

Top Stories

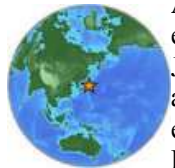
Plane carrying 160 crashes in Venezuela



A Colombian passenger jet carrying 152 passengers and 8 crewmembers

has crashed in Western Venezuela. Officials said the plane was travelling from Panama, headed for Martinique in the Caribbean when its pilot reported engine trouble to the Caracas airport just after 3 am (07:00 UTC).

Earthquake strikes northeast Japan, shakes Tokyo



A magnitude 7.2 earthquake has struck Japan at 2:46 UTC (11:46 am local time) time, off the eastern coast of northern Honshu, 95 km (60 miles)

from Sendai. Buildings in Tokyo, 350 km (220 miles) from the epicenter, were swayed by the trembler and trains were shut down.

Featured story

Coroner makes first post mortems of Athens airliner crash victims; text message was a hoax

The first post mortems of the victims of Sunday's crash have been carried out. In addition, the text message supposedly sent from the doomed airliner has been revealed as a hoax.

Wikipedia Current Events

- Lena Baker is pardoned 60 years after her execution by The Georgia Board of Pardons and Paroles.
- Coretta Scott King, widow of civil rights pioneer Martin Luther King, Jr., is admitted to Piedmont Hospital in Atlanta.
- Two helicopters crash near the city of Herat, in western Afghanistan, killing Spanish troops.

Wikipedia Current Events

- Madonna suffers multiple broken bones from a horseback riding accident during her 47th birthday celebration.
- ITN news has uncovered classified documents which seem to imply that Jean Charles de Menezes, the man shot dead by British Police on July 22, 2005, was not wearing a heavy coat, did not jump the ticket barrier, was not given a warning, and did not at any time flee from police.
- West Caribbean Airways Flight 708: A Colombian plane from West Caribbean Airways with 160 people on board has crashed in a remote region of Venezuela.
- 2005 Honshu Coast Quake: A magnitude-7.2 earthquake strikes northeastern coast of Honshu, Japan at 11.46am (02:46 UTC), injuring at least 40 people, and resulting in a tsunami warning.
- World Youth Day 2005 begins in Cologne, Germany.

Leaked documents reveal killed Brazilian was not acting suspiciously

It has been revealed, in documents leaked to the ITN news services, that Jean Charles de Menezes, the Brazilian electrician shot dead by British Police on London's underground on 22 July, was not acting suspiciously. Furthermore, the documents reveal that the original report given by the police and recorded on the official coroners report were almost entirely false.

The original reports claimed that de Menezes was acting suspiciously, was wearing a padded jacket, and ran when challenged, even vaulting the ticket barriers. However, the leaked documents, which include reports from officers involved in the operation and photographs of the scene, show that he behaved like any other commuter, used his travel pass to enter the station, even picking up a newspaper on his way. He was not challenged by police, and appears to have been unaware of being

followed before being shot. Photographic stills show he was wearing a light denim jacket, which could not have been concealing a bomb. Finally, it appears that he only ran in order to reach a train that was about to leave the platform.

A leaked document describes CCTV footage, which shows Mr de Menezes entered Stockwell station at a "normal walking pace" and descended slowly on an escalator.

The document said: "At some point near the bottom he is seen to run across the concourse and enter the carriage before sitting in an available seat.

An eye witness, who was sitting opposite de Menezes on the train, is quoted as saying: "Within a few seconds I saw a man coming into the double doors to my left. He was pointing a small black handgun towards a person sitting opposite me. He pointed the gun at the right hand side of the man's head. The gun was within 12 inches of the man's head when the first shot was fired."

This report is considerably different to initial reports that claimed de Menezes tripped as he fled onto the train, before being restrained by pursuing officers and shot. Photographs leaked to ITN appear to collaborate this new witnesses report as they clearly show blood on the seat in which de Menezes is said to have been sitting.

