



Top Stories

U.S. Senate defeats bill banning gay marriage

In a 49 to 48 vote on cloture, far short of the required 60, the United States Senate has effectively blocked the proposal to amend the Constitution to ban same-sex marriage.

Australian PM announces nuclear taskforce

Australian Prime Minister, John Howard announced on Tuesday that he will be setting up a "Prime Ministerial taskforce" to investigate uranium mining, processing and nuclear energy in Australia.

Featured story

Researchers discover giant asteroid impact crater in Antarctica

Researchers have found a giant asteroid impact crater under the Wilkes Land ice sheet of Antarctica and it may have been responsible for the creation of the dinosaurs, but may also have been the cause of a mass extinction.

Wikipedia Current Events

- It was officially announced that the an American Bald Eagle was born in Germany in Saxony-Anhalt in a zoo in Magdeburg, the first time that a Bald Eagle has been born outside North America. The bird was born on May 3, 2006.
- Swiss investigator Dick Marty

Wikipedia Current Events

concludes that there are "serious indications" that the CIA operated secret prisons for suspected al-Qaeda leaders in Poland and Romania, adding that "authorities in several European countries actively participated with the CIA in these unlawful activities. Other countries ignored them knowingly, or did not want to know."

Two arrested in England with possible connections to Canadian bomb plot

Two males, aged 16 and 21 have been arrested in England by counter-terrorism police with possible connections to a Canadian bomb plot in which 17 people were arrested in Toronto on June 3. The alleged plot included plans to bomb and takeover the Canadian Parliament, take Military Police officers hostage and bomb public buildings. It also included beheading Canadian Prime Minister, Stephen Harper.

The Times quoted an anonymous security source as saying, "We believe that people living in the UK played a pivotal role in helping to organise this series of planned attacks. This is an example of the extremist soup we have in this country with lots of overlapping links."

"The operation did not involved armed officers," said the Manchester Police department.

Police say that the 21-year-old

came from Canada and arrived at Manchester Airport in England yesterday while walking off a plane. Police also say that he lived with some of the suspected terrorists arrested in Toronto. He is said to be of Pakistani decent and may have citizenship in the United Kingdom.

The 16-year-old was arrested in West Yorkshire a few hours after the 21-year-old was arrested. Police say that they tracked him down via cellular phone records and documents they found in Toronto.

Police say that the two males are connected and that a security alert was issued when authorities found out the 21-year-old male had left Canada.

The names of the 2 suspects have not yet been released and police have searched at least 4 homes in Dewsbury Hanover Square, England and Bradford, England.

US reveals Nazi war criminal's location was known two years before his capture

The 27,000-pages of documents released on Tuesday reveal that while the United States and West Germany knew the location of Nazi war criminal Adolf Eichmann two years before his capture, the fact was kept secret. The documents were declassified as part of the Nazi War Criminals Disclosure Act of 1998.

West German Intelligence informed the US in March 1958 of

the whereabouts of the senior Gestapo officer, who was living under the alias "Clemens" in Argentina where he had arrived seven years earlier.

It was not US policy at the time to go after nazi criminals since they were still recruited for Cold War operations.

"It now appears that West Germany could have captured him in 1958, if it wished to," said University of Virginia historian Timothy Naftali. He also said that CIA helped West Germany at the time to suppress part of Eichmann's diary - which was in the possession of Life magazine - that would have embarrassed West German national security adviser Hans Globke, himself a former Nazi.

Eichmann was captured by Israel in 1960 in Argentina. He was tried in Jerusalem and received the death penalty.

Portuguese Republican National Guard in Dili confined to headquarters

The Portuguese Republican National Guard (GNR), that arrived last Sunday at Dili, have interrupted their patrols in the streets of Dili and are now confined to their temporary headquarters.

According to a Portuguese governmental source, the GNR force is confined to its improvised headquarters in Dili, with orders, of the government, to not go out into the streets, due to a diplomatic block in the negotiations with Australia about the command chain.

