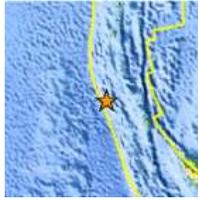


Top Stories

Large 7.2 quake rocks Indian Ocean



In response to another major earthquake near the India's Nicobar Islands in the Indian Ocean (about 690 miles southwest of Bangkok, Thailand), the

government agencies briefly issued tsunami warnings. It was later determined that the type of earthquake that hit, although strong, does not spawn large tsunami.

WHO: China engaging in bird flu cover up



The World Health Organization's Beijing spokesman has said that the People's Republic of China has withheld vital information regarding H5N1 outbreaks, a type of bird flu that is infecting animals throughout Asia.

Featured story

Space Shuttle Discovery launch scheduled for Tuesday



NASA has announced that the Space Shuttle Discovery is due to blast off on Tuesday 26 July at 10.39 am EDT.

Wikipedia Current Events

- A magnitude 7.2 earthquake occurs off the Nicobar Islands at 1542 UTC, near the epicentre of the 26 December 2004 earthquake. The U.S. Geological Survey warns of the possible risk of tsunamis in the region. (USGS). The Thai authorities have issued a tsunami warning for their southwest coast. USGS reports the quake was felt in Chennai, India, and Phuket, Thailand.

Wikipedia Current Events

- 56 people die in Nigeria when a bus travelling from Lagos crashes and falls off a bridge into the Gadar Tamburawa river, just south of Kano. It is believed that the driver fell asleep as he drove.
- At least 40 people, mostly civilians, have been killed when a Suicide Truck Bomb exploded at a police station in the Iraqi Capital of Baghdad.
- Two Israeli civilians and two Palestinian militants have been killed. The Israelis were killed by Palestinian militants on the Kisufim road in the Gaza Strip, and the IDF Engineering forces killed the two militants. The al-Aqsa Martyrs' Brigades, the Popular Resistance Committees and Islamic Jihad all claimed responsibility for the attack.
- A Palestinian attempted suicide bomber from Jebaliya was caught near Kibbutz Nir Am, near Sderot, just outside the Gaza Strip.
- American cyclist and cancer survivor Lance Armstrong wins his seventh consecutive Tour de France. Armstrong has announced that this will be his last tour and he will be retiring from the sport.

Egyptians conduct roundup of bombing suspects



Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak vowed to hunt down the terrorists.

A new explosive detonated on Sunday near the Pyramids of Giza in Egypt police said. It was reportedly carried by a man from a tourist bazaar. The man allegedly was carrying the bomb in a sack. It might accidentally have exploded in the area of Kufr Tuhumus. No other injuries were

reported except to the bomber himself, Sami Gamal Ahmad, who was too badly injured to be questioned. The man may have been taking the explosive to the tourist area of Kerdassa, where souvenir shops are located in a bazaar near the pyramids, said an official.

Egyptian security forces have detained 70 suspects in a sweep to find the perpetrators in Saturday's early morning bombings that killed 88 and left hundreds injured.

The police investigation of the bombings has targeted a smaller number of people than the October 2004 roundup that followed attacks in the Sinai resorts of Tabas and Ras Shitan. 3,000 people were detained for questioning in those bombings. According to Canadian CTV, 200 of those people are believed to still be in custody.

A massive manhunt was undertaken in the Sinai Peninsula to identify whether it was foreigners who executed the attack. One security official speaking on the condition of anonymity told an Al Jazeera reporter that the bombers "did not appear to be locals." But the New York Times reported that Bedouin leaders were arriving at the local police headquarters, possibly over concerns that many of the suspects picked up in the prior bombing in the region were, by human rights group accounts, Bedouin.

Among the dead, officials said victims included British, Russian, Dutch, Kuwaitis, Saudis, Qataris, Czech Republic and native Egyptians. Sixty were identified as Egyptians, and at least eight were foreigners.

Malaysian Prime Minister Abdullah Ahmad Badawi said, "The whole world is getting very disturbed. The frequency [of attacks] seems to be mounting." Badawi chairs the 57-nation Organization of the Islamic Conference.

Resort hotels are being abandoned by tourists. At the nearest international airport, hundreds are reported trying to get flights

out.

Three bombs erupted in the Red Sea resort of Sharm el-Sheikh just after 1am. At the Ghazala Gardens hotel, work is underway to clear the destroyed reception lobby where emergency teams have gavin up the search for survivors. A car with 660 pounds of explosives drove into the hotel's driveway and detonated in an apparent suicide attack.

The day of the bombings is marked as an Egyptian national holiday that commemorates the bloodless coup by a group of army officers that brought them to power after deposing King Farouk in 1952. Egypt has been the victim of 15 tourist attacks since October 1992.

Tsunami warning briefly issued for Indian Ocean after latest earthquake



Location of earthquake epicenter.

In response to another major earthquake near the India's Nicobar Islands in the Indian Ocean (about 690 miles southwest of Bangkok, Thailand), the government agencies briefly issued tsunami warnings. It was later determined that the type of earthquake that hit, although strong, does not spawn large tsunamis.

