



Top Stories

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Unions battle in Ohio over hospital workers

The Service Employees International Union was trying to unionize 8,300 workers in nine different Ohio hospitals through elections that were scheduled for this Wednesday and Friday.



But then organizers from a second union, the California Nurses Association, came to the hospitals, buttonholing workers and maneuvering their way into hospital wards, to press the workers to vote not to join the S.E.I.U. These actions led to the service employees union on Tuesday asking to postpone the vote by workers at the nine hospitals, all which are a part of the Catholic Healthcare Partners system.

Australian PM subject to scrutiny over Carer and Senior's payments

Australian Prime Minister, Kevin Rudd faced intense scrutiny in federal parliament on Tuesday following days of speculation



Top Stories

that he was considering scrapping cash bonuses to recipients of carer and seniors payments. Questions by the opposition during question time were dominated by the cash bonuses, with leader of the opposition, Brendan Nelson moving to censure the Prime Minister.

UK Chancellor of the Exchequer, Alistair Darling releases 2008 budget

The UK Chancellor of the Exchequer, Alistair Darling, has revealed the 2008 budget, which he describes as a "responsible Budget to secure Britain's stability in the face of global uncertainty." The budget report showed that the government expenditure for 2008 was higher than the total government funds, meaning that the governments debt has increased over this financial year.



Wikipedia Current Events

- Crude oil futures contracts end trading at a new closing high of \$109.92 a barrel after earlier topping \$110 a barrel for the first time.
- Israeli commandos kill four militants on the West Bank including three members of the Islamic Jihad Movement in Palestine.
- Sweden's largest lake, the Vänern, which is also the third largest lake in Europe, will be lowered by 15 centimeters, in order to avoid flooding.

Archer kills elderly man on street in California, US

The body of a man was discovered on a street in Lancaster, California around 1:45 a.m PDT (UTC-7) Tuesday morning with an arrow stuck deep into his chest. Sheriff's deputies who responded to the crime scene at 13th Street and Avenue K initially thought the victim to have been homeless, but he was later identified as Angel Martinez, age 62, who resided in Lancaster.

"Who would want to do something like that to an elderly person?" said Tony Martinez, a local resident who was among those who found the victim. "And what was an elderly man doing out here anyway that late?"

The attacker, who struck by night, is being sought by authorities.

Wikipedia Current Events

The United States Environmental Protection Agency announces a major expansion of efforts to fight smog in cities and towns throughout the United States.

- The total amount of digital information is estimated at 281 billion gigabytes, exceeding available data storage for the first time.

Unions battle in Ohio over hospital workers

The Service Employees International Union, a trade union in the United States and Canada, was trying to unionize 8,300 workers in nine different Ohio hospitals through elections that were scheduled for this Wednesday and Friday. But then organizers from a second union, the California Nurses Association, visited the hospitals to encourage the workers to vote not to join the S.E.I.U. These actions led to the service employees union on Tuesday asking to postpone the vote by workers at the nine hospitals, all which are a part of the Catholic Healthcare Partners system.

Andy Stern, the service president is quoted as saying, "nothing more than a flimsy cover for out-and-out union busting that we normally see from employers, not organizations that claim to care about workers."

The California Nurses Association, said it dispatched organizers to Ohio because in its view the unionization efforts were part of a "sweetheart deal".

Rose Ann DeMoro, executive director of the nurses association, condemned this agreement. She called it "a rigged scam" in which the service union would bargain without care if they won the vote.

"This was a top-down deal between an employer and a hand-picked union," Ms. DeMoro said. "There was a gag order on everyone, and as a result this was a banana republic election."

"As for the future," DeMoro said, "no election is planned." She said that delaying the election was "a significant victory for employee rights."

Dave Regan, president of a service employees' local representing 35,000 health care workers in Ohio, West Virginia and Kentucky, called the nurses union's conduct as, "Their conduct is indistinguishable from that of the most vicious anti-union employers," Mr. Regan said. "It violates every principle of unionism. Real people are worse off today as a result of their behavior."

Orest Holubec, spokesman for Catholic Healthcare, said the system's hospital in Lima had obtained a restraining order to bar the California nurses from entering restricted patient-care areas and aggressive leafletting outside hospitals. "They were doing exactly the kind of things we were trying to avoid," Mr. Holubec said. "They poisoned the well to the degree that we didn't have the conditions that we tried to establish for a pressure-free environment."

UK Chancellor of the Exchequer, Alistair Darling releases 2008 budget

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The budget report showed that the government expenditure for 2008 was higher than the total government funds, meaning that the governments debt has increased over this financial year.

The budget report mentioned a increase in fuel duty. The budget report said that "the planned fuel duty increase of 2 pence per litre in April 2008 will now be postponed until October 1, 2008. Main road fuel duty rates will rise

by 1.84 pence per litre on 1 April 2009, and will increase by 0.5 pence per litre above inflation on 1 April 2010".

