to consider an out-of-court settlement.

In an open letter, Microsoft Chairman Bill Gates said the company is committed to "a fair and responsible" resolution. The company's chief operating officer, Bob Herbold, said on the Sunday talk shows that "there's nothing we'd like more than to settle this case."

Assistant Attorney General Joel Klein, who also appeared on three television programs, said, "Obviously, settlement is always an option."

Neither Klein nor Herbold would

suggest what an agreement might entail.

"We would need a settlement that deals with the very findings that the court made in this case, a settlement that produces consumer choice, innovation and competition in the market," Klein said on "Fox News Sunday."

He cited "serious issues here about law enforcement and the antitrust laws. And, of course, if Microsoft were prepared to engage on those issues, we would be prepared as well."

In Gates' letter, which appeared as a full-page advertisement in The Washington Post, he wrote that "Microsoft is committed to resolving this matter in a fair and responsible manner, while ensuring that the fundamental principles of consumer benefit and innovation are protected."

Jackson, who presided over 77 days of testimony, declared in a remarkably blunt decision that Microsoft's aggres-

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JOEL KLEIN

assistant attorney general

sive use of its monopoly status stifled innovation and hurt consumers by limiting choices.

On ABC, Klein said Jackson's findings meant that "Microsoft was able to control personal computers and control investment in that area."

Klein said both sides will submit to Jackson legal analyses of the findings, after which the judge will decide penalties, if any.

Government lawyers, Klein said, are "doing an analysis that will look at

the full range of remedies."

Asked if breaking up Microsoft is among them, Klein said: "That is in the range, but ... it is premature for us now to get ahead of the story."

One penalty that he appeared to rule out is a fine, Klein said on CNN's "Late Edition."

Appearing on the same program, Sen. Orrin Hatch, chairman of the Senate Judiciary Committee, praised Klein for his prosecution and counseled Microsoft to negotiate.

Lawsuit could change use of university fees

MADISON, Wis. (AP) — A lawsuit by a student who objected to the use of his student fees to support liberal campus groups at the University of Wisconsin could change the way fees are spent on college campuses nationwide.

The U.S. Supreme Court, which is to hear the case Tuesday, will decide whether public universities can use mandatory student activity fees to subsidize campus groups that pursue political goals.

"The decision will affect, literally, every college and university in this country," said Brady Williamson, who teaches constitutional law at the University of Wisconsin-Madison.

The suit was filed in 1996 by then-law student Scott Southworth. A federal trial judge and the 7th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals ruled in his favor that the subsidies unlawfully force some students to subsidize views they find objectionable.

If the high court upholds those rulings, it could bar schools from using student fees to pay for politically active groups, or it could issue a less sweeping remedy allowing students to opt out of giving money to groups they find objectionable.

University spokeswoman Sharyn Wisniewski said the school appealed the rulings because the fees help pay for a system that gives students a forum to discuss and deal with issues that might not exist without fee-supported groups.

The fee in question is \$15 per semester for each of the 38,000 students. The money is distributed through student committees elected by the student body.

Southworth and several other law students with conservative political views had challenged the funneling of the fee proceeds to 18 organizations on the Madison campus. Among groups they objected to were International Socialist Organization; Campus Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual Center and an AIDS support network.

"We didn't believe that any student should have to pay fees that went to groups that they objected to on a personal, ideological or religious basis," said Southworth, now a lawyer and an aide to a state senator.

"It's inconsequential whether they're liberal or conservative," he said. "We'd support liberal students who object to their fees going to conservative groups."

Thirty-three hurt in bomb explosion

Islamic militants blamed for pipe-bomb explosion in busy shopping area.

NETANYA, Israel (AP) — On the eve of final status talks with the Palestinians, police on Sunday blamed an explosion in the busy coastal town of Netanya on Islamic militants opposed to the process.

Three pipe bombs injured 33 Israelis and raised questions about whether Palestinians are able to meet the major Israeli expectation of peace — an end to terror.

There were no fatalities. Two of the victims suffered moderate injuries, and the rest were slightly injured, said Danny Hadad, deputy police commander of Netanya and the surrounding area.

A fourth pipe bomb failed to explode. It was taken to the beach by the police bomb squad and detonated safely.

Three Palestinian suspects were detained, but two were released after questioning, police spokeswoman

Sivan Kedmi said. Army radio said dozens of Palestinians were rounded up because they lacked the necessary permits to be in Netanya.

Prime Minister Ehud Barak said the government will not capitulate to terrorism. "There are elements who will try to torpedo the peace process," he told reporters. "They will not succeed. The government and the security services will smash the terrorism."

