



Top Stories

Palestinian gunmen assassinate ex-security chief

Former Palestinian security chief Moussa Arafat, cousin of the late Palestinian leader Yasser Arafat, was assassinated at his home in the Gaza Strip after a half-hour shootout between a number of militants and Arafat's bodyguards.

California passes same-sex marriage bill

On Tuesday, the state of California passed a controversial new bill that would redefine marriage as the union between two people. Governor Arnold Schwarzenegger has not revealed whether or not he will veto the bill.

Featured story

Linux installed on 2,460 desktop computers in Italian schools

A Linux computer operating system was installed in all public and private schools of an Italian province during the summertime.

Wikipedia Current Events

- Moussa Arafat, cousin of Yasser Arafat and former Palestinian Authority security chief, is shot and killed by members of the Popular Resistance Committees.
- The California State Assembly passes a bill recognizing same-sex marriage in what some consider to be a victory for gay rights advocates. Earlier this week the state Senate approved the measure; it now heads to the desk of Governor Arnold Schwarzenegger where there is uncertainty whether he will sign or veto the measure. The legislation is the first passed by a U.S. state legislature recognizing same-sex marriage.
- A report by an independent inquiry committee criticizes Secretary General Kofi Annan, the U.N. Security Council in the Oil for Food Scandal.

US carrier Delta Air Lines cuts jobs, sells planes

The United States' third-largest airline operator, Delta Air Lines, will cut 1,000 jobs due to a planned service reduction at their Cincinnati hub. The carrier also announced they will sell 11 of their Boeing 767-200 planes to an air-cargo company, ABX Air Inc., since they are the least fuel-efficient aircraft in the fleet.

Cincinnati/Northern Kentucky International Airport lost 9 destinations, but the carrier said there would be no inconvenience to passengers. Delta will fly to 20

new "business destinations" from Atlanta and Salt Lake City, instead. Also 41 international connections are to be maintained or expanded.

The changes took place due to the difficult financial situation of the company, which suffered \$10 billion in losses since 2001, and warned that they would file for bankruptcy if unsuccessful in lowering costs.

Palestinian gunmen assassinate ex-security chief



Map of the Gaza Strip from The World Factbook.

Former Palestinian security chief Moussa Arafat, cousin of the late Palestinian leader Yasser Arafat, was assassinated at his home in the Gaza Strip after a half-hour shootout between a number of militants and Arafat's bodyguards. The force, estimated to be up to a hundred men, overpowered Arafat's numerous bodyguards, using assault rifles and grenades, before directly assaulting the house. They dragged Arafat into the street, while still in his pajamas, where he was shot. He

Wikipedia Current Events

- The first ever multi-party elections in Egypt are conducted, with incumbent President Hosni Mubarak expected to win a fifth six-year term.

was declared dead on arrival to hospital.

The Popular Resistance Committees, or PRC, claimed responsibility for the attack, as well as the kidnapping of Arafat's son Manhal during the fighting. Manhal Arafat is a senior security official who has been described as one of his father's closest aides. The PRC explained the killing of Arafat as punishment for corruption after normal Palestinian security forces would not take action, describing it as "executing the will of God".

While holding no official position, Arafat had been retained as a military advisor to current President of the PNA Mahmoud Abbas, after being removed from his position as security chief. Palestinian officials have condemned the attack, describing it as an attack on the authority of the government.

There is no indication that this incident will affect the withdrawal of Israeli settlers from the Gaza Strip and parts of the West Bank, scheduled to be completed in the next few weeks.

Australia's ABC head Levy leaves for "Channel Nine"

Australian Broadcasting Company (ABC) television head, Sandra Levy, has quit to become the director of development for "Channel Nine."

Her new role is expected to focus on drama.

ABC managing director Russell Balding said that Ms Levy had lifted audiences to "historically unprecedented" levels. However, Ms Levy came under fire during her ABC tenure for an overly

conservative programming approach to major news stories - notably a sluggish response to coverage of the December 2004 South Asian Tsunami. This almost caused ABC to be declared bankrupt which would have caused a huge rise in unemployment in Australia as many people would have lost their jobs.

