



Top Stories

Turkey's Constitutional Court invalidates first round in presidential elections

The Constitutional Court has ruled that there were not enough Members of Parliament (MPs) at the first round of voting in the presidential election, effectively annulling the results. If the age limit for MPs is lowered to 25 from the current 30, the government is ready to call early parliamentary elections.



Reports: Leader of al-Qaeda in Iraq killed



Reports say that Abu Ayyub al-Masri, the leader of al-Qaeda in Iraq has been killed by Sunni tribesmen in an area just north of Baghdad called Taji during a battle between tribesmen and al-Qaeda militants. A militant website in Iraq denies the reports saying he is safe.

Featured story

Western New York recovering after major internet outage

Residents and businesses in Buffalo, New York and the surrounding Western New York area are recovering after an internet outage occurred during the weekend. Some are still experiencing issues.



Wikipedia Current Events

- President George W. Bush vetoes an Iraq War funding measure that sets a deadline for the withdrawal of US troops.
- Turkish presidential election, 2007: The Constitutional Court of Turkey annuls last Friday's presidential vote in the Grand National Assembly after a challenge by opposition parties.
- At least three people die after an explosion in an apartment building in Palencia in northeast Spain.
- Police arrest 30 alleged animal rights extremists in raids in the United Kingdom, Belgium and the Netherlands.
- Brigadier-General Abdul Kareem Khalaf of the Iraqi Interior Ministry claims that Abu Ayyub al-Masri, the leader of Al Qaeda in Iraq, has been killed in a battle between insurgents. The claim is later denied by insurgents.
- Deutsche Börse AG, operator of the Frankfurt Stock Exchange, agrees to buy International Securities Exchange the second biggest United States options market for \$2.8 billion creating the largest transatlantic derivatives market.
- Nigerian opposition and civil society groups join trade unions in May Day rallies against the recent presidential election which saw Umaru Yar'Adua elected as the President of Nigeria as well as recent state elections.
- Eitan Cabel, a member of the

Wikipedia Current Events

- Israeli Cabinet resigns in protest of Ehud Olmert's handling of the 2006 Lebanon War.
- Two men are charged in Melbourne, Victoria with being members of the Tamil Tigers and providing funding to the organisation.
- Thousands of Macau residents demonstrate against the government's labour policy and corruption on May Day, resulting into a clash with the police.

Turkey's Constitutional Court invalidates first round in presidential elections



Abdullah Gül
Credit: José Cruz/ABr, 2006

Turkey's Constitutional Court has annulled the first round of voting in the presidential election, ruling that there were not enough members present at the parliamentary vote for it to be valid. The court ruled 9-2 in favor of the challenge.

Opposition parties, who boycotted the vote, challenged the result in court on the grounds that there were not enough MPs in attendance to achieve quorum which is set at two-thirds of the 550 member Grand National Assembly of Turkey. The government argued that only one-third or 184 MPs were needed for quorum.

In Friday's vote, Abdullah Gül got 357 votes. The governing party, Justice and Development Party

(AKP) has 363 of the 550 seats in parliament. The main opposition party, Republican People's Party (CHP), holds 178 seats. Independents hold the remaining 9 seats.

Government spokesperson Cemil Cicek said the government will seek to have the required 367 MPs in attendance for a new vote on Wednesday. If the age limit for MPs is lowered to 25 from the current 30, the government is ready to call early parliamentary elections. Early polls have been sought by the opposition and business interests.

Reports: Leader of al-Qaeda in Iraq killed



Abu Ayyub al-Masri.

Reports say that Abu Ayyub al-Masri, the leader of al-Qaeda in Iraq has been killed by Sunni tribesmen in an area just north of Baghdad called Taji during a battle between tribesmen and al-Qaeda militants. Other reports say that he was killed in al-Nibayi, near a bridge where fighting was taking place.

"Preliminary reports said he was killed yesterday in Taji area in a battle involving a couple of insurgent groups, possibly some tribal people who have problems with al-Qaeda. We too have security and intelligence reports that Abu Ayyub al-Masri was killed as a result of fighting between insurgents and al Qaeda yesterday near Taji. These reports have to be confirmed," said Barham Sale, Iraq's Deputy Prime Minister.

However; despite the reports, the Islamic State of Iraq denied that al-Masri was dead posting a message on a militant website saying, "The Islamic State of Iraq reassures the Ummah on the safety of Sheikh

Abu Hamza al-Muhajir, may God protect him, and that he is still fighting the enemies of God."

According to Ali al-Dabbagh, an Iraqi government spokesman, DNA tests will be performed on the alleged remains.

"We will make an official announcement when we confirm that this person is Abu Ayyub al-Masri. DNA tests should be done and we have to bring someone to identify the body. The Iraqi government will work to identify him," said al-Dabbagh.

However; the United States military has not yet confirmed the reports.