The U.S. Geological Survey, National Earthquake Information Center reported that the earthquake occurred at 15:42:05 (UTC) on Sunday, July 24, 2005, and registered as a magnitude 7.2 earthquake. Its location is 7.926°N, 92.146°E

The Japan Meteorological Agency reported at 16:11 UTC that an earthquake had occurred at 15:42 UTC near the Indo-Chinese Peninsula (N8.7, E92.1). The scale of this earthquake was estimated by JMA to be 7.3 on the Richter scale, and its seismic center near the Nicobar Islands in the Indian Ocean.

"There is a possibility of a destructive local tsunami in the Indian Ocean," said the JPA,

when it issued its warning. But that possibility did not come to fruition.

This was made clear in a report from the U.S. National Earthquake Information Center said in a bulletin that "No tsunami threat exists to coastlines in the Pacific, however earthquakes of this size sometimes generate local tsunamis that can be destructive along coasts located within a few hundred kilometers of the earthquake epicenter. As the center does not have sea level gauges outside the Pacific, they will not be able to detect or measure a tsunami if one occurs. It can be assumed the danger has passed if no tsunami waves are observed near the epicenter within an hour of the earthquake."

The US Geological Survey's Waverly Person told the BBC that the event was "unlikely to spark a tsunami".

Thai TV station MCOT is reporting that everything is under control and there has been no confusion. In Phuket and Trang provinces, the sea level is reported to currently be at normal levels. At 1:25 (local time) Thai National Disaster Warning Center cleared the tsunami warning nationwide.

The federal top administrator of the Nicobar Islands, Ram Kapse, told Reuters news agency that there had been no reports of casualties or damage from any of the inhabited islands.

World Health Organisation: China engaging in bird flu cover up



Map of China. Source: CIA World Factbook

The World Health Organization's Beijing spokesman has said that the People's Republic of China has withheld vital information regarding H5N1 outbreaks, a type of bird flu that is infecting animals throughout Asia. The animals most affected by the disease are those among waterfowl and poultry, however in recents months it has infected humans and had also been

discovered in tigers as well as swine. The Nation magazine quotes WHO officials has saying that the strain has the potential of causing a human pandemic resulting in tens of millions of deaths on a global scale.

The first appearance of this type of flu was in Hong Kong during 1997. As of July 21, 2005, one hundred and nine cases of human infection have been confirmed resulting in fifty five deaths outside of China reports the Centers for Disease Control. The Economist says eleven countries across Asia have been affected, and more than one hundred and twenty million birds have died from infection or been culled. Although this week a case was found in Russia making it the first European country with an infection and twelfth in the world.



World Health Organization logo. Source: U.S. Census Bureau

Usually these flu viruses are carried worldwide by wild bird populations in their intestines and are non-lethal. However this variant has mutated into the most lethal strain of influenza ever recorded says Mike Davis, author of *The Monster at Our Door: The Global Threat of Avian Flu*. Such occurrences are natural and have happened in the past has in the 1918 Spanish influenza pandemic.

The current virus is morphing into a type that is spread among humans with the first human-to-human cases found in Vietnam during 2005. When avian influenza subtypes adapt for this mode of transmission the effect is deadly for humans as the immune system has no natural immunities for it and the production of appropriate antibodies to fight the infection takes some time.

Further complicating the effort to combat H5N1, it was reported that the People's Republic of China has been illegally administering the medication Amantadine to poultry; the result has been that the virus is now largely immune to the medication and

is significantly deadlier. World Health Organization officials had been preparing to use the drug to fight a future pandemic and now it has been rendered useless.

Chinese government officials have said more than 1,000 migratory birds have been found dead during 2005 and there have been unofficial Internet reports of one hundred and twenty related human fatalities that are strongly denied by Beijing. The United Nations has criticized the Chinese government for withholding vital information to fight the virus as it did in the SARS outbreak.

Margaret Chan, WHO director of pandemic influenza preparedness is pressing China to allow laboratories to examine specimens from birds in Qinghai, where the H5N1 virus has killed more than 5,000 birds from five species. Recombinomics has found Chinese message boards indicating part of Qinghai province may be under martial law and quarantine.

Three outbreaks of H5N1 have affected China in recent months but the World Health Organization has not received the information or the virus samples from infected birds that they requested. "It is a matter of urgency," said Roy Wadia, the WHO's speaker in China. "We stress that this virus is highly unpredictable and versatile and can change any time. It is highly dangerous."

Critics honor 2004-2005 best in U.S. TV



The Television Critics Association (TCA) announced the winners of its annual Critic's Award for best in television programming June 23, in Beverly Hills, California. The TCA is made up of approximately 200 television writers and columnists in the U.S. and Canada.

The awards, except for the Heritage Award and Lifetime Achievement Award, were for outstanding programs first broadcast in the United States between June 2004 and May 2005.

ABC's *Desperate Housewives* was named Program of the year, while the Network's *Lost* was named as best dramatic program.

The critics' choice for best comedy series was Fox's *Arrested Development*.

Awards for acting and performance went to Hugh Laurie in Fox's *House* for best dramatic performance while best comedic performance honors went to Jon Stewart of Comedy Central's *The Daily Show* with Jon Stewart.

