



Top Stories

Deadly car bomb explosion rocks Beirut

The seemingly endless saga of car bombings continued to haunt citizens of Lebanon on Friday night, when an explosion ripped through multiple cars and buildings, killing one and injuring 19 people.

Voting chaos in Germany expected



Electoral voting experts are expecting a chaos in the German federal election, caused by a loophole in the German electoral law, which can force the voters to vote against their political party.

Featured story

Australian man allegedly ignites carpet, plastic with static electricity

An Australian man reportedly built up over 30,000 Volts of static electricity and ignited carpets, causing three buildings to be evacuated in Warrnambool, Victoria.

Wikipedia Current Events

- In his speech to the U.N. General Assembly, Iranian President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad rejected an offer from the European Union to halt its nuclear program, "the most far reaching step outside the requirements of the NPT ... in keeping with Iran's inalienable right to have access to a nuclear fuel cycle."
- Tayseer Allouni, a reporter with Al Jazeera, is arrested by Spanish police for the second time.
- In the New Zealand general election, the Labour Party, led by Prime Minister Helen Clark, seems best placed to form a new government. Although the opposition National Party of Dr Don Brash makes the greatest gains, these are mainly at the expense of minor parties. All the existing minor parties lose seats, with only the new Māori Party making gains.

Saudi Arabia, UAE to support increasing oil production



OPEC headquarters in Vienna

Oil ministers from Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates announced that both countries

would support raising crude oil output quotas by the Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries. The Saudi minister, Ali al-Naimi, said that rising prices were lowering world demand, and his nation 'absolutely' backs the increase, while Mohammed bin Dhaen al-Hamli from the UAE claimed that the markets could calm on the decision.

Earlier, the OPEC cut their oil demand estimates for 2005, saying that it will rise by only 1.7%, compared to previous prediction of 1.9%.

The organisation is to meet to discuss the possible increase on September 19. If the decision take place, the official limits will be the highest since 1987.

Saudi Arabia is the OPEC's biggest crude oil producer, with production of about 9.5 million barrels a day and spare capacity of approximately 940,000 barrels. Formal daily output of whole organisation is 28 millions barrels outside Iraq, and estimated unused stocks of 1.39 million barrels.

On the London-based International Petroleum Exchange price of the Brent crude barrel fell \$1.45 to \$62.21 on Friday.

Australian man allegedly ignites carpet, plastic with static electricity

A story about a man carrying over 30,000 (sometimes reported as 40,000) volts of static electricity in his body, allegedly generated by a

Wikipedia Current Events

- Conflict in Iraq: At least 30 people die following an explosion at a market in the Iraqi capital of Baghdad.
- Ariel Sharon, the Prime Minister of Israel, threatens to withdraw Israeli assistance for the upcoming Palestinian elections if Hamas takes part.

wool sweater and nylon jacket combination, is circulating through major news outlets. The story, carried first by the Warrnambool Standard, says that the man, Frank Clewer, a 58-year old cleaner from Dennington, involuntarily created a scene by causing fire departments to evacuate three buildings he had left his mark in, before he realized he was causing the burn marks on carpets and allowed the fire department to help him.

The story has been picked up by The Register, Guardian, BBC, USA Today, Reuters, local agencies of ABC, the San Francisco Chronicle, and other news outlets.

Several unanswered objections mark the story as a possible hoax: Clewer enters and exits his car several times in the story - if he opened the car by touching its presumably metal lock, he would surely release some electricity into the car through his hand; everyone has at some point experienced the painful shock of touching a door handle or car keys to a lock. Though the car might not be grounded, it would still be at a lower potential and thus energy would be transferred. This would be noticeable; the story does not comment that Clewer understood what was happening to him.

Firefighters supposedly "used a device to check static electricity on him and his belongings." While firefighters would be likely to carry a high-voltage multimeter around to measure the current and voltage ratings of downed power lines, it is unlikely that the same device could measure such a large voltage resulting from a very small amount of static energy without de-electrifying it.

For such a large voltage to be stored, humidity would have to

have been extremely low on that day for the air around him not to ionize and source current, removing the static energy. If he was carrying such a large voltage, his hair would probably have stood on end, as this is a notable effect when one touches a Van de Graaf generator. Note: It is uncertain at what voltage this effect begins, and since Van de Graaf machines routinely exceed Megavolts of electric potential, this may not be a verifiable objection. This statement: "Firefighters took possession of Clewer's jacket and stored it in the courtyard of the fire station, where it continued to give off a strong electrical current." (Reuters UK) First, there is no reason they would need to take possession of the jacket - the static electricity could be dealt with by simply dumping water on it. Second, the jacket could not "give off" an electric current without some source of energy, which, in storage, is impossible. It is possible that the jacket could hold a voltage, but the effects of this would not be visible - if they were, they would be short-lived as the jacket would lose its static energy.

