



Top Stories

Highway bridge in Minneapolis, Minnesota, collapses

As many as four to nine people have been reported killed and twenty missing, after the bridge over the Mississippi River on highway Interstate 35W collapsed. At least 50 cars and a school bus with children on board were on the bridge when it fell.

Al-Qaeda terror ad warns of 'big surprise'

An advertisement for al-Qaeda, posted on the internet by the As-Sahab propaganda campaign for al-Qaeda, has warned of a "big surprise" by the terrorist group.

Featured story

Russia claims North Pole by planting flag on seabed

A Russian expedition claims to have successfully planted a titanium flag of Russia on the seabed below the North Pole.

Chris Langham found guilty of downloading child pornography

The British actor Chris Langham has been found guilty on 15 counts of downloading child pornography. A jury of four women and seven men took two hours and forty minutes to reach a verdict at Maidstone Crown Court. Judge Philip Statman said that Langham will remain in custody till his sentencing on September 14.

Langham, 58, from Goldford, Kent

claimed that he had been studying porn sites, researching for a character called, "Pedro," for the television series *Help*. However, co-star Paul Whitehouse claimed he had no knowledge of this research. Langham refused to answer questions about certain images found on his computer.

During his time in court, Langham claimed that he was abused at the age of eight during a holiday to Canada. He also said his brothers and sisters were abused, and that he felt no shame at looking at child pornography. Langham said he pleaded not guilty because he did not want to be labelled a, "Paedophile".

Langham however was cleared of charges of indecently assaulting an underage girl. The girl claimed that Langham took her virginity at the age of 14, but Judge Statman said, "The Crown accepts that there is no evidence to support these particular counts on the indictment."

Langham said, in a statement read out by his solicitor, "I am absolutely delighted my name has been cleared of all the charges I have consistently denied. I have been found guilty on charges I have made admission to from the moment of my first arrest. I am grateful to the jury for their careful deliberation and I would also like to thank the press for their restraint in not making the lives of my wife, children and family difficult during this time and I implore them to continue to grant

my family the privacy they need. I am afraid I am unable to comment further until sentence on the 14 September."

Derek Cuff, Deputy Inspector of Kent Police said, "Let us not forget that child abuse images circulating on the internet are real situations involving real children, who are sexually abused for other's gain and self-gratification. Viewing such images simply perpetuates child abuse. The jury had to view some images that had to be selected carefully - but what they saw and heard in evidence is harrowing and disturbing. I think this itself puts some measure of perspective on the level of child abuse we are dealing with."

This will effect the filming of the next series of the satirical sitcom *The Thick of It*, where Langham plays Hugh Abbot MP. The last two special episodes did not star Langham due to his arrest. Writer Armando Iannucci hoped that if Langham was found not guilty, he would be able to appear in his show again.

Wikimania 2007 Site Events warming up for main conference

Counting down to Wikimania 2007, the Site Events such as "Hacking Days & Extra", "One Laptop Per Child Curriculum Jam", and the "Citizen Journalism Unconference" precluded the main conference.

On August 1, Cary Bass and many other programmers participated in the Hacking Days. Mike "b6s" Jiang

hosted this two-day long event where programmers can exchange experiences.

That same day, the One Laptop Per Child Curriculum Jam kicked off. Project Director Samuel "SJ" Klein invited many teams with an interest in freely licensed content to produce learning materials, which youngsters from 6 to 16 years of age could judge.

The Citizen Journalism Unconference was held August 2. It hosted by the Wikimedia Foundation and Public Television Services Taiwan (PTS). The organization invited Frontier Foundation Researcher Shu-fang Tsai and Facilitator of Institute of Culture Affairs Taiwan Gail West to host this unconference. The Unconference was held in an open space style. Topics for discussion were created by participants at the unconference.

In this unconference, participants talked about lots of free content portals comparisons, such as PeoPo by PTS Taiwan, the characteristics and role of citizen journalists, the comparisons between citizen journalism and professional journalism, and the future of citizen journalism.

After these events, the main conference will start at August 3, 2007 9:00 Taipei local time.

