

Top Stories

London bombers may have been 'duped' into committing suicide



BREAKING NEWS

The British tabloid The Daily Mirror today suggested that the London bombers may not have planned to commit suicide, while a Scotland Yard spokesman said they have not definitely confirmed that the four men intended to die when they carried out the attacks.

54 killed by suicide bomber at Musayyib gas station



At least 54 people died today and 82 were wounded when a suicide bomber blew himself up at a gas station near a mosque in Musayyib.

Plane crash in Equatorial Guinea kills 55

An Equatair plane carrying 55 people crashed on Saturday soon after take-off near the capital of Equatorial Guinea, Malabo. Witnesses told AFP the Antonov aircraft bound for Bata suddenly caught fire and crashed in a forest near Baney, a town some 19km from the capital.

Wikipedia Current Events

- Time correspondent Matthew Cooper reveals that last week he told a grand jury that Karl Rove—a top White House political adviser to U.S. President George W. Bush—was the first to reveal Valerie Plame's identity as a CIA agent.
- 14 Spanish Firefighters have died while attempting to battle a forest fire in the central province of Guadalajara.
- The Military of Pakistan claims that 17 people have died, including a Pakistani soldier, following clashes on the border with Afghanistan.
- Conflict in Iraq: At least eight people, mostly policemen, have died following a bomb attack in the Iraqi capital, Baghdad.

Wikipedia Current Events

- According to Israel Defence Force sources, a Palestinian gunman is shot dead approaching the Israeli settlement of Netzarim in the Gaza Strip.
- Said Seyam, a Hamas commander of the Ezzedeen-al-Qassam Brigades in Khan Yunis has been killed by an Israeli sniper.
- Two Hamas mortars injure five residents of the Israeli settlement of Neve Dekalim in the Gaza Strip. Four Qassam rockets land on Israeli territory but no injuries are reported.
- An Israeli Air Force missile strike on a car in Beit Lahiya misses the car but seriously wounds a Palestinian bystander. Two members of the Popular Resistance Committees are believed to have been in the car.
- Israeli troops mass for a military offensive on the Gaza Strip border prior to a visit to Israel by US Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice.

London bombers may have been 'duped' into committing suicide

The British tabloid The Daily Mirror today suggested that the London bombers may not have planned to commit suicide, while a Scotland Yard spokesman said they have not definitely confirmed that the four men intended to die when they carried out the attacks.

The Daily Mirror claims that the bombers brought return rail tickets to Luton, and that they purchased pay and display car park tickets before boarding the train at Luton Station. The tabloid paper also states how the bombers all had personal items on their person at the time of the attacks, such as wallets, driving licences and bank cards. It also states how they were carrying large rucksacks which could be easily dumped, instead of having the explosives strapped to their bodies, as would be expected by a suicide bomber. It also points to evidence

from the bombers families, where two of the men had pregnant wives.

From this evidence, the paper draws the conclusion that the four men were not told the bombs would detonate straight away, and that the men thought they would be able to escape unscathed. This was probably done to protect their master's identity, the paper suggested, since there was a high probability the bombers would be caught had they lived.

Manchester City agree big money for Shaun Wright-Phillips to move to Chelsea FC

Chelsea FC had a bid of £20,000,000 for the England winger rejected on Friday after they finally made their interest in the player official.

Shaun Wright-Phillips had declared on Friday he was happy to stay at Manchester City FC, but 24 hours later he asked City to agree a fee with Chelsea so that he could move to Stamford Bridge.

Both sides have now thrashed out a fee for Wright-Phillips and the flying winger has now been given permission to open talks with Chelsea.

"As a result of Shaun's request to speak to Chelsea we have conducted a series of complex negotiations with Chelsea," City's communications chief, Paul Tyrrell.

"A fee for Shaun's transfer of £21,000,000 has been agreed and consequently we have granted his wish to talk to the other club."

Chelsea are hoping to tie up a deal with Wright-Phillips as soon as possible so that he can join them on their tour of the U.S.A next week.

This article contains first-hand journalism by a Wikinews Reporter.

Sir Edward Heath, former British PM, dead at 89

Sir Edward Heath, Prime Minister of the United Kingdom from 1970-1974 and leader of the conservative party from 1965-1975, has died at his home in Salisbury just a week after his 89th birthday.

Heath led the United Kingdom into the European Economic Community, initiated a failed power-sharing government in Northern Ireland, and, in order to cope with economic unrest, instituted a three-day work week in the UK.

