



Top Stories

Death toll rises in Indonesian tsunami

Over 300 people have been reported killed after a tsunami, triggered by a magnitude 7.7 earthquake hit western Java.

Severe tropical storm Bilis leaves 178 dead in south-east China

South-east China has been flooded by torrential rainstorms as the Severe Tropical Storm Bilis came ashore on Friday.

Featured story

G8 Summit debates Middle-east crisis, WTO trade talks

The leaders of the Group of Eight nations met this weekend, to discuss the ongoing crisis in the middle-east, the stalled WTO trade talks and other global issues.

Wikipedia Current Events

- Israel closes Haifa's port after Hezbollah rockets rain on the port-city, wounding two people.
- The Nikkei 225 stock market index falls by 2.8 percent due to uncertainty in the Middle East.
- Ehud Olmert, the Prime Minister of Israel vows to keep fighting until the captured soldiers are released and Israeli citizens are safe.
- The death toll from the July 2006 Java earthquake and the tsunami rises to 339. As scores of people are missing, the death toll is expected to keep rising. BBC

Wikipedia Current Events

- A car bomb kills at least 15 labourers and wounds dozens in the southern Iraqi town of Kufa.
- Dr. Anna Pou and two nurses from Memorial Medical Center, New Orleans, have been charged with murder in connection with the possible mercy killings of 34 patients in the immediate aftermath of Hurricane Katrina.
- The United States House of Representatives fails to pass a constitutional amendment to ban gay marriage as the margin 236-187 is 47 short of the necessary two-thirds support needed for constitutional amendments.
- Tropical Storm Beryl forms off the coast of North Carolina, 180 miles southeast of Cape Hatteras. It is the second tropical storm to form in the North Atlantic in the 2006 hurricane season.
- Rough seas from Beryl caused the Princess Cruises ship Crown Princess to tilt heavily, injuring several passengers. It immediately returned to Port Canaveral.
- Turkey called for Iraq and the United States to crack down on Kurdish guerrillas based in northern Iraq, and issued a veiled threat to attack the rebel bases if there was no progress. Meanwhile, the International Crisis Group releases a report entitled 'Iraq and the Kurds: The Brewing Battle over Kirkuk' which examines the dangerously neglected looming conflict in and around the northern Iraqi city.

Wikipedia Current Events

- Reuters Alertnet LA Times ICG report
- On the first day of the 90th International Four Days Marches Nijmegen, two participants died of heart failure due to exhaustion caused by the exceptionally warm weather in the Netherlands. Because even higher temperatures were predicted for the second day, the organization decided to cancel the remainder of the event.

Day 7 of the Hezbollah-Israel conflict

One week has passed since Israel commenced its attacks on Lebanon. There is no immediate end of the conflict in sight as Israeli airborne, naval and ground units have pounded a wide array of targets in Lebanon, sparking what many call the worst crisis in the Middle East in 10 years.

The Lebanese PM Fouad Siniora condemned Israel saying their attacks have been "opening the gates of hell and madness". However, an Israeli general said that the offensive could go on for weeks to come.

It's the civilian population in Lebanon that have taken the largest toll; 200 Lebanese civilians have been reported to be killed in the past seven days, 30 of them today. In addition, 30 Lebanese soldiers have died without engaging Israeli units. Eleven of them were killed today in an Israeli airstrike on a Lebanese army base

east of Beirut. A Lebanese barracks was also hit yesterday, killing several soldiers.

The United Nations want an international peace contingent to be stationed in southern Lebanon to stop Hezbollah from firing missiles into Israel. The force would act as a stabilisation force against attacks from both sides in the conflict.

500,000 people have been displaced in Lebanon by the violence which could end in a humanitarian disaster, UN said.

A UN team was in Israel today, holding talks with the Israeli FM about a possible ceasefire agreement. However, the minister reiterated Israel's ultimatum that its two soldiers should be released and the Lebanese government posts troops in southern Lebanon before agreeing on a ceasefire. Lebanon say they fear posting soldiers in it's southern region could spark a civil war in the country.

Yesterday, transport trucks were targeted by warplanes. Israel believed that the trucks were transporting missiles for the Hezbollah. The Israeli military say 750 Hezbollah rockets, missiles and mortars have so far been fired since the start of the crisis. One Israeli was reportedly killed.

Hundreds of foreigners have been evacuated from Lebanon by any available transportation. Ships, helicopters and buses have been used by several European countries and the United States to ferry their citizens out of the country.

