



### Top Stories

#### World reacts to execution of Saddam Hussein

The execution of Saddam Hussein caused critical statements by governments from the world and also by non governmental organisations. The United States, Australia, Iran and some Polish politicians saw positive effects of the execution. George W. Bush said it was a "milestone" on the way to a democratic Iraq.

#### Iraqi government to investigate Saddam video

The Iraqi government has vowed to investigate and hold the individuals responsible to who taunted Saddam before execution and those who leaked the confidential video.

### Featured story

#### Ice shelf breaks free in Canadian Arctic

The Ayles ice shelf, which is the size of more than 11,000 football fields and is located just south of the North Pole, has broken free in the Canadian Arctic and scientists say that global warming has played a "major" role in the break.

### Wikipedia Current Events

- Earlier reports of the discovery of the wreckage of Adam Air Flight 574 were proved false.
- Former President Gerald Ford's state funeral occurs at the National Cathedral in Washington, D.C. . His casket is

### Wikipedia Current Events

later moved to his hometown Grand Rapids, Michigan for burial on Wednesday January 3, 2007.

#### 21-year-old man sexually assaulted in New Zealand

A 21-year-old New Zealander, who has not been named, was sexually assaulted early yesterday morning (NZDT) in Wellington, New Zealand. The New Zealand police have described the sexual attack as "prolonged and terrifying".

The man was first threatened with a weapon at a shopping center located in Riddiford Street, Newtown, Wellington and was then forced into a dark and isolated carpark where the sexual attack occurred.

Detective Sergeant Zane Smith, said that they have been given a very good description of the attacker and with that description have released an identikit picture. The attacker is a Māori aged between mid-20s and early 30s, measuers around 1.8 metres and has a solid build. The most identifiable feature is a Māori tattoo located on his chin. The attacker was also wearing a '50 Cent' green hooded top, faded black baggy jeans and was wearing sneakers coloured red and white.

The attacker has still not been found and police are asking for anyone who may have been in the Riddiford Street shopping centre between 2:00 a.m. and 3:30 a.m.

CCTV (closed-circuit television) cameras are being examined.

#### Iraqi government to investigate Saddam video

A cell phone video has surfaced in various Arab media outlets and also on video sharing websites such as Youtube that shows Saddam's hanging uncensored. The video contained audio of some witnesses taunting Saddam with chants of "Muqtada" and of the former leader responding that his tormentors were being unmanly.

The taunts referred to Muqtada al-Sadr, the radical Shiite cleric who is a main backer of Prime Minister Nouri al-Maliki, the Shiite leader who pushed for a quick execution of Saddam. The prime minister on Tuesday ordered an investigation into the conduct of Saddam Hussein's execution in a bid to learn who among the witnesses taunted the former Iraqi leader in the last minutes of his life and leaked a cell phone video.

Sadiq al-Rikabi told Al-Hurra television that he does not know who leaked the video and that such an act "is wrong and should be investigated, and I agree that cellular telephones were taken from witnesses before they boarded the helicopter" to the execution site.

"I am full of hope that the results of the investigation will be announced, and the person who did this act should pay a price," he said.

Munqith al-Faroon, a witness to Saddam's execution said: "two top officials ... had their mobile phones with them" and also that "I am certain that the chanting at the moment of the execution was not organized, and that those chanting were not being ordered to do so. The guards made a decision to do so by themselves. This is the truth. I shouted at them and ordered them to keep silent, my voice is very clear in the recording."

In the leaked video one voice called: "Allah, bless those who pray for Muhammad and his descendants. Allah, pray for Muhammad and his descendants and may they bring us their help soon and curse their enemies and back their son Muqtada, Muqtada, Muqtada."

Saddam then asked, "Is this manly?"

A voice responded, "To hell."

Another voice called out, "Long live Mohammed Baqir al-Sadr" — a reference to the Dawa Party founder and Shiite cleric who was executed along with his sister by Saddam in 1980.

Then, a voice purportedly belonging to al-Faroon said: "Please no, this man is being executed, please no, I beg you no."

