



Top Stories

Islamabad's Marriott Hotel bombed

The Marriott Hotel in Islamabad, Pakistan has been bombed. At least 50 people are dead and 120 injured. The explosion, believed to be a car or truck bomb, occurred at 8 P.M. PST(14:00 UTC), just hours after newly elected President Asif Ali Zardari addressed Parliament and promised to destroy terrorism in the country.



Website of Bill O'Reilly, FOX News commentator, hacked in retribution

According to a document published by Wikileaks.org, a document leaking website, the official website account of Fox News Channel commentator Bill O'Reilly has been hacked. The hack was in response to comments O'Reilly made on his show against the press, and Wikileaks.org.



Wikinews interviews Prince Christopher I of the Principality of Vikesland on his micronation's recent space launch

Little over one month ago, [redacted] micronational history was made when the Principality of Vikesland had its flag sent into



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outer space. In a recent interview with Wikinews reporter Joseph Ford, Vikesland's head of state, Prince Christopher I, explained how his country achieved this and much more.

United Nations requests US\$700 million in aid for East Africa to avoid famine

The United Nations has called for wealthy donor nations to donate US\$700 million (£382 million or €484 million) in emergency aid for Eastern Africa to prevent widespread famine. Since the start of 2008 the number of people living in hunger in the region has almost doubled to seventeen million, according to the UN.

Wikipedia Current Events

The Ugandan Lords Resistance Army has launched a surprise offensive in Southern Uganda hitting an army base and villages in the nearby Democratic Republic of Congo.

- Residents of Galveston Island, Texas are advised that they can return home next Wednesday but there will be little or no services after Hurricane Ike destroyed much of the town.
- The Bush administration asks the United States Congress for \$700 billion to buy mortgage-related assets to try and resolve the subprime mortgage crisis.
- A suicide bomber attacks a Pakistan Army convoy, killing

Wikipedia Current Events

eight soldiers in North-West Pakistan.

- South African President Thabo Mbeki agrees to resign after the ruling African National Congress requested him to step down.
- Pakistan detains 13 Indian fisherman after they drifted in Pakistani waters.

Scientists to study near-death experiences

An international study, Awareness during Resuscitation experiment (Aware), will examine near-death experiences involving 1,500 cardiac arrest survivors in about 25 centers in the US and Britain. The study is coordinated by the Human Consciousness Project at the University of Southampton, which specializes in studying the human brain, consciousness and death.

The research, expected to take three years, will analyze whether people with no heartbeat or brain activity can have "out of body" experiences. Some people report seeing a tunnel or bright light, recall looking down from the ceiling at medical staff, hearing voices telling them to return to the living world and others feel a tremendous sense of peace and well-being.

"If you can demonstrate that consciousness continues after the brain switches off, it allows for the possibility that the consciousness is a separate entity." —Dr Sam

Parnia, University of Southampton

During the study, doctors will use technology to study the brain and consciousness during cardiac arrest. To test whether such experiences involve the mind leaving the body, pictures will be placed around the areas of the hospital where heart attacks occur most frequently, such as accident and emergency and intensive care units. The pictures will only be visible from above. If patients are able to describe these pictures, project leaders argue that scientists will have to rethink how they understand the mind.

"There could be great benefits from this research for the future," said Penny Satori, an Intensive care nurse, who leads the project at Morrision Hospital. "As well as helping surviving patients psychologically after a trauma, it can give peace of mind to grieving families.

Alaskan Governor and Republican U.S. vice presidential nominee Sarah Palin's email account hacked

A hacker who has claimed to be loosely associated with internet group Anonymous managed to hack into the email account of Alaskan Governor and Republican vice-presidential nominee Sarah Palin in the early morning hours of Wednesday, September 16.

"I read all of the e-mails in the Palin's account and found nothing incriminating, nothing that would derail her campaign as I had hoped. All I saw was personal stuff, some clerical stuff from when she was governor and pictures of her family." —Hacker

Partial contents of her email account - including two family photos, email messages and

contact lists - were subsequently hosted online at Wikileaks.org, a website that anonymously hosts leaked government and corporate documents. Anonymous, who were responsible for attacks on Scientology in the past, have claimed credit for the intrusion. The email account has been used by Palin for conducting government business and communication, circumventing transparency laws.

