



### Top Stories



**Bomb attacks kill over 100 people as Benazir Bhutto returns to Pakistan**

**At least 31 dead and 35 missing after loss of Indonesian passenger ferry**

A ferry has capsized off Sulawesi, Indonesia - at least 31 are dead and 35 more missing.



### Featured story

**John Reed on Orwell, God, self-destruction and the future of writing**



Christopher Hitchens called him a "Bin Ladenist" and Cathy Young said he blames the victims of 9/11's terrorism, but author John

Reed's quest for spirituality and sense in modern America keeps moving forward. A Wikinews interview with the controversial novelist.

### Wikipedia Current Events

Sam Brownback, Senator for Kansas, pulls out of the United States presidential election, 2008 due to a lack of support and funds.

•British Prime Minister Gordon Brown says that his predecessor Tony Blair would be a "great candidate" to become the first President of the European Council after EU leaders agree on a new Reform Treaty for the union.

•2007 Karachi bombings: The death toll from the bombings rises to 136 with 387 people wounded.

•A explosion kills up to eight civilians in Makati City's Glorietta Mall in Metro Manila.

•A ship sinks off the coast of Sulawesi in Indonesia resulting in at least 31 deaths and 35 people missing.

•Thailand arrests suspected Canadian pedophile Christopher Paul Neil after an international man hunt.

•Leaders of the European Union reach agreement on the Lisbon Treaty following concessions to Poland, Italy and Bulgaria.

**At least 31 dead and 35 missing after loss of Indonesian passenger ferry**

At least 31 people have died and 35 more are missing after wooden passenger ferry Acita III sank off the coast of Sulawesi, Indonesia. At least 125 more have been rescued.

The vessel capsized and sank at approximately 9pm local time last night, going down near the port town of Bau Bau. It has been suggested that bad weather was the cause of the disaster, but Bau Bau mayor Amirul Tamin has told reporters that he believes overcrowding was a much more likely cause.

An alternative explanation was offered by local police chief Mochammad Badrus, who says that the ship capsized after large numbers of passengers clambered onto an upper deck in attempts to gain mobile phone signals as the ferry neared land. Local residents and fisherman say they could hear people screaming for help as the accident unfolded.

Passenger manifests are rare and usually inaccurate when they are available in Indonesia, so passenger numbers are unconfirmed, but the ship was thought to have been carrying 150 - 200 people. However, Tamin has said that the ferry should only have been carrying a maximum of 30 passengers.

It is Indonesia's most serious ferry accident since the Levina 1 caught fire in February, which, in turn, came after MV Senopati Nusantara sank during a storm in late December.

**Two-horse race likely for leadership of UK Liberal Democrats**

The leadership election for the

Liberal Democrats, the UK's third party, is looking increasingly likely to be between two candidates. Environment spokesman Chris Huhne, who launched his leadership bid on Wednesday 17 October, has been joined in the race today by his frontbench colleague Nick Clegg, the Liberal Democrat home affairs spokesman. All other likely contenders have ruled themselves out.

Steve Webb, chair of the party's manifesto group and considered to be on the left wing of the party, gathered enough support from Liberal Democrat MPs to stand. But he withdrew from the contest and gave his support to Mr Clegg, citing the "huge cost" to his family if he became leader and his confidence in Mr Clegg's abilities.

Backbencher John Hemming, who had stated his intention to stand, ruled himself yesterday, saying that he has been unable to gather the necessary seven nominations from Liberal Democrat MPs. Mr Hemming, MP for Birmingham Yardley, wrote on his blog: "I will, however, not decide for now who I will support and I will announce that in the future when I have discussed matters with the other candidates and colleagues in Birmingham."

### **Quality, innovation and competitiveness centre-stage at Taipei Hardware & DIY industry conference**

The 7th Taipei International Hardware & DIY Show, organized by Kaigo Taiwan (The representative of Koelnmesse in Taiwan) and Koelnmesse GmbH, started on October 18-20 at Taipei World Trade Center Exhibition Hall 3. This show has 183 participants using 300 booth to exhibit accessories and tools on esoteric

fabricating, home-living applications, and security.

With people in Taiwan valuing on the quality of home-living, the organizer set a pre-show pavilion of "2008 Taipei Home & Lifestyle Fair" and invited B&Q & HomeBox holding DIY workshops for visitors.

This exhibition is conjuncted with industry and applications, and pursuing with three main topics of "Quality, Innovation and Competitiveness". International factories such as Hitachi, Rexon, Ryobi participated this show for the export opportunity in the hardware industry.

After the "Product Certificates and Testing" pavilion in TAITRONICS Autumn, Bureau of Standards, Metrology & Inspection, M.O.E.A., R.O.C. (Taiwan) and DIY in Europe magazine were invited for speeches focused on certifications on hardware & DIY products and environment issues in EU.

