

making the news

From Associated Press Reports

HARRISBURG, Pa. — Radiation levels dwindled to near normal around the Three Mile Island nuclear power plant Wednesday, and federal officials said they were considering a proposal to take the disabled reactor into cold shutdown.

And while officials are concerned about the durability of vital instruments inside the reactor, conditions at the plant remain "stable," Harold Denton, of the Nuclear Regulatory Commission, said at a briefing.

He confirmed that human error had contributed to the reactor accident. In Washington, NRC officials described three separate human errors that contributed to the crisis.

The first error came when valves on an emergency pumping system — part of the reactor's coolant system — were closed, when they should have been open. Later, an operator turned off the plant's main emergency core cooling system at the wrong time. Finally, four standby water pumps were disengaged when there was no apparent reason for them not to be working.

Denton said having the standby pumps disengaged was a violation of NRC regulations.

SALEM — A woman could be convicted of raping a man under a bill passed Wednesday by the Oregon House.

The bill HB2234, which passed unanimously and without debate, would delete all references to gender in existing rape statutes. As the law now reads, rape victims are defined as females.

A woman now can be convicted of rape only if she is an accomplice in the rape of another woman by a man.

RAWALPINDI, Pakistan — Rioting and demonstrations erupted here and in the neighboring Indian state of Kashmir Wednesday protesting the hanging of former Prime Minister Zulfikar Ali Bhutto. World leaders, who had tried to save him from the gallows, expressed regret and anger at the execution.

Three persons were reported killed in the Kashmir riots. Most of Pakistan was calm, but some observers said violence could come later.

In Washington, the State Department expressed regret over the execution. Spokesman Hodding Carter noted that Pres. Carter had asked for mercy for Bhutto on humanitarian grounds. A department official said privately that the president's plea was based in part on fears of political violence after the hanging.

PROVINCETOWN, Mass. — The Internal Revenue Service has announced the planned auction on April 20 of writer Norman Mailer's home here on the tip of Cape Cod in an effort to recover more than \$80,000 in back taxes and penalties.

The house, which overlooks Cape Cod Bay and has a third-floor writer's studio, is valued at \$135,000.

The IRS has seized the house, claiming that Mailer did not file income tax returns in 1976 and 1977 and owes the service \$80,521.79.

Uganda ready to fall Idi Amin disappears

NAIROBI, Kenya (AP) — Tanzanian and Ugandan-exile infantrymen swept into the downtown area of the Ugandan capital of Kampala on Wednesday night, sending Pres. Idi Amin's cadre of Libyan soldiers fleeing into the countryside, residents reported.

Exile sources said the government of Amin, who has been accused of murdering tens of thousands of his countrymen, could fall in a few days or a few hours.

Amin's regular army had

already disintegrated, the exile sources said, claiming the troops sent by Libyan leader Col. Moammar Khaddafi to aid Amin, a fellow Moslem, were the only force preserving Amin's eight-year reign.

Amin's whereabouts were not publicly known. On Tuesday, he visited towns in areas he still controls in eastern Uganda, jovially greeting soldiers and civilians in an apparent morale-building tour.

The Tanzanian-Ugandan war began last October.

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Most Americans favor execution for murderers

NEW YORK (AP) — With the first execution in this country in more than a year scheduled for Friday, most Americans remain in favor of the death penalty for those convicted of murder, an Associated Press-NBC News poll shows.

And the public is convinced capital punishment does deter some people from committing murder.

Sixty-two percent of those interviewed March 19-20 said they favor the death penalty for persons convicted of murder.

That support is down somewhat from levels found last year. It is 4 points below the finding of the November AP-NBC poll and 7 points below the September survey.

Last month, 24 percent opposed the death penalty and 14 percent were not sure.

This finding comes as convicted murderers are scheduled to die soon in Alabama and Florida.

No one has been executed in the United States since Jan. 17, 1977, when a Utah firing squad killed Gary Gilmore. Gilmore, who said he wanted to die, was the first person to suffer capital punishment in this country after 10 years of Supreme Court

challenges of death penalty laws in individual states.

The next man to be executed could be John Louis Evans III, scheduled to die in the early morning hours of April 6 at Holman prison in Atmore, Ala. The 29-year-old native of Beaumont, Texas, was sentenced to the electric chair for the Jan. 5, 1977, shooting death of a pawn-shop owner in Mobile, Ala.

Also close to the electric

chair is John Spenkelink, who is on Florida's death row awaiting the outcome of a final clemency hearing. That hearing is scheduled April 20. The U.S. Supreme Court refused March 26 to review his case.

Many supporters of the death penalty argue that the threat of the ultimate punishment deters some people from committing murder. Most Americans agree with that argument, the AP-NBC poll shows.

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