



Top Stories

Pink elephant spotted in Botswana

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Two US Navy vessels collide in the Strait of Hormuz; 15 lightly injured

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Portions of Wikileaks, Wikipedia blocked in Australia

Wikinews has learned that portions of Wikileaks.org, the "uncensorable Wikipedia for untraceable mass document leaking and analysis", has been blocked in Australia. Portions of Wikipedia and YouTube have also been blocked.

US lawmakers approve bill taxing executive bonuses

The United States House of Representatives approved a measure on Thursday to impose a heavy tax on bonuses to executives from companies that have been bailed out by the government. The bill was passed by a margin of 328-93.

Wikipedia Current Events

The United States Navy's USS Hartford and USS New Orleans collide in the Strait of Hormuz.

- Somali pirates hijack the Greek cargo ship MV Titan.
- A bomb severely damages a government building in Athens, Greece.
- The Fermi National Accelerator Laboratory discovers Y(4140), a new subatomic particle.

Two US Navy vessels collide in the Strait of Hormuz; 15 lightly injured

According to the United States Navy Fifth Fleet, two vessels registered to the US Navy collided on Friday in the Strait of Hormuz, located near Iran. Fifteen sailors were reported to have been slightly injured.

The two crafts involved in the incident were the USS New Orleans, a transporter and the USS Hartford, a nuclear-powered submarine. As a result of the collision, the New Orleans' fuel tank, ruptured upon impact, leaking 90 to 95 thousand litres of diesel fuel.

"New Orleans suffered a ruptured fuel tank, which resulted in an oil spill of approximately 25,000 gallons of diesel fuel marine," the navy said in a statement. "Both the submarine and the ship are currently on regularly scheduled deployments to the U.S. Navy Central Command area of responsibility conducting Maritime

Security Operations."

A spokesman for the Fifth Fleet, Lieutenant Nathan Christensen, said that "there is no disruption to shipping traffic in the strait," and "both ships are operating under their own power and have passed through the strait."

"It was a night-time event and the submarine was submerged at the time," Christensen replied when asked about how the accident happened. "There is no disruption to shipping traffic in the Strait. Both ships are operating under their own power and have passed through the strait," he said.

The Strait of Hormuz separates Oman from Iran, and is the entrance into the Gulf. An estimate by the International Energy Agency said that over 15 million barrels of crude oil passed through the strait every day in tankers. It is less than a hundred kilometres broad at its widest point.

Canadian PM announces funding for US-Canada bridge crossing

Stephen Harper, the Prime Minister of Canada, has announced an investment of C\$13.5 million (US\$10.8 million) to upgrade the Blue Water Bridge.

This bridge connects Port Huron, Michigan and Point Edward, Ontario across the St. Clair River, and is the second-busiest Canada – United States border crossing.

"Blue Water Bridge is a crucial link

in trade between Canada and the United States. This cross-border traffic is vital to our export industries – and more important than ever, given the current global economic downturn," said Harper. "This project will reduce border congestion, improve trade, and create local jobs."

The investment will widen the bridge approach to Ontario Highway 402 and provide new Canada Border Services Agency (CBSA) inspection booths.

Bomb blast damages buildings in Athens

Two buildings have been damaged in a bombing in Athens, Greece on Thursday. The target was a building owned by an agency that manages state real estate.

Nobody was injured in the blast, but the building's entrance was damaged. A nearby store and a parked car also sustained damage. The homemade device, which consisted of explosives placed inside a plastic bag and tied to a pole close to the target, damaged the Hellenic Public Real Estate Corporation building.

The area was cordoned off by police after the explosion, which occurred at 9:30 p.m. local time yesterday. Bomb disposal experts checked the area following the explosion, while anti-terrorism officers began their investigation. The building is about 250 yards from the Athens police headquarters, and is also close to the Supreme Court.

No claim of responsibility has yet been made, but the Greek conservative government has been attempting to control left-wing terrorism in recent months. One group, the Revolutionary Struggle, was responsible for a failed car

bombing against an Athens Citibank office on February 28, and also bombed a Citibank branch in the city on March 9. Greece has been receiving advice from police in London after the increase in terrorist activity and rioting last year throughout the nation.

Portions of Wikileaks, Wikipedia blocked in Australia

Portions of Wikileaks.org, the "uncensorable Wikipedia for untraceable mass document leaking and analysis", has been blocked in Australia. Wikinews has also learned that portions of Wikipedia, the free, online encyclopedia anyone can edit, have also been blocked. Portions of the video sharing website YouTube have also been blocked.

