



Top Stories

Over one hundred die in Madrid plane crash

A passenger plane leaving from Madrid - Barajas Airport has crashed during take-off. At least 45 fatalities and many injuries have been reported amongst those who were on the aircraft.



Flight JK5022, operated by Spanair, was destined for Gran Canaria when it skidded

off the end of the runway in good weather at 14:45 local time. The aircraft is reported to be on fire.

Olympic highlights: August 20, 2008

August 20, 2008 is the 11th major day of the 2008 Olympic games. The article lists some of the highlights of today's events.



United States Senator Lieberman to speak at Republican party convention

United States (U.S.) Senator Joe Lieberman is scheduled to speak at the Republican party convention, according to a member of the McCain campaign who wishes to remain anonymous. Lieberman, who was the Democratic vice presidential candidate in the 2000



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presidential election, has been one of Republican party candidate John McCain's staunchest supporters.

US Congresswoman Stephanie Tubbs Jones dies at age 58

United States congresswoman Stephanie Tubbs Jones, representing Cleveland, Ohio died today following a brain aneurysm while she was driving her car.

Wikipedia Current Events

Usain Bolt of Jamaica wins the 200-metre race in the 2008 Summer Olympics setting a new world record.

- The United States and Poland sign an agreement to place an American missile defense base on Polish territory with Russia warning that its response will go beyond diplomacy.
- Spanair Flight JK 5022 with 178 on board crashes on takeoff at Madrid's Barajas International Airport, causing over 150 confirmed fatalities.
- At least 11 people are killed and 31 injured in two bombings in the Algerian town of Bouira.
- The United Kingdom Competition Commission recommends that BAA Limited should sell two out of its three airports in South East England (Heathrow, Gatwick, and Stansted) and one of its Scottish airports (either Edinburgh Airport or Glasgow International Airport) due to competition concerns.
- An Amnesty International

Wikipedia Current Events

worldwide movement for human rights reported on August, 14, that the assault of the Georgian Army on Tskhinvali included '14 hours of bombardment' of the city. Amnesty International is still gathering information on the reported heavy civilian casualties, as well as reported bombings of non-military targets leading to deaths of civilians and the destruction of civilian buildings.

- Russia has rejected a draft UN Security Council resolution on Georgia as it did not include the full text of the EU-brokered ceasefire plan. Russia then introduced its own draft resolution based on the Medvedev-Sarkozy plan.

President Levy Mwanawasa of Zambia dies at age 59 following stroke

Levy Mwanawasa, the President of Zambia died yesterday at age 59. He died in a Paris hospital in France. His death was initially announced by an anonymous family member. It was later confirmed on television by vice president Rupiah Banda.

Mwanawase suffered a stroke while in Egypt in June of this year for an African Union summit, whereafter he was flown to France. His condition suddenly deteriorated on Monday.

"I also wish to inform the nation that national mourning starts today and will be for seven days," said Banda.

United States President George W. Bush expressed condolences and referred to Mwanawasa as "a champion of democracy in his own country and throughout Africa."

Mwanawase whose political career started in 1985 when he was appointed Solicitor General in the Zambian government. He was appointed Vice President of Zambia in 1991. He left office in 1994 announcing gross abuse of office and corruption as his reason. He retired in 1996 but later ran for president in 2001.

He won the 2001 presidential election beating ten other candidates. He successfully ran for a second term in 2006. He was one of the first African leaders to criticise Robert Mugabe.

He also criticised the West for its position on doing business with China. "You people in the West redeem yourself before you begin attacking China," Mwanawasa said.

Mwanawasa suffered a mild stroke in 2006. On July 3, 2008 it was reported that Mwanawasa had died, these reports later turned out to be false. He had been in the French hospital since early July. Rupiah Banda is now the current acting president of Zambia. A presidential by-election will have to be called within 90 days.

British celebrity Jade Goody diagnosed with cancer

British television celebrity Jade Goody of Big Brother fame has been diagnosed with cervical cancer.

Goody, 27, arrived in London Heathrow Airport on Tuesday night, having cut short her stay in the Indian version of Celebrity Big Brother, known as Bigg Boss.