The amount of energy stored on Clewer's person and possessions could not have been more than a few Joules; this is unlikely to have burned carpet.

The equation for stored energy in capacitors is:

$$U = 1/2 C * V^2$$

Where U = energy, C = capacitance, and V = voltage. A human body by itself typically has a capacitance of around 250 pF, which would mean a voltage of 30,000 V would produce energy of 0.11 Joules. Even if Clewer's possessions resulted in a parallel capacitance of 1 microfarad, this

would still only result in an energy storage of 450 J. This amount of energy would probably be insufficient to burn carpet or char plastic.

Nintendo unveils controller for Revolution console



The controller for the Nintendo Revolution, taken at all angles

At Thursday's keynote presentation of the Tokyo Game Show, Nintendo president Satoru Iwata unveiled the controller design for the company's new Nintendo Revolution console. Designed like a television remote, the controller's main feature is gyroscope technology; players will be able to control video games by waving the device through the air.

The remote control design is said to target new players who are unfamiliar with traditional video game controllers.

However, many people are not in favor of the design, as it could be considered "too different." IGN has designed a mockup controller shell, a product Nintendo could offer for those who want to use the Revolution in a traditional sense. Another potential disadvantage of the controller is

fatigue, as people may get tired out from holding out the controller for long terms of playing.

The Revolution is expected to be released next year.

Results of the 2005 New Zealand General Election

At 07:00 UTC today (19:00 NZST, local time), the polls closed in the New Zealand general election, 2005.

Labour- has won 50 seats and National Party has won 49 in the 122-member House of Representatives , which has increased by two (from 120) because the Maori Party won four electorate seats, more than its proportion of the party vote entitled it to (Called in MMP an overhang).

Neither the Labour-led coalition or the National Party have won sufficient seats to govern on their own, and will require the backing of a centrist party to govern.

There are 193,348 special votes still to be counted. Official results are expected to be announced on 1 October 2005.

The preliminary results for the 2005 General Election are from the Chief Electoral Office website and its mirror plus TV coverage (One, and TV3)

The official results will be released after inclusion of special votes and re-counting of all votes over the coming two weeks.

Labour	NZ First	National
40.72	5.84	39.63
Greens	United Future	ACT
5.07	2.72	1.52
Progressive	Maori Party	
1.21	1.98	

Results to be announced in the New Zealand 2005 General Election

There is a little under an hour to go until polls close in the 2005 New Zealand General Election.

Both National leader Don Brash and the Prime Minister Helen Clark (Labour) have already cast their votes.

Nearly three million people are eligible to vote.

Turnout has been strong, and turnout results are predicted to be to be higher than the 2002 turnout (77%).

Under New Zealand's MMP system, parties must win either an electorate seat or 5% of the party vote to win seats in the 120-seat parliament.

Voting chaos in Germany expected

Electoral voting experts are expecting a chaos in the German federal election, caused by the by-election in the constituency of Dresden I, in the state of Saxonia. The reason is a bug in the German electoral law, which can force the voters to vote against their political party.

While in 298 of 299 constituencies the federal elections take place on September 18th, a Dresden constituency has to vote on October 2nd, caused by the death of the NPD candidate there, Kerstin Lorenz.

Voters in Germany have two votes, one for a candidate in their constituency and another for the list of a party within one of Germany's sixteen states. The vote which normally defines how

many seats a party gets in the Bundestag is the second vote (party vote). But due to the extreme complexity of Germany's Mixed Member Proportional voting system, voters could actually have "negative vote", as constitutional lawyers call it. This is mainly caused by overhang seats, which occur when a party gains more seats by winning constiencies than they would actually be entitled to according to the Percentage of second votes they get.

Polls suggest that exactly that is going to happen with the CDU in Saxonia. The CDU would then actually have to urge their supporters not to vote for them with their second vote because that could change their overhang seat into a "normal" seat, which the CDU would then be missing in another state where no overhang seats occurred thus reducing their total seats by one.

In the 2002 election nearly 49.000 second votes were cast for the CDU in Dresden I and caused them to lose the seat of Siegfried Meseck. A complaint against the 2002 election at the German constitutional court is still not decided.

Gaza looters destroy Palestine Authority property

Frenzied destruction of empty Jewish settlements in Gaza by Palestinian looters have marred plans for exploiting those facilities to create much needed jobs for the area.

