

Top Stories

Hurricane Dennis makes landfall on Gulf Coast near Pensacola

Hurricane Dennis suddenly lost strength and dropped from a Category 4 storm to 3 before it struck land and moved swiftly inland. Gulf region spared what was feared to be even more colossal damages, and Bush declares 'state of emergency' for Florida.

Gas explosion in Russian shopping center kills at least 16

An explosion at a shopping center in the northern Russian city of Ukhta has resulted in several fatalities, a fire and dozens of injuries. Varying news reports indicate between 16 and 17 fatalities so far and that at least 30 people have been injured.

The explosion occurred in a shop called "Passazh" at 1:58pm local time (9:58am UTC). Local police have said that the explosion was caused by a gas canister.

Meth use now USA's top drug problem, survey finds

Methamphetamine use is now the nation's most serious drug issue, according to a survey recently completed by the National Association of Counties (NaCO). Counties in the survey said that methamphetamine was their largest drug problem followed by cocaine, marijuana and heroin as the most problematic drug for each county.

Wikipedia Current Events

- In China a mine explosion has killed 22 miners in Xinjiang province. 35 men were rescued while over 30 are still missing.
- The Catholic Church expels six New York priests accused of sexual abuse, defrocking them back to lay status.
- In the Netherlands, Mohammed Bouyeri, suspected killer of filmmaker Theo van Gogh, goes on trial.
- In Bosnia and Herzegovina, tens of thousands of people gather in Potocari to commemorate the Srebrenica massacre and rebury 610 victim

First gay marriage in Spain takes place



Universal LGBT flag

Emilio Menendez, a Spaniard, and Carlos Baturin German, an American, became the first gay couple to be married under a new law allowing same-sex marriage in Spain. The couple tied the knot in the town of Tres Cantos, outside of Madrid. Wedding guests included family and friends, as well as journalists and politician Pedro Zerolo, the governing Socialist Party's top official for social issues.

Spain is only the third nation in Europe to legalise same-sex marriage, after the Netherlands and Belgium. The bill was passed by the lower house of Parliament on 30 June 2005, overruling a rejection by the upper house, the Senate. Although the move was opposed by Roman Catholic groups, polls suggest that a majority of Spaniards support the decision. There were protests in Madrid prior to the bill being passed, and a Roman Catholic group submitted a 600,000-signature petition urging a referendum.

happy couple after the ceremony. Menendez told reporters, "The happiest day of our lives was when we fell in love with each other. We have been together for 30 years, there have been many wonderful days, today is yet another wonderful day."

Sen. Clinton compares Bush to Mad magazine character



Bush has recently come under fire from Sen. Clinton and other prominent Democrats

According to an AP report, Sen. Hillary Rodham Clinton (D-NY) stated during the inaugural of the Aspen Ideas Festival, "I sometimes feel that Alfred E. Neuman is in charge in Washington." The event was organized by the Aspen Institute, a think tank unaffiliated with any particular political party.

She claimed that Bush's attitudes towards many major issues are in line with the Mad magazine character's philosophical catch line: "What, me worry?" Republican groups denounced the attack, saying that Sen. Clinton was merely making a partisan attack for political gain at a time when the nation should be focusing on national security issues. Republican National Committee spokeswoman Tracey Schmitt called Sen. Clinton "part of today's angry and adrift Democrat Party."

Many have speculated that the former first lady and current New York senator will make a presidential bid in the 2008 election, but Sen. Clinton stated that she is "too wrapped up in her Senate work and re-election effort to think about that."

Wikipedia Current Events

- The 17th Maccabi Games were officially started, with a great ceremony in Israel. More than 7000 Jewish athletes will compete on various sport events.
- The body of a U.S. Navy SEAL has been found and recovered in Afghanistan, a senior defense official said Sunday.
- In Kyrgyzstan, acting president Kurmanbek Bakiyev wins presidential elections with 89% support so far.

