



### Top Stories

#### Israeli PM Sharon rushed to hospital

Ariel Sharon, 77, the Israeli Prime Minister has been admitted to Hadassah hospital in Jerusalem after suffering what doctors are calling a serious stroke.

#### U.S. Supreme Court orders Padilla to civilian custody

The U.S. Supreme Court ordered Wednesday that accused "enemy combatant" José Padilla be transferred from military to civilian custody, in order to face charges of supporting terrorism. This latest move comes after much criticism from civil rights groups, several court rulings, and a request from the Bush administration.

### Featured story

#### Australia records hottest year on record

According to the Australian Bureau of Meteorology, 2005 was the hottest year since since reliable, widespread temperature observations became available in 1910. The Bureau say the result is more evidence of global climate change, and an indicator of things to come.

### Wikipedia Current Events

- Turkey announces two confirmed human cases of the avian influenza.
- The King of Saudi Arabia, Abdullah al-Saud, offers to pay for repairs to the Jama Masjid

### Wikipedia Current Events

mosque in Delhi, India. The King also offers to fund education in India.

- At least 50 die following a series of insurgent attacks across Iraq, including a suicide bomb at a Shia funeral.
- Dow Jones & Co., one of the world's most important financial publishers, announces its new CEO, Richard Zannino, takes over from Peter Kann. Since Mr. Zannino is not a reporter, this breaks a century-old tradition of keeping newsmen at the helm.
- A leaked intelligence report states that Iran has been "successfully scouring Europe" for the equipment needed to create a nuclear bomb, as well as parts for a ballistic missile.
- 14 people are killed, with many more feared dead, after a landslide destroys a village in Java after flash floods in the region. It is the second such incident in the region within a week.
- 14 people are now confirmed dead in the Bad Reichenhall ice rink roof collapse, with one person still trapped in the rubble.
- Seven Qassam rockets are fired on civilian Israeli targets by Palestinian militants. Two rockets land near a gas station on a road leading to the Israeli town of Sderot, and another five land near Kibbutz Zikim. There are no reports of injuries or damage.

#### U.S. Supreme Court orders accused 'Enemy Combatant' Jose Padilla transferred from military to civilian custody

The U.S. Supreme Court ordered Wednesday that accused "enemy combatant" José Padilla be transferred from military to civilian custody, in order to face charges of supporting terrorism. This latest move comes after much criticism from civil rights groups, several court rulings, and a request from the Bush administration.

José Padilla, former Chicago gang member and U.S. citizen, was arrested in 2002 as an "enemy combatant," on accusations of taking part in a plot to dirty bomb apartment buildings, and has been held for the past three years without charge and denied traditional legal rights. The charges he is presently facing are apparently unrelated, instead concerning his alleged aid in financing and recruiting terrorists.

The Supreme Court's ruling contradicts the 4th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals' decision made only last month.

#### Israeli PM Sharon rushed to hospital

Ariel Sharon, 77, the Israeli Prime Minister has been admitted to Hadassah hospital in Jerusalem after suffering what doctors are calling a massive stroke.

According to reports from Hadassah Ein Karem hospital in

Jerusalem, the Prime Minister has suffered a stroke and was put under an anesthetic prior to surgery to address a massive cerebral hemorrhage.

The White House says its "thoughts and prayers" are with the Israeli Prime Minister.

With Sharon in the hospital, control of Israel has now been transferred to his deputy, vice-premier Ehud Olmert.

Dr. Shlomo Mor-Yosef, director of Hadassah Hospital in Jerusalem stated Sharon suffered "a significant stroke" and that he was "under anesthetic and receiving breathing assistance." Minutes later, Mor-Yosef stated initial tests showed that Sharon suffered a cerebral hemorrhage and that he was suffering "massive bleeding and was being transferred to an operating theater."

According to Wikipedia, "A stroke or cerebrovascular accident (CVA) occurs when the blood supply to a part of the brain is suddenly interrupted" and many news sources are reporting this situation is life threatening.

Last month on December 18th, Sharon suffered a minor stroke and was admitted to the Hadassah Ein Kerem hospital after feeling unwell driving home and having difficulties with his speech. During his treatment, he was found to have a minor hole in his heart and was scheduled for surgery on January 5th. Sharon was treated and released December 20th.

