



Top Stories

Thousands protest Iraq war in Washington D.C.

Anti-war demonstration were being held in Washington, D.C. and other cities around the world in order to call an end to the Iraq war and to bring back home the troops stationed there.



Black Box from missing Indonesian plane may have been found

The United States military may have found the Black Boxes from an Indonesian jetliner that went missing on January 1, 2007. All 102 people that were onboard the plane are feared dead.

Featured story

Students insulted on returned New Zealand exam papers



Two New Zealand students have been insulted when their exam papers were returned to them with rude remarks on them.

Wikipedia Current Events

- ICU insurgency: Attackers have fired four mortar bombs at an Ethiopian military camp close to Mogadishu.
- Palestinian factional violence: More than 13 people are killed in

Wikipedia Current Events

clashes between rival factions Hamas and Fatah.

- Scientists find connection between tobacco smoking addiction and the insula, a region of the brain's cerebral cortex linked to emotion.
- UK retail giant Tesco opens its first own-brand supermarket branch in China, in the capital, Beijing.
- An argument has erupted between Adam Air and the Indonesian government over who bears the cost of recovering the black box of the crashed plane Adam Air Flight 574.

Aussies ignore flag ban at Big Day Out festival

Despite pleas from Big Day Out promoters to leave the national flag of Australia at home, many of the 55,000 music lovers have turned up to the Sydney event covered in it.

Co-promoter Ken West caused a stir when the flag was "banned" from this year's Big Day Out in Sydney after organisers branded it a "gang colour" and symbol of hate. Organizers of the rock festival had planned to confiscate any flag or bandanna bearing the national symbol at the gate. The organizers defended their action claiming Sydney was "a hot bed of racism." They had already moved the event from the traditional time, Australia Day, to avoid these "nationalistic overtones." The Prime Minister John Howard responded by

declaring that the Big Day Out should have been cancelled unless organisers reversed their decision to ban the flag.

After widespread outrage on talkback radio, and condemnation of their action by the Prime Minister and state Premiers, Australian's have literally worn their hearts on their sleeves by draping the Aussie flag over their shoulders or wearing t-shirts, tattoos or bikinis with it printed on it. Event organisers allowed hundreds of fans to bring Australian flags to the event, backing down on their earlier call to leave the emblem at home.

Melissa-Rose Heap, 18-years-old, of Kogarah, said she and her friends had fashioned the Australian flag into dresses after the banning controversy.

"We made them into dresses because they said we weren't allowed to, and that's not right," she said. "They shouldn't be able to tell anyone that we can't be proud of Australia."

Carbon monoxide protects against paralysis in MS mice

Ângelo A. Chora et. al. are reporting in the Journal of Clinical Investigation this week that carbon monoxide (CO) and the heme oxygenase-1 protein protect against the symptoms of multiple sclerosis (MS) in the related mouse model of experimental autoimmune encephalomyelitis (EAE).

Multiple sclerosis is a chronic, inflammatory disease that affects

the central nervous system (CNS). Although many patients are largely unaffected by their disease, MS can cause impaired mobility and disability in more severe cases.

The research group from the Gulbenkian Institute in Portugal used the EAE mouse model of MS to study the affects of the Heme oxygenase-1 (HO-1) protein encoded by the HMOX1 gene.

HO-1 knockout mice, lacking both copies of the gene (not producing the protein), showed a more severe progression of the disease compared to wild-type mice, having normal levels of the protein. The symptoms of the disease were reversed when the HO-1 protein expression was induced using cobalt protoporphyrin IX.

During MS attacks the body's own immune system destroys the myelin sheath surrounding nerve cells in the brain and spinal cord. Pathogenic T helper cells are triggered by Antigen-presenting cell (APCs) within the brain stem. The disease can cycle between attacks (relapses) followed by remission, suggesting that there is an underlying regulatory system. The HO-1 protein had been identified previously as a possible candidate for a protective gene.

HO-1 degrades excess heme within the body acting as the rate controlling step when under inflammatory conditions. The HO-1 heme degradation pathway produces as products equal amounts of free heme, carbon monoxide and biliverdin.

Carbon monoxide was also shown to limit the effects of the disease. Mice were exposed to a high concentration of CO for 20 days within a chamber. Mice exposed to CO had limp tails, but were more

mobile than the mice in the control experiment which displayed hind limb paralysis.

It is still unknown exactly how carbon monoxide slows down the symptoms of EAE, possibly through the mopping up of free radicals, or through promoting the binding of iron to heme (decreasing radical production).

