



Top Stories

Tropical Storm Ernesto Weakens

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Canada's Defence Minister visits Canadian troops in Afghanistan

As public opinion wavers over Canada's involvement in Afghanistan, Defence minister Gordon O'Connor made an appearance to shore up support among the troops for the Afghan mission.

Featured story

FBI most-wanted fugitive, polygamist Warren Jeffs, arrested

Warren Jeffs, the fugitive leader of the Fundamentalist Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints (FLDS) has been arrested in Nevada.

Wikipedia Current Events

- Mars Reconnaissance Orbiter successfully completed aerobraking, and is preparing to enter a Aun synchronized science orbit at Mars.
- Israeli troops kill at least eight Palestinians in fighting in Gaza City, as part of a two-month offensive in the territory.
- Mexican presidential candidate Andrés Manuel López Obrador vows to form a parallel

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government following the Federal Electoral Tribunal's ruling that Felipe Calderón won the presidential election.

- Former United States Deputy Secretary of State Richard Armitage originally revealed the identity of Valerie Plame to columnist Robert Novak in 2003.
- 2006 Israel-Lebanon conflict:
 - The UN's humanitarian chief accuses Israel of "completely immoral" use of cluster bombs in Lebanon.
 - A Hezbollah cabinet minister rejects a call by Kofi Annan for the unconditional release of the two Israeli soldiers, in accordance with United Nations Security Council Resolution 1701.
 - Israel rejects a call by Kofi Annan to lift the blockade of Lebanon before United Nations Security Council Resolution 1701 is implemented.
 - Multiple bomb attacks across Baghdad, Iraq kill at least 40 people while 12 more die after bomb explodes near an army recruiting office in Hilla.
 - The UK Government announces plans to make the possession of violent pornographic images illegal and punishable by up to three years in prison.
 - Wake Island is evacuated, in preparation for its predicted inundation by Typhoon Ioke, now classified as a super typhoon, which is expected to destroy

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almost all structures on the island.

- A United States federal judge overturns a jury's recent \$50 million award against Merck on behalf of a Vioxx user, on the ground that the award was excessive.

Tropical Storm Ernesto Weakens

Tropical Storm Ernesto Weakens over Florida. It is expected to enter North Carolina. It came ashore early this morning in the Florida Keys with less intensity than expected by forecasters. The storm had weakened to a tropical depression as it moved up the Florida peninsula. It is expected to go to Charleston, South Carolina. Tropical storm watches have been issued for Savannah, Georgia, to Morehead City, North Carolina.

At 5 P.M. (21:00 GMT), Ernesto's sustained winds were about 35 mph (56 kph), said the hurricane center. The center of the system was still over Florida, about 55 miles (90 km) south-southwest of Cape Canaveral.

Forecasters say Ernesto could regain tropical storm status with peak winds exceeding 40 miles (64 kilometers) an hour.

"Ernesto has the potential to regain tropical storm strength on Thursday over the Atlantic," the hurricane center said.

Two deaths were reported in

separate wrecks in Florida.

Iraqi activist forced to change T-Shirt with Arabic Peace Slogan

Raed Jarrar, an Iraqi peace activist who lives in the USA, was forced to change his T-Shirt, which bears an Arabic Slogan, because it was found "Offensive".

The incident took place in JFK airport in New York. The activist reported in his blog, that he had checked in his bags and was issued a boarding pass and was waiting near the gate to board his jetBlue airlines flight, after having to go through a secondary search, when two officials approached him.

"People are feeling offended because of your t-shirt" told him one of the men, Raed reported. The writings on the T-Shirt says in both Arabic and English "We will not be silent", it can be seen here.

Raed asked about the reason why this has offended anyone, and he insisted that it was his right of freedom of expression that was violated.

