

Today	Wednesday	Thursday
		
High: 78 Low: 50 Precip: 0%	High: 71 Low: 47 Precip: 0%	High: 78 Low: 49 Precip: 20%

IN BRIEF

DA won't prosecute bishop accused of rape

SPRINGFIELD, Mass. — Just hours after an indictment against former Springfield Bishop Thomas Dupre was unsealed Monday accusing him of molesting two boys in the 1970s, the county prosecutor refused to pursue the case because the statute of limitations has expired. The decision by Hampden District Attorney William Bennett means that, though Dupre is the first Roman Catholic bishop to face criminal charges in the sex abuse scandal still plaguing the U.S. church, he won't go to trial for them.

Trial ordered in Florida e-ballot lawsuit

TALLAHASSEE, Fla. — A mere five weeks before Election Day, a federal appeals court revived a lawsuit Monday demanding that all Florida voters who use touchscreen machines receive a paper receipt, in case a recount becomes necessary. The 11th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals told a federal judge in Fort Lauderdale to reopen the case, which could affect 15 Florida counties whose electronic voting terminals do not issue paper records.

Audit finds large FBI translation backlog

WASHINGTON — The FBI has a backlog of hundreds of thousands of hours of untranslated audio recordings from terror and espionage investigations, despite large increases in

money and personnel for translations since the 2001 terror attacks, a Justice Department audit released Monday said. In addition, the audit by Glenn A. Fine, the agency's inspector general, found more than one-third of al-Qaida intercepts authorized by a secret federal court were not reviewed within 12 hours of collection as required by FBI Director Robert Mueller.

U.S. jets pound militant positions in Iraq

BAGHDAD, Iraq — Two car bombs killed seven Iraqi national guardsmen and a rocket barrage hit a police academy Monday. Insurgents kept up their offensive to subdue Iraq's beleaguered security forces. U.S. jets pounded suspected militant positions in a Baghdad slum. Two U.S. soldiers with the 1st Infantry Division were killed in separate incidents Monday near Balad, north of the capital. The first died in a car crash and the second was killed when a patrol came under fire as it returned from the crash, the military said.

DEA's failed battle to ban hemp food has ended

SAN FRANCISCO, Calif. — Food products made with hemp will remain legal after the Justice Department declined to challenge a ruling that overturned a Bush administration ban, lawyers for the hemp industry said.

Monday night was the deadline for the government to challenge a federal appeals court's February decision that the United States cannot ban the domestic sale of hemp foods.

The appeals court decision was a victory for more than 200 companies that make products including energy bars, waffles, milk-free cheese and veggie burgers with the plant that contains only trace amounts of THC, the key ingredient in marijuana.

— The Associated Press

North Korea increases nuclear weapons stock

The nation is expanding its 'nuclear deterrent' as a response to threats of war from United States

BY EDITH M. LEDERER
THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

UNITED NATIONS — North Korea has turned the enriched uranium from 8,000 spent nuclear fuel rods into weapons to serve as a deterrent against a possible nuclear strike by the United States, a North Korean minister said Monday.

Warning that the danger of war on the Korean peninsula "is snowballing," Vice Foreign Minister Choe Su Hon blamed the United States for intensifying threats to attack the communist nation and destroying the basis for negotiations to resolve the dispute about Pyongyang's nuclear program.

Without specifying what kinds or the number of weapons it has, Choe said North Korea has been left with "no other option but to possess a nuclear deterrent" because of U.S. policies that he claimed were designed to "eliminate the DPRK by force while designating it as part of an 'axis of evil' and a target of preemptive nuclear strikes."

DPRK stands for Democratic People's Republic of Korea, the North's official name.

When asked if the fuel had been turned into actual weapons, not just weapons-grade material, Choe said: "We declared that we weaponized this."

In Washington, a State Department official noted that the administration has long believed North Korea has at least one or two nuclear weapons. The official, who asked

not to be identified, also said the North Koreans have made conflicting statements about how far along their weapons-development programs have come.

But Choe told the U.N. General Assembly that North Korea is still ready to dismantle its nuclear program if Washington abandons its "hostile policy" and is prepared to coexist peacefully.

At the moment, however, he said "the ever-intensifying U.S. hostile policy and the clandestine nuclear-related experiments recently revealed in South Korea are constituting big stumbling blocks" and make it impossible for North Korea to participate in the continuation of six-nation talks on its nuclear program.

A State Department official said North Korea should take part in the party discussions and noted that Secretary of State Colin Powell has said repeatedly that the United States has no plans to attack that country.

At a press conference afterward with reporters, the North Korean ambassador was asked what was included in the nuclear deterrent.

"We have already made clear that we have already reprocessed 8,000 wasted fuel rods and transformed them into arms," he said.

Julie Enzer, head of the Washington-based Nuclear Policy Research Institute, when asked about Choe's comments, said "it certainly sounds like they've taken the spent fuel rods and further enriched them to be weapons-grade uranium and put

them in some kind of weapon."

North Korea said earlier this year that it had reprocessed the spent nuclear fuel rods and was increasing its "nuclear deterrent" but had not provided any details.

The crisis erupted in 2002 when the United States accused North Korea of running a secret nuclear weapons program. The United States, the two Koreas, Japan, China and Russia since have held three rounds of talks on curbing the North's nuclear ambitions but have produced no breakthroughs.

The State Department official noted that Secretary of State Colin Powell has said repeatedly that the United States has no plans to attack North Korea.

At the third round of talks in June, the United States proposed that the North disclose all its nuclear activities, help to dismantle facilities and allow outside monitoring. Under the plan, some benefits would be withheld to ensure the North cooperates.

North Korea said it would never scrap its nuclear programs first and wait to get rewarded later. Instead, it insisted on "reward for freeze."

Choe told the General Assembly North Korea's proposal was aimed at building "mutual confidence" and a freeze would be "the first step toward eventual dismantlement of our nuclear program." But he said the dispute must be solved step-by-step.

Choe indicated there was a chance for revival of the talks.

"If the United States has the will to co-exist peacefully with the DPRK by abandoning its hostile policy on the DPRK, the nuclear issue will be resolved properly," he said.

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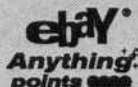
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