



Top Stories

Thai PM Thaksin ousted by coup



A military coup has taken place in Thailand with soldiers and tanks surrounding government buildings in Bangkok while ousted Prime Minister Thaksin Shinawatra was at the annual UN General Assembly in New York. The army Commander-in-Chief Gen. Sondhi Boonyaratkalin has been announced to be the acting prime minister.

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



US President George W. Bush and Iranian President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad addressed the 61st annual meeting of the UN General assembly in New York

Featured story

Canadian terror suspect Arar cleared after one year of torture

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

Wikipedia Current Events

- An announcement on Thai television declared that a "Council of Administrative Reform" with King Bhumibol Adulyadej as head of state had seized power in Bangkok and nearby provinces without any resistance. State TV stations are broadcasting messages of loyalty to the King, while international broadcast channels were blocked.
- President of Iran Mahmoud Ahmadinejad and President of the United States George W. Bush both speak at the United Nations General Assembly. Ahmadinejad said that Bush's policies in the Middle East were "moving the world toward war." Bush said that "The greatest obstacle to this future is that your (Iranian) rulers have chosen to deny you (the Iranian people) liberty and to use your nation's resources to fund terrorism and fuel extremism and pursue nuclear weapons."

- A judicial panel in Canada finds that Canadian citizen Maher Arar was falsely accused when he was secretly extradited by the United States to Syria, and that he was tortured there.
- Israeli media report an explosion in Tel Aviv. Police spokesman Micky Rosenfeld said the blast appeared to be criminal in nature and not a terrorist attack.
- The return of the space shuttle Atlantis is delayed by one day after a mysterious object is found floating near the shuttle.

Wikipedia Current Events

- 2006 protests in Hungary: demonstrations continue in Hungary peacefully to enforce the resignation of the Gyurcsány-government. The demonstrators expressed their regret on the vandalism done at the Hungarian Television's headquarters last night. In the meantime, farmers announced that they will close roads in the countryside and around Budapest.
- In Ankara, protesters demand that the Justice Ministry arrest the Pope upon his arrival in Turkey, should he go ahead with his planned visit there in November.
- A corporal in the Duke of Lancaster's Regiment becomes the first British soldier to confess to committing a war crime in Iraq, after admitting inhumane treatment of civilians, at a court martial.

Canadian "terror" suspect Arar cleared after one year of torture

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

"The potential consequences of labelling someone an Islamic extremist in post-9/11 are enormous" wrote O'Connor.

Based on information received from the RCMP, Arar was detained on September 16, 2002, during a stopover at JFK Airport in New York City. After being held in the US for two weeks he was deported to Syria under the US policy of "extraordinary rendition" and was detained in a Damascus prison for a year without charges and tortured before being returned to Canada.

"I am able to say categorically that there is no evidence to indicate that Mr. Arar has committed any offence or that his activities constitute a threat to the security of Canada," O'Connor wrote in his 822 page report. "This was not a case where investigators were unable to effectively pursue their investigative goals because of lack of resources or time constraints. On the contrary, Canadian investigators made extensive efforts to find any information that could implicate Mr. Arar in terrorist activities... The results speak for themselves: they found none," stated the report.

Arar, 36, was relieved by the findings and was tearful when he first read them.

"I think the Canadian public has always believed that I was innocent. But it's very different when it comes from a respected jurist like Justice O'Connor," he said saying also that the judge had "cleared my name and restored my reputation."

Thai PM Thaksin ousted by coup

Thailand's army general ousted Prime Minister Thaksin Shinawatra

in a military coup, declaring martial law and revoking the constitution. Army spokesperson Col. Akara Chitroj said army Commander-in-Chief Gen. Sondhi Boonyaratkalin would be acting prime minister. An announcement from the military earlier declared a provisional authority loyal to King Bhumibol Adulyadej. Earlier a number of tanks had surrounded the government headquarters in the capital of Thailand, Bangkok. Hundreds of troops had deployed at government installations and major traffic intersections. Swedish television has shown footage of troops with military vehicles setting up checkpoints on roads, as well as soldiers on guard (follow the video links within the article). The footage shows troops wearing yellow ribbons tied to their uniforms, the color of the King.

The Prime Minister Thaksin Shinawatra has declared a state of emergency from New York, where he is currently with the UN. "The prime minister with the approval of the Cabinet declares serious emergency law in Bangkok from now on," Thaksin said on a government-owned TV channel. He has also sacked the current Thai army commander.

