

Top Stories

Four small explosions strike London's transport system



London Metropolitan Police commissioner Ian Blair confirmed there were three small explosions on tube trains at Warren Street, Oval and Shepherd's Bush stations and one on a bus in Hackney.

Sir Ian Blair described the incidents, which come two-weeks to the day behind the July 7 explosions in three London tubes and on a bus that killed 56 and wounded over 200 others, as 'attempts' to set off explosives. Blair said further from Scotland Yard that the London ambulance services reported no casualties in the incident.

German president dissolves parliament; elections in September



German president Horst Köhler announced today that he has dissolved the Bundestag after a motion of confidence by chancellor Gerhard Schröder deliberately failed on July 1st. He set the 18th of

September 2005 as the date for early elections to the Bundestag.

Featured story

Prayer does not help heart patients, study finds



A multi-center US study of 748 patients with coronary artery disease who were to undergo treatment has found that distant prayer by Christian, Muslim, Jewish, and Buddhist groups had no

measurable effects on the medical health of the study subjects.

Wikipedia Current Events

- Kenyan MPs approved a constitution, which critics say leaves too much power in the hands of the President
- After a blitz of detentions of suspected militants and Islamists, Pakistan's President Pervez Musharraf called for a holy war against preachers of hate and announced steps to curb militant Islamic schools and groups.
- Algeria's two most senior diplomatic staff in Iraq have been kidnapped from outside a restaurant in the western Mansour district.
- The Chinese government announces a 2 percent revaluation of its currency, the yuan, and says the yuan will no longer be pegged to the US dollar, instead trading within a narrow range against a market basket of currencies.
- In Morocco, authorities have detained five supporters of Western Saharan independence for their alleged part in violent demonstrations last May.
- Indonesian president Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono orders the army to stop offensive against separatist rebels in Aceh after the acceptance of the new peace deal.
- In Mexico, police are looking for kidnapped soccer coach Omar Romano.
- In Rwanda, gacaca court investigating the Rwandan genocide summons Thaddee Ntihinyurwa, head of the Catholic Church in the country, to testify
- In China, group of farmers in Shengyou village in Hebei province that demonstrated over seizure of an arable land for the power plant, win in a dispute

UK markets up despite London incident

The FTSE 100 index closed higher today despite of the incidents in London. The markets fell over 50 points when the reports first came out, but recovered later and closed 6.4 points higher at 5,221.6.

The stock market had been expecting another attack and today analysts said the FTSE had been "amazingly robust".

The Dow Jones in New York fell 60 points today to 10,629.



German president dissolves parliament; elections in September



President Horst Köhler

German president Horst Köhler announced today that he has dissolved the Bundestag after a w:motion of confidence by chancellor Gerhard Schröder deliberately failed on July 1st. He set the 18th of September 2005 as the date for early elections to the Bundestag.

In a televised address Köhler stated that Germany is in serious economic situation and that the country is needing a stable government. He recalled the previous occasions when the Bundestag was dissolved and agreed with the chancellor that the loss of confidence was genuine and urged the citizens to vote.

The Speaker of the Bundestag, Wolfgang Thierse, welcomed the decision and urged the parties to conduct fair campaigns.

Chancellor Schröder also paid his respect to Köhler, calling his decision confident and

again expressed that he intends to resume the good way on which Germany is heading under his leadership.

The Chair of the conservative Christian Democrats (CDU) and her party's candidate for chancellor, Angela Merkel, as well welcomed the call for early elections and wants to get Germany on the right track if her party gets to power in September.



Chancellor Gerhard Schröder

The dissolving is the result of a long political muddle that began on May 22th when Schröder's Social Democrats (SPD) lost the most populous state of Germany, North Rhine-Westphalia, to the CDU, the biggest opposition party. Minutes after the early projections were in, SPD chair Franz Müntefering announced that his party would seek reelection in fall of 2005. However, the Basic Law of Germany does not permit the self-dissolving of the Bundestag. The only way to achieve early elections is when the chancellor loses a motion of confidence. All major parties, including the opposition, support the call for early election. Polls also indicate that 75 % of the population support going to the ballots in September. However some MP's, most notably Werner Schulz of SPD's coalition partner, The Greens, say that the procedure was unconstitutional because the loss of confidence was orchestrated. They announced that they will sue against the dissolving before the Constitutional Court of Germany.

