



Top Stories

Iran says it may withdraw from Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty

In a letter to the United Nations, Iran's Parliament said it may have to withdraw from the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty if pressure against Iran escalates. United Nations Secretary General Kofi Annan still urges Iran and the United States to hold direct talks.

Tension in central Athens during anti-war rally

Fierce clashes between anarchist demonstrators and greek police took place in the centre of Athens, Greece, during the anti-war demonstration of the 4th European Social Forum. Riot police used tear gas, while a branch of a greek bank, a fast-food store and around 50 shop windows in central Athens were damaged.

Featured story

Rhode Island congressman Patrick Kennedy involved in car accident near U.S. Capitol

U.S. Representative Patrick J. Kennedy (D-RI) was involved in a traffic accident near the U.S. Capitol in Washington, D.C. at about 2:45 a.m. (EDT) yesterday morning. A police report was filed and it is unknown if Kennedy was arrested.

Wikipedia Current Events

- Gardaí (Irish Police) open fire in Dublin to stop a stolen bus smashing through cars on the wrong side of a motorway. The driver, a disgruntled bus company worker, kills 1 woman, injures 13 and tries to run over the manager of the bus company before crashing the bus.
- United States President George W. Bush announces his support for closing Guantanamo Bay detention center.
- Iranian President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad threatens to pull Iran out of the Nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty if the United States and the EU 3 do not accept Iran's nuclear program.
- Veteran Australian journalist Richard Carleton, 62, dies while reporting the Beaconsfield mine collapse in Tasmania.
- Arsenal F.C. play their last game at Highbury, or Arsenal Stadium. They had been playing there for 93 years.

UK Government report into UFOs

A report by the Ministry of Defence investigating the possible existence of Unidentified Flying Objects (UFOs) was released today. The report was confidentially published in 2000 and has come to light after Dr David Clarke of Sheffield Hallam University requested it citing the Freedom of Information Act.

The report concludes that "no evidence exists to suggest that the phenomena seen are hostile or under any type of control, other than that of natural physical forces ... There is no evidence that 'solid' objects exist which could cause a collision hazard".

Explanations such as meteors and the aurora borealis effect are accredited as the cause of most, if not all, UFO sightings.

March against new French copyright law

Paris, France - 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. According to EUCD.info, a watchdog group fighting developments of the EU Copyright Directive, more than 160,000 people signed the anti-DADVSI petition.



Deputy Martine Billard

The protest, uniting elected officials, representatives from

computing and Internet organisations, political groups, and simple citizens, walked in a festive and peaceful atmosphere from the Place de la Bastille (site of the former royal prison) to the Ministry of Culture. It was sponsored by a variety of organisations, including the Association of Audionautes, various free software and Linux user groups, the French Communist Party and its young adult affiliate organisation, the youngs of the French Socialist Party, the youngs of the centrist Union for French Democracy, the young Greens.



Demonstrators march in opposition

The DADVSI law, among other issues, enacts an extensive protection of copyrighted content online and a protection of digital rights management techniques, including civil and criminal penalties for help in circumventing them. Opponents contend that the bill, depending on how it is amended in the French Senate, could in effect criminalise the writing of players compatible with new online distribution formats for music, video or even text, and thus make such content unplayable on systems such as Linux, thereby generating a monopoly for established suppliers.

The bill is due to be examined in the Senate this week. Then, under the fast track procedure requested by the government, it may be signed into law by president

Jacques Chirac after a mixed commission merges the text from the Senate and the lower house of Parliament, the National Assembly. Opponents have already indicated they would mount a constitutional challenge before the Constitutional Council. The bill, when it was examined by the National Assembly, proved divisive; the ruling UMP party was split on the issue, some even sponsoring a "legal licence" which would enable French Internet users to copy copyrighted content legally, provided they would pay a flat fee which would be split between the rights holder.

Protesters, as well as deputies from all parties, contend that the bill's passage was influenced by major lobbies. Some amendments were nicknamed Vivendi Universal, from the name of a major record company that allegedly suggested it. Protesters recalled that Minister of Culture Renaud Donnedieu de Vabres was convicted of money laundering in 2004.

