



### IN BRIEF

**SC lawyers honoured at New York gala**  
NEW YORK  
Supreme Court lawyers Arundhati Katju and Menaka Guruswamy were on the red carpet for the *Time* 100 gala held in New York on Tuesday. The two advocates featured on *Time* magazine's list of the 100 most influential people in the world for their fight to decriminalise homosexuality in India.



### 2,000-year-old mummies found in Egypt

CAIRO  
Archaeologists have uncovered an ancient tomb with mummies believed to date back about 2,000 years in the southern city of Aswan in Egypt. The Antiquities Ministry said that the tomb is from the Greco-Roman period, which began with Alexander the Great in 332 B.C. Decorated masks and vases were also found. AP



### Garner nabs cover of *People* special issue

LOS ANGELES  
Actor, entrepreneur and children's rights advocate Jennifer Garner is featured on the cover of *People* magazine's annual 'beautiful issue'. The magazine said it chose the star for balancing her career and charitable work with the raising of her three children with ex-husband Ben Affleck. REUTERS

## Magic milk: fighting infections with a clue from the echidna

Scientists find novel way of tackling antibiotic-resistant bacterial strains

V. GEETANATH  
HYDERABAD

Scientists at the Council of Scientific & Industrial Research - Centre for Cellular and Molecular Biology (CSIR-CCMB) here have isolated an anti-microbial protein found in the milk of an egg-laying mammal. The protein promises to serve as an alternative to antibiotics used on livestock.

Echidnas, also known as spiny anteaters, are unique egg-laying mammals found only in Australia and New Guinea.

Their young hatch from eggs at a very early stage of development and depend completely on mother's milk. But the mammary glands of the echidnas are devoid of nipples, forcing the young ones to lick milk



**Tiny genius:** The echidna is an egg-laying mammal. ■ FILE PHOTO

from the mother's body surface and potentially making them vulnerable to micro-organisms.

However, nature protects its own. The milk of the echidna has a protein that can puncture the cell membranes of multiple bacterial species, thus destroying the

source of infection. Scientist Satish Kumar from the research team said that there are ways to produce the protein in large quantities using *E. coli*. It can then be used to fight infections.

The scientist pointed out that there is a rise of superbugs due to the indiscrimi-

nate use of antibiotics by the animal husbandry industry to raise livestock.

The superbugs can cause mastitis, an infection of the mammary gland, in dairy animals.

Dr. Kumar's team has been able to show that the protein from echidna milk is effective against mastitis-causing bacteria.

The research was published in *Biochimica et Biophysica Acta - Biomembranes*, said CSIR-CCMB director Rakesh Mishra. "These studies give us novel approaches to fighting infectious diseases taking clues from nature. They are the best way forward in this emerging scenario of increased infectious disease burden and resistance to current treatments," he said.

## Ghana launches medical drone service

The aircraft are part of an ambitious plan to leapfrog problems of medical access

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE  
ACCRA

Ghana launched a fleet of drones on Wednesday to carry medical supplies to remote areas, with President Nana Akufo-Addo declaring it would become the "world's largest drone delivery service".

The craft are part of an ambitious plan to leapfrog problems of medical access in a country with poor roads.

"No one in Ghana should die because they can't access the medicine they need in an emergency," Mr. Akufo-Addo said in a statement to mark the launch.

"That's why Ghana is launching the world's largest



Workers pack a box of vaccines to be delivered by a Zipline drone.

drone delivery service," Mr. Akufo-Addo said. "It represents a major step towards giving everyone in this country universal access to life-saving medicine."

The drones have been flying test runs with blood and

vaccines, but the project was officially inaugurated on Wednesday at the main drone base in Omenako.

Omenako is the first of four distribution centres which, when fully operational, will each have 30 drones serving 500 clinics within an 80-kilometre radius.

Operator Zipline, a U.S.-based company, said the three other sites should be up and running by the end of 2019.

