



Top Stories

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OhmyNews citizen reporters meet in Seoul, Korea

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Citizen Reporters' Forum from June 23 to June 26, 2005 in Seoul. OhmyNews is one of the most popular South Korean news websites, and it has played an important role in the election of reformist President Roh Moo-hyun.

Dublin gets ready to be rocked once again by U2

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Wikipedia Current Events

- Maureen Faibish arrested over San Francisco pit bull mauling.
- Ohio Governor Bob Taft says he will not resign, despite ethical questions around him and his administration.
- The Irish Republican Army apologises unreservedly to the family of 14-year old Kathleen Feeney, whom it shot dead in Londonderry in November 1973. The IRA had previously blamed the British Army for the killing.
- Sir Donald Tsang is sworn in as the second Chief Executive of Hong Kong in the Great Hall of the People following his appointment by the Election Committee.
- In Iran, second round of voting begins in presidential elections between candidates Akbar Hashemi Rafsanjani and Mahmoud Ahmadinejad Nobel Laureate Shirin Ebadi announces that she will boycott the election 26 Iranians have been arrested for poll violations.
- Mahmoud Ahmadinejad wins Iranian presidential elections.
- In China, death toll in summer floods has risen to 536.
- 21 people die in clashes between government troops and rebels of the Maoist Communist Centre in the state of Bihar, India.
- Palestinian militants kill an Israeli in drive-by shooting near the Jewish settlement of Beit Haggai, in the West Bank outside Hebron.
- Palestinian Authority arrests eight Palestinians in connection with the previous day's killing of a Palestinian policeman, accusing Said Amin of the Al-Aqsa Martyrs' Brigades of leading the killers.

Citizen reporters meet at OhmyNews forum in Seoul, Korea



OhmyNews founder Oh Yeon Ho welcomed citizen reporters on Thursday.

Seoul – More than 300 "citizen reporters" hailing from countries as far apart as Chile and Norway are coming together at the OhmyNews International Citizen Reporters' Forum from June 23 to June 26, 2005 in Seoul. OhmyNews is one of the most popular South Korean news websites, and it has played an important role in the election of reformist President Roh Moo-hyun. Unlike traditional news sources, OhmyNews allows any individual with an Internet connection to contribute stories. A professional staff of journalists vets incoming submissions and decides which stories are to be published.

The project is sponsoring the forum in order to promote its English edition, officially launched in May 2004. Citizen reporters writing in English exchange ideas and stories, and try to understand the inner workings of the Korean edition. The conference is sponsored by Korean corporations such as Samsung, SK Corporation, LG, Yuhan-Kimberly, and Asiana Airlines.



OhmyNews citizen reporters holding their national flags in a ceremony on Friday evening.

Speakers include Ken Takeuchi, president of JanJan, Shintaro Tabata, head of news service at Japan's Livedoor, Professor Clyde Bentley from the University of Missouri and MyMissourian.com, Professor Neil Thurman from City University London, Jeremy Iggers from the Minneapolis Star Tribune, and Erik Möller from Wikinews.

Conference participants were welcomed by OhmyNews founder and CEO Oh Yeon Ho. They toured briefly through Seoul's technology sector, including a visit to the "Ubiquitous Dream" exhibition and Samsung's technology showroom. "Ubiquitous Dream" is meant to demonstrate Korea's vision of ubiquitous computing, including Internet-enabled refrigerators, household robots and voice recognition. Afterwards, conference attendees visited the OhmyNews news room, including a the studio used for producing streaming video.



OhmyNews news room. This is where paid staff writes stories and vets submissions from citizen reporters.

Visitors were given a chance to take a look at the Cheonggyecheon restoration site, an attempt to transform a riverbed into an avenue with parks and fountains. The restoration project manager gave an overview of the effort, and Seoul's mayor Lee Myung Bak briefly highlighted his vision of Korean city development.

At the end of Friday's events, speakers and citizen reporters alike met in the Grand Ballroom of the COEX Convention and Exhibition Center. Oh Yeon Ho gave a brief but passionate speech about his project: "We are from different countries and many of us have a different skin color, but we share one

struggle: Every citizen is a journalist." He stated that citizen journalism needs "sustainable business models" to survive. OhmyNews is funded by advertising and subscriptions. He also pointed out the need for different citizen journalism projects to collaborate, and announced the creation of a global alliance to this end.

