



Top Stories

Small aircraft crashes into NYC building

A small aircraft has hit a residential building on the upper east side in Manhattan, New York City.

Trains collide in Northern France

Two trains have colided in Northern France at Zoufftgen in the Mossele region of France close to the Luxembourg border, at around 11:45 earlier today.

Featured story

Russia estimates larger yield for N. Korea nuclear test

Russia's defense minister, Sergei Ivanov, said Monday that North Korea's nuclear test has been confirmed and yielded as much as 15 kilotons of TNT; which was the size of the Hiroshima atomic bomb.

Wikipedia Current Events

•A small aircraft crashes into a building at 524 East 72nd Street, on Manhattan's Upper East Side in New York City killing at least 4 people. FBI states that there is so far no reason to suspect terrorism, and the alert level hasn't been raised. The plane was registered to New York Yankees pitcher, Cory Lidle. Lidle is reported to have been the pilot, and have been killed in the crash.

•Minutes from the United States Federal Reserve meeting held on

Wikipedia Current Events

September 20 predict a "modestly better inflation outlook" due to a softening economy and lower energy prices. The Federal Reserve held interest rates steady.

•An estimated 655,000 Iraqis have died since 2003 who might still be alive but for the US-led invasion, according to a survey by Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health. The study is in dispute though since The Iraqi Ministry of Health places the death toll at 50,000.

•Twelve people have died following a train crash at Zoufftgen in north-east France, near the Luxembourg border.

•A North Korean official stationed in Beijing tells the Yonhap news agency that "If all out sanctions are implemented, we will take it as a declaration of war".

•Kim Yong-nam, North Korea's number two leader, tells the Japanese news agency Kyodo that North Korea will have no choice but to take physical steps if the United States continues to adopt a hostile attitude towards it.

•A United Nations report declares that abuse of children is "widespread and tolerated" in many parts of the world. A separate report by charity Save the Children states that more than a million children around the world are in prison.

•In Melbourne, Australia, the

Wikipedia Current Events

Eureka Tower residential building is offically opened. At 297.5m (976ft), the structure is the second tallest skyscraper in the Southern Hemisphere, and the second tallest residential building in the world.

Geneva bomb scare causes rail chaos

Geneva, Switzerland – Yesterday (October 10, 2006) a bomb scare occured in Geneva. More than 30,000 people were evacuated from the main station Cornavin and the Globus Department store. By 20:00 Swiss Time (18:00 UTC) the alert was called off. Over 40 trains were cancelled and the scare caused mass havoc in the centre of Geneva.

"Ce message s'adresse aux forces de Police: deux bombes ont été posées à deux endroits stratégiques. Une, à Cornavin et une au centre commerciale Globus. Nos demandes sont...

"This message is addressed to the Police Forces: two bombs have been placed at two strategic positions. One at Cornavin [Geneva's main station] and one at the Globus shopping centre. Our demands are as follows...' The line then cut off.

That was the message received by the alert centre of the Police at 17:12 Swiss time (15:12 UTC), causing an evacuation like none seen before in Geneva. An anonymous caller called 117, (the

Police number in Switzerland). At 18:00 Swiss time (16:00 UTC) in the middle of rush hour, railway police began asking people to leave the main station building [Cornavin]. In a matter of minutes the entire station was empty. All trains were stopped at Lausanne, or had they already by-passed the station, they were to halt at the nearest station ahead of them.

These halts caused the stranding of more than 30,000 passengers. All trams were stopped causing major traffic jams. There were similar happenings in the Globus department store where staff and shoppers were evacuated without hassle. As no bomb was found in the store, the Police Line bands were removed at 19:23 Swiss Time (17:23 UTC). However, the search continued in the bigger Cornavin station, but shortly after 20:00 Swis Time (18.00 UTC) the danger in the station was decided to be non-existent.

