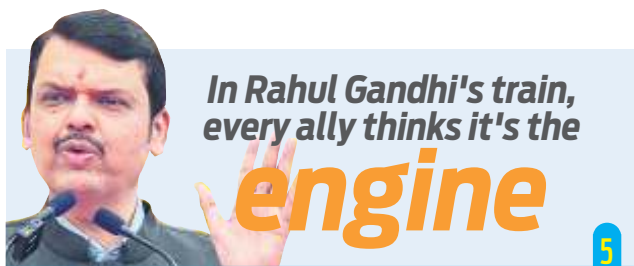


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In Rahul Gandhi's train, every ally thinks it's the engine

INDIA FASTEST GROWING ECONOMY DURING LAST 3 FINANCIAL YEARS: FM



Nidhi Agerwal reportedly joins The Raja Saab SETS



QUOTE OF THE DAY

If we watch the CM speak and his shivering at public meetings we can assume that the people of Telangana have revolted. Survey reports are coming. The Congress won't get more than two seats in the state. Farmers are revolting. During the Narayapet meeting, if we see Chief Minister's fear and shiver then it means that the government may not last even a year. Who knows when who will join the BJP or whether the CM himself will jump to the BJP? The CM talks one thing here and in Delhi on TV he says vote for the BJP. Who is the B-team of whom?

- KCR, BRS chief



DON'T MISS...

52% works undertaken for..

Principal Secretary to the Municipal Administration and Urban Development (MAUD) Dana Kishore on Tuesday said 52 per cent of the works undertaken for flood control were completed and all the remaining works should be completed.

-PAGE: 3

'Breast cancer may cause a ...

Breast cancer is now the world's most common carcinogenic disease with the ailment likely to cause a million deaths a year by 2040, according to a new Lancet Commission on breast cancer.

-PAGE: 5

Equity investors become poorer ...

Investors' wealth tumbled Rs 7.93 lakh crore in three days of market crash amid escalating tensions in the Middle East and weak global trends.

-PAGE: 8

Gujarat Titans, Delhi Capitals..

Gujrat Titans will be striving for much needed consistency when they meet Delhi Capitals in an Indian Premier League match here on Wednesday.

-SPORTS



29 Naxalites killed in encounter with jawans

PNS ■ KANKER

At least 29 Naxalites were killed in an encounter with security personnel in Chhattisgarh's Kanker district on Tuesday, the Border Security Force (BSF) said.

was out on an anti-Naxal operation, a statement issued by the BSF said. The BSF has been extensively deployed in Kanker district for counter-insurgency operations.

EC derails Revanth's Ram Navami plans at Bhadrachalam

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

The Election Commission of India derailed Chief Minister Revanth Reddy's plans to celebrate Ram Navami at Bhadrachalam.



quizzed about visiting Ram Mandir, he speaks about Bhadrachalam. Revanth said that he will eventually visit Ayodhya Ram Mandir, but says the BJP government and Modi didn't visit Bhadrachalam.

Continued on Page 2

About 50 from T states crack Civils

Ananya bags third rank,

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

The Union Public Service Commission (UPSC) declared the civil service exam results on Tuesday. About 50 candidates from both Telangana and Andhra Pradesh cracked the exam.



Donuru Ananya Reddy (3rd rank)



Chandana Jahnvi (50th rank)

She is followed by Nandala Sai Kiran (27th rank), KN Chandana

'Lilliput' Cong govt may not last for 1 year: KCR

Says Shiver in Revanth's voice indicates people's revolt

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

BRS chief K. Chandrasekhar Rao termed the Congress government as a "Lilliput Government" while addressing a public meeting in Sultanpur.

people of Telangana would revolt. Survey reports are coming. Congress won't get more than two seats in the state.



he says vote for the BJP.

Sometimes defeat can be good, says CM

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Chief Minister Revanth Reddy commented that sometimes defeat can lead to good things. He said that everyone cannot win and that it is common in a game or any contest.

BJP will end reservations for SCs & STs, warns KTR

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

BRS Working President KTR said that many BJP leaders are talking about changing the Constitution if the BJP comes to power again.

this openly. If we get a two-thirds majority in this Lok Sabha election, we will change the Constitution itself. We will remove reservations. They say they will remove all SC and ST reservations.

