



Top Stories

Israeli PM Sharon rushed to hospital

Ariel Sharon, 77, the Israeli Prime Minister has been admitted to Hadassah hospital in Jerusalem after suffering what doctors are calling a serious stroke.

Televangelist Pat Robertson claims Sharon's stroke is "divine retribution"

American televangelist Pat Robertson is coming under fire for claiming that Ariel Sharon's stroke is "divine retribution" from God, for withdrawing from the Gaza Strip.

Featured story

Interview with Frank Warren, founder of PostSecret

An exclusive Wikinews interview with the founder of PostSecret. PostSecret is a web site where people release their secrets by sending them in on homemade postcards.

Michael Jackson sued for unpaid veterinarian bills

Santa Maria, (California) – Martin Dinnes, the owner of Dinnes Memorial Veterinary Hospital, states that Michael Jackson owes him over \$91,602 in veterinary bills.

The pop star's exotic animals were looked after by the veterinarian at the Neverland ranch, where Michael Jackson has not lived in

since the last child molestation trial in June 2005.

Dinnes helped Michael acquire animals for his zoo which include flamingoes, giraffes, elephants and orangutans.

Dinnes filed this lawsuit with great reluctance, he has a lot of admiration for Michael. This is just a business matter.

A hearing was set for May 2.

11 million may starve in Africa

Up to 11 Million people may starve in East Africa because of extreme drought and war. Extreme famine has been reported in Kenya, in a report made by the United States Government.

Reports are stating that Kenya, Somalia, Ethiopia, and Djibouti need immediate food, water, seeds and any other agricultural product. The Food and Agricultural Agency said that millions of people are on the brink of starvation due to the recent severe droughts that have been devastating the area.

Many did not expect that the area's dry season would be as significant as it has been, and did not anticipate the vast affects it has had on the people, and it is said to be getting worse by the day. Many fear the total figure for those that will be fed by the World Food Program could exceed 2.5 million people.

Crops have failed, and Kenya's

attempts at distributing supplies have been hampered by the country's poor infrastructure and lack of supplies. What makes the situation even worse is the rain season failed to aid in the production of much needed crops.

Nearly one-fifth of the population of Djibouti have been said to be facing food shortages and widespread starvation. Nearly \$40 million is said to be needed to oppress the famine. 64,000 tons of food are needed by the World Food Program, but only 16,700 are available.

The World Food program is trying to assess the worst hit areas at this time, but with little luck. And a shortage of funds will not help the situation at all.

20 people injured after stand collapse in the Carnival of Blacks and Whites in Colombia

At least 20 people were injured when a covered stand collapsed during a main parade in the Carnival of Blacks and Whites in the Colombian city of Pasto.

According to the police, the stands were designed to support 500 people, but there were 700 on them. The intense rains might have also contributed to the collapse as the tents had become too heavy.

The Red Cross immediately helped all those affected. Most people presented minor injuries although 3 people had to be referred to

medical assistance centers.

Despite the incident the parade continued along the main streets of the city.

Tamil Tigers blamed for attack on Sri Lankan Navy

13 sailors have been reported killed and others missing or injured after suspected Tamil Tiger guerrillas attacked a naval vessel off northeastern Sri Lanka early Saturday. Sri Lankan military say it was one of the worst attacks by the sea Tigers of the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE).

According to defence officials, the Sri Lankan Navy fast attack craft was sunk in the early hours of Saturday by a heavy explosion carried out by the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) rebels. The Sri Lankan sailors were on patrol when a boat rigged with explosives rammed their vessel off the port of Trincomalee.

Sri Lanka Broadcasting Corporation (SLBC) said two of the injured sailors had been recovered, who were believed to have been thrown out by the power of the explosion.

The LTTE has stepped up attacks against security forces in northern and eastern Sri Lanka since President Mahinda Rajapakse was elected on November 17th and invited the rebels to renew negotiations with the government.

With Saturday's blast, over 65 security personnel and police officers have been killed in rebel attacks since the election.

The attack follows LTTE reports of army abuses and killings. The government is investigating one such incident after five Tamil

youths, whom the army said were blown up by their own grenade, were found shot dead.

The Tigers say they want a political solution to the conflict, which has killed more than 64,000 people and displaced hundreds of thousands since 1983.

A similar attack on the navy in Trincomalee harbour killed 12 sailors and led to the collapse of a previous ceasefire in 1995.

In December, 39 military personnel were killed in a string of mine attacks, the deadliest month since a 2002 ceasefire that some say is strained to breaking point.

Indonesian fishermen jailed for fishing offences

Thirty-four Indonesian fisherman have been jailed in Broome in northern Western Australia for illegal fishing offences. Seven of the 34 have been jailed in Australia before for previous fishing offences.

Their vessels were found hiding in mangroves off the Kimberley coast. Nearly two tonnes of trochus shell was uncovered. The fisherman face jail terms up to a year.

The WA Fisheries Department says the jail terms reflect the seriousness with which the offence is being viewed. Department officer Chris Mitchell says the fishermen had traversed 200 miles of Commonwealth waters and were inside the three nautical mile state limit when they were caught.

He says their actions are a serious breach of fisheries laws. "In the early days, the courts would have given a good behaviour bond for a first offender," he said. "That was

more specifically for the traditional sail-powered vessels, not these motorised vessels that are coming down and because these are in state waters it is far more serious."

On Thursday, skippers of 11 Indonesian fishing boats were fined by a Perth court. Three of the men, who had previous convictions, were fined \$15,000 each, with 100 days to pay. The remaining eight were fined \$9000 each and given 60 days to pay.

The captains were fined between \$9,000 and \$15,000 for fishing and taking trochus shell from Australian waters off the north-west coast last month. Three of the captains have been caught fishing in Australian waters before between 1997 and 2004.

