



### Top Stories

#### English Wikipedia reaches one million articles



Today, at 23.09 UTC, the internet encyclopedia Wikipedia reached the point of having over one million articles written in English.

#### India and U.S.A. work toward nuclear fuel agreement



U.S. President Bush flies to meet with India's Prime Minister Singh, and they are expected to sign a last-minute deal regarding nuclear fuel trade to India.

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### Featured story

#### Brisbane woman charged with Sizzler poisoning



A woman has been arrested in connection with the contamination of foods at two Sizzler restaurant's salad bars. The Australian restaurant chain has closed its salad bars at all 29 locations nationwide.

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### Wikipedia Current Events

•Fijian Prime Minister Laisenia Qarase announces that the 2006 Fiji general elections will be held in the second week of May 2006 from the 6th to the 13th.

### Wikipedia Current Events

•A member of the board of directors of major German steel manufacturing company ThyssenKrupp AG says the company is "examining all its options," and may not complete its proposed acquisition of Canadian steel company Dofasco.

#### Saddam Hussein admits to requesting trials

Former leader of Iraq, Saddam Hussein, has admitted before the court that he had ordered the trial of Shia Muslims, 148 of which were ultimately executed, as well as the 1982 raze on the farming village of Dujail after an assassination attempt by members of the Daawa party. During the raze 1,500 residents were incarcerated and tortured and over 1,000 square kilometers of land was destroyed. The town was rebuilt shortly after the attack.

The former leader defended his actions and suggested that the court should be trying him and him alone.

"I razed them... we specified the farmland of those who were convicted and I signed," he told the court. He later added, "If it was a crime to refer for trial those accused of shooting at the president, then try me and save a lot of trouble..."

"I am Saddam Hussein. I was in charge, and just because things have changed, I am not going to say someone else was

responsible."

Chief prosecutor, Jaafar al-Moussawi, presented the court with documents and letters in an attempt to link Hussein to the trials and subsequent executions. The documents consisted of over 100 death certificates of villagers hanged after being convicted by the Revolutionary Court, which has been called an "imaginary trial" by the prosecution. The documents also contained transfer orders for families that were relocated to the desert. One document, apparently originating with the Iraqi secret service, said that close to fifty of the accused had died during interrogation.

Defending his co-accused, Awad al-Bandar, Hussein stated, "I referred them to the revolutionary court according to the law. Awad was implementing the law, he had a right to convict and acquit."

His defense team indicated that he was Iraq's president at the time and all actions were taken in accordance with Iraqi law. Nehal Bhuta, a legal expert for Human Rights Watch told ABC news, "What we saw today was not Saddam admitting guilt, but admitting to the fact that he acted in accordance with his official duties and powers."

Both Hussein and his defense team were subdued during the prosecution's testimony, a contrast with the often chaotic outbursts that eventually lead to Hussein and his lawyers refusing to return

to court. The trial thus far has seen the deaths of two defense lawyers, the resignation of a previous judge, and numerous complaints by human rights groups that a fair trial is impossible.

The trial, which began last October has been adjourned until March 12th.

### **Thaksin denies rumours of resignation**

With a boycott by all seat-holding parties other than Thaksin Shinawatra's Thai Rak Thai party, the embattled Prime Minister has ruled out resigning as demanded by protestors.

Announcing his plan to lead Thai Rak Thai candidates to sign up for the April 2 snap election on Thursday morning, Thaksin stated that it was business as usual in his role as now-caretaker Prime Minister. His intention is to address a rally this Friday at Sanam Luang, the location of last Sunday's protest. According to Thailand's English-language paper, The Nation he may announce proposals to have any newly formed parliament work on constitutional amendments.

### **BBC's global poll shows 4-1 feel Iraq War Increased likelihood of Terrorist Attacks**

The international polling firm GlobeScan conducted a survey for the BBC World Service which polled residents of 35 countries. The question asked was "Has the war in Iraq increased, decreased or had no effect on the likelihood of terrorist attacks around the world?"

The global response was that 60% felt that the likelihood had increased; 15% felt that the likelihood had decreased; 12% felt

that there was no effect and 13% had no answer. Out of the 35 countries, Mexico was the only one where the people polled thought the invasion lessened the likelihood of terrorist attacks. The highest percentage of people who felt the invasion would increase the likelihood of terrorist attacks was China where 85% held that view.

"It's official. Citizens worldwide think Western leaders have made a fundamental mistake in their war on terror by invading Iraq," said Doug Miller, GlobeScan's President; "Short of the Iraqi government asking them to stay longer, people think the troops should leave."