Goody was a controversial character in last year's Big Brother, sparking over 40,000 complaints to Ofcom, the British broadcasting regulator after she allegedly made racist and defamatory remarks to fellow housemate and Indian celebrity Shilpa Shetty.

Goody has stated she agreed to take part on the Indian version of the show as an attempt to make up for her behaviour last year. Shetty is hosting the show, and has stated that her "prayers are with Jade."

Goody has been accused of making the announcement as a publicity stunt, but her spokesman has dismissed this as "ridiculous". Goody has stated she "will worry for [her] boys if [she] get[s] unwell". She said that she entered the house, despite undergoing medical tests, because she "can't wait around for the doctors" and that bills need paying.

Goody is said to have signed a contract worth £100,000 with Bigg Boss before her departure from the show. She is expected to undergo medical tests so doctors can see how far the cancer has spread.

Olympic highlights: August 20, 2008

August 20, 2008 is the 11th major day of the 2008 Olympic games, the below article lists some of the highlights.

Men's 200 meter sprint

Jamaican Usain Bolt, who recently set the world record for the one hundred meter sprint, has set a new world record in the 200 metre sprint with his time of 19.30 seconds, 0.02 seconds quicker than the previous world record, which was set by Michael Johnson

in the 1996 Summer Olympics.

"This is a dream come true. You come out every day to be a champion and I'm just happy," said Bolt, after the race. "I've proved I'm a true champion and that with hard work anything is possible."

The silver and bronze went to Americans Shawn Crawford and Walter Dix, respectively.

Women's swimming 10km

Russian Larisa Ilchenko took home gold in the women's marathon swim. Her final time 1:59:27.7. She beat the United Kingdom's Keri-Anne Payne by 1.5 seconds, and Cassandra Patten, also of Great Britain by 3.3 seconds.

Women's hammer throw

Belarusian Aksana Miankova set a new Olympic Record and won the gold medal in the final of the women's hammer throw with a score of 76.34.

Yipsi Moreno, who was representing Cuba, won the silver medal, while Wenxiu Zhang, from China finished in third place with a score of 74.32.

Zhang also set her new season's best.

Women's 400m hurdles

Jamaican Melaine Walker set a new Olympic record, national record and won the gold medal in the final of the women's 400m hurdles with a final score of 52.64 seconds.

Sheena Tosta, who was representing United States, won the silver medal, while Tash Danvars, from Great Britain, finished in third place with a final score of 53.84, a new personal best.

Men's Baseball

Canada, China, Chinese Taipei, and the Netherlands were eliminated in the matches leading up to the Baseball semi finals which will take place on August 21. Chinese Taipei defeated Canada in a closely matched 12 inning 6-5 game, but both failed to advance. China was defeated by Cuba 17-1, and the Netherlands was defeated by South Korea 10-0. The United States and Japan also played, with the US defeating Japan 4-2, but both were already guaranteed entry into the medal round. Japan will play South Korea in the bronze medal round, while Cuba and the United States will compete for the gold medal.

Other news

Liudmyla Blonska fails drugs test
Liudmyla Blonska, who won silver in the heptathlon is suspected of using illegal substances. As a result, she faces a lifetime ban and she may be stripped of her silver medal.

Kelly Sotherton, who competed against Blonska, criticised the athlete. "I've been saying all along that she got caught doping when she was scoring 6300, so how can she not be doping and scoring 6800?" she said.

"I've not seen any of her results since early June and then she comes out here and is producing good performances, which was suspicious," she continued. "The thing I hope is that the Russian and the American who will be upgraded get their medals in a proper presentation, otherwise they will have lost that moment forever."

Nick Davies, a representative of the International Association of Athletics Federations also criticised

Blonska. "It is fair in life to give people a second chance but now (if it is proved) she has committed an offence again, it is a life ban and good riddance quite frankly."

United States Senator Lieberman to speak at Republican party convention

United States (U.S.) Senator Joe Lieberman is scheduled to speak at the Republican party convention, according to a member of the McCain campaign who wishes to remain anonymous. Lieberman, who was the Democratic vice presidential candidate in the 2000 presidential election, has been one of Republican party candidate, John McCain's, staunchest supporters.