### **Blast kills 8, injures 126 at a mall in Manila, The Philippines**

An explosion rocked an upscale mall in the main financial district of the Philippine Capital Manila. The explosion damaged the Glorietta Mall in the financial district of Makati and killed at least 8 people and injured at least 126 people, 98 of these needing hospitalization and the other 28 given first aid at the blast site for minor injuries.

The explosion happened past 1:30 pm just after employees of the different companies in Makati just finished their lunch breaks.

The popo initially said that the cause of the explosion is from a leaking Liquified Petroleum Gas Tank, but after a few hours the Chief of the Philippine National

Police, Director General Avelino Razon Jr., ruled out the possibility of an LPG leak and saying that a bomb could be the cause of the explosion because investigators say that the blast site smelled of gunpowder and not of a leaking LPG tank.

Philippine president Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo meanwhile is now on her way to the blast site. Currently, the explosion is still under investigation and the PNP bomb squad are inside the mall to check if there is any bomb debris or human remains.

### **Cousins sacked by West Coast in AFL drug scandal**

Ben Cousins, the former West Coast Eagles AFL team captain has been forcedly removed from the West Coast Eagles and is 'no longer a registered player', according to an AFL spokesperson.

Cousins was pulled over by police on Tuesday for erratic driving. Police charged the player with one drug charge and failing to provide a blood test. The drug charge was dropped today but the blood test charge still lingers, after police had found the drug Valium solely in pill form - the drug is only illegal in the liquid form (for injection).

Cousins had already been temporarily suspended by the West Coast Eagles prior to the 2007 season but has never actually tested positive to illicit drugs. Cousins then underwent rehabilitation in the USA in early 2007 and agreed to return to the club under a number of conditions, including a 'zero-tolerance clause', according to The Sunday Times this morning.

West Coast still stands in its decision to sack Cousins.

### **Amazon loses "1-click patent" suit**

Today, New Zealander Peter Calveley successfully defeated internet bookseller Amazon.com in a suit brought over Amazon's patent for "1-click shopping". The technique, which allows a customer to purchase product without repeatedly entering personal information such as name and address, was seen as a valuable resource to ease customer frustration.

Amazon filed a patent application for 1-click shopping in early 1997 and was awarded the patent in September 1999. Twenty-three days later Amazon sued rival Barnes and Noble for alleged infringement by its "Express Lane" ordering which was introduced in 1998. In December 1999 Amazon won an interim injunction against Barnes and Noble but the USA Court of Appeal lifted this injunction in February 2001. Amazon has successfully licensed the technique to other e-sellers such as Apple.

The Auckland man who won the case in the United States Patent office used internet archives to show that defunct company Digi Cash used the technique prior to Amazon. Despite costing a substantial sum of cash and requiring donations to pursue the case, Calveley said he did it as a game and hopes that his success inspires others to play the same game.

Amazon announced its intent to appeal.

### **Australia Votes 2007: Labor releases tax plan**

Labor has released its tax plan, following the announcement from the Liberal/National coalition that they would provide tax cuts

costing \$34 billion if re-elected. The government has placed pressure on Labor since their announcement on Monday, urging Mr Rudd to release the opposition's tax plan.

Under Labor's system, the government's planned tax cuts for Australians earning more than \$180,000 per year would be scrapped, saving \$3 billion. The savings would be spent on health and education for working families.

Speaking in Canberra today, Mr Rudd announced that if elected he would spend \$2.3 billion on tax rebates for parents with children in primary and secondary schools. The refunds would be available to those who are eligible for Family Tax Benefit A. Mr Rudd claims the plan would be available to around two million children.

A Rudd government would offer a 50 percent education rebate to parents, up to \$750 per child for primary school aged children and up to \$1500 for children in secondary school. The rebate could be used for a variety of purchases but not for school fees. Mr Rudd said the rebate would help to equip children for the digital age.

"If mum and dad are spending money on buying a laptop, spending money on buying a home computer, spending money on ... purchasing internet connection, education software printers and books, those expenditures, (they) will be eligible to claim the 50 per cent education tax refund that we are putting forward," Mr Rudd said.

"We need to equip our young people with the skills necessary to participate in the digital economy of the 21st century."

Mr Rudd vigorously denied that he rushed the plan out after the government's announcement. "We have been working on this education tax refund for the better part of four, five months," Mr Rudd told reporters.

Labor would spend \$400 million of the savings on Labor's national health reform plan, while the remaining \$200 million would go to the budget surplus.

Under the health reform plan, an elective surgery strategy would be implemented with the aim of reducing waiting times. Mr Rudd said the waiting times experienced by some Australians were unacceptable.

"We intend ... to establish through the use of other funds as well a plan which would create a national elective-surgery strategy to reduce waiting times across the nation," Mr Rudd said.