Russia claims North Pole by planting flag on seabed

A Russian expedition claims to have successfully planted a titanium flag of Russia on the seabed below the North Pole.

The expedition ship Akademik Fyodorov is carrying over 100 scientists to the North Pole. "Apart from the purely scientific goal of a comprehensive study of the

climate and seabed at the North Pole, this expedition may help Russia to enlarge its territory by more than one million square kilometers," the Russia's Arctic and Antarctic Research Institute said.

"This isn't the 15th century. You can't go around the world and just plant flags and say 'We're claiming this territory'" —Peter MacKay, Foreign Minister of Canada

The mini-submarine Mir-1 was reported by the Vesti-24 television channel to have successfully reached the Arctic seabed. "Our mission is to remind the whole world that Russia is a great polar and research power," said expedition leader and deputy speaker of the Russian parliament Artur Chilingarov, who has been named presidential envoy to the Arctic by Russian President Vladimir Putin.

Submarines have in the past traveled below the Arctic ice cap, but this is the first time man reaches the seabed below the North Pole. The Mir-1 and a second Mir-2 submarine face the challenge of diving 13,980 feet (4,261 metres) deep, and then having to resurface at the exact location where they've submerged, because they are not strong enough to penetrate the ice themselves. The nuclear ice-breaker vessel Rossiya is keeping the ice open for the research ship and the submarines.

Canada, the United States, Norway and Denmark (through Greenland) have an exclusive economic area 200 miles north of their Arctic coastline, established under international laws. Russia is claiming a larger area, extending to the North Pole, saying that a continental shelf called the

Lomonosov Ridge, runs from Siberia on the Arctic seabed to the North Pole. As such, it would be an extension of Russian territory.

"This isn't the 15th century. You can't go around the world and just plant flags and say 'We're claiming this territory'," was the reaction of Canadian Foreign Minister Peter MacKay.

In 2001, Russia made a case with the United Nations to extend its boundaries to the Arctic, but the U.N. requested more scientific data to strengthen the Russian case. The current mission is collecting evidence to submit another request in 2009, under the UN Convention on the Law of the Sea. Canada and Denmark last year sent out a joint mission to establish whether the Lomonosov Ridge is connected to their territories, and Norway is investigating this possibility too. Last May, U.S. senator Richard Lugar (Rep, Indiana) said that it would be difficult to negotiate about Russia's claims as long as the U.S. has not ratified the Convention on the Law of the Sea.

Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov said that any issues about Russia's claims would be resolved "in strict compliance with international law."

The claimed territory could contain undiscovered natural resources such as oil and gas, media sources speculate.

Al-Qaeda terror ad warns of 'big surprise'

An advertisement for al-Qaeda, posted on the internet by the As-Sahab propaganda campaign for al-Qaeda, has warned of a "big surprise" by the terrorist group.

The ad reportedly shows digitally altered images of Pakistan's

President, Pervez Musharraf, and the United States President, George W. Bush, in front of the White House in Washington, D.C., which happens to be on fire in the background and a U.S. presidential motorcade is also in the background. Images of Osama bin Laden and Ayman al Zawahri are also flashed across the advertisement.

The message then says "wait for the big surprise," but does not add anymore information. It ends with a simple "Soon -- God willing."

Whoopi Goldberg to take Rosie O'Donnell's spot on 'The View'

Actress, Oscar, Emmy, Grammy and Tony Award winner, Whoopi Goldberg will be taking Rosie O'Donnell's place as co-host of The View.

It was confirmed by the shows host Barbara Walters on Wednesday's show who said that Goldberg will begin to co-host on September 4, the shows season premiere. Shortly after the announcement, Goldberg made an appearance on the show.

"I love this show! I love coming on it. I love hanging out with you guys," said Goldberg who also said that she does not plan to have a feud with any of the other co-hosts.

"Who knows? Anybody could say 'I don't like her.' That's OK. I just won't come to your home," added Goldberg.

When O'Donnell co-hosted The View, she sparked a feud with Donald Trump after O'Donnell called Trump a "pimp" in her personal blog by saying that Trump "has no right to be the moral compass for 20-year-olds in America."

