



Top Stories



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Olympic torch faces protests in San Francisco

The Olympic torch again faced protests over the China-Tibet situation as it did in London and Paris. The torch relay route was altered by large protests in San Francisco, California, and the closing ceremonies were moved.

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The TV show, The Simpsons, has been taken off Venezuelan television after claims that the programme is "inappropriate" for children.

Credit: Adam Red (cc-by-sa-2.0)

Featured story

Death of 4000th U.S. soldier in Iraq shines spotlight on gays in the military

The January occasion of the death of the 4,000th member of the United States military in the Iraq War brought renewed focus on the military's "Don't ask, don't tell" (DADT) policy towards LGBT service members, according to the Washington Post and other media sources. US Army Major Alan Rogers, a civil rights activist in the gay, lesbian and bisexual military veteran community is the first known LGBT soldier to die in combat in Iraq. He was posthumously awarded a Purple Heart and Bronze Star, according to reports.



DoD photo of Rogers

Wikipedia Current Events

make sure some wiring on its fleet of 300 MD-80 jetliners was secured correctly inside wheel wells.

- Police in Nepal shoot dead six Maoist rebels the day before the holding of elections in Nepal.

Olympic torch faces protests in San Francisco

The Olympic torch relay in San Francisco, California, began today at 1:00 p.m. PDT (UTC-7). It was the only stop for the torch in the United States, as it makes its way around the world to Beijing, China, for the 2008 Summer Olympics.

The route for the torch was materially altered as protesters filled the streets along the planned route. The route, which was originally 10 kilometres long, was shortened by nearly half, according to the San Francisco Police Department. In hopes that all eighty of the scheduled torch carriers would get a chance to carry the torch, the carriers ran in pairs.

The first torch carrier ran as scheduled, but then carried it into a warehouse, from which a motorcycle was observed leaving. It was then spotted again on a major street nearly two miles off course.

The rerouting was carefully planned, according to San Francisco Mayor Gavin Newsom, who told Associated Press, that it was because of "a disproportionate

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The Olympic torch relay through San Francisco descends into chaos as the first runner in the elaborately planned relay disappears into a warehouse on a waterfront pier.

- The body representing all National Olympic Committees says it had deleted a mention of Tibet in its Beijing Games declaration after a debate among its members.
- American Airlines cancels more than 1,000 flights in order to

concentration of people in and around the start of the relay."

The closing ceremonies were held at San Francisco International Airport instead of the planned waterfront location at AT&T Park.

Matt Helmenstine, 30, a California high school teacher carrying a Tibetan flag told Reuters: "I think it's cowardly. If they can't run the torch through the city, it means that no one is supporting the games."

"This is a once-in-a-lifetime thing for us to see the torch," said Nancy Chan, a local resident, to the San Francisco Chronicle. "There is a lot of politics around it, but that is the great thing about America - the free speech." She and her 4-year-old son ran to the new route when it was announced.

At least one protester was arrested, Xiao Tan, 32, of Chinese origin, who tried to unfurl a Tibetan flag. "I'm proud to be Chinese, but I don't like what's happening in Tibet," he told AFP. The Vancouver Sun reported a number of arrests, but says that violence is limited.

Peter Ueberroth, the chairman of the United States Olympic Committee, said that the right balance between preserving freedom of speech for protesters, while still providing an exhilarating experience for torchbearers, as well as preventing a repeat of the chaotic demonstrations that accompanied the torch in London and Paris.

Already Tuesday evening, hundreds paraded with Tibetan flags while chanting "Shame on China". On Monday, protesters hung banners from the Golden Gate Bridge. As the torch went to

London and Paris, the torch relay was subject to large scale protests in both cities.

Tight security was planned in advance. Airspace restrictions have been put in place and over 700 security personnel are expected to be deployed including FBI agents. Police leave was cancelled. The United States Coast Guard patrolled the part of the route that was to take the torch along the waterfront at Fisherman's Wharf.

"We are trying to accomplish two goals here. One is to protect the right to free speech and the other is to ensure public safety, and here in San Francisco we are good at both of those things," said Nathan Ballard about the security. Ballard is a spokesperson for San Francisco Mayor's office.

"I am saddened that such a beautiful symbol of the torch, which unites people of different religions, different ethnic origin, different political systems, cultures and languages, has been attacked," said Jacques Rogge, the president of the International Olympic Committee, to the Wall Street Journal.

