



Top Stories

2006 "Stolenwealth" Games to confront Commonwealth Games in Melbourne

The possibility of large-scale protests in the face of world media coverage of the 2006 Commonwealth Games in Melbourne, Australia, has event organisers and the Government worried. The "Black GST" - which represents Indigenous Genocide, Sovereignty and Treaty - are planning demonstrations at prominent Games events to highlight a range of demands relating to Indigenous rights.

Authorities impose vehicle ban on Baghdad

As of Friday, the 3rd of March, police will be ordered to confiscate any private vehicle on the roads of Baghdad during a day-time vehicle ban. The restrictions come on top of the regular night time curfew, which ends at 6 AM, when the new curfew will kick in.

Featured story

City Planning Board postpones decision on Buffalo, N.Y. hotel proposal

The City of Buffalo's Planning Board has postponed any decision on the proposed Elmwood Village Hotel, saying the public needs to be more involved. The Board is also concerned the hotel is still too big.

Wikipedia Current Events

• In spite of a federal judge's ruling, the United States releases the names of only 317 of the 490 prisoners being held at Guantanamo Bay after four years of requests.

• Former U.S. House Representative Randy "Duke" Cunningham (Rep., CA) is sentenced to eight years and four months in prison, the longest sentence ever for a congressman, for collecting \$2.4 million in bribes.

• British Labour Party MPs close to Gordon Brown call for Culture Secretary Tessa Jowell to resign over her husband, David Mills' alleged acceptance of money from Silvio Berlusconi.

• British Rock star Gary Glitter is convicted of the molestation of one 11- and one 12-year-old girl in the town of Vung Tau in southern Vietnam. He is sentenced to 3 years in prison, but may be back in the United Kingdom by December.

• An Italian parliamentary commission accuses the former Soviet Union of orchestrating the 1981 attempt to assassinate Pope John Paul II

Band sticker causes bomb scare at Ohio University

A sticker for the Pensacola, Florida punk band "This Bike Is A Pipe Bomb" was found on a bike near the Ohio University's Oasis restaurant by a university police officer.

The university police, who were unaware of the band's existence, summoned the Columbus police bomb squad, who destroyed the bike to ensure that there was no bomb inside. The university discovered later on their error.

The bike's owner, a graduate student, has been charged with "inducing panic", a misdemeanor. He has been released and is due to appear in court March 13 on the charge.

The band's label, Plan-It-X Records, has not yet commented on the incident.

BBC & CBS polls find support low for the Iraq War, and feelings that it increased likelihood of terrorist attacks

The international polling firm GlobeScan conducted a survey for the BBC World Service which polled residents of 35 countries. The question asked was "Has the war in Iraq increased, decreased or had no effect on the likelihood of terrorist attacks around the world?"

The global response was that 60% felt that the likelihood had increased; 15% felt that the likelihood had decreased; 12% felt that there was no effect and 13% had no answer. Out of the 35 countries, Mexico was the only one where the people polled thought the invasion lessened the likelihood of terrorist attacks. The highest percentage of people who felt the invasion would increase the likelihood of terrorist attacks

was China where 85% held that view.

"It's official. Citizens worldwide think Western leaders have made a fundamental mistake in their war on terror by invading Iraq," claimed Doug Miller, GlobeScan's President. He claimed further that "Short of the Iraqi government asking them to stay longer, people think the troops should leave."

A separate poll of Americans by CBS News poll, found that only 36% thought "the war is going well", and 30% felt "Bush was doing a good job of handling the conflict." CBS also found that only 18% held a favorable view of Vice-President Dick Cheney.

In Afghanistan on Wednesday, President Bush said; "If I worried about polls, I wouldn't be doing my job, I've got ample capital and I'm using it to spread freedom and to protect the American people, plus we've got a strong agenda to keep this economy growing." President Bush also said that Iraqis must choose between "chaos or unity."

Ian Thorpe starts to recover from chest pains

Australian swimmer Ian Thorpe is reported to be feeling much better after suffering from a chest complaint for some time.

The Olympic gold medalist was due to swim in the 100m and 200m freestyle and in three relays at the Commonwealth Games - but due to the chest complaints his fitness has been in doubt. He has been unable to take the drugs needed to overcome his complaint as they are banned (from the Games).

However Thorpe yesterday told the media "It's actually the best I've

felt in a while, the antibiotics are starting to work", so hopes are rising that he may be able to compete in some of his events.

Authorities impose vehicle ban on Baghdad

As of Friday, the 3rd of March, police will be ordered to confiscate any private vehicle on the roads of Baghdad during a day-time vehicle ban. The restrictions come on top of the regular night time curfew, which ends at 6 AM, when the new curfew will kick in. Despite the traffic ban, people may walk on foot to their local mosques for friday prayers.

