



Top Stories

Israeli vessels enter Lebanese waters to enforce blockade

Israel's naval ships have entered Lebanon's territorial waters to enforce a blockade on the Levantine state, Thursday.

Investigation into Mumbai train bombings begins

Investigations have begun into the bombings on Mumbai's commuter trains that killed 200 people.

Featured story

Elmwood Village Hotel proposal in Buffalo, N.Y. withdrawn

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Wikipedia Current Events

•A Harrier Jumpjet en route to the Air Tattoo at RAF Fairford crashes onto a road near Tackley in Oxfordshire. The pilot, who managed to eject before impact, was praised for his skill ensuring no loss of life occurred; the aircraft went down in a relatively populated area.

•The United States vetoes a United Nations resolution

Wikipedia Current Events

condemning Israel's military operations in the Gaza Strip.

•North Korean diplomats quickly leave a meeting with South Korea and a U.S. diplomat, and leave the region after a week of diplomacy.

•Merck & Co wins a trial over a grandmother's claim that its Vioxx painkiller caused her to have a heart attack, reducing pressure on the company to settle 12,000 other cases about the drug.

•A complete First Folio edition of William Shakespeare's plays is auctioned in London for £2.8 million. It had been owned by a religious library which paid about £500 for it in 1716. When new in 1623, the Folio would have cost £1.

•Two explosions hit oil installations belonging to an Italian company in Nigeria's southeast region. Sabotage is the suspected cause.

•The United States is considering establishing an independent command for South Korean troops. South Korea has command of its forces during peacetime, but currently the United States would take control if there were a war.

•Russia makes a deal with the U.S. allowing Russia to join the WTO.

Day of attacks continue in Israel and Lebanon

Wikipedia Current Events

•A man claiming to represent Al-Qaeda in India claims that they have set up a network in Kashmir and appeals to Indian Muslims to take up jihad.

•Israel now attacks Beirut's international airport for a second time. Fuel tanks explode at the airport.

•Haifa city is hit by rocket artillery fired from Lebanon.

•Lebanon announces it refuses to abide UN Security Council's Resolutions 1559 and 1583, calling Lebanon to assert full control over its border with Israel.

•Israeli jets attack a Lebanese army air base near the Syrian border, destroying runways, the first attack against Lebanon's army in Operation Just Reward.

•Katyusha barrages hit northern Israeli cities and towns, killing two civilians in Nahariya and Safed. Approximately 150 civilians are wounded, including women and children. Hezbollah threatens to launch long-range rockets at Haifa if its headquarters in Beirut are attacked.

•Israel imposes an air and sea blockade on Lebanon.

•An Israeli aircraft fires three

Wikipedia Current Events

rockets into Beirut international airport killing 22 civilians. All incoming air traffic is diverted to Cyprus. Israel claims that the airport was used to supply weapons to Hezbollah, and was about to be used to smuggle its kidnapped soldiers away to Iran.

Day of attacks continue in Israel and Lebanon

Fighting continued in Israel and Lebanon as Israel attacked targets in Lebanon using aircrafts and ships. Rockets also came from Lebanon and landed on the Israeli side of the border, Thursday.

Summary

Israeli aircraft launched missiles at Beirut international airport and damaged the runway and fuel stores. Additional targets in Hezbollah controlled areas were attacked, including a Hezbollah run TV station, Al-Manar, which continued to broadcast after being targeted, but later went partially off air.

45 civilians and two Lebanese soldiers were reported killed as a result of Israeli overnight raids. 103 people were injured according to Lebanon. In some areas Israeli planes dropped leaflets warning residents to stay away from Hezbollah buildings.

Hezbollah forces also bombarded Israeli civilian and military targets across the border Thursday. At least two civilians were killed many others injured, including children. The Israeli army said over 80 rockets were fired by Hezbollah into northern Israel.

