



Top Stories

Legislative Assembly election results declared in 5 Indian States

State Assembly election results declared in West Bengal, Tamil Nadu, Assam and Pondicherry

Exiled Chagos islanders win right to return home

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Featured story

Giorgio Napolitano elected Italian president

The Italian Parliament in unified session elected Giorgio Napolitano the new President of the Italian Republic on May 10th. Napolitano, 80, was elected on the fourth ballot with 543 valid votes (the threshold to win the election was 505).

Wikipedia Current Events

- Eight bombs erupt in a coordinated strike in the Ethiopian capital of Addis Ababa. Three people are killed and 48 are wounded. No group has yet claimed responsibility.
- 200 people are killed in the Nigeria oil blast in Ilado, Nigeria.
- Cloning scientist Hwang Woo-Suk is indicted for fraud, embezzlement and violation of bioethics law in a scandal in South Korea over his faked stem cell research.

Wikipedia Current Events

- Yoweri Museveni takes his oath of office for a third consecutive term as President of Uganda.
- 21 people are killed in an Egyptian bus crash.
- Justin Gatlin breaks the world record in the 100 meter dash with a time of 9.76 seconds.
- The FBI raids the home of Kyle "Dusty" Foggo, outgoing number three man at the CIA, in an investigation into political corruption, including the use of prostitutes and bribery in connection with lobbyist Brent Wilkes, revealed to be the "no. 1 unindicted co-conspirator" in the Randy "Duke" Cunningham scandal.

Exiled Chagos islanders win right to return home

The islanders of Chagos Archipelago have won a High Court battle which may allow them to return to the islands they were exiled from in 1971. The Chagossians (also known as Ilois) had previously won another High Court battle in 2000 which paved the way for their return, but this was overturned by Foreign Secretary Jack Straw using an Order-in-Council, a little-used piece of legislation involving the Royal Perogative. Yesterday, the high court judges ruled that the use of this action was "irrational and unlawful". The government have 28 days to decide whether to appeal.

There are around 4,000 exiles

from the Chagos islands, with most living in poverty within the poor areas of Mauritius. All the exiles have British citizenship, with about 250 living in the UK. The case won in the High Court yesterday was brought by Chagossian community leader Olivier Bancoult, who has been fighting for the right of exiles to return to the islands for many years.

A US military base currently occupies Diego Garcia, the biggest island in the group, after having been leased the land by the British government. The base played a role in the Iraq war. Mauritius has claimed ownership of the island, but it is currently considered by the British to be part of the British Indian Ocean Territory. Under the treaty arrangements between the UK and the US, the US is allowed to stop people living on the islands.

It remains to be seen whether, and when, the Ilois will be able to return. Lawyers for the Ilois argued that although they would not initially be able to live in Diego Garcia, they should be allowed to return to another of the 52 islands within the group (which contains over 600 islands in total).

A spokesman for the foreign office said: "We are disappointed with the judgement." They have not yet decided whether to appeal.

Oil Blast in Nigeria, 200 feared dead

200 people feared dead in an

explosion at an oil pipeline near Lagos in Nigeria. Many of the bodies had been burnt beyond recognition. Firefighters were on the scene of the explosion at Ilodi; a fishing village 25 miles east of Nigeria's main city of Lagos, and Red Cross workers were helping survivors.

"There was a big fire and quite a number of people died," Red Cross spokeswoman Okon Umoh said. Many of the bodies had fallen into the water of the coastal village. The blast took place when villagers were scooping out fuel that was gushing out from a ruptured pipe.

Nigeria is Africa's leading oil producer, the world's seventh-biggest exporter and fifth-biggest source of U.S. oil imports. But, most of the population lives in poverty. The pipelines often pass through poor communities, who break them to steal the precious oil.

Nigeria has a history of pipeline disasters. At least 1000 people died in Jesse in a pipeline blast in October 1998.

Calls for corporate tax reform goes unheeded

Peter Costello's budget announcement has led to rejoicing for small businesses, but the lack of joy for those pushing for radical corporate taxation reform has led to many businesses asking "what about us?"

Personal taxation and small business have been the big winners after this year's federal budget. Although dampened by the twin economic threats of rising interest rates and petrol prices, there should be a reasonable amount of real income savings for both low and high income earners, with those receiving Medicare, or a

superannuation benefit, privy to an even lower level of taxation(0% for those on super benefits).

Small business also has benefited from the Howard governments 11th annual budget, with them receiving a higher level of reducing depreciation, leading to a higher level of deductions in the years following the uptake of new technology or other capital. They are also privy to a \$435 million dollar tax cut to compensate for their changing accounting requirements under the government's new AIFRS reporting standards, as well as increasing the uptake of both the small business tax relief scheme and CGT (Capital Gains tax) Concessions.

The budget was not a complete loss for big business however, as superannuation laws have been tweaked to streamline contribution and payment rules previously impeding those with multitudes of staff.