There was a scare last week when several army tanks were seen in the streets of Bangkok, but army commanders said they were simply returning from exercises.

The last coup was 15 years ago, back in February 1991; there have been 23 coups (successful or attempted) in the last 74 years in the country.

Thailand has been in political turmoil since the results of April's general elections were annulled, leaving the country without a

working legislature. Thaksin had won elections in 2001 and 2005, and was widely expected to win planned elections in November.

According to Sky News, 50 soldiers have been said to be inside Bangkok's Government House.

All international news stations were taken off the network of cable operator UBC. All local stations are now airing a military speech loop stating everything will be over shortly.

The army issued this statement shown on national TV:

"Whereas the political reform commission under the democratic constitutional monarchy, comprising the commanders in chief of the armed forces and the head of the national police, have secured the situation in Bangkok and nearby suburbs without any resistance.

"In the interest of maintaining law and order, a request is therefore made for public cooperation for which our apologies for any inconvenience."

New Brunswick voters shun Premier Bernard Lord

Voters in the Canadian province of New Brunswick narrowly defeated the Progressive Conservative government of Premier Bernard Lord giving Shawn Graham's Liberals a narrow upset victory in yesterday's general election.

While the Tories edged the Liberals in the popular vote by a margin of 47.65% to 47.00%, the Liberals will form a majority government having won 29 seats to the Conservatives' 26 while the New Democratic Party was shut out. Graham, 38, will become premier displacing Lord, 40, who held the

office for two terms. Lord becomes the first New Brunswick premier to fail to win a third term since the 1950s.

"Welcome to a new era for our province," said Graham in his victory speech. "It is with great humility tonight that I accept this mandate from the people of New Brunswick."

"But the first thing we will do is bring back the pride of New Brunswickers," he said. "Today, New Brunswickers made a choice and that choice was change. You have chosen hope. We can not wait another day. We have worked to earn your trust and now we will work to keep your trust."

Lord accepted the result telling his supporters that "serving as Premier for the last seven years has been an honour and a privilege. I was hoping that we had the energy [to win] but in the end I accept the decision of the people of New Brunswick."

In the election, the Liberals picked up two seats from the Tories in northern New Brunswick where the government had made several controversial hospital closings.

Judge dismissed in Hussein trial

The judge in charge of Saddam Hussein's genocide trial has been replaced, the Iraqi Prime Minister's office said.

A government spokesman said that the court agreed to replace Grand Judge Abdullah al-Amiri with a new judge.

"We asked the court to replace him because he said that Saddam wasn't a dictator, which was a violation of his neutrality." said government spokesman Ali

Dabbagh.

"The court told us he has already been replaced. This was a decision by the cabinet of the prime minister."

The court is trying Hussein, his cousin Ali Hassan al-Majeed, known as "Chemical Ali," and five others on charges of war crimes and crimes against humanity for their role in the 1988 Anfal campaign against ethnic Kurds.

Hussein and al-Majeed also face the graver charge of genocide. If found guilty, all men face death by hanging.

The court was set up by US occupying forces to try Hussein for war crimes, and genocide. It is now run by the Iraqi government, with the United States acting as an advisor body.

Unidentified object contributes to delay of shuttle landing

Flight controllers in Houston, Texas, U.S.A observed an unidentified object at approximately 7:45 UTC today moving at an undetermined distance from the Space Shuttle Atlantis as it orbited the Earth at an altitude of over 190 nautical miles. As of 16:00 UTC, there was still uncertainty as to the object's size and distance from the orbiter. Video of the object showed it following an undeviating path between the shuttle and the Earth below.

NASA released the following statement on its official website: "An object was observed by flight controllers using a TV camera on the shuttle in close proximity to the spacecraft. It was observed following standard tests of Atlantis' reaction control system about 2:45 a.m. today. Flight

controllers continue to analyze the situation and are concerned the item may be something that came off of Atlantis."

The shuttle had been scheduled to land at 15:45 UTC on Wednesday, but concerns raised by the object, in addition to an unfavorable weather forecast, prompted Mission Control Center to "wave off" the landing until 11:32 UTC Thursday at the earliest.

ABC News is reporting that flight controllers first saw the object shortly after sensors in the shuttle's wings indicated the craft had been "hit by something", but the Associated Press reports that NASA officials believe the sensor reading was triggered by the spacecraft itself as it fired positional jets. As of 18:00 UTC the leading theory at NASA is that something escaped from the shuttle's cargo bay during that jet firing sequence. Cameras will be focused on the object throughout the night and a detailed inventory of cargo bay items will be taken in an effort to learn whether a safe landing can be made without the object, if it in fact belonged to the shuttle.

