



Millthorpe Library News

Weekly News to your Library!

Temporary truce allows exchange of hostages and prisoners between Israel and Hamas



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(Read page 2 to find out more).

Disclaimer: *This article may contain content that is upsetting*

Every Bitcoin Payment requires "A swimming pool of water"

A recent study has suggested that every bitcoin transaction uses the equivalent of a backyard swimming pool of water. This is about 6 million times the amount used for conventional transactions, Alex de Vries of Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam has calculated, and this is due to the large amount of water required to cool the millions of computers Bitcoin relies on in order to carry out transactions.

(Read page 3 to find out more).

Covid-19 Inquiry Insider

Since June this year, there has been a public investigation into the handling of the coronavirus pandemic. How did our Government respond to the virus and what did our leaders say and do?

(Read page 7 to find out more).

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Temporary truce allows exchange of hostages and prisoners between Israel and Hamas

After mediation talks hosted by Qatar between Israel and Hamas, a planned 4-day ceasefire was arranged and commenced on Friday 24th November, due to finish on the 28th November, with Palestinian detainees in Israel being released alongside some hostages held by Hamas. Palestinian prisoner crimes include throwing stones (the most common cause), which was a 20-year sentence in jail for children, carrying out bombing attacks and attempted stabbings against Israeli authorities. Save the children estimated that a large number of the 160 Palestinian children who have been arrested by Israel and live in detention zones have suffered physical abuse and harm. Israel currently maintains around 7,000 Palestinian detainees. When released, Israel banned celebrations of the returning prisoners, saying it “is equivalent to backing terrorism.” However, 80% of these branded “terrorist” prisoners have not officially been charged.

Over the 4 days, 150 Palestinian prisoners were to be freed alongside 50 hostages held by Hamas (a designated terrorist organisation) - some of the hostages are in the picture on the right. As part of the truce, more aid to Gaza has been allowed, including well-needed fuel supplies. 80% of the population in the war-torn Palestinian territory of Gaza have been displaced according to the United Nations. Hospitals in Gaza being so starved of medical supplies in dire conditions that one study told Al Jazeera News that 200 trucks of aid would be needed every single day for two months to meet the needs of the 2.3 million people living in Gaza. Al-Shifa hospital doctors have resorted to using their phone torches due to the energy shortage. It is feared that diseases are spreading like wildfire among Gazans. So far, 1,400 Israeli civilians have been killed and over 15,000 Palestinians have died in the retaliation response of Israel’s military.

Following the few days of much-needed peace which acted as a win-win situation on both sides, Hamas said they were willing to further continue a ceasefire. Israel agreed in a last-minute change of events to a two day extension of a ceasefire until 30th November. As Millthorpe Library News went to press on Wednesday 29th November, 750 trucks of aid had arrived into Gaza via the Egyptian Al-Rafah crossing since the truce. Israeli PM, Benjamin Netanyahu reiterated that the Israeli military would continue the fighting and attempt to destroy Hamas following the ceasefire saying the country will fight “until the end”.

At the time of writing, it is unknown whether the ceasefire will continue, but there have been major calls from senior officials and people across the globe to embrace the opportunity for further peace, including Palestinian foreign minister who called for a permanent ceasefire. The UN has said Gaza is an “epic humanitarian catastrophe.”

During a raid on Jenin (a Palestinian city in the West Bank), Netanyahu claimed that the Israeli military killed two senior terrorists and arrested 17 others. Among these, 2 young boys have also seemingly been shot in the raid, as shown on video footage. Israel is investigating claims that a baby was murdered by Hamas as 160 hostages still remain in Gaza as of 29th November. Egypt and Qatar have held further talks in Doha for the future of the peace, with the US, Israel and Hamas all welcoming the principle of a longer ceasefire to benefit all sides.



