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Prices in Canada may be higher

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A.I. Cheating Has Swamped Online Classes

Teachers Searching for Practical Solutions

**By DANA GOLDSTEIN
and ALAN BLINDER**

Artificial intelligence threatens to undermine online education, a growing business for colleges and universities, as professors struggle to counter a groundswell of tech-enabled cheating.

In physical classrooms, many educators have shifted to oral presentations and handwritten exams to try to prevent misuse of an unregulated technology. But those strategies can be harder to execute online, where more than half of American college students took at least one class last year, up from about a third in 2019.

In many online courses, whether at community colleges or globally renowned universities, students may never meet with their professors or their peers, even over video. Those classes are self-paced with prerecorded lectures, also known as asynchronous. Assignments and tests are submitted digitally.

While some universities are completely online, an increasing number of brick-and-mortar schools are expanding their online offerings. Sometimes students can earn full degrees online. In other cases, they take individual classes.

In this realm, A.I. cheating is quickly accelerating beyond the copy-and-pasting of chatbot-produced essays and problem sets. A.I. agents have made it possible for students to outsource a semester of work. With simple commands — “log in and complete my quiz” — a student can unleash what is, essentially, an imitation of themselves. Agents can watch lecture videos, take tests, write papers and chat with classmates about reading assignments.

There have always been questions about whether degrees from online programs are of equal value to those earned on campuses. But policymakers and education leaders have spent two decades championing online learning as an equity tool allowing nontraditional college students, like low-

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James Barnacle Jr. of the F.B.I., joined by federal prosecutors on Friday, discussed Luigi Mangione's plea in Brian Thompson's death.

Health Fears Are Fueling Bans Of Herbicide Farmers Rely On

By TED ALCORN

California's pesticide regulator has announced that the state will phase out the herbicide paraquat, which studies increasingly associate with Parkinson's disease and other health problems.

The action on Monday by the country's largest agricultural state highlights the growing concerns over the chemical's health effects, even as American farmers say it is an essential tool and continue to spray millions of pounds of it on crops each year.

In March, following lawsuits from thousands of people who blame paraquat for their illnesses, the agrochemical company Syngenta said it would stop producing the chemical, leaving generic manufacturers to fill the void.

Studies Link Paraquat and Parkinson's

A company spokesperson said that the claims made in the lawsuits were meritless.

In May, Vermont became the first state to ban paraquat, and in June, two congresswomen from opposite ideological camps — Representative Chellie Pingree, Democrat of Maine, and Representative Anna Paulina Luna, Republican of Florida — introduced a bill to prohibit it nationwide.

For now, federal regulators have declined to act. Environmental advocates say this reflects how unwieldy the country's pesticide

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California Mulls Recognizing 'Jewish' as a Formal Ethnicity

By YAIR ROSENBERG

The state of California recognizes nearly 50 racial and ethnic identities for data collection, from American Indian to Samoan. Now it is considering adding one more: Jewish.

A bill that passed a crucial committee vote on Thursday would require state agencies to include an optional box for Jewish ethnicity on all demographic data forms, from college applications to public assistance programs. Its passage would make California the first state to officially treat Jewishness as something more than a religion in this fashion — a shift more significant than it might seem.

Scholars of Jewish identity say that it has long posed challenges to American law and public dis-

Approaching Identity as More Than a Religion

course, because Jews have never fit into contemporary conceptual categories. In fact, the challenges — and misconceptions — go back centuries.

“When Jews received the rights of citizenship in European nation states, Jews were forced to think of themselves as a religion,” said Leora Batnitzky, professor of religion at Princeton University and author of “How Judaism Became a Religion.” “But this was always contested from an internal Jewish point of view.”

Plenty of proudly identified

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PLEADING GUILTY, MANGIONE GIVES DETAILS OF PLOT

LAYS OUT C.E.O. KILLING

Admission in U.S. Court
— His Team Asks to
Dismiss State Case

**By BENJAMIN WEISER
and HURUBIE MEKO**

All of the pieces of the brazen assassination on a Manhattan sidewalk that riveted the nation one early morning in December 2024 fell into place on Friday in a federal courtroom.

