

Top Stories

UN calls for further Syrian cooperation



The United Nations Security Council unanimously called on

Syria to detain suspects in the assassination of former Lebanese Prime Minister Rafik Hariri. The resolution stopped short of threatening sanctions in the event of non-compliance.

Sydney residents protest anti-terror laws



A protest against proposed Australian anti-terror laws was held in Sydney on Tuesday.

Featured story

US state of Kansas in battle over "Intelligent Design" in education



Kansas' school board efforts to write Intelligent Design into the public school science curriculum may have unleashed entertaining, but unintended, consequences.

Wikipedia Current Events

- The Delhi Police has released three sketches of one of the suspected bombers involved in 29 October 2005 Delhi bombings.

Wikipedia Current Events

- The Washington Post reports that the Central Intelligence Agency has been operating, perhaps illegally, a covert network of "black site" prisons for terrorist suspects in eight foreign countries, including Afghanistan, Thailand, and several Eastern European democracies for the last four years, with little or no oversight from the United States Congress.

- Iran's President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad nominated Sadeq Mahsouli as Supervisor of Ministry of Petroleum of OPEC's Number 2 producer, risking domestic political commotion and a parliamentary veto after already making a disturbance abroad with a call for Israel's destruction.

- A car bomb kills six in Srinagar, India

- The British Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, David Blunkett, resigns a second time, following allegations of ministerial misconduct over his directorship and purchase of shares in a bioscience company.

- The 2005 Paris riots continue for the sixth consecutive night. Rioting spread through impoverished suburbs, which was sparked by the death of two youths who were allegedly fleeing police and were accidentally electrocuted while hiding in an electrical substation. The riots have caused increased strains between the authorities and the inhabitants of the poor suburbs.

Wikipedia Current Events

- 80 of the world's top radio astronomers meet in Pune to decide how and where to set up the world's biggest radio telescope, the Square Kilometre Array.

- An Israel Defense Forces soldier was seriously wounded and later died of his wounds in an overnight arrest raids near the West Bank town of Jenin.

Sydney residents protest anti-terror laws

A small group of people gathered in protest outside the New South Wales Parliament in Sydney, Australia at midday. The group was protesting the proposed Anti-Terrorism Bill, calling upon Premier Iemma not to support the laws. The protest was organised the New South Wales Greens and was addressed by several speakers, including Lee Rhiannon, an elected Greens parliamentarian from the New South Wales Legislative Council.



Protester outside New South Wales Parliament

One protester carried a placard

which read: "Terrorism Laws=Fascism!" She compared the proposed legislation to the 1933 German Enabling Act, saying "It is the most basic rule of democracy is that you have the right to legal representation and Hitler took that away, that was Habeas corpus as it was called, in 1933 legislation and from that moment on that's when everything began. They could remove people, anyone who objected anyone who was a witness, anyone who tried to find out what happened could also be removed."



Lee Rhiannon addresses the rally

"John Howard's terror law would not make Australia safer", Lee Rhiannon said in her speech, "They will not stop a London style bombing occurring in Australia and that's what we need to remember. This is another one of John Howard's lies. Let's remember weapons of mass destruction, (and) children overboard."

The Australian government introduced anti-terror laws after September 11, and has sought to extend those laws in the wake of the London train bombings.

The government claimed in a media release today that it has this week received specific information about a terrorist threat to Australia.

"The Government has received specific intelligence and police information this week which gives cause for serious concern about a potential terrorist threat. The detail of this intelligence has been provided to the Leader of the Opposition and the Shadow Minister for Homeland Security," the release said.

The government claims that the new bill is intended to improve the ability of intelligence services and the police to counter this threat.

"The Government is satisfied on the advice provided to it that the immediate passage of this bill would strengthen the capacity of law enforcement agencies to effectively respond to this threat," the release said.

Dr Andrew Lynch, Project Director of the Terrorism and Law project at the Gilbert & Tobin Centre of Public Law, has said that Rhiannon has raised some valid issues regarding some of the provisions in the proposed legislation.

"It is difficult to see how many of [the provisions] will enhance our security. For example, the bans on free speech will only drive inciting and hateful messages underground which must make the job of security forces harder in identifying real threats. The restrictions on family members knowing about the detention of their children is not conceivably going to improve our safety. There is a lot to be said for the view that depriving people of their liberty on the basis only of 'reasonable suspicion' might well fuel feelings of alienation amongst some groups which could be harnessed by extremists," Dr Lynch said.

