

Top Stories

Crew of Discovery inspect Shuttle for launch damage



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inspections of the exterior of the Orbiter. They are checking for any damage that may have occurred during take-off – the Columbia was destroyed after a piece of foam falling from the external fuel tank split open a wing, allowing super-heated gas to enter the craft upon reentry, leading to its break-up.

CAFTA faces tough vote in U.S. House



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America Free Trade Agreement (CAFTA), which is scheduled for a vote Wednesday night.

Featured story

U.S. magazine TV Guide to drop local editions in makeover



The owners of U.S. magazine TV Guide ordered a complete overhaul of the 52-year-old publication. The magazine's owners noted that with the advent of digital cable and satellite TV, more viewers rely upon electronic program guides provided free.

Wikipedia Current Events

- In Australia, New South Wales premier Bob Carr resigns and announces his disengagement from politics.
- Malaysia takes chairmanship of the ASEAN Standing Committee.

Wikipedia Current Events

- NASA postpones indefinitely future launches of the Space Shuttle after a piece of insulation broke off the Space Shuttle external tank during the July 24 of the Discovery.
- In China, death toll of the still unidentified disease rises to 24. 21 are in critical condition and number of infections has increased to 117.
- In Kyrgyzstan, about 400 Uzbek refugees who fled from Uzbekistan after crushing of an uprising last May will be moved to Romania.

CAFTA faces tough vote in U.S. House



File photo of President George W. Bush delivering his State of the Union address to the nation and a joint session of Congress in the House Chamber at the U.S. Capitol Tuesday, Jan. 28, 2003.

President Bush is lobbying the U.S. House of Representatives to pass the Central America Free Trade Agreement (CAFTA), which is scheduled for a vote Wednesday night. The U.S. Senate passed the treaty in June.

Similar to the existing North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) among the U.S., Canada and Mexico, CAFTA would create a free trade zone putting an end to most trade barriers between the United States and six additional countries, including Costa Rica, El Salvador, Honduras, Guatemala, Nicaragua and the Dominican Republic.

The free trade agreement faces stiff opposition among Democrats. Many Republicans who represent agricultural Corn Belt or industrial Rust Belt and southern textile states in Congress also have

stated opposition to the bill. But with a Republican majority in the House large enough to ensure passage of CAFTA, party leaders are trying to shore up enough votes to ensure CAFTA's passage.

This has prompted last minute action by the President to lobby individual members of House, reminding members that Central American countries have committed troops and other resources to fight the U.S. War on Terror. Other Republican leaders have been using the party's traditional pro-business message and linking it to homeland security issues.

"Trade creates jobs and lifts people out of poverty and there's nothing like a stable society to fight terrorism and strengthen democracy, freedom and rule of law," Dennis Hastert, Speaker of the House, reportedly said at a news conference Tuesday.

But the opposition disagrees. CAFTA is "a bad deal for Central Americans and also for Latinos in this community... (with CAFTA) the exploitation of workers will continue in Central America," Democrat Representative Hilda Solis of Los Angeles said. Her views are common among Democrats, who are overwhelmingly against the treaty.

According to opponents of CAFTA, the current trend of American jobs being sent to foreign countries, particularly in the information technology sector, would greatly expand under the treaty.

"This will be a vote in the middle of the night. They'll keep the vote open for several hours, in violation of the rules. If it passes, it will be by fewer than five votes," predicted Rep. Sherrod Brown, a Democrat from Ohio, according to a Washington Post report.

Tentative deal averts Ontario liquor stores strike

The Liquor Control Board of Ontario, Canada, reached a tentative agreement with

its union one day before some 5,400 unionized employees were to walk off the job at roughly 600 LCBO outlets across the province. The Ontario Public Service Employees Union said it received a commitment that the provincially run liquor stores would not be sold, which was the main issue. Last week, workers voted 84 per cent against the latest contract offer from the LCBO, which called for raises of 11 per cent over four years to full-time staff.

Football CL: All first leg games of second qualifications round are over

The biggest surprise of the leg is probably Artmedia Bratislava's (also known as Artmedia Petržalka) easy victory over Glasgow Celtic of 5 - 0. According to IFFHS' ratings, Celtic is 43rd on the list, while Slovaks are on position 200.

RSC Anderlecht secured an almost certain victory in the second round, as they won 5 - 0 at home against PFC Neftchi.

Another clear favorite is Liverpool, which beat Kaunas in an away game yesterday with a final result of 1 - 3. Kaunas will have to score at least three goals at Anfield next week to stay in game.

Anorthosis made the same result against Trabzonspor, but at home, which can still give Turks realistic hope to make it up next week.

