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world briefs

BRAZIL

A box of 12 condoms in Brazil costs more than the monthly minimum wage of \$70, *The Chicago Tribune* reported March 5.

The newspaper blamed the price on "efforts by Brazil's rubber industry to keep out foreign-made latex products."

Brazil has recorded 59,000 AIDS cases, ranking it third worldwide. Health officials believe 1 million Brazilians are HIV positive, out of a population of 158 million.

Recent surveys in the Brazilian state capitals of Salvador, Curitiba and Aracaju found that 60 to 80 percent of Brazilians believe gay men and lesbians must have the same rights as heterosexuals, and 50 to 65 percent think gay and lesbian couples should be able to get married, correspondent Luiz Mott reports from Salvador, Bahia.

Seventy-three Brazilian cities and towns—including São Paulo, Rio de Janeiro and Brasília—ban discrimination based on sexual orientation.

Legislation to create civil-union contracts for same-sex couples was recently introduced nationally by Worker's Party Deputy Marta Suplicy, Mott said.

Mott and his lover were united in a religious ceremony in the Pacifist Christian Church, and Mott has demanded that the Justice Department recognize the marriage under civil law. He is waiting for a response.

BRITAIN

A network of 60 dissident Church of England priests performs clandestine gay weddings in



Anglican churches across Britain, London's *Sunday Times* reported March 12.

"They have ushered hundreds of homosexuals up the aisle in services that could lead to their dismissal if discovered by bishops," the report said.

The secret ceremonies reportedly are arranged by the Lesbian and Gay Christian Movement, which acts as a go-between for gay lovebirds and sympathetic vicars.

Former Royal Air Force nurse Jeanette Smith, kicked out in December for being a lesbian, is the first person to challenge the British military's ban on lesbians and gay men.

Smith filed suit before a London High Court judge alleging her dismissal was unlawful. On March 14, the court ruled she could proceed with her case because the ban may violate European Union anti-discrimination laws.

Around 300 lesbians and gay men have been kicked out of the British military in the past five years, according to Stonewall, Britain's main sexual minority lobbying organization.

CANADA

Canadian Federal Court Justice Barbara Reed ruled last month that the higher age of consent for anal sex between men was unconstitutional because it discriminated against gay men, reported Toronto's *Xtra!*

The government claimed the law was needed

to slow HIV transmission.

The ruling came in the case of a U.S. man, Henry Halm, who fled to Canada to avoid prosecution for having had sex with teenage boys in New York. Halm thought he'd be safe because he thought Canada's age of consent was 14, and because Canada does not deport people if the crime they committed elsewhere is not also a crime in Canada. But, in fact, Canada's age of consent is 14 for oral and vaginal sex, but 18 for anal sex.

GERMANY

Those cutting-edge Lesbian Avengers in Berlin have wowed the gay Internet community by establishing their own World Wide Web site.

Point your Web browser at <http://www.cs.ucl.ac.uk/students/zcacst/LA.html>.

The World Wide Web allows one to point-and-click her way around the globe at the speed of light, following topical links on thousands of computers in scores of countries.

In his inaugural speech as an openly gay member of the German parliament, Volker Beck blasted the Liberal Democrat Party for breaking a promise to pursue legal recognition of same-sex partnerships.

The pledge appeared in campaign ads run in lesbian and gay newspapers.

Beck said he will now have to take the matter into his own hands, by introducing a bill to legalize same-sex marriage.

INDIA

In five years India will be the world's most AIDS-stricken country, said a researcher who spoke at the recent conference of Australians for an Ecologically Sustainable Population.

Biology professor Roger Short of Monash University said the epidemic's epicenter will move from Africa to India and that India will probably have more AIDS cases than the rest of the world combined.

India's National AIDS Control Organization estimates that 1.62 million of the country's 850 million citizens are HIV positive, up 60 percent since 1993, according to Reuters.

ISRAEL

Tel Aviv University has settled out of court and granted full spousal benefits to the lover of gay chemistry professor Uzi Even, reports Israel's Society for the Protection of Personal Rights.

The benefits include tuition exemption, use of university facilities, air tickets for sabbaticals, and a pension.

More than 150 professors and 1,200 students signed petitions supporting Even's lawsuit.

JAPAN

Seven percent of Japanese companies that responded to a Tokyo Chamber of Commerce survey would ask an employee to quit if he or she tested HIV positive, the Kyodo news service reported March 14.

Twenty-six percent of companies plan to treat AIDS like any other disease, while 21 percent don't know what they will do when confronted with the issue.

Nine percent of the companies plan to test all employees for HIV and two percent plan to test job applicants.

Meanwhile, *Nikkei Weekly* reports that 114 Japanese gay men got HIV through sex in 1994, a 97 percent increase over 1993, according to the government's AIDS Surveillance Committee.

Japan has seen 3,637 HIV/AIDS cases, of which 1,845 resulted from sex. The others were from blood transfusions.

Compiled by Rex Wockner. Translated by Mario Inchiosa, Guido Gaietta and Peter Rauber.



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