At least Thirty-Three more dead in Ethiopia election clashes

At least thirty-three more people have died in a second day of protests in Addis Ababa, the Capital of Ethiopia. Reuters put the figure at twenty-three.

According to incoming reports police forces opened fire on stone throwing youths who were engaged in protest.

The protests were called in reaction to the results of the parliamentary elections held in May which many opposition figures maintain were rigged. When the election results were first declared in June riots erupted in which 36 people died.

The latest series of protests come as the parliamentary session is scheduled to begin. The Opposition party, the Coalition for Unity and Democracy called the protest and refused to take their seats till a new and transparently organised elections are held, and mass arrests of opposition activists ceases. The party said that six of its top officials, including chairman Hailu Shawel and vice-chairman Berhanu Nega, had been detained.

30 taxi drivers who took part in demonstrations against the parliamentary elections were arrested and had their licenses revoked.

The Associated Press reports that an Anonymous source in Black Lion Hospital told thir reporter that Most of the dead were shot in the chest. One Eye-Witness at the hospital claims that the police fired randomly into the crowd.

The dead were all shot by riot

police and opposition spokesman Gizachew Shiferaw said police used excessive force, the day previous, however, two of the dead were police shot by protesters.

The Government accuses the opposition of attempting to topple the government, and dismissed an assessment by European Union monitors that the elections failed to meet international standards.

UK work secretary David Blunkett resigns

David Blunkett, the United Kingdom's Work and Pensions Secretary, resigned his office following a meeting with Prime Minister Tony Blair today.

Public pressure had been growing on Mr. Blunkett to resign after revelations emerged that he had broken the British Ministerial Code of Conduct in relation to his large shareholdings and short-lived directorship in a company called DNA Bioscience.

This is Blunkett's second time to be forced into standing down from office, having previously stepped down as home secretary last year over claims his office had fast-tracked a visa application. A member of the opposition Liberal Democrat party, Greg Mulholland said "I think he's done the right thing [in quitting], having done several quite blatantly wrong things".

Yesterday Blunkett declared that he would not resign in an interview with the Sheffield Star, insisting that he had "done nothing wrong."

Blunkett's replacement was named as John Hutton, previously Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster.

Anti-terror amendments to be rushed through Australian parliament because of new 'potential threats'

New terror amendments are to be rushed through Australian Federal Parliament based on new threats recently revealed by the Australian Security Intelligence Organisation (ASIO). The government claimed in a media release today that it has this week received specific information about a terrorist threat to Australia.

"The Government has received specific intelligence and police information this week which gives cause for serious concern about a potential terrorist threat. The detail of this intelligence has been provided to the Leader of the Opposition and the Shadow Minister for Homeland Security," the release said.

The government claims that the new bill is intended to improve the ability of intelligence services and the police to counter this threat.

"The Government is satisfied on the advice provided to it that the immediate passage of this bill would strengthen the capacity of law enforcement agencies to effectively respond to this threat," the release said.

The opposition leader, Kim Beazley, has been briefed by the Prime Minister on the nature of the threat, and has pledged that Labor will support the amendments.

The amendments are separate to the proposed anti-terror legislation.

Some commentators noted that the nation's security alert level had not been escalated as a result of the new information and

remained at "medium" and a subsequent interview with the Attorney-General, Philip Ruddock on Lateline appeared to indicate that there was in fact no information about a specific imminent threat.

Greens' Senator Bob Brown noted that there already laws that could deal with a specific imminent threat: "Whoever these unnamed people are, they can be arrested, they can be interrogated for up to seven days, they can be charged under the current crimes act." he said.

The government has a track record of presenting misleading information to the public for political ends as in the infamous children overboard affair when refugees were vilified by ministers of the Australian government, including the Prime Minister, on the basis of false evidence.

Australian Treasury related agencies spend 17000 AUD on massages in 2004

Australian agencies under the responsibility of the federal Treasurer, Peter Costello, spent approximately \$17,000 AUD on massage services in 2004, namely the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) and the Australian Securities and Investments Commission (ASIC).

The Australian Labor Party member Christopher Bowen asked the Treasurer for details on massage services in a question on notice, and received the answer on October 31.

