



Top Stories

Indian markets crash: Sensex loses 826 points, Nifty down 246



Markets record largest ever intraday loss, all stocks close in red, Finance Minister

reassures investors says the markets are making a routine correction.

Culture of violence reported in central Australian Aboriginal communities



Australian media reports that a recently leaked Northern Territory police briefing paper exposes "shocking"

cases of sexual abuse and violence against women and children in remote Australian Aboriginal communities.

Featured story

U.S. restores full diplomatic relations with Libya

The U.S. has announced full diplomatic relations will be restored with Libya and the country removed from the list of nations the U.S. considers to be state sponsors of terrorism following a 45-day open comment period.

Wikipedia Current Events

•White House Press Secretary Tony Snow is unwilling to either confirm or deny U.S. financial and logistical support for the

Wikipedia Current Events

Alliance for the Restoration of Peace and Counter-Terrorism in Somalia. Previously, such accusations were denied. The current Prime Minister of Somalia, Ali Mohamed Gedi, criticized U.S. support for "criminals."

•The European Parliament committee examining the claims of para-legal deportations of individuals for torture-based questioning, known as "extraordinary renditions", has reported that it has CIA confirmation that between 30 and 50 individuals underwent such deportations to seven "black sites" in Asia, Europe and Africa. Those in Europe have reportedly been closed down following the public outcry, but there is still one such site operating in a North African country.

•New Italian prime minister Romano Prodi pledges to withdraw Italian troops from Iraq and calls the Iraq war a "grave mistake that has not solved but increased the problem of security".

•Typhoon Chanchu, the strongest storm on record to have entered the South China Sea in May, makes landfall between the cities of Shantou, Guangdong and Xiamen, Fujian in China.

NZ Finance Minister introduces 2006 budget

Today the New Zealand Finance Minister, Hon. Dr Michael Cullen, presented the 2006 New Zealand

Budget to the House of Representatives. There is a NZ\$8.5 billion OBERAC surplus and a NZ\$1.5 billion cash surplus.

It has been labelled as the "Bondi Budget" by National leader Don Brash, "Helen Clark and Michael Cullen believe there is a place for tax cuts - it's called Australia" he said.

Key issues in the budget includes: The Telecom New Zealand local loop unbundling. \$1.3 billion extra for transport. \$3 billion extra for health care, over the next four years. \$361 million extra for schooling \$166 million extra for tertiary education and skill training \$162 million extra for early childhood education

Nepal Parliament passes resolution to curb King's power

Prime Minister of Nepal, Giriraj Koirala proposed in Parliament a resolution which is aimed at drastically curtailing the monarch's powers. According to the resolution, the King will be stripped of his status as the Supreme Commander of the Royal Nepal Army (which is to be renamed as the Nepal Army Cabinet). Portions of the Nepalese national anthem which praise the King have been cut out.

The proposal also aims at cutting down on the King's allowance and his right to be exempted from paying taxes. The government which is currently referred to as the "King's administration" will

henceforth be known as the "Nepalese Government". The resolution also changes Nepal's status from that of a Hindu nation to a secular one. The King's Advisory Council will no longer exist and his security will be taken care of by Parliament. The King will also now no longer have the privilege of being above the law of the land since the resolution provides for him to be tried in court if the situation so warrants.

Analysts have expressed concerns saying that under the current Constitution, this proposal cannot become law till the King signs it. Politicians say however that this proposal is above the Constitution and reflects the will of the people. King Gyanendra restored democracy to the Himalayan Kingdom after weeks of massive anti-monarchy protests earlier this year.

New Italian government proposes withdrawal of troops from Iraq

In his first speech since being sworn in as the country's leader, Italian Prime Minister Romano Prodi says the US-led invasion of Iraq had been a mistake. He says his new government will propose the withdrawal of Italy's 3000 troops from Iraq.

"We consider the war in Iraq and the occupation of the country a grave error," Mr Prodi told Italian Parliament this week. "It has not resolved, but complicated the situation of security. It is the intention of this government to propose to Parliament the return of our troops from Iraq." His speech resulted in jeers from Italy's centre right parties.

Mr Prodi said his government intends to continue "good relations" with Washington. He did

not give a date for a withdrawal, saying a "technical timeframe" would have to be agreed with all sides involved. Italy's centre-left parties opposed the US-led invasion of Iraq three years ago.

