



Top Stories

Man confesses to 1996 murder of JonBenet Ramsey

John Mark Karr, 41, a former elementary school teacher, has confessed to murdering 6-year-old JonBenet Ramsey in 1996. Karr, an American, was arrested in an apartment located in Bangkok, Thailand. Karr called the murder an "accident."

Indonesian health officials investigating possible human to human transmission of H5N1 Bird Flu virus

Indonesian Health officials are concerned that a 9-year-old girl who died of the H5N1 Avian Flu virus, contracted the illness as a result of human to human transmission and officials say a team of experts are on the way to the area to determine if a cluster exists.

Featured story

UK seeks pardon for executed World War I soldiers

The UK Defence Secretary announced a plan to seek a group pardon for more than 300 British soldiers executed during the First World War for offences such as cowardice and desertion, including Pte. Harry Farr, whose family had appealed for a full, posthumous pardon.

Wikipedia Current Events

•South Korea said Friday it has no clear evidence that North Korea is preparing for a nuclear test.

Wikipedia Current Events

•Israel has set up a commission to investigate how the military campaign in Lebanon was conducted.

•Israel says it would be difficult to accept nations which do not recognise its right to exist as part of a UN force in Lebanon

Wikimedia servers unreachable for 3 hours due to network outage

Earlier today, the free encyclopedia Wikipedia and other projects hosted by the Wikimedia Foundation suffered downtime due to network issues. Thanks to the efforts of Wikimedia staff and volunteers, service was restored relatively quickly. The downtime lasted from about 17:20 UTC to 20:00 UTC, according to Wikimedia's Chief Technology Officer, Brion Vibber.

According to Vibber, Cogent Communications, readvertised routing to Wikimedia's primary IP address block, rendering the site unreachable to most visitors. The reason behind Cogent's actions remain unclear at this time.

According to a reliable anonymous source, the service outage was due to a dispute between Cogent and the hosting provider used by Wikimedia, and had nothing to do with Wikimedia's services or content in any way. Rumors that the outage was related to a DMCA takedown notice received by Cogent are false, according to the same source.

Whilst some users were still able to access the site, projects such as Wikipedia were temporarily switched to read-only mode in order to combat vandalism. This block on editing was removed once normal service resumed.

North Korea to accept international aid

In the wake of last month's floods, North Korea has agreed to accept aid from South Korean donors as well as international organisations. This signifies an apparent change of heart the North Korean leadership, which as recently as last month had insisted they would handle everything itself.

Local North Korean sources put the number of deaths from the floods at 547 and a few hundred missing, however Good Friends, a South Korean private aid agency, estimates the numbers may be more than hundred times that and top 57,700 deaths. Good Friends, citing "many sources" inside North Korea, also estimates more than 2.5 million homeless and hundred of thousands of acres of farmland had been inundated.

Initially the aid from United Nations World Food Program will cover 150 tonnes of food to feed 13,000 people for a month in North Korea's worst hit northern Songchon county. South Korea has pledged an additional \$72 million.

In related news North Korean infant mortality reaches 21 for every 1000, one of the highest in the world, mostly due to

malnutrition and poor medical conditions.

Canadian soldier killed in accidental shooting laid to rest

Regina, Saskatchewan-- The funeral for the Canadian soldier (Master Cpl. Jeffrey Walsh) was in Regina. It leaves St. Paul's Cathedral in downtown Regina on Thursday after the funeral service. The Regina soldier died August 9, 2006 after he was wounded accidentally by another Canadian soldier's accidental discharge with a weapon near Kandahar, Afghanistan.

"He knew there were bad guys out there, but he knew he had a duty to go and protect the public," said Rev. Allan Higgs at the service for the 33-year-old master corporal in the 2nd Battalion of Princess Patricia's Canadian Light Infantry.

Walsh had been in Afghanistan just six days before he was killed, a day after celebrating his 33rd birthday.

North Korea reportedly planning nuclear bomb test

Citing unnamed senior military and State Department officials, ABC News says that there is new evidence that North Korea is planning an underground nuclear test bombing. The intelligence is based on "suspicious vehicle movement" as observed from either a spy satellite or a U-2 spy plane.

U.S. State Department spokesman Gonzalo Gallegos declined any comment on "intelligence-related matters" but did say, "A North Korean nuclear test would be an extremely provocative action that would draw universal condemnation from the international community. We continue to consult with friends

and allies."

South Korea, responding to the report, said that it does not have proof that North Korea is preparing for a test. "I haven't heard that we have confirmed clear evidence that North Korea is pursuing a nuclear test," Unification Minister Lee Jong-seok told lawmakers at a hearing.