Traditional "sin taxes" - duty on alcohol and tobacco - formed a headline-grabbing part of the announcement: the alcohol tax is to increase by 6% more than inflation, with an inflation+2% increase in each of the next four years. This will result in a near-immediate increase of 4p per pint of beer, 3p on cider, 14p on wine, and 55p on a bottle of spirits. A packet of 20 cigarettes will cost 11p more. An additional £950 duty will be charged on the most polluting new cars when they are first bought.

The winter fuel allowance paid to over-60 year olds, is increased by £50 to £250, while over 80s will receive an extra £100, to £400.

In the budget speech Darling described the financial forecasts. He said that his "forecast shows the UK economy will continue to grow throughout this period of global uncertainty - a view supported by the Bank of England, the International Monetary Fund and the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development."

One year on: IFALPA's representative to ICAO, pilot and lawyer on ongoing prosecution of Garuda Indonesia Flight 200 pilot

Almost exactly one year ago, on March 7, Garuda Indonesia Flight 200 crashed during landing at Adisucipto International Airport, near Yogyakarta, after a scheduled domestic Indonesian passenger flight. 21 people - 16 Indonesians and five Australians - were killed when the Boeing 737-400 overshot the runway, crossed a road, struck an embankment and burst into

flames in a rice paddy. Overall, the plane had traveled 252m beyond the extreme end of the runway.

The final report, released in October, blamed pilot error for the disaster. The report stated that the aircraft had approached at a speed far exceeding that at which the wing flaps could properly operate, and attempted to execute a landing at 408 kph (254 mph), which is 160 kph (100 mph) above the safe speed. It also found that captain Marwoto Komar had ignored fifteen activations of the Ground Proximity Warning System (GPWS) informing Mr Komar that the aircraft was flying at a speed beyond that at which it could safely land, but he failed to abort.

It also commented that he missed one further opportunity for emergency evasive action when the airliner struck the runway and bounced into the air, at which point co-pilot Gagam Rochmana requested a 'go-around' procedure be initiated, but was also ignored. It further criticised Mr Komar for singing during final approach, a direct violation of the Garuda Basic Operations Manual, which calls for activation of the Sterile Cockpit Rule at 10,000 feet and below.

Mr Rochmana was also criticised for his failure to take control away from Mr Komar when it became apparent that the aircraft was being operated in an unsafe manner. However, the report did note that Garuda Indonesia had failed to give him any simulator training replicating a situation whereby the co-pilot would take over control duties from the pilot in charge due to unsafe handling of the plane; in fact, training was found to be inadequate for both members of the cockpit crew.

Further criticisms were also leveled

at airport and governmental authorities for failures in their respective roles to provide safety features and to enforce regulations.

However, the Indonesian authorities have recently generated intense controversy by deciding to prosecute Mr Komar for his role in the disaster. The move has been pushed for by some, but met with opposition by others.

Alexander Downer, Australian foreign minister at the time of the crash, immediately said "...I am very glad that they have reached a point now where they have charged the captain of the aircraft." The unusually high number of Australians amongst the 140 passengers on board was attributable to a visit by Mr Downer.

One of those was Morgan Mellish of the Australian Financial Review, who died in the crash. His sister, Caroline Mellish, had specifically called for prosecution to be avoided, saying "I think having 21 deaths on your conscience is probably enough. I don't think prosecuting the man is going to make any difference."

There were fierce calls for prosecution of both pilots immediately after the report's release, with Downer himself pressurising the Indonesian authorities, citing the "very credible report" and saying "I've asked our ambassador today (October 24) to make it absolutely clear to the Indonesians that we want people prosecuted for this accident. I want to see people who have negligently allowed Australians ... to be killed, I want to see those people brought to justice."

Australian Opposition Leader Kevin Rudd also made clear a desire for prosecutions, saying he had telephoned secretary-general of Indonesia's foreign affairs department and former ambassador to Australia Imron Cotan, telling him that he wanted those responsible "prosecuted to the absolute full". "This is a serious matter, many Australians visit Indonesia, Garuda is an often used airline and there is a basic national interest at stake here as well," he said.

National Transport Safety Committee chairman Tatang Kurniadi said at the time that no information from the report could be used in any criminal or civil liability investigations. "I would like to go back to the objective of this, the report was made by NTSC for safety purposes only, not for blaming, he said. "If any institution wants to ... follow up that accident, that's their own decision. The report contained the results from the cockpit voice recorder and flight data recorder, but according to international regulations on aviation these black boxes are not allowed to be used for... liability purposes. We will not give police or any institution (information) other than for safety purposes only - it's in international regulations and we want to follow those regulations." He also confirmed that investigators cannot speak to the police, with the only permitted testimony under the legislation being to testify at a court hearing, and pointed out that the document does not actually appoint any blame.

