

IN BRIEF



Mick Jagger says he feels better after surgery
LOS ANGELES
Mick Jagger, frontman of rock band Rolling Stones, on Saturday said he is feeling "much better" after his heart surgery. The legendary band had to postpone the North American leg of their "No Filter" tour, which was supposed to run from April 20 to July 29, to give Jagger time to recover. PTI



Mummified mice, birds found in Egyptian tomb
SOHAG
Dozens of mummified mice were among the animals found in an ancient Egyptian tomb. The tomb, dating back over 2,000 years, was unearthed in Akhmim. A human mummy, along with more than 50 mummified mice, cats and falcons, were found inside the tomb. AFP

Soon, first photo of black hole

Scientists will unveil the picture at six global news conferences on Wednesday

REUTERS
PARIS

Scientists are expected to unveil on Wednesday the first-ever photograph of a black hole, a breakthrough in astrophysics, providing insight into celestial monsters with gravitational fields so intense no matter or light can escape.

The U.S. National Science Foundation has scheduled a news conference in Washington to announce a "groundbreaking result from the Event Horizon Telescope (EHT) project," an international partnership formed in 2012 to try to directly observe the immediate environment of a black hole.

Simultaneous news conferences are scheduled in Brussels, Santiago, Shanghai, Taipei and Tokyo.

A black hole's event horizon, one of the most violent places in the universe, is the point of no return beyond which anything — stars, planets, gas, dust, all forms of electromagnetic radiation including light — gets sucked in irretrievably.

While scientists involved in the research declined to



Rare shots: A supermassive black hole is seen in an undated NASA illustration. • REUTERS/NASA/JPL-CALTECH

disclose the findings ahead of the formal announcement, they are clear about their goals.

"It's a visionary project to take the first photograph of a black hole. We are a collaboration of over 200 people internationally," astrophysicist Sheperd Doleman, director of the Event Horizon Telescope at the Center for Astrophysics, Harvard & Smithsonian, said at a March event in Texas.

Test for Einstein's theory
The news conference is scheduled for 6:30 p.m. (1300 GMT) on Wednesday.

The research will put to

the test a scientific pillar — physicist Albert Einstein's theory of general relativity, according to University of Arizona astrophysicist Dimitrios Psaltis, project scientist. That theory, put forward in 1915, was intended to explain the laws of gravity and their relation to other natural forces.

The researchers targeted two supermassive black holes.

The first — called Sagittarius A* — is situated at the centre of our own Milky Way galaxy, possessing 4 million times the mass of our sun and located 26,000 light

years from the earth. A light

year is the distance light travels in a year, 9.5 trillion km.

The second — called M87 — resides at the centre of the neighbouring Virgo A galaxy, boasting a mass 3.5 billion times that of the sun and located 54 million light-years away from the earth.

Black holes are extraordinarily dense entities formed when very massive stars collapse at the end of their life cycle.

Supermassive black holes are the largest kind, devouring matter and radiation and perhaps merging with other black holes.

Mr. Psaltis described a black hole as "an extreme warp in spacetime," a term referring to the three dimensions of space and the one dimension of time joined into a single four-dimensional continuum. The scientists will also be trying to detect the dynamics near the black hole as matter orbits at near light speeds before being swallowed into oblivion.

Einstein's theory, if correct, should allow for an extremely accurate prediction of the size and shape of a black hole.

Seven women settle lawsuits against Cosby

GRAHAM BOWLEY
MASSACHUSETTS

Seven women who accused actor Bill Cosby of sexual assault, and then sued him for defamation when his representatives accused them of lying, have settled their claims in their long-running case, according to documents filed on Friday in federal court in Massachusetts.

"The plaintiffs have settled their claims against Cosby," a lawyer for the seven women, Joseph Cammarata, said. "Each of the plaintiffs is satisfied with the settlement."

Andrew Wyatt, a spokesman for Cosby, confirmed that a settlement had been reached, but insisted Cosby was not paying. Instead, he said, Cosby's insurance company, American International Group, was.

Mr. Wyatt added: "AIG decided to settle these cases, without the knowledge, permission and/or consent of Mr. Cosby. Mr. Cosby denies the allegations against him in these defamation suits, and he maintains his innocence." NY TIMES

73-year-old is world's oldest soccer player

Israel's Isaak Hayik sets Guinness record



In the game: Isaak Hayik defending a goal. • REUTERS

REUTERS
OR YEHUDA

Darting between the goal posts with his striking white hair, 73-year-old Israeli Isaak Hayik set a new world record on Friday as the oldest person to play in a professional soccer match.