One of the inspectors answered him "you can't wear a t-shirt with Arabic script and come to an airport. It is like wearing a t-shirt that reads "I am a robber" and going to a bank". The peace activist replies saying that the script means "We will not be silent" and that it's already translated on the same T-Shirt. The inspector replied that he cannot be sure because he cannot read Arabic. The inspector suggested he wear his T-Shirt inside out. Raed requested to talk to a supervisor, and his request was rejected, "Many people called and complained about your t-shirt. Jetblue customers were calling

before you reached the checkpoint, and costumers called when you were waiting here in the boarding area", The woman from jetBlue offered to buy the activist a new T-Shirt, as he had no other T-Shirt, all his bags had been checked in. After refusing at the beginning he agreed to wear the other T-Shirt, with "New York" written on it. The officer commented that it doesn't need to go from one extreme to the other: wearing a T-Shirt with Arabic peace slogan on it to wear a T-Shirt with New York on it. Raed commented that there is no reason to hate New York if you are an Arab speaking peace activist.

He added "I feel very sad that my personal freedom was taken away like this. I grew up under authoritarian governments in the Middle East, and one of the reasons I chose to move to the US was that I don't want an officer to make me change my t-shirt. I will pursue this incident today through a Constitutional rights organization, and I am sure we will meet soon".

He was issued another boarding pass, with a different seat at the back of the plane.

JetBlue said it was investigating the incident but a spokeswoman said: "We're not clear exactly what happened." He also said the airline does not forbid Arabic T-shirts, but that it does take into account the concerns of its passengers.

The American-Arab Anti-discrimination Committee said the US Transportation Department and the Transportation Security Administration were also investigating the incident after the committee lodged complaints on behalf of Jarrar.

"We Will Not Be Silent" is a slogan adopted by opponents of the war in Iraq and other conflicts in the Middle East.

It is said to derive from the White Rose dissident group which opposed Nazi rule in Germany.

U.S. calls for sanctions against Iran

The United States State Department has called for sanctions against Iran and has also said that Iran has not indicated to the United Nations that they intend to follow through with halting their nuclear program.

"We would expect that the parties would immediately begin formal discussions about a resolution that would call for sanctions," said spokesman for the State Department, Sean McCormack.

"[Sanctions] have been our intention for some months, it remains our intention, it'll be our intention on September the first if the Iranians don't comply with the resolution," said John Bolton, the U.S. ambassador to the United Nations.

Today, the Washington Post reported that the International Atomic Energy Agency will report to the U.N. Tomorrow that Iran is still enriching uranium despite a U.N. resolution calling for the country to halt its nuclear program.

The Chinese Foreign Minister Li Zhaoxing; however, has called for a "diplomatic resolution" to Iran's nuclear program.

Iran's President, Mahmoud Ahmadinejad said that sanctions will not stop Iran from their "lofty goals of progress." He also said that Europe should "be

independent [from the U.S.] in decision-making and to settle problems through negotiations" in regards to Iran's nuclear program.

The deadline set by the U.N. is set to expire on August 31.

Canadian Idol top 4 eliminations

Last night was the eliminations for Canadian Idol's top 4. Chad Doucette of Chezzetcook, Nova Scotia was voted off. The show started with the current top 4 singing together on stage.

Rex Goudie performed live on the Canadian Idol stage last night. Goudie performed his hit single "Run". Host Ben Mulroney presented Goudie, the 2005 Canadian Idol runner-up, with a Platinum Record on behalf of Sony BMG Music (Canada) Inc. and Canadian Idol for his hit CD Under The Lights.

Eva Avila and Craig Sharpe were safe and Chad Doucette was called to centre stage with Tyler Lewis. After the commercial break the results were announced. Ben Mulroney - "Eva and Craig you're safe". Ben Mulroney - "Chad you're eliminated".

After the results were revealed Mulroney thanked Doucette: "I am so glad you decided to come back and audition this year," he said. "If there is anything you have shown us in your run to Top 4 is how memorable you are."

"I don't know if I was as confident in what I wanted to do before I started this competition, but now I am absolutely positive I want to be a musician," Doucette said. "You guys showed me that it's alright to be unique. Thank you!"

"You've got a unique voice, which means you have to sing your own words," Jake Gold advised him after the results were announced. "Keep doing what you're doing and write songs."

This week Canadian Idol got a record of 4.3 million votes. "When the competition is this good and only four singers are left, each week is anybody's game", said Mulroney.

