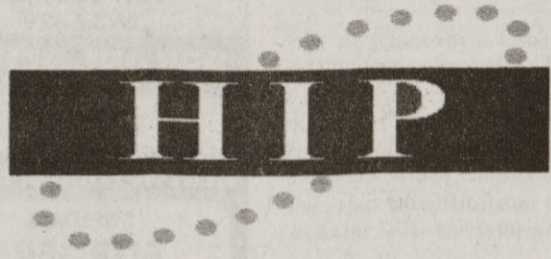




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NATION & WORLD

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THE BATTALION

Thursday, March 30, 2000

Finger painting



STUART VILLANUEVA/THE BATTALION

Sydney May of Cypress, Texas, paints on a Volkswagen Beetle at the Brazos Children's Museum in Bryan on Wednesday.

Netanyahu denies charges

JERUSALEM (AP)—Former prime minister Netanyahu drew both barbs and praise Wednesday in a televised denial of corruption charges, but one commentator said only the "dry facts" will determine if the combative ex-leader ends up in jail.

Netanyahu angrily denied any wrongdoing in a night's broadcast, aired hours after police urged Netanyahu to resign. Netanyahu said he had no recollection of a contractor, kept 700 presents meant for property — including a gold letter opener from Vice President Al Gore — and tried to influence others to let him off. If tried and convicted of the most serious charge, a conviction of justice, Netanyahu could be sentenced to 10 years in prison.

During Tuesday night's 50-minute interview, Netanyahu, famed during his tenure as prime minister for media savvy, used props and dramatic pauses to deny his innocence and to accuse police of a witch hunt. He mentioned his son and recently deceased mother and said, "The whole thing is ridiculous."

Israeli newspapers Wednesday were full of commentary marveling at what was described by many as an attempt for political survival.

"It was an emotional, ingenious performance," Netanyahu diverted attention from the question, Kim wrote in the respected *Haaretz* Daily.

Overnight, Netanyahu supporters plastered bus stop kiosks in Jerusalem with stickers reading: "Bibi, we miss you" — using the former prime minister's name.

Mount Usu tremors cause 8,000 Japanese to evacuate

TOKYO (AP)—Three towns near a volcano that was in danger of erupting in northern Japan ordered the evacuation of 8,000 people as increasingly powerful tremors shook the region Wednesday.

The order was issued an hour after an earthquake with a preliminary magnitude of 4.2 was recorded near Mount Usu on Japan's northernmost main island of Hokkaido. It was the most powerful of the more than 1,000 tremors that have shaken the snow-covered volcano over the last three days, in what volcanologists said is a sign of impending eruption.

Hundreds of villagers had already voluntarily abandoned their homes. Local officials reportedly fear an eruption could trigger deadly mudslides.

Mount Usu, 475 miles north of Tokyo, last erupted in 1978, killing two and destroying 196 homes.

Japan's Meteorological Agency issued a statement today that an eruption was possible "within several days," heightening the urgency of an initial warning issued Tuesday.

Three towns with a combined population of 51,300 are near the 2,416-foot mountain.

Authorities in the towns of Date, Sobetsu and Abuta Wednesday ordered the evacuation of 3,832 homes considered dangerously close to the volcano, said Takashi Odajima, a disaster-prevention official with Hokkaido's government.

The mountain's seismic tremors have escalated in frequency and strength, according to the Meteorological Agency, though no major injuries or damage have been reported.

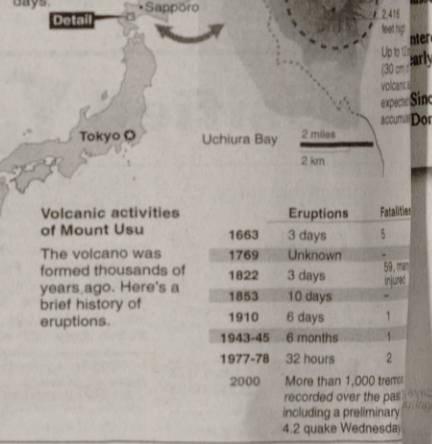
The Date town office has been flooded with telephone calls from residents asking about evacuation procedures and volcano updates as the mountain continued to spew out smokes and steam.

"We are worried," Date spokesperson Katsuhiko Morita said. "Especially these frequent low rumblings make us feel uneasy."

Mount Usu is also a sightseeing and hiking area. Hokkaido government official Toshikazu Azumada said that three hiking trails have been all closed off.

Mount Usu threatens to erupt

Eight-thousand people were ordered to evacuate from three towns near snow-covered Mount Usu on Wednesday as powerful tremors continue to shake the region. Japan's Meteorological Agency warns that a volcanic eruption is possible within several days.



Source: Local government

TEXAS AGGIE SWING CATS

Spring Dance Lesson Schedule

Beginning Swing Monday - April 17
Adv. Swing/Lindy Tuesday - April 18

Monday lessons are 8-10pm in Reed Bldg. Rm. 255
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