The experiments found that HO-1 did not affect the development or function of regulatory T cells. For a beneficial effect HO-1 needed to be expressed in dendritic cells, causing inhibition of MHC-II proteins, involved in presenting antigens, and inflammatory cytokines (IFN- γ).

These experiments open up new possibilities for MS therapies, involving the expression of HO-1 in suppressing the development of MS.

The article went online on the 25th January 2007 and will be printed in the Journal of Clinical Investigation in February.

Locals and officer claim to have seen a UFO in Charlotte, North Carolina

A turquoise colored UFO was reported by locals and an officer in and around Charlotte, North Carolina. Jim Neal said that the object was, "Bright blue-green ball with a white tail." Julie Bigham said that the object was, "A greenish-like light low in the sky. We thought a small plane or helicopter was going to crash." David Whitesides said that the object was, "A slow-moving bluish glow." Brett Lay said that the object was, "Large, bright green ball. Had a haze about it." Amy Bromberg said that, "Almost looked like a flare. Kind of creepy."

An officer, who had been

dispatched to confirm the object, said that object was visible and moving.

Dispatch: "Did you see it?"

Officer: "10-4."

Dispatch: "We've gotten several calls."

Officer: "I'm out on 27 heading west. I don't know what it was... like a shooting star or something."

Psychologist Granville Angell, who is also a former military pilot, said that, "It was like a ball that grew a tail. It was about 20 to 30 degrees above the horizon. Uh, and it came from west to east. It was like a shallow arc across the sky and descended down. It was a very shallow descent and a glowing flare as it went down. It was visible for about, oh, 10-15 seconds. Heaven only knows what it could be, but some type of a UFO. I'm not saying an alien but something." He noted that he initially thought it was an airplane crashing but noticed that the colors weren't right and he said it could not have been a comet because it moved too slowly.

The National Weather Service said they received more than a dozen calls about the object. All planes and helicopters in the area were accounted for.

- **Series of earthquakes hit Taiwan, Turkey, Uzbekistan, Kyrgyzstan, and Indonesia**

On Wednesday at 11.36 p.m, an earthquake struck the border between Uzbekistan and Kyrgyzstan.

- On Thursday at 1:20 p.m (0520 GMT), a 5.6-magnitude earthquake hit the eastern portion of Papua, Indonesia.
- On Thursday, a 6.2-magnitude earthquake hit Taiwan's east coast.
- On Friday at 10:20 a.m, a

4.7-magnitude earthquake struck the province of Elazig, Turkey.

Snow falls in New Mexico

The National Weather Service said that snow fell in parts of Southern New Mexico due to low pressure. The National Weather Service said that they expected 3-7 inches of snow to fall on the high country and 1-3 inches of snow to fall on the lowlands.

Microsoft sales go higher than expected in last quarter

The sales of the Microsoft Corporation has increased considerably during the latest quarter, having brought more profit than predicted by Wall Street. However, the delay in arrival of the major new products resulted in spoiled financial results.

The quarter that finished in December marked the increase by 6 percent in the Microsoft sales, having reached the revenue of \$12.5 billion. The delayed products - the latest versions of Windows Vista and Office 2007 - are to be launched next week.

Microsoft's video game business grew considerably in the quarter - its revenue increased by 75 percent, to the mark of \$2.96 billion. The success of the business is explained by steady sales of its Xbox 360 console and highly demanded games like the critically acclaimed Gears of War at the end of 2006.

The noteworthy results have been gained by Microsoft in selling its server software applied in corporate data centers. It brought the revenue up 17 percent, to \$2.85 billion. As for the operating profit, it increased by 35 percent, to over \$1 billion. Following the most profitable Windows and Office, the

server group, including databases, operating systems, and back-end programs used for e-mail systems, presently represents the third major product line of the Corporation.

Net income witnessed 28 percent decrease, to \$2.63 billion to be compared to \$3.65 billion dollars during the same period of time the previous year. To solve the problem of the product delay and support the personal computer industry, Microsoft provided free or discount coupons for upgraded versions of Windows Vista and Office 2007. Consequently, PC makers sold new computers during the last period of 2006 promising their customers that they would be able to acquire the new Microsoft products, thus preventing PC sales from standing at still point.

The coupon program was initiated by Microsoft in October with expectations of approximately 1.5 billion dollars in revenue to be deferred. However, with better PC sales Microsoft received the \$1.64 billion. Microsoft pays attention towards development of the consumer electronics business. In the end of 2006 the company launched a digital media player called Zune, a product to compete with iPod produced by Apple. However, Microsoft's section of consumer entertainment and devices is not profitable yet.