Rebel leader, 56 inmates escape from East Timorese jail

East Timorese rebel leader Alfredo Reinado and other 56 inmates escaped last night from Dili's mail jail.

Australian and Portuguese forces initiated a massive manhunt for the escapees, which with their escape, created a new crisis for international security forces in East Timor. Australian SAS troopers using Black Hawk helicopters and night-vision goggles were involved in the search.

GNR's liaison officer, Lieutenant Cabrita told the Portuguese Rádio Renascença news agency that the prisoners took advantage of the relieve of guard to escape. "The evasion happened during the relieve of the forces that were serving in the jail's security, having the escapees used vehicles for their escape".

Later Australian police liaison officers confirmed the escape of the rebel leader. "It is understood 57 prisoners are currently unaccounted for, one of those being Mr Alfredo Reinado," an Australian police spokesman said.

Alfredo Reinado is a former East Timorese Army officer who deserted and led a rebel group

during the unrest in May, being blamed for some of the country's violence during the security crisis. Him and other 14 soldiers of his rebel group were arrested on July by Australian troops for illegal possession of firearms after an GNR patrol found them with pistols, hundreds of ammunition and grenades in a house during a routine operation.

Of the other 56 prisoners unaccounted for, 16 are believed to be former Timorese police and soldiers accused of crimes committed during East Timor's security crisis, and five prisoners convicted for homicide.

According to Becora's prison warden Carlos Sarmiento, the inmates had escaped by breaking down several walls on the prison's east wing.

The East Timorese Justice Minister, Domingos Sarmiento, blamed the international security forces for the jailbreak and told the Lusa news agency that the New Zealand forces in charge of the security of the prison's exterior left the prison without informing the Timorese government.

"There was an agreement in which the forces of New Zealand would be in charge of the outside security of the prison, but about a week ago they left the location and didn't inform us", Domingos Sarmiento said.

Domingos Sarmiento said that he contacted the Australian-led forces so that the security outside the prison could be restored, but was told that the forces' removal from the prison were due to the necessity of deploying troops in other points of the city.

The Minister recognized that the

absence of police and military forces on the prison's outside and the fact that the guard were unarmed contributed to facilitate the escape of the prisoners. Also recognizing that the use of weapons by the guards would improve the security in the jail, he noticed that the internal regulation doesn't allow that use.

Prime Minister Harper plays small role in television show *Corner Gas*

Rouleau, Saskatchewan—Tuesday, Prime Minister Stephen Harper was filming a cameo appearance on the popular sitcom *Corner Gas*. *Corner Gas* is filmed about 40 km south of Regina in the tiny farming community of Rouleau.

Harper then filmed a scene where he was surrounded by a large group of actors playing reporters and photographers. After completing the scene, he got back into his car and a motorcade left the town, which is called Dog River on the show.

"We can't say much about cameo appearances, because they're supposed to be a surprise for the viewers, but yes, there was press scrum," *Corner Gas* executive producer Virginia Thompson said. "That's all I can reveal." "It works well for the show, actually ... We were told by the Prime Minister's Office that he had a sense of humour, but we thought we would wait and see and sure enough, yeah, he delivered."

When he was the leader of the government, Paul Martin had a cameo the show last season. Saskatchewan Premier Lorne Calvert has also made an appearance on the show last season.

"The prime minister was not paid

for his appearance and had other reasons for coming to Saskatchewan beyond being part of the show", said Thompson.

Reporters were kept back and not allowed to see how he performed in front of the cameras.

Harper waved goodbye to small town of Rouleau while travelling down Highway 39 away from the set after spending about 1 1/2 hours there. After, Harper planned to meet with members of his Saskatchewan caucus at a barbeque at Sherwood Forest Country Club Tuesday night. Harper is scheduled to tour the RCMP training academy in Regina today.

The episode featuring Harper will air sometime next spring.

Thailand may create new province to honour King

Following confirmation by Thailand's caretaker cabinet, a proposal to create a 77th province to honour the king's 80th birthday, will be the subject of a feasibility study.

