



Top Stories

Bloggers cite rumors of US "secret war" with Iran and Syria

Rumors are circulating in the United States capital of Washington that President Bush has declared a "secret, informal war" on Iran and Syria, according to a pair of blogs written by apparent Washington insiders.

Explosion at the U.S. embassy in Athens

The U.S. ambassador in Greece, Mr. Charles Ries told the reporters that the attack was "a senseless act of violence". Both the Ministers of Foreign Affairs and Public Order of Greece, Dora Bakoyannis and Byron Polidoras, strongly condemned the action.

Featured story

Bollywood stars Aishwarya Rai and Abhishek Bachchan engaged

Indian actors Abhishek Bachchan and Aishwarya Rai confirmed that they were engaged in Mumbai last night, ending months of media speculation about the relationship between the two. The wedding is reportedly scheduled to be held at the Hyatt around March this year.

Wikipedia Current Events

- Red Crystal is recognized as an official symbol of the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement.
- The Union for a Popular

Wikipedia Current Events

Movement nominates Nicolas Sarkozy as its candidate to become the next President of France in the 2007 French presidential election.

- Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas tells United States Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice that he opposes the establishment of a provisional Palestinian state with temporary borders.
- An African Union delegation is in Somalia's capital Mogadishu to discuss the deployment of international peacekeeping troops.

Fifth person killed by serial killer in Mumbai

A serial killer found on Mumbai's streets killed another person last night; making him one of five young men murdered. The body of a 20-year-old unidentified man was found in a secluded spot on the railway tracks between Churchgate and Grant Road. His head crushed by a 10 kg stone. A senior police official said that they had found food at the crime scene, indicating that the victim had been offered it before being bludgeoned.

The police are awaiting the post-mortem report to confirm whether this victim, like the others before him, had been sexually assaulted before being murdered. This attack comes just a day after another body was found a kilometre away, near the Wankhede Stadium rail bridge. Police say that the

perpetrator may have claimed up to eight lives so far, although his role has only been confirmed in four cases. The killer, suspected to be a man in his late 20s, targets young, male ragpickers in South Mumbai, killing them in the early morning and leaving a beer can at the scene of the crime.

Although the latest killing appears to be the work of the same man, Railway Police officials are wary of declaring this homicide as the work of the same perpetrator, saying there were "similarities as well as differences in the modus operandi of the murderer". Mumbai Police have established a 90-man team tasked with nabbing the serial killer, who a senior police official compared to Raman Raghav, who bludgeoned 9 pavement dwellers in their sleep in the 60s.

New Zealand Green party rates other parties on climate change policies

The Green party of Aotearoa New Zealand has ranked other political parties in New Zealand based on their policies and action taken on climate change. The results were announced at a Greens picnic today by co-leader, Doctor Russel Norman at his State of the Planet speech.

The top party was themselves, Labour (Government) in second with Dr Norman saying they are "too frightened to do what needs to be done," the Māori party in third, then National, United Future, New Zealand First and lastly, ACT,

leaving out Jim Anderton's Progressive Coalition party from being ranked. According to the Greens, ACT is denying how important climate change really is.

However not even Dr Norman is satisfied being at the top of the list, stating that more can be improved on. "We have been leading the debate but we don't have all the answers." Dr Norman does say that if the Greens were not in Parliament then all the other parties would be "floundering" because they would not know what to do.

Dr Norman says that New Zealand needs to do our part in helping Earth face its biggest challenge.

In Dr Norman's speech he also encouraged the other parties to take more action regarding climate change. "The results show that while the parties are more than happy to jump aboard the climate change band wagon, when it comes down to it, there is still a lack of political will to take firm action."

Dr Norman said: "Most parties had yet to tackle the tough issue of reducing greenhouse gas emissions in the agricultural sector - this sector accounts for about 50 percent of New Zealand's total emissions. They fared only slightly better in increasing forested area and reducing emissions from the electricity sector."

