



Top Stories

11 suspects in UK air bomb plot charged

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JonBenet Ramsey murder suspect back in America

John Mark Carr, the man who says he killed six-year-old JonBenét Ramsey ten years ago, has arrived in the US after being extradited from Bangkok in Thailand.

Featured story

Australia to detain Burmese boatpeople on Nauru

Eight Burmese boatpeople, who are seeking refugee status in Australia will be sent to the immigration processing facility in Nauru island by the Australian authorities.

Wikipedia Current Events

• Democratic Republic of the Congo general election, 2006 : While a meeting between Bemba and foreign ambassadors representing the International Committee Accompanying the Transition to Democracy (CIAT) is taking place in Kinshasa, clashes break between Kabila and Bemba forces, and Bemba's residence, which hosts the meeting, comes under attack, reportedly by heavy machine guns and artillery. Plans are being drawn up to rescue the foreign diplomats

Wikipedia Current Events

stranded in the Bemba residence's shelter.

•Italy offers to lead the United Nations peacekeeping forces in Lebanon instead of France. Italy has offered to provide 2,000 forces, more than any other nation, and France is only offering to provide 200 civil engineers.

•The Government of Kyrgyzstan warns that the Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan, a terrorist group affiliated with al Qaeda, and other militant Islamic groups, are preparing to attack southern cities like Osh.

•Eleven suspects are charged over the 2006 transatlantic aircraft plot in the United Kingdom as police find bomb-making equipment and martyrdom videos during their inquiries.

•The Channel Tunnel, that connects the UK to France, is closed today due to smoke coming from a freight train in the tunnel.

•Virginia Tech closed campus and canceled classes today, the first day of classes, during the search for a man who was suspected of murdering a hospital security guard and a police officer. The suspect, William Morva, is in custody.

•A bomb goes off in a Moscow market killing 10 and wounding about 40. Authorities are not ruling out terrorism. It appears to have been intentional.

Wikipedia Current Events

•New Zealand: Tuheitia Paki, the eldest son of Dame Te Atairangikaahu, is selected as the new Māori King.

•Carla Del Ponte, the chief Yugoslav war crimes prosecutor criticises Serbia for its failure to arrest former Bosnian Serb army chief, General Ratko Mladić as the war crime trials of seven Bosnian Serb military and paramilitary commanders continues.

•At least 51 people killed and another 138 injured in a train crash north of Cairo when two trains travelling on the same line collided.

Hungary's Constitution Day hit by storm: 3 left dead

On Sunday, between one and one and a half million people had gathered in Budapest for the Constitution Day fireworks when a severe storm hit.

According to the Budapest Fire Department, a 30-to-40 year-old man and a 12-year-old girl died when a large tree fell on a crowd of spectators on the Buda side, while the cause of an elderly woman's death in Pest remains unclear yet. One man is still missing.

The storm brought winds of at least 100 km/h and large hail. Roof tiles were torn off, trees knocked down, and cars and windows smashed. A stage at the celebration collapsed, causing panic among the audience.

Most of the injuries were caused by falling tiles and debris from roofs. The fire services were called to 250 locations during the night and reports of damage are expected to increase during the day.

"Five minutes into the display a wind starts rolling in, about a minute later, the wind is reaching 70km/h... then the rain comes, but so hard and so large that it slaps your skin like a needle, then hail fell from the sky, people panicking and screaming and running over each other. I lost my sister and her friend, and on my way there were two disabled people in wheelchairs, people just jumping over and pushing them," Armand Versace said.

Meteorologists say they had warned that the storm was approaching. Prime Minister Ferenc Gyurcsany has ordered an inquiry into why the event went ahead.

The Budapest City Council security committee held an extraordinary meeting late on Sunday and the civic security directorate decided to set up a special unit to help those in need.

11 suspects in UK air bomb plot charged

Charges have been laid against 11 of the 23 suspects being detained by British police for an alleged plot to blow up several trans-Atlantic airliners.

Eight men were charged with conspiracy to commit murder and preparing acts of terrorism said Peter Clarke, deputy commissioner of Scotland Yard's anti-terrorist branch during a news conference in London, Monday.