King Bhumibol Adulyadej's 80th birthday next year follows on from the 60th anniversary of his accession to the throne earlier this year. The as-yet unnamed new province would likely consist of three districts and one sub-district surrounding the Klaikangvol Palace in Hua Hin. In addition to Hua Hin, the Pran Buri district and Sam Roi Yot subdistrict from Prachuap Khiri Khan Province and Cha-am from Phetchaburi would make up the new province.

Currently the country consists of 75 provinces, it is expected that the 76th district will be around the Suvarnabhumi International Airport which opens in September

2006.

New Zealand police to trial tasers from Friday

Yesterday New Zealand Police officers were showcasing their new tasers, model X26, and at the same time, trialling them on their own officers. This Friday 180 police officers, between Auckland and Wellington, will start trialling them for 12 months.

Policeman, Constable Mike Smith, who had the new taser trialled on him said, "My whole body was completely incapacitated from my feet to my head. My legs felt like concrete. I wouldn't do it again."

The police will not carry the tasers with them everywhere but only to call outs where they can expect violent encounters.

The tasers will replace pepper spray, as it is more effective and the offender is able to recover quicker. Only the armed offenders squad carry guns.

The particular model the police will use is the X26 model. This model delivers 50,000 volts of electricity but counters this high voltage with a very low amperage of .0036 amps, police say that this is safe. The taser works by firing two metal spurs at the target and transmits a charge of five seconds which paralyses the victim long enough to get the offender in handcuffs. The taser has a range of six metres, and is able to penetrate through both skin and clothes.

The New Zealand Green Party and civil rights lawyers are protesting against the use of tasers, saying that "It risks lives and could be misused."

The superintendent, John Rivers,

said that a report that had been commissioned after Steve Wallace was fatally shot in 2001 said that tasers were "A less lethal option."

John Rivers said Tuesday, "The use of tasers was in the interest of public safety. He said they give police more tactical options when dealing with violent offenders. Very [sic] person who is shot with a taser gun during the trial will receive an examination by a doctor afterwards. British research had found that of the 400 times police there had drawn the weapon at least 60 per cent have resulted with the police not firing the device."

Most injuries were not caused by the taser itself but by the falling to the ground that is caused by the taser, according to an independent medical research group run by Peter Robinson. "No coroner or medical officer has found a situation where the Taser was the cause of death," Robinson said.

Audience in Ireland watches circus acrobat fall to his death

A Russian trapeze artist, Vitaly Kharapavitski, 26, performing at a circus in Scariff, Ireland has died after a cage attached to a hot air balloon crushed the performer. His wife, Sasha, 24, who was also performing at the time, was injured, breaking her arm. Both were dressed in clown suits.

At least 100 people were attending the circus and watched the acrobat fall. Most of the attendees were children.

According to witnesses, the balloon caught fire and the cage fell on top of the acrobat, crushing his head.

Spectators of the circus were asked to leave the area while the

incident was being investigated. Tony Kenneally, a Garda Superintendent said that the incident is being treated as an accident.

"We had to discharge the audience because we knew it was quite serious," said spokespeople for the Royal Russian Circus.

Some of the attendees thought the fall was part of the performance.

27 die from pipeline explosion in Diwaniya, Iraq

Diwaniya, Iraq— At least 27 people are dead after a disused pipeline exploded today. Unconfirmed reports have already placed the count as high as 74. Fuel shortages are common in Iraq, even though the country is endowed with large reserves of petroleum. According to reports, locals cut holes in the unused pipeline to syphon fuel, igniting fumes inside the pipeline. Many of the survivors were left with severe injuries, often with burns over 75% of their bodies. The blast comes after fierce fighting yesterday in Diwaniya between Iraqi government forces and the local Mehdi Militia that claimed 40 lives. The Mehdi Militia are loyal to the cleric Moqtada Sadr.

