



Top Stories

Comedian Mochrie to host Canadian "5th Grader" game show

Second City alumni Colin Mochrie will host



Canada's Are You Smarter Than a Canadian 5th Grader? adaptation

First signs of recovery from horse flu outbreak



As of 08:00UTC travel restrictions on horses were lifted in Western Australia, racing to resume over the weekend.

Featured story

Pakistan test fires nuclear-capable cruise missile



Pakistan successfully test fired a new cruise missile on Saturday that is capable of carrying nuclear weapons.

Wikipedia Current Events

The Supreme Court of Chile confirms a life sentence for Hugo Salas Wenzel, a Chilean general under former dictator Augusto Pinochet, for his role in the murder of 12 opponents of the regime.

•The Sudanese Government and the United Nations launch a flood appeal to help victims of recent flooding which has killed 89

Wikipedia Current Events

people and destroyed 73,000 homes.

•South Korean hostage crisis: Officials in South Korea's Blue House claim that the Taliban has agreed to release 19 South Korean hostages.

•Battle of Karbala (2007): At least 52 people have been killed in fighting in Karbala, as thousands of Shia pilgrims gathered in the city for an annual festival.

•Scientists in Colombia discover new poisonous frog, dubbed the 'golden frog of Supatá,' in a remote mountainous region.

•A United States federal judge orders the extradition of former Panamanian President Manuel Noriega to France, where he has already been convicted in absentia on money-laundering charges.

•Abdullah Gül of the Justice and Development Party is elected President of Turkey.

•The Cockpit voice recorder is retrieved from the wreckage of Adam Air Flight 574, 24 hours after the recovery of the Flight data recorder.

•The Ontario Court of Appeal acquits Steven Truscott of the 1959 murder of Lynne Harper, declaring the original trial that had sentenced the then-14-year-old to hang was a miscarriage of justice. The case has been a cause célèbre for almost fifty years.

Wikipedia Current Events

•A total lunar eclipse takes place in the early morning hours across most of North America and the eastern Pacific Ocean region.

Greek opposition attacks government on wildfires tragedy

Greece's socialist opposition party leader, George Papandreou has stepped up its attack on the government's response to the most devastating wildfires in the country's history, with 64 dead and thousands homeless.

Papandreou pointed that the government had been "totally incompetent" in fighting the blazes that continued to rage across southern Greece after five days. The PASOK president said that "This government was proven to be totally incompetent, unable to handle the fire crisis, like all the other crises it encountered in its four-year administration," while he met with Greek President Karolos Papoulias at the presidential mansion in Athens earlier today.

Protesters have marched through Athens chanting "down with the government" after Greek television showed householders trying to fight the flames with hoses and buckets, fuelling claims that the governmental response had been poorly coordinated. Another protest is going to take place tomorrow in Thessaloniki and other cities throughout Greece.

The prime minister, Kostas

Karamanlis, said on Saturday it could not be coincidence that so many fires broke out simultaneously in so many areas of the country. Papandreou attacking the government, denounced the claims as baseless conspiracy theories, although across the political spectrum there was agreement that arson may have been involved.

Sen. Larry Craig claims innocent of lewd conduct

Sen. Larry Craig held a news conference Tuesday in Boise, Idaho to issue a public statement about his arrest in June, 2007 and subsequent guilty plea, August 8, to a misdemeanor charge of disorderly conduct.

In his statement, Sen. Craig indicated that when he pled guilty to the charge, two months after the fact, he didn't understand at the time what he was signing and declared himself innocent of any wrongdoing at the Minneapolis airport on June 11, 2007.

According to the arresting officer, Sgt. Dave Karsnia, who was dressed in civilian clothes at the time of the incident, he was using a bathroom stall when Sen. Craig entered the stall next to his. Karsnia reported the Senator tapped his right foot, and then stretched his foot over to touch the officer's left foot. Sen. Craig also ran his hand along the bottom of the stall's dividing wall. According to CNN, that type of behavior is known in the Gay community as a signal that the person wants to engage in lewd behavior. The officer subsequently showed Sen. Craig his badge. Using his other hand, the Karsnia directed the Craig to move toward the door. After some words and Sen. Craig's refusal to cooperate with the officer, he was placed

under arrest.

