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NASA's Phoenix spacecraft lands safely on Mars

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minutes later at 23:53. Phoenix was launched atop a Delta II rocket last August. It is the first Mars

Scout spacecraft to be sent to explore Mars. It will search for water and complex molecules at the North Pole of Mars.

Former vice president of Democratic Republic of Congo arrested on charges of war crimes

One of the Democratic Republic of Congo's (DRC) vice presidents



and former militia leader Jean-Pierre Bemba, has been arrested in

Belgium on charges of war crimes. This comes as United Nations (U.N.) peacekeepers discovered three mass graves in the nation containing an estimated total of 100 bodies.

President Bush to meet with LDS Church leaders in Utah



United States President George W. Bush is set to

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meet with leaders of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints next week in Utah. President Bush's primary purpose in visiting Utah is to raise money for Republican presidential candidate John McCain's general election campaign. The Deseret News and The Salt Lake Tribune have reported that the meeting is scheduled for May 29.

Eleven days later, a survivor pulled from rubble after Chinese earthquake

Eleven days, or 266 hours after an earthquake in Sichuan Province in China which killed over 60,000 people, a survivor has been rescued from the rubble of his own house in the city of Mianzhu. Xiao Zhihu, 80, who is said to be in stable condition at a local hospital, was paralyzed prior to the earthquake and was found underneath a pillar that once held up his house.

Wikipedia Current Events

The International Atomic Energy Agency releases a report accusing Iran of hiding information about alleged studies of producing nuclear warheads and defying demands to suspend its uranium enrichment.

•China relaxes its one-child policy to allow parents of children killed in the 2008 Sichuan earthquake to have another child.

•Westpac signs an implementation agreement for its take over of the

Wikipedia Current Events

St George Bank, creating the largest bank in Australia with a market capitalisation of A\$66 billion.

•Nepalese authorities ban rallies and mass meetings in Kathmandu prior to the first meeting of the Nepalese Constituent Assembly which is expected to declare Nepal a republic.

•A court in Ethiopia sentences former ruler Mengistu Haile Mariam to death for his role in the Red Terror.

•Embattled Canadian Minister of Foreign Affairs Maxime Bernier resigns after admitting to having left confidential documents unsecured in a private home.

Film director Sydney Pollack dies at age 73

Sydney Pollack, Academy-Award winning american film director, producer and actor has died today at his home in Los Angeles, California at the age of 73. The cause of death was announced as stomach cancer.

He was born on July 1, 1934 in Lafayette, Indiana, United States. He directed films such as The Way We Were, Tootsie, and Out of Africa.

Pollack is survived by his wife, Claire Griswold and 3 children.

Author Robert Asprin dead at 61

Author Robert Asprin died

Thursday in his New Orleans, Louisiana home at the age of 61. Asprin, known for his science fiction and fantasy novels including the MythAdventures series, and Thieves World series of shared world anthologies which he created and edited with his then-wife, Lynn Abbey, was also known by his Society for Creative Achronism (SCA) nickname of "Yang the Nauseating".

Asprin had been scheduled to appear as a keynote guest at the Multiple Alternative Realities Convention (MARCON) in Columbus, Ohio, over the weekend, and his body was discovered by an SCA friend who had come to pick him up to take him to the airport.

He is survived by his mother, sister, son, daughter, and cat, Princess. According to his wishes, a gathering at Fahy's Pub in the French Quarter will be held tonight in lieu of a formal memorial service.

Nine killed as Russian cargo plane crashes in Siberia

All seven on board a Russian Antonov An-12 have been killed after the plane crashed near the Siberian city of Chelyabinsk. The Moskovia Airlines plane had left the city's airport empty and was destined for Perm in the Ural Mountains.

An emergency ministry spokeswoman, Natalya Andryanova, said on state TV "The pilot told ground control that there was smoke in the cockpit and he decided to return to the airport. The plane crashed as he was coming in for landing." The plane is reported to have gone down in forest about a dozen miles from the city at about 6 p.m. According to regional emergency official

Vyacheslav Latunkin, the plane hit a power line.

The An-12 is a large, four-engined cargo turboprop that can carry 20 tons and was designed in the 1950s. Large numbers were sold for use in both the military and civilian markets, and around 100 are still in service. Dmitry Medvedev expressed his condolences and ordered Transport Minister Igor Levitin to launch an inquiry. Interfax reports that a criminal investigation has also been launched into possible regulatory breaches.

