



### Top Stories

#### Ahmadinejad sends letter to George W. Bush

Iranian government spokesman Gholam-Hossein Elham said that Iranian president Mahmoud Ahmadinejad has sent a letter directly to US president George W. Bush proposing "new solutions for getting out of international problems and the current fragile situation of the world".



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#### Tasmanian miners rescued

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### Featured story

#### March against new French copyright law

Protesters marched denouncing the new copyright bill, known as DADVSI. Opponents to the bill contend that the broad civil and criminal penalties that it enacts in order to fight illegal online copying of copyrighted works will in fact have a chilling effect on a variety of unrelated developments, especially in free software..



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### Wikipedia Current Events

- Former South African deputy president Jacob Zuma is acquitted of a rape charge; the judge rules that a sexual encounter with a 31-year old HIV-positive woman was consensual.
- Iranian President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad writes to United States President George W. Bush. This marks the first time in 27 years that an Iranian President has written to a U.S. President.
- The Italian parliament starts to vote in order to elect the successor of Carlo Azeglio Ciampi as President of the Italian Republic.
- Judgement is given in London for Apple Computer in a high-profile trademark suit brought by The Beatles' company, Apple Corps.

#### Tasmanian miners rescued

The two miners who had been trapped almost one kilometer beneath the surface in Beaconsfield, Tasmania in a collapsed gold mine for 14 days have now been rescued.

The men, Brant Webb and Todd Russell, were well enough to walk out from the lift onto the surface and threw their arms up in exultation. They then walked to a board and removed their location tags to indicate that they were no longer underground at approximately 5:59 a.m. AEST before embracing family and friends and making their way to the waiting ambulances. The

vehicles slowly made their way though the crowds with a police escort and the miners waved to the crowds through the open rear doors. They will undergo medical supervision at Launceston Hospital for 24 hours before being confirmed well enough to return home.

The last stages of the rescue, cutting the final sections of the escape tunnel had proceeded very slowly because very hard rock was encountered and work had to proceed gently to minimize the chances of further rock collapses.

The escape tunnel was completed at 4:47 a.m. AEST and it took another hour for the men to be transported to the surface via a "crib room" at "Level 375" (375 metres underground) where they were medically examined and were also able to shower.

A bell at Beaconsfield's Uniting Church pealed just after 5 a.m. AEST to celebrate the rescue, and an air raid siren was sounded. This was the first time the church bell had been rung since the end of World War II. A local fire engine drove through Beaconsfield's streets sounding the siren to wake residents for the good news.

A funeral will be held later today for a third miner, Larry Knight, who was killed in the collapse that trapped the miners on April 26.

#### Apple Corps loses court case against Apple Computers

The Beatles' label Apple Corps lost

its court case against Apple Computer today in the High Court. Apple Corps argued that the iTunes Music Store was a breach of the 1991 settlement reached between the two parties. The 1991 agreement was that Apple Computer would not sell music branded with an apple. Mr Justice Anthony Mann agreed with Apple Computer's defence that, while the iTunes Music Store is branded, the music it sells is not - "I conclude that the use of the Apple logo ... does not suggest a relevant connection with the creative work". During the case Apple Corps showed the court just how many times the Apple Computer logo appeared during a typical download. The song purchased during the demonstration was Le Freak by Chic.

After the case closed Apple Computer CEO Steve Jobs extended an invitation to the record label, "we have always loved the Beatles, and hopefully we can now work together to get them on the iTunes Music Store". Apple Corps have decided to take the case to the Court of Appeal. Speaking for Apple Corps, manager Neil Aspinall said, "with great respect to the trial judge, we consider he has reached the wrong conclusion".

### **Soft drink foes cheer victory, lament remaining junk foods in schools**

In an announcement made last week, soda manufacturers agreed to stop the sale of their products in U.S. schools. Some who threatened legal action against soda makers in an effort to block sales of the sugary sodas in schools, pat themselves on the back over the agreement, while lamenting that the deal did not go far enough, and are now laying plans to press for more

restrictions.

"Though there is room for improvement — sugary "sports" drinks still will be sold in schools, for instance — this voluntary agreement is certainly good enough that CSPI will drop its planned lawsuit against Coca-Cola, PepsiCo, Cadbury-Schweppes and their bottlers," said Michael F. Jacobson, the executive director of the Center for Science in the Public Interest. "I hope this settlement contributes to the momentum that is building in Congress for legislation that would require USDA to update its standards for foods sold outside of school meals. That would enable USDA to eliminate the sale of candy, cookies, French fries, potato chips, and other snack foods, as well as sports drinks, that are standard fare in school vending machines and stores."

