



Top Stories

World reacts to execution of Saddam Hussein

The execution of Saddam Hussein has unleashed a wave of criticism from both governmental and non governmental quarters in the days following. While the United States, Australia, Iran, and Poland all came out in support of the move, not all governments have agreed with endorsements like those from U.S. president George W. Bush, who called Saddam's execution a "milestone" on the way to a democratic Iraq.

Canadian PM cabinet shuffle results

Canadian PM Stephen Harper has shuffled his cabinet today. Rona Ambrose has been replaced with Treasury Board President John Baird. The new cabinet will consist of 32 ministers.

Featured story

CNN typo mixes up U.S. Senator with Osama bin Laden

CNN mixed up U.S. Senator Barak Obama and Osama bin laden by mistake Monday, leading into a segment on Osama bin laden with the title, "Where's Obama?" on The Situation Room, a show hosted by pundit Wolf Blitzer. CNN called it a "bad typographical error."

Wikipedia Current Events

•Josefa Iloilo is restored as President of Fiji by Commodore Frank Bainimarama, leader of the

Wikipedia Current Events

December 2006 coup d'état.

•A meteor is observed entering the atmosphere, breaking up and disintegrating over Denver, Colorado, and is seen throughout the Rocky Mountains of the United States, is identified as part of the Quadrantids meteor shower. None of the fragments are believed to have struck Earth.

•An irregular metallic object, the size of a golf ball and the weight of a can of soup, severely damages a house in Freehold Township, NJ. No one is injured.

•Nancy Pelosi is elected speaker of the United States House of Representatives, and becomes the first woman to hold that post.

•U.S. National Intelligence Director John Negroponte resigns. United States President George W. Bush appoints him Deputy Secretary of State according to officials.

•NASA announces Nature article, Cassini-Huygens found methane lakes on Titan, a moon of Saturn.

•Keith Ellison, the first African American elected to the House from Minnesota and the first Muslim member of the United States Congress is sworn in using Thomas Jefferson's Qur'an

Saturn's moon Titan hosts liquid lakes and rivers

The Cassini Spacecraft has taken images from July 22, 2006 that show rivers and lakes present on Saturn's moon Titan.

"At the time we first announced it, we were like, 'Well, we think these are probably lakes,' but that was about our level of confidence. I would say at this point, we've analyzed the data to the extent that we feel very confident that they are liquid-filled lakes," said University College London and Caltech and Cassini team member, Ellen Stofan.

The rivers and lakes are likely to contain ethane or methane in a liquid form, but the liquids are said to "act like water" and are "clear" like water. Both ethane and methane are organic gases on Earth.

"Dark surfaces are smooth and most likely liquid, rock, ice or organics. More than 75 radar-dark patches or lakes were seen, ranging from 3 kilometers (1.8 miles) to more than 70 kilometers (43 miles) across. Some lakes appear partly dry, while others seem liquid-filled. Some of the partly filled lakes may never have filled fully, or may have partly evaporated at some point in the past. The dry lakes have margins or rims and a radar brightness similar to the rest of the surrounding terrain, making them appear devoid of liquid," said a statement by NASA on their website.

"It's going to behave like water. It's transparent just the way water is. So if you were standing by the shoreline, you would be able to see down to whatever pebbles or gunk that was on the bottom. As far as

we know, there is only one planetary body that displays more dynamism than Titan, and its name is Earth," added Stofan.

Cassini will be performing at least 22 more flybys of Titan. The next flyby is expected to take place this month.

United States Navy ordered to Somalian coast

The United States Navy has been ordered to the Somalian coastline in an attempt to stop Islamic Militants who are part of the Union of Islamic Courts, from escaping the country.

Naval forces have been boarding ships searching for militants who might be hiding on them to escape Somalia. The Navy is also attempting to stop any "terrorists" that may also be trying to leave the region.

"We...are going to be working closely with states in the region to ensure that these individuals aren't able to transit those borders and exit Somalia," said a spokesman for the U.S. State Department, Sean McCormack.

Uganda is also expected to help with the fleeing militants by providing peacekeepers for Somalia, but Uganda's parliament must first approve the request.

"The troops are ready but I have to consult the speaker of parliament. As soon as parliament approves, they will be sent to Somalia," said Ugandan President, Yoweri Museveni. If Uganda's Parliament approves, between 1,200 and 2,000 peacekeepers will be deployed inside Somalia. The force, with approval, could be ready in at least a month. Currently, no U.S. troops are engaged in fighting inside Somalia.

