



Top Stories



US likely to reduce troops in Iraq

White House officials say Bush will reduce troops in Iraq by 30,000 before next Summer.

Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe resigns

Reports are stating that Japan's Prime Minister Shinzo Abe will resign.



Featured story

20-year-old captures abusive police officer on tape

A 20-year old male turned the tables on an abusive police officer in St. George, Missouri after he was pulled over inside a commuter parking lot by officer Sgt. James Kuehnlein of the St. George police department.

Wikipedia Current Events

Somali Islamists and opposition leaders meeting in Eritrea have joined forces in a new alliance to overthrow Somalia's transitional government.

•A new case of Foot-and-mouth disease in the UK was confirmed

Wikipedia Current Events

after it was assumed that the outbreak of 2007 had been under control.

•A major earthquake with a magnitude of 8.4 occurs off the west-coast of the island Sumatra, Indonesia. Sea level readings indicate a tsunami might follow and a tsunami watch is put in place for the whole of the Indian Ocean.

•Vladimir Putin sacks Mikhail Fradkov's Second Cabinet and nominates Viktor Zubkov as his replacement.

•Thousands of ex-soldiers are rioting in the People's Republic of China in the cities of Baotou, Wuhan, and Baoji, breaking into cars, destroying classrooms, and setting fires. The riot is the largest protest since the 1989 Tiananmen Square protest.

•A cholera epidemic occurs in northern Iraq with 7,000 infected and 10 deaths so far.

•Anna Bligh is endorsed as the next Premier of Queensland by the Queensland Labor Party caucus with Paul Lucas as her deputy.

•Former President of the Philippines Joseph Estrada is found guilty of corruption in his 6-year trial and sentenced to Life Imprisonment.

•Shinzo Abe, the current Prime Minister of Japan, announces his resignation after failing to win popular support in the aftermath of ruling Liberal Democratic

Wikipedia Current Events

Party's defeat in Upper House elections in July. The resignation comes into effect with the election of his successor in a LDP party conference on 19 September 2007.

•Tropical Depression Eight and Tropical Depression Nine form near the Lesser Antilles and Gulf of Mexico respectively.

Tropical storm Humberto eyes Gulf Coast

The eighth named storm of the Atlantic Hurricane Season, tropical storm Humberto, was named today over the Gulf of Mexico.

The tropical storm was about 70 miles south-southwest of Galveston, Texas at 2 p.m. EST and was moving towards the north at 6 mph.

Maximum sustained winds associated with the storm stood at 45 mph.

But, forecasters warn that additional strengthening is possible before the storm makes landfall.

While heavy rain is already pounding the Gulf Coast, Humberto's center is not expected to reach the coast of Texas until late tonight.

The National Hurricane Center (NHC) issued a tropical storm warning from Port O'Connor, Texas, to Cameron, Louisiana.

Anywhere from 5 to 10 inches of

rain is expected along the upper and middle coast of Texas, as well as in southwestern Louisiana. Some areas to be impacted by the storm may see rain totals near 15 inches, according to the NHC.

Also, the NHC warned storm surge flooding of 2 to 3 feet is possible.

2007 Rugby World Cup: Tonga, Fiji and Italy win

In the 2007 Rugby World Cup, Tonga started their campaign with a 15-25 win over the United States. Fiji won their opening match by four points in a close contest against Japan.

Romania, playing their first match of the tournament, led Italy just after half time but eventually fell to a 24-18 defeat.

In Pool A, Tonga raced to an early lead after Finau Maka scored a try in the second minute and Pierre Hola added the conversion. However the United States pinned them back for most of the first half with Pierre Hola scoring just two penalties for Tonga, giving them a 13-0 lead. Shortly before half time Mike Hercus scored a penalty for the United States to take the score to 13-3 at the interval.

The Americans controlled the game for much of the second half. Mike MacDonald scored a try for the Americans to pull the score back to 13-8, but Tonga hit back with a try from Joseph Vaka. Louis Stanfill scored a try to close the gap to three points, but Viliami Vaki scored with ten minutes remaining to claim the victory for Tonga.

