

*Top Stories*

**Hardliner wins Iran presidential runoff**  
Mahmoud Ahmadinejad, Tehran's hardline conservative mayor has won the Iranian presidential election with a landslide of 61.8%, according to Iran's Interior Ministry.



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.

**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.

**OhmyNews citizen reporters meet in Seoul, Korea**

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.



*Wikipedia Current Events*

- A second case of mad cow disease has been confirmed in the United States.
- Elections in Bulgaria: The people of Bulgaria are voting today and the government of Prime Minister Simeon Saksoburggotski, the country's former Tsar, is expected to be defeated.
- Pope Benedict XVI's new book contains material critical of the European Union's efforts "attempt to build a human community absolutely without God" and Western liberalization of abortion.
- Hong Kong's new leader, Donald Tsang, in a speech today promised to rebuild the trust of the people in the government of the Chinese territory.
- The Sri Lanka Muslim Congress, a political party, said it would boycott the deal between the government and Tamil rebels for sharing tsunami relief because it shortchanged Muslims.
- China's southern province of Guangdong suffered great damage from the flooding Pearl River.
- In Iran, the hardline Mayor of Tehran, Mahmoud Ahmadinejad, won Friday's run-off election for the nation's presidency with 62% of the vote.
- Residents in St. Louis, Missouri were allowed back to their homes early today after an explosion at an industrial gas plant forced evacuations Friday.
- The board of the NAACP unanimously selects business executive Bruce S. Gordon as the civil rights organization's next president

This amounts to nearly the all the aid given to Africa by the west over the same period.

Nigeria gained its independence from Britain in 1960 but was ruled by a succession of military leaders until democracy returned in 1999. In 2002, the Nigerian Economic and Financial Crimes Commission was set up to investigate corruption of past leaders.

Their figures showed that the military had squandered the public money on projects which did not help the country's citizens, and have left no lasting benefit.

The military siphoned the money off from sales of Nigerian oil - Nigeria is the world's eighth largest exporter of oil. Nigeria's last dictator, General Sani Abacha, may have stolen up to \$6 billion, but only around \$300 million has ever been recovered.

The chairman of the commission, Mallam Nuhu Ribadu described the military has having "institutionalised corruption", and of having undermined the public's desire to have efficient infrastructure in place.

"We are tired of giving ourselves bad names. Government must deliver on its promises. The moment we start doing things correctly, injustice will reduce, and corruption will also reduce. We need a leadership that is bold, strong and courageous," Ribadu said.

The G8 recently agreed to cancel the debt of 14 African nations, but excluded Nigeria on the grounds of corruption.

A professor at the Lagos Business School, Prof Pat Utomi, said that was the right decision. "Who is to say you won't see the same behaviour again if it is all written off?"

**Second case of BSE confirmed in U.S.**

Seven months after suspicions were first raised, United States Agriculture Secretary Mike Johanns confirmed that a second American cow has tested positive for BSE

**Nigeria's past rulers stole \$400 billion in public money**

Figures have revealed that Nigeria's past military dictators stole approximately \$400 billion in the 39 years they were in power for.

(also known as 'mad cow disease'), as determined by a lab in Weybridge, England. The department believes that this cow was born in the United States.

The delay in confirmation followed conflicting test results from last November and a senior research associate with Consumers Union, Michael Hansen, said USDA officials "almost sound like some Keystone Kops."

Johanns reassured Americans that they should not be afraid of eating beef, saying: "This animal was blocked from entering the food supply because of the firewalls we have in place. Americans have every reason to continue to be confident in the safety of our beef."

On June 17, the Associated Press reported: "American cattle are eating chicken litter, cattle blood and restaurant leftovers that could help transmit mad cow disease — a gap in the U.S. defense that the Bush administration promised to close nearly 18 months ago."

John Stauber, co-author of "Mad Cow USA: Could the Nightmare Happen Here?" said: "Once the cameras were turned off and the media coverage dissipated, then it's been business as usual, no real reform, just keep feeding slaughterhouse waste. The entire U.S. policy is designed to protect the livestock industry's access to slaughterhouse waste as cheap feed."

Critics of the U.S. testing regimen said the fumbles this time increase their concerns about America's screening process.

"How can we be sure they were really negative?" Craig Culp, a spokesman for the Center for Food Safety asked; "After all, (here is a cow that was) negative in November that is positive in June."

Earlier, Johanns was annoyed that the round of testing which confirmed "Mad Cow" had been ordered without him being consulted first. Inspector General Phyllis Fong, an internal auditor and investigator, has not explained why she ordered the new tests.

"I was asked by the Senate and the president to operate the department," Johanns said. "I believe, in this area, very clearly, the secretary should be consulted, whoever the

secretary is, before testing is undertaken. From my standpoint, I believe I was put there to operate the department and was very disappointed."

The companies which render slaughter waste say new restrictions are not warranted. "We process about 50 billion pounds of product annually — in visual terms, that is a convoy of semi trucks, four lanes wide, running from New York to L.A. every year," said Jim Hodges, president of the American Meat Institute Foundation.

