



Top Stories

Tsunami alert lifted for Japan and Russia

The tsunami alert for certain areas of Russia and Japan after an 8.1 magnitude earthquake struck near the north coast of Japan have been lifted.

U.S. Airways makes bid on Delta

US Airways Group Inc. made a hostile \$8 billion cash and stock bid for Delta Air Lines Inc. on Wednesday, a deal that would create one of the world's largest carriers. .

Featured story

Canadian law proposes to ban spitting, swearing and urinating in public

A new law that proposes no spitting, swearing, or urinating in public passed its second reading in Calgary.

Wikipedia Current Events

- General John Abizaid, head of the United States Central Command, tells the United States Senate Committee on Armed Services that he is optimistic that "we can stabilize Iraq."
- An earthquake measuring 8.1 on the Richter scale occurs at 11:14:19 UTC on the Pacific Ocean seafloor with an epicentre 390 kilometres (244 miles) east of Etorofu island (latitude 46.7 North, longitude 153.5 East). Tsunami warnings and watches are issued by the Pacific Tsunami

Wikipedia Current Events

- Warning Center and the West Coast and Alaska Tsunami Warning Center. After expectations of a tsunami at least 2 metres (6 feet) high, the largest wave to hit Hokkaido measures only 40 centimetres (16 inches).
- Joseph Kabila wins the presidential run-off election in the Democratic Republic of the Congo with 58% of the vote according to the electoral commission. His opponent Jean-Pierre Bemba claims that there were widespread instances of fraud.
- India and Pakistan agreed today to set up a panel to combat terrorism during the first peace talks between the countries in almost a year. However, there has been no progress in the core dispute over Kashmir, the mountain region both countries claim.
- Senator Mitch McConnell becomes the leader of the Republicans in the United States Senate.
- Widespread flooding is reported in East Africa especially Kenya, Somalia and Ethiopia, with at least five reported dead in Mogadishu where the Shabelle and Juba rivers have burst their banks and more than 70,000 people reported displaced in total.
- A patient in southern Kazakhstan has been accidentally infected with the HIV virus. Earlier this year 79 children were

Wikipedia Current Events

- accidentally infected resulting in a political scandal and the dismissal of Health Minister Yerbolat Dosayev and several lower level officials. There was another widespread infection in 2005.
- Al Jazeera establishes a 24-hour English language news channel Al Jazeera English, formerly Al Jazeera International, and started broadcasting today.
- Forests begin to revive as global devastation of trees is reversed. A new study offers hope for endangered species and climate change.
- United States Army soldier James Barker pleads guilty to raping a girl in the Mahmudiyah incident in March 2006.
- Richard Causey, former Chief Accounting Officer at Enron is sentenced to 66 months or five and a half years in prison for his role in the collapse of the company.
- A building collapses under the force of a British Columbia wind storm. The storm has also prompted the evacuation of West Vancouver neighbourhoods because of the forceful gusts.

47th Thessaloniki International Film Festival to open Friday

The 47th Thessaloniki Film Festival will open on Friday, November 17, 2006 in Thessaloniki, Greece. According to the Festival's officials, a record number of three hundred plus films will compose this year's

festival programme. The Venice Film Festival prize winner *The Queen*, directed by Stephen Frears and starring the award winner, British actress Helen Mirren, will be the opening film. According to the Festival's Director, this year's international competition section will "lean towards the adventure of narrative. It creates a world of vital stories, which film makers from four continents believe they must tell at any cost". Among the official guests of the 47th Film Festival are the French actress Emmanuele Béart, director Wim Wenders, and the American actress and singer Juliette Lewis, who will give a concert at the Mylos Hall, in Thessaloniki's Port. Also, the France-based Greek director Costa Gavras will give a seminar regarding the Greek-American actor-director, John Cassavetes.

