

NEWS IN BRIEF

STORIES BY BECCA HELLER

GRAPHIC BY DANIEL VASILES



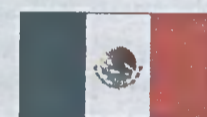
UNITED STATES

ON JAN. 17, WIKIPEDIA SHUT DOWN ITS SITE IN PROTEST OF TWO RECENTLY PROPOSED ANTI-PIRACY ACTS. During the 24-hour "blackout," users visiting wikipedia.org were met with a black page urging supporters to contact their local representatives. In a statement, Wikipedia explained their position. "Proponents of SOPA have characterized the opposition as being people who want to enable piracy or defend piracy," said Wikipedia's founder Jimmy Wales to BBC. "But that's not really the point. The point is the bill is so over broad and so badly written that it's going to impact all kinds of things that, you know, don't have anything to do with stopping piracy."



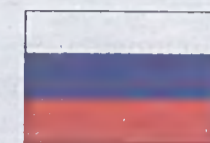
ITALY

ON JAN. 13, A CRUISE SHIP CARRYING ABOUT 4,200 PEOPLE CAPSIZED RESULTING IN THE DEATH OF AT LEAST 11 PEOPLE AND THE DISAPPEARANCE OF AT LEAST 20 MORE. According to BBC, Captain Francesco Schettino admits that he was at fault for the ship's running aground. Further reports suggest that, in addition to his negligence in navigation, Schettino fled the ship before evacuation was complete. While Schettino denies this claim, coast-guards believe he never returned to the ship. With Schettino now under house arrest on suspicion of multiple manslaughter, the search for survivors has been suspended, due to the risk of the Costa Concordia cruise ship sinking completely in rough seas.



MYANMAR

AFTER BEING RELEASED FROM HOUSE ARREST IN 2010, PRO-DEMOCRACY LEADER AUNG SAN SUU KYI REGISTERED TO RUN IN A BY-ELECTION FOR A SEAT IN PARLIAMENT. Hundreds of supporters flocked around her as she made an appearance in Kawhmu, where she will be seeking office. She made no public statement, but according to BBC correspondent Rachel Harvey Suu Kyi's National League for Democracy party plans to contest over 40 seats to test the current military-backed government's claims of reform. Suu Kyi will almost certainly take a seat in Parliament as a result of the election, BBC reports.



RUSSIA

RUSSIAN FOREIGN MINISTRY PUBLICLY CALLED ATTENTION TO U.S. HYPOCRISY IN REGARDS TO HUMAN RIGHTS IN A REPORT RELEASED LAST MONTH. Specifically citing U.S. actions in "the odious prison in Guantanamo Bay," the ministry said that our policies were "far from the ideals declared in Washington," BBC reports. The U.S. State department responded unaggressively, acknowledging the Russian report with respect. "We certainly don't regard it as interference in our affairs," said spokesman Mark Toner in a statement. "In terms of our human rights, we're an open book." Early attempts to shut down Guantanamo Bay have been blocked by Congress, and the prison remains open, despite the efforts of the Obama administration to close it.

Mitt Romney pulls ahead in New Hampshire race

By Zachary Thomas
STAFF WRITER

Cruising to a sizable victory during the Jan. 10 New Hampshire primary two days after a victory in the Iowa caucus, Mitt Romney has all but solidified his position as the candidate to beat in the hunt for the Republican presidential nomination.

"Thank you, New Hampshire, tonight we made history!" Romney told supporters in a victory speech on the day of the vote, his wife and family standing by his side.

Romney made use of the moment to criticize current President Barack Obama on the economy and to put on a display of patriotic fanfare.

"What defines us as Americans is our unwavering conviction that we know that (conditions) must be better and will be better," he said.

The former Massachusetts governor finished first in the New Hampshire polling with 39.3 percent of the vote, ahead of fellow candidates Ron Paul (22.9 percent) and Jon Huntsman (16.9 percent), according to The Associated Press. Newt Gingrich, Rick Santorum, and Rick Perry made up the remaining active Republican candidates

in the poll.

Romney mainly faced competition in this primary from libertarian candidate Ron Paul, with his notably fervent and young supporters, and Jon Huntsman, the former ambassador to China who skipped campaigning in Iowa to devote resources solely to competing in New Hampshire.

"I'm not surprised at all. He was expected to win in New Hampshire. It looks like Romney has the clear path to get the nomination."

Robert Duncan, visiting associate professor of political science

Romney, who owns a \$4.3 million lakeside home in New Hampshire, was, in many ways, competing in his own backyard.

"I'm not surprised at all," said Visiting Associate Professor of Political Science Robert Duncan about the primary results. "He was expected to win in New Hampshire. It looks like Romney has the

clear path to get the nomination."

Further speaking to that point were exit polls that showed 56 percent of New Hampshire primary voters, regardless of who they voted for, felt Mitt Romney was the GOP contender with the best shot to win in the general election, according to the Washington Post.

However, looking beyond the New Hampshire primary, Romney's opponents and some analysts emphasize that the race for the party's nomination isn't over just yet.

"He keeps flip-flopping to suit the situation and his record sucks," Duncan said of Romney. "He represents the moderate

faction of the party."

Duncan also notes that in comparison to New Hampshire, the upcoming Jan. 21 primary in South Carolina features a "much more socially conservative populace," a demographic that aids the more right-leaning candidates of the race — in other words, everyone but Mitt Romney.

Recent polling done in South Carolina shows Newt Gingrich within five points of frontrunner Mitt Romney, with Ron Paul coming in third and Rick Santorum a close fourth, according to Public Policy Polling data from Jan. 10 – 11.

Nonetheless, it is hard to imagine a scenario where one candidate emerges from the rest of the pack to consolidate support and overtake the resourceful and well-funded Romney campaign.

"I don't see anybody — Ron Paul, maybe — beating Romney ... it's most likely too late for anyone else to jump into the race," stated Duncan.

Mitt Romney will have to take advantage of this momentum in order to seize his party's nomination and face-off against President Barack Obama in a general election that could very well be a watershed moment in our nation's history.