An additional charge against Sen. Craig, interference with privacy, had been thrown out. Sen. Craig received a ten-day suspended jail sentence, was fined US\$500, and was given one year probation.

Sen. Craig admitted that he did not mention his arrest to the Senate Ethics Committee, which is not required by law, and also didn't tell his wife and other immediate family members about his arrest until recent days.

Law will delay University of Minnesota strike

A law was passed that will prevent clerical, technical and health care workers from striking when the University of Minnesota students return to classes on Tuesday, however, the new law makes no guarantee about workers striking on Wednesday.

According to Jan Johnson, with the the Minnesota Bureau of Mediation Services, both sides do wish to avoid a strike if at all possible.

The American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees have filed for a 10 day notice to strike, however, the 10 day notice to strike law requires that the 10th day of the cooling off period fall on a day other than a Saturday, Sunday or a holiday, thus, Labor Day Monday is out of reason. In other words, a strike is not even a possibility until at least Wednesday, the second day of classes.

English Premier League 2007/08: Kieron Dyer suffers suspected broken leg

West Ham United midfielder Kieron Dyer suffered a suspected broken leg in the Carling Cup tie against Bristol Rovers.

Dyer, who joined from Newcastle United at the start of this season, was carried off on a stretcher in the first few minutes of the game.

The 28 year old was injured in a tackle by Joe Jacobson and the game was delayed before he was taken to hospital.

The Hammers won the match to reach the 3rd Round 2-1 but boss Alan Curbishley said: "It's immaterial. We are so devastated for him. I can't put it into words really. You put a strong side out and you wonder why sometimes. We are delighted we have got through but after 10 or 15 minutes the game was immaterial. Everyone in the dressing room is really down about it."

UEFA Champions League 2007/08: Liverpool complete safe passage

Liverpool went into Tuesday's game knowing they would struggle if they conceded. Liverpool were without Jamie Carragher or Steven Gerrard due to injury but managed an easy win at home to Toulouse.

Peter Crouch put Liverpool 1-0 up after 18 minutes with a header scored from a Dirk Kuyt cross. From here, Liverpool dominated the game. Sami Hyypiä scored the second goal with a header from a Yossi Benayoun corner.

In the second half Kuyt was denied by the crossbar after his shot had taken a touch off Mauro Cetto but he got his first goal of the season on the 87 minute mark after a fine one-two with substitute, and Dutch compatriot, Ryan Babel. Kuyt then scored his second, and Liverpool's fourth, with the last touch of the game from a Benayoun assist.

UEFA Champions League 2007/08: Rangers through after tense draw

Rangers survived a testing match in Belgrade to progress through to the group-stages of the UEFA Champions League.

Allan McGregor was Rangers' hero twice in the opening 45 minutes denying Red Star Belgrade striker, Igor Burzanović, twice in the first half.

Jean-Claude Darcheville and Lee McCulloch shot close for Rangers in the second half, whilst McGregor denied Ognjen Koroman to preserve the 0-0 draw, and the 1-0 lead on aggregate.

Carling Cup: Match abandoned after player collapses

The Carling Cup tie between Leicester City and Nottingham Forest was abandoned at half time after Leicester defender Clive Clarke collapsed in the changing room at half time.

Shortly after the half time whistle, paramedics were called into the changing room before taking Clarke to Queens Medical Centre in Nottingham.

Tim Davies, Leicester City's chief executive said: "He was taken away in an ambulance to hospital. He did offer a few words in the ambulance. Our thoughts and prayers are with Clive and his family."

The Nottingham Forest chief executive added: "I think football is secondary to human issues."

Nottingham Forest had been leading 1-0 at the time after a goal from Junior Agogo, however after a 15 minute delay both managers agreed to abandon the game as many of the players had been

shaken up by the incident.

Clarke is currently believed to be conscious.

Sweden suspends commercial flights to Iraq amid allegations of attempted shutdown

Sweden has suspended all commercial flights in and out of Iraq amid allegations that an attempt was made to shoot down a Nordic Airways passenger jet.

