



July 13, 2006

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Top Stories
Israel: "Entering southern Lebanon to search for Israeli soldiers" Israel has launched an incursion into southern Lebanon after Hezbollah, a Lebanese militia, launched an incursion into Israel, Wednesday.
Several blasts rock Mumbai commuter trains Several people have been killed in a series of blasts that ripped through local trains in the Indian financial capital.

Wikipedia Current Events
Election because of alleged vote fraud.
Former General Secretary of the Soviet Union Communist Party Mikhail Gorbachev says "We have made some mistakes," referring to attacks on Russia's democracy, and making several unflattering comments about the United States.
• 10 or more of Iran's Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps members attended North Korea's launch of its Taepodong-2 missile.
• France, United States, United Kingdom, Russia, People's Republic of China and Germany have decided to refer Iran to the U.N. Security Council over its nuclear program, after Iran not deciding whether to respond to a package of incentives quickly enough.
• The death toll from the 11 July 2006 Mumbai train bombings has risen to 200 deaths and 700 injuries. Timers in pencils have been found at some of the sites of explosion.
• Robert Novak says Karl Rove not primary source for Plame leak.
• The United States has blamed Syria and Iran for the kidnapping of the two Israeli soldiers.

Featured story
Pink Floyd's Syd Barrett dies at age 60 Today, it was announced that Syd Barrett, the founding member of British rock band Pink Floyd died from a complication with diabetes. According to a Pink Floyd spokeswoman, he died days earlier but the announcement was withheld.
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• A tornado has struck 20 miles north of New York City during rush hour. This has caused heavy damage to a Westchester County store.
• An Israeli air strike has destroyed the Palestinian Foreign Ministry Building in Gaza City.
• Several thousand protesters marched in Mexico City, Mexico because of Felipe Calderon's win. They march in protest of the 2006 Mexican Presidential

China and Russia counter resolution against North Korea
China and Russia have today put forward a jointly-crafted resolution regarding sanctions against North

Korea. The document was released to counter a Japanese alternative, which was written in response to last week's Taepodong-2 missile tests. This Sino-Russian version, however, removes sections which could advocate military action against Pyongyang.

The move comes after a number of Chinese requests this week to revise the original Japanese version, claiming that tensions in the region would increase if it were to be adopted. As a result, Chinese diplomats have been instructed to veto the initial document, which advocates much stronger sanctions against North Korea than semi-allies Russia and China would have felt comfortable with.

The two nations presented their revised resolution to the United Nations this afternoon. After reviewing a draft copy - which was released to The Associated Press - several influential nations, including the United States and the United Kingdom, have reaffirmed their support for Japan's initial version.

Both Russia and China, who share a border with the nation, have been placed in a difficult position by last week's missile tests. Both countries have relatively positive relations with North Korea but their commitment to the international community - mainly the UN Security Council - has led to an impartial stance on this issue. The publishing of this "counter-resolution" is the first active move the two nations have

made against the North since the tests, who still approve of sanctions but describe Japan's proposed extensive restrictions as "over-reacting."

Japan and the United States have announced tonight that they still intend to put their first resolution to a vote, despite the threat of a veto by China and possibly Russia. A Japanese diplomat has said that the Sino-Russian reworking was "a step in the right direction" but lacked decisive wording on important issues. The use of weaker language - namely asking instead of demanding - has also been criticised.

South Korea has not commented directly on the new resolution, but has instead urged North Korea to return to the Six-Party Talks, which are seen to be a key step forward in ensuring diplomacy between the nation and its democratic peers.

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- The Hezbollah organization kidnaps two Israeli soldiers patrolling along the Israeli northern border. Three soldiers are killed in the incident, and four soldiers are killed in subsequent confrontations inside Lebanon. Hezbollah militants launch Katyusha rockets and mortar shells at Israeli towns along the border, wounding six Israeli civilians and five soldiers. Israeli ground and air forces attack numerous Hezbollah positions in Southern Lebanon in failed attempt to thwart the transportation of the kidnapped soldiers from the area.

- Hezbollah's unprovoked attack draws fierce international condemnation. The US, EU, Japan, UK, Egypt and UN call for

Wikipedia Current Events

the immediate unconditional release of two kidnapped Israeli soldiers. The Syrian regime and various Palestinian groups praise the attack by Iranian-backed Hezbollah.