It is speculated that this stroke may be directly attributable to Sharon's notorious unhealthy eating patterns. The previous stroke was directly prefaced by a meal of hamburgers, steak in

chimichurri sauce, lamb chops, shish kebab, and salad. He has also been known to finish an entire tube of Pringles during a single interview sitting. While his previous wife Lily forced him to go on a diet, Mr. Sharon frequently had his security detail smuggle him pita filled with greasy meat.

### **Thai forces on alert for second anniversary of Narathiwat armoury raids**

Two years on from the raids that signalled the start of what is generally accepted to be a separatist campaign in the south of Thailand, military forces in the area remain on alert for a repeat of the daring raid that saw four soldiers killed and over 400 guns stolen.

The raid on Ratchanakharin army camp in Narathiwat Province announced the most recent expression of nationalistic beliefs in the predominantly Muslim provinces that once made up the Malay Sultanate of Pattani, insurgency action since that time has seen over 1,000 killed, mainly through attacks allegedly made by insurgents. One of the most significant aspects of the raid was that it provided arms for the insurgency movement. According to the government of Prime Minister Thaksin Shinawatra, the movement is home-grown and does not include foreign fighters. This significant supply of arms and ammunition has allowed a considerable number of attacks such as drive-by shootings, and efforts to recover the stolen weapons have had minimal success with only ten or less of the guns reportedly recovered.

Despite the majority of casualties having been caused by the insurgents, inexperience in

handling a modern guerilla campaign have seen actions of Thai security forces the cause of casualties, most notable being the Tak Bai incident where 78 men died in custody. This has not helped in convincing the local community that the government has their best interests in mind.

### **Two Mormon missionaries gunned down in Virginia**

The new year started off on a violent note in Chesapeake, Virginia, when, just after 6 p.m. on January 2nd, two missionaries from The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints were shot. The missionaries had apparently parked their bicycles to begin door-to-door proselytizing when they were approached and fired upon by an unidentified assailant.

The men, ages 21 and 19, were both hit. One of the individuals was killed, and the other is in good condition at a nearby hospital. Although there has been some speculation that the missionaries were shot because they may have witnessed of a crime, no specific details are available at this time. The gunman, described as a 5'10" black male, escaped on foot.

The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints has approximately 56,000 young men and women performing full-time missionary work throughout the world. Missionary work is done on a volunteer basis, and young men are expected to serve a mission shortly after their 19th birthday. Male missionaries remain in the field for two years unless there are extenuating circumstances.

The murder was Chesapeake's first of such crime of 2006. There were 15 murders in the city in 2005.

## Dubai leader Sheikh Maktoum bin Rashid Al Maktoum dead

"His Highness Sheikh Maktoum bin Rashid Al Maktoum, Vice President and Prime Minister of the UAE and ruler of Dubai has passed away. He was 62 years old."

The above statement from the Ministry of Presidential Affairs confirmed that the ruler of Dubai died earlier this morning in Australia. The statement added that "the UAE had lost a historical leader from its leaders who dedicated his life to building the country, and strove to do his best for its people."

The official mourning period will last for 40 days, during which all UAE flags will fly at half mast. Ministries and government organisations will be closed for seven days, starting Wednesday.

Local stock markets in Abu Dhabi and Dubai shed 1.8% and 3.3%, respectively, in early trading.

The Dubai Shopping Festival, the largest business & cultural event in Dubai's calendar, has been postponed until further notice, in a statement by CEO Saeed Al Nabouda.

Sheikh Mohammed bin Rashid Al Maktoum has been named the new ruler of Dubai, in an accession process that officials described as being automatic.

## Gazprom stops supplying gas to Moldova

The Russian concern Gazprom stopped supplying gas to Moldova on January 1, as the latter did not sign a gas supply contract, which stipulates a price of 160 dollars per 1,000 cubic metres for the next three months, according to

officials of Chisinau and Russian concern Gazprom.

In connection with this situation, Vladimir Voronin, current president of Moldova, cancelled his winter vacation and created on Monday, 2 January, an anti-crisis group, composed of the representatives of the cabinet and SA Moldova-Gaz.

