



Top Stories

Former Chilean president Augusto Pinochet fingerprinted



Former Chilean president Augusto Pinochet had his mugshot taken and was fingerprinted by police in his home. Pinochet is being charged with

crimes involving the disappearance of 119 political dissidents during his time as president of Chile.

South Korea begins sending indictments via SMS



South Korean prosecutors plan to begin sending legal notices such as

indictments and fines via SMS text messaging. The move was prompted by the high percentage of the population carrying mobile phones, as well as the cost and slow delivery of paper notices.

Featured story

Australian mother and son on drugs charges



A 69 year old woman and her 39 year old son from southern Australia have been charged with drug offenses following

their arrest last week. Evelyn Harvey, a pensioner from Perth, and her son Johnny Harvey, from Prospect have been charged with "(possessing) a prohibited drug with intent" in Western Australia.

Wikipedia Current Events

- Twenty Sudanese migrants are killed when a Cairo camp is broken up by police.
- A consortium led by New York based Citigroup has won the right to buy 85% of the Guangdong Development Bank, in the People's Republic of China, according to a Reuters report. It beat out a rival Europe-based consortium.
- Tropical Storm Zeta, the twenty-seventh named storm of the 2005 Atlantic hurricane season, forms in the Atlantic Ocean one month after the season's official end.

Bolivia's new president-elect brands Bush 'the only terrorist'

Bolivia's new president-elect Evo Morales has branded George W. Bush a "terrorist", and has referred to Condoleezza Rice as "Mrs Condolences" in an exclusive interview for Qatar's News Channel Al-Jazeera.

Before departing for an official visit to Cuba, Morales denounced what he calls a "dirty war" undertaken by Bush against him and said that "Bush was the only terrorist because he is the only one who militarily interferes in the domestic affairs of other countries. That's state terrorism, but those who claim their rights are not terrorists", he reiterated in what has been regarded as an escalation of his anti-Washington rhetoric.

At the same time, he said in Chapare during the celebration of his victory, that the plan "zero coca" carried out by the US to eradicate coca in Bolivia is terminated. "We are winning the green battle, coca is defeating the American dollar" he said.

Venezuela's Hugo Chavez is another head of state who has previously labeled George W. Bush a "terrorist".

University of Michigan over Michigan Tech in the Great Lakes Invitational

University of Michigan beat Michigan Tech University with a score of 5-3 in the Great Lakes Invitational ice hockey tournament at Joe Louis Arena in Detroit, Michigan.

With 2 minutes remaining in the third period University of Michigan went one up over Michigan Tech, breaking the 3-3 tie. Michigan Tech pulled their goalie with one minute remaining to gain a man advantage, but the strategy failed and allowed the University of Michigan to get another goal resulting in the final 5-3 score.

The game secured the third place position in the invitational for University of Michigan, and fourth place for Michigan Tech.

Distributed computing discovers largest known prime

On December 15, 2005, a

computing effort of the Central Missouri State University (CMSU), led by Curtis Cooper and Steven Boone, as part of the distributed computing project known as the Great Internet Mersenne Prime Search (GIMPS), discovered the largest known prime number, divisible only by the number 1 and itself: 230,402,457-1.

The discovery, which marks the 43rd known Mersenne prime and the 9th discovered by GIMPS, was made by running a free downloadable program called Prime95. The CMSU team is currently the highest-ranked contributor to GIMPS with over 700 computers running Prime95.

Al-Qaeda releases video of Sudanese hostages

Al-Qaeda in Iraq has released video of Sudanese hostages that members of the organization have kidnapped last week.

The video indicates that the militants intend to kill five kidnapped employees of the Sudanese Embassy in Baghdad in two days unless the Sudanese government removes its diplomatic mission from Iraq. Sudan as announced that it will abandon its embassy today, apparently in a bid to free the hostages.

Florida teenager skips school, goes to Iraq

Farris Hassan, a 16 year old high school student from Florida, decided to visit Iraq and left for the country on December 11, 2005 alone and without having informed his parents.

After catching a connecting flight in Amsterdam, he arrived in Kuwait City on December 13. He

called his parents on the telephone and informed them of where he was and his intention to visit Iraq. This was the first time his parents learned of his plans. He then attempted to cross the Kuwait-Iraq border by taxi, but because of tight security for the upcoming elections he was unable to pass through, and spent a week in Beirut, Lebanon, interviewing minority Christians. Then on December 25, he flew in to Baghdad International Airport. Relatives picked him up from the airport and put him at a hotel known to frequently house American citizens.

