



Top Stories

Israeli PM Ariel Sharon to undergo more surgery

Israeli PM Ariel Sharon is to undergo more surgery. Doctors will be performing a tracheotomy to aid in his breathing.

Hussein trial judge submits resignation

The chief judge in Saddam Hussein's first trial submitted his resignation on Friday. The reasons for his resignation are still unknown.

Featured story

US Senators, EU voice support for Iran sanctions

U.S. Senators and the E.U. voice concern over Iran's nuclear program while Iran threatens to "raise oil prices beyond levels the West expects."

Wikipedia Current Events

- Russia and Ukraine are set to enter more diplomatic troubled waters over the alleged occupation of a lighthouse in the Black Sea.
- Kim Jong-il, the leader of North Korea, is alleged to have made a journey to China as part of a fact-finding mission in the region.
- Doctors perform a tracheotomy on Ariel Sharon, the Prime Minister of Israel, hoping this will help his recovery from a recent stroke.
- Michelle Bachelet is elected the first female President of Chile.

Wikipedia Current Events

- The first round of voting in the Presidential election in Finland was held with no conclusive victor. Tarja Halonen and Sauli Niinistö will continue to the second round which is held 29 January.
- The French warship Clemenceau's transit through the Suez Canal is approved by Egyptian authorities. This decision is heavily criticized by Greenpeace and other environmental groups.
- Canadian diplomat Glyn Berry is killed and two Canadian soldiers critically injured by a bomb blast in Afghanistan. He is the first Canadian diplomat to be killed on duty.
- The ruling emir of Kuwait, Sheikh Jaber Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, dies at age 79. Kuwait's cabinet names crown prince Sheikh Saad Al-Abdullah Al-Salim Al-Sabah as the new emir.

Chile elects first woman President

Michelle Bachelet became Chile's first elected female President Sunday when her rival, Sebastian Pinera, conceded defeat after trailing by six points.

Bachelet, a member of the center-left group Concertacion, previously served as both Health Minister and Defense Minister.

Outgoing President Lagos called it a "historic day" and phoned Bachelet to congratulate her.

Bachelet has not yet made a public statement, although her supporters are reportedly celebrating her victory.

Protests erupt in Pakistan over US air strike

Many Pakistanis took to the streets Saturday to demonstrate against the U.S. air strike of a village on the border of Afghanistan. The main demonstration took place in the city of Karachi, where protestors shouted "Death to American Aggression" and "Stop bombing innocent people", a BBC report claims. Riot police were deployed to keep order.

A rally also took place in the town of Samarbagh, where over 600 people came out to protest, according to the Aljazeera news network. Speaking at the rally, Aizaz-ul Mulk Afkari, a leader from the Hezb-ul Mujahidin group, is reported to have claimed that Washington was targeting Pakistan because of its nuclear weapons.

The previous day, around 8000 tribesmen are reported to have staged a rally in the town of Inayat Qala. The US has not yet commented on the attack.

US Justice Department sues American Airlines on behalf of reservists

The US government has filed a lawsuit against American Airlines on behalf of three pilots. The pilots were employed by the company while serving in the Naval Reserve and Air National Guard.

The US Department of Justice alleges that when the pilots were called into active duty by the US military, American Airlines denied them employment benefits. The Department of Justice said in a complaint filed in the US District Court in Dallas that American Airlines conducted an audit of leave taken for military service by pilots in 2001. The Justice Department charges that based on that audit American Airlines then cut the employment benefits of pilots who had taken military leave while not cutting benefits of pilots who had taken non-military leave.

Justice Department Assistant Attorney General Wan Kim said "This nation depends on our reservists to faithfully carry out their duty. No reservists, indeed no members of the armed forces, should ever be punished or discriminated against for answering the call of duty."

This is the first class action lawsuit under the 1994 Uniformed Services Employment and Reemployment Rights Act.

Finnish Presidential election held. Niinistö and Halonen goes to the next round

Helsinki, Finland - The first round the presidential elections were held today. So far with 99,9% of the votes counted, no candidate reached more than the number of votes necessary to win. The top two candidates, the social-democrat incumbent, Tarja Halonen with 46,4% and the conservative, Sauli Niinistö with 24,1 %, will go the next round in two weeks time, on the 29th. Finland has its presidential election every 6 years and it decided on the alternative vote system of 50%+1.

Finland is a Nordic country with

semi-presidential system of government, in which both president and prime minister are heads of government. The role of president of Finland has become smaller the past years due to changes in the constitution, though president is still head of foreign policy and the commander-in-chief of the Finnish Defence Forces.

