



Top Stories

First casualty of French riots reported

Jean-Jacques Le Chenadec has been reported as the first casualty of recent rioting in France. The 61-year old man had been beaten by a hooded rioter last week and been in a coma since the attack.

Nationwide rallies against anti-terror laws held in Australia

A coordinated set of Australian protests against proposed anti-terror bills and calling on the withdrawal of troops from Iraq occurred in Sydney on Saturday.

Featured story

Coral Gables hosts Herald Hunt puzzle adventure

Puzzle enthusiasts from around the USA play the Herald Hunt, created by humorist Dave Barry and Tom Shroeder

Wikipedia Current Events

- Three gunmen assassinate Adel al-Zubeidi, the defense lawyer for Taha Yassin Ramadan, a former Iraqi Vice President under Saddam Hussein. (Reuters)
- Italian state-owned channel Rai News 24 airs a controversial documentary in which Iraqi people and ex-U.S. soldiers say that white phosphorus, a chemical weapon, was used by the U.S. Army against civilians in Fallujah last year. (BBC) (Rai News 24, with video)
- French authorities decide to

Wikipedia Current Events

impose curfews in attempt to quell civil unrest simmering across France, which continued for a 12th consecutive night. (CNN)

•Australian police claim to have disrupted a large-scale terrorist attack as 17 suspects are arrested in Melbourne and Sydney following raids. (Sydney Morning Herald) (CNN)

•The International Fund for Animal Welfare (IFAW) says that the Tokyo-based Institute of Cetacean Research is about to start a controversial program that could kill up to 940 whales in the name of scientific research, abusing the rights under the International Whaling Convention. (abc.net.au)(IOL)

Organs of killed Palestinian boy used in Israeli patients

Seventeen people have been arrested overnight in Sydney and Melbourne, in what Police have described as 'anti-terror' raids. New South Wales (NSW) and Victorian police conducted the raids, and both police chiefs have said that the action foiled a terrorist plot. New South Wales Police Commissioner Ken Moroney said that, "we have disrupted what I would regard as the final stages of a terrorist attack or the launch of a terrorist attack in Australia." The Guardian is reporting that some of those arrested in Sydney are alleged to have been stockpiling chemicals.

Some of those arrested in

Melbourne have appeared in court, including Abu Bakr, also known as Abdul Nacer Benbrika. Benbrika was criticised last year for comments he made in support of al-Qaeda.

In NSW, warrants were executed in Lakemba, Belmore, Wiley Park, Greenacre, Illawong, Punchbowl, Hoxton Park, Condell Park, Ingleburn, Belfield, Bankstown and Kemps Creek, resulting in 8 arrests.

A NSW Police spokesman has said that one of the men arrested was shot in the chest by police in Green Valley at about 9am, after firing at police. "One officer was struck, we believe in the hand, and suffered a minor wound," the spokesman said. "One of the police officers returned fire and the person of interest to police was wounded in the neck."

It has been reported that the arrests in Sydney, unlike those in Melbourne, do include charges relating to planning and preparation of violent acts. The suspects have not yet appeared in court and the case has been adjourned to Friday.

Mick Keelty, Commissioner of the Australian Federal Police (AFP), has said that the seven people arrested in New South Wales will be charged under the anti-terrorism legislation that was rushed through parliament last week. Mr Keelty has said that the details of the allegations against the men should be kept secret.

"An application will be made by the

Commonwealth Director of Public Prosecution this afternoon to suppress the details of the allegations," he said.

Keelty justified the action by arguing that "we give these people a fair opportunity to prepare their defence before the court rather than run the trial in the media."

In Victoria, warrants were executed in Dallas, Hoppers Crossing, Fawkner, Preston, Haberfield, Coburg, Yarraville, Meadow Heights, Hadfield and Mount Druit, resulting in 9 arrests.

Victorian Police Commissioner Christine Nixon also believes that the raids prevented a terrorist attack, however she stated that the police did not know what form the attack would take, saying "we weren't exactly sure when nor, more importantly, what they planned to damage or do harm to." Commissioner Nixon said that they had sufficient evidence to proceed.

Nixon said that the raids were the result of a long-term operation. When queried, she confirmed that the anti-terror legislation rushed through Parliament last week was related to today's raids. "Some of that is related to that amendment that occurred," she said. The changes became law just two days ago.

Those arrested will be charged with "a range of offences", however the exact nature of the charges is yet to be announced. It is not yet clear to what extent the emergency legislative changes rushed through parliament last week are a legal basis for the arrests.

One of those arrested in Melbourne was Abu Bakr, also

known as Abdul Nacer Benbrika. He is a dual Algerian and Australian citizen, and was criticised last August when he told ABC Radio that he supported al-Qaeda. At the time he denied being involved in any terrorist activity.

In an interview on the ABC Radio "National Breakfast" program, Rob Stary, a criminal defence lawyer who will be representing those arrested in the Melbourne raids said that, as far as he is aware, the charges all relate to being a member of a proscribed organisation, and none of the Melbourne suspects had been charged in relation to any planning or preparation offences. At the time of the interview he was not aware which proscribed organisation the charges relate to.

Seven men have appeared in the Melbourne Magistrates Court, on charges of intentionally being a member of a terrorist organisation and knowing the organisation was a terrorist organisation. The court has heard that Abu Bakr is the "spiritual leader" of the group and the prosecutor alleged that the organisation is directed by Abu Bakr. Speaking of the Melbourne arrests, Prosecutor Richard Maidment QC alleged that the group constituted a "terrorist organisation". Making reference to the Sydney arrests he said that the Sydney suspects had "gathering chemicals of a kind that were used in the London Underground bombings," and planned to kill "innocent men and women in Australia."