The hacker gained access to Palin's account by answering Yahoo!'s security questions, finding the answers on websites like Wikipedia.org. The hacker was apparently careless and frightened, and posted the new password on 4chan.org as well as a few hasty screenshots. In the screenshots were proxy data, which Ctunnel.com owner Gabriel Ramuglia plans to use to help with FBI investigations.

"White hat" hackers, however, have discovered that the hacker's online identity was linked to the email address of David Kernell, the son of Democratic Tennessee state representative Mike Kernell. When confronted, Kernell made no confirmation of that. While 4chan has deleted all images of the email account, the screenshots have quickly spread to blogs and news websites online.

South African President Thabo Mbeki agrees to resign

South African President Thabo Mbeki has agreed to a call from the ruling African National Congress to resign.

The ANC announced earlier today that it wanted Mbeki, 66, to resign after two days of talks. He was just months from completing his full term of office, but is caught up in allegations that he influenced a

corruption case being brought against rival and ANC leader Jaco Zuma.

Zuma was cleared of all charges on September 12, with the court ruling that Mbeki's regime had interfered. Mbeki and others deny this.

Half of the cabinet is reported to be threatening to walk out if Mbeki does leave. He has called a special government meeting tomorrow to decide how to continue with his removal.

It is unknown who will be named interim ruler by parliament, but it may be Zuma. He may also stand for election to President.

Marriott Hotel in Islamabad bombed

The Marriott Hotel in Islamabad, Pakistan was bombed today killing at least 60 people and injuring 120.

The explosion, believed to be a car or truck bomb and heard 30km (18 miles) away in Rawalpindi, occurred at 8 P.M. PST (14:00 UTC), just hours after newly elected President Asif Ali Zardari addressed Parliament promising to destroy terrorism in the country.

It is thought that more than a ton of explosives were used in the blast, which left a crater 30 feet deep and triggered a gas leak which sent the hotel up in flames. It is feared that the death toll may go much higher in what is one of the worst terror attacks in Pakistan's history.

The Marriot is a popular place for foreigners to stay and the most prominent US-owned enterprise in the city, despite a wave of violence the country suffers.

The hotel, popular among tourists, had been victim of another attack in January 2007, where a security guard was killed and several people injured after the guard blocked a bomber from getting at the hotel, forcing him to detonate his explosives where he was.

Ambulances rushed to the scene of today's explosion, where rescuers ferried away the dead. Dozens of vehicles were gutted by fire, nearby trees were knocked down, and windows shattered in buildings hundreds of metres away.

Witnesses, including a security guard, described a large truck approaching the building immediately before the explosion.

No-one has yet claimed responsibility for the bombing, but the main suspects are Pakistan Taleban who operate in the north-west of the country.

No evidence of engine fire at Aeroflot-Nord Flight 821 crash site

Investigators have announced that there is no evidence of an engine fire in the wreckage of Aeroflot-Nord Flight 821, which crashed on September 14 in Perm, killing the 88 on board. This contradicts earlier eyewitness statements which say one engine was aflame when the Boeing 737 crashed.

Russia's Interstate Aviation Committee (MAK) says the CFM International CFM56 engines kept operating up until impact. They also confirm the plane did not break up in the air. Instead, the investigation focus has shifted to some unusual movements that Air Traffic Control records indicate were made by the pilot.

As announced earlier this week, the plane began to ascend instead of descend as it was cleared to do

during final approach. After executing a missed approach procedure, the 737-500 then turned in the wrong direction before crashing.

Efforts are continuing to analyse the Cockpit Voice Recorder and Flight Data Recorder, which were heavily damaged by a post-crash fire. It is hoped they will provide an insight as in to what the crew were up to during the flight's final moments.

United Nations requests US\$700 million in aid for East Africa to avoid famine

The United Nations has called for wealthy donor nations to donate US\$700 million (£382 million or €484 million) in emergency aid for Eastern Africa to prevent widespread famine. Since the start of 2008 the number of people living in hunger in the region has almost doubled to seventeen million, according to the UN.

UN emergency relief co-ordinator John Holmes states that food levels are dangerously low in much of Ethiopia, Somalia, Eritrea, Northern Kenya and Uganda. The area, known as the 'Horn of Africa', has seen drought, war and high food prices all worsen the situation. Holmes has warned that the levels of those in need could rise still further.

