



### Top Stories

#### Tens of thousands rally against Thailand's Prime Minister



In the latest attempt to evict Prime Minister Thaksin Shinawatra ahead of next week's election, tens of thousands of protesters have rallied in

Bangkok, Thailand. Some 10,000 police have been mobilised for the protest. Another 10,000 officers are on standby. Police estimated the crowd at 30,000 people.

#### Celebration of Greek Independence day

Greeks worldwide celebrate Greek Independence day, commemorating the March 25, 1821 start of the struggle against the Ottoman Empire. Many local Greek communities are holding events and parades for the national holiday.



### Featured story

#### 42 West Papuan asylum seekers get temporary Australian visas



The Australian government has granted temporary visas to 42 West Papuan asylum seekers who accuse the Indonesian military of genocide. The 36 adults and seven children spent five days at sea, arriving in January, and have been since been detained under Australia's Mandatory Detention policy.

### Wikipedia Current Events

- A scramjet jet engine designed to fly at 7 times sonic speed has been successfully tested in Australia. The British-designed HyShot III (on back of a two stage Terrier-Orion rocket) was launched at Woomera up to 314 km height; falling back to Earth, speed may reach Mach 7.6 (9,000 km/h). It is hoped the engine could reduce flight times between London and Sydney to only two hours. The HyShot III has been developed as part of an international consortium led by the University of Queensland, based on their successful scramjet research.
- Canada's annual seal hunt has begun, amid international appeals for an end to the controversial cull of up to 325,000 young harp seal pups. The Canadian government says the cull, which reportedly earns C\$16.5m (£8.3m) in meat and pelt sales, is also necessary to control seal numbers.
- An explosion at a French university chemical research facility kills one professor. The cause is unknown.
- Thousands of demonstrators gather in Phoenix, Arizona, and in Los Angeles, California to protest efforts to tighten U.S. immigration policy.

#### Tens of thousands rally against Thailand's Prime Minister

In the latest attempt to evict Prime Minister Thaksin Shinawatra ahead of next week's election, tens

of thousands of protesters have rallied in Bangkok, Thailand. Officials say as many as 10,000 police have been mobilised for the protest against the Thai PM. Another 10,000 officers are on standby. Police estimated the crowd at 30,000 people.

Organisers had hoped the rally would draw one million people, but officials said about the same number of monks were chanting prayers for peace and unity nearby - far fewer than the 100,000 that attended earlier demonstrations.

Thaskin has called a snap election three years early in hopes of ending the crisis. There have been chants of "Thaksin, get out". There are reports of bands playing music near the Prime Minister's offices. A sign written in English has been posted on the fence of Government House reading "For Rent".

A poll released this week showed Bangkok people are becoming fed up after weeks of rallying. Today's rally was a "united call" on King Bhumibol Adulyadej to replace Thaksin. The palace reports that the king is following events closely but says there are no signs he will act against Thaksin. The monarch has intervened publicly twice in his 60-year reign. The campaigners want the king to appoint a neutral government to carry out political reforms.

The three main opposition parties are boycotting the election, declaring the electoral process

"unfair" as Thaksin has taken over the independent institutions. Thaksin, once the richest man in Thailand, transferred ownership of his companies to family members and employees prior to becoming Prime Minister.

The weekly rallies in Bangkok, numbering in the hundreds of thousands, make the movement to depose the troubled Thaksin the "largest massing of public dissent since 1992," when huge demonstrations and the army's subsequent massacre of protesters culminated in the end of military rule in Thailand.

The latest rally on Saturday launched a series of protests due to continue with a march through the main shopping district. The protestors will converge on police headquarters on Monday to demand criminal charges be brought against the prime minister.

Police would be stationed at the rally site, near his office, and at other key government offices, national police spokesman General Achirawit Suphanaphesat said. Thaksin, who has been accused of clamping down on dissent and stifling freedom of the press, vowed to call a state of emergency if protests turn violent.

