



Top Stories



1,000,000 flee homes in California due to wildfires

China launches space probe to the moon



The People's Republic of China today launched its first moon orbiter as part of the country's lunar exploration program.

Featured story

UN report: climate change and food shortage major problems for Earth's future

The United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) has released a comprehensive report on the current state of the global environment. Climate change, food and water shortage and a decline in biodiversity threaten humanity's survival, so urgent action is necessary, the report warns.

Wikipedia Current Events

Supporters of a U.S. congressional resolution condemning the Armenian genocide drop calls for a vote.

•The death toll from the California

Wikipedia Current Events

wildfires of October 2007 rises to 12 as four bodies are discovered near the Mexican border.

•Ehud Barak, the Defense Minister of Israel, approves a plan to cut off supplies of electricity to the Gaza Strip which has been recently declared as "hostile territory".

•30 killed in a powerful explosion near the police lines in Mingora in Swat, Pakistan

•The United States imposes economic sanctions against Iran for its support of terrorism.

•Yang Jiechi, the foreign minister of China, meets with Pranab Mukherjee, the Foreign Minister of India, to discuss India's aspirations to become a Permanent Member of the United Nations Security Council.

•The Airbus A380 takes off on its inaugural passenger flight from Singapore to Sydney.

•A 7.1 magnitude earthquake occurs off the coast of Sumatra in Indonesia approximately 135 kilometres south-west of Bengkulu.

•The Tokelauan self-determination referendum fails by 16 votes.

Armando museum goes up in flames

A huge fire set the Armando museum in Amersfoort, Netherlands in flames around 1:00pm (local time). The museum was having a special exhibition and had borrowed many paintings

from other museums and individuals. The museum was being worked on by painters, though there is no evidence it was the cause.

Armando is a Dutch artist currently living in Germany. The collection of his work in the museum is estimated to have been worth roughly €3 million. The collection consisted mostly of paintings and statues.

The people living near the museum had been evacuated in case the fire spread beyond the buildings which already had caught fire. They were able to spend the night in the local city hall.

2007/08 UEFA Cup: Red Star Belgrade vs. Bayern Munich

Bayern Munich beat Red Star Belgrade 3-2 on the last kick of the game on 17-year-old Toni Kroos' 1st professional goal. Toni Kroos played a key role as he also assisted on Miroslav Klose's 2nd equalizer only minutes earlier.

Red Star Belgrade opened the scoring in the 16th minute while Miroslav Klose 1st equalizer 4 minutes later. Red Star Belgrade took the the lead again when Michael Rensing couldn't handle a long distance shot.

Quotes

Uli Hoeneß: "It was a real fight out there tonight, especially on the unbelievably difficult pitch. Even the referee said he had trouble staying on his feet, so it was very tough and definitely a lottery. It

was good to see the team coming from behind twice, but obviously it was a little bit lucky at the end. We'd have been happy enough with a draw, but now we're obviously delighted. We've put ourselves in a great position. We need to win our home games, and then we're home and dry."

Ottmar Hitzfeld: "You could see we were having huge problems with the turf. We did consider lodging an appeal after we trained on the pitch yesterday. I'm just pleased we've basically come out of it in good shape. Today was all about desire. It wasn't a day for the pretty stuff, all that mattered was battling away. By the end, I'd have been happy enough with a point."

Miroslav Klose: "I want to praise the team for the way we kept coming back at them. We had to go to the limit, especially when you consider the conditions here. The turf wasn't exactly perfect, and you feel it in your legs. We need to keep believing in ourselves."

Toni Kroos: "It was vital to start the group with a win. It was hard work, the pitch was a catastrophe, but I think we made the best of the situation and coped well. We fought hard and put up stiff resistance, and I think we deserved to win at the end."

2007/08 UEFA Cup: Brann vs. Hamburg

Hamburg beat Norwegian club Brann to go top of the group after Matchday 1 of Group D.

Hamburg consistently played in Brann's half of the field and managed to get 16 shots which 9 hit the target. Hamburg's attack proved effective when Vincent Kompany scored in the 62nd minute.

Hamburg has Matchday 2 off while Brann is away to Rennes.

2007/08 UEFA Cup: Bayer Leverkusen vs. Toulouse

Bayer Leverkusen are in 2nd place after a 1-0 victory against French side Toulouse FC. Bayer Leverkusen trail FC Zürich on the 2nd tiebreaker.

