



Top Stories

Explosions hit waterfront in New Orleans, Louisiana



Fires are raging in New Orleans following a series of explosions along the waterfront. The cause and the effects of the blasts are not known.

Louisiana officials accused of blocking rescue volunteers



SPECIALREPORT

State Police in Lafayette, Louisiana, have been accused of hindering attempts by private citizens to rescue people trapped by floodwaters in New Orleans.

Wikipedia Current Events

•Vladimir Putin tells mothers of Beslan children killed a year ago that the government could not guarantee complete security in the face of terrorism.

Woman torches own house, attempting to kill spiders

A German woman has destroyed her family's home in an attempt to kill the spiders in its garage.

Zuelpich police report that when spraying them with hairspray failed to kill them, the spiders were then subjected to being burned with a cigarette lighter. However, they were probably still covered with hairspray, which set alight the floor of the garage. The fire then spread to a hedge, and then to the house, which the woman failed to save with a garden hose. It is reported to be uninhabitable, but the neighbouring semi-detached house was spared, suffering only broken windows and exterior charring.

The damage is estimated at around €100,000 (£70,000 or \$125,000.)

A policeman stated, "The family have had to look for somewhere else to stay. The spiders are gone though - that problem was solved."

US Department of Housing and Urban Development to provide housing for Katrina refugees

The United States Department of

Housing and Urban Development (HUD) will make many of their marketable housing properties in the southeastern United States and elsewhere available to hurricane refugees. HUD Secretary Alphonso Jackson said that an "overwhelming" response from government and private officials would make housing available as soon as the middle of next week. HUD housing centers as far away as Philadelphia and Detroit would be making properties available. HUD is considering offering these properties to displaced persons regardless of their income and allowing the refugees to use the properties for up to one year.

Minnesota 2% biodiesel mandate becomes effective September 29

On September 29, Minnesota will become the first U.S. state to require diesel fuel sold at filling stations in the state to be blended with 2% biodiesel. This follows the statewide mandate requiring ethanol to be mixed into gasoline—also a first by Minnesota—which took effect in 1997. The biodiesel mandate was approved by the 2002 state legislature, and was sent to then-Governor Jesse Ventura. Ventura allowed the bill to become law without his signature, stating his concern that the increased cost of fuel would effect the trucking industry—potentially spurring inflation—though he felt that this was nearly balanced by the positive impact the mandate would have on agriculture in the state.

The law had an initial target date

Featured story

West African cholera claims more than 500 lives, more deaths feared

An outbreak of cholera in West Africa has resulted in the deaths of more than 500 people, and United Nations (UN) health officials are concerned that inadequate health services in the region could result in many more deaths.



Wikipedia Current Events

- President Bush tours the area devastated by Hurricane Katrina amidst growing criticism of his leadership. Media reports say he will not visit New Orleans. Bush said order would be restored and New Orleans would emerge from its "darkest days".
- The NASA Mars Exploration Rover Mission robotic Spirit rover sends back a partial panoramic view from the top of "Husband Hill" at Gusev Crater on Mars.

of July 1, 2005, but would only go into effect once production capacity exceeded 8 million gallons (30 million liters) per year. At the beginning of 2005, the state was only capable of producing three million gallons each year, but two new facilities in Albert Lea and Brewster increased state capacity twenty-fold when they opened this summer. Each of the two new plants can produce 30 million gallons (113 ML) annually. Agriculture Commissioner Gene Hugoson verified production levels in the August 29 edition of the Minnesota State Register, meaning that the law will become effective following a month-long notification period.

The prices of diesel and biodiesel have equalized, so the negative economic impact initially feared by Ventura are not expected to come to pass and the effect should be pennies more or less per gallon. Despite the dramatic increase in capacity, biodiesel production is not yet a broad solution to shortages or high prices—in 2001, the state used 14.3 million gallons of petroleum every day.

Did human remains cause mad cow disease?

