

Hyderabad basks in continued respite from sweltering heat as rains loom ahead

Hyderabad: Hyderabad continues to savour a break from the blistering temperatures, with rainfall forecast for upcoming days. The India Meteorological Department – Hyderabad has issued a yellow alert for thunderstorms and rains across the city for the next four days. “Thunderstorm accompanied with lightning and gusty winds (40-50 kmph) very likely to occur at isolated places in Rangareddy, Hyderabad, Medchal Malkajigiri, Vikarabad, Sangareddy, Medak, Mahabubnagar, Nagarkurnool, Wanaparthy, Narayanpet, Jogulamba Gadwal, Komaram Bheem Asifabad, Mancherial, Peddapalli, Jayashankar Bhupalapally, Mulugu, Bhadradri Kothagudem, Khammam, Nalgonda, Suryapet, Mahabubabad, Warangal, Hanamkonda, Jangaon, and Yadadri Bhuvangiri districts of Telangana,” stated the IMD forecast for Thursday. On Sunday, Hyderabad registered a temperature of 36.8 degrees Celsius. While certain isolated areas like Sangareddy, Vikarabad, Kamareddy, Medak, and Nagarkurnool saw temperatures ranging between 31 and 35 degrees Celsius, approximately half of Telangana’s districts experienced temperatures ranging from 40 to 42 degrees Celsius. Dharmapuri in Jagtial recorded the highest temperature at 42.3 degrees Celsius.



Publicity material on dengue fever released in Mancherial



Mancherial: Additional Collector (Revenue) Sabhavat Motilal said that efforts were being made to prevent the spread of dengue fever. He along with District Medical and Health Officer Dr Anitha unveiled wall posters, pamphlets and flex posters meant for creating awareness among the public over the disease here on Wednesday. Speaking on the occasion, Motilal said that the publicity material was sent to primary health centres to raise understanding of the public over preventive measures, causes of spread and treatment. He stated that one should not be panicked if diagnosed with the disease, a viral infection spreads from mosquitoes to people. The additional collector further said that most common symptoms of the fever include high fever, headache, body aches, nausea and rash. He advised those who were diagnosed by the disease to visit nearby PHCs or government run hospitals to get treatment. He told the public not to keep premises tidy and to avoid stagnation of water which would give rise to inhibition of mosquitoes.

Showing solidarity with Palestinian counterpart, Indian Farmers Union demands end of war against children in Palestine



Chandigarh (JAG MOHAN THAKEN), May 15: Expressing solidarity with Palestinian Farmers Union, Samyukta Kisan Morcha (SKM), a largest umbrella of Indian farmers' unions, has expressed its grief and fury on the massacre of innocent children in Palestine. A release by SKM leaders states that the leaders of Palestinian Farmers Union in Qalqilya Governorate have appealed to farmers across the world to raise their voice for a ceasefire, ending the war especially on children of both Palestine and Israel. SKM claims that the Union has released video clips of brutal attacks on children- heartbreaking and stirring the conscience of the people all over the world.

SKM has appealed to end the war against children in Palestine and urged the government of India to do everything possible for a ceasefire. In a press release issued on Tuesday, SKM leaders have shown their concern that one child killed or severely injured every ten minutes in Gaza. The farmers' organisation has alleged that more than 14000 children have

been butchered by Israel since 7th October 2023. SKM urged that people world over must rally against US Imperialism and the Netanyahu Government of Israel and appealed to all the Political Parties to put pressure on the Government of India to unite all world nations for peace and tranquillity.

The farmers' umbrella has also appealed to all sections of the people to join the solidarity movement world over for Free Palestine and world peace. The release divulged that as per the UN Children's Fund (UNICEF), the number of children killed in the besieged Gaza strip since October 7, 2023 has surpassed 14000. UNICEF also has requested the entire world to do something for a ceasefire. The Israel attack has become 'a war against children' and one child is being killed or severely injured every ten minutes in Gaza.

Sharing the release with our representative, SKM leader and National Vice-President of All India Kisan Sabha (AIKS),

Dr. Inderjeet Singh quotes the statement that there were never such massacres of children by any army in the history of the world. The Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and the state army must be prosecuted as war criminals for such a height of cruelty. This war is a crime against humanity. The US Imperialism and other Imperialist countries including UK, France and Germany are extending support to the Netanyahu Government of Israel to wreak havoc on Palestinians thus exposing the barbaric face of world capitalism. SKM appeals to the people in India and all over the world to rally against US Imperialism and Zionist Netanyahu Government of Israel.

The Indian Farmers' union alleges that imperialist manipulations and Zionist dogma based on hate politics are the root causes of the ongoing genocide. The Jewish people have been subjected to the worst genocide in the history under the Nazi Germany led by Adolf Hitler. The modern state of Israel consisting of the Jewish

people is perpetrating the most inhuman, cruel genocide against Palestinians today is a paradox.

The successful history of the plural society of India is the answer for the genocide and the threat of Zionism based on racial superiority. SKM demands the Government of India to come out of the clutches of the USA-Israel nexus and regain its status as the voice of the developing countries never compromising on world peace and tranquillity. SKM further puts its demand to all the political parties in India to exert pressure on the State of India to play its historical and most important role for mobilizing people's opinion for world peace. SKM also appeals to all the mass and class organisations and trade unions to join hands against the Imperialist forces led by the USA that stand with Israel and veto the resolutions in the UN Security Council that demands ceasefire. SKM appeals to the people of India to rally and join the massive peace movement world over in solidarity with Palestine.

