



Top Stories

London Underground train derails leaving passengers trapped

A London Underground train has derailed on the Central Line shortly after 9am BST during the morning rush-hour leaving hundreds of passengers stranded.

African Union Summit ends in Accra

The 9th summit of the Assembly of the African Union ended in Accra, Ghana just before midnight yesterday.

Featured story

New 'clean water' funding for Djibouti's drought-stricken rural areas

The announced €2 million in new funding from the European Union for the UNICEF water and sanitation program should provide some relief to an estimated 25,000 rural inhabitants.

Wikipedia Current Events

- Ayman al-Zawahri, the second in charge of Al Qaeda, issues a video calling for further jihad and calling for the overthrow of "corrupt" Governments in the Middle East.
- A landslide buries a bus carrying at least 40 people in mountains near Tehuacán in the Mexican state of Puebla.
- Investigators find a suicide note from the two men accused of involvement in the 2007 Glasgow

Wikipedia Current Events

- International Airport attack.
- Fretilin wins more votes than any other party in the East Timorese election with 29 per cent of the vote but has to form a coalition with other parties to form a government.
- A power blackout hits eastern Georgia, leaving 2.5m people without electricity and briefly stranding a thousand on the Tbilisi Metro.
- The terror threat level in the United Kingdom is reduced from critical to severe.
- The 9th summit of the Assembly of the African Union, which lasted for 3 days, ends in Accra, Ghana.
- Over 700 students surrender at a mosque in Islamabad after being surrounded by Pakistani security forces.
- Japan's first female Minister of Defense, Yuriko Koike, is sworn in a day after the resignation of her predecessor, Fumio Kyuma.
- The International Olympic Committee elects Sochi as the host city for the 2014 Winter Olympics during its session in Guatemala City.
- A tornado kills 14 people and injures at least 146 near Tianchang, Anhui Province, in eastern China. 89
- Syrian Foreign Minister Walid Muallem says the government is open to peace negotiations with Israel without preconditions.

Wikipedia Current Events

- BBC reporter Alan Johnston, held captive in Gaza for nearly four months, is released.
- Six Canadian soldiers were killed by a roadside bomb in the Panjwahi district.

231st Independence Day celebrated in United States

Many of the 302 million people living in the United States celebrated Independence Day today.

There often are public ceremonies and declarations by officials. President Bush's Independence Day message was: "I send greetings to Americans everywhere celebrating Independence Day. "Two hundred thirty-one years ago, 56 brave men signed their names to a bold creed of freedom that set the course of our Nation and changed the history of the world. On this anniversary, we remember the great courage and conviction of our Founders, and we celebrate the enduring principles of our Declaration of Independence. "Through selfless sacrifice and unrelenting determination, the patriots of the American Revolution ensured that our Nation's claim to liberty and equality would not be dismissed or forgotten. The ideals they fought for and the country they helped establish are lasting symbols of hope to the entire world. "Our commitment to America's founding truths remains steadfast. We believe that freedom is a

blessing from the Almighty and the birthright of every man and woman. As our Nation faces new challenges, we are answering history's call with confidence that our legacy of freedom will always prevail. On Independence Day, we express our gratitude to the generations of courageous Americans who have defended us and those who continue to serve in our country's hour of need, and we celebrate the liberty that makes America a light to the nations. "Laura and I wish you a Happy Fourth of July. May God bless you, and may He bless our wonderful country."

Speaker of the House of Representatives Nancy Pelosi promised to make the day "Energy Independence Day".

There were many public events, including parades and public festivals with various entertainment and food attractions.

The day is traditionally celebrated with fireworks, often with large performances by social and government organizations. Cancellation of Mount Rushmore's July 3 fireworks show was considered due to dry conditions, but it was decided at 9 PM to proceed. 5,200 shells and pyrotechnics were used in the 27 minute show. The fireworks were preceded by a day filled with music and dance for visitors at the park. The finale for events in the nation's capitol was musical events, with cannon fire by the U.S. Presidential Salute Battery, and a fireworks display. The Boston Pops 2007 event was on the Esplanade in Boston, with a concert preceding a fireworks display.

Occurring well into summer, this federal holiday was celebrated by

many during family events and activities. It was expected that many would take vacation time from work during the week, particularly as the holiday being in mid-week allows five days of vacation by only taking two days off from work. Among the activities of July 4th, the most common activities are picnics in the daytime, barbeques at evening, and fireworks at night.

