



Top Stories

US declares vital interest in space

President Bush has declared space to be essential to US defence in a new National Space Policy. Not only has the United States declared that it has rights in space, but, if necessary, it will deny its adversaries access to space.

Thai Prime Minister to consider lifting martial law

Thai Prime Minister Surayud Chulanont has indicated that he is considering lifting the martial law imposed in the country following the September 19 coup, during talks with Indonesian President Yudhoyono.

Featured story

US population reaches 300 million

On Tuesday, October 17, 2006 at 7:46 A.M. (EDT), the estimated population of the United States crossed the 300 million mark. The United States population reached the 100 million mark in 1915 and the 200 million mark 52 years later in 1967. Only 39 years later, it has touched 300 million.

Wikipedia Current Events

- The Romanian Army officially ends the use of conscription.
- The Initiative Group of Independent Rights Defenders in Uzbekistan demands the Karimov administration release political

Wikipedia Current Events

opposition leader Sanjar Umarov, calling the case against him "entirely fabricated." Uzbek authorities arrested Umarov in 2005.

• Police in Hungary have fired tear gas on crowds of about 1,000 demonstrators during the 50th anniversary of the country's revolt against Soviet rule.

• Sir Michael Somare, Prime Minister of Papua New Guinea, and Ham Lini, Prime Minister of Vanuatu, condemn the police raid on the office of Solomon Islands Prime Minister Manasseh Sogavare.

• Hurricane Paul becomes a Category 2 hurricane off Mexico's Pacific coast as it heads for Baja California.

• Two of the three people accused of plotting to steal trade secrets from Coca-Cola have each pleaded guilty to one count of conspiracy.

• Authorities say an explosion at a coal mine in eastern Pennsylvania has killed one person.

• Jeffrey Skilling is sentenced to 24 years, 4 months in prison for his role in the collapse of Enron, concluding the Trial of Kenneth Lay and Jeffrey Skilling.

• Though given three days to leave Sudan for blogging on recent government defeats in the Darfur conflict, UN envoy Jan Pronk left the next day when UN Secretary General Kofi Annan recalled him to New York for consultations.

Senior diplomat criticizes U.S. policy in Iraq

In an interview Saturday, October 21 with Aljazeera.net, Alberto Fernandez, a senior diplomat with the State Department, made the following statement concerning the war in Iraq: "We tried to do our best, but I think there is much room for criticism, because, undoubtedly, there was arrogance and there was stupidity from the United States in Iraq,"

Alberto later apologized, "Upon reading the transcript of my appearance on Al-Jazeera, I realized that I seriously misspoke by using the phrase 'there has been arrogance and stupidity' by the U.S. in Iraq."

Hungarian police disperse rally against Prime Minister Gyurcsany

Amid the official celebrations of the 50th anniversary of the anti-stalinist Hungarian uprising of 1956, a group of about three thousand people who are calling for the resignation of the Prime Minister, Mr. Ferenc Gyurcsány, are being blocked from entering Kossuth square.

The square, in front of the Parliament building, has been the venue of anti-Gyurcsány protests for weeks and also hosted the October 23 official state rally. The police (some of them mounted) have used tear gas, water cannons and rubber bullets against the demonstrators.

The tearful demonstrators have

used some of the props of the celebrations to build barricades and even started up a tank, parked in the center of town to recall the events in 1956.

The demonstrators have been forced to withdraw along Alkotmány utca, Bajcsy-Zsilinszky út and Károly körút in the direction of the separate memorial rally convened by the main opposition party, Fidesz, on Astoria square. The tens of thousands there seem to be peacefully sympathetic to the cause of the dispersed demonstrators.

There seem to be several wounded among both the demonstrators and the police.

UK Government propaganda directed at Muslim youth

The Scotsman uncovers what it calls "a largely-unannounced propaganda campaign" by John Reid, the UK Home Secretary, intended to prevent the spread of extremism among young British Muslims. Islamic teachers and preachers have been recruited to put the case against violence and promote moderation. The media used for this campaign include a website The Radical Middle Way, events held in different parts of the country, courses of lectures, pod casts, and CDs. Listed among the supporters of this campaign, which include a number of book shops, food providers and charities, are the Home Office, and the Foreign and Commonwealth Office.

One Home Office source is quoted as saying that "...there are forces within this country trying to manipulate the feeling of British Muslims, and we have to do more to combat those forces".

