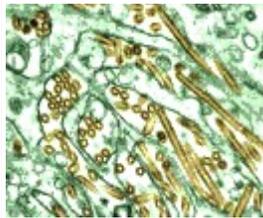




Top Stories

Indonesian Health Ministry: Two new human clusters of Bird Flu suspected in Sumatra



The Indonesian Health Ministry has stated that at least seven people, including three children from

Northern Sumatra Province in the district of Karo, are being hospitalized for the suspected H5N1 Bird Flu virus and officials believe that the infected are part of "two clusters" of family members who are sick.

Fidel Castro temporarily hands power to his brother Raul



President Fidel Castro of Cuba has handed power, including over the military forces, to his brother and Vice President, Raul

Castro ahead of scheduled intestinal surgery.

Featured story

Scientists crack age-old egg problem



Scientists in the UK have developed a new way to ensure boiled eggs are

perfectly cooked thanks to a brand new hi-tech logo being printed on shells.

Wikipedia Current Events

- Mel Gibson charged with misdemeanour drunken driving and related offences.
- Israeli Prime Minister Ehud Olmert has said that there will be no ceasefire in Lebanon until an international force is deployed in the south of the country.
- Iran's supreme leader has urged the Muslim world to stand up to Israel and the US, criticising them for their role in the conflict in Lebanon.
- An Israeli civilian is killed and 16 wounded as more than 210 rockets are fired at northern Israel, the biggest daily number since the beginning of the conflict on 12 July.
- A missile fired from Lebanon lands near the West Bank city of Jenin in the West Bank. No casualties reported.
- A massive Israeli operation is completed near Baalbek.
- Israel plans to resume air strikes after a 48-hour partial suspension.

Bombs kill several during Iraq football game

Around twelve people have been killed in Iraq today while they were playing football on a makeshift pitch on a waste ground in a predominantly Shia area in west Baghdad. According to police, two bombs, which had been planted in the middle of the pitch, were detonated. It is thought most of the victims were children.

Earlier today, Iraq's President Jalal Talabani revealed Iraqi troops would take over safekeeping of the entire country from American troops by the end of 2006. He said the takeover would occur gradually but would be complete by the start of 2007.

Yesterday, more than fifty people were killed across the country.

Indonesian Health Ministry: Two new human clusters of Bird Flu suspected in Sumatra

The Indonesian Health Ministry has stated that at least seven people, including three children from Northern Sumatra Province in the district of Karo, are being hospitalized for the suspected H5N1 Bird Flu virus and officials believe that the infected are part of "two clusters" of family members who are sick. The individuals are being treated at Adam Malik Hospital located in Medan. All individuals were admitted on Tuesday.

The Associated Press quoted Nyoman Kandun, a Health Ministry official, as saying, "there are two clusters, one with two sisters, the other with three family members, and another two of their neighbours." The three children range in age from 18 months to six-years-old.

However; experts are waiting on results from tests on the individuals and must be "scientifically proven," said Runizar Ruesin, also a Health Ministry

official.

The condition of all victims are stable, however; all victims have a fever, a cough, and flu-like symptoms which officials say resemble the symptoms of Bird Flu.

"Their lungs have not shown signs of pneumonia but we have to keep monitoring them because in one or two days things could change," said hospital director, Luhur Suroso.

According to anti-bird flu task force member, Bayu Krisnamurthi, if the situation is or becomes "feasible as far as the procedure is concerned" then poultry local to the area will be "culled" beginning "today."

In May, seven members of the same family, from the same district, were killed when becoming infected with Bird Flu through possible human to human transmission. So far, officials have not stated if this is the case or not in the new clusters.

Father pays tribute to his son who died in Iraq

The father of a British soldier who was killed in Iraq yesterday has paid tribute to his son.

29 year-old Corporal Matthew Cornish, who was married with two young children, sustained injuries after a mortar attack on a base in Basra. He was rushed to hospital, but he later died. He was the first soldier to be killed in an attack on a UK military compound in Iraq.

"I'm proud of him as a soldier and as a son. He did the Army proud," 60 year-old Robin Cornish said of his son, the one hundred and fifteenth British soldier to be killed

in Iraq since operations began in 2003.

Cpl Cornish, who served for the 1st Battalion The Light Infantry, joined the Army at the age of eighteen in Leeds. His deployments included Northern Ireland, Sierra Leone and Iraq in 2003 and 2004. He had been touring the country for a third time for three months when he was killed. His father said he would have risen through the ranks: "He would have got on. He was determined to go up the ladder and he would have got there."

Cpl Cornish grew up near Otley in West Yorkshire. He was killed on Yorkshire Day.

Yesterday, Cpl Cornish's Commanding Officer, Lieutenant Colonel Johnny Bowron, said: "Matthew was a great soldier, a fine friend and a marvellous husband and father. He will be remembered for his heart and his great character. A Yorkshire man through and through and an enthusiastic follower of Leeds Rhinos Rugby League, he was constantly teased for his inexplicable loyalty to Tottenham Hotspur Football Club."

Cpl Cornish leaves behind his wife Abbey, his three-year old son Ethan and his one-year old daughter Libby. Lt Col Bowron said Cpl Cornish's true passion was for his family. "They were what lay closest to his heart - the rest was irrelevant."

Elsewhere, in southern Afghanistan yesterday, three UK troops died after a vehicle patrol was attacked by militants. So far in 2006, nine British troops have died there.

Des Browne, the Defence Secretary, commented on the loss of life in both Iraq and Afghanistan yesterday. "Our troops are doing a tough job magnificently well. Their courage and commitment demands nothing but admiration."

Rotorua, New Zealand bans criminals from CBD

Rotorua has banned criminals with five or more dishonesty convictions from entering the Central Business District (CBD). The criminals will be issued with trespass notices banning them from the main streets of Rotorua.

