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Edmonton NEWS BREAK

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* On Monday, the queen thanked the public "for the wonderful support and encouragement that you have given to me". Celebrations of her Diamond Jubilee, marking six decades on the throne, officially began Monday and continue through June, when London will mark the anniversary of her coronation with festivities including up to 1,000 boats sailing up the River Thames. Two new photographs of the queen were released Monday as part of the Diamond Jubilee celebrations, showing her wearing a necklace worn by Queen Victoria in her own Diamond Jubilee portrait in 1897. She is the oldest British monarch in history, but has not yet passed her great-great-grandmother Victoria as the longest-reigning one.
* A 6.8-magnitude earthquake struck early Monday 70 kilometers rom the coastal city of Dumaguete on the Philippine island of Negros killing at least 12 people. The dead included two elementary school children who died when walls at their schools collapsed on them. Aftershocks of magnitude 6.0, rattled the area into the evening.
* U.S. President Barack Obama is imposing tough new sanctions against Iran and its central bank in a move designed to freeze the country's assets amid growing nuclear tensions. The U.S. Treasury Department said in a release that under the president's executive order, Iran's assests within the jurisdiction of U.S. persons or entities will be frozen.
* Intense blasts that echoed through the Syrian city of Homs on Monday were just a part of the latest violence ravaging parts of the country, as world leaders sought a new strategy to end the deadly fighting. At least 74 civilians were killed Monday across Syria, according to the Local Coordination Committees of Syria, an opposition group that organizes and documents anti-government protests. Most of the deaths occurred in Homs, it said. Meanwhile, the United States closed its embassy in Dimascus after the Syrian government refused to address its security concerns. Also Monday, U.K. Foreign Secretary William Hague announced that the British ambassador to Syria had been recalled for "consultations."
* Violent clashes near Egypt's Interior Ministry on Monday left at least one person dead and 72 injured. Among those injured Monday was Salma Said, a prominent pro-democracy blogger who was reportedly shot in the face with bird shot by a police officer. Democracy activists and protesters are angry with police handling of a deadly riot at a soccer stadium on Thursday that left 13 people dead and more than 2,500 injured.
* The captain of the shipwrecked cruise liner Costa Concordia faced a closed-door hearing Monday over whether he should remain under house arrest. Francesco Schettino faces possible charges of manslaughter, shipwreck and abandoning ship after the vessel struck rocks and rolled onto its side in the waters off the Italian island of Giglio on January 13. Sixteen bodies have been recovered, and 16 people remain missing. The three-judge panel has three days to reach a verdict on house arrest.
* Saif al-Islam Gadhafi, the son of Libya's deposed leader Moammar Gadhafi, could go on trial "within weeks or months," according to the country's interior minister. Fawzy Abdilal said Saif al-Islam's case will be handed to the courts as soon as the prosecutor general completes his investigations. Separately, military trials of those who "committed criminal acts under the Gadhafi regime" began Sunday in the city of Benghazi.
* Alberto Contador was stripped of his 2010 Tour de France title Monday and banned for two years after sport's highest court found the Spanish cyclist guilty of doping.

NATIONAL NEWS

Dustin Paxton was found guilty in a Calgary courtroom Monday of assault with a weapon and uttering threats against Abraham Chutta, one of his former roommates. Chutta alleged Paxton beat him with a dog leash and baton. Justice Sheilah Martin still has to rule on the charges of aggravated assault, sexual assault and forcible confinement in connection with another former roommate, who was dropped off at a Regina hospital in April 2010 weighing 87 pounds, suffering from numerous broken bones and a mutilated face.
* Investigators are now looking for the cause of a fire Sunday evening that has left residents of a 160-unit apartment complex in Fort McMurray homeless. Ecole McTavish School has been set up as an evacuation centre and was closed Monday as relief workers distributed supplies. There wre no reports of injuries.
* A Saskatchewan law limiting the ability of public sector workers to go on strike has been ruled unconstitutional by a Queen's Bench judge. Regina Justice Dennis Ball said the Public Service Essential Services Act — also known as Bill 5 — infringes on workers' rights and is of "no force or effect." Ball ruled the 2008 Bill doesn't give employees an adequate dispute resolution process where they can challenge which employees are designated as essential. It's believed to be the first time in Canada an essential services law has been taken to court on a charter challenge.
* Prime Minister Stephen Harper's comments that he wants Research In Motion to keep growing as a Canadian company would make a hostile takeover of the market-share losing BlackBerry maker more unlikely, analysts said Monday. The prime minister recently said that he wants to see the "company succeed and continue to grow as a Canadian company." Meanwhile, the TSX slipped 17 points Monday to 12,559. The loonie closed at USD$1.004. March oil rose 24-cents to USD$97.15 a barrel.

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BEEF BREAK

If Parliament ever gets around to passing the Bill that will allow wine to be shipped across provincial boundaries that's just the first step. Next would be the dismantling of all the provincial agricultural marketing boards. It's easier for the Americans to sell their yellow corn fed chickens in Alberta than it is for a Saskatchewan farmer. Wouldn't all of urban Canada benefit with lower grocery prices.
Comments: beefbreak@bellyellow.com

On This Day in History

1867 - London England - Lord Carnarvon, Secretary of State for the Colonies, introduces a bill to unite the Provinces of Canada, New Brunswick, and Nova Scotia. It is called the British North America Act.

Today's Pop Quiz: What island is separated from Canada by the Davis Straight?
Yesterday's Quiz:
What's a male beaver called? A. a buck

BILLBOARD TOP 10

1. Set Fire To The Rain, Adele
2. Stronger, Kelly Clarkson
3. We Found Love, Rhianna
4. Good Feelng, Flo Rida
5. Turn Me On, David Guetta
6. It Will Rain, Bruno Mars
7. Sexy And I Know It, LMFAO
8. Domino, Jessie J
9. The One That Got, Katy Perry
10. Rack City, Tyga

Weather

Today: sunny, H -7
Tomorrow: sunny, H -2

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