After Oh's speech, Chin Dae Je, South Korea's Minister of Information and Communication, gave a presentation about ubiquitous computing and the future of the information and communications technology sector in Korea. Lastly, many different citizen reporters, including an 11-year-old from Utah, told their stories about how they joined the OhmyNews community and participated in group photos and a flag ceremony.

This article contains first-hand journalism by a Wikinews Reporter.

Yahoo closes user-created chat rooms over sexual conduct

Yahoo! (NASDAQ: YHOO) gave no specific reason, other than to acknowledge the use of its software in child-porn chat allegations, for closing all user-created chat rooms on its internet portal site. After a Houston, Texas television station KPRC reported on chat room names such as "Girls 13 And Under For Older Guys" and "Girls 13 And Up For Much Older Men" that were aimed at sex with children, the publicly held business Yahoo! was compelled to act by shutting down all chat rooms created by users and stopped the ability to create new user chat rooms. Online chat rooms created by the company itself are still in service and use.

Major brand name advertisers such as PepsiCo Inc., Georgia-Pacific Corp., State Farm Mutual Automobile Insurance Co., Countrywide Mortgage and T-Mobile withdrew ads placed on Yahoo! web pages that may have come under association with the offensive chat rooms. The company is also faced with a lawsuit seeking \$10 million in damages that was filed by watchdog groups of internet portals on behalf of the parents and a 12-

year-old victim of molestation. A man, who once operated a Yahoo Groups site where members traded child pornography, is also involved in the suit.

Other internet portals, such as AOL and MSN, also allow users to create their own chat rooms. These internet portals are different from Yahoo! in that they are subscription based, and only allow access to the rooms if the user is a subscriber to the service. MSN in its earliest versions of chat had monitors watch activity on its servers, but it was abandoned. Efforts to monitor chat for any effect appear to be futile. Geoff Sutton, the European general manager of Microsoft MSN, told Wired News at the time it cut free chat service in 28 countries that, "The straightforward truth of the matter is free, unmediated chat isn't safe."

According to a Reuters news story by Duncan Martell, an investigation by the U.S. Federal Bureau of Investigation that was targeted at Yahoo Groups users resulted in the arrest of more than 100 people in the United States. The lawsuit now brought against Yahoo! was filed on May 9 in U.S. District Court for the Eastern District of Texas. It charges that Yahoo! breached its duties in internet providership by allowing co-defendant Mark Bates and others to share child pornography on a chat room site called 'Candyman'.

Yahoo!'s terms of use requires persons who create chat rooms to agree not to make available content that is "unlawful, harmful, threatening, abusive, harassing, defamatory, vulgar, obscene, libelous or otherwise objectionable." Legal rulings to date imply that if internet service provider's do monitor the activity in chat rooms, they incur some responsibility for its content, similarly to a publisher's responsibility for the content found in one of its books.

The result is software providers who take a "hands-off" approach grant internet users the ability to add and create content to the World Wide Web that opens the door to contributions that range from great to sometimes objectionable, to out-

right illegal, and often enlightening.

Most of Greek workforce participating in a general strike, say unions



Greek workers' unions claim that 70 to 100% of country's workforce has joined the general 24 hour long strike on Friday. Private and public sector workers alike are protesting mass lay-offs, age discrimination of employees, lowering pensions to 40%, denouncing responsibilities of employers regarding collective contracts and demanding to keep eight hour work day.

Buses operated between 8am until 9pm, while the metro, railway, and trams did not operate at all. Administration and civil servants stopped working for three hours during the day. Banks are working with emergency personnel, causing a shortage of currency and reducing trade.

Workers in the private sector also went on strike for a day, while state employees account for half of the country's workers.

Independent estimates or reports on impact of the general strike are hard to find, as media has joined too, and did not operate at all from 1pm to 5pm.

Strike was followed by protests in several Greek cities.

The country has fallen into recession after the last Olympic games and analysts expected economic and political turmoil this summer. Greece had a high GDP growth rate prior to 2004, when it reached 4.1%. However, it is expected that for 2005, it will be around 2.7%.