Why artist TV Santhosh's work is a search to understand history and the violence of our times

Artist TV Santhosh believes that there are almost always a number of solutions to any conflict. "My focus is on trying to understand history and the reasons behind constant wars and conflicts. At any given moment, some war is happening somewhere. It is a continuous process, like an endless chain of action and reaction, often exposing the darker side of humanity... When you look at the larger picture, you realise that there is often an alternative, a probable solution to the unrest the world is dealing with," says the Mumbai-based artist.

In the exhibition titled "History Lab and the Elegy of Visceral Incantations", organised by the Kerala Lalit Kala Akademi at Durbar Hall Art Gallery in Ernakulam, he elaborates on this line of thought, carefully presenting the realities and deliberating on the diverse scenarios. If a painting portrays a televised war, depicting how the turbulent outside world enters our drawing room through television channels, in the sculptural installation *When World Enters Your Home*, a gun is affixed onto a door with insertions signifying bullet marks. "It is a reminder to the kind of violence that is happening and stories of attacks that we confront. The metaphorical door has guns placed on both sides. The rifle on the inside is meant to protect people from an attack outside, where an AK 47 is fixed... When you look at each episode of violence individually, then there is a clear picture of the enemy. But when you look at the same event from a large humanistic point of view, the distinction between the victim and the aggressor gets blurred. In the end, it is the human beings themselves who are being victimised," says Santhosh.

The newsprint often influences texts in the cataclysmic narratives where images find manifold interpretations as Santhosh explores themes of terrorism, injustice, war and how perceptions are influenced by the media. "Our connection to the outside world is essentially through news media that exposes us to the turbulent realities and contemporary situations. The second-hand experience becomes part of our everyday experience, redefining the nature of our relationship with the outside world, bringing forth stories of violence, cries of innocent victims; but once again there is an inherent issue of who is the attacker and who is the victim — this can be approached through various angles, historical and ideological points of view and the answers will be different," says Santhosh. Trained in sculpture at Kala Bhavan, Santiniketan, the artist, who completed his MFA from Maharaja Sayajirao University in Baroda, notes that his works seek to question our understanding of our surroundings, contemplating, "Who is the real enemy?". Santhosh says, "On the one hand, it is a political question but it is also a philosophical question." If his first solo, "One hand clapping/siren", presented by Guild Art Gallery in 2003 in Mumbai featured near-monochromatic paintings, in the 2008 installation, *A Room to Pray*, he created a space to pray, with walls that appeared as a pile of bones. The centre table was symbolic of Leonardo da Vinci's *The Last Supper*. At the Grosvenor



Gallery in London in 2014, he "appropriated" images that refer to the "notion of being under attack and being wounded". "It's like as soon as India begins to recover from one attack another one happens. It happens all over: we keep inflicting wounds on society. When it heals, another wound occurs," he says, in the concept note.

Often modelled on himself, the central protagonists, who appear in his works, are usually his studio assistants. "There are

autobiographical elements but they are the main characters of the story... It is almost like what would be there in a one-act play, where the same actor enacts different roles. Several objects and props are placed around to tell stories, from skulls to rat traps and knives," says Santhosh. The practice, perhaps, also originates from his own theatre days as a student in Thrissur, when he also made political posters for street plays. "We often go back in time and restore something we did, discovering new meanings,"

adds Santhosh. His projection of the future though is rather bleak. The titular sculpture in the ongoing exhibition *History Lab IV* incorporates an "apocalyptic clock". "History has its multiple complex narratives. Many scientists, over time, have predicted that the world is not going to last forever; the end might come due to ecological reasons or man himself committing a huge crime against humanity... The clock is a metaphor for the inevitable doom and catastrophe," says Santhosh.

Audi launches two new cars under its Bold Edition in India

New Delhi: German luxury car manufacturer Audi on Friday launched two new cars under its Bold Edition — Q3 and Q3 Sportback, in India.

The Audi Q3 comes at a price of Rs 54,65,000 (ex-showroom) in five colours — Glacier White, Nano Grey, Mythos Black Navarra Blue & Pulse Orange, while the Audi Q3 Sportback is priced at Rs 55,71,000 (ex-showroom) and comes in Glacier White, Daytona Grey, Mythos Black, Progressive Red and Navarra Blue colour options. "A perfect blend of luxury, performance and versatility, both these models are now being offered with a Bold Edition

— a more exclusive and sportier variant packed with distinctive styling elements," Balbir Singh Dhillon, Head of Audi India said in a statement.

"The Bold Editions are designed for those who want to make a unique statement on the road. With limited units available, we are positive that these will be sold out in no time," he added. Audi's Black styling package for the cars features a striking black design that radiates elegance, which includes a gloss-black grille, black Audi rings in front and rear, black window surrounds, black ORVMs and black roof rails.

Powering the Q3 and the Q3



Sportback Bold edition is the 2-litre TFSI engine which produces 190hp of power and 320Nm (Newton metre) of torque.

