



Top Stories

Texas man foils burglary in Britain

A Dallas, Texas man foiled a burglary in Liverpool via webcam, after spotting thieves trying to break into a shop.

Liberal MP resigned as deputy foreign affairs critic

Liberal MP Borys Wrzesnewszkyj resigned over uproars over his comments suggesting that Canada should negotiate directly with Lebanon's Hezbollah.

Featured story

Pluto loses planet status

Astronomers have voted to strip Pluto of its status as a planet.

Wikipedia Current Events

- French President Jacques Chirac says sending 15,000 peacekeeping troops to southern Lebanon is "excessive".
- An Aer Lingus flight from New York is evacuated at Shannon Airport following information about explosives on board the flight.
- Zhao Yan, a Chinese researcher for the New York Times, is sentenced to three years for fraud in Beijing. However, he is found not guilty of leaking state secrets.
- The Trinity Cathedral of St. Petersburg catches fire. The main dome collapses.

Wikipedia Current Events

• Danny Ferrer, owner of BuysUSA.com, is convicted of conspiracy and copyright infringement, sentenced to 6 years in prison, and ordered to pay more than US\$4.1 million in damages to companies such as Adobe Systems, Autodesk, and Macromedia.

Tony Blair's eldest son released from hospital

Euan Blair, the eldest son of British Prime Minister Tony Blair, has been released from hospital this evening. He was admitted yesterday after complaining of stomach pains.

The twenty-two year-old was being treated in the Queen Elizabeth Hospital, Bridgetown, near Bridgetown. It is not thought that Euan's condition was serious and he did not undergo surgery

Tony Blair and his family had been holidaying on the Caribbean island for the past three weeks. Mr Blair returned home this morning and he was kept up to date with his son's condition.

Euan finished an internship with two members of Congress in Washington earlier this year.

At the age of sixteen, he was arrested for being drunk and incapable. Police found him in London's West End; he had been sick on the pavement in Leicester Square.

Texas man foils burglary in Britain

A Dallas, Texas man foiled a burglary in Liverpool, after spotting thieves trying to break into a shop. The man spotted the burglary using a webcam. He went online to view images of the city's famous Beatles quarter on Mathew Street, an area in Liverpool synonymous with the Beatles and home to the Cavern Club where the band regularly played.

The man saw intruders apparently breaking into a sports store. Then he telephoned the Merseyside Police. The police went to the scene and arrested 3 men.

"We did get a call from someone in Dallas who was watching on a webcam that looks into the tourist areas, of which Mathew Street is one because of all the Beatles stuff," a Merseyside Police spokeswoman said.

There was a ladder against a wall and a first-floor window had been broken, and the men were taking property out.

The men are all aged in their mid-30s. They are arrested on suspicion of burglary and bailed pending further inquiries.

The investigation is ongoing.

Security scare prompts UK-US flight to divert

American Airlines flight 55 from Manchester, England to Chicago, Illinois has been diverted due to a security alert and has landed in

Bangor, Maine.

An American Airlines spokesman in London, Richard Hedges, said: "I can confirm AA flight 55 from Manchester to Chicago (was) diverted into Bangor, Maine, due to a possible security concern."

An FBI spokeswoman, Gail Marcinkiewicz, said: "We're responding to determine the cause of the diversion. It's going to take a number of hours for passengers to be interviewed. The pilot made a decision to divert the plane and we're investigating this now. We're interviewing the pilot, crew and passengers."

According to the FBI, the flight was diverted when officials "learned of a reported threat to the aircraft while it was en route," said Richard Kolko, another spokesman for the FBI.

The US Transportation Security Administration said: "Given the current threat level, the agency, in conjunction with other federal authorities, took prudent action to assure the safety of the passengers and crew. The plane has landed safely and passengers are being de-planed while TSA canines search the airplane. Responders are on the scene and the FBI will be interviewing the passengers and crew to further assess the situation."

There is no word on what caused the flight to be diverted, but Guardian Unlimited is reporting that the bomb squad has been asked to assist. There are at least 179 passengers onboard the plane.

Since August 10, when police in the UK claimed they had foiled a suspected plot to blow up several transatlantic planes, there have

been several similar incidents.

