



### Top Stories

#### 20 wounded in explosion at Philippine karaoke bar

An explosion has been reported near the gate of the Philippine army's 104th Brigade headquarters, inside a karaoke bar on southern Jolo Island. At least 20 people are reported to have been injured.

#### 85 rescued, thousands feared dead in Philippine landslide

At least 85 people have been rescued after a massive landslide buried three villages in Saint Bernard, Southern Leyte province, in central Philippines on Friday.

### Featured story

#### Hotel development proposal could displace Buffalo, NY business owners

Savarino Construction Services Corp. has proposed a 7 million dollar hotel to be placed on the Forest and Elmwood intersection. If the development goes through, several business will be forced to close and residents will have to find a new place to live.

### Wikipedia Current Events

- France orders mass inoculation of domestic fowl following the discovery of an infected dead duck near Lyon.
- Sixteen people were killed in northern Nigeria as demonstrates protested the cartoons by storming and burning Christian churches and businesses.

### Wikipedia Current Events

- Former Malawi Minister of Education and head of the Malawi anti-corruption campaign Yusuf Mwawa is sentenced to five years in prison for fraud and corruption.
- Venezuelan president Hugo Chávez threatens to cut off oil to U.S. after Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice claims that the Venezuelan government poses "one of the biggest problems" in the region.
- Movement for the Emancipation of the Niger Delta rebels, kidnap nine foreign oil workers in Nigeria.
- Egypt records the presence of the virus for the first time.
- India confirms the virus was responsible for the death of 50,000 chickens in Maharashtra state in recent days. Iraq reports a second human fatality.
- Italian reform minister Roberto Calderoli resigns after criticism for wearing a T-shirt depicting the cartoons. The incident triggered yesterday's rioting outside the Italian consulate in Benghazi, Libya, in which at least 10 people died.

#### H5N1 confirmed in France

The strain of bird flu lethal to humans, H5N1, has been confirmed to have infected a dead wild duck, found on Monday, in marshland near Lyon in the east of France. France is the seventh country in the European Union to suffer this virus; following Austria,

Germany, Slovenia, Bulgaria, Greece and Italy. Suspected cases of H5N1 in Croatia and Denmark remain unconfirmed.

Globally, The H5N1 strain has infected 171 people, and killed 93 of them, since 2003.

A 2 mile (3km) safety area has been set-up from the area in which the bird died. In accordance with EU guidelines, vets will check all the birds in this zone. Surveillance has stepped up on wild birds within 10km.

In an attempt to address the public concern, a telephone line and website has been set-up. This notifies them not to touch dead birds, but to report them straight away to the authorities.

France, as the largest producer of poultry in Europe, already has farmers worrying about their livelihood; despite the fact the avian flu has not affected any of the nation's poultry. If the disease transfers to poultry, the transport of poultry can be restricted.

Further tests are been carried out on two ducks which have died in the Somme region in the north of France.

#### Avian Flu is confirmed in Egypt

Yesterday February 17, 2006, the World Health Organisation officially declared presence of the H5N1 strain of the avian flu virus in Egypt. "There is avian flu now in Egypt," Hassan el Bushra, regional adviser for emerging diseases at

the eastern Mediterranean regional office of the WHO said. His response was to the reported presence of H5N1 virus in dead birds in three areas in Egypt - namely (Cairo, Giza, and Al-Minya ).

Today February 18, 2006, a responsible source from Egyptian ministry of health announced reporting of another 25 cases of infected birds in Al-Minya with aftermath of 35 confirmed cases between birds, yet there are no human cases reported.

Egypt has banned the import of live birds and has tightened quarantine controls at airports to keep out bird flu. It has also canceled the annual bird hunting season to minimize contacts between people and migrant birds. In Cairo phone numbers 3912136, 3907147, and the hotline 152 have been assigned for reporting any suspected cases. A newly formed unit formed of veterinarians and preventive medicine specialists in Giza actively studying more than 70 reports of dead birds for exclusion of H5N1.

Egyptian Prime Minister Ahmed Naxif has advised people who breed poultry at their homes to dispose of their birds to prevent the virus from spreading.

"The time has come to get rid of the idea of breeding chickens on the roofs of houses, especially under current circumstances," he said.

Many Egyptian citizens breed chickens and pigeons on the roof of their residences for their own consumption and as a source of extra income.