Canon develops EOS R1 as the first flagship model for EOS R SYSTEM

New image processing system further improves AF and image quality

Canon Inc. announced today that it is currently developing the EOS R1, a full-frame mirrorless camera, as the first flagship model for the EOS R SYSTEM equipped with RF mounts and is aiming for a 2024 release. The EOS R1 is a mirrorless camera geared toward professionals that brings together Canon's cutting-edge technology and combines top-class performance with the strong durability and high reliability sought in a flagship model. This camera will dramatically improve the performance of both still images and video and meet the high requirements of professionals on the frontlines of a wide range of fields including sports, news reporting, and video production.

This camera employs the newly developed image processor DIGIC Accelerator in addition to the pre-existing processor DIGIC X. The new image processing system, composed of these processors and a new CMOS sensor, enables large volumes of data to be processed at high speeds and delivers never-before-seen advancements in Auto Focus (AF) and other functions. By combining the new image processing system and deep learning technology to an advanced degree, Canon has achieved high-speed and high-accuracy subject recognition. For example, subject tracking accuracy has been improved so

that in team sporting events where multiple subjects intersect, the target subject can continually be tracked even if another player passes directly in front of them. In addition, the AF "Action Priority" function recognizes subject movement by rapidly analyzing the subject's status. In moments during a sports game when it is difficult to predict what will happen next, this function automatically determines the player performing a certain action, such as shooting a ball, as the main subject and instantly shifts the AF frame, thereby helping to capture decisive moments of gameplay. The combination of the new image processing system and deep learning technology will help to improve image quality. Canon implements the image noise reduction function, which has been previously developed and improved as part of the software for PCs, as a camera function to further improve image quality and contribute to user creativity. Canon is working on field tests for this camera and will support capturing definitive and impactful moments at international sporting events to be held in the future. Going forward, Canon will continue to expand the EOS R SYSTEM lineup of fascinating cameras and RF lenses, thereby continuing to meet the demands of a wide range of users and contribute to the development of photography and video culture.



When Veerappan took to abduction for the first time, taking policemen hostage

However, on December 3, forest bandit Veerappan struck near the Sirumugai forest, abducting Chidambaranathan, a Deputy Superintendent of Police (DSP) at the Directorate of Vigilance and Anti-Corruption; Rajagopal, head constable, CID, Erode; and Sekar Raja, a physical training instructor at a private school in Coimbatore. Rajagopal was the DSP's brother and Raja was their relative. Perhaps, it was the first and only occasion that he abducted policemen, though he was known for attacking the men in uniform and police stations in Tamil Nadu and Karnataka. Needless to say, by the early 1990s, he became the dreaded man for his brutal murder of officials of the Forest Departments of the two States. According to an estimate, he killed 140-odd persons.

The three hostages were held in captivity for 27 days before members of the Special Task Force or STF, which was formed to nab the smuggler, rescued them from the forest in the afternoon of December 30 that year. Talking of this episode, W. I. Davaram, in his memoir Munnar to Marina: The Journey, explains why Veerappan took to abduction. He contends that it was Veerappan's "loss of revenue" from sandalwood smuggling and elephant-poaching, coupled with his "failure" to get the STF out of the forest, that made him to turn to abduction. Mr. Davaram, then STF chief and later Director-General of Police

(DGP), says that "in spite of specific warning" from the STF, the hostages went to their farmhouse near the Sirumugai forest, located between the eastern slope of the Nilgiris and the Bhavanisagar Dam. At that time, Jayalalithaa was Tamil Nadu's Chief Minister. Her administration immediately authorised Coimbatore Collector C.V. Sankar to hold negotiations with representatives of the smuggler, while Mr. Davaram and his team continued efforts to rescue the hostages. Three days after the abduction, Mr. Sankar received an audio cassette in which Veerappan made two demands — safe passage and protection for his messenger to facilitate communication with the Collector and no obstruction to food supplies for himself, his men, and the hostages. "The Collector said he had conceded both demands so that the line of communication could be maintained to know the demands of Veerappan," said a report of The Hindu on December 7, 1994. Then came the smuggler's "fantastic demands", to quote another report of this newspaper. Five days later, Veerappan made more than 10 demands. Among them were the laying down of weapons before the President of India; payment of ₹1,000 crore in compensation to the victims of police firing; protection for his group members; licence for the weapons already in their possession; a licence to run a blue metal quarry; and permission to produce a film

on his exploits. The Collector received the list of demands from Veerappan's brother Arjunan. Cabinet goes into a huddle. At one stage, DMK president M. Karunanidhi doubted the very existence of the brigand and wondered whether the government was enacting a "drama" through the episode. The Cabinet met on December 15 and discussed the demands of Veerappan. Describing the demands as "mind-boggling", Chief Secretary N. Haribhaskar, however, told journalists that "we will have to make a cautious move", considering the plight of the abductees. In his book, Mr. Davaram recalls that three parties were formed and "started from Sholurmattam near Kotagiri, 6,000 feet above the Bhavani river, made our way down the jungle slope". He writes, "It was [the then STF Commander] Sanjay Arora's party that was first sighted by Veerappan's gang which opened fire, injuring a constable. Sanjay Arora returned the fire effectively and rescued all the three hostages." At a crowded press conference in Coimbatore on December 30, Mr. Sankar and Mr. Davaram announced the end of the hostage crisis. While Veerappan and four men escaped, four other members of his gang, including Ayyandurai, the third lieutenant of the outlaw carrying ₹20 lakh on his head, were nabbed. Veerappan's brother and second-in-command Arjunan, who was then undergoing treatment in Coimbatore for a



knee injury, and the four, who surrendered to the STF, were arrested for various offences, including murder. The firearms they had in their possession had been confiscated. A word of praise from the CMBesides, "two muskets, 21 cartridges, 4 elephant tusks worth ₹2.5 lakh, and ₹18 lakh in cash were seized," Mr. Davaram writes in his book. According to a report of The Hindu on December 31, 1994, the Chief Minister conveyed her appreciation on the phone to three officers — DGP S. Sripal, Mr. Davaram and Mr. Sankar. She spurred them on in their quest to get Veerappan dead or alive.

