



Top Stories

Thai PM barred from politics, three parties dissolved

Today's ruling from Thailand's Constitutional Court sees the Prime Minister, Somchai Wongsawat, removed from office, barred from politics, and the People's Power Party (PPP) dissolved. The allegations leading to this were of vote buying in the last election.

.tel top-level domain launched

Domain names with .tel top-level domain have been put on sale for businesses and organizations purchasing their trademarks. It is intended to be used for pages that contain contact details for individuals and companies, although websites using this domain will not be available for everyone to purchase until March 24 of next year.

Number of Zimbabwe cholera deaths nears 500



Image Credit: Rei-artur GFDL/CC-BY

A cholera outbreak in the African country of Zimbabwe has killed almost 500

people since August, according to the World Health Organization (WHO). The WHO said that the outbreak affected most areas of the country, and that some remote areas had seen fatality rates increase by as much as

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30%. Zimbabwe's Ministry of Health reported 484 deaths from 11,735 cases since the outbreak began

Wikipedia Current Events

In the Thai political crisis, the Constitutional Court dissolves three parties in the ruling coalition, and Prime Minister Somchai Wongsawat resigns.

- A cholera outbreak in Zimbabwe spreads, with hundreds dead and over 10,000 people infected since August 2008.
- Rioting over disputed election results kills more than 381 people and injures hundreds in Jos, Nigeria.
- Attacks at the Taj Mahal Palace Hotel and several other locations in Mumbai, India, kill 183 people and injure hundreds.
- The people of Greenland pass a referendum regarding greater autonomy from Denmark.
- Brazilian officials declare a state of emergency as flooding in the Southern state of Santa Catarina causes at least 116 deaths and forces the evacuation of over 78,000 people.
- The PAIGC wins a majority of seats in the National People's Assembly after legislative elections in Guinea-Bissau.

Car accident was an act of God, says driver

A man from San Antonio, Texas in the United States, is being charged

with assault with a deadly weapon and aggravated assault after he ran a woman off the road. The driver who caused the accident told police that God told him to do it.

Police say that Michael E. Schwab claimed that while he was driving on U.S. Highway 281 in Texas, God told him to run the unnamed woman off the road because she "wasn't driving right" and "needed to be taken off the road." He slammed into her car at over 100 miles per hour, spinning both vehicles into the median.

"God must have been with them, 'cause any other time, the severity of this crash, it would have been a fatal," said Kyle Coleman, a spokesman for the Bexar County sheriff's department.

Police say that Schwab was not drunk, and they found no illegal drugs inside his car. He is expected to undergo a psychiatric evaluation. Neither of the individuals suffered serious injuries.

God has faced scrutiny in the past, including a recent lawsuit that was thrown out of court. A judge in Nebraska, USA had dismissed a lawsuit in October that was filed against the higher power. In 2007, Nebraska state Senator Ernie Chambers, who represents legislative District 11 in North Omaha, filed the lawsuit alleging God was responsible for "widespread death, destruction and terrorization of millions upon

millions of the Earth's inhabitants."

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This top-level domain is operated by Telnic.

Khashayar Mahdavi, CEO of Telnic, commented on the new domain.

"The launch of .tel represents the most significant innovation in the domain name system since the advent of .com," he stated. "Essentially, the .tel offers businesses of all sizes a fast, efficient, adaptable and intelligent service that will let customers interact with them in any way they want. Anyone that wants to communicate better with their customers should purchase a .tel."

Describing today's launch, Telnic stated that currently "owners and licensees of trademarks registered with national effect may apply." The organisation also requires that "trademarks must have been applied for prior to 30 May 2008 and registered prior to the date the Sunrise application is submitted. Applications may be based on both word and figurative [device] marks that consist exclusively or predominantly of words."

According to a Google search for all sites using .tel, there are already 581 pages using the new top level domain.

Republican Senator from Georgia wins run-off election

United States Republican incumbent Senator Saxby Chambliss won reelection over Democrat Jim Martin in the state of Georgia in a run-off election on Tuesday, taking 57.5% of the popular vote to Martin's 42.5%. The run-off occurred because neither Martin nor Chambliss received a majority in the general election in November.

"People all around the world truly had their eyes on Georgia, and you have delivered tonight a strong message to the world that conservative Georgian values matter," Saxby Chambliss said in his victory speech. "Now comes the hard work."

