



Top Stories

Pakistan says senior al-Qaeda official killed in shootout

According to Major-General Shaukat Sultan, a Saudi Arabian man named Abu Marwan al-Suri, 38, a suspected senior al-Qaeda "bag man", was killed in a shootout on Thursday. Officials also say a notebook with instructions in Arabic on making bombs and explosive devices was found with al-Suri.

Oil prices surge over \$75 a barrel to a record high

Crude oil prices surged to a new record of over \$75.00 a barrel on Tuesday closing at a price of \$75.17. In Europe, Brent crude oil rose to \$74.59 a barrel.

Featured story

Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II turns 80

Friday marks the 80th birthday, of Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II. Her birthday has been celebrated across the Commonwealth.

Wikipedia Current Events

- April 2006 Nepalese General strike: King Gyanendra of Nepal asks for Prime Minister nominations to be made to assist in ending unrest in the country.
- Queen Elizabeth II of the United Kingdom and the Commonwealth Realms celebrates her 80th birthday. On the same day, the BBC marks eighty years since the granting of its first Royal Charter.

Oil prices surge over \$75 a barrel to a record high

Crude oil prices surged to a new record of over \$75.00 a barrel on Tuesday closing at a price of \$75.17. In Europe, Brent crude oil rose to \$74.59. In less than a month, prices have risen \$10, back to the record highs set after Hurricane Katrina caused refineries to shut down in August 2005. Prices are also 42% higher than a year ago.

Political instability in oil-producing countries is seen as a major cause of this rise. The standoff over Iran's nuclear program has led to strong words being exchanged and a possibility of sanctions being imposed on Iran, the world's fourth largest producer of oil. Violence in Nigeria earlier this year has led to a drop the country's production by almost a quarter. Nigeria is Africa's largest oil exporter and is also a major supplier of gasoline-rich crude oil to the United States, where demand is set to increase as the "driving season" begins next month.

Edmund Daukoru, the president of OPEC and Nigerian oil minister said on Tuesday, "The current shoot up we are experiencing is as a result of the Iran problems and it's not helped by the flare up between Israel and the Palestinians. But mainly it's the threatening statements being made against Iran as a result of its nuclear program."

Pakistan says senior al-Qaeda official killed in shootout

According to Major-General Shaukat Sultan, a Saudi Arabian man named Abu Marwan al-Suri, 38, a suspected senior al-Qaeda "bag man", was killed in a shootout on Thursday. It is believed he has been killed in Khar, a town in the tribal district of Bajaur, Pakistan while at a checkpoint when he opened fire on security officials while inside a car. According to Sultan, when al-Suri was asked to stop his car, he opened fire. Al-Suri wounded two people and killed one Pakistani security official. "His death is quite a significant blow to al Qaeda," said officials.

Al-Suri is believed to be one of several senior al-Qaeda officials that were targeted in an United States lead airstrike in the Damadola village in Bajaur, Pakistan, against Ayman al-Zawahiri in January which killed at least 18 civilians and several other militants. Zawahiri was not killed in the strike. Suri was also believed to be giving money to the families of Iraqi militant leader Abu Musab al-Zarqawi and other militants in Afghanistan and Pakistan. Al-Suri is also believed to have been a close associate of Zawahiri.

"He was giving them money every three months," said officials. Pakistani officials say they have his body and that it will undergo testing to determine the true identity at a hospital in the city of Peshawar.

Officials also say a notebook with instructions in Arabic on making bombs and explosive devices was found with al-Suri. The notebook also contained diagrams and drawings of circuits.

Employees of Mumbai's bus service BEST announce indefinite strike

At least 45,000 employees of the BEST, Mumbai's public transport provider will go on strike indefinitely. Workers are unhappy with changes made to wages and are concerned about their working conditions. Union leaders say the strike will end when the company rethinks its decision. At least 450,000 commuters are expected to be affected by the strike as nearly 3,300 buses will be taken off the road as talks with the union leaders have drawn an inconclusive response. Another round of talks is expected to take place later today. An Industrial Court has termed the strike call illegal and BEST has warned its employees participating in the strike, that they would be faced with disciplinary action.

Sharad Rao, General Secretary of BEST's workers union, said, "The management took this decision arbitrarily without even coming to the negotiating table. They moved to the committee to change the wages and other conditions on their own, and that is absolutely illegal. Three days ago, they have again moved to the BHT committee asking them to freeze the dearness allowance which no worker is going to tolerate". Dearness Allowance is an inflation-linked component of wages.

"I have been on the road for the last one hour. Normally I would have just hopped on to a bus," said commuter Mukul Chandan.