Prime Minister Tony Blair is said to

have instructed Ministers to look beyond the Muslim Council of Great Britain and engage with all streams of Muslim opinion.

Trevor Phillips, chairman of the Commission for Racial Equality is reported as saying on BBC 1's Sunday AM programme that he would not want to be a Muslim, because what should have been a proper conversation between all kinds of British people "seems to have turned into a trial of one particular community, and that can't be right".

What stimulated the rush to the studios of politicians and Ministers to give their opinions on Muslim culture was the objection that the Leader of the House of Commons, Jack Straw had to women wearing the full veil when attending his surgery.

Interview with Chuck Jeffrey, Regional Council candidate for Wards 2 & 6 in Brampton, Canada

The upcoming 2006 Brampton municipal election, to be held November 13, features an array of candidates looking to represent their wards in city council or the council of the Peel Region.

Wikinews contributor Nick Moreau contacted many of the candidates, including Chuck Jeffrey, asking them to answer common questions sent in an email. This ward's incumbent is Paul Palleschi, also challenging Palleschi is Vicky Colbourne, David Esho, Curtis Grant, and Tejinder Singh.

Q: List the three most important issues in your campaign.

A:

Ensuring that regional costs are not inappropriately downloaded to Brampton

Ensuring that the voice of

Brampton citizens is heard at Regional Council
Ensuring that the citizens of Brampton receive their fair share of regional programs including but not restricted to infrastructure and services

Q: What one election issue do you feel is most relevant to your ward in this election?

A: Promotion of and protecting of the interests of the citizens of Brampton rather than having decisions affecting the City of Brampton directed by representatives from Mississauga

Q: What qualities or experiences do you possess, that make you more desirable than the incumbent?

A: As a patent agent have developed the skills to assess clearly each issue and do the appropriate research to ensure that the most beneficial outcome is realized from each endeavour.

Q: Why do you want to represent your ward on council?

A: Regional Council needs and deserves representation that will both promote and protect their interests and ensure that they receive their fair share.

Q: Of the decisions made by council since the last election, which one would you have changed, and why?

A: Decision to modify the salary of Councillors. Believe the salary should represent work effort for the City. Suggest the recommendation of the review committee could have been more closely followed.

Q: How are you currently involved in the community?

A: I presently serve as Treasurer for the Rotary Club of Heart Lake and Director of the Brampton

Community Service Foundation.

Q: Much of Brampton's existing council is quite seasoned in the civic political process. What could you bring to the table as a "rookie", above and beyond the current roster of councillors?

A: From time to time new thoughts, ideas and concepts are required to make an enterprise successful; by bringing a fresh perspective to Regional Council I will be able to ensure that decisions are not made because "that's the way we have always done things".

Q: The Rose Theatre recently launched. What are your thoughts on this facility? Have you had a chance to tour it yet?

A: The Rose Theatre has added significantly to the stature of Brampton as a progressive community. The facility represents the history of Brampton yet introduces the latest in theatre construction concepts and beauty. I have attended several events at The Rose Theatre.

Q: The province has strongly encouraged the development of high-density residences near the downtown. Do these buildings fit in with your vision of the downtown? How much say should other levels of government have in urban planning?

A: Development of high density residences in the downtown core needs to be carefully considered to ensure that the ambience that is Brampton is not lost in a metropolitan style environment. Other levels should restrict their involvement in urban planning to those issues in which direct impact on services provided by the other levels of government would be directly impacted.

Q: How do you feel about

Brampton's rate of expansion? Council recently capped the annual amount of new development; do you agree completely with this decision, would you have slowed development even further, or not have imposed a cap at all?

A: Brampton's rate of expansion has exceeded its ability to develop and support the necessary infrastructure. Therefore, I support the recent cap on new development.

Q: What are your opinions on Brampton's congestion and the level of public transit funding?

A: As mentioned, the lack of a transportation infrastructure necessary to support the growth of Brampton has resulted in a negative impression of our community by both local residents and visitors. Clearly the issue of funding for public transit needs to be addressed along with the integration of public transit with services of neighbouring communities.

Q: What service is most lacking in Brampton?

A: The service most lacking in Brampton is an adequate transportation infrastructure necessary to sustain the growth in our community.

Q: Why should businesses be attracted to locating in Brampton?

