



Top Stories

Massive ice deposits found on Mars

The European Space Agency Mars Express spacecraft has discovered enormous ice water deposits in the south pole of Mars that are larger than the state of Texas.

Burgas-Alexandroupolis pipeline agreement signed in Athens

The agreement for the oil pipeline Burgas-Alexandroupolis was signed today in Athens, between President Vladimir Putin of Russia and Prime Ministers of Greece and Bulgaria, Kostas Karamanlis and Sergei Stanishev respectively.

Featured story

Saturn's moon Enceladus may host "internal life"

Scientists at NASA say that new satellite images of Saturn's moon Enceladus taken in 2005, has shown that the moon has begun to spew geysers which contain "liquid water", and that the internal heat produced by the moon's core may be able to host life below the icy surface.

Wikipedia Current Events

- Hungarian police use water cannon and tear gas to disperse a crowd of 1,000 far right skinheads and other extremists in Budapest.
- Four United States soldiers die in Baghdad in a car bomb attack, while 12 Iraqis die in Baghdad and Iskandariya in the south of Iraq.
- Willie Brigitte is sentenced to nine years' jail in France for planning terrorist attacks in Australia.
- Researchers discover that the polar ice cap at Planum Australe, the south pole of Mars, is thick enough to cover the planet with water if melted.
- The Governor of California Arnold Schwarzenegger signs a bill to move the California primary from June to February 5.
- Russia, Greece and Bulgaria sign a deal to build a pipeline to transport Russian oil to the Greek port of Alexandroupolis.
- The five permanent members of the United Nations Security Council and Germany agree on a proposal for sanctions against Iran for its nuclear programs to be discussed by the Security Council.
- The BBC issues a plea for information on the whereabouts of its Gaza correspondent, Alan Johnston, who has been missing for three days and is believed by Palestinian security officials to have been kidnapped.
- The Movement for the Emancipation of the Niger Delta frees two Italian oilworkers that it took captive last year in Nigeria.

2007 Cricket World Cup: Zimbabwe vs Ireland

Zimbabwe tied the second Group D match in the World Cup against Ireland at Sabina Park, Kingston, Jamaica.

This was only the third tie in the history of the competition.

Missing boy from Glynn County, Georgia found dead

The body of a 6-year-old Christopher Barrios, Jr. who vanished last Thursday was found covered alongside a road near the Glynn County Airport, police said. A ranger with the Department of Natural Resources found the body of Christopher Barrios about 3 miles from his home.

Police already had George Edenfield, a convicted sex offender, his parents David and Peggy Edenfield, and Donald Dale, a family friend, in custody in connection with the case. The case is being treated as a homicide. Local police chief Doerin said it was obvious that he had been slain, but would not comment further.

NCAA Basketball: Thursday session 1 recap

The first three games of the NCAA tournament yielded two close games and one blowout. All three games featured victories by the higher seeds.

Maryland 82, Davidson 70

The Maryland Terrapins received a scare from the Davidson Wildcats,

as the Terps had to fight back from a second-half deficit to take down the Wildcats 82-70. Stephan Curry of Davidson led all scorers with 30 points.

Davidson jumped out to an eight-point halftime lead but started to show obvious signs of fatigue at the midway point of the second half. Despite the fast pace to the game, Davidson only shot 34.3% from the field during the game. They also hit ten 3-point shots, but attempted 27. It was a mistake-filled game for both teams, with Davidson turning the ball over 17 times and Maryland committing 22 turnovers.

Maryland ultimately won the game under the basket, both outscoring the Wildcats in the paint and outrebounding the Wildcats on both ends. Maryland will go on to face the winner of the Butler-Old Dominion contest.
Official box score
Official play-by-play

Boston College 84, Texas Tech 75
Boston College and Texas Tech played an evenly-matched game out in Winston-Salem, with the Eagles defeating the Red Raiders 84-75. Bob Knight's Texas Tech team finishes the season 21-13.

