



Top Stories

20 wounded in explosion at Philippine karaoke bar

An explosion has been reported near the gate of the Philippine army's 104th Brigade headquarters, inside a karaoke bar on southern Jolo Island. At least 20 people are reported to have been injured.

85 rescued, thousands feared dead in Philippine landslide

At least 85 people have been rescued after a massive landslide buried three villages in Saint Bernard, Southern Leyte province, in central Philippines on Friday.

Featured story

Hotel development proposal could displace Buffalo, NY business owners

Savarino Construction Services Corp. has proposed a 7 million dollar hotel to be placed on the Forest and Elmwood intersection. If the development goes through, several business will be forced to close and residents will have to find a new place to live.

Wikipedia Current Events

- Sixty-six Mexican coal miners are trapped approximately three kilometers underground after a mine explosion near Nueva Rosita, Coahuila.
- Ismail Haniya of Hamas becomes Prime Minister of the Palestinian National Authority, succeeding Ahmed Qurei.

Wikipedia Current Events

- Palestinian-Israeli conflict: Interim Israeli Prime Minister Ehud Olmert decides to withhold payment to the Palestinian Authority of tax receipts amounting to about \$50 million per month.

India Win Hutch Cup One Day series 4-1

India won the final match of the recent cricket series. Yuvraj Singh made a unbeaten 107 (93b, 15x4) helping India's , chasing 287, achieved with 19 deliveries remaining on a good batting pitch. India have clinched the Hutch Cup ODI series 4-1. Mahendra Singh Dhoni (77 not out, 56b, 6x4, 4x6) was another importat contributor to the Indian Innings. Karachi: Feb 19, 2006 - India win the Hutch Cup One-Day cricket series 4-1 agains Pakistan.

The Pakistani bowling, apart from a probing spell from paceman Rao Iftekar Anjum, was made to look ordinary. The Pakistani fielding let the side down again. Mohammed Sami lost the ball twice. When on 64, Yuvraj was put down at covers by Shoaib Malik.

India preferred to rest Sachin Tendulkar and Irfan Pathan. Tendulkar carried the drinks, indicating that in this Indian side experience and youth blended into one.

In Tendulkar's absence, Rahul Dravid opened the innings with Gautam Gambhir.

The left-handed Gambhir sparkled with a few pick-up shots on the leg-side; this also showed Pakistan's pacemen were not bowling the right line.

Mohammed Asif has not been a big factor in the ODIs since the away going delivery is a lesser weapon in this variety of the game, especially if a side is bowling in the afternoon. It was his two-way movement that made him so dangerous in Tests.

Gambhir once again wasted a start, but the opening pair had, importantly, raised 69. Dravid's 50 (6x4) might have consumed 82 deliveries, but he made sure that, in the absence of Virender Sehwag and Tendulkar, the Indians had enough wickets in hand before they began the final onslaught. The chase was splendidly orchestrated.

It was Sreesanth who dented Pakistan in the morning after Zaheer Khan and Ajit Agarkar shared the new ball. The Kerala paceman, who is learning fast, cut down on his pace realising that there was not too much assistance for him from the wicket. He struck thrice and Pakistan, from 62 without loss, slumped to 77 for three. In the context of the match, Sreesanth's spell of 5-1-25-3 was crucial. Both Imran Farhat and Kamran Akmal, after putting together 62, fell to pull shots, and Shoaib Malik steered right into Suresh Raina's hands at gully. There is fluency about Sreesanth's

run-up and action that is hard to ignore, and he did bowl well at the death, swinging the ball into the right-hander.

And off-spinner Ramesh Powar won a leg-before decision against an ominous looking Inzamam on the sweep; the delivery drifted into the right-hander from outside the off-stump and then straightened.

Pakistan recovered through a strokeful fifth-wicket stand of 95 in 110 balls between Mohammad Yousuf (67, 85b, 6x4) and vice-captain Younis Khan (74 not out, 79b, 3x4, 2x6). Yousuf appeared set for his hundred when he flicked Ajit Agarkar into Zaheer Khan at mid-wicket.

Abdul Razzaq biffed a 15-ball 24 before miscuing a pull of R.P. Singh, but Pakistan lost some momentum towards the end. However, the 18 runs off the last six balls by Zaheer came in handy for the side; Younis twice smote the left-armer over the mid-wicket ropes.

The bowlers, backed by aggressive fielding, had performed a fair job, under the conditions.

Students find fossilised giant penguin

Children on a field trip in New Zealand have discovered what may be the finest giant penguin fossil yet found. These early penguins stood 1.5 metres (5 feet) tall, weighing over 100 kilograms (220 pounds), and lived some 40 million years ago.

While the party of 22 from the Hamilton Junior Naturalists Club were looking for fossils, they did not expect to find anything this significant in their trip to Kawhia, an hour southwest of Hamilton.

Group leader Chris Templer said that the sea was already beginning to erode the fossil, and if it had not been found for another 18 months, there might not have been much left. He has dreamed of making a find like this since he began hunting fossils as an eight-year-old. "I went 'Oh my God', and just about keeled over on the reef," he said.

