



### Top Stories

#### NASA: Signs of liquid water found on surface of Mars

NASA scientists have announced that the Mars Global Surveyor has captured images of deposits in gullies on the surface of the planet Mars which have been created since the areas were photographed seven years ago. These deposits are believed to be the residue of liquid water breaking out of cliffs and crater walls, carrying sediment downhill through the gullies, and later evaporating. The gullies are located inside the Terra Sirenum crater and the Centauri Montes regions.

#### Same-sex marriage reaffirmed in Canada

The Canadian House of Commons has voted 175 to 123 to defeat a motion by the Conservative minority government to re-open the same-sex marriage debate.

### Featured story

#### Fiji suspended from Commonwealth

At an urgent meeting held today in London the Commonwealth Realm has decided to suspend Fiji, following the military coup that took place in Fiji three days ago. The suspension is immediate.

### Wikipedia Current Events

• Four people are shot in a Chicago skyscraper with three of the victims in a critical condition.

### Wikipedia Current Events

- Bushfires in the Australian state of Victoria threaten at least six townships in the Gippsland region with extreme weather conditions over the weekend expected to increase the danger. The Victorian Department of Education closes 24 schools due to threat of fire.
- Ethiopian war in Somalia: The Somali and Ethiopian militaries engage the Islamic Court Union inside Somalia.
- Officials organizing the 2006 ASEAN summit in the Philippines, originally due to begin on December 10, have announced that it has been postponed due to Severe Tropical Storm Utor. Officials also denied that the postponement was due to a terror threat.
- Research linking the spread of the AIDS virus with malarial infections in Africa is published in Science.
- Fiji is suspended from the Commonwealth of Nations following a meeting of Commonwealth foreign ministers in London.
- Former Prime Minister of Fiji Laisenia Qarase warns that Fijians are planning a campaign of civil disobedience against the regime of Commodore Frank Bainimarama.
- Alaska State Representative Tom Anderson (R) is taken into custody by the FBI in connection with the probe of alleged

### Wikipedia Current Events

unethical association by Alaska Legislature with VECO Corporation.

#### Fiji suspended from Commonwealth

At an urgent meeting held today in London the Commonwealth Realm has decided to suspend Fiji, following the military coup that took place in Fiji three days ago. The suspension is immediate.

The decision was made unanimously by the Ministerial Action Group. The group contained eight foreign ministers from Commonwealth countries, including United Kingdom.

Don McKinnon, secretary general of the Commonwealth, described the coup as a: "a serious violation of the Commonwealth's fundamental principles." Mr McKinnon said: "Fiji's military regime should forthwith be suspended from the Councils of the Commonwealth pending the restoration of democracy and the rule of law in that country. It would be our endeavour to obviously engage with the regime as soon as we can in order to do what we can to bring the country back to democracy."

The suspension results in Fiji taking part in any Commonwealth meetings nor activities. However existing technical assistance will continue but no new assistance programmes will be started.

The military coup that took place a few days ago has already been condemned by Australia, New Zealand, United Kingdom, Fiji's Council of Chiefs and religious groups. New Zealand has barred the military leader and president of Fiji, Commander Frank Bainimarama, from visiting New Zealand where some of his family live and has also banned seasonal workers coming from Fiji to work in New Zealand.

Commander Bainimarama has sworn in Doctor Jona Senilagakali as the caretaker Prime Minister. Dr Senilagakali is an old military medic and relatively new at politics.

### **Bush reacts to the Iraq Study Report**

When introducing the Iraq Study Group Report to a Senate Committee, former Secretary of State James Baker emphasized that all the 79 recommendations in the report complemented each other and had to be taken together. This was not a "fruit salad" from which one could pick and choose. Despite this, President Bush is giving indications that he is going to do just that. While agreeing that the Report had some good points to make, he said that he had also asked the Pentagon, the State Department and other government agencies to reflect on the Iraq situation and report their conclusions to him.

The report proposes progressive changes to the role of the troops deployed in Iraq, from combat to the training of Iraqi forces and the withdrawal of all combat troops by early 2008, depending on local conditions. The President made it clear that matters concerning the deployment of troops were for the military to determine. A change of strategy is expected to be

announced within the next few weeks.

Bush has said that he will not talk with Syria or Iran unless they meet certain conditions. Syria would have to "stop destabilizing" the government of the Lebanon. Iran must "verifiably suspend their nuclear enrichment program." In declaring these conditions, Bush and Tony Blair, prime movers in the invasion of Iraq, are in agreement.

Tony Blair reflected that the report's recommendations that settling the Arab/Israeli disputes in the area should be given priority. He has said that the key to solving the problems in Iraq, Lebanon, and elsewhere lay in settling the two-state disputes in Palestine. He announced that he would be visiting the region shortly. He would bring his experience in Northern Ireland to bear on the problem, indicating that persistence was needed to achieve reconciliation. President Bush said he supported this initiative.

Meanwhile, Israel's Prime Minister, Ehud Olmert, flatly rejected the notion that there was any connection between the problems in Palestine and the situation in Iraq. He stated that the time may not be right for Israel to be negotiating with Syria and he reiterated Israel's absolute opposition to Iran's development of nuclear weapons. Robert Gates, the new candidate US Secretary of Defense, asserted that Iran is surrounded by nuclear powers, including Israel. Shimon Peres, Israel's deputy prime minister, refused to affirm or deny whether Israel had a nuclear weapons capability, saying that such uncertainty was a defense in itself.

