



Top Stories

Fast track offer if Iceland applies to join EU

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British PM condemns walkouts



British Prime Minister Gordon Brown has condemned the workers who staged mass walkouts across the country on Friday.

Credit: Andy Mettler, WEF - cc-by-sa

Cyprus detains weapon-laden ship

On Friday, authorities in Cyprus said that they had detained a ship carrying the nation's flag. The ship, which had initially docked at



Port Said in Egypt, went to the Cypriot port of Limassol after Egyptian authorities

ordered it to leave.

Wikipedia Current Events

- Rafael Nadal of Spain defeats Roger Federer of Switzerland to win the 2009 Australian Open men's singles.
- Japan Airlines conducts the first successful test flight of a Boeing 747-300 partly powered by biofuel.
- The United States contributes an additional US\$20 million in humanitarian aid to the Gaza Strip.
- The Japan Meteorological Agency warns that Honshū Island's Mount Asama could erupt within the next two days.
- Kirill I is officially enthroned as Patriarch of the Russian Orthodox Church.
- The Sri Lankan Army bombs a hospital in Puthukkudiyiruppu twice, killing at least six Tamil civilians and wounding countless more patients.

National Guard mobilized in Kentucky ice storm aftermath

Kentucky's National Guard have been mobilized in the aftermath of what the governor called "the biggest natural disaster that this state has ever experienced".

An ice storm hit the U.S. state on Tuesday 27 January, bringing down power lines, freezing mains water supplies, bringing down trees and killing at least seven. More than 500,000 homes and business in the state remain without power, with utilities warning that it may take two

weeks to restore supplies. State officials and the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) have been issuing generators to the most vulnerable.

The National Guard are visiting homes in Kentucky to check that residents are well. At Murray State University the campus lost power and the water was turned off to stop pipes bursting. Students were moved to shelters. The state of Tennessee was also affected, with 265 people staying in shelters.

States of emergency have been declared in 92 of Kentucky's 120 counties, leading Governor Phil Bredesen to call FEMA for assistance. FEMA aid is available to states that have suffered for damages and extraordinary costs above \$7.4 million.

Ice storms are caused when a layer of warm air is caught between two layers of cold air. Water in the frozen layer is melted by the warmer layer but is then reduced to below freezing by the second cold layer. It falls as water, but freezes on contact with the ground, power lines and trees, leading to a build up of ice.

15 killed and 22 injured after fire in Chinese bar

A fire at a bar in Changle, China has killed 15 people and injured 22 others. It was triggered by a group of ten celebrating a birthday who set off fireworks shortly before midnight.

A firework set light to the ceiling of

Wikipedia Current Events

The wreck of the British warship HMS Victory is allegedly found in the English Channel.

- Four people are killed in a café shooting in Russia's Dagestan Republic.

the Latin-style bar at 11:55 pm. Within minutes the 198-square metre structure was fully alight, with the fire brigade receiving a call shortly after midnight on Sunday morning.

By 12:20 am the fire had been extinguished and rescuers found 35 people within the ruins, fifteen of whom were declared dead at the scene. The bar, which is on Zhenghe Road, was cordoned off by police and an investigation has been launched.

Most of the injured were suffering from smoke inhalation, burns to their heads and limbs or both. Changle City Hospital, which is a kilometer from the bar, provided first aid and the wounded were then transported to three other hospitals within the provincial capital Fuzhou.

Israeli military launches airstrikes into Gaza Strip

The Israeli military launched at least six airstrikes into the Gaza Strip in retaliation for rockets that were fired into Southern Israel by members of Hamas earlier in the day. Among the targets hit were a police station and other sites in the city of Rafah, believed to be tunnel locations. Small arms fire has also been reported. No one was injured or killed in the strikes.

"In response to rocket and mortar fire today, the air force has attacked a number of targets in the (Gaza) Strip, including six tunnels and a Hamas position," said the Israeli military in a statement to the press.

At least 13 mortar shells and three Qassam rockets were fired into Southern Israel Sunday night, four landing in Sha'ar HaNegev where two IDF soldiers and one civilian were injured. Ehud Olmert, the

Israeli prime minister, stated just before the airstrikes that the attacks would cause a military response.

"The cabinet's position from the first moment was that if the south's residents are fired on, our response will naturally be disproportionate," said Olmert to reporters.

Hamas had earlier called the threats by Israel a way to "find false pretexts to increase its aggression against the people" of the Strip. Hamas had said they were not responsible for the rocket fire. Smaller previously unknown groups are saying to be taking responsibility, but Israel says that they hold Hamas responsible for any rocket attacks into Israel from the Strip.

