



Top Stories

American tennis player Andre Agassi retires

Andre Agassi retired after a defeat by Benjamin Becker of Germany at the U.S. Open. The score was 7-6, 6-7, 6-4, 7-5.

"Low pathogenic" H5N1 Bird Flu virus found in wild ducks in Maryland and Pennsylvania

The United States Department of Agriculture has announced that a "low pathogenic" form of the H5N1 Avian Flu has been found in fecal samples taken from wild Mallard ducks located in Queen Anne's County in Maryland and in Crawford County located in Pennsylvania.

Featured story

Ghana bans gay and lesbian conference

A conference between gay men and lesbians that was scheduled to meet in September has been banned by Ghana's government which has said that "disciplinary action" will be taken if the conference proceeds, due to the fact that homosexuality is illegal in that country.

Wikipedia Current Events

•Spain win the first place in the gold medal game at the FIBA World Championship 2006 against Greece. The game, held in Saitama, Japan, ended with a final score of 70-47. This is the first time the Spanish national basketball team has achieved a gold medal in a World

Wikipedia Current Events

Championship.

•Andre Agassi loses to Benjamin Becker in the 4th round of the US Open. The final score is 7-5, 6-7 (4), 6-4, 7-5. This match marks Agassi's retirement, after 21 years of playing in the US Open.

•Egyptian daily Al Akhbar reports that 3 Palestinian terrorists are planning to carry out attacks on Israelis holidaying in the Sinai Peninsula, Egypt.

•Europe's first lunar probe, Smart-1, successfully crash-lands onto the moon, ending its 16 month mission.

•Mouwaffak al-Rubaie, the National Security Adviser of Iraq, announces the capture of Hamed Jumaa Farid al-Saeedi, the second most senior figure in al-Qaeda in Iraq.

•More than 200 Taliban rebels and 4 Canadian troops die in a major offensive in Kandahar, Afghanistan.

Two-day NATO offensive sees 80 captured, over 200 fatalities

Nato claims that numerous Taliban have been killed and 80 captured as a result of a major two-day NATO offensive in southern w:Afghanistan which also saw the deaths of four Canadian NATO soldiers. On Saturday, a British military reconnaissance plane supporting the operation crashed killing all 17 on board.

The stated objective of the offensive is to gain control of the

Taliban stronghold of Panjwaii, an area covering roughly between 20 and 40 kilometres of terrain west of Kandahar city.

"Reports indicate that more than 200 Taliban fighters have been killed since Operation Medusa began early Saturday morning," said a NATO spokesman. The Afghan Defense Ministry, however, puts the number of Taliban dead at 89.

Approximately 2,000 NATO and Afghan soldiers are fighting as part of Operation Medusa, the largest military operation in southern Afghanistan since July when the NATO-led International Security Assistance Force replaced US-led forces in the region. Most of the NATO combat units are from the Canadian military which reports that its casualties were sustained in fighting around Panjwayi district. British, American, Dutch and Danish troops are also involved in the offensive.

Ground troops engaged in fierce fighting have been supported by artillery and air strikes against enemy forces using rocket-fired grenades and small arms.

"This operation, which is continuing on tomorrow, has inflicted severe damage to the Taliban capability," says Canadian Brigadier-General David Fraser. "We will continue operations here. We're making good progress."

According to NATO spokesperson Major Scott Lundy, the coalition

forces have gained ground and disrupted the Taliban command and control.

The operation had "special emphasis on driving out the insurgents so Afghans in Panjwayi district can return to their homes and orchards that sustained their livelihoods," according to NATO.

British forces have denied that the Nimrod MR2 reconnaissance plane was shot down by the Taliban. Instead, they say, it was brought down by a technical fault.

The 4 Canadian deaths bring to 30 the number of Canadians killed since Canadian Forces joined the conflict in 2002.

Second in command of al-Qaeda in Iraq in custody

United States and Iraqi forces have captured the al-Qaeda in Iraq's second in command, Hamad Jama al-Saedi. He is also known as, Al-Suaidi, Abu Rana and Abu Humam. Officials say that the arrest "dealt a severe blow" to al-Qaeda in Iraq. According to officials, Saedi masterminded the al-Askari shrine bombing which occurred in February.

"We announce today the arrest of the most important al-Qaeda leader after the criminal Abu Ayyub al-Masri [the current leader of al-Qaeda in Iraq]. He's the second man in the organisation. He wanted to use children and women as human shields as our forces attempted to capture him. We continued to track him down [in the Salaheddin province] and then he moved to north of Baquba in mid-June," said Mowaffak al-Rubaie, the National Security Adviser of Iraq.

