



Top Stories

UN pressures Iran with nuclear compromise plan

Mohamed el-Baradei, head of the U.N. watchdog group International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), may go directly to Tehran some time this week with a compromise plan to reduce the threat that Iran may make use of its uranium enrichment program to produce nuclear arms.

British man fully "recovers" from HIV

A 25-year-old British man has been reported to have made a full recovery from the HIV virus.

Featured story

Chinese hunger strike continues at Australian detention centre

Three Chinese men being held at Sydney's Villawood Immigration Detention centre have ended a four-week hunger strike. But another three detainees are continuing to refuse food for the 25th consecutive day. The men began their hunger strike on October 20 to protest Australia's Mandatory Detention policy.

Wikipedia Current Events

- Germany: Conferences of the CDU, CSU and SPD approve a coalition deal that will see Angela Merkel become Chancellor on November 22.
- Mexico and Venezuela have withdrawn their ambassadors amid rising tension between the two countries after Venezuelan President Hugo Chavez

Wikipedia Current Events

threatened Mexican President Vicente Fox, "Don't mess with me, sir, because you'll get stung."

- Petrol shortages in Uzbekistan continue to worsen. Critics attribute the shortages to the Uzbek government's monopoly of the petrol industry.
- The Supreme Court of Uzbekistan found 15 men guilty of inciting the May 2005 unrest in Uzbekistan in the city of Andijan. The defendants allege that they were tortured while incarcerated.
- Somalia: 8 men were sentenced to death today for the murder of British Aid workers Richard and Enid Eyeington in Somaliland in October 2003.
- Ugandan opposition leader Kizza Besigye, the main challenger to President Yoweri Museveni in the first multi-party elections since 1986, is arrested by the police. This has sparked off riots. He is accused of having links to the rebel groups People's Redemption Army and Lord's Resistance Army.
- The United States government issues warning after receiving credible information that a terrorist threat may exist against official U.S. government facilities in Guangzhou, China.
- Knesset Member Omri Sharon, the son of the prime minister of Israel Ariel Sharon, struck a deal with prosecutors that would see him plead guilty to a series of charges in connection with illegal fundraising during Ariel Sharon's 1999 primaries campaign.

Smoke condition at Penn Station suspends LIRR

Pennsylvania Station (New York City) – Long Island Rail Road (LIRR) service was suspended at Pennsylvania Station due to a smoke condition. The fire was in the station ceiling above the entrance to tracks 18 and 19 between the waiting room, and the information and ticket-vending booths.

New Jersey Transit and Amtrak trains continued to roll without delays during the incident.

The fire, which started at 7:05 p.m. (the last time shown on the mechanical departures board), continued to fill the 7th Ave. entrance with smoke as late as 8:10 p.m., well after the FDNY had the situation under control. TV crews captured footage and passers-by snapped cellphone images of the scene, while confused commuters were moved along to the tune of "Keep movin'" by National Guardsmen and MTA Police.

The LIRR level of Penn Sta. was sealed off from the Exit Concourse on north, including the escalators leading to the 7th Ave. entrance. A myriad of commuters packed the Exit and West End Concourses, calling and text-messaging their delay on their phones.

By 8:22 p.m. the electronic departures board resumed listing trains, the station's shops reopened for business, and limited service was restored. Those who were shoulder-to-shoulder in the

concourses found themselves in the same situation, but now on a train bound for home.

LIRR customers are advised that residual delays - and scent of smoke - should be expected for the rest of the night.

The cause of the fire has not yet been determined.

Teens sought in Pennsylvania killings found

BELLEVILLE, Indiana — A man wanted in a Pennsylvania double homicide and apparent abduction of 14-year-old girl was captured Monday after a red Jetta he was driving crashed in Indiana following a police pursuit, State Police said.

State Police 1st Sgt. Dave Bursten said David Ludwig, 18, was apprehended about 12:30 p.m. EST after a car he was driving crashed about 20 miles west of Indianapolis, in Belleville. Bursten first attempted to pull Ludwig over, but he sped off, initiating a pursuit by State Police.