"I travel by bus everyday, but today because of the strike I have had to take an auto and its going to cost me Rs 200 just one way," said another commuter Janki Patel.

Nigeria announces clearing of Paris Club debt

President Olusegun Obasanjo of Nigeria announced that Nigeria will complete repayment of all debt owed to the Paris Club of creditors by Friday. The Director General of the Debt Management Office (DMO), Mansur Muhtar confirmed that the Central Bank of Nigeria (CBN) would transfer \$4.5 billion to the recipient countries on Friday.

The Paris Club is an informal group of creditor governments from major industrialized countries. Under the terms of an agreement signed last year, Nigeria will pay \$12.4 billion in exchange for a debt cancellation of an estimated \$18 billion, representing about 60% of the \$30 billion Nigeria owed the Paris Club creditors. The agreement is the biggest debt relief deal for an African nation.

Nigeria, Africa's largest producer of oil, has used "windfall" earnings from the prevailing high oil prices in making these payments.

The Paris Club agreement was negotiated in October 2005, with the Nigerian delegation headed by Ngozi Okonjo-Iweala, the minister of finance. The deal is part of the free-market reforms pursued by President Obasanjo.

The announcement comes in the wake of the endorsement of the reform programme by the International Monetary Fund (IMF), which marks the last step for the debt relief deal to be completed. Nigeria is the first

country to qualify for the IMF's Policy Support Instrument (PSI), which provides assessment and endorsement of a country's economic policy by the IMF, for those countries that do not require fund assistance.

Speaking before the commencement of the Federal Executive Council meeting at the Council Chambers, State House, President Obasanjo said, "By Friday, April 21, we would have cleared ourselves of all debts owed to Paris Club." He also added, "Considering the outstanding debts to the London Club and those owed internally, we are not out of the woods yet."

Condoleezza Rice will visit Greece and Turkey

The USA Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice will visit Athens and Ankara during next week by the opportunity of her participation in the NATO Foreign Ministers meeting in Sofia, Bulgaria. The State Department announced that the head of US diplomacy will meet with Greek Prime Minister Costas Karamanlis and Foreign Minister Dora Bakoyannis as well as with the Turkish PM, Recep Tayyip Erdogan.

In the two Mediterranean countries, Rice will have the opportunity to discuss the mutual interests between the USA and its strategic allies, Greece and Turkey. The promotion of democracy and peace in the Middle East, the Cyprus issue, the possibility of Turkey's accession in the European Union, and war against terrorism in North Eastern Europe and Asia will likely be discussed.

King of Nepal to restore democracy

In an address to the nation, the

king of Nepal, Gyanendra said that he was turning the nation pro-democratic.

"We are committed to multi-party democracy and a constitutional monarchy. Executive power of the kingdom of Nepal, which was in our safekeeping, shall from this day be returned to the people. We hope peace and order is restored to the country by protecting multi-party democracy. We ask the seven-party alliance to recommend the name for the post of prime minister at the earliest," said the king in his address to the nation today.

Girija Prasad Koirala, the former Prime Minister of Nepal and leader of the opposition alliance said he will meet and discuss the announcement made by the king, before responding.

Earlier, United States Ambassador James Moriarty, had said that "his [the king's] time is running out" and that "ultimately the king will have to leave if he doesn't compromise. And by 'ultimately' I mean sooner rather than later."

7.7 magnitude earthquake strikes Kamchatka peninsula

According to the U.S. Geological Survey, an earthquake struck at 23:25:05 UTC April 20 (local time 12:25:05 April 21) on the Kamchatka peninsula in Russia.

The epicenter of the quake was located at 61.092° N 167.100° E at a depth of 43 km. According to the Japanese Meteorological Agency and the U.S. National Oceanic and Atmospheric Association, there was no danger of a tsunami.

According to wire reports, damage has been reported in several villages in Russia. The Associated

Press reports via local reports that public facilities in the village of Telichiki near the seashore have been damaged and that transmission of electrical power has been affected. CNN reports that the population of the village is 2,000.

Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II turns 80

Today marks the 80th birthday of Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II, whose reign has lasted nearly 53 years.

Her Majesty became the first female to become the sovereign since Queen Victoria, who died in 1901 after a 64-year reign.

She was crowned on June 2, 1953, in Westminster Abbey. It was the first coronation that was televised live. She is Queen of sixteen independent nations known as the Commonwealth Realms, which includes the United Kingdom.

One of the most peculiar incidents of her reign was when Michael Fagan broke into Buckingham Palace and entered the Queen's bedchamber in the early hours of July 9, 1982.