At the moment, Moldova is ensured gas from Ukraine, in proportion of 50%, according to an agreement between Voronin and his Ukrainian counterpart Viktor Yushchenko.

The head of the Moldovan state stated that, theoretically, he agrees to accept the market prices of gas, but, pursuant to him, these must be "logical and not illusory".

Moldova will continue negotiations with Gazprom. An operative staff on energy security headed by Minister Vladimir Antosii was created for this purpose.

Chisinau officials say that an agreement on transit of Russian gas through Moldova should be signed on January 3, and an agreement on new prices was expected to be signed later. The situation in Moldova, which does not have other gas sources, is unique, as 15 percent of the natural gas supplies of Russia are transited to the West through Moldova's territory. Negotiators have recently agreed in Moscow on a transit price of 2.5 dollars for transportation of 1,000 cubic metres on a distance of 100 kilometres.

## New Zealand holiday road toll: 20 fatalities

The New Zealand Christmas – New Year road toll has climbed to 9

more than the 11 deaths in the entire period last year, after a Korean man became the 20th victim when his car ended up in a canal.

The official Christmas-New Year road toll runs between 4pm on 24th December and 6am on 4th January.

The final tally still needs to be officially confirmed by the police; this should happen in the next 1 to 2 months. Police National Road Safety Manager, Inspector John Kelly, says "the final toll may fluctuate, depending on the outcome of investigations into the crashes that took place."

The fatalities are: eight passengers, seven drivers, three motorcyclists and two pedestrians.

"The toll is one of the highest" says Andy Knackstedt, from LTNZ, "it's certainly nearly double the number that died on the roads [in the holiday period] last year".

In 2005, for the full year, 404 people died on New Zealand roads, which is 31 less than the previous year.

## 12 coal miners are found dead, 1 in critical condition, in West Virginia mine

According to many news outlets including CNN and USA Today, reports indicate that 12 coal miners have been found dead in the mine in Sago, West Virginia and only 1 has survived, reversing earlier reports that 12 had been found alive and 1 dead that had caused celebration amongst family members and friends 3 hours earlier in the day.

The surviving family members of the miners that died were notified

of the deaths by Ben Hatfield, the President of the International Coal Company, at the Sago Baptist Church. The president blamed the reversal on "lack of communication".

"What happened is that through stray cell phone conversations it appears that this miscommunication from the rescue team underground to the command center was picked up by various people that simply overheard the conversation that was relayed over cell phone communications without our ever having made a [public news] release," explained Mr. Hatfield.

Family members walked out of the church saying that the CEO of the mining company had "lied to them". The surviving miner, Randal McCloy, is currently in critical condition at Ruby Memorial Hospital.

The United States Mine Safety and Health Administration issued the mine 208 citations last year, up from 68 reported in 2004. Federal regulations cover concerns over accumulations of combustible materials, such as methane gas and coal dust from loose coal, in addition to other safety issues. It now plans on launching a in-depth investigation into the incident. The investigation will examine the mine's compliance with health and safety standards and how emergency information was communicated.

### **Wildfires still burn in Oklahoma, Texas**

NORMAN, Okla. – National Weather Service officials are warning of continued fire dangers throughout Oklahoma and Texas due to serious drought conditions.

More than 220 homes and businesses have been destroyed by fire in Oklahoma since Nov. 1, according to the Oklahoma Department of Emergency Management. Wildfires in 29 of the state's 77 counties have claimed more than 360,000 acres. Meanwhile, officials in Texas say 238 homes and 254,555 acres have been lost to wildfires in that state since Dec. 26.

Unseasonably warm weather and wind gusts of up to 40 mph have combined to make an already dangerous situation worse across the Southern Plains, which also include parts of Kansas, Colorado and New Mexico, said Jason Levit of the National Storm Prediction Center in Norman.

"The region also continues to remain in a severe to extreme drought situation," Levit said. "Dry surface vegetation will continue to serve as an excellent fuel for any fires that develop."

