



Top Stories

India's Secretary-General candidate Tharoor suggests UN reform agenda

India's nominee and strong contender to succeed Kofi Annan reveals four-point program to revamp the United Nations.

5 killed as bus from New York City to Montreal crashes

Five passengers have died and more than a dozen are injured after a bus bound for Montreal from New York City crashed through a guard rail in upper New York state on Monday evening.

Featured story

Watchdog group StopBadware.org warns against free AOL software

The software watchdog group StopBadware.org, ran by the Berkman Center for Internet & Society of Harvard Law School and the Oxford Internet Institute, has opened a dialogue with AOL with concerns over the presence of badware, also known as malware, in the now-free AOL 9.0 software.

Wikipedia Current Events

- Israeli forces have launched air and land attacks on Balata refugee camp in the occupied West Bank, killing two Palestinian fighters.
- Iranian president Ahmadinejad challenges Bush to a live television debate. The American Government calls this a

Wikipedia Current Events

- "diversion" and refuses.
- British police charge another suspect over the 2006 transatlantic aircraft plot.
- Israel must lift its blockade of Lebanon soon, UN chief Annan tells Israel's defence minister.
- Kofi Annan says that the United Nations hopes to double the strength of the peacekeeping force by Friday.
- Tropical Storm John becomes Hurricane John, the sixth hurricane of the 2006 Pacific hurricane season and threatens Mexico's Pacific Ocean including Acapulco.
- New Orleans and United States mark the one year anniversary of Hurricane Katrina.
- A magnitude-5.4 earthquake strikes off the Maluku Islands in Indonesia. Officials currently state that a tsunami is not possible, as their initial magnitude estimates have been downgraded. This follows four magnitude-5 foreshocks the previous day.
- Warren Jeffs, the fugitive leader of a polygamist Mormon sect and one of the FBI Ten Most Wanted Fugitives, has been arrested in southern Nevada.
- Vivendi Universal, the world's biggest music group, has signed a deal to make its music catalogue available on a free legal downloads service.
- Public school teachers in Detroit

Wikipedia Current Events

- begin a strike after failing to reach an agreement with school district officials.
- Residents in south Florida prepare for Tropical Storm Ernesto with concerns that the storm could again strengthen and become a hurricane after it leaves Cuba.
- Conflict between Shiite militia and the Iraqi military in southern city of Diwaniyah leaves at least 19 dead.
- In London, three more men are charged with conspiracy to murder and preparing acts of terrorism over an alleged plot to bring down airliners on or around August 10th this year, bringing the total number of suspects facing these charges to eleven.
- British rail company South West Trains begin a series of one-day strikes over claims that unqualified company managers were allowed to drive trains

Annan demands Hezbollah free captured soldiers, Israel lift blockade

United Nations Secretary General Kofi Annan called on Hezbollah, Monday, to release the two Israeli soldiers it captured on July 12th at the start of the 34 day Israel-Hezbollah conflict that engulfed southern Lebanon and northern Israel.

Annan also urged Israel to lift its air and sea blockade of Lebanon faulting it for not meeting the

requirements of the UN resolution governing the 15 day old ceasefire. The UN leader made his comments in Beirut following talks with Lebanese Prime Minister Fuad Saniora.

"It's a fixed menu. . . . It's not an a la carte menu where you choose and pick," said Annan of the ceasefire provisions and the failure of both sides to fulfill them. He said that the truce had created the opportunity for a "long-term ceasefire and a long-term peace" but that all sides of the conflict had to fully implement the UN Security Council resolution for that to occur.

Israel responded to Annan's comments by saying it intended to continue the blockade until international forces are deployed along Lebanon's border with Syria and other entry points in order to stop arms shipments to Hezbollah.

"Once the international forces are fully in place and they're able to prevent the smuggling of weapons to Hezbollah, there will be no need for the air and naval blockade," said David Baker speaking on behalf of Israeli Prime Minister Ehud Olmert.

Annan said that the Lebanese army, not the international force, should have the responsibility of policing the border with Syria saying that the deployment of peacekeeping troops on the border of two countries that have not been at war would be unprecedented. Syrian President Bashar Assad has said having international forces on the country's border would be a "hostile" act.

He stressed that southern Lebanon must become an arms free zone, "In Lebanon, there should be - as

we have all agreed - one law, one authority, one gun," he said, and that the disarmament of Hezbollah must be achieved by national agreement within Lebanon and could not be implemented by international forces.

Annan's visit to Lebanon is the first leg of a tour of the Middle East aimed at propping up the ceasefire. He will also be visiting Israel, Syria, the Palestinian Territories and Iran.

Canadian Idol top 4 perform

Last night the top four of Canadian Idol performed. Tyler Lewis, Chad Doucette, Craig Sharpe, and Eva Avila sang songs that were picked by the judges. They each performed twice in one hour. They are now awaiting Canada's vote for who should be eliminated.

When the show started the host had a quick chat with the judges:

Ben Mulroney: "What did you keep in mind when you made these selections?"

Jake Gold: "We thought let's make them look good and at the same time challenge them."

Ben Mulroney: "How hard was it to pick the songs for tonight?"

Sass Jordan: "We were fighting, we were yelling, we were screaming, we were singing...at the end

Ben Mulroney: "What do you think of this Top Four?"