Nigerian troops allegedly burned down slums after soldier's killing

Residents in the city of Port Harcourt said that Nigerian troops burnt down hundreds of slum dwellings, allegedly as reprisal after an Army sergeant was killed in Thursday's abduction of oil workers in the area.

Residents told news agencies that troops poured petrol over slum houses located near a compound belonging to Saipem, a subsidiary of Italian oil company Eni, and set them alight. The fires have reportedly destroyed hundreds of homes and shops and hundreds of people are said to have fled from the area. On Friday, people returning to the area and onlookers were chased away by soldiers.

Speaking to the Associated Press, Army Brigadier General Samuel Salihu denied that Nigerian troops were responsible for the arson. He said that militants active in the area had set the fires, wearing Army camouflage.

On Thursday, oil workers were kidnapped from a bar near the slums by armed men who shot dead an Army soldier guarding the workers, and injured another soldier. Nigerian military sources said at least two foreign oil workers were missing, one of them, Italian. The Italian foreign ministry, though, said that three foreigners were missing.

The oil-rich Niger Delta region has witnessed a spate of kidnappings recently. Nineteen people were held captive in eight separate abductions this month. All but three of them have been released since, some after the state

government and the oil companies paid a ransom.

The Movement for the Emancipation of the Niger Delta (MEND), a militant group which has taken hostages and attacked oil facilities, but says it does not kidnap for ransom, said in a statement that it the state government has encouraged such abductions by paying ransoms.

Last week, as part of a tougher line adopted by the Nigerian government, President Obasanjo sent in the Army, with orders to use "force for force" against militants in the region. Over 160 people were taken into custody in a two day crackdown, including over 100 from a nearby slum, but most have been released since then.

The BBC's Alex Last reports that local leaders and oil companies are concerned that this new tough policy will increase tensions in the region.

Liberal MP resigns as deputy foreign affairs critic

Liberal MP Borys Wrzesnewskyj has resigned after an uproar over his comments suggesting that Canada should negotiate directly with Lebanon's Hezbollah, which is on Canada's list of terrorist organizations. In response to the statement by Wrzesnewskyj, Liberal leadership hopefuls Scott Brison and Carolyn Bennett had immediately demanded Wrzesnewskyj step down from his post, saying that his comments were unacceptable.

"His comments, which were not representative of the Liberal party, caused a lot of concern," said Liberal MP Keith Martin.

Tory MP Jason Kenney, was calling

his comments nothing short of a sign of support for terrorist groups. "Their idea of a balanced approach is one where Israel is always wrong," said Kenney. "This represents a totally irresponsible approach to foreign security policy."

Wrzesnewskyj denied media reports about him claiming that he wants Hezbollah taken off Ottawa's official list of terrorist organizations.

"I've said all along that Hezbollah is a terrorist organization and will continue to be," Wrzesnewskyj said.

Wrzesnewskyj resigned on Wednesday and interim Liberal Leader Bill Graham said his resignation was accepted.

Jason Kenney subsequently came under fire when it was revealed that in April he spoke to a rally organized by supporters of a banned Iranian terrorist group. A photograph of Kenney appears on the website of the National Council of Resistance of Iran, the political wing of the PMOI, or People's Mojahedin Organization of Iran.

The PMOI is one of the names used by the MEK, or Mujahedin-e-Khalq, an armed Iranian rebel group formally designated as a terrorist organization by the governments of Canada, the United States and the European Union.

"It really means that Jason Kenney is a hypocrite," New Democrat MP Peggy Nash said in response to the news.

"He's speaking to an organization that's linked to a terrorist organization according to Canada and the U.S. State Department,

and he's done it on the steps of Parliament Hill in the name of the Prime Minister," she added.

Bodies of Afghan boy, Canadian soldier returned

The bodies of a Canadian soldier killed in a suicide bombing in Kandahar, Afghanistan has been returned to Canada, Wednesday, the same day that the remains of a child killed by Canadian troops in the aftermath of the car bomb was returned to his family.

The soldier was killed in a suicide car bombing outside a military base two hours before the shooting took place. The 10-year old Afghan boy was riding on the back of a motorcycle when he and a teenaged driver sped to the scene of the attack, crossing a security perimeter that had been set up.

