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The Record

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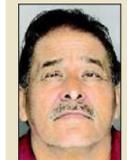


Official target of extortion, police say

Jailed activist accused of seeking political favors

By David Siders
Record Staff Writer

STOCKTON — Police said Wednesday that Ramiro A. Reyes, the south Stockton activist arrested Tuesday at City Hall, tried to extort political favors from Stockton Planning Commissioner Sam Fant.



Ramiro Reyes
Arrested in alleged attempt to extort planning commissioner Sam Fant.

Reyes, 60, said he did not do that. He remained at the San Joaquin County Jail on Wednesday on suspicion of attempted extortion.

Reyes' arrest followed by less than a week what Reyes described as a lunch meeting between Reyes, Fant and Arthur Murrillo, an associate of Reyes' and a City Council candidate.

The Police Department declined, as it did the previous day, to discuss the case in any detail. Officer Pete Smith, a department spokesman, said, "I believe he (Reyes) was looking for things in the way of future votes and things that might come before the Planning

SEE ACTIVIST, PAGE A8

Governor fights prison guard furlough ruling

By Don Thompson
The Associated Press

SACRAMENTO — The Schwarzenegger administration said it would file an appeal Wednesday in a lawsuit over his furloughs of state workers, contesting a decision by the controller to restore pay for prison guards.

Last year, Gov. Arnold Schwarzenegger ordered about 200,000 state employees to take three days off a month without pay, cutting their paychecks by 14 percent to help close the state's budget gap. The California Correctional Peace Officers Association sued, arguing that guards are losing three days' pay each month, but can never take the time off because prisons operate around the clock.

Alameda County Superior Court Judge Frank Roesch sided with the 30,000-member union last month. On Tuesday, state Controller John Chiang said he intends to restore guards' full pay to comply with that ruling. The guards' court victory does not affect about two dozen other union lawsuits opposing the furloughs.

Schwarzenegger spokesman Aaron McLear
SEE FURLOUGH, PAGE A8



Staggering toll feared in Haiti



Haitians gather Wednesday, above, outside the badly damaged National Palace in Port-au-Prince. A woman grieves, top, in a shantytown on the outskirts of Port-au-Prince.

Port-au-Prince streets strewn with dead; medical care, supplies still scarce

By Jonathan M. Katz
The Associated Press

PORT-AU-PRINCE, Haiti — The earthquake spared neither poor nor powerful: the president was homeless, the U.N. mission chief missing, the archbishop dead. Whole neighborhoods were flattened and perhaps tens of thousands of people killed in the latest catastrophe to befall impoverished Haiti.

Dazed survivors wandered past dead bodies in Port-au-Prince's rubble-strewn streets Wednesday, crying for loved ones, and rescuers searched collapsed buildings for signs of life.

The first cargo planes with food, water, medical supplies, shelter and sniffer dogs headed to the Western Hemisphere's poorest nation a day after the magnitude-7 quake flattened much of the capital of 2 million people.

Hospitals, schools and the main prison collapsed in Tuesday's quake. The capital's Roman Catholic archbishop was killed when his office and the main cathedral fell. The head of the U.N. peacekeeping mission was missing in the ruins of the organization's multistory headquarters.

At a triage center improvised in a hotel parking lot, people with cuts, broken bones and crushed ribs moaned under tentlike covers fashioned from bloody sheets.

"I can't take it any more. My back hurts too much," said Alex Georges, 28, who was still waiting for treatment a day after the school he was in collapsed and killed 11 classmates. A body lay a few feet away.

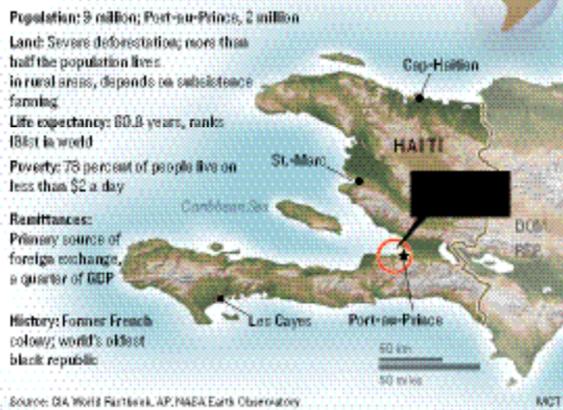
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Twitter again becomes the go-to worldwide channel for eyewitness reports, this time amid the chaos in Haiti. **PAGE A8**

SEE HAITI, PAGE A8

Profile in adversity

Haiti, severely damaged by four hurricanes in 2008, has been hit by a strong earthquake near its capital Port-au-Prince.



SOME OF HAITI'S WORST NATURAL DISASTERS

- 1842:** Earthquake destroys Cap-Haitien and other cities in northern Haiti and Dominican Republic.
- 1935:** Unnamed storm kills more than 2,000 in Haiti before moving on to Florida as hurricane, where 400 die.
- 1946:** Magnitude-8.1 quake strikes Dominican Republic and Haiti, causing tsunami that kills 1,790 people.
- 1954:** Hurricane Hazel kills hundreds in Haiti.
- 1963:** Hurricane Flora leaves more than 6,000 dead in Haiti and Cuba.
- 1994:** Hurricane Gordon blamed for hundreds of deaths in Haiti.
- 1998:** Hurricane Georges destroys 80 percent of Haiti's crops while killing more than 400.
- May 2004:** Three days of heavy rains cause floods that kill more than 2,600.
- September 2004:** Tropical Storm Jeanne causes flooding and landslides that kill 1,900 and leave 200,000 homeless in Gonaives, Haiti's third-largest city.
- October 2007:** Tropical Storm Noel triggers mudslides and floods, killing at least 57 Haitians.
- August and September 2008:** Three hurricanes and tropical storm kill about 800 in Haiti, devastate crops and cause \$1 billion in damage.
- Jan. 12, 2010:** Magnitude-7.0 quake levels buildings in Port-Au-Prince, raising fears of tens of thousands of deaths.

— Associated Press

TODAY'S RECORD



R&B SINGER PENDERGRASS DIES
Teddy Pendergrass, who became a soul sex symbol in the 1970s and '80s with his love ballads, has died. **B8**



ACCUSED KILLER ESCAPES CUSTODY
A San Joaquin County man being transported to Wisconsin to face a murder charge escaped in Arkansas. **A3**



A HOST OF ZANY MISADVENTURES
A British farce loaded with innuendo brings plenty of laughs to the Stockton Civic Theatre this week. **TIMEOUT**



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Mostly sunny



Stockton: 58/40
Manteca: 54/39

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