The highway linking Beirut and Damascus is said to have been hit by five Israeli missiles at various points. The highway is the only

route out of the country after the airport was shut down, but witnesses said that the road was free from traffic when the missiles hit.

In a television interview, Wednesday July 12, Brigadier Gen. Dan Halutz had told Israel's Channel 10 if the soldiers were not returned Israel would "turn Lebanon's clock back 20 years". He also said of Lebanon "nothing is safe."

Lebanon

Israeli airforce attacked Beirut Rafic Hariri International Airport in the Lebanese capital twice Thursday. The attack forced cancellation of all flights and the closure of the facility, police and airport officials said.

Beirut International Airport

In the first attack the runways were hit by rockets from planes. In a second attack two fuel tanks were hit by missiles from helicopters and exploded. The second attack occurred after Haifia had been hit by two rockets.

Lebanon events

- Two Lebanese army air bases were attacked.
- Lebanon says two families of 10 and seven members respectively was killed in their homes in Dweir.
- Israeli planes dropped leaflets over Shiite areas of southern Beirut which told residents to stay away from Hezbollah buildings.
- The Hezbollah supported TV station Al-Manar was hit by an Israeli missile, but the broadcasting continued according to an official at the station. However, an antenna in the town of Baalbek stopped transmitting. One person at

the site was injured.

- A civic station near Baalbek was hit.
- Israeli navel forces set up a blockade of the Levantine coast.
- The highway between Beirut and Damascus have been hit by at least five missiles fired by an Israeli aircraft.

Notes

Israel claim their offensive is in retaliation to Wednesday's attack by Hezbollah on an Israeli border patrol and what Hezbollah called the capture of two Israeli soldiers. Israel said the soldiers - Ehud Goldwasser, 31, and Eldad Regev, 26 - were kidnapped. The Israeli army has called the attack on Lebanon "Operation Just Reward".

Northern Israel

At least two Israeli civilians died and many injured as over 100 rockets, which included the Katyusha and Thunder 1, hit targets across northern Israel, which included Haifia, Thursday. Israel said the attacks were from Hezbollah.

List of places attacked

- Two rockets were fired into Haifa, the third largest city in Israel. The attack did not result in any damage or injuries. Israeli police said both rocket hit the Stella Maris district of Haifia which is an area popular with tourists.
- A house in Nahariya, ten kilometers south of the Israeli-Lebanon border, was hit killing a woman, while 29 others were wounded.
- The town of Safed was hit by four rockets, one civilian was killed and 11 wounded. Of the three who sustained

serious injuries, two were children.

- Rockets hit the town of Carmiel (Karmiel), but there were no injuries.
- In the village of Majdal Qrum (Majd el-Kurum) a civilian was injured.
- In the small town of Zirit a civilian was slightly injured.
- In an attack at night Mount Meron was hit by 10 rockets; there were no casualties.
- A civilian airstrip was damaged near Rosh Pina Hatzor.
- Rockets landed in Hatzor.

Notes

- Hezbollah denied the attack on Haifa but a spokesman said they would attack the city with its population of 270'000 if "Beirut or its southern suburbs are attacked," Hezbollah deputy leader Sheik Naim Kassem said.
- Nahariya Mayor Jackie Sabag urged residents to stay in their shelters. In Nahariya Hospital patients and pregnant mothers were moved to lower floors and underground shelter.
- Hezbollah say they have for the first time used a new rocket called "Thunder 1". This rocket are said to be more accurate than the Katyusha rocket the group has used earlier.
- Israeli ambassador to the United States said the attack on Haifa, Israel's third largest city, was an escalation. "They have more than 10,000 rockets. For them to do this, in Haifa is a major escalation," said Daniel Ayalon.

Israeli Prime Minister Ehud Olmert had called the first Hezbollah attack on Israel "an act of war." Israel also blamed Iran and Syria for the attacks.