Germany has been struggling with high unemployment for several years and the reforms Schröder introduced were criticized as being neo-liberalistic by unions and also by members of his own party.

Current polls see the CDU at 44 %, while the SPD can only expect 27%. The liberal FDP, CDU's possible coalition partner, can

expect 7 %, The Greens 8 % and the Party of the Left (formerly PDS) 11 %.

The governing SPD-Green coalition is faced with an overwhelming opposition majority in the Bundesrat, the upper chamber, that is able to block most bills. Schröder claims that the CDU is engaging in a policy of blockade rendering him unable to make laws and implement policy changes while Angela Merkel, says that Schröder's government is simply incapable to take action.

Four small explosions strike London's transport system



The location of Shepherd's Bush on the Hammersmith and City Line

London Metropolitan Police commissioner Ian Blair has confirmed that there have been three small explosions on tube trains at Warren Street, Oval and Shepherd's Bush stations, and another small explosion on a No. 26 bus in Hackney.

The London Ambulance Service has not found any injured people, but one person has reported themselves to a local hospital for treatment for an asthma attack.



The location of Warren Street and Oval on the Northern line

All the devices were "conventional" but possibly faulty, and contained no chemical or biological agents. Not all the bombs exploded fully, Bomb Squad officers are working on making them safe. There are no reports of the deaths of suspects who attempted to set the explosives off.

Incidents

A spokesman for Stagecoach said the driver

of the number 26 bus travelling through Shoreditch had heard a bang on upper deck, gone upstairs and seen the windows were blown out. The bus driver was very shaken but is said to be fine. Reports of the windows having been blown out have been denied by a police officer on the scene. "I have seen the bus. There were no windows blown out," the officer told Reuters.

One injury sustained at Warren Street tube station has been confirmed by authorities. There have been no other reports of injuries, and authorities are reporting no casualties.

At around 15:25, a man was arrested by armed police in Whitehall, which is cordoned off. A second man was arrested in the Whitehall area around 16:15, but Police have confirmed that this arrest is unconnected with the explosions.

Armed police were deployed at UCL Hospital, near Warren Street tube station, after reports of a suspect entering the hospital. There was speculation that one of the bombers may have been injured and sought treatment at the hospital. A Scotland Yard spokesman had said "We are dealing with an incident at University College Hospital and we have armed officers deployed there. We cannot go in any further detail at this stage." A UCL spokeswoman confirmed that an email had been sent to staff asking them to be on the lookout for the suspect. At 16:00 a spokesman for the Metropolitan police confirmed that the incident was over, but armed police returned to the hospital 30 minutes later to search the premises. Police have now also confirmed this is unrelated to the explosions.



A picture of the Holborn area, where traffic has been suspended due to the events

Prime Minister Tony Blair has cancelled a visit to an East London school and a photocall with visiting Prime Minister John Howard of Australia, instead heading to a

COBRA committee emergency meeting. Australian Prime Minister John Howard is in London and is involved in discussions with Tony Blair as this unfolds.

In a public press conference, Blair said that "there appear to have been no casualties", and that he wanted people to "React calmly, and continue with our lives". John Howard also stated that Australia stood by Britain and that people should "beware the minds of terrorists."

Police initially advised against unnecessary travel in London, asking Londoners to keep travel to a minimum and avoid the public transport system. At 15:52 Sir Ian Blair of the Metropolitan Police has asked Londoners to return to their normal activities, including travel. He also stated that some public transport services are not yet functioning.

A release from Scotland Yard stated that there was no chemical agents found after checking the Oval. Investigations at Shepherd's Bush station also confirmed no chemical agents.

The Northern line, the Hammersmith and City Line, the Piccadilly Line, and the Bakerloo Line have been suspended. Victoria Line and the Waterloo and City Line were suspended but reopened shortly after. Whitehall had been sealed off but reopened shortly after, only to be closed again after armed police surrounded and arrested a man outside the Ministry of Defence, however at a press conference at 17:45 Metropolitan Police Commissioner Sir Ian Blair said that this arrest was unconnected with the explosions.

Various news sites are reporting a minor explosion in a passenger's backpack. A BBC correspondent, claiming to have sources working in the London Underground, suggested the explosions were only detonators and that the bombs contained no explosives. It is also believed that reports of gunshots being heard at the stations are mistaken, passengers simply mistaking the sound of the detonators for the sound of gunshots.

