



Top Stories

Indian Ocean tsunami, one year after



One year on from the Indian Ocean tsunami, the world's grief and compassion returned to the

tsunami-battered coastlines of the Indian Ocean. where at least 216 000 people lost their lives.

NYC Transit asks members to ratify new contracts



A tentative contract agreement has been struck, five days after New York City was ground to a halt

in a transit strike. The executive board of the Transport Workers Union (TWU) Local 100 and the Metropolitan Transportation Agency (MTA) had been negotiating under a media blackout, but terms of the agreement have started to come to light.

Featured story

Timekeeping will pause into the New Year with a 'Leap Second'



The U.S. Naval Observatory in Washington D.C. will adjust atomic clocks by

pausing (adding) a second, and thus let time pass without counting it for the Coordinated Universal Time or UTC on December 31st.

Wikipedia Current Events

- M C Puri, Professor Emeritus of Mathematics at the Indian Institute of Technology, Delhi, is killed and three others are injured when unidentified gunmen opened fire at India's premier educational institute, the Indian Institute of Science at Bangalore.
- Jürgen Chrobog, Germany's former Deputy Foreign Minister, his wife and three children, are kidnapped in Yemen by tribesmen pressing for the release of jailed members of their tribe.
- Europe's "sat-nav" technology satellite, Giove-A, is launched as part of the Galileo positioning system with the goal of providing access to timing and location information independent of the US' prevalent GPS system.
- Israeli jets bomb the PFLP-GC base in Naameh, Lebanon, a few miles outside Beirut, wounding two people, in retaliation for a rocket attack that hit Kiryat Shmona. Israeli warplanes then fly over southern Lebanon and the western Bekaa Valley in reconnaissance flights, drawing anti-aircraft fire from the Lebanese army. The PFLP-GC denies responsibility for the rockets that hit Kiryat Shmona. Major General Udi Adam has not ruled out targeting installations in Syria.
- Militants from al-Aqsa Martyrs Brigade and other militants linked to Fatah storm electoral offices in Gaza.

Wikipedia Current Events

- Israel Defense Forces forces launch Operation Blue Skies, firing artillery rounds against areas in the northern Gaza Strip and at the areas in close proximity to the newly established 'security strip' - an area of the Gaza Strip that Israel has declared off limits to Palestinians which Israel claims is aimed at distancing Qassam rocket launchers from the border with Israel.

Study says poor African American women less likely to receive pap smears

African american women living in communities with high poverty rates are significantly less likely to be screened for cervical cancer, a study finds.

The Harvard School of Public Health's Geetanjali Dabral Datta investigated the relationship between individual characteristics and larger socioeconomic factors and cervical cancer screening rates. The February 1 issue of Cancer carries the study. More than 40,000 black women from across the United States participated in the Black Women's Health Study.

"African-American women have twice the mortality rate from cervical cancer as white women," said Elizabeth Ward, the director of the American Cancer Society. "Researchers need to investigate how those differences are related

to socioeconomic status. One of the big factors that may account for this finding is access to high-quality medical care. Often communities that have high poverty rates either lack access to good quality care, or people have to travel longer distances to obtain high-quality care."

David L. Katz at Yale University's School of Medicine said; "While this finding is not surprising, it is noteworthy just the same. No one should die of cervical cancer, because a simple screening test reliably finds the condition in its earliest stages when cure is almost universally achievable. Yet, several thousand deaths from this cancer occur each year in the U.S."

U.K. MP calls for ban on aspartame

According to a recent article Roger Williams, a UK Member of Parliament, called for emergency action to ban the artificial sweetener Aspartame, questioning its safety. The MP said that there was "compelling and reliable evidence for this carcinogenic substance to be banned from the UK food and drinks market altogether". Some of the FDA's scientists questioned its safety from the very beginning. No honest reassessment of the science on aspartame was attempted as country after country followed the FDA's lead and approved the chemical sweetener. The chemical sweetener has allegedly been linked to brain tumors, anxiety attacks and other side effects and there are calls for possible class action law suits.

