

## At a glance

A brief look at our world

### State

#### State acknowledges more tax form errors

HARRISBURG (AP) — The Pennsylvania Revenue Department has acknowledged more errors on individual, corporate and estate tax forms.

It is the second time in recent weeks that the state said it found mistakes in tax forms. Last month, the state said it had notified 500,000 taxpayers that their 1994 overpayments had been sent to the Wild Resources Conservation Fund, rather than applied to 1995 tax bills, as the taxpayers requested.

The latest errors on individual forms were the omission of a signature line for tax preparers and later deadlines for taxpayers who make quarterly estimated payments, said Revenue spokeswoman Deb Snyder.

#### 20-month-old survives fall from seventh story

MCKEESPORT — It seemed like a miracle when 20-month-old David Markotan survived a seven-story fall from a window. His doctor agreed.

"I kept looking in his room for an Angel," said Dr. Edward Barksdale Jr., David's surgeon. "It's incredible that he is alive."

David was in fair condition yesterday at Children's Hospital of Pittsburgh.

Several ribs on his right side were broken, his pancreas and liver were bruised and he had a concussion.

Officials said the boy apparently fell through a torn screen in a seventh-floor apartment at Harrison Village in McKeesport, about nine miles southeast of Pittsburgh.

The boy's father was working on his car at 8 p.m. Tuesday in the parking lot outside the building when he noticed a child on the ground nearby. He walked over and realized it was his son, said Jim Brewster, a Housing Authority official.

### Nation

#### Surgeon infects 19 with hepatitis B virus

BOSTON (AP) — A young heart surgeon unknowingly infected at least 19 of his patients with the hepatitis B virus, despite wearing gloves and carefully following all of the other usual operating room precautions.

While this virus can be extremely infectious, the high rate of spread startled experts, especially since they could not find that he had done anything wrong.

About 1 percent of U.S. surgeons are believed to be infected with hepatitis B, which can be fatal. Most of them, like the doctor in the newly described case, apparently caught it from their patients during operations.

The outbreak occurred four years ago at two Los Angeles hospitals where the physician trained in thoracic surgery. Over 12 months, he passed hepatitis B to 13 percent of his surgical patients, mostly during heart operations.

### World

#### Epidemics killing thousands in Nigeria

LAGOS, Nigeria (AP) — At least 15,000 people have died in the last month from epidemics sweeping northern Nigeria, according to news reports yesterday.

Health Minister Ikechukwu Madubike told the Lagos Guardian newspaper that in the last week, 50 people had died every hour in Kano state, on the northern border with Niger.

The home state of Nigerian military ruler Gen. Sani Abacha is suffering from acute epidemics of spinal meningitis, gastroenteritis, cholera and measles.

It is the height of summer in West Africa. Temperatures can easily reach 100-105 with stifling humidity, causing food to spoil and sanitary conditions to worsen.

There is also a serious lack of trained doctors in the region.



#### At check-point

A Russian soldier sits in front of the check-point outside the Chechen town of Argun yesterday. A top Chechen police official, Maj. Uvais Gozayev, was shot in a building staircase Tuesday afternoon and died on the way to the hospital, the ITAR-Tass news agency said.

## Clinton: Lift abortion ban

By MARCY GORDON  
Associated Press Writer

WASHINGTON, D.C. — President Clinton asked Congress yesterday to amend a bill outlawing a type of late-term abortion to permit the procedure when a woman's life or health is at risk. He said he had "studied and prayed" about it for months.

The measure seeks to outlaw a rare procedure known as an intact dilation and evacuation, which is performed after 20 weeks of gestation and is called by abortion opponents a "partial birth abortion." The White House has said previously that Clinton would veto the bill in its current form, but it was the first time he personally addressed the controversy.

"I have studied and prayed about this issue, and about the families who must face this awful choice, for many months," Clinton said in a letter to Senate Judiciary Committee Chairman Orrin Hatch and other lawmakers.

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— President Clinton  
on late-term abortions

Reacting to Clinton's proposal, Senate Majority Leader Bob Dole said he was "very disappointed" and urged the president "to rethink your position so that we can stop this brutal and indefensible procedure."

Dole, R-Kan., who is seeking the GOP presidential nomination, wrote Clinton that his argument about the bill "has already lost on the Senate floor and for good reason."

Anti-abortion groups said Clinton's proposal would render the bill meaningless. A leading abortion rights' advocate called it "an important step for the president to have taken to reassert his support"

for a woman's right to choose.

In the procedure, a fetus is partially extracted feet first and its skull is collapsed by suctioning out the brain to make it easier for the fetus to pass through the birth canal.

The procedure "is very disturbing and I cannot support its use on an elective basis where the abortion is being performed for non-health related reasons and there are equally safe medical procedures available," the president wrote.