Local resident Vladimir Zonov said wreckage was spread across 300 metres. He also said the plane crashed into a wheat field and not forest as otherwise reported.

Russian air safety is among the worst in the world, as is that of many former Soviet countries. Industry analysts blame poor pilot training, cost-reduction at the cost of safety and inadequate control by the government.

Fire and explosions kill at least 30 at Iranian chemical factory

A fire and string of explosions at a chemical factory in Iran have killed at least 30 people. State news agency IRNA says at least 38 more are injured at the facility near Shazand in the industrial province of Markazi.

IRNA reports that a 60,000 litre chemical reservoir exploded to trigger the disaster, which may have been caused by nearby welding work.

23 of the injured people are reported to have sustained burns accross 70-100% of their body. It is unclear what was manufactured at the factory, with RTE reporting that it was a pharmaceutical plant,

and Agence France-Presse saying the site was used to produce cosmetics and detergent.

Local officials say the property has been almost completely destroyed, but the fire has been brought under control. The fire had rapidly spread from the building of origin to the rest of the complex, leaving roofs caving in and many vehicles burnt out. Some of the dead are charred beyond recognition.

2008-09 Bundesliga: Bayer Leverkusen appoint Labbadia as Head Coach

Bayer Leverkusen has appointed SpVgg Greuther Fürth Head Coach Bruno Labbadia as the club's new Head Coach. Michael Skibbe was fired last week after failing to qualify for a European competition. Labbadia signed a 2-year contract.

Bruno Labbadia scored 103 goals in 328 Bundesliga games while playing as a forward for Bayern München, Werder Bremen and Hamburger SV.

Labbadia led Greuther Fürth to 6th place in the 2nd division in the 2007/08 season.

Lebanon elects army chief as new president

Michel Suleiman officially became the President of Lebanon yesterday after a series of events that had delayed the election by over a year were concluded.

Some people in the Lebanese capital, Beirut, set off explosives and fired guns to celebrate the victory.

US President George W. Bush released a statement regarding the victory: "I congratulate Michel Sleiman on his election as President of Lebanon."

Bush continued, "I am confident that Lebanon has chosen a leader committed to protecting its sovereignty, extending the government's authority over all of Lebanon, and upholding Lebanon's international obligations under UN Security Council Resolutions, including 1559, 1701 and 1757."

"I am hopeful that the Doha Agreement, which paved the way for this election, will usher in an era of political reconciliation to the benefit of all Lebanese. We look forward to working with President Sleiman in pursuit of our common values of freedom and independence."

Squash lines up for the 2016 Olympics

Squash is among the seven sports considered for new events in the 2016 Olympics. The other nominated sports are baseball, golf, karate, roller sports, rugby and softball. Of these, four were nominated for the London 2012 Olympics, but none were chosen.

At the International Olympic Committee (IOC) session in Singapore 2005, squash won the vote to get into the Olympic program, but did not get the 2/3 majority needed for adoption. The new sports for 2016 are baseball and softball, with baseball having been in the Olympics before as a "test" sport, however it did not succeed and was only on the program for one event before it was removed.

Squash is among the favourites because it already in 2005 proved to be favourite for the IOC members at that time. Since 2005, according to the World Squash Federation (WSF), there has been a lot of work to get squash into the Olympic Games. A marked rise in players across the world has

occurred, and approximately 13 new countries have been adopted into the WSF.

However, baseball is also considered among the favourites, because it has been tried before and because it is a major sport in the United States and growing in the rest of the world. Notably, Chicago is bidding to host the 2016 Olympics, and therefore a major US sport could be the natural choice.

The last of the three favourites is golf, because it is by far the most played sport of the candidates. However, it is seen as a disadvantage that the Olympic tournament may not be the top priority for the players, who may feel they would rather concentrate on the US or European tours.

Australian art gallery raided by police; photographer faces possible indecency charge

The Rosley Oxley9 Gallery in Sydney, Australia was raided by police over the weekend following complaints of child pornography. The complaints related to an exhibition of works by photographer Bill Henson, which included several photographs of naked pubescent children. Twenty-one of the forty photographs in the exhibition were seized during the raid, and police have announced that charges will be laid under the NSW Commonwealth and Crimes Act for "publishing an indecent article". Digital versions have also been removed from the Gallery's website.

