

Top Stories

Indonesian blackout caused by lack of generation capacity



A power outage in Indonesia that left about 100 million people without electricity has generated increased

energy concerns throughout the nation. The country's state-owned energy monopoly, PLN, has not determined the immediate cause, and the country's president has ordered the national intelligence agency and police to investigate.

Document reveals U.S., Taliban discussed bin Laden assassination



According to documents recently declassified by the U.S. State Department, top U.S. and Taliban officials discussed the potential assassination of Osama bin Laden after the bombings

of U.S. embassies in 1998.

Featured story

Virginians melee at used Apple iBook sale

Officials estimate nearly 5,000 people thronged a sale for \$50, four-year-old used Apple iBook laptop computers in Virginia. Among them were 17 injured, four requiring hospitalization - one for a leg injury and four for heat-related illness

Wikipedia Current Events

- Two Iraqis have died following an IED explosion near Tikrit.
- 3 members of the main Sunni Arab political party in Iraq are kidnapped and killed as they put up posters urging people to vote in the upcoming elections in Mosul.

Wikipedia Current Events

- Former Northern Ireland Secretary Mo Mowlam has died in a hospice at 55.
- Pierre Nkurunziza of the National Council for the Defense of Democracy-Forces for the Defense of Democracy, a former rebel leader of the Hutu majority in Burundi, has been elected unopposed as the new President of Burundi by the parliament, the first president chosen through democratic means since the start of the civil war in 1993.
- The Polisario Front independence movement in Western Sahara frees its last 404 Moroccan prisoners of war, many held for almost two decades, in a bid to end the armed conflict with Morocco.
- New York authorities reveal the existence of a letter from a deceased woman who claims her husband and two others killed Judge Joseph F. Crater and buried him under the boardwalk at Coney Island. Crater has been missing since 1930 and has since become one of the most famous "missing person" stories.
- Merck & Co. loses the first wrongful death lawsuit over its painkiller Vioxx, with a jury awarding \$253 Million in damages. There have been over 4000 cases filed against Merck over this drug.
- Pennsylvania police announced the discovery of a body presumed to be that of missing woman LaToyia Figueroa and the arrest of former boyfriend Poaches.
- Pakistan's Supreme Court upholds the death sentence awarded to Manjeet Singh, an alleged Research and Analysis Wing agent who was also reportedly involved in five bomb blasts in the country. Singh was arrested by security forces at the Indo-Pak border on August 30, 1990.
- In one of the worst confrontations on the Indo-Bangla frontier in recent months, Bangladesh Rifles opens unprovoked fire at the India side at some outposts in West Bengal. About 500 rounds were fired in the skirmishes, but there was no casualty.

Indonesian blackout caused by lack of generation capacity

A power outage in Indonesia that left about 100 million people without electricity has caused a political crisis. The country's state-owned energy monopoly, PLN, has not determined the immediate cause, and the country's president has ordered the national intelligence agency and police to investigate.

The blackout appears related to deficiencies in Indonesia's power generation capacity.

The power failure follows attempts to deal with the country's growing energy crisis, including conservation and trying to allow private companies to provide energy, which was ruled unconstitutional in 2004. In January, the Indonesian government held a special energy summit to attract investment in their energy infrastructure. At the summit they set the goal of adding 22,000 megawatts to Indonesia's present capacity of 23,000 megawatts, in order to support the country's growth.

The World Bank and others have warned that without more investment in the country's energy infrastructure an energy deficit will result. However, foreign investors remain wary of investing in Indonesia. "The power outage has resulted in worries over an energy crisis which could hurt the nation's industrial sector," said a trader on Indonesia's stock market.

The outage began at 10:23 a.m. local time, August 18, 2005, when power failed along the electrical system that connects Java, Bali, and Maruda, causing outages in Java and Bali. Almost half of the country depends on the electrical grid that experienced failures. Some of the main lines on the grid are over 20 years old, according to PLN president Eddie Widiono.

The blackout caused traffic jams in Jakarta, forced cancellation of several international and domestic flights at Jakarta's Soekarno-Hatta International Airport, shut down

Jakarta's electric train service, and disrupted hospital operations. Some larger hospitals were forced to delay surgeries while many smaller hospitals could not receive patients. About 1,800 officers were called into action by Jakarta's metropolitan police to deal with short-term problems caused by the power failure.

Candles used in place of electric lighting started six fires in Jakarta.

Mulyo Aji, a PLN official, said more power failures are likely in the future as energy demand increases, without any corresponding new supplies of electricity scheduled to come online soon.

Croatian singer beaten in Belgrade

Singer Darko Rundek (a French resident of Croatian descent), was attacked on a street in Serbia and Montenegro yesterday. Rundek was in Belgrade performing at "Beer Fest". He left at around 5:00 a.m., with two women from Belgrade, when he was attacked by nationalist Serbs. He was not seriously injured and was released from the hospital shortly after his arrival. The police are still looking for several young male suspects. During his performance there were a few smaller incidents where several people fought with police.

Document reveals U.S., Taliban discussed bin Laden assassination

According to documents recently declassified by the U.S. State Department, top U.S. and Taliban officials discussed the potential assassination of Osama bin Laden after the bombings of U.S. embassies in 1998.