Lee Yong-joon, head of the South Korean Foreign Ministry's task force on the North Korea nuclear issue, which monitors movements in North Korea in cooperation with the U.S., declined to comment directly on the report. The U.S. and South Korea "share all intelligence and evaluations" related to North Korean movements, Lee told AP.

While not addressing the issue of a possible test bombing, an article on the website of KCNA, the state news agency of North Korea, urged the U.S. to end its hostile policy toward North Korea and halt its invasion plans.

On July 4, North Korea conducted seven ballistic missile tests, which provoked international condemnation, including a unanimous United States Security Council resolution condemning its actions.

North Korea is believed to have enough nuclear material for 10 to 12 nuclear bombs, but has never tested one.

Chechen rebels surrender

A younger brother of Chechen warlord Doku Umarov is the latest of around 120 rebels whom have surrendered in the Russian republic Chechnya alone since an amnesty was declared following last month's killing of rebel leader Shamil Basayev.

In an attempt to capitalize on Basayev's death and other recent successful developments in Russia's long struggle against Chechen separatists, Russian authorities instigated an amnesty that reached out to all insurgents of the Russian North Caucasus area who would lay down their weapons in exchange for peace. Previous amnesties showed only lacklustre success but it is hoped the current situation and declining popularity of the separatist groups within Chechnya will lend this latest attempt more success. The amnesty initially valid until August 1 was later extended until September 30.

Doku Umarov however rejected the amnesty as "a hopeless attempt by the Kremlin regime to shroud the real situation [...] in lies". After the death of Shamil Basayev, Doku Umarov is considered the most influential separatist. A previous report that it was Doku Umarov himself, who had surrendered has been denied.

Cape Breton, Nova Scotia to have launch pad

The province of Nova Scotia has agreed to set aside 300 acres in Cape Breton for the country's first orbital launch facility, the Toronto Star reported Wednesday. According to the Star, the Canadian Space Agency has been aware of a proposed orbital launch facility for Cape Breton, Nova Scotia for several months and is "pleased."

"Seeing industry taking a strong role and a leadership role in this area is not something we're against," said Hugues Gilbert, the agency's director-general of policy planning and relations. "Au contraire, this is something we're very pleased to see."

The proposal came from a Canada and U.S. firm called PlanetSpace.org. They are working on a shuttle called the Silver Dart. It plans to construct a spacecraft capable of shuttling astronauts and supplies to the International Space Station, then gliding back to Earth. PlanetSpace picked Cape Breton as a launch site because of its location in relation to the International Space Station.

Nova Scotia Business Inc., a government development agency, recommended the move after reviewing the company's business plan. The province will allow PlanetSpace to use 120 hectares of Crown land for the project.

"PlanetSpace is a company that is very involved in the commercialization of space," government spokesman Mark James said Wednesday.

PlanetSpace says NASA is so intrigued with its proposed "Silver Dart" vehicle and launch location it's willing to provide unfunded technical support. PlanetSpace and a related company, Canadian Arrow, have built and tested a powerful liquid fuel rocket engine near London, Ontario.

"PlanetSpace also says it's in discussions with NASA to sign a Space Act Agreement, which would give us the technology to complete the vehicle", said Dr. Chirinjeev Kathuria, chairman of PlanetSpace.

The spacecraft is expected to launch vertical atop a stack of about 10 Canadian Arrow rocket engines and land horizontally on an aircraft runway, they added.

US senators on Greenland tour
U.S. Senator John McCain will next

to observe the effects of global warming on Greenland. The Danish government has invited a number of influential American politicians to for them to witness with their own eyes the consequences of climate change on the arctic ice.

Last year 25 Environmental Ministers from all over the world were treated to a similar tour. Last week American scientists from University of Texas at Austin released a study that showed that the ice is melting three times faster now than in the late nineties.

Among several senators participating in the trip is former presidential candidate John McCain. From the Danish side, Foreign Minister Per Stig Møller and Minister for the Environment Connie Hedegaard will be on the tour.

"We have to realize, that the current president hasn't in mind to do anything, but John McCain can be key to that process in the U.S." Connie Hedegaard said to DR's radio news.

Muhammad cartoon row continues

Nearing the one year anniversary of the publication of twelve controversial editorial cartoons depicting Muhammad in a Danish newspaper, a leading authority of Sunni Islam has demanded that the newspaper be shut down.

