



Top Stories

Protests in Turkey over Presidential candidate



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Stephen McNeil becomes leader of the Nova Scotia Liberals



Stephen McNeil, MLA for Annapolis, was voted the new leader of the Nova Scotia Liberal Party at the leadership convention on Saturday.

Featured story

Report claims that Pakistani cricket coach Bob Woolmer was poisoned



Woolmer, who was found dead in his hotel room after Pakistan's shock-defeat to Ireland, was poisoned before being strangled, according to a TV report due to be broadcast on the BBC News programme Panorama.

Wikipedia Current Events

•Morocco and the Polisario Front agree to United Nations sponsored talks about the future of Western

Wikipedia Current Events

Sahara.

- General Sir Richard Dannatt, the head of the British Army, confirms that Prince Harry will deploy with the Blues and Royals regiment on a six-month tour of duty in Iraq.
- The Governor of Virginia Timothy Kaine tightens gun laws after the Virginia Tech massacre.
- Israeli PM Ehud Olmert is criticised in a high-level report for taking Israel to war in Lebanon last year "hastily".
- A smoking ban comes into effect in Northern Ireland, three years after the Republic of Ireland; this now means the entire island of Ireland is smoke-free.
- A meeting of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change starts in Bangkok to discuss approaches to climate change.
- The US-led Coalition claims to have killed scores of Taliban forces in Afghanistan.
- Five men arrested in 2004 as part of Operation Crevice are convicted at the Old Bailey of a plot to explode fertiliser bombs in the UK.

Historic Georgetown library on fire

The Georgetown branch of the District of Columbia library is currently on fire in Washington, DC.

In addition to books, the Georgetown Public Library has a large collection of historic documents and paintings that are

part of the Peabody Collection. Firefighters are attempting to salvage some of these items.

DC Fire and EMS dispatched units at approximately 12:30 p.m. on April 30, 2007 to a report of smoke in the building. The first arriving fire fighters reported heavy smoke and began an initial attack. Fire fighters were soon pulled out of the building because of fears that the building might collapse.

The fire has been upgraded to a 3rd alarm fire with numerous fire apparatus responding. The fire has been largely knocked down as of 1:45 p.m., though many units remain on the scene.

Traffic on Wisconsin Avenue and other area streets is being detoured around the fire area.

Protests in Turkey over Presidential candidate

Hundreds of thousands of Turks rallied again in the capital Istanbul on Sunday to protest Abdullah Gül's presidential candidacy, which they fear would threaten Turkey's separation between religious and state affairs.



National symbols were prominently present during the rally. Credit: Michel

The "Çağlayan Demonstration for the Republic" was centered around the Çağlayan Square. While security forces estimated the number of demonstrators at 700 000, estimates around 1 million and more are reported in the Turkish media.

The scene of the previous "Protect your Republic" demonstration was repeated, with uncountable Turkish flags and many posters of Atatürk, founder of the modern Turkish state. The protesters shouted slogans like: "Turkey is secular and will remain secular!".



Between 700 000 and 1,2 million Turks are reported to have demonstrated near the Çağlayan Square. Credit: Michel

The demonstrators fear that current Foreign Minister Abdullah Gül, the presidential candidate of the ruling AK Party of Prime Minister Erdoğan, will allow Islamic influences in Turkey to become more powerful. The party officially denies having such a hidden agenda.

The army, traditionally loyal to the Turkish pro-secular side, accused the government on Friday of tolerating radical Islam. But Gül replied: "It is out of the question to withdraw my candidacy." In 1997 the democratically elected Islamic-oriented President Necmettin Erbakan was removed from office by the army, with public support.

In Turkey, the president is elected

directly by the parliament, and Gül failed to get elected in the first round of the elections, when opposition lawmakers boycotted the vote. The opposition also appealed to the Constitutional Court to declare the process unlawful. A second round is to be held on Wednesday, and a third one on May 9.

Gül's wife Hayrunisa wears a head scarf and has appealed to the European Court of Human Rights to be allowed to wear it at a university. But secular Turks want to keep the current ban on wearing such scarves in public places.



*File photo of Recep Tayyip Erdoğan
Credit: Bertil Videt*

Prime Minister Erdoğan in a national television address on Monday called for national unity: "Unity, togetherness, solidarity, these are the things we need most. We can overcome many problems so long as we treat each other with love."