The fossil has been carefully removed after consultation with Te Papa (the national museum) and local Māori. Experts are excited by the completeness of the Kawhia fossil. Although roughly a dozen extinct penguin species have already been discovered in New Zealand, only a few fossilised bones have been found from most of these species. Te Papa has only three bones from the largest giant penguin. According to Alan Tennyson, curator of fossils at Te Papa, the Kawhia discovery might be of international significance. "I think it's very exciting to find something like this...it's a very rare event to find such a well preserved specimen," he enthused.

US pressure group proposes covert attack on Iran

The Iran Policy Committee, a pressure group meant to influence US government policy towards Iran, made up of former White House, State Department, Pentagon and CIA officials, and supported by several members of the US Congress, called for covert military action on Iranian territory and support for the Mujahedin-e Khalq (MKO or MEK), which is presently (though controversially) listed by the State Department as a Foreign Terrorist Organization. The MKO has had public support in several EU countries and the US, including from many members of Congress.

Members of the Iran Policy Committee proposed removing the MKO from the list of Foreign Terrorist Organizations and supporting it as part of Iranian "Civil Society". Their proposal is to support Iranians by both covert military methods and other methods to remove the system of government under which president Mahmoud Ahmadinejad was recently elected, in the second round of presidential elections in 2005, and replace it by a new form of government.

On February 15, 2006, Human Rights Watch (HRW) defended its May 2005 report on the MKO, describing additional interviews and verifications it had taken to check claims of inaccuracies in its report. It claimed that the former report was accurate. In the May 2005 report, HRW claimed on the basis of various documents and interviews with ex-members of the MKO that "abuses [occurred] ranging from detention and persecution of ordinary members wishing to leave the organization, to lengthy solitary confinements, severe beatings, and torture of dissident members." The report also noted that the MKO is strongly focused on its leadership, the husband and wife team of Massoud and Maryam Rajavi, to the extent that members burned themselves alive in protest when Maryam Rajavi was arrested in Paris.

Meanwhile in the UK, the Conservative Party said that military action against Iran "should not be ruled out to deal with its controversial nuclear programme", that "it was wrong for the European Union's foreign affairs spokesman Javier Solana to rule out the use of force" and that "it is wrong for Britain's Foreign Secretary, Jack Straw, to echo

[Javier Solana]."

The previous removal of an elected government in Iran in which the US was involved was Operation Ajax in 1953, a complex plot involving the CIA and British intelligence services, motivated by Mohammed Mossadegh's nationalisation of oil companies.

American Bar Association denounced President Bush's warrantless domestic surveillance program

On Monday, the American Bar Association denounced President Bush's program of domestic surveillance without court issued warrants. The program has been the subject of much debate, with the opposition claiming it is unconstitutional, and supporters saying that it helps to catch terrorists.

In the past, wiretap warrants could be secretly obtained from a special court created by the 1978 Foreign Intelligence Surveillance Act or publicly obtained from any federal court. The Bush administration maintains that the congressional measure authorizing war in September 2001 empowered eavesdropping without any court issued warrant. The ABA has also asked Congress to affirm that granting such authority was not its intention.

President Bush has claimed that only a small number of Americans were subject to NSA eavesdrop without the the usual requisite warrants. But, Russell Tice, who worked for the NSA for 20 years, has disagreed, saying that millions of Americans could be affected "if the full range of secret NSA programs is used."

Mr. Tice said that individual conversations can be isolated

based upon keywords, such as 'jihad', but such technology is most often used for keyword based traffic analysis of the conversations of suspects, as well as their acquaintances.

The ABA sets academic standards for law schools and controls the code of ethical standards for lawyers.

Last May, the NSA revoked Tice's security clearance based upon so-called psychological concerns, and later dismissed him. Tice has responded that this is simply the NSA's way of dealing with whistleblowers. NSA has made no further comment.

Today in History

1472 - James III of Scotland annexed the Orkney and Shetland Islands from Denmark-Norway.

1810 - Andreas Hofer, a Tyrolean patriot and the leader of a rebellion against Napoleon's forces, was executed.

1913 - King O'Malley drove in the first survey peg to mark the commencement of work on the construction of Canberra, Australia.

1959 - The Avro Arrow supersonic jet fighters programme in Canada was cancelled by the Diefenbaker government amid much political debate.

1965 - The Ranger 8 spacecraft successfully transmitted 7,137 photographs of the moon in the final 23 minutes of its mission before crashing in Mare Tranquillitatis.

February 20 is Presidents' Day in the United States and Family Day in Alberta, Canada (2006)

Quote of the Day

"External success has to do with people who may see me as a model, or an example, or a representative. As much as I may

dislike or want to reject that responsibility, this is something that comes with public success. It's important to give others a sense of hope that it is possible and you can come from really different places in the world and find your own place in the world that's unique for yourself." ~ Amy Tan

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