Mr Prodi said his government will remain on the front lines in the war against terror and would participate in anti-terror operations if they are sanctioned by international organizations, such as the United Nations. "We are convinced participants in the war against terrorism, even militarily, when it is legitimized by an international organization to which we belong." he said.

Former Prime Minister Silvio Berlusconi was defeated in a tight election to Prodi's centre-left bloc in April this year. As opposition leader, Prodi has always opposed the war in Iraq. Berlusconi sent 3,000 troops to Iraq in 2003. The move was widely opposed by the Italian public.

Although troops were already expected to return home by the end of 2006, Prodi did not give an exact timeframe for the withdrawal. He said it would only happen in consultation with Iraqi authorities.

Cholera Outbreak Hits Angola

A cholera epidemic in Angola has killed over 1,200 people in the past three months. The UN World Health Organization (WHO) says about 35,000 people are have fallen ill, half the victims in the capital of Luanda, where the first cases were detected in February.

The UN say the epidemic is Angola's worst cholera outbreak in almost two decades continues to rage on with 546 new cases and 31 deaths reported in the last 24 hours. A third of the victims are

children under 5.

The medical charity Mangola, Medecines Sans Frontieres and the World Health Organisation say it is the worst outbreak recorded in the country. Spokesman for Medecines Sans Frontiere Richard Veerman said: "Angola is heading for its worst ever outbreak and the situation remains very bad in Angola," he said.

"It's very worrying, the official number of deaths countrywide is now more than 1,200, which is likely under-reported. Many people will be at home and die at home and have no possibility to come to one of our treatment centres."

Cholera, an acute intestinal disease caused by ingestion of food or water contaminated with the bacterium *Vibrio cholerae*, causes copious, painless, watery diarrhoea that can quickly lead to severe dehydration and death if treatment, including rehydration, is not given promptly.

Australian rugby league club to have extra police at all NSW games

The Canterbury Bulldogs, a team in Australia's National Rugby League have entered into an agreement with New South Wales police to provide extra police at all games in NSW. The agreement follows a spate of violent incidents at Bulldogs matches this year.

In March, there were fights during and after a game between the Bulldogs and Wests Tigers at Telstra Stadium, the Bulldogs home ground. This led police to step up their presence at Bulldogs matches for the rest of the season. A month later, a group of Bulldogs supporters abused four South Sydney cheerleaders at another home match.

According to NSW Police, a meeting was held between the police executive and Bulldogs CEO, Malcolm Noad where it was decided that the club will pay for additional police at all Bulldogs games across NSW. The additional police will include specialist police (including riot police) to provide security for spectators.

Only police which are working outside their normal rostered hours will be paid for by the club.

The police Commander of the North West Sydney region, Assistant Commissioner said he was pleased that the club was working with the police proactively. "It is pleasing to see the club taking a proactive stance to ensure the games proceed with a strong police presence to provide increased safety" he said.

Assistant Commissioner Clifford warned that police will not be specifically targeting Bulldogs supporters, but anyone who is causing trouble at games. "It is hoped this initiative will stamp out violence at future Bulldogs matches. Police will be targeting anyone doing the wrong thing, regardless of which team they support" he said.

Indian markets crash: Sensex loses 826 points, Nifty down 246

The Bombay Stock Exchange Sensitive Index (Sensex) crashed 826 points and the National Stock Exchange's index (Nifty) 246 in what was the largest ever intra-day drop in their histories. At the end of day's trade, the Sensex closed at 11,391 and the Nifty at 3,388. The market breadth is also negative - 2081 shares have declined, with only 336 stocks advancing.

Analysts speculated that the reason for this drop was that the U.S. CPI number, which was released yesterday, was above expectations. This, coupled with weaknesses observed in the London Metal Exchange, has led to losses in emerging markets like India, Mexico, and Brazil.

Asian Regional Strategist at JPMorgan Chase, Adrian Mowat, believes that the Sensex will stabilise at around the 11,000 mark after correcting by around 5-6%. Indian Finance Minister P. Chidambaram dismissed the issue and described it as a routine fluctuation. The main losers in today's crash were the steel and cement segments.

