



Top Stories

Consensus reached on incentive package for Iran

Top diplomats from the United States, Russia, China, Britain, France, and Germany reached an agreement on Thursday on an incentive package to offer to Iran in exchange for its giving up uranium enrichment.

Iraq to investigate Haditha "massacre"

The Iraqi government is to launch a formal investigation into claims American soldiers murdered civilians in the Iraqi town of Haditha in November 2005.

Featured story

In the land of the open source elves: Interview with "Battle for Wesnoth" creator David White

If you've always wanted to live in a world populated by elves, dwarves and wizards, you don't need to pay for a World of Warcraft subscription or buy the Special Extended DVD Trilogy Edition of The Lord of the Rings just yet. You could instead give Battle for Wesnoth a try.

Wikipedia Current Events

•The UK Independent reports a great-grandson of Apache leader Geronimo has appealed to US President Bush to help recover the remains of his famous relative - purportedly stolen more than 90 years ago by a group of students - including the President's grandfather, and

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employed in ceremonies by Skull and Bones, a secret society at Yale University.

•Extraordinary renditions. The Bundesnachrichtendienst (German intelligence agency) declared yesterday that it had known of Khalid El-Masri's seizure 16 months before Germany was officially informed of his mistaken arrest in the frame of the War on Terror. Germany had previously claimed that it didn't know of el-Masri's abduction by the CIA and his stay in the Salt Pit in Afghanistan until his return to the country in May 2004

•British police shoot a suspect in an anti-terrorism raid, although his injuries are not life threatening. The 23 year old was shot in front of his family as police raided his home.

•The BBC shows a video about a new alleged massacre by US troops in Ishaqi, Iraq, on March 15, 2006.

•Robert F. Kennedy, Jr., writing in Rolling Stone magazine, accuses George W. Bush and his Republican Party of widespread voting fraud during the 2004 Presidential Election.

•Female circumcision is found to increase infant mortality and childbirth complications.

•Russia, China, France, the United Kingdom, Germany and the United States propose a set of incentives and possible sanctions in an effort to encourage Iran to

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suspend or abandon its plans of nuclear development.

US troops kill pregnant Iraqi woman entering "no-go" zone

Two women, one of them about to give birth, were shot dead by US forces as they rode in a car entering a "no-go" zone, according to witnesses and Iraqi police Capt. Laith Mohammed.

Nabiha Nisaif Jassim, 35, and her 57-year-old cousin, Saliha Mohammed Hassan, were killed by the gunfire, according to the Associated Press. Jassim, a mother of two, was pregnant with her third child; doctors at a nearby hospital tried unsuccessfully to save the baby.

Khalid Nisaif Jassim told reporters that he was rushing his sister to the hospital for childbirth. "I was driving my car at full speed because I did not see any sign or warning from the Americans. It was not until they shot the two bullets that killed my sister and cousin that I stopped.

"God take revenge on the Americans and those who brought them here," he added. "They have no regard for our lives."

A US military statement released Friday disputed the account. "A local national sedan entered a clearly marked prohibited area near coalition troops at an observation post," the statement read. "As the vehicle neared the

troop location and failed to stop despite repeated visual and auditory signals, disabling shots were fired into the vehicle. The vehicle stopped, changed direction, and quickly departed the area."

The e-mailed statement to the Associated Press also expressed regret for the loss of life, noting that "coalition forces go to great lengths to prevent them."

The Washington Post reported that the women's bodies were "wrapped in sheets and lying on stretchers outside the Samarra General Hospital before being taken to the morgue, while residents pointed to bullet holes on the windshield of a car and a pool of blood on the seat".

Federal Air Marshal's cover blown

A Federal Air Marshal decided to exit a Southwest Airlines flight today after dropping ammunition on the aircraft floor. The incident occurred at Chicago's Midway Airport.

