



Top Stories

Campaigning ends in landmark Congo elections

The month long election campaign in the run up to this weekend's elections in the Democratic Republic of Congo has ended, with a one day break before voting can begin Sunday.

Landis' fate to be announced Monday

On Monday, the result of a counter-analysis of Floyd Landis' B-sample, as requested by the Americans, will be announced. Landis, came in first on this year's Tour de France. He has previously tested positive for an abnormally high testosterone balance in his blood stream. Landis continues to deny any wrongdoing.

Featured story

Hezbollah leader alleges prior Israeli-US planning of current conflict

Hassan Nasrallah, the leader of Hezbollah claims that the 2006 Israel-Lebanon conflict is the result of an American-Israeli conspiracy to attack Lebanon and gain control over the state as a part of a "new Middle East".

Wikipedia Current Events

- Israel rejects a UN call for a truce.
- The IDF leaves the Lebanese town of Bint Jbeil, thus ending the Battle of Bint Jbeil. 8 Israeli soldiers and 50-70 Hezbollah

Wikipedia Current Events

militants were killed in Bint Jbeil.

•Hezbollah head Hassan Nasrallah vows rocket strikes on towns in central Israel, calling it a "temporary country" and asking "When in any Arab-Israeli conflict were two million Israelis forced to flee or enter bomb shelters?"

•Hezbollah fired a rocket on Friday, which they claim to be a new long-range missile named "Khaibar 1". The rocket matched the furthest distance that Hezbollah rockets had landed inside Israel since the conflict began on July 12.

•An oil well explosion at the Pertamina-PetroChina oil refinery complex at Bojonegoro in East Java province of Indonesia leads to 150 people being treated at hospital and 6,000 people fleeing nearby villages. At this stage, there is no news of casualties.

All Blacks retain Bledisloe Cup

The New Zealand All Blacks have defeated the Australian Wallabies for the second time this year and have retained the Bledisloe Cup, winning 13-9. All Black winger, Joe Rokocoko scored the only try of the match in the first half, beating several defenders on his way to the line.

Earlier in the week Australian coach, John Connolly, stated that the new All Blacks haka Kapa O Pango should be banned, causing much controversy, citing that the throat slitting gesture at the end is a bad example.

Stirling Mortlock kicked 3 goals. Daniel Carter 1 conversion, 1 penalty, 1 dropped goal.

Hezbollah leader alleges prior Israeli-US planning of current conflict

Hassan Nasrallah, the leader of Hezbollah claims that the 2006 Israel-Lebanon conflict is the result of an American-Israeli conspiracy to attack Lebanon and gain control over the state as a part of a "new Middle East". In the 28-minute speech on al-Manar television July 26 Nasrallah alleges that in the project for a new Middle East the United States seeks the removal of all resistance groups that pose a threat to its procurement and control of the area's wealth and resources.

In the June 2 edition of London-based magazine al-Watan al-Arabi it is claimed Hezbollah received intelligence that Olmert had obtained a green light from Bush in the event of an open confrontation between Hezbollah and Israel. That is alleged to have happened in May when Israeli Prime Minister Ehud Olmert paid his first visit to Washington as head of the state of Israel and met President George W. Bush. Based on that knowledge Hassan Nasrallah delivered a "Strategic Defense Plan," to the National Dialogue Committee (al-Hiwar al-Watani). The plan outlined what Hezbollah should do in the event of an Israeli air, land, or sea assault on Lebanon.

The Hezbollah leader claims in the al-Manar speech that both the United States and Israel planned using the element of surprise to invade Lebanon in late-September early-October. Nasrallah says they discovered this warplan and Hezbollah used the kidnapping of the Israeli soldiers to enter into the conflict directly and remove the surprise factor.

According to the San Francisco Chronicle an Israeli army officer, at an off-the-record briefing, presented a war plan last year. Several journalists and diplomats were told of Israel's plans for a three-week campaign in Lebanon. There was no plan, according to this scenario, to reoccupy southern Lebanon on a long-term basis. It is not clear if Hezbollah obtained this information.

Gerald Steinberg, professor of political science at Bar-Ilan University, says "Of all of Israel's wars since 1948, this was the one for which Israel was most prepared". Professor Steinberg continued "In a sense, the preparation began in May 2000, immediately after the Israeli withdrawal, when it became clear the international community was not going to prevent Hezbollah from stockpiling missiles and attacking Israel. By 2004, the military campaign scheduled to last about three weeks that we're seeing now had already been blocked out and, in the last year or two, it's been simulated and rehearsed across the board."

Campaigning ends in landmark Congo elections

The month long election campaign in the run up to this weekend's elections in the Democratic Republic of Congo has ended, with a one day break before voting can begin Sunday.

The fiercely fought campaign began on June 29th and involved no less than 9,707 parliamentary candidates and 33 presidential candidates. Canvassing ended yesterday with a mass rally in support of the current president Joseph Kabila.

Kabila, who became the youngest head of state in Africa in 2001, used his final speech before voting to claim credit for taking the D.R. Congo to its first democratic elections in over 40 years. "I can say to you without false modesty: mission accomplishedâ he told crowds of around 50,000 on Friday, "We've reunited and pacified the country. It is also a message of hope, and for peace and development and security after the polls."

The international community is taking a keen interest in the elections â the first since 1961. However, the July campaign has been marred by violence and accusations of fraud on all sides.

International observers, such as the Carter Centre, expressed concern that the incumbent President's domination of the media would undermine the campaign. Several hundred people protested at alleged irregularities in the polls on the 18th of July, which ended in 7 people being killed in police clashes. One candidate has also fled to Uganda after violence.

This Thursday, 6 people were killed in election related incidents in the capital, Kinshasa, and yesterday, Kabila's presidential guards killed an opposition candidate's bodyguard in a gunfight.

The U.N. has deployed it's largest ever peacekeeping force, 17,000 ,

to monitor the elections, costing over \$460 million. Despite troubles, the deputy U.N. representative in the country, Ross Mountain, said the Democratic Republic is ready for tomorrow's polls.

50,000 polling stations have been set up around the country, for the 25.6 million voters, with over 60,000 Congolese police and 1,700 international observers in place to monitor voting.

Today in History

1419 - Hussite Wars: Jan Zizka and others threw several town councillors out the window at the First Defenestrations of Prague.

1619 - The first representative assembly in the Americas, Virginia's House of Burgesses, convened for the first time.

1756 - Bartolomeo Rastrelli presented the Catherine Palace, a Baroque palace in Tsarskoye Selo, to Empress Elizabeth of Russia.

1825 - Malden Island, now one of Kiribati's Line Islands, was discovered in the Pacific Ocean.

1930 - Uruguay won the first Football World Cup in front of their home crowd at Estadio Centenario in Montevideo, beating Argentina 4 to 2.

July 30 is Independence Day in Vanuatu (1980)

Quote of the Day

What am I singing?
A song of seeds
The food of love.
Eat the music.
~ Kate Bush ~

Word of the Day

hubris; n

1. Conceited pride or arrogance

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