"Even four and a half years ago, this country was riven by serious problems, which thank goodness have been overcome one by one," the Prime Minister said, referring to the many reforms his government has implemented since it came into power. He also pointed out Turkey's steady growth rate during the last years. To maintain this, he asked the nation for stability: "At this

point, it's enough that we protect the environment of stability, it's enough that we protect the environment of peace. Enough that we don't harm the environment of confidence we have worked so hard to attain."

In reaction to the ongoing uncertainty, the E.U. enlargement commissioner warned the Turkish Army about interfering: "It is important that the military leaves the remit of democracy to the democratically-elected government and this is the test case if the Turkish armed forces respect democratic secularism and the democratic arrangement of civil-military relations," commissioner Olli Rehn said. Erdoğan and Gül support Turkey's efforts to join the European Union.

The Turkish stock market lost 4,01 per cent on Monday, which analysts attribute to the current political crisis.

Ex-CIA Director George Tenet's memoir published



George Tenet

Former Director of the Central Intelligence Agency, George Tenet has released his memoir, *At the Center of the Storm: My Years at the CIA*.

The book outlines Tenet's version of 9/11, the War on Terrorism, the 2001 War in Afghanistan, the run-up to the 2003 Iraq war, rough interrogation and other events.

Tenet spoke about his memoir on 60 Minutes yesterday, outlining the contents of his book including allegations that are contrary to the George W. Bush administration positions.

Tenet faced accusations of hypocrisy from former espionage

officials on the book's release date, for not speaking out earlier against the White House's push to invade Iraq.

An error was found in the book where a key conversation with then Pentagon advisor Richard Perle on September 12, 2001, in which Tenet claims Perle told him that "Iraq had to pay for the attack" could not have occurred as Perle was stranded in Paris and didn't return to Washington, D.C. until three days later.

Microsoft Silverlight released into first test phase



Microsoft
Silverlight

Microsoft has finally released its long awaited "Silverlight" into Alpha Testing for the general public. "It's the biggest

challenge for Microsoft right now," said Brent Thill, an analyst from Citigroup. This is the most direct threat to date, that Microsoft has posed to Adobe (makers of the popular Flash platform).

The creators of Silverlight have been promising a single plug-in which will work across all browsers and operating systems and will offer a rich video and interactive media experience which can be embedded within Web sites.

Microsoft has also promised to make some of the Silverlight technologies open source. This has been a popular decision among the computing industry, and has been a step away from the usual protection of their products.

While at MIX07, Microsoft also discussed its new package called Expression, which is set to be

released in June, and will be an alternative to Adobe Creative Suite 3 (CS3).

Iranian Supreme Leader seeks worker justice

Leader of the Islamic Revolution Ayatollah Ali Khamenei gave a public address before Labor Day wherein he commended the workforce for its contribution to the economic growth of the Islamic Republic of Iran. The address ensued the Minister of Labor Mohammad Jahromi presentation of an economic report.

Khamenei affirmed that the Islamic System is superior to the materialistic ones of the West that trample upon workers' rights when he indicated that the "West-linked establishments has shown in practice they hold no mercy for workers". In fact, the "concentration and accumulation of wealth and maximization of profit" is deplored in Iran's Constitution. Moreover, he emphasized that solutions must be sought within the framework of Islam. In the Islamic school of economy, "respect of investor comes along respect of worker" while the balance should tilt towards the worker to promote justice.

Khamenei also indirectly lashed out against the enemies who want to sow discord among classes through trade unions. This may have been a reference to Mansour Osanlou who led a strike of bus workers in Tehran in 2005 and others.

Khamenei also decried "the rage in the pre-Islamic-Revolution era" over foreign products. The was chiefly a reference to the termination of American products in Iran such as Coca-Cola, vehicles, electronics, et cetera. He went on to proclaim that the humiliation of the nation is over.

Stephen McNeil becomes leader of the Nova Scotia Liberals



Neil makes his acceptance speech Saturday, at the Dartmouth Sportplex, after winning on the second ballot.

Stephen McNeil, Member of the Legislative Assembly (MLA) for Annapolis County, Nova Scotia in Canada, is now the head of an even bigger family.

McNeil, the 12th of 17 children, was voted the new leader of the Nova Scotia Liberal Party at the leadership convention on Saturday.