Hamas, the Palestinian group designated by USA and Israel as a terrorist organization, described Hezbollah's July 12 attack on Israel "heroic." "This is a heroic operation carried out against military targets and so it is a legitimate operation, especially as it took place in occupied Lebanese territory," said Hamas political bureau member Mohammad Nazzal.

The European Union called Israel's use of force in Lebanon "disproportionate" but demanded Hezbollah release the Israeli soldiers Israel said they kidnapped[8], whom Hezbollah had claimed as their captives.

The United Kingdom asked for "restraint on all sides". "We call for the urgent release of the kidnapped Israeli soldiers, and an end to attacks on Israeli towns and cities. And we urge all those countries with influence over Hezbollah and Hamas to play their part," said Foreign Secretary Margaret Beckett. But "while Israel is entitled to do what is required to protect its security, it should do so in a way which does not escalate the situation and which is proportionate and measured, conforms to international law, and avoids civilian deaths and suffering."

While a Whitehouse spokesman said America "recognised Israel's right to defend itself", U.S. Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice asked Israel to be more restrained. Rice also told Syria to get Hezbollah to stop their attacks on Israel.

Lebanese ministers want a ceasefire with Israel.

The Arab League want an emergency meeting to discuss the Israeli-Lebanon crisis. Yeman asked for an official Arab summit. "We are concerned about an escalation," said an Arab League official.

Iranian President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad said that an Israeli strike on Syria would be considered "attacking the whole Islamic world and this regime will receive a very fierce response".

In related news, United States vetoed a UN condemnation of Israel on Thursday. The draft vetoed was proposed by Qatar and demanded that Israel pulled back its forces from the Gaza Strip.

Economical impact

The turmoil in the Middle East has made its mark on the economical sector; oil is now trading at a record high \$76.70 a barrel.

The stock market in Tel Aviv closed down 4.3 percent on Thursday and the current political situation is leaving the market concerned of what to come. The shekel has also slipped against the dollar.

Other international events are also having it say on stock markets worldwide as investestors are keeping their eyes on North Korea and Iran's nuclear ambitions in addition to the situation in the Middle East.

Thomas McIntyre at McIntyre, Freedman & Flynn put it this way: "We're having a complete breakdown in attitude toward the stock market. In a declining market, everything that's wrong in the world seems more important."

International reaction

Microsoft and Yahoo! link their instant messaging services

Nine months after announcing the interoperability between their instant messaging (IM) services, Internet rivals Microsoft and Yahoo! began limited public beta (pre-release) testing of the program. This enables users of the two services to communicate with each other using their existing IM client, Microsoft's Windows Live Messenger (formerly MSN Messenger) and Yahoo! Messenger with Voice.

Users wishing to use the new feature can go to a special page on the service's website, where they have to review and accept an agreement. After signing out and signing in again, the interoperability is enabled without downloading any new software.

The service is designed to allow users to see each others' online presence, view personal status messages, share select emoticons, view offline messages and add new contacts from either service. However, more advanced features, like voice calls and shared folders are not interoperable between the two services.

The program is available internationally in more than 15 markets.

Three die in crash of Canadian Search and Rescue Helicopter

A Canadian Forces CH-149 of 413 Squadron based at CFB Greenwood, Nova Scotia crashed while conducting a night training exercise. Three crew were killed in the incident. The aircraft was conducting a hoist operation at 12:30AM local time near a Canadian Coast Guard Vessel. The helicopter ditched near the ship and suffered damage to the forward fuselage but remained

floating. All seven crew were recovered from the wreckage. In addition to the three killed, four others were taken to hospital. One of the injured was transported by air ambulance to Halifax for further treatment.

The CH-149 is a Canadian designation for the AgustaWestland EH101 built in Italy. Canada purchased 15 for Search and Rescue duties. This is the first fatal crash in Canadian service. The aircraft were previously grounded due to cracks in critical rotor components which were believed to be the cause of the crash of a British Merlin (EH101) in 2000.

