

The doctrine of the mandate in Scotland

In September 2014, less than 3 years ago, 2m Scots voted to stay in the UK, and just over 1.6m voted to leave. It was a convincing result. It was a once in a generation question, as the SNP agreed at the time.

Since then the SNP has never gathered anything like as many votes as the Independence campaign secured. The SNP managed 1.45 million in the General Election of 2015, and only 1.05 million in the 2016 Scottish Parliament elections. There is no evidence in either of those votes of more people deciding to back the SNP because they wanted to change their minds from the Independence referendum itself. It is difficult to see why the SNP argue their subsequent polling justifies asking the public again after such a short passage of time to re run the Independence referendum. It is interesting that since the referendum the SNP have not managed to get a significant number of their referendum supporters to back them again.

Mr Brown has decided to have another go at the argument over Independence and devolution, just as he did in 2014 and when in office. He labours under one simple misapprehension. Offering Scotland more and more devolved power he thinks will end the pressure for independence. The opposite seems to be the case. The more power the Scottish Parliament is given, the more the SNP demand. They were quick to dismiss his arguments yesterday when he blurted onto the airwaves. Mr Brown may believe it when he claims he saved the Union by getting Mr Cameron to offer yet more devolution. From my memory of the campaigns, it was the absence of good answers from the SNP to how the money would work out, and which currency they would be using, that helped persuade a majority to say No to the SNP offer. If every time the SNP demand more powers the Union Parliament grants them, you should expect the SNP to go on asking for more. It is also better than having to be accountable for exercising the powers they do have, as they can always try to claim that they need the extra powers to be able to achieve something.

There does not seem to be any amount of authority that leads to the SNP saying they will now get on with using the powers they have got for the betterment of Scotland.

Yunnan police seize 4 tonnes of drugs over past 5 years

Police in Xishuangbanna Dai Autonomous Prefecture in southwest China's Yunnan Province have busted 39 major cross-border drug-trafficking cases and seized

a total of four tonnes of drugs over the past five years.

Local police cracked 14 cross-border drug-trafficking rings and arrested 127 drug dealers, the public security bureau of the prefecture announced on Friday.

Xishuangbanna police have established good relationship with parties, governments and armed forces from neighboring countries, which contributed to the achievements.

Xishuangbanna, located in the south of Yunnan, is one of the Chinese border regions most affected by drug use, due to its proximity to the opium-growing Golden Triangle in Southeast Asia.

[Diabetes drug may help treat breast cancer](#)

Researchers in China have discovered that a drug used to treat diabetes could be effective against a form of deadly breast cancer.

More than 70,000 people die from breast cancer in China every year, according to the national cancer center.

Triple-negative breast cancer is particularly aggressive among the four clinical subtypes of breast cancer, said Dong Chenfang, a professor at Zhejiang University School of Medicine. It has a tendency to quickly spread or metastasize to the brain and lungs. There are currently no effective targeted therapies for this form of breast cancer, which is therefore often fatal, according to Dong.⁸ Dong and his colleagues found that the levels of a metabolic enzyme called AKR1B1 were significantly elevated in triple-negative breast cancer cells and that this was associated with increased rates of metastasis and shorter survival times.

The researchers also found epalrestat, a drug that inhibits AKR1B1 and is approved in Japan to treat diabetic complications, was able to block the growth and metastasis of the cancer cells.

Dong said the finding is still in the experimental stage. Whether epalrestat can be applied to the clinical treatment still needs further tests.

A detailed research article was published on March 7 in the Journal of Experimental Medicine.

Hong Kong's pandas say goodbye to public in mating season

In anticipation of the upcoming mating season of female giant panda Ying Ying and male giant panda Le Le, Giant Panda Adventure (GPA) of the Hong Kong Ocean Park is temporarily closed from Saturday until further notice, the park announced.

Suzanne Gendron, Executive Director of Zoological Operations and Education of the park, said both pandas have recently displayed oestrus behaviors such as water play and vocalizations by Ying Ying, whilst Le Le has shown increased sniffing of Ying Ying's scent.

In terms of physical and hormonal changes, the park's veterinary team and giant panda experts from the China Conservation and Research Center for the Giant Panda in Wolong confirmed that the two giant pandas are entering this year's breeding season, which, Gendron said, is considered an appropriate timing for the experts to prepare for Ying Ying's and Le Le's breeding season this year and temporarily close GPA.

This year, the closure period of GPA where Ying Ying and Le Le reside will be longer than previous years so that expert teams from Ocean Park and Wolong will be able to closely manage and monitor the pair's breeding behaviour from the moment they exhibit early signs of breeding to the time they hit the peak of their breeding cycle.

The gestation period for giant pandas can last from 72 to 324 days and pregnancy confirmation can only be detected by ultrasound scan earliest 14 days before birth.

Ying Ying and Le Le, who experienced their first mating season in 2011, are turning 12 years old this August.

GPA will be reopened to the public after Ying Ying successfully gives birth to a panda cub, or after she is confirmed non-pregnant, according to the park.

The Ocean Park, founded in 1977, is Hong Kong's unique home grown theme park and has gained recognition for its animal husbandry, research and relationship with the community.

H7N9 fatalities hit 13 in E China's

Jiangxi



Thirteen of the 37 people infected with H7N9 avian flu have died since January in east China's Jiangxi Province. [File photo]

Thirteen of the 37 people infected with H7N9 avian flu have died since January in east China's Jiangxi Province, the provincial health and family planning commission announced Saturday.

The province has stepped up monitoring of the epidemic as well as efforts to halt the operation of live poultry markets and carry out disinfection and quarantine to prevent infection.

The public are advised to avoid contact with dead and live poultry and to seek medical treatment in the event of any suspicious symptoms.

According to the National Health and Family Planning Commission, 79 people died nationwide in January from the virus.

H7N9 is a bird flu strain first reported to have infected humans in China in March 2013. Infections usually occur in winter and spring.