He financed the trip and made all the arrangements himself with money that he had saved up.

The inspiration for his journey was the result of attending a class on 'immersion journalism' at his school. He was working on an assignment on the war in Iraq and he wished to experience his subject matter first-hand.

Hassan contacted the Associated Press to announce that he was in Iraq to do research and humanitarian work. They were shocked to see an American teenager walking around unaccompanied. They in turn immediately contacted the US Embassy, who had been contacted by his parents and were on the lookout for him. Hassan's parents were born in Iraq, but he does not speak any Arabic, making him easily stand out as a foreigner in Iraq, where kidnappings of Americans and violence are an everyday occurrence. His parents planned to take him to see Iraq once the war was over.

U.S. Consul General Richard Hermann reiterated the U.S. Embassy's strong warning to U.S.

citizens against traveling to Iraq as he announced that Hassan was with American troops and was on his way home.

He turned in his assignment via email and is due back home over the New Years Day weekend.

Million Dollar Homepage is close to achieving million-dollar goal

Alex Tew, a student in England, has almost reached his target of one million dollars on his website: Million Dollar Homepage. He came up with the idea after jotting down ideas before he went to bed on how to become a millionaire before he went to university. Then he came up with the million-dollar idea: selling pixels at USD \$1 each on a web page. Alex currently believes he can make his goal by the end of 31st December, 2005.

Advertising companies especially appreciate the website, as they wish to "make Internet history" on the Million Dollar Homepage. In fact as of writing, he has already made USD \$936,700. The student says advertisers get to keep their ads for a period of five years from purchase and he says he will use the money he has made to guarantee it. Alex has said he has already got numerous job offers from companies aiming to secure his money making talent.

Tew is undergoing a business management course at Nottingham and needed GBP £7000 a year to complete his studies. He is understandably overwhelmed by the success he has achieved: "It's just nuts. I'm in a state of disbelief. It's like Monopoly money but then I look at my bank account and there's a lot of cash in it." The British National Union of Students claim that 90%

of students are in debt. However, what only worries him is how he's going to spend his money. He has already spent some of his money on a car for himself, as he thinks of what to do with his new fortune.

His website's method is simple; his website is made up of one page divided into 10,000 boxes, each 100 pixels in size. Companies can buy one or more boxes for USD \$100 each and cover it with a logo, which, when clicked on, transports web users to the customers' own site. The figures add up with the site now carrying over 240 advertisements and has 30,000 hits a day. Even the actor Jack Black, star of "School of Rock" and "Shallow Hal", is using the site to advertise his band Tenacious D.

Uproar over sexual EU spoof posters in Austria

Posters produced and printed by the art project 25peaces, in Austria have caused huge public outcry and debate. The posters depict the English Queen Elizabeth, having sexual intercourse with US president George W. Bush, and French President Jaques Chirac. A number of public figures including Wolfgang Schuessel, the Austrian Chancellor, have publicly denounced the posters.

Its creator, artist Carlos Aires, says he had no desire to offend anyone, "I suddenly had this image of three decision makers who are having an orgy while everything around them collapses".

Mario Draghi succeeds Antonio Fazio as Bank of Italy governor

Fazio has stepped down after an investigation into his role in a

controversial bank takeover. Mario Draghi is to fill his shoes. Draghi's former job was managing director of the investment bank Goldman Sachs. Draghi will serve a six year term under a new law that set term limits for the Central banks governor passed last week.

Draghi, who is 58, has had senior government positions in the past including director general of the Italian treasury. He was born in Rome and earned a doctorate in economics from MIT in 1976. After earning his degree he taught at the University of Florence until 1991. During this time Draghi was an Executive Director of the World Bank. During his tenure as director general of the treasury he carried out extensive privatisation and was appointed chairman of the Italian Committee for Privatisations. Analysts say he has a good reputation but "Draghi has a tough job to restore the Bank of Italy's credibility, but he is appreciated internationally and has done a lot of jobs and done them well," said Luigi Speranza, an economist with BNP Paribas.

Lorenzo Codogno, an economist with Bank of America, looks forward to Draghi's tenure as the governor of the central bank "His appointment should lead to a more open Italian bank market which will, in the end, mean Italians have to pay less for their bank services."