Farley Flex: "We've got four distinct talents, four distinct styles and four really cool names that everybody is going to hear about next year in the music industry."

Ben Mulroney: "Is this the time

where range and versatility come into play?"

Zack Werner: "It's all fantastic material...tonight is the night where you either put up or you Ben Mulroney."

"When we made the selections, we thought let's make them look good and at the same time challenge them," said Idol judge Jake Gold at the beginning of the show.

"I was all ready to go 'he shoots, he scores,' but you came out really flat in the third period," said Idol judge Zack Werner when he was judging Tyler Lewis' first performance of the night.

The results show will be featuring a special guest performance from last year's Top 2 competitor, Rex Goudie of Burlington, Newfoundland.

Canada - Alberta's opposition filibuster anti-gay marriage bill

Legislation aimed at protecting civil officials who refuse to perform or sanction gay marriage have been dealt another blow in the province of Alberta.

18 months ago, in the face of federal legislation tabled by then Prime Minister Paul Martin, the conservative premier of Alberta, Ralph Klein, promised the largely right-leaning province that he would draft legislation to protect the "traditional" definition of marriage (that of one man to one woman). Klein had threatened to use the constitution's notwithstanding clause to veto the federal legislation in the province.

The original civil marriage bill, tabled under the Liberal minority government, received narrow approval with the support of the Bloc Quebecois. Incensed with the

passage of the legislation, the conservative government of Klein threatened to draft counter-legislation following the passage of the federal legislation into law. No such legislation ever materialized from the Klein government, prompting Foothills-Rocky View Tory MLA Ted Morton to draft his own legislation and introduce the bill as a backbencher. Morton, a University of Calgary law professor is also a contender for the leadership of the Conservative party of Alberta.

"It's a sad day for democracy when the Liberals and NDP won't allow a debate on an issue this important," said Morton, "I'm predicting that Bill 208 will be back as a government bill next February, I know I have the support of about three-quarters of caucus, plus the premier."

Morton's bill died on the order paper after the Liberal and NDP opposition parties used up all of the legislature's time on procedural matters. In order for the bill to be debated, the provincial legislature would have to sit again before the Autumn, which it is not scheduled to do.

President Bush mocked in two Canadian ad campaigns

A Canadian university and a Toronto firm selling books on tape are both running advertising campaigns that poke fun at US President George W. Bush.

The Toronto firm simplyaudiobooks.ca has covered the city with billboards depicting a shrugging US president under the headline "Don't read enough?" The Toronto area company promoted by the ads say that their sales have doubled since the billboard campaign began.

Meanwhile, Lakehead University, a small northern Ontario college, is attempting to attract new students with ads that feature Bush over the words "Yale Shmale" advising that "graduating from an Ivy League university doesn't necessarily mean you're smart." The website for the campaign proclaims "There are universities and then there are universities. So let's not beat around the bush."

Frederick Gilbert, president and vice-chancellor of Lakehead, said the campaign is meant to gain attention in a humourous manner.

"It was literally a tongue-in-cheek way of getting attention," he said, adding, "I must say that older generations, well even some of our students, have looked at it as not appropriate."

Lakehead's student union president, Isabelle Poniatowski, described the ads as "repugnant" though Gilbert says that 95% of the response on the campaign's website, yaleshmale.com, has been positive.

The website of the British newspaper The Guardian currently also runs a banner ad featuring Bush and several recent US presidents. The ad states: "US presidents have always come to us for an overview of world affairs. Except one. ... (Go on George it's free)".

Iran voices defiance towards nuclear deadline

President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad of Iran expressed his unwillingness to conform to UN Security Council demands on Tuesday. Ahmadinejad said, "Peaceful nuclear energy is the right of the Iranian nation. The Iranian nation has chosen that based upon international regulations, it wants

to use it and no one can stop it." Iran has until Thursday to comply with a U.N. Security Council demand to stop its uranium enrichment program. If Iran does not comply by Thursday, the UN has left open the possibility of economic sanctions. Ahmadinejad says that he is willing to listen to negotiations related to changing Iran's nuclear program but that, "...any kind of dialogue should be based upon the certain rights of the Iranian nation."

While the rights of which Ahmadinejad speaks are not currently available for public viewing, Iranian academics point to the six issues in Iran's standard diplomatic policy.

Iran has consistently claimed that it is enriching uranium and building plutonium-producing reactors for solely peaceful purposes—for the generation of electricity, the exporting of materials for other civilian nuclear industries, and the creation of medical radioisotopes—while many western nations have accused the country of running a clandestine nuclear weapons program. They have cited as evidence for this Iran's continual investment in dual-use technology which could be used for either civilian or military purposes, as well as alleging that Iran has not been forthright in disclosures of its nuclear developments.

Iran provoked international controversy in April 2006 when it announced an earlier nuclear success: the enrichment of a small amount of uranium to reactor-grade levels (3.5% of the isotope uranium-235 using gas centrifuge technology. Concern was raised by some that if Iran was able to scale up its enrichment facilities to thousands of centrifuges, they

could be used to produce bomb-grade uranium (90% uranium-235).

Iran has insisted that under the terms of the 1968 Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty, of which it is a signatory, it is guaranteed the right to develop nuclear energy for peaceful purposes. None of Iran's facilities currently have the ability to produce weapons-grade nuclear material, and most experts say it would be at least a decade for Iran to be able to build a functional nuclear weapon.