Mr. Hayik, who celebrates his 74th birthday next week, broke the record after playing as a goalkeeper in an afternoon game with Israel's Ironi Or Yehuda soccer club.

The Iraqi-born keeper was officially recognised in an award ceremony attended by representatives from the Guinness World Record

organisation.

"I'm ready for another game," said Mr. Hayik, who made some good saves in the team's 5-1 defeat to Maccabi Ramat Gan.

"This is not only a source of pride for me but also to Israeli sports in general," added Mr. Hayik, who moved to Israel when he was four years old.

The previous record was held by Robert Carmona of Uruguay, who in 2015 played a professional match with Uruguay's Pan de Azucar at the age of 53, an official adjudicator for Guinness World Records said.

Moderate drinking may not be good for health: study

It steadily raises the risk of stroke and blood pressure

REUTERS
LONDON

Blood pressure and stroke risk rise steadily the more alcohol people drink, and previous claims that one or two drinks a day might protect against stroke are not true, according to the results of a major genetic study.

The research, which used data from a 1,60,000-strong cohort of Chinese adults, many of whom are unable to drink alcohol due to genetic intolerance, found that people who drink moderately — consuming 10 to 20 gm of alcohol a day — raise their risk of stroke by 10 to 15%.

For heavy drinkers, consuming four or more drinks a day, blood pressure rises significantly and the risk of stroke increases by around



Moderate drinking raises risk of stroke by 10 to 15%. • GETTY IMAGES/ISTOCKPHOTO

35%, the study found.

"The key message here is that, at least for stroke, there is no protective effect of moderate drinking," said Zhengming Chen, a professor at Oxford University.

This latest study, published in *The Lancet* medical journal, focussed on people of East Asian descent, many of whom have genetic

variants that limit alcohol tolerance. Because the variants have specific and large effects on alcohol, but do not affect other lifestyle factors such as diet, smoking, economic status or education, they can be used by scientists to nail down causal effects of alcohol intake.

The research team, including scientists from Oxford and Peking universities and the Chinese Academy of Medical Sciences, said it would be impossible to do a study of this kind in Western populations, since almost nobody there has the relevant alcohol-intolerance gene variants. But the findings about the biological effects of alcohol should be the same for all people worldwide, they said.

Riot of colour



Spirit of festivity: Youth dance to the beats of the 'dhol' to celebrate Gudi Padwa, the Maharashtra New Year's Day, in Mumbai on Saturday. • VIVEK BENDRE

150-year-old heart of saint on U.S. tour

ASSOCIATED PRESS
NEW YORK

The 150-year-old heart of a French priest is on a U.S. tour with New York City as its latest stop.

The Roman Catholic relic was on display on Saturday at St. Patrick's Cathedral on Fifth Avenue, where both the faithful and the curious lined up to see the human organ behind glass.

The Knights of Columbus fraternity is sponsoring the pilgrimage of the heart. Cardinal Timothy Dolan, the archbishop of New York, is to lead a Sunday procession venerating the heart of Saint John Vianney.

He lived during the French Revolution, helping to hide priests on the run. The tradition of venerating the relics goes back to the Middle Ages in Italy.

Jiu-jitsu champ battles Philippines' sex abuse scourge

Martial arts star Meggie Ochoa is teaching self-defence to victims to help them recover from trauma

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE
MANILA

Abandoned and sexually abused as a young girl, Angelica, like thousands of minors in the Philippines — a global blackspot for child abuse — struggled to cope with the horrors of her past, but a campaign run by a sporting champion is giving survivors like her fresh hope.

Filipina martial arts star Meggie Ochoa is teaching self-defence to victims of sexual abuse in a bid to give them tools to better recover from such trauma, but also to better protect themselves in the future.

Children's charities have branded the Philippines a



Fighting back: Meggie Ochoa, top right, demonstrating a technique during a session at a gym in Manila. • AFP

key hub for both the live-streaming of child sex abuse and for sex tourism, estimating that 60,000-1,00,000 children are involved in

prostitution rings.

