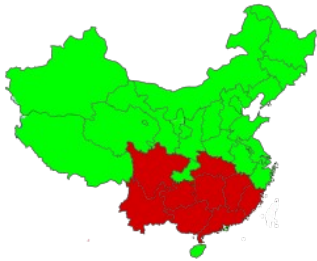




Top Stories

Scores dead, thousands flee as flooding spreads across southern China

Over 50 people have been confirmed dead and at least one million people have fled from their homes as a result of heavy flooding across much of Southern China.



Harrier jet crashes in Rutland, England, pilot survives

A Royal Air Force pilot has safely ejected from his Harrier aircraft moments before it crashed in a field near the small village of Ashwell, Rutland in England.



Credit: Adambro (CC-BY 3.0)

Senior intelligence official suspended after leaving top secret files on train

A senior intelligence official in the United Kingdom has been suspended from his job pending an investigation into top secret documents that were left on a commuter train on Tuesday. The Cabinet Office confirmed that the documents, including reports on Al-Qaeda and Iraqi security forces, had been found on the train and handed in to the offices of the British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC), who turned

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the files in to police.

SPECIAL REPORT

Temporary restraining order stops demolition of partially collapsed building in Buffalo, New York

In an exclusive report, Wikinews has learned that a restraining order won by area residents has temporarily stopped the emergency demolition of a three story building which partially collapsed on Wednesday, June 11, 2008 causing at least 15 homes to be evacuated in Buffalo, New York.



Credit: DragonFire1024 (CC-BY 2.5)

Wikipedia Current Events

Chadian rebels take the town Biltine as they move toward the capital N'Djamena.

- Hundreds of Taliban militants swarm in the Arghandab District of Kandahar Province with the Afghan government sending reinforcements to the nearby city of Kandahar.
- Same-sex marriage in California comes into effect following a court ruling on May 15, 2008.
- International Criminal Court judges severely criticize prosecutors in the case against Thomas Lubanga.
- Israel and Syria conclude talks

Wikipedia Current Events

on the Golan Heights issue held in Turkey.

- An official of the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs reports that effect food crisis on Somalia is creating a worse humanitarian situation than the War in Darfur.
- Tiger Woods defeats Rocco Mediate in a playoff to win the 2008 U.S. Open Golf Championship.
- The European Union agrees to tougher sanctions against Iran for its nuclear weapons program with the United Kingdom freezing assets of Iran's largest bank Bank Melli.

Al Gore endorses Obama for US President

Environmental activist and former Vice-President Al Gore today announced his support for Democratic candidate Barack Obama in the United States presidential election.

In an email sent to Obama supporters, Al Gore voices his support for the presumptive nominee. "From now through Election Day," he writes, "I intend to do whatever I can to make sure he is elected President of the United States." He believes that Obama is the candidate who will "bring change to America" in issues such as the Iraq War, the American economy, and climate change.

"Over the past 18 months, Barack

Obama has united a movement," Gore writes. "He knows change does not come from 1600 Pennsylvania Avenue or Capitol Hill. It begins when people stand up and take action."

Gore also stated his intention to attend a rally with Obama in Detroit, Michigan later that night. Obama was in Flint earlier today, where he addressed a crowd of workers at a General Motors plant. Obama said Gore was "a visionary, not just for the party, but for the country."

At the rally in Detroit's Joe Louis Arena, Gore called Obama "the next President of the United States of America" and said he could lead the nation past "eight years in which our Constitution has been dishonored and disrespected". He addressed the issue of climate change, which he said many Republicans had "refused to discuss at all".

"The outcome of this election will affect the future of our entire planet," Gore said, adding that "the future is ours, not to predict, but to create." He compared the criticisms of Obama's young age and foreign policy experience to those faced by John F. Kennedy in the 1960 Presidential election.

Obama spoke next, thanking Al Gore and calling him "a global leader in the fight for a clean energy future". He discussed many issues, including healthcare, education, the national debt, and the war in Iraq. He criticized the way the Bush administration has handled these issues, and repeated the oft-heard criticism that McCain is running for Bush's "third term".

"We can't afford 8 more years of George W. Bush policies," Obama

said. He said that if there was one thing that could unite the Democrats, it is that "when we go into the polling places in November, the name 'George W. Bush' will not be on the ballot." Obama commended McCain for his service to the country, but said that he "seems to have lost his way" from his reputation as a political maverick. "The Straight Talk Express lost a couple of wheels," he said.

