



Top Stories

Hospitals declare "code red" in Wellington, New Zealand

Hospitals have declared "code red" in Wellington, New Zealand. They are unable to accept patients due to a lack of nurses.

US Senate says no to pullout of US troops from Iraq

The U.S. Senate voted on the pullout of troops from Iraq, but the amendment fell 8 votes to pass bill.

Featured story

Skull study confirms humans originated in Africa

A genetic study by U.K. scientists performed on 6,000 skulls from around the world, reveals that the origin of mankind lies in southeastern Africa.

Wikipedia Current Events

•An initial probe into the crash of TAM Linhas Aéreas Flight 3054 suggests that the pilot tried to abort the landing.

•A steam pipe explodes in Midtown New York City outside Grand Central Terminal; killing 1 person, injuring 44 and causing evacuations and delays throughout the area.

•A study in Nature confirms that the island of Britain was severed from continental Europe by a giant flood that cut away the Weald-Artois Anticline about 200,000 years ago.

•Florida Governor Charlie Crist ends the state's temporary

Wikipedia Current Events

voluntary moratorium on the death penalty by signing the death warrant of Mark Dean Schwab, convicted in 1992 of kidnapping, raping and murdering an 11-year-old boy in Cocoa, Florida. He is scheduled to die on November 15, 2007.

•Atlanta Falcons quarterback Michael Vick and three others are indicted by a federal grand jury in connection with the Bad Newz Kennels dog fighting investigation.

•Suspected militants attack a Pakistan army convoy detonating a bomb and opening fire leading to the loss of at least 16 lives and 14 more injuries.

•The International Atomic Energy Agency confirms that North Korea has shut down all five of its nuclear reactors as six-party talks resume in Beijing.

•Iraq War: The US Senate, with a 52-47 vote, fails by 8 votes to pass a bill that would have required withdrawal of all US troops (except for a small force) from Iraq by April 30, 2008.

•As China struggles to deal with flooding in the provinces of Sichuan, Guizhou, Anhui, Hubei, and Jiangsu, the city of Chongqing is hit with the largest rainstorm in the city's meteorological records, killing 32. 12 people are reported missing. The city's transportation network has been shut down completely.

Explosion, steam eruption near Grand Central Terminal in New York City

A pipe has burst in New York City, the largest city in the United States, causing a generator to explode. The explosion occurred in Midtown Manhattan near Grand Central Terminal (GCT) and the Chrysler Building, and approximately at the intersection of 41st Street and Lexington Avenue. Nearby buildings have been evacuated, and a large area has been blocked off. There are reports of a very large crater at the scene.

The New York Police Department (NYPD) has officially ruled out terrorism. Grand Central Station was quickly evacuated soon after the incident. Subway lines 4, 5 and 6 have no service in both directions between the 125th Street Station and the Bowling Green Station. The S line service has been shut completely.

The Fire Department of New York (FDNY) received a call at 5:56 p.m. EDT (UTC-4) reporting an explosion. More than 170 firefighters were dispatched to the scene. Witnesses reported that buildings in the nearby area shook. This was a five-alarm response.

At least 20 people have been reported injured, and one man died from a heart attack. Two people are currently in critical condition.

There are potentially harmful materials at the scene of the

explosion and HAZMAT crews are on the scene to clean up debris. There are reports that pipes were wrapped in asbestos, but the air is being tested, and results should be available late Wednesday night.

ConEdison Workers are on the scene as well, and it appears that they are working nearby.

Emergency workers are reporting that the situation is not under control. They are still unable to confirm why the pipe exploded due to the inaccessible nature of the scene at the source of the explosion. The pressure of steam has subsided and the air appears to have cleared, revealing the crater. Disruption of electricity in the surrounding area is minimal.

GCT is reported to be reopened at this time. An area was cordoned off and people trapped in the vicinity due to fears of asbestos pollution resulting from the explosion.

According to a press conference with the mayor, the pipe involved was built in 1924, and a likely cause of the eruption and explosion was cold water leaking into the pipe, possibly from rain or from a water pipe. A tow truck had fallen into the crater left by the explosion, and the explosion also shattered glass on nearby buildings.

Toxic air from Ukraine train derailment continues to make people sick

A freight train in Lviv, Ukraine derailed, caught fire and spilled a toxic chemical, releasing the fumes into the air early Tuesday morning (local time) and people who live near the site of the crash are still getting sick. Officials say that the air that surrounds at least 14 villages near the scene is at least

23% above normal limitations.

So far 70 people, 19 of those are children, have been hospitalized after they were poisoned by the fumes from train cars filled with yellow phosphorous. That number is up compared to 15 which were seeking medical attention on Tuesday.

