



Top Stories

Kenya Airways jet with 115 on board crashes

Flight KQ 507, traveling from Abidjan to Nairobi with a stopover in Cameroon has crashed, according to Agence France-Presse. At least 115 people were on board, from 23 different countries.

Mohammad Khatami meets Pope Benedict XVI

The former Iranian President was among a delegation of Islamic clerics to meet Pope Benedict XVI. This is Khatami's first meeting with Pope Benedict XVI and his second with a pope.

Wikipedia Current Events

lost contact with Kenya Airways Flight 507, a Boeing 737-800 with 115 passengers and crew aboard flying between Douala, Cameroon and Nairobi. Kenyan state radio later claims that it crashed in southern Cameroon near the town of Niete.

- Five people are killed in attacks by Islamic rebels in the south of Thailand.

- A third mass rally in support of secularism in Turkey is held in Çanakkale, protesting against the Justice and Development Party (AKP) regarding the presidential election.

Center has listed as a high risk for tornadoes, something that is rarely done.

Bermuda Chief Justice: No new charges in Middleton murder

Despite expressing personal sympathy for the Middleton family, Bermuda's chief justice Richard Ground dismissed, on Friday, an application to re-examine the 1996 killing of Rebecca Middleton.

Seventen-year old Rebecca Middleton, of Belleville, Ontario, Canada had been in Bermuda on vacation when she was raped and murdered. At the time, police had identified two suspects in the crime, 21 year-old Kirk Mundy and 19 year-old Justis Smith. Before DNA test results had been tabled, the attorney general made a plea deal with Mundy in exchange for his testimony against Smith. It turned out that prosecutors didn't have enough hard evidence to connect Smith to the crime and the murder charges against him were dropped. Mundy served 5 years for being an accessory to the crime.

The murder case had garnered significant worldwide attention, even drawing in Cherie Booth QC, lawyer and wife of British Prime Minister Tony Blair. Booth had advocated on behalf of the Middleton family during the recent two-day hearing in front of justice Ground.

In his ruling, Chief Justice Ground explained that new charges would amount to double jeopardy and would violate current law, as there

Featured story

New Zealand dog saves five children; receives international attention

A small, "nicely trained" jack russell terrier dog gave his life to help save a group of five children from two aggressive pitbulls last Sunday in Manaia, Taranaki, New Zealand.

At least nine killed in Greensburg, KS tornado

At least nine people were killed and another 60 were injured after a tornado swept through the town of Greensburg, KS. The tornado, which meteorologists described as a 1.4 mile wide wedge tornado, came through at approximately 9:38 P.M. local time. It leveled about 95% of the town, including at least two schools, and the town's hospital, resulting in the evacuation of the entire town.

One of the few structures currently left standing, a tavern, has been turned into a makeshift morgue. Residents are currently being bussed to nearby hospitals or storm shelters for the night.

More tornadoes can be expected Saturday; Greensburg is in the area which the Storm Prediction

Wikipedia Current Events

- YouTube shows a seventeen-year-old Kurdish girl being stoned to death for having a relationship with a Sunni boy.

- More than 20 countries including the People's Republic of China, the United States, France, Japan, Chile and South Korea agree to work together to end bottom sea trawling.

- Kenya Airways states that it has

were no errors in a previous review. "I have to declare the law as it is," said Ground in his written ruling. "The [double jeopardy] rule is well established and straightforward...it would require legislation, or possibly the intervention of a higher court to change it."

Since the ruling went against the Middletons, the lawyers representing Mundy and Smith called for their legal fees to be paid by Dave Middleton, Rebecca's father. However, Justice Ground rejected the request. "The applicant has suffered a terrible loss, for which he can never be compensated. He has also suffered a wrong, in the way that this matter was mishandled at the outset," said Ground. "In my view [Middleton] is entitled to explore every reasonable avenue in an attempt to put that right, and I am not going to order him to pay the costs of doing so."

Dave Middleton, revealed that with his own legal bill approaching CA\$100,000, an appeal of the latest ruling may be out of reach financially. "The cost just keeps going up. So far we are covering our bills, but will we be able to continue to do that? I don't know," he told CBC News from his home in Belleville. The Middletons have received financial support in the past by fundraising through the Rebecca Middleton Foundation.

For the next stage in the process, Middleton revealed that the case would reach the Court of Appeal in Bermuda, possibly in November. Should that appeal prove unsuccessful, the case could be brought before the UK Privy Council or the European Court of Justice.