Authorities believe that Ludwig was attempting to cross into Minnesota and possibly stay with his relatives, according to information provided by Ludwig's father.

Bursten said Ludwig was found with the missing girl, 14-year-old Kara Beth Borden, a daughter of the slain couple, and that she was unharmed.

"He's in custody and we have the girl," Bursten said.

A radio broadcast heard by a motorist prompted the listener to report sighting the car in which the two were riding.

Climate change a factor in Australia's warmest year on record

Climatologists believe artificially induced climate change is the reason Australia is destined for the warmest year on record. Temperatures so far this year have averaged one degree above the 30-year average, the Bureau of Meteorology (BOM) told the Greenhouse 2005 – Action in Climate Change Conference being held in Melbourne this week.

The head of the National Climate Centre, Michael Coughlan, says Australia has had the warmest ever first 10 months of 2005, and seems likely to be a record-breaking year. "It's typically been a degree or more above the average for most of the months," said Mr Coughlan. "When you think you're averaging over hundreds of stations across Australia, to get a one degree warming over such a large area is fairly significant."

According to BOM, Australia has experienced its warmest start to a year on record (since 1950), with the January to October temperature averaging 1.03 degrees Celsius above the 30 year average (1961-1990). Annual mean temperatures have increased throughout Australia since 1910, particularly since the 1950s.

"If one draws a trend line from the mid-50s or early 50s, through to the present, it's a fairly steady upward trend. And it's interesting that this is not true only of Australia, but it's fairly typical throughout most continents now, most parts of the world," said Mr Coughlan.

As the average temperature has

risen, there has been an increase in the incidence of hot days and hot nights, and a reduction in the number of cold days and nights. This warming is mirrored in the oceans around Australia.

Michael Coughlan says warm sea surfaces are a significant factor in the creation of cyclones and hurricanes. "One might expect, with those sea temperatures being warmer than they have been in the last few years, that the odds would be tipped towards perhaps a greater number of the cyclones than we have seen in the last few years," he says.

Warming is not the only sign of change in Australia's climate. Other changes include a marked decline in rainfall in southwest and parts of southeast Australia, and recent reduction in rainfall through the eastern states. At the same time, rainfall in the arid interior and northwest has increased dramatically, in some places nearly doubling during the last 50-years.

"Climate change affecting Australia is real," says CSIRO's Dr Bryson Bates. "In 2005 the questions we face are how best to respond and adapt – from projections in agriculture to changing ecosystems, reduced catchment flows and downward rainfall trends," Dr Bates says.

The GREENHOUSE 2005 Action on Climate Change Conference is expected to attract 400 Australian and international delegates.

France plans on extending anti-riot powers

Despite a drop in violence in the country over the past weekend, the French cabinet has agreed to ask the parliament for a three-month extension to emergency

powers. Ministers agreed on the extension at a meeting chaired by President Jacques Chirac, and a bill on that effect will be presented on Tuesday to the National Assembly and on Wednesday to the Senate.

The police reported 284 vehicles being torched in petrol bomb attacks on Sunday, the 18th consecutive night of the riots. The number is lower than the previous night, when 374 cars were destroyed, and considerably below previous week's peak of 1,400.

Chirac, who has been criticized for keeping a low profile during the crisis, prepared to address the nation on Monday night in a television broadcast. Chirac was quoted by a government spokesman as saying that the emergency powers were "strictly temporary and will only be applied where they are strictly necessary."

In spite of all departmental prefects being authorised to impose curfews, in practice only few have. The extension of powers has drawn some criticism from local mayors who have deemed it an overreaction and potentially inflammatory. The pressure group SOS Racisme said that events had shown that the prefects already had enough powers.

Since the beginning of the unrest on October 27, more than 8,000 cars have been torched, more than 2,700 people arrested and dozens of buildings wrecked. According to José Manuel Durão Barroso, President of the European Commission, the European Union is prepared to release 50 million € in aid for damaged areas.