In an interview with the Danish newspaper Berlingske Tidende, Sheikh Mohammed Sayyed Tantawi, Grand Iman of the Al-Azhar University in Cairo and formerly Grand Mufti of the Republic, demanded the closure of Jyllands Posten, the paper responsible for publishing the

cartoons. He went on to call for chief editor Carsten Juste to be jailed for three years, and for the editor of the paper's cartoon section, Flemming Rose, be depicted as a pig.

"It is thought provoking," Rose said, "that he (Tantawi) believes it would be a punishment for me to be depicted as a pig. It confirms that the imam has a shocking lack of knowledge about our civilisation, and it confirms the need for dialogue." Rose added that it shows how blasphemy law in the Arab world is used to suppress those with views different from those in power.

Tantawi called the drawings "one of the most serious crimes ever committed."

Two New Zealand men ran illegal text lottery

Two New Zealand men, Richard Stuart Hayes and Troy Jonathon Elliot, have been convicted of running an illegal mobile text based competition after 27 winners did not receive the car prizes. The pair were found guilty yesterday in a decision reached by Judge Nicola Mathers in Auckland District Court, following a February hearing.

The two convicts, whose names were suppressed until yesterday, are the directors of the company which ran the 'TxtDrive' competition in March 2004, the Watch and Win Company. The company had hoped to gain a profit of NZ\$2.5 million, but due to lack of interest and entrants they could not afford to honour the daily prizes as they had only raised \$414,595.

"I am satisfied that the Department of Internal Affairs (DIA) has proved to me beyond

reasonable doubt that Mr Hayes and Mr Elliot organised an illegal lottery. I consider they deliberately entered into the scheme and were careless as to the legality of this novel scheme." Judge Mathers said.

During the 27-day competition, cellphone users had to send a \$0.99 text message during television adverts on TV 2 for the opportunity to win a Peugeot car a day or free products from Pizza Hut.

Settlements have been reached with the winners; only one received a car.

Hayes and Elliot argued that it was not a lottery but a sales promotion, which means it didn't need to be licensed by the DIA.

Mark Woolford, DIA lawyer, said "Internal Affairs had to prove that the Hayes and Elliot organised the competition, that it was a lottery under the definition of the Gaming and Lotteries Act 1977, and that it was not authorised as a lottery by Internal Affairs."

A sales promotion is defined as "Any competition promoted by a manufacturer, distributor, wholesaler or retailer for the purpose of promoting the sale of goods or services." Judge Mathers said she was satisfied the TxtDrive competition was an illegal lottery.

The two men are to appear back in court on 6 October, they face either a fine of \$4,000 or three months in prison under the maximum penalties.

Irish firm issues free energy challenge to scientists

Irish firm Steorn has placed an advertisement in The Economist magazine asking for 12 scientists

to test their "free energy" invention.

The Dublin based firm, founded in 2000, says it has developed technology that takes a small amount of mechanical energy and returns a bigger amount, using magnetic fields. The company's Chief Executive, Sean McCarthy, said that they discovered the technology whilst working on generators for wind turbines used to power CCTV cameras.

The company has asked for 12 physicists to help them rigorously test their invention to prove, one way or the other, whether it works as they say it does. McCarthy claims that the vast majority of the scientists they've directly invited to test their device have refused, which is why they've resorted to the advertisement.

"Free energy" is a perennial claim of inventors, one that science has constantly battled with. The idea that a small amount of energy can return a bigger amount without drawing it from somewhere breaks the basic laws of physics, specifically the laws of thermodynamics. Devices that are claimed to exhibit this behaviour are known as perpetual motion machines.

Today in History

1848 - California Gold Rush: The New York Herald reported news to the East Coast of the United States that a gold rush was on in California.

1942 - World War II: Allied forces raided Dieppe, France in the Dieppe Raid.

1953 - Operation Ajax: The government of Mohammed Mossadegh in Iran was overthrown.

1960 - Russian space dogs Belka and Strelka began to orbit the

Earth aboard the Korabl-Sputnik-2 spacecraft.

1991 - Mikhail Gorbachev was announced as "ill and had been relieved of his state post as President" in a failed Soviet coup attempt.

August 19 is Afghan Independence Day; National Aviation Day in the United States.

Quote of the Day

"How are we to survive? Solemnity is not the answer, any more than witless and irresponsible frivolity is. I think our best chance lies in humor, which in this case means a wry acceptance of our predicament. We don't have to like it but we can at least recognize its ridiculous aspects, one of which is ourselves."

~ Ogden Nash

Word of the Day

irksome; adj

1. Disagreeable or troublesome by reason of long continuance or repetition.

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