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Ten dead in Alabama shooting

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Teenage gunman kills 15 in south-west Germany

A 17 year old gunman has killed fifteen people in the towns of Winnenden and Wendlingen, near Stuttgart in southwestern Germany, before being killed himself in a shootout with police.

Philippine exports plunge to eight-year low

According to government figures published on Tuesday, Philippine exports fell by 41% in January to the lowest levels in eight years. The plunge was preceded by a 40.4% year-on-year loss last December.

Wikipedia Current Events

The United Nations Children's Fund claims that a meningitis epidemic in Nigeria, Niger, Burkina Faso, and Mali has killed 931 people since January 2009.

•The United States National Aeronautics and Space Administration delays the Space Shuttle Discovery's mission to the International Space Station due to a hydrogen gas leak.

•China's exports contract 25.7%, the worst decline in more than

Wikipedia Current Events

ten years.

•The Liberal Democrats claim that more than 1,000 police officers in the United Kingdom have criminal records.

•At least 15 people are killed in a school shooting in Winnenden, Germany.

•Former Iraqi Intelligence Service Director Ali Hassan al-Majid and former Deputy Prime Minister Tariq Aziz are sentenced to 15 years in jail for crimes against humanity.

•President Nicolas Sarkozy announces that France will rejoin NATO's military command.

Feud between CNBC and The Daily Show continues to escalate

CNBC pundit Jim Cramer plans to appear on The Daily Show Thursday, in the midst of an escalating feud between Cramer and the Comedy Central show's host, Jon Stewart.

Cramer, host of Mad Money, has been the only CNBC employee to publicly respond to Daily Show segments strongly criticizing the television business news channel's financial coverage during the growing global recession, particularly focusing on specific remarks by made by Cramer and other pundits.

The feud began on March 4, when the Daily Show aired an eight-minute clip lampooning CNBC. The

comedy news show featured several clips of pundits, focusing particularly on predictions or reports by CNBC reporters that The Daily Show argued were overly optimistic or too strongly slanted in favor of the companies being discussed.

In one clip, a CNBC pundit reported Merrill Lynch said it would not need capital, which the Daily Show followed with a list of billions in bailout money the financial services firm has required since September. In another clip, Jim Cramer is shown allegedly affirming the strength of Bear Sterns' stock, followed by a Daily Show statement that the global investment bank went under six days later.

"If I'd only followed CNBC's advice, I'd have a million dollars today," Stewart said during the bit, "provided I'd started with a hundred million dollars."

Although most CNBC reporters and executives declined to comment, Cramer defended himself in a column published Monday, claiming the clip was taken out of context. Cramer said he wasn't talking about buying Bear Sterns stock, but simply reassuring a viewer that money held in Bear Sterns was safe.

"The absurdity astounds me," Cramer said of the Daily Show bit.

Later that day, The Daily Show responded with another montage of clips, this time more specifically

targeting Cramer.

"So Jim Cramer, I apologize," Stewart said. "You weren't suggesting to buy Bear Stearns. That was something that you did five days earlier."

Stewart followed the quip with additional footage of Cramer specifically advising listeners to buy Bear Stearns stock, including footage where he said, "I believe in the Bear franchise. (...) I'm not giving up on the thing."

Cramer responded again during a Tuesday appearance on the Today show, saying, "Did I make a mistake? First of all, any time you recommend a stock and it goes down, you've made a mistake. Here's a shocker: Almost every stock is down! Any stock you recommended is bad. You know, Warren Buffett, I could run tapes from him, he would look like a complete fool."

The feud between The Daily Show and CNBC generated a significant amount of attention in the mainstream media. The Associated Press called the first Daily Show bit a "brutal takedown" of CNBC. Other publications, like New York magazine, defended CNBC, writing, "We doubt there's a single news outlet that hasn't made a misstatement regarding the economy in the past year."

The Thursday Daily Show sketch ran the same day CNBC reporter Rick Santelli was scheduled to appear on the show, to discuss his vocal criticisms of President Barack Obama's plans for dealing with foreclosures. Santelli cancelled the appearance, but Daily Show executives said the CNBC montage was not retaliatory and that they planned to show it before the cancellation was announced.

Ten dead in Alabama shooting

Ten people have been killed and several injured across two small towns of Samson and Geneva in Alabama after a shooting incident by a gunman. The victims include the gunman and the wife and child of a sheriff's deputy.

The gunman started his killing spree in a gas station in Samson after 5 p.m. Eastern Time and his rampage ended 12 miles away at the Reliable Metal Products plant, a manufacturing plant in Geneva. According to a report by CNN from Alabama state Senator Harri Anne Smith, who represents Geneva County "he [the gunman] was shooting at just ordinary people going about their business".

The gunman was identified as Michael McLendon, who once worked at the Reliable Metal Products plant. He took his life at the plant after an encounter with the police. The victims include six adults and a child. The investigators are not sure what caused this catastrophic event to take place. Samson and Geneva are two small rural towns with a population of less than 5000 in Alabama in the Florida border.