Bovine spongiform encephalopathy, better known as BSE or "mad cow" disease, may have been caused by human remains ingested by British cattle, two scientists said today.

Alan Colchester and his daughter Nancy Colchester, from the University of Kent and University of Edinburgh, respectively, suggested that the remains of humans cast into the Ganges in an Indian funeral rite contaminated Indian animal feed that was imported to the U.K. If some of the humans died of Creutzfeldt-

Jakob disease, bone meal infected with CJD would have entered the British food chain, causing the similar BSE in cattle.

Admitting the evidence was not solid, the two scientists still argued that this new theory merited further review. The current theory of the origin of BSE involves the transmission of scrapie, a similar disease that affects sheep, to cattle. Prions, infectious proteins that would be the only disease-causing agents without nucleic acid, are thought to be the cause of all of these diseases.

Microsoft Office dropped by Massachusetts, USA

The state of Massachusetts unveiled plans to officially end use of the Microsoft Office suite, instead switching to an open document format currently implemented by many open-source groups. Massachusetts is believed to be the first major public-sector group to implement such a plan in the United States.

Target implementation date is January 1, 2007. The task is considered challenging, as most government documents were created in closed-source programs such as Office, Lotus Notes, and Corel WordPerfect.

OpenDocument is an XML-based standard for creating documents, spreadsheets, charts and graphs. The OpenDocument format is supported by many software suites, including OpenOffice and StarOffice. While Microsoft document formats are generally the most commonly used, government officials worried about the proprietary nature of the formats.

King of Swaziland seeks thirteenth bride, continues to cause ire

HM King Mswati III of Swaziland has held a massive ceremony to find his 13th wife. More than 50,000 showed up to the unofficial call for brides. All potential brides who attended the two-day Reed Dance, held annually since 1999, were bare-breasted, wearing short, beaded skirts and were supposedly virgins.

As his country's 37-year-old Ngwenyama (king), Mswati is the last absolute monarch in sub-Saharan Africa.

Mario Masuku, leader of the banned opposition party, said that "The Reed Dance has been abused for one man's personal satisfaction. The king has a passion for young women and opulence." Masuku's comments were based on the fact that the Reed Dance traditionally celebrated virginity and womanliness.

"The king takes a wife whenever he wants, and that's the way it is. This is our culture, and we will never change," says Tsandzile Ndлуva, 21, one of the dancers at the event.

Ludzidzini Royal Village also hosted the Great She-Elephant, their name for the country's queen mother Ntombi Thwala. She was greeted by 50,000 people, which is 5% of the nation's population. Their traditional ceremony for the She-Elephant includes dancing and building a wind-break for her out of reeds.

The King's current wives include Inkhosikati LaMatsebula, Inkhosikati LaMotsa, Inkhosikati LaMbikiza, Inkhosikati

LaNgangaza, Inkhosikati LaHwala, Inkhosikati LaMagwaza, Inkhosikati LaMasango, Inkhosikati LaGija, Inkhosikati LaMagongo, and Inkhosikati LaMahlangu. LaMbikiza has a Master's Degree in Law.

He has 27 children from his first 13 wives and wives-to-be, and over 200 brothers and sisters, a result of his late father King Sobhuza II's 70 wives. Mswati must look after all of these relatives with funds from the royal-owned company, Tibiyo TakaNgwane.

At the Reed Dance, Mswati repealed the law prohibiting sexual activity for girls younger than 18. This law was first enacted in 2001, to help in the fight against AIDS, which was, and still is, at crisis levels. The ban was set to end in 2006. The law was actually a revival of the ancient "umchwasho" rite, a Swazi tradition. In the first weeks this law was enacted, Mswati broke it himself, marrying Inkhosikati LaMagongo. This forced him to pay a fine of one cow.

Forty-percent of Swazis are HIV+, including 42% of pregnant women, a matter that the King was taken to heart. He has travelled internationally to try and raise money, increase awareness, and seek solutions to the epidemic. World-renowned musicians like Michael Jackson have signed on to record an album, to raise funds for orphans in the country.