"Whatever the artistic view of the merits of that sort of stuff - frankly I don't think there are any - just allow kids to be kids."

—Kevin Rudd, Australian Prime Minister

Politicians on both sides of the fence spoke out against the exhibition. Prime Minister Kevin Rudd, speaking to the Nine Network, said he found the photos to be "absolutely revolting [...]" Whatever the artistic view of the merits of that sort of stuff - frankly I don't think there are any - just allow kids to be kids." His Opposition counterpart, Brendan Nelson, believes that the exhibition "violates the things for which we stand as Australians and indeed as parents".

Art experts have supported Henson and defended his work, denying claims of child pornography and exploitation. According to Betty Churcher, a former director of the National Gallery of Australia, "[t]here is absolutely no suggestion of pornography in these photographs". Sydney art dealer Denis Savill hung one of Henson's works, featuring two nudes, in his gallery window beside an Arthur Boyd nude, to "give them something to grizzle about".

According to Tony Oxley, husband of gallery owner Roslyn, the gallery's answering machine has recorded several threats to burn the building down. The police action also calls into question the fate of similar works by Henson in other galleries in Australia and around the world.

2008 YODEX Review: Varied competitions, Vast creations

The 27th Young Designers' Exhibition 2008, recognized by the International Council of Societies of Industrial Design (ICSID) as the largest show of student creations, recently ended Sunday May 18. It was held at the Taipei World Trade Center. Improvements and expansions were seen with 107 academical and industrial units'.

Different design competitions participated and showcased their products and also received awards.

It's no doubt that companies related to design and cultural industries want to discover creative talents from academical units in this exhibition. However, most companies still try to showcase different conceptional and applicative products in order to promote Taiwan's designs into the world market. A typical example is Fora Series, a photo-voltaic product series by the Tsann Kuen Trans-nation Group.

Before entering into their careers, students participated in this show and showcased varied styles that differ from the usual industrial businesspeople. To get more opportunities and in order to interact with the design and cultural industries, students also participated in vast competitions and tried to get the top places. Some students also tried to design conceptional products in conjunction with industrial designs, especially in some design competitions.

In summary, not only did the 2008 YODEX, have companies which can discover talents and showcase achievements of industrial design in the exhibition, but students can make their stages to showcase excellences from their creations in several competitions related to YODEX.

NASA's Phoenix spacecraft lands safely on Mars

NASA's Phoenix spacecraft has landed safely on Mars, following a ten-month flight. Landing occurred yesterday evening at around 23:38 GMT (20:38 EDT), with confirmation being received by flight controllers around fifteen

minutes later at 23:53, the communications delay due to the time taken for light and radio signals to travel from Mars back to Earth.

Phoenix was launched atop a Delta II rocket last August. It is the first Mars Scout spacecraft to be sent to explore Mars. It will search for water and complex molecules at the North Pole of Mars. It is the third spacecraft currently operating on Mars, joining the Mars Expedition Rovers, Spirit and Opportunity, which are currently operating on the planet's surface. Phoenix is expected to operate on the surface of Mars for 90 Martian days, about 92 Earth days.

Scientists monitoring the landing at the Jet Propulsion Laboratory in Pasadena, California cheered as the news was transmitted by the spacecraft, saying it had landed safely.

According to the live broadcast on NASA TV, a systems check began in final preparation for landing at 22:20 GMT (7:20 p.m. eastern time) which was given the "all green". At 22:22, Phoenix was confirmed to be properly aligned for entry into the Martian atmosphere. At 22:30 Phoenix began to accelerate into the atmosphere, where it will hurtle towards the planet at nearly 11,000 miles an hour. At 22:41 the data stream was successfully sent to Earth, Phoenix successfully separated from its boosters and sent a UHF signal to NASA. At 22:44 its main radio was confirmed to be on.

Scientists monitoring the MRO then confirmed the signal from Phoenix at 22:45. Approximately 3 minutes later Phoenix was confirmed to have entered the Martian atmosphere.

