



Top Stories

14 US soldiers dead after helicopter crash in Iraq

At least 14 United States troops, four crew and 10 passengers, were killed in Tikrit, Iraq when their UH-60 Black Hawk helicopter crashed.

Exclusive report on New Zealand's digital TV service

An exclusive, and special report by freelance journalist, Gabriel Pollard, has compiled the views from various politicians on New Zealand's latest digital television service, Freeview.

Featured story

Wikinews interviews World Wide Web co-inventor Robert Cailliau

Wikinews interviewed Robert Cailliau, co-inventor of the WWW, on the history and future of the Web.

Wikipedia Current Events

- Pakistan's Supreme Court says Inter-Services Intelligence (ISI) is not a law-enforcement agency or a customs authority.
- Hurricane Dean makes its final landfall near Tecolutla, Veracruz, Mexico, 100 miles north of the city of Veracruz, as a Category 1 storm. It missed the heavily-populated regions of the Yucatan Peninsula on its first landfall, with the Red Cross claiming only one injury and no deaths.
- An American UH-60 Blackhawk helicopter crashes in northern

Wikipedia Current Events

- Iraq killing all 14 soldiers on board.
- A suicide bomber kills at least 20 people and wounding 40 more in the town of Baiji.
- Voters in Kiribati go to the polls for the Kiribatian parliamentary election, 2007.
- Three Pakistani soldiers are killed in an attack by suspected pro-Taliban militants on a checkpoint in Bannu in the North-West Frontier Province.
- Typhoon Sepat has killed at least 36 people in southeast China in the past week.
- The U.S. Campaign for Burma claims that Myanmar's military government has arrested at least nine leaders of the pro-democracy 88 Generation Students.
- UK government plans to spend £5.2bn in the next four years on Identity Card and related schemes.

Sunni and Iraqi Shi'ite negotiators to meet in Finland
Mediators will meet in Finland next week with the aim of ending violence in Iraq between Iraqi Shi'ites and Sunnis, two of the country's largest population groups.

The negotiations have been arranged by Finland's Crisis Management Initiative (CMI), a non-profit, non-governmental organization founded by former

Finnish president Martti Ahtisaari in 2000. Although it is unclear which CMI personnel will take part in discussions, it has been confirmed that Ahtisaari himself, currently the UN envoy for Kosovo, will play no direct role.

CMI officials are continuing to remain anonymous, citing their reasons for doing so as the sensitive nature of the arrangements in the context of current tensions in Iraq. The CMI is also refusing to refer to the planned meeting as a negotiation, preferring instead to describe it as "bringing experiences from other crisis areas in the form of a seminar".

CMI director of operations Meeri-Maria Jaarva said "What we are aiming at is to look at possible lessons learned from previous peace processes, like those in Northern Ireland and South Africa, to see if anything can be helpful".

It is understood that a third major faction in Iraqi violence, the large Kurdish minority, will have no involvement in the discussions. The Iraqi government is similarly not involved, although some of the other "key actors" arriving from Iraq are party representatives and parliamentarians. The Finnish government will be the only government directly involved. About a dozen people in all are expected to be present at the meetings.

The Finnish Ministry for Foreign Affairs has made it clear that

Finland will not technically be a party to the meeting, but is merely acting to arrange it. However, the Foreign Ministry has pledged support if it is requested.

The CMI did not specify the exact location of the meetings, nor could it tell reporters how long negotiations will last, saying that the length will depend on how successful the talks are. Some organizers have said that the worst case scenario is that there will only be one meeting.

The CMI also said that it was only one of several organizations critical to arranging the talks, which it describes as having been "in the works" for some time. However, when questioned about it Eija Rotinen, head of the Finnish foreign ministry's Middle East and North Africa desk, told reporters "It's completely CMI's project... We do support, though, all efforts to get peace in Iraq and the ministry does support CMI activities, even financially,"

The last time the CMI arranged international discussions in Finland was in 2005, when political leaders from Indonesia and the province of Aceh successfully negotiated a peace deal. Those talks were presided over by Ahtisaari.

Mayor of Oslo resigns after tax fraud scandal

The mayor of the Norwegian capital Oslo, Per Ditlev-Simonsen, resigned today after massive critique following revelations that he used to have a Swiss bank account for which he did not pay taxes. Ditlev-Simonsen was elected mayor in 1995. Before that, he was the defence minister of Norway from 1989 to 1990.