Greenhouses in Gaza have been partly destroyed as crucial equipment was stripped by the Palestinians. Looters took everything from water pumps, plastic sheets, tubing and

equipment. This makes at least one third of the hothouses at least temporarily unusable to feed the families of Gaza and for potential export to Israel.

The facilities were purchased by a group of Jewish-American donors and given to the Palestinian government to encourage economic development. It was initially anticipated over four thousand Palestinians could be given work at the greenhouses, however all offers have been suspended prior to the damage being assessed and repairs arranged.

UN agrees on reform document



United Nations headquarters, New York City.

A deal to reform the United Nations has been signed at the end of a summit marking the organisation's sixtieth anniversary.

The summit was the largest gathering of heads of state ever, with over 150 in attendance. During its three days, Syria was the only one of the 191 represented nations not to address the General Assembly.

The Secretary General, Kofi Annan, had put forward a wide-ranging set of reform proposals encompassing poverty, war, genocide, and reform of the organisation itself.

Of the reforms that got through

the intense diplomatic negotiations, Responsibility to Protect is one of the most significant. Rather than waiting for genocide to be demonstrated, the international community has now agreed to act in cases of crimes against humanity and ethnic cleansing. A peacebuilding commission is also to be established by December 2005.

The opinions expressed by participants varied, with Venezuelan President, Hugo Chavez condemning the document as having been "conceived in darkness". In stark contrast, United States ambassador, John Bolton, praised the document.

Polls Closed in The New Zealand 2005 General Election

At 07:00 UTC today (19:00 NZST, local time), the polls closed in the New Zealand general election, 2005.

Nearly three million people were eligible to vote.

Turn out was strong, turnout results are predicted to be to be higher than the 2002 turn out (77%)

Under New Zealand's MMP system, parties must win either a electorate seat or 5% of the party vote to win a seat in the 120-seat, parliament.

Preliminary election results will be on Wikinews as they come through it is expected that all votes will be counted by 11:30 UTC (23:30 NZST)

The official results are expected to be available by Saturday, 1 October 2005, on the Chief Electoral Office 2005 General Election Results website.

Hubble Space Telescope running on two gyroscopes

NASA's Hubble Space Telescope entered a new era of science operations as September began, when engineers shut down one of the three operational gyroscopes aboard the observatory. The two-gyro mode is expected to preserve the operating life of the third gyro and extend Hubble's science observations through mid-2008, an eight-month extension. Switching off one gyro can preserve it for future use and extended two-gyro operational time for Hubble.



Hubble Space Telescope

The gyros are an integral part of Hubble's complex pointing control system. The system maintains precise pointing of the telescope during science observations. The system was originally designed to operate on three gyros, with another three in reserve. Two of the six are no longer functional.

"Hubble science on two gyros will be indistinguishable from the superb science we have become accustomed to over the years," said senior Hubble scientist David Leckrone at Goddard.

Gyros are the heart, though not the sole component, of Hubble's pointing control system. When only two gyros are available, the observatory experiences an

"unsensed" direction. Using Hubble's Fine Guidance Sensors, engineers were able to "fill in" the missing data normally generated by the third gyro.

Hubble also needs to know its location as it completes one observation and slews across the sky to acquire its next target. This information, previously supplied by the observatory's three gyros, is provided by onboard magnetometers and Fixed Head Star Trackers.

NASA has stated a Space Shuttle servicing mission to Hubble will be considered after two successful return-to-flight missions. The servicing mission would include installing new gyros, batteries, and science instruments to provide several more years of observations.

Navy helping New Orleans pets

The spanish word "tortuga" means "turtle." But in the wake of the New Orleans disaster, the USS Tortuga is helping other animals.

For nearly two weeks now, sailors from Tortuga's repair division have devoted much of their time during this disaster relief operation to ensure the health and comfort of displaced pets.

September 4th, just after the ship moored to a pier at Naval Support Activity (NSA) New Orleans, HT1 (SW) Mark Hanley and DC1(SW) Antony Graves gathered materials from the repair shop on board to construct a kennel along the levee. The facility they made soon became a popular shelter for the homeless animals of the storm.

Tortuga's search and rescue team brought aboard more than 170 displaced citizens during this past

week, providing them with food, water, medical aid and a place to sleep.



Residents and visitor.

Tortuga's makeshift kennel, named 'Camp Milo & Otis,' has housed as many as 90 dogs, eight cats, one rabbit, one guinea pig, a pair of parakeets and a flightless pigeon during the past week of operation.

Currently, there are 14 dogs that remain in Tortuga's care, as many of the other pets have been taken to animal shelters in the area for extra medical attention, or been claimed by their owners upon arrival to Tortuga. The pets that Tortuga has registered have all been in the hands of professional veterinarians assigned to provide expert medical attention to the members of Camp Milo & Otis.