Earlier the IDF reportedly made phone calls, using a recorded message, to warn residents in Gaza of the airstrikes and told them to evacuate immediately. "All those residing near a terror hub, a tunnel or a weapons cache must leave the area immediately," said the message.

Derailments close Australian rail routes

Two train derailments in two days have closed railway lines in Australia.

A Rio Tinto iron ore train derailed at Pilbara, on a spur of the Tom Price to Dampier line on Thursday 29. The following day, a freight train with 40 wagons derailed east of Kalgoorlie, injuring three people.

The second derailment has closed the line used by the long distance Sydney to Perth Indian Pacific passenger train. Operators Great Southern Railway expect to lose

A\$500,000 revenues as the line remains closed until at least Thursday. Police say heavy rain has affected the area, and the federal Australian Rail Track Corporation say that a new access road needs to be built in order to clear the wreckage and repair the track.

Rio Tinto have sufficient stocks of iron ore already in place to keep working. However, the freight train was carrying consumer products, which may run short in the south of Western Australia in the next few days. The Kalgoorie crash is to be investigated by the Australian Transport Safety Bureau, while maintenance company Transfield Services will also be examining the incident.

British PM condemns walkouts

British Prime Minister Gordon Brown has condemned the workers who staged mass walkout across the country on Friday.

Speaking to the BBC from the World Economic Forum in the Swiss skiing resort of Davos, he said that the walkouts were "not the right thing to do". Workers on industrial sites in Wales, Scotland, Cheshire, Hampshire and Teesside had left their plants and staged protests outside in sympathy with staff at Lindsey Oil Refinery in Lincolnshire, after French owner Total had given a contract to an Italian firm. The firm brought 300 Italian and Portuguese staff into the plant.

Brown had made a speech in 2007 where he called for "British jobs for British workers". He explained to the BBC's Politics Show that "when I talked about British jobs, I was talking about giving people in Britain the skills, so that they have the ability to get jobs which were at present going to people from

abroad". The government says that European Union (EU) law makes it impossible for them to provide British jobs for British workers in the EU common market. Earlier, the Secretary of State for Health, Alan Johnson, told the BBC that recent European Court of Justice judgments had undermined employment rights but that the government would be pushing the EU to take action if it finds that the foreign workers are 'undercutting' UK citizens. He described the walkouts as "unhelpful", but said he understood the anger over EU workers coming to the UK "on worse terms and conditions to actually get jobs in front of British workers on the basis of dumbing down the terms and conditions."

The walkouts were also condemned by the opposition Conservative Party. Foreign affairs spokesman William Hague said that "strikes are never the way forward" and that his party strongly supported the free market in labour in the EU. He said that it was "so unbelievably ridiculous and silly" for Brown to have made the promise on British jobs in the first place.

The government has asked the Advisory, Conciliation and Arbitration Service (ACAS) to examine the circumstances behind the strikes and see if British workers are being unlawfully excluded, as the GMB union has claimed.

Secondary or sympathetic industrial action has been illegal in the UK since the 1980s. However, the penalties apply only to unions organizing secondary action and not to individual workers walking out.

Tarja Turunen reveals working title for new album

Finnish symphonic rocker Tarja Turunen has revealed that the working title for her new album is *What Lies Beneath*. The album follows on from 2007's *My Winter Storm*.

"With *My Winter Storm*, I chose the name of the album in the early stages and that helped me to create the concept for the album. With the new album, I decided to do it the same way, so I searched for an inspiring title and all the songs are one way or another related to it," Tarja explained.

My Winter Storm was Tarja's first album after she left the Finnish symphonic power metal band *Nightwish*, which she fronted. On the day of the album's release - November 14, 2007 - it was certified gold in Finland for sales in excess of 15,000 copies. On January 2, the album was rereleased in a 2-CD format with 32 tracks, including a guest appearance by Doro Pesch and an unreleased song recorded in China that features the Beijing Philharmonic and the Qingdao Symphony Orchestra.

Regarding her next effort, she said "In the last months I've been writing a lot of music for my new album. Songwriting is always an amazing learning experience, and it has been a pleasure to discuss music with different people.

"The album process is still going on and I have more songs that are in the working. It is sounding very promising. The songs are absolutely more mature, wild, and emotional and they sound more me, if I can say so."

The album is tentatively scheduled for release in September, but Tarja

has commented that this is not set in stone. "The biggest difference in preparing this new album is that I will be taking the time that I need until the songs are in a shape that I am happy with," she said "No matter how long it takes. I want it to be perfect for me. No hurry; no pressure."