Ugandan ceasefire takes effect

A twenty year war between the Ugandan government and the rebel Lord's Resistance Army entered a new stage today as both sides initiated a ceasefire agreement.

At 0600 hours local time (0300 GMT) government soldiers returned to their barracks and rebel guns fell silent after a peace deal was signed on Saturday.

Under the deal, rebel forces, under leader Joseph Kony, will have 3 weeks to assemble at select locations in southern Sudan where they will be escorted in safety by regional government troops. Kony and the LRA leadership are reportedly on the Chad/ DR Congo border and are planning on flying to the assembly locations.

Kony's second in command, General Otti appeared on radio in Gulu on Sunday night to address his troops declaring the ceasefire and ordering them to lay down their weapons.

For their part, the Ugandan government has promised to respect the ceasefire and not attack the rebel troops as they assemble.

An army spokesperson, Major Felix Kulaije, announced today that "The cessation of hostilities is in effect now and involves the Ugandan army halting their search-and-destroy operations."

State Minister for Defence Ruth Nankabirwa told journalists "we are now in a period of silence...I pray that none of the sides violate the cessation of hostilities agreement."

Once rebel troops have been gathered under the protective wing of the Ugandan Peoples' Defence Force, extensive peace talks are due to begin. Key issues to be discussed will likely be the return of thousands of children kidnapped by the Lord's Resistance Army for use as child soldiers, and Kony's status as a wanted war criminal. The Ugandan government surprised many outsiders by promising to protect the LRA leader in return for negotiations despite being wanted by the International Criminal Court.

A modest wooden hotel in Juba was the scene of this weekend's landmark talks which secured the ceasefire to end two decades of conflict. The Ugandan government has been fighting the Lord's Resistance Army since the 1980s, in a war that has caught up over 20,000 children, many becoming child soldiers or sex slaves for the LRA.

With Ugandan President Yoweri Museveni warning that hostilities would begin again if talks collapsed, the international community will be following the upcoming talks very closely.

Water level of Great Lakes is falling

Environment Canada is reporting

that the water levels of Lake Erie, Lake Huron, Lake Superior and Lake Michigan have dropped and that Lake Erie could lose two feet or 15% or more of its water level by the year 2050.

"We should pay attention to what they're telling us. That's not to say they're perfect, and there's always room for uncertainty, but . . . it's the best information we have at this point," said director of the Great Lakes Center at Buffalo State College, Joe Atkinson.

Reports also state that if any of the lakes lose a few feet of water the event could be an "economic disaster."

"That would just be an economic disaster. Water levels are what make or break this industry," said spokesman for the Lake Carriers Association, Glen Nekvasil. He also added that if a drop in water levels of a few feet in any of the great lakes, could render the shipping "inviolate."

Researchers at Buffalo State College are not convinced that a major problem is looming.

"It's really just too early to make a decision," he said. "Water levels have fluctuated a lot in the last [few] hundreds of years, so it's hard to put that to global warming," said researcher with the Great Lakes Center at Buffalo State College, John J. Freidhoff.

Some officials admit that the loss of water levels in the lakes are not in the "top ten" problems that the Great Lakes face.

"The water being lost through climate change is not in our top 10. We have other fish to fry, so to speak," said Lake Erie specialist at the Environmental Protection

Agency's (EPA) Great Lakes National Program Office located in Chicago, Illinois, Dan O'Riordan.

Lake Michigan and Lake Huron are at least 45 cm. below their yearly average and Lake Superior is only 20 cm below its average, but Lake Erie and Lake Ontario have made a recovery from their averages.

Residents in Michigan are complaining about foul smells, dead fish, muck and garbage that litter the shorelines of Lake St. Clair which is also 7 inches below its level this year when measured in mid-summer.

"It's not just down a little -- it's down a lot," said Macomb County resident, Jim Doran who resides in the township of Harrison.

"It's not a pretty sight, and it smells," added Doran.

Shipping companies are reporting that at least 200-500 tons of cargo will not be able to be shipped in the lakes if the levels continue to drop. Freighters will lose the ability to ship at least 270 tons of cargo for every one inch of water that is lost.

"We're down 200 to 500 tons per trip, compared to last year," said Nekvasil.

Film from Nunavut in Canada's north to open TIFF

A film by Isuma Productions of Canada's north will open the 2006 Toronto International Film Festival (TIFF). Produced by an Igloolik, Nunavut company, the film is titled *The Journals of Knud Rasmussen*, and co-directed by Zacharias Kunuk of Igloolik and Norman Cohn of Montreal.

The company received critical acclaim for their first film,

Atanarjuat, which translates to *The Fast Runner*. Released in 2001, TIFF declared *Atanarjuat* one of the top ten Canadian films of all-time. The film grabbed awards at TIFF, Montreal, Chicago, Cannes, Edinburgh, San Diego, Lake Placid, New Port, and many others.

The film portrays the pressures on traditional Inuit culture when explorer Knud Rasmussen introduced European cultural influences to the area in 1922.

The film will play three times during the festival, debuting at the "Visa Screening Room" of the Elgin Theatre at 6:30 PM Thursday, then at Roy Thompson Hall at 8:30. The next day Ryerson University will show the film at 9:30 AM.