Christophe Zawadaski, spokesperson for the police, explained that the search took a long time because the bomb-sniffing dogs found a suspicious bag in a train. But "luckily there was no bomb inside" he said. The first train left again at 20:45 Swiss Time (18:45 UTC).

The SBB-CFF-FFS (The Swiss Federal Railway company) say around 40 trains were cancelled. Police say there is no links between this event and the alert of a possible attack on the UN building last week, which was leaked to the press, and was meant to be a top-secret document. Geneva police have not yet made an arrest following this false alert. But, if whomever caused this panic is caught, Swiss penal code decrees anyone accused of a fallacious tip-off is

liable to three years in prison.

Imagination Movers to shoot Disney series pilot

New Orleans-based band Imagination Movers have announced that they will be shooting a pilot for the Disney Channel this December.

The band reached a deal with Disney this April to distribute their music through Disney Records, after a year of negotiations. The series is set to debut on Playhouse Disney in 2007. Since September, their music videos have been on rotation on The Disney Channel.

Nancy Kanter, the senior vice president of programming for Playhouse Disney, first discovered the movers at the Kids Tent of the New Orleans Jazz and Heritage Festival. "We sat in the hot Kids Tent and were just blown away to see the response to them. We'd heard their CDs, but when you actually sit there with a couple hundred preschoolers and, in some cases, older kids, and see the way they react to the music, we thought, 'This is for us.'"

The Movers launched Playhouse Disney's concert series, playing at MGM Studios' ABC Theater from 18-24 September. The band is playing a Halloween concert on 21 August 2006, in New Orleans.

Imagination Movers are a kids band formed in 2003. Indie Kids Rock reviewed the group in May, saying they were "the U2 of kids music with a big anthemic pop/rock sound, catchy lyrics, & of course, imagination." The group includes Rich Collins, Scott Durbin, Dave Poche and Scott "Smitty" Smith. While all four members had at least "dabbled" in music, Durbin was a computer instructor, Collins worked in online journalism, Poche

as an architect, Smith as a firefighter.

New agitations over cartoons of Prophet Mohammed

Amateur footage of members of the Danish People's Party drawing cartoons of Prophet Mohammed were aired on Danish Television last week, prompting protests by Muslim groups.

The footage shows party youth members in a competition to draw cartoons, during a summer camp in August.

There have been protests in Egypt and Iran, also by Muslim groups in many parts of the world. .

Iran lodged a protest over the issue, saying it was "deplorable that the extremist elements in Danish society have attempted to sabotage Denmark's relations with the Islamic countries once again".

Danish Prime Minister Anders Fogh Rasmussen called the drawings "tasteless" and "unacceptable", but insisted that he cannot control content shown in the media.

Two youths featured in the film have gone into hiding.

Chinese soldiers shoot Tibetans crossing into Nepal

At around 10:30 am on September 30 Chinese soldiers opened fire on people crossing from Nepal to Tibet killing at least two. Mountaineers and Sherpas in Nepal witnessed the event.

There has been no official Chinese comment on the event.

About 70 refugees were crossing the Nangpa Pass seeking a religious education in Nepal.

Kelsan Namtso, a 17 year old nun

leading the children, and and 13 year old boy were killed. British climber Steve Lawes said that he saw a body being left there 28 hours before it was collected.

French schoolgirl stoned in playground for not observing Ramadan

ast Wednesday, October 7, 2006, a Muslim school girl at Jean-Mermoz School in Lyon, France was injured by stones hurled at her by four male classmates who are Muslim, as reported in the regional newspaper *Le Progrès*. The reason given was for eating during the fast of Ramadan, and thus not observing what is believed by Muslims to be one of the seven pillars of Muslim faith orthodoxy.