Cyprus detains weapon-laden ship

On Friday, authorities in Cyprus said that they had detained a ship carrying the nation's flag. The ship, which had initially docked at Port Said in Egypt, went to the Cypriot port of Limassol after Egyptian authorities ordered it to leave.

In Limassol, the container ship, the *Monchegorsk*, was anchored and boarded by Cypriot authorities. It still remains anchored there as of Sunday. The *Famagusta Gazette* cited well-informed sources as saying the ship contains specialized components for the manufacture of rockets.

According to reports, the ship was initially stopped in the Red Sea by the United States Navy, but it lacked the authority to board the ship or prevent it from continuing its route.

Cyprus state radio reported the vessel was Russian-owned traveling from Iran to Syria with weapons destined for Hamas.

Haaretz reported that Israel believes the weapons were bound for Hezbollah or for Hamas militants in the Gaza Strip.

On Friday, the President of Cyprus said the ship was in violation of United Nations resolutions. However, he did not go into detail.

"We are investigating what it is carrying and for this reason we have to handle things very responsibly and with a great deal of seriousness, without a lot of media noise," President Dimitris Christofias said.

"It is a problem for us that we are forced to accept a ship under the Cypriot flag which is carrying whatever [it] is carrying, which is contrary or in conflict with Security Council resolutions," Christofias added.

On Sunday, Cyprus foreign minister Markos Kyprianou said that the government was still investigating whether the ship was in violation of United Nations resolutions.

"Our aim is to resolve the matter in the best possible way without harming the interests of the Republic of Cyprus ... The less that is said the better," said Marios Garoyian, president of the House of Representatives of Cyprus.

New Icelandic government to take office today

The newly formed Icelandic coalition interim government will take office today, according to a coalition leader. The new government will also include a new prime minister, Jóhanna Sigurðardóttir, the country's and the world's first openly gay prime minister.

"If everything goes as planned now a new government will take over [this] afternoon," said Steingrímur Sigfússon, who heads the Left-Green Movement.

On January 27, it was announced that the nation's coalition government had collapsed and dissolved following a banking financial crisis. In October of 2008,

Iceland's banking sector collapsed and was largely nationalised. Iceland's interest rate is now 18%, with GDP expected to fall 9.6% this year. Inflation has reached 13.1%. Just before the announcement of the government taking office, nearly 1,500 people were protesting outside the parliament building over the collapsed government and the recent financial crisis, but protesters seemed happy about the change.

"The demands of the people have been met. Therefore today is a celebration," said protest organizer Hordur Torfason to the crowd who were cheering about hearing the news.

The new minority coalition will consist of Jóhanna's Social Democratic Alliance and the Left-Green Movement with backing from the Progressive Party. Jóhanna will be replacing the current prime minister, Geir Haarde who resigned on January 26, and is the chairman of the nation's independent party and a critic of Jóhanna. He criticizes her not for her sexual orientation, but her appointment because he believes she will not help the economic crisis, resulting in more government spending.

The quick appointment of the new government also means an early election, which is scheduled to take place on April 25.

Fast track offer if Iceland applies to join EU

A commissioner in Brussels has suggested that Iceland could be fast tracked to join the European Union (EU) by 2011.

The European Commissioner for enlargement, Olli Rehn, said that if the country, stricken by the world

financial meltdown, applied for membership to the 52-year-old international economic and social organization this year, it would be welcomed with open arms. The EU is expecting an application if the Social Democratic Alliance wins May's general election in the country.

The next entrant to the union is to be Croatia. It has been rapidly making changes to its government and economy in order to join in 2011. The EU will then have 28 members. Iceland could join at the same time, making 29.

Iceland could join quickly because it is already a member of the European Economic Area and therefore already complies with many EU directives. The main contention would be Iceland's rich fishing waters, which are contested by several nearby fishing countries. Iceland and the United Kingdom fought short naval wars in the 1950s and 1970s over the issue of fishing rights in the area. There is also an issue with Ireland's failure to ratify the Treaty of Lisbon, which was designed to streamline the union as more countries join. Without the unanimous ratification, further expansion is difficult.

The EU has its roots in the six member European Coal and Steel Community, founded by France and then-West Germany in 1951. In 1957, the members of the Community formed the European Economic Community (EEC), a common market and customs union. The coal and steel organization was merged into the EEC in 1967. In 1993, the EEC became the European Union. The EU adopted a central banking system and single currency, the Euro, between 1999 and 2002.

The Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, and Turkey are all on the waiting list for entry to the EU.

DS4SEQ discusses daylight savings in Queensland with Wikinews

Wikinews recently held an interview with the Daylight Saving for South East Queensland (DS4SEQ) political party about the upcoming Queensland state election.

