



Photo Credits: Ava Flo

Amazon River in Crisis

Connor Almstead
Staff Writer

Due to a combination of extensive drought and over 10,000 wildfires since October 1st, the water in the Amazon river has decreased and rapidly evaporated. Tributaries across the river are reporting the lowest water levels seen in over a century. The city of Manaus, one of the largest in the area, with an average minimum of 17.56 meters, had water as low as recorded at 13.17 meters in early October.

The governor of the Amazona region of Brazil, Wilson Lima, has declared a state of emergency for over 50 towns along the river. "We have never seen anything like this. It is the worst drought in history," said Lima, in an interview. Key shipping routes in the Amazon have become impassible, leaving thousands without a supply of necessities. The ecosystem is also taking a large hit, as many species, such as the Amazonian Pink Dolphin, have had many reports of death along the coast of the river.



Photo Credits: CNBC

189 Decaying Bodies Found

Sarah Chilton
Staff Writer

In October, 189 decomposing bodies were removed from a "green" Colorado funeral home. After 24 hours above ground and without refrigeration, bodies that experience green burials (purposeful natural decay) begin the process of decomposition. Reported to the police due to a massive rotten smell, this facility was detected to have not followed such procedure, having left all of the bodies out for an overextended period of time. Unregulated green burial laws in Colorado have led to a lack of arrest on these grounds.

The Israel - Hamas War

Sarah Chilton
Staff Writer

On October 7, 2023, the war between Israel and the Palestinian militant group Hamas began after an unexpected series of airstrikes and infiltration of Israeli communities near the border. During the initial attack, 1,400 Israelis were killed and 220 taken hostage. In response, attacks by Israel on the Gaza Strip - one of the most densely populated places in the world - have resulted in death tolls nearing 6,000. Israel has also cut off resources to Gaza such as electricity, water, food, and medicine, but has allowed some humanitarian aid through Gaza's border with Egypt. Israel Defense Forces have warned citizens of Gaza to evacuate but many say there is nowhere to go since the borders have been closed.

With no visible precursor, Hamas' attack surprised Israel and the rest of the world. Israel has retaliated with force and the intent to destroy Hamas, backed by one of one of the most organized and trained militaries in the region. A challenge in this conflict is Israel's effort to free Israeli and dual citizen captives in Gaza, an area full of concealed places and traps about the size of Washington, DC.

The initial source of this conflict is disputed, however issues in this area are ongoing and tend to arise along territorial and religious lines. The United States' stance is in support of Israel given past alliances and a statement from President Biden. Both the US and international communities are focusing on the humanitarian crisis in Gaza and the increasing loss of life. There is speculation that this conflict has not followed international humanitarian law, as there have been some reports of war crimes by Hamas and PIJ fighters. There are also concerns of widening regional conflict, such as Hezbollah's potential to enter the war if Israel launched a ground invasion and Iran's involvement backing the group.



Photo Credits: Sky News

AI Translates Ancient Scrolls

Connor Almstead
Staff Writer

Ancient Herculean scrolls, written before the eruption of Mount Vesuvius two mil-lennia ago, have seemed almost impossi-ble to decipher. However, thanks to an ar-tificial intelligence program, these scrolls have begun to be decoded. Luke Farritor, a computer science student at the Uni-versity of Nebraska, discovered the first word, "πορφυρας," which was translated to "porphyras," the Greek word for purple. This discovery was thanks to the 2023 Vesuvius Challenge, an event to speed up the discovery of the decryption of ancient scrolls by the promise of hefty financial compensation. The grand prize for decrypting is \$700,000, and still up for taking. There's a long way to go before a whole roll can be read, but Micheal McOsker, a researcher in Papyrology says, "it's a solveable problem now."



Photo Credits: Brent Seales

Ethnic Cleansing in Africa

Connor Almstead
Staff Writer

In Darfur, a city near the Chad-Sudan border, a conflict has started and continued over the course of 2023. The Rapid Support Group (RSF), an Arabic military group, has been accused of attempts of the mass killing of an unwanted ethnic or religious group, (ethnic cleansing). Since August, there is proof that campaigns of violence are primarily targeted against a group of Masalits - a principal, non-Arab tribe in Chad. Burnt villages, mass killings, and lootings have been reported across the area around the border. Hundreds of thousands have fled from the country in search of a safer place to stay.

Resistance has been shown by the Sudanese Armed Forces (SAF), the official army of the Republic of Sudan, attempting to control the widespread violence. This is not the first time the RSF has been prevalent in a genocidal campaign. The RSF was rebranded from a militia called the Janjaweed, who was responsible for a campaign for ridding Sudan of all non-Arab tribes from 2003-2004. In partnership with the government of Sudan at the time, they killed an estimated 300,000 people.