

Early Bird 17 – 23 March

SAFETY & SECURITY

Nuclear power plants unequipped for nuclear catastrophe (March 19)

According to a report in the “Spiegel” magazine, Germany is not adequately prepared for a nuclear catastrophe such as the one in Fukushima in 2011. The magazine refers to an unpublished study of the federal office for radiation protection. Radioactive substances would pollute much larger areas than assumed until now. Total cities would have to be evacuated, which is not provided for in the emergency planning.

Mother beats nine-year old girl with a belt (March 19)

An American woman has been fined €750 by the district court of Schweinfurt for beating her nine-year old daughter with a belt. The initial charges were for abuse. She was only sentenced for assault. According to a statement made by the 31-year old woman, she wanted to discipline her daughter one morning in September for lying. She wanted to discipline her daughter by beating her rear-end. However, since the girl ducked away she hit her on the cheek bone. The teacher noticed the red and swelled spot and sent the girl to the school nurse. Then the youth welfare office was notified. The defense attorney demanded to close the proceedings, which were not possible since beating a child with a belt are disciplinary methods that are not tolerated in Germany. The parental right of corporal punishment was abolished in Germany. Even though the woman stated that she did not know this and that such punishment is normal in the States, it did not exempt her from punishment, in spite of the fact that the paternal right of corporal punishment still exists in the U.S.A.

Youths attack an eleven year boy (March 17)

According to the Schweinfurt police two unknown youths attacked an eleven year old boy in Schweinfurt-Bergl, pressed him for money, threatened and hit him in broad daylight. Last Thursday afternoon the boy was on his way home from school when he was stopped by two youths in Oskar-von-Miller-Strasse at approximately 3:30 p.m. One of the offenders pressed him for money and threatened to beat him. When the boy said that he had no money the two pushed him and hit him in the face with their fists. The eleven year-old boy was able to escape with minor injuries. He ran to the train station and caught a bus to take him home. The police are looking for witnesses.

Belgium children killed in tragic accident return home (March 17)

With a minute of silence, Belgium commemorated the death of 28 people who were killed in a bus accident in Switzerland. Exactly at 11 a.m. hundreds of thousands or possibly millions of people interrupted their everyday life to commemorate the victims of a tragic accident. Most of the victims were no older than 12 years of age. In the Netherlands people also remembered the victims. According to the ministry of foreign affairs there were also six children from the Netherlands killed in the accident.

LEADERS & POLITICS

New Schweinfurt science club to inspire children in technology (March 23)

It is a project which should secure the future of Schweinfurt as a seat of industry in the long term. Therefore it has a high priority in communal politics and the local worldwide concerns. We cannot complain that there is a lack of skilled personnel, if we are not doing anything beforehand, said Peter Ottenbruch, Chief Technology Officer at ZF Friedrichshafen AG. Now something is being done, also based on his initiative. Young people between the ages 8 and 18 will move into the facilities, operated by the association in July 2012. There will be class rooms for mechanics, physics and electrical engineering in following the example of the successfully working science club in Friedrichshafen, home office of ZF Sachs.

Joachim Gauck takes oath (March 23)

The new President of the Federal Republic of Germany, Joachim Gauck, will take his oath in front of the "Bundestag" (Lower House of German Parliament) and the "Bundesrat" (Federal Assembly). During a one hour meeting in the Reichstag building the former civil rights activist is expected to sketch out some of the focus points in his future work. At age 72 Gauck is the oldest President of the Federal Republic of Germany. On Monday Gauck will start his first foreign trip to Poland. He has emphasized several times that he holds the German-Polish relations near and dear.

Schweinfurt observes girls and boys day, April 26 (March 21)

Girls' and boys' day is held on April 26 this year. Businesses, parents and schools are supposed to make it possible for students to participate in that career orientation day. Companies and organizations enter the various events into a central "action map" under "girls' day" or "boys' day" where the youths can look for offers and can register, according to a press release by the city of Schweinfurt. Since career and life planning of young people are still shaped by traditional role models, girls and boys should get to know occupations that do not conform to this gender stereotype. The important concept is to separate girls and boys. The separation makes it easier to leave known paths and to discover new interests. The youths will gain new perspectives for their individual career and life plans. Girls learn about technical jobs, IT and crafts while boys get to make experiences in child care and social services. Companies, business, authorities, organizations, universities and institutes support girls' and boys' day 2012 by offering free on-the-job training days and workshops. The city of Schweinfurt will also participate in the girls' and boys' day 2012 and offers 27 slots for girls and 20 for boys.

Communities with nuclear power plants demand compensation (March 20)

German communities housing nuclear power plants want to pressure the federal government to force it into finding solutions for nuclear repositories. They fear that otherwise the local temporary storage areas will turn into permanent ones, which would hinder the development of the communities, since the areas could not be used for any alternative purposes. During a conference in Grafenrheinfeld, the mayors also demanded to have a say so in regard to any questions on storage of nuclear material. In the past such decisions always were made without the consent of the communities affected. The pressure increases due to the decision to take all nuclear power plants in Germany off the net by 2022. During the dismantling of nuclear power

plants, additional radioactive material – radioactivity ranging from low to medium - is set free and is usually stored in a storage building at the site. Mayor Roland Lauer does not understand why the permanent storage plant is still not ready. Furthermore the communities demand financial compensation for the jobs and the buying power that are lost.

ECONOMY

Progress has its price (March 20)

Consumers have to brace themselves for considerable price increases for electricity. Electrical power will increase by 5 to 7 percent in the coming years. Additional power networks are necessary when using more alternative energy. The network charges are about one-fourth of the electricity rates. However, consumers do not have to accept this. By changing suppliers a 4-person household can save more than €200 per year.

Corruption costing €250 billion a year (March 17)

A study shows that the annual damage for the German economy is immense. Bribery and acceptance of benefits cause the German economy approximately 250 billion every year, according to a study by the economist Friedrich Schneider of the University Linz. The study to the actual state of corruption caused a stir after it was published with details in the “World.” The financial damage that corruption causes in a national economy mainly lies in the fact that when awarding contracts the contract is not awarded to the bidder with the best offer. This leads to lower expenditures for these investment projects which hinders economic growth. Many universities do not spend much time on corruption.

SPORTS/ATHLETICS

HOCKEY: Mighty Dogs looking to take title (March 23)

The Mighty Dogs are determined to win the championships in the Bavarian League with the game taking place in Weiden Friday, March 23 at 8 p.m. Coach Victor Proskuryakov said, “We have had a super training this week. Everyone is fired up to achieve the second victory in a row and they will do everything and they will do everything it takes tonight in Weiden.”

HEALTH

European researchers closer to enable paraplegics ability to walk (March 23)

On Thursday, scientists introduced a new prototype which measures brain waves, transfers them to a computer and enables some movements. The patient, with his thoughts, can choose which

part of the body he wants to move, according to Rüdiger Rupp of the paraplegic center at the University of Heidelberg.