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Delta II rocket launches OSTM satellite

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

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around an hour later, and the solar panels on the satellite have deployed.

Wikipedia Current Events

The President of Venezuela Hugo Chavez threatens to stop selling oil to European countries who apply new European Union legislation on illegal immigration.

- Iraqi security forces enter the city of Amarah, arrest its Sadrist mayor, and take control.
- An Alabama state judge upholds a fraud verdict against AstraZeneca Pharmaceuticals in a Medicaid drug pricing suit but reduces the value of damages to \$160 million.
- The President of Iran Mahmoud Ahmadinejad accuses the United States of plotting to kidnap and assassinate him during a visit to Iraq.
- Two former Bear Stearns hedge fund managers are arrested and will be the first people to face criminal charges as a result of the subprime mortgage crisis.
- Royal Dutch Shell shuts down an offshore oil installation in Nigeria after an attack from the Movement for the Emancipation of the Niger Delta.
- Zimbabwe police arrest an opposition Movement for Democratic Change lawmaker and place six others on a wanted list.
- The bodies of four people who

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opposed Robert Mugabe have been found in Zimbabwe.

- Lee Myung-bak, the President of South Korea, apologises to South Koreans over an unpopular decision to resume importing beef from the United States.
- Commencing at dawn, the Israeli Government and Hamas declare a truce in the Israel-Gaza conflict, halting attacks across the border between the Gaza Strip and Israel.
- A report reveals sailors onboard the submarine HMCS Chicoutimi during a 2004 fire may develop serious health problems as a result.
- Four German and Spanish servicemen die when their EUFOR helicopter crashes in Bosnia-Herzegovina.

Judge orders residents and city to come to agreement on partially collapsed building in Buffalo, New York

Buffalo, New York – Judge Justice Christopher Burns of the New York State Supreme Court has ordered a halt to an emergency demolition on a 19th century stable and livery on 428-430 Jersey Street in Buffalo, New York that partially collapsed on Wednesday June 11, initially causing at least 15 homes to be evacuated. At least two homes remain evacuated.

Burns orders that both the city and the group Save The Livery (www.savethelivery.com) have to

come to an agreement on what to do with the building, and try to work out ways of saving at least some portions if it including the facade, side walls and a lift tower. Save The Livery is comprised of concerned area residents who have grown to love the building's historic and unique character. On June 14, they won a temporary restraining order to stop demolition. The court ruled that the city was only allowed to remove material in immediate danger to residents and pedestrians, but stated that the demolition could only be performed with "hand tools." The court also ordered that any rubble which had fallen into neighboring yards when the building collapsed, to be removed.

"It is in the interest of the city to have a safe environment--but also important to maintain a sense of historical preservation," stated Burns in his ruling. Burns has given the sides until tomorrow (Friday June 20) to come to an agreement and has ordered both parties to return to court at 9:30 a.m. (eastern time) "sharp." Activists of Save The Livery urge supporters of the stable to "fill the courtroom" to show "continued and ongoing support." The hearing is scheduled to take place at 25 Delaware Avenue in the Supreme Court building, 3rd Floor, trial part 19.

Currently the building is owned by Bob Freudenheim who has several building violations against him because of the buildings poor condition. He has received at least five violations in three months and residents who live near the building state that Freudenheim should be "100% responsible" for his actions. Many are afraid that if the building is demolished, Freudenheim's charges of neglect

will be abolished.

On June 17, developer and CEO of Savarino Companies, Sam Savarino was at the site of the stable, discussing the building with residents and preservationists. In 2006, Savarino proposed and planned The Elmwood Village Hotel, a 'botique' hotel on the Southeast corner of Elmwood and Forest Avenues. The project was later withdrawn after residents filed a lawsuit against Savarino and the city. Wikinews extensively covered the story, and contacted Savarino for his professional opinion on the building.

"[I would] love to see it preserved. I was there to see if there was anything we could do to help, to see if anything can be salvaged. I just want to see the right thing happen, and so does the city," stated Savarino to Wikinews who added that he was allowed inside the building for a brief period.

"The side walls are beyond repair. The roof has rotted and it could come down at any time," added Savarino who also said that the building "below the second floor appears to be stable." He also states that the back wall of the building, which borders several homes, appears to be intact.

"Eliminating the back wall could be a problem for the neighbors. It is not unreasonable to leave at least 12 feet" of the back wall standing, added Savarino.

Savarino did not say if he was interested in buying the property, but did state, "I am sure there are a couple of people interested" in buying the property. On Thursday, Buffalo News reported that a "businessman" might be interested in purchasing the property, though Wikinews is not able to

independently confirm the report. Savarino says that with the property still slated for emergency demolition, a potential buyer could face tax fees of nearly US\$300,000.