### **Boil water advisory lifted in Vancouver**

On Monday, November 27, 2006 the Medical Health Officers of the Vancouver Coastal Health and Fraser Health recommended that the boil water advisory that had been in effect for the City of Vancouver, North Vancouver, and Burnaby could now be lifted. Hospitals, care facilities, schools, food premises and the public are no longer being advised to boil drinking water or to use an alternate drinking water source. The boil water advisory for the Greater Vancouver Regional District (GVRD) had been lifted days before but had remained in effect for the listed areas.

Turbidity is on a downward trend but still remains above pre-storm levels. Water may continue to appear cloudy or discoloured for some time. The Medical Health Officers, monitoring and testing the water, at no point found the water un-safe, but felt the boil water advisory was justified as a safety precaution. It has been advised that people with comprised immune systems should continue to boil drinking water or drink filtered water.

### **Two Buffalo, New York police officers shot while on duty**

Two police officers working for the Buffalo Police Department in Buffalo, New York have been shot numerous times and still managed to apprehend the suspect, without firing a shot back at the suspect. Both officers were rushed to Erie County Medical Center for treatment.

Officer Patricia Parete, 41 was shot twice at close range and had to be revived by paramedics on the scene. Parete was shot in the jaw and the bullet severed her spinal cord. Parete already underwent

one surgical procedure and her condition is "very grave," according to H. McCarthy Gipson, the Buffalo Police Commissioner. Her condition remains serious. Her condition was upgraded from critical to serious after surgery on December 6, 2006. A bullet proof vest stopped the first bullet from penetrating her chest area.

Officer Carl Andolina was shot twice, once in the left arm and once in the neck. The bullet piercing his neck is still stuck near his throat, and doctors cannot remove it until swelling around the area goes down. He has since been released from the hospital to recover at home before doctors remove the lodged bullet.

Both officers were shot by a .38-caliber revolver. At least 5 shots total were fired.

The two officers were responding to a call at about 9:00 p.m. on December 5, that a male and female were fighting inside a Valero gas station located on West Chippewa and Elmwood Avenues in Downtown Buffalo when one of the suspects, Varner Harris, 18 who lives in Buffalo fled police. When the officers began to chase Harris, he turned and fired several shots at the officers, wounding both of them. Despite being shot two times, Andolina still managed to give a short chase to apprehend the suspect, tackling him to the ground. Neither officer fired any shots.

"He [Harris] immediately opened fire. The officers never exchanged gunfire," said a spokesman for Buffalo's Mayor's office, Peter K. Cutler.

Harris is facing two counts of attempted murder.

### **New Zealand National party: "TVNZ must explain coup threat coverage"**

The New Zealand National party is asking state owned entity TVNZ (Television New Zealand), why they broadcast the coup threats the military commander, Commodore Frank Bainimarama, made live to the world.

"The question that TVNZ must answer is was this a legitimate media conference, or were they acting under the instruction of Frank Bainimarama. Be it inadvertent or not, the New Zealand public broadcaster has become a tool of the coup leader," Gerry Brownlee, state owned enterprises spokesman for the National party, said.

"Television New Zealand news is run by professional journalists and has a duty to cover news of major significance," Andrew Little, national secretary of Engineering, Printing and Manufacturing Union which represents journalists, said.

During question and answer time in Parliament on Thursday 8 December, Mr Brownlee asked Dr Michael Cullen if the broadcasting was consistent with government public services policies. Dr Cullen did not answer the question as he said that there was no evidence or reports and Dr Cullen does not trust Mr Brownlee's word.

"This is not a question about whether the Commodore's threats were news. They were. This is a question about whether, without TVNZ's satellite assistance, the Commodore would have been as effective in his campaign of fear," Mr Brownlee said.

"[The journalists] and they alone should decide what should be covered. The day that a politician

decides what the state broadcaster covers will be a sad day for the integrity of New Zealand democracy," Mr Little said. The union seeking insurances "The union is seeking an assurance from the National Party that media censorship is not National Party policy."

Mr Brownlee commented: "I for one don't want to see TVNZ becoming the Al Jazeera of the South Pacific..."

### **STS-116 launch scrubbed**

NASA has scrubbed the launch of Space Shuttle Discovery on mission STS-116 to the International Space Station during the final stages of the countdown, after the weather conditions were considered unfavourable for launch, due to a low cloud ceiling and strong winds caused by a low front.

The launch, which was scheduled to be the third Shuttle launch this year, was to have occurred at 02:35 GMT at the Kennedy Space Center, Florida, however it has now been rescheduled. The next possible launch can occur at the same time on December 9.

The scrub occurred during an unscheduled hold in the countdown, 5 minutes before the launch was to have occurred.

The STS-116 mission is a flight to the International Space Station, to install a new truss segment, and deploy 4 nanosats. It will also perform a crew change. The Space Shuttle's duration is 12 days.

**Today in History**

1897 - Stage actress, journalist and leading suffragette Marguerite Durand founded the feminist newspaper La Fronde.  
 1905 - Legislation on the separation of church and state in France was adopted, triggering civil disobedience by French Catholics.  
 1946 - The Doctors' Trial, the trial for crimes committed in Nazi human experimentation during World War II, began in Nuremberg, Germany.  
 1958 - The John Birch Society was founded to fight the perceived threat of communism in the United States.  
 1961 - Tanganyika gained independence from Britain (Tanganyika would become part of Tanzania three years later).  
 December 09 is Independence Day in Tanzania (1961)

**Quote of the Day**

I know that every good and excellent thing in the world stands moment by moment on the razor-edge of danger and must be fought for.  
 ~ Thornton Wilder

**Word of the Day**  
 segue; v

1. To move smoothly from one state or subject to another.
2. (music) To make a smooth transition from one theme to another .

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