A total of \$1.4 billion is to be raised for the period from now to the year's end, but at least \$716 million of that remains to be found. "We may need significant funds after that period - this is not the end of the story," warned Holmes.

"We can avoid the situations of the 1980s and the 1990s which were genuine famines at different times. But we do need extra resources,

very quickly indeed if we are going to avoid going back to famine situations," he said. He says Ethiopia and Somalia are in the worst states, with six million Ethiopians requiring emergency support and 43% of Somalia's population in a similar predicament.

He described locals saying that the situation has never been as bad since 1928, when vast amounts of livestock died. They say rain is needed within the next few months if there is to be any grazing and cereal crops are impossible in the near future, it being well into 2009 before anything may be ready to harvest.

The number of hungry people in the world rose by 75 million last year to 925 million. The UN Food and Agriculture Organisation says high food prices are to blame for the crisis.

15 killed, 30 injured attempting to steal fuel from train in India

Fifteen people are dead, and thirty more have become ill after attempting to steal fuel from a freight train travelling through Karbi Anglong, Assam, India. It is thought they broke into a tank containing toxic chemicals.

According to a railway official, the train was in the remote region with 48 wagons of petrol and diesel when raiders intercepted it. The train was in a forested area at the time and was surrounded by armed men, a common occurrence in an area where trains transporting products to and from refineries are regularly targeted.

Witnesses described liquid pumping out of a tank at high pressure. There are no reports as in to what the tank contained, but

the fumes were toxic; when police arrived they found that fifteen had succumbed to the gas, and thirty more were sickened by it. A number of empty oil drums, presumably intended for fuel from the train, were also discovered.

Indonesian parliament approves privatising of three major state firms

The parliament of Indonesia has approved government plans to make an Initial Public Offering (IPO) of shares in three major state-owned firms, privatising them. They are steelmaker Krakatau Steel, Bank Tabungan Negara (BTN) and national flag carrier Garuda Indonesia.

The parliament has left the process fully in the hands of the government, and has set the maximum stake to be sold at 30% for BTN and Krakatau, and 40% for Garuda. Although Indonesia has been known to fund budget deficits with privatisation, the intention is for the funds from this scheme to go to the businesses themselves to allow expansion.

Krakatau expects 3.2 trillion Rupiah (IDR) from the sale, while the estimated price for their stock is between IDR3 and IDR4 trillion (321 - 428 million USD). Both ArcelorMittal SA, the biggest steelmaker in the world, and BlueScope Steel Ltd, the largest in Australia, have expressed an interest in the IPO. Krakatau will use the funds to help finance an expansion scheme which aims to have production doubled to five million tonnes in 2011.

BTN, which focuses on home owner loans, has set itself a target income of IDR36.12 trillion (3.86 billion USD) in 2010 compared to a projected IDR22.9 trillion (2.45 billion USD) this year. Net profit

for this year is projected at IDR472 billion (50.5 million USD) and is hoped to rise to IDR1.39 trillion (148.7 million USD) in 2010. The bank's loan to deposit ratio is predicted to rise from 105.05% this year to 144.93% in 2012. BTN hopes to conduct its IPO before the end of 2008.

Garuda is not quite 100% state-owned to start with, unlike the other two, but is very close with 95.44% of the company belonging to the government. Like all of Indonesia's 51 airlines, Garuda is on the list of air carriers banned in the EU due to safety concerns raised after a string of air accidents in the nation. Garuda expects to raise IDR4.2 trillion (449.4 million USD) in funds from the IPO, and will use IDR2.5 trillion (267.5 million USD) to pay off its debts and invest IDR1.7 trillion (181.9 million USD) in new aircraft.

The government is still working to get a deal to make IPOs for architectural firm Yodya Karya and three plantation firms called Perkebunan Nusantara III, IV and VII.

False cancer cure claims lead to federal charges against five US companies

The United States Federal Trade Commission filed charges against five companies for "deceptive advertising of bogus cancer cures". An additional six companies also named in the federal agency's complaint have settled and their cases will not go into litigation; however, they will be required to send letters to their former customers, and four will be forced to offer reimbursement

The five companies charged are Omega Supply, San Diego,

California; Native Essence Herb Company, El Prado, New Mexico; Daniel Chapter One, Portsmouth, Rhode Island; Gemtronics, Inc., Franklin, North Carolina, and Herbs for Cancer, Surprise, Arizona. According to Lydia Parnes, director of the Federal Trade Commission's Bureau of Consumer Protection, "There is no credible scientific evidence that any of the products marketed by these companies can prevent, cure, or treat cancer of any kind."

