



**Island Trips
Whale Watching
Sport Fishing
Awesome Cocktails**



**Av. El Anclote
Punta de Mita
Nayarit
01(329)291-51-16**



**BRING THIS COUPON IN FOR 1 FREE
MARGARITA OR CERVEZA
(with purchase of food)**



GLOBAL NEWS TODAY

Volume Two, Issue Thirty-Seven

YES. EVERYDAY.

Saturday February 7, 2009

FDA OKs 1st drug from genetically altered animals

FDA OKs blood thinner made with milk from bio-engineered goats, approval is a first for US

Ricardo Alonso-Zaldivar and Matthew Perrone, WASHINGTON (AP) -- The Food and Drug Administration made history Friday as it approved the first drug made with materials from genetically engineered animals, clearing the way for a new class of medical therapies.

GTC Biotherapeutics said regulators cleared its drug ATryn, which is manufactured using milk from goats that have been scientifically altered to produce extra antithrombin, a protein that acts as a natural blood thinner.

The drug's approval may be the first step toward new kinds of medications made not from chemicals, but from animals altered by scientists. Similar drugs could be available in the next few years for a range of human ailments, including hemophilia.

The FDA cleared the drug to treat patients with a rare hereditary disorder that causes a deficiency of the protein, putting them at higher risk of deadly blood clots. The injectable treatment will be marketed in the U.S. by Deerfield, Ill.-based Ovation Pharmaceuticals

About 1 in 5,000 people don't produce enough antithrombin protein, according to Framingham, Mass.-based GTC. As a result, their blood is more likely to stick together, occasionally causing clots that can travel to the lungs or brain, causing death. Half of patients with the disorder experience their first life-threatening clot before age 25.

Pregnant women with the ailment are at higher risk of miscarriage or stillbirth, because of blood clots in the placenta.

Patients with hereditary anithrombin deficiency are currently prescribed conventional blood thinners, like Plavix from Bristol-Myers Squibb and Sanofi-Aventis. That will not change with the new approval. ATryn is only approved for use when patients are undergoing surgery or having a baby, times when the risk of dangerous clots is particularly high. Those patients would receive the drug by intravenous infusion for a limited time before and after their procedures.



To make the drug, scientists from GTC put modified DNA, or rDNA, for the human antithrombin protein into single-cell embryos of goats. Goat embryos with the gene were then inserted into the wombs of surrogate mothers who gave birth to baby goats that produce the protein-charged milk.

Genetically engineered, or GE, animals are not clones but rather animals that have had their DNA changed to produce a desirable characteristic.

"We looked carefully at seven generations of these GE goats," FDA Director for Veterinary Medicine Bernadette Dunham said in a statement. "All of them are healthy and haven't seen any adverse effects from the rDNA construct or its expression."

Amid growing questions about GE technology, the FDA last month issued guidelines on how it will regulate products made from the animals.

FDA said it will not allow any such products to be sold without first submitting them to scrutiny by independent advisers at a public meeting. The agency's panel of blood product experts recently concluded ATryn was safe and effective.

But consumer groups said the FDA's long-awaited policy will not require all genetically engineered foods to be labeled as such. And they said the government has not done enough to examine the potential impact of genetically engineered animals on the environment, particularly if some escape and begin to mate with animals in nature.

ATryn should be available for patients in the second quarter of this year, GTC said. The drug received European approval in 2006.

Shares of GTC Therapeutics fell 12 cents, or 14.6 percent, to close at 70 cents.

Top 10 romantic island inns

By Steve Millburg
(Coastal Living) -- Leave behind the mainland and sneak away to these heavenly hideaways

Petit St. Vincent, Grenadines

The fantasy: Your own sun-blessed, beach-fringed island in the Caribbean, with sailing, snorkeling and other pastimes available at your whim, and a staff to provide anything from meals to massages.

The reality: At Petit St. Vincent, it's the same as the fantasy. Twenty-two understatedly elegant stone cottages, overlooking the water and open to the breezes, scatter across this 113-acre island. With rates starting at \$675 a night, Petit St. Vincent qualifies as a splurge, but the price covers all activities and meals. Open November through August; 800/654-9326 or psvresort.com.

The Inn on Peaks Island, Maine

Rocky, rustic, small-town New England floats languidly in Casco Bay, two miles from downtown Portland. Summer brings visitors seeking art galleries, nature and relaxation. In winter, you can snuggle up at the inn and enjoy the muted clang of buoys in the bay and the sharp scent of a wood fire.