According to a leading Jean-Mermoz School official, "it was a simple incident, not premeditated," and commented that the story did not warrant French television coverage. In a *Le Progrès* update report dated October 11, 2006, "the sequence of the facts are better known." Allegedly, three students were taken aside by several schoolboys, who exclaimed, "You are eating!" to one of the students in the group, a girl who was eating a sandwich, and who then threw stones which "lightly injured the girl in the head." The prosecutor of the Republic of Lyons noted that the word 'Ramadan' had not been uttered during the incident. "It is very necessary to know that the political awareness of these boys is limited," he added. Two of the four alleged perpetrators who did acknowledge these acts were suspended for four days, and the school's 250 students were assembled by the principal shortly after the event "for a solemn reminder of the law." The aggressed girl's parents lodged a formal complaint.

According to the sources, this is not the first time such an act has occurred at the school. The incident has been cause for strong emotions among the French educational community, which is sensitive to issues surrounding France's Muslim community, especially those regarding the treatment of women.

Azzedine Gacci, president of the Regional Council of Muslim Worship (CRCM), stated: "[S]i les faits sont avérés, ils sont inacceptables...."—"...if the facts are proven (to be true), they are unacceptable". The young girl in question was in her menstruating cycle at the time of the incident. He expressed regret that some Muslim youths do not know that "femmes indisposées" (women in an exceptional state) are exempted by the Koran from observing certain aspects of Ramadan injunctions.

Canadian MP Belinda Stronach has first interview since affair with Tie Domi

Recently Canadian MP Belinda Stronach had an affair with Tie Domi, a former NHL player. She had refused to answer direct questions about her personal life.

Now for the first time since her affair, with Tie Domi, she sat down with CBC's George Stroumboulopoulos on his show *The Hour* to answer his questions about the affair, politics, and other topics during the nine minute chat, on October 9th. It was held at 11:00 P.M. EDT.

No transcripts of this interview are officially available but, a video (see CBC source below) can be viewed.

Small aircraft crashes into NYC building - Terror alert to remain unchanged

A small aircraft struck an apartment building in New York this afternoon, killing the pilot and a flight instructor. Cory Lidle, a pitcher for the New York Yankees baseball team, was the registered owner of the aircraft and is believed to have been piloting it; his passport was found on the scene. The flight instructor has not been identified.

The plane, a Cirrus SR20 with registration number N929CD, hit the 26th floor of the Belaire Condominium, a 50 story brick luxury residential building on the Upper East Side at 524 East 72nd Street at York Avenue near the East River in Manhattan, New York City, of which the first 20 floors are a hospital. An eyewitness, present half a block from the building, reported that the plane hit the building, creating an enormous fireball, broke in two and crashed down onto on the street below. Authorities received a 911 call reporting a crash at 2:42 p.m. Eastern time.

New York City mayor Michael Bloomberg gave a press conference at approximately 5:20 p.m. Eastern time to report that the plane was occupied by a flight instructor and a student pilot, but as next-of-kin had not been able to be notified, the identities of the two people on the plane would not be released at this time.

Apartments were seen to be engulfed in flames. The FBI has stated that it was not an act of terrorism. The New York area was grey and overcast during the time at crash; however, visibility was not hampered.

After an hour and a half, the fire

was extinguished by the FDNY.

Initial reports suggested that a helicopter was involved, but the FAA has stated that it was a fixed-wing aircraft. CNN Television reported that it was a single-engine fixed-wing plane which left Teterboro Airport, a busy General Aviation airport in New Jersey, circled the Statue of Liberty was tracked on radar until it was lost near the 59th Street Bridge, that the plane may have been having fuel problems or fuel pump problems, and that it was "a pilot in distress."

Wallace Sines, a source for CNN stated he believes the plane was a Cirrus SR-20 with an installed parachute, which did not deploy. The whole-plane parachute system may have saved the lives of the aircraft occupants had it been safely deployed clear of buildings, but the system is not designed to prevent the trauma associated with a plane impacting a building. The Cirrus SR-20 was introduced in 2001 and the Cirrus line of 4-seater aircraft has since become one of the most purchased single engine aircraft in the world. The SR-20 does not normally carry an airline-style flight-data recorder, but some are equipped with GPS equipment which logs flight direction, speed and altitude.