He said there are "rare and tragic" circumstances in which the procedure could be needed to save a woman's life or protect her health.

## Clinton to delay China's loans

The delay of billions of dollars, which comes after accusations that Beijing provided nuclear technology to Pakistan, allows the administration to further examine the situation.

By BARRY SCHWEID  
AP Diplomatic Writer

WASHINGTON, D.C. — President Clinton has decided to delay billions of dollars in loan guarantees for U.S. business investments in China, based on accusations that Beijing has provided dangerous nuclear technology to Pakistan, a senior administration official said Tuesday.

Clinton's request to the Export-Import Bank to delay for several weeks up to \$10 billion in such credits "sends a signal to Beijing" but without making a final determination, said the official.

The president's action effectively gives the Chinese more time to persuade the United States it did not violate the 1994 Nonproliferation Act aimed at deterring the spread of atomic weapons. It also gives the administration more time to evaluate the Chinese claims.

If China does not make a persuasive case, Clinton could still find some sanction other than a suspension of loan guarantees, which imposes the brunt of any

penalty on American businessmen trying to develop a foothold in what will be the fastest growing economy of the 21st century.

The official, speaking on the condition of anonymity, said Clinton is still reviewing additional recommendations from his National Security Council.

The CIA has concluded that China last year sold the Pakistanis specialized ring magnets to use in uranium enrichment plants. China has acknowledged cooperating with Pakistan but has said the program is entirely peaceful.

Describing the parts as "in a gray area," the administration official said top Chinese officials were expected to come to Washington for high-level meetings aimed at resolving the dispute.

While the administration has moved cautiously on the magnetic rings, the proliferation problem "needs urgent attention," the official said.

Enriching uranium involves filtering raw uranium to separate out the fissionable material needed for a nuclear reaction. While the step is vital link in producing atomic weapons, it also is a necessary element in producing fuel for nuclear power plants.

Both Pakistan and India, which have fought three wars, are believed to be embarked on nuclear weapons programs, and many analysts consider the region the most dangerous in the world in terms of possible nuclear conflict.

## Sanctions bill agreed upon

By JIM ABRAMS  
Associated Press Writer

WASHINGTON, D.C. — Rushing to punish Cuba, Congress and President Clinton agreed yesterday on new sanctions that would bridle foreign investment with the goal of removing Fidel Castro.

The White House, seeking to avoid a veto, accepted controversial language in a Cuba sanctions bill that will allow American citizens to sue foreign investors who make use of property in Cuba confiscated during the 3½ decades of Castro's rule.

In a compromise, the president is given the authority to waive that right to sue but for no more than six months at a time, when the national interest is involved.

White House officials, anxious over the lawsuit provisions that could antagonize U.S. allies, wrestled with Republican lawmakers on the bill's final language but appeared resigned to quick passage.

"The bill's got a lot of problems that we hope can be fixed," White House press secretary Mike McCurry said before the agreement was reached. He said President Clinton "wants to sign that bill now in light of the incident Saturday."

Cuba's shooting down of two small American planes off the Cuban coast Saturday galvanized Congress to complete a Cuba sanctions bill passed in different versions by the House and Senate last fall but held up by administration

objections to several controversial provisions.

In light of the attack on the planes flown by Cuban-American pilots, House and Senate negotiators say they will insist on the tougher House version. It gives Cuban-Americans and others the right to sue in the United States foreign companies investing in Cuban property confiscated during Castro's rule.

Last September, the State Department recommended a Clinton veto when the House passed the bill with that provision.

White House and congressional staffers struggled yesterday to work out a compromise on the lawsuit provision that would give the president authority to waive for a limited period that right to sue.

Also at issue was a provision mandating the State Department to deny a visa to a foreign company president or other individual who made use of confiscated property.

The United States is the only major Western country that maintains a trade embargo on Cuba. Canada and other countries have voiced displeasure at the idea of unilateral U.S. action to restrict their rights to invest in Cuba.

Backers of the bill, which has strong congressional support, insist it could provide the pressure finally to bring down the Castro government. Rep. Benjamin Gilman, R-N.Y., chairman of the House International Relations Committee, contended it would "bring an early end to the Castro regime by cutting off capital."

## Congress watchdogs investigate Shuster

The group will investigate the relationship between Rep. Bud Shuster, R-Pa., and lobbyist Ann Eppard.

By ANICK JESDANUN  
Associated Press Writer

WASHINGTON, D.C. — Consumer advocate Ralph Nader's congressional watchdog group asked the Justice Department yesterday to investigate a House committee chairman's dealings with a lobbyist who is a longtime associate.

While acknowledging it had no direct evidence of any criminal wrongdoing, the Congressional Accountability Project said in a letter to Attorney General Janet Reno that "strong circumstantial evidence" warranted a probe.