As for Microsoft's on-line business, it also leaves much to be desired, especially considering Internet searches. In the latest quarter there was a decline in the Microsoft's market share in searching. Still, the company continues to invest into this business segment. The revenue brought by on-line services, including web advertising and search-linked ads, increased by 5

percent in the quarter, to \$624 million.

Black Box from missing Indonesian plane may have been found

The United States military may have found the Black Boxes from a missing Indonesian jetliner that went missing on January 1, 2007.

Using ultrasonic pinger signals, the USNS Mary Sears located debris on the bottom of the ocean that match the signal that they are using to find the boxes.

"[We have] detected heavy debris scattered over a wide area," said the U.S. embassy in Indonesia in a statement. Other debris may also have been located at least 1,000 meters below the oceans surface.

"During the search of the projected crash site of Adam Air Flight 574, the Mary Sears, using a Towed Pinger Locator, detected pingers on the same frequency of the black box associated with the missing airplane," added the statement.

Despite the announcement, Indonesia's transport safety board denies receiving any reports that the boxes have been found.

"One thing is for sure, up until this second, I have not received any report from the (Indonesian) liaison officers who were onboard the ship," said Indonesian air force commander who is in charge of the ongoing search to find the plane, Eddy Suyanto.

The largest piece of the plane to be recovered so far, is the tail of the plane, which was discovered by a fisherman. Trays and seats have also been recovered, but so far none of the bodies of the passengers or crew have been found.

The plane, a Adam Air Boeing 737-400 went missing, in flight from Surabaya, on the island of Java, to Manado on the island Sulawesi. All 102 people on board the plane are believed to have been killed.

Just 1 day after the plane crashed, false reports that the wreckage was found on land and 12 survivors were found had began to circulate. The 12 people that were reported to have been survivors, turned out to be the remaining survivors of a ferry crash in the same area 4 days before the plane was reported missing.

The cause of the crash is still not known, and investigations are ongoing.

Yahoo's new Internet ad sales system is a progress

The introduction by Yahoo Inc. of its new Internet ad sales system was successful. The company's new feature may turn out to be very useful for Yahoo's shares, since investors are betting on rapid growth of the company's revenue.

When Yahoo stated that it will launch on February 5 a full version of its new system, entitled Panama, the company's shares rose by 8 percent on Wednesday. The system, being introduced in the United States, will be launched a month earlier than Wall Street expected.

The ad system is to bring the company in closer league with the number one search engine Google Inc. Yahoo's technology will permit various advertisers to pay for specific search terms, which are based on their popularity.

Panama will also help advertisers in targeting ads that are sent to a specific audience on the Internet. The system will allow rotating ads

in accordance with their effectiveness. Google have been offering these features for several years.

Martin Pyykkonen, who is the analyst at Global Crown Capital, said that Yahoo was not as successful as Google but it still continues to strengthen its position as number 2. Although Google had a stronger software platform, Yahoo continues to register good results, which is worth something.

Pyykkonen also mentioned that he is not forecasting any shifting in wholesales, and especially a sudden fall of Google, but he is sure that Yahoo will not be far behind Google; in fact the company is to shorten the gap between the two.

The ability of Yahoo's new system, to draw more ad dollars from customers, should boost the company's growth in this year's second half. Yahoo is also dealing with a potential drop in prices regarding its key branded advertising sales. This is due to the competition provided by MySpace.com and YouTube.

Four women killed in Papua New Guinea witchhunt

Villagers near the town of Goroka in the jungle-covered highlands about 400 kilometres north of the capital Port Moresby in Papua New Guinea killed four women they believed to be witches. They tortured the women by stabbing them with hot rods so they would confess to causing a road crash using sorcery. The accident had resulted in the death of three prison guards. The villagers hid the bodies in an old pit.

With the help of some village elders, police have now discovered these murders which occurred in

October of last year. BBC News reports human rights campaigners saying that it is not uncommon in Papua New Guinea for women suspected of engaging in black magic to be killed, often by hanging or burning.

New host announced for 2007 Netball World Championships

Auckland, New Zealand has been announced as the new host of the 2007 Netball World Championships, beating Christchurch. Auckland replaces Fiji as the hosts following their coup last year.

The decision was announced by the International Federation of Netball Associations (IFNA) and the Netball New Zealand Board (NNZ). President of the IFNA, Molly Rhone, said: "IFNA would like to thank both Auckland and Christchurch for their offers and welcome Auckland as the new host of 12th World Netball Championships in New Zealand."