Pelosi named new Speaker of the House

Californian Democrat Nancy Pelosi has been named the 60th United States Speaker of the House with the votes 233-202 at the age of 66. She is the first female House speaker in United States history. The opening of the Congress in 2007 marks the first time in a dozen years that the Democrats have control of the entire Congress.

In her speech she said it was time for a new America: "Now it is our responsibility to carry forth that vision of a new America. A new America that seizes the future and forges 21st century solutions through discovery, creativity, and innovation, sustaining our economic leadership and ensuring our national security. A new America with a vibrant and strengthened middle class for whom college is affordable, health care accessible, and retirement secure. A new America that declares our energy independence, promotes domestic sources of renewable energy, and combats climate change. A new America that is strong, secure, and a respected leader among the community of nations," said Pelosi in her speech.

She finished her speech by calling all the children, including her own grandchildren, to the microphone and declaring "For all of America's children, the House will be in order."

Rep. John Boehner of Ohio was named the new Republican minority leader.

Canadian PM cabinet shuffle results

Canadian PM Stephen Harper has shuffled his cabinet today.

The major change with this shuffle is Rona Ambrose, Minister of Environment, being replaced by Treasury Board President John Baird. When a reporter asked her earlier if she would be replaced she replied, "Yes -- very excited." Ambrose is the new intergovernmental affairs minister.

Vic Toews, the justice minister, is now President of the Treasury Board. Rob Nicholson, who was house leader, is now justice minister. Peter Van Loan, who was intergovernmental affairs minister, is now house leader. Monte Solberg, the immigration minister, replaces Diane Finley as Minister of Human Resources and Social Development. Diane Finley, loses the Human Resources portfolio and gets the Citizenship and Immigration ministry.

Six MPs were appointed "Secretary of State" roles, they are junior cabinet ministers. Secretary of States do not make part of the cabinet. These new Secretary of States are :

Helena Guergis, MP for Simcoe—Grey, Secretary of State (Foreign Affairs and International Trade) (Sport);
Jay Hill, MP for Prince George—Peace River, Secretary of State and Chief Government Whip.
Jason Kenney, MP for Calgary Southeast, Secretary of State (Multiculturalism and Canadian Identity);
Christian Paradis MP for Mégantic—L'Érable, Secretary of State (Agriculture) and
Gerry Ritz, MP for Battlefords—Lloydminster, Secretary of State (Small Business and Tourism);

Marjory LeBreton who was the Leader of the Government in the Senate now also has the role of Secretary of State (Seniors).

The new cabinet still will consist of 27 ministers, 32 if you include the Secretaries.

A complete list of the new Ministers and Secretary of States is found on this Canadian governmental site.

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Television actors acknowledged by SAG Awards nominations

Introduced by Alan Rosenberg, current President of the Screen Actors Guild, Grey's Anatomy star Sandra Oh and Bobby, Happy Feet actor Elijah Wood announced nominees for "the Actors".

The award ballots will be mailed to voters tomorrow. The Guild's entire active membership is allowed to vote, before the January 26 deadline. It is the only award voted on solely by actors, and the only award given solely to actors.

The ceremonies are held two days later, on January 28. TNT and TBS will both air the program in the United States, at 8 p.m. ET/PT, 7 p.m. CT, and 6 p.m. MT. In Canada, CTV is expected to show the special.

A total of eleven funny men and women got "Outstanding Performance by a Actor in a Comedy Series" nominations.

For male actors, the list reads Alec Baldwin as Jack Donaghy in 30 Rock, Steve Carell as Michael Scott in The Office, Jason Lee as Earl Hickey in My Name is Earl, Jeremy Piven as Ari Gold in Entourage, and Tony Shalhoub as Adrian Monk

in Monk.

The females given a nod were America Ferrera as Betty Suarez in Ugly Betty, Felicity Huffman as Lynette in Desperate Housewives, Julia Louis-Dreyfus as Christine Campbell in The New Adventures of Old Christine, Megan Mullally as Karen Walker in Will & Grace, Mary-Louise Parker as Nancy Botwin in Weeds, and Jaime Pressly as Joy in My Name is Earl.

Thespians also got their due salutes.

"Outstanding Performance by a Male Actor in a Drama Series" nominees are James Gandolfini as Tony Soprano in The Sopranos, Michael C. Hall as Dexter Morgan in Dexter, Hugh Laurie as Dr. Gregory House in House, James Spader as Alan Shore in Boston Legal, and Kiefer Sutherland as Jack Bauer in 24.