The Channel Nine network, that she now joins, is in a rebuilding phase after coming under heavy ratings pressure in the past 12 months. Long the dominant commercial network in Australia, in 2005 it has seen numerous changes in its executive ranks, including the sudden resignation of CEO David Gyngell. Channel Nine also almost closed down which would also have caused a huge rise in unemployment.

Channel Nine's interim CEO, television veteran Sam Chisholm, has launched cost-cutting at the network.

Tunisian ATR-72 plane crash on 6 August caused by incorrect fuel gauge

Investigation of the crash into sea of a Tunisian airplane ATR-72 near Sicily on August 6, 2005 has arrived at an astonishing conclusion. The wrong type of a fuel gauge was installed in the aircraft. The gauge was designed for another type of aircraft, the much smaller ATR-42.



The ATR-72, a 74-passenger plane.



A smaller ATR-42, designed to carry 40-50 passengers.

The level indicated by the gauge was wrong, causing the pilot to think that the plane needed less fuel than it did and less fuel than needed was loaded in the airport of Bari. While in flight the airplane ran out of fuel, despite the gauge showing fuel was still available.

After this conclusion by the Italian National Security Flight Agency (ANSV) the Italian National Agency for Civil Aviation (ENAC) has suspended Tunisian airline Tuninter's authorization to operate commercial flights in Italy. A warning was also sent to European Authority about what has happened asking that all fuel gauges installed on ATR-42 and ATR-72 be checked.

Australian PM Howard under fire over AU\$1.40/L pump prices

Australian Prime Minister John Howard has been criticised for refusing to cut the fuel excise tax as petrol prices reach up to \$1.40 AUD per litre in parts of the country. The criticism of Queensland Premier Peter Beattie has been particularly vocal, claiming that the government simply does not want to lose the revenue the excise generates. The Queensland government subsidises fuel in the state with GST revenue.

"The reality is they cream off a huge amount every day. He can do something about it if he really wants to," Mr Beattie said.

Mr Howard responded by explaining the steep rise in petrol prices was due to current market trends and short-term repercussions of Hurricane Katrina. This was consistent with the statements by the Australian Competition and Consumer Commission, which explained the major reasons for the increase were Katrina and China's recent embargo on refined petrol exports.

The Prime Minister also estimated that the Federal government would lose billions in a cut of significant size. He estimated the government would lose at least \$380 million for every one cent reduction, which would increase as drivers demanded a five to ten cent cut.

Celebrities contribute to Katrina relief

After Hurricane Katrina passed across the United States, various artists and media stars have leapt at a call to action.

Sean Penn actually went to Louisiana. After loading down a small boat with his entourage, it was discovered one of them had neglected to seal a hole in the bottom. Penn was wearing a white vest rather than a life vest while bailing. After the motor wouldn't start, the crew paddled down a flooded New Orleans street. Bystanders jeered at whether any victims could fit aboard the crowded craft. No report on rescue stunts. Local authorities had previously been criticized for not allowing volunteer boaters in to help.

Morgan Freeman, whose home fared well, is organizing an online auction of celebrity items at charityfolks.com, to benefit the American Red Cross Disaster Relief Fund.

Curt Schilling opened his home to a family of nine driven out of their New Orleans home. The Schilling family will provide housing for the Fields for a year while their home in New Orleans is rebuilt and repaired.

Some celebrities "graced" disaster zones with their presence in the days following Katrina.

Singer Macy Gray and television personality Phil McGraw visited Houston's Astrodome.

Celebrities visiting New Orleans include singer Harry Connick, Jr., CNN's Anderson Cooper, actor Jamie Foxx, singer Faith Hill, actor Matthew McConaughey, singer Lisa Marie Presley, comedian Chris Rock, actor John Travolta, and The Oprah Winfrey Show contributor Lisa Ling and interior decorator Nate Berkus. Oprah Winfrey also visited New Orleans, Houston, and Mississippi.

Singer Fats Domino was missing during the New Orleans flood but has since reached safety.

New Orleans who were out of town during the Hurricane included rapper Juvenile, who left New Orleans before the storm, Dave Pirner, who was visiting his Minneapolis hometown, and Master P, whose family members are missing.

