

IN BRIEF



SpaceX suffers capsule anomaly during tests

FLORIDA
SpaceX suffered an anomaly in one of its Crew Dragon capsules while conducting engine tests at the Cape Canaveral Air Force Station in Florida on Saturday. The company said that an orange smoke was seen rising above SpaceX's facilities, and that the anomaly was contained with no injuries. SpaceX and NASA are working closely on the issue. REUTERS



Millions using '123456' as password, says study

LONDON
Millions of people are using easy-to-guess passwords on sensitive accounts, with "123456" being the most widely-used on breached accounts, suggests a security study. The second-most popular string, "123456789", was not much harder to crack. Others in the top five included "qwerty", "password" and "1111111". IANS



Director John Singleton hospitalised after stroke

NEW YORK
Boyz n the Hood director John Singleton suffered a stroke last week and remains hospitalised. In a statement released on Saturday, Mr. Singleton's family announced that the 51-year-old filmmaker was in ICU and "under great medical care." AP

China draws up tighter rules on human gene and embryo trials

Medical and human tests would face closer scrutiny and stricter requirements

REUTERS
BEIJING

China's top legislature will consider tougher rules on research involving human genes and embryos, the first such move since a Chinese scientist sparked controversy last year by announcing he had made the world's first "gene-edited" babies.

He Jiankui, associate professor at Southern University of Science and Technology in Shenzhen, attracted condemnation from the global scientific community when he said he had used a technology known as CRISPR-Cas9 to alter the embryonic genes of twin girls born in November.

Chinese authorities launched an investigation in-



Last year, a Chinese scientist's announcement that he had made "gene-edited" babies sparked ethical concerns. ■AP

to Mr. He's work and said they had halted the kind of research he was undertaking.

Under the draft laws sent to China's legislature for review on Saturday, medical and human trials would face closer scrutiny and stricter

requirements, such as ensuring human subjects are properly briefed, State media outlet Xinhua reported.

The rules would also require all future trials to be approved by administrative authorities as well as ethical committees, it said.

The report did not specify a timeline for the approval of the regulations, or make specific mention of Mr. He's research.

In videos posted online and at the November 2018 conference, where Mr. He made his controversial presentation, the Chinese scientist said that he believed his gene editing would help protect the girls from infection with HIV, the virus that causes AIDS.

Chinese authorities and institutions, as well as hundreds of international scientists, condemned him and said any application of gene editing on human embryos for reproductive purposes was against the law and medical ethics of China.

Ethical gold rush: buyers want guilt-free jewellery

Labels track origin of metal, extraction methods and supply

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE
PARIS

Forget how many carats – how ethical is your gold? As high-end consumers demand to know the origin of their treasures, some jewellers are ensuring they use responsibly sourced, eco-friendly or recycled gold.

Specialised producers now tack a "fairmined" ecologically friendly label on their output, and the Swiss house Chopard last year became the first big name to commit to "100% ethical" creations.

The Geneva-based firm, which makes the Palme d'Or trophy for the Cannes Film Festival, says it now uses only verified suppliers of gold that meet strict standards to minimise negative environmental impacts of mining the precious metal.

Among the many certificates and standards claiming to codify "responsible" gold mining, two labels stand out.

They are "fairmined" gold – a label certified by a Colombian NGO – and the more widely known "fairtrade" label launched by Swiss foundation Max Havelaar.

Work conditions, wages

Both support artisanal mines that seek to preserve the environment in terms of extraction methods, along with decent working conditions and wages for the miners.

Such production remains limited – just a few hundred kilograms annually. Global gold output by comparison totals around 3,300 tonnes.

Concerned jewellers are keen to ensure they can trace the source of their entire supply to an ethical pro-



Gilded age: A jeweller processing gold in an ethical gold jewellery workshop in Paris. ■AFP

duction cycle and to firms certified by the not-for-profit Responsible Jewellery Council (RJC), which has developed norms for the entire supply chain.

RJC members must adhere to tough standards governing ethical, human rights, social and environmental practices across the precious metals industry.

