



Top Stories

Mad Cow disease confirmed in U.S.

The U.S. Department of Agriculture has confirmed the third case of Mad Cow disease, which was spotted when a routine test came back positive. Further tests conducted on an animal from an Alabama farm, confirm the presence of the disease.

Former Yugoslavian president Slobodan Milosevic found dead in his cell

The Serbian Socialist party and UN officials confirm that Slobodan Milosevic, 64, has died in his cell at the U.N. war crimes tribunal's detention center in Den Hague.

Featured story

U.S. found in violation of Native Americans rights

The Convention on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination (CERD) accused the U.S. government of violating Native Americans land rights and the international anti-racism convention. Eighteen independent experts alleged that Western Shoshone peoples were being denied their traditional right to land.

Wikipedia Current Events

- Estonian officials were incorrect in their estimate that all petrol from a recent accident in the Baltic Sea had been cleaned up. There are still 3-4 tonnes. This spill may have killed 35,000 sea birds.

Wikipedia Current Events

- The judge in the trial of Zacarias Moussaoui is considering throwing out the death penalty as an option after lawyers from the Federal Aviation Administration coached four government witnesses.

- German drug & chemical manufacturer Merck KGaA announces plans to buy Schering in a merger of €14.6 billion. Merck and Schering would become Germany's largest pharmaceutical company. -

- London Metropolitan Police chief Sir Ian Blair admits secretly recording conversations with the Attorney General Lord Goldsmith, an illegal act if the other party has not granted permission for conversations to be taped.

Chinese government approved Nanjing purchase of MG Rover

The Chinese National Development and Reform Commission approved today the plans by Nanjing Automobile Group to revive the MG Rover brand.

Nanjing Automobile are planning to annually produce 200,000 cars, 250,000 engines and 100,000 gearboxes on the assembly lines purchased from MG Rover.

The first MG produced in Pukou in Nanjing in the east of China will be the sedan version of MG-75, in the first half of 2007.

U.S. found in violation of Native Americans rights

A UN (UNCHR) committee on the Convention on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination (CERD) accused US government of violating Native Americans land rights and the international anti-racism convention. The committee of 18 independent experts said in a press release that it had received credible information alleging that Western Shoshone peoples were being denied their traditional right to land. The decision details the US actions against the Western Shoshone and calls upon the United States to immediately:

- Respect and protect the human rights of the Western Shoshone peoples.
- Initiate a dialogue with the representatives of the Western Shoshone peoples in order to find a solution acceptable to them, and which complies with their rights.
- Adopt the following measures until a final decision or settlement is reached on the status, use and occupation of Western Shoshone ancestral lands in accordance with due process of law and the US obligations under the Convention.
- Freeze all efforts to privatize Western Shoshone ancestral lands for transfer to multinational extractive industries and energy developers.
- Desist from all activities planned and/or conducted

on Western Shoshone ancestral lands.

- Stop imposing grazing fees, livestock impoundments, hunting, fishing and gathering restrictions and rescind all notices already made.

Bernice Lalo, Western Shoshone delegate, said "The mines are polluting our waters, destroying hot springs and exploding sacred mountains--our burials along with them--attempting to erase our signature on the land. We are coerced and threatened by mining and Federal agencies when we seek to continue spiritual prayers for traditional food or medicine on Shoshone land." Mr Lalo continued "We feel the decision will be helpful by opening the door. We will continue this struggle to give our children a better chance."

Joe Kennedy, a Western Shoshone, said "we have rights to protect our homelands and stop the destruction of our land, water, and air by the abuses of the United States government and the multinational corporations. He said "the situation is outrageous and we're glad the United Nations Committee agrees with us."

Laura Inouye, Oxfam America, said "This is a tremendous victory for the Shoshone people, the UN decision acknowledges the U.S. government's violations of Shoshone civil, political, economic, and cultural rights". Inouye concluded "Hopefully, they will now be granted the justice that the US government has denied them for years". Oxfam America is a human rights organization who had backed the Western Shoshone.

A UN official said, according to AP, the US mission to the UN in Geneva had no immediate response to the decision.

