



Bt20
www.nationmultimedia.com

WEDNESDAY, April 20, 2005
36 PAGES, 2 SECTIONS, VOLUME 30, No 50765

The Nation

INSIDE

World 9-11A
Talk of the Town 14A
Horoscopes 15A
Health 16A
Cartoons, TV 12-13B
Sport 14-18B

*Veggie
craze*
FOOD, 17A



Check out the
hi-tech Rockster &
a sexy coupe 8-9B



**CHELSEA SET TO
LOCK HORNS WITH
ARSENAL TODAY**

SPORT, 18B

PAPAL SUCCESSION

Ratzinger elected pope

Conservative German to lead Catholic Church, takes name Benedict XVI

■ *Agence France-Presse*
VATICAN CITY

THE ROMAN Catholic Church elected Germany's Joseph Ratzinger as its first new pope of the third millennium yesterday, asking him to guide its 1.1 billion followers around the world into a new era.

The 78-year-old cardinal, a staunch conservative who has been the Vatican's doctrinal enforcer, will take the name Benedict XVI, the Vatican announced.

A delirious crowd of around 100,000 cheered and waved wildly as Ratzinger, the 265th pontiff in the Church's 2,000-year history, smiled and acknowledged the applause from the curtain-draped balcony of Saint Peter's basilica.

His first words were met by a huge ovation: "Dear brothers and sisters, after the great Pope John Paul II the cardinals have elected me a simple and humble labourer in the vineyard of the Lord," he said, paying tribute to his immediate predecessor.

The announcement that the 115 cardinals sequestered inside the Sistine had chosen a new pontiff on only the second day of their conclave came when white smoke billowed out of a chimney atop the Vatican.

It sent the waiting thousands on

the square into raptures, but it was not until another agonising wait of more than 10 minutes that the bells pealed to confirm the election.

Within no time, other bells began answering back all over Rome.

Sister Lydia, a nun, jumped up and down on a chair clapping in uncontrolled excitement. "I prayed for a new pope today at the tomb of the Holy Father (the late John Paul II) and now we have one," she beamed.

Eight-year-old Pierfrancesco, also standing on a chair to get a good view, screamed to his mother on a cellphone "Mama, we have a pope, we have a pope!"

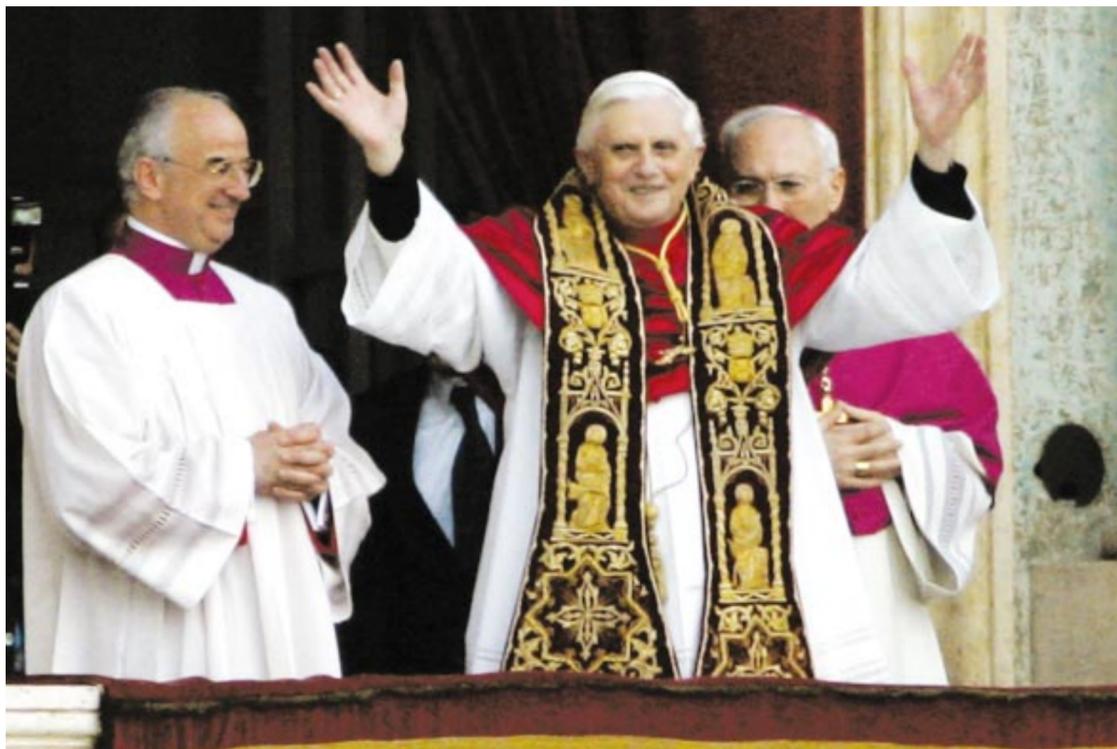
"We have a father again," said Zambian nun Sister Prisca.

"Can you imagine? John Paul II told us to look to the future in hope, and now we have this new pope."

The election by a two-thirds majority came in a fourth round of voting that had begun when the 115 cardinals sequestered themselves into the chapel late Monday for their conclave.

Ratzinger now has the onerous burden of guiding the Church into a new era fraught with moral dilemmas and dissension over a host of issues ranging from emptying pews to contraception and celibacy.