Family of Neville Brothers have relocated to Round Rock, Texas, a small city adjacent to Austin. Threadgill's World Headquarters is

the new home for Cyril Neville and family, with the band playing there September 9th. Family members cooking up Louisiana specials in the kitchen as well.

New Orleans DirectNIC Offices, 'Outpost Crystal' visited by 82nd Airborne



A United State military truck rolls through the streets of New Orleans beneath the offices of DirectNIC -- home of "Outpost Crystal".

The offices of DirectNIC, a New Orleans based webhost and services provider, were visited by armed members of the 82nd Airborne Division during an interview with Wikinews reporters Tuesday evening. DirectNIC has been the home of "Outpost Crystal" -- an information dissemination effort involving hundreds of volunteers throughout the world -- since Hurricane Katrina wracked the United States Gulf Coast last Monday.

Armed police and military are currently patrolling the devastated city to protect residents and property. While New Orleans Mayor, C. Ray Nagin, has ordered a "forced" evacuation of the city, it is not apparent yet whether these orders are being executed by law enforcement agencies. DirectNIC personnel indicate that they will be allowed to stay as they constitute part of the recovery effort of the

city.

This article contains first-hand journalism by a Wikinews Reporter.

California passes same-sex marriage bill

On Tuesday, the lower house or State Assembly of the State Legislature of the US state of California passed a controversial new bill that would redefine marriage as the union between two people, as opposed to a man and a woman. The California State Senate, the upper house, had already acceded to this.

A critical swing vote came from Tom Umberg (D-Santa Ana) of Orange County, the second largest California county, which is predominantly conservative. He was ushered on by Senator Joe Dunn of the same constituency. The voting predominantly followed party lines, with no Republican supporting the bill and few Democrats opposing it.

Governor Arnold Schwarzenegger has not revealed whether or not he will veto the bill.

Chopper knocks Austrian gondola off cables, killing nine

On Monday, a helicopter accidentally dropped a concrete block weighing nearly 1,500 pounds when it was flying it up to an Austrian mountain for a "ski resort construction project". The concrete block struck a cable holding a gondola, the one that suffered all of the casualties, although other gondolas reported people suffering injuries from the jolt. The car that was hit fell quite some distance to the ground, up to hundreds of meters. Two more cars started tilting as some people were flung out from these cars.

A least nine people are reported to be killed in the incidents. There are also many injured, some of them seriously. Up to a dozen rescue helicopters immediately rushed to the scene from all over the Swiss alps.

The work was made to make the infrastructure more secure after an incident that happened when a low-flying US marine plane cut through a cable killing 20 people in 1998. This incident will bring into question if those policies saved lives or need to be recast in light of this tragedy.

Astronomers find changes in Saturn's rings



Saturn as observed by Cassini-Huygens on March 27, 2004

Astronomers have discovered that Saturn's D ring, the innermost of Saturn's 15 rings, has grown dimmer in the past 25 years and sections have moved up to 125 miles inward toward the planet. This discovery was made after astronomers compiled results predominantly from the Voyager 2 spacecraft, which passed Saturn in 1981, and the Cassini-Huygens probe which entered Saturn's orbit last year.

Other rings were found to be rotating slower than had previously been estimated with computer models. It was also discovered that the matter composing the rings is of far more

widely varying temperatures than had been expected. Sections of Saturn's F ring were also recognised as breaking apart and reforming, depending on the location of one of Saturn's moons.

The rings, which are now iconic to Saturn, and known to be common to all Jovian planets in general, were first observed in 1610 by Galileo. The rings have recently become a subject of scientific interest to modern astronomers who believe they are similar in structure to the dust which orbited the Sun, in a similar pattern, and formed the planets some 4.5 billion years ago.

This, and other Cassini-related discoveries, were discussed at a meeting of the American Astronomical Society's division of planetary sciences on Monday.

Award show producers try Emmy Idol

The Primetime Emmy Awards will have a unique twist for 2005, as television celebrities will sing the themes of classic series. Similar to the format of reality shows like American Idol and Rock Star: INXS, the audience will be able to vote on their favorite performance during the initial broadcast of the show.