- Israeli Prime Minister Ehud Olmert describes the Hezbollah attacks as "unjustified acts of war" by Lebanon and promises a "very painful and far-reaching" response.

- An IDF reserve armoured division is called up in preparation for large scale operations in Lebanon, raising concerns for war.

- The Japanese national government announces it will introduce a satellite system that will warn residents of incoming missiles, earthquakes, and other disasters in a 200 million yen program named "J-ALERT".

- Iraqi security forces discover the bodies of 20 bus drivers kidnapped earlier in the week. Three kidnap victims are freed.

- Condoleezza Rice says Iran's rejection of the international incentives program will force the major powers to take decisions in the United Nations Security Council.

- An Israeli brigade enters the central Gaza Strip via Kissufim crossing, aiming at temporarily bisecting it. Simultaneously, the Israel Air Force targets a meeting of Hamas operational wing commanders in an apartment building in Gaza city. One Hamas leader, seven members of his family and one neighbour are killed. Top Hamas leaders Mohammed Deif and Abu Anas al-Ghandour, who Israeli officials claim were heavily involved in the kidnapping of Cpl. Gilad

Wikipedia Current Events

Shalit, are moderately wounded. Fourteen additional Palestinian militants are killed in other incidents in the Gaza Strip.

Zidane apologises for headbutt

Zinedine Zidane has apologised on French TV for his actions on the World Cup final, Wednesday. Zidane had headbutted Italian player Marco Materazzi and was sent off as a result.

"I want to ask for forgiveness from all the children who watched," he said.

It also was expected that Zidane would reveal what provoked him into the headbutt. Zidane refused to divulge what Materazzi actually said, but did say that Materazzi made remarks which were "very personal" and specifically concerned his mother and sister.

Materazzi had earlier admitted that he insulted Zidane, but denied any remarks on Zidane's mother or having made a racial slur.

"I didn't insult his mother. I lost my mother when I was 15 years old and still get emotional when I talk about it"

"Zidane is my hero and I have always admired him a lot," said Materazzi.

The French star's comments contradicted Materazzi's view. Zidane also refused to apologise to Materazzi for his on-field assault. "I want to apologise to them [the children] but I can't regret what I did because it would mean that he [Materazzi] was right to say what he said."

After the red card to Zidane Italy

went on to win the final on penalties.

The partial apology comes as FIFA President Sept Blatter said Zidane may be stripped of his Golden Ball award for the tournament's best player. FIFA set up a disciplinary committee to investigate Zidane's violent conduct.

Blair ally Lord Levy arrested

Police have arrested Lord Levy, chief fundraiser to the Labour Party and close associate of Tony Blair. Lord Levy was arrested by the Specialist Crime Directorate of London's Metropolitan police as part of an on-going investigation into the cash-for-peerages row which has troubled the Labour government since the start of the year. He was bailed on Wednesday afternoon without charge pending further enquiries.

In a statement, Lord Levy said the arrest was "totally unnecessary". A spokesman also said: "He has not been charged and does not expect to be, as he has committed no offence."

The cash-for-peerages affair erupted earlier this year, after an independent body reported that Tony Blair had sold peerages (the title of Lord) to businessmen in exchange for secret donations to the Labour Party. This potentially breaks the Honours (Prevention of Abuses) Act of 1925 which was originally introduced after Prime Minister Lloyd George was caught selling peerages for personal funds.

The ruling Labour Party admitted soon after that it had borrowed over £14 million before the last general election in 2005. The opposition Conservative Party also admitted it had been loaned £16 million by wealthy businessmen.

Itâs believed that as chief fundraiser, Lord Levy arranged the Labour Partyâs loans.

All political parties deny any wrong-doing, although the arrest of one of the Prime Ministerâs closest allies is going to provide yet more scandal for the already troubled party.

Downing Street has so far declined to comment on what they call a "party matter" and Levy himself has accused the police of "over-reacting". Some politicians have commented that the situation could be very serious for Mr. Blair.

Israel: "Entering southern Lebanon to search for Israeli soldiers"

Israel has launched an incursion into southern Lebanon in what they claim is a search for two Israeli soldiers. The soldiers were taken Wednesday by Hezbollah, a Lebanese militia, during an incursion into Israel.

