



Top Stories

Ayman al-Zawahiri releases new tape

Senior Al Qaeda official Ayman al-Zawahiri has appeared in a video posted online. The CIA has authenticated the tape, but its date of creation is unknown.

Al Jazeera airs new Osama Bin Laden tape

The CIA has confirmed an audio tape aired on the television network Al Jazeera is that of Osama Bin Laden's voice. The tape is said to have been made in December of 2005.

Featured story

Interview with Brazilian blogger Ricardo Serran Lobo

Ricardo Serran Lobo is a Brazilian blogger who began writing about his famous neighbor: the politician Roberto Jefferson, head of the Brazilian Labor Party in the Brazilian Congress of Deputies. Jefferson has become a major figure in the ongoing Brazilian mensalão scandal revolving around corruption and bribery.

Wikipedia Current Events

- Three former workers at the Davis-Besse nuclear power plant in Ohio are indicted for repeatedly falsifying inspection reports and other information to the US Nuclear Regulatory Commission, and the plant's owner, FirstEnergy Corporation, accepts a plea bargain and \$28 million in fines in lieu of criminal prosecution.

Wikipedia Current Events

- Archaeologists digging under the Roman Forum discover a tomb estimated at 3000 years old, predating the creation of the Forum by several centuries.
- Canadian soldiers in Afghanistan have defused a huge car bomb found not far from their base near Kandahar. The discovery comes just days after a suicide bomber killed Canadian diplomat Glyn Berry and seriously wounded three soldiers traveling with him.
- Embroiled in a nuclear standoff with the West, Iran says it is moving funds out of Europe to shield them from possible U.N. sanctions.
- Iraq's election commission says that an alliance of Shiite religious parties, the United Iraqi Alliance, has won the most seats in Iraq's new National Assembly after the December 2005 legislative elections.
- At least 52 people including five children are killed after an overcrowded bus plunges down a deep gorge in Indian Kashmir.
- Israel says it has proof that Iran financed the bombing of a fast-food restaurant in Tel Aviv, and that Syria carried it out.
- Rescue teams search for two West Virginia miners missing after a coal mine fire.
- Japan has halted the import of U.S. beef after an animal spine was found in a beef shipment at Tokyo International Airport.

TWU members reject contract

Union members rejected the proposed contract forged by the Transport Workers Union Local 100 (TWU) and Metropolitan Transportation Agency (MTA) after a crippling transit strike ground New York City to a halt in December.

Calling the rejection "disappointing news to all New Yorkers", Mayor Michael Bloomberg called on the TWU and the MTA to return to the bargaining table as soon as possible. The TWU has expressed that it is ready to negotiate, but the MTA has not made any comment at this time.

After a week-long rallying effort, including radio advertisements by TUW Local 100 President Roger Toussaint encouraging union members to vote for the proposed contract, the voting period ended at 12:00 EST (17:00 UTC) and ballots had been counted by 17:00 EST (22:00 UTC). The final tally was 11,227 to 11,234 against - A difference of seven votes.

US stocks slump as crude oil surges, gold hits 25 yr high

US stocks suffered their biggest declines in more than two years on concerns about oil supplies from Iran and Nigeria. Crude oil prices jumped to more than \$68 a barrel, levels not seen since September last year. Gold hit a 25 year peak and last traded at \$553.50 an ounce.

The Dow Jones Industrial Average (DJIA) slumped 213+ points today

amid fears of Iran and terrorism. The index has now given up all its gains since the beginning of the year. Among its 30 components, only McDonalds ended the day in positive territory. Disappointing earnings dragged down shares of General Electric Co. and Citigroup Inc.

Since the start of the Q4 earnings season, many analysts have been reducing their earnings expectations. S&P 500 companies are now expected to report a profit growth of 12.7 percent, compared with earlier expectations of 15.5 percent. This analysis was done by Bloomberg using data from Thomson. Earnings growth is expected to slow down to 9.9 percent in the first quarter of this year.

Shares of GE gave up \$1.35 to end at \$33.33 after the firm reported its smallest earnings gain since 2004. GE is the world's second largest firm by market value. Q4 earnings rose to 55 cents a share from 54 cents while revenue rose 2.6 percent to \$40.7 billion, below analysts' estimates.

