

# World and Nation

## Church suspends attempts to mediate crisis in Panama

PANAMA CITY, Panama (AP) — The Roman Catholic Church said Thursday it was suspending its efforts to mediate Panama's political crisis as the first major split appeared in the opposition to Gen. Manuel Antonio Noriega.

Marcos G. McGrath, the Catholic archbishop of Panama, said in a statement he was withdrawing his mediation offer for three reasons:

- Opposition groups refused to talk to the government until it showed it was willing to discuss the departure of Noriega.

- The archbishop had not received Noriega's "explicit and personal backing of the initiative" in writing.

- There were no assurances that the four international leaders who proposed the talks could be present.

The breakdown came a day after Noriega ordered the arrests of several leading opponents.

The general has defied U.S. efforts to force his resignation.

In another development, banking and diplomatic sources said Panama's banks would not reopen Friday,

and possibly not next week. The government said last week it hoped to have banks functioning again Friday.

A major rift appeared Thursday in the anti-Noriega opposition, as two parties split from the opposition alliance to form their own anti-government movement.

Their leaders argued that U.S. economic sanctions are hurting Panama's people more than they are damaging Noriega and the civilian government he controls.

## Panel will investigate EPA's plan to bulldoze contaminated soil

WASHINGTON (AP) — A congressional panel will investigate the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's proposal for cleaning up an arsenic-contaminated site in Crystal City, U.S. Rep. Albert Bustamante's office spokesman announced Wednesday.

U.S. Rep. Mike Synar, D-Okla., chairman of the panel, will conduct a hearing Monday in Crystal City on EPA plans to bulldoze the contaminated soil into a pit and cover it with a plastic cap, Bustamante's office spokesman said.

Environmentalists and residents of Crystal City, a community of 8,000 in South Texas, contend the EPA's plans to clean up the Superfund site at the city's airport are inadequate.

"There have been a lot of protests from environmentalists, city and state government officials, different people in the federal government up here, who feel the EPA is trying to get away with a proposal that is less than adequate . . . because Crystal City is a small town in the middle of a rural area," said Henry Chalmers, a spokesman for Bustamante, D-Texas. Chalmers called it "a pretty shoddy proposal."

But EPA spokesman Roger Meacham in Dallas said the agency believes the plan protects human health and the environment.

Opponents of the EPA plan fear arsenic and other toxins will seep out of the pit and rain or wind will carry them to nearby homes and schools, Chalmers said.

## National Briefs

### Jury finds white separatists innocent

FORT SMITH, Ark. (AP) — All 13 white supremacists on trial in federal court were found innocent Thursday of all charges against them.

Nine of the defendants were charged with seditious conspiracy. The government contended the defendants wanted to overthrow the U.S. government and start an all-white nation in the Northwest.

On Wednesday, the jury returned a verdict in the case of five of the defendants charged with conspiracy to assassinate a federal judge and an FBI agent.

U.S. District Judge Morris Arnold refused then to make the verdict public and rebuffed the jury's declaration that it could not reach a verdict on the other charges.

### Democratic leaders admonish Gore

(AP) Albert Gore Jr. got a message from two Democratic Party heavyweights on Thursday to tone down his criticism of presidential front-runners Michael Dukakis and Jesse Jackson, while Sen. Paul Simon put his campaign on hold but kept his delegates in pocket.

New York Gov. Mario Cuomo, one of the Gore critics, implied he might withhold his sought-after endorsement and said, "Who cares what . . . Mario Cuomo says?"

Cuomo said he told Gore that his negative campaigning "wasn't helping him" in New York ahead of that state's April 19 primary.

Democratic National Chairman Paul G. Kirk Jr. endorsed Cuomo's appeal to the Tennessee senator.

"The admonitions that have been addressed to Sen. Gore by Gov. Cuomo just help to make sure we can continue to talk about the issues in a positive way," Kirk said in Washington, D.C.

But Gore consultant David Garth, a sometime adviser to Cuomo, took exception to the governor's comments.

"Big chief, big blanket, sends up big signal — like make nice and roll over," Garth said, adding that he assumed Cuomo was trying to help Dukakis win New York.

