



Top Stories

Civilian casualties increase as Israel continues to attack Beirut

At least 35 people, including 15 children have died and 3 harbours have been destroyed in the Lebanese capital as Israel continues its aggression.

Hezbollah-Israel conflict continues, Israel issues Syria ultimatum

Hezbollah has fired two C802 missiles at an Israeli warship in Lebanese waters, 8 Lebanese children die as Israeli rocket destroys van, Hezbollah fire rockets into Israeli towns and Israel give Syria an ultimatum.

Featured story

Elmwood Village Hotel proposal in Buffalo, N.Y. withdrawn

According to the developer Savarino Construction Services Corporation, the proposed Elmwood Village Hotel which would be placed on the corner of Elmwood and Forest Avenues in Buffalo, New York has been withdrawn from the city's Planning Board and Common Council, but the proposal is expected to be resubmitted.

Wikipedia Current Events

- The 2006 Central American and Caribbean Games begin in the city of Cartagena, Colombia.
- US President George W. Bush claims that the United States and

Wikipedia Current Events

Russia had almost reached agreement on Russia joining the World Trade Organisation. Bush met with Vladimir Putin prior to the G8 meeting in Strelna.

- The presidents of the US and Russia differ in emphasis in voicing concern about the Mid-East crisis at the 32nd G8 summit in Strelna.
- US President George Bush calls for Syria to urge Hezbollah to "lay down its arms and to stop attacking". Russian defense minister Sergei Ivanov calls Hezbollah to "cease using terrorist methods, including attacks on neighboring countries".

•Hezbollah fires more than a hundred Katyusha rockets against the Israeli cities of Tiberias, Karmiel, Nahariya and Safed, as well as numerous towns. Several civilians are injured as residential areas are heavily damaged. Israeli defense minister Amir Peretz is about to sign a "home front emergency" declaration, enabling local security forces to shut down schools and close certain areas for traffic, narrowing the damages of the expanding fighting.

- Israel Air Force strikes Hezbollah targets and facilities in Lebanon. An Israeli general says all Lebanese coastal radars were destroyed, after they took part in the attack on an Israeli missile boat on Friday, killing 4 soldiers.

Wikipedia Current Events

Lebanese police reports at least 23 civilians are killed when an Israeli missile hits a van in southern Lebanon, after fleeing from a village and refused shelter by local UN forces.

•United Nations Security Council turns down for now a Lebanese request to impose a cease-fire. Israeli Prime Minister Ehud Olmert told UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan that Israel would not end its military operation in Lebanon until the implementation of UNSC Resolution 1559, which calls for disarming Hezbollah and the deployment of the Lebanese army in southern Lebanon.

•Since Wednesday morning, Hezbollah militants fired about 700 rockets against Israeli towns, killing 4 civilians and wounding more than 500. More than a 100 Lebanese have been killed and hundreds were injured, including many civilians and an undisclosed number of Hezbollah militants.

•Two Hamas militants killed in two Israeli air strikes in the Gaza Strip, one of them on a house in Gaza city.

California wildfires continue blazing

In Yucca Valley, California, USA, wildfires destroyed nearly 110 square miles of land (285 square km), burning over 45,000 acres (182 square km), as the outcome of two wildfires merging into one. Current conditions could only make it worse.

Over 3,000 firefighters and 36 aircraft were sent to fight the blaze, which some predicted would reach all the way to Big Lear Lake, a popular summer getaway vacation area, about 80 miles east of Los Angeles, California (129 km). Temperatures there reached up to 112°F (44.5°C).

Firefighters fighting the wildfire have successfully stopped it from burning the resort and other communities nearby in its path.

The continuous winds and the intense heat would only mean that the blaze would last even longer and call for more firefighters to overtake the flames.

Hezbollah-Israel conflict continues, Israel issues Syria ultimatum

As the conflict in the Middle East goes into its fourth day, Israel launches more air strikes against targets in Lebanon. Israel has also threatened Syria with a 72 hour ultimatum to stop the Hezbollah attacks that continued to injure civilians in northern Israel and release the soldiers they claim were kidnapped.

Israel said Saturday that Hezbollah fired two radar-guided, Iranian-made C802 missiles at an Israeli warship on Friday. Israel earlier said that the ship was hit by a explosives-laden drone. The ship, INS Hanit, was in Lebanese waters near Beirut Friday when it was hit. The first rocket was said to miss and the second hit the helicopter deck. Four Israeli sailors were reported missing, two later confirmed dead, as the ship caught fire. The ship has since been towed back to an Israeli sea port.

The Israeli military said that up to 100 elite Iranian Revolutionary

Guards had assisted Hezbollah in providing and helping firing C-802 missiles. This was denied by Iran and Hezbollah. Iran called it an attempt "to escape reality with the aim of covering up (Israel's) inability to confront the Lebanese nation and resistance".