Dr. Kelly Crowdis and Dr. Latina Gambles, both from Tuskegee University and Christian Veterinary Missions, have treated many of the pets for infection, dehydration, malnourishment and broken bones at the Camp during the past week.

"The animals were bathed and assessed before physical interaction with the sailors," said Dr. Crowdis. "They've been given immunizations, antibiotics and medications based on their medical needs."

Dr. Crowdis added, "What these sailors have done on their own has been such a heart-warming thing. As an animal lover, it is so comforting to know that everyone cares about the animals in addition to the human lives rescued from the storm. I'm very pleased with these guys for taking the initiative to construct this kennel."

Graves, Hanley and other members of their division have consistently bathed, fed, walked and given special attention to every dog, every day.

"We play with them," said Hanley. "We take them out of their kennels to give them attention every day. And we'll continue to do that for as long as our ship's mission keeps us here."



USS Tortuga at New Orleans.

September 11th, the Agricultural Center at Louisiana State University donated supplies to "Camp Milo & Otis" in support of Tortuga's efforts to help the animal victims.

"We got medical supplies, bowls, food, cages, leashes, collars, toys, cat litter and cleaning supplies from these people yesterday," said Graves. "It's nice to know that so many people out there have heard about what our ship is doing, and responded by donating so much to

support us the best they can.”

A photo gallery of unclaimed pets is on the USS Tortuga's web site.

As part of disaster plans, the Department of Homeland Security has also deployed Veterinary Medical Assistance Teams to provide medical care to pets and livestock, as well as provide any needed veterinary medical care for search and rescue dogs.

There are over 3,850 animals being sheltered around the state. If someone is looking for a pet they should contact their nearest Humane Society or go online to <http://www.petfinder.org/> . More information is also available at <http://www.vetmed.lsu.edu/>.

Deadly car bomb explosion rocks Beirut

The seemingly endless saga of car bombings continued to haunt citizens of Lebanon on Friday night, when an explosion ripped through multiple cars and buildings, killing one and injuring 19 people.

The blast took place close to midnight near Byblos Bank in the J'eitawi district of Ashrafieh in Beirut.

Major General Ashraf Rifi, commander of the Internal Security Forces, confirmed that the bomb was put in a bag and placed between two cars. Rifi was also able to identify a timer used to detonate the bomb.

The bomb shattered through a nearby coffee shop, killing the shop owner upon impact.

Lebanese security forces were quick to respond. They cordoned the bomb site in a swift and

professional manner, preventing people from tampering with the evidence.

A series of car bombings preceded this latest explosion, predominantly in Christian areas. While the people are losing count of the bombings, no arrests have been made so far. Public confidence in Lebanon's security state is extremely low, understandably so with the lack of closure to virtually identical crimes.

The bombing is the first since the string of arrests of individuals suspected of murdering Premier Rafik Hariri on February 14, 2005. Chief investigator Detlev Mehlis has yet to draw a link between the perpetrators of the Valentines Day massacre, and the subsequent series of car bombings and targeted assassinations since.

The latest exposure of Lebanon's shaky security state comes at a time when the country's two top leaders are absent.

President Emile Lahoud is in New York. Despite repeated calls for Lahoud to cancel his trip, he insisted on attending the U.N. General Assembly, where he delivered a speech today. Prime Minister Fouad Siniora boycotted Lahoud's delegation, declaring it unwise for both the President and Prime Minister to be absent with the current security state.

Despite his previous reservations, Siniora flew to New York on Friday to lead the 'Help Lebanon' conference. The premier will be soliciting international aid to fund political, economic, social and judicial reforms in a post-Syria occupied Lebanon.

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Today in History

96: Nerva (pictured) was appointed by the senate to become Roman Emperor, the first of the Five Good Emperors.

1850: The United States Congress passed the Fugitive Slave Act.

1895: Daniel David Palmer made the first chiropractic adjustment.

1931: The Mukden Incident: A section of the Japanese-built South Manchuria Railway was allegedly destroyed by Chinese terrorists, providing an excuse for the Japanese annexation of Manchuria.

1998: The Internet Corporation for Assigned Names and Numbers (ICANN), a non-profit organization that manages the assignment of domain names and IP addresses in the internet, was established.

September 18 is Mid-Autumn Festival in the Chinese lunar calendar (2005); Independence Day in Chile (1810).

Quote of the Day

"Pleasure is very seldom found where it is sought; our brightest blazes of gladness are commonly kindled by unexpected sparks." ~ Samuel Johnson

