



### Top Stories

#### BBC Reporter Alan Johnston is released in Gaza



The BBC's correspondent Alan Johnston based in Gaza has been freed after almost fourth months in captivity.

#### Detained AIDS activist Phyu Phyu Thin released in Myanmar



An outspoken critic of the military government, she was imprisoned for more than a month after she took part in a march calling for the release of the Aung San Suu Kyi, the leader of Burma's pro-democracy movement.

### Featured story

#### Michael Moore's controversial new documentary 'Sicko' opens strongly



The biting expose of the United States' healthcare system earned weekend totals of US\$4.5 million, the second highest opening for a

documentary ever, after Moore's own Fahrenheit 9/11.

### Wikipedia Current Events

- United States counterterrorism experts claim that some of the men arrested in connection to terror plots in the United Kingdom had links to al Qaeda in Iraq.
- The British government will designate and ban Tehrik Nefaz-e Shari'at Mohammadi and Jamaat-ul-Mujahideen Bangladesh as terrorist organizations.
- Former President of Liberia Charles Taylor makes a surprise appearance at his trial for military atrocities in The Hague.
- Former Prime Minister Benazir Bhutto says she will return to Pakistan and is considering contesting the next presidential election.
- Lal Masjid Mosque clashes: At least seven people have been killed in clashes between security forces and militant students at a mosque in the Pakistani capital Islamabad.
- Ghana redenominates Ghanaian cedi. The new currency starts exchanging at GH¢ 0.92 to the US dollar, the highest valued African currency.
- Japan's Minister for Defense Fumio Kyuma resigns over comments he made about the atomic bombing of Nagasaki and Hiroshima on the weekend.
- Alinghi beats Emirates Team New Zealand in the final race of the 2007 America's Cup, winning the regatta 5-2.

#### Standoff at Islamabad mosque claims at least 9 lives in Pakistan

Nine people, including two police, were killed, and dozens injured, in fighting earlier today outside an Islamabad mosque between armed protestors and security forces.

There is a standoff at Lal Masjid, or Red Mosque in Islamabad, Pakistan. Hard-line clerics have kidnapped alleged prostitutes and police in their efforts to impose a Taliban-style version of Islamic law in the capital.

"We ask them to surrender and lay down their arms. No action will be taken against those who do it, but if anyone displays weapons and comes out (of the mosque) he will be answered with bullets," Interior Minister Zafar Warriach said.

#### America's Cup: Alinghi wins

Alinghi has defeated Team New Zealand by one second in the seventh race to win the 32nd America's Cup in a close run race. The final score was five wins for Alinghi and two for Team New Zealand in the best of nine challenge.

Skipper Brad Butterworth, coincidentally a New Zealander, led the Switzerland-based boat to a second straight "Auld Mug" trophy.

The race started with Team New Zealand, skippered by Dean Barker, having a slight advantage. This was soon lost to Alinghi however, ending the first mark with a seven second lead. Nearing

the end of the second mark, Team New Zealand managed to overtake Alinghi to gain a 14 second lead.

However, when SUI-100 were catching up to NZL-92, Team New Zealand were penalised for port-starboard incident. Team New Zealand then lost the lead. "Our sponsors, suppliers and the New Zealand fans have been absolutely marvellous. They've been so supportive both here and in New Zealand."—Grant Dalton

Coming up to the final leg of the race, Team New Zealand managed to take a 70 metre lead after the wind faded, and both yachts had dropped their spinnakers and Alinghi dropped into a hole. Team New Zealand still had to complete their 360 degree penalty turn, and did so. After completing the turn, Alinghi sailed up beside them and took the win by one second.

Swiss President Micheline Calmy-Rey congratulated the team, sending a telegram that read: "We Swiss find our way at sea, not just in the mountains."

Micheline Calmy-Rey, president of Switzerland, sent a telegram to the team congratulating them of their win. "We Swiss find our way at sea, not just in the mountains," referring to Switzerland being most popular for Alpine skiing.

Managing director of Team New Zealand, Grant Dalton, said, "All credit to Alinghi. They kept it close when we got past them on the first run they just kept on sailing the way they do and beat us fair and square in the end."

