



Top Stories

Romanian journalists freed



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Greece wins 2005 Eurovision song contest



The Eurovision Song Contest 2005 was won yesterday by the entry from Greece, Helena

Paparizou, singing My Number One, second place going to the entry from Malta and third place going to Romania.

The competition was held in Palace of Sports in downtown Kiev, Ukraine, after its entry, Ruslana, had won the 2004 contest singing Wild Dances.

Adrian dissipates, producing heavy rains and mudslides

Hurricane Adrian appeared to have dissipated over Honduras Thursday night, but is still providing heavy rainfall to the region.



At 8 a.m. PDT, the center of now Tropical Depression Adrian was dissipating at 15.0° N, 87.5°W; inland over western Honduras. Its is moving toward the northeast at about 17 mph (28 km/h), containing maximum sustained winds of 30 mph (45 km/h), with higher gusts.

Weather



Five Irish schoolgirls die in bus crash



The bus involved was a Bus Eireann schoolbus

Five schoolgirls, all between thirteen and sixteen, have died in a bus crash in County Meath, Ireland. The three vehicle crash, involving a school bus carrying fifty-one teenagers and two cars, occurred at 4.30pm on a straight section of the Navan to Kentstown road.

Apart from the five fatalities, six children in a critical state and nineteen others with less serious injuries have been admitted to Our Lady's Hospital, Navan. Six more teenagers, also in a critical state, and twenty others with lesser injuries have been admitted to Our Lady of Lourdes Hospital, Drogheda, County Louth.

The bus was carrying secondary school students from four schools home when the accident occurred. At present it is unknown what caused the accident - but it is suspected that the two cars collided head on and the bus then attempted to swerve in order to avoid them, causing it to topple over. Several investigations have begun; including one by the Gardaí and one by Bus Eireann.

The accident was quickly responded to by an emergency plan which lead to fourteen ambulances, several fire engines, squad cars and a few helicopters arriving on the scene within minutes.

BBC drops programmes as third of staff join strike



The staff of the British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC) have entered a one-day strike this morning in dispute of impending job cuts and partial privatisation.

The industrial action follows union ballots at three of the leaders of journalism and broadcasting: Amicus, National Union of Journalists and Bectu. The NUJ have already described the action as an "astonishing success" and its general secretary, Jeremy Dear, describes the union as "absolutely delighted with the level of support we have received for the strike." The unions expect 11,000 of 27,000 BBC staff to take part in the strikes.

Due to the extensiveness of the strike it has affected the output of the BBC on its television and radio services. News and live services have been particularly badly affected following the unions aims to leave "blank screens and dead air".



Staff joining the strike at the regional Broadcasting House in Bristol.

BBC Radio 4's Today, The World at One, PM and The World Tonight have all been cancelled; BBC One's 1 O'Clock News

and 10 O'Clock News was shortened from half an hour to 15 minutes and the 6 O'Clock News was cut to half an hour rather than a hour; live programming of BBC News 24, BBC World and Five Live have been extensively cut; and international output on the World Service has been impacted.

The most noticeable impact have been on the Breakfast programme, headed by just one presenter (against the usual two) and cut short for a pre-recorded interview. The leading serious news magazine programme, Newsnight, will also be cancelled.

Some BBC radio celebrities have defied the strike action and appeared for work on their shows. These include breakfast radio presenters Chris Moyles of BBC Radio 1, Terry Wogan of BBC Radio 2, and Shelagh Fogarty of BBC Radio 5.

Unlike a similar 1989 strike in which presenter Nicholas Witchell crossed the pickets to read news, those presenters who have decided to continue their positions have not been publicly denounced.

Striking staff have been picketing outside the main entrances of the BBC television centre in west London.

The strikes have occurred following the Corporation's plans to cut 3780 jobs and privatise parts of the national service. It has claimed that these cuts are necessary to spend more on programming when they were announced in March by governing director Mark Thompson. The cuts aim to make savings of GBP 355 million (US\$663.37 million, EUR 487 million).

Unions have defied calls by BBC executives to partake in consultations over impending actions. The unions have responded by claiming that consultations would give their staff little say and that negotiations are the only way in which they will be listened to.

