



Top Stories

Engine failure may have been factor in Amsterdam plane crash

According to the chief of the agency investigating the Turkish Airlines aeroplane crash at Amsterdam's Schiphol Airport in the Netherlands yesterday, engine trouble may have been a factor in the accident.

Al-Shabaab and AU peacekeepers clash in Somalia

In ongoing clashes that started Tuesday in Somalia, Islamist rebels Al-Shabaab battled troops from the African Union's peacekeeping force, African Union Mission to Somalia. According to rights groups and other sources, 81 people have been killed.

Former Serbian president Milutinovic acquitted of war crimes

Milan Milutinovic, the former president of Serbia, has been cleared of charges of war crimes and crimes against humanity by a United Nations war crimes tribunal in Kosovo.

Wikipedia Current Events

The Bangladesh Rifles surrender after the government promises amnesty.

•Palestinian groups Hamas and Fatah begin peace deliberations in Cairo, Egypt.

•The International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia acquits former

Wikipedia Current Events

Serbian President Milan Milutinović of committing war crimes.

•General Motors reports a US\$9.6 billion loss, due to the current automotive industry crisis.

•Switzerland's UBS AG appoints former Credit Suisse CEO Oswald Grübel as its new Group CEO.

•China's Navy and Denmark's Navy rescue Italian and Chinese merchant vessels from Somali pirates in the Gulf of Aden.

•The Marriott Hotel in Islamabad, Pakistan, catches fire, five months after it was bombed.

•Latvian President Valdis Zatlers names former Finance Minister Valdis Dombrovskis as the new Prime Minister.

•Ajmal Kasab, the 2008 Mumbai attacks' lone surviving gunman, is charged with waging war against India.

•The Royal Bank of Scotland Group reports a 2008 loss of £24.1 billion.

•Thirteen thousand civil servants stage a one-day strike action in Dublin, Ireland.

•Former Guinean President Lansana Conté's eldest son confesses to drug trafficking.

•An outbreak of dengue fever in Bolivia has killed 18 people and infected 31,000.

•Spanish police arrest 11 people for their alleged involvement in drug smuggling.

Wikipedia Current Events

•The University of Reading identifies the oldest words in the English language.

•A study by the scientific journal Nature shows that HIV is evolving to resist the human immune system.

•The earliest footprints evidencing modern human foot anatomy and gait are discovered in Kenya.

•The Svalbard Global Seed Vault receives 90,000 food crop seed samples.

•Kuwaiti Foreign Minister Sheikh Muhammad al-Sabah visits Iraq.

•The United States Defense Department allows news agencies to publicize photographs of the coffins of soldiers killed in Iraq and Afghanistan.

Former Serbian president Milutinovic acquitted of war crimes

Milan Milutinovic, the former president of Serbia, has been cleared of charges of war crimes and crimes against humanity by a United Nations war crimes tribunal in Kosovo.

Five other top Serbian officials, however, were found guilty of their charges and given sentences ranging from 15 to 22 years in gaol.

Milutinovic, aged 66, was the president of Serbia from December 1997 to December 2002, but was widely seen as a figurehead president during the Kosovo

conflict in the 1990s. The court concluded that he did not have any direct control over the army, and was released from custody.

"The trial chamber finds you not guilty of counts one to five of the indictment," said Iain Bonomy, the judge at the trial. "In practice, it was Milosevic, sometimes termed the 'Supreme Commander', who exercised actual command authority over the [Serb army] during the Nato campaign."

Milutinovic and the five other men went on trial in July of 2006 on charges of murdering hundreds and forcibly deporting 800,000 civilians by Serbian forces in 1999 in Kosovo.

Of the five sentenced to prison, former Deputy Prime Minister Nikola Sainovic, Yugoslav Army General Nebojsa Pavkovic, and Serbian Police General Sreten Lukic were given sentences of 22 years. Yugoslav Army General Vladimir Lazarevic and Chief of the General Staff Dragoljub Ojdanic were each sentenced to 15 years behind bars.