Ohio's Nick & Jimmy's Bar and Grill investigated after dozens become ill

Nick & Jimmy's Bar & Grill, 4956 Monroe St., a popular Toledo eatery is, according to this story, being investigated as the likely source of a food-borne illness from contaminated potato salad that left as many as 100 people sick after catering a June 15 graduation party in the Bowling Green area. The story says that the Ohio Department of Health is investigating the complaint with the help of the Toledo-Lucas County and the Wood County health departments.

Amy Jones, communicable disease nurse for the Wood County health department, was cited as saying yesterday that potato salad served at the gathering tested "fairly high for fecal coliform" and that the Ohio health department found that eight stool samples from people who ate the potato salad all tested positive for Norovirus.

Ms. Jones said the potato salad most likely was contaminated when a food service employee failed to wash his or her hands after using the restroom.

The Toledo-Lucas County health department followed up on the complaint with a June 16 inspection of Nick & Jimmy's Monroe Street location. According to health department records, inspectors found 35 violations, including 12 that were labeled critical.

Among the critical violations was an employee observed smoking in the restaurant's kitchen. A June 27 follow-up inspection indicated only three violations, of which two were critical, according to records.

The following day, the health

department issued a public health order to "cease and desist" all catering operations because the restaurant is not a licensed caterer. The letter to the restaurant said that the health department was investigating a food-borne illness.

Heatwave sweeps USA, many struggling to keep cool

Temperatures as high as 44C (111 F) have hit the US today, a continuation of Monday's triple-digit record fahrenheit highs in some areas.

High energy costs have many elderly and low income citizens keeping the air conditioning off, fixed incomes being blamed in many cases. In response to this, cities such as Chicago and New York have turned some public facilities into 'cooling areas' for the duration. Buildings being converted include homeless shelters, senior centers, libraries and shopping malls. State agencies are urging anyone experiencing heat related symptoms to get to one of these places as soon as possible.

Early reports are attributing at least three dead from heat related complications in Philadelphia, Arkansas, and Indiana

The National Weather Service has issued Red Flag warnings for six states, warning that the heat could easily lead to forest fires. Much of the northeast corridor and central plains states have been issued heat warnings.

Relief is in sight for the northeast, with storms bringing cooler weather from the Ohio Valley through New England; however the central part of the US won't see a break in the heat until the weekend.

Light aircraft makes emergency landing in major industrial estate

BBC Wales and iPTV station, VTV are reporting that a light aircraft made an emergency landing at 13:00 BST, at Treforest Industrial Estate, near Cardiff, south Wales.

The aircraft, an orange-coloured single-engine model Fox home-built kit, was carrying two people, a man and a woman, when it made the forced landing on the estate's dual carriageway, which runs through the industrial park.

It is not known how severely the two persons on board, are injured, however a spokesperson for South Wales Police has stated that both of the aircraft's occupants had sustained "non life-threatening injuries".

Treforest Industrial Estate is one of the largest business parks in the south Wales valleys and its location, just two hundred metres from the main A470 expressway, could have resulted in a far greater tragedy.

VTV reporter and private pilot, Craig Handley, said that the location of the accident "would have been the most logical place to try and set the aircraft down as the dual carriageway, which runs through the estate, is clearly visible from the air and is almost completely straight and wide."

Today's accident comes less than a year after a similar-sized aircraft was forced to make an emergency landing, less than two miles away from Treforest Industrial Estate, after suffering a sudden loss of engine power, during its approach to nearby Cardiff International Airport.

That aircraft, a Cessna 150,

collided with a group of trees, shedding its wings; before coming to rest on a small country road. The two occupants of the aircraft received slight injuries.

South Wales Police have not confirmed whether any motorists or pedestrians were injured when the aircraft, involved in today's accident, made its emergency landing. The aircraft did, however, cause some structural damage to a factory unit on the industrial estate, before coming to a rest, inverted, on the adjacent dual carriageway.

According to one eyewitness, the aircraft appeared to have experienced an engine-related problem, seconds before impact.

A spokesperson, for Cardiff International Airport said that the aircraft had departed, from Cardiff, at 12:43 BST and that the airport's Air Traffic Control centre had lost contact with the plane.

The Civil Aviation Authority's Air Accident Investigation Branch (AAIB) have been informed and are due to begin their investigation, into the crash.

Discovery lands at Kennedy Space Centre

Space shuttle Discovery landed at Cape Canaveral at 9:14 a.m. (1314 UTC) yesterday. It returned after a thirteen day mission to the International Space Station (ISS).

The mission was used to provide thousands of pounds of supplies to the ISS and brought thousands of pounds of trash and discarded equipment back to Earth.

