



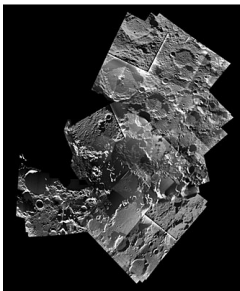
SPACE NEWS

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Last week in space

The latest issue of ESA's flagship magazine, the Bulletin, carries a broad range of articles: the International Space Station and the launch of Europe's Columbus module. In other articles: Mars Express is exhaustively studying the Red Planet from orbit; Gaia will survey our Galaxy in great detail; the Globcolour and Medspiration projects are helping to assess the state of our planet; and Soyuz vehicles will soon be launched from French Guiana. For more information see here: www.esa.int/esaCP/SEMVVV19R9F_index_0.html.



A new map obtained with SMART-1 data shows the geography and illumination of the lunar North Pole. Such maps will be of great use for future lunar explorers. The lunar poles are very interesting for future science and exploration of the Moon mainly because of their exposure to close to dark areas that could host water ice – potential future lunar base sites. For more information see here: www.esa.int/SPECIALS/SMART-1/SEMMH029R9F_0.html.

Spectacular images and data from the Hinode mission have shed new light on the Sun's magnetic field and the origins of solar wind, which can disrupt power grids, satellites and communications on Earth. Data from Hinode, a Japanese (JAXA) mission with ESA participation, shows that magnetic waves play a critical role in driving the solar wind into space. The solar wind is a stream of electrically charged gas that is propelled away from the Sun in all directions at speeds of almost 1.5 million km/h. Better understanding of the solar wind may lead to more accurate prediction of damaging radiation waves before they reach satellites.



The Columbus Blog is now online, and will run through to the end of the Space Shuttle Atlantis STS-122 mission. ESA's Columbus Blog will cover the intense activity supporting the delivery of the Columbus lab - Europe's cornerstone contribution to the ISS - to space. You can blog, here: www.esa.int/blog.

Not to be missed next week

Tuesday 11th December: The comet 8P Tuttle (magnitude 8.2) can be seen, with an instrument about 1° from Gamma Cepheus (magnitude 3.2).

Wednesday 12th December: From today and through to the 3rd of January, Jupiter can be seen in the SOHO LASCO C3 coronagraph, you can follow the planet's progress here: <http://sohowww.nascom.nasa.gov/data/realtime-images.html>.

Friday 14th December: Maximum of the Geminid meteor shower.

Try spotting Neptune about 1° north of a very young moon.