



### *Top Stories*

#### **Insurgents in Iraq kill 32 with chemical bomb**

Insurgents in Iraq have exploded chlorine gas tanks in a car bombing, killing at least 32 and injuring at least 50 in the village of Abu Saydah in the Diyala Province.

#### **Recently discovered planet may contain 'hot ice'**

A team of European and American astronomers say the extrasolar planet, located not far from Earth, has oceans and rivers of hot solid water.

### *Featured story*

#### **Whales that swam into Sacramento River are injured**

Marine biologists say that the two lost, mother and male calf Humpback Whales that swam into the Sacramento River in Sacramento, California, have sustained injuries from a boat propeller blade and need medical attention if they do not return to their homes in the Pacific Ocean.

### *Wikipedia Current Events*

- Michael Nutter wins the Philadelphia Democratic mayoral primary making him the presumptive winner of the general election in the fall.
- Tony Blair, the Prime Minister of the United Kingdom, meets with the President of the United States George W. Bush for the final time before his departure from politics.
- Alex Salmond, the leader of the

### *Wikipedia Current Events*

Scottish National Party, is elected as the first non-Labour First Minister of Scotland.

- Nicolas Sarkozy succeeds Jacques Chirac as President of the French Republic after prevailing over Ségolène Royal in the 2007 French presidential election.

- Fifteen people die in fighting between Hamas and Fatah forces on the Gaza Strip with Hamas killing five people at the house of a Fatah security chief Rashid Abu Shbak in Gaza City.

- Over 18 people have been wounded by approximately thirty Qassam rockets being fired from the Gaza Strip into Israel. Hamas has claimed responsibility and sources believe the rocket attacks are an attempt to lure Israel into the ongoing internal conflict between Hamas and Fatah.

- A flare dropped from a New Jersey National Guard F-16 Fighting Falcon is believed to be the cause of a wildfire that has burned 20 square miles at the edge of Pinelands National Reserve, New Jersey, burning three homes and causing the evacuation of 2,500 other homes.

- The United Kingdom's Ministry of Defence announces that HRH Prince Harry of the British Royal Family will not be deployed to Iraq as originally planned, due to the security risks to both himself and his regiment the Blues and Royals.

#### **Jackson County, Oregon rejects tax to reopen libraries**

Jackson County, Oregon in the United States voted to reject measure 15-75, which would have provided funding to reopen county libraries, closed since April 6. The new levy, at US\$0.66 per US\$1000 of assessed property value, would have provided funding to open the 15 libraries left unfunded after the U.S. Congress did not renew the Secure Rural Schools and Self-Determination Act. A similar levy was defeated in November, 2006.

County Commissioners Jack Walker and Dave Gilmour blamed the defeat not on a lack of support for libraries, but a reticence to pay additional taxes. Gilmour noted an oncoming recession and called libraries "just one more casualty of the Iraq War," while Walker said voters reacted against tax-and-spend measures.

#### **Prince Harry prohibited from going to Iraq**

Prince Harry, known as Prince Henry of Wales, who was recently set to leave for Iraq with his regiment, has been prohibited from going. The Chief of the General Staff (Head of the British Army) General Sir Richard Dannatt, has decided Prince Harry would not be deployed based on his review of specific risks.

"I have decided today that Prince Harry will not deploy as a Troop Leader with his Squadron," said General Dannatt in a statement. ""There have been a number of specific threats – some reported

and some not reported, which relate directly to Prince Harry as an individual. These threats place not only him but also those around him to a degree of risk that I now deem unacceptable."

Despite Prince Harry's previous threats to quit the army if he was not allowed to deploy to Iraq, a spokesman has said he will stay in the army. "Let me also make quite clear that as a professional soldier, Prince Harry himself will be extremely disappointed," added General Dannatt.

A number of threats have been a factor in the Chief of the General Staff's decision making, saying that "sending him in not only endangers those around him, the effect of being kidnapped would be a blow to the entire UK."

The UK Ministry of Defence (MoD) indicated in a press release Wednesday that the decision was based on a military assessment and that Clarence House, Buckingham Palace, 10 Downing Street and the Defence Secretary had been informed of the decision.

The MoD acknowledged that some insurgents in Iraq might try to claim victory with the decision, but that it was important to deny them "such a high value target".

### **6.3 earthquake rocks Laos**

According to the USGS a magnitude 6.3 earthquake struck the Luang Namtha province of Laos at approximately 3:56 p.m. local time [4:56 a.m. eastern time]. The quake was felt as far as Bangkok.

The epicenter was reported to be 165 km [105 miles] west, northwest of Luang Prabang, Laos at a depth of 38.1 km [23.7 miles]. The quake was located just north of the town Chiang Rai provincial.