Seventy arrested after fight in Moscow

round two hundred people got involved in a mass fight in central Moscow yesterday. Fists and baseball bats were used in a quarrel over land property between

employess of two firms. At one point, few concrete blocks and bricks flew.

Russian firm Real-Impex (Реал-Импекс) owns property in Granatny Pereuluk, that was due for some time to be transferred to another firm. However, the deal was broken in yet unknown circumstances. The fight arose as a way to settle scores.

Five people were hospitalized for injuries. ITAR-TASS reports that 68 people were arrested, questioned and allowed to go home.

Iranians vote in runoff election



Iranians are voting in Iran's first follow up run-off presidential election today as no candidate received more than 50% in last weeks election. The polls opened at 0430 UTC.

The choice is between conversative candidate Mahmoud Ahmadinejad (now mayor of Tehran) who has promised the poor a greater share of Iran's oil revenues and Akbar Hashemi Rafsanjani who was considered a conservative candidate in the past but now portrays himself as a reform candidate. Rafsanjani has committed himself to keeping the reforms started by outgoing President Mohammad Khatami.

Iran has a very young population and it is reported the country is divided between a more open westernized society and a return (continuation) of an Islamic society.

Regardless of which candidate wins, final outcomes are still controlled by Iran's unelected Clerical Ruling Council.

US city police officer disciplined for drawing gun

In Ann Arbor, Michigan, Law Enforcement Officer Keith Robins was

disciplined for his actions related to an investigation of an armed robbery. Two males and two females were suspected of robbing a Shell gas station, and one boy was described as having red hair and red pants. Robins was searching the surrounding area and approximately 3.2 miles away from the incident when he found a ten-person group that included one male matching the red hair, red pants description.

Robins had spoken to another officer just minutes earlier to discuss how to handle the potential suspects. They decided "that the best way to handle the situation was probably to advise them to all get on the ground, possibly at gunpoint, if the circumstances warranted," Robins wrote.

The group stopped by Robins included seven male students and three teachers from Stone School who were out for a walk. Robins detained this group until backup could arrive to confirm their identities and whether or not they were involved in the armed robbery. They were released after back-up officers arrived and police determined the students were not the suspects.

Officer Keith Robins has returned to active duty. He was placed on desk duty and paid administrative leave during the investigation of the April 11 incident.

Police Chief Daniel Oates remarked "I'm proud to say that the officer involved recognized his mistake and offered to go to the school to apologize to the students and staff who were affected, for various reasons, that did not occur, but it says a lot about our officer that he extended that offer."

School district spokeswoman Liz Margolis said officials were informed of the conclusion of the internal investigation. She said school staff members and parents jointly decided not to accept Robins' offer to personally apologize, but said police officials had visited the school twice after the incident to talk to students.

"The school has moved beyond this, so

they felt they didn't want to bring it up again," Margolis said. "The police department has kept up good communication with the school through the entire investigative process."

According to official Ann Arbor Police Department documents (Obtainable through the Freedom Of Information Act) there are defined levels of "Use of Force" for differing circumstances. When determining which level is needed officers "responses should be based upon: Physical size, strength and weaponry of the person(s) compared to the officer(s) Nature of the encounter Actions of the person(s). Exigent conditions (i.e., availability of backup)."

The force level used by the officer by drawing his gun was a level one response (lowest possible response level) described as: "Officer Presence/Verbal Direction: ... Uniformed presence or identification as a police officer, Verbal direction, or use of Restraint Devices (i.e. compliant handcuffing)." Levels two through five responses consist of the use of batons, empty hand techniques (pressure points, striking, take downs), impact weapons, pepper spray, and deadly force.

This article contains first-hand journalism by a Wikinews Reporter.

African Union rejects calls for action on Zimbabwe

The African Union has rejected Western calls for action in Zimbabwe, with South African spokesman Bheki Khumalo saying he is 'irritated' by UK foreign secretary Jack Straw's demands.

He told the BBC: "South Africa refuses to accept the notion that because suddenly we're going to a G8 summit, we must be reminded that we must look good and appease the G8 leaders. We will do things because we believe they are correct and right."

The leaders have said that Zimbabwe's actions, which have made an estimated 200,000 homeless, destroyed businesses and stopped farming in urban areas, are

justified to restore order in the country.

