



Top Stories

Israeli Army begins forced evacuation of Gaza settlements



The Israeli army has begun to forcibly remove settlers in Gaza Strip as the deadline for voluntary evacuation passed at 00:00 this morning (21:00 UTC Tuesday).

Meanwhile, three Palestinians get killed in the West Bank

Canadian gasoline tops C\$1/litre, politicians consider options



The average retail price of gasoline in Canada surpassed the psychological barrier of \$1 per

litre during the past week, according to a Calgary firm.

Featured story

Fiddle Legend Vassar Clements dead at 77



Vassar Clements has died at the age of 77. He was a legendary fiddle player whom took bluegrass

music from an obscure cultural art form to a mainstream influence.

Wikipedia Current Events

- Ohio Governor Bob Taft is charged with four misdemeanors for failing to disclose golf trips paid for by others. He is the first Ohio governor charged with a crime while in office.
- Israeli settler kills 3 Palestinian civilians in the West Bank.
- At least two people have been killed and several others injured in a series of over 300 blasts across Bangladesh. An outlawed Islamic group, Jamatul Mujahideen Bangladesh, has claimed responsibility.

Wikipedia Current Events

- Conflict in Iraq: At least 42 people have died following a series of co-ordinated car bombings in the Iraqi capital of Baghdad.
- The first actual pullout of settlers in the Gaza Strip, as part of the Israel unilateral disengagement plan, has started.
- S.R. Nathan returns unopposed for a second term in the Singapore presidential elections. Three other candidates who filed for candidature were rejected by the Presidential Elections Committee due to "lack of experience", amongst other reasons.
- The governors of the U.S. states of New Mexico and Arizona declare an emergency along their borders with Mexico citing recent violence, and inaction in both the US government and the Mexican government.
- The Zotob computer worm causes fatal crashes of computers worldwide. The worm only crashes PCs running Windows 2000 and earlier versions of Windows XP, shutting down and rebooting the computer endlessly. Affected were CNN, ABC, Caterpillar, New York Times and Capitol Hill PCs.

Two new schools open in Beslan



Map of North Ossetia

Two new schools have opened in the North Ossetian town of Beslan to replace School Number One that was destroyed in the Beslan school siege.

The mayor of Moscow, Yuri Luzhkov, attended the opening ceremony and symbolically handed over the keys to the buildings to the school directors. He said the construction of the schools is part of a general plan to help rebuild Beslan and hoped that "children go to school with a feeling that will help them in life in the future".

The construction was financed by the Russian government. The two schools, totalling 36,000 square meters, will house 600 pupils each. The first day of school in the new buildings will be on September 5th, 2005.

Beslan's School Number One was seized by terrorists in September 2004. The 3-day standoff claimed the lives of 344 people, 172 of them children.

Canadian gasoline tops \$1 a litre, politicians consider options

The average retail price of gasoline in Canada surpassed the psychological barrier of \$1 per litre during the past week, according to the Calgary firm M.J. Ervin & Associates.

According to Ervin, the average price for a litre of regular unleaded gasoline is now \$1.04. Fuel remains under a dollar a litre in some parts of the country, with retailers in Edmonton offering the cheapest prices of all the major cities at 93.3 cents/litre. Drivers in Montreal were paying \$1.14/litre, the highest price in the country.

The surging price of crude oil has been cited by Ervin as the reason for the unprecedented prices. Rising demand coupled by ongoing political problems in the Middle East have pushed crude prices to new records at the close of each day of trading. The price at the New York Mercantile Exchange is now averaging over US\$65 per barrel, a full \$20 a barrel higher than one year ago.

"The biggest factor playing into the current pump price is, without a doubt, the high

crude oil prices," according to Ervin's Cathy Hay. But she added, "Layering in on top of that is very strong gasoline demand and a decline in inventories."

Hay's remarks echo the view of many analysts that despite the record prices, there is not yet any sign of major changes in Canadians' driving habits.

"(Canadians) will basically grin and bear it. Well, maybe they won't grin, but they'll bear it." Bank of Montreal economist Doug Porter said. "So far we really haven't seen any response whatsoever on the consumer spending front."