But this is not enough, says Big 4 accounting firm Ernst & Young. In their newly published paper "Taxation of Investment in Australia: the need for ongoing reform". In it they lead the charge for a greater streamlining and organization of the corporate tax system in Australia, submitting that it will lead to reductions in "disincentives to work save and invest in Australia [as well as improving] the international competitiveness of Australian businesses." This follows from a recent report brought out by Mr. Costello himself about the need for tax reform in Australia.

A budget night Mr. Costello was notably coy about any future reform of corporate tax in Australia. He alluded to the report

by his ministers but kept from outlining the governments plan precisely.

Israeli gasoline supplier to Palestinians cuts supply

Israeli company Dor Energy, the sole supplier of gasoline and cooking gas to the Palestinian territories, cut off all deliveries on Wednesday, citing US\$27 million in unpaid bills.

Mujahed Salameh, director general of the Palestinian Petroleum Agency, predicted an "economic catastrophe" which would cripple factories and transportation as many people would be unable to work. He said that the Palestinian Authority does not maintain petroleum reserves and that gasoline supplies would run out in many areas by Thursday. The Associated Press reported long lines at gas stations in the Gaza Strip, and gasoline stations through the West Bank have begun rationing.

Dor Energy had threatened supply cutoffs twice before 2006, which were averted when the Palestinians made last-minute payments.

Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas is reportedly in talks with U.S. and European Union officials in an attempt to get Israel to resume delivery of fuel. For Israel's part, a spokesman for Prime Minister Ehud Olmert said that the Israeli government would "absolutely not" bail out the Palestinians.

The gasoline shortage is expected to deepen an economic and humanitarian crisis in the Palestinian territories since the U.S. and EU cut off aid to the Palestinian Authority after Hamas won parliamentary elections.

Giorgio Napolitano elected Italian president

The Italian Parliament in unified session elected Giorgio Napolitano the new President of the Italian Republic on May 10th.

Napolitano, 80, was elected on the fourth ballot with 543 valid votes (the threshold to win the election was 505). The number of great electors (the Parliamentarians of both houses and the regional delegates) present was 1,000, of which 990 voted.

The election process started on May 8th, but no winner emerged from the previous three ballots, which required a two-thirds supermajority. Italian parliamentary rules allow a simple majority from the fourth ballot onward.

Other candidates who received more than two votes were Umberto Bossi (42), Massimo D'Alema (10), Giuliano Ferrara (7), Gianni Letta (6), Silvio Berlusconi (5), Roberto Dipiazza (3) and Sergio Pininfarina (3). There were 347 blank ballots, along with 14 votes of "null" and 10 vote that went to candidates who only received two votes or fewer.

Italy was in an unusual political situation in which the term of outgoing President Carlo Azeglio Ciampi was due to expire as the new center-left government led by Prime Minister Romano Prodi needed to be appointed. Prodi's coalition won the election of April 9-10, defeating the government of Berlusconi. It was not known if the President of the Republic was to be elected first or if the old President was still able to assign the role of Prime Minister. It was decided, after the election of the two Presidents of the Senate and

the House of Parliament, to elect the new President of the Republic first.

Ciampi's term expires on May 18, but he has agreed to resign on May 15 before Napolitano's inauguration.

Napolitano is the first person to be elected President of the Republic who previously was a member of the Italian Communist Party.

Australian emergency telephone service lost in Southern NSW, ACT

Australia's emergency telephone service, triple-0, which is operated by Telstra has been lost in Southern New South Wales and the Australian Capital Territory following damage to two optical fibre cables.

It is believed that in two separate incidents, optical fibre cables were cut at Gundagai and Narrandera in Southern NSW. In addition to the loss of the triple-0 service, 34 mobile base stations in the region have also been affected. According to Telstra local calls are still possible and they recommend that people dial their local fire, ambulance or police station in case of an emergency.

Telstra says that services will be restored as soon as possible.

Today in History

1848 - Maamme, the national anthem of Finland, was performed for the first time.

1888 - Isabel the Redeemer signed the Lei Áurea into law, formally abolishing slavery in Brazil.

1917 - Our Lady of Fatima: Lúcia Santos and her cousins Jacinta and Francisco Marto witnessed their first Marian apparition near Fátima, Portugal.

1969 - The May 13 Incident: Chinese-Malay race riots left at least 184 people dead in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia.

1981 - Mehmet Ali Ağca shot and critically wounded Pope John Paul II in Saint Peter's Square, Vatican City.

May 13 is World Fair Trade Day (2006)

Quote of the Day

"'Fire' does not matter, 'earth' and 'air' and 'water' do not matter. 'I' do not matter. No word matters.

But man forgets reality and remembers words."

~ Roger Zelazny in Lord of Light

Word of the Day

postprandial; *adj*

Definition

1. After a meal, especially after dinner.

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