



Top Stories

Chinese chemical plant explosion threatens water supply for major city

A large scale environmental accident is causing wide-spread disruptions to water supplies in Harbin, China after an accidental release of toxins two weeks ago at a chemical plant. Water supplies are being shipped in amidst a relative calm, Thursday. Local officials have suggested normal water supplies may resume in some form as early as Sunday.

Venezuela provides discounted heating oil to Massachusetts

Venezuela will provide heating oil at a 40% discount to low income families in Massachusetts this winter.

Featured story

Alleged Bush-Blair Al-Jazeera bombing transcript leaked

An unverified document discovered by the UK tabloid The Daily Mirror claiming to have been leaked from Downing Street has been reported to contain a statement from US President George W. Bush about wishing to bomb the headquarters of Arabic TV station Al Jazeera in Doha, Qatar. According to The Daily Mirror, the President was dissuaded from bombing Al Jazeera's headquarters in Qatar by UK Prime Minister Tony Blair.

Wikipedia Current Events

- Israel hands over the bodies of three Hezbollah fighters it captured earlier in the week to the Lebanese Government.
- Reporters Sans Frontiers voiced concerns over the Al Jazeera bombing memo and their shock over the reporting ban placed by the UK government on the issue. Peter Kilfoyle, MP lodged Early Day Motion 1084 in the House of Commons calling on the government to publish the memo in full.

EU cuts sugar subsidies

The European Union agreed to reform it's sugar subsidies thursday. The EU has been under pressure by other members of the World Trade Organization to change it's agriculture sector. The EU has been blamed for stalling trade talks at the recent APEC convention.

The EU offered a guaranteed price, paid for by consumers, with Brussels buying at about three times the average world market price. The WTO ruled the EU's sugar prices to be illegal earlier this year after following complaints from Australia, Brazil, and Thailand. The reform package, going into effect in 2006, drops the guaranteed price by 36% and will make 6.3 billion euros (about \$10 billion US dollars) available to EU sugar farmers and refiners.

This reform package will help the EU's negotiations in the WTO.

Turkey found buried alive in an Austin, Texas yard

Before the McIntire family of Austin, Texas sat down for their Thanksgiving dinner Thursday, the family discovered something unusual: a live turkey buried in their front yard.

The eldest child of the family, Sean, was returning from work yesterday when he stumbled upon the patch of fresh dirt in his yard. He called his father out to look at the patch, then proceeded to examine its contents. The family then discovered the thirteen pound (6 kg) turkey buried in the hole; the turkey was still breathing. They kept the turkey in a dog cage, ate thanksgiving dinner, then took the turkey to a veterenarian where it died during examination.

"The turkey must have been alive in the ground for at least 2 days" said Bill Rogers, the McIntires' veterinarian, "It takes at least that long for a turkey to starve to death." No legal assistance has been given to the McIntires to find the person who buried the turkey, although the McIntires say the act violates animal cruelty laws.

Peter Forsberg scores two in win over the Bruins

In Friday's National Hockey League contest between the Philadelphia Flyers and the Boston Bruins at the TD Banknorth Garden in Boston, Peter Forsberg almost netted his first hat trick in a Flyers uniform. At one point during the game, he had been given credit for three goals, however an official

review took his first goal away, and officially he scored his eighth goal of the season at 13:06 in the second period with assists from Simon Gagne and former Hartford Whaler Sami Kapanen.

To date, there have been 24 hat tricks (3 or more goals in one game) in this NHL season.

Forsberg, a 32 year old native of Sweden, recently joined the Flyers for the 2005-2006 season after spending the NHL lockout season with Modo, Sweden.

The Flyers ended up winning the game 5-3, adding yet another loss to an already disappointing Bruins season.

Calvin-Hope Rivalry Gets New Digs

ESPN recently named the basketball rivalry between Calvin College and Hope College fourth greatest across all divisions of the NCAA (although fans had a different perspective). Now when the rivalry makes its way to Holland, the teams will have a new facility in which to square off. Hope College has put the finishing touches on the new 102,000 sq ft Richard and Helen DeVos Fieldhouse, whose foundation contributed the \$7.5 million anchor gift. Designed by sports architectural firm Ellerbe Becket, the fieldhouse will hold about 3,400 fans for basketball, volleyball and will also be used as a venue for college and community events.