Allegations that Ditlev-Simonsen had an unknown Swiss bank

account were first made in the financial newspaper Dagens Næringsliv on August 17. He admitted to not having paid taxes on the money in the account, which he said was closed before he became mayor. The account reportedly contained NOK 1 500 000, approx. EUR 182 000.

Ditlev-Simonsen belongs to the Conservative Party (Høyre), and said that concerns about the party's recognition was the main factor in his decision to resign. He also said the requests from liberal parties weighed heavily in on his decision, saying he wanted to be a uniting mayor.

There will be a regional election in Norway on September 10. The Ditlev-Simonsen case has reportedly hurt the Conservative Party's reputation, though the polls still give the party better odds than in the last election.

South African cricket team in Zimbabwe 2007 - 1st ODI

South Africa has won the first One-Day International of the series against Zimbabwe by five wickets at Queens Sports Club, Bulawayo, Zimbabwe.

Zimbabwe won the toss and elected to bat first. However they slumped to 72-7 in the 24th over. Vernon Philander took two wickets in two balls and some poor running decisions led to five run outs in the whole innings. Elton Chigumbura and Gary Brent fought back for Zimbabwe with a partnership of 115 runs, with Chigumbura being run out for 59 runs and Brent finishing on 59 not out. The pair recovered Zimbabwe's innings which finished at 206 all out after fifty overs.

South Africa suffered an early blow when opening batsman Loots

Bosman was dismissed in the first over, but captain Graeme Smith and ODI debutant Gulam Bodi added 72 runs together, followed by a partnership of 74 runs from Bodi and A B de Villiers. Smith (50 runs), Bodi (51) and de Villiers (63) all made half centuries, and South Africa comfortably reached the target with nineteen balls remaining.

The second ODI will be held at Harare Sports Club, Harare on August 25, with the final ODI the day afterwards. South Africa lead the series 1-0. The tour comes two weeks before the start of the inaugural Twenty20 World Championship, which will be held in South Africa.

59-year-old graduate student makes Division III football team

Mike Flynt, 59, of Franklin, Tennessee has made the roster of the Sul Ross State Lobos' football team, and could play as early as September 1, 2007. Flynt last played college football in 1970. Flynt returns reportedly after stating that he regretted his dismissal from the school's football team before his senior year. Flynt eventually received his bachelor's degree from Sul Ross after attending another school where he earned the last 12 credit hours he needed. He transferred those hours back to Sul Ross. Flynt enrolled in graduate school so he can take advantage of his final semester of Division III eligibility.

Flynt is giving new meaning to being a college senior. After all, he's a grandfather. He's eight years older than his coach and has two kids older than any of his teammates. His youngest child just started at the University of Tennessee.

Flynt's position is still being determined, but he used to play linebacker. Wherever he lines up, just getting into a game likely will make him the oldest player in college football history. Neither the NCAA or NAIA keeps such a statistic, but research hasn't turned up anyone older than mid-40s.

And with around 200 pounds on a 5-10 frame, about the only visible difference from his playing days is a shaved head. He's in tremendous shape for his age because he's made a living out of working out. Flynt, who declined an interview request, is paying his own tuition because Division III schools do not offer athletic scholarships.

Prisons in New Zealand to introduce mobile phone jamming technology

A successful 12-month trial of mobile phone blocking technology in New Zealand prisons has just been completed, according to the Minister of Corrections, Vodafone and Telecom.

Corrections Minister, Damien O'Conner, described this technology as a world first and a significant milestone for the Department of Corrections.

The mobile phone blocking technology is being implemented to help prevent the growing problem of inmates using mobile phones which they are currently prohibited from. One case included a Mt Eden prisoner using a mobile phone to organise NZ\$1 million worth of methamphetamine (commonly known in New Zealand as P) being smuggled in. Other cases at Mount Eden Prison included posting of pxts on the Internet, and ordering meals of KFC.

Vodafone, Telecom and the Department of Corrections signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) stating that they will help prevent the use of mobile phones inside prisons. In a joint statement Greg Patchell, Group Technology Officer for Telecom, and Tom Chignell, Corporate Affairs General Manager for Vodafone, said, "With the technical trials completed, and the MoU Agreement in place, work can now begin to apply the most effective technologies to combat unauthorised cellphone use in each prison site in New Zealand."

Hawke's Bay Prison will be the first prison to get the new technology due to its high level of gang members. The technology will be implemented in the next six weeks.

