



Top Stories

Israel offers peace treaty with Lebanon

Ehud Olmert, the Prime Minister of Israel has offered to make peace with Lebanon, calling for an end "hostility, fanaticism and hatred" towards each nation by "shaking [each other's] hands."

Smart-1 probe ends mission with planned crash into the Moon

Observatories around the world watched the skies early on Sunday morning as a European space probe, the SMART-1 crash landed on the Moon; the first time a European made object has landed there and, as the first, it made quite a bang.

Featured story

Crocodile Hunter's Steve Irwin dies at 44

Steve Irwin, the environmentalist and star of The Crocodile Hunter, died Monday after an accident with a stingray near Cairns, Australia, according to local Australian media. He was 44.

Wikipedia Current Events

- Operation Medusa: more than 50 Taliban insurgents killed in Afghanistan.
- Felipe Calderón of the PAN is declared the winner of Mexico's 2 July presidential election.
- Bill Ford steps down from his position as CEO of Ford Motor Company. He is replaced by Alan Mulally, the former executive vice

Wikipedia Current Events

president and CEO of Boeing Commercial Airlines. Bill Ford will remain chairman.

- The Turkish Parliament votes to authorize the Turkish Government to send troops to the United Nations peacekeeping force in Lebanon. Deputy speaker Nevzat Pakdil said 340 of the 533 lawmakers present in the 550-seat house voted for the deployment; 192 voted against and one abstained.
- Lebanese troops move into the southern town of Bint Jbeil.
- Pakistan has signed a deal with pro-Taliban militants on the Afghan border aimed at ending years of unrest.

•A roadside bomb seriously wounds Lt. Col. Samir Shehade, a Lebanese police officer, and kills four of his aides. Shehade was involved in the August 2005 arrest of four pro-Syrian Lebanese generals, on suspicion of involvement in the February 2005 assassination of former Lebanese PM Rafik Hariri.

•Fidel Castro claims that he is recovering well despite losing 18 kg (41 lb) as a result of intestinal surgery.

•President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad of Iran calls for a purge of liberal and secular professors from the nation's universities. He said: "Today, students should shout at the president and ask why liberal and secular university lecturers are present in the universities."

Liberal leadership hopeful Ken Dryden outlines visions for Canada

Liberal leadership hopeful Ken Dryden outlined his vision of the country today. He wants Canada to be a fair, global, environmental and learning society.

"What I'm trying to focus on is the educational systems as part of a whole piece of what I call a learning society," Dryden told CTV's Canada AM this morning. "We learn from the day we are born and we learn until the day we die."

"The challenge is finding ways of enhancing learning through a national system of early childcare and a proper mix of scholarships and government help, such as grants and tax incentives," said Dryden.

Dryden admitted during a news conference that he doesn't know whether Canadian troops should withdraw or stay in Afghanistan or whether a carbon tax should be part of any climate change plan. He has now called for a thorough debate and examination of the issue.

Other leadership hopefuls are planning big policy announcements this week as they head into the few weeks before delegates are chosen to attend to leadership convention in December.

Wikinews Shorts: September 5, 2006 Arctic Monkeys win Mercury

Music prize

The Arctic Monkeys won the Mercury music prize for their debut album *People Say I Am, That's What I'm Not*. They beat such competition as Muse, Editors and Sandi Thom to the two hundred thousand pound prize. The Arctic Monkeys said they were "Surprised, honoured but very pleased" to win, in all more than two hundred albums (released in the last year) were considered from both British and Irish acts.

People Say I Am, That's What I'm Not became the fastest selling album ever in Britain when it was released; selling three hundred and sixty thousand copies in its first week.

Egypt - Rail accident claims five lives

The collision of a freight train with a passenger train just north of Cairo in the town of Shebin al-Qanater. The accident claimed 5 lives and injured another 30. It is reported that one of the dead was the engineer of the freight train.

The accident comes amid a public inquiry into a previous crash. Mohammed Mansour (Egypt's new director of transport) has said that the transportation system is to be overhauled. The government has approved \$860 million in funding to develop the rail infrastructure as well as another \$600 million in loans to private rail operators.