After earlier arriving from Philadelphia, the Marshal was on board a Southwest Airlines jet bound for Kansas City, when his gun's clip fell to the aircraft floor, spilling bullets. According to Southwest Airlines spokeswoman Whitney Eichenger "He picked up the bullets immediately." She also added, "Since he was no longer traveling incognito, he decided not to continue on the flight to Kansas City."

Because of the incident, the flight was delayed forty-five minutes.

Oil workers kidnapped off of Nigerian oil rig

Eight oil workers have been kidnapped after gunman boarded

the Bulford Dolphin oil platform off the African coast of Nigeria. One American, one Canadian, and six Britons were among those kidnapped. The names of the victims are not known, but families have been notified. At least 84 workers were on the platform at the time of the incident.

"Some unknown persons boarded the rig at 0300 [local time, 0200 GMT] and took eight workers. One of the abductees was made to call their onshore office in an attempt to open negotiations. Other than that, we don't know who appears to be responsible or what the condition of the abductees might be," said a spokesperson for the Dolphin Drilling company.

Gunmen boarded the platform from three speedboats firing shots from their weapons while doing so. At least twenty gunmen are blamed for the incident.

Authorities investigating the crime do not know who is responsible. "We are on their trail and trying to secure the hostages' release as soon as possible," said a spokesman for the Nigerian police.

Oil drilling on the platform has been suspended until further notice.

Preliminary hearing against Buffalo, N.Y. hotel proposal delayed

Buffalo, New York – In a statement, attorney Arthur Giacalone in charge of the case, Nancy Pollina et al opposing Savarino's Elmwood Village Hotel, who is co-owner with Patty Morris of Don Apparel at 1109 Elmwood in Buffalo, New York has said that the preliminary hearing in New York State Supreme Court has been delayed.

"The court appearance has been adjourned for two weeks to 6/22," said Giacalone.

The Elmwood Village Hotel is a 72-room, seven-million-dollar hotel proposed by Savarino Construction Services Corporation and designed by architect Karl Frizlen of the Frizlen Group. Its construction would require the demolition of at least five buildings, currently at 1109-1121 Elmwood, which house several shops and residents. Although the properties are "under contract," it is still not known whether Savarino Construction actually owns the buildings. It is believed that Hans Mobius, a resident of Clarence, New York and former Buffalo mayoral candidate, is still the owner. The hotel is expected to be a franchise of the Wyndham Hotels group.

Buffalo's Common Council, Planning Board, Mayor of Buffalo, Byron W. Brown, Savarino Construction Services Corporation, Hans J. Mobius and his son Hans S. Mobius owners of the properties at stake, Pano Georgiadis, owner of Pano's Restaurant on Elmwood, and Cendant Corporation, the parent company of Wyndham Hotels are among those named in the suit.

According to Giacalone, the city of Buffalo has requested two week extension to prepare their defense. Area councilman Joseph Golombek has been contacted to further confirm the date change request, but has not yet responded.

Judge orders U.S. Department of Justice officials to testify

The United States District Court for the District of Columbia has ordered four U.S. Department of Justice (DOJ) officials to give testimony after a Freedom of

Information Act (FOIA) lawsuit was filed by Citizens for Responsibility and Ethics in Washington (CREW).

Judge Emmet Sullivan granted a motion for discovery by CREW to serve depositions to James Kovaka and Steve Brady, both attorneys with the DOJ responsible for processing FOIA requests in the case. Also ordered to provide testimony were Daniel Metcalfe, head of the DOJ'S Office of Information and Privacy, and Robert McCallum, Associate Attorney General whose nomination as U.S. ambassador to Australia is currently pending in the Senate.

CREW sued after the DOJ failed to respond to the group request for information relating to the lowering of the government penalty request from \$130 billion to \$10 billion in the landmark case *United States of America v. Philip Morris Incorporated, et al.*, which CREW believes to be politically motivated.

CREW specifically requested the DOJ to disclose contacts between McCallum and his former law firm, which the group says represented the tobacco companies in case. McCallum is also before a different court with 5 other justice department officials in a trial where they are accused of ethics violations relating to a case involving North American indians.

