



IN BRIEF

Elvis biopic to release in October 2021
LOS ANGELES
Warner Bros will release the yet-untitled film on legendary singer Elvis Presley on October 1, 2021. Directed by Australian filmmaker Baz Luhrmann, the biographical film will feature Austin Butler in the role of Presley and Tom Hanks as his iconic manager Colonel Tom Parker. The project will be shot at Queensland in Australia. **PTI**



Original *Lion King* animator flays remake
LOS ANGELES
David Stephan, one of the original animators of *The Lion King* (1994), has blasted the remake of the classic Disney film, calling it "cheap". "Disney's now taken the cover off, and it's now in your face: 'Yeah, we just want to make money'. That's disappointing," the animator said. **PTI**



Facebook to add name to WhatsApp, Instagram
SAN FRANCISCO
In a step towards merging all its platforms into one unified experience for users, Facebook is adding its name to Instagram and WhatsApp. Instagram will soon become "Instagram from Facebook" and WhatsApp will turn into "WhatsApp from Facebook" and the new titles will be displayed in app stores. **IANS**

U.S. rapper A\$AP Rocky released pending verdict

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE
STOCKHOLM

A Swedish court released U.S. rapper A\$AP Rocky on Friday pending the verdict of an assault trial that has outraged his fans. The court's decision was quickly welcomed by U.S. President Donald Trump.

The 30-year-old rapper, whose real name is Rakim Mayers, hugged his mother in the courtroom after the Stockholm district court's presiding judge Per Lennerbrant announced he would be released pending the verdict, which would be delivered on August 14.

Mr. Mayers has been held in Sweden since July 3 when he was arrested following a brawl in Stockholm on June 30, which saw him and his crew embroiled in a fight with a 19-year-old plaintiff.

He and two others had been held in custody ahead of their trial because the court deemed him a "flight

Canadian iceberg hunter follows 'white gold' in the Atlantic

Chunks of ice are melted and the water sold to local traders who make products for wealthy clients in Europe, Singapore and Dubai

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE
BONAVISTA

It's midday and Edward Kean, a Canadian fisherman who now scours the North Atlantic for icebergs that have broken off from Greenland's glaciers, is positively beaming.

Using his trusty binoculars, the rotund, 60-year-old captain of the fishing boat *Green Waters* has spotted his next prize – it's several dozen metres tall and floating just off the coast of Newfoundland.

"It's a very fine piece of ice," Mr. Kean proclaims.

Every morning at dawn, Mr. Kean sails out with three other crew members to hunt what has become his own personal white gold: icebergs.

For more than 20 years, he has hauled in the mighty ice giants and then sold the water for a handsome profit to local companies, which



Sea story: (Clockwise from left) Edward Kean's fishing boat passing an iceberg in Bonavista Bay; a hook is sharpened to 'catch' chunks of ice; bits of ice being axed for melting and the water finally getting bottled for a premium range. **•AFF**

then bottle it, mix it into alcoholic products or use it to make cosmetics.

Business has soared in tandem with the warming of the planet, especially quick

in the Arctic, meaning that more and more icebergs find their way south.

But it's a tough gig. The days are long and the "harvest" isn't easy.

Arriving at the foot of the massive wall of floating ice in Bonavista Bay, which opens into the Atlantic, he shoulders a rifle and blasts away in the hopes that some of it will

break off. But the ice does not split. "Sometimes it works, sometimes it doesn't," said Mr. Kean.

As summer gets under way, time is of the essence in



Wearable device to link man and machine

It can collect and relay information

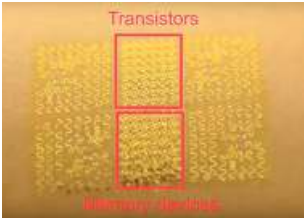
ASIAN NEWS INTERNATIONAL
WASHINGTON

Researchers have developed a multifunctional ultra-thin wearable electronic device that is imperceptible to the wearer.

These human-machine interface devices that can collect and store important health information about the wearer have benefited from advances in electronics, materials and mechanical designs.

But current models still can be bulky and uncomfortable, and they can't always handle multiple functions at the same time time.

Researchers reported in



At the cutting-edge: (Clockwise from left) A smart patch worn on the back of the hand; a close-up of the patch and a robotic hand covered with prosthetic skin. **•SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT**

the study published in the journal *Science Advances* the development of a ultra-thin patch.

The device allows the

wearer to move naturally and is less noticeable than wearing a Band-Aid, said Cunjiang Yu, the lead author for the paper. "Everything is

very thin, just a few microns thick. You will not be able to feel it," said Mr. Yu.

It has the potential to work as a prosthetic skin for a robotic hand or other robotic devices, with a robust human-machine interface that allows it to automatically collect information and relay it back to the wearer.

That has applications for health care as well as for situations such inspecting chemical spills, which are risky for humans but require human decision-making based on physical inspection.

"What if when you shook hands with a robotic hand, it was able to instantly deduce physical condition?" Mr. Yu asked. While current devices are gaining in popularity, the

researchers said they can be bulky to wear, offer slow response times and suffer a drop in performance over time. More flexible versions are unable to provide multiple functions – at once sensing, switching, stimulation and data storage, for example – and are generally expensive and complicated to manufacture.

The patch, which is worn on human skin to capture multiple physical data and also on a robot to offer intelligent feedback, forms a closed-loop interface. The multifunctional soft stretchy device is based on a one-step formed, gel-on-polymer processed indium zinc oxide semiconductor nanomembrane electronics, the researchers wrote.

