

Top Stories

Space Shuttle Discovery lands safely in California



The US Space Shuttle Orbiter Discovery has returned to Earth safely, landing at Edwards Air Force Base, California, touching down on runway 22 at 8:11:22 AM EDT (1211 GMT)

U.N. to begin forming response to Iranian nuclear program



A meeting set for Tuesday by the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) could be a move closer to a showdown at the United Nations over the Iranian plan to resume uranium conversion at its Isfahan nuclear facility.

Featured story

Interview: Wikinewsie Kim Bruning discusses Wikimania



Regular contributor and conference attendee Kim Bruning talks to Wikinews about Wikimania.

Wikipedia Current Events

- Space Shuttle Discovery, the craft for the STS-114 mission, lands at 05:12 PDT (12:12 UTC) at Edwards Air Force Base in California.
- Mahmoud Abbas, President of the Palestinian Authority, has announced that there is to be a Palestinian general election in January 2006.
- Israel orders Jewish Settlers on the Gaza Strip to leave their settlements or face eviction.
- Mamadou Tanja, the President of Niger, has denied reports claiming a famine in Niger.

Wikipedia Current Events

- The Mayor of Baghdad, Alaa al-Tamimi, has been removed from office after 120 armed men, operating on behalf of the Interim Iraqi Government, stormed his office and installed the provincial governor in his place.
- 10 members of the Iraqi police have been shot dead following insurgent attacks across Baghdad and in Baqouba, Iraq.
- At least three civilians have died following a suicide car bomb in the Iraqi capital of Baghdad.
- A committee in Sudan is formed to investigate the death of vice-president John Garang in a helicopter crash.

U.N. to begin forming response to Iranian nuclear program



International Atomic Energy Agency flag

A meeting set for Tuesday by the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) could be a move closer to a showdown at the United Nations over the Iranian plan to resume uranium conversion at its Isfahan nuclear facility.

Iran on Monday refused the weekend offer by the European Union (EU) of economic incentives that included help with nuclear-energy generation. The EU, led by Britain and France, both of which in May 2005 [1] were considered to have violated the first pillar of the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty by failing to make serious efforts to dismantle their nuclear bomb stockpiles (preamble and Article VI of the treaty), and Germany, combined the offer with an exchange for Iran to verifiably give up all activities that could lead to a nuclear bomb.

Iranian officials insist their nuclear program is for peaceful purposes, and say it is part of Iran's right to develop nuclear power, as is legally agreed to in the third pillar of the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty, which gives all states the right to peacefully use nuclear technology. "The proposals are unacceptable," Hossein Moussavian said. "They negate Iran's inalienable right," said the top Iranian nuclear negotiator.

The Iranian refusal, coming from under the new leadership of Mahmoud Ahmadinejad, would probably trigger the referral of Iran to the UN Security Council.

Iran began uranium conversion shortly after IAEA inspectors installed cameras and other surveillance equipment at their nuclear facility. The facility carried out an early stage of the fuel cycle, which includes turning raw uranium (yellowcake) into gas.

France and Britain, both nuclear weapons states which have failed to disarm, condemned Iran's actions.

The IAEA sealed sensitive equipment at Iran's uranium conversion facility at Isfahan and its uranium enrichment plant at Natanz, as part of Tehran's earlier compliance with a Paris agreement. An Al-Jazeera report said the IAEA seals on the plants' sensitive equipment was recently removed.

In a IAEA statement issued Monday, Reuters reports, "It should be noted that the sealed parts of the process line remain intact."

New entrance discovered to world's longest cave



Mammoth Cave, Kentucky. USGS Photo

Explorers have just released information on the discovery and exploration of a new entrance to Kentucky's Mammoth Cave. Located in the east central United States, the 579-kilometer-long (360 mile) cave is the longest known in the world. Despite its length and a two-hundred-year exploration effort, only eight natural entrances have been located into the vast underground system.

The entrance was discovered in September 2003, and a route to known sections of Mammoth Cave was first discovered in March. The actual connection was made at 11:55 p.m. Central Standard Time, March 18, 2005 (4:55 UTC, March 19, 2005) by veteran cavers Alan Canon, John Feil, Dick Market, and James Wells. The latest mapping adds four kilometers (2.5 miles) to Mammoth Cave's total length.

Alan Glennon, a cave scientist at the University of California, Santa Barbara, describes the find as "exciting". "Such significant discoveries show that we've still got a lot to learn about places right under our feet", he said.

