



Top Stories

Reports: Bomb threats close 14 supermarkets in UK

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Featured story

Man takes armoured vehicle on rampage through Western Sydney

Police have arrested and charged a 45 year-old man from Dharruk in Western Sydney after he went on a 90 minute rampage throughout Western Sydney in a armoured personnel carrier.

Wikipedia Current Events

- The Fifteenth Pan American Games begin in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil.
- Conrad Black is found guilty on three charges of fraud and one charge of obstruction of justice in Chicago.
- The world's third largest optical telescope, the 10.4m Gran Telescopio Canarias on the island of La Palma, starts its commissioning observations.
- Indonesia and the Philippines agree to expand intelligence

Wikipedia Current Events

sharing with hopes that it will help track down two suspects in the 2002 Bali bombings.

- Iran and the International Atomic Energy Agency reach agreement on resolving the disputes over the Iranian nuclear program.
- The death toll in the sinking of the MV Blue Water Princess of the coast of Luzon in the Philippines rises to 15.
- Okinawa, Japan suffers blackouts and flights are cancelled to and from the island as the typhoon passes through the island prefecture.
- North Korea's military seeks talks with the United States to discuss "peace and security on the Korean peninsula."

Tour de France: Tom Boonen wins stage 6

Tom Boonen of Belgium has won stage 6 of the Tour de France, after beating Spaniard Oscar Freire in a sprint by a bike length.

British rider Bradley Wiggins tried his luck on a solo-effort from the 2 km-mark, but after reaching a maximum gap of 17½ minute at km 57, the pack reeled him with less than ten kilometres to go.

Fabian Cancellara of Switzerland remains the overall race leader, stage winner Boonen conquered the green point jersey, and Sylvain Chavanel keeps the polka dotted mountain jersey.

Injured teammates Alexandre Vinokourov and Andreas Klöden both finished the stage near the back of the peloton.

US House votes to bring troops home from Iraq

The United States House of Representatives voted 223-201 on Thursday to require that most US troops leave Iraq by April 1, 2008. The legislation requires that the withdrawal commence within the next 120 days.

A limited number of troops will be allowed to stay to train Iraqis, protect US interests and fight alleged terrorists.

The vote follows a report released by US President George W. Bush which found that there had been only limited progress following the deployment of troop reinforcements earlier this year. It is thought that the Senate will now be under pressure to approve a similar timeline.

President Bush has threatened to veto the legislation as he has done twice previously. He said there would be no shift on his Iraq policy before September.

Argentine Supreme Court declares Riveros pardon unconstitutional

The Supreme Court of Argentina today ruled that a decree issued by the Argentine ex-president Carlos Saúl Menem was unconstitutional. The decree pardoned military general Santiago Omar Riveros, charged for crimes

against humanity which were committed during the "Guerra Sucia", a military rule (1976-1983) in Argentina.

The members of the Supreme Court of Justice decided by a majority of four votes the revoke of the pardon towards Riveros. The votes were as follows:

Support
Ricardo Lorenzetti
Juan Carlos Maqueda
Eugenio Zaffaroni
Elena Highton
Oppose
Carlos Fayt
Carmen Argibay
Abstain
Enrique Petracchi

The Supreme Court thus retracted the pardon towards Riveros. The ruling also left an open door for the cases of other pardoned generals, such as Jorge Videla and Eduardo Massera.

"Crimes against humanity, because of their seriousness in nature, are not only contrary to the Constitución Nacional, but as well to the entire international community," the Supreme Court ruled. Nearly 30,000 disappeared in the Argentina military dictatorship.

International media mogul Conrad Black convicted of fraud

International media mogul Conrad Black has been found guilty by the US District Court for the Northern District of Illinois in Chicago, Illinois on three charges of mail fraud and one of obstruction of justice. However, the jury did clear him of the rest of the charges. Black faces a maximum of 35 years in prison and a US\$1 million fine at his sentencing, which is scheduled for November.

"We think the verdict vindicates the serious public interest in making sure that when insiders in a corporation deal with money entrusted to them by the shareholders."

—U.S. Attorney Patrick Fitzgerald

He was found not guilty of nine other charges including racketeering, misuse of corporate perks and tax evasion. The 13 charges were based on allegations that Black defrauded investors in his company, Chicago-based Hollinger International (now known as Sun-Times Media Group). He was accused of stealing around US\$60 million from the company.

