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Shuttle launch aborted

United Press International

CAPE CANAVERAL, Fla. — An engine failure forced a dramatic launch abort seconds before blastoff of the space shuttle Discovery Tuesday. A fire broke out and the shuttle commander said the crew was ready to "bail out" if it had not been extinguished.

But the astronauts did not have to use escape gondolas attached to long slide wires at the top of the launch tower to reach safety. Instead, they spent an anxious 38 minutes in Discovery's cabin while ground crews quickly defused the situation.

"We were all disappointed, but the crew's reaction was at all times purely professional and needless to say, we look forward to a successful mission later on," said shuttle commander Henry Hartsfield.

Discovery's maiden flight was delayed indefinitely by the launch failure. Glynn Lunney, shuttle program manager at the Johnson Space Center in Houston, said he "anticipated" the delay caused by the engine failure would be a minimum of 10 days to two weeks.

"After the 31-second point in the launch count, I thought that we were on our way," Hartsfield said in a statement released by NASA. "We had the normal big kick when the engines ignite and almost simultaneously we had the engine alarm."

"It was then that I knew that we were not going anywhere and my major concern was that the solids did not fire," Hartsfield said, referring to the shuttle's twin booster rockets that are not ignited until all three main engines reach full power.

The launch sequence was stopped just four seconds before solid rocket ignition, which would have committed the shuttle to blastoff. Instead the spaceship remained firmly bolted to the launch pad.

A nearly invisible hydrogen fire flamed briefly at the base of Discovery moments after a failure in the No. 3 main engine had prompted the shuttle's master computer to stop the launch sequence.

An inspection team was scheduled to assemble at the oceanside launch pad at 8 a.m. Wednesday to find out the extent of the damage caused by the fire and the water spray on delicate systems.

Discovery is scheduled to blast off Aug. 29 on its second mission, but that date will inevitably slip as the investigation into the launch failure proceeds.



Learning New Steps

The Vidor High School Brigadettes concentrate on a new dance routine in East Kyle. The group is participating in the

American Drill Team School on campus this week. See page 5 for related photos.

Photo by PETER ROCHA

Senate votes for penalty

United Press International

WASHINGTON — Spurred by pleas to save hundreds of young lives per year, the Senate voted Tuesday to restrict federal highway construction funds for states that do not enact a 21-year-old drinking age within two years.

The measure was adopted over the protests of conservatives, who said it would curtail states' rights and discriminate against young drivers. But backers argued it would stem highway deaths, especially those of young people who drive over "blood borders" to neighboring states to drink.

The drinking age provision, which passed 81-16, would cut federal highway construction funds 5 percent in fiscal 1987, which begins Oct. 1, 1986, and 10 percent in fiscal 1988 for states that do not raise their drinking ages to 21. It was an amendment to a child safety bill.

Offered by Sen. Frank Lautenberg, D-N.J., it also would add 5 percent to highway safety grants for states imposing mandatory jail terms and license revocation for drunk driving offenses.

The House adopted a drinking age amendment to a different bill June 7 — and not including the mandatory sentencing provisions — so another House vote will be needed. President Reagan endorsed the concept June 13.

Before adopting the Lautenberg provision, the Senate defeated, 65-32, a rival approach offered by conservative members to add 5 percent to a state's highway safety money for enacting a 21-year-old age drinking law, 5 percent more for mandatory sentencing and 1 percent more for every 1 percent decrease in alcohol-related deaths.

Twenty-three states now have 21-year-old drinking laws, including four that approved them this year.

Lautenberg said his punishment approach is the most effective way to end a "crazy quilt of drinking ages in neighboring states."

The National Highway Traffic Safety Administration estimates 1,250 lives a year would be saved by a higher drinking age, Lautenberg said. Half the nation's teenage highway deaths are caused by drunk driving, he said, and teenagers are involved in 21 percent of alcohol-related highway deaths.

Education accord reached

United Press International

AUSTIN — A House-Senate conference committee reached accords Tuesday on the state school board and teacher competency tests, leaving the complex issue of school financing as the only remaining area of discord in two versions of an education reform bill.

The 10-member committee, in a more conciliatory mood Tuesday after a late night session Monday erupted into name-calling and obscenities, enters its fourth day of negotiations Wednesday in hopes of resolving the school financing issue.

