

Record-Journal

138th Year, No. 189

Meriden, Connecticut, Friday, July 8, 2005

50¢

Dozens dead, hundreds injured by rush-hour bombs in London

Transport halted in capital; Blair: 'The terrorists will not succeed'



Sang Tan / Associated Press



Alexander Chadwick / Associated Press



Martyn Hayhow, pool / Associated Press

The wreckage of a double-decker bus lies amid damaged cars at Tavistock Square in central London Thursday.

Commuter Alexander Chadwick captured this image of passengers being evacuated from a train in a London tunnel on his mobile phone camera.

PM Tony Blair returned to London from the Group of Eight summit.

Attacks bear 'hallmarks' of al-Qaida, official says

By Alan Cowell
New York Times News Service

LONDON — Bomb explosions tore through three subway trains and a red-painted double-decker bus in a coordinated terror attack during London's morning rush-hour on Thursday, killing at least 37 people, injuring about 700 and leaving the city stunned, bloodied but oddly stoic.

On Wednesday, London bubbled over with joy at winning the 2012 Olympics. On Thursday, commuters on the city's subways — the Tube — were plunged into the nightmare of a subterranean bloodbath, when an explosion tore through a subway train 100 yards into the tunnel at Liverpool Street Station at 8:51 a.m., according to a police chronology. Seven people died.

The next explosion occurred at 8:56 a.m. near King's Cross station, where the death toll was 21, the police said.

Twenty-one minutes later, at 9:17 a.m., a third blast ripped through a train coming in Edgware Road underground station, killing seven.

Above ground, at 9:47 a.m., an explosion tore open the roof of a No. 30 double-decker bus with such force that it threw debris three yards into the air. The blast, at the junction of Upper Woburn Place and Tavistock Square, was so powerful that it took hours to determine that two people had died.

The entire subway network was closed as rescue workers went deep

below ground to look for the dead and wounded. Police in yellow slickers sealed off streets and bus services were halted.

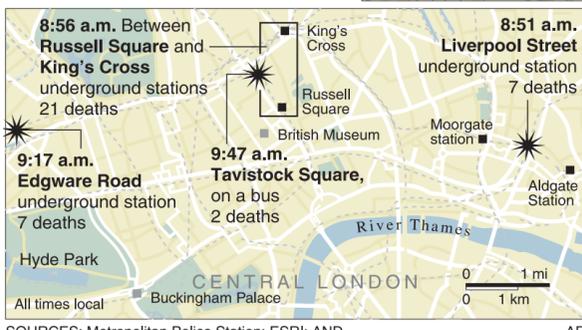
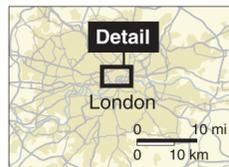
"It is reasonably clear that there have been a series of terrorist attacks in London," a shaken-looking Prime Minister Tony Blair told reporters before he left the Group of Eight summit meeting he was hosting at Gleneagles, Scotland. The attack, he said, was timed to coincide with the summit meeting. He flew back to London lead emergency ministerial meetings here, leaving the other seven leaders — including President Bush — for several hours.

Immediately after the attacks, the United States raised its terror alert level from elevated to high for mass-transit systems, and European nations also increased mass-transit security precautions.

A group describing itself as being affiliated with al-Qaida took responsibility for the attacks on a Web site, but the police said they were unable to confirm the authenticity of the claim. The group, the Secret al-Qaida Jihad Organization in Europe, said the attacks were undertaken to

Four blasts rock central London

Four explosions rocked the London subway and a double-decker bus during the morning rush hour Thursday. According to officials, at least 37 people were killed and more than 700 wounded.



SOURCES: Metropolitan Police Station; ESRI; AND AP

avenge British involvement in the wars in Afghanistan and Iraq.

The British foreign secretary, Jack Straw, said the attacks bore the "hallmarks" of al-Qaida.

The attacks were the worst in British memory since World War II.

Some of the wounded were ferried to hospitals swathed in silvery space blankets, their faces blackened with soot. The police said seriously injured people had lost limbs and

Please see **Attacks / 2**

Blasts turn routine morning chaotic for Londoners

By Sarah Lyall
New York Times News Service

LONDON — The subway had been evacuated — in the chaos of the morning, 22-year-old Jasmine Gardner did not yet know why — so she did the next best thing. She decided to take the bus.

It was the No. 30 bus, a double-decker. Moving slowly in the heavy rush-hour traffic, it stopped at the intersection of Upper Woburn Place and Tavistock Place, not far from the British Museum. It was packed. Gardner began to get on.