"It don't think the margin today really matters. They still won it."

The New Zealand Government has announced that it is setting aside

NZ\$10 million to help retain key yachties. This is just under double what the government gave them after the loss in 2003.

Sports and recreation minister for New Zealand, Trevor Mallard, said, "It is the view of the government that the team should continue, that it should be based in New Zealand and that Auckland should host an America's Cup regatta again."

### **School bus crashes during driver's examination**

A woman, who was taking the road test to become a licensed school bus driver, crashed the bus into a utility pole in White Plains, New York, today. The wreck occurred on South Kensico Road between the intersections with Minevera Place and Oakley Avenue.

The Journal News reported that the accident occurred at 11:30 a.m. EDT (UTC-4) and that neither the student driver nor the examiner from the New York Department of Motor Vehicles (DMV) were injured.

According to The Journal News the road was closed in both directions. Police and workers from the utility company, Con Edison, were on the scene inspecting the damage. The utility pole had snapped at the bottom and it was leaning the bus.

Wikinews went to the crash site and found that Con Edison crews were still working to replace the pole. Nearly five hours after the crash, a new pole had been installed and the old one was being held parallel up against it. Workers were transferring the wires onto the new pole.

Kensico Road had been reopened, but only in one lane. Workers let traffic pass alternating between

one direction and then the other. Ironically, the green sign that is affixed to the pole reads "DMV test site starts here."

### **Hamas begins to use force to release Alan Johnston**

Hamas has begun to use force to release captured BBC news reporter Alan Johnston. Hamas also plans to release 10 of its soldiers who were captured on Monday.

Johnston was kidnapped in Gaza City on March 12, and has since been kept in captivity by a group calling itself The Army of Islam. Despite mounting diplomatic pressure from Hamas and the British Government, Johnston has not yet been released.

The actions by Hamas come after reports that The Army of Islam planned to capture more journalists in order to strengthen their position, bargaining for the release of Iraqi Sajeda Rishawi, imprisoned in Jordan.

Hamas' armed division is reported to have surrounded the neighbourhood of Sabra in Gaza, taking control of the suburb. The Army of Islam has threatened to kill Johnston should any rescue attempt be made using force. One civilian fatality has been reported as a result of the fighting between Hamas militants and The Army of Islam.

However, a spokesperson for Hamas said, "This operation is not aimed at freeing Johnston," suggesting the primary objective is freeing its own men.

### **European Commission praises "flexicurity" employment policy**

The European Union would like to make it easier to dismiss

employees. At the same time, social security should be improved. Then, thanks to the improved flexibility of the market, it should be simpler to find a job. Surveys show that Europeans mostly seem to agree with the need to adapt and change.

The concept of flexicurity, preached by the European Commission, is aimed to encourage EU governments to unfasten their employment policies. According to Vladimír Špidla, the European Commissioner for Employment, Social Affairs & Equal Opportunities, a too protective employment policy may paralyze the labour-market. Such a policy "extends the time needed for jobseeking and the period of unemployment", writes the Commission in its report.

On its paper, the Commission is inspired by the social model of the Scandinavian countries - namely by the social system established in Denmark in the late 1990's.

### **Controlled explosions take place as police enquiry into UK bombings continues**

A suspicious bag has undergone a controlled explosion outside a London Underground station, as has a car outside a mosque in Glasgow, Scotland.

These police actions come in the wake of failed terror attacks involving car bombs in London and at Glasgow International Airport on 29th and 30th June.

The terror threat level in the UK remains critical, indicating that an attack could be expected imminently and high security is in evidence on mass transport routes, while the police continue their investigations. Earlier this

morning, a controlled explosion took place on a suspicious package discovered outside Hammersmith Station on the London Underground system. The scare led to the closure of Hammersmith and Barons Court stations for one hour.

Two other stations, Tower Hill and East Ham, were closed in similar circumstances. All four stations have now been reopened.

Sky news reports that three controlled explosions took place on a car outside a mosque in Glasgow, in order to allow police to gain entry to it. The mosque itself is not being linked to the terror attacks.