### Police prepare for war on street gangs

LOS ANGELES (AP) — Police are preparing for a weekend war on violent, drug-dealing street gangs with overwhelming support from political and community leaders whose attention has suddenly focused on a long-festering problem.

The sweep by as many as 1,000 police officers will be the biggest in a series of mass patrols in gang-ridden neighborhoods. A 13-hour sweep which ended Thursday morning resulted in the ar-

rest of 128 suspected gang members.

"We're out there to let these gang-bangers know that we're here, we're not going to go away, and this city belongs to the good people," said Detective Tony Celli, using the street slang for gang member.

Such tough talk from the police is not new, but it has been adopted by elected officials who are backing words with financial support.

### Israeli girl slain; troops vow revenge

KARNEI SHOMRON, Occupied West Bank (AP) — Armed Jewish settlers vowed revenge Thursday and shouted "Expel the Arabs!" as they buried an Israeli girl stoned to death by Palestinians. Troops killed a man in the town where she was slain.

An army announcement said the Palestinian fatally shot in Beita was a suspect in the attack on a group of Israeli teen-agers Wednesday in which 15-year-old Tirza Porat was killed. It said she did not obey an order to halt.

Two other Arabs were wounded in separate incidents in the occupied West Bank and Gaza Strip, which have been swept by violence since Dec. 8.

Soldiers arrested hundreds of Arabs and blew up five homes in Beita. Israeli settlers attacked two nearby Arab villages, beating residents, breaking windows and firing shots in the air.

Palestinians retreated to their homes, fearing further revenge raids by vigilante groups.

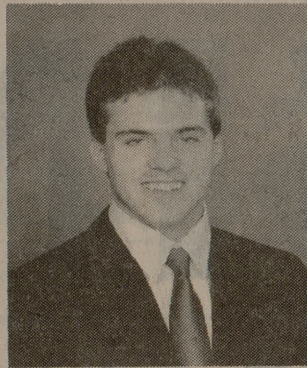
An army investigation of Tirza's death said she was killed by a stone thrown by the mother of one of the dead Arab youths, according to Israeli television and radio.

The army inquest also showed that a bullet fired from the weapon of one of the Israeli guards was found in Tirza's body, the media reports said.

Army investigators said they could not determine who fired the shot, but noted that the magazines of the two weapons were empty by the time villagers wrested them away from the Israeli guards, according to the media reports.

"Tirza Porat's only crime was taking a walk in her country," Prime Minister Yitzhak Shamir told about 9,000 mourners who gathered under heavy guard at Jewish cemetery for the region.

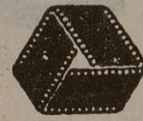
Tirza lived in the Elon Moreh settlement overlooking the West Bank city of Nablus and was on a holiday hike Wednesday with other teen-age children of Jewish settlers accompanied by guards.



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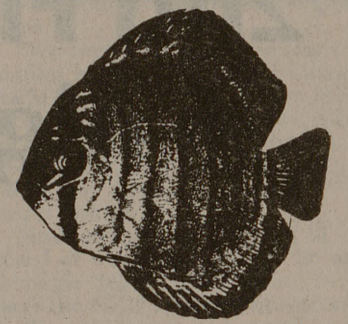
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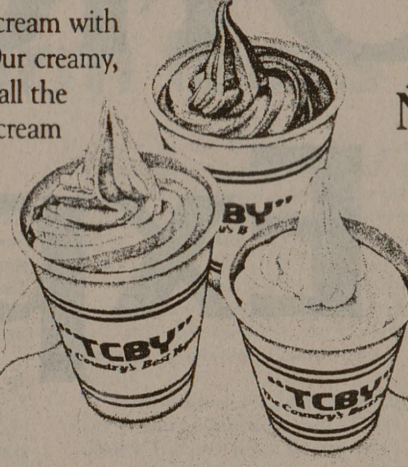
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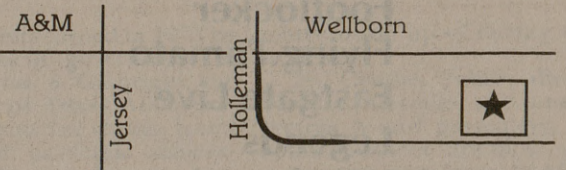
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