Dr Norman said that we are heading towards a "global catastrophe."

Toxic wetlands may be cause of thousands of bird deaths in Western Australia

Western Australian government authorities say they believe a toxin may be responsible for the recent

mysterious death of an estimated 5,000 birds found in the area of Esperance - on the state's south eastern coastline. Autopsies by toxicologists from the WA Department of Agriculture will test for organochlorins, organophosphates and heavy metals.

Esperance residents first noticed large numbers of dead birds littering their streets and gardens on December 7 last year. Populations of honeyeaters, wattle birds and miners have reportedly been effected.

The birds were being found vomiting and convulsing in bushland and suburban backyards over an extensive area.

Department of Environment and Conservation's (DEC) nature conservation coordinator Mike Fitzgerald says toxic wetlands near Esperance are the most likely reason for the mass bird deaths.

The DEC says it has failed to figure out the cause of death despite interviewing industry groups, farmers, grain handlers and timber companies about pesticide and chemical use.

Birds Australia, the peak group dedicated to the conservation, study and enjoyment of Australia's native birds and their habitats, said it had not heard of a similar occurrence. "Not on that scale, and all at the same time, and also the fact that it's several different species," chief executive Graeme Hamilton told the Sunday Times. "You'd have to call that a most unusual event and one that we'd all have to be concerned about."

Mike Fitzgerald said the DEC were looking at something "pretty potent." "This is not a normal situation. The common thing that

we have seen and heard is that the affected birds have an insatiable thirst... If it turns out to be a toxin that is responsible, that will raise more questions because there is no obvious source of exposure."

The deaths could be a result of a drier than normal winter, causing algal and bacterial blooms in the Esperance Lakes Nature Reserves. Esperance recorded 457mm rainfall in 2006 out of an average of 620mm.

Initially, health authorities feared a virus, such as the deadly avian bird flu, was responsible. That was quickly ruled out, along with poisoning from bacteria or eating poisoned insects.

The first deaths were reported by Esperance resident Michelle Crisp - who lives close to the worst-affected area. Dozens of native birds began dying in her back yard a week before Christmas. She says she contacted neighbours to discover if they were experiencing the same thing. Mrs Crisp found four dead birds, then 16, then 30 and finally up to 80.

Mike Fitzgerald said that any one of hundreds of toxins could be causing the deaths but so far all leads had not produced any answers.

Bloggers cite rumors of US "secret war" with Iran and Syria

Rumors are circulating in the United States capital of Washington that President Bush has declared a "secret, informal war" on Iran and Syria, according to a pair of blogs written by apparent Washington insiders.

"Washington intelligence, military and foreign policy circles are abuzz

today with speculation that the President, yesterday or in recent days, sent a secret Executive Order to the Secretary of Defense and to the Director of the CIA to launch military operations against Syria and Iran," blogger and think-tank fellow Steven Clemons wrote on Thursday on his site, The Washington Note. The Plank, hosted by the New Republic Magazine, posted an entry on Friday about similar speculation around the capital U.S. city.

Both blogs cited questions asked by Senator Joseph Biden to Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice at a congressional hearing on Thursday. The hearing was a planned follow-up by the administration to answer concerns raised by President Bush's address to the nation on Wednesday where he announced the commitment to send more troops to Iraq. Biden asked several questions about whether the president had plans to send troops across the borders of Iran and Syria.

"Does that mean the president has plans to cross the Syrian and/or Iranian border to pursue those persons or individuals or governments providing that help?" Biden asked.

In an extensive answer, the secretary did not seem to explicitly deny it: "...What we're really trying to do here which is to protect our forces and that we are doing that by seeking out these networks that we know are operating in Iraq. We are doing it through intelligence. We are then able, as we did on the 21st of December, to go after these groups where we find them. In that case, we then asked the Iraqi government to declare them persona non grata and expel them from the country because they

were holding diplomatic passports."

