

IN BRIEF



The many faces of Juliet in Pirelli's 2020 calendar

VERONA

Actors Claire Foy, Emma Watson and Yara Shahidi are the faces of Juliet in the 2020 Pirelli calendar, giving a nod to Shakespeare for the just-released 47th edition. Photographed by Italian photographer Paolo Roversi, the "Looking for Juliet" calendar also features Whoopi Goldberg. AFP



Billie Eilish to receive Apple Music Award

LOS ANGELES

Billie Eilish will be the first recipient of the Apple Music Award for global artist of the year, one of three honours for the pop singer. Apple announced that Eilish's *When We All Fall Asleep, Where Do We Go?* has been named album of the year. Eilish and her brother Finneas will also receive songwriter of the year honours. AP



Rare Gauguin fetches €9.5 mn at auction

PARIS

A rare canvas by French artist Paul Gauguin from his time in Tahiti fetched €9.5 million in Paris on Tuesday, nearly twice its estimated value, the auction house said. It is one of the few paintings from the post-impressionist's Tahiti period that are still in private hands. AFP



Baby Yoda causes social media meltdown

LOS ANGELES

Baby Yoda may stand only a few inches tall, communicating with high-pitched squeaks and mischievous gestures, but the adorable creature has loomed large online, causing a global social media meltdown. The wide-eyed tyke was unveiled recently in the premiere of Disney's Star Wars series *The Mandalorian*. AFP

When elephant mothers worry

Higher stress observed among jumbo herds that had many calves and few adults

SHIV SAHAY SINGH
KOLKATA

Stress in adult female Asian elephants is directly proportional to the number of calves and inversely proportional to the number of adult females in a herd, reveals a study by scientists from the Indian Institute of Science, Bengaluru.

The study states that physiological stress on female elephants is significantly influenced by the number of calves and adult females present in the herd, seasonality, and lactational status.

Sanjeeta Sharma Pokharel, co-author of the paper, said, "With a higher number of calves, there's greater danger of predation, so female elephants have to be more vigilant, whereas a higher number of female elephants in a herd may mean better social bonds, as the presence of experienced adult females or the matriarch results in more effective competitive and defence behaviours to perceived threats." The other authors of the paper include Polani



Sharing duties: Social structure plays a crucial role in the welfare of elephant herds. ■SANJEETA SHARMA POKHAREL

B. Seshagiri from the Department of Molecular Reproduction and Developmental Genetics, IISc, Bengaluru, and biologist Raman Sukumar.

Hormone tracking

The scientists recorded stress in female elephants by measuring their faecal glucocorticoid metabolite (fGCM) concentrations. Glucocorticoids are hormones secreted by mammals during periods of stress.

A total of 145 fresh faecal samples were collected from 123 identified adult female

elephants inhabiting the Bandipur and Nagarhole National Parks in south India, between the years 2013 and 2015. "fGCM levels were negatively correlated with the number of adult females (herd size) and positively correlated with the number of calves in a herd and the active lactational status of an adult female. fGCM levels of adult female elephants were higher during the dry season (February to May) than the wet season (August to December)," the study said.

Another interesting observation made in the study was that the levels of fGCM were higher in lactating females than in non-lactating females. "Such patterns could be a result of exposure to the high nutritional demands during lactogenesis and to predation threats to the suckling calves of lactating females," the paper states.

Ms. Sharma Pokharel said that the findings of the study "highlight the importance of maintaining the social structure of elephants in the wild to avoid detrimental effects on their physiological health".

Insights from such assessments could be used to evaluate the stress in elephants that are involved in direct conflict with humans to take steps for mitigating conflicts, she added. "Management of elephant-human conflicts, such as through selective capture of elephants from herds or splitting herds through chase, could potentially increase stress levels directly as well as through disruption in the social structure of the herd," the paper states.



Winners all: Tai Shani, Lawrence Abu Hamdan, Helen Cammock and Oscar Murillo. ■AP

ing ovation at the ceremony in Margate, a British seaside town that is home to Turner Contemporary, the museum hosting the prize's annual exhibition.

