



Top Stories

CNN banned from Iran after misquoting president



Time Warner Inc.'s CNN, has been barred from Iran after "mistranslating" a small portion of Mahmoud Ahmadinejad's speech on Saturday.

Israeli PM Ariel Sharon briefly opens eyes

Israeli PM Ariel Sharon is said to have opened his eyes today for the first time since his stroke on January 4, 2006. He underwent a tracheotomy on Sunday to help him breathe.



Featured story

Free Software Foundation releases first draft of GPLv3



The Free Software Foundation released the first draft for the next version of the GNU General Public License today. The revisions mark the first changes to the GPL since the second version was released in 1991.

Wikipedia Current Events

- Former United States President Gerald Ford is hospitalized with pneumonia.
- Ellen Johnson-Sirleaf is sworn in as Liberia's new president. She becomes Africa's first female elected head of state.

Wikipedia Current Events

- The UN appeals for US\$240 million of food aid for West Africa to feed at least 10 million people affected by the food crisis, with Niger being the worst-affected.
- A dockworkers' strike in Europe has thousands of workers off the job in protest over proposed liberalization of European Union rules on port services. A demonstration outside of the European Parliament leaves twelve French police officers injured in Strasbourg.
- Former US Vice President Gore blasts current President Bush's policy on domestic spying, saying President Bush "repeatedly and persistently" broke the law in connection with the NSA warrantless surveillance.
- The Premier of Western Australia, Geoff Gallop, resigns his office after announcing he is suffering from depression.
- At least 27 people are killed in two suicide bombings in Afghanistan.
- Nine people die after jumping from a burning eight-story office building in the Russian city of Vladivostok amid allegations of blocked emergency exits and fire code violations.
- Iraq's electoral commission rules Monday that more than 99% of the ballots from the Dec. 15 parliamentary elections are valid, opening the way for a new government to start coming together.

Ellen Johnson-Sirleaf inaugurated as Liberian president

Ellen Johnson-Sirleaf has been inaugurated as Liberia's first female president, and also the first female head of state in Africa.

The inauguration took place in the country's capital, Monrovia and was attended by several key figures in world politics. The inauguration was attended by US Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice, US First Lady Laura Bush, and South African President Thabo Mbeki.

The inauguration was held outdoors, as Liberia lacks any proper buildings for the event to have taken place in, including their captiol building which stood nearby. The BBC reports that guests sat on plastic patio chairs, and were shielded from the sun by palm matting.

Johnson-Sirleaf's address said "We know that your vote was a vote for change, a vote for peace, security and we have heard you loudly." She asked for a moment of silence for the thousands who died in Liberia's civil war.

CNN banned from Iran after misquoting president

Iran has "barred" Time Warner Inc.'s, CNN, from working in Iran "until further notice" due to mistranslating comments made by Iran's President, Mahmoud Ahmadinejad during a press conference Saturday January 14, 2006.

In his speech Saturday, Ahmadinejad defended Iran's right to continue nuclear research.

State Media complained to CNN that they had used the translation "nuclear weapons" instead of "nuclear technology."

The ban by the Culture and Islamic Guidance Ministry was read in a statement on state-run television saying, "due to mistranslation of the words of Ahmadinejad during his press conference, activities of the American CNN in Tehran are banned until further notice," the statement said. "CNN quoted Mahmoud Ahmadinejad as saying that Iran has the right to build nuclear weapons," the network said in its report of the ban. "In fact he said that Iran has the right to nuclear energy." He then adds "a nation that has civilization does not need nuclear weapons, and our nation does not need them.'

CNN has acknowledged that they had made the mistake.

The network then went on to say "CNN apologized on all its platforms which included the translation error, including CNN International, CNNUSA and CNN.com, and also expressed its regrets to the Iranian Government and the Iranian ambassador to the UN."

Mohammad Hossein Khoshvaght, director of foreign media at the Ministry of Culture and Islamic Guidance, said on state television that he welcomed CNN's apology, but that "so far it's not clear whether it was something pre-planned or a mistake. Therefore, we will ban its activities (in Iran) for the time being. CNN's right to work in Iran would depend on an assessment of the broadcaster's

future coverage of the Islamic state."

CNN has told its viewers that it has not yet been officially notified of the ban.

Free Software Foundation releases first draft of GPLv3

The Free Software Foundation released the first draft for the next version of the GNU General Public License at the International Public Conference for GPLv3 in Cambridge, Massachusetts, USA, today. The revisions mark the first changes to the GPL since the second version was released in 1991.

According to Richard M. Stallman, the president of the Free Software Foundation, the most significant change to the license are changes to allow GPLv3 to be compatible with other popular free software licenses, notably the Apache Software License 2.0 and the Eclipse license. A second significant change, according to Stallman, is the addition of a clause prohibiting the use of GPL software for Digital rights management (DRM), "something for which there can never be toleration."