The international legislation he was referring to is probably the Convention on International Civil Aviation, which stipulates that accident reports and related

material, specifically transcripts of interviews, communications with crew and cockpit voice recorder and flight data recorder (collectively known as black boxes) readouts, must not be used for any purpose other than determining the cause of an accident or incident. The only possible exception to this is where potential benefit would outweigh the "adverse domestic and international impact" on the investigation in question or any other either in progress or in the future. This legislation is in place to provide protection to witnesses on the basis that without it they may be less likely to cooperate with investigational procedures.

The law caused was actively opposed by some. Aridono Sukman, the police member in charge of the criminal investigation, said that the contents of the black box were vital evidence. Officials commented that some relatives had expressed their frustration over the legal challenges involved in the prosecution effort.

Early in February Mr Komar was arrested; he has subsequently been charged with manslaughter charges which carry a maximum sentence of five years' imprisonment. The London-based International Federation of Air Line Pilots Associations (IFALPA) issued a press release condemning this move, saying that further investigations are needed into the crash, and that criminal proceedings could prevent an accurate version of events from ever being known. Specifically, the release said that "IFALPA believes that the circumstances of the accident as set forth in the final report of the Indonesian investigation authority leaves many serious questions concerning

the crew actions prior to the accident. Central to these concerns are the underlying reasons for the reported behavior of Captain Marwoto Komar. Experienced pilots have considerable difficulty in attempting to explain what is reported in the context of normal airline operations. The Federation believes that the explanations proffered by the report do not square with the collective experience of our members." The release went on to state the opinion that prosecution may bring total foreclosure to the case and could only be counterproductive. It also said "He remains a professional who was involved in an unfortunate tragedy."

One possible explanation had previously been suggested by the head of the Garuda pilots association, Stephanus Geraldus. He said that marital problems between Mr Komar and his wife Norma Andriani were "common knowledge" and was backed up by an industry analyst and pilot who said he believed the couple had been arguing late into the night, and expressed concern that the report had not addressed psychological issues. Mr Geraldus also said sleep deprivation could have contributed, with the flight crew reporting for duty at 4:30 am and the flight departing an hour and a half later.

The report had hinted at problems, saying The pilot was probably emotionally aroused because his conscious awareness moved from the relaxed mode "singing" to the heightened stressfulness of the desire to reach the runway by making an excessively steep and fast, unbalanced approach," and "His attention was fixated or channelised on landing the aircraft on the runway and he either did not hear, or disregarded the GPWS

alerts, and warnings, and calls from the copilot to go around." It is also known that Mr Komar had been under police surveillance, during which time he was receiving psychological treatment.

The Indonesian Pilot's Association has also said that the criminal prosecution should be avoided, arguing that the only people who can judge whether mistakes were made in aviation are those professionally involved and not the police. There were protests in Jakarta demanding his release and dozens of pilots across the nation also campaigned. Meanwhile, two survivors, Adrianus Meliala and Retno Gunowati, went to the House of Representatives (DPR) to challenge those opposed to legal processes against the pilot.

Mr Komar was released on police bail on February 15, and is currently awaiting trial. He was forced to resign late in February with being fired his only alternative, and his licence has been suspended. He is believed to be the only man ever prosecuted in Indonesian history over an airliner crash.

The issues thrown up by this ongoing case have now been exclusively commented on for Wikinews by Paul McCarthy. Mr McCarthy is IFALPA's representative to the International Civil Aviation Organisation (ICAO). He is both a pilot - as are all of IFALPA's roughly 100,000 members - and a lawyer, and is an acknowledged expert on issues concerning the criminal liability of pilots. Mr McCarthy's comments, obtained by email via IFALPA media representative Gideon Ewers are available below.

Interview

Wikinews: IFALPA's press release

expresses difficulty in explaining Mr Komar's behaviour. It has been suggested that it could be caused by a combination of marital problems and sleep deprivation. Do you feel that this alone could explain what happened?

Paul McCarthy: I have no idea why the Captain acted as he seems to have done. We are recommending that that is the proper job of the accident investigation team. The allegation of "tunnel vision" simply does not answer the issue.

WN: In your own estimation, without necessary evidence from psychology experts, do you believe Mr Komar's mental condition was such as to render him unfit to stand trial and take responsibility for his actions?

PM: As above, we do not speculate. The Captain has a legal team which is charged with such determinations

WN: The Convention on International Civil Aviation states that various investigative materials cannot be used to establish criminal or civil liability, but makes an exception where the benefit would outweigh the negative effect on aviation investigations. How would such a situation be determined, and is there a serious possibility of this happening here?

