



FALLING LEAVES HAS AUTUMN ARRIVED EARLY THIS YEAR? PAGE 3



GOING OUT GUIDE TO THE BEST OF THE WEEKEND ENTERTAINMENT INSIDE

The Herald



223RD YEAR NO 187

THURSDAY SEPTEMBER 1, 2005

PRICE 60P

Death toll now feared to be thousands | Evacuation to last three months | Threat of disease growing

New Orleans: the abandoned city

BRETT MARTEL
NEW ORLEANS

HURRICANE Katrina has probably killed thousands of people, the mayor of New Orleans said yesterday, and ordered the city to be abandoned.

"We know there is a significant number of dead bodies in the water," and others dead in attics, Ray Nagin said. Asked how many, the mayor replied: "Minimum, hundreds. Most likely, thousands."

Mr Nagin said there would be a "total evacuation of the city. We have to. The city will not be functional for two or three months".

Louisiana's governor, Kathleen Blanco, said the situation was so desperate there was no choice but to clear out. "The logistical problems are impossible and we have to evacuate people in shelters," she said. "It's becoming untenable."

"There's no power. It's getting more difficult to get food and water supplies in, just basic essentials."

George W Bush, the president, called Katrina "one of the worst natural disasters in our nation's history" and said the recovery would take years.

Mr Nagin estimated 50,000 to 100,000 people remained in New Orleans, a city of nearly half a million people. He said 14,000 to 15,000 a day could be evacuated. He also warned it would be some time before people could return. "We are looking at 12 to 16 weeks."

To add to the chaos, looting was rife. Mr Nagin ordered 1500 police to switch from rescue operations to try to curb the looters.

The death toll has reached at least 110 in Mississippi alone. In Louisiana, they have not yet counted the dead, concentrating on rescuing the living,



FLOODED OUT: A woman crosses Bourbon Street in New Orleans's French Quarter. The situation is so desperate, there is no option but to evacuate, says the state governor. Picture Scott Morgan/Getty

many still trapped on rooftops and in attics.

The government declared a public health emergency for the entire Gulf Coast. Food, medicine and water had to be brought in.

Michael Leavitt, health and human services secretary, warned about potential disease outbreaks and sent disease control experts. People were

told to boil water, and follow food safety precautions.

Mr Nagin also warned of the serious health risk. "We have dead bodies in the water. At some point in time the dead bodies are going to start to create a serious disease issue."

There were increasing concerns for more than 20,000 people who had taken shelter in the Superdome. The water

INSIDE

Years to recover Page 7

was rising, toilets were broken, and tempers rising. Ms Blanco ordered that it be evacuated, with the people being moved to the Astrodome in Houston in a vast bus convoy.

Paul McHale, the assistant

defence secretary, said the National Guard would help law enforcement. The Pentagon mounted one of the largest search-and-rescue operations in US history, sending warships with drinking water and emergency supplies, along with the hospital ship USNS Comfort, search helicopters and SEAL water-rescue teams.

The helicopters flew over the city, lowering baskets to rescue people trapped on roofs. The Red Cross had about 40,000 people in 200 shelters in its biggest ever relief operation.

A full day after the Big Easy thought it had escaped Katrina's full fury, two levees broke and spilled water into the streets, swamping an estimated 80% of the city. Army engineers struggled to plug breached levees

with giant sandbags and concrete barriers. They said they planned to use heavy-duty Chinook helicopters to drop 3000lb sandbags into the 500ft gap in the failed floodwall.

The government said it would release oil from a strategic reserve to offset production losses in the Gulf of Mexico, but petrol prices were continuing to rise towards \$3 a gallon.

Rangers head for their financial goals with net debt cut by £51m

PAUL ROGERSON

RANGERS FC have cut their debts by two-thirds, £51m, and declared a £12.4m pretax profit for 2004/05.

The figures followed the recent £57m rights issue, which was largely underwritten by David Murray, the chairman.

The pretax profit came after Rangers recorded a one-off gain of £15m on a share transaction involving a subsidiary. During the year, the club acquired 15 million £1 preference shares in Rangers Media Investments from a third party for a token fee of £1. The identity of that party is not stated in the annual results, published yesterday.

Sales fell last season, however, as Uefa Cup revenues failed to match the previous year's income from the Champions

League. The club posted an operating loss before exceptional items of £7.8m, an improvement on the £10.5m deficit recorded in 2004, and net debt fell from £74m in 2004 to £23m at June 30.

The vast bulk of December's rescue package was underwritten by Mr Murray himself through MurrayMHL, the vehicle which he originally used to buy investment company's ENIC's 20% stake in Rangers in August 2004. The one-for-one share offer raised £51.4m before expenses, shoring up the club's balance sheet.

Mr Murray said cash raised from the issue would go towards easing the club's debts, and so it appears. A £17.5m overdraft outstanding at June 30, 2004 has disappeared from the balance sheet, and long-

term bank loans fell from £36m in 2004 to £19m.