Late Indian politician's son in critical condition after suspected drug overdose

Rahul Mahajan, the son of late BJP leader Pramod Mahajan has been admitted to the Apollo Hospital in New Delhi in a critical state, apparently after a drug overdose. Rahul was found in an unconscious state in his father's residence in

New Delhi early today morning. Vivek Moitra, Pramod Mahajan's secretary who was with Rahul at the party has been declared dead presumably as a result of the same drug. Police say the Rahul, Vivek and three other men were drinking champagne together and were also apparently consuming cocaine. This assumption is based of the fact that opiate traces were found in the deceased Mr. Moitra's pocket.

Doctors described Rahul's condition as "critical but stable". They said that details regarding what led to his present condition would be revealed after the conduction of a toxicology test. Two domestic helps rushed the men to hospital in the early hours of today morning. The helps disturbed the scene by clearing up the glasses and the bottles. Traces of what seems to be cocaine were however found in one the glasses.

Rahul is currently on a ventilator and his condition will have to be closely monitored for the next couple of days. He was supposed to visit Assam tomorrow to immerse his father's ashes in the Brahmaputra. Mr. Pramod Mahjan died about a month ago after being shot by his brother. Rahul was on anti-depressants as a result of this.

British police swoop on bomb nest

At dawn this morning a team of 250 policemen stormed a building in Forest Gate, London, England. A part of the police teams were armed, while others were equipped with chemical weapons gear. Two men were arrested and one was shot in the raid made under the 2000 Terrorism Act.

Deputy Assistant Commissioner Peter Clarke, the Metropolitan

Police's anti-terror chief, said he had acted on specific intelligence, "we planned an operation that was designed to mitigate any threat to the public either from firearms or from hazardous substances."

The injury to the man who was shot was not life threatening and the Independent Police Complaints Commission, who have opened an investigation into the incident, say a single shot was fired. At Royal London Hospital where the man, later arrested, was taken armed guards were seen at the entrances.

The man who was not shot, said to be 20 years old, has been questioned at Paddington Green police station. Others at the address have been moved out - two residents have been treated in hospital for shock.

The search at the house in Lansdown Road is said to be ongoing. Police have closed Lansdown Road, Rothsay Road and Prestbury Road and a blind has been erected around the premises. The Civil Aviation Authority report a four-day "no fly area" below 2,500ft is in force over east London.

The British intelligence agency, MI5, and the Health Protection Agency also had a role in the operation, which British Prime Minister Tony Blair had been told about. The suspected bomb nest is not thought to be linked to the London tube and bus bombings in July 2005.

Hackers hit Swedish police's website

Hackers have brought the Swedish Police Service's website down. It is suspected this might be retaliation for the raid on The Pirate Bay on May 31.

The police's website went down on late June 1, after a Denial of Service attack sent large amounts of traffic to the site, causing it to crash.

Police spokesmen Lars Lindahl said today that a link with The Pirate Bay "is quite possible, but that is only speculation,". He added that a criminal investigation has started.

90 days of hard labor for Abu Ghraib dog handler

Convicted on the first of June by a military jury for participating in prisoner abuse at Abu Ghraib, former sergeant Santos Cardona, 32, a dog handler in the United States Army, was today sentenced to ninety days of hard labour and demoted to the rank of specialist.

Cardona was charged and convicted on two counts: aggravated assault, for using a Belgian shepherd dog to threaten detainees with actions "likely to produce death or grievous bodily harm," and for dereliction of duty in relation to this act. He was cleared of seven other charges.

Cardona faced up to three and a half years in prison on these charges, and despite the conviction his attorney has expressed relief at the sentence. He will not be held in confinement during the term of his sentence.

"Metric tonne" of date rape drug was bound for US

Scottish police have arrested a man and a woman after finding Britain's largest ever stash of Gamma-butyrolactone. The man in charge of the operation, Graeme Pearson, director of the Scottish Crime and Drug Enforcement Agency, called the find "the most significant discovery of the drug in

the UK."

