

Top Stories

Tropical Storm Katrina threatens Florida, Bahamas



A tropical storm warning and hurricane watch have been issued by the National Hurricane Center

for the southeast Florida coast from Vero Beach southward to Florida City.

Massive floods in Bavaria, Austria, Switzerland

Heavy rainfalls have caused massive floods in Southern Bavaria, Western Austria and Central Switzerland.

Wikipedia Current Events

- In Israel, two Qassam rockets fired out of the Gaza Strip by Palestinian militants land near the southern Israeli town of Sderot. Earlier, two mortar rockets were fired from Lebanon, one of which struck a chicken coop in the Northern Galilee Moshav of Margalioth, while the other landed in Lebanese territory.
- Two Egyptian policemen have died following two explosions in northern Sinai.
- Conflict in Iraq: 36 male corpses have been found in a shallow river near the town of Kut, Iraq.

Brampton, Canada and Marikina, Philippines seeing double as cities twin

The City of Brampton in Ontario, Canada, and Marikina City in the Philippines have recently "twinning".

Both cities are roughly the same size, both have female mayors, both are near urban destinations (one of Toronto, the other Manila) and feel they can benefit economically with each other.

Mayor Susan Fennell of Brampton commented "This twinning agreement between Brampton and Marikina City will not only provide new and exciting economic possibilities, but it is an excellent chance to recognize and celebrate the Filipino community in Brampton. As one of Canada's most diverse cities, Brampton is home to more than 8,000 Filipino residents with a distinct culture, and I am pleased to be able to celebrate that culture with this agreement."

Brampton is also a twin of Plano, Texas.

Next generation DVD format war nearing deadline

The deadline for a compromise between Sony and Toshiba in the battle over the next generation DVD format is drawing closer as studios start planning their Christmas releases.

Sony, with their Blu-ray Disc format, has already started embedding the new technology into their next-generation gaming console, the Playstation 3. Meanwhile, Toshiba has secured deals with both NBC Universal and Paramount Pictures to use their format, HD-DVD. Many industry watchers fear that the battle of these two formats will bring some serious consequences. Some think this may repeat another VHS and Betamax battle, however others fear that because there is no clear winner, consumers will hold off until there is reassurance that only one format will survive.

Featured story

Google Talk released in beta form



Google today released Google Talk (link) in beta, an Instant Messaging (IM) and Voice over IP (VoIP) product using the Jabber protocol.

Americans are getting fatter, not-for-profit's report finds

An American not-for-profit organisation has released statistics that show that obesity rates rose last year in all but one state.

According to the Trust for America's Health the only state not to see a rise was Oregon, which remained at the same level. In ten states more than a quarter of adults are defined as being obese: Mississippi, Alabama, West Virginia, Louisiana, Tennessee, Texas, Michigan, Kentucky, Indiana, and South Carolina. Mississippi is the heaviest state, while Colorado is the lightest.

In total 119 million Americans - some 65% of the population - now have a body weight that rates them as being overweight or heavier. In 2004 24.5% of the population was rated as being obese - up from 23.7% the year before. Even in the military, 16% of personnel are obese.

The U.S. Department of Health has a target of reducing obesity in adults to 15% or less by 2010. Critics say federal programs to combat the issue are too limited and that urban planning is not helping.

Wikipedia Current Events

- Violence occurs in Najaf, Nasiriyah, Diwaniyah, and Sadr City (Baghdad). Cleric Muqtada al-Sadr calls for an end to violence between his followers engaging a rival Shiite group, the Badr Brigades (backed by the Supreme Council for the Islamic Revolution in Iraq (SCIRI). Sadr blames the Badr Brigade for the violence. Badr Brigade officials deny responsibility for the violence and blamed Sadr's followers. Some Shia National Assembly members and ministers suspend their membership in the council because of the violence.
- At least 42 people have died following a series of floods throughout Europe.
- The German Constitutional Court rules that early elections on September 18 may go ahead.

NBC Universal and Paramount Pictures have both withdrawn earlier announcements of releasing movies this year on the next generation formats. Some industry insiders say it would be unlikely that any movies would be released this year based on a unified format of the two sides as it would take a few months to adjust the technologies from both sides and come up with a single format.

