

NASA on a crusade to debunk 2012 apocalypse myths

NASA駁斥二〇一二末日預言



The world is not coming to an end on Dec. 21, 2012, the US space agency insisted in a rare campaign to dispel **widespread** rumors fuelled by the Internet and a new Hollywood movie.

Sony Pictures' latest big screen offering *2012* arrived in theaters on Friday, with a US\$200 million production about the end of the world supposedly based on myths backed by the Mayan calendar.

The doomsday **scenario** revolves around claims that the end of time will come as an obscure Planet X — or Nibiru — heads toward or collides into Earth.

The mysterious planet was supposedly discovered by the Sumerians, according to claims by pseudo-scientists, **paranormal** activity enthusiasts and Internet theorists.

Some Web sites accuse NASA of concealing the truth on the wayward planet's existence, but the US space agency denounced such stories as an "Internet hoax."

"There is no factual basis for these claims," NASA said in a question-and-answer posting on its Web site.

If such a collision were real "astronomers would have been tracking it for at least the past decade, and it would be visible by now to the naked eye," it added. "Obviously, it does not exist."

"**Credible** scientists worldwide know of no threat associated with 2012," NASA insisted.

Initial theories set the disaster for May 2003, but when nothing happened the date was moved forward to the winter solstice in 2012 to coincide with the end of a cycle of the ancient Mayan calendar.

But NASA insisted the Mayan calendar in fact does not

end on Dec. 21, 2012, as another period begins immediately afterward. And it said there are no planetary alignments on the horizon for the next few decades.

And even if the planets were to line up as some have forecast, the effect on our planet would be "negligible," NASA said.

Among the other theories NASA has set out to debunk are that geomagnetic storms, a pole reversal or unsteadiness in the Earth's crustal plates might befall the planet.

And while comets and asteroids have always hit the Earth, "big hits are very rare," NASA noted. The last major impact was believed to be 65 million years ago, spurring the end of dinosaurs.

"We have already determined that there are no threatening asteroids as large as the one that killed the dinosaurs," the space agency said.

(AFP)

—— 〇一二年十二月二十一日不會是世界末日！美國航太總署（NASA）罕見地發文駁斥種種因網路和好萊塢新片加油添醋炒作而盛傳的謠言。

索尼電影公司的最新電影《2012》上週五上映，這部耗資兩億美元製作的電影根據馬雅曆法預言，描述世界末日的景象。

末日景象的話題，圍繞在一顆鮮為人知的X行星（或稱Nibiru）朝地球直衝而來或撞上地球，造成世界末日。

偽科學家、超自然活動愛好者和網路理論家聲稱，發現這顆神秘行星的應該是蘇美人。

有些網站指控NASA隱瞞這顆難以掌控的行星存在的真相，但NASA駁斥這類說法是「網路騙局」。

NASA在其網站上發布了一篇問與答說：「這些說法毫無事實

根據。」

如果真的有行星會撞上地球，那「天文學家至少十年前就會追蹤到這顆行星，而我們現在用肉眼就能看見它。」網站中還說：「很顯然地，這顆行星根本不存在。」

NASA堅稱：「全球有信譽的科學家都知道，沒有與二〇一二年相關的威脅。」

最初的理論指出，世界末日是二〇〇三年五月，結果那一天什麼也沒發生後，又有人將日期推後至二〇一二年冬至，那天正好是馬雅古曆一輪的終結。

但NASA堅稱，事實上，馬雅曆並非完結於二〇一二年十二月二十一日，而是緊接著展開新的一輪。NASA也表示，未來數十年內不會出現行星連成一線的現象。

NASA說，而且就算行星真如有些人預測的那樣連成一線，對地球的影響也「微不足道的」。

NASA提出駁斥的末日理論還包括：地磁風暴、地極反轉和地殼板塊不穩。

NASA特別提到，雖然常有彗星和小行星撞擊地球，「巨大的撞擊卻極為罕見」。上一次嚴重撞擊據信是在六千五百萬年前，導致了恐龍的滅亡。

NASA說：「我們已確認地球不會遭到像造成恐龍滅亡那樣大的行星撞擊。」

(法新社／翻譯：袁星塵)

In this film publicity image released by Columbia Pictures/Sony, Lily Morgan, left, and John Cusack are shown in a scene from *2012*.

PHOTO: AP/COLUMBIA PICTURES/SONY, JOE LEDERER

哥倫比亞電影公司和索尼公司提供的這張宣傳照中，是莉莉·摩根（左）與約翰·庫薩克在電影《2012》中的一個場景。

照片：美聯社／哥倫比亞電影公司／索尼公司，喬伊·萊德勒

TODAY'S WORDS

今日單字

1. **widespread** /'waɪd,spred/ adj.

普遍的 (pu3 pian4 de5)

例：There's a widespread belief that the chairman will step down at the end of the year.

(大家普遍認為董事長今年年底會退休。)

2. **scenario** /sə'nærio/ n.

情景 (qing2 jing3)

例：It's hard to imagine a scenario where your plan would work.

(我很難想像你計畫成功的情景。)

3. **paranormal** /,pə're'nɔ:ml/ adj.

超自然的 (chao1 zi4 ran2 de5)

例：Most so-called paranormal activity can easily be logically explained away.

(大多數所謂的超自然活動都能輕鬆用邏輯解釋。)

4. **credible** /'kredəbl/ adj.

有誠信的 (you3 cheng2 xin4 de5)

例：The defendant failed to provide a credible explanation for his actions.

(被告無法為他的作為提供可信的解釋。)