

Afghans mourn mistaken killing of children

HUTALA, Afghanistan (AP) — Hats and shoes littered a blood-stained field in this desolate Afghan village Sunday, a day after U.S. warplanes — targeting a terror suspect — mistakenly killed nine children.

American officials offered their regrets Sunday and said they were “deeply saddened” by the deaths. The United Nations called for an investigation. And the Afghan government urged the U.S.-led coalition hunting Taliban and al-Qaida fighters to make sure such an accident is never repeated.

In Hutala on Sunday, a line of fresh graves marked the tragedy, and village men stood quietly by a stream in a dusty field where the children had been playing. They seemed as bewildered as

they were angry.

“First they fire their rockets. Then they say it was a mistake,” Haji Amir Mohammed told The Associated Press, as dozens of American soldiers sent to investigate the incident offered condolences or lay in the warming winter sun. “How can we forgive them?”

Villagers said the young victims had been playing with marbles in a dusty field beside mud homes in this impoverished valley, some 150 miles southwest of Kabul, when the A-10 ground attack aircraft homed in.

Military officials said Sunday they had no idea children were in the area when they decided to attack. U.S. Ambassador Zalmay Khalilzad said the suspect targeted and killed was a former Taliban

commander named Mullah Wazir, adding that he was “deeply saddened” by the “tragic loss of innocent life.”

Khalilzad said the former commander “had bragged of his personal involvement in attacks on innocent Afghan citizens,” including aid groups and Afghans working on the Kabul-Kandahar road, a site of frequent violence.

Lt. Col. Bryan Hilferty, a spokesman for the coalition, told the AP in Hutala that it had appeared to the pilot of the aircraft that “just that person that we wanted, that terrorist, was in the field. So we fired on him.”

Troops discovered the children’s bodies after rushing to the scene to verify that they had got Wazir. U.S. officers flew in Sun-

day to apologize to village elders, Hilferty said.

But residents were adamant that the military had acted on bogus intelligence. Many said the man killed was not Wazir, and that the former district commander under the Taliban had left the village some days before the attack.

“There are no terrorists, no Taliban or al-Qaida here,” said Abdul Majid Farooqi. “Just poor people.”

The 11,500 U.S.-led troops hunting Taliban and al-Qaida remnants in south and east Afghanistan often are supported by air power, and there have been a string of military mishaps.

The worst occurred in July 2002, when Afghan officials said 48 civilians at a wedding party



An Afghan shows the marbles nine children were playing with before they were killed in a U.S. air strike, in the village of Hutala, in eastern Afghanistan on Sunday.

The Associated Press

Candidate proposes student federal aid

BY JAMIE LOO
Contributing writer
with wire reports

Democratic candidate Howard Dean recently announced a plan that would guarantee \$10,000 a year in federal financial aid to college students.

Dean has argued that President George W. Bush’s tax cuts have resulted in cuts to Pell grants and other federal financial aid. His proposal would entitle students to \$10,000 a year for college or a high-skills training program. In order to finance his plan, Dean would repeal all of Bush’s tax cuts.

As part of his \$7.1 billion higher education program, the former Vermont governor proposed having students in eighth grade commit to attending college or a high-skills training program. Families would then be given advance calculations of the federal aid they would be qualified for and would not have to pay more than 10 percent of their income towards loans after graduation.

The debt obligation would be held to 7 percent for students who enter nursing, teaching, social work, law enforcement, firefighting and emergency care, which Dean calls the “Public Service Corps.” Following graduation, student loan debts would be considered paid in full after 10 years.

Higher education plans have become a hot topic among many of the Democratic candidates seeking

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HOWARD DEAN



Kids compete in ‘Mission to Mars,’ create mechanical robots

BY WHITNEY TRUMBLE
Staff writer

A favorite childhood toy became a learning tool as Lego robots battled at the Lego League Regional Competition held on the University campus on Saturday.

Five teams, ranging in age from fourth grade to high school, participated in this year’s challenge, “Mission to Mars,” which required the students to develop robots to perform certain tasks that they might have to do on Mars, such as launching boulders.

Chris Sattler, regional coordinator liaison and coach of the Bartlett Robo Crushers, said the competition began as a high school robotics event, but evolved to include younger kids when FIRST (For Inspiration and Recognition of Science and Technology) and Lego combined

forces to develop the new program.

Students competed in four areas — teamwork, research, technical design and performance — with awards given for each category. The robots were made solely of Lego materials and a computer software program in which students programmed certain movements on the computer and then downloaded the information into the robots.

The robots had a certain amount of time to perform tasks and received points for their completion. The competition also included an interview session to judge teamwork and a play to demonstrate knowledge about Mars.

“The competition provides not only exposure to technology and a first taste of programming, but also (gives students the opportunity to) work as a team and research in depth in a

scientific area,” Sattler said.

While this was the sixth annual Lego League Challenge, it was the first regional competition in the area.

Dr. Susan Linnemeyer, director of special programs for the College of Engineering, said she volunteered to host the competition in part to expose girls to engineering.

“Often girls are turned off to math and science around the middle school age, so the fourth to fifth grades are a great age to get them interested before their peers say it’s not cool,” Linnemeyer said.

There are only two all-girl teams in the state, she added.

Saturday’s competition had a majority of boys and only one all-girl team, the only team from the area in the competition. Urbana’s Home Hi Middle School for Girls.

