



Top Stories

Shooting at Virginia Tech college in USA; at least 33 dead

Two shootings at Virginia Tech in Blacksburg, Virginia have left 33 people dead, and many more injured. The gunman, who took his own life, is amongst the dead.



Pro-secular Turks rally against Erdogan's possible presidential candidacy

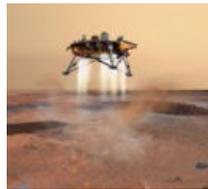
Several hundred thousand protesters marched on Saturday in Turkey's capital Ankara to ensure that Turkey remains a secular Republic, and to deter prime minister Recep Tayyip Erdoğan from candidacy for the presidency.



Featured story

Canada contributes weather station to NASA Mars mission

Canada has contributed a significant component to NASA's Phoenix mission to Mars, announced Maxime Bernier, Canada's Minister of Industry. In a news release on Thursday, Bernier, who is also responsible for the Canadian Space Agency (CSA), indicated that Canada had provided a meteorological station, named MET.



Wikipedia Current Events

- Sudan agrees to allow 3,000 United Nations troops in Darfur to support a 7,000 strong African Union force.
- A series of shootings at the Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University campus in Blacksburg, Virginia leaves at least 33 people (including the gunman) dead and 29 others wounded, making it the deadliest school shooting incident in U.S. history.
- The offices of the Prosperous Armenia political party in Yerevan are bombed. No one is killed and no one has claimed responsibility.
- The United States, Japan and India carry out a joint naval exercise in the Pacific Ocean in an attempt to increase strategic cooperation.
- Kalyk Imankulov, the former Chairman of the Kyrgyz National Security Service, joins the United Front For A Worthy Future For Kyrgyzstan political alliance. The alliance is staging its sixth day of protests as it calls for the resignation of President Kurmanbek Bakiyev.
- Former Macedonian Interior Minister Ljube Boskovski and his ex-bodyguard Johan Tarculovski face trials for war crimes at the International Criminal Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia at The Hague.
- Wal-Mart retakes the #1 position on the 2007 Fortune 500 list with US\$351.1 billion in revenue for

Wikipedia Current Events

- F/Y 2006, beating previous #1 ExxonMobil by \$3.9 billion.
- At least 11 people die in southern India as a passenger train runs into a minibus carrying local officials near the village of Thirumatpur in Tamil Nadu.
- At least ten Afghan police die in a suicide bombing in Kunduz in northeastern Afghanistan.

Shooting at Virginia Tech college in USA; at least 33 dead

Two shootings at Virginia Tech in Blacksburg, Virginia have left 33 people dead, a gunman included, in the deadliest civilian shooting in the United States. A further 15 people are being treated in a hospital. According to police, the gunman committed suicide.

At a 4:45 p.m. EST press conference it was stated that no names of the injured or killed will be released soon. According to the press conference, the shooter shot and killed two people at an on-campus dormitory in a "domestic dispute." He then walked to the other end of the campus and began to open fire on students.

Two separate shootings are reported to have taken place; one at 7:15 AM at West Ambler Johnston Hall, a co-ed dormitory, and one at about 9:30 AM EDT in Norris Hall, an engineering building on the other side of the campus. In the week preceding the shooting there had been two bomb threats directed at Virginia Tech; the first

at Torgersen Hall, the second at multiple engineering buildings. The university had offered a \$5,000 reward for information on these threats.

Police do not know if the incidents are connected and are trying to establish a link.

Officials believe that the shooter at Norris Hall was an Asian male in his 20s who was wearing a maroon cap and a leather jacket.

Two people, one male and one female were shot and killed at West Ambler Johnston Hall, in what police initially were led to believe was domestic incident. That building was secured immediately by police, who had "reason to believe " that the gunman had already left the building.

Police, who were hiding behind trees and other cover at the time, told students to "get out of there". Matt Waldron, a student at Virginia Tech, claims that two students panicked and jumped out of the top story of West Ambler Johnston Hall, which houses at least 895 male and female students out of Virginia Tech's student population of over 28,000. One student broke his leg, while another was described as "not in good shape".

The second shooting occurred approximately two hours after the first at Norris Hall. In this incident 31 people died, including the gunman. Police indicated that he had taken his own life.

