



Top Stories

45 feared dead in Pakistan air crash

All people on board PIA Flight PK 668, which crashed shortly after take-off in the city of Multan, are feared dead.

Building collapses in Manhattan

A four-story building on 62nd Street on Manhattan has collapsed. Both the White House and New York Fire Department have said the preceding explosion was not caused by a terrorist attack. There have been injuries, but no deaths have been reported.

Featured story

One year on, London remembers 7/7 victims

Londoners are commemorating the one year anniversary of the terrorist attacks on its transport networks that claimed 52 lives. On this day last year, a series of coordinated suicide bombings struck London's public transport system during the morning rush hour.

Wikipedia Current Events

- The United Kingdom has unveiled a new terror alert status system, similar to the United States' system. It is currently at "severe" on a scale of low, moderate, substantial, severe and critical.
- U.S. President George W. Bush will likely cast the first veto of his

Wikipedia Current Events

presidency if the Senate passes a bill expanding federal funding for embryonic stem-cell research, Karl Rove says. The House has already passed the bill.

- U.S. Chief Judge Thomas Hogan rules that a Federal Bureau of Investigation raid on the Capitol Hill office of Congressman William J. Jefferson was legal.
- The Indian GSLV rocket carrying the INSAT 4C satellite fails. Pakistan, per treaty, and the United States were notified before the IRBM test.
- The U.N. Security Council's five permanent members and Japan agree today to postpone the vote on possible sanctions against North Korea.

• A Palestinian girl is critically wounded when a Qassam rocket launched by Palestinian militants hits her home in the Gaza Strip.

• Israeli prime minister Ehud Olmert criticises the European Union for its refusal to condemn the daily Palestinian rocket attacks against Israeli civilians, leaving Israel to take effective measures by itself.

• Fighting has erupted in Somalia, with fighting between Somalian fighters aligned with defeated warlords and Islamic militants killing 60 people and wounding 100.

• A chlorine gas leak at a Chinese chemical plant has hospitalized 164 people. It occurred at the Xing'erte Chemical Products Co.

Wikipedia Current Events

• Chechenya's rebellion leader Shamil Basayev has been allegedly killed, according to Russian authorities. He was said to have been killed together with other Chechen fighters working with him at the time of his alleged death.

• Japan says it is considering whether a pre-emptive strike against North Korea's missile bases would be a violation of its constitution. This is ahead of a possible UN vote on sanctions against North Korea.

• Last month a Dell laptop computer exploded during a conference in Japan, producing several explosions over a period of 5 minutes. This has recently hurt Dell's attempts to improve its image.

• The defense starts the concluding remarks in the trial of Saddam Hussein.

• The Hebrew University of Jerusalem releases 1,300 letters written by Albert Einstein, shedding light on his lovers, wives and kin.

Building collapses in Manhattan

New York City â A four-story building on 62nd Street in Manhattan collapsed after an explosion Monday. Both the White House and New York Fire Department have said the explosion was not caused by a terrorist attack. The New York Fire Department said that the owner of

the building, Dr. Nicholas Bartha, might have deliberately caused the explosion in a suicide attempt after a difficult divorce.

According to the latest reports, five people were injured by the blast, one of whom was hospitalized in critical condition. An additional ten firefighters were injured in the following rescue operation. No deaths have been reported.

Most sources give the cause as a natural gas leak that ignited; a ConEd spokesperson said that someone had reported a gas leak to them about one and a half hours before the explosion took place. The resulting fire, which began in the basement, burned strongly for some time, but was later brought under control by firefighters.

The shockwave from the blast was described by numerous people as being similar to an earthquake.

Four more U.S. soldiers charged with rape of 14-year-old girl, murders

The U.S. military have charged four more soldiers with the rape and murder of a 14-year-old Iraqi girl, Abeer Qasim Hamza al-Janabi, and the murder of her parents and sister.

U.S. officials originally estimated the girl's age to be 25, but have since then lowered their estimate. The girl's identity card and death certificate show her birth date as August 19, 1991. This was also confirmed by the mayor of Mahmoudiya, Mouyad Fadhil Saif, while speaking to CNN. U.S. Army spokesman Paul Boyce also said he has seen documents that indicate she could have been about 14.

The soldiers allegedly conspired with Steven Green, who was charged on July 3 with rape and murder in connection with the same events. A sixth soldier was charged with dereliction of duty for not reporting the crime back in March when it happened.

A U.S. Justice Department affidavit states that the rape was pre-meditated and that three soldiers accompanied Green into the house while another soldier monitored the radio while the assault took place. The affidavit says that Steven Green shot the woman's family, including her 5-year old sister. He and another soldier then raped Abeer, and Green fatally shot her.

The affidavit quotes soldiers telling military investigators that Green and his companions then set the family's house on fire, burned their bloodstained clothing, and threw an AK-47 rifle used in the killings into a canal, in an effort to destroy evidence of the crime.

