



### Top Stories

#### **Kidnappers of BBC reporter Alan Johnston deny that he will be released**

In a video broadcast on al-Jazeera and made by the Army of Islam, a militant group which claims responsibility for kidnapping BBC News reporter Alan Johnston, has denied that a deal has been reached with Hamas that would secure his release.

#### **31 children rescued as UK police shut down global paedophile ring**

Police in the UK have shut down a global internet paedophile ring in a ten month operation that involved 700 suspects in 35 different countries. 31 children have been rescued.

### Featured story

#### **Cockpit voice recorder retrieved from wreck of Kenya Airways Flight 507**

A search team in Cameroon has found the cockpit voice recorder from the May 5 wreckage of Kenya Airways Flight 507.

### Wikipedia Current Events

- Nine firefighters are killed in the line of duty at a furniture warehouse blaze in Charleston, South Carolina, the largest loss of firefighters in the USA in one incident since the collapse of the World Trade Center in 2001.
- The President of Turkey Ahmet Necdet Sezer vetoes a bill

### Wikipedia Current Events

bringing forward a referendum of the direct election of the President.

- Floods kill four people in north Texas.
- The European Union and United States restore foreign aid to the Palestinian Authority.
- Hamas leader Mahmoud al-Zahar issues an ultimatum to the Palestinian Army of Islam to free kidnapped BBC journalist Alan Johnston, or face military action.
- A global internet pedophilia ring with over 700 suspects worldwide has been smashed by UK police. 31 children were rescued.
- Two former Croatian generals Mirko Norac and Rahim Ademi go on trial in Zagreb charged for alleged atrocities against Serb civilians in 1993.
- Rwanda and Burundi join the East African Community in a meeting in Kampala, Uganda.
- Mongolian authorities confirm a helicopter crash that claimed 14 lives last Wednesday.
- As many as 36 people are killed south of Baghdad in fighting between Shiite militiamen and British forces doing searches door to door.
- Parts of Melbourne, Australia are in lockdown after a gunman shoots three people in the CBD, sparking a massive manhunt throughout the city.

#### **Restored WWII warplanes flown at Canadian Warplane Heritage Museum in Hamilton, Ontario, Canada**

Photographers, journalists, reporters, and spectators flocked to the Canadian Warplane Heritage Museum, beside the Hamilton International Airport, in Hamilton, Ontario, Canada on Sunday to see restored Canadian warplanes in the sky that were flown in WWI and WWII.

Since the museum is beside the airport, many people and travelers came.

The Canadian Warplane Heritage Museum is a non-profit organization dedicated to restoring old Canadian warplanes from the beginning of WWII to present day. The planes are always in the museum but they are not flown unless the museum receives money. Many of the restored planes were flown and showcased on Saturday on Sunday, Father's Day weekend, as part of its annual Flyfest. They were flown all day from 9:00 p.m. to 5:00 p.m. ET.

The Avro Lancaster, one of the only two left in the world, was flown and showcased at the museum. Guests had to pay to get in the plane, as well as other planes, for a ride. After, there was a line-up of people that climbed a ladder to get into the Lancaster for about CAN\$5.00. People were allowed to walk around and take pictures and video of inside the plane.

A Wikinews reporter came to the event, took pictures, and video.

### **White House press center evacuated after bomb scare**

A press room across the street of the White House was evacuated after a bomb sniffing dog had a reaction to a van it was searching. The van was believed to be a transport vehicle for Israeli Prime Minister Ehud Olmert, but some reports also say that it is not known to whom the van belongs.

The evacuated space is where the press gathers before they enter the Press Briefing Room in the West Wing of the White House. It is around the corner from Blair House.

"Police were called, they are on the scene currently attempting to clear the vehicle. The vehicle is part of the delegation that is staying at the Blair House," said Darrin Blackford, a spokesman for the Secret Service.

Police searched the van using a robot and blocked off streets around the area to vehicle traffic, but at 4:30 p.m. (eastern time), authorities gave the "all-clear" for personnel to be allowed back into the building.