On August 8 a Nordic Airways McDonnell Douglas MD-83 took off on a flight between Sulaimaniyah, northern Iraq to Stockholm, Sweden, carrying 130 passengers. Shortly after take-off the pilots noticed a trail of light arcing over the aircraft in a fashion similar to that of an incoming missile.

According to a spokesman from the Civil Aviation Authority, the preliminary view is that "some kind of rocket" was fired at the aircraft. However, the director of Sulaimaniyah International Airport, refuted the allegations, saying "the pilot's assumptions were wrong...in fact, the Kurdish hunters are using spotlights at night. We interviewed more than 50 passengers who arrived in Sweden and had been on board and they said nothing happened and they hadn't seen any gunfire."

Sweden's decision to ban services from Iraq affects two airlines, one being Nordic Airways, which operates a weekly service between Sulaimaniyah and Stockholm, and the other being Viking Airlines, which runs a service between Stockholm and Irbil four times a week.

According to the aviation authority, Nordic Airways has rebooked passengers scheduled to fly out of Iraq onto other services out of the

country, but 3,000 people booked onto Viking Airlines's route are currently stranded in Iraq.

While flights currently remain suspended, Austrian Airlines have also suspended flights to Irbil, citing the same incident and a subsequent resultant security review as their reasoning for the cessation of the route. Since then, the Kurdistan Regional Government, Erbil International Airport and Suleimaniah International Airport have all been in discussions with Austrian Airlines in an attempt to re-launch flights from the airline.

There has only been one confirmed case of a commercial airliner being struck by a missile over Iraq; that of the 2003 Baghdad DHL shutdown incident, which became famous as the only time a commercial fixed-wing airliner has been successfully landed without any operational control surfaces.

AllOfMP3.com to reopen soon

The controversial Russian music site, AllOfMP3.com, is expected to reopen after a Moscow court ruled that Denis Kvasov, owner of the site, did not break Russian copyright laws and that the site was fully legal.

Mr Kvasov argued that although no royalties had been paid to the music industry, the site did pay the 15% of its profits required by the Russian Organization for Multimedia and Digital Systems (Roms). A spokesperson from Roms said "We pay royalties to those who sign up with us and ask for them. But none of the majors, among them I mean labels like EMI and Universal, want their money."

A blog post on the website, which had been shut since July, said that

"the service will be resumed in the foreseeable future", however no official date for the reopening has been announced.

The court ruling disappointed many including the International Federation of the Phonographic Industry (IFPI). Tim Jenkins from the IFPI said, "If it were to resume trading as it was before, it would be in clear violation of copyright laws both within and outside Russia."

European football: Sevilla player dies after collapsing during game

Sevilla midfielder Antonio Puerta died today at the age of 22. Puerta had been in critical condition at Virgen del Rocío hospital since collapsing during a game against Getafe. Puerta's body will be taken to the club's stadium where fans could pay their respects. He will be buried on Thursday.

Puerta collapsed after jogging back towards his own goal in the 35th minute of the game.

Spanish media reported that Puerta was due to become a father in under 2 months.

The UEFA Champions League 3rd qualifying round 2nd leg against AEK Athens in Athens today has been postponed. The game will be played on September 3rd.

Pakistan test fires nuclear-capable cruise missile

Pakistan successfully test fired a new cruise missile on Saturday that is capable of carrying nuclear weapons.

The announcement was made by the nation's military in a statement, saying that the air-launched Ra'ad (meaning 'thunder' in Arabic) missile has been

successfully tested. The missile is constructed using materials and designs specifically developed for stealth and has a range of 350 kilometres, they said.

The missile was developed exclusively in Pakistan, and, according to the statement, has been built specifically with Pakistan's existing air force platforms in mind, in order to give these 'a strategic stand-off capability on land and at sea,'. The statement also said that the missile's accuracy was comparable to Pakistan's long-range Babur missile, and that the missile is capable of carrying "all types of warheads".

Both the Pakistani prime minister, Shaukat Aziz and the president, Pervez Musharraf, congratulated the team of scientists and engineers who developed the new technology. "Pakistan's defense will continue to be strengthened as an imperative of national security, they said, and assured all support to Pakistan's strategic program," according to the army.