PM: The standard requires, in this case, the court to make the balancing determination. The question becomes, if certain voluntary disclosures made to the investigators are subsequently used in prosecution, what is the probability that such disclosures will no longer be made in future investigations. If they are withheld, will the investigation, and by inference safety suffer?

WN: What evidence is available to the prosecution? Is a conviction possible even if the authorities are blocked from using evidence from the investigation?

PM: The ideal situation is that the

police independently investigate and procure their own evidence. Is a conviction possible? I don't know.

WN: One official expressed a desire to call in the investigators as expert witnesses because they cannot use their testimony as investigators. Does this loophole really exist, or can it be prevented?

PM: It depends on the rules of evidence in Indonesia. It should not be possible to call the active investigators as expert witnesses. To do so would subvert both the investigation and the court proceeding.

WN: Based on your own experience, what structure is Mr Komar's defence likely to take?

PM: Again, the Captain has a legal team.

WN: If convicted, what kind of appeals process does Indonesian law supply to Mr Komar?

PM: I have no idea.

WN: There are a number of other individuals and organisations that could potential also face legal action for their roles in the disaster, but only Mr Komar has. Why do you believe this is?

PM: I once again will not speculate in this area.

WN: Despite not having faced trial, Garuda Indonesia have recently forced Mr Komar to resign. Do you feel this move was justified?

PM: It was expected and is quite common in many parts of the world, with or without establishment of culpability. It is a matter of face for the corporation.

WN: Do you feel Mr Komar's case sets a precedent for the industry?

PM: Unfortunately, it is simply the most recent example of this attitude that somehow prosecution will improve safety. It will not.

WN: Have there been any previous cases in other nations that could in any way be compared to this? How were they resolved?

PM: Each accident has a different fact situation, so it is difficult if not impossible to use one as precedent. The most famous is probably the New Zealand case at Palmerston North (International Airport) where the captain was prosecuted following a crash. Even though he seemed guilty under the applicable statute, the jury refused to convict.

WN: Do you believe Australia was right to push for prosecution so soon after the report was published?

PM: No. If this accident was in Australia, their own laws would preclude much of what has happened. In fact, the Australian position could be viewed as a cynical political move.

WN: Had the co-pilot been adequately trained he would have taken over the operation of the plane and averted an accident. Does this have any bearing on Mr Komar's case?

PM: To answer this one must compare cultures and the ability to train cultural bias out of the reactions of a crewmember. Once again, the investigation should have addressed this issue but did not.

WN: Why do you feel the final report fails to address the issues IFALPA are calling for it to consider?

PM: I would restate my answers above to the questions concerning the crew actions. The investigation has not addressed them in a way that will be useful as a guide for the industry to act to prevent a reoccurrence.

WN: Do you believe there ever will be another investigation?

PM: No.

WN: If a full investigation into Mr Komar's psychology conclusively found that he was of sound mind at the time, would that change IFALPA's stance on the prosecution?

PM: No. we are not interested so much in a sound mind as we are the reactions of a professional airman to a certain set of stimuli. Where, as seems to be the case here, the reactions are totally unresponsive, it is not sufficient to give a glib answer, either "tunnel vision" or "psychological problems". The industry needs to understand the mechanism so that it can be identified and remediated prior to it once again causing an accident.

WN: Does the fact that this prosecution has gone ahead indicate to you that changes in the law may be required?

PM: Time will tell as the prosecution is continuing.

WN: To what extent is a pilot protected by law in event of an accident caused by his or her negligent conduct?

PM: The issue that ICAO, IFALPA, IATA FSF and every other serious observer has addressed is the use of the word negligent. Ordinary negligence can be attempting to get it right and not succeeding. The level of negligence that should trigger prosecution would have a component of intent to either do harm or to disregard the high probability that harm would occur. This is variously described as gross negligence or wilful and wanton misconduct. To prosecute someone for attempting to deal with a particular situation and getting it wrong adds nothing to the safety mix.

WN: Would you still get into an aircraft that you knew Mr Komar was piloting, assuming he was confirmed to be of sound mind at the time?

PM: We can assume that a proper training and evaluation program will make certain, to the highest degree possible, that all flight crew members are fully fit to perform their duties. A proper explanation in this instance would have

assisted Airline training departments in fulfilling this mission.

WN: How big do you believe the impact would be if Mr Komar were convicted?

PM: On whom?

WN: The effect on safety in general.

Gideon Ewers: I think I can answer that.

The important question to ask is "Will the conviction of Capt Komar improve air safety?" Since in this case there has been no full, independent and complete technical investigation into all the events surrounding the accident the answer to this question would have to be no. All that is known following the report is what happened...not WHY it happened. Furthermore, the prosecution itself is flawed since without a full investigation it is hard to see how wilful negligence can be demonstrated but that is a digression from the core issue.