Dave Middleton also suggested that the Middletons would like to retain

the services of Cherie Booth for the upcoming appeals. "She's a big part of how we progress, and I'm very hopeful of that," said Middleton.

Abby Cadabby debuts at Sesame Place today as a walkaround character

Langhorne, Pennsylvania theme park Sesame Place opened for the season this morning, for its 2007 season, adding Abby Cadabby to its all-star lineup of characters that kids can meet.

Described as a "sweet, inquisitive enthusiastic three-year-old fairy-in-training," who loves making new friends, the character stars in a musical show called Abby Cadabby's Treasure Hunt. Featuring all of the stars of Sesame Street, the production joins Elmo's World Live: Fishes.

Roller coaster Super Grover's Vapor Trail, the Sky Splash water ride, and the "Rock Around the Block" musical parade all return, as do tons of other rides, shows, and physical play activities.

Press material say that it "is considered the first theme park experience for young children offering an exciting introduction to thrills and adventures for families with children two to seven years of age."

The park is open Friday through Sunday until 25 May, when the park begins opening daily. After Labor Day, Sesame Place is open weekends only until 27 October 2007.

A fairy-in-training, Abby was not the first recurring female character to be introduced to Sesame Street since 1993, as press materials for season 37 of Sesame Street proclaimed; Phoebe and Googel

from the short-lived Monster's Clubhouse segment both hold that title. She is however the first new female character since 1993 to show any lasting power. Her performer, Leslie Carrara, says Abby will appear in "almost every episode next season".

The Langhorne, Pennsylvania attraction was opened in 1980, sparking robust commercial development in the town. While similar parks have opened in Irving, Texas, Tokyo, Japan, Monterrey, Mexico and Sao Paulo, Brazil, none of them managed to strike the hearts and minds of tourists.

Mohammad Khatami meets Pope Benedict XVI

Mohammad Khatami, the president of Iran from 1997 to 2005, was among a delegation of Islamic clerics to meet Pope Benedict XVI in the Vatican City in Rome on Friday. This is Khatami's first meeting with Pope Benedict XVI and his second with a pope.

Khatami told a press conference after the meeting that the wounds caused by Benedict XVI's remarks that linked Islam to violence were "very deep." He, moreover, stated that the wounds "cannot be healed easily and a single meeting may not be enough."

On the issue of terrorism, Khatami made it clear that dialogue is the best solution to "eliminate terrorism and the great military conflicts," stressing that one cannot invoke God "as a password for war and hate." He emphasized the need for a "joint effort."

The Vatican issued a statement to the press which said that the meeting provided an opportunity to reflect on the importance of a serene dialogue among cultures to

overcome the "severe tensions that mark our time".

The situation of Christian communities in the Middle East and in Iran and the need for "strong initiatives" from the international community to help resolve the situation in the Middle East was also discussed, the statement said.

Noting the high-level diplomatic conference in Sharm al-Sheikh, the meeting called for serious negotiations that take into account everyone's rights and respected international legality.

In the talks which lasted about 30 minutes, Khatami and Benedict XVI concurred that the Sharm al-Sheikh conference to resolve the tensions in Iraq was a positive development. Later, Khatami met with Romano Prodi, the Prime Minister of Italy.

Khatami is not representing the government of Iran on this trip.

Khatami met with Pope John Paul II in 1999.

Kenya Airways jet with 115 on board crashes

Officials say that a Kenya Airways Boeing 737-800 with 8 crew members, 106 passengers and a flight engineer on board, has crashed in Cameroon.

A Boeing 737-800 operated by Kenya Airways, similar to the one that crashed.
Credit: Boeing

Flight KQ 507 was traveling from Abidjan to Nairobi. It made a stopover in Douala, Cameroon where more passengers got on the plane, before it continued on its flight.

It is not known if there are any survivors, but Kenya Airways says

that there were passengers from at least 23 different countries on the plane (list below).

"Flight 507 was coming from Abidjan via Douala. The aircraft unfortunately has not arrived. The last message was received in Douala after takeoff and thereafter the tower was unable to contact the plane," said the CEO of Kenya Airways, Titus Naikuni said earlier in a statement.

Reports say that the plane sent a distress signal at 2:00 a.m., just after it took off from Cameroon, but it is not known what triggered the distress signal.

"The distress call came from a machine, not a pilot. They have a helicopter in the area where the signal was coming from," added Naikuni.

The TurkishPress.com, which quotes AFP, an unnamed official says that they have located the wreckage.