Video taken from the cell phone camera of Jamal Albarghouti watches police move into position as 27 shots (some fired in continuous bursts) are fired inside Norris within the small time it was recording. The weapon or weapons involved have been speculated to

be either a pair of 9mm handguns or a single 9mm handgun with a .22 caliber handgun, although the police declined to reveal the weapon or weapons used by the shooter.

The video also gives a loud bang at the end. This has been speculated to be some kind of an instrument or tactical explosive used by police (the doors to Norris Hall were found to be chained), or whether it is a separate weapon used by the shooter is still unclear.

The university has canceled all classes, and is urging students to stay indoors and away from windows, even though the police had already taken one person into custody. The university also requests that "persons off campus not come to campus".

A message posted on the Virginia Tech web page said that classes will be canceled today and tomorrow. Faculty and students have been told to evacuate the campus. All 23 schools in Montgomery County, VA, are on lockdown.

President George W. Bush was made aware of the shootings and according to the White House said, "thoughts and prayers for those who are dealing with this." Senate majority and minority leaders Harry Reid and Mitch McConnell led a prayer service and moment of silence for the faculty, students, and everyone at Virginia Tech during the Senate floor session. House speaker Nancy Pelosi led a prayer and moment of silence on the House floor.

Charles W. Steger, President of Virginia Tech, said the following in a news conference: " Today, the university was struck with a tragedy we consider to be of monumental proportion. There

were two shootings which occurred on campus. In each case, there are fatalities. The university is shocked, and indeed horrified. I want to extend my deepest and most sincere and profound sympathies to the families of these victims, which include our students.

At about 7:15 this morning, a 911 call came to the university Police Department concerning an event in West Ambler Johnston Hall. There were multiple shooting victims. While in the process of investigating, about two hours later, the university received reports of a shooting at Norris Hall. The police immediately responded. The shooter in Norris Hall is deceased. There are multiple fatalities. The number of fatalities has not been confirmed, victims have been transported to various hospitals in the immediate area and the region to receive emergency treatment. We will proceed to notify the next of kin as the victims' identities are available. "

In a press conference aired on television, President Bush said "Schools should be places of safety, sanctuary and learning, when that sanctuary is violated, the impact is felt in every American classroom in every American community."

Kenya's Cheruiyot and Russia's Grigoryeva capture Boston Marathon crowns

Kenya's Robert Cheruiyot won the men's division of the 111th running of the Boston Marathon finishing with a unofficial time of 2:14:13 seconds. This is Kenya's 15th win in 17 years. It is also Cheruiyot's third Boston Marathon win and second consecutive win. Cheruiyot first won in 2003, then again last year and setting the current course record of 2:07:14. He was able to win despite a slick, wet road, fierce

winds on the final stretch and headaches that have plagued him since suffering a concussion sliding across the finish line in the Chicago Marathon last year after a fall. "When the lion is chasing the antelope, he doesn't look back. He has to eat, so when I run, I don't stare at my time," stated Cheruiyot.

"When the lion is chasing the antelope, he doesn't look back. He has to eat, so when I run, I don't stare at my time."

—Robert Cheruiyot, Marathon winner

Russia's Lidiya Grigoryeva captured the women's division crown with an unofficial time of 2:29:18. This is her first Boston Marathon win and Russia's fourth win. She beat last year's champion Kenyan Rita Jeptoo and the American favorite Deena Kastor, who was born in Waltham.

Japan conquered the wheelchair divisions winning with Masazumi Soejima capturing the men's wheelchair crown with an unofficial time of 1:29:16 beating South Africa's Ernst Van Dyk who hoping to tie with the current Marathon record of seven total wins. Van Dyk won the Marathon's men's wheelchair division from 2001 through 2006. Wakako Tsuchida won the women's wheelchair division with an unofficial time of 1:43:29. The two wins were Japan's first in the wheelchair divisions.

The weather was of some concern due to the fact a Nor'easter pounded the area the night before that forecasters were predicting to interfere with the race. However, by morning the weather was calm with a temperature of 52 degrees Fahrenheit and some moderate rain leaving the road slick along with some stiff winds at starting line in

Hopkinton. However, the sun made an appearance during the race. However, the winds did slow down the runners somewhat. Others did not turn up at all, Marathon officials reported that 2,449 of 23,903 registered runners did not pick up their bibs.