Freudenheim gave the city permission to demolish the building on Thursday June 12 during an emergency Preservation Board meeting, because he would not be "rehabilitating the building anytime soon." Freudenheim, along with his wife Nina, were part-owners of the Hotel Lenox at 140 North Street in Buffalo and were advocates to stop the Elmwood Village Hotel. They also financially supported a lawsuit in an attempt to stop the hotel from being built. Though it is not known exactly how long Freudenheim has owned the stable, Wikinews has learned that he was the owner while fighting to stop the hotel from being built. Residents say that he has been the owner for at least 22 years.

The building was first owned by a company called White Bros. and was used as a stable for a farm which once covered the land around the building for several blocks. The Buffalo Fire Department believes the building was built around 1814, while the city property database states it was built in 1870. Servants and workers of the farm were housed inside resident quarters situated at the rear of the building on what is now Summer Street, but are now cottages where area residents currently reside. Some date as far back as 1829.

At about 1950, the stable was converted into an automobile body shop and gasoline station. A property record search showed that in 1950 at least four fuel storage tanks were installed on the

property. Two are listed as 550 square feet while the other two are 2,000 square feet. All of the tanks are designated as a TK4, which New York State says is used for "below ground horizontal bulk fuel storage." The cost of installing a tank of that nature according to the state, at that time, included the tank itself, "excavation and backfill," but did not include "the piping, ballast, or hold-down slab orring." It is not known if the tanks are still on the property, but residents are concerned the city was not taking the precautions to find out.

Water level rising in Chinese rivers, further flooding expected

Further rain has continued to fall across southern China after the country was devastated by floods earlier this week.

176 people have been confirmed to have died as a result of the flooding, and around 50 more are officially missing. Xinhua, the state news agency in China, has reported that the flooding in the Pearl River Delta was the worst in the area for over fifty years.

The Chinese government says it evacuated 111,476 in the Sichuan Province. In Wenchuan County, 72,000 were relocated. Over the past week some 1.3 million people have reportedly fled their homes.

The China Meteorological Administration (CMA) issued a warning on the situation before the first wave of flooding. "Faced with the increasingly severe rain and flood situation, at 16 o'clock of June 12, Flood Control and Drought Relief Headquarters of Guangxi urgently started level 2 flood control emergency response and required the relevant departments and places to prepare

immediately so as to ensure the work of flood control and drought relief," the CMA said in a statement released late last week.

Imperial Tobacco to cut over 2000 jobs

Imperial Tobacco, a United Kingdom-based tobacco company, has announced that it will cut 2,440 jobs as part of a restructuring plan. This move comes after the Imperial's takeover of Spain-based Altadis.

The job cuts were made as part of the process of moving the production of tobacco products to Northern Spain. In the United Kingdom, the Bristol factory is the only one that is completely closing, although there are significant job losses at other locations.

A spokesperson for Imperial Tobacco defended the move. "We are regrettably closing the cigar factory in Bristol - it's a very regrettable step for us to take, but it is an industry which is under considerable pressure," he said.

The Unite union has stated that they will fight the decision. Iain MacLean, a union spokesman, said that "it's early days but we will be fighting for every job and there will be absolutely no acceptance of any compulsory redundancies."

Swedish Parliament passes electronic surveillance law

On June 18, 2008 the Parliament of Sweden approved a bill that permits the interception and recording of data traveling through and within Sweden's borders beginning on the first day of 2009. The proposition was passed in a 143 to 138 vote, with one abstention. It was passed with an addendum to be reviewed this fall. The amendment will further stipulate the rights of the Swedish

people under the new law.

The stated intent of the monitoring is to protect against foreign threats, cyber warfare, and the like. The hundreds who rallied to protest the privacy infringement seemed to have their own ideas. The Swedish National Defence Radio Establishment, the national signals intelligence agency, will now have expanded access to electronic communications including phone calls, e-mails, text messages and internet usage.

San Francisco's Green Party endorses Cindy Sheehan in bid against Speaker Pelosi

San Francisco, California – Shortly after an extended question and answer session last night, anti-war activist Cindy Sheehan easily secured an endorsement from the San Francisco Green Party as nominative challenger to the Speaker of the House Nancy Pelosi in California's 8th congressional district.

Sheehan answered a wide variety of questions helping to overcome a common perception that she is a one-issue candidate. Sheehan emphasized the stance for which she is famous, regarding ending the War in Iraq and dramatically reducing the amount of money spent by the Pentagon, explaining that the United States' founders intended for us to have militia, not a multi-trillion dollar military used for "corporate imperialism."

She also demonstrated a knowledge in a variety of topics that are important to party members, underscoring a commitment to the Green Party's "10 Key Values," while acknowledging that her campaign's platform on indigenous rights is still being developed.