Gary Ruskin, the group's director, said the department should consider whether the frequent use by Rep. Bud Shuster, R-Pa., and his family of transportation lobbyist Ann Eppard's home constituted acceptance of illegal gratuities.

Ruskin also said the department should investigate whether Eppard obeyed a one-year prohibition against directly lobbying Shuster, her former boss and now chairman of the House Transportation and Infrastructure Committee.

"We urge the Department of Justice to initiate an investigation into the interconnected mutual network of favors, benefits and interests enjoyed by Representative Bud Shuster and Ann Eppard to determine whether criminal laws were violated," Ruskin wrote.

Two months before Shuster became chairman, Eppard left his congressional office to become a full-time lobbyist. She had served

for 22 years as his chief of staff and still is a paid employee for his campaign.

In a statement, Shuster blasted the group for "repeating false innuendo which previously has been published."

Eppard did not immediately return a telephone call seeking comment.

Both Eppard and Shuster have said they took precautions to separate their personal and professional dealings.

In an earlier interview, Eppard said she had not discussed any pending issues with Shuster during the one-year prohibition period following her Nov. 9, 1994, departure from his staff.

Eppard and Shuster, who have known each other since 1970 when she worked for his computer company, said they have had periodic discussions with House ethics committee officials for guidance on complying with House rules.

However, a Justice Department investigation would be independent of any action by the ethics committee and would focus on criminal law rather than House rules.

Complying with House rules would not necessarily exempt a person from criminal prosecution, Ruskin said.

Ruskin said the Congressional Accountability Project also was working to find a lawmaker willing to file an ethics committee complaint on the group's behalf.

He said he has been in touch with more than a dozen Democrats but has received no commitments from any of them.

Ruskin said Shuster's "frequent presence as an overnight guest in Eppard's home . . . and her excellent access to Shuster" call into question whether Eppard obeyed the one-year ban.

## Ireland, Britain agree to summer date for peace negotiations

By SUE LEEMAN  
Associated Press Writer

LONDON — Britain and Ireland set a date for Northern Ireland peace talks yesterday, and waited to see whether the IRA chooses to continue bombing or have its allies take seats at the negotiating table.

For 17 months, the Irish Republican Army had suspended its violent campaign to end British rule of Northern Ireland. The lull was shattered Feb. 9 when the IRA, fed up with the slow progress toward talks, called off the cease-fire and set off a bomb in east London, killing two people.

Prospects for peace seemed to collapse under the renewed violence, but in a dramatic turnaround yesterday, Prime Minister John Major of Britain and Irish leader John Bruton announced in London that talks would begin June 10.

Sinn Fein, the IRA's political ally, cannot

join the talks unless the guerrillas restore their truce, the two leaders insisted. But Britain dropped its demand that the IRA start disarming before Sinn Fein is admitted to negotiations — a key issue that had held up the talks.

Sinn Fein leaders welcomed the long-sought setting of a date but were upset that the province would first hold elections to produce a negotiating team.

"I think that the first duty Sinn Fein has in all of this is to get clarity in determining whether the present package contains the dynamic to reestablish the peace process," said Martin McGuinness, the reputed former IRA commander who leads Sinn Fein's negotiating team.

David Ervine, leader of the Progressive Unionist Party, which is allied with an outlawed Protestant paramilitary group, saw possibilities. "This can work," Ervine said.

The elections, first proposed by a Protes-

tant-based party, gained symbolic significance after IRA supporters dismissed them as a delay tactic that proved Britain was not serious about negotiating.

IRA supporters have claimed that Major's adoption of the elections proposal was the straw that provoked the IRA's return to violence.

Three people died in IRA bombings in London this month — one of them the bomber.

Bruton and Major insisted that Sinn Fein could not join the talks until the IRA reinstates its cease-fire.

"There is no place whatsoever for violence or the threat of violence in the peace process or in the negotiations," Major told Parliament.

"Those who advocate violence or do not dissociate themselves clearly from its use . . . cannot expect others to go on sitting at the negotiating table with them," he said.

The two governments said consultations with all Northern Ireland parties would start Monday on the arrangements for elections and the ensuing negotiations.

No election date was announced. While government ministers refuse to meet Sinn Fein until the IRA cease-fire is restored, British officials indicated that Sinn Fein could be involved in consultations with civil servants.

The agreement met some of the demands of all the principal parties: an election for pro-British unionists, and a firm date for talks demanded by Sinn Fein and Social Democratic and Labor Party, which are supported by the Catholic minority in Northern Ireland.

The Social Democratic and Labor Party has also called for a referendum on nonviolence in both parts of Ireland — an idea the Protestant unionists dislike because they think it smacks of a united Ireland.