The websites are among thousands of others that the Australian Communications and Media Authority (ACMA), a government owned entity, block access to when using their blocking software. The alleged three lists, from 2008 and 2009, were leaked to Wikileaks who published the documents. Most of the blocked websites are ones hosting hardcore pornography. According to their website, the ACMA's role in regards to the internet is to "address community concerns about offensive and illegal material online and, in particular, to protect children from exposure to material that is unsuitable for them."

Despite the alleged leak, Stephen Conroy, the Minister for Broadband, Communications and the Digital Economy in Australia, much of the listed websites were never an issue with the ACMA, but that some of the websites are. He also goes on to say that anyone publishing the content of the ACMA's list will face criminal

prosecution.

"I am aware of reports that a list of URLs has been placed on a website. This is not the ACMA blacklist. ACMA is investigating this matter and is considering a range of possible actions it may take including referral to the Australian Federal Police. Any Australian involved in making this content publicly available would be at serious risk of criminal prosecution," said Conroy in a statement to the press. Wikileaks insists the list is real and that publishing the three of them reflects what ones were added in the past, then removed or vice versa.

"Between the 11th and yesterday, the company did an enormous cleanup of the list. No doubt as a result of the list appearing on Wikileaks. Where the list previously contained over 2000 URLs, and Conroy and the ACMA claimed 'See! Our 'current list' never contained that many URLs', this new list is about the size the ACMA claimed it to be," said Wikileaks in a statement posted on their website.

Wikileaks recently leaked documents that revealed the ACMA's alleged list of 2,395 blocked websites, portions of Wikileaks being among them. Of the three lists, the final one shows that the ACMA "cleaned up" their list, according to Wikileaks. The ACMA warns websites that link to blocked websites. One of the blacklisted URLs to Wikileaks includes a leaked list of blocked websites in Denmark. Not included on the list is the leaked list of blocked websites in Thailand.

"This week saw Australia joining China and the United Arab Emirates as the only countries

censoring Wikileaks. We were not notified by ACMA. Australian democracy must not be permitted to sleep with this loaded gun. If Australia's 'Senator for Censorship', Steven Conroy, has his way, Australia will be the first Western country to have a mandatory Internet censorship regime," said Wikileaks in another statement on their website. "The first rule of censorship is that you cannot talk about censorship".

Portions of Wikipedia blocked include a photo taken by Wikinews contributor David Shankbone titled The making of an adult film by David Shankbone. The URL was added to the ACMA's list on July 28, 2008. However, Wikinews has learned that the file was deleted from Wikimedia Commons on January 21, by the founder of Wikipedia, Jimmy Wales by "user request: Courtesy delete per request of uploader". It was deleted more than one year after the ACMA added the URL to its list. Other portions of Wikipedia that are blocked are pages belonging to users Cyde and Ewlyahoocom. Wikinews contacted the ACMA for a statement, but as of this report, there was no response. Wikinews also contacted Mr. Wales who confirmed the file was deleted because he was asked to do so.

"The deletion log says it all. Courtesy delete per request of uploader. This had nothing to do with Australia," said Wales to Wikinews. Wales did not say whether he was aware of the specific file linked to Wikipedia was being blocked. The Wikipedia URLs appear on all three lists leaked by Wikileaks. Another image, in the same photo set was also deleted by Mr. Wales on the same day, but that URL does not appear on the alleged ACMA list. It underwent a request for deletion in 2008, which

was later deleted despite it being discussed as 'keep'. An anonymous source told Wikinews that the images were sexually explicit and featured three men, pornography star Michael Lucas, Rodrigo diCarli and Kurt Wild, having anal intercourse. Shankbone told Wikinews that he has "no comment for this story."

Websites caught linking to or promoting websites on the ACMA's block list could face a fine of AU\$11,000 per day if they don't remove the content in question within 24 hours of receiving a notice from the ACMA. The same standard can be enforced on an international level. Fines can be imposed on websites outside Australia that link to material on its list.

Bangladesh security tightened following Pilkhana massacre and Bashundhara City fire

Following the Pilkhana massacre which occurred February 25 and 26 leaving 74 dead and the inferno at the Bashundhara City shopping mall complex March 13 leaving seven dead, Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina said security measures are being tightened countrywide across Bangladesh.

