



Top Stories

Explosion in French college

A huge explosion has ripped through the École Nationale Supérieure de Chimie de Mulhouse (ENSCMu), a technology college in Mulhouse, eastern France, killing one person and injuring another.

Journal Nature study 'fatally flawed', says Britannica

Encyclopædia Britannica has issued a rebuttal to the science journal Nature's report that Wikipedia came close to Britannica in accuracy of scientific articles. Britannica has, in addition, called for a retraction of the report.

Featured story

Buffalo, N.Y. hotel proposal approved by Common Council

With no comments permitted from the public, Buffalo's Common Council approved the Elmwood Village Hotel proposal. However; the Planning Board, which meets this Tuesday, must also approve the proposal.

Wikipedia Current Events

- Lin Liang Ren, 29, is convicted on 21 counts of manslaughter arising from the February 2004 Morecambe Bay cockling disaster.
- South Korean President Roh Moo-hyun nominates Han Myung-Sook to become the country's first woman prime minister.

Wikipedia Current Events

- Clerics in Kabul, Afghanistan call for Abdul Rahman to be put to death. He is accused of committing apostasy for converting from Islam to Christianity.
- It is alleged by a report from The Pentagon that Russia gave Saddam Hussein's Iraq intelligence information regarding American troop movements during the early stages of the Iraq War.

SpaceX Falcon 1 Destroyed After Maiden Launch

The Falcon 1 rocket, launched by SpaceX, was destroyed shortly after its maiden launch today. Despite an earlier highly successful static test firing of the main engines, this fourth attempt at launch failed during the first stage burn. After clearing the tower, an onboard webcam revealed a swirl of flame around the base of the rocket before contact was lost. Both the Falcon 1 launcher and its Falconsat payload were lost.

Personal relationship between Bush and McCallum Questioned

Australia's major newspapers are highlighting the personal relationship between the U.S. President George Bush and his newly nominated Australian ambassador, Robert McCallum. Australian reporters Phillip Hudson of The Age, and Mark Coultan of the Sydney Morning Herald, have written stories examining the Bush/McCallum friendship which allegedly dates back to 39 years

ago when they were inducted into the Skull and Bones society.

The Australian ambassadorship post had been vacant for 13 months, which former deputy prime minister Tim Fischer said was an "unforgivable" delay. The McCallum nomination on March 11 would replace the former ambassador Tom Schieffer who left the post in February 2005. United States President George W. Bush nominated McCallum on March 11th.,2006

McCallum is an associate attorney-general for the Department of Justice and previously represented big tobacco companies at an Atlanta law firm. He also has a master's degree from Oxford University and is a Rhodes Scholar as well as having a bachelor's degree from Yale.

The two Australian papers report on activities of Bush and McCallum in their younger years, and the Sydney Morning Herald alleges that personal connections were instrumental in the career advancements of both men.

McCallum also made news last year when he overrode U.S. Justice Department lawyers who had been handling the government's tobacco racketeering trial for the past 5 years. McCallum ordered the lawyers to reduce the penalties sought at the close of the nine-month trial from \$130 billion to \$10 billion, angering some of the trial lawyers to the point where it is reported they threatened to

quit their jobs. McCallum said the reduction was necessary as a matter of law.

University suspends 'racism row' lecturer

Leeds University has suspended a lecturer who praised the British National Party (BNP) in a new book. Frank Ellis, a lecturer in Russian and Slavonic studies, also praised the Bell Curve theory, which claims that black people are less intelligent than white people. Vice-chancellor Professor Michael Arthur suspended Ellis following a meeting yesterday, March 23. It is expected that disciplinary measures will take months, during which time Ellis remains an employee of the university. The Race Relations (Amendment) Act 2002 requires universities to promote racial equality.

Ellis spoke at the American Renaissance conference in 2000. He criticised the Stephen Lawrence enquiry and the Macpherson report which followed it. This year BNP leader Nick Griffin was a speaker at the conference.

Journal Nature study 'fatally flawed', says Britannica

Encyclopædia Britannica has strongly criticised the scientific journal Nature for last year's investigation into the encyclopedia's accuracy compared to that of the open-source online encyclopedia, Wikipedia. Britannica also called for a retraction of the article. Nature has rejected the accusations, saying that their comparison was fair and that they do not intend to retract their report.

In a 20-page response (titled "Fatally Flawed") to the report's findings that there was not a significant difference in accuracy between the two encyclopædias,

Britannica wrote that 'Almost everything about the journal's investigation [...] was wrong and misleading.' The document goes on to call the investigation 'invalid', 'completely without merit' and 'careless'. Britannica also accused Nature of 'misrepresenting its own results'. The last 12 pages of this comprehensive rebuttal are responses to specific article criticisms, mainly consisting of differences of opinion on style and article composition, but some citing outright factual errors on Nature's part.

In their response, Nature revealed that Britannica had raised their grievances in private some time ago, and then received no further correspondence until Britannica's open letter of 22 March 2006. Nature notes that Britannica criticised 'less than half the points [their] reviewers raised', and states that the two encyclopædias were subject to the same treatment.