In the wake of the announcement of the agreement by the three largest soft drink companies, their bottlers and the public health advocacy group, the Alliance for a Healthier Generation, Jacobson thanked his team of litigators for "negotiating effectively with the soft-drink industry over the past six months, and for demonstrating that the judicial system can play an important role in spurring public health advances."

Richard Daynard, a law professor and president of the Public Health Advocacy Institute, which threatened the soft-drink industry with lawsuits, said in an institute press release, "The industry agreement with the Clinton Foundation and American Heart Association comes after sustained pressure from potential litigation and negotiations with public health groups and their lawyers. It is a credit to the role of litigation and

the legal system as a component of effective public health strategy."

"This agreement demonstrates the potential of public health litigation to help control the obesity epidemic," he said.

In an email exchange with the James Logan Courier, Margo Wootan, director of Nutrition Policy for the Center for Science in the Public Interest, said, "Last week's announcement that soft drink companies will pull all sugary sodas from schools is great step toward improving school foods. This agreement is the culmination of the tremendous national momentum on improving school foods -- from the local policies (in LA, NYC, Chicago, Philadelphia, DC, etc.), state bills (in 2005, 200 bills were introduced in 40 states to get soda and junk foods out of schools), the strong bipartisan bill pending in the U.S. Congress, and threats of litigation against soda companies."

"While today's agreement is a huge step forward, it is by no means the last step" wrote Wootan, " We still have a lot of work to do to improve school foods."

The agreement, announced Wednesday morning by the William J. Clinton Foundation, means that the nation's biggest beverage distributors, and the American Beverage Association, will pull their soda products from vending machines and cafeterias in schools serving about 35 million students, according to the Alliance for a Healthier Generation, a joint initiative between the Clinton Foundation and the American Heart Association.

Under the agreement, high schools will still be able to purchase drinks

such as diet and unsweetened teas, diet sodas, sports drinks, flavored water, seltzer and low-calorie sports drinks for resale to students.

The companies plan to stop soda sales at 75 percent of the nation's public schools by the 2008-2009 school year, and at all schools in the following school year. The speed of the changes will depend in part on school districts' willingness to change their contracts with the beverage distributors.

Some food activists criticized the deal for not going far enough and undermining efforts to go further.

Michele Simon, the director of the Center for Informed Food Choices, based in Oakland, Ca., called the deal "bogus" and a "PR stunt" by "Big Cola" in an effort to "sugar coat it's image."

"This announcement could potentially undermine ongoing grassroots efforts, state legislation, and other enforceable policies," wrote Simon in an article at [www.commondreams.org](http://www.commondreams.org)," For example, in Massachusetts where a stronger bill is pending, a local advocate is worried about the adverse impact, since legislators could easily think that Clinton has taken care of the problem and ignore the bill. What was already an uphill battle—getting schools and legislatures to take this problem seriously—was just made worse, not better, by this bogus agreement.

"Even from a health standpoint, the deal is hardly impressive. Diet soda full of artificial sweeteners, sports drinks high in sugar, and other empty-calorie beverages with zero nutritional value are still allowed in high schools," Simon

wrote, "Also, parents concerned about soda advertising in schools will not be pleased with the agreement. Not a word is mentioned about the ubiquitous marketing children are subjected to daily in the form of branded score boards, school supplies, sports bags, and cups (just to name a few), which is required by exclusive Coke and Pepsi contracts. "

She's not the only one criticizing the deal." While the initial details are promising, PHAI is concerned about some aspects of the agreement as it is being reported," Daynard said in the press release. "The continual sale of "sports drinks" is a cause for concern. While they have a role for marathon runners and others engaged in sustained strenuous sports, for most students "sports drinks" are just another form of sugar water. Furthermore, the change in beverages offered must be carefully monitored and cannot depend entirely on the schools' willingness and ability to alter existing contracts. Soda companies have spent decades pushing these unhealthy drinks on children and should bear the responsibility for their removal. PHAI is also concerned about the enforcement of this agreement and its silence on industry marketing activities in the school system," he said.

"Importantly, the agreement doesn't address the sale of chips, candy, snack cakes, ice cream, or any of the other high-fat, high-calorie, high-salt foods that are sold widely in schools," said Wootan of the Center for Science in the Public Interest, "This is a voluntary agreement and is not enforceable, we need Senator Harkin's school foods bill to lock in the beverage standards and give

them the force of law."