Some dry areas, such as the Rocky Mountains and Great Lakes, may soon see some much-needed rain. Levit says the already fire-ravaged Southern Plains will have no such luck, however, and people should be aware of the severe danger that will continue to threaten the region.

In Oklahoma, state authorities and the National Guard have established a command post in Shawnee, about 40 miles east of Oklahoma City, where they have been joined by officials from the U.S. Forest Service, the Bureau of Indian Affairs, and the National Weather Service.

The state was granted access to relief from the Federal Emergency Management Agency on Dec. 28, said Gov. Brad Henry. The

Governor requested fire management grants to help cover expenses related to the wildfires that began the previous day. FEMA's approval means funds are now available to local governments and volunteer fire departments that responded to the blazes in Hughes and Seminole counties. Requests involving nine other counties were approved in the days that followed.

Fires hit the northeastern part of Oklahoma City, the state's capital and largest city, on Sunday. Fires were said to have destroyed 20 homes over the weekend.

A National Guard helicopter and firefighters from North Carolina were sent to battle a blaze near the town of Davis, in south-central Oklahoma, on Tuesday. Meanwhile, the BIA sent two airplanes to help fight a fire near Eufaula, in eastern Oklahoma. Three other BIA aircraft aided crews fighting fires near Wewoka, in central Oklahoma, and additional fires were reported near Knowles, Oklahoma City, Ponca City and Tishmingo,

Authorities said additional National Guard helicopters and Forest Service planes are available to battle other fires as they break out. In addition to teams from North Carolina, other firefighters from Alabama, Florida, and Tennessee have arrived and are being stationed throughout the state.

The Oklahoma State Medical Examiner's Office said one man has died from injuries sustained from recent wildfires. A 68-year-old Hughes County man died Dec. 28 from thermal burns and smoke inhalation. The death is in addition to that of a 68-year-old Carter County woman who died last

month while trying to use a garden hose to save her home from being consumed by flames.

The governor's office said the state continues to await word on a request for a federal disaster declaration made Friday. A disaster declaration by President George W. Bush would qualify Oklahoma for federal funds to place firefighters ahead of where blazes are burning, and would provide temporary housing assistance and low-interest loans for those whose homes or businesses have been destroyed.

Texas authorities say they have 92 aircraft and 650 state workers working to fight fires, and have been joined by crews from Alabama, Florida, Louisiana, Tennessee, and Wisconsin. The U.S. Forest Service is also helping the state to handle the emergency.

Despite efforts, wildfires on Monday claimed nearly the entire town of Ringgold, destroying 45 buildings that comprised about 80 percent of the town.

### **Australia records hottest year on record**

Australia has officially recorded its warmest year on record. According to the Bureau of Meteorology, (BOM) 2005 was the hottest year since reliable, widespread temperature observations became available in 1910. Data collected by the Bureau show Australia's annual mean temperature for 2005 was 1.09°C above the standard 1961-90 average.

The Bureau of Meteorology says the result is more evidence of climate change.

The Bureau's Blair Trewin said: "We've seen things like the general

retreat of the winter snow line. We've seen a marked decrease in the frequency of frost, especially in inland Queensland," Dr Trewin said. "We've seen an increase in the number of extreme hot days."

And the warming trend is likely to continue. "All the projections we have from climate models we would expect to see continued warming through the 21st century," he said. "Numbers like this ... are another piece of evidence that climate change is real and it's a real issue."

Despite unseasonably cool weather in the South West of Western Australia, 2005 was a hot year over most of the nation, with the Northern Territory (NT) bearing the brunt. The NT area-average maximum temperature was 1.45°C above the long-term mean, the largest anomaly of any state or territory.

The previous record of +0.84°C was set in 1998. The Bureau says that while these temperature departures may seem relatively small, a 1°C increase in mean temperatures is equivalent to many southern Australian towns shifting northward by about 100km.

All States and Territories, apart from Victoria and Tasmania, recorded 2005 mean temperatures amongst their top two warmest years on record. The only region recording a cooler than normal year was a coastal strip of Western Australia extending from Cape Leeuwin to Carnarvon.

Australia's previous warmest years on record were influenced by significant El Niño events, say the Bureau. However, no such event occurred in 2005, making the record warmth even more

unusual. The 2005 record is yet another sign that our climate is changing. Since 1979, all but four years have been warmer than average in Australia.