Other statements suggest that the Brazilian was seated before being pinned down by a plain-clothed police officer. Plainclothed armed officers had entered the carriage at this point. Several shots were the fired and de Menezes was hit seven times in the head and once in the shoulder. Three further shots missed Mr Menezes.

A community officers report (one of the leaked documents) confirms that Mr. de Menezes was seated and restrained at the time of being shot:

"I heard shouting which included the word

'police' and turned to face the male in the denim jacket.

"He immediately stood up and advanced towards me and the CO19 [the armed unit] officers ... I grabbed the male in the denim jacket by wrapping both my arms around his torso, pinning his arms to his side.

"I then pushed him back onto the seat where he had been previously sitting ... I then heard a gun shot very close to my left ear and was dragged away onto the floor of the carriage."

The leaked documents confirm that Police had been given permission to shoot if a suspect was non-compliant, having been told that "unusual tactics" may be required and if they "were deployed to intercept a subject and there was an opportunity to challenge, but if the subject was non-compliant, a critical shot may be taken." It is thought that when he ran for the train officers felt this was suitable evidence of "non-compliance".

The Independent Police Complaints Commission (IPCC) said its priority was to keep Mr de Menezes family informed and refused to comment on the details of the leak.

The commission said the family "will clearly be distressed that they have received information on television concerning his death".

No official comment from the family has been reported as yet, although the families Lawyer was interviewed by ITN, in this interview she expressed concerns that the Police had withheld information from the investigation for a longer period than was permitted under UK law.

The IPCC statement added: "The IPCC made it clear that we would not speculate or release partial information about the investigation, and that others should not do so. That remains the case."

Mark Oaten, Home Affairs Spokesman for the Liberal Democrats, said: "If true, these preliminary findings will create obvious concerns. It is in the best interests of the police and the community for the full report and any recommendations, to be published as quickly as possible."

Babies on U.S. no-fly lists holding up passengers

Some infants are being prevented from boarding planes at U.S. airports because their names match or resemble those listed on the United States' "no-fly list".

The Transport Safety Administration, which maintains the list, has told airlines that children under twelve should not be stopped from boarding or subjected to additional checks, even if their names are on the list. Despite this, infants whose names register with the "no-fly list" are being impeded at major airports across the nation.

The U.S. government has maintained a list of people who are barred from flying or required to pass additional security checks since before the 9/11 attacks, but the list has grown from a few dozen to more than 100,000 since then. Critics of the list, such as the American Civil Liberties Union, say not enough detail is provided on the list to accurately identify who it is meant to be targeting, resulting in innocents being snagged. The TSA is investigating 89 children who either complained themselves that their name is on the list, or had complaints filed on their behalf. Fourteen of them are babies under two.

Richard A. Altomare, Chairman of the Coalition for Luggage Security sees the babies debacle as indicative of more serious concerns; "We see articles daily about luggage and airport security. Each one contradicts what the TSA says it is doing to provide safer air travel for the public. The flying public is distracted by hopping on one foot with their shoes in one hand and their belt in another, or babies being held up because their names are the same as or similar to those of possible terrorists on the government's 'no-fly list.' But meanwhile, uninspected or minimally inspected cargo is loaded into the belly of the same plane. This just means there is no true reform, but rather a facade to give the illusion of real reform."

Plane carrying 160 crashes in Venezuela

A Colombian passenger jet carrying 152 passengers and 8 crewmembers has crashed in Western Venezuela. Officials said the plane was travelling from Panama, headed for Martinique in the Caribbean when its pilot reported engine trouble to the Caracas

airport just after 3 am (07:00 UTC). The pilot reportedly asked for permission to land at Maracaibo airport shortly before the plane went missing in the remote state of Zulia, close to the Colombian border. Locals have reported hearing explosions near the scene of the crash.



A Scandinavian Airways MD 82. This is the type of plane involved in the crash

The crashed plane was a 19 year old MD-82 of West Caribbean Airways based in Medellín carrying the registration number HK-4374X. which was delivered only back on 10 January 2005.