State run television broadcast images of the

Temperature in east Iceland reaches 25 degrees Celsius (77°F)



East Iceland and Egilstaðir

This summer has brought a large amount of sunlight to Iceland. Temperatures have been soaring upwards in the eastern and north eastern regions of Iceland over the last few days, with the temperature reaching as much as 25 degrees Celsius (77° Fahrenheit) in Miðjarðarnesi.

At Egilstaðir, near to Landsvirkjun's Kárahnjúkavirkjun dam construction site it's been around 24°C (75°F).

The Icelandic Weather Agency is predicting continuing hot weather in east Iceland. The sun could even start shining in Reykjavík, the capital city of Iceland, later this week.

Much of western Europe has been experiencing particularly hot weather this week with much of Ireland enjoying temperatures between 24°C and 26°C (75-79°F) since Saturday afternoon.

Funding for new Museum of Liverpool approved



The Pier Head, as seen from the River Mersey

In Liverpool, England the North West Development Agency (NWDA) has approved funds of nearly £33 million pounds (about \$57.6 million U.S. dollars) for the construction of the Museum of Liverpool on Mann Island at the Pier Head — part of Liverpool's UNESCO World Heritage Site waterfront. An additional £7.5 million pounds (about 13.1 million U.S. dollars) has been allocated for the creation of a canal link across Mann Island,

encompassing central docks, the Pier Head, and the Albert Dock.

The museum is to replace the current Museum of Liverpool Life. The future museum, which is presently a £65 million pound project, is to be situated on the site of the failed "Fourth Grace" building. The "Three Graces" are: the Royal Liverpool Building, the Cunard Building; and the Port of Liverpool Building. The abortive Fourth Grace was a controversial building known as "The Cloud", the brainchild of architect Will Alsop. It was cancelled in July 2004 after local opposition, rising costs and the belief that the design was unrealistic.

The future museum, which will be designed in the shape of an "X", will feature 10,000 square metres of exhibition space on Liverpool's cultural and social history, including present exhibits of the Museum of Liverpool Life.

The two projects are considered integral aspects of Liverpool's successful bid in 2003 for the 2008 European Capital of Culture.

German opposition launches election campaign



Headquarters of the CDU.

Germany's main opposition parties, the CDU and its sister party, the Bavarian CSU, presented their manifesto for the upcoming federal election in Berlin today. With this program, titled Deutschlands Chancen nutzen (Taking Germany Opportunities), the CDU wants to return to power in the election, which will most likely take place on September 18th of this year.

The number one issue is this election will be employment. Germany is struggling with 4.7 million unemployed people and the CDU wants to reduce labor costs and make the hiring and firing of new employees easier. The party also intends to reduce income-taxes but plans to raise the value-

added tax from 16% to 18%.

Party chair Angela Merkel, the CDU's candidate for chancellor, called their program the "most honest in a long time" while incumbent chancellor Gerhard Schröder said that Merkel would make "everything more expensive and nothing better".

Gas explosion in Russian shopping center kills at least 16



The Komi Republic in Northern Russia

An explosion at a shopping center in the northern Russian city of Ukhta has resulted in several fatalities, a fire and dozens of injuries. Varying news reports indicate 17 fatalities so far and that at least 30 people have been injured.

The explosion occurred in a shop called "Passazh" at 1:58pm local time (9:58am UTC). Local police have said that the explosion was caused by a gas cannister.

Ukhta is an important industrial city in the Komi Republic of northwestern Russia. Its population is around 100,000 and is located near rich gas and oil reserves.

Yankees defeat Indians, 9-4; win 7 of last 8 heading into the All-Star break

The Yankees rebounded from a tough loss on Saturday to win Sunday's game 9-4 against the Indians thanks to some timely hitting.

Randy Johnson (9-6) allowed three runs on nine hits, six of which were leadoff hits. His performance bested Tribe starter Jake Westbrook (6-11), who pitched well to start the game but then surrendered two runs in the 4th inning and three in the 5th as the Yankees' hitters constructed a lead.