Violence continues in Baghdad, suspected al-Qaeda leader arrested

Iraq witnessed more violence, with more than 30 people killed and a well known football player abducted. The incidents follow Sunday's arrest of "al-Qaeda second-in-command in Iraq" by security forces.

The bodies of 33 men were discovered dumped in various places in Baghdad today. The men had been blindfolded, had their hands and feet bound, were tortured and shot dead.

On Saturday, a well known Iraqi football player, 22-year old Ghanim Ghudayer, was abducted by persons wearing military uniforms and has not been seen since. Ghudayer is a member of Baghdad's Air Force Club.

South of Baghdad in the town of Kut, two more bodies were discovered found near a roadside. Both of the victims had been shot execution style, according to the local pathologist. The execution style killing has coincided with an Iraqi forces effort to secure the city of Karbala in advance of a Shiite religious holiday, set for 9 September. So far the fighting has killed 14 gunmen and one soldier.

The incidents follow Sunday's announcement by the Iraqi security service that they had arrested Hamed Jumaa Farid al-Saeedi, who they claimed was al-Qaeda's second-in-command in Iraq.

British Foreign Secretary Margaret Beckett, who made a surprise visit to Baghdad, said "We do not underestimate the challenges ahead, But we must not forget the progress made in the last twelve months in bringing the first democratically elected national unity government to the country, with a constitution voted for by the people." The visit comes as public support for the Iraq operation is beginning to sag on both sides of the Atlantic.

Iraq's parliament voted to extend Iraq's two-year-old state of emergency by another month. The

state of emergency grants security forces special powers of curfew and detention.

Smart-1 probe ends mission with planned crash into the Moon

Observatories around the world watched the skies early on Sunday morning as a European space probe, the SMART-1 crash landed on the Moon; the first time a European made object has landed there and, as the first, it made quite a bang. For the culmination of its three-year mission the probe left its orbit around our nearest neighbor and smashed into the Lake of Excellence at around 4,500 mph. The impact created a brand new crater and scattered debris up to 30 miles, in contrast to the gentle touchdown of the Eagle lander (when Neil Armstrong became the first man on the moon) 37 years ago.

SMART-1, an unmanned probe, was launched aboard an Ariane 5 rocket on September 27, 2003 from the European Space Agencies launch site in Kourou, French Guiana. The first probe from the Small Missions for Advanced Research in Technology (SMART) group took 14 months to reach its destination. Since then it has orbited more than 3000 times, covering a staggering 62 million miles. In that time its mission has been to gather new information about the Moon's geographical and chemical make up. An ESA scientist, Bernard Foing said: "The legacy left by the huge wealth of SMART-1 data, to be analysed in the months and years to come, is a precious contribution to Lunar science at a time when the exploration of the Moon is once again getting the worlds interest." Using X-ray and infrared cameras the probe took pictures of the Moon's surface; some of its

findings include a mountaintop (christened the Peak of Eternal light) where the Sun never sets.

Considering the distance it had traveled, the fuel consumption of SMART-1 was quite economical: the entire mission required just 62 litres (13 gallons) of liquid Xenon to fuel it. Weighing in at 376 kilograms and costing £75 million, SMART-1 was one of the smallest and cheapest space missions. Towards the end of its mission the probe was orbiting up to 4 times a day (as opposed to twice a day at the start of its mission) as controllers brought it closer and closer to the Moon in preparation for the final act.

The mission was also a test of new technologies. The miniature X-ray camera is the first in the world to be able to identify Calcium deposits in rock formations. Combined with other features the probe was, for the first time, able to map the chemical structure of large sections of the Lunar landscape. Manuel Grande, the University of Wales scientist in charge of the camera, said: "What was particularly pleasing was the calcium signal [...] This is the first time we've been able to take an inventory of all the rock-forming elements of the moon."

A similar camera is expected to be included on a similar Indian mission, the (Chandrayaan-1), due to be launched in 2007-2008.