Six pleasantly furnished suites feature fireplaces, private decks and spa tubs. The Pub restaurant serves seafood and locally brewed beers year-round. A 20-minute ferry ride connects Peaks with the shopping, dining and nightlife of Portland. Prices range from \$175 to \$300; 207/766-5100 or innonpeaks.com.

The Inn at Mama's Fish House, Maui, Hawaii

The handful of cottages that make up this hideaway rest under coconut palms on Maui's North Shore, just off the scenic Hana Highway. "Old Polynesia" decor and a low-key atmosphere mark it as a throwback to an era when Hawaii meant tropical exoticism, not real-estate opportunities. Coastal Living: More on Maui

A short drive west takes you to the town of Paia. A short drive east reveals the bright sails of windsurfers swooping just off Hookipa Beach. And simply staying put ensures the pleasures of lounging on the sand in front of your cottage or savoring the seafood at Mama's Fish House Restaurant next door. Rooms from \$175; 800/860-4852 or mamasfishhouse.com.

The Collier Inn, Useppa Island, Florida

In the early 20th century, northern tycoons made Useppa their winter playground. Today, anyone can share its still-genteel lifestyle at the posh Collier Inn. Seven antiques-filled suites recall the pre-Depression boom years when ad exec and developer Barron Collier held sway over most of Southwest Florida, and gentlemen in white suits competed civilly at croquet.

FXDaily® - Daily table of currency exchange rates

Base Currency: Mexican Peso, MXP on Saturday, February 7, 2009

USD	14.3142	/ 0.07005
CAD	11.5742	/ 0.08669
GBP	21.015	/ 0.04773
EUR	18.3583	/ 0.05463
AUD	9.4462	/ 0.1062
NZD	7.4504	/ 0.1347

hotline@globalnews2day.com

GLOBAL NEWS TODAY

The 80-acre island, accessible only by water and explored mostly by golf cart, contains neither cars nor roads. The Pink Promenade, a pathway of shells and pink sand, winds past banyan trees and tropical flowers. Prices range from \$125 to \$395; 239/283-1061 or useppa.com.

Hotel del Coronado and Glorietta Bay Inn, Coronado Island, California

Technically Coronado is a peninsula, but it has been an island -- at least at high tide. And, true to island character, it feels like a place apart. The red-roof turrets and dormers of the 1888-vintage, beachfront Hotel del Coronado confirm it. Across the street, so does the Glorietta Bay Inn, which incorporates a 1908 Italian Renaissance mansion. Coastal Living: Southern California eateries

Rooms in The Del's rambling original building have more character, but the newer structures (especially the Beach Village cottages and villas) tend to offer nicer accommodations; 800/468-3533 or hoteldel.com. Rooms in the main resort range from \$255 to \$1,650; Beach Village accommodations range from \$450 to \$5,400. At the Glorietta, choose the mansion. Rooms start at \$185; 800/283-9383 or gloriettabayinn.com.

English Country Garden B&B, Cape Breton Island, Nova Scotia

Only the most spectacular scenery could draw tourists all the way to this remote Atlantic island on the eastern end of Nova Scotia. Cape Breton delivers; ask anyone who has ever driven the Cabot Trail along the coast of the ruggedly glorious Highlands.

Accommodations tend to be comfortable but rustic -- except at English Country Garden Bed & Breakfast (at Indian Brook), which opts for comfortable and luxurious. The four rooms include a tiny, se-

Mexico will sell power to Los Angeles

MEXICALI, Mexico, Feb. 6 (UPI) -- Mexico's Federal Electricity Commission signed an agreement with Los Angeles to allow Mexico's state-owned power company to sell electricity to the U.S. city.

Electricity will be generated at Mexico's Cerro Prieto geothermal power plant in Mexicali and then sold to the Los Angeles Department of Water & Power, according to the memorandum of understanding signed by Los Angeles Mayor Antonio Villaraigosa and Mexico's Federal Electricity Commission Chief Alfredo Elias Ayub.

How much power will be generated and sold was not disclosed.

Mexico's commission said it recently signed a similar deal with Belize and is close to finalizing another power sale agreement with Guatemala, bringing its foreign power sales to \$100 million by the end of 2010.

The Mexican utility said its goal is to "diversify the sources of electricity generation" and reduce emissions of pollutants and greenhouse gases.

Mexico's voodoo promo for soccer match gets sponsor

By PETER ORSI Associated Press

cluded log cottage with a porch overlooking a small lake. The breakfasts and the optional, reservation-only dinners are equally sumptuous. Rooms from \$120 Canadian (about \$98 US); 866/929-2721 or capebretongarden.com.