The rising fuel prices have prompted the country's major airlines, Air Canada and WestJet to levy fuel surcharges. Analysts expect the rising fuel costs to trigger a rise in the price of many goods and services as shipping costs rise. Concerns regarding the long-term effect of higher fuel prices are prompting demands by the Canadian Taxpayers Federation, the Canadian Automobile Association and others that the federal and provincial governments either lower or eliminate gasoline taxes.

Nova Scotian Finance Minister Peter Christie is considering such requests, although he emphasized that such steps would not be taken quickly. Nova Scotian New Democrat leader Darrell Dexter said the province's Harmonized Sales Tax should be removed from gasoline, asserting that since there are already both federal and provincial excise taxes on fuel, it is therefore immoral to charge what is effectively a double tax by adding HST (or the Goods and Services Tax and provincial sales taxes outside Atlantic Canada).

However, federal cabinet ministers were quick to reject calls to lower the federal excise tax to exempt GST. Federal Natural Resources Minister John Efford said the price of gasoline was being driven up by demand for crude oil, not taxes.

"Camp Casey" moves to safer land, as Mother's protest continues

In Crawford, Texas, anti-war protesters led by American Cindy Sheehan, mother of a fallen soldier, have found a new place to demonstrate. "A kind gentleman from down the road, closer to the Bush ranch, has

offered us the use of his property," said Sheehan to the reporters, as the camp prepared a move to private land.



The property owner, U.S. Army veteran Fred Matlage, said, "I just think people should have a right to protest without being harassed, and I'm against the war. I don't think it's a war we need to be in."

Sheehan continued to tell the reporters, "He offered it because he heard about the shots fired at us the other day and he didn't think that was right. He happens to be the third cousin of the person that fired the shots and so he came down and he said he supports us 100 percent."

The "shots fired" were those of nearby resident Larry Matlage, whose land borders the protesters at their current location. After complaining about the proximity of the protesters, he fired a shotgun twice into the air Sunday - in order to prepare for duck hunting season, he said. Matlage says at no time was he ever threatening the protesters with his shots.



Vandalized memorial at Camp Casey

Not all Americans agree with Mrs. Sheehan's position. On Monday, a man was arrested and charged with vandalism of Camp Casey's memorial for troops lost in Iraq. Around 10pm the previous night,

authorities say the accused used his pickup truck to run over hundreds of small wooden crosses bearing names of U.S. soldiers killed in Iraq.

In comments to the press, Bush offered sympathy to Sheehan, "I sympathize with Mrs. Sheehan. She feels strongly about her -- about her position. And she has every right in the world to say what she believes.", he said. However, he has still declined to meet her. "I think it's important for me to be thoughtful and sensitive to those who have got something to say." Bush told reporters, "But, I think it's also important for me to go on with my life, to keep a balanced life."

Others have commented that Sheehan is being used by those with their own agendas, "What started out as a grieving mom that we all sympathized with has now turned into ... an orchestrated far-left campaign," commented Greg Mueller, a conservative public-relations executive.

A former FBI special agent, Rowley, and Becky Lourey, whose son was killed in Iraq, will leave for Texas on Thursday and camp at the site for a few days.

Rowley said, "It puts a human face on this issue; many people, if they don't have a personal connection to the troops, it's so easy for this to become a discussion that lacks seriousness and urgency. I think it's good to show that there are real people that are being affected."

"Our children are dying and I think it's time to go support Cindy and see if Bush will come out and we can say, 'President Bush, what is the mission exactly?'," Becky Lourey added. "Truth has been shifting all around and I think we need to rejoin the world community and not occupy another nation." Lourey said.

Sheehan wants the withdrawal of all troops from Iraq. President Bush indicated that leaving Iraq now wouldn't be helpful for Iraqis or Americans, but only for terrorists.

Bangladesh hit by several bomb explosions

Several cities and towns in Bangladesh have been rocked by a series of small explosions. To date at least 125 people have been injured and two people have been killed.

The two people killed were a bicycle rickshaw driver in the northern town of Chapainawabganj and a 10-year-old boy in the central town of Savar.