All six men had pleaded not guilty to their charges.

Engine failure may have been factor in Amsterdam plane crash

According to the chief of the agency investigating the Turkish Airlines aeroplane crash at Amsterdam's Schiphol Airport in the Netherlands yesterday, engine trouble may have been a factor in the accident.

Addressing Dutch state television, chairman of the Dutch Safety Board Pieter van Vollenhoven said that the way the aircraft dropped from the air suggests that the engines may have failed. "If you

then lose speed, you then literally fall out of the sky," he said. However, he noted that the reason for the apparent engine failure had not yet been established.

Van Vollenhoven said that the analysis of the aeroplane's flight data recorders could be finished as early as Tuesday, but added that the Dutch Safety Board would most likely not disclose any preliminary findings until next week.

Fred Sanders, a spokesman for the board, said that the damage to the aircraft corroborated witness accounts that the plane impacted with the ground tail-down.

"This may indicate that the plane had lost its forward momentum, that there was no motor function," he said, adding that it may be a long time before a full explanation of the incident is available. "We will have an official finding probably in about a year, but we should be able to give an interim finding within weeks," he said.

Nine people were killed and 86 injured on Wednesday when a Boeing 737-800 with 135 people on board registered to Turkish Airlines crashed just short of the runway in a farmer's field near Schiphol Airport.

Al-Shabaab and AU peacekeepers clash in Somalia

In ongoing clashes that started Tuesday in Somalia, Islamist rebels Al-Shabaab battled troops from the African Union's peacekeeping force, African Union Mission to Somalia (AMISOM).

According to rights groups and other sources, 81 people have been killed. Among them are 48 civilians, said the Elman Peace and Human Rights Organisation.

Another 90 civilians have been injured, the group added.

On Sunday, Al-Shabaab attacked Burundi troops with suicide bombers at an AMISOM base in Mogadishu. 11 troops were killed and 15 wounded.

Xuddur, the capital of Bakool, is reported to have fallen under Al-Shabaab control.

"Al-Shabaab fighters are now patrolling the town and the other group fled," local elder Hussein Abdi Isak told Reuters in a phone interview.

The United Nations Security Council issued a statement to "condemn in the strongest terms the attacks on the African Union mission in Somalia." The statement was passed unanimously and urges all Somalis "to reject violence and extremism."

"This is a kind of setback, no doubt about it, but this is not the time to despair," the President of the United Nations Security Council, Japan's Ambassador Yukio Takasu, told reporters. "On the contrary, I think all of us have much stronger determination to continue to provide and accelerate the logistical support to AMISOM."

The African Union says its peacekeeping force in Somalia — which is supposed to number 8,000, but currently has about 3,500 soldiers from Uganda and Burundi — is in dire need of reinforcement.

However, Nigeria, which was supposed to send 850 officers and soldiers within weeks, says it now has second thoughts.

"At the time the commitment was

made to go to Somalia, what was on ground was peacekeeping," Foreign Minister Ojo Maduekwe said. "But the situation in Somalia has deteriorated considerably. We are not in a hurry to start getting the body bags to this country."

"If we are going to risk the lives of our young men and women, if we are going to put our young men and women in harm's way, it has to be a carefully analyzed mission response. It should not be without adequate planning and it should not be without adequate logistical, material support," he added.

Australian state of Queensland will go to the polls on March 21

The Premier of the Australian state of Queensland has announced that the state will have its election on Saturday, March 21. In an address on YouTube, Anna Bligh of the Australian Labor Party said that she called the election due to the state of the economy and to stabilise the government.

"It's time for Queensland to settle this election. It's time to settle the speculation. So that government, business and the community can get on with the task at hand and not be distracted and destabilised by looming elections," Ms Bligh said in the statement.

Ms Bligh has recently denied that she would call an early election.

"I have always said that I want my government to run the full term and I have not changed my view on this lightly," she said.

"After 11 years in office, Ms Bligh only cares about one job: her own," said Lawrence Springborg head of the Liberal National Party (LNP) and the Leader of the Opposition. "Queensland deserves better. Over the next 27 days, the

LNP will build on our vision for the Queensland we all deserve."