Elmwood Village Hotel proposal in Buffalo, N.Y. withdrawn

Buffalo, New York ' According to the developer Savarino Construction Services Corporation, the proposed Elmwood Village Hotel which would be placed on the corner of Elmwood and Forest Avenues in Buffalo, New York has been withdrawn from the city's Planning Board and Common Council and will undergo a "do over"; however, Eva Hassett, Vice President of Savarino says that the proposal will be resubmitted, from scratch by the end of next week.

The hotel would require the demolition of at least five properties, 1109-1121 Elmwood and would cause the closure of several businesses. Already, two businesses, Skunk Tail Glass and Six Nations Native American Gift Shop have relocated, outside the Elmwood Strip. Don apparel, H.O.D. Tattoo and Mondo Video still remain on Elmwood; however, Mondo Video is planning on moving to a new location. The hotel will be 72 rooms and will cost at least 7 million dollars to

build.

"We're lovers, not fighters. Our energies should be spent on developing a really wonderful project, not wasted in court. We'll start over with a clean slate and take as much time as necessary to hear people out and end up with a very positive project for the neighborhood," said President of Savarino Construction, Sam Savarino.

The hotel will not undergo any major changes in its design says Savarino. "We would anticipate little if any physical change to the plans." He also alleges that the issues with the hotel were not with the design or the proposal and also says that the hotel is still right for the intersection.

"The perceived problem was with the process, not the proposal itself. We believe this is the right thing to do on that corner," added Savarino.

According to the Buffalo News, the projects resubmission is aimed to "shed the lawsuits" against the proposal. The Buffalo News also claims that the Common Council members are all still "in favor of the project." The proposal was unanimously passed by the council on March 21, 2006.

Attorney Arthur J. Giacalone who represents the plaintiffs, Nancy Pollina and Patricia Morris, who operate Don Apparel (a vintage clothing and collectibles shop at 1119 Elmwood Avenue), Angeline Genovese and Evelyn Bencinich, owners of residences on Granger Place which abut the rear of the proposed site, Nina Freudenheim, a resident of nearby Penhurst Park, and Sandra Girage, the owner of a two-family residence on Forest Avenue less than a

hundred feet from the proposed hotel's sole entrance and exit driveway, says that the hotel proposal was "inappropriately rushed," but some council members disagree. Defendants in the lawsuit against the hotel are, Buffalo's Common Council and Planning Board, Mayor of Buffalo, Byron W. Brown, Savarino Construction Services Corporation, Hans J. Mobius and his son Hans S. Mobius owners of the properties at stake, Pano Georgiadis, owner of Pano's Restaurant on Elmwood, and Cendant Corporation, the parent company of Wyndham Hotels, which will be, according to Savarino, the hotel operator. Attorney David State is representing the city, Planning Board, Mayor Byron Brown and the Common Council.

"I don't think it was a rush job," said Dominic J. Bonifacio Jr., the council's Majority Leader. He also alleges that the only way to make "it [the hotel] a better project and ease the concerns of some neighbors would be to find a way to provide more parking."

In an exclusive phone interview with Wikinews, Giacalone states that the lawsuit against the hotel and the city "will not be moved [withdrawn] unless the Common Council resins their [prior] decisions in passing the proposal." Giacalone also says that Savarino has yet to submit any new plans for the proposal to the city. He also says that he "still plans to represent all plaintiffs" if they wish to continue with the suit and the use of his services.

Giacalone rescheduled the preliminary hearing which is "still in place" for July 27, 2006. When asked if the properties are still owned by mobius, Giacalone replied "yes" and that according to

attorney Bob Knoer, the Lawyer representing Hans Mobius, the owner of the properties that could be demolished, there is "no contract between Savarino" and that Mobius "plans to put the properties back on the market." Mobius has not returned phone calls or e-mails and has not yet commented on the situation or the proposal itself. The city denies these claims.