Michael Schumacher takes away another first place from Fernando Alonso

This weekend a fifth in this season Formula-1 Gran Prix of Europe took place in Germany, Nürburgring track. Unlike in the previous race, this time, Michael Schumacher was only second after the classification on Saturday, losing the pole-position to Fernando Alonso, first Renault pilot. However, in the last part of the race, "Schumi" outstayed Alonso on the track and have the lead owing to some fast laps with the track free of traffic. The "Red Baron" passed the checked flag and won the race 86-th time in his Formula-1 career.

In spite of the second defeat,

Fernando Alonso stands in the lead of the drivers championship, 13 points ahead his closest competitor, Michael Schumacher.

Felipe Massa, the second Ferrari driver, was third. This achievement is the first victory in his Formula-1 career.

Kimi Räikkönen, as in the previous season, is achieving a good pace from race to race. Kimi pushes Massa pretty well on the last laps and closed the gap to a +0.4 seconds when they crossed the finish line.

Nico Rosberg, the "discovery of the season", made a nice race for BMW Sauber Formula-1 stable. He finished 7-th.

1 dead, 13 injured in Dublin bus pursuit

One person is dead and 13 others, including 5 members of the Garda Síochána, Irelands police force, are injured following the pursuit of a stolen bus throughout the south of Dublin city and county.

The coach was stolen from the yard of private hire operator Dualway by a driver who was not authorised to take the vehicle early in the morning of May 7. It was later located at Dublin Heuston railway station by the coach company, where the driver attempted to run over the son of the owner of Dualway.

The driver then returned to the Dualway depot in Rathcoole in what developed in to a high speed pursuit involving up to 20 patrol cars and a police helicopter. The Gardaí fired several shots at the driver's tyres in an attempt to stop the car, as well as laying tacks. The bus was driven down the wrong side of the N7 Naas road,

where it collided with a number of cars, killing a female driver, and rammed five Garda patrol cars which were blocking the road. The driver was apprehended and arrested at the Dualway depot after crashing the bus.

Sections of the N7 as well as surrounding roads were closed following the incident for forensic examinations, and the Luas tram services were severly curtailed.

Iran says it may withdraw from Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty

In a letter to the United Nations, Iran's Parliament has said it may have to withdraw from the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty if pressure to end its nuclear program escalates.

The letter to UN Secretary General Kofi Annan stated that if the issues with Iran's nuclear program are not settled by peaceful methods, then "there will be no option for the parliament but to ask the government to withdraw its signature."

"Should the UN secretary general and Security Council members not fulfill their crucial duties in settling arguments, there will be no choice for the Majlis but to demand the government withdraw the ratification of the additional protocol and put on its agenda a review of Article 10 of the NPT," said the letter, signed by at least 160 deputies.

In the Non-Proliferation Treaty, Article 10 states that a country can withdraw its signatories from the treaty if the interests of the country has been compromised. In 2003, North Korea withdrew from the treaty for the same reason.

"We will not accept any resolution that is against our rights. Any action by the Security Council will have a negative influence on our cooperation with the agency. The involvement of the Security Council will direct the path of cooperation towards confrontation. It's obvious that the Security Council should not take any action that it is not capable of dealing with later because we will not refrain from our rights," said Iran's Foreign Ministry spokesman, Hamid Reza Asefi in a press conference on Sunday.

"Suspension and pause is not on the agenda at all, and the Security Council should not do something that will get it into trouble later on," and "intervention by the Security Council in this issue is completely illegal," added Asefi.

United Nations Secretary General Kofi Annan still urges Iran and the United States to hold direct talks.

"If everybody - all stakeholders and key players - were around the table, I think it would be possible to work out a package that would satisfy the concerns of everybody. Should they (Iran) be offered a diplomatic package allowing them to pursue nuclear energy for peaceful ends, and they resist that, how do they explain it to the world?", said Annan.

However; Asefi said that Iran will not talk with the United States "one-on-one" about its nuclear program.

"The U.S. isn't prepared to have talks on a one-to-one equal basis. They are following the politics of threat. So under these conditions we see no necessity to start talks with them," said Asefi.

