



Top Stories

Ukraine Hurt By Russian Gas Deal

The Ukrainian Parliament lost a motion of non-confidence as the fallout of the deal with Russia increases.

Chinese ban of Wikimedia enters tenth week

China's ban on the Wikimedia project, which includes Wikipedia, has entered into its tenth week. Beginning October 19, this is the third such ban from China, upsetting students and researchers who state that it is having a significant impact on their ability to conduct research, and even pass civil service exams.

Featured story

7 year old chased by police

A 7 year old Tennessee boy gave police officers quite a chase after taking his parent's truck for a joyride, all because he wanted to get his driver's license.

Wikipedia Current Events

- The first ministerial meeting of the Asia-Pacific Partnership for Clean Development and Climate begins in Sydney, Australia.
- A knife-wielding man enters a synagogue in Moscow and stabs at least eight people.

7 year old chased by police

A 7-year old Tennessee boy who was eager to get his driver's

license got an early education when he decided to take his parents pick-up truck for a joyride.

The boy, whose name was not released, remembered to wear his seatbelt and even used his turn signal when he was supposed to.

Police chasing the boy initially thought they were chasing a drunk driver. "He was weaving and all over the road. He couldn't stay in his lane," Officer Josh Laverette said.

But when the truck came to a stop in front of a house, police saw that it was a boy, a second grader, barely 4 feet tall, behind the wheel. "He was so short he had to sit up close to the steering wheel," Laverette said. "Whenever he would brake, he would pick himself up with his left foot and stomp on the brake with his right."

The boy had barely avoided several collisions, authorities said.

When police began to talk to the boy, who managed to park in front of his own home, "He said the reason he took the vehicle was because he wanted to get his license," said Laverette.

"There were like probably five city cars and three county cars and a state trooper" all of which were chasing the pickup, said Susan Daniel, a witness to the incident. "It blew my mind because we actually watched him put on his turn signal and turn, and we could see when he went past that he had

seat belts on," Daniel said. "Then to come find out it was a child, I was really shocked."

The boy was charged with driving without a license, eluding police, and leaving the scene of an accident. He is expected to appear in juvenile court next week.

Chinese ban of Wikimedia enters tenth week

This article mentions the Wikimedia Foundation or one of its projects. Wikinews is a project of the Wikimedia Foundation.

The blocking of the Wikimedia project by government agencies of the People's Republic of China has entered into its tenth week. The Wikimedia project includes Wikinews as well as other popular sites such as Wikipedia.

Beginning October 19, this is the third such block in China, upsetting students and researchers who say that it is having a significant impact on their ability to conduct research, and even pass civil service exams.

There is little indication of whether the block is temporary or permanent, as government agencies have not commented. However, Wikimedia has been blocked twice in the past. It has been speculated by Wikipedia users that the two previous bans, both in 2004, were due to articles on banned subjects, such as Taiwanese independence and the Tiananmen Square Protests of

1989.

Many users in China have been using proxy servers and other means to circumvent the ban. On October 21st, a prominent Chinese Wikipedia administrator posted, "If nothing goes wrong, the block should be lifted within one week." He followed up on the 24th by saying, "The block will be lifted by Wednesday [October 26].

According to procedure (the details of which are unknown), after the appeal is submitted, a reply will come within 3 business days, and my appeal has already been submitted by the ISP on Friday. My ISP has said that so far they haven't encountered a case where an appeal has failed. This should be good news, but it's still impossible to know the reason for the block." Since then, there has been no reported response from government agencies.

During the first block, users of the project petitioned their ISPs, one of which appealed to relevant agencies and was able to have the site unblocked. The second block, slightly later in the year, was only temporary, lasting four days with, once again, no explanation from government agencies.

The Chinese government has an active policy of blocking websites they consider controversial. Among other sites that have been blocked, China has been known to block foreign news sites (BBC News as an example), information about Tibetan independence, the Falun Gong and some websites based in Taiwan.

The Wikimedia Foundation is a popular group of non-profit websites dedicated to open content information that any user can edit. It includes an encyclopedia, news, quote

archives, and other information. It has recently been criticized by the media for being too easy to edit, with the highest profile cases including John Seigenthaler Sr, when an anonymous user falsely claimed Seigenthaler was involved in the assassination of John F. Kennedy on his encyclopedia entry.

Comet Samples Near Home

Stardust, a NASA space capsule carrying precious comet samples from deep space, is scheduled to return to earth January 15, 2006.

Scientists hope to discover new meaning to the beginning of our solar system.

Stardust's 2.9 billion mile round-trip mission took it halfway to Jupiter to catch particles from comet Wild 2 two years ago. Its journey will have lasted a total of just over 7 years when it lands in the Utah desert.

On Sunday, the ship will remain in space while a 100-pound (45 kg) capsule loaded with comet dust returns to earth and lands at the U.S. Air Force Utah Test and Training range at 3:12 a.m. local time (5:12 a.m. EST or 1012 GMT). If the skies are all clear on January 15, then people from Northern California, Oregon and Nevada could get quite a show as the capsule enters Earth's atmosphere. The show will be quick, but should prove impressive.

Comets are thought to be remnants from the process of planet formation, and scientists said the dust collected by Stardust will give them their first opportunity to study pristine samples of materials formed billions of years ago. The particles

from the comet were captured using a tennis-racket-sized space probe containing ice-cube sized compartments lined with aerogel, a porous substance that is 99.9 percent air. It is the first time since 1972 that any solid extraterrestrial material has been collected and brought back to Earth, and the first time ever for comet particles.

During its descent over the desert, the capsule is scheduled to deploy two parachutes, though NASA officials said they have prepared for the possibility of a hard landing. A NASA probe called Genesis crashed to Earth in 2004 when its parachute failed to open. That craft had been on a three-year mission to collect solar wind ions, which were recovered by scientists even though the spacecraft was destroyed.

