



Top Stories

Amnesty International calls for Guantanamo shutdown

In their annual report on human rights, Amnesty International Secretary General, Irene Khan, said "Guantanamo has become the gulag of our time." In this 308-page report, they called for the United States to shut down the Guantanamo prison and pointed to the United States' foreign and military policy as providing a justification for other governments to ignore human rights.

Schappelle Corby found guilty, sentenced to 20 years

Schappelle Corby was today found guilty by an Indonesian court for the importation of 4 kilograms of marijuana to Bali. She was sentenced to 20 years in prison. The verdict was handed down by three judges amidst tight security at the Denpasar District Court.

The verdict was read in Indonesian and relayed to Corby via her translator. The court erupted as result became clear. Her family and supporters screamed at the judge, and said that justice had not been done

Marshall Islands to request \$3 billion more from U.S. for health effects of nuclear testing

The Republic of the Marshall Islands (RMI) is petitioning for \$3 billion in additional compensation from the U.S. government, after receiving \$270 million in an agreement which expired in 2001. The U.S. government performed a series of 67 tests of nuclear weapons in the Marshall Islands between 1946 and 1958. Fallout from the testing is claimed to have affected some of the island's near 60,000 inhabitants. "We're finding people on remote islands with high percentages of cancers," said RMI Foreign Minister

Wikipedia Current Events

- The Clock Tower of the Palace of Westminster in London, known as Big Ben, renowned for its accuracy and chimes, stopped ticking for 90 minutes, an engineer said Saturday.
- Japan announces closure of World War II sex slave fund by March 2007. The Asian Women's Fund, set up in 1995, paid 2M yen (\$19,470) each in compensation, plus medical and welfare support, to 285 so-called "comfort women" in the Philippines, South Korea and Taiwan.
- California State Senator Joseph Dunn, local school officials, and environmental professionals meet with parents of Kennedy Elementary School students in a town-hall style meeting in Santa Ana Thursday evening. The parents air their concerns over health issues at schools and workplaces, including a rash of leukemia cases in the student population, and begin a dialogue they have been working toward for years

Saudi Arabia's King Fahd admitted to hospital

King Fahd of Saudi Arabia has been admitted to a hospital in Riyadh for testing. Unofficial sources say that the King, who has been ill since 1995, might have "water in his lungs", possibly indicating pneumonia. Crown Prince Abdullah has performed most of the duties of the aging monarch in recent years, and is a very likely candidate for succession of the throne should King Fahd succumb to his illness.

How tall is tallest? Chinese researchers measure tallest mountain

Mount Qomolangma, known in the west as Mount Everest, may be taller than ever, and a group of 24 Chinese researchers

have scaled the peak and made observations they hope will document its current height.

In 1975 the peak was surveyed at a height of 8 848 metres, in line with previous calculations, but a U.S. survey team in 1999 measured it at 8 850m. The growth to some extent fits current theories regarding the geology of the region, a region with crustal upthrust. The growth may also be due in part to rapid glacier retreat on the peak's slopes, and the mountain springing back as the weight of snow melts and runs off.

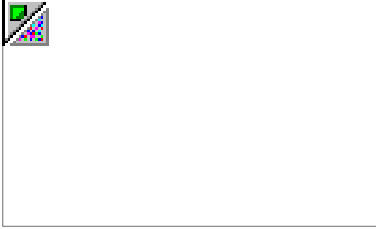
At the same time, recent theories suggest the mountain is also shrinking. The peak may be getting smaller from subsidence as it reaches extreme heights, and again the glaciers and snow help to stabilize and expand the mountain itself.

There is some disagreement regarding the methods of measurement used previously, so the researchers spent an hour at the summit taking measurements using radar, satellite, and other methods on 6 points. The average of the measurements will be used to make the official Chinese measurement, which remains at 8 848. Results of the expedition are expected to be available in August.

A previous measurement team from Italy also used the radar methodology in 2004, but their results have not yet been published.

The mountain straddles the border between Tibet and Nepal, and is known by several names. In Chinese, 珠穆朗玛峰 (pinyin: Zhūmùlǎngmǎ Fēng); Tibetan Qomolangma ("Mother of the Universe"); in Nepal Sagarmatha ("Forehead of the Sky"); and in English named after Sir George Everest.

