



Top Stories



London police found guilty in case of killed suicide bomber suspect

Westboro Baptist Church ordered to pay US\$11 million to family of fallen US soldier



The Westboro Baptist Church has lost a lawsuit and has been ordered by United States District Court: District of Maryland to pay US\$11 million to the family of a fallen soldier who was killed while serving in Iraq.

Wikipedia Current Events

Benazir Bhutto leaves Karachi for United Arab Emirates amidst speculations that President Pervez Musharraf might impose martial law in Pakistan

•Massive flooding hits the Mexican state of Tabasco, with Governor Andrés Granier estimating that 80% of its 25,000 km² surface area is under water.

•The London Metropolitan Police is found guilty of violations of Health and Safety law over the shooting of Jean Charles de Menezes on the London underground in July 2005, and is fined £175,000 and ordered to pay £385,000 in legal costs.

•Flash floods in central Vietnam kill at least 13 people and injure 31 with 14,000 homes submerged in Quang Tri, Quang Binh and Quang Nam provinces.

•A suicide bomber attacks a bus carrying Pakistan Air Force personnel in Punjab resulting in at least five deaths and 40 people being injured.

was deemed an excessive threat to the public. They also stressed that no individual culpability should be placed on Cressida Dick, the officer in charge of the operation. The police force was fined £175,000 and ordered to pay £385,000 for legal expenses.

"This was very much an isolated breach brought about by quite extraordinary circumstances," said Justice Henriques. "One person died and many others were placed in potential danger."

Sir Ian Blair, the Commissioner of Police of the Metropolis, was at Old Bailey to hear the verdict. He said he plans to "continue leading the Metropolitan police." Len Duvall, chair of the Metropolitan Police Authority, said it "fully supported" Blair. A spokesperson for Gordon Brown said that Blair continues to have the confidence of the Prime Minister of the United Kingdom.

However, Asad Rehman, a spokesperson for the victim's family, called for Blair's resignation. "Whilst it was a difficult day, that does not mean that procedure and the Metropolitan Police did not fail," he said.

Electrician Jean Charles de Menezes died in the Stockwell Tube Station after being shot in the head by police officers seven times. They mistook him for another man, Hamdi Adus Isaac (aka Osman Hussain), who failed in the July 21, 2005 attack on the London underground one day

Featured story

Wikimedia fundraiser highlights webcomic community's frustration with Wikipedia guidelines

Wikinews reporter Brian McNeil approached Howard Tayler, creator of the Schlock Mercenary webcomic, to see about advertising the Wikimedia fundraiser on his website. Tayler's response was not as McNeil expected.

London police found guilty in suspected suicide bomber case

London's Metropolitan police force has been found guilty of endangering the public during an anti-terrorism operation that led to the death of an innocent Brazilian man in July of 2005.

The British jury at Old Bailey convicted the police force of violating the Health & Safety legislation because the operation

before.

Washoe "the signing chimp" dies

Washoe, a chimpanzee that became famous for being taught to use American Sign Language (ASL), has died at the age of 42. Washoe was the first chimpanzee to learn sign language, although whether or not Washoe's and other great apes's communication was actually language is still a subject of controversy.

In the early 1960s, attempts to teach apes to speak had consistently failed. Allen Gardner and Beatrix Gardner hypothesized that this was due to physical constraints on the vocal apparatus of the apes rather than a lack of brain power. To test their hypothesis, in 1966 they took the baby Washoe and began to teach her sign language which turned out to be successful; Washoe learned over 250 symbols from American sign language, and other researchers quickly began to make similar experiments with other chimpanzees and great apes.

However, later work by Herbert Terrace suggested that the behaviour of Washoe and others was, to a large extent, imitating the researchers rather than spontaneous. Furthermore, Washoe and other chimpanzees never learned how to use grammar or how to construct recursions, two things which many linguists point to as unique aspects of language. Later attempts to have chimpanzees learn by observation as human infants do have also been successful, but there are still no signs that they have learned grammar. Some linguists such as Noam Chomsky have suggested that humans have specialized areas of the brain devoted to processing language and that we

are hardwired to do so. Such hypotheses explain why apparently intelligent apes are unable to form language.

