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WORLD news

AUSTRALIA

The recent Gay Games lost \$1.4 million, and the company Sydney 2002 Gay Games Limited likely will file bankruptcy, the Australian Broadcasting Corporation reported Dec. 4.

"The timing was probably unfortunate," administrator Peter Marsden said. "The Bali bombings in September had a significant impact on the number of people that actually came to Australia for the Games."

The festival injected an estimated \$56 million into Sydney's economy. About 12,000 competitors from 80 nations competed in 31 sporting events.

SWITZERLAND

Switzerland's Cabinet unveiled gay partnership legislation Nov. 29.

"The recognition by the state of the partnership between persons of the same sex will contribute to ending discrimination, which hits homosexual couples particularly hard, and to lessening prejudice against homosexuality," the government said in a press release. Justice Minister Ruth Metzler told reporters, "The picture of same-sex couples hugging and kissing on the street should become normal."

Same-sex partners would register at the civil state office, where they would commit to living together and to mutual respect, assistance and economic life. A non-Swiss partner would be granted residency.

Registrees would acquire marriage rights in the areas of inheritance, social security and divorce. Adoption and assisted-procreation rights are not included.



Ruth Metzler

"Adoption is an institution of social assistance to children," the government said. "There is no right to adoption.... If the law authorized a homosexual couple to adopt a child, this child juridically would have two fathers or two mothers, instead of a father and a mother, and this would contrast with the order of things."

The government said about 30 federal laws would have to be modified to accommodate the partnership scheme. Gay groups welcomed the measure while denouncing the adoption and assisted-procreation restrictions and lamenting that same-sex couples simply are not being granted access to regular marriage.

NEPAL

About 2,000 people marched Dec. 1 through downtown Kathmandu carrying placards reading, "Live and Let Live."

Nepal formulated an AIDS policy just this year. "Affected people should be rehabilitated and provided with opportunities of livelihood to enable them to live without social stigmas attached to their names," Health Minister Upendra Devkota said.

CHINA

China lifted a ban on condom advertising Dec. 1, the State Administration of Industry and Commerce announced. A 1989 policy prohibited all advertising related to sex.

Officials say China, population 1.3 billion, could see 10 million HIV infections by 2010. About 1.5 million people are believed to be infected now.

"The ban should have been lifted a long time ago," state family planning spokesman

An Bohua told *China Daily*. "Condoms are the most effective tools for...protecting people and their partners from sexually transmitted disease."

SINGAPORE

Singaporean men who travel to nations with high HIV rates will receive government-issued safe-sex packets prior to their departure, Minister of State for Health Balaji Sadasivan announced Nov. 23.

The kits include condoms, warnings against casual sex and toiletries. Singapore has documented 1,788 cases of HIV infection.



Canada spanked televangelist R.W. Schambach (left, with wife Winifred) for his hate speech

CANADA

Canada's Vision TV violated media ethics during an anti-gay program, the Canadian Broadcasting Standards Council has ruled.

According to the Nov. 28 issue of Toronto's *Xtra!*, during a February broadcast of the program *Power Today*, evangelist R.W. Schambach said: "Homosexuality is not another lifestyle. It's a demon spirit. In the beginning God made Adam and Eve. He didn't make Adam and Steve.... God made you a man; God made you a woman. And the devil has come in, and he's thwarted the program of God.... What you do in private, God's gonna splash it all over the front page. Demon spirit."

The council declared: "Intolerant comment can find no salvation by wrapping itself in religious garb. Broadcasters of religious programming must be as vigilant with respect to other social values (such as the human rights of identifiable groups) as broadcasters of all other types of programming."

Vision TV's infraction carries no penalty. However, the network does have to air the council's decision, once during prime time hours and once during *Power Today*.

In a separate ruling, the council determined *Queer as Folk* does not breach broadcasting sex guidelines, but Showcase was ordered to air a viewer-discretion warning after each commercial break. The network must broadcast the text of the council's ruling, once during prime time and once during the program.

The province of Alberta must offer gay couples family health insurance, a tribunal of the Alberta Human Rights Commission ruled Dec. 4.

This means the government "is in a position to accept same-sex couples as a family, so that gives you all sorts of rights and obligations under the law," plaintiff Keith Purdy told the Canadian Press wire service. Alberta's socialized health care system charges \$22 a month for individual coverage and \$44 for an entire family.

The leader of Nunavut said Nov. 23 that the territory does not give out condoms in prisons because gay sex does not occur behind bars.

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