Top Stories

Israeli troops remove protesters from Gaza synagogues

Israeli soldiers are in the process of removing Jewish protesters from synagogues in Neve Dekalim and Kfar Darom in the Gaza Strip as part of an operation to force the evacuation of settlements.

Canadian gasoline tops C$1/litre, politicians consider options

The average retail price of gasoline in Canada surpassed the psychological barrier of $1 per litre during the past week, according to a Calgary firm

Featured story

Virginians melee at used Apple iBook sale

Officials estimate nearly 5,000 people thronged a sale for $50, four-year-old used Apple iBook laptop computers in Virginia. Among them were 17 injured, four requiring hospitalization - one for a leg injury and four for heat-related illness

Wikipedia Current Events

• Al Qaeda's leader in Saudi Arabia, Saleh Mohammed al-Aoofi, is killed in a shootout with police.

•Dennis Rader, also known as the BTK Killer, is sentenced 10 consecutive life sentences for 10 murders between 1974 and 1991.

•NASA has decided to push the next shuttle mission STS-121 to March 2006 and reassign it to the Space Shuttle Discovery.

Wikipedia Current Events

•Pope Benedict XVI made his first foreign trip to his homeland Germany, attending the World Youth Day 2005. He was welcomed with amazing cheers and made several speeches to leaders of Germany and to pilgrims at the Rhine banks at a ship as well as in front of the Cologne cathedrale.

•Conflict in Iraq: 4 US Troops die following an IED explosion in Samarra, north of Baghdad, Iraq.

•Israeli troops drag Zionist Jews opposed to Ariel Sharon's unilateral disengagement plan one by one from their strongholds in the synagogues in the Jewish Settlements on the Gaza Strip.

"Able Danger" Detected 9/11 Terrorists Year Earlier

A year before the 9/11 attacks, through data mining an Army intelligence group had identified two terrorist cells, including Mohammed Atta and three other 9/11 hijackers. Lieutenant Colonel Anthony Shaffer, a liason officer of a unit called Able Danger, has spoken on the topic. By analysis of non-military data, several of the terrorists with direct links to top Al-Qaeda leadership were identified.

Able Danger also used publicly available information from government immigration agencies.
SHAFFER: "...Land Information Warfare Activity, LIWA, at Fort Belvoir, Virginia, an Army unit ... this targeting exercise of al Qaeda. What the LIWA did -- and it was their ability to go through massive amounts of open-source data, 2.5 terabytes, and look for patterns that related to previously-known terrorists. It was that information then which popped up...
S. O'BRIEN: So, by trolling the Internet and LexisNexis, things like that, I think that's what you mean by open source data? Am I right about that?
SHAFFER: Open source -- anything that's not a classified database. We're talking about commercial databases, financial databases. Anything that's out there that relates to the real world."

On the Sean Hannity Show Wednesday, Shaffer said there were direct links to top Al-Qaeda leaders. He is scheduled to return to the show Thursday.

Madrid bombing suspect arrested in Belgrade

Abdelmajid Bouchar, a March 2004 Madrid terrorist attack suspect, was arrested in Belgrade, Serbia and Montenegro, the Ministry for Internal Affairs said yesterday.

He was arrested on June 23rd after he allegedly presented forged Iraqi identity documentation with a name "Midhat Salah" during a routine check by Serbian police. He is currently held in a prison in Padinska skela, near Belgrade.

Spanish interior minister, Jose Antonio Alonso, said Spain will seek extradiction. The man is accused of presenting false documents and immigration violations and is currently being held in Serbia.

Interpol office in Madrid confirmed identity based on the fingerprints.

Israeli troops remove protesters from Gaza synagogues

Israeli soldiers are in the process of removing Jewish protesters from synagogues in Neve Dekalim and Kfar Darom in the Gaza Strip as part of an operation to force the evacuation of settlements.

The settlement of Neve Dekalim was founded in 1983 and was home to 500 Orthodox Jewish families. It also was occupied earlier before back in the 1940s, settled by a couple Jewish families who were able to hold off the Eygptian army.