The decision was made after an incident during the middle of the afternoon (local time), when a Republican National Guard patrol

was transporting three men to a new temporary detention center, guarded by Australian troops. The Australian soldiers denied to receive the detained men, questioning the legitimacy of the Portuguese soldiers to make arrests.

At this moment, urgent negotiations are being made in New York. Portugal is waiting for President Xanana Gusmão and the Timorese government to clarify the action of the Portuguese force on the bilateral agreement signed between the two governments that guarantees operational autonomy to the Portuguese soldiers.

Contacted by SIC reporters, the spokesman of the Portuguese Foreign Ministry, Carneiro Jacinto, denied that may be in cause the permanence of the GNR in East Timor. Carneiro Jacinto told SIC that the case is being treated through the diplomatic channels, that include the United Nations, the government and the Timorese presidency. Carneiro Jacinto told also that it's necessary, for a time for all, to clarify the case, so that situations "serious like this one" will not be repeated.

Ana Pessoa, East Timor's State Minister, told TSF News Agency that the idea of which the Portuguese contingent mission in Timor may be threatened makes no sense. For Ana Pessoa, what's in discussion at this time is only which mission will the GNR force will certainly assume in East Timor.

Last Friday (June 2) a Australian mission held a meeting with Portugal's Foreign Minister, Diogo Freitas do Amaral, that was sent to ask for clarification of the agreement signed the day before

(June 1, Thursday) between Portugal and East Timor, that gave the Portuguese Republican National Guard troops its own operational command, but would report directly to President Xanana Gusmão.

Monday (June 5) in a meeting between Australian, Malayan, New Zealand and Portuguese representatives, the four countries discussed the creation of a coordination structure, instead of an only Australian-led command, for the police forces working on the Timorese territory.

Beyond the 120 soldiers of the Portuguese Republican National Guard force, that arrived this Sunday to East Timor, there are in country 70 Australian police agents and 200 Malaysian police agents, also a New Zealand police team from Auckland arrived yesterday to analyse the possible send of police agents. In addition to this police forces, the international force includes also more than 2,000 Australian, New Zealand and Malaysian soldiers.

Wayne Rooney will play in Germany

England soccer player Wayne Rooney, 20, has been passed fit to play in the FIFA World Cup soccer tournament which starts on June 9 in Germany. The £27 million Manchester United star had a scan on Wednesday that showed the 4th metatarsal he broke on Apr 29 had healed - in less than 6 weeks.

Rooney was supposedly spotted boarding a plane to Germany while the BBC claim sources close to the Football Association indicated Rooney was in England's final World Cup squad.

The news is considered a big boost to England's chances to win the

World Cup. Manchester United manager Sir Alex Ferguson had said the player's chances of playing were "a forlorn hope."

The English soccer club, recently bought by American billionaire Malcolm Glazer, were concerned their investment would risk a worse injury if the previous toe-bone break had not healed when he started to play again. Manchester United's club doctor Todd Gill and physiotherapist Rob Swire, accompanied by a small army of Red Devils' lawyers, were said to have attended the foot scan.

The scan was considered so important to England's fortunes that Eriksson sent England's doctor to observe the event. A FIFA official was also present in the crowd at the moment of truth for Rooney's foot. The official would have been final decision maker in case of a dispute between one of the richest soccer clubs in the world and the country that invented the game.

The Swedish manager of the English football team Sven-Göran Eriksson, who had said Rooney would play some part in the competition, named Rooney in England's 23-man squad for Germany.

The World Cup tournament pits soccer players from national teams against each other for a trophy. Previously graced by Pele and Maradona, England has not won the competition for 40 years.

Billy Preston dies at 59

Musician Billy Preston, a so-called "fifth Beatle," died in Arizona at the age of 59 after a long illness.

A native of Houston, Texas, Preston played while in his teens

with Mahalia Jackson, Little Richard and Ray Charles.

He later backed up the Beatles, playing keyboards on Let It Be, The White Album and Abbey Road. He also played on the hit Beatles single "Get Back."

As a soloist, Preston topped the record charts in the early 1970s with "Outta Space," "Will It Go Round in Circles," and "Nothing from Nothing."