The terrorist attacks have been attributed to the Jamaat-ul-Mujahideen group. Leaflets bearing the Islamic group's message were found near many of the homemade bombs. The group wants to establish an Islamic state in place of current secular laws.

The bombs were made to cause limited damage. The explosives were packed in small containers and wrapped in tape, paper or sawdust. Explosives created for high collateral damage would contain nails or other items that could be used as shrapnel.

Bangladesh currently has the world's third largest Muslim population in the world. The Jamaat-ul-Mujahideen was banned in February after a series of bombings against non-governmental groups including holy shrines and other targets.

Fiddle Legend Vassar Clements dead at 77

Vassar Clements, age 77, a legendary fiddle player whom took bluegrass music from an obscure cultural art form to a mainstream influence, and who played on over 2000 albums, passed away at his Goodlettsville, Tennessee home August 16th 2005 at 8:35 am Nashville time (CST) from lung cancer which had metastasized to his liver and brain.

Mr. Clements taught himself to play the fiddle at age 7, and though he had no formal training was recognized as one of the world's most versatile fiddle players and was considered a virtuoso. The first song he learned was "There's an Old Spinning Wheel in the Parlor". He described his talent saying, "It was God's gift, something born in me. I was too dumb to learn it any other way. I listened to the (Grand Ole) Opry some. I'd pick it up one note at a time. I was young, with plenty of time and I didn't give up. You'd come home from school, do your lessons and that's it. No other distractions. I don't read music. I play what I hear."

He didn't always earn his living playing music, though. In the mid-1960's he was employed briefly at the Kennedy Space

Center in Florida, where he worked on plumbing. He also performed several other blue-collar jobs including work in a Georgia paper mill, as switchman for Atlantic Coast Railroad; he even sold insurance and once owned a potato chip franchise.

In his 50 year career he played with artists ranging from Woody Herman, and the Nitty Gritty Dirt Band to The Grateful Dead, Linda Ronstadt and Paul McCartney, and earned at least five Grammy nominations and numerous professional accolades. He once recorded with the pop group the Monkees by happenstance, when he stayed behind after an earlier recording session. He also appeared in Robert Altman's 1975 film "Nashville".

His 2005 Grammy award for best country instrumental performance was for "Earl's Breakdown," by the Nitty Gritty Dirt Band, and featured Mr. Clements, Earl Scruggs, Randy Scruggs and Jerry Douglas.

Mr. Clements, whose last performance was February 4 in Jamestown, N.Y., was hospitalized earlier this year for 18 days to receive chemotherapy and other treatment. He had been diagnosed in March 2005.

Born in Kinard, South Carolina, his musical career began at age 14 when he associated with Bill Monroe, and later officially joined the Blue Grass Boys band where he remained for seven years. In 1957 he joined bluegrass band Jim & Jesse McReynolds where he remained until 1962. In 1967 he returned to Nashville where he became a much sought after studio musician.

After a brief touring stint with Faron Young he joined John Hartford's Dobrolic Plectral Society in 1971 when he met guitarist Norman Blake and Dobro player Tut Taylor, and recorded Aereo Plain, a widely acclaimed newgrass album that helped broaden the bluegrass market and sound. After less than a year he joined Earl Scruggs, who first earned widespread renown for playing the theme to sitcom The Beverly Hillbillies.

His 1972 work with the Nitty Gritty Dirt Band on their album Will the Circle Be Unbroken earned him even wider acclaim, and later worked with the Grateful Dead's Wake of the Flood and Jimmy Buffett's A White Sport Coat and a Pink Crustacean.

Though he played numerous instruments, Mr. Clements indicated that he chose the fiddle over guitar recalling that, "I picked up a guitar and fiddle and tried them both out. The guitar was pretty easy, but I couldn't get nothing out of the fiddle. So every time I'd see those instruments sitting side by side, I'd grab that fiddle."

Big band and swing music were considerable influences upon his style and musical development, and he said that, "Bands like Glenn Miller, Les Brown, Tommy Dorsey, Harry James and Artie Shaw were very popular when I was a kid. I always loved rhythm, so I guess in the back of my mind the swing and jazz subconsciously comes out when I play, because when I was learning I was always trying to emulate the big-band sounds I heard on my fiddle."