The eight are Abdullah Ahmed Ali, 25, Tanvir Hussain, 25, Umar Islam, 28, Arafat Waheed Khan, 25, Assad Ali Sarwar, 26, Adam Khatib, 19, Ibrahim Savant 25, and Waheed Zaman, 22.

Two others were charged with failing to disclose information about potential acts of terrorism, whilst a 17-year-old is charged with possession of articles useful to a person preparing acts of terrorism under Section Five of the Terrorism Act, 2006.

A woman was released without charges being laid leaving an additional 11 suspects in custody without charges, according to the Crown Prosecution Service.

The suspects have been in detention since August 10 when they were arrested in connection with an alleged plot to set off explosives on at least 10 flights between the United States and the United Kingdom.

Susan Hemming, head of the CPS counter terrorism division, said the alleged plot was to "manufacture and smuggle the component parts of improvised explosive devices on to aircraft and assemble and detonate them on board".

Manhunt underway after woman and her three children found dead

A woman and her three children, aged five to 11, have been found dead in their home in Cheadle Hulme in Greater Manchester, prompting a murder investigation by police.

Officers were summoned to the scene on Turves Road last night after neighbours became concerned about the well being of the house's inhabitants. Greater Manchester Police had to break

into the house, and when they got in, they discovered four bodies which had been there for some time.

In a press conference this afternoon, Greater Manchester Police said that they want to trace Rheman Arshad, a thirty six year-old male who was living with the four victims in the house. Detective Superintendent Martin Bottomley said: "We are keen to trace the fifth occupant of the house, Mr Arshad. We are concerned for his welfare. We are treating it as a murder inquiry, therefore we need to speak to him. There are a number of strands to the inquiry but the most immediate one is to trace the whereabouts of Mr Arshad."

He has been missing for four weeks, and Mr Bottomley have asked him or anybody who has seen him to contact them. "We have alerted every police force in the country. We want to speak to him in relation to the horrendous events in the house. We are liaising with forces abroad." Mr Arshad, a local taxi driver, may be driving a BMW 320 series sports coupe.

Mr Bottomley said the cause of death is not yet known. He also said that post-mortem examinations are yet to take place. "The bodies may have been lying there for up to four weeks and you can imagine in the hot weather we have been faced with a devastating scene."

This morning, a spokeswoman for Greater Manchester Police said: "A murder investigation has been launched after four bodies were discovered in Cheadle Hulme. Police were called to the address and officers attended and forced entry. They discovered four

bodies, believed to be a woman and three children. It is believed the bodies may have been there for some time."

Winifred Lomax, a seventy four year-old retired shop worker who lives on Turves Road, said: "They had not been seen for a few weeks and someone looked through their letterbox and there was a nasty smell."

This afternoon, an eyewitness told Wikinews what she saw: "I walked past the scene earlier today, and the terrace house was surrounded with tape. Several officers in white forensic suits were examining the barricaded area and a huge white tent was erected in front of the house's front door."

The woman and her children are thought to be Asian.

NASA discovers new evidence of dark matter

New observations of the distribution of mass in a pair of colliding galaxies show clear evidence of the separation of dark matter and normal matter, according to NASA scientists.

"This is the most energetic cosmic event, besides the Big Bang, which we know about," said Maxim Markevitch of the Harvard-Smithsonian Center for Astrophysics and member of the NASA team that studied images collected with the Chandra X-ray observatory, the Hubble Space Telescope, the European Southern Observatory's Very Large Telescope and the Magellan optical telescopes.

The observation confirms that the bulk of the material in the universe is invisible dark matter, which is currently detectable only by observing the gravitational

force it exerts.

"A universe that's dominated by dark stuff seems preposterous, so we wanted to test whether there were any basic flaws in our thinking," said team leader Doug Clowe of the University of Arizona at Tucson. "These results are direct proof that dark matter exists."

Because gravity can deflect light, the team was able to detect the presence of large amounts of dark matter through gravitational lensing, which leads to the distortion of the images of objects that lie behind the dark matter. To make their discovery, the scientists trained their telescopes on a cluster of galaxies officially designated 1E0657-56, but informally known as the bullet cluster because of its shape.