Fire drills will be enacted at all key-point installations (KPI). Fire fighting systems will be examined by the fire brigade and the public works department (PWD) to ensure functionality. Security measures will be enhanced supplementing areas under private security such as at the Bashundhara City Complex.

The Fire Service and Civil Defence Department requires modernization and needs new equipment to fight fires past the sixth floor of buildings. The Fire Brigade says it needs turntable

ladders, snorkels, foam-tenders, lighting units, emergency tenders, fireproof uniforms, and rescue ropes for fire fighting and rescue operations. Transportation to fires is also an issue due to narrow roads, low electrical wires and congestion.

The Bangladesh National Building Code requires fire fighting equipment installed in buildings over seven floors. This code is to be monitored by authorities to ensure compliance with the new guidelines and to make sure buildings are being maintained.

The Bashundhara City Complex opened Monday for shoppers two days after Friday's blaze. A probe is underway to determine the cause of the fire and to assess structural damage.

Loss of life was minimized as the blaze broke out on a Friday, the beginning of the weekend in Bangladesh, so offices in the upper floors were empty. The lower eight floors are used for shopping and the upper floors are all Bashundhara Group offices.

The mall is valued at Tk 7.0 billion (US\$100 million). It is not known if the complex is covered by fire insurance.

It is estimated that it will take over two years to rebuild the area damaged by flames which were burned down to a skeleton. Bashundhara City's technical advisor, Latifur Rahman, estimated damages at Tk 2.0 billion (US\$29m).

Only one television cameraman has been allowed in to film the burnt area. None of the 2,500 shops, cinemas or cafes were burnt by the inferno. The seventh and eighth floors still experience

smoke damage, and there was water damage to merchandise.

A three member committee is currently investigating the cause of the fire which will consist of Iqbal Khan Chowdhury, joint secretary of the ministry, representatives of the police, IGP Noor Muhammad, and fire brigade, Director General Abu Nayeem Md Shahidullah. The committee is required to report within the week with their findings. The forensics department is also sifting through the burnt remains.

The Dhaka Chamber of Commerce and Industries has also formed a committee which has begun interviewing witnesses and recording their testimony alongside the government committee.

It has been discovered that 150 closed circuit cameras were not being used when the fire started. Another mystery is why the mall fire fighting system has been found unused.

"In the shopping mall there is an ultra-technology elevator which runs even without electricity but we have found that locked," Iqbal Khan Chowdhury, joint secretary (Police) of the home ministry, said. "Why the fire burnt so fiercely is a matter to think. We have to see if there was any incendiary substance there. These matters seem to be mysterious."

Mall management has been asked to submit substances and items which would have been in the upper floors when the fire started. The fire erupted on the 17th floor and spread quickly to the two floors above and engulfed the three floors below. The aerial ladders belonging to the Fire Service and Civil Defence reached

as high as the 13th floor of the 21-storey building.

Videos have been sent to the United States (US) for examination to assist in determining the cause of the fire and to help in the damage assessment. Experts from the US are expected to arrive soon.

Firefighters were brought to the rooftop of the 20-storey tower by helicopter. The only fatality in this operation was Baki Billa, a firefighter of Bashundhara City firefighting department, who fell when climbing down a rope from a helicopter to the roof of the building. Three other firefighters made the transition safely. At this same time, the chief security officer was safely rescued by the Bangladesh Air Force helicopter, a Bell 212. Six security officers of the complex also lost their lives.

Pink elephant spotted in Botswana

A baby pink elephant was sighted in the African country of Botswana on Friday by a filmmaker for the BBC as he was filming for a wildlife documentary. The cameraman took photographs of the elephant when he noticed it in a herd of around eighty elephants in the Okavango Delta. According to experts, it is most likely an albino, an occurrence that is very rare among African elephants.

"We only saw it for a couple of minutes as the herd crossed the river, said Mike Holding, who spotted the elephant. "This was a really exciting moment for everyone in camp. We knew it was a rare sighting - no-one could believe their eyes."

"I have only come across three references to albino calves, which have occurred in Kruger National

Park in South Africa," said ecologist Mike Chase, who is in charge of the Elephants Without Borders conservation charity. "This is probably the first documented sighting of an albino elephant in northern Botswana. We have been studying elephants in the region for nearly 10 years now, and this is the first documented evidence of an albino calf that I have come across."