As of noon EST today, the license is available in draft form on the Free Software Foundation's website. The conference about the license, which continues now and into Tuesday, is being held in Building 10, Room 250, on the campus of the Massachusetts Institute of Technology. Approximately 200 people attended the morning session of the conference, during which Eben Moglen gave what he called a "quick" 90 minute overview of the license changes.

While Moglen's presentation covered a great deal of legal

detail, it was not without levity. When the cell phone of Dave Turner, an FSF staff member sitting in the front row, rang during Moglen's speech, Stallman broke in, requesting of the audience, "If you have brought in a portable tracking and surveillance device, you should turn it off," before making other remarks about the police.

The crowd at the conference included a large number of free software celebrities, including Bruce Perens, Andrew Tridgell, and Chris diBona. According to Wikinews reporter Brandon Stafford, it seemed that IBM and Sun were the corporations with the most employees present. Representing the companies were Bob Sutor, Craig Cook, and Mark Brown from IBM and Simon Phipps and Doug Johnson from Sun. Also in attendance were representatives from Intel, Redhat, MySQL AB, Hitachi, and Qualcomm, among others.

Brazilian general dies in Haiti

The Brazilian General Urano Teixeira da Matta Bacellar, military chief of the United Nations Stabilization Mission in Haiti (MINUSTAH) died in the morning of January 7, in his Port-au-Prince hotel room.

Early speculations that the commander had committed suicide were supported both by a recently published UN report, and by a separate Brazilian police investigation. Bacellar had been placed in charge of the mission in August 2005, replacing General Augusto Heleno Ribeiro Pereira.

Since Bacellar's death, the post was run by a Chilean general. Carlos dos Santos, the director of the UN Information Center in Brazil, told Agência Brasil that a

new commander is presumed to be named no later than next week.

The UN Department of Peace Operations, along with Kofi Annan and advisors, are evaluating which of the two nominees are best suited to the position.

Arizona may have driest winter in centuries

Nearly a month into the Winter season, much of Arizona has still not received rain or snow. Drought conditions have affected the state to varying degrees for the past 11 years, but 2006 looks to be the worst yet.

Rain and snowfall are typically most prevalent during January and February, but a high-pressure system has been keeping storms away from Arizona. Both are needed to refill the water reservoirs and keep forests healthy; if they continue to dry out under the current warm weather, it could cause an earlier fire season than usual.

The lack of rain will also increase farmers' demand on the water supply earlier in the year than usual and may cause problems if the summer monsoons also fail to arrive.

U.S. senators defend Pakistan missile strike that killed 18

U.S. senators are defending the missile strike that left 18 Pakistani villagers, including women and children, dead in northern Pakistan but missed the alleged al-Qaeda member Ayman al-Zawahiri.

Senator Trent Lott said the strike was "clearly justified by the intelligence". Senator Evan Bayh explained that with the lack of government control in the tribal areas "regrettably, this kind of

thing is what we're left with." He said, "Now, it's a regrettable situation, but what else are we supposed to do?" Senator John McCain apologized for the strike, but added that he couldn't say the U.S. would not do the same thing again. He added the U.S. has "to do what [we] think is necessary to take out al-Qaeda, particularly the top operatives. This guy has been more visible than Osama bin Laden lately."

Meanwhile the killings prompted demonstrations across Pakistan on Sunday. They were mostly organized by Islamist factions according to, but opposition political parties as well as a key coalition partner of the current government participated. "There has been a protest in every big city, and the government understands why so many people are angry," said Pakistan's information minister Sheikh Rashid Ahmad. The demonstrators were mostly peaceful, chanting "Death to America" and "Stop bombing innocent people," but on Saturday the office of a U.S. backed aid agency was set on fire.

A Pakistani intelligence official has contradicted reports that DNA tests were being performed on the victims to determine their identity. "What do you think, that the families of the victims would let us or the Americans dig the graves of their loved ones for FBI tests? An absolutely crazy idea."

West Australian Premier Geoff Gallop resigns

Western Australian Premier, Dr Geoff Gallop, has resigned his post, to treat depression. Dr Gallop says the "debilitating" illness forced him to seek expert help last week. The 54-year-old became State Premier in 2001 and was re-elected in February last

year.

In a media statement today, he said:

WA Premier, Dr Geoff Gallop resigned on January 16 2006, he was recently diagnosed with depression

"It is my difficult duty to inform you today that I am currently being treated for depression. Living with depression is a very debilitating experience, which affects different people in different ways. It has certainly affected many aspects of my life. So much so, that I sought expert help last week. My doctors advised me that with treatment, time and rest this illness is very curable. However, I cannot be certain how long I will need. So in the interests of my health and my family I have decided to rethink my career."

Dr Gallop says he will not do any further media interviews in the near future. The WA parliamentary Labor Party will decide on his successor. State Treasurer and Acting Premier, Eric Ripper, has cancelled his scheduled leave to act as Premier in the interim.

Dr Gallop was first elected to Parliament as the Member for Victoria Park in 1986. In today's statement he said: "In fact, what has made this announcement all the more difficult today is that I love being premier, I love the work, I love the state and I love its people.