Once the two houses accept the conference committee's compromise bill, it then can be sent to Gov. Mark White for his signature.

Despite strong opposition earlier by Senate members, conferees adopted the House bill's plan to require all teachers to pass a competency test by June 1986 in order to

'Pro-family' groups protest education reform bill

United Press International

AUSTIN — A coalition of "pro-family" groups Tuesday protested the education reform bill being considered by the Texas Legislature, saying it assumes parents don't know what's best for their children.

"Some of these people seem to have the idea that the parents of

Texas don't know what they're doing and they're not qualified to educate their children and rear their children," said spokesman Buddy Hicks of Austin.

About 100 demonstrators, some carrying placards, gathered on the state Capitol steps to express their displeasure with the bill.

retain their jobs. The Senate bill made competency testing optional for local school districts.

Conferees also compromised on a career ladder plan that would give additional pay bonuses to teachers who complete certain performance and educational requirements.

For advancement from level one to level two of the ladder, teachers would earn between \$1,500 and \$2,000 a year; from two to three, \$3,000 to \$4,000; and from three to four, \$4,500 to \$6,000. School districts must award the maximum amounts to teachers unless the state

Ag college enrollment declines

By KARI FLUEGEL
Staff Writer

The number of agriculture scientists retiring and other factors could result in a serious shortage of agricultural scientists within the next ten years, Dr. H.O. Kunkel, dean of the college of Agriculture, said while speaking at Governors' Conference on Agriculture.

An estimated 15,000 doctorate degrees will be granted in agriculture during the next decade, or about 1,500 a year, Kunkel said, but that may not be enough to fill the positions of retiring scientists.

"These raw numbers, on the surface, suggest the needs will be met," Kunkel said.

Because the United States is a major training ground for third world agricultural scientists, almost 40 percent of the students studying agriculture in the United States are non-immigrant foreign students, 90 percent of which will find employment in other countries upon graduation.

"This of course is an essential, vi-



Dr. H.O. Kunkel

tal contribution of U.S. higher education to the welfare of people throughout the world," Kunkel said. "But it also suggests that not enough U.S. citizens have gone into graduate studies in agriculture."

About 27 percent of the current faculty members in agriculture will have reached 65 by 1994 and an estimated 90 percent will retire within the decade.

"Assuming a two percent annual attrition for other reasons, 3,000, or nearly one-third, of the available Ph.D. supply will be required for

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New Hilton started

By KARI FLUEGEL
Staff Writer

Construction began about a month ago on a new hotel and conference center in College Station.

The Hilton Hotel and Conference Center, costing an estimated \$17.8 million dollars, is scheduled to open May 23, 1985.

Located at the corner of University and Fedmart, the basement of the complex already has been dug and workers are pouring cement. Ron Jackson, president of Sunbelt Hotels Inc. and one of the owners of the Hilton, said.

The strange looking t-shaped crane which can be seen from the Texas A&M campus will run up the front of the building. Later, it will aid in construction as an elevator shaft to get equipment up to workers, Jackson said.

The new complex is being built in this area because of the expected growth in the Bryan-College Station area over the next five years, Jackson said.

Future university activities and expected growth of industry in the area influenced the decision to build the hotel, Jackson said.



Construction on the new Hilton continues.

"We just think the market is ready for a high quality facility," Jackson said. "We'll have the finest facilities in the area."

The 11-story building will have 302 rooms, eight suites, seven jacuzzi suites, an outdoor pool and a lobby bar.

Other facilities at the Hilton will include a 130-person capacity seafood restaurant, a 120-person Tex-mex restaurant called the Plaza Cafe and a 300-seat Las Vegas-type bar named Sundance with live club acts.

The hotel also will have a 1,200-person capacity ballroom, an amphitheater with projection equipment and ten other meeting rooms.

In Today's Battalion

Local

• The Family Tree is a halfway house for men at least 18 years old suffering from mental retardation. See story page 3.

State

• Mexican businessmen are complaining about U.S. Immigration and Naturalization Service officers at the San Antonio airport. See story page 6.

National

• Democratic rivals Walter Mondale and Gary Hart made peace Tuesday. See story page 4.

World

• Iran accused Iraq of shelling three of its towns in a new violation of a U.N.-mediated cease-fire protecting border cities. See story page 6.