



Top Stories

Taliban executes one of Korean hostages; Releases 8 others

Afghanistan police have recovered the bullet-ridden body of a South Korean, who was among 23 aid-workers held hostage by the Taliban and reports say at least 8 other hostages were released.

Natural gas plant explodes in Texas

At least two people have been seriously injured after a Southwest Industrial Gases, Inc. natural gas plant in Dallas, Texas exploded sending flaming debris into the air and onto buildings and expressways.

Featured story

Press conference to be held Thursday on new 'Star Trek 11' movie

Wikinews has learned that a "press conference" will be held on Thursday July 26 regarding the new Star Trek 11 movie.

Wikipedia Current Events

- Italian rider Christian Moreni fails a doping test in the 2007 Tour de France and is led away for questioning by French police.
- Danish rider Michael Rasmussen, the wearer of the maillot jaune, is pulled from the race by Team Rabobank after winning Stage 16 for "violating internal rules" of the team by apparently lying about his whereabouts and missing several team-

Wikipedia Current Events

administered doping tests prior to the competition.

- The President of Brazil Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva fires the Defense Minister (also responsible for civil aviation) Waldir Pires and replaces him with former Justice Minister Nelson Jobim after two major crashes in ten months.
- The United States House Committee on the Judiciary votes 22-17 to approve a report citing former White House counsel Harriet Miers and current Chief of Staff for President Bush Joshua Bolten for failing to comply with subpoenas regarding the dismissal of U.S. attorneys controversy.
- A car bomb in the Mansour district of Baghdad kills at least 30 Iraqis celebrating victory in an Asian Cup match against South Korea. Another suicide attack in East Baghdad kills another 20.
- 8 of the 23 South Koreans held hostage by the Taliban in Afghanistan are released. One of the hostages has been executed with the Taliban warning that the remaining hostages will be killed.
- The first delegation from the Arab League comprising the foreign ministers of Egypt and Jordan visits Israel.
- Iraq's largest Sunni Arab bloc, The Iraqi Accordance Front, suspends its membership in Prime Minister Nouri al-Maliki's coalition government.

Wikipedia Current Events

- Pratibha Patil is sworn-in as the First woman President of India.
- A Russian subcontractor advises that Iran's first nuclear power reactor will be ready in August 2008.
- The Australian Commonwealth Director of Public Prosecutions reviews the case against Mohamed Haneef accused of giving material support to terrorism following concerns being raised about the strength of the case.
- More houses are evacuated in Oxford as the River Thames breaks its banks.
- North and South Korea conduct high-level talks to resolve a border dispute.
- The President of France Nicolas Sarkozy travels to Libya following the release of the medical workers sentenced to death in the HIV trial in Libya.

Gas tanks explode at facility in Texas, US

Three people were hospitalized with injuries after a series of explosions at Southwest Industrial Gases, Inc. gas facility in Dallas, Texas. None of their injuries are consider life-threatening.

Tanks of oxygen, helium and acetylene began blowing up after a connector used to join acetylene tanks during the filling process malfunctioned. The explosions sent flaming debris into the air and onto buildings and expressways.

Black smoke that could be seen for miles billowed from the facility. It all began around 9:30 a.m CDT (UTC-5), according to Dallas Fire Department Lt. Joel Lavender, at loading dock and then spread to a trailer housing some 100,000 cubic feet (approximately 28,300 cubic metres) of gas.

Authorities evacuated an area that was one-half of a mile (approximately 800 m) wide. Portions of Interstate 35 and Interstate 30 were shut down. Flaming debris ignited small grass fires next to the roads.

Officials for the Environmental Protection Agency, as well as, local and state environmental officials, have deemed air quality levels acceptable following the blast. Hazardous material crews have blocked water used in the fire from entering the Dallas storm drains.

New Liverpool FC stadium unveiled

Liverpool FC revealed the plans for it's new Stanley Park Stadium today. The stadium is to be built over the next three years in Stanley Park it will replace Liverpool's long time home at Anfield. The plans as submittted would give a capacity of 60,000, with a possible increase to nearer 80,000.

The design by HKS is sunk some 8 meters bellow the current surface to lessen it's impact. The cost of construction is said to be £300 million.

Taliban execute one Korean hostage; reports of release denied

Afghanistan police have recovered the bullet-ridden body of a South Korean, who was among 23 aid-workers held hostage by the Taliban. Earlier reports that at

least 8 other hostages were released are now being denied.

"I can confirm that one of the hostages has been killed by the Taliban," said head of the Afghan delegation in charge of the hostage negotiations, Waheedullah Mujadadi who also added that he could not confirm the release of the other 8 hostages.

