



Top Stories

Scores killed and wounded as violence escalates in Iraq

Intense violent turmoil in Iraq continued Sunday and Monday when attacks across Baghdad killed more than 30 people. A busy restaurant frequented by police officers was the target of the deadliest attack, a suicide bombing that claimed 23 lives and wounded more than 36 others.

Iran election going to run-off, challenger alleges fraud

Friday's elections whittled Iran's field of presidential candidates from eight to two, but the incredibly close vote has led to the scheduling of an unprecedented runoff to be held next Friday. Candidates Mahmoud Ahmadinezhad and Ali Akbar Hashemi Rafsanjani will square off next week --- unless candidate Mehdi Karroubi has his way.

Hotel Rwanda hero tours USA

Paul Rusesabagina, the real-life hero portrayed in the film "Hotel Rwanda", visited Atlanta, Ga. and Washington, D.C. this week to address American students and business leaders at schools and conferences centers. His appearances coincide with World Refugee Day events in Washington.

Wikipedia Current Events

•At Stonehenge in England, up to 19,000 people gather to celebrate the rising sun on the summer solstice.

•Cleanup operation continues in North Yorkshire after the serious flash flooding on Sunday Night / Monday Morning. The towns of Thirsk, Helmsley and Hawnby were seriously affected, as were several villages when the rivers Swale and Rye burst their banks.

•In Manchester, UK, 30 police raid a house at 5 a.m. and arrest a 40-year old man on suspicion of involvement in suicide bombings in Iraq. Another man resident in the same house is believed to have gone to Iraq in February to carry out a bombing. Last week, police in Spain and Germany also made arrests in connection with bombings in Iraq, but it is not known if the cases are related.

•New Zealand's telecoms network crashes for five hours when a rat chews one of the North Island's main fibre-optic cables at the same time as a workman damaged another cable in another part of the island. Mobile phone and internet communications were badly affected, and the Stock Exchange had to close for several hours.

•In Mexico, Zapatista rebels are in alert, pulling out of villages and closing their radio stations. The reasons are unknown, although the move may be due to an army drug raid in Los Altos. Subcomandante Marcos announces that foreign aid workers can stay only at their own risk.

today in Beirut. A car bomb had apparently been hidden under the passenger's seat of the vehicle he was in; the blast killed Hawi almost instantly. Hawi was formerly the secretary of the Lebanese Communist Party. He had long been a Syrian ally, but recently switched sides, criticizing the Syrian occupation of the country, which was withdrawn after the similar assassination of former Prime Minister of Lebanon Rafik Hariri brought international pressure.

Hawi is the third prominent anti-Syrian figure to be assassinated in Lebanon, and the second this month. Rafiq Hariri was assassinated on February 14th. More recently, journalist Samir Kassir was killed on June 2nd. The killings are thought by many, including some in Lebanese government as well as United Nations officials and United States diplomats, to be the work of Syrian-backed intelligence forces still operating in the country. Hawi's stepson, Rafi Madoyan, said in a statement, "Those who killed him are the same as those who killed Rafiq Hariri and Samir Kassir, it's the security regime that is in power." United States Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice expressed similar sentiments, accusing Syria of contributing to instability in Lebanon.

George Hawi's assassination came on the heels of the conclusion of the last round of parliamentary elections in Lebanon, which saw a coalition of opposition candidates led by Saad Hariri, son of Rafik Hariri, capture a majority of seats.

Priest charged in exorcism death

A Romanian priest and four nuns have been charged in the death of a reportedly schizophrenic nun who was crucified in an exorcism.

George Hawi, anti-Syrian Lebanese politician, assassinated

An opponent of Syrian influence in Lebanon, George Hawi, was assassinated

The novice, Maricica Irina Cornici, of Holy Trinity convent in northeast Romania, died last week after spending three days gagged and chained to a cross without food or water in the church's cellar.

The 23-year-old nun was found with a towel stuffed into her mouth and had been left in the cold room while the priest delivered prayers to drive out evil spirits.

An initial autopsy revealed the nun died from dehydration, exhaustion and lack of oxygen.

Prosecutors are waiting the results of a second autopsy, which is being carried out because of a suspicion of foul play.

The priest, Daniel Petru Corogeanu, and four nuns have been charged with imprisonment leading to death. They could face up to 20 years in prison if found guilty.

Father Daniel told local news that he was trying to "take the devil out of her". When asked whether the nun was in need of medical help instead of an exorcism, he replied, "You can't take the devil out of people with pills."

Ms. Cornici, who grew up in an orphanage, is said to have entered the remote convent three months earlier. There has been speculation by the Romanian media that Ms. Cornici's schizophrenic behaviour may have caused her fellow nuns and the priest to believe she was possessed by the devil.

The Orthodox Church has condemned the incident and suspended Father Daniel, who has refused to stop work at the Holy Trinity monastery.

Riot police had to intervene when scuffles broke out as nuns yelled at a vicar who came to suspend Father Daniel on Sunday.

Iraq's Justice Minister accuses U.S. of having "lots of secrets they want to hide"

In an exclusive interview with the Associated Press, Abdel Hussein Shandal, Iraq's Justice Minister, said, "it seems there are lots of secrets they [U.S. government] want to hide."

Shandal accused the U.S. of concealing information about Saddam Hussein and of trying to delay Iraqi interrogations of Hussein. The Iraqi government had said that Saddam's trial would be held within two months, but they are now saying it will be before the end of 2005.

American officials have urged Iraq to be cautious about expediting a trial and have said Iraq needs to have a more established judicial system first. U.S. officials have also stated that the trial might inflame sectarian tensions and interfere with the drafting of an Iraqi constitution.

International Whaling Commission ajourns for private talks

A meeting of the International Whaling Commission in the South Korean city of Ulsan has adjourned for private talks with commissioners. The commission had been about to vote on a Japanese plan to increase its minke whale catch and to start hunting humpback whales.

Australia attempted to stop the ajournment accusing Japan of trying to stall the vote.

Nauru, The Gambia and Togo applied to join the commission last week, but have no voting rights until their membership payments are cleared, which could happen any time during the IWC meeting. The three countires are expected to follow Japan's pro-whaling line.

The 66 member body is currently evenly split between pro and anti whaling countries.

Today in History

168 BC - In the Battle of Pydna, Roman forces defeated and captured Macedonian King Perseus.

1854 - The British Parliament abolished feudalism and the seigneurial system in British North America.

1937 - Camille Chautemps became Prime Minister of France in the second Popular Front ministry.

1941 - Nazi Germany invaded the Soviet Union with Operation Barbarossa.

1986 - Argentine footballer Diego Maradona scored both the Hand of God goal and the Goal of the Century against England during the quarter-final match of the FIFA World Cup in Mexico City.

Quote of the Day

"The sea does not reward those who are too anxious, too greedy, or too impatient... Patience, patience, patience, is what the sea teaches. Patience and faith. One should lie empty, open, choiceless as a beach— waiting for a gift from the sea." ~ Anne Morrow Lindbergh

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