



*Top Stories*

**Haze crisis over Malaysia prompts talks with Indonesia**



Air quality in the Malaysian capital city of Kuala Lumpur is so poor, health officials are

advising citizens to stay at home with doors closed.

**NAFTA dismisses US claims of Canadian violation of Trade Agreement rules in softwood lumber dispute**



An Extraordinary Challenge Committee rejected U.S. allegations that an earlier ruling, in support of the Canadian position, violated NAFTA

rules. The decisions are legally binding and must be put into effect within 60 days.

*Featured story*

**Slovenian alpinist rescued from Himalayan peak**



A Pakistani military helicopter Lama III rescued Slovenian alpinist Tomaž Humar, who went up on a solo climb on one of the highest peaks in the Himalayas.

*Wikipedia Current Events*

- Some 150,000 Israelis have converged on Tel Aviv to protest the proposed removal of Jewish Settlements from the Gaza Strip.
- The Northern Giant Mouse Lemur was introduced to the public as a species new to science.
- Abortion in Ireland: Three Irish women are taking the Government of Ireland to the European Court of Human Rights to challenge Ireland's constitutional ban on Abortion.

*Wikipedia Current Events*

- Pakistan's first domestically designed cruise missile, the Babur missile, is test launched.
- Salva Kiir has been sworn in as the Vice-President of Sudan, following the recent death of John Garang. Ugandan President Yoweri Museveni has threatened to close down newspapers which continue to publish "conspiracy theories" about Garang's death.
- Mars Reconnaissance Orbiter was scheduled to be launched at 9:00am EST (local time for launch), but the launch was scrubbed due to technical problems.
- Malaysia has announced a state of emergency in two towns after air pollution reached dangerous levels. The pollution is blamed on fires lit to clear land in neighbouring Indonesia, seriously affecting air quality and visibility across the Strait of Malacca.

**Palmeiro benched on return to Major League Baseball**

Baltimore Orioles baseball fans had a chance to vote for their support of Major League Baseball's (MLB) steroid use and policies with their home game attendance Thursday night. Rafael Palmeiro, back after serving a 10-game suspension for testing positive for stanozolol, was notably not in the starting line-up against the visiting Tampa Bay Devil Rays. Attendance was a little on the thin side in the 48,262 capacity stadium at Camden Yards.

The Orioles concluded a 3-game sweep of the Rays with tonight's 4-2 win.

Palmeiro, this season's embattled designated hitter and sometimes first baseman, is an Orioles star who made finger wagging and emphatic denials of steroid use during his testimony before the House Committee on Government Reform in March this year. It was later learned that MLB officials had evidence of his drug use prior to the

Palmeiro testimony, but the evidence was not exposed until a scandalous aftermath was caused by the August 1 suspension.

The House committee chairman, Tom Davis (R-VA), said Palmeiro voluntarily turned over documents that are being reviewed during their stepped up perjury investigation.

The prospects for a Palmeiro nomination to baseball's Hall of Fame currently look dim. Previously, he was virtually assured a place.

In a short meeting with ballpark press reporters before the game, Palmeiro, who earlier insisted he would not talk to the press said, "It's been a tough time for me and my family over the last couple of weeks, and at this time, I've been instructed by my attorneys not to comment on the situation. The time will come soon, hopefully, that I can explain my situation."

A local sportswriter David Steele called on fans to stay home and hit the sport in its money pockets. "Wondering what to do tonight, the official end of Palmeiro's insultingly brief punishment, when he suits up again at Camden Yards? Try this: stay home."

**Tropical Storm Irene to intensify, may hit U.S. coast**



*Tropical Storm Irene on August 11, 2005 at 16:15 UTC*

Tropical Storm Irene will increase in strength over the next several days, possibly developing into a hurricane that will hit the east coast of the United States, said the National Hurricane Center of Miami, Florida in a report today.

Irene was located approximately 975 kilometers south-southeast of Bermuda at 16:00 UTC today. Forecasters say that the storm is now moving in a west-northwest direction with top sustained winds of 40 miles per hour.

Commenting on Irene's potential impact on the United States, James Franklin of the National Hurricane Center said, "It certainly doesn't look like the main threat is Florida, but stranger things have happened. ... It may well turn sharply enough (to the north) to not make landfall."

Irene is the ninth named storm in this year's Atlantic hurricane season. The average number of storms named by this point in the season is only two.

