

A little bit of history : at just 26 cm tall, the 17-year-old who is about to set a new record.

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At just 56cm tall, the 17-year-old who is about to set a new record

A little bit of history

By Joel Taylor

JUNREY BALAWING will soon be crowned the smallest man in recorded history – as long as he doesn't put on a sudden growth spurt.

Standing at 56cm (1ft 10in), the Filipino teenager is the same size as a one-year-old and will smash the existing record when he turns 18 this June.

He is 11cm (4.3in) shorter than the current smallest man in the world – **Khagendra Thapa Magar**, 18, who stands at 67cm (2ft 2.3in).

And he's a shade smaller than the shortest man on record, **Gul Mohammed** of India measured just 57cm (1ft 10.5in). A heavy smoker, he died at the age of 40 in 1997.

'If I were the smallest man in the world, it would be very cool,' said Junrey, from Zamboanga del Norte, in the Philippines.

But fame has its price. He cannot stand for long and is dependent on his mother, Concepcion, 35. 'Junrey can only walk with some help and he can't stand for too long because he's in too much pain,' she said.

'But he loves it when I tell him he's going to be the smallest man in the world. He smiles with pride.'

The family's village is very remote and the nearest town is an hour away.

And while his younger but taller siblings Jaycel, 13, Jay-art, 11 and Jeanrich, six, go to school, he stays at home.

Mrs Balawing said: 'I would love to be able to work while my other children are at school but I can't leave Junrey. He



Hang on, dad: **Reynaldo Balawing** carries his son

needs my care every minute of every day.' She first noticed something was wrong when he was two but no doctor was able to help.

'He was always sick and we noticed he wasn't growing so we took him to see doctors but they were baffled,' she added.

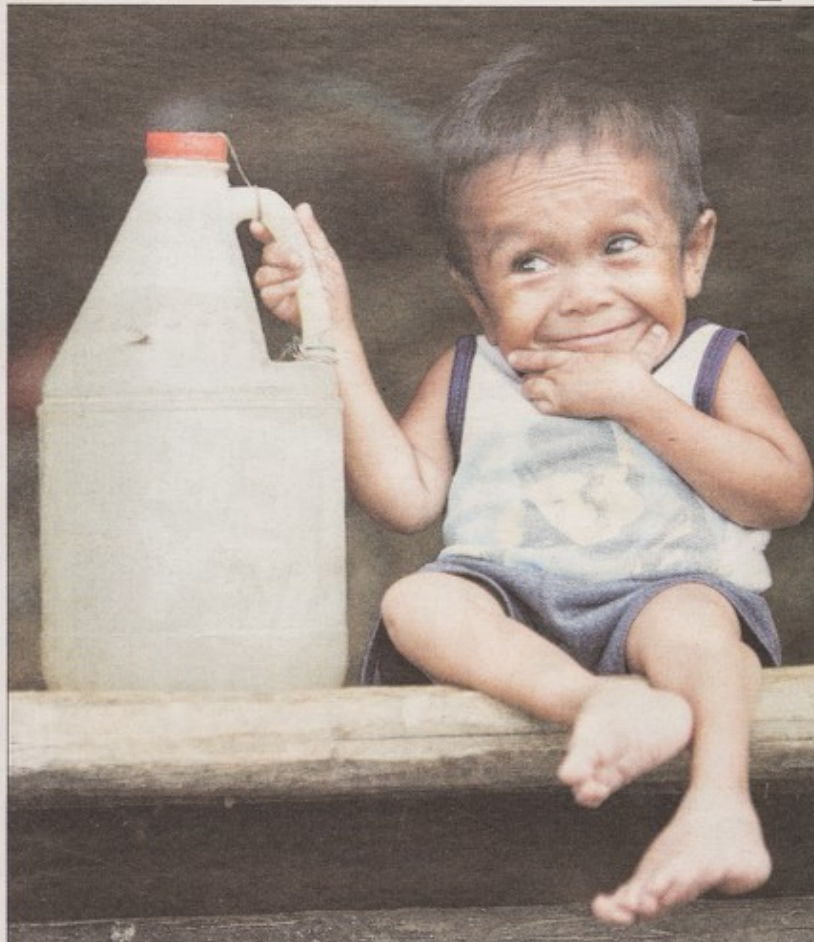
They took him back when he was 12 but the doctors' only advice was to take more vitamins, which the family could not afford.

Their village is an hour away from the nearest town and they're 920km (570 miles) from the capital Manila. Junrey's father, **Reynaldo**, 37, works as a blacksmith and is home only at weekends.

Present record holder **Mr Magar**, who was born in 1992 in the Baglung district of Nepal, started to walk only at the age of eight and he stopped growing at 11.



