



Top Stories

Masterminds of USS Cole and Limburg bombings escape from Yemani prison

Twenty-three militants have broken out of a Yemeni prison. Among those that escaped are the masterminds of the bombings of the USS Cole and the French supertanker, Limburg.

Egyptian passenger ferry sinks in Red Sea

Stormy conditions sink ferry traveling from Saudi Arabia to Egypt. At least 1,000 people are still believed missing.

Featured story

Gates pledges \$600 million for Global Plan to Stop Tuberculosis

Drive to stop TB's spread gets large donation from software billionaire Bill Gates, and hopes to reverse occurrences of the treatable disease.

Wikipedia Current Events

• Iran resumes most of its nuclear program after it was voted to be referred to the United Nations Security Council. However it says that it is still open for renegotiation.

• Jamal al-Bedawi, who masterminded the USS Cole bombing, and Fawaz al-Rabeiee, who planned the 2002 attack on the French tanker Limburg, escape from a prison in Yemen along with 22 other prisoners, 12 of whom were convicted members of Al-Qaida.

Wikipedia Current Events

• The Danish embassy in Beirut, Lebanon is burned by protesters because of the continued controversy over the cartoons depicting the Prophet Muhammad.

US Army Chaplains adopt new program to aid personnel in spouse selection

The spouse selection aid program created by former minister and doctor of psychology John Van Epp has been adopted by US Army chaplains. Since the onset of the US campaign in Afghanistan, 56,000 of the active duty, National Guard, and Army Reserve personnel have been divorced. The program titled "No Jerks" was adopted with the intent of providing Army personnel subject to periods of long deployment with effective advice for consideration in the selection of spouses who are able to adapt to the circumstances that military service causes in regard to the potential family stresses of possible injury also.

Army spokeswoman Martha Rudd has said in regard to marrying in to the military that "not everybody is cut out."

Van Epp said of the high divorce rates and increased prevalence of domestic violence that "Settings like military bases are incubators ... They try to hatch ... relationships extremely fast." Epp sent 200 program workbooks to Iraq in January 2006.

Masterminds of USS Cole and Limburg bombings escape from Yemeni prison

mong 23 militants that broke out of a jail in Sana, the capital of Yemen, were 13 Al-Qaeda members that were convicted for the bombings of the USS Cole and the French supertanker Limburg, said Interpol.

Interpol released a "urgent global security alert" after the men escaped. The alert calls the escapees "dangerous individuals."

Interpol's Secretary General Ronald K. Noble said in the alert that at least 13 of the 23 men were, "convicted al Qaeda terrorists, some of whom were involved in attacks on U.S. and French ships in 2000 and 2002. Their escape cannot be considered an internal problem for Yemen alone. Unless Interpol Red Notices are issued urgently for these fugitives and unless the world community commits itself to tracking them down, they will be able to travel internationally, to elude detection and to engage in future terrorist activity."

Noble also added that "Al Qaeda terrorists have been deemed a serious threat to the entire world community by the U.N. Security Council, by Interpol and by a wide range of countries."

Noble said that he issued the alert himself because, "the escape and unknown whereabouts of Al-Qaeda terrorists constituted a clear and present danger to all countries."

Reports also say among the escapees are top militants Jamal Ahmed Badawi and Fawaz Yahya Al-Rabeei.

Interpol says the men had escaped by digging a 220 foot, (140 meter) long tunnel which took them to a mosque.

Rabeie is the leader of the group responsible for the Limburg explosion in 2002 which killed one Bulgarian crew member, injured 12 others and spilled 90,000 barrels of oil into the Gulf of Aden. He was facing the death penalty.

Badawi was serving a 15 year sentence for the bombing of the Cole in 2000 which killed 17 sailors. He was sentenced in May of 2003. After his sentencing Badawi declared, "This is an unjust verdict, this is an American verdict. There are no human rights in the world, except for the Americans. All the Muslims in the world are being used to serve American interests."