In recent years, more and more Americans have gained interests in setting off their own fireworks. Consumer fireworks are banned in many places due to their perceived dangers, but fireworks enthusiasts cite that fireworks are safe when used properly. According to the CPSC, the amount of imported fireworks have roughly tripled during the last 10 years, while the rate of injuries has gone down.

EU launches YouTube channel

This weekend the European Commission launched its own channel on YouTube, a highly popular website for distributing videos made by its users.

Margot Wallström, the Commission Vice-president responsible for the communication strategy of the EU, explained that the channel on YouTube will be used to distribute informational and promotional videos about the EU.

YouTube allows users to create a "channel" in which to upload a series of videos in a dedicated, user-specific directory. The EU had used online videos before, but they did not catch on with a larger audience.

At the time of writing (2007-07-04, 21:25 UTC), the channel contained 47 videos, which were watched approximately 2.5 million times in total. A controversial

video entitled "Film lovers will love this!" garnered over 1.8 million views alone. The video contains short segments of several successful movies whose production was funded by European Commission, the segments show couples undressing, kissing and reaching orgasm. It is intended to promote knowledge about the Media Program of the European Commission and its results.

West Indies cricket team in England 2007 - 2nd ODI

West Indies have beaten England by 61 runs in the second One-Day International of the West Indies tour of England at Edgbaston, Birmingham, England.

West Indies recorded a challenging total of 278-5. Shivnarine Chanderpaul scored 116 not out off 122 balls to post his seventh century in One-Day Internationals. Marlon Samuels scored 77, while Chris Gayle and Devon Smith shared an opening partnership of 50.

The England batsmen struggled in comparison, with opener Alastair Cook departing for just 19 and a controversial LBW decision for Ian Bell reducing them to 30-2. Top scorers for England were Matt Prior with 52 and Owais Shah with 45. Ravi Rampaul was the pick of the West Indian bowlers with 4-41.

Conditions at Edgbaston were damp, with rain interrupting the match on three occasions.

The three match series is now tied at 1-1. The third and final ODI, and series decider, will be played at Trent Bridge, Nottingham on 7th July.

Previously on the tour, England won a four match Test series 3-0

and drew a two match Twenty20 series 1-1.

UK threat level reduced to 'severe'

The United Kingdom's Joint Terrorism Analysis Centre (JTAC), a division of the security agency MI5, has now reduced the United Kingdom threat level from 'critical' to 'severe'.

Since the terrorist attacks in London and Glasgow the threat level in the United Kingdom was at 'critical' meaning an "attack was imminent", however the Home Secretary, Jacqui Smith, today announced the level was to be reduced.

She said, "There is no intelligence to suggest that an attack is expected imminently. However, the reduction of the threat level to severe does not mean the overall threat has gone away."

The MI5 website stated, "This means that future terrorist attacks are still highly likely, but no longer thought to be imminent. The decision has been made by JTAC based on a review of the latest intelligence."

This reduction comes after eight arrests were made in connection to the terror attacks.

Hovind's 11th Circuit Court Appeal Denied

On Monday July 2, 2007 Kent Hovind's appeal was denied by Eleventh Circuit Court. Hovind filed an appeal with the U.S. Court of Appeals claiming he was prevented from challenging the amount of his tax liability. According to the Pensacola News Journal, "the three-judge panel ruled that Hovind failed to raise the issue at the right time, so he waived his

rights to contest his tax liability."

On July 7, 2006 in Kent Hovind v Commissioner of Internal Revenue Service (Docket number 011894-05L) the United States Tax Court found that Hovind was deficient in paying his federal income taxes in tax years 1995-97 in the amount of \$504,957.24. The Tax Court ruled that the IRS had a valid, perfected lien on Hovind's property in that amount. In the Memorandum Opinion the judge noted that Hovind's defense was based on "bizarre arguments" and "some of which constitute tax protester arguments involving excise taxes and the alleged '100% voluntary' nature of the income tax."

In the November 2006 case Kent was convicted of 58 counts while Jo Hovind, his wife, was convicted of 44 counts, and both decided not to present a defense at trial. In January Hovind was sentenced to ten years plus fines and probation, and last Friday June 29, 2007, Jo Hovind was sentence to one year and one day plus probation and fines.

Though the couple were indicted on the November charges last summer in July 2006, they had a long history of tax protesting, filing false bankruptcy claims, filing frivolous lawsuits, and running the Creation Science Evangelism Ministry (CSE) without proper licensing. In court the IRS noted Kent Hovind had never filed any income taxes with the agency.