The ecologist said that the condition might make it hard for the animal to survive for very long. "What happens to these young albino calves remains a mystery. Surviving this very rare phenomenon is very difficult in the harsh African bush. The glaring sun may cause blindness and skin problems," he noted.

However, he added that it still might be possible for the elephant to survive, as it appears to be adapting to the condition: "Because this elephant calf was sighted in the Okavango Delta, he may have a greater chance of survival. He can seek refuge under the large trees and cake himself in a thick mud, which will protect him from the sun," Dr Chase noted.

"Already the two-to-three-month-old calf seems to be walking in the shade of its mother. This behaviour suggests it is aware of its susceptibility to the harsh African sun, and adapted a unique behaviour to improve its chances of survival."

US lawmakers approve bill taxing executive bonuses

The United States House of Representatives approved a measure on Thursday to impose a heavy tax on bonuses to executives from companies that have been bailed out by the government. The bill was passed

by a margin of 328-93.

Under the bill, executives making over US\$250,000 a year would be charged a 90% tax on bonuses. The tax would apply to firms that have been given at least \$5 billion in aid from the government.

The move comes after recent outrage at American International Group (AIG), which gave out \$165 million in bonuses to its top executives after receiving no more than \$180 billion in government bailouts. AIG has said that the bonuses have to be given out, as the company is legally required by contract to do so.

Nancy Pelosi, the Speaker of the House, said that the bill was necessary because of the bad judgment shown by firms who received bailouts from the government.

"We must stabilize the financial system in order to strengthen our economy and create jobs. We must also protect the American taxpayer from executives who would use their companies' second chances as opportunities for private gain. Because they could not use sound judgment in the use of taxpayer funds, these AIG executives will pay the Treasury in the form of this tax," said Pelosi to reporters following the House vote.

The Senate is expected to vote upon a similar version of the bill. If approved, the differences between the two versions would have to be bridged before it could be signed into law.

Documents show U.S. knew of Guatemalan human rights abuses

The United States State Department knew that members of Guatemala's military government

were responsible for the disappearance of thousands of people during the country's 36-year civil war, according to declassified documents obtained by the Washington D.C.-based National Security Archive, a non-governmental, non-profit research organization.

Eleven documents from the State Department and the U.S. Embassy in Guatemala, dating from 1984 to 1986, show that the Reagan administration was aware that the Guatemalan Army and National Police were involved in a systematic effort to "kidnap anyone suspected of insurgent connections" during the military government of President Óscar Humberto Mejía Victores.

"The government is obviously rounding up people connected with the extreme left-wing labor movement for interrogation," reads a 1984 cable by Frederic L. Chapin, U.S. Ambassador to Guatemala from 1981-1984. A State Department report from the same year says, "Government security services have employed assassination to eliminate persons suspected of involvement with the guerrillas or who are otherwise left-wing in orientation."

The Guatemalan Civil War was waged from 1960-1996 between the government, dominated since the 1954 military coup by elements of the army, and leftist guerillas. More than 200,000 people, most belonging to indigenous Mayan tribes, died or went missing during the war.

In the first week of March 2009, Guatemalan authorities arrested two police officers on charges related to the 1984 disappearance of Edgar Fernando García, a trade union activist. García is named in

several of the declassified documents.

The National Security Archive obtained the documents from the U.S. State Department under the Freedom of Information Act. Current State Department spokesman Fred Lash said he was unaware of the documents.

England and New Zealand vie for Women's Cricket World Cup

England will take on New Zealand in the final of the 2009 Women's World Cup tournament currently being held in Australia. The final line up was confirmed after the final set of the Super-Six matches yesterday when New Zealand defeated Pakistan by 223 runs. The other two matches between Australia and England ended with Australia beating England by 8 wickets and India beating the West Indies by 8 wickets as well.

The final will be a repeat of the 1993 world cup final held in England. England beat New Zealand in the 1993 final at Lord's, London by 67 runs to win the tournament. The final of the 2009 tournament will be held on March 22nd at the North Sydney Oval, North Sydney. Before that, on March 21st, the 3rd place playoff between Australia and India will be played at Bankstown Oval, Sydney and the 5th place playoff between West Indies and Pakistan will be played at Drummoyne Oval, Sydney.

Pennsylvania state trooper found guilty of first-degree murder

In the United States, a suspended Pennsylvania state trooper has been convicted of first-degree murder for killing his girlfriend's estranged husband.