The boy's death has angered Afghans in the area and military officials are concerned of a backlash from the incident.

The casket of Corporal David Braun, 27, was flown from Kandahar in a C-130 Hercules aircraft. He was the eighth Canadian soldier killed in Afghanistan this August and the 27th Canadian killed in Afghanistan since troops were deployed there in early 2002. Three other soldiers were injured in the suicide attack on the NATO convoy but are reported to be in good condition.

The military's National Investigation Service is scrutinizing the shooting of the Afghan boys. According to a NATO statement: "Soldiers signalled the motorbike to stop and fired two warning shots...the rider and passenger were both hit and wounded by a single bullet."

Officials say that the motorcycle was fired upon by troops who feared a second suicide attack was underway.

Colonel Fred Lewis, deputy commander of NATO's International Security Assistance Force (ISAF), denies that the shooting occurred because newly-arrived Canadian soldiers were inexperienced.

"I don't think so, I really don't think so," Lewis told The Canadian Press. "Initial impressions right now are the soldiers did what they had to do."

The victims were taken to medics and then flown to Kandahar Air Field Hospital where the ten year old died. The driver, 17, remains in serious but stable condition.

"We are very sad at what happened and we express our deep regret and condolences to the family and community," said Col. Arie Vermeij, deputy commander of ISAF's Regional Command South.

The father of the dead boy denounced Canada's military when approached by the Canadian Press for comment. Several women at the family home screamed, cried and shook their fists.

Military officials fear a backlash in response to the boy's death. In the aftermath of the shooting, angry Kandahar residents expressed support for the suicide bombers and their opposition to foreign troops remaining on Afghan soil.

"They're very angry about that, the shopkeepers, the bakery man, all the people that are living in this place," said a Kandahar resident who works for a non-governmental

agency and who was at the scene.

"They're angry and they get upset and they get out of patience, and they said, 'Yeah, we support the suicide (bombers)'," he told the Toronto Star.

The bomb, aimed at the Canadian patrol, killed 21 Afghan civilians and wounded 13.

"We support them and the international community should leave Afghanistan. We want to build our country by ourselves," he quoted other residents as saying.

"They have been telling me that they had better leave, all the ISAF, the security forces, the peacekeepers, they have to leave our country," he said. "It's a very bad situation. It's dangerous and you can't trust anyone. The Canadian soldier had to do something but sometimes ... mistakes are made."

Venezuelan President Chavez in Beijing to boost trade

Venezuelan President Hugo Chavez arrived in the Chinese capital of Beijing, Wednesday, beginning a visit that will see new agreements to increase China's investment in Venezuela's petroleum, telecoms, agriculture and transport. Chavez says that his country intends to boost its oil exports to China to 500,000 barrels a day within five years, quadrupling its current exports, and up to one million barrels a day by 2012.

"Within five years we'll arrive at half a million barrels (a day) to China. We are currently exporting close to 150,000 barrels (a day), and next year we will double that," Chavez said.

"The oil issue is of utmost importance because we are

diversifying the petroleum business. We are moving toward a new petroleum model," said Chavez, speaking on Venezuelan state television from China. "It's one step more in a strategic alliance."

Chavez met Chinese President Hu Jintao on Thursday, senior leader Wu Bangguo and Premier Wen Jiabao on Friday. Following Thursday's meeting, Chavez said that Jintao agreed to support Venezuela's bid to join the United Nations Security Council as a non-permanent member. He is also discussing Chinese involvement in developing his countries gold and coal mining industries, according to reports.

The countries are also signing agreements for Chinese assistance in building a petrochemical plant within the Amuay oil refinery in western Venezuela.

Agreements are also be signed with two of China's state owned oil companies to develop and export crude from Venezuela's Orinoco river basin as well as to approve the sale of Chinese oil tankers to Venezuela.

While the United States remains the leading importer of Venezuela's oil, Chavez' left wing government has sought to diversify its trading partners in an attempt to reduce its reliance on the United States and promote a "multi-polar" world order.

China is the world's second largest consumer of petroleum and is in need of increased oil supplies in order to maintain its rapid pace of economic growth.

Chavez told Venezuelan state television that increased trade with China and Russia will help

boost Venezuela to medium-power status. He claimed that investment agreements with China will transfer technology to his country and help Venezuela escape dependency.

