



Top Stories

Thai PM Thaksin ousted by coup



A military coup has taken place in Thailand with soldiers and tanks surrounding government buildings in Bangkok while

ousted Prime Minister Thaksin Shinawatra was at the annual UN General Assembly in New York. The army Commander-in-Chief Gen. Sondhi Boonyaratkalin has been announced to be the acting prime minister.

UN General Assembly opens with rhetorical appeals by both Bush and Ahmadinejad



US President George W. Bush and Iranian President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad

addressed the 61st annual meeting of the UN General assembly in New York

Featured story

Canadian terror suspect Arar cleared after one year of torture

The RCMP bungled the case of Maher Arar leading to an innocent man being tortured in Syria following his deportation from the United States. Justice Dennis O'Connor's report, released yesterday, reveals that the RCMP erroneously told the United States that Arar was linked to Al Qaeda and was wrongly described as an "Islamic extremist individual".

Wikipedia Current Events

- BBC Top Gear presenter Richard Hammond is critically injured in an attempt to break the UK land speed record for the TV show
- In Kazakhstan, 41 miners die in the nation's worst mining accident after a methane explosion in a coal mine.
- Former South African Deputy President Jacob Zuma's corruption trial is thrown out by the judge at Pietermaritzburg High Court, who rules that the State's case goes "from one disaster to another" and failed to follow proper procedure. This is thought likely to improve Zuma's chances of succeeding President Thabo Mbeki, but prosecutors have said that they will refile charges later.
- Dozens are killed and hundreds missing in India and Bangladesh after heavy rainstorms in the Bay of Bengal.

- The United States Federal Reserve decides to leave its benchmark interest rate unchanged at 5.25% for a second successive month. Chairman Ben Bernanke and his colleagues believe a slowing economy and falling energy prices are starting to relieve inflation pressures.
- Shinzo Abe is elected as party leader of the Liberal Democratic Party in Japan, replacing the current Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi. He will likely be elected as the new prime minister on 30 September 2006.

Wikipedia Current Events

- The leader of the military coup in Thailand, General Sondhi Boonyaratglin, declares that a new civilian prime minister will be appointed in two weeks to replace the deposed Thaksin Shinawatra.
- A second night of violence in the capital Budapest leaves nearly 60 people injured and leads to 100 arrests as police clash with demonstrators seeking the resignation of Prime Minister Ferenc Gyurcsány.
- A public memorial service is held at Australia Zoo in Beerwah, Queensland, Australia, for "The Crocodile Hunter" Steve Irwin.
- The English Football Association is to investigate allegations of corruption and the taking of illegal payments (known colloquially as 'bungs') within the sport.

Richard Hammond injured in jet-powered car crash

Richard Hammond, a British television presenter known for presenting shows such as Top Gear and Brainiac, is in a stable condition in hospital following a car accident during filming for Top Gear. He was injured when the jet-powered car he was driving crashed during filming for the former. The "Vampire" car, which holds the British land speed record, overturned whilst being driven at speeds of up to 280 miles per hour at Elvington airfield near York, in what was suggested to be an attempt at bettering the

previous record. It has been alleged that he succeeded in a previous attempt. It was during his final attempt that the crash occurred. Emergency services were called to the scene at 5.45pm local time (16.45 UTC).

The BBC reports suggest that he was taken from the crash scene unconscious and airlifted to the specialist neurological unit at Leeds General Infirmary. The ambulance service is reported to have said that Hammond began to regain consciousness upon arrival at the hospital. However, a firefighter who witnessed the accident said that he was able to speak when removed from the wreckage, and numerous eyewitnesses from the Top Gear crew claimed he was 'helped into' an air ambulance, suggesting he was conscious at the time.

The car was "very very badly damaged and in many pieces on the runway", according to BBC News 24, reporting comments made by his colleagues.

A BBC spokesman confirmed that the presenter had been injured. Presenters are reported [BBC] to be at his side. Consistent news emerged that he had regained some sort of consciousness by the time he arrived at the hospital in Leeds.

At 11:26pm local time, Hammond was declared by BBC News 24 to be in a stable condition.

Cricket: India beats the West Indies by 16 runs

India defeated the Windies by 16 runs in the fifth ODI at the Kinrara Oval in Kuala Lumpur, thereby keeping alive their hopes of making it to the finals of the DLF Cup tri-series. The West Indies were chasing 163 to win, but were

bowled out for 146 at the end of the 41st over. India will now face Australia in the semi-final on Friday. The West Indies have already secured themselves a place in the final.

