

Bubble in plant shrinks, explosion danger down

HARRISBURG, Pa. (AP) — Engineers achieved a "dramatic decrease" Monday in a gas bubble that has held a stranglehold on efforts to cool down the disabled Three Mile Island nuclear reactor.

Plant and federal officials said the hydrogen bubble had shrunk to a much safer size and

the reactor's temperature had dropped significantly.

"I am certain it is cause for optimism," said Harold Denton, Nuclear Regulatory Commission operations chief. He said the bubble was showing "a dramatic decrease in size."

"I didn't expect such a rapid change," Denton said of the

bubble. "I think it is safer than yesterday."

Local civil defense officials, hopeful that the changes meant that the five-day crisis here had passed, nevertheless maintained efforts to prepare for a precautionary evacuation of 25,000 residents still within a five-mile radius of the plant.

But the signals were clear: The situation had improved substantially.

On Monday, technicians continued efforts to eliminate the bubble completely, chiefly by the method they have used all along: letting the gas dissolve in the constantly circulating cooling water and then allowing it to escape from the water outside the reactor.

Technicians also studied options on exactly how to achieve the "cold shutdown" which would go a long way to ending the crisis.

George Troffer, an official with Metropolitan Edison, which operates the facility, said radioactive releases had been halted at the site.

And NRC's Denton said that radiation beaming from the plant was at low levels in a confined area.

The bubble, which had threatened an explosion that could have ripped the lid off the reactor dome and spewed radiation, began shrinking dramatically Sunday and continued throughout the day and night, Troffer said.

The latest developments gave officials more time to cool down the reactor. The critical time for a possible explosion from a chemical reaction within the reactor "has moved considerably out" from the five days Denton had predicted on Sunday, he said.

It was the most encouraging statement to date from the NRC since Wednesday's accident, which led the governor to urge pre-school children and pregnant women to stay further than five miles from the plant and prompted an estimated 50,000 persons to voluntarily leave the Harrisburg area.

making the news

From Associated Reports

TEHRAN, Iran — Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini claimed unanimous approval in the two-day referendum on his plan to make Iran an Islamic republic, but his revolutionary regime admitted one ethnic minority was still fighting in the northeast and trouble was brewing with another in the south.

Khomeini's victory statement proclaiming the new Islamic republic was read by an announcer over Radio Tehran Sunday while votes were still being counted from the balloting Friday and Saturday.

The referendum amounted to a vote of confidence in the leadership of the 78-year-old Shiite Moslem patriarch who engineered the revolt that drove Shah Mohammad Reza Pahlavi from Iran in February.

SALEM — A caravan of 40 cars from Southern Oregon rolled through the state capital Saturday to show opposition to proposed legislation to restrict the sale of handguns in the state.

About 150 to 200 members of the Protective Sportsmen's Association joined local hunting, gun club and four-wheel drive enthusiasts to oppose HB 2423, which would restrict registration procedures and personal sales of handguns and would restrict application for a concealed weapons permit.

The demonstration was sponsored by the Oregon Rifle and Pistol Association.

LOS ANGELES — Gov. Edmund Brown Jr. has asked the federal Nuclear Regulatory Commission for a "precautionary and temporary" shutdown of a nuclear power plant near Sacramento because it might share a defect with a crippled plant in Pennsylvania.

Brown said Sunday that the NRC had been unable to assure him that the Rancho Seco plant and the Three Mile Island facility near Harrisburg, Pa., do not share a "serious generic defect."

Both plants were designed and built by the same firm, Babcock & Wilcox Co. of Lynchburg, Va.

NAIROBI, Kenya — Tanzanian forces stepped up their war against Pres. Idi Amin today with an air attack on Jinja, Uganda's second largest city, and renewed shelling of Kampala, his capital, after apparently pushing his Libyan defenders back, diplomatic sources reported.

Residents of Jinja, 50 miles east of Kampala, said three fighters made a brief bombing run over the city but missed their apparent target, the local army garrison. Instead, their bombs fell near the Libyan Arab Uganda Bank, causing few injuries and doing little damage, the sources said.



German
AUTO SERVICE

VW'S MERCEDES BMW'S
DATSUN TOYOTA

reliable service for
your foreign car

2025 Franklin Blvd.
Eugene, Ore. 97403
Bus. Ph. 342-2912



**Save 50% or more
when you buy
Bronson Vitamins**

Compare the formula and the price of Bronson Vitamins with those of a similar high quality you may now be using. Our "Formula and Price Comparison Folder," is proof that you can save 50% or more.

**Bronson products and literature
are available at the Bookstore.**

UO
BOOKSTORE

13th & Kincaid
686-4331

Open:
Mon-Fri 8:15-5:30
Sat 10:00-2:00

emu

Cultural Forum

PRESENTS

**MOVIE
MAGIC**

The Special Effects of STAR WARS and Beyond

with
ROBERT BLALACK

Academy Award Winner — Best Visual Effects

STAR WARS

Multimedia presentation and discussion

A behind-the-scenes look at how the spectacular special effects for STAR WARS and other movies were produced

Thursday, April 5, 1979
8:00 PM EMU BALLROOM
Admission: \$1