637 ASIC staff made use of massages, compared with only 50 in the ABS, who however spent more on massages than ASIC.

US state of Kansas in battle over "Intelligent Design" in education



TOUCHED BY HIS NOODLY APPENDAGE

The Flying Spaghetti Monster is typically depicted as a clump of tangled spaghetti with two eyestalks, two meatballs, and "noodly appendages," here in a parody of Michelangelo's The Creation of Adam.

Tempers are flaring in the U.S. state of Kansas, where a school board may be on the verge of passing a measure to require that Intelligent Design be taught in public school science classes.

Christian political activists such as Reverend Jerry Johnston of First Family Church in Overland Park Kansas are supporting the effort to shape Kansas science standards according to religious beliefs. Johnston said, "Getting intelligent design into school curricula is the worthiest cause of our time and the key to reversing the country's moral decline."

In an apparent attempt to make the inclusion of Intelligent Design into the curriculum seem foolish, "believers" in the Flying Spaghetti Monster are lobbying the Kansas school board, calling for it to require that creation by the Flying Spaghetti Monster be taught alongside Darwinism and Intelligent Design. Several members of the Kansas Board of Education have already indicated

that they might vote in favor of such an initiative. Board member Carol Rupe wrote, "The new version (of science standards) changes the very definition of science from 'seeking natural explanations' to 'seeking logical explanations.' That is why I think FSMism is able to be included. It is as 'logical' as any other theory."

In 1999, Kansas also wrote Creationism, a precursor of Intelligent Design, into the public school curriculum. A later school board, however, overturned that directive.

ASIO settle out of court, wrongful detention case

The Australian Security Intelligence Organisation, and the Federal government of Australia have settled out of court with a couple whose house had been raided a couple weeks after the 11 September 2001 attacks against the Pentagon and the World Trade Center towers in the USA.

ASIO, a domestic counter-intelligence service, mistakenly raided the couples house when they had a search warrant for another house.

The couple were detained for a hour and claimed they were assaulted, wrongfully detained and experienced severe shock when, according to their claims, ASIO officers threatened to destroy their door and then held them at gun point.

It is also claimed that until an hour after the attack, ASIO officers would not allow Mrs. Fatme Iali to put on her clothes. As compensation, the couple asked the court for Aus\$1.5 million in damages. Although it is unknown how much Bilal Daye and

his wife received in the out of court settlement (under the terms of the deal, the settlement cannot be disclosed), they stated that they were satisfied with the result.

"Just relieved, I can take care of my family now, that's all I wanted," Mr Daye said.

Mr Daye's solicitor Stephen Hopper said the victory was very important for civil rights, but suggested that close scrutiny of government actions was required in the future.

"What this case demonstrates is that ASIO can be held accountable ... the government can be held open to scrutiny," he said.

"Control orders can be slapped onto a person before the evidence can be tested in court ... they should have to justify why such orders and restrictions should be put on a free person before they do it."

"The government's got to be scrutinised for all of its actions and if they make a mistake they should be held accountable."

Mr Hopper argued that the proposed Anti-Terrorism Bill could prevent media reporting of incidents such as this.

"If the new laws were brought in and it was an issue of preventative detention no probably not, no," he said

"If it's an issue of an ASIO warrant, under section 34d of the ASIO Act, no, you wouldn't and the Government's got to be scrutinised for all of its actions and if they make a mistake they should be held accountable," he added.

It is unclear what implications it could have for websites like Wikinews, which are hosted on servers outside Australia.

Today in History

1793 - French playwright, journalist and outspoken feminist Olympe de Gouges was guillotined for her revolutionary ideas.

1838 - The Times of India, the world's largest circulated English language daily broadsheet newspaper was founded.

1848 - A new constitution drafted by Johan Rudolf Thorbecke was proclaimed, severely limiting the powers of the monarchy of the Netherlands.

1957 - The Sputnik 2 spacecraft was launched, carrying Laika the Russian space dog (pictured) as the first living being to orbit the Earth.

1971 - The UNIX Programmer's Manual was first published.

November 03: Eid ul-Fitr begins at sunset (Islam, 2005);

Independence Day in Panama (1903), Dominica (1978) and the Federated States of Micronesia (1986).

Quote of the Day

Somewhere, over the rainbow,
way up high, There's a land that I
heard of once in a lullaby.

Somewhere, over the rainbow,
skies are blue, And the dreams
that you dare to dream
Really do come true.

~ Judy Garland as "Dorothy Gale"
in The Wizard of Oz ~

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+1-866-653-4265
(toll-free in the U.S.)
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