



Source: AFP, Reuters, 'Insurgents shut Iraq's largest oil refinery', *The Age online*, 31/12/05.

Tags: [world events](#), [celebrations](#)  
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Around the world, any significant event must be accompanied, or even better, preceded by relatives with video cameras. In Iraq, since the price of petrol has risen sharply, wedding plans for many families have been curtailed. Apparently each wedding party includes convoys of cars with relatives sprouting out the windows videoing the event. Without this, well, it's not really a wedding.

Meanwhile, in Baku, Azerbaijan: Parked near the entrance steps was a spotless white Lada. Two strings of red baubles were stretched across the hood and windshield. Inside, the stairwell of the building was swollen with people, dancing and singing. Naked light bulbs and electrical wires dangled from the ceiling. Men clapped and stomped their feet. Women swayed to the music, arms raised, accenting the oriental melody through the expressive movements of their hands and fingers. Children watched, leaning over the concrete stair railing. Relatives with video cameras trained their lenses on the groom inching his way through the crowded apartment hallway toward his beloved. The 18-year-old bride waited in a cramped room nearby. As is the tradition, she fixed her gaze to the floor, occasionally dabbing her eyes to imitate tears. Her white dress sparkled with gold trim.

Caleb Daniloff, 'Baku Diary', *Azerbaijan International*, Spring 1997 (5.1), <http://www.azer.com/>

They are there for Christmas in Fiji: As the big day had drawn closer, Kesh had felt the familiar sense of excitement grow. It wasn't the same sense of anticipation she'd felt when she was younger. Instead of greedily chewing up the whole of her Christmas holidays, sliding down the sugar-crazed slippery-dip of extra attention from long-lost relatives in the form of melty chocolate and fizzy drinks and lollies, she now savoured every day. The conversations, the general immersion—all the things she missed when she went back to Melbourne, the things that would come back to her in doona-wrapped dreams on cold winter nights. The toe-curling, acid-sour, totally addictive crunch of pale green, unripe mango double-dipped in chilli-salt. The all-night card games and Bollywood movie marathons. Being chased around all day by loud relatives with video cameras. The warm coconut-oil head massages as everyone sat around drinking tea and talking.

Shalini Akhil, *The Bollywood Beauty*, Penguin, 2005, <http://www.penguin.com.au/spotlight/>

At a liberal arts college in central New York: I noticed another sound of graduation, later that night after the luncheon. It startled me as I was walking up the hill on the way to the Torchlight Procession. It was quiet and dark, and the gentle shuffle of relatives with video cameras began to echo over the campus. All of a sudden, there was a booming clang. It was the chapel bell. I didn't know the chapel had a bell. It stopped me in my tracks, and I paused for a moment to listen to its rhythmic tintinnabulation. (That is a big word for ringing. I have always wanted to use it, but never had the chance!) The vibration of each toll announced to me, with wordless clarity, that graduation was finally here. The bell also told me that I was late, so I sprinted the rest of the way up the Persson Hall steps.

Kate Bertine, 'The Sounds of Graduation' *The Colgate Scene On-Line*, <http://www4.colgate.edu/scene/july1997/graduation.html>

Or in the life of a young woman of Sydney: I went to West Pennant Hills today to help with Caper's winter dance recital.

OMG i have never been surrounded by so many cute little girls before in tutus with their make up all done and mothers doing their hair and relatives with video/cameras. It was THE cutest thing, and they'd be running around and practicing [sic] their little tap dances and ballet and stuff.

After helping out with the recital (showing people where to go, watching over the little ones so that they don't [sic] run off while their parents are watching the show, getting all the groups up on stage and telling all the little ones to be quiet) we wanted to go to Krispy Kreme but instead we decided that it was be much nicer if we have coffee and cake so we have more time together (there were 3 cars—and we would have all waited seperately [sic] for more than a hour).

Karen, Sunday July 27, 2003 entry, *Wateva Kaz! Blog*, <http://karenmay.blogspot.com/>

Petrol is now over \$1.20 a litre in Sydney but I doubt if it will ever stop the celebration of any young girl's dance recital.

*Adapted for performance from a Google search by Barbara Campbell.*