



Top Stories

TNT blamed for Chinese karaoke bar explosion that killed 25

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Rower Tuijn halfway across Pacific in record attempt

Dutch adventurer Ralph Tuijn has reached the halfway point of his attempt to be the first person to row across the Pacific Ocean unaided.

Featured story

Poll of 100 million votes names new Seven Wonders of the World

In 1999, Bernard Weber started the New7Wonders foundation, and eight years, 200 candidates and 100 million votes later, seven man-made structures now have something in common - they all hold the title of 'Wonder'.

Wikipedia Current Events

- al Masjid siege: An attempt to negotiate a peaceful end to the seven-day standoff at Islamabad's Red Mosque ends without any progress.
- Four men are found guilty of conspiracy to murder over the failed terror attacks on the London Underground on July 21, 2005.

Wikipedia Current Events

- The Election Commission of India issues notification for the election of the next Vice President of India. The election is scheduled to be held on August 10, 2007.
- Snow falls in Buenos Aires, Argentina for the first time in 89 years and the second time in recorded history. Two people die of exposure in Argentina while one person dies in Chile.
- The Arab League agrees to send a delegation to Israel for the first time.
- The Governor of Pennsylvania Ed Rendell orders a partial shutdown of state government functions following the failure of state legislators to agree on a budget.

Tour de France: Gert Steegmans wins stage 2

Belgian riders, Gert Steegmans and Tom Boonen, finished one-two in stage 2 of the 2007 Tour de France that ran mostly in their home country.

Starting in Dunkirk, France, and ending in Ghent, Belgium, the 168.5 km (104.7 mile) stage is considered a flat stage. The roads were wet with rain today.

"What an explosion of emotion it was after the finish," Steegmans said. "It was really important for the team. You could feel this enormous pressure because we're a Belgian team."

Steegmans and Boonen are not only countrymen, but also

teammates on the Belgian-sponsored Quick Step-Innergetic team.

There was a large crash with less than 3 km to the finish. Swiss rider Fabian Cancellara was involved in the crash, but maintained the overall lead.

U.S. Hurricane Center director leaves position

Bill Prozena has left his position as director of the National Hurricane Center in the United States after about half of the center's employees called for his removal. He has been re-assigned within the center and will be replaced by deputy director Ed Rappaport.

National Hurricane Center spokesman Dennis Feltgen said, "We need to move forward. Effective immediately Ed Rappaport will serve as acting director on an interim basis."

TNT blamed for Chinese karaoke bar explosion that killed 25

More than a ton of TNT stored illegally in the basement of a karaoke bar caused the recent explosion that killed 25 people and injured 41 more in the north-eastern Chinese town of Tianshifu, news reports say.

Mum?

Qu Yujie or Yijie (known locally as Qu Hua), owner of the two-storey Tianying Karaoke Hall and Bath House which was levelled by the blast was amongst those killed. He

was described as "a successful businessman" who owned a local colliery. Many residents of Tianshifu, where the blast occurred stated that he regularly used the basement of the building as a storage site for his explosives. His elder brother and his elder brother's wife were also among the deceased according to Benxi county government spokesman Fu Qingbin.

As part of a short statement regarding investigative results made available to state news agency Xinhua on Sunday, the following conclusion as in to the cause of the disaster was given: "After more than three days' efforts, we found self-ignition of the explosives led to the explosion,".

Reports state that there were many students celebrating the end of exams at the bar when the explosion occurred - eight teenage girls who were part of a group of 13 from a local department store celebrating a the 19th birthday of Sun Bo, including Bo herself, and several pedestrians outside the building were amongst the casualties of the disaster. The drivers of a truck and a motorcycle passing the building when it exploded were also killed, as were a couple who owned a car wash near to the site. The explosion also buried a number of cars under tons of concrete and blew out windows in nearby buildings.

Police estimated that over a ton of TNT was required given the force of the explosion, and noted that the explosives had been manufactured by a factory in the local area. This was backed up by the Beijing News quoting an investigator as saying "The explosion was so powerful that there must have been about one

tonne of explosives,".

The coal mine the explosives were intended for is one of around 3-400 in the local area, which operate both legally with licences and illegally without. Detonators were also recovered from ground zero.

Relatives of the deceased are currently being put up at local hotels in preparation for compensation discussions with the authorities. Of the 41 injured survivors, all are still being treated in local hospitals, four with "serious injuries" and the remaining 37 with "fractures, chest injuries and broken ribs", according to one physician. One person suffered injuries of a severity that required him to be taken to the Benxi City Central Hospital, while the rest are in either Benxi County No. 1 hospital or at a hospital in Tianshifu itself, according to deputy director of the Benxi County Health Bureau Jiang Yongcheng. A dozen extra medical experts have also gone to Benxi County to help treat the victims.

