



Top Stories

Two dead, three wounded in Idaho, USA shooting

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UN denounces killing of Haitian journalist Alix Joseph

The popular radio host was shot down by unknown gunmen. His radio station had earlier received threats over its reporting on local crime gangs.

Featured story

700 new forms of life discovered in Antarctic sea

Three expeditions to the Weddell Sea were made by a team of scientists from the British Antarctic Survey bay to study the biodiversity in the region.

Wikipedia Current Events

- 2007 Israel-Gaza conflict: An IAF plane fires a missile at house of Hamas lawmaker Khalil al-Haya, killing eight people and wounding many others, according to eyewitnesses. Al-Haya apparently escaped the strike.
- DPS, the Turkish minority party, is winning the European Parliament elections in Bulgaria. It is followed by BSP on the left and GERB on

Wikipedia Current Events

the right.

- Tens of thousands of Venezuelans march in protest in support of Radio Caracas Televisión and in opposition to President Hugo Chávez, who has vowed not to renew its licence.
- Thousands gather in Samsun, Turkey to protest against the government.
- Fighting breaks out between Fatah al-Islam militants and Lebanese soldiers at the Nahr al-Bared refugee camp in Tripoli, Lebanon.
- David Hicks returns from Guantánamo Bay to his home state of South Australia. He will serve the remaining seven months of his sentence for providing material support for terrorism at Yatala Labour Prison.

Two dead, three wounded in Idaho, USA shooting

Three people, including a police officer, were killed and three others were wounded Sunday morning after a sniper gunman opened fire outside the Latah County courthouse in Moscow, Idaho in the United States. The gunman, who has not yet been identified, was believed to have fired 75 shots from outside the courthouse. Police then cornered the gunman inside a nearby church, where the gunman shot himself. Streets in the area have been closed off and barricaded.

The incident started when 30 shots

were fired into the sheriff's dispatch center, adjacent to the courthouse, late Saturday night. Police believe the gunman did not have a specific target in mind, and that the victims were shot with automatic weapons fire. The shooting is believed to be ambush-style, and that the gunman was attempting to bring people outside the courthouse, to his gunfire.

David Hicks transferred from Guantanamo Bay to Australian prison

Australian David Hicks, held for the past five years at the U.S. Guantanamo Bay detention camp in Cuba, was flown to Adelaide, South Australia Sunday on board an Australian government-chartered aircraft. Hicks is now in the custody of South Australian Correctional Services.

At a recent U.S. war crimes tribunal, Hicks plead guilty to providing material support to a listed terrorist organisation and was sentenced to seven years in prison. As part of the plea agreement, all but nine months of the sentence was suspended, which he will be allowed to serve out in an Australian prison.

"He [Hicks] has been transported to Yatala Labour Prison, where he will serve out his custodial sentence," said Alexander Downer, Foreign Minister and Philip Ruddock, Attorney-General in a joint press release. "Law enforcement and security agencies are working together to determine appropriate security arrangements. Consistent

with longstanding practice, the Government does not intend to detail these measures, but the community should be assured that public safety is the primary concern."

His lawyer, David McLeod, told reporters: "David is well and he enjoyed the trip...He was very glad to be back on Australian soil."

Hicks was the first among hundreds of prisoners who are to be tried by the U.S. war crimes tribunal at the Guantanamo Bay detention camp in Cuba. Under the international transfer of prisoners scheme, Hicks was allowed to serve out the remaining time of his sentence in his home country. A contentious part of his sentence was a ban, or gag-order, placed on Hicks to prevent him from speaking with the media for a period of one year from the time he plead guilty, which was in March, 2007. It is unsure whether the U.S. gag-order could be legally enforced in Australia.

For the five years Hicks spent in detention at Guantanamo Bay, his family and some supporters in Australia had been lobbying the Australian government to secure the quick return of Hicks.

A small number of protesters waited outside the prison, with the media, for the arrival of Hicks. Some of the protesters were labling Hicks a political prisoner and criticized the U.S. policy of holding people as unlawful combatants for so long without trial. "David Hicks is a political prisoner and it is just a complete human rights violation that our government can completely neglect one of its own citizens and leave him to rot in Guantanamo Bay," said Steve Patroni, one of the protesters.

At his trial, Hicks admitted he

attended training camps in Afghanistan, conducted surveillance of the U.S. Embassy in Kabul and revealed that he had met Osama bin Laden, leader of Al-Qaeda. He had participated in fighting against the U.S. and its allies in Afghanistan in late 2001, and was caught while trying to flee the area.

Hicks is expected to be released from Australian prison by December, 2007.

Radio 1's Big Weekend closes, sinister plot continues

Europe's largest free ticketed music event, Radio 1's Big Weekend, today drew to a close after two days of entertainment and music from some of the UK's largest musical names, including the Scissor Sisters, Razorlight, Mika, and Natasha Bedingfield. Hosted in Preston, Lancashire, the first musical event of the UK season provided 35,500 fans over the two days with not only a musical treat, but a sinister plot developing in the background.