In an exclusive phone interview by Wikinews, area councilman Joseph Golombek states that the reason for the resubmission of the proposal was due to "a mistake in the Planning process" and that none of the council members have "indicated that they have changed their opinions on the hotel" and still remain in favor of the project.

"I still think the Hotel is a good idea for that part of Elmwood. For Elmwood to stay strong and vibrant it must continue to grow and adapt to change. It is a different community than it was twenty years ago and will be different in another twenty years. The opponents of the Hotel have the opportunity to challenge it and are doing that. Even though I disagree with them I am glad there is a safety mechanism for people who disagree with government. We need to keep moving forward," added Golombek.

Supporters of the hotel proposal are planning on holding s rally to support the new development. WNYmedia.net claims that the first rally will be held to support the hotel proposal on July 17, 2006 at 5:00 p.m. on Elmwood and Forest, on the site of the proposed location. According to WNYmedia.net they "are tired of the anti development crowd in Western New York." They also

blast opponents of the hotel proposal calling them "bananas" and "nimbys." People opposed to the hotel proposal are planning on "counter attacking" with their own protest on the same day and time.

Investigation into Mumbai train bombings begins

The toll in yesterday's serial bombings on Mumbai's commuter trains has risen to 200 killed, with 714 people injured, according to the official estimate released by the Police. 127 victims have been identified and a further 56 remain unidentified, the estimate said. No group has so far claimed responsibility for the attacks. Indian authorities have said that the Kashmiri militant group Lashkar-e-Toiba (LeT) may be involved. An LeT spokesman has denied any involvement.

The day after the blast, schools, colleges and offices functioned normally in Mumbai and the commuter train service targeted in the bombings was operational. Many commuters rode the trains to work, though their numbers were smaller than usual. The Bombay Stock Exchange, located in the city shrugged off the bombings, with the BSE SENSEX gaining 3 percent on opening, calming fears that economic confidence will be undermined by the blasts.

Investigation underway

The Maharashtra state government has announced a reward of Rs. 25,00,000 (about US \$55,000) for information leading to the arrest of the perpetrators. A number of people, reported to be 350[1] have been detained for interrogation, but no arrests have been made. Police are working on preparing sketches of possible suspects, news reports say.

The Times of India newspaper reported that Indian intelligence officials believe that Lashkar-e-Toiba and the banned Students Islamic Movement of India were behind the blasts. The Home Ministry confirmed the involvement of Students Islamic Movement of India. The Chief Secretary to the Maharashtra state government, D K Shankaran told Reuters news agency "So far it looks like there was a substantial involvement of Lashkar-e-Toiba with local support,".

P.S. Pasricha, director-general of police in Maharashtra, speaking to reporters, said that while it was too early to say who is responsible for the attacks, the coordinated explosions were in the style of Lashkar-e-Toiba (LeT), which has been blamed for carrying out similar attacks before. Indian authorities have accused Kashmiri militant groups such as the Lashkar, Jaish-e-Mohammed (JeM) and the Hizb-ul-Mujahideen of attacks on civilians before. The Mumbai underworld is another potential suspect - a series of bombings in Mumbai in 1993 which killed 250 people are believed to have been planned by a Mafia don Dawood Ibrahim. India alleges that Ibrahim lives in Pakistan and has long maintained that Lashkar-e-Toiba and Jaish-e-Mohammed have been trained and supported by Pakistan in the past.

Spokesmen for the Lashkar-e-Toiba and Hizb-ul-Mujahideen have denied any role in the attacks. The LeT spokesman said that LeT could "feel the pain of the victims" of the attacks as the people of Kashmir have been suffering "the same pain for the last 17 years at the hands of the Indian security forces", adding that an "independent investigation should be carried out... so that the people

behind the attack can be exposed".

"Attacks on civilians are not part of our manifesto. We never carried out such attacks nor will allow anyone to do so," said Ehsan Elahi, spokesman for the Hizb-ul-Mujahideen.

