

IN BRIEF



Photos of Markle in sari resurface on web

LONDON
Unseen pictures of the Duchess of Sussex Meghan Markle taken in January 2017 in India have surfaced on the Internet and gone viral. At the time of her trip for some charity work, news of her romance with Prince Harry had only just emerged. In the photos, Markle is seen in a sari and sports a traditional tilak on her forehead. IANS



Jack Ma sparks debate over working hours

BEIJING
Remarks by Jack Ma, the head of Chinese online business giant Alibaba, that young people should work 12-hour days, six days a week if they want financial success have prompted a public debate over work-life balance in the country. People's Daily has issued an editorial saying mandatory overtime is unfair to workers. AP



Indian Psychiatric Society flays new film's poster

MUMBAI
The Indian Psychiatric Society has written a letter to the Central Board of Film Certification, arguing that the posters of Kangana Ranaut and Rajkummar Rao-starrer *Mental Hai Kya* depicts mental illness in poor light. The letter has demanded that the title be changed. PTI

Cases of measles show alarming rise, warns WHO

Global data shows a jump of 300% in the first three months of 2019, compared to the same period last year

BINDU SHAJAN PERAPPADAN
NEW DELHI

The number of cases of measles – one of the world's most contagious diseases – is climbing, warned the World Health Organisation (WHO), stating that preliminary global data shows that reported cases rose by 300% in the first three months of 2019, compared to the same period in 2018.

In 2017, the most recent year for which estimates are available, it caused close to 1,10,000 deaths. Worse, in recent months, spikes in case numbers have also occurred in countries with high overall vaccination coverage, including the United States

of America as well as Israel, Thailand, and Tunisia, as the disease has spread fast among clusters of unvaccinated people.

"Measles has the potential to be extremely severe. Even in high-income countries, complications result in hospitalisation in up to a quarter of cases, and can lead to lifelong disability, from brain damage and blindness to hearing loss," said WHO.

It added that while data released currently was "provisional and not yet complete, it indicates a clear trend".

"The actual numbers of cases – captured in global estimates – will also be consid-



Mass immunisation of children is needed to fight the disease. • AP

erably higher than those reported. We estimate that less than 1 in 10 cases are reported globally, with variations by region. With this as the background to date, 2019 has seen 170 countries report 1,12,163 measles cases to WHO. As of this time last

year, there were 28,124 measles cases from 163 countries. Globally, this is almost a 300% increase," noted WHO. Countries with the most reported cases include Madagascar, Ukraine, India, Nigeria, Kazakhstan, Chad, Myanmar, Thailand, the Philippines and Democratic Republic of the Congo.

India at risk

A senior Health Ministry official said that to "eliminate measles and control rubella, mass [over 95%] immunisation of children is required. In India, measles is still one of the leading causes of death in young children. About 15% of vaccinated chil-

dren fail to develop immunity from the first dose, meaning that if only 80% are fully immunised, an outbreak is likely. We have to ensure herd immunity to stay ahead of the disease."

WHO's African region has recorded a 700% increase, the region of the Americas 60%, the European region 300%, the Eastern Mediterranean 100% and 40% increases have been observed in South-east Asia and the Western Pacific.

Many countries are in the midst of sizeable measles outbreaks, with all regions of the world experiencing sustained rise in cases. Current outbreaks include those

from Democratic Republic of the Congo, Ethiopia, Georgia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Madagascar, Myanmar, Philippines, Sudan, Thailand and Ukraine, causing many deaths – mostly among young children.

The disease is almost entirely preventable through two doses of a safe and effective vaccine. For several years, however, global coverage with the first dose of measles vaccine has stalled at 85%. This is still short of the 95% needed to prevent outbreaks, and leaves many people, in many communities, at risk. Second dose coverage, while increasing, stands at 67%.

Instagram passwords stored in readable form

Facebook admits to bigger numbers

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE
SAN FRANCISCO

Millions of Instagram users had their passwords stored in unencrypted form on internal servers, Facebook said on Thursday, raising its original estimate of tens of thousands.

