



Top Stories

Masterminds of USS Cole and Limburg bombings escape from Yemeni prison



Twenty-three militants have broken out of a Yemeni prison. Among those that escaped are the masterminds of the bombings of the USS Cole and the French supertanker, Limburg.

New Zealand marks Waitangi Day, 2006



Monday marked the 166th anniversary of the signing of the Treaty of Waitangi, New Zealand's

founding document, in 1840. This year the celebrations were peaceful, in contrast to other years where the day was the focus of violent protests by Maori activists.

Featured story

Gates pledges \$600 million for Global Plan to Stop Tuberculosis



Drive to stop TB's spread gets large donation from software billionaire Bill Gates, and hopes to reverse occurrences of the treatable disease.

Wikipedia Current Events

•Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov warns against threatening Iran over its nuclear program.

Wikipedia Current Events

•Western scientists working in the Foja Mountains in Indonesia discover a "new" species of echidna called Long-Beaked Echidnas along with 20 previously unknown frog species, four new butterflies, at least five new plants, and a new kangaroo.

•Four people have been killed in Afghanistan as protests against European cartoons depicting the Prophet Muhammad swept across the country.

•In the Egyptian port of Safaga, relatives of hundreds of passengers killed when the ferry al-Salam Boccaccio '98 sank in the Red Sea on Friday have attacked the offices of the ship's owners.

•In Costa Rica, the presidential election is a tight race and too close to call.

•As Stephen Harper is sworn in as Canada's 22nd Prime Minister, David Emerson crosses the floor from the Liberal Party to join Harper's Conservative Party, and is appointed as Minister of International Trade. Harper also appointed Michael Fortier, an unelected party supporter, to minister of public works and government services and to the senate.

•Isabelle Dinoire, the French woman who received the world's first partial face transplant appears before the media for the first time, saying she expects to resume a normal life.

Wikipedia Current Events

•U.S. Senate Committee on the Judiciary hearings begin regarding the NSA warrantless surveillance program, with testimony from Attorney General Alberto Gonzales.

Iran demands that IAEA end nuclear program surveillance

Shortly after ending its cooperation with the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), the government of Iran has now ordered the IAEA to discontinue surveillance of their developing nuclear program. Tehran has also asked the agency to remove any and all signage from their nuclear sites by the end of next week.

The demands come in response to the Saturday resolution by the IAEA to report Iran to the United Nations Security Council. By a vote of 27 to 3 (with five abstentions), the IAEA recommended that the matter of the Iranian nuclear program be brought before the Security Council.

The report states there are serious concerns about Iranian nuclear aims, and the agency is not confident in claims that their program is intended solely for civilian or other non-military use. Mohamed ElBaradei, chairman of the IAEA, will prepare a list of "steps Iran needs to take to dispel suspicions about its nuclear ambitions" by March 6, when he will declare the results of his full report.

The IAEA's resolution calls for Iran to reinstate a freeze on its nuclear programs, consider ending construction of a plutonium-producing heavy water reactor, and to continue allowing the IAEA's purposes and actions in Iran. However, the council will not implement any further action until ElBaradei makes his full report on March 6.

ElBaradei also reported to the IAEA Monday that Iran would also demand a reduction in the amount of facilities inspections from the agency, and that they would discontinue their agreement to the so-called "Additional Protocol" of the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) regarding IAEA weapons inspectors if the agency reported Iran to the Security Council. This protocol entitles the IAEA to hold unannounced inspections of facilities, increased surveillance capability, and placing IAEA seals on nuclear equipment.

Other diplomatic ventures are being planned. On February 16, Iranian officials will meet with the Russian government in Moscow to discuss the possibility of Russia enriching uranium for export to Iran in exchange for a halting of its nuclear program. And Wang Guangya, China's ambassador to the UN, said Monday that "Even with the adoption of this IAEA resolution, it is the belief of most of the members there that a diplomatic solution is the way out within the framework of the IAEA."

Google removes German BMW from search results

The search engine Google announced the removal of the official German BMW website from its search results today. Google is reported to have removed the website due to the use of a trick to raise its website ratings in the

search engine's results.

The online version of the magazine Forbes reported that the German word for used car, *gebrauchtwagen*, appeared 42 times in a doorway web page created by the German car manufacturer. Doorway web pages contain many keywords designed to attract search robots. The page presented to Google's robot for indexing was significantly different than the page presented to the site's visitors.

According to a recent blog post by Matt Cutts, one of Google's software engineers, this technique is "a violation of our webmaster quality guidelines." These guidelines encourage webmasters to "avoid tricks intended to improve search engine rankings."

BMW reacted to the measure by claiming that it had no intention of manipulating the search results, but instead used the doorway pages with the objective of "offering a better service" to those looking for used cars.