Cabinet shuffled in Ontario

Ontario Premier Dalton McGuinty implemented a mini-Cabinet shuffle yesterday following the surprise resignation of Economic Development and Trade Minister Joe Cordiano who is leaving politics to spend more time with his family.

After only five months on the job, Education minister Sandra Pupatello moved to the trade portfolio while parliamentary secretary Kathleen Wynne has been promoted to the education portfolio.

Pupatello had faced criticisms for her handling of a conflict with three school boards, including the both the Toronto District School Board and the Toronto Catholic board which have not balanced their budgets. Wynne, a former Toronto school trustee, is seen as being less pugnacious than her predecessor and as having a better relationship with the boards. Pupatello had insisted that the boards' problems were self-inflicted and some Queen's Park reporters such as the Toronto Star's education reporters suggest the change in ministers may indicate a change of attitude by the government.

Cordiano, 48, has been in politics for 21 years and says he wants to spend more time with his wife and daughters. "I'm standing here with very mixed emotions," Cordiano told reporters, "after a great deal of reflection, I've decided my time here should come to an end."

Wanaka, New Zealand attempts bra chain record

Wanakafest has attempted to break the world record for the longest bra chain. They fell short by 107,297 bras, but raised more than NZ\$10,000 for the Breast Cancer Research Trust charity in the attempt to beat the record currently held by Cyprus. The record is 114,782 bras which was made on April 30 this year.

The bra chain, however, did manage to create a distance of 5 kilometers from 7,485 bras collected from all over the world over a period of six weeks. The bras included such places as United States, United Kingdom, Spain, Germany, Australia and from numerous places in New Zealand. 1,000 bras collected in North Hampton, England, courtesy of the BBC, did not count for the

final tally. Three sacks full of bras, delivered complete with spiders, cob webs and cockroaches, from the world-famous Cardrona bra fence in Otago which farmer John Lee had to dismantle after council pressure earlier this year.

Wanakafest managed to collect \$10,000 for charity by donations sent in with people's bras, bras previously owned by celebrities were auctioned on New Zealand auction site, TradeMe, community fundraisers and an art auction.

Kerry Quin, Wanakafest manager, said that she was "thrilled with how the community got behind the fundraiser. We have had so much support – not only from Wanaka locals, but also from throughout New Zealand. It's great to be able to give money to such a worthy cause."

The Wanakafest organisers are unsure what will happen to the bras collected but Ms Quinn has said that a Napier charity asked for them and were not told what the purposes for them were.

Quinn said: "Some were so tiny you wonder why they bother, and some so big you wonder how they walk!"

Germany wins Hockey World Cup

Germany won the 2006 Men's Hockey World Cup on Sunday in Mönchengladbach, Germany in a 4-3 defeat of Australia. Germany came behind from a 1-3 deficit to score 3 unanswered goals. Christopher Zeller of Germany was named Most Promising Player and Jamie Dwyer of Australia was named Player of the Tournament. Spain defeated South Korea 3-2 after extra time for 3rd and in the match for 11th between India defeated South Africa 1-0. South

Africa is now relegated from the top tier of Men's Hockey.

Today in History

1378 - Papal Schism: Unhappy with Pope Urban VI (pictured), a group of cardinals started a rival papacy with the election of Antipope Clement VII, throwing the Roman Catholic Church into turmoil.

1854 - The Crimean War began with a Franco-British victory over Russian forces in the Battle of Alma.

1870 - The Bersaglieri entered Rome, ending the temporal power of the Pope and completing the unification of Italy.

1906 - The ocean liner RMS Mauretania, the largest and fastest ship in the world at the time, was launched in Newcastle, England.

1973 - Billie Jean King defeated Bobby Riggs in straight sets before 30,492 spectators at the Astrodome in Houston, Texas in an internationally televised tennis match dubbed the "Battle of the Sexes".

Quote of the Day

His voice rose under the black smoke before the burning wreckage of the island; and infected by that emotion, the other little boys began to shake and sob too. And in the middle of them, with filthy body, matted hair, and unwiped nose, Ralph wept for the end of innocence, the darkness of man's heart, and the fall through the air of the true, wise friend called Piggy." ~ William Golding

Word of the Day

internecine; adj

1. Mutually destructive, most often applied to warfare.
2. Struggle within a group, usually applied to an ethnic or familial relationship.

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