



Top Stories

Jaafari nominated Iraq PM

The United Iraqi Alliance nominated Ibrahim al-Jaafari for Iraqi Prime Minister after talks amongst party leaders concerning the nomination which had delayed the selection.

Protest against Muhammad caricatures in Paris

Several thousands of Muslims demonstrated today in Paris, France, over the initial Danish publication of the Muhammad caricatures and their republication in two French newspapers.

Featured story

Berlin court repeals preliminary injunction against Wikimedia Germany

The Amtsgericht Berlin-Charlottenburg has repealed an injunction that it had issued in January against Wikimedia Deutschland, the German chapter of the Wikimedia Foundation.

Wikipedia Current Events

- A royal tomb from the 2nd or 3rd century BC was found in Pella, Greece and is the largest Greek tomb found to date. This announcement comes a few days after the Egyptian tomb in the Valley of the Kings was found.
- The Blizzard of 2006 dumps 27 inches of snow on New York City, closes many major airports, and leaves 200,000 without power in Washington, D.C. and Baltimore, Maryland.

Wikipedia Current Events

- A British tabloid, the News of the World, releases a video showing British troops beating captured Iraqi youth protesters. The newspaper is satisfied with the authenticity of the video, which the Ministry of Defence is investigating.
- The United States has been revealed to be at work on plans for a major military bombing campaign against Iranian nuclear sites in the event that diplomatic efforts fail to convince Iran to voluntarily end what Western governments consider to be efforts at acquiring a nuclear bomb.
- United States Vice President Dick Cheney accidentally shoots Harry Whittington while hunting in rural Texas.

Record snowfall in Northeastern United States

The National Weather Service announced that some 27 inches of snow was measured at 4:10 pm EST at Central Park in New York City today, breaking a record set in 1947. This after a day of snowfall and storms in the Northeastern United States.

The poor weather conditions prompted that LaGuardia, John F. Kennedy, and Newark International Airports be shut down. Delta Airlines also canceled flights in and out of Washington, Philadelphia, Baltimore, Providence, and Hartford. Also, New York City employees worked long hours to

salt and plow the snow which has covered the area. In Massachusetts, heavy snow and blizzard warnings are in effect as visibility has been greatly hindered by the falling snow. There are other reports of near-blizzard conditions in parts of Connecticut, and Rhode Island.

Adding to the storm, winds as high as 60 mph in New England prompted concerns over coastal flooding.

Newspaper alleges U.S. drawing up plans to attack Iran

The British newspaper Sunday Telegraph has reported on alleged plans for a US attack on Iran. The plans were allegedly made in retaliation for Iran's Uranium enrichment program due to suspicions that it is for military application in the development of Nuclear weapons.

The paper has also reported that the alleged plans to attack Iran may be a possible motivation for the development of nuclear weapons by Iran; there have been other threats of military response by both the US and Israel.

On February 12, 2006, the Sunday Telegraph claimed that strategists at the Pentagon are "drawing up plans for devastating bombing raids backed by submarine-launched ballistic missile attacks against Iran's nuclear sites" as "a last resort" for the situation.

The newspaper also claims that

preparations are extremely active, stating, "Central Command and Strategic Command planners are identifying targets, assessing weapon-loads and working on logistics for an operation,".

Assessments of the time scale for Iran to possibly develop nuclear weapons include three to ten years. According to the Centre for Nonproliferation Studies, cities likely to be targets because of their alleged role in nuclear weapons development include medium-size towns such as Bushehr or Bushire (بوشهر), population estimated as 165,000 (2005) and Arak with a population of about 511,000 (2005) and the small mountain town of Natanz.

Ellen Laipson, the other ex-CIA official also stated, "the Iranian fear of an attack by the United States has long been a standard element in NIEs [National Intelligence Estimates] on Iran."

Former UN weapons inspector Hans Blix had reportedly recommended that the United States give a similar commitment not to attack Iran with either conventional or nuclear weapons, just as it apparently has given to North Korea, stating, "regime changes, we know, from the outside are not that much of a panacea. So I think [the United States] should contemplate similar offers to Iran as they have to North Korea."

Dick Cheney accidentally shoots another hunter

U.S. Vice President Dick Cheney reportedly shot another man accidentally on Saturday during a hunting trip in Texas.

The victim, Harry Whittington, is a 78 year-old Austin lawyer and was accompanying the Vice President

on his south Texas quail hunt when he was sprayed with shotgun pellets. The wounded hunter, who is currently at Corpus Christi Memorial Hospital, is said to be "alert" and doing fine.

Cheney spent the afternoon at the hospital with Whittington.

The incident, which occurred yesterday, was not disclosed by Cheney's office until Sunday.

Jaafari nominated Iraq PM

The majority Shia group in Iraq has nominated Ibrahim Jaafari for Prime Minister. He was chosen in a tight vote with Vice-President Adel Abdel Mahdi.