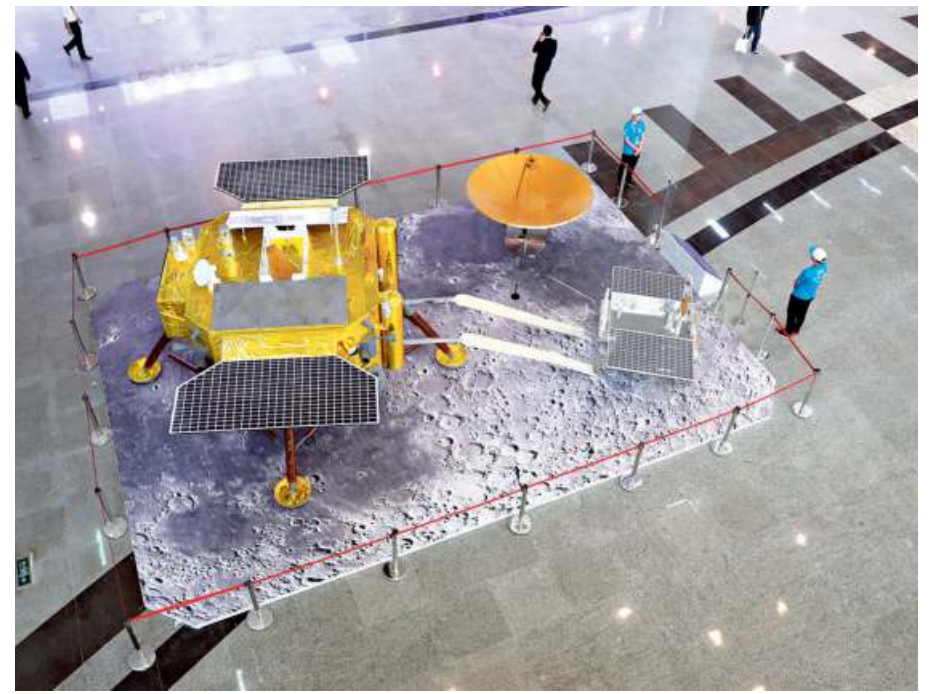
The drones are planned to ferry 150 different medicines, blood, and vaccines to more than 2,000 clinics serving over 12 million people - roughly 40% of the population.

Zipline first began delivering blood and medicine in East Africa in 2016, deploying drones in Rwanda, a country dubbed the "land of a thousand hills" where access to many villages by road is difficult.

Now the company is expanding on the other side of the continent.

"Millions of people across the world - in both developed and developing countries - die each year because they can't get the medicine they need when they need it," said Zipline chief Keller Rinaudo.

Doctors can order blood or medicine by sending a message by mobile phone.



**Eye on the future:** Models of the lunar rover Yutu-2 and the moon lander for the Chang'e 4 lunar probe are seen at an exhibition to mark China's National Day on Wednesday. ■ REUTERS

## China announces plan to build moon station in 10 years

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE  
BEIJING

Beijing plans to send a manned mission to the moon and to build a research station there within the next decade, state media reported on Wednesday, citing a top space official.

China aims to achieve space superpower status and took a major step towards that goal when it became the first nation to land a rover on the far side of the moon in January.

It now plans to build a scientific research station on the moon's south pole within the next 10 years, China National Space Administration head Zhang Kejian said during a speech marking "Space Day", the official Xinhua news agency reported.

He also added that Beijing plans to launch a Mars probe by 2020 and confirmed that a fourth lunar probe, the Chang'e-5, will be launched by the end of the year.

Originally scheduled to

## NASA probe picks up first detected 'marsquake'

ASSOCIATED PRESS  
CAPE CANAVERAL

NASA's InSight lander has picked up a gentle rumble at Mars, believed to be the first marsquake ever detected.

InSight's quake monitor recorded and measured the faint signal April 6, and scientists announced the finding late on Tuesday.

Philippe Lognonne from the Paris Institute of Earth Physics said that it was

exciting to finally have proof that Mars was still seismically active. Mars is not nearly as geologically active as Earth and, like our moon, lacks tectonic plates.

Researchers are still analysing the data, as well as three other even fainter seismic signals detected since mid-March. By analysing marsquakes, scientists hope to learn more about how rocky planets are formed.

collect moon samples in the second half of 2017, the Chang'e-5 was delayed after its planned carrier, the powerful Long March 5 Y2 rocket, failed during a separate launch in July 2017.

China on Wednesday also announced that its Long

March-5B rocket will make its maiden flight in the first half of 2020, carrying the core parts of a planned space station. The Tiangong - or "Heavenly Palace" - will go into orbit in 2022, the China Manned Space Engineering Office said.

## Japan apologises to forcibly sterilised people

Govt. to offer compensation

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE  
TOKYO

Thousands of Japanese people - some as young as nine - who were forcibly sterilised under now-defunct eugenics laws, will receive government compensation after lawmakers passed historic legislation on Wednesday.

Following the unanimous vote, Prime Minister Shinzo Abe voiced "sincere regret" and said the government "apologised wholeheartedly" over the notorious policy. Some 16,500 mentally disabled people were sterilised under the law that remained in force until 1996, according to the country's Health Ministry data.

Each victim will receive ¥3.2 million yen (₹20 lakh) under the measures passed on Wednesday - an amount derided by campaigners as "failing to meet the serious-

ness" of the damage suffered. The issue hit the headlines last year after a Japanese woman, now in her 60s, sued the government over a sterilisation operation carried out in 1972 after she was diagnosed with a mental disability.

Lawyers and campaigners have long criticised the government for failing to compensate victims long after the eugenics law was abandoned in 1996. About 20 victims have so far filed lawsuits across the country seeking compensation.