"I can say we have resolved the situation by extinguishing those tankers. Now we need to talk about dealing with the aftermath of this breakdown," said Viktor Yanukovych, Ukraine's Prime Minister.

"This is a dangerous substance ... It is highly flammable and causes burns and choking," said Greenpeace Russia toxic gas expert, Alexei Kiselev.

The European Union has stated that they will continue to monitor the gas cloud saying that toxic gas clouds do not "respect borders" of countries and will travel.

The train was shipping cargo from Kazakhstan to Poland when it derailed. Authorities have ruled out sabotage and terrorism as playing a role in the crash and are still investigating the accident. At least 15 cars, of the 58 the train was pulling, derailed and or tipped over.

Water and local crops are said to not be affected by the chemical spill.

Tour de France: Cédric Vasseur wins stage 10

Cédric Vasseur of France has won stage 10 of the 2007 Tour de France. Vasseur won a five man sprint to the finishline by the slimmest of margins.

"This morning I was on the phone

to a friend and he told me, 'Today is your day!' And in all honesty I had the same confidence about this long stage. The victory had to be mine," said Vasseur after his victory.

Michael Rasmussen of Denmark retains the overall lead, finishing the stage some 10 minutes later with the peleton. In fact, all of the top ten in the overall, finished with the same time, leaving the standings unchanged from yesterday.

"It was a long, hard day and all the guys are suffering in the heat, that's quite obvious and 230 kilometers into a headwind takes its toll on everybody. My Rabobank team defended well today and we'll have to wait and see how we go. There is another two days before we have the big test in the time trial on Saturday and then I'll start thinking about the Pyrenees," said Michael Rasmussen.

He went on to say that he is now the leader of the Rabobank team: "There's been a lot said about the situation regarding leadership between myself and Denis Menchov and I think it's quite clear now that I'm the leader in the team now and I'm here to defend the yellow jersey for as long as possible."

Patrik Sinkewitz of Germany, who has already dropped out of the Tour after a crash, got more bad news when the A sample in a drug test on June 8, came back positive.

Driver dies after truck falls onto railway line in County Durham, England

The driver of a propane gas tanker has died after his vehicle fell 70 feet onto a railway line in County Durham, northern England. The tanker left the road and smashed

through a bridge near the small town of Wolsingham and landed on the Weardale Railway below with the driver being thrown from the cab.

The driver, who was in his twenties, had been airlifted to a hospital in Newcastle-upon-Tyne but later died from his injuries.

The Calor Gas tanker was said to be carrying 13,000 litres of liquefied petroleum gas at the time of the accident and nearby homes were evacuated. The fire crews who responded to the incident did not detect any gas leaking from the tanker however.

Chris Hockaday, from County Durham and Darlington Fire and Rescue Service described the problems they were facing, "There are a few options to consider - one is to see if we can decant the gas out into another vehicle. The problem is that it's gone off next to a bridge so it will be difficult to get any heavy lifting gear into position. We may have to right the vehicle and move it along the tracks somehow, maybe even using a train."

The Weardale Railway operates over a five mile section of restored track between Stanhope and Wolsingham.

In a statement the railway company said, "There will be no further services on Weardale Railway until further notice and we apologise to our passengers for any inconvenience this may cause. We have appointed an incident manager and have alerted the Rail Accident Investigation Board and Her Majesty's Rail Inspectorate. We will not be able to assess the damage until the site of the accident has been declared safe by the fire brigade and the tanker

removed from the track."

US Senate says no to pullout of US troops from Iraq

After a rare all-night session, the United States Senate voted today at 11am EST on the motion to invoke cloture of the Levin/Reed Amendment (S.Amdt. 2087) which would pullout United States troops from Iraq, but only 52 votes were cast in favor of the amendment and 47 were cast against it, falling just short of the 60 votes needed to overcome the Republican filibuster of the measure.

Cots were brought in for the Senators to catch snatches of sleep during the long night, while some slept at their apartments for short periods of time. Pizza was brought in for senators to eat. Seven Democrats left the Senate floor to go outside to join a candlelight vigil held across the street from Congress.

Had the bill passed, troops would have left Iraq 120 days after the vote, and would have been out of the country by April of 2008.

Four Republican senators, including both of Maine's senators, Susan Collins and Olympia Snowe voted with Chuck Hagel of Nebraska and Gordon Smith of Oregon, all critics of the war. Collins was a surprise vote, although a critic, she has not been favorable toward the deadline approach. Joe Lieberman, the Independent Democrat senator from Connecticut, who caucuses with Democrats, voted with Republicans against the motion, as he has done with all Iraq war legislation this year.