Local inspirational icons, Team Hoyt, made up of Dick and Rick Hoyt did not take part, due to the fact, Rick Hoyt, who was diagnosed with cerebral palsy at birth could not compete as hr was recovering from surgery and a infection in his hip.

The Marathon winners receive \$100,000 USD as first prize and a olive wreath.

2007 Cricket World Cup: Australia vs Sri Lanka

Australia have beaten Sri Lanka by seven wickets in the Super 8 phase of the World Cup at Queen's Park, St. George's, Grenada. Both teams had qualified for the semi-final stage of the competition before the match.

Sri Lanka faltered early in their innings, struggling to 27-3. Silva (64) and Jayawardene (72) shared a fourth-wicket partnership of 140 to help Sri Lanka to 167-4. However wickets fell regularly after that, losing their next five wickets for just 17 runs, before Bandara and Maharooof's late stand of 34. Nathan Bracken was the pick of the Australian bowlers, taking 4/19.

Australia were never troubled by the modest target and a bowling attack missing Muttiah Muralitharan, Chaminda Vaas and Lasith Malinga. They reached the target of 227 in 42.4 overs for the loss of just three wickets. Ricky Ponting was Australia's top scorer with 66 off 80 balls while Andrew Symonds scored 63 off 71 balls. Sri Lanka's best bowling performance

came from Russel Arnold with 2/20.

Toss: Sri Lanka won, and elected to bat first.

Hawaii entertainer Don Ho dies at 76

Don Ho, arguably one of Hawaii's best-known entertainers who entertained generations of tourists in Waikiki, died Saturday of heart failure. He was 76.

Ho was pronounced dead at 11:59 a.m. Saturday at Queen's Medical Center in Honolulu after collapsing at his Waikiki residence.

In 2005, Ho was diagnosed with cardiomyopathy and underwent experimental stem cell treatment that November in Thailand in an attempt to repair his damaged heart muscle. He resumed a reduced workload in January 2006 and continued his performances at the Ohana Waikiki Beachcomber hotel until his death; his last performance was Thursday.

Born in Honolulu on August 13, 1930, Ho was raised in Kaneohe and graduated from Kamehameha Schools. After receiving his bachelor's degree from the University of Hawaii and serving in the United States Air Force, he started his entertaining career, first at his family's bar in Kaneohe, then in Waikiki since 1962. It was while he was performing at Duke Kahanamoku's club in Waikiki that his band caught the attention of record executives.

His best known hit, "Tiny Bubbles," reached #8 on Billboard magazine's charts. Ho would go on to record more albums and perform at venues across the United States as well as in Waikiki. A nationally televised variety show known as the Don Ho Show aired on ABC from 1976 to 1977.

Local entertainers remember him for his ability to connect with his audience as well as his laid-back, mumbled delivery that became his signature.

Ho is survived by wife Haumea Hebenstreit Ho and 10 children, including singer and actress Hoku Ho.

New Zealand's telecommunications ranks low in OECD

The New Zealand Commerce Commission, who promote competition in the New Zealand market, have released a report today that has shown that New Zealand's telecommunications sector is very expensive compared to other OECD countries.

In the report, the Commerce Commission ranks various call plans, both cellular and landline, with other similar plans in the OECD.

United Kingdom company, Teligen did the data gathering in November 2006. All prices exclude G.S.T. (Goods and Services Tax).

The following data is for low mobile user plans. One of Vodafone's mobile phone plan titled Vodafone Base 20 costs NZ\$299.54 annually, which was given a rank of 22 out of the other 30 OECD countries. One of Telecom's plan titled Telecom FLEXI Mytime costs \$336.11 annually, and is ranked 26. Another Vodafone plan, Motormouth Prepay costs \$386.85 which gives it a rank of 28. Telecom's Go Prepaid Mates' Rates plan costs the same amount as Vodafone's Motormouth and thus has the same rank. Note, some of the above plans are set contract plans, which means they must be subscribed to for a set amount of time, and have other restrictive terms.

The following data is for medium mobile user plans. Vodafone Base 60 costs an annual amount of \$598.01 which gives it a rank of 25. Vodafone Choose 60 + Your Time + TXT 100 costs \$660.94 each year, which gives it a rank of 27 internationally. Telecom's FLEXI Anytime costs \$811.29 with a rank of 29. Again, some of the plans above have restrictive terms and a set term contract.

