



Top Stories

New video released shows BBC journalist Alan Johnston wearing 'explosive belt'

A new video has been released by the kidnappers of BBC News reporter Alan Johnston, who was kidnapped whilst returning from work in Gaza City 105 days ago.

Audio tape released of missing Israeli soldier

Kidnapped Israeli soldier Gilad Shalit, 20, is believed to be alive, and Hamas has released an audio tape where Shalit says he needs to be hospitalized and that he regrets that Israel has not met the demands of the kidnappers.

Featured story

Election of new 7 wonders of the world: deadline approaching

The results of the New Seven Wonders of the World election, a proposed revision of the ancient wonders, will be announced on July 7, 2007 (or 07.07.07).

Wikipedia Current Events

- Mauricio Macri, a member of the National Congress of Argentina and President of Boca Juniors, is elected as the Chief of Government of Buenos Aires.
- Ali Hassan al-Majid, better known as "Chemical Ali" is sentenced to death for his role in killing 180,000 Kurds under Saddam Hussein.
- A roadside bomb hits a United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon

Wikipedia Current Events

patrol killing six Spanish(of whom three were ofColombian nationality) peacekeepers and injuring two others.

- More than 200 people die in accidents related to storms in Karachi, Pakistan.
- Gordon Brown becomes the Leader of the Labour Party, replacing Prime Minister Tony Blair. Brown will replace Blair as Prime Minister on 27 June 2007.
- Harriet Harman becomes the Deputy Leader of the Labour Party, replacing Deputy Prime Minister John Prescott. She is not expected to follow Prescott as Deputy Prime Minister, and won the Labour deputy leadership election with 50.43%, narrowly beating Alan Johnson.

At least four UN peacekeepers killed, six injured by bomb in Lebanon

Reports say that a roadside bomb or landmine blast has killed at least four United Nations peacekeepers from Spain and injured at least three to six other peacekeepers in the town of Khiam, Nabatieh Governorate in southern Lebanon.

At least two UN armored vehicles were severely damaged by the blast and at least one of those vehicles was carrying a stock of ammunition which caused it to explode after the device detonated.

It is not known who planted the

device, but Hezbollah has stated that it is not responsible for the blast and condemns the attack.

"The attack hurts the people of the south and of Lebanon," said an unnamed Hezbollah official.

It is estimated that 15,000 peacekeepers are inside Lebanon.

Ali Hassan al-Majid and two others sentenced to death by Iraqi court

A cousin of Saddam Hussein, Ali Hassan al-Majid, also known as "Chemical Ali", was sentenced to death by hanging yesterday in Iraq by the Supreme Iraqi Criminal Tribunal, along with two other officials from the former Baath Party. They were sentenced for their roles in the Al-Anfal Campaign, an anti-Kurdish campaign that resulted in the deaths of 180,000 Kurds.

It was during an attack against the Kurds that he received the nickname "Chemical Ali", for the infamous Halabja poison gas attack, in which he ordered chemical weapons to be used against a town full of Kurdish civilians. The trial did not deal with this specific incident.

Judge Mohammed Oreibi al-Khalifa told al-Majid that, according to a New York Times report, he had "been convicted of genocide, crimes against humanity and war crimes for ordering army and security services to use chemical weapons in a large-scale offensive that killed or maimed thousands."

Al-Majid was head of the Baath Party's Northern Bureau Command at the time of the offences.

Al-Majid is reported to have said "Thanks be to God" as he left the court building, although he was trembling and silent when the verdict was read out. Reuters described him as "old-looking" during the sentencing.

Former defense minister Sultan Hashim Ahmad al-Tal was also sentenced to death, for a large-scale attack on civilians, and for the usage of chemical weapons and illegal deportation against the Kurds. He insisted he was innocent as he left the courtroom, saying "I will not say anything new, but I will leave you to God. I'm innocent,".

Former deputy director of operations for the Iraqi Armed Forces Hussein Rashid Mohammed was the third to be sentenced to death, for a number of allegations against the Kurds, including making anti-Kurdish military plans. He interrupted the judge during the reading of the verdict, saying that all the defendants were merely defending Iraq from Kurdish rebels. He is reported to have said "God bless our martyrs. Long live the brave Iraqi army. Long live Iraq. Long live the Baath party and long live Arab nations,".

There were also two sentences of life imprisonment, one for former head of military intelligence's eastern regional office Farhan Mutlaq Saleh and one for director of military intelligence under Saddam Hussein Sabir al-Douri. Charges were dropped against former governor of Mosul and head of the Northern Affairs Committee Taher Tawfiq al-Ani due to insufficient evidence. This move was expected as the prosecutor

had earlier requested his release.

