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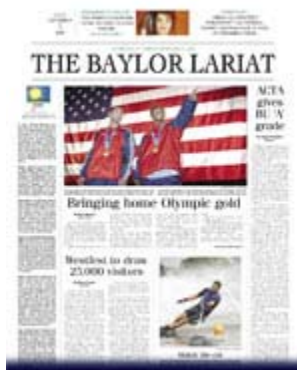
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Space station slowly but surely becoming extraterrestrial reality

April 28, 1998

Could the dream finally come true?

Twelve years ago, Weekly Readers, in which young children read about the world and about technological advances that would happen in their lifetimes -- our lifetimes, were passed out to elementary school classes.

One such advancement that children read about was of an international space station. That dream is slowly becoming a reality -- very slowly.

An Associated Press article Friday said that, as of now, with no complications arising, the space station will be completely assembled in space sometime between 2004 and 2006. But, before the news that Russia failed to meet its deadlines, the space station was supposed to be completed in June 2002.

The space station will be assembled above the Earth as part by part is launched into space. The first part was supposed to be launched later this year, but now it is delayed till at least 1999. Months of waiting have now turned into years.

But, why is this space station so important?

Not only is it a technological dream, it is also the dream of people coming together -- the breaking down of barriers.

The first phase of this space station shows how barriers can be broken -- Russian Space Station Mir. Mir is a test to see how a space station might actually work and what problems may be encountered. There are three objectives of the Mir project: cooperation, investigation and operation. Russians and Americans have come together in space.

Sixteen nations from four continents are participating in the building of this dream. People who would most likely not come together on Earth will have the chance to come together in space. So, watch, wait and hope for no more delays as our childhood dream of an international space station slowly comes true.

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