The important thing is to prevent a recurrence and the best way to do this is by a full, complete, independent technical investigation. The bottom line is that investigations carried out in line with the provisions set out in ICAO Annex 13 have done much to create the one of the safest means of transport in the world...it works. Whereas it's hard to show where a prosecution of an airline crew has improved air safety.

New York Governor Eliot Spitzer resigns

New York Governor Eliot Spitzer has announced that he has resigned, effective Monday. Spitzer was recently discovered to have been a client of a prostitution ring on numerous occasions.

In a press conference, Governor

Spitzer said: "I am deeply sorry that I did not live up to what was expected of me. To every New Yorker, and to all those who believed in what I tried to stand for, I sincerely apologize. I will try once again outside of politics to serve the common good."

Public opinion polls in recent days have shown that 68% of New Yorkers wanted Spitzer to resign and many politicians had also called for his resignation.

The move means that Spitzer will be succeeded by Lieutenant Governor David Paterson, who will become New York's first African American governor. It is believed he will be the first legally blind governor in the United States.

Jayant "Dr Death" Patel arrested in Oregon, US

Jayant Patel, wanted for manslaughter, grievous bodily harm and fraud in Australia, was arrested by FBI agents in Oregon, United States and is scheduled to face an extradition hearing on April 10.

According to an affidavit filed by US prosecutors, Patel, previously restricted from performing surgery in the US due to "professional misconduct", lied about his professional history in order to work at Bundaberg Base Hospital in Bundaberg, Queensland.

Patel performed surgeries at Bundaberg that are alleged to have directly led to the deaths of several of his patients, including one procedure which he had previously been banned from performing in Oregon. The incidents led to Patel being nicknamed "Dr Death".

If successfully extradited to Australia, Patel "will get a fair

trial", according to the Federal Member for Hinkler, Paul Neville, whose electorate includes Bundaberg, although the extradition may take some time due to Patel's US citizenship.

MPs and Police Officers pay tributes to Michael Todd

Senior police officers and Members of Parliament in the United Kingdom have paid tribute to Michael J. Todd, the chief constable of the Greater Manchester Police, who was found dead yesterday. He was found dead in North Wales yesterday. It has been reported that he was found at the bottom of a cliff with letters found nearby, either on his body or in his car, which were addressed to family and friends, although this has not been confirmed.

The discovery came after an extensive search by mountain rescue teams, following Todd's unexpected absence on a. According to Greater Manchester Police, the chief constable had been on a walking trip, which was not uncommon, however when he failed to return the alarm was raised.

David Blunkett

David Blunkett, the former UK Home secretary commented: "Michael Todd was a decent and committed policeman who did a first-class job in difficult circumstances, including in dealing with counter-terrorism and the tragic death of Detective Constable Oakes.

His death is a real tragedy and I personally feel very sad to hear of his loss. My thoughts are with his family at this time."

Dave Whatton

Dave Whatton, the deputy chief constable for GMP commented: "What I can say is that I and all the officers of Greater Manchester Police and all the members of Greater Manchester Police Authority are absolutely shocked by what's happened today and what's taken place in the last 16 hours."

Chris Huhne

Chris Huhne, who is the Home Affairs spokesperson for the Liberal Democrat party commented: "Michael Todd was a distinguished chief constable with a lifetime of achievement in British policing behind him, who would have continued to make a great contribution to the fight against crime and terrorism. His death is a great loss to policing in this country, and I offer all my sympathy to his family and friends."

Jacqui Smith

Jacqui Smith, the Home Secretary commented: "I have been saddened to learn that Greater Manchester Police colleagues believe Ch Con Michael Todd has died.

Chief Con Todd has had a long and distinguished career in various forces and has contributed greatly to the fight against crime and terrorism. My thoughts are with his family, friends and colleagues"

David Davis

David Davis, the shadow home secretary from the Conservative party commented: "I was shocked and saddened to hear of the death of Chief Constable Mike Todd.

He made an important contribution to policing in Greater Manchester and the other forces he served with. He also gave distinguished

service at a national level, in particular in the fight against terrorism, where he always gave frank and thoughtful advice.

He will be greatly missed by all who knew him. My thoughts are with his family and colleagues."

Sir Ian Blair

The Metropolitan police commissioner, Sir Ian Blair commented:

"I am shocked and saddened to hear reports of the death of Michael Todd. Our thoughts are with his family, friends and colleagues in the Greater Manchester force at this time.

Michael held a variety of posts and ranks in the MPS. He made a significant contribution to policing.

In London, this culminated in him being assistant commissioner for territorial policing and leading the important fight against street crime. He was held in high esteem and I and colleagues who knew him are truly shocked by this terrible news."

Jan Berry

Jan Berry, who chairs the police federation of England and Wales commented:

"This is an extremely sad day for policing and my thoughts are with Mike Todd's family, friends and colleagues as they come to terms with this tragic news.