The Western Shoshonis rights to the land, 60 million acres stretching across Nevada, Idaho, Utah and California was recognized by US under the 1863 Treaty of Ruby Valley and signed by President Ulysses S. Grant a few years later. It was questioned by US Supreme Court 1979 and the land was labeled 'government trusteeship' and much was claimed as federal territory. President Bush signed a bill in July 2004 and gave approval to distributing more than \$145 million as compensation after Shoshones voted to accept the distribution in a disputed election.

Jim Manley, a spokesman for Sen. Harry Reid (D. Nevada) and a proponent of the bill said "The tribe twice has voted decisively in favor of the distribution"

Mad Cow disease confirmed in U.S.

John Clifford, Chief Veterinarian of the United States Department of Agriculture confirms that tests done on a sample from a cow on a farm in Alabama, contain bovine spongiform encephalopathy or mad cow disease. The results were confirmed by a Western Blot Test.

"We received a positive result on a Western blot confirmatory test conducted at the USDA laboratories in Ames, Iowa, on samples from an animal that had tested 'inconclusive' on a rapid screening test performed on Friday, March 10, 2006. In this instance, the inconclusive result from the contract lab in Georgia was confirmed through a second rapid test at the National Veterinary Services Laboratory.

Now, the Western blot test has returned a positive result, and that is sufficient for us to confirm this animal to be positive for BSE, which is why we are making this announcement today," said Clifford.

"The samples were taken from a non-ambulatory animal on a farm in Alabama. A local private veterinarian euthanized and sampled the animal and sent the samples for further testing, which was conducted at one of our contract diagnostic laboratories at the University of Georgia. The animal was buried on the farm and it did not enter the animal or human food chains," he also added.

Clifford also says the cow was at least ten years old saying, "while epidemiological work to determine the animal's precise age is just getting underway and is ongoing, the attending veterinarian has indicated that, based on dentition, it was an older animal, quite possibly upwards of 10 years of age. This would indicate that this animal would have been born prior to the implementation of the Food and Drug Administration's 1997 feed ban," and that they are still looking into where the cow could have been born and raised. The cow had only been on the Alabama farm for about a year. Clifford also confirmed the cow was meant for the use of beef.

"We will be working to locate animals from this cow's birth cohort and any offspring," said Clifford. A birth cohort identifies animals born in the same herd within one year of the affected animal.

Clifford also adds that no part of the cow made it into the human feed chain saying, "I want to

emphasize that human and animal health in the United States are protected by a system of interlocking safeguards, and that we remain very confident in the safety of U.S. beef. Again, this animal did not enter the human food or animal feed chains."

This is the third case of Mad Cow disease in the U.S.. The first case turned up in December of 2003, when a cow from a Washington State farm, born in Canada, tested positive for the disease.

The second cow to test positive for the disease, found last June, was born on a farm in Texas.

On March 1, 2006, Sweden announced its first possible case of Mad Cow disease and on January 23, Canada announced its fourth case of the disease.

Worldwide, at least 150 people have died from the disease by consuming infected beef.

Thousands of Thai protesters to overnight prior to march on Government House

With Thailand's The Nation reporting over 100,000 in attendance at the latest rally against the country's PM, Thaksin Shinawatra, the People's Alliance for Democracy plans to spend the night at Sanam Luang before marching on Government House in the morning.

Reports indicate that over 6,000 officers are involved in policing the event but no trouble is anticipated. Police do not intend to prevent the protesters from marching to Government house.

This latest large-scale protest against the caretaker Prime Minister is likely the most significant since the February 26

protest, and with pro-Thaksin groups making their way to Bangkok the bloody confrontation of 1992 has been brought up as a reminder. Free to air TV stations have broadcast coverage of the King's intercession in the '92 dispute where a popular uprising had been met with a military crackdown. Panthep Puapongpant, a PAD representative, indicated that the protest for Tuesday morning would take heed of the advice and proceed peacefully. Concerns that there might be a clash with pro-Thaksin groups have been averted as a result of the PM's supporters planning their rally for March 16.