The high user market plans follow. The Vodafone Choose 120 + Your Time 100 + TXT 100 costs \$886.56, which gives it a rank of 23. The Telecom FLEXI Anytime plan is the most expensive in New Zealand costing \$1,368.63 each year. It is also ranked at the bottom of the OECD at 30.

The landline plans did not fare any much better, or worse, than the mobile phone plans.

Benn criticises concept of 'war on terror'

UK Secretary of State for International Development and deputy Labour leadership candidate Hilary Benn, has criticised US President George W. Bush's 'war on terror' concept in a speech given to the Center on International Cooperation, a US think tank.

Benn's speech argued that the phrase 'war on terror' should be deprecated because it can't be won by military means alone as well as indicating that the 'war-on-terror' concept may have actually assisted terrorist groups by giving them a sense of belonging.

Sadr ministers leave al-Maliki's cabinet

Six ministers in radical cleric Muqtada al-Sadr's Sadrist Movement have resigned from the Iraqi government, because Prime Minister Nouri al-Maliki did not

push for a timetable for the withdrawal of foreign troops from the country.

At a press conference, the head of Sadr's parliamentary bloc Nassar Rubaie, read a statement from al-Sadr:

"Considering the public interest, we found that it was necessary to issue an order to the ministers of the Sadr bloc to immediately withdraw from the Iraqi government," The statement continued, "The six ministries shall be handed over to the government itself, hoping that this government would give these responsibilities to independent bodies who wish to serve the interests of the people and the country."

Al-Maliki was happy the Sadrists respected the political process. The move could have threatened to topple his government, but so far the Sadrist Movement is still part of the ruling coalition.

Undercover reporter finds corruption and drugs at private prison

Investigations undertaken by an undercover journalist, unearthed corruption, intimidation of staff, as well as exposing issues concerning availability of drugs within HMP Rye Hill prison in Warwickshire, a class B facility which is privately run. The investigative journalist finds staff living in fear of their lives and a massive black market in the prison which is run by GSL Group. The company countered that the undercover reporter, did not follow his training as a guard.

BBC's current affairs programme, Panorama, is scheduled to air an episode about the reporters findings.

UK's Department of Trade and Industry may be restructured

Secretary of State for Trade and Industry Alistair Darling said that some MPs have called for the scrapping of Department of Trade and Industry (DTI). His statement came as a survey of 145 firms found that only 8% saw the DTI playing an important role. He has, however, said that DTI needed to continue for nuclear decommissioning.

A survey of British by the British Chamber of Commerce (BCC) found that British companies feel it more difficult to start and grow a business today than ten years ago. On a positive note, of the top 750 European companies, UK companies generated a third of total profits.

Pipeline firms consolidate in Russia

According to Russian officials, Transneft and Transnefteprodukt(TNP) are to merge. The merger will create a "single network of oil and oil products via the pipelines and protect the economic interests of the Russian Federation," according to a Kremlin Statement. The move would give the companies concerned more power internationally, say analysts.

President Vladimir Putin has signed a decree, approving the merger. The Russian government would keep a 75% ownership stake in the combined firm. The merger of firms is to be complete in five months.

US still seeking missing ex-FBI agent in Iran

For the third time in a month, the United States has requested information about a missing former FBI agent believed to be in Iran. The State Department says Robert Levinson went missing while visiting Kish Island in March. He is retired and is said to have been

there on his own business interests.

Iran's previous responses have been to request more information about Levinson. Each time, the inquiries went through Swiss diplomats.

Today in History

1895 - The Empire of Japan and the Qing Empire signed the Treaty of Maguan, an 'unequal' treaty that ended the First Sino-Japanese War.

1942 - World War II: Captured French General Henri Giraud escaped from German captivity in the Königstein Castle.

1975 - The Khmer Rouge captured Phnom Penh, ending the Cambodian Civil War and starting a genocidal regime under Pol Pot under which over a quarter of the population died.

1982 - A new "patriated" Constitution of Canada, including the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms, was signed into law.

1986 - The Netherlands and the Isles of Scilly declared peace, ending the Three Hundred and Thirty Five Years' War.

Quote of the Day

Fools rush in where Angels fear to tread. ~ Alexander Pope

Word of the Day

plutocracy; n

1. Government by the wealthy.
2. A controlling class of the wealthy.

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