



Top Stories

Newly discovered extra-solar planet may be Earth-like

A planet with a radius 1.5 times larger than Earth and a mass five times greater has been discovered over 20 light-years away. Scientists claim that the planet is likely to have an atmosphere and liquid water at its surface.

Inmates take over Indiana prison, two employees injured

Order has been restored after inmates took over an Indiana prison today at about 2:00 pm EDT after local and state police were called to the scene.

Featured story

Rare rhino caught on videotape

A camera set up in the jungles of Malaysian Borneo in Sabah by the World Wide Fund for Nature or WWF, has captured, for the first time, a Borneo Rhino on videotape.

Wikipedia Current Events

- Kevin Tillman, brother of former American football player Pat Tillman, who was killed by friendly fire in Afghanistan, accuses the U.S. military of manipulating his death during testimony to the U.S. Congress.
- At least nine people are killed and 120 injured as a severe storm hits the twin towns of Eagle Pass, Texas, and Piedras Negras, Coahuila, on the U.S.-Mexico border.

Wikipedia Current Events

- Jadarite, a mineral of the same composition as Superman's Kryptonite, has been found in a Serbian mine.
- The United States Department of Veterans Affairs allows the Wiccan pentagram to be used on the tombstones of deceased soldiers.
- Abortion in Mexico: Mexico City's Legislative Assembly votes to legalise abortion on demand during the first trimester of pregnancy.
- Thousands of people gather in Moscow, Russia to mourn former President Boris Yeltsin.
- Prisoners riot at the New Castle Correctional Facility in Indiana, United States.
- Ethiopian rebels from the Ogaden National Liberation Front raid a Chinese-run oil field in near the country's border with Somalia, killing 74.
- The Tamil Tigers launch an air attack on the Sri Lankan military's main base in Jaffna.
- British anti-terrorism police arrest five people in London and one in Luton for alleged breaches of the Terrorism Act.
- Foreign Minister of Turkey Abdullah Gül is nominated as the AK Party candidate for President of Turkey.
- Toyota overtakes General Motors in global vehicle sales from January to March as a result of increased demand for fuel-efficient vehicles.

Wikipedia Current Events

- The military arm of Hamas fires rockets and mortars into Israel from Gaza.

Football: Manchester United defeat AC Milan in Champions League

A stoppage time goal by Wayne Rooney lifted Manchester United to a 3-2 win over AC Milan at Old Trafford in Manchester. United have never defeated Milan over two legs, having lost twice to them in semi-finals, and once in the round of sixteen previously. With injuries mounting for United, they were forced to play an extremely altered back line, with John O'Shea and Gabriel Heinze in the centre of defense. Milan had a boost before the match as keeper Nelson Dida proved fit enough to play. United opted for only one striker in Wayne Rooney, while Milan did the same fielding Alberto Gilardino. The game also featured two of the best young midfielders in the world currently, with Cristiano Ronaldo for United and Kaka for AC Milan.

Manchester had a dream start to the match when Ronaldo opened the scoring after only five minutes. Dida was caught out of net as Ronaldo headed towards goal, and after slapping twice at the ball, it eventually found its way into the net. United, and Ronaldo in particular, continued to threaten the Milan goal, but the next chance fell to Michael Carrick whos stinging shot was saved well by Dida. Milan then equalized through Kaka as he received a through ball from

Seedorf, and the Brazilian sprinted past the defense and slid the ball past Van Der Sar. United continued to threaten, but nothing came of chances for both Giggs and Rooney. A curling shot by Ronaldo almost fooled Dida, but he managed to palm it away. Kaka then had a solo effort to lift Milan into the lead, as he managed to beat out three defenders, two of which collided with each other, and curl the ball past Van Der Sar. Milan continued to pressure and Kaka nearly had a hat-trick off a 30-yard drive, but Van Der Sar saved well.

United started brightly in the second half, clearly not wanting a home loss in the Champions League, and Carrick should have done better as he volleyed wide off a corner from Giggs. Kaka continued to threaten for Milan, but could not get his attempts on target. Paul Scholes then played a cheeky scooped ball into Rooney within the box, and after controlling it on his chest, the Englishman slid the ball under Dida to tie the match. United pushed for the winning goal, and they eventually earned it in stoppage time as a through ball by Giggs found Rooney, and his first time strike flew past an out of position Dida to earn Rooney the brace, and give United the advantage for the second leg.