Stardust's project manager, Tom Duxbury, said that "after the Genesis incident and the Columbia shuttle disaster, the mission's team spent six months testing and reviewing the spacecraft's design to make sure there were no errors". Once the craft is recovered, it will be whisked away to the Johnson Space Center in Houston. Only after it is in a secure lab, free of potential contamination, will the probe be pried open to reveal its payload.

"We are at the end of a fantastic voyage," Don Brownlee, the lead scientist for the mission known as Stardust, recently told reporters at a media briefing. "We will learn a phenomenal amount... from the most primitive materials in our solar system. It is a real thrilling time." Now, near the end of its long voyage home, the probe is set to plunge back to Earth in the predawn hours on Sunday.

Smoke reported on London Underground

No injuries were reported when firefighters were called to two London Underground stations when the smell of smoke was reported and seen, said police.

A spokeswoman for London Transport police said firefighters had checked reports of smoke coming from the Bakerloo line, but the incident was not threatening. Fire services were sent to Oxford Circus and Piccadilly Circus.

Ukraine Hurt By Russian Gas Deal

The Ukrainian Parliament voted to oust the Prime Minister and his cabinet Tuesday after the handling of the countries gas crisis with Russia last week.

Viktor Yushchenko called the vote "incomprehensible, illogical, and wrong".

Although Russia and Ukraine have solved the crisis, for the time being, when the two countries agreed to new gas prices last week, the parliament described the deal as "traitorous," reports The Independent of London, and ousted Prime Minister Yuri Yekhanurov's government in response.

Both Members of Parliament and even opposition groups, said they were unhappy with the governments response to the crisis, and began to accuse it of "selling out to Russia and betraying national interests".

The motion to oust the government, which both shocked and suprised many MP's was backed by 250 of the 450 members of Parliament. Mr

Yushchenko's former ally and one-time prime minister, Julia Tymoshenko, was among those who voted against the government.

Yushchenko is calling the no-confidence vote politically motivated.

It is expected, however, that the government will remain in place until parliamentary elections are held, which are scheduled to occur in March.

The debate, at the moment, is whether the standing parliament has the authority to dismiss the prime minister. While the constitutional amendments allowing such an action were adopted Jan. 1, Yushchenko and Yekhanurov claim that only the parliament set to be elected in March will have such an ability.

However, there are some that believe that the parliament's move was more about gaining "political leverage" than responding to the gas crisis, reported the Los Angeles Times.

Yushchenko also accused Ukraine's parliament on Wednesday of "destabilizing the country by sacking his government," a move which sent the local currency plummeting to its lowest point in nearly nine months.

Yushchenko met Vladimir Putin for the first time since the Russian president ordered gas taps to be turned off to his ex-Soviet neighbor at the new year in a bitter dispute over prices that briefly disrupted supplies to the rest of Europe.

Last week Moscow agreed to a new contract, which Ukraine would pay nearly two times the amount

it did before. The two leaders barely touched on the energy issue in comments to reporters after their meeting, instead focusing on the positive side of their strained relations.

"Ukraine and Russia have entered an excellent phase in bilateral relations, a phase of personal friendship, which allows us to discuss wonderful prospects," Russia's Interfax news agency quoted Yushchenko as saying.

Former NSA employee alleges illegal spying

Russell "Russ" Tice, a former employee of the National Security Agency (NSA) who specialized in "special access programs," has admitted to ABC News that he was one of the sources the New York Times used in its December 2005 investigation into the NSA's spy activity against Americans.

He alleges that some of NSA and the Department of Defense's secret intelligence operations were run in violation of the law and has agreed to testify before Congress about their legality.

President Bush admitted ordering the NSA to monitor a small number of Americans without the use of warrants, but Tice believes it goes beyond that. If the full extent of NSA programs is being taken advantage of, he said, the number of Americans under surveillance could be in the millions. The ability exists, Tice stated, to track every domestic and international phone call as they are switched through centers and to monitor them for key words.

"If you picked the word 'jihad' out of a conversation, the technology exists that you focus in on that

conversation, and you pull it out of the system for processing."

Tice's security clearance was revoked in May of 2005 based upon "psychological concerns" and the NSA later dismissed him.

The New York Times has not confirmed that Tice was one of their sources, nor have they revealed the identities of any unnamed sources cited in their article.

Whole Foods moves to renewable energy

Whole Foods Market, a natural food grocery chain based in Austin, Texas, announced that it intends to use wind energy for all of its electrical needs. This will make the company the largest business to use renewable energy in the United States.

"It's a sales driver rather than a cost," Michael Besancon, a regional president for the company, said. "All of those things we do related to our core values: help drive sales, help convince a customer to drive past three or four other supermarkets on the way to Whole Foods."

Since utility companies send power directly to the national utility grid, Whole Foods will purchase energy credits equivalent to 100% of the energy they use, a total of 458,000 megawatt-hours of wind energy credits per year from Renewable Choice Energy. That's enough electricity to power 44,000 homes for a year.

Today in History

1838 - In order to avoid anti-Mormon persecution, Joseph Smith, Jr. and his followers fled Ohio for Missouri.

1966 - Batman the television series, starring Adam West, was first broadcast on ABC.

1969 - British rock band Led Zeppelin released their first record album, also called Led Zeppelin.

1970 - The self-proclaimed Republic of Biafra in southeastern Nigeria capitulated, ending the Nigerian Civil War.

Quote of the Day

"Magnanimity in politics is not seldom the truest wisdom; and a great empire and little minds go ill together." ~ Edmund Burke

About Wikinews

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