

Top Stories

Hurricane Katrina causes upwards of \$12bn of damage; oil prices surge



New Orleans was spared the most intense winds as the hurricane weakened by landfall as a Category 3 storm. An estimated 1 million barrels of

daily oil production was halted by Katrina, while residents unable to leave sought shelter in the Superdome.

First suicide attack since Israel pullout occurs in Beersheba



Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas condemned the bombing that critically wounded two security guards at the Beersheba bus

station and hurt another 46 people.

Featured story

Swedish Wikipedia reaches 100,000 articles



The Swedish language edition of the multilingual Wikipedia project passed 100,000 articles this evening at 18:11

CEST. Swedish is the fifth language to reach the milestone, joining English, French, German, and Japanese.

Wikipedia Current Events

- Hurricane Katrina makes landfall at 6:10 a.m. CDT (11:10 a.m. UTC). The eye is just east of New Orleans, Louisiana.
- New South Wales Opposition Leader, John Brogden, resigns from the leadership of the NSW Liberal Party after describing Helena Carr, wife of former Premier Bob Carr, as a "mail-order bride" and sexually harassing two female journalists. Brogden will remain Member for Pittwater until at least the next state election.
- The Nigerian Vice President's home in Maryland, USA was raided by the FBI. Atiku Abubakar's relations with President Olusegun Obasanjo have cooled and it is possible he might use the pretext of the FBI corruption investigation to dismiss him.
- Countries of the European Union attempt to work out a deal to end the "bra wars", the Chinese textile import row.

Little Caesar's Pizza to open eight stores in Ireland

US pizza chain giant Little Caesars is to open 8 stores in Ireland and has plans to increase that to 45 over the next few years. The company has signed a ten year deal with Doughmaster to support Little Caesars franchisees in Ireland.

Dublin based Doughmaster will open the first eight stores and operate them as its own over the

next 18 months. Afterwards it will pursue franchisees.

Little Caesars was founded in Michigan in 1959. The firm has franchised over 3,000 restaurants in the USA and has revenues of over \$1bn.

Little Caesars adds to a highly expansive Irish pizza market - existing players include Apache, Domino's, Godfathers, Fourstarpizza and Pizza Hut. The four largest pizza operators (those mentioned excluding Pizza Hut) now have over 90 outlets in Ireland in total. Apache remains the largest company in store count with 29 outlets.

Hurricane Katrina causes upwards of \$12bn of damage; oil prices surge

Hurricane Katrina is now over the U.S. mainland and has caused more than US\$12 billion of damage. Some estimates are as high as \$30 billion.



Superdome - those unable to evacuated lined up before Katrina's arrival for shelter in the sports arena.

New Orleans was spared the most intense winds as the hurricane weakened as it made landfall, and its track turned slightly east, away

from the city. However, the area was still subjected to sustained winds of more than 100mph, and rainfall as heavy as six inches per hour.

Futures prices of crude oil rose above \$70/barrel in the U.S. on Monday in the wake of Katrina's surge through oil and refinery processing facilities in the Gulf of Mexico. The storm forced operators to shutdown an estimated 1 million barrels of daily refining capacity in the region that accounts for nearly a quarter of total domestic production.

A U.S. spokesman for the Bush administration said the government will consider releasing crude oil from the Strategic Petroleum Reserve if requested by refiners. OPEC has pledged to blunt the impact by increasing production to compensate.

White House spokesman Scott McClellan told reporters that Michael Brown, the director of the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA), briefed Mr. Bush before he left his Texas ranch for Arizona where he will deliver a speech on Medicare. Brown said it would take time before an assessment of when refineries could resume activity would be possible.

President Bush authorized loans from the strategic reserve to help make up for missing supplies when Hurricane Ivan struck in 2004.

Wreck of August 6 airliner crash recovered from sea off Italy

The wreck of the plane ATR72 that fell into the sea near Sicily, Italy on August 6 has been recovered. One of the two black boxes that

contained the communication recording, and the complete set of instruments and commands in the cockpit, was recovered.