Casita de Maya, Cozumel, Mexico

Don't confuse it with Cancún, the party-hearty spring break destination a few miles north. The laid-back Caribbean island of Cozumel attracts scuba divers and snorkelers, beach bums and honeymooners who prefer quiet togetherness. Coastal Living: Mexico travel tips

Tucked away next to the airport, of all places (but away from the flight paths, so jet noise does not intrude), Casita de Maya provides the perfect headquarters for a getaway. The four rooms, beautifully appointed in earthy colors, open onto a pretty little courtyard with a pool. Owner Dan Komorowsky and his staff can answer any question about the island and arrange expeditions. They also know when to disappear and give guests time for themselves. Rates from \$59; 281/214-1122 or casitademaya.com.

MacKaye Harbor Inn, Lopez Island, Washington

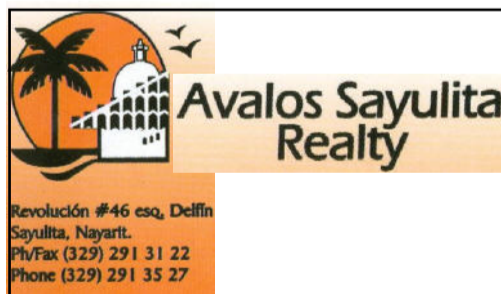
Like most out-of-the-way places, Lopez (north of Seattle in the San Juan Islands) attracts residents who want to do something different. As you meander the mostly flat roads, you'll encounter organic farmers and winemakers, cattle ranchers, artists and such establishments as the Love Dog Café and Vortex Juice Bar & Good Food.

MacKaye Harbor Inn, in a huge restored farmhouse near the south end of the island, lends guests mountain bikes to explore. Of course, you'll want to be back at the inn in time for evening chocolates

MEXICO

MEXICO CITY — After Radioshack dropped out, a Mexican newspaper has found a new U.S. corporate sponsor to help put a voodoo hex on the U.S. national soccer team — and end Mexico's decade-long losing streak.

Blockbuster stores in Mexico City began trading Record newspaper coupons for voodoo-doll likenesses of U.S. soccer players Friday. The back of the dolls' jersey reads, "Gringos." They should be used to wish for a Mexico goal during the World Cup qualifier Wednesday in Columbus, Ohio, according to the instructions.



Mexico has not beaten the Americans on U.S. soil in 10 years.

"Hold a needle firmly between your thumb and index finger and prick slowly the part of the doll where you want to affect the opponent," the instructions say.

and spectacular sunsets. Rooms from \$135; 888/314-6140 or mackayeharborinn.com.

A Water's Edge Retreat, Kelleys Island, Ohio

A 19th-century limestone industry left this Lake Erie island (off Sandusky) with a 21st century legacy of grand Victorian houses. You can't miss this bed-and-breakfast, with its bright coral-and-aqua exterior. Despite the punchy paint job, the rooms are traditional and refined.

Guest perks include onsite spa services and sailing trips on Lake Erie. Alas, the inn operates only April through October. But that does cover the summer tourist season, as well as the spring and fall, allowing a chance to catch sight of migrating raptors, waterfowl and songbirds. Rooms from \$199; 800/884-5143 or watersedgetretreat.com.

Jekyll Island Club Hotel, Jekyll Island, Georgia

You probably don't vacation with an entourage that requires a 25-room mansion, but a century ago you might have -- if you were a Rockefeller. In the late 1800s, America's business elite began gathering at Jekyll Island each year for winter vacation. Some stayed in the extravagant clubhouse; others built grand holiday homes nearby. Coastal Living: What to pack for coastal Georgia

The Jekyll Island Club Hotel now occupies the clubhouse and several other historic buildings, including a couple of the cottages, keeping up the standards splendidly. You can wander the 240-acre Millionaire's Village and envision yourself in the Gilded Age. And you can play golf and tennis, cruise around the island by bicycle, inhale the fresh salt air on the beach, and ride in a horse-drawn carriage. Rooms from \$149; 800/535-9547 or jekyllclub.com.

Electronics retailer RadioShack, of Forth Worth, Texas, dropped out as a distribution partner last week after learning details of the campaign. But Record merely had to go to Dallas to find another co-sponsor, DVD and video game rental chain Blockbuster Inc. A phone message left with the company's public relations office was not returned Friday.

But Record spokesman Daniel Paz said the promotion is lighthearted.

"In soccer, training and practice are what determine the results. The best team will win," he said. "But without any doubt, this little doll can help the good vibes of the Mexican fans to change the history of Mexico and turn things around."