According to the Pensacola News Journal, in court last Friday Eric Hovind, the couple's son, said of his mother "She did what she was told" and she was "a submissive wife." Jo spoke to the court saying, "I had no intention of evading the IRS." She continued, "I really did

not have a leadership role in CSE" and finished "I would never knowingly do anything illegal." But the prosecutor said Jo Hovind's statement contradicted the evidence. "I do not believe she's being truthful to the court," the prosecutor told the judge.

At the hearing the judge explained that while "Mr. Hovind was the decision-making authority" at CSE and Dinosaur Adventure Land in four years Jo Hovind cashed some 200 checks, all under \$10,000, for a total of \$1.5 million. The judge further noted, the frequent use of cash was "their attempt to keep the ministry under the radar screen of the IRS" and not provide a traceable record. In the end the judge concluded, "Mrs. Hovind was in charge of the payroll," when handing down the sentence.

The judge said a sentence must be handed down so that it will "promote respect for the law" and deter others who might be tempted to break the law. Jo Hovind received a year and a day in prison, followed by three years probation upon release, and ordered her to pay \$8,000 in fines and costs. Kent Hovind received ten years, followed by three years probation upon release, and ordered to pay over \$600,000.

The Pensacola News Journal further added, "the government also has taken 10 properties from the Hovinds" for money owed.

Anwar's lawsuit over gay slur by former Malaysian premier is dismissed

A defamation lawsuit filed by Malaysia's former deputy prime minister Anwar Ibrahim against retired prime minister Mahathir Mohamad, who had said Anwar was homosexual, was dismissed today by a High Court judge.

In his lawsuit, filed in January 2006, Anwar sought damages of 1 million ringgit (about US\$290,000), against Mahathir, after Mahathir had stated at a human rights conference that he had to dismiss Anwar because he was gay – an accusation that had caused Anwar to serve six years in prison.

Mahathir had filed a counter motion, seeking dismissal of the suit on the grounds that it was scandalous, frivolous and vexatious. In a 48-page affidavit, Mahathir said Anwar was using the suit to "rehabilitate himself for high office".

"The plaintiff's action is unsustainable based on background evidence ... and the [Mahathir]'s application to strike out is therefore allowed with cost," High Court Judge Tengku Maimon Tuan Mat was quoted as saying by Agence France-Presse (AFP).

Neither Anwar nor Mahathir were present for today's hearing.

"I have informed Anwar Ibrahim of the decision and he is indeed quite upset and he has instructed that we file an appeal as we are dissatisfied with the decision," Anwar's lawyer, Sankara Nair, was quoted as saying by AFP.

At a Malaysian Human Rights Commission conference in September 2005, Mahathir said he had to dismiss Anwar because having a homosexual in his Cabinet would have been immoral.

Mahathir's remarks stemmed from sodomy charges brought against Anwar in September 1998, which along with corruption charges, disgraced Anwar and sent him to prison for six years.

Anwar has said the accusations were politically motivated to keep him from challenging Mahathir.

The sodomy conviction was later overturned after two appeals, but the corruption charges stood.

Judge Tengku Maimon noted that, although the sodomy conviction was overturned, earlier court findings proved the charge that Anwar had sodomized his former family driver, Azizan Abu Bakar.

"Hence, given the background facts of the case ... it is apparent that the defenses are bound to succeed. No purpose would have been served in insisting that the defenses be proven at a full trial," Tengku Maimon was quoted as saying by Bernama.

From the early 1990s, Anwar was being groomed by Mahathir, his former mentor, to take over as prime minister, but by the end of the decade, conflicting views on governance had deteriorated the "father-son" relationship.

With Anwar in jail, Mahathir retired in 2003 after 22 years in office, turning power over to Prime Minister Abdullah Badawi.

Anwar was released from prison in 2004, having his sentence reduced by the successful overturning of the sodomy conviction. He is barred from seeking public office until 2008. Earlier this year, he sought to be named leader of Parti Keadilan Rakyat, the party of which his wife Dr. Wan Azizah is president, but was prevented from doing so because of the political ban.

In other recent legal cases, Anwar had proven victorious. In 2005, he won a judgment of \$1.2 million

against author Khalid Jafri, who had written a book that accused Anwar of fathering an illegitimate child. DNA tests proved the child was not his. Anwar also forced a public apology from a former police chief who had beat him in custody in 1998.