Recently Ntfonjeni Dlamini, the government's official overseer of traditional affairs, beat one of the King's daughter's, 17-year-old Princess Sikhanyiso, who was throwing a party with loud music and alcohol. The party was to

celebrate the end of the chastity decree.

"It was within the traditional overseer's right to discipline anyone — including princesses — who wanted to spoil the important ceremony," claimed Jim Gama, governor of the queen mother's residence.

Princess Sikhanyiso had already caused ire around Swaziland, as she broke traditions by wearing Western-style short skirts and jeans.

The King says he is suffering from stress, finding it difficult to cope with the pressure of work. He told BBC News "I find very little time with my family most of the time. I normally work until 11pm... and this makes me feel stressed because I'm being overworked, but I have to do everything possible to satisfy my people."

Oil prices fall as reserves are released

The International Energy Agency announced that its member states will release 60 million oil barrels from their strategic reserves next month. "All 26 member countries will take collective action", said the agency in its statement. The announcement was in response to the crude price surge after disruption of oil supply in the Gulf of Mexico caused by Hurricane Katrina.

Earlier today Javier Solana, chief of the European Union's foreign policy, said the EU can provide the US with reserves of the member states. Also OPEC is considering taking action. The United States and Japan already plan to release oil from their reserve stocks.

Oil prices fell slightly today,

following the IEA statement, as expected. US light crude fell US\$1.57 to US\$67.90 a barrel.

Intel responds to AMD antitrust suit



Intel has filed its response to AMD's antitrust lawsuit of June 27, 2005, saying AMD's claims are "factually incorrect and contradictory". The 63-page response, filed in federal district court in Delaware, is 15 pages longer than the original lawsuit. The strongly worded reply from Intel prompted many industry watchers to comment that the legal battle could take years to settle. According to Intel, "the evidence will show that every failure and setback for which A.M.D. today seeks to blame Intel is actually a direct result of A.M.D.'s own actions or inactions."

AMD has already issued its own rebuttal. On September 29, a federal multidistrict court in North Carolina will decide whether or not to combine many class-action suits related to the same charges.

Controversy over New Orleans photos captions

Tuesday, Yahoo! News posted photographs from the Hurricane Katrina disaster area gathered from various sources.

An Associated Press photograph of two African-American women was captioned, "Looters carry bags of groceries through floodwaters after taking the merchandise away from a wind damaged convenience store in New Orleans on Monday, Aug. 29, 2005."

A similar Agence France Press

(AFP) photograph of two caucasians was labeled, "Two residents waded through chest-deep water after finding bread and soda from a local grocery store in New Orleans..."

The vast majority of people who did not evacuate from the famous city were poor and non-white; many were unable to obtain transportation.

Several news sites have noted that New Orleans rescue and evacuation efforts have been severely complicated by the presence of these looters. The evacuation of the Superdome was halted after shots were reported, fired at a National Guard rescue helicopter.

Yahoo! News later released a statement on the images, saying, "...we present the photos and their captions as written, edited and distributed by the news services with no additional editing..." Yahoo! agreed to AFP's request to remove AFP-supplied photographs after the controversy began, fueled by articles on the topic by Salon, Flickr, and other news sites.

The choice of wording may be chalked up to different policies at the two agencies (AP and AFP); the AP has been labeling several of their photos with the term "looting" if their photographers witness the act, while Getty spokeswoman Bridget Russel said regarding the AFP/Getty photo, "This is obviously a big tragedy down there, so we're being careful with how we credit these photos."

Chris Graythen, who took the AFP picture and wrote the caption, said "I believed in my opinion, that they did simply find them, and not 'looted' them in the definition of the word. The people were

swimming in chest deep water, and there were other people in the water, both white and black. I looked for the best picture. there were a million items floating in the water - we were right near a grocery store that had 5+ feet of water in it. it had no doors. the water was moving, and the stuff was floating away. These people were not ducking into a store and busting down windows to get electronics. They picked up bread and cokes that were floating in the water. They would have floated away anyhow."