Recently acquired reliever Wayne Franklin threatened to lose the lead in the 7th inning, but was saved by Tanyon Sturtze, who came on to get the final out of the inning. Gary Sheffield then responded in the bottom of

the inning with a three-run homer hit deep into the right-centerfield bleachers, stretching the Yankee lead to 9-4.

Mariano Rivera closed out the game with a two-inning appearance, recording his 20th save. He enters the All-Star break preparing for Tuesday's game, along with Sheffield and Alex Rodriguez. The Yankees currently trail AL East leader Boston by 2.5 games, but face tough road series against the BoSox, Rangers, and Angels when play resumes on Thursday.

BSkyB director joins Setanta

The former managing director of BSkyB, Trevor East, has been appointed director of sport at Irish sports TV company Setanta. Prior to working for BSkyB Mr. East, 54, was head of sport at ITV for 22 years. The new role will involve gaining the rights to different sports events, and possibly even the premiership.

Setanta initially started out by broadcasting GAA games to Irish people living abroad particularly in the US. Today, backed by an investment by AIG, it is pursuing an ambitious plan to grow its business - it currently broadcasts the Scottish Premier League and earlier this week it bought control of North American Sports Network. North American Sports Network broadcasts baseball, NFL football, basketball and Nascar motor racing outside the US. Also in the planning stages is a European sports station for the the US market.

Wild storms lash New South Wales South Coast

Gale force winds ripped through Sydney and the South Coast late on Saturday night, causing widespread damage and extensive power outages, with up to 30,000 homes going without electricity at one point. The strong winds caused trees to be uprooted, in one instance crashing down upon an unsuspecting motorist, killing a man in his 60's and severely injuring his wife.

The State Emergency Service (SES) has responded to over 800 calls for help to repair damage caused by the storms, however the storms have subsided somewhat and flood warnings around Bega and Moruya have been withdrawn.

Worker's Party leader detained in Sao Paulo's airport with \$100,000 hidden in his underpants



The money discovered by the Brazilian Federal Police inside Mr Vieira's underpants.

São Paulo, Brazil – On Friday, Brazilian police officers detained a leader of the Workers' Party at Airport of Congonhas in Sao Paulo. He tried to board carrying R\$200,000 (83,744.90 USD) and US\$100,000 undeclared in cash. The money was hidden in his bag and in his underwear.

The man who was detained is José Adalberto Vieira da Silva, 39, Organization secretary of the Workers' Party from Ceará and the adviser of state deputy José Nobre Guimarães. Guimarães is the brother of José Genoino, President of the Workers' Party, the ruling party in Brazil.

José Adalberto, was detained on Friday, at about 11 a.m. (local time) when he was boarding to Fortaleza. Authorities detected through the airport's X-rays equipment that a great quantity of money was inside Adalberto's bag. After the bag was opened, the officers discovered R\$200,000 (83,744.90 USD) in cash. The authorities took José Adalberto to another room in the airport. After searching in his clothing, police officers discovered US\$100,000 hidden in Adalberto's underpants. The authorities charged José Adalberto for boarding without notification with more than R\$10,000 (4,187.25 USD), which is forbidden by Brazilian laws.

Adalberto is currently being held in São Paulo, awaiting trial. The deputy José Nobre Guimarães denied any involvement in this case and fired José Adalberto Vieira da Silva.

José Genoino, the Worker's Party President, resigned on Saturday (9). Mr Tarso Genro, the current Minister of Education, left the ministry and assumed the Worker's Party

Presidency.

José Genoino is the third official to resign since the Brazilian deputy Roberto Jefferson began to give details about an alleged huge corruption scheme involving politicians from the government, the Worker's Party, the Brazilian Agency of Intelligence (Abin) and public and private enterprises. On July 5, the party's treasurer Delubio Soares and the general-secretary Silvio Pereira had resigned.

