



### Top Stories

#### 13 U.S. soldiers killed in helicopter crash

The United States military has confirmed that all 13 U.S. soldiers aboard a U.S. Blackhawk helicopter military helicopter were killed when it crashed near Baghdad, Iraq.

#### H5N1 Avian Flu virus mutates; shows resistance to drug

A mutation in the H5N1 Avian Flu or Bird Flu virus has been found in two humans infected with the virus located in the Gharbiyah Province of Egypt which is located about 50 miles outside of Egypt's capital, Cairo, Egypt.

### Wikipedia Current Events

passengers.

- A planned meeting between Palestinian Authority President Mahmoud Abbas and Hamas leader Khaled Meshaal is postponed.
- Venezuelan President Hugo Chávez says Fidel Castro is 'battling for his life'.
- A three-man team, using only skis and kites, completes a 1,093 mile trek to reach the Southern Pole of Inaccessibility for the first time since 1958 and for the first time ever without mechanical assistance.

shot towards the sun, where it will begin to melt and a tail would follow behind it.

"If you came back in two million years, EL61 could well be a comet. When it becomes a comet, it will be the brightest we will ever see," said Brown.

Brown also says that nearly 4.5 billion years ago, the object was made of half rock and half ice. Sometime after the object's birth, an object slammed into it causing most of the ice inside it to be broken off. The pieces to be broken off then became satellites, which are believed to be made of very pure water-ice.

### Featured story

#### Kuiper Belt object to become comet

An object located in the Kuiper Belt just outside our solar system is on its way to becoming a comet, possibly the brightest comet ever seen by scientists.

#### Kuiper Belt object to become comet

A Kuiper Belt object just outside our solar system is on its way to becoming a new comet, possibly the brightest comet ever seen by scientists.

Pieces of the object may currently be inside the solar system, already forming to become comet material.

"It's a bit like the story of Mercury. Mercury got hit by a large object early in the Solar System. It left mostly a big iron core, with a little bit of rock on the outside. This is mostly a rock core with a little bit of ice on the outside," added Brown.

But don't expect to get a light show from this object in the near future. Brown estimates that the comet will form in about 2 million years, but will be visible from Earth.

### Wikipedia Current Events

- Senator Hillary Clinton launches her White House bid.
- A man named Ogun Samast is arrested in Samsun by Turkish authorities for killing Armenian-Turkish writer Hrant Dink.
- War in Somalia: Somali gunmen attacks government and Ethiopian troops in a crowded market, killing 4 people.
- The U.S. military says one of its helicopters has crashed north-east of Baghdad, killing all 13

The object, 2003 EL61, is currently in the shape of a potato or a football and is roughly the size of the former planet, Pluto. The object rotates on its axis every 4 hours. The top layer of the KBO is covered in a thin layer of an ice like substance and has a rocky center. Simulations show that the object is in an unstable orbit.

According to California Institute of Technology Professor Mike Brown, the object may enter Neptune's gravity, causing 2003 EL61 to be shot into the inner solar system or into interstellar space, becoming a comet. The object may also be

#### 13 U.S. soldiers killed in helicopter crash

The United States military has confirmed that all 13 U.S. soldiers aboard a U.S. Blackhawk

helicopter military helicopter were killed when it crashed near Baghdad, Iraq.

"A U.S. forces helicopter went down northeast of Baghdad ... Emergency Coalition Forces responded and secured the scene. Thirteen passengers and crew members were aboard the aircraft and all were killed," said a statement issued by the U.S. military.

The cause of the crash is not known and an investigation has been launched, but witnesses near the crash have stated that the helicopter was hit with a "rocket" or another form of a "projectile" and was in flames while flying in the air, before it crashed.

"I'm not sure if it was a rocket or other projectiles. After the helicopter was fired upon it was obvious that it was losing control. Then it crashed with an explosion and the smoke started," said a farmer who witnessed the crash. He also stated that he and other witnesses refused to go near the downed helicopter to attempt a rescue of survivors, but was concerned that if he had done so, soldiers would have began to fire shots at him.

### **Hillary Clinton forms presidential exploratory committee**

Releasing a video on her website, Hillary Clinton announced today that she will be forming a presidential exploratory committee.

"I'm in. And I'm in to win", the Democrat Senator for New York announced on her website today, confirming the widely held assumption that she will seek the U.S. presidency in 2008. This is widely speculated to be in

immediate response to senator Barack Obama's presidential exploratory committee announcement earlier this week.

### **Chinese short movie mocks Kim Jong il and his secret agent**

North Korea's 007, a currently very popular short movie by some Chinese netizens, mocks Kim Jong Il and his secret agent buying Hennessy XO wine from Chinese black market.

As of 3:27 AM, January 20, 2007, China Standard Time, the movie has been watched 1,993,567 times on a single site (6rooms.com) and received 1620 comments.

The talks between the North Koreans are in English; the talks between the agent and the Chinese are in Chinese (now featuring English subtitles). The story part situated in China is as follows:

The agent first went to a grocery where he didn't find XO, then to a wine store which sells XO, but he complained about the price being much more expensive than the price quoted on the Internet. His accent surprised a girl who recognized his North Korean identity and the saleswoman rejected his buying due to "resulting UN security council penalty." The agent left the store and a white-coated fat man (a black market wine seller) and a black-coated man followed.