Mike was a very popular police officer who, despite his rank, never forgot the dangers and pressures those on the frontline face. He was, and will be always be remembered as, a coppers' copper."

Sir Gerald Kaufman

The MP for Greater Manchester Gorton, Sir Gerald Kaufman commented:
 "I'm shocked and saddened to hear of Michael Todd's sudden death.

He was in the prime of his life and he was a very good chief constable of Greater Manchester.

He will be very much missed."

Ken Jones

Ken Jones, from the association of police chief constables commented:
 "We now have to address the awful prospect that Mike Todd has lost his life.

Mike has made an enormous contribution to policing in Manchester and nationally throughout his distinguished career.

The news of his apparent death is a tragedy and he will be greatly missed by chief officer colleagues and all who worked with him during his career.

As a personal friend and valued supporter, I will miss him greatly.

Acpo headquarters has received already a huge volume of calls from colleagues across the policing family and in government who were shocked at the news and join us in conveying their support for his family."

Former Australian PM attacks parliament on apology to the Stolen Generations

Former Australian Prime Minister, John Howard has criticised the Rudd Labor government for apologising to the Stolen Generations in parliament last month. Mr Howard was prime

minister before the election last year.

Mr Howard's successor, opposition leader and leader of the Liberal party, Brendan Nelson supported the apology, making a speech of his own in parliament. The apology was unanimously supported by the House of Representatives.

While speaking to students at the John F. Kennedy School of Government at Harvard, the former Prime Minister defended his decision not to apologise to indigenous Australians during his 11 years in office.

"I do not believe, as a matter of principle, that one generation can accept responsibility for the acts of an earlier generation. I don't accept that as a matter of principle," Mr Howard said.

"In some cases, children were wrongly removed; in other cases, they were removed for good reason; in other cases, they were given up; and in other cases, the judgment on the removal is obscure or difficult to make."

Mr Howard said the apology was dangerous as it led many to believe that the government had "ticked the box" on indigenous issues in Australia. "The third reason I wasn't in favour of it was that it seems to me that there is a real danger that when we do something like that, there's a psychological reaction of the indigenous box has been ticked, and we've solved the problem,"

"The commitment to do practical things such as reducing the gap between the life expectancy of indigenous Australians and other Australians, which is unacceptably high, is pushed into the background," the former PM told

listeners.

Mr Howard said there had been a failure over the past few decades to address indigenous affairs. "I think we persevered for too long with the notion of separate development. I think the only way the indigenous people of Australia can get what we call a fair go is for them to become part of the mainstream of the community and get the benefits and opportunities available from mainstream Australian society, whilst recognising ... the particular and special place of the indigenous culture in the life of the country," said Mr Howard.

Mr Howard rejected suggestions from a member of the audience that his refusal to apologise to indigenous Australians and refusing to sign the Kyoto Protocol lost his government the election. "The first lesson I learned is you win some, you lose some,"

"I did have the opportunity of winning four elections," said Mr Howard.

Australian PM subject to scrutiny over Carer and Senior's payments

Australian Prime Minister, Kevin Rudd faced intense scrutiny in federal parliament on Tuesday following days of speculation that he was considering scrapping cash bonuses to recipients of carer and seniors payments. Questions by the opposition during question time were dominated by the cash bonuses, with leader of the opposition, Brendan Nelson moving to censure the Prime Minister.

It was the first censure motion moved against the Prime Minister since his election last year.

For the past four years, the previous Howard government had made one-off payments to seniors of up to \$500 and \$1,600 to carers.

Facing repeated questions, the Prime Minister said "I guarantee that carers will not be one dollar worse off as a consequence of the budget".

Mr Rudd said that the government was also looking at "the challenges of carers and pensioners in the long term" instead of through one-time bonus payments as the previous government had. Mr Rudd then called the opposition the "new party of compassion" and told the house that the Howard government had never committed to the payments in the long term, as they were not in forward budget estimates.

Brendan Nelson then moved a motion to censure the Prime Minister over his plans. During his motion, Dr Nelson called upon the Prime Minister to "get up, for God's sake, get up, stand in front of that microphone and say to the carers of this country, 'I, the Prime Minister of Australia, believe in you and will deliver you a lump sum payment in the budget.'"

Dr Nelson also accused the Prime Minister of not seeing the significance of the bonus payments for those who receive them. "For someone earning \$250,000 a year, a lump sum payment of \$1,600 would probably make them think: 'What's that? It's my credit card payment or whatever.'" said Dr Nelson.

The opposition leader told the House of Representatives that many people had been budgeting for the bonus payment and it was unfair for it to be taken from

them. "If you are hanging out for that lump sum payment, it is absolutely essential for your budgeting," said Dr Nelson.