Many of the problems in America "go back for decades," Obama said. "The American people feel that American dream slipping away. So we cannot wait... and that is why I am running for President of the United States of America." Between cynicism and faith, Obama says, "I choose hope. I choose faith."

Obama thanked his supporters for helping his campaign, saying that "change in America doesn't happen from the top down; it comes from the bottom up." He also thanked former candidate Hillary Clinton, although many booed at the mention of her name. "She's a fighter," Obama said. "And we need fighters in the Democratic Party because we've got a lot to fight for." Obama and Gore were introduced by Michigan governor Jennifer Granholm, who supported Clinton in the primaries but now says she is supporting Obama.

Al Gore served as Vice-President under President Bill Clinton in the '90s, and after losing the 2000 Presidential election to George W. Bush, he focused his efforts on environmental activism, winning an Academy Award for his documentary *An Inconvenient Truth*. He has also won a Nobel Peace Prize for his efforts in teaching the public about climate

change.

Protesters clash with police as Bush visits London

Protesters taking part in a demonstration in London's Parliament Square were caught in violent brawls with the Metropolitan Police as United States President George W. Bush was making his way to meet Britain's Prime Minister Gordon Brown at Downing Street on Sunday evening.

The protest, called for by the Stop the War Coalition, the Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament and the British Muslim Initiative, was attended by 2000 people according to Scotland Yard, and had previously been banned from marching past Downing Street. As they approached the barrier police had erected to block off access to Whitehall, police officers defended the blockade wielding batons and arresting 25 protesters.

While Deputy assistant commissioner to the Metropolitan Police Service, Chris Allison, criticized the protests as "deplorable" acts that could not "be described as lawful demonstration", a Stop the War Coalition member put the blame on the police, stating that there would have been no violence at all had the demonstration be allowed to past the Prime Minister's residence.

An earlier demonstration near Windsor Castle, where President Bush met with Queen Elizabeth for afternoon tea, stayed peaceful. On Monday, Bush will join Gordon Brown in talks with Peter Robinson, the first minister of Northern Ireland, in Belfast, where further protests are announced.

Study raises health concerns about shower curtains

The Canadian Environmental Law Association and the Canadian organization Environmental Defence jointly conducted a study that was released to the public on Thursday, saying that chemicals released by new vinyl curtains may pose a significant health risk.

The study noted that many shower curtains contain more than 100 volatile organic compounds (VOCs), phthalates and organotins, some of which may be released into the air when first taken from a package. These chemicals, responsible for the characteristic smell of new vinyl, may cause damage to kidneys, the liver and the central nervous systems, respiratory problems, nausea, headaches and loss of coordination, according to the report.

These vinyl curtains are also said to contain traces of metals like lead, cadmium and mercury.

Jennifer Foulds of Environmental Defence advises consumers to seek alternatives to new vinyl products such as shower curtains and table cloths. Older products are thought to be safe, as they have already released most of the allegedly dangerous chemicals.

Critics of the study have called it "fear-mongering", and some health professionals agree that the risk is being overblown. Warren Foster, a professor in the obstetrics and gynecology department at McMaster University in Hamilton, Ontario points out that, "the difference between hazard and risk is great, and without knowing the actual human exposure, it's premature to make any judgement."

Foster further commented that the study was not performed in a rigorous manner by not having controls or random sampling.

Five brands of shower curtain were examined in the study; they were purchased from American stores including Bed Bath & Beyond, Kmart, Sears, Target and Wal-Mart. Curtains of the same brand are also available in major Canadian stores.

Marion Axmith, director general of the Vinyl Council of Canada calls the report a "blatant attempt to manipulate consumers and retailers into thinking shower curtains pose a danger, and they don't." She noted that, "as far as we know, nobody's ever been harmed by a shower curtain."

Vinyl has long been a point of dispute between environmentalists and those in the chemical industry. A chemical used to make vinyl is known to be a risk for liver and other cancers for chemical plant workers, and the phthalates in vinyl products have been linked to interference with normal male hormone production.

Harrier jet crashes in Rutland, England, pilot survives

A Royal Navy pilot has safely ejected from his Harrier GR7 aircraft moments before it crashed in a field near the small village of Ashwell in England. The crash occurred at about 1350 BST today.