Danish and Austrian embassies in Tehran attacked

400 protestors threw fire bombs and stones at the Danish embassy in Tehran, Iran. Iranian riot police were sent in, but a few protestors made their way into the embassy and burned documents before being removed by the police. The gate and two trees were ignited. This was another reaction to the Mohammad cartoons which were first published in Denmark. Tear gas was used against the demonstrators resulting in their withdrawal. At least nine of the demonstrators were injured, according to the police. Denmark has repeated its request to the Iranian government for better protection of its embassy. Iran's

minister of trade has halted all trade between the two countries. It has also been said that Iran is planning to review its trade ties with all of the countries in which the cartoons have been published.

Demonstrators also attacked the Austrian embassy in Tehran today, as a protest against the Austrian newspaper that published the cartoons, *Kleine Zeitung*. Windows were broken, but the building has not been reported to be under fire. Iran's ambassador in Denmark has returned to Iran. The demonstration was also a result of the IAEA's treatment of Iran's nuclear arms program.

Conservative Canadian government sworn in

At 11:18 a.m., February 6 2006, Stephen Harper was sworn in as prime minister of Canada at Rideau Hall in Ottawa, Ontario, Canada. That same day at approximately 11:22 a.m. with the Her Excellency the Right Honourable Michaëlle Jean, Governor General of Canada present, Stephen Harper signed in his new cabinet. Swearing in of each cabinet minister is currently happening (February 6th 2006, 11:25 a.m.) and being broadcast live on television stations such as Global Television and Rogers Telecommunication CPAC Chanel. At 12:27 p.m. the swearing in of cabinet ministers was complete and the Governor General officially signed in the cabinet. Canada now has a new government that will be directed by the Conservative Party. The conservatives party according to Global News "have not been sworn into government since Brian Mulroney in 1984." Interesting enough it was also reported by Global Television that one member of the Liberal Party has crossed over to the Conservatives.

Latham to face court on assault, stealing and malicious damage charges

Former Australian opposition leader Mark Latham has been issued with court attendance notices for assault, malicious damage and steal from person by Campbelltown Police.

The notices follow an altercation between Latham and a Daily Telegraph photographer on January 19.

Police briefs allege that Latham snatched the photographer's camera worth \$12,000 and started to walk to his car.

When the photographer demanded that Latham return his camera, Latham is alleged to have thrown a punch at the photographer, but did not injure him.

Police later found that the camera had been destroyed.

Sydney's Daily Telegraph said following the incident last month that it intended to claim \$12,000 against Latham for damage to a camera carried by its photographer.

Latham is due to appear in Campbelltown Local Court on March 22.

New Zealand marks Waitangi Day, 2006

Today marks the 166th anniversary of the signing of the Treaty of Waitangi, New Zealand's founding document, in 1840.

Although this is New Zealand's national day, the commemoration has often been the focus of protest by Maori activists, and is often marred by controversy. This year the morning celebrations at Waitangi were peaceful, and there

was only a brief altercation during the afternoon there. Celebrations also went smoothly at over 60 other sites around the country, except for a confrontation at Hayman Park in Manukau City between local Maori and National Front members.

New Zealand Prime Minister Helen Clark did not attend the dawn service at Waitangi today, or visit the lower Te Tii Marae. She hosted a breakfast for Northland civic leaders instead, and then took part in other events around the country. In the afternoon she visited Hoani Waititi Marae in West Auckland, then attended the reception at Government House hosted by the Governor General.

The Leader of the Opposition Dr Don Brash visited the upper Te Tii Marae on Saturday afternoon. In his speech at the Marae Dr Brash said New Zealand needs to stop looking in the "rear-view mirror" and that the speedy settlement of claims is important for all New Zealanders.

The Government (Labour) has pledged to finish all Treaty claims by 2020, while National's 2005 election policy called for all claims to be settled by 2010.

Dr Brash said National is still committed to settling claims quickly, but because of the current Labour government, National's deadline of 2010 to settle treaty grievances is no longer realistic. The target will be reviewed in a National Party caucus meeting next week.

Dr Brash also attended the dawn service at the upper Te Tii Marae this morning, where he was asked to offer a prayer; he said about the treaty we "ask your

forgiveness for our sins...none of us is without sin, we have all fallen short of the treaty promise". The Prime Minister has refused to comment on the prayer.

Dr Brash then visited Hoani Waititi Marae this afternoon, and left before the Prime Minister arrived.

This year also marked the first time in a decade that the Royal New Zealand Navy (RNZN) has had a major presence at Waitangi Day celebrations.

Chief of Navy, Rear Admiral David Ledson says "You can either build walls of silence or you can use words to build bridges...we'd sooner use words and conversation to build bridges than sit either side of a stone wall."

At dawn, the RNZN raised the New Zealand flag, the Union Jack and the White Ensign on the flagstaff in the treaty grounds.

This was followed by a church service and cultural displays. Several boats re-enacted the calling ashore of Governor Hobson to sign the treaty.

The annual hikoi (protest march) with about 500 people started at lunch time and marched from the lower Te Tii Marae, up to the upper Te Tii Marae and then to the contentious flagpole, where some protestors had a brief standoff with police.

