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**WORLD news**

**THE NETHERLANDS**

The man who killed Dutch gay politician Pim Fortuyn was convicted of murder and sent to prison for 18 years April 15.

Some of Fortuyn's supporters believed Volker van der Graaf, 33, should have been jailed for life. They stormed from the courtroom when the sentence was announced.

Van der Graaf said he shot Fortuyn, who founded a popular grassroots political party, for the sake of the Netherlands' Muslim population. Fortuyn had proposed a ban on additional Muslim immigrants, saying the ones who were already there had failed to integrate into Dutch society.

Van der Graaf said, "I could see no other option than to do what I did."



Pim Fortuyn might have had enough support to become prime minister of the Netherlands

**CANADA**

A 2-year-old boy in London, Ontario can't have two moms and a dad, Family Court Justice David Aston ruled April 11.

Although the three adults share parenting of the boy, only the biological mother and father are his parents, Aston ruled. The judge said he wanted to rule otherwise, but the Children's Law Reform Act prevents him from naming more than two people as a child's parents.

The boy "obviously [is] thriving in a loving family that meets his every need," Aston said. The nonbiological mother told *The London Free Press*, "We are heartbroken that, in his honor's view, our lives cannot reflect the truth of our son's life."

**UNITED KINGDOM**

British transsexual and her husband haven't been married for 22 years like they thought. Five Law Lords from Britain's highest court, the House of Lords, ruled April 10 that Elizabeth and Michael Bellinger's marriage is invalid because gender is fixed at birth.

When the couple got married in 1981, the same year Elizabeth had a sex-change operation, no one requested proof of her gender. The Bellingers sought legal recognition as a test case.

"The man I have been married to all these years and been his wife, his dishwasher, cleaner and cook...it means he has never existed," Elizabeth, 56, said after the ruling. "Everything was taken away from me today.... I fear I am left with no choice other than to seek redress in the European courts."

The British government said in December that it hopes to change laws prohibiting transsexuals from marrying as a member of their post-operative gender. Only three other European nations—Albania, Andorra and Ireland—refuse to recognize sex changes.

**JAPAN**

The Home Affairs Ministry ruled in mid-April that a trans candidate could run for a local government seat identified as her chosen gender. News reports said the instructions to the Metropolitan Election Administration Commission might be the first time the government has OK'd submission of a public document with a gender ref-



Britain's highest court has invalidated Elizabeth and Michael Bellinger's 22-year marriage

erence contrary to an individual's family register.

Aya Kamikawa, 35, will run for the Setagaya Ward Assembly as a woman April 27 even though she was born male. "I hope the decision will serve as a starting point for necessary legal reforms to allow one to live fully in accordance with one's preferred sex," she told *The Japan Times*.

**NEW ZEALAND**

About 25 percent of New Zealand women and 11 percent of men admit to having had gay sexual attractions, University of Otago's Dunedin Multidisciplinary Health and Development Study has found.

Researchers questioned 980 26-year-olds all born in the city of Dunedin. People with more education were more likely to acknowledge same-sex attractions.

**ARGENTINA**

In a first for Latin America, civil union laws came into force in Buenos Aires and in the nation's Río Negro province April 1.

Both laws extend marriage rights to unioned gay and straight couples in areas such as social security, contracts, mortgages, pensions, insurance, sick leave, bereavement leave, visitation rights and relocation expenses. In order to register, couples must have been together for two years.

"We have taken a great step toward becoming a tolerant society based on the dignity of all people, without distinctions," Buenos Aires City Councilor Héctor Costanzo said. Similar laws are under consideration in the provinces of Buenos Aires, Jujuy and Córdoba.

**FRANCE**

The Higher Audiovisual Council OK'd the launch of a gay cable channel, Pink TV, April 9. In addition to regular programming, the network will be permitted to broadcast 208 pornographic movies a year if they are doubly encrypted and air only between midnight and 5 a.m.

Pink is required to give viewers the option of subscribing to a version that does not transmit porn, and cable operators are prohibited from bundling Pink with channels targeting children or teens. As part of its bargaining with the council, Pink agreed to invest 23.5 percent of its profits in French television and film production.