Denise Caron MacPherson, 45, and Hanan Rabin, 53, have been charged with exporting the drug, also known as GHB, to the United States between 19 April and 24 May. The news of the Scottish factory comes as a US study found drug use was involved in two-thirds of sex attacks, while 5 per cent were given an actual "date rape" drug.

Graham Rhodes for The Roofie Foundation, a helpline for victims of drug rape, said: "I am very relieved this has been recovered as in the wrong hands it is very dangerous. Not only is it used to spike the drinks of people to rape them but it's also used to assault and rob people."

Used by ravers, robbers and bodybuilders, the base chemical (gamma-hydroxybutyrate) was taken during a raid on a house and business in West Lothian. The haul would have been put on the United States illicit drug market and sold for fun and more sinister purposes.

In its non-powder form GHB is barely detectable: clear and having no smell it can be particularly potent with a few drops mixed into an alcoholic drink. Once a sufficient amount of the salty liquid has been ingested the victim can be knocked out within an hour.

While GHB is known both as "liquid ecstasy" and the date rapist's "Plan A", the versatile compound is also used by body builders instead of anabolic steroids, by dieters and as a sleeping aid.

In Britain, GHB is a "Class C" drug which means making it, holding it and selling it is punishable with up

to two years in prison. The effects of rape, for which the drug is reportedly used, can last a lifetime. Jane Cumming, from support group Crisis, said she received an average of 4 calls a week from people claiming to be victims of date rape.

The pair, who were caught in Livingston, were accused of distributing the drug in Scotland from MacPherson's house around the same time as they were exporting to the United States, while MacPherson was also charged with Cannabis possession.

Consensus reached on incentive package for Iran

In Vienna, top diplomats from the United States, Russia, China, United Kingdom, France, and Germany reached an agreement on Thursday on an incentive package to offer to Iran in exchange for its giving up uranium enrichment.

The specifics of the incentive package were not revealed, but a delegation from Europe led by European Union foreign policy chief Javier Solana is expected to formally deliver the offer to Iran in the coming days. Iran would then have several weeks to respond.

In a prepared statement, British foreign secretary Margaret Beckett said, "We have agreed on a set of far-reaching proposals as a basis for discussions with Iran. We believe they offer Iran the chance to reach a negotiated agreement based on cooperation."

Beckett did not mention any sanctions to be taken against Iran if it refuses to comply. The United Nations Security Council is expected to take up the question of sanctions should Iran turn down the offer.

The agreement comes a day after the United States offered to participate in multilateral negotiations with Iran over its nuclear program if Iran suspends its uranium enrichment program. Iran agreed to the idea of holding talks but rejected the preconditions.

In the first direct reaction by the Iranian government to the offer, Iranian foreign minister Manouchehr Mottaki said on Thursday; "Iran welcomes dialogue under just conditions but won't give up our rights," Iranian state-run television reported. "We won't negotiate about the Iranian nation's natural nuclear rights but we are prepared, within a defined, just framework and without any discrimination, to hold dialogue about common concerns," he said.

Katharine Close, 13, wins Scripps National Spelling Bee

Katharine "Kerry" Close, a 13-year-old 8th-grader from Asbury Park, New Jersey, spelled "ursprache", a word for the ancestor of a language or language group, to win the 79th annual Scripps National Spelling Bee on Thursday night. Close beat out 274 other contestants from 9 to 15 years old. This was Close's last year of eligibility; she was one of only two contestants this year to be in her fifth year at the national competition. She finished seventh in 2005, having gotten a better ranking every year she's competed.

This is the Bee's first appearance on network television, with the finals airing on ABC; earlier rounds were televised in the afternoon on ESPN. Close, who enjoys running, music, reading, and her puppy, is the first New Jersey resident ever to win the competition, which she

prepared for up to two hours each day. And this is the first time the judges have made such a visible error in the televised broadcast.