According to the President of the Thessaloniki Film Festival, actor Georges Corraface, this year's bill of the Festival reaches 7.5 million Euros. From his side, the Greek Minister of Culture, Giorgos Voulgarakis stated that the Ministry acts towards the increase of the International character of the Film Festival. Thessaloniki's Film Festival is regarded the most important cinema festival in the Balkans. Many famous actors, actresses and directors like Francis Ford Coppola, Faye Dunaway and Catherine Deneuve have been among the official guests of the Thessaloniki Film Festival during the last decade. Former Presidents of Thessaloniki's Festival were the film directors Theo Angelopoulos and Pantelis Voulgaris.

Abramoff begins prison sentence

Jack Abramoff, the disgraced lobbyist began his six year prison sentence today. Abramoff himself

pled guilty on January 3, to three criminal felony counts in a Washington, D.C., federal court related to the defrauding of American Indian tribes and corruption of public officials. The following day he pled guilty to two criminal felony counts in a separate federal court, in Miami, related to his fraudulent dealings with SunCruz Casinos.

On March 29, he was sentenced to five years and 10 months in prison and ordered to pay restitution of more than \$21 million. His prison sentence was the minimum permitted under a plea bargain with federal prosecutors. Abramoff arrived at about 6:30 a.m. ET at a prison facility in western Maryland and began serving a nearly six-year prison sentence for a fraudulent deal to buy a fleet of casino ships in Florida. The camp is all male.

Stephen Finger, executive assistant at the prison, said all inmates work while there. Incoming inmates such as Abramoff typically are assigned to jobs such as food service work. Finger said that inmates can work their way up from low-level jobs paying 12 cents an hour to better positions paying up to 40 cents an hour.

Abramoff has ties to many Republican officials including former Representative Bob Ney, two of former Representative Tom DeLay's Aides, Senator Conrad Burns (lost on Election Day) and Representative John Doolittle.

U.S. Airways makes bid on Delta

As a surprise to many, U.S. Airways placed a \$8 Billion bid for Delta this morning, rallying the Dow Jones Industrial Average which closed at 12,251.71, a

record high. The offer to buy Delta once the Atlanta-based airline emerges from bankruptcy protection by the middle of 2007 would give Delta's unsecured creditors \$4 billion in cash and 78.5 million shares of US Airways stock. Delta has yet to file its own plan of reorganization. If completed, the deal would combine two of the oldest and most storied airlines in the United States. Delta started as a crop duster in the 1920s and grew to make its base at Atlanta-Hartsfield the nation's largest airport. US Air started as a mail carrier in the 1930s and has gone through several mergers and two bankruptcies.

"Consumers will have more choice and more reach, and a carrier that has a cost structure of a low-fare carrier," US Air CEO Doug Parker said in a phone interview.

The last airline deal of this magnitude, United Airline's proposed purchase of US Airways, was blocked by the Justice Department on antitrust grounds in 2001, just before the Sept. 11 terrorist attack.

Management of Delta have not endorsed the deal, stating they wish to prevail as independent. On Wall Street, however, US Air (up \$6.64 to \$57.57) investors welcomed the proposal, sending the carrier's stock soaring more than 12 percent in midday New York Stock Exchange trading. Investors also were pleased with Delta, with shares soaring 19 percent but then going back to modest gains. If the deal is completed the airline would operate under the name of Delta but nothing is set in stone.

Canadian law proposes to ban spitting, swearing and urinating in public

A new law that proposes no spitting, swearing, or urinating in public passed its second reading in Calgary.

Calgary City Council is expected to pass it into law later this year.

Fines would range from \$50 for carrying a visible knife or standing on public benches and \$300 for urinating or defecating in public. People who spit would face a \$100 fine and those who fight in city streets would pay a \$250 ticket.

"You have to set the groundwork of expectations — mutual expectations — in order to be able to work well together, live well together," said Ald. Madeline King, a councilor who represents part of Calgary's inner city. "This is the right thing to do — this is a social contract between Calgarians that calls for a minimum amount of respect," he said.

"Unless you have rules, things don't work so well in terms of living together harmoniously," said Ald. Madeleine King. "It's not targeting the homeless, it's targeting anyone who behaves in this way."

It will come back to council for final approval next week.

City lawyers have concerns about enforcing some parts of the legislation.