Goldberg has starred in such films as The Color Purple (1985), Ghost (1990) and Sister Act One and Two (1992 & 1993)

Highway bridge in Minneapolis, Minnesota, collapses

The Interstate 35W Mississippi River eight-lane bridge in Minneapolis, Minnesota has collapsed on both sides of the highway over the Mississippi River during rush hour.

Previous reports indicated at least nine people had died, but Minneapolis police revised this to four during a 7:30 a.m. (local time) press conference. Tim Dolan, the Minneapolis Police Chief later stated that "several [adding to the four] people are confirmed dead at the scene," but would not elaborate on how many. At least 79 have been injured and at least 30 are missing, still believed to be in the rubble.

The road was busy with bumper-to-bumper traffic in four lanes when the entire 1907 foot (581 m) steel arch bridge collapsed. At least 50 cars were traveling on the bridge, including a school bus. The Red Cross said that 60 children were aboard a school bus, and that ten of those were admitted to a hospital.

The entire length of the bridge over the river collapsed at 6:05 p.m. CDT (UTC-5). The bridge, built in 1967, cleared the water level by 64 feet; the deck surface and pavement were considerably higher.

Reports say that people may be trapped in the water. Further, "many voids may contain survivors, but we cannot search those voids until it's safe," said Jim Clack, Minneapolis Fire Chief,

during a press conference.

"One has died from drowning," said a doctor from the medical center during an 8:00 pm press conference, who also said that so far 22 are in "yellow condition" and at least six are in "critical condition."

Minneapolis officials have stated during an earlier press conference that "people are being sent downtown and all survivors are off the bridge. We are seeking help from the Red Cross." and "[...]at least 60 children are receiving trauma care some with severe injures, some with minor injuries."

Most of the injured have been received by Hennepin County Medical Center in downtown Minneapolis for medical treatment. Area hospitals are requesting all off duty staff and all Minneapolis ambulances to report. Residents are being encouraged to stay away from the area to let emergency crews do their work.

It is not known what caused the collapse, but there was construction being performed on the bridge's road surface which included the use of jackhammers and the FBI has ruled out terrorism.

"Although it is much too early to make any determination of the cause, we have no reason at this time to believe there is any nexus to terrorism," said Paul McCabe, an FBI spokesman.

In 2001 a stress inspection was done and Minnesota Department of Transportation stated that the bridge "should not have any problems with fatigue cracking in the foreseeable future."

Typically an eight-lane bridge, the

bridge was reduced to four lanes (two in each direction) during the current construction. The Minnesota Department of Transportation (Mn/DOT) had just announced overnight lane reductions on the bridge to one lane in each direction for the late evening hours of July 31 and August 1.

Mayor's Statement

R. T. Rybak, the Mayor of Minneapolis, has issued a statement, posted on the front page of his website saying, "Our heartfelt grief goes out to the families and loved ones of those who perished in tonight's I-35W bridge collapsed over the Mississippi River. The impact of this tragic disaster is felt by every resident of Minneapolis as we pray for those lost to this terrible accident.

Collapsed I-35W bridge in Mississippi River, August 1, 2007. Two rescue boats are visible through dam arch, with concrete carts near cars on bridge deck. View is from Stone Arch Bridge across lower St. Anthony Falls dam, with 10th Street bridge in background.

"We are deeply grateful to Minneapolis' brave emergency first responders who risked their lives to immediately respond to this disaster and rescue those caught in the collapse. Their dedication and service will not be forgotten.

"I am directing every available City resource to guarantee that our emergency response teams work to ensure that nearby infrastructure, streets and bridges are safe. We will also work with our state and federal partners to complete a full and thorough investigation into the cause off

[sic] this disaster."

U.S. President and Transportation Secretary remarks

United States President George W. Bush said in a press conference at 10:50 a.m. (eastern time), "I understand what it is like to carry the burden of grieving people. We are in prayer for those who suffered. I thank my fellow citizens for helping those who are suffering. We in the federal government must respond and respond robustly to help the people there not only recover but to make sure that lifeline of activity, that bridge, gets rebuilt as quickly as possible."