The bullet shape is the result of the violent collision of a small galaxy cluster with another, larger cluster as normal matter in the galaxies interacts during the collision. Dark matter, however, does not experience any of the forces that affect normal matter, other than gravity, and ended up separating from the normal matter during the event.

These results will be published in an upcoming issue of *Astrophysical Journal Letters*

UK soldier killed in Afghanistan named by Ministry of Defence

The British soldier who was killed in southern Afghanistan yesterday has today been named by the Ministry of Defence.

Cpl Bryan Budd, of the 3rd Battalion of the Parachute Regiment, was killed in Helmand province at about noon local time during a gun battle with Taliban

forces in the volatile area.

"Cpl Budd died as a result of injuries sustained during the contact. Three other British soldiers received minor injuries," said an MoD spokesman.

So far, twenty British armed forces personnel have died in Afghanistan since 2001.

Yesterday, Defence Secretary Des Browne said: "I was deeply saddened to be informed of the death today of a British soldier and the injuries of three others as they supported the NATO mission in Afghanistan. I wish to express my sincere condolences to their families and friends. My thoughts are with them at this difficult time."

Buffalo, N.Y. restaurant to end nearly 30-year tradition

Buffalo, New York – After nearly thirty years, Pano's Restaurant at 1081 Elmwood Avenue in Buffalo, New York will end a tradition of being open 24 hours a day, seven days a week by ending its overnight food service.

The tradition for Buffalonians, who are able to enjoy drinks at the bars and clubs until 4:00 a.m. will end sometime at the end of August or September, according to overnight manager Wendi Dittmar and restaurant accountant Roseanne Jones.

"We will be starting the closure of the overnight shift sometime in the next 2 weeks to a month," said Dittmar in an exclusive interview with Wikinews.

Jones told Wikinews that owner Pano Georgiadis is "just fed up" with the "destruction, the walk-outs of bills and fights that the 'drunk' people cause" in his

restaurant.

Pano's opened in 1977 on the day of the blizzard of '77' and has "remained open for 24 hours since then", only closing for an hour at a time on the weekends to clean up and prepare the restaurant for breakfast, said Georgiadis.

Artvoice who holds the "Best of Buffalo" competition every year where readers vote for their favorite Buffalo place, has listed Pano's as the Best of Buffalo for best brunch, best Greek restaurant, best patio and best super-cheap breakfasts for 2006.

Dittmar also says that Georgiadis is expected to make several "public service announcements" within the next few weeks to "thank customers for their patronage."

Manhunt underway for 2 murders in Virginia; Virginia Tech closed

William Morva, who escaped from a hospital in Blacksburg on Sunday, is in custody. He is a suspect in the murders of hospital security guard, Derrick McFarland on Sunday, and police officer Cpl. Eric Sutphin.

Virginia Tech has closed their campus and cancelled classes on Monday. They issued an emergency advisory at 10:30 am local time.

William Morva, 24, was taken to a hospital after complaining of a sprained wrist and leg, and escaped early Sunday morning after wounding a police officer and killing Derrick McFarland, an unarmed security guard. Around 7:30 am, Morva shot and fatally wounded Cpl. Eric Sutphin while he was on patrol on a local trail. Virginia Tech cancelled classes

after a report that Morva was seen in a campus building. The building was evacuated, but he was not found.

At 3:36 pm EDT August 21, 2006, Montgomery County police reported over the police scanner that William Morva was captured and taken into custody. He was captured west of the rugby fields on the Virginia Tech campus. This has been confirmed by a statement by the Blacksburg Police.

Google re-opens online word processor service

According to published reports and information posted to the Writely.com website and blog, the service has re-opened its Writely account beta program.

The Writely beta was launched in August 2005, and Google acquired the Writely technology on March 9, 2006. The core Writely service provides a free online collaborative word processor which is widely viewed as an alternative and potential competitor to more traditional locally-run word processing software.

The service has claimed that thousands of people had previously registered for the service exclusively driven by word-of-mouth and the Writely blog. Shortly after being acquired by Google, the company greatly restricted the service and maintained a future customer sign up waiting list.