She stressed her differences from speaker Pelosi's positions, and reaffirmed her belief that Pelosi has been complicit in maintaining the US presence in Iraq. Sheehan pointed out that she presently lives in the district, whereas Pelosi only recently purchased a home in Pacific Heights, her first in San Francisco. Pelosi has often been criticized for her absence from the district she represents. Sheehan provided an understanding of local issues, including the recent Hunter's Point controversy, reiterating her commitment to "affordable housing, better mass transit, alleviating traffic, dependence on fossil fuels, [and] rent control."

On the 9/11 World Trade Center attacks, Sheehan said, "I've never said it's been an inside job, I'm not convinced of that," but asserted that there are questions about the attacks that still need to be answered that only an independent, thorough investigation could provide.

Sheehan is receiving support from independent presidential candidate Ralph Nader and expected Green Party candidate Cynthia McKinney. When asked whom she would endorse for president, Sheehan replied, "It's a tossup between Ralph and Cynthia."

Cindy Sheehan is still collecting the signatures needed to get on the ballot by the July filing date, but is expected to gain a substantial amount at the Gay Pride celebrations in the upcoming weeks. Sheehan is not running as a Green Party candidate, and has the endorsement of the local Peace and Freedom Party.

Also present was Barry Hermason, Green Party candidate for California's 12th district, which

includes most of the south-west quarter of San Francisco.

Nepal officials strike after minister locks official in toilet

Workers in a Nepalese local government office have gone on strike in protest against actions made by Matrika Yadav, the minister for Forest and Soil Conservation.

Yadav caused controversy after locking up Dandu Raj Ghimire, a local development officer in a toilet. Protesters said that this action was an "inhumane and objectionable act."

Ghimire had been accused by Yadav of illegally operating a mine, and Yadav said that he locked the official up to show him what it is like to be stuck in 'foul conditions'. The official was locked in the toilet for ninety minutes.

The strike, which is taking place across the whole of Nepal, was organized by the Local Level Employees Organisation. Four thousand local government employees are involved in the strike.

French director Jean Delannoy dies at age 100

Jean Delannoy, an early actor who started out in silent film movies and became a film director has died yesterday at the age of 100. The cause of death was announced as natural causes.

Delannoy was born on January 12, 1908 in Noisy-le-Sec, Œle-de-France, France. Amongst his best known works is the 1958 film "Maigret tend un piÈge", which he directed.

Although Delannoy was born in a Paris suburb, his family was from Haute-Normandie in the north of

France. He was a Protestant, a descendant of Huguenots, some of whom fled the country during the French Wars of Religion and were first to settle in Wallonia. After their name became De la Noye and then Delano, they were on the second ship to emigrate to Plymouth, Massachusetts in America.

Delannoy was a student in Paris when he began acting in silent films. He eventually landed a job with Paramount Studios Parisian facilities, working his way up to head film editor. In 1934 he directed his first film and went on to a long career, both writing and directing. In 1946, his film about a Protestant minister titled La symphonie pastorale was awarded the Palme d'Or at the Cannes Film Festival. In 1960, his film, Maigret tend un piÈge was nominated for a BAFTA award for "Best Film from any Source."

In recognition of his long service to the French motion picture industry, Delannoy was given an Honorary César Award in 1986.

Kosmos-3M rocket launches six Orbcomm satellites

Six Orbcomm satellites have been launched by a Russian Kosmos-3M carrier rocket. Lift-off, from Site 107 at the Kapustin Yar launch site in South-West Russia, occurred at 06:36:28 GMT. This is the first orbital launch to occur from Kapustin Yar since April 1999.

Orbcomm is an American company which operates a constellation of communications satellites in low Earth orbit. The satellites launched today were five Quick Launch satellites, and a technology demonstration spacecraft which will be operated in conjunction with the United States Coastguard. A seventh satellite, Ufa State

University's UGATUSAT nanosatellite, was originally scheduled to be launched, but was moved to a later launch aboard a Soyuz-2 rocket for unknown reasons. The launch was conducted by COSMOS International, a Russo-German organisation, and Russia's Strategic Rocket Forces.

This is the 31th orbital launch of 2008, and the second of which to have been conducted by a Kosmos-3M rocket. The next Kosmos-3M launch is currently scheduled for the end of July, when the SAR-Lupe 5 satellite will be placed into orbit.

Police charge Australian man over laser incident

A 19-year-old man from the Sydney, Australia suburb of Bella Vista has been charged with interfering with a crew member while in an aircraft after a laser stunned the crew of a police helicopter last night.