International condemnation

The attacks have been condemned by a number of countries around the world. India's neighbours Pakistan, and Afghanistan; the UK, France, Italy and the EU; Spain, which witnessed a similar attack in 2004; South Africa, the United States, Australia and the UN Secretary General amongst others have spoken out against the attacks.

A statement released by Pakistan's Ministry of Foreign Affairs condemned the attacks, saying "Terrorism is a bane of our times and it must be condemned, rejected and countered effectively and comprehensively."

India faults Pakistan Foreign Secretary statement

The Pakistani Foreign Minister Khurshid Mehmood Kasuri, after condemning the attack, noted that not much progress has been made on Kashmir problem, he said, "incremental approach is good but now we must tackle real issues. And this is the best way of tackling extremism in South Asia".

India took exception to this remark. External Affairs Ministry spokesman Navtej Sarna described the statement as 'appalling', saying Mr Kasuri's 'remarks appear to suggest that Pakistan will cooperate with India against the scourge of cross-border terrorism and terrorist violence only if such so-called

disputes are resolved,'.

He urged Pakistan to "dismantle the infrastructure of terrorism" on territory under its control and act in the spirit of the joint statement reached between the two countries on January 6, 2004.

Foreign Secretary Shyam Saran told a news channel on Wednesday that India may review some of the confidence building measures it is jointly developing with Pakistan, following the attacks. A meeting between Mr. Saran and his Pakistani counterpart, scheduled to take place on July 20-21, is also under question, with the External Affairs Ministry spokesman Navtej Sarna failing to make any announcement regarding the date.

Pakistan's foreign ministry rejected these accusations in a statement, saying Mr Kasuri's remarks had been misreported and denying he had drawn a link between the bombings and the Kashmir dispute. and said that Pakistan was "in the forefront of international efforts to fight [the] menace" of terrorism.

Prime Minister addresses nation

In an address to the nation, the Indian Prime Minister Manmohan Singh expressed his condolences to the victims of the attacks and to their families, saying that India stands by the people of Mumbai and Srinagar (where 8 people were killed in a grenade attack yesterday) "in this hour of grief". "My heart goes out to those who have lost their loved ones", he said.

He acknowledged the "courage and humanism" shown in the response to the attacks and the efforts of the emergency and service personnel and the public in the aftermath of the tragedy.

Saying that Mumbai is the symbol of a united, inclusive India, he said that India will "continue to walk tall, and with confidence despite the attack".

The Union Home minister Shivraj Patil, the Congress party chief Sonia Gandhi and Railway Minister Laloo Prasad Yadav visited Matunga Road railway station late yesterday. Mr Patil appealed for unity and restraint in responding to the attack. Mr Yadav has announced an ex-gratia compensation of Rs 5,00,000 (US \$11,000) to the families of the dead and promised jobs in the railways for the families who have lost earning members in the bombings.

Opposition BJP calls for tougher anti-terrorism measures

The Leader of the Opposition L K Advani and President of the Opposition Bharatiya Janata Party Rajnath Singh, who visited the blast sites and the met with the injured, called the bombings "an attack on India".

A resolution adopted by the BJP office-bearers criticised the central UPA government, charging that it was sending "consistent signals that the initiative against terrorism can be traded for votes". However, Mr. Advani said that "it was not the time for criticising the government". He said that the blasts showed up the need for a stringent anti-terrorism law and that the authorities must not give an impression that they are willing to compromise national security.

In 2004, The UPA government had repealed such a law, the Prevention of Terrorist Activities Act enacted by the previous BJP-led government.

Several injured in Ben Nevis cable car accident

As many as eight people have been injured after two cable cars collided at the Nevis Range near Fort William in Scotland.

Two RAF helicopters, an air ambulance, four ambulance crews, police, fire brigade and a mountain rescue team are among those present. Police have confirmed that three people have been injured, including one child. Injuries include broken legs, head and chest injuries. The Scottish Ambulance Service have reported that up to seven people had been thrown on to the hillside. A reporter at the scene said one car near the top of the mountain had slid down a cable, hitting another and then one of the cars fell to the ground.