"We are in discussions with the Iraqis over how they obtained this intelligence. If we do have a body, we are going to conduct DNA tests, and that will take several days. If there is no body, that makes it harder. Obviously I hope it's true. We want to be very careful before we confirm or deny anything like that," said Lt. Col. Christopher Garver, a spokesman for the U.S. military in Iraq.

Iraqi and U.S. military forces were not involved in the battle.

US State Department accuses Iran of being top state sponsor of terrorism



Seal of the U.S. State Department.

The report contrasts Al-Qaeda's interest in "global jihad" against the interests which Iran is said to be sponsoring. Iran's focus is explained as Israel, Iraq, and

Afghanistan.

The report describes Iran's interest in Israel as, "encouraging anti-Israeli terrorist activity, rhetorically, operationally, and financially." Supreme Leader Khamenei and President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad are accused of lauding terrorist attacks carried out by anti-Zionist groups. The report notes that Iran's support for organisations involved in the Israel-Palestine conflict is not limited to Shia groups such as Hezbollah; Hamas and others are, like most Palestinians, Sunni muslims.

Second, Iran is accused of playing a "destabilizing role in Iraq." In particular, Iran's providing of IED to rejectionist groups in Iraq were mentioned in the State Department report. The report also indicates that Iraq is "not currently a terrorist safe haven" but can become a "potential safe haven" for them. Iranian officials deny that they are supplying weapons to Iraqi insurgent groups.

Third, Iran is said have aided the Taliban militarily according to General Peter Pace and other U.S. officials. In Afghanistan, Iran gainsays a military role; it only acknowledges that it has helped with the reconstruction and revival of the Afghan economy.

The Islamic Revolutionary Guards and Iran's intelligence ministry were specifically named in the coordination of the activities of the Iranian government abroad.

This statements of this State Department report are not novel. In fact, in 2006, U.S. Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld said, "The Iranian regime is today the world's leading state sponsor of terrorism."

Many Iranian officials accuse the United States of terrorism and a raft of crimes in return and "Death to America" chants are a regular scene at Friday prayers throughout Iran.

Ayatollah Ebrahim Amini, the 2nd deputy chair of the Assembly of Experts has, for instance, said, "How do they allow themselves to commit so many crimes? Is this the same democracy that Bush, Blair, and Sharon want to bring the Iraqi people as a gift? Death to this democracy. Is this how you want to present this democracy to the world? Shame on this democracy. Are you humans? Animals? What are you?...Why do they commit so many crimes? Stop it. Enough with the treachery. Enough with the crimes."

Other countries on the state sponsors of terrorism list were Cuba, North Korea, Sudan, and Syria.

Internet Radio Equality Act proposed

Internet radio broadcasters may find a savior in a recent proposition in the US Congress. The recently proposed Internet Radio Equality Act, introduced by representatives Jay Inslee (D-WA) and Donald Manzullo (R-IL), would strive to revert the drastic changes applied to Internet radio royalties by the Copyright Royalty Board (CRB) that will go into effect on May 15, 2007, and retroactive since January 1, 2006. The proposition aligns Internet broadcasting fees to be more inline with those of satellite radio, for a flat fee of 7.5% of the broadcaster's revenue, rather than the CRB rules of .08 (2006) to .19 (2010) cents per song for private broadcasters, or \$500 per month for public broadcasters if below a specific number of listening hours.

According to Inslee, the fees that would go into effect on May 15 would be a chokehold on democracy, and claimed in a statement that webmasters need a functioning business model.

A common fear among Internet broadcasters is that they will have to file for bankruptcy once the fees of the CRB will go into effect. "Over 90% of internet radio will simply be gone. The net result will be a huge loss of diversity, a huge loss for music artists and a loss of virtually all of the internet radio that exists," claimed Joe Kennedy, CEO of Pandora.

SoundExchange, supportive of the CRB rules and a major collector of artist royalties from radio stations, has claimed the new fees are necessary to pay the artists that deserve it.

Western New York recovering after major internet outage

Buffalo, New York – Residents and businesses in Buffalo, New York and the surrounding Western New York area are recovering after an internet outage occurred during the weekend.

Customers of Time Warner Cable reported losing their service around 4:30 a.m. on Sunday. Many customers could not connect to the internet, had a connection but slow speeds, or had issues accessing "secure web pages such as Yahoo, eBay, Google and MySpace.com," according to a recorded message on Time Warner's customer service line.

The issues started to occur when Time Warner began the final system switch from the former provider, Adelphia Cable's PowerLink to Time Warner's Road Runner high speed internet. As part of the switch over, many customers

were assigned new IP addresses, which is believed to have caused many of the issues with not being able to connect to the internet.

Service should have been restored today, said a spokesperson for Time Warner, but many customers are still experiencing issues. Time Warner said that by shutting down your computer and modem, unplugging them both for several minutes, then rebooting them, should fix the issues customers have.

Despite the number of people experiencing the issues, Time Warner says that "there should not have been too much disturbance of the system. [The outage] certainly got a lot of people's attention on our end," said Robin Wolfgang, a spokeswoman for Time Warner.

If you still experience issues, Time Warner asks that you call their customer service line at 1-888-683-1000. It is not known when all service will be fixed, but some customers report that when calling Time Warner, the service agent says that some customers may not have service restored for at least 3 to 5 days.

Time Warner services about 120,000 customers in Western New York and nearly all of them were affected in one form or another, but an exact number of the affected is not yet known. Cable TV service was not affected.

Five found guilty of UK bomb plot

Five men were found guilty Monday for their part in an unsuccessful plot to carry out bombings in the UK. The five had been arrested in 2004 in a police raid named Operation Crevice. Two other men arrested and charged at the time were found not guilty.

The trial at the Old Bailey criminal court in London took place over the past year and had been carried out with little detail being released. It has now been revealed that the guilty had planned large fertiliser bombings of a nightclub, gas power plant and shopping mall. All five were found guilty of plotting to cause an explosion likely to endanger life and have been jailed with life sentences.

The convicted are Omar Khyam, 25, Waheed Mahmood, 34, and Jawad Akbar, 23, from Crawley, West Sussex, Salahuddin Amin, 31, from Luton, Bedfordshire and Anthony Garcia, 24, of Barkingside, east London. All of the men are British citizens. The two men found not guilty are Nabeel Hussain and Shujah Mahmood.

During summations, the judge, Sir Michael Astill, criticised the guilty men for plotting against their country. "You have betrayed this country that has given you every opportunity," said judge Astill. "All of you may never be released. It's not a foregone conclusion."

It was also revealed that some of the fertiliser bomb conspirators had met with two of the London subway bombers. Opposition parties have now called for an independent inquiry into the 7 July link. The details of the 7 July link had not been brought in front of the jury during the trial of the fertiliser bomb planners.

A Canadian man, Momin Khawaja, was arrested in 2004 and has been held in a Canadian jail ever since. He is accused of being a co-conspirator with five British plotters for allegedly developing bomb detonators. Khawaja is considered an un-indicted co-conspirator with relation to the British case.

Khawaja is the first person to be held under the 2001 Anti-Terrorism Act under Canada's Criminal Code, put in place by Canada's then Liberal government. Khawaja has been charged with seven offences under the new laws.

"He's been in custody for more than three years, facing these charges," said Lawrence Greenspon, Khawaja's lawyer. "The (British) jury obviously had a great deal of difficulty coming to a decision," Greenspon told CTV News. "Even with that, two of the seven were acquitted."

Khawaja maintains his innocence.

Khamenei criticizes "materialistic values" for mistreatment of workers

Leader of the Islamic Revolution Ayatollah Ali Khamenei gave a public address before Labor Day wherein he commended the workforce for its contribution to the economic growth of the Islamic Republic of Iran. The address ensued the Minister of Labor Mohammad Jahromi presentation of an economic report.

Khamenei claimed that the Islamic System is superior to the materialistic ones of the West that trample upon workers' rights when he indicated that the "West-linked establishments has shown in practice they hold no mercy for workers". In fact, the "concentration and accumulation of wealth and maximization of profit" is deplored in Iran's Constitution. Moreover, he emphasized that solutions must be sought within the framework of Islam. In the Islamic school of economy, "respect of investor comes along respect of worker" while the balance should tilt towards the worker to promote justice.

Khamenei also indirectly lashed out against the enemies who want to sow discord among classes through trade unions. This may have been a reference to Mansour Osanlou who led a strike of bus workers in Tehran in 2005 and others.

Khamenei also decried "the rage in the pre-Islamic-Revolution era" over foreign products. The was chiefly a reference to the termination of American products in Iran such as Coca-Cola, vehicles, electronics, et cetera. He went on to proclaim that the humiliation of the nation is over.

Today in History

1670 - A Royal Charter granted the Hudson's Bay Company a monopoly in the fur trade in Rupert's Land.

1829 - British Royal Navy Captain Charles Fremantle established the Swan River Colony on the west coast of Australia.

1945 - World War II: General Helmuth Weidling, defence commandant of Berlin, surrendered the city to Soviet forces led by General Georgy Zhukov, ending the Battle of Berlin.

1982 - HMS Conqueror launched three torpedoes and sank ARA General Belgrano during the Falklands War.

1986 - Henri Toivonen died while leading the Tour de Corse rally, resulting in FISA banning the powerful and popular Group B rally cars for the next season.

May 02 is Vesak in Thailand and Vietnam, Pesach Sheni in Judaism (2007); Teachers' Day in Iran, Flag Day in Poland.

Quote of the Day

A man must be excessively stupid, as well as uncharitable, who believes that there is no virtue but on his own side, and that there are not men as honest as himself who may differ from him in political principles. ~ Joseph Addison

Word of the Day

taper; v

1. To diminish in size toward the tip or edge

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