"The plane has crashed. We have located the plane ... and we cannot talk about it," said the unnamed official with the Kenyan Civil Aviation Authority. Reports also say that the Cameroonian military is using helicopters to search the area around the Cameroonian capital Yaoundé, near the town of Douala and Niete.

Despite the AFP's report, Naikuni says he cannot confirm that the plane has crashed.

According to Kenya Airways, bad weather is causing delays in efforts to locate the plane and any possible wreckage. "We are trying to get to the area of the crash, but the weather is really bad. We are getting help from the army," said Kenya Airways.

The plane was suppose to land at 6:15 a.m. local time. It left Abidjan at 11:05 p.m. local time.

The last crash of a Kenya Airways flight took place on January 30, 2000. The flight had taken off from Abidjan, Ivory Coast, onroute to Nairobi. Kenya Airways is reported to be one of the safest airlines in Africa.

According to a Kenya Airways news release, a crisis management centre in Embakasi, a location close to the airport, was setup to monitor the situation and additional details will be provided when received. Relatives of those on board the plane are being asked to stay at that location and wait for further details.

Kenya Airways contact

As per a Kenya Airways press release, information may be obtained through the following contact.

Mr. Michael Okwiri
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Nationalities of those on board

3 Unknown
35 Cameroonians
15 Indians
9 Kenyan crew members
7 South Africans
6 Chinese
6 Ivorians
6 Nigerians
5 British
3 Nigerians
2 from the Central African Republic
2 from the Democratic Republic of the Congo
2 from Equatorial Guinea
1 American
1 Swiss
1 Swede
1 Malian

- 1 Togolese
- 1 Ghanaian
- 1 from the Comoros
- 1 from Mauritius
- 1 Senegalese
- 1 Congolese from Congo-Brazzaville
- 1 Egyptian
- 1 Tanzanian
- 1 from Burkina Faso

New Zealand dog saves five children; receives international attention

A small, "nicely trained" jack russell terrier gave his life to help save a group of five children from two aggressive pitbulls last Sunday in Manaia, Taranaki, New Zealand.

The dog named George is being described as a hero, gathering a huge amount of international media interest in the process.

The dog suffered massive injuries that the vet had never seen to that extent before, which resulted in 69-year-old Alan Gay, the dog's owner, allowing George to be put down. Although he now regrets this decision that he only thought about for a couple of minutes.

The two pitbulls rushed at the group of children that George was following to the dairy, including a four-year-old. George then started barking loudly at the pair of dogs, and putting himself between the dogs and the children. Mr Gay told Fox News, "If it wasn't for George, those kids would have copped it."

Despite having a lot of offers of new dogs, Mr Gay has said that he will wait a while before getting another jack russell terrier, as he is afraid it could happen again.

It is also believed that the two attacking dogs, which have been destroyed, were bred to be aggressive, including being fed methamphetamine, commonly

referred to as "P" in New Zealand.

Mr Gay has said that Manaia has had a problem with stray dogs before, but he never expected that George would become a victim of those stray dogs.

One story ran in USA Today, which prompted over 120 comments, and one reader to personally call Alan Gay expressing their condolences.

Responding to the huge amount of media interest, Mr Gay said, "This really surprises me, and it's marvellous. I never expected this ... I'm surprised it got around the world as it did." He says he has been getting a huge amount of phone calls from the media and the public. "The phone has been going since about half past seven this morning. Every time I hang up it rings again. It's worn out; I might have to get a new one."

World Health Organization launches clinical trial website

The World Health Organization (WHO) announced Friday, the launch of a specialized search website, which will facilitate access to "high quality" clinical trial information for health researchers, doctors, and patients.

Accessing clinical trial with multiple source information was reportedly a difficult task, unless the data is reported in the published literature. A significant number of clinical trials, however, are not published. And for trials that are published, not all of the data is reported in some cases.

The WHO's Assistant Director General, Information Evidence and Research, Tim Evans suggests the new WHO clinical trial website will facilitate access to published and unpublished clinical trials through the registration and tracking of the

research projects. "For health care researchers, funders, policy-makers and consumers the portal represents an enormous step towards greater access, transparency and accountability of health research globally," said Evans.

"The registration of clinical trials is a scientific, ethical and moral responsibility," stated the WHO. Clinical trial registers have become accepted widely as common practice. The new WHO website provides easy navigation through the large number of registers that currently exist.