Liberians choose their president

In the aftermath of a 14-year long civil war, Liberians are holding elections for their first post-war

president. Of the two final candidates — Ellen Johnson-Sirleaf and George Weah — Mr Weah had a higher percentage of the vote in run-off elections held on October 11 this year.

Mrs. Johnson-Sirleaf, 66-year-old former economist of the World Bank and Harvard University graduate, the so called "Iron Lady", is very popular along educated people and women. She is believed to be a better candidate due to her economics background. She was the runner-up in the October 11 elections, receiving about 20% of votes. Opponents point to the fact she'd be the first woman leader ever in Africa, and that she does not have the support of the rebel warlords.

Mr. Weah, 39-year-old well-known football player and former star of AC Milan, is said to be a successful man. His supporters, who call him "King George" are generally made up of young men - many of them war veterans. But his opponents say that he is an inexperienced leader, without political skills. He won the voting on October 11, 2005, receiving 28% of votes.

According to United Nations peacekeepers only a single incident of violence was reported during the elections. The elections results are expected in about 2 weeks.

Cheney Lobbies for CIA Exemption to Torture Ban

The United States Vice President Dick Cheney lobbied Senate Republicans to exempt the CIA from the proposed ban on torture of terror suspects held by the United States. According to senators participating in the closed door-session, Cheney argued that

the administration needs an exemption from the ban on "cruel, inhumane or degrading" treatment of detainees in United States custody to be effective in the war on terrorism, although he also said that the United States does not engage in torture.

The Vice President's appeal comes at a time when Congress is still dealing with the aftermath of the Abu Ghraib prison scandal, as well as allegations of torture in Guantanamo Bay. At the same time questions about secret CIA detention centers outside of United States territory and cases of individuals that have been extradited from the United States to countries that are known to practice torture to obtain intelligence information resurface in the media.

The Bush administration is growing increasingly isolated in its stance on this issue. Republican Senator Chuck Hagel said on ABC television "I think the Administration is making a terrible mistake in opposing John McCain's amendment on detainees and torture," and added "Why in the world they're doing that, I don't know."

The Office of the Vice President declined to comment on this issue.

Arrests made in Australia after 'anti-terror' raids

The organs of a 12 year-old Palestinian boy mistakenly killed by Israeli soldiers have been transplanted to Israeli patients, helping to save their lives.

Ahmed al-Khatib was shot during clashes in Jenin last week when soldiers mistook his toy gun for a real one. He later died in a hospital. The Israeli Defense

Forces regretted the incident.

Ahmed's kidneys, liver, lungs and heart were transplanted to a total of six patients, including Israeli Arabs, Jews, and Druze. One of the recipients was 12 year-old Samah Gadban, who had been waiting for a new heart for five years. Her father thanked Ahmed's family "from the depths of my heart" and called the donation a "gesture of love".

Ahmed's father, Ismail al-Khatib, said the family made the decision to donate his son's organs "for the sake of the world's children and the children of this country". He added that saving lives was more important than religion and thinks that his son "has entered the heart of every Israeli".

al-Khatib stressed he has received nothing but praise from fellow residents in Jenin.

The Speaker of the Knesset, Reuven Rivlin, praised the action saying that this "remarkable gesture [...] despite the war and conflict without solution for nearly 100 years, must be noted".

Coral Gables hosts Herald Hunt puzzle adventure

On November 6, 2005, thousands of puzzle lovers from around the country swarmed Coral Gables, Florida, USA, with the hopes of being the first to solve a series of interactive riddles and win a weeklong resort vacation for four, as part of a free event called 'The Herald Hunt.' Billed as an 'urban puzzle safari', the Herald Hunt was designed by Dave Barry and Tom Shroder, and produced by The Miami Herald newspaper.

The Sunday issue of the Miami Herald included a special Hunt

section which listed over eighty numbered clues. But only five of the clues were legitimate; the rest were red herrings. Participants roamed the city in search of five numbers that would reveal the identity of the genuine clues from the newspaper. Cryptic hints were embedded in unusual places: street trolleys bearing strange messages, speakers blaring loud music, actors on the sidewalk making hand gestures, and even in the songs sung by a barbershop quartet in front of City Hall.

The five correct clues, when combined with a final clue announced at 3pm, yielded a phone number. Teams that correctly deduced and called the phone number heard a message containing one final puzzle that needed to be solved in order to win the prize.

The members of this year's winning team were Robin and Cary Ginter, Steve Friedland, Brian O'Neil, and Mark Engelberg. They were the first team to decode the phone message and complete the final task.

Engelberg and O'Neil flew in from across the country to attend the Hunt with their friends who are local to the area. O'Neil explained, "There's no other event I'm aware of that's quite like the Herald Hunt. There are other puzzle competitions, but nothing on this kind of large scale."

This is Engelberg's and Friedland's third win, and a second-time win for the other members of the team. When asked to explain the secret of their success, Engelberg said that teamwork was key. "We've gotten very good at working together," he said.

Today in History

1799: The coup of 18 Brumaire led by Emmanuel Joseph Sieyès and Napoléon Bonaparte deposed the French government, replacing the Directory with the Consulate.

1872: The Great Boston Fire of 1872 began, eventually destroying over 700 buildings in Boston, Massachusetts.

1938: Kristallnacht, the first large-scale act of physical anti-Jewish violence in Nazi Germany, began.

1965: In the Northeast Blackout of 1965, several U.S. states and parts of Canada were hit by a series of blackouts lasting up to 13½ hours.

1989: The Berlin Wall fell, marking the symbolic end of the Cold War, impending collapse of the Warsaw Pact, and beginning of the end of Soviet communism.

November 09 is Independence Day in Cambodia (1953); Schicksalstag in Germany.

Quote of the Day

"If you wish to make an apple pie from scratch, you must first create the universe." ~ Carl Sagan

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