



Top Stories

World climate conference in Nairobi

The 12th UN-Climate Conference has opened in Nairobi, focusing on ways to assist developing countries to adapt to climate change.

Queen Elizabeth II unveils New Zealand Memorial in London

Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II, New Zealand's Head of State, unveiled the New Zealand Memorial at Hyde Park Corner, in London today.

Featured story

Massive hurricane spotted on Saturn

NASA's Cassini Spacecraft has captured images of a massive hurricane on the planet Saturn.

Wikipedia Current Events

- Voters in South Ossetia vote 98-99% in favor of independence from Georgia in a referendum. 78% of the vote has been counted. Neither Russia nor the West recognize the poll's legitimacy.
- Rwandan President Paul Kagame denies previous reports that quoted him as saying Rwanda would invade Congo to deal with Hutu rebel groups responsible for the Rwandan genocide.
- South Korea says it won't participate in the Proliferation Security Initiative that aims to intercept North Korean ships

Wikipedia Current Events

suspected of carrying supplies for North Korea's nuclear and missile programs.

- A colliery explosion in Shanxi province in northern China kills at least 24 miners.
- A train crash near Cape Town, South Africa, kills at least 27 people.
- Joseph Kony, head of the Lord's Resistance Army terrorist organization in Uganda, meets with Jan Egeland, the United Nations' highest humanitarian official.
- Lebanese Environment Minister Yaacoub Sarraf, a Christian allied with Hezbollah, joins the rank of five other cabinet members who resigned on November 11, 2006. The cabinet later unanimously approved a UN-proposed international tribunal to try suspects over the assassination of Prime Minister Rafik Hariri in February 2005.

Man apologizes for grandfather's duty as a concentration camp guard

Twenty-seven year old Robin Parkircher arrived to Israel today to apologize to Holocaust survivors for his grandfather's behavior. Parkircher's grandfather was an SS guard in women's Nazi concentration camp near Bremen, Germany, where over eight hundred women were incarcerated. In an interview, Parkircher told Israeli Yediot Aharonot newspaper that years

after his grandfather passed away, Parkircher found a picture of him wearing an SS uniform. After inquiring with his grandmother, he discovered about his grandfather's service as a camp guard.

After the discovery, the younger Parkircher decided he should look for the camp survivors and ask their forgiveness. After months-long search, he discovered traces of survivors in Nordia senior citizen home in central Israel.

His first visit was to author and camp survivor Lili Curtis, with whom he previously unsuccessfully tried to communicate. After the communication attempts failed, Parkircher decided to come to Israel by himself and meet with Curtis.

After the meeting, Curtis said that she was confused at first and moved as the conversation developed. Following the conversation between the two, Parkircher was invited to a meal with residents of Nordia House, where he used the opportunity to talk and apologize to the survivors. Witnesses reported later that the apology was very moving and brought many of them to tears.

The young German man has a long way to go. He is scheduled to stay in Israel for another twelve days, to visit additional survivors of the concentration camp.

UK to step up anti-terror legislation

New measures to counter the

threat of terrorism in UK are expected in the Queen's Speech.

Sir Ian Blair, Metropolitan police chief, in a speech in Berlin, highlighted the scale of disaffection among the Muslim community, pointing to reports that between 40,000 and 120,000 Muslims believed that the London bombings, when four British suicide bombers killed 52 civilians, were justified. He believed that this disaffection was related to the very negative way in which many in the Muslim community perceived the country's foreign policy. This view had been expressed last month by Foreign Secretary Margaret Beckett and by the Head of MI5, Dame Eliza Manningham-Buller, earlier in the week. However, Prime minister Tony Blair contested the strong connection to foreign policy, saying that the problem has "grown up over a generation".

Sir Ian outlined where he thought new legislation was needed. Despite the fact that the measure had caused the Government to be defeated in the last session of Parliament, he wanted the extension of the 28 days suspects can be held without charge to be reconsidered. He wanted the law restricting the reporting of court proceedings relaxed to let people, particularly in the communities from which those on trial come, to see justice being done. As things stand, once they have charged a suspect, the police have no right to continue questioning; this should be changed, he said. He also wanted phone tap evidence to be allowed in court and flag burning to be made illegal. Home Secretary John Reid will have an opportunity of introducing new legislation in the Queen's Speech.

Following Dame Eliza

Manningham-Buller's statement that MI5 has the task of keeping track of 1,600 suspects engaged in 30 known terrorist plots with a staff of 2,800, and that disaffection is increasing as never before, it is expected that more resources will be provided to support her department's work. Patrick Mercer, the shadow homeland security minister said that both the intelligence and security services needed a substantial increase in resources. Chancellor of the Exchequer Gordon Brown has said that his first priority as Prime Minister would be to head anti-terrorism measures personally. In his present post he has responsibility for the allocation of resources to government departments.