Additionally, reports suggest that Abu Assem al-Ahdal, a leading Al-Qaeda official in Yemen, may also be among those that have escaped.

1,000+ of Saudi Arabia's guest workers feared drowned

Over 400 survivors have been pulled from the water, along with 195 bodies, leaving approximately 800 still missing. Tensions are rising between the ferry owners and the families of the passengers, many of whom have been camping out on the dock since the accident. Many are complaining that they have been given very little information regarding the passengers. While details about the passengers are not available, information regarding condition aboard the

ferry have been quickly spreading including reports that their were not enough lifejackets and lifeboats for everyone, that alarm systems were malfunctioning, and the crew has been accused of ignoring problems.

Weather conditions on the Red Sea have been making rescue efforts difficult.

Manhunt on for gay bar attacker in Massachusetts

Authorities have killed the man sought in connection with an attack on patrons of a gay bar in New Bedford, Massachusetts Wednesday night, February 1. Jacob D. Robida, 18, of New Bedford was wanted on suspicion of three counts of attempted murder and hate crimes.

Robida entered Puzzles Lounge around 11:30 pm Wednesday night and asked if it was a gay bar. The bartender said yes and served Robida a drink acquired with a fake ID.

After finishing the drink and ordering a second one, Robida moved to the back of the bar where a game of pool was being played and started swinging a hatchet at a customer's head. While the bartender was calling the police, Robida struck a second patron with the hatchet and then pulled out a gun shooting the first victim in the face and the second twice in the head. A third person was also shot.

Robida was captured Saturday February 4, 2006 in Norfolk, Arkansas after a gunfight with police. A police chase began after Robida killed a police officer who pulled him over for a routine traffic stop. After his car was spotted on Arkansas Highway 201 he was chased into Norfolk and stopped

at a police barricade. Once stopped Robida killed the passenger in his car and fired on police. At this point the police returned fire and shot Robida twice in the head, and he was then taken to a hospital in Springfield, Missouri.

Robida died at 3:38 a.m. Sunday February 5, 2006 as a result of his injuries. The female passenger who was traveling with Robida and was killed before the shoot out with police has been identified as Jennifer Rena Bailey of Charleston, West Virginia. She appears to have had a prior relationship with Robida, however his reason for picking her up and later killing her is still unknown.

Rio Tinto makes more than \$4 billion

Rio Tinto Group, the world's third-largest miner, say they will return a record annual profit of over AU\$5.32 billion to shareholders, following surging commodity prices - doubling the group's profit. Earnings from operations jumped 118 percent last year.

The London-based company unveiled a net profit of 58 per cent on the previous year. The result was boosted by increases in commodity prices driven by demand from China. Chinese interests account for around 15 percent of Rio Tinto's sales.

Rio Tinto's CEO, Leigh Clifford said demand for iron ore remains strong. Prices for the steelmaking raw material and metalshave climbed to records amid rising demand from China.

"China clearly continues to have a major impact on what they are doing," said Tim Barker at BT Financial Group. "With commodity prices as strong as they are at the

moment, and not showing any signs of a change of direction, one would think there is still room for some improvement in earnings in 2006," he said.

The company produced 65 million tons of iron ore in the second half, 15 percent more than a year ago. Rio and other miners last year secured a record 71.5 percent price increase.

Rio Tinto say they are studying further mine expansion and will invest around \$9billion to meet the global demand led by China. Projects include expanding WA iron ore mines, its coal mine in NSW and copper interests in the USA.

Other investments would see the expansion of a titanium dioxide project in Madagascar and Canada, in the Cortez Hills gold venture in the USA, and in the Argyle Diamonds underground mine development in North West Australia.

BHP halts operations after mine death in Western Australia

A BHP Billiton nickel mine at Leinster, 645Km northeast of Perth, Western Australia has halted operations after the death of a mine worker. WA Police say Mark Quinn, 32, an employee of mining contractor MacMahon's, working about 900 metres underground, was killed in an explosion.

