



Top Stories

Earthquake kills thousands in Indonesia

Over 2,500 people have been killed and thousands more injured in a 6.2 magnitude earthquake in Indonesia.

Iraq roadside bomb kills four, including two journalists

A roadside bomb in the Iraq capital Baghdad has killed four people, including two journalists working for television network CBS.

Featured story

Keep your eyes peeled for cosmic debris

Stardust@home will use distributed computing which will allow participants to discover interstellar dust. Andrew Westphal is the director of Stardust@home and Wikinews interviewed him.

http://en.wikinews.org/wiki/Keep_your_eyes_peeled_for_cosmic_debris

Wikipedia Current Events

- In Toronto, Canada, a labour dispute at the Toronto Transit Commission shuts down the city's public transit system unexpectedly, leaving commuters stranded.
- In the Italian municipal elections, centre-left incumbent mayors Walter Veltroni, Sergio Chiamparino and Rosa Russo Iervolino lead in Rome, Turin and Naples, respectively. In the regional election of Sicily,

Wikipedia Current Events

incumbent president Salvatore Cuffaro of the House of Freedoms leads over Rita Borsellino.

- In Kabul, Afghanistan, thousands demonstrate against the United States after several civilians were killed in a car accident in which 3 US humvees collided with a traffic jam.
- The Times reports on investigations into an incident in al-Haditha, Iraq, where US Marines are accused of having covered up the murder of 24 civilians after a soldier had been killed in an attack.
- The Lebanese-based Hezbollah group threatens Israel with Iranian-made rockets.

Malaysia bans film "The Last Communist"

Malaysia – Manjit Kaur of the Malaysian Star reports the controversial documentary The Last Communist or Lelaki Komunis Terakhir has finally been banned by the Home Ministry under the Film Censorship Act 1991.

The film was passed without any cuts by the National Film Censorship board in March but the Home Ministry retracted the approval ten days before film was scheduled to start screening.

The film is described as a "semi-musical documentary" and is inspired by the leader of the disbanded Malayan Communist Party, Chin Peng and the Malayan Emergency during which over ten

thousand Malayan and British troops and civilians lost their lives.

The film features "interviews with the people in the towns [Peng] lived from birth to national independence" that is "interspersed with specially composed songs in the mould of old-fashioned propaganda films." The film made its world debut at the Berlin Film Festival. It also appeared at this year's Seattle International Film Festival and the London Film Festival.

The ban comes after Berita Harian, a conservative Malay daily, printed a series of articles critical of the film and the Censorship board. In the first article, the reporters ask government ministers and professors to comment on the impact of the film.

Lebanese Hezbollah militants threaten Israel with long range rockets

According to the Israeli newspaper Haaretz, the Lebanese militant group Hezbollah has new long-range rockets. These replace the short-term rockets that Hezbollah fire occasionally on Israel, since 1995. The last rocket attack was on May 28, 2006. A few rockets were fired toward a military base on the Meyron Mountain, about 10 km. away from the Northern border. The base was damaged, and one soldier was injured.

The long-range artillery rocket Zelzal-2 is made in Iran. If obtained by Hezbollah and fired from south Lebanon the rockets

are capable of hitting targets and causing damage on most of Israel's large cities, including Tel-Aviv and southern center Be'er Sheva.

Iraq roadside bomb kills four, including two journalists

A roadside bomb in the Iraq capital Baghdad has killed four people, including two journalists working for television network CBS. The two journalists, cameraman Paul Douglas and soundman James Brolan, both British, were embedded with the American 4th Infantry Division and were on a routine patrol when a nearby car packed with explosives was detonated. A US army officer and an Iraqi interpreter were also killed. CBS correspondent Kimberly Dozier, who the journalists were working with, was seriously injured and was flown to a U.S. military hospital to receive surgery.

CBS President Sean McManus said it was "a devastating loss".

Fan resurrects sitcom

A fan who set up his own company and bought the rights of his favourite sitcom has today released the DVD.

Craig Robins, 41, was so frustrated that *Joking Apart*, originally shown on BBC Two in 1993, had not been released that he secured the rights from the BBC and did it himself. As a video technician, he was able to produce the DVD, and has established a label to sell the product.

He is thought to be the first individual to have achieved such a feat.

Joking Apart was written by Steven Moffat, best known for writing *Coupling* and some

episodes of the new *Doctor Who*. It is based upon the collapse of Moffat's first marriage.

The show stars Robert Bathurst, who played David in *Cold Feet*, and Fiona Gillies, who appeared in *Peak Practice*. The cast say that they are often approached by people who remember the show. Bathurst, Gillies, Moffat and co-star Tracie Bennett recorded interviews and a commentary for the disc in central London in January.

The disc, available from today, is being distributed via Robins' website. He hopes to release further forgotten classics.

Moffat says: "I would be absolutely delighted if this was a success."