The win takes Tonga to third place in Pool A with four points, behind South Africa with five and England on points difference. The United States have no points from two

defeats.

Fiji overcame Japan in a dramatic encounter in Pool B. Nicky Little kicked Fiji to an early lead, but Shotaro Onishi scored two penalties to give Japan a 6-3 lead in the 30th minute. Fiji went ahead with a try from Akapusi Qera, and Japan's Onishi scored a penalty just before half time reducing Fiji's lead to one point.

Onishi scored another penalty after the restart and Japan led once more. Qera scored his second try for Fiji in the 49th minute, but Luke Thompson scored a try for Japan two minutes later. A try from Seru Rabeni once again gave Fiji the advantage, but Japan were kept in the match by a Tomokazu Soma try. Fiji stretched their lead to 11 points after Kele Leawere scored a try, and a last minute Luke Thompson try was not enough to snatch the win for Japan.

Fiji are third in the pool with five points, behind Australia and Wales on points difference. Japan are fourth, taking one point from this defeat.

In Pool C, Italy led Romania 8-0 at half time through an early try from Santiago Dellapè and a David Bortolussi penalty.

Romania took the lead early in the second half after Alexandru Manta and Marius Tincu scored tries. Italy regained the lead after they were awarded a penalty try due to several fouls from Romania. Ionut Dimofte scored two penalties for Romania to keep them in the game, but Ramiro Pez scored three to keep Italy ahead.

Italy are third in Pool C with four points, behind New Zealand and Scotland with five each. Romania

are fourth, earning one point in this match.

Scandinavian Airlines System landing gear failures prompt grounding of Bombardier Q400s

The second landing gear failure on a Scandinavian Airlines System (SAS) de Havilland Canada Dash 8 (also known as a Bombardier Q400 following Bombardier's purchase of de Havilland Canada from Boeing) within the space of a week has prompted the grounding of many of the twin-engined turboprops.

On, Scandinavian Airlines Flight 1209 suffered a right landing gear failure during landing at Aalborg Airport, Denmark. A fire broke out during the crash, and five people sustained injuries. This was followed today by the similar crash of Scandinavian Airlines Flight 2748 at Palanga Airport, Lithuania. No-one was injured.

The accidents have resulted in Bombardier recommending the grounding of all Q400s, which have undertaken more than 60,000 flights, as a "precautionary measure". This affects leading carriers around the world, including SAS, Alaska Air's Horizon Air subsidiary, Flybe, Japan Airlines, Austrian Airlines Group and Augsburg Airways, and covers around 60 aircraft.

SAS and Horizon Air have grounded 27 and 15 aircraft respectively, while Flybe have grounded six. Another airline, Porter Airlines, which operates the type exclusively against any others, have pointed out that their aircraft have not undertaken enough flights to be affected by the measures.

The landing gear are manufactured in the United States by Goodrich

Corporation. One industry analyst, Cameron Doerksen, said that he felt that although the incidents and groundings obviously constitute bad publicity, he feels it would not influence the decision of a carrier considering whether to purchase Q400s. Bombardier declined 17 cents, or 2.7 percent, to C\$6.23 on the Toronto Stock Exchange and SAS fell 6 kronor, or 4.8 percent, to 118 kronor in stock exchanging in Stockholm. Goodrich stock rose 19 cents to \$64.96 on the New York Stock Exchange.

The groundings have caused hundreds of flights to be cancelled, leaving thousands of passengers stranded every day. The cost to SAS alone is estimated at 10-15 million Swedish kroner per day.

Former Philippine President Joseph Estrada found guilty of plunder

Former Philippine President Joseph "Erap" Ejercito Estrada was found guilty by the Sandiganbayan (anti-graft court) for plunder but found him not guilty on a count of perjury.

The Philippines' 13th President was arrested in April 2001 after being ousted in a peaceful revolution in January of the same year for allegedly amassing US\$ 85 million (PhP 46=US\$) from kickbacks and for failure to declare his true assets and liabilities as a requisite for any public elected or appointed official.

