



Top Stories

Harriet Miers withdraws from Supreme Court nomination

President George W. Bush's nominee for Associate Justice of the U.S. Supreme Court Harriet Miers, has withdrawn herself from the nomination.

Australian anti-terror laws will be delayed

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Featured story

Japan likely to change law to allow female heirs to the throne

Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi suggested yesterday that the government would submit a draft allowing female heirs to the Japanese Throne.

Wikipedia Current Events

- Conflict in Iraq: At least 20 Shia Militia members and Iraqi Police have died following a Sunni Arab ambush in Nahrawan, South East of Baghdad.
- Israeli troops raid the Palestinian town of Jenin, in the West Bank.
- At least seven Palestinians, including one militant, have died following Israeli Air Strikes in the Gaza Strip.
- Israeli Prime Minister Ariel Sharon calls for the expulsion of Iran from the United Nations

Wikipedia Current Events

after the Iranian President called for Israel to be "wiped off the map".

•As the relief operation of 2005 Kashmir earthquake is facing great difficulties in reaching victims due to bad weather, mountainous terrain, landslides and blocked roads, Pakistani Prime Minister Shaukat Aziz makes an appeal to millions of survivors in the mountains to leave their villages and come down to the valleys and cities for shelter before the start of winter in about three weeks.

•Former Northern Irish footballer George Best's medical condition worsens in an intensive care unit at a private English hospital, as he is reportedly suffering from serious internal bleeding.

•President George W. Bush's Supreme Court of the United States nominee for Associate Justice, Harriet Miers, has turned down the nomination made on October 3, 2005. The President has accepted her withdrawal.

Iranian president calls Israel 'disgraceful blot'

Iranians plan a nation-wide demonstration on Friday in support of their president's comments that called for the elimination of Israel. The demonstrations would coincide with the annual event called al-Quds Day, where the Israeli control of Jerusalem is protested.

Mahmud Ahmadinejad in a speech to 3,000 students in Tehran said

Wednesday there was, "no doubt the new wave [of attacks] in Palestine will soon wipe off this disgraceful blot from the face of the Islamic world." At a conference called "The World without Zionism", the recently elected Iranian president Ahmadinejad said the establishment of Israel was, "a move by the world oppressor against the Islamic world," a reference to Western military and political pressure.

Ahmadinejad won the presidency in June with a populist approach that stressed Islam and revolutionary principles. The speech cited numerous references to the Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini and included a declaration that, "As the imam said, Israel must be wiped off the map."

Other similar remarks, such as "God willing the eradication of Israel would soon be realized through the continued wisdom of the Palestinian nation," have drawn wide condemnation.

France and Germany have summoned the respective Iranian ambassadors to their countries. A spokesperson for the British government called the remarks "deeply disturbing and sickening". The European Union said in a joint statement that "calls for violence, and for the destruction of any state, are manifestly inconsistent with any claim to be a mature and responsible member of the international community".

Israeli Prime minister Ariel Sharon said that "a country that calls for the destruction of another people

cannot be a member of the United Nations" and added: "Such a country that has nuclear weapons is a danger, not only to Israel and the Middle East, but also to Europe."

The United Nations Secretary General Kofi Annan expressed "dismay" over Ahmadinejad's remarks. In statements released by his secretary on Thursday, Annan, who's plans still include a visit to Iran within a month, said he would "place the Middle East peace process, and the right of all states in the area to live in peace within secure and recognized boundaries free from threats or acts of force, at the top of his agenda for that visit." The U.N. Charter calls on all members to refrain from threats or force against the territorial integrity or political independence of another state.

A U.S. state department spokesman, Sean McCormick, said the United States would not support the call by Israel to eject Iran from the United Nations. McCormick's response was centered on issues of the enriched uranium processing in Iran, the human rights of its people, and alleged support for terrorism abroad. The U.S. has had no formal diplomatic relations with Iran since the Islamic revolution of 1979.

Harriet Miers withdraws from Supreme Court nomination

President George W. Bush's nominee for Associate Justice of the U.S. Supreme Court, Harriet Miers, has withdrawn herself from the nomination.

In a letter dated October 27, to President Bush, she wrote that "members of the Senate have

indicated their intention to seek documents about my service in the White House," and that she "would be expected to testify about my service in the White House."

Faced with mounting criticism of his nominee from numerous disparate organizations, within and outside the President's Republican Party, Bush acknowledged her resignation and critics by saying "It is clear that Senators would not be satisfied until they gained access to internal documents concerning advice provided during her tenure at the White House — disclosures that would undermine a President's ability to receive candid counsel. Harriet Miers' decision demonstrates her deep respect for this essential aspect of the constitutional separation of powers — and confirms my deep respect and admiration for her."

The Miers nomination was politically controversial because she is White House Counsel and she was a personal lawyer to Bush when he was governor of Texas. Miers also has no experience as a judge.

Since there was no record of how she might interpret the Constitution, members of the Senate Judiciary Committee requested detailed written replies to a series of questions probing her past. It became apparent that Senators wanted to review White House records documenting legal advice provided by Miers as part of her work for the Bush administration.

