



Top Stories

Prime Minister Harper meets with President Bush



Canadian Prime Minister Stephen Harper met with President George W. Bush at the White House today. The meeting was a short one and focused primarily on global security, particularly bilateral security issues addressing the two countries.

Mexican conservative wins presidential election



Felipe Calderon is declared the winner by a narrow margin in the Mexican general election. The leading rival candidate, Andres Manuel Lopez Obrador, did not concede and said that he would seek to contest the results.

Featured story

One year on, London remembers 7/7 victims



Londoners are commemorating the one year anniversary of the terrorist attacks on its transport networks that claimed 52 lives. On this day last year, a series of coordinated suicide bombings struck London's public transport system during the morning rush hour.

Wikipedia Current Events

- Craigslis is sued because of illegal posts to that website. Amazon, eBay, AOL, Yahoo, and Google all file briefs as friends of the court in support of Craigslis.
- Ayman al Zawahri, deputy of al-Qaeda claims that two of the London bombers trained with al-Qaeda on a video posted on a website. The two men he identified as training with them are Shehzad Tanweer and Mohammad Sidique Khan.
- Polish Prime Minister Kazimierz Marcinkiewicz has resigned. His party Law and Justice has recommended the post be taken over by its chairman Jaroslaw Kaczynski.
- The board of General Motors authorises Chief Executive Officer Rick Wagoner to explore an alliance with Nissan and Renault.
- President George W. Bush says in a rare conference out of Washington, D.C. in Chicago, that the United States had "a reasonable chance" of shooting down the long range missile fired by North Korea, if it didn't fail. He also said however that, "Our anti-ballistic systems are modest, they are new," and that, "I have always said it is important for an American president to exhaust all diplomatic avenues before use of force."
- Japan circulates a new United Nations Security Council draft resolution including the threat of sanctions against North Korea.

US soldier arrested for rape and four murders in Iraq

U.S. federal prosecutors have charged a former U.S. soldier who served in Iraq with the rape and murder of an Iraqi girl and the murder of three members of her family, including the girl's sister believed to be five years old.

The rape victim was Abeer Qassim Hamza. Ahmed Taha, the girl's uncle, put her age at a definitive 15 years old whereas the FBI affidavit (based on soldiers' accounts) estimated her age to be 25. The other victims have been identified as Fikhriya Taha, the girl's mother; her father Qassim Hamza, and her younger sister, Hadeel Qassim Hamza.

The charges follow a military investigation into the involvement of as many as five soldiers in the rape and murders committed in the town of Mahmoudiya, 30 km south of Baghdad, on March 12.



Steven D. Green

Steven D. Green, a 21-year-old former Army private first class in the 101st Airborne Division, appeared in a federal magistrate's courtroom in Charlotte on Monday. FBI agents had arrested Green on Friday and he is being held in

Charlotte without bond pending a transfer to Louisville, Kentucky. He was honorably discharged from the Army in May 2006 because of an alleged "personality disorder."

In an affidavit, FBI special agent Gregor J. Ahlers said Green and three other soldiers from the 101st's 502nd Infantry Regiment were on duty at a traffic checkpoint when they conspired to rape the female who lived nearby.

According to witness testimony in the affidavit, the soldiers changed their clothes before going to the victims' home to avoid detection. Green took three members of the family - an adult male and female, and a girl estimated to be 5 years old into a bedroom. Shots were heard from inside the bedroom.

"Green came to the bedroom door and told everyone, 'I just killed them, all are dead,'" Ahlers wrote in the affidavit.

The affidavit is based on interviews conducted by the FBI and investigators at Fort Campbell with soldiers assigned to Green's platoon. One of the soldiers said he witnessed Green and another soldier rape the girl.

"After the rape, (the soldier) witnessed Green shoot the woman in the head two-to-three times," the affidavit said.

U.S. officials and others had previously claimed the Iraqi family was killed in sectarian violence. Abeer Hamza's uncle, Ahmed Taha, told AP Television News that the family had believed insurgents had carried out the killings until the US military made public its investigation last week.

"Some said it was insurgents, and in fact, we ruled out the American

troops," Taha said.

Response

The news of the killings and rape was met with a wave of anger in parts of Iraq and the Iraqi government directed at the nature of the current US military presence. "We believe that the immunity given to members of coalition forces encouraged them to commit such crimes in cold blood (and) that makes it necessary to review it," was the opinion of Prime Minister Nouri al-Maliki during a visit to Kuwait, July 7.

One Baghdad resident, Hussein al-Shimmari, said that the incident "shows the barbaric and aggressive nature of Americans." The Americans themselves claim they are in Iraq to help the government protect its democracy and are reported to have reviewed the way soldiers deal with Iraqi citizens.

Gen. George W. Casey Jr., commander of U.S. forces in Iraq and Zalmay Khalilzad, ambassador to Iraq, issued a joint apology Thursday. "We understand this is painful, confusing and disturbing," they said, "not only to the family who lost a loved one, but to the Iraqi people as a whole."