The agent checked in at a hotel and received 3 phone calls; one from his commander urging him forward on the mission, one from a whore offering "special service" (to whom the agent replied with "Yes, I need, I need a bottle of XO!"), and one from the fat man asking him to go to a disco bar for XO

trading. He went to the bar and watched the fat man dancing to "We Were Forced to Be Gangs" (the music is Michael Jackson's "Beat It"). The fat man found the agent's money was fake (which the agent explained was because North Korea wanted to "ease the pressure that the hostile West put on China for currency appreciation") and a fight ensued. The fat man was defeated and said "Your country is not based on honesty" while the agent said in his mind, "No honesty for your revisionist country."

The agent is about to cross the China-North Korea border and the black-coated man caught up and defeated him by breaking his "Kim Jong Il medal" (which is a devastating psychological strike to North Koreans). The black-coated man revealed himself to be George W. Bush and some Chinese bystanders questioned him on why he hung Saddam ("One Saddam is down but a million Saddams will be up!") and drove him away. The curious Chinese bystanders accidentally broke the agent's XO which resulted in another devastating episode. The white-coated fat man reappeared and said he saw the whole event and was impressed by the agent and gave away another bottle of XO to him.

The agent returned to North Korea and presented the XO to Kim Jong Il (on their way to Kim's residence their eyes were covered in order not to "give the Americans a chance to pinpoint Kim's precise location"). Kim immediately died because the wine was faked and poisonous.

### **Flaming possum blamed for New Zealand fire**

The New Zealand Department of Conservation (DoC) has blamed a

flaming possum for causing a big fire yesterday at the skifield in The Remarkables, Queenstown, New Zealand.

The possum attempted to run across two power lines and caught alight and then fell into some dry tussock.

Nick Edwards, spokesman for Wakatipu DoC, said that it was not the first time a possum on fire has started a fire, even though it does sound unusual. Mr Edwards said that the possum never stood a chance of surviving.

The fire burnt 50-hectares in the Rastus Burn Recreation Reserve. It took crews of firefighters and three helicopters twelve hours to bring the fire under control.

A crew of firefighters and one helicopter will stay to prevent any flare-ups.

### **H5N1 Avian Flu virus mutates; shows resistance to drug**

A mutation in the H5N1 avian flu or bird flu virus has been found in two humans infected with the virus located in the Gharbiyah Province of Egypt which is located about 50 miles outside of Egypt's capital Cairo.

The victims, a 16 year-old girl and her 26 year-old uncle both died in December of 2006 and both patients were administered the Bird Flu treatment oseltamivir (Tamiflu®), had shown to be less effective against their illnesses. The virus was also tested against the drugs zanamivir (Relenza®) and amantadine, and it was found that these drugs were still effective against the mutated form of this virus.

A sister of the 26 year-old also died of Bird Flu in December of

2006, but health officials have yet to determine if she died from the mutated form of the virus.

The World Health Organization is also stating that the three cases may be human to human transmission, but further tests are needed. The three cases are being treated as an outbreak and officials have yet to determine if the victims received the illness from chickens, or from one another.

"Based on the information we have, we can't yet rule out human-to-human transmission. We need to better understand the dynamics of this outbreak," said Bird Flu antivirals expert for the WHO, Doctor Fred Hayden. "It would be very worrisome" if human to human transmission did occur.

The WHO however is not concerned that this outbreak may be the start of a world-wide pandemic and it is unknown how many times Bird Flu will need to mutate before it becomes more dangerous to humans.

"Given the information we have, we don't see any broad public health implications," said a spokesman for the WHO, Dick Thompson.

Egypt was added to the list of countries where the H5N1 virus has been found just last year. Since then the virus has only infected 18 people. Of those people, 10 have died so far, including these three cases in December.

The WHO reports that 267 people have been infected with Bird Flu in the entire world and that of those people, 161 have been confirmed to have died from the H5N1 virus.

Mutated Strains of Bird Flu have been found in Vietnam in 2005 and in Turkey in 2006.

### **Today in History**

304 - Thirteen-year-old Saint Agnes, the patron saint of young girls, was executed for refusing a marriage proposal.

1525 - The first Anabaptists in Switzerland re-baptized each other.

1793 - French Revolution: After being found guilty of treason by the National Convention, King Louis XVI was guillotined in front of a cheering crowd.

1968 - Vietnam War: The People's Army of Vietnam attacked Khe Sanh Combat Base, a U.S. Marines outpost, starting the Battle of Khe Sanh.

1976 - The Concorde supersonic transports began commercial flights to London, Paris, Bahrain, and Rio de Janeiro.

### **Quote of the Day**

To me, literature is a calling, even a kind of salvation. It connects me with an enterprise that is over 2,000 years old. What do we have from the past? Art and thought.

That's what lasts. That's what continues to feed people and give them an idea of something better. A better state of one's feelings or simply the idea of a silence in one's self that allows one to think or to feel. Which to me is the same.

~ Susan Sontag

### **Word of the Day**

transmogrify; v

1. To completely alter the form of something.

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