The first verdict over the issue will be announced on May 28, and plaintiffs' lawyers have vowed to seek compensation they say matches the gravity of the harm suffered. Tokyo has pledged to pay the compensation "swiftly" but the government will likely continue to battle in court against victims claiming more.

## Avengers unite



**Star power:** Producer Kevin Feige, actors Chris Hemsworth, Chris Evans, Robert Downey Jr., Scarlett Johansson, Jeremy Renner and Mark Ruffalo attend a ceremony at TCL Chinese Theatre in Hollywood on Tuesday. ■ AFP

## Netflix wins Oscars theatre rule debate

REUTERS

In a win for Netflix, Amazon and other streaming services, the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences has voted not to change its rules for winning an Oscar, Hollywood's top prize.

The decision follows a battle over how long a movie must play on the big screens in theatres before being launched on the Internet, DVD or other mediums that put it on the small screen.

The Academy's Board of Governors said that the existing rules, which say a movie has to run in a theatre for only seven days in Los Angeles to qualify, had won.

"We support the theatrical experience as integral to the art of motion pictures, and this weighed heavily in our discussions," Academy President John Bailey said in a release.

Some theatre owners say short runs at a theatre



Steven Spielberg

means more people will stay home to watch movies.

And movie producers including Steven Spielberg have said movies that are shown primarily on the small screen should only compete for television awards, such as the Emmys.

In February, Netflix won three Oscars for *Roma*, which streamed three weeks after a limited theatrical debut.

Netflix tweeted that it "loved cinema" but also supported access for people who cannot afford, or do not live close to, theatres.

## Tummy timetables: WHO offers lifestyle advice for children

For toddlers aged three to four, 180 minutes of daily physical activity should include at least an hour of 'moderate to vigorous' movement

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE  
GENEVA

The United Nations on Wednesday released its first-ever recommendations on physical activity for children under five, with disputed advice on subjects ranging from screen time to "tummy time".

The guidelines from the World Health Organization may read to some parents like common-sense practices, including not exposing babies under 12 months to screens.

"This is about making the shift from sedentary time to playtime," Juana Willumsen, WHO's point person for childhood obesity and physical activity, said in a statement.



**Watch out:** Monitoring of screen time for young children has been advised by the global health body. ■ SUDHAKARA JAIN

five - a crucial period for lifestyle development.

Despite acknowledging that its "strong recommendations" were based on "very low quality evidence", the UN health agency said its advice could apply to all young children, regardless of gender, cultural background or socio-economic status.

### Babies not exempt

For infants under one, the WHO recommends at least 30 minutes of physical activity a day, including prone position - or tummy time - for those not yet mobile.

Babies under one should also not be restrained in a pram, highchair or strapped to someone's back for more than an hour at a time and

should sleep between 12 and 17 hours a day, the agency said. For children between one and two years old, WHO recommends three hours of physical activity each day, with no more than an hour of "sedentary screen time" and at least 11 hours of sleep.

And for children aged three to four, three hours of daily physical activity should include at least an hour of "moderate to vigorous" movement, while screen time should be kept under an hour.

"I do rather wonder to what extent global guidelines on public health policy, affecting millions of families, should be based on 'very low quality evidence'," Kevin McConway, emeritus profes-

sor of applied statistics at The Open University in Britain, said in a statement.

Fiona Bull, programme manager for the prevention of non-communicable diseases at WHO, told reporters that the authors were fully confident in the strength of the guidelines.

By addressing the low quality of the evidence, WHO was simply being "transparent that there is still lots of science to do in emerging area of importance," she said.

"What exactly is 'sedentary screen time' anyway?" asked Mr. McConway, one of several experts who took issue with WHO's use of the term. "WHO's glossary says that it excludes 'active

screen-based games where physical activity or movement is required', but that's not very clear in my view."

Andrew Przybylski, director of research at the Oxford Internet Institute at Oxford University, agreed that while restricting young children's screen time appeared to "make sense... in many ways the conclusions drawn about screens are out of step with scientific evidence of harm."

Ms. Willumsen said the screen time guidelines do not pertain to "an interactive tablet based game or a TV programme where children are encouraged to move, to copy movements to dance to interact with the media."

"It is very much the passive screen time," she said.

## Interpol rescues 'child slaves'

REUTERS  
DAKAR

Police have rescued 216 human trafficking victims, mainly children, from forced labour and prostitution in a major operation in Benin and Nigeria, Interpol said on Wednesday.

Operation Epervier II involved 100 police officers across the two countries who rescued 157 child slaves, said the global police organisation, which coordinated the raids in early April.

The youngest to be rescued was a boy forced to smuggle heavy goods such as bags of rice across the Benin-Nigeria border, Interpol said. Teens were rescued from prostitution.