After almost six years of trial, Estrada faces a lifetime of imprisonment or at least 40 years in prison.

The former president's son, Senator Jose "Jinggoy" Estrada and personal lawyer Edward S. Serapio who also faced similar charges of plunder and perjury

were proclaimed not guilty.

A special division of the anti-graft court was created to specifically hear the case of Estrada and found beyond reasonable doubt that the former President was guilty of plunder.

The court's decision stated that Estrada received money from illegal gambling and collected commissions from the sale of publicly listed Belle Corp. shares.

The court stated that it found not enough evidence to tie Estrada to charges of misappropriating tobacco excise taxes and amassing wealth deposited in the so-called "Jose Velarde" account.

The 262-page decision stated that, "The predicate acts alleged [in the two cases] were linked by the fact that they were plainly geared towards a common goal which was the accumulation of ill-gotten wealth ... and that they shared a pattern or a common method of commission which was the abuse or misuse of the high authority or power of the presidency."

As a result of the court's decision, the state will forfeit Mr. Estrada's accounts that includes P545.29 million (US\$11.5 million) credited to the Erap Muslim Youth Foundation and the P189-million (US\$ 4.10 million) Velarde account, including the so-called Boracay Mansion in New Manila, Quezon City.

Estrada, who was also a popular movie actor said in an interview after the verdict that the three person panel of judges of the anti-graft court were "pressured" to ensure the legitimacy of the incumbent administration of President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo.

Mrs. Arroyo assumed the office of the President on June 20, 2001 when a peaceful uprising forced Mr. Estrada to step down from office.

The 70 year old former President declared this Sunday that his lawyers will appeal should the court find him guilty and he is prepared to face incarceration. Estrada added that he will not ask for any form of pardon from incumbent President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo who assumed office when Estrada was ousted.

Mr. Estrada proclaimed before members of media after the verdict was read saying, "I submitted myself to the rule of law when I allowed the impeachment proceedings against me to take its course. I did not resort to influence, the trial nor to any acts that may constitute obstruction of justice, whitewash or cover-ups."

The former president re-emphasized his position that he will never ask for any form of pardon from Mrs. Arroyo's administration and he was prepared to serve his sentence at the National Penitentiary among the common people with no special privileges.

Estrada, has been on detention by virtue of a "house arrest" at his rest house at Tanay in Rizal Province, east of the capital Manila.

"I am at peace with myself notwithstanding the guilty verdict because you, my beloved countrymen, have overwhelmingly acquitted me," Estrada added.

The Philippine government placed the entire military and police on its highest level of alert, more than a week ahead in preparation for the

Estrada verdict.

Traffic around the anti-graft court was re-routed and classes from among nearby schools were also suspended to pre-empt any possible security problems resulting from pro-Estrada supporters.

On May 1, 2001, thousands of Estrada supporters amassed before Malacañan Palace to protest the incarceration of the former President and attempted to unseat Mrs. Arroyo to restore Estrada.

The office of President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo appealed before the public to "let the rule of law prevail."

Mrs. Arroyo stated during a speech before a mix group of delegates at the Presidential palace calling for "peace and reconciliation" after the verdict has been rendered.

The president has also called for an end on "political drama," to allow the country's economy progress to move forward with no fear from political instability.

2007 Twenty20 World Championship: Australia vs Zimbabwe

Zimbabwe have defeated Australia by five wickets in Group B of the 2007 Twenty20 World Championship at Newlands Cricket Ground, Cape Town, South Africa.

Australia, who are the world champions in the 50 over format, struggled against some good fielding and bowling from Zimbabwe. Elton Chigumbura took 3-20 and Gary Brent took 2-19 as Australia were restricted to 138 for 9 wickets after 20 overs. Brad Hodge was Australia's top scoring batsman, scoring 35 not out, while Andrew Symonds scored 33 runs

before being stumped.

Zimbabwe's batsmen started well, but Vusi Sibanda was caught behind for 23, as were Justice Chibhabha, Tatenda Taibu and Stuart Matsikenyeri to leave Zimbabwe on 70-4. A heavy shower interrupted the innings, but play restarted and Brendan Taylor scored 60 not out as Zimbabwe reached the target with one ball remaining in a tense finish.

