



Top Stories

Saddam Hussein executed by hanging

Saddam Hussein, deposed president of Iraq, was executed at 6:00 a.m. Saturday morning local time in an unspecified location after having been sentenced to death by an Iraqi court for crimes against humanity.

Explosion hits Madrid Airport's terminal 4

A car bomb by ETA has exploded in Terminal 4 of Madrid's Airport.

Featured story

Ice shelf breaks free in Canadian Arctic

The Ayles ice shelf, which is the size of more than 11,000 football fields and is located just south of the North Pole, has broken free in the Canadian Arctic and scientists say that global warming has played a "major" role in the break.

Wikipedia Current Events

- Saddam Hussein is executed, by hanging, at approximately 6:05am Baghdad time (0305 UTC).
- A bomb exploding in the parking lot of Terminal 4 of Barajas Airport, Madrid, Spain, damages cars and buildings.
- The Supreme Council of Kyrgyzstan votes 50 to 1 in favor of amendments to the Constitution giving greater power to the executive branch after

Wikipedia Current Events

President Kurmanbek Bakiyev accuses Parliamentarians of "sabotaging" the political process. The President will now have the power to appoint and dismiss the Prime Minister and his cabinet and regional governors. The SNB, the domestic intelligence organization, will report to the President, not the legislature.

- At least 500 people are feared to have drowned after the ferry Cholid travelling between the Indonesian islands of Borneo and Java sank during a storm.
- Former U.S. President Gerald Ford's funeral is held at the United States Capitol.
- The coat of arms of Nepal is changed as a gesture of reconciliation after the Nepalese Civil War.
- A 67-year-old Spanish woman, whose name has not been revealed, is reported to have given birth to twins in Barcelona, becoming the oldest birth mother.

Explosion hits Madrid Airport's terminal 4

Around 9:00 a.m. local time (0800 UTC) today, an explosion occurred at Barajas International Airport, in Madrid, Spain.

A car bomb exploded in the Level-D Parking Garage of the recently completed Terminal 4. A Spanish official declared that the police first received a telephone call warning them about the bomb, and then a second call with the type of

vehicle. The second caller claimed the attack for the Basque nationalist group ETA. Thanks to the telephone call, the police could evacuate most of the area. One man is reported missing after the explosion, and 26 people including two police officers were reported to be injured in the blast. The terminal sustained serious damage, and the situation in the airport became chaotic on one of the busiest days of the year.

Arnaldo Otegi, spokesman of ETA's political wing Batasuna, did not condemn the attack, but said the peace talks are not interrupted by the explosion. The Spanish Interior Minister Alfredo Perez Rubalcaba condemned the attack, saying that it "breaks nine months without violence on the part of ETA, which breaks the permanent ceasefire." Only in June, the Spanish President José Luis Rodríguez Zapatero announced peace talks with ETA. But tonight, Zapatero ordered the suspension of all dialogue, because "with violence, there can be no kind of dialogue."

Christmas Island preparing for New Year

Christmas Island, also known as Kiritimati, is preparing for the new year while only hours are left. The island, which is home to about 5,100 people, is the first country in the world to welcome the new year.

Christmas Island will kick off the new year at UTC+14 (05 am ET). Just 15 minutes later, clocks at the Chatham Island will hit midnight.

Later, at UTC+13 (06 am ET), also New Zealand, Tonga, Antarctica, McMurdo and several other small stations on the South Pole, will celebrate the new year.

Pago Pago, the American Samoa, is the last country to enter 2007. That will happen at UTC-11 (6 am ET, Monday morning).

Reasons for Litvinenko's conversion to Islam revealed

Exiled Chechen emissary Akhmed Zakayev revealed that although dissident Russian ex-spy Alexander Litvinenko had converted to Islam on his deathbed, he had been considering such a move for a long time. FreeMediaOnline.org reported that Mr. Zakayev comments on Mr. Litvinenko's conversion to Islam were made in an interview for the Voice of America (VOA) Russian program which aired Friday.

Mr. Zakayev said that Mr. Litvinenko grew up in the North Caucasus among Muslims and was always interested in their religion. According to Mr. Zakayev, Mr. Litvinenko was ashamed of Russia's actions in the Chechen war and this also influenced his conversion. Mr. Zakayev told VOA that Mr. Litvinenko wanted to show that not all Russians behave the same way as those responsible for atrocities in Chechnya.

Mr. Zakayev was granted political asylum in Great Britain and the British government has refused Moscow's requests for his extradition. The Russian authorities accuse Mr. Zakayev of foreknowledge of terrorist attacks and other crimes involving hundreds of killings and captures of Russian servicemen during the separatist wars in Chechnya. He has denied these accusations.

Alexander Litvinenko died in 2006 after a three-week struggle with effects of radiation poisoning. Before his death, Litvinenko accused Russian president Vladimir Putin of ordering his death. Since then, British and Russian investigators have found numerous traces of a rare radioactive element that caused Litvinenko's death, although no connection to Putin has been found.

Putin's critic dismisses Kremlin's accusations in Litvinenko's case as 'science fiction'

Exiled Russian businessman and President Putin's critic Boris Berezovsky dismissed the latest accusations by Moscow in the Litvinenko poisoning case as moving beyond absurd into the realm of science fiction. FreeMediaOnline.org reported that Mr. Berezovsky made his comments in an interview for the Voice of America (VOA) Russian radio program which aired Friday.