The official who informed the press of this announcement stated that Lieberman is slated to speak on the second day, a Monday, of the convention. There has been a lot of speculation in the past months that Lieberman would speak at the convention. In a interview with David Brody of CBN, Lieberman stated in response to the question about the possibility of him being at the convention that, "well, it's not clear yet but you might just see me there."

Lieberman is currently in Georgia, with Senator Lindsey Graham, responded when asked if he would be speaking at the convention that "it's quite possible, but I'll let them announce it." Lieberman's office has not commented on this announcement.

Lieberman has been recently considered a possible candidate for the Republican vice presidential seat. The convention will be held in St. Paul, Minnesota from September 1 through the 4th. He is currently a Independent Senator in Connecticut, who caucuses with

the Democratic party. Lieberman was the Democratic vice presidential candidate back in 2000, when he ran with Al Gore.

Former communist leader Hua Guofeng dies age 87

Hua Guofeng, the successor of Chinese communist leader Mao Zedong, died this afternoon in Beijing at age 87 from an undisclosed disease.

Born Su Zhu in China's Shanxi province in 1921, Guofeng became a Communist Party member at age 15. Soon after, he became known to Mao Zedong in 1954, and as a result rose quickly through the party ranks.

After he succeeded Zhou Enlai as China's Premier, Guofeng was chosen by the dying Mao to be his successor. After becoming Premier and Chinese Communist Party Chairman, he ended the Cultural Revolution and had the Gang of Four (including Mao's last wife, Jiang Qing) arrested.

A vain leader, Hua had the National People's Congress, the CPC Party Congress, and all schools hang portraits of Mao side-by-side with himself in prominent positions. Hua also attempted to change the Chinese national anthem's lyrics to incorporate Mao Zedong, however these revisions were rejected.

He was effectively ousted in 1978 as a result of Deng Xiaoping's increasingly strong grip on the Communist Party. Guofeng was replaced as Premier in 1980 ending four years of service.

Over one hundred die in Madrid plane crash

A passenger plane leaving from Madrid - Barajas Airport has crashed during take-off. 153

fatalities and 19 injuries have been reported amongst those who were on the aircraft. Flight JK5022, operated by Spanair, was destined for Gran Canaria in the Canary Islands, when it skidded off the end of the runway in good weather at 14:45 local time. An engine of the aircraft is reported to have caught fire during the attempted takeoff.

A spokesman for S.A.M.U.R., stated that there were only 26 survivors. The plane at the time was carrying 173 people. 7 survivors later died en route to hospital.

The cause is unknown, but reports indicate that the left engine of the MD-82 was on fire during take-off. The United States agency National Transportation Safety Board said it was sending a team to help with the investigation and reported that "the aircraft broke apart and a post-crash fire ensued."

"Helicopters are continually heading to the scene, dropping lots of water... The smoke has really died down now, things seem to be more under control," said Stephanie McGovern from the BBC, commenting on the incident. Manuel Moleno, who witnessed the crash, said that "I've seen around 50 ambulances. They're still coming and going, so there may still be more casualties."

"SAS is doing everything possible to help passengers and next-of-kin and to assist Spanish authorities at this difficult time," read a statement from SAS Group, the Stockholm-based company that owns Spanair. "SAS will provide further information as soon as it becomes available."

"Boeing sends its deep condolences to the families and

friends of those lost in the crash of Spanair flight 5022, and its wishes for the quick recovery of the injured," said manufacturer Boeing which merged with McDonnell Douglas in 1997. "We stand ready to provide technical assistance."

Claim of 'Bigfoot' dead body is a hoax

Researchers say that two men claiming to be 'Bigfoot' hunters in Georgia in the United States and who claimed to have found the remains of the mythical creature earlier this month, are part of an elaborate hoax.

Bigfoot hunters Matt Whitton and Rick Dyer stated on August 15, 2008 that they were hunting for the creature in the forests of northeastern Georgia when they came across the supposed corpse of one of the legendary cryptids. After finding the body, they claimed to have taken it home where they stored it in a freezer.