The state of the art facility will also house Hope's department of kinesiology which includes athletic training, exercise science and physical education. In addition to the construction of the fieldhouse, Hope added a new science center

in 2003 and renovated the Peale Science Center for '04-05.

Ellerbe Becket has designed nearly 20 arenas for NBA and NHL teams, including the new facility for the Charlotte Bobcats.

Calvin visits Hope Saturday, Januaray 14 2006, and hosts the Flying Dutchman February 8, 2006.

Brian Lara becomes second person to score 11 000 runs

Hotshot batsman Brian Lara has become the second player in test cricket history to score 11,000 runs. Brian achieved the milestone while delivering a characteristic century to his West Indies team score sheet during day one of the final Test against Australia in Adelaide. Lara scored an unbeaten 106 by tea and cucumber sandwich time and is now only 107 runs behind Test record holder Allan Border, who plundered and pillaged 11,174 runs in 265 innings.

Lara already holds the records for the highest Test and first-class scores, 400 not out and 501 respectively.

Venezuela provides discounted heating oil to Massachusetts

Venezuela will provide heating oil at a 40% discount to low income families in Massachusetts this winter. According to an agreement signed on Tuesday Citgo, the Houston-based subsidiary of Venezuela's state-owned oil company, will provide 12 million gallons of discounted home heating oil. The oil will be distributed through two nonprofit organizations, Citizens Energy Corp. and the Mass Energy Consumer Alliance.

In August William Delahunt (D-Mass) met President Hugo Chávez in Caracas. The meeting between a member of Congress and a head of state so critical of the White House, sparked negotiations that led to the deal. Mr Delahunt said he was simply trying to smooth strained US-Venezuelan relations while helping low-income people in his home state.

Hugo Chávez says he is leading a Bolivarian Revolution and calls his program an act of justice for poor Americans, whom he says have been neglected by their government. Mr Chávez is one of Latin America's harshest critics of U.S.-style capitalism, which he calls a major cause of poverty. Venezuela has been selling fuel on preferential terms to countries across Latin America and the Caribbean, extending low-interest loans and accepting partial payment in goods ranging from bananas to sugar.

Critics said Delahunt should not be working so closely with Chávez, an outspoken leftist. Steve Johnson, a Latin American specialist at the conservative oriented Heritage Foundation, said "Meeting with the leader who calls himself a revolutionary populist is not something I'd like my congressman to be doing."

Representative Delahunt said "This is a humanitarian gesture," and that his constituents' needs for heating assistance trump any political points the Chavez administration can score. Asked if he was subverting State Department policy toward Chávez Mr Delahunt said, "I don't work for Condoleezza Rice. I don't report to the State Department. I report to the people who elected me in the state of Massachusetts. I belong to

an independent branch of government."

Over 10 percent of US oil imports come from Venezuela, and while Mr Chávez seeks to diversify his markets, the US remains his leading trade partner.

When the discounted oil arrives early december Citizens Energy will determine suitable recipients with the help of local organizations that serve the poor. 350 local dealers will then distribute three-fourths of the oil to local families.

The remaining quarter will be distributed or sold to homeless shelters, food banks, and low-income housing groups by MassEnergyConsumer Alliance. Larry Chretien, the nonprofit group's executive director says home heating oil prices are expected to increase by 30 percent to 50 percent this winter because of rising oil prices. The CITGO agreement could help ease the crunch on some families.

Today in History

1778 - The expedition led by James Cook reached Maui, the second largest of the Hawaiian Islands.

1917 - The National Hockey League was formed with its first five teams: the Montreal Canadiens, the Montreal Wanderers, the Ottawa Senators, the Quebec Bulldogs, and the Toronto Arenas.

1922 - Howard Carter and Lord Carnarvon became the first people to enter Pharaoh Tutankhamun's tomb in over 3000 years.

1942 - World War II: Josip Tito (pictured) and the Yugoslav Partisans convened the first meeting of the Anti-Fascist Council of National Liberation of Yugoslavia at Bihać in northwestern Bosnia.
1950 - Battle of Chosin Reservoir: Chinese forces in North Korea launched a massive counterattack against South Korean and United States armed forces, ending any thought of a quick end to the Korean War.

Quote of the Day

"Only by not forgetting the past can we be the master of the future." ~ Ba Jin

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