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Every Bitcoin Payment requires “A swimming pool of water”

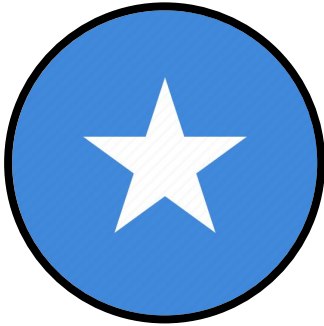
A recent study has suggested that every bitcoin transaction uses the equivalent of a backyard swimming pool of water. This is about 6 million times the amount used for conventional transactions, Alex de Vries of Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam has calculated, and this is due to the large amount of water required to cool the millions of computers Bitcoin relies on in order to carry out transactions. This is a devastating statistic, considering many regions around the globe struggle with day to day freshwater struggles, with up to 3 billion people around the world already experiencing this issue. The situation is currently expected to worsen over the coming decades. “This is happening in Central Asia, but it’s also happening in the US, especially around California”, Mr de Vries has stated. “And that’s only going to get worse as climate change gets worse” In total, bitcoin consumed 1,600 billion tonnes of water in 2021 alone, and the 2023 figure is predicted to be over 2,200 billion tonnes of water.

Bitcoin requires an enormous amount of computing power, which in turn requires an immense amount of electricity to run, and it is so power hungry it’s electricity consumption almost rivals Poland’s in numbers, according to Cambridge University. Large amounts of water are used to cool the global worldwide computers to process bitcoin transactions, and a huge amount of this water is also reportedly used to cool and run gas and coal fired plants which power most of the energy grid. Mr de Vries has argued that the water consumption by Bitcoin can be drastically reduced, singling out the process at its heart, “Bitcoin Mining”, as the main source of consumption. “You have millions of devices around the world, constantly competing with each other in what I like to call a massive game of ‘Guess the Number’,” Mr de Vries has claimed to the BBC.



Around The World

Somalia joins East African Community



Following around 30 years of war, Somalia's government has joined a regional trade alliance with other neighbouring East African nations, a group commonly known as the East African Community (EAC). President Mohamud said it was a "beacon of hope and offered a future of opportunities and prosperity" by boosting the struggling economy. The decision was made in Tanzania,, a key member state of the EAC, after months of tricky lobbying.

Anti-islamic populist wins Dutch election in shocking victory



Geert Wilders, a far-right Dutch populist (somebody who claims to represent the interests of the people), recently won a general election in the Netherlands for the Freedom Party (PVV) in a surprising victory as a political outsider. He is notably well-known for his controversial, hardline anti-immigrant, anti-islamic views proposing an end to the "tsunami of asylum and immigration" followed by the banning of mosques and the Qur'an (the islamic holy book).

Rat plague terrorizes Australia



In a terrifying event that happened similarly in the country a few years ago, thousands of rats have swarmed the beaches of Queensland (northeast Australia). One resident expressed fear: "mate, there's rats everywhere", as plagues of living and dead rats engulfed coastal towns subsequent to plentiful wet weather and crop booms in the area, causing rodents to reproduce fast in ideal conditions.

Workers trapped in Uttarakhand tunnel collapse



After a devastating landslide which caused 41 workers in Northern India to be trapped in a tunnel for over 2 weeks, A massive rescue operation took place, with services extracting them via a pipe one by one. Prior to the main rescue, oxygen, food and water were sent down a separate pipe. The Indian PM praised their "courage and patience" as the workers were greeted with celebrations, applaud, fireworks, sweets and more by the citizens of Uttarakhand.

WHO investigates respiratory illness spike among children in China



As Chinese children experience a soaring number of pneumonia cases, officials have confirmed that there is no 'unusual or novel pathogens' to blame for the spread of the growing respiratory illness in northern China and Beijing. Pneumonia is a term for a general lung infection, and can be caused by many different viruses, bacteria or fungi. It is believed that the increase in flu, coronavirus, pneumonia, RSV and other respiratory diseases spiked after 3-year coronavirus restrictions were lifted and immunity was at an all-time low - a similar outcome of other nations like the UK and USA. The WHO has urged China for more data and information.



