



### Top Stories

#### Scientists say genetic building blocks are from out of this world

A team of scientists from the United States, United Kingdom and the Netherlands have determined that chemicals in a meteorite that form the building blocks of DNA and RNA had formed before the meteorite fell to Earth.



#### Guinea coup trial defendant names co-conspirators

Testifying in court about a plot to overthrow the government of Equatorial Guinea, Simon Mann named Sir Mark Thatcher and Chelsea-based Lebanese billionaire Ely Calil as major players, while describing himself as a junior member.



#### Row over Lech Wałęsa's alleged collaboration with communists escalates

A soon-to-be published book containing allegations that Lech Wałęsa, a founder and leader of Solidarity, worked with the secret police has caused a stir and may trigger lawsuits in Poland. The book alleges, among



Credit: Slawek (cc-by-sa-2.0)

### Top Stories

other things, that Wałęsa informed on other dissidents in exchange for money.

#### Jason-2 satellite launched to measure sea levels

The Ocean Surface Topography Mission (OSTM), or Jason-2, satellite, has been launched into low Earth orbit. A Delta II rocket carrying the satellite lifted off from Space Launch Complex 2W at the Vandenberg Air Force Base in California, United States, at 07:46 GMT this morning. Spacecraft separation occurred around an hour later, and the solar panels on the satellite have deployed.



### Wikipedia Current Events

2008 Pacific typhoon season: At least two people die in a landslide in Cotabato City in Mindanao as Typhoon Fengshen hits the Philippines.

- UAE wins the first ever Arab Cup of Ice Hockey by defeating Kuwait 4-1.
- People's Alliance for Democracy marched to the Government House in Bangkok demand that the government step down.
- The Franco-American Jason-2 satellite launches, with a mission of furthering the study of physical oceanography.

### Wikipedia Current Events

- Police in Nepal detain more than 700 Tibetan exiles protesting outside the Chinese embassy and arrest three activists for alleged anti-China activities.
- A suicide bomb attack in southern Afganistan kills 6 civilians.
- After white patches uncovered by digging from the Phoenix lander are found to have sublimated by the lander's cameras, NASA believes it has found water ice on Mars.
- The European Union agrees to lift the sanctions it has imposed on Cuba since the 2003 Cocktail Wars dispute.
- Twelve people are trampled to death trying to escape a police raid in northern Mexico City.

#### Scientists say genetic building blocks are from out of this world

A team of scientists from the United States, United Kingdom and the Netherlands have determined that chemicals in a meteorite that form the building blocks of DNA and RNA had formed before the meteorite fell to Earth. In a paper published in Earth and Planetary Science Letters on June 15, the team documents an examination of molecules found in the Murchison meteorite, fragments of which landed near the village of Murchison, Victoria in Australia in 1969.

Previous studies had identified

amino acids and sugars in the meteorite that were believed to have formed in space. The samples the current study examined included molecules of uracil and xanthine, which belong to the class of nucleobases - chemicals which, when combined with sugars, form a crucial part of DNA and RNA. These molecules contained a form of carbon, known as carbon 13, in much higher concentrations than would be expected if they had come from contamination through exposure from Earth sources. The study, using nuclear magnetic resonance (NMR) imaging, had not been undertaken before due to its laborious and time-consuming nature - the low concentration of nucleobases in the meteorite meant that 15 grams of space rock had to be processed to get a large enough sample, compared to the milligrams required for previous studies.

"Life is all about information - its replication and processing"  
—Professor Paul Davies

Co-author Dr Zita Martins, a chemist and astrobiologist from Imperial College London, believes their findings suggest that some of the chemicals that generated life on Earth came from meteorite bombardments. "We are not saying that only meteorites contributed to the building blocks of life," she said, "but it's a very great contribution." Other scientists, however, do not believe that meteoritic chemicals played such a significant role. According to Emeritus Professor Robert Shapiro of New York University, "They're a subunit of a subunit of DNA. My opinion is that their amounts were utterly unimportant and insignificant."

Wikinews contacted Professor Paul

Davies, a physicist and astrobiologist presently at Arizona State University, about the recent findings. While he agreed with the findings, he said that he thinks such discoveries are "a red herring in the origin of life story - a hangover from the Miller-Urey experiment. Life is all about information - its replication and processing."

### **MDC may pull out of Zimbabwe election**

According to party officials, Zimbabwe's Movement for Democratic Change (MDC) will announce Monday, June 23, whether they will pull out of the 2008 presidential election, due to election violence, or stay in the race.