### **British University academics vote for strike action**

University academics in the Association of University Teachers (AUT) and NATFHE unions in Britain have voted in favour of strike action in protest against academic salaries. The unions claim that academic pay has fallen 40 per cent in relative terms over the past 20 years and that employers have broken public promises to use extra government funding to improve pay.

Members were given the options of voting for strike action and also for 'action short of a strike. 64% of those who voted in the AUT, and 70% of the NATFHE members, voted for strike action. 81% of members voting in AUT, and 87% of NATFHE members, voted for action short of a strike. Turnout for AUT members was 51%, and turnout for NATFHE was 47%.

NATFHE general secretary Paul Mackney said "This is a strong mandate for action and shows the level of dissatisfaction throughout higher education." Speaking to the employers, he said that they must respond immediately with an offer - not talks about talks - if they are to prevent disruption. AUT general secretary Sally Hunt said "University staff do not appreciate being lied to and today they have said that enough is enough."

The Universities and Colleges Employers' Association (UCEA) claimed that the ballot represented only a "small minority" of academic staff and offered 'constructive negotiations', but only if the threat of industrial action was dropped. Jocelyn Prudence, Chief Executive, said that they would seek to minimise any impact upon students.

### **First bird flu cases registered In Maharashtra, India**

The first cases of bird flu have been registered in the world's second most populous country, India. The cases registered are reportedly from the Nandurbar Slaughter House in the western state of Maharashtra. Some 1500 birds have been reported as having the disease. Maharashtra Animal Husbandary Minister Anees Ahmed confirmed the reports and said that effective steps will be taken with the help of eminent veterinarians. Ahmed also said a high-level meeting was under way in Mumbai to assess the situation and to decide how to cull the large flocks of birds in poultries in Nandurbar and Dhule districts.

The minister also stated that state authorities had decided to cull all 500,000 chickens in the farms in an area of roughly three kilometres around the farms where the infected birds were found.

More than 25,000 chickens had died in poultry farms in the district over the past 10 days, district official Jayant Gaikwad said.

This is the first time that the disease has been reported in India, a nation of 1.1 billion people. There were no reports of infected people and Maharashtra government officials said there was no reason to panic.

The federal cabinet was meeting in New Delhi to take stock of the situation.

India's animal husbandry and health authorities have a contingency plan in place in case of an avian flu outbreak. The government has said that there are adequate supplies of the generic Tamiflu drug to meet an

emergency.

Ahmed said consignments of the drug had been flown to northern Maharashtra, but there have so far been no reports of humans becoming infected.

Doctors have been rushed to the affected areas to take precautionary measures, he added. India's Animal Disease Laboratory also confirmed the virus in dead chickens.

Maharashtra is the second most populous state in India, having a population of 120 million.

The H5N1 strain of bird flu, which has killed at least 90 people since early 2003, can infect humans in close contact with birds.

### **20 wounded in explosion at Philippine karaoke bar**

An explosion has been reported near the gate of the Philippine army's 104th Brigade headquarters, inside a karaoke bar on southern Jolo Island. At least 20 people are reported to have been injured.

Lt. Col. Mark Zimmer, a military spokesman said that no American deaths have been reported.

According to witnesses, most of the wounded were female entertainers, and men who were drinking at the bar.

U.S troops are encamped on the grounds for joint military exercises.

### **Japanese H-IIA rocket launches satellite into orbit**

The Japan Aerospace Exploration Agency have successfully launched another of their H-IIA space rockets. Its payload, the MTSAT-2

satellite designed to control air traffic and track weather patterns, has successfully seperated from the rocket, and is due to be inserted into a geostationary orbit on 21st February.

The satellite is owned by the Civil Aviation Bureau and the Japan Meteorological Agency, part of the Ministry of Land, Infrastructure and Transport.

The rocket was launched from the Tanegashima space centre in the southern region of Kagoshima, at 15:55 (06:55 GMT). It is the ninth in a series of H-IIA rockets, which form the main part of the Japanese space programme. A previous H-IIA rocket was launched less than a month ago.

### **Switzerland: Policemen acquitted in the Aubonne bridge affair**

After the prosecution dropped the charges on Wednesday, the local tribunal of Nyon pronounced a double acquittement for sergeant Poget and gendarme Deiss.