Sunni Muslims, who have taken to the streets in mainly peaceful demonstrations in Sunni enclaves across the country. They are outraged by the video and do not think that he should have been taunted by the guards.

### **Bush plans to roll out new Iraq strategy this week**

U.S. President George W. Bush

plans to announce his new strategy for Iraq sometime this week, according to a senior administration source quoted by the BBC.

That strategy will reportedly include a troop increase and will focus on securing Iraq rather than training Iraqi forces. Bush will reveal the strategy in a speech "within days," according to the BBC. Its theme will be sacrifice. Other news agencies have yet to confirm the BBC report.

The announcement comes as Democrats are preparing to start back to work on Thursday in Washington as the new majority, having won many of their new seats by vowing to pull troops out of Iraq.

Bush's new strategy would also prove to be a rebuke of the long-heralded Iraq Study Group report, which he commissioned. It nudged the president toward a policy of negotiations with countries like Iran and Syria, previously seen as enemies, and eventual withdrawal.

Bush met with advisers during December to decide how to proceed in Iraq. Before taking a vacation in Crawford, Tex., his spokesman said the announcement of a new strategy would come sometime after the New Year. Some have speculated that meant he would include in his his State of the Union address to Congress expected later this month.

However, the timing of a speech this week may be pointed toward Capitol Hill anyway, as Democrats said they plan to largely sideline Bush's Republican party from the first 100 hours of lawmaking as the new legislature convenes.

### **Qatari proxy IP address temporarily blocked on Wikipedia**

Wikipedia blocked posts by a proxy IP address belonging to Internet users in the Middle Eastern kingdom of Qatar for a period of 12 hours due to persistent vandalism originating from the IP.

Since only one provider of high speed Internet access operates in Qatar, Wikipedia was not able to implement its usual countervandalism solution, the blocking of individual IPs or user accounts. Wikipedia said that the action was taken after repeated vandalism of the articles on sex, the United States, and the birthday of the prophet Muhammad.

Jimmy Wales, the Wikipedia founder, emphasized the temporary nature of the ban, saying, "This IP number was temporarily blocked for less than 12 hours, and a block of an entire nation would go absolutely against Wikipedia policy."

At 21:26 UTC (5:26 p.m. ET) a Wikipedia admin unblocked the IP address with the reason: "This IP is the address for the entire nation of Qatar; it should not be blocked."

### **Calgary, Alberta bars resist smoking ban**

Calgary, Alberta and the southern Alberta city of Lethbridge became the eighth and ninth cities in Canada to ban smoking in bars and restaurants.

On October 18, 2006, Calgary City Council approved of the bylaw that bans smoking in public areas.

Exemptions were put in place for bingos, casinos, and establishments with smoking rooms until January 1, 2008. First

time offenders will pay \$200 in fines. A city bylaw boss said people who deliberately go against the law could pay \$3,500 or more.

"Obviously, I am ecstatic about it," said Robyn Hauck back in October, who is an anti-smoking activist. "For us to be going smoke free Jan. 1, with a few exceptions, I couldn't be happier."

However, the smoking ban which can into effect on New Years Day didn't have much effect on some smokers.

"I don't ever tell anyone else how to live so they [the politicians] shouldn't tell me how to live," said resident Doug Baum, who was surprised that he could still light up at the local pub. "Pubs like this one are the last places you can still go to have a smoke and enjoy yourself."

Another bar allowed customers to smoke.

"Absolutely we'll keep smoking because it's not fair the exemptions make it discriminatory," said Chris Daskas, who owns Filo's Restaurant.

### **UFO Spotted at Chicago's O'Hare Airport**

A group of United Airlines employees said they saw a mysterious, elliptical-shaped (saucer-shaped) UFO hovering over a terminal at Chicago's O'Hare Airport. The employees said that the UFO did not have any lights, and that after hovering over the airport's terminal, it went into the clouds and disappeared. The employees said they were frustrated that their bosses, the United Airlines, and the FAA were not taking their report seriously.

