



Top Stories

British Prime Minister Tony Blair to resign on June 27

British Prime Minister Tony Blair has announced the date when he will stand down from office.

Subtropical storm brews off eastern Florida, USA

The first storm the the 2007 Hurricane Season brews near eastern Florida.

Featured story

Exclusive interview with prominent blogger, David Farrar

New Zealand-based blogger David Farrar, most known for his "fairly popular" blog, Kiwiblog, talks about blogging, web 2.0, and the Internet in general.

Wikipedia Current Events

- East Timorese presidential election, 2007: Prime Minister Jose Ramos Horta is elected as the next President of East Timor winning a runoff election against Francisco Guterres of Fretilin by 73% to 27%.
- Military officers from North Korea and South Korea agree on the first cross-border rail link over their heavily fortified border since the Korean War.
- President Bashar al-Assad states that Syria will not cooperate with a United Nations tribunal to try suspects in the suspected assassination of former Prime Minister of Lebanon Rafiq al-Hariri.

Wikipedia Current Events

- The Grand National Assembly of Turkey votes on a proposal to have the President of Turkey directly elected by Turkish voters.
- Syrian dissident Kamal Labwani is jailed for 12 years for allegedly undermining national security by visiting the United States.
- The Prime Minister of the United Kingdom Tony Blair announces he will step down on June 27, once the Labour Party has elected a successor.

Only one World War I veteran left in Canada

Just yesterday the second-last Canadian World War I veteran died, leaving just one remaining alive in Canada. The 106 year old Percy Dwight Wilson died in Toronto's Sunnybrook Health Sciences Centre veterans residence, being there from June 2006.

Born, February 26, 1901, one of nine children in Elgin County, Ontario, Wilson enlisted in the Army in 1915 as a Bulgier. After his Basic Training, he was sent to England via a ship across the Atlantic. As he was a minor, he was never sent to the front lines, and helped to dig trenches until being sent back to Canada.

However, he was still determined to be a soldier, and re-enlisted upon arriving home, and was then discharged from the service in 1918. He joined the forces once more, as a reserve Officer in the 1st regiment reserve. World War II

began and Wilson enlisted for a third time but was not accepted due to age limits.

From 1919 on to his retirement in 1966 he worked for Bell Canada, he studied music and vocals at Toronto's Royal Conservatory of Music and the London, Ontario's University of Western Ontario where he met his wife Eleanor Dean, who married in 1927 and later died at 94.

His death leaves John Babcock, who currently resides in Spokane, Washington, USA, also 106 years old, as the sole living Canadian who once served in the First World War.

Wilson is servived by his two sons Dean and Paul, four grandchildren, and seven great-grandchildren.

Tamil Nadu film 'Sivaji: The Boss' nearing release

The much awaited film of Tamil Nadu is nearing release. After several postponements from April 12 to May 8 then to May 17 and finally postponed to the release date of May 26. The last three dates are all add up to the magic number of Shankar's, 8. This release date was confirmed by Ayngaran International (the international distributor) and AVM (the producer). The reason for the latest postponing of the film was due to the background score of the film being incomplete, A. R. Rahman (music director) is currently working on this.

This will be Rajinikanth's 100th Tamil language film. The film has

big names Shankar (director of the 8 Filmfare Award winning Anniyan), AVM (the largest producer of films in Tamil Nadu), A. R. Rahman (word recognized due to his work in the Bombay Dreams musical) and the "Superstar" of Tamil cinema Rajinikanth.

Pyramid is expecting over Rs. 120 million in the Nizam area of Andhra Pradesh from the films ticket sales. So far it has been estimated that over Rs. 1 billion has been invested in the film.

New developments in Hrant Dink case

Several Turkish daily newspapers have reported new developments in the case of Hrant Dink, who was the editor-in-chief of the bilingual Turkish-Armenian newspaper Agos. Hrant Dink was gunned down in front of his office on February 19 in Istanbul by Ogün Samast, a 17 year old ultra-nationalist Turk.

According to the Turkish daily newspaper Radikal, Bahattin Hayal told to the public prosecutor that following the killing of Hrant Dink and subsequent arrest of Hayal's son Yasin, as the mastermind behind the killing, he was taken to the Trabzon Security Services. Here he was told by a Turkish police chief that " His son (Yasin Hayal) would now live better. We would write our report accordingly. The flag could be taken from the ground by people like Yasin. He would not receive an heavy punishment with our report. God permits he would be given a light sentence."

On the hand other, Yasin Hayal forwarded five petitions to the public prosecutors' Selim Berna Altay and Fikret Seçen, in February and March of this year and informed them that he was encouraged to kill Hrant Dink and given directions by Erhan Tuncel,

who was a police informant. Hayal also reported that an officer-in-charge who was working at the Trabzon Security Services visited Hayal and Tuncel prior to the killing and told them that "the Turkish flag had fallen to the ground and people like Erhan and Yasin would raise the flag". In his statement to the Prosecutors, Tuncel reported the same incident and also stated that he had informed the authorities about the assassination plan but the authorities failed to take an action to prevent the killing of Hrant Dink.