A: Brampton is uniquely positioned to attract business because we are centrally located to major road services, Highway 410, Highway 407, Highway 401, to air transport via Pearson International Airport and via rail.

Q: How could Brampton further itself in attracting corporate investment?

A: Brampton could further itself in attracting corporate investment by focusing on the immense talent

pool available in the community to assume the jobs created through investment in the community.

Q: Why have you chosen to involve yourself in the political process?

A: I have chosen to get involved in the political process because of a deep concern that recent changes in the structure of Regional Council would result in decisions being made by Mississauga yet would have a significant impact on Brampton the impact of which may not have been adequately represented.

Q: What does Brampton mean to you?

A: Brampton means a safe community where one can raise a family and participate fully in social, sports and cultural events.

Notes

The entire original text can be read on the article's talk page.

New Zealand broadcasters to pay back National party's GST

Today New Zealand newspaper, The Press, reported that New Zealand broadcasters are having to pay back the GST (Goods and Services Tax) owed to Inland Revenue by the New Zealand National Party for its election advertising. The amount owed is at least NZ\$112,000.

Talks between broadcasters and the National Party were said to have failed.

Crown owned broadcaster, Television New Zealand (TVNZ) is having to pay back about \$60,000. TVNZ told The Press that they have paid back \$57,369 on behalf of the tax payer. "We did consider taking (legal) proceedings, but we actually decided against that," a spokesman for TVNZ said. "The likelihood would be that judgment

could not be entered against the party as the debt was actually illegal. That is not to say that at some point we will not be looking to recover our money."

The owner of TV3, Canwest MediaWorks, said that it has paid back \$16,011. Roger Beaumont, spokesman, said: "We are still in discussions with the National Party in pursuit of that outstanding money."

Tony O'Brien, spokesman for Sky Network Television, said that Sky is in talks with National over the unpaid GST and hopes to get to a resolution soon.

National said the money owed has been put into a trust fund and wont be available until the law has been changed. But with Michael Cullen, finance minister, saying that he will block the legislation the law is unlikely to get passed.

This follows Labour Party agreeing to give back \$800,000 taxpayer money which they spent on illegal advertising. That illegal spending was last week made legal by Labour.

National is now trying to introduce it's own bill to allow it to pay back the GST, without the bill it will be illegal for them to break the \$900,000 advertising cap. If National was to break the cap they would receive a big fine. National report that they do have enough money to pay back the GST.

Racial Equality commissioner warns of racial violence in Britain

The head of the Commission for Racial Equality, Trevor Phillips, in an article in today's Sunday Times, warns that, unless people are prepared to talk honestly with each other about racial prejudices,

there could be violence in the streets, much worse than the riots in the North of England five years ago.

This intervention follows two weeks of interviews and phone-ins, an "air war", involving politicians and Government Ministers, including Prime Minister Tony Blair triggered by leader of the House of Commons, Jack Straw's comments urging Muslim women to drop the full veil.

Phillips describes the situation, "On one side of the trenches we have those who want a fully fledged auto-da-fé against British Muslims, in which anything any Muslim does or says must be condemned as a signal of their willful alienation and separation; on the other hand the defensiveness of some in the Muslim communities has hardened into a sensitivity that turns the most neutral of comments into yet another act of persecution".

Phillips writes that although there are other contributory factors, the "real crisis is our failure to adjust to change in our society and our failure to find a civilised way of talking about our diversity."

Today in History

1260 - The Cathedral of Chartres was dedicated in the presence of King Louis IX of France.

1648 - The Peace of Westphalia was signed, ending the Thirty Years' War and "officially" recognizing the Republic of the Seven United Netherlands and Swiss Confederation as independent states.

1929 - The Great Depression: The New York Stock Exchange crashed on "Black Thursday", setting off a chain of bankruptcies and triggering a worldwide economic depression.

1945 - The UN Charter, the

constitution of the United Nations, entered into force.

1960 - A prototype of the Soviet R-16 intercontinental ballistic missile exploded on the launch pad at the Baikonur Cosmodrome, killing over 100 people in the Nedelin catastrophe.

October 24 is Eid ul-Fitr in Islam concludes at sunset (2006); United Nations Day; Independence Day in Zambia (1964).

Quote of the Day

I am certain there is too much certainty in the world.
~ Michael Crichton

Word of the Day

maunder; v

1. To speak in a disorganized or desultory manner; to babble or ramble.
2. To wander or walk aimlessly.

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