'Transfer all cops probing phone tapping'

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

The BRS has asked the Election Commission of India to transfer all police officials investigating the phone tapping case including the Commissioner of Police.

the files of the Punjagutta PS in Hyderabad should be under the supervision of the ECI. The Commissioner of Police of Hyderabad City, the Deputy Superintendent of Police of West Zone, Hyderabad, the Assistant Commissioner of Police of Banjara Hills PS and the IO must be immediately transferred and divested of their supervisory powers over Crime No: 234 of 2024 and it should be conducted under the supervision of

an officer appointed by the ECI." The BRS said that all the above officers appointed by the present government after coming to power in December 2023, are dancing to the tunes of the Chief Minister and his colleagues.

Akbaruddin says he might be jailed, poisoned

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

All India Majlis-e Ittehadul Muslimeen (AIMIM) MLA Akbaruddin Owaisi said that he could be imprisoned and poisoned.



Chandrayangutta MLA asked people to imagine Hyderabad without the AIMIM and the Owaisi brothers. He appealed to the people to highlight the shortcomings of AIMIM so that they could be corrected.

SKIPPING ELECTION TRAINING

Notices issued to 3,700 poll staffers

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

The District Electoral Officer, GHMC Commissioner Ronald Rose, said that notices have been issued to 3,700 polling staffers who failed to attend the Election Training Programme.

FIR to be filed if required, says DEO Ronald Rose

tives along with the Returning Officers of Hyderabad and Secunderabad at the Panwar Hall in GHMC headquarters on Tuesday.

Apex Court pans EVM critics

Asks them to remember ballot paper era when booth capturing was rampant

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The Supreme Court on Tuesday deprecated criticism of Electronic Voting Machines (EVMs) and calls for reverting to ballot papers, saying the electoral process in India is a "humongous task" and attempts should not be made to "bring down the system".

pendent vote verification system which enables an elector to see whether his vote was cast correctly. A bench of Justices Sanjiv Khanna and Dipankar Datta was critical of the argument that many European countries have gone back to ballot papers after having tried out voting machines.

Continued on Page 2











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PAPER WITH PASSION

## Shower of blessings

For the first time in a decade, IMD predicts above-normal rainfall across the nation

The Indian Meteorological Department (IMD) has marked a significant milestone by releasing its long-term forecast. For the first time in a decade, the IMD has predicted above-average rainfall across almost the entire expanse of the country. This forecast carries profound implications for various sectors, ranging from agriculture to water resource management and beyond. Policymakers and farmers will welcome this news, although ordinary individuals may find themselves contending with a more pronounced monsoon season than usual. It would indeed be a sign of relief for all farmers. The agricultural sector, which forms the backbone of India's economy, is heavily reliant on timely and adequate rainfall. Adequate precipitation is essential for the cultivation of crops and the sustenance of agricultural activities. With an anticipated surplus in rainfall, farmers can expect better soil moisture levels, leading to improved crop yields. Additionally, the forecast offers them an opportunity to plan their cropping patterns and maximise agricultural output. Besides, India's water resources are intricately linked to the monsoon patterns. Above-normal rainfall augurs well for the replenishment of reservoirs, lakes and groundwater aquifers. It provides the much-needed boost to water levels, especially in regions grappling with water scarcity. Adequate rainfall can alleviate the stress on water resources, ensuring better availability for domestic, industrial and agricultural purposes. A bountiful monsoon also facilitates the generation of hydroelectric power, thus contributing to the energy sector.



However, it may be too early to celebrate a normal or above-normal monsoon. Weather forecasts are probabilistic in nature; even a good monsoon across the country is a rare occurrence. While above-normal rainfall brings several benefits, it also presents certain challenges. Excessive precipitation can lead to flooding, particularly in low-lying areas and regions prone to inundation. Flooding not only causes damage to property and infrastructure but also poses risks to human life. Therefore, authorities must undertake pre-emptive measures such as strengthening infrastructure, improving drainage systems and implementing effective flood management strategies. Heavy rainfall increases the risk of soil erosion and landslides, particularly in hilly terrains. Adequate soil conservation measures and afforestation efforts are essential to mitigate these risks and safeguard vulnerable ecosystems. Also, authorities need to ensure efficient water management practices to prevent wastage and optimise the utilisation of water resources. The IMD's forecast heralds promising prospects for farmers to enhance productivity and for authorities to address water scarcity concerns. By adopting a comprehensive approach that combines preparedness, conservation and sustainable practices, India can harness the benefits of abundant rainfall while minimising associated risks, laying the way for socio-economic development and environmental sustainability.