One of the three people who were still missing from the accident was found, while there is yet no sign of the other two persons. The identity of the recovered corpse is not yet known (and the identification is expected to be difficult).

A survey published today by the Italian association Intesaconsumatori (Union of Consumers) said that 61% of Italians are afraid to fly, while 41% of population feels less safe about plane safety than they did one month earlier. According to the survey, 20% would be ready to get off the plane, or refuse to get in the plane, if they found that the airline is different from the one they were told when they bought the ticket.

Bush attendance at Australia CEO conference a hoax

News agency AAP reported last Thursday that George H. W. Bush would be attending the Forbes Global CEO Conference, which starts this Tuesday. These reports have now been revealed to be a hoax. They were based on a media release and associated website, and reported in Wikinews, as well as a number of print publications in Australia. The president and publisher of Forbes Asia, William Adamopoulos, has confirmed that Mr Bush will not be attending.

"Mr Bush snr is definitely not attending the conference," he said.

Mr Adamopoulos said that he is considering pursuing legal action against the originators of the

hoax. According to reports, the media release and website used the Forbes name.

"While we would not wish to oppose free speech in any way - for free speech is one of the things that unites both Australia and the United States - we are investigating what legal action could be open to us," he said.

Two Australian broadsheets fell for the hoax put out by the :30A protest network. The network sent out a press release purporting to be from the organisers of the Annual Forbes Conference, claiming that former US President George H. W. Bush was to attend the conference. Bruce Knobloch of the 30A network indicated that the purpose of the hoax was to show how shallow the media coverage of the conference and the protest is.

The hoax was originally reported by AAP, who checked the claim with a provided number on the press release before publishing it. The hoax was then picked up by several internet news sites, including this one. AAP quickly published a retraction, however that didn't stop the hoax making its way into the paper versions of two of Australia's most respected broadsheets, The Sydney Morning Herald, and The Australian.

The Forbes conference will take place at the Sydney Opera House, and will be attended by hundreds of CEO's from around the world, as well as Australian Prime Minister John Howard, former New York Mayor Rudolph Giuliani, and Steve Forbes himself.

There is a protest planned to coincide with the conference. Protest organisers have called for people to assemble at Customs Square at

Circular Quay at 5pm on Tuesday 30 August. The protest was originally planned for the Opera House forecourt, however police have declared this area to be an exclusion zone.

NSW, Australia Police Commissioner: Activist groups 'trained to disrupt and undermine'

New South Wales Acting Police Commissioner, Terry Collins, today accused activist groups of training their members to cause disruptions during protests. He was speaking in reference to the protests planned to coincide this week with the Forbes Global CEO Conference at the Sydney Opera House.

"Activist groups by their very nature are actually trained to go about to disrupt and certainly undermine any attempts by police or any other security forces to actually deal with protest groups," Mr Collins said.

"I make no apology for the fact that, if people are breaking the law and are disrupting the conference, we will deal with it and we will arrest people," he added.

A spokesman for the 30A Network, Bruce Knobloch, has labelled the claims as ridiculous.

"The assistant commissioner has been very pig headed," he said.

"The only training I know about is something called non-violent direct action. This is exactly what it says: non-violent," he added.

Mr Knobloch says that the 30A network has not attempted to hide its plans, and has made every attempt to work with the police.

"The 30A network has no secrets, we have been very open about our intentions: to have a carnival protest. It's amazing the degree of paranoia going on at the heads of the NSW Police Force. We are a bunch of community activists and concerned citizens who have a right to protest against the war profiteers and free-market freaks," he said.

The comment by the Acting Police Commissioner seem to be in contrast to previous statements from the 30A Network, who said in a press release last week that they are hoping for a peaceful, fun protest.

"We want a safe community action showing that people in Sydney oppose Howard's plan for a US-style wages system, the war in Iraq and his kow-towing to global corporate chiefs. We pose no threat to the Opera House or the millionaire delegates, or to other users of east Circular Quay," the press release said.

