Infotainment Edge Global

INFOTAINMENT EDGE™

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SECTION 1 – TECH BUZZ

ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE

EY, IBM Introduce AI Innovation in HR

EY and IBM have jointly unveiled EY.ai Workforce, a cutting-edge HR solution that seamlessly integrates artificial intelligence (AI) into critical HR processes. This collaboration signifies a significant stride in harnessing AI's potential to enhance productivity within HR operations.

- EY.ai Workforce merges IBM Watsonx Orchestrate's AI and automation capabilities with EY's extensive expertise in HR transformation. This innovative solution empowers organizations to revamp their HR processes. Leveraging EY's in-depth understanding of business processes, tailored solutions are designed and implemented to streamline employees' tasks with the aid of AI.
- The automation features of Watsonx Orchestrate are packaged into discrete tasks, guiding employees through common processes such as creating job descriptions and generating payroll reports. The user-friendly natural language interface ensures accessibility for all employees, enabling them to utilize these automations effortlessly. This, in turn, allows employees to redirect their focus towards more high-value tasks, thus optimizing their time and efforts.
- Andy Baldwin, EY Global Managing Partner - Client Service, emphasized the timeliness of this collaboration, given the rapidly evolving modern workplace. He highlighted how

EY.ai Workforce reshapes work dynamics by maximizing talent potential, placing humans at the core of technology, resulting in an enhanced work experience and superior productivity.

- Kareem Yusuf, Ph.D., Senior Vice President of Product Management and Growth at IBM Software, expressed IBM's dedication to creating AI-driven enterprise solutions tailored for specific business needs. He underlined that EY.ai Workforce is a strategic advancement in their alliance with EY, providing clients with targeted intelligent automation solutions that leverage the power of AI to boost productivity and address real business challenges.
- EY, with a global presence in over 150 countries, is committed to building a better working world by creating long-term value for clients, people, and society. Their diverse teams, enabled by data and technology, offer services in assurance, consulting, law, strategy, tax, and transactions. EY's approach involves asking insightful questions to find innovative solutions for the complex issues faced by the world today.
- IBM, a leading provider of global hybrid cloud and AI solutions, operates in more than 175 countries. They assist clients in harnessing insights from their data, streamlining business processes, reducing costs, and gaining a competitive edge. IBM's expertise in AI, quantum computing, industry-specific cloud solutions, and consulting ensures flexible options for clients, backed by a commitment to trust, transparency, responsibility, inclusivity, and service.
- The EY and IBM Alliance harnesses business acumen, AI, and hybrid cloud technology to address the world's most intricate business, environmental, and social challenges. This collaboration extends support to various functional areas, including HR, sustainability, M&A, risk and compliance, supply chain, and asset management. By enabling business and workforce transformations through hybrid cloud solutions, EY and IBM continue to drive innovation and efficiency in the corporate landscape.

Google AI Improves Traffic

Google has launched its Project Green Light in Manchester, partnering with Transport for Greater Manchester (TfGM) to pilot artificial intelligence (AI) technology in the city's traffic light system.

- This initiative aims to reduce stop-and-go emissions and enhance the flow of vehicles. The company revealed its UK launch during a sustainability event in Brussels, where Google showcased its innovations in high-emission industries, emphasizing the use of AI for climate solutions.
- Google's research found that half of emissions at traffic intersections result from vehicles stopping and starting. To address this issue, the Green Light research initiative utilizes AI and driving data from Google Maps to analyze traffic patterns. Based on this analysis, the initiative provides recommendations for optimizing existing traffic light plans. City engineers can implement these suggestions using current infrastructure in as little as five minutes.
- The Green Light program is currently active at 70 junctions in 12 cities worldwide, including Haifa in Israel, Rio de Janeiro in Brazil, and Bangalore in India. Early data

from these cities show the potential for up to a 30% reduction in stops and a 10% decrease in emissions at junctions.