Remembering Srebrenice massacre

Tens of thousands of people gathered in Srebrenica today to remember the massacre of over 8,000 Muslims, mostly men and boys, which happened on 11th July 1995. This is considered the worst atrocity in Europe since the end of World War II.

610 victims of the massacres were buried today after their bodies were recovered from multiple mass graves. 1,300 bodies have been identified with DNA testing but 4,500 body bags of human remain still need to be identified

Serbian president Boris Tadic attended the memorial and paid his tribute to the victims by bowing before their coffins. Tadic's attendance caused outrage among Serbian hardliners but has been applauded by the international community.

French, Dutch and UK ministers were also present, as well as former US Balkan envoy Richard Holbrook. UK foreign secretary Jack Straw apologized on behalf of the world community stating that it is "the shame of the international community that this evil took place under our noses and we did nothing about it". He also called it "sickening" that Radovan Karadzic and General Ratko Mladic, the men accused of overseeing the massacre, have not yet been captured and brought to justice.

Security was tight after two bombs were found in the area last week. More than 1,500 policemen are patrolling the area.

Ryanair launches more Shannon Airport routes



Irish low fares airline Ryanair has

announced it is to commence service of two new routes from Shannon Airport in County Clare, Ireland. It will now fly to Bristol, England daily and to Nantes, France three times a week. The airline will also increase the frequency of its Shannon-Frankfurt route.

Shannon airport has seen its traffic figures soar in the past year since Ryanair established a new base there. Ryanair CEO Michael O'Leary has said he expects the new routes to bring an additional 200,000 passengers to the airport.

Despite the positive announcement of the new routes on Thursday, Ryanair's share price plunged by 10% on the same day due to the London bombings that morning. However the share price recovered substantially on Friday.

Ryanair is the world's most profitable airline, having reported record profits of €269m earlier this year, and is pursuing an aggressive expansion plan which will see its total number of passengers jump to 70m over the next few years. At present Ryanair has 91 aircraft and 230 Boeing 737's on order.

Australian PM promises to assist Corby

Australian Prime Minister John Howard has promised that his government will do whatever it can to assist Schapelle Corby's legal team. He said this as part of a three page letter sent in response to a request from Corby herself.

"Let me assure you that the Australian Government will continue to provide every assistance it can under our legal system, consistent with our approach to date," he said.

Corby was recently sentenced by an Indonesian court to 20 years in jail for attempting to smuggle four kilograms of marijuana into the island of Bali. The case has been controversial in Australia, with many people believing she is innocent and that the legal process was unfair. The Bali High Court decided during an appeal that new evidence should be heard in the case. During the original case a number of key witnesses were not called.

Corby's lawyers are now collecting new

information and preparing for the case. Mr Howard pledged to support them in this process.

"Looking ahead, the Australian government will do what it can to support your legal team as they work to collect further evidence in Australia", he said.

Abbott labs ends dispute with Brazilian government over AIDS drug

Two weeks ago, the government of Brazil threatened to break the patent on the most widely-prescribed AIDS medication, Keletra (produced by Abbott Labs), if the makers would not comply with the government's requests. After holding its ground during the days leading up to the deadline set by Brazilian authorities, Abbott Labs has finally reached an agreement with the Brazilian government and is lowering its prices to levels deemed appropriate by the government of Brazil.

Brazilian law allows Brazil to break patents on medicines when there is a "risk to public health". After determining that the current prices were so exorbitant that they posed a significant risk to public health, the Brazilian government-owned chemical laboratories could begin manufacturing the drug themselves.

Brazil spent \$107 million producing the drug this past year, and stated that the new financial deal will save the government \$18 million next year, and \$259 million over the next six years.

Brazilian citizens receive free AIDS medication, paid for by the government. This bulk purchasing arrangement allows Brazilian citizens to receive the most affordable healthcare in the developed world.