Number of private contractors killed in Iraq and Afghanistan passes 1,000

The US Department of Labor has released data showing that more than 1,000 private military contractors have been killed in Iraq and Afghanistan, in response to a Freedom of Information request filed by Reuters.

The number is based on insurance claims filed on behalf of contractors that had been killed, and includes both US and foreign contractors.

As of March 2007, an additional 10,569 contractors have been wounded in Iraq and 2,428 in Afghanistan.

There are disputes about the exact number of contractors in Iraq, but it is estimated to be between 130,000 and 180,000 US-paid private military contractors, compared to 157,000 US military personnel.

Despite beliefs that the contractors all belong to large military-oriented groups such as the British intelligence firm Aegis or Blackwater USA which has been labelled "mercenaries", the jobs of contractors killed have been as varied as electrical engineer Ronald Schulz, translator Kim Sun-il and truck driver Murat Yuce.

African Union Summit ends in Accra

The 9th summit of the Assembly of the African Union ended in Accra,

Ghana just before midnight yesterday. The three day summit, which was scheduled to last until the afternoon of July 3 overran, ending just before midnight.

The main issue discussed was the call for the setting up of a Pan-African government. The Libyan leader, Muamar al-Gaddafi, and the Senegalese President, Abdoulaye Wade were advocates for its establishment as soon as possible. Gaddafi was in favor of a single African army, foreign policy and government. Others such as Robert Mugabe and Thabo Mbeki were more inclined to a more gradual process of integration. Yoweri Museveni , of Uganda preferred more economic integration to political union, as he felt Africa was too diverse to be under one government.

The African leaders put out a unanimous declaration agreeing to set up a Ministerial Committee to examine the relationship between an African Union government and the various national governments. The committee would also be expected to look at the impact on the sovereignty of member states and to provide a time frame and road map for the process.

The idea of a continental government was first advocated by Kwame Nkrumah of Ghana in the mid fifties and sixties when he was the Ghanaian president. It however received very little support at the time.

The host of the summit, John Kufuor of Ghana, Chairman of the Union, said there had been no winners or losers and that the debate had been characterised by tolerance and mutual respect. He said Africa's union was not being modelled on that of the USA nor the European Union but rather on

model that would be unique to the continent. He was also keen on the rationalization of the various Regional Economic Commissions towards the realization of an African Economic Commission.

The next summit is scheduled for Addis Ababa, Ethiopia in 2008.

BBC Reporter Alan Johnston is released in Gaza

The BBC's correspondent Alan Johnston based in Gaza has been freed after almost four months in captivity. The BBC broadcast images of Alan Johnston leaving a building in Gaza and entering a white car.

Hamas police surrounded a building where it was believed Johnston was being held. Earlier, Hamas had captured several members of the Army of Islam and continued to put pressure, by threat of force, on the captors. An intervention by another militant group, the Popular Resistance Committees, led to a breakthrough in negotiations between Hamas and the Army of Islam.

Rallies were held worldwide and an online petition calling for Johnston's release was signed by over 200,000 people. On Johnston's appearance after his release a witness said that he appeared healthy, but had lost weight.

"We have been able to close this chapter which has harmed the image of our people greatly," said Khaled Meshaal, leader of Hamas. "The efforts by Hamas have produced the freedom of Alan Johnston."

On the subject of Fatah, Meshaal told Reuters, "It showed the difference between the era in which a group used to encourage and commit security anarchy and

chaos and the current situation in which Hamas is seeking to stabilise security." Hamas had stated that they were anxious to have Johnston freed to highlight differences in their ability to provide security in Gaza as compared to Fatah.

Alan Johnston was the only western correspondent working full-time in Gaza. He went missing on March 12th 2007. Concern for his safety grew last month as a video released by the Army of Islam showed Johnston wearing a vest packed with explosives.

In a press conference with Hamas Prime Minister Ismail Haniya, Alan Johnston said he felt 'buried alive and detached from the world' and that he gained hope through listening to the radio and the support that he has received from around the world. He also thanked the Hamas leader and security services.

His parents held a press conference just after 7am (BST) on the 4th of July. The parents said that they never gave up hope over the 114 days. They received a phone call late last night where he told them briefly that he was okay. The parents ended wanting to thank people for helping them get through this difficult time and for keeping their spirits up.

Gordon Brown Prime Minister of Britain issued a statement on the release of Alan Johnston at his first Prime Minister's Questions. "I welcome the good news of Alan Johnston's release. This will come as a great relief to his family and friends, and all those who have worked to see him freed."

