



Top Stories

Violence surrounds political rally in Pakistan

Violence erupted as the suspended Chief Justice of Pakistan, Iftikhar Muhammad Chaudhry, arrived in Karachi, Pakistan, to address a rally of supporters. Some reports say up to 34 have died.

Syrian democracy advocate Kamal Labwani jailed for 12 years

Kamal Labwani was sentenced in a Syrian court Thursday to 12 years of hard labour. Labwani is a prominent activist with a history of advocating for democratic reform in Syria.

Featured story

Startup web broadcaster Joost signs deal with Warner Brothers

Momentum toward the realization of Internet TV got a boost as upstart web broadcaster Joost recently announced that it signed a deal with Warner Brothers to host some of its WBTV-branded content.

Wikipedia Current Events

- Guinean soldiers riot in the capital Conakry after the President of Guinea Lansana Conte fails to attend a meeting to discuss grievances over their pay and conditions.

- The final of the 2007 Eurovision Song Contest takes place in Helsinki, Finland. Serbia wins with its debut entry Molitva.

Wikipedia Current Events

- A bomb placed on a bicycle was detonated in a bazaar in İzmir, Turkey wounding fifteen people just a day before the scheduled "republic protest" in the city. One of the wounded was in a critical condition and later died in the hospital while most of the others were lightly wounded and were released from the hospital the same day.

- At least 33 people are killed and 120 are injured in clashes between pro-government supporters and opposition who supports deposed Chief Justice of Pakistan Iftikhar Muhammad Chaudhry in the Pakistani city of Karachi.

- Su Tseng-Chang resigns as the Premier of the Republic of China (Taiwan) following a loss in a primary election to be the Democratic Progressive Party candidate in the 2008 Taiwanese presidential election.

- Voters in Armenia go to the polls to elect a new National Assembly of Armenia.

Serbia wins Eurovision Song Contest

Serbia's entry, Molitva (A Prayer), performed by 23-year-old Marija Šerifović, has won the 2007 Eurovision Song Contest in Helsinki, Finland, with a score of 268 points.

Second place was claimed by the Ukrainian drag queen Verka Serduchka, and third place went to the Russian entry of Serebro.

Turkey took the fourth place with Shake It Up Shekerim. Greece with Sarbel's Yassou Maria came 7th as the first Western-European country, while Ireland took only 5 votes, finishing below France and the United Kingdom which shared the second-last place.

16 out of 24 finalists came from Eastern Europe, which caused many Western European countries to doubt the possibility that a country from Western Europe could ever win the final. Although France, the U.K., Spain and Germany are the big sponsors of the festival and are automatically selected for the final round, they all ended up at the bottom of the ranking. The fact that affiliated countries vote for each other (neighbourhood countries such as Scandinavian, Balkan or ex-Sovjet countries) is also an annually returning matter discussed in the media.

A record 42 countries entered the Eurosong Festival, but 18 didn't make it through the selection rounds. Serbia competed as an independent country for the first time, separate from Montenegro or Bosnia-Herzegovina, and immediately won the competition. This year's edition was the first to host new styles like jazz side by side with traditional ballads and rock. The winning song was also the first non-English song to win since the transsexual artist Dana International won for Israel in 1998.

The competition took place in Finland because last year the

Finnish hard rock song 'Hard Rock Hallelujah' by Lordi won the competition. The song kicked off the final in Helsinki.

President of Guinea submits to military

Today, the Guinean President Lansana Conté gave into military demands to remove his Minister of Defence, which was a main demand in the three day old military revolt in the African nation. The President also raised the pay of soldiers.

The revolt began when it was leaked that no promotions would occur for Officers unless they had 14 years of service. When this had been announced, junior officers began revolting and making demands of higher pay and the removal of the Minister of Defence, amongst other things.

Tamil Nadu film 'Sivaji: The Boss' release date changes again

AVM have now officially announced the recent postponing of Sivaji: The Boss to May 31, one day after saying it would be on May 26. Ayngaran have for the first time put on their website a date for the release which is also May 31. This is said to be the last postponing of the film, but due to the multiple previous postponings there is speculation about this.

When speaking to employee's in Ayngaran there seems to be a rumour that it will be released before the May 31 in the UK, this could be a possible preview show of the film.

Object that fell through roof of New Jersey, USA home not a meteorite

An object that fell through the roof of a New Jersey home in January was not a meteorite, according to Jeremy Delaney a geologist at

Rutgers University. Instead, it appears the object was space junk, or orbital debris.

"Basically, it's a piece of stainless steel. There's huge amounts of material that have been left by the various space programs of the world," said Delaney.

The meteorite shaped object was not from a naturally occurring substance and had a silver like reflection. It weighed about the same as a small can of soup, 13 ounces (about .37 kilograms), but was no bigger than a golf ball.

Earlier during the incident, scientists from Rutgers examined the object visually along with police who were at the scene, and determined it was a meteorite. But further tests by geologists confirmed that it was not a meteorite, but probably a metal piece from a rocket or satellite. They had earlier thought it was made of iron.