New research on common food additives, including the controversial sweetener aspartame and food colourings, suggests they

may interact to interfere with the development of the nervous system.

Aspartame is sold under the brand names of Equal and Nutrasweet.

Rebellion in Brazilian State Prison is over

The rebellion at the Urso Branco (White Bear) State Prison in Porto Velho, the capital of the Brazilian state of Rondonia, has ended.

The rebelled prisoners entered into an agreement with the Brazilian authorities. The Secretary of Public Security of Rondônia, Renato Eduardo de Souza, said that the police officers are ready to enter the prison, examine the prisoners and to place them into the cells, and to free the hostages.

Information from the prison indicated the death of at least 16 persons during the rebellion. However the deaths have not been confirmed and some prisoners have affirmed that the deaths were faked.

The rebellion at the prison began on Sunday. More than 200 people were held hostage and the prisoners were demanding the return of their leader: Ednildo Paula Souza, aka Birrinha, from another prison.

The authorities agreed and said that Birrinha will be transferred to Urso Branco.

Argentina to pay off IMF debt

President Kirchner says that Argentina will be able to pay off its IMF debt of US\$9.8 billion dollars next week following the New Year weekend. The announcement has come with great applause at home, but according to CNN it has

led to a temporary decrease of the value of the Argentine peso in international markets. Payment was originally scheduled for 2008, and paying off the debt early will save Argentina around \$1 billion dollars. The payment is made out of the Central Bank foreign currency reports, which according to CNN total \$28 billion.

The economic crisis in Argentina started with a recession in 1999. People began to withdraw money from their accounts, which resulted in the government freezing bank accounts. Eventually the country would have to default on a large part of their public debt. The crisis led to the increase of the income gap between the rich and the poor, but policies in recent years have brought that back down to previous levels. Argentina had previously renegotiated private debt earlier this year of \$100 billion which reduced the amount owed by 75% according to ABC News.

Shooting at Indian Institute of Science, Bangalore

A shooting at the Indian Institute of Science, at Bangalore, India, left a professor dead.

The shooting occurred during a dinner being hosted in honour of a conference which was attended by academicians across the country. Indiscriminate firing by unidentified assailants led to a number of scientists and technicians getting injured, including a professor from the Indian Institute of Technology at New Delhi, who later died of his injuries. Police believe an automatic weapon was used. The assailants, who reportedly drove in unchallenged through the main gates, have not yet been apprehended, and Bangalore is

currently in a state of lockdown, with a red alert being declared by the government. No terrorist outfits have claimed responsibility yet.

Colombian soldiers killed by rebel group

In Vista Hermosa, more than 200 km south Bogota, soldiers were guarding coca eradication workers when they were assaulted by a rebel group, believed to be the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia or FARC rebel group who operates near the area of the attack. Reports are varying between 24 and 28 Colombian soldiers were killed in the attack. The Army first reported that 24 soldiers had been killed, but the defense minister later placed the death toll at 28.

Narcotrafficking is a key source of funding for the rebel group, and is likely a reason for the attack. President Uribe is expected to strike back as a result of this attack. According to Reuters, President Uribe is up for reelection in May and this attack could be related to that. Uribe has negotiated peace agreements with some rebel groups, such as the marxist National Liberation Army, but FARC has refused to speak with the Uribe administration. This attack is the worst that has happened since Uribe came into office in 2002. Uribe's father was killed in a kidnapping attempt by FARC in 1983.

Former German deputy foreign minister and family abducted in Yemen

Jürgen Chrobog, former Secretary of State in the German Foreign Office, was abducted today in eastern Yemen, along with his wife, their three children, and

three locals.

The family was travelling as part of a large group in the country when their vehicle went missing around 460 km east of the capital Sanaá. According the Yemeni interior ministry they were abducted by a tribal group.

Reuters named the captors as members of the Al-Abdullah tribe who told the news agency by phone that the life of the family is not in danger and that they are their "guests". They are reportedly demanding that the Yemeni government release member of their tribe from prison.