### **Report: U.S. tried to delay Hussein's execution**

On Friday, U.S. officials asked Iraqi Prime Minister Nuri al-Maliki to delay the hanging of former dictator Saddam Hussein for two weeks, CNN reported on its website Tuesday.

The story, which CNN posted at 1:27 a.m. EST, cited "a member of the Iraqi parliament close to the prime minister." The account has so far not been verified by other news agencies.

Saddam, a Sunni Muslim, was executed before dawn on Saturday.

American officials reportedly asked for the delay, fearing the execution could be perceived as "more about Shiite retribution and less about justice."

Nuri al-Maliki, a Shiite, saw Saddam as his arch-nemesis and did everything he could to ensure the execution went off without a hitch, the Wall Street Journal reported on its front page Tuesday. Al-Maliki was sentenced to death in 1980 by the government of Sadam because of his activism in the Dawa party. Since then, he lived in exile in Iran, and later in Syria.

### **Mob protests Saddam Hussein's execution**

Sunnis upset over the hanging of former Iraqi dictator Saddam Hussein began protesting Monday, the Associated Press reported.

A mob in Samara, a town in the Sunni-dominated region of Iraq, tore off pieces of a bombed-out Shiite shrine, called the Golden Dome, which was attacked by extremists 10 months ago. They also carried a mock coffin and photos of Hussein, a Sunni who

was executed by the majority-Shiite government on Saturday.

Many were angered by a three-minute video, apparently shot on a cellphone and making its way around the Internet, that showed Hussein taunted by his Shiite executioners moments before he dropped to his death.

In the video, those gathered to witness Hussein's execution could be heard chanting, "Muqtada! Muqtada! Muqtada!" for Muqtada Sadr, whose radical Shiite militia has been known to hunt down Sunni Arabs and kill them.

At least one photo taken by the Associated Press showed a protestor Monday with a hand covered in red, made to look like blood.

The protest followed Hussein's burial the day before in his birthplace of Al Auja, where mourners also expressed outrage for the hanging. "Today they proved themselves that the trial and the execution were mere retaliation and not justice," one mourner told the Los Angeles Times. "It is clear now against whom we should retaliate."

### **Slovenia adopts euro**

On January 1 2007, Slovenia officially joined the Eurozone and adopted the euro as its new official currency. At the same time, Slovenian euro coins, which were available as a "starter kit" from December 15, became legal tender everywhere in the Eurozone.

A period of dual circulation, when both the former currency, the tolar and the euro will be accepted, will only last until January 14. All banks are going to exchange tolar into euros at the official rate of 239.64 SIT per 1 EUR at no

commission until March 1, 2007. After that date it will be possible to exchange tolar banknotes (unlimited) and coins (until 2016) only at the Bank of Slovenia.

Most ATMs already dispense euro banknotes with the rest to follow in the following days. Commercial banks automatically converted all tolar accounts into euros and online banking systems will be accessible to their users again on January 3. Even though January 1 and 2 are non-working days in Slovenia, many banks will be opened from 10:00 to 14:00 on both days, available only for one service: exchanging tolar to euros and larger euro banknotes into smaller units.

**Today in History**

- 1521 - Pope Leo X excommunicated Martin Luther from the Roman Catholic Church after Luther refused to retract 41 of his 95 theses.
- 1749 - Benning Wentworth began to issue the New Hampshire Grants on land which was also claimed by New York, and is now Vermont.
- 1958 - Ten former British colonies in the Caribbean joined to form a new independent country, the West Indies Federation.
- 1973 - George Steinbrenner and a group of investors bought the New York Yankees for US\$8.7 million.
- 1990 - United States invasion of Panama: General Manuel Noriega, the deposed "strongman of Panama", surrendered.

**Quote of the Day**

Each comprehended only that part of the mind of Ilúvatar from which he came, and in the understanding of their brethren they grew but slowly. Yet ever as they listened they came to deeper understanding, and increased in unison and harmony.  
 ~ J. R. R. Tolkien in The Silmarillion

**Word of the Day**

truculent; adj

1. Fierce, barbarous, or cruel.
2. Harsh and scathing.
3. Defiant, uncompromising.

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