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Top Stories

Lethal earthquakes rock western Iran, 70 or more die

At least 51 people are dead and hundreds more injured after three earthquakes and several aftershocks rocked western Iran on Thursday. Some estimates of those injured currently range between 700-870 people.

Nigeria arrests Charles Taylor for war crimes trial

Yesterday in Nigeria, former Liberian president Charles Taylor was arrested after being caught trying to flee the country. Nigeria had announced that it would allow Taylor's transfer to Liberia at the request of the new Liberian president Ellen Johnson-Sirleaf.

Featured story

Buffalo, N.Y. hotel proposal gets final approval by city Planning Board

In an unanimous vote, the City of Buffalo's Planning Board approved the Elmwood Village Hotel proposal. Although the meeting was not a "public hearing", citizens lashed out at the board members for not letting them speak.

Wikipedia Current Events

- In Ukraine, after days of vote tallying, Viktor Yanukovych's Party of Regions wins a plurality in the 2006 parliamentary election. Central Election Commission of Ukraine
- Chadian senior army commander

Wikipedia Current Events

Abakar Itno is assassinated by a joint force of Janjaweed, Rally for Democracy and Liberty, and Sudanese military forces.

• Jack Abramoff scandals: Lobbyist Tony C. Rudy, former chief of staff for Rep. Tom DeLay (R-TX), pleads guilty to conspiracy and agrees to cooperate with the ongoing investigation into the Jack Abramoff Indian lobbying scandal.

• MINOS (the Main Injector Neutrino Oscillation Search) observes neutrino oscillation, implying that neutrinos have mass, which would require a substantial revision to the Standard Model of particle physics.

• A The Nation Group's newspaper critical of Thai Prime Minister Thaksin Shinawatra agrees to stop publishing for five days amid protests about the way it referred to the King of Thailand.

Lethal earthquakes rock western Iran, 70 or more die

At least 70 people are dead and hundreds more injured after three earthquakes and several aftershocks rocked western Iran between Doroud and Boroujerd in the Lorestan province at 11:06 p.m. local time (1936 GMT) on Thursday. Some estimates of those injured currently range between 700-1,200 people.

The first earthquake measured a 4.7 on the Richter magnitude scale and was in a mountainous area

and the second measured a 5.1. The third quake measured a 6.0 and hit Doroud and the villages surrounding the area at 4:47 a.m. local time (0117 GMT) on Friday.

According to the U.S. Geological Survey, however, a 5.7 magnitude quake occurred at 0117 UTC followed by an earthquake of 4.7 magnitude fifteen minutes later. They also report that the previous day, a quake measuring 4.7 in magnitude occurred in the same area.

Power has been cut to some areas and there are reports of at least 200 villages that have been severely damaged. Some reports say that at least 20 villages have been destroyed.

In December of 2003, a magnitude 6.6 earthquake killed over 31,000 people and in February of 2005 a 6.4 eathquake killed 600 people near Zarand in the Kerman province.

Judge sentences Ali to 30 years for Bush assassination plot

Ahmed Omar Abu Ali, a 25-year-old U.S. citizen, was sentenced by a U.S. district court judge to 30 years in prison on Tuesday for plotting to assassinate United States President George W. Bush. Ali, a self-proclaimed member of Al Qaeda, was arrested by Saudi officials in 2003 at the Islamic University of Medina.

Prosecutors had originally asked for a life sentence, but the judge said that the 30-year sentence was

adequate, comparing the case to the "American Taliban" John Lindh. In addition, the judge pointed out that Ali's actions "did not result in one single actual victim. That fact must be taken into account."

Ali had given a statement to Saudi officials after his capture stating that he had joined Al Qaeda and talked with its senior members about plots to assassinate the President and to establish a terrorist cell in the United States. He asserted that his confession had been obtained through torture.

Faust seeks Murphy disqualification in PA Congressional primary

Jane Faust, former Republican committeewoman once convicted of forging signatures, was a plaintiff yesterday in Pennsylvania's Commonwealth Court (state court). Her lawyer, Larry Otter, argued that Patrick Murphy should be thrown off the ballot for the Democratic primary election in the eighth congressional district of Pennsylvania (PA). The eighth district is primarily located in Bucks County, PA.

Otter argued that during the period of election petition signature collection, Murphy had signed his name as the circulator on two petition sheets, but was not present for each signature that was signed on those sheets, and thereby breaking PA state law. PA law states that whoever signs a petition sheet as a circulator must be present for each signature and see each signature placed on the sheet.

Murphy admitted that he was not at the sheet for every signature, and he agreed that the 96 signatures on those two sheets

should be invalidated. He also stated that he was unaware of that particular election statute. Otter argued that the candidacy should be thrown out because when Murphy presented his signatures he was required to sign an affidavit stating he would "not knowingly violate any election law." It was Otter's contention to Judge Robert Simpson Jr. that it is unbelievable that Murphy would not know the law, as Murphy is a lawyer.

"Mr. Murphy is a member of the bar of this court. He can't say he doesn't know what the law was. He's been campaigning over a year," Otter said. He then continued, arguing that since Murphy knowingly falsified his name on those two circulation petitions, he also failed to fulfill his candidate affidavit, which according to state law is a criminal offense.

The campaign manager for the Murphy campaign, Josh Nanberg, said, "Under Otter's argument, any candidate who has a meeting and puts a clipboard at the front table and ... goes to the bathroom should be thrown out. That's ridiculous."

Rainy weather in Hawaii enters sixth week

Heavy rains have hit the main Hawaiian Islands for nearly six weeks, contributing to flooding in many places in the islands: a deadly dam break in northern Kauai, a sewage spill in Honolulu's Waikiki district, and record rainfall totals in many areas of the state.

A series of upper-level storm systems have formed northwest of the island of Kauai, drawing tropical moisture from the south over Hawaii and forming areas of heavy rain and thunderstorms.

The island of Kauai, on which an earthen dam broke on March 7 killing seven people, has been hardest hit. Mount Waialeale, in the center of the island, has received 90 inches of rain during the month of March and 126.69 inches since the weather pattern began on February 19. 34.31 inches of rain had fallen at Lihue airport, the most rain in a single month since records started in 1950.

Tourism officials are concerned about the long-term effect that the heavy rains may have on tourism, and they expect to launch a marketing campaign once the weather improves.

The entire state remains under a flash flood watch until at least Saturday. Weather forecasters expect a return to normal weather patterns early next week.

Today in History

1789 - The U.S. House of Representatives held its first quorum in New York City and elected Frederick Muhlenberg as the first Speaker.

1826 - The internal combustion engine was patented by Samuel Morey.

1918 - The Royal Naval Air Service and the Royal Flying Corps merged to form the Royal Air Force, the air force branch of the British Armed Forces.

1939 - Generalísimo Francisco Franco of the Spanish State proclaimed victory in the Spanish Civil War.

1973 - Project Tiger, a wildlife conservation project to protect the Bengal Tiger, was launched at Jim Corbett National Park, India.

April 01 is April Fool's Day

Quote of the Day

"The first of April is the day we

remember what we are the other
364 days of the year." ~ Mark
Twain

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