Attorney Richard Jaffe who represents the firm Native Essence, one of the companies charged, protested against the FDA's action. "In our view it's a battle between the right to speak and the government's censorship." Native Essence sells herbal supplements and informs customers of herbs that have historic use for cancer and other ailments. Jaffe asserts the claim of historic use is truthful and does not necessarily mean that the herb is effective. Other items marketed by the companies named in the action include laetrile, essiac tea, mushroom extracts, and black salve. FDA representative Douglas Stearn expressed concern that people who have cancer may select these items instead of treatments that have been studied and found effective, or that unstudied herbal treatments could produce drug interactions with conventional medicine.

Before filing legal action the FTC sent over 100 warning letters and many firms dropped or changed the health claims for their products. In conjunction with the announcement the FDA announced a new website <http://www.ftc.gov/> curious that urges cancer patients to discuss all treatments they consider trying with their physicians, warns about the

dangers of delaying or stopping cancer treatments in favour of alternative medicine, and gives advice about spotting and reporting false health claims.

'Buried' video surfaces of police making mass arrests during the Republican National Convention

A video has surfaced which shows police in St. Paul, Minnesota arresting over 200 people at a city park during the first day of the Republican National Convention (RNC) on September 1, 2008. The video first appeared on YouTube which were then picked up and reported on by the political news websites Altnet.org and Blue Linchpin. Glass Bead Collective (GBC), who had interviewed the author of one of the buried video, was preemptively raided before the RNC according to an interview published on Democracynow.org.

The video, which had been buried in the park's ground by the author only known as 'Wes', show hundreds of people, protesters and others who were there to only to attend the Service Employees International Union (SEIU) concert and were not part of the convention at all, talking amongst themselves or passing through. Nearly 400 armed police officers, dressed in full riot gear, then began to surround them. Some officers were on bicycles while others were on horses. Some people began to yell for help while others complained that the officers cut them off from water and the use of restrooms for at least an hour. One video shows police shooting canisters of tear gas and percussion grenades at seemingly peaceful protesters, some who were on bicycles, were running and screaming for help.

According to another video posted

on Altnet.org, among those arrested were people just passing through or were there to use its services. It also states that the National Guard was dispatched to the park. When the narrator of one of the videos asks the police what the police are waiting for, he replies "we are waiting for them [other officers] to let us know when we can let you leave." Several minutes later, police began to arrest everyone they surrounded.

"Ladies and gentlemen, you are [all] under arrest. Please be seated, place your hand on your head and cooperate with us," stated a police officer speaking through a megaphone. In the background one female is heard saying, "Are you serious?"

The Glass Bead Collective tells Wikinews that 'Wes' was charged with "felony rioting" but that after spending three days in jail, "his charges were downgraded to misdemeanors right before he saw the judge". GBC also tells Wikinews that about a week after being released, 'Wes' went back to the park and retrieved his videotape.

It is not known if anyone was injured nor if any individuals remain in jail. Reports say that 800 people were arrested during the convention, with nearly 20% of those being the people inside the park.

Website of Bill O'Reilly, FOX News commentator, hacked in retribution

According to document-leaking website Wikileaks.org hackers bypassed security at BillOreilly.com, the official website of Fox News Channel commentator Bill O'Reilly, exposing personal information of the site's users in a

document posted on the Internet.

The one page document, which Wikileaks confirms to be authentic, shows a list of individuals and passwords of those who have accounts on O'Reilly's website, BillOReilly.com. The list, according to the document, contains at least 205 names, e-mail addresses, billing addresses and passwords of subscribers.

"The hack was a response to the pundit's recent scurrilous attacks over the Sarah Palin's email story--including on Wikileaks and other members of the press," said Wikileaks in a statement on their website. According to the report, the security on O'Reilly's website was "non-existent".

"I'm not going to mention the website that posted this, but it's one of those despicable, slimy, scummy websites. Everybody knows where this stuff is, OK, and they know the people who run the website, so why can't they go there tonight to the guy's house who runs it, put him in cuffs and take him down and book him?," said O'Reilly on his show, The O'Reilly Factor, on September 18.