Families angered at £400,000 fine imposed on Stockline Plastics

The families of workers killed in the blast at the Stockline plastics factory in 2004, are criticizing the £400,000 fine imposed on the company.

They are upset at the amount of the fine imposed on the company.

The Scottish TUC gave the following statement : "No level of fine can adequately reflect the loss that these families have suffered. Our justice system appears to be totally inflexible in the sentences that judges can impose following breaches of health and safety legislation."

Emergency inspections ordered on all Boeing 737s in aftermath of China Airlines explosion

The United States Federal Aviation Administration has issued an emergency Airworthiness Directive to all owners and operators of certain Next Generation Boeing 737s to inspect their aircraft in light of recent developments in the investigation of the recent China Airlines explosion.

The measures have been imposed due to the discovery that a structural bolt in the aircraft that exploded had come loose and punched a hole in the aircraft's right wing fuel tank.

It is thought the bolt came loose after a worker failed to replace a washer after a routine maintenance procedure several months prior to the accident.

Boeing spokesman Jim Proulx said "This was determined to be an issue of flight safety... It's very, very important."

Operators must complete an initial inspection of the wing slat assemblies of the affected aircraft in 10 days, and must ensure the fasteners are properly torqued within 24 days. They must then repeat the inspections every 3,000 flight cycles thereafter. The directive is believed to affect over 2,000 aircraft worldwide.

Black boxes retrieved from lost Indonesian airliner after eight months

Eight months after the January 1st crash of Adam Air Flight 574 into Indonesian waters, the cockpit voice recorder (CVR) and flight data recorder (FDR) have been retrieved from the wreckage.

The devices, collectively referred to as 'black boxes', had remained

unrecovered over a dispute between the Indonesian government and the airline over who would bear the costs of salvage.

Only recently has a contract been signed with United States salvage firm Phoenix International, who arrived last week in Indonesia to receive the recorders, working cooperatively with the Indonesian Transport Safety Commission (ITSC) and the US National Transportation Safety Board (NTSB).

The boxes were located by an underwater remotely operated vehicle searching the seabed near Majene, Sulawesi, where the plane went down. They were approximately 2,000 metres (6,500 ft) down and 1,400 metres apart. The FDR was recovered on August 27 at midday and the CVR was retrieved the following day at 10 a.m.

According to Tatang Kurniadi, chairman of the ITSC, the boxes exhibit only minor physical damage, but there is currently no way of knowing if the data they contain has been damaged or destroyed by their prolonged stay underwater.

The devices will now be sent to Washington for analysis by NTSB specialists.

Australians enjoy second lunar eclipse for 2007

Citizens in the Australian city of Bathurst in Central-Western New South Wales have turned out in the hundreds on top of Mount Panorama to observe tonight's lunar eclipse. Those who turned out for the spectacle were treated to live music and purple flags with lighting to take on a mystic theme.

Mount Panorama provided perfect conditions for the show, with minimal light and clear skies. Just before 7 PM AEST the eclipse began to be visible with the Earth beginning to shadow the Moon, by 8:37 PM AEST the top of Mount Panorama was bathed in an eerie red glow as the moon glowed deep red.

Michael Stanton, a local astronomy fan told Wikinews "this is just great, we have music and this visual delight to see".

Glasgow factory firm lands fine of £400,000

The Stockline Plastics operators in Glasgow, ICL Plastics and ICL Tech, have been fined £400,000, for the explosion which ripped through the firm's Glasgow plant.

9 were killed in the incident, which happened on 11th May 2004.

It happened as gas from a corroded pipe installed in 1969 ignited in the cellar of the factory.

The company lawyer read a statement by the factory firm, however, when asked a question, claimed she had 'no further comments'.

The director of the H&SE in Scotland said lessons were to be learnt from this incident.

Horse flu damage spreads

As the Federal Labour Party calls for an inquiry into the outbreak of Equine Influenza, federal Opposition leader Kevin Rudd said "if there is a hole in the quarantine system, it needs to be plugged straight away."