Mexico fan Mauricio Munoz, picking up one of the Blockbuster dolls, said he doesn't believe black magic will have any effect on his team or the winless streak. "But in any case," he said, "it's a good way to have fun."

Whale shark sightings on rise in Gulf of Mexico

By JANET McCONNAUGHEY Associated Press Writer

It was such an unusual sight that the commercial fishing crew in the northern Gulf of Mexico took an hour out of their work day to count the whale sharks swimming around and even rubbing their sandpaper-like backs against the boat.

GLOBAL NEWS TODAY

The crew stopped at 44 to avoid double-counting the dark-bodied fish, some up to 50 feet long, opening and closing their wide mouths as they vacuumed in plankton, fish eggs or small fish southwest of Morgan City, La.

It was the largest sighting in a record year for a study of the world's largest fish that began in 2002 at the University of Southern Mississippi's Gulf Coast Research Laboratory in Ocean Springs, Miss.

As far as your eye could see in every direction, you just saw fish after fish after fish after fish," said David Wesley Underwood of Pensacola, Fla., a deckhand on his uncle's boat, the Norman B.

That pod, seen in June and reported Jan. 29 to USM scientists, was among 70 sightings of at least one whale shark during 2008 - by far the largest number for the project.

"We're getting the word out," said lead researcher Eric Hoffmayer. He depends on non-scientist spotters because the sharks are seen most frequently

where the water turns sharply from shallow to deep, and trips out there are expensive.

About two-thirds of the sightings have been within 100 miles of the Mississippi River's mouth.

Hoffmayer believes the sharks are attracted by plankton blooms fed by fertilizer and other nutrients in the river water - the same phenomenon that creates an oxygen-depleted dead zone closer inshore every summer.

Hoffmayer worries, however, that the sharks may be swallowing poison along with the plankton. "What about all the other chemicals that are being washed out with all this runoff?" he said.

Researchers plan to look into that. First, they need a handle on how many sharks are swimming around the northern Gulf, where they come from, and where they're going.

The one whale shark tagged last year in the northern Gulf was 260 miles south, in Mexican water, and more than a mile underwater, at 6,000 feet - probably the lowest the species has been recorded -

when the electronic tag popped off, Hoffmayer said.

Little is known about whale sharks, including where they go after they leave gathering places near Australia and Yucatan, or where they give birth to their pups.

Although they were added last year to the World Conservation Union's "red list" of threatened species, the Australian research indicates that - unlike most sharks, which are declining sharply - whale sharks appear to be increasing off Western Australia, said Jason Holmberg of Portland, Ore., information architect of the Ecocean Whale Shark Photo-identification Library.

They are a warm-water fish and all sightings in the Gulf of Mexico have been between April and November, with most from June through October - roughly corresponding to the seasonal heating of Gulf waters that feeds hurricanes.

It's possible the increased numbers around the river's mouth are just a fluke, because that's where most of the spotters are.

USA+CANADA

Alaska Senate: Palin's husband, staff in contempt

By ANNE SUTTON, Associated Press

JUNEAU, Alaska - The Alaska Senate on Friday found Gov. Sarah Palin's husband and nine state employees, including some of her top aides, in contempt for ignoring subpoenas to testify in the Legislature's Troopergate investigation.

The Senate said it would seek no punishment for the witnesses' failure to appear before the Senate Judiciary Committee last fall in an investigation into the governor's firing of her public safety commissioner, Walt Monegan.

"During the Monegan investigation, we were reminded that the legislative branch's power of subpoena is an important one, and must be respected by the executive branch," said Sen. Hollis French, D-Anchorage. "With this resolution, the Senate is making it clear that we are a coequal branch of state government."

The witnesses later provided sworn written statements after a lawsuit filed on behalf of seven of the state employees by state Attorney General Talis Colberg was dismissed in Superior Court. The case was appealed to the state Supreme Court.

The investigation was looking into whether Palin, assisted by aides and her husband, Todd, pressured Monegan to fire a state trooper - the ex-husband of Palin's sister - and then fired Monegan when he refused. Palin said Monegan was ousted over budget disagreements.

Attorney Thomas Van Flein, who represented Todd Palin, said there was no contempt because his client initially provided the proper objection to the subpoena and later complied with a written statement.

Van Flein said the Senate should have allowed witnesses an opportunity to state their case before issuing the resolution.

"They didn't allow any opportunity to present actual evidence and facts. It appears to be pure political grandstanding," he said.

Colberg was not immediately available for comment Friday. Palin's spokesman Bill McAllister said the governor had no comment.