"We discovered additional logs of Instagram passwords being stored in a readable format. We now estimate that this issue impacted millions of Instagram users," Facebook said in a blog post. "We will be notifying these users as we did the others. Our investigation has determined that these stored passwords were not internally abused or improperly accessed," the social network said.

Facebook, Instagram's parent company, revealed last month that the unencrypted passwords of hundreds of millions of users



Facebook has said it will tighten security measures to handle data. • AP

had been stored, putting the number of Instagram users affected in the tens of thousands. The social network's handling of user data has been a flashpoint for controversy since it admitted last year that Cambridge Analytica, a political consultancy, used an app that may have hijacked the private details of 87 million users.

Facebook has announced a series of moves to tighten handling of data, including eliminating most of its data-sharing partnerships with outside companies.

Holy Friday



Pope Francis lying down in prayer prior to the Mass for the Passion of Christ at St. Peter's Basilica at the Vatican on Friday. He later participated in the traditional Way of the Cross procession at the ancient Colosseum in Rome. • AP

Coming to China: the car of the future

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE
SHANGHAI

Global automakers are positioning for a brave new world of on-demand transport that will require a car of the future – hyper-connected, autonomous, and shared – and China may become the concept's laboratory.

With ride-hailing services booming and car-sharing not far behind, the need for vehicles tailored to these and other evolving mobility solutions is one of the hottest topics among global automakers gathered for this week's Shanghai Auto Show.

Interconnected times

"We cannot just develop electric cars. They will have to be smart, interconnected and of course shared," Zhao Guoqing, vice president of Chinese auto giant Great Wall Motors, said on the auto show's sidelines.

Discussion of China and ride-hailing inevitably involves Didi Chuxing, the country's omnipresent answer to Uber.

The eagerness of Chinese travellers to hail rides with a smartphone click has unleashed a colossal market: on-demand transport reached \$28 billion in turnover in China last year, or about half of global volume, and is expected to double by 2022, according to data firm Statista.

Didi accounts for about 90% of the Chinese market.

The on-demand potential is bringing automakers and service providers together.

Last year, Didi unveiled an alliance of Chinese and foreign manufacturers including Renault, Toyota and Volkswagen, dedicated to exploring ways forward.

Tiny baby set to go home in Japan

Ryusuke Sekiya weighed only 258 gm when he was born in October

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE
TOKYO

The world's smallest baby boy, who was born in October in Japan weighing as much as an apple, is now ready for the outside world, his doctor said on Friday.

Ryusuke Sekiya was delivered via emergency Caesarean section, after 24 weeks and five days of pregnancy as his mother Toshiko experienced hypertension.

At 258 grams he was even lighter than the previous record holder, another Japanese boy who weighed just 268 grams when he was born last year. That baby was discharged from a Tokyo hospital in February.

When Ryusuke was born on October 1, 2018, he measured 22 cm, and medical staff kept him in a neonatal



Baby Ryusuke Sekiya at birth and, right, with his parents. • AFP/NAGANO CHILDREN'S HOSPITAL

intensive care unit. They used tubes to feed him, sometimes taking cotton swabs to apply his mother's milk to his mouth.

Healthy growth

Nearly seven months later, the boy has grown 13 times in weight, now weighing over 3 kg. He will be released

from Nagano Children's Hospital in central Japan over the weekend.

"When he was born, he was so small, and it seemed as if he would break with a touch. I was so worried," his mother Toshiko told reporters. "Now he drinks milk. We can give him a bath. I am happy that I can see him

growing," she said. The smallest surviving girl was born in Germany in 2015 weighing 252 grams, according to a registry put together by the University of Iowa of the world's tiniest surviving babies.

The survival rate for tiny babies is substantially lower for boys than for girls.

Athens finally installs Alexander statue

The project, completed in 1972, was mired in bureaucratic delays for 30 years

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE
ATHENS

Athens on Friday installed its first Alexander the Great statue, a project mired in bureaucratic delays for nearly three decades. The 3.5-metre equestrian statue of a young Alexander, cast in bronze, was erected in central Athens opposite a statue of Lord Byron.

According to the city of Athens, it was completed in 1972 and acquired by the state in 1992, at a time of intense nationalist feeling over a bitter name dispute with the newly-independent former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia.