The DJIA was dragged down by Citigroup, largest bank in US. Its stock fell \$1.98 to \$45.96. The company reported fourth-quarter earnings of \$4.97 billion, or 98 cents a share. The earnings were below consensus estimates of \$1.

Iran moves finances out of Europe's banks

Iran, which recently restarted their nuclear program, has decided to pull its finances out of European banks and into different foreign banks.

A senior Iranian official stated that this is an attempt to pre-empt possible U.N. sanctions over its nuclear program.

Official confirmed comments by Central Bank Governor Ebrahim Sheibani, which was carried on air by the ISNA student news agency, confirmed that Iran had started transferring funds.

"We transfer foreign reserves to wherever we see as expedient. On this issue, we have started transferring. We are doing that," Sheibani told the ISNA agency.

Ebrahim Sheibani also told the agency that the assets were being moved to an "undisclosed" location.

It is unknown exactly how much money is involved or whether or not Iran's investments in Europe would be affected by the move.

However, most traders said that they had already factored the news into the market because such a move was already considered to be a possibility.

Gary Samore, an expert on Iran and vice president for international programs at the McArthur Foundation in Chicago, said "the move reflected concern by Tehran that the Europeans might take unilateral measures amid the crisis over its nuclear program." He also added that its decision to pull its assets from Europe "makes sense in terms of preparing for the possibility that Europe might take some measure to impose some financial sanctions. I don't know that it changes the diplomatic formula. The key issue is still the question of whether or not the Western group can engineer a formal referral to the Security Council."

It is unclear if an asset freeze or other punishment is imminent in Iran, but it has happened before.

The country's assets in the United States have been frozen since Iranians seized the U.S. Embassy in Tehran and held its staff hostage after the 1979 Islamic revolution.

An Italian court last year had ordered an Iranian bank account to be frozen at the request of U.S. plaintiffs who were seeking compensation for terrorist acts they believe were supported by the country (Iran).

Earlier the EU drafted a resolution that calls for referring Iran to the 15-nation council. But it is said to stop short of asking for punitive measures against Iran. The IAEA is expected to meet on February 2, 2006 to discuss Europe's draft.

Google refuses to hand over logs to US Department of Justice

The search engine Google has been asked by the U.S. department of Justice to hand over its records of user activity. Google was asked for information regarding the type of search and the index of pages it had over a week.

This evidence is being requested by lawyers who are trying to defend the constitutionality of the Child Online Protection Act, which was struck down in 1998 by the Supreme Court.

Google has not complied with the request prompting US Attorney General Alberto Gonzales to request a court order from a federal judge in California. Google has nevertheless stated that it would fight the order. Nicole Wong, the associate general counsel for Google, said "Google is not a party to this lawsuit and their demand for information overreaches," and

that "We had lengthy discussions with them to try to resolve this, but were not able to and we intend to resist their motion vigorously."

Unlike its competitors, Google is taking a firm stand on this issue with no room to compromise. Yahoo has already said that it releases data "on a limited basis and did not provide any personally identifiable information." and Microsoft said that it "works closely with law enforcement officials worldwide to assist them when requested".

Lancet cancer study a hoax

In Norway, the Oslo and Akershus County Medical Officer has announced that it is launching an inquiry into a possible scientific hoax, involving cancer researchers from Norway, the U.S. and Finland.

In October 2005, the Norwegian researcher Jon Sudbø along with 13 co-authors published the study in the prestigious medical journal *The Lancet*. The study claimed to detect a positive effect of ibuprofene in preventing oral cancer in smokers, based on a controlled case-study, entailing several hundred patients. On the basis of this study, a broader prospective multicenter study was to be started in 2006, partly funded by the U.S. National Cancer Institute.

On January, 17th 2006 however, the Radium Hospital in Oslo, Norway announced that there were strong suggestions that the whole study was a hoax. The patient material presented appeared to be invented, and thus the whole study seems to be fraudulent.

The Radium Hospital in Oslo has hired an autonomous investigative

committee to look into the matter, led by the Swedish epidemiologist Anders Ekblom from the Karolinska Institute, Stockholm. The editor of the *Lancet*, Richard Horton, said that this was the worst research fraud he has dealt with in his time at *The Lancet*.