Northern Constabulary have stated "It's understood that two gondolas would appeared to have collided and a number of casualties have been reported. The local mountain rescue team, Inverness helimed and other air support are in attendance to remove casualties".

The Doppelmayr gondola system is made up of eighty six-seat closed cabins running on a continuous 4.6km steel cable.

Israeli vessels enter Lebanese waters to enforce blockade

Israel's naval ships have entered Lebanon's territorial waters to enforce a blockade on the Levantine state, Thursday.

"Since this morning Israeli naval vessels have enforced a full naval closure on Lebanon, because Lebanon's ports are used to transfer both terrorists and weapons to the terror organizations operating in Lebanon," a spokesman for Israeli

Army said.

The spokesman did not comment on whether Israel had also blockaded Lebanon's airspace. However Israeli aircraft attacked Beirut's Rafik al-Hariri International Airport, Thursday morning, which damaged the main runway and forced incoming flights to divert to Cyprus. Israel's Army Radio said that other airports might also be targeted in order to restrict access to Lebanon.

"We will take all necessary measures to bring an end to the rogue behavior of a state that does not assume responsibility and put an end to the activities of a major partner in their own government," said Israeli Cabinet Minister Isaac Herzog to Reuters.

The government in Beirut has said it accepts no responsibility for what Hezbollah claimed was the capture of two Israeli soldiers, in an attack which injured six Israeli civilians. 27 civilians have been killed so far in Israeli raids on Lebanon.

Canadian media company Bell Globemedia to acquire rival CHUM

Canadian media company CHUM Limited has announced that it has agreed to be acquired by larger rival Bell Globemedia Inc. for \$1.7 billion CAD cash, bringing the CTV and Citytv broadcast-television networks and such specialty channels as MuchMusic, TSN and Bravo! under the same corporate umbrella.

Shareholders will receive \$52.50 per common share of CHUM and \$47.25 per Class B (non-voting) share. The estate of the late Allan Waters, who died late last year, has agreed to tender all its shares to the bid, netting the Waters

family nearly \$450 million.

In a joint statement, CHUM's chairman, Jim Waters, said, "In Bell Globemedia's offer, we not only found value for shareholders, but confidence that we would be placing CHUM in the hands of an owner with the financial resources and track record to continue to grow and build on our collective legacy."

Globemedia CEO Ivan Fecan added, "We are able to make this premium offer because Bell Globemedia is clearly the most logical buyer of CHUM. There is a unique strategic fit to our operations that can make the united company a stronger national champion in broadcasting. We intend to maintain and build the valuable CHUM brands and develop more opportunities for Canadian programming." He added that CTV and Citytv will remain separate networks and "will maintain separate and independent news divisions in order to ensure a continued diversity and competition in news coverage."

In a separate release, CHUM announced it would be cutting 281 jobs at its stations across the country, particularly at its Citytv stations in western Canada. Effectively immediately, evening newscasts at CKVU-TV Vancouver, CKEM-TV Edmonton, CKAL-TV Calgary and CHMI-TV in the Winnipeg market are being eliminated, with plans for a new newsmagazine tentatively titled *In Your City* at the three Prairie stations, and more resources being put into each station's local version of *Breakfast Television*. Less drastic changes are planned for its A-Channel stations in smaller markets. The company said these changes will result "in a

significant reduction in staffing and operating costs."

The companies said that they expect to sell CHUM's A-Channel stations, as well as Alberta educational broadcaster Access, to third parties, despite CTV's historical ties to several of them. Many of the A-Channel stations were originally acquired by CHUM from Baton Broadcasting, the predecessor of Bell Globemedia, in 1997, as part of a trade that sent CHUM's ATV and ASN assets in Atlantic Canada to Baton and allowed Baton to acquire the CTV network itself.