The Muslim Council of Britain has condemned the attacks, and has urged Muslims throughout the country to assist in police investigations.

The police force is continuing its investigations throughout the country, with an open appeal to the country for vigilance in reporting anything suspicious.

### **Eighth suspect connected to failed UK bombings arrested**

Reports say that authorities in Brisbane, Australia have arrested an individual connected with the failed Glasgow and London bombings in the United Kingdom on June 29 and June 30. Australian media reports that the man was arrested at Brisbane International Airport yesterday at 11:00 p.m. AEST (UTC+10).

The man has since been named as Mohammed Haneef and Australian Attorney-General Philip Ruddock says that Haneef is cooperating with authorities and has not been charged with any crime as of yet.

Police in the U.K. confirm that the arrest has been made saying, "he remains in custody."

"Yes there was an arrest last night but I will stress at no stage was there any threat to the Brisbane Airport," said Jim Carden, a spokesman for the airport.

Mohammed Haneef is being described as a 27 year-old male who is a qualified medical doctor and reports say that he was leaving the airport and had a one-way ticket to Pakistan.

Haneef is employed at the Gold Coast Hospital in Queensland. Haneef is not an Australian citizen. It is reported that Haneef is from India.

A total of eight suspects have been arrested, six of which are doctors or studying to be doctors.

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### **Balloonist to establish Trans-Atlantic Crossing record**

David Hempleman-Adams left St. John's at approximately 9:30pm local time on July 2, 2007 from St.

John's, Newfoundland and Labrador in a small helium filled balloon in an attempt to make the Trans-Atlantic crossing in the smallest balloon ever to make such a crossing. The final destination of the landing is not known and will be determined as the flight nears its end. The craft is made of light weight material with just enough space for necessary equipment and cooking implements. The basket is small and has openings in the side for Hempleman-Adams to extend his legs as he sleeps. Hempleman-Adams is hoping to make the crossing in three to four days and reach Europe by July 5 or 6th.

### **New Ghanaian currency introduced**

New currency notes are being introduced in Ghana today. The new currency, to be called the Ghanaian cedi, replaces the previous cedi which has been in circulation since 17 February, 1967.

The Ghanaian cedi will be exchanged at 10,000 old cedis to one new Ghanaian cedi. The exchange rate against the US dollar starts at GH¢0.92 to one US dollar. The new ISO code for the currency is GHS, and the new symbol, GH¢.

The change, which was originally scheduled by the Bank of Ghana to start on July 1, 2007, will instead start on Tuesday July 3, as the original date is Ghana's Republic Day.

Monday, July 2, was declared a public holiday as the actual Republic Day fell on a Sunday. July 3, is thus the first day that the currency will be available to the public as banks open to the general public. This is because ATMs were shut down over the

weekend so that the currencies could be checked and replaced in all of them nationwide. The old and new currencies will be used concurrently until the end of December 2007, when the old currency will cease to be legal tender.

This is the third Ghanaian cedi to be introduced in the country since 1965.

### **Soprano Beverly Sills dies at age 78**

Soprano Beverly Sills, who brought opera to United States popular culture through frequent television appearances, died last night at her home in New York. She was 78.

Born Belle Miriam Silverman on May 25, 1929 in Brooklyn, she was nicknamed "Bubbles", and started singing at age 3, winning talent contests and singing on the radio.

She made her professional stage debut in 1945, with a touring Gilbert and Sullivan show, and in 1947, started singing opera as Frasquita in Carmen with the Philadelphia City Opera. She sang with the San Francisco Opera and the New York City Opera.

She married in 1956 to journalist and Cleveland Plain Dealer publishing heir Peter Greenough, and had two children with him. One was deaf and the other mentally retarded, so Sills curtailed her performances to care for them.

She returned to opera in 1962, with the Opera Company of Boston, and then reached her peak singing years in the mid- and late-1960s, singing with the New York City Opera.

She made her debut with the Metropolitan Opera in April 1975,

receiving an 18-minute ovation for her performance in The Siege of Corinth.