In Afghanistan today, President Bush said; "If I worried about polls, I wouldn't be doing my job, I've got ample capital and I'm using it to spread freedom and to protect the American people, plus we've got a strong agenda to keep this economy growing." President Bush also said that Iraqis must choose between "chaos or unity."

### **Possible first case of mad cow disease in Sweden**

A suspected case of BSE, better known as mad cow disease, has been discovered in Sweden at a farm near Västerås some 80 kilometres west of Stockholm.

The affected farm has been quarantined and no ruminants from the farm are allowed to be sold or transported. The cow was destroyed earlier after symptoms of calving paralysis had been discovered, and the tests were carried out in accordance to rules set by the European Union (EU).

The Swedish Board of Agriculture (Jordbruksverket) analysed specimen from the cow at the

farm this weekend. The tests confirmed the presence of BSE and the specimen was sent for further analysis at a UK laboratory.

If the British analysis confirms BSE in the specimen, it will be the first case of BSE in Sweden. The affected farmer told the Swedish public service radio: "As my father said, if we have to make history it would be a pity to do it this way."

BSE isn't transmitted directly between animals, but rather from feedstuffs containing tainted tissues from infected ruminants to healthy animals. Such cattle feeds have been prohibited in Sweden for many years, but as the affected cow was born in 1994 she might have been given such food in her early life.

The disease has been declining in the EU after restrictions and regulations were put in place or tightened following an epidemic of the disease in humans in the UK. In that outbreak 150 people died.

Sweden has been considered a low-risk country. Ten previous tests have all proven to be false alarms.

### **Sydney woman charged in Perth heroin seizure**

Australian Federal Police have charged a 37-year-old Vietnamese-born Australian woman after 2.6 kilograms of heroin was allegedly found in the lining of her suitcase.

Thitinh Ho and her two children, aged 18 months and three years, were travelling to Australia from Singapore. The woman's bags were selected for closer inspection when her behaviour aroused the suspicion of customs officials.

"Upon closer examination,

customs officers discovered a white powder, which allegedly tested positive for heroin," said a customs officer.

Senator Chris Ellison, Minister for Justice and Customs, said the detection was the largest seizure of heroin at the border in Western Australia for 12 years. "This seizure sends a clear message to those who attempt to import drugs that they will be caught," he said.

Australian Federal Police spokesman Peter Wood said officers are investigating possible distribution networks. "Obviously we are looking at the source of the drugs and we're also looking to identify the network here in Australia where it was going to be distributed to," he said.

Ho appeared before Perth Magistrates' Court today charged with importing a border-controlled drug. She was remanded into custody and her children were placed into Government care.

The maximum penalty for drug trafficking is a fine of up to \$750,000 and/or life imprisonment.

The arrest comes just three months after Singapore executed convicted Australian drug trafficker Nguyen Tuong Van.

### **Brisbane woman charged with Sizzler poisoning**

Queensland police have charged a 57-year-old woman with the alleged contamination of the salad bar at two Sizzler restaurants.

Rat poison pellets were found in food at Sizzler restaurants at Toowong on January 20 and the Brisbane Myer Centre outlet last Sunday. Yesterday Sizzler closed salad bars nationwide, but they

did not report the incidents to the Queensland Health Department until last Monday.

Queensland's Health Minister Stephen Robertson criticised the restaurant chain for delaying reporting a possible incident of food contamination for 37 days. "I think this is a case that - a real life case - that we should perhaps learn some lessons from," he said.

Queensland Police Inspector Bob Hytch said the woman is the same woman police asked to come forward after she told Sizzler staff she had found pellets in soup at the Myer Centre restaurant last Saturday.

The woman is expected to face Brisbane Magistrates' Court tomorrow charged with two counts of contamination of goods and four counts of an act intending to cause grievous bodily harm.

### **Random driver drug testing to become permanent in Victoria**

After the world's first-ever 12 month trial of random drug testing for automobile drivers, the Victorian government yesterday introduced legislation into parliament for the testing to become permanent starting July 1, 2006. The government tests targeted for the presence of cannabis and amphetamines by use of a saliva swab. During the trial period, the presence of ecstasy was not tested, because at the time the trial period began, there was uncertainty over the accuracy of saliva tests for drug.

The legislation comes in response to the discovery that one in 46 drivers tested were found positive for cannabis and/or amphetamines. Victorian Assistant Commissioner of Traffic, Noel Ashby said, "It is one in 46 drivers

that we're testing are prepared to take a risk and endanger the lives of other people and that's really what we're about, we're trying to prevent people endangering the lives of others".