Science & Environment News



“T-shirt chewing” enzyme ready to take on plastic waste



In 2010, an enzyme was found in a pile of rotting leaves in a nearby park to the University of Osaka in Japan. Sintawee Sulaiman had just begun her first job in a lab, and she was put to the task of researching and experimenting with the enzyme. The enzyme, known as LCC (Leaf-branch Compost Cutinase), allows and assists microbes in the breaking down of the waxy layer of leaves, and it was hoped that it may be able to do the same with plastic. To investigate this, the enzyme was left in water with shards of plastic packaging overnight, and by morning there had been a change. “The plastic had some holes, or some breakdown”, she stated. “That made me feel so surprised”.

The plastic in question was a type known as PET, which is a polymer - a long string of small molecules known as monomers. Polyester, which is a form of PET plastic accounts for roughly half of global clothing fibre produced, but most of this is either incinerated or sent to landfill. It is hoped the enzyme can help prevent this.

Harmful Gases pose risk to millions of people within Middle East



A recent BBC investigation suggests that toxic gases released by gas flaring are putting millions more people at risk than previously thought. The process of flaring is taking place across the gulf, including by COP 28 hosts the United Arab Emirates. The evidence has shown that pollution from flaring is spreading hundreds of miles across the region, and worsening air quality.

Despite the fact the UAE banned gas flaring 20 years ago, satellite imagery has said otherwise, and is still being done even when there are potential health risks for inhabitants of the UAE and surrounding countries. Pollution from wells in Iraq, Kuwait, and Iran have also been covered in the investigation, but none have made any statement about the recent findings, however, oil companies such as BP and Shell how are said to be partially responsible for the flarings have stated that they are working to reduce the practice. Also, BBC News has reportedly uncovered documents stating the UAE’s plans to use it’s role as host of COP28 to strike oil and gas deals. David R. Boyd, the UN special rapporteur on climate and human rights described the findings as “Very disturbing”.

Covid-19 Inquiry Insider: How was the pandemic handled by our government?

Since June this year, there has been a public investigation into the handling of the coronavirus pandemic. Boris Johnson was forced out of government last year following his attendance at the Downing Street parties during lockdowns where the British public was forced to stay at home. There is ongoing inquiry into how Boris Johnson and his cabinet responded to the coronavirus, with Matt Hancock who was the Health Secretary at the time, being investigated on Thursday 30th November.

Sir Patrick Vallance, chief scientific adviser from 2018 to 2023, said about the contestant who went on I'm a celebrity get me out of here! (Hancock): "I think he had a habit of saying things which he didn't have a basis for and he would say them too enthusiastically, too early, without the evidence to back them up, and then have to backtrack from them days later." Former NHS England Chief stated that if coronavirus levels got out of hand, Matt Hancock "wanted to decide who should live and die" - a last minute measure that should only be carried out by the NHS themselves. He continued: "fortunately this situation never crystallized."

A top civil servant (somebody who advises politicians in power), MacNamara, said that there wasn't a day when covid rules were followed in Downing Street. She said that the Government's 'macho' culture harmed the covid response. Macho means strong sense of masculinity. She also said that it was not a pleasant place to work with, especially with Dominic Cummings, Boris Johnson's chief advisor, who resigned in 2020 after allegations of breaking lockdown restrictions by driving to a town in Northern England to test his eyesight when his wife had an illness.

Boris Johnson has been criticized left, right and centre for a range of different things. One note suggested that Johnson said old people should have accepted their fate. In Autumn 2020, it is believed that the ex-Prime minister said he would rather "let the bodies pile high" than enter another lockdown. He denied this saying it was 'total rubbish', but has been urged by Labour to apologize. Another piece of evidence was that Boris asked scientists if a 'special hair dryer' could kill covid when up the nose. Furthermore, according to an advisor, the ex-PM had wished to do a televised video of injecting covid into himself to calm public fear about the virus and to demonstrate that it didn't "pose a threat".

Former cabinet secretary, Mark Sedwill has apologized for statements he made about exposing the public to the virus to achieve herd immunity on purpose by hosting "chickenpox parties" to infect people, reckless method of dealing with a global pandemic. MP's have been criticized for taking a London-central approach to the disease, by showing concentrated care for their home city but not everywhere else in England. Michael Gove, a conservative politician apologized for "mistakes" made and victims of the disease "who endured so much pain". He stated that the first and lockdowns in March and November 2020 came too late and as a senior minister who was "close to many of the decisions that were made, I must take my share of responsibility for that".

