



### Top Stories

#### Emergency declared in Peru as Mt. Ubinas threatens to erupt

The government of Peru has declared a state of emergency over threat of Mt. Ubinas erupting. The civil defence institute has recommended the total evacuation of the 3,500 residents of the district of Ubinas.

#### Study claims recreational ecstasy use and depression unrelated

A new study finds that there is no significant link between Ecstasy (MDMA) use and depression. Long-term effects are still unknown and heavily debated among scientists.

### Featured story

#### Others named in lawsuit against Buffalo, N.Y. hotel proposal

A copy has been obtained of the lawsuit filed against the City of Buffalo for allegedly fast-tracking a seven million dollar hotel proposal. According to official court documents, there are more defendants than previously thought.

### Wikipedia Current Events

- The Scottish National Party wins the Moray by-election, 2006 for the Moray constituency to the Scottish Parliament.
- The Government of Chad and the World Bank end a four-month long dispute over allocation of

### Wikipedia Current Events

Chadian petroleum funds. The World Bank will allow Chad to spend more of its oil revenue on its military in exchange for a resumption of oil output through the Chad-Cameroon pipeline.

• Construction begins on the Freedom Tower in New York City breaking a deadlock between the Port Authority of New York and New Jersey, which owns the site, and private developer Larry Silverstein. The 1,776-foot tower is the centerpiece of the rebuilding effort for the World Trade Center, which was destroyed in the September 11, 2001 attacks.

• Nepal Civil War: Maoist insurgents in Nepal, responding to a demand by the newly appointed prime minister Girija Prasad Koirala, announce a unilateral three-month truce. Kathmandu gradually resumes normalcy after weeks of pro-democracy protests.

• The head of the London Stock Exchange publicly warned the president of Russia, Vladimir Putin, that his recent decision to bar the head of a large equity fund from that country could send "a very negative signal" to the world's equity markets.

• In Israel, the centrist Kadima party forms a coalition government with the left-leaning Labor party.

### Members of Granny Peace Brigade acquitted

18 members of the Granny Peace Brigade (an anti-war activist group) were acquitted on charges of disorderly conduct during a protest outside a Times Square military recruiting center in New York City last fall.

The defendants in the case -some were in their 80's and 90's- were charged with two counts of disorderly conduct during their Oct 17, 2005 protest of the Iraq war.

The Judge Neil Ross says that his verdict is not a critique of any particular police agency but rather due to a lack of evidence that pedestrian traffic was blocked and anyone could enter the recruiting center.

The Manhattan courtroom erupted into applause after Judge Ross said that the prosecution "failed to prove each defendant guilty of each charge."

The defense lawyer Norman Siegel said that the women were pleased by the verdict and was quoted saying that, "They are great Americans, and they walk the shoes of great Americans who have made America the place that it is,"

If any of the grannies were convicted they each could have faced up to 15 days in prison.

### US Federal Reserve ceases to publish M3 index

On March 23, 2006 the Federal

Reserve ceased publication of the M3 monetary aggregate, in line with an announcement it made in November, 2005. The M3 is a measure of money supply in the United States,

The M3 is most general of the many measures of money supply, the quantity of money available within the economy for purchasing goods, services, and securities. The money supply is monitored and adjusted by a central bank, to keep inflation in check, because money supply has to change in tune with real Gross Domestic Product (GDP) to prevent inflation (or deflation).

In November last year, the US Federal Reserve announced that it would cease publishing M3 data, saying, "[the] M3 does not appear to convey any additional information about economic activity that is not already embodied in M2 and has not played a role in the monetary policy process for many years", adding that the costs of collecting the data required for the index outweighed its benefits.

Some commentators have questioned this decision and have speculated that this would allow the Federal reserve to covertly fund the US budget deficit and its negative balance of trade or hide the fall in international demand for the US dollar. In March, 2006, Rep. Ron Paul introduced a bill (HR 4892) requiring the Federal Reserve to reverse its decision.

### **"Voxtel" company will be transformed into "Orange"**

By the decision of the shareholders the "Voxtel" company will be transformed into "Orange".

The shareholders of "Voxtel" are: France Telecom – 61%, MMT-BIS –

30%, MobilRom – 4%, IFC – 5%.