Boeing unveils new 787 Dreamliner

Aircraft manufacturer Boeing have unveiled their new 787 Dreamliner at their Everett Factory near Seattle, Washington, in the United States. Sunday was chosen as its date matches the aircraft's designation number when written in the American format, 7/8/07.

The event was attended by 15,000 people including employees, customers, suppliers and officials from government and the local community.

Scott Carson, president and CEO of Boeing Commercial Airplanes said, "This has been a wonderful and exciting day to celebrate this

breakthrough airplane with our customers, employees, supplier partners and our communities."

The mid-sized 787 will seat between 210 and 330 passengers, and will be the first commercial airliner of a mostly carbon fibre composites construction. Boeing claims that the resulting reduction of weight compared to the traditional aluminium will offer enhanced fuel efficiency, benefiting both operators and the environment. According to the company, the 787 Dreamliner will use 20 percent less fuel per passenger than similarly sized aircraft.

On Saturday, Boeing announced 35 new orders from German airline Air Berlin and ALAFCO Aviation Lease & Finance of Kuwait, bringing the total to 677 order from 47 customers. At the list price, these orders are worth US\$5.62 billion.

The first flight is expected to take place in August or September of this year, with the first customer, All Nippon Airways, due to receive their first aircraft in May 2008.

The 787 illustrates the differing strategies adopted by Boeing and Airbus whose double-decker A380 first flew in April 2005 and is expected to enter service later this year. Whereas the Airbus A380 is aimed at flying large passenger numbers between major hubs, the Dreamliner is targeted at smaller airports where Boeing predicts will be an area of growth in the industry.

Earlier in the day, Boeing received a congratulatory letter from Airbus. The company president and CEO Louis Gallois said, "Today is a great day in aviation history. For, whenever such a milestone is

reached in our industry, it always is a reflection of hard work by dedicated people inspired by the wonder of flight. Even if tomorrow Airbus will get back to the business of competing vigorously, today is Boeing's day -- a day to celebrate the 787."

2007 AFC Asian Cup: Qatar scores late to draw with defending champions Japan

An eighty-eighth minute goal has given Gulf Cup champions Qatar a 1-1 draw with Japan in their 2007 AFC Asian Cup Group B match at the My Dinh National Stadium, Hanoi, Vietnam.

Three-time champions and current defending champions of the Asian Cup competition, Japan scored in the sixty-first minute through prolific striker Naohiro Takahara. They held the lead for nearly half an hour before Sebastián Quintana levelled the scores for Qatar.

Japan's goal was the result of a clever finish by Takahara after getting on the end of a Yasuyuki Konno cross from the left-hand wing. A series of passes around the edge of Qatar's penalty area ended up with a through-ball for Konno on the left, who precisely drilled his left-footed cross for Takahara to smartly strike on the half-turn into the net.

Japanese midfielder Yuki Abe fouled Quintana two metres outside the box, and Quintana sweetly struck the ball to the right of the defensive wall and past Japanese goalkeeper and captain Yoshikatsu Kawaguchi on eighty-eight minutes.

The drama-packed last few minutes included the goal as well as a straight red card against Qatar defender Hussain Yasser for a reckless tackle. Australian

referee Matthew Breeze adjudged Yasser to have dangerously lunged at Japanese midfielder Hideo Hashimoto with the studs showing, collecting him both late and above the ball, two minutes into injury time.

Qatar coach Džemaludin Mušović was sent away from the sideline by Breeze immediately following Yasser's dismissal, after overzealously protesting the referee's decision to send his player off. When Mušović initially failed to leave, the sideline-based fourth official intervened and he made his way to the grandstand.

The result leaves underdog hosts Vietnam on top of Group B after their upset victory over the United Arab Emirates yesterday.

Rower Tuijn halfway across Pacific in record attempt

Dutch adventurer Ralph Tuijn has reached the halfway point of his attempt to be the first person to row across the Pacific Ocean unaided.

The 16,000 kilometre journey from the coast of Peru to the seaside city of Brisbane, Australia - the widest section of the Pacific - has never been crossed absolutely unaided by a rower, and Tuijn says just nine people have rowed it even with assistance.

Tuijn reached the central point of his crossing - an insignificant point of water in the ocean - 111 days after setting off from Peru in March. He has been making good progress, and has since cut his estimated time of arrival in Brisbane by a month.

The Dutchman, who now expects to reach his destination on October 20, has kept in touch with those tracking his movements through

daily internet postings from his laptop, including his wife Winnie. His boat, the Zeeman Challenger, is a seven-metre custom plywood vessel.