Unknown to all but a relative few, the event itself was actually host to a live event as part of an Alternate Reality Game known as Frozen Indigo Angel. The ARG, of which this section is in conjunction with the BBC, is developed by Mind Candy, the same developers as the wildly popular ARG Perplex City, and encompassed a variety of old characters (from Perplex City) and a new character ("sacked" BBC producer, Paul Denchfield) for the players to interact with.

The opposing team, the Third Power, led by a man known as Cyrus Quinton, intended to use a Neural Override device to control the minds of the fans in attendance at the event. During the previous week, players were subject to various online puzzles, which, if

solved in time, gave them access to a pair of tickets to the Big Weekend - and a chance to thwart the plans of the Third Power.

Saturday, May 19th

With a group of players on the ground, and tens of others gathering in chatrooms across the internet, neither side had any idea of what to expect. Paul Denchfield informed the players that they had to find "key words" with various colours, shapes, and numbers. These would then form sets which, when put into a private interface (intended for Third Power operatives assisting Cyrus Quinton), gave the players map pieces. Players collaborated for hours on these sets until, finally, the entire map was completed. Players then discovered that small marks on the maps could be joined to create triangles, which showed the locations of the transmitters.

By the end of the day, the online team had finished this map

Paul Denchfield was contactable throughout the day, providing updates to the players via his blog, video updates, and a quick update service known as Twitter. Players would send leads to him and the other members of the player team who were at the event, who would then follow these leads and report back with new information. The day closed with the players having located the positions of the transmitters, but Paul informing them that they were not present at the given locations.

Sarah Hunt, who was a member of the ground crew on Saturday, described the day as "hectic". She felt "it was very team building as well, as we had to work together for the entire event." She noted that the music was "off-putting" as they were trying to concentrate on

the puzzles, but they enjoyed the music as well as interesting some new players! "They asked questions about what we were doing, thus advertising Perplex City well."

Sarah described her favourite part of the first day - finding a poster! "It was spotted on the side of a bin that was being taken out of the arena, and two other players ran after it shouting 'STOP WE NEED TO SEE WHAT'S ON THE SIDE!'. It was a brilliant start to the event, and amusing as well. I think they thought we were completely nuts!"

Sunday, May 20th

Players on the ground were given the task of disabling four of the the five transmitters that were being put into location throughout the day. This consisted of first finding a rotary padlock combination for the containing box, and then "cutting the red wire" within. The online team worked to relay messages from Paul to the ground team, as he was informing them of when the transmitters were in location (via a link to Perplex City's Violet Kiteway).

Spirits of the players remained higher throughout the day. Players had disabled two of the transmitters by 3:45pm BST, and a video was posted to Paul's blog showing the ground team in action disabling the transmitters at around 4:30pm, just as the update for the next transmitter going live was sent. It took a total of 20 minutes until the online team was notified of it being disabled.

The final transmitters that were required to be disabled were located in the VIP area of the event, which the players were granted access to by Paul. Both were disabled by 6:00pm BST, crippling the Third Power's operations for the day. Paul

announced the end of the event with a final Twitter message, reading "WE DID IT! FOUR TRANSMITTERS DOWN, CYRUS RUN OUT OF TOWN, AND THE BIG WEEKEND IS SAFE. NICE WORK AND THANKS! ENJOY THE MUSIC!". Online players had been informed that this was not yet the end of Frozen Indigo Angel - and that the prizes will get bigger yet.

MasterCheese, who was a member of the online team, said that "the whole thing was great fun, there was plenty for us to do online, and it was great to be able to help with such a huge event". He commented on the online team's effectiveness, and how they managed to find the triangles that related to the positions of the transmitters. "To find something that important from something as insignificant as those dots was quite impressive".

Apart from the ARG, the more traditional side of the Big Weekend was the music and entertainment provided on-site. With bars located around the event grounds, which covered a third of Moor Park, and the "best portaloos [the BBC] can find!", the event was packed from opening until closing with music fans on both days.

Fans were treated to musical performances by a large number of bands, singers, and other musical talents including Groove Armada, Westwood, Kaiser Chiefs, Klaxons, and Dizzee Rascal. The performances were set across three stages, the Main Stage (pictured left), the In New Music We Trust Stage, and the Outdoor Arena.

Hawk, a Perplex City player, commented that the atmosphere at the event was "very cool". In a message to the online team, he commented that it was "Bright & sunny. Way more people than on

Saturday. Occasionally seeing Perplex City players sticking out like sore thumbs!".

Radio 1's Chris Moyles was on site, updating the BBC website with humorous videos of celebrities he met around the site, with crazy challenges such as "how long can he hug Mika for". Jo Whiley joined him in a feature called "Jo Blogs" on the same website, which included short updates and snippets of video.

The 35,500 fans leaving the event over the two days were left buzzing and not ready to go home. With the event getting bigger every year, we are left wondering just what, and where, the BBC will choose to host at the next Big Weekend event.