"That's the nature of science. If the conclusion from the test says it's not a meteorite, then it's not a meteorite. We have to move forward," said Srinivasan Nageswaran, an individual belonging to the family that found the object.

Longest coffee table symbolises World Fair Trade Day in Belgium

Oxfam and several other fair trade-organisations organised coffee tables all over Flanders to celebrate the World Fair Trade Day. The combined length of the tables at different locations was meant to exceed 2015 meters (to remind people of the U.N. millennium development goals for 2015), but eventually reached over 3000 meters.

The fair trade organisations distributed a petition addressed to European commissioners for Trade Peter Mandelson and commissioner for Development and Humanitarian Aid Louis Michel, in which they asked for:

- Market regulations to compensate the small farmers for the instabilities in the natural resource prices
- Access to information about the coffee market
- The right for networks of small farmers in Africa to join negotiations.

Hundreds of volunteers across Flanders lured people to the tables with free fair trade coffee, hot chocolate and cake. The action came at the end of a month were films and debates brought the situation of small coffee farmers in Africa under the attention.

Stevenage Borough win 2007 FA Trophy at Wembley Stadium

Stevenage Borough beat Kidderminster Harriers 3:2 in the final of the FA Trophy after being 2:0 down at half time.

The game was the first competitive club match to be played at the new Wembley Stadium.

James Constable scored the first goal after 31 minutes, and a second one at the end of the first half. Mitchell Cole scored the first goal for Stevenage 5 minutes into the second half, then Craig Dobson equalized. Steve Morison scored the winning goal 2 minutes before the end of normal time.

Violence surrounds political rally in Pakistan

Violence erupted in Karachi, Pakistan as recently suspended Chief Justice Iftikhar Muhammad Chaudhry reached the city to

address a rally of supporters.

Clashes erupted in the streets between rival political factions. Members of the pro-government party, Muttahida Qaumi Movement (MQM), clashed with supporters of Chaudhry, Jamaat-e-Islami (JI). There are reports of up to 34 people killed in the riots and another 120 injured. Supporters of Chaudry accused the MQM of initiating the violence, but the MQM has denied the accusation.

Chaudhry had flown in to attend the rally in the city, but was unable to leave Karachi airport due to the violence. After spending several hours at Karachi airport, Chaudhry returned to Islamabad.

In what was considered a controversial move, Pakistani President Pervez Musharraf suspended Chaudhry, March 9, 2007, on charges of misconduct. Critics say that Musharraf removed Chaudhry to put in place a Chief Justice more sympathetic to Musharraf's military-ruled government. There are reports Musharraf will put in a bid later this year to extend his rule by another five-year term and will seek legal support for his actions.

While the unrest in Karachi was taking place, President Musharaff addressed a large pro-government rally in Islamabad where approximately 80,000 people turned out. "This is a historical day... because I haven't been to any gathering where I have seen so many people in support of the government's policies," Musharraf told the crowd.

Musharraf ruled out imposing an emergency in Karachi. "There is absolutely no requirement and absolutely no environment for taking such drastic measure," he

said.

Two children witness woman being killed by a tiger

Tanya Dumstrey-Soos, 32 was killed at the Siberian Magic exotic animal park in Bridge Lake British Columbia, Canada after being attacked by a Bengal Tiger named Gangus.

"The animal is part of a collection of exotic and domestic animals. It appears that the animal ... reached outside of the cage and grabbed her. Upon arrival police determined that all the animals were in their cages and the woman was found lying on the ground receiving help from family," said Const. Annie Linteau, a spokeswoman for the Royal Canadian Mounted Police, [RCMP]. Gangus is one of two Bengal Tigers at the park.

The owner of the park is Kim Carlton, the boyfriend of Dumstrey-Soos. The entire attack was witnessed by the children of Carlton, his 15 year-old daughter and 12 year-old son who both called for help shortly after the attack.

Dumstrey-Soos was standing near the tiger's cage when he grabbed her legs. According to the mayor of nearby Williams Lake, Scott Nelson, all of the injuries inflicted onto Dumstrey-Soos were at her waist and below. She was taken to a hospital in the town of 100 Mile House, where she was pronounced dead.

Authorities with the B.C. SPCA are not surprised that the attack happened, claiming that they tried to remove the tigers from the park several times.

"This is extremely sad, but not unexpected. We've spent thousands of dollars trying to have these

animals removed." said B.C. SPCA spokeswoman, Marcie Moriarty who also said that the animals arrived in 2005. Moriarty also said that the tigers lived in small cages made of chain-linked fencing and that the locks were too small.

The reason that the tigers were not removed from the park is because, according to Moriarty, the SPCA does not have the facilities to hold the tigers until proper housing can be provided for them.

"When we went up there, we realized we weren't just dealing with animal cruelty, we were dealing with a public safety issue," added Moriarty.

Dumstrey-Soos worked as a receptionist and saleswoman at the 100 Mile House Advisor newspaper.

Syrian democracy advocate Kamal Labwani jailed for 12 years

Syrian medical doctor Kamal Labwani was sentenced in a Syrian court Thursday to 12 years of hard labour, one of the longest sentences for a dissident meted out by Syrian President Bashar al-Assad's government.

