



Top Stories

German Social and Christian Democrats agree on new government

Nearly two months after the German parliamentary election, the Social Democrats (SPD) and the Christian Democrats (CDU/CSU) have reached a deal to form a grand coalition, paving the way for Angela Merkel to become Germany's first female chancellor.

U.S. Senate passes amendment stripping Guantanamo detainees' access to courts

The U.S. Senate has adopted an amendment, proposed by Senator Lindsey Graham, to a defense bill limiting detainees' court privileges.

Featured story

Paul McCartney to be "beamed up" in first live concert to be broadcast in space

Sir Paul McCartney is scheduled on Saturday, November 12, to perform the first concert broadcast live into space.

Wikipedia Current Events

- Amir Peretz, the new head of the Israeli Labour Party, warns Israeli Prime Minister Ariel Sharon that if Sharon does not pick a date for an early election, Peretz will institute a motion of no-confidence forcing a snap election within 90 days.
- Germany/Switzerland: A rare earthquake is measured in the

Wikipedia Current Events

region. The earthquake has a magnitude of 4.4.

- The United Nations Secretary General, Kofi Annan, makes a surprise visit to Iraq and expresses support for an Arab League conference discussing cooperation with Iraq's many factions.
- Four people die following a car bomb in Baghdad.
- Tens of thousands of people gather at Rabin Square in Tel Aviv in a rally to mark a decade since the assassination of prime minister Yitzhak Rabin

French Journalist Beaten in Tunis

A journalist for the French Daily Libération, Christophe Boltanski, was attacked on Friday by several men in a street of Tunis, where he was reporting on the repression of human rights activists.

He was badly beaten and stabbed with a knife in the back by four unidentified assailants near his hotel in the embassy district. He called for help, but the policemen on guard outside the nearby Czech Embassy did not react, according to Libération.

Boltanski filed a complaint on Saturday morning before returning to Paris. Libération and Reporters without Borders suspect this attack was a deliberate act of intimidation decided by the Tunisian regime.

Canadian Mike Mintenko retires from swimming

Canadian Olympic swimmer Mike Minenko has announced his official retirement from the sport. Mike finished fifth in his premier event, 100m Butterfly, at the 2000 Sydney Olympics and won a silver medal in the freestyle relay at this years World Championships.

30 year old Mike, who grew up in a small town in Saskatchewan, currently lives in Los Angeles with his wife, American swimmer Lindsay Benko. Nicknamed "The Tank" with a height of 6'3", Mike never forgot his roots and was keen to emphasise the importance of his hometown, telling the Canadian media "Small town values are so important"... "The people in a small town...they appreciate you working hard."

In addition to his World Championship medal, Mike holds the 50m and 100m butterfly long course and short course Canadian national records.

Fires at Baxter Immigration Detention Centre in South Australia

34 apartment buildings have been destroyed by fire at the Baxter Detention Centre near Pt Augusta in South Australia today. The blaze also gutted a kitchen, laundry, recreational area and officers' station. The original blaze broke out around 4am ACST in the kitchen of the "White One" compound which houses single men. Fire units took almost three hours to put them out.

Fifty-eight detainees were evacuated from Baxter IDC. Six have been treated for smoke inhalation.

Immigration minister Amanda Vanstone says about 17 rooms have been ruined and others damaged. She says deliberate property damage will not be tolerated and the Australian Federal Police are questioning four detainees over the blazes and anyone found responsible will be charged.

"Anyone with no lawful right to be in Australia should leave irrespective of the behaviour that they've undertaken, but if someone with a visa or without a visa to be in Australia engages in criminal conduct that would be taken into account in terms of cancelling a visa," she said.

The Metropolitan Fire Service (MFS) said four fires appeared to have been deliberately lit. "The first fire in the kitchen area was followed by three other separate fires within the complex," an MFS spokesman said.

Refugee rights advocate Pamela Curr said she had concerns about the safety of detainees in the event of a fire because of the electronic doors. She said detainees at a detention centre at Amsterdam's Schiphol airport had been killed during a fire last month because authorities had been unable to manually open the electronic doors. "Thank heavens nobody seems to have been hurt today," she said. "We're always on the alert that Baxter is not a safe detention centre".