Toss: Australia won, and chose to bat first.

Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe resigns

Reports are stating that Japan's Prime Minister Shinzo Abe is to resign.

"Unfortunately, he will announce himself his decision to resign. He has made a very significant decision," said Liberal Democratic Party (LDP) chairman for the affair of parliament, Tadamori Oshima.

At 2:00 pm (local time) NHK broadcast the press conference where Abe announced his coming resignation. Abe would have been Japan's Prime Minister for just under one year. He was elected on September 26, 2006.

At the conference, Abe admitted he lacked trust from Japanese people and Ichiro Ozawa, the leader of the opposite party had refused a meeting Abe had offered today. Abe expressed his concerns to continue the current foreign military mission, reportedly speaking about Afghanistan, and his expectation that resigning might change the situation around that issue and would allow the government to continue the current mission.

Not mentioned at the conference, Abe's cabinet faced domestic problems too. Due to the financial scandal, Takehiko Endo resigned from the post of Minister of Agriculture on September 3, just 8 days after he was appointed to the post, the Japan Times reported.

Interviewed by NHK, the opposite party leaders Ichiro Ozawa (DP), Kazuo Siki (JCP) Mizuho Fukushima (SDP) made criticizing comments separately. At the conference from 3 p.m. (local time), broadcast by NHK, Ozawa expressed mild surprise that Abe canceled the diet meeting scheduled today, implying he could have stepped down much before, and said that he doesn't think he rejected the offer of an official meeting with Abe as the leader of LDP and thinks such a meeting wasn't officially offered either by the government and Abe as individual. According to Ozawa, he had reported Abe would have liked to come to "greet" and had replied the question time at the Diet would be enough.

Massive earthquake strikes Indonesia on September 12

According to the United States Geological Survey (USGS), a massive earthquake with a magnitude of 8.4 has struck Indonesia and a tsunami is reported to have been generated. Some smaller aftershocks with magnitudes between 5.2 and 5.7 were also reported in the region. At least 4 have been killed and dozens injured.

The National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration has issued a tsunami warning saying that the quake had the potential to "generate a widespread destructive tsunami that can affect coastlines across the entire Indian Ocean."

"Sea level readings indicate a tsunami was generated. It may have been destructive along some coasts. Based on these data, the threat continues for all coastal areas of the Indian Ocean," said the NOAA tsunami warning.

The earthquake was recorded at 6:10 p.m. (local time), 130 kilometers (80 miles) southwest of Bengkulu, Sumatra, Indonesia with a depth of 30 kilometers (18.6 miles) and the USGS states that damage could be "moderate to heavy."

Reports say that buildings shook heavily in Jakarta and that the quake could be felt as far away as Singapore and Thailand.

Semicon Taiwan 2007 starts with 5 mainstream topics

Semicon Taiwan 2007, organized by SEMI and TAITRA, started from September 12 to 14 at Taipei World Trade Center Exhibition Hall 1 and 3. Organizers invited VIPs from semiconductor industry from Taiwan and other countries to join Opening Ceremony in the morning, and held "SEMI Theater" and executive forums related with 5 topics (300mm Prime, SiP Packaging & Testing, Solar Energy Industry, Secondary Market, Seismic Risk Management).

In the Opening Ceremony, Stanley Myers (President & CEO of SEMI Global Headquarters) continued the topic from press conference yesterday and praised the semiconductor industry in Taiwan, and he believed that Taiwan will still have a great improvement and achievement.

Terry Tsao (President of SEMI Southeast Asia) also remarked that SEMI Taiwan played as a assistant role in the semiconductor

industry in Taiwan, with the holding of Semicon Taiwan, every exhibitors can exchange their own technologies from each other, and SEMI Taiwan also cooperated with Governments in Taiwan to help the development of the semiconductor industry in Taiwan.