The Beijing Organizing Committee said in a statement on Monday: "We strongly condemn the actions of the few 'pro-Tibet independence' activists who have attempted to sabotage the Olympic Torch Relay. The Olympic flame belongs to the world and these actions are a serious violation of the Olympic spirit. They are bound to fail and will surely arouse the resentment of peace-loving people who support the Olympic Games."

UEFA Champions League: April 9th, 2008

Manchester United and Barcelona will face off in the Champions League semi-finals after both teams won their quarterfinal matches. Both sides came into their second legs having won their away legs, Barcelona having defeated Schalke 04 1-0 in Germany, and United coming out of Italy with a 2-0 decision.

Results

Barcelona 1 - 0 Schalke 04

Catalan giants Barcelona defeated Schalke 04 by a scored of 1-0 for the second consecutive game to secure their spot in the Champions League semi-finals. Both sides fielded full strength sides with Henry, Krcik and Eto'o in attack for Barca, and Altintop and Kuranyi as the Schalke strikers.

The home side could have gone ahead early as Krikic received the ball from Eto'o, but the youngster mis-controlled and after a series of rebounds the balled was volleyed over by Xavi. Schalke pressed to tie the series on aggregate and Gerald Asamoah drove a shot just wide before Halil Altintop's effort was saved by Victor Valdes. Xavi had the next chance for Barca put his low shot was saved well by Manuel Neuer. Kuranyi should have scored the opener in the 21st but blazed his point blank shot wide. Barca went ahead in the 43rd minute on a bizarre goal from Yaya Toure. Toure released Krkic on the right, and his cross was headed high by Marcelo Bordon in defense. The looping ball had to be headed off the line by Mladen Krstajic but it fell to Toure, who scuffed his shot past Neuer. Barcelona had several chances to double their lead from Henry, Iniesta, and substitute Giovanni Dos Santos, but none could solve Neuer. Schalke pushed but

couldn't produce anything too threatening and Barcelona held on until the final whistle.

Manchester United 1 - 0 Roma

Coming into the match with a two goal aggregate advantage, Sir Alex Ferguson opted to play a side devoid of several big names, leaving Rooney, Ronaldo, Scholes and Neville all on the bench. Meanwhile Roma were again without talisman captain Francesco Totti, and Vucinic was paired with Mancini in his stead.

United started strongly, looking to put the tie out of reach. Chances from Park and Tevez were sent wide before Roma keeper Doni was forced to make two good saves. The first was from Hargreaves as he was sent in all alone by Giggs, but Doni saved with his feet. Positions were then reversed as Giggs latched onto a cross by Hargreaves, but Doni again did well as he sprinted across his goal-line and made the save. Just as United was getting closer, Roma's Mancini won a penalty as he was adjudged to be brought down by Brown, however replays showed the striker performed a blatant dive. Daniele De Rossi, who scored from the spot in Serie A on the weekend, stepped up and blazed the ball over the net, coming nowhere close to the goal. Roma then started to press, and had several good chances including a header from Juan and a shot by Mancini, but the Italians were unable to break down the United defence or Edwin van der Sar.

It was Roma who came out strongly in the second half with a couple early chances. Vucinic took a long range shot which van der Sar was unable to gather, but as Casseti pushed to latch onto the spilled ball van der Sar finally gathered and wiped out the

danger. Roma's next chance came from Taddei, but his shot was blocked by a charging Mikael Silvestre. United booked their place in the semi-finals in the 69th minute as Tevez supplied the ball to Hargreaves on the counter-attack, and the Argentine sprinted into the area and dove to head the return cross past Doni. United nearly doubled their lead through Park as he was sent clear on goal but Doni charged out and the South-Koreans effort ballooned over onto the top netting. The final whistle blew and United celebrated their semi-final berth, as they will now travel to the Camp Nou to take on Barcelona.

Semi-finals are to be played April 23rd and 30th

The Simpsons taken off Venezuelan TV after being called unsuitable

The animated television show, *The Simpsons*, has been taken off Venezuelan television after claims that the programme is "inappropriate" for children. A regulator in Venezuela said that, by airing the program, the network broadcasting *The Simpsons* Televen "were infringing many things in the television and radio social responsibility law."

The American drama series *Baywatch Hawaii*, which stopped airing in the United States in 2001, is being aired as a replacement to the animated series. *Baywatch* is about the lives of fictional lifeguards in the county of Los Angeles.

According to the CIA's *The World Factbook*, Venezuela has a total of 111 television channels. It is claimed in the factbook, however, that 45 of these are repeater channels.

The website of Televen describes the animated series, which it will soon stop airing, as a "famous family," which has won "several awards."