Indian city of Bangalore to be renamed Bengaluru

Marking the growing trend in the rise of Indian nationalism, the Chief Minister of the Indian state of Karnataka, Dharam Singh has announced that the state government will rename Bangalore to its pre-colonial name, Bengaluru, taking effect from November 1, 2006. The change was suggested by U. R. Ananthamurthy, best known for winning the Jnanpith literary award.

Other cities to be renamed recently were Channai (formerly Madras), Mumbai (formerly Bombay) and Kolkata (formerly Calcutta).

The move follows other cities in India being reverted to their traditional Indian names, following independence from the United Kingdom

South African Presidency defends deputy president's holiday trip

The South African Presidency today denied that it had been inconsistent with its explanations and defense of a holiday trip undertaken by the South African deputy president, Phumzila Mlambo-Ngcuka, during December last year, which was funded by the state.

Mlambo-Ngcuka, who was appointed as deputy president of South Africa after the previous deputy president, Jacob Zuma,

was removed from the position following allegations of fraud and corruption, undertook the controversial holiday trip to the United Arab Emirates aboard a state-owned Falcon 900 National Defense Force jet during the December holidays last year. When the facts surrounding the trip became known in early January it was criticised by a wide range of critics, including the country's leading opposition party, the Democratic Alliance (DA) and the largest alliance of trade unions, COSATU. The cost of fuel alone for the use of the jet is said to amount to approximately R400,000 (at least \$67,000). The total cost to the state and the South African taxpayers for the deputy president's holiday trip amounts to as much as R700,000 (at least \$116,000).

The deputy president has indicated that whilst the trip was a private holiday trip, it had also been undertaken for work purposes and that she had visited projects in the UAE that she had had an interest in. The deputy president's children and the wife of Social Development cabinet minister Zola Skweyiya had accompanied her on the trip.

Australian Wheat Board inquiry begins

An inquiry began this week in Sydney into whether Australian companies paid bribes to Saddam Hussein during the UN Oil-for-food programme.

The inquiry was set up by Prime Minister John Howard, after allegations last year that the Australian Wheat Board paid US\$220m in bribes to the Iraqi government. The terms of reference of the inquiry are restricted to the AWB and two other companies.

Theo Walcott deal goes through for Arsenal

Today, Arsenal have confirmed that they will be adding Theo Walcott to their side, after a 12.5 million pound deal was struck, on the premise that he pass rigorous medical examinations. Although the 16-year-old striker cannot sign until he turns 17 on 16 March, Wenger seems to see this only as a formality, as the player is set to be unveiled Today, at Highbury.

Although there are not many other details at this moment, it is thought that he will not be able to return to southampton on loan, due to the hectic schedule that he will have at arsenal. Whatever way the deal may turn out, it seems that Theo's family are with him whatever he does.

Syria voices support of Iran's nuclear program

On Thursday, Syria said that it supports Iran's nuclear stance and said it "has a right to atomic technology," and said Western objections to Tehran's nuclear ambitions were "not persuasive."

It comes in the wake of demands by US and european countries for Iran to halt its nuclear fuel enrichment activities. Iran states that its nuclear program does not violate international law or treaty obligations under the Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) and that it will not abandon its enrichment efforts.

President Bashar Assad of Syria, a longtime Iranian ally said he "backed Tehran's moves toward nuclear power," and wanted to strengthen the two nation's ties. "We support Iran regarding its right to peaceful nuclear technology," Assad said at a news conference with Iranian President

Mahmoud Ahmadinejad. "It is the right of Iran and any other state to own nuclear technology for peaceful purposes. Countries that object to that have not provided a convincing or logical reason."

Ahmadinejad also said the two countries needed to "coordinate their positions."

Also on Thursday, Russia's Foreign Minister called for "a cautious approach to the mounting crisis over Iran's renewal of nuclear research."

The two nations have been allies for twenty-six years.

Prosecutors continue investigation as Livedoor faces possible delisting

The Tokyo District Public Prosecutors Office has been investigating allegations surrounding Livedoor's acquisition strategies and stock sales. Japanese newspaper Yomiuri Shimbun reports that the company may have made 4 billion yen (\$35 million) in profits by following illegal takeover practices. Livedoor has been known to use acquisitions to support its rapid growth. It currently owns about 50 technology companies providing financial services and other software over the internet.