Dispute with Macedonia
Athens Mayor Giorgos Kaminis insisted on Friday that the move had "nothing" to



Soaring high: The Alexander the Great statue that was unveiled on Friday in central Athens. • AFP

do with the Macedonia dispute. "The decision to erect the statue was taken in 2015. This is a mark of the delays of Greek bureaucracy," said Mr. Kaminis. The fourth century BC warrior king, born in today's northern Greek region of Macedonia, is a hero figure to Greeks. For decades, Athens accused Skopje of seeking to usurp its ancient heritage. Until now, there had also been no agreement

in Athens on where to place the statue. A decade ago, a nationalist government in Skopje launched an initiative to erect its own statues to Alexander and his father Philip.

Renaming of republic

In February, the former Yugoslav republic was officially renamed North Macedonia following a landmark deal with the leftist government in Greece that ended the three-decade dispute.

Earlier this month, North Macedonia renamed its main football stadium, formerly known as Philip II arena, after the father of Alexander the Great.

Skopje in recent months has also dropped Alexander the Great from the name of an airport and a highway.

Thai king confers awards on two Australian divers

REUTERS
BANGKOK

Two Australian cave divers who were instrumental in the rescue last year of 12 Thai boys and their soccer coach from a flooded cave received on Friday a royal honour from King Maha Vajiralongkorn in a ceremony in Bangkok.

The Wild Boars soccer team, aged between 11 and 16, and their 25-year-old coach became trapped on June 23 while exploring the cave complex in the northern province of Chiang Rai when a rainy season downpour flooded the tunnels.

A 17-day effort to rescue them gripped the world with experts from various countries volunteering to help.

Richard Harris and Craig Challen were members of the main rescue team, made up of 13 foreign divers and five Thai navy divers, that



Thailand's Prime Minister Prayut Chan-O-Cha, right, shaking hands with Australian cave diver Richard Harris, as fellow Australian cave diver Craig Challen looks on. • AFP/THAI GOVT.

brought the boys and their coach out to safety.

They received the Most Admirable Order of the Distinguished Service Order at Bangkok's Government House before meeting Prime Minister Prayuth Chan-ocha in their first trip back to Thailand since the rescue.

They will travel to Chiang

Rai and return to the Tham Luang cave on Monday to meet the boys and their coach.

Dr. Harris, a physician specialising in anaesthesia, was responsible for sedating the boys before they were brought out one-by-one on a rescue stretcher through flooded tunnels.

Paintings removed from Notre-Dame

An environmental group has warned that the site could be a toxic health threat due to lead pollution

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE
PARIS

French art experts headed into the stricken Notre-Dame Cathedral in Paris to remove all the remaining paintings on Friday.

Officials from the Culture Ministry were allowed into the 850-year-old landmark to begin retrieving the artworks after fire service officials declared the scorched structure safe enough to go inside.

Firefighters and engineering experts have been working on the fragile landmark since a devastating blaze on Monday night, erecting scaffolding and other wooden supports to stop any of the stonework collapsing.

"The paintings inside the cathedral have been saved from the flames and can now be taken down and transported to safe areas," France's Culture Minister Franck



A crane working at the Notre-Dame cathedral. • REUTERS

Riester told reporters at the scene on Friday.

"All of the paintings will be removed today," Mr. Riester added, saying that he was

feeling "very positive" given how most of the priceless canvasses, many of them dating from the 17th or 18th century, had been saved.

As firefighters inspected the top of the fragile southern façade, art experts carried out paintings from the cathedral in protective white

film. The artworks were taken to the Louvre museum, a centre of restoration, where experts will repair relatively minor damage caused by smoke or water before storing the paintings until they can be returned.

Bees safe

Some 2,00,000 bees inhabiting hives in Notre-Dame cathedral survived the inferno.

Beekeeper Nicolas Geant, who looks after the hives that are kept on top of a sacristy that adjoins the cathedral, said, "At first I thought that the three hives had burned. Then I saw from satellite images that this was not the case and then the cathedral spokesman told me that they were going in and out of the hives."

He said that this kind of bee does not abandon its hive or the queen bee.