The helicopter was flying at about 6pm at an altitude of about 1600 feet, when a green laser allegedly targeted the crew. The crew members were "momentarily distracted and disoriented by the incident", according to a New South Wales Police press release, but were uninjured and managed to identify a yard from which the light originated. The officers landed the helicopter nearby, and contacted local police who arrested the teen and confiscated a laser device. He was taken to Castle Hill police station, where he was interviewed and charged, before being released on bail. He is scheduled to face Hornsby Local Court on June 22.

New South Wales Police Minister David Campbell expressed his disdain for the incident, which is

similar to a number of recent occasions where laser pointers have targeted commercial pilots. "I just can't believe the stupidity of those people who want to shine lasers in the eyes of pilots and drivers," he said. "It is gutless and cowardly and could result in the most dire of consequences."

Last night, New South Wales State Parliament passed new laws restricting the use and possession of laser pointers, with all laser pointers banned from public places where the user does not have a reasonable explanation for needing one, and class three and four laser pointers requiring a prohibited weapons permit from the firearms registry to possess. The maximum penalty for breaking this law will be 14 years' jail. The laws will not come into effect for about 10 days, so the Bella Vista teen will only be charged under existing laws.

Technology innovations unveiled on Research at Intel Day 2008

The "2008 Research @ Intel Day" showcased conceptual innovations in the fields of visual computing, wireless, health care, environment, and life sciences.

Last Wednesday, Intel said it is investing some of its \$6 billion research budget in the Computer History Museum in Mountain View, California.

Technology related to mobile computing, green technology, WiMAX and wireless networking, solutions for healthcare with SHIMMER and BioMOBIUS technology, an intelligent identification robot named "BarKeep", and Platform Power Management, were showcased there.

In the keynote address, Justin

Rattner, Intel Senior Fellow and Corporate Vice President and director of Intel's Corporate Technology Group, introduced the history of microprocessors and said: "Parallel Computing will be a critical factor on programming for the best experience to users."

Bush calls for US offshore oil exploration

United States President George W. Bush delivered a speech Wednesday in which he urged the United States Congress to end a ban on oil exploration off of US shores. Currently there is both an executive order and a Congressional moratorium against such exploration.

The Congress issued its moratorium in 1981. In 1989, President George H.W. Bush issued an executive order in the wake of the Exxon Valdez oil spill.

President Bush said that "we should expand American oil production by increasing access to the Outer Continental Shelf, or OCS. Experts believe that the OCS could produce about 18 billion barrels of oil. That would be enough to match America's current oil production for almost ten years."

"I know the Democratic leaders have opposed some of these policies in the past," President Bush said. "Now that their opposition has helped drive gas prices to record levels, I ask them to reconsider their positions. If Congressional leaders leave for the Fourth of July recess without taking action, they will need to explain why \$4-a-gallon gasoline is not enough incentive for them to act."

Senator John McCain, who is the presumptive nominee for the

Republican Party, said on Tuesday that he favors offshore drilling.

Senator Harry Reid, the Senate majority leader from the Democratic Party, said: "This week's flip-flop on offshore oil drilling by President Bush and Senator John McCain is nothing more than a cynical campaign ploy that will do nothing to lower energy prices, and represents another big giveaway to oil companies already making billions in profits."

"It's cynical to say that we can drill our way out of this mess," said Athan Manuel, of the environmental group Sierra Club. "The solution to \$4 gas is not off our coast."

A recent poll conducted by Reuters/Zogby showed that about 60% of Americans support more oil drilling and refinery construction, yet nearly the same percentage also say they are in favor of conservation.

"We will take pressure off gas prices over time by expanding the amount of American-made oil and gasoline. We will strengthen our national security by reducing our reliance on foreign oil. We will benefit American workers by keeping our nation competitive in the global economy — and by creating good jobs in construction, and engineering, and refining, maintenance, and many other areas," said Bush in his speech.

Today in History

451 – A coalition led by Roman General Flavius Aetius and Visigothic king Theodoric I clashed violently with the Hunnic alliance commanded by Attila the Hun at the Battle of Chalons.

1685 – Monmouth Rebellion: The Duke of Monmouth declared

himself King of England at Bridgwater.

1789 – French Revolution: Members of France's Third Estate took the Tennis Court Oath, pledging not to separate until a new constitution was established.

1837 – Victoria succeeded to the British throne.

1973 – Snipers fired into a crowd of Peronists near the Ezeiza Airport in Buenos Aires, killing at least 13 people and injuring 365 others.

June 20 is June Solstice (23:59 UTC, 2008); Midsummer festivities begin (Northern Hemisphere, 2008); Winter solstice festivals (Southern Hemisphere, 2008); World Refugee Day; Flag Day in Argentina; West Virginia Day in the U.S. state of West Virginia

Quote of the Day

For every man who lives without freedom, the rest of us must face the guilt. ~ Lillian Hellman

Word of the Day

otaku n

1. One with an obsessive interest, particularly anime or manga.

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