The Eagles were led by game high scorer Tyrese Rice (26 points) and Sean Marshall (21 points). Boston College trailed by 4 points midway through the final half, but a 14-4 run gave the Eagles the lead. While Texas Tech would make it close, Boston College would pull away in the final minutes for the victory.

Martin Zeno led Texas Tech with 21 points. Three other players contributed double-digit point totals but as a team, Texas Tech was outrebounded 34-21.
Official box score
Official play-by-play

Louisville 78, Stanford 58

For the Louisville Cardinals, it may have just seemed to be another regular-season home game.

Five players scored in double figures for the Cardinals, who played their first-round matchup mere miles from Taco Bell Arena in Louisville. While on any other day, Louisville would have expected to be soundly booed, they attracted a firmly partisan crowd in their favor for a 78-58 rout of Stanford.

Stanford started out slow, and could not string together enough successful possessions to keep the game close. Louisville forced 21 turnovers and held Stanford to 41% shooting. Of those 21 turnovers, 11 were steals for Louisville. Edgar Sosa and David Padgett led Louisville in scoring, both with 16 points. Brook Lopez led Stanford with 18 points.

Transcript of 9/11 confession by Khalid Sheikh Mohammed released

Khalid Sheikh Mohammed, alleged 9/11 mastermind and number 3 in Al-Qaeda's hierarchy, confessed on Saturday that he was responsible for beheading Wall Street Journal reporter Daniel Pearl in 2002, according to a military tribunal transcript released by the Pentagon. The transcript also details how Mohammed, through a representative, confesses that he "was responsible for the 9/11 Operation, from A to Z."

September 11, 2001 attacks

"I was the Operational Director for Sheikh Usama Bin Laden for the organizing, planning, follow-up, and execution of the 9/11 Operation under the military commander, Sheikh Abu Hafs Al-Masri Subhi Abu Sittah," Mohammed confessed according to

the transcript. He also expressed remorse for the children harmed during the World Trade Center operation. "I don't like to kill people," he said.

The transcript contains a list of 31 items Mohammed wholly or partially confesses to. These include alleged Al-Qaeda attacks such as the bombing of a night club in Bali or the attempt by Richard Colvin Reid to use a shoe bomb to bring down a U.S. airplane. According to the document, Mohammed also confesses to planning attacks against the Panama Canal, suspension bridges in New York, former U.S. President Jimmy Carter, the Sears Tower, Big Ben, Heathrow Airport and more.

Daniel Pearl killing

Mohammed admitted to decapitating Daniel Pearl, a reporter for the Wall Street Journal in the city of Karachi, Pakistan in 2002.

Daniel Pearl was working on a story in Pakistan in January of 2002 when he was taken hostage. Pearl was investigating the British "shoe-bomber" Richard Reid, and links between Pakistan's intelligence agency, the Inter-Services Intelligence and al-Qaeda.

Military tribunal for Guantánamo prisoners

The case of Khalid Sheikh Mohammed is being put through a closed military tribunal, consisting of three military officers and a government-selected representative. Human rights organizations have criticized this approach, because the defendant is not allowed to freely choose who represents them, and the courts are closed to public scrutiny. Another transcript of a Guantánamo Bay hearing of Abu Faraj al-Libbi, also released

yesterday, explains the prisoner's opinion about the closed military tribunal hearings: "I have been held by the United States for over two years without any indication of how the judicial system is going to deal with my situation. It is my opinion the detainee is in a lose-lose situation."

Mohammed refused to take the oath, explaining that he wasn't lying, but that taking the oath would be recognizing the court. He also accused the U.S. of double standards, comparing the 9/11 attacks to the killing of people in Iraq.

Khalid Sheikh Mohammed was apprehended in Rawalpindi in March 2003. According to the New York Times, the Justice Department and the CIA approved of using harsh interrogation techniques on him, such as "waterboarding", which involves a prisoner being strapped to a board and water being poured over him, which simulates drowning. During the hearing, Mohammed presented a written statement claiming abuse by U.S. personnel during his detention.

