



### Top Stories

#### Lebanon faces humanitarian crisis

More than half a million people have been displaced in Lebanon as the conflict between Israel and Hezbollah continues into its second week. Efforts are underway to open a safe corridor to allow aid shipments to be sent to Lebanon.

#### Somali Islamists halt peace talks with government

The Union of Islamic Courts has broken off peace talks with Somalia's interim government as the country slides closer towards major military conflict. The Islamists blamed the influx of soldiers from neighbouring Ethiopia for the end of talks.

### Featured story

#### Human Rights Watch: US abuse of Iraqi prisoners continues

A report published by Human Rights Watch titled No Blood, No Foul: Soldiers' Accounts of Detainee Abuse in Iraq claims that that harsh interrogation techniques and torture continues and are approved by commanders.

### Wikipedia Current Events

- Talks among key World Trade Organisation (WTO) member countries to liberalise global trade (known as the Doha round) collapses after nearly five years of negotiations.

### Wikipedia Current Events

- Chadian President Idriss Deby fires Livestock Minister Mahamat Allamine Bourma Treye and Decentralization Minister Mahamat Abdoulaye, who served as the Livestock Minister in Deby's second term, accusing them of embezzling 277 million CFA Francs.

- Condoleezza Rice is trying to put together a package that might lead to a new Security Council resolution insisting on the implementation of Resolution 1559, approved in September 2004. That called for the disbanding of Hezbollah as a militia and the extension of Lebanese government control to the border with Israel.

- Hezbollah leader Hassan Nasrallah announces in an interview with Al-Jazeera that he discussed the abduction of the two Israeli soldiers with Lebanese political leaders before the attack occurred.

- Prime Minister Tony Blair is coming under pressure from within his own party to take a tougher stance with Israel over its bombing of Lebanon.

- Iran's President, Mahmoud Ahmadinejad, warns Israel over its actions in Lebanon.

- Saddam Hussein, 69, the deposed former Iraqi President, has been force-fed in a Baghdad hospital through a tube after 16 days of hunger strike.

- Two powerful bombs in

### Wikipedia Current Events

Baghdad's Sadr City neighborhood kill at least 66.

#### Victoria Cross fetches record price at auction

The auction house Bonhams and Goodman have sold the last privately owned Victoria Cross (VC) awarded at the World War I Gallipoli campaign in Sydney tonight. The medal was awarded to New Zealand-born Australian soldier Captain Alfred Shout. The sale price of \$A 1 million surpassed the previous record of \$A575,000 set in 2004 for the VC medal awarded to Sergeant Norman Jackson of the RAF 1944.

The Victoria Cross is the highest recognition for valour "in the face of the enemy" that can be awarded to members of the British and Commonwealth armed forces and civilians under military command. It is also the highest award in the British Honours system.

The buyer is an Australian businessman, auctioneer Mr Tim Goodman said "I can confirm the buyer is a prominent Australian businessman who is going to work with the RSL to make sure the medals go on display at the Australian War Memorial in Canberra.", after commisions and other charges the successful buyer will pay \$A1,214,500.

The addition of this medal will take the display of Victoria Crosses at the Australian War Memorial to 60. The display will include all nine

Victoria Crosses awarded to Australian servicemen at Gallipoli.

### **PCC promotes new wave of attacks in Brazil**

The criminal organization known as PCC (Primeiro Comando da Capital, Portuguese for First Command of the Capital City) promotes a new wave of attacks against civil and authority targets in Brazil which began early July. The main attacks are occurring in São Paulo state.

According to the Secretary of Public Security of São Paulo, from 22:00 of Tuesday (11, 01:00 Wednesdays UTC) until the beginning of the evening of Thursday(13), 102 criminal actions against a whole of 118 different targets have been carried out: 65 buses were put on fire, 16 banks, 2 supermarkets and several other buildings were shot or attacked with bombs. The attacks are occurring in the state's capital São Paulo and at least 18 cities of the interior.

The Secretary of Public Security of São Paulo reports 6 deaths among civilian and police officers.

### **Two New Zealand children die in fire**

Two children living in a bach (a small holiday home) in Motueka, New Zealand died in a fire on Saturday night. The two children who perished in the 10.25 p.m. fire were an 11-year-old girl, Charna Maria Baileys Edwards and a 12-year-old boy, Whetumarama James Edwards.

The New Zealand Police say that the cause of the fire was ashes taken from a log fire and then placed in a plastic bucket. The ashes then reignited.

Also injured in the fire was the

children's grandmother, 54-year-old, legal guardian to the two children, and an uncle, 34. A firefighter also received minor injuries. They are all being treated in Nelson Hospital and are in a stable condition.

Grief counsellors have been sent to Lower Moutere School where the two children went to school. Eric Davies, principal of Lower Moutere School, told National Radio "The families of the classes that the children were in have been contacted and asked if they could discuss it with their kids."

Kevin Whitlow, a witness to the fire, told The Press "It was horrendous knowing there were two children stuck in there and there was nothing you could do because it was already too late. The woman just kept saying, 'Save my grandchildren, my grandchildren are in there'."

### **Atlantis departs hangar ahead of August 28 launch**

The Space Shuttle Atlantis has entered final preparation for mission STS-115, and has begun movement from its hangar at the OPF, to the VAB, where it will be attached to its external tank and solid rocket boosters. The first motion occurred at 11:34 GMT (07:34 EDT)

This will be the third mission since the loss of the Space Shuttle Columbia on mission STS-107, and the first ISS assembly mission in four years. It will also be the first time Atlantis has flown since 2002.

The move, which is currently in progress, is expected to take about an hour. Rollout to the pad is scheduled for August 1st, ahead of an August 28th launch date. It is possible that these may be brought forward for an August

27th launch, which would make it the first time in NASA history a manned spaceflight has occurred earlier than originally scheduled.

The flight will deliver a truss and solar panels to the space station.

### **Today in History**

306 - Constantine I was proclaimed Roman emperor by his troops.

1261 - The Latin Empire ended when Michael VIII Palaeologus and his Nicaean forces captured Constantinople to re-establish the Byzantine Empire.

1909 - French aviator Louis Bleriot made the first crossing of the English Channel in a heavier-than-air flying machine.

1978 - Louise Brown, the world's first test-tube baby, was born in Oldham, England.

2000 - Air France Concorde Flight 4590 crashed after takeoff in Paris, killing 113 people.

July 25 is Constitution Day in Puerto Rico; Galicia Day in Galicia, Spain; Feast day of Saint James the Great.

### **Quote of the Day**

"There seem to be magic days once in a while, with some rare quality of light that hold a body spellbound... Then comes the hard part: how to plan a picture so as to give to others what has happened to you. To render in paint an experience, to suggest the sense of light and color, air and space..."

~ Maxfield Parrish

### **Word of the Day**

corsair; n

1. A pirate along the Barbary coast.
2. A fast pirate ship or privateer.

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