Briton to fly hang glider across the UK

A man from North London is currently training for an attempt at flying a hang glider across the UK from land's End to John O'Groats.

Shola Ogunlokun a 41 year old married father of 3 who had never flown a hang glider before taking up this challenge said yesterday "I aim to fulfil a dream of flying, use the challenge as an opportunity to meet the people of Britain and encourage people of similar ethnic backgrounds as me to pursue their dreams".

Shola is on stage 2 of a 3 stage training programme, and has flown a glider off a 2000ft mountain on completion of stage 1 of his training. He is currently looking for sponsors and in talks with a TV production about making a documentary of his attempt.

The flight attempt is currently planned for around Autumn next year, should take between 5-7 days, and Shola would like to spend the night of each flight at the home of a local in the town he lands. If successful, Shola will be

the first person to have flown a hang glider across the UK over this distance.

Shola has an online diary charting his progress at <http://mbchallenge.blogspot.com> For further details, or to contact Shola, please visit his website: <http://www.meet-britain.org.uk>

Bomb in Dagestan explodes Russian military truck



Map of Russia showing Dagestan

An explosion today in Makhachkala, Russia in the Russian region of Dagestan killed one and wounded five others, police say. The bomb detonated in a pile of garbage, where servicemen and a truck had been sent to search for explosives on a street near a military base. When the engineers got out of the truck to search, the bomb went off.

The Dagestani Ministry, reported by the Russian news agency ITAR-Tass, originally stated that the blast killed two servicemen and wounded three others. They later revised this to six servicemen wounded (as well as one civilian), but no fatalities. A police officer told ITAR-Tass news that a brigade had been on patrol when the explosion occurred.

According to RIA-Novosti and Interfax news, medics reported one death and six injuries. RIA-Novosti also reports that the bomb exploded near a trolley bus.

Police and ambulances were immediately brought to the area of

the explosion, which was quickly sealed off by police.

The alleged planters of the bomb were followed by police, but escaped after firing at the officers.

This explosion is not surprising, as racial tensions in the Muslim majority region of Dagestan often lead to attacks on officials and police.

Ivorian rebels say South African mediators 'discredited'

On Thursday, the Ivorian rebel group Forces Nouvelles, responded to the South African mediator's Wednesday testimony to the UN Security Council by saying that South Africa had become "discredited" by taking the side of Ivorian president Laurent Gbagbo's government in Abidjan.

"We categorically do not want the South African mediation continuing here in Cote d'Ivoire" said the rebel group in a statement. The Forces Nouvelles spokesman further demanded that "the African Union, and especially AU president Olusegun Obasanjo, take his responsibility and find a new way," calling on regional leader Nigeria to intervene in the crisis.

The statements are the latest in a series of setbacks to Cote d'Ivoire's beleaguered peace process, which also include the failure of the rebels to meet the July 31st disarmament deadline, and the rejection of October 30 as a feasible date for the national elections.

Special Representative of the Secretary-General to Cote d'Ivoire, Pierre Schori, expressed his support for the continued South African mediation and stated that conducting free and fair elections

in Cote d'Ivoire was more important than sticking with the set dates.

Explosions hit waterfront in New Orleans, Louisiana

Fires are raging in New Orleans following a series of explosions along the waterfront. The cause of the blasts is not known. One official has stated that the explosions took place at a chemical storage facility near the riverfront a few miles south of the French Quarter.

This news comes as police suspended search-and-rescue operations in order to attempt to halt the rising levels of looting in the city, and after Louisiana Governor Kathleen Blanco ordered National Guard troops to "shoot and kill" rioters and looters.



Flooding of residential areas



Typical damage from the hurricane

Although aid has been promised by the US federal authorities, New Orleans Mayor Ray Nagin criticised them for what he feels is a slow response.