Australian refugee contractor accused of breaching its duty of care

The Australian Centre for Languages, a company which has a multi-million dollar contract with the Australian government to provide refugee services, has been accused of breaching its duty of care following the death of a

chronically ill child and allegations of failing to provide three women in their care with food.

A two-and-a-half year old child, Richard Niyonsaba, died less than 24 hours after arriving in Australia.

In November, Richard and his family came to Australia after spending time in a refugee camp in Tanzania. Richard suffered from chronic sickle-cell anaemia.

The boy's father, Protais Ntiranyi had been in the country just 18 hours when he woke, at 4am on November 5 to find his son convulsing. Mr Ntiranyi who was alone with his family in a Fairfield flat was frightened and confused as he did not know what to do to help his son.

The family's case worker, from a company called the Australian Centre for Languages (ACL), had earlier shown them a telephone in the flat and allegedly told them to dial 000 in case of emergency. Mr Ntiranyi had never used a telephone and could not speak English.

Mr Ntiranyi, roamed the neighbourhood screaming for help in his native language. The only attention Mr Ntiranyi got was that of a Sudanese refugee, who couldn't understand what he was saying but knew he was clearly distressed and in need of help. By the time he brought the neighbour to his flat his son had passed away.

Two sisters and another woman from Africa, considered refugees have made claims that they were not provided with food by ACL.

Princess and Yeah Yeah Gbdeah arrived in Sydney on November 4,

2005 and were relocated to Newcastle. The sisters allege that when they arrived in Newcastle, a case worker from ACL presented them with a 12-month lease to sign. They claim that when they refused to sign the lease as they were afraid and unfamiliar with the area that the case worker told them they would not be given any food vouchers.

A third woman, Caroline Nykango, was with the sisters and signed the lease. She was given a \$50 food voucher, but did not know how to use it as she had never used a supermarket.

According to the women the only food in the house was an apple, a packet of rice and some oil. The women went without food for 5 days before walking out and meeting a man on the street who took them to a church for assistance.

Princess said "There was no food to eat, she didn't show us how to use the stove, we were sick, we were afraid". "We were told a case worker would come to see us but no case worker came. We told her we didn't want that home, we don't want to sign and she said, 'We will not give you the vouchers unless you sign, we will not give you the food'".

Jenny Witmarsh from ACL said the circumstances described by the women "are not the facts as I understand them".

The two sisters are now living in a house in Hamilton, organised with the help of local citizens.

The matter had been referred to an independent inquiry, which should be completed in early February.

In October the federal government awarded a multi-million dollar contract to ACL for the care and resettlement of refugees - work that was previously carried out by non-profit and volunteer organisations.

It is believed that only days before Richard's death doctors at the Newcastle Refugee Health Clinic had written to the Immigration Department warning the government that problems relating to the health of new arrivals in Australia had emerged in the Hunter Valley. ACL also had the contract for the care of refugees in the Hunter Valley.

Organisations which formerly provided care to refugees have strongly criticised ACL saying that they can not provide the level of care that these people require.

The family of Richard Niyonsaba have called on the federal government to review its policy of outsourcing refugee services. The federal government is unlikely to hold an inquiry with the Minister for Multicultural Affairs and Citizenship, John Cobb disagreeing with the familys version of events.

Greg Barnes from Rights Australia is calling for a review saying "We have a child who comes in to Australia who's obviously extremely ill and his parents are really, on the face of it, given very little or no support at all".

Today in History

- 406 - The Vandals, Alans and Suebians crossed the Rhine River to begin an invasion of Gaul.
- 1600 - The British East India Company (flag pictured) was founded by a Royal Charter of Queen Elizabeth I.
- 1963 - The Central African Federation officially collapsed,

which eventually became Zambia, Malawi and Rhodesia.

1972 - Roberto Clemente died in a plane crash en route to deliver aid to earthquake victims in Nicaragua.

1999 - Boris Yeltsin, the first democratically elected President of Russia, resigned and named Vladimir Putin as Acting President. December 31 is New Year's Eve, Hogmanay in Scotland.

Quote of the Day

For auld lang syne, my jo,
For auld lang syne,
We'll tak' a cup o' kindness yet,
For auld lang syne!
~ "Auld Lang Syne"
by Robert Burns ~

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