Federal Minister for Agriculture Mr McGauran has cautioned against a rushed judgment that failures at the Eastern Creek Quarantine

station was the cause of the outbreak. But an unidentified former quarantine official believes its the most likely source.

Mounted Police patrols during the APEC meeting scheduled for Sydney next week have been canceled, as to plans to bring additional horses from interstate. Deputy Commissioner Andrew Scipione said "It won't stop us being able to protect dignitaries, the public or police at any planned protest"

Organisers of the World Youth Day Papal mass plans of holding the event at Randwick Race course are also doubt. Vice President of the Randwick Trainers Association Mr O'Shea said of the current outbreak "We are going to take a massive financial hit now..."

"If we go through both World Youth Day and equine influenza that would be the death knell for training at Randwick," Original plans for the Papal mass required 10 weeks where trainers would not be able to use the Randwick facilities, a revised plan which would use the venue for 3 days was suggested.

Mr O'Shea said the three-day plan was "totally unworkable" as it would require 24 days of disruption.

Australia's largest wagering company Tabcorp Holdings LTD announced it has lost an estimated A\$150 million after the cancellation of last weekends racing, this caused it share price to drop 4.6% on Monday.

A Tabcorp spokes person said "Based on its experience to date, if Australian racing (thoroughbred and harness) were not to resume until next weekend, Tabcorp

expects that the loss in turnover will be in the order of A\$150m" Further falls are likely with A\$1.5 billion in Melbourne Cup and Spring carnival turnover under threat if the outbreak causes cancellation of races.

Tattersalls spokesman said it would have to run into months before it had an significant impact on their earning. Sportsbet said they stood to lose A\$20m in turnover each weekend, with A\$50m turnover at risk for the Melbourne Cup.

An independent study into the 2005 Melbourne Cup conclude it contribute A\$318m into the Victorian economy. The racing industry has called on the Government to setup National disaster relief for the industry.

Peter V'Landy, Chief Executive of Racing New South Wales said "Jockeys can't earn an income unless they're riding. You've got stable hands, catering staff, totalisator staff and, you know, there are a lot of small businesses. I think this is a natural disaster for the racing industry. It's a very big industry, it's one of the top three in Australia, so we are, we are seeking now for financial assistance to these people so they can meet their financial commitment."

Idaho senator arrested for disorderly conduct

Larry Craig, the senior United States Senator for Idaho, was arrested at Minneapolis-St. Paul International Airport in Minnesota after pleading guilty to a charge of disorderly conduct. He has been forced to pay US\$575 in fees and serving 10 days in jail, and has been put on unsupervised probation for a period of one year.

Craig was arrested on June 11th

after a man reported lewd conduct in one of the men's restrooms, by tapping his foot in a pattern used to solicit gay sex. At the time, he stated, "I complained to the police that they were misconstruing my actions. I was not involved in any inappropriate conduct".

After his arrest, he stated, "I should have had the advice of counsel in resolving this matter. In hindsight, I should not have pled guilty. I was trying to handle this matter myself quickly and expeditiously".

Craig is a member of the Republican Party. He has served in the United States Senate continuously since 1991, and was a United States Representative from 1981 to 1991. Earlier, he was elected to the Idaho State Senate in 1974, 1976 and 1978. Craig is married, and adopted the three children his wife had had from a previous marriage.

Craig had previously faced allegations of homosexual behavior, and in 1982 went on network news to deny rumors involving cocaine and sex with male congressional pages. He is considered a social conservative in his voting record, and supported a Federal Marriage Amendment to bar same-sex marriage.

Horse racing in NSW, Queensland canceled indefinitely

Thoroughbred horse racing has been cancelled indefinitely in the Australian states of New South Wales and Queensland due to an outbreak of Equine Influenza. An Australia-wide ban on the movement of horses, donkeys and mules which was due to expire on Wednesday has been extended until Friday. NSW and Queensland have extended their bans

indefinitely.

So far the virus only appears to have infected horses in NSW and Queensland, with 51 confirmed cases and another 400 suspected. So far all those infected appear to be horses used for recreational purposes and not thoroughbred race horses.