The ballot to strike which was held on May 12 also determined to strike for 48

hours on May 31 and June 1. It is unclear if any further action is planned.

### Romanian government approves new minorities law



The Romanian Government approved the new draft minorities law, which will give Romania one of the most progressive minority laws in Europe

The Romanian government has approved a new draft minorities law which will give national minorities the right to study in their native language at all levels of education, from pre-school to university.

If the law is approved by the parliament, the state must guarantee mother tongue education to recognised minorities, either in separate institutions or separate classes. Class sizes in pre-school, primary school and middle school must not exceed 10 people, while 15 students is the limit for high school. All exams can also be taken directly in the mother tongue of the minorities, and minorities will receive funding from both the central government and local government to set up educational institutions in their native language.

Aside from education rights, the new draft legislation also states that authorities do not have a right to undertake legislative or administrative measures to change the ethnic mixture of an area. The law stipulates that minorities have the right to set up cultural organisations, and are entitled to space for TV and radio broadcast in their language.

The draft law states that the recognised minority groups to which it will apply include: Albanians, Armenians, Bulgarians, Czechs, Croats, Greeks, Jews, Germans, Italians, Macedonians, Hungarians, Poles, Russians, Roma, Serbs, Slovaks, Tatars, Turks and

Ukrainians. Romania's largest minority groups are the Hungarians, which make up 6.9% of the population, followed by the Roma, which make up 2.5%.

The new law brings Romania's ethnic minority rights to European Union standards, giving the country one of the most modern and progressive pieces of legislation in this field in Europe.

### Bill Clinton visits Romania to take part in branding conference



Former United States president Bill Clinton

Former United States president Bill Clinton visited Bucharest on Saturday to attend the Beyond Borders conference, where he delivered a keynote presentation about the meaning of branding, or marketing, a country. The Beyond Borders conference was also attended by several high-profile Romanian personalities, including President Traian Băsescu, Prime Minister Călin Popescu-Tăriceanu, opposition leader Mircea Geoană and former Prime Minister Petre Roman.

Clinton said that since his last visit to Romania in 1997, things have changed positively. The country had become a NATO member (an event which occurred in 2004), it is soon to join the European Union, and people are more optimistic, with higher hopes for the future.

Clinton praised Romania for its involvement in the relief effort for the Indian Ocean tsunami of December 2004, stating that "This proves you [Romanians] are involved and you want to be more integrated into the

international community."

As to branding Romania, Clinton advised that Romanians should find a phrase or symbol that truly reflects the country and that its residents believe in. He said, "If 98 percent of Romanians will believe in that phrase, it is good, because they will be able to convince foreigners."



Romanian President Traian Băsescu likes to see his country as "the new tiger of Europe"

The former U.S. president said that, before the conference, he had a talk to President Băsescu about marketing. Clinton said that Băsescu wants to launch Romania's image as "the new tiger of Europe", making an allusion to Romania's solid economic growth and political progress in the past few years. Romania's economy grew in 2004 by 8.3%, one of the highest growth rates in Europe.

Meanwhile, Clinton said he thought a more appropriate phrase would be "find Europe's future here". He stated that, "Every Romanian I have met believed in freedom and believed in the future of his country, [a future] which is tied to the US and Europe."

Clinton also said that, in order to give Romania a competitive advantage over other countries in the region, it should choose elements that are positive and different from its neighbouring countries. "You can simply say Romania is bigger. That gives more room for investment," he said.

Aside from attending the Beyond Borders conference, Clinton launched the Romanian translation of his

autobiography "My Life", going to a major bookstore in Bucharest to sign 500 copies of the book. "My Life" sells in Romania for 75 new lei, or €21, with 5000 copies launched in bookstores around the country.

### Karzai blames U.S. and Britain for increased opium production



Opium poppy. Photo by Catherine Giayvia

Afghanistan opium cultivation was a record 323,700 acres last year and yielded almost 90 percent of the world's supply. Opium may account for one-third of Afghanistan's GDP.