The only goal and eventual winner came from the Stefan Kiessling 1st half strike as Bayer Leverkusen held on to the lead after 7 saves.

Bayer Leverkusen goes to Moscow to play Spartak Moscow on November 8 as Toulouse is home to Sparta Prague on the same day.

Garuda Indonesia Flight 200's pilot's marital problems may have affected judgment

A new theory has emerged as to why the pilot of Garuda Indonesia Flight 200 attempted to land at a hugely excessive speed, despite 15 automated warnings he was flying too quickly and the co-pilot's call for a 'go-around' procedure to be performed. 21 people were killed in the March 7 crash of the Boeing 737-400 passenger jetliner.

Stephanus Geraldus, head of the Garuda pilots association, said that problems at home and a lack of sleep may have affected Marwoto Komar's judgement. The news comes as Indonesian authorities announce they are pressing ahead with a possible prosecution.

The final report into the disaster, released on Monday, found that Komar, 45, had exhibited what was described as a "fixation" to land the plane, resulting in the excessively fast approach.

"If you look at his long flying experience, it's impossible that he would try to land at that speed,"

Captain Geraldus said, adding that marital problems with wife Norma Andriani, a former air hostess, were "common knowledge". This was backed up by Dudi Sudibyo, an analyst at Angkasa magazine (translated: 'Airspace').

"I understand he was arguing with his wife until late that night," said Sudibyo, who went on to express concern at the lack of addressal of potential mental problems on the part of the pilot in the report. Sudibyo is himself a licensed pilot.

Lack of sleep may also have contributed. Both Komar and Gagam Rochmana, the flight's co-pilot, reported for duty at 4:30 a.m., with the flight departing Jakarta for Yogyakarta as scheduled at 6 a.m. "What I want to know now is: why he didn't report that lack of sleep and ask to be shifted to the next flight, or maybe he felt extremely confident he could fly - overconfident," Sudibyo speculated. The report did not find any explicit evidence that they were unfit to fly, but did comment that "they did not provide the investigation with information about (their) activities during the 72 hours prior to commencing duty".

Police officials have commented that a prosecution is likely with the only personnel required to complete the case against the pilot and co-pilot being expert witnesses, and that the pilots had been grounded since the accident. "We're looking to prosecute under criminal negligence causing death and serious injury," Inspector-General Adiwino said.

"We need witnesses who can prove there was negligence, and since this was an aviation matter, that could be someone from the National Safety Transportation

Committee, or it could also be a medical doctor because of the deaths and injuries.

"We have been proceeding with this investigation all along, but we needed enough preliminary evidence, which we now do have, with the report that says, yes, there was human negligence." He also said that the airline may itself be prosecuted for failing to provide necessary training to the flight crew. This new development comes at the same time as six Garuda Boeing 737-400s are grounded for failure to comply with import regulations.

Disney theme parks to rid trans fats internationally

Walt Disney Resorts in Paris, Hong Kong, and Tokyo will eliminate trans fats from all food served at the parks, by 2009.

This move comes in addition to ridding foods of trans fats at Disneyland in California and Walt Disney World in Florida, by the end of this calendar year. The American parks began to take action a year ago, as a response to nutritionists. Healthier options such as low-fat milk and baby carrots have been added to the menu, to increase guest choices.

Disney Consumer Products has already licensed the company's brands to healthy prepared food products in Canada, via Sobey's grocery stores' Compliments label, while Tesco supermarkets will start offering similar foods next month.

As concern over childhood obesity grows, many companies are taking steps to cleanup their act, and gain the trust of customers. Trans fats have been linked to coronary diseases.

2007/08 UEFA Cup: Zenit St. Petersburg vs. AZ Alkmaar

Zenit St. Petersburg and AZ Alkmaar drew 1-1 to open the Group Stage of this season's UEFA Cup.

Ari scored in the 20th minute to only to be sent off in the 39th minute and to see Zenit St. Petersburg equalize in the 43th minute. Both teams had their chances up to the red card. However, at this point, AZ Alkmaar decided to change tactics and to avoid giving up anymore goals after Zenit St. Petersburg equalized.

Both teams are tied with 1 point after Matchday 1, with Everton being in 1st place after their 3-1 victory over Larissa.

UN report: climate change and food shortage major problems for Earth's future

The United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) has released a comprehensive report on the current state of the global environment. Climate change, food and water shortage and a decline in biodiversity threaten humanity's survival, so urgent action is necessary, the report warns.

