



Top Stories

American captain freed from Somali pirates



Captain Richard Phillips of the American cargo ship Maersk Alabama has been freed from Somali pirates after being held hostage for four days. The U.S. Navy reports three of the four pirates were killed in a short gun battle, with the fourth being taken into custody.

Image Credit: US Navy

State of emergency in Thailand; protestors attack PM's car



Troops are being deployed throughout Thailand as the government of Abhisit Vejjajiva declared a state

of emergency in reaction to protestors supporting ousted prime minister Thaksin Shinawatra.

Image Credit: Yipski CC-BY-SA

Wikipedia Current Events

temporarily suspend their offensive against the Tamil Tigers to allow civilians to find refuge.

- Pope Benedict XVI says that only reconciliation can resolve the conflict between Israel and the Palestinian people.

- Ángel Cabrera wins the PGA Tour's 2009 Masters Tournament in Augusta, Georgia, United States

American captain freed from Somali pirates

Captain Richard Phillips of the American cargo ship Maersk Alabama has been freed from Somali pirates after being held hostage for four days. The U.S. Navy reports three of the four pirates were killed in a short gun battle with Navy SEALs, with the fourth being taken into custody.

Phillips was removed to the USS Bainbridge, a Navy warship, before being flown to another, the USS Boxer, where he was examined and is said to be in good health. Talks between the Navy and pirates were not going well prior to the short battle.

"The negotiations between the elders and American officials have broken down. The reason is American officials wanted to arrest the pirates in Puntland and elders refused the arrest of the pirates," said an official involved.

The FBI announced it was opening an investigation into the hijacking of the Maersk Alabama, which

arrived at its original destination of Mombasa, Kenya on Saturday.

"We are all absolutely thrilled to learn that Richard is safe and will be re-united with his family," John Reinhart, CEO of the Maersk Line said. "Maersk Line Limited is deeply grateful to the Navy, the FBI and so many others for their tireless efforts to secure Richard's freedom."

State of emergency in Thailand; protestors attack PM's car

Troops are being deployed throughout Thailand as the government of Abhisit Vejjajiva declared a state of emergency in reaction to protestors supporting ousted prime minister Thaksin Shinawatra. Armoured vehicles and bands of protestors are reportedly roving the streets of Bangkok and the prime minister has threatened to use force against the protestors.

The protestors are supporters of the National United Front of Democracy Against Dictatorship (UDD). They demand the immediate resignation of the prime minister and fresh elections.

A group of protestors at the country's Ministry of the Interior, which Xinhua says numbered in the "hundreds", attacked the prime minister's Mercedes but he was not inside at the time. The ministry building was stormed by protestors and several police and protestors were injured during the ensuing riot.

Wikipedia Current Events

- Thai Prime Minister Abhisit Vejjajiva declares a state of emergency in Bangkok and its surrounding areas.

- Former Thai Prime Minister Thaksin Shinawatra urges the National United Front of Democracy Against Dictatorship to revolt.

- Sri Lanka's Armed Forces

The state of emergency comes after mass protests and an invasion of the conference site by UDD red-shirted demonstrators forced the abandonment of the sixteen-member ASEAN summit in the resort town of Pattaya yesterday.

"The government has to declare the state of emergency to restore normality as soon as possible," the Prime Minister was quoted as saying. This morning, the protesters were "infuriated" as the government arrested UDD leader and politician Arisman Pongruangrong, who led the Pattaya protest.

The protests come just months after the yellow-shirted People's Alliance for Democracy occupied airports in Bangkok, leading to the fall of the previous, Thaksin-aligned government. Thailand has had five prime ministers in the past 18 months since the Council for National Security relinquished power; the CNS took power in a 2006 military coup d'etat that deposed the Thaksin government.

Army spokesman Col. Sansern Kaewkamnerd called the deployment of troops a "measure to restore order" and denied it was another coup.

Deputy Prime Minister Suthep Thaugsuban, in charge of the security measures against the UDD, stated on television earlier: "Police and military officers must fully and forcefully carry out their jobs lest more damage is done. Actions must be taken promptly and order be restored as soon as possible. Your superiors and I will take responsibility for all your actions."

Thailand has remained in turmoil

since the ousting of now-fugitive ex-premier Thaksin Shinawatra. A bloodless coup in 2006 saw him deposed, and he left the country to stay in the United Kingdom. While the courts in Thailand considered allegations of corruption against him and his wife, the UK government revoked his visa. In previous video conference and telephone addresses he has encouraged the red-shirted UDD protesters to oppose the current government.

Following the coup that deposed Thaksin, the various people involved in the populist Thai Rak Thai (TRT - lit. Thais love Thais) political party were forced to reform as TRT was outlawed. With significant support from the rural poor they won elections following the militarily appointed government stepping aside. Unrest following this, and charges of election fraud, toppled the new populist government.

Today in History

1111 – Henry V is crowned Holy Roman Emperor.

1829 – The British Parliament grants freedom of religion to Roman Catholics.

1902 – James C. Penney opens his first store in Kemmerer, Wyoming.

1943 – The Jefferson Memorial is dedicated in Washington, D.C., on the 200th anniversary of Thomas Jefferson's birth.

1970 – An oxygen tank aboard Apollo 13 explodes, putting the crew in great danger and causing major damage to the spacecraft while en route to the Moon.

Quote of the Day

I have sworn upon the altar of god eternal hostility against every form of tyranny over the mind of man.

~ Thomas Jefferson

Word of the Day

ecumenical adj

1. General, universal, worldwide.
2. (ecclesiastical) Pertaining to the Christian Church in a worldwide sense or of the desire to unite the denominations of the Christian Church.
3. Interreligious or interdenominational.

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http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Main_Page

Quote of the Day

http://en.wikiquote.org/wiki/Main_Page

Word of the Day

http://en.wiktionary.org/wiki/Main_Page

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