He was offered the post of Ambassador to the United States in 1979, but declined. He continued to represent the constituency of Old Bexley and Sidcup as a backbench MP until his retirement in 2001. He was created a Knight of the Garter in 1992.

Israeli PM assassin Yigal Amir on open-ended hunger strike

Yigal Amir, the student who assassinated Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin, began a hunger strike on June 28th in protest against "the basic human rights abuse by Israel's prison authorities", as he describes it. According to the prison service, he's not in a proper hunger strike because he drinks 5 liters of sweet raspberry-flavoured drink every day.

The issue of contention is denial of recognition of his marriage to Larisa Trembovler by Israeli Prisons Service.

In January 2004, when news of the couple's intentions reached the press, Israel Prisons Service Commissioner Lieutenant General Ya'akov Ganot rejected Amir's request to marry in jail, even though by then the Prison Service had itself submitted a formal application for permission to hold the ceremony. Ganot even requested that the legal department be "prepared to defend the decision."

Two months ago, Amir and Trimbovler asked the Association for Civil Rights in Israel to represent them before the Prison Service, and present their desire to marry within the prison walls.

According to the Association, "The right to marry applies to prisoners as well; human rights also apply to Yigal Amir." The association said that the couple performed

the "marriage by messenger" for lack of alternatives "after they were deprived of their basic right to marry, as it is normally understood."

Disneyland turns fifty

Today, The Walt Disney Company and thousands of guests celebrated the fiftieth birthday of theme park and American cultural landmark Disneyland.

Park guests, some of whom began queuing for entry around 3:00pm the previous day, packed into the park bringing it to full capacity before lunchtime.

Arnold Schwarzenegger, Julie Andrews, Art Linkletter, Diane Disney-Miller, Disney CEO Michael Eisner and Disney CEO-elect, president and COO Bob Iger all joined in the festivities, with Disney-Miller, the eldest daughter of park founder Walt Disney, reading her father's original dedication at the precise time it was first read.

The park kicked off the official festivities on May 5 with the opening of the Happiest Homecoming on Earth.

Tiger Woods wins British Open

Tiger Woods has won the British Open Championship at St Andrews for the second time. Woods had held the lead at the Old Course since the first day of the championship, with opening rounds of 66-67. He then battled tough conditions on the third day for a 71, and hit a closing round of 70; five shots clear of Colin Montgomerie.

The win at St Andrews marks Tiger Woods' 10th major title of his career.

Rep. Waxman: Karl Rove violated non-disclosure agreement

House representative Henry Waxman (D-Cal) released on Friday a fact sheet from a "briefing booklet" that Karl Rove received when he signed the classified information nondisclosure agreement (SF-312). Executive Order 12958 requires that a person sign this standard form before being granted security clearance. The briefing booklet states that:

Before confirming the accuracy of what appears in the public source, the signer of

the SF 312 must confirm through an authorized official that the information has, in fact, been declassified. If it has not, confirmation of its accuracy is also an unauthorized disclosure.

The nondisclosure agreement and the executive order require sanctions against security clearance holders who "knowingly, willfully, or negligently" disclose classified information. The sanctions for such a breach include "reprimand, suspension without pay, removal, termination of classification authority, loss or denial of access to classified information, or other sanctions.

The agreement requires that violators be subject to appropriate sanctions, regardless of whether or not they knew they were leaking classified information:

Officers and employees of the United States Government ... shall be subject to appropriate sanctions if they knowingly, willfully, or negligently ... disclose to unauthorized persons information properly classified.

This information was provided to YubaNet by Representative Waxman, and discussed in detail here.

The case, however, is being tried under the 1982 Intelligence Identities Protection Act. The strictest interpretation of the act limits breaking it to *knowingly* reveal the identity of an undercover agent. There is only one publicly known conviction for the law. CIA employee Sharon Scranage, who pleaded guilty in 1985. She served 8 months out of a 5 year conviction for revealing to her boyfriend the names of other agents while stationed in Ghana.

The case is clouded by reckoning on the covert status of Valerie Plame when the leak occurred. Charles E. Schumer (D-N.Y.) called for an FBI probe 10 days after the July 13, 2003 column by Robert Novak identified her as an agent. A Chicago native and appointed special prosecutor, Patrik Fitzgerald took over the case 19 months ago. That the case continues today says something in itself.

Critics of the investigation believe the case

is overblown because it was widely known in Washington social power circles that Plame worked for the CIA.

A MediaMatters report on the widely publicized quote by Joseph Wilson, who said, "My wife was not a clandestine officer..." , was misconstrued by the press.

