



NEW MOVIES
A real-life drama, a kids' flick and two fictional thrillers are opening. TODAY C1, 3 & 4

The London Free Press

Light snow, High -4° Low -9° Details on Page B2 FRIDAY, MARCH 12, 2004 www.lfpress.com section A

Bombs kill more than 190

A group claims responsibility in the name of al-Qaida for the blasts that have devastated Spain.

Free Press news services

MADRID, Spain — A series of bombs hidden in backpacks exploded in quick succession yesterday, blowing apart four commuter trains, killing at least 192 people and wounding more than 1,200.

Spain blamed Basque separatists, but a shadowy group claimed responsibility in the name of al-Qaida for the worst terrorist attack in Spain's history.

Panicked commuters trampled each other after two of the bombs went off in one train in the Atocha station in Madrid.

Train cars were turned into twisted wrecks and platforms were strewn with corpses. Cellphones rang unanswered on the bodies of the dead as frantic relatives tried to call them.

"March 11, 2004, now holds

its place in the history of infamy," Prime Minister Jose Maria Aznar said.

The bombing came three days ahead of Spain's general election Sunday. A major campaign issue was how to deal with ETA, the Basque militant group.

Campaigning for the election was called off and three days of mourning were declared.

It was Europe's worst terror attack since the bombing of a Pan Am jetliner over Lockerbie, Scotland, in 1988 that killed 270 people.

The 10 backpack bombs exploded over a 15-minute span, starting about 7:40 a.m., on trains along 15 kilometres of commuter line from Santa Eugenia to the Atocha terminal, a bustling hub for subway, commuter and long-distance trains. Police also found and detonated three other bombs.

"An act of barbaric terrorism has engulfed Spain with profound pain, repulsion and anger," Spanish King Juan Carlos said on national television.

See SPAIN Page A7



TERRORIST ATTACK: Rescue workers cover bodies beside a bomb-damaged train yesterday following Spain's worst-ever terror attack.

Associated Press

THE GAMES COME TO LONDON



SUE REEVE The London Free Press

The Flags of the Games performance precedes the parade of athletes at the opening ceremonies for the Ontario Winter Games last night at the John Labatt Centre. The ceremonies included a performance by figure skater Brian Orser.

Orser recalls own Games debut

The old master weaved through the roiling neophytes and remembered it all fondly.

He's 42 now, but figure skater Brian Orser knows exactly how the 2,700-plus throng of teenage athletes were feeling at last night's Ontario Winter Games opening ceremony at the John Labatt Centre.

JIM KERNAGHAN



He's been here, done this and went on to world acclaim.

Orser won the Ontario Winter Games singles title as

a 12-year-old in 1974, then added the Canada Winter Games gold two months later en route to eventual status as world champion.

"It was my first competition where there were athletes from all sports," Orser said as the nervous teens gathered in chattering clumps for the march-in. "It was a major trip for me at the time."

More coverage: What's going on in the competitions. Page D1, D5

It was a trip that some of the kids who'll compete in London over the next three days might one day say was their first important step at multi-sport international competition.

See GAMES Page A2

Incident another blow to OPP

Fifteen officers face discipline charges after a native's property was defaced.

BY JENNIFER O'BRIEN
Free Press Reporter

The OPP has suspended two officers and disbanded an entire tactical unit after a warrior flag and other property of a London-area native were defaced while he was in custody.

Eight members of the OPP's Barrie Tactical Response Unit (TRU) face discipline charges under Ontario's Police Services Act and seven others internal discipline following the January incident at the Chippewa of the Thames First Nation.

"It's a sad day for the OPP," spokesperson Supt. William Crate said yesterday.

"A newspaper photograph and a native flag were damaged while our officers were lawfully in a residence."

The officers face a range of penalties from required counselling to dismissal, he said.

The incident follows another recent blow to OPP-native relations, the release of a videotape from the 1995 Ipperwash standoff in which two OPP officers were heard

making racist comments.

Native protester Dudley George was fatally shot by police at Ipperwash, triggering a long-delayed public inquiry set to begin next month.

"It is so sad this situation would happen in light of what's been released in terms of OPP comments regarding the Dudley George incidents eight years ago," said Earl Commanda, Union of Ontario Indians grand council chief.

"It's a sad day for the OPP."

Supt. William Crate

"It appears the OPP have made the right decision in disbanding the unit," he said.

Commanda said the incident shows a need for more education of OPP officers who deal with native communities.

"No disciplinary actions can erase racism, but perhaps more training of a different nature could help educate officers," he said.

Chippewa Chief Kelly Riley called the disciplinary action a "reasonable first step," but was disappointed over the vandalism of a Mohawk flag and a photo of a native protester.

See POLICE Page A2

PM swings through region



SUE REEVE The London Free Press

JACKET: Prime Minister Paul Martin shows off his new UWO jacket for the crowd during his visit to Western yesterday.

BY CHIP MARTIN
Free Press Politics Reporter

Prime Minister Paul Martin breezed through London and St. Thomas yesterday in what he insisted wasn't a pre-election swing.

But the trip — one in a series of Martin outings in Ontario since the \$100-million Liberal sponsorship scandal blew up — had all the trappings of a campaign event.

Making his London debut as prime minister, Martin met community leaders and discussed issues ranging from health care, to education, commercialization of university research, low commodity prices and wind turbines.

He found time to blast the National Hockey League over Todd Bertuzzi, the Vancouver Canuck suspended for a vicious attack on a player.

Our View: Prime minister shows he's listening. Page A8

"I'd certainly say clean up your act," Martin said.

Martin's own act had all the hallmarks of an election-style swing, as he shared the spotlight with his four local Liberal MPs — Joe Fontana of London-North-Centre, Pat O'Brien of London-Fanshawe, Sue Barnes of London West and Gar Knutson from Elgin-Middlesex-London.

Martin praised the hard work of the MPs. He credited Fontana, Barnes and O'Brien with getting research dollars for London and Knutson for "a tremendous job (with) a lot of international responsibilities (as minister of state for new and emerging markets)."

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Bertuzzi out for season

BY SHI DAVIDI
Canadian Press

TORONTO — The National Hockey League tried to make the punishment fit the crime yesterday, suspending Vancouver Canucks forward Todd Bertuzzi for the rest of the season — and perhaps longer — for attacking Colorado's Steve Moore.

Bertuzzi's ban will cost him at least 17 games (13 regular season matches plus a minimum of four playoff contests) and \$501,926.39 US of his \$6.8-million salary, money the Canucks will pay into the NHL

More coverage: Reaction, columnists' views. Page D1, 2



BERTUZZI: May miss up to 41 games.

Players' Emergency Assistance Fund.

The all-star power forward could miss up to 41 games if Vancouver reaches the Stanley Cup final.

See BERTUZZI Page A6