United Iraqi Alliance, who backed both the men, chose a nominee today after talks amongst party leaders concerning the nomination, which had originally stalled on Saturday.

There is little doubt that Mr Jaafari will lead the new government considering that the UIA is the largest of the Iraqi political parties. However, many say that he will be faced with the challenge of getting the support of the nation's Sunni and Kurd populations.

Oklahoma student paper publishes new controversial cartoon

The Vista, a student paper at the University of Central Oklahoma in Edmond, Oklahoma, has published a cartoon including one of caricatures of the Prophet Mohammad. The cartoon itself has been perceived as being very offensive, besides the fact that it includes one of the infamous caricatures. The cartoon was made by Cary Stringfield, the paper's cartoonist. It shows two men of middle eastern origin with the one

on the right holding one of the Mohammad caricatures (Caricature: the one with the bomb in his turban). The man on the left is shown as saying: "I'm not sure this response is appropriate for that cartoon." (Pointing to the background of violent protest). The man on the right replies by saying: "I agree, if we only had a Nuclear Bomb, then we could show them." The Vista is published twice a week on Tuesdays and Thursdays. The cartoon was published on Tuesday February 7, 2006. Since then there has been some/many verbal/written protests to the paper. The paper published an explanation in their Thursday paper which is linked to below.

Since then, some have found it hard to decide if the cartoon or the follow-up article was more offensive. The Muslim Student Organization at UCO has issued a letter with numerous signatories to the paper to protest their distaste at the inappropriate content. But in the feedback posted on their website, some readers have supported the cartoon as representing freedom of speech.

Sondhi may face legal action from Thai Rak Thai party

According to the Thai News Agency Sondhi Limthongkul, an outspoken critic of the government and Prime Minister, may face legal action.

This would not be the first time the de-facto leader of the campaign to oust the Prime minister has faced legal action over his words. In 2005, a number of lawsuits were filed by the Prime Minister against Sondhi, most notable being a 1 billion baht suit in November. Thailand's King, Bhumibol Adulyadej (Rama the

ninth) made use of his 78th birthday speech to comment on the issue and advise that the government must accept some criticism. This resulted in the dropping of the lawsuits.

Sondhi's recurring open-air rallies and protests have made calls for Prime Minister Thaksin Shinawatra to resign or to be impeached. It is remarks made at a rally held this weekend at the Royal Plaza in Bangkok that are under scrutiny by lawyers for the ruling Thai Rak Thai party. Dr Surapong, who announced the party's investigation of the remarks, described them as "offensive" and "verbal abuse". He called for a halt to the accusations whilst a petition detailing alleged offenses of the Prime Minister was reviewed.

That petition was submitted for the attention of the King as the climax to Sondhi's last rally in Royal Plaza on February 5. After addressing a crowd estimated to number more than 100,000. Sondhi then hand-delivered the petition to the residence of the President of the Privvy Council. Several accusations are levelled at the Prime Minister in the petition, including allegations that he has used his position for personal financial gain.

A new petition seeking the Prime Minister's impeachment, which was started on February 10, reached 7,500 signatures in just 3 days. Thammasat university's student union has started this effort which, according to the country's constitution, requires a total of 50,000 signatures gathered within 180 days for the impeachment process to begin.

Michelle Kwan withdraws from Olympics

Michelle Kwan, a figure skater on

the United States Olympic team, has pulled out of the Olympic Games because of a groin injury. According to a newsbreak bulletin on NBC, she injured her right hip abductor muscle in a fall during practice on Saturday. The muscle pain continued to worsen and at 2:45am she went to the team doctor. The team doctor determined this was a serious injury and Michelle made the decision to pull out of the Olympics and give the alternate Emily Hughes the chance to skate. Emily Hughes was contacted at 8:45pm Eastern time that she would be needed at the Games. She is scheduled to fly to Italy on Sunday. Emily Hughes is the younger sister of Olympic medalist Sarah Hughes.

Today in History

1689 - Glorious Revolution: Instead of James Francis Edward Stuart the Prince of Wales acceding to the throne, his sister Mary and her husband William were proclaimed co-rulers of England.

1880 - Thomas Edison observed the Edison Effect, which later formed the basis of John Ambrose Fleming's vacuum tube diodes.

1881 - Hubertine Auclert, a leading French suffragette in Paris, launched the feminist newspaper *La Citoyenne*.

1945 - The RAF Bomber Command began the strategic bombing of Dresden in Saxony, Germany, resulting in a lethal firestorm which killed tens of thousands of civilians.

1984 - Konstantin Chernenko succeeded the late Yuri Andropov as General Secretary of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union.

February 13 is Tu Bishvat (Judaism, 2006)

Quote of the Day

"Life is what it is, and you take what's handed, and you work as hard as you can, and hopefully you'll be successful, but I just don't spend too much time worrying about that." ~ Jerry Springer

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