



# FIRST WATER, NOW FIRE

*Blazes turn parts of besieged city into an inferno*



STAFF PHOTO BY ALEX BRANDON  
**NEW ORLEANS:** A chemical plant in the 3400 block of Chartres Street burns after exploding Friday. Given the lack of firefighting resources in a city without water, a potentially greater threat was the fire that erupted in a low-rise sandwich shop nestled among hotels and office towers in the heart of the Central Business District, just yards from the sprawling Harrah's New Orleans Casino.

## Bush stunned by condition of New Orleans

From staff and wire reports

President Bush, who rarely admits failure, made no bones Friday about his disappointment with the federal relief effort along the Gulf Coast following Hurricane Katrina.

With an entourage that had swelled with Mississippi officials picked up during an earlier visit to Biloxi, Bush rode by helicopter to New Orleans Louis Armstrong International Airport at 2 p.m., where the two presidential choppers were met by a delegation of state officials that included U.S. Sens. Mary Landrieu and David Vitter, Gov. Kathleen Blanco, New Orleans Mayor Ray Nagin and Kenner Congressman Bobby Jindal.

The meeting, scheduled for 15 minutes, lasted an hour and was declared "productive" by Blanco.

"The president is starting to grasp the magnitude of the situation," said Landrieu, D-La. Sen. Trent Lott, R-Miss., said, "The president obviously was just stunned" by what he saw.

Nagin, Blanco and Bush then boarded the helicopter and flew over New Orleans.

In a Biloxi stop prior to the New Orleans visit, Bush said the damage was "worse than imaginable," and described the \$10.5 billion aid package just approved by Congress as a small down payment for disaster relief.

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AP PHOTO

**MISSISSIPPI COAST:** President Bush comforts Kim Bassier, left, and Bronwynne Bassier while touring storm-ravaged Biloxi on Friday. Bush flew over Louisiana but did not leave the Louis Armstrong International Airport out of security concerns.

## More guns, buses, relief roll into city

By **Jed Horne**  
Staff writer

New Orleans, or what's left of it, awoke Friday to discover that fire had been added to the array of pestilences - floodwaters, hunger, looting and mass death - that have beset the city since Hurricane Katrina's winds ripped it apart five days ago.

The plumes of smoke rising from locations on both sides of the river were offset by the belated arrival of long-promised National Guard units in a bid to further the evacuation and reverse the virtual anarchy that descended over the city as beleaguered and increasingly angry local officials begged for federal assistance.

On a daylong tour of New Orleans and the stricken Gulf Coast, President Bush conceded that the nation's disaster response had been a disappointment and vowed a redoubled relief effort.

"What is not working, we're going to make it right," he said after an initial landing in Mobile, Ala. His wife, Laura Bush, echoed the same theme in remarks during a visit to Lafayette.

There were continued signs of the efforts to restore order.

Guns pointed skyward in the back of troop transport vehicles, Friday's initial deployment of about 7,000

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