Bomb scare halts Brisbane transport

Public transport in Brisbane came to a halt following an anonymous tip-off to police over an alleged bomb on the city's mass-transit network. Trains, buses and railway stations were evacuated by authorities without elaboration on the threat. They have not yet found any evidence to support the claim.

Passengers were moved at least 100m away from buses and train stations, and all luggage was removed. All inbound and outbound services from Southbank, Roma Street, Central and Fortitude Valley stations had been affected, but now most services have resumed, albeit with delays.

Police received a "general threat" about Brisbane-bound train and bus services from an unidentified source, leading to services being suspended from 11.45am (AEST) on Monday, a police spokeswoman said.

The scare takes place against the background of the Australian Federal Government's introduction of harsh new anti-terrorism laws. Queensland Premier Peter Beattie is due to make an announcement shortly.

Pennsylvania couple murdered; daughter abducted

Michael and Cathryn Borden, a couple, both 50 years old, were found shot to death in Litz, Pennsylvania shortly after 8 AM EST (1300 UTC). Their 9 year old son, David, had fled to a neighbor's house and called emergency assistance (911). The couple's younger daughter, Kara Beth Borden, age 14, was reported

missing. Her older sister was found in the home unharmed.

Police believe that the abductor was 18-year-old David G. Ludwig. Neighbor Stephanie Mannon said Ludwig had been secretly dating Kara, without the approval of Kara's parents. "It wasn't because he was a shady character," stated Mannon, "because he wasn't."

An Amber alert was issued for Borden, with her description stated as: white female, age 14, 5'1", 100 pounds, brown hair with blond highlights. She was last seen wearing a black sweat shirt with "Pillar" across the front, blue jeans and black sneakers.

Increased tension in border dispute between Eritrea and Ethiopia

The BBC reports that Ethiopian Prime Minister Meles Zenawi has confirmed that he had moved thousands of extra troops to the north of the country, to prevent an invasion by Eritrea. Ethiopia is estimated to have nearly half its armoured units in the area.

Sapa-AFP reports however, "It is not true at all that there is an Eritrean troop movement," and, "Eritrea is only engaged in its development projects and agricultural revolution," as stated by the Eritrean Information Minister.

As frustration grows on both sides, some fear that recent Ethiopian troop movements to the frontier while the domestic political situation worsens could lead to renewed conflict.

Since 2002 Eritrea and Ethiopia have exchanged heated words about their once contested border.

At the close of a 3-year war over their common border, Eritrea and Ethiopia decided to settle their differences in court. The Permanent Court of Arbitration at The Hague in the Netherlands presided over the Border Commission. Its decision in 2002 was hoped to be the conclusion to this long conflict.

Instead the stalemate has drawn on for three years. One of the modalities of the Agreement was that the decision would be 'final and binding.' In essence, both parties agreed to the decision in advance. At the announcement of the decision both parties lauded the decision as being fair and on the side of justice.

Since that time however, the border between these two countries remains unmarked. The Ethiopian Government refuses to allow the marking of the boundary, saying that there must be allowance for the shifting of the border. On the other hand the Eritrean Government has recently curtailed the movements of the UN peacekeeping mission.

This Cold War has been cool for years, but as frustration mounts the conflict simmers.

Today in History

655 - Penda of Mercia was defeated by Oswiu of Northumbria at the Battle of Winwaed.
 1864 - William Tecumseh Sherman began his "March to the Sea".
 1920 - The first general assembly of the League of Nations was held in Geneva, Switzerland.
 1971 - Intel released the 4004, the world's first single-chip microprocessor.
 1988 - The Soviet Buran shuttle was launched on her first and only space flight.
 November 15 is Republic Day in Brazil; Shichigosan in Japan.

Quote of the Day

Variety's the very spice of life,
 That gives it all its flavour.
 ~ William Cowper ~

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