BLITZER: But the other argument that's been made against you is that you've sought to capitalize on this extravaganza, having that photo shoot with your wife [in the January 2004 Vanity Fair magazine], who was a clandestine officer of the CIA, and that you've tried to enrich yourself writing this book and all of that.

What do you make of those accusations, which are serious accusations, as you know, that have been leveled against you?

WILSON: My wife was not a clandestine officer the day that Bob Novak blew her identity.

BLITZER: But she hadn't been a clandestine officer for some time before that?

WILSON: That's not anything that I can talk about. And, indeed, I'll go back to what I said earlier, the CIA believed that a possible crime had been committed, and that's why they referred it to the Justice Department.

In the full context of the above CNN Wolf Blitzer Reports televised broadcast, Wilson was responding to mean that after Robert Novak's column ran, his wife was no longer a clandestine officer. The Vanity Fair coverage given Wilson with wife Plame was a result of the publicity that ensued from the column written by Novack. The photo shoots did not occur before the disclosure, they came in January 2004.

The Associated Press reported the Wilson-Blitzer interview as follows:

...CNN Thursday before the latest revelation, Wilson kept up his criticism of the White House, saying [White House senior adviser Karl] Rove's conduct was an "outrageous abuse of power ... certainly worthy of frog-marching out of the White House."

But at the same time, Wilson acknowledged his wife was no longer in an undercover job at the time Novak's column first identified her. "My wife was not a clandestine officer the day that Bob Novak blew her identity," he said.

Federal law prohibits government [sic] officials from divulging the identity...

Media outlets followed the AP lead with their own reporting that mirrored AP report.

Plane crash in Equatorial Guinea kills 55

An Equatair plane carrying 55 people crashed on Saturday soon after take-off near the capital of Equatorial Guinea, Malabo. Witnesses told AFP the Antonov aircraft bound for Bata suddenly caught fire and crashed in a forest near Baney, a town some 19km from the capital. "No one survived -- the plane was destroyed," said Alfonso Nsue Mokuy, the Information minister of E Guinea, after rescue teams arrived at the crash site on Sunday.

The old propeller-machine took off at about 10am local time (9am UTC) and disappeared from the radar soon after, officials said.

Flying in Africa is considerably more dangerous than in other parts of the world. While accounting for only 3% of worldwide air traffic, 27% of all fatal airplane crashes occur in Africa according to Dutch-based Aviation Safety Network. This is blamed on the chronic under-investment many airline companies on the continent suffer from.

Gulf Air launches direct flights to the Middle East from Dublin

Middle Eastern carrier Gulf Air has announced it is to provide direct flights from Dublin, Ireland to its hub in Manama, Bahrain from December three times a week. This is the first ever scheduled long haul route from Ireland not to North America.

Gulf Air, which is owned jointly by the Kingdom of Bahrain, the Sultanate of Oman and the Emirate of Abu Dhabi, will commence service using an Airbus A330 on the 2nd December 2005.

Gulf Air is hoping travellers will use the service as a gateway to Asia, Africa and

Oceania. Previously most travellers went via Paris and London to reach destinations not served by a direct link.

Saddam Hussein formally charged with the killing of Shia Muslims

The Special Tribunal set up to try Saddam Hussein has made its first formal charge against him.

Saddam and three others have been charged with the killings in Dujail, the town in which the ex-president survived an assassination attempt in 1982. The charge is minor compared to other crimes Saddam is accused of committing; however he would still face the death penalty if he were to be convicted. The Tribunal is said to have picked this charge as it is one in which the investigation has progressed the most.

Many Iraqis would prefer a quick trial of the ex-president, and so the Special Tribunal has picked a charge they are confident they can convict on quickly. The date for the trial is set to be announced in the next few days. Iraqi law states that a trial can only begin 45 days after the charges have been made, and therefore the proceedings could start as early as September.

Other than Saddam Hussein, his brother-in-law Barzan Ibrahim Al-Hassan, former vice-president Taha Yasin Ramadan and former top judge Awad Badar Al-Bender are also being charged in the Dujail case.

The Iraqi Government has said it plans to bring only 12 charges against the former leader, each of them carrying the death penalty, out of a possible 500 of which he is accused. The trial is expected to start as early as September.

Death toll in Musayyib gas station blast rises to 98

The death toll from a suicide bomb attack on a gas station in Musayyib has risen to 98. A suicide bomber attacked a fuel truck arriving at the gas station in the Iraqi town overnight on July 16, running up to the truck and detonating his explosives. The huge blast which followed killed many locals at a crowded vegetable market near the local Shi'ite mosque.