Dee Caffari on last stretch of round the world sailing challenge

Briton Dee Caffari and her 72ft steel cutter Aviva are on the last part of their journey around the world. The former PE teacher from Hertfordshire is just 55 miles from becoming the first woman to sail around the world solo against the prevailing winds and currents.

FBI searching Michigan farm for clues in disappearance of Jimmy Hoffa

The FBI and Bloomfield Township, Michigan Police are searching land on a horse farm in Milford Michigan for clues or evidence related to former Teamsters union leader, Jimmy Hoffa who was 62 when he went missing in 1975. The FBI received a tip a few weeks ago from an FBI source which authorities believe is credible and detailed enough to warrant a search of the property.

The FBI says that the search is "in connection with the ongoing investigation into James Riddle

Hoffa's disappearance, for evidence of criminal activity that may have occurred under prior ownership," said Dawn Clenney, a special agent for the FBI. "This is one [tip] we felt we needed to follow up on," added Clenney.

However; Barbara Ann Crancer, the daughter of Hoffa said that "we've been down this road many times before. All they told me is a new tip came in and they were going to search somewhere in Milford. It's always a shock when it all comes rushing back again."

Previous searches and claim have turned up nothing. Most recently, in May 2004, official Frank Sheeran for the Philadelphia Teamsters said in a biography that he was the one to kill Hoffa by shooting and killing Hoffa in a Detroit home. A Detroit TV station, WJBK investigated the claims and found blood in the home, but tests proved that it did not belong to Hoffa. His body was also previously suspected of being buried in Giant's Stadium in the endzone in Meadowlands, New Jersey, a trash facility linked to the mob in Hamtramck and a landfill also in New Jersey.

Authorities say that the search could take several days to complete and that heavy digging equipment will be brought in on Thursday to assist in digging four locations on the land.

Australian opposition expected to release workplace plan

Australian opposition leader Kim Beazley is expected to release his workplace plan when he will speak to a union delegate meeting in Sydney today.

At the meeting today, there will be delegates from the Construction Forestry Mining Energy Union

(CFMEU), Energy Union, Australian Manufacturing Workers Union (AMFU) and Australian Workers Union (AWU).

Under the plan, employers will be prevented from employing overseas migrants for 12 months after sacking Australian workers from the same job.

In a statement, Andrew Ferguson, CFMEU's NSW Secretary said that his union is contacted regularly after Australian workers are sacked for less expensive overseas labor. "There is not a day that goes by that people don't contact the union looking for help finding a job because employers are importing cheap labour rather than investing in Australian workers".

Mr Ferguson welcomed the opposition's incentives. "Kim Beazley's proposal is a welcome step forward in rectifying the short-sighted policies of a government that has completely failed to look out for the interests of working Australians."

Apple releases Macbook

Apple Computer today introduced the new Macbook line, which includes the Macbook and Macbook Pro. It is the successor to the iBook line and contains Intel Core Duo processors and a host of features, and starting at a price of \$1,099. The Macbook features a 13.3" widescreen display, while the Pro can be purchased with either 15" or 17" displays. It comes in two colors: Black (2 GHz model only) and White (1.83 and 2 GHz models). This release leaves only one PowerPC processor computer that has not made the transition to Intel chips, the PowerMac G5.

Today in History

1536 - Anne Boleyn, the second wife and queen consort of Henry VIII of England, was beheaded for adultery at the Tower of London.
 1643 - "The Great Condé" scored a decisive victory in the Battle of Rocroi during the Thirty Years' War, marking the end of prominence for the Spanish tercios and the resurgence of French power in Europe.
 1649 - The Rump Parliament passed an act to formally establish the Commonwealth of England.
 1802 - The Légion d'honneur was first instituted by Napoléon Bonaparte, First Consul of the French Republic.
 1922 - The Young Pioneer Organization of the Soviet Union was founded.
 May 19 is Commemoration of Atatürk, Youth and Sports Day in Turkey.

Quote of the Day

"Faith is a continuum, and we each fall on that line where we may. By attempting to rigidly classify ethereal concepts like faith, we end up debating semantics to the point where we entirely miss the obvious — that is, that we are all trying to decipher life's big mysteries, and we're each following our own paths of enlightenment." ~ Dan Brown

Word of the Day

domesticate; *v*

Definition

1. To make fit for life in a house or home.
2. To adapt to live with humans.

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