This is the second death this year of an animal famous for possibly learning language. In September 2007 Alex the Grey Parrot, who had learned to speak a variety of words and distinguish colors and shapes, died after a protracted illness.

When Washoe and other apes who had learned ASL interacted with each other, they used ASL to communicate.

Washoe spent the last few years of her life at Central Washington University at the Ellensburg campus.

A memorial service is planned for Washoe for November 12 2007. Details will be made available from "Friends of Washoe," a non-profit organization.

Five injured as Mandala Airlines 737 overshoots runway in Malang, Indonesia

A Mandala Airlines Boeing 737-200 has overshoot the runway at Abdul Rachman Saleh Airport, East Java, Indonesia after a domestic flight from Jakarta. Five passengers were injured in the incident, none seriously.

The aircraft's nose landing gear is understood to have separated in the incident, in which the aircraft skidded 260 feet from the end of the runway. Five of the 89 passengers and seven crew on board received cuts and bruises during the emergency evacuation that followed. It was raining heavily at the time, although it is not known if this is considered to have played a factor.

Airport official Suradi described the scene to Reuters via telephone: "The plane now lies abandoned on the runway ... Its head is slightly tilted down because the front wheel broke off."

The accident is currently under investigation. One potential cause being looked at is the fact that the forward landing gear axle is believed to have snapped upon landing, setting off the chain of events.

The Indonesian aviation industry has been the subject of much criticism this year over safety concerns, sparked by a string of accidents including Adam Air 574, which crashed into the ocean, killing 102, Adam Air Flight 172, a nonfatal accident where a plane snapped in half, and Garuda Indonesia Flight 200, which overshoot a runway at extreme speed, killing 21. All Indonesian airlines are on the list of air carriers banned in the EU, and the United States Federal Aviation Administration has downgraded Indonesia to it's lowest safety rating.

Mandala's only fatal accident was the crash of Mandala Airlines Flight 091 in 2005, which killed 112 people.

Westboro Baptist Church ordered to pay US\$11 million to family of fallen US soldier

The Westboro Baptist Church has lost a lawsuit and has been ordered by United States District Court: District of Maryland to pay US\$11 million to the family of Marine Lance Cpl. Matthew Snyder a fallen soldier who was killed while serving in Iraq.

The lawsuit was filed by Snyder's father, Albert, after the church held a protest across the street

from the cemetery where funeral services were being held. The church was sued for, "defamation of character, invasion of privacy-- intrusion upon seclusion, invasion of privacy--publicity given to private life, intentional infliction of emotional distress and civil conspiracy," according to court documents obtained by Wikinews.

Wikinews has also learned that the church filed a motion for a mistrial on October 29, but was ultimately denied.

The jury ordered that \$2.9 million be awarded to the Snyder family for compensatory damages and \$8 million in punitive damages, but reports say that the church cannot afford that amount, with their assets worth under \$1 million. The defendants plan to appeal the judgement and have expressed confidence they can get it overturned.

Japan fishermen clash with surfers over 2007 dolphin hunt

Japanese fishermen in Taiji, Japan clashed with surfers from Australia and the United States. The location where dolphins are culled was moved to a secluded cove this year to hide the activity from television crews and protesters.

After successfully defending the hunt, by using boat propellers and boat hooks against the group of surfers, who were joined by actress Hayden Panettiere, the fisherman have started their annual cull.

Whaling in Taiji usually yields 2,000 dolphins per year using the dolphin drive hunting method. The dolphins are diverted from their migration route by banging metal rods. As fear can affect the taste of the meat, after being speared and bludgeoned to death, they are

left to hang for a day before being cut up. Television crews and campaigners opposed to the culling were prevented by fishermen and local police from filming these activities.

Although the practice of aquatic mammal hunting is condemned by many groups worldwide as well as within Japan, whaling is seen by those involved as a long-practiced cultural tradition that should be defended. As the demand for whale and dolphin meat for use in sushi has declined, the Government of Japan now has to financially subsidize the industry to support the local economy. Japan argues that whaling is still carried out for scientific reasons, to understand species population numbers. This claim is disputed by the scientific community outside of Japan as well as by environmentalists.