The Opposition need to pick up at least twenty seats from the government to overcome the significant Labor majority and a number of independents.

"It is a sad legacy of economic management and mismanagement of the Labor Government that after 11 years of the rivers of gold, our state is broke," Mr Springborg said. "It's a little bit like lighting a fire and then running around and wanting credit for putting it out."

A March 21 election gives candidates twenty six day to campaign. This is just within the legal requirements. The Queensland Electoral Act (1992) requires the election campaign to last between 26 and 56 days.

The Queensland Greens nominated an environmental lawyer to run against treasurer Andrew Fraser.

"We can tackle climate change and create long-term jobs, but Labor can't see that because they are blinded by the interests of their big donors - the urban development and coal industries," says Larrisa Waters, the Greens candidate for Mt-Cootha.

"The Greens want to give the community and the environment a voice back in State Parliament."

"The current stance taken by both major parties, in relation to Daylight Saving in Queensland, is outdated, out of touch and inflexible. South East Queenslanders are frustrated that neither major party is currently prepared to explore options on the issue of Daylight Saving", DS4SEQ party leader Jason Furze told Wikinews on January 30. DS4SEQ

is a single-issue party, focused on the debate on daylight saving time.

Indigenous activist Sam Watson will be contesting the South Brisbane electorate which is currently held by the premier. He will represent the Socialist Alliance. Watson campaigned heavily for indigenous rights since the 1970s and was a community spokesperson following the death of Mulrunji Doomadgee in 2004.

Hilda Solis begins new job as US Secretary of Labor

On Wednesday, February 25, Hilda Solis made her entrance as the new United States Secretary of Labor saying she was "fired up and ready to go." Solis reported for her first day as the new Secretary after having been confirmed by the Senate by a vote of 80–17 on February 24. Wikinews was there for her appearance.

After being confirmed, she resigned from her position as a Representative for California and was sworn into her new position that same evening. She then joined the cabinet at President Obama's speech to Joint session of Congress which took place on February 24.

Solis' arrival was announced on Wednesday to all Department of Labor employees who were invited to attend an informal gathering to greet her on her first day. More than 1,000 employees greeted Solis as she walked into the Department of Labor's Frances Perkins Building. Solis stopped to shake hands and accept the congratulations of her new staff.

Solis briefly spoke to the assembly and then set about to start her day. She addressed the crowd, assembled both inside and outside

the building, by saying "We need to revitalize this agency." She also told the crowd, "It's time to put labor back in the Department of Labor."

The department has an annual budget of approximately \$53 billion and nearly 17,000 employees. Solis received a warm welcome from her new staff.

Today in History

1594 – Henry IV of France was crowned at the Cathedral of Chartres near Paris, beginning the Bourbon dynasty.

1801 – Under the District of Columbia Organic Act of 1801, Washington, D.C., a new planned city and capital of the United States, was placed under the jurisdiction of the U.S. Congress.

1933 – The Reichstag building in Berlin, the assembly location of the German Parliament, was set on fire, a pivotal event in the establishment of the Nazi regime in Germany.

1940 – American biochemists Martin Kamen and Sam Ruben discovered the radioactive isotope carbon-14, which today is used extensively as the basis of the radiocarbon dating method to date archaeological, geological, and hydrogeological samples.

1976 – The rebel movement Polisario Front proclaimed the Sahrawi Arab Democratic Republic in Western Sahara.

February 27 is Independence Day in the Dominican Republic (1844)

Quote of the Day

Turn, turn, my wheel! All things must change
To something new, to something strange;
Nothing that is can pause or stay;
The moon will wax, the moon will wane,
The mist and cloud will turn to rain,

The rain to mist and cloud again,
To-morrow be to-day.
~ Henry Wadsworth Longfellow ~

Word of the Day

penny for your thoughts

- (idiomatic) A phrase used to inquire into the thoughts and feelings of another, especially when the person appears pensive or conflicted.

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