Russia and Italy share views in solving conflicts

After having a meeting in Bari, Italy, on the 13th of March, the President of Russia, Vladimir Putin, and the Prime Minister of Italy, Romano Prodi, gave a press-conference, summarizing the results of their conversations.

The main point the two leaders agreed on was that only diplomatic means should be used in solving such international conflicts as in Afghanistan, Iraq and, especially, Iran with its nuclear program issue.

Mr. Putin confirmed once again his views on any use of armed forces in

resolving such international conflicts. Mr. Prodi agreed with the Russian President on this point and also stated that such conflicts should be solved using a multi-lateral approach, where several nations would take part in discussions. In addition to this the potential of the UN authority should be used, added Mr. Prodi.

The Prime Minister said that Italy is looking forward to a closer cooperation with Russia in the UN Security Council, as well as in the energy sector. All of this could be reached only through thoroughly developed partnership agreements, he added.

Kids game portal BBC Jam to close after competition complaints

Kids will have to look elsewhere for educational entertainment, after the European Commission received complaints that the British Broadcasting Corporation's website was "unfair competition" to the commercial online games market.

The site, called BBC jam, will be suspended on March 20, 2007, pending review, per the BBC Trust.

BBC jam offers educationally-oriented games aimed at 5 to 16-year-olds, created with an operating budget of £150 million (US\$290 million) over five years, US\$85 million of which allocated to independent content producers. The government funded service is formally requesting proposals on how it should promote education and learning digitally, without being "non-compliant".

NUT Cymru, a Welsh teachers' union, is worried about the closure. "As a union we believe that education should be a public service and when you start talking about the commercial online

companies the alarm bells start ringing and we think 'has this been too successful?' It's only 15 months old and it's been cut at very short notice. It makes us very worried. One wonders to what extent commercial companies are going to step into the gap that the BBC has left in terms of Welsh language provision."

Both NUT Cymru and the Welsh Assembly Government have questioned the extent to which commercial firms would step in and fulfill the terms of the Welsh Language Act 1993.

Missing dog's severed head found by 17-year old girl

A \$2,500 reward has been issued by the Humane Society of the United States for information on an "implied terroristic threat", according to Sergeant Jim Gray of the St. Paul Police Department.

According to Crystal Brown, 17 year old owner of the dog, a gift-wrapped box with a note saying "Congratulations Crystal. This side up. Batteries included.", was left on her doorstep along with the severed head of her dog, Chevey, and a Valentine's Day candy.

The dog, an Australian shepherd mix called Chevy, went missing in February and Crystal, his owner, spent weeks searching for him, posting fliers, going door to door, and visiting the local animal shelter.

Dale Bartlett, Deputy Manager for the Humane Society said that "This case was extremely heinous. I deal with hundreds and hundreds of cruelty cases each year. When I read about this case, it just took my breath away."

"This was so cruel," Crystal said. "We're dealing with one sick, twisted person."

Potter #7 to break Potter #6's record

12 million copies of Harry Potter and the Deathly Hallows will be printed by American publisher Scholastic, a record setting number for the first edition of any book.

The immensely popular book series will break Scholastic's previous record first printing, for Harry Potter and the Half-Blood Prince, which sold 6.9 million copies in its first 24 hours of release.

The first six books have sold a total of 325 million copies worldwide.

The Deathly Hallows will be released July 21, at 12:01 am EST.

Harry Potter to appear on French stamps

Photos of the Harry Potter movie cast will appear on French stamps and stationery.

La Poste will release the three designs this weekend, with the following rate/design combinations:
Priority domestic: Harry Potter
Slow domestic: Ron Weasley
International: Hermione Granger

The Harry Potter characters have appeared on stamps in Australia, the Isle of Man, and Taiwan, as well as numerous smaller nations that depend on stamp sales to foreigners. Canada has issued non-circulation coins of many of the characters, based on the movie actors' appearances.