Even the diet drinks, which will still be offered, need to go, said Ross Getman, an attorney in Syracuse, NY. Getman has advocated that soda should not be sold in public schools and that long-term "pouring rights" agreements, which give a company exclusive access to sell their brands at a school, are illegal for a variety of reasons.

Getman, who contends that some diet sodas are contaminated with benzene, a cancer-causing chemical, said the soda "industry gets an "F" for incomplete" for "the industry's failure to pull all soda from school and to recall products."

Schools account for about \$700 million in U.S. soft-drink sales, less than 1 percent total revenue for Coca-Cola, PepsiCo and Cadbury, the nation's largest soda companies.

Ten of the largest U.S. school districts have already removed soft drinks from vending machines, according to Getman. States including California, Maine and Connecticut have also banned sugary sodas in schools.

### **Union criticizes East London Line 'privatisation'**

The transport union RMT has criticised Transport for London (TfL) for the decision to apparently privatise the East London Line, which is undergoing a major upgrade and extension programme over the coming years. The announcement follows a report from BBC News which claims that a 'leaked memo' has revealed plans for the line to be run by the private sector come 2009. RMT General Secretary said "there is no earthly reason why its operations

should not remain within London Underground", adding that the Union would take steps to safeguard the jobs of its members currently working on the line.

Responsibility for the East London Line was officially transferred from the Strategic Rail Authority to Transport for London in November 2004, and London Mayor Ken Livingstone has pledged to deliver the £900m extension by the end of the decade. However it has always been the plan that the line, once built, would form part of the national rail network, rather than the Underground network. Network Rail will manage much of the track, and private companies will run the trains under strict franchise from the London Rail arm of TfL, in the same manner as TfL franchises the bus services.

Phase One of the project, due to be complete in June 2010, will see a northern extension to Dalston Junction and a southern extension to Crystal Palace and West Croydon. This is in plenty of time for the 2012 London Olympic Games.

Control of the North London Line, currently run by Silverlink, will also pass to TfL from Autumn 2007. It is planned that eventually the line will join up with the East London Line, the West London Line and the South London Line to form a circular 'Orbirail' service.

### **Thailand election was invalid, rules court**

Thailand's Constitutional Court has ruled that the general election, held on April 2, 2006, is invalid and orders fresh poll. Thailand is in the middle of political turmoil since the election, which was called by Prime Minister Thaksin Shinawatra in the face of mounting protests.

"The constitutional court voted 8 to 6 that the elections were unconstitutional and voted 9 to 5 to hold a new election," said Judge Ura Wangomklang on Monday.

Earlier, the opposition parties boycotted the April poll. As a result, some of the seats remained empty, which meant parliament could not be formed. Thaksin Shinawatra, the prime minister, was unable to form a new government.

King Bhumibol Adulyadej of Thailand had to intervene to resolve the crisis. He described the situation as a "mess" and said any parliament with no opposition presence would be undemocratic. He initiated the court to pass a ruling to bring back the country to normalcy.

The crisis began when Prime Minister Thaksin Shinawatra sold 49.6% family stake in telecoms company Shin Corporation in January. Massive protests were held all over demanding his resignation. He dissolved the parliament in February and called for an emergency election to prove he still had widespread public support. Three main opposition parties decided to boycott the poll.

Thai Rak Thai Party (TRT), led by Thaksin Shinawatra won 57 % of the votes in the election held in April amid opposition boycott. But, there were millions of "Protest no-vote", which ultimately led to him stepping aside. Two rounds of by-election failed to resolve the crisis.

Soon afterwards, under the intervention of King Bhumibol Adulyadej, the top judges from Thailand's three main judicial institutions - the Supreme, Administrative and Constitutional courts - met to discuss the

situation.

Thailand's ruling Thai Rak Thai Party (TRT) and the former opposition Democrat party pledged on Monday to join the new poll after the court ruling.

### **U.S. President George W. Bush nominates Gen. Michael Hayden as director of CIA**

United States Air Force General Michael Hayden has been nominated as the new director of the CIA.

"The men and women of the CIA will have a strong leader to support them," said U.S. President George W. Bush in a press conference today.

"This is simply too important to not get absolutely right," said Hayden.

The nomination sparked controversy from Republican and Democratic critics, who claim that the military background of Michael Hayden makes him unsuitable, because the CIA is a civil institution rather than a military arm of the government. Saxby Chambliss calls it a "major problem" due to the intelligence budget that is already controlled by The Pentagon up to and/or more than 80 percent. Peter Hoekstra, Intelligence Committee Chairman, says he would oppose the nomination of General Michael Hayden as "the wrong person, the wrong place at the wrong time".

