



Top Stories

Merapi roars, compulsory evacuation ordered



Indonesian authorities have ordered the compulsory evacuation of

thousands of residents living on the slopes of volcano Mount Merapi. The area is under a red alert, the highest level, warning of an imminent eruption of the volcano.

Exiled Chagos islanders win right to return home

The islanders of the Chagos



Archipelago have won a High Court battle which may allow them to return to the islands they were exiled from in 1971.

Featured story

Giorgio Napolitano elected Italian president



The Italian Parliament in unified session elected Giorgio

Napolitano the new President of the Italian Republic on May 10th. Napolitano, 80, was elected on the fourth ballot with 543 valid votes (the threshold to win the election was 505).

Wikipedia Current Events

- CIA officials try to get the case of Khaled el-Masri, who says he was abducted and tortured, dismissed as it "could undermine U.S. relations with foreign countries".
- The International Committee of the Red Cross criticizes the United States for denying access to detainees in violation of the Geneva Convention. The US admits holding detainees secretly but claims they do not fall under that convention.
- Typhoon Chanchu hits the Philippines. 21 people are killed and five remain missing after a boat capsizes in the stormy seas off Masbate island.
- FUC spokesman Albissaty Saleh Allazam announces that none of the eight organizational members that make up the Chadian rebel alliance will end attacks on the Déby administration despite the recent peace deal between ARFWS and the Government of Sudan.
- The UNHCR has opened a new refugee camp within Chad just outside of the city of Habila to accomodate the 7,000 Fur refugees who fled Janjaweed attacks in western Sudan.
- George Seitz, a Labour Party Member of the state Legislative Assembly in Victoria, Australia, is accused of running an elaborate branch stacking operation to manipulate results in state and federal elections and pre-selections.

Wikipedia Current Events

- Authorities in Indonesia issue a red alert for active volcano Mt. Merapi, evacuating 17,000 people in expectation of an eruption.

Liverpool win an exciting FA Cup final

Liverpool Football Club have won the 2006 FA Cup 3-1 on penalties after an eventful final against West Ham United ending 3-3 after extra time. Whilst the first twenty minutes started slowly, the pace couldn't have been any faster during the rest of the ninety minutes of normal play. West Ham took an early lead from a Jamie Carragher own goal 21 minutes into the game, before scoring another through Dean Ashton seven minutes later. Two goals down, Liverpool scored with a goal from Djibril Cisse just four minutes later and then drew level in the second half with an impressive volley from Steven Gerrard. Paul Konchesky put West Ham back in front on the 54th minute with a left wing cross that somehow ended up in the back of the net.

With West Ham 3-2 up, play continued at a frantic pace with plenty of opportunities for both teams, but the Hammers looked set to hold out till the final whistle. As the clock hit 90 minutes though, Gerrard, despite suffering from cramp, saved Liverpool from defeat with a last minute goal.

Going into extra time, both teams were suffering from the fast tempo of the first 90 minutes, with

several injured and cramp-suffering players on both teams. With both sides having used up their three substitutions however, they had no choice but to battle on, and compared to the rest of the match, play slowed down considerably. West Ham nearly snatched victory with a shot from Nigel Reo-Coker, but Liverpool keeper Pepe Reina managed a deflection, and with the ball landing at the injured foot of West Ham's Marlon Harewood, it was all he could do to get a shot in, which went badly wide.

As extra time finished, the game turned to the penalty shootout to decide the cup winners. 40 year old Teddy Sheringham scored one for West Ham, but with two of West Ham's penalties getting saved by the keeper, Liverpool won 3-1, missing just one penalty themselves.

West Ham were firm underdogs in this final, but the teams proved to be a good match for each other, and pundits agreed that this was the best FA cup final for several decades.

Merapi roars, compulsory evacuation ordered

Indonesian authorities have ordered the compulsory evacuation of thousands of residents living on the slopes of the volcano Mount Merapi. The alert level has been raised to the highest level, warning of an imminent eruption of the volcano which has been rumbling for weeks and spewing lavas and black ash.

"This morning we raised the status of Merapi to the top alert which is the red code" said Subandrio, head of the Merapi section at the Centre for Volcanological Research and Technology Development.

"Every resident has been ordered to evacuate."

"Because there has been constant lava flows that cause hot gases, we have raised the status to the highest level," said Bambang Dwiyanto, head of the region's vulcanology center.

More than 1,000 people who live closest to the crater, including the elderly and mothers with young children, have already been evacuated. But some residents have remained reluctant to leave as they fear losing property and livestock. 27,000 locals in 3 villages could be affected by this eruption.

The scientists have warned that the greatest danger could come from hot gasses expelled from the volcano's crater.

The 3,000m (9,700ft) peak, in densely populated Central Java province, is one of 129 active volcanoes in Indonesia and part of the Pacific "Ring of Fire" - a series of volcanoes stretching from the Americas through Japan and Southeast Asia.