Garry Moore, mayor of Christchurch, said that it is disappointing for Christchurch to not have gained the hosting rights, but is still proud of the bid they made in the very short time frame they were given. "I want to congratulate Auckland and wish them all the very best in what will be a very exciting time in the City of Sails." Mr Moore has called for support for Auckland, and has said that Christchurch will still benefit financially from Auckland having the hosting rights, as well as New Zealand as a whole. He gives his luck to Auckland for a successful Championships.

The Netball World Championships, which happens every four years, will be held between 10 November and 17 November later this year, later than originally planned so the hosts and venues can be better

prepared. The games will be played at Trusts Stadium, Waitakere, Auckland and the semi-finals and final may be played at Vector Arena, if it has been completed.

Bob Harvey, mayor of Waitakere, said that he expects millions of dollars to be put into the local economy because of the Championships. Mr Harvey said the council put NZ\$50,000 into their bid to host the Championships and has set aside \$70,000 for the hosting of the games. Mr Harvey said that he is delighted that the region has managed to secure the hosting rights, and expects Vector Arena to be completed in time to host the semi-finals and final.

Don Mackinnon, NNZ Board Chair, said: "We're grateful to the Venues who worked with their City Councils and Netball communities in preparing these offers, and congratulate Auckland on their successful proposal."

Dick Hubbard, mayor of Auckland City, is pleased that the hosting rights were given to Auckland, the "home to 25,630 registered netball players." "Auckland City recognises the hugely important role netball plays in our community and is excited about showing our passion for the game to the world." Mr Hubbard said that the Championships will also provide a good start for Auckland in the lead up to the 2011 Rugby World Cup.

Ruth Aitken, coach of New Zealand's netball team, Silver Ferns, said that it will be good for her players that the Championships are being held in Auckland. She said that playing at home is a wonderful opportunity.

Mr Mackinnon has announced that a new organisation will be formed to help with the preparation of the

Championships, along with the work NNZ has already done.

Ms Rhone, said that it was major benefit for the Championships that NNZ was willing to make the dates and venues final so quickly, as it means that preparation can now get started for the venues and the 16 participating netball teams.

"Running a world class event in a compressed timeframe will be a challenge, but with the support of the Auckland community, we know that New Zealand will be able to host an excellent World Netball Championships," Mr Mackinnon said.

Mr Mackinnon said that he and NNZ are looking forward to hosting the championship, which he described as the pinnacle event of Netball.

One of the reasons that Christchurch did not gain the hosting rights this year might have been because in 1999, Christchurch hosted the event.

US soldier in the Philippines apprehended for violating gun ban

A US soldier, Army Master Sergeant Steve Saunders, was arrested in General Santos City (Gensan) for carrying a firearm, a violation of the nationwide gun ban imposed by the Commission on Elections (Comelec) during the election period.

Saunders, a member of the US Army Engineering Corps and United Nations Peacekeeping Force who are in the Philippines on a humanitarian mission, was apprehended by police officers while in a drinking spree inside a bar after a report.

The Comelec imposed the nationwide gun ban for the period

starting January 14 until June 14. Under the law, violators will be jailed for six years.

According to reports, the US soldier was drunk and carrying a 9-mm pistol while inside the bar, where a group of local journalists were having fun. He reportedly hit a radio correspondent, Henry Araneta, for no apparent reason at the Cassado Bar of East Asia Royale Hotel at dawn Thursday.

The American soldier was drunk, Araneta said, adding that he will file a slight physical injury charge against Saunders.

"I want to teach him a lesson. I could not accept that a foreigner hit me in our own country," he said, according to the report, noting that he could have just ignored the incident if the suspect was a Filipino.

Saunders was brought to the Joint Task Force(JTF)-Gensan headquarters. He was later released and sent to Manila.

When contacted for comment, Lt. Col. Julieta Ando, 6th ID spokesperson, did not answer his cellular phone, which was turned off later on, report said.

Colonel Medardo Geslani, JTF-Gensan chief, told reporters that the firearm taken from Saunders during the arrest was issued by his military unit. He concluded that Sanders did not violate the Comelec gun ban.

US Embassy spokesperson, Matthew Lussenhop, quickly brushed off allegations Saunders was violating the gun ban but he said the soldier may face sanctions from the US military.

The militant group Bagong

Alyansang Makabayan (National Patriotic Alliance) asked local Comelec to investigate the case, emphasizing that no special treatment should be given to Sanders, or any member of the visiting US forces.

Bill Andres of Bayan said this was another example of a US serviceman getting off lightly after violating Philippine laws.