This week alone, at least five MDC activists or their family members have been killed in election violence. The MDC's secretary general, Tendai Biti, was charged with subversion and treason. The case has been delayed until July 7, more than a week after the run-off election on June 27. The charges carry a possible death sentence, but he could still be granted bail.

The MDC has said that during the run-off elections, at least 70 of its supporters were killed, and over 25,000 have been evicted from their homes in a campaign of violence endorsed by President Robert Mugabe. Mugabe, however, has blamed the MDC for the violence.

Mugabe has repeatedly said that he would not allow the MDC to come into power. "The MDC will never be allowed to rule this country -- never ever," Mugabe said on Friday. "Only God who appointed me will remove me - not the MDC, not the British," he added, referring to the accusation

that his election opponent Morgan Tsvangirai is a puppet of former colonial power Britain.

"In the light of the violence and intimidation, we will make a position whether we still feel the people's will will be realised, whether it's conducive to go into an election," said MDC spokesman Nelson Chamisa. Some party members are split over the issue. Innocent Gonese, the MDC's secretary for legal affairs, said, "People are saying despite all that we should not withdraw and we also believe withdrawing will not solve anything."

Nelson Chamisa said the party needs to assess the situation before deciding their next move, as some areas are inaccessible. "Our grass-roots activists are being subjected to terror," Chamisa said. "Some of them are staying in the bushes and mountains to avoid Zanu-PF militias. Unless there's a change in conditions on the ground, the election will be a charade."

### **Peacekeeping helicopter crash kills four in Bosnia**

A European Union peacekeeping helicopter crashed near Banja Luka in Bosnia and Herzegovina yesterday, killing the four servicemen on board. Two were German and two were Spanish.

The helicopter belonged to Spain and was deployed as part of the EUFOR peacekeeping mission, which Spain and Germany have 250 and 130 soldiers engaged in respectively. It was a German-built Messerschmitt-Bolkow-Blohm BO-105. Spain's defence ministry named the deceased Spaniards as Lieutenant Santiago Hormigo Ledesma and Sergeant Joaquin Lopez Moreno. The Germans have not been named.

The cause of the accident is unknown, but the crash was witnessed by a second military helicopter in the area at the time. They reported seeing smoke from the helicopter but little else because the mountainous and forested terrain impeded their view. It is also known that the aircraft departed Sarajevo on a routine flight and crashed half an hour later after issuing a distress call. An investigation is ongoing.

The bodies were recovered today. The Spaniards were flown home on a C-130 military transport plane, after a short ceremony in which a Spanish general placed medals upon the coffins in the presence of the Spanish ambassador and EUFOR officials.

A EUFOR spokesman said the bodies of the Germans will probably be flown home on Monday.

### **Row over Lech Wałęsa's alleged collaboration with communists escalates**

A book alleging that Solidarity trade union leader and former Polish president Lech Wałęsa collaborated with communist security services (SB) raised a major stir in Polish media this week, with insults and threats of lawsuits heating up the mood even before its scheduled publication next week.

According to its authors, National Remembrance Institute (IPN) historians Sławomir Cenckiewicz and Piotr Gontarczyk, the book shows that Wałęsa, who in 1983 won the Nobel Peace Prize for leading the peaceful Solidarity movement that later led to the downfall of communism in Poland, had collaborated with the SB in the early 1970. They also allege that

Wałęsa received payment for reports that later led to repressions against his fellow dissidents.

Wałęsa said he would sue state-owned broadcaster Telewizja Polska for 20 million zlotys in damages after it aired a documentary detailing the book's allegations on June 18.

On June 17, IPN vice-president Maria Dmochowska apologized to Wałęsa for the book in an open letter published in national media, while right-wing national daily Rzeczpospolita ran cover-page interview with the books authors in which they supported their claims.

Last week Wałęsa and current President Lech Kaczyński traded harsh words after Kaczyński said he knew that Wałęsa had been a collaborator. Wałęsa called the president was "an inhibited, little man who shook with fear his whole life", and said he would sue him if it was formally possible to do so.

The book, SB a Lech Wałęsa. Przyczynek do biografii (The SB and Lech Wałęsa: a contribution to a biography), is set to be published on June 23.

### **2008 Google Developer Day makes its inception in Taiwan**

Last Saturday June 14, 2008 Google Developer Day made its first appearance in Taiwan at the Taipei International Convention Center. Approximately 1,000 developers participated in this conference.

