



Top Stories

NASA observes largest supernova on record



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President-elect Sarkozy promises change for France



Nicolas Sarkozy has been elected as the 23rd President of the French Republic with 53% of the vote. France and the world reacts. Sarkozy outlines policies.

Featured story

Iran's leader appoints new members to cultural council



The Supreme Leader of Iran, Ali Khamenei, appointed 22 members to the main body that determines the cultural policy of Iran. The body is known as the Supreme Council of the Cultural Revolution.

Wikipedia Current Events

- 6 men from the former Yugoslavia and the Middle East are arrested in a plot to attack Fort Dix, New Jersey to "kill as many soldiers as possible".
- Former US President Bill Clinton announces a deal with drug companies to lower the price of anti-AIDS drugs in Third World countries.
- Andre Boisclair resigns as the leader of the Parti Quebecois.
- The Treasurer of Australia Peter Costello delivers his twelfth budget with significant tax cuts and increases in government spending on education and health.
- The Movement for the Emancipation of the Niger Delta blows up three oil pipelines in the Niger delta in the south of Nigeria.
- Home rule returns to Northern Ireland. DUP leader Ian Paisley and Sinn Féin's Martin McGuinness take office as First Minister and Deputy First Minister, respectively.
- A suicide bomber kills at least 10 people and injures many more in an attack on the Shi'ite city of Kufa in Iraq.
- Tomislav Nikolić, the temporary leader of the Serbian Radical Party, is elected as the Speaker of the National Assembly of Serbia.
- Former Prime Minister of Australia Gough Whitlam gives evidence to the coronial inquest into the death of the Balibo Five in Balibo, East Timor in October 1975.

Wikipedia Current Events

- Scotland's John Higgins beats England's Mark Selby in the World Snooker Championship 2007 final by 18-13 frames.
- Hebrew University archaeologist Ehud Netzer lays claim to discovering the tomb of Herod the Great in Herodium.

NCAA Sports: Mid-Con name to be dropped in favor of Summit League

A major change for one of the United States Division I NCAA member conferences was accidentally leaked to the news media a week early. It appears the Mid-Continent Conference has secretly been planning to change its name to the "Summit League," for some time, according to a television report by Indiana's News Center in Fort Wayne.

The secret was planned by the league officials to be revealed in a May 15 news conference, when the Mid-Con was also scheduled to unveil a new conference logo.

The local television station noticed the change when new 2007-2008 telephone directories were released for Fort Wayne by Verizon Communications. It included an advertisement stating that IPFW, the local NCAA Division I university, would be joining the "Summit League" as a member school in 2007. Previously the university said it was joining the Mid-Continent Conference as of July 1, 2007.

According to the television report,

when asked to clarify the matter, IPFW confirmed that the Mid-Con will be changing its name to "Summit League," that the decision had been made some time ago. According to the report, the "Summit League" moniker will take effect in June.

Dunedin Subway manager sacks New Zealand worker for sharing drink, lays theft charges

A worker at a Dunedin, New Zealand Subway has been sacked from her full-time job for "serious misconduct". Her manager sacked her when, she shared some of her free Diet Coke with a friend in distress. After being sacked, she was also charged with the theft of two NZ\$4.00 drinks by the New Zealand Police.

Jackie Lang, the employee, was entitled to a free drink while she was working at the George Street franchise of Subway. "They are allowed endless amounts of soft drink if they work there. Her friend came in all upset and distressed, so Jackie took a break, poured a drink and sat down with her," Bill Clark, from the Autonomous Workers Union, said.

Mr. Clark said it was the most vicious action that a company has done in relation to the offence that he has had to deal with, a view shared with Ms Lang. Ms Lang said, "I shared my drink with my friend. I was only trying to comfort her. Isn't it what most people would do? I mean, I wasn't trying to do anything wrong. I did what I thought any person would do in the situation."