In Baghdad, 20 people were found shot to death. Investigators said the victims had been bound, and showed signs of torture. The bodies were dumped behind a Shia mosque, heightening tensions between Iraq's cultural factions. As sectarian killings continue, the divide between the Shia and Sunnis is driven deeper. Armed groups now patrol neighbourhoods that at one time coexisted peacefully. The groups are often comprised of local militias, or simply by vigilantes bent on protecting their territory. In spite

of the violence, some economy continues to survive. "Shoulda property prices have risen a lot, because it is protected by the Mehdi Army and is safe," said Ahmad Abdel Karim, a Shia police officer and member of the Mehdi Militia, "Sunni families left on their own. No one threatened them. They left so that the bombs fall only on Shias. The Americans come here with the National Guard. They try to confiscate weapons from the Mehdi Army so that this area falls to the terrorists."

On Tuesday, two Shia militia members were killed by insurgents in the city of Baquba.

On the other side of the fence a small Sunni enclave exists, guarded by equally dedicated Sunni community members. "My life is basically between the house and guarding the mosque. You can't go anywhere else. If you go down that street, it's almost guaranteed a car will stop, pick you up, and you'll disappear." - Mohamed Reyad, a former plumber. Reyad said that weapons were provided by his "Sunni brothers", which included a group of scholars.

The latest wave of violence comes as US and Iraqi government forces have intensified efforts to secure Baghdad against growing violence and division among Iraqis.

Canada's Defence Minister visits Canadian troops in Afghanistan

As public opinion wavers over Canada's involvement in Afghanistan, Defence minister Gordon O'Connor made an appearance to shore up support among the troops for the Afghan mission.

O'Connor disembarked a Canadian Forces Hercules C-130 transport plane dressed in full desert battle fatigues and boots, and was greeted by Lieut.-Gen. Michel Gauthier at Canada's base on Kandahar airfield. "I'm here on this visit to get three perspectives - One is what's happening on the ground here. The other in Kabul for what's happening on the national level, and then I'm going to Pakistan for the international perspective."

The minister's visit comes as a surge of violence is sweeping across southern Afghanistan. Military casualties have run high since August 3rd, claiming the lives of eight Canadian troops, one British soldier and many more civilians. Much of the violence comes at the hands of suicide bomb attacks against resupply convoys amid growing frustration at the presence of foreign troops in Afghan territory. In the hours before O'Connor's arrival another suicide bomber targeted a Canadian convoy, killing two civilians and injuring a third.

Military officials took the opportunity to highlight concerns for the troops on the ground who are complaining of poor equipment, vehicles and accommodation.

Jimmy Carter blasts Blair for "subservience" to Bush

Former US President Jimmy Carter has accused British Prime Minister Tony Blair of contributing to the crisis in Iraq through lack of leadership and subservience to current US President George W. Bush.

"I have been surprised and extremely disappointed by Tony Blair's behaviour," said Carter in an interview with the Sunday

Telegraph.

"I think that more than any other person in the world the Prime Minister could have had a moderating influence on Washington - and he has not. I really thought that Tony Blair, who I know personally to some degree, would be a constraint on President Bush's policies towards Iraq."

Carter also said the invasion of Iraq had strengthened al-Qaeda and undermined the war on terrorism.

"In many countries where I meet with leaders and private citizens there is an equating of American policy with Great Britain - with Great Britain obviously playing the lesser role."

"We now have a situation where America is so unpopular overseas that even in countries like Egypt and Jordan our approval ratings are less than five per cent. It's a shameful and pitiful state of affairs and I hold your British Prime Minister to be substantially responsible for being so compliant and subservient," said Carter, 81.

Today in History

1876 - Abdul Hamid II became Sultan of the Ottoman Empire when his brother Murad V was deposed.

1888 - In Victorian London, Jack the Ripper claimed his first victim.

1920 - Polish forces, led by their cavalry, defeated the Bolshevik Red Army in the Battle of Komarów.

1986 - After a collision with a freighter, Soviet ocean liner Admiral Nakhimov sank in the Black Sea within 7 minutes, killing 398 on board.

1992 - Pascal Lissouba was inaugurated as the President of the Republic of the Congo after a

multi-party presidential election, ending a long history of one-party Marxist rule.

August 31 is Independence Day for Malaysia (1957), Trinidad and Tobago (1962), Kyrgyzstan (1991)

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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