“Here’s some of the stories trending This Week at NASA!”

Engineers at Johnson Space Center in Houston are using a mockup of NASA’s Orion spacecraft to evaluate how well astronauts are able to operate Orion’s rotational hand controller and cursor control device, while dressed in spacesuits.

The controllers operate the displays and control system used to maneuver and interact with the spacecraft.

The testing aims to provide data that can be used to make adjustments needed to ensure future Orion crews can interact appropriately with the spacecraft’s control system during deep space missions.

NASA recently completed a major milestone on its journey to Mars, and the work to transform Florida’s Kennedy Space Center into the spaceport of the future.
an independent assessment have determined

the agency’s Ground Systems Development
and Operations Program is on track, on schedule

and on budget with plans to modernize facilities
and ground support systems at Kennedy needed
to process the Space Launch System (SLS) rocket,
and the Orion spacecraft for missions to Mars

and other deep space destinations.

Engineers are upgrading Kennedy’s iconic Vehicle
Assembly Building, crawler transporters, Launch

Pad 39B and other launch infrastructure to
support the requirements of Orion and SLS.

On March 31, a Russian cargo spacecraft, stocked
with about three tons of food, fuel and supplies

launched from the Baikonur Cosmodrome in Kazakhstan,
on a mission to resupply the International

Space Station.

The Progress is the second of three supply
ships scheduled to deliver cargo to the station

in as many weeks.

Orbital ATK’s Cygnus spacecraft arrived
on March 26 with nearly 7,500 pounds of supplies

and hardware, and SpaceX will launch its Dragon cargo craft to the ISS no earlier than April

Among the items that Dragon will deliver is the Bigelow Expandable Activity Module (BEAM) -- a technology demonstration to study the radiation protection, thermal performance and general operations of expandable habitats in space.

NASA has selected a team to build a new, cutting-edge instrument that will detect planets outside our solar system, often referred to as exoplanets.

The instrument, part of an observational research partnership with the National Science Foundation, will measure the tiny back-and-forth wobble of a star, caused by the gravitational tug of a planet in orbit around it -- an indication to researchers that a planet is orbiting a star.

Measuring the size of the wobble can also
reveal how massive the planet is.

The new instrument, scheduled to be completed in 2019, will be installed on the 3.5-meter WIYN telescope at the Kitt Peak National Observatory in Arizona.

Observations from NASA's Spitzer Space Telescope have led to the first temperature map of a rocky planet nearly two times as big as Earth. The map shows new evidence that instead of a moisture-drenched atmosphere, the super-Earth-sized planet — named 55 Cancri e, is a world blanketed with hot lava that sits very close to its star. 55 Cancri e is about 40 light-years from Earth.

NASA's Green Propulsion Infusion Mission (GPIM) recently passed a major flight readiness milestone — marking the successful completion of functional and environmental testing of its systems and software. The milestone is a major step for the mission, which is scheduled for launch in early 2017,
to demonstrate the practical capabilities of using a greener, less toxic propellant than the hydrazine fuel used as a propellant by many spacecraft.

And that's what's up this week @NASA ...

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