- Manchester, the first UK city to host the pilot, has approximately 2,400 traffic signals and experiences millions of journeys each week. Google's UK Managing Director and Vice President, Debbie Weinstein, emphasized the transformative potential of AI, stating that it can significantly enhance the UK's productivity and support net zero goals. She expressed Google's excitement about partnering with TfGM for Project Green Light, which leverages existing infrastructure to provide city planners with a cost-effective solution to improve traffic flow, decrease stop-and-go traffic, and cut emissions.
- David Atkin, TfGM's Analysis and Reporting Manager, acknowledged the complexity of Greater Manchester's road network, catering to the diverse needs of motorists, cyclists, pedestrians, and public transport users. He highlighted the innovative nature of the Green Light initiative, underscoring its potential to reduce congestion and improve journeys by up to 18%, while also decreasing emissions. Atkin expressed TfGM's commitment to enhancing the network's efficiency and eagerness to apply the lessons learned from this pilot to benefit all road users. Google and TfGM are optimistic about the positive impact this collaboration can have on Manchester's traffic management and the environment.

AI Revolutionizes Brain Aneurysm Treatment

A groundbreaking software platform driven by artificial intelligence (AI) could transform the treatment of brain aneurysms, according to recent research. The program, called PreSize, has demonstrated superior accuracy in predicting the placement of a stent in a patient's brain compared to experienced neurosurgeons. Oxford Heartbeat, a technology company, developed PreSize after analyzing past brain aneurysm surgeries that utilized a variety of stents to understand how these devices behaved.

- Brain aneurysms, caused by weaknesses in artery walls, can affect anyone but are more common in individuals over 40. Detection before rupturing allows for monitoring through regular check-ups or surgical intervention, such as sealing the aneurysm with a metal clip or fitting a stent, a flexible mesh tube made of metal. Stents are inserted through a catheter in the groin and guided to the affected area using X-ray screening. However, stent procedures are complex and come with a high complication rate, including the risk of blood clots leading to strokes.
- PreSize works by providing clinicians with an accurate, reconstructed image of the patient's brain and a library of "digital twins" representing different stent devices. These digital twins behave exactly like real stents, allowing clinicians to simulate the placement and predict how a specific device would function in a particular location within the patient's brain. This technology significantly reduces the guesswork involved in stent implantation.
- Dr. Katerina Spranger, founder and CEO of Oxford Heartbeat, emphasized the importance of precise device placement and size. PreSize allows clinicians to load a patient's scan and experiment with various devices in real-time, aiding them in choosing the best-suited stent. The software's intuitive design ensures ease of use in high-stress surgical environments, allowing clinicians to make informed decisions swiftly.

- Clinical trials involving PreSize have yielded promising results. A study published in the BMJ Journal of Neurointerventional Surgery compared the accuracy of PreSize predictions to those made by neurointerventionalists. The research involved 3D images and data from 51 cases, with PreSize demonstrating a remarkable 95% accuracy rate compared to the 81% accuracy achieved by human clinicians. PreSize has been employed in procedures involving 375 patients and is currently in use across multiple hospitals in England, Scotland, Germany, Finland, and Ukraine. The technology is also part of a National Institute for Health and Care Research (NIHR) trial, aimed at gathering objective evidence on its effectiveness.
- Dr. Spranger stressed the transformative potential of AI in healthcare. While acknowledging the need for rigorous testing of new systems, she emphasized that AI-driven software like PreSize represents a new generation of medical devices, which, due to its high accuracy, is likely to become a standard of care in the future. The integration of AI technologies in healthcare, including the use of software like PreSize, holds the promise of revolutionizing diagnostics and treatment, ultimately improving patient outcomes.

TECHNOLOGY

Spacetech Potential Unleashed

A recent report by global consultancy firm Deloitte, in collaboration with Nasscom and the Indian Space Association (ISpA), has emphasized the potential of a digital public infrastructure-led approach in unlocking substantial value within India's downstream spacetech segment.