A U.S. military official has told the Associated Press that U.S. investigators will attempt to have Abeer's body exhumed in order to collect forensic evidence.

45 feared dead in Pakistan air crash

A Pakistan International Airlines (PIA) passenger plane crashed shortly after take-off in the eastern Pakistani city of Multan. The police chief present at the location told Reuters that all 41 passengers and 4 crew members on board died in the crash.

"Everyone is dead. I am standing at the site," Iftikhar Babar, the police chief, told Reuters.

Airport officials said PIA Flight PK 688 left Multan heading for Lahore

and Islamabad. It crashed 10 minutes after take-off,

"Bodies are badly charred. The debris has caught fire," an eyewitness told Reuters[2]. He said rescue workers from the privately run relief foundation Edhi, the Civil Aviation Authority, and the army were taking part in the rescue operation.

Pakistan's private Geo Television station also stated the aircraft to be in flames. They describe it as having gone down in a wheat field near a mango orchard, two miles from the airport. Several trees were burning from the impact of the crash and a perimeter wall was damaged. It also appeared to have hit an electric power line while crashing in the field. Police have cordoned off the area and are keeping people away from the scene.

It is still unclear if anyone on the ground has been killed or injured.

A PIA spokesman said: "The plane lost contact with the control tower about two minutes after take-off. We don't know what happened to it."

Mohammed Iqbal, an airline security official, confirmed that there were 41 passengers and four crew members on board the Fokker aircraft.

Auckland Zoo otter Jin has been found alive

Jin, the short-clawed Asiatic otter who escaped from the Auckland Zoo almost a month ago, has been found alive.

Jin escaped from the zoo by digging through two walls and scaling a 1.8 metre high barrier around her enclosure.

She successfully evaded capture despite numerous sightings around Auckland's inner harbours.

The New Zealand Department of Conservation says a tip-off from a yachtie helped bring an escaped zoo otter's days of freedom to an end this morning, the yachtie spotted her at Islington Bay, at the causeway between Rangitoto and Motutapu island.

Auckland Zoo senior vet Dr Richard Jakob-Hoff said Jin has "got to take her time and relax in her own time. She is in quite good condition and is well hydrated... She's lost a lot of weight but given that she is really in very good condition."

She has abrasions on her head, another under her tail and on her back paws.

When Jin first left the enclosure she weighed 3.6-kilograms (kg) and when she was caught she weighed 2.5 kg.

She is currently in quarantine for 30 days to make sure she is free of any infections that she could have caught from the outside world. The infection she would most likely get would be salmonella from the raw food she has been eating.

"The most common thing in these types of animals is that toxoplasmosis can cause blindness and can get into the brain and cause fits... She has been very stressed and that is what I am concerned about." said Dr Richard Jakob-Hoff.

Argentina qualify for Rugby World Cup in France next year

The Argentina national rugby union team has qualified for the 2007 Rugby World Cup to take

place in France next year, during October and November. Argentina join Pool D with hosts France as well as Ireland and two nations that will come through as Europe 3 and Africa.

The Pumas, as Argentina are known, defeated Uruguay 26 points to nil at home at the San Isidro Athletic Club in Buenos Aires to take the first Americas spot. Miguel Avramovic scored two tries, with Federico Todeschini converting both, as well as kicking two penalty goals for Argentina. Following the Uruguay win, Argentina finished at the top of Round 3a of Americas qualifying. In their first match of Round 3a, Argentina defeated Chile 60 points to 12 in Santiago. Chile are currently in second place behind Argentina, however, there is still one fixture remaining, between Chile and Uruguay, so both nations have the chance to continue to the next round.

In the other group - Round 3b, the USA are leading the table, though they and Canada have both won one game - having defeated Barbados, who are now out of the running for a place. The USA and Canada are meeting in St. John's in Canada, on August 12th, 2006, which will determine who goes through to the World Cup as Americas 2, and who enters the Round 4 play-off against Chile to fight it out for Americas 3.

Today in History

1302 - Flemish infantry successfully halted a French invasion near Kortrijk in the Battle of the Golden Spurs.

1789 - French Revolution: Jacques Necker was dismissed as Director-General of Finances and ordered to leave France at once.

1804 - In Weehawken, New Jersey, former U.S. Treasury

Secretary Alexander Hamilton was fatally wounded in a duel with Vice President Aaron Burr.

1811 - Italian scientist Amedeo Avogadro published a hypothesis on the molecular content of gases, now known as Avogadro's law.

1957 - Prince Karim El Husseini succeeded Sultan Mahommed Shah as the Aga Khan, becoming the 49th Imam of the Shi'a Ismaili Muslims.

July 11 is Naadam in Mongolia begins

Quote of the Day

"Posterity: you will never know how much it has cost my generation to preserve your freedom. I hope you will make good use of it." ~ John Quincy Adams

Word of the Day

anachronistic; adj

1. Erroneous in date; containing an anachronism; in a wrong time.

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

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San Francisco, California, 94105, USA

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