She soon added: "...We do need to work with our allies to make certain that they have the defense capacity that they need against growing Iranian military build-up, that they feel that we are going to be a presence in the Persian Gulf region as we have been, and that we establish confidence with the states with which we have long alliances, that we will help defend their interests. And that's what the president had in mind."

The Plank was quick to note that the "secret war" was, at this point, just a rumor. Later that day, The New York Times published a report on an interview conducted in Condoleezza Rice's office Friday afternoon, before she left for a trip to the Middle East. "There has been a decision to go after these networks," she said, referring to President Bush. The U.S. military was authorized by the president to take action against Iranian operatives in Iraq months ago.

In the same report, the New York Times quoted the new secretary of defense Robert M. Gates as saying, "We believe that we can interrupt these networks that are providing support, through actions inside the territory of Iraq, that there is no need to attack targets in Iran itself."

Though he is Commander in Chief of the U.S. armed forces, the president does not have the constitutional authority to declare war (only the Congress does). The president, however, can order military strikes without declaring war.

The U.S. has long explored possible attacks on Iran, according to Seymour Hersh, who has

written three articles on deteriorating US-Iran relations for the New Yorker magazine.

The US, acting through Turkey, has supported Israeli intelligence collection and propaganda broadcasts supporting the ethnic Azeri nationalist movement in the north of Iran, according to Scott Ritter, former UNSCOM weapons inspector in Iraq, since at least 1996.

Anticipation of possible US military action against Iran has only intensified since Bush's midweek speech in which he announced 21,500 more soldiers would be sent to Iraq. In the same speech, he warned Iran and Syria against involvement in the Iraq conflict.

Hours after the speech, U.S. forces raided the Iranian Consulate in the town of Arbil, in the Kurdish area of Iraq, detaining several Iranian officials.

Ship accident in Norwegian sea causes environmental catastrophe

Cypriot cargo ship "Server" went down in Norwegian territory of the North Sea near the Norwegian city Bergen around 6pm local time on January 12. The ship broke into two parts and the accident is described as a catastrophe for the environment in the area due to a significant fuel oil leak. The oil reached land a short time after the breakdown.

The entire 25-man crew was brought to land around 9pm by a Sea King-helicopter. At noon next day it was reported that 290 tons of heavy fuel oil had leaked out onto the sea. Oil covers ground along the coast and it is still spreading. A nature reservation area for birds is in imminent danger after the accident.

Today in History

1759 - The British Museum opened to the public.
 1885 - Wilson Bentley took the first photograph of a snowflake.
 1919 - Rosa Luxemburg and Karl Liebknecht, two prominent socialists in Germany, were tortured and murdered by the Freikorps.
 1943 - Construction of the world's largest office building, The Pentagon, was completed.
 1967 - The Green Bay Packers defeated the Kansas City Chiefs in the American football championship game now known as Super Bowl I.
 January 16 is John Chilembwe Day in Malawi, Korean Alphabet Day in North Korea, Martin Luther King Day in the United States (2007), Pongal in Tamil Nadu (2007).

Quote of the Day

I build no system. I ask an end to privilege, the abolition of slavery, equality of rights, and the reign of law. Justice, nothing else; that is the alpha and omega of my argument: to others I leave the business of governing the world.
 ~ Pierre-Joseph Proudhon

Word of the Day

Sisyphean; adj
 1. Incessantly lengthy or recurring, but futile.

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. Other content released under the GNU Free Documentation License.

To view a copy of the CC-BY 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

To view a copy of the GFDL, visit:
<http://www.gnu.org/copyleft/fdl.html>

Wikipedia Current Events
http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Portal:Current_events
 Today in History
http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Main_Page
 Quote of the Day
http://en.wikiquote.org/wiki/Main_Page
 Word of the Day
http://en.wiktionary.org/wiki/Main_Page

About Wikinews Print Edition

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