



Top Stories

Police ends demonstration of anarchist squatters in Belgium



Police evicted anarchist squatters from an abandoned house in

Leuven, Belgium last Monday. As a reaction, the anarchists carried out demonstrations on Friday.

North Korea denies entry of IAEA inspectors



North Korea has decided not to give International Atomic Energy

Agency inspectors permission to enter the country, claiming that the \$25 million of recently unfrozen funds has not yet reached their bank account.

Featured story

Inflation in Zimbabwe becomes world's highest at 11,000% and rising



Inflation in Zimbabwe is now the world's highest at 11,000

percent. US Ambassador to Zimbabwe Christopher Dell believes inflation may reach 1.5 million percent by the end of 2007.

Wikipedia Current Events

•Abel Muzorewa, the only Prime Minister to serve in Zimbabwe Rhodesia (in 1979), announces that after a 12-year absence he

Wikipedia Current Events

will return to politics, contesting the 2008 presidential election.

•Inflation in Zimbabwe has risen to 11,000%. U.S. ambassador Christopher Dell predicts it will reach 1.5 million percent by December.

•IDF soldiers near Hebron shoot an unarmed Palestinian who later died. The IDF states that the Palestinian was trying to run through the gate, the soliders yelled for him to halt, which he did not, and they shot the man.

•Director Michael Hayden of the United States Central Intelligence Agency announces plans to declassify documents, referred to as the 'family jewels', detailing illegal activities performed by the agency between 1950 and 1980 including assassination plots, domestic spying and wiretapping, kidnapping and human experiments.

•Space Shuttle Atlantis lands safely at Edwards Air Force Base in California, after inclement weather had prevented its programmed landing at the Kennedy Space Center in Florida, ending STS-117.

Passengers, pilot witness two one mile wide UFOs over English Channel

Pilot and Captain for Aurigny Airlines Ray Bowyer, 50, and at least 2 passengers on a flight over Alderney, on its way to Guernsey in the United Kingdom, have spotted what they describe as two

"mile wide" UFOs. These are reportedly the largest UFOs ever to be recorded.

"It was a very sharp, thin yellow object with a green area. It was 2,000ft up and stationary. I thought it was about 10 miles away, although I later realised it was approximately 40 miles from us. At first, I thought it was the size of a [Boeing] 737. But it must have been much bigger because of how far away it was. It could have been as much as a mile wide," said Bowyer who added the UFO was shaped like a cigar.

After sighting the first object, Bowyer then spotted a "second identical object further to the west. It was exactly the same but looked smaller because it was further away. It was closer to Guernsey. I can't explain it. This was clearly visual for about nine minutes."

Bowyer also said that he attempted to fly closer to the object to get a better view of it by using binoculars.

"I'm certainly not saying that it was something of another world. All I'm saying is that I have never seen anything like it before in all my years of flying," added Bowyer.

Kate and John Russell, two passengers on the plane also witnessed the objects saying it was "an orange light. It was like an elongated oval."

Despite the witness accounts, the

Civil Aviation Authority (CAA) says that the full report was not "published."

In Phoenix, Arizona thousands of people witnessed very similar objects on March 13, 1997 known as The Phoenix Lights.

Inflation in Zimbabwe becomes world's highest at 11,000% and rising

Inflation in Zimbabwe is now the world's highest at 11,000 percent and rising. Reports first came in that the value of the Zimbabwean dollar had reached an all-time low two days ago, at which point the official inflation rate was 4,500 percent. Even though this was already high enough to be the world's highest, to make matters worse, independent financial sources estimated the figure to be closer to 9,000 percent. Yesterday, reports came in that inflation had risen to 11,000 percent.

US Ambassador to Zimbabwe Christopher Dell is reported to have told The Guardian newspaper over the telephone that he believes inflation "will hit 1.5 million percent by the end of 2007, if not before," adding that he "know(s) that sounds stratospheric but, looking at the way things are going, I believe it is a modest forecast." Dell went on to predict that president Robert Mugabe would be forced out of power by the hyperinflation, a prediction also made by opposition leader Morgan Tsvangirai.

Dell added that he felt Mugabe would be out in "a matter of months, if not weeks" and justified his comments with the rational that It destabilises everything. People have completely lost faith in the currency and that means they have completely lost faith in the government that issues it."

Tsvangirai comments to the Associated Press were that: "He's got an economy that's down on its knees, he knows he cannot sustain it." Despite this, Mugabe has expressed intentions to stand for the next election.

Exchange rates for the U.S. dollar have reached an official 15,000-1, but on the black market, according to one anonymous illicit money trader, deals have reached 140,000-1 in cash, with a shortage of bank notes creating a 200,000-1 premium on bank transfers and large overseas deals reaching as much as 300,000-1. Meanwhile, in the course of a week the black market exchange for the UK£ has risen from 160,000-1 to 400,000-1. Despite these increases, Mugabe remains adamant that his currency should not be devalued, and is keeping official exchange rates fixed, with the rate for the US\$ fixed at 250-1.