Biggest free music event in Europe back in Liverpool

The Mathew Street festival, an annual event held in Liverpool, has started today. Claiming to be the largest free Music festival in Europe, it gets its name from the street on which the Cavern Club was situated. Last year some 370,000 people attended the event.

75 bands will perform on five stages across the city and free live music at another 40 indoor venues throughout the August Bank Holiday weekend. The Royal Liverpool Philharmonic Orchestra will make its debut at the festival on Friday, 7.30pm at the Pier Head. The Lightning Seeds are headlining the festival on Sunday. Gerry and the Pacemakers will also be playing as well as upto 30 unsigned local bands.

Dutch Ambassador to India expresses regret following Schiphol false-alarm

India summoned the Ambassador of the Netherlands, Eric Nieve to the Ministry of External Affairs today, following the detention of 12 Indian nationals in Amsterdam because of their alleged "suspicious" behaviour onboard a NorthWest Airlines flight headed for Mumbai. Minister of External Affairs Anand Sharma said that the Indian Government's views had been communicated to their Dutch counterparts at the "highest level" and that India's envoy in that country was also in touch with the officials there.

U.S. air marshalls were guarding

the flight from Amsterdam to India and according to a Tennessee politician, John Duncan, the American air marshalls "...felt that there were passengers on the plane that were acting in a suspicious way, they conferred with both the flight attendants and the captain and they decided to turn the plane around and bring it back to the airport," Duncan said.

The Ministry's secretary (Western relations), Mrs. Shashi Tripathi met Niede at the South Block and conveyed to him that India had taken the detention of the Indian citizens "very seriously". India has asked its Ambassador in The Hague to submit a detailed report of the incident to the Government for further analysis of the issue.

Niede expressed his regret over the incident and clarified that his government had had nothing to do with the detentions. He said the passengers were arrested after they allegedly behaved in an "unruly" manner and were released after being interrogated. He said that the arrests of the 12 Muslims, who according to eye-witnesses, sported beards and spoke Urdu, had nothing to do with racism. The detainees, who had gone to Tobago on business, have since left for their homes in Mumbai and are expected to reach by Friday night. The detainees and their family, however, allege that they were unfairly targeted on racist grounds.

Sharma rejected claims that the government had mishandled the issue, saying his officials had acted quickly to get the Indian citizens out of custody within 30 hours of their arrest. He also pointed out that consular access had been provided to them much before the 48 hour time limit stipulated by

the Vienna Convention.

Tony Blair's eldest son admitted to hospital

Euan Blair, the eldest son of British Prime Minister Tony Blair, has been admitted to a hospital in Barbados after complaining of stomach pains.

The twenty-two year-old is being treated in the Queen Elizabeth Hospital, Bridgetown, near Bridgetown. Andrew Zbar, who is a doctor there, said that he expected Euan to be dismissed from the hospital later today.

Tony Blair and his family had been holidaying on the Caribbean island for the past three weeks. Mr Blair returned home this morning and is back at his office in Number 10. He is said to be keeping up to date with his son's condition.

A spokeswoman from Downing Street said: "We can confirm that Euan Blair was taken into hospital with a stomach complaint."

Adulterous Czech PM's wife joins rival party

The wife of the Czech Republic's new prime minister has joined a rival political party after he admitted, last Friday, having an affair with the deputy leader of parliament. Mirek Topolánek, leader of the conservative Civic Democrats (ODS), was appointed prime minister last week. His wife, Pavla Topolánková, has joined the rival right-wing Politika 21 party and intends to run for the Senate under its banner.

"I was surprised but not cross," said Topolánek who called his wife's action "sweet revenge" for his infidelity. Lucie Talmanová, 36, the deputy leader of parliament has admitted the affair with Topolánek who told Czech radio

"respectable people don't ask about such things and respectable people don't answer such things. But in 27 years of marriage things can happen."

Topolánek has reportedly instructed his lawyer to begin divorce proceedings against his wife.

NASA announces official search for the missing Apollo tapes

On August 16, 2006 NASA announced its official search. "The original tapes may be at the Goddard Space Flight Centre ... or at another location within the NASA archiving system. NASA engineers are hopeful that when the tapes are found they can use today's digital technology to provide a version of the moonwalk that is much better quality than what we have today."