Milans next match comes this Saturday against Torino in the Serie A as they try to clinch a Champions League berth for next season, while United take on Everton at Goodison Park, as they are in a tight race with Chelsea for the Premier League title. The second leg between the two will take place on May 2nd at the Stadio Giuseppe Meazza in Milan.

Newly discovered extra-solar planet may be Earth-like

A planet 1.5 times greater in radius and with about 5 times earth mass orbiting the red dwarf Gliese 581 has been discovered inside the constellation of Libra.

A 2005 search revealed that the star Gliese 581 possessed a Neptune sized planet, prompting astronomers to take a closer look.

Gliese 581 c, as the planet is currently named, has an estimated surface temperature between 0 and 40°C (32 and 104°F). Scientists claim the planet is likely to have an atmosphere and liquid water.

A second planet, about 8 times the mass of earth, was also discovered not too far from Gliese 581 c.

A team of scientists from France, Switzerland and Portugal discovered the planets using the ESO 3.6-m telescope from the High Accuracy Radial Velocity Planet Searcher or HARPS, located at the European Southern Observatory in La Silla, Chile.

"The separation between the planet and its star is just right for having liquid water at its surface," said team spokesperson Stephane Udry of the Observatory of Geneva in Versoix, Switzerland. "That's why we are a bit excited."

"Liquid water is critical to life as we know it and because of its temperature and relative proximity, this planet will most probably be a very important target of the future space missions dedicated to the search for extra-terrestrial life. On the treasure map of the Universe, one would be tempted to mark this planet with an X," added Xavier Delfosse, from Grenoble University in France.

The newly discovered planet is 20.5 light-years away from the Earth.

Inmates take over Indiana prison, two employees injured

A prison riot occurred at the New Castle Correctional Facility near Indianapolis, Indiana. The incident began at about 2:00 pm and order has since been restored. Two prison employees have sustained injuries.

Local newspaper reports also say for a short time inmates took over the prison. Inmates also set fires and the fire department was called. Police have been trying to get all inmates back into their housing rooms. They used tear gas to disperse the prisoners and no shots were fired. Tear gas is used to loosen crowds, especially during large protests. It can cause irritation or disabling of physical effects.

"We are quickly collaborating with local law enforcement to properly handle the New Castle Correctional Facility situation. We will keep the public updated as more details unfold."—Commissioner J. David Donahue

The Mayor of New Castle, Indiana, Tom Nipp, dispatched all of the city police officers to the prison to protect the safety of the residents. State Police were also called in by prison officials to assist in putting down the riot.

"We are quickly collaborating with local law enforcement to properly handle the New Castle Correctional Facility situation," said Commissioner J. David Donahue. "We will keep the public updated as more details unfold."

Nipp called the disturbance, "A full scale riot."

Within the last 24 hours prior to the

uprising, new inmates from Arizona had been transferred into the facility. Recently, the states of Indiana and Arizona reached an agreement in which Indiana would house prisoners from Arizona in its prison system to decrease overcrowding in Arizona prisons. The prison was built in 2002 and can house about 2,200 inmates. It currently has about 1,000 from Indiana and 600 from Arizona.

2007 Cricket World Cup - 1st Semi-Final: Sri Lanka vs New Zealand

Sri Lanka have progressed to the final of the 2007 Cricket World Cup. They posted 289-5 in their 50 overs against New Zealand in the the first semi-final at Sabina Park, Kingston, Jamaica. Captain Mahela Jayawardene made his maiden century of the World Cup, making 115*, whilst Upul Tharanga reached 73 before being bowled by Vettori.