Despite the bans on racing and horse movements, track work will recommence in NSW and Queensland today.

It had been feared yesterday that four race horses at Randwick Racecourse in Sydney had been struck down by the virus, but the horses later tested negative to the virus. If an outbreak were to occur at Randwick it could affect up to 700 race horses stabled there.

The outbreak comes at a bad time for the industry, as it prepares for the lucrative spring racing season in Sydney and Melbourne. The AUD\$1 million Golden Rose event at Rosehill has been cancelled, although it is expected that Melbourne's spring racing carnival will resume on Saturday as no cases of the flu have been seen in Victoria.

Racing Victoria has also said the Melbourne Cup will go ahead as planned despite the outbreak, even if no interstate or international horses can attend.

Despite fines of up to \$44,000 and 12 months imprisonment in NSW there have been reports that more than 100 horse owners have been caught moving their horses. The NSW Primary Industries Minister Ian Macdonald, said it was "absolutely vital that no-one moves a horse in this state".

"We will be working with police to

ensure horses are at a standstill," he said.

The racing bans have cost gaming companies Tabcorp and Tattersall's millions, with Tabcorp losing \$65 million in revenue on the weekend. Tabcorp expects to lose around \$150 million in turnover this week. Tattersall's has also said it expects to lose around \$2 million in revenue per week due to the outbreak. Investors reacted to the news, slashing 3 percent of the price of Tattersall's shares and over 4 percent of those of Tabcorp.

Obesity rates rise across most of the U.S.

According to the Trust for America's Health (TFAH) research group, obesity rates in 31 states in the United States continued to climb. Not one state showed a decline in obesity rates in the latest report released Monday.

The data presented in the Trust for America's Health's *F as in Fat: How Obesity Policies are Failing in America, 2007* report is primarily sourced from CDC's Pediatric Nutrition Surveillance System (PedNSS) and Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System (BRFSS) surveys.

Mississippi became the first state to have more than 30 percent of its residents considered to be obese. West Virginia and Alabama, however, edged very close to the 30 percent marker.

Meanwhile, Colorado continued to hold the title as the leanest state in the U.S., with less than 18 percent of its residents considered to be obese.

The report also examined childhood obesity rates for the first time. The District of Columbia came in at 22.8%, the highest,

while Utah had the lowest ranking at 8.5%.

The TFAH's director Jeffrey Levi said the government needs to become more involved in preventing obesity. "It's one of those issues where everyone believes this is an epidemic, but it's not getting the level of political and policymaker attention that it ought to...As every candidate for president talks about health care reform and controlling health care cost costs, if we don't hone in on this issue, none of their proposals are going to be affordable."

However, Levi did acknowledge that many people believe obesity results from personal decision making and not societal policy. But Levi said the modern world can help promote good choices.

Finland offers helicopters, personnel to assist Greece with forest fires

The government of Finland has announced it will offer to send three specialist firefighting helicopters, 25 firefighters and 2-3 forest fire experts to Greece via the European Union to assist with the forest fire emergency Greece is currently experiencing.

Greece is currently in urgent need of fixed-wing aircraft with water-bombing capabilities, assets which Finland does not possess. If the Greek authorities deem Finland's offers to be suitable, they will be dispatched with immediate effect, within six hours of Greece requesting the rotorcraft and personnel.

It is thought that the men would most likely be put to use protecting built-up areas in an attempt to prevent the death toll, already over 60, from rising any higher.

The helicopters have been sourced via a private company. Finland said that the country could not commit to send the aircraft any sooner without arrangements being made to cover their removal from service, as otherwise safety in Finland would be severely jeopardised, with emergency aircraft unavailable should Finland experience any fires of its own.

The helicopters Finland have available can each carry up to 800 litres of water or foam retardant, whereas large firefighting planes can carry tens of thousands of litres.

Finland had previously thought they would be unable to spare any help for Greece, and it was only after much sourcing of aircraft from the private sector that Finland was able to make the offer. Finland are also looking into whether they may be of assistance in reforestation efforts after the fires have been extinguished.