### **Death claims Buck Owens, country music icon, at 76**

Country music singer, songwriter icon and 1996 Country Music Hall of Fame inductee Buck Owens has passed away at his Bakersfield, California residence. He was 76.

Family spokesman Jim Shaw made the announcement.

Considered by many as the original rhinestone cowboy, his career included over 20 number

one hits including his first, "Act Naturally," in 1963, "Together Again," and "I've Got a Tiger by the Tail." Most of his biggest hits were released during the mid 1960's to mid 1970's. Among the numerous recording artists who recorded his songs were Emmylou Harris, the Beatles, who recorded "Act Naturally," and Dwight Yoakam's 1988 duet with Owens on "Streets of Bakersfield." His songs also became hits for them.

Among his most memorable images was his red, white and blue guitar which became his visual performance trademark.

He transformed country music with his honky-tonk "Bakersfield Sound," so named for the town of his residence 100 miles north of Los Angeles where he moved in 1951.

He co-hosted with Roy Clark the long-running popular television comedy country-themed musical variety show "Hee-Haw" from 1969-1986.

Mr. Owens had throat cancer surgery in 1993 and was hospitalized with pneumonia in January 1997.

Born Alvis Edgar Owens August 12, 1929 outside Sherman, Texas, he was the son of a sharecropper, and moved with his family to Arizona during the Great Depression at age 8, and by age 16 was playing music in taverns.

His first wife Bonnie sometimes performed with him, later becoming a lead back-up singer after their 1953 divorce.

One of their two sons became a singer under the stage name Buddy Alan. He had a 1968 top 10 hit "Let the World Keep on a

-Turnin," and sang many duets with his father. His two other sons, Michael and John survive him.

### **Riot police arrest Kozulin, Belarusian opposition leader**

Presidential candidate Aleksandr Kozulin, leader of the Belarusian opposition against president Alexander Lukashenko has been arrested by Belarusian police, according to witness reports at a march. The march was being held to protest the arrests of 200 fellow demonstrators who are being held at a detention center in the area. Witnesses stated that Kozulin was pulled out of a crowd of protestors and arrested by riot police at the scene.

Interfax news agency stated that Aleksandr Milinkevitch was also arrested. Sergei Voznyak, a press secretary for Milinkevitch has since been quoted as saying, ""A few minutes ago I spoke to Milinkevich's aides. He has not been arrested and is in safety." He also commented that the personal spokesman for Milinkevitch, Pavel Mazheiko had been arrested.

### **Greece, Greeks celebrate Independence day**

Today, Greece and Greeks all over the world celebrate the Greek Independence day; the 25th of March, 1821, during which the struggle of the Greeks against the powerful Ottoman Empire started. The President of the Hellenic Republic, Karolos Papoulias, and the Greek Prime Minister, Costas Karamanlis, attended the great parade of the Armed Forces at the Constitution Square of Athens. Earlier, in the Orthodox Cathedral of Athens, Archbishop Christodoulos performed a Te Deum which was attended by the political and military leadership of the country.

The Greek Independence day was celebrated in all the large cities of Greece, including Thessaloniki, Patras, and Corinth where the local authorities had the opportunity to attend parades of the armed forces and high-school students.

Hellenism across the world celebrates the Independence day as well. From London to Melbourne, Greek communities organized events and parades in honour of March 25, 1821. The big parade in New York City, United States, will be attended by thousands of Greeks and Greek-Americans. The Greek government will be represented by the Secretary of State, Dora Bakoyiannis.

### **Council pres. removes Easter bunny from St. Paul, MN city hall**

A cloth Easter Bunny holding a sign that said "Happy Easter" was removed from the lobby of City Hall in St. Paul, Minnesota.

The city's human rights director, Tyrone Terrill, requested that the display be removed because it could offend non-Christians, but also said that no one had complained to him about the display.

"This has just gone too far. We can't celebrate Spring with bunnies and fake grass?", said Council member Dave Thune.

"As government, we have a different responsibility about advancing the cause of religion, which we are not going to do," said council president, Kathy Lantry.