French said the witnesses' decision to eventually provide written statements led to the Senate's decision not to impose any penalties. State statute provides for fines and a maximum of six months in jail for contempt of legislative subpoenas.

French said the resolution was meant to strike a balance and, in so doing, represented the Senate at its best. The lone dissenter in the 16-1 vote, Anchorage Republican Con Bunde, disagreed.

"We rehash an old issue and then decide to do nothing about it, I hope that's not our best," Bunde said.

Democrats and Republicans each have 10 seats in the state Senate, but it is led by a bipartisan coalition that includes all the Democrats and six of the Republicans.

Palin initially said she would cooperate fully in the legislative investigation but that changed after the matter became politically charged when she was named Republican presidential candidate John McCain's running mate.

Two separate investigations looked into the matter of Monegan's firing.

The legislative special counsel, Stephen Branchflower, found that Palin had abused her office but the firing was legal since Monegan was an at-will employee.

A subsequent investigation by the Alaska State Personnel Board found there was no probable cause to believe Palin or any other state official violated the Alaska Executive Ethics Act.

The 10 people cited in the resolution are Todd Palin; Sarah Palin's Chief of Staff Mike Nizich; Deputy Chief of Staff Randy Ruaro; special assistant Ivy Frye; Department of Administration Commissioner Annette Kreitzer; Department of Administration employees Dianne Kiesel, Nicki Neal and Brad Thompson; Kris Perry, the director of the Palin's Anchorage office; and the governor's scheduler, Janice Mason.

Whales serve as backdrop for aquarium yoga classes

From Doug Gross

CNN

ATLANTA, Georgia (CNN) -- There's the cobra, the cat and the downward-facing dog.

Now, the world's largest aquarium is introducing a new animal to complement those centuries-old yoga stances -- the beluga whale.

The Georgia Aquarium -- which with 80,000 animals and 8 million gallons of water is considered the biggest facility of its kind -- has begun offering yoga classes in front of the tank that holds its belugas, whose playful nature and graceful movements have made them a favorite of visitors since the aquarium opened in late 2005.

"The beluga whales are so slow and so smooth in their movements, which is indeed what this is about -- slow movements of the body," said Todd DeLaune, one of the instructors of the weekly sessions, which start Sunday. "And I think the energy of the belugas corresponds with the practice that we do."

The classes -- billed as the first of their kind -- are part of an ongoing effort the aquarium has made since its inception to keep things fresh and keep visitors coming back, even in tough economic times.

Home Depot co-founder Bernie Marcus, who bankrolled the aquarium almost entirely out of his own pocket, said in 2005 that attractions such as aquariums have a habit of starting strong but fading after a few years, something he was determined to avoid.

"We are trying to do something new all the time, so every time you come to the aquarium there's something new -- a new program, a new animal, a new exhibit," said spokesman Dave Santucci.

Santucci said the aquarium largely has weathered the dismal economy well, with a decrease in out-of-state and international visitors being offset by an increase in visitors who live within 100 miles and are forgoing long-distance trips themselves.

Children's classes will be offered at the same time as the adult ones. The cost is \$20 for aquarium members and \$35 for nonmembers, who also get a day pass to visit the rest of the aquarium.

At a recent preview class, student Stephanie Joluck said the atmosphere at the aquarium enhanced

GLOBAL NEWS TODAY

her practice of yoga, the physical and mental discipline believed to have originated in India as early as 3000 B.C.

"For me, it's a dream to be here in this calm space, to watch the whales," she said. "The music ... the lights -- everything is a dream."

Monet painting auctioned for £11m

Dans La Prairie, an oil painting by Claude Monet, has sold for more than £11m at a London auction, but fell short of its estimated price of £15m.

The image of his wife, Camille, reading in a field of wild flowers sold for £11,241,250, Christie's said.

The artist's La Promenade d'Argenteuil, which had been expected to fetch £5m, failed to find a buyer.

Paintings by Renoir and Matisse also failed to reach reserve prices in the sale of Impressionist and Modern art.

Sales fluctuations

Paul Gauguin's Les Dindons, Pont Aven, just managed to make its reserve of £2m.

But other works exceeded their estimates, including Modigliani's dual portrait Les deux filles which sold for £6.5m - more than £1m above expectations.

It was the first time that the painting had been put up for auction.

A Henry Moore sculpture, Reclining Mother and Child, also fetched more than the predicted £2m.

The auction was seen as a further test of the art market's health in difficult economic conditions.

Last November, a number of art sales in New York caused concern when several high profile works failed to sell.

Monet's Le Bassin Aux Nymphaes sold for more than £40m in June 2008.