Saryn Hooks, 14, was nearly eliminated in the eighth round, with "hechsher", a symbol indicating that a food has been certified kosher. The judges mistakenly had the word down as "hechscher"; after being removed, she was reinstated in the next round after the judges received the correction. Hooks, who spent six months reading the entire dictionary to prepare, came back with confidence and finished in third place, missing "icteritious" in round twelve.

Kendra Yoshinaga, 12, of Thousand Oaks, California, a favorite for the finals, was knocked out in the seventh round just before the ABC broadcast began by "cointise", a scarf worn on a lady's headdress. Yoshinaga said that this third national bee she's competed in felt "a lot more rigid" than the previous two.

This year's schedule was rearranged for the ABC news broadcast; previous championships have been held earlier in the day. The spellers have all been given more media attention; for this reason Yoshinaga is perhaps one of the few who didn't want to win, claiming that it would be too much. She's already gotten her share of attention, as co-author of *The Spelling Bee And Me: A Real-Life Adventure In Learning*, a children's book about her experiences.

"People I don't know very well seem to make a big deal about it, but my really close friends know that it's not a really huge part of my life," she says, of her relative

fame. Keenly interested in politics and social issues, Yoshinaga spent a large portion of her last two trips sightseeing in Washington, but this trip, she says, has been more focused on studying.

"My mom sometimes finds words for me from books and magazines," says the homeschooler, who studied over 30,000 words in the week preceding the national bee. Paige Kimble, bee coordinator, wouldn't have been surprised to see her break into the top ten.

Another favorite eliminated earlier on in the competition was Samir Patel, who tied for second in last year's 19-round marathon and placed third in 2003. Patel misspelled "eremacausis" in round 7, joining Yoshinaga and 6 others in a tie for 14th place.

The studious 12-year-old has one more chance at the national finals; Yoshinaga has two, as students may compete from their fourth through eighth grade years.

Cody Boisclair, a 23-year-old graduate student at the University of Georgia, misses the competition. He competed in the 1997 and 1998 finals, placing fourth in his second try. The Bee has changed since he began participating, becoming more international, and with increased media attention putting more pressure on spellers. Though many critics claim that the rote memorization and drilling of spelling bees is not a particularly beneficial activity, Boisclair believes his experience in the bee helped his knowledge of language rather than serving as a simple display of memory.

"I was one of those people who tried to dissect the word into its

component parts, to find similarities to other words that I was familiar with," says Boisclair, who began reading at the age of two. "Although I did do some drilling, I tried to find relationships to help me remember words, and even tried to analyze the words I was studying as I studied them." His analysis skills led him not to a career in lexicography or linguistics but rather to graduate study in computer science.

Boisclair, who spent the evening watching the Bee on television while in a chat room with several other former national finalists, looks back on the competition as one of the highlights of his school years. "I think the best thing about it was a sense of camaraderie—for once, I really felt like I fit in somewhere. I was with people my age who were, by and large, 'on the same wavelength'."

World conference of expatriate Greeks to take place in Athens

Thessaloniki & Athens, Greece –

The first world conference of Greeks living abroad will take place in Athens, Greece, between 6-8 of June 2006. The congress is organised within the frame of the celebrations for the ten years of Ecumenical Hellenism program's [1] operation. In the organisation of the conference, the University La Trobe of Melbourne, Australia joins with its co-operation.

The congress is organised under the patronage of the Greek Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Municipality of Athens as well as under the blessing of the Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew I of Constantinople, the Archbishop of Athens and all Greece Christodoulos and the Orthodox Patriarch of Alexandria, Theodoros.

Official guests of the congress - which will take place in a central Athens Hotel as well as in the Zappion Conference Centre - are topmost personalities of the expatriate Hellenism, top members of the political, religious and cultural leadership of Greece as well as businessmen and University professors from Europe, America and Australia. According to the conference's organisers, an especial distinction of honour will be delivered to the Mayor of Havana, Cuba, who is an official guest of the congress, as a result of his offer to the classical studies in Latin America and to Orthodoxy.