Ms. Cammock read a speech from the stage on behalf of all four artists, saying they felt their work – which involves collaborating with other artists and members of the public – was "incompatible with the competition format, whose tendency is to divide and individualise."

"The issues we each deal with are as inseparable as climate chaos is with capitalism," she added, saying the gesture to accept the prize together, an idea generated by the artists, was also an important statement.

The jury "rapidly, unanimously" agreed to the artists' request, feeling it reflected their work. The group will share the prize fund of £40,000. NY TIMES

Film on Bikram Choudhury caught in copyright row

Material used without consent, says yoga college

NAMRATA JOSHI
MUMBAI

Bikram: Yogi, Guru, Predator, the critically acclaimed documentary that spotlights rape and sexual harassment charges against controversial yoga guru Bikram Choudhury, has landed in a copyright row.

Kolkata-based Ghosh's Yoga College (GYC), yoga expert and GYC ambassador Ida Pajunen and Jerome Arm-



Bikram Choudhury. ■GETTY IMAGES

strong, the author of the book *Calcutta Yoga: Buddha Bose and the Yoga Family of Bishnu Ghosh and Yogananda*, have expressed concern

about some images and content having been used in the film without permission and due credit "in a manner that amounts to copyright infringement".

Counched in controversy

Meanwhile, Choudhury, who left the U.S. and faces an arrest warrant issued by a Los Angeles judge for non-payment of about \$7 million in compensation and punitive damages in a civil suit that he lost, is likely to lead a yogacum-sightseeing package tour titled 'Bikram's Legacy Tour of India 2020' in January.

The documentary on the fugitive yogi premiered at the Toronto International Film Festival in September, and became available on Netflix on November 20.

In a demand letter dated November 29 (a copy of which is with *The Hindu*) to Thomas Benski, CEO and founder of producer Pulse Films, patents and trademark attorney Martha Engel, writing on behalf of GYC, Pajunen and Armstrong, asserted that an attribution to the content from their materials was not to be found anywhere in the film.

The *Yoga Cure* pamphlet,

that GYC has rights to, "appears to be copied in its entirety at about 70:09 [minutes] in the Bikram film", Engel stated in the letter. The pamphlet was written in 1961 by Bishnu Charan Ghosh, the founder of the school and Choudhury's hatha yoga guru. GYC is currently owned and operated by Shantanu Mitra and his wife Muktamala Ghosh, who is the daughter of Bishwanath, the only surviving son of Bishnu Ghosh.

"Nowhere in the film, including its credits, is there any acknowledgement or attestation provided of the source and ownership of these images," Engel wrote. Additionally, several images throughout the film appear to be taken directly from Armstrong's book. In addition to the images, there are key historical facts in the Bikram film from research found only in the *Calcutta Yoga* book; however, no attribution to the book or to Armstrong is found anywhere in the film, the attorney wrote.

E-mails seeking comment from Pulse Films, filmmaker Orner, producer Anthony and Netflix did not receive a response.

Sand cars draw crowds at festival

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE
MIAMI

On Miami Beach, more than 60 cars sculpted out of sand are drawing attention at this year's Art Basel international festival, but the aim of their creator is as much about raising awareness of climate change as tickling art lovers' palates.

The sand cars, in traffic jam formation, were created by 46-year-old Argentine sculptor Leandro Erlich.

A wild hunt for food crop genes

Scientists seek to bolster defences against climate change

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE
PARIS

Scientists have been on a global search for the wild relatives of our food crops, hoping to bolster their defences against disease and climate change, a study said.

Humans have domesticated wild plants for some 10,000 years to provide food but in doing so they have bred out many of their natural defences, leaving them –

and us – potentially exposed. "We live in an interdependent world. No single country or region harbours all of the diversity that we need," said Chris Cockel, coordinator of the Crop Wild Relatives project at the Kew Gardens Millennium Seed Bank, which has so far distributed nearly 3,300 samples of 165 species.