Wikileaks recently published documents from Palin's hacked Yahoo.com e-mail account. The documents had shown that Palin had been conducting matters pertaining to the public or government of Alaska over her private e-mail account.

In an exclusive statement to Wikinews, Wikileaks stated that they will only publish the single page, but also claim to have several more. Wikileaks also states that they have already received "three letters" from staff members employed by O'Reilly "requesting" Wikileaks remove the document,

which Wikileaks refuses to do.

"We simply cannot [remove the information]. The system, as per policy, is designed so that files can not be taken down, once up," said Wikileaks to Wikinews.

O'Reilly and Fox News have not yet responded to inquiries.

Wikinews interviews Prince Christopher I of the Principality of Vikesland on his micronation's recent

A little over one month ago, a groundbreaking event in the history of micronations, entities that are unrecognized by major world governments but claim independent statehood, took place. The flag of the Principality of Vikesland, a micronation located in Manitoba, was carried into outer space. This is the first time ever that the flag of a micronation has left Planet Earth.

Wikinews was able to have the opportunity to speak with Vikesland's head of state, Prince Christopher I, about this historical achievement. He told reporter WN: exactly how he got his country's flag into space and what the future may hold for Vikesland. The interview can be read below.

Interview

Wikinews (Joseph Ford): The Principality of Vikesland is the first known micronation to have its flag displayed in outer space. How did you go about doing this?

Prince Christopher I: I am an amateur rocket enthusiast and was researching ways we could possibly send a rocket up about 10 miles. While I was doing this research I came across the JP Aerospace website and the rest was history. Why re-invent the wheel when there is a perfectly good existing organization doing

what you want to accomplish. They were very accessible and relatively inexpensive to get involved with. We simply helped sponsor the AWAY 35 mission and for that we had our flag taken to the edge of space.

WN: What was the intermicronational reaction to your country's achievement?
Prince Christopher I: From what I could tell, the response was all very good. Some leaders even suggested it was a leap forward for Micronationalism in general. We were generally congratulated.

WN: Will Vikesland's flag be displayed in outer space again in the near future? Is this a sign of things to come for the Vikeslandic Department of Aeronautics and Space?

Prince Christopher I: Right now, I can say that it is definitely going to be displayed again in some form or another. We are currently thinking up ideas for a pongsat (ping pong ball size satellite) to send on one of the AWAY missions. The next major mission will likely happen in fall of 2009. Ultimately we are moving towards having a manned mission to space in the distant future with one of the civilian rocket companies like Virgin Galactic.

WN: Although it is a bit off topic, how are things in Vikesland? Have any major changes or events taken place since our last interview?

Prince Christopher I: Things are going well in Vikesland right now. An award winning filmmaker out of Toronto has expressed interest in doing a documentary on Vikesland. I am as well working towards a more general documentary on Micronationalism in general.

In late June we conducted our first foreign state visit to the

Micronation of Molossia in Nevada. We also had a large weekend party with some 97 citizens showing up over two days at the Royal Ranchlands. I plan on posting some pictures on our website soon.

Today in History

454 – Roman Emperor Valentinian III killed Aetius in Ravenna.

1745 – The Jacobite Risings: Jacobite troops led by Charles Edward Stuart defeated the Hanoverians in Prestonpans, East Lothian, Scotland.

1792 – French Revolution: The National Convention voted to abolish the monarchy, and proclaimed the First Republic.

1898 – The Hundred Days' Reform in China was abruptly terminated when Empress Dowager Cixi forced the reform-minded Guangxu Emperor into seclusion and took over the government as regent.

1937 – J. R. R. Tolkien's *The Hobbit*, a predecessor to *The Lord of the Rings*, was first published.
1942 – The prototype model of the B-29 Superfortress, a four-engine heavy bomber that became one of the largest aircraft to see service during World War II, flew for the first time.

September 21 is International Day of Peace and Peace One Day; Independence Day in Malta (1964), Belize (1981) and Armenia (1991)

Quote of the Day

I'm guided by a signal in the heavens,
I'm guided by this birthmark on my skin
I'm guided by the beauty of our weapons
First we take Manhattan, then we take Berlin.
~ Leonard Cohen ~

Word of the Day

between a rock and a hard place

adv

1. Having the choice between two unpleasant or distasteful options.

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