



World Beat

International

Astronaut sets record

MOSCOW (AP) — A cosmonaut set an endurance record in space Wednesday by spending more than 237 days in orbit, Soviet media said. "It's only the beginning," flight commander Yuri Romanenko declared from space in a televised hookup with the Mir orbital platform.

Romanenko, 42, blasted into space on Feb. 6 along with flight engineer Alexander Laveikin and began a series of experiments aboard the Mir, the Soviets' second-generation space station launched 19 months ago. Laveikin, however, showed signs of heart trouble and was replaced by Alexander Alexandrov in late July. Soviet evening television news broadcast an interview with Romanenko Wednesday night after he passed the 237-day mark set in 1984 by three other Soviet spacemen.

National

Arms plot uncovered

NEWARK, N.J. (AP) — Chinese diplomats at the United Nations attempted to buy TOW and Sidewinder missiles and plans for F-14 fighter aircraft, U.S. authorities alleged in documents disclosed in court Wednesday. The disclosure came during a detention hearing for Chang-Yao Chi, 65, a New York City businessman who was arrested Sunday and charged with conspiracy to illegally export arms.

Chi has links to "high-ranking members of the United Nations (Chinese) delegation and the People's Republic of China," said Assistant U.S. Attorney Mark S. Olinsky. According to the complaint, no missiles or plans changed hands. U.S. Magistrate Stanley R. Chesler ordered Chi detained without bail after finding him a risk to flee because of his diplomatic and government contacts.

Economic signs rise

WASHINGTON (AP) — The Commerce Department said Wednesday its chief economic forecasting gauge rose 0.6 percent in August, signaling continued growth for a recovery set to claim the record as the longest peacetime expansion in U.S. history. It marked the seventh consecutive increase in the department's Index of Leading Indicators, which had risen a smaller 0.3 percent in July.

It was the longest string of monthly advances in the forecasting gauge since 21 consecutive gains beginning in late 1982 as the nation was pulling out of the 1981-82 recession. In another report, the Commerce Department said new-home sales climbed 2.7 percent in August to a seasonally adjusted annual rate of 688,000 units as buyers rushed to close home deals before mortgage rates went higher.

Count disputed

WASHINGTON (AP) — President Reagan on Wednesday disputed a Democratic headcount showing his nomination of Robert Bork in trouble. Both Reagan and White House Chief of Staff Howard H. Baker Jr. challenged Senate Democratic Whip Alan Cranston's tally showing at least 49 senators now against confirmation.

Baker acknowledged the administration can count only 40 votes for Bork, but he said there are just 30 sure votes in opposition and about 30 undecided "souls yet to be saved." Cranston had said of Bork on Tuesday, "I think he's licked." But his Republican counterpart, Sen. Alan Simpson, R-Wyo., predicted on Wednesday that Bork would be confirmed. By his count, Simpson said, "we're four up with about 20 to two dozen undecided."

Report called unfair

WASHINGTON (AP) — Two Republican members of the House Iran-Contra committee complained Wednesday that the panel's secret draft report is loaded with anti-administration innuendo and implies President Reagan might have known of the diversion of Iran arms-sale money to the Nicaraguan rebels. They said they will write their own version.

Reps. Henry Hyde, R-Ill., and Jim Courter, R-N.J., said the draft raises questions about the credibility of the testimony of former National Security Adviser John M. Poindexter, who said he never told Reagan of the diversion. "There is the implication that Poindexter was lying and that the president knew about the diversion," said Courter. "To say that's part of the facts is not so. A reader would get the opinion that this could be the case."

Judge OKs drug tests

WASHINGTON (AP) — A federal judge Wednesday upheld the Transportation Department's random drug testing of an estimated 30,000 employees with safety responsibilities, saying the department's testing program is reasonable. U.S. District Judge Gerhard Gesell ordered the department, however, to keep detailed records of each random test and any subsequent personnel action because of possible additional court challenges.

The department began the random testing Sept. 11 when 50 employees were selected by computer and told to submit urine samples. It was not immediately known Friday how many employees actually have been tested in the federal government's first widespread random drug testing of civilian employees.

Players walk line

NEW YORK (AP) — Another eight players, including quarterback Danny White and eight-time Pro Bowl center Mike Webster, crossed picket lines Wednesday as union chief Gene Upshaw criss-crossed the country trying to prevent more defections.

That made it 33 players on 13 teams who have returned to practice camps since the NFL strike started nine days ago, according to an Associated Press count. The union has 1,585 players under its jurisdiction.

No negotiations were planned. In Washington, however, union and management lawyers met with the National Labor Relations Board to discuss procedural points in the unfair labor practice complaints each side has filed against the other.

Despite the new defections, Upshaw, executive director of the NFL Players Association, continued to maintain that players were solidly behind the strike.

Agreement approved

DETROIT (AP) — Ford Motor Co. workers ratified a new job-protecting contract by nearly a 3-1 margin, the United Auto Workers announced Wednesday. Ford's 104,000 active United Auto Workers union members approved the pact with a 72 percent "yes" vote, the union said. It declined to release precise figures from the weeklong balloting.

The contract provides for a 3 percent wage hike in the first year, and lump sum payments equal to 3 percent in the second and third years. Base pay for assemblers is currently \$12.83 an hour. The contract also commits Ford to recalling laid-off workers before paying overtime at its factories, and limits Ford's ability to transfer work outside the company by forbidding layoffs of workers who had been doing jobs transferred elsewhere.

Meese's help alleged

WASHINGTON (AP) — A former Wedtech Corp. executive said in an affidavit released Wednesday that he believed Edwin Meese III had interceded at a crucial time with Defense Secretary Caspar Weinberger to help the company get \$135 million in Navy contracts without competitive bidding.

On Jan. 6, 1984, a top Navy official reversed an earlier decision and decided to set aside the entire \$135 million in Navy contracts for which Wedtech qualified. Three months later, Wedtech was awarded the entire contract without competitive bidding. Independent counsel James McKay said that on April 8, 1982, letter from Wedtech lobbyist Lyn Nofziger to Meese was written with the intent "to influence Meese to contact the secretary of the Army" on behalf of Wedtech.

Ozone loss reported

GREENBELT, Md. (AP) — More of the earth's protective ozone layer disappeared over the Antarctic continent in September than ever before recorded, scientists reported Wednesday.

High-altitude ozone fell to half the normal level in the middle of the month, compared with reductions of 40 percent in 1985 and 35 percent last year, Robert Watson, chief of NASA's high-altitude research program told a news conference at the Goddard Space Center here.

Watson was reporting preliminary results of flights into the ozone depletion area by two National Aeronautics and Space Administration planes from Punta Arenas, Chile. The planes carried instruments to make the first measurements at high altitudes of chemicals important in the destruction of the ozone.

Cause of death found

DETROIT (AP) — Legionnaires' disease played a contributing role in the death of Henry Ford II, who contracted pneumonia during a 10-day European vacation, according to doctors.

Ford, 70, who rescued Ford Motor Co. during World War II and ran it for four decades, died Tuesday morning at Henry Ford Hospital.

The Legionella bacteria was diagnosed in Germany, said Dr. Louis Saravolatz, division head of infectious diseases at Ford Hospital.

Legionnaires' disease takes its name from an outbreak at an American Legion convention in Philadelphia in July 1976, when 221 people contracted the disease and 34 of them died. It is caused by water sources, including air conditioning systems. It usually occurs in clusters associated with wings such as hospitals, factories or hotels.

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