Army transports patrolling at the Israeli-Lebanese border were attacked in the morning by Hezbollah near the Israeli settlement of Zar'it. Mortars and long-range rockets were also fired at the Israeli town Shlomi and nearby settlements. Three Israeli soldiers died and eleven wounded. Two soldiers were found to be missing.

Israeli troops and tanks entered southern Lebanon claiming to be in search of the soldiers, who they say were kidnapped. Following the incursion, five more soldiers were killed, four of them when an Israeli tank hit a mine. Hezbollah said one of its members died.

The Israeli air-force targeted several roads, bridges and Hezbollah outposts while saying

this targeting was an attempt to stop militants from moving the soldiers. Two civilians were killed in an air raid on one of the bridges, while 23 others have been injured. Israeli artillery and gunboats also attacked other targets on Lebanese soil.

Later, Hezbollah said they had destroyed an Israeli tank which had crossed the border into Lebanon.

Ehud Olmert, Israel's Prime Minister, blamed the attack on the Lebanese government calling it "an act of war" and vowed to deliver a "very painful and far-reaching" response. Israel Defense Forces Chief of Staff Dan Halutz told Israel's Channel 10 that if the soldiers are not returned "we will turn Lebanon's clock back 20 years".

Hezbollah Secretary-General, Sheik Hassan Nasrallah, hailed what he called the capture of the two soldiers calling them "our natural, only and logical right". He also said that the soldiers were taken to "a far away place" and that the only way to get them back was through an exchange with Lebanese and other Arab prisoners in Israeli jails.

The Israeli cabinet is in an emergency meeting and has yet to make an official statement about the situation though PM Ehud Olmert has already said that the swapping of prisoners is not an option.

Hezbollah's announcement of their captures led to celebration scenes in a Hezbollah-strong suburb in Beirut with firing of guns in the air and handing out candy to children.

The Lebanese government issued a statement after an emergency

meeting of the cabinet saying that it was not informed of the intentions of Hezbollah and that it does not endorse the group's actions. Prime Minister Fouad Siniora was quoted as saying that "the government was not aware of and does not take responsibility for, nor endorses what happened on the international border".

This view is recognized by the United States, which condemned the attacks but acknowledged that Lebanon had little say over Hezbollah in the south. The U.S. said the militant group's violent actions were supported by Iran and Syria, the White House says.

Israel strongly opposes this and has filed a complaint with the United Nations, calling for the Security Council to enforce resolutions urging Lebanon to extend its authority throughout its territory and to disarm its militias.

Dozens preemptively arrested in leadup to St Petersburg G8 Summit

A G8 summit has been planned to take place from 15-17 July in St Petersburg, Russia. Several sources have reported that a systematic police crackdown on people participating in alternative meetings (a Libertarian Forum and the Russian Social Forum) and critical of the official meeting has begun almost a week prior to the summit. Estimates range from dozens to one or two hundred arrests and detainements.

For the past several years, especially since the 27th G8 summit in 2001 in Genoa, the G8 summits of the leaders of seven of the world's richest industrialised countries and of Russia have been regularly met by popular protests by critics who assert that members of G8 are responsible for

global issues such as global warming due to carbon dioxide emission, poverty in Africa and developing countries due to debt crisis and unfair trade policy, exacerbating the AIDS crisis by medicine patent policy and other problems that are related to globalization. These protests have been met by massive numbers of arrests and police violence, on some occasions.

In contrast to previous G8 meetings, this time arrests have been taking place a week before the official meeting itself has started. At least 23-25 human rights activists and political activists, including two German citizens, have been detained by police in Moscow, St Petersburg and other cities in Russia since 7 July. Many of them have been sentenced to ten days' imprisonment, enough to prevent them from participation in political protests until the end of the official summit.

Some sources claim that the true detention rate may be much higher, such as an unconfirmed report attributed to the Siberian Confederation of Labour (Сибирская конфедерация труда) claiming 200 arrests. The activists' legal team claims that more than 100 arrests and detainments have occurred.

Discussions on global energy issues and other themes have started at the Libertarian Forum despite the arrests, and the Russian Social Forum is expected to start on schedule on 13 July, followed by the official G8 meeting on 15-17 July. Permission to carry out a street demonstration by the Russian Social Forum has been refused by the authorities.

Russian authorities say that demonstrations are permitted, but only in the location set aside for them - a sports stadium about 25 km (16 miles) from the Constantine Palace, which will house the summit. The Russian Deputy Interior Minister Alexander Chekalin said that allegations of harassment were "from the realms of supposition".