Infant milk substitute: clinical trial under probe

ICMR asked to get the issue examined

AESHAN YASMEEN
BENGALURU

A prominent manufacturer of infant milk substitute is now under the Union Health Ministry's scanner for sponsoring a research titled "Multicentric Observational Study to Observe Growth in Pre-term hospitalised infants" in alleged violation of rules in five hospitals across the country.

The manufacturer, Nestle India Ltd., conducted clinical trials on 75 premature babies in five hospitals on substitutes for breast milk in complete contravention of the The Infant Milk Substitutes, Feeding Bottles, and Infant Foods (Regulation Of Production, Supply And Distribution) Act 1992 and Amendment Act 2003 (IMS Act).

The alleged violation was found by the Breastfeeding Promotion Network of India (BPNI) on screening the trial registry of the Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR).

The BPNI complained to Union Health Minister Harsh Vardhan on July 17 alleging that the company had violated Section 9(2) of the IMS Act.

This Section states that no producer, supplier or distributor shall offer or give any contribution or pecuniary benefit to a health worker or any association of health workers, including funding of seminars, meetings, conferences, educational courses, fellowships or research work.

Following the complaint, Union Health Secretary Preeti Sudan on Friday directed ICMR Director Balram Bhargava to "get the trial examined and take necessary action to comply with the provisions of the IMS Act".

She has also directed

Prof. Bhargava to ensure that all such clinical trials are first screened for infringement of the IMS Act in future.

Dr. Monjori Mitra of Med-clin Research Pvt Ltd. is the trial co-ordinator and research director of the clinical trial – number CTRI/2018/12/016715 – registered under the Clinical Trial Registry of the ICMR . The five hospitals which participated in the research – Cloudnine Hospital (Bengaluru), Institute of Child Health (Kolkata), Manipal Hospital (Bengaluru), Sir Ganga Ram Hospital (New Delhi) and Calcutta Medical Research Institute (Kolkata) – are private institutions.

Amulya Nidhi, co-nov-nor of the Swasthya Adhikar Manch, alleged this clinical trial was "only to put our children's health at risk for the benefit of corporates like Nestle".

Nestle's response

Responding to the allegations, a spokesperson for Nestle India emphasised that the company always complied with all laws and regulations including the IMS Act.

In a statement, the spokesperson said the objective of the clinical study was to encourage science-based research and all Institutional Ethics Committee approvals had been obtained from the participating sites.

"The letter from the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare has requested the Indian Council of Medical Research to examine the matter. Nestlé India will provide all its support on this issue to ICMR and we are confident of our position," the statement said, noting that the IMS Act does not discourage dissemination of scientific information.

Fan Bingbing talks of comeback after scandal

In a rare interview, the actor opens up about her fall from grace and her determination to keep going

STEVEN LEE MYERS
BEIJING

For more than half her life, Fan Bingbing was an icon of China's booming film and television industry, who evolved from girl-next-door roles into an international star and fashion celebrity.

Then last year, her career was convulsed by a tax scandal that precipitated her spectacular fall from public grace and tarnished an entire industry – one that the Chinese government is eager to put under even tighter creative control.

"No one can have smooth sailing throughout the journey," Ms. Fan said, during a rare interview, the first to touch on the scandal since it erupted. For four months last year, Ms. Fan disap-



Ups and downs: Fan Bingbing. **•AFF**

peared, and the unexplained absence of China's most famous movie star distressed millions of her fans and spread fear among her filmmaking colleagues.

No one knew it then, but she was being held under a

type of house arrest while tax authorities scoured the records of her long and lucrative career as an actor, a luminary of the red carpet, a face of luxury brands and a successful businesswoman.

Now Ms. Fan, who turns

38 next month, is dipping her toe back into the waters of a society that once revered her. "It may be a trough I encountered in my life or in my work, but this trough is actually a good thing," she said. "It has made me calm down and think seriously about what I want to do in my future life."

She recently posted her first updates to her 62 million followers on Weibo, China's version of Twitter, promoting charity events and announcing her breakup with her fiancé, Li Chen, an actor and director.

She also appeared last month in a teaser on Instagram for 355, a film shepherded by actor and producer Jessica Chastain. Ms. Fan's role in the film – an ac-

tion thriller featuring women playing foreign agents from around the world – had been in limbo since the scandal.

In October, China revealed that Ms. Fan had been fined nearly \$70 million in unpaid taxes and penalties, while her eponymous studio was hit with a tax bill exceeding \$60 million. That same month, in her first public statement since June, Ms. Fan expressed her remorse.

She was spared criminal charges, but her manager at the time, among others, was arrested. Ms. Fan said she was ready for the next scene, no what matter it brought.

"There are regrets, pain and fragility," she said. "But I still feel that I need to keep on living." **NY TIMES**

Raccoon rescue goes viral

The animal had got stuck in a sewer grate in a U.S. town

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE
WASHINGTON

He may lack the poise of *Guardians of the Galaxy* superhero Rocket Raccoon but this little adventurer is becoming an Internet star in his own right.

The mischievous mammal became popular on the Internet after he was photographed by U.S. firefighters during a bungled escape from a sewer on Thursday.

"He had been stuck for a while but we are happy to report he is free!!!" the local fire department tweeted after freeing the trapped trash panda in Newton, Massachusetts.

Firefighters were dispatched when a passing cyclist saw the raccoon clinging desperately to the grill,



The raccoon before it was rescued. **•NEWTON FIRE DEPARTMENT**

head and tiny paws visible through the metal struts.

"We sent a fire truck and we tried to remove his head from the sewer grate with soap and water," said Newton Fire Lieutenant Michael

Bianchi. When that failed, the firefighters called in local government animal control experts, who sedated the raccoon, calming it enough to pull its head out of the grate.