In response, New Zealand struggled to 32/2, losing captain Stephen Fleming for just 1 and Ross Taylor soon after for 9. Scott Styris and Peter Fulton began rebuilding - their 50 partnership coming up in just 52 balls - including one over where they hit 20 off of some wayward bowling by Dilhara Fernando. But Styris fell 2 overs later to Tillakaratne Dilshan, followed by a New Zealand middle order collapse: going from 105/3 from 22 overs to 116/7 from 26. Craig McMillan hit a quick-fire 25, but just one ball after hitting a huge maximum he missed the ball, resulting in him being bowled out by Sanath Jayasuriya. Bond fell soon after for Muralitharan's 4th wicket, leaving New Zealand on the brink of being eliminated from the competition. Franklin and Patel rebuilt and reached their 50 partnership in just 55 balls - which is a new record for a 10th wicket

partnership for this World Cup - but Patel succumbed to trying to slog Dilshan over midwicket, but falling short and being caught by Fernando to finish New Zealand's resistance. Sri Lanka won in comfortable fashion by a margin of 81 runs.

Toss: Sri Lanka, who elected to bat first.

Canada's Liberals to put forward Afghanistan motion

The Liberal Party of Canada have put forward a motion to re-ensure Canadian soldiers will be pulled out of Afghanistan two years from now in February.

Liberal defence critic Denis Coderre says the Liberals "just don't believe them [the Conservatives] when they say the deadline is February 2009" and if Canadian soldiers were to be pulled out they "will still be there for development and diplomacy."

The NDP, who support an immediate withdrawal, say they will not support the motion. The Bloc Québécois are expected to support the motion.

In May of 2006, the Conservative government received approval by parliament to extend the mission in Afghanistan until February 2009, by a slim margin of four votes. Thirty Liberals supported the extension but the majority of them opposed. The NDP and Bloc Québécois ordered their members to vote against the extension.

The Conservatives argue that the length of the Afghanistan mission is not within the purview of Parliament in any case.

Coderre also states the government have been buying military equipment and that could mean

extending the mission. The Conservative government have recently said they want to stay in the country until the job is done and that could mean a longer extension.

The Liberal motion was defeated in parliament, Tuesday afternoon, by a vote of 150 to 134, with both the Conservatives and NDP voting against.

Turkey's governing party names Abdullah Gül as presidential candidate

Abdullah Gül, current deputy prime minister and foreign minister of Turkey, has been named as the new presidential candidate by his party, the Justice and Development Party (AKP).

In Turkey, the parliament votes to elect the new President of Turkey. The AKP has 353 of the 550 seats in Grand National Assembly of Turkey. While Gül may not get elected in the first or second round, when a two-thirds majority is needed, their votes are enough to elect the new president at the third or fourth rounds of the election process, when a simple majority is needed. The first round will take place on Friday.

Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdoğan announced Gül's selection on Tuesday. The decision comes in the wake of a very large demonstration aimed at dissuading Erdoğan from running himself. Erdoğan said that Gül was "the person who emerged at the end of our evaluations as the candidate to become Turkey's 11th president."

Both the current president, Ahmet Necdet Sezer, and the influential head of the Turkish Armed Forces, General Yaşar Büyükanıt have stressed that the new president must defend Turkey's secular

values. To that end Gül said: "the president must be loyal to secular principles... The president must be bound by the basic principles of the constitution... If I am elected I will act accordingly."

The main opposition party, the Republican People's Party (CHP), hinted that it may nominate its own candidate to challenge Gül.

Thailand orders Ample Rich directors to pay US\$616 million taxes

Thailand's anti-corruption body, the Assets Examination Committee (AEC) has instructed the country's tax authorities to issue a tax bill to the company set up by ousted Prime Minister Thaksin Shinawatra. The amount is US\$616 million, or 20.89 billion baht.

The company Ample Rich is registered in the British Virgin Islands, however the AEC stated the company could not evade corporate tax due to their operations taking place within the Kingdom of Thailand.

With two of Thaksin's children on the board of directors of the company, and earlier rulings on tax liability, the Bangkok Post reports that the total tax liability for the Shinawatra family has now risen to 27.44 billion baht.

The main reason given by the AEC for the tax bill is the underpriced selling of Shin corporation shares to the Thaksin children at 1 baht per share only days prior to the sale of the company to Temasek holdings. The actual sale of Shin Corp. sparked street protests in Bangkok as the then-Prime Minister was accused of profiting from selling a national asset after changing the law to allow the sale to be tax-free.

20 tons of cocaine seized by US Coast Guard

The United States Coast Guard (USCG) has seized 20 tons or nearly 40,000 pounds of cocaine with a street value of over 500 million [USD] in what authorities call the largest cocaine busts in history.