Unlike the first two Developer Days held in China and Japan, this event focused more on demonstrations of "OpenSocial" and "Google App Engine".

Kai-fu Lee, Founding Chairman of

Google China, proposed the theory on different generations and leaders on the Internet.

Li-feng Chien, Engineering Director of Google Taiwan, commented about the theory to Wikinews Journalist Rico Shen: "It's evidently a good phenomenon in Taiwan that interactions on several critical topics and incidents between Internet users was more and more active, but in opposite way, it exposed weaknesses on community awareness and agglomerations. Therefore, community awareness will be the critical factor on the Internet not only in Taiwan."

### **2008 Google Developer Day focuses on Internet APIs in Australia**

Google Developer Day 2008 took place on June 18 at the Wharf 8 Venue Complex in Sydney, Australia. This is the fourth event after Japan, China, and Taiwan. Thirteen Google Developer days have been scheduled for 2008. About 650 local developers participated in this conference.

Internet APIs on websites and enterprises was emphasised at this event, in addition to discussions on Google Apps Engine, Google Maps, and Android.

Alan Noble, Engineering Director of Google Australia and New Zealand, hoped potential talents and developers can be discovered in this conference, and also commented about the Internet era to local media: "Developers took hold of the notion that the web itself is truly the platform of the future - an open playing field where anyone can build innovative applications."

### **2008 Taste of Taiwan Cuisine features three shows for food**

### **and packaging industries**

The second annual Taste of Taiwan Cuisine opened on Wednesday of June 18, 2008 and runs until June 21. Organized by Taiwan External Trade Development Council to promote the culinary culture of Taiwan, the tradeshow featured three main shows for food and food packaging industries: "Food Taipei", "Foodtech Taipei", and "Taipei Pack".

Twenty-seven countries including United States, South Korea, Canada, Japan, Sri Lanka, Austria, Philippines, Chile, Malaysia, Spain, Fiji, Poland, and six nations from Africa, grouped their own national pavilions for sourcing and procurement. In addition, the Taiwan Pavilion featured sections on culture, product image, brand design, and agriculture verification in Food Taipei.

Industrial solutions including medical applications, packaging machines, food CNCs, and bar-code printers are showcased in the "Foodtech Taipei" and "Taipei Pack". Seminars and forums from security, global marketing, and policies for food, machinery, and packaging industries are also held during show hours.

After the 3-in-1 show in Taipei, the Kaohsiung International Food Show will be scheduled

### **Guinea coup trial defendant names co-conspirators**

Simon Mann, a former United Kingdom SAS officer, told an Equatorial Guinea court that he was one of the "junior" members of a 2004 attempt to overthrow President Teodoro Obiang Nguema, and not the mastermind as the prosecution claimed. In his address to the court, Mann named several others involved in the plot including Mark Thatcher, son of

former UK Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher, and Chelsea-based Lebanese billionaire Ely Calil, whom Mann alleges was one of the major players.

The planned coup was allegedly plotted and bankrolled by a group of influential figures, including Calil, in an attempt to put self-declared opposition leader Severo Moto — currently living in exile in Madrid, Spain — in power and claim the profits from de facto ownership of the country's oil reserves. Mann, who had run mercenaries in civil conflicts in other African countries, claims Calil convinced him to run the operation through financial and moral incentives. "They knew I would be sympathetic to the story they told about the oil money not getting to the people," he told the court. Mann claimed that he was told the coup was supported by South Africa, Spain and the United States, as well as several unnamed oil companies, and that the conspirators included several members of Nguema's own parliament who kept watch of his movements.

Mann was arrested in Zimbabwe at Harare airport in 2004 on the way to Equatorial Guinea along with 61 alleged accomplices. He was found guilty of attempting to buy arms for the alleged coup plot, and sentenced to seven years' prison in Zimbabwe. In May 2007 a Zimbabwe judge court ruled for him to be extradited to Equatorial Guinea. Co-conspirator Nick Du Toit, who is currently serving a 34-year sentence for his role, was already in the capital city of Malabo with a troupe of mercenaries when Mann was arrested.

### **Mormon church warns Wikileaks over documents**

Wikileaks, a website which hosts copies of restricted documents, recently received a claim of copyright infringement from the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints (LDS). This development follows a similar letter being sent to the Wikimedia Foundation, owners of Wikinews, regarding a link to the Wikileaks document.