The festival attracts independent filmmakers and Hollywood celebrities alike. It will run from 7 to 16 September 2006.

Wikinews Shorts: August 29, 2006

Microsoft's PlaysForSure DRM cracked

Engadget reported last friday that a crack for Microsoft's PlaysForSure DRM has been released. The application that removes the protection is called "FairUse4WM". It allegedly removes all DRM from Windows Media DRM versions 10 and 11, although it does not work for version 9. Files from the Napster online music service have been reported to work with this software. According to some, it removes all protection from the files and allows them to be played by any non-DRM-enabled WMA decoder.

Atlantis launch delayed by weather
NASA's launch of the space shuttle Atlantis was delayed due to

lightning storms in the Florida Gulf, and may possibly be delayed indefinitely due to Tropical Storm Ernesto. This will allow more time to analyze the impact of lightning on the launch pad. The space shuttle was re-scheduled for today 15:43 local time (1842 UTC), but will now launch September 7 at the earliest.

GAO report says federal anti-drug Ad-campaign ineffectual

The United States Government Accountability Office, an independent, nonpartisan agency that works for Congress to investigate how the federal government spends taxpayer dollars, has concluded that the \$1.2 billion anti-drug advertising campaign conducted by the government since 1998 does not appear to have helped reduce drug use.

In its August 25, 2006, report entitled ONDCP Media Campaign: Contractor's National Evaluation Did Not Find that the Youth Anti-Drug Media Campaign Was Effective in Reducing Youth Drug Use, the G.A.O. states that "reports and associated documentation leads to the conclusion that... the campaign was not effective in reducing youth drug use, either during the entire period of the campaign or during the period from 2002 to 2004 when the campaign was redirected and focused on marijuana use." It further suggests that the campaign "may have promoted perceptions among exposed youth that others' drug use was normal."

Making a recommendation on the spending aspects of this apparently failed program, the G.A.O. report includes the following: "Given that Westat's evaluation stated the campaign did not reduce youth drug use

nationally, Congress should consider limiting appropriations for the campaign, beginning in the 2007 fiscal year budget until ONDCP [Office of National Drug Control Policy] provides credible evidence of a media campaign approach that effectively prevents and curtails youth drug use."

Tom Riley, spokesman for the White House Office of National Drug Control Policy (ONDCP) says that the GAO report is "irrelevant" to his organization because it is "based on ads from 2.5 years ago, and they were effective, too," according to a report in USA Today . "Drug use has been going down dramatically. Cutting the program now would imperil (its) progress," according to Riley.

However, the anti-drug campaign had been criticized before. In 2003, the White House Office of Management and Budget called the campaign "non-performing" and said it had not demonstrated results.

India's Secretary-General candidate Tharoor suggests UN reform agenda

India's nominee for the post of Secretary-General of the United Nations, Shashi Tharoor has revealed a four-point plan to tackle the problems the international body is facing. He said that the biggest hurdle faced by the UN is that it has to deal with a large number of issues at the same time. The United Nations with its "impressive achievements and "haunting failures has changed but needs to change further" he said in an article in Newsweek International.

Tharoor's proposal is concentrated on four areas- making democracy a priority; bolstering the ranks (of the United Nations); prioritising

and streamlining; and healing wounds. He talked about the crisis in the Middle East, and the nuclear standoff between the U.N and countries like North Korea and Iran, referring to them as "obvious and trying". He also pointed out "problems without passports" such as climate change, narcotics smuggling and human rights violations. Tharoor, a leading candidate to succeed Kofi Annan, said that strengthening the capacities of both the UN and its member-states was the best way to deal with these problems.

Tharoor stated that further efforts were needed to promote democracy and good governance the world over. "We now have a Democracy Fund to help us do that, financed not just by the rich West but by countries like India," he said. He also pointed out that the UN should try and stand up more for human rights by making sure the Human Rights Council did its job more effectively than the "over-politicised" Human Rights Commission it replaced. He said the UN should support the efforts bodies like NATO and the EU were making in their peacekeeping. Tharoor also spoke about the conflict in Iraq, saying "And where the task, like enforcing peace in Iraq, is clearly beyond us (the UN), we should let wars be fought by warriors, not peacekeepers,"

In reference to "healing wounds", he pointed out the danger of the Cold War divisions being replaced by a North-South divide at the UN "The new secretary-general must urgently combat this. I would focus on building issue-based coalitions to deal with specific practical problems (things like management inefficiencies, procurement policies, information technology, outsourcing) that have little to do with ideological

politics," he said.

Tharoor is currently the UN's Under Secretary-General for Communications and Public Information. He and South Korean Foreign Minister Ban Ki Moon are considered frontrunners in the race to succeed Annan, whose term ends at the end of the year. Thailand's Deputy Prime Minister Surakiart Sathirathai and former UN disarmament chief Jayantha Dhanapala from Sri Lanka are also official candidates for the top UN job.

U.S. commuter blows up section of Washington D.C. Bridge

Regular commuter Dan Ruefly detonated a half-mile (800 m) section of the old Woodrow Wilson Bridge just after 12:30 a.m. local time (0530 UTC) on Tuesday 29 August 2006. The detonation brought down over 2,600 tons of steel. The bridge, which carried the Capital Beltway across the Potomac River, was scheduled for destruction as part of a \$2.4 billion project to replace the span. The bridge has caused traffic delays nearly every day since its opening in 1961.