Nicole Kidman injured during movie stunt

Actress Nicole Kidman was injured in a car accident while filming the movie, *The Invasion*. The car reportedly went off course, and ran into a light pole on West Sixth Street in Los Angeles, California.

"The stunt driver apparently went off course and hit a light post," said Karen Smith, a officer with the Los Angeles Police Department.

"Nicole Kidman was in the vehicle at the time of the accident and was taken to the hospital for evaluation. She was released shortly thereafter," said a statement issued by Warner Bros. Entertainment, Inc.

Kidman, along with eight other people were taken to the Cedars-Sinai Medical Center in Los Angeles where all were released with minimal injuries just 2 hours later. All are reported to have returned to work. Paramedics also treated Kidman on scene before she was taken to the hospital.

"I think she's OK," said Catherine Olim, Kidman's publicist.

Kidman was inside a Jaguar.

Mummified baby found In Florida self-storage unit

A partially-mummified baby was found Monday, January 22, 2007, in

a Delray Beach, Florida, self-storage unit.

A woman was emptying her deceased parents' storage unit when she found a suitcase containing an object wrapped in newspapers. Within that suitcase was another suitcase containing the tightly-wrapped baby. When she recognized the object as a fetus, the woman contacted authorities.

The woman, who has yet to be identified, traveled from New Jersey to clear out the storage unit when she was informed the contents were to be sold at an auction.

According to police, her father died in 2002 or 2003 and her mother died last year in her 70's.

The newspapers used to wrap the child were from the January 9, 1957 edition of the *Daily News*, apparently from the New York area.

Labatt USA to move headquarters to Buffalo, New York

Labatt, a company that makes beer, has decided to move their headquarters from Norwalk, Connecticut to Buffalo, New York.

"We've got a very large volume base in Buffalo, Syracuse and Rochester. Labatt USA is very excited to get back to Buffalo," said President of Labatt USA, Glen Walter, who also added that years ago the headquarters used to be in Buffalo.

At least 20 marketing and sales jobs will be created as a result of the move. Offices will be housed in the Key Bank Tower located on Main Street in Downtown Buffalo. The move is expected to take place this spring.

InBev is the parent company of

Labatt USA and has their main headquarters in Belgium. InBev claims to be the largest brewer of beer, by volume, on the planet.

City officials; however, did not know of the move until it was announced, but Mayor of Buffalo, Byron W. Brown, is not concerned and calls the move "impressive."

"They did not [contact us], which makes it all the more impressive for the community," said Brown.

Try-It Distributing, a local distributor of the beer sells an estimated 43 million bottles of the assorted Labatt beer products and those are just the sales in Erie and Niagra counties in New York alone.

Attacks against Ethiopian troops in Kisimaayo

An Ethiopian soldier was killed and another wounded after unknown men launched an attack in Kisimaayo, Somalia, said local sources to the Missionary Service News Agency (MISNA). The attackers opened fire against the two Ethiopian soldiers who were guarding a road near the city's main market. Local militias, loyal to the transition government and Ethiopian troops surrounded the entire area and started to arrest suspected civilians at the market.

The episode is very similar to the many sudden attacks that took place in the past weeks in Mogadishu, but it is the first time that Ethiopian troops suffer an ambush outside the capital.

According to the president of the Somali transition government, the attacks against government forces and their Ethiopian allies are said to have been launched by the many militiamen tied to the Islamic Courts who are still present in Somali cities. Other sources have suggested that the attacks could

also be the work of local militias driven by ancestral 'differences' with neighboring Ethiopia.

Today in History

1888 - The National Geographic Society, publisher of the National Geographic Magazine, was founded.

1945 - The Soviet Red Army liberated 7,500 prisoners left behind by Nazi personnel in the Auschwitz concentration camp in Oświęcim, Poland.

1951 - Nuclear testing at the Nevada Test Site began with a one-kiloton bomb dropped on Frenchman Flats.

1967 - The Apollo 1 spacecraft was destroyed by fire at the Kennedy Space Center, killing astronauts Gus Grissom, Edward White and Roger Chaffee.

1973 - The Paris Peace Accords were signed to put an end to the Vietnam War.
January 27 is

Quote of the Day

I do not believe they are right who say that the defects of famous men should be ignored. I think it is better that we should know them. Then, though we are conscious of having faults as glaring as theirs, we can believe that that is no hindrance to our achieving also something of their virtues.
~ W. Somerset Maugham

Word of the Day

roborant; adj

1. Invigorating, strengthening, or energizing.

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