Recycled gold

The French luxury group Kering, which says it has bought more than 3.5 tonnes of "responsibly produced" gold since 2015 for its Boucheron, Pomellato, Dodo and Gucci brands, has committed to 100% use of "ethical" gold by 2020.

"We are trying to maximise the proportion of Fairmined and Fairtrade gold – but their modest production is in great demand so the bulk of our sourcing remains recycled gold, (which is) certified 'RJC Chain of Custody'," said Claire Piroddi, sustainability manager for Kering's jewellery and watches.

Fairmined or Fairtrade gold is "about 10 to 12% more expensive. But recy-

pled gold barely generates any additional cost premium," Ms. Piroddi said, since it was already refined for a previous life in the form of jewellery or part of a high-tech product.

Extraction from e-waste

Going a step further, using only precious metal from electronic or industrial waste is an original idea developed by Courbet, a brand launched just last spring.

"We do not want to promote mining extraction or use recently extracted gold, so we sought suppliers who recycle gold used in graphics cards or computer processors. That's because we know today that more than half of gold's available reserves have already been extracted," said Marie-Anne Wachtmeister, Courbet's co-founder.

Ms. Wachtmeister said that the brand's watchwords are ethical and environmental consciousness.

"In a mine, a tonne of terrain might contain five grams of gold, whereas a tonne of electronic waste might generate 200 grams," she added.

Easter marked at Holy Sepulchre

The Jerusalem church stands on the site where Jesus was 'crucified and resurrected'

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE
JERUSALEM

Hundreds of pilgrims filed into Jerusalem's Church of the Holy Sepulchre, the traditional site of Jesus's resurrection, for Easter celebrations on Sunday.

Catholics and Protestants mark Easter on Sunday, while eastern Orthodox Christians celebrated Palm Sunday, with Easter Sunday coming for them on April 28.

The church, in the Old City of Israeli-occupied east Jerusalem, is built at the site where Christians believe Jesus was crucified, buried and resurrected.

A recently renovated ornate shrine within the church surrounds the cave where Jesus is believed to



Celebrating faith: Easter service at the Church of the Holy Sepulchre in Jerusalem's Old City on Sunday. ■AFP

have been interred.

The western and eastern faiths mingled there in a packed crowd.

"Too much of an unruly crowd is not so spiritual,"

grumbled Donatella Buhler from Switzerland, there with her children.

Polish pilgrim Matthew Novak was more impressed. "It's really different," he

said. "You can feel the spirit of religion."

Roman Catholic Archbishop Pierbattista Pizzaballa celebrated mass near the shrine and alluded to the pain and violence all around, and to the hope born of faith.

"Each of us brings his or her experience of Easter, of death and resurrection," he said in his sermon.

"In the tragic situation we are living, it is this hope that comes to the rescue of a faith that is at odds every day with such great violence".

He did not directly mention Sunday's series of bomb attacks in Sri Lanka, which included strikes on three churches, killing more than 200 people.

Queen Elizabeth II turned 93 on Sunday

She marks her official birthday in June

ASSOCIATED PRESS
LONDON

Queen Elizabeth II celebrated her 93rd birthday on Sunday, also the occasion of Easter.

The queen attended a service with other senior royals at St. George's Chapel on the grounds of Windsor Castle, west of London.

She was joined by Prince William and his wife Kate, the Duchess of Cambridge, and Prince Harry, whose wife Meghan, the Duchess of Sussex, is expecting their first child in the coming weeks and did not attend.

The queen's birthday is marked this year by an unusual sunny spell that has sent flowers blooming on the extensive castle grounds.

Sunday is the first of two birthday celebrations each year for the queen. She



Queen Elizabeth II

marks her official birthday in June with the Trooping the Color parade. The two-birthday tradition dates back more than 250 years, when it was instituted by King George II.

Elizabeth is the longest-reigning monarch in British history. She still maintains an active schedule, although she does not travel as often as she used to.