However, some prisons, including Mt Eden Prison, might not have this technology implemented due to different characteristics of each prison. Simon Power, Corrections Spokesperson for the National Party, said, "The technology won't work around all prisons, the most notable being Mt Eden, which has had significant contraband problems." Patchell and Chignell said, "...we have now identified a package of technical solutions which the Department of Corrections believes could be deployed with effectiveness in some of its facilities."

The prison and if the mobile phone service of anyone living near a prison will be affected, will determine the type of mobile phone jamming technology used.

As well as the new mobile phone jamming technology, new legislation is being written which will mean if an inmate, prison contractor, or staff member is found carrying a mobile phone,

they will face either a fine of \$5,000 or a year in jail. As well as tighter security of prisons, including only one point of access into them.

RAF jets intercept Russian bomber over north Atlantic

Eurofighter Typhoons shadowed a Russian Tupolev Tu-95 "Bear-bomber" reconnaissance aircraft last Friday, which turned back before it reached UK skies. Two Typhoons were sent from RAF Coningsby in Lincolnshire to meet the Bear-H aircraft after the early warning radar system detected it heading towards UK territory, according to the Ministry of Defence. The jets cover the UK Quick Reaction Alert (QRA) commitment together with Tornado F3 aircraft based at RAF Leeming and RAF Leuchars.

President Vladimir Putin announced this week that Russia has resumed long-range patrols by its bomber planes for the first time since the end of the Cold War.

14 US soldiers dead after helicopter crash in Iraq

At least 14 United States troops, four crew and 10 passengers, were killed in Tikrit, Iraq when their UH-60 Black Hawk helicopter crashed. The U.S. military in Iraq are blaming mechanical failure for the crash. One other helicopter was flying with the downed one on a mission the military calls Task Force Lightning.

"There were no indications of hostile fire. Two UH-60 Black Hawk helicopters were on a night operation when one of the aircraft crashed. That helicopter had been carrying four crew members and 10 passengers," said the U.S. military in a statement to the press.

The military says that this is the worst crash of its kind in Iraq since 2005 when 31 U.S. marines were killed after their chopper crashed.

Dwarf gets penis glued to vacuum cleaner

A British dwarf who was performing at the 'Edinburgh Festival' found his penis glued to a vacuum cleaner while preparing for a live show.

Daniel Blackner, known as "Captain Dan the Demon Dwarf" performed at the Circus of Horrors, known for its oddball and offbeat performances. As part of the show, the dwarf pulls a Henry vacuum cleaner using a special attachment, across the show attached to his penis. However, the vacuum cleaner was broken before a performance and performer Blackner placed extra-strong glue on the attachment to fix it, neglecting to wait the entire 20 minutes required for the glue to dry, which resulted in his penis becoming glued to the vacuum cleaner.

After being rushed to the A&E department of Edinburgh Royal Infirmary, Blackner was freed after an hour and remarked that: "It was the most embarrassing moment of my life when I got wheeled into a packed A&E with a vacuum attached to me. I just wished the ground could swallow me up. Luckily, they saw me quickly so the embarrassment was short lived."

Hospital sources confirmed that they treated the performer, but a spokesman for the Royal Infirmary said he could not comment on individual cases.

Today in History

1305 – After a show trial, William Wallace, leader of the Scottish resistance against England during the Wars of Scottish

Independence, was executed in Smithfield Market, London.

1839 – As it prepared for war against China's Qing Dynasty, an ensuing conflict that became known as the First Opium War, Britain captured the southeast Asia port of Hong Kong.

1927 – After a controversial trial, and despite worldwide protests, Italian-born American anarchists Sacco and Vanzetti were executed via electrocution in Massachusetts for the charge of murder and theft.

1939 – World War II: Nazi Germany and the Soviet Union agreed to the Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact, a 10-year, mutual non-aggression treaty that was eventually broken when the Germans invaded the Soviet Union three years later.

1989 – Baltic Way: Approximately two million people joined their hands to form an over 600 km (373 mi) long human chain across the Estonian, Latvian and Lithuanian Soviet republics during the Singing Revolution.

Quote of the Day

I wish to write down my musical dreams in a spirit of utter self-detachment. I wish to sing of my interior visions with the naïve candour of a child. No doubt, this simple musical grammar will jar on some people. It is bound to offend the partisans of deceit and artifice. I foresee that and rejoice at it. ~

Claude Debussy

Word of the Day

cheval de frise; n

- (military) An obstacle made of wood with spikes, for use against attacking cavalry.
- Protective row of spikes or broken glass set into the

top of a wall and used to prevent intrusion.

- (fashion) The jagged edge of 18th century women's clothing.

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