

A close-up portrait of Vladimir Putin, looking slightly to the left with a serious expression. He is wearing a dark suit and a white shirt.

Today in History

August 9, 1999

▲ **Former KGB officer Vladimir Putin was named acting prime minister of Russia after President Boris Yeltsin sacked his fourth premier in 17 months**

1962: The morning sickness drug thalidomide, subsequently linked with birth defects, was banned in Australia

1990: China's first airship, 40 metres long, made its maiden flight over the central province of Hubei

2002: A crow was reported to have bent a piece of wire to make a tool in order to retrieve food

2004: The world's deepest vertical drop, 516m deep, was found in a cave in Croatia's Velebit mountains