- The report, titled 'Exploring Opportunities for Indian Downstream Spacetech,' highlights the transformative impact this approach could have, positioning India as a global leader in the spacetech sector. The key focus of the report revolves around three core satellite application areas: Remote Sensing/Earth Observation, Positioning, Navigation, and Timing (PNT), and Satellite Communication (SATCOM), identifying over 200 specific use cases.
- According to the findings, the earth observation category holds critical applications in agriculture, spanning from crop insurance and yield monitoring to disaster management and biodiversity conservation, including natural resource extraction, mining, and urban development. Additionally, SATCOM-as-a-service offers promising applications in in-flight and remote area connectivity, DTH broadcasting, telehealth, and tele-education. India's PNT program, including NavIC, is recognized for its potential role in transportation, communication, and defense sectors.
- The report emphasizes that a digital public goods and digital public infrastructure-led approach could actualize the vision of 'spacetech-as-a-service,' creating value-added, scalable solutions for both domestic and global markets. Collaboration between the private sector and the government is crucial in making this vision a reality. Deloitte and Nasscom, in a joint statement, stressed that such an approach could be highly value-accretive.

- Sreeram Ananthasayanam, Partner at Deloitte Touche Tohmatsu India LLP, highlighted the downstream space sector's potential to significantly impact India's economy and society. By addressing challenges related to awareness and adoption, India can emerge as a global leader in the sector, reaping substantial benefits. The report underlines that downstream applications play a pivotal role in generating revenue and impact within the space economy, supporting advancements in other domains.
- In the rapidly evolving space arena, India's dual-purpose mission focuses on safeguarding national security and strengthening defense capabilities. Lt Gen A K Bhatt (retd), Director General of ISpA, emphasized the importance of securing space assets and access, considering space's rise as the fourth operational domain.
- The report concludes by pointing out that the downstream space sector offers significant promise for forward-thinking investors, especially those embracing innovation, cost-effectiveness, and dynamic growth prospects in areas such as Artificial Intelligence (AI) and machine learning. With strategic investments and collaborative efforts, India can position itself as a frontrunner in the global spacetech landscape.

COMPUTING

Jiuzhang 3.0

Chinese scientists have unveiled a groundbreaking quantum computer prototype named "Jiuzhang 3.0," marking a significant leap in the field of photonics quantum computing technology. Led by the esteemed Chinese quantum physicist Pan Jianwei, the research team achieved a remarkable milestone by detecting 255 photons, showcasing the immense potential of quantum computing.

- In this pioneering study, the team harnessed Gaussian boson sampling (GBS), a problem deemed classically intractable, to demonstrate the quantum computational speedup. The researchers utilized a newly developed superconducting nanowire single-photon detection scheme with a fiber loop-based configuration, along with innovative techniques like demultiplexing photons into time bins through delays, enabling pseudo photon number resolving. These advancements significantly increased the complexity of photonics quantum computing.
- Published online in the journal Physical Review Letters, Jiuzhang 3.0 exhibited extraordinary computational speed. It outperformed the world's fastest supercomputers by a staggering factor of 10 quadrillion when solving GBS problems. To put this achievement into perspective, the most intricate GBS samples that Jiuzhang 3.0 could calculate in just one microsecond would take the world's fastest supercomputer, "Frontier," more than 20 billion years to complete.
- The team's previous accomplishment, Jiuzhang 2.0, had 113 detected photons, and they also developed a 66-qubit programmable superconducting quantum computing system named "Zuchongzhi 2.1" in 2021. With these achievements, China became the only country to attain a quantum computational advantage in both photonics quantum computing technology and superconducting quantum computing technology.

- The researchers emphasized the immense effort and long-term competition between classical algorithms and quantum computing hardware required to establish quantum computational advantage.
- They anticipate that their work will stimulate further research in classical simulation algorithms and, through continuous dedication, address various scientific and engineering challenges in quantum computing research. Ultimately, quantum computers are poised to achieve computational power far beyond the capabilities of classical computers, driving the advancement of science and technology.