Chao-yi Chen (Director General of Industrial Development Bureau of MOEA of R.O.C. Taiwan) mentioned that this show is still in progress such as exhibitors and professional visitors and buyers. And he believed that this show will establish brand new records in buyers and exhibitors' trading opportunities.

According to SEMI Taiwan, this year of Semicon Taiwan has more than 750 exhibitors that used more than 1,450 booths to exhibit, with a 16.5% growing rate more than last year. SEMI Taiwan predicted that more than 40,000 professional visitors will come to visit this show.

2007 Twenty20 World Championship: Pakistan vs Scotland

Pakistan defeated Scotland by 51 runs in Group D of the 2007 Twenty20 World Championship at Kingsmead, Durban, South Africa.

The Scottish bowlers restricted Pakistan to 171 runs from their 20 overs. Opening batsman Imran Nazir was dismissed for just four runs in the third over, while Salman Butt fell for 13 soon afterwards. Mohammad Hafeez was caught and bowled by Craig Wright, taking three wickets, while Shaoib Malik was stumped in the thirteenth over leaving Pakistan on 81-4. However Younis Khan scored 41 runs and Shahid Afridi scored 22 off 7 balls and Pakistan recovered, finishing on 171-9.

In response Scotland lost Ryan Watson in the second over and Navdeep Poonia was bowled by Umar Gul soon afterwards. Fraser Watts scored 46, but Shahid Afridi dismissed Gavin Hamilton and Neil McCallum in the same over to reduce Scotland to 54-4. Scotland were bowled out in the final over for 120 runs. Umar Gul took two wickets in two balls and finished with 4-25, and Shahid Afridi took 4-19.

Scotland face India tomorrow at Kingsmead.

Toss: Scotland won, and chose to field first.

Tunisian swimmer Oussama Mellouli stripped of championship for doping

On 11 September 2007, Tunisian star swimmer Oussama Mellouli was stripped by the Court of Arbitration for Sport in Lausanne, Switzerland, of his world championship and another world championships silver medal from the 2007 World Aquatics Championship, which were held in Melbourne, Australia, in March.

He was also suspended for 18 months retroactive to 30 November 2006 – all for testing positive for amphetamine, after using the drug Adderall, which aids concentration levels, and which is widely used by college students when cramming for exams.

A few weeks after the conclusion of the 2007 World Aquatics Championships in Melbourne in late March 2007, reports began to surface that Mellouli had tested positive for a banned substance at the US Open in November 2006. These reports surfaced because FINA, the international governing body of the sport, had discovered that Tunisian authorities had

known about the positive test and only given him a warning. The rules state that when an athlete tests positive for a banned substance, he or she must be given a 2 year ban from the sport. Therefore, FINA had taken the case to the Court of Arbitration for Sport. Finally, after months of speculation, yesterday Oussama Mellouli lost his case before that Court.

He escaped the worst possible punishment, because the timing and the retroactive status of the suspension give Mellouli a chance to compete in the 2008 Summer Olympics in Beijing, where he is a favorite in several medium distance races.

However, he loses the distinction of having become the first Arab world champion in the history of competitive swimming (in 800 m freestyle), and loses another silver medal (in 400 m freestyle) from his best-ever showing at the Australian world championships.

2007 Twenty20 World Championship: Kenya vs New Zealand

New Zealand defeated Kenya by nine wickets in Group C of the 2007 Twenty20 World Championship at Kingsmead, Durban, South Africa.

Kenya suffered a disastrous start to their innings, when Maurice Ouma was bowled by Shane Bond and Tanmay Mishra was caught by Jacob Oram in the first over without scoring. In the second over David Obuya hit wicket and captain Steve Tikolo fell lbw to Mark Gillespie to leave Kenya on 1-4. Collins Obuya scored 18 runs before being stumped, and Thomas Odoyo also scored 18. Kenya slumped to 73 all out, which is the lowest score in a Twenty20

international. Mark Gillespie was the best performing bowler for the Black Caps, taking 4-7.

New Zealand had no trouble reaching the target, and Lou Vincent was the only batsman to fall when he was caught by David Obuya for 27 runs. Brendon McCullum (16 not out) and Peter Fulton (21 not out) took New Zealand to victory in the eighth over.