"This is a very important development. It comes in the

wake of [the] killing of Zarqawi and also a number of Zarqawi associates. Deliberate intelligence work both by Iraqi forces and as well as multinational forces have dealt a very severe blow to al-Qaeda organization in Iraq," said Barham Salih, the Planning Minister for Iraq.

The arrest was made north of Baquba when forces found Rana hiding inside a building. According to Rubaie, the building was currently in use by some families. No injuries were reported during the arrest.

Forces found information on the location of Saedi when a U.S. airstrike in June killed former leader of al-Qaeda in Iraq, Abu Musab al-Zarqawi.

14 Indian, Pakistani pilgrims killed in Iraq

Fourteen pilgrims, three of them Indian nationals, who were travelling to Shi'ite holy sites in Iraq were abducted and slain in Anbar province - the heartland of the Sunni insurgency.

An official at the Al-Hussein hospital in Kerbala stated that the men were bound and then shot in the head. Some of the bodies that were brought to the hospital showed signs of having been tortured, and one had been partially beheaded.

An attack on a Shii'te shrine this February has led to increasing sectarian violence in Iraq, prompting the Pentagon to release a 63-page assessment report that warned of a possible "civil war" between the Shias and the Sunni minority. The U.S report, however, indicated the fact that the current violence could be quelled to prevent it from escalating into a full-scale war. Washington has

been trying to strengthen Iraqi security forces to curb the conflict and enforce the authority of Prime Minister Nuri-al-Malliki, but has, so far, been unsuccessful. A ceremony to hand over operational command of Iraqi armed forces from U.S-troops to local authorities was postponed due to poor planning of the itinerary.

India's Deputy Foreign Minister E.Ahmed expressed regret over the fact that the victims had ignored an Indian advisory against travelling to Iraq. Pakistan condemned the killings and once again warned its citizens against visiting Iraq.

Al-Qaeda releases new videotape

A 41 minute long video, released by al-Qaeda, has appeared on the internet featuring an al-Qaeda operative wanted by the FBI.

The man speaking on the tape is known as Azzam or Adam Yahiyeh Gadahn, 28, a native of the United States and from California. He calls himself "Azzam the American."

Al-Qaeda's second in command, Ayman al-Zawahri introduced him on the video. Zawahiri gives "an Invitation to [join] Islam" before making the introduction.

"To Americans and the rest of Christendom, we say either repent misguided ways and enter into the light of truth or keep your poison to yourself and suffer the consequences in this world and the next. We invite all Americans and unbelievers to Islam. Muslims don't need democracy to rid themselves of their homegrown despots and tyrants," said Gadahn.

"Ignorance of Islam causes the

people of the West to rapturously applaud when Israel perpetrates wholesale slaughter of Muslims in Lebanon and Palestine and leads them to give their consent to the atrocities that governments commit in Afghanistan, Iraq and elsewhere in the Muslim world," added Gadahn.

The CIA has confirmed that one of the voices on the tape is Zawahiri, but has not confirmed if the other voice is Gadahn.

Zawahiri and Gadahn were not speaking together.

New Democrat MP disagrees with Layton's call to withdraw from Afghanistan

New Democratic Party leader Jack Layton's call to withdraw the 2,000 Canadian troops stationed in Afghanistan by February 2007 has not been universally greeted by his caucus.

NDP Member of Parliament Peter Stoffer of Nova Scotia said his views were more in line with those expressed by Liberal defence critic Ujjal Dosanjh who supports keeping troops in Afghanistan but altering their mission. Stoffer represents a riding that includes a large military base.

"To be honest with you, Mr. Dosanjh got it right the other day when he said just to extend the mission for two years without a proper debate and a plan is wrong, but to do an immediate pullout, or a very quick pullout, is also wrong, Stoffer said to the Globe and Mail adding "without a comprehensive plan, what are you pulling out for? What are you leaving behind?"

Layton said on Thursday that Canada must withdraw its troops as there is no "comprehensive

strategy to achieve peace", no clear goals and no exit strategy. He has also called for negotiations with the Taliban.

In another interview, Stoffer said, "I think just to ask for a pullout right now may be a bit early."

