



Top Stories

Explosions rock New Delhi marketplace



Three bombs shook India's capital city of New Delhi on Saturday in crowded marketplace bazaars, killing at least 61 people and injuring hundreds.

Lewis "Scooter" Libby indicted on five charges



I. Lewis "Scooter" Libby, Chief of Staff to US Vice President Cheney, resigned Friday after he was charged with obstruction of

justice, two counts of perjury, and two counts of making false statements.

Featured story

Japan likely to change law to allow female heirs to the throne

Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi suggested yesterday that the government would submit a draft allowing female heirs to the Japanese Throne.

Wikipedia Current Events

• Italian Interior Minister Altero Matteoli announces interest in switching to nuclear power as the main source of energy within 10-15 years. Nuclear power has been banned in Italy since the Chernobyl accident in 1986.

Wikipedia Current Events

•Hurricane Beta, the first hurricane named with the Greek letter Beta, approaches Nicaragua and Honduras as a Category 3 storm, and makes landfall on the Mosquito Coast at Category 2 intensity. Thousands of residents of Puerto Cabezas, Nicaragua have been evacuated to shelters.

•Further rioting occurs overnight in the Parisian suburb of Clichy-sous-Bois, France following the electrocutions of two teenagers, aged 15 and 17, and a third teenager suffering severe burns. Rioters attacked police and journalists. Critics allege that the teenagers were targeted because they were Muslim, though this claim has been denied by French Interior Minister Nicolas Sarkozy.

•The Dresden Frauenkirche (Church of Our Lady), a Protestant Church in Dresden, Germany is re-consecrated. The church was destroyed during the bombing of Dresden in World War II. The remains of the church had been left untouched by the government of East Germany as an anti-war monument. Some 60,000 people celebrated the reopening. Both Queen Elizabeth II of the United Kingdom and German President Horst Köhler said that the rebuilding was a 'symbol of reconciliation'.

Russian peacekeepers will not leave Transdniestria, official says

Russian peacekeepers will stay in the Transnistrian region until

adoption of a political decision on change of their mandate, Russian Defence Minister Sergei Ivanov has told Russian journalists. Also, Ivanov claims that Russia does not insist on an exclusive right to peacekeeping mission in the region, although Chisinau's appeals to change the make-up of the operation have not received support and have not been introduced in the agenda of the negotiations from October 27-28.

In a discussion with Russian journalists Prime Minister Vasile Tarlev accused Tiraspol of illegal sale of Russian weapons (that would have been used in Beslan too), but his statement was refuted by Russian and Chechen officials.

Ivanov stated: "I stake my life that no munitions left the Russian military bases". Transdniestria has its own army that can defend very well its own depots, Ivanov added.

Minister Ahmed Dakaev, Chechnya's Deputy Home Affairs, as stating that he knows nothing about the sale of munitions from Transdniestrian to Chechnya. He qualifies these statements as political.

Of the Transdniestrian foreign department Vitalie Ignatiev said rumors about the illegal sale of weapons from Transdniestrian exist for more than 15 years but nobody could prove it. He has also refuted Moldovan Prime Minister's statements and sought evidence.

The 1999 OSCE summit in Istanbul had obliged the Russian Federation

to withdraw its troops and ammunition from Moldova. Russia interrupted the process two years ago under pretext that Tiraspol delays the withdrawal of weapons from the region.

World Bank Continues Its Support to Moldovan Private Sector Development

The World Bank approved a US\$9.8 million Competitiveness Enhancement Project (CEP) for the Republic of Moldova Thursday. The approved amount represents a US\$4.90 million credit and a US\$4.90 million grant. The credit is offered under IDA terms, the World Bank Moldova Country Office has reported.

The overall objective of the Competitiveness Enhancement Project is to assist Moldova in enhancing the competitiveness of enterprises through improvements in the business environment and making adequate standards, testing and quality improvement services available to enterprises.

"The project will help the Government of Moldova to implement the business regulatory reform that had been started earlier," said Irina Astrakhan, World Bank Task Manager for the Project. "It will also assist the government to begin modernization of the national standards and quality system, leading to improved competitiveness of the Moldovan economy in domestic and international markets and more attractiveness for foreign direct investment."

The CEP Project has four components -- business environment improvement; modernization of measurements, standards, testing and quality

(MSTQ) system; facilitation of enterprise access to MSTQ services; and facilitation of access to finance.

"The Project will bring about unquestionable benefits to the economic environment in Moldova by focusing on stability within the framework of business regulation, the promotion of adequate legislation, access to product certification services in line with the standards set by the European Union, encouragement of an innovative potential for enterprises, and facilitation of access to funding by means of various up-to-date mechanisms", said Mr. Valeriu Lazar, the Moldovan Minister of Economy and Trade.