About 25,000 Australians are on waiting lists for elective surgery despite having passed the clinically acceptable waiting period, he said.

"That's unacceptable," he said.

Mr Rudd also said that Labor would embrace tax reform by flattening the number of tax rates from four to three, at 15, 30 and 40 percent by 2012-13. This contrasts to the government's planned tax cuts bringing rates to 15, 30, 25 and 40 percent.

If Labor is elected, those paying the highest tax rate would pay around \$10 a week more than they would under a Howard government. Mr Rudd said that he was not waging a class war and believed those paying the top tax rate wouldn't mind investing in the country.

"If you're on \$180 grand and more, as people like myself are, I don't think you really need it just now," said Mr Rudd.

"What I say instead is that most people in that bracket wouldn't mind an investment going into bridging the digital divide for the whole country."

"If we were waging some sort of class warfare, we wouldn't be in the business of outlining the long term goals that we've put forward – a flattening, prospectively, of the tax system down to three rates rather than four with a top marginal tax rate of 40."

The government has criticised the plan, with Treasurer Peter Costello claiming that Mr Rudd copied "91.5 percent" of their tax policy. He accused the opposition of never having a tax plan.

"Mr Rudd talks about education - if he'd have brought his exam paper in after copying 91.5 per cent of the answers from the student sitting next to him, he would have got an F for fail."

The Treasurer said that it would be unlikely that a Rudd government could deliver tax cuts as it could not manage the economy well enough to deliver them.

"Unless you can manage the Australian economy, these tax cuts will not be deliverable," he said.

"Mr Rudd and Mr Swan do not understand the Australian economy. This is entirely clear from the fact they have spent four days copying 91.5 per cent of our tax plan."

Mr Costello said that a Rudd government would have a dilemma

if elected, in that he could not follow the coalition's policies.

"He never had a tax policy," Mr Costello said.

"He hadn't done the work, five days after our tax policy, his great contribution to the tax debate in this country is to say 'me too, but'."

"The trouble with 'me too, but' is, it's OK for Mr Rudd to say 'me too, I'll be like Howard and Costello and adopt their policies', but if he gets in Howard and Costello won't be there writing the policies."

Mr Costello said that when Kevin Rudd runs out of ideas, the union movement would step in to provide guidance. "So who is going to say 'me to, but' to them? I think the union movement will be giving him a few ideas," said Mr Costello.

### **YouTube announced the release of Taiwan Traditional Chinese website**

YouTube announced that Taiwan Traditional Chinese website has been released yesterday in Taipei City, Taiwan, and the unique web address will be shown as "www.youtube.com.tw" or "tw.youtube.com". Users from YouTube Global Sites can access Taiwan Site. This site launch will be a benefit for users preferring reading Chinese more than other languages.

In the Press Conference, the co-founder Steve Chen explained the reason choosing ".tw" address, "With lots of good experiences using Traditional Chinese Site in Hong Kong, I think Taiwan should also be. We improved search functions to clos more in Taiwan." He remarked. "YouTube has lots of international sites in many countries including Taiwan, with a

keyword, you can find lots of different results in different sites." YouTube International Manager Sakina Arsiwala said.

Not only the launch by the performance of Eight Generals and Steve Chen, YouTube also invited China Television Co., Commonwealth Magazine, Lion Travel Co., Ltd., and Taiwan Broadcasting System to share experiences of partnership. "We should learn some conceptions on sharing and public service needed in this networking era." Yuan-hui Hu (President and CEO of Public Television Service, Taiwan) remarked at the Partner Panel of the Press Conference.

After the Press Conference, YouTube held launch and site experience activities at Xinyi Plaza of Shin Kong Mitsukoshi and invited registered users participating in "Beautiful Taiwan" online video competition.

### **Today in History**

1740 – Maria Theresa assumed the throne of Austria, following the Pragmatic Sanction of 1713.

1818 – The United Kingdom and the United States signed the Treaty of 1818, which settled the Canada–United States border on the 49th parallel for most of its length.

1827 – An allied British, French, and Russian naval force destroyed a combined Turkish and Egyptian fleet at the Battle of Navarino, a decisive moment in the Greek War of Independence.

1941 – World War II: German soldiers began a massacre of thousands of civilians in Kragujevac in Nazi-occupied Serbia.

1973 – Queen Elizabeth II, in her capacity as Queen of Australia, formally opened the Sydney Opera House on Bennelong Point in

Sydney Harbour.  
 October 20 is Birth of the Báb, a  
 holy day in the Bahá'í Faith.

**Quote of the Day**

I'm learning to fly, but I ain't got  
 wings  
 Coming down is the hardest thing.  
 ~ Tom Petty ~

**Word of the Day**

yarn; n

1. A twisted strand of fiber used for knitting or weaving.
2. A story, a tale, especially one that is incredible.
- 3.

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