The "suspicious" van was parked in front of Lafayette Park. Other areas near the White House were also evacuated including Pennsylvania Avenue, on which the White House is located, and the Jackson Square Press Center, because "of an abundance of caution."

Olmert is currently a guest in the Blair House which is located across the street from the White House. Olmert is expected to meet with United States President George W. Bush to discuss the Palestinian

government and other issues. It is not known if Olmert was inside the house at the time of the incident.

It is not known why the dog reacted to the van, but nothing was found inside it after the Secret Service searched it.

### **Council of Europe report challenges teaching of Creationist theories**

The spread of Creationist theories within the education systems of European Union member states "could become a threat to human rights", according to a report which will be discussed and voted on by the Council of Europe on 26th June.

"Investigation of the creationists' growing influence shows that the arguments between creationism and evolution go well beyond intellectual debate. If we are not careful, the values that are the very essence of the Council of Europe will be under direct threat from creationist fundamentalists." —Council of Europe Report

The text written by the Committee on Culture, Science and Education of the Council, firmly challenges the belief in a creator and a world which was created, to the exclusion of accepted theories of evolution. Although Creationist theories were for a long time an American phenomenon and not too widespread within the European countries, the report suggests that they are now spreading to EU member states.

According to the document, Creationism - which defends a theory of the origin of the world based on the Bible - is not based on facts and does not rely on any scientific grounds.

The report notes that children

currently study predominantly evolutionary theories with a scientific basis, and suggests that there is a consequential risk of introducing confusion for them when presented with alternative theories based on "convictions, beliefs and ideals" with no scientific basis.

The Parliamentary Assembly urges member states and their education authorities, inter alia, to "firmly oppose the teaching of creationism as a scientific discipline on an equal footing with the theory of evolution by natural selection and in general resist presentation of creationist theories in any discipline other than religion".

### **EU, US and Israel to resume aid to and lift financial sanctions against Palestine**

It was announced today that millions of dollars worth of foreign aid would once again be delivered to Palestine by the European Union. Aid to the Palestinian Authority had previously been ceased some 15 months ago when Hamas seized control. The announcement comes the day after Palestinian president Mahmoud Abbas swore in a new emergency government in response to the Hamas takeover of the Gaza Strip.

The announcement was made in Luxembourg by EU foreign policy chief Javier Solana, and is said to be due to Hamas no longer being a part of the Palestinian government. Luxembourg Foreign Minister Jean Asselborn said "We absolutely have to back" the new government in the West Bank and that "The question of today is: How can we help the 1.4 million people in Gaza?"

Riyad al-Malki, the new Palestinian minister of information and justice,

said of the event "There are encouraging steps. We hope that these steps will be carried out quickly."

Both the United States and Israel have also said they will lift financial restrictions against Palestine. Israel has withheld some \$55 million a month in customs duties that it has collected on Palestine's behalf starting soon after Hamas took power, coming up to \$550 million total, and Israel say they are considering releasing the money.

Ehud Olmert, Prime Minister of Israel, flew to the US this weekend and is scheduled to discuss the situation in Gaza with US President George Bush tomorrow. Upon his arrival, he informed reporters that "Israel would be a genuine partner of the new Palestinian government."

Israel and the US have said they will back the new government against Hamas. The U.S., EU and Israel all consider Hamas a terrorist group as they have killed hundreds of Israelis in suicide bombings.

### **Scottish first minister calls for united front in visit to Northern Ireland**

Scotland's First Minister Alex Salmond made his first official visit outside Scotland as First Minister, meeting his counterpart in Northern Ireland, First Minister Ian Paisley.

The leader of the Scottish National Party, who is calling for Scotland and Northern Ireland to present a united approach toward governance, addressed the Northern Ireland Assembly and said Stormont, and the Scottish Parliament "now share a political model based on necessary

compromise."

"The Deputy First Minister hasn't stopped being a nationalist and you, First Minister, haven't stopped being a unionist," Salmond said, referring to Deputy First Minister Martin McGuinness of Sinn Féin and Paisley, of the Democratic Unionist Party. "Nevertheless, what matters is identifying the areas where you agree and working on those. It doesn't remove the other issues, but it allows a democratic chamber to function and an executive to govern.