Hayden was head of the NSA from 1999-2005 and was in charge of the eavesdropping program that allows the U.S. government to monitor e-mail and international telephone calls of suspected terrorists without obtaining a warrant. Last year, he became the deputy for the director of National

Intelligence John Negroponte.

Hayden also is currently serving more than 35 years in the U.S. Air Force and from 1980-1982 he served as intelligence chief at Osan Air Base which is located in South Korea.

On Friday, Porter Goss resigned as director of the agency.

### **Sex-for-aid spreads in war-torn Liberia**

The aid agency Save the Children says an alarming number of girls in Liberia, as young as eight, were having sex with UN peacekeepers, policemen, teachers and humanitarian aid workers in exchange for money, food or favours.

"People don't really accept it but because of the financial constraints, people just have to do so. Most of them are in households headed by only the mother, catering for children. Their fathers got killed in the war, or some fathers are living but can't afford to care for their children; they have to accept the situation, so there is no way out. "

The report says most people cited lack of economic and livelihood opportunities, as well as chronic poverty, as underlying causes for the ongoing exploitation of children. Parents reported feeling powerless to stop children who were having sex in exchange for goods and services, as they did not have the economic means to provide for their children. In some instances, families cited that transactional sex was a means of supporting the wider family to access things such as food or money to purchase food. In other cases, children identified more personal needs such as clothing or being able to access video clubs to

watch films. The widespread nature of the problem meant it affected children in a broad cross section of environments.

The study, conducted by Save the Children, was intended to explore the ways in which children in 'Internally Displaced Person' (IDP) camps are vulnerable to exploitation and abuse as they attempt to meet their basic and other needs. It also explored the roles and responsibilities of humanitarian agencies in providing more protective systems for the delivery of assistance. During the discussions in the field, 315 men, women and children were consulted.

The people of Liberia have experienced ongoing suffering over the past two decades as a result of war and displacement. Children have been drawn into this in many ways, such as recruitment into armed forces, separation from their families, witnessing atrocities, rape and torture. Thousands have been driven from their homes into exile in neighbouring countries or camps for IDPs within Liberia, the report says.

Liberia has been shattered by the 1989-2003 civil war which caused an estimated 250,000 deaths in a country of barely 3 million people. The war forced around 1.3 million people from their homes into camps around the capital Monrovia or abroad.

Elections late last year saw Harvard-trained former World Bank economist Ellen Johnson-Sirleaf elected as the new president. Her government faces a massive task in rebuilding an economy and society torn apart by years of bloodshed. Many Liberians have been, and continue

to be, heavily reliant on humanitarian assistance as a means of survival. Those who are able to find work often still live in chronic poverty with the national average wage being only US\$50 per month.

The report found that people unanimously agree that attitudes have fundamentally changed since the war.

"It is like the cultural tradition is not holding any more. People have lost the cultural values and the tradition has been broken down. "

Most people said that children were not involved in prostitution before the war, or to a very small extent, and that this only happened in the cities but not in the villages.

### **Rescue of Tasmanian miners delayed**

Rescuers working to free miners trapped during the Beaconsfield mine collapse have moved to a slightly faster blasting method. The rescue effort was expected to conclude on Sunday, however due to rescuers encountering extremely hard rock, it has been once again delayed.

The vertical distance had previously been estimated at 1.5 metres, although rescuers believe it could be less with work being carried out overnight.

Todd Russell, 34, and Brant Webb, 37, have been underground for 13 nights after a minor earthquake triggered a rockfall in the Beaconsfield Gold Mine. They survived because they were in a small cage when the collapse occurred. Their workmate Larry Knight, 44, died in the collapse, and his funeral is to be held in Launceston on Tuesday. His family

members have delayed the funeral proceedings with the hope that the trapped miners will be freed and able to attend.

### Today in History

- 328 - Athanasius became the Patriarch of Alexandria.
- 1092 - Lincoln Cathedral in Lincolnshire, England was consecrated.
- 1901 - The first Parliament of Australia opened in the Royal Exhibition Building in Melbourne.
- 1946 - King Victor Emmanuel III of Italy abdicated.
- 1950 - Dianetics: The Modern Science of Mental Health by L. Ron Hubbard, the founder of Scientology and Dianetics, was first published.
- May 09 is Victory Day in various Eastern European countries, Europe Day in the European Union.

### Quote of the Day

"The time for the healing of the wounds has come. The moment to bridge the chasms that divide us has come. The time to build is upon us." ~ Nelson Mandela

### Word of the Day

discombobulate; *v*

Definition

1. To throw into a state of confusion; to befuddle or perplex.

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