He joined the Rolling Stones on tour and backed them up on "Can't You Hear Me Knocking" and "Heartbreaker."

He also wrote the Joe Cocker hit "You Are So Beautiful," and collaborated with Aretha Franklin, Bob Dylan, Quincy Jones, and Barbra Streisand.

He won two Grammys, including one for his involvement in the Concert for Bangladesh, staged by ex-Beatle George Harrison in 1971. Last year, in one of his final appearances, Preston performed in Los Angeles with former Beatle Ringo Starr and Harrison's son, Dhani.

Plagued by drug and alcohol abuse, Preston had scrapes with the law on narcotics and other charges. He suffered from chronic kidney failure, and had been in a coma since November.

Kenya deports Somali businessman

Following its decision yesterday to bar Somali warlords and their associates from entering the country, Kenya today deported a Somali businessman, citing his links to leaders engaged in the ongoing civil conflict in Somalia.

Abdirashid Hussein Shire was

arrested by police at a hotel in the Kenyan capital Nairobi and escorted to a flight out of the country, reportedly heading for Dubai. Shire is alleged to be a supporter of the Alliance for the Restoration of Peace and Counter-Terrorism, an alliance of Somali warlords who are currently engaged in a conflict with the Islamic Courts Union for control over Mogadishu, the capital of Somalia.

Yesterday, the Kenyan government barred Somali warlords or their associates from entering the country. The Kenyan foreign affairs assistant minister Moses Wetang'ula delared them "persona non-grata".

"The government would like to reiterate its previously stated position that it will not permit its territory to be used by those who persist in destabilising Somalia and undermining our ongoing efforts to restore peace and security in that country," said the Kenyan foreign ministry in a statement released Tuesday.

Kenya has been closely involved in efforts to normalise the situation in Somalia. Kenya hosted and mediated talks between the various Somali factions for more than two years, leading to the formation of the Transitional Federal Government (TFG) in 2004. The Somali Cabinet was named in August 2004 at the United Nations headquarters in Nairobi.

The Kenyan President Mwai Kibaki is also the current chairman of the Intergovernmental Authority on Development, a seven-member regional development organization in Eastern Africa. The IGAD passed a resolution in March in support of the transitional government,

expressing concern over the upsurge of violence in Somalia and calling for a cessation of hostilities. The resolution also called for the lifting of a UN arms embargo to "enable IGAD and the AU deploy the Peace Support Mission to Somalia".

Many Somali leaders have homes or business interests in Kenya, whose capital Nairobi forms a regional business hub.

U.S. Senate defeats bill banning gay marriage

The United States Senate has defeated a proposed constitutional amendment banning gay marriage. The bill was defeated 48 to 49 and did not receive the minimum amount of 60 votes to that would allow the bill to be taken to the full Senate. The bill fell 18 votes short of the 67 that were needed for approval. In order for the bill to become part of the U.S. Constitution, this bill would have had to be approved by a two-thirds majority in both the Senate and the House of Representatives, then be approved by the legislatures of three fourths (that is, 38) of the States.

However, senator David Vitter, R-LA who is a supporter of the bill says, "we're building votes."

"Most Americans are not yet convinced that their elected representatives or the judiciary are likely to expand decisively the definition of marriage to include same-sex couples," said John McCain (R-AZ) who opposed the bill.

"A vote for it is a vote against civil unions, against domestic partnership, against all other efforts for states to treat gays and lesbians fairly under the law," said Massachusetts senator Edward

Kennedy.

The bill would define marriage as between a man and a woman, and would preclude the official recognizing of same-sex marriages. The bill is expected to be taken back to the Senate in July.

Already, 45 states have banned gay marriages.

"Ten Commandments" judge loses Alabama gubernatorial primary

Alabama Gov. Bob Riley beat back a Republican primary challenge from Roy Moore, the former judge who tried to put up a Ten Commandments monument in his courthouse.

In the weeks leading up to Alabama's gubernatorial primaries, polls showed Riley had pulled ahead of Moore, the former state chief justice who became a hero to the religious right in 2003 when he was ousted over his refusal to remove a 5,300-pound Ten Commandments monument from the state judicial building.

