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WEATHER: Mostly cloudy, with thunderstorms. High 86, low 76. FORECAST ON BACK PAGE OF SPORTS

The Palm Beach Post

WEDNESDAY, SEPTEMBER 20, 2000 SOUTH COUNTY FINAL 82 PAGES 50 CENTS

County schools told to fix safety hazards in buildings

Fire-code violations discovered

By Mary Ellen Flannery

Palmetto Bay High School

Nearly half the schools in Palm Beach County have hardware safety problems in their classrooms and corridors, and school officials are feeling pressure from the state Department of Education to resolve them quickly.

They did, the school buildings would have to close — but the state has asked the district to provide a detailed schedule by Friday saying where each problem will be fixed. Some schools could take weeks, but school officials said they will put these projects at the top of their list.

More than a dozen older schools have hand-sprinklers with down in their first-floor classrooms, which means students would have to break a window to escape a fire that blocked the door; others have windows built into corridor doors, which would allow a fire to spread quickly from one room to another and finally enter a gym, which could block students trying to flee from a fire.

School safety concerns

Inspections have turned up some recurring safety problems in Palm Beach County schools, including:

- **Hand-to-open windows in some first-floor classrooms**, which means students would have to break a window to escape a fire that blocked the door.
- **Windows built into corridor doors**, which would allow a fire to spread quickly from one room to another.
- **Lacks on exterior pipes**, which could block students trying to flee from a fire.

China trade bill approved in Senate

China may soon join the WTO, allowing U.S. businesses access to 1.3 billion people.

By Matthew Vila

WASHINGTON

The Senate voted by a large margin Tuesday to normalize trade relations with China, ending one of the biggest legislative battles of the year and highlighting the progress of historic economic opening by the world's most populous nation.

The 83-15 vote sets the stage for China's accession to the World Trade Organization, possibly before the end of the year, as those advocating increased engagement with the economy.

Florida's anti-giant over-claim to who argued that the trade deal is an abandonment of democratic principles in the name of corporate profits.

The legislation, approved earlier this year by the House, now goes to the White House for President Clinton's signature. The president has made passage of the China trade bill one of his top priorities this year, leading to a recent free trade agreement with the North American Free Trade Agreement with Mexico and Canada.

The landmark agreement will ensure economic prosperity and boost and promote economic freedom in China, increasing the prospects for openness in China and a more peaceful future for all of us, Clinton told reporters at the White House.

The bill will end a 20-year practice under which Congress reviewed China's trade status on a year-to-year basis and instead will grant Beijing permanent normal trade relations, guaranteeing Chinese goods the same low tariff access to the U.S. market as products from all but a handful of countries. In exchange, China agreed to open up its vast market of 1.3 billion

14,000 become U.S. citizens in Broward



PORT LAUDERDALE — Sadika Rathi, 93, from Syria, is one of about 14,000 new U.S. citizens being sworn in during four ceremonies Tuesday and today at the Broward County Convention Center. The ceremonies

Cuban airplane crashes 9 rescued

One passenger dies; Cuba remains quiet

By Lisa Fain, Sandra Marger Garcia

MIAMI

Ten Cubans apparently trying to flee western Cuba in Miami Tuesday in an aging Soviet-era crop-duster were picked up by a fighter when their plane ran out of fuel and crashed into the sea.

A U.S. Coast Guard spokesman in Miami said Capt. Konstantinos Kallitragas of the MV Clion Diver rescued at 1:45 p.m. to say that one of the Cubans was dead, and that a man had serious head injuries. The group consisted of four men, three women and three children.

The pilot was identified as an Agracora France-Perse report from Cuba as Angel Luis Iglesias Hernandez, 36, of Los Palacios. He quoted a friend of the pilot as saying he took his wife, Mercedes Martinez Paredes, his two



THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Please see CUBA, 11A

Study: Boca firm's staph vaccine curbs infections up to 57%

NEW BEACH POST/DAVID THE BOON

TORONTO — A vaccine developed by a Boca Raton company has been shown for the first time to protect against life-threatening staph infections, a major hazard among hospital patients, researchers said Tuesday.

The genetically engineered vaccine was tested first in laboratory studies, and it cut their risk of staph blood poisoning in half for nearly one year. The patients' antibody levels then dropped, and their protection against staph began to fade.

But doctors still are encouraged by the results. "It could be a major breakthrough in this area," said Dr. Steve Black of the Raber Performance Vaccine Study Center in Oakland, Calif.

Black presented the results in a 15-minute addition to the program of the annual infectious disease meeting of the American Society for Microbiology. The vaccine, called StaphVAX, originally was created at the National Institute of Health and now is being developed by Boca Raton-based Nabi, which financed the latest study.

Nabi makes drugs that prevent and treat infections.

Please see VACCINE, 11A

Vatican signals shift on condom use

General use is still opposed, but the church calls condoms 'the lesser of two evils' if AIDS is a direct threat.

By Douglas Berlin

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