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•For the second time this week, Dublin Airport's main terminal is evacuated. This occurred when airport security was notified of a strange bag in the Arrivals Area of the airport terminal shortly before 08:00 (IST). A controlled explosion of the bag was carried out by the Army. The airport reopened just over two hours later, though 60 flights and 12,000 passengers were affected.

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- Typhoon Ewiniar nears landfall on the southern island chain of Okinawa, Japan. The typhoon packs winds 160 km, 99 mi, per hour. Japan's Meteorological Agency warns of flooding on the island and the storm to move across South Korea over the weekend.
- Spain has had its first case of H5N1 bird flu, a laboratory has confirmed. The country has forbidden the transport within a 3 km, 1.8 mi, zone around where the virus was found.
- Iran's president, Mahmoud Ahmadinejad, warns of an "explosion" in the Islamic world and it would target Israel and its supporters in the Western world, if Israel doesn't cease its activity in the Gaza Strip. Ahmadinejad said during a rally in Tehran that, "This (Israel) is a fake regime ... it won't be able to survive. I think the only way (forward) is that those who created it (the West) take it away themselves."
- The FBI has uncovered a plot to bomb the Holland Tunnel and flood Lower Manhattan with water.
- South Korea is developing cruise missile technology, Yoon Kwang-ung, South Korea's defense minister says. This is legal under the South Korea-U.S. missile guideline signed in 2001.
- North Korea might have moved another Taepodong-2 missile, a long range missile, to the launch site, according to South Korea's defense minister.
- Three Israeli civilians are wounded when a Qassam rocket lands in a basketball court in Sderot. More than ten rockets land in Israeli towns on Friday, in spite of an Israeli raid in the

Wikipedia Current Events

northern Gaza Strip.

- Israeli minister Avi Dichter suggests Palestinian prisoners will be released "in a goodwill gesture", if kidnapped soldier Gilad Shalit is released and rocket attacks cease. Hamas official rejects this suggestion.

- An explosion in the village of Dongzhai village in Shanxi province in north China kills 43 people.

Truckload of trouble for Thai Rak Thai

Yesterday saw Thailand's Attorney General file charges of election fraud with the country's Constitutional court. According to Sondhi Limthongkul's ThaiDay, the action seeking the dissolution of five parties was delivered by truck and consisted of over 120,000 pages of legal citations.

Both the Thai Rak Thai party making up the caretaker government and the main opposition Democrats are named. The allegations centre on claims that Thai Rak Thai paid minor parties to participate where seats would otherwise be unopposed, and that the Democrats may have bribed parties to claim that they had been paid by Thai Rak Thai.

Thailand's prolonged political crisis originally stemmed from repeated corruption allegations against the Prime Minister, Thaksin Shinawatra. An April 2nd snap election apparently intended to cement the ruling party's position and dismiss critics as unrepresentative backfired when the three main opposition parties announced a boycott. This left many seats unopposed, particularly in the country's troubled Muslim south. With Thai

Rak Thai standing alone in strong Democrat territory, a grassroots abstention campaign left many seats empty when they failed to garner the constitutionally required 20% of eligible votes.

Amongst all the political posturing, and allegations that the Election Commission had unduly favoured the ruling party, claims that there had been irregularities surfaced. Thai Rak Thai was accused of having paid minor parties to circumvent the 20% rule by offering token opposition. The claims were brought before the Election Commission who eventually handed the case over to the Attorney General without offering any recommendation. The commission's sub-committee that prepared the report had recommended the dissolution of Thai Rak Thai.

At present it is unclear if the political crisis will be resolved through the country's legal system prior to the upcoming October election rerun. The volume of evidence may leave the Constitutional Court unable to agree on a ruling prior to the election.

One year on, London remembers 7/7 victims

Londoners are commemorating the one year anniversary of the terrorist attacks on its transport networks that claimed 52 lives.

On this day last year, a series of coordinated suicide bombings struck London's public transport system during the morning rush hour, with three bombs exploded within 50 seconds of each other on three London Underground trains. A fourth bomb exploded on a bus nearly an hour later in Tavistock Square. Fifty-two people were killed in the attacks, as were the

four bombers, and about 700 injured in the deadliest single act of terrorism in the United Kingdom since the Lockerbie bombing in 1988 and the deadliest bombing in London since the Second World War. The four suicide bombers were all UK residents, and while Al Qaeda has claimed responsibility for the attacks, police are unsure of its exact role in the attack.

Flowers were laid by mayor Ken Livingstone and Tessa Jowell, Secretary of State for Culture, near Kings Cross station at 8:50 a.m. BST (0750 UTC), marking the time and place of the first attack on a Piccadily Line train beneath the station.