Eleven out of twelve councillors, including the Rotorua mayor, supported the by-law along with support from the police.

Kevin Winters, Mayor of Rotorua, said "The ban also had the support of local businesses, who wanted an end to the thefts, assaults, shoplifting and other street crime on Rotorua streets. Crime was an issue in the area. Five strikes and you're out."

The trespass notice would ban the offenders from the CBD for three months, but would allow them to enter if they had appointments or emergencies.

They would have CCTV cameras operated by volunteers to catch offenders breaking the trespass notice.

However Bill Hodge, constitutional law expert, said "It's the king's highway and you've got a right to go down the king's highway...so I don't think they can treat you as a trespasser for going down the street."

The councillors would review the impact of the legislation in three years time.

Rotorua already has legislation similar to this one acting at the Kuirau Park, Government Gardens and the Lakefront.

Study at the University of Toronto says text messaging helps with grammar

A study by researchers at the University of Toronto found that teenagers demonstrate a strong command of grammar in their text messaging.

The study found that while informal forms such as acronyms like "lol" (laughing out loud) are used in text messaging, more formal language constructs that are not usually used in spoken language were also used in messaging. For instance, the word "said" was used in messaging instead of "was like", a common informal spoken phrase.

The study found that instant messaging language does mirror patterns in speech, but also uses constructs from a wide range of diction.

Prof. Sali Tagliamonte, a professor of linguistics at the University of Toronto, said parents and teachers shouldn't be concerned that this new medium is corrupting young people's grammar. "I don't think parents have to worry, because they're really showing that they are creative and that they have a mastery of the language. They are not using ruinous language," he said. "What these kids are doing is showing us that they have a really good command of the English language, so much so that I was really blown away by how fluidly they operate," he added.

The research was presented today at the annual meeting of the Linguistics Association of Canada and the United States.

Man arrested for photographing unrelated arrest

On July 19th, 2006, Philadelphia police took a 21-year old student, Neftaly Cruz into custody for photographing the arrest of an alleged drug dealer in his neighborhood.

Roused by commotion in his neighborhood, Cruz saw the street outside his house lined with police vehicles and proceeded to photograph the event with his camera phone. Soon after, one of the police officers walked onto his property, grabbed his hand, placed him in handcuffs and drove off with him. Gerrell Martin, a neighborhood woman, witnessed and confirmed these events. She recalls the officer said to Cruz while restraining him, "You should have just went in the house and minded your own business instead of trying to take pictures off your picture phone."

According to Cruz, "They threatened to charge me with conspiracy, impeding an investigation, obstruction of an investigation. They said, 'You were impeding this investigation.' (I asked,) 'By doing what?' (The officer said,) 'By taking a picture of the police officers with a camera phone.'"

After detaining him for over an hour, Philadelphia Police finally released him with a warning that, according to Cruz, "if the supervisor was there I wouldn't be a free man and that he is letting me go because he felt that I was a good person."

Israeli soldiers landing in Baalbek

Israeli commandos landed Wednesday at Baalbek in

northeast Lebanon, an area considered to be a Hezbollah stronghold.

The soldiers were airlifted in by helicopter, supported by Israeli warplanes which targeted at least five suspected Hezbollah positions near Baalbek. The helicopters came under heavy Hezbollah fire and had to retreat while the Israeli raid was ongoing.

Israeli aircrafts hit "several" locations near Baalbek and there was a large amount of helicopter activity east and west of Baalbek, according to the Lebanese army sources.

Hezbollah said Israeli commandos were pinned down inside the Dar al-Hikma Hospital near Baalbek when Hezbollah fighters surrounded the building. The Israeli soldiers inside were said to be checking the identification papers of patients and staff. The skirmishes between the Israeli commandos and Hezbollah fighters lasted several hours. Five Lebanese men were captured by the commandos and subsequently airlifted from the area.

Israeli forces claimed it had killed up to ten Hezbollah fighters and seized five more in Jemmaliyeh, near the eastern Lebanese city of Baalbek. Between 16 to 19 civilians, including 4 to 7 children, were reportedly killed. Hospital sources said that 20 people were wounded in the Israeli raids. Police reported that five Lebanese men were captured and taken into Israel by the commando team.

Dan Halutz, Israeli chief of staff, said: "We have carried out this operation to prove that we can hit everywhere in Lebanon". He added: "during the Baalbek operation special forces captured

five members of Hezbollah while more than 10 others were hit."

A Hezbollah statement said "the Islamic Resistance announces that it has foiled an Israeli landing operation in Baalbek and denies that the enemy had captured any of its members". Hezbollah claimed those abducted were civilians.

Today in History

435 - Nestorius, the originator of Nestorianism, was exiled by Byzantine Emperor Theodosius II to a monastery in Egypt.

1916 - Sir Roger Casement was hanged for his role in the Easter Rising in Ireland.

1923 - Calvin Coolidge was inaugurated as the 30th President of the United States, succeeding Warren G. Harding.

1940 - World War II: Approximately 175,000 Italian troops invaded British Somaliland, beginning the East African Campaign.

1948 - Whittaker Chambers accused Alger Hiss of being a communist and a Soviet spy.
August 03 is Independence Day in Niger (1960)

Quote of the Day

"Somewhere, he thought, on the long backtrack of history, the human race had accepted an insanity for a principle and had persisted in it until today that insanity-turned-principle stood ready to wipe out, if not the race itself, at least all of those things, both material and immaterial, that had been fashioned as symbols of humanity through many hard-won centuries."

~ Clifford D. Simak

Word of the Day

arachnidism; n

1. The condition of being poisoned as a result of a spider's bite.

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