Mr. Ruefly had won the honour of pushing the plunger in a contest to find the worst commuting experience; after a motoring accident he became stuck in a traffic jam. Mr. Ruefly (who leaves home at 5:00 a.m. every day to beat the traffic) had crashed into a stationary tractor-trailer on the bridge, leaving him with severely crushed hips. The ambulance sent to transport him to hospital was unable to make it through rush hour traffic and, as a result, Mr. Ruefly almost died.

The detonation of the six-lane drawbridge was originally planned

to occur at 11:59 p.m. however it was delayed by over half an hour when spectators broke through security fences to get a better view, the bridge was finally brought down at around 12:35 a.m. There was a 20 second delay between the time of initiation and the actual detonation. It was reported that the plunger was not actually wired to the charges, and was only a ceremonial prop to signal the actual detonation by the engineering crews.

The demolition is part of a complete replacement of the former six-lane bridge with a twelve lane version comprised of two side-by-side drawbridges. Work started on the project as early as 1999 and the new north-bound bridge was opened on June 10 2006. This demolition is the first step in the next stage of the project; to replace the existing bridge with the southbound 'twin'.

Boat traffic on the Potomac River and vehicle traffic on the new Wilson Bridge were halted during the detonation. Airspace was also briefly closed for a short duration.

BC man is selling the boat from old TV series Gilligan's Island

A man named George Schultz in Parksville, British Columbia is selling the boat from old TV series Gilligan's Island at the cost of \$99,000. The cruiser, originally cost about \$290,000 in the 1960s.

"There have been a couple of modifications, so it doesn't look exactly like the original," said Shultz, a boat broker who's selling the 36-foot Wheeler Express Cruiser for fellow Parksdale resident Scotty Taylor. "But it's still the original boat."

Originally, the boat's name was The Blue Jacket.

"Just for the show, for a stage name, it was called the S.S. Minnow," Shultz said. The name was a reference to Newton Minnow, once chairman of the FCC.

"He just liked the boat, he wanted to restore it, it was a nice looking boat, a wooden boat, a classic and he likes classic boats," said Shultz. "The hole in the hull was actually the least of the repairs the interior needed a lot more work".

Someone later stole the plaque on the boat, but the 46-year-old boat still has the round life preserver with S.S. Minnow emblazoned on it and the skipper's chair.

Mexican ruling boosts Calderon, rival vows parallel government

Mexico's electoral court has unanimously rejected claims of massive fraud in the July 2nd presidential election and reported that the partial recount ordered at the end of last month has not changed the original result of a narrow victory for conservative candidate Felipe Calderon of the National Action Party (PAN). Andres Manuel Lopez Obrador of the left-wing Democratic Revolution Party (PRD), continues to insist that the election was rigged and has vowed to continue fighting the result. Lopez Obrador has rejected the ruling and suggested forming a rival parallel government.

There is no legal avenue to appeal the court's ruling. The seven judges have until August 31 to resolve all complaints and until September 6 to officially declare a president-elect or annul the elections.

Lopez Obrador has led massive

protests in Mexico City over the past month demanding a full recount.

"Never more will we accept that an illegal and illegitimate government is installed in our country," he told thousands of supporters following the ruling calling upon them to never accept Calderon as president and to decide if he should form a parallel government and continue nationwide protests.

Leonel Cartillo, the president of the tribunal, said Lopez Obrador's claims of massive fraud "turned out to be completely unfounded."

Lopez Obrador's election team had filed complaints at 50,000 polling stations but the court ordered a recount at only 11,839 stations or 9% of all voting locations following massive street protests. Calderon won the initial ballot count by a margin of less than 0.6%

Turkey to decide on sending troops to Lebanon

Turkish government spokesman and Justice Minister Cemil Cicek has confirmed the Turkish government's intentions to send troops to Lebanon under the UN Resolution 1701. The statement was made after the Council of Ministers meeting yesterday. The final decision is to be made by Turkish parliament.

The statement also revealed the ongoing struggle between Tayyip Erdogan's AK(Justice and Development) Party government and President Ahmet Necdet Sezer. Sezer's statements on Friday was regarded as a clear indication of President's reluctance to send Turkish troops to Lebanon. "Yes, let's do it, I am not against it. But the UN resolution does not focus on humanitarian aid", said Sezer on Thursday. On Saturday,

Head of Parliament MP Bulent Arinc has made a counter declaration that it is not Presidents but government and parliament's decision on whether or not to send troops.

On the other hand, Turkish army generals are refraining from making political statements but emphasizing their readiness for such operations if parliamentary decision is made. The new Military Chief of Staff General Yasar Buyukanit said "It is government's duty to decide joining the operation", but he also underlined that Turkish army has started the preparations.

Despite differences between state organs opinions, Turkish people are not very enthusiastic to send their army to Lebanon as one online survey on the highest selling daily newspaper Hurriyet web page indicates. According to the poll more than 75% of the respondents are against sending troops to Lebanon.

The final decision has to be given by Turkish Parliament, expected this week or early next week according to government spokesperson Cemil Cicek.