### **Rolling Stones unleash new song critical of Bush**

A new song by the British rock band The Rolling Stones titled "Sweet Neo Con" has been stirring a controversy over its lyrics, which are highly critical of the Bush administration.

"You call yourself a Christian, I call you a hypocrite" is among the verses in "Sweet Neo Con", according to the Magazine Newsweek. Lead singer Mick Jagger commented on the song, saying "It is certainly very critical of certain policies of the administration, but so what! Lots of people are critical." Jagger, however, denies the criticism is directed at Bush.

The song is scheduled for release September 5 on a CD entitled "A Bigger Bang". Jagger told music critic Jude Cole of ExtraTV, "You can't make rock records without a lot of vitality."

The band is scheduled to start a tour in the United States, starting in Boston, Massachusetts on August 21.

### **Truck carrying explosives crashes, explodes in Utah**

A truck carrying 35,500 pounds of high explosives overturned and exploded on a rural mountain section of U.S. Highway 6 in Utah Thursday morning, injuring at least ten people and leaving a 35 foot deep crater in the highway. The driver was transported via

helicopter to a hospital, where he was listed in "fair condition".

The explosion was caused by the truck going too fast on a sharp turn, jack-knifing, and skidding on the pavement. The truck then caught on fire.

The co-driver of the truck rig helped the driver clear of the wreckage. He hollered to a crowd, by then consisting of 23 to 30 people who stopped to help, "It's explosives! Get out of here!"

With the warning, the crowd scattered. The blast crater was 70 feet across and damaged the nearby railroad line in Utah's Spanish Fork Canyon.

### **U.S. government hiring more hackers**

At a hackers conference in Las Vegas with the spoofed name of Defcon, the Assistant Secretary of Defense Linton Wells made a pitch to attendees; "If you want to work on cutting-edge problems, if you want to be part of the truly great issues of our time ... we invite you to work with us."

Technology commentator Richard Thieme said that there are many Feds attending undercover; "You can't be deceived by the uniforms. I talked at the Pentagon, and one-third of the people in the audience I already knew from Defcon." Attendees who "out" the undercover ops are awarded free "T" shirts

A "Meet the Feds" panel was attended by a man who demanded, "I would like to know why the federal government, especially some of the law enforcement agencies, are destroying this country."

Pentagon people would not comment on the rumours that they are looking for people to attack "foreign" networks. "I'm learning while I'm here but I'm also getting the names of people." said Don Blumenthal of the Federal Trade Commission.

The Feds arrested a Russian programmer Dmitry Sklyarov at the annual 2001 Defcon conference. The gathering is attended by computer security experts, hackers and crackers of all types who celebrate the cutting edge of the technology.

### **Haze crisis over Malaysia prompts talks with Indonesia**

A week-long choking smog-like haze over Malaysia has prompted crisis talks with Indonesia. Lingering smoke from forest fires on the Indonesian island of Sumatra are the primary cause. Farmers regularly burn scrub and forest to clear land during the dry season, but this is the worst haze since 1997.

Air quality in the Malaysian capital city of Kuala Lumpur is so poor, health officials are advising citizens to stay at home with doors closed. Some schools have been closed to keep children from being exposed to the haze. Schools that chose to remain open are keeping children indoors and require them to wear protective masks when they are forced to venture outdoors.

Kuala Lumpur International Airport was unaffected but smaller flights from Subang airport were suspended.

Malaysia's Environment Minister, Adenan Satem, and Commodities Minister, Peter Chin, will meet with Indonesia's forestry minister and officials from its environment ministry in Medan, according to Malaysian media. Malaysia has offered to send firefighters to fight the forest and scrub fires estimated at numbering more than 300.

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## Today in History

1099 - The First Crusade concluded with the Battle of Ascalon, and Fatimid forces under Al-Afdal Shahanshah retreating to Egypt.

1676 - John Alderman shot and killed Metacomet the Wampanoag war chief, ending King Philip's War.

1851 - Isaac Singer was granted a patent for his sewing machine.

1953 - History of nuclear weapons: Joe 4, the first Soviet thermonuclear bomb was detonated at Semipalatinsk, Kazakhstan.

1985 - Japan Airlines Flight 123 crashed in Gunma Prefecture, Japan, killing 520 of 524 on board in the world's worst single-aircraft aviation disaster.

## Quote of the Day

"Once we realize that imperfect understanding is the human condition there is no shame in being wrong, only in failing to correct our mistakes." ~ George Soros

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