UNEP's Global Environment Outlook: environment for development (GEO-4) report involved the work of about 390 experts in various fields from around the world.

While the GEO-4 report salutes some improvements, for example the increased public awareness of environmental issues and political interest, it also warns that "There are no major issues ... for which the foreseeable trends are favourable." Although the report sets out a gloomy scenario, its main aim is to call for action.

Climate change

The report finds that despite "visible and unequivocal" evidence of climate change caused by human activity, the global response is "woefully inadequate" and shows "a remarkable lack of urgency". It criticizes highly-polluting countries that refused to ratify the Kyoto Protocol, and the industrial sectors that lobbied against it. Negotiations for a new Protocol to curb climate changes will start in December.

Although the emission of ozone-layer damaging chemicals has decreased by 95 percent, the spring hole in the ozone layer is larger than ever. UNEP calls the way Europe and North America have dealt with the problem of acid rain "one of the success stories of recent decades", while the challenge remains in countries like China, India and Mexico.

Food and water

As far as water is concerned, the report warns that "The escalating burden of water demand will become intolerable in water-scarce countries." Contaminated water and lack of sanitation services already affect 2.6 billion people, being the single leading cause of death in developing countries with 3 million deaths annually, mostly in children younger than five. Although agricultural efficacy has increased, up to a third of the global population is affected by soil erosion, nutrient depletion and water scarcity.

Priorities per continent

This is the first UNEP report which addresses specific problems in individual continents. In Africa, desertification and declining food production are key problems, while agricultural subsidies in developing countries decrease trade profits. Bushmeat trade is also mentioned,

for example in the Congo Basin, where the trade is at six times its sustainable rate. In Asia, urban air quality, fresh water and increasing waste problems are among the priorities. The illegal traffic in electronic and hazardous waste worldwide is mentioned separately as an emerging challenge.

Overconsumption, high energy use and transport problems cause concern in Europe, while North America is, according to the report, struggling to address climate change. Urban growth is a particular concern in Latin America. 2007 is reported as being the first year in history when more than half of all people lived in cities. The Polar regions are already feeling the impact of climate change, ozone layer effacement and pollution.

Wake-up call

Achim Steiner, Under-Secretary General of the U.N. and director of UNEP, said that "There continue to be 'persistent' and intractable problems unresolved and unaddressed. ... Meanwhile, institutions like UNEP, established to counter the root causes, remain under-resourced and weak."

"There have been enough wake-up calls ... I sincerely hope GEO-4 is the final one. The systematic destruction of the Earth's natural and nature-based resources has reached a point where the economic viability of economies is being challenged and where the bill we hand on to our children may prove impossible to pay," Mr Steiner warned.

Rumors false about Britney Spears on Sesame Street

Britney Spears will not appear on the legendary American children's program Sesame Street.

When contacted today, Sesame Workshop press representative Ray Hammerman replied that the rumours were, "not true, there are no plans to have her on as a guest."

Sesame Workshop Vice President of Corporate Communications Ellen Lewis backed up this statement, adding that the show is "not in production until Feb. 2008".

Published reports in British tabloid newspaper The Daily Star suggested Spears was to improve her image by appearing on the show. She was to perform a "dumbed-down" version of her hit single "Toxic", with Oscar the Grouch, a character that lives in a trash can. "Toxic" was released in 2003.

Spears faces losing complete custody of sons two-year-old Sean Preston and one-year-old Jayden James.

The Daily Star has not yet responded to Wikinews about their reasoning for the story.

Sesame Street has featured well over 300 celebrity guest stars in its 38 seasons.

The most recent season saw guests Alec Baldwin, Tyra Banks, James Blunt, Miri Ben-Ari, Richard Belzer, Chris Brown, Anderson Cooper, Ann Curry, Ellen DeGeneres, Tina Fey, Charles Gibson, Cuba Gooding, Jr., Mariska Hargitay, Ice T, Matt Lauer, Fred Newman, players of The New York Jets, Howie Mandel, Christopher Meloni, Conan O'Brien, Sarah Jessica Parker, Ahmad Rashād, Rachael Ray, Al Roker, Diane Sawyer, Jon Stewart, Sugarland, Meredith Vieira, and Brian Williams.

Bus explosion in Mogadishu, Somalia kills many civilians

At least 15 civilians, including women and children, have been killed in a bus explosion in Mogadishu's northern district of Yaqshiid in Somalia. The explosion occurred when the bus drove over an IED (improvised explosive device) or landmine while traveling to the Suuqa Holaha district in northern Mogadishu on Wednesday.