Indian Supreme Court issues notice to government over quota issue

A vacation bench of the Indian Supreme Court comprising Justices Arijit Pasayat and L.S. Pantia issued a notice to the Central Government questioning the basis for the government's decision to reserve 27% of the seats in universities for members of the Other Backward Class group of castes. The notice also asked the government to explain how this move would be implemented without depriving meritorious students from the "forward" castes their fair chance at securing seats. The court also wanted the Centre to explain the basis on which castes would be classified as "backward" or "forward".

The government has been granted eight weeks time by the Bench to file an affidavit in regard to this notice. The apex court also said that it would examine the effects of this policy, which, the petitioner

said, would divide the country on the basis of caste thereby threatening India's integrity. The Bench said that the questions posed to it had serious social and political significance and would hence be dealt with appropriately. The two petitions were filed by Shiv Khera and advocate Ashok Kumar Thakur. Additional Solicitor General Gopal Subramianam, who was representing the respondents, accepted the notice and appreciated the Court's view that agitating medical students should return to work in the interest of the patients.

The medical students welcomed this move and have decided to start running parallel outpatient clinics from tomorrow onwards. They have however clarified that their movement will continue despite the government's assurances that the number of seats in institutes will be increased. The main opposition party, the BJP has said that it supports the reservation policy, but that financially disadvantaged students from the "forward" castes should also be given consideration.

Boeing delivers final 717 to AirTran, ending Douglas era

Boeing Commercial Airplanes on Tuesday delivered the final 717 jet ever built to AirTran Airways in ceremonies in Long Beach, California, bringing production of McDonnell Douglas jets to an end.

"AirTran Airways would like to thank the many Boeing employees for their hard work and dedication over the years and enabling us to build a world-class aircraft fleet that is unparalleled in the aviation industry," said Joe Leonard, Chairman and Chief Operating Officer of AirTran Airways.

The final Boeing 717 was the

15,599th plane built by the Long Beach plant, the original home of Douglas Aircraft and McDonnell Douglas. It also marked the end of the popular DC-9 family of jets, which has sold over 2,400 units over its 41-year history.

In 1995, McDonnell Douglas introduced the MD-95, which later became the Boeing 717 when McDonnell Douglas merged with Boeing in 1996. The 717 had suffered from slow sales throughout its history, with 155 planes ordered. In January 2005, Boeing announced that it would cancel the 717 program after completing all outstanding orders.

The 717 program's demise leaves the C-17 military cargo jet as the only remaining jet aircraft built in California. Some workers from the 717 program have transferred to the C-17 program. Its future is also uncertain as Boeing's contract to produce the aircraft expires in 2008.

Australian woman dies in backburning operation near Bathurst

A 42 year-old woman has died following an accident during a backburning operation on a farm at Black Forest, near Bathurst in New South Wales' central west. According to police the woman died after suffering burns to 98 percent of her body.

A backburn is carried out to reduce the amount of material which could fuel a fire during the bushfire season. In Australia, it is common for these backburns to be carried out this time of year, in preparation for the fire season.

At around 2PM on Sunday, the woman and a group of people were conducting the backburn on the property when the wind

suddenly changed direction. The woman tried to move out of the fire's path but tripped when she was climbing a fence where she was engulfed by the fire.

The woman was rushed to Bathurst Base Hospital before being airlifted to the Royal North Shore Hospital in Sydney where she died at 1:30AM this morning.

Opposition should push for Australian federal electoral reform: Whitlam

Former Australian Prime Minister, Gough Whitlam has attacked the Labor party's stance on electoral reform during a speech at the opening of Labor member Kevin Rudd's new office in Brisbane.

Mr Whitlam said that the Australian opposition's recent record of defending the rights of citizens and improving the functioning of governance was "abysmal".

He also said that the Labor party seemed to have ignored the fact that the incumbent government has an advantage in determining election dates. "They don't seem to care that the national elections are held on the date which the incumbent prime minister calculates will give the biggest advantage to his party," he said.

"In this way, he restricts the capacity of the alternative government to choose candidates, prepare policies and plan campaigns."

As well, Mr Whitlam voiced his belief that Labor should push for fixed four-year terms, much the same as those which operate in some Australian states.

Mr Whitlam said the joint standing committee on electoral affairs'

report last year, which found that election terms should be fixed for three-years at the least could be used to push for reform. Mr Whitlam added that it has long been Labor party policy for Australia to have fixed four-year terms for both houses of parliament.

Mr Whitlam said the issue of electoral reform was urgent. "Referendum proposals must be submitted to the electors... not less than two nor more than six months after they have been passed by an absolute majority in each house of the Parliament. The issue is urgent."

Mr Whitlam also warned that if Labor won the next election that it would be frustrated by a coalition majority in the senate. Senators are elected for six-year terms with half of them due for re-election every three-years.

NSW school maintenance a "disgrace": Opposition

New South Wales opposition leader, Peter Debnam has called the maintenance backlog in NSW schools a disgrace following an announcement by the Iemma government to spend AUD\$120 million over four-years.

Mr Debnam challenged the government to fix the problem before the election in March next year and said that the plan was a "fraud".