The news that the tapes were missing broke to the public on August 5, 2006 when the printed and online versions of The Sydney Morning Herald published the story with the title One giant blunder for mankind: how NASA lost moon pictures.

The Apollo missing tapes are the recordings of the transmissions (television, sound and telemetry data) broadcast during the Apollo missions (including broadcasts from the Moon), referred to as Slow-Scan TV (SSTV). This raw data was recorded onto 1" wide magnetic tapes at the same time as it was converted for terrestrial TV broadcast. There are about 2612 boxes that might contain the tapes and whose location is unknown. It is estimated that about 13,000 original magnetic tapes are missing. They might be at Goddard Space Flight Center or another location within the NASA

archiving system. Scientists believe that if the tapes are found modern techniques would allow these tapes to be turned into higher quality pictures than the ones seen by the public.

Israel buys nuclear capable subs

Israel has purchased two more Dolphin class submarines which have the capacity to carry nuclear warheads. Israel already has three older nuclear weapons-capable Dolphin submarines but the new Dolphins have propulsion systems that allow them to remain submerged for longer periods of time, according to the Jerusalem Post, making it harder for them to be tracked by satellite. Experts view the purchase as a clear signal to Iran that Israel can retaliate if subjected to a nuclear attack.

"The Iranians would be very foolish if they attacked Israel," said Paul Beaver, a British based defence analyst, speaking to the Washington Post. According to Beaver, the submarines would provide Israel with both first strike and second strike capability.

Israel already has land-based nuclear-capable ballistic missiles in the form of the Jericho I and II missiles.

German officials confirm that the contracts for the new submarines was signed July 6. The Jerusalem Post reports that they will be operational shortly.

Israel has never confirmed nor denied that it has nuclear weapons but is believed to have the world's sixth largest stockpile of the devices, with most outside estimates putting their stockpile in the low hundreds. Israel's possession of nuclear arms has often been a locus of bitter

controversy in the Middle East, especially among countries who believe that the world community, and especially the United States, is hypocritical in its tolerance of Israeli nuclear arms while decrying the efforts of other Middle Eastern nations to develop their own nuclear capabilities.

Meanwhile, the Jerusalem Post reports there is a growing mood among Israel's defence establishment that the country will have to act independently to stop Iran from obtaining nuclear weapons as the United States is unlikely to do so.

"America is stuck in Iraq and cannot go after Iran militarily right now," according to an unnamed official quoted by the paper.

A report by the US House of Representatives' Intelligence Committee released on Wednesday asserts that if Iran arms itself with nuclear weapons, Israel would be pressed to respond militarily. "A nuclear armed Iran would likely exacerbate regional tensions. Israel would find it hard to live with a nuclear armed Iran and could take military action against Iranian nuclear facilities," the report states. Iran has continually maintained that it seeks only to develop nuclear technology for the production of electrical power, though this has been disputed by many nations.

Air New Zealand Screen Awards winners announced

The winners of the annual 2006 Air New Zealand Screen Awards were announced on Thursday, 24 August night.

The movie: The World's Fastest Indian, about an Invercargill motorcycle enthusiast who set a world speed record in 1967 on his

Indian motorcycle, won altogether seven awards. The awards were for best-Director, Roger Donaldson, Leading actor, Sir Anthony Hopkins, Film, Gary Hannam and Roger Donaldson (producers), Screenplay, Roger Donaldson, Editing, John Gilbert, Sound, Tim Prebble, Gethin Creagh and Michael Hedges and Production design, J Dennis Washington & Rob Gillies.

However both Donaldson and Hopkins were not present at the ceremony to receive their awards.

John Gilbert, The World's Fastest Indian editor, said: "The movie is successful because people can relate to the main character."

The film No. 2 won four awards, they were for best: Actress, Ruby Dee, Supporting actor, Rene Naufahu, Supporting actress, Mia Blake and Original music, Don McGlashan.

Ruby Dee, American actress was also absent from the ceremony.

The River Queen scored two awards, including best: Cinematography, Alun Bollinger and Costume design, Barbara Darragh.