BBC News 24 has reported that four people have been killed; however, it is unknown whether they were in the building or the aircraft and the NYPD has confirmed this. According to CNN Television ten people have been injured, six of them firefighters. The New York Times, however, reports that eleven firefighters have been injured.

The aircraft was owned by baseball player Cory Lidle. He was on board

reported by AP. Lidle was killed, according to reports. CNN Television reported that the FBI stated he was at the controls as the only occupant of the plane, and that his passport was found on the ground below the accident.

A little over an hour and a half after the crash, the fire was extinguished after 39 fire units and over 100 fire fighters responded.

The White House has said that there has been no change in the terror threat alert and that President Bush is being updated constantly.

La Guardia airport was temporarily restricted to no take offs from other airports, however by 4:10 Eastern Time, CNN Television reported that all New York-area airports were open.

CNN Television announced at 3:50pm Eastern Time that as of a few minutes earlier, NORAD is putting fighter aircraft on patrol over certain major American cities as a precautionary measure similar to the actions taken after the 9/11 terrorist attacks as a "just in case" measure. It also reported that tomorrow is the 6th anniversary of the attack on the USS Cole in Aden, Yemen.

Moments after the crash, there was a drop in the New York Stock Exchange, however it quickly returned to normal after it was reported that the crash was an accident.

The New York Yankees organization confirmed the plane is registered to Cory Lidle of the New York Yankees, who was planning to fly from New York to Florida, and that some unnamed member of the Yankees organization was on the plane.

One eye-witness interviewed by the BBC stated: "I was wondering why the plane was doing acrobatics and then the next thing I knew was that it had crashed into the building." She also added that the plane was a small, white, 4-seater winged aircraft and not a helicopter as many news agencies were reporting it to be.

CNN Television broadcast reports from eyewitnesses who reported: A pilot who saw the impact stated, "It looked like a pilot who was desperately trying to get to an airport."

Another eyewitness who saw the event from the Bronx-Queens Expressway, also referred to the incident as appearing as if the plane was "desperately trying to get to LaGuardia" and that as to whether he "clipped" the building, or struck it directly, that "he hit it dead on."

"I heard a buzzing noise and then an explosion which looked like a mushroom cloud."

Giant camel bones found in Syria

The skeletal remains of a giant camel were discovered in a Syrian desert. The fossils are estimated to have come from a camel that died about 100,000 years ago.

The bones were unearthed at al-Hemel, Syria, about 155 miles northeast of Damascus, by an archaeological team made up of both Swiss and Syrian people.

Apparently the Palmyra region of the Syrian desert "is the first origin of the camel," said Bassam Jammous, director general of the Antiquities and Museum Department.

A scientific name has not yet been agreed upon, but the joint Swiss-Syrian team has dubbed it the

"Syrian Camel". Jammous stated that the animal is thought to have been around 13 feet tall, twice that of an average-size modern day camel.

Some of the bones were discovered in 2005, but only recently did they find many more.

Evidence from the fossils make it appear that they weren't bred by humans, but this cannot be certain.

India's Kiran Desai wins Booker Prize for "The Inheritance of Loss"

The 2006 Man Booker Prize was awarded to Kiran Desai, for her fictional work *The Inheritance of Loss*. The 35-year-old is the youngest woman, and the third Indian, to win the £ 50,000 award. After two hours of deliberation, Hermione Lee, (chairwoman of the judges) announced that the panel had chosen Desai's second novel over the other shortlisted entries- *In the Country of Men* by Hisham Matar, *The Secret River* by Kate Grenville, *Carry Me Down* by M. J. Hyland, *Mother's Milk* by Edward St Aubyn and *The Night Watch* by Sarah Waters.