Australian Federal Opposition Leader, Kim Beazley says Dr Gallop is a brilliant and innovative leader, who leaves Western Australia a far better place than he found it. He says Dr Gallop will be remembered for his decisions relating to WA's environment and

education system, along with his vigorous pursuit of minerals development.

Federal deputy Labor leader Jenny Macklin says Dr Gallop's departure is devastating. "For me, he's always been the most brilliant man, an extraordinary politician, a very lively and entertaining character," she said. "I think he's made an enormous contribution both to Western Australia but also to broader Australian politics."

Prime Minister John Howard says all Australians will wish Dr Gallop and his family well for the future. "He worked very hard for the people of Western Australia as Premier," Mr Howard said in a statement. "Despite our political differences I always found it possible to work constructively with him."

The president of the WA branch of the Australian Medical Association, Dr Paul Skerrit, says he was shocked to hear of Dr Gallop's resignation. He says it shows depression can strike people in all kinds of jobs.

"Depression is a thing that smites people when they're in their prime and doing very well," he said. "People think that you've got to have something wrong with you to get this illness but it's not the case at all."

Israeli PM Ariel Sharon briefly opens eyes

Israeli media is reporting that Prime Minister Ariel Sharon opened his eyes for the first time since he suffered a major stroke on January 4, 2006.

However, hospital officials said the reports were generated by the Sharon family's "impression of eyelid movement, whose medical

significance is unclear."

"He was listening to a tape of his grandson and you could see tears in his eyes for a matter of seconds before he closed them again," a doctor treating Sharon told AFP news agency on condition of anonymity.

Army Radio, citing unidentified close associates of Sharon, say the Prime Minister could "recognize people around him."

However, hospital officials state that it is "too early to tell whether the development represented a significant improvement or was just a temporary reflex."

Sharon had undergone a tracheotomy on Sunday to help with his breathing and to help prevent infection from his respirator tube.

Daily protests in Sarajevo, organized online

A peaceful protest in Sarajevo, lasting for several weeks so far, was ignited by a post on an online discussion board, Sarajevo-X. In a post named "Patriotism" one user, with nickname Stolac92, expressed his dissatisfaction with Bosnia today, writing among other things on December 22: "My heart hurts. It hurts because of all injustice, recklessness, theft... But what hurts the most is that we are quiet, we are tolerating, forgiving instead of doing something about it."

After receiving support from other forum members, the user proposed gathering in front of the Assembly building every day, starting from 5pm. The protests started the same weekend, and had been lasting since, with couple to several dozen people attending.

Forum members decided they will not support any particular political party, but to work for Bosnia and Herzegovina without political ethnic entities and to support policies which are fair to all citizens and punish criminals. They decided to use an open palm with a Bosnian map on it for their symbol, with word Dosta (Enough) as their slogan.

Bosnia and Herzegovina has been divided in two ethnic ethnities since the end of the war, the Serbian Republic and Federation of Bosniaks and Croats. Economic progress has been slow and created disparity between people.

New Zealand's secrets from 20 years ago released

The New Zealand Government is to investigate how 20 year old top secret papers were released. They show that New Zealand was spying on the communications of Argentina, the Soviet Union, East Germany, France, Egypt, Japan, North Korea, Vietnam, Laos, the Philippines, Fiji, Tonga, the Solomon Islands, South Africa and even the United Nations diplomatic cables.

The leak came when a copy of the Government Communications Security Bureau's (GCSB) 1985-1986 annual report was found among the personal papers of former New Zealand Prime Minister David Lange. After Cabinet signed off, they were released by Archives New Zealand.

According to intelligence expert Nicky Hager, "This is the most secret report and most revealing one ever to come to the public."

Duty Minister Jim Anderton says the report should have been returned to the agency after David Lange had read it. "There'll be

some investigation by officials as to how the report was not returned and was just left in the archive like this for people to stumble over... I think there'll be some concern about that."

The report also shows that the United States threatened to spy on New Zealand if New Zealand didn't back down on its anti-nuclear legislation.

In 1984 after the New Zealand government passed laws that stop nuclear-powered or nuclear-armed ships from using New Zealand ports, the United States announced that it was stripping New Zealand of allied status until United States Navy ships were re-admitted to New Zealand ports.

Today in History

1893 - The Citizen's Committee of Public Safety, led by Lorrin A. Thurston overthrew the government of Queen Liliuokalani (pictured) of the Kingdom of Hawaii.

1929 - Popeye the Sailor, a cartoon character created by Elzie Crisler Segar, first appeared in newspaper comic strips.

1946 - The UN Security Council held its first meeting at Church House in London.

1995 - The Great Hanshin Earthquake struck near Kobe, Japan, killing over 6,000 people and causing over US\$100 billion of property damage.

Quote of the Day

"Human felicity is produc'd not so much by great pieces of good fortune that seldom happen, as by little advantages that occur every day." ~ Benjamin Franklin

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