### **Arrest warrants issued in Italy for 13 alleged CIA people on kidnapping charges**

Ten men and three women allegedly linked to the CIA have been ordered arrested by an Italian judge for allegedly kidnapping a terrorism suspect in Italy and then secretly taking him to Egypt where he said he was tortured. The Italian prosecutors office confirmed the arrest warrants relating to the abduction of imam Hassan Mustafa Osama Nasr on Feb. 17, 2003. An unnamed judicial source said; "In the judge's order, it (the abduction) is clearly attributed to the CIA."

The CIA's response to the allegation was: "We're not commenting. We're saying: if we have anything to say, we'll get back to you."

### **Dresdener Elbe Valley becomes UNESCO World Heritage site**



*Elbtal near Söbrigen*

Since July 2, 2004 the Elbe Valley near Dresden has been in the process of becoming a UNESCO World Heritage Site. Friday saw the hand over of the documents in Castle Albrechtsberg confirming the status. Today, mayor Roßberg and Professor Bandarin will unveil a plaque in the church of Loschwitz - starting the Elbe Valley celebrations.

The cultural landscape consists of an 18 km long strip along the Elbe between Soebrigen and the Dresden bridge Flügelwegbrücke. It includes the ancient city of Dresden, the

many castles along the river Elbe, the town centres of the small villages near the river as well as the very famous Castle Pillnitz.

The city of Dresden sees the status as an internationally-affecting advertisement for investors and tourists in the acknowledgment as a site of world heritage. By this status it will give no further restrictions for the UNESCO. The possibility "of a developing culture landscape" granted itself.

### **Hardliner wins Iran presidential runoff**

Mahmoud Ahmadinejad, Tehran's hardline conservative mayor has won the Iranian presidential election with a landslide of 61.8%, according to Iran's Interior Ministry. "The figures show that Ahmadinejad is the winner," Ministry spokesman Jahanbakhsh Khanjani said to reporters. His rival Ayatollah Hashemi Rafsanjani received 35.7% of the vote. An estimated 23 million votes were cast -- making voter turnout nearly 49 per cent. This runoff is the first since the Islamic Revolution in 1979.

Ahmadinejad was seen as the underdog and was not expected to make it into the runoff, but active campaigning by his supporters and their crossing of class barriers propelled him into the runoff and ultimately into the presidency. He had the political support of low-income workers, vigilante groups and militias while calling for a return to the ideals of the Islamic Revolution of 1979.

Ahmadinejad is a former commander in the Revolutionary Guard, former provincial governor of Maku and then Ardabil. As an ardent and loyal supporter of the ruling clerics and the Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, his appointment as mayor of Tehran by the city council surprised few.

### **Serbian Parliament members accuse NGOs of anti-Serbian campaign**



Much of Friday's Serbian Parliament session was spent accusing domestic non-governmental organizations (NGO) of

spreading anti-Serbian sentiments.

The discussion was started by Tomislav Nikolić of the Serbian Radical Party, who criticized Nataša Kandić and her Humanitarian Law Center for publicly accusing Nikolić of war crimes in former Yugoslavia.

Last week, Kandić announced that she has evidence of Nikolić's personal involvement in killings of civilian Croatian population in village Antin in December 1991. Nikolić responded that he was a "regular volunteer", and that while he was in Antin no one was killed. About 50 elderly Croats were reported as murdered by Serbian volunteer forces and the Yugoslavian People's Army.

Aleksandar Vučić, also a member of Serbian Radical Party said: "The sort of banditry by which you accuse innocent people of the worst possible things will have to stop and [accusers] will be held responsible. When you have people like that, such pathological liars, you can't do much."

In addition to the opposition Serbian Radical party, who hold the most seats in parliament, members of the ruling parties also voiced their concerns.

Miloš Aligrudić of Democratic Party of Serbia (DSS), the leading government party, said that "People like Kandić should not cause distinguished representatives to have to defend themselves in front of the Parliament."

Dragoljub Kojčić (DSS) expressed his opinion that there is an "hysterical campaign against the interests of Serbia" led by the non-governmental sector "which, as their finances reveal, are representatives of power centers outside of our country." Kojčić proposed creation of "a committee for finding the truth about Srebrenica in the part for which there are insinuations of Serbian involvement by NGOs."

The only party taking an dissenting was opposition Democratic Party. Dušan Petrović told journalists that "it is not true that NGOs are leading anti-Serbian campaign ... I don't think that any action aimed at bringing criminals to justice is negative in any way."

### OhmyNews citizen reporters meet 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 on Thursday evening. On Friday, 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 studio used for producing streaming video.

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.*

# Wikinews Back Page



## Today in History

1409 - Western Schism: The Catholic church is led into a double schism as Petros Philargos is crowned Pope Alexander V after the Council of Pisa, joining Pope Gregory XII in Rome and Pope Benedict XII in Avignon.

1940 - Under the Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact, the Soviet Union gave Romania an ultimatum requiring it to cede territory.

1945 - The United Nations Charter was signed in San Francisco, California.

1959 - The Saint Lawrence Seaway, a system of canals connecting the Great Lakes to the Atlantic Ocean, was officially opened.

1963 - John F. Kennedy uttered "Ich bin ein Berliner."

June 26 is Flag Day in Romania

## Quote of the Day

"The sons of torture victims make good terrorists." ~ André Malraux

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