There are no reports of damage as of yet, but the USGS reports that damage in the area could be "moderate to heavy."

"The tremor could be felt in Bangkok and the northern provinces. The people in Oudomxai, near the epicentre, were shocked and ran out of their buildings but there were no reports of casualties or damage," said Smith Dharmasarojana, the director of the National Disaster Warning Center.

Witnesses report office building shaking in Bangkok and several of the skyscrapers have been evacuated.

No tsunami warning has been issued.

### **Wikinews attends Christy Carlson Romano concert in Sesame Place**

Wikinews reporter Nicholas Moreau contacted professional photographer David Fore of Lloyd David Photography to go to the recent Christy Carlson Romano concert at Sesame Place theme park in Langhorne, Pennsylvania.

Romano, perhaps best known for her breakout role in Even Stevens opposite Shia LaBoeuf, is presumably working towards a new album, regularly posting new singles to her MySpace profile. She is listed as "indie" on her profile, having originally been signed to Disney Records.

Romano has performed Belle in Beauty and the Beast on Broadway, as well as voice acting in the television series Kim Possible and video game Kingdom Hearts.

Sesame Place recently opened for the season, adding Abby Cadabby to its cast of life-size Muppets. The

park offers a variety of wet and dry rides, as well as stage attractions. Christy performed at the park four times over last weekend, as well as riding in its daily Rock Around the Block Parade.

### **Sarkozy succeeds Chirac as president of France**

Today, the official ceremony ushering in Nicolas Sarkozy as the new president of France took place at Élysée Palace. A 21-gun salute marked the moment he assumed power from his predecessor, Jacques Chirac.

Jean-Louis Debré, president of the Constitutional Council, received the oath of office from Sarkozy. "From this day on and for the duration of your mandate, you embody France, symbolize the republic and represent all the French people," he said as he made Sarkozy the 23rd President of France.

Sarkozy's wife, Cecilia, and their five children were among the attendees.

"I will defend the independence of France. I will defend the identity of France," said Sarkozy in his inaugural address. "There is a need to unite the French people ... and to meet commitments because never before has [public] confidence been so shaken and so fragile."

France needs "to take risks and follow initiatives," he said, as well as "rehabilitate the values of work, effort, merit and respect."

He also said he would place defense of human rights and the fight against global warming at the center of his foreign policy.

Handing over the launch codes for France's nuclear arsenal, was one of the final tasks of Chirac's

presidency. After a private meeting with Sarkozy, Chirac drove off, ending his 12 years as president, with Sarkozy waving goodbye from the courtyard of Élysée Palace. Tuesday, Chirac had made his farewells to the nation in a televised address.

Sarkozy rode in convertible up the Avenue des Champs-Élysées to the Arc de Triomphe, where he rekindled the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier. He said that he was moved by a letter written by Guy Môquet to his parents. Môquet was executed by the Germans in 1941, along with Jean-Pierre Timbaud. It is essential that children know the horrors of war, he said. Coincidentally, Sarkozy is the first president of France to have been born after World War II.

After that, Sarkozy flew to Germany for talks about the future of the European Union.

"The first emergency is to get the European Union out of its current paralysis," Sarkozy told reporters in Berlin. "For that, it is necessary that Germany, which today holds the EU presidency, and France, which has always been its privileged partner in Europe, see eye to eye on this."

### **Khamenei OKs talks with US on Iraq**

The Supreme Leader of Iran, Grand Ayatollah Ali Khamenei has approved talks with the United States to deal with the security situation in Iraq but has said the discussions won't involve other outstanding issues between the two countries such as Iran's nuclear program.

Khamenei, as the supreme leader of Iran, has the final say in all state issues under Iran's Rule of the Islamic Jurisprudence. Moreover, he

is the highest-ranking Islamic cleric in Iran and also has a considerable following in Iraq, Lebanon, the Palestinian territories, and other parts of the Islamic world.

Khamenei make his remarks in a speech in Mashhad where he said, "Iran's policy of not negotiating and having relations with America remains the same until the policies of this arrogant government change."

The United States and Iran have broken diplomatic relations since the Iran hostage crisis in 1980. Tehran has in the past called the United States the "Great Satan" and the enemy of Islam. Khamenei believes that rejecting a thorough discussion of all the disagreements between the United States and Iran is a "firm, logical and defensible policy." The Leader of Islamic Revolution said, "How could one talk with an arrogant, bullying, expansionist and colonizing American government especially in tenure of its current rude, disrespectful and insolent authorities?"