"Orange" - is one of the world mobile communication leaders and is a daughter enterprise of the "France Telecom" group. The "Orange" group is present in 17 countries, where it has more than 80 million mobile communication subscribers.

### **Australia to introduce universal health and welfare smartcard**

Australia's federal cabinet has approved plans for a universal smartcard, which would be required to access health and welfare services from 2010. The card will be introduced from 2008.

The face of the card will contain it's owner's name, a photograph, a number and the cardholder's signature. The card will also have a chip which will store a second photograph, address, date of birth and details of children. Cardholders will be able to optionally include details of their next of kin, medical information and organ-donor status.

Australian Prime Minister John Howard said the card will replace 17 cards and vouchers used through Australia's health and welfare system. The card will be used to access unemployment benefits, pensions, healthcare rebates, childcare subsidies, veteran's entitlements and family tax benefits.

Mr Howard denied that the card was intended to be a stepping stone for a national identity card. He said that the card would not be compulsory and would not be required to be carried with a person at all times.

Australians have never been keen on the idea of a national identity

card. The idea for a national identity card first appeared in 1985 with a proposal for the Australia Card but was eventually given up upon, since then the idea has resurfaced on numerous occasions, most recently in 2002 after the w:London bombings. Mr Howard said his government had looked into a national identity card but the disadvantages outweighed the advantages.

The government hopes that the card will crack down on welfare fraud. The government estimates that it will cost \$1 billion to implement the card and claims the card will save \$3 billion over 10 years.

The Australian Labor Party, has cautiously welcomed the card, claiming to support it "in principle". The party's public accountability spokesman, Kelvin Thomson said that Labor will question if the card will be used to track people for national security purposes.

"Will this card be used for national security purposes and, if so, how?" Mr Thomson said.

Peter Hendy, chief of the Australian Chamber of Commerce and Industry (a body representing businesses in Australia said that the card would be intrusive and increase operating costs for businesses.

The Australian Council for Civil Liberties has also expressed concerns. ACCL president Terry O'Gorman said he is concerned that the card will infringe the right to privacy.

### **Maoists in Nepal declare three month ceasefire**

Maoist rebels in Nepal announced a three month ceasefire from

Thursday onward saying that this move reflected their support for the formation of a new Constituent Assembly. Maoist leader Prachanda said in a statement that the People's Liberation Army would not carry out any offensive military action during the tenure of the ceasefire. Maoist rebels have been fighting to overthrow the monarchy in the Himalayan nation since 1996 and over 13000 people have been killed in the insurgency. The Maoists' announcement has been welcomed by India, which has indicated that it will likely resume sending financial and military aid to Nepal.

### **Sri Lankan Army Chief critically injured in LTTE suicide bombing**

A female suicide bomber from the militant separatist group LTTE disguised herself as a pregnant woman and detonated a bomb inside the Sri Lankan Army HQ in Colombo yesterday evening. Eight soldiers were killed in the attack and Lieutenant General Sarath Fonseka was severely wounded.

The Sri Lanka Air Force launched retaliatory strikes against rebel positions this morning at 00:30 GMT. This attack threatens to put an end to the uneasy ceasefire between the Tamil rebels and the Sri Lankan government that has been in place since 2002.

### **Today in History**

1192 - Third Crusade: Conrad of Montferrat, the elected King of Jerusalem, was assassinated by the Hashshashin.

1789 - Fletcher Christian led a mutiny aboard HMAV Bounty against Commander William Bligh.  
1952 - Occupied Japan: Japan was once again an independent state, when the Treaty of San Francisco entered into force.

1996 - A spree shooter in the Port Arthur Massacre killed 35 people, and seriously injured 37 in Tasmania, Australia.

2001 - Dennis Tito became the world's first fee-paying space tourist, riding the Soyuz TM-32 spacecraft to the International Space Station.

### **Quote of the Day**

"War: first, one hopes to win; then one expects the enemy to lose; then, one is satisfied that he too is suffering; in the end, one is surprised that everyone has lost."  
~ Karl Kraus

### **Word of the Day**

mallemaroking; *n*

Definition

1. Drinking party on board a Greenland whaling ship.

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