

NEWS DIGEST

your quick guide to news from around the world

Texas separatist shot by police trackers

1 FORT DAVIS, Texas — A fugitive member of the Republic of Texas was killed Monday in a gun battle with police who had been tracking him since he fled the secessionist group's hideout.

A second man remained at large in the rugged Davis Mountains, where the two had headed separately before the rest of the militant group laid down their arms over the weekend.

The group's leader and several other people were named Monday in a federal fraud indictment.

The gunfire took place at a bunker about a mile from the group's "embassy" headquarters in a sparse mountain development, state officials said.

The dead man had apparently been shooting at police tracking dogs and a helicopter that were searching for the pair, said Sherri Deatherage Green, a spokeswoman for the Texas Department of Public Safety.

"Shots were fired from the helicopter and from the ground at the suspect," she said.

The dead man's name was not immediately known. The two men being sought were identified as Richard Keyes III, 21, and Mike Matson, 48.

R.J. Reynolds wins wrongful death suit

2 JACKSONVILLE, Fla. — A jury Monday found R.J. Reynolds Tobacco Co. not responsible for the death of a lifelong smoker, a victory for the industry as it seeks to settle multibillion-dollar health claims filed by state governments.

The six-member jury decided that cigarettes made by RJR were not "unreasonably dangerous and defective" and should not be blamed for the death of Jean Connor, who testified on videotape that cigarettes caused her lung cancer.



McVeigh's sister takes the stand

3 DENVER — Timothy McVeigh's sister took the stand against him Monday and recalled his festering hatred for the government and his statement that he was "in the action stage" just months before the Oklahoma City bombing.

In calm, matter-of-fact testimony that came under immunity from prosecution, Jennifer McVeigh also spoke of her brother's fear of private eyes and wiretaps, his use of disguises and an alias, and his anecdote about transporting 1,000 pounds of explosives.

The testimony by the upstate New York student centered on her brother's fixation on his safety in early 1995, and his warning for her to use pay phones to talk to him because he suspected her phones were tapped.

She said in another letter sent earlier that McVeigh spoke of his shift in political attitude.

"He indicated that he was not in the propaganda stage, which was like passing out papers. He was now in the action stage," she said.

Zaire rebels close in on capital, Mobutu

4 LUBUMBASHI, Zaire — Desperate to prevent an all-out attack on the Zairian capital, a U.S. envoy pressed rebels Monday to enter Kinshasa peacefully and shuttled around Africa to talk with their leader and the influential men who back him.

Bill Richardson, U.S. ambassador to the United Nations, urged restraint during the eight days that rebel leader Laurent Kabila said in the southeastern rebel stronghold of Lubumbashi, a day after peace talks with Mobutu.

"He has to choose to relinquish power and he is safeguarded, or he perishes with his power," Kabila said in the southeastern rebel stronghold of Lubumbashi, a day after peace talks with Mobutu.

The rebels said in a statement they would guarantee Mobutu's safety and that of his family if he resigned now.

Kabila's 70,000-strong rebel army has captured more than three-quarters of Zaire in its drive to end Mobutu's nearly 32-year dictatorship.

FDA approves new smokeless inhaler

5 WASHINGTON — Smokers trying to kick the habit are getting a new source of help: The Food and Drug Administration approved the first smokeless nicotine inhaler Monday.

The Nicotrol Inhaler, to be sold by prescription only, allows smokers to suck nicotine through a plastic tube, letting the chemical be absorbed through membranes in the mouth.

Currently, would-be quitters can buy nicotine patches or chewing gum over the counter.

The FDA said clinical trials showed the inhaler worked about as well as these other products. Compared to no help, McNeil said, the Nicotrol Inhaler as much as doubled the likelihood that users would abstain from smoking for a year.

Each puff of the inhaler contains eight to 10 times less nicotine than a puff of a cigarette — and none of the dangerous tar and other toxins cigarettes deliver. Also, because the nicotine is absorbed gradually through mouth tissue, users don't get the quick jolt that smokers feel when the chemical hits their lungs.

FTC moves to loosen 'Made in USA' rules

6 WASHINGTON — The government wants to give manufacturers more leeway in promoting their products as "Made in USA" even if some of the parts originate overseas.

In proposing new guidelines Monday, the Federal Trade Commission said it wanted to ensure consumers are not deceived when they see a "Made in USA" label and also make sure American manufacturers have enough flexibility to meet global competition.

"The claim that a product is 'Made in USA' is important to many consumers as they make purchasing decisions," said Jodie Bernstein, director of the FTC's bureau of consumer protection. "Understanding what the claim means to consumers is difficult given today's world marketplace."

The agency's proposal drew quick criticism from labor unions. The AFL-CIO said any weakening of the FTC's standards would make the label "a fraud on the American public and open the door even wider to the export of U.S. jobs."

"The words 'Made in USA' are on their face simple, clear and easily understood as long as they mean what they say," stated an AFL-CIO statement. "The words no longer would mean what they say under the new guidelines."

But Robin Lanier, from the International Mass Retail Association, said the proposal was a step in the right direction.

She said it would allow manufacturers who use one or two foreign components in their products to "make the claim honestly that they are making things in the United States."

Under current rules, companies can't make that claim if a product has more than a small amount of foreign content. While the percentage of non-U.S. content has never been specifically set, FTC officials said it is a very small or insignificant percentage.

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