INTERNET

6G Technologies Unveiled

Vivo Communications Research Institute unveiled its latest advancements in 6G research during the company's conference themed "Approaching the 6G Era." At this event, the Institute released three whitepapers: "Convergence of AI and Communication," "Technologies of Integrated Sensing and Communication," and "6G Network Architecture."

- This occasion also marked the debut of several prototypes developed by Vivo, showcasing technologies crucial to the next-generation mobile communication standard. These prototypes provided a glimpse into how 6G could revolutionize consumer experiences and lifestyles.
- Since 2020, Vivo Communications Research Institute has been actively engaged in extensive 6G research, as evidenced by its previously released whitepapers: "Digital Life 2030+," "6G Vision, Requirements and Challenges," and "6G Services, Capabilities and Enabling Technologies."
- Qin Fei, President of Vivo Communications Research Institute, expressed their consumer-centric approach, stating, "At Vivo, we believe in technology serving our consumers and enriching their lives meaningfully. This philosophy drives our exploration of new frontiers, as reflected in the whitepapers launched today. These papers delve into concepts and key technologies shaping the 6G user experience, including AI and sensing technologies, and network architecture that supports the convergence of mobile communications and computing, making 6G a reality."
- The convergence of AI and communication stands as a pivotal aspect of 6G evolution. To address the demands for higher throughput, lower latency, increased reliability, and a larger number of connections, AI has been identified as a fundamental technology for 6G. Sun Peng, Director of Transmission Technology at Vivo Communications Research Institute, highlighted, "AI can tackle multiple challenges within 6G communication systems, enhancing signal transmission and optimizing network connectivity.
- This results in stable and seamless network connections for consumers, anytime and anywhere." Vivo's research, viewed from a device manufacturer's perspective, proposed system design principles, including unified lifecycle management based on logical nodes, establishing a future-proof, efficient, and elegant protocol architecture. Additionally,

Peng introduced a Vivo-designed distributed AI 6G system ensuring data privacy and security.

- Integrated Sensing and Communication (ISAC) also plays a crucial role in 6G applications, particularly in scenarios like industrial automation, smart healthcare, and intelligent transportation. Jiang Dajie, 6G Director at Vivo Communications Research Institute, outlined key ISAC technologies, including waveform and signal design, collaborative sensing, multi-antenna ISAC systems, and mobility management.
- Vivo showcased three ISAC prototypes based on different sensing modes, offering scenarios such as positioning, trajectory tracking, and respiration monitoring.
- The design of the 6G network architecture is essential for integrating communication, AI, and sensing technologies to meet the anticipated 6G service requirements. Yuan Yannan, Vivo 6G specialist, emphasized three main design principles for 6G network architecture: retaining 5G advantages, meeting new 6G requirements, and enhancing basic capabilities.
- Guided by these principles, the 6G network architecture natively supports features like AI and ISAC, providing users with multidimensional services beyond communication, ensuring a superior user experience.
- Vivo anticipates significant opportunities in the 6G era, enabled by key technologies such as AI-enabled Network, Almost-zero Power IoT, 6G-Satellite Integrated Network, and the convergence of mobile networks and computing.
- These advancements will empower mobile users to overcome hardware limitations, enabling experiences like high-quality online gaming, interaction with 3D virtual humans, and immersive XR experiences anytime, anywhere.
- In Vivo's vision, the 6G era heralds extraordinary opportunities for the communications industry and consumers alike. The company aspires to create a freely connected physical and digital world, collaborating with industry partners worldwide to turn this vision into reality.

SECTION 2 – GLOBAL INFO

EUROPE

RUSSIA

Russian forces have intensified their assault on the eastern Ukrainian town of Avdiivka, closing in on the frontline on Tuesday. The Ukrainian capital, Kyiv, issued a warning, stating that Moscow was escalating its strikes in an effort to completely encircle the town.