Canadian MP Benoit Sauvageau dies in car crash

Bloc Quebecois Member of Parliament Benoit Sauvageau was killed in an automobile accident on Monday morning after his vehicle hit a tow truck at the side of a road in his Montreal constituency.

Sauvageau, 42, had been an MP since 1993 and represented the riding of Repentigny at the time of his death.

BQ Leader Gilles Duceppe, speaking in Quebec City, remembered Sauvageau as a

hard-working representative who was widely respected "not only in the sovereigntist camp but by his adversaries who always recognized him for his honesty and his determination."

"I think he was a very good member of Parliament, a very good sovereigntist," added Duceppe.

Visibly shaken by the news, Duceppe said: "It's awful, at 42 with four children (daughters) between the ages of five and 15, it's not right."

Former Quebec Premier Lucien Bouchard, who led the BQ when Sauvageau was first elected, told Radio Canada: "It's a tragedy. It's unbelievable that he died like that."

"He is a man who was engaged in political fights but he did it correctly, with nobility and idealism and a lot of respect for others, even his adversaries," said Bouchard.

Sauvageau was a history professor before entering politics. As an MP he was the Bloc's spokesperson on public accounts and the treasury board and was also the party's critic responsible for the Official Languages Act and the rights of francophones outside of Quebec.

"On behalf of the Liberal Party of Canada and our Parliamentary caucus, I would like to express my deepest sadness and regret at the news of the death of Benoit Sauvageau in a tragic car accident in Repentigny this afternoon," said Interim Liberal leader Bill Graham.

Prime Minister Stephen Harper said the prayers and thoughts of all Parliamentarians are with Sauvageau's loved ones at this

difficult time.

25 drown as van plunges into Krishna river in India

A van carrying around thirty-three people crashed into the Alamatti reservoir on the Krishna river in north Karnataka, killing 25 people while the rest managed to swim to safety. The passengers, including women and children, were from Bagsibundu village in Koppal district and were going to visit the Alamatti dam after going on a pilgrimage to Koodalasangama. District officials rushed to the spot and initiated efforts to rescue survivors and extricate the bodies of the deceased. Chief Minister of Karnataka, H.D Kumaraswamy expressed shock over the accident.

Historian Beckett names Thatcher & Atlee greatest Brit PMs.

Margaret Thatcher and Clement Attlee topped a list of the greatest British Prime Ministers, evaluated by Historian Francis Beckett. Writing in the BBC History Magazine, Beckett gave 20 Prime Ministers a score from 0 to 5, basing his view on the leader's implementation of their policy rather than the content of their policies.

Thatcher and Attlee topped the list (both scoring 5). Identifying her victory over the miners as the key decider, Beckett said of Lady Thatcher: "Today few people under 40 remember a time when trade unions were a real force in the land, when the public sector controlled large swathes of the economy, when local councils controlled education and other local services, when benefits were considered rights of citizenship,"

Thatcher, the only woman to have become British Prime Minister, is

recognised as one of the most significant British politicians in recent history and her policies have been met with both strong support and strong opposition.

Attlee, the longest serving Labour party leader (at 20 years) and Prime Minister from 1945 to 1951, ranked highly due to his key role in major reforms in British politics and economy. He was responsible for the creation of the National Health Service (NHS) and for granting independence to India. In 2004 a poll of political academics (organised by MORI) Atlee was voted the most effective (non-wartime) British Prime Minister of the 20th century.

The current Prime Minister, Tony Blair ranked mid table; with a score of 3. Beckett noted that Blair's handling of the Iraq War in 2003 marked him down, although his running reforms of schools and hospitals counted in his favour ensuring an average mark.

In a 2002 public poll (conducted by the BBC) Sir Winston Churchill (awarded 4 points in this new ranking along side Edward Heath and Harold Macmillan) was voted the greatest Briton of all time. Interestingly, in the same poll Thatcher came 16th whilst Attlee did not feature.

Of the twenty, only Neville Chamberlain and Sir Anthony Eden scored 0. Beckett cited Chamberlain's failure to prevent the Second World War as his reason for the low marking.

HUD hoaxer calls attention to lack of affordable housing

Assuming the role of Rene Oswin, spokesperson for United States Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) in New Orleans, Louisiana, a member of

The Yes Men gave a satirical 15-minute speech claiming that HUD had reversed its decision to demolish four serviceable public housing complexes -- a controversial action, suspected by many former residents and the NAACP as a policy intended to drive out poor black families. The media coordinator for the Survivors Village, Annie Chen, applauded Oswin.

Alternatively, Oswin proposed for Wal-Mart "to withdraw from areas near low-income New Orleans neighborhoods and to help nurture local businesses to replace them," "partnership with health departments and the CDC" to "insure there is at least one well-equipped public health clinic for every public housing development," and "that Exxon and Shell have agreed to finance the rebuilding of the protective wetlands from part of their 60 billion dollars in profits this year."

From Washington, D.C., HUD spokeswoman Donna White confirmed the speech as a hoax and that no one named Rene Oswin works for the department. She said, "I'm like, who the heck is that?"