SCOTT BORT The Daily Illini

Far left: Julie Pahre (left) and Lily Benner of Urbana make adjustments to their robot before competition on Saturday at the Digital Computer Lab. Urbana’s Home Hi Middle School for Girls was one of five teams competing in the regional competition.

Right: Tyler Rumbold (left) and Mike Roberts of the Buda Storm team set up their robot on the landing pad on Saturday. The team earned points for accomplishing certain tasks, such as successfully coming off the landing pad shown here.



Brigitte Pieke, founder and director of Home Hi, said the girls gained teamwork experience, developed an understanding of computers, learned skills to present the results and practiced public speaking through this project.

Meghan Bannon, sophomore in engineering and one of the coaches for Home Hi’s Señoritas, said the seventh grade class, nine girls, participated in this program as a part of their curriculum.

“The main purpose (of the competition) is to introduce girls at such a young age to engineering, math and science so they can get experience so they’re not discouraged like many girls are.”

The teams started preparing mid-September, Bannon added, with coaches meeting twice a week and the students meeting every Thursday. Night sessions were added as the competition neared.

Kate Hosier, a seventh grader at Home Hi, said that the robotics program was a good combination of arts and science.

“I’m an artsy kind of person, and in a way robotics is artistic; you need to be creative. If not, you can’t think of different ideas for the Legos,” Hosier said.

Home Hi won second place in the competition and will be advancing to the state competition on Dec. 13.

Finance knowledge compass for students

Editor’s note: This is part one of a series outlining various aspects of personal finance that may affect students as they enter the working world.

BY CZARINA GREGORIO
Contributing writer

As the jungle of economic survival becomes increasingly thicker and harder to navigate, one might use the basic fundamentals of building a stable stock portfolio as a compass.

First it is important to understand what a stock is.

“Companies issue ownership of their company, so you essentially own a piece of the company if you hold stocks in it,” said Louis Chan, a University finance professor.

Mark Thies, investment representative for the Edward Jones firm, uses some basic fundamentals of a balanced stock portfolio, “Rules of the Road.”

The first rule is to have a plan. “It’s important to identify per-

sonal financial goals and to have a plan to get those goals accomplished,” Thies said. “An important key is to start early.”

Alex Ring, freshman in business, did just that. He has been studying stocks since he was 11 years old, bought his first stock of Home Depot at age 14 and trades stocks daily through a discount broker online.

Ring started a Finance Club in high school to teach others how to invest in stocks. Today he owns between 10 and 15 stocks and plans to average 14 to 15 percent return. This means that he intends to make 14 to 15 percent return on his trades that are not an-

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How to read a stock table quote

52-WEEK HI / LO

This indicates the highest and lowest price of stock for last 52 weeks. Up and down arrows indicate a new high or low.

STOCK (SYM)

This is the name of stock and ticker abbreviation.

DIV

Dividends are cash payments, using company profits that a company’s board of directors distributes to its stock holders. Share prices might not move much; the dividends attempt to make up for this.

YTD % CHG

This indicates the stock price percentage change for the calendar year to date.

52-WEEK HI / LO	STOCK (SYM)	DIV	YTD % CHG	NET CHG	CLOSE
100.00 / 100.00	IBM	1.00	10.00	1.00	110.00
20.00 / 20.00	MSFT	0.50	5.00	0.50	40.00
30.00 / 30.00	GOOG	0.75	7.50	0.75	60.00
40.00 / 40.00	AMZN	0.25	2.50	0.25	50.00
50.00 / 50.00	ORCL	0.50	5.00	0.50	60.00

Example from the Wall Street Journal

NET CHG

This is the dollar value change in the stock’s price from the previous day’s closing price.

YLD %

This indicates the dividend yield or percentage of return on a dividend by calculating the annual dividends per share divided by the price per share.

PE

The price / earnings ratio evaluates the worth of a stock by dividing the earning per share during the last four quarters by the market value per share.

VOL 100s

This is the unofficial number of shares traded; for the actual number of shares, add ‘00’ to the end.

CLOSE

This is the trading price recorded when the market closed for the day.

Daily Illini graphic by Melissa Monno
Sources: Wall Street Journal and Investopedia.com

U.S. general: End of attacks won’t come with Saddam capture

BAGHDAD, Iraq (AP) — Guerrillas killed a U.S. soldier with a roadside bomb in northern Iraq on Sunday, and a U.S. military commander said insurgent attacks might not abate even if American troops kill or capture Saddam Hussein.

A soldier from the U.S. Army’s 101st Airborne Division died and two others in his unit were wounded when rebels detonated a bomb as their convoy drove through the center of Mosul at midday, Master Sgt. Kelly Tyler said.

“I heard an explosion and came running toward the site of the attack and saw three soldiers, one of them covered with blood,” said Bahaa Hussein, a student. Mosul is 250 miles north of Baghdad.

The top commander in Iraq, Lt. Gen. Ricardo Sanchez, said at-

tacks could surge ahead of a July 1 deadline for a transfer of authority from the U.S.-led coalition to a transitional Iraqi government.

“We expect to see an increase in violence as we move forward toward sovereignty at the end of June,” Sanchez said.

“The killing or capturing of Saddam Hussein will have an impact on the level of violence, but it will not end it,” he said. “It won’t be the end-all solution.”

“It’s a needle in a haystack,” he said of the hunt for the ousted Iraqi leader. “Clearly we haven’t found the right haystack ... We are moving under the assumption that he is still in the country, that he is still operating.”

In Saddam’s hometown of Tikrit, children took a break from See SADDAM on Page A-8