"Tonight, the voters of Georgia have spoken," Jim Martin said in his concession speech. "I accept the decision that has been made."

The election was widely watched because a win by Martin would have been crucial for the Democrats to achieve a supermajority in the Senate allowing them to terminate filibusters. Under the rules of the United States Senate, senators can prolong debate indefinitely unless 60 out of the 100 senators vote to close the matter.

Without Martin, the Democrats will have 59 or 58 senators. The exact number depends upon an ongoing recount in Minnesota between Republican incumbent Norm Coleman and Democratic challenger Al Franken.

In the past, filibusters have frequently involved coalitions of senators, and votes to stop filibusters have rarely been precisely along party lines.

The contest between Martin and Chambliss featured heavy involvement by major politicians and celebrities. Former vice-presidential candidate Sarah Palin campaigned for Chambliss, while former President Bill Clinton and the rapper Ludacris campaigned for Martin.

Local council in Australia rejects McDonald's development plan

The development application for a McDonald's restaurant at Minyama, on Queensland's Sunshine Coast in Australia, has been rejected by the Sunshine Coast Regional Council.

"We knocked back a Hungry Jack's on Nicklin Way because of the nuisance code," said divisional councilor Chris Thompson. "We already have a 24-hour McDonald's at Mooloolaba, only one kilometre away, and there are already [anti-social] issues at that site."

Local residents previously vowed to fight any McDonald's development at the proposed site due to the risk of anti-social behavior. Protest group spokesman John Meyer-Gleaves was "over the moon".

"It's not often you knock Maccas [McDonald's] over," he said.

Mayor Bob Abbot said Minyama was in some ways more suitable than Mooloolaba. However, he was concerned about the proximity to a residential estate.

The rejection is expected to be ratified at an ordinary meeting of the council on Thursday.

"It needs to be endorsed or ratified by council at its ordinary meeting on Thursday and then it will

become a statutory decision of council," Chris Thompson said. "I'm reasonably pleased with the outcome."

British Airways considers possible merger with Qantas
British Airways, the flag carrier of the United Kingdom, has stated that it is considering a possible merger with the Australian airline Qantas Airways.

In a statement, British Airways said that, if done, the merger will create a dual-listed company in London and Australia. It also added that there was "no guarantee that any transaction will be forthcoming."

Shares in British Airways rose 14% higher after the news on Tuesday. Qantas shares rose as much as 9.3 percent on Wednesday

United States newspapers see record drop in advert sales
According to figures released by the Newspaper Association of America on Tuesday, newspapers in the United States saw a record 18% drop in advertising revenue in the third quarter of this year.

It said that total print advert revenue dropped to US\$8.2 billion from \$10.2 billion in quarter a year ago.

Revenue from ads online also fell 3 percent to just under \$750 million from \$773 million the previous year.

Venice hit by flood
Venice, Italy suffered from its worst floods in 22 years on Monday.

Water stood more than 150 centimetres deep before it began to recede. According to city officials, the tide peaked at 61

inches, 21 inches past the 40-inch flood mark, as heavy winds pushed the sea into the city.

Alarms were set off at half past six in the morning to alert residents, however, many people were still taken by surprise, as the authorities had not predicted such a high level of water.

This is Venice's fourth highest tide since the city started keeping records in 1872. The record was 76 inches, set in 1966.

Today in History

306 - Martyrdom of Saint Barbara.

1829 - In the face of fierce opposition, British governor Lord William Bentinck issues a regulation declaring that all who abetted suttee in India were guilty of culpable homicide.

1872 - The crewless American ship Mary Celeste is found by the British brig Dei Gratia (the ship was abandoned for 9 days but was only slightly damaged).

1918 - U.S. President Woodrow Wilson sails for the World War I peace talks in Versailles, becoming the first US president to travel to Europe while in office.

1992 - Somali Civil War: President George H. W. Bush orders 28,000 US troops to Somalia in Northeast Africa.

Quote of the Day

Is there any religion whose followers can be pointed to as distinctly more amiable and trustworthy than those of any other? If so, this should be enough. I find the nicest and best people generally profess no religion at all, but are ready to like the best men of all religions. ~ Samuel Butler

Word of the Day

parkour n
1. An athletic discipline, in

which practitioners traverse any environment in the most efficient way possible using their physical abilities.

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