Nominations for "Outstanding Performance by a Female Actor in a Drama Series" go to Patricia Arquette as Allison Dubois in Medium, Edie Falco as Carmela Soprano in The Sopranos, Mariska Hargitay as Det. Olivia Benson in Law & Order: Special Victims Unit, Kyra Sedgwick as Deputy Chief Brenda Johnson in The Closer, and Chandra Wilson as Dr. Miranda Bailey in Grey's Anatomy.

Two nominations in the "Outstanding Performance by an Ensemble in a Drama Series" went to each ABC and HBO. The first got acknowledgement for Grey's Anatomy and Boston Legal, while the series on the latter were The Sopranos and Deadwood. The FOX network's series 24 also received a nomination.

Up for "Outstanding Performance by an Ensemble in a Comedy

Series" are The Office on NBC, ABC's Ugly Betty and Desperate Housewives, and two cable series, Showtime's Weeds and HBO series Entourage.

Many of the series have writing and performances that could qualify them for either Drama or Comedy series, such as Boston Legal and Desperate Housewives.

The Sopranos was the only series to get three nominations; telefilm Broken Trail also received that many.

As with many television-related award shows over the last decade, HBO lead the pack in nominations, with 10. ABC and NBC received 8 each.

Canadian PM will shuffle cabinet today

Canadian PM Stephen Harper will shuffle his cabinet today at 11:00 a.m. ET. The replacing cabinet ministers will be sworn in at a ceremony in Rideau Hall, the Governor General's official residence in Ottawa, the nations capital.

Harper is scheduled to make a statement at 12:30 p.m today at 24 Sussex Drive, the Prime Ministers residence.

The shuffle could involve five (some sources say seven) cabinet ministers.

Environment minister Rona Ambrose will likely be replaced. The Canada media speculated that Treasury Board President John Baird will replace her. Earlier it was said that Indian affairs minister Jim Prentice would be replacing her but Prentice denied rumors. Ambrose, then, could be minister of Intergovernmental affairs.

Jim Flaherty is expected to keep his job as Finance Minister.

The Canadian media says that the Conservative government, who were elected on January, 23, 2006, could have an election in spring 2007.

Toxic chemicals found in four Canadian politicians

Toxic chemicals were found in four Canadian politicians after they volunteered to have their blood tested as part of Environmental Defense's report titled Toxic Nation on Parliament Hill.

The federal politicians that were tested are:

Environment Minister Rona Ambrose,
Health Minister Tony Clement,
NDP Leader Jack Layton, and
Liberal Environment Critic John Godfrey.

Godfrey at number 55 had the highest total number of pollutants followed by Health Minister Tony Clement and Jack Layton at 54 and Environment Minister Rona Ambrose at 49.

They were tested for a total of 103 chemicals, which are related to cancer, developmental problems, respiratory illnesses, and nervous system damage. The chemicals found in them were mainly from household items which can cause cancer. In total, 54 carcinogens, 37 hormone disruptors, 16 respiratory toxins, 54 reproductive or developmental toxins, and 33 neurotoxins were found within the four politicians.

According to Dr. Rick Smith, Environmental Defence's executive director, the politicians are more contaminated than the ordinary citizens tested last year.

"Our tests show that pollution affects everyone. From Parliament Hill to kids in Vancouver and Saint John, harmful pollutants are contaminating the bodies of Canadians no matter where they live, how old they are or where they work, play or go to school," said Dr. Rick Smith. "I don't know why that is. Maybe it has to do with their strange lifestyle — eating out a lot and a high-stress existence," he said.

"Maybe its attributable to the unique lifestyles these guys lead," Mr. Smith said. "Politicians have a very strange, very stressful lifestyle that results in them grabbing a bite to eat when they can and eating a lot of junk food."

All four politicians were more polluted than child and adult volunteers that participated in a survey released last June for pollutants in families.

The blood was tested in Quebec and British Columbia for pollutants that fall under seven broad groups which are the following:

- PCBs (polychlorinated biphenyls),
- Stain repellents and non-stick chemicals (known as PFCs, or perfluorinated chemicals),
- Organochlorine pesticides (such as DDT),
- Organophosphate insecticide metabolites (such as the breakdown products of malathion),
- Heavy metals (such as mercury and lead),
- Air pollutants called PAHs (polycyclic aromatic hydrocarbons),
- Flame retardants (PBDEs, or polybrominated diphenyl ethers).

"The need to measure what

substances are accumulating inside Canadians is why the Chemical Management Plan announced December 8th includes a Biomonitoring component," said Tony Clement. "This first-ever national survey will help determine future trends and allow comparisons to other countries, and will give scientists valuable data in making those determinations and proposing prevention or remedial measures where needed."