Teenage gunman kills 15 in south-west Germany

A 17 year old gunman has killed 15 in the towns of Winnenden and Wendlingen, near Stuttgart in south west Germany, before being killed himself in a shootout with police.

Dressed in what has been described as black combat gear, the gunman entered Albertville school at 9.30am on March 11 2009 and, beginning with a particular classroom, started shooting at pupils and staff wandering through various 9th and 10th grade classrooms, reloading

his handgun a number of times as he did so in a two minute shooting spree.

Reportedly aiming at the heads of his victims the gunman, identified as former pupil Tim Kretschmer, initially killed nine pupils, all except one being female, and three female teachers, one of whom was still a trainee who started only 4 weeks earlier. A further seven female students were injured. There are conflicting reports if a tenth student died from injuries later. Other students were injured as they attempted to escape by jumping out of windows.

Police received a call within three minutes at 9:33 a.m. the police entered the school at 9:40 a.m. to discover the bodies of the slain victims. A pupil managed to call for help using a mobile phone, and the headmaster apparently gave an early warning via the intercom so that some of the teachers were able to lock the doors to their classrooms from the inside, probably preventing more killings. From the first floor of the school, Kretschmer fired at the first police who arrived on the scene.

Kretschmer fled the school as further police arrived, and killed a gardener in a nearby clinic as he did so.

As the police evacuated the 1,000 pupil secondary school, Kretschmer, hijacked a Volkswagen Sharan and forced the driver to drive him south. Slowed by a traffic jam Kretschmer forced the driver to drive towards Wendlingen.

A police checkpoint was not able to apprehend Kretschmer. The car went off the road, and the gunman fled into an industrial area in Wendlingen about 40 kilometres

(25 miles) from the school.

Tracked by specialist armed police and police spotters in helicopters Kretschmer was finally cornered in the carpark of a car dealership in Wendlingen. Kretschmer, the son of a well known local farmer and businessman, made a last stand and killed a salesman and a customer before being shot by police marksmen being injured in the leg. At first it was unclear if the shooting killed him or if he was wounded and then shot himself. Police now believe that the evidence points to suicide.

During the manhunt, police stormed the youth's home in Leutenbach to conduct a search. Kretschmer's father, a hobbyist hunter, legally owned 15 firearms and one was missing from the collection. The majority of the firearms were kept securely locked as German law mandates, however a handgun was kept in the parent's bedroom and it is this weapon that is presumed to have been used. Also, all the ammunition was not locked away, and Kretschmer reportedly carried a "3-digit figure" of munitions with him.

The police are still uncertain about the motive, as Kretschmer was known as a calm, inconspicuous person to the people who knew him personally. He didn't have a criminal record and has apparently not made any announcements of his killing spree, neither online nor to any of his friends.

Two police officers remain in serious condition.

Kretschmer had been a graduate of Albertville school the previous year.

Philippine exports plunge to eight-year low

According to government figures published on Tuesday, Philippine exports fell by 41% in January to the lowest levels in eight years. The plunge was preceded by a 40.4% year-on-year loss last December.

Philippines' January export receipts equaled US\$2.494 billion, the lowest figures since April 2001, when exports were at \$2.246 billion. The statistics are down 6.8% month-on-month from last December.

The National Statistics Office said that electronic exports, which comprise over half of the country's exports, dropped 48.4 percent to \$1.345 billion, almost an eleven-year low.

The government planning office announced that the export predictions for this year had fallen to 6-8%, down from their original estimate of 1-3%.

"We expect the [export] losses will taper off in February and March. Export growth will still be negative but it will be less than in January," said the president of the Philippine Exporters Confederation, Sergio Ortiz-Luis, to the AFP news agency. "It looks like exports will be negative for the whole year, even assuming there is a recovery in the second half. It will be difficult to end up with positive growth at this point."

Today in History

1881 – Andrew Watson made his debut with the Scotland national football team and became the world's first black international football player.

1930 – Gandhi began the Dandi March, a 24-day walk to defy the British tax on salt in colonial India.

1938 – Anschluss: Austria was occupied by the Wehrmacht, and subsequently became Ostmark, a province within the German Reich.

1947 – The Cold War: U.S. President Harry S. Truman proclaimed the Truman Doctrine to help stem the spread of Communism.

1993 – A series of thirteen coordinated bomb explosions took place in Bombay, India, killing over 250 civilians and injuring over 700 others.

2003 – Serbian Prime Minister Zoran Đinđić was assassinated in Belgrade.

March 12 is Independence Day in Mauritius (1968); Arbor Day in China

Quote of the Day

Life to each individual is a scene of continued feasting in a region of plenty; and when unexpected death arrests its course, it repays with small interest the large debt which it has contracted to the common fund of animal nutrition, from whence the materials of its body have been derived. Thus the great drama of universal life is perpetually sustained; and though the individual actors undergo continual change, the same parts are filled by another and another generation; renewing the face of the earth and the bosom of the deep with endless successions of life and happiness.

~ William Buckland

Word of the Day

frumpy adj

1. Dowdy, unkempt, or unfashionable.
2. (dated) Ill- or bad-tempered.

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