Italian political leader threatens forcible rebellion against government

Italian politics were flamed on Sunday, August 26th, by a statement from Umberto Bossi, the leader of far-right party Northern League, who said during a rally in Ca' San Marco di Mezzoldo, north of Milan, "People of this region have never drawn out the rifles, but there's always a first time". Bossi, who had been minister of reform from 2001 to 2006, during last days had repeatedly invited people to a tax revolt against the government.

The President of Italy, Giorgio Napolitano, issued immediately a public statement expressing "a strong call to moderation in Italian politics". Several leftist politicians

asked the leader of rightist coalition Silvio Berlusconi to distance from Bossi's statement but a representative of Berlusconi's party, Forza Italia, Fabrizio Cicchitto pointed out that "Bossi's language is usually strong and metaphorical". Similar comment came from former minister Maurizio Gasparri (now spokesman of party Alleanza Nazionale) who explained that Bossi "was speaking of verbal rifles".

Prescott to stand down as UK MP

John Prescott, former Deputy Prime Minister of the United Kingdom is to stand down as a Member of Parliament after the next general election.

Mr Prescott, 69, who has been MP for the constituency for Hull East for 37 years, made his announcement for at a weekend garden party. Stephen Brady, chairman of the local Labour association said, "John told us he would not be standing again. People paid tribute to his long service. It was an emotional event."

Prescott, recently took up the post of head of the Parliamentary delegation to the Council of Europe. It is suspected he may enter the House of Lords and has been reported that he sold his memoirs for £300,000.

There has also been speculations over who will replace Prescott as an MP. Amongst the people who have been mentioned are Prescott's son David Prescott and Chris Leslie, an aide to Prime Minister Gordon Brown."

Opium production in Afghanistan reaches record highs

According to the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) report released Monday, the opium produced in Afghanistan has doubled in the past two years, reaching record highs. The United Nations' report determined that 93% of the world's opium is now produced in Afghanistan, up 1% from last year.

In 2007, 193,000 hectares of land in Afghanistan were dedicated to opium poppy cultivation, representing a 17 percent increase over 2006. In addition, the yield per hectare was up from last year, due to favourable weather conditions. In 2007, opium yields were 42.5 kg per hectare, while in 2006 yields were 37.0 kg/ha. Overall in 2007, Afghanistan produced 8,200 tons of opium, an amount 34 percent greater than in 2006.

This marks the sixth consecutive year that production has increased despite the United States' US\$600 million counter-narcotics program in Afghanistan. When commenting on the report's overall findings, William B. Wood, the American ambassador to Afghanistan, said, "I think it is safe to say that we should be looking for a new strategy, and I think that we are finding one." He refers to the possibility of such enhanced U.S. efforts including spraying poppy crops with herbicides. This proposal has been opposed by both British and Afghan officials in the past.

Today in History

1533 – Spanish conquest of the Inca Empire: Conquistador Francisco Pizarro executed Inca Emperor Atahualpa in Cajamarca.

1756 – As neighboring countries began conspiring against him, Frederick II of Prussia launched a preemptive invasion of Saxony, starting the Seven Years' War.

1907 – The Quebec Bridge, currently the longest cantilever bridge span in the world at 549 m (1800 ft) connecting Quebec City and Lévis, Quebec, Canada across the St. Lawrence River, collapsed during construction, killing 75 workers.

1944 – World War II: Slovak troops turned against the pro-Nazi government of Jozef Tiso and the German Wehrmacht, starting the two-month long Slovak National Uprising.

2005 – Storm surges of Hurricane Katrina caused multiple breaches in levees around New Orleans, flooding about 80 percent of the city and many neighboring areas for weeks.

August 29 is Feast day for the Beheading of St. John the Baptist (Christianity)

Quote of the Day

The truth that seems discouraging does in reality only transform the courage of those strong enough to accept it; and, in any event, a truth that disheartens, because it is true, is still of far more value than the most stimulating of falsehoods. ~ Maurice Maeterlinck

Word of the Day

innocuous; adj

1. Harmless; producing no ill effect; innocent.
2. Inoffensive, unprovocative, not exceptional.

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(toll-free in the U.S.)
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(outside the U.S.)
+44-871-218-6397
(U.K. / Europe)

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