Exploration of Mammoth Cave is conducted by the Cave Research Foundation and Central Kentucky Karst Coalition. Both groups' membership is open to experienced cave surveyors. The explorers note that the new entrance is located far from the developed, tourist trails within Mammoth Cave National Park.

Mammoth Cave is located at 37.186° N 86.100° W.

This article contains first-hand journalism by a Wikinews Reporter.

U.S. war protest mom met Bush in 2004



Cindy Sheehan rallied supporters in front of the tour bus emblazoned with "Veterans for Peace.org Impeachment Tour"

On a CNN Wolf Blitzer Late Edition

broadcast Sunday, U.S. Senators George Allen (R-VA) and Barbara Boxer (D-CA) both told Blitzer that in the furore created by the protest that they believe President Bush should personally meet with Cindy Sheehan. She is the mother of a soldier son killed in Iraq in April 2004, and leader of a protest march now camped near the presidential ranch in Crawford, Texas.

After returning from commercial break, Blitzer told his guests that CNN had just received a news bulletin from the White House. The bulletin said that Bush had met previously with Sheehan in the summer of 2004. Both Senators and Blitzer withheld further comment on the matter during the remaining segment of the show.

Later that day, Cindy Sheehan herself appeared on CNN Sunday with Blitzer and said she did meet with Bush in Seattle with fifteen or sixteen other families.

She defended her current protest by saying, "The whole meeting was simply bizarre and disgusting."

Sheehan said that Bush entered the meeting chamber with an insensitive comment to those present, "Who we'all honorin' today?" She added, "His mouth kept moving, but there was nothing in his eyes or anything else about him that showed me he really cared or had any real compassion at all. This is a human being totally disconnected from humanity and reality. His eyes were empty, hollow shells."

The angry mother of the fallen U.S. soldier on Saturday led a protest march of nearly 50 on the Bush ranch. Cindy Sheehan of Vacaville, California demanded, but was denied, the chance to speak with Bush and personally ask him, "Why did you kill my son? What did my son die for?"

Sheehan was met outside the ranch, after progress of the march was stopped by Texas troopers and the Secret Service, by national security adviser Steve Hadley and deputy White House chief of staff Joe Hagin. They spoke with her approximately 45 minutes.

Sheehan, unsatisfied with the meeting, vowed to remain camped outside the ranch until she is granted a personal interview with Bush. Meanwhile, Bush arrived in Albuquerque, New Mexico Monday where

he signed into law the new energy bill. He will travel back to his Texas ranch this week to meet with his defense and economic advisers, then later, he will travel to Illinois to sign a highway bill.

Cindy Sheehan said Sunday that she plans to hold the roadside peace protest near Bush's ranch until he talks to her again. "I'll follow him to D.C.," she said.

Cindy's current comments are a drastic change from her comments in a 2004 interview with THE REPORTER of Vacaville, CA. From the article:

"I now know he's sincere about wanting freedom for the Iraqis," Cindy said after their meeting. "I know he's sorry and feels some pain for our loss. And I know he's a man of faith."

U.S. Pentagon conference says weapons entered Iraq from Iran



Donald Rumsfeld. File photo of press conference 2005-06-27. Photo by Cherie A. Thurlby

In a televised Pentagon press briefing Tuesday, U.S. Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld stood by a press release from the Pentagon on Monday that reported explosives and bombs crossed into Iraq from across the Iranian border. A weapons cache was said to have been intercepted. "It is true that weapons, clearly, unambiguously from Iran have been found in Iraq," Rumsfeld said today.

Evidence reportedly indicated the quality and sophistication of the weapons was such that they may have been manufactured and made in Iran.

Rumsfeld, along with the Chairman of the Joint Chief of Staffs Richard Myers, said

the jihadist effort in Iraq was to incite civil war, because they realize they cannot directly defeat the coalition. Speaking on the border crossings of troops and munitions from Syria and Iran, Rumsfeld said they do not want progress in Iraq to be made. He added, "What are the Iranians doing? Are they helpful or unhelpful? ... the same with the Syrians. Are they helpful or unhelpful?"

The two cited progress by the Iraqi government working toward the August 15 deadline for drafting a new constitution. In a nod to the possibility of the deadline being missed, it was said that the constitution could be amended, and that voting on its ratification would occur in October this year. A general election would follow in December. Myers referred to a shift in the Sunni participation in the process, saying, "All indications are the Sunni leadership has made a fundamental decision they want to be involved."

They reasserted previous President Bush statements that there is no clear time-table for an Iraqi withdrawal. In Iraq, "the drawdown of U.S. troops will depend on conditions", Rumsfeld said. Questions by reporters to pin on them a clear withdrawal time-line on this issue was rebuffed.