Mr. Berezovsky was reacting to the Russian Prosecutor-General's Office announcement on Wednesday that it suspected Israel-based former Russian oil billionaire Leonid Nevzlin might be involved in the death of Alexander Litvinenko, who died in a London hospital on November 23 from exposure to the highly toxic radioactive substance polonium-210.

Mr. Nevzlin dismissed allegations by Moscow and said he had cooperated with the British authorities investigating the London murder of the dissident Russian ex-spy. The Russian government has unsuccessfully sought Mr. Nevzlin's and Mr. Berezovsky's extradition on charges of fraud. The Russian authorities have also accused Mr.

Nevzlin of involvement in contract killings. Both men dismissed these accusations as politically motivated. Mr. Nevzlin, who lives in Israel, is now believed to be on a visit to the United States. Mr. Berezovsky received political asylum in Great Britain.

In the Voice of America interview, Mr. Berezovsky said that the US government would not have allowed Mr. Nevzlin into the country if Washington gave the slightest credence to Moscow's accusations. "I know him personally, and these accusations have absolutely no basis in fact," Mr. Berezovsky told VOA.

Saddam Hussein executed by hanging

Saddam Hussein, deposed president of Iraq, was executed shortly after 6:00 a.m. Saturday morning local time (0300 GMT) after having been sentenced to death by an Iraqi court for crimes against humanity.

Three Iraqi television channels first reported that Saddam Hussein has been executed, by hanging as requested, after a U.S. judge refused to stop the execution in a last-ditch attempt by the defendant on late Friday.

Saddam had been found guilty of killing more than 148 members of the Shiite population. Witnesses to the execution gathered at the execution site, Baghdad's "Green Zone." BBC News 24, however, has reported that the execution took place outside the "Green Zone", at a building known to the US Army as "Camp Justice".

"Saddam's body is in front of me," said an official in the prime minister's office. "It's over." The witness reported that celebrations broke out after Hussein was dead,

and that there was "dancing around the body."

Iraqi state television has shown Saddam going to his death and then his lifeless body after his death.

The executions of Hussein's half-brother Barzan Ibrahim Tikriti and Awad Hamed al-Bandar, president of the Revolutionary Iraqi Court, were postponed to a later date. Iraqi National Security Adviser Mowaffak al-Rubaie announced this move, saying, "We wanted to have this day to have an historic distinction."

On CNN, Saddam's defence attorney alleged that the trial was "unfair" and that he and his co-counsel would fight for justice in Iraqi courts.

Tikrit, the town Saddam hid out in until his capture in late 2003 will be under lockdown for 4 days due to the threat of violence. Coalition forces within Iraq are on high alert for possible retaliation attacks.

U.S. President George W. Bush released a statement commemorating the former dictator's death but also warned that roadside bombs and other routine acts of violence will not suddenly end with his execution: "Bringing Saddam Hussein to justice will not end the violence in Iraq but it is an important milestone on Iraq's course to becoming a democracy that can govern, sustain, and defend itself, and be an ally in the War on Terror."

Hepatitis scare at a New Zealand McDonald's restaurant
McDonald's is asking everyone who ate at a McDonald's restaurant located in Greenlane, Auckland, New Zealand, in December 15,

2006, to go to their doctor after a worker tested positive for Hepatitis A.

Doctor Greg Simmons, medical officer of health in Auckland, said that it is possible for the food handler worker to have passed on the disease during 7:00 p.m. (NZDT) and 2:00 a.m. as he would have been in the most infectious stage of Hepatitis A and was not wearing gloves. According to a spokeswoman from McDonald's, Joanna Redfern-Hardisty, food handlers are not required to wear gloves but are required to have thoroughly washed their hands with antimicrobial soap. However Dr Simmons says that the infected worker usually wore gloves.

The shift the worker worked was the only one the worker handled food when he was infectious with Hepatitis A.

It is unknown how many people could have come into contact with food that the infected worker had prepared as Friday night is usually a busy night, according to Ms Redfern-Hardisty.

Dr Simmons says that if someone has been infected with Hepatitis A then they will currently be showing early symptoms. Those symptoms include being tired, no appetite, nausea and skin and eyes will show a yellowish colour.

Ms Redfern-Hardisty, spokeswoman for McDonald's, confirmed that no more risk is being posed to customers. She said that it is currently unknown where the worker caught Hepatitis A but has stated that it was from an external source.

The worker has been suspended from work.

If you ate at the McDonalds located in Greenlane, Auckland, on late December 15, early December 16, then please either visit your doctor or ring the Auckland Regional Public Health Service on 096234600.

Today in History

406 - The Vandals, Alans and Suebians crossed the Rhine River to begin an invasion of Gaul.

1600 - The British East India Company was founded by a Royal Charter of Queen Elizabeth I.

1963 - The Central African Federation officially collapsed, eventually to become Zambia, Malawi and Rhodesia.

1972 - American baseball player Roberto Clemente died in a plane crash en route to deliver aid to earthquake victims in Nicaragua.

1999 - Boris Yeltsin, the first democratically elected President of Russia, resigned and named Vladimir Putin as Acting President. December 31 is New Year's Eve, Eid ul-Adha in Islam (2006), Hogmanay in Scotland

Quote of the Day

When a thing is done, it's done. Don't look back. Look forward to your next objective.
~ George Marshall

Word of the Day

wiki; n

1. (From Hawaiian wikiwiki): A website based on any kind of Wiki software which enables users to add to, edit, and delete from the site's content quickly.

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