The organiser of the first world conference of Greeks living abroad, is the program "Ecumenical Hellenism"; a result of the co-operation between the Greek National Line publishing house and the Institute for National and Religious Studies of Thessaloniki.

US accused of sinking The Pirate Bay

Debate about the raid on the world's largest Bittorrent site in Sweden continues. According to the Swedish public television network SVT, requests for the closure of "The Pirate Bay" were made at a meeting between the Swedish justice department, police and the US government in April. Issues relating to The Pirate Bay were presented by US officials on behalf of the MPAA.

According to the SVT report, the Swedish justice department asked police to act, which allegedly claimed that the legality of The Pirate Bay was unclear. An official of Sweden's justice minister subsequently contacted the country's head prosecutor and head of police, who ordered the

raid. Debate is rife in Sweden about whether or not the Swedish justice minister should cave to US demand where the legality of the issue in Sweden is not clear. The justice minister has firmly denied SVT's story and having had any influence on the police action.

According to a statement on The Pirate Bay web site and an interview with Slyck News, The Pirate Bay plans to have the site up and running within a few days. There is speculation that new site will be running in a country other than Sweden.

Henrik Ponten of Sweden's IP property organisation - Antipiratbyråns said that the main targets of the raid were anti-copyright lobby organisation Piratbyråns and The Pirate Bay.

The Pirate Bay's and Piratbyråns' sites were hosted by a Swedish company. According to a statement on PRQ's website, "all servers and network equipment was seized in an act of blatant abuse of power by public prosecutor Håkan Roswall". PRQ accuses the police of not only seizing servers hosting The Pirate Bay and Piratbyråns, but also other servers which were unrelated to the two sites. PRQ is planning to sue the Swedish government to get their hardware back and for compensation of economic losses. According to IDG, 9 other sites were taken offline when police seized PRQ's equipment. Expressen.se writes that owners of PRQ were running The Pirate Bay as their hobbyproject and that was the reason why all servers were seized.

New Zealand's Taupo Airport worst in the world

Taupo airport has been rated the worst in the world by the

International Federation of Airline Pilots Associations due to its "critically deficient" safety measures.

The main concern is over the complete absence of air traffic controllers at Taupo.

In 2004, the Civil Aviation Authority rejected a recommendation made by their own staff to install a flight information service. CAA director John Jones said that the proposal was rejected because it was not cost effective. A spokesman yesterday reaffirmed that position.

"Failure to endorse the major safety recommendation of the study team would expose the director to a level of risk that would be difficult to defend in the event of an incident at Taupo that might have been mitigated by an [information service]. We believe your recommendation would place the travelling public and aviation participants at risk and would be indefensible in a Coroners Court," study team leader Len Wicks wrote in an internal memo.

The New Zealand Airline Pilots Association has issued 11 "special operating procedures" for pilots at the Taupo airport. The airport which had the next lowest number of air traffic controllers is that of Umtata, South Africa, which has five.

Taupo is the tenth busiest airport in New Zealand. It receives and sends out more flights than Napier, Dunedin or Invercargill, but this distinction is largely negated by its air traffic control woes.

Air New Zealand Eagle Air general manager Doug Roberts, however, said that his airline had been

flying to Taupo for decades without difficulty. Likewise, Taupo Air Charter, which has operated in Taupo for 25 years, has suffered no problems in its flights.

Federal and NSW governments withdraw Snowy Hydro shares

The Australian federal and New South Wales governments will not be selling their shares in Snowy Hydro Limited (the owner and operator of the Snowy Mountains Hydro-Electric Scheme). Snowy Hydro Limited's major shareholder is the NSW government with a 58 percent shareholding. The Victorian government owns 29 percent and the federal government has a 13 percent stake.

NSW Premier Morris Iemma announced in December 2005 that he wished to sell the state's share in Snowy Hydro which caused the federal and Victorian governments to follow.

The proposed sale has attracted immense criticism by those who believed that the sale would affect the environment and water supplies along the Snowy River, this was reinforced yesterday when 58 eminent Australians presented a petition to the government opposing the sale.