- This aggressive move follows months of a slower-than-expected Ukrainian counteroffensive, initiated in the summer to reclaim territory lost during Moscow's invasion.

- Avdiivka, once home to approximately 31,000 people, now only houses an estimated 2,000 residents. Despite the drastic population decrease, the town holds immense symbolic and strategic importance for Kyiv.
- It is situated just north of Donetsk, a city controlled by Moscow-backed separatist forces since 2014. Avdiivka has become a poignant symbol of Ukrainian resistance against Moscow, with Kyiv tenaciously holding on despite relentless Russian attacks during the Kremlin's almost 20-month-long offensive.
- In the morning, Russian forces launched a relentless artillery attack on the town, firing incessantly and raising concerns about the safety of the remaining residents. The situation in Avdiivka remains dire as the conflict continues to unfold.

ASIA

CHINA

China is all set to host its third Belt and Road forum in the capital next week, as confirmed by Beijing officials on Wednesday. The event is expected to witness the presence of several foreign leaders, including Vladimir Putin.

- Representatives from more than 130 countries will participate in this gathering, which marks the 10th anniversary of Beijing's extensive infrastructure initiative.
- Hua Chunying, the spokesperson for the Chinese Foreign Ministry, announced that Chinese President Xi Jinping will grace the opening ceremony with his presence and deliver a keynote speech. Additionally, President Xi will host a welcome banquet for the foreign leaders and heads of international organizations attending the forum.
- Of particular note is Russian President Putin's attendance at the event, marking his first visit to China since his involvement in the conflict in Ukraine led to his international isolation. China and Russia have repeatedly emphasized their strategic alliance, often highlighting their partnership without limitations, encompassing both economic and military cooperation.

SOUTH AMERICA

ARGENTINA

The US dollar has surged past the significant milestone of 1,000 pesos in Argentina's parallel market, creating a frenzy among citizens to ditch their own currency just two weeks before a crucial presidential election. The Argentine population is entering the election period grappling with staggering annual inflation exceeding 120 percent and unprecedented levels of poverty, intensifying the economic crisis in the South American nation.

- Traditionally, the US dollar has served as a safe refuge from the volatile Argentine peso, with individuals resorting to purchasing dollars as a means of safeguarding their savings against foreign exchange fluctuations.
- However, due to stringent restrictions on accessing US dollars, most people turn to the "blue dollar," a thriving black market exchange mechanism, to acquire the coveted greenback. Presently, the parallel dollar is trading at more than 1,000 pesos, nearly three

times the official rate set at 365 pesos, which the government is struggling to uphold, incurring substantial costs.

- There is an atmosphere of intense uncertainty prevailing in the lead-up to the election. Javier Milei, the frontrunner and a radical outsider who has advocated for dollarizing the economy, has cautioned citizens against investing in pesos, adding to the prevailing sense of unease among the populace.

AFRICA

NIGER

France has initiated the withdrawal of its troops from Niger following an order from coup leaders, coinciding with the United States cutting off over $500 million in aid to the insurgency-stricken Sahel nation.

- The move comes after Washington accused Niger's military of staging a coup on July 26, overthrowing a democratic government that was considered a crucial defense against Russia.
- In response to the situation, State Department spokesman Matthew Miller stated that any reinstatement of US assistance would necessitate prompt and credible measures to establish democratic governance in Niger. The United States, in collaboration with West African nations and former colonial power France, had been urging the military to restore President Mohamed Bazoum to power.
- A senior US official explained the decision, stating, "We're taking this action because over the last two months, we've explored all possible options to preserve constitutional order in Niger." Despite the aid cut, the United States is maintaining approximately 1,000 military personnel in Niger. However, they are no longer actively involved in training or assisting Niger forces, as confirmed by another US official.

