

# The Epoch Times

WWW.THEEPOCHTIMES.COM

FREE

VANCOUVER EDITION Published every Thursday

AUGUST 13 - 19, 2009



## BENZ GLK350

Packed with serious luxury and utility in a compact body

Autos P15

COURTESY OF NETCARSHOW

## Iran's government wrong on rights

As if rigged elections were not enough, the new Iranian government has compounded its breach of the law by the systematic abuse of Iranians taken prisoner after the June 12 presidential election...

Opinion P7

## SCIENCE MATTERS

David Suzuki weighs in on bears and berries

Science P12



## Airlines' shaky credit could cost consumers

By MATTHEW LITTLE  
Epoch Times Staff

Consumers have been getting great deals on travel and trips but the price is being paid by airlines and tour operators. With credit getting tight, that price might be coming back to consumers in the form of higher fees, suggests an industry expert.

With major airlines in the United States and Canada floating in and out of bankruptcy protection, the companies that handle credit card transactions for the airlines are finding themselves exposed to tremendous risk.

That's because when travellers ask for refunds for trips cancelled due to an airline or tour operator bankruptcy, the credit card processing company has to give it to them. This is a requirement credit card companies place on processors.

In effect, the processing company handles the order on behalf of the credit card company. Airlines use the processor to handle all seat sales paid for by credit card. If that airline goes under and all the passengers want refunds, it is the credit card processor that has to pay them and then try to recoup that money from the airline in bankruptcy proceedings.

This means companies like Moneris, which handled credit card transactions for now-defunct Jetsgo, can be left paying out millions in

chargebacks.

In the Jetsgo bankruptcy, Moneris became the single largest creditor to the airline when it was left with \$30 million worth of chargebacks from customers who bought tickets from the Montreal-based discount airline just before it went bankrupt in 2005.

To protect themselves, some credit card processors are asking airlines and tour operators to keep massive deposits on hand to cover chargebacks should an airline or tour operator go under.

A spokesperson for Westjet said its processor, Moneris, is not asking it to hold deposits because of the carrier's continued success as the most profitable airline in North America. Air Canada refused to comment saying such information was confidential.

But the deposits have presented major cash flow problems for some Canadian companies, such as Conquest Vacations which cited the demands of credit card processors in its bankruptcy in April this year.

"They mainly went under because they had to keep such a large amount of cash on hand. It's very, very expensive to do that obviously, so it's very expensive to run any travel company nowadays," says Nina Slawek with Take Off Eh, a travel industry intelligence company based in Toronto.

CONTINUED ON P3 NATION

## Afghan vote: high noon for Karzai—and Obama



TENSION: Guards on the lookout at the entrance of the main mosque of Kandahar while the presidential candidate and former foreign minister Abdullah Abdullah visits the mosque. MARCEL METTELSIEFEN/GETTY IMAGES

KABUL (Reuters)—When Afghans defy Taliban threats of bloodshed to stage an election on August 20, their charming but care-worn president Hamid Karzai will not be the only leader with his future on the line.

Thousands of miles away,

Barack Obama, who has waged U.S. foreign policy on a rapid and overwhelming military escalation in Afghanistan to defeat the Taliban, has almost as much at stake.

Whoever wins, holding a successful election with a result that Afghans accept is crucial

not just for Afghanistan, but also for Obama's revamped strategy to defeat the insurgents, the biggest foreign policy gamble of his own young U.S. presidency.

Karzai is still favourite to win, either with a first-round majority or in a run-off six weeks later,

but he no longer wears the air of certain triumph he carried into Afghanistan's euphoric first democratic election five years ago.

This time, he faces two stronger foes—one at the ballot box and one on the battlefield.

CONTINUED ON P4 WORLD



MUSICAL OPENING: (L-R) New Brunswick Premier Shawn Graham, Nicholas Robichaud-Barrette, and Gilmond LaRocque make music at the opening of the 2009 World Acadian Congress on Aug. 7 in Miscou, New Brunswick. PROVINCE OF NEW BRUNSWICK

## Acadians commemorate history, celebrate culture

By CINDY CHAN  
Epoch Times Staff

It has been called the Olympics of culture in French communities.