Winning the toss, India elected to bat first but got off to a disastrous start. Skipper Rahul Dravid was caught behind off Dwayne Smith's bowling for a duck, and was soon followed by Virender Sehwag who was bowled by Smith after getting just one run off six balls. Suresh Raina, Sachin Tendulkar and Harbhajan Singh helped bring India's total up above the 150-mark, even as the rest of the batting order collapsed under the West Indian attack.

The Indian bowlers managed to put some pressure on the Windie batting order by getting some early wickets. Shivnarine Chanderpaul, Ramnaresh Sarwan and Runako Morton were all dismissed in the 20s, following which the rest of the West Indies batsmen were all sent back to the pavilion by the 41st over.

Two Canadian Liberal leadership candidates failed to donate to party

A Wikinews analysis of financial reports filed with Elections Canada shows that two of the candidates for the leadership of the Liberal Party of Canada have not made any financial donations to the party, its riding associations, or election candidates in 2005 or 2006. Neither Michael Ignatieff nor Gerard Kennedy are recorded as having made financial contributions.

Ironically, Ignatieff was the recipient of a donation from one fellow leadership candidate, Martha Hall Findlay, who donated \$230.58 to his successful effort to

be elected to the House of Commons in the January 23, 2006 federal elections.

Bob Rae, a former leader of the Ontario New Democratic Party donated a total of \$845 to the Liberals since the beginning of 2005 including \$300 to MP John Godfrey's election campaign and \$300 to Pierre Pettigrew's riding association in Papineau. He also donated money to NDP candidates in the January election including \$300 to Irene Mathysen, who was a cabinet minister under Rae in the 1990s, and \$250 to his former special assistant, Rochelle Carnegie, the NDP's candidate in Willowdale. Carnegie's Liberal rival was Jim Peterson, brother of former Ontario premier David Peterson whose government Rae defeated in 1990.

Scott Brison is the most generous Liberal having donated a total of \$3175 to the party, its candidates and riding associations, followed by Ken Dryden who donated \$2145, Joe Volpe who has donated \$1695, Hedy Fry with \$1323.49, Hall Findlay with \$1290.85, Rae's \$845 and Stephane Dion with \$595.

Totals do not include donations made by the candidates to their own leadership campaigns. Wikinews examined financial reports for donations to political parties, riding associations and federal election candidates made in 2005 and 2006.

Mercury contamination throughout the food chain

A new report released by the National Wildlife Federation finds that, in the United States, the animals of many different species, including species eaten by humans, are contaminated with mercury at levels higher than

previously thought. Mercury poisoning in humans, which can result from eating contaminated animals, leads to a wide range of conditions, including kidney and neurological damage, fatigue, vision problems, and tremors. Mercury poisoning in some animals is so severe that they cannot reproduce at their normal rates, or they simply die from it.

While many people are aware of mercury contamination of fish, more recent studies have found that insects, and animals that eat them, also have high levels of mercury. Felice Stadler, from the National Wildlife Federation, says that "the research shows birds that eat contaminated insects get contaminated themselves. Turkeys and chickens, which humans eat, eat those same contaminated insects, so this is the tip of the iceberg."

Confirming previous studies, the report also finds high mercury levels in animals that eat fish. Because of the high mercury levels, 46 of the 50 states have issued advisories for pregnant women and children against eating certain types of fish, including tuna and swordfish. States have also issued other warnings because of mercury-contaminated foods. For example, Florida has issued a warning against eating alligator meat; Utah, against eating shoveler and goldeneye ducks.

According to Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia, the National Wildlife Federation is the largest American conservation organization. The report, released on Tuesday, is based on 65 different scientific studies conducted by more than 20 scientists. It highlights that, in the United States, mercury is accumulating in a diversity of

species, including species of fish, mammals, birds, reptiles, and amphibians, and in a diversity of environments, including freshwater, marine, and forest habitats. Some of the animals in which mercury is accumulating include songbirds, alligators, turtles, bats, otters, polar bears, mink, ducks, loons, and bald eagles.

Felice Stadler says that the report "underscored how pervasive mercury contamination has become. Nearly every aspect of our food web has been contaminated. It's difficult to find an ecosystem that's not contaminated, whether it's ocean or forest or coastal waters or wetlands."

According to Wikipedia, mercury exposure in humans can result in brain damage, birth defects, severe neurological consequences, mercurial ptyalism, Minamata disease, and possibly autistic behaviors.