A group called Searching For Bigfoot Inc. stated that they paid the hunters "an undisclosed sum" of money for all publicity related to the alleged carcass, but when researchers Tom Biscardi and Robert Schmalzbach went to examine the remains of the thawing body, they began to discover that it was nothing more than a plastic Halloween costume.

"[Within the first hour of thawing] a break appeared up near the feet area. ... I observed the foot which looked unnatural, reached in and confirmed it was a rubber foot," said one of the researchers for Searching For Bigfoot Inc., Steve Kull, who also examined the alleged corpse.

The researchers then attempted to reclaim their money and went to the hotel Whitton and Dyer were

staying in, only to find the rooms empty, and the two men nowhere to be found.

"[We are a] victim of this series of deceptions," added Kell who also said the group is "seeking justice".

Whitton and Dyer claimed they had photos, video and DNA evidence to support their claim, but only one photo portraying a blurred black figure in the distance in the forest was provided.

The TimesOnline reports that the joke fell flat with Jeffrey Turner, who as Chief of Police in Clayton County, Georgia, put Mr Whitton on medical leave when he was shot in the wrist as he tried to foil a robbery earlier this summer. "As soon as we saw it was a hoax, I filed the paperwork to terminate his employment," said Chief Turner. "He's disgraced himself, he's an embarrassment to the Clayton County Police Department, his credibility and integrity as an officer is gone, and I have no use for him," he declared.

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Human Rights Watch claims both Georgia and Russia violated rights of the civilian population during the conflict. Georgian ground offensive in South Ossetia included shelling of Tskhinvali, capital of South Ossetia, with Grad rocket systems and 'indiscriminate' use of tanks in the city, which caused 'numerous' civilian casualties and 'extensive' destruction. HRW says 'a hospital, apartment buildings, houses, schools, kindergartens, shops, administrative buildings, and the university' in Tskhinvali were 'severely damaged' during Georgian night-long

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'uninterrupted' shelling of South Ossetian capital on August 7-8. Russian airforce, HRW reports, carried out bombardments of the two buildings in Georgian village in South Ossetia, 'that could be housing the Georgian military', and attacked presumably civilian convoy of several dozen cars. HRW also confirmed the Russian military's use of cluster bombs in two towns in Georgia, killing at least 11 civilians.

- Russia has rejected a draft UN Security Council resolution on Georgia as it did not include the full text of the EU-brokered ceasefire plan. Russia then introduced its own draft resolution based on the Medvedev-Sarkozy plan.
- Medvedev: Russian troops to pull out from Georgia by Friday.
- Russia moves closer to recognizing full independence of Abkhazia and South Ossetia, as both regions are to hold pro-independence rallies within days.
- The 56 member states of the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE) agreed Tuesday to send up to 100 additional monitors to Georgia at a special meeting of its Permanent Council in Vienna.
- Russian soldiers released the Georgian governor of Shida Kartli Region, Lado Vardzelashvili after 2-hour long detention

Today in History

1772 – A bloodless coup d'état led by Gustav III was completed with the adoption of a new Swedish Constitution.

1831 – Nat Turner led a slave revolt in Southampton County, Virginia, USA, but it was suppressed about 48 hours later.

1963 – The Army of the Republic of Vietnam Special Forces loyal to Ngo Dinh Nhu, brother of President Ngo Dinh Diem, raided and vandalised Buddhist pagodas across the country, arresting thousands and leaving an estimated hundreds dead.

1968 – The "Prague Spring", a period of political liberalization in Czechoslovakia, abruptly ended after Warsaw Pact troops invaded the country, killing 72 Czechoslovaks and arresting their leader Alexander Dubček.

1976 – Operation "Paul Bunyan" was carried out in response to the Axe Murder Incident, almost triggering a second full-scale Korean War over cutting down a 100-foot (30 m) poplar tree in the Joint Security Area of the Korean Demilitarized Zone.

August 21 is Ninoy Aquino Day in the Philippines

Quote of the Day

A means can be justified only by its end. But the end in its turn needs to be justified.

~ Leon Trotsky

Word of the Day

slipshod adj

1. Done poorly or too quickly; careless.
2. (obsolete) Wearing slippers or similar shoes.

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