The display was put up by a city council secretary and no city funds were used to buy the display. For

nearly ten years, the same secretary put up decorations in the same lobby to celebrate St. Patrick's Day, Christmas, Valentine's Day and Fall.

### **Cape Town charges Frontline Fellowship pastor with Halloween paintball assault**

Peter Hammond, an evangelist pastor & director at Cape Town Frontline Fellowship, has been charged with assault, after leading his four children on a paintball shooting spree, targeting trick-or-treaters last Halloween.

His 11 year old son had originally been a codefendant, but the charges were recently dropped. As a result, the charges against Hammond have been transferred out of juvenile court.

### **Hyshot tests hypersonic "scramjet" in Australia**

A supersonic jet engine known as a "Scramjet," which could substantially reduce air travel time has been tested at Woomera, in South Australia's far north. An international team launched the Terrier-Orion rocket carrying the hypersonic scramjet – an oxygen-sucking supersonic combustion ramjet engine. The rocket took the pototype to an altitude of 314km (195 mi) before crashing ten minutes later, a spokeswoman for the Hyshot program said. A supersonic boom was felt across the Woomera test range seconds after the jet took off.

The Queensland-led HyShot III experiment uses a scramjet engine developed by UK company, QinetiQ. Travelling at 8,000 km/h (~5000 mph)– or 10 times the speed of a conventional jet, and almost eight times the speed of sound (Mach 8), the rocket turned and powered back to Earth some 400 km (250 mi) down the range.

The scientists are hoping the scramjet kicked into action during a six-second window shortly before impact.

The scramjet advantage is once it is accelerated to about Mach 4 by a conventional jet engine or booster rocket, it can fly at hypersonic speeds, possibly as fast as Mach 15, without carrying heavy oxygen tanks, as conventional rockets do.

Team leader Professor Allan Paul says the flight went well but it will take several months to analyse the collected data. He told the media it was too soon to tell if the \$2 million experiment had been a success.

Another HyShot team member Michael Smart said the flight followed the nominal trajectory and impacted 400 km (250 mi) from its launch pad. Dr Smart said that radar tracking data showed the experiment had gone to plan.

Professor Paull said scramjet-powered passenger jets were still a long way off, but it might be possible to have a scramjet-powered vehicle within the next decade. He says the team is happy with the result so far.

NASA set the speed record for a jet-powered aircraft in [November 2004] during the third and final flight of the experimental X-43A scramjet project.

Two HyShot scramjet flights were made previously - one on 30 October 2001 and another on 30 July 2002. Supersonic combustion was achieved on the second flight. HyShot IV launch is planned for 28 March.

### **Police arrest roof-climbing graduate of high school in**

**Hopkinton, Massachusetts**

Hopkinton, Massachusetts police yesterday arrested a former student of the Hopkinton High School who had entered the school and climbed the roof.

Christopher Stevens, 19, a graduate of Hopkinton High School, entered the school around dissimal time, carrying a baseball bat and chain, smoking a cigarette. Stevens head towards the library and was trailed by school administrators. Although the buliding was mostly clear, those still left in the buliding were told to leave immediately. Stevens then broke some windows and climbed onto the school's roof. Stevens told officials he took some medicine and was suicidal.

Stevens suffered cuts on his hands; when a police officer tended to his cuts on his hands, the officer grabbed him and pulled him down to a lower section of the roof. He was then lowered down from the roof in a rescue basket where he was placed in a ambulance to be taken to at Leonard Morse Hospital in Natick, Massachusetts to be treated for the cuts on his hands and the medicine overdose.

Stevens has yet to be charged; However, he will most likely face charges. The incident is under investigation and police are not sure what made Stevens come back to the high school. No other students were injured.

**FCC head Kevin Martin endorses telcos' tiered Internet plan**

Kevin Martin, current head of the FCC, voiced his support on Wednesday for a tiered Internet. This plan would open the door for AT&T, BellSouth, Verizon, and other telcos to limit bandwidth to

popular web sites such as Google unless those sites paid significantly higher rates.