The shuttle, which was orbiting the Earth with the engine facing forward, fired the engines briefly to slow down and begin the

descent, flipping its nose forward to prepare for the landing.

As Discovery descended into the atmosphere, parts of the shuttle's outer surfaces were heated to temperatures of about 3000°F (1650°C). The shuttle executed a series of computer controlled S curves to slow down to the landing speed.

The shuttle neared the landing strip at an angle 7 times steeper and a speed 20 times faster than a commercial aircraft.

The space shuttle was welcomed by hoots and whistles from the few hundred astronauts' relatives and space centre workers as it landed on the 3 mile (4.8 kilometres) long runway

"It was a fun entry ' it was beautiful," radioed mission commander Colonel Lindsey as he prepared to leave the shuttle.

'Just because we're going to be back to flight doesn't mean we're going to change the way we're operating,' he said. 'We're going to be very careful, very cautious, look at everything ' and we'll leave no stone unturned as we continue with this program.'

This is the second space shuttle flight since the Columbia disaster.

A further 16 shuttle missions are scheduled for completing the space station before the fleet is retired in 2010.

'This shows that with appropriate care and vigilance, the odds of operating the shuttle with acceptable risk are good,' said John M. Logsdon, the director of the space policy institute at George Washington University.

'It doesn't mean the shuttle is safe,' he added. 'The shuttle will remain a very risky vehicle, to be operated with extreme care.'

Death toll rises in Indonesian tsunami

Relief officials have said that at least 341 people have been killed by a tsunami which hit the Indonesian island of Java on Monday afternoon. An underwater earthquake, which measured 7.7 on the Richter scale, triggered the two-metre-high tidal wave.

The small town of Pangandaran was worst-hit, and over 200 people are reported missing. Police and Indonesian troops have arrived in the area to mount rescue and relief operations.

The Indonesian Vice President Jusuf Kalla has said that the death toll may rise within the next few days. 'In a tsunami, it is possible that the number of dead will increase, especially those who are missing or who have been washed away to sea,' he told a local radio station.

According to Indonesia's Metro TV, two Dutch and four Japanese nationals are among the 450 people injured, and Sweden's foreign ministry has said that two Swedish children who were on holiday with their family are thought to be lost.

Body bags have arrived in the area, and essential aid material such as tents and food are to be delivered to those 52,700 people who have been left homeless.

A resident, who called herself Teti, told EIShinta radio station yesterday that high waves had destroyed hotels in Pangandaran and thrown boats onto the beach. 'Waves suddenly came and we ran

to the hills. Many small hotels were destroyed," she said. "Boats have been thrown into hotels.'

A Belgian tourist said he was in a beach side bar when the wave hit. "I saw this big cloud of dark sea water coming up to me," he said.

After the earthquake, Japanese and US agencies issued tsunami alerts for parts of Indonesia and Australia. However, there was no reported local warning of the disaster, despite efforts to establish an early warning system in the wake of the 2004 Asian tsunami, which killed more than 130,000 people.

Indonesia is situated on the Pacific Rim of Fire where 90% of the world's earthquakes and 81% of the world's largest earthquakes occur.

Commerce Commission fines BNZ \$5 million

The New Zealand Commerce Commission has fined the Bank of New Zealand (BNZ). It has been forced to pay NZ\$5 million in compensation to its customers, \$500,000 in fines and \$80,000 in costs to the Commerce Commission. The money will be placed into a bank account to be monitored by an auditor, and if there is any money left over it will be donated to a consumer organization.

BNZ has been forced to pay these fines for failing to disclose that they were charging their customers for the exchange of foreign currency during February, 2002 until May, 2004 on its credit and debit cards, which is a breach of the Fair Trading Act. They pleaded guilty to 21 counts of breaching the act. The BNZ say that they will contact their affected customers and that they should

get their compensation by November this year. The bank is responsible for contacting all their customers.

The BNZ is the third bank to be charged, the two others were ANZ and the National Bank, which were charged \$11.325 million combined as they had since become a single company.

There are still other ongoing prosecutions on these other financial services: Westpac, ASB, TSB, American Express, Diners Club and The Warehouse Financial Services. The Commission would not comment on these cases.

Paula Rebsotck, Commerce Commission Chairperson, said "the result was a victory for New Zealand consumers, many of whom would have unknowingly paid the currency transaction charges. While fees like these remain hidden, banks have no incentive to offer lower fees."

George H. W. Bush charged with war crimes during visit to Iceland

George H.W. Bush, former president of the United States of America has been charged with committing war crimes. Bush senior visited Iceland in the beginning of July, primarily to catch (and release) salmon.