"For the people who said Liberalism in Nova Scotia is on life support, I say look at this room," said McNeil. "The Tory [Conservative] government in Nova Scotia is on life support."

"We know with your support we can be the next government of Nova Scotia," he said.

Just under 1400 delegates came out to the Dartmouth, Nova Scotia Sportsplex to vote for the new leader of the party. McNeil won the leadership on the second ballot, receiving 718 votes.

The second ballot came down to just McNeil and Diana Whalen, MLA for Halifax-West Clayton Park. Whalen finished with 650 votes.

McNeil is taking over from interim leader Michel Samson, who held the position after former leader Francis MacKenzie resigned after the dismal 2006 provincial election that left the Liberals with only nine seats. MacKenzie had been leader of the party since 2004.

"Our Liberal Party stands at the

threshold of immense promise and opportunity. Each of us has an important role to play in helping achieve this goal. Let's make it our primary objective to restore the Nova Scotia Liberal Party as a unified force in Nova Scotia politics. As Leader, I will work together with each of you to build our party's unity through hard work and dedication and to re-establish the Liberal Party's rightful place in Nova Scotia politics.

As your leader, I am committed to making sure that every time this government turns its back on the people of Nova Scotia, they will hear me roar." — Stephen McNeil, on winning the Liberal leadership

McNeil has a lofty task before him. The Nova Scotia Liberals have been stuck as a third party for the past eight years. The party has also struggled to find unity and direction —this was the third Liberal leadership convention since 2002.

"I understand the awesome responsibility I asked for," said McNeil. "This has truly been a great campaign and a rebirth of our party."

The first ballot required a majority of 699 votes to win. McNeil received 571 votes, Kenzie MacKinnon 169, Mike Smith 255 and Whalen 402.

After the results of the first ballot, fourth-place candidate MacKinnon marched his cheering supporters to the other side of the stadium to lend his support to Whalen.

There was a dramatic pause as delegates waited to see if Smith would stick around for the second ballot or free his delegates.

McNeil supporters stood in front on Smith's section and tossed Smith

supporters McNeil t-shirts in hopes of gaining their support. Whalen's supporters cheered on the other side.

Then, in a move that surprised many of Smith's supporters, he hugged Whalen and offered her his support.

However, unlike the MacKinnon supporters who waved both "Kenzie" and McNeil placards, Smith's supporters were seen waving Smith/McNeil and Smith/Whalen signs. Support was split. But by the end of the first ballot, McNeil only needed just over a third of the bottom two candidates' supporter's votes to win.

McNeil thanked his competitors after the win, and said he hoped to see Smith and MacKinnon in the legislature after the next election. He also thanked his mother —the woman he credited with introducing him to Liberalism, and his constituency.

"To the people of Annapolis—look how far you've taken this country boy," said McNeil.

During his campaign, McNeil also promised to hold a youth summit within 30 days on winning the leadership and a presidents' summit within 90 days. He said tomorrow—after his son's confirmation, he would begin work on these two events.

The leadership convention was hosted by the Nova Scotia Federal Liberal Caucus.

Report claims that Pakistani cricket coach Bob Woolmer was poisoned

Pakistani cricket coach Bob Woolmer, who was found dead in his hotel room after the shock loss

of the Pakistani cricket team to lowly-ranked Ireland during the Cricket World Cup, was poisoned before being strangled, according to a TV report due to be broadcasted on BBC News programme Panorama.

According to the programme, a toxicology report prepared after Woolmer's death indicates that he had a substance in his bloodstream which would have incapacitated him, leaving him helpless. This would explain how Woolmer, a large man over six feet tall, was strangled with little sign of a struggle.

Speculation has been rife in the cricketing community that Woolmer's death is connected to match fixing, a practice which rocked the sport in the late 1990s. Jamaican police, however, have consistently refused to comment as to whether they have any leads on the case.

Queensland prisoners put to work manufacturing water tanks

Prisoners in the Australian state of Queensland have been put to work manufacturing rainwater tanks to help meet a shortfall in supply.

The southeast corner of Queensland, which is currently undergoing one of its worst droughts on record, is experiencing a boom in the rainwater tank industry. Households, encouraged by subsidies introduced by the Beattie government, have enthusiastically begun installing rainwater tanks as well as other water-saving devices. These subsidies have led to a shortfall in supply however, with some households waiting months for tanks to be installed.