Ms. Lang was suspended for two weeks following the incident after management was shown video footage on March 19. After being suspended she filed a personal

grievance case, at which point the franchise owners went to the police. She was subsequently arrested and put in jail for two hours 20 days after being suspended. The video shows that Ms. Lang took a break following her friend coming into the workplace. She then shares her drink, gets a free refill and leaves it with her friend while she continued her work.

At 12.00 p.m. (NZST) the Otago University Young Labour branch organised a protest, starting at the university and finishing at the George Street Subway. President of the university's Young Labour branch, Ashley Murchison said, "I'm disappointed that any employer would treat their workers like this, especially over a matter this trivial, which could have easily been resolved internally."

Before the incident, Jackie Lang had a clean employment history and no criminal record, which is why she is surprised the case wasn't handled internally. "It's a human thing to do to offer a drink as comfort. If Subway doesn't like it, they have internal procedures to deal with that," she said.

Prior to the protest, Young Labour announced a nationwide boycott of Subway, though promoting a focus on Dunedin.

The franchise co-owner, Rob Nicol, has refused to comment on the matter stating it is a matter between herself, her business partner, the police and the employee.

Ms. Lang will appear in Dunedin District Court later this month.

Parti Québécois leader steps down

André Boisclair announced his

resignation today as leader of the Parti Québécois (PQ). He said he would stay as an MNA for his riding of Pointe-aux-Trembles in Montreal, Quebec. An interim leader has yet to be named.

"I want to thank from the bottom of my heart everyone who has supported me up until now," he said. "I will no longer lead the Parti Quebecois. I was honored to represent the Parti Quebecois's members."

His party finished third in the 2007 Quebec general election winning 36 seats in the province sparking rumours of a Confidence Motion reviewing his leadership. His resignation also follows last Friday's Radio-Canada broadcast talking of rumours of federal Bloc Québécois leader Gilles Duceppe interested in going federal with the Parti Québécois, if Boisclair stepped down or a Confidence Motion was proposed. Both party's share the some ideology aimed at separating Quebec from Canada.

Speaking outside the House of Commons Tuesday, Duceppe remained coy about his own plans. "We are here to pay homage to Andre Boisclair. It is not for me to make a decision," said Duceppe. "He made a noble decision in the best interests of the sovereigntist movement," continued Duceppe, in reference to Boisclair's resignation.

Boisclair, 41, started his career when, just at 23, represented the Quebec riding of Gouin with the Parti Québécois in 1984, becoming the youngest member ever elected to the Quebec National Assembly. He later became a cabinet minister twice; from 1996 to 2001 under PQ premier Lucien Bouchard and again from 2001 to 2003 PQ premier Bernard Landry. He resigned in August 2004 in order to attend

Harvard University's John F. Kennedy School of Government, attending speeches by Michael Ignatieff. On the 2005 Parti Québécois leadership election Boisclair became the sixth leader of the party.

He admitted to using cocaine during his time in the legislature. Boisclair is also the first ever publicly gay politician in Quebec.

Tajik president meets Khamenei in Tehran

Leader of the Islamic Revolution, Ayatollah Sayyed Ali Khamenei, received the president of Tajikistan, Imomali Rakhman, in Tehran today. Their meeting focused on expanding bilateral ties between the two nations and trilateral talks among the three Persian-speaking nations. Moreover, both heads of state expressed the desire to expand ties with the Islamic world.

Khamenei stated that the past of Iran and Tajikistan are intertwined religiously and culturally. This is because Tajikistan was part of Iran before the late 1700s. Nevertheless, Khamenei said the the true religion of Islam is the key to Islamic unity among all of the Islamic Countries. Rakhman agreed with Khamenei and said, "Enemies of Islam and the Islamic Republic are not willing to see the expanding levels of ties between Iran and the regional countries or the world of Islam, nevertheless, Iran's unity-inspiring policies besides its progress has become source of pride and opportunities for the region and the whole world of Islam. "

The Tajik president also said that should Iran, Afghanistan, and Tajikistan become linked through railway, then the flow of many resources to Central Asia and China will be made possible due to Iran's

access to the Persian Gulf and beyond.