Of 13,176 tests carried out during the trial, 199 drivers tested positive for amphetamines only, 19 for cannabis alone and 69 for both amphetamines and cannabis. Each driver who tested positive was fined at least AU\$307 and lost three demerit points.

Police also conducted tests for ecstasy, despite being unable to prosecute those driving under the influence of ecstasy alone. During the trial, 25 drivers tested positive to ecstasy alone and more than 200 tested positive for both ecstasy and amphetamines.

Victorian Police Minister, Tim Holding said existing penalties - which are softer than for drink-driving offences - were inadequate and would be toughened to ensure they reflected the seriousness of the offence.

At present, a first drug-driving offence incurs a \$307 fine and three demerit points; subsequent offences a \$1227 fine and up to a six-month loss of licence.

In comparison, a drink-driving offence attracts a fine of up to \$1200 plus disqualification from driving for at least six months and up to 10 demerit points. Repeat drink-drivers face the possibility of being penalised with a fine of up to \$2500 or up to three months' imprisonment, plus a minimum one-year loss of licence and use of an alcohol interlock device for at least six months.

Under the random roadside drug-testing system, drivers who test

positive are forced off the road for 24 hours. A second swab is then taken and sent for testing to identify the drug before penalties are issued.

Ken Ogden from the RACV said he would like to see every booze bus in Victoria be able to also operate as a drugs bus.

### **Sizzler salad bars shut after rat poison found in food**

The Sizzler Restaurant franchise in Australia has closed the salad bars in all of its 29 restaurants across the country, after rat poison was discovered in food at two of the chain's outlets in Brisbane. Self-serve salad bars at the restaurants have been closed in response to a sabotage scare. Sizzler Australia Managing Director Bo Ryan said customer safety was always the restaurant chain's first priority.

A media release on the Sizzler website states: "As a precautionary measure and because customer health and safety is our number one priority, we have temporarily closed salad bars in all Sizzler Restaurants. We sincerely apologise for this major inconvenience."

Police said green pellets were found in pasta sauce at a Sizzler restaurant in Brisbane's inner-west on January 20. A regular customer at the Toowong restaurant told Sizzler staff she had found something odd in her bolognese pasta sauce. Similar pellets were found in a vegetable soup at Sizzler's Myer Centre outlet in the city about 5pm on Saturday.

Bo Ryan said the decision to close all of its Australian salad bars was made after laboratory tests confirmed that the substance in the pasta sauce was indeed rat poison. He said trainees who

tasted the poisoned soup had been taken to hospital by ambulance as a precaution, but had suffered no ill effects.

Queensland Police Inspector Bob Hytch said no one had been reported ill as a result of eating the poisoned food and there had been no extortion threats. Sarah Kenny, a university student, said she and two friends had eaten spaghetti bolognese that "tasted really weird".

"The inconvenience to customers and the economic impact on the company and its 1600 employees will be severe, but as a family restaurant our first priority is the welfare of our diners," said Bo Ryan. "Steak and seafood and a limited range of salads would continue to be available." He hopes that customers will understand the action was taken in their best interests, and that "they can be patient while temporary product security procedures are developed and implemented in all restaurants."

The 29 Australian Sizzler Restaurants, along with 107 Kentucky Fried Chicken outlets are operated by the Collins Foods Group, a wholly owned subsidiary of Worldwide Restaurant Concepts Inc. Mr Ryan said Sizzler was assessing measures which could be taken to prevent a recurrence of the sabotage. "As soon as new measures are introduced, over and above existing strict protocols, we will reassess the situation," he said.

### **Today in History**

1836 - The Republic of Texas declared its independence from Mexico.

1861 - The Emancipation Manifesto of Tsar Alexander II was proclaimed, abolishing serfdom in

Imperial Russia.

1943 - World War II: Australian and American air forces attacked and destroyed a large convoy of the Japanese Navy in the Battle of the Bismarck Sea.

1962 - Wilt Chamberlain scored 100 points in a basketball game, still a record in the NBA today.

1998 - NASA announced the discovery of water, likely a salty ocean, on Europa, one of the moons of the planet Jupiter.

March 02 is Independence Day in Morocco (1956)

### **Quote of the Day**

"Our dignity, our free institutions and the peace and welfare of this and coming generations of Americans will be secure only as we cling to the watchword of true patriotism: 'Our country — when right to be kept right; when wrong to be put right.'" ~ Carl Schurz

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