

## IN BRIEF

**Kohli is the sole Indian in list of top-paid athletes**

NEW DELHI  
Cricketer Virat Kohli, the sole Indian in the Forbes list of the world's highest-paid athletes, is ranked 100th with estimated annual earnings of \$25 million. Football star Lionel Messi tops the list with \$127 million in earnings. PTI

**'Lovelorn fish turn gloomy when separated'**

PARIS  
Researchers in France found that the Central American convict cichlid turn gloomy when separated. The tropical fish, known to be a loyal and monogamous partner, suffers from heartache when separated from its lover. AFP

**WHO emergency meet as Ebola spreads to Uganda**

GENEVA  
The World Health Organization said on Wednesday that a key emergency committee would meet on Friday following confirmation that an Ebola outbreak in the Democratic Republic of Congo had spread to neighbouring Uganda. A five-year-old boy in Uganda has died of Ebola. AFP

## Survey reveals 86% of Internet users fall victim to fake news

Lion's share of blame for its spread lies with the U.S., followed by Russia and China

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE  
OTTAWA

Eighty-six percent of Internet users have been duped by fake news – most of it spread on Facebook – according to a global survey published on Tuesday.

Respondents said they want both governments and social media companies to crack down on these activities, which are contributing to a growing distrust of the Internet as well as negatively impacting economies and political discourse.

The U.S. took the lion's share of the blame for spreading fake news, followed by Russia and China,



Fake news is most prevalent on Facebook, but also appears on YouTube and Twitter. •GETTY IMAGES/STOCKPHOTO

according to the annual Ipsos survey of more than 25,000 Internet users in 25 countries.

Fake news appeared to be most prevalent on Facebook, but also appears on

YouTube, blogs and Twitter, the pollsters found.

The results showed people in Egypt were the most gullible while respondents in Pakistan were the most sceptical. It also revealed wide-

spread distrust of social media firms and growing concerns over privacy and biases baked into algorithms used by Internet companies.

The poll – which relied on both in-person and online interviews – was conducted between December 21, 2018 and February 10, 2019 on behalf of the Centre for International Governance Innovation (CIGI). “This year's survey not only underscores the fragility of the Internet, but also netizens' growing discomfort with social media and the power these corporations wield over their daily lives,” CIGI's Fen Osler Hampson said.

## A fake Zuckerberg video challenges Facebook rules

It shows him boasting about his online empire

CADE METZ  
SAN FRANCISCO

Two weeks ago, Facebook declined to remove a doctored video in which Nancy Pelosi, Speaker of the U.S. House of Representatives, seemed to drunkenly slur her speech. Over the weekend, two British artists released a doctored video of Facebook's Chief Executive, Mark Zuckerberg, as a sly comment on the spread of false information online.

Posted to the Facebook-owned social network Instagram, the video shows Mr. Zuckerberg speaking directly into the camera, boasting of nefarious motives behind



Mark Zuckerberg

his online empire.

“Imagine this for a second: One man, with total control of billions of people's stolen data, all their secrets, their lives, their futures,” he appears to say. “I owe it all to Spectre. Spectre showed me that whoever controls the data, controls

the future.” Spectre is a reference to a fictional, evil organization in *James Bond* lore.

The two artists behind the video, Bill Powers and Daniel Howe, did not immediately respond to requests for comment on Tuesday evening. Stephanie Otway, a spokeswoman for Instagram, said the fake video of Zuckerberg would receive the same treatment as the fake video of Pelosi. “If third-party fact checkers mark it as false, we will filter it from Instagram's recommendation surfaces like Explore and hashtag pages,” she said. NY TIMES

## Big B pays off loans of 2,100 Bihar farmers

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA  
MUMBAI

Megastar Amitabh Bachchan on Wednesday said he helped pay off outstanding loans of over 2,000 farmers from Bihar.

The 76-year-old actor took to his personal blog to share the news.

Mr. Bachchan said he called some of the farmers to his residence and donated the amount.

“A promise made done. The farmers from Bihar who had outstanding loans, picked 2,100 of them, and paid off their amount with an OTS with the bank. Called some of them over to



Amitabh Bachchan

Janak and personally gave it to them at the hands of Shweta and Abhishek,” he wrote on his blog.