Location of the crash site

The French news agency AFP reports that all passengers and crew have perished. The crash comes just two days after an airplane crash in Greece, which killed 121 people.

Helicopter crash in Afghanistan kills 17



It has been confirmed that a NATO helicopter of the International Security Assistance Force has crashed near Herat, Western Afghanistan.

Two Eurocopter Cougar helicopters were apparently on a training mission for the

forthcoming Afghan parliamentary elections when one of the aircraft crashed, killing twelve Spanish soldiers and five crew members. The second Cougar helicopter made a forced landing which injured five personnel.

A rescue team from ISAF was sent to the scene, evacuating the dead and wounded to a military hospital in Herat.

It is presently unknown whether the crash was the result of an accident or an attack by the Taliban or Al Qaida.

Initial reports suggest that the crash may have been caused by a sandstorm. A spokesman for the Spanish prime minister told CNN that there were no indications that the chopper was brought down by enemy fire.

Taliban commander Mullah Daldullah claimed to news agency Reuters that insurgents had shot the helicopter down.

NATO has currently some 8,500 ISAF soldiers stationed in Afghanistan, some 800 of them are Spanish.

Somalia food hijackers make new demands



The hijackers of a ship carrying food aid to Somalia have demanded that the food be distributed to people in their home area.

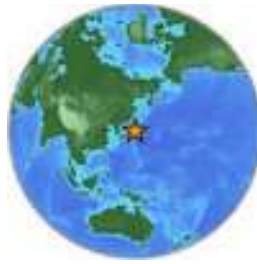
The ongoing crisis looked to be coming to an end when the WFP said an agreement had been made on 5 August, but the hijackers have told the UN IRIN news service that they have refused to sign the agreement.

Initially the hijackers asked for half a million dollars but have since claimed that people in their home communities have been neglected despite being badly affected by the tsunami.

Food aid to Somalia has been suspended

since the hijacking over a month ago.

Earthquake strikes northeast Japan, shakes Tokyo



A magnitude 7.2 earthquake struck Japan at 2:46 UTC (11:46 am local time), off the eastern coast of northern Honshu, 95 km (60 miles) from Sendai. Buildings in Tokyo, 350 km (220 miles) from the epicenter, were swayed by the trembler and trains were shut down. A tsunami bulletin was issued by the Pacific Tsunami Warning Center and small tsunamis were observed thereafter. (1) (2).

As a precaution, the Tohoku Electric nuclear power plants have been shut down.

Electric supply ceased due to the earthquake in the Miyagi Prefecture and in its southern neighbor, Fukushima Prefecture, and 17,000 households in total have been affected and lost power.

Railway transports including Tōhoku Shinkansen have been stopped. Sendai Airport has been temporarily closed.

No casualties have been reported. So far over 69 people have been injured in Miyagi, Iwate, Fukushima, Saitama and Tokyo Prefectures including 26 people who have been injured due to falling roof in an indoor swimming pool in Sendai. 687 houses in Tohoku region were destroyed to some extent. In addition, a house by wood in Saitama Prefecture. A female resident was trapped by this broken house and rescued after 50 minutes.

Today in History

1807 - Robert Fulton started the first commercial steamboat service in the world.
1896 - Bridget Driscoll became the first person to be killed in a petrol-driven car accident.

1962 - East German border guards shot and killed Peter Fechter as he attempted to cross the Berlin Wall into West Berlin.

1969 - Hurricane Camille struck the Mississippi coast, killing 248 people and causing US\$1.5 billion in damage (1969 dollars).

1988 - President Muhammad Zia-ul-Haq of Pakistan was killed in a plane crash.

August 17 is Independence Day in Indonesia (1945), Gabon (1969)

Quote of the Day

"All men dream, but not equally. Those who dream by night in the dusty recesses of their minds wake in the day to find that it was vanity: but the dreamers of the day are dangerous men, for they may act their dream with open eyes, to make it possible."
~ T. E. Lawrence

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