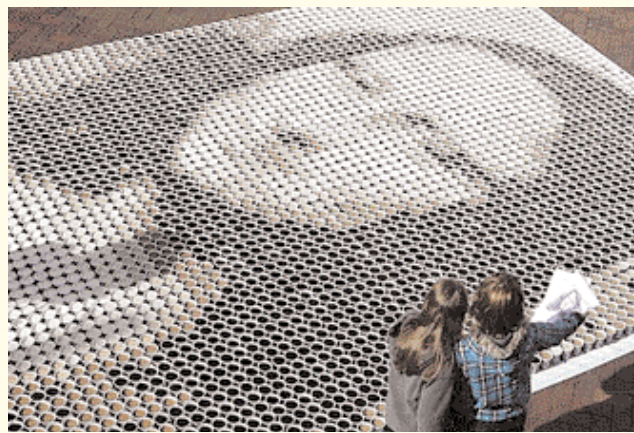


Best from our email junk

Monalisa in tea cups



Tomatoes 'stop you getting fat'

Tomatoes could be the key to staying slim, researchers believe, helping dieters to feel fuller for longer.

Nutritionists have long recognised that vegetarians and others who eat a lot of fruit and vegetables are much more likely to be slim than those drawn to a standard modern diet of highly processed foods.

But now it seems it is not just down to the fact that fruit and vegetables contain fewer calories.

Tomatoes are rich in the compound lycopene, which scientists believe may help to make people feel more full by lowering appetite hormones.

Researchers from the University of Reading made their discovery by testing the effects of bread enriched with vegetables on a group of 17 normal weight women aged 18 to 35.

The volunteers were given sandwiches either filled with

cream cheese or made with bread enriched with carrot or tomato and asked to record how full they were.

The researchers had expected the additional fibre in the carrot bread to promote the most feelings of satiety or fullness, but instead they found the tomato bread was actually the most filling.

"It was a small study, and we can't yet say what the crucial tomato ingredient is, but the results were statistically significant," Dr Julie Lovegrove, a specialist in nutritional metabolism who is leading the project, said.

The lycopene found in tomatoes makes them red and is a key component of the Mediterranean diet which is credited with lowering rates of heart disease, diabetes, dementia, and some forms of cancer.

Dr Lovegrove believes it may too be the reason why the volunteers felt more full.

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'Ninja Assassin' misses the target

by **Song Woong-ki**
The Korea Herald/ ANN

Humourless, preposterous, and soaked in blood, Ninja Assassin turns out to be thinly-plotted schlock from a team of pedigree filmmakers who should have known better.

"The day Rain did his first scene in Speed Racer, the Wachowski brothers called me and said 'This guy is unbelievable. He's a natural, our dream come true.' We began to plan Ninja Assassin immediately afterward," producer Joel Silver said in an earlier interview.

Unfortunately for "world star" Rain, what was to be his breakout film falls way short of what Enter the Dragon was for Bruce Lee. No doubt that was what the Wachowski Brothers were aiming to do by gambling on a relative unknown in the Western world.

Rain plays Raizo, one of the world's deadliest assassins trained by the Ozunu Clan - an underground band of killers that has remained hidden for generations by posing as a mythical organisation.

Robbed of his childhood, Raizo is transformed into a merciless Katana-wielding killing machine. Breaking free from their mountain lair, he plans to exact revenge on the clan for killing his first love.

In his quest for revenge, he gets help from a Europol agent Mika Corretti - played by Naomi Harris - who stumbles upon a money trail connecting a slew of high profile political assassinations around the world committed by the Ozunu.

As she begins to uncover the truth behind the murders, she too, becomes their target and is saved by Raizo when assassins emerge to kill her in Berlin.

By now, plots like these have become the silver screen version of painting-by-numbers in the same manner as Tom Clancy inspired techno-thriller novels.

But the plot does have all of the makings of a straightforward pulp action thriller, as its opening set-piece suggests. In it Raizo ambushes a gang of Yakuza members, with heads



and limbs severed and buckets of blood everywhere.

The level of over-the-top ultra-violence established through this opener is unfortunately juxtaposed with a serious tone devoid of much irony.

The film is not a nod to pulpy B-grade kung-fu genre of the '70s, nor is it a polished action flick geared towards a mainstream audience. Instead it's stuck in the middle ground, in an area unlikely to appeal to fans of either genre.

When production on the film was announced, anticipation was high, as it was written and produced by the makers of The Matrix trilogy, with directing duties falling on James McTieague, the veteran director who scored both a critical hit and modest box office success with 2005's V for Vendetta.

But it seems somewhere down the line the creative vision of the producers and the director clashed without either camp

realising.

Perhaps they realised during post-production they had a potential turkey on their hands - the film's marketing has focused on Rain and the physical transformation he underwent during six months of grueling training with the stunt and fight team that trained the actors in 300.

And the result is there on the screen. The 28-year-old actor is shown sans shirt as if he's allergic to fabric except for a leather jacket.

He's ripped. His female fans will love him - as long as they don't get too squeamish from seeing all the blood.

He does a decent job with the few lines he has throughout the 98-minute running time.

The verdict is still out on whether this will be his breakthrough role and it will be interesting to see if his star power alone will be able to generate enough revenue in Asia to warrant future high-profile roles.



Sunsilk Hedakari Making successful career beauticians

Through years, the brand name 'Sunsilk' is one associated with fondness. The past eight years have seen the combination of strong consumer brand ties that were made possible through the 'Sunsilk Hedakari Programme.' In 'Sunsilk Hedakari,' the famous brand 'Sunsilk' partners with the experts in the beauty industry to offer people from many spheres of life, world class training helping them to pursue a career by themselves.