It has small eruptions every 3-4 years and larger eruptions every 10-15 years. It has produced more pyroclastic flows, popularly known as heat cloud and magma, than any other volcano in the world. A gas cloud from the volcano's last eruption in 1994 killed 60 people. During the eruption in 1930, 1,300 people died. Historians say that Mount Merapi has been erupting for 10,000 years. Mount Merapi is considered very sacred by the locals. According to the local folklore the volcano's eruption is the result of spirits being angered by not receiving sufficient offerings or by a disrespectful attitude among

the people in slopes.

Native Hawaiian sovereignty bill to be debated in U.S. Senate in June

The U.S. Senate has scheduled debate and a vote in June on a bill that would initiate a process for Native Hawaiians to achieve the same level of self-governance and autonomy over their own affairs that many Native American tribes currently have.

Senator Daniel Akaka (D-Hawaii), the main proponent of bill S. 147 (the Native Hawaiian Government Reorganization Act) and a Native Hawaiian himself, had been giving daily speeches on the Senate floor since May 9 in support of the bill to raise awareness of it. His advocacy of the bill has led it to become known as the "Akaka Bill."

"I thank our majority leader, the senior senator from Tennessee, who is working to uphold his commitment to bring this bill to the Senate floor for a debate and roll call vote," Akaka said after receiving the pledge from Majority Leader Bill Frist (R-Tenn.) on Friday. He also recognized his chief opponent, Senator Jon Kyl (R-Ariz.), who worked with Akaka "to uphold his promise to allow the bill to come to the floor for a debate and roll call vote."

Frist is expected to file a cloture motion after the Senate returns from its May recess. A vote on the cloture motion would occur within 48 hours of filing.

Opponents of the bill, including Kyl, charge that the bill is a race-based privilege that the U.S. Constitution prohibits. Others, such as Sen. Lamar Alexander (R-Tenn.) imply that passage of the bill could have unintended consequences. In a speech on the

Senate floor on Tuesday that preceded Akaka's, Alexander likened the bill to recognizing Hispanic populations descended from pre-republican Texas or giving tribal status to the Amish or Hasidic Jews, the Honolulu Star-Bulletin reported.

Akaka believes that he has bipartisan support for his bill, with four Republican senators pledging support for it. At least six Republican senators would need to vote for the bill for it to pass, assuming that the bill receives solid support from Akaka's fellow Democrats and the chamber's one independent member who usually votes with the Democrats.

A recent report from the U.S. Civil Rights Commission recommended that the bill be rejected.

Supporters of the bill, which include the Democratic members of Hawaii's congressional delegation and Republican governor Linda Lingle, counter that Hawaii is a unique case because of its former history as an independent nation before the overthrow of the Hawaiian monarchy in 1893.

Kyl had placed a block on the bill when it was originally placed on the Senate schedule in July 2005, but has since agreed to allow the bill to come to a floor vote. The bill was later deferred indefinitely due in part to Hurricane Katrina.

Full text of Ahmadinejad's letter to Bush made available online

The French daily Le Monde, which has a tradition of publishing full texts by politicians and intellectuals, was one of the first organisations to publish the full English text of Iranian president Mahmoud Ahmadinejad's letter to

US president George W. Bush

President of the USA- George W. Bush

on May 9, 2006. On the same day, US daily The Wall Street Journal published a scan of the English text, and the Iranian Islamic Republic News Agency (IRNA) published the full text. In the UK, The Guardian published the full text two days later.

The full text of the letter included discussion of a wide range of international, social, political, economic and religious issues including proliferation of nuclear weapons, WMDs, the "War on Terror", "unified international community", "the possibility of the existence of WMDs in one country", Saddam Hussein, the Iran-Iraq War, Guantanamo Bay, the Holocaust, the establishment of Israel, the Palestinian legislative election in 2006, US vetoes of UNSC resolutions against Israel, Operation Ajax in 1953, the shooting down of the Iranian passenger plane Air Flight 655, Iran's nuclear program, September Eleven, economic inequality, international inequality, the monotheistic religions and the liberal form of democracy.

Today in History

1264 - King Henry III was captured in the Battle of Lewes, making Simon de Montfort the de facto ruler of England.

1796 - Edward Jenner began testing cowpox as a vaccine for protection against smallpox.

1804 - The William Clark and Meriwether Lewis left Camp Dubois and began traveling up the Missouri River.

1948 - Prime Minister David Ben-Gurion publicly read the Declaration of the Establishment of the State of Israel in Tel Aviv.

1973 - The NASA space station Skylab was launched from Cape Canaveral.

May 14 is Mother's Day in various countries (2006), Flag Day in Paraguay.

Quote of the Day

"It is confidently expected that the period is at hand, when man, through ignorance, shall not much longer inflict unnecessary misery on man; because the mass of mankind will become enlightened, and will clearly discern that by so acting they will inevitably create misery to themselves." ~ Robert Owen

Word of the Day

warble; v

Definition

1. To frequency modulate a tone; trill.
2. To sing like a bird.

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