Moore conceded in his hometown of Gadsden, telling supporters, "God's will has been done."

Real body found at mock crime scene in Florida

When 29 students in Florida attended a fake crime scene during a field trip, set up by their teacher, Sue Messenger, they found a real body.

The body of a homeless man was found in Fort Lauderdale Park by the students and police say he died of natural causes and there was nothing to indicate that foul play was involved. The students are part of a criminology class at St. Thomas Aquinas High School.

"We thought it was Ms. Messenger messing around with us," said 16-year-old Josh Rozental, who was the one that had discovered the body.

"When I went over, knowing what I know about rigor mortis and postmortem lividity, it was apparent to me that actually this was a deceased individual. So the biggest thing is I wanted them to move off ... I knew there was going to be an investigation and I just wanted them to back off and for us to not to disturb anything," said Messenger.

For 20 years Messenger has been using "paper skeletons, fake weapons, notes, shell casings, and sunglasses" that students could find to further their education. The study was in its fifth of 13 days.

Some students even thought the body was a "dummy."

"It was a good crash course. The first thing we thought was, 'that's a real good dummy she set up,'" said 15-year-old Juan Cantor, a student at the high school.

"The students went up to this one area ... and found a man with his back against the wall and he looked dead. They thought it was part of the skit," said Kathy Collins a Fort Lauderdale Police detective.

Police say the man was David Wayne Bodie, 45.

20 percent of Victorians drive on worn out tyres

A survey released today by the RACV and Victorian Automobile Chamber of Commerce found that 20 percent of cars in Victoria have at least one worn out or unroadworthy tyre.

The study looked at 1,000 cars last month and found of those 200 had at least one tyre which had worn out.

Chief engineer for the RACV, Michael Case said that driving on worn tyres can increase the distance it takes a car to brake and road safety. "Increasing the braking distance can increase the chance of running into the car in front of you and having an unnecessary collision and if that collision is serious enough certainly it can cause injuries" said Mr Case.

It is widely accepted that tyres are one of the most important parts of a vehicle. As tyres are the only part of a vehicle in contact with the road, they affect acceleration, braking and cornering.

Despite the safety issues with driving a vehicle with a worn out tyre, drivers can be fined for "driving an unsafe vehicle" and fined AUD\$171, in addition police may defect the vehicle restricting the use of the vehicle until it is repaired. Victorian law requires that tyres have a minimum tread depth of 1.6mm.

In an investigation conducted by Wikinews, we found that the average price of each tyre on a typical large Australian sedan was AUD\$129, AUD\$105 for a small sedan and AUD\$191 for an SUV.

11,000 evacuated in Indonesia as Mount Merapi threatens to erupt

The Indonesian government has ordered the evacuation of 11,000 people from the Magelang district as Mount Merapi spews ash, lava and smoke from its dome. The dome continues to rise and scientists fear it may collapse. Smoke and ash are rising at least

2.4 miles into the sky and lava is rising at least 4 miles from the volcano's crater.

"Of course it is dangerous. But we don't know for sure whether the lava dome will collapse," said an Indonesian government volcanologist, Subandriyo.

At least 40 cars and trucks have been ordered to assist in the evacuation and take villagers to nearby schools and government buildings that have been turned into makeshift shelters.

"Since Monday we have evacuated ... more or less 2,000 people. The people that we need to evacuate are around 11,000. The lava has spread out in various directions. The lava domes are weakening," said Edi Purwanto, who is in charge of the evacuation post.

Scientists also say that the recent earthquake on May 27 which had a magnitude of 6.3 may have caused the volcano to become unstable and likely "shook the mountain." At least 5,800 people were killed in the quake.

"I don't think that's unreasonable. The volcano is an unstable pile of rock. It's fragile. I would be surprised if it [the quake] didn't literally shake the mountain," said an Arizona State University volcanologist who studies the volcano, Stanley Williams.

The volcano sits 280 miles to the east of Indonesia's capital of Jakarta.