Current holder: **Khagendra Thapa Magar**



Lot of bottle: **Junrey Balawing** celebrates his 18th birthday in June Pictures: BBC/Corbis Media

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Ripper fails in sentence plea

YORKSHIRE
Ripper Peter Sutcliffe yesterday failed in his attempt to challenge an order that he must never be released. Sutcliffe (pictured) asked the Court of Appeal to let him take the case to the Supreme Court but was turned down. He was jailed in 1981 for murdering 13 women and attempting to kill seven others.



Top rail bosses denied bonuses

NINE top bosses at Network Rail will not be paid annual bonuses this year, it was

announced yesterday. The move follows a shake-up in performance-related pay by the rail maintenance company. NR said it was working on a 'radically different approach to incentivisation' after top executives received more than £2million in bonuses last year. TSSA union leader Gerry Doherty said the decision showed NR was 'starting to live and operate in the real world'.

Cancer drugs 'not for NHS'

A HEALTH watchdog said yesterday two drugs to treat cancer of the lung and bladder should not be approved for use on the NHS. The National Institute for Health and Clinical Excellence announced it would not recommend Tarceva, used



for non-small-cell lung cancer, and Javlor, a treatment for advanced bladder cancer. The watchdog was concerned

about claims of the drugs' effectiveness. Its guidance is in only a draft form at present and will go out to consultation.

Slate mine boss dies in air crash

A TOURIST attraction owner has died after his helicopter crashed in the Lake District. The body of Mark Weir, 45, was found in the wreckage yesterday near Honister Slate Mine in Keswick. He was reported missing on Tuesday. Mr Weir (pictured) had turned the abandoned mine into a popular visitor attraction with 30 staff.



'significant' cut in the number of ministers and aides, MPs claimed yesterday. Many ministers were engaged in tasks better carried out by officials, while parliamentary aides performed 'few functions of real value', the public administration committee said. Wage bills also needed to be reduced at a time of severe public spending cuts, it added.

and finally...

A CAT with no eyes has been named after 'Meow-town' star Stevie Wonder. The kitten was given the same name as the music star after being taken to Rushden Persian Rescue, in Northamptonshire. 'She has a way of looking into the air which reminds everyone of him,' said founder Patsy Smith.

Call for number of MPs to be cut

DAVID CAMERON'S Big Society should be judged a failure if it does not result in a

Petrol prices at £6 a gallon for first time

THE average cost of petrol has hit £6 a gallon for the first time in British history, the AA said yesterday.

A litre is now 132.12p – up 6.93p since the start of the year and 1.68p in a week, according to the organisation.

Diesel prices have also reached an all-time high, with a litre costing 137.92p.

There are fears that worse is yet to come as oil prices surge because of instability in the Middle East.

'This £6 a gallon is not simply another milestone along the road to higher fuel prices,' said AA president Edmund King.

'It marks the point at which the wheels start to come off mobility in 21st-century UK.'

A family of four with two petrol cars now pays about £280 to fill up the vehicles in a month. That is a rise of nearly £40 compared with March last year, when a litre of petrol cost 114.30p and diesel was 115.31p.

'Lower-income drivers, poorer rural residents, volunteer drivers and youngsters looking to their first jobs are some

By **Hayden Smith**

of the vulnerable groups struggling to stay on the road,' Mr King added.

'Middle East troubles have brought matters to a head but the writing has been on the wall for months and only now are the government and business analysts taking notice.'

He urged ministers to 'act urgently' to cut high fuel duty and VAT.

'High prices are already leaving casualties among drivers, consumers and business,' Mr King said.

The RAC called on chancellor George Osborne to abandon his proposed rise in fuel duty of 1p plus inflation in the Budget on March 23.

Mr Osborne has hinted that he might drop the plan.

Shadow treasury minister Kerry McCarthy said: 'George Osborne needs to stop dithering and act now.'

'He should help hard-pressed motorists this week by listening to Labour and immediately reversing the Tory VAT rise on fuel.'

Hague rips into Iran for arming Taliban

WILLIAM HAGUE has condemned Iran for supplying arms to the Taliban in Afghanistan. The foreign secretary (pictured) said Tehran's behaviour was 'completely unacceptable' after British Special Forces uncovered the weapons cache in southern Nimruz Province last month. 'I call on Iran to act in the interests of a stable and secure region,' Mr Hague added. He said there was 'no doubt' the weapons, which

included 48 rockets and 1,000 rounds of ammunition, had originated in Iran. The Taliban have not had rockets of this range and capability since 2007, when they were using old Soviet weaponry, an MoD insider said. ■ A soldier from 1st Battalion The Royal Irish Regiment has died in Helmand Province, Afghanistan. He was killed by a roadside bomb.



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