The day closed with the flags being lowered by the RNZN in a traditional ceremony.

Governor-General Dame Silvia Cartwright said in her annual Waitangi Day address. "Celebrations at Waitangi on Waitangi Day have changed a great deal over the years...[now]

involving families, schools, youth and community groups...let us as always, remember our history, but let us look forward also to a bright future for our country."

The Governor-General arrived at Waitangi on Saturday, 4 February, where she welcomed the Governor-General of Papua New Guinea to Waitangi before she attended a reception onboard HMNZS Te Mana.

Today she attended the dawn service on the treaty grounds, followed by celebrations in Hamilton. She then hosted an afternoon garden party at Government House in Auckland, not at the traditional Wellington Government House venue. This is her last Waitangi Day as Governor-General.

New South Wales to introduce 'parenting contracts'

New South Wales Premier Morris Iemma announced Sunday that his government would be introducing "parenting contracts" for parents of children who are at risk of neglect. The contracts are the next element of the government's "respect and responsibility" reforms announced last month.

Premier Iemma believes that the contracts will help to reduce juvenile crime by forcing parents to take responsibility for their children's actions.

Parents would be forced to sign the contracts by the children's court. They could require parents to attend parenting classes, undergo counselling, stop drug use or stop consuming excessive amounts of alcohol depending on the situation. The NSW Department of Community Services would be allowed to apply to the court for the contracts to be drawn up.

If parents failed to comply with the contracts their children would be removed by authorities.

The Department of Community Services would be able to apply to the court for contracts to be drawn up.

The plan follows the murder of a taxi driver in Sydney by two 14 year-old girls last week. Following the arrest of the girls, Mr Iemma said he was concerned about the whereabouts of the girl's parents. Mr Iemma denies that the contracts are a kneejerk reaction to that incident.

Speaking of the plan Mr Iemma said, "We know the majority of people naturally take their responsibilities as parents very seriously."

"However, those children who are failed in this regard by their parents are at risk of becoming adolescents and adults without respect."

NSW Community Services minister, Reba Meagher referred to studies showing that out of 1,000 neglected children, 256 came into contact with the juvenile justice system.

"There is plenty of evidence to show that children who are failed by their parents are more likely not to complete their schooling, to become involved in crime and to abuse their own children." said Ms Meagher.

A similar proposal has been made in South Australia by the opposition. The Liberals have promised a similar system of contracts in South Australia if they are elected.

Child welfare advocates claim that it is not clear whether or not the plan is the best solution to the problem.

Jane Woodruff from the Association of Child Welfare Agencies said "Do we know that this is the right strategy and if we do, where's that evidence, where's that research, where's that practice experience so we don't make mistakes in such an important area?"

"If parents are going to be required to attend a certain range of services, who's actually going to provide those services?" she said.

Tasmania's Human Services minister, David Llewellyn said that he has not been able to look at the proposal in detail, but felt that "on the surface it does not seem appropriate legislation for Tasmania".

Suspect in gay bar attack dies after gunfight with police

The man who was suspected of attacking three men in a gay bar in Massachusetts died early Sunday morning after being shot in a gun battle with Arkansas State Police.

Jacob D. Robida, 18, fled Massachusetts on Friday and picked up his girlfriend, 33-year-old Jennifer Rena Bailey, in Charleston, West Virginia. Robida was pulled over in a traffic stop by Gassville, Arkansas, Police Officer Jim Sell. Sell asked Robida to get out of the car, and Robida shot him three times before getting back in the car and leaving. A witness called 911, but Sell died at the scene.

Robida led Baxter County, Arkansas, sheriff's officers and Arkansas State Police officers on a

high-speed chase. Robida ran over spike strips in Norfolk and drove on two flat tires for a while. He ultimately wrecked his car into some parked vehicles while trying to avoid a roadblock on Arkansas State Road 5. Robida shot at the officers, who returned fire, shooting Robida twice in the head. Bailey was killed in the gunfight; though some witness said Robida shot her before firing on the officers, an autopsy and forensic investigation will determine how she died.

Robida was rushed to Cox-South Hospital in Springfield, Arkansas, where he was pronounced dead at 3:38am CST (0938 UTC).

Today in History

1301 - Edward of Caernarvon, the future King Edward II, became the first English heir apparent to hold the title as Prince of Wales.

1863 - HMS Orpheus sank off the coast of Auckland, New Zealand, killing 189.

1984 - NASA astronaut Bruce McCandless II performed the first untethered spacewalk using a Manned Maneuvering Unit.

1992 - The Maastricht Treaty, which led to the formation of the European Union, was signed in Maastricht, the Netherlands.

February 07 is Independence Day in Grenada (1974)

Quote of the Day

"He judged it not fit to determine anything rashly; and seemed to doubt whether those different forms of religion might not all come from God, who might inspire man in a different manner, and be pleased with this variety; he therefore thought it indecent and foolish for any man to threaten and terrify another to make him believe what did not appear to him to be true." ~ Thomas More

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