Around 1,500 protesters inside the synagogue refused to leave despite warnings

from the soldiers. Many protesters have been retaliating to the soldiers' commands, and have even started shoving and punching a few guards. The protesters have linked their arms in a chain to attempt to prevent themselves being removed. The protesters are mostly not Gaza settlers, but are extremist youths from the West Bank and Israel.

After several hours of unsuccessful negotiations unarmed security forces entered the complex to begin removing people to buses waiting outside. Those who did not go as instructed were usually escorted by two or three guards each to the buses. Meanwhile, all male protesters have been removed from the building while the female protesters are still inside the synagogue.

In another Gaza town, Kfar Darom, protesters are also making their last stand in a synagogue, and thousands of troops have surrounded the buildings. There, soldiers entered the synagogue as well and are dragging protesters out of the building. They were, however, hampered by protesters on the roof, who, among other things, threw acid at the soldiers. Consequently, the rooftop was taken by security forces as well. Seventy seven people have been injured, two moderately on the roof of the synagogue. Police say that 120 demonstrators were arrested.

The evacuations are extremly stressful for protesters and soldiers alike. Having to evict fellow Jews is "traumatic" for the soldiers said IDF Capt. Yael Harman. He added in connections to the synagogues evacuations: "Many of our soldiers are religious, and it's very difficult for them to conceive of the idea of going into a religious building and trying to pull those people out [...] but this is what we must do."

Virginians melee at used Apple iBook sale

"Total chaos" is how many described the melee that resulted from a sale of used Apple iBook laptop computers at the Richmond International Raceway (RIR) by the Henrico County, Virginia school system.

Officials estimated nearly 5,000 people thronged the sale for the $50, four-year-old computers. Among them were 17 injured, four requiring hospitalization - one for a leg injury, and four for heat-related illness, said Henrico County Police. Reports of trampling in the stampede were not uncommon, and one driver reportedly tried to drive through the throng of prospective buyers.

Alice Jemerson, an elderly customer said, "They bum rushed the gates and I was knocked over, fighting for my life. All these people were on top of me."

Shortly after 7am EST officials opened the gates and many residents ran hysterically toward the building where the sale was to occur at 9am.

At a post sale press conference, Henrico County Police spokesman Lieutenant Doug Perry told reporters, "A few bad apples found their way inside. It looked worse than it was."

Apple iBooks are the preferred computer for Henrico County schools, and Director of General Services of Henrico County Paul Proto, said changes were made to the event after tremendous interest was generated, some as far away as Europe and California. Officials closed and moved the sale from the Henrico county school warehouse to the RIR, after residents complained that their tax dollars were used to buy the computers, and they ought to have first right to repurchase them. The Henrico County Board of Supervisors voted to amend the County Code so that only residents could purchase the laptop computers.

Although officials had prohibited camping out and overnight parking, some in attendance reported that people began arriving at midnight.

Henrico Police Chief H.W. Stanley, Jr. said five patrol officers were originally planned for the event, a customary presence for an event the size authorities had estimated. But by 6 am, an enormous crowd was assembled at the front gate.

Officials present before opening told the crowd that automobiles would be allowed to enter first, which prompted many to run their cars. But while some were running back to their cars, others rushed the gate. The resulting confusion created much

anger, and guards closed the gates shortly thereafter.

Long lines encircling the sale building were commonplace, and one observer noted, "They're going to see themselves on the news tonight, and see what fools they are."

Some citizens, however, considered their wait worthwhile. Hairstylist and mother of two Sheress Blunt was one of the first hundred to buy one of the iBooks; she came with her mother and said they sneaked into the raceway through a side gate.

Tonya Vaughan arrived at 5:30 a.m., also bought one of the first iBooks and said three people offered to buy it from her for as much as $200. She declined however, saying, "I told them no way! I had worked too hard for it."

Lt. Perry said many officers were complimented on the way they handled the crowd, adding that police were seen letting children who had been pushed aside, into the building.

Mr. Proto said, "There are no plans right now to have another iBook sale."

Henrico County Battalion Police Chief Steve Wood said no arrests were made and the iBooks were sold out by 1pm EST.