SECTION 3 – MIXED BAG

HEALTH

AI Diagnosing Schizophrenia

A recent study conducted by researchers at University College London in the UK has revealed that artificial intelligence (AI) language models might play a crucial role in diagnosing schizophrenia. Schizophrenia is a mental disorder characterized by distortions of reality and disturbances in thought and language.

- The scientists developed innovative tools based on AI language models, specifically utilizing Facebook AI Research's fastText, to identify subtle patterns in the speech of individuals diagnosed with schizophrenia.

- In this study, 52 participants, including 26 individuals with schizophrenia and 26 control subjects, were involved in verbal fluency tasks. During these tasks, participants were asked to name as many words as possible within specific categories, such as "animals," or starting with a particular letter, like "p," within a time frame of 5 minutes. The researchers employed their AI tools to predict the words spontaneously spoken by the participants.
- The findings indicated that the AI model could more accurately predict the responses of the control group compared to those of the individuals with schizophrenia. Moreover, this disparity became more significant with the severity of symptoms. The researchers proposed that these differences in verbal fluency could be linked to the brain's ability to form connections between memories and ideas, stored as 'cognitive maps.' Schizophrenia disrupts these cognitive maps, impairing associative cognition and the ability to link concepts from memory.
- To support their theory, the researchers conducted brain scans to measure activity in areas of the brain responsible for learning and storing these cognitive maps. This study represents a significant breakthrough in the field of psychiatry, as automatic language analysis was previously beyond the reach of doctors and scientists. With the advent of AI language models like ChatGPT, the landscape is changing, enabling a deeper understanding of language and meaning in the context of mental disorders.
- Lead author Matthew Nour, a psychiatrist and neuroscientist, emphasized the potential of applying AI language models in psychiatry, a field intricately connected to language and meaning. Currently, psychiatric diagnoses primarily rely on conversations with patients and their close associates, with limited involvement of tests like blood tests and brain scans. However, by combining AI language models with brain scanning technology, researchers are uncovering how the brain constructs meaning and how this process is disrupted in psychiatric disorders.
- Nour expressed optimism about the future integration of AI language models into medical practices, suggesting that if these tools prove to be safe and reliable, they could be deployed in clinical settings within the next decade. The study opens new avenues for the application of AI in understanding and diagnosing complex mental health conditions.

SPACE

NASA to unveil first images of historic asteroid sample

NASA is gearing up to unveil groundbreaking images on Wednesday, showcasing the largest sample ever collected from an asteroid in space. This significant achievement could offer vital insights into the early days of our solar system and even shed light on the origins of life itself.

- The sample in question was gathered during NASA's OSIRIS-REx mission in 2020, where rock and dust were meticulously collected from the asteroid Bennu. Just over two weeks ago, a capsule containing this precious cargo safely returned to Earth, landing in the Utah desert. Currently, scientists are meticulously analyzing this material in a specialized clean room at NASA's Johnson Space Center in Houston.

- During a live-streamed news conference at 11:00 am Eastern Time (1500 GMT), NASA will present photographs and preliminary scientific analysis from this remarkable mission. While Japan had previously achieved the feat of collecting asteroid samples in 2010 and 2020, OSIRIS-REx stands out due to the substantial amount of material collected—250 grams (half a pound), in contrast to Japan's Hayabusa2, which returned 5.4 grams of samples.
- Bennu was specifically chosen as the target due to its believed richness in organic compounds. Scientists speculate that similar asteroids might have brought organic building blocks to Earth, alongside water, through collisions billions of years ago. Bennu's orbit, intersecting with that of our planet, made the mission's roundtrip journey more feasible compared to reaching asteroids in the Asteroid Belt between Mars and Jupiter.

ECONOMICS

BoE Assesses UK Economy

In its recent economic evaluation, the Bank of England (BoE) reassured the public that Britain's banking system is robust, and UK businesses have demonstrated resilience against higher interest rates. The assessment, based on a survey conducted by the BoE's Financial Policy Committee, highlighted cyber attacks, geopolitical unrest, and high inflation as the primary threats to stability.