100 participate in Zagreb Pride

One hundred people walked in Zagreb Pride parade yesterday in Zagreb, Croatia. Guarded by five hundred policemen, the parade promoting tolerance towards non-heterosexual people went without any major incidents. Helena Štimac Radin, president of the Government's institution for sexual equality, was present at the parade.

Organizers of the parade, the feminist organization Epikriza, said that postponing the event caused low turnout this year. It was not clear for about three weeks if the parade would take place at all, as the initial organization Iskorak, which was supposed to organize the parade this year, decided not to initiate it as they felt another type of event would be more appropriate.

Participants held banners saying "Love always wins", "Homophobia is illness" and "Sexual education into schools".

Several groups of people protested the parade, carrying banners reading "Raise your own children, not mine." They also disseminated flyers with "Croatian women and men, say no to faggoting of Croatia" written on them.

"I am angry because my tax money is spent on this kind of thing. There is money for these sick people, but there isn't for schools and kindergardens. It drives me crazy", one of the protestors said according to the newspaper Novi List. The parade was in part sponsored by the city of Zagreb.

Bypassers shouted insults at the paraders, who replied with "Gay is OK" and "Zagreb is gay". Police checked the identification of several skinheaded young men, but there were no larger incidents.

Hurricane Dennis makes landfall on Gulf Coast near Pensacola



Hurricane Dennis on July 10, 2005 at 3:15 p.m. EDT. Source: NHC

Hurricane Dennis regained strength during its north-westerly crossing of the Gulf of Mexico to surge into Florida's western panhandle near Mobile, Alabama with Category 3 force that packed sustained winds of 120 mph.

Santa Rosa, Okaloosa and Escambia were the first Florida counties hit by the eyewall

of the hurricane at 3:25 EDT Sunday afternoon. The small storm eye of the powerful hurricane spared the region more major destruction.

The compact storm picked up travel speed from 14 to 18 mph as it came to within 3 hours of landfall, where the storm's eye made for the Pensacola Bay. Its strength suddenly dropped from Category 4 before it struck land and moved swiftly inland. It continued to gain speed, traveling at 21 mph, while its strength sapped to Category 2 on a track into the Ohio Valley.

Residents of Fort Walton Beach and Pensacola who remained in the region, were told hours before the storm's arrival that storm shelters were full, and they were urged to stay home or find other shelter. In Escambia County Florida, officials announced at 2pm they were no longer able to respond to 911 calls for help due to the high winds.

The storm came 10 months after Hurricane Ivan, which struck the panhandle and Mobile Bay region last year. Dennis landed just 50 miles east of Ivan's, where recovery efforts from that storm were still ongoing. The Dennis landfall matched Ivan's Category 3 wind speeds.

Power outages were reported in Mobile and across the panhandle. Florida governor Jeb Bush promised in a televised press conference that all efforts to restore power would be done as quickly as possible so that, "people can help themselves" recover from the storm. A hospital administrator at Sacred Heart Hospital in Pensacola said it lost power at 2:30pm, and can operate 60 hours using back-up power generators.

Sunday evening, President Bush declared that Florida has major disaster areas, making the state eligible for FEMA assistance.



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Today in History

- 1862 - The U.S. Army Medal of Honor was first authorized by the U.S. Congress.
- 1967 - Race riots began in Newark, New Jersey, leading to 27 deaths in four days.
- 1975 - São Tomé and Príncipe declared independence from Portugal.
- 1979 - The Gilbert Islands gained independence and became known as Kiribati.
- 1993 - A magnitude 7.8 earthquake off the shore of Hokkaidō, Japan launched a devastating tsunami, killing 202 on the small island of Okushiri.

July 12, Commemoration of the Battle of the Boyne (1690) in Northern Ireland

Quote of the Day

"All men profess honesty as long as they can. To believe all men honest would be folly. To believe none so is something worse." ~ John Quincy Adams

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