Australian PM announces nuclear taskforce

As expected by media sources, Australian Prime Minister, John Howard announced on Tuesday that he will be setting up a "Prime Ministerial taskforce" to investigate

uranium mining, processing and nuclear energy in Australia.

Timeframe and purpose

The results of the review to be undertaken by the taskforce are expected to be made public in November. The taskforce is to investigate:

- Whether Australia has the capacity to increase uranium mining,
- Whether it would be economical for Australia to carry out uranium enrichment and reprocessing,
- Implications a nuclear energy industry would have on Australia's existing energy industries,
- The circumstances under which nuclear energy could become economically viable,
- How nuclear energy could decrease greenhouse gas emissions,
- How nuclear energy could work alongside renewable energy sources,
- "Next generation" nuclear technologies, which claim to resolve safety, waste and proliferation concerns,
- Nuclear waste and storage,
- Possible security implications,
- Health and safety issues.

The taskforce

Mr Howard said the taskforce will be led by former Telstra CEO and nuclear physicist, Dr Ziggy Switkowski and will include five other members. In a statement, Mr Howard announced two of the five additional members. One of Australia's foremost nuclear researchers, Professor George Dracoulis from the Australian National University and economist Professor Warwick McKibbin, a board member of the Reserve Bank of Australia.

The Prime Minister said that he will announce the other three

members today, after they confirm their availability.

The review process will be assisted by Dr Jim Peacock, Australia's Chief Scientist.

Mr Howard said that Australia should investigate the potential to capitalise on its vast uranium reserves. He said Australia had 40 percent of the world's known uranium reserves, and Australia could "increase and add value to our uranium extraction and exports".

The Prime Minister told reporters that nuclear energy is not something that will happen in the short term in Australia, but may occur in the long term. "I don't expect to have nuclear power stations in Australia within the next two or three years," he said.

"I do think, however, that we need in an open-minded and as emotionless fashion possible, to have a serious debate about this issue." Mr Howard said.

Mr Howard said that it is "foolish" for Australia to remain solely as an exporter of uranium given the vast amounts of the mineral the country has.

The opposition has been calling on the Howard government to name possible locations for nuclear power stations since announcing that they wish to investigate the use of nuclear energy. Mr Howard told reporters that the plants would be built by private enterprise and those calls on the government were "putting the cart before the horse".

Mr Howard said that his government expected the opposition to run a "fear campaign" on the issue and that he would not be deterred as he

believes the public's opinion on nuclear energy has shifted significantly. He said that he wanted a full and open review, examination and debate.

Criticism

During his press conference on Tuesday, Mr Howard was asked if the taskforce had been weighted to come up with a favourable report as the members announced so far were pro-nuclear. Mr Howard denied the claim saying that members had been selected who knew the subject and were "open-minded and clear headed".

Claims of a conflict of interest with Ziggy Switkowski have begun to surface after it was revealed that he is a board member of the Australian Nuclear Science and Technology Organisation, which runs Australia's only nuclear reactors in Lucas Heights, south of Sydney. Mr Howard, speaking on ABC Television defended the claims saying "He's a nuclear physicist Ziggy Switkowski, he's a proven person in the commercial area, he's got strong public administration skills, that's a good combination for something like this".

In order to minimise the conflict of interest, Switkowski resigned from the board of ANSTO on June 7 2006.

EPA block massive West Australian energy project

The Western Australian (WA) Environmental Protection Authority (EPA) have advised against the massive Greater Gorgon liquefied natural gas project off WA's Pilbara coast. Proponents of the projects say Gorgon is one of Australia's biggest export ventures, scheduled to provide up to 6,000 jobs and exports of up to \$1.2 billion.

EPA chairman Dr Wally Cox said the Gorgon project operators (Chevron, ExxonMobil, and Shell), had made an effort on flora and fauna issues but in its present state, the Gorgon proposal was "unacceptable." Gorgon LNG general manager Colin Beckett said that Gorgon was a world-class gas field and that the joint venture partners were confident of appealing the decision.

