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Pope's visit was underestimated

FACILITIES for the international news media would have been "quite insufficient" had the Pope been able to carry out his planned visit to Switzerland this year.

Pope John Paul was to have visited Switzerland in June but the attempt on his life in Rome prevented him from making the trip. No new date has been fixed but he may now visit Switzerland during 1982.

Said a Swiss Roman Catholic spokesman: "We simply underestimated the extent of international news media interest in the Pope's visit. We had planned for 500 journalists – but by mid-May the number had already risen to 988.

"Had the visit taken place we would certainly have been in trouble with the media facilities and infrastructure."

The spokesman added: "We have since had discussions with media representatives and now have a clearer understanding of media requirements. Any new Papal visit would certainly involve a number of changes."

Casanova wins government post

ACHILLE Casanova, 40, one of Switzerland's most prominent radio and TV journalists, has been elected to the Swiss Government post of vice chancellor. He is the first Italian-speaking Swiss to win election to the post.

Mr Casanova has been parliamentary correspondent of Italian radio in Switzerland since 1962 and of Italian television since 1966.

TV dismissal upsets unions

SWITZERLAND'S SGB trade union federation – the equivalent of Britain's TUC – has protested to the Swiss Broadcasting

Corporation over the dismissal of a top television journalist.

Peter Wettler was dismissed without notice after he had resigned as editor of a popular consumer protection programme. He resigned over matters of editorial policy and in protest against the removal of the programme from a peak viewing hour.

The SGB trade union federation said his sacking confirmed "the increasing number of dismissals and repressive measures being taken against critical journalists".

Complaints body planned

THE Swiss Government has announced plans for an independent complaints body for radio and television.

The proposal recommends a government-appointed body of nine members who would serve a four-year term. It also suggests that complaints could be brought only against programmes already broadcast.

Complaints could be initiated by authorities, groups or individuals, with complaints from individuals requiring the support of at least 20 signatures.

The complaints body would not be empowered to take disciplinary action but could make recommendations to the Swiss Communications Ministry which is the supervisory authority for broadcasting.

Writer cleared of spy charge

A DOMINICAN journalist working in Switzerland has been cleared by the Swiss attorney general's office of charges of economic espionage.

The charges were brought against Swiss-based Emmanuel Jean-Baptiste, correspondent for the Nigerian monthly Afriscope

and for other foreign and Swiss publications.

The charges were filed by a Swiss textile company after Mr Jean-Baptiste had reported that some of the firm's Nigerian clients

divided equally between political, economic and cultural affairs. The publication has a full-time editorial staff of 30.

Added the spokesman: "We expect to lose money for the first

Switzerland's press, radio and television not only report the news – they sometimes make it as well. This round-up by Colin Farmer spotlights some of the recent happenings back home in which the media made their own headlines.

were evading their country's import ban on luxury textiles.

He alleged that clients were purchasing the products direct in Switzerland and then smuggling them into Nigeria through neighbouring Benin.

Dismissing the company's charges against Mr Jean-Baptiste, the Swiss authorities ruled that the journalist had stayed "within the bounds of legal information" while researching his story.

New weekly launched

A NEW national news weekly – Woche (Week) – has been launched in Switzerland by Ringier of Zurich, the country's largest magazine publishers. A French-language version will have its editorial headquarters in Lausanne.

A Ringier spokesman said coverage would concentrate on Switzerland and Swiss-related foreign affairs and would be aimed at a nationwide readership of "opinion makers".

Editorial content will be

six years and it will be nine years before we start recovering the capital invested."

'Confidential' charge dropped

THE Swiss Government has decided not to bring charges against a journalist on the new weekly Weltwoche who obtained and published confidential arm correspondence critical of Swiss-built combat tank.

A letter – from a senior military officer to the Swiss army chief of staff – was passed on to the Weltwoche journalist by an unknown person whose identity has still not been discovered, said a defence ministry statement.

The statement added that although the letter had contained confidential information, state security had not been endangered by its publication and no action was therefore being taken against the journalist.

But a defence ministry spokesman said that care would be taken to prevent "similar indiscretions" in future.

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