Tsunami alert lifted for Japan and Russia

The tsunami alert issued for certain areas of Russia and Japan after an 8.1 magnitude earthquake struck near the north coast of Japan have been lifted. While the tsunami alert has been lifted,

Japan's Meteorological Agency's web site is still showing watches in affect for most of the eastern Pacific coast of Hokkaido.

A small 40cm (15.7 inches) wave did wash up in some areas of the eastern coast of Japan, but this was no where near the 200cm (6.5 feet) wave that had been feared.

Tsunami wave alert for British Columbia dropped

A tsunami wave alert for the outer coast of British Columbia has been dropped. It was lifted about three hours after the alert was issued.

The alert was issued at 4:10 a.m. PST for B.C. north and central coasts to the northern tip of Vancouver Island and also the west coast of Vancouver Island south to Sombrio Point. It was expected to hit at 9:00 a.m. PST, 12:00 p.m. ET.

"That's our latest information - that if a wave was generated it would be hardly noticeable," said Cam Filmer, executive director of Provincial Emergency Planning office.

No impacts are expected from any tsunami wave that might reach B.C.'s outer coast, Emergency officials in British Columbia say.

Recent reports from Japan and Alaska indicate that any wave that might reach coastal B.C. will be very small.

Currently, there are blackouts, heavy rain and high winds through-out the area. 8,000 customers in Sechelt, Whistler, Bowen Island and Quadra Island, B.C. have no power. Winds are up to 100 kilometres an hour in some areas and rainfall amounts of 50 to 110 millimetres, Environment Canada reports.

Float plane services are cancelled between Vancouver, Victoria and Nanaimo.

Ferries are also cancelled on routes linking the mainland to Vancouver Island and the Gulf Islands.

The Yes Men troll Wharton Business School with slavery proposal

The anti-globalization satirist & performance art group The Yes Men recently delivered a presentation at a Wharton Business School conference on trade and investment in Africa.

The performance artist Hanniford Schmidt, pretending to be a WTO representative, announced a new WTO initiative for "full private stewardry of labor" in some parts of Africa. His talk attempted to make clear that this meant slavery.

"This is what free trade's all about," said Schmidt. "It's about the freedom to buy and sell anything—even people."

Schmidt reported that "One conference attendee asked what incentive employers had to remain as stewards once their employees are too old to work or reproduce" but that "there were no other questions from the audience that took issue with Schmidt's proposal."

Wharton Business School placed a notice on the conference site stating that their invitation of Schmidt had been based upon his misrepresentation of himself as a representative of the WTO, and that they do not endorse his views.

Ed Joyce to replace Trescothick for Ashes

Middlesex batsman Ed Joyce will replace Marcus Trescothick in the England Cricket squad facing Australia in the first Ashes test at the Gabba in Brisbane on 23 November.

The Irish-born left-handed batsman has only played three one-day internationals and one Twenty20 for England, averaging 10.33.

Joyce was chosen over Owais Shah and Rob Key; who have both had test experience for England, with Rob Key playing for the losing 2002/03 tourists at the last Ashes series in Australia.

England squad to face Australia:

A Flintoff (captain)

AJ Strauss (vice-captain)

JM Anderson

IR Bell

PD Collingwood

AN Cook

AF Giles

SJ Harmison

MJ Hoggard

GO Jones (wicketkeeper)

EC Joyce

SI Mahmood

MS Panesar

KP Pietersen

LE Plunkett

CMW Read (wicketkeeper)

R&B singer Gerald Levert dies

Gerald Levert, R&B singer, songwriter and producer died of a heart attack around 2:30 p.m. on Friday.

Gerald Levert was the son of Eddie Levert (of the soul group The O'Jays). Levert was known for a number of top ten hits in the 1980s and 90s, particularly "Pop, Pop Goes My Mind", "Casanova", and ABC-123". Levert had finished an album, which is expected to go

into release in early 2007.

The memorial service for his death will be held Friday, November 17, and scheduled to honor Levert are Stevie Wonder, Johnny Gill and Angie Stone.