Mary E. Peters, the Secretary of Transportation, arrived in the Minneapolis area to survey the damage caused by the collapse.

"We will take every step possible to make sure something like this will never happen again," said Peters who also stated that at least US\$5 million is set aside to clean up the wreckage and to help with rebuilding the flow of traffic in the area. Peters later signed off on an advisory to the Federal Highway Administration. It urges state transportation departments to do inspections on bridges, similar to the one which just collapsed in Minneapolis.

Detour Routes Announced

The Minnesota Department of Transportation is urging commuters to follow signed detours around the collapsed bridge. The official detour will be to use Minnesota Highway 280 and Interstate 94 to bypass the damaged section of Interstate 35W. Highway 280 will be temporarily converted to freeway operation by closing the

intersection at Broadway Ave. and County Road B and green lighting all highway 280 traffic through that intersection. Interstate 35W will be closed between the Mississippi River and Stinson/New Brighton Blvd. The northbound lanes of 35W north of Interstate 94 will also be closed.

Bus service altered

Metro Transit announced that extra buses will be added north of Minneapolis due to the altered traffic situation. Additional buses will run from 6 am to 9 am at the following park-and-ride locations: Foley Boulevard in Coon Rapids (between Coon Rapids Blvd. and East River Rd. near Hwy. 610), served by Routes 850 and 852. Maplewood Mall (near Beam and Southlawn avenues), served by Route 270 Northtown Shopping Center in Blaine (at 85th and Jefferson), served by Routes 824, 852 and 854 63rd Avenue/County Road 81 (Bottineau Blvd.) in Brooklyn Center, served by Routes 758 and 767 Rosedale Shopping Center in Roseville, served by Route 260 Roseville City Hall (County Rd. C and Civic Center Dr.)/Grace Lutheran Church (Hamline Ave. at County Rd. B2), served by Route 261.

Minnesota Twins

A baseball game between the Minnesota Twins and the Kansas City Royals was minutes from starting when the nearby bridge collapsed. Because most of the fans were already at the stadium, it was decided to play the game because releasing thousands of cars would greatly interfere with the numerous rescue vehicles at work in the area. There was a

moment of prayer held before the Wednesday game and fans were encouraged to stay off their cell phones. Most of the rescue work had been completed before the game ended. Thursday's Twins-Royals game, as well as the ceremonial ground-breaking for their new ball park, have been postponed due to the collapse. Minneapolis officials earlier stated the "Metrodome is safe."

Today in History

435 – Nestorius, the originator of Nestorianism, was exiled by Byzantine Emperor Theodosius II to a monastery in Egypt.

1916 – Irish nationalist Sir Roger Casement was hanged at London's Pentonville Prison for treason for his role in the Easter Rising, a rebellion to win Irish independence from Britain.

1923 – Calvin Coolidge was inaugurated as the 30th President of the United States, succeeding Warren G. Harding who suffered a fatal heart attack one day earlier.

1940 – World War II: Italian troops led by General Guglielmo Nasi invaded British Somaliland, beginning the East African Campaign.

1948 – Before the House Un-American Activities Committee of the United States House of Representatives, former spy turned government informer Whittaker Chambers accused U.S. State Department official Alger Hiss of being a communist and a Soviet spy.

1958 – The nuclear-powered submarine USS Nautilus made the world's first submerged voyage across the North Pole.

2005 – President Maaouya Ould Sid'Ahmed Taya of Mauritania was overthrown in a military coup while he was attending the funeral of King Fahd in Saudi Arabia.

August 03 is Independence Day in Niger (1960); Flag Day in

Venezuela.

Quote of the Day

There is a plan, it seems to me, that reaches out of the electron to the rim of the universe and what this plan may be or how it came about is beyond my feeble intellect. But if we are looking for something on which to pin our faith — and, indeed, our hope — the plan might well be it. I think we have thought too small and have been too afraid. ~ Clifford D. Simak

Word of the Day

take by storm; *v*
(military) To capture by force.

1. To rapidly gain popularity in a place.

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