Festive spirit



Devotees standing in a queue holding chickens for ritual sacrifice during the Garia Puja festival in Agartala, Tripura, on Sunday. A three-day festival to honour the deity Baba Garia is held annually on the first day of the Hindu calendar month of 'Vaisakh' (mid-April). ■ABHISEK SAHA

Bosnians cheer for horses in log-towing contest

Activists raise concerns that the animals experience pain, injury and fear during the competition

REUTERS
SARAJEVO

Several thousand people flocked to a private arena in northwest Bosnia on Saturday to cheer on their favourite horses during a traditional pre-Easter log-towing contest.

The twice-yearly Straparijada event in which pairs of horses compete in strength hauling heavy logs along a 100-metre track draws fans from across the Balkan country and neighbouring Serbia and Croatia.

"I have been working in the forest with the draft horses for the past 10 years and spend all my spare time after work training them," said Djurac Galic from the nearby town of Bosanski Petrovac, celebrating his second victory.



Horse power: Competitors push their horses during 'Straparijada', a contest in which horses compete in strength hauling heavy logs, in Izacic, Bosnia and Herzegovina. ■REUTERS

The horses compete in three different categories depending on the weight they haul, with the heaviest logs weighing about two tonnes.

Folk singers entertain the mainly male visitors while they enjoy roast lamb on a stick, a Bosnian speciality. Samir Alicic, the driving

force behind the organisation of the first Straparijada in 2012 in Izacic, said he invested his own money and effort to build the racing are-

na and accompanying facilities.

Eye on tourism

Authorities in the regional centre have recognised Mr. Alicic for his contribution to the sport and to tourism.

But organisations for the protection of animals have called for the contests to be banned, saying the horses experience pain, injury and fear.

Mr. Alicic and Mr. Galic both dismissed their concerns, saying a law introduced several years ago has prohibited whipping or beating of the animals and introduced fines for violations. A veterinary inspector checks all the animals in each race.

"A horse who does not want to pull logs will give up," Mr. Galic said.

Cyber expert made malware, pleads guilty

ASSOCIATED PRESS
MILWAUKEE

A British cybersecurity researcher credited with stopping a worldwide computer virus has pleaded guilty to developing malware to steal banking information.

Federal prosecutors in Wisconsin and Marcus Hutchins' attorneys said in a joint court filing that the 24-year-old agreed to plead guilty to developing malware called Kronos and conspiring to distribute it from 2012 to 2015.

Kronos was "used to infect numerous computers around the world and steal banking information," prosecutors said.

It's unclear how much Hutchins' profited from creating the malware.

'Gender stereotypes leave imprint on brains'

Society's expectations alter it

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
WASHINGTON

Society's expectations about gender roles alter the human brain at the cellular level, scientists say.

Though the terms 'sex' and 'gender' are often used interchangeably by the average person, for neuroscientists, they mean different things, according to Nancy Forger, a professor at Georgia State University in the U.S.

"We are just starting to understand and study the ways in which gender identity, rather than sex, may cause the brain to differ in males and females," said Ms. Forger.

Sex is based on biological factors such as sex chromosomes and reproductive organs," whereas gender has a social component and involves expectations and behaviours based on an individual's perceived sex, researchers said.

These behaviours and expectations around gender identity can be seen in "epigenetic marks" in the brain, which drive biological functions and features as diverse as memory, development and disease susceptibility.

Biological implications

Ms. Forger said that epigenetic marks help determine which genes are expressed and are sometimes passed on from cell to cell as they

divide. They also can be passed down from one generation to the next, she added.

"While we are accustomed to thinking about differences between the brains of males and females, we are much less used to thinking about the biological implications of gender identity," Ms. Forger said.

"There is now sufficient evidence to suggest that an epigenetic imprint for gender is a logical conclusion. It would be strange if this were not the case, because all environmental influences of any importance can epigenetically change the brain," he said.

Scientists reviewed previous studies of epigenetics and sexual differentiation in rodents, along with new studies in which gendered experiences among humans have also been associated with changes in the brain.

"Given our lifetimes of layered gendered experiences, and their inevitable, iterative interactions with sex, it may never be possible to completely disentangle the effects of sex and gender on the human brain," Ms. Forger said.

"We can start, however, by including gender in our thinking any time a difference between the brain functioning of men and women is reported," she added.



Sex is based on biological factors whereas gender has a social component and involves expectations. ■GETTY IMAGES