Tuijn has overcome a variety of obstacles to reach the halfway point. He is suffering from the constant attention of sharks, who often bump his boat and disrupt his attempts at sleep. One particular shark, dubbed 'Gomulka' by Tuijn, has been trailing the adventurer's boat for extended periods.

He has also accidentally burnt himself when he spilled hot water on his foot whilst trying to make coffee, apparently also from a shark 'bump'. He is also forced to manually pump water for cooking and drinking after his automatic water pump broke down not long into his journey.

His vessel has no motors or sails, but relies on his physical rowing power to move. The boat does have a solar power system to provide energy for his laptop, a telephone and a global positioning system.

"Physically everything feels great and I can't help feeling that I could do this for 500 days, but mentally it's still hard to be on your own for such a long time" —Ralph Tuijn

Tuijn, who is raising money for a children's home in Mumbai, India, is rowing at an average speed of 58 kilometres each day. His diet consists of freeze-dried foods and fish, which are keeping him physically well-conditioned despite tiring mentally.

Tuijn is a serial adventurer and experienced rower. He has rowed across the Atlantic Ocean and the North Sea, as well as cycled across

Russia and the icy terrain of Greenland.

Federer wins fifth Wimbledon title

World number one in tennis Roger Federer has defeated Spaniard Rafael Nadal to win his fifth consecutive Wimbledon mens single title.

The 25-year-old Swiss maestro overcame the second-seeded Nadal in five sets, 7-6, 4-6, 7-6, 2-6, 6-2. The final took 3 hours and 45 minutes to complete.

Federer, who lost to Nadal in the 2007 French Open final less than a month ago, equalled Swede Bjorn Borg's record of five straight Wimbledon titles. Borg was men singles champions at the All England Club between 1976 and 1980. Borg attended the match and met with Federer afterwards to offer his congratulations.

The match was very evenly contested throughout all five sets. Federer won the first set in a tiebreak, 9-7, which featured a series of uncharacteristic errors from both players. Both players had broken each other early in the first set.

Federer was in trouble on serve twice in the second set. He managed to recover from 15-40 down in the sixth game with three successive aces - Federer ended up serving 24 aces in the match to Nadal's one. However, he couldn't repeat the effort in the tenth game, and Nadal broke to close the set out 6-4.

The third set went on serve for all twelve games, with no breaks leaving the score at 6-all. Federer won the tiebreak 7-3.

The fourth set was entirely

different again. Nadal charged out to a 4-0 lead, aided by the assistance of the Hawkeye appeals system. Federer, who has been an outspoken critic of the technology, snapped at the end of the third game after a Nadal ball was called 'out' but overturned after Hawkeye revealed that 2mm of the ball had touched the back of the line. "How in the world was that ball in? ...

Look at the score now. This system is killing me," he said in the direction of the umpire. Nadal went on to win the set 6-2 with no further breaks of serve.

The players entered the final set, the first for Federer in his five-year reign as Wimbledon champion, and the defending champion had to scrap to save his first two service games. Down 15-40 in both, he managed to hold on, and it appeared to deflate Nadal. Nadal was then broken by Federer - his first break since the first set - in the sixth game to lead 4-2, with Federer producing some high-quality shots to break the serve. He held serve to love to lead 5-2, and then broke Nadal on his second match point to win the final.

The match was the third-longest men's final, at 3 hours 45 minutes, in the history of the Wimbledon championships. Federer has now won eleven Grand Slam titles, and has a record of 11-2 in Grand Slam finals. The two losses were both against Nadal and both at the French Open, the only one of the four Grand Slams he is yet to win.

2007 AFC Asian Cup: Australia draw with Oman, hosts Vietnam upset UAE

Tournament favourites and debutants Australia have drawn 1-1 with a skillful Oman in the second match in Group A of the 2007 AFC Asian Cup.

Oman shocked the Socceroos when they scored on thirty-two minutes, after some enterprising play on their left-hand flank. A ball cut back made its way through the Australian defence to Omani striker Badar Mubarak, who slotted the ball low into the left-hand corner of the goal.

Oman very nearly had a second goal on three separate occasions in the second half. They were only denied by three world-class saves by Australian goalkeeper Mark Schwarzer, including a low save from a driving volley by Ahmed Mubarak, a reflex save to stop a point-blank header in the seventieth minute, and then another low-down save minutes later from Fawi Bashir's driving shot.

A heavy downpour began ten minutes prior to the final whistle, and it appeared to reinvigorate Australia. They pressed forward in numbers, and were rewarded in injury time with a goal to Everton midfielder Tim Cahill, after a low volley by Marco Bresciano was well-saved by Omani keeper Suleiman Al Mazroui.