Flickr launches video-sharing service

Flickr, the online photo sharing service owned by American internet company Yahoo!, today launched a new video-sharing service for "Pro" users. After 4 months of waiting since an unofficial "coming soon" on the Flickr forums, subscribers to the service are now able to upload videos of up to 90 seconds in length, or 150 MB in size.

After some criticism over the website diversifying too much, Flickr Community Manager Heather Champ, and Yahoo! spokesperson George Hadjigeorgiou responded by calling these 90-second videos "long photos", which capture a "slice of life to share". Mr. Hadjigeorgiou elaborated, by saying that "digital media has led to new behaviour with digital photography fans and we've seen a huge growth in people taking short video clips, essentially 'long photos', with their digital still cameras and mobile phones." He added that he could see "a great resonance between this new category of content and with the kind of authentic, personal moments already being shared on Flickr."

"Pro" users, who pay a yearly subscription of US\$24.95 for unlimited file uploads, have also had their filesize limit increased to 20 MB for each individual photo, and other members, who do not pay a subscription, have had their limit raised to 10 MB per photo. "Free" members are currently unable to upload videos.

Death of 4000th U.S. soldier in Iraq shines spotlight on gays in the military

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US Army Major Alan Rogers, a civil rights activist in the gay, lesbian and bisexual military veteran community is the first known LGBT soldier to die in combat in Iraq. He was posthumously awarded a Purple Heart and Bronze Star, according to reports.

Rogers was killed by an improvised explosive device while on foot patrol in Baghdad on January 27, 2008, according to an Army report.

Rogers' funeral gained national media publicity, initially on MSNBC, in the Washington Post and on National Public Radio's (NPR) Morning Edition; however, initial reports omitted Rogers' sexual orientation or anything related to the subject.

The Post and Morning Edition reports coincided with the "grim milestone" that the US military death toll reached 4,000 dead. Rogers' death and funeral gained further media attention when it was revealed that he was gay and worked to end the military's DADT policy.

Initially, members of the national media were well aware of Rogers' sexual orientation, and it was widely reported that Rogers was not married and left no children. While technically accurate, the omission of Rogers' sexual

orientation was viewed as an intentional distortion by some members of the LGBT community.

The Washington Post ombudsman, Deborah Howell, wrote that the editors of the Post deliberated the question of whether to disclose his sexual orientation and ultimately made a decision not to include such information.

The Army asked that Rogers' sexual orientation not be disclosed, and the Army presented it as a concern of the family, according to news reports.

The Washington Blade, a newspaper for the Washington LGBT community, reported on the Post's decision to change the story and included more details about Rogers' activities and friends in the LGBT community.

Subsequently, Howell of the Washington Post, citing Rogers' apparent feelings on DADT, wrote a column admitting that the Post's article "would have been richer" had it disclosed his sexual orientation and activities in the LGBT community.

Rogers was buried with full military honors at Arlington National Cemetery on March 14, 2008.

Sulfur Dioxide levels in Hawaii remain high

Hawaii Volcanoes National Park remains closed today after high levels of Sulfur Dioxide vented from Kilauea. Continuing southeastern winds will exist through most of the day, causing much of the contamination to exist elsewhere on the Big Island.

In addition to the park, the Volcano House hotel and Kilauea Military Camp remain evacuated.

Volcano Charter School remains closed for a second day.

Sulfur dioxide can cause irritation to the nose, eyes, throat, and respiratory tract. Residents in the area are recommended to avoid smoking, stay indoors, and drink plenty of fluids, among other suggestions. Residents living northeast of the volcano should be prepared to evacuate, mainly those living in Mauna Loa Estates, Ohia Estates, Volcano Village, the Keauhou Ranch area and the Volcano Golf Course region.

Trade winds on Thursday may return the conditions to normal. However, people in the region should remain prepared to evacuate if necessary.

Norfolk youths banned from buying eggs and ketchup

Youths in the Norfolk town of Caister-on-Sea, near Great Yarmouth, England, have been banned from purchasing "squirty bottles" of ketchup, and eggs after a number of complaints from residents in the area. The move, which is backed by the Norfolk Police, is aimed at reducing the number of anti-social incidents occurring in the area. Sergeant Andy Brown, of the Norfolk Police, has said that no further complaints have been received since the ban came into force.

"I know it sounds a bit daft, but it has made a difference because we've had no more reported incidents since the supermarkets came on board."