Toss: New Zealand won and chose to field first.

Russian President Vladimir Putin dissolves government

According to the Kremlin, Vladimir Putin, the President of Russia, has "dissolved the country's government."

Prime Minister of Russia Mikhail Fradkov has resigned, citing his reason as being "the approaching major political events in the country and a desire to give the president full freedom in making decisions, including personnel." Putin has nominated Victor Zubkov to replace him, and a new cabinet is expected to follow as well.

Parliamentary elections are to still expected to take place in three months as the parliament has not been dissolved, and presidential elections will take place in six months.

US says Israel hit Syrian targets in airstrike last week

Officials with the United States Department of Defense have stated that Israeli fighter planes struck at least one target inside Syria a week ago. On September 7, Syrian fighter planes fired upon Israeli jets that were allegedly "dropping ammunition" in the northeastern part of Syria.

The actual target, or the extent of the damage has yet to be determined, but U.S. officials say a weapons storage facility was the likely target. The Israeli government believes that Iran is sending weapons through Syria to Lebanon to arm the militant group Hezbollah. Israel also thinks that those weapons are coming from North Korea.

"It wasn't big. It was a quick strike. They were engaged by the Syrians, they dropped their ordnance and scooted out of there. The Israelis think North Korea is selling to Iran and Syria what little they have left," said an unnamed Defense Department official who also said that Israeli planes are taking photographs of possible targets and nuclear power facilities inside Syria.

Syrian officials believe that the ammunition was dropped in order to make the Israeli planes go faster so that they may escape.

"They were fleeing and in order to speed up the planes they dropped the munitions. Israel is seeking military escalation. We are exerting efforts so that we don't fall into this trap," said Bashar Jaafari, Syria's Ambassador to the United Nations.

Israel has not confirmed or denied the reports, simply stating "we cannot discuss military operations."

Free-to-air channel sues pay TV operator over rugby screening

The owner of TV3 and music channel, C4, has made an unprecedented move by winning an interim injunction against New Zealand's monopolistic pay television operator, Sky Network Television over their amount of

content screened of the Rugby World Cup. TV3, the official RWC television broadcaster for New Zealand, described Sky's actions as illegal and unethical.

MediaWorks, which runs TVWorks and RadioWorks, filed the injunction against Sky in Auckland's High Court today saying it breached fair dealing practices over its use of Rugby World Cup footage. Sky is now temporarily banned from screening TV3's WRC footage on The Cup, Rugby Highlights (channel) and Sport 365 Highlights.

An agreement between MediaWorks and other broadcasters, including Sky, was signed allowing content to be used for news purposes, but state Sky breached the agreement and used content of which it had no right to.

Bill Ralston, former head of news and current affairs at TVNZ (Television New Zealand), said when they had 2003 Rugby World Cup rights, "TV3 pushed the boundary by taking a bit more than they should." The three networks usually pushed the rules but the boundaries were relaxed. "Simply because Sky controls so many sports rights themselves, you can normally get a good quid pro quo out of them. You relax a bit, they relax a bit."

The TVWorks Chief Operating Officer said, "We are simply acting to protect our interests, and the interests of the viewing public." Rick Friesen said, "We believe Sky's behaviour to be unethical and illegal, and we will be taking whatever action we can to protect the interests of ourselves and every Rugby fan in New Zealand."

An undisclosed amount of money was paid to secure the rights to

screen footage, beating TVNZ and Sky. It has been rumoured the cost is to be in the millions of dollars (NZ\$).

Sky is yet to make a comment on this action.

A full hearing on the injunction will occur on Friday.

US President George Bush to reduce amount of troops in Iraq

According to United States officials at the White House, President George W. Bush will be cutting the amount of U.S. troops in Iraq by as much of 30,000, to "pre-surge" force levels, and the withdraw could take place as early as next Summer, but with certain "conditions" applying.

The plans are expected to be formally announced in a speech Bush is expected to make on Thursday at 9:00 p.m. (eastern time).