The author of the charges, Elias Davidsson, an Icelandic citizen, has written several articles in peer reviewed journals on international law. He maintains that it was the duty of the Icelandic judiciary system to arrest Bush, in keeping with conventions that the country is party to, and then put to trial or allow an international court to do so. The charges include invasion of Panama, and the conduct of US forces in the 1991 Gulf War.

Nine other Icelanders signed the charges delivered to the Icelandic authorities.

In the days since the charges were put forward, mainstream media do not appear to have picked up the story. The only known exception is the Icelandic TV News channel NFS, and its accompanying web-site visir.is.

Harvard lawyer who advises IDF asked about "rules of engagement" in 2004

Michael Byers, who holds the Canada Research Chair in Global Politics and International Law at the University of British Columbia, revealed in Sunday's Toronto Star that while he was in Tel Aviv in 2004, he met with a lawyer who advises the Israel Defence Force about rules of engagement Scenarios which were unfolding were discussed.

The Toronto Star reported a conversation between Byers and an IDF colonel / lawyer during a luncheon. According to Byers, the colonel felt that attacks on southern Lebanon and civilian targets as well as Lebanese infrastructure would be justified under specific interpretations and in certain circumstances. She asked Byers for his opinion on these matters.

The lawyer Byers met with is a colonel with a Harvard doctorate. He met with her by an invitation that came while he was a visiting professor at the University of Tel Aviv. After just a few minutes, the Harvard graduated colonel got to the point of their meeting:

"There have been a number of missile attacks along our northern border," she said. "We're going to respond with air strikes against some Hezbollah installations in

southern Lebanon next week. What do you think?"

Byers said he was taken aback as governments rarely consult foreign academics about their military plans. Though it was not clear whether the colonel was engaged in private conversation or asking for the Professor's services on behalf of the military.

Byers responded; "Well, for starters, any act of self-defence has to be necessary and proportionate."

Byers advised the colonel; "Also, you must never target civilians, or facilities such as water-filtration or electrical plants relied upon by civilians."

"Ah, here we disagree!" the colonel exclaimed. "Collateral damage is allowed in situations of military necessity. And dual-use facilities are legitimate targets."

"What constitutes military necessity depends on the relative capabilities of the opposing forces," Byers responded "And the dual-use argument is a slippery slope."

"Perhaps." the Israeli colonel said.

"There's a second reason you should do everything possible to protect civilians," Byers advised. "Israel has to work particularly hard to maintain the moral high ground. Your reputation has suffered because of your treatment of the Palestinians."

"We're completely justified in our treatment of the Palestinians," the colonel said.

"We can disagree on that," Byers said, "..but do me a favour, as someone who wants to sympathize

with Israel. If you do launch air strikes, please limit yourself to Hezbollah facilities. Leave civilians and the Lebanese government alone."

Two years ago, Byers' IDF advisor suggested considering southern Lebanon a failed state was justification for incursions and airstrikes. In contrast, speaking about the current crisis, Israel's Prime Minister Ehud Olmert said the recent cross-border attack by Hezbollah was an "act of war" committed by the government of Lebanon and that, "The events this morning are not terror attacks but actions of a sovereign state that attacked Israel for no reason. The Lebanese government, of which Hezbollah is a member, is trying to destabilize regional stability. Lebanon is responsible and it will bear responsibility."

Israel's defense ministry confirmed it held Lebanon "directly responsible" for their fate and safe return of the two soldiers captured by Hezbollah. The Israeli Defense Ministry issued a statement which said; "The Lebanese government is responsible for the fate of the Israeli soldiers, and must take immediate action to locate them without harming them and return them to Israel."

Today in History

711 - Roderic and the Visigoths in Iberia were defeated in the Battle of Guadalete by Moorish Umayyad invaders led by Tariq ibn-Ziyad.

1553 - Lady Jane Grey was replaced by Mary I of England as Queen of England after holding that title for just nine days.

1848 - The two-day Women's Rights Convention opened in Seneca Falls, New York, United States.

1870 - France declared war on Prussia, starting the Franco-

Prussian War.

1947 - Burmese nationalist Aung San was assassinated.

1979 - Sandinista rebels overthrew the US-backed government of the Somoza family in Nicaragua.

July 19 is President's Day in Botswana

Quote of the Day

"To endure is greater than to dare; to tire out hostile fortune; to be daunted by no difficulty; to keep heart when all have lost it; to go through intrigue spotless; and to forgo even ambition when the end is gained - who can say this is not greatness?"

~ William Makepeace Thackeray

Word of the Day

uxoricide; n

1. A man who kills his wife.
2. The killing of one's wife.

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