"They don't have a clue what's going on down there," Mayor Ray Nagin told WWL-AM Thursday night.

"They flew down here one time two days after the doggone event was over with TV cameras, AP reporters, all kind of goddamn — excuse my French, everybody in America, but I am pissed."

Coroner finds that Australian Prime Minister Holt drowned in 1967



Victorian State Coroner Graeme Johnstone has ruled that former Australian Prime Minister Harold Holt drowned in the surf at Cheviot Beach on December 17, 1967. Mr Holt was swimming at the beach, known for its dangerous currents, when he disappeared. Numerous theories have circulated since to explain the disappearance, including one that believed he was abducted by a Chinese submarine.

No formal inquiry was held at the time, because the law at the time stated that coroners could not investigate unless there was a body. This law was changed in 1985. Mr. Johnstone said that the lack of inquiry meant that much information was not released to the public, which may have contributed to the development of the conspiracy theories.

"Unfortunately, there was no open inquiry at the time so this detailed material did not become general public knowledge," he said, adding, "A simple reading of the original investigative material provides the real and credible explanation."

Mr. Holt's son said that the family believed all along that Holt had drowned.

"Myself and the other family members have always thought that it was simply a matter of him going for a swim when he shouldn't," he said.

Louisiana officials accused of blocking rescue volunteers

State Police in Lafayette, Louisiana, have been accused of hindering attempts by private citizens to rescue people trapped by floodwaters in New Orleans. The accusations were contained in an unconfirmed report received via email by Jason Robideaux, an attorney from Lafayette.

The email was written by a person who claimed to be part of "a group of approximately 1,000 citizens pulling 500 boats" heading into New Orleans to rescue people still stranded in places such as hospitals. The email claimed that the members of the flotilla were "... experienced boaters, licensed fishermen and hunters, people who have spent their entire adult life and teenage years on the waterways of Louisiana."

The email reports that a Dept. of Wildlife & Fisheries (DWF) agent ordered them to turn around and go home.

"We then specifically asked the DWF agent that we (and other citizens in the flotilla) be allowed

to go to the hospitals and help evacuate the sick and the doctors and nurses stranded there. We offered to bring these people back to Lafayette, in our own vehicles, in order to ensure that they received proper and prompt medical care," the email said.

"The DWF agent did not want to hear this and ordered us home. We complied with the DWF agent's orders, turned around and headed back to Lafayette along with half of the flotilla. However, two of my friends were pulling my other boat, a smaller 15ft alumaweld with a 25 hp. The DWF agents let them through to proceed to the rescue operation launch site," the email continued.

The email also reported hundreds of DWF agents who were not being utilised.

"My two friends were allowed to drive to the launch site where the La. Dept. of Wildlife and Fisheries were launching their rescue operations (via boat). They reported to me that there were over 200 DWF agents just standing around and doing nothing. My friends were kept there for approximately 3 hours. During that time they observed a large number of DWF agents doing nothing. After three hours had passed they were told that they were not needed and should go home. They complied with the DWF's orders and turned around and went home to Lafayette," the email said.

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

US Senate approves \$10.5 billion in aid for Hurricane Katrina victims

The United States Senate has cut short their summer recess and has arrived in Washington to approve a \$10.5 billion aid bill to victims of Katrina as requested by President George W. Bush. The United States House of Representatives is expected to pass a similar bill later today.

Bush has told Congress he will ask for more funds in the coming weeks.

Most of the money will go to the Federal Emergency Management Agency and the rest will go to the Pentagon which is dispatching ships to the area.

Bush has asked his father, former President George H.W. Bush and former President Bill Clinton to help raise private funds for relief just like they did for the December 2004 tsunami in Asia.

Guantanamo prisoners stage hunger strike

A number of prisoners at the prison camp at Guantanamo Bay have staged a hunger strike in protest of their detainment. The prisoners, many of whom have been held since the overthrow of the Taliban in 2001, are angered at the United States' refusal to charge them with any crimes, and denying the prisoners legal access.