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### PICTALK



Devotees stand in a queue to offer prayers at Dakshineswar Kali Temple on Bengali New Year, in Kolkata

## Reflections on class and age discrimination

From a childhood encounter at a political rally to navigating workplace dynamics, an individual's journey unveils lessons in equality and empathy

The then Prime Minister was to address a public rally in Ghaziabad. My father, posted as the head of the electricity department in the city, was responsible for the electrical arrangements at the venue. He took us to listen to her speech from a vantage point. I do not remember the speech. What I do remember is that my father came back immediately after the event ended and rushed us from the venue. He kept looking back surreptitiously, asking us to walk faster. I was to learn that a supervisor working under my father and wanting to make a good impression, was also pursuing us to introduce his family. Much later, at a more mature age, I could understand that this was an incidence of class discrimination prevalent in our society. I was to learn quite a few life-altering lessons a few years later as I joined Indian railway services. During my first posting in Calcutta, I was asked to study an old machine and propose measures to improve its productivity, taking the assistance of an experienced supervisor. The two of us



SANJAY CHANDRA

spent innumerable hours studying the machine. I became an apprentice to a more knowledgeable person, even though he was lower in the hierarchy. Then and even later in my subsequent postings, or even after I quit an active professional life, I learnt a lot about handling work-related issues and even man management, from my junior colleagues, by not dwelling on the so-called finer nuances of a superior status. I also learnt empathy for others. In yet another posting, as a branch head, I was approached by irate union leaders who complained

about the rude language by a junior colleague. His fault was that he had used the term tum to address a worker rather than the more respectable aap. This was Bengal, where everyone is expected to use a respectful salutation when talking to another person, whatever the status. I tried to assuage the hurt sentiments by pointing out that the junior colleague came from north India where it was a common practice to use the more affectionate tum even while addressing parents. The representatives were not done. They pointed out that I was

always respectful even though I was from the same region. This was another lesson learnt, never to be forgotten, about the futility of status discrimination. We were visiting relatives a few days back. My wife's uncle, now nearing 80, narrated a recent experience. He had gone to some office for work, where a much younger person jumped the queue. The uncle objected which was rudely brushed aside by the young man. "How is it material? Have I pointed a gun at you?" This was a status discrimination of another kind - a perceived superiority of the youth against old age. Or was it the gun power? We ought to remember what Nelson Mandela said, "No one is born hating another person because of the colour of his skin, or his background, or his religion. People must learn to hate and if they can learn to hate, they can be taught to love, for love comes more naturally to the human heart than its opposite."

(The author is an electrical engineer with the Indian Railways and conducts classes in creative writing; views are personal)

## Ignoring neighbours to embrace the world



ASHOK K MEHTA

The BJP Government has put Neighbourhood First Policy on backburner, leaving it underperforming amid rising anti-India sentiments in the region

BJP government has made foreign policy a key election issue: Prime Minister Modi has stated, 'Neighbour first and Act East second'. Foreign Minister S Jaishankar is campaigning how G20 has enhanced India's image and influence as a global player. Quest for High Table has shifted focus from Neighbourhood First Policy (NFP). S Jaishankar explained that politics can go up and down in neighbourhood but people generally have good feelings for India. That is certainly not the ground reality today when in almost every country, anti-India feeling is prevalent. NFP which was formally launched in 2008, has not performed optimally due to internal and external factors. Act East appended later has also failed to take off. Followed several add-ons: sab ka saath sab ka vikas; SAGAR; Vishva Mitra; First Security Responder and so on.

Former Minister Jaswant Singh in his book *Defending India*, has noted that India is strategically confined by Macmahon Line, Durand Line, LAC and LoC. Still it was once the regional hegemon having promulgated the Indira Doctrine and employed military force in national interest. India's geography and asymmetry with neighbours are both asset and liability. Congenital problems with Pakistan and later China have made it the least connected South Asian region. NFP was designed to shape the neighbourhood, especially the periphery, extending the neighbourhood to Mauritius and Iran in the West and Myanmar in the East. Curating friendly regimes, winning the goodwill of people through economic linkages and connectivity, creating strategic assets, minimising liabilities and most of all, being sensitive to genuine concerns of neighbours were some objectives of NFP. Rubbing neighbours the wrong way was not, nor meshing domestic politics with diplomacy. That an aspirational India would create glitches for NFP was not envisioned. China, gate-crashed after hiding its strength and biding its time arriving with deep pockets, BRI, MSR and Wolf Warrior



diplomacy. With ups and downs in politics regional rivalries were in full flow. Nepalese scholars were first to note change. The founding father, King Prithvi Narayan Shah had observed that Nepal is a yam between two boulders: China and India. They corrected that gospel to three boulders, adding US. Till late last year, Maldives followed India First policy, the only country to publicly proclaim the choice.