According to predictions before the landing, based on the sequence of events programmed into onboard computers, the cruise stage, which had controlled the spacecraft during its journey from Earth to Mars, separated from the probe which was to enter the atmosphere at 23:24:15 GMT. Entry interface occurred at 23:31:15, and the parachute deployed at 23:34:58. The heat shield was jettisoned at 23:35:13, followed by the rest of the "aeroshell", which had protected the spacecraft during decent, and the parachute, at 23:37:13. Landing itself occurred at 23:38:36 GMT. During descent, the spacecraft's progress was monitored by the Mars Reconnaissance Orbiter and 2001 Mars Odyssey spacecraft, already in Areocentric orbit. Mars Odyssey was in contact with Phoenix throughout the descent, including during the phase of the descent where maximum temperatures were reached, when controllers had predicted that data would be lost.

Phoenix's goal is to gather environmental information about Mars to search for possible locations for the best signs of microbial life in the soil. It will also research the history of water on Mars. The mission is scheduled to last for at least 92 Earth days, or 90 Martian days.

The spacecraft landed in an area near the North Pole of Mars, unofficially named the Green Valley. It is an area about 250 kilometres wide, located in the Vastitas Borealis plains.

Phoenix is carrying a number of instruments to investigate Mars. Some of these were taken from the cancelled 2001 Mars Surveyor lander, and some others were

derived from instruments flown on the Mars Polar Lander (MPL) spacecraft. MPL was launched in January 1999, but failed during its descent to the Martian surface. Landing on Mars is considered to be one of the most difficult challenges in space exploration, and one scientist working on today's landing said that "this is not a trip to Grandma's for the weekend". More than half of previous missions to Mars have failed, leading to jokes that exploration of the planet is cursed.

This is the 38th spacecraft to be launched to Mars, and the 19th to arrive successfully, bringing the success rate to exactly 50 percent. It is also the 12th spacecraft to attempt a landing on Mars, and the 7th to successfully accomplish this.

Upon confirmation of landing, a flight controller was heard to exclaim "The Phoenix has landed, welcome to Vastitas Borealis!", whilst others cheered, and congratulated each other on the successful landing.

23 die as bus and truck collide in Hamedan, Iran

23 people have died after a bus and a truck collided in Iran's Hamedan province on a road to Tehran yesterday. The crash comes two months after 22 students died when their bus had a fiery crash with a fuel tanker in Southwest Iran. Iran's roads have one of the world's worst safety records due to poor maintenance, reckless driving and inadequate police attention.

Myanmar embassy in Thailand hit by fire

No-one was injured after a fire broke out in Myanmar's embassy in Thailand, but the second floor was completely destroyed, as were

sections of the roof, leaving the building unable to supply the visas many aid workers are still waiting for after Cyclone Nargis hit the country. The fire is said to have been caused by an electrical fault.

Harry Potter actor stabbed to death

18-year old actor Rob Knox, who will appear as Marcus Belby in Harry Potter and the Half-Blood Prince, to be released in the US and UK in November, was stabbed to death trying to protect his 16-year old brother from two men in a bar in Siccup, London, England.

Today in History

1153 – Malcolm IV became King of Scotland at the age of twelve.

1703 – Russian Tsar Peter I founded Saint Petersburg after reconquering the Ingrian land from Sweden during the Great Northern War.

1860 – Expedition of the Thousand: Giuseppe Garibaldi and his Redshirts launched their attack on Palermo, capital of the Two Sicilies.

1923 – French racing drivers André Lagache and René Léonard won the first running of the 24 Hours of Le Mans near Le Mans, Sarthe, France.

1937 – The Golden Gate Bridge, at the time the world's longest suspension bridge span, connecting the City of San Francisco to Marin County, California, opened.

1942 – Operation Anthropoid: Czech resistance fighters in Nazi-occupied Prague ambushed and mortally wounded Reinhard Heydrich, the chief of Reich Security Main Office and the Protector of Bohemia and Moravia. May 27 is Children's Day in Nigeria

Quote of the Day

Like the wind crying endlessly through the universe, Time carries

away the names and the deeds of conquerors and commoners alike.

And all that we are, all that remains, is in the memories of those who cared we came this way for a brief moment. ~ Harlan Ellison

Word of the Day

accede v

1. To agree or assent to a proposal or a view.
2. To join a group by agreement; to become part of.

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