Microsoft announces prices for new Xbox 360

Microsoft has revealed prices for the Xbox 360, its new games console which goes on sale later this year. Details were made public by Chris Lewis, the Regional Vice President of Xbox across Europe, the Middle East and Africa, in an interview with the console's official website, Xbox.com.

According to Lewis, the Xbox 360 will ship in two seperate bundles — the full system, and the Core System. The full system is the premium edition; it comes with the components and accessories — including a detachable 20-gigabyte hard drive and wireless controller — that Microsoft believes necessary for experiencing 'the ultimate digital entertainment thrill ride'. It will retail at $399.99 in the US, €399.99 in Europe and £279.99 in the UK. The Core System is essentially a stripped-down

version, offering the full power of the Xbox 360 without the add-on features. This edition will retail at $299.99 in the US, €299.99 in Europe and £209.99 in the UK.

Rumours have been circulating about the price tag since the Xbox 360 was unveiled to a blaze of publicity at this year's E3. Yesterday's announcement confirmed early speculation by analysts at major investment bank UBS that Microsoft would sell its new console at a loss. The stand-alone Xbox 360 contains $375 worth of hardware. With the console set to retail at $299.99 (or $399.99 with $100 worth of add-ons) Microsoft stands to make a $76 loss on each unit sold. It is expected that 933,000 to 1.2 million units will be sold in 2005, which means that the Xbox 360 could cost its publisher up to $91.2 million for this year alone. Microsoft plans to make up the lost income with sales of its eagerly awaited launch titles.

Iraqi gasoline is the cheapest in the world at $.05 per gallon

A new report indicates that while Iraq's economy remains in shambles and the prospect of future growth still dim, Iraqi citizens do enjoy some of the least expensive gas prices in the world.

The International Monetary Fund says Iraqi drivers currently pay an average of 5 cents a gallon for gasoline. This contrasts to averages of $2.55 in America, $6.24 in Great Britain. Even neighboring Iran pays more at the pump than Iraq; 38 cents a gallon.

The low cost is due in large part to generous pre-war government subsidies on petroleum products that remain in place today.

In its report, the IMF warned the subsidies are a threat to economic growth in the country. The country still suffers near daily insurgent attacks, high unemployement, inflation, and frequent electrical, water and sewage service disruptions.

Meanwhile, Iraqi oil output continues to recover. Prior to Operation Iraqi Freedom, Iraq's daily output of crude was 2.5 million barrels a day. This week, oil production is 1.6 million barrels per day. Iraq's oil reserves are estimated at nearly 115 billion barrels, the third largest in the world.

Baghdad morgue received over 1,000 bodies in July

The bodies of over 1,000 civilians were brought to Baghdad's morgue last month, the highest recorded death toll for Iraq's capital since the invasion began in March 2003.

Amid preparations for the new Iraqi constitution, the Interim Government has tried to suppress details of the growing number of civilian casualties, but the truth emerged after British veteran journalist *Robert Fisk paid a visit to the morgue and was shown the human cost of Iraq's security crisis:*
So many corpses are being brought to the mortuary that human remains are stacked on top of each other. Unidentified bodies must be buried within days for lack of space — but the municipality is so overwhelmed by the number of killings that it can no longer provide the vehicles and personnel to take the remains to cemeteries.

'The July figures are the largest ever recorded in the history of the Baghdad Medical Institute,' one of the senior managers at the morgue said, speaking on condition of anonimity.

An estimated 1,100 bodies were received by the Baghdad mortuary in July, a rise of 85% compared with figures for the same month before the US-led invasion. The latest figures show a rising trend: in 2004 and 2003 the numbers in July were 800 and 700 respectively. By comparison, equivalent figures for 1997, 1998 and 1999 were all below 200.

All of last month's dead are civilians, the majority male and most aged between 15-44. Fisk, writing in The Independent, described how the task of identifying all of the bodies has been complicated because many have been tortured or otherwise disfigured. 'In many cases, the remains have been shattered by explosions — possibly by suicide bombs — or by deliberate disfigurement by their killers,' he wrote.

The medical authorities have buried 500 nameless bodies since January.