In the United States alone, mercury pollution is about 100 tons per year. Primary sources of pollution include coal-burning power plants, waste water treatment plants, and waste incinerators.

World Wars lowered New Zealanders life expectancy

A population study, released by Statistics New Zealand titled A History of Survival in New Zealand, highlights that the life expectancy of New Zealand males born in the mid 1890's would have been five years higher without the impact of the two world wars, as 10% of males died in war. Also males born in the late 1910's would have had a three year higher life expectancy, without the impact of the two world wars as

well. The new study is an international study of survival and mortality.

The study also reveals that a male born in the late 1870's would have had an average life span of 51-years-old and in the 1930's the average life span was 69-years-old. And in females the life expectancy is 75-years-old, previously 55-years-old.

Kim Dunstan, Statistics NZ demographer, said: "The dramatic lifespan changes were attributed to many factors, including improved hygiene, sanitation, medicines and infectious disease control. Changes in lifestyle had also made an important difference."

People born in the late 1870's had a 23% chance of not making it to see their 15th birthday, people born in the 1900's had a 15% chance, people born in the 1930's had a seven percent chance, people born in the 1960's had a three percent chance and those born around the 1990's had a one percent chance.

Mr Dunstan said: "The study provided the most complete picture of how long New Zealanders lived and showed for the first time the impact of war deaths on the population. Death comes to us all and it does affect us at a lot of levels. A lot of people have had family members who died in the war and can relate to their own experiences."

A History of Survival in New Zealand also shows that New Zealand is one of the few countries in the world that has an almost complete and detailed history of births, deaths and migration information dating back to the late 1800's. This study is a historic

book full of births, deaths and external migration for the population of New Zealand. It will also be used in the future relating to health, population and mortality areas. It is also unique because it follows the population from birth right through to death. "We see the study very much as the basis for further work ... across other organisations in New Zealand and, indeed, internationally," Mr. Dunstan said.

Riots in Hungary as PM 'lies'

More than 150 people were injured when protestors clashed with Hungarian police in the capital Budapest on Tuesday. The protestors were demanding the resignation of of the Prime Minister Ferenc Gyurcsany after a videotape in which the PM tells MPs that the government "lied throughout the last year-and-a-half, two years..." and that there were no "significant government measure we can be proud of" came to light on Sunday.

The tape recorded a meeting held a few weeks after the April elections and the PM, in a speech riddled with obscenities says that tough economic measures are needed but admits lying to voters during the elections. The revelations have lead to protests in the capital and several other cities and more are planned, calling on the PM to resign. The Prime Minister has announced that he has no plans to resign and has vowed to continue his budget reforms. On Monday, he was backed by a unanimous vote by Socialist MPs.

The Hungarian President, Laszlo Solyom has said that the revelations have created a "moral crisis" and opposition parties have demanded his resignation, and the centre-right Fidesz party said that

they plan to boycott Parliament over the affair.

Some protestors have stormed buildings and set cars alight. On Tuesday, trouble began when a group of protestors, who were trying to hand in a petition, and some broke into the state television building. Police used tear gas and water cannons to quell the protests. About 150 people were reported injured, including 102 police officers.

Japan's Liberal Democratic Party chooses Abe

Shinzo Abe took 66% of the vote in today's Liberal Democratic Party election for a leader to replace Junichiro Koizumi, whose term as party chief expired. The party, with a solid majority in the House of Representatives, is expected to elect Abe to be the next Prime Minister. Abe is a third-generation politician related to two former Prime Ministers. The election comes on the day before his 52nd birthday. He is expected to become the nation's first Prime Minister born after World War II.

"The LDP has helped make Japan a democracy that has contributed to the world," Abe said after the vote. "I will demonstrate my leadership to preserve the flame of ideals, and put reforms forward as the first party leader from the postwar generation."

Four suspects arrested for assault on Oslo synagogue

The Norwegian police has arrested and charged four men, aged between 20 and 30 for an assault on a synagogue in Oslo at 2:30 am on Sunday, September 17th.

The four arrested are from different ethnic backgrounds and can be detained up to three days before appearing in front of a

judge. Police have not ruled out further arrests over the incident.

At least 10 shots were fired at the synagogue. Nobody was injured in the incident. It is believed that the attack was carried out with an assault rifle.

The Mosaic Religious Community, which owns the site had requested for better protection following threats and an incident of vandalism last month.