Network neutrality is usually taken to mean that telcos and ISPs may not limit services or bandwidth, charge extra fees, or otherwise discriminate based upon a site's identity or content type.

However, Mr. Martin said he viewed network neutrality as applying only to outright blocks, and that other forms of content- or identity-based pricing were acceptable and did not violate network neutrality.

When the telcos began their recent lobbying campaign, Professor Michael Geist (University of Ottawa, Faculty of Law) said that "While prioritising websites or applications may hold some economic promise, the lack of broadband competition and insufficient transparency surrounding these actions will rightly lead to growing calls for regulatory reform that grants legal protection for the principle of network neutrality."

According to The Nation, the multi-tiered approach being considered by the telcos could eventually expand to set limits on the number of downloads, media streams, or even email messages.

Senator Ron Wyden (D-Oregon) has proposed legislation to prevent a two-tiered Internet.

**Benedict XVI Elevates 15 to Cardinal**

Pope Benedict XVI elevated 15 men to College of Cardinals today at an Ordinary Consistory, a ceremony in which the new Princes of the Roman Catholic Church receive three-cornered hats of crimson, the color

distinguishing their new office and signifying their willingness to shed blood to spread the Christian faith.

In addition to fulfilling vital roles as advisors to the Pope and leaders at the highest administrative and pastoral roles of the Church, some Cardinals (those below age 80) also serve as electors in the Conclave, the means by which a new Pope is chosen.

According to the announcement made in an audience by Benedict XVI on 22 February 2006, the new cardinals eligible to participate in a conclave are:

- Archbishop William Joseph Levada, Prefect of the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith
- Archbishop Franc Rodé, C.M., Prefect of the Congregation for the Institutes of Consecrated Life and Societies of Apostolic Life
- Archbishop Agostino Vallini, Prefect of the Supreme Tribunal of the Apostolic Signatura
- Archbishop Jorge Liberato Urosa Savino of Caracas, Venezuela
- Archbishop Gaudencio B. Rosales of Manila, the Philippines
- Archbishop Jean-Pierre Ricard of Bordeaux, France
- Archbishop Antonio Cañizares Llovera of Toledo, Spain
- Archbishop Nicholas Cheong-Jin-suk of Seoul, Korea
- Archbishop Sean Patrick O'Malley, O.F.M. Cap., of Boston, U.S.A.
- Archbishop Stanislaw Dziwisz of Krakow, Poland
- Archbishop Carlo Caffarra of

Bologna, Italy

- Bishop Joseph Zen Ze-kiun, S.D.B., of Hong Kong

Three Cardinals elevated for their distinguished service include:

- Archbishop Andrea Cordero Lanza di Montezemolo, Archpriest of the Basilica of St Paul Outside-the-Walls
- Archbishop Peter Poreku Dery, Archbishop emeritus of Tamale, Ghana
- Father Albert Vanhoye, S.J., former Rector of the Pontifical Institute the Biblicum, and Secretary of the Pontifical Biblical Commission

### Today in History

1707 - By the Acts of Union, England and Scotland merged to form the Kingdom of Great Britain.

1871 - The Paris Commune was formally established.

1881 - Domnitor Carol I (pictured) was proclaimed the first King of Romania, beginning the Hohenzollern-Sigmaringen dynasty.

1973 - The first of more than eight thousand episodes of the American soap opera The Young and the Restless was televised.

1999 - The Melissa computer worm was released, infecting e-mail systems around the world.  
 March 27 is Independence Day in Bangladesh (1971), Mothering Sunday in the United Kingdom (2006), Laetare Sunday in Western Christianity (2006).

### Quote of the Day

He acts without contact,  
 instructs without meeting,  
 guides without pointing.  
 Desires do not conflict with Him,  
 thoughts do not mingle with Him:  
 His essence is without  
 qualification,  
 His action without effort.  
 ~ Mansur al-Hallaj ~

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