The treaty was opened for

signatures in 1968 and in 1970 entered into force. There are 187 signatures on the treaty.

Human Rights Watch implicates 600+ in war prisoner abuse

A human rights project, The Detainee Abuse and Accountability Project (DAA), released a report in Washington saying that allegations of detainee abuse, torture and killings have now implicated at least 600 U.S. military and civilian personnel deployed in Iraq and Afghanistan, as well as the prison for terrorist suspects in Guantanamo Bay, Cuba. The project is a cooperation between New York University's Center for Human Rights and Global Justice, Human Rights Watch and Human Rights First.

The human rights groups say they analyzed thousands of pages of government documents and conducted interviews with witnesses and prisoners who say they were abused by U.S. troops.

"Over 95 percent of those implicated were military personnel," said Hina Shamsi, a senior counsel for the group Human Rights First. "The remainder were from the CIA or other intelligence agencies or were civilian contractors working either for the military or the CIA. The cases involve over 1,000 acts of abuse, including homicide, assault, cruelty, maltreatment, maiming and sexual abuse."

"We found that abuses were pervasive, extending far beyond Abu Ghraib and that investigations have been incomplete and delayed, which has left a general failure of accountability," she said.

In the two years since the Abu

Ghraib scandal surfaced, the human rights groups say 40 people have been sentenced to serve time in prison. Of those, 10 have been sentenced to a year or more in detention.

Lieutenant Commander Jeffrey Gordon, a press officer at the Department of Defense, told VOA the allegations outlined by the human rights groups "are false."

Commander Gordon says the military has conducted more than 600 criminal investigations resulting in charges against 251 soldiers who faced courts-martial, the military's equivalent of criminal trials, or administrative punishment.

Commander Gordon says all allegations of abuse are taken seriously, people were held accountable, and the military's system of justice does work.

The information from the human rights groups comes at same time as the news that a U.S. Army lieutenant colonel is expected to be charged in connection with the abuse of detainees at the Abu Ghraib prison in Iraq.

"Two years ago, U.S. officials said the abuses at Abu Ghraib were aberrations and that people who abused detainees would be brought to justice," said the faculty director of the Center for Human Rights and Global Justice at NYU Law School, Professor Meg Satterthwaite. "Yet our research shows that detainee abuses were widespread, and few people have truly been brought to justice."

A detainee in outdoor solitary confinement cell talks with a military policeman at Abu Ghraib prison on outskirts of Baghdad (file photo - June 22, 2004) Two

years after the Abu Ghraib scandal caused a worldwide uproar, reports say Lieutenant Colonel Steven Jordan will become the highest-ranking officer to be charged in the case.

Colonel Jordan's attorney says he expects his client will be charged within the next few days on several counts, including dereliction of duty, conduct unbecoming an officer and lying to investigators.

The colonel led the Joint Interrogation and Debriefing Center at Abu Ghraib between September and December 2003.

Military investigations determined that Colonel Jordan, who was trained as a civil affairs officer, had no experience with interrogating prisoners and failed to properly supervise soldiers under his command.

Iraqis celebrate deaths of British troops

A British military helicopter crashed in Basra on Saturday killing four crew members. Local Iraqis filled the surrounding streets celebrating the crash before a clash occurred with British troops upon their arrival.

"We can confirm it was a British military helicopter that has crashed and an investigation is ongoing," a British military spokesman in London said.

An AFP reporter on the scene heard from a local policeman that the helicopter was hit by a rocket fired by local militia.

According to Basra police spokesman Lieut. Colonel Kareem al-Zaidi, "a multinational forces helicopter was hit by a rocket and

went down on houses in central Basra". He also added that fire-fighters later found the four British crew members charred in the wreckage and that no casualties on the ground resulted from the impact.

Earlier, an AFP journalist sighted the downed British military helicopter and reported he saw two burnt crew members after the impact which caused the helicopter to burst into flames.

After the crash, it is reported that hundreds of people from the local area, many of them youths, celebrated the helicopter's downing in the streets surrounding the crash.