The opinion poll findings quoted by Dame Eliza are questioned by the 1990 Trust (a charitable trust supported by the Rowntree Trust, Comic Relief, CRE and others). Introducing an internet survey conducted between the 8th and 27th September 2006, Karen Chouhan of the 1990 Trust said "This (referring to Dame Manningham-Buller's speech) is nothing short of irresponsible politicking and journalism which is designed to create a moral panic to pave the way for renewed legislative assaults on civil liberties and can only serve to fuel fears and hostility towards Muslim communities in the UK". The specific criticism of the use being made of the ICM/Sunday Telegraph Poll, that has been widely reported, is that "some sections of the media have conflated Muslim respondents answering positively to the question of whether they have sympathy 'with the feeling and motives of those who carried out the attacks' (20% of those polled in the same ICM/Telegraph survey

of February 2006 answered affirmatively) with the violence itself. To understand the motive behind an action cannot be equated with violence itself, and the media have a responsibility to create a clear demarcation".

A Report from the Joseph Rowntree Trust, by Professor Stuart Weir, Director of Democratic Audit at the University of Essex, Dr Andrew Blick and Tufyal Choudhury was published today November 13, 2006. It concludes that "the government's counter terrorism legislation and rhetorical stance are between them creating serious losses in human rights and criminal justice protections...and so are prejudicing the ability of the government and security forces to gain the very trust and cooperation from individuals in those communities that they require to combat terrorism."

Parliament resumes its work next week when the Queen's Speech will indicate what new anti-terrorist and anti-racist legislation the Government intends to propose.

UFDR rebels seize second town

Rebels known as the Union of Democratic Forces for Unity (UDFU) or the UFDR with its French initials in the Central African Republic (CAR) claim to have taken over another town in the CAR after a two-week long offensive.

The rebels told a BBC reporter via satellite telephone that they had captured Ouadda-Djalle, an isolated settlement 200 km west of the border with Sudan.

A government spokesman has only confirmed the rebels' activity but so far, not the seizure of the town. The government claims that

Ouadda-Djalle still remains in the army's hands.

The UFDR claims their reasons for rebelling are to fight against corruption and mismanagement under CAR President Francois Bozize's handling, who seized power in a 2003 coup.

The first town to fall into the hands of the UFDR was Birao, which was captured in October. Both towns claimed by the rebels are near eastern Chad and Sudan's western Darfur region.

The CAR government believes that the rebels are being supported by Sudanese authorities and are operating from Darfur. Sudan has denied this, though.

The French military has been requested to come and stop the rebellion from getting out of control.

"We captured this town in the early hours of the morning this Friday after [a] fierce battle with the regular army," Abakar Saboune, one of the rebels said.

Saboune also said twenty government troops were killed in the seizure, and twelve more were taken prisoner. The rebels only lost three people, and another two were wounded.

The UFDR's forces, currently located 750 km north of the Bangui, are thought to be ready to capture another two towns.

The rebels requested that a national conference be held to discuss the matter of sharing power, but the government has, at this point, not responded.

Orcon New Zealand to provide television via Internet

Internet service provider (ISP) and telephone provider, Orcon Internet Limited, is going to start to provide television channels via super-fast broadband right to the customers television set. The service will be rolled out sometime next year after Telecom New Zealand has opened its lines to the competitors.

The high speed internet Orcon wishes to use is called VDSL2+ which is able to go 100 megabits per second, this is an upgrade of Telecoms current technology, ADSL 2+. The new technology will be able to be installed when the government has opened up Telecoms lines to other ISPs. Scott Bartlett, regulatory manager of Orcon, said: "If we left this to the big telcos we wouldn't get VDSL2+ for 5-10 years. We don't have an existing legacy framework that limits us, so we can leap-frog them in terms of technology."

The television channels/programmes will be delivered in high definition via IPTV, or Internet protocol television, to a set-top box, similar to those of Sky Network Television, connected to broadband.

Orcon has invested NZ\$30 million into the new television service, they will be teaming up with Siemens to deliver the new television system.

Mr Bartlett said: "We are pitching to a market segment who were not necessarily totally nuts about watching the rugby live but still wanted high-definition quality television delivered by broadband."

Orcon already has 52 channels secured, they channels will include the genres of comedy, science-

fiction, news, music, weather and speciality language channels. The movies will cost \$1.00 each. And for \$25 customers will be able to buy 25 channels or for \$30 there will be 52 channels. For Sky television it costs \$15 a week for an entry level package. "We don't believe we have a monopoly and every channel known to man, we just think we have the ones that are important to New Zealanders," the chief executive of Sky, John Fellet, said.

Mr Fellet said they "would like to partner with Orcon and deliver our channels over Orcon's service, but if that did not happen, we are looking forward to competition heating up. Compete with us, that is fine. If you want to take our core product and add options yourself, that is an option as well. We have rights to rugby and movies, so whenever companies start seriously looking at it, they will look upon us as more of a supplier than a competitor.

Sky has confirmed that they have contracts to deliver IPTV via Telecom services, as Sky is planning to release an IPTV service early 2007. "For the foreseeable future, until the infrastructure improves, the satellite is the best way to deliver live rugby but if you wanted to see a game that has been played, the internet is the best way to do that, by streaming," Mr Fellet said.