In 2005, the NSW Auditor-General released a report which found that there was a \$116 million maintenance backlog in schools across the state. It found that there were 1,000 outstanding maintenance jobs, ranging from leaking roofs and fraying carpets to classrooms in need of paint across the states' 2,224

government-owned schools.

On Sunday, NSW Premier, Morris Iemma announced that his government will be spending \$120 million over a four-year period to clear the backlog. During the announcement, he admitted that the government needed to do more to clear the backlog. "It is part of our plan to ensure our children have the best possible education and the best possible learning environment" he said.

Teachers have said that the level of funding and time frame were not enough to clear a backlog spanning 10 years. President of the NSW Teachers Federation, Maree O'Halloran said "Why should children have to wait four years for overdue maintenance work which forms the maintenance backlog?"

"In 2005, the Auditor-General identified a \$115 million maintenance backlog and Professor Tony Vinson called for an additional \$90 million dollars for maintenance per year, over two years." said Ms O'Halloran.

Opposition education spokesperson, Brad Hazzard said that the government's plan is a fraud and that the reason students are leaving school is because of the out-dated infrastructure.

"The announcement of extra money is a fraud because it is over four years," said Mr Hazzard.

"The State Government has shown no foresight about the major problem that causes ... students to walk away from the public school system annually - 1960 infrastructure in the 21st century." said Mr Hazzard.

Libertarians flock to New Hampshire for annual festival

Less than five years ago, a Yale University grad student by the name of Jason Sorens wrote an essay for The Libertarian Enterprise, a libertarian news and commentary site published by science-fiction author L. Neil Smith. Frustrated by a lack of political clout, Sorens proposed that libertarians - people who are socially tolerant and fiscally conservative - could move to a single state and have a much greater impact. Sorens received more than 200 messages in response, and the Free State Project was born.

The strategy has matured since that announcement, but the core idea remains intact. In a state with a population of 1.3 million, 20,000 activists can break beyond the novelty value of American third-party viewpoints.

As of this writing, over 7100 people have made that original pledge. This year, spurred by the success of early movers, a second pledge was created. Known as the "First 1000", this pledge has a strict timeline for success; 1000 people must agree, by the end of 2006, to move to New Hampshire by the end of 2008. Like the original statement of intent, should the signers fall short of the goal, none of them are obligated to follow through. As of today, nearly 300 people have signed on to the First 1000.

Most Free Staters, or "Porcupines", (so named for the group's mascot), are known to each other only by way of communicating over the Internet. Once per year, they shed their online monikers and meet in real life, at the annual Porcupine Freedom Festival, known affectionately as "Porcfest".

Porcfest '05 brought an estimated 500 freedom activists from around the country, including former Presidential candidate Michael Badnarik. While the press attended the event, Free Staters used the festival as an opportunity to socialize and relax.

According to the agenda, the group intends to have a variety of activities ranging from activist education, to hiking, and just socializing with other porcupines.

The festival runs from June 23rd through July 1st in Lancaster, New Hampshire. More information on the movement and the annual festival at the group's website.

Tauranga man charged with the robbery of a bank

Adam Leatham, 22, was arrested on Saturday for armed robbery of a Cherrywood Westpac bank branch last week, Tuesday May 23.

Leatham appeared in Tauranga District Court this morning for five charges relating to the robbery.

Police say that he was wearing orange overalls, a balaclava and a pistol when he stole \$6300 from Cherrywood at about 3.15 pm.

Outside the bank he was trying to hijack a car, he threatened an old man with his pistol, eventually stealing a black Mitsubishi Mirage. The car was found later around Fairmont Terrace, Glenn Terrace or Ridge Street area, abandoned.

He will be back in court Friday.

Police are wanting any information from anyone who saw "suspicious activity" around the bank on Tuesday, around 2.00 pm.

Today in History

1434 - Taborite forces led by Prokop the Great were decisively defeated in the Battle of Lipany, effectively ending the Hussite Wars in Bohemia.

1536 - Henry VIII of England married Jane Seymour, a lady-in-waiting to his first two queen consorts.

1911 - The first Indianapolis 500 open-wheel automobile race was held at the Indianapolis Motor Speedway in Speedway, Indiana.

1967 - Chief Emeka Ojukwu took office as the first President of Biafra, a secessionist state in southeastern Nigeria.

1989 - Goddess of Democracy, a statue made mostly of polystyrene foam and papier-mâché, was erected by student protestors in Tiananmen Square, Beijing.

Quote of the Day

"I bow before the authority of special men because it is imposed on me by my own reason. I am conscious of my own inability to grasp, in all its detail, and positive development, any very large portion of human knowledge. The greatest intelligence would not be equal to a comprehension of the whole... I receive and I give — such is human life. Each directs and is directed in his turn.

Therefore there is no fixed and constant authority, but a continual exchange of mutual, temporary, and, above all, voluntary authority and subordination." ~ Mikhail Bakunin

Word of the Day

contrite; *adj*

Definition

1. Sincerely penitent or feeling regret or sorrow, especially for one's own actions.

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