

Top Stories


Strong earthquake hits Pakistan, north India, Afghanistan



The strongest earthquake that this region experienced in the last century has caused

widespread damage across Pakistan, North India and Afghanistan Saturday morning. Strongest hit was apparently Kashmir. Between 20,000 and 30,000 people are thought to have perished.

Iraq on verge of civil war, head of Arab league fears

 Amr Moussa, head of the Arab League, says a civil war in Iraq is looming. "A civil war could erupt at any moment, although some people would say it is already there," stated Moussa.

Featured story

Australia's High Court rules mod-chips are legal

Australia's High Court, in an unanimous decision on Thursday, found modchips to be legal. Modchips are attached to the systems motherboard that allows users to bypass copyright and regional controls on game consoles such as PlayStation 2 and Xbox.

Wikipedia Current Events

• New York Senator Hillary Rodham Clinton is inducted into the Women's Hall of Fame.

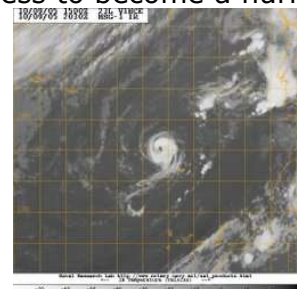
Wikipedia Current Events

- Three, white, New Orleans police officers are arrested after a video surfaces showing the officers brutally beating unarmed, 64-year old Robert Davis and the cameraman. The victim is believed to have been beaten because he was black. Davis has been charged with public intoxication and resisting arrest.
- In a joint statement, Anglican and Catholic leaders voice concerns over euthanasia as House of Lords gears up for debate on legislation.
- Former actress and current Labour MP Glenda Jackson announces she intends to stand against Tony Blair in a leadership bid if he doesn't stand down in the near future.
- Tropical Storm Vince, the 20th named storm of the season (making the current Atlantic hurricane season the 2nd most active since recording first took place) gained hurricane strength while heading towards Europe. It's unusual for such a storm to form so far east in the Atlantic Ocean, and more so gaining hurricane strength, since the waters are much cooler than in the Caribbean area.
- Southend Pier is devastated by a fire.

Hurricane Vince on track for Europe

This unusual hurricane season, one of the most active in history, has produced another strange storm. Category 1 Hurricane

Vince, which was formed from a non-tropical low today, is forecast to head east towards Portugal, rather than west as is usual. Vince caught forecasters by surprise, since the waters in the area are around 25°C. Few expected Vince to even form in the cool waters, much less to become a hurricane.



Satellite picture of Hurricane Vince.

Forecasters at the National Hurricane Center do not expect Vince to be a hurricane for long. It is forecast to weaken as it moves towards Portugal, and to finally become extratropical. In about 48 hours, they believe Vince will be absorbed by a front in Portugal or Spain.

Weekend violence in Darfur complicates peace talks



Darfur refugees

On Sunday, armed men kidnapped eighteen African Union personnel

(including military observers and civilian police) in the war-torn Darfur region of Sudan. According to AU commission spokesperson Adam Thiam, "They were taken by a dissident group of Jem." The Justice and Equality Movement, or Jem, is an Islamic rebel force deeply involved in the ongoing conflict in the region.

One day earlier two AU personnel and two civilians were killed in an attack believed to be perpetrated by the Sudan Liberation Army. A third soldier injured in the attack succumbed to his injuries on Sunday. Additionally, two personnel are missing and three others were injured.

According to the AU, those who survived identified the attackers' vehicles and uniforms as belonging to the SLA.

Both rebel groups have been in conflict with the Sudanese government and its Arab militia (referred to as Janjaweed) since 2003, although the roots of the violence stretch back to the first and second Sudanese Civil Wars. Since the conflict began it is said that 180,000 people have been killed and 2 million have been forced to flee from their homes. The term genocide has been applied to the conflict although this has been hotly contested. The United Nations has come under intense criticism for refusing to refer to it as a genocide, something the United States has done. The International Criminal Court is investigating alleged war-crimes in the region, although the Sudanese government denies the allegations.

6,000 African Union troops have been dispatched to monitor a ceasefire between the opposing forces, and these latest attacks

come on the heels of another round of peace talks. Although both sides have expressed optimism, the AU contends that progress is slow and blames divisions within the Sudan Liberation Army for holding up progress.

The AU has also accused the government of continuing attacks on villages and refugee camps. The Khartoum government denies this.

More troops for southern Thailand troubles



The Thai Prime Minister, Thaksin Shinawatra, despatched an additional 1,000 troops to the south of the country to help deal with the widespread violence. This brings the total number of security forces operating in the three troubled provinces to approximately 30,000.

Mr. Shinawatra's recent visit to the region was followed by further shootings. In Narathiwat Province a 40 year old village worker was shot while helping a neighbour repair a fence. Friday saw the shooting of an assistant village head in Yala Province, and an elderly couple were shot in Pattani Province whilst returning from a local market.

The insurgency and campaign for an independent Muslim state in the southern provinces has resulted in an exodus from the area. Estimates put the number of Thai Buddhists who have fled the area at 34,000. There are also

some reports that Muslim inhabitants of the area have been seeking refuge in Malaysia.

The state of emergency imposed last month has had a mixed reception. Largely favoured by Buddhists in the provinces, this grants additional powers to the Prime Minister and follows on from martial law having been in place since January 2004. Despite these security measures, over 1,000 people have died in the insurgency.

Oracle buys Innobase

ORACLE

US-based Oracle Corporation announced Friday it had acquired Innobase OY for an undisclosed sum. Innobase is a Finnish company that has developed several open-source database technologies. They are best known for InnoDB.

InnoDB is an add-on storage engine for MySQL used by many popular websites, including Slashdot, EDS/Sabre, Yahoo Finance, Google and Wikimedia. It is an open source tool, distributed under the GNU General Public License (GPL).

"Oracle has long been a supporter of open source software such as Linux and Apache. Innobase is an innovative small company that develops open-source database technology. Oracle intends to continue developing the InnoDB technology and expand our commitment to open source software." said Charles Rozwat, executive vice president of Database and Middleware Technology at Oracle.

Innobase is the 11th company to be acquired by Oracle in under a

year. The most recent acquisition was of rival Siebel Systems on September 13 for \$5.85 billion.

Today in History

732: Battle of Tours: Charles Martel and the Franks defeated a large Andalusian Muslim army led by Abd er Rahman near Tours and Poitiers, stopping the northward advance of Islam from the Iberian Peninsula.

1911: The Xinhai Revolution began with the Wuchang Uprising, marking the beginning of the collapse of the Qing Dynasty in China.

1973: U.S. Vice President Spiro Agnew (pictured) resigned after being charged with tax evasion.

1982: St. Maximilian Kolbe, who had volunteered to die in place of another man in a Nazi concentration camp, was canonized by the Roman Catholic Church.

1987: After two military coups in Fiji led by Sitiveni Rabuka, the military government revoked the constitution and declared Fiji a republic.

October 10 is Thanksgiving holiday in Canada and Columbus Day in the United States (2005); Independence Day in Cuba (1868) and Fiji (1970); Double Tenth Day in the Republic of China.

Quote of the Day

"The truth is that there is only one terminal dignity — love. And the story of a love is not important — what is important is that one is capable of love. It is perhaps the only glimpse we are permitted of eternity." ~ Helen Hayes

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