

IN BRIEF



**Rihanna to launch her own fashion brand**  
PARIS  
Pop idol Rihanna is set to launch her own luxury brand in collaboration with French powerhouse LVMH, the singer said on Friday. The Barbados-born superstar, who already has her own successful Fenty sportswear and Savage lingerie label, said creating the new line “is an incredibly special moment for us. I’m ready for the world to see what we have built together.” **AFP**



**Beckham banned for 6 months from driving**  
LONDON  
Former football player David Beckham has been banned from driving for six months for using a mobile phone while behind the wheel of his Bentley. Mr. Beckham’s lawyer Gerrard Tyrrell said his client had “no recollection” of the incident but pleaded guilty. **AP**



**Japanese man jailed for smuggling insects**  
QUITO  
A Japanese man was sentenced to two years in prison in Ecuador for attempting to smuggle insects out of the country. The defendant was arrested with 248 insects, including spiders, cockroaches, wasps, bees and butterflies, in his suitcases, at the Quito airport in March. **AFP**

Amazon unveils space vision, moon lander

Jeff Bezos outlines plan to build infrastructure to sustain the colonisation of space in future

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE  
WASHINGTON

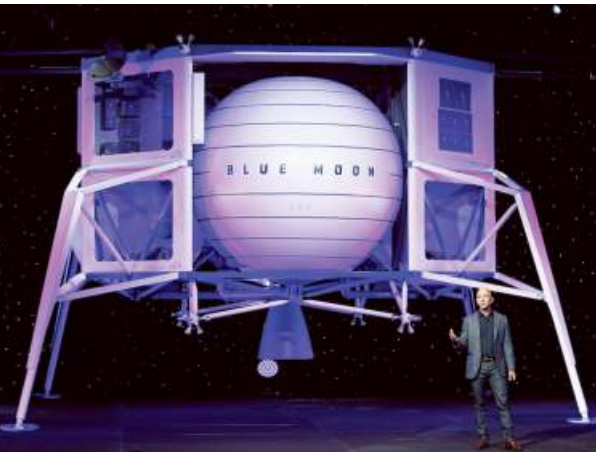
Jeff Bezos, who heads both Amazon and space company Blue Origin, unveiled a lunar lander on Thursday that he said would be used to transport equipment, and possibly human beings, to the south pole of the moon by 2024.

“This is Blue Moon,” the world’s richest man said at a presentation in Washington, as curtains lifted to show a mock-up of a huge vessel weighing many tons and able to carry four self-driving rovers.

“It’s an incredible vehicle, and it will go to the moon,” he declared.

Mr. Bezos didn’t announce a specific date for the project’s first launch, but said the lander would be ready in time to make President Donald Trump’s announced timeline to return people to the moon by 2024.

**Generating water**  
“We can help meet that timeline, but only because we



**Settling on moon:** Amazon CEO Jeff Bezos speaking in front of a model of Blue Moon lunar lander in Washington. **AP**

started three years ago,” he said. “It’s time to go back to the moon, this time to stay.”

The vehicle has been under development for the past three years, Mr. Bezos said. It will be capable of carrying scientific instruments, the four small rovers, and also a future pressurised vehicle for humans.

The goal is to land on the moon’s south pole, where ice deposits were confirmed

in 2018. Water can be exploited to produce hydrogen, which in turn could fuel future exploration of the solar system.

Fully loaded with fuel, Blue Origin will weigh about 33,000 pounds (15,000 kilograms), which will decrease to around 7,000 pounds when it is about to land, he said.

The White House’s intention to return to the moon in

2024 has sent NASA into a frenzy of activity since the end of March, because that particular mission was originally anticipated for 2028.

Nothing is ready: not the rocket necessary to transport vehicles and astronauts. Not the components of the future mini-station in lunar orbit, which will act as a rest-stop between the earth and moon. And not the lander or rovers needed by astronauts, among whom will be the first woman to set foot on the moon.