One of the main issues in this election is Finland's relation to NATO. Some candidates like Halonen and the green candidate Heidi Hautala oppose and some candidates like Niinistö and Henrik Lax support joining NATO. Though president is not in a position to decide about this, it is considered by some as a signal from the voters if they support NATO supporting or NATO resisting candidates.

Stardust lands in Utah successfully

"All stations, we have touchdown," an announcer declared.

Stardust, a capsule carrying dust from Comet Wild 2, has landed safely in the Utah desert. It also is the first time in history that a space mission has brought back such material.

"The tiny particles that the Stardust mission is bringing back are the most scientifically exciting and technically challenging material that we have ever had the opportunity to study," said Monica Grady of the Planetary and Space Science Research Institute (PSSRI).

When the landing was complete, it drew cheers from excited scientists.

"It's an absolutely fantastic end to the mission," said Carlton Allen of

NASA's Johnson Space Center.

"Everything worked so well. What an exciting moment," said Allan Cheuvront, Stardust spacecraft engineer at Lockheed Martin Space Systems.

Many reports are stating from skywatchers, that sighted the speeding capsule as it shot across the sky over the western United States. "We saw it in the sky...it was great," said Paula Nicholson, Public Affairs Officer at the U.S. Army Dugway Proving Ground.

In 2004, another collector capsule from another spacecraft, Genesis, which collected solar wind particles crashed into the Utah desert, however, the samples did not survive.

After the capsule landed, it activated its locator beacon and helicopter recovery crews successfully located the capsule in the dark. The capsule is reportedly intact from the helicopter observations, and the unofficial touch down time was 5:10 a.m. EST. It will be transferred to a "cleanroom" and is expected to be flown to Johnson Space Center early next week where the capsule will be unlocked for the first time since it landed.

When opened, scientists will find the microscopic dust particles trapped in a porous, pale-blue smokelike material known as aerogel made up of 99.8 percent air that was used to snag the dust in space.

The dust then will be looked at under a microscope to be examined and because this comet is nearly 5 billion years old, they hope it will unlock some of the secrets to the formation of our galaxy and universe.

The capsules speed when it was going through Earth's atmosphere was a record breaking 29,000 mph, making it the fastest man-man probe to return to Earth. Its first parachute opened at nearly 100,000 feet from the ground where it was then guided to a 10-MPH landing in the desert.

The capsule also brought back with it 72 black-and-white pictures showing broad mesas, craters, pinnacles and canyons with flat floors on the surface of Wild 2, which was a staggering 500 million miles from Earth at the time Stardust was launched.

Stardust was launched in 1999 and its trip lasted over 7 years. Stardust traveled about 4.5 billion kilometers (2.88 billion miles), and went around the sun 3 times.

Israeli PM Ariel Sharon to undergo more surgery

Ariel Sharon, 77, is scheduled to undergo a tracheotomy today, which is expected to help wean him off a respirator, which is helping him to breathe, a hospital statement said.

A tracheotomy is a procedure which an incision in the windpipe that forms a temporary or permanent opening, and will replace the tube now lodged in the throat of Sharon who suffered a major stroke on January 4, 2006. Last week, doctors said the plastic tube connecting his windpipe with the respirator will start to cause him damage if they leave it in for too long.

Tracheotomies are routinely performed on stroke victims to reduce the risk of infection posed by intubation.

"The prime minister's condition continues to remain critical but

stable," said a statement issued by Jerusalem's Hadassah hospital where doctors have been trying, unsuccessfully, to wake Sharon from a medically induced coma. "This evening the prime minister will undergo a CT test after which he will undergo a tracheotomy. The surgery is aimed at helping to wean him off a respirator machine. It will be conducted in the operating room under general anaesthesia."

Ottawa 67's lose to Saginaw Spirit, 7-5

Michigan, with the Spirit topping the 67's at a score of 7-5.

The Spirit made their mark in the first period, scoring three goals. Tim Priamo scored the first goal of the night, followed by Tom Craig, who scored his first ever OHL goal. Ryan McDonough rounded out the period with the Spirit's third goal.

The second period continued a lead for the Spirit, with Patrick Asselin scoring another goal for the Spirit, making the score 4-0 before the 67's responded when Julian Talbot shot two goals in the period, making the score 4-2.

