



Top Stories

Iraq rejects US probe clearing US troops of killings civilians in Ishaqi

Adnan al-Kazimi, close to Iraq Prime Minister Nouri al-Maliki rejects US probe clearing US troops of killings civilians in Ishaqi. "We have from more than one source that the Ishaqi killings were carried out under questionable circumstances," said al-Kazimi.

Australian nuclear power plants rejected by states

Australian media reports that Prime Minister John Howard is expected to push a nuclear energy inquiry through federal cabinet this week. Meanwhile, a list of possible sites for nuclear reactors has been leaked by the Opposition to media. The locations, listed in 1997, include Adelaide, Darwin, Perth, Lucas Heights, Goulburn, Holsworthy, and Broken Hill in New South Wales and other sites.

Featured story

Researchers discover giant asteroid impact crater in Antarctica

Researchers have found a giant asteroid impact crater under the Wilkes Land ice sheet of Antarctica and it may have been responsible for the creation of the dinosaurs, but may also have been the cause of a mass extinction.

Wikipedia Current Events

- Pakistan bans The Da Vinci Code film because it is said to contain blasphemous material about Jesus.
- A strong quake measuring 5.2 on the Richter scale hits Southern Iran killing a young girl in the village of Ramkan.
- The United States military finds its soldiers innocent of any wrongdoing in the Ishaqi incident of 11 Iraqi civilians.
- Iranian President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad, while continuing to maintain that his country has the right to continue development on their nuclear technology, says that he "will not pass judgment on the proposals hastily," referring to the incentives package being offered by the US, Russia, United Kingdom, Germany, France and China in order to dissuade Iran from further nuclear development.
- Human Rights Watch releases a video showing South Sudanese Vice President Dr. Riek Machar Teny Dhurgon bribing cult and rebel leader Joseph Kony and his second-in-command Vincent Otti of the Lord's Resistance Army to not attack southern Sudanese citizens.
- A Russian diplomat is killed and four kidnapped in an attack near the Russian embassy in Baghdad, according to Russian and Iraqi officials.
- In a special session of parliament, Montenegro declares

Wikipedia Current Events

- its independence from Serbia.
- 2006 Toronto terrorism arrests: The Royal Canadian Mounted Police have announced the arrest of 17 suspected Islamic terrorists in connection with a planned terrorist attack around Toronto. The RCMP said that three tons of ammonium nitrate was seized. By comparison, the 1995 Oklahoma City bombing used one ton.
- Czech parliament election leaves the Czech Republic with a even split between party blocs.
- In response to his million dollar bill gospel tracts being seized from The Great News Network by the United States Secret Service, Ray Comfort, founder of Living Waters Publications, has stated that he will refuse to turn over his supply of tracts without a warrant.
- The GayFest pride parade takes place in Bucharest, Romania, with more than 500 LGBT activists and supporters calling for greater tolerance and the legalisation of same-sex unions.

Iraqi terrorists execute 19 Turkomen and two Kurds in Diyala province

Gunmen in Iraq have killed 19 Turkomen, two Kurds and injured one while sparing the lives of four Sunnis. The deaths came after three minibuses were ambushed at a bogus "checkpoint" in Diyala province.

A police official said the victims

were taken "one by one from their cars and executed." 12 students, as young as 15, and older men were among the dead in the attack, 55 kilometres northeast of Baghdad.

Some were shot as they tried to flee the scene. Reuters news agency have released photographs that showed six of the victims were shot in the chest.

The Mayor of Qara Tappah, Serwan Shokir, said the busses were carrying commuters from his town to Baqouba where the students were going to take exams.

The Sunni Arabs who were not killed by the gunmen have been questioned by police about the incident.

The killings in Diyala, an ethnically mixed part of Iraq, come as Prime Minister Nouri al-Maliki is working to find interior and defence ministers for the fledgling US-supported Shiite-led democracy.

On the tactics used by the terrorists, police said they had created their own checkpoint near Udhaim and had stopped the vehicles to kill the passengers.

Bush calls for ban on gay marriage

United States President, George W. Bush has used his weekly radio address to propose the country's Constitution be amended to ban same-sex marriages.

Mr. Bush formally defined marriage as a "union between a man and a woman" and said that an amendment was needed because the presence of "activist" courts left him with no alternative.

Democrats have accused the government of using this as a

smokescreen to divert attention from more important issues. Senate Minority Leader Harry Reid said: "Bush Republicans would rather focus on purely divisive maneuvers than real solutions that address the growing energy crisis."

An amendment such as one to ban gay marriage may not be passed but some assert this will be a vote-winner for the Republicans during the mid-term polls in November.

The President may be able to focus attention on a subject of his choosing at a time when an energy crisis or the war in Iraq may be a distraction for his Republicans and a vote-winner for Democrats.