South Africa to legalize same-sex marriage

South Africa's national assembly has passed bill 230-41 legalizing same-sex marriage in that country. The bill allows for the voluntary civil union or marriage between two people. It does not specify the orientation or sex of the people involved.

It was passed just in time to meet the Constitutional Court deadline of December 1, set forth by its ruling of December last year which said the current marriage law is unconstitutional.

The bill is being hailed by gay and liberal activists as another step forward out of the country's apartheid past, while at the same time religious clergy and traditional lawmakers are stating that the passage of the bill is "the saddest day in our 12 years of democracy." Islamist leader w:Sheikh Sharif Ahmed has said the bill is a "foreign action imposed on Africa".

Homosexuality is overwhelmingly illegal on the African continent, and even in countries such as South Africa it is not unusual for gays to be persecuted and attacked for their orientation.

Now that the bill has passed the National Assembly with a vote of 230-41 its next stop is the National Council of Provinces where its passage is widely expected on its way to being signed by President Thabo Mbeki.

CNN accused of covering up transcript of Bill Maher outing Ken Mehlman

Last thursday, CNN edited out portions of Larry King's "live" interview with Bill Maher for the west coast showing, and removed the same portions from the online transcript.

The deleted portions consisted of Bill Maher saying that Republican National Committee chair Ken Mehlman was gay.

Here is the deleted portion of the transcript:

Larry King: You will name them?

Bill Maher: Well, I wouldn't be the first. I'd get sued if I was the first. Ken Mehlman. Ok, there's one I think people have talked about. I don't think he's denied it when he's been, people have suggested, he doesn't say...

Larry King: I never heard that. I'm walking around in a fog. I never...Ken Mehlman? I never heard that. But the question is... Bill Maher: Maybe you don't go to the same bathhouse I do, Larry.

Ken Mehlman, currently the chair of the National Republican Committee, has been known to avoid questions about his sexuality, and supports a constitutional ban on same sex marriage.

Israeli Woman killed by Qassam rocket

A woman was killed early morning today by Qassam rocket, launched by fighters from Palestinian controlled Beit Hanoun in Northern Gaza Strip. Rockets were launched at Israeli Southern city of Sderoth and several other locations. Two rockets landed in the city, killing a fifty seven year old woman and injuring a twenty four year old bodyguard of Israeli Defense Minister Amir Peretz, who lives in

the city. Several other people were treated for shock.

The twenty four year old bodyguard lost both legs due to shrapnel wounds and is still in surgery, several hours after the attack.

The Al-Quds Brigades, military wing of Islamic Jihad, took responsibility for the attack, saying they have launched "two sophisticated Quds rockets at a mid-range", as a retaliation for the IDF artillery shelling of Beit Hanoun earlier this month, where 19 people were killed. Izz al-Din al-Qassam, Hamas' military wing, also took responsibility for the attack.

IDF officials said today that the attack was carried out from area around Beit Hanoun cemetery, where large-scale Qassam launching operation is underway.

Another attack occurred hours later, when another rocket landed near several young men, severely injuring seventeen years old youth and lightly several others. After today's attacks, 10 Israelis were killed by Qassam rockets since 2002 and over 270 injured.

Meena among 60 Asian Heroes of Time Magazine

Meena Keshwar Kamal, popularly known as Meena, the founder of the Revolutionary Association of the Women of Afghanistan (RAWA) has been listed among the "60 Asian Heroes" along with Mother Teresa, Dalai Lama, Kang Chol Hwan and others, in the Asian edition of Time Magazine. The magazine dedicated its November 13, 2006 special anniversary issue to pay "homage to the men and women who have shaped our destiny and our times."

Aryn Baker writes in her profile of Meena: "Although she was only 30 when she died, Meena had already planted the seeds of an Afghan women's rights movement based on the power of knowledge. She believed that if women were able to read and write, that if they could communicate and learn about the world, they would discover their own strength and could make a difference in their own society."

