



Top Stories

Jawad al-Maliki named Iraqi prime minister

Jawad al-Maliki of the Islamic Dawa party, a member of the Shiite-led United Iraqi Alliance, has been named prime minister-designate of Iraq by President Jalal Talabani.

Oil prices surge over \$75 a barrel to a record high

Crude oil prices surged to a new record of over \$75.00 a barrel on Tuesday closing at a price of \$75.17. In Europe, Brent crude oil rose to \$74.59 a barrel.

Featured story

PBS show asserts greenhouse gases, atmospheric pollutants dimming future

"Dimming the Earth", aired by Public Broadcasting Service, presented research by some leading scientists regarding the complex and chaotic systems of our global climate and the effects that human activity is having on it.

Wikipedia Current Events

- Seventeen Colombian soldiers and a secret policeman were killed by rebels in an ambush in the mountains near the Venezuelan border.
- Four Canadian soldiers were killed 75 kilometers north of Kandahar by a roadside bomb planted by Taliban militants.
- Opposition leaders in Nepal reject King Gyanendra's

Wikipedia Current Events

proposals for restoring democracy. Thousands of protesters approaching the royal palace in Kathmandu are fired upon by security forces with tear gas.

- The first city-wide election in New Orleans after Hurricane Katrina takes place.
- The Iraqi Parliament meet to vote on choosing a Prime Minister, only the second time since the December elections. The nominee Jawad al-Maliki has been put forward by the dominant Shia block.
- Kharkiv supermarket bombings: Two homemade bombs exploded at supermarkets in the Ukrainian city of Kharkiv, injuring 14.

PBS show asserts greenhouse gases, atmospheric pollutants dimming future

This week, the Public Broadcasting Service aired the NOVA program titled - "Dimming the Earth", which presented research by some leading scientists regarding the complex and chaotic systems of our global climate, and the effects that human activity is having on it. One of the largest interactions (scientists call them inputs) humans have with our atmosphere is our ever increasing (2% per year for this decade) use of fossil fuels.

When we burn fossil fuels in our factories and automobiles, we send their waste into our atmosphere in two forms. The first

is CO2 and other greenhouse gases, which have received substantial attention in the last few years because of the way they trap heat in our atmosphere. The second category of waste products is tiny particles of sulfur dioxide, soot and ash, which scientists call aerosols (basically smog). Much research and effort has gone into understanding the negative health effects of air pollution on humans, which has resulted in catalytic converters on our cars, and devices that scrub these solids out of our industrial waste before it goes into the air.

What has more recently come into focus for many atmospheric scientists is the phenomena of an observed reduction (nearly a 10% decline since 1960) of sunlight reaching the surface of Earth, which has been dubbed the "global dimming" effect. This is now understood to be due to the way these aerosols act upon clouds.

Clouds form when moisture gathers around airborne particles, such as pollen or dust. The clouds formed by the aerosols particles emitted by the burning of fossil fuels are made of many more tiny droplets than "natural" clouds. These smog created clouds have a twofold effect: they shield sunlight from getting to Earth's surface and, due to the reflective nature of water, the millions of tiny droplets held suspended in them reflect light back into space and allow less light to reach the surface.

Many scientists now believe that

global dimming caused by these pollutants has mitigated the temperature rises brought about by global warming. Over the last thirty years, Earth's temperature has increased by about one to one and half degrees Fahrenheit. Without global dimming, Earth might be two to three degrees warmer than it currently is. So there is a sort of tug-a-war between the greenhouse gases and particulate released by burning fossil fuels. Our efforts to mitigate the human health dangers of smog have allowed more heat into our atmosphere and brought about a sharper increase in global warming.

If we continue on our current pattern, Dr. James E. Hansen, professor at Columbia University and the head of the Goddard Institute for Space Studies [1], believes this warming could be as much as five degrees in the next thirty years and ten to fourteen degrees over the course of this century. Such a temperature rise would be devastating to life on Earth, likely bringing on a cascade of self-promoting warming effects. Earth's forests drying and burning, a steady thawing of the Greenland and arctic ice sheets, and (most dangerous of all) a release of the methane hydrates that are now frozen at the bottom of the oceans could remake the planet into something that is very inhospitable to human life. Dr. Hansen warns that his research shows that man has just 10 years to reduce greenhouse gases before global warming and other responses to human activity by Earth's climate reach what he calls a tipping point, and becomes unstoppable.

Jawad al-Maliki named Iraqi prime minister

In the first meeting of the Iraqi

parliament since general elections were held four months ago, Jawad al-Maliki of the Islamic Al'Dawa Party, a member of the Shiite-led United Iraqi Alliance, has been named prime minister-designate of Iraq by President Jalal Talabani. He will replace interim Prime Minister Ibrahim al-Jaafari, whose candidacy for the permanent position led to an impasse in negotiations to form a national unity government.

According to Adnan Pachachi, acting parliament speaker, al-Maliki has one month to present his list of cabinet minister to Parliament for approval. Should al-Maliki's Cabinet fail to win support, someone else will be asked to form a government.