Writely re-opened its beta service on August 17, 2006. According to the company's blog, the timing of the re-launch was due to a positive product review on CNET combined with persistent email requests asking the service to re-open. Additionally, Writely is

planning to make its service available as part of the Google Account sign-in sometime on the near future.

A number of industry sources have speculated on why Google chose to issue a press release on August 17, 2006 touting its involvement in a Star Trek convention and failed to release any information on the Writely beta re-open. While Google has proven reticent to release and publish product information in the past, the lack of any published information for the Writely beta re-open has generated a greater than usual number of web posts and articles addressing the subject.

Channel Tunnel closed after smoke seen coming from train

Thirty-four people had to be evacuated this lunchtime after a fire started on a lorry which was being transported on a freight train in the Channel Tunnel.

Eurotunnel, the operator of the Channel Tunnel, said all services had to be suspended this afternoon due to the small blaze in which nobody was hurt.

John Keefe, a spokesman for Eurotunnel, said: "It was a freight shuttle going through with about 34 people on board, who have all been evacuated safely.

"Eurotunnel is conducting checks of the tunnel and its equipment. Once these investigations are completed, Eurotunnel will commence a progressive restart of commercial services."

The company also said services through the Tunnel would hopefully resume later today. "Unfortunately with this being a very busy time of year, it's going to take a few hours to clear the

backlog once we've got started again," said Mr Keefe.

A Eurostar spokesman said: "We are advising passengers to avoid travelling today if possible. Tickets can be exchanged for another day."

The Channel Tunnel is a 31 mile long rail tunnel beneath the English Channel which connects Folkestone in Kent to Coquelles near Calais in northern France.

JonBenet Ramsey murder suspect back in America

John Mark Carr, the man who has been accused of killing six-year-old JonBenét Ramsey ten years ago, has arrived in the US after being extradited from Bangkok in Thailand.

The forty-one year-old American schoolteacher was escorted by US security officials from Bangkok, but officers from the Los Angeles Police Department accompanied him after he went through customs. He was then whisked off in a helicopter and taken to the Twin Towers Correctional Facility in downtown Los Angeles.

"Mr. Carr is expected to remain in the custody of local authorities while the Boulder District Attorney's Office seeks his extradition to Colorado," a statement from the Immigration and Customs Enforcement said.

In a press conference on Wednesday, Carr confessed to being with JonBenet when she died, adding that her death was an accident. "I was with JonBenét when she died. I loved JonBenét. She died accidentally. I am so very sorry for what happened to JonBenét. It's very important for me that everyone knows that I love her very much, that her death

was unintentional, that it was an accident."

Despite his confession, Carr's then ex-wife said that he was in Alabama with her when the murder occurred.

JonBenét was found beaten and strangled in her Colorado home on the day after Christmas in 1996.

Indian shehnai Maestro Ustad Bismillah Khan Passes Away

The legendary Indian shehnai maestro Ustad Bismillah Khan Sahib (March 21, 1916 - August 21, 2006) was the third classical musician to be awarded the Bharat Ratna (in 2001), the highest civilian honour in India. According to the Indian Home Ministry officials, the musical maestro would be given a state funeral. Flags would be flown at half mast in all the government buildings as part of the mourning.

He also had the distinction of heralding in India's Independence, mesmerizing audiences before the start of Pandit Nehru's speech and the unfurling of the tricolour on August 15, 1947. Ustad Bismillah Khan Sahib were one of the few people to be awarded all the top four civilian awards.

New Zealand riot police use batons to disperse unruly pub-crawl

The annual 'Undie 500' road-trip, in which 400 Canterbury and Otago university students took part, turned into a riot when students started throwing bottles around and lighting fires. The riot started in Dunedin on Castle Street North, which is known for its parties. In the Undie 500 road-trip, students go from Christchurch to Dunedin and along the way stopping at five pubs. It is the biggest pub crawl of its kind in

Australasia.

The police found students watching the New Zealand Fire Service battling the fires they had lit.

Maggie Kleist, an Otago University student, said: "The police were so outnumbered, and people were just getting each other worked up more and more and more and it was yeah, pretty intense."

Riot police then turned up to move students away with batons but more bottles were thrown and more fires were lit. "At this stage police moved the crowd with the use of batons," Allan Grindell, Police Senior Sergeant said.