"This is a magnificent novel of humane breadth and wisdom, comic tenderness and powerful political acuteness.", Lee said, adding that the judges had "felt strongly about" and "admired" all the entries, and that *The Inheritance of Loss* was not a "compromise" choice. While accepting the award, Desai said, "I didn't expect to win. I don't have a speech. My mother told me I must wear a sari... a family heirloom, but it's completely transparent!" After expressing her gratitude to her publisher, editor and agent, she added, "I'm Indian and so I'm going to thank my parents."

Kiran Desai's mother Anita Desai is also an author, and three of her works have been shortlisted for the prize.

The Inheritance of Loss deals with issues such as globalisation, and life in rural India. The book, set in New York and the Himalayas, deals with an embittered judge and his desire to enjoy a peaceful retired life.

"I was very conscious of the emotional territory that I wanted to capture, in terms of the story, I didn't know at all what it was going to be, I think I wrote in every direction - the story of immigrants in New York, my parents, my grandparents, my journey. But yes, I was aware of the certain sort of emotional landscape, darkness, worry and fear that this journey between East and West causes.", said Kiran Desai of her work.

The Booker Prize was founded in 1969 and is considered one of the most prestigious honour given to authors whose works have been published in Britain, Ireland and the Commonwealth. The honour was renamed the Man-Booker Prize after the Man Group began sponsoring it.

Trains collide in eastern France

Two trains have collided head-on in eastern France at Zoufftgen in the Moselle region of France, close to the Luxembourg border, at around 11:45 local time (09:45 UTC) earlier today. Based on initial reports, BBC News has suggested 10 passenger deaths as well as the those of two train drivers involved in the incident and a track side worker. French officials later confirmed at least 5 dead.

The trains were a french freight

train and a Luxembourgish passenger train. The passenger train was travelling from Luxembourg to Nancy and the freight train was travelling from Thionville to Luxembourg.

There are also at present 20 additional casualties although this number could rise. BBC News has reported, some of the injured may still be trapped in wreckage. Rescuers from France and Luxembourg are at the scene, with BBC reporting that a mobile hospital as well as specialist equipment was on the way.

The cause of the crash is undetermined at present, but due to engineering works, single line working was in operation on the route affected. The trains collided head-on. An SNCF spokesman was quoted as saying "Due of the engineering works, only one way was available and train traffic was alternating" He continued, "For reasons still to be established, the trains found themselves facing each other".

French Prime Minister Dominique de Villepin and Transport Minister Dominique Perben are understood to be on their way to the scene of the incident.

Eric Soupa, a local official was quoted (BBC News) on French radio: "We are faced with an important and dramatic situation." According to first reports, the spokesman of SNCF has indicated that the driver of the freight train did not "pass a signal at red" and had actually passed the signal at green.

New Zealand Government announces record surplus

Today the New Zealand Government announced that they had a record surplus of NZ\$11.5

billion for the 2005 and 2006 financial year. This amount was \$2.5 billion more than the government expected to get, however \$1.8 billion of the surplus was because of a change to the recording of the tax take.

However the surplus is now going to put more pressure on the government to put tax cuts on the cards. Both the Labour and United Future parties are reviewing cutting business tax. But the National party says that with the big surplus they can afford to cut both business tax and personal tax.

However finance minister, Doctor Michael Cullen, said the amount of cash available for tax cuts will be clearer in December.

John Key, finance spokesman for National, said: "The surplus makes a mockery of claims made by Michael Cullen before the last election that tax cuts were unaffordable and would put at risk core primary services. When surpluses are this enormous, any veiled hope the government had that it is not overtaxing people will rapidly evaporate."

Cullen said: "The Government's "robust" financial position was a firm base for the future, but it was not an indication of how much room he had for tax cuts or spending."

Phil O'Reilly, Chief Executive of Business New Zealand said: "The business tax reduction from 33 to 30 cents planned for April 2008 could be brought forward to April 2007. The last time the business rate was cut, in 1989, business tax revenue actually went up. In the decade before 1989, revenue averaged around \$1 billion a year, while in the decade after, it

averaged nearly \$3 billion a year - in other words, revenue nearly tripled.

