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Three dead, over 70 injured in Bangkok blasts

Death toll from Chinese earthquake passes 2,000

Train derails in South Africa; at least two dead

US Treasury unveils new \$100 note

Prime minister of Belgium offers to quit

Prime Minister of Belgium Yves Leterme offered to resign amid a political dispute, as the press office of the Belgian parliament said on Thursday.

Belgian king hasn't yet accepted prime minister's offer. King Albert II and Leterme met on Thursday's afternoon, the office said.

The prime minister acted after a Flemish liberal party withdrew from a coalition government.

Three dead, over 70 injured in Bangkok blasts

A series of explosions occurred in Bangkok, the capital of Thailand, on Thursday, in which at least three people died and at least 70 people were wounded. The army says the explosions were caused by five M-79 grenades; three in the Saladaeng

Skytrain station on Silom Road, one close to Dusit Thani Hotel, and one near a bank. The Thai government said the attacks had been from anti-government protestors. The explosions occurred in the business district of the city.

Television footage showed ambulances coming to the area and locals carrying the injured to safe spots. Office windows were destroyed and pavements had traces of blood.

Colonel Sansern Kaewkamnerd, spokesman of the army, mentioned that five M-79 grenades had been used in the attack. Three of these were thrown through the roof of Saladaeng Skytrain station, along Silom Road, the central part of Bangkok's business district, he added. He said the fourth and fifth bombs exploded on a pavement close to the five-star Dusit Thani Hotel and near a bank, respectively. The attacked railway station was soon closed, according to sources.

Central Bangkok has been the site of recent protests staged against the current Thai government. A coalition of protestors, named the Red Shirts,

have been demanding new elections and the resignation of Prime Minister Abhisit Vejjajiva for five weeks. Recently, 21 people died in clashes between the Red shirts and government forces. The military has recommended using tear gas, rubber bullets and other ammunition to prevent the protestors from causing disruption, if necessary. However, Army Chief General Anupong Paochinda is reluctant to use such ammunition, being unwilling to renew violence

Train derails in South Africa; at least two dead

A luxury train derailed in South Africa outside the capitol of Pretoria yesterday, killing at least two people and leaving 25 injured.

The train had been entering a station in Pretoria when seventeen cars derailed, apparently during a switch between steam and electric locomotives, although the exact cause is not known. The train had been coming from Cape Town, with 55 passengers and an unknown number of crew on board.

None of the dead were identified, and nationalities were not released. However, a spokesperson for the

operator of the train, Rovos Rail, said that passengers were from several different countries, and that most customers of the railroad were from the US or Europe.

Chris Botha, an emergency worker at the scene said that the derailment had produced "absolute carnage." According to him, "[s]ome of the railway coaches are lying on top of each other and absolute wreckages. They had to use hydraulic rescue equipment to cut some of the people free." The section of track where the incident occurred has been closed off.

US Treasury unveils new \$100 note The United States Department of the Treasury's Bureau of Engraving and Printing unveiled a new United States one hundred-dollar bill Wednesday morning. This is the first time that the one hundred dollar note has been redesigned since 1996.

Until now the one hundred dollar note, along with the one and two dollar notes, was not part of the newest batch of dollar note redesigns. The Bureau of Engraving and Printing redesigned the series 2006 5, 10, 20, and 50 dollar notes previously.

The new one hundred dollar note will contain new security and design features. Along with a new stylized portrait of Benjamin Franklin, the note also features a quill pen and

inkwell on the obverse. On the reverse it has a new larger printed '100' in gold lettering. The new security features include a EURion constellation, a new more secure watermark, and a new feature called 'motion' which uses 650,000 micro lenses to create a moving image.

The note was originally slated for release in 2008 although budget constraints pushed the release date back to late 2009 or early to mid 2010. The note will go into general circulation by early 2011.



Commons Picture of the Day



Kuna woman selling molas in Panama City.

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