Recent investigations have centered around the acquisitions of two companies Royal Shinpan, a consumer finance company and Cueznet Co. an online matchmaking firm. Livedoor announced its intent to acquire the two companies in August and September of 2004.

According to allegations, an investment fund was used to purchase shares in the targeted companies before the

announcements were made public. It is believed that after the stock swaps in October 2004, Livedoor received the shares of the two companies through this fund. The investment fund also received new Livedoor shares in exchange which were then allegedly sold off to a foreign investment fund. Livedoor is reported to have issued 12.6 million new shares for the two stock swaps.

Since Livedoor owned most of the fund, the profits from these sales were siphoned back into Livedoor. The investment fund JMAM Salvage Ichi-go Toshi Jigyo Kumiai was deemed a voluntary organization and hence avoided registration and disclosure regarding its investors and its investments. Concealing ownership of targeted takeover companies violates securities and exchange laws. A prosector commented "Stock swaps are not illegal, but it is problematic if a company makes deals aiming to make profits by selling its shares this way."

Livedoor shares continued their fall for the fourth straight day on Friday. The stock has now lost about 52 percent or \$3.3 billion in market capitalization since news of the investigation broke through on Monday evening.

The Tokyo Stock Exchange(TSE) is considering delisting stocks of Livedoor Co. and its affiliate Livedoor Marketing Co. Livedoor is scheduled to submit the findings of its internal investigation to the TSE by Friday. "If we can confirm they violated listing regulations, we'll have no choice but to decide to delist their stocks," TSE Chairman and President Taizo Nishimuro told reporters at a news conference.

A company's delisting would seriously impact its ability to raise funds.

Slovak transport plane crashes over Hungary

42 of 43 Slovak soldiers were killed as an An-24 type aircraft of the Slovak Army crashed shortly after 8.30 pm UTC+1 at a hill in the North East of Hungary. There were 43 soldiers (including three women) on the board. The plane was flying from Pristina to Košice, Slovakia as it collided 10 km away from the border to the 800 meter high hill.

Two aircraft entered the Hungarian airspace, the captain of the second alarmed the authorities. One survivor has been found, there is no news of other surviving.

Mark Latham in fight 12 months after resigning as Australian opposition leader

Former Australian opposition leader and leader of the Australian Labor Party, Mark Latham has been accused of assaulting and stealing a camera belonging to a photographer for The Daily Telegraph in Sydney.

The newspaper claims that Latham assaulted photographer Ross Schultz, injuring his wrist outside a fast-food restaurant in Campbelltown, a suburb in Sydney's South-West. It is alleged that Latham stole Schultz's camera and smashed it with a hammer when he returned home.

The Daily Telegraph claims that Latham later handed the smashed camera to Campbelltown police.

It is believed that Latham was angry that the photographer took photographs of his children playing on play equipment at the restaurant. Latham accuses the

newspaper of stalking and harassment.

Mr Shultz said "He took the camera and began walking to his car," "I politely asked him to return it. He placed it on the bonnet and then turned around and threw a left hook at me."

"I evaded it easily but he wanted to go toe-to-toe with me. I just kept telling him to calm down, 'You've got kids in the car', but he was off his head. He was so worked up, I wasn't thinking of the camera."

The Daily Telegraph claims they were working on a story to coincide with the first anniversary of Latham's resignation as opposition leader and as an MP.

Mr Latham is reported to have a history of violence, breaking the arm of a taxi driver in 2001 and in 1989 allegedly assaulting a Labor party stalwart.

Brokerage executive linked to Livedoor deals found dead

Hideaki Noguchi, 38, a close aide to Livedoor president Takafumi Horie was found bleeding in a hotel bed with cuts to his wrists on Wednesday in Naha, the capital of the southern prefecture of Okinawa. He was later confirmed dead and the police suspect that he committed suicide. Hideo Sawada, the president of HS Securities, told reporters in Tokyo that Noguchi's family had identified the body

Noguchi was a board member at Japan M&A Management Co., a unit of H.S. Securities Co. The firm was raided by prosecutors earlier this week in connection with fraudulent practices at Livedoor,

according to the Kyodo News agency. He was a graduate of Tokyo's Meiji University, and joined Livedoor in 2000. He had previously worked at Kokusai Securities Co. as an adviser in financing. Livedoor was publicly listed on the Tokyo Stock Exchange in April 2000. Noguchi then set up the investment unit Capitalista Co., which merged with HS Securities.