Environment Minister Mark McGowan said there was a definite process to be followed. The Minister says he will make a final decision on the Gorgon proposal after considering the EPA report - and any subsequent report from the Appeals Convenor. The EPA recommendations on the Gorgon proposal are subject to a two-week appeals period.

The EPA's Dr Cox said that joint venture had "not been able to demonstrate that impacts from dredging, the introduction of non-indigenous species and the potential loss of fauna could be reduced to acceptable levels."

In September 2003 the WA government provided "in-principle agreement" to the Gorgon joint venturers subject to a number of conditions. Dr Cox said that the Environmental Review and Management Programme had further highlighted the terrestrial and marine conservation values of Barrow Island and the adjacent waters.

"Flatback turtles in particular would be put at risk from the proposal with two of the most important nesting beaches located adjacent to the proposed LNG processing plant site and the materials off-loading facility," Dr Cox said. "There is very little

science available on the life-cycle, behaviour and feeding habits of Flatback turtles and as a consequence it is not possible at this time to identify management measures that would ensure ongoing survival of this Pilbara Flatback turtle population."

Dr Cox also said that the Proponent had not been able to demonstrate that risk could be reduced to satisfactory levels in the areas of: Impacts on the marine ecosystem from dredging; The introduction of non-indigenous species; Potential loss of subterranean and short range endemic invertebrate fauna species. "As a result, the proposal in its present form cannot meet the EPA's environmental objectives and is considered environmentally unacceptable," Dr Cox said.

Government/Industry Support
Despite the EPA's decision to block the proposal, the Australian newspaper reports that WA Premier Alan Carpenter was prepared to overrule the EPA's advice: "While he stopped short of providing a guarantee the project would go ahead, Mr Carpenter said it involved "massive economic and social benefit" for the state."

The Australian Petroleum Production and Exploration Association (APPEA), has welcomed the bi-partisan support by the Premier, and the Leader of the Opposition, Paul Omodei, to the Gorgon project. APPEA's Chief Executive, Belinda Robinson, said. "It also involves the world's first commercial carbon sequestration project. It's hard to imagine what more could be done," Ms Robinson said.

"The Gorgon project is a world class gas resource of more than 40 trillion cubic feet, and its

development has the potential to deliver 6,000 jobs, \$2.5 billion in annual export income, and more than \$17 billion in government taxes and royalties over its 60 year life," Ms Robinson said.

The Gorgon project proposal involves a two-train, 10 million metric-ton-per-year liquefied natural gas (LNG) plant and a domestic gas plant on Barrow Island, located off Australia's northwest coast. Home to Australia's largest operating onshore oil field for the past 40 years, the island is also a Class A nature reserve.

However, the Greens have applauded the WA EPA's advice. Greens Senator Rachel Siewert said in a media release: "This is the second time the WA EPA has knocked back this proposal. The proponents should review their options to put the project on the mainland, which will ultimately be a win for the regional economy and a win for the unique environment of Barrow Island."

"This is a proposal that should always have been located on the mainland. Proposing to build something on this scale inside Australia's most precious island nature reserve was deeply flawed from the beginning," said Senator Siewert. "The island has been dubbed 'Australia's Ark' for its unique cargo of endangered species, many of them now extinct or endangered on mainland Australia. He must take strong action to look after the island."

Today in History

- 632 - Muhammad, founder of Islam, died in Medina.
- 1887 - Herman Hollerith received a patent for his punch card calculator.
- 1949 - George Orwell's dystopian

political novel *Nineteen Eighty-Four* was first published.
1966 - One of the XB-70 Valkyrie prototypes is destroyed in a mid-air collision with a F-104 Starfighter chase plane during a photo shoot. NASA pilot Joseph A. Walker and USAF test pilot Carl Cross were both killed.
2004 - Ethiopian distance runner Kenenisa Bekele broke the world record for outdoor 10,000 m in Ostrava, Czech Republic.

Quote of the Day

"The present is the ever moving shadow that divides yesterday from tomorrow. In that lies hope."
~ Frank Lloyd Wright

Word of the Day

ilk; *n*

1. Kind, sort, type, class of people, those that resemble or behave like a certain person.

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