The new initiative, announced by

Premier Peter Beattie as well as Corrective Services minister Judy Spence will see prisoners at Woodford Correctional Centre, Australia's largest gaol, constructing tanks for \$A4 a day. Spence has pledged not to use the cheap labour to undercut existing tank suppliers. Beattie also pointed out that the programme would give prisoners constructing the tanks valuable work skills for when their sentences are completed. If the programme is successful, it may be extended to other gaols around the state.

The Beattie government has been increasingly criticised over recent months for its failure to handle the water crisis engulfing Southeast Queensland. Opponents accuse the Government of a lack of planning foresight with regards to water supply for the booming area, which includes state capital Brisbane, as well as other cities such as Ipswich, Toowoomba and Gold Coast.

Daylight savings extended in New Zealand

The New Zealand Government has announced that the daylight savings period has been extended by three weeks. Clocks will be brought forward by one hour for 27 weeks in a year beginning a week earlier on the last Sunday of September and ending on the first Sunday of April.

The extension is due primarily to a petition signed by 42,000 New Zealanders backed by Mark Holmes, Nelson city councillor, who says it will benefit those workers who work from 9.00 a.m. till 5.00 p.m.. It was also backed by politician Peter Dunne, leader of minor political party, United Future.

The change is done by an Order-in-Council signed by the Governor-General, Anand Satyanand, acting

under section 4(1) of the 1974 Time Act.

The Department of Internal Affairs and the Internal Affairs minister, Rick Barker, also received a lot of support for a change, including from the Federated Farmers. Farmers had usually opposed a change to the daylight savings period because it hampered with operations.

Helen Clark, the Prime Minister of New Zealand, stated that she personally did not support a change to the start of daylight savings in March. However the main reason that the start was altered was to avoid clashes with the fourth school term.

Rick Barker says that they will be working with various companies in the information technology sector to make sure computers are updated and ready for the first new daylight savings period change since 1990.

The Department of Internal Affairs will monitor the amount of energy has been saved because of the longer amount of daylight, and the effects it has on the economy.

In a press release, Mr Barker said, "The decision means people will have an extra hour of daylight in the evenings from late September to early April to enjoy the outdoors. This builds upon the extra half an hour already built into New Zealand's time throughout the year."

The United States and Canada have both also recently extended their daylight savings to a 34-week period.

No un-Islamic hairdo, makeup, or ties for Iranian men

New reports have emerged

detailing the extent of the efforts by the Iranian government to purge Western cultural influence in Iran that is deemed un-Islamic. Based on Iran's Islamic Sharia law, non-compliance results in legal punishment because the state sees itself responsible in executing punishment for Islamic theological sins.

Newspaper headlines such as "Western hairstyles ... have been banned" re-iterated the legal status of Western hairstyles; barbers who offer to what officials consider un-Islamic hairdos, provide make-up services, and pluck eyebrows have been warned that they can face month-long suspension or revocation of their licenses. Barber clients who violate government policies will be subject to lashes, fines and imprisonment. Iranian male youth are not supposed to sport outlandish hairstyles or use gel to make their hair stand.

Additionally, the ban on neckties remains in place. This ban evades the attention of those outside Iran albeit attentive observers realize that, for example, not one of non-clerical members of the Iranian government wears a necktie. Vice squad police are in place to bring non-compliant individuals to Islamic justice.

Mahmoud Ahmadinejad has called for moderation and consideration for Iran's image worldwide emphasizing the need for a "cultural rather than disciplinary approach." Hard-line clerics stress that both approaches are needed. Many Iranian women have appeared on state television whereon they praised Islamic dress code effusively and advocated the arrest of offenders.

The Supreme Cultural Revolution Council, created during the Islamic

Cultural Revolution, indicated that it would filter immoral video and audio messages sent using cellular phones. According to Iranian television statement, "In order to prevent possible misuse of MMS, immoral actions and social problems, the Telecommunications Ministry will filter immoral MMS." No details of how immoral messages would be filtered such naming the type of software to be used were divulged.