World climate conference in Nairobi

The 12th UN-Climate Conference was opened in Nairobi on Monday November 6, 2006.

The aim of the negotiations is to find ways of assisting the developing countries to adapt to climate change.

The formulation of goals for lowering greenhouse gas emissions after the Kyoto-Protocol runs out in 2012 is high on the agenda. The World Meteorological Organisation (WMO) reported half-a-percent rise in CO2 concentration in the atmosphere during 2005. This rise is destined to continue unless more positive action is taken.

The United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) forecasts crop failures, flooding and threats to freshwater supplies. Actions to mitigate the effects of climate change in developing countries include developing new species of food crops, constructing sea defences, planting vegetation, improving the water-supply infrastructure in vulnerable areas and increasing public awareness of the the need to conserve water.

Some 6000 delegates will discuss these issues 6 - 17 November 2006.

The United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) senior-level round-table discussion on International Technology Cooperation on Environmentally Sound Technologies will take place on Tuesday, 14 November, 13.15 - 14.45

Of special interest will be the new report from UNFCCC on how climate change will affect the African continent.

Gerald Ford oldest living US President ever

After passing Ronald Reagan on Sunday, Gerald Ford became the oldest living United States President in history at 93 years old.

Ford was born on July 14, 1913 in Omaha, Nebraska and has been alive for 93 years and 121 days. Reagan died at 93 years and 120 days in June, 2004.

A former Michigan congressman, Ford became Vice President in December of 1973 under Richard Nixon after Spiro Agnew resigned due to taking bribes.

After Richard Nixon resigned on August 9, 1974 because of the Watergate scandal, Ford became the 38th President.

Ford was the only president who was never elected, and remained in office until defeated by Jimmy Carter in the November 1976 Presidential election.

Ford and his wife Betty, 88, live in Rancho Mirage in the desert area of Southern California.

"The length of one's days matters less than the love of one's family and friends," said Ford in a statement in the local Desert Sun newspaper.

Ford has battled a series of illnesses this year. He has been hospitalized four times for angioplasty, shortness of breath and pneumonia, and other tests.

Alberta premier Ralph Klein joke outrages Liberal MP Belinda Stronach

Alberta premier Ralph Klein was at the annual Calgary Homeless Foundation roast Tuesday evening when he poked fun about Liberal MP Belinda Stronach crossing the floor from the Conservatives to the Liberals. "I wasn't suprised that she crossed over to the Liberals. I don't think she ever did have a Conservative bone in her body. Well, maybe one." [Referring to Conservative MP Peter MacKay, her

ex boyfriend]. "Well, speaking of Peter MacKay...," he continued.

Klein refused to apologize for the remark saying: "I'm making no apologies....I read the copy and I approved. I thought it was a funny line....So did Bruce [his bodyguard]," he added.

"A roast is a roast is a roast. It's not a toast," Klein told reporters.

The audience laughed at the joke, but after some people said they felt uncomfortable with it.

"Ms. Stronach roasted the premier two years ago and made remarks about his weight, his clothing and even his flatulence," Marisa Etmanski, Klein's press secretary, told the Canadian Press. "In a roast situation, these remarks were hysterical, and that's the same kind of thing that happened this year."

Stronach, a feminist, was offended by the joke and said that "we want to attract many more women to participate in politics" and "improve the civility that occurs in public life."

Stronach was in Montreal on Thursday for an international conference on global poverty and turned the joke back on Klein. "Ralph should put his money where his mouth is and buy a whole bunch of bednets to save kids from malaria in Africa."

The joke was taken from Mr. MacKay's alleged comment calling Stronach a "dog" last month in the House of Commons.

"I don't know of any person who is more respectful of women, who is less inclined to tell off-colour stories or use improper language," said Shirley McClellan, Klein's

deputy premier. "I've worked with this gentleman for 17 years, and have never been treated with anything more than the utmost respect. And I am so disappointed in our media."

The video has made its way around the popular internet video site YouTube. It has been viewed more than 19,500 times and more than 100 comments had been posted about the video.

Today in History

1228 - Frederick of Isenberg was executed for the murder of his cousin Engelbert of Berg, the Archbishop of Cologne.

1889 - Nellie Bly, reporter for the New York World, departed on her successful attempt to travel Around the World in Eighty Days.

1940 - Coventry Cathedral and much of the city centre of Coventry, England was destroyed in heavy Luftwaffe bombing.

1971 - Mariner 9 reached Mars, becoming the first spacecraft to orbit another planet.

1990 - Germany and Poland sign a treaty confirming their border at the Oder-Neisse line.

November 14 is Children's Day in India.

Quote of the Day

Peace has been said to be indivisible; so is freedom, so is prosperity now, and so also is disaster in this One World that can no longer be split into isolated fragments.

~ Jawaharlal Nehru

Word of the Day

flagship; n

1. A ship occupied by the fleet commander.
2. The most important item in a related group.

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