

"The sentiments expressed by the judiciary have been very liberal and progressive," Naz spokesman Shaleen Rakesh said. "The public debate in the media has also vocalized the opinion that two consenting adults should have the right to choose whom they love. Things are finally looking optimistic."

UNITED KINGDOM

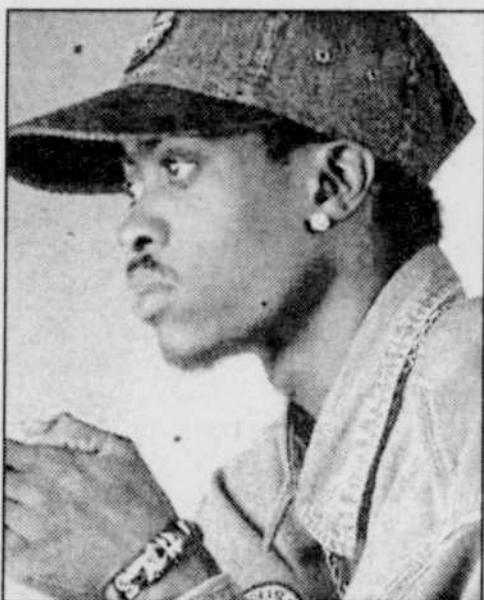
Five of the 314 gay couples who have tied the knot under London's Partnership Register since it was launched a year ago have deregistered, the *Independent* reported Sept. 3.

The paper said the partnership failure rate, 1.6 percent, is nearly the same as for heterosexual marriages in the first year—1.3 percent. Unlike many European nations where registered gay couples have most rights of marriage, very few benefits are granted by London's gay registry other than symbolic recognition by Mayor Ken Livingstone.

About two-thirds of the United Kingdom's Anglican priests oppose the ordination of gay priests who refuse to be celibate, a new survey found. The poll of some 2,000 priests was carried out by Christian Research and the conservative organization Cost of Conscience.

Rowan Williams, the incoming archbishop of Canterbury and leader of the worldwide Anglican Communion, which includes the Episcopal Church in the United States, has a history of knowingly ordaining noncelibate gay priests. But shortly after his selection, he promised he would not impose his "personal theories" or a gay "manifesto of his own devising" on the rest of the church.

Some gay Anglican activists have denounced Williams for allegedly caving in to reactionary elements in the church and ignoring his personal conscience on the matter.



Janet Jackson is being boycotted for recording a duet with anti-gay musician Beenie Man

Officers said they nabbed nine callboys and two pimps. Nguyen Van Tuan and Truong Hoang Minh Tuan were charged with organizing prostitution and circulating obscene DVDs, videos and magazines.

The nine alleged prostitutes were sent to rehabilitation centers. The alleged pimps will face a judge, prosecutors said.

SOUTH AFRICA

South Africa's Pan-African HIV/AIDS Treatment Access Movement has targeted Coca-Cola, demanding Africa's

largest employer provide anti-HIV drugs to all infected employees, *Business Day* reported Aug. 26.

The group has set Oct. 17 as a "global day of action" against the corporation. Some other South African companies, including mining giants Anglo American, Anglo Gold and De Beers, reportedly provide the drugs.

Coke "has enjoyed a rapidly growing market, decades of escalating profit and low labor costs in Africa [but] refuses to pay for HIV treatment for the bulk of its workers," the movement said. The corporation reportedly provides AIDS drugs to administrative staff but not to lower-level employees.

BRAZIL

The Brazilian government has recognized a lesbian couple for immigration purposes, activists reported Aug. 27.

The French/Brazilian couple met in France and were "married" there under France's civil unions law, which grants nearly all rights and obligations of marriage. The Brazilian woman then was granted French residency.

When the couple decided to move to Brazil, their relationship was recognized, after prolonged wrangling, by a 17-judge panel based on the principle of international reciprocity, the activists reported. "This is important for us because it brings to light that reciprocity laws are important," said Marta Donayre, who works with the San Francisco-based National Center for Lesbian Rights.



Marta Donayre

George Michael pulled out of a British Broadcasting Corp. documentary after learning producers planned to revisit his 1998 arrest for masturbating with a cop in a Los Angeles park toilet. The filmmakers planned to follow him and his lover, Kenny Goss, for four months, chronicling their lives in the wake of the pop star's controversial new record, "Shoot the Dog."

Among much else, the video portrays President Bush as an imbecile and British Prime Minister Tony Blair as his obedient dog. A different scene shows them as boyfriends.

Michael was strongly denounced in some U.S. media outlets because of the record's content and vowed to stay abroad for a time out of fear he would be physically attacked in the United States.

The British gay group OutRage! wants an apology from pop music star Janet Jackson and is urging gays to boycott her. They are upset that she has recorded a duet, "Feel It Boy," with Jamaica's Beenie Man, whose other songs have overtly advocated murdering homosexuals.

VIETNAM

Police in Ho Chi Minh City have busted what they called a gay prostitution ring, local media reported Sept. 5.

Compiled by REX WOCKNER, who has reported for the gay press since 1985. He has a bachelor's degree in journalism from Drake University and started his career as a radio reporter.

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