When the Prime Minister spoke against the motion, he reminded the opposition that a Liberal party document said "A re-elected Coalition Government will consider continuing to pay these bonuses, depending on the economic circumstances at the time."

Mr Rudd then drew attention to his \$500 utilities allowance, which will be paid to aged and disability pensioners as well as carers to counter the rise in the cost of living.

Speaking for the motion, opposition community services spokesman Tony Abbott accused the Rudd government of "compassion fatigue" and said that the cardboard cutout of the Prime Minister which appeared in parliament on the previous sitting day had "more heart than this Prime Minister".

The censure motion was defeated along party lines.

National Hockey League news

There were 9 games played in the National Hockey League on March 11, 2008.

Colorado Avalanche @ Atlanta Thrashers

Andrew Brunette scored the first goal for the Avalanche at 4:47 into the first period. A few minutes later, Joe Sakic put Colorado ahead by 2 with his 10th goal of the season. Colby Armstrong put the Thrashers on the board 1:27 later. Milan Hejduk scored his 22nd goal of the season 48 seconds into the second period. David Jones put the Avalanche ahead by three goals less than

halfway through the second period. Brunette then scored his second of the night on a power play later in the second period. In the third period, Erik Christensen scored for Atlanta. The Avalanche have won 8 of their last 10, while the Thrashers lose their 10th in 11 games. Sakic and Jones each had three point nights for the Avalanche.

San Jose Sharks @ Nashville Predators

Joe Pavelski broke a scoreless tie 15:32 into the second period on a Sharks power play. Milan Michalek put San Jose ahead by 2 early in the third, his unassisted goal coming 37 seconds into the period. Jason Arnott brought the Predators within one goal 5:29 into the third on a Nashville power play. Evgeni Nabokov made 26 saves for San Jose, and Dan Ellis allowed 2 goals in 42 shots for Nashville. The Sharks have won 10 straight, while the Predators have lost 2 in a row.

St. Louis Blues @ Edmonton Oilers

Zachery Stortini scored his third goal of the season, putting the Oilers on the board 2:58 into the first period. Jarret Stoll scored a power play goal for Edmonton at 7:03, and Sam Gagner gave the Oilers a 3 goal lead 1:37 later on another power play. Andy McDonald put the Blues on the board late in the first period on a St. Louis power play. Lee Stempniak brought St. Louis within 1 early in the second period. Brad Boyes tied the score 11:15 through the second period. The score remained tied until 5 seconds left in sudden death overtime, where Andrew Cogliano scored the game winner, giving Edmonton their third straight win. St. Louis has lost 10 of their last 11 games. Mathieu Garon made 28 saves, earning his 26th win of the

season.

Philadelphia Flyers @ Toronto Maple Leafs

Scottie Upshall scored 13:26 into the first period to put the Flyers on the scoreboard first. Braydon Coburn scored a power play goal with less than a minute remaining in the second period. Daniel Brière put the Flyers up by three 1:12 into the third period. The Maple Leafs then scored three unanswered goals. Leafs captain Mats Sundin scored on a power play 4:48 into the third. Pavel Kubina brought Toronto within one at 13:16. Jeremy Williams scored his second of the season to tie the score at three apiece with 3:41 left in regulation to force overtime. With less than a minute remaining in 4-on-4 overtime, Kubina scored his second of the night, completing the come-from-behind win for the Leafs. Toronto outshot the Flyers 55-25. Martin Biron made 51 saves for the Flyers. Vesa Toskala made 22 saves for Toronto.

New Jersey Devils @ Montreal Canadiens

Bryan Smolinski scored the first goal 4:51 into the first period, putting the Canadiens on the board first. Saku Koivu's goal with 1:32 left in the first period made it 2-0 Montreal. Maxim Lapierre scored 14:20 into the second period for the Canadiens. Michael Ryder gave Montreal a 4 goal lead with his 13th goal of the season. Carey Price made 38 saves for the Canadiens, earning his second shutout of the season. The Canadiens now sit on top of the Eastern Conference standings.

Boston Bruins @ Ottawa Senators

Dany Heatley broke a scoreless tie 5:44 into the second, giving the Senators the first score of the game. Heatley also scored a power play 11:05 into the second on a

power play. Jason Spezza put Ottawa ahead by 3 late in the second period on a power play. Dennis Wideman put the Bruins on the board with 2:26 left in the game. Heatley completed his hat trick by scoring an empty net goal with 36 seconds left. Martin Gerber made 28 saves for the Senators, who have now won 2 straight. Boston goaltender Alex Auld allowed 3 goals on 28 shots. Heatley had 4 points, also assisting on Spezza's goal in the second period.