Fighting erupts between Lebanese army and Islamist group

Gun battles erupted today as the Internal Security Forces of Lebanon, mainly the police and the Lebanese Army, tried to arrest suspects of a bank robbery that occurred a day earlier in Amyoun, southeast Tripoli. Clashes erupted between the Lebanese Army and a Palestinian Islamist group, Fatah Islam, in the Nahr alBarid Palestinian refugee camp early morning just after police raided a militant-occupied apartment. Twenty-two ISF personnels and over ten militants and civilians were killed or injured.

Fatah Islam is a Palestinian Islamist group, believed to be supported by neighboring Syria, which is accused by the Lebanese government for trying to destabilize the country. However, the leader of Fatah Islam is on the run from Syrian authorities, and Syria has shut down two of its border crossings into Lebanon for security reasons.

As the battle between the ISF and the Islamist group went on, Fatah Islam warned that the "Gates of Hell" would be opened all over Lebanon if the ISF did not back down. As a result of this warning, crossing into northern parts of Lebanon has been suspended until further notice.

Horse racing: Curlin wins 2007 Preakness Stakes

At the 132nd running of the Preakness, the second jewel in horse racing's Triple Crown, Robby Albarado rode Curlin to a photo finish victory over Kentucky Derby winner Street Sense. Going into the final stretch run, Curlin made a valiant charge to beat Street Sense by a head with a winning time of 1:53.46, matching the fastest ever finishing time in Preakness race history. Thus, for at least another year, the Triple Crown trophy will remain unclaimed. Affirmed was the last horse to accomplish what has become a rare feat for thoroughbred horses, back in 1978.

Curlin's win was as fast as track record holders (for 1 3/16 mile races) Tank's Prospect and Louis Quatorze, winners of the Preakness in 1985 and 1996, respectively. Curlin (4) paid \$8.80 to win at odds of almost 7-2. The top three finishers in the Preakness were also the top three finishers in the Kentucky Derby, albeit in a different order. The \$2 exacta of Curlin and Street Sense (4-8) paid \$23.20. The \$1 trifecta of Curlin, Street Sense, and Hard Spun (4-8-7) paid \$25.00. Edgar Prado rode C P West to a 4th-place finish, capping off a \$1 superfecta (4-8-7-9) of \$340.30.

If a rematch happens between Street Sense and Curlin, it may not happen very soon. Carl Nafzger, trainer of Street Sense, has not indicated that he will run Street

Sense in the Belmont Stakes on June 9.

Guantánamo detainee David Hicks back in Australia

After five years in U.S. military custody, David Hicks has returned to Australia. Hicks was taken to the maximum security Yatala Labour Prison, where he will serve the rest of his 9 month sentence.

His lawyer David McLeod told reporters: "David is well and he enjoyed the trip. ... He was very glad to be back on Australian soil."

The flight in a government-charted airplane took 24 hours and is estimated to have costed 500,000 Australian dollars. According to his lawyer, Hicks was grateful to the taxpayers for paying his repatriation.

Hicks pleaded guilty before a special military court to providing material support to the Taliban. He was sentenced on March 30 to seven years in prison, but only needed to complete nine months of his penalty, which expires in December.

US has paid Pakistan \$5.6 billion in 5 years for 'war on terror'

The New York Times reports that the United States are making monthly payments to Pakistan, totalling about \$1 billion annually, for their efforts against Al-Qaeda and Taliban militants. The so-called coalition support funds continued unchanged after President Pervez Musharraf decided to cut back on patrols along the border with Afghanistan.

"They send us a bill, and we just pay it. ... Nobody can really explain what we are getting for this money or even where it's going," the New York Times article quotes a senior

military official involved.

Olmert threatens to intensify response to rocket attacks

Prime Minister of Israel Ehud Olmert declared that: "If the measured steps we are taking, in the political and military sphere, do not bring about the desired calm, we will be forced to intensify our response."

Olmert held Hamas and the Islamic Jihad militants responsible for the escalation in rocket attacks on Israel over the past week. Israel answered with daily bombardments on Palestine for the past six days. Meanwhile, the ceasefire between Hamas and Fatah seems to be holding, after a week of increased factional violence in Palestine.

Today in History

1674 - John III Sobieski, elected by the szlachta, became the King of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth.

1879 - War of the Pacific: Two Peruvian ironclads attempted to lift the blockade of Iquique by Chilean battleships in the Battle of Iquique.

1894 - The Manchester Ship Canal was officially opened, linking the city of Manchester to the Irish Sea.

1927 - Aboard the Spirit of St. Louis, Charles Lindbergh completed the first solo non-stop transatlantic flight.

1998 - Indonesian President Suharto resigned, ending a 32-year reign.

May 21 is Victoria Day in Canada (2007); Navy Day in Chile.

Quote of the Day

Life — a culmination of the past, an awareness of the present, an indication of a future beyond knowledge, the quality that gives a touch of divinity to matter.

~ Charles Lindbergh

Word of the Day

procrastinate; v

1. To put off; to delay taking action; to wait until later.

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