

Top Stories

Series of explosions hit hotels in Amman

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France imposes emergency laws in response to riots

Emergency laws have imposed across France in an effort to quell the rioting that has wracked the country for the last 12 days.

Featured story

Coral Gables hosts Herald Hunt puzzle adventure

Puzzle enthusiasts from around the USA play the Herald Hunt, created by humorist Dave Barry and Tom Shroeder.

Wikipedia Current Events

- A gunbattle between the Indonesian police and militants in East Java kills seven militants, including terrorist mastermind Azahari Husin who is believed to have blown himself up.
- At least two explosions rock the city of Amman, Jordan, killing at least fifty and injuring 120 other people, mostly Westerners.
- In Israel, archaeologists discover two lines of a Phoenician or Hebrew alphabet on a stone

Wikipedia Current Events

dating to the 10th century BC, suggesting that literacy existed in ancient Israel earlier than had been thought. "All successive alphabets in the ancient world, including the Greek one, derive from this ancestor at Tel Zayit," says the excavation's director.

- In the United States, the visit of Iraqi Deputy Premier Ahmed Chalabi to the Department of State and Department of the Treasury arouses controversy.
- In the United Kingdom, the Government loses a key House of Commons vote on detaining terrorism suspects for 90-days without charge, in the report stage of the Terrorism Bill.
- Venus Express, the first mission to Venus in over a decade, lifts off from the Baikonur Cosmodrome in Kazakhstan.
- California special election, 2005: voters reject all eight statewide ballot propositions, including four backed by governor Arnold Schwarzenegger.

Angry Azeris protest allegedly faked results of parliamentary elections

Thousands of protestors demonstrated today in Baku, the capital of Azerbaijan. They left their houses due to unrest over the results of the November 6 parliamentary elections, which, according to the opposition, are faked. The protest lasted about three hours before being shut down.

The protest gathered some 15,000 people, but the opposition hoped to gather 30,000 to 50,000 Azeris. Many people were stopped by police on their way to the outskirts of Baku. The main demonstration took place at Gelebe Square. When rioters tried to enlarge the protest, police used force to stop them.

Some Azeris believe that a "three hour revolution" wouldn't change anything in the country. They believe that the demonstration was controlled by the government.

The November 6 elections, won, according to officials, by the governing New Azerbaijan Party, have been condemned by international organizations, such as The Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe, and by independent observers. The Council of Europe reports that results in about 43% of polling stations were faked.

To prevent protests, re-runs were ordered in two districts by election officials. Also, one recount will take place.

Blair suffers humiliating defeat after vote on terror laws

British Prime Minister, Tony Blair, has suffered what some consider a humiliating political defeat after the House of Commons dismissed a controversial government proposal to permit the detention of terror suspects for up to 90 days without bringing charges.

Members of Mr Blair's Labour Party used the vote to rebel against the proposal, with a crucial 49 tipping

the balance to reject it by 322 votes to 291. It was the first Commons defeat for Mr Blair in his 8 years as Prime Minister. Later, a second proposal to extend the detention time limit for terror suspects to 28 days was passed by 323 votes to 290.

New powers were called for by the police after the bomb attacks in London on July 7, 2005. The police had argued that because anti-terrorist investigations can take considerable time, the new powers would have been justified. Critics charge that the powers would have infringed on civil liberties.

Leaders of the opposition parties were delighted with the results. Conservative leader Michael Howard said the vote had "diminished" the Prime Minister's authority and that he should tender his resignation. Charles Kennedy, leader of the Liberal Democrats, called Mr Blair a "lame duck".

Under current UK anti-terrorism laws, suspects can be held for up to 14 days without any charges being made against them.

Series of explosions hit hotels in Amman

At least three explosions hit US-owned hotels in Amman this evening, killing at least 67 people and wounding at least 150 others.

The first of the apparently coordinated suicide bombings occurred at 8.50 pm (1850 UTC) at the Grand Hyatt hotel in the Jordanian capital. It was followed by explosions at the Radisson SAS and the Days Inn. The hotels are particularly popular with American and Israeli tourists. CNN also reports that the car of the Jordanian prime minister was

parked in front of the Grand Hyatt when the blasts occurred.

The bomb at the Grand Hyatt hotel apparently went off in the lobby; the bomb at the Radisson SAS exploded in a wedding hall packed with around 300 people.

Jordanian King Abdullah II has condemned the bombings and announced that "justice will pursue the criminals".

European Venus probe launched successfully

European Space Agency's probe to Venus was successfully launched on Wednesday, November 9, at 0333 GMT from the Baikonur Cosmodrome in Kazakhstan. The probe, entitled Venus Express, separated from its Soyuz Fregat carrier 90 minutes after the launch, after which it emitted a signal marking the start of its journey to Earth's closest planetary neighbour.

Venus Express is to arrive at Venus in April 2006. The probe will spend at least 15 months—two Venusian days—studying the planet. The orbiter, however, has enough fuel to operate for 1000 Earth days.

The 220 million € (260 million US\$) probe is set to examine the turbulent atmosphere and intense greenhouse effect of Venus. The probe will study the planet's temperature variation, cloud formations, wind speeds and gas composition. It is hoped that the results will help scientists understand Earth's global warming better.