Most recently, Rishi Sunak denied claims that he said 'just let people die' in a fierce argument against the Labour Party's accusations in the House of Commons.



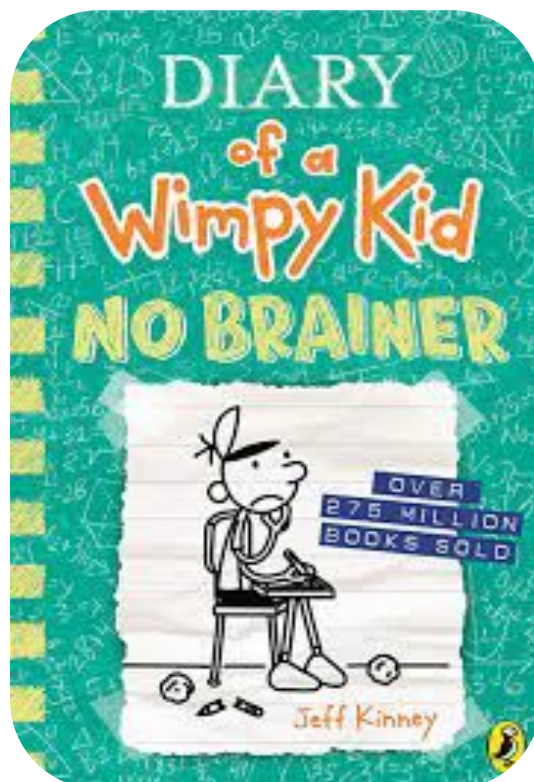
Book of the Week

Diary of a Wimpy Kid: No Brainer

Yet another book in the long Diary of a Wimpy Kid series has released fairly recently, and it still lives up to its same standards! Now, let's jump straight into a book overview. Up until recently in the book, school for Greg Heffley hasn't exactly been the best of experiences. So when the town threatens to close the crumbling building, he's not too worried about it. But when Greg realizes this means he's going to be sent to a different school than his best friend, Rowley Jefferson, he changes his tune. Can Greg and his classmates save their school before it's closed for good? Or is this the start of a whole new chapter for Greg? Read the book to find out!

Age Rating:

The age rating of this book may be 10+, but it is still a good read for people our age, especially if you've read the series in the past!



Puzzles

Riddles

Easy - What 2 things can you never eat for breakfast?

Medium - What starts with a T, ends with a T, and has T in it?

Hard - You walk into a room that contains a match, a kerosene lamp, a candle, and a fireplace. What would you light first?

| | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | 5 | | | 4 | | |
| | | 8 | | | 3 | | 9 |
| | 6 | | | 9 | 4 | | 1 |
| 8 | | | | 5 | | | 3 |
| | | 2 | 4 | | | 6 | 7 |
| | | 5 | | | | | 2 |
| 5 | 8 | | | | | | |
| | | 3 | 7 | 8 | 5 | | |
| | 2 | | | 3 | | | |

*(This sudoku will be cut out next to the issue stand for you to complete)!

$$\begin{array}{r}
 \text{Die (1,2,3)} - \text{Ball} \times \text{Ball} = -1079 \\
 \text{Ball} - \text{Die (1,2,3)} \times \text{Ball} = -253 \\
 \text{Die (1,2,3)} \times \text{Ball} + \text{Die (1,2,3)} = 140 \\
 \text{Die (1,2,3)} \times \text{Ball} \times \text{Ball} = ?
 \end{array}$$

Last Issue's Answers

Riddles: **Easy** - Are you asleep yet? **Medium** - Trouble & **Hard** - A Table

Visit Our Website!

Hello! As you may have known, Millthorpe News actually has its own website!

Here, you can read the newspaper digitally, view older newspapers and even take quizzes!

Note: You must be signed in your school account to access it.

All this is available at:

sites.google.com/millthorpe.southbank.academy/millthorpenews

Or for after school use only:

Scan the QR code:



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