"You just can't say, 'Well, we're going to stay in Afghanistan for two more years' without a plan. And I don't think you can say, 'We'll pull out right away or in February' without a plan. I think both elements of that discussion should be more comprehensive in their approach," he added.

In May, MPs voted narrowly 149 to 145 to extend the mission in Afghanistan by two years. At the time Stoffer voted against extending the mission. 28 Canadian soldiers and one diplomat have died since the mission began four years ago.

The disagreement within the NDP caucus comes as the party prepares for its policy convention in Quebec City later this week.

41st Jerry Lewis telethon to run Sunday, Monday

The Muscular Dystrophy Association will get their annual boost, thanks to one of America's longest running annual programs, the Jerry Lewis MDA Labor Day Telethon.

Anchored for the 39th consecutive time by Ed McMahon, the special will be co-hosted by Kelly Monaco, who recently appeared on Dancing with the Stars, and Tom Bergeron, host of that series. Broadcast from the South Coast Hotel in Las Vegas, the live program will begin at 9 p.m. EDT Sunday and run for 21½ hours.

America's Got Talent winner Taylor

Ware will perform Monday, according to her agent. Set to perform are Celine Dion, Lance Burton, Clint Holmes, Rita Rudner, and George Wallace; a complete list was not made available on the MDA website.

Lewis started the telethon on just one station in New York City, in 1966, yet the show raised \$1 million. Last year's record total raised was \$54.9 million, as the special was aired on 190 stations across America.

"Low pathogenic" H5N1 Bird Flu virus found in wild ducks in Maryland and Pennsylvania

The United States Department of Agriculture has announced that a "low pathogenic" form of the H5N1 Avian Flu has been found in fecal samples taken from wild Mallard ducks located in Queen Anne's County in Maryland and in Crawford County located in Pennsylvania. Officials stress that the strain is of no risk to humans. Samples from the ducks in Pennsylvania were taken on August 28.

"Testing has ruled out the possibility of this being the highly pathogenic H5N1 strain that has spread through birds in Asia, Europe and Africa. Test results thus far indicate this is low pathogenic avian influenza, which poses no risk to human health. The fecal samples were collected on August 2 from resident wild ducks in Queen Anne's County, Maryland, as part of a research project conducted by Ohio State University. The fecal samples came from mallards that showed no signs of sickness," said the USDA in a statement on its website. Ducks in Pennsylvania also had shown no signs of being sick.

"Additional testing at NVSL will

confirm the pathogenicity of the virus. These results are expected within two weeks and will be made public when completed. It should be noted that wild birds are known to harbor many influenza viruses, and the finding of these viruses during routine testing is not unusual," added the statement.

Officials also state that there is no threat to the U.S. chicken industry.

"There is nothing in international rules that would indicate this low-pathogenic bird flu case being a problem" for the poultry industry in the U.S said, director of communications with the National Chicken Council, Richard Lobb, but some poultry groups are worried that some countries may impose sanctions on American chickens.

This is the second time this year a low pathogenic strain of the Bird Flu has been found in the U.S.. Two wild swans in Michigan tested positive for the same strain on August 14.

Since 1975, the same strain has shown up at least six times in the U.S.

Today in History

476 - Romulus Augustus, the last emperor of the Western Roman Empire, was deposed.

1260 - Florence and Siena fought in the Battle of Montaperti, as part of the conflict between the Guelphs and Ghibellines.

1886 - After years of fighting against the U.S. Army and the armed forces of Mexico, Geronimo of the Chiricahua Apache surrendered in Arizona.

1956 - The IBM RAMAC 305, the first commercial computer that used magnetic disk storage, was introduced.

1972 - Mark Spitz won his seventh swimming gold medal at the 1972 Summer Olympics in Munich, West Germany, becoming the first Olympian to win seven gold medals.

September 04 is Labor Day in the United States and Labour Day in Canada (2006)

Quote of the Day

"A master in the art of living draws no sharp distinction between his work and his play; his labor and his leisure; his mind and his body; his education and his recreation. He hardly knows which is which. He simply pursues his vision of excellence through whatever he is doing, and leaves others to determine whether he is working or playing. To himself, he always appears to be doing both."

~ François-René de Chateaubriand

Word of the Day

caesura; n

1. A a pause or interruption in a poem, music, building or other work of art.
2. In Classical prosody, using two words to divide a metrical foot.

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http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Main_Page

Quote of the Day

http://en.wikiquote.org/wiki/Main_Page

Word of the Day

http://en.wiktionary.org/wiki/Main_Page

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