That has changed to India Out with President Muizzu demanding the 88 Indian soldiers leave before elections next month. He even hinted that Delhi tried bullying Male. Its strategic geography is pivotal in the Indian Ocean. Maldives is for now China First but India could have been more gentle with its smallest neighbour. Raking up the Kachhatheevu issue that the government admitted it was settled in 2015, was a self goal but both Modi and Jaishankar wished to politically embarrass the ruling DMK in Tamil Nadu and INC. Instead it has infuriated Sri Lankan media and ordinary Lankans, especially fisherfolk among the lakhs of Sri Lankan and Indian Tamils. US Assistance Secretary of State for South Asia and Central Asia, Donald Lu has called Sri Lanka's economic recovery a "comeback story" with concessional loans from India and USAID. That story



**MOST, IF NOT ALL, REGIONAL COUNTRIES WANT SAARC TO BE REVIVED, BUT INDIA'S IRON-CLAD POLICY OF NOT DEALING WITH PAKISTAN UNTIL TERRORISM FROM ITS SOIL STOPS HAS BEEN AGGRAVATED BY THE REMOVAL OF ARTICLE 370**

will suffer a setback lead to revival of anti-India sentiment and further tilt towards China to whom Lanka owes USD 10 bn. In Bangladesh BNP has started an India Out campaign. China is heavily invested in projects including constructing a submarine port near Cox's Bazar adequate for 8 to 10 submarines. Bhutan was within a whisker of a land swap with China by the previous government. Otherwise Doklam could have been lost to the Chinese which would have endangered Siliguri Corridor, the India-Bhutan-China trilateral junction dispute. The new Lotay Tshering government might delay the Doklam swap. In Myanmar, the military is rapidly losing ground in the civil war with Ethnic Armed Organisations and NUG. It has lost border control with China, Bangladesh, India and Thailand to EAOs. Most critical for India is Sittwe Port vital for the multi-modal Kaladan project and also the trilateral highway to Thailand. Reuters reported that junta troops nearby have fled and an attack on Sittwe is imminent. But Sohail Kazan, executive director, Bharat Freight, said last week that Sittwe will be safe following a deal between junta and Rakhine state government. If true, that is good news. Kaladan project was contracted in 2008 and is nowhere near completion dislocating India's two signature Act East pro-

jects. Delhi has to rethink its relations with the junta. Most if not all regional countries want SAARC to be revived, But India's iron clad policy of not dealing with Pakistan till terrorism from its soil stops has been aggravated by removal of Article 370. Trade potential according to World Bank between Pakistan and India is between USD 15 and 20 bn. India's NFP has not worked because its global ambitions have diluted its zeal for the neighbourhood. Further, it has been unable to compete with China despite geography being on its side. Under NFP and Act East, India has concentrated mainly in the maritime domain resulting in neglect of inland connectivity. The Government brags about North East shining (Manipur is a shame) but little progress is seen over connectivity of BBIN (Bangladesh, Bhutan India Nepal) or South East Asia. The Bangladesh China India Myanmar (BCIM) is also dead. India's focus on neighbourhood has wavered, failing to secure the periphery. Some diplomats have advocated India setting red lines? Winning over neighbours is now a huge challenge. (The writer, a retired Major General, was Commander, IPKF South, Sri Lanka and a founder member of the Defence Planning Staff, currently the Integrated Defence Staff. Views are personal)

### LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

#### CONSTITUTIONAL MORALITY

Madam — Apropos the news article, "Constitutional Morality: The Pillar of India's Democracy", published on April 15, this is my response. India's electoral fervour every four years embodies the essence of democracy, echoing the aspirations of its constituent assembly. Dr. B.R. Ambedkar's vision of constitutional morality as the cornerstone of governance rings true today. It's a conscious cultivation, not merely a natural sentiment, vital for a vibrant democracy. Justice D.Y. Chandrachud aptly emphasises the judiciary's role in upholding constitutional values like dignity and equality. This jurisprudence, evolving alongside societal dynamics, ensures the Constitution remains a living document. Recent landmark judgments, from LGBTQ+ rights to adultery laws, highlight the judiciary's commitment to constitutional morality over popular sentiment. Yet, navigating societal and religious intersections, as seen in the Sabarimala case, poses ongoing challenges. The court's role in reconciling evolving beliefs, evident in decisions on euthanasia and abortion rights, underscores its pivotal position in shaping India's moral landscape. As we navigate these complexities, constitutional morality stands as a beacon, guiding our journey towards a more just and equitable society.