Cahill achieved the remarkable double of scoring both Australia's first Asian Cup and World Cup goals, after he scored in the eighty-third minute of their match against Japan at the 2006 FIFA World Cup. He and John Aloisi capped off the comeback by scoring twice late to defeat Japan 3-1.

The Australian players were visibly frustrated by Oman's play-acting tactics, which saw the stretcher used four times in the first half alone. British match commentator Simon Hill described the tactics as "a blight to the game" and "absolutely rubbish", the latter in

relation to one incident where no contact was made whatsoever. When queried about it after the game, Arnold said cynically "welcome to Asia".

The Australians were flat and their defending was poor, said coach Graham Arnold at the post-match media conference. He also commented on goalkeeper Schwarzer's three fantastic saves, saying "Mark Schwarzer's got us out of jail. Schwarzer's made two unbelievable saves, otherwise it's 2-0 and all over".

The draw leaves all four Group A teams equal on the table on one point, with one goal for and one against, following Iraq 1-1 draw with hosts Thailand yesterday.

In the other game played yesterday (UTC), co-hosts Vietnam caused a major shock by defeating United Arab Emirates in their Group B fixture.

The Emirates are the current Gulf Cup champions, and the hosts were expected to struggle to win this match, or progress from Group B which includes two-time Asian champions Japan and Asian Games gold medallists Qatar. Vietnam is playing at Asian Cup level for the first time in nearly half a century.

UAE had the better of the chances in an otherwise-even first half, with the best Faisal Khalil's shot in the thirtieth minute, which was well-saved by Vietnamese goalkeeper Duong Hong Son who managed to turn the ball around the post for a corner.

However, they scored two second half goals to take the three points from the My Dinh National Stadium. On sixty-three minutes, a counter-attack from the half-way

line involving three Vietnamese players resulted in defender Huynh Quang Thanh putting the ball in the back of the net.

Vietnamese player of the year Le Cong Vinh made it 2-0 nine minutes later when he chased down a long ball and calmly lobbed it over Emirates goalkeeper Majed Nasser, who had come off his line to try and avert the danger.

Bruno Metsu, coach of the United Arab Emirates, substituted players and launched an all-out attack to try and salvage something, but failed to find the goals he needed.

Sony announces new 80GB PlayStation 3 and reduces price of 60 GB version

On July 9, 2007, Sony Computer Entertainment America announced the release of an 80GB hard drive version of its PlayStation 3 video game console, priced at US\$599.

Sony also announced a price drop to US\$499 for its current 60GB model. Jack Tretton, Sony Entertainment America chief executive, said, "Our initial expectation is that sales should double at a minimum."

Nigerian gunmen release British toddler

Nigerian gunmen have released three-year-old Margaret Hill, after holding her captive for four days. The toddler has since been reunited with her parents. She is reportedly in good health but covered with mosquito bites and also hungry, having not eaten recently.

The kidnappers had threatened to kill the toddler unless a ransom was paid or Mr. Hill came to take her place. The family claims no ransom was paid for her freedom. She was kidnapped from her car

on July 5, on her way to school. Her driver was stabbed trying to protect Margaret.

Today in History

1584 – William the Silent, the Prince of Orange, was assassinated at his home in Delft, Holland by Balthasar Gérard.

1796 – German mathematician and scientist Carl Friedrich Gauss discovered that every positive integer is representable as a sum of at most three triangular numbers, writing in his diary his famous words, "Heureka! num = $\Delta + \Delta + \Delta$."

1925 – Indian guru Meher Baba began his silence of 44 years until his death in 1969.

1962 – Telstar, the world's first active, direct relay communications satellite, was launched by NASA aboard a Delta rocket from Cape Canaveral.

1985 – French intelligence agents bombed and sunk the Greenpeace vessel Rainbow Warrior, while docked in a port of Auckland, New Zealand, to prevent her from interfering in a nuclear test in Moruroa.

July 10 is Independence Day in the Bahamas (1973); Silence Day.

Quote of the Day

There lies before us, if we choose, continual progress in happiness, knowledge, and wisdom. Shall we, instead, choose death, because we cannot forget our quarrels? We appeal as human beings to human beings: Remember your humanity, and forget the rest. If you can do so, the way lies open to a new Paradise; if you cannot, there lies before you the risk of universal death.

~ Bertrand Russell in the Russell-Einstein Manifesto

Word of the Day

vacillate; v

1. To sway unsteadily from one

side to the other; to oscillate.

2. To swing indecisively from one course of action or opinion to another.

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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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