At 2:15pm (BST) a rally was held at BBC Television Centre which over one hundred BBC staff

attended. At the same time the 'Free Alan Johnston' poster which was attached to the side of the Television Centre was taken down. Alan Johnston also thanked the people at the rally and was amazed at the support he has been given.

New 'clean water' funding for Djibouti's drought-stricken rural areas

With the announcement Monday of €2 million in new funding from the European Union (EU), the Republic of Djibouti's Ministry of Agriculture hopes to provide some relief to an estimated 25,000 rural inhabitants suffering through severe drought conditions. The money, to be channeled through UNICEF for its water and sanitation program, will be used to develop new wells and improve existing ones.

UNICEF is to contribute a further €60,000, as well as technical expertise to the Ministry of Agriculture, who will carry out the bulk of the work.

"The two-year water supply project targeting rural districts is very significant since people living in 45 villages and their 40,000 heads of cattle will have access to clean drinking water," said Joaquin Gonzalez, EU Representative in Djibouti.

At the same time, the UN aid agency World Food Program (WFP) indicated that it is working with the Ministry of Agriculture and UNICEF to gradually shift Djibouti's reliance on emergency aid to a Food for Work program, which it hopes will assist nomadic herders in Djibouti with long-term sustainability. "What we are trying to do together with the Ministry of Agriculture and UNICEF is, for example to dig wells so that despite drought, these herders will

be able to irrigate their fields," said Simon Pluess, WFP spokesman. "And, together with the UN Food and Agriculture Organization, we will try and promote vegetable gardens."

Djibouti has survived harsh drought conditions for the past 5 years. Groundwater is the primary source of water for drinking and irrigation, but has been difficult to exploit and is often contaminated. Almost 50 percent of people in rural Djibouti do not have ready access to properly developed source of drinking water. And, due to the ongoing drought, water availability for livestock is limited. Livestock have shown signs of distress and, subsequently, milk production is down substantially.

Nearly half of all families in Djibouti's northwest were forced to migrate to find pasture for their livestock. As the droughts continue, the importance of properly maintained wells has become apparent. "Life is harder and harder for us. Years ago there were more rains and also more pastureland for cattle. Now it is good for us to have functioning wells so that we can keep cattle here," said Anou Amada, farmer in the village of Andoli.

A 2006 survey indicated that only 15 percent of wells in Djibouti were equipped with a protective concrete wall to prevent contamination. Andoli's well is one of many undergoing repair through WFP's Food for Work project.

"WFP couldn't do this alone, so we work with the Ministry of Agriculture and UNICEF to dig wells and the UN Food and Agriculture Organization for vegetable gardens," said Benoit Thiry, Director, WFP in Djibouti.

When the project is completed in 2008, it will have increased Djibouti's water pump capacity by adding 25 solar-power pumps, which would compliment the current 61 diesel-powered pumps. "The advantage of solar...is that it is much cheaper and requires less maintenance," said Omar Habib, UNICEF communication specialist. "We want the people to participate and to appropriate these pumping stations. The government's role in the long term should be as restricted as possible," he added.

Today in History

1687 – Philosophiae Naturalis Principia Mathematica by Isaac Newton was first published, describing his laws of motion and his law of universal gravitation.

1937 - The Hormel Foods Corporation introduced Spam, the canned precooked meat product that would eventually enter into pop culture, folklore, and urban legend.

1954 – Elvis Presley began making his first commercial recordings at Sun Studios in Memphis, Tennessee, USA.

1977 – General Muhammad Zia-ul-Haq overthrew Prime Minister Zulfikar Ali Bhutto of Pakistan in a military coup d'état.

2004 – Indonesia held its first direct presidential elections in its history; Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono would later be elected president during the second round of the elections on September 20.

July 05 is Independence Day in Venezuela (1811), Algeria (1962) and Cape Verde (1975); Saints Cyril and Methodius Day in the Czech Republic and Slovakia; Tynwald Day on the Isle of Man.

Quote of the Day

There are truths which one can only say after having won the right to say them. ~ Jean Cocteau

Word of the Day

Pyrrhic victory; n

1. A very costly victory, wherein the considerable losses outweigh the gain, so as to render the battle unfavourable.

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http://en.wikiquote.org/wiki/Main_Page

Word of the Day

http://en.wiktionary.org/wiki/Main_Page

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