In a statement, Mr Murray said: "This (share) issue underpinned the club's financial structure and these results demonstrate the positive direction that (the) board has taken. Football business has moved much closer towards a sustainable cost base for the long term. However, even with the self-imposed budgetary constraints we have improved the calibre of the playing squad."

Rangers' income fell to £55m in 2004/05 from £57m as revenues from European competition declined from £9.9m to £4.6m. However, wages fell by 10%, to £27.3m, and now take up less than half of annual income.

Transfer swoops Back Page

1000 Iraqi pilgrims killed in stampede

Up to 1000 pilgrims died yesterday in a stampede over a Baghdad bridge provoked by rumours of a suicide bomber.

Crowds of Iraqi Shi'ites had been heading to a ceremony at the Kadhimiya mosque when the rumour started and people began throwing themselves into the Tigris.

Page 11

£25,000 a week for business lawyer

The highest-paid corporate lawyer in Scotland is earning £25,000 a week, the latest figures show. Alastair Dickson, head of Dickson Minto, the Edinburgh finance house, and married to Belinda Robertson, the designer, had a salary package of £1.32m.

Page 21

Rory police took two days to follow up alert on suspect

BRIAN DONNELLY and CALUM MACDONALD

SIMON Harris, the prime suspect in the Rory Blackhall murder who was found hanged on Sunday, was reported to police two days before his home was raided.

This emerged yesterday as pressure mounted on police to explain a series of apparent failures that allowed Harris to slip through the net.

Harris, who was awaiting trial on sex abuse charges when he was suspected of killing the 11-year-old boy in Livingston, went to the town's St John's Hospital at the start of last week. When he presented himself there, it is understood he was agitated and had marks on his face, but at the time medical staff had no reason to link

him to Rory's murder. After an appeal from Lothian and Borders Police to trace a man spotted close to where Rory disappeared, hospital staff thought Harris fitted the description and contacted the force.

However, it was more than two days later that police raided Harris's home in Camps Rigg, Livingston, where they found him dead.

Lothian and Borders Police refused to comment on the delay between receiving the information and visiting Harris's home, saying it was inappropriate to release details of the case in a continuing inquiry.

However, a police source said the plethora of information they received meant officers had to have enough cross-referenced evidence before specific individuals could be

checked. The source added: "A lot of the officers have been stung by criticism levelled at them. They have been working very long hours to ensure that all the relevant elements of the case are included before it goes to the procurator-fiscal."

Rory's family last night expressed concerns over the system that allowed Harris to ignore his court appearance with impunity.

One relative, Elaine Blackhall, who is married to a cousin of Rory's father, said Harris should not have been let out on bail after being charged with child abuse. She said the seriousness of the offences meant he should have been remanded in custody pending his trial.

She added: "The priority has

Continued on Page 2



JOAN MCALPINE

SHOPPERS ARE RIGHT TO HEAD OUT OF TOWN

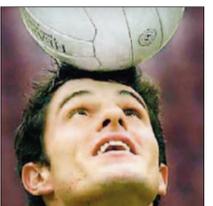
Page 16



THE LAST TICKET PART 4

SHE SIPPED BRANDY AND REMEMBERED SHE WOULD DIE

Page 13



BOY FROM BRAZIL

HEARTS SIGN MIDFIELDER TO BOLSTER TITLE CHALLENGE

Page 34

WEATHER	2
FEATURE	13
LETTERS	17
FAMILY ANNOUNCEMENTS	18
TELEVISION	19
CROSSWORD	34

www.theherald.co.uk



ALL MODELS WITH REMAINDER OF MANUFACTURERS WARRANTY

AVAILABLE AT A BRANCH NEAR YOU

Arnold Clark promises delivered

OFFERS ARE SUBJECT TO STATUS, TERMS AND CONDITIONS. MODELS SHOWN FOR ILLUSTRATIVE PURPOSES ONLY.

www.arnoldclark.com

54 HONDA CIVIC 1.6 V-TEC SE 5 DR

PRICE FROM **£8988**

choice of colours, air conditioning, electric windows, alloys, CD player, 4 airbags, rear spoiler, side protector mouldings



05 CIVIC 1.6 V-TEC SPORT 3 DR

PRICE FROM **£10,988**

PAS, remote locking, white dials, TYPE R style steering wheel, sports seats, CD player, air conditioning, alloys, electric windows/mirrors, TYPE R style body kit, locking wheel nuts, sports grille



05 HONDA JAZZ 1.2 DSI S

PRICE FROM **£8588**

electric front windows, colour choice, ABS, airbags, CD tuner, electric PAS, twin airbags, magic seat, low mileage



05 HONDA FRV 2.0i SE

PRICE FROM **£12,988**

6 SEATER, Honda's latest MPV with 3 seats in the front and 3 in the back, air conditioning, CD player, ABS, electric windows, remote locking