Later, President Rakhman met with Gholam-Ali Haddad-Adel, the speaker of the Islamic Consultative Assembly of Iran, and expressed support for the nuclear program of Iran," It is the legitimate right of the Islamic Republic of Iran to benefit from peaceful nuclear energy.

Six arrested in plot against US army base in New Jersey

Federal investigators in the United States have arrested six men on Monday evening on charges of conspiracy to kill US servicemen. The men are alleged to be members of an Islamic radical terror cell who were planning a heavily armed attack against soldiers at the United States Army facility at Fort Dix in New Jersey.

The US Attorney's Office said that some of the men were living illegally in the US, while others were legal immigrants. It identified the men as Dritan Duka, Eljvir Duka, Shain Duka, Serdar Tatar, Mohamad Shnewer and Agron Abdullahu. They were said to be four ethnic Albanians (from the former Yugoslavia), one from Turkey, and the sixth man from Jordan.

Reportedly, the FBI had the men under surveillance for 16 months as they trained with both paintball guns and real weapons in the the Poconos Mountains area of Pennsylvania. The men video-taped their training and brought the tapes to a camera store to be copied to DVD. The camera store owner alerted the FBI, which then began its investigation.

The Star-Ledger reports that the men were lured by an FBI informant into a sting operation to

meet with an arms dealer where they wanted to purchase five AK-47 automatic machine guns and three M-16 assault rifles at a residence in Cherry Hill, New Jersey. It was at this point they were arrested.

U.S. Attorney for New Jersey Christopher J. Christie called the the camera store owner who tipped off the FBI to the terror cell "an American hero", according to Richard Degener of The Press of Atlantic City. Christie spoke at the Flanders Hotel on Tuesday to the Ocean City Regional Chamber of Commerce. "The camera store owner saw Muslim men in military garb toting weapons in the woods. He heard them talking about jihad and how Allah was great. He called the FBI and became a hero," Christie said.

One member of the terror cell was able to gain detailed knowledge of the military base from his work as a pizza delivery driver. The plot was to take over guard posts and "kill hundreds of Fort Dix soldiers", Christie said. U.S. Marshal James Plousis joined Christie at the Chamber of Commerce luncheon with 50 area Atlantic City merchants to talk about the value of reporting suspicious activity.

"They are not being charged with being members of an international terror organisation," said White House spokesperson, Tony Snow. "However, their involvement in weapons training, operational surveillance and discussions about killing American military personnel warranted a strong law enforcement response."

NASA observes largest supernova on record

SN 2006gy was the brightest and largest supernova ever discovered, scientists announced. The star was in the NGC 1260 galaxy, in the

same direction as the constellation Perseus and may be a type of supernova previously predicted by theory but not observed. The conclusion was reached after extended observations of the supernova by both optical telescopes and X-ray telescopes. Currently, there are two possible explanations for the supernova's brightness, but both require the star in question to have been at least a hundred times as massive as the sun. Although the supernova is brighter than SN 1987A, which was bright enough to be seen by the naked eye, SN 2006gy is too far away to be seen by the naked eye.

The star Eta Carinae, which is in our galaxy, is similar in size to the star which became SN 2006gy. It is possible that Eta Carinae could supernova in a similar fashion. Dave Pooley, one of the discoverers of SN 2006gy said that if Eta Carinae exploded in a similar fashion, it would be bright enough that one could read by its light. However, Pooley estimates the likelihood of the star exploding soon is small and estimates that, even if it did explode, the risk to life on earth would be minimal.

Israeli archaeologists find tomb of Herod the Great

The Hebrew University of Jerusalem announced that it has uncovered the grave and tomb of King Herod, who ruled Judea for the Roman empire from circa 37 BCE. The Tomb was found at Herodium, 12 km south of Jerusalem.

Woman stable after La Trobe University stabbing

An Australian female science student is in a serious but stable condition at the Royal Melbourne Hospital after being stabbed by another female student at La Trobe University this morning.