News of the suicide is being featured in the Japanese media in connection with what is being termed the "Livedoor Shock". The problems at Livedoor have led to the loss of a third of its \$6.3-billion value in the stock market. Livedoor maintains that its own investigation reveal that it did not violate any securities laws.

Some view the affair as an outcome of the larger struggle between competing business cultures in Japan. Takafumi Horie is part of a new generation of Japanese entrepreneurs with little patience for the customs of a traditionally cautious business culture. Horie has shown an appetite for publicity through his internet blogs and appearances on TV shows while living a rock star lifestyle that includes private jets and actress girlfriends.

Horie is also credited with popularizing stock trading among individual investors. The practice of day trading is relatively new in Japan. The Nikkei index was up about 40% last year, its best performance since 1986.

CNN hires three conservative commentators

American cable news network CNN has begun to implement more personalities into its lineup, with the hirings of three prominent conservative commentators as

contributors.

On January 5, the weblog TVNewser reported that Bill Bennett had been hired by the network as a political analyst. Bennett, a Republican activist, was appointed by Ronald Reagan as the Secretary of Education, and currently hosts a talk radio show, Morning in America. Bennet came under fire in late 2005 for controversial statements made following the landfall of Hurricane Katrina, in which he said on his radio program: "if you wanted to reduce crime, you could—if that were your sole purpose—you could abort every black baby in this country and your crime rate would go down."

On January 17, the Atlanta Journal-Constitution reported that CNN Headline News was hiring radio host Glenn Beck to host a new primetime show, and just a day later, CNN announced that former Republican congressman J.C. Watts was joining the network as a political analyst. Beck is quoted by the group Fairness and Accuracy in Reporting as saying that "Every night I get down on my knees and pray that Dennis Kucinich will burst into flames."

In an article in Variety, CNN executive vice president Ken Jautz touted Beck, saying "Glenn's style is self-deprecating, cordial; he says he'd like to be able to disagree with guests and part as friends. It's conversational, not confrontational." In response, MSNBC host Keith Olbermann named Jautz the "Worst Person in the World" on his show, saying "That's cordial? Compared to who? Bill O'Reilly? Nancy Grace? Michael Savage?"

Liberal media watch group Media Matters sent out two emails to

members, saying, "These three actions [hirings] raise serious questions about whether CNN has made a high-level decision to support and promote right-wing individuals, even those who have a history of promoting conservative misinformation and offensive rhetoric," commented Media Matters' David Grossman.

The media watch group Fairness and Accuracy in Reporting also criticized the move in an action alert, saying "The strategy of out-Foxing Fox by signing up incendiary right-wing talk show hosts is a dangerous one, as MSNBC found when it gave a show to hate-radio star Michael Savage and had to let him go when it turned out that his TV persona spouted the same vitriol featured on his radio show," referring to an incident during a live broadcast that led to Savage's dismissal.

CNN has been in a fierce ratings competition with the FOX News Channel, which has steadily begun gaining market share against the network, featuring several of the most-watched primetime shows.

Errant monkeys draw the ire of Delhi court

The Delhi High Court expressed its displeasure to the civic authorities on their continued failure to resolve the problem of marauding monkeys in the court premises. The court was in session when the public interest litigation filed by a Supreme Court lawyer was brought to its attention.

The petitioner Mr.Nirmal Chopra argued the case and explained how the simians showed up during work hours and attacked people and snatched food from them. The rhesus monkeys have also been blamed for damaging furniture belonging to the lawyers and

courtroom fixtures such as electrical fittings. According to Mr.Chopra India's Wildlife Act of 1972 empowers civic authorities to kill or hunt animals when they endanger human life. He said that the lawyers from the Tis Hazari court had requested the state government and the municipality to tackle the situation but no action had resulted.

The lawyer for the civic authority was quoted by the Press Trust of India as saying that catching monkeys was no longer its responsibility. The court was informed that a monkey catcher hired by the municipality had required 72 stitches after being mauled during an operation. After this incident the work had to be halted because other monkey catchers refused to take up the job.