4,400 kilograms of drugs seized in New Delhi

In the biggest ever narcotics haul in India's capital, the New Delhi police have seized over 4,400 kg of Mandrax and Rs. 20 crore from a dealer in the city. The consignment, meant for a customer in the U.S, was seized from a godown in Badarpur, near the Delhi-Haryana border. The alleged trafficker, identified as Vonod Sharma, claimed that the contraband was not his and that he had nothing to do with the matter. Sharma started his career as a scrap-dealer in Delhi, and

police suspect that with the help of some contacts he used container depots for drug-trafficking, whilst successfully dodging both the police and the Customs Department.

On Sunday the Delhi Police arrested him at his Kalkaji residence. DCP South District Delhi Police, Anil Shukla said, "Sharma befriended container drivers and once they had driven past customs, he and his men would meet them at a distance and pilfer the containers."

New Zealand police want bus driver to pay reparation

Christchurch, New Zealand Redbus bus driver Micheal Sean Ohiomhair, 57-year-old, is being sought for NZ\$9000 by the New Zealand Police for wasting time and resources after he filed a false statement that a woman had attacked him. The police had put 100 hours into the hunt for the attacker.

The Christchurch District Court found out today that the injuries he sustained were self-inflicted. Ohiomhair changed his plead to guilty to the charges of making a false statement after originally pleading not guilty. Serina Bailey, defence council, said "57-year-old Ohiomhair had originally pleaded not guilty because there were medical and psychological issues I wished to raise". Her client has now consulted mental health services for on-going psychological matters.

Police and ambulance personnel were called to the scene on May 10 at 2045 (NZST), when Ohiomhair told the police that a woman had attacked him while he was at a bus stop in Hornby, Christchurch. The ambulance staff treated him at the scene for

injuries he sustained to his forearm and the left side of his head.

The police and police dogs then searched the area but failed to find the alleged woman attacker. After reconfirming what happened the police told him that it appeared his reconfirmation appeared incorrect, he then left the station but later appeared back at the station and confessed to making it up.

This incident followed an original incident when a different bus driver was attacked by teenage girls.

Ohiomhair will appear back in court, after he was remanded on bail, on September 15 for a probation report, a reparation report and sentencing.

Mark Berryman, Police prosecutor Sergeant, said "He said he received information from a family member two hours before, which caused him to become stressed and confused," the information he had received was relating to an incident that happened 25 years ago.

5 killed as bus from New York City to Montreal crashes

Five passengers have died and more than a dozen are injured after a bus bound for Montreal from New York City crashed through a guard rail in upper New York state on Monday evening.

The Greyhound bus was heading north on Interstate 87 when it rolled over at around 6:45 pm before reaching Westport, New York, about half way between Albany and Montreal. Several passengers were still trapped two hours after the crash, according to the Plattsburgh Press Republican.

"All we did was try to comfort people," said Plattsburgh Mayor Daniel Stewart. "I also did a lot of French to English translation for police. Many on the bus were tourists returning to Canada."

The dead include a 16-year old boy and 34-year old man, both from Montreal, and a 69-year old woman from an undisclosed Canadian location. The other two victims are both from New York State including the bus driver.

Thirty-seven passengers were taken to Champlain Valley Hospital in Plattsburgh, New York, following the crash. Twenty-two were treated and released.

Two passengers were have been transferred to Montreal General Hospital where they are in intensive care. Four others are in stable condition.

Reports suggest that the bus crashed through a guard rail after passing a truck, went down an embankment and rolled at least twice before landing upside down. The rear and top of the bus was crushed and one of its back wheels was turned inward. According to Don Jaquish, deputy director of the Essex County, New York Emergency Services, many of the passengers were thrown out of the bus and landed on a grassy area nearby.

Major Richard Smith, Jr., of the New York State Police said that investigators believe a tire failure may have been a contributing factor in the crash. Survivors say they heard a loud bang before the bus lost control.

Smith said that 48 of the 52 passengers on the bus sustained injuries. Greyhound Bus No. 4014

had been due to arrive in Montreal at 9:10 pm. Many of the passengers are believed to be from the Montreal area.

The highway remained closed late Monday between Exits 30 and 31 in both directions.

Family members can call Greyhound at 1-800-972-4583 for more information.

Watchdog group StopBadware.org warns against free AOL software

The software watchdog group StopBadware.org, run by the Berkman Center for Internet & Society of Harvard Law School and the Oxford Internet Institute, has opened a dialogue with AOL about concerns over the presence of badware, also known as malware, in the now-free AOL 9.0 software. Badware refers to software applications that try to download additional software with very little or no explanation.

StopBadware.org decided to investigate after their users have sent in complaints regarding the operation of the software.

According to the "open inquiry" on StopBadware.org, the preliminary tests conclude that AOL 9.0 installs software and Internet Explorer extensions without the consent of the user, requires users to take certain actions, and it doesn't completely uninstall itself. The page then warns readers not to use the AOL software unless they're prepared to handle the risks involved.

The report clarifies its charges; for example it lists "RealPlayer, QuickTime, AOL You've Got Pictures Screensaver, Pure Networks Port Magic, and Viewpoint Media Player" as the software that is installed without

notification. Additionally, the AOL toolbar, a bookmark to AOL.com, as well as extra icons are added to Internet Explorer without consent. The report continues by noting that AOL coerces users into upgrading the software by a popup window that does not allow refusal, as well as automatically upgrades the software without allowing that option to be disabled.