His last album 'Livin' With the Blues', released in 2004, featured guest appearances by Elvin Bishop, Norton Buffalo, Maria Muldaur and others.

Mr. Clements' daughter Midge Cranor wrote on his website that "As I was still holding his hand his breathing stopped. I looked at the clock and it was 7:20 am."

Mr. Clements' remains have been transported to Bond Memorial Chapel, 1098 Weston Drive, Mt. Juliet, TN 37122; (615) 773-2663.

21 July bombing suspect to be extradited back to the UK

Hamdi Issac, a suspect in the 21 July bombings in London, has been ordered by an Italian court to return to the UK.

The Ethiopian national was arrested in Rome a few days after the July 21 failed terror attacks in London.

Despite today's decision by Rome's appeal court, Issac's attorneys are expected to immediately appeal, delaying his extradition by up to a month.

New computer worm poised to cause massive outages

Anti-virus software publisher Symantec has reported that outbreaks of two varieties of

worm are imminent following system failures on two unnamed major corporate networks in the United Kingdom. After receiving several eyewitness accounts from on-site personnel this reporter noted similarities to the MSBlast worm which made headline news two years ago (on the 16th of July 2003) after causing massive outages.

The worms are limited to Microsoft Windows products based on the NT architecture such as Windows 2000 or Windows XP, exploiting administrator services applets which shut a computer down when a certain service fails. The worms cause these "administrator services" to fail, provoking the computer into shutting down immediately.

Microsoft has announced that a critical update is available for all users, even for those who use pirated versions of Windows.

Chrysler, Kraft Foods and many other US corporations are feeling the brunt of the attack as the US was in the middle of the work day when new more virulent variants emerged.

Israeli Army begins forced evacuation of Gaza settlements

The Israeli army has begun to forcibly remove settlers in Gaza Strip as the deadline for voluntary evacuation passed at 00:00, local time, this morning (21:00 UTC Tuesday).



The Gaza Strip

Soldiers entered the settlements of Neve Dekalim, Morag, Ganei Tali, and Bedolah in the early morning hours and have begun to carry settlers away. In Neve Dekalim over 1,000 settlers shut themselves inside the local synagogue while others did the same in their houses. In Morag a bulldozer was

needed to break through a barricade constructed of trash containers. A soldier there was lightly wounded when a protester stabbed her in the arm with a needle. Prime minister Ariel Sharon responded to the incident by saying "don't hurt them, hurt me". In Southern Israel a woman is in critical condition after she set herself on fire in protest over the evacuations.

The army claims more than half of the 8,500 settlers in the Strip have already left. However, those remaining vowed to stay as long as they can, telling the soldiers that they "should be ashamed at what [they] are doing".

A thin majority in the Israeli government believe the pullout from Gaza is vital for the security of the country. "I look with hope to the future, that the price we are paying [...] will in the end bring about a positive change in Israel's situation," said Defense Minister Shaul Mofaz.

The Palestinian Authority welcomes the withdrawal from Gaza but believes it can only be a first step in the process of giving up all Israeli settlements, including in the West Bank.

Meanwhile, an Israeli settler from Shiloh, in the West Bank, killed three Palestinians and wounded another three when he opened fire in an industrial area of the settlement. The 38-year old reportedly stole the gun used in the shooting from a security guard. He was arrested. Hamas has vowed to avenge the killings.

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Today in History

293 BC - The oldest known Roman temple to Venus was founded, starting the institution of Vinalia Rustica.

1590 - John White, the governor of the Colony of Roanoke, returned from a supply-trip to England and found his settlement deserted.

1868 - Pierre Janssen discovered helium while analysing the chromosphere during a total eclipse of the sun.

1877 - Asaph Hall discovered Phobos, the largest moon of Mars.

1941 - The T-4 Euthanasia Program in Nazi Germany temporarily halted due to public resistance.

Quote of the Day

"Be sure that you are right, and then go ahead." ~ Davy Crockett

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