"The police's actions are commensurate with the situation at hand. The situation demands particular measures, sometimes intensified. Sometimes it demands that we visit a family in their apartment," He said.

Sex scandal rocks Scottish politics

A controversial defamation court case is continuing today in Edinburgh after hearing fresh allegations against one of Scotland's most influential politicians. Tommy Sheridan, a Member of the Scottish Parliament (MSP) and convener of the Scottish Socialist Party, is pressing ahead with the case despite claims of orgies and other sexual acts by tabloid newspaper The News of the World.

Since the case began over a week ago, the courtroom has heard allegations from several journalists, MSPs and colleagues of Mr Sheridan, with witnesses telling of scandals varying from extra-marital group sex to "threats that someone would pull out a tongue". The case began after The News of the World printed several pieces in 2004 and 2005, making allegations regarding Mr Sheridan's personal life. The newspaper stands by the articles as true, despite the MSP claiming £200,000 in damages.

Many of the original articles centre

around the former market researcher Helen Allison, who claims that, in 2002, she was invited to a Glasgow hotel by a friend to attend a "VIP party." Upon arrival, she was taken up to a suite where she saw Tommy Sheridan "having sex with a female at the bottom of a bed and another man sitting at the side of the bed putting a condom on." It was alleged by The News of the World that this woman was a prostitute. It was after selling this story to the newspaper that Miss Allison received threats that her tongue would be removed.

The courtroom has also heard testimonials from another witness, 38 year-old journalist Anver Khan. Miss Khan told the court that she had visited a "Swingers' Club" in Manchester with Mr Sheridan. She has also told of threats and attacks by individuals associated with the MSP, who is currently married to Gail Sheridan. In a show of unity, the couple have been arriving at court each day hand in hand.

The trial is set to last for two weeks in total.

Iraqi group claim deaths of U.S. soldiers avenge rape, murder of Iraqi girl

A group allegedly linked to al Qaeda, Mujahideen Shura Council in Iraq, posted a web video Tuesday which purported to show two U.S. soldiers' mutilated bodies and claimed the soldiers were killed to avenge the rape and murder of 14-year-old Abeer Qassim Hamza.

The six American soldiers who have been charged with various crimes related to the alleged rape and murder incident are from the same unit as the two U.S. soldiers who were abducted, killed and

mutilated, they claim.

The group said that the video was released as "revenge for our sister who was dishonored by a soldier of the same brigade" and that after their fighters heard of the rape and killing, "they kept their anger to themselves and didn't spread the news, but were determined to avenge their sister's honor. God Almighty enabled them to capture two soldiers of the same brigade as this dirty crusader," said a written statement posted on the Web along with the video.

U.S. officials in Iraq condemned the release of the graphic video. "[Multi-National Division-Baghdad] condemns the release of the video in the strongest of terms; it demonstrates the barbaric and brutal nature of the terrorists and their complete disregard for human life. Coalition forces remain resolute in our commitment to catch perpetrators of this crime and bring them to justice."

The video is 4:39 minutes and shows two bodies in torn military uniforms; bloodied and mutilated. One is decapitated and fighters are shown turning the bodies over and also lifting the severed head.

UK to get new nuclear power stations

The British government has given permission for new nuclear power stations to be built in the United Kingdom. This decision follows months of public debate and controversy over the proposal. Many Britons have argued for greater use of renewable energy supplies, but the government has said that even with a big increase in investment, renewable sources will not meet all of the UK's additional energy demands. It is expected that 25 GW of additional

generating capacity will be required over the next two decades, partly as compensation for old nuclear stations which will be closed down. This additional capacity must be met while reducing overall greenhouse gas emission as per the Kyoto Protocol.

The government also announced big increases in spending on renewable energy research and for the construction of onshore wind farms. It is claimed that 20% of energy will be produced from renewables by 2020, and if there are new breakthroughs in renewable energy science this figure may be increased further. Philip Wolfe of the Renewable Energy Association (REA) told the BBC "The government has seen the light on renewables. The energy review supports what we and many others have been consistently saying - that renewables, energy efficiency and decentralised systems are the strongest prospects for secure and sustainable energy supplies."