An Israeli missile incinerated the people inside a van near the southern port of Tyre, killing eight children and nine adults and also wounding six others. Police said the vehicle the Israelis destroyed was carrying refugees fleeing the village of Marwaheen after Israel told them to flee via a loudspeaker announcement. Some Lebanese civilians sought shelter at a Ghanaian UN position, but were turned away and went back to the village; they were attacked as they fled for the second time.

Early on Saturday, more rockets were fired toward Israeli warships. According to the Israeli military, the rockets missed and hit and sank an Egyptian merchant ship.

Israel has given Syria a 72 hour ultimatum to stop Hezbollah's activity, according to London-based Arabic language newspaper Al-Hayat and a senior source in the United States Pentagon or else Israel "would launch an offensive with disastrous consequences.". The ultimatum also included the release of kidnapped IDF troops. Israel stated that if such a situation did not come about, they may attack targets within Syria.

Lebanese PM Fouad Siniora declared Lebanon a "disaster zone" Saturday and called upon the international community for a cease-fire and help to stop the Israeli "war machine". He added; "These are hours for unity, not for division".

Russian PM Vladimir Putin commented early Saturday that he suspected Israel had more on its agenda than rescuing kidnapped soldiers. Putin said at a G-8 press conference in St Petersburg that "it is our impression that aside from seeking to return the abducted soldiers, Israel is pursuing wider goals", without elaborating his statement.

Lebanon

At least 35 Lebanese were killed in Israeli air strikes, including civilians. According to witnesses, Israeli planes fired four rockets at the Masnaa crossing point, on the Beirut-Damascus road near the Lebanon-Syria border.

A building in Beirut where Hezbollah has its main office was hit again Saturday by Israeli warplanes. The Palestinian Hamas organization headquarters in Beirut was also targeted. No casualties were reported.

Israel's campaign against Hezbollah in Lebanon has so far resulted in the deaths of 96 people, most civilians, and at least 229 have been wounded.

The ports in Beirut and Tripoli were hit by Israeli warplanes on Saturday. Radar installations, a lighthouse and grain silos were hit in the raid on Beirut. The coastal cities of Batroun and Juineh were also hit. Two Lebanese soldiers were killed and three wounded in the attacks.

Israeli actions such as blockading Lebanese ports and targeting Beirut's Rafiq Hariri International Airport have also resulted in losses for the latter country's economy. The Israeli army said that it had struck about 150 targets so far, less than 12 of which (according to Reuters) were directly connected

with Hezbollah.

Israel

Areas in northern Israel have been under heavy shelling the entire night. Hezbollah fired 12 new Fajr-5 rockets, which hit the towns of Tiberias and Carmiel. Twelve people were wounded in Tiberias and over 60 in northern Israel, with heavy damage to property and houses.

The list of civilian locations that have been hit by Hezbollah so far include the city of Haifa, Naharia, Tiberias, Karmiel, Rosh Pina, Safed, Kiryat Shmona, and smaller towns including Ma'alot, Meron, Kabri, Shavi Zion, Horfish, Elkosh, Zuriel, Oshrot, and others. So far, a dozen Israeli soldiers and four civilians were killed, and many dozens wounded.

Israel says it has deployed Patriot missile batteries to counter rockets fired from Lebanon.

Gaza

Israel is continuing its offensive in the Gaza strip against Hamas after a soldier named Gilad Shalit was kidnapped in a raid, June 2006.

Despite the Israeli offensive, Palestinians fired more Kassam rockets from the Gaza Strip into Israel, landing mainly in the town Shderot.

Background

This is the fourth day of violence after July 11 when Hezbollah attacked Israeli army patrols and captured two Israeli soldiers in a mission Hezbollah called "Truthful Promise". Israel later confirmed the soldiers were kidnapped and then began a mission it called "Operation Just Reward". On July 12 Israel set up a blockade of Lebanon and attacked the landing strips at Beirut International

Airport as well as a fuel tank and other areas in Lebanon, while Hezbollah fired rockets into northern Israel. The scenes repeated themselves the coming days.

On July 15 Israel commenced air strikes on targets in central Beirut, the Lebanese capital, in an attempt to damage the infrastructure used by Hezbollah.

Royal Navy sailing for Lebanon

The Royal Navy aircraft carrier HMS *Illustrious* and landing ship HMS *Bulwark* have been ordered to 'make ready' to sail to Lebanon. It is reported that UK ministers are considering plans to evacuate UK citizens who are trapped there due to the Israeli naval blockade of Lebanese ports and the closure of Beirut airport on 13th July after Israeli airstrikes.

HMS *Bulwark* is currently off the coast of Spain and HMS *Illustrious* is in Gibraltar.

The UK Foreign and Commonwealth Office has advised UK citizens in Lebanon to "stay put for the time being and keep a low profile". They are advised to keep in touch with the British Embassy and to be ready to be ready for 'departure' at short notice as well as to have travel documents ready.

The move comes as the crisis between Israel and Lebanon approaches its fifth day.