The Turkish Public Prosecutors believe that Erhan Tuncel planned the killing of Hrant Dink together with Yasin Hayal and knowingly misled the authorities.

Milliyet, a turkish daily newspaper reported that Erhan Tuncel in his statement to the Public prosecutors stated that he had informed the authorities 16-17 times prior to the killing. Moreover, Milliyet reported a 48 page report about Erhan Tuncel, prepared by the Security services gone missing.

Children's program on Palestinian TV propagates Islamic world leadership

The children's show 'Tomorrow's pioneers' on Al-Aqsa TV, which is controlled by Hamas, is hosted by a character resembling Mickey Mouse, who tells young viewers to drink milk, study hard and fight for Islamic world leadership and commit violence against Israel and the United States.

The images date from April but have made the press earlier this week. Meanwhile the show was reported to have been put on hold, pending a "full revision", according to the Palestinian Minister of Information Mustafa Barghouti. But a representative from Al Aqsa TV

called this a mistake, so the show might still be aired on Friday.

At the beginning of the video Farfur (Butterfly), an actor in a mouse suit, calls for Islamic world leadership, starting in Palestine. He pleads for the restoration of the glory of Palestine, the liberation of Jerusalem, Iraq, and "the Muslim countries, invaded by murderers." "We will resist and protect against the Zionist occupation," co-host Saraa predicts. Saraa is only a young girl. A report by Fox News claims that children have been used before for Palestinian propaganda.

The children's program is filmed in a studio with fuzzy dice and colourful letters and numbers on the wall. In this setting the shows hosts proclaim things like: "We will win, Bush. We will win, Sharon. Ah, Sharon is dead..."

Another fragment shows how an 11-year-old girl calls the show and sings "Rafah sings 'oh oh', its answer is an AK47," which is a Kalshnikov assault rifle. The fake Mickey Mouse gestures holding a firearm.

Meanwhile the footage has been watched over 100,000 times on YouTube. The images were edited by the Israeli organisation Palestinian Media Watch, which studies and brings to attention the role of the Palestinian authority on the media and schoolbooks. The Middle East Media Research Institute was also involved in bringing the show under the attention.

Walt Disney's only living daughter, Diane Disney Miller, has already reacted to the news. She was shocked by the show, and called it "pure evil".

According to the Palestinian

Minister of Information Mustafa Barghouti (who is independent from both Hamas and Fatah), the show is an illustration of the struggle of the Palestinian people against the Israeli occupation. "It's a situation of imprisonment for years. And that oppression, this apartheid system, of course drives people crazy and creates certain reactions as the one you have seen," Barghouti explained. He also called the shows content "very unfortunate," and a "mistaken approach" to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.

Exclusive interview with prominent blogger, David Farrar

Freelance journalist writing for Wikinews, Gabriel Pollard, with help from Brian Anderton, has interviewed New Zealand-based blogger, David Farrar on blogging, web 2.0, and the Internet in general.

David Farrar is most known for his "fairly popular" blog, Kiwiblog, where he posts on various topics, including politics and technology. He is the vice-president of the Internet Society of New Zealand, and has been involved in helping to split Telecom New Zealand up and in anti-spam legislation.

David Farrar first started using the "best invention ever," Internet, in February 1996 after having owned a BBC Micro microcomputer since 1982. On the Internet he debated various issues using Usenet newsgroups. Kiwiblog now serves for this purpose. He then got his own personal Internet account with ihug in August of that year.

Farrar also has political ties, which can be seen in some of his blog posts. For eight years, Farrar worked for various Prime Ministers (PM) and Opposition leaders for the

National Party, working with the likes of former PM Jim Bolger and former PM Jenny Shipley in the Media Services Unit of Ministerial Services.

Until Farrar landed himself a job in parliament, he had been using mainly Apple computers, "[I] finally converted to Microsoft in 1997 after being the only person in Parliament to have a Mac!"

Farrar was involved with introducing public e-mail for ministers, and the first Prime Minister website.

In 2004, after leaving politics, Farrar set up his polling and research company.

Kiwiblog, sparked by now defunct blog NZ Pundit by Gordon King, currently receives over 300,000 visitors a month. He suspects that Russell Brown, and the Spareroom blogs get well over 100,000 visitors. "There's then probably a dozen or so other bloggers who get into the tens of thousands."

"Gordon [King] would post wonderful polemics challenging the conventional thinking and reporting, and after a few months of reading him I realized that I also had views and could try sharing them with the world. So in July 2003 I made my first post, and enjoyed it ever since."