Redmi Note 13 5G Series Surpasses 15 Million Unit Sales Worldwide, Xiaomi Unveils Big Price Drop on Series, Starting at INR 15,499

Xiaomi, the most trusted and loved smartphone brand, recorded a remarkable milestone of exceeding 15 million Redmi Note 13 Series units sold worldwide. Celebrating the massive success, Xiaomi announced a big price drop on the series and an India exclusive Redmi Note 13 Pro+ 5G World Champions Edition, in collaboration with the Argentine Football Association (AFA).

Redmi Note 13 5G Series Price Drop

Xiaomi announced the never seen before prices on the entire lineup. Now, with the Redmi Note 13 Series 5G starting at a net effective price of INR 15,499. Xiaomi aims to empower even more customers to experience the best-in-class technology that the Note series has to offer. Redmi Note 13 5G will now be available at a net effective price of INR 15,499 6GB+128GB, INR 17,499 for 8GB+256 GB and INR 19,499 for 12GB+256GB, inclusive of offers. Redmi Note 13 Pro 5G will now be available at a net effective price of INR 21,999 for 8GB+128GB, 8GB+256GB for INR 23,999 and INR 25,999 for 12GB+256GB, inclusive of offers. Redmi Note 13 Pro+ 5G will now be available at a net effective price of INR 27,999 8GB+256GB, INR 29,999 for 12GB+256GB and INR 31,999 for 12GB+512GB inclusive of offers. These will be available across Mi.com, Amazon, Flipkart, Xiaomi Home & Xiaomi Retail, inclusive of bank offers.

Redmi Note 13 Pro+ 5G World Champions Edition



Ahead of celebrating its momentous 10th anniversary in India, Xiaomi launched the Redmi Note 13 Pro+ 5G World Champions Edition, an India-exclusive creation in collaboration with the Argentine Foot-

ball Association (AFA). It is inspired by the vibrant blue and white stripes, and comes in a specially crafted collectible gift box with customized AFA edition 120 HyperCharge, USB Type-C cable, and a football-inspired sim ejector pin. Packed with top-of-the-line

features, including IP68 protection for dust and water resistance, a true 200 Megapixel camera, and a 3D Curved AMOLED display protected by Corning® Gorilla® Glass Victus®, the smartphone is available at a price of INR 34,999*.

Why was NewsClick founder Prabir Purkayastha's arrest invalidated by the top Court? | Explained

In a significant development, the Supreme Court on May 15 ordered the release of online portal NewsClick founder Prabir Purkayastha from custody after concluding that his arrest and remand under the draconian Unlawful Activities Prevention Act, 1967 (UAPA) by the Delhi Police are "invalid in the eyes of law". A Bench of Justices B.R. Gavai and Sandeep Mehta pointed out that neither Mr. Purkayastha nor his designated counsel were provided the grounds for his arrest in writing, which is "sacrosanct and cannot be breached under any situation". The ruling emphasises the need for law enforcement agencies to adhere to proper procedure and due process, especially, in stringent UAPA cases where there is a reverse burden of proof on the accused. This makes obtaining bail extremely difficult in such cases. Arguments on the 'illegality' of arrest

As per the arrest memo, Mr. Purkayastha was arrested on October 3, 2023, at 5.45 p.m. by invoking stringent UAPA provisions on the ground that he had allegedly received funds through Chinese firms to spread pro-China propaganda. Earlier on August 17, 2023, an FIR was lodged by the Delhi Police envisaging serious offences under Sections 13 (unlawful activities), 16 (terrorist act), 17 (raising

funds for terrorist acts), 18 (conspiracy), and 22(C) (offences by companies, trusts) of the UAPA, and Sections 153 A (promoting enmity between different groups) and 120B (criminal conspiracy) of the Indian Penal Code, 1860 (IPC).

During the proceedings, senior advocate Kapil Sibal, appearing on behalf of Mr. Purkayastha, contended that the FIR was neither made available in the public domain nor was a copy supplied to him until his arrest and remand in violation of the fundamental right guaranteed under Article 22(1) of the Constitution. Further, the Court was apprised that on the morning of October 4, 2023, Mr. Purkayastha was produced before the remand judge at his residence without intimating his designated lawyer. He was instead represented by a legal aid lawyer whom he had never engaged before. Mr. Purkayastha's lawyer was finally informed about the remand proceedings at 7.07 a.m. through a WhatsApp message — after the remand order granting 7 days of police custody had already been passed.