Sunandna Sharma | Hisar

#### HISTORICAL REFLECTIONS

Madam — Apropos the news article, "Unravelling the Roy family's legacy", published on April 15, this is my response. The political landscape for the 2024 Lok Sabha elections reveals not just contemporary rivalries but also echoes of Bengal's tumultuous past. Amidst accusations and justifications, the saga of Siraj-ud-Daula's downfall resurfaces, highlighting the intricate web of alliances and betrayals that shaped the region's destiny. Delving into history, one confronts the pivotal Battle of Plassey in 1757, altering the trajectory of Bengal's identity. The

#### Revitalising railway realms



Apropos the news article, "Desolate railway tracks transformed into a verdant oasis", published on April 15, this is my response. The transformation of a once-ignored stretch of land into the lush oasis of 'Evergreen Nursery' is a testament to human innovation and environmental stewardship. This verdant haven, nestled amidst the bustling railway tracks, not only rejuvenates the landscape but also symbolises a paradigm shift in urban con-

servation efforts. The metamorphosis from a crime-ridden wasteland to a vibrant botanical sanctuary reflects the power of collaborative endeavours between public and private entities. The partnership between the Delhi Division of Northern Railway and Evergreen Nursery exemplifies a shared commitment to sustainable development and beautification.

Moreover, the altruistic purpose behind the nursery, where plants are nurtured not for profit but for communal enrichment, resonates deeply with the ethos of community service. It serves as a poignant reminder of the interconnectedness between humanity and nature, where each leaf and bloom embodies a story of renewal and hope. As we traverse through these green corridors, we are reminded not only of the beauty of flora but also of our collective responsibility to safeguard our planet for future generations.

Neeraj Shah | Delhi

clash between Bengali and Islamic cultures, symbolised by Siraj-ud-Daula's reign, echoes through the ages. The triumph of Clive and the merchant princes ushered in a new era, fostering a renaissance that birthed luminaries like Tagore and Bose.

The revelation from Atlee underscores the lesser-known role of Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose, a beacon of resistance against British rule. His legacy, intertwined with Bengal's ethos, stands as a testament to the region's indomitable spirit, shaping not just India's past, but its future. In this electoral battleground, as parties jostle for power, Bengal's historical tapestry reminds us of the enduring struggle for identity and freedom.

Roshan Kumar | Bhubaneswar

#### CAFFEINE CHRONICLES

Madam — Apropos the news article, "Exploring the world of single origins, flat whites and beyond!", published on April 14, this is my response. Melbourne's caffeinated landscape is a saga of passion, history and innovation, woven into the

city's very fabric. With an abundance of cafes that surpass a thousand, each sip of espresso unveils a narrative steeped in Italian heritage and modern-day craftsmanship. Monique Bayer's guided tour offers a portal into this world, where every alleyway hides a treasure trove of coffee delights. From the legacy of Pellegrini Espresso Bar to the emergence of artisanal roasters like Industry Beans, Melbourne's coffee evolution is palpable. Monique's curated journey delves deep, introducing nuances like filter coffee and cold drip variants, enriching the sensory experience.

In this city, coffee isn't just a beverage; it's a cultural phenomenon. From paleo-friendly butter coffee to innovative frozen concoctions, Melbourne's cafes cater to every palate. With terms like cupping and AeroPress echoing through the streets, it's evident that coffee here is more than a drink—it's a way of life.

Kundan JM | Bhopal

Send your feedback to: letterstopioneer@gmail.com



## FIRST COLUMN STRIVE TO DEVELOP FAITH

The pursuit of guidance from the Divine holds the promise of revelation



AJIT KUMAR BISHNOI

Let me start with why we often don't endeavour to develop faith, as is commonly observed. Lord Krishna has aptly stated, "Out of thousands of men, hardly anyone strives for perfection" (The Bhagavad Gita 7.3). The essence of a perfect life lies in becoming a devotee of God, for He is the ultimate controller of the entire world. There exist numerous reasons, or perhaps excuses, for this reluctance. Beginning with a straightforward argument: who has truly seen Him? If God holds such significance, why does He not present Himself so that