Legal Aid lawyer David McKenzie, says the fishermen were were very poor and it was highly unlikely they would be able to pay the fines.

The magistrate ordered that they spend between 60 and 100 days in jail in Western Australia if the fines were not paid.

Interview with Frank Warren, founder of PostSecret

PostSecret is a community art project where people release their secrets by anonymously mailing them on a homemade postcard. Frank Warren started PostSecret in November, 2004 and has since recieved thousands of secrets from all over the world. The cards appeared in an All-American Rejects music video for the song Dirty Little Secret, and PostSecret's fee? a \$2,000 donation to The National Hopeline Network 1(800)SUIKIDE, a suicide hotline. PostSecret has recently

published a book of some of the postcards with some of the proceeds also going to the hotline.

Wikinews: What is PostSecret for you?

Frank Warren: PostSecret is a community art project where anyone can write a secret on a postcard and mail it in.

You originally sent out 3,000 postcards at the projects inception in November, 2004. Over a year later, approximately how many cards have you received?
20,000.

Geographically, how far away have you received postcards?

The cards come from all over the world; Hong Kong, Afghanistan, Australia, Ireland, India...

You let the All-American Rejects use the postcards in their video for a donation to the National Hopeline Network, a suicide hotline. You also have a book out now with some of the proceeds going to National Hopeline. Is depression the most common theme in the secrets that you have recieved?

I do not know if depression is the most common theme, but I picked the charity because of my own experiences with suicide and because I have first-hand knowledge of the good work done by 1(800)SUICIDE.

What, in your opinion, is the motivation for people to send you their secrets?

I think some people are looking to share a funny story, others want to talk about a secret kindness they performed but most people, I believe, are looking to better understand their own secrets and perhaps use this project as a first step in taking action upon their secrets.

Have you ever gotten into any sort of trouble or controversy because of what you have posted on your site? If so, what has happened as a result?

I once received a postcard from a girl saying, "I worked really hard to get into [Ivy League School] but now I hate it here." She later contacted me and said her friends and family recognized her handwriting and the posting was causing her distress. She asked me to remove it and I did. But I asked her to let me know how things turned-out in the long-run. Maybe this event will cause her to change schools or find new ways to appreciate where she is now.

Finally, PostSecret has touched and aided the lives of many people. How can people help the project?

I hope people just continue to bravely share their secrets on the site and visitors continue to express their understanding and compassion.

Australian government says technology could reduce emissions three times more than Kyoto

Less than one week out from the inaugural Asia-Pacific Clean Development and Climate Partnership meeting in Sydney, the Australian government has claimed that technology could be used to cut emissions three times more than the Kyoto Protocol.

Ian Macfarlane, Minister for Industry said that the six countries at next week's meeting will discuss ways to cut greenhouse gas emissions while continuing to produce large amounts of energy.

"While Kyoto puddles on, to put it nicely, the real reductions will come from technology" Mr

Macfarlane said. "This is not a diplomatic love-in. It's a hard-edged business plan with targets and reporting duties."

The members of the partnership - Australia, the United States, China, India, Japan and South Korea produce around half of the world's greenhouse gas emissions. Of the world's developed nations only Australia and the United States have refused to ratify Kyoto.

The pact will not set binding targets upon its members, but will monitor its results.

It is believed that the meeting will discuss nuclear energy generation, geothermal energy and capturing and storing gases underground.

The federal opposition is calling on the Australian government to ratify Kyoto. Environment spokesman, Anthony Albanese, said "The Kyoto Protocol is the main game, with mandatory fixed targets for greenhouse gas emission reductions over an extended timetable, with economic instruments driving the policy outcomes".

Two companies plea 'guilty' to Birmingham theatre stage collapse

Two companies have pleaded guilty to breaching health and safety laws after the stage of The Alexandra Theatre in Birmingham, United Kingdom collapsed resulting in injuries ranging from bruises to bone fractures in 30 people.

The two companies, Sing Along Productions and Clear Channel, said that the collapse occurred after a communications breakdown between them.

During the production of Sing-Along-A-Sound-of-Music, members of the audience in costume had climbed onto the stage to participate in a song when the stage fell into the orchestra pit 20 feet below.

The case has been sent to Birmingham Crown Court for sentencing. The case was brought to Birmingham Magistrates Court by Birmingham City Council under health and safety legislation.

New Zealand Maori Queen on dialysis

The New Zealand Maori Queen, Te Arikinui Dame Te Atairangikaahu is undergoing dialysis treatment the Tainui Tribe confirmed today.

The Queen's condition is not believed to be critical, and plans for the celebration in May of her fortieth coronation anniversary continue. Taini Rutene; Te Arikinui Dame Te Atairangikaahu private secretary says "Dame Te Ata is undergoing medical treatment for a long-standing illness. There is no immediate concern."

According to Wikipedia, dialysis is a method for removing waste such as urea from the blood when the kidneys are incapable of this.

The Maori Queen holds no constitutional function in New Zealand, but Te Arikinui Dame Te Atairangikaahu is an avid supporter of cultural and sporting events.

Today in History

1198 - Lotario de Conti became Pope Innocent III. His first act was the restoration of the papal power in Rome.

1815 - Andrew Jackson won the Battle of New Orleans two weeks after the signing of the Treaty of Ghent.

1889 - Herman Hollerith received a patent for his electric tabulating machine.

1989 - British Midland Flight 92 crashed onto the embankment of the M1 motorway in the Kegworth air disaster.

2004 - RMS Queen Mary 2, the largest passenger ship ever built, was christened by her namesake's granddaughter, Queen Elizabeth II.

Quote of the Day

"For millions of years mankind lived just like the animals. Then something happened which unleashed the power of our imagination. We learned to talk."

~ Stephen Hawking

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