Thus, it was argued that the grounds of arrest were neither informed to the NewsClick founder orally nor in writing in violation of the Supreme Court's verdict in Pankaj Bansal v. Union of India and Oth-

ers (2023). The top Court had categorically held that to give effect to constitutional safeguards, "it would be necessary, henceforth, that a copy of such written grounds of arrest is furnished to the arrested person as a matter of course and without exception". On the other hand, Additional Solicitor-General S.V. Raju, appearing for the Delhi Police, pointed out that the ratio of Pankaj Bansal applied only to money laundering cases under the Prevention of Money Laundering Act, 2002, (PMLA), and not those under the UAPA. The law officer argued that the UAPA required the police to only "inform" the accused of the reasons for arrest without providing them in writing to him. Applicable laws and judicial precedents Mr. Purkayastha's case is based on the constitutional safeguard provided under Article 22(1) of the Constitution, which dictates that no person who is arrested can be detained in custody without being promptly informed of the grounds for their arrest. It further stipulates that an arrested person cannot be denied "the right to consult, and to be defended by, a legal practitioner of his choice". Notably, both the PMLA as well as the UAPA contain similar provisions, which mandate the intimation of the grounds of arrest to an accused. Under Section 19 of the PMLA, the Enforcement Directorate (ED) officer should

not only have material with him giving him "reasons to believe" that a person is guilty of an offence under the law but such reasons should also be "recorded in writing before effecting arrest of any person". Further, these written grounds of arrest must be communicated to the accused for a valid arrest to take place. This, according to the Supreme Court's verdict in Pankaj Bansal, affords an opportunity to the arrested person to prove before a trial Court that there are grounds to believe that he/she is not guilty of such offence, to avail the relief of bail. Similarly, Sections 43A and 43B of the UAPA mandate the furnishing of the grounds of arrest to an accused at the earliest. Mr. Sibal had pointed out that the language of both the statutory provisions is *pari materia* (upon the same subject matter) and thus the law laid down in Pankaj Bansal squarely covers Mr. Purkayastha's case. In a verdict delivered on October 13, 2023, Justice Tushar Rao Gedela of the Delhi High Court agreed with the Delhi police that the ratio of Pankaj Bansal would not apply to the facts of Mr. Purkayastha's case. He underscored that the verdict in Pankaj Bansal was delivered purely in relation to PMLA provisions and that "by any stretch of imagination, be made applicable, *mutatis mutandis*, to the cases arising under UAPA".

What is needed is a bypass and not a flyover, say experts

Less than 100 metres wide at many stretches, can the Bannerghatta National Park (BNP) accommodate a massive six-lane flyover without posing a severe threat to its wildlife and ecosystem? Its buffer zone already shrunk, can the endangered green space be protected from the latest onslaught by exploring alternative alignments to the proposed Satellite Township Ring Road (STRR)? Planned to be built on the 3.85km stretch of the existing road linking Bannerghatta and Jigani Road, the flyover project has unleashed a storm of concern among environmentalists and wildlife conservationists. The National Highways Authority of India (NHAI) says it will install effective noise barriers and restrict construction hours. But will these be enough to address the grave risks posed both in the short and long terms?

Severe threat of fragmentation Faced with very high man-animal conflict and encroachments, BNP is already reeling under severe threats of fragmentation, reminds conservationists. "The Park has a unique distinction of hosting large mammals including the tiger, elephant, gaur, dholes and others right at the edge of a metropolis. Though it is connected to Cauvery Wildlife Sanctuary in Karnataka and Tamil Nadu, the national park is a very linear protected area with several parts of the forest area already used for tourism, zoo and other activities," notes conservation biologist Sanjay Gubbi. This mandates extremely effective mitigation measures. "It needs to be ensured that the measures are planned and designed based on scientific studies and not on an ad-hoc basis. It should involve a good understanding of wildlife movement patterns especially that of elephants," he points out. But the flyover project runs counter to this rationale. Sanjay explains, "This new road project will reduce the habitat available for elephants and increase the conflict in the long run as there are nearly 100 elephants that use the landscape. For sustainable development we really need to zone our landscapes and earmark where wildlife gets priority and where development gets importance."

Strategically located on the Northern side of Mysore Elephant Reserve, Bannerghatta park also serves as a critical link for the migration of elephants from the Cauvery Wildlife Sanctuary in Krishnagiri and the Hosur Forest division in Tamilnadu. Geographically, the park is also a key watershed for streams such as Rayathmala Hole, Muthyala Madu halla, Antaragange Hole and rivers Arkavathi and Suvarnamukhi. In March 2020, the Centre had reduced the eco-sensitive zone (ESZ) around BNP by 100 sqkm. The zone area shrank to 168.84 sqkm from 268.9 sqkm, earmarked by a 2016 notification. Commercial mining, stone quarrying and setting up of crushing units are effectively banned within the ESZ.

By 2008 itself, an Indian Institute of Science (IISc) Centre for Ecological Sci-

ences (CES) study had found about 120 human settlements within five kilometres km from the BNP boundary and five human settlements within BNP. Many of the settlements formed thereafter were through encroachments of forest lands. Tribes dominate the settlements located close to the park boundary in the South-East, and South-West and depend on agriculture and livestock rearing for livelihood.