Australian temperatures have increased by approximately 0.9°C since 1910 - consistent with global warming trends. Scientific studies have linked global and Australian temperature increases to the enhanced greenhouse effect.

The early months of 2005 were also very dry over much of Australia with the January-May period being the 2nd driest on record. Australia's area-averaged rainfall is calculated from a network of around 5000 rainfall stations. Observations from this network reveal that, when compared to historical records, Tasmania was the wettest State in 2005, while Queensland and Western Australia were the driest.

Over the New Year bushfires have caused havoc in many parts of Australia, with houses, farm stock devastated. Thousands of hectares of bushland and farmland have been burnt out.

Environmentalists say the weather is a precursor of things to come: "2005 gave us a little taste of what life will be like if we fail to tackle climate change," Greenpeace's Catherine Fitzpatrick said. "The extreme heat and bushfires of New Year's Day 2006 showed that it isn't going to be fun. If action isn't taken soon to avoid catastrophic climate change, Australians will have John Howard to blame for failing to act when he had the chance."

Ms Fitzpatrick said the Federal Government was as beholden to the coal and aluminium industries as the Japanese government was

to whaling companies, and with far more devastating impacts.

"Today's figures should spur our Environment Minister ... to real action – ratify Kyoto, quit coal and move towards clean, renewable energy," Ms Fitzpatrick said.

The Howard government claims it is taking appropriate action. Federal Environment Minister Ian Campbell said he recognised climate change was the biggest modern-day environmental challenge. "I think that climate change is alarming," he said on ABC radio. "I regard climate change as the number one environmental challenge ... It is a huge and serious challenge. These figures add to the weight of evidence that climate change is real and it's a problem that the world needs to work together to seek to solve."

Australia and the United States are the only developed nations to have refused to sign the Kyoto Protocol, which calls on countries to cut greenhouse emissions by 5.2 per cent below 1990 levels by 2012.

The Government argues Kyoto will not work because it does not commit developing nations to reducing emissions. "Kyoto excludes most of the emissions in the world. It only covers just over a third of the countries of the world and ... we need something that includes all countries of the world," said Senator Campbell.

Many regions across the globe also reported an exceptionally warm year. According to a preliminary estimate released by the World Meteorological Organization (WMO), the global mean temperature for 2005 was about 0.48°C above normal, putting 2005 amongst the four warmest years globally since records

commenced in 1861.

### **Two deaths unreported in Natrecor study**

Johnson and Johnson has released information that two patients have died after taking the company's heart drug Natrecor. The deaths were not included in a report of a study the company released in October, and the company says they did not know of the two deaths when the original report was released. The company intends to reanalyze the data to see if these two deaths are of statistical significance to the drug's risk.

Natrecor is a drug used to treat acute heart failure and has been approved by the FDA since 2001. The FDA told the company a year ago to further explore the mortality data, in which the company said to have not found a statistically significant difference for mortality between the drug and a placebo.

A new report is said to be available in March about the possible health effects of the drug.

### **BASF makes \$4.9 billion hostile bid for Engelhard**

BASF has made a \$4.9 billion hostile bid for Engelhard Corp. Engelhard is a US based supplier of pollution control devices such as catalytic converters, which it invented. Engelhard holds 35% of the world market on such pollution control devices. The bid is \$37 a share in cash and may be increased by \$1 a share.

BASF has over \$4.79 billion for acquisitions after it sold Basell NV plastics in August.

If the acquisition goes through it

will be the biggest ever hostile takeover of a US company by a European firm according to Bloomberg.

Engelhard shares have surged above the offer price on the news to about \$38 a share. Some speculate Dow Chemical Co., the largest US chemical maker, will make a competing offer.

"Dow has an automotive materials business like BASF, and is diversified like BASF so that it could use all the pieces" said John Roberts, a Buckingham Research analyst.

US regulations going into effect in 2007 are tighter on emissions. This will increase the demand for Engelhard's catalytic converters. Limits are getting tighter in the EU and Japan as well.