With choices of candidates in the upcoming April 2 election already severely restricted due to the three main opposition parties' boycott, the disqualification of candidates from minor parties reduces the options open to those who don't boycott the election. Up to 200 may be disqualified for reasons such as not being a member of a party for 90 days, or being a member of more than one party.

Google launches Google Mars

First there was Google Maps, then came Google Earth and Google Moon, now say hello to Google Mars. Yesterday, Google officially launched Google Mars, another add-on to the Google Maps service. The services offers three different ways to view Mars in the vein of Google Maps. The three different types of image data are elevation, visible and infrared. The images come from two different NASA Mars missions, Mars Global Surveyor and 2001 Mars Odyssey. The data was prepared in collaboration with NASA researchers at Arizona State University.

The elevation data is a shaded-relief map taken by the Mars Orbiter Laser Altimeter (MOLA) on NASA's Mars Global Surveyor spacecraft and is colored coded. The visible data is black and white images taken by the Mars Orbiter Camera (MOC), which is also located onboard the Mars Global Surveyor and the infrared images are produced by the Thermal Emission Imaging System (THEMIS) on NASA's Mars Odyssey spacecraft. The THEMIS data is the sharpest map of Mars ever made so far, due to the fact that it shows colder areas in darker colors and warmer regions in brighter colors, also dust and clouds are transparent due to the infrared nature of the images.

Google has added various bookmarks showing points of interest such as landings of spacecraft, locations of mountains and craters.

At the present time, you cannot access data through Google's Google Earth client, but it is in development.

"Massive" oil spill in Alaska

BBC News is reporting "up to 267,000 gallons (one million litres)" of crude oil has leaked from a pipeline in the Prudhoe Bay oilfield. Although not as large as the Exxon Valdez oil spill in 1989, this is thought to be the largest spill on record affecting the Alaska North Slope.

Alaska Wilderness League report that there is "no confirmation" of the quantity of oil lost but points out that it is not only the oil that causes problems, the cleanup efforts will also have environmental impacts.

Associated Press first reported this spill on 2 March

Queen Elizabeth II arrives in Australia for 15th visit

Queen Elizabeth II and Prince Phillip arrived in Australia yesterday for a five-day tour which includes the opening of the 2006 Commonwealth Games in Melbourne, the Queen's 15th visit of her reign and her first since 2002.

Their tour began when they landed at Fairburn Air Force Base in Canberra where they received a state welcome, attended by Prime Minister John Howard, Governor-General Major General Michael Jeffery and several hundred well-wishers. The couple accepted flowers and chatted with the crowd for a few minutes before being driven off in a black Rolls Royce.

The Queen and Prince Philip spent last night at Government House before beginning official duties in Sydney today. In Sydney, they will officially open the new colonnade of Sydney Opera House and receive a 21 gun salute.

Republican campaigners have used the occasion as an opportunity to reopen the republican debate.

"While the queen is held in great affection by the Australian people, many Australians recognize that it is no longer sensible for us to have a citizen of another country, who visits Australia only occasionally, as our head of state," said Allison Henry, national director of the Australian Republican Movement.

Today in History

1590 - French Wars of Religion: Henry of Navarre and the Huguenots decisively defeated the forces of the Catholic League under the Duc de Mayenne in the Battle of Ivry.

1757 - Admiral John Byng of the British Royal Navy was executed by firing squad for breaching the Articles of War at the start of the Seven Years' War.

1794 - Eli Whitney patented the cotton gin.

1984 - Gerry Adams, leader of Sinn Féin, was seriously wounded in an assassination attempt in central Belfast, Northern Ireland.

1991 - The "Birmingham Six", wrongly convicted of murder and bombing pubs in Birmingham, England, were released after 16 years in prison.

March 14 is Purim in Judaism (2006), New Year's Day in the Sikh Nanakshahi calendar, White Day in Japan, Pi Day.

Quote of the Day

"Imagination is more important than knowledge. For knowledge is limited, whereas imagination embraces the entire world, stimulating progress, giving birth to evolution." ~ Albert Einstein

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