And then it exploded. "One minute the bus was there; the next minute it seemed to dissolve into millions of pieces," Gardner, who works for a television distribution company, said in an interview. "I was showered with bits of metal and bits of the bus. I was shielding myself with my umbrella, and it all landed on my umbrella."

But the explosion was only one of four to strike central London on Thursday morning. The others took place deep inside the subway system, all within 30 minutes of one another,

"Today's bombings will not weaken in any way our resolve to ... defeat those who would impose their fanaticism and extremism on all of us."

— British Prime Minister Tony Blair

on three different trains traveling in or out of some of the busiest stations in the city: Liverpool Street, King's Cross and Edgware Road. All the trains were crammed with commuters.

The first explosion struck at 8:51 a.m. on a Circle Line train going east through a tunnel between Aldgate and Liverpool Street subway stations, in London's financial district.

Witnesses described a scene of

Please see **Morning / 2**

City has paid out \$100K to Abbatematteo

By Jennifer Manes
Record-Journal staff

MERIDEN — City officials were outraged Thursday upon learning that Police Chief William C. Abbatematteo has received nearly \$100,000 worth of salary and benefits since being placed on paid administrative leave last September. Overall, the chief's alleged misconduct has cost the city more than \$160,000.

Abbatematteo was placed on paid

leave Sept. 27 after a private investigation revealed a series of alleged ethics violations. City Manager Lawrence J. Kendzior said Abbatematteo is entitled to all benefits of a police chief, including perks such as free use of a sport utility vehicle, gasoline and a cell phone, all used while he is accruing vacation and sick time at his Mattabasset Drive home.

"The law requires that his employment status remain the same," Kendzior said in a telephone interview Thursday. "He's

entitled to any salary and benefits he would have as chief."

And while some city officials are critical of the costs, Abbatematteo's attorney said Thursday that his client has received what he is entitled to.

"He's done nothing wrong," Martin McQuillan said. "He didn't leave the job. The city put him on paid administrative leave. If they hadn't, he would have acted in full capacity until his injury incapacitated him like it has now. If the pen-

sion board would act appropriately, he'd be out on pension now."

Abbatematteo has collected \$73,030 of his \$94,159 annual salary since September. In addition, the city has paid nearly \$14,000 for medical and life insurance. He has also accrued more than \$755 a month in sick and vacation time that he can receive payment for if he cuts ties with the city. If he were fired for mis-



Please see **Abbatematteo / 4**

Rell puts signature on anti-gridlock plan

By John Christoffersen
Associated Press

NORWALK — Gov. M. Jodi Rell signed into law Thursday a \$1.3 billion plan to reduce gridlock on Connecticut's highways and improve rail service in the state.

The legislation allows the state to spend \$667 million to buy 342 new Metro-North commuter rail cars and hundreds of millions of dollars more for highway improvements.

The new rail cars, expected to be

delivered in three to four years, are slated to replace an aging fleet of train cars that carry 110,000 riders daily on one of the nation's busiest rail lines.

The old train cars break down frequently, especially in the winter.

At the same time, the state's highways have become so congested that officials warn traffic delays pose a threat to Connecticut's economy, especially in prosperous Fairfield

Please see **Anti-gridlock / 4**

Shiites force Iraqi port city to change its libertine ways

By Edward Wong
New York Times News Service

BASRA, Iraq — The loudest sounds emanating from musicians' row these days come from explosions.

Ahmed Ali walked through a shop that sold musical instruments before it was gutted by a bombing a week earlier, the latest in a series

of mysterious attacks in this narrow alley in the last half-year, he said. The men here, just a block from the Ministry of Religious Affairs, sell instruments by day and perform at weddings in the evening.

"They say it's forbidden by Islam," Ali, 18, said as he went back to his own shop, its shelves stocked with drums. "We're afraid

of everything. I'm afraid of it all. I'm afraid even when I'm talking to you."

The once-libertine oil port of Basra, 350 miles south of the capital and far from the insurgency raging in much of Iraq, is steadily being transformed into a mini-theocracy under Shiite rule. There

Please see **Iraqi / 4**

Weather forecast: Today: Heavy rain likely, chance of a thunderstorm, tapering off tonight. Page 14

Table with 3 columns: Category, Page, Category, Page. Includes Abby, Bridge, Business, Classified, Comics, Editorial, Horoscope, Local, Lottery, Movies, Obituaries, Sports, State, Television.