"Since Kabul's administration did not listen to our demand and did not free our prisoners, the Taliban shot dead a male Korean hostage," Qari Mohammad Yousuf told Reuters via telephone. "If the administration of Kabul is not ready to release our hostages, then by 1.00 a.m. the rest of the hostages will be killed," he continued. "That time is the last deadline." Yousuf said the hostage was killed in Qarabagh district of Ghazni Province. Reports claim he was shot ten times.

Associated Press cited two Western officials when reporting that some of the 23 hostages had been released. One of the officials, who spoke on the condition of anonymity, said six women and two men had been taken to the main United States base in Ghazni.

"Talks continue but no one has been freed so far," said Ghazni governor Mirajuddin Pattan. Taliban spokesperson Yousuf said the claim of a release was "government propaganda."

Tour de France: Yellow jersey Rasmussen withdrawn

Current yellow jersey, Michael Rasmussen has been withdrawn from the 2007 Tour de France by his team Rabobank for lying to the team about his whereabouts in June, saying he was in Mexico while he was, in fact, in Italy. An Italian Tour de France

commentator mentioned he had met Rasmussen in June on a training camp in Italy.

It has been reported that the hotel, where Rabobank's team was staying, was raided and searched late Wednesday by the police. There is no word on whether the search turned up anything.

Rasmussen had come under heavy fire for having recieved four warnings from cycling authorities before the race, because of him failing to inform about his whereabouts.

Before today's stage, which he won, Rasmussen said: "I want to make absolutely clear I've had out-of-competition tests prior to the Tour de France, 14 tests during the Tour and all the results are negative ... I do support my team in the fight against doping and [for] a clean sport."

"Michael Rasmussen has been sent home for violating the team's internal rules," said Rabobank spokesman Jacob Bergsma.

According to Danish news channel TV 2 News, the rest of the Rabobank team will be allowed to finish the race. TV 2 News also says Rasmussen has left Rabobank's hotel.

Davide Cassani, a former Tour de France cyclist and now a TV commentator for Italy, said that he had seen Rasmussen in the Dolomites area of the Alps on both June 13 and 14, 2007. Rasmussen had filed information with his team that he was in Mexico from June 4 through June 26.

Reactions

"We cannot say that Rasmussen cheated, but his flippancy and his lies on his whereabouts had

become unbearable.”— Christian Prudhomme, general director of the Tour de France

“The team decided to pull him out; that's their prerogative. I can only applaud that. It's a zero-tolerance policy, and it's a lesson for the future” -Pat McQuaid, president of the Union Cycliste Internationale

“It's in no way a celebration on our end. It's the third piece of bad news. It reflects badly on our sport.”— P.J. Rabice, spokesperson for Discovery Channel Pro Cycling Team

Changes in Fred Thompson US Presidential campaign

On Tuesday and Wednesday, two of Fred Thompson pre-campaign staffers resigned. J.T. Mastranadi, who was hired less than two weeks ago as the campaign's director of research, resigned this morning. Whereas, yesterday Thompson's top adviser, Tom Collamore, resigned "because of differences with Thompson's wife, Jeri Kehn, a Naperville native."

While some reports have noted Thompson's success, according to Mark Murray, "Sources close to the presumptive campaign tell NBC News that Fred Thompson's fundraising is down 'markedly.' One claimed it has 'slowed down big-time'."

In the polls, Thompson continues to be a major contender. A July 24th poll by Washington Post-ABC News has: Rudy Giuliani 37%, John McCain 16%, Fred Thompson 15%, and Mitt Romney 8%. While a July 17th poll by FOX News/Opinion Dynamics has: Rudy Giuliani 27%, John McCain 17%, Fred Thompson 17%, and Mitt Romney 10%.

ETA places explosives on Tour de France route in Spain

Authorities in Spain say that at least two explosive devices were found on a section of the Tour de France bicycle race just outside the Spanish town of Belagua. Authorities say that "a small amount of explosives", were placed inside plastic food containers then placed on both sides of the road.

There are no reports of injuries but conflicting reports say that the cyclists passed the area before the devices went off, while others report that the devices were detonated before the cyclists passed.

The Basque separatist group known as the ETA have claimed responsibility for placing the devices on the route. A telephone call was placed to authorities by someone claiming to be from the ETA who threatened to use the devices.

Tour de France: Michael Rasmussen wins stage 16

Michael Rasmussen of Denmark has won stage 16 of the 2007 Tour de France in a time of 6h 23' 21".

Rasmussen increased his overall lead by 35" over Alberto Contador of Spain, who finished third.

After a rest day, the riders faced the third-longest, 218.5 km, and arguably the Tour's hardest, stage. The first challenge was the brutal Port de Larrau (14.7 km climb at 8.1%), which is just 79km into the stage. The race dips into Spain for some 50 kilometres at the summit, the fourth country visited in this year's Tour. From there, there was little reprieve for the riders, hitting the Alto Laza and the Col de la Pierre St Martin (14.2 km climb at 5.2%) before descending to the

start of the difficult, and very steep, first-category Col de Marie-Blanche (9.3 km climb at 7.4%). The riders then climb the infamous Col d'Aubisque (16.7 km climb at 7%), which will reward out-and-out climbing ability and punish the legs of all the major contenders.