Paul Chong, Students Association president, said: "Couch-burning and bottle-smashing aren't serious enough offences to justify bringing in baton-wielding police."

Allan Grindell said: "Many in the crowd were heavily intoxicated and drinking from bottles and cans."

An unnamed student said: "This is just out of control."

Sergeant Wayne Pitcaithly says 95 arrests were made. The police continued to dispersed crowds for 45 minutes.

"People were throwing bottles, everyone was getting arrested, the riot police came, and they were hitting people with their batons," said Canterbury Student Josh Binns.

NASA chooses Woomera, South Australia for rocket launch site

NASA has announced that rockets will be launched from Woomera in outback South Australia to service the International Space Station

(ISS) - starting in 2008. NASA has selected two American companies to launch rockets from the Woomera base. Rocket Plane Kistler and Space-X will conduct orbital flight tests and commercial operations. The Woomera site would also be used to launch cargo such as fuel and food to the ISS as often as every two weeks.

Woomera, named for an Aboriginal spear-throwing tool, was originally involved in testing of long-range missiles and rockets for Britain during the Cold War. The site was also recently used by the Australian government to incarcerate asylum-seeking refugees.

SpaceX based in California, and Rocketplane-Kistler of Oklahoma City, will share up to \$US500 million in NASA seed money to develop their launch vehicles. NASA has stated it wants commercial firms to take over ISS transportation services after the space shuttle fleet is retired in 2010.

SpaceX, owned by Internet entrepreneur and PayPal founder Elon Musk, made its launch debut in March with the Falcon 1 rocket but the vehicle failed shortly after lift-off. The two companies secured the NASA contract to demonstrate its "commercial orbital transportation services". Kistler has scheduled the first launch of its K-1 rocket from Woomera in late 2008.

Kistler said work on a \$100 million launch site at Woomera was expected to start in October. The site should be completed by the end of next year. Kistler Woomera chairman Alan Evans said the contract meant "hundreds of jobs" would be created within the aerospace industry in South

Australia. "The jobs will be within the high-level end of the spectrum of the space industry, which is great news for the state," he said.

K-1 will have crew transportation capabilities, meaning the Woomera site could see astronauts leave from Australia. The site may also be used to transport satellites into space for telecom companies and defence organisations. The K-1 launch vehicle is designed to be re-used 100 times. It is powered by liquid-propellant engines and lands back on Earth with the help of parachutes and airbags.

"Woomera was chosen because it can be used for polar and equatorial launches and because of its clean land areas," Mr Evans said. "Kistler has already spent US\$700 million developing this idea."

Rocketplane Kistler say their K-1 launch system will also provide low cost space access for satellites and research payloads. Their sub-orbital XP Spaceplane is 50% complete, and scheduled for first flight in late 2008. The K-1's hardware is 75% complete - and is scheduled for first flight in 2008.

Demand for biofuel irrigation worsens global water crisis

A report by the International Water Management Institute (IWMI) says rising demand for irrigation to produce food and biofuels will aggravate scarcities of water. "One in three people is enduring one form or another of water scarcity," states the report compiled by 700 experts.

IWMI warns there has to be a radical transformation in the management of water resources - citing as examples Australia, south-central China, and last year's devastating drought in

India. Report authors claim that the price of water could double or triple over the next two decades. The report, backed by the United Nations and farm research groups, shows that globally, water usage had increased by six times in the past 100 years and would double again by 2050 - driven mainly by irrigation and demands by agriculture.

Record oil prices and concerns about rapid onset climate change are driving more countries to produce biofuels - from sugarcane, corn or wood - as an alternative to fossil fuel. "If people are growing biofuels and food it will put another new stress," says David Molden, who led the study at the Sri Lanka-based IWMI. "The big solution is to find ways to grow more food with less water. Basically, more crop per drop," Molden said. "The number one recommendation... is to look to improve rain-fed systems in Sub-Saharan Africa and South Asia."

The report says conquering hunger and coping with an estimated 3 billion more humans by 2050 will result in an 80 percent increase in water use for agriculture. Irrigation absorbs around 74 percent and is likely to surge by 2050.