Labwani is a prominent activist with a history of advocating for democratic reform in Syria. Labwani founded the Democratic Liberal Gathering, which Human Rights Watch describes as "a group of Syrian intellectuals and activists who advocate for peaceful change in Syria based on democratic reforms, liberalism, secularism and respect for human rights."

"The Syrian government has accelerated its crackdown on free speech and peaceful activism," said Sarah Leah Whitson, Middle East director at Human Rights Watch. "Peaceful activists like Labwani are

paying a heavy price for expressing their views."

Labwani was convicted of inciting a foreign country to attack Syria. The charges may have stemmed from meetings Labwani held in late 2005 with American officials while on a visit to the United States. He was arrested at Damascus Airport on his return to Syria in November 2005.

The White House issued a statement on Friday condemning the sentence, and suggested that Labwani may have been treated harshly under inhumane prison conditions. "These developments demonstrate that the Assad regime in Syria continues to suppress dissent and crack down on those who peacefully seek to defend their rights and bring democratic reform to their country," said Tony Snow, White House Press Secretary. "As the President stated last year, all political prisoners in Syria should be released immediately."

The sentencing of Labwani comes just two weeks after Anwar al-Bunni, another Syrian democracy activist was jailed five years for signing a petition, the "Damascus Declaration", which encouraged significant changes to Syria's involvement with Lebanon.

Labwani's defense lawyer, Khalil Maatouk, rejected the charges against his client and indicated he would appeal the judgment within 30 days. "This is a political trial," said Maatouk. He suggested that Labwani "believed in peaceful change from within Syria."

Ayatollah Emami-Kashani calls Americans 'murderers'

Ayatollah Mohammad Emami Kashani fiercely lambasted Americans as an occupier in Iraq for not caring about the fate of

Iraqis during Friday prayers at Tehran University. During the same prayers he stated that vanity and arrogance are the root of all evil.

Emami-Kashani is a senior member of the Assembly of Experts; the Assembly of Experts is a clerical body charged with reviewing the actions of the Supreme Leader of Iran, Grand Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, to ensure conformity with Islamic laws. Furthermore, the Assembly of Experts chooses a new Supreme Leader should Khamenei become incapable of leadership.

Emami-Kashani told prayerful supporters, "The Americans are murderers, and yet they propagate about the aggressive nature of our dear Islam, or being uncivilized of the great Iranian nation."

He also spoke about the Social Security Plan of Iran. However, he wasn't referring to social insurance; Emami-Kashani meant the necessity of ridding Iran of moral corruption: "It is not right for an Iranian mother to stare worriedly at the entrance door of her house till hours after midnight for the return home of her daughter, lest an ethically corrupt boy would have cheated her."

He also said that Americans care only about U.S. deaths.

"The only important point for the US statesmen is that 4,000 US soldiers have got killed in Iraq, not caring a bit about the huge number of the innocent Iraqis that have got killed at home due to the US arrogant policies."

Last month, he said that the West wants "a strife between Islamic countries so that Muslims would kill each other."

In December of 2006, Ayatollah

Emami-Kashani ran for re-election and garnered 823,308 votes in his district. This may attest to his popularity, that was second only to Akbar Hashemi Rafsanjani in the 2006 Assembly of Experts vote.

Hostage crisis ends at Russian embassy in Costa Rica

Police say Roman Bogdanyants, 21, from Kyrgyzstan, entered the Russian Embassy in Costa Rica and took at least one other male hostage at gunpoint, before authorities were able to end the standoff peacefully after four hours.

"It all ended without violence, without loss of life. All the embassy staff are just fine," said Valery Nikolayenko, the Russian Ambassador, who was on a different floor of the embassy, was not injured during the standoff. No other embassy workers or personnel were injured.

Bogdanyants entered the embassy with his mother and took Andrey Yurenkov hostage in what is believed to be a dispute over money. Bogdanyants's mother spent the entire time during the standoff, attempting to get her son to surrender.

Today in History

1497 - Girolamo Savonarola of Florence was excommunicated by Pope Alexander VI.

1619 - Dutch statesman Johan van Oldenbarnevelt was executed in The Hague after having been accused of treason.

1888 - Isabel the Redeemer signed the Lei Áurea into law, formally abolishing slavery in Brazil.

1917 - Our Lady of Fatima: Three children reportedly experienced a Marian apparition near Fátima, Portugal.

1969 - Chinese-Malay race riots left at least 184 people dead in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia in the May 13

Incident.

May 13 is Mother's Day in several countries (2007); Rotuma Day in Fiji.

Quote of the Day

Unto the furthest flood-brim look
with me;
Then reach on with thy thought till
it be drown'd.
Miles and miles distant though the
last line be,
And though thy soul sail leagues
and leagues beyond,—
Still, leagues beyond those leagues,
there is more sea.

~ Dante Gabriel Rossetti ~

Word of the Day

inflect; v

1. To cause to curve inwards.
2. (music) To change the tone or pitch of the voice when speaking or singing.
3. (grammar) To vary the form of a word to express tense, gender, number, mood, etc..

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