These most recent remarks by Khamenei come after the brief exchange of greetings by Condoleezza Rice and Manouchehr Mottaki at the Sharm el-Sheikh conference in Egypt without a substantive discussion of the security situation of Iraq.

In 2005, Khamenei declared that the United States was responsible for terrorism in Iraq and said, "The presence of aliens in Iraq is harmful and destructive to the Iraqi people." He also exhorted the American forces to withdraw.

### **Media speculate over possible presidential bid by Michael Bloomberg**

New York City Mayor Michael

Bloomberg is prepared to spend one billion dollars of his own money for a 2008 White House bid, the Washington Times reports, citing his friends and "close associates" .

However, Mayor Bloomberg yesterday made light of Senator Chuck Hagel's suggestion that Bloomberg could run as an independent with Hagel as running mate. Bloomberg has so far denied that he is running but has not ruled out the possibility either.

Media reports speculate that Bloomberg is considering a run if the Democratic and Republican nominees cater more to the the parties' bases, leaving room for an independent candidate who can attract moderate voters for both camps.

TIME magazine reports that Bloomberg was at first ready to consider spending US\$500 million for a presidential run.

Michael Bloomberg could have more money than either party candidates, former FEC chairman Michael E. Toner told the Times. Those funds would come in handy to mobilize the thousands of petitions needed to qualify for a run in some states.

The Washington Times also has reports of a Bloomberg adviser saying some people involved with John McCain's Presidential Campaign are prepared to leave and join Bloomberg's campaign if he does indeed run.

Bloomberg's advisers have also said that they have been studying and learning from Ross Perot's Presidential campaign in 1992. They have called and talked with Perot's former advisers and campaign workers to learn from their mistakes and experience.

Bloomberg made his fortune with his company Bloomberg L.P., a financial news and data company. Forbes magazine ranked him 44th on a list of wealthiest Americans and 142nd on a list of billionaires worldwide. His net worth is estimated at US\$5.5 billion.

### **New York couple keeps Indonesian women as slaves**

In Long Island, New York, a millionaire couple has been arrested after keeping two Indonesian women as slaves for at least five years.

According to federal prosecutors, the two women were beaten and tortured by Nassau County couple Varsha Mahender Sabhnani, 35, and her husband Mahender Murlidhar Sabhnani, 51, and were kept from leaving the house unless it was to take out the trash. Both women are legal immigrants who migrated to the United States back in 2002. Since receiving the jobs, both women had their passports taken away from them by the Sabhnanis.

"No one would ever think that human beings were being brought into the United States and held for slave labor, and beaten, and tortured in a beautiful mansion right here in one of the most exclusive neighbourhoods on Long Island," said Demetri Jones, a prosecutor in the case.

Authorities say that the women had scalding hot water poured on them, were forced to take as many as 30 showers in a three hour period, were made to run up and down flights of stairs, and one of the women was forced to eat "25 extremely hot chilli peppers." All the "punishments" were in response to not completing work properly. The women also said that they had to hide food from "their

captors" because the Sabhnani's did not feed them enough.

Police were alerted to the situation when they found one of the women walking around the city wearing only a towel and a pair of pants.

Both women were promised by the couple to receive at least USD\$100 to USD\$200 for their work, but according to prosecutors, the couple paid only USD\$100 a month, which was sent to one of the women's daughters who lives in Indonesia.

The women are only identified as Samirah and Nona.

The couple will face charges of keeping people against their will. They are reported to be running a perfume business from their Long Island home.

### **Martin Luther King Jr.'s oldest daughter Yolanda King dies at age 51**

Yolanda King, the oldest daughter of former Civil Rights Leader Martin Luther King Jr. has died at the age of 51.

The cause of her death is still unknown, but reports say that she was suffering from heart related problems and that shortly after King gave a speech, she collapsed.

"She was an actress, author, producer, advocate for peace and nonviolence, who was known and loved for her motivational and inspirational contributions to society," said a statement issued by King's family.

A spokesman for the King Center, Steve Klein, says that King died while at her Santa Monica, California home.

King was born on November 17,

1955 in Montgomery, Alabama. An actress, speaker and producer, King played Rosa Parks in the King miniseries in 1978. She was also the CEO of Higher Grounds Productions, a company that produces events related to spirituality and which advertised King for speeches and performances.

"We must keep reaching across the table and, in the tradition of Martin Luther King Jr. and Coretta Scott King, feed each other," said King during a January speech at Ebenezer Baptist Church.

### **Thomson Corporation and Reuters agree to merge**

The Thomson Corporation and Reuters Group PLC announced Tuesday that they have agreed to combine the two companies. The boards of both Thomson and Reuters will recommend the merger to their shareholders. The new company will be known as Thomson-Reuters.