United Nations Security Council imposes sanctions on North Korea

The United Nations Security Council has unanimously voted to impose sanctions related to weapons on North Korea.

The resolution demands that North

Korea 'suspend all activities related to its ballistic missile program.

The resolution requires all UN member states to prevent imports from or exports to North Korea of missiles and missile-related items as well as materials that could be used in weapons of mass destruction.

However, in order to keep China from vetoing the resolution, the resolution did not mention Chapter 7 of the U.N. Charter which is used on a legally binding document. However, the resolution is considered mandatory because of the way the it is worded.

China and Russia proposed a resolution with weaker language, but agreed to this tougher resolution.

North Korean ambassador to UN Pak Gil Yon spoke after the vote and criticized some members of the Security Council for attempting to isolate North Korea. He also vowed that North Korea will continue with its missile testings.

All Ferrari front row on 2006 French Grand Prix

Ferrari driver Michael Schumacher and his teammate Felipe Massa won the front row on the FIA Formula-1 French Grand Prix on the Circuit de Nevers Magny-Cours.

Renault driver Fernando Alonso third. A very successful qualification for Toyota team drivers Jarno Trulli and Ralf Schumacher, both cars after Alonso.

French fans noted original aerodynamic elements on the Williams-Cosworth cars - the so-called "Petronas towers" owing to

the team prime sponsor Petronas.

Australia thrash South Africa in Tri Nations rugby match

Australia has bounced back from their 12-32 loss against the All Blacks a week ago, to defeat the South African Springboks 49-0 in the second round of the 2006 Tri Nations rugby union series. Australia scored six tries, two to inside centre Matt Giteau, as they recorded their largest win over South Africa. It was the first time a team had been held scoreless in the Tri Nations since South Africa's 28-0 loss to the All Blacks in Dunedin in 1999, and the margin was one point shy of the Springboks' worst defeat in their history, a 53-3 rout by England at Twickenham in 2002.

The Wallabies made four changes to their starting lineup that lost to the All Blacks the week before. Hooker Jeremy Paul, No. 8 Scott Fava and inside center Giteau were all moved into the starting lineup, with Rocky Elsom moving to blindside flanker. Queensland prop Rodney Blake was expected to return for the Wallabies, but failed to recover from injury in time. The Springboks, playing their first Tri Nations match of the season, introduced two un-capped players; Bulls winger Akona Ndugane and No. 8 Pierre Spies.

The first points of the match were scored by Stephen Larkham, who landed an early drop goal for Australia. Greg Holmes, Paul and Giteau all scored tries in the first half. Giteau grabbed a double, scoring his second try in the second half, along with fullback Chris Latham, and replacement lock Mark Chisholm. In total, Stirling Mortlock racked up 18 points through conversions of tries and penalty goals. The match was played at Brisbane's Suncorp

Stadium, in mostly fine conditions, though the second half was covered in light rain. Next week South Africa will meet the All Blacks.

Suicide bomber assassinates prominent Shia cleric in Karachi, Pakistan

A suicide attacker detonated a bomb near the home of a prominent Pakistani Shia Muslim cleric in Karachi yesterday, killing the cleric and two other people, police said.

The death of Allama Hassan Turabi is likely to raise tensions in Karachi, which is often the scene of violence between Shias and Sunnis. Allama Turabi had narrowly escaped an attempt on his life in April 2006 when a bomb was exploded just after his car crossed the area. He was the leader of a Shia party, Islami Tehreek Pakistan, and a vice provincial chief for Mutahida Majlis-e-Amal Sindh (MMA), an opposition religious coalition.

Manzoor Mughal, a police investigator, said a lone attacker on foot had detonated the bomb at the gate of Allama Turabi's house as he was getting into a car. He died of his injuries at a private hospital in Karachi, and his guard, a cousin, and the attacker, were also killed. It was initially reported that the attacker was in a car. Mr Mughal said police had collected body parts, including the head of the attacker.

About 300 youths gathered near Allama Turabi's house after the blast, weeping and chanting slogans against the US and Israel. Reports said that public buses were damaged and set alight in disturbances following the killing, and one person was reported killed. Hours before the attack,

Allama Turabi had addressed an anti-Israel rally organised by the MMA. The MMA is strongly opposed to the US led War on Terror and Pakistan's support of it.

Today in History

622 - Beginning of the Islamic calendar.

1918 - Russian Revolution: Bolsheviks executed Tsar Nicholas II of Russia and his family at Ekaterinburg.

1945 - Manhattan Project: "Trinity", the first nuclear test explosion, was detonated near Alamogordo, New Mexico, United States.

1979 - Saddam Hussein took over as President of Iraq, succeeding Ahmed Hassan al-Bakr.

1994 - The planet Jupiter was hit by fragments of the Shoemaker-Levy 9 comet.

Quote of the Day

"If you build it, he will come."
~ "The Voice" in Field of Dreams

Word of the Day

salubrious; adj

- Promoting health or well-being; wholesome.

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