The documents were released on Thursday by the National Security Archive under the Freedom of Information Act. They show that the deputy chief of mission at the U.S. Embassy in Pakistan, Alan Eastham Jr., met with Wakil Ahmed, a close aide to Taliban leader Mullah Omar, on November 28th 1998 at the Taliban embassy in Islamabad.

In that meeting Wakil Ahmed told Eastham Jr. that the Taliban would understand the U.S. desire to have bin Laden expelled from Afghanistan. He said that one possibility to "resolve" the "bin Laden Situation" would be if the U.S. were to "kill him, or arrange

for bin Laden to be assassinated".

Wakil said the Taliban wanted to resolve the "bin Laden problem" as quickly as possible because a failure to do so would result in American bombing of Afghanistan and the Taliban's "termination".

Daily Mail: Scotland Yard offered Menezes family US\$1m

The British newspaper Daily Mail reports that Scotland Yard has offered the family of Jean Charles de Menezes, who was mistaken for a suicide bomber and shot by British police on July 22nd, one million US\$ (£560,000) in compensation. The paper quotes his parent as saying: "We will not be bought off. We will not be silenced. This is not about money, this is about justice."

According to Yasmin Khan, of the Justice4Jean campaign, John Yates, deputy assistant commissioner at Scotland Yard, flew to Brazil about two weeks ago and made the initial offer. Khan said: "Money was being bandied about but was not accepted. The family felt it was insulting and was not prepared to be bought off." She also stated that she considers Scotland Yard's alleged actions to be part of a cover-up.

Menezes' cousin Alessandro Pereira told the Daily Mail: "The police knew Jean was innocent, yet they let my family suffer. They let us suffer. Ian Blair (Metropolitan Police commissioner) let us suffer. For three weeks, we have had to listen to lie after lie about Jean and how he was killed. The police met my family yet they still didn't tell us the truth. Did they think because we are poor Brazilians we do not deserve the truth?"

Scotland Yard has denied the reports. A Spokesman said: "The only discussions we have had so far with the family of Jean Charles de Menezes have been about initial expenses. We strongly refute any suggestion that a figure anywhere in the region of one million dollars has been offered as compensation."

At least 13 killed in shootings at polling stations in Pakistan

According to Online, 13 people were killed and over a hundred injured in armed clashes between rival political factions in Pakistan on Thursday August 18, 2005 local time.

The attacks centered around polling stations throughout the country where elections for local offices were taking place.

The first of the clashes occurred in the Bannu district in Pakistan's North-West Frontier Province. There three people directly participating in the armed clashes were shot dead. Their political ties are unclear. Many others were injured in the incident.

Two were killed in a clash in Khiali in the Punjabi district of Gujranwala and more than fifteen were injured. One was killed in the Multan district where another 15 were injured.

Three people were injured due to sporadic shooting in the Sialkot district in Punjab.

Seventeen were injured in the district of Lodhran in Punjab, including a candidate for the position of nazim. There, four people were arrested.

In Dera Allah Yar in Pakistan's Jaffrabad district, members of the Jamali and Imrani ethnic groups exchanged fire two hours after polling began. Both groups used automatic weapons, and one person was killed at the scene of the clash. Two others died later while receiving medical care. Nineteen others were injured, three of whom are reported to be in critical condition.

Army personnel were called to maintain peace in ten of the Punjab's 17 districts. In total, 40 of Pakistan's 53 districts received army assistance in an attempt to keep the peace. Security was heightened in many areas of the country.

Pakistan has many sources of conflict, ranging from supporters of Al-Qaeda and the former Afghanistan Taliban government, to those involved in terrorist activities against India over disputed borders, to tensions between the numerous political, ethnic, tribal, and religious factions.

Attempt to reopen Western Australia's biggest beef processor

Administrators Ferrier Hodgson are working to get troubled EG Green and Sons, trading as Harvey Beef, back open in

two weeks. Approximately 600 workers are directly employed by the company, which is both a major employer in the region and the region's largest meat exporter. South West Chamber of Commerce and Industries president Rolf Stene was quoted as saying "It could affect a lot of people, those 600 workers at the abattoir, farmers, shopkeepers, the service industry it would hit a lot of people right throughout the community." The employees have currently been forced to take annual leave.

Many beef producers are owed money by the company. The Pastoralists and Graziers Association (PGA) is still trying to identify creditors and EG Green and Sons are working with the administrators in order to "maximise returns to creditors". Despite the well known brand, the company has been trading at a loss in recent years. Recent expansions may be at the root of the sudden financial problems that forced the company to suspend operations.

Calls by the Opposition for a government enquiry were rebuffed by the Agriculture Minister's parliamentary secretary, Tony McRae, saying "an inquiry would be counter productive." The State Government has at this stage declined to assist EG Green and Sons.

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Today in History

- 1680 - Pueblo Indians captured Santa Fe from the Spanish.
- 1772 - A coup led by Gustav III was completed by adopting a new Instrument of Government, ending the Age of Liberty in Sweden.
- 1831 - Nat Turner led a slave revolt in Southampton County, Virginia.
- 1959 - Hawaii was admitted as the 50th U.S. state.
- 1986 - Toxic gas erupted from volcanic Lake Nyos in Cameroon, killing over 1700 people.
- August 21 is Independence Day in Latvia

Quote of the Day

If you want the world to know
We won't let hatred grow
Put a little love in your heart.
~ Jackie DeShannon ~

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