The dealer said that added uncertainty had arisen from talks held between the current government and the opposition party, the Movement for Democratic Change. The official press services published propaganda describing the talks as the opposition negotiating "in bad faith" for its own political gain.

Shops are running out of goods due to the huge cost of imported goods and the lack of local ones due to the closure of inflation-crippled factories. "If it goes on like this, we'll have nothing to sell, we'll have no staff and we'll have to close down completely," said one store manager, who was unnamed because he feared retaliation by the state for being a "prophet of doom". Other shops have been closing down temporarily to change their prices.

Hyperinflation is also worsening already crippling poverty in Zimbabwe, with people unable to afford the necessary goods for survival. State regulations limit bank money withdrawals to Z\$1.5 million per day, hopelessly inadequate given current currency values. One person's pension company informed him he would no longer receive statements because the value of his pension fund had decreased to less than that of a postage stamp.

The state daily Chronicle in the second city of Bulawayo reported that Western countries were planning to become involved with the situation upon Mugabe's departure with a rescue package valued at US\$3 billion. Western officials have confirmed that budget proposals exist relating to, according to the Associated Press, "food support, public services reform and the rebuilding of agriculture and general infrastructure over five years in a new political landscape led by reformist Zimbabwean politicians." However, state media again ran propaganda-based stories, saying that Western powers and their close political friends, who state media call the "Fishmongers Group", were "working overtime to destroy the economy, mutilate the Zimbabwe dollar, foment civil unrest and then dangle a rescue package to win the support of gullible politicians."

UK Radar station could aid flood warnings

A new £1 million weather station is planned for installation in the north-east of England. The Met Office, Environment Agency, and Northumbrian Water all want to install the station at High Moorsley, near Sunderland. The new facility, which will feature a 16.5m (54ft) weather dome, will vastly improve

weather forecasting abilities of the north-eastern areas of England. If the proposal is approved, work is planned to start in spring 2008.

The gap in the national weather radar system - a system upon which work began on in 2002, and which now has a total of 14 stations across the country - has been problematic to the flood-prone north-east areas of England, which have relied on weather equipment from Lincolnshire and Lancashire up to now, which can only measure rainfall in 5km grids. The new system will increase the resolution of the grids, with 1km grids across the major urban areas of the River Tyne, River Wear and the River Tees, and 2km grids over the rest of the region.

"We estimate that more than 70 communities across the region are at risk of flooding and will directly benefit from the improved data the radar will provide" —Jacqui Cotton, Environment Agency

Jacqui Cotton, a spokeswoman from the Environment Agency, told the BBC that "the proposed North East weather radar will significantly improve our ability to predict when and where rain is likely to fall and will enable us to give more accurate and timely flood warnings." She continued on to say that "we estimate that more than 70 communities across the region are at risk of flooding and will directly benefit from the improved data the radar will provide." The radar will be able to provide detailed weather information every 15 minutes to local forecasters and information stations - which will greatly aid the forewarning of flash floods and other weather systems.

Health concerns have been met by the scheme's partners, who state

that the radar is pointed in a straight line, well above people and houses, and spends 99% of its' time "listening" rather than transmitting. Transmissions made will be at less than one-quarter of the power of a conventional domestic microwave oven.

Police ends demonstration of anarchist squatters in Belgium

Last Monday, the police entered the abandoned house in Leuven, Belgium, that anarchist squatters had occupied for seven years. None of the squatters were present at the time, mostly due to exams. The premise was evacuated and the police dumped everything inside in containers. The house, which the squatters had baptised Villa Squattus Dei, belongs to the Catholic organisation Opus Dei.

As a reaction, the anarchists had called for a non-violent demonstration on Friday, starting at 20:00 p.m. (UCT+1) in front of city hall of the Flemish university town near Brussels. One of the protesters, who wished to remain anonymous, told Wikinews that the protest was mainly because the squatters were filled with indignation by the way the eviction took place. He also criticised the hypocrisy of the town mayor and politicians in the way they treated the squatters. Several media outlets reported speculation this week that some cases of arson were a retribution to the eviction of the Villa Squattus Dei.

The police had completely cordoned off the Great Market square with barb wire fences. All pubs were closed and the preparation for a festival taking place the next day on the square, were delayed. Well over 100 squatters, anarchists and supporters gathered next to the

Great Market. The Flemish radio- and television station VRT reports that prior to the beginning of the demonstration, 10 people were already arrested.

The protesters marched through the city's main streets. At a student's house, which according to the squatters belongs to Opus Dei, the protesters threw paint, and a window got broken. During the demonstration, mayor Louis Tobback and alderman Brepoels responsible for housing, the police and Opus Dei were disparaged with slogans which translate to "You can't evacuate ideals, fuck the police, squatting continues" and "Opus Dei get lost, Tobback go to your grave."