Myers said, "Economic progress has to be made, political progress has to be made." He added that "173,000 Iraqi security forces" are in place in the country, but along with work on the country's infrastructure, much remains to be done with the training and equipping of their security forces.

This article contains first-hand journalism by a Wikinews Reporter.

Anti-gay church protests U.S. military funerals

U.S. veterans groups and Midwest politicians are angered by the anti-gay Westboro Baptist Church's recent practice of protesting at the funerals of U.S. soldiers killed in the Iraq War.

The Topeka, Kansas-based church led by Fred Phelps sent 6 protestors with picket signs to the memorial service of 49 Ohio servicemen killed in Iraq. They were members of the Third Battalion, 25th Marine Regiment of Brook Park, Ohio, a

suburb of Cleveland.

Last week at the August 5 funeral of Army Specialist Adam Harding in the Chicago suburb of Portage, Indiana, the Westboro church sent 10 protestors. Harding died in Iraq July 25 when the convoy he was in hit a roadside bomb.

According to reports, the picket signs at the funeral carried such messages as, "Thank God for 9/11," "God is U.S.A.'s Terrorist," "God hates you," "Thank God for dead soldiers" and "America is Doomed." Despite the tone of the messages, church members say they are not protesting against the Iraq War, but against homosexuality. Neither Harding nor any of the 49 Ohio servicemen killed are reported to have been homosexual.

In Ohio, many of the funeral attendees cursed the protestors, according to a report in the Los Angeles Times.

A report from the Chicago Tribune said Westboro church spokeswoman Shirley Phelps-Roper said the church is delivering the church's message that it believes America is doomed and that they single out military funerals because soldiers, like all Americans, are being taught to accept homosexual behavior and other acts it calls sinful.

"This nation has angered the Lord their God and the wrath of god is pouring out on them. God is dealing with this nation, and you can't do one thing to stop it or stop him from blowing those young people to pieces," Phelps Roper said in an interview with CBS affiliate WBBM-TV in Chicago.

Church members say they are expressing their First Amendment rights to protest as they see fit.

But Chicago-area veterans associations held a press conference Monday denouncing the funeral protestors. "Those who are protecting our nation provide the fundamental right of the First Amendment. But to protest at funerals is wrong," Chicago Alderman James Balcer, a veteran of the Vietnam War, reportedly said.

Balcer said the Westboro church should apologize to veterans for its actions.

Oil for food scandal: UN releases third report

The UN-appointed panel investigating the oil for food scandal has released its third report.

The report says that Benon Sevan took nearly \$150,000 in cash bribes. Chef de Cabinet for Kofi Annan, Mark Malloch Brown, said that the UN would lift Sevan's immunity should an approach come from a law enforcement authority and that the UN had been in 'active collaboration' with the Southern District of New York.

At the press conference responding to the report, Malloch Brown also said that there was will "a real need for serious, deep-rooted management reform of our organization, and that does not seem to be yet fully accepted by all member states."

Benon Sevan, who worked for the UN for nearly forty years before resigning on Sunday, has denied the accusation. In his resignation letter to Kofi Annan, he wrote: "The charges are false and you, who have known me all these years, should know they are false... I fully understand the pressure you are under..., but sacrificing me for political expediency will never appease our critics or help you or the organisation."

A former UN procurement officer Alexander Yakovlev has pleaded guilty to accepting hundreds of thousands of dollars in bribes from UN contractors.

Space Shuttle Discovery lands safely in California

The US Space Shuttle Orbiter Discovery has returned to Earth safely, landing at Edwards Air Force Base, California, touching down on runway 22 at 8:11:22 am EDT (1211 GMT), and rolling to a stop.

Commander Eileen Collins and the rest of her crew on Discovery are going through check-out procedures to secure the vehicle and assure safety. A convoy of specially-designed vehicles have parked near Discovery, ready to assist in debarkation of the astronauts from on-board the shuttle, and other initial post-flight processing of the orbiter.

The astronauts on board Discovery (Orbital Vehicle 103 (OV-103)) are expected to disembark at approximately 9 am EDT.

A press conference has been scheduled for 8:30 am CDT, including Dr Mike Griffin, NASA Administrator, among others. NASA-TV will be providing live coverage, among others.

Shuttle Discovery given 'go' for landing at Edwards AFB

The Space Shuttle Discovery STS-114 has been given a 'go' for landing at Edwards Air Force Base today.