Wal-Mart's package reduction strategy results

After launching its Packaging Scorecard initiative on February 1, Wal-Mart has released its first in-store packaging reduction results. On February 1, Wal-Mart announced that its trying to reduce packaging by 5% as of 2013. Their

vendor site has been visited by 2268 companies, and 117 products have been entered into their sustainability calculator. It determines the score based on the amount of greenhouse gas emissions created by production, materials, product-to-packing ratio, and "cube utilization", how space efficient the product can be shipped.

Buyers will be able to log onto the website in 2008, to make their purchasing decisions.

Beyond attracting environmentally conscientious customers, this move will save Wal-Mart USD\$3.4 billion over the next five years.

TV show about a card game to launch in Canada

European trading card game-turned-television series Chaotic will air in North America for the first time March 16. Canada's Teletoon animation channel has scheduled the series to appear regularly Sunday mornings.

The series helps viewers learn game strategies for the game. Unlike most card games, kids are encouraged to play virtually; once they purchase a pack, they type in special codes on the cards to access those characters online.

The plot of Card Captors Sakura was based around a card game, while the Pokemon game is a famous spin-off products, based on the series and video game.

Chaotic was also the name of Britney Spears and Kevin Federline's reality television series.

Sources

Gary Rusak "Teletoon gets Chaotic". KidScreen Magazine, March 15, 2007

Wind tunnel free-fall record set

Andy Scott of Marsh Gibbon, England just set the world record for "free falling distance in a vertical wind tunnel".

By balancing himself in the jet of air for one hour, 18 minutes and 52 seconds, Scott, 37, fell the equivalent of 130 miles at the Airkix Windtunnel in Milton Keynes.

Vertical windtunnels were originally created so that free fall parachutists could safely practice positioning themselves, before making actual real life attempts.

The record has yet to be officially confirmed with Guinness World Records.

2007 Cricket World Cup: Sri Lanka vs Bermuda

Sri Lanka have won their first Group B match in the World Cup by 243 runs against Bermuda at the Queen's Park Oval, Port of Spain, Trinidad and Tobago.

Sri Lanka won the toss and chose to bat first.

Burgas-Alexandroupolis pipeline agreement signed in Athens

An agreement to begin construction of the Burgas-Alexandroupolis pipeline to transport oil from the Black Sea to the Mediterranean was signed by Bulgaria, Greece and Russia today.

The signing ceremony was held in the presence of the President of the Hellenic Republic, Karolos Papoulias, at the Presidential Palace in Athens, with President Vladimir Putin of Russia and Prime Ministers of Greece and Bulgaria, Kostas Karamanlis and Sergei Stanishev respectively.

The oil pipeline agreement is the

end of months of negotiations between the three countries and was saluted by the Greek government as a "momentous" agreement. According to President Putin, the agreement will not only benefit the three contributing members but will also be significant for the world economy and, furthermore, he added that "the pipeline allows diversification in the oil routes, in the best interest of our countries, our peoples and the economy". As for the Greek-Russian bilateral relations, Mr.Karamanlis stated that "this visit bears witness to the excellent ties between the two nations, signalling and symbolising the construction of a major project, the Burgas-Alexandroupolis oil pipeline". This the second time that Putin visits Athens to meet with the Greek Premier, however they had also previous meetings in Moscow and northern Greece, during the last two years.

Before the signing of the pipeline agreement, President Putin and Prime Minister Stanishev had the opportunity to meet with their Greek counterparts and discuss issues of bilateral and regional significance. Yesterday night, Prime Minister Karamanlis hosted a dinner in honour of the Russian and Bulgarian heads of state in central Athens.

New Zealand's state broadcaster told off by police

The New Zealand Police have told off New Zealand's state broadcaster, TVNZ (Television New Zealand) for not telling them that they knew where a rapist on the run from police was. However, he did turn himself in after giving the interview.

John Clarke, the convicted rapist, was on the run from police after leaving his home while he was on

home detention on Monday, and two probation officers were also present. Mr Clarke was labelled as a high risk offender.