New York Islanders @ Tampa Bay

Michel Ouellet scored the first goal of the night for Tampa Bay, coming at 6:51 into the first period on a power play. Vincent Lecavalier also scored on a Lightning power play, putting them ahead by 2 12:09 into the first. The Islanders got on the board with less than 3 minutes left in the first, when Bill Guerin scored his 21st of the season. Ruslan Fedotenko tied the score at 2 goals apiece 4:16 into the second. Jeff Halpern scored for the Lightning 9 minutes into the second period, retaking the lead for Tampa Bay. Nick Tarnasky scored 14:49 into the second, giving Tampa a 2 goal lead. Lecavalier scored his second of the night, giving his team a 3 goal lead. Ben Walter scored a power play goal to get within 2 of Tampa, but the Lightning then scored 3 goals within 1 minute. First, Lecavalier completed the hat trick with 2:17 left in the game, then Ouellet scored his second of the night 28 seconds later. Just 10 seconds after that, Jason Ward scored an unassisted goal, his 8th of the season. Mike Comrie added a goal for the Islanders with 37 seconds remaining.

Chicago Blackhawks @ Detroit Red Wings

Kirk Maltby scored the first goal of

the game for the Red Wings 8:34 into the first period. Rene Bourque tied the score a couple minutes later with his 9th goal of the season. Pavel Datsyuk scored his 26th goal of the season to retake the lead for Detroit. Johan Franzen scored an unassisted empty net goal with 49 seconds left in the game, ensuring the victory for Detroit, who have now won 4 straight. Chris Osgood made 19 saves, improving his record to 24-8-3. Chicago has now lost their last 3 games.

Anaheim Ducks @ Phoenix Coyotes

Todd Marchant scored first for the Ducks, breaking a scoreless tie with 1:22 left in the first period. Ryan Getzlaf scored for Anaheim 7:17 into the second period, giving them a 2 goal lead. The Coyotes tied it up to force overtime, after the captain Shane Doan scored late in the second, and Keith Yandle scored over halfway through the third. In a shootout, Radim Vrbata scored the only goal, giving the Coyotes their 5th win in 6 games against Anaheim this season. Jean-Sebastien Giguere made 37 saves throughout the game, allowing two goals and one shootout attempt. Ilja Bryzgalov made 35 saves, allowing just two goals in regulation.

Player of the Day

Today's Player of the Day is Dany Heatley of the Ottawa Senators. Heatley scored three goals and assisted on the other in Ottawa's 4-1 win over the Boston Bruins. He now has 35 goals and 39 assists on the season.



Wikipedia Current Events

Southwest Airlines grounds 41

Wikipedia Current Events

jets as the airline discovered potential structural issues with its Boeing 737s.

- The last French veteran of World War I, Lazare Ponticelli, an Italian immigrant who lied about his age to join the French Foreign Legion and fight in the trenches, dies at 110.
- French Minister of Foreign Affairs Bernard Kouchner and his Swedish counterpart Carl Bildt pronounce their support for Serbian membership in the European Union
- Chinese police fire tear gas to disperse protesters during the second day of demonstrations by Buddhist monks in Lhasa, Tibet demanding the region's independence.
- Governor of New York Eliot Spitzer resigns effective March 17 amid a prostitution ring scandal. He will be replaced by David Paterson, the first African American and legally blind person to hold this position.
- A gunman opens fire at a bank in McComb, Mississippi, killing two people, before forcing his wife into a car and driving away, later killing her and committing suicide.
- A man under investigation for the sexual abuse of children at an orphanage in Sofia, Bulgaria, opens fire on teenage witnesses, killing one and wounding two others before committing suicide.

Today in History

1781 – German-born British astronomer and composer William Herschel discovered the planet Uranus while in the garden of his house in Bath, Somerset, England, thinking it was a comet.
 1845 – German composer Felix

Mendelssohn's Violin Concerto, one of the most popular and most frequently performed violin concertos of all time, was first played in Leipzig, with violinist Ferdinand David as soloist.
 1943 – The Holocaust: Nazi troops under SS Hauptsturmführer Amon Göth began liquidating the Jewish Ghetto in Kraków, Poland, sending about 8,000 Jews deemed able to work to the Plaszow labor camp. Those deemed unfit for work were either killed or sent to die at the Auschwitz concentration camp.
 1954 – Viet Minh forces under Vo Nguyen Giap unleashed a massive artillery barrage on the French military to begin the Battle of Dien Bien Phu, the climactic battle in the First Indochina War.
 1996 – In the deadliest attack on children in the history of the United Kingdom, a spree killer killed sixteen children and a teacher at a primary school in Dunblane, Scotland before committing suicide.

Quote of the Day

Don't give up! I believe in you all
 A person's a person, no matter how small!
 And you very small persons will not have to die
 If you make yourselves heard! So come on, now, and TRY!
 ~ Dr. Seuss ~

Word of the Day

tin-pot adj
 1. (informal) Inferior; shoddy.

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