Early reports put the number of dead at between 50-60, but this has risen as the full scale of the carnage has become apparent. Hospital sources said they were treating 75 wounded, including 19 in a serious condition. The attack in Musayyib was the deadliest suicide attack since 125 people were killed in February in nearby Al Hilla.

'This is a black day in the history of the town,' the Musayyib police chief, Yas Khudayr, said.

Musayyib lies south of Baghdad, in the center of a dangerous area known as the 'triangle of death', where patrolling US forces are subject to constant attack from Iraqi resistance forces.

Angry crowds protested on Sunday against the local authorities, which they blamed for not doing enough to prevent the attack. According to one protester, police had placed a ban on trucks entering the town, but had allowed the fuel tanker through.

During a parliamentary session in Baghdad, the government was blamed by politicians for the dire security situation. Calls were made for local militia to be formed to replace the police and soldiers who had failed to protect Iraqis.

Pakistan warned British intelligence about terrorist plans to bomb London

A British newspaper has revealed that Pakistan had warned British counter-terrorism experts in May 2005 about terrorist plans to bomb London in the 'early summer'.

The Pakistani interior minister, Aftab Sherpao, told The Observer that interrogations of a 25-year old Pakistani-born Briton believed to be a member of al-Qaeda had revealed a plot to 'bomb London pubs, restaurants and possibly railway stations' [1].

On July 7, 55 people were killed and over 700 injured in a series of co-ordinated terrorist attacks on London transport, including underground railway stations. Senior British police officers denied receiving any warning before the attacks.

However, Mr Sherpao said that Pakistan intelligence had 'received information from

a number of sources and passed it on to the British' in May. Pakistani sources claim that after the London attacks, British investigators have travelled to Pakistan to interview the terrorist suspect.

Peer-to-peer file-sharing user numbers still growing

Statistics released by online media measurement company BigChampagne indicate that the average number of simultaneous, individual connections to file sharing networks has increased to around 9 million by June, 2005. This contrasts dramatically with an August, 2003 figure of just under 4 million users.

The eDonkey network is a good example of file-sharing platform that has seen strong growth. Today eMule, which connects and transfer files via eDonkey, had user numbers of more than 9 million at one time. One year ago the total number of eMule users barely reached 3 million.

Online file sharing reportedly includes the widespread distribution of unauthorized copyrighted content and continues despite civil prosecution of both users and developers of file-sharing software in the United States as well as criminal prosecutions in Europe and Hong Kong. Grokster and StreamCast Networks are two recent examples of companies targeted by legal prosecution in the U.S. Supreme Court.

The Court ruled last month that companies who provide file-sharing software are liable for the actions of those who use the service to download copyrighted files. Few noncommercial programmers on open-source projects appear ready to quit over of the court's ruling, but they do discourage piracy talk on open forums. File sharing networks that work under a loosely formed open-source programming project, such as Shareaza, could defy the definition of what is called a company.

Texas man arrested after rescuing drowning swimmer

San Marcos resident, Dave Newman, was swimming in the San Marcos river on the July 4th holiday weekend when he noticed that another man who had jumped into the river had failed to surface. Police arrived on

the scene as Mr Newman attempted to rescue the man, Abed Duamni, a 35 year old from Houston. The officers instructed Mr Newman to swim to the nearest shore and get out of the water but he instead swam to the far shore with Mr Duamni. Upon his emergence from the river, Texas State University police arrested Mr Newman for interfering with public duties. Now free on \$2000 bail Mr. Newman is set to appear in court next month.

UPDATE:

Texas State University Police have dropped charges against Dave Newman after his arrest July 3 for interference with public duties at an emergency water rescue scene at Spring Lake Dam on the San Marcos River.

University President Denise Trauth and San Marcos Mayor Susan Narvaiz released the following joint statement:

"Mr. Newman was arrested because of his refusal to comply first with pleas, then requests, and then orders to leave the river after his rescue of Mr. Duamni. However, Mr. Newman did perform a heroic act, and we believe the proper course of action is to drop the charges. We want to emphasize to the public that the area around the Spring Lake Dam can be dangerous. It claimed the life of a young man as recently as last April and it has been the site of six emergency water rescues since that time. We cannot overstate the importance of heeding the many warning signs posted in the area and using extreme caution when swimming there. We also want to re-emphasize to the public the importance of following the directives of police and fire and rescue personnel when they are on the scene of an emergency. We are forming a university-community committee immediately to explore steps we can take to make this swimming area safer for the public."