It is not known who was behind the latest bomb attack but it appeared to be aimed at the government or Ethiopian soldiers. In Mogadishu, the insurgency by militants linked with the ousted Islamic Courts Union has been going on since the Ethiopian invasion in December 2006-January 2007

The bus explosion is one of the deadliest terrorist attacks in Somalia in the recent years.

In a separate incident today, a roadside blast killed two Somali government soldiers in Baladweyn, Somalia.

2007 Taipei 101 Run Up invites elite runners Run to Top of the World

With prize money of NT \$1,010,000, the 2007 3rd "Taipei 101 Run Up" will take place at Taipei 101 on the morning of November 25. The building is a landmark in Taipei, Taiwan. Taipei 101 and the Taipei City Government not only invited Hotai Motor Co., Ltd (agency for Toyota Motor Corporation in Taiwan) titled this competition, but also cooperated with Foundation of 2009 Summer Deaflympics Organizing Committee by donating funds of registration fee to the foundation for the promotion funds of "2009 Summer Deaflympics".

"The run-up competition slogan - 'Run to Top of the World' is echoed with our brand achievement - 'moving forward' and recent topics 'Toyota Production System' in the management level, all those words with one goal - keep moving forward, hoped every participants or runners challenge for a higher achievement. With the combination of 2009 Summer Deaflympics at this run-up challenge, it reached our pursuit of charity and close to people. We hope this game can 'move forward and realize our dream' with supports of Deaflympics athletes in Taiwan." Ming-chieh Chang (Manager of Vehicle Sales of Hotai Motor) remarked at the Press Conference.

According to some media in Taiwan, Hotai Motor also held "Toyota Ten Thousand People Walking with Ten Thousand Steps" from 2005 in 5 cities in Taiwan for a passion of life. This series activity surely promoted a healthy walking sport and showed excellence and good image of their product symbol.

Even though the on-line pre-registration for lucky draw of 1,500 athletes on Self-Challenge Group, but Wikinews Reporter Brock experienced an error with the information for 2005 version replaced by 2007 version. For this replacement factor, the Public Relationship Division of Taipei 101 commented that the replacement is just for a experiment for some new functions for 2007 version, with this fault, Taipei has already prepared a new web address for current version, and old (2005) data will be restored to original web for the coherence and completion. It won't take effect on current registration system, and we'll announce the 1,500 athletes after a draw on November 1.

"With good reviews of the Enterprise Group since last year and a trial at 2005, we'll invite companies from Taipei 101 Skyscraper and outside of Taipei 101. We also welcome good elite runners challenging the extremity with 10 minutes and 29.32 seconds." Cathy Wen-chi Yang (Associate Director at Taipei Financial Center Corp.) remarked.

According to the main organizers, this run-up challenge for "Enterprise Group" and "Elite Group" runners register by invitation, "Self-challenge Group" runners are welcomed to register on-line during October 25-31 for the final draw of 1500 participants. On November 18, organizers will hold a warming up match for some Deaflympics athletes in Taiwan. At the main competition (Nov. 25), Taipei 101 will invite medical team ready for emergency at some key floors, start and finish areas. Also, the organizers will set up "Digital Imaging System" with a memory and award a certification for participated runners.

Aung San Suu Kyi leaves house arrest to meet with government official

Myanmar opposition leader, Aung San Suu Kyi has left her house arrest to meet with government official.

Witnesses have observed a caravan of vehicles leaving the home of the 1992 Nobel Peace Prize recipient. Reports say that she is meeting with a liaison minister, U Aung Kyi, who was recently appointed by Senior General Than Shwe, the leader of Myanmar's military junta.

The appointment of a liaison minister came after Special Envoy of the United Nations, Ibrahim Gambari, arrived in Myanmar on

an urgent mission to press for mediation and reconciliation.

Yesterday, protests around the world yesterday marked the 12 years that Aung San Suu Kyi has spent in detention or house arrest. She was first arrested in 1989.

Macedonian policeman killed in attack near Kosovo

A Macedonian police officer was killed and two were wounded in an attack with automatic rifles on their patrol vehicle near the border with Kosovo, the breakaway province of Serbia. The ambush occurred yesterday, not far from the village of Tanuševci, a scene of bitter ethnic clashes in 2001.