Last night during the all-night senate debate, Democratic Majority Leader from Nevada, Harry Reid, asked that the Senate

vote on the bill this morning. He later voted no on the motion in order to take advantage of Senate rules to reintroduce the measure.

After the motion failed Reid proposed that the Senate look at a series of Iraq proposals, including the failed plan, and make them subject to a simple majority vote. Mitch McConnell, the Republican Minority Leader from Kentucky objected and Reid withdrew the legislation from the floor and the Senate moved on to discussing student loans and grants.

Throughout the night, the Senators took turns speaking with Democrats speaking while a large sign behind them announced "Let Us Vote" speaking for the amendment and not allowing them a simple majority to vote for the amendment while Republicans took turns decrying it, noting that Democrats did the same when they were the minority and criticizing Republican leaders.

The following is a breakdown of how the Senators voted on the motion of cloture for the Levin/Reed Amendment (S.Amdt. 2087) grouped by state:

Alabama:
Sessions (R-AL), Nay
Shelby (R-AL), Nay

Alaska:
Murkowski (R-AK), Nay
Stevens (R-AK), Nay

Arizona:
Kyl (R-AZ), Nay
McCain (R-AZ), Nay

Arkansas:
Lincoln (D-AR), Yea
Pryor (D-AR), Yea

California:
Boxer (D-CA), Yea
Feinstein (D-CA), Yea

Colorado: Allard (R-CO), Nay Salazar (D-CO), Yea	Snowe (R-ME), Yea	North Carolina: Burr (R-NC), Nay Dole (R-NC), Nay
Connecticut: Dodd (D-CT), Yea Lieberman (ID-CT), Nay	Maryland: Cardin (D-MD), Yea Mikulski (D-MD), Yea	North Dakota: Conrad (D-ND), Yea Dorgan (D-ND), Yea
Delaware: Biden (D-DE), Yea Carper (D-DE), Yea	Massachusetts: Kennedy (D-MA), Yea Kerry (D-MA), Yea	Ohio: Brown (D-OH), Yea Voinovich (R-OH), Nay
Florida: Martinez (R-FL), Nay Nelson (D-FL), Yea	Michigan: Levin (D-MI), Yea Stabenow (D-MI), Yea	Oklahoma: Coburn (R-OK), Nay Inhofe (R-OK), Nay
Georgia: Chambliss (R-GA), Nay Isakson (R-GA), Nay	Minnesota: Coleman (R-MN), Nay Klobuchar (D-MN), Yea	Oregon: Smith (R-OR), Yea Wyden (D-OR), Yea
Hawaii: Akaka (D-HI), Yea Inouye (D-HI), Yea	Mississippi: Cochran (R-MS), Nay Lott (R-MS), Nay	Pennsylvania: Casey (D-PA), Yea Specter (R-PA), Nay
Idaho: Craig (R-ID), Nay Crapo (R-ID), Nay	Missouri: Bond (R-MO), Nay McCaskill (D-MO), Yea	Rhode Island: Reed (D-RI), Yea Whitehouse (D-RI), Yea
Illinois: Durbin (D-IL), Yea Obama (D-IL), Yea	Montana: Baucus (D-MT), Yea Tester (D-MT), Yea	South Carolina: DeMint (R-SC), Nay Graham (R-SC), Nay
Indiana: Bayh (D-IN), Yea Lugar (R-IN), Nay	Nebraska: Hagel (R-NE), Yea Nelson (D-NE), Yea	South Dakota: Johnson (D-SD), Not Voting Thune (R-SD), Nay
Iowa: Grassley (R-IA), Nay Harkin (D-IA), Yea	Nevada: Ensign (R-NV), Nay Reid (D-NV), Nay	Tennessee: Alexander (R-TN), Nay Corker (R-TN), Nay
Kansas: Brownback (R-KS), Nay Roberts (R-KS), Nay	New Hampshire: Gregg (R-NH), Nay Sununu (R-NH), Nay	Texas: Cornyn (R-TX), Nay Hutchison (R-TX), Nay
Kentucky: Bunning (R-KY), Nay McConnell (R-KY), Nay	New Jersey: Lautenberg (D-NJ), Yea Menendez (D-NJ), Yea	Utah: Bennett (R-UT), Nay Hatch (R-UT), Nay
Louisiana: Landrieu (D-LA), Yea Vitter (R-LA), Nay	New Mexico: Bingaman (D-NM), Yea Domenici (R-NM), Nay	Vermont: Leahy (D-VT), Yea Sanders (I-VT), Yea
Maine: Collins (R-ME), Yea	New York: Clinton (D-NY), Yea Schumer (D-NY), Yea	Virginia: Warner (R-VA), Nay Webb (D-VA), Yea

