

Runway opens at world's first spaceport

BBC ONLINE

Commercial space travel took a step closer with the opening of the runway at the world's first spaceport in the US state of New Mexico.

The event was marked with a flypast of an aircraft carrying SpaceShipTwo.

The vehicle has been designed to take fee-paying tourists on trips to the edge of space and back.

British billionaire Sir Richard Branson - whose Virgin group has backed the venture - said the first passenger trip should take place within 18 months.

The opening of the nearly two-mile (three-kilometre) runway comes less than two weeks after another major step for Sir Richard's Virgin Galactic company: the first solo glide flight of SpaceShipTwo.

"Today is very personal as our dream becomes more real," Sir Richard said.

"People are beginning to believe now. I think the drop flight two weeks ago, which went beautifully, I think it made people sit up and realize this is really reality."

More than 300 people have already paid at least \$200,000 (£128,000) each for a three-hour flight.



Daniel Ellsberg, former US military analyst and the man behind a leak of US Pentagon documents to whistleblowing website WikiLeaks, speaks yesterday during a press conference at the Park Plaza hotel in central London. WikiLeaks founder Julian Assange said that hundreds of thousands of classified US military documents leaked by the website highlighted the 'truth' on the Iraq war.

WikiLeaks files show 'truth' on Iraq: Assange

AFP, London

WikiLeaks' founder Julian Assange said yesterday that hundreds of thousands of classified US military documents leaked by the website showed the 'truth' on the Iraq war.

"This disclosure is about the truth," Assange told a news conference in London after WikiLeaks released 400,000 documents which give a grim snapshot of the Iraq war, including showing the abuse of Iraqi civilians by Iraqi security forces.

"The attack on the truth by war begins long before war starts and continues long after a war ends," Assange added.

"We hope to correct some of that attack on the truth that occurred before the war, during the war and which has continued on since the war officially concluded."

WikiLeaks' spokesman Kristinn Hrafnsson told the same news conference that it would also soon release a further batch of 15,000 secret files on the war in Afghanistan.

The heavily redacted files released Friday contain graphic accounts of torture, civilian killings and Iran's hand in the Iraq war, giving a grisly picture of years of blood and suffering following the 2003 US invasion to oust Saddam Hussein.

The Iraqi government said the documents "did not contain any surprises".

Many of the documents, which span from January 2004 to December 2009, chronicle claims of abuse by Iraqi security forces, while others appear to show that US troops did nothing to intervene to stop the abuse.

The documents comprise the second such release from the controversial website, which accused the United States of "war crimes" and earlier released some 92,000 similar secret military files detailing operations in Afghanistan.

WikiLeaks made the files available to selected newspapers and TV channels and then, just before their publication, invited journalists for a three-hour lock-in preview in London.

In one report, US military personnel describe detainee abuse by Iraqis at a facility in Baghdad that is holding 95 detainees in a single room where they are "sitting cross-legged with blindfolds, all facing the same direction."

China defends language policies in Tibetan areas

AP, Beijing

Chinese officials tried to defuse discontent following days of student protests in ethnically Tibetan areas, saying a plan to teach classes only in Mandarin Chinese was not aimed at wiping out Tibet's native tongue, state media reported yesterday.

Changes won't be forced in areas where "conditions are not ripe," the official Xinhua News Agency cited Wang Yubo, the Qinghai province education department director, as saying. The report did not elaborate on how officials would make that determination.

The London-based group Free Tibet has said that hundreds, possibly thousands, of middle, high school and college students joined the demonstrations.

For authorities, any sign of unrest among Tibetans is seen as a threat to national sovereignty and a reminder of past uprisings against China's often heavy-handed rule over the Himalayan region.

No arrests or violence were reported following the student protests that began in the town of Tongren and soon spread to other communities in the western province of Qinghai, which is home to numerous minority ethnic groups, including Tibetans and Mongolians, who retain their own

languages. There was also a similar protest on the campus of a Beijing university.

The protests appear to have been sparked by remarks by Qiang Wei, Qinghai province's Communist Party chief, who was quoted last month by the Communist Party's official newspaper as praising the use of a "common language" in schools. A report on Qinghai's plans for educational reform over the next decade has said "the nation's common language must become the language of instruction."

Students fear the government's plan means the current bilingual system will be scrapped in favour of using Mandarin Chinese alone, except in language classes.

The goal of the policy is to bridge the education gap between China's various ethnic groups and promote development in ethnic minority areas, Xinhua said, citing an open letter issued by the Qinghai provincial government to all teachers and students on Friday.

Authorities will respect the viewpoints of students and their parents before carrying out reforms, Xinhua cited Wang as saying.

Xinhua also gave the first official confirmation that students had "expressed their dissatisfaction" in at least four Tibetan prefectures in Qinghai between last Sunday and Wednesday.

Storm hits China after killing 12 in Taiwan

AP, Taipei

Taiwanese rescuers searching mountainous areas hit by massive mudslides unleashed by typhoon Megi found mangled parts of a vehicle thought to be a bus that was carrying 19 missing Chinese tourists, the transport minister said yesterday.

Landslides caused by the typhoon killed nine people and buried a Buddhist temple in hardest-hit Ilan county in the northeast, where a record 45 inches (114 centimetres) of rain fell over 48 hours. Three other people drowned in their flooded homes, the Central Emergency Operations Center said. A total of 23 people were missing.

Megi, which earlier killed 26 people in the Philippines, pounded southern China's Fujian province on Saturday after leaving Taiwan but was downgraded to a strong tropical storm with winds of up to 67 mph (108 kph).

Bahrainis to vote in parliamentary polls

BBC ONLINE

People in Bahrain are set to elect representatives for the lower house of parliament, the third such vote since it became a constitutional monarchy.