The sentences, unless overturned on appeal, will mark the end of the so-called Anfal trial, the second trial against regime officials since the 2003 invasion of Iraq. The other trial was that of Hussein himself, which ended in his execution. Prior to his death, Hussein had also been a defendant in the Anfal trial.

Torrential rainstorms kill over 200 in Karachi, Pakistan

Torrential rainstorms with gale force winds brought floods and destruction to Karachi, the capital of Sindh Province in Pakistan.

Over 40 dead were recovered on Saturday and more than 180 on Sunday. Many more are said to have been injured by downed trees and power lines. Widespread power outages are reported as well as some rioting.

"We have declared an emergency at all government hospitals and cancelled the vacations and leave of doctors and paramedics," said the health minister for Sindh Province, Syed Sardar Ahmed, to AFP. "Now the total number of those killed because of rain is 228," he told Reuters.

America's Cup: Alinghi wins first race over Team New Zealand

The Swiss syndicate, Alinghi has won the first race against Team New Zealand over the challenge for the top yachting award, the 32nd America's Cup. Alinghi finished the race 35 seconds ahead of Team New Zealand.

In the first race of a best out of nine challenge, Alinghi and Team New Zealand started at an even pace. Team New Zealand managed to edge out 25 metres in front of

Alinghi on the right hand side of the course, which Team New Zealand chose by winning the coin toss.

Team New Zealand skipper, Dean Barker said that the right hand side was the better side at the start of the race. But the wind changed and favoured Alinghi on the left hand side.

But ten minutes through the race, Alinghi's SUI-100, skippered by New Zealander Brad Butterworth, managed to head out, at times 160 metres in front of NZL-92.

"It felt really good – it was a huge relief to get out there. The racing was close, but we were pretty calm...," Alinghi trimmer Simon Daubney said.

The wind speeds were around 12.5 knots, with Alinghi grinder, Matt Welling describing the conditions as washing machine like. It has been reported that Team New Zealand modified their yacht, NZL-92, for choppy conditions.

Barker, Team New Zealand weather checker, Adam Beashell, and Daubney agree that SUI-100 isn't faster than NZL-92, and New Zealand could win in different conditions. Barker said, "You certainly couldn't blame it on our boat. We are very happy with it. It was just the way the breeze blew today. They are a very strong opponent and they got in front and controlled the race well." Daubney said, "The boat speed is pretty similar between the two, but it was puffy and the breeze was up and down, so you can't get too much of a read on it in just one race. From a first look though, it seems the boats are pretty similar in speed."

Team New Zealand mastman,

Barry McKay said the Team New Zealand will bounce back and carry on, a view also shared by Team New Zealand after-guard, Rob Salthouse.

In the last America's Cup challenge, 2003, Alinghi defeated Team New Zealand 5-0, though in 1995 and 2000, Team New Zealand defeated Alinghi.

Around 800 boats of different sizes and types gathered on the Mediterranean Sea to watch the first race.

Team New Zealand won the right to challenge Alinghi for the cup after defeating Luna Rossa Challenge five-nil for the Louis Vuitton Cup.

Olympus Marathon takes place in northern Greece

One of the most important sport events of northern Greece takes place this weekend in Litochoro, Greece. The Skai Olympus Marathon started yesterday in the roots of the famous mountain, with athletes starting from a sea-level altitude follow 44km of trails at the slopes of Mt.Olympus and reach the height of 2780m. The Greek weightlifter and three-time Olympic champion Pyrros Dimas gave the sign for the start, from the town of Dion. The race was won by Alexis Gounko of Greece. Tonight the event will conclude with a ceremony in Litochoro's central park.

Today in History

1530 - The Augsburg Confession, the primary confession of faith of the Lutheran Church, was presented to the Holy Roman Emperor Charles V at the Diet of Augsburg.

1876 - Indian Wars in North America: United States Army Colonel George Armstrong Custer

was killed at the Battle of the Little Bighorn.

1950 - The Korean War between North and South Korea began with the North Koreans launching a pre-dawn raid south over the 38th parallel.

1967 - Over 400 million people in over 30 countries watched Our World, the first live, international, satellite television production.

1993 - Kim Campbell was chosen as leader of the Progressive Conservative Party and became the first female Prime Minister of Canada.

June 25 is Statehood Day in Croatia and Slovenia.

Quote of the Day

Absurdity, n. A statement or belief manifestly inconsistent with one's own opinion. ~ Ambrose Bierce

Word of the Day

foment; v

1. To apply a poultice to; to bathe with a cloth or sponge.
2. To incite or cause; to promote, encourage, or instigate.

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