UN General Assembly opens with rhetorical appeals by both Bush and Ahmadinejad

During the opening day of the 61st annual UN General Assembly on Tuesday, Iranian President Ahmadinejad used his address to challenge the effectiveness of the UN Security Council.

"Can a council in which they [the United States and Britain] are privileged members address their violations? Has this ever happened?" President Ahmadinejad asked the assembly. "In fact we have repeatedly seen the reverse."

"The persistence of some hegemonic powers in imposing their exclusionist policies on international decision making mechanisms, including the Security Council, has resulted in a growing mistrust in global public opinion, undermining the credibility and effectiveness of this most universal system of collective security," President Ahmadinejad said.

The US President Bush address earlier on Tuesday spoke both to the assembly and the world Islamic population.

"Freedom, by its nature, cannot be imposed -- it must be chosen.

From Beirut to Baghdad, people are making the choice for freedom. And the nations gathered in this chamber must make a choice, as well: Will we support the moderates and reformers who are working for change across the Middle East -- or will we yield the future to the terrorists and extremists?" President Bush asked.

"My country desires peace. Extremists in your midst spread propoganda claiming that the West is engaged in a war against Islam. This propoganda is false and its purpose is to confuse you and justify acts of terror," said President Bush. "We must seek stability through a free and just Middle East where the extremists are marginalized by millions of citizens in control of their own destinies."

"To the people of Iran," President Bush said, "You deserve an opportunity to determine your own future, an economy that rewards your intelligence and your talents, and a society that allows you to fulfill your tremendous potential. The greatest obstacle to this future is that your rulers have chosen to deny you liberty and to use your nation's resources to fund terrorism, and fuel extremism, and pursue nuclear weapons."

President Ahmadinejad was not present for the mid-afternoon address by President Bush. Ahmadinejad also did not attend the UN's traditional banquet for visiting presidents, princes and prime ministers, where dignitaries have a chance to mix informally, because alcohol was served at the banquet. The banquet this year was held in honor of UN Secretary Kofi Anan, who will step down after two consecutive 5-year terms

ending December 31.

Newfoundland supporters of Craig Sharpe feel cheated on

Newfoundland supporters feel that Craig Sharpe should have won the popular television show Canadian Idol. They say that since Quebec, the home of recent Idol winner Eva Avila, is bigger and therefore Avila got more votes and that Canadian Idol was fixed because Sharpe is a Newfoundlander. Officials at CTV said such talk was nonsense.

Residents throughout the province increasingly complained of jammed residential phone lines. It happened so much that a payphone "Vote Craig" campaign was launched. In recent weeks Sharpe supporters drove at night looking for available payphones. Pay phones had a high success rate for registering calls, while home-based lines often got busy signals.

"Newfoundland knows how to represent their people," Sharpe said. "But you can't make it to the top two with just Newfoundland. You've got to have Canada behind you."

"Canadian Idol is not a popularity contest based on region," said Scott Henderson, a spokesman for CTV. "Craig and other finalists from Newfoundland have made it as far as they have in the competition because they receive the support of the entire country."

It was the second year in a row that a Newfoundlander finished second on the show. Rex Goudie of Burlington, Newfoundland lost last year to Calgary, Alberta's Melissa O'Neil.

Avila beat Sharpe by a three per cent margin, just over 131,000

votes, in the last show that CTV officials said was determined by fans in Western Canada.

Today in History

- 1792 - French Revolution: The National Convention voted to abolish the monarchy, and the First Republic was proclaimed.
- 1823 - According to Joseph Smith, Jr., the angel Moroni appeared to him and revealed the location of the hidden Golden Plates, which contained the ancient sacred texts of the Book of Mormon.
- 1898 - The Hundred Days' Reform in China was abruptly terminated when Empress Dowager Cixi (pictured) forced the reform-minded Guangxu Emperor into seclusion and took over the government as regent.
- 1937 - J. R. R. Tolkien's *The Hobbit*, a predecessor to *The Lord of the Rings*, was first published.
- 1942 - The prototype model of the B-29 Superfortress flew for the first time.

September 21 is International Day of Peace and Peace One Day; Independence Day in Malta (1964), Belize (1981) & Armenia (1991).

Quote of the Day

Like a bird on the wire,
like a drunk in a midnight choir
I have tried in my way to be free.
~ Leonard Cohen ~

Word of the Day

- thaumaturgy; n
1. The working of miracles.
 2. Magic, witchcraft, wizardry.

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