- According to the report, the global economic growth outlook remains weak in the short term, with several potential risks that could further dampen growth. The BoE pointed out that if inflation persists, there might be a need for further interest rate hikes. However, the bank emphasized that the UK banking system is well-equipped to support households and businesses even in adverse economic conditions. Large capital buffers and other resources are in place to absorb potential losses or cash outflows.
- Economists have raised concerns about the possibility of Britain slipping into a recession due to multiple interest rate hikes implemented by the Bank of England since the end of 2021. These measures were aimed at curbing elevated inflation levels. The BoE warned that disruptions in market-based finance, including equity and debt markets, could increase the cost and limit the availability of finance for both UK businesses and households.
- The BoE's latest Systemic Risk Survey, which collected responses from 56 firms in August and September, indicated that businesses maintain confidence in the stability of the UK financial system. Their level of confidence remained consistent with the results of the equivalent survey conducted in the first half of 2023. The survey also highlighted that cyber attacks, geopolitical risks, and inflation continue to be the most significant challenges for firms. Interestingly, some respondents identified artificial intelligence as a new potential risk to financial stability, signalling a growing concern in this area.
- Researchers at NASA have been particularly intrigued by the discovery of unexpected particles, described as black dust and debris coating the sample collector. This abundance

of material posed an unusual challenge; there was so much material that it took longer than expected to collect it, a "problem" that delighted scientists working on the mission.

- Bennu's origin story is fascinating. It is believed to have formed from fragments of a larger asteroid within the asteroid belt, following a colossal collision between one and two billion years ago. Data gathered by the spacecraft has revealed that the particles composing Bennu's surface are so loosely packed that a person stepping onto it might sink in, similar to stepping into a pit of plastic balls.
- Besides advancing our scientific knowledge, understanding Bennu's composition holds practical implications. This knowledge could prove invaluable if humanity ever needs to divert Bennu away from Earth. While the asteroid poses no threat to our planet until the mid-2100s, the probability of impact increases to around 1 in 1750 between then and the year 2300, as per NASA's assessment.

OFFBEAT

Hippo-sized pumpkin is world's biggest

In a stunning display of agricultural prowess, Travis Gienger has clinched the world record for the heaviest pumpkin, weighing a colossal 2,749 pounds (1,247 kilograms), equivalent to the weight of a hippopotamus.

- This remarkable feat unfolded at the Half Moon Bay Pumpkin Festival in California, where Gienger, donned in an orange shirt, triumphantly raised his arms in victory, enveloping everyone in hugs. The iconic anthem "We Are The Champions" by Queen reverberated through the air, capturing the euphoria of this historic moment.
- Celebrating its 50th anniversary, the festival drew competitors from across North America, all vying to produce the most gargantuan gourd. Hailing from Minnesota, Gienger outshone his rivals, outpacing the closest contestant by an impressive 250 pounds, securing his claim to this year's coveted title. In addition to the honour, Gienger also shattered the existing world record set by an Italian grower in 2021, whose pumpkin weighed a relatively modest 2,703 pounds. As a testament to his achievement, Gienger was awarded a substantial prize of $30,000.
- This magnificent pumpkin, now recognized as the grand champion, will be proudly exhibited in Half Moon Bay during the upcoming Art and Pumpkin Festival. As autumn sweeps across the United States, pumpkins of diverse shapes and sizes adorn store shelves. While some will undergo spooky transformations as Halloween approaches, others will find their way into delectable pies or become part of hearty meals.
- Pumpkin spice, a delightful blend of cinnamon, cloves, nutmeg, and ginger, permeates the air during this season, flavouring an array of treats from cookies to coffee and even unexpected items like cans of Spam. Gienger's extraordinary achievement stands as a testament to the ingenuity and dedication of growers, marking a monumental moment in the world of giant gourds.

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