DS4SEQ is a single issue party which, as its name suggests, advocates the implementation of daylight saving in South East Queensland. Currently Queensland runs on Australian Eastern Standard Time (UTC+10).

Interview

Wikinews: Why have daylight saving in only part of the state instead of the whole state? Daylight Saving in Queensland appears to be a geographical issue. The results of the 1992 Referendum show that the concept was favoured by 51 (out of 89) electorates, all of which were located in the South East Queensland Region. In 2007, the Queensland Government commissioned AC Nielsen to undertake research. The results of this research indicated that 69% of respondents in the South East Queensland region were in favour of Daylight Saving, with only 20% opposed. This research also indicated that 59% of respondents outside of the South East region were opposed to Daylight Saving being introduced into their region. Overall those opposed to daylight saving in Queensland has decreased from 54.5% in 1992 to only 34% against, according to the Nielsen findings. South East Queensland businesses are also overwhelmingly in favour of having

Daylight Saving introduced into the region.

As Daylight Saving is not favoured outside of the South East Queensland region, DS4SEQ believe that a dual time zone is a compromise that respects the needs of regional and rural Queenslanders, while also giving fair consideration to the view of the majority of residents in South East Queensland.

Wikinews: What benefits would daylight saving have for South East Queensland?

By moving the time of the clock against the natural occurring solar movement, Daylight Saving provides allowance for an hour less sunlight in the very early morning, when about 80% of people are sleeping, and provide an hour more sunlight in the evening, which can be utilised. Benefits that can be gained from the introduction of daylight saving into South East Queensland are:

- Promotes more of an outdoor lifestyle
- Allows more time for outdoor family activities
- Allows more time to perform outdoor garden activities e.g. mowing the lawn
- Provides a positive effect on health
- Improved safety and security for evening leisure activities and public transport
- Promotes tourism
- Increases economic efficiencies for majority of business dealings from South East Queensland
- Studies have suggested that, in the long term, Daylight Saving can reduce traffic accidents and road fatalities.

Wikinews: How soon would you like to see a referendum on the issue of daylight saving?

DS4SEQ are not advocating a referendum. DS4SEQ's political goal is to convince the major parties to change their thinking about Daylight Saving in Queensland, to adapt to Queensland's changing landscape and "It's About Time!" that serious consideration was given to our dual time zone concept.

Wikinews: What questions would you like see on the ballot paper for said referendum?

As per the previous question, DS4SEQ are not advocating a referendum, but seeking a revised policy on Daylight Saving in Queensland, by both major parties, to seriously consider a dual time zone arrangement for 6 months of the year.

Wikinews: Will DS4SEQ keep campaigning for daylight saving in South East Queensland if you don't get any seats in parliament?

The current stance taken by both major parties, in relation to Daylight Saving in Queensland, is outdated, out of touch and inflexible. South East Queenslanders are frustrated that neither major party is currently prepared to explore options on the issue of Daylight Saving.

Whilst DS4SEQ is aiming to win seats in the Queensland Parliament, we believe that gaining a sizeable percentage of the primary vote will send the key message to the major parties that they can no longer ignore: When it comes to the issue of Daylight Saving, the people of South East Queensland have been ignored for too long, and a dual time zone arrangement must be implemented.

With a sizeable percentage of the vote achieved, DS4SEQ will be able to lobby the Government and Opposition, with evidence that constituents are demanding Daylight Saving to be implemented within the South East Queensland region.

Today in History

1536 – An expedition to the New World led by Spanish conquistador Pedro de Mendoza founded what is now Buenos Aires, Argentina.

1709 – Scottish sailor Alexander Selkirk was rescued after spending four years as a castaway on an uninhabited island in the Juan Fernández archipelago, providing the inspiration for Daniel Defoe's novel Robinson Crusoe.

1848 – The Mexican–American War ended with the signing of the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo, granting the United States the Mexican Cession.

1922 – The novel Ulysses was first published in its entirety after this material by author James Joyce first appeared in serialized parts in the American journal The Little Review from March 1918 to December 1920, becoming one of the most important works of Modernist literature.

1943 – World War II: The Soviet Red Army captured 91,000 tired and starving German soldiers, ending the Battle of Stalingrad, one of the bloodiest battles in human history.

February 02 is Candlemas in Western Christianity; Groundhog Day in Canada and the United States

Quote of the Day

History teaches us that men and nations behave wisely once they have exhausted all other alternatives. ~ Abba Eban

Word of the Day

cunctation n

1. (obsolete) Delay, hesitation, procrastination.

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