Putin denies dancing to Abba hits

(BBC)

An Abba tribute band says it has performed a private concert for Russian Prime Minister Vladimir Putin.

Bjorn Again says it was paid £20,000 to play the gig 200 miles (320km) north of Moscow on 22 January.

Bjorn Again's manager Rod Stephen and other band members said Mr Putin danced to Abba hits and shouted "Bravo!"

The PM's spokesman denied the claim. Mr Putin - a former KGB spy who has a black belt in judo - is known in Russia and the West for his macho image.

'Paid by Kremlin'

It's no surprise that the swirling, languid movements of the aquarium's three belugas -- Nico, Maris and Natasha -- enhance the experience, said instructor Kimberly Hard.

EUROPE

Bjorn Again says that in January it was flown from London to Moscow and then driven north to a place on the shores of Lake Valdai.

The four member-group says Mr Putin and about seven other guests, including a woman, were present at the concert, but they sat on a sofa veiled by a curtain.

"It was the smallest audience we have ever performed to but Mr Putin was really enjoying it, shouting 'Bravo' and clapping with the others," Aileen McLaughlin, who performs as Abba's blonde Agnetha Faltskog, was quoted as saying by the Times newspaper.

"He [Putin] was dancing along in his seat to Super Trouper and raised his hands in the air during Mamma Mia when we asked the audience to," she said.

Bjorn Again says it performed 15 Abba songs during the private gig, claiming that it was paid by the Kremlin.

Mr Putin's spokesman Dmitry Peskov denied that the prime minister attended any such concert.

Russian President Dmitry Medvedev, who succeeded Mr Putin last May, is a well-known fan of British band Deep Purple.

Last year, Mr Medvedev attended a concert by the British rockers to mark the 15th anniversary of the founding of Gazprom.

Italian right-to-die move blocked

Italy's government has issued an emergency decree to prevent a woman who has been in a coma for 17 years from having her feeding tubes disconnected.

Last year the father of Eluana Englaro won a court battle allowing the hospital to let her die. The centre-right government opposed the move.

The new decree says food and water cannot be denied to a patient.

It was approved despite objections from Italy's president. The case has provoked fierce debate in the country.

Ms Englaro, 38, has been in a persistent vegetative state since a car crash in 1992.

Her father has been battling with the courts in Italy to let her die since 1999, insisting it was her wish.

Direct conflict

In November, Italy's highest court ruled that she had expressed a preference for dying over being kept alive artificially. On Tuesday she was transferred to a private geriatric clinic in the northern city of Udine, where doctors had agreed to disconnect her feeding tubes.

But Friday's decree states that feeding "can in no circumstances be refused".

"The first time I came to the aquarium, I was impressed by the animals and the landscape," she said. "One has always known that the ocean generates peace and calm."

Prime Minister Silvio Berlusconi said: "Urgent government intervention is needed because this morning they began the non-provision of food and water to the person."

The BBC's Duncan Kennedy in Rome says the case puts Mr Berlusconi in direct conflict with the courts and President Giorgio Napolitano.

The prime minister said if the president persisted in refusing to sign the decree, an emergency session of parliament would enact a new law.

Although opinion polls in Italy show the public is split over this case, the government now appears to have decided to adopt the position taken by the Catholic Church, our correspondent adds.

Senior Vatican officials have, in recent months, described attempts to stop feeding Ms Englaro as euthanasia. One cardinal said it amounted to murder.

On Sunday, Pope Benedict XVI added his voice to the debate about euthanasia, calling it a "false solution" to the tragedy of suffering.

and that doctors could stop feeding her.

Monasteries offer taster weekends

Religious orders in Britain are giving people the chance to "try out" becoming a nun or a monk for a weekend.

The Roman Catholic church is hoping to slow a decline in people choosing monastic life by arranging the weekends at Worth Abbey in West Sussex.

In 2007, Catholic orders had just 29 novices in England and Wales, compared to 217 in 1982.

Both men and women can attend the weekend, during which they pray five times a day and eat meals in silence.

The weekends at the abbey do not have a specific cost, although donations are accepted.

The rooms are designed to look like the monks' quarters and visitors are expected to follow the rhythm of their daily life.

This means rising at dawn, eating in silence while listening to a reading and walking to the church for prayers five times a day.

Ric Slatter, a media graduate, said the weekends would help him decide if the priesthood was right for him.

"It's far easier to come on this try-before-you-buy, no-strings-attached event, than to knock on the doors of a monastery and say 'I think I might want to join'," he said.

"For a long time the celibacy thing was one of the biggest things in my head, like 'could I actually do that'. But the input we've had has helped to say 'well actually, if that was what I was meant to be doing then yes, I could'."