"A wild relative of one of these crops, in the Ameri-

cas, Africa or Asia, could be the source of say, pest resistance, which can benefit all of us in the future," Mr. Cockel said in the report.

By going back to the original source plants of some 28 foods – for example, of rice, potatoes, oats, groundnuts – researchers collected as wide a variety of seeds as possible in 25 countries to fill in the gaps in existing gene banks.

Exploring Kolkata's southern flavour

A new book pays tribute to the Tamils who made the city their home

INDRANI DUTTA
KOLKATA

It's no secret that until a few years ago, Bengalis referred to a certain pocket of the city as "mini Madras", the moniker for the hub of people from the south of the Vindhyas who had made the city their home.

What is less known is that among them were people of eminence like physicist C.V. Raman, freedom fighter C. Rajagopalachari, former chairman of the Steel Authority of India S. Samarapungavan and doctor V.R. Ramanan. It is also not common knowledge that invasions by the Cholas and the western Chalukya empire led to the decline of the Pala dynasty in Bengal, paving the way for the arrival of ethnic people from Karnataka to this region as far back as the 11th century.

Weaving a narrative around the early known Tamil connections with Bengal, and on Tamils who have served the society or the State over short or long stays, S. S. Kumar has written a book on their 1,000-year-old history titled *Tamils of Bengal*.

The author, Srinivasan Sampath Kumar, has been living in Kolkata for over 60 years and now divides his



Activity hub: Visitors to a cafe at the Calcutta South India Club that was started in 1926. ■RAJEEV BHATT

time between writing and photography. He is a member of the Supreme Court Bar Association and has headed the Council for Leather Exports. He was conferred a knighthood by the Italian government in 2006.

The return of Englishmen to their homeland after Independence, the author says, created a void for secretaries, stenographers and typists with good knowledge of English. Erstwhile Calcutta then became a preferred destination for many south Indians, who joined in entry-level posts and rose to top positions through their hard work and loyalty.

First central Calcutta, and then the area near the Lake

Market in south Kolkata, reclaimed from swamps, slowly became the hub of all activity by the south, of the south and for the south, complete with iconic names like Udupi Home, Murugan Lodge and Komala Vilas. A store nearby sold freshly ground coffee powder while the Rasika Ranjana Sabha organised Carnatic music and dance programmes.

The South India Club provided facilities for board games like bridge and carrom. There are also the Sri Ramar temple, the Murugan temple, the Ayappa temple and the Guruvayur temple here.

In his foreword to the 160-page book, former Chief Justice of Calcutta and Bombay

High Court Chittatosh Mookerjee recalls how his grandfather, Sir Asutosh, had persuaded C.V. Raman to join the post-graduate department of teaching and research at Calcutta University, after which he began his research at the Indian Association of Cultivation of Science and went on to be awarded the Nobel Prize in Physics in 1930.

According to Mr. Kumar, the recorded migration of Tamils to Bengal, which took place in the mid-17th century, began as temple priests to the relatively obscure Panchkot kingdom in Purulia. There was no recorded migration in the intervening period, till the Bengal Nagpur Railway was founded. A reverse migration was triggered by the ultra-Left movement of the 1970s. Peace-loving Tamils, mostly confined to their own society, perhaps could not bear the *gheraos*, sieges and *hartals*. Their number has now dwindled to around 10,000, far lower than its peak of 2 lakh.

The ubiquitous *curry patta*, whose aroma would waft through the vegetable markets of the south, and the yellow and orange *kana-kambaram* flower garlands are now becoming hard to find.

FRONTLINE
LEADING THE DEBATE SINCE 1984



MAHA SHOCK

The BJP's attempts to retain power in Maharashtra by hook or by crook backfire and galvanise the opposition to forge an unlikely alliance and form the government.



AN ALASKAN ADVENTURE

The Salmon Run is around the corner and the grizzly bears can't wait to grab their share! A picture feature.



THE SIEGE OF JNU

The fee hike in JNU compels a sharp look at higher education, the race for its commodification that leaves behind the poor and the underprivileged, even as communalism finds a new pitch.



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MAHA JOLT

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