The curfew is part of the efforts by the Iraqi government to combat escalating violence after the bombings of the golden mosque of Sammarra on the 22nd of February. According to the BBC at least 400 people have died in the violence following the assault on the Shia shrine; the arab network Al-Jazeera estimates this number to be at least 500.

The security situation in the country as a whole has greatly deteriorated since the attack that triggered a wave of violence between the Shiite and Sunni Muslim groups. The Iraqi administration fears that clerics might encourage violence during the day's friday prayer, and interim prime minister Ibrahim al-Jaafari made an appeal on Iraqi TV for the religious leaders, asking them to "express themselves in the language of national unity."

2006 "Stolenwealth" Games to confront Commonwealth Games in Melbourne

The possibility of large-scale protests in the face of the 3,000 journalists covering the Melbourne 2006 Commonwealth Games, has event organisers and the

Government worried.

The group "Black GST" - which represents Indigenous Genocide, Sovereignty and Treaty - are planning demonstrations at prominent Games events unless the Government agrees to a range of demands including an end to Aboriginal genocide, Aboriginal Sovereignty and the signing of a treaty.

The Black GST say they hope the focus of the world's media will draw attention to the plight of indigenous Australians during the Games. Organisers say supporters are converging from across Australia and from overseas. Organisers say up to 20,000 people may take part in talks, rallies, colourful protests and many cultural festivities designed to pressure the Federal Government on Indigeneous rights issues. They want the Government to provide a temporary campsite for the supporters, saying "organised chaos was better than disorganised chaos."

The 2006 Stolenwealth Games convergence, described by organisers as the "cultural festival of the 2006 Commonwealth Games," was virtually opened on March 2nd with the launch of the official "Stolenwealth Games" website. Scoop Independent News and Perth Indymedia reported that the launch was held at Federation Square in Melbourne. The site contents were projected via wireless laptop by the Stolenwealth Games General Manager, and a tour of the website was given on the big screen. He said "overwhelming amusement was the response from the audience." The group say permanent access points to the website are being set up at public internet facilities across Victoria

during the coming weeks.

Support

"Interest in the Stolenwealth Games is building all over the world and this fresh, exciting and contemporary site will draw in people from Stolenwealth Nations around the globe to find out about the latest news and events," said a Stolenwealth Games spokesperson. "We have been getting many requests from around the world wanting to know about the Stolenwealth Games. We have provided many ways that individuals and organisations can support the campaign by spreading the word."

The Victorian Traditional Owner Land Justice Group (VTOLJG) which represents the first nation groups of Victoria, has announced its support to boycott the 2006 Commonwealth Games until the Government "recognises Traditional Owner rights." The group asserts that culture has been misappropriated in preparation for the Games.

Organisers of the campaign say they welcome the formal support from the Traditional Owners. "While some seek to divide and discredit Indigenous Australia, this support is further evidence that the Aboriginal people are united in opposition to the ongoing criminal genocide that is being perpetrated against the Aboriginal people" said Black GST supporter and Aboriginal Elder, Robbie Thorpe.

"We now have endorsement from the VTOLJG and the Aboriginal Tent Embassy for the aims and objectives of the Campaign and we are looking forward to hosting all indigenous and non-indigenous supporters from across Australia in March," he said. The Black GST group have said "the convergence

will be held as a peaceful, family-focussed demonstration against genocide, and for the restoration of sovereignty and the negotiations towards a Treaty."

But the campaign has recieved flak in mainstream media, such as Melbourne's Herald Sun, who wrote: "the proposal to allow BlackGST to set up an Aboriginal tent embassy at a site well away from the Commonwealth Games will be interpreted by some as the State Government caving in to a radical protest group. A major concern for the Government... is to protect the event from disruption... no chances should be taken..."

"Games Management Zones" The Black GST has been planning the convergence for months, calling for Aboriginal people and their supporters to converge on Melbourne. The Melbourne-based Indigenous rights group have called on thousands of people concerned about the plight of indigenous Australians to converge on Melbourne during the Games, which they have dubbed "the Stolenwealth Games". But the choice of Kings Domain has made conflict almost inevitable, as the area is one of the areas gazetted by the State Government as a "Games management zone".

Under the Commonwealth Games Arrangements Act, any area gazetted as a management zone is subject to a range of specific laws - including bans on protesting, creating a disturbance and other activities. The protest bans will be in effect at different times and places, and offenders can be arrested.

A spokeswoman for the Black GST, which advocates peaceful protest, said the site had been chosen

because it was close to where the Queen will stay on March 15. "We figured that she is only in Melbourne for 27 hours or something like that so we thought we would make it easy for her to come next door and see us," she said. "We are a very open, welcoming group, so she will be welcome to come and join us."