The *Badla* star also said he was on his way to honour another promise he made to the families of the martyrs of the Pulwama terror attack.

## How much plastic is in your diet?

‘People are ingesting 5 g of microplastic every week, equal in weight to a credit card’

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE  
PARIS

People worldwide could be ingesting 5 g of microscopic plastic particles every week, equivalent in weight to a credit card, researchers said on Wednesday.

Coming mostly from tap and especially bottled water, nearly invisible bits of polymer were also found in shellfish, beer and salt, scientists from the University of Newcastle reported.

The findings, drawn from 52 peer-reviewed studies, are the first to estimate the sheer weight of plastics consumed by individual hu-



Humans consume about 250 g over the course of a year. •ISTOCKPHOTO

mans: about 250 g over the course of a year.

Another study calculated that the average American eats and drinks in about 45,000 plastic particles smaller than 130 microns an-

nually, while breathing in roughly the same number.

“If we don't want it in our bodies, we need to stop the millions of tons of plastic that continue leaking into Nature every year.”

In the last two decades, the world has produced as much plastic as during the rest of history, and the industry is set to grow by 4% a year until 2025, according to a report by Grand View Research.

**75% plastic wasted**

More than 75% of all plastics winds up as waste. A third of that – some 100 million

tonnes – is dumped or leaches into Nature, polluting land, rivers and the sea. On current trends, the ocean will contain one metric tonne of plastic for every three metric tonnes of fish by 2025, according to *The New Plastics Economy* report.

Plastic particles have recently been found inside fish in the deepest recesses of the ocean, and blanketing the most pristine snows in the Pyrenees mountains between France and Spain.

The authors have invited other researchers to build on their conclusions.

## Priest, ex-slave, on path to sainthood



Augustine Tolton

REUTERS  
VATICAN CITY

Pope Francis on Wednesday put Father Augustine Tolton, the first African-American Catholic priest who started life as a slave in the 19th century U.S., on the path to sainthood.

The Vatican said Pope Francis approved a decree recognising Tolton's “heroic virtues,” an early step in the sainthood process, after a five-year investigation in Chicago.

Tolton was born in Bush Creek, Missouri, on April 1, 1854, into a family of slaves owned by a white Roman Catholic family.

His father escaped bondage by serving in the Union army during the American Civil War and the rest of the family gained freedom in 1862 by crossing the Mississippi river into Illinois, a free State.

Although tutored by Catholics who recognised his intellectual prowess, he had to study for the priesthood at a papal university in Rome because no seminary in the U.S. would take him. He was ordained in 1886 and returned to Illinois to serve in black parishes in that state until his death in 1897.

The Pope on Wednesday granted Tolton the title “Venerable,” meaning that Catholics can pray to him for intercession with God.

### Diving deeper



**Marine life:** A biologist inspecting corals growing on tables in the Red Sea as a part of research carried out by the Interuniversity Institute for Marine Sciences near the southern Israeli city of Eilat. •AFP

## Solo, yet tutti: an app puts orchestra in your living room

‘NomadPlay’ is free and offers a catalogue of albums

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE  
AIX-EN-PROVENCE

It's a musician's dream – rehearse alongside a full orchestra, but in your own living room. And the immersive experience has been made possible with an app, courtesy French start-up, Digital Music Solutions.

“NomadPlay” is all down to an algorithm which separates out the sound components of a score to remove any instrument as desired, fading out an oboe or piano part for instance, and allowing the home musician to join the fray.

“When we were young we all practised with records to get the impression we were playing along with the Vienna or Berlin philharmonic. That was very gratifying,” internationally-renowned French violinist Renaud Ca-



**Melody of innovation:** French violinist Renaud Capucon practising with the new application ‘NomadPlay’. •AFP

pucon, 43, said.

“But it was a nightmare when our parents heard us play because it just wasn't the same thing!”

Now, thanks to the app, “you're accompanied by an orchestra all on your own in your room – it's extraordinary.”