"No-one in this chamber should feel that their aspirations, their view of the future, is anything other than legitimate," Salmond said in his speech, quoted by BBC News Online.

Salmond hailed the dedication of Prime Minister Tony Blair and the resolution of the Northern Ireland political crises.

"You will know how closely many in Scotland follow events and I am acutely aware of the difficulties you faced and, indeed, still face in the path to progress," he said in the Stormont Senate chamber.

"In that context, the efforts to make strides forward in the interests of the people of Northern Ireland are truly remarkable.

"Scottish Government and the people of Scotland salute you for that collective leadership.

"Leadership is a concept that is often cheapened and devalued in modern politics but the members of this Assembly have done something truly impressive.

"Over the last years, you have turned a seemingly intractable situation into one full of hope and

optimism. That is real leadership."

Salmond, as a Scottish Nationalist, said he is a passionate believer in Scottish independence, but compromise is still needed.

Salmond said that he thinks the Edinburgh Parliament and the Belfast Assembly present a united front on devolution issues as they seek more home rule powers.

Among the issues would be lowering corporation tax to a 12.5 percent rate.

"It is not a question of ganging up, it is a question of formulating ideas in a constructive way," Salmond said. "And on many of these issues it will also be, in my opinion, in the interests of the Westminster Government."

He said the British-Irish Council, meeting next month in Belfast, is "the best mechanism we currently have for Scotland and Northern Ireland to work together within the devolved structure".

Salmond is also planning to visit Welsh leader Rhodri Morgan in addition to visits to Ireland, Brussels and Norway.

### **17 hurt in southern Thailand blasts, schools closed**

Bombings across southern Thailand injured 17 people today. In Yala, a bombing in a tea shop injured 14 people, while in Narathiwat, a roadside bomb injured two soldiers and a bomb on a bridge injured a government employee.

Overnight, a school was burned. Prime Minister Surayud Chulanont ordered indefinite closure of all public schools in the three southern provinces of Yala, Narathiwat and Pattani, citing

insurmountable security concerns because of the south Thailand insurgency.

"There are more than 700 schools in the three southern provinces. It's difficult to beef up security at all schools," Surayud was quoted as saying by the Thai News Agency.

### **Politically charged murder trial under way in Malaysia**

A trial in the murder of Mongolian-born model and interpreter Altantuya Shaaribuu got under way today in Shah Alam, Malaysia, with a former adviser to Deputy Prime Minister Najib Tun Razak as one of the defendants.

The prosecutor said political consultant Abdul Razak Baginda, 47, plotted the Oct. 19, 2006, murder with two police officers, Chief Inspector Azilah Hadri and Corporal Sirul Azhar Umar, who fatally shot Altantuya, and then blew her body up with C-4 in an attempt to get rid of the evidence.

The sequence of events would be pieced together by testimonies of witnesses who saw Altantuya taken from Abdul Razak's house, closed-circuit television footage and telephone records, deputy public prosecutor Abdul Majid said in his opening remarks.

"Several items belonging to the deceased have also been seized by the police from Sirul Azhar. [We] will show that the items belonged to the deceased through identification by prosecution witnesses and DNA tests, prosecutors told the court," he said.

"Besides that, a pair of bloodstained slippers had been found in Sirul Azhar's car and analysis by the Chemistry

Department had confirmed through DNA tests that the blood was Altantuya's," Abdul Majid said.

Abdul Razak has admitted he had an affair with the 28-year-old Altantuya, who was born in Mongolia, and schooled in Russia and France. She was a part-time model and also worked as an interpreter and translator, as she was fluent in Mongolian, Russian, French and English.

Abdul Razak has said he met Altantuya in Hong Kong in 2004, and they had a short-lived extramarital affair. After he ended it, Altantuya went to Malaysia and threatened Abdul Razak with blackmail.