Kings Domain is the burial site for 38 indigenous forefathers of Victoria. Black GST elder, Targan, said trade union groups have offered to install infrastructure at the site. The group initially worked with the State Government to find a suitable camp site, but the relationship broke down when the Government failed to meet a deadline imposed by the protesters. "While we are disappointed the ministers were not able to meet deadline on our request, we thank them for their constructive approach towards negotiations and the open-door policy exercised," said Targan.

A spokesman for Games Minister Justin Madden said the Government was still investigating other sites. Victoria Police Games security commander Brendan Bannan said he was not convinced the Black GST represented the views of most indigenous people. "We are dealing with the Aboriginal community and they don't seem to support it at all ... the wider Aboriginal community don't support disruption to the Games at all," he said.

The Government was told that Black GST supporters would camp in Fitzroy Gardens and other city parks should it fail to nominate a site. A spokesman for Aboriginal Affairs Minister Gavan Jennings said the Government was taking the issue seriously, but had not been able to finalise a campsite

before the deadline.

Under special Games laws, people protesting or causing a disturbance in "Games management zones" can be arrested and fined. While prominent public spaces such as Federation Square, Birrarung Marr, Albert Park and the Alexandra Gardens fall under the legislation, such tough anti-protest laws cannot be enforced in the nearby Fitzroy Gardens.

Games chairman Ron Walker has urged the group to choose another date for its protest march through the city, which is currently planned to coincide with the opening ceremony on March 15. The group believes that an opportunity to gain attention for indigenous issues was lost at the Sydney Olympics and has vowed to make a highly visible presence at the Games.

Sacred Flames

The Black GST said the Australian Aboriginal Tent Embassy's sacred flame, burning over many years at the Canberra site will be carried to Melbourne before the Games, and its arrival would mark the opening of the protest camp from where a march will proceed to the MCG before the Opening Ceremony.

Black GST claims supporters from all over Australia, including three busloads from the West Australian Land Council, will gather in Melbourne during the Games for peaceful protests.

Aboriginal Affairs Minister Gavin Jennings had offered Victoria Park to the protesters. Victoria Park, former home of Collingwood Football Club, where one of the strongest statements of Aboriginal pride, when St Kilda star Nicky Winmar in 1993 raised his jumper

and pointed to his bare chest after racial taunts from the Collingwood crowd.

Black GST, which has labelled the Games the Stolenwealth Games, said the State Government had failed to find a suitable venue. Black GST may encourage protesters to camp in prominent parks such as Fitzroy Gardens and Treasury Gardens. Graffiti supporting the action has also appeared in central Melbourne.

Melbourne City councillor Fraser Brindley has offered his home to the Black GST organisers. "I offered my home up to people who are organising visitors to come to the Games," he said. Cr Brindley will be overseas when the Commonwealth Games are held and has offered the free accommodation at his flat at Parkville. He said he agreed with the protesters' view that treaties needed to be signed with indigenous Australians. "I'm offering it up to the indigenous people who are coming to remind Her Majesty that her Empire took this land from them," said Cr Brindley. Nationals leader Peter Ryan said: "This extremist group has no part in the Australian community." Melbourne councillor Peter Clarke said the actions were embarrassing and that he would try to discourage him. "It's not in the spirit of the Games," he said.

Aboriginal elder, Targan, said the possibility of securing Victoria Park was delightfully ironic. "There's a lot of irony going on," Targan, 53, a PhD student at Melbourne University, said. "GST stands for Genocide, Sovereignty and Treaty. We want the genocide of our people to stop; we want some sovereignty over traditional land, certainly how it is used, and we want a treaty with the

government," Targan said.

Australia will not export uranium to India

The Australian foreign minister, Alexander Downer, has confirmed that Australia will not export uranium to India while it is not a signatory of the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT). The confirmation was prompted by a recently announced agreement between India and the United States involving the sale of civilian nuclear technology.

"Well our policy has developed over many years, going right back to the time of the Fraser Government actually, our policy has been that we would only export uranium to countries that are signatories to the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty," Mr. Downer said in an interview on today's AM radio programme.

Mr. Downer also said that the Australian government was disappointed when India and Pakistan developed nuclear weapons, but supports the new US deal with India as an attempt to engage with India and "open up their civilian nuclear industry to International Atomic Energy Agency inspectors."

"We've considered very carefully over the last few months the American proposal for this agreement that President Bush has signed with the Indians, and our view about it is that it's a good step forward in what's been a difficult situation," Mr. Downer said.