David Radler, who was the second-highest ranking officer at Hollinger at the time of the crimes, testified against Black, after admitting fraud himself. Radler testified before the court and jury, that Conrad Black had concocted a scheme where executives of Hollinger could pocket payments when selling small local newspapers that Hollinger owned, in exchange for non-compete agreements.

Black's three co-defendants and former associates (Jack Boulton, Peter Atkinson and Mark Kipnis) were all found guilty of several counts of mail fraud.

"We intend to appeal and there are viable legal issues. We vehemently disagree with the government's position on sentencing."

—Edward Greenspan, attorney for Conrad Black

"We think the verdict vindicates the serious public interest in making sure that when insiders in a corporation deal with money entrusted to them by the shareholders, that they not engage in self-dealing, that they not break the law to benefit themselves

instead of the shareholders," said U.S. Attorney Patrick Fitzgerald, who prosecuted the case.

"We intend to appeal and there are viable legal issues. We vehemently disagree with the government's position on sentencing," said Edward Greenspan, Conrad Black's attorney. "We believe, based on the conviction of the charges here, that the sentences for this type of offence are far less than what the government suggested."

"It only takes one fraud charge and the man is disgraced and finished," said Joshua Rozenberg, legal editor of Daily Telegraph, which was once owned by Hollinger International. "He is clearly facing a lengthy prison sentence."

Black was released, pending his appeal, on a US\$20 million bond. He agreed to remain in the Chicago area for at least one week. Judge Amy St. Eve confiscated his passport.

Conrad Black renounced his Canadian citizenship in 2001, to become a life peer as Baron Black of Crossharbour. He is technically a United Kingdom citizen, as he is a British Lord. Even without his Canadian citizenship, Black continues to enjoy the privileges of membership in the Queen's Privy Council for Canada which Brian Mulroney gave him in 1992 which includes the use of a special diplomatic passport.

Party video game banned in UK for having offensive word

Employees of British video game retailer GAME are reporting an email sent around stores to remove the popular Wii board party game Mario Party 8 and all applicable advertising due to the game having a word considered to

be offensive in Britain.

The word is "spastic," and can be seen on the "Shy Guy's Perplex Express" board. If a player lands on one of several certain green spaces, Magikooopa will appear and, before rearranging the train cars, will say, "Magikooopa magic! Turn the train spastic Make this ticket tragic!"

Nintendo is currently developing an updated version of the game without the offending word.

This is not the first time a video game has been banned in the UK for including the word "spastic." Last month, Ubisoft announced a recall of its PSP brain-training game Mind Quiz after a mother of a child with cerebral palsy complained because the game called her a "spastic" for not doing well.

Pamplona's famous "running of the bulls"

The nine day San Fermín festival, commonly known as the running of the bulls (or "el encierro" in Spanish) in Pamplona, Spain, is the most famous of all such events.

Like every year, several revelers are gored, both locals and tourists. Some 800 000 tourists were estimated to have come to Pamplona last weekend. On Thursday, thirteen people were admitted to the hospital, seven of whom were gored. Three of the latter had to have surgery.

A 48-year-old man from Pamplona was in a critical condition after being gored in the chest. Other serious incidents involved a Mexican and a German man in their twenties. Runners from Poland, Norway, Spain and the United States also sustained

injuries.

Thursday's run lasted six minutes, where a normal run is only two minutes long. Normally, the pack of bulls stays together, but in this run they separated, which is more dangerous for the runners. Since 1924, there have been 13 fatalities, the last of whom was an American in 1995.

The 825m run garnered international fame after Ernest Hemingway described the running in his 1926 book *The Sun Also Rises*. The end of the run is the bullring where the matadors will deal with the bulls.

Animal rights activists protest the bull-running because they believe the tradition is cruel to the animals. Tomorrow, the eighth and final run will be held, at 8:00 a.m. CEST (UTC+2).

BBC apologises to Queen Elizabeth II for misrepresentation in documentary

The British Broadcasting Cooperation (BBC) has apologised to Queen Elizabeth II and photographer, Annie Leibovitz, after a trailer for a documentary suggested she had walked out of a portrait sitting when the photographer asked her to remove her crown.