Registers providing data to the search portal are required to participate in the new WHO Network of Collaborating Clinical Trial registers. The network will provide a forum for registers to collaborate on procedures for clinical trial registration. Registers are also required to disclose details such as ownership, governance structure, and for-profit status.

Jeff Drazen, Editor-in-Chief of the New England Journal of Medicine supports the portal and is pleased with the ability to find all trials in a particular area of interest. "The onus now lies with all investigators to be sure that their work is fully and meaningfully registered in a WHO compatible database," said Drazen.

Data from approximately 50,000 clinical trials from United Kingdom, Australia, New Zealand, and the United States have been made available on the WHO site.

Kentucky faith-based agency under fire for religious coercion

A lawsuit filed by a former employee of Kentucky Baptist Homes for Children (now Sunrise

Children's Services) and four other tax-payers, has shed light on the possibility of religious coercion by the organization. The lawsuit challenges the faith-based agency's eligibility for state funds.

Specifically, interviews of children conducted by the state of Kentucky have revealed complaints from some of the children. Mainly, children who said they were Catholic, Pentecostal, Jehovah's Witnesses or atheist voiced complaints in the interviews.

"They tried to more [or] less force me to become a Christian," said one child in an exit interview. "I just felt I was being pressured into giving up my religion."

Another child reported s/he was "not allowed to choose when or when not to attend a religious service," per the interview, and was told "'to do' some type of Bible study during that time or get consequences."

Both the Commonwealth of Kentucky and Sunrise say there is a strict policy against proselytizing in the program and that it does not prevent children from practising their individual faiths.

They also stress that these complaints number merely a "handful" among the approximately 1,500 children that are served by the faith-based agency.

"If a child says, 'I don't want to go to the Baptist church,' then the child does not go," Jonathan Goldberg, the state's attorney, said. Some children might have mistakenly believed they were forced to go, he added.

The plaintiffs are seeking to have the interviews unsealed, at least in the cases where the child is now 18

years of age or older. The state and Sunrise argue they need to be kept confidential.

The lawsuit originated with Alicia Pedreira, who was fired in 2000. She alleges her firing was direct result of Sunrise (then Kentucky Baptist Homes for Children) finding out she is a lesbian.

Sunrise Children's Services provides residential programs and foster care homes for children that have suffered abuse or neglect. Since 2001, Kentucky has paid Sunrise US\$61 million to provide the services for children who would otherwise be in direct state custody.

In 2001, the state did find cause for action against one of Sunrise's homes to fix "a coercive religious environment" where staff members confirmed that church attendance was required.

With accusations of undue pressure by a Christian agency funded by the state, the Sunrise case bears some similitude to the lawsuit against Iowa for paying Chuck Colson's evangelical agency to run part of its prison.

Last June, U.S. District Judge Robert W. Pratt strongly reprimanded and ruled against Iowa's use of a Christian social service agency to administer its prison. Judge Pratt stated: "For all practical purposes, the state has literally established an Evangelical Christian congregation within the walls of one of its penal institutions... There are no adequate safeguards present, nor could there be, to ensure that state funds are not being directly spent to indoctrinate Iowa inmates."

The Iowa ruling is pending appeal.

Critics point to both of these cases as failures of George W. Bush's faith-based services initiative. The program is often seen as conflicting with the tradition of separation of church and state in the United States.

Today in History

1682 - King Louis XIV of France took up residence in the Château de Versailles.

1863 - American Civil War: The Army of Northern Virginia, led by Robert E. Lee and Stonewall Jackson, scored a decisive Confederate victory in the Battle of Chancellorsville.

1937 - The German zeppelin Hindenburg caught fire and was destroyed at the Lakehurst Naval Air Station in New Jersey.

1954 - Roger Bannister became the first person to run the mile in under four minutes.

1994 - The Channel Tunnel, a 51 km (31 mile) long rail tunnel beneath the English Channel at the Strait of Dover, officially opened. May 06 is Lag Ba'omer in Judaism (2007); St George's Day in Bulgaria

Quote of the Day

Who knows what beautiful and winged life, whose egg has been buried for ages under many concentric layers of woodenness in the dead dry life of society ... may unexpectedly come forth ... to enjoy its perfect summer life at last! ... such is the character of that morrow which mere lapse of time can never make to dawn. ... Only that day dawns to which we are awake. There is more day to dawn. The sun is but a morning star.
~ Henry David Thoreau in *Walden*

Word of the Day

sophistry; n

1. An argument that seems plausible, but is fallacious or misleading, especially one devised deliberately to be

so.

2. The art of using deceptive speech or writing.

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