Grand Ayatollah Ali Khamenei explicitly delineated the threats Iran faces on the cultural front, "More than Iran's enemies need artillery, guns and so forth, they need to spread cultural values that lead to moral corruption. They have said this many times. I recently read in the news that one of them, a senior official in an important American political center, said: "Instead of bombs, send them miniskirts." He is right. If they arouse sexual desires in any given country, if they spread unrestrained mixing of men and women, and if they lead youth to behavior to which they are naturally inclined by instincts, there will no longer be any need for artillery and guns against that nation."

Following the Islamic Revolution, the Revolutionary Guards is reported to have cut women's lips with razors because the women were wearing lipstick. This was done in public view to deter others.

Norway purchases Canadian oil sands company

Statoil ASA (Statoil), a Norwegian state-owned oil company, entered into an agreement Friday to purchase all outstanding common shares of the privately held Canadian firm, North American Oil Sands Corporation (NAOSC). The deal is reported to be worth CA\$2.2 billion in an all-cash transaction.

NAOSC is an Alberta-based oil company founded in 2001. It manages 1,110 square kilometres of oil sands leases located in northern Alberta. It is estimated that the NOASC oil sands hold approximately 2.2 billion barrels of oil reserves. The company is planning to develop an extraction project and an upgrading facility. When the project is completed, NAOSC expects it to produce over 200,000 barrels of bitumen per day. The upgrading facility would then process the bitumen into synthetic crude oil.

The NAOSC board of directors has approved the bid from Statoil unanimously, and has recommended that its shareholders accept the offer. One of the largest shareholders of NAOSC currently is Paramount Resources Ltd. (TSX:POU). Paramount announced Friday that it had entered into a lock-up agreement with Statoil, which calls for Paramount to sell its 30.9% interest in NAOSC to Statoil ASA for a cash deal worth approximately CA\$682 million.

"We are impressed by the performance and competence held by the employees in NAOSC," said Helge Lund, chief executive of Statoil. "Combined with Statoil's experience and commitment to prudent operations, we are well-positioned to develop the resources in a sustainable manner, creating value for Statoil and its shareholders."

Statoil suggests that the development plans for the NAOSC oil sands includes an application of Steam Assisted Gravity Drainage (SAGD) technology, which, according to the company, leaves a smaller environmental footprint than strip mining. Statoil admits, however, that heavy oil production,

such as is required in the oil sands, is "energy intensive and challenging in an environmental perspective." The company said it intends to capture the carbon dioxide (CO2) emissions from its oil sands production and store it underground.

Under new environmental regulations announced Thursday by Canadian Environment Minister John Baird, companies that can't meet new intensity targets for CO2 emission reductions will be able to purchase offset credits or contribute to a technology fund, at an initial cost of \$15 per tonne of emissions. New plants would have three years before they were obligated to begin reducing their emissions.

However, Julia Langer, director of the World Wildlife Fund's global threats program, told the Globe and Mail that the initial exemptions for new plants and the technology fund contributions would undermine the government's new environmental plan. "This is a regulatory plan that is geared to business as usual for the tar sands sector," said Langer.

The Statoil-NAOSC transaction is expected to close by the end of the second quarter of 2007.

Shooter at Kansas City mall kills three

A gunman killed three people and wounded two others Sunday after a shooting occurred at the Ward Parkway shopping center in Kansas City, Missouri. The shooting took place at around 4 p.m. local time (2200 UTC). The gunman fired shots from the parking lot, then entered the mall and continued shooting. He himself was then shot, presumably by local police.

Today in History

1707 - The Kingdoms of England and Scotland merged to form the Kingdom of Great Britain, a single kingdom encompassing the entire island of Great Britain with a single parliament and government based in Westminster.

1840 - The Penny Black, the first official adhesive postage stamp, was issued in the United Kingdom.

1893 - The World's Columbian Exposition, a World's Fair to celebrate the 400th anniversary of the discovery of the New World by Christopher Columbus, opened in Chicago, United States.

1956 - A doctor in Japan reported an "epidemic of an unknown disease of the central nervous system", marking the official discovery of Minamata disease.

1960 - Bombay State, India was partitioned into Gujarat and Maharashtra along linguistic lines.

May 01 is Beltane in Ireland and Scotland, May Day in various countries.

Quote of the Day

A man must be excessively stupid, as well as uncharitable, who believes that there is no virtue but on his own side, and that there are not men as honest as himself who may differ from him in political principles. ~ Joseph Addison

Word of the Day

circumlocutionary; adj

1. Articulated in a roundabout manner.

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