WORLD NEWS

Pakistan nuclear scientist 'free'

A court in Pakistan has freed disgraced nuclear scientist Abdul Qadeer Khan from house arrest.

Dr Khan, who has been under tight restrictions since 2004, can now leave home and receive visitors.

Dr Khan welcomed the ruling and said he was not bothered what the international community thought of his release.

The US has described the move as "unfortunate", with Secretary of State Hillary Clinton saying she was "very much concerned" by Dr Khan's release.

Dr Khan admitted transferring nuclear secrets to other countries in 2004 but was later pardoned by former Pakistani President Pervez Musharraf.

The US has repeatedly said it wants to question Dr Khan, but Pakistan has always refused access.

'Free citizen'

A jubilant AQ Khan told journalists shortly after the court order was announced: "There are no winners, no losers. I think it has been a good judgment at least I have got some [of] my freedom."

When asked about what the international community would think, he said: "Let them talk. Are they happy with our God? Are they happy with our Prophet? Are they happy with our leaders? Never, so why should we bother what they say about us?"

He added: "I would be more worried about what you (Pakistani journalists) say about me, not what Bush says or what Dick Cheney says. I don't damn care."

Dr Khan must still give 48 hours' notice if he wants to leave Islamabad but he said on Friday that he had no plans to go abroad or to go into politics.

Dr Khan, the former head of Pakistan's nuclear programme, said he would use his freedom to concentrate on educational projects.

He added: "All this has happened because of the keen interest taken by the president, the prime minister and especially [Interior Minister] Rehman Malik, who has looked into the case, reviewed it, discussed it with the government, discussed it with the concerned authorities."

Dr Khan's wife said she would wait to see how and whether the court's judgement was executed.

Over the past year, the government has eased some of the restrictions on Dr Khan. It says those that remain are for his own security.

The BBC's Barbara Plett in Islamabad says that despite Friday's ruling Dr Khan's proliferation activities still arouse international concern, although Pakistan regards the case as closed.

US State Department spokesman Gordon Duguid, speaking on Friday, said Dr Khan remained "a serious proliferation risk".

"The support that Khan and his associates provided to Iran and North Korea has had a harmful impact on... international security and will for years to come," he said.

In January, the US imposed sanctions on people and companies linked to Dr Khan.

Last July, Dr Khan told the media that Pakistan had transported uranium enrichment equipment to North Korea in 2000 with the full knowledge of the country's army, then headed by Gen Musharraf.

The former leader has repeatedly stated that no-one apart from Dr Khan had any knowledge of the transportation of nuclear technology.

Dr Khan is seen as the father of Pakistan's nuclear industry and is still regarded a hero by many in the country.

How do you pay a pirate's ransom?

**By Robyn Hunter
BBC News**

Pirates in Somalia are making a fortune by hijacking ships and demanding ransoms to set them and their crews free - one official estimates the total this year to be around \$150m.

There are conflicting reports about how much they want for the Saudi oil tanker they seized last month, the Sirius Star, and its cargo of two million barrels of oil, but how do you negotiate and deliver a pirate ransom in the 21st Century?

From what can be gleaned - how the negotiations run their course and how the ransoms are paid - what goes on would be worthy of a Hollywood action movie script.

"No matter what process is taken, they always go through a middleman," advises BBC Somali service analyst Said Musa. "And trust is at the heart of everything."

Fahid Hassan, who has experience of the negotiations, says that after boarding the ship, the first step for the pirates is to make contact with its owners.

"All the important documents are there on the ship, so the pirates can know easily all the information they need," he says.

"The talks are by telephone, mostly satellite phone but sometimes even SMS/text messages are sent. The pirates do not negotiate themselves. They hire someone and often this person is a relative; someone they can trust."

"For the Sirius Star, there are two negotiators. Sometimes they are on the ship, sometimes they are in town. The negotiator must work and work and work to get the money which is a very difficult job. It is very difficult to please the owner and please the pirates," he adds.

"But once the money is delivered the negotiator gets a share, the same as a pirate. Everyone on the ship gets an equal share."

Mr Hassan says that in the past, the ransom was delivered by money transfer, but that now owners hire a third party to hand over the money directly.

"They come onto the ship or the pirates get onto their boat for the handover of the bags of cash," he says.

"The men who bring the money then go; they leave the ship to let the pirates count and check. Some of the pirates have counting machines and also machines to detect fake notes."

Roger Middleton, a Horn of Africa specialist at the Chatham House, says the ship-owners hire professionals, from specialist negotiators to private security firms, to transfer the ransoms.