Also elected during the initial meeting was Sunni politician Mahmoud al-Mashhadani as the speaker of the Council of Representatives. Khalid al-Attiya, a Shiite, and Aref Tayfour, a Kurd will serve as deputies. Talabani was also re-elected as Iraqi president during the meeting.

Al-Maliki called on the formation of a national unity government "to eradicate injustice that the Iraqis have suffered." "We will work as one family to lead the political process, not based on our differences, sects or parties," al-Maliki said.

Reaction has been mostly positive so far. Sunni leader Tariq al-Hashimi of the Iraqi Islamic Party pledged to work with al-Maliki, and to "work together in order to form a unity government."

Kurdish leaders have not commented thus far, but independent Kurdish politician Mahmoud Othman was said to have welcomed al-Maliki's

nomination. U.S. Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice also welcomed al-Maliki's nomination as an "important milestone" for the Iraqis.

Sunnis, Kurds, and secularists have opposed al-Jaafari's renomination, citing weak leadership and sectarian strife.

Woman arrested for heckling Chinese President Hu at White House

Wang Wenyi, who was seen on television heckling Chinese President Hu Jintao during his White House appearance this week was formally charged in a United States federal court for a misdemeanor of willfully intimidating, coercing, threatening, and harassing a foreign official.

According to the Secret Service, Wang Wenyi gained press credentials for working with the Falun Gong run newspaper The Epoch. She then stood on a camera stand and shouted in Chinese: "Stop oppressing the Falun Gong," as well as "Your time is running out," and "Anything you have done will come back to you in this lifetime." She also shouted in English, "President Bush, stop him from persecuting the Falun Gong." The Falun Gong is a religious group who are currently being persecuted in China for unconventional beliefs.

Wang Wenyi was then "escorted" by the Secret Service away from the South Lawn where the appearance was taking place. At Wang's arraignment over 35 or so supporters attended on Friday. If Ms. Wenyi is convicted she could receive up to six months in jail and a \$5,000 fine.

This is Wang Wenyi's second

incident in five years involving protest of a Chinese leader. July 2001, she confronted then President Jiang Zemin during a tour of Malta. According to Wang, she introduced herself to Jiang and then urged him "to stop the killing of Falun Gong practitioners in China." Security officials dragged her away, but Jiang called her back and spoke to her in Chinese saying that the "Falun Gong practitioners were killing themselves."

Hu is in the U.S. for a weeklong conference with President Bush.

BJP leader Pramod Mahajan shot at in Mumbai

Pramod Mahajan, the general secretary of India's main opposition party, the Bharatiya Janata Party, was shot in Mumbai earlier today. The attack occurred at Mahajan's residence at around 6:30 a.m. IST (0100 UTC).

There are few details available at this time; however, sources say Mahajan was shot three times at close range by his brother Praveen Mahajan, allegedly over a property dispute. Praveen later surrendered at the Worli Police Station. His lawyer Nandkumar Rajukar claimed that he was depressed and suffering from some mental trauma.

Pramod Mahajan was rushed to the nearby Hinduja Hospital, where he is currently being operated upon for a serious injury to his liver. A senior surgeon at the hospital stated that Mr. Mahajan was still in critical condition and that the next 72 hours would be "crucial". Three bullets are still lodged in his body and doctors are finding it difficult to extract them. There is talk of using the help of doctors from the armed forces, who have better experience in

treating bullet injuries. Mr. Mahajan's liver was severely injured in the incident, leading to massive blood loss. Doctors say that he is currently on a ventilator and that the bullets cannot be removed for fear of causing even more bleeding.

Praveen Mahajan has been booked under Section 307 of the Indian Penal Code which deals with attempt to murder. He underwent a psychological examination which indicated that he was mentally stable.

Senior politicians from across India are arriving in Mumbai to offer their support to the popular leader. The Prime Minister of India Manmohan Singh, speaker of the Indian parliament Somanath Chaterjee and the President of India A P J Abdul Kalam have expressed shock over the attack.

Today in History

- 1014 - Irish forces led by Brian Boru clashed with the Vikings in the Battle of Clontarf.
- 1827 - Irish mathematician and physicist Rowan Hamilton presented his Theory of Systems of Rays.
- 1923 - Gdynia was inaugurated as a Polish seaport on the south coast of the Baltic Sea.
- 1954 - Batting against Vic Raschi of the St. Louis Cardinals, Hank Aaron of the Milwaukee Braves hit the first of his 755 home runs in Major League Baseball.
- 1982 - The Conch Republic facetiously declared independence from the United States.
- April 23 is Easter in Eastern Christianity (2006); World Book Day; National Sovereignty and Children's Day in Turkey; St George's Day in various countries.

Quote of the Day

"The fool doth think he is wise, but

the wise man knows himself to be a fool."
 ~ William Shakespeare in As You Like It

Word of the Day

tarantella; *n*

Definition

1. A rapid dance in 6/8 time, originating in Italy; the dance was believed to cure poisonous spider bites.

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