Lunar colonies

The lander’s unveiling came as Mr. Bezos outlined his broader vision to build an infrastructure that would sustain the colonisation of space by future generations of humans and shift polluting industries off the Earth.

“We’re going to build the road to space,” he said.

As space agencies prepare to return humans to the moon, top engineers are racing to design a tunnel boring machine capable of digging

underground colonies for the first lunar inhabitants.

“Space is becoming a passion for a lot of people again. There are discussions about going back to the moon, this time to stay,” U.S.-Iranian expert Jamal Rostami said at this year’s World Tunnel Congress in Naples.

But the harsh conditions on the surface of the moon mean that, once up there, humans need to be shielded from radiation and freezing temperatures in structures which maintain atmospheric pressure in a vacuum.

They also need protection from meteorite strikes. “Imagine something the size of my fist as a piece of rock coming at 10-12 km per second, it can hit anything and would immediately destroy it,” Mr. Rostami said at the meeting in southern Italy.

“Our idea is to start underground, using a mechanism we already use on the earth, a tunnel boring machine, to make a continuous opening to create habitats or connect colonies,” he added.

‘India faces acute shortage of healthcare providers’

Bihar, Jharkhand, U.P. among worst-affected

BINDU SHAJAN PERAPPADAN  
NEW DELHI

Despite the health sector employing five million workers in India, it continues to have low density of health professionals with figures for the country being lower than those of Sri Lanka, China, Thailand, United Kingdom and Brazil, according to a World Health Organisation database. This workforce statistic has put the country into the “critical shortage of healthcare providers” category. Bihar, Jharkhand, Uttar Pradesh and Rajasthan are the worst hit while Delhi, Kerala, Punjab and Gujarat compare favourably.

“Southeast Asia needs a 50% increase in healthcare manpower to achieve universal health coverage by 2030. India faces the problem of acute shortages and inequitable distributions of skilled health workers as have many other low- and middle-income countries,” said K. Srinath Reddy, presi-

dent, Public Health Foundation of India.

“Data on the prevalence of occupational vacancies in the health care system in India overall is scarce. Government statistics for 2008, based on vacancies in sanctioned posts showed 18% of primary health centres were without a doctor, about 38% were without a laboratory technician and 16% were without a pharmacist,” says a paper titled ‘Forecasting the future need and gaps in requirements for public health professionals in India upto 2026’ published last month in the *WHO South-East Asia Journal of Public Health*.

The health workforce in India comprises broadly eight categories, namely: doctors (allopathic, alternative medicine); nursing and midwifery professionals; public health professionals; pharmacists; dentists; paramedical workers (allied health professionals); grass-root workers; support staff.

Popstars drop new tune to beat the blues

Justin Bieber and Ed Sheeran’s single *I Don’t Care* confronts mental health issues

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE  
NEW YORK

After teasing it for weeks Justin Bieber and Ed Sheeran on Friday released their new single *I Don’t Care*, melding a jaunty melody with lyrics that confront mental health.

The track, sure to become a summer earworm, comes just months after Bieber, 25, said he was stepping back from music to focus on his health and family. “I have been looking, seeking, trial and error as most of us do, I am now very focussed on repairing some of the deep-



Singers Justin Bieber, left, and Ed Sheeran. **REUTERS**



rooted issues that I have as most of us have, so that I don’t fall apart,” the singer posted on Instagram in March.

In his collaboration with Sheeran, 28, the superstar

sings of feeling out of place and battling anxiety. “With all these people all around/ I’m crippled with anxiety/ But I’m told it’s where we’re supposed to be,” he sings.

The bop then turns into

something of an ode to love, purportedly aimed at Bieber’s wife, model Hailey Baldwin, and Cherry Seaborn, the partner of Sheeran.

“And you’re making me feel like I’m loved by somebody/ I can deal with the bad nights when I’m with my baby,” the pair sing. The pair’s last song *Love Yourself* was released in 2015.

Bieber has spoken about his depression, telling *Vogue* that “I’ve struggled with the feeling that people are using me or aren’t really there for me.”