



Top Stories

Former Chilean president Pinochet dies at 91

Former Chilean Head of State, General Augusto Pinochet, 91, has died today in Santiago de Chile's Military Hospital at 2:15 p.m. (1715 GMT).

Canadians to elect senate for first time

For the first time ever Canadian Prime Minister Stephen Harper has proposed a bill that says Canadians will elect the Senate of Canada. The PM will still appoint senators, but will only appoint those who are elected by popular vote.

Featured story

British computer scientist's new "nullity" idea provokes reaction from mathematicians

Reading university teacher Dr. James Anderson's claim that he has devised a number system that handles the "divide by zero" problem has been challenged by academics and bloggers, who have also criticised the BBC for its reporting on the claim.

Wikipedia Current Events

- Bomb and mortar attacks kill 23 Iraqis and wounds at least 52 in Baghdad and Kirkuk.
- The Dutch care-taker government of prime minister Jan Peter Balkenende is in crisis after a parliamentary motion of disapproval was passed against immigration minister Rita

Wikipedia Current Events

Verdonk.

• Malaysia crowns its thirteenth king - the second youngest ever - in a traditional ceremony in Kuala Lumpur. Sultan Mizan Zainal Abidin, 44, takes over from outgoing King Tuanku Syed Sirajuddin, 63, whose five-year term as monarch ended on December 12.

• In a survey conducted by the Social Opinion Center of Uzbekistan, 93.7% of respondents said they opposed religious extremism and 3.9% said religious freedom is restricted, and but only 39.4% said they had conditions that "satisfied their religious needs."

• 78 year old assisted suicide advocate Dr Jack Kevorkian (known as Dr. Death) is to be paroled in June.

U.S. Senator Tim Johnson suffers stroke

Tim Johnson, a United States Democratic Senator from South Dakota, suffered a stroke at about 11:30 this morning. The seriousness of his condition has not been disclosed; however, he was transported to George Washington University Hospital by ambulance, where he is still receiving treatment.

Currently, the US Senate is controlled by the Republican Party; however, when the Senate reconvenes after the recent midterm elections the Democrats will have a one senator majority.

Under the 17th amendment to the U.S. Constitution, state legislatures can give their governor the power to appoint someone else to take over, but this power can only be used in cases where the senator vacancies his seat. Historically, this extended to death or resignation, but serious illness does not count.

Should Johnson die or resign the Republican governor, Mike Rounds, will likely appoint a Republican in Johnson's place. This would bring the Senate to a 50-50 tie for organizational purposes and give Vice President Dick Cheney the tie-breaking vote, thus letting the Republicans control the Senate. This appointment would last until the end of Johnson's term, in 2008.

The results of the Antiquorum's auction of vintage and modern timepieces

The Antiquorum's auction that took place on 6th and 7th of December in New York resulted in the sale of some new and old timepieces. The sales achieved a total of more than \$ 7,250,000. Not less than 396 timepieces were sold at the auction. This was the Antiquorum USA's second best auction.

About 83% of both vintage and contemporary timepieces were purchased by various collectors worldwide. The estimate resulting of all the watches and clocks that were sold at New York's Antiquorum was 115%. The most active bidding was the telephone

and in-house ones. There were also 284 international bidders that registered themselves on the Internet.

The most competitive bidders were from the United States, Canada, Russia, and China. There were also active bidders from Australia and some European countries.

"This is an auspicious beginning for Antiquorum USA's headquarters in the heart of New York City" said the Chairman and at the same time the Founder of Antiquorum Auctioneers, Osvaldo Patrizzi.

This is how Antiquorum proved to be one of the best auction houses for watches and clocks. The highest bid - \$ 372,400, was given to the creation of the Swiss watch manufacturer Audemars Piguet entitled "Grande Complication Automatique". The auction saw the sale of timepieces from some other famous watch manufacturers such as: Rolex, Patek Philippe, Cartier and Omega.

New Zealand local loop unbundled

The New Zealand government has announced that the Telecommunications Amendment Bill, which will make Telecom unbundle the 'local loop', has passed in parliament only six months after it was introduced. The bill was opposed by two member of parliaments while 119 voted for the proposed changes.

Unbundling the local loop means that Telecom, New Zealand's telecommunications monopoly company, will open its lines to competitors and provide "naked DSL", which some say will lead to equal and fair competition in the Internet sector. The Honourable David Cunliffe, minister of

communications, said that "We now have a clear, firm mandate from the people of New Zealand. Kiwis are demanding fast, 'all you can eat' broadband, which this legislation is designed to deliver."

Hon Cunliffe said that history has been made with the new bill as it will bring New Zealanders faster and better broadband. "The passing of the Telecommunications Amendment Bill marks the beginning of a new era."

"What some people said couldn't be done is being done. What some people said wouldn't work is being given the opportunity to work with an overwhelming majority. The bill equips New Zealand for the new digital age— an age where the smart use of technology will determine our continued prosperity as a country and make economic transformation a reality."

The bill will also enable Minister Cunliffe and the Commerce Commission the powers to split Telecom into three different division, one each for retail, business and network after public consultation. The Telecommunications Commissioner will also have more power to implement the changes and monitor the implementation.

The bill will ensure that consumers do not have to purchase a phone account when signing up for an Internet account; before the bill was passed, a NZ\$10 fee was added to the bill if the phone account was not with the Internet provider.

"I welcome the fact that the telecommunications industry has already responded to the reforms in this legislation and is working collectively towards a digital future where Kiwis can realize their

economic, social and cultural aspirations," Hon Cunliffe said.

Today in History

1896 - Glasgow Subway, the third oldest metro system in the world, began operations in Glasgow, Scotland.

1911 - Norwegian explorer Roald Amundsen and his team became the first people to reach the South Pole.

1918 - King Väinö I of Finland renounced the throne after the defeat of the German Empire in World War I.

1962 - Mariner 2 became the world's first spacecraft to successfully fly by Venus.

1995 - The Dayton Agreement was signed in Paris, France to end the Yugoslav wars.

Quote of the Day

My deepest impulses are optimistic; an attitude that seems to me as spiritually necessary and proper as it is intellectually suspect.

~ Ellen Willis

Word of the Day

pectinate; adj

1. Resembling a comb.

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