The 23-page judgement, particularly long for such an affair, was pronounced by the president on Friday at 11:45.

Acknowledging the lasting physical and psychological harm caused to Shaw and Wenzel, the tribunal reacted to the deliberate will to turn the trial into a political tribune: "The tribunal is not the control authority for the police", the president reminded. He rulled out any commentary about preliminary investigations, which had been subject to the criticism of Maître Gerbade, attorney for the plaintiffs, during his requisitory.

The judging underlines the non-violence of the alter-globalisation militants, who "cannot be

compared to the vandals" who has made a rampage in Geneva and Lausanne the same day. He also reminded a particularly difficult context for the policemen, who were facing their 4th important intervention of the morning. A filling station had notably been put to fire, fortunately without any harm to people. The tribunal also specifically quoted Indymedia, which it said is an "honourable source".

Reminders of facts insisted on several points:

The militant who was acting as a sentry to protect the rope was not forcibly evacuated by the police, but rather left her station on her own will, in an attempt to interdict the passage of cars under the rope, then lifted by the police.

"One minute and ten seconds" at most passed before the rope was cut by Deiss, one minute of "confusion and general mess", according tot he court.

Several policemen were tempted to cut the rope to allow the passage of cars and remove the blocking of the highway, but were told not to do so by a sergeant; thus, cutting the rope seems to be what one would naturally be tempted to do, according to the Court.

The numerous cars stranded on the highway because of the blockade were a risk of major accident; the drivers were infuriated by the stop and the radio was reporting the unrest in Lausanne and Geneva, creating and atmosphere of stress and fear, according the the president.

The warnings put by the militants ("do not shoot" and "Stop here or you will kill two people") were seen by the Court as "ambiguous"

at best, and "incomprehensible" at worst, since the militants were sitting the highway, a dangerous place where their own lives were in jeopardy.

"As a consequence, noting can be reproached to the policemen", the president said. "Bullshit", shouted Shaw, who then rose, and barred the room with a poster reading "Police everywhere, justice nowhere"; after insulting the tribunal, the militants and their friend in the audience left in much turmoil, letting the President free to proceed.

The accident occurred as a "series of misunderstandings" and of unlucky causes. Confronted to a completely new situation (no such event had ever occurred then), the policemen acted for what they thought was the best interest of the militants and the users of the highway. Denying any will to call the attention of the offence committed by the plaintiffs, the Court however the lack of security rope, of signals, of notification to the authorities and the possibility for the militants to rope themselves at 4 or 5 metres high rather than 25.

In conclusion, the Court pronounced acquittement for Poget, acquittement for Deiss, the payment of the spendings of Justice by the State, and the restitution of the evidences to the

Demonstration of the alter-globalisation militants

Martin Shaw, on the 15th of February 2006, brandishing the previous days's edition of the tabloid *Le Matin*, titled "Policemen lie".

Even before the audience, in anticipation of the verdict, the

militants protested in front of the courthouse, brandishing posters ("Your cops are your responsibility") and mocking the Court.

In addition to the noisy events of the court room, Shaw also gave much talking after exiting the courthouse, criticising the Justice of the canont of Vaud: "The whole system is corrupted from bottom to top", he said. He complained that it is not possible to obtain justice in Switzerland.

A press conference followed. The commucation to the press on the site of the militants calls of "direct action".

**Today in History**

197 – Septimius Severus defeated usurper Clodius Albinus in the Battle of Lugdunum, securing full control over the Roman Empire.

1594 - King Zygmunt III Vasa of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth was crowned King of Sweden.

1942 - Air raids on Darwin: The capital of Northern Territory, Australia was devastated by 242 bombers and fighters of the Imperial Japanese Navy.

1942 - U.S. Executive Order 9066 was signed, authorising the relocation and confinement of over 112,000 Japanese Americans to internment camps.

1986 - The space station Mir of the Soviet space program was launched, establishing the first long-term research station in space.

**Quote of the Day**

"External success has to do with people who may see me as a model, or an example, or a representative. As much as I may dislike or want to reject that responsibility, this is something that comes with public success.

It's important to give others a sense of hope that it is possible and you can come from really different places in the world and find your own place in the world that's unique for yourself." ~ Amy Tan

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+1-866-653-4265  
(toll-free in the U.S.)  
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