Warning in Colombia about possible volcanic eruption

The Galeras volcano could have an

eruption at any moment according to Julian Villaruel, director of the Colombian Institute of Geology and Mines (Ingeominas).

The spokesman for the Volcanoes and Seismologic Observatory of Pasto [1], Colombia, explained that the Galeras volcano has registered a level two activity in a scale of 1 to 4, which means that an eruption is likely to happen in days or weeks.

He declared that some of the measurements taken have been analyzed by scientific institutions in the US that have confirmed the likelihood of an eruption.

The observatory and the local committee for the prevention and reduction of disasters (CREPAD) will continue to keep a watchful eye on the behavior of the volcano in order to instruct the residents about the risks and the evacuation routes in case of eruption.

The Galeras summit is 4276 meters (14,028 feet) above sea level. The last time it registered some activity was in 2004. Pasto, at its base, is a city of about 400 thousand people. There are 5 other towns around the Galeras skirts. 60,000 people live around the influence zone and about 9,000 live in the area of highest risk.

Paul McCartney to be "beamed up" in first live concert to be broadcast in space

Sir Paul McCartney is scheduled on Saturday, November 12, to perform the first concert broadcast live into space. Performing in Anaheim, CA, McCartney will awaken astronaut Bill McArther and cosmonaut Valery Tokarev on the International Space Station. Songs played will include "English

Tea" from his newly-released album "Chaos and Creation in the Backyard." Also on the playlist is the Beatles classic "Good Day Sunshine".

The idea for the show originally came from a report McCartney received about "Good Day Sunshine" being used to wake astronauts aboard the space shuttle Discovery as it prepared to land in August. Said Sir Paul "I was extremely proud to find out that one of my songs was played for Discovery this summer. In our concert we hope to return the favor."

This event will mark the first time a live music show is broadcast into space. It should be noted that only his voice will be heard, as there is no video feed from the site. The former Beatle has seen interest in his work climb recently with the release of a critically-acclaimed album and a children's book, as well as a series of American commercials feature songs from his new album and a collage of video clips and photos detailing his life's work.

Pirates hijack Thai merchant ship off Somali coast

The Somalian government called on Saturday for the international community to help stem the wave of recent seafaring pirate attacks off their coast in the Indian Ocean.

The London-based International Maritime Bureau (IMB) reported yesterday that a Thai merchant vessel and its crew of 26 have been hijacked by Somalian pirates off their coastline.

The predominantly Thai crew were kidnapped at gunpoint, and a ransom has been demanded for their release. The merchant ship

was en-route from Brazil to Yemen with a cargo of sugar.

A letter to Somalia from the United Nations security council admonished the government. Somalia has largely disintegrated into fiefdoms since the former dictator Siad Barre was ousted in 1991.

Last weekend, a U.S.-owned cruise ship was attacked with rocket propelled grenades. It is the fourth ship to be attacked in the space of a week. According to the IMB, there have been 23 other pirating attacks in coastal waters off the east African nation since March 15.

Today in History

1887 - Bloody Sunday clashes in Trafalgar Square

1970 - Bhola cyclone: A 100-mph tropical cyclone hit the densely populated Ganges Delta region of East Pakistan (now Bangladesh), killing an estimated 500,000 people (this is regarded as the 20th century's worst cyclone disaster).

1982 - The Vietnam Veterans Memorial was dedicated in Washington D.C. after a march to its site by thousands of Vietnam War veterans.

1985 - The volcano Nevado del Ruiz erupted, causing a lahar (volcanic mudslide) that buried Armero, Colombia, killing approximately 23,000 people.

1990 - The first known web page was written.

Quote of the Day

"Once for all, then, a short precept is given thee: Love, and do what thou wilt: whether thou hold thy peace, through love hold thy peace; whether thou cry out, through love cry out; whether thou correct, through love correct; whether thou spare, through love do thou spare: let the root of love be within, of this root can nothing spring but what is good." ~
Augustine of Hippo

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