Meena established RAWA in 1977 to promote women's rights and a secular democracy. The group opposed both the Soviet-supported regime and the later Mujahideen and Taliban Islamist rulers. After 10 years of struggle for women's rights, she was assassinated in Queeta of Pakistan on Feb.4, 1987 allegedly by the agents of Khadamat-e Etela'at-e Dawlati (KHAD), the secret police of the Soviet-supported regime in Afghanistan, which functioned under the control of the KGB.

Murat Kurnaz describes systematic torture in Guantanamo

Murat Kurnaz, a Turk born and raised in Germany, who was held in extrajudicial detention by the United States for five years, described systematic torture while held in the Guantanamo Bay detention camp in Cuba.

Kurnaz alleges he was subjected to electric shocks, waterboarding, the technique of leading a victim to feel he was on the verge of drowning, being shackled to the ceiling for days on end, being denied food, one time for a period of twenty days.

Kurnaz's case first received widespread scrutiny in March of 2005, when his fully classified dossier was accidentally briefly

declassified.

One allegation against Kurnaz was that he had been a friend of a man who killed himself during a suicide bombing mission. However the dossier revealed that his friend, the alleged suicide bomber, was alive and well and living in Germany. The Bremen Prosecutor's office had certified that his friend, who American intelligence analysts had initially alleged was a suicide bomber, was found to be innocent.

Another allegation was that he had traveled with a group of missionaries from the Pakistani missionary group Tablighi Jamaat. The files submitted on Kurnaz's behalf to his Administrative Review Board by lawyers filing his writ of habeas corpus contained three letters from American professors of religious studies, who had studied the Tablighi Jamaat. The letters from these experts were consistent in their description of the Tablighi Jamaat as a large apolitical organization.

Unlike Christian missionary groups the Tablighi Jamaat only worked among fellow Muslims. Missions consisted of traveling, in small groups, between mosques in foreign lands. The missionaries would discuss the practice of Islam in their various nations, and the practice of Islam in their host mosques.

Charles Upham's medals to stay in New Zealand

The Victoria Cross and bar awarded to soldier, Charles Upham, have been sold to Britain's Imperial War Museum in London. The Victoria Cross and bar, also known as a double Victoria Cross, were only awarded to one combat soldier, Mr Upham. The medals will, however, remain in New Zealand as they are on loan to

New Zealand for 999 years, this is welcoming news to the New Zealand government.

The medals were not exactly donated to New Zealand as it is currently illegal to export the medals, but it still generous to donate them so New Zealand can still see the medals at the Waiouru Army Museum. His family had requested that they be on view.

Amanda Upham and Virginia McKenzie are Mr Uphams daughters and are the ones who sold the medals to the war museum in Britain. The medals were sold for an unknown amount of money, however it was known that they had wanted NZ\$3.3 million.

The government had offered to buy the medals for \$1 million, this was rejected by the two daughters which caused a lot of controversy. A collector had then offered \$9 million.

Speaking in Hong Kong, Phil Goff, minister of defence, said: "I'm hugely pleased the Upham medals will now be held at the Waiouru Army Museum in perpetuity as part of New Zealand's military heritage." Mr Goff also thanked a trust that worked together with the museum to make sure that New Zealand was still able to view the medals.

Mr Upham had won his Victoria Crosses in World War Two. His first Victoria Cross was won in the Battle of Crete in 1941. And he won his bar in the Western Desert about a year after his first Victoria Cross.

A Victoria Cross is the highest medal available to be awarded for bravery in the Commonwealth Realm.

Today in History

1384 - Though she was a woman, Jadwiga was crowned "King of Poland".

1532 - Sapa Inca Atahualpa was captured by Francisco Pizarro in the Battle of Cajamarca.

1885 - Louis Riel, Canadian rebel leader of the Métis and "Father of Manitoba", was executed for high treason.

1979 - The first line of the Bucharest Metro was opened in Bucharest, Romania.

2002 - Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome (SARS) was first recorded in Guangdong, China.
November 16 is International Day for Tolerance

Quote of the Day

We are at war between consciousness and nature, between the desire for permanence and the fact of flux. It is ourself against ourselves.
~ Alan Watts

Word of the Day

mitigate; v
To reduce, lessen, or decrease.

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