The trailer shows a clip of the photographer telling the Queen, "I think it will look better without the crown because the garter robe is so..." The Queen responded with "Less dressy! What do you think this is?" The following clip shows the Queen walking down a corridor saying, "I'm not changing anything. I've had enough dressing like this, thank you very much."

It has since been clarified that this second clip shows the Queen arriving at the sitting, not departing.

In a statement the BBC said, "In this trailer there is a sequence that implies that the Queen left a sitting prematurely. This was not the case and the actual sequence of events was mis-represented. The BBC would like to apologise to both the Queen and Annie Leibovitz for any upset this may have caused."

The BBC blamed a production error for the mistake, saying, "This assembly was never intended to be seen by the public or the press. Unfortunately, this assembly was given in error to the BBC personnel who were preparing the BBC One autumn launch tape."

The company responsible for the editing of the documentary, RDF Media, also apologized to the Queen. Michael Grade, previous controller of BBC One, blamed the mistake on "young, untrained" workers who "don't understand that the basic ethic of broadcasting in this country is trust."

Photographer, Leibowitz, commenting about the session in Vanity Fair even before the release of the trailer, said, "She doesn't really want to get dressed up any more. She just couldn't be bothered and I admired her for that."

Christian protesters try to disrupt first Hindu prayer in US Senate

A Hindu prayer was used as the opening prayer in the United States Senate for the first time Thursday. The prayer was given by Chaplain Rajan Zed. Proceedings were disrupted by three Christian protesters in the visitors gallery

who shouted that there is "No Lord but Jesus Christ", adding insults and calling the Hindu prayer an "abomination." The three people involved in the incident were arrested thereafter. Under the direction of Senate Majority Leader Harry Reid, the prayer for the Senate has been given by a variety of religions of late, although the prayer is still often given by a chaplain of a Christian denomination.

Barry Lynn, speaking for Americans United for Separation of Church and State, a First Amendment advocacy group, said that the incident demonstrated the intolerance of the Christian right and that "I don't think the Senate should open with prayers, but if it's going to happen, the invocations ought to reflect the diversity of the American people."

Zed had wanted to read the prayers in Sanskrit but did so in English instead at the direction of the Senate Chaplain Office.

Later reports stated that the three protesters, Ante Pavkovic, Katherine Pavkovic and their daughter Christan Sugar Pavkovic, were affiliated with the American Family Association, a conservative Christian organization which had previously attempted to block the prayer from occurring although other reports connected them with the smaller Operation Save America, a Christian organization based in Dallas.

The protesters were released after being charged.

Network Rail employee arrested in connection with Cumbrian train crash

An employee of Network Rail, the company that owns and maintains the British railway infrastructure,

has been arrested in connection with the Grayrigg derailment in Cumbria, in the north of England, which left one passenger dead in February of this year.

The Virgin Pendolino service from London to Glasgow derailed at 20:15 GMT on February 23 as it passed over a set of points which an interim report by the Rail Accident Investigation Branch found were missing components and were in a poor condition.

A spokesman for the British Transport Police said that the 46-year-old man from Preston was arrested on Wednesday and has been released on police bail until October 31.

Network Rail were unable to comment on the arrest.

AFC Asian Cup: Thailand defeat Oman, Qatar draw with Vietnam

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Today in History

- 1789 – French Revolution: Parisians stormed the Bastille, freeing its inmates and taking the prison's large quantities of arms and ammunition.
- 1798 – The Sedition Act became United States law, making it a federal crime to write, publish, or utter false or malicious statements about the U.S. government.
- 1933 – Gleichschaltung: All political parties in Germany were outlawed, except the National Socialist German Workers Party.
- 1958 – King Faisal II, the last king of Iraq, was overthrown by a military coup d'état led by Abd al-Karim Qasim.
- 1965 – The NASA spacecraft Mariner 4 flew past Mars, collecting the first close-up pictures of another planet.
- July 14 is Bastille Day in France.

Quote of the Day

Nobody living can ever stop me
As I go walking my freedom highway
Nobody living can make me turn back
This land is made for you and me.
~ Woody Guthrie ~

Word of the Day

- ratify; v
1. To give formal consent to; make officially valid.

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