President Bush stated that, "Ages of experience have taught us that the commitment of a husband and a wife to love and to serve one another promotes the welfare of children and the stability of society."

A recent Gallup poll showed that 59% of Americans were against validating gay marriages by law. It is possible the Republicans will use this finding to gain a political edge come election time.

Any such amendment would need two-thirds approval in the House of Representatives (290 out of 435) and the Senate (67 out of 100) as well as the approval of three-fourths of the State Legislatures (38 out of 50). Currently the Republican Party holds 231 seats in the House, 55 seats in the Federal Senate, and 20 state Legislatures. A similar amendment was defeated in 2004.

Iran warns disruption of oil may be a consequence of U.S. "wrong moves"

Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, the supreme leader of Iran has said that the oil flow between Iran and the United States will be "at serious risk" if any "wrong move" is made against the country.

"We are committed to our ideals and national interests and if anyone threatens our national interests it will face the Iranian nationsâ wrath," said Ayatollah Ali Khamenei during the 17th anniversary ceremony of the death of the former spiritual leader of Iran, Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini.

"If the U.S. makes a wrong move against Iran, energy flow in the region will be definitely put at serious risk. You [the United States] can never maintain security for [the distribution of] energy in the region. A country with war criminal records such as the US should never again take the term human rights into its mouth. We are a peace-willing nation and our only weapon is the belief and resistance of our people," added Khamenei.

However; the U.S. has stated that it wants to resolve its issues with Iran by diplomatic means, but has not taken the use of military force, as an option, off the table. The U.S. has expressed a willingness to join in on talks with Iran along with Germany, France, China, Russia and the United Kingdom, but said that it will only do so if Iran ends its Uranium enrichment program. Iran has responded by expressing a willingness to hold talks over matters of "mutual concern", but rejected the call to halt enrichment.

"We shouldn't put too much emphasis on a threat of this kind.

After all, Iran is also very dependent on oil revenue," said Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice also adding that the United states will "not allow Iran to drag [out]" talks on its nuclear program.

"We really do have to have this settled over a matter of weeks not months, but the fact is there are two paths, and we hope they're going to choose the path that is a path away from confrontation and toward a solution," added Rice.

Iran is the 4th largest producer and supplier of crude oil in the world and has stated that its nuclear programme is for peaceful purposes and that they will "not start a war."

"We will never start a war. We have no intention of going to war with any government. We have no problem with the world. We are no threat whatsoever to the world and the world knows it... The other suggestion is that Iran is seeking a nuclear bomb. This is an irrelevant and wrong statement, it is a sheer lie. We do not need a nuclear bomb. We do not have any objectives or aspirations for which we will need to use a nuclear bomb. We consider using nuclear weapons against Islamic rules," said Khamenei.

Australian nuclear power plants rejected by states

Australian media reports that Prime Minister John Howard is expected to push a nuclear energy inquiry through federal cabinet this week. Meanwhile, a list of possible sites for nuclear reactors has been leaked by the Opposition to media. The locations, listed in 1997, include Adelaide, Darwin, Perth, Lucas Heights, Goulburn, Holsworthy, and Broken Hill in New South Wales and other sites.

West Australian (WA) premier Alan Carpenter says the list of fourteen potential sites were a "facade to soften up Western Australians into accepting a nuclear waste dump." The WA Premier said people would not only be surprised but "stunned to learn that the federal cabinet considered possible sites... without disclosing them to any state government."

Mr Carpenter said in a media release that the document mentions a site near Perth airport. "People should wake up to what's happening around Australia, particularly in WA," said Mr. Carpenter. "Only a few weeks ago, we had three prominent WA Liberal MPs supporting a nuclear waste dump in WA," he said. "This is all a facade in the Howard Government's push to soften up West Australians for a nuclear waste dump."

Premier Carpenter, whose Labor government stridently opposes uranium mining in WA, stated his opposition to a nuclear waste dump: "I vehemently oppose the prospect of our State becoming the dumping ground for the world's nuclear waste and that is what will happen if we allow uranium mining in WA. The evidence is mounting and indisputable."

The South Australian Government has ruled out any possible nuclear power plant in SA. "A nuclear power plant would bankrupt our state," SA Premier Mike Rann said. "It would not be commercially viable and would not, in my view, be acceptable to the public. Nuclear power plants need giant populations to sustain them, there is no-one coming to me from the commercial sector or the mining industry or anywhere else,

suggesting a nuclear power plant."

Earlier, Foreign Affairs Minister Alexander Downer said South Australia should build a nuclear power station to run a desalination plant. Premier Rann dismissed the idea as ridiculous and said comments by Mr Downer highlight divisions within Federal Cabinet. He said Mr Downer is at odds with the Federal Finance Minister Nick Minchin, who says the high costs of nuclear power would rule it out.