The pilot was taken by air ambulance to Queen's Medical Centre in Nottingham for treatment for spinal injuries.

Local resident Vic Harrison spoke to the BBC about the incident: "I thought he didn't stand a chance, but I looked up and saw the parachute of the pilot. I really

thought he had hit the houses. It was a narrow miss - it must have been just 400 yards from our house. It has been an exceptionally lucky escape."

The plane, from the nearby RAF Cottesmore airbase, was on a training mission and is said not to have been carrying any weapons.

Elián González joins Communist youth group, AP says

The Associated Press is reporting that Elián González was among the 18,000 youths who joined Cuba's Young Communist Union on Saturday. Juventud Rebelde, the communist youth newspaper, quoted González as saying that he will never let down ex-president Fidel Castro and his brother, Raul Castro.

An international custody battle centering around González became the focus of much media attention eight years ago. The boy had survived a boating accident when he and his mother fled Cuba to go to the United States. His mother did not survive the accident.

Elián González turns 15 in December.

Australian government considers controlling fuel supplies

The gas crisis in Western Australia continues to deepen with more business standing people down without pay. Businesses have been instructed to turn off non-essential items including limiting the number of lifts and reduced lighting; domestic customers are urged to reduce energy use.

In the Federal parliament today Resources Minister Martin Ferguson raised the prospect of activating the Liquid Fuel

Emergency Act, saying "During such a situation, I can control the production, transfer and stock levels of crude and liquid fuel...While I sincerely hope that this will not be required, the Liquid Fuel Emergency Act provides authority for the Australian Government to prepare for and manage a national liquid fuel supply emergency"

Western Australians Premier Alan Carpenter called on all Western Australians to reduce energy usage, saying that the situation could be managed with on going co-operation, while reassuring the everyone that the crisis will be short, with the Apache Corporation expected to begin partial operations in two months. Supplies were interrupted after a fire at Apache's Vanarus Island refinery, which supplied 30% of the states natural gas requirements.

Alinta spokesman has said that with the expected cold weather during the next week that demand will put further pressure on supplies, advising that its critical that all consumers limits its energy usage.

Alinta requests that residential customers;

- use only essential heating and limit it to one room
- turn down hot water system by 10 degrees
- reduce shower times
- wash in cold water.

While suggest small business;

- shift production schedules
- bring forward maintenance and shut down schedules
- turn off equipment not essential to the business.

Wikipedia Current Events

54,000 defense jobs and push for a stronger European Security and Defence Policy as part of a new defense strategy.

- South Korean construction workers join truck drivers in going on strike seeking higher pay and lower fuel costs.
- Japan turns away a Taiwan activist boat near the disputed Senkaku Islands in a protest against a ship collision last week.
- Heavy rainstorm and major flooding continues in the South China region. Millions of people are affected in Anhui, Hunan, Jiangxi, Fujian and Guangdong. Tens of thousands of victims of the 2008 Sichuan earthquake are evacuated due to heavy rains as 65 people are dead or missing with flood warnings on the Yangtze River and Pearl River amongst other rivers.
- At least 12 police officers are killed and many more people wounded by a suicide bombing outside a police station in the town of Vavuniya in northern Sri Lanka.

Today in History

- 1462 – Forces led by Vlad III Dracula of Wallachia attacked an Ottoman camp at night in an attempt to assassinate Mehmed II.
- 1775 – American Revolutionary War: British forces took Bunker Hill outside of Boston.
- 1789 – French Revolution: The Third Estate of France declared itself the National Assembly.
- 1953 – The Group of Soviet Forces in Germany and the Volkspolizei violently suppressed an uprising in Berlin against the East German government.
- 1972 – The Watergate scandal began after five men were arrested for stealing from the

offices of the Democratic National Committee in the Watergate complex in Washington, D.C..
 1982 – The body of Italian banker Roberto Calvi, known as "God's Banker" due to his close association with the Vatican, was found hanging from scaffolding beneath London's Blackfriars Bridge.
 June 17 is Icelandic National Day

Quote of the Day

Our security strategies have not yet caught up with the risks we are facing. The globalization that has swept away the barriers to the movement of goods, ideas and people has also swept with it barriers that confined and localized security threats.
 ~ Mohamed ElBaradei

Word of the Day
 thrall n

1. One who is enslaved.
2. The state of being under the control of another person.

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France announces plans to cut

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