The Australian Labor Party (ALP) supported the government's stance on exporting uranium to non-NPT countries. "Any future agreement to export to India must be dependent on India becoming a

signatory to the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty and the negotiation of a bi-lateral agreement ensuring that Australian uranium is only used for peaceful purposes," they said in a press release.

US-India agreement

The deal between the two countries involves the US supplying civilian nuclear technology to India, in exchange for money and a promise to open some reactors for inspection. India has said it will reclassify 14 of its 22 nuclear reactors as being for power generation only, which will allow the International Atomic Energy Agency to inspect them.

In a press briefing, National Security Advisor Steve Hadly said that the agreement would bring India "into the international non-proliferation mainstream", including "placing its civilian nuclear facilities and programs under IAEA safeguards, and also harmonizing its export control lists with those of the Nuclear Suppliers Group and the Missile Technology Control Regime." The deal stops short of normalising India's nuclear status; however it is not clear that this could occur without a complete renegotiation of the NPT, or an abandonment of nuclear weapons by India.

The director of the IAEA, Mohamed ElBaradei, called India "an important partner in the non-proliferation regime".

Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT)

The NPT permits 5 states to own nuclear weapons: France (signed 1992), the People's Republic of China (1992), Soviet Union (1968; obligations and rights assumed by Russia), United Kingdom (1968), and the United States (1968). All

other signatories have agreed that they will not seek nuclear weapons technology. 187 sovereign nations are currently signed on to the NPT; however India, Pakistan, and Israel have not. All three possess nuclear weapons.

Uranium exports

Australia has 30% of the world's available uranium. According to the Uranium Information Centre, from 2000 to 2005 Australia exported 46,600 tonnes of uranium, to the value of over A\$2.1 billion. Australia currently exports to the USA, Japan, South Korea, Spain, France, United Kingdom, Sweden, Germany, Belgium, and Finland. Exports are for electricity generation only, in accordance with the NPT.

Bush told before war 'Saddam unlikely to attack US'

Key US intelligence sources disagreed about the likelihood that Saddam Hussein was building nuclear weapons in order to attack the United States, and reported this to US President George W Bush before the Iraq War, reports The National Journal. If true, this contradicts US Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice's statement in October 2003 that neither she nor the President were informed of any disagreement within the agencies.

Bush used the threat of an imminent attack by Saddam Hussein as one justification for the war against Iraq. One piece of important evidence behind the threat was the existence of aluminium tubes. The CIA, amongst other US intelligence sources, said the tubes were going to be used to build nuclear weapons. However, two agencies, the Energy Department and the State Department's Bureau of Intelligence and Research

disagreed and said the tubes were destined for conventional weapons, which was proved true after the war.

Two single-page intelligence briefs containing the dissenting opinions were given directly to Bush in 2002 and 2003. These documents, known as 'The President's Summaries', are abridgements of the more detailed analysis and judgments reported in the "National Intelligence Estimates" by a number of different US intelligence agencies.

Harry Browne, former US presidential candidate and best selling author dead at age 72

Harry Browne, two-time US Libertarian Party presidential nominee and best-selling author died of Lou Gehrig's disease in his home in Franklin, Tennessee, Wednesday night, 1 March 2006. He was born 17 June 1933 in New York City and grew up in Los Angeles, California.

He was the Public Policy Director for DownsizeDC.org and was a consultant to the Permanent Portfolio family of mutual funds.

He was nominated by the US Libertarian Party as its presidential candidate in 1996 and again in 2000.

He is also know for his articles (including those on LewRockwell.com) and books including:

"How You Can Profit from the Coming Devaluation"

"How I Found Freedom in an Unfree World"

"You Can Profit from a Monetary Crisis"

"Why Government Doesn't Work"

"The Great Libertarian Offer."

His writings focused largely on

supporting libertarian ideas^[1] and investment advise. "How You Can Profit from the Coming Devaluation" predicted the future rise in gold prices in the 1970s.

He is survived by his wife Pamela Lanier Wolfe Browne and his daughter Autumn.

Today in History

1461 - Wars of the Roses in England: Lancastrian King Henry VI was deposed by his Yorkist cousin, who then became King Edward IV.

1681 - King Charles II of England granted William Penn a charter for the Pennsylvania Colony.

1825 - Despite having lost in both the electoral and popular votes in the 1824 presidential election, John Quincy Adams was inaugurated as the sixth President of the United States.

1877 - Emile Berliner invented the microphone.

1980 - Robert Mugabe of the Zimbabwe African National Union was elected to head the first government in Zimbabwe.

March 04 is Saint Casimir's Day in Lithuania

Quote of the Day

There was a young fellow from
Trinity,
Who took the square root of
infinity.
But the number of digits, Gave
him the fidgets;
He dropped Math and took up
Divinity.
~ George Gamow ~

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