The Canadian Thomson-family holding company Woodbridge, which controls 70% of Thomson, has agreed to vote in favour of the deal and the Reuters Founders Share Company, which controls a special share in Reuters, will also support the merger.

Based on the TSX CA\$46.36 closing share price of Thomson on May 14, 2007, each Reuters share would be valued at 691 pence and, therefore, the full capital of Reuters valued at approximately £8.7 billion. Cash requirements for the deal are to be provided by Thomson. Woodbridge will own approximately 53 percent of the combined company, other Thomson shareholders 23 percent and Reuters shareholders about 24 percent.

The merger arrangement will leave

two separate companies that will be operated as a single entity. The boards of the two companies will be identical as will the senior executive management team. Thomson will be renamed to Thomson-Reuters Corporation, and will be listed on both the TSX and the NYSE. Thomson-Reuters PLC will list on the London Stock Exchange and the NYSE.

Reuters current CEO, Tom Glocer, will become CEO of the combined company while Thomson President and CEO Richard J. Harrington will retire at the completion of the merger.

Thomson has currently 32,000 employees worldwide, with operations in 37 countries and revenues of US\$6.6 billion in 2006. Thomson's major business operations centre around financial information and legal services, with smaller ventures in tax accounting, health care, and the scientific field. Thomson is headquartered in Stamford, Connecticut, in the United States.

Reuters is one of the world's largest news agencies, with a total of 16,800 staff in all divisions, but derives more than 90 percent of its revenue from its financial service business. It is the merger of Thomson and Reuter's financial services divisions that may have been the genesis of the talks. It has been suggested that both companies wanted a better economy of scale to compete with Bloomberg, the American financial services giant.

"We are enormously proud of the evolution of The Thomson Corporation and the value it has created for all our shareholders," said David Thomson, Chairman of Thomson. "We recognize the rich history of Reuters and are

committed to uphold the Reuter Trust Principles."

The chairman of Reuters, Niall FitzGerald, expressed his satisfaction with the merger. "The shared expertise and complementary strengths of these two companies makes for a strategically compelling and financially attractive combination," said FitzGerald in a joint press release. "I am especially proud that Reuters journalism will continue to be governed by the powerful Reuter Trust Principles of independence, integrity and freedom from bias."

The new company is projecting efficiencies of greater than US\$500 million per year, by the end of the third year after closing the deal.

Criticisms were raised by Reuters journalists, who voiced concerns in an open letter to the Reuters Founders Share Company. They worried whether or not "a reconstituted Reuters would maintain the high standards of journalism and the integrity, independence and freedom from bias that have shaped the company's 156-year-old reputation."

It is expected that the merger will draw the attention of regulators due to the size and nature of the transaction. "Antitrust authorities in Europe and the U.S. are almost certain to apply a more detailed and lengthy review of the acquisition than is typical, because of the limited number of companies that supply prices, data, news and financial tools," said Simon Baker, analyst, Credit Suisse in London.

### **New Jersey wildfires burning over 18,000 acres of land, thunderstorms expected**

In New Jersey, USA, 18,000 acres, or 20 square miles, of pine forests

are ablaze. The fire started about 25 miles from Atlantic City, near an aerial bombing base. While there have been no deaths, 2,500 homes have been evacuated. The National Weather Service has posted a Severe Thunderstorm Warning for Wednesday night.

### **Today in History**

1590 - Anne of Denmark was crowned Queen of Scotland in the abbey church at Holyrood Palace.

1792 - The New York Stock Exchange was formed.

1865 - The International Telecommunication Union was founded as the International Telegraph Union in Paris.

1900 - Second Boer War: The Siege of Mafeking was lifted after 217 days.

1943 - World War II: RAF Dam Busters successfully deployed bouncing bombs on German dams in Operation Chastise.

May 17 is Ascension Thursday in Christianity (2007); Constitution Day in Norway (1814), Galician Literature Day in Galicia, Spain.

### **Quote of the Day**

We are all, always, the desire not to die. This desire is as immeasurable and varied as life's complexity, but at bottom this is what it is: To continue to be, to be more and more, to develop and to endure. All the force we have, all our energy and clearness of mind serve to intensify themselves in one way or another. We intensify ourselves with new impressions, new sensations, new ideas. We endeavour to take what we do not have and to add it to ourselves. Humanity is the desire for novelty founded upon the fear of death.

That is what it is.

~ Henri Barbusse

### **Word of the Day**

delve; v

1. To dig the ground, especially

with a shovel.

2. To search thoroughly and carefully for information.

### ***About Wikinews***

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