

PROPHETIC TIMES

WEEKLY WORLD NEWS UPDATE

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CHINA FINDS FIRST HUMAN BIRD FLU CASES

November 16, 2005 Wired News reported: "China confirmed on Wednesday its first human cases of bird flu, adding to fears of a global pandemic in which millions of people could die. China's Ministry of Health reported two cases in the central province of Hunan and one in eastern Anhui, the official Xinhua news agency said. The World Health Organization (WHO) said one of the victims in Hunan was a girl of 12 who died last month.

The spread of bird flu to people in the world's most populous country is a significant development. The deadly H5N1 form of bird flu has already killed more than 60 people in Asia and is endemic in poultry in parts of the region. The WHO said it had been informed by China that a 9-year-old boy from Hunan province suspected of having bird flu was indeed stricken by the H5N1 virus, as was his 12-year-old sister, who fell ill and died last month.

In October, China reported that hundreds of chickens and ducks had died in Wantang village in Xiangtan County, near Hunan's provincial capital of Changsha. After mass culling and disinfection, the area was declared free of bird flu this week.

Chinese officials initially reported that the two children in Hunan had suffered pneumonia and not bird flu, but later invited international experts in to help investigate the cases. The boy was discharged from hospital last weekend. WHO spokesman Roy Wadia said the third case was identified as a woman in Anhui province. Xinhua did not identify any of the victims.

"It's not a surprise. It shows that China like other countries that have bird flu in poultry can have human cases," Wadia said.

Wadia also said a teacher in Hunan had fallen ill with symptoms of pneumonia and was still considered a suspect bird flu case. A poultry worker in the northeastern province of Liaoning, where an outbreak was reported among domestic birds this month, also was considered a suspected case, he said..."

CHINA TO VACCINATE ALL POULTRY AGAINST BIRD FLU

November 16, 2005 New Scientist.com reported: "China plans to vaccinate all five billion of its poultry against H5N1 bird flu, amid news of two more outbreaks and continued uncertainty about human cases in the country. The move will slow the spread of the virus and reduce human exposure to it, but will also make any remaining virus hard to detect.

Jia Youling, China's chief veterinarian, told the official Chinese news agency Xinhua on Tuesday that "China is trying to vaccinate all poultry nationwide" He said the government would cover the costs. At the moment China has 5.2 billion birds as livestock, Jia said, while over the course of a year the nation produces 14 billion poultry. China is the only country in Asia to practice widespread vaccination of poultry against H5N1, but until now this has mainly been done by large-scale producers, not by the millions of peasant farmers with backyard flocks.

But after a year with only two reported outbreaks – in far-flung Tibet and Xinjiang – China has now officially reported six outbreaks in poultry since 14 October. These were across the country, in Inner Mongolia, Anhui, Hunan, Liaoning and Hubei provinces. Then on Monday it announced another in Anhui, and two in Xinjiang on Tuesday.

Officials have blamed outbreaks in Liaoning, where a woman is suspected of contracting the disease, on the use of faulty or fake vaccines on poultry. But it is known that the virus can persist and spread even in properly vaccinated birds unless stringent precautions are taken..."

DIPLOMATS: IRAN BEGINS NEW URANIUM CONVERSION

November 17, 2005 Voice of America News reported: "Diplomats say Iran has started a new round of uranium conversion, despite international calls for it to halt sensitive nuclear work. Officials close to the International Atomic Energy Agency confirmed Wednesday that conversion had resumed - an initial step in preparing nuclear fuel.

Iran conducted an earlier round of nuclear work in August, prompting the European Union to break off talks with the Islamic Republic about its nuclear program...The U.N. atomic agency is to meet next week to consider the request. Iran says its nuclear program is peaceful..."

EU TO BUILD NETWORK OF SPY SATELLITES

November 15, 2005 The London Telegraph reported: "The European Union is building its own network of spy satellites allowing Brussels to ensure nations and private individuals are obeying its policies, it was announced yesterday.

The multi-billion-pound system, known as "Global Monitoring for Environment and Security" (GMES), should be up and running by 2010, a commission spokesman said. Announcing the launch of a "pilot stage" for GMES, the commission stressed its "user-friendly" application in guiding relief work after disasters or providing real time images of forest fires or oil spills.

But a commission memo also acknowledged that GMES would play a key role in the "implementation, review and monitoring of EU policies", including watching for agriculture and fisheries fraud and boosting "internal security".