On the arrival of British troops at the scene, including two tanks and one land-rover, the crowd allegedly attacked the British forces with rocks, debris and petrol bombs.

A British spokeswoman, Capt. Kelly Goodall, said British soldiers who responded came "under attack by a variety of weapons, including small arms fire, petrol bombs, as well as blast bombs and stone."

British soldiers used foam to extinguish their vehicles, escaping un-injured.

Members of the crowd allegedly shouted slogans such as "victory for the Mehdi Army!" and "we are all soldiers of al-Sayed" in support of local militants lead by Shi'ite Muslim cleric Moqtada al-Sadr.

During the conflict, An AFP photographer was shot and wounded in the leg by a rubber-coated bullet. Contrary to reports from the British defence department, the journalist said

that British soldiers raised their rifles and shot one man dead and also later shot the driver of a car in a local street dead.

As conflict was escalated, British and Shi'ite gunmen exchanged fire which resulted in the addition deaths of four Iraqis including two children. An estimated 30 civilians were reportedly injured in the melee.

An Iraqi policeman in Basra said the helicopter was downed by a rocket and said four Iraqi civilians, including two children, were killed and another 19 wounded in the fighting.

Military forces later cordoned off the scene and imposed a curfew on the surrounding area in Basra.

Sudan will welcome UN Peacekeepers in Darfur

Sudan Government has expressed that Darfur Peace Accord with main rebel group, Sudan Liberation Army, led by Minni Menawi, can overturn the previous rejection of UN Peacekeepers. So far, only African Union Peacekeepers were allowed in Darfur.

"The Sudan government will be open for any assistance," Bakri Mulah, secretary-general for external affairs in Sudan's Information Ministry, said in Khartoum, Sudan.

In New York, John Bolton, the US ambassador, on Saturday welcomed Khartoum's new willingness to accept a UN peacekeeping force to take over from AU soldiers in Darfur region. He cited the Sudanese government representatives' comments to indicate they were now willing to accept the UN force.

He said, " We view this as a very encouraging sign, the first positive outcome from the Abuja peace agreement. "

In the meantime, top UN humanitarian official Jan Egeland has arrived in Sudan to review the situation in the Darfur region. He is expected to visit southern Darfur, where fighting has broken out recently. It is the first visit by a UN official to the region since the peace deal was signed.

He said that access for aid workers in Darfur was at its worst level in two years. "At the moment Darfur is slowly being strangled, it's dying in front of us, half of the population now has become war victims...so I believe, yes, we are turning the corner, but the whole world has to put pressure on the parties."" said Mr Egeland, the UN's Emergency Relief Co-ordinator.

Earlier, UN Secretary General Kofi Annan requested Khartoum to issue visas to his team of assessors so they could plan for the deployment of an international peacekeeping force to replace the 7,000 African Union troops later in the year. The AU troops, now running out of funds, had largely been ineffective in stopping atrocities, leaving millions to struggle in camps with little food or water. While details for a UN peacekeeping force are finalised, the US diplomat said the US had asked Rwanda to send in some 1,200 troops to supplement the AU forces.

In a recent development, a Spanish United Nations Aid worker was shot in Chad, by an unknown assailant. She is working in the eastern part of Chad to assist the refugees from Darfur region. 2,00,000 refugees have crossed

the border to escape from the violence in Darfur. She is in critical condition.

PAP returned to power in 2006 Parliamentary Elections, Singapore

The incumbent People's Action Party (PAP) has retained its power in the Singapore parliament after getting 66.6% of the valid votes. It maintained 82 of the available 84 seats after securing 45 of the 47 contested seat, together with 37 of the seats that it won on Nomination Day on 26th April through walkovers. The opposition parties Singapore Democratic Alliance (SDA) and Workers' Party (WP) also retained one seat each.

Despite having more seats contested in this election compared to the 2001 General Elections, the breakdown of seats remains unchanged from the previous election. However, the PAP only won a reduced majority, having only 66.6% of the valid votes compared to the 75% that it won in the previous election because of the spectre of terrorism and a poor economy then.