A previous hunger strike was halted in July when Pentagon officials reached a compromise with the prisoners. The compromise included provisions to bring the prison in line with the terms of the Geneva Convention. The prisoners have since accused the government of not following through on this deal.

The exact number of prisoners is a question of debate. The Pentagon

says that only 76 are striking, while lawyers for the prisoners say that as many as 200 prisoners are refusing to eat. The lawyers also have said that one prisoner has drawn up a will in apparent anticipation of dying.

California Senate votes to allow gay marriages

The California State Senate voted on Thursday to allow homosexuals to marry, therefore becoming the first legislative body in the United States to embrace the controversial issue.

The Senate approved the Religious Freedom and Civil Marriage Protection Act, which would define marriage as a civil contract between two people rather than a man and a woman. The vote passed by the minimum number of necessary votes, 21-15. All Republicans in the Senate opposed the bill, as did one Democrat, Sen. Dean Florez of Shafter. Three Democrats abstained.

The bill's chief sponsor, Assemblyman Mark Leno (D-San Francisco) said, "We're looking for three votes, and I can't tell you today who the three will be, but I think the power of the success coming from the floor of the Senate today will give us the necessary momentum and encouragement to do what we all know is the right thing to do."

California Governor Arnold Schwarzenegger's spokeswoman, Margita Thompson, stated that the Governor believes the issue should be decided by the court and not the legislature.

"The governor was elected to uphold the laws of California. The people spoke when they voted in Proposition 22. It has

subsequently gone to the courts and the governor believes that is where it should be decided. It's an issue for the people and the courts," she said. Prop 22, which is currently being challenged by San Francisco, deals only with the issue of non-Californian marriages.

Because California has a direct democracy, decisions of the legislature can be overturned by a direct vote of the people. A court decision on the matter, however, could not be overturned except by a higher court.

Fats Domino rescued in New Orleans



Legendary R&B singer Fats Domino has been accounted for, three days after Hurricane Katrina hit in his hometown of New Orleans, Louisiana.

Fats Domino was found on Monday by a helicopter searching for residents stranded in floodwaters. He was identified by his daughter from a photo taken Monday by a New Orleans Times-Picayune photographer. However, while it is known that Domino was rescued, his whereabouts and the whereabouts of his family are not immediately clear.

The singer had told his agent, Al Embry, that he planned to stay at his home with his wife and daughter, rather than evacuate. He had not been heard from since

before the storm hit. Domino, 77, lives in the city's 9th Ward, one of the areas hardest hit by Katrina. Attempts to reach Domino by phone proved futile, as phone lines have not been working in the area since the storm hit.

Antoine 'Fats' Domino first gained stardom with one of the first rock n' roll records, "The Fat Man". The record went platinum, selling over a million copies and hitting #2 on the Billboard charts. Of Domino's numerous Top 40 singles, perhaps his most notable were Blue Monday and a cover of Blueberry Hill.

Domino retired from touring in the 1980s, and has not left the city since, citing his dislike of touring, and his love of New Orleans cuisine. Not even his induction to the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame or an invitation to the White House were able to get Domino to leave the town.

Wikinews Back Page



Today in History

301: San Marino, one of the smallest nations in the world and the world's oldest republic still in existence, was founded by Saint Marinus.

1189: Richard the Lionheart was crowned King of England in Westminster.

1260: Mamluk forces defeated a Mongol army in Palestine in the Battle of Ain Jalut, marking the point of maximum westward expansion of the Mongol Empire.

1783: The signing of the Treaty of Paris formally ended the American Revolutionary War.

1976: The Viking 2 spacecraft landed on Mars and took the first close-up, color photos of the planet's surface.

September 03 is Independence Day in Qatar

Quote of the Day

"Speak softly and carry a big stick." ~ Theodore Roosevelt

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