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WORLD news

CHINA

China's most well-known AIDS activist has been arrested and jailed, charged with revealing state secrets.

AIDS Action Project head Wan Yanhai faces prosecution for widely e-mailing a leaked report on thousands of farmers in the Henan province who were infected with HIV after selling their blood to unsanitary, government-sanctioned collectors between the late 1980s and mid-1990s. He has said up to 2 million people might have been infected in similar circumstances.



Wan Yanhai

"What my husband did is good for his country, his people and AIDS prevention in China," Wan's wife, Ivy Su, said Sept. 5. "He is a very intelligent, rational scholar. I believe that in the fight against AIDS, the government is not enough. [Non-governmental organizations] and volunteers and community-level work cannot be ignored."

HUNGARY

Hungary's Constitutional Court on Sept. 4 equalized the age of consent for gay and straight sex at 14. Gay sex was previously illegal until age 18.

The move is, in no small part, a response to demands made by the European Union, which forbids members from discriminating against gays. The EU recently persuaded Cyprus to equalize its age of consent, too.

"The criminal code discriminated against homosexuals in an arbitrary and objectively unjustifiable way," the court said in its verdict. The judges reportedly also deleted some passages in the statute that labeled gay sex "lewdness against the order of nature."

In 1995, the Constitutional Court extended the rights and obligations that apply to unmarried opposite-sex couples to cover same-sex couples as well, creating a kind of common-law gay marriage.

According to the International Lesbian & Gay Association, Hungary must repeal one additional law to join the EU. It prevents people younger than 18 from joining gay rights groups.

"The Constitutional Court's ruling is a great and long-overdue victory for Hungary's LGBT movement," said Ailsa Spindler, executive director of ILGA's European division. "The Hungarian government must now go the final step in accepting European human rights standards and eliminate its restrictions on the freedom of association of young lesbians, gays and bisexuals."

AUSTRALIA

More than 12,000 participants from 70 countries have signed up for the Novem-

ber Gay Games in Sydney. Several sports are still accepting competitors: field hockey, ice hockey, netball, marathon, men's billiards, judo, aerobics, triathlon and some track and field events.

A few participatory cultural events also are still open, including draw inspiration, open stage, writing for performance, poetry slam, concert/marching bands, bridge, chess and video games. Organizers are waiving late registration fees.

"It's now clear we will reach 13,000 participants, which by anyone's standard is an outstandingly successful number. We can say unequivocally that Sydney 2002 is on track—financially and logistically—and participants and spectators should expect the time of their lives," co-chairman Peter Bailey said.

Singer k.d. lang and Maude television actress Bea Arthur will appear at the opening ceremonies of the games Nov. 2. "I've waited a long time to participate in the Gay Games," lang said in a statement.

The assets of Sydney's famous Gay and Lesbian Mardi Gras celebration have been put up for sale.

Included are floats, costumes, props, equipment and the organization's trademark. The group's bankruptcy administrator says members of the board of directors might end up personally responsible for its hundreds of thousands of dollars of debt.

INDIA

Elton John will perform in the southern city of Bangalore in November. It is the first time he has booked a concert in India.

"I'm way beyond excited," John said, according to PopMusic.com. "It's a whole new experience for me, and I'm thrilled to finally do this and hang out with the many beauties they have there."

Activists told the *Times of India* Sept. 4 that they expect the government to legalize gay sex later this year. The gay/AIDS group Naz Foundation is challenging the ban before the Delhi High Court.

Same-sex relations ("carnal intercourse against the order of nature") are punished with up to 10 years in prison. Some of the foundation's members were prosecuted under certain provisions of the law last year for handing out safe-sex brochures.



Actress Bea Arthur (center) will appear at the opening ceremonies of the Gay Games on Nov. 2 in Sydney, Australia