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Pakistan's Musharraf announces resignation

Pervez Musharraf, the Pakistani president who was facing impeachment, has announced in a speech that was broadcast on national television that he will resign from his position as President of Pakistan. He was facing impeachment on charges of violating the constitution and gross misconduct.



Beijing 2008: Michael Phelps wins eighth gold

The American Michael Phelps has set a new record for the most gold medals won in one Olympic games by winning his eighth gold medal of the 2008 Olympic games, beating the previous world record of seven that was set by Mark Spitz in the 1972 Olympic Games, which took place in Munich, Germany.



Merkel: Georgia will join NATO

"Georgia will become a NATO member if it wants to, and it does want to," German Chancellor Angela Merkel said during her Sunday visit to Tbilisi, Georgia. Merkel expected a very prompt withdrawal of Russian forces from Georgia and stated that Georgia's territorial integrity and its



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independence have to be respected.

Dorival Caymmi, Brazilian singer and songwriter, dies aged 94

Dorival Caymmi, a popular Brazilian singer and songwriter, has died today at the age of 94 at his Rio de Janeiro home. His death was caused by kidney cancer and multiple organ failures.

Wikipedia Current Events

Musharraf, who was facing impeachment, announces his resignation as President. Indirect presidential elections will be held within 30 days.

•A US-Poland agreement to deploy a missile defense shield prompts the Russian president to declare Poland "a legitimate military target" and the deputy of the Russian general staff states that Poland "opens itself to a nuclear strike".

Wikipedia Current Events

Russia's Yelena Isinbayeva sets a new world record of 5.05 m outdoors in the womens pole vault at the Summer Olympics Games in Beijing.

•Swedish Prime Minster Fredrik Reinfeldt cancels all exercises and military ties between Sweden and Russia, saying that "[the] Russian invasion of Georgia is unacceptable and a crime against international law. The Russian action has changed [our view] of Russia as an international partner."

•According to general staff in Moscow, Russia has begun troop withdrawals from Georgia, following a pledge by President Dmitry Medvedev. However, Russian troops remain near the Georgian capital of Tbilisi.

•NATO convenes an emergency foreign ministers meeting on the crisis.

•Pakistani President Pervez

Anti spamming technology used to aid archiving

Technology used to help prevent access to websites by spamming bots, whilst still allowing access by human users is now being used to help archiving efforts. reCAPTCHA are now distributing words that cannot be read by optical character recognition software to its 40,000 sites which use its software. The results of the text entered by the users are then used by the archivers to replace the unrecognised words.

reCAPTCHA technology, which was first developed by Luis von Ahn at Carnegie Mellon University, Pittsburgh, has previously helped digital archiving of records such as the New York Times archives. By distributing the unknown words with a control word both the control of human access and blocking or bots can be achieved whilst still gaining the feedback on the unknown word, with the collected responses then compared to ensure accuracy. The process

has said to have reached an accuracy rate of 99.1% which is higher than that required by archivists and with CAPTCHA technology being used over 100 million times each day the process will go a long way with helping to digitalise many more archives, such as at the Internet Archive, which contain yellowed papers which cannot be recognised automatically by computers.

Pakistan's Musharraf announces resignation

Pervez Musharraf announced in a speech that was broadcast today on national television that he will resign from his position as President of Pakistan. He had been facing impeachment on charges of violating the constitution and gross misconduct.

The hour-long speech started at 13:00 local time (07:00 UTC). In it, Musharraf explained in Urdu his reasons for resigning.

"If I was doing this just for myself, I might have chosen a different course," he said, early in the speech. "But I put Pakistan first, as always," he continued. "Whether I win or lose the impeachment, the dignity of the nation would be damaged, the office of the president harmed."

The former President explained that, "even if I beat this impeachment, relations between the presidency and the government can never be fixed." He said that he believes that "pillars of the state – parliament and the judiciary – would be harmed and, God forbid, the army might have been dragged in," if he did not resign.

Despite his resignation, he remained adamant that the charges against him are incorrect.

"Not a single charge can be proved against me," he emphasized.

Just three days ago, the chief spokesperson for Musharraf denied reports that came out Thursday indicating that the president would step down within days.

McCain and Obama participate in Saddleback Church forum

United States Presidential candidates Senators Barack Obama and John McCain each participated in a live forum broadcast from Saddleback Church in Lake Forest. The forum, moderated by pastor Rick Warren, was scheduled to showcase the candidates to an evangelical segment of the population, who account for 26.3% of the American public.

During the forum the candidates were each individually asked a series of identical questions by the pastor, with Senator Barack Obama going first and Senator John McCain taking his turn second. Senator McCain traveled to the church and waited in a green room while Obama was speaking, and by agreement did not listen to the questions or Senator Obama's responses. On some questions the candidates differed in their interpretations.

When asked whom they believed were the three wisest people to rely on as president, Obama answered that his wife and grandmother were at the top of his list along with a mix of Republican and Democratic Senators. McCain comprised his list of a range of people: the architect of the troop surge in Iraq, General David Petraeus; Democratic Congressman and civil rights leader John Lewis; and the former CEO of eBay, Meg Whitman.

In response to being questioned about their toughest decisions in life, Obama answered that deciding to oppose the Iraq War in 2002 was his toughest, while McCain cited his refusal to leave his men behind in a POW camp in Vietnam when given the chance.

On some philosophical questions the candidates differed in their moral stances. When asked when they believed individuals should be given human rights, Obama responded that the question was "above [his] pay grade" while McCain decisively replied that he believed it should occur "at the moment of conception." On the concept of evil, Obama related it to the situation in Darfur and on America's streets. McCain related it to radical Islamic extremism relaying that he believed evil should be "defeated." He then promised that as president he would hunt Osama bin Laden to the "gates of hell."

On a few questions the candidates had similar responses. They both answered that the biggest moral dilemmas in their lives were personal mistakes they had made when they were younger. For Obama, it was his drug use, for McCain it was his failed first marriage.

Both candidates were on the stage together briefly between the interviews and shook hands and hugged in a moment symbolic of Warren's call for civility at the beginning and end of the forum.

Today in History

1782 – American Revolutionary War: Ten months after the British surrender at the Siege of Yorktown, a combined force of British rangers and American Indians routed Kentucky militiamen at the Battle of Blue

Licks.

1812 – War of 1812: American Navy frigate USS Constitution defeated British Royal Navy frigate HMS Guerrière off the coast of Nova Scotia, Canada, earning her nickname "Old Ironsides".

1960 – Russian space dogs Belka and Strelka began to orbit the Earth aboard the Korabl-Sputnik-2 spacecraft.

1991 – During a Soviet coup attempt led by Gennady Yanayev and other top level government officials, it was announced that Mikhail Gorbachev had been relieved of his duties as President "due to illness".

2003 – A car bomb destroyed the United Nations headquarters at Baghdad's Canal Hotel, killing Brazilian diplomat Sérgio Vieira de Mello and 21 others.

August 19 is Afghan Independence Day; National Aviation Day in the United States

Quote of the Day

Must I at length the Sword of Justice draw?
Oh curst Effects of necessary Law!
How ill my Fear they by my Mercy scan,
Beware the Fury of a Patient Man.

~ John Dryden ~

Word of the Day

excise v

1. To impose an excise tax on something.
2. To cut out; to remove.

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