The Kosovo police chief Veton Ellshani said that he cannot confirm that the attackers entered Macedonia from Kosovo.

Oral Roberts University reportedly owes over \$50 million

In the midst of accusations of wrongdoing, the Oral Roberts University (ORU) Board of Regents Chairman George Pearsons said the school owes over \$55 million in debt. According to IRS records, ORU had about \$76 million in revenue in 2005, and its operating budget for 2007-2008 was over \$82 million. One former regent member said that the endowment approached \$60 million at its peak, but a university spokesman said the current endowment exceeds \$34 million.

In September Richard Roberts, who served as president since 1993, was accused of wrong-doing and stepped down temporarily last week. His father Oral Roberts returned to serve for as a temporary president last week. On Monday night alumni, clergy from around the U.S., and the people

fired held a rally at Morningstar Baptist Church asking for Richard to permantly resign. They say Robert's temporary leave of absence "isn't enough."

Chinese police seal off monastery in Tibet

Armed Chinese police have surrounded and sealed off two monasteries in Tibet after monks began to celebrate the Dalai Lama's honor of receiving the United States Congressional Gold Medal. At least 100 monks are reported to be held inside the Drepung monastery and its not known if any have been injured or arrested. Earlier, at least 3,000 police surrounded the Zhaibung Monastery.

"[Chinese] police stopped an attempt by monks to peacefully mark the honor to the Dalai Lama last week [by sealing off the monastery]. Tibetan sources report a buildup of armed police in the city, checkpoints on roads out of Lhasa, and an order to Lhasa citizens not to carry out any religious or celebratory activities," said the International Campaign for Tibet in a report.

Other protesters and monks are reported to have been arrested and injured when police began to clash with the celebrations which started on October 16 inside the monastery. Beginning in the morning on October 17, police began to intervene to stop the celebrations throughout Tibet.

China claims that it is not aware of any report, and has not commented on the situation in Tibet.

Supposed image of the Virgin Mary found on pebble

Lisa Coolett, a woman who lives in Christchurch, New Zealand has

found a one centimeter wide pebble that supposedly shows the image of the Virgin Mary. She found the pebble while walking on a beach on the South Island of New Zealand.

Since finding the pebble, Coolett has stated that she has had some "good luck" lately, despite the fact that she does not practice any religion.

Coolett put the pebble up for auction on the popular New Zealand internet auction site Trade Me with a buy now of NZ\$70,000. Later, she lowered the buy-now price to NZ\$50,000. An American woman clicked the buy-now. "Trade Me business manager Mike O'Donnell said a phone call to the bidder to verify the offer was met with "a serious intake of breath," followed by a long silence. Mr O'Donnell said the person had not expected the bid to be taken seriously.". The highest bid prior to the \$50,000 click was for \$5000. The highest bid at the moment sits at NZ\$26,900, but Coolett decided to sell the pebble to an American lady who previously bought a piece of toast that supposedly had an an image of the Virgin Mary on it.

"If someone is willing to pay 28,000 dollars for a piece of toast, I'm sure someone out there would pay at least that for rock," said Coolett. She did not say how much the American woman paid for the pebble.

Today in History

1597 – Imjin War: About twelve Korean ships commanded by Admiral Yi Sun-sin defeated a large Japanese invasion fleet of at least 300 at the Battle of Myeongnyang in the Myeongnyang Strait.

1863 – The Football Association, the oldest governing body in

football, was founded at a pub in London's Great Queen Street. 1881 – The Gunfight at the O.K. Corral took place in Tombstone, Arizona, USA between the Wyatt Earp faction and Ike Clanton's gang.

1937 – Second Sino-Japanese War: Xie Jinyuan and his 'Lone Battalion' of Chinese soldiers began the Defense of Sihang Warehouse against waves of Japanese attackers during the Battle of Shanghai.

1944 – World War II: In one of the largest naval battles in modern history, Allied forces defeated the Imperial Japanese Navy at the Battle of Leyte Gulf in the seas surrounding the Philippine island of Leyte.

2001 – U.S. President George W. Bush signed the USA PATRIOT Act into law, significantly expanding the authority of U.S. law enforcement agencies in fighting terrorism in the United States and abroad.

October 26 is National Day in Austria (1955); Angam Day in Nauru.

Quote of the Day

Contempt loves the silence
it thrives in the dark
with fine winding tendrils
that strangle the heart.
~ Natalie Merchant ~

Word of the Day

delude; v

1. To deceive someone into believing something which is false.

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