Dow Chemical declined to comment on the bid or the possibility of the corporation making a bid, stating "it's Dow's policy not to comment on speculation regarding possible investment opportunities".

### **Australia First begins revival campaign**

The Australia First Party is writing to its supporters requesting that they become members in order to re-register as a political party in Australia. Australia First is seen as a far-right wing party with nationalist ideals.

The party was founded in 1996 by Graeme Campbell a Member of the House of Representatives and the Australian Labor Party. In 2001, Graeme Campbell, One Nation offered to endorse him as a senate candidate in Western Australia. He failed to be elected in the October 2001 election and has remained

within the One Nation Party.

The party was de-registered by the Australian Electoral Commission in 2004 for not nominating a single federal election candidate for four years.

Recently it has been alleged that the Australia First Party and its offspring the Patriotic Youth League had been involved in organising the racial violence in Sydney in December last year. The party denies this claiming "There is no way a small group of young nationalists could organise 10,000 people to gather at Cronulla Beach". However the party's website does claim that "Australian Youth And Families Should Support The Cronulla Mass Mobilisation On December 11".

Once the party has been re-registered with the Australian Electoral Commission it intends to contest local government elections in the Sutherland Shire, Marrickville, Coffs Harbour and Newcastle before running for federal parliament in 2007.

The party's NSW Secretary, Jim Saleam said "What's being done in Australia now is a situation where the European identity is being deprecated further, to the point where Europeans will disappear next century".

"Under certain circumstances that would be called a genocide, but it's not, it's called progress."

Mr Saleam was jailed for three-and-a-half years in 1991 for possessing a firearm and organising a shotgun attack on the home of the African National Congress Australian representative, Eddie Funde.

The party needs 500 correctly

completed membership applications to apply to the AEC for re-registration. The registration process will then take up to 12 weeks.

### **7.1 magnitude earthquake in Fiji**

A powerful earthquake measuring 7.1 on the Richter scale has struck in the Pacific Ocean off the coast of Fiji on Monday at 22:13 (10:13PM) (UTC).

The quake hit 579 kilometers below the Earth's surface about 100 kilometers North East of Ndoi, the US Geological Survey said.

No damage or injuries have been reported following the quake and the Pacific Tsunami Warning Center said they did not expect it to trigger a Tsunami as the quake happened far below the Earth's surface.

Lasarus Veutibau, a seismologist at Fiji's Mines and Resources Department, said the quake was too deep to have been felt anywhere in the Fiji islands.

### **Today in History**

1527 - Felix Manz, a leader of the Anabaptist congregation in Zürich, was executed by drowning.

1895 - Alfred Dreyfus, a Jewish officer in the French military wrongly accused of treason, was stripped of his rank and sentenced to life imprisonment on Devil's Island.

1933 - Construction began on the Golden Gate Bridge (pictured) across San Francisco Bay.

1968 - Alexander Dubček came to power in Czechoslovakia, beginning a political reform known as "Socialism with a human face".

1970 - The first episode of All My Children was broadcast on the ABC television network.

January 05 is Twelfth Night (Western Christianity)

### **Quote of the Day**

"Evil spreads with the wind; truth is capable of speading even against it." ~ Paramahansa Yogananda

### **About Wikinews**

We are a group of volunteer journalists whose mission is to create a diverse community where citizens from around the globe (including **you**) can collaborate to report the news on a wide variety of current events. By making our content perpetually available for free redistribution and use, we hope to contribute to a global digital commons.

### **Got news and no computer? Call the Wikinews Hotline**

+1-866-653-4265  
(toll-free in the U.S.)  
+1-202-742-5918  
(outside the U.S.)

### **License**

This work is licensed under the Creative Commons Attribution License. Articles published in this Print edition were created by Wikinewsies.

To view a copy of this license, visit: <http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/2.5/> or send a letter to Creative Commons 543 Howard Street, 5th Floor San Francisco, California, 94105, USA

### **Audio Wikinews**

Audio Wikinews is a free non point-of-view news radio program recorded daily.

<http://en.wikinews.org/wiki/Wikinews:Audio>

### **About Wikinews Print Edition**

For more information about Wikinews Print Edition visit: <http://en.wikinews.org/wiki/Wikinews:Print>