



World beat

International

Coup staged in Fiji

SUVA, Fiji (AP) — Former Prime Minister Ratu Sir Kamisese Mara on Friday gave his backing to the bloodless military coup in which soldiers abducted the newly elected prime minister and his Cabinet.

But Fiji's governor general, an influential chief who represents Queen Elizabeth II in this former British colony, said he had assumed executive power and declared a "public emergency" because of the military takeover.

Prime Minister Timoci Bavadra, who defeated Mara in last month's election and was abducted by soldiers along with his Cabinet on Thursday, appealed for calm and said neither he nor his ministers had been harmed, the Fiji Times reported Friday.

Mara, in an exclusive interview with The Associated Press, said he had accepted an offer from Lt. Col. Sitiveni Rabuka — who led the coup — to be the country's new foreign minister.

Steen tape released

BEIRUT, Lebanon (AP) — Moslem kidnappers released a videotape Thursday of American hostage Alann Steen, and he appeared in good health despite earlier claims by his captors that he was near death.

It was the first communication from any group of kidnappers since April 2, when fellow American hostage Jesse Turner said in a videotaped message that Steen would die in a few hours.

"We are very pleased to see that Alann is still alive and that he is still trying to cope with what has happened to him," Steen's wife Virginia said while viewing the videotape at Beirut University College where she works.

The videotape contained no clue as to when it was made.

Steen and Turner were kidnapped Jan. 24 along with two other teachers at Beirut University College. Twenty-four foreigners, including eight Americans, are missing after being kidnapped in Beirut since March 1985.

Kenyan drought ends

NAIROBI, Kenya (AP) — More than two weeks of rain in Somalia ended a drought that killed an estimated 600 people, but millions more need help because of the threat of starvation, a U.S. official said Thursday.

"There's no drought anywhere — it's been raining since April 28. But areas short of food still need help," Louis Cohen, director for Somalia of the U.S. Agency for International Development, said in a telephone interview from Mogadishu, the Somali capital.

Donor countries and relief agencies are working together to get food and medical supplies to the most severely affected regions of Gilguduud, Hiran and Mudug in central Somalia along the Ethiopian border, Cohen said.

The day before the rains came, the Somali government declared a nationwide state of emergency, saying 600 people had died and 60 percent of the country's 6.7 million people were in danger of starving.

National

North implicated

WASHINGTON (AP) — National Security Council aide Lt. Col. Oliver North worked directly with a courier who helped get money and weapons to the Nicaraguan Contras at a time Congress had banned U.S. military aid to the rebels, the Iran-Contra hearings were told Thursday.

The testimony, by former courier Robert Owen, triggered the sudden resignation of a White House official he implicated, Johnathan S. Miller.

The second week of the House-Senate hearings concluded with the testimony by Owen, who gave the committees details of his role as middleman between North and Contra leaders. Owen will return to the witness table when the hearings resume on Tuesday.

New virus discovered

WASHINGTON (AP) — Scientists agree that a new virus

related to the one which causes AIDS is spreading in West Africa, but American and French researchers are at odds over whether it causes a similar immune system disease.

Researchers at the Harvard School of Public Health said Thursday that they sampled blood from 4,248 persons from six West African countries and found evidence of exposure to the new virus as high as 16 percent in some countries.

Yet, even though the contagious virus infects the same cells as the AIDS virus, it "does not appear to be associated with immunodeficiency-related disorders," they said in a report to be published in the May 15 issue of the journal Science.

White House ran plan

WASHINGTON (AP) — A plan for U.S. drug agents to rescue American hostages in Lebanon came from White House officials and was financed in part by the CIA, Sen. Paul Trible, R-Va., said Thursday.

Trible, a member of the Senate Iran-Contra committee, provided new details to reporters as congressional concern mounted that the agents were used improperly, that U.S. drug agency relations with other countries may be harmed, and that the Reagan administration may have broken the law by failing to notify Congress of the operation.

Rep. Charles B. Rangel, D-N.Y., chairman of the House select committee on narcotics, said there was "gross misuse" of the Drug Enforcement Administration personnel. He vowed that if the Iran-Contra hearings failed to reveal the entire story, he would hold special hearings to get to the bottom of the operation.

Trade deficit narrows

WASHINGTON (AP) — The biggest surge in U.S. exports in six years helped to narrow the nation's trade deficit to \$13.6 billion in March from \$15.1 billion in February, the Commerce Department reported Thursday.

Although tempered by a rise in imports to record levels, the report was hailed by many economists as a sign that declines in the value of the U.S.

dollar are finally beginning to pay off in easing the trade imbalance.

Commerce Department analysts cautioned against reading too much into the improvement between February and March, noting that many imports counted in February were actually received in January — suggesting that February's \$15.1 billion deficit may have been overstated and January's \$12.3 billion deficit understated.

March's \$13.6 billion deficit was thus only slightly down against the average \$13.7 billion deficit for the first two months of the year.

Regional

Darigold begins recall

SEATTLE (AP) — Darigold Inc. has begun a voluntary recall of five types of frozen novelty dessert bars made in its

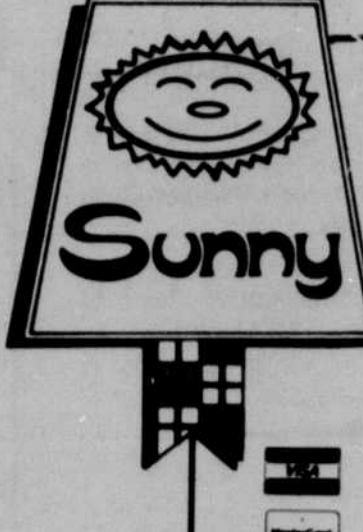
Portland plant because a specific type of bacteria was found in two bars there, the company announced Thursday.

The recall, in cooperation with the federal Food and Drug Administration, involves five "stick bar" items: Darigold brand Twin Pops, Super Pops, Juice Bars, Fudge Bars and Darigold Supreme Round-Shape Fudge Bar.

The items have been distributed in Washington, Oregon, Alaska, Montana, Idaho and northern California.

The recall was precipitated by the finding of a bacterium known as *Listeria Monocytogenes* during a recent FDA inspection at the Portland plant.

Listeria produces little risk to healthy people but can cause listeriosis, an illness characterized by mild to moderate flu-like symptoms.



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