In the television section the The Insider's Guide To Love won six awards, including the best: Contribution to design, Nic Smillie, Actor, Gareth Reeves, Actress, Kate Elliott, Director in a drama/comedy programme, Nathan Price, Camerawork in a drama, Simon Baumfield and Original music, David Long.

Television series Interrogation won three awards, for best:

Supporting actress, Claire Chitham,
Script for a single episode of a drama series or serial, Fiona Samuel and
Editing in a Drama programme, Lisa Hough.

Television comedy series *bro'Town* won three awards for best: Comedy,
Production design, Ant Sang and
Script in a Comedy, Oscar Kightley, Mario Gaoa, David Fane, Shimpal Lelisi & Elizabeth Mitchell.

Drama series *Outrageous Fortune* won two awards, for best: Drama programme and Drama series

TV Series *The Promise* won two awards, for best: Documentary and Camerawork in a Documentary, Wayne Vinten.

The following twelve shows also won an award: *High Times*, *Koi*, *Holly's Heroes*, *Dancing With The Stars*, *Westfield Style Pasifika 2005*, *Busted At The Border*, *The Market*, *Off The Rails -- A Love Story*, *Lifting Of The Makutu*, *The Living Room Series 3*, *From Cannon's Creek to Jacob's Pillow* and *Earthquake*.

8th case of mad cow disease found in Canada

An 8th case of mad cow disease was found in a cow in the province of Alberta. The Canadian Food Inspection Agency did a test and found BSE. The agency found no part of the beef cow's carcass entered either the human or animal feed chains. The CFIA said that, "the cow could have likely lived another 6 months or so, but died of complications of mastitis".

"The animal's age is between eight and 10 years", said the Canadian

Food Inspection Agency.

The CFIA also traced 172 animals would likely ate feed out of that load.

"The cow's exposure to BSE likely occurred before or during the introduction of new feed regulations in 1997 prohibiting use of cattle parts susceptible to the disease in certain animal feeds", A release said yesterday.

An investigation is already underway to find the animal's birth farm and potential sources of contaminated feed.

The United States has delayed lifting a ban on older cattle imports from Canada, pending investigation.

Karr waives extradition, will face charges in Colorado

John Mark Karr, the man who last week admitted to killing six year-old JonBenét Ramsey on Boxing Day 1996, has been told by a judge that he will be sent to Colorado to face charges.

On Monday, the forty-one year-old American teacher was extradited from Bangkok in Thailand to California. From there he will fly to Colorado within the next few days, and it is expected that he will be formally charged with murder, sexual assault and kidnapping.

JonBenét, a beauty queen, was found beaten and strangled to death in her Colorado home on the day after Christmas in 1996.

In a press conference last Wednesday, Karr confessed to being with JonBenét when she died, adding that her death was an accident. "I was with JonBenét when she died. I loved JonBenét. She died accidentally. I am so very

sorry for what happened to JonBenét. It's very important for me that everyone knows that I love her very much, that her death was unintentional, that it was an accident."

Despite his confession, Karr's then ex-wife said that he was in Alabama with her when the murder occurred.

Update: August 25, 2006

Karr has arrived at Boulder, Colorado and was booked into jail.

Today in History

1071 - Seljuk Turks led by Alp Arslan captured Byzantine Emperor Romanus IV in the Battle of Manzikert.

1346 - Hundred Years' War: The military supremacy of the English longbow over the French combination of crossbow and armoured knights was established in the Battle of Crécy.

1789 - French Revolution: The Declaration of the Rights of Man and of the Citizen was approved by the National Constituent Assembly at Versailles.

1839 - The slave-held *Amistad* landed off Long Island in the U.S. state of New York.

1883 - The volcanic eruption of Krakatoa generated disastrous tsunamis, destroying many settlements on Java and Sumatra in Indonesia and killing 36,000 people.

Quote of the Day

"If those in charge of our society — politicians, corporate executives, and owners of press and television — can dominate our ideas, they will be secure in their power. They will not need soldiers patrolling the streets. We will control ourselves."
~ Howard Zinn

Word of the Day

nucleus; n

1. The central part (of something), round which others are collected.
2. The massive, positively charged central part of an atom made up of protons and neutrons.
3. A large organelle found in cells which contains genetic material.
4. A cluster of many neuronal bodies where synapsing occurs.

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