

ASTRO NEWS

NASA, Google launch Virtual Exploration site



Google Earth will take you through a high-resolution, three-dimensional view of Planet Mars. Besides providing a three-dimensional view of Mars, the new mode, Google Mars 3D, will also give researchers a platform for sharing data similar to what Google Earth provides for Earth scientists. The mode enables users to fly virtually through enormous canyons and scale huge mountains on Mars, higher than any found on Earth.

Help NASA name the next ISS Module

The next module for the International Space Station needs a name. NASA is seeking opinions and suggestions for new names, for the component – a connecting module and its cupola, targeted to launch in December 2009. NASA has a few names picked out, so you can vote for those,



or suggest your own. NASA says the name should reflect the spirit of exploration and cooperation embodied by the International Space Station.

NASA, ESA plans next big mission

NASA and ESA, the two space agencies, have narrowed down choices for the next big planetary missions which will be joint efforts between the US and Europe. A mission to Jupiter and its four largest moons will be the primary mission the two space agencies will focus on, while they continue to plan for another potential mission to visit Saturn's largest moon Titan and Enceladus.

NASA funds development of Mars Balloon.

NASA has awarded a Small Business Innovative Research (SBIR) contract to develop a balloon launcher to operate from the surface of Mars.

Such a system would have potential for atmospheric sampling and video data capture unavailable on current Mars missions.



THE BUZZ

Jai ho...



Danny Boyle's *Slumdog Millionaire* won eight Oscars including Best Director and Best Picture at the 81st Academy Awards 2009. Music maestro, A R Rahman won the Academy Award for best original score, and he shared another Oscar with lyricist Gulzar for best original song, 'Jai Ho'. Resul Pookutty created history by becoming the first Indian to bag the Oscar for best sound-mixing. The other awards in the film's kitty were for best cinematography, editing and adapted screenplay. The other Indian entry, *Smile Pinki*, a real world fairy tale, based in a village in Uttar Pradesh won the Oscar in the best documentary (short) category.

Bharat Ratna for Bhimsen Joshi



Noted Hindustani classical vocalist Pandit Bhimsen Joshi (87) was presented with the Bharat Ratna, India's highest civilian honour. The award, announced after a gap of seven years, was last given to singer, Lata Mangeshkar and shehnai maestro Ustad Bismillah Khan.

Crystal Award to Amitabh

Legendary Bollywood actor Amitabh Bachchan has been honoured with the World Economic Forum's Crystal Award at Davos, Switzerland for his contribution to the world of cinema. Amitabh received the award along



with famed Indian dancer, Mallika Sarabhai.

Nano computer at Rs 500

The Indian government will soon launch nano computers for students at Rs 500. The technology for the computers has been developed by the Indian Institute of Science (IISc), Bangalore, and Indian Institute of Technology (IIT), Chennai.



Indian woman first to fly Russian fighter

Suman Sharma became the world's first woman to fly the mighty Russian MiG-35 fighter jet at the Aero India international air show that concluded recently. She also became the first civilian woman to co-pilot the American-strike fighter F-16IN of Lockheed Martin.

SPORTS NEWS

Indian marathon team creates history



The Indian marathon team created history by finishing overall third in the 5th edition of The Greatest Race on Earth challenge which concluded with the Hong Kong marathon. 25-year-old army man Angad Kumar Prasad finished the men's full marathon at the seventh place in the final leg with a timing of 2:25:21 sec.

Indian team's New Jersey unveiled



A New Jersey sponsored by Nike has been unveiled for the Indian team, before its New Zealand tour. The New

Jersey is in darker shade than the present sky-blue jersey and has been designed by Tarun Tahilani.

India slips six places to 148 in FIFA rankings

The 1-2 defeat to Hong Kong in their friendly last month pushed India six rungs down to 148th in the latest FIFA rankings recently. India, who started the year ranked 142nd, lost a lot of ground following the defeat on January 14. Hong Kong, meanwhile, improved nine places to 143rd. Bob Houghton's team also dropped out of the top 20 in Asia and is now ranked 24th.

Real Madrid is richest football club

Real Madrid is still the top moneymaking club in world football, beating out European Cup champion Man-

chester United due to the plunging pound, according to the latest review of the sport's finances. Deloitte's study, which ranks the 20 biggest clubs based on revenue, showed that Madrid generated Euro365.8 million in the 12 months to June 30, 2008.



ICC Women's World Cup 2009

The ICC Women's World Cup to be staged in Australia from Mar 7 - Mar 22, 2009, will be the first to be played under the auspices of the ICC since its merger with the International Women's Cricket Council (IWCC) in 2005. Australia will defend the title it won after defeating India in the final in South Africa in 2005. The other seven teams to take part in the tournament include India, New Zealand, England, Sri Lanka, West Indies, South Africa and Pakistan.