The court gave the civic authority four more weeks to catch the monkeys that are disrupting work at the Tis Hazari courts. "If you cannot perform your statutory duty, then close down your institution" the court is reported to have told the counsel.

Delhi is known to suffer from trouble brought on by monkeys. The animals are reported to invade homes, schools and government offices in the city. Scores of animals have moved in as the city expands into surrounding forests. In an effort to control the problem, the Delhi administration captured about 500 monkeys and took them to the outskirts of the city last year.

New Zealand to send out bird flu brochures

A New Zealand newspaper reported on Wednesday the 18th of January that the New Zealand Ministry of Health intends to send

out brochures, to about 1.4 million households in a national mail drop; on how to prepare for a Avian Flu pandemic. It is believed that the campaign would begin in March.

The brochures will contain information on how to set up emergency kits, and hygiene guides.

The brochures will complement print, radio and television advertising, which will be running at the same time. Advertising started this week on National Radio; New Zealand's public service radio broadcaster.

Dr Ashley Bloomfield, acting director of public health, would not confirm a mail drop at this stage, but other activities for raising awareness such as more paid advertising, updates to the website and 0800 number, and "possibly" a nationwide mail drop.

The Avian Flu H5N1 has killed at least 79 people since 2003.

New Horizons probe bound for Pluto on nine year journey

Earlier today, an Atlas V rocket carrying the New Horizons unmanned spacecraft probe lifted off from Pad 41 at the Cape Canaveral Air Force Station bound for the last unexplored planet in the solar system, Pluto, at 11 am EST, after two scrubbed liftoffs the past two days because of bad weather.

The probe will take a nine-year, 3-billion-mile (5-billion-km) journey to Pluto, the ninth and final planet in the solar system. It is expected to take photos of the planet that are of the highest resolution ever, since current photos of Pluto are not of the highest quality, even those taken from Hubble Space

Telescope. It will also attempt to characterize the global geology and morphology of planet and study the atmosphere of the planet.

After accelerating to 36,000 mph, it will pass the moon in nine hours. The probe will pass by Mars in April and then head on to Jupiter where it will pass by in February 2007 and continue on. Around July 14, 2015, the probe is expected to fly by Pluto and its moon Charon, after which the probe could possibly make a flyby of one or more Kuiper Belt objects. (KBOs).

New Horizons is powered by a onboard nuclear electric generator, known as a radioisotope thermoelectric generator, using 24 pounds (10.8kg) of plutonium as its radioactive "fuel" source. The power generation method has been approved by the United States Department of Energy for safety.

The Tuesday liftoff was postponed because of high winds at the launch site. The Wednesday launch was stopped after a severe storm near Laurel, Maryland knocked out power at the Johns Hopkins University's Applied Physics Laboratory, which hosts the flight control center for the mission.

Today in History

- 304 - Thirteen-year-old Saint Agnes, the patron saint of young girls, was executed for refusing a marriage proposal.
- 1525 - The first Anabaptists in Switzerland re-baptized each other.
- 1793 - French Revolution: After being found guilty of treason by the National Convention, King Louis XVI was guillotined in front of a cheering crowd.
- 1915 - The first Kiwanis service

club was founded in Detroit, Michigan.

1976 - The Concorde supersonic transports began commercial flights to London, Paris, Bahrain, and Rio de Janeiro.

Quote of the Day

"If we would acquire useful knowledge, we must first divest ourselves of those impediments and sincerely endeavor to search out the truth: and draw our conclusions from reason and just argument, which will never conform to our inclination, interest or fancy but we must conform to that if we would judge rightly." ~ Ethan Allen

About Wikinews

We are a group of volunteer journalists whose mission is to create a diverse community where citizens from around the globe (including **you**) can collaborate to report the news on a wide variety of current events. By making our content perpetually available for free redistribution and use, we hope to contribute to a global digital commons.

License

This work is licensed under the Creative Commons Attribution License. Articles published in this Print edition were created by Wikinewsies.

To view a copy of this license, visit: <http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/2.5/> or send a letter to Creative Commons 543 Howard Street, 5th Floor San Francisco, California, 94105, USA

About Wikinews Print Edition

For more information about Wikinews Print Edition visit: <http://en.wikinews.org/wiki/Wikinews:Print>