On Sunday's CNN's Late Edition, Afghanistan's President Hamid Karzai laid the blame for the explosion of opium production in his country at the feet of the US and Britain. "This particular operation in Kandahar or in other parts of the country, which have not been so successful, was supposed to be done by an agency, a department that was funded by the international community, by the United States, by Britain. The failure is theirs, not ours." Kazai said. "Where international money and creation of forces for destruction of poppies was concerned, it was ineffective and delayed and half-hearted."

Karzai was responding to allegations in Sunday's New York Times that his government was dragging their heels in reducing the opium production in Afghanistan. In Kandahar Province last week, farmers were visible from the main road scraping the last resin from poppy plants. That location is just 10 minutes outside the provincial capital.

### Romanian journalists freed



The three journalists: Sorin Miscoci, Marie-Jeanne Ion and Ovidiu Ohanesian

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Romania's president, Traian Băsescu, assured people that, for the journalists' release, no ransom was given and there was no negotiation in terms of changing Romania's foreign policy. Romania's 860 troops will remain in Iraq.

Ion Vasile, the father of Marie-Jeanne Ion, said that he was happy that his daughter is in safe hands, and considers that, after her release, he feels she has been "born again". He said, "It's an immense happiness, for which we prayed 53 days!"

A Hercules plane left Romania yesterday, at 16:30, for Iraq. For security reasons, the journalists were not boarded onto the plane during the night. It is expected that they will return with this plane today, leaving for Bucharest.

### BBC prepared for news blackout as staff strike



Broadcasting House, home of BBC Radio 4.

The British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC) looks tonight to be resigned to losing its flagship radio and television news, politics and current affairs broadcasting.

Staff at the technicians' union Bectu, the manual workers' union Amicus and the National Union of Journalists (NUJ) are taking part in a one day strike in protest to the 4,000 job cuts announced earlier this year.

The job cuts amount to almost 20% of the BBC's workforce and are part of a £355 million cost-cutting move by the new Director General Mark Thompson, which unions say will compromise the quality of the BBC's output.

On Thursday the BBC were forced to concede that BBC TWO's flagship current affairs show Newsnight would fall casualty to the strike after presenter Jeremy Paxman said he would not cross the picket line.

Radio 4's four main current affairs programmes, The Today Programme, The World At One, PM and The World Tonight are expected to be replaced with short news bulletins and pre-recorded material. Other shows which are usually live are expected to be pre-recorded or produced by management.

Television news bulletins are expected to be shortened and will not contain their usual high-tech graphics. The rolling news channel BBC News 24 has prepared to air 50% pre-recorded material tomorrow, and rolling news radio station Five Live has also pre-recorded some shows.

Coverage of the Chelsea Flower Show on BBC ONE and BBC TWO which begins tomorrow is likely to be affected.

It is unclear how hard BBC News Online and the World Service will be hit, and how many of the BBC's field journalists will break the strike.

A 48 hour strike is scheduled for the 31st

of May and 1st of June, and further strikes will be announced if talks do not advance, though the strikes have so far avoided clashing with major outside broadcasts such as Saturday's FA Cup final.

Gerry Morrissey of Bectu says that "Staff are keen to take part in action to leave director general Mark Thompson in no doubt that he is out of touch," and the NUJ secretary Jeremy Dear predicted major disruption.

#### **Wikipedia Current Events**

-Nambaryn Enkhbayar is elected President of Mongolia.  
-Chancellor Gerhard Schröder of Germany announces early federal elections to be held later this year, after his Social Democrats lose the state election in North Rhine-Westphalia to the Christian Democrats, ending 39 years in government.

-Helena Paparizou becomes the first contestant from Greece to win the Eurovision Song Contest.  
-In England, Arsenal win the FA Cup by beating Manchester United in a penalty shootout.

#### **Today in History**

1487 - Impostor Lambert Simnel was crowned in Christ Church Cathedral in Dublin, Ireland as "King Edward VI".  
1626 - Peter Minuit bought Manhattan in exchange for trade goods valued at 60 guilders.  
1822 - Troops led by Antonio José de Sucre secured the independence of Quito from Spain.  
1911 - The New York Public Library opened.  
1941 - World War II: The German battleship Bismarck sank the British battlecruiser HMS Hood in the Battle of the Denmark Strait.

#### **Today's fact provided by Wikipedia**

The Delaware Basin in Texas contains fossilised coral reefs from the Permian.

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