Prime Minister Tony Blair, who attended a private memorial at London's Fire Brigade headquarters, said "This is a time when our country unites across all races, religions and divides and stands in solidarity with all those who have suffered so much, in sympathy with them and in defense of the values which we share," and recalled the efforts of emergency and public service personnel and the public at large, in the aftermath of the attack.

Tributes were also paid at Tavistock Square where a bus was attacked at 9:47 a.m. BST this day one year ago.

The bells of St Paul's Cathedral tolled at the exact time of each of the bombings.

A two minutes silence was held across the UK at noon BST (1100 UTC), including at the Wimbledon tennis tournament. In many schools, offices, shops and town centres across the country the two minutes was observed. Other events are planned around London for later in the day.

Special programmes have been broadcast on British television to mark the occasion.

Yesterday, a video of one of the bombers, Shehzad Tanweer, was broadcast on the Al-Jazeera television channel, claiming to link the attacks with Al-Qaeda.

NZ man stabbed in the face with a 15-centimetre knife

A 36-year-old man, who is yet to be named, is undergoing surgery after an attacker lodged a knife through one cheek and out the other. The handle broke off, leaving the 15-cm (about 6 inches) blade inside him. The man was rushed to hospital today, July 7, at about 2 a.m. NZST. The attack occurred last night after a domestic row in Albany on Auckland's North Shore.

New Zealand Police report that the knife just missed his optic nerve and his condition is stable and not life threatening.

John Chaplin, head and neck surgeon said, "the man could be treated relatively simply. The major blood vessels of the head were further back in the neck and the knife could be relatively easily removed in an operating theatre where bleeding could be controlled."

The police have issued an arrest warrant for Vance Paraki Tuheke, 31-year-old, in relation to the attack.

The victim may suffer from some facial numbness.

Iraq's PM calls for a review of coalition troops' immunity from Iraqi prosecution

The Iraqi Prime Minister Nouri al-Maliki said today that immunity from prosecution granted to

coalition troops in Iraq has encouraged atrocities.

"We believe that the immunity given to members of coalition forces encouraged them to commit such crimes in cold blood (and) that makes it necessary to review it," al-Maliki said during a visit to Kuwait.

He called for either a joint investigation or an independent Iraqi investigation into the alleged and suspect March 12 rape and murder of an Iraqi girl, claimed by some sources to be by US soldiers. The mother, father and 5 year old sister of the girl, were also allegedly killed in the attack at their home in the town of Mahmoudiya, south of Baghdad.

"We are going to demand an independent Iraqi investigation or at least a joint investigation between us and the multinational forces," al-Maliki said.

U.S. Maj.-Gen. William Caldwell said the coalition would discuss the prime minister's demands.

"We are here as guests of the Iraqi government. They are a sovereign nation. When the prime minister gets back, the coalition will engage with him and discuss what he wants to discuss." Caldwell said.

Nathula pass reopens

India and China reopen the Nathula Pass in Sikkim for trade, closed for the past 44 years due to Sino-Indian War.

The opening of the pass was marked by a ceremony on the Indian side attended by officials from both sides, including Sikkim Chief Minister Pawan Kumar Chamling - the chief guest, the Chinese ambassador to India, and the Tibetan Autonomous Region

Chairman, C Phuntsok. A delegation of 100 traders from India, and 100 Tibetans crossed the border to the respective trading towns. Despite heavy rain and chilly winds, the ceremony was marked with the attendance of many officials, locals, and international and local media.

For now only few items are allowed to trade, but the opening is expected to stimulate the economy of the region, and also bolster Indo-Chinese trade, which amounted to \$7 billion in 2004. India hopes that the trade volumes between the two nations will grow to Rs. 206 crore (44.6 million US\$) by 2007, and Rs. 12,203 crore (2.6 billion US\$) by 2015.

Today in History

1497 - Vasco da Gama set sail on the first direct European voyage to India.

1709 - Great Northern War: At Poltava, Ukraine, Peter I of Russia defeated Charles XII of Sweden in the Battle of Poltava, effectively ending Sweden's role as a major power in Europe.

1776 - The Liberty Bell was rung to summon citizens of Philadelphia, Pennsylvania for the reading of the Declaration of Independence by the Continental Congress.

1889 - The first issue of the Wall Street Journal was published.

1947 - Newspapers in Roswell, New Mexico reported the capture of a "flying saucer" by the U.S. military.

Quote of the Day

"It is not the end of the physical body that should worry us. Rather, our concern must be to live while we're alive - to release our inner selves from the spiritual death that comes with living behind a facade designed to conform to

external definitions of who and what we are." ~ Elisabeth Kabler-Ross

Word of the Day

eccentric; adj

1. Not perfectly circular, such as an orbit.
2. Deviating from the norm; behaving unexpectedly.
3. (physiology): Acting against or in the opposite direction of a muscle's contraction.

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+1-866-653-4265
(toll-free in the U.S.)
+1-202-742-5918
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+44-871-218-6397
(U.K. / Europe)

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543 Howard Street, 5th Floor

San Francisco, California, 94105, USA

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