Yesterday a coalition of 200 human rights groups, both African and international, also demanded that the issue be discussed at the AU. In the press release for Amnesty International, a representative of the coalition said: "The appointment of a UN Special Envoy to investigate the mass violations taking place in Zimbabwe is welcome. But effective action must also be taken immediately to help those already sleeping on the streets, beside the rubble of their homes and to ensure that the evictions and demolitions stop immediately."

"The AU and UN simply cannot ignore such an unprecedented, wide-ranging appeal on behalf of the people of Zimbabwe, particularly from African civil society. African solidarity should be with the people of Africa - not their repressive leaders."

President Mugabe bulldozes homes of 200,000 across Zimbabwe



Zimbabwean President Mugabe's Operation Murambatsvina ("Drive out rubbish") has seen at least 200,000 people made homeless in Zimbabwe as the government bulldozes "illegal" homes, buildings and markets.

The opposition has said the operation is designed to "punish" those who object to Mugabe's government.

Two children under the age of two have been killed, the first deaths reported so far in the actions which have been taking place for a month now.

International pressure is building on

Zimbabwe to stop. British Foreign Minister Jack Straw has been joined by U.S. Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice in condemning the evictions and urging African leaders to speak out.

The government has said the buildings it is destroying are "illegal", and have said that the "black markets" are to blame for the country's "economic meltdown". Over 70% of the population is unemployed.

The bulldozers have the protection of armed police as they do their work. Sometimes the police have forced homeowners to carry out the destruction themselves.

At other times, the government has claimed it is destroying the buildings to get rid of unsafe structures and to reduce overcrowding. Other children have died when the walls of their houses have collapsed.

The authorities are also preventing non-governmental organisations from providing aid to those who have lost their homes.

The country currently needs to import 1.2 million tonnes of food to avoid famine as rural farming production drops.

England and Wales see 60% increase in public injured by police vehicles

The total number of people killed and injured by police officers driving cars in the course of their duties in England and Wales has risen by 61% in just one year.

The figures were released by Home Office minister Hazel Blears in a written answer to a question from Lynne Featherstone, MP for Hornsey and Wood Green in London.

They show that in 2002-2003, a total of 22 people were killed and 1,131 were injured.

But in 2003-2004, the number killed has increased to 31, with more than 2,000 injured, of which 138 were serious.

All the people killed or injured were involved in road traffic collisions with police vehicles responding to emergency calls, or those involved in high-speed pursuits.

The police force with the worst record for deaths is Greater Manchester Police. Four people died in collisions involving GMP vehicles in 2002-2003, but the number increased to 6 the following year. However, the number injured dropped from 74 to 56 over the same period.

The safest force was Dyfed-Powys Police, who did not kill or injure anyone in both years. The force covers a rural area of Wales, with a low population density.

Independent Police Complaints Commission Chair Nick Hardwick issued a statement in response to the figures.

Training and risk assessment are the keys to reducing deaths and serious injuries involving police drivers", he said.

"We all accept that in emergencies police officers have to speed and go through red lights but they must not take unacceptable risks, either for themselves or the public."

"The IPCC will continue to manage or independently investigate the most serious collisions involving police driving. We are ensuring that the lessons learned will benefit the police service."

Dublin gets ready to be rocked once again by U2



U2 in concert earlier this year

240,000 U2 fans are preparing for Ireland's most successful band ever to return for a hometown gig in Dublin. The supergroup is playing Friday, Saturday and Monday in front of 80,000 people a night at Croke Park. Gardai have put in

place a massive traffic management plan to cope with the influx of people. Fans have been queing since thursday morning when a group of fans from Holland, Italy and Canada started queing outside the stadium.

The concert forms part of U2's current "Vertigo" world tour. The support acts include emerging Irish bands Snow Patrol and The Thrills along with already very popular Paddy Casey. Ash and The Bravery will cap it off as warm up acts on Monday.

The gates for the gig will open at 4pm with the actual band not expected until around 8.30pm. Irish media has entered a frenzied anticipation of the concert all this week, with constant coverage on radio stations. The national broadcaster, RTE is set to dedicated almost 3hr 30min to the band with an exclusive interview by Dave Fanning forming the centerpiece of the stations coverage of the "U2 weekend". Coldplay frontman Chris Martin, who played in front of a sell out crowd in Dublin earlier this week told fans that U2 were "still the best band in the world".