AOL spokesman Andrew Weinstein claims that these problems are going to be addressed in an upgrade available next month. In the meantime, Weinstein claims that the problems are not malicious. "No one has done more to protect users from malware than AOL," Weinstein said. John Palfrey agrees that the findings of AOL are not the worst he's seen, but they should disclose more information about the software to users. When AOL was issued with an advance copy of the report, StopBadware.org was "very impressed" with their response, and that they look forward to working with AOL.

Case against Karr dropped: no DNA link to JonBenet Ramsey murder

Prosecutors have withdrawn their case against John Mark Karr, the man who confessed to killing JonBenet Ramsey in 1996, since DNA tests do not place him at the crime scene.

"The people would not be able to establish that Mr. Karr committed this crime despite his repeated insistence that he did," District Attorney Mary Lacy said in court papers. Lacy also said that prosecutors found no evidence placing Karr in Boulder at the time of the killing. She also vowed to keep pursuing leads in the murder, saying, "This case is not closed."

Karr will remain in custody in Boulder until he can be sent to Sonoma County, Calif., to face child pornography charges dating from 2001.

According to reports by MSNBC and KUSA, a local television station in Denver, Colorado, tests performed on DNA samples taken from Karr do not match samples recovered from Ramsey's body.

On its website, KUSA says it "has confirmed from two sources that the DNA taken from John Mark Karr, 41, does not match the DNA samples taken from the crime scene in the JonBenet Ramsey murder case. No charges will be filed against Karr in connection with the Ramsey case by the Boulder County District Attorney's office."

DNA from Karr's hair and saliva were tested in the Denver, Colorado Police Department's lab over the weekend.

"This information is critical because ... if Mr. Karr's account of his sexual involvement with the victim were accurate, it would have been highly likely that his saliva would have been mixed with the blood in the underwear," said Colorado District Attorney, Mary Lacy. Lacy noted that Karr had become a suspect after exchanging e-mail with a professor in California .

Karr's attorney has requested that all DNA evidence be handed over to the defense for examination. His attorney has also requested additional testing of Karr's DNA; however, there is confusion about who represents Karr. Seth Temin, a public defender claims to represent Karr, but at least two other attorneys in California,

Jamie Harmon and Patience Van Zandt, are also claiming to represent him.

"The warrant on Mr. Karr has been dropped by the district attorney. They are not proceeding with the case," said Timen. "We're deeply distressed by the fact that they took this man and dragged him here from Bangkok, Thailand, with no forensic evidence confirming the allegations against him and no independent factors leading to a presumption he did anything wrong," added Timen.

JonBenét, a beauty queen, was found beaten and strangled to death in her Colorado home on the day after Christmas in 1996.

In a press conference earlier this month, Karr confessed to being with JonBenét when she died, adding that her death was an accident. "I was with JonBenét when she died. I loved JonBenét. She died accidentally. I am so very sorry for what happened to JonBenét. It's very important for me that everyone knows that I love her very much, that her death was unintentional, that it was an accident."

Despite his confession, Karr's then ex-wife said that he was in Alabama with her when the murder occurred.

Sri Lanka - Government Army strikes at Tamil Tiger enclaves in the north east

Casualties are mounting in a Sri Lankan army offensive launched against the separatist Tamil Tigers militia in the northeast of the island nation. Reports say eight soldiers have been killed and 28 injured in the latest fighting.

The campaign, launched Sunday, includes navy, air and ground

force advancement into Tamil Tiger held territory. Last month the town of Muttur saw heavy fighting and recession of rebel-held territory to the Sri Lankan Government. The fighting prompted international aid agencies to send emergency supplies to the estimated 500,000 residents.

"There was heavy shelling and aerial bombardment, 20 civilians were killed and 26 injured," rebel spokesman Rasiah Ilanthiraiyan told the Associated Press. Accounts of the fighting differed from the account given by Brig. Prasad Samarasinghe of the Sri Lankan Government forces, "We have killed no civilians. I don't think any civilian lives there."

Neither of the reports can be confirmed at this time. International observers have pulled out of the conflict zone and the district is closed to outsiders. The port of Trincomalee is an important supply point for the region's 43,000 government troops.

The airstrikes and shelling have internally displaced close to 204,000 civilians.

The offensive continues even though a 2002 ceasefire is in place, from which neither side has officially withdrawn.

Today in History

1800 - Gabriel Prosser attempted a slave rebellion in Virginia, United States.

1813 - Napoleonic Wars: French General Dominique Vandamme and thousands of his soldiers were captured in the Battle of Kulm by forces of the Sixth Coalition under Field Marshal Michael Andreas Barclay de Tolly.

1862 - American Civil War: James Longstreet and Stonewall Jackson led their Confederate troops to a decisive victory in the Second Battle of Bull Run.

1992 - Michael Schumacher won his first Formula One race at the Belgian Grand Prix.

1999 - The people of East Timor voted for independence from Indonesia in a referendum.

August 30 is St. Rose of Lima's Day in Peru; Victory Day in Turkey.

Quote of the Day

"Who is the happiest of men? He who values the merits of others, and in their pleasure takes joy, even as though 'twere his own." ~ Johann Wolfgang von Goethe

Word of the Day

bestir; v

1. To put into brisk or vigorous action; to move with life and vigor.
2. To become active; to rouse oneself.

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