

# Miss Universe is dethroned, new successor is crowned

NEW YORK (AP) — Moments after being crowned Tuesday as the new Miss Universe, 23-year-old Justine Pasek of Panama said she was still stunned by news that the pageant winner had been dethroned. "I'm sure this next nine months will be the most important of my life," she said, carefully balancing a diamond and pearl tiara on her head during a brief ceremony at the Trump Tower. "I could not be more excited and ready to start."

Russian law student Oxana Fedorova, who won the May pageant in Puerto Rico, was dethroned because pageant officials said she was not fulfilling her duties. It was first time a titleholder had been fired in the contest's 52-year history.

Donald Trump, co-owner of the organization, said Paula Shugart, the organization's president, had asked Fedorova to resign. "When Oxana didn't resign, Paula had no choice but to terminate her," Trump said.

Shugart said Fedorova didn't show up for some photo shoots and charity events.

"She needed to spend a lot of time in Russia," Shugart said on NBC's "Today" show. "I believe her mother was ill at one point."

Fedorova, a police lieutenant pursuing a graduate law degree at St. Petersburg's Police Academy, denied she was fired and said she gave up the title voluntarily.

"The duties of a world beauty are wonderful. However, my prime goal is my studies and career in Russia," Fedorova told RTR state television Monday. "I know I will remain Miss Universe for Russian citizens and for myself."

Pasek, who works in televi-

sion production and hopes to complete a degree in environmental engineering, will spend the coming months as a goodwill ambassador in the fight against HIV/AIDS.

She said she wished Fedorova "the best and I'm very happy to be taking over this job now."

Pageant officials said Fedorova had returned the \$20,000 diamond and pearl tiara she won. A more expensive tiara — with 800 diamonds instead of 15 — which winners wear only when they are crowned, is kept by the Miss Universe Organization.

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NEWS IN BRIEF

## Judge declares death penalty unconstitutional

MONTPELIER, Vt. (AP) — A federal judge declared the federal death penalty law unconstitutional Tuesday in a ruling defense lawyers said could provide a new argument for challenging capital cases across the country.

U.S. District Judge William Sessions said recent cases, including a U.S. Supreme Court ruling that found juries and not judges must hand out death sentences, have rendered existing death-penalty law unusable.

Since the high court's ruling in June, a federal judge in New York has ruled capital punishment is in itself unconstitutional. Other federal judges, in Virginia and Pennsylvania, have upheld the Federal Death Penalty Act.

## Britain says Iraqi weapons are a serious threat

LONDON (AP) — Iraq has a growing arsenal of chemical and biological weapons, and plans to use them, Prime Minister Tony Blair said Tuesday, unveiling an intelligence dossier to a special session of Parliament.

Blair, who also said Iraq is trying to develop nuclear weapons, told lawmakers his priority is to get inspectors back into Iraq. But he repeatedly expressed enthusiasm for the U.S. goal of "regime change" in Baghdad.

"Iraq, the region and the whole world would be better off" without Saddam Hussein, Blair said in releasing the dossier, which asserts the Iraqi leader has weapons of mass destruction ready to be used within 45 minutes of an order to fight.

## Gunmen storm Hindu temple in western India

GANDHINAGAR, India (AP) — Attackers sprayed gunfire through a temple crowded with Hindu worshippers Tuesday, killing at least 30 people and fueling fears of new rioting in western India, where vicious religious clashes between Muslims and Hindus killed 1,000 people earlier this year.

Hours after the attack, the gunmen remained in control of part of the Swaminarayan temple complex — and some worshippers were still inside, officials said. Bloody bodies were carried away on stretchers and many wounded limped out, their clothes stained with blood. About 45 people were wounded.

Hundreds of commandos swarmed into the sprawling temple complex after the attackers stormed in, setting up positions around the main temple.

# Prosecutors investigating Xerox accounting practices

STAMFORD, Conn. (AP) — Federal prosecutors are investigating accounting practices at Xerox Corp. that were previously reviewed by securities regulators in a probe that led to a record \$10 million civil penalty against the copy machine maker.

The Stamford-based company issued a statement Monday night announcing the new investigation and saying it would cooperate with prosecutors.

Xerox settled allegations by the Securities and Exchange Commission in April. The SEC alleged that the company used a variety of what it called "accounting tricks" and "accounting opportunities" to boost earnings by about \$1.5

billion, misleading investors about its results.

Xerox spokeswoman Christa Carone declined to comment Monday on the new investigation. A spokesman for the U.S. attorney's office also declined to comment.

The SEC said Xerox senior management "orchestrated" a four-year scheme to disguise its operating results, using improper accounting techniques to accelerate the recognition of equipment revenue.

Under the settlement, the world's largest copier company agreed to pay the fine, restate its financial statements for 1997 through 2000. The company did not admit wrongdoing in the settlement.


## Xerox jam

Shares of Xerox Corp. tumbled Tuesday following news that the U.S. attorney's office is investigating the company's accounting practices.

## Stock performance



SOURCES: Yahoo.com; Commodity Systems Inc.; Associated Press



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