Correspondents say the main contest is between Islamists and those with a more secular vision for the Gulf state.

The election comes amid rising tension between the dominant Sunni Muslim community and majority Shia Muslims.

The government has also been criticised for arresting dissidents and curtailing media and internet freedom.

Observers will also be watching to see if Bahrain's only woman in parliament is joined by other female MPs.

N Korea's leader tries hand at restaurant designing

ANI, London

North Korea's leader Kim Jong-il has bolstered his CV with a new skill - restaurant design.

The 68-year-old Kim personally provided "on-site guidance" during the construction of a new 60,000 sq ft wing at Okryugwan (The Jade Stream Pavilion), the most famous restaurant in North Korea, according to the Korean Central News Agency.

The extension, which can seat thousands of diners, "is another gift presented by Kim to the Pyongyangites and all other people with his loving care because he always thinks about how to improve the people's diet," reports the Telegraph.

US MIDTERM ELECTION

Obama launches rescue mission for top Democrat

AFP, Las Vegas

President Barack Obama has launched a last-ditch rescue mission for Democratic Senate chief Harry Reid, who risks taking a knockout punch from Republicans in mid-term polls.

Reid is battling to save his political life, and his defeat by rival Sharron Angle, a favourite of the conservative "Tea Party" movement would sicken Democrats already bracing for heavy losses in the election on November 2.

"All those who fought for change in 2008, you have got to fight for change in 2010," Obama told a raucous rally in Las Vegas Friday, seeking to fire up his youthful, diverse coalition of Nevada voters on Reid's behalf.

"We are just in the first quarter, I can't have you tired now," Obama told supporters ahead of polls in which analysts tip Republicans to win back the House of Representatives and cut Democratic margins in the Senate.

Earlier, on the third day of a campaign swing, Obama branded Republicans as radical and reactionary, seeking to bolster another key Democratic Senator, Barbara Boxer, in normally safe Democratic ground of California.

He charged that the first Republican president, his political hero Abraham Lincoln would be too moderate to win the opposition party's presidential nomination in the modern age.

"Seriously, can you imagine him trying to run with these folks?" Obama said, in a bid to portray the Republican Party as outside the mainstream.

Obama accused Republicans of sitting on their hands while he saved the economy from a second Great Depression and of wanting to go back to the same lax regulatory regimes that caused the crisis in the first place.

Republicans need to win 39 seats to take back the House after four years of Democratic control -- a task well within their reach with some analysts judging up to 90 races in the 435-seat chamber as competitive.

France passes pension bill

BBC ONLINE

The French Senate has passed a controversial pension reform bill, which has caused a series of strikes and protests around France.

The senators approved President Nicolas Sarkozy's plan to raise the retirement age from 60 to 62, and it could become law as early as next week.

Sarkozy says the measure is necessary to reduce the deficit.

But hundreds of thousands have protested against what they see as an attack on their rights.

Senators passed the motion to raise the retirement age by 177 votes to 153, after the government used a special measure known as a guillotine to cut short the debate on the bill.



An anti-nuclear protestor holds a 3-eyed Cookie Monster puppet and a placard, which reads "I will block the Castor! You too?" during a protest march in Berlin's Kreuzberg district yesterday. Nationwide protests were held against the upcoming Castor transport of nuclear waste to the storage facility in a salt deposit in Gorleben scheduled for the start of November.

MEN: Handle with Care

Detect Prostate Cancer Early for Best Recovery



While prostate cancer generally tends to grow slowly in most men, some forms of prostate cancer are more aggressive and spread quickly. Early detection gives you a better chance of successful treatment.

Early stage prostate cancer usually shows no symptoms.

In later stages, symptoms include:

- Difficult, weak or interrupted urine flow
- Blood in semen or urine
- Frequent urination, especially at night
- Nagging pain in the back, hips or pelvis
- Pain or burning sensation during urination
- Painful ejaculation

There is a range of treatments available for treatment of Prostate Cancer. Doctors at Singapore General Hospital (SGH) Urology Centre, the largest, one-stop centre in the region who pioneered the minimally invasive 'Da-Vinci' robotic surgery technique in South East Asia, lists the options available:

Active surveillance - Some patients may be monitored through blood tests or repeat biopsies. Treatment starts when there is evidence that cancer has progressed.

Surgery - Surgery is normally done on patients in good health. Surgery may be followed by radiation therapy, when necessary. Increasingly, the minimally invasive 'Da-Vinci' surgery option is used at SGH as the method of choice.

Radiation therapy - Some studies suggest that radiotherapy may be as effective as surgery in certain stages of prostate cancer.

Hormonal therapy - The production of the male hormones is stopped or prevented from reaching the cancer.

Chemotherapy - Usually given in advanced stage prostate cancer when the patient is no longer responsive to hormonal treatment.

Immunotherapy - Using the patient's own immune system to fight cancer, this treatment is also called biotherapy or immunotherapy.

For more information on treatment options for prostate cancer and other urology conditions, please go to:
www.healthxchange.com.sg/urology

Call us for High Quality & Affordable Medical Care at Singapore Hospitals

Contact us for cutting-edge medical treatment at leading Singapore healthcare institutions.

Dhaka	Galaxy Healthcare Services : Tel : 88 - 01714 1100 44; 88 - 0288 3286 78 Email: info@galaxyhealthcare.com.bd	EcomHealth Care (www.ecomhealth.com) Tel : 88 - 01738 3839 89 Email: care@ecomhealth.com
Chittagong	: Tel : 88 - 01713 0844 72 Email: chittagong@galaxyhealthcare.com.bd	Tel : 88 - 01676 0022 52 Email: care@ecomhealth.com
Sylhet	:	Tel : 88 - 01726 6834 67 Email: care@ecomhealth.com