A spokesman for London Underground has stated the nature of the incidents is unknown.

Eyewitness reports from Warren Street say that something happened towards the front

of the train. The passengers all headed towards the back of the train. As the train pulled into the station somebody pulled the emergency alarm and all the passengers got off the train. There are reports of a 'burning rubber' smell from eyewitnesses.

25% of Shepherd's Bush / Uxbridge Road and all of Shepherd's Bush Green is sealed off.

Eyewitness report of "bang" in a carriage at Oval station. No injuries. After being spotted the suspect fled the station, leaving the suspect package unexploded in a carriage. (BBC News 24)

London Police are not regarding this as a major incident yet. (BBC News 24)

British Transport Police report there has been one injury at Warren Street Station. No details as to the cause and nature of this injury are available, although BBC News are speculating that the injury is to the person who set off the device.

There are reports of problems sending text messages or making calls from mobiles phones on some networks. (O2 confirmed, Orange is fine, occasional text service but no calls on Vodafone) O2 provide communications services for emergency teams across the UK and have previously prioritized their network usage for this use.



Police evacuate the area near St Paul's Cathedral after the explosions. Photo: Adam Randall

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

Five Commissioners rescind welcome of 2006 Gay Games in Chicago

A month after the Cook County Board of Commissioners unanimously voted to welcome the 2006 Gay Games to Chicago, the five Republicans on the board withdrew their names under pressure from conservative activists. Chicago is located in Cook County.

The Gay Games is an Olympics-style multi-day international sports competition targeted to LGBT athletes.

Commissioners Gregg Goslin, Liz Gorman, Carl Hansen, Tony Peraica and Peter Silvestri, the only Republicans sitting on the Board of Commissioners withdrew their names from the proclamation. "I'm a pro-family kind of person and conservative on social issues. That's nothing against the gay and lesbian community, but it's nothing I want to advance as a cause celebre," Peraica told the Chicago Sun-Times. In the same report, Gorman said that she doesn't support "special rights for any group."

An anti-gay lobbying group, the Illinois Family Institute (IFI), says it is trying to get Democrat commissioners to also withdraw their names from the official welcome. "There is a difference between tolerating and celebrating homosexuality," Peter LaBarera, a spokesman for the group said in an Associated Press interview. The IFI also expressed concern about taxpayer money being used to promote the event.

Although Gay Games spokeswoman Tracy Baim she said she was not surprised by the reversal of the five commissioners, Mike Quigley, a Democrat Cook County Commissioner said of the retraction of his colleagues, "It's a blinding bias and animosity that is overriding human interest, job creation, economic development and the whole spirit of athletic competition." Quigley was the sponsor of the proclamation and plans to play ice hockey in the games.

The 12 other commissioners who voted for the welcome proclamation maintained their support for the event, which is scheduled to run from July 15 to July 22, 2006 and projected to generate between \$50 million and \$80 million in tourist business to the city and county.

Prime Minister, Police chief urge London to "get moving again"

British Prime Minister Tony Blair has made a statement at 10 Downing Street saying that the explosions in London today were "to scare people and to frighten them, to make them anxious and worried".

He broke off his meeting with Australian Prime Minister John Howard to make the statement, with Howard alongside him.

Blair went on to say how the "police have done their very best, and the security services too, in the situation, and I think we have just got to react calmly and continue with our business as much as possible as normal".

London Metropolitan Police Commissioner Sir Ian Blair also released a statement urging Londoners to "get moving again", stating that the sites of the four explosions were secure and the situation was under control.

Three tube lines remain closed: the Victoria, Northern and Hammersmith & City Lines. The Bakerloo line is suspended between Paddington to Piccadilly Circus. Replacement shuttle bus services are running.

Police are appealing to anyone who may have photos or mobile phone images from any of the incident scenes, either at the time of the incident or shortly before, to send them online to: www.police.uk.

Stores drop game after Grand Theft Auto: San Andreas given 'Adults Only' rating

The Entertainment Software Ratings Board (ESRB) changed its content rating of the controversial Grand Theft Auto: San Andreas video game from "Mature" to "Adults Only" on Wednesday. The ESRB change came after a investigation proved that sexual content in the game could be unlocked by anyone except for owners of the Xbox version of the game.

