

# World and Nation

## EPA proposes treatment for water supply

WASHINGTON (AP) — The Environmental Protection Agency took steps Wednesday to reduce levels of hazardous lead in the nation's drinking water supplies by proposing that water be treated at tens of thousands of plants.

The proposed rules, which EPA officials said likely could require about half the nation's water supply

systems — 53,000 — to treat water, could prove expensive for those served by small systems.

A few families could see their bills rise as much as \$367 a year.

Environmentalists had mixed reactions to the proposal.

They lauded the plan to treat water supplies, but said EPA's proposal fails to ensure Americans will drink lead-free water.

They also said it could contribute to wasting precious water, and places too heavy a burden on the consumer.

Lee M. Thomas, EPA's administrator, said the regulations will reduce lead in the drinking water of 138 million Americans and "will be especially beneficial to young children, who are at much greater risk than adults."

Concentrations of lead in the blood have been associated with a variety of health problems.

Lead can impair mental ability in children, cause premature births and delay physical and mental development of babies.

In adults it can interfere with

hearing and increase blood pressure, and, at high levels, cause kidney damage and anemia.

Under EPA's proposal:

- Water plant operators would be required to begin a corrosion control program by treating water with certain chemicals if water at the consumer's tap has lead levels greater than 10 parts per billion. The program also would be required for acidic water.

- Lead often enters water — particularly acidic or corrosive water — after it leaves the treatment plant but before it reaches the consumer's tap.

- Acidity is an indicator of corrosive water, which causes pipes to leach lead before it reaches the tap.

Thomas said there is a "dramatic

reduction" in lead if the acidity of the water is checked.

- If the average lead levels are greater than 10 parts per billion, water suppliers must conduct a public education program, which would include helping consumers get their water tested.

- Some consumers might have to pay to have lead pipes, which the U.S. banned two years ago, replaced in their homes. They also may have to allow water to run from the tap for a time before drinking.

- Water treatment plants would have to reduce lead to a maximum contaminant level of 5 parts per billion. Lead in source water supplies is less of a problem than lead collected in pipes.

## Demonstrators killed, policemen beheaded during Burma protests

BANGKOK, Thailand (AP) — Scores of demonstrators have been killed during two days of anti-government protests in Burma, and rioters beheaded three policemen Wednesday in Rangoon, the official Burmese radio reported.

It said 30 people were killed in Rangoon street battles Wednesday, bringing the officially reported death toll for the two days throughout the country to about 80. A mob attacked a police station in southern Burma, the radio added.

Unofficial reports said the death count may be well over 100 from clashes between security forces and generally unarmed students.

Buddhist monks and others demanding the ouster of President Sein Lwin and a return to democracy.

Rangoon radio has reported about 160 wounded and 1,500 arrested in the two days. The capital has been under martial law for a week, a curfew was imposed Tuesday and gatherings of more than five people are prohibited.

The demonstrations are by far the largest since a coup by Ne Win ended democracy in Burma in 1962. Sein Lwin became president and head of the government party last month when Ne Win resigned after 26 years in power.

## Senate opens debate on plan to send aid to Contra rebels

WASHINGTON (AP) — A politically divided Senate opened debate Wednesday on a Democratic plan to send humanitarian aid to Nicaragua's Contra rebels and open the way for resumption of military assistance later this year.

Senate Majority Leader Robert C. Byrd, D-W.Va., urged Republican support for the proposal, with its built-in guarantees against a filibuster, as the only approach that has a

chance of actually getting aid to the Contras.

Byrd's appeal came after Senate leaders and White House officials failed in dozens of private meetings over the past two weeks to reach a broad bipartisan agreement on U.S. policy toward Nicaragua.

"This approach keeps the options open and on a fast track," Byrd told the Senate. "I hope my amendment will receive bipartisan support and

send a signal to the Nicaraguan government in the strongest possible way."

After failing to win agreement to limit debate before a vote on his plan, Byrd said he would, if necessary, cut short a long-scheduled summer recess and reconvene the Senate immediately after next week's Republican National Convention in New Orleans.

## License tag casts doubt on shootings

CIUDAD JUAREZ, Mexico (AP) — The existence of a bullet-riddled license plate could cast even more doubt on the official police version of the shootings of a Juarez TV anchor and two others.

Manuel Gomez Martinez, husband of slain anchorman Linda Bejarano, said he planned to present to a prosecutor the rear license plate of the car in which he and the three others were attacked July 23.

Bejarano, the car's driver, Carlos Alfonso Garcia; and Gomez's mother, Lucrecia Martinez, were killed when police and their helpers shot 46 bullets into the white Chrysler New Yorker. Gomez says he was in the front seat and escaped injury by diving to the car floor.

Police have said they mistook Gomez' car for a vehicle whose occupants — suspected of being drug traffickers — shot at police south of Juarez two hours before.

One reason Gomez' car was mistaken for that of drug traffickers was that it had no rear license plate, police said.

But Gomez' lawyer insists that the car did carry a license plate, and that it shows bullet holes from the police fusillade. Attorney Lorenzo Holguin Cisneros said police removed the plate after the shooting.

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