Three busts in total were made in a period of nearly one month. The first on February 19, off the coast of Mexico, March 18 off the coast of Panama and on March 25, also off the coast of Panama.

In the first bust on February 19, "the Ecuadorian-flagged fishing vessel Don Juan K was approached in the Pacific Ocean February 19 off the coast of Mexico while allegedly offloading cocaine into "go-fast" (cigarette-style boat) boats. The fishing vessel's crew apparently set fire to Don Juan K in an attempt to destroy the evidence and flee in the go-fasts. Sherman's crew stopped the go-fasts and recovered about 900 pounds of cocaine as Don Juan K sank. The 14 crew members are being processed for further legal action," said a statement on the USCG's website.

The second bust on March 18 yielded nearly 40,000 pounds of cocaine.

"The 330-foot Panamanian-flagged motor vessel Gatun was interdicted in the Pacific Ocean Mar. 18 off the coast of Panama while heading north toward the United States. Sherman's crew stopped and boarded the vessel and found 765 bales of cocaine weighing approximately 38,000 pounds in two shipping containers. Gatun was escorted back to Panama and its 14 crew members processed for further legal action," added the statement.

In the third bust on March 25, at least 2,000 pounds of cocaine was seized, also from a ship off Panama's coast.

"[The] Sherman's crew stopped and boarded a small stateless go-fast in the Pacific Ocean Mar. 25 off the coast of Panama following a short chase, in which, the go-fast attempted to flee at a high rate of speed. Approximately 2000 pounds of cocaine was found aboard the go-fast and its four crew members were processed for further legal action," said the statement.

Several agencies both in the U.S. and in other countries in Central and South America and will continue to investigate the extent of the drug ring.

"The Coast Guard works in close coordination with Joint Interagency Task Force South, U.S. Attorney's office, Panama Express South, DEA, FBI, Bureau of Immigration and Customs Enforcement, and Customs and Border Protection, as well as the Departments of Justice, State and Homeland Security on counter drug operations in the Pacific Ocean near Central and South America. These drug smuggling routes are some of the most active, yielding roughly 70% of the cocaine seized annually by the Coast Guard," added the statement.

9 US soldiers killed in Iraq bombing; 20 others wounded

A suicide car bomber detonated explosives at a U.S. military outpost in the Province of Diyala in the city of Baqubah, Iraq. It killed at least 9 United States soldiers and wounded at least 20 other soldiers. 15 were treated at a medical post and later released to return to duty. The remaining 5 were transferred to another medical center where they will receive

further medical attention.

"We have seen a lot of recent attacks up in Diyala... that have been part of the fight for the province," said Lieutenant-Colonel Christopher Garver, a spokesman for the U.S. military in Iraq.

A militant group calling itself the Islamic State in Iraq claimed in a statement they posted on a website: "Two knights from the Islamic State in Iraq ... [in] two booby-trapped trucks hit the heart of the Crusader American headquarters in the region of Diyala."

At least 3,333 American troops have been killed since 2003 when the U.S. invaded Iraq.

Entire fossilized forest found in Illinois, USA

A 300 million-year-old fossilized rain forest has been found, in its entirety, outside Georgetown, Illinois, United States. Coal miners called in scientists to look at a vast and dense seam of fossils they found in a mine. It is the largest fossilized forest ever to be found. It is about the size of San Francisco, California or 10,000 hectares [10 km by 10 km] and is said to be the first rain forest ever to exist on Earth.

"The forest is composed of a bizarre mixture of extinct plants: abundant club mosses, more than 40 metres high, towering over a sub-canopy of tree ferns, intermixed with shrubs and tree-sized horsetails. Nowhere elsewhere on the planet is it possible to (literally) walk through such an extensive swathe of Carboniferous rainforest," said a press release by the University of Bristol in the United Kingdom.

In forests, over time, the leaves,

branches and other material will build up, layer after layer with the oldest layer on the bottom, and the youngest layer at the top. The scientists observed the layers on the top of the mine shaft.