"Some of the kids that I've gotten to know... they saw themselves as worthless because of what they experienced. For me, that's so heartbreaking," the jiu-jitsu world champion said of her decision to launch advocacy campaign Fight to Protect.

In just two years, she has taught hundreds of sex abuse survivors. She offers two courses — one for those who wish to learn the sport, and another focused purely on self-defence.

"Jiu-jitsu taught me to be disciplined, confident and to face my fears," Angelica, now aged 15, said.

"I can face the problems I encountered before and I am now comfortable interacting with people," she added.

Poverty in a nation where tens of millions get by on less

than \$2 per day, as well as increased internet access and fluency in English, make the Philippines vulnerable to both online and real-world sexual predators.

Advocacy and legal aid group International Justice Mission (IJM) says Philippine children are at risk of being forced into live-streamed sex abuse, where paedophiles pay to direct so-called "shows" online.

"Easy access to the web and money transfer services make the country a global hotspot for this problem," said IJM, noting that it is often family members that organise or even commit the abuse.

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Avengers help raise \$5 million fund for seriously ill children

ASSOCIATED PRESS
ANAHEIM

Some of Marvel's top Avengers have assembled to support a \$5 million donation to benefit seriously ill children in hospitals around the globe.

Robert Downey Jr., Chris Hemsworth, Scarlett Johansson, Jeremy Renner, Paul Rudd and Brie Larson helped unveil the donation of money and toys to benefit charities and children's hospitals at Disney Resort in Anaheim, California, on Friday.

Toys and products from the new Marvel superhero film will be sent to children's



Stars to the aid: Actors Scarlett Johansson, Paul Rudd, Jeremy Renner and Chris Hemsworth with children. • AP

hospitals throughout the country.

Disney donated \$1 million to the Starlight Children's Foundation. The LEGO

group, Hasbro, Funko and Amazon collaborated to donate more than \$4 million to children's hospitals around the country.

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Climate change blights children's lives in Bangladesh

Around 12 million of them live in and around rivers that regularly burst their banks, and another 4.5 million in coastal areas regularly struck by cyclones

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE
DHAKA

Environmental disasters linked to climate change are threatening the lives of over 19 million children in Bangladesh, prompting many families to push their daughters into child marriages, UNICEF said on Friday.

"Climate change is deepening the environmental threat faced by families in Bangladesh's poorest communities, leaving them unable to keep their children properly housed, fed, healthy and educated," UNICEF said in a report.

"In Bangladesh and around the world, climate change has the potential to reverse many of the gains that countries have achieved in child survival and development."

Triple threats

Around 12 million children live in and around the river systems that regularly burst their banks, the report said.

Another 4.5 million children live in coastal areas regularly struck by powerful cyclones, including almost half a million Rohingya refugee children from neighbouring

Myanmar living in fragile bamboo and plastic shelters.

A further three million children live further inland, where farming communities suffer increasing periods of drought.

Bangladesh's flat topography, dense population and weak infrastructure have long made it vulnerable to extreme weather events, but experts say that these have become more frequent in recent years as global temperatures have risen.

In 2007, a powerful cyclone killed nearly 4,000 people and affected hundreds



A file photo of children sitting on garbage piled up by river Buriganga in Hazaribagh in Dhaka. • AP

of thousands more.

The most recent major flooding of the Brahmaputra

River in 2017 inundated at least 480 community health clinics and damaged some

50,000 tube wells, essential for meeting communities' safe water needs.

The report says that climate change is a key factor pushing poorer Bangladeshis to head to the capital Dhaka and other major cities, where children risk being pushed into dangerous forms of labour and early marriage.

Labour, early marriage

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The connection between climate change and child marriage, child labour and access to education is evident in various parts of Bangladesh, according to the report.

"Climate change makes people poorer," said Gyas Uddin, a specialist on child protection issues, "and poverty is a major factor behind child marriage".

Despite making impressive gains in many social indicators in recent decades, child marriage remains rampant in the conservative, Muslim-majority country.

Bangladesh currently has one of the world's highest rates of child marriage with nearly a third of girls being married before the age of 15.

According to UNICEF Bangladesh Child Protection Specialist Kristina Wesslund, climate change is one reason why an estimated 3.45 million Bangladeshi children are involved in child labour. "Climate change is undoubtedly increasing the number of children who are pushed into the workplace, where they miss out on an education and are terribly exposed to violence and abuse," she said.