The letter sent to Wikileaks demands that Wikileaks takes down the document immediately. In an exclusive statement given to Wikinews, however, Wikileaks said that "WikiLeaks will not remove the handbooks, which are of substantial interest to current and former Mormons. WikiLeaks will remain a place where people from around the world can safely reveal the truth."

In another exclusive statement given to Wikinews, before the LDS incident, Wikileaks did say that if there was a substantial danger, Wikileaks would remove the documents from the site. "If aliens parked in orbit and said that they would obliterate the world if Wikileaks did not remove some document exposing them, would Wikileaks' distributed file server operators remove the document in question? Of course, even though there is no mechanism to do this, everyone involved would work out how to ."

The letter notifying Wikileaks of the copyright infringement was sent by Berne S. Broadbent, president of Intellectual Reserve, which controls the intellectual property of the mormon church.

On May 5, the Wikimedia Foundation received a copyright infringement claim from

Intellectual Reserve. The infringement claim was addressed to Jimmy Wales, the designated agent of the Wikimedia Foundation, and requested that access to the link to Wikileaks be removed. Wikinews acted differently to Wikileaks after receiving the notice, as Wikinews took down the link soon after being made aware of the claim.

### Jason-2 satellite launched to measure sea levels

The Ocean Surface Topography Mission (OSTM), or Jason-2, satellite, has been launched into low Earth orbit. A Delta II rocket carrying the satellite lifted off from Space Launch Complex 2W at the Vandenberg Air Force Base in California, United States, at 07:46 GMT this morning. Spacecraft separation occurred around an hour later, and the solar panels on the satellite have deployed.

OSTM is a collaboration between the American space agency, NASA, and the French space agency, CNES. It will study and map the surface of the oceans from space. The Delta II rocket flew in the 7320 configuration, the lowest capacity variant, with three solid rocket motors, and no third stage. The exact launch time was 07:46:25.192 GMT.

This is the third launch of a Delta II carrier rocket to be conducted so far this year, and the 137th overall. The next Delta II is scheduled to launch in mid-late August, with the GeoEye-1 civilian imagery satellite, however A GPS satellite launch which was delayed from mid July to an unconfirmed date could potentially occur before this. This is the 32nd orbital launch of 2008.

### NASA: White substance photographed by Phoenix lander on Mars 'must have been ice'

White 'chunks' that were photographed by the Phoenix lander on Mars on June 15 after digging a trench, have disappeared, leading scientists to believe they most certainly found ice on the Red Planet.

"It must be ice. These little clumps completely disappearing over the course of a few days, that is perfect evidence that it's ice. There had been some question whether the bright material was salt. Salt can't do that," said Phoenix Principal Investigator Peter Smith of the University of Arizona located in Tucson, Arizona.

The chunks were left at the bottom of a trench informally called "Dodo-Goldilocks" when Phoenix's Robotic Arm enlarged that trench on June 15, during the 20th Martian day, or sol, since landing. Several were gone when Phoenix looked at the trench early today, on Sol 24.

Digging in a different trench Phoenix's robotic Arm connected with a hard surface that has scientists excited about the prospect of next uncovering an icy layer.

"We have dug a trench and uncovered a hard layer at the same depth as the ice layer in our other trench," said Washington University robotic arm investigator for Phoenix, Ray Arvidson. The arm tried at least three times to penetrate the layer, but was unsuccessful. As a result the arm went into a holding pattern, awaiting its next commands.

### Today in History

1734 – A black slave known as

Marie-Joseph Angélique, after having been convicted of setting the fire that destroyed much of Montreal, was tortured and then hanged in New France.

1813 – Peninsular War: The Marquess of Wellington's combined British, Portuguese, and Spanish allied army defeated the French near Vitoria, Spain.

1898 – In a bloodless event during the Spanish-American War, the United States captured Guam from Spain.

1948 – The Manchester Small-Scale Experimental Machine, the world's first stored-program computer, ran its first computer program.

1973 – The U.S. Supreme Court delivered its decision in the landmark case *Miller v. California*, establishing the "Miller test" for determining what is obscene material.

1985 – Greenland officially adopted its own flag, adding support to its independence movement from Denmark.

### Quote of the Day

Every natural fact is a symbol of some spiritual fact. ~ Ralph Waldo Emerson

### Word of the Day

vocalize v

1. To express with the voice; to utter.
2. (of animals) To produce noises or calls from the throat.
3. (music) To sing without using words.
4. (linguistics) To turn a consonant into a vowel.

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