The Monarchist League of New Zealand, said in a press release: "there is scarcely a single public figure who can compare with The Queen. She is universally admired and respected for her professionalism, dignity and example."

Despite her age, royal watchers say Her Majesty will never abdicate. If Her Majesty is reigning on September 9, 2015, she will become the longest reigning monarch in British history. Cries of "God save the Queen!" have been said across the Commonwealth today.

Nepal's King Gyanendra cracks down on protests; 3 dead

Nepal's King Gyanendra deployed lethal force against protestors in Kathmandu on Thursday as a general strike and pro-democracy protest spread through Nepal threatening the future of the monarchy.

Government forces fired on protesters in the Kathmandu neighborhood of Kalanki, killing three people and injuring more than 100, according to officials at two city hospitals. Two of those killed appeared to have been shot in the head by live bullets.

Kathmandu was under a curfew from 2 a.m. to 8 p.m. local time on April 20. Non-governmental organizations such as the United Nations and the Red Cross were denied permission to move through the city during the curfew, and journalists were also denied curfew passes. The United Nations Office for the High Commissioner for Human Rights called the move a "clear violation" of their agreement with the Nepali government.

The curfew was reportedly extended until 3 a.m. local time Friday. Protestors intend to continue protests on Friday.

Gyanendra assumed direct rule in February 2005, citing the failure of political parties to control a Maoist insurgency that has killed 13,000 people. He has pledged free elections by April 2007, but an alliance of political parties has demanded he relinquish power to an all-party government immediately.

The protests have touched all areas of Nepalese society. As an example, a peaceful protest

meeting called by the Nepal Bar Association was fired upon by Nepalese police on April 13, 2006. About 1500 people took part in the protest which took place at Babarmahal in Kathmandu. 50 were reportedly injured in the firing. Nepal Bar Association President Shambu Thampa was one of the casualties. It is not clear at this time whether the police used rubber, or live bullets. After the protest, tear gas shells were used to disperse the crowd. The authorities reportedly detained 72 people.

Later that day, around 100 people were arrested at a rally in a stadium at Maitighar. Most of those detained were associated with the Association of International NGOs (AIN).

Kucinich asks Bush about alleged US support for armed insurgency in Iran

U.S. Rep. Dennis Kucinich (D-OH) claimed in a letter to President George W. Bush on April 18, 2006 that the US seems to be supporting both the Party for a Free Life in Kurdistan (PEJAK), an armed group associated with the Kurdistan Workers Party (PKK) and based in Iraq, and the People's Mujahedin of Iran (MEK) in insurgent activity in Iran during 2005 and in particular in killing twenty four Iranian soldiers in March 2006.

Both the PKK and the MEK are listed by the U.S. State Department and by the Council of the European Union as terrorist organizations. The FBI alleges that the National Council of Resistance of Iran is "an integral part of the MEK", i.e. essentially the same organisation as the MEK, while the NCRI itself claims that the MEK is just one of five components of the NCRI.

Kucinich compared the alleged US support for insurgents against the government of Iran with Bush's previous criticisms against insurgent groups, writing to Bush, "U.S. support for insurgent activity in Iran is not tolerable. You have claimed numerous times that the object of the so-called 'War on Terror' is to target lawless insurgent groups."

Kucinich asked Bush to report to Congress both on US military operations in Iranian territory and on US use of proxy organisations in military actions against the Iranian government, stating, "Previously I asked you to immediately report to Congress on the extent of U.S. military operations currently in Iran. Now, in light of the evidence described above, I urge you to report to Congress on U.S. support for military operations in Iran by anti-Iranian insurgent groups."

Bush's response is not yet known.

Today in History

1500 - Portuguese explorer Pedro Álvares Cabral (pictured) and his crew became the first Europeans to sight Brazil.

1864 - The U.S. Congress authorized the minting of a two-cent coin, the first U.S. coin to bear the words "In God We Trust".

1913 - The Bolshevik newspaper Pravda was first published in Saint Petersburg, Russia.

1914 - Babe Ruth played his first professional baseball game as a pitcher for the Baltimore Orioles.

1915 - Chlorine gas was released as a chemical weapon in the Second Battle of Ypres, the first large-scale use of poison gas in World War I.

April 22 is Great Sabbath in Eastern Christianity (2006), Earth Day in the United States.

Quote of the Day

"I know more than I can express in words, and the little I can express would not have been expressed, had I not known more." ~ Vladimir Nabokov

Word of the Day

prognosticate; *v*

Definition

- To predict, especially through the application of skill.

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.)
+44-871-218-6397
(U.K. / Europe)

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

About Wikinews Print Edition

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