"It [tax] should be put to use in a way that truly benefits New Zealand," O'Reilly added.

French teacher in hiding after criticizing Islam

Robert Redeker, a French writer and college tutor in Toulouse, is now in hiding after receiving a series of death threats from Islamic fundamentalists by phone, email, and on a radical Islamist internet forum.

One online posting called upon French Muslims to "follow the lead of Muhammad Bouyeri", who murdered the Dutch filmmaker Theo van Gogh after he made a film denouncing the plight of abused Muslim women.

The forum also published photos of him, his home address with directions, the places where he works, and his telephone numbers. Mr. Redeker told i-TV that: "There is a very clear map of how to get to my home, with the words: 'This pig must have his head cut off'."

The French police say they are taking the threats seriously, but did not elaborate on the protection offered to Mr. Redeker.

Mr. Redeker had published an editorial in Le Figaro criticizing Islam. His article stated that the Prophet Mohammed was "a merciless warlord, a looter" and "a mass-murderer of Jews". He also asserted that Islam "exalts violence and hatred" in its sacred text and religious rites.

Le Figaro has defended Mr. Redeker, publishing a front-page open letter, signed by the editor

and the publisher, saying "We condemn with the greatest conviction the grave attacks on freedom of thought and freedom of expression which this affair has provoked." But later issues apologies.

Education Minister Gilles de Robien expressed "solidarity" with Mr. Redeker but also criticized him for not showing "prudence and moderation". Two French teachers unions have issued statements defending Mr. Redeker's right to speak freely while also criticizing his statements.

Le Figaro has been banned in several Muslim countries, including Egypt.

NYC boy found on Long Island, New York after car theft triggers amber alert

An amber alert has been cancelled after an eight-year-old Inwood boy was found unharmed after a car theft-turned-kidnapping ended on Long Island.

According to various local sources, Belkis Gonzales left her sleeping child, Jay Polanco, in her SUV while she entered a store at Sherman Avenue near 204th Street. The vehicle was then stolen with the boy still inside.

Residents in the area kept their eyes open and NYPD arrived on the scene quickly.

According to news reports, the vehicle was traveling along the Northern State Parkway near Westbury when one of its tires went flat. A good Samaritan, Thomas Knabbe, pulled over to assist and became suspicious when he discovered that the driver, a white female, spoke only English, while the child spoke only Spanish.

When the Knabbe pulled up to Nassau County's 6th Precinct, the driver fled. Polanco was handed over to the police, and was reunited with a much relieved Gonzales in Manhattan.

The thief-turned-kidnapper, still not identified, was apprehended approximately an hour after fleeing the scene. According to reports, she appeared to be intoxicated when she was arrested by NCPD.

Today in History

1492 - Christopher Columbus makes landfall in the Caribbean, believing he has reached East Asia.

1810 - The first Oktoberfest was held in Munich, to celebrate the wedding of Prince Ludwig I of Bavaria.

1859 - Self-described "Emperor of the United States and Protector of Mexico" Joshua A. Norton "ordered" the United States Congress to dissolve.

1984 - The Provisional Irish Republican Army failed in its attempt to assassinate British Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher and most of her cabinet in the Brighton hotel bombing.

2002 - A series of car bombs exploded in Bali, Indonesia, killing 202 people and injuring a further 209.

October 12 is Hispanic Day in Spain and most of Latin America, Day of Indigenous Resistance in Venezuela, Our Lady Aparecida's Day & Children's Day in Brazil.

Quote of the Day

I have always read that the world, both land and water, was spherical, as the authority and researches of Ptolemy and all the others who have written on this subject demonstrate and prove, as do the eclipses of the moon and other experiments that are made from east to west, and the elevation of the North Star from north to south.

~ Christopher Columbus

Word of the Day

ersatz; adj

- Made in imitation; artificial, especially of an inferior quality.

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