RTE's Eddie Hobbs attracts massive audience

In Ireland, RTE's new "Rip Off Republic" TV series has attracted a record audience of 667,000 for its second show, making it one of Ireland's top TV programs. The second show broadcast on Monday 15th August captured 50.5% of all TV viewers in Ireland.

The series which contains four shows broadcast from Dublin City University's "Helix" centre, aims to expose over pricing and the exploitation of consumers in Ireland. Hosted by financial advisor Eddie Hobbs, the show has attracted huge media commentry, particularly as it has attracted the attention of the governments main party, Fianna Fail.

The main argument against the show has been that it generalises issues and makes exaggerated claims - for example it claimed that restaurants make a 300%+ profit on a typical bottle of wine, leading the viewer to believe that all businesses were making such a profit. This claim has since come under attack by restaurant owners nationwide. Other arguments against the show have stated that while inflation is less than 3%, wage growth is over 6% meaning people are still better off.

The third show will be broadcast on 29th August at 9.30pm on RTÉ One. It will focus on the transport sector in Ireland.

George H. W. Bush to attend Sydney CEO conference

It was revealed today that George H. W. Bush will be attending the Forbes Global CEO Conference in Sydney next week. Mr. Bush is a wealthy businessman and member of skull and bones. He has also been President of the United States and the head of the CIA, and is the father of the current

US President George W. Bush.

The conference will be held at the Sydney Opera House. The Forbes website says that at the event "senior figures from the world's leading companies and institutions will discuss the best ways to nurture and capitalize on innovation and reveal the latest global trends." Other attendees will be former New York mayor Rudolph Giuliani, Prime Minister John Howard, former NSW Premier Bob Carr and, controversially, Steve Forbes, president and chief executive officer of Forbes Inc, and one of the signers of the Statement of Principles of Project for the New American Century.

Mr Knobloch of the 30A network described the attendees as "a few hundred neo-conservative corporate chiefs". An article written by James Goodman and hosted on the 30A network website alleges a connection between Mr Forbes, the Bush family, and the policies of the administration of George W. Bush.

"Ironically enough, Forbes now leads the charge in the US business world against the 'Axis of Evil' (which of course includes Iran). Backing the US 'War on Terror' to the hilt, Forbes is one of Bush's key business sponsors. In January 2004 it proudly announced 'Bush is Best,'" the article said.

The 30A network is organising a protest in Sydney to co-incide with the conference. It is not yet known if the ASIO risk assessment for the event will change as a result of Mr Bush attending.

German Constitutional Court green-lights early elections call

The German federal Constitutional Court, the Bundesverfassungsgericht, has dismissed the complaints by two Members of the Bundestag against the dissolving of the parliament and removed the last obstacle on the road to early elections on September 18th.



The Bundesverfassungsgericht in Karlsruhe

Jelena Hoffmann from chancellor Gerhard Schröder's Socialdemocrats and Werner Schulz from the Greens, which are also members of the government, claimed that the loss of confidence by Schröder on July 1st was orchestrated and that President Horst Köhler had therefore no right to dissolve the Bundestag on July 21st.

The majority of the court, voting 7:1, disagreed with that assessment. It ruled, that Schröder's declaration, saying he does not have a reliable majority in parliament for his reform programme, is "plausible" and added that the Constitution grants the chancellor wide freedom in that matter.

Representatives of all major parties have welcomed the decision.

Protestors want 'carnival not confrontation' at Forbes conference

The 30A network has said that it wants to create a carnival atmosphere while protesting at the Forbes Global CEO conference. The protest, which starts on August 30, is expected to attract up to 2,000 protesters. Similar events in the past have deteriorated into violent confrontations between police and activists. The 30A network is a loose affiliation of groups and individuals co-ordinating the protest.

30A spokesman Bruce Knobloch, of the International Socialist Organisation, made the call for a peaceful protest in a press release last week.

"We want a safe community action showing that people in Sydney oppose Howard's plan for a US-style wages system, the war in Iraq and his kow-towing to global corporate chiefs. We pose no threat to the Opera House or the millionaire delegates, or to other users of east Circular Quay," Mr Knobloch said.