Farrar admits to not having a deliberate strategy for promoting himself and his blog, he just found that doing more posts in a day and posting what he was interested in got the visitors that were interested in the same things. "Oh and most important of all is to have a sense of humour and enjoy doing it."

If Farrar wasn't blogging, he says he would be "Earning money! I

spend far too long blogging when I should be working on more business. However it is doing well enough that I can divide my time up between my business, InternetNZ and blogging and not starve."

Farrar has a few tips for those politicians who have started a blog, or are looking at starting one up, "Very few are successful because [they] treat it as a one way communication tool where they just post press releases or travel diaries. Rodney Hide is the best example of doing it the right way. John Key is video blogging and responding to comments through future videos, which is a different way to interact." But still warns that most readers of blog prefer "honest opinion" instead of reading what the politicians want them to read.

Farrar is a huge supporter of Wikipedia and says that he uses it multiples times a day. He says that he was "very proud" when the Wikipedia community regarded him as notable enough to have his own entry.

"I wish I had more time to edit Wikipedia. There's lots more NZ content to get onto there."

Sites like YouTube, which Farrar uses daily, show that they can leave this big brand names like Google Video for dead if they show strong innovation, Farrar says.

Farrar says the success to websites such as Wikipedia and YouTube is because of multiple user generated content, "...rather than tightly controlled content from one source." The focus on the community at large is also a major factor of their success.

When asked where he sees the

Internet in decades from now, his simple response was, "I wish I knew." But he does predict every house in New Zealand will be connected to the Internet via fibre optics.

One scenario Farrar drew was, "...being able to see a map of your local area on your phone, and not just get told where the nearest toilets or bookstore is, but also if any of your friends are nearby."

David Farrar would just like to say thanks for the opportunity of being interviewed on Wikinews.

British Prime Minister Tony Blair to resign on June 27

British Prime Minister Tony Blair has told the Cabinet of the UK government the date when he will stand down from office and allow his successor to take over as leader of the Labour party, and thus Prime Minister, in a private meeting.

"The prime minister started cabinet by acknowledging that it wasn't quite a normal day. He confirmed that he would be going to his constituency. He confirmed that he would make an announcement. He also confirmed that announcement would be about his intentions and that those intentions had not changed," said the official spokesman for Blair.

Just before 11:00 a.m. local time he arrived at Teeside Airport, England, on his way to his parliamentary constituency of Sedgefield, where he is due to publicly announce his resignation to fulfill a promise to his constituents that they would be the first to know news of his departure.

Blair arrived at the Trimdon Village Labour Club in Sedgefield at 11:25 a.m. where he was greeted by supporters with banners and a

large international media presence. At midday he made a speech where he named 27 June 2007 as the date he will officially step down as prime minister.

It is widely reported that the current Chancellor, Gordon Brown, will replace Blair. In this morning's fifteen-minute-long Cabinet meeting Brown is said to have described Blair's premiership as a "unique leadership".

Canadian government employee faces criminal charges in leak of environment plan

A Canadian government employee of Environment Canada was arrested Wednesday for criminal breach of trust with respect to a leak of the Conservative government's green plan days before it was due to be made public.

The Royal Canadian Mounted Police (RCMP) arrested the unidentified male employee following a complaint from Environment Canada's security department. The department alleges that a secret draft copy of the government's regulatory framework, Climate Change Section of the Eco-Action Plan, had been leaked to the media prior to being released officially to the public.

"An employee who violates the terms of their workplace security clearance, including the release of secret documents, may be subjected to legal consequences, including criminal charges," said Superintendent Stan Burke, officer in charge of the RCMP's financial integrity division. There was also concern that if the details were leaked, securities laws could be compromised if stock trades were made based on privileged information.

Environment Minister John Baird was forced to reveal details of the government's climate change plan on April 24, in an opinion piece published in the media. The move came after a copy of a speech describing the plan was faxed by mistake, a day earlier, to an opposition Liberal party member and environment critic, David McGuinty. It is not clear whether the police action Wednesday was related to that incident.

The RCMP stated that the matter remains under investigation and, as such, no further details would be released at this time.

Today in History

1792 - Merchant sea-captain Robert Gray first entered the Columbia River, the largest river flowing into the Pacific Ocean from North America.

1812 - British Prime Minister Spencer Perceval was assassinated by John Bellingham in the lobby of the House of Commons.

1918 - The Mountainous Republic of the Northern Caucasus was established, with Tapa Tchermoeff as the first prime minister.

1949 - Siam was officially renamed Thailand.

1960 - Mossad agents captured Adolf Eichmann, a Nazi leader and fugitive war criminal hiding in Argentina.

Quote of the Day

Life is a tragedy for those who feel, and a comedy for those who think.
~ Jean de La Bruyère

Word of the Day

- kaleidoscopic; adj
- Brightly coloured and continuously changing in pattern, as if in a kleidoscope.

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