Mr Rann says South Australia will not allow nuclear power. "For once I'm agreeing with Nick Minchin," he said. "I think Nick Minchin is right that a nuclear power plant isn't necessary and won't happen and I think that Alexander Downer is having a bit of a lend of him."

Queensland Premier Peter Beattie says he "would not jeopardize the state's coal industry by supporting a nuclear power plant." Mr. Beattie has ruled out uranium mining in Queensland to protect the state's huge coal industry. He said he would not support a nuclear power plant. "The State Government would not support it," Mr. Beattie said.

"We have the power to block them and we would block them, we would not support nuclear power. Why would we have a nuclear reactor in competition with the coal industry?" Mr. Beattie told media.

Climate change

The Australian Conservation Foundation (ACF) chairman Don Henry says a nuclear debate must consider climate change. "If the inquiry is just about nuclear power it will be a waste of taxpayers money because nuclear power is too dangerous, too dirty, and too slow to tackle climate change," he

said. "If the inquiry is going to be fairdinkum, it needs to look at that issue: what can we do right now to tackle climate change in Australia?"

The ACF say "nuclear energy is not a solution to climate change." ACF President Professor Ian Lowe says "Nuclear is too slow to provide any legitimate answer to climate change or to energy security for the developing world." The ACF report that, as an energy source globally, uranium provides less power than renewables do. "Uranium is inextricably linked to very serious environmental and health problems via nuclear weapons and radioactive waste. There is nothing ideological about opposing its use..."

Nuclear inquiry

The Australian Newspaper reports that Prime Minister Howard is preparing to appoint chief scientist Jim Peacock, a supporter of nuclear power, and other high-level nuclear industry experts to the team. The public inquiry, to be undertaken by three or four selected experts is expected to "examine the economics of nuclear energy, health, safety, environmental and proliferation issues as well as waste and storage." The taskforce will take submissions and is expected to prepare a report to Government within four or five months, with the Government's response early in 2007.

The Australian Nuclear Science and Technology Organisation (ANSTO), Ian Smith, says "at least three" power plants would be required. Mr. Howard said the ANSTO report challenged the view that the cost of nuclear power was prohibitive. Dr Smith told a Senate estimates hearing that Australia would require "multiple power

stations to make the industry viable".

Federal Industry Minister Ian Macfarlane said the nuclear energy inquiry would also include consideration of nuclear enrichment plants in Australia. Mr. Macfarlane said he would consider a nuclear power plant in his own Toowoomba electorate.

Prime Minister John Howard insisted he would not be deterred by the unpopularity of nuclear power.

Explosion in Turkey injures eight

Eight people were injured in an explosion outside a shopping mall in the Turkish Mediterranean port of Mersin on Saturday.

According to Dogan News Agency, the Governor of Mersin province Huseyin Aksoy said, "The explosion was caused by a remote-controlled bomb in which an explosive device was connected to a mobile telephone."

As shown on private news channel, CNN Turk, the injured were carried on stretchers to waiting ambulances. Damages amounted to broken windows in the immediate area.

While radical Islamic, Kurdish, and left-wing militants are active in Turkey, there has been no claim of responsibility for the attack.

Portugal beats Luxembourg, in preparation for the World Cup

Portugal's national team defeated the Luxembourgish team by 3-0 yesterday, in Portugal's last game in preparation for the 2006 World Cup. The game was resolved by two goals of Simão and another of Figo.

In the first part of the game, Scolari, the head coach of the team, used the same "eleven" players that were used on the Euro 2004. At halftime, Scolari changed Deco, Costinha and Pauleta for Postiga, Petit and Simão.

Simão was important for the win of the Portuguese team. After a few seconds in the game, the Benfica's player scored the first goal of the game. At the 74th minute, Simão, taking a penalty kick as the result of a foul committed against Figo, scored the second goal.

The last goal was scored by the team's captain, Figo, in the 84th minute.

The next game of the Portuguese national team will be on June 11 against Angola, already at the 2006 World Cup. In Group D, Portugal and Angola will also face the national teams of Mexico and Iran.

Suspects deny London bomb plot, say lawyers

The two brothers who were arrested on Friday regarding intelligence of a chemical bomb plot in East London have denied all the accusations, according to their lawyers.

In relation to the accusations of manufacturing a chemical device, Kate Roxburgh, Mohammed Abdul Kahar's lawyer, said "(Kahar) says there's absolutely not a word of truth in any of it. He says the police are not going to find anything because there is nothing to find."

Koyair's lawyer has denied his client has been involved in a terrorist plot.

The announcement comes after the dramatic events of Friday morning, where over 250 police officers were involved in a raid on a house in the Forest Gate area of the city. The raid took place after British security services received intelligence of a "viable" chemical device within the property.