The conference will be held at the Sydney Opera House. The Forbes website says that at the event "senior figures from the world's leading companies and institutions will discuss the best ways to nurture and capitalize on innovation and reveal the latest global trends." It was recently announced that George Bush Sr will be attending the conference, along with former New York mayor Rudolph Giuliani, Prime

Minister John Howard, and former NSW Premier Bob Carr.

Mr Knobloch described the attendees as "a few hundred neo-conservative corporate chiefs".

The protesters have been denied access to the Opera House forecourt for the duration of the conference. Mr Knobloch believes that this decision is unjustified. He also accused the police of deliberately creating the conditions for confrontation.

"The police seem intent on creating chaos and confrontation, which is the last thing we need. We've urged police to build a barrier in front of the Opera House proper and to allow us to use the public space in the forecourt. By pushing us out into the CBD the police are going to create problems for commuters and business owners," he said.

30A protestors this week organised a media conference outside Surry Hills Police Station, requesting a meeting to negotiate an agreement. According to an article on Sydney Indymedia, police at the station were unable to discuss the issue, but told 30a representatives that they would be contacted to organise a meeting.

"Minimising the protesters right to peacefully rally dramatically increases police powers and strikes at the heart of protesters' democratic right to peaceful assembly," the article said.

ASIO has assessed the conference to be "medium risk", and this has been used by the police and government to justify the increased security.

Tropical Storm Katrina threatens Florida, Bahamas



The center of tropical storm Katrina is estimated near latitude 25.6 north and longitude 77.2 west or about about 185

miles east of the southeast coast of Florida.

Katrina is moving toward the northwest near 9 mph. A turn toward the west-northwest or west at a slower forward speed is expected to occur tonight or early Thursday. This motion will bring the center through the northwest Bahamas tonight and Thursday and into the Florida Straits Thursday night.

Maximum sustained winds are near 45 mph with higher gusts. Additional strengthening is forecast during the next 24 hours.

Tropical storm force winds extend outward up to 70 miles from the center.

The minimum central pressure recently observed by an air force reserve unit reconnaissance aircraft was 1002 mb or 29.59 inches.

Due to its slow forward speed, Katrina is expected to produce a significant heavy rainfall event over the central and northwest Bahamas as well as south Florida Total rainfall accumulations of 6 to 12 inches and isolated maximum amounts of 15 to 20 inches are possible.

Storm surge flooding of 3 to 5 feet above normal tide levels, along with large and dangerous battering waves, can be expected near the center in areas of onshore winds in the Bahamas.

Wikinews Back Page



Today in History

1071 – Seljuk Turks led by Alp Arslan captured Byzantine Emperor Romanus IV in the Battle of Manzikert.

1346 – Hundred Years' War: The military supremacy of the English longbow over the French combination of crossbow and armoured knights was established in the Battle of Crécy.

1789 – French Revolution: The Declaration of the Rights of Man and of the Citizen was approved by the National Constituent Assembly at Versailles.

1839 – The slave-held Amistad landed off Long Island in the U.S. state of New York.

1883 – The volcanic eruption of Krakatoa in Indonesia generated disastrous tsunamis, destroying many settlements on Java and Sumatra and killing 36,000 people.

Quote of the Day

"You think that a wall as solid as the earth separates civilization from barbarism. I tell you the division is a thread, a sheet of glass. A touch here, a push there, and you bring back the reign of Saturn." ~ John Buchan

About Wikinews

We are a group of volunteer journalists whose mission is to create a diverse community where citizens from around the globe (including you) can collaborate to report the news on a wide variety of current events. If you would like to write, publish or edit articles, visit

en.wikinews.org

All stories on Wikinews are in the public domain. By making our content perpetually available for free redistribution and use, we hope to contribute to a global digital commons. Wikinews also aims to write stories from a neutral point of view.

Got news and no computer?

Call the Wikinews Hotline

+1-866-653-4265 (toll-free in the U.S.)
+1-202-742-5918 (outside the U.S.)

Audio Wikinews

Audio Wikinews is a public domain, non point-of-view news radio program recorded daily.

http://en.wikinews.org/wiki/Wikinews:Audio_Wikinews

About Wikinews Print Edition

For more information about Wikinews Print Edition visit:

http://en.wikinews.org/wiki/Wikinews:Print_edition