"We will have to change business as usual in order to deal with growing scarcity," said Frank Rijsberman, director general of the IWMI, of the report released at the 2006 "World Water Week" conference in Stockholm. Solutions included helping poor countries to grow more food with available fresh water via simple, low-cost measures in a shift from past policies that favoured expensive dams or canals, the report said.

According to Rijsberman, there are

two types of shortages: those observed in regions where water is over-exploited, causing a lowering of groundwater levels and rivers to dry up; and those in countries lacking the technical and financial resources to capture water - despite its abundance.

Billions of people in Asia and Africa already faced water shortages because of poor water management, he said. "We will not run out of bottled water any time soon, but some countries have already run out of water to produce their own food," he said.

The report said that a calorie of food took roughly 1 litre of water to produce. But a kilo of grain needed only 500-4,000 litres - while a kilo of industrially produced meat took 10,000 litres.

"Without improvements in water productivity the consequences of this will be even more widespread water scarcity and rapidly increasing water prices." Rijsberman said water scarcity in Africa was caused by a lack of infrastructure to get the water to the people who needed it. "The water is there, the rainfall is there, but the infrastructure isn't there," Rijsberman told reporters.

Other recommendations for certain regions include the extension and the improvement of agriculture using rainwater, the introduction of cereal varieties that need less water as well as the development of irrigation systems.

But the priority, Rijsberman stresses, is to change mentalities and often outdated government policies. "Government policies and their approach to water are probably the most urgent that need changing in the short term," he said.

There is, he says, enough land, water and human capacity to produce enough food for a growing population over the next 50 years, but one of the challenges is to provide enough water for agriculture without damaging the environment. "Agriculture is driving water scarcity and water scarcity is driving environmental degradation and destruction," he said.

In Australia last week, Rijsberman said he would "not be surprised to see the price of water double or triple over the next two decades."

Australia to detain Burmese boatpeople on Nauru

Eight Burmese boatpeople, who arrived off Western Australia's Ashmore Reef last week, say they wish to claim refugee status. The group of 8 men, aged between 24 and 40, are being held in detention on Christmas Island by the Australian Federal Government. They will be sent to Nauru after identity interviews and medical checks are completed.

According to The Age newspaper, the men are from a refugee camp on the Thai-Burmese border, and may be from the Karen tribe, who are battling Burma's brutal military Government. Karen rebels have been at war with the central Government for 57 years.

An Immigration department spokesman confirmed that the eight men claimed to be from Burma. Two of the men have contacted immigration lawyers seeking assistance with asylum claims. David Manne, from Melbourne-based Refugee and Immigration Legal Centre, said the other six were likely to do the same. "There's a very strong likelihood that they are genuine

refugees," he said.

The men were first spotted by the Australian Customs Service at Ashmore Reef, 610km north of Broome, WA on August 13. They were sent by Navy vessel to Christmas Island - 2,400 km northwest of Perth, WA. The men have been held since Friday as part of the Howard Government's Pacific Solution to keep asylum seekers out of the country.

In 2005, the Department of Immigration began construction of an Immigration Reception and Processing Centre on Christmas Island, due for completion late in 2006. The facility is estimated to cost \$210 million, and will contain 800 beds.

The news of the boatpeople's arrival became public last week as Prime Minister John Howard scrapped controversial new migration laws. The proposed laws would have excised the Australian mainland for immigration purposes.

Ashmore Reef, already excised from Australia's migration zone, means the men have no legal entitlement to be brought to Australia for processing. They have no access to the Australian court system to argue their claims or contest the rulings of the Immigration Department.

Mr Manne said he was concerned that the circumstances of the men's confinement could hamper their attempts to communicate with lawyers. He said the Burmese men should be afforded the same rights as the West Papuans or Vietnamese asylum-seekers who recently made it to Australian shores. "It's absolutely crucial these people be given a fair go, so that they can actually speak with

us properly about the issues," he said. Mr Manne says he has made several requests of the Department of Immigration in Canberra.

"They're asylum seekers... they believe that they'd be persecuted if sent to Burma, and we have agreed to act on their behalf." He was unable to say whether the group was dropped off by people smugglers, as Immigration Minister Senator Amanda Vanstone claims.