"A growing awareness of the impacts toxic chemicals are having on families and children confirms for us that our government is moving in the right direction with groundbreaking action against harmful pollutants," said Rona Ambrose. "By delivering an aggressive, world-leading approach to chemicals management, we are ensuring the health of our environment and future generations."

"No one is immune from picking up dangerous chemicals, no matter how healthy a lifestyle you lead," said John Godfrey. "These results underline the need for a greater effort to get harmful substances out of the air we breathe, the food we eat, and the products we use and dispose of."

"Like many, I've been concerned about these toxics for decades and worried about them a lot," said NDP Leader Jack Layton. "I've worked for years to have pesticides and other toxics banned or reduced. In light of these recent results, our party will redouble its efforts because this toxic shocker reinforces our commitment to be tough on companies that pollute and governments that don't act. And clearly, this commitment should go beyond party lines."

Record number of bicycles sold in Australia in 2006

Bicycle sales in Australia have recorded record sales of 1,273,781 units for 2006, exceeding car sales by 32 percent. It is the fifth year in a row that the bicycle industry has sold more than one million units, a figure yet to be realised by car manufacturers.

The Cycling Promotion Fund (CPF) spokesman Ian Christie said Australians were increasingly using bicycles as an alternative to cars. Sales rose nine percent in 2006 while the car market stalled. Mr Christie said people were looking to cut their fuel costs and improve their fitness.

Mr Christie said organisations were beginning to supply bicycles as a company vehicle. "There is an emerging trend towards people using bikes as their official company-supplied vehicle in place of the traditional company car," he said.

"Some of Australia's biggest corporations now have bicycle fleets, and when you add in government organisations, we now know of at least 50 organisations which operate fleets of bikes."

"Although the company bicycle is a long way from taking over from the company car, it's an important trend when you consider that nearly half of all cars sold are to company fleets."

The CPF claims most commutes to work are less than 5 kilometres (3 miles) making bicycle travel a viable alternative.

Australian Police net \$540 million in "liquid ecstasy"

Police in Sydney have seized 1,900 litres of 3,4-methylenedioxyphenyl-2-

propanone, a chemical known as "liquid ecstasy" during a raid in the North-Western Sydney suburb of Castle Hill. Authorities estimate the chemical could be used to make up to two tonnes of ecstasy with an estimated street value of AU\$540 million.

Police claim the bust is one of the largest in Australia's history.

The operation was carried out by New South Wales, Victorian and Australian Federal Police.

Police are yet to make an arrest and are continuing their investigations.

Baghdad TV station shut down for showing Saddam mourners

The Iraqi government has shut down the Baghdad studios of a privately-owned satellite TV station for "inciting sectarian violence" because it broadcast images of people mourning the execution of Saddam Hussein.

The press-freedom organization Reporters Without Borders on Tuesday condemned the interior ministry's decision to shut down the Al-Charqiya station, which follows the earlier closures of the al-Zaura and Salah-Eddin TV stations for showing footage of Iraqis protesting Saddam's death sentence.

"We are very concerned by the attitude of the Nuri al-Maliki government which is imposing more and more restrictions on the press," a statement issued by the Paris-based NGO read, adding that "[t]he authorities should show more restraint..."

Despite the closure of their Iraqi bureau, Al-Charqiya continues to broadcast from their Dubai and Amman offices.

Saddam was hanged Saturday for the summary executions of 148 Iraqi residents of Dujail, following an unsuccessful assassination attempt in 1982.

Today in History

1477 - Charles the Bold died at the Battle of Nancy, leading to the annexation of Burgundy by France.

1527 - Felix Manz, a leader of the Anabaptist congregation in Zürich, was executed by drowning.

1968 - Alexander Dubček came to power in Czechoslovakia, beginning a political reform known as "Socialism with a human face".

2005 - Eris, the largest known dwarf planet in the Solar System, was discovered by the team of Michael E. Brown, Chad Trujillo, and David L. Rabinowitz using images originally taken in 2003 at the Palomar Observatory.

January 05 is Twelfth Night (Western Christianity)

Quote of the Day

All statements are true in some sense, false in some sense, meaningless in some sense, true and false in some sense, true and meaningless in some sense, false and meaningless in some sense, and true and false and meaningless in some sense.

~ Principia Discordia

Word of the Day

flail; v

1. To beat using a flail or similar instrument.
2. To move or beat in the manner of using a whip or scourge.

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