"It was an amazing experience. We drove down the mine in an armored vehicle, until we were a hundred meters below the surface. The fossil forest was rooted on top of the coal seam, so where the coal had been mined away the fossilized forest was visible in the ceiling of the mine. The fossilized forest was preserved following a major earthquake 300 million years ago," said Howard Falcon-Lang, paleobotanist with the University of Bristol, who observed the fossil.

The forest was estimated to contain trees that were more than 130 feet high. It also contained a variety of smaller trees, shrubs and ferns. One fossil was shaped like an asparagus stalk, but was the size of a small tree.

It is believed that the forest was buried in nearly a flash after the land was pushed downward, below sea level, after a massive earthquake burying the forest "forever."

"The fossilized forest was preserved following a major earthquake 300 million years ago. The quake caused the whole region to drop below sea level whereupon the forest became buried in mud, preserving it forever," added the press release.

The forest is dated to have been alive in the Carboniferous period.

74 killed in raid on oil field in Ethiopia

65 Ethiopians and 9 Chinese were killed in their sleep Tuesday in a predawn raid on an oil field in

Abole, a small town in southeast Ethiopia's Somali state. Seven Chinese were kidnapped.

The Ogaden National Liberation Front (ONLF), a separatist group, claimed responsibility for the attack on the field which is run by a Chinese firm.

At a news conference, Prime Minister Meles Zenawi said: "Such an outrage, the cold-blooded murder of people who were building roads and engaged in other development activities, is a measure of the level of barbarity involved."

Chinese foreign ministry spokesperson, Liu Jianchao, condemned the attack, which he said involved more than 200 gunmen.

Armed wing of Hamas declares end of truce

In response to weekend raids by Israel, the armed wing of Hamas, Izz ad-Din al-Qassam Brigades, declared an end to a 5-month old truce and fired rockets into Israel. The rockets caused some damage, but no injuries were reported.

The Hamas-led Palestinian Authority (PA) urged calm. "The government is interested to keep the ceasefire and the calm and we are trying, through consultation and discussion with the Palestinian factions, to take a position in order to protect our people," PA spokesperson Ghazi Hamad said.

PA President, Mahmoud Abbas who is a member of Fatah, said: "The violation of the truce is an exceptional event that will not last."

The Defense Minister of Israel, Amir Peretz warned against further attacks, but so far Israel has not

made an armed response.

Mexico City legalizes abortion

México City, the capital of the world's second-largest Catholic country, Mexico, voted today to legalize abortion.

City lawmakers passed legislation that legalizes abortion during the first three months of pregnancy. Hitherto, abortions were only legal in cases of rape, if the woman's life is in danger, or if there are signs of severe defects in the fetus.

The legislation passed in the face of pressure from Mexican bishops who spoke out against the law. Opinion polls indicated that Mexico City residents were fairly evenly split on the issue.

Sponsors of the bill argued that the deaths of some 1,500 women during illegal abortions over the last ten years showed the need to legalize it.

Today in History

1719 - Robinson Crusoe, a novel by Daniel Defoe, was first published.

1792 - Claude Joseph Rouget de Lisle composed La Marseillaise, now the national anthem of France.

1953 - Molecular structure of Nucleic Acids: A Structure for Deoxyribose Nucleic Acid by James Watson and Francis Crick was published in the scientific journal Nature.

1986 - Mswati III was crowned King of Swaziland, succeeding his father Sobhuza II.

2005 - A commuter train came off its tracks in Amagasaki, Hyōgo, Japan and rammed into an apartment building, killing the driver and 106 passengers and injuring 555 others in the Amagasaki rail crash.

April 25 is Administrative Professionals' Day in Canada and the United States (2007); ANZAC Day in Australia and New Zealand;

Liberation Day in Italy; Flag Day in the Faroe Islands; Freedom Day in Portugal; Red Hat Society Day.

Quote of the Day

It is especially important to encourage unorthodox thinking when the situation is critical: At such moments every new word and fresh thought is more precious than gold. Indeed, people must not be deprived of the right to think their own thoughts. ~ Boris Yeltsin

Word of the Day

onychophagist; n

1. A person who bites his or her own fingernails.

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http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Main_Page

Quote of the Day

http://en.wikiquote.org/wiki/Main_Page

Word of the Day

http://en.wiktionary.org/wiki/Main_Page

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