Teaching Intelligent Design: Dover PA school board election results

The Dover, Pennsylvania school board became the first to mandate inclusion of Intelligent Design in a public school biology curriculum. For this year's November 8 election, Republicans fielded a pro-Intelligent Design slate of candidates including some returning candidates who had previously voted to include a statement about Intelligent Design in the biology curriculum. A mixed slate of Democrat and Republican candidates came forward as an alternative group of school board candidates, the Dover CARES coalition. They proposed to remove Intelligent Design from the biology curriculum but allow discussion of Intelligent Design in courses dealing with philosophy and comparative religion.

All eight open school board seats were won by Dover CARES coalition candidates. Two candidates who had previously voted as school board members to include intelligent design in the public school science curriculum received the fewest votes in Tuesday's election. One of the newly elected board members is Bryan Rehm, a parent of a Dover school student. Rehm, along with ten other parents, initiated a law suit against the school board for its decision to insert Intelligent Design into the science curriculum.

In October 2004, the Dover school board decided that Intelligent Design is a scientific theory that should be mentioned in biology classes that include discussion of biological evolution as part of the course content. The board mandated that a statement should be read in those classes stating

"Intelligent Design is an explanation of the origin of life," and "The school leaves the discussion of the Origins of Life to individual students and their families."

The school board's statement on Intelligent Design directs students to the book *Of Pandas and People* as a source of information "for students who might be interested in gaining an understanding of what Intelligent Design actually involves." This book is published by the Foundation for Thought and Ethics, a non-profit organization founded for the purpose of "promoting and publishing textbooks presenting a Christian perspective."

Parents of some Dover public school students filed a law suit against the school board, charging that including the school board's statement on Intelligent Design was an attempt to introduce religion into the science curriculum. The book *Of Pandas and People* says, "Intelligent design means that various forms of life began abruptly through an intelligent agency." The original complaint in the law suit against the school board claimed that "Intelligent design is a non-scientific argument or assertion." The evidence phase of the trial ended on November 4, 2005.

The US District Court Judge John Jones, who heard the non-jury case, hopes to make his ruling by the end of the year. A local Dover newspaper, the *York Daily Record*, editorialized that Dover voters should take trial testimony into account when casting votes for school board members.

Biology teachers in the Dover schools have refused to read the school board's statement on

Intelligent Design to students because the Pennsylvania state code for education states that "The professional educator may not knowingly and intentionally misrepresent subject matter." In a letter to their administrator, the teachers stated their view that "Intelligent design is not science." School administrators have been reading the school board's Intelligent Design statement to students in Dover public schools.

France imposes emergency laws in response to riots

Emergency laws have imposed across France in an effort to quell the rioting that has wracked the country for the last 12 days. French Prime Minister Dominique de Villepin today declared, "The republic is at an hour of truth."

Curfews designed to restrict the movement of those that might engage in violence and rioting allow the government to imprison individuals for up to two months. The northern city of Amiens was one of the first to impose a curfew; unaccompanied youth in that city will be unable to walk the streets between midnight and 6:00 a.m.

The 1955 law invoked by the cabinet Tuesday morning will allow local officials throughout the country to impose curfews. In French terminology, the government did this by issuing a *décret* (decree). The law originates from the Algerian War and has never been used in Metropolitan France until now. De Villepin said that more than 9,500 police have been called up to help bring the riots under control.

This law, including corrections up to the 16 June 2000, states, under Article 15, that Algeria is now

under a state of emergency and this state of emergency will remain under effect for six months. In practice, since Algeria is now a state independent from France, it is unlikely that any attempt would be made by the fifth French Republic to put Article 15 into practice.



*A car burns in Strasbourg, France.
Photo credit: François Schnell.
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Article 11 of the law permits censorship of all types of media (including theatre performances), as long as that is stated in the decree. Article 12 authorises the use of military tribunals to judge ordinary crimes, again as long as this is stated in a decree. Article 14 states that even when the state of emergency is lifted, court cases started under the military tribunals will continue.

In the last 12 days more than 5,000 cars have been set ablaze, and at least 1,500 have been arrested in what is the worst public violence in France since 1968.

Vatican issues defence of evolution, rejects fundamentalist creationism

The Vatican issued a defence of Darwinian evolution at a news conference Thursday.

In what many are calling a direct attack on the rising support for

fundamentalist creationism in America, Cardinal Poupard, head of the Vatican Pontifical Council for Culture, stated that the Genesis description of God's creation of the universe and Darwin's theory of evolution are "perfectly compatible" if the bible is properly interpreted.

"The fundamentalists want to give a scientific meaning to words that had no scientific aim," he said, and that the point of Genesis is that "the universe didn't make itself and had a creator."

"The faithful should heed modern science and to guard against religion crossing over to fundamentalism if it ignores scientific reasoning."

"Science should also listen to religion. The atomic bomb and cloning are from reason with no ethical or religious link."

When asked directly about intelligent design, Mons. Basti quoted John Paul II, saying that evolution was "more than just a hypothesis."

Today in History

1865: Major Henry Wirz, the superintendent of Camp Sumter, was hanged, becoming the only American Civil War soldier executed for war crimes.

1871: "Dr. Livingstone, I presume?" – Henry Morton Stanley located missing missionary and explorer, David Livingstone in Ujiji, near Lake Tanganyika in present-day Tanzania.

1928: Hirohito (pictured) was crowned the 124th Emperor of Japan.

1969: Sesame Street debuted on the National Educational Television network in the United States.

1995: Playwright and environmental activist Ken Saro-Wiwa and eight others from the Movement for the Survival of the Ogoni People were executed by the Nigerian military government.

Quote of the Day

"If you wish to make an apple pie from scratch, you must first create the universe." ~ Carl Sagan

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