One News, owned by TVNZ, were interviewing John Clarke yesterday, meanwhile a lot of time and effort from police was going into trying to hunt him down. After they have finished the interview, Mr Clarke handed himself in to the Greymouth police, which One News also recorded.

"They were in a bit of a rush to get it on the 6 o'clock news." — Sergeant David Cross, Greymouth police.

"He wandered in off the street with a TV film crew," said Greymouth Sergeant David Cross.

A spokeswoman for TVNZ, Megan Williams said that they would only agree to the interview with Mr Clarke if he handed himself into police after they had finished. She said that if he had not handed himself in, they would then have gone to the police.

The police say that they would have expected TVNZ to have called them "...to say 'look Gary, perhaps if you pull back some of your resources at 5 o'clock, this guy's going to give himself up'," said Sergeant Cross. Sergeant Alison Eleam, Christchurch's central area commander, says that she is not impressed with the way TVNZ acted. TVNZ say that they are now happy to talk to the police.

In November, 2006, Mr Clarke was released from prison and placed into home detention for kidnapping and raping a 15-year-old girl in 1997.

Canadian government tax

processing computers back online

The Canada Revenue Agency (CRA) announced today that computer systems involved with the processing of tax returns for individuals are back online.

Tax processing had been halted on March 6, 2007, due to a computer glitch. The source of the problem had been traced back to software maintenance performed on March 4.

In an update on the CRA website, dated March 14, Michel Dorais, Commissioner of the Agency, stated that all of the databases had been restored and CRA employees are processing the backlog of returns and payments.

Tax processing for businesses had not been affected by the computer shutdown.

In his statement, Dorais thanked taxpayers "for their patience and understanding" during the service outage. He also stated that "the integrity and safety of personal data was never at risk".

The CRA suggests that it would work quickly to process the resulting backlog of tax returns.

Disney Cruise Line to add two new ships

In a press release on February 22, 2007, Disney announced the expansion of its cruise line. Disney plans to add two new ships to its current fleet of two. This expansion is expected to more than double the cruise line's current passenger capacity. By expanding, Disney hopes to meet the increasing demand for its cruise line.

The two new ships are to be very similar to each other and will weigh about 120,000 tons. They are

planned to be two decks taller than the two existing ships, the Disney Magic and the Disney Wonder and will have 1,250 staterooms. These two ships are scheduled for christening in 2011 and 2012.

In the press release, Disney President and CEO Bob Iger stated: "Since our maiden voyage in 1998, Disney Cruise Line has been a huge success for our guests and for our shareholders alike. It has brought our unparalleled family vacation experience to the high seas, and has also generated high margins and double digit returns on invested capital. We're excited to announce the expansion of our fleet, which is a logical next step in what is a real growth business for us."

Names have not yet been announced for the ships.

Today in History

1815 - William I proclaimed himself King of the United Kingdom of the Netherlands, the first constitutional monarch in the Netherlands.

1872 - In the first ever final of the FA Cup, the world's oldest football competition, Wanderers F.C. defeated Royal Engineers A.F.C. 1-0 at The Oval in Kennington, London.

1935 - Conscription was re-introduced in Nazi Germany, and the German military was renamed Wehrmacht.

1968 - Vietnam War: American soldiers killed 347 civilians in My Lai, Vietnam.

2006 - The United Nations General Assembly voted overwhelmingly to establish the UN Human Rights Council.

Quote of the Day

There are no necessary evils in government. Its evils exist only in its abuses. If it would confine itself to equal protection, and, as Heaven does its rains, shower its favors

alike on the high and the low, the rich and the poor, it would be an unqualified blessing. ~ Andrew Jackson]

Word of the Day

bone of contention; n

1. Something that continues to be disputed; an issue on which no agreement can be reached.

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+1-866-653-4265
(toll-free in the U.S.)
+1-202-742-5918
(outside the U.S.)
+44-871-218-6397
(U.K. / Europe)

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