The study's projected land use of 2027 depicted the loss of forest cover from 41.38 to 35.59% and an increase in urban area from 4.49 to 9.62 % due to various layouts in the periphery. Barren land area showed a reduction from 4.17 to 3.36 % by conversion of open spaces to urban. "The forest cover present in southern parts represents minimal disturbances (connected to Tali reserve forest and Cauvery wildlife sanctuary) while the Northern portion shows more transitions," the study noted. In a clear warning, the study said, "The uncontrolled and unplanned growth of greater Bangalore would have an irreversible impact on forests of BNP. The regions of Koli Farm gate, Batterayana Doddi village, Weavers colony, Kalkere region and Bannerghatta village, Anekal road represents higher loss in forest cover due to new paved surfaces created in the form of townships. The barren lands and fallow lands near to state highways and major roads were converted as layouts resulting in creating new agriculture areas in gomala and other fragmented forests." "The flyover project will aggravate the human-animal conflict. We are shrinking their habitat and making them more and more vulnerable. That is why we need to be really careful about this project. Leopards, for instance, keep straying into settlements. Then people become more reactive and start killing, or demand like in Wayanad to start culling. It



is so unrealistic," says Dr. T.V. Ramachandra, who anchored the study along with his team. Electric fence made of railway barricades serves as the boundary of the Bannerghatta National Park and separates it from the adjoining Hakki Pikki Colony. Electric fence made of railway barricades serves as the boundary of the Bannerghatta National Park and separates it from the adjoining Hakki Pikki Colony. | Photo Credit: BHAGYA PRAKASH KNO scientific basis

Alternatives to the road through the park are indeed possible. But, as he points out, "We don't have a scientific basis in designing or formulating the project. We implement it because large amounts of money are involved." Flyover projects do exist in other forested areas. But there is a difference here, as Sanjay reiterates. "The experience in other forests has been mixed. When highways are made in forests that are vast in size, then a flyover may be the only solution. However, Bannerghatta is a very narrow stretch of forest. That is the concern. Anything like

this is going to affect the animals." Dr. Ramachandra draws attention to other problems related to vehicular emissions. "During the construction stage too, there will be impact while erecting pillars and more. Besides, there are issues linked to climate change. The Park acts as a carbon sink for Bengaluru. More than 1,200 deciduous trees will be lost and there are many medicinal plants too," he explains. An elevated flyover inside the park will effectively bypass villages that are inside Bannerghatta that rely on road connectivity, says Sanjay. "I don't know how they will address this by providing connectivity. That is something which only the Detailed Project Report (DPR) can tell us." The State Wildlife Board has already cleared the project. Questions are now being raised whether it explored other alternatives. As an insider indicates, the proposals are usually not circulated in advance to the members to help them understand and deliberate on it. "Agenda is given in the meeting, so nobody has a clue about anything," the insider says, preferring anonymity.

Jeff Bezos overtakes Elon Musk as world's richest person



New Delhi: Amazon founder Jeff Bezos has overtaken Tesla and SpaceX CEO, Elon Musk, as the richest person in the world, as per the Bloomberg Billionaires Index. As per the latest figures, the Amazon founder's net worth is \$200 billion, while Musk's net worth is at \$198 billion. Bernard Arnault is ranked third with a net worth of \$197 billion. Elon Musk's net worth is down \$31.3 billion in the last year while Bezos net worth is up \$23.4 billion. Bezos owns about 9 per cent of Amazon, the world's largest online retailer, according to a February 2024 filing, as per the Bloomberg Billionaires Index. He also owns space exploration company Blue Origin, which is included at Bloomberg's calculation of investment cost.

Big Swedish study hints at link between bowel disease, infant diet

Inflammatory Bowel Disease (IBD) describes disorders where the lining of the digestive tract is inflamed. There are two types of IBD disorders: ulcerative colitis, where the large intestine and the rectum are prone to inflammation and sores, and Crohn's disease, which usually affects the small intestine. Researchers have reported diet, age, family history, cigarette smoking, and certain medications, among other factors, as being responsible for causing or worsening IBD. They have also said changing diet patterns can help explain changing patterns of the prevalence of IBD. For example, a 2023 study in *The Lancet* attributed a higher incidence of IBD in rural Telangana to the greater availability and consumption of processed foods. More recently, a study published in the journal *Gut* in January reported that the diet of infants as young as a year old could affect their chances of developing IBD in future. Researchers behind the study followed the dietary habits of more than 80,000 children through adolescence in Norway and Sweden as they consumed plenty of vegetables and fish in the first year of life, and were associated with a lower future risk of developing IBD. Consuming sugar-sweetened beverages in this time was associated with a higher risk of IBD, they reported. According to their analysis, at three years of age, no dietary factor other than fish intake was associated with IBD risk. The researchers suspect the developing gut microbiome may be at the heart of the apparent age-dependent relationship of dietary intake and IBD. The gut microbiome comprises a vast number and types of microorganisms that live in the human gut. According to the authors of the *Gut* paper, it changes significantly through the first year and stabilises by the time the infant is two to three years old. Ashwin Ananthakrishnan, a gastroenterologist at the Massachusetts General Hospital, Boston, suggested in an article accompanying the paper that infants may benefit from a "preventive" diet that includes "adequate dietary fibre, particularly from fruit and vegetables", "intake of fish", a minimal amount of sugar-sweetened beverages, and a preference of "fresh over processed and ultra-processed foods and snacks". The authors of the *Gut* paper, led by doctoral student Annie Guo from the University of Gothenburg, Sweden, tracked participants from two large-scale databases: All Babies in Southeast Sweden (ABIS) and Norwegian Mother, Father and Child Cohort (MoBa). Both databases use questionnaires to document a child's upbringing and lifestyle, including diets. ABIS records data from children born in southeast Sweden from October 1997 to October 1999. MoBa recruited pregnant women throughout Norway from 1999 to 2008. Together, the researchers had a cohort of 81,280 children, of which roughly half were female. They found an IBD incidence rate of 32 per 100,000 person-years in the ABIS database and 22 per 100,000 person-years in