The December 2005 study was seen at the time as a major boost to the credibility of Wikipedia, which has been stigmatised as unreliable due to its open-source nature and a perceived problem with vandalism. Recent changes to some of its editing policies have attempted to resolve some of the issues raised.

Wikipedia has yet to comment.

Lawsuit accuses Chicago priest of molesting 13-year-old boy

Rev. Chester Przybylo has been accused in a civil law suit of molesting a 13-year-old boy almost 20 years ago, when he was serving at Holy Martyrs parish in Chicago.

The plaintiff said the abuse took

place in the apartment of a friend of Rev. Przybylo and the rectory of Five Holy Martyrs, and continued for more than a year. Rev. Przybylo supposedly threatened to have the plaintiff's mother, a Polish immigrant, deported if he resisted.

The plaintiff says that he told a bishop and another pastor about the abuse, but he said, "I was yelled at and told to go to confession as if I sinned."

Rev. Chester Przybylo is currently the pastor at Shrine of Christ the King church in western Chicago, a conservative Catholic congregation which is not officially recognized by the Roman Catholic hierarchy.

Explosion in French college

A large explosion has ripped through a research building of the École Nationale Supérieure de Chimie de Mulhouse (ENSCMu) in Mulhouse, eastern France. The Mulhouse mayor, Jean-Marie Bockel, confirmed that the blast had killed one person and injured another. A Code Red was declared by the police, and the neighborhood was evacuated.

The ENSCMu is a technology college, with a 25 hectare campus near the centre of Mulhouse. 8,000 students are enrolled there - this school is known for its museum of coloring agents (Musée des Colorants), which has about 2700 samples, mainly from the second part of the nineteenth century. The database is available online in French.

The blast occurred at 11:25 GMT (12:25 local time). It is reported to have been heard two kilometres away and to have broken the windows of nearby buildings.

It is not yet clear what caused the

explosion - it is believed to have happened in a ground-floor laboratory. There are no signs it is related to recent protests by students of the college.

BNP lose council seat in Keighley

The British National Party(BNP), a far-right political party failed to hold on to one of its seats on Bradford City Council, West Yorkshire, UK. The byelection was called after the incumbent BNP councillor, Angela Clark, stood down. BNP had won the seat in 2004 after it adapted an ongoing campaign against gangs grooming girls for sex. The BNP claimed white girls were being groomed by Asian men for sex. The original campaign was organised by Angela Sinfield, whose 13 year-old daughter was groomed by a gang which she pointed out contained white and Asian men. Sinfield joined the Labour Party last year and was its candidate for the Keighley West seat. She sensationally won the seat with 1819 votes over the BNP's 1216, a swing of 11.4 per cent from the BNP to Labour. The voter turnout was near general election levels, 58.8 per cent. Three BNP councillors remain on Bradford City Council, with two of them up for election in May.

Virologists discover why H5N1 doesn't spread easily between humans

Virologists think that the reason the H5N1 strain of bird flu has poor ability to spread between humans is that the infection does not cause coughing or sneezing.

US and Japanese scientists, led by Professor Yoshihiro Kawaoka at the University of Wisconsin at Madison, found that avian influenza and human influenza viruses infect different tissues in

the respiratory tract. Another group of scientists, based at the University of Rotterdam, has also published similar results.

Professor Kawaoka's team discovered that bird flu tends to be found among alveoli deep in the lungs. Human flu is instead most prevalent in the mucous lining of the nose and sinuses, as well as the throat, windpipe and bronchi.

Human flu infects parts of the respiratory system that cause coughing and sneezing. When an infected person coughs or sneezes, tiny droplets containing the virus are released into the air, which other humans can inhale, becoming infected. As bird flu infects the alveoli, it doesn't cause coughing or sneezing, and heavy exposure to the virus is required before it can get to the lungs.

Professor Kawaoka said, "For the viruses to be transmitted efficiently, they have to multiply in the upper portion of the respiratory system so that they can be transmitted by coughing and sneezing."

For H5N1 to be transmitted easily among humans, it would need to undergo multiple mutations, according to Professor Kawaoka.

"Certainly, multiple mutations need to be accumulated for the H5N1 to become a pandemic strain," he said.

These mutations would have to affect where the virus binds in the human body and affect the way in which it reproduces.

Currently only one strain of H5N1, A/Hong Kong/213/03, has shown the ability to latch onto cells in both the upper and lower parts of the human respiratory system.

Today in History

1306 - Robert the Bruce was crowned King of Scotland at the Scone Palace in Perth.

1634 - The English colony of Maryland was founded by Lord Baltimore and a group of Catholic settlers.

1655 - Christiaan Huygens discovered Titan, the largest natural satellite of the planet Saturn.

1931 - The Scottsboro Boys were arrested and charged with rape.

1957 - West Germany, the Netherlands, Luxembourg, Italy, France and Belgium signed the Treaty of Rome, establishing the European Economic Community. March 26 is Independence Day in Greece (1821), Feast of the Annunciation in Western Christianity.

Quote of the Day

"With the arrogance of youth, I determined to do no less than to transform the world with Beauty. If I have succeeded in some small way, if only in one small corner of the world, amongst the men and women I love, then I shall count myself blessed, and blessed, and blessed, and the work goes on." ~ William Morris

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