The entire Astana Team withdrew from the Tour prior to this stage due to Alexander Vinokourov testing positive for blood doping. Some riders staged a protest against doping at the start.

Another doping scandal hit the Tour today. Cristian Moreni of Italy tested positive for testosterone in a test conducted after Thursday's stage 11. Moreni was questioned by police. Cofidis team manager Eric Boyer told Reuters: "He accepted his wrongdoing and did not ask for a B-sample."

Like Astana did, Cofidis has withdrawn its entire team from the Tour. François Migraïne, the team president and CEO of the sponsoring insurance company, Cofidis, said: "It's the only thing to do in such circumstances."

Post-stage statements
 “It’s true that I was booed at the start and again during the stage also. I believe that, for the moment, there’s a lot of frustration amongst the people who follow cycling and in the peloton about what’s going on – about what happened to ‘Vino’ yesterday – and I think that since he is not here and the Astana team has gone home, people are taking their frustration out on me. I understand now what Lance Armstrong went through for seven years and my respect for him is growing day by day.

The only good thing there is to say about the Vinokourov case is that

it proves that the system is working and to that I can only add that I've had 14 negative tests so far during this Tour. Now the overall victory is more important than stage wins but with the position that I was able to put myself in – winning the queen stage of the Tour while in the yellow jersey – it was pretty hard to deny taking the opportunity to do so. ”— Michael Rasmussen, Rabobank

Emirates hub a possibility for Auckland

Dubai Aerospace Enterprise (DAE) has entered a controversial bid for New Zealand's busiest airport, the Auckland International. Merger documents have revealed that DAE would use "reasonable endeavours" to create new routes and services from Auckland for Emirates Airline.

DAE's plan is to takeover 60% of the publicly-traded airport for NZ\$2.6 billion (approx. US\$2.1 billion).

The chair of DAE, Sheikh Ahmed bin Saeed al Maktoum, also chairs Emirates, which flies four times daily into Auckland. DAE does not have a shareholding in the Dubai-based airline. Emirates has said its long term plan for the airport is to establish it as a secondary hub, with flights to the west coast of the United States, or Central and South America. Another possibility being looked into is round-the-world flights through Dubai, South Africa and Auckland. Auckland has been chosen as DAE's hub of the region due to Australian laws preventing foreign control of major airports.

DAE was set up last year by the government of the United Arab Emirates in Dubai, with funds of US\$15 billion (approx. NZ\$19

billion). One of the entity's goals is to build up a global portfolio of airports, particularly in emerging markets.

DAE is not the only bidder for the airport, with the Canadian pension fund among other potential buyers completing due diligence.

Former MLB player Rollie Stiles dies

Rollie Stiles, pitcher in Major League Baseball who played for the St. Louis Browns from 1930 to 1933 has died at the age of 100.

Born Rolland Mays Stiles on November 17, 1906 in Ratcliff, Arkansas, he batted and threw right-handed, and was 9-14 with an ERA of 5.92 in his three seasons. Rollie attended Southeastern State Teachers College. His first game in the Major Leagues was June 19, 1930, and his last game was October 1, 1933. Stiles' nicknames when playing baseball were "Leapin' Lena", "Lena", and "Rollie", all typical of how he signed autographs for baseball fans.

He made an appearance and gave a speech at the St. Louis Browns Reunion dinner held at the Missouri Athletic Club June 8, 2006 in St. Louis, Missouri.

Today in History

811 - Bulgarian forces led by Krum defeated a Byzantine invasion in the Battle of Pliska, killed Byzantine Emperor Nikephoros I and severely wounded his son and co-emperor Staurakios.

1139 - After a victory over the Almoravid Moors in the Battle of Ourique, Afonso the Conqueror was proclaimed the first king of an independent Portugal.

1822 - José de San Martín met with Simón Bolívar in Guayaquil to plan for the future of Peru and

South America in general.

1882 - Richard Wagner's opera Parsifal is premiered at Bayreuth.
1953 - Fidel Castro and his brother Raúl led a group of approximately 160 rebels in an unsuccessful attack on the Moncada Barracks, thus beginning the Cuban Revolution.

July 26 is Independence Day in Liberia (1847) and Maldives (1965).

Quote of the Day

To see ourselves as others see us is a most salutary gift. Hardly less important is the capacity to see others as they see themselves.

~ Aldous Huxley

Word of the Day

belie; v

1. To give a false representation of (something).
2. To tell lies about (someone).
3. To contradict or show to be false.

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+1-866-653-4265
(toll-free in the U.S.)
+1-202-742-5918
(outside the U.S.)
+44-871-218-6397
(U.K. / Europe)

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