Another new technology used by the probe was its engine, called a Hall effect thruster, a new form of Ion thruster (first considered by scientists in the 1950's). Previously this type of engine was only flown on Russian satellites, and this was the first time one has ever powered a craft beyond earth orbit. The thruster works by

applying a large voltage across a magnetic coil, creating a strong magnetic field. This ionises the Xenon fuel supply which accelerates the ions to high speeds, pushing the craft forward. The propulsion of such an engine is around 3 times that of a normal chemical rocket. The thruster was powered by 2 solar panels on either side of the probe.

The engine's small size and cost-efficiency helped keep down the mission budget. However there are drawbacks; for example, maneuvers have to be carried out in long progressive burns rather than with short sharp bursts. A hall effect engine will also be used on the Bepi-Colombo mission to Mercury in 2013.

Astronomers and scientists in ground observatories tracked the crash landing as it unfolded, controlled by the ESA staff from the Darmstadt centre, Germany. The Mauna Kea observatory in Hawaii caught the impact on infrared cameras, seen as a bright flash as rock and soil became superheated. Elsewhere, results were less conclusive; in Florida thick cloud meant astronomers missed the event. One observer said: "It would have been nice if it was clear, but that's the way astronomy works."

ESA sources say the mission was entirely successful in its aim to test new technology and obtain more data about the Moon. "It was really a great mission for the agency," said mission manager Gerhard Schwehm, "It was a technology demonstrator that grew up and provide lots of beautiful science data."

New Zealand woman survives being run over by train

A New Zealand woman who lay

down between railway tracks and had a freight train run over her is "incredibly lucky", sustaining only minor injuries, according to Sue Foley, spokeswoman for the railway company, Toll Holdings.

The driver saw the woman lying in between the tracks while the train was travelling at about 20 km/h. Despite the slow speed of the train, the driver was unable to stop the train before it ran over the woman. "By the time he stopped the train and walked back down the line, she popped out from under the third wagon," said Mike Lawton, acting sergeant for Feilding police.

The woman was flown to Palmerston North Hospital after complaining about sore elbows and shoulders and receiving minor injuries.

The driver of the train has been offered counselling while he has been taken off driving duties.

Police and the train operator would not comment on why the woman was lying between the tracks.

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In August the director of rail service in Egypt was fired after a similar accident killed 58 people in the town of Qalyoub. A public inquiry into that accident is underway amid growing criticism of the government for lacs rail safety and transport regulation. Mohammed Mansour, Egypt's new director of transport has agreed

that the transportation system is in need of extensive overhauls. The government has approved \$860 million to develop the rail infrastructure, plus another \$600 million in loans to private rail operators.

Today in History

394: The Christian Roman Emperor Theodosius I defeated the pagan usurper Eugenius in the Battle of Frigidus.

1522: The Victoria returned to Sanlúcar de Barrameda, Spain, with Juan Sebastián Elcano and 17 survivors of Ferdinand Magellan's 265-man expedition, becoming the first ship to circumnavigate the globe.

1941: The Holocaust: All Jews over the age of 6 were required to wear the Star of David in areas controlled by Nazi Germany.

1955: Ethnic Greeks in Istanbul were attacked by an overwhelming Turkish mob during the Istanbul Pogrom.

1995: Baltimore Oriole shortstop Cal Ripken, Jr. played his 2131st consecutive major league baseball game, breaking the 56-year old record set by New York Yankee first baseman Lou Gehrig.

September 06 is Independence Day in Swaziland (1968); Defence Day in Pakistan; Unification Day in Bulgaria.

Quote of the Day

"My personal feeling is that this is how any further improvement of the world will be done: by individuals making Quality decisions and that's all."

~ Robert M. Pirsig

Word of the Day

caesura; n

1. A a pause or interruption in a poem, music, building or other work of art.
2. In Classical prosody, using two words to divide a metrical foot.

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http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Main_Page

Quote of the Day

http://en.wikiquote.org/wiki/Main_Page

Word of the Day

http://en.wiktionary.org/wiki/Main_Page

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