A spokesperson for the German Foreign Office said it is unknown whether Chrobog was singled out or if it was just a coincidence that he and his family were taken.

Chrobog had been the German ambassador to the United States from 1994 till 2001 when he transferred to the Foreign Office, where he himself negotiated the release of Germans held abroad.

This incident is the fourth time this year that foreigners were abducted in the country to blackmail the Yemeni government.

NYC Transit asks members to ratify new contracts

A tentative contract agreement has been struck, five days after New York City was ground to a halt in a transit strike. The executive board of the Transport Workers Union (TWU) Local 100 and the Metropolitan Transportation Agency (MTA) had been negotiating under a media blackout, but terms of the agreement have started to come to light: A 3% increase in salary the first year, 4% increase the

second year, and a 3.5% increase in their third year. There will be no changes in the employees' pension plan and the retirement age remains at 55 in exchange for employees contribution of 1.5% of their paycheck.

The new contract still must be approved by the state-run authority's board, whose next regular meeting is on January 25, 2006. There is no word yet if a special meeting will be called.

The Union's workers will vote by mail, a process which may take weeks to complete.

Union members probably will ratify the contract because it would be "near suicidal" to strike again, says Gary Chaison, professor of labour relations at Clark University in Worcester, Massachusetts.

Pickers at the 207th Street Yard / Kingsbridge Bus Depot

Thirty-four thousand Transport Workers Union members walked off the job on December 20, when negotiations broke down over disagreements concerning pensions, health benefits, and pay. The strike, which lasted three days, affected an estimated 7 million commuters daily.

Australian copyright laws to be overhauled in 2006

The Australian Federal Government has indicated that it will overhaul copyright law in 2006. The changes will legalise the recording of television shows and the right to transfer CDs to portable music devices.

The reforms, instigated by Attorney-General Phillip Ruddock aim to add "fair use" clauses for personal use.

A spokeswoman for Mr Ruddock said the Government was close to finalising draft laws which would allow people to copy music from CDs legitimately to their own portable music devices and tape television to watch later.

At present both "time shifting" (recording a television show to watch later) and "format shifting" (copying a legally owned CD to another format such as MP3 for play on a portable device) are illegal in Australia. While the Australian Federal Police do not pursue offenders, it still must act upon every complaint.

It is unknown whether the new laws will force a levy on blank CDs and portable music devices as they did when introduced in Canada.

Today in History

1170 - Archbishop of Canterbury Thomas à Becket (pictured) was slain in his own cathedral on orders from Henry II of England.
 1845 - The Republic of Texas was annexed by the United States, becoming the state of Texas.
 1890 - The United States Army killed over 400 members of the Great Sioux Nation at the Wounded Knee Massacre.
 1911 - Sun Yat-sen was elected the first President of the Republic of China.
 1937 - The Irish Free State was replaced by a new state called Ireland when a new constitution was adopted.

Quote of the Day

"If I am shot at, I want no man to be in the way of the bullet." ~ Andrew Johnson

About Wikinews

We are a group of volunteer journalists whose mission is to create a diverse community where citizens from around the globe (including **you**) can collaborate to report the news on a wide variety of current events. By making our content perpetually available for free redistribution and use, we hope to contribute to a global digital commons.

Got news and no computer? Call the Wikinews Hotline

+1-866-653-4265
 (toll-free in the U.S.)
 +1-202-742-5918
 (outside the U.S.)

License

This work is licensed under the Creative Commons Attribution License. Articles published in this Print edition were created by Wikinewsies.

To view a copy of this license, visit:
<http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/2.5/>
 or send a letter to
 Creative Commons
 543 Howard Street, 5th Floor
 San Francisco, California, 94105, USA

Audio Wikinews

Audio Wikinews is a free non point-of-view news radio program recorded daily.

<http://en.wikinews.org/wiki/Wikinews:Audio>

About Wikinews Print Edition

For more information about Wikinews Print Edition visit:
<http://en.wikinews.org/wiki/Wikinews:Print>