Washington:
Cantwell (D-WA), Yea
Murray (D-WA), Yea

West Virginia:
Byrd (D-WV), Yea
Rockefeller (D-WV), Yea

Wisconsin:
Feingold (D-WI), Yea
Kohl (D-WI), Yea

Wyoming:
Barrasso (R-WY), Nay
Enzi (R-WY), Nay

UK tube company Metronet goes into administration

Metronet, a company set up to manage the upgrade of three-quarters of London's tube network, has gone into administration (which is similar to Chapter 11 in the United States) after having accrued debts of up to £2 billion, following the decision on Monday to limit the amount of extra funds that the company would receive from public funds.

A notice on the Metronet website announced that the Boards of both Metronet BCV (responsible for the upgrade of the Bakerloo, Central and Victoria lines) and Metronet SSL (responsible for upgrade of the 'sub-surface' lines) had asked the Mayor to seek the appointment of a PPP Administrator. The statement says that the decision follows a period of 'financial uncertainty', with the decision of the arbiter leaving Metronet "unable to carry out its contract".

Metronet's shareholders, the companies Atkins, Balfour Beatty, Bombardier, EDF Energy and Thames Water had blocked access to an extra funds, and each have a limited liability of £350 million, their original equity stake.

Transport for London have

reassured the public that tube services will not be affected - Metronet is not responsible for day-to-day operation - but it is so far unclear what will happen to the upgrade contracts.

TAM Linhas Aéreas plane crashes at São Paulo airport in Brazil

On Tuesday afternoon a TAM Linhas Aéreas Airbus A320 (flight #JJ3054) crashed while attempting a landing at Congonhas airport, in São Paulo Brazil. The plane reportedly skidded off the wet runway, crossed a busy thoroughfare before careening into a fuel depot and warehouse ultimately bursting into flames.

"The plane accelerated when it reached the end of the runway and tried to take off again to avoid the road, but it crashed into the building and exploded," Junior Matos told AFP.

Authorities believe that all 180 people onboard the plane have died, and a further 15 people on the ground are feared dead as well.

Earlier, there were reports from the Brazilian media that 8 people, some from the plane, and some from the gas station, were taken to the local hospital for treatment and that Brazilian congressman Júlio Redecker was also on board the plane.

Low clouds and heavy rain were reported at the time of the crash. Additionally, the runway has had a history of problems with standing water. Neither of these factors have been linked to the cause of the crash at this point.

Rodrigo Pinho, state attorney, said the authorities will thoroughly investigate "to determine the

cause and to identify who was responsible".

US Senate to vote on troop pullout from Iraq today

United States Senate Democratic Majority Leader from Nevada, Harry Reid, has asked that the senate vote on the Levin/Reed Amendment at 11:00 a.m. (eastern time), which would begin a pullout of some U.S. troops from Iraq in 120 days, if the amendment is passed.

Currently, the U.S. senate is pulling an all-night debate on the Iraq war to decide whether troops should be pulled out of the country.

Despite the all-night session, some senators say that the debate is nothing more than a publicity stunt.

"Our enemies aren't threatened by talk-a-thons, and our troops deserve better than publicity stunts," said Mitch McConnell, a Republican Senator from Kentucky.

"We have no alternative except to keep them in session to explain their obstruction," added Reid.

Democrats are calling for a "simple majority vote" of at least 51 in order for the amendment to go forward, while Republicans want at least 60 votes.

Today in History

711 – Muslim conquests: Moorish Umayyad invaders led by Tariq ibn-Ziyad defeated Roderic and the Visigoths at the Battle of Guadalete.

1553 – Lady Jane Grey was replaced by Mary I of England as Queen of England after holding that title for just nine days.

1848 – The two-day Women's Rights Convention, the first

women's rights and feminist convention held in the United States, opened in Seneca Falls, New York.

1870 – A dispute over who would become the next Spanish monarch following Isabella II's abdication two years prior during the Glorious Revolution led France to declare war on Prussia.

1947 – Burmese nationalist Aung San and six members of his newly-formed cabinet were assassinated during a cabinet meeting.

Quote of the Day

The museums are here to teach the history of art and something more as well, for, if they stimulate in the weak a desire to imitate, they furnish the strong with the means of their emancipation.
~ Edgar Degas

Word of the Day

corbie step; n
1. (architecture) A series of step-like projections at the top of a gable.

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