The cause of the explosion is not yet known. Department of Community and Employment Protection investigators have travelled to the site from Kalgoorlie to conduct an inquiry.

Global resources giant BHP Billiton Ltd./Plc, says employees are being

briefed and counselled over the incident. The mine will remain closed until the investigation is complete. Police will prepare a report for the coroner.

According to media reports, no-one else was injured in the explosion - the cause of which is not yet known. The accident comes almost two years after a BHP Billiton worker died in a gas explosion at the Boodarie iron plant in Port Hedland, WA. The plant was then abandoned after the incident in May 2004.

In April 2004, a man was killed at BHP Billiton's Nelson Point facility, also at Port Hedland in WA. And in May 2000 a truck driver was killed at a BHP Pilbara iron ore operation in WA. BHP Billiton employ some 37,000 people at over 100 operations in 25 countries.

Portuguese Air Force Merlin helicopters enter service

On Friday the 3rd the Portuguese Air Force started to operate eight EH101 Merlin helicopters, replacing the old French made Puma helicopters; which have had more than 30 years of service, first used during the Portuguese Colonial War.

After the war, the Puma were used in missions of search and rescue, transport of patients and evacuation missions, and also assisted the USAF in recovery of NASA's Space Shuttles.

Twelve Merlin have been purchased; in three different models: six SAR (for use with Search & Rescue), four in CSAR (for deployment of troops to zones out of the country) and two in SIFICAP (for Fisheries Control).

The Merlin is capable of carrying more than 3 tons, its maximum

speed is 309 km/h and it has a range of 1390 km. The Merlin is the helicopter used for the transportation of the president of the United States George W. Bush and other VIP's.

Four Puma operating in the Azores and in Madeira will continue in service, for the next few months, until the last four Merlin CSAR helicopters are delivered. The air force is currently considering using these four onboard a future logistic support ship. (LPD)

A ceremony was held at the Air Base of Montijo, attending was Portuguese minister of National Defence, Luís Amado. He said during the ceremony that the old Puma might be converted for civilian protection missions, such as fire fighting.

"The Government will decide the future of the Puma helicopters on the board of appreciation that is being done with other sectors of the Government, namely the Ministry of Internal Administration, in the possibility of the Puma being adapted for other missions, for example on the scope of the civilian protection".

The Merlin, was purchased in 2001 by the Government of António Guterres. The two first helicopters arrived in February 11 of last year, being held in February 24 an official ceremony in the Montijo Air Base, attending both the president of the Portuguese Republic, Jorge Sampaio, and the then minister of National Defense, Paulo Portas.

They have cost the Portuguese Government 446 million euros, (approximately \$536 million USD). This deal has given 60 million euros in counterparts, relatively in orders of production in the workshops of OGMA. It's expected

that this sum will grow to almost a total of 315 million euros.

Today in History

- 1819 - Stamford Raffles founded Singapore, a new trading post for the British East India Company.
- 1820 - Sponsored by the American Colonization Society, the first African American immigrants established a settlement in present-day Liberia.
- 1922 - France, Italy, Japan, the United Kingdom, and the United States signed the Washington Naval Treaty to limit naval armaments.
- 1952 - The Duchess of Edinburgh learned of her accession to the British throne while in a tree-top hotel in Kenya, becoming Queen Elizabeth II.
- 1959 - Jack Kilby filed the patent for the first integrated circuit.
- February 06 is Waitangi Day in New Zealand (1840); Sapporo Snow Festival in Japan begins (2006).

Quote of the Day

"You and I are told increasingly that we have to choose between a left or right, but I would like to suggest that there is no such thing as a left or right. There is only an up or down — up to a man's age-old dream; the ultimate in individual freedom consistent with law and order — or down to the ant heap totalitarianism, and regardless of their sincerity, their humanitarian motives, those who would trade our freedom for security have embarked on this downward course."
~ Ronald Reagan

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