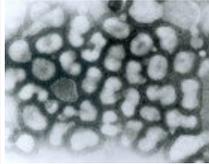




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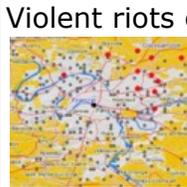
Major new bird flu outbreaks reported in Asia



New outbreaks of the lethal H5N1 strain of the avian influenza have been documented in Vietnam and

China. Health officers in these regions have identified more than 13,000 potentially infected birds.

French riots continue into second week



Violent riots continue in the suburbs of Paris and other areas, where residents have set fire to buildings, cars, and buses and shot at police and firefighters.

Featured story

US state of Kansas in battle over "Intelligent Design" in education



Kansas' school board efforts to write Intelligent Design into the public school science curriculum

may have unleashed entertaining, but unintended, consequences.

Wikipedia Current Events

- Archaeologists in Israel discover the so-far most ancient Christian church. The church was uncovered near the prison at Megiddo and is dated at more than 1700 years old.
- Britney Spears makes return to album charts with a new release.

Armed gunmen attack cruise ship off Somali coast

The Seabourn Spirit, a cruise ship sailing off the coast of Somalia, narrowly escaped an attack by gunmen believed to be pirates.

The alleged pirate attack occurred on Saturday, when two boats approached the ship and began firing automatic weapons and rocket propelled grenades, injuring one crew member.

The crew took evasive action and escaped safely by employing an acoustic bang which caused the gunmen to flee believing they were under fire.

302 passengers and crew, mostly from the United States, Canada, and Australia, were onboard when the gunmen opened fire. The attack took place 160km (100 miles) off the Somali coastline, which has a reputation for pirate activity.

Deborah Natansohn, president of the Seabourn Cruise Line told CNN Radio, "The occupants of those boats did not succeed in boarding the ship and eventually turned away ... our captain and crew did a terrific job taking responsive action."

Edith Laird, from Seattle, told the BBC, "My daughter saw the pirates out our window. [...] There were at least three RPG that hit the ship, one in a stateroom four doors down from our cabin."

According to Mike Rogers, a passenger from Vancouver, the

captain opted not to sound the alarm and instead announced the attack over the speakers, fearing the sound would drive people to the deck and place them in the line of fire.

Natansohn has stated that the company will re-evaluate future trips to the area.

The Seafarers Assistance Program (SAP) is planning on highlighting the incident and its potential costs for tourism on Monday.

Pirate attacks have been an increasing problem in the area, with 23 hijackings and attempted seizures recorded by the International Maritime Bureau (IMB). Two of the attacks were on ships carrying aid for the United Nations World Food Program. One attack involved a ship carrying 935 tons of rice for Asian tsunami victims. The crew had been held for three months before being released. According to the IMB, the pirates - mostly made up of the Horn of Africa's former navy as well as former fishermen - represent a serious threat to commercial shipping.

Somalia has been a volatile area since the ousting of former dictator Mohamed Said Barre. The country has been operating without a central administration since 1991 and is now controlled by

Nationwide rallies against anti-terror laws held in Australia

A coordinated set of Australian protests against proposed anti-terror bills and calling on the

withdral of troops from Iraq began in Sydney today. Approximately one thousand people gathered in Belmore Park in the center of the New South Wales capital for a rally and march through the city.



Protester demonstrates concern that new laws will gag dissent

A central focus of the protesters and speeches was the new anti-terror legislation introduced into Parliament by the Australian government which may effectively outlaw some forms of dissent.

"These new laws are against dissent" said David Bernie, a speaker from the NSW Council for Civil Liberties. "We are seeing a big change," he said, "Now, ASIO questioning warrants, people subject to those are not allowed to talk about it for two years. Now, this is automatic, and it is automatic irrespective of whether there is any need for secrecy or not. So ASIO doesn't have to apply for any gag order, the gag order applies automatically. Its stops not only that person talking about it, but their lawyer talking about or the media talking about it."

Mr. Bernie said that under the laws, it may be a criminal act for family members to discuss the fact that a member of the same family had been secretly detained.

"Would John Howard, if he was told by his son, 'I am safe but I can't tell you where I am', not tell Janette about it? It just is a ridiculous situation".

The rally was addressed by several other speakers including the Greens party Senator Kerry Nettle before setting out on a police escorted march through the streets of Sydney.



Protest enters Elizabeth Street

On return to Belmore Park further speeches took place, and the rally was concluded with a speech from Paul White from the Muslims for Peace organisation. He suggested that the notion that it was necessary for foreign troops to stay in Iraq to prevent civil war was false. "The historical fact is that Iraq has never had a history of sectarian conflict. Never, never, never. Sunnis and Shites live all over Iraq, not just in the South and in fact they are heavily inter-married." he said. He suggested that most of the violence in Iraq was directly or indirectly the result of foreign intervention. "The real leaders of Iraq's Muslims are unanimous, Sunni and Shite, in denouncing sectarian violence". He concluded, "The only solution to the chaos in Iraq is for all foreign troops to leave Iraq."

Engine troubles delay Airbus superjumbo tour

The departure from France of the new Airbus A380 superjumbo airliner on a tour of Asia and

Australia has been delayed, leading to a rearrangement of its public appearances. Citing "a precautionary measure", Airbus announced that two of the Rolls-Royce Trent 900 engines on the prototype airliner would be replaced before the tour commenced.



The A380's first landing on April 27, 2005

Singapore will remain the airliner's first stop, where Singapore Airlines will display the aircraft they intend to launch into passenger-carrying service in November 2006. It is expected that the Airbus 380 will wear the livery of Singapore Airlines when it arrives on November 11, three days later than originally planned.

The massive airliner will then bypass the planned stop in Malaysia, and fly directly to Sydney, then Melbourne and Brisbane as part of the leadup to Qantas' 85th birthday celebrations on November 16. Qantas plans to commence A380 operations starting in April 2007.

The Malaysia visit will be rescheduled for November 17, occurring during the return flight to France.

It is unclear whether the originally planned Australian tour dates can be kept, and sources indicate that the airliner's first stop in Brisbane, on November 11, maybe

eliminated in favour of a brief appearance on November 16.

Today in History

- 1789: John Carroll, S.J., was appointed Bishop of Baltimore, the first Roman Catholic bishop in the United States.
 - 1860: Abraham Lincoln (pictured) became the first Republican candidate to win the U.S. presidential election.
 - 1962: The United Nations General Assembly adopted Resolution 1761, condemning South Africa's apartheid policies.
 - 1963: Duong Van Minh officially took over the government of South Vietnam a few days after the assassination of President Ngo Dinh Diem.
 - 1999: Although opinion polls had clearly suggested that the majority of the electorate favoured republicanism, the Australian republic referendum was defeated.
- November 06 is Constitution Day in the Dominican Republic (1844) and Tajikistan (1994); Gustavus Adolphus Day in Sweden; Flag Day in Finland.

Quote of the Day

"I feel for all faiths the warm sympathy of one who has come to learn that even the trust in reason is a precarious faith, and that we are all fragments of darkness groping for the sun." ~ Will Durant

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