President Bush has been seeking to replace the retiring Justice Sandra Day O'Connor, the first female Supreme Court Justice, since her July 1, 2005 letter stating she would retire "effective

upon the nomination and confirmation of her successor."

Thai PM promises action on suspected militants

Thai Prime Minister, Thaksin Shinawatra, told journalists attending his weekly press conference that the government would be more aggressive in measures taken to counter insurgency in the country's provinces on the southern border with Malaysia.

His statement followed coordinated attacks by suspected militants in the provinces of Yala, Narathiwat, and Pattani.

At a time chosen for the likelihood of the predominantly Muslim population to be at evening prayers in local mosques, armouries belonging to local village defense forces were raided. According to local media reports there were at least three deaths as well as several people injured — some seriously. The casualties are said to consist of both insurgents and local villagers.

Thaksin said that the suspected separatists demonstrated "strong coordination" in the attacks, he stated that the authorities in the area should have new measures in place by November to aggressively address the issue. Despite strong words on the matter, the Prime Minister emphasised that, "the government will exercise most restraint and patience", and that the government's objective was to bring peace to the region.

Australian anti-terror laws will be delayed

Jon Stanhope, the Australian Capital Territory Chief Minister, is the first Australian state or

territory chief to reject the Howard Government's proposed anti-terror legislation in its current state.

He said he would not vote into law the ACT's part of the legislation, including extending preventive detention of terror suspects to 14 days, unless there were changes.

The Federal Government requires the support of a least four states to give the final legislation the go-ahead. If the Commonwealth proceeds with its laws without the ACT's co-operation - the territory could become the odd jurisdiction out, as the only one without preventive detention for people suspected of planning a terrorist attack.

"I'm quite happy to change it provided the situation is covered," Mr Howard told reporters in Madang, at the Pacific Islands Forum. "I'm quite relaxed about the final form of the legislation, providing it delivers on the substance of the agreement." Mr Howard said he was not committed to introducing the changes next week, although he wanted them up and running by Christmas.

Opposition Leader Kim Beazley, who was outraged that the Government had chosen Melbourne Cup Day as a cover to introduce the Bills, pointed out that the Treasurer and the Prime Minister were at odds.

The Australian PM has agreed to changes to Australia's controversial Anti-Terror Laws, after comments from his own Treasurer.

Peter Costello, speaking to The Age Newspaper for the first time on the issue, apparently contradicted earlier statements

made by the PM, saying, "Unfortunately nobody ever finally knows these things until such time as the court rules".

"Peter Costello contradicted John Howard today and went out there and said 'Well it might be unconstitutional but let's just sort of suck it and see'," Mr Beazley said to Melbourne's Herald Sun newspaper.

Mr Howard said there was nothing of concern in legal advice from the Solicitor-General and he remained convinced the laws were constitutional, but did concede to changes to the so-called "shoot-to-kill" provisions for police. . Queensland Premier Peter Beattie welcomed Mr Howard's move on the shoot-to-kill clause and said he was confident all constitutional issues could be overcome.

The Human Rights and Equal Opportunities Commission(HREOC)president is of the belief that the bill needs to be reconsidered because it is not in line with Australia's international human rights obligations.

HREOC is a national independent statutory body of the Australian Government. It has the responsibility for investigating alleged infringements under Australia's anti-discrimination legislation.

The Head of HREOC says under the proposed laws the opportunity to challenge a detention order against an individual or a control order against the person's family is unrealistic, and has concerns about what happens to a person after they are subjected to a preventive detention order.

"They're not told why they're subject to it, nor is there any way

in which they can go about challenging the facts upon which that order is made," he told the ABC.

"That's the real, the most serious of the human rights issues in the whole procedure. There is no means of reviewing what has been done once its happened."

"International human rights law requires that a person who is detained must have the right to challenge this detention in a court without delay. Review before the court needs to include: consideration of whether the order is based on a correct understanding of the facts; whether the detention is fair; whether it is reasonably necessary in the circumstances; and whether it is proportionate to the goal of protecting national security. The current form of the bill simply fails to meet these basic guarantees."

HREOC says a special court should be established to review enforcement provisions in the draft bill.

Today in History

312 - Constantine the Great adopted Christianity and defeated Maxentius in the Battle of Milvian Bridge.

1886 - In New York Harbor, U.S. President Grover Cleveland dedicated the Statue of Liberty (pictured), a gift from France, to commemorate the centennial of the United States Declaration of Independence.

1918 - Czechoslovakia gained its independence from Austria-Hungary.

1922 - The Fascist Blackshirts marched on Rome to take over the Italian government.

1940 - Italy invaded Greece from Albania, as part of the Balkans Campaign in World War II.

October 28 is Oxi Day in Greece (1940)

Quote of the Day

"I know that it will hurt, I know that it will break your heart, the way things are, and the way they've been. Don't spread the discontent, don't spread the lies, don't make the same mistakes with your own life." ~ Natalie Merchant

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