Kevin Foley, 43, faces a

mandatory life sentence without parole for slashing to death John Yelenic, a Blairsville dentist who was in the final stages of divorcing his wife, Michele. Foley's attorney said he plans to appeal the decision. Prosecutors did not seek the death penalty.

Foley previously said he "loathed Dr. Yelenic" and asked another fellow trooper to help kill him. During his testimony, which lasted several hours, Foley claimed he was joking and had no true intention of carrying out the threat, but the Indiana County jury rejected that defense after about six hours of deliberations.

John Yelenic was found dead in his home on April 13, 2006, one day before he was planning on signing his divorce papers. Charges were brought against Foley in September 2007, more than 17 months after the murder.

Foley, who had been on suspension from the Pennsylvania State Police, was himself the final witness to take the stand Wednesday in the trial. Foley insisted he was innocent during his testimony, and even made jokes that the jury laughed at on a few occasions.

"I never made a threat with the intention of carrying it out," Foley said under cross-examination by the prosecution.

When Senior Deputy Attorney General Anthony Krastek pressed Foley for what was funny about asking another state trooper to help him kill Yelenic, Foley answered, "There isn't any joke. It's just my personality, my behavior (with co-workers)."

Prosecutors said Foley killed Yelenic after going to the dentist's

house to confront him over the terms of the divorce. Prosecutors claim Foley slashed Yelenic several times with a knife and pushed his head through a small window. Yelenic bled to death.

"John has his justice tonight," Mary Ann Clark, a cousin of Yelenic, told MSNBC. "John deserved this; he was the most wonderful person in the world. He died the most horrible death and tonight, this is his night. The system worked."

Foley had been living with Michele Yelenic for two years at the time of the homicide. Prosecutors previously said Foley and Michele helped perpetuate rumors that Dr. Yelenic molested their son. John and Michele Yelenic had been separated in 2002. Michele Yelenic stood to collect Dr. Yelenic's estate and a US\$1 million life insurance policy, and could lose about \$2,500 a month in support if the divorce was finalized, a Pennsylvania grand jury previously determined.

Michele Yelenic, who has not appeared at the trial, may face legal action herself, media reports indicated. A sentencing hearing for Foley is scheduled for June 1.

New Jersey to consider bikini waxing ban

New Jersey is considering a state-wide ban on Brazilian waxes, the removal of hair from the bikini area.

Although genital waxing has never really been allowed in the state, the New Jersey Board of Cosmetology and Hairstyling plans to propose a ban with more specific legal wording, in response to two women who reported being injured during a wax. The board will consider the proposal at their

next meeting on April 14.

If the measure passes, New Jersey may become the only US state to ban the practice outright.

Although millions of Americans engage in bikini waxes, which generally cost between \$50 and \$60 per session, the practice comes with risks. Skin care experts say the hot wax can irritate delicate skin in the bikini area, and result in infections, ingrown hairs and rashes.

Waxing on the face, neck, abdomen, legs and arms would continue to be permitted in the state under the proposed ban. Although New Jersey statutes have always banned bikini waxing, the laws were unclear and seldom enforced.

As a result, many salons from around the state have offered bikini waxing for years. Many salon owners spoke out against the proposed ban, which they said would severely damage their business.

"I really don't know if the state can stop it at this point," said Valentia Chistova, owner of the Monmouth County salon Brazil. "I know a lot of women who are really hooked."

Today in History

1556 – Archbishop of Canterbury Thomas Cranmer, one of the founders of Anglicanism, was burnt at the stake in Oxford, England for heresy.

1800 – Pius VII was crowned Pope in Venice with a temporary papal tiara made of papier-mâché.

1804 – The Napoleonic code, the French civil code established under Napoleon, entered into force.

1960 – Police in Sharpeville, South Africa opened fire on a group of unarmed black demonstrators who

were protesting pass laws, killing almost 70 people and wounding about 180 others.

1989 – An article in Sports Illustrated alleged that Pete Rose, the Manager of the Cincinnati Reds, was involved in baseball gambling.

March 21 is Naw-Rúz in the Bahá'í calendar; Benito Juárez Day in Mexico; World Poetry Day

Quote of the Day

The creative process lies not in imitating, but in paralleling nature — translating the impulse received from nature into the medium of expression, thus vitalizing this medium. The picture should be alive, the statue should be alive, and every work of art should be alive.

~ Hans Hofmann ~

Word of the Day

hematophagy n

1. The practice, of some animals, of feeding on blood.

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