At the height of her popularity in the 1970s, she was a regular guest on television variety shows with Danny Kaye, Carol Burnett and The Muppet Show. She was even a guest host on Johnny Carson's The Tonight Show. For two years, she had her own weekly talk show. Sills graced magazine covers, such as Time and Newsweek, as an example of an American who conquered the European-dominated world of classical music.

After retiring from performing in 1980, Sills became the general manager of the New York City Opera. She became the chairman of Lincoln Center for the Performing Arts in 1994, and 2002 was appointed head of the Metropolitan Opera.

Sills had surgery for cancer in 1974, but it had been revealed last month that she was ill with an aggressive form of lung cancer, though she never smoked. She died about 9 p.m. ET yesterday at her home in Manhattan with her family and doctor at her side.

### **Detained AIDS activist Phyu Phyu Thin released in Myanmar**

HIV/AIDS activist Phyu Phyu Thin has been released from police custody in Myanmar, after being detained more than a month ago.

"I am fine and I will meet my patients tomorrow," Phyu Phyu Thin was quoted as saying in an Associated Press (AP) report today.

A supporter of the National League for Democracy (NLD), Phyu Phyu Thin heads the NLD's volunteer HIV/AIDS relief effort, in which she visits patients' boarding houses

and homes and helps them obtain free treatment from international organizations, such as Médecins Sans Frontières.

She has been an outspoken critic of the Burmese military government's handling of HIV/AIDS, saying not enough is being done.

Phyu Phyu Thin was taken from her home by police on May 21, after she had participated in a march calling for the release of Aung San Suu Kyi, the detained leader of the NLD.

She was never charged with a crime, she said. She was released at around 9 p.m. local time last night (0230 GMT) from a detention center in Yangon.

While in detention, Phyu Phyu Thin engaged in a hunger strike, taking only liquids for about a week, which left her very weak.

"I staged the hunger strike demanding to know why we were arrested without charges. I demanded to know on what grounds we were detained and if we were accused of breaking any law," Phyu Phyu Thin told the AP.

The United States Department of State had issued a statement last week, calling on the Myanmar junta to release Phyu Phyu Thin.

While Phyu Phyu Thin was being held, 11 HIV/AIDS patients were detained last month for a few days at a hospital after they had held demonstrations, calling for her release.

"Efforts and pressure by all parties including the international community are always very important for those who have been arrested," Phyu Phyu Thin told the

AP.

Phyu Phyu Thin's release follows the release of 51 NLD supporters who also were detained last month in a government crackdown on the NLD's prayer vigils for Suu Kyi.

Phyu Phyu Thin, 36, had previously been detained in 2000, after she and other supporters were bundled away by special police from a rally for Suu Kyi. She and the others were held in Insein prison.

Speaking of the HIV/AIDS situation in the country, Phyu Phyu Thin said in an interview with The Irawaddy before she was detained: "The situation is worse now than ever before". "I get 40 to 50 new cases a month of people urgently in need of treatment and there's nowhere for them to go ... there's too much emphasis on education and not enough on treatment; treatment should come first," she said.

**Today in History**

993 – Pope John XV became the first pope to canonize a saint, Ulrich of Augsburg.

1776 – The Continental Congress of the Thirteen Colonies in British North America approved a Declaration of Independence.

1862 – In a rowing boat travelling on the River Thames from Oxford to Godstow, Lewis Carroll told Alice Liddell and her sisters a story that would eventually form the basis for his children's book Alice's

Adventures in Wonderland, first published exactly three years later.

1939 – Baseball player Lou Gehrig, recently diagnosed with amyotrophic lateral sclerosis, officially announced his retirement at a ceremony at New York City's Yankee Stadium.

1941 – German AB Action operation in Poland: After

capturing Lwów, the Nazis executed approximately 45 professors of the University of Lwów.

July 04 is 200th Anniversary of the birth of Giuseppe Garibaldi (b. 1807); Independence Day in the United States, Filipino-American Friendship Day in the Philippines

**Quote of the Day**

The world owes all its onward impulses to men ill at ease. The happy man inevitably confines himself within ancient limits.

~ Nathaniel Hawthorne

**Word of the Day**

keepsake; n

1. An object given by a person and retained in memory of something or someone.

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