—Sgt. Andy Brown - Norfolk Police

While squirting ketchup itself is not a criminal offence, the damage that it can cause, such as removing paint from cars or houses, is often enough to bring charges of criminal damage. Sgt

Brown said that there were "about a dozen complaints from residents, some of them elderly, about people squirting ketchup over doors, windows and vehicles." Martin Bailie, a spokesperson for Lidl supermarkets, has defended his staff's actions, saying "the stores' staff were [already] challenging youngsters who were trying to bulk buy these things. It wasn't that we haven't been selling eggs and ketchup to youths, but have been careful about who we have sold them to, and we are glad it has been making a difference."

Apple's iTunes replaces Wal-Mart as No. 1 U.S. music seller

Five years after its launch, Apple Computer's iTunes downloadable music service in February passed Wal-Mart to become the No. 1 music seller in the United States, according to figures released April 3 by NPD Group, a market research firm.

The firm said more than 4 billion songs had been downloaded from the iTunes store since its launch in 2003 and that as of February, the iTunes store accounts for 70% of all digital music sales. NPD said according to those figures, Apple's iTunes store passes U.S. electronics retailer Best Buy for the No. 2 U.S. music retailer in 2007.

According to an April 2nd report in *Ars Technica*, an internal memo at Apple showed the company passed Wal-Mart as the top U.S. music seller Wal-Mart at the beginning of the year. Their projections showed that as of January 2008, Apple's iTunes held 19 percent of the U.S. music market with Wal-Mart at 15 percent, followed by Best Buy at 13 percent. Rounding out the top five were Amazon.com and Target at 6 percent each.

France recalls Ingrid Betancourt mission

France is recalling the mission it recently sent to Colombia in hopes of freeing Ingrid Betancourt, who is a hostage of the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (FARC).

"The French medical mission isn't appropriate and much less so when it's not the result of an agreement," a FARC statement said. "Ingrid Betancourt and soldiers and the jailed guerrillas would now have regained their freedom and it would be a victory for everyone," said the statement dated the day after the French team landed. The only condition would have been that Álvaro Uribe had agreed to a 45-day demilitarized zone, according to the statement.

President Nicolas Sarkozy's office said in a statement that he is "deeply disappointed" he was unable to save Betancourt, who holds both French and Colombian citizenships.

"He wants to assure our compatriot's family — as well as those of all the hostages — that his determination to win their liberation remains as strong as ever," the statement continued.

FARC has been seeking to exchange 39 high-profile hostages for some 500 rebels currently in Colombian prisons. Colombian President Álvaro Uribe has consistently rejected this trade.

Recently, however, Colombia has promised to suspend military strikes against FARC in the regions where hostages are believed to be held.

Judge in Gambian court warns media not to cover case

A judge in a Gambian court has

said that any journalist who reports on the court proceedings at Kombo Central District Tribunal will face a jail sentence.

The Media Foundation for West Africa commented on actions by the judge. "It is likely that Bojang will act as both prosecutor and judge of the case, which defies the fundamental principles of justice," they said.

This move comes soon after a journalist was arrested for reporting on a murder case in Gambia.

Survey: Big Ben is the most popular UK landmark

A survey of over 2000 people has found that the London Clock Tower, containing the famous bell Big Ben, is the most popular landmark in the United Kingdom.

Stonehenge was voted second in the poll, which was launched to mark the birthday of Victorian engineer Isambard Kingdom Brunel.

No Brunel structures appeared in the list of the top 10. This is despite the fact that the poll was launched to mark the birthday of Brunel.

Today in History

1606 – The Charter of the Virginia Company of London was established by Royal Charter by King James I of England with the purpose of establishing colonial settlements in North America.

1815 – Mount Tambora in Indonesia began one of the most violent volcanic eruptions in recorded history, killing at least 71,000 people.

1919 – Mexican Revolutionary leader Emiliano Zapata was shot to death near Ciudad Ayala, Morelos.

1959 – Crown Prince Akihito, the

future Emperor of Japan, wedded Michiko, the first commoner to marry into the Japanese Imperial Family.

1998 – The Republic of Ireland and the United Kingdom signed the Belfast Agreement in Belfast, a major step in the Northern Ireland peace process.

Quote of the Day

They knew me from the dawn of time: if Hermes beats his rainbow wings,
If Angus shakes his locks of light, or golden-haired Apollo sings,
It matters not the name, the land; my joy in all the gods abides:
Even in the cricket in the grass some dimness of me smiles and hides.
~ Æ ~

Word of the Day

agley adv

1. Wrong in the sense of awry, askew, amiss or distorted.

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