Officials say that the President will endorse the reduction of troops recommended by General David Petraeus.

"I believe that we will be able to reduce our forces to the pre-surge level ... by next summer without jeopardizing the security gains we have fought so hard to achieve. The level of security incidents has declined in eight of the past 12 weeks, with the level of incidents in the past two weeks the lowest since June of 2006," said Petraeus while testifying in front of the U.S. Congress on Monday.

According to officials, the conditions on the reduction of troops depends on whether or not violence in Iraq continues to decline, and how much political stability and security progresses.

Currently, there are 168,000 U.S. troops serving in Iraq, the most that have ever been in the country.

Brian Melo crowned winner of Canadian Idol

Mainstream rock singer Brian Melo has been crowned winner of Canadian Idol 2007 (Season five). The 25-year old Hamilton, Ontario native sang in front of an audience at the Air Canada Place in Toronto, Ontario. The show was two-hours.

Seventeen year old Johnny Cash and Elvis-inspired country singer Jaydee Bixby of Drumheller, Alberta finished in second.

The Canadian Idol Top 10 started off the show last night singing Jon Bon Jovi's "You Give Love a Bad Name".

The top 10, and a duet with the top two, did several performances throughout the show.

Canadian-International pop-rock singer Avril Lavigne performed "Hot" and "When You're Gone" from her third new album the "Best Damn Thing".

Season four winner of Canadian Idol, Eva Avila performed her song "Fallin' For You". Melo and Bixby presented her with gold and platinum disk awards for her debut single "Meant To Fly" and her debut album "Somewhere Else".

Country-rock singer Jon Bon Jovi, who mentored the singers for Monday's performances, sang their new song "Lost Highway" and 2000 song "It's My Life".

Canadian Idol allowed auditioners, their top 22, and top 10 to perform with instruments this year. No other Idol shows have allowed this. Top ten competitors

Greg Neufeld sang and performed with his guitar and Dwight d'Eon sang and performed with his electrical guitar, with the top 10 last night.

Canadian Idol's official top 3 competitors, including top three's eliminated Carly Rae Jepsen from Mission, British Columbia, are set to have an "Idol Winner's" tour across 15 Canadian cities this fall. The tour will start November 18, 2007 in Charlottetown, Prince Edward Island. They are expected to tour cities in Nova Scotia, New Brunswick, Newfoundland, Ontario, Manitoba, Alberta, Saskatchewan and British Columbia. It finishes with a final show in Edmonton, Alberta on December 12, 2007.

It's the first tour the show has ever done.

Melo, the winner, was a construction worker in Hamilton. He auditioned at the nearby Toronto auditions.

At the beginning of the season Bixby and Melo appeared as stiff performers but changed drastically throughout the weeks. Melo was in the bottom three, three times.

"Just remember that you are so privileged and enjoy every minute but you never know how long it's going to last," Avila said before the winner was announced by host Ben Mulroney.

An estimated five million votes were cast following Monday's performances.

Local Hamiltonians gathered last night at Hamilton Place Theatre. Approximately 2,000 fans were there. Most people and fans from, or around, the town of Drumheller gathered in a local hockey rink to show their support for Bixby.

Melo's new single "All I Ever Wanted" will be released on radio's and online music stores through Sony BMG Music Canada at 12:00am on September 13, 2007. His debut album will be out this winter.

"I want to grow and get better with each album. I want to be an international star, I'm thinking of big things. I want to hit the American market, I want to hit the European market as much as I can," Melo said.

Melo says he will go the full way and write songs for his album. He also said he has planned dates to meet with songwriters for some input on what he'll write.

"But being in this process, there's been so many songwriters, so many great musicians that haven't gotten the credit . . . that they deserve. So hopefully I'll be able to change that," Melo said.

"Keep positive, keep on the positive side of things'," Bixby said. "And you know, there's nothing negative about coming in second in a national audition, so I'm very happy. I'm glad I made my parents proud."

"I didn't think a year ago that I would be standing here. If it wasn't for the fans, my friends, my family and everyone in the Hammer... (Hamilton) It's been amazing," said Melo.