The fourth World Acadian Congress, which began on Aug. 7 in the Acadian Peninsula of northeast New Brunswick, is a gathering of Acadian people from around the world that's held every five years.

An estimated 40,000 Acadians, the descendants of French colonists who settled in Atlantic Canada in the early 1600s, are attending the two-and-a-half week event to renew their bonds while they commemorate their history and celebrate their culture.

Hundreds of planned activities include family reunions, concerts, village festivals, tours, workshops, exhibits, and conferences.

James Moore, federal Minister of Canadian Heritage and Official Languages, spoke at the opening ceremony in Shippagan last Friday. The following day in Caraquet, Secretary General of la Francophonie Abdou Diouf unveiled a street named in his own honour.

Governor General Michaëlle Jean on Wednesday attended the Grand rassemblement jeunesse 2009 in Tracadie-Sheila, a gathering of youth to pay tribute to Acadian history and culture.

CONTINUED ON P2 NATION

## Workers' health sacrificed to boost China's economy

By HENG HE  
Epoch Times Staff

Over the last two decades China has become the workshop of the world due to the plentiful supply of one resource: cheap labour. Mr. Zhang Haichao, a farmer turned factory worker, explains how that resource is maintained.

Zhang, a farmer in Xinmi City in Henan Province, worked in a factory run by Zhengzhou Zhendong Ltd. in nearby Zhenzhou City making fire-retardant bricks. In a workplace filled with thick dust, he was given no protective gear. In August 2007 Zhang began complaining of a persistent cough and shortness of breath, and fatigue, which he initially thought was the flu.

He went to several hospitals, trying to find the cause of his sickness. The diagnosis of hospitals in Beijing and Zhengzhou, the capital city of Henan Province, was the same: pneumoconiosis. More commonly known by a

variety of names, the most familiar of which is the black lung disease suffered by coal miners, pneumoconiosis is an occupational disease caused by breathing in dust.

According to China's laws and regulations, a job-related disease, also called an occupational disease, can only be diagnosed by a state-designated institute. In Zhang's case, this was the Zhengzhou Occupational Disease Prevention and Treatment Centre (ODPTC). This centre rejected the other hospitals' diagnosis and insisted on its own diagnosis, suspected pneumoconiosis plus tuberculosis.

According to the ODPTC diagnosis, Zhang had the symptoms of pneumoconiosis but the disease was not progressed far enough for him to be eligible for the free treatment and job-related compensation promised by China's laws to someone with a fully developed case of black lung disease.

CONTINUED ON P5 WORLD

'Just wait for death. Go home and wait to die'

## Free speech quashed for Olympics, says BCCLA

By JOAN DELANEY  
Epoch Times Staff

A civil liberties watchdog says some bylaw changes put in place for the 2010 Winter Olympics will curtail freedom of expression and infringe on people's democratic rights.

To facilitate a safe and smooth-running Games, Vancouver city council recently passed a package of temporary changes to bylaws

governing things such as licensing, noise, graffiti, vending, zoning, and the distribution of publications.

Effective from Jan. 1 to Mar. 31, 2010, the new bylaws will be effective in areas that include the various Olympic venues and city sites. Implementation dates for items such as street closures, however, will occur closer to the Games which start on Feb. 12.

CONTINUED ON P3 NATION

Inside

NEWS & COMMENTARY

P2 & P3 Nation  
P4 & P5 World  
P6 Business  
P7 Opinion  
P8 Sports

LIFE & LEISURE

P9 Entertainment  
P10 Arts & Culture  
P11 Travel  
P12 Science  
P13 Health & Classifieds  
P14 Style  
P15 Business Directory  
P16 At Home

GreenPrinter

SAVE TREES. PRINT GREEN

778 737 7750 | greenprinteronline.com  
Please check out our BLOG greenprinteronline.com/blog