New pope faces huge workload ■ 10A



THE NEWLY ELECTED POPE, Joseph Ratzinger of Germany, waves to the crowd from the central balcony of St Peter's Basilica at the Vatican yesterday. Ratzinger is the 265th pontiff of the Roman Catholic Church.

Mobile ID plan arouses suspicion

■ *The Nation*

COMMERCIAL INTERESTS and impracticality may combine to shoot down the government's plan to regulate the purchase of SIM cards for prepaid phone services.

Mobile-phone operators initially said they were willing to collaborate with measures by the government in its efforts to prevent mobile phones from being used to detonate bombs in the restive deep South. Yet some executives seem to have backtracked in the face of concerns over potential abuse by the government.

One executive, speaking on condition of anonymity, said several of his industry peers were now wondering if the government might not have an ulterior motive in proposing that operators demand buyers of prepaid SIM cards provide personal information.

Under the plan put forward by the Information and Communications Technology Ministry (ICT), future buyers of SIM cards for prepaid-phone services would have to produce identity cards for purchases, while existing users would have to prove their identity to mobile phone operators within six months, or else have their service terminated. Mobile-phone operators would also be required to create a database of all their prepaid phone users.

"The point is, how can the government assure us that in requiring access to such sensitive information, it will not be used in ways to benefit well-connected people's business interests?" the executive asked.

About 22 million people use prepaid phone services in Thailand. Some 13 million of them are customers of Advanced Info Service Plc (AIS), which is owned by the family of Prime Minister Thaksin Shinawatra.

Yingluck Shinawatra, Thaksin's youngest sister and the president of AIS, said yesterday that AIS was

See *Criminals* [6A]

I N S I D E	
Official hurt in shooting	■ 5A
Muslims irked	■ 6A
Public lends support	■ 6A
Plan won't stop hi-tech terror	■ 13A

“Having this agreement will raise the profile of your country and our country ... and will have spin-offs in education and tourism, in people-to-people links.”

**HELEN CLARK
NZ PRIME MINISTER**

■ TRADE DEAL

Thailand, New Zealand sign FTA

■ *Agencies*

NEW ZEALAND Prime Minister Helen Clark yesterday witnessed the inking in Bangkok of the bilateral free trade agreement, and hinted it would sign on to a regional non-aggression treaty.

Clark hailed the closer economic partnership (CEP), saying it would allow her nation to become more competitive in Southeast Asia.

"More than half of our exports to Thailand will come in without tariffs from the first of July, and

that is a major step forward for us," Clark told reporters covering her two-day official visit. She was also holding talks with Prime Minister Thaksin Shinawatra at Government House.

Clark predicted immediate benefits from the pact, which was wrapped up last November. New Zealand's dairy industry stood to gain the most, as it accounts for 58 per cent of exports to Thailand.

A "substantial portion" of duties will be eliminated in July, when the CEP goes into effect, with the

remainder to be phased out, Thaksin said.

The pact covering trade in goods, services and labour was among the four deals that officials signed. The deal would give the two-way trade routing at US\$396 million (Bt15.7 billion) a year a 20-per-cent boost, Thaksin said, while his counterpart pointed out that it was "about a lot more than just trade."

"Having this agreement will raise the profile of your country and our country ... and will have spin-offs in education and tourism, in people-

to-people links," she said. "We see a lot of possibilities for a greatly stepped-up and strengthened relationship flowing out of" it.

The two premiers said they discussed New Zealand possibly committing itself to the Association of Southeast Asian Nations' Treaty of Amity and Cooperation. Clark said her country had been "studying it with a positive tint".

The Asean non-aggression pact obliges signatories not to use force against one another. Disputes have emerged in recent weeks, as Asean

has demanded that countries intent on attending an inaugural East Asia Summit in December sign the treaty first.

Clark said she was "confident about the track" her country was on in terms of becoming a signatory.

"Analysis at government level suggests to us that it would not change anything that we presently do with respect to Asean," she said.

The three other agreements signed yesterday focused on labour

See *Trade* [6A]

From pub grub to world's best eatery

■ *The Guardian News Service*
LONDON

LAST YEAR it came second. This year it scooped the top award. The Fat Duck in Bray, southern England, once a pub, has now been voted the best restaurant in the world by a panel of critics and peers.

This is a remarkable achievement for a restaurant that is only in its 10th year and whose chef/proprietor, Heston Blumenthal, is self-taught.

Blumenthal's story is an extraordinary one. He left school with few qualifications and worked as a photocopier salesman and credit controller for his father's business.

Some 14 years later he lectures Nobel prize winners in physics on the science of food and taste, or molecular gastronomy as it has come to be known; corresponds with the likes of Harold McGee, the author of "Science and Lore of the Kitchen", and Tony Blake, the vice-president of research at Firmenich, the world's largest flavouring com-



READYING the tables at The Fat Duck in Bray, England.

pany; and creates some of the most delicious food.

Some people have found the idea of dishes such as snail porridge, cauliflower risotto with chocolate jelly, chips that take three days to prepare and carrot toffee as bizarre at best, but the critics and guides, with very few exceptions, have been unanimous in their praise.

Perhaps even more remarkably, it is difficult to find a fellow chef who has anything but appreciation for what Blumenthal and the Fat Duck

represent, even if few of them actually understand his cooking.

Pleasure, the desire to produce pure and perfect flavours, to create that sense of surprise and delight that we feel when we first encounter certain flavours as children, lies at the heart of his cooking. Of course, such an award is not given to a restaurant just for its food. It is for the whole experience - service, the wine list, atmosphere. In this respect, the Fat Duck is almost as unusual as its food.