The victim, a 27-year-old behavioral science student, was stabbed several times in the chest by a masked female stranger in a toilet block outside the Bundoora campus library. Students quickly evacuated the library after seeing the victim running from the bathroom, screaming that she had been stabbed and leaving a trail of blood behind her. The 23-year-old attacker has been charged with attempted murder. Witnesses to the event are being offered counselling services.

Sarkozy criticized over vacation cruise

President-elect of France, Nicolas Sarkozy was criticized for going on a luxury cruise in Malta with his family, right after winning the election on a platform that emphasized hard work.

"It sends a disastrous signal to the country, notably the 53 percent of French people who earn less than 800 euros a month and who voted for him," said Patrick Menucci, former advisor to Ségolène Royal.

However, Sarkozy last week explained the reasons for taking what was supposed to be an unpublicized retreat. He said he needed time to prepare himself for the heavy burden of state.

Nigerian rebels force further oil shutdowns

Attacks by Movement for the Emancipation of the Niger Delta (MEND) in Nigeria have reportedly forced Italian oil company Eni to shut down production of some 150 thousand barrels of oil per day.

"We intend to destroy between now and May 29 more pipes than we have destroyed in the last one year," Jomo Gbomo (suspected to be a pseudonym), spokesperson for

MEND, said in an e-mail.

Up to 25% of the usual production is said to have been lost last year.

NATO forces attacked, civilians caught in the cross fire

At around 1am local time NATO forces came under attack from insurgents in Kandahar City, Afghanistan. During the battle one civilian was killed and another two were injured with conflicting reports as to who was to blame. First hand reports lay blame on the NATO troops however there has been no official confirmation either way as yet. The nationality of the NATO soldiers involved in the incident has not been released. Both NATO and the Afghan Police are investigating the civilian death and injuries.

The Associated Press states that 151 Afghan civilians have been killed in combat during the first 4 months of 2007, and that 51 of these died from NATO and/or US fire.

DOE awards management of US nuclear lab to UC-led team

In Washington DC, Department of Energy Secretary Samuel Bodman announced the awarding of the Management & Operation (M&O) contract for Lawrence Livermore National Laboratory today in a press conference. The M&O contract was awarded to a consortium comprised of the University of California, Bechtel National, BWX Technologies, Washington Group International, and Battelle, to be known as Lawrence Livermore National Security (LLNS) LLC.

"Livermore National Laboratory is a critical part of our nuclear weapons complex and has been for the last 55 years," Secretary Bodman said. "For the first time since the

beginning of the laboratory a new contractor is coming to Livermore. We look forward to working with LLNS as Livermore continues its vital national security work."

Today in History

- 1671 - Thomas Blood was caught trying to steal the British Crown Jewels from the Tower of London.
- 1901 - The first Parliament of Australia opened in the Royal Exhibition Building in Melbourne.
- 1945 - End of World War II in Europe: The signing of a second German Instrument of Surrender by General Field Marshal Wilhelm Keitel, specifying the capitulation of the Wehrmacht to the Soviet Red Army, was announced.
- 1946 - King Victor Emmanuel III of Italy abdicated.
- 1950 - Dianetics: The Modern Science of Mental Health by L. Ron Hubbard, the founder of Scientology and Dianetics, was first published.
- May 09 is Festival of Matsu in Southeast Asia (2007); Victory Day in various Eastern European countries, Europe Day in the European Union.

Quote of the Day

And, oh! what beautiful years were these
 When our hearts clung each to each;
 When life was filled and our senses thrilled
 In the first faint dawn of speech.

 Thus life by life and love by love
 We passed through the cycles strange,
 And breath by breath and death by death
 We followed the chain of change.

~ Langdon Smith ~

Word of the Day

- 1. To preach in a singsong

- fashion, especially in a false or empty manner.
- 2. To set something at an angle or tilt from the vertical.
- 3. (heraldry) To make a pun that references the bearer of a coat of arms.

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