The app can be down-

loaded for free on a phone or tablet and offers a catalogue of albums, ranging from Beethoven's Fifth Symphony to Schubert's Fantasia in F Minor. Amateurs and professionals buy the pieces for between five and €20 (\$5.60-\$22.50).

The concept is similar to that of karaoke.

## No ‘Endgame’ for Avengers fan who watched film 110 times

Works for 10 hours, watches movie two times on weekdays

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE  
LOS ANGELES

A Marvel fan in the U.S. is doing his part to help *Avengers: Endgame* become the highest-grossing movie in history – he's seen the superhero blockbuster a whopping 110 times, possibly setting a Guinness record.

“I work 10 hours, watch end game 2 times on weekdays at least 6 hours,” said Agustín Alanís in a message on Twitter on Monday.

Mr. Alanís, who lives in Florida, has been chronicling his trips to see the movie on Twitter, posting a picture of himself at each



A file photo of fans at a costume contest before the first screening of *Avengers: Endgame* in Los Angeles. •AFP

viewing with his ticket stub.

The latest mega-blockbuster from Marvel Studios has earned a worldwide total of \$2.732 billion at the box office so far, putting it within range of beating *Avatar*, which raked in \$2.788 billion to become the highest-grossing movie of all time.

Industry watchers, ho-

wever, say the movie has begun to lose steam with viewers and may end up in the number two spot for the foreseeable future – possibly until an eventual re-release.

That's unless more fans like Mr. Alanís make it their duty to ensure *Endgame* snatches the title from *Avatar*.

## Surrogacy Bill pits progressives against feminists in U.S.

New York seeks to legalise surrogacy after Washington State and New Jersey did it last year

VIVIAN WANG

The proposal to legalise surrogacy in New York was presented as an unequivocal progressive ideal, a remedy to a ban that burdens gay and infertile couples and stigmatises women who cannot have children on their own.

And yet, as the State legislature hurtles toward the end of its first Democrat-led session in nearly a decade, the Bill's success is anything but certain.

**Coercive to poor women** Female lawmakers have spoken out against it. Prominent feminists, including Gloria Steinem, have denounced it. Women's rights scholars have argued that paid surrogacy turns women's bodies into commodities and is coercive to poor women given the sizeable payments it can bring.

The Bill has the support of Gov. Andrew M. Cuomo, and



Between 1999 and 2014 in the U.S., over 18,400 infants were born through gestational surrogacy. •GETTY IMAGES/STOCKPHOTO

passed the State Senate on Tuesday. But it remains stalled in the Assembly, where several prominent female lawmakers have expressed firm opposition.

Assemblywoman Deborah Glick, who became the first openly gay member of the Legislature in 1991, said surrogacy rights were not the only marker for equality. “I'm not certain that, considering the money involved, that this is an issue for the

LGBTQ community to the state of New York.” “I think that's a mark of progress for our community and a mark of progress for human rights in general,” said Mr. Hoyleman, who is the State's only openly gay senator and has two daughters born through surrogacy in California.

**In response to an ad**

The debate over surrogacy rights is relatively new, as it is inherently entwined with advances in reproductive technology. Its roots are in the infamous Baby M case, when Mary Beth Whitehead, a woman in New Jersey, answered a newspaper ad in 1984 to be a surrogate for a couple, Elizabeth and William Stern.

But after Ms. Whitehead gave birth to a girl, Baby M, she changed her mind: she wanted to keep the baby, who was biologically her daughter, as she had used her own egg for the pregnancy. A protracted legal battle

ensued. The Sterns won custody of the baby.

In the wake of that case, many States, including New York, banned surrogacy. But that trend has reversed in recent years. Washington state and New Jersey legalised paid surrogacy last year, joining about a dozen other states. Many other states allow it under certain circumstances or have no laws on the topic, effectively permitting it.

Between 1999 and 2014 in the U.S., more than 18,400 infants were born through gestational surrogacy, where the carrier is not related to the foetus, according to data from Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

Yet the opposite has happened globally. Surrogacy is illegal in most of Europe. And India – where “fertility tourism” brought in \$400 million a year – outlawed commercial surrogacy last year, over exploitation concerns. NY TIMES