The Herald Sun, a Melbourne newspaper, is reporting that "Radical protesters from Melbourne will send their most 'hard-core' activists to Sydney to protest outside a meeting of the world's top business leaders." The paper is reporting that "leftists" are unable to guarantee that they will obey police exclusion zones.

Socialist Party national organiser Anthony Main said that protestors would not provoke violence, however he suggested that the police may act violently.

"Given the new era of global terrorism and so forth, we wouldn't be surprised if they (police) flexed their muscles," he said.

The 30A Network is a loose

association of peace and global justice groups and trade unions. The protest hopes to draw attention to a wide variety of issues, including war, corporate greed, and neo-liberalism.

"The protest is against free-market madness. The conference attendees are people who believe that the free-market can solve all of our problems, e.g privatisation, including things such as water. One of the conference attendees works for a private water company," Mr Knobloch said.

Sydney, Australia protesters reach agreement with police

Organisers of the 30A Protest, planned to coincide with this weeks Forbes Global CEO Conference, have reached an agreement with police about how the protest should proceed. The 30A Network has received permission to use the Customs Square area of Circular Quay.

"After weeks of discussion and stalling, police have now given assurances that, while the Opera House forecourt will remain an exclusion zone between the CEOs and the real world, the 30A carnival protest will be facilitated at Customs Square," said the 30A Network website.

The plans for the mass gathering were thrown into turmoil over the last few weeks when police refused permission for the protest to occur near the Opera House, and declared the entire Opera House forecourt to be off-limits for the duration of the conference.

The protest organisers have said that they are hoping for a "carnival atmosphere", and look forward to working peacefully with the police.



Sydney Opera House and Harbour Bridge

"Assurances have been given that truck, stage, music and speeches - not to mention drumming, dancing and protest - will not be prevented from going ahead as planned in the square directly outside Customs House at Circular Quay," the website said.

"We want a safe community action showing that people in Sydney oppose Howard's plan for a US-style wages system, the war in Iraq and his kow-towing to global corporate chiefs. We pose no threat to the Opera House or the millionaire delegates, or to other users of east Circular Quay," said 30A spokesman Bruce Knobloch.

The conference will take place at the Sydney Opera House, and will be attended by hundreds of CEO's from around the world, as well as Australian Prime Minister John Howard, former New York Mayor Rudolph Giuliani, and Steve Forbes himself.

Protest organisers have called for people to assemble at Customs Square at Circular Quay at 5pm on Tuesday 30 August.

First fifty-star United States flag up for sale



The designer of the current 50-star United States flag, Robert G. Heft, has put his original creation up for sale on the popular auction website eBay.

Heft originally made the flag for a school project in 1958, in which he received a "B minus" as his grade. When he submitted the design in 1959, he beat out over 100,000 other applicants. His design was adopted as the new flag in 1960, and his grade was promptly changed to an "A".

The flag has been flown over all state capitol buildings, and over 80 United States embassies. 63 year old Heft states that medical bills, as well as tuition costs for his relatives, are becoming an economical burden.

The opening bid on the flag starts at \$250,000 US dollars, and the auction lasts until Monday.

Heft has also designed a 51-star US flag, which is currently in possession of Representative Clarence Miller, a republican from Ohio.

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Today in History

1800: Gabriel Prosser attempted a slave rebellion in Virginia, United States.

1813: Napoleonic Wars: An Austrian-Prussian-Russian alliance defeated the French forces in the Battle of Kulm.

1863: American Civil War: James Longstreet and Stonewall Jackson led their Confederate troops to a decisive victory in the Second Battle of Bull Run.

1992: Michael Schumacher won his first Formula One race at the Belgian Grand Prix.

1999: The people of East Timor voted for independence from Indonesia in a referendum.

August 30 is St. Rose of Lima's Day in Peru; Victory Day in Turkey.

Quote of the Day

"No one can conceive the variety of feelings which bore me onwards, like a hurricane, in the first enthusiasm of success. Life and death appeared to me ideal bounds, which I should first break through, and pour a torrent of light into our dark world." ~ Mary Shelley

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