2007 Taipei International Flower Exhibition started with multiple applications

After "Taiwan Flower Tourist Train" started at Kaohsiung Station on Oct. 30, the main show - 2007 Taipei International Flower Exhibition (2007 TIFE), supervised by Council of Agriculture, Executive Yuan, R.O.C. (COA Taiwan) and organized by Taiwan Floriculture Development Association (TFDA), opened from yesterday (Oct. 31) at Taipei World Trade Center Exhibition Hall (TWTC). This show had more than 200 participated companies and organizations exhibiting products, solutions, and international specialists in flower industry.

At the opening ceremony yesterday, Chia-chuan Su (Commissioner of COA Taiwan) encouraged the export market in Taiwan's flower industry and mentioned applications on arts and

cultural decorations. "After 12 years' suspension and Taiwan Orchid Exhibition held in Tainan several months ago, This show (TIFE) finally located at TWTC and gathered flower industry and application companies in several countries including Taiwan. We (organizers) also set a special pavilion for orchids to promote 2008 Taiwan Orchid Exhibition, if we successfully hold this exhibition, we'll expand exhibition space next year."

"Taiwan had some unique creations and diversifications especially flower seeds and materials in the flower industry, with those conditions above, the good quality and its excellence can be shown in its industry in Taiwan." Shui-bian Chen (President of Republic of China, Taiwan) remarked at Opening Ceremony.

In the international pavilions, some of participants like the Netherlands, Japan, Philippines, Malaysia, Thailand, and Australia showed their own style with booth decoration, national culture, and unique products like planting. By the way, TFDA will invite entertainer from 1st season "Taiwan Million Star" finalist Judy Ting-wei Chou and zodiac professional in Taiwan Yung-heng "the Zodiac Sign Prince" Yen for the "Stage of Floral Show Zone" performances separately on Nov. 2 & 3 with night hours.

According to TFDA, 2007 TIFE is a professional trade show in the flower industry, the opening day is only available for trade and industrial visitors and medias, public people should enter with tickets on next 4 days from today. And night hours will be available on Nov. 2 & 3. With security and quality issue, minors under 120cm

aren't permitted to enter the showground.

Singer Meat Loaf falls ill during concert

Wikinews has learned that American rock singer Meat Loaf has taken ill during a concert in Newcastle upon Tyne, United Kingdom. He told the audience that it was "the last concert of his life," and left the stage.

The incident came 70 minutes into the show on Halloween night. During the opening of "Paradise by the Dashboard Light" he suggested that the crowd of thousands should enjoy the performance as it was the last of his career. He attempted to sing the first line of the song, but instead said "Newcastle, I love you, but can't continue. I take off my coat to you." He thanked the audience for 30 years, and left the stage.

The venue, Metro Radio Arena, have announced that the singer had a sore throat. However, they also say that fans are unlikely to be refunded the cost of their tickets, priced at between £37.50 and £45, because he had performed for over an hour.

Today in History

1795 – French Revolution: Under the terms of a new constitution that was ratified during the aftermath of the Reign of Terror and the subsequent Thermidorian Reaction, the Directory succeeded the National Convention as the executive government of France.

1917 – British Foreign Secretary Arthur Balfour issued the Balfour Declaration, proclaiming British support for the establishment of a Jewish homeland in Palestine.

1936 – BBC Television Service launched the world's first regular, public, high-definition television service.

1947 – American industrialist and aviator Howard Hughes flew Spruce Goose, the largest flying boat ever built, on its maiden flight from the coast of Long Beach, California, USA.

2000 – Expedition 1: American astronaut William Shepherd and Russian cosmonauts Sergei Krikalev and Yuri Gidzenko became the first resident crew to arrive at the International Space Station. November 02 is All Souls' Day in Western Christianity; Day of the Dead in Mexico.

Quote of the Day

By the theory of our Government majorities rule, but this right is not an arbitrary or unlimited one. It is a right to be exercised in subordination to the Constitution and in conformity to it. One great object of the Constitution was to restrain majorities from oppressing minorities or encroaching upon their just rights. Minorities have a right to appeal to the Constitution as a shield against such oppression. ~ James K. Polk

Word of the Day

tmesis; n

- (prosody) The insertion of one or more words between the components of a compound word.

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