Dudelage lost at home to Rapid Vienna with 1 - 6. Strikers were on a goaling spree in the first ten minutes of the game, leaving Rapid with a steady advantage of 1 - 3. Akagündüz scored his second goal of the game in 16' for Rapid. Two more goals in the second half secured an easy home game for the Austrians.

Partizan Belgrade managed to beat Moldavian Sheriff at home, with 1 - 0, but the organized fans among 15,000 present at the stadium did not cheer for their team. Fans were protesting against the club management, as they banned any banners from the stadium. Most fans only chanted "Management out!" every few minutes.

Partizan's stadium has a capacity of 32,710 seats, but last season games averaged only about 2000 spectators in domestic matches. There is a long standing conflict between

Partizan's fans and the management, as fans accuse the club leadership of manipulation of club's funds and favoring certain fan groups.

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They are checking for any damage that may have occurred during take-off – the Columbia was destroyed after a piece of foam falling from the external fuel tank split open a wing, allowing super-heated gas to enter the craft upon reentry, leading to its break-up.

The crew of Discovery are using a laser-scanner mounted on the end of the shuttle's 15 m (49.2 ft) long robotic arm. The inspection will consist of 90 minute sessions, during which a three-dimensional image of the surface of the nosecone and the leading edges of the wings will be built up.

NASA engineers are studying footage taken from a camera mounted on the external fuel tank which appears to show a 1.5" (3.8 cm) piece of tile falling away from on or near the nose landing-gear doors. There is also footage of an unidentified piece of debris which fell away as the solid rocket boosters were jettisoned, and did not appear to strike the shuttle.

Record rains disrupt life in Mumbai, India

Mumbai, India's largest city and financial capital, received a record-high rainfall on Tuesday, July 26. The rain left many parts of the city flooded. Landslides and other related effects of the rain claimed more than 100 lives in Mumbai and the surrounding areas.

Transportation was seriously affected, as the two main highways, railway lines, and the runways at Mumbai International airport remain submerged. Trains and city buses were shut down for 24 hours, and have not yet resumed full service. Domestic and international flights have been diverted out of Mumbai. Residents of buildings in low-

lying areas are being rescued with boats and navy helicopters. Large numbers of Mumbai residents did not make it home from work, or spent the night in cars that were stranded on the road.

The rainfall received in Mumbai's suburbs on Tuesday totaled 37.1 inches, which exceeds the world's record for highest rainfall in a single day (33.0 inches at Cherrapunji, Meghalaya, India).

As per Vilasrao Deshmukh, Chief Minister of Maharashtra, the rainfall cost the city \$110m in damages

Brief bomb alert in central London

There was a bomb alert in Oxford Circus in central London at 1.20pm BST (1220 UTC) today. All streets around Oxford Circus were briefly cordoned off and pedestrians asked to move down side streets.

This article contains first-hand journalism by a Wikinews Reporter.

British computer firm Tiny axes more than 1,500 Jobs

Granville Technology Group who owns brands such as TIME and Tiny are to axe around 1,500 jobs just after the company went into administration.

The company has already closed down all 78 retail stores around the United Kingdom.

It had emerged that all the group's directors, except its part-time chairman, have also resigned.

Formerly known as Time Group, it had been producing around 500,000 PCs a year.

Its customers included businesses, schools and private individuals, and its products have been household names for years.

Four arrested in Birmingham UK in connection with July 21 attempted bombings

Four men were arrested at 04:30 BST (4:30 a.m.) in police raids at two addresses in Birmingham, West Midlands in relation to the failed London bombings of 21st July.

One of the four men, arrested in Heybarnes Road in the Hay Mills area, is thought to be

suspected of being one of last Thursday's bombers, and has been taken to the high security Paddington Green police station in London. Police have acknowledged using a Taser stun gun in the arrest, but no firearms were used.

The other three arrests were made shortly afterwards in Bankdale Road, Washwood Heath. Police said a suspect package was found at one of the addresses and local residents were evacuated.

Two men were also arrested at Grantham railway station after information was received from off-duty policemen on a GNER train travelling between Newcastle and Kings Cross.

Google adds Hybrid Satellite/Map View

Mountain View, CA - Users of the beta Google Maps service may see the world in a new way with the introduction of the "hybrid view." Here, hybrid means offering a combined satellite and map view, the hybrid button that appears on map search queries adds new functionality to the map service, combining the other choices of either map or satellite views.

The competing and similar MSN Virtual Earth service launched July 25 by Microsoft, also offers a hybrid-type view. Both services offer hybrid map and satellite views and scrollable images.

Initial public response to both services on Slashdot has been generally positive, but users noted glitches that need to be worked out, including discrepancies between satellite and map data.