Croke Park is the fourth largest stadium in Europe, with an official capacity of 82,000 - bigger than both Cardiff's Millennium Stadium and Paris' Stade de France. Croke Park is used to host GAA matchs such as Hurling and Gaelic Football and regularly attracts audiences of 60,000 or more in the summer months.

Senator Biden intends to run for United States Presidency



Although the next U.S. presidential election is more than three years away, U.S. senator Joseph Biden (Democrat – Delaware) has already announced his

intentions of running. Although he originally said in December 2004 that he would wait two years to make a decision, he told Face The Nation on Sunday that he will spend this year trying to "explore his support", adding, "[I'm going to take my] game on the road, letting people know what I think." He also told the CBS news show that he will make his decision as to whether or not to pursue the party's nomination towards the end of this year.

Should he decide to pursue the nomination, Biden may be vying for the nomination alongside several others, including former first lady Hillary Rodham Clinton, 2004 Democratic candidate John Kerry, and Indiana senator Evan Bayh.

Described by Ron Williams in an opinion piece as, "the walking definition of a professional politician," Biden has been vocal in his opposition to the war in Iraq. He is a top-ranking Democrat on the Senate Foreign Relations Committee where he receives press coverage for his criticism of the U.S. administration's handling of the war.

Biden ran an unsuccessful bid for the Democratic presidential nomination in 1988. Political analysts generally believe that Biden's early announcement for the presidency is good strategy when the hopeful presidential field includes other Democratic heavy weights.

Mlambo-Ngcuka sworn in as South African deputy president



Phumzile Mlambo-Ngcuka was sworn in as deputy president of South Africa Thursday becoming the first woman ever to hold that position. Other Cabinet members applauded as she was sworn in to office in Cape Town. Her appointment comes after former deputy president Jacob Zuma was sacked after being accused of corruption relating to a bribery scandal.

She stated that she will perform much the same function as Zuma, namely "looking after the second economy", HIV/AIDS issue, and other assignments President Thabo Mbeki make give her. "I will be looking after women and youth," she also said.

Mlambo-Ngcuka, a former school teacher, travelled to Geneva, Switzerland to work with the YWCA. She returned to South Africa in 1987 and assumed a leading role in the Ecumenical Action Group and other anti-apartheid groups. She was later elected to parliament and appointed deputy trade and industry minister.

In 2003 she publicly accused Jacob Zuma of corruption, though the case was never formalized due to insufficient evidence.

Individuals opposed to her appointment accuse her of involvement in the transfer of large sums of taxpayers' money to the African National Congress' election fund through an oil company. Her brother, who asserts that the transaction was completely above board, has been implicated in South African news reports.

Basketball: Djordjevic's farewell game to be played July 3



Popular Serbian basketball player Aleksandar Sasa Djordjevic will play his last game in Belgrade on July 3. More than 60 players and coaches who worked with Djordjevic throughout his career will attend the game, and all ticket proceedings will go to the UNICEF "School without violence" program.

Djordjevic played in the Yugoslavian, Italian, Spanish and NBA league, as well as for the Yugoslavian national team. The

38 year-old won two European Championships and one World Championship. He is retireing as a player of Armani Jeans Milano and an MVP of the Lega A Basket.

"Everything hurts: my shoulder, elbow and joint. Everything ends, and so does a basketball career. They still have to invent medicines that would ease this pain," said Djordjevic.

Croatian basketball player Dino Radja decided not to come to Belgrade. He told Djordjevic that he doesn't want any booing, which would ruin the farewell game.

Wikinews Back Page



Today in History

1876 - Colonel George Armstrong Custer is killed at the Battle of the Little Big Horn.

1950 - The Korean War, between the United Nations and North Korean forces, began.

1991 - Croatia and Slovenia declared their independence from Yugoslavia.

1993 - Kim Campbell was chosen as leader of the Progressive Conservative Party and became the first female Prime Minister of Canada.

1996 - The Khobar Towers bombing in Al-Khobar, Saudi Arabia, left 19 U.S. servicemen dead.

Quote of the Day

"Political language— and with variations this is true of all political parties, from Conservatives to Anarchists— is designed to make lies sound truthful and murder respectable, and to give an appearance of solidity to pure wind." ~ George Orwell

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