After that, prosecutors say, Abdul Razak contacted Azilah, who was head of Deputy Premier Najib's security detail, and that Abdul Razak "abetted" the two policemen "by planning and giving instructions to get rid of her by killing her".

Abdul Razak, Azilah and Sirul Azul were brought into court handcuffed and made to sit in a dock.

Before entering, the tearful Abdul Razak hugged his wife who was wearing a T-shirt that said "Mrs. Abdul Razak Baginda" on the front, with "And Proud of It" on the back.

The politically charged trial has been a sensation in the Malaysian media, and is one of the biggest political scandals since former deputy prime minister and opposition leader Anwar Ibrahim was jailed on charges of corruption and sodomy. Supporters of Anwar, who was released from prison in 2004, forced Najib to vehemently deny allegation that he was linked to the murder.

The trial has also been beset by delays.

Today, lawyer Karpal Singh, representing Altantuya's family, asked that the judge and a defense lawyer be replaced because they distantly related by marriage.

Judge Mohammad Zaki Mohammad Yasin denied the request, saying his third cousin is dead and he has "no personal interest whatsoever" in the case. Defense lawyer Hazman Ahmed's late wife was the third cousin of the judge.

The trial had been scheduled to start on June 4, but was postponed after the attorney general abruptly replaced the prosecutor after he was seen playing badminton with the judge. The new prosecutor then needed more time to study the case.

### **Kidnappers of BBC reporter Alan Johnston deny his release**

The Army of Islam, a militant group which claims responsibility for kidnapping BBC News reporter Alan Johnston, has denied that a deal has been reached with Hamas that would secure his release and threaten to kill Johnston if Hamas fails to honor the group's demands, in a video broadcast on Al Jazeera.

Despite the threat, the militant group has said that there are "developments" in the discussions with Hamas, but the group did not say what those developments were.

"There are developments and we will let you know when there are new developments. If they do not meet these demands there will be no release of this prisoner, but if

things get worse we will get closer to God by killing this journalist," said an unnamed masked man in the video who is reportedly a spokesman for the Army of Islam.

In the video, the man says that in order for Johnston to be released, Abu Qatada, a Palestinian cleric who is in a British prison in the U.K., and all other "Islamic prisoners" must be released from prison.

It is not known if the video is genuine. Johnston was kidnapped while he was returning to his home on March 12 in Gaza City.

### **31 children rescued as UK police shut down global paedophile ring**

Police in the United Kingdom have shut down a global internet paedophile ring in a ten month operation that involved 700 suspects in 35 different countries, some of whom remain at large. 31 children have been rescued from their abusers.

Sky News crime correspondent Martin Brunt said it could well be the biggest internet paedophile operation ever mounted in the UK. It was led by the Child Exploitation and Online Protection Centre.

Timothy Cox, 28, from Buxhall, near Stowmarket, UK, has been identified as the ringleader and has been sentenced to an indefinite jail term. He hosted the network the paedophiles used to communicate, a web chatroom called Kids The Light Of Our Lives, on which they swapped photos and videos of child sex abuse. Some attacks were broadcast live over the internet.

Judge Peter Thompson said that Cox posed a significant risk and had to be sent to jail for the

protection of the public. He will not be considered for release until such time as he has persuaded the authorities that he is no longer a threat to the community. Such a term could mean that he is never released.

Cox himself was found to have 75,960 indecent and explicit images on his computer and police found evidence he supplied at least 11,491 images to other paedophiles over the chatroom, on which he used the identity "Son of God". He admitted to 9 counts of possessing or distributing images of children. Since his arrest in September, authorities worldwide have been infiltrating the network and collecting evidence against the other members, culminating in today's announcement.

### **Emergency Air New Zealand landing performed with no landing gear**

An Air New Zealand Beechcraft performed an emergency landing at Blenheim after being diverted from its destination following a landing gear problem.

The Beechcraft 1900D was being flown by Eagle Air, a subsidiary of Air New Zealand, flying from Timaru to Wellington with 15 passengers and two air crew on board.