The pipe bombs, placed close together, exploded outside a large bank in a busy shopping area. The twisted remains of a bicycle and a garbage can blown open by the bomb lay on a charred sidewalk at an intersection.

The area was closed while forensic experts in white overalls and gloves combed the area for evidence.

At a street corner near the site, about 30 residents of Netanya gathered and shouted "Death to Arabs" and "Barak Go Home."

Israeli and Palestinian representatives are scheduled to meet Monday in the West Bank town of Ramallah to begin negotiations on a permanent peace agreement.

Russian bombers take over Grozny, other small towns

GROZNY, Russia (AP) — Russian forces gained ground in Chechnya on Sunday, advancing on the breakaway republic's second-largest city, Gudermes, and dislodging rebels from their western stronghold in Bamut.

Russian bombers and artillery, meanwhile, flattened parts of Grozny and other towns in the government's two month campaign to wipe out Islamic militants. Many of the attacks on Grozny, the capital, hit residential areas.

Grozny commandant Isa Munayev said 38 civilians had been killed and more than 100 wounded, but the toll could not be independently confirmed.

After heavy fighting, rebels abandoned their stronghold in Bamut, 35 miles southwest of Grozny, Chechen military headquarters announced. It said 28 of their fighters had been killed and 26 wounded in fierce fighting around the nearby villages of Samashki, Zakan-Yurt and Alkhan-kala.

Col. Valery Yakhnovets, a paratroop commander, said Russian forces had taken a ridge outside Gudermes, which they have been besieging for more than a week. He said there were no Russian casualties.

"During the day, our aviation nicely ironed out the heights; that was preparation for storming it," Yakhnovets said.

After repeated air strikes, the main street in Grozny, Avtorkhanov Avenue, became a string of craters, some 30 yards wide and 10 yards deep.

A moving truck, apparently carrying belongings of people fleeing the city, was overturned and crushed by the blasts, and hundreds of family photographs spilled out and lay scattered around the pitted street.

Most residents had already fled the Russian raids, but rescue workers were seen carrying away at least one dead body after the attack, and several people were injured.

World and Nation Datelines

■ Rhode Island Sunday memorial service remembers flight victims

NEWPORT, R.I. (AP) — Relatives of the victims of EgyptAir Flight 990 gathered Sunday to bid a wrenching farewell to their loved ones, as the Navy received reinforcements in its search for the airplane's "black boxes."

Leaders from the Jewish, Christian and Islamic faiths were called upon to offer prayers at an afternoon memorial service in Brenton Point State Park, overlooking the Atlantic Ocean. The service was closed to the public.

At sea, a civilian ship equipped with a newer, remote control submersible robot headed to the area off the island of Nantucket where the Boeing 767 plummeted into the sea Oct. 31 from 33,000 feet, killing 217 people.

■ South Africa Doctor supports anti-AIDS drug for pregnant women

JOHANNESBURG, South Africa (AP) — A doctor has challenged the government's refusal to provide anti-AIDS drugs to pregnant HIV-positive women, saying the policy violates their babies' constitutional rights to life and proper medical care.

Dr. Costa Gazi said in an interview with The Associated Press that he has filed a complaint with the Human Rights Commission in an effort to pressure Health Minister Manto Tshabalala-Msimang into changing the policy.

Gazi's initiative is certain to create a stir in a nation with one of the world's worst AIDS problems. Eight percent of the population — 3.6 million people — is estimated to be HIV positive.

Last April, Gazi, a member of the opposition Pan Africanist Congress, publicly criticized the health minister's decision to withhold the antiviral drug AZT from HIV-positive pregnant women, prompting the government to charge him with shaming the republic and the constitution. Hearings into the misconduct charges are expected to begin in December.

■ India Freedom of religion 'basic human right,' Pope says

NEW DELHI, India (AP) — With his minority church under fire by some Hindus for its missionary work, Pope John Paul II said Sunday that freedom to practice or change one's religion must be considered a basic human right.

Frail and moving slowly in the heat, the pope celebrated his only Mass in India on the same day as Diwali, a major Hindu holiday that is marked by lights and firecrackers. He then attended a meeting with representatives of other religions, describing it as a further sign that Roman Catholics seek dialogue with other faiths.

"No state, no group has the right to control, either directly or indirectly, a person's religious convictions ... or the respectful appeal of a particular religion to people's free conscience," John Paul told them.

The pope rested his head in his hands through most of the 90-minute interfaith meeting, as the religious leaders uttered greetings in different languages.

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