"They are mostly ex-SAS and British or Australian. A lot are also South African," he says.

Not much more is known for certain, however, as it is an unwritten rule among members of such firms that there are no kiss-and-tell stories.

Understandably, those involved are also aware of the needs of their clients and the strict demand for secrecy with people's lives being at stake.

However, Mr Middleton says that such operations cost about \$1m, not including the ransom.

"The professional negotiators, acting on behalf of the ship owners, get about \$100,000 for their services and the lawyers receive a fee of about \$300,000 for ensuring that the shipping companies are not putting themselves in any dubious positions," he explains.

Regarding what goes on behind closed doors, be it the negotiations and the legal and insurance matters as a result of these hijackings, Mr Middleton says it would be fair to say that, "most of it happens in London," he adds.

Gavin Simmonds, head of international affairs at the British Chamber of Shipping, agrees this assumption is "highly likely" as London is the centre of the global maritime industry.

"It seems perfectly plausible that the actual facilitation of ransom money is being done by London-based insurers," he says.

However, Mr Simmonds says he has also heard rumours that some exchanges have taken place in Dubai.

Bags of cash

The pirates ask that the ransom is all in used dollar bills - normally \$50 or \$100 notes - according to those with experience of such negotiations.

Kenyan sailor Athman Said Mangore, who was held captive for more than 120 days by Somali pirates, says they are known to make many demands and put in place a number of restrictions.

"They sometimes say they want \$208,000 exactly in \$100 bills only," he says.

"I don't know why they make those demands. They usually also don't like dollar bills that were printed in 2000 or the years before. If it was printed in 1999, they say: 'This is not fit to be used in our shop'," he adds.

Once the ship's owners have sourced cash, a private security firm takes over.

They then hire a tug boat, often from the Kenyan port of Mombasa, which they take further north up the coast towards Somali waters.

The security personnel then board the boat with the bags of cash and enough weaponry to keep it safe.

When the ransom has been paid, the pirates are left to count the money and are allowed to leave the vessel freely.

"The navies in the Somali waters of course must have a pretty good idea of what goes on, as they have spy drones and they are watching the hijacked vessels," Mr Middleton says.

"Whether there's any coordination between the ransom payers and the navies is unknown." The BBC's Joseph Odhiambo in Mombasa says that on

at least two prior occasions the ransom money was delivered to the hijacked vessels via air-drops.

He also says that other payments were flown from Wilson Airport in the Kenyan capital, Nairobi, into Somalia on cargo planes transporting the stimulant, khat. No-one knows how long it will be until the Sirius Star is set free, but it is fair to say the ransom

negotiations will be both complicated and delicate, with its cargo believed to be worth \$100m.

And the families of its 25 crew members, who are being held hostage, will be hoping that the pirates stay true to their word that they have no intention of harming them.

SAYULITA

DONATIONS NEEDED TO PAINT THE BERTHA VON GLUMEER PRESCHOOL

PLEASE BRING DONATIONS TO
CHOCOBANANA Restaurant in the Plaza

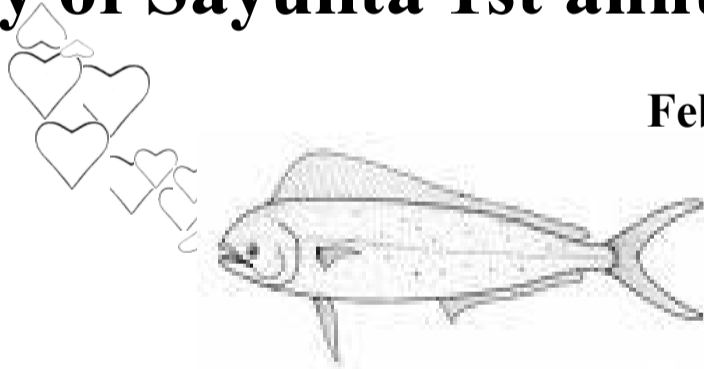
OR CALL
TEL # 322-157-3058

I♥FISHING

Dia St. Valentine

City of Sayulita 1st annual

Febrero 14, 2009



Dorado Grande Fishing Tournament

6 A.M. SHOTGUN START FROM SAYULITA
2 P.M. WEIGH IN

ENTER NOW

CONTACT NOE TO REGISTER 329 291 3887/ 322 42 93256

CASH PRIZE

BIGGEST DORADO WINS JACK POT
2500 PESO ENTRY FEE PER PONGA

PARTY TO FOLLOW ON THE PLAYA

hotline@globalnews2day.com