U.S. Senator Santorum: 'not to run' in 2008 Presidential race

Senator Rick Santorum wrote Monday that his "intention is not to run" in the GOP nomination for president. The two-term senator from Pennsylvania was among names mentioned as a contender to the White House in the next presidential election in 2008.

Santorum faces a tough re-election challenge in his home state during the upcoming mid-term elections next year, where he is considered vulnerable against Democratic challenger and state treasurer

Robert P. Casey Jr.

Santorum authored the book "It takes a Family: Conservatism and the Common Good" which further established views of him as a near ultra-conservative.

On the WashingtonPost.com on-line discussion forum, the lawmaker said, "I have six children ages 4-14. And the idea of coming off a race of the intensity that I am engaged with at this point [in Pennsylvania] and turning around and running another two-year campaign for president is not something that I believe is in the best interest of my family."

Sinn Féin leaders believed to have left IRA Army Council

The Irish Minister for Justice, Equality and Law Reform, Michael McDowell, TD, announced yesterday that he understands that Gerry Adams, Martin McGuinness and Martin Ferris, senior members of the Irish republican party Sinn Féin, have resigned from the Army Council of the Provisional Irish Republican Army.

Mr. McDowell, who most recently accused the three of being members during a radio debate on the 20th of February this year, expressed his belief that the three had resigned seats on the IRA Army Council, the paramilitary organisation's ruling body, within the past fortnight, but he did not think that this "by itself amounts to a severance between the two organisations." Adams, the Sinn Féin president, McGuinness, the party's chief negotiator, and Ferris, a representative in Dáil Éireann (the Irish lower house of parliament), have however consistently dismissed all such allegations of membership of the seven-man Council.

The comment comes as expectation grows that the IRA will issue a statement this week concerning its future, following a plea by Adams in April for the organisation to "take courageous initiatives which will achieve [its] aims by purely political and democratic activity." Mr McDowell said he was looking forward to the statement, but said that was "no question of governments on either side of the border tolerating the continued existence of an unlawful organisation", and that the IRA must decommission its arsenal "down to the last bullet".

Claims that Sinn Féin members have left the Army Council have been described by some unionist politicians, such as DUP spokesperson Ian Paisley, Jr., as a "stunt" ahead of the expected statement from the IRA. On Monday, new Ulster Unionist leader Sir Reg Empey expressed his opinion that "The only thing that is going to matter is what the republican movement actually do."

McGuinness is expected to travel today to the United States with senior Sinn Féin member Rita O'Hare to brief the Irish American community on the current situation.

San Diego votes for new mayor

Voters in the city of San Diego, California went to the polls Tuesday to pick a mayor to lead the financially-troubled city. Officially mayor-less since Dick Murphy resigned on July 15, the city of San Diego also lost two councilmen to convictions on charges of corruption. The largest issue facing the next mayor of this major bio-tech hub and military town on the U.S. border with Mexico, however, is the paralysis and red ink produced by two years of underfunding the pension fund for city employees. The municipal employee unions had pushed for massive benefit expansion during the booming '90s, but once the dot-com bubble burst, San Diego, home to high-tech corporate players like Qualcomm Corp., rapidly lost revenue. The result was a \$2bn pension deficit, "junk" status for the city's bonds on Wall Street, and the dubious designation of "Enron-by-the-Sea" from The New York Times.

Incredibly, 11 candidates are on the ballot to lead the city that calls itself "America's Finest". The front-runner is Councilwoman Donna Frye, 53. She is expected to win a plurality of all votes cast, at the least. The city's former chief of police, Jerry Sanders, and businessman Steve Francis are dueling for the second place slot. The winner of that would face Frye again, in a run-off election slated for Nov. 8.

As of 10 pm Pacific Daylight Time July 26, Donna Frye led with 43.32%, and Jerry Sanders was leading in the contest for second place, with 27.01% to Steve Francis' 23.50%. No other candidate broke into the double-digits.

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Today in History

- 1794 - Reign of Terror leader Maximilien Robespierre was guillotined.
- 1914 - Austria-Hungary declared war on Serbia, starting World War I.
- 1976 - The Tangshan earthquake measuring between 7.8 and 8.2 magnitude flattened Tangshan, China, killing 242,769 and injuring 164,851.
- 1990 - Alberto Fujimori became President of Peru and the first person of East Asian descent to become executive head of state of a non-Asian nation.
- 1996 - The remains of the prehistoric Kennewick Man were discovered.
- July 28 is Independence Day in Peru (1821)

Quote of the Day

"Whenever a theory appears to you as the only possible one, take this as a sign that you have neither understood the theory nor the problem which it was intended to solve." ~ Karl Popper

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