The TCA awarded American comedian Bob Newhart with its Lifetime Achievement Award. The Heritage award for program "that has transcended its medium to profoundly impact on society or culture" was presented to ABC late night news program, *Nightline*.

Lance Armstrong wins Tour de France for seventh time



United States sportsman Lance Armstrong today won the international cycling competition Tour de France. This is the seventh consecutive win for Armstrong. It is also his last, as Armstrong announced prior to the race that he will be retiring from professional cycling after the competition.

The last leg was an 89.8-mile stretch from Corbeil-Essonnes to Paris' famed Champs-Elysees. But poor weather conditions affected the finale.

The official race time clock was stopped when the riders reached the Champs Elysee due to rain making the famous cobble stones slippery. However, the rain stopped and the stones dried during the eight final laps of the famous road, and time-bonuses were awarded for the stage win.

Alexandre Vinokourov of Kazakhstan, riding for T-Mobile, won the stage after his break-away from the field 1,500m out could not be reeled in by the peloton, relegating the

sprinters to lower placings. The 20s time bonus moved Vinokourov to fifth overall in the race.

As Armstrong was presented the final Yellow Jersey, he was quoted in the press as saying in a mixture of French and English, "Vive le Tour, forever." The winning Yellow Jersey is awarded to the cyclist who had the best overall performance throughout the tour's circuit.

Opposition parties rally in Baku for fair elections

Around four hundred people demonstrated in Baku, Azerbaijan, yesterday, demanding that parliamentary elections to be held on November 6 be free and fair. The National Democratic Party led the rally, and other opposition parties and groups including Citizen Solidarity, Liberal Democratic Party, Free Azerbaijan, Salvation and Progress participated. The rally was sanctioned by the Baku government.

Demonstrators requested from Ilham Aliyev, President of Azerbaijan, the protection of gatherings, citizens' will and an equal chance for all candidates in the elections. They also demanded removing obstacles in development of Azerbaijani's independent media, and the return of political emigrants.

NASA announces astronaut glove design contest

NASA's Centennial Challenges program has announced its latest prize contest, the Astronaut Glove Challenge. The competition, a collaboration between NASA and the non-profit Volanz Aerospace, will be held in late 2006 and will award \$250K to the team which produces the best-performing glove within contest parameters.

The basic idea was originally proposed last year on Rand Simberg's *Transterrestrial Musings* to improve on current gloves, which have difficulties with remaining flexible while maintaining constant internal pressure.

Previously-announced competitions include prizes for superstrong tethers, beaming power, and extracting oxygen from lunar regolith. These are all part of a large recently-announced program, which will

potentially include 'an eight-figure prize for the first privately developed robotic moon lander.'

as customers shifted to electronic trading, which bypassed the need for stock exchange services in many instances.

Inter Milan's tour of England back on

The president of Inter Milan, Giacinto Facchetti, announced that the Italian football club will tour England after all. Yesterday, Inter announced that they intended to cancel the tour due to safety concerns. Giancarlo Aragona, Italy's ambassador to Britain, confirmed that tour is back on.

Inter will play friendlies against Crystal Palace, Leicester City, Portsmouth, and Norwich City between 25 July and 31 July. According to Leicester City's official website, Inter have described the commotion over the cancellation as a "misunderstanding".

Inter will arrive in England today.

Stock exchange merger could end San Francisco stock trading

After the New York Stock Exchange (NYSE) completes its acquisition of Chicago-based electronic trading company, Archipelago Holdings within the next 12 months, the impact will also be felt in San Francisco, California as the future of the 123-year-old Pacific Exchange (PCX) becomes murky.

This stems from a deal struck in January of this year, before the NYSE merger, when Archipelago struck a deal worth \$83 million to take over operations of the San Francisco stock exchange and its 260 employees. All PCX operations are scheduled to be under Archipelago control by the end of September. Archipelago had planned to maintain the San Francisco operations.

As details were released Thursday of the April NYSE-Archipelago merger to the Securities and Exchange Commission, all Archipelago functions are to be folded into NYSE operations, including the PCX stock and options trading business. The report did not state whether or not the San Francisco employees would be kept after the merger is complete.

Started in 1882 at the San Francisco Stock Market, the Pacific Exchange, along with other regional stock exchanges, has suffered

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Today in History

- 306 – Constantine I was proclaimed Roman emperor by his troops.
 - 1261 – The Latin Empire ended when Michael VIII Palaeologus and his Nicaean forces captured Constantinople to re-establish the Byzantine Empire.
 - 1909 – French aviator Louis Blériot made the first crossing of the English Channel in a heavier-than-air flying machine.
 - 1978 – Louise Brown, the world's first test-tube baby, was born in Oldham, England.
 - 2000 – Air France Concorde Flight 4590 crashed after takeoff in Paris, killing 113 people.
- July 25 is Feast day of Saint James the Great

Quote of the Day

In Xanadu did Kubla Khan
A stately pleasure-dome decree:
Where Alph, the sacred river, ran
Through caverns measureless to man
Down to a sunless sea.
~ Samuel Taylor Coleridge ~

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