The new nuclear plants will cost 400-500 million UK pounds (700-900 million US dollars) and will generate 1.5 to 2 GW of power each. These will provide the baseline amount of additional power should there be a lack of success in new areas of renewable energy research. The private sector will initiate, fund, construct and operate the new nuclear plants and will cover the full cost of decommissioning and their full share of long-term waste management costs. The Government proposes to address potential barriers to new nuclear stations, but says it will not provide any taxpayer money for the nuclear industry - tax investment will only be put into renewable energy research. This

approach is similar to the successful approach adopted in the USA. It contrasts with early UK nuclear power development, where individual power plants or small groups of plants were planned and built by separate publically funded research and engineering groups, but there was poor planning of nationwide issues such as waste management. Critics argue that the government has only put the nuclear option on the table as it is privately run and does not require government investment, whereas increasing renewable energy production would cost taxpayer money.

The review also discusses energy self-sufficiency, and points out that the increase in renewable energy to 20% of the total will improve the UK's self sufficiency. No mention is made of opening uranium mines in the Orkney islands (or reopening Cornish uranium mines) in order to make the UK self-sufficient in uranium, something which Margaret Thatcher tried to address in 1980.

Some critics were disappointed that the review had little discussion of the reduction of emissions from transport, a sector which gives a larger contribution to the total UK emissions than electricity generation. This may relate to the high costs associated with significant reductions in emissions in the transport sector.

Man arrested for mutilating NZ body

Tonight, July 12, the New Zealand Police have arrested a man for murdering Tony Stanlake.

The murderer, 21-year-old, will be in Wellington's District Court tomorrow morning.

Head Detective Inspector, Mike

Arnerich, said "tonight's arrest was excellent news, police were still seeking more people in connection with the death. We firmly believe more people were involved in Tony's death. We've still got a lot of investigative work to do to identify and find these people."

The 62-year-olds body was found mutilated in Wellingtons south coast, New Zealand. His hands were cut off at the wrists and the head had received numerous fractures.

The police had been seeking a Subaru Legacy which got stuck in the sand at Owhiro bay a day before the body was discovered, they found the car at Wainuiomata. They forensically examined the car, this was followed by the arrest of the man.

Police are still seeking more information about the Subaru and sightings of Mr Stanlake.

The hotline for anyone to contact with any information is (NZ) 0508733762

Microsoft launches classified listings site

Microsoft launched its free online classified listing site, Windows Live Expo today in the United States market, announcing that it is no longer a public pre-release beta version, but "a fully fledged Windows Live service". The corporation is readying a UK version, too.

Expo, one of the 30+ announced Windows Live services and software products, is the fifth service in the set to launch. It was previously available in a public beta form for U.S. residents.

On Windows Live Expo users can

buy and sell items, post classified advertisements, and search for bargains. Similar Web sites include Craigslist and eBay. Expo can perform searches for listings by people in a specific group (e.g. only e-mail contacts), and also by radius of the user (e.g. maximum 50 miles from me).

The service is meant to be heavily integrated with other Windows Live products, such as Messenger and Spaces. The new version, compared to the betas, introduces the new Windows Live look, the ability to add comments to a listing, provides driving directions to a specific place (like the home of the seller of an item), and also provides more help for developers to expand upon Expo.

The announcement, published on the product team's blog, also noted, that a UK version of the service was created, and is available internally inside the company.

Expo was previously code-named Fremont, later Classifieds.

Today in History

1772 - HMS Resolution set sail from Plymouth, England, under the command of Captain James Cook.

1793 - Jean-Paul Marat, a leader in the French Revolution, was murdered in his bathtub by Charlotte Corday.

1878 - The major powers in Europe redrew the map of the Balkans in the Treaty of Berlin.

1923 - The Hollywoodland Sign was officially dedicated in the hills above Hollywood, California. The last four letters of the sign were later removed in 1949.

1985 - Live Aid benefit concerts, organised by Bob Geldof and Midge Ure to raise funds for famine relief in Ethiopia, were held

in London and Philadelphia.
July 13 is Bon Festival in Japan

Quote of the Day

Quote of the Day
To-morrow
comes, true copy of to-day,
And empty shadow of what is to
be;
Yet cheated Hope on future still
depends,
And ends but only when our being
ends.
~ John Clare ~

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Word of the Day

vex; v

1. To annoy.
2. To cause (mental) suffering
to; to distress.

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