Such programme continues to give students like Indrajit Dissanayake, Nishani Wedaarachchi, Sudarshani Kiridigala, Ishan Priyantha and many others to realise their dreams and to move on to share their experience with others who share similar vision.

'Sunsilk Hedakari' is an island-wide educational hair care and beauty programme, conducted by 'Sunsilk' of the Unilever Sri Lanka Limited, which awarded scholarships for over 20 winners for an intense four-month training, after which they would be graduated as trained beauticians.

This initiative enables talented beauticians from rural areas to acquire training, accrue a qualification, and add more prospects to their future in the field.

Dissanayake from Badulla is currently following the advanced diploma course and has already opened his own salon in Badulla. He hopes to take part in an international hair and beauty competition soon, owing his success to the confidence gained by working and learning from experts.

Nishani from Moratuwa agreed that after following the course, she gained the ability to detect why things go wrong, especially in hair colouring, perming, re-bonding and other beauty related exercises.

Brought up by her widowed mother, Nishani had the rare opportunity of supplementing her family income while pursuing her dream job, which was to open her own salon. Thanks to the solid foundation she gained during her time at RFSA, 'Salon Nishani' was the realisation of her childhood dream. On graduating from RFSA on Nov. 24, she would be adjudged 'the best Sunsilk student,' awarding her assiduous dedication. She remains a living proof of how the 'Sunsilk Hedakari Programme' changes lives of women who want to take charge and live life to the fullest.

"A dream come true for me thanks to Sunsilk" is a sentiment echoed by Priyantha from Balapitiya, the proud winner of 'Sunsilk Hedakari 2008.' He too established his own salon named 'Ishan Hair and Beauty Salon,' and has claimed fame in being technically and theoretically aware about hair, skin and other aspects of beauty - with the know-how gathered from the scholarship he acquired through 'Sunsilk Hedakari' in the RFSA. Ishan in turn plans to share his knowledge by teaching correct techniques in beauty culture in the rural areas.

Galaxies give birth to 50 stars a year

Young fertile galaxies give birth to stars such as the sun at a "runaway" rate of up to 50 a year, astronomers have learned.

The discovery shows that "stellar nurseries" within early galaxies similar to our own were producing stars far more rapidly than was previously thought. Astronomers looked back 12.5 billion years to study one of the most distant galaxies known, MS1358arc.

Light from the galaxy began its journey across the universe just one billion years after the Big Bang that created the cosmos. "Gravitational lensing" was used to magnify the galaxy by making use of the way its light bent round a nearby galaxy cluster. Using this technique the scientists were able to observe rapid bursts of star formation. New stars were being created

in the galaxy's star-forming regions at a rate 100 times faster than had earlier been predicted. Measuring 6,000 light years across, the collection of stars was expected to evolve into a spiral galaxy similar to our own, the Milky Way. The findings, published in the Monthly Notices of the Royal Astronomical Society, were based on observations from the Gemini North telescope in Hawaii and NASA's Hubble and Spitzer space telescopes.

Lead astronomer Dr Mark Swinbank, from the University of Durham, said: "The runaway effect in this galaxy suggests it is growing much faster than expected. "Given the size of the star-forming regions, we would expect it to be forming stars at the rate of about one sun per year; but it seems to be much more active than that. "We

think this galaxy is fairly typical of galaxies at this time and we expect that the Milky Way once looked like this as it formed its first stars.

"In effect we are seeing the first generation of stars being born in a galaxy like the Milky Way. This gives unique insight into the birth of our own galaxy." Most of the observed stars would have eventually exploded as supernovae at the end of their lives, said the scientists. However, light from the explosions will not reach our part of the universe for billions more years.

Supernova explosions hurl debris into space which eventually forms new stars and planets. "In this respect these stars are the seeds of future star formation in the universe," said Dr Swinbank.

Holding hands reduces pain

Holding the hand of a loved one can reduce their pain during times of distress, scientists believe.

Researchers revealed that, at least for women, the touch or sight of a partner seems to anaesthetise them. Even a photograph of their loved one is enough to have an effect.

The discovery was made by psychologists at the University of California and "underscores the importance of social relationships and staying socially connected", they reported.

The 25 volunteers were mostly students who had been in a good relationship with their boyfriends for at least six months.

Tests revealed that if the young women were given a mild burn, they felt less discomfort by looking at photos of their boyfriends.

A similar anaesthetising effect was found if they held hands with their partners when "moderately painful heat stimuli" was applied to their forearms.

Researcher Naomi Eisenberger, an assistant professor of psychology involved in the study, said: "When the women were just looking at pic-



tures of their partner; they actually reported less pain to the heat stimuli than when they were looking at pictures of an object or pictures of a stranger.

"The mere reminder of one's partner through a simple photograph was capable of reducing pain. "This changes our notion of how

social support influences people. Typically, we think that in order for social support to make us feel good, it has to be the kind of support that is very responsive to our emotional needs.

"Here, however, we are seeing that just a photo of one's significant other can have the same effect."

In further experiments, each woman held either the hand of her boyfriend, the hand of a male stranger or a squeeze ball. The "thermal stimulus" last for just a tenth of second to produce a "sharp prickling sensation."

The volunteers who held hands "reported less physical pain than when they were holding a stranger's hand or a ball while receiving the same amount of heat stimulation".

Prof Eisenberger added: "This study demonstrates how much of an impact our social ties can have on our experience and fits with other work emphasising the importance of social support for physical and mental health."

The findings might also explain why a mother can apparently give instant comfort to a poorly child by "kissing it better".

The researchers gave advice to anyone suffering pain or stress that if you cannot bring a loved one with you, a photo may do instead.

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