Despite CHUM's ownership of MuchMusic and CTV's recent launch of MTV Canada, the companies claim their specialty channels are "complementary" and did not indicate any sale plans.

Bell Globemedia is currently majority-owned by BCE Inc. but is awaiting regulatory approval for a restructuring involving the Ontario Teachers Pension Plan, Torstar Corp., and the Thomson family. In the interim, the takeover offer will be made by a new company owned by the proposed new shareholder structure.

EU fines Microsoft 280.5 million

Microsoft was fined 280.5 million today by the European Commission for not complying to a 2004 antitrust ruling by the European Union.

EU had ruled in 2004, asking Microsoft to provide its competitors information about its Windows operating system. This was to give the rivals a level playing ground for writing software for the Windows platform to compete with Microsoft's own offerings.

The EU set a dead-line of July 21 for Microsoft to provide complete technical information to its competitors. If not, there may be further fines, up to '–3 million a day.

The commission is saying that Microsoft has not done enough on the issue and must provide the information by July 31. Microsoft however does not agree to this and believes that it has done no wrong, and has in fact complied to the 2004 EU ruling.

The European Union's Commissioner for Competition Neelie Kroes has warned Microsoft to comply with these regulations for their upcoming Operating system, Vista which is scheduled to be released in 2007.

Psilocybin induces mystical and spiritual experiences: study

A study published by researchers at John Hopkins University (Baltimore, Maryland) concluded that psilocybin, a hallucinogenic drug, causes experiences of 'substantial personal meaning and spiritual significance' in users. A majority of the participants felt a better sense of well-being, even months after consuming the drug. Researchers expect that the results can be used for further investigation of psychoactive substances and cognition.

The experiment, led by Roland R Griffiths, assessed the degree of mystical experience and attitudinal effects of the psilocybin experience; this report was published in the journal *Psychopharmacology*.

Thirty volunteers without prior experience with hallucinogens were given psilocybin and

methylphenidate (Ritalin) in separate sessions. The Ritalin sessions served as the control group who used that drug as a placebo. The tests were double-blind, with neither the subject nor the administrator knowing which drug was being administered.

The degree of mystical experience was measured using a questionnaire on mystical experience developed by Ralph W Hood; 61% of subjects reported a "complete mystical experience" after their psilocybin session, while only 13% reported such an outcome after their experience with Ritalin. Two months after taking psilocybin, 79% of the participants reported moderately to greatly increased life satisfaction and sense of well-being.

About 36% of participants also had a strong to extreme 'experience of fear' or dysphoria (eg, a 'bad trip') at some point during the psilocybin session (which was not reported by any subject during the methylphenidate session), with about one-third of these (13% of the total) reporting that this dysphoria dominated the entire session. These negative effects were reported to be easily managed by the researchers and did not have a lasting negative effect on the subject's sense of well-being.

Today in History

1789 - French Revolution: Parisians stormed the Bastille.
 1798 - The Sedition Act became United States law, making it a federal crime to write, publish, or utter false or malicious statements about the U.S. government.
 1933 - Gleichschaltung: All political parties in Germany were outlawed, except the National

Socialist German Workers Party.
 1958 - King Faisal II, the last king of Iraq, was overthrown by Abdul Karim Qassim.
 1965 - Mariner 4 flew past Mars, collecting the first close-up pictures of another planet.
 July 14 is Bastille Day in France

Quote of the Day

"Regardless of whether I believe or not, whether I am a Christian or not, I would play my part in the collective building of the cathedral."

~ Ingmar Bergman

Word of the Day

Gordian knot; n

1. A legendary knot which carried a prophecy that whoever loosed the knot would become ruler of all Asia. Alexander the Great solved the puzzle by slicing through the knot and took it as a sign of Zeus's favor.
2. (by extension): Any intricate and complex problem.

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About Wikinews

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