The enterprise sector, especially SMEs, will be the primary beneficiaries of this project. The Ministry of Economy and Trade Business Regulatory Reform Commission and Secretariat, the Service for Standardization and Metrology, the National Institute for Standardization and Metrology, the Accreditation Center for Conformity Assessment of Products and other institutions of the MSTQ infrastructure will also be helped by the project.

The total cost of the CEP Project is US\$14.3 million. In addition to the World Bank credit and grant, the project will also be financed by the Government of Japan in the form of grant amounting to US\$4.5 million. The Project implementation period is 4 years, from January 2006 to December 31, 2009.

Since Moldova joined the World Bank in 1992, Bank commitments to the country total approximately US\$592 million for 29 operations.

Bush narrows choice to Supreme Court

The Chicago Tribune reports that President Bush narrowed his short list of Supreme Court nominees to two, with a possible third. The two top individuals in consideration are Judge Samuel Alito of New Jersey and Judge Michael Luttig of Virginia. Judge Priscilla Owen of Texas may remain as a third possibility.

The nominee, when and if confirmed, would succeed Justice Sandra Day O'Connor who announced her retirement in July. This latest nomination process was made necessary when Harriet Miers withdrew from consideration.

Since congress returned from summer recess, there have been significant changes at the court. When Justice O'Connor originally announced her intention to retire, President Bush nominated Judge John Roberts to replace her. However, when Chief Justice Rehnquist died in September from thyroid cancer, Roberts became the replacement for the Chief Justice.

Both Alito and Luttig are viewed by many as staunch conservatives with strong qualifications. The debate over either conservative candidate is expected to be largely partisan, unlike the Harriet Miers nomination that was widely criticized by both legislative parties for her lack judicial experience.

Samuel A. Alito, age 55, serves as judge on the 3rd U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals in Philadelphia. J. Michael Luttig, age 51, serves as judge on the 4th Circuit Court of Appeals in Richmond.

Explosions rock New Delhi marketplace

Three bombs shook the Indian capital of New Delhi on Saturday in crowded marketplace bazaars within minutes of each other, killing at least 61 people, according to recent reports. The national government is on high alert. Prime Minister Manmohan Singh issued a statement in response to the attack, saying, "India will win the battle against terrorism."

The BBC reports that ten people have been detained in the investigation into the blasts. Police say they are making progress into the investigation and that it appears the same group was behind all three incidents.

In addition to the reported deaths, 210 people have been injured in the blasts in central and south Delhi, according to recent reports. With Diwali, the Hindu festival of lights being celebrated Tuesday, the bomb blasts have sent ripples across the nation. Prime Minister Manmohan Singh blamed terrorists for the blasts, but verification of responsibility has not occurred. The blasts, first thought to be masterminded by Lashkar-e-Toiba, a terrorist group supported by Pakistan, were later asserted by a group called "Inquilab". The blast had all the hallmarks of being carried out by well-funded terrorist groups supported by Pakistan, however its foreign ministry said in a statement: "Pakistan strongly condemns the terrorist attacks in Delhi, which have resulted in the loss of a number of innocent lives."

The bombings came just as India and Pakistan were beginning to recover from the shock of this

month's Kashmir earthquake.

Last May, one person died and 49 were wounded by bombs at two Delhi cinemas; the attack was blamed on Sikh militants.

Delhi was the location of a terrorist attack in December 2001. The 2001 event was blamed on Islamic militant groups backed by Pakistan, although Hindu-Muslim conflicts have usually occurred in the disputed region of Kashmir.

Today in History

1517 - According to traditional accounts, Martin Luther (pictured) nailed his 95 Theses onto the door of a church in Wittenberg, Germany, marking the beginning of the Protestant Reformation.

1863 - The Maori Wars resumed as British forces in New Zealand led by General Duncan Cameron began their Invasion of the Waikato along the Waikato River.

1922 - Benito Mussolini became the youngest Premier in the history of Italy at age 39.

1941 - Gutzon Borglum and 400 workers completed the colossal busts of U.S. Presidents George Washington, Thomas Jefferson, Theodore Roosevelt, and Abraham Lincoln at Mount Rushmore.

1984 - Prime Minister Indira Gandhi of India was assassinated by two of her own bodyguards. Riots soon broke out in New Delhi.

October 31 is Halloween, Reformation Day in Protestantism

Quote of the Day

I can see lights in the distance
trembling in the dark cloak of
night
Candles and lanterns are dancing,
dancing a waltz on All Souls Night.
~ Loreena McKennitt ~

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