



World Briefs

Levy accuses Shamir of ethnic discrimination

JERUSALEM — The rift in the ruling Likud bloc widened Tuesday after Foreign Minister David Levy accused Prime Minister Yitzhak Shamir of waging an ethnically oriented vendetta against him and his supporters.

Levy warned that Likud would suffer in the June 23 elections. He said he would not quit the party but would stick to his announced plan to resign his post to protest Shamir's "conspiracy."

Levy, born in Morocco, said ethnic slurs were made against two of his Ashkenazi supporters, Michael Kleiner and Dan Tichon.

He said Kleiner was told he would be punished "because of the smell of that Moroccan, David Levy, that is sticking to him," Levy said. Tichon was asked, "How you support this Frank?" he said.

"Frank" is an offensive term for Sephardim — Jews who immigrated from Middle Eastern and North African countries. Ashkenazi are Jews from middle and eastern Europe.

If Levy leaves Likud, as many of his supporters urge him to do, it seriously could undermine Likud's appeal among Sephardim, whose unhappiness with the opposition Labor Party resulted in Likud's takeover 15 years ago.

House Post Office audit shows more corruption

WASHINGTON — A surprise audit of the troubled House Post Office last week found an unlocked vault stacked with \$100 money orders, personal and public money mixed together and employees ill-equipped to handle stamps and cash.

The General Accounting Office audit also said there were money shortages and a House member's \$580 expense account with an unexplained "Do not process" note attached.

No written findings were issued, but key House officials were briefed by the GAO on Monday. The Associated Press obtained the results from the detailed written notes of a staff member who attended the session.

Mismanagement at the House mail facility has become a major embarrassment for the House Democratic leadership, along with bad checks written at the chamber's former bank.

Three former post office employees have pleaded guilty to embezzlement and a fourth — who has admitted selling drugs — is awaiting trial.

Allegations of illegal loans using postal funds have been published, and separate investigations are under way by a federal grand jury and the House Administration Committee.

The surprise audit was ordered by House Clerk Donald Anderson, who was asked by Speaker Thomas Foley to take control of the post office pending the naming of a new postmaster.

— The Associated Press

STATE AND NATIONAL

Food Lion stores under investigation

By Tara Duncan
Staff Writer

Food Lion, the grocery store chain that claims to save you money, might be saving itself money these days as some of its employees work "off the clock."

Executives of Food Lion Inc., a Salisbury company with stores in 12 states, testified before the House Subcommittee on Employment and Housing March 25, after members of the United Foodworkers Union complained that some workers had been forced to stay on the job after clocking out.

"Occasionally, we have cases of people working off the clock," said Food Lion spokesman Mike Mozingo. "People will come forward and say that someone forced them to work off the clock."

"We try to pay them for their time if this is found to be true."

According to federal law, an employer must reimburse an employee for work done without punching in on the time clock or after punching out.

Employers found to have violated this law can face stiff monetary fines and can be forced to pay back wages plus an additional amount to the worker, said

Dean Speer, director of the division of policy and analysis for the U.S. Department of Labor.

Employers that continuously overlook off-the-clock hours can receive as much as a \$1,000 fine for repeated violations, he said.

"It is the employers' and the employees' responsibility and duty to accurately pay and keep account of all hours," Speer said.

Mozingo said that although some Food Lion workers had chosen to work late after clocking out, no one was forced

to work without pay.

Testifying against Food Lion were two former employees, a former store manager and two current employees. Four of these witnesses were from Food Lion stores in Winston-Salem, Asheville, Pinchurst and Morganton, but they were unavailable for comment. One of the witnesses was from a Camden, S.C., store.

Food Lion executives have not been informed of any other meetings with the subcommittee and do not know where the testimonies will lead, Mozingo said.

"Apparently the subcommittee is in the middle of a fact-finding exercise, and we don't know what the ultimate goal will be."

Mozingo said that the company was not under an official investigation and that the committee called the executives in the hope they could serve as an example of problems in the Labor

Department's enforcement of wage and hour laws.

"It was a fact-finding mission," he said. "We were invited to talk about how we handled hours off the clock policies, scheduling and employee time off."

Former and present employees also testified that Food Lion routinely asked employees to work without pay.

Sometimes employees get off their shift, clock out and then are asked to continue helping because the store is busy or because there is something that has to be done immediately, Mozingo said.

There also have been occasions where one employee would ask another off-the-clock employee to fill in for him or her. This could end up being work without pay that store officials were unaware of.

N.C. prison overcrowding hits emergency levels

Department of Corrections seeks alternatives to incarceration

By Brian McJunkin
Staff Writer

The state's growing prison overcrowding problem has triggered recent efforts to avoid a "prison population emergency" and provide alternative methods of punishment and rehabilitation.

Under the 1987 Emergency Prison Population Stabilization Act, a prison population emergency is declared when the number of state inmates is more than 19,986 for 15 consecutive days. Once an emergency is declared, the State Parole Commission must reduce the prison population to 19,782 within 90 days or risk a federal takeover.

Last Thursday, the state prison population increased to a single-day record 20,136 inmates. The total has remained above 19,986 every day since then.

Because of recent overcrowding in N.C. prisons, the parole eligibility of certain inmates has been moved up by six months, although convicted murderers, drug and sexual offenders, kidnapers and drunk drivers are ineligible for this consideration.

"It's a mess," said Jim Woodall, an assistant district attorney for Chapel Hill. "If they had space for 20,000 more (prisoners), I guarantee it would be filled within a year."

During 1991, 28,536 convicts were admitted into state prisons, said Bill

Poston, the head of public information for the Department of Corrections.

In contrast, only 16,370 prisoners entered state facilities in 1985, and 12,655 were locked up in 1980, he said.

The state's prison population shows no sign of dropping.

During the last year, prison admissions have increased by 20 percent, Poston said.

But the rise in the number of admissions does not mean prisoners are serving their full terms, he said.

A recent state Department of Corrections study showed that most inmates serve only about 29 percent of their sentence.

"You get somewhat of a revolving

door sense of criminal justice in North Carolina," said Thad Beyle, a UNC political science professor. "Being in prison is not a major problem (for many offenders). It's a short penalty, and then you're back on the street."

Many state prisons are clogged with inmates charged with less severe crimes, Beyle said. These prisoners take up space better suited for more serious criminals, he said.

"We send too many people to jail, people who are only hurting themselves," he said.

With the state's recent overcrowding problems and economic woes, law enforcement officials increasingly are searching for alternatives to incarceration.

In addition to releasing prisoners earlier, officials have been utilizing house arrest procedures and have been exploring the idea of rehabilitation camps, modeled after military boot camps.

Alternative punishment techniques would save the state a great deal of money, Poston said.

In addition to the overcrowding problem, N.C. prison officials recently have begun addressing the poor quality of living in most state prisons.

Most N.C. inmates are educated poorly and some have histories of drug abuse, Poston said.

Until 1987, when several lawsuits were filed against the state, prisons had very few programs designed to deal with these problems.

Today, the N.C. penal system has a statewide drug rehabilitation program and provides vocational education opportunities for inmates, Poston said.

The state even offers prisoners a way to earn a high school diploma, he said. Participation in the drug rehabilitation and educational programs can earn inmates good-time credits, Poston said.

Each good-time credit reduces an inmate's sentence six days for each month they are scheduled to serve, he said.

Along with efforts to provide alternative penal programs, state lawmakers plan to construct more prison facilities to alleviate overcrowding, Poston said.

"The legislature has issued \$112.5 million in general obligation bonds to finance the construction of (facilities) for 3,298 additional inmates," he said. "We hope to have inmates in them in 1994."

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