Mohammed Abdul Kahar, aged 23, and his 20 year-old brother Abul Koyair were arrested in a dawn raid on Friday under the Terrorism Act after several weeks of surveillance by MI5. During the operation, Kahar was shot in the shoulder.

Early reports suggested that police were responsible for the injury, from which Kahar is now recovering. However, one source claims that it was actually Abul Koyair who pulled the trigger, accidentally wounding his brother in the panic - an allegation which Koyair has denied.

The brothers, who are both Muslim and of Bangladeshi origin, are being questioned today at London's high-security Paddington Green Police Station. Meanwhile, police officers are still searching the house for a device, which they believe to be a conventional explosive with added chemical components.

Due to the ongoing investigations, there is still a large police presence at the residence, as well as a layer of sheeting surrounding the building. Despite the small yet ever-present chance of a chemical incident, other residents of the street have not been evacuated.

In response to safety fears, police said that "nothing suspicious was found in an initial search of the house and that neighbours are not in danger."

BBC News reported that Health Secretary Patricia Hewitt was "keeping ministers informed" about the unfolding situation but would not comment about specific points of the investigation.

Sex slave auctions held at British airports

The British Crown Prosecution Service (CPS) has said people are being sold into the sex trade in auctions held at British airports.

Nazir Afzal, the CPS director, says British airports are becoming crime hotspots and "We are now seeing 'slave auctions' being held in public places at airports where brothel keepers are bidding for women destined for prostitution."

The people being traded are said to include those of Eastern European origin. Airports mentioned included Britain's "big three": Gatwick, Heathrow and Stansted.

Tim Brain, the Gloucestershire chief constable in charge of an investigation called "Operation Pentameter," said there might be hundreds of foreign slaves living in Britain.

A world-scale criminal activity, police have said men or women who have visited brothels where they suspect people have been coerced into prostitution should contact the authorities in confidence.

The scandal in which British airports have become key crossing points in slave markets is expected to be discussed more fully at a CPS conference on Monday.

Nigerian kidnappers release 8 oil workers

Eight oil workers who were

kidnapped from a Bulford Dolphin oil platform off the coast of Nigeria on Friday have been freed. One American, one Canadian and six Britons were among those freed and were "in good health." The Movement for the Emancipation for the Niger Delta was thought to have been behind the crime, but deny any involvement or connection.

"All the hostages have been released. They are with the governor now [and are] looking very fine," said spokesman for the state of Bayelsa in southern Nigeria, Ekiyor Welson.

Earlier reports stated that all 8 hostages were freed, but spokespeople for the Nigerian Police later withdrew that statement and said that only 2 had been freed and talks lead to the rest of the hostages being freed. The companies that the former hostages work for have denied paying for their freedom.

Those responsible for the kidnappings are not yet known and officials have not released the names of any of the hostages.

One week after quake, geologists fear Mount Merapi eruption

An Indonesian government volcanologist reports that Mount Merapi spewed lava and ash many times on Saturday, renewing fears of a devastating volcanic eruption.

Government geologist Subandriyo said that Merapi's lava dome has swelled 56 feet (17 m) in the past week to a height of 330 feet (100 m), raising fears that it could collapse and release a pyroclastic flow of hot gases and rock fragments burning everything in its path. The quake is believed to contribute to the growing

instability of the lava dome, scientists said.

The mountain also sent about 90 trails of molten lava down its western slope on Thursday, said geologist Tri Yani.

The announcement comes one week after a 6.3 magnitude earthquake struck the city of Yogyakarta, killing at least 6,000 people and injuring tens of thousands more. Since then, the region has experienced over one thousand aftershocks, most of which were weak but some were strong enough to jolt awake villagers in the area.

Villagers in the vicinity of the mountain have started performing ancient religious rituals aimed at averting an eruption. The royally appointed guardian of the mountain, "Mbah" Maridjan, was reported to have led a silent procession of about 100 people on a march around a village near the volcano.

Today in History

- 1849 - Denmark became a constitutional monarchy.
- 1947 - George Marshall called for economic aid to war-torn Europe.
- 1967 - The Six-Day War began with an Israeli Air Force attack on Egypt, Jordan, and Syria.
- 1968 - Sirhan Sirhan mortally shot Robert F. Kennedy in Los Angeles.
- 1995 - A new phase of matter, the Bose-Einstein condensate was discovered.
- June 05 is Queen's Birthday in New Zealand (2006); UN World Environment Day; Whit Monday in Christianity (2006)

Quote of the Day

Nobody knows you. No. But I sing of you.
 For posterity I sing of your profile and grace.
 Of the signal maturity of your understanding.
 Of your appetite for death and the taste of its mouth.
 Of the sadness of your once valiant gaiety.
 ~ Federico Garc a Lorca ~

Word of the Day

hydroplane; *v*

Definition

1. To skim the surface of a body of water while moving at high speed.

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