Armagh man charged with 1998 bombing murders



A man from Jonesborough in south County Armagh, Northern Ireland, was charged today with the murder of 29 people who died in the 1998 Omagh bombing, which injured in excess of 300 additional people.

Sean Hoey, 35, appeared at the Craigavon Magistrates Court, saying nothing. His solicitor said his client strongly denies the charges, and that there is no evidence against him to support the charges. Hoey, who was also charged with 23 explosives offenses and conspiracy to murder security force members, was remanded to custody in Maghaberry Prison and is scheduled to appear, via video link from prison, before the Belfast magistrates on May 31.

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The verdict was read in Indonesian and relayed to Corby via her translator. The court erupted as the outcome became clear. Her family and supporters screamed at the judge, and said that justice had not been done. "Scheppelle is innocent!" one supporter said.

Her lawyer reported before the verdict was handed down that she was terrified. "She's probably the worst I've ever seen her," he said.

After the verdict she stopped briefly to hug her family before being loaded into a

van and driven away.

Corby was arrested at Denpasar Airport last October. On her trip to Bali, she flew from Brisbane to Sydney and then changed planes. Her defense centered around the claim that Australian airport baggage handlers placed the drugs in her bodyboard bag as part of a drug smuggling ring. It was claimed that the drugs were being smuggled from Brisbane to Sydney, but for some reason were not removed before her luggage was transferred to the Indonesian flight.

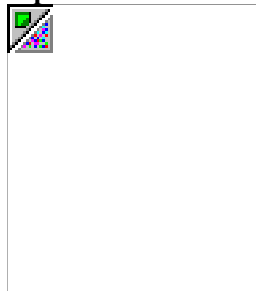
After a lengthy trial that attracted much media attention in Australia, prosecutors called for the judges to hand down a life sentence.

Hundreds of supporters and friends gathered at Tugun Surf-Lifesaving Club on the Gold Coast to watch the verdict and show their support.

Australian Prime Minister John Howard said that he felt for Corby but that Australians had to trust the Indonesian justice system. "We have to respect the justice system of other countries," he said.

The judge said she had until next Wednesday to appeal.

Al Qaeda leader Abu Musab al-Zarqawi reported "wounded"

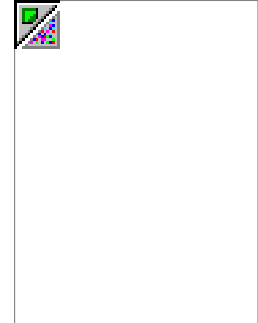


Abu Musab al-Zarqawi from Rewards for Justice

There have been reports that the leader of the Al-Qaeda terrorist network, Abu Musab al-Zarqawi, was wounded in Iraq. Internet statements on Al-Qaeda websites Tuesday and Thursday asked Muslims to pray for al-Zarqawi and said that an interim leader named Abu Hafis al-Gerni had been appointed.

The credibility of these statements is currently unverified. Iraq's Interior Minister Bayan Jabr did allege that the statements were correct, however. During a news conference, he reported, "We are not sure whether he is dead or not, but we are sure that he is injured."

Researchers at UC Berkeley strike against "bad faith bargaining"



At University of California, Berkeley on Thursday, researchers and technical workers formed a strike against what they call "bad faith bargaining" within the UC system. The Coalition of University Employees (CUE) labor union estimates that around 10,000 university workers are on strike. Other strikes related to this are occurring at UCSF Medical Center, UC Santa Cruz, and four other UC campuses around the state.

The Coalition of University Employees accuses top UC officials of ignoring the union's requests regarding the high turnover rate of researchers. CUE organizers say the university is misleading the union about the quantity of money readily available for employee salary increases.

The UC officials deny accusations that they have bargained in bad faith, saying they have offered a contract to the researchers that's similar to an approved deal.



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Today in History

1588 - The Spanish Armada set sail from Lisbon for the English Channel.
1892 - The Sierra Club was founded in San Francisco by environmentalist John Muir.

1905 - Japanese forces led by Admiral Togo Heihachiro destroyed the Russian Baltic Fleet and won the Battle of Tsushima, the decisive naval battle in the Russo-Japanese War.

1936 - Alan Turing submitted "On Computable Numbers, with an Application to the Entscheidungsproblem" for publication.

1961 - A newspaper article by Peter Benenson started a letter-writing campaign that grew and became Amnesty International.

May 28 is Republic Day in Armenia and Azerbaijan

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