Saginaw's Tyson Gimblett and Ottawa's Joe Grimaldi held a fistfight on the ice during second period, with Gimblett drawing a two minute instigator penalty, along with a five minute fighting penalty and a ten minute misconduct during the incident. Grimaldi was charged with a five minute penalty for fighting. Another fight late in the period between the 67's Elgin Reid and the Spirit's Jamie Klie had both in the penalty box for five minutes.

Third period goals, separated only by seconds, from Ottawa's Chris Hulit and Jamie McGinn took lead of the game for the 67's, upping

the Spirit by one. The Spirit responded with two of their own from Patrick McNeil and Matt Corrente, regaining the lead for Saginaw, 6-5.

With only minutes remaining, Ottawa pulled their goalie from net to gain a man advantage. Saginaw's last goal of the game was scored by Michael Birner, making the final score of the game 7-5.

The Spirit team maintains second position for their West division, behind the Plymouth Whalers. The 67's are currently fourth in the East division.

Venezuela will buy Spanish planes with European technology

In a communique issued by the Embassy of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela in Madrid as response to the barring of Spain's sale of military planes to Venezuela, and then made public by the chancellor's office, Venezuela has claimed that the reason why the United States government vetoes the selling of Spanish planes to Venezuela is because Washington wants to continue imposing the flight of American anti-drug patrols dean nations. If the US did so it would violate Venezuela's sovereignty he said.

Spain says it will keep its promise and will equip the planes using European parts to bypass the US licenses.

Venezuela wants to buy 12 planes with a combined value of 2 billion U.S. dollars to carry out its own anti-drug surveillance and interception flights.

Venezuela is also attempting to buy planes from Brazil, but this

move has also been vetoed by the US government under the grounds that Brazilian planes use American technology.

Brazil, Bolivia promise cooperation

Meeting yesterday at Itamaraty, Brazil's Foreign Ministry, Bolivian President-elect Evo Morales and Brazilian President Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva outlined plans for broad cooperation between the two countries during Morales' upcoming term in office, which begins on the 22nd of this month. Lula's special assistant for International Issues, Marco Aurélio Garcia, mentioned in particular that Bolivia might be interested in development of its petroleum resources with the help of Brazil's Petrobras, as well as in increasing social programs and seeking to deepen its relationship with other governments.

According to Garcia, there are plans to form a bilateral commission to guide cooperation between the two nations in the coming years.

Public statements from the two leaders have characterized the meeting in glowing terms. After the talks, Morales described a "relationship of brotherhood," saying that he looks forward to the help of Brazil, whom Morales says, "leads the region." Asked about whether the close bonds between the growing number of leftist governments in Latin America constituted the development of an anti-United States counterweight in the region, Morales responded, "We are for a culture of dialogue...We are not going to create a bloc against the U.S."

Hussein trial judge submits resignation

The chief judge in Saddam

Hussein's trial submitted his resignation yesterday. The reasons for his resignation are still unknown, and it is unknown at this time whether his resignation will be accepted.

Rizgar Mohammed Amin—one of a five tribunal judges overseeing Hussein's case—offered to resign, a court official told the press. Prosecutor Jaafar al-Mousawi, told the media that Amin's resignation, if accepted, would not affect the proceedings because he can be quickly and easily replaced.

Since the trial opened on Oct. 19, two defense lawyers have been assassinated, and a third fled the country. Police also uncovered a plot to fire rockets at the courtroom in late November 2005.

Another court official, who wished for his name not to be released, due to the sensitivity of the case, said Amin offered to resign, but efforts were under way to get him to reverse the decision.

At least two judges on the case earlier in the week said that the remarks that Amin was going to resign were "untrue."

Today in History

27 BC - Gaius Octavius was given the title Augustus by the Roman Senate.

1547 - Ivan the Terrible was crowned Tsar of Russia.

1605 - Book One of Don Quixote, El ingenioso hidalgo Don Quijote de la Mancha by Miguel de Cervantes, was first published.

1909 - The expedition led by Sir Ernest H. Shackleton located the Magnetic South Pole.

1917 - World War I: The Zimmermann Telegram was dispatched.

January 16 is Martin Luther King Day in the United States (2006)

Quote of the Day

"What is needed is a realization that power without love is reckless and abusive, and love without power is sentimental and anemic.

Power at its best is love implementing the demands of justice, and justice at its best is power correcting everything that stands against love... I know that love is ultimately the only answer to mankind's problems. And I'm going to talk about it everywhere I go." ~ Martin Luther King, Jr.

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