In just 10 minutes, Luigi Mangione told a judge how he had researched and stalked Brian Thompson, the chief executive of UnitedHealthcare, leaving him bleeding on the sidewalk as he fled after shooting him.

For Mr. Mangione, 28, who pleaded guilty on Friday to two federal counts of stalking Mr. Thompson leading to his death, his remarks in court were his first public admission about that morning. The shooting led to horror and grief but also prompted some to rally in support of a gunman whose violent act was seen as a protest against the nation's health insurance industry.

He could face up to life in prison. At the time of his arrest, Mr. Mangione was found with a document that prosecutors have called a manifesto decrying America's system of for-profit health care and the “parasites” of the insurance industry. He did not use such words in court on Friday, but his message was unmistakable as he described how he had plotted and carried out the attack.

Addressing the court, Mr. Mangione said that after enduring years of severe pain from an injured back and navigating the health insurance system, he tracked down the location of the annual investor conference for UnitedHealthcare, the nation's largest health insurer, by posing as a wealthy investor to solicit information from the company. The conference was to be held in Midtown on Dec. 4, 2024. When that

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Volunteers Whose Mission Knows No Borders

**By GENEVIEVE GLATSKY
and FEDERICO RIOS**

CALI, Colombia — For 40 days they labored in Venezuela, rescuing survivors from the wreckage and later recovering bodies from La Guaira, the coastal region that was the nexus of death and destruction triggered by back-to-back earthquakes.

After a quake struck in neighboring Colombia on Monday they hopped on a red-eye flight. By Wednesday morning they were at collapsed buildings in Cali, Colombia's third-largest city, trying to dig out survivors.

“By the time we were at that point in La Guaira, it was strictly body recoveries,” said Alex Rodríguez, 36, who had been in Venezuela. “And right now we're here at the site, fighting and racing against time to find signs of life.”

The rescue workers were from Topos Azteca, a Mexican volunteer search-and-rescue team that has become one of the best-known names in disaster response across Latin America and beyond. Its members have traveled to earth-

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Héctor Méndez described his experience during a devastating 1985 quake in Mexico as an epiphany.

In Thawing Arctic, Beavers Invade and Renovate

By NORIMITSU ONISHI

UMIUJAQ, Quebec — Until a few years ago, a small stream meandered down a long valley flanked by sheer ridges in Umiujaq, a subarctic village in northern Quebec. The waterway had pretty much hewed to that course since the earth's crust rebounded after the last ice age.

Newcomers from the south, though, had other ideas.

A crew of bucktoothed, paddle-tailed beavers has erected five dams, the most impressive being as tall as a city bus and even longer. The sound of cascading water is heard half a mile away. Toads paddle inside the large ponds that now pockmark the valley, beneficiaries of the hydrological attenuation engineered by the recent arrivals.

“Here, you really feel the beaver's power,” said Najat Bhiry, a geographer who had recently spent two hours thrashing through dense thickets and battling thousands of airborne insects to reach the most ostentatious dam, where a single beaver popped out of the water for a split second.

Catching her breath behind the barrier, her words nearly drowned out by the roar of the crashing water, Professor Bhiry added, “A little animal like the one we just saw, swimming peacefully — and look what it's done!”

Beavers are migrating north —

way north. The furry, pyriform rodents are waddling across boreal forests and torpedoing through both freshwater and saltwater in their push north as Canada's Arctic grows less frigid. They have established themselves in subarctic regions that straddle the tree line, like Umiujaq. The most intrepid are testing the waters hundreds of miles above the Arctic Circle, in hamlets like Tuktoyaktuk, where beavers have been spotted lolling around in the harbor this summer.

Canada's national symbol, beavers have finally hit land inhabited by the Canadians who perhaps know them the least: the Inuit. Traditional residents of Canada's treeless, northern reaches, the Inuit had little, if any, interaction with the beavers.

Beavers, Canada's national symbol, have built dams that disrupt the spawning of Arctic char, angering the residents in Umiujaq.



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LIV Golf needs not only a functioning balance sheet, but also a way to keep its remaining star players happy. PAGE B9

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With gas prices high, Pakistanis are buying battery-powered bikes. The Iran war has made President Trump “salesman of the year,” one man said. PAGE A4

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The family of Jason Arday announced his death. He had been accused of plagiarism and fabrication. PAGE A9

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