the MoBa database. (If 1,000 people participated in a study for one year, the study is said to have 1,000 person-years of data.) To test whether an early-life diet correlated with later incidence of IBD, the authors collated data of the children's dietary habits at 1-1.5 years and 2.5-3 years of age from the two databases. They assigned a score to the diet quality, and recorded the frequency of intake of nine food categories: dairy, fish, fruits, grains, meat, sugar-dense and fat-dense food, sugar-sweetened beverages, and vegetables. A diet rich in fruits, vegetables, fish, and eggs was seen to comprise "healthy food groups". A diet had "unhealthy foods" if it was rich in "salty snacks and sweet snacks". In their analyses, the researchers used a statistical test to check whether a child's early-life dietary intake could also predict later IBD risk. The analysis was adjusted to account for several factors implicated in the past as causes of IBD, including parental history of IBD, early-life antibiotic exposure, and intake of formula food in the first year. The effect of fish

The researchers also excluded from their final analysis data from children who were diagnosed with IBD at less than six years of age because such a case "often constitutes a highly genetically determined subtype of IBD", they wrote in their paper. The authors found that children who had a high intake of fish and vegetables at one year of age were at lower risk of developing IBD while those who had a higher intake of sugar-sweetened beverages at the same age were at higher risk. At three years, fish intake was the only dietary predictor of IBD: a high intake correlated with

a lower risk. The authors speculate, "The content of poly-unsaturated fatty acids or vitamin D in fish may be of special importance for IBD." This is because, they add, previous studies on adults have observed that higher intake of PUFAs and Vitamin D are associated with lower risk of ulcerative colitis and Crohn's disease respectively. According to the authors, the study's strength lies in being the first to "prospectively investigate the association between early-life diet quality and intake frequency of specific food groups and later IBD risk". Not readily generalisable that said, Ms. Guo, the lead author, told this reporter that "since diet and other lifestyle habits may be strongly influenced by factors such as country of living and cultural differences, our findings should be replicated in other settings before we can generalise the results to other parts of the world." In their paper, the team added that since the study's sample came from two high-income countries, the results may not be readily generalisable to low- and middle-income countries. Researchers know the composition of the gut microbiome composition – an imbalance of which is implicated in IBD – varies between different geographical locations and between different ethnic groups in the same area. However, Sylvia Karpagam, a public health doctor and researcher, told this reporter that instead of exactly replicating Guo et al.'s study as is, such studies in India must also account for nutritional deficiencies and dormant infections that participants aren't regularly screened for. For example, activist groups have raised con-

cerns about the Indian government's distribution of iron-fortified rice that has allegedly exacerbated complications from undiagnosed sickle-cell anaemia, thalassaemia, and dormant tuberculosis in tribal populations in Chhattisgarh and Jharkhand. Dr. Karpagam also suggested studies on IBD focus not on diet alone but on "multiple factors that interplay with and aggravate each other". For example, she mentioned that the probability of a child developing IBD later in their life may be the result of their dietary intake and of their socioeconomic status, which could affect their diet and exposure to toxins, duration of breastfeeding, and their likelihood of consuming junk foods. "These confounding variables are not taken into account and one variable gets highlighted," she said. A 'preventive' diet for infants? Dr. Ananthakrishnan also wrote in his editorial that the study didn't account for additives and emulsifiers common in baby foods. These compounds have been implicated in accelerating IBD by changing the composition of the gut microbiome. Dr. Karpagam said "individual foods cannot be blanket-classified as 'detrimental' or 'beneficial' in the context of IBD." For example, she said, "some people with IBD show improvement with whole milk" while others deteriorate. Fruits and vegetables are high in dietary fibre and a high-fibre diet is implicated in IBD development and aggravation, she added. A 2021 review found that while several studies demonstrate the benefit of high-fibre diets for people with IBD, other studies show "fibre intake prior to developing IBD [to be] linked to risk of disease"

When myth and music make it to the movies

At various points in the documentary series *The Beatles: Get Back*, *The Beatles*, also known as the Fab Four, are seen sitting in perfect harmony, wearing their iconic mop-top hairdos and taking on reporters. One reporter asks George Harrison: "George, do you think all this success is a one-night stand?" He responds, "I mean, it can't go on the way it has been going on." Another one asks: "Does any of you have any ambition left at all?" And he says, "Yeah, I wanna be an astronaut."