When arriving at Wellington, the landing gear would not lower, forcing flight NZ 2300 to be diverted to the RNZAF Base Woodbourne, Blenheim where it landed on its belly at around 9.00 a.m.. The plane was badly damaged, and immediately covered in foam as is standard policy and as a safety precaution.

The air base was expected to be closed for around two hours as cranes cleaned up the wreckage.

Eagle Air General Manager, Doug Roberts said that their initial assessment is that the crew did an excellent job, and executed a text book wheels up landing. "Our pilots undergo some of the most extensive training in the industry and dealing with emergency situations like this is a cornerstone of their training."

A man from Wellington on board with his son and partner, said that he was a bit "freaked out", but was fine after the landing, praising the landing performed by the experienced pilot.

Marty Solomon says that all passengers were informed throughout the journey of what was happening, and were well prepared for the crash landing.

Two of the passengers, one of whom was pregnant, were sent to hospital for check ups.

A special support crew is now being flown to Blenheim by Air New Zealand to help those affected by today's emergency landing. They say that most of the passengers will now continue the rest of their journey today.

Eagle Air and the Transport Accident Investigation Commission will now investigate the incident.

Eagle flies 17 other Beechcraft, and service by those planes is continuing as normal today, as they are considered to be extremely reliable.

### **Gunman on the loose in Melbourne**

Police in Melbourne, Australia are on the hunt for a gunman who killed a man and injured two others in the city's central business district this morning.

Officials warned all office workers to remain indoors, and train services to Flinders Street Station were temporarily on hold, as investigations were carried out on the intersection of Flinders Lane and William Street.

Malcom Bates, who witnessed the shootings at around 8:15am, said the gunman grabbed a woman from inside a taxi. "The lady got away and he turned and shot three people basically point blank," Mr Bates said. "I was right across the road". He said that the incident took no longer than the "wink of an eye".

Paramedics struggled to revive the one victim for almost an hour before declaring him dead at the scene. The two injured people have been taken to the Royal Melbourne Hospital in a critical condition.

Police believe the incident began at the Bar Code 24-hour bar in King Street, when a woman attempted to get into a taxi. She was apparently grabbed by the hair by the gunman who then shot her and two men who attempted to come to her aid.

Police have identified the gunman as Christopher Wayne Hudson, aged 29. They believe him to be a member of the Hells Angels bikie gang. Police have described Hudson as about 180 cm tall, with short brown hair and wearing a dark tracksuit top and dark denim jeans.

A building worker on a construction site on the corner of Queen and Flinders Streets has reportedly discovered a handgun. It is understood the gunman may have thrown the weapon into the site as he fled the scene.

**Today in History**

- 1306 - Wars of Scottish Independence: The Earl of Pembroke's English army defeated Robert the Bruce's Scottish army at the Battle of Methven.
- 1867 - Maximilian I of the Second Mexican Empire was executed by firing squad in Querétaro.
- 1953 - Americans Julius and Ethel Rosenberg were executed as spies who passed U.S. nuclear weapons secrets to the Soviet Union.
- 1961 - Kuwait declared independence from the United Kingdom.
- 1970 - The Patent Cooperation Treaty, an international law treaty, was signed, providing a unified procedure for filing patent applications to protect inventions.
- June 19 is Duanwu Festival (2007); Juneteenth in some parts of the United States.

**Quote of the Day**

We are gradually being conditioned to accept violence as a sensual pleasure. The directors used to say they were showing us its real face and how ugly it was in order to sensitize us to its horrors. You don't have to be very keen to see that they are now in fact desensitizing us. They are saying that everyone is brutal, and the heroes must be as brutal as the villains or they turn into fools. There seems to be an assumption that if you're offended by movie brutality, you are somehow playing into the hands of the people who want censorship. ... Yet surely, when night after night atrocities are served up to us as entertainment, it's worth some anxiety. ... How can people go on talking about the dazzling brilliance of movies and not notice that the directors are sucking up to the thugs in the audience?  
 ~ Pauline Kael

**Word of the Day**

- somnolent; adj
1. Drowsy or prone to sleeping.
  2. Tending to cause sleepiness.

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