In addition, officials hope GMES will support the EU's first steps towards becoming a military power. It will "provide authorities with necessary elements for a European Security and Defence Policy", the commission memo said.

The commission in Brussels will identify and develop possible uses for GMES. The management of the satellites will fall to the European Space Agency (ESA), which pools the space resources of 15 EU member states, including Britain, plus Norway and Switzerland..."

TOP SUPERCOMPUTER REACHES NEW RECORD SPEEDS

November 15, 2005 NewScientist.com reported: "The most powerful supercomputer on the planet has reached a scorching new processing speed, confirming its reputation as the world's top number-cruncher by some margin.

The BlueGene/L System ranks number one on the latest world rankings, a list of the 500 fastest supercomputers known as the Top500. It has come top of the last two lists but remains a work in progress – it is made from modular units that can be easily added to its increase raw processing power. Since the last list in June 2005, BlueGene/L has more than doubled in size. It now has more than 130,000 individual processors.

BlueGene/L was jointly developed by IBM and the US National Nuclear Security Administration and is installed at Lawrence Livermore National Laboratory in California, US. The machine is used to simulate nuclear weapon explosions and model molecular dynamics. Once complete, it is expected to reach a maximum performance in excess of 367 teraflops..."

HOW JEWISH IS JERUSALEM?

November 17, 2005 aish.com reported: "How Jewish is Jerusalem?– You might think that's a silly question, but in the world of academia, revisionist history and even biblical archaeology, scholars have cast the shadow of doubt over Judaism's intrinsic connection to Jerusalem.

For a growing number of academics and intellectuals, King David and his united kingdom of Judah and Israel, which has served for 3,000 years as an integral symbol of the Jewish nation, is simply a piece of fiction. The biblical account of history has been dismissed as unreliable by a cadre of scholars, some of whom have an overtly political agenda, arguing that the traditional account was resurrected by the Zionists to justify dispossessing Palestinian Arabs. The most outspoken of these is Keith Whitelam of the Copenhagen School which promotes an agenda of "biblical minimalism," whose best-known work is *The Invention of Ancient Israel: The Silencing of Palestinian History*.

Even in Israel, this new school has found its voice. Israel Finkelstein, chairman of Tel Aviv University's Department of Archaeology, began championing a theory several years ago that the biblical accounts of Jerusalem as the seat of a powerful, unified monarchy under the rule of David and Solomon are essentially false... But his book, *The Bible Unearthed*, wound up on the *New York Times'* best-seller list and he became the darling of a sympathetic media. He concluded that David and Solomon, if they existed at all, were merely "hill-country chieftains" and Jerusalem a poor, small tribal village. He claims that the myth of King David was the creation of a cult of priests trying to create for themselves a glorious history.

But the debunkers of Jewish biblical history got some bad news recently, when a spunky, dedicated archaeologist began her latest dig. Dr. Eilat Mazar, world authority on Jerusalem's past, has taken King David out of the pages of the Bible and put him back into living history. Mazar's latest excavation in the City of David, in the southern shadow of the Temple Mount, has shaken up the archaeological world. For lying undisturbed for over 3,000 years is a massive building which Mazar believes is King David's palace.

For Mazar, 48, one of the world's leading authorities on the archaeology of ancient Jerusalem and head archaeologist of the Shalem Center Institute of Archaeology, the discovery was the culmination of years of effort and solid speculation. From the time she was a teenager, she had her nose in archaeology literature, and worked closely with her grandfather, renowned archaeologist Benjamin Mazar, who conducted the southern wall excavations next to the Western Wall. She holds a doctorate in archaeology from Hebrew University, is author of *The Complete Guide to the Temple Mount Excavations*, and in the 1970s and '80s worked on the digs supervised by Yigal Shilo in the City of David. The significant discoveries made then, including a huge wall called the "stepped-stone structure" -- which Shilo believed was a retaining wall for David's royal palace or part of the Jebusite fortress he conquered -- ignited Mazar to continue to look for the prize: David's palace itself.

Some biblical scholars gave up looking for the palace because, according to Mazar, they were looking in the wrong place. Scholars searched for remains of the palace within the walls of the ancient Jebusite city that David conquered and called *Ir David* (City of David)...But Mazar always suspected that the palace was outside the original city, and cites the Bible to prove it..."

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