The de-orbit burn is expected at 6:06 AM Central Daylight Time (CDT) (Mission Control's local time), and landing is expected at 7:12 AM CDT. Weather conditions are clear at landing site, with scattered clouds at approximately 20,000 feet, with winds peaking at about 12 knots at the number 22 runway, which is where Discovery has been cleared to land.

Shuttle Pilot Jim Kelly will be providing the human piloting for the main part of the flight, with Shuttle Commander Eileen Collins taking over most of the piloting duties as Discovery enters the subsonic range.

Interview: Wikinewsie Kim Bruning discusses Wikimania

On Thursday, August 4, 2005, Wikimedia opened its doors to the first-ever Wikimania Conference, a five-day event put together by the Wikimedia Foundation.

The event, held in the the Haus der Jugend in Frankfurt am Main, Germany, featured discussion and interaction on all Wikimedia projects, including its well-known Wikipedia project, an online encyclopedia which touts figures of millions of articles in over 70 languages.

Conference attendee and Wikinews contributor Kim Bruning talked to Wikinews, represented here by contributor Jonathan Collwer, about the event.

Interview with Kim Bruning

Jonathan Collwer: *Kim, thanks for taking out some time for a quick interview. Let's begin with press coverage. Were any major news organizations present?*

Kim Bruning: *Yes, Wikimania recieved its*

fair share of press attention. According to the Wikimedia Foundation, over 100 press representatives were present at the event, as the conference was held in Frankfurt.

Jonathan Collwer: *As many know, Jimbo Wales, the founder of Wikimedia was a featured speaker at the conference. What was the focus of his speech?*

Kim Bruning: *Jimbo Wales' speech was about a series of blog posts. He's doing a Lawrence Lessig blog. It's called Ten Things That Want to Be Free.*

Jonathan Collwer: *Ward Cunningham, the creator of the wiki, also spoke at Wikimania. Could you tell us a little bit about what he had to say?*

Kim Bruning: *Cunningham's speech focused on both the history of the wiki and what he envisions the future to hold for wiki software. Ward Cunningham first described an Apple Hypercard project that eventually developed into the wiki we know today. Hypercard allows the user to create a "stack" of virtual "cards" that display information. Cunningham created a work-around for the program that created a stack of cards to display information about certain keywords -- if there wasn't a card about a certain keyword, Hypercard would create one. While this emulates the gist of today's Wikipedia, Hypercard is not natively a wiki-like program, so Cunningham determined it necessary to write a dedicated program. He called it the wiki.*

After describing the wiki's past, Cunningham described his vision for the future of the wiki. He hopes to see the wiki become distributed across computers worldwide. The wikis could drift to and fro between computers and keep a history of where they've been. Each computer would automatically keep only links to the information that is on that machine. In all, Cunningham wants to see it embraced that partial data is acceptable. Why? Because this would allow people to use Wikipedia (and other Wikimedia projects, for that matter) even if they don't have a connection to the internet, thus extending the reach of public human knowledge. So that's the inventor of the wiki's take on what the future holds -- a more scalable wiki.

Jonathan Collwer: *So, overall, was the Wikimania conference successful in the*

eyes of the beholder?

Kim Bruning: *The Wikimedians I talked with seemed to be quite pleased with how the event turned out. Wikimania allowed people to finally meet each other face to face, without the computer monitors in the way.*

Jonathan Collwer: *Lastly -- are there any plans for a future Wikimedia meetup?*

Kim Bruning: *Too early to say. There is a plan floating around for something in 2008, but that's not official yet.*

Jonathan Collwer: *Thanks for talking with us, Kim.*

Kim Bruning: *Thanks for interviewing. :-)*

This article contains first-hand journalism by a Wikinews Reporter.

Wikinews Back Page



Today in History

1792 - French Revolution: Insurrectionists stormed the Tuileries Palace, effectively ending the French monarchy until it was restored in 1814.

1809 - History of Ecuador: After nearly three centuries of Spanish rule, the first cry for independence was heard in Quito.

1846 - Smithsonian Institution was chartered by the Congress of the United States.

1920 - Representatives of Sultan Mehmed VI signed the Treaty of Sèvres, recognizing the partitioning of the Ottoman Empire in the aftermath of World War I.

1990 - The Magellan space probe reached Venus.

August 10 is Independence Day in Ecuador, International Biodiesel Day

Quote of the Day

"There's a whole industry of conservatives saying, 'Ah, it's those damn liberals,' and a whole group of liberals saying, 'It's all those damn conservatives.'..." ~ Peter Jennings

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