Opposition leader takes early lead in Sierra Leone presidential run-off elections

The results of Saturday's presidential run-off elections in Sierra Leone are being tallied, and early data indicated that opposition leader Ernest Bai Koroma of All People's Congress

(APC) was out front with 64 percent support. Vice President Solomon Berewa of the Sierra Leone People's Party (SLPP) had garnered 36 percent support, according to the country's election commission.

However, only 18 percent of the polls had been tallied so far and the election commission pointed out that the early poll results came mainly from an area in western Sierra Leone having strong support for APC. It could take up to 12 days to count all the votes. For the results that have been tabulated, voter turnout has been determined to be approximately 73 percent.

The lead-up to the run-off election had been marred by reports of violence and, on election day, monitors had observed some irregularities such as ballot box stuffing and excessive voter registrations. However, most observers, both domestic and international, agreed that the elections were carried out in an orderly fashion.

On September 2, the two presidential candidates signed a communiqué, which outlined ten "matters of concern" to be dealt with "immediately". The agreement laid out a framework for cooperation on issues such as security and a weapons ban. There was a declaration to condemn "all actions of intimidation, harassment and use of provocative language, physical violence directed at any person/persons or the malicious destruction of property for any reason."

One group of election monitors from the U.S.-based National Democratic Institute for International Affairs (NDI) expressed their satisfaction with the election process. "Despite

heightened tension and several reported instances of election-related violence during the campaign period, the delegation considers that the overall electoral process was generally transparent and peaceful," said NDIIA in a statement on September 10.

The September 8 run-off elections followed the first round of presidential and parliamentary elections held on August 11, which were the second held since 2002 after the end of the civil war. Opposition leader Koroma, 54, garnered 44 percent of the vote, while Berewa, 69, won 38 percent support. Should Koroma win ultimately, it would mark the APC's return to power for the first time since it was overthrown in a 1992 coup.

In a statement following Saturday's run-off elections, the spokesperson for the UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon expressed Mr. Ban's support for the process. "The Secretary-General is pleased to note that the second round of the presidential election in Sierra Leone took place on September 8 in a generally orderly and peaceful atmosphere, in spite of the tensions and violence that marred the campaign period. The Secretary-General urges the political parties and people of Sierra Leone to exercise restraint as counting of the ballots proceeds and to resolve all arising disputes through the existing legal channels."

Spokesman for the U.S. Department of State Sean McCormack relayed the sentiment of the administration. "The United States congratulates the Republic of Sierra Leone for the peaceful presidential run-off electoral process on September 8, 2007. We commend the independent

National Electoral Commission, the Sierra Leone Police, and especially the people of Sierra Leone for the overall calm and sense of order shown as voters cast their ballots."

The winning candidate will take over from current president Ahmad Tejan Kabbah who, by law, must step down after his current, second term in office.

Today in History

533 – Belisarius and his legions defeated Gelimer and the Vandals at the Battle of Ad Decimum near Carthage, and began the "Reconquest of the West" under Eastern Roman Emperor Justinian I.

1814 – War of 1812: The bombardment of Fort McHenry during the Battle of Baltimore inspired Francis Scott Key to write "The Star-Spangled Banner," which later became the national anthem of the United States.

1956 – IBM unveiled the 305 RAMAC (Random Access Method of Accounting and Control), the first commercial computer that used magnetic disk storage.

1987 – Goiânia accident: A radioactive item was stolen from an abandoned hospital in Goiânia, Brazil, contaminating hundreds of people.

1993 – After rounds of secret negotiations in Norway, PLO leader Yasser Arafat and Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin formally signed the Oslo Peace Accords. September 13 is First day of Ramadan (Islam, 2007) and Rosh Hashanah (Judaism, 2007).

Quote of the Day

Worldly renown is naught but a breath of wind, which now comes this way and now comes that, and changes name because it changes quarter. ~ Dante Alighieri

Word of the Day

fermata; n

- (music): A notation to hold a note for longer than its usual duration, until the conductor cuts it off.

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