"What we do know is they're seeking refugee status, that is, protection from brutal human rights abuse," he said. The Burmese regime has recently waged an aggressive attack on Karen insurgents - forcing thousands of villagers to hide in the jungle or seek refuge in Thailand. There are 140,000 refugee camps in seven camps along the Thai-Burma border.

Australian Greens Senator Kerry Nettle says the government must allow the Burmese group to be brought to Australia to process the asylum-seeker's claims. "The government needs to ensure that all asylum seekers are offered legal support," she said. "The best way to ensure the Burmese asylum seekers have full access to their lawyer is to bring them to Australia while their asylum claims are assessed."

Meanwhile the near-bankrupt Nauru Government has urged Australia to "speed up asylum seeker processing" in their country. Nauru says Australia is taking far too long to process asylum seekers. Currently two refugees remain on Nauru - both Iraqi men. The men have been held in detention on the remote tiny island for five years.

According to The Age, the Nauru Government has approved a plan to impose financial penalties on Australia if asylum seekers are forced to languish on the near-bankrupt island. The report says if they have not been processed and either returned or resettled within three months, their visas will have to be renewed each month, with the cost increasing by \$500 for each renewal.

Nauru's Foreign Minister David Adeang raised serious concerns about the mental state of the detainees. He says Muhammad Faisal's condition worsened sharply after he was re-interviewed by ASIO. Mr Adeang has asked for the Government to evacuate the Mr Faisal immediately, he says he is also concerned about the mental health of the other Iraqi man left on Nauru. The Australian Government claims advice from ASIO that the man may be a "security threat."

Nauru is the world's smallest island nation, covering just 21 km². Since 2001 it has accepted aid from the Australian government. In exchange for this aid, Nauru houses an 'offshore' detention centre for Australia.

Polish peace activist imprisoned

On August 9, 2006 in the Polish city of Poznań, Krzysztof Wantoch-Rekowski, an anti-hunger, anti-war campaigner from the international Food Not Bombs network was detained by police.

He was sentenced to six weeks imprisonment on the charge of "destroying" his identity card, which is a criminally punishable action under Article 276 of the Polish Criminal Code.

In a press statement made on August 15, supporters said that Wantoch-Rekowski did not destroy his card, he only stuck a "paper illustration" on it to prevent it from falling apart ("podkleił 'papierową ilustracją' swój rozpadający się ze starości dowód"). Typical (old-style) Polish identity papers are made of paper and soft carton and must be carried at all times.

Wantoch-Rekowski's supporters claim that his detention is an example of the "absurdity" of an increase in imprisonment rates against "the homeless, the unemployed and those living on the margins of society" which has taken place, according to them, since the parliamentary and presidential elections in late 2005 were won by the right-wing Prawo i Sprawiedliwość (PiS) party and one of its leaders, Lech Kaczyński.

The number held in prison in Poland increased by 5% from about 83,000 to about 87,000 in the first six months of 2006, making it one of the highest imprisonment rates in the European Union. The imprisonment level in Poland increased 100% since the post-communist epoch, beginning in 1989.

Today in History

1485 - The Battle of Bosworth Field decisively ended the Wars of the Roses.

1851 - The yacht America won the first America's Cup near the Isle of Wight, England.

1864 - The Red Cross movement led by Henry Dunant officially began when twelve European nations signed the First Geneva Convention.

1910 - Korea was annexed by Japan with the signing of the Japan-Korea Annexation Treaty.

1989 - Nolan Ryan struck out

Rickey Henderson, becoming the first pitcher in Major League Baseball to record 5000 strikeouts.

Quote of the Day

"No lesson seems to be so deeply inculcated by the experience of life as that you should never trust experts. If you believe doctors, nothing is wholesome: if you believe the theologians, nothing is innocent: if you believe the soldiers, nothing is safe. They all require their strong wine diluted by a very large admixture of insipid common sense."
~ Robert Gascoyne-Cecil, Lord Salisbury

Word of the Day

torporific; adj

1. Inducing torpor; tending to cause apathy or lethargy.

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+1-866-653-4265
(toll-free in the U.S.)
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