Prime Minister John Howard announced today that the federal government would not be selling its 13 percent share of Snowy Hydro following what he calls "intense community reaction". In a statement, Mr Howard said This decision to sell the Snowy Hydro has created significant unhappiness, concern and unrest throughout the Australian community."

Mr Howard said that the sale was not an election promise by his

government and that the federal government failed to see any long term benefits from the sale. He also said that the government needed to "safeguard the interests of all those dependent on Australia's iconic water resources".

The federal government has however stated that despite refusing to sell its share in Snowy Hydro that it will not be purchasing additional shares if NSW and Victoria push ahead with the sale of their shareholdings.

Despite telling Macquarie Radio earlier this morning that his government would be pushing ahead with the sale as it was in the best "interests of NSW", Premier Iemma announced shortly after Mr Howard's release, that the NSW government would be withdrawing its shares from sale.

Mr Iemma conceded that the sale would be extremely difficult with the federal government withdrawing it's 13 percent from sale. "The Prime Minister has pulled the rug out from under the sale," Mr Iemma said. "The circumstances are significantly changed."

"The Commonwealth decision makes it extremely difficult for NSW to proceed," he conceded.

Victoria is yet to announce whether or not it will be withdrawing its shares from sale.

U.S. offers direct talks on nuclear issue; Iran dismisses as 'propaganda'

In a major foreign policy shift, U.S. Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice on Wednesday announced that it would join European nations in multilateral talks with Iran over its nuclear energy issue if Iran fully and

verifiably suspends its nuclear enrichment activities.

"We urge Iran to make this choice for peace, to abandon its ambition for nuclear weapons," she said. At the same time, Rice acknowledged that Iran had a right for civil nuclear energy.

However, the official Iranian news agency, IRNA, said in a dispatch following Rice's remarks, "Given the insistence by Iranian authorities on continuing uranium enrichment, Rice's comments can be considered a propaganda move." Iranian lawmaker Kazem Jalali, speaking unofficially, said that the U.S. offer "can be considered positive but the precondition set by the U.S. is not appropriate."

European Union foreign policy chief Javier Solana welcomed Rice's remarks. "Direct U.S. participation would be the strongest and most positive signal of our common wish to reach an agreement with Iran," Solana said.

Iran and the United States have had no diplomatic relations and no direct official contact since the 1979 Islamic Revolution in which 52 Americans were held hostage in the American Embassy in Tehran.

Toronto transit workers strike illegally

Toronto – Nearly a million commuters were immobilized and some businesses closed as Toronto Transit Commission workers walked off the job yesterday and formed picket lines outside subway stations, bus terminals and other TTC facilities. None of their buses, streetcars or subway trains were operational.

Some service in the Greater Toronto Area continued through

other transit services, but was of limited use without a link to downtown Toronto.

TTC workers said they'd been locked out, but Toronto Mayor David Miller and the Ontario Labour Relations Board ruled yesterday that the walkout was illegal and ordered employees back to work. They complied with this order.

Service resumed sporadically during the evening (after rush hour) and is expected to continue as normal today.

Today in History

1889 - The first long-distance electric power transmission line in the United States was constructed between Willamette Falls and downtown Portland, Oregon.

1937 - The Duke of Windsor married Wallis Simpson.

1940 - World War II: The Battle of Dunkirk ended with a German tactical victory.

1944 - Charles de Gaulle became Prime Minister of France.

June 03 is Shavuot (until sundown) in Judaism (2006)

Quote of the Day

"It's a bumper sticker culture. People have to get it like that, and if they don't, if it takes three seconds to make them understand, you're off their radar screen. Three seconds to understand, or you lose. This is our problem."

~ Lawrence Lessig

Word of the Day

Definition

1. (mathematics): A directed quantity, with both magnitude and direction.
2. A chosen course or direction for motion, as of an aircraft.
3. (medicine): A carrier of a disease-causing agent.

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