No 'mates' in Australia's Parliament House

Security guards at Parliament House in

Canberra have been advised by internal memo not to use the word 'mate' when communicating with the public.

The Speaker of the house has been asked to look into the directive after it was rumoured that a member of Parliament or a senior public servant complained about use of the common Australian term.

The Secretary for the Department of Parliamentary Services said on ABC TV: "There was a feeling that they perhaps just needed a reminder that some informality, while it may be appropriate for some people, it may not suit all our visitors."

Australian Labor Party MP Tanya Plibersek said the ban was un-australian "I can't tell you how offended I am by this," while reaction from the Liberals and Nationals was mixed.

"I think that people should get off their high horse and take a reality check," Said Liberal backbencher Bob Baldwin, who believes the word should be treated as a badge of honour. "I have never seen anything so criminal in all my life. It's part of the Australian vernacular. It's a term of endearment and of mateship."

Nationals MP Paul Neville said "If they want to call me mate or buddy or something like that, I'm not the least bit offended."

Pope visits World Youth Day in Cologne

World Youth Day in Cologne

Pope Benedict XVI has arrived in Cologne, Germany for World Youth Day 2005. It is the new Pope's first foreign trip. His plane landed at 12 am (UTC+2) at Cologne/Bonn Airport.

He was greeted by German president Horst Köhler, chancellor Gerhard Schröder and a cheering crowd. Later, the Pope boarded a cruise ship and sailed downstream the

Rhine, with hundreds of thousands of people cheering at the riverbanks. He addressed the crowd from the ship and said he feels great to see so many young people from countless countries and hopes they can "have a moving experience of prayer as dialogue with God".

Benedict XVI

The four-day event began on Tuesday and will conclude with a big open-air mass on Sunday. Up to 1 milion people are expected there.

While in Cologne, Benedict XVI will visit a synagogue and meet representatives from various religious groups, including members of the Muslim community.

Chandra X-Ray Observatory illuminates Supernova 1987A

Chandra and Hubble images of SN 1987A

Recent images from the Chandra X-Ray Observatory reveal details of the nature of the star that became Supernova 1987A. In the time just before the star exploded, solar winds created a cavity in a cloud of cool gas that surrounded it. The explosion first lit up the cooler gas with a burst of ultraviolet light, then created a shock wave that started travelling through this cavity.

"In 1999, Chandra imaged this shock wave, and astronomers have waited expectantly for the shock wave to hit the edge of the cavity, where it would encounter the much denser gas deposited by the red supergiant wind, and produce a dramatic increase in X-radiation. The latest data from Chandra and the Hubble Space Telescope indicate that this much-anticipated event has begun." an

article on the Harvard-Smithsonian Center for Astrophysics' Chandra website states.

These events confirm scientists' understanding of stars. As the shock wave continues it will travel through less understood material, hopefully allowing scientists to further their research into the birth and death of stars, and the overall behaviour of the universe.

Multiple computer worms released as "botwar" rages

Security experts are calling it a "botwar". Multiple computer worms, with payloads that turn infected computers into sources of spam, viruses and security attacks, are being released by at least two separate groups. Now newer versions of one group's worm include the ability to disable earlier versions of the other group's infection. "The W32/Zotob-F worms (also known as Bozori) attempts to remove infections by earlier versions of the Zotob worm and other malware, so it can take control of the compromised computer for itself", a Sophos news item stated. F-secure's Weblog confirmed this and added "It seems there are two groups that are fighting: IRCBot and Bozori vs Zotobs and the other Bots."

Gregg Keizer of TechWeb News draws parallels between the current events and a prior example of criminal activity; "The most notable back-and-forth between [virus and worm writers] was in early 2004, when the writers of the Bagle and Netsky worm families engaged in a long-running tit-for-tat exchange where each tried to delete the other's code. The battle led to a veritable flood of malicious code that [lasted] weeks." While some see a repeat of those events, other experts indicate that the current situation is "business as normal" for the criminals that create these "bot networks".

A statement from Kaspersky Labs stated that confusion over the naming of the worms has combined with overzealous reporting by infected news organisations to create confusion as to the magnitude of the attack. At this stage they are not calling it an epidemic.