Graphic sex scenes in the game can be revealed if a user downloads an internet version of the "Hot Coffee modification" with a secret code that depicts characters as having sex. The secret code is widely available on the Internet such as gamer sites, MoFunZone.com and Gamespot.

In response to this, Rockstar Games and it's parent company Take-Two Interactive stopped making the verison of the game with the sexual content and plan to release a "Mature"-rated title in the fall with the "Hot Coffee" content removed.

Game maker Take-Two says the 'game mod' is third-party software that violates the end-user license agreement of the company's intellectual property rights. Citing what the company calls standard industry practice to create content that never makes it into the final version of a game, the sex scenes included in the software, "were never intended to be found."

After the rating change, stores such as Wal-Mart and Target pulled the game off their shelves under their policies not to sell "Adults Only"-rated games.

This controversy has lead to major debate between execs and politicians whether the video game industry should continue to judge itself or not. Many of the watchdog groups were unaware that content like this is usually "locked away" instead of being deleted.

No evidence against London Bombing suspects says cleric

Oma Bakri Mohammed, a controversial Muslim cleric living in Britain under political asylum since 1985, has said he does not believe the July 7th London bombers were Muslims.

He told BBC News that there was no evidence the four young Muslim men filmed at a station prior to the attacks were responsible for the bombs. He also condemned "any killing of innocent people here and abroad"

However he said he would not co-operate with police in the search for the bombers and other Muslim extremists, or even when he knew of an imminent terrorist attack.

"I believe co-operation with the British police would never ever prevent any action like this." He said.

Adding, "The youth will leave us. The youth will see us, at that time, the voice, the eyes and the ears of the British government."

"The way to earn the heart of the British youth is by the divine text, to say 'God say it and ... Mohammed say it, Do not attack the people you live among.' Not to tell

them, 'Tony Blair say it, the law say it, don't do so.'"

Oma Bakri Mohammed is facing deportation after partly blaming Britain itself for the attacks on London. He also blamed the UK government's "evil foreign policy and the war on terror" for pushing Muslims in "the wrong direction". He has lived in Britain for 20 years, and said he would not resist if he were to be imprisoned or deported.

The cleric also believes Islam does not allow Muslims to fight the people they lived side by side with. "To live among them, and sell with them and deal with them and trade with them and then fight them, that is completely not Islamic."

South Dakota duck population gets help from rain

A wet late Spring season's increase in rainfall helped duck populations rebound in the northern Great Plains near the U.S.-Canadian border. A dry Winter and resulting low ground water levels threatened duck nesting grounds in the area.

Much to the relief of duck hunters, who feared a possible 2005 ban on duck hunting, the most-recent waterfowl survey released this week by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service showed duck populations in South Dakota on the rebound.

This contrasted to a May survey that showed fewer ducks and waterfowl nesting areas in the state with the population of breeding ducks numbering 1.6 million, down from 1.7 million in 2004. The same May survey indicated that duck habitats, specifically ponds, had declined more than 35 percent from the historical average.

However, late Spring rains reportedly improved wetland conditions and irrigated grasslands for grazing duck broods and re-nesting hens. The figures are used to set duck-hunting limits for the fall season, which begins in August.

"I have observed many duck broods across eastern South Dakota in July, and grassland cover looks great statewide," Spencer Vaa, a waterfowl biologist with the South Dakota Department of Game, Fish and Parks said in an Associated Press report.

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Today in History

1812 – Peninsular War: Near Salamanca, Spain, an Anglo-Portuguese force led by Arthur Wellesley inflicted a severe defeat on Marshal Auguste Marmont and his French troops in the Battle of Salamanca.

1933 – Wiley Post became the first pilot to fly a fixed-wing aircraft solo around the world.

1934 – Bank robber John Dillinger, the U.S. Federal Bureau of Investigation's "Public Enemy Number One", was shot dead in an ambush in Chicago.

1946 – An Irgun bomb destroyed the headquarters of the British Mandate of Palestine at the King David Hotel in Jerusalem, killing 90.

2003 – U.S. forces attacked a compound in Mosul, Iraq, killing Saddam Hussein's sons Uday and Qusay

July 22 is Pi Approximation Day, feast day of Mary Magdalene.

Quote of the Day

Give me your tired, your poor,
Your huddled masses yearning to breathe free,
The wretched refuse of your teeming shore.
Send these, the homeless, tempest-tost to me,
I lift my lamp beside the golden door!
~ Emma Lazarus ~

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