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The complexity of the band and the idiosyncrasies of its members accompanied by cryptic lyrics and a flare for counterculture only make it a herculean task at hand for director Sam Mendes — to capture the essence of Beatlemania in spirit and in cinema. Ever since Sony Pictures announced that Mendes would direct and produce a biopic each on the Fab Four, upping the hopes of fans on the internet and elsewhere, the world of Beatlemania has been on the edge. This is the first attempt at a biopic on each of *The Beatles* — and the stakes are both commercial and sentimental, the legacy of Harrison, John Lennon, Paul McCartney and Ringo Starr. It comes with consent from the surviving

members — McCartney and Starr — and the families of Lennon and Harrison. Even at the peak of their musical careers in the 1960s, surrounded by the press and fans, *The Beatles* were eerily familiar with the perils of stardom. Perhaps it was an awareness brought on by the brave new world that individualised the band and its members. They dealt with their art, and political and personal lives with the same gusto.

The glory they attained was not a matter of chance for *The Beatles*. It came with reimagining the individual in a society that thwarted any semblance of it, one that was only loyal towards a collective sense of statehood. It was little after the mid-20th century that *The Beatles* took over the English rock scene — something they continue to dominate decades later. The band played a role in jolting the UK out of its uppity stupor while invading the music industry in other parts of the world. *Get Back*, the three-part documentary TV series directed and produced by Peter Jackson, came out in 2021. Comprising edited versions of 60 hours of film footage and 150 hours of audio, the series — most of which is the making of *The Beatles'* 1970 studio album *Let It Be* — acts like a premonition. It is disconcerting for a fan to watch the undoing of a heroic band, to witness a tangible hostility between its members.

But unlike a documentary, a biopic makes room for explanations for the hostilities. Just like it makes room for the love and the friendships. A biopic is not a product of yesteryears in which its protagonist flourished but one that is made decades later, influenced by the politics and cultures of the contemporary. Biopics seek to canonise the icons they depict in an at-



tempt to uphold a larger sense of unity among the viewers, subsequently reconstructing what is out there as public history. However, for Mendes, the challenge will be to replay and recast some of the same events from the perspectives of four luminaries — to produce a work of cinematic realism shrouded by what is understood as the "Rashomon effect" — one that possibly serves contradicting versions of a given incident. In popular culture, Lennon's has been the most dramatic life of the four while Starr's has been the least. Starr is better understood as the most innocuous member of the band even though his personal life was as tumultuous as the others. Notably, small-scale biopics have been made on Lennon and the band previously (*Nowhere Boy* in 2009 and *Backbeat* in 1994), but they caused barely

a ripple. Biopics on musical legends such as Freddie Mercury (*Bohemian Rhapsody* in 2019) were a commercial success because they depicted "safer plots", as many fans pointed out. Mendes is a master storyteller who uses tools of symbolism and cinematography — cases in point are his directorial debut *American Beauty* (1999) and his war film *1917* (2019). His strength has been the focus on developing characters over advancing his plots, something that may come in handy in the case of *The Beatles*. In the four films to be made by Mendes, it will be interesting to see each main character become a supporting character as the story shifts from one protagonist to another. It will also be interesting to witness a shift in what might be a layered fandom alongside a shift in a layered stardom. May we recommend Mendes watch Todd Haynes' *I'm Not There* for starters?

Impact of hyperthyroidism on skin health: Symptoms and tricks to protect skin



Hyperthyroidism, commonly referred to as an overactive thyroid, is characterised by an excessive production of thyroid hormones by the thyroid gland where these hormones play a crucial role in regulating various bodily functions, impacting nearly every major organ and notably, hyperthy-

roidism extends its influence to the skin, as the surplus of thyroid hormones accelerates bodily functions. This heightened activity manifests in increased blood flow, metabolic rate and cell growth, collectively contributing to significant effects on skin health. In understanding the intricate connection between hyperthyroidism and skin

well-being, it becomes imperative to explore the symptoms and employ effective strategies to safeguard the skin from the repercussions of this thyroid disorder. In an interview with HT Lifestyle, Dr Shweta Shetkar, MBBS, DDV, Dermatologist and Cosmetologist at Amaryllis Skincare Clinic in Mumbai, revealed that hyperthyroidism can exert profound effects on your skin, leading to various issues due to the accelerated growth of skin cells and in contrast to hypothyroidism, which is associated with dry and pale skin, hyperthyroidism manifests in distinctive skin problems -

1. Skin Rash: Typically emerging in skin creases, a rash is a common manifestation of hyperthyroidism.

2. Hives (Urticaria): Painless, raised patches of skin, often accompanied by itching, may develop as a result of hyperthyroidism.

3. Itchiness: Itching sensations may arise, whether or not rashes or hives are present.

4. Skin Discoloration: Affected areas

may exhibit discoloration, with a characteristic waxy and hardened texture.

5. Unusual Warmth: The heightened metabolic rate associated with hyperthyroidism can lead to increased heat sensitivity, resulting in warm and sweaty skin. She highlighted, "The primary contributor to hyperthyroidism is Graves' disease, a condition often accompanied by pretibial myxedema. This secondary skin condition manifests as lumpy and inflamed skin on the lower legs, frequently occurring alongside eye bulging and swollen fingers, collectively known as Graves' dermopathy. Understanding these skin manifestations is crucial for comprehensive management and care in individuals with hyperthyroidism." Understanding the Characteristics of a Hyperthyroid Rash According to Dr Shweta Shetkar, the appearance and sensations of a hyperthyroid rash can vary depending on individual factors such as skin tone. She explained, "The rash may manifest in shades of purple, red or brown and could be accompanied by the development of raised patches known as hives."