U.S. retailers sue world's largest credit card issuer

U.S. retail chain stores Kroger's, Walgreens and five other food and drugstore chains have filed a lawsuit against the world's largest credit card company, Visa International Inc. The federal lawsuit claims the company practices fee fixing on transactions, and with restricting competition among member banks.

The retail merchants claim that Visa acts in collusion with its member banks to fix transaction fees taken as a percentage of each retail sale. The suit was filed Thursday in the U.S. District Court in Manhattan, and seeks unspecified damages.

Member banks, those banks that issue and process merchants' Visa transactions, are unable to negotiate transaction fees directly with the merchant, and merchants are forced to accept Visa purchases regardless of the issuing bank. The complaint says, "The merchant restraints have resulted in exorbitant interchange fees that bear no relationship to the cost of the services being provided."

A small group of Connecticut retailers filed a similar lawsuit last month naming with Visa, also MasterCard and several other large banks. The suit was filed in Connecticut's federal court. That suit also calls the fees "exorbitant".

Merchants see the rising use of card transactions and the effect it has on their bottom line. The interchange fees are currently 1.75% from most banks, but on some cards it rose this year to 2.9%. The National Retail Federation said for 2004 that between Visa and MasterCard, they pulled in \$17.4 billion.

Retailers do not oppose transaction fees, but believe they should be based on market forces. They claim that technology has lowered the cost of processing the transactions, but the savings is not being passed along to them. There are currently 4 major credit card providers in the U.S.

Webpronews writer John Smith cites this merchant quote: "The collective setting of interchange fees by Visa and its member banks constitutes horizontal price-fixing that leads to higher retail prices for our customers," said Paul Heldman, Kroger senior vice president and general counsel. "This hidden cost must be borne by all Kroger customers, whether they pay for their groceries with cash, by check or by debit or credit card. At a time when technology has made card authorization and processing faster, cheaper, safer and more efficient than ever, we believe that our customers should be receiving the benefit of declining interchange fees. Instead, Visa is

using its extraordinary market power to profit at our customers' expense."

The Vice-President of Visa, Paul Cohen, said "It appears this is another in a series of attempts by some merchants to receive all the value of electronic payments, while shifting their normal costs of doing business onto consumers."

Chinese General threatens U.S. with nuclear weapons over possible Taiwan Strait conflict, Beijing downplays comment

A General in the Chinese People's Liberation Army (PLA) and dean at the National Defense University in China commented to visiting Hong Kong reporters on Friday that the PLA might use nuclear weapons against the U.S., in a conflict over the Taiwan Strait. "If the Americans draw their missiles and position-guided ammunition onto the target zone on China's territory, I think we will have to respond with nuclear weapons," Maj. Gen. Zhu Chenghu said to the reporters of the Asian Wall Street Journal and the Financial Times. "We Chinese will prepare ourselves for the destruction of all of the cities east of Xian [in central China]. Of course the Americans will have to be prepared that hundreds ... of cities will be destroyed by the Chinese."

U.S. State Department spokesman Sean McCormack called the remarks "highly irresponsible" and "unfortunate", and expressed the hope that they did not reflect the views of the Chinese government.

Echoing the official Xinhua News Agency, the People's Republic of China's Foreign Ministry officials said that Zhu was expressing personal views, and had warned the reporters accordingly, but stated that China would never tolerate "Taiwan independence". Reportedly, Maj. Gen. Zhu is not directly involved in the formulation of Chinese military strategy.

The U.S. is bound to defend Taiwan under the Taiwan Relations Act and is currently Taiwan's largest arms supplier.

Wikinews Back Page



Today in History

64 - The Great fire of Rome burned completely out of control, while Roman Emperor Nero reportedly played his lyre and sang as he watched the blaze from a safe distance.

1863 - American Civil War: The first formal African American military unit, the 54th Massachusetts Volunteer Infantry, saw action against the Confederacy's Fort Wagner.

1925 - Adolf Hitler published his personal manifesto Mein Kampf.

1944 - General Tōjō Hideki was forced to resign as Prime Minister of Japan after a series of setbacks towards the end of World War II.

1982 - The Guatemalan army and allied paramilitaries slaughtered upwards of 250 Maya campesinos in the Plan de Sánchez massacre.

Quote of the Day

"Most of the books, music and movies ever released are not available for sale, anywhere in the world. In the brief time that P2P nets have flourished, the ad-hoc masses of the Internet have managed to put just about everything online. What's more, they've done it far cheaper than any other archiving/revival effort ever." ~

Cory Doctorow

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