All of these worms currently exploit the MS05-039 Plug and Play vulnerability, for

which a patch has already been released.

Wikinews Back Page

Map 1 (World, 05:02 UTC, 19 August 2005, °C)

Barrow 3, Eureka 2, Anchorage 18, Churchill 8, Reykjavik 10, Murmansk 6, Tiksi 15, Yakutsk 17, Seattle 20, Oslo 14, Moscow 10, Berlin 13, New York 21, Rome 20, Almaty 17, Beijing 27, Tokyo 32, Los Angeles 18, New Orleans 27, Casablanca 23, Tehran 25, New Delhi 33, Hong Kong 27, Honolulu 29, Mexico City 19, Riyadh 32, Khartoum 36, Bangkok 32, Yap Island 31, Panama City 27, Paramaribo 26, Dakar 27, Lagos 30, Colombo 28, Pago Pago 29, Recife 26, Kinshasa 23, Jakarta 25, Darwin 31, Lima 18, Rio de Janeiro 23, Lusaka 12, Alice Springs 20, Perth 15, Sydney 23, Buenos Aires 8, Cape Town 8, Wellington 13, South Georgia -4, Williams Field -9

Temperature scale: -29 -17 0 10 22 32 38 43 48 °C

05:02 UTC
19 August 2005

Map 2 (Europe, 05:02 UTC, 19 August 2005, °C)

Temperature scale: -29 -17 0 10 22 32 38 43 48 °C
05:02 UTC
19 August 2005

Oslo 14, Stockholm 13, Helsinki 12, Aberdeen 12, Riga 13, Copenhagen 13, Minsk 8, Dublin 11, Amsterdam 18, London 18, Berlin 13, Warsaw 14, Kiev 17, Prague 12, Krakow 16, Paris 30, Vienna 16, Chisinau 18, Bern 16, Milan 18, Zagreb 14, Bordeaux 17, Bucharest 17, Barcelona 21, Rome 20, Tirana 27, Istanbul 22, Madrid 31, Ankara 19, Lisbon 21, Athens 15, Tunis 26

Map 3 (North America, 05:02 UTC, August 19, 2005, °F)

Prince Rupert 66, Edmonton 50, Regina 50, Moosonee 53, Seattle 68, Helena 57, Fargo 69, Thunder Bay 64, Quebec 53, Ottawa 59, Boise 73, Chicago 78, New York 69, Denver 66, St. Louis 82, Washington DC 78, San Francisco 59, Las Vegas 91, Nashville 80, Los Angeles 64, Atlanta 75, Dallas 86, New Orleans 80, Chihuahua 80, Monterrey 86, Miami 84

Temperature scale: -20 0 32 50 72 90 100 110 120 °F
05:02 UTC
August 19, 2005

Map 4 (Australia/Oceania, 05:02 UTC, 19 August 2005)

Ambon, Madang 31, Jakarta 25, Denpasar 29, Moresby 28, Darwin 31, Port-Vila 18, Port Hedland 23, Townsville 24, Mount Isa 29, Alice Springs 20, Brisbane 21, Kingston 17, Perth 15, Adelaide 12, Sydney 23, Canberra 15, Auckland 16, Melbourne 13, Wellington 13, Hobart 13

Temperature scale: -29 -17 0 10 22 32 38 43 48 °C
05:02 UTC
19 August 2005

Today in History

1848 - California Gold Rush: The New York Herald reported news to the East Coast of the United States that a gold rush was on in California.

1942 - World War II: Allied forces raided Dieppe, France in the Dieppe Raid.

1953 - Operation Ajax: The government of Mohammed Mossadegh in Iran was overthrown.

1960 - Russian space dogs Belka ("Squirrel") and Strelka ("Little Arrow") began to orbit the Earth aboard the Korabl-Sputnik-2 spacecraft.

1991 - Mikhail Gorbachev was announced as "ill and had been relieved of his state post as President" in a failed Soviet coup attempt.

August 19 is Ghost Festival in the Chinese calendar (2005)

Quote of the Day
"Truth has such a face and such a mien as to be lov'd needs only to be seen." ~ John Dryden

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