The police blocked the crowd's passage to the Court building, but besides a little pushing the demonstration was non-violent up to that point. A police helicopter started tracking the demonstration from the air.

On the Fish Market square, the police were pelted with stones and fireworks. A cameraman from VRT was hit by one of the stones and sustained a minor head injury. A little further down the street, some demonstrators started pushing an officer, and the police used their batons on the assailants, which they arrested.

Since the passage to the city centre was again blocked, the squatters led the protesters to a nearby park to get some rest and regroup. From there, the demonstration moved up a hill, and to the nearby ring road. The police could not prevent the crowd to get onto the busy road, stopping the traffic in both directions. The police decided to take decisive action, with police cars storming in, and officers

chasing the scattered crowd through the nearby bushes of the nearby abbey. Dozens of protesters were arrested.

'Purity' ring case taken to High Court

Lydia Playfoot, a 16 year old schoolgirl from West Sussex, England, has been faced with expulsion by her school, Millais School of Horsham, for wearing a purity ring that symbolises her dedication to chastity.

Her case, that she should be allowed to wear the ring as it is an "expression of [her] faith and should be exempt from the school's rules on wearing jewelery", was taken to the High Court on Friday. Judgement in the case was reserved for a future date.

This case echoes a decision in a case last year. The Law Lords rejected Shabina Begum's, former pupil of Denbigh High School, in Luton, Bedfordshire, appeal to wear a Muslim Jilbab to school.

Miss Playfoot spoke to BBC Radio regarding the case. She said "Muslims are allowed to wear headscarves and other faiths can wear bangles and other types of jewellery. It feels like Christians are being discriminated against." Her lawyers have argued that her right to wear the ring as a symbol of faith is upheld by the Human Rights Act 1998

European council reaches compromise over reform treaty

European leaders meeting in Brussels reached a compromise on new rules for the European Union after a full night of negotiation.

The controversial points of the discussion included the double-majority voting system that would

lessen the weight of Poland and the Charter of Fundamental Rights, which was objected by United Kingdom.

In the compromise, Polish President Lech Kaczyński had to back a change in EU policy that he had criticised for giving unfair weight to larger countries such as Germany.

Myanmar democracy party formally asks to see Suu Kyi

Myanmar's National League for Democracy has sent a letter to the State Peace and Development Council, formally asking the junta for a meeting with detained party leader Aung San Suu Kyi.

A letter was sent to the junta on Wednesday, a party spokesman told Agence France-Presse today. Suu Kyi, who has been kept under house arrest by the junta for most of the past 17 years, has not met with anyone from her party since 2004. Party officials said they wanted to discuss a possible appeal of her detention.

On Friday, the U.S. Senate has passed a resolution, condemning the junta for detaining Suu Kyi and other political prisoners.

Thailand justice minister threatens Thaksin with extradition

Thailand will seek extradition of Thaksin Shinawatra and Potjaman Shinawatra if the deposed prime minister and his wife fail to return to obey a Royal Thai Police summons, asking them to appear on stock-fraud charges, Justice Minister Chanchai Likhitjitta said today.

In a national broadcast today, Prime Minister Surayud Chulanont also appealed to Thaksin, saying he would personally assure the

ousted premier's safety if he were to return to Thailand.

Thaksin, who has been living in self-imposed exile since being ousted in a coup last year, is in the United Kingdom, where he has lodged a bid to purchase the Manchester City football club. Yesterday, he told the Manchester Evening News that his legal troubles in Thailand would not affect his proposed purchase of the football team.

Today in History

1314 - Scotland regained independence as forces led by Robert the Bruce defeated Edward II of England in the Battle of Bannockburn.

1894 - Italian anarchist Sante Geronimo Caserio assassinated Marie François Sadi Carnot, President of the French Third Republic, after delivering speech at a public banquet in Lyon, France.

1947 - First widely-reported post-World War II sighting of UFOs: American businessman and pilot Kenneth Arnold saw nine luminous disks in the form of saucers flying above the U.S. state of

Washington near Mount Rainier. 1948 - The Soviet Union blocked access to the American, British, and French sectors of Berlin, cutting off all rail and road routes going into Soviet-controlled territory in Germany.

June 24 is Battle of Carabobo Day in Venezuela (1821); Midsummer Day in Northern Europe, Fête nationale du Québec (Saint-Jean-Baptiste Day) in Québec, Canada.

Quote of the Day

Absurdity, n. A statement or belief manifestly inconsistent with one's own opinion. ~ Ambrose Bierce

Word of the Day

toucan; n
1. Any of various neotropical

frugivorous birds from the family Ramphastidae, with a large colorful beak.

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