The PAP took all 7 contested Group Representation Constituencies (GRC) in Ang Mo Kio, Aljunied, East Coast, Jalan Besar, Tampines, Pasir Ris-Punggol and Sembawang, making up 38 of the seats. It also took seven of nine of the single seats in Bukit Panjang, Chua Chu Kang, Joo Chiat, MacPherson, Nee Soon Central, Nee Soon East and Yio Chu Kang.

Among the opposition parties, the WP had the best showing, taking 16.34% of the valid votes, which is an improvement over the 2.7% that in received in the previous

election. In the Hougang ward, the incumbent Low Thia Kiang of the WP took 13,987 (62.74%) of the votes, defeating Eric Low Siak Meng of the PAP who only managed 8,306 (37.26%) of the votes while the remaining 277 votes were voided. The opposition win in Hougang is a big disappointment for PAP which had dangled a carrot of some S\$100 million in housing upgrading grants.

Despite losing all of its GRC contests, its best performance was in the controversial and hotly-contested Aljunied, where it took 43.9% of the votes against George Yeo's PAP team who won 56.08% of the votes. Just a few days before, James Gomez of the WP was heavily criticised by the PAP for a non-submission of a certificate proving of his status as a minority. It then became a heavily debated issue in the campaigning until the PAP decided that it should move on to more important issues. Opposition position poster girl Sylvia Lim of the WP Aljunied team seems to be the most likely to be appointed as a Non-Constituency Member of Parliament (NCMP) as she got the highest non-winning number of votes.

Chiam See Tong of the SDA beat PAP's Sitoh Yih Pin in the Potong Pasir ward with a margin of 8,242 (55.84%) over 6,518 (44.16%) votes. The remaining 186 of the votes were voided. This is an improvement over the previous election where he only won 52.4% of the votes. However, they did not manage to win any other seats. They received more than 30 percent votes for the seats that they did not win.

Contrary to the performance of the other opposition parties, the

Singapore Democratic Party (SDP) performed poorly in this election compared to the previous election. It lost all the 7 seats that it contested and only received 4.06% of the valid votes compared to 8.1% in 2001. It blamed it on the ban of political podcasts. It also alleged that the media waged a relentless campaign against it and that the lawsuit against it by the PAP prevented it from raising the issue involving the National Kidney Foundation scandal.

Australian Veteran Nine Network Reporter Dies

During a live press interview broadcast at the Beaconsfield Gold Mine on the Seven and Nine Networks Veteran 60 Minutes news reporter Richard Carleton suffered a suspected heart attack.

Other reporters witnessed Carleton going red in the face, walking a short distance then collapsing to the ground.

A few minutes earlier Carleton asked Beaconsfield Mine Manager Matthew Gill about the safety of the mine.

Ambulance officers worked to revive Carleton for over 25 minutes, before he was rushed to hospital. He was pronounced dead upon arrival at Launceston hospital.

Carleton had a history of heart problems which has included a heart attack in 2003 and a bypass operation in 1988. He was also diagnosed with prostate cancer in early 2005.

Today in History

May 8: Victory in Europe Day

1429: Siege of Orléans: French troops led by Joan of Arc lifted the English siege and turned the tide of the Hundred Years' War.

1541: The expedition led by Spanish conquistador Hernando de Soto reached the Mississippi River.

1794: French chemist and economist Antoine Lavoisier, a former royal tax collector with the Ferme Générale, was tried, convicted, and guillotined on the same day during the Reign of Terror.

1902: The volcanic eruption of Mount Pelée destroyed the town of St. Pierre, Martinique, killing over 30,000 people.

1945: Most armed forces under German control ceased active operations by 23:01 hours CET at the end of World War II in Europe, in accordance with the capitulation documents signed the day before.

Quote of the Day

From Wikiquote

"While in the physical sciences the investigator will be able to measure what, on the basis of a prima facie theory, he thinks important, in the social sciences often that is treated as important which happens to be accessible to measurement. This is sometimes carried to the point where it is demanded that our theories must be formulated in such terms that they refer only to measurable magnitudes."

- Friedrich Hayek

Word of the Day

From Wiktionary

unfettered; adj

Definition: "Not bound by chains or shackles."

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