The ceremony's executive producer, Ken Ehrlich, said to the press that "There are certain television theme songs that are nearly as memorable as the shows connected to them."

Billionaire American business executive Donald Trump, of reality show The Apprentice, will accompany the high-pitched voice of actress Megan Mullally, singing the Green Acres theme. R&B singer Macy Gray will be joined by

Gary Dourdan of CSI: Crime Scene Investigation, as they sing "Movin' On Up", the theme to All in the Family spin-off sitcom The Jeffersons.

William Shatner of Star Trek: The Original Series and opera singer Frederica von Stade will perform the theme from Star Trek. Shatner is notorious for his musical recordings, which many criticize, as he typically speaks the lyrics instead of singing them, typically as an exaggerated interpretive reading. However, the Star Trek theme does not require any singing other than that of the female opera singer.

Kristen Bell of the series Veronica Mars will perform the theme to Fame, solo.

The show will be again hosted by talk show host and comedienne Ellen DeGeneres. In honor of the victims of Hurricane Katrina, all Emmy presenters and performers will be given magnolias, the state flower of both Louisiana and Mississippi. Information will be given out during the broadcast on how viewers can donate to relief efforts.

The Emmys will be broadcast September 18th, 2005.

U.S. state of Utah begins to accept evacuees from Hurricane Katrina

Evacuees from New Orleans arrived on Sunday and have continued to come to Utah, utilizing the facilities at Camp Williams, the training facility for the Utah National Guard, to house the incoming people. Flights from New Orleans to Salt Lake City International Airport provided by JetBlue Airways under a contract from FEMA have been shuttling

people from New Orleans to many destinations throughout the United States, including Utah.

In addition, Utah Air National Guard relief missions transporting food and other supplies to New Orleans relief efforts have also been returning with people in the cargo areas of the airplanes on return flights. "In keeping with our mission to assist in the security and safety of our homeland, we stand trained, ready, and able to respond to the call to assist our fellow citizens in Louisiana, Mississippi and elsewhere," said Maj. Gen. Brian Tarbet, Utah National Guard Adjutant General.

The people on board the airplanes had no idea where they were going. In one case the airplane was headed to San Antonio and at the last minute while still airborne the destination was changed to Utah. Peter Coroon, Salt Lake County Mayor: "Some of the people look dazed. Some of them are just happy to be out of where they were. Some of them are eager to find their loves ones they've been separated. Some of them weren't sure where they were going when they left New Orleans."

Governor John Huntsman, Jr. utilized surplus state funds by declaring a state of emergency to begin efforts housing and clothing people coming to Utah, however some of this will likely be reimbursed by the Federal Government at a later date. He announced that Utah was willing to take up to 1,000 people at shelters in Utah, and that amount was later increased to over 2,000. On Monday, President Bush signed an executive order granting the emergency declaration in Utah to provide

Federal assistance for the evacuees in Utah.

After arriving in Utah, one evacuee said "I want to thank the people of Utah for their hospitality and for restoring my faith in America." Another evacuee said "it seems like heaven, looking at the mountains and getting a breath of fresh air and saying, 'Thank God we made it.'"

Not all evacuees were pleased with the move to Utah. "I knew where Utah was, but nobody told me that's where we were going. Nothing personal. It's nice. But I don't know anybody here," said Bergeron, among the first batch of 152 evacuees to arrive at the Camp Williams Utah Army National Guard training site.

The Utah chapter of the American Red Cross has been training volunteers over the Labor Day weekend, and according to one official they have been overwhelmed with community support to help the evacuees. The line of volunteers to receive the training helping those at Camp Williams was literally out of the door at the Red Cross offices today. One volunteer, Kayelynn Wright said, "The last couple of days we'd talked about it and said, 'What can we do?' So when I saw it (a call for volunteers) last night, I called (my neighbor) this morning and said, 'We gotta go!'" The Red Cross has asked that you contact the local office if you plan on volunteering or donating any new clothing and other items to help the evacuees.

Volunteers from The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints on Saturday gathered at the LDS Humanitarian Center in Salt Lake to assemble more than 50,000 hygiene kits for hurricane victims.

Plastic bags were stuffed with toothbrushes and toothpaste, combs, soap, washcloths and hand towels. The supplies will be shipped to a church-owned storehouse Georgia for distribution.

Transportation requests are also being honored by the Utah state government, and evacuees are having transportation to anywhere in the United States paid for at state expense. In addition, a small amount of extra money is being donated directly to each family to help with immediate expenses. The Utah Transit Authority has already established a regular municipal bus service between Camp William and downtown Salt Lake City, which will begin formal service starting tomorrow morning.

Massachusetts to set up "village" for Katrina evacs

The US state of Massachusetts is turning a portion of Camp Edwards, an active Cape Cod military base, into a "village" for 2,500 evacuees of Hurricane Katrina, as part of Operation Helping Hand.

The temporary shelter on the Massachusetts Military Reservation will have a population the size of Truro, Massachusetts and will include an active mayor and a system of government that will be like a town council

However, the shelter will face security demands different from the fifteen Cape towns because Cape Edwards is an active base used for training exercises. Security will be overseen by the Massachusetts National Guard, with help from the Massachusetts State Police and the County Sheriff's office. Massachusetts

Governor Mitt Romney stressed that he wanted to give it a comfortable, non-hostile atmosphere.

Upon touching down at Otis Air National Guard Base, Massport officials will issue identification cards, create case files for them and ask the evacuees to provide personal information which will go into to a database to be shared with other states that are taking evacuees.

The agencies that will be on hand are, the Massachusetts Emergency Management Agency, the American Red Cross and the Salvation Army. These agencies will coordinate volunteers, who must commit themselves to five days of volunteer efforts, and they must be able to transport themselves to the camp. Romney has asked for donations from the community.

Evacuees will be assigned housing by groups. There could be barracks for single men, another for single women, and then space for elderly and families with children. Visitors will not be allowed.

The school superintendent for the township of Bourne, Ed LaFleur, will work on enrolling the children of evacuees into Cape Cod schools. Romney met yesterday with leaders of the Blake Churches Alliance who will make available chaplains and counselors for the evacuees.

Romney spent Monday night asking for the State House to pass a \$25 million emergency spending bill to pay the initial costs of the facility.

The arrival time of the evacuees has been postponed, for unknown

reasons.

Sony breaks UK launch sales record with PlayStation Portable



The Sony PlayStation Portable went on sale in the UK on Thursday, September 1. In the three days following the release, more than 185,000 PlayStation Portables were sold. This sets a new sales record on game consoles. The record was previously held by Nintendo, who sold 87,000 Nintendo DS handhelds the first three days after its release. The PlayStation Portable is being sold for £179 in the UK.

Twenty of the 24 games launched with PlayStation Portable are in the the top 40. PlayStation Portable games also occupy nine of the top 10 slots on the sales charts. The game Ridge Racer was the most popular, with one in every five people buying both the PlayStation Portable and Ridge Racer at the same time.

Sony's main competitors in the handheld gaming console market are Nintendo with the Nintendo DS and Nokia with the nGage. Like Nintendo and Nokia, Sony is marketing the device as being able to do more than just play games. The PlayStation Portable can play specially created versions of popular movies and surf the Internet wirelessly. Sony expects to sell a million PlayStation Portables in the UK before Christmas.

Wikinews Back Page



Today in History

1331 - Stefan Dušan of the House of Nemanjić declared himself Tsar of Serbia.

1504 - David, a marble statue by Michelangelo, was unveiled in Florence.

1888 - The inaugural season of The Football League in England began with six matches.

1923 - The Honda Point Disaster: Twenty three sailors died when nine destroyers of the U.S. Navy ran aground off the coast of California .

1978 - Hundreds of demonstrators in Tehran were killed on Black Friday during the Iranian Revolution.

September 08 is National Day in Andorra; Independence Day in the Republic of Macedonia

Quote of the Day

"Freedom of choice is more to be treasured than any possession earth can give." ~ David O. McKay

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