



Top Stories

Flight from Armenian capital Yerevan crashes near Sochi

A large Armenian airlines passenger plane has crashed into the Black Sea. Reports say 113 people were on-board. Controllers lost contact with the plane Tuesday at 2315 UTC and no survivors have been found.

Voting day for local elections in England

Voters in England will take to the polls today to elect local councils in what will be seen as a test for Prime Minister Tony Blair.

Featured story

Australian civil rights activists protest terror suspects' internment

About 100 people, including family members of the accused, went to the Barwon maximum security prison to voice their disapproval of the treatment of the 13 men accused of terror offences. Speakers said the laws were unjust and constituted torture on the ground of the UN charter as being cruel and unusual.

Wikipedia Current Events

- A jury finds Zacarias Moussaoui should not be put to death, essentially sentencing him to life in prison without parole for his role in the September 11, 2001 attacks. (Washington Post)
- German hostages René Bräunlich and Thomas Nitzschke returned

Wikipedia Current Events

home to Germany. They landed safe with a governmental aircraft at 2:24 pm in Berlin-Tegel. BBC

•Nepal Civil War: The Nepalese cabinet declares a cease-fire with Maoist rebels and announces that they will no longer consider them a terrorist group. The government urges the rebels to open peace talks. (BBC), (Reuters)

•Senior Indian leader and former federal minister Pramod Mahajan dies in hospital.(BBC), (CNN)

•Armavia Flight 967, an Airbus A320 airliner of Armenian airline Armavia, carrying over 110 passengers, crashes into the Black Sea while approaching Adler-Sochi International Airport. Rescue workers had found baggage, pieces of the shattered plane and oil floating at the site of the crash. (BBC)

•The Iranian author Ramin Jahanbegloo has been arrested in Tehran.

8.0 magnitude earthquake occurs near Tonga

An earthquake with estimated magnitude 8.0 has shaken the pacific island of Tonga. The strongest quake of the year so far, the earthquake occurred at 01:26 local time (15:27 UTC) on May 3rd at 19.9°S, 174.2°W, about 150 KM south of Neiafu, Tonga and 2150 KM north-northeast of Auckland, New Zealand.

Two more earthquakes with

magnitude of 5.1 (1700 UTC) and 5.4 (1756 UTC) were felt in the same region, according to USGS report.

The Pacific Tsunami Warning Center in Honolulu issued tsunami warnings for Fiji and New Zealand and a tsunami watch for other areas in the Pacific, including Hawaii, but excluding the west coast of North America. The warning and watches were cancelled at 1736 UTC (7:36 a.m. HST).

According to the latest bulletin, sea level readings indicated a tsunami was generated. There was some definite tsunami activity recorded near Pago Pago and Niue, and there is still a possibility that there has been some destruction near the earthquake's epicenter in Tonga.

According to the BBC, initial reports indicate no major damage in Tonga, but authorities are still assessing the damage.

Communal tension erupts in Vadodara, India

Violence erupted in Vadodara in the state of Gujarat after municipal authorities demolished a dargah (Muslim shrine). The shrine was an unauthorised structure that was obstructing a road-widening project.

The Muslim community objected to its demolition citing the fact that it was at least 200 years old. They also observed that many Hindu temples that were unauthorised

were spared. Despite the reservations of the minority community, the authorities decided to proceed with the razing of the dargah, leading to rioting.

At least 6 people were killed in the clashes, and one citizen (35 year-old Rafiq Vora) was burnt alive in his car by an angry mob. Curfew has been imposed in the troubled areas and the sending of instigatory text messages prompted authorities to temporarily block the sending of mobile-phone text messages in the town.

Vadodara is infamous for the horrific Hindu-Muslim clashes in 2002, which left thousands dead. To avoid the recurrence of such a tragedy, six battalions of Rapid Action Force anti-riot police and multiple companies of the Central Reserve Police Force have been rushed to Vadodara. Gujarat Chief Minister Narendra Modi is visiting Vadodara and has promised that all efforts would be made to prevent the situation from escalating any further. Home Minister Shivraj Patil is also monitoring the situation closely.

BJP leader Pramod Mahajan dies in Mumbai

Senior politician and general-secretary of Bharatiya Janata Party, Pramod Mahajan, passed away in Hinduja Hospital, Mumbai at 16:10 IST (10:40 UTC) today. He was 56 . His younger brother Pravin had shot him three times from point blank range on April 22, 2006. He was given 25 bottles of blood to compensate for the extensive bleeding he suffered. His pancreas and small intestine were also damaged. Over the past 12 days his condition had remained critical yet stable. He was on a respirator, and ionotropes had to be administered to him to keep his

blood pressure up. The seriousness of the condition made it unsafe for doctors to operate on him and remove the bullets lodged in his body.

Events took a turn for the worst when he developed acute respiratory distress syndrome 36 hours ago. This prompted physicians to further increase the level of respiratory support provided to him. This afternoon doctors reported that he was suffering from multiple organ failure - the first indication that his life was in grave danger. His family members and well-wishers were allowed to see him around 14:30 IST today. The attending physicians from Hinduja Hospital made an official statement of his death at 16:50 IST. Pramodji's family made the decision to cease giving him artificial ventilaitaion after doctors made it clear to them that chances of Mr.Mahajan's recovery were very bleak. He will be given a state funeral tomorrow in Mumbai at 12:00 IST (6:30 UTC).

New Zealand Government to unbundle local loop

The New Zealand Government has announced that it would require Telecom to unbundle the local loop to provide "faster and better broadband Internet services." New Zealand used to be the only country in the OECD to have investigated unbundling the local loop and then rejected it. This means now that any Internet service provider in New Zealand can create their own plans / speeds for New Zealanders.

Inter-Balkan Summit to take place in Thessalonika, Greece

The northern port of Thessaloniki, Greece's second biggest city, will host the Inter-Balkan co-operation Summit, on the 3rd and 4th of

May 2006. The countries of southeast Europe who are part of the Inter-Balkan Cooperation; Greece, Turkey, Bulgaria, Serbia-Montenegro, Romania, Albania, Croatia, Bosnia and FYROM will be represented by their leaders, Prime ministers and Ministers of foreign affairs.

The Inter-Balkan Cooperation Summit will focus on all the developments, both economic and political, in the area of southeast Europe, with the main topic being the situation in Kosovo.

On the sidelines of the Inter-Balkan Cooperation Summit, which will take place at the Hyatt Regency Hotel of Thessaloniki, Greek Premier Kostas Caramanlis will meet with his Turkish counterpart Recep Tayyip Erdogan on Thursday in order to discuss bilateral issues, including the Cyprus problem.

For the safety of the leaders as well as for the convenience of city's traffic during possible demonstrations, a security plan has been prepared according to local police. Three years ago, Thessaloniki was the host city of the 2003 European Union Summit.

Today in History

- 1471 - Wars of the Roses: Yorkist Edward IV defeated a Lancastrian army in the Battle of Tewkesbury.
- 1855 - William Walker and a group of mercenaries sailed from San Francisco to conquer Nicaragua.
- 1886 - A bomb exploded near the police line, turning a peaceful labor rally in Chicago into the Haymarket Riot.
- 1919 - The May Fourth Movement began in China with large-scale student demonstrations in Tiananmen Square, Peking against the Paris Peace Conference and Japan's Twenty-One Demands.

1953 - Ernest Hemingway was awarded the Pulitzer Prize for The Old Man and the Sea.

May 04 is Independence Day in Latvia (1990), Remembrance of the Dead in the Netherlands .

Quote of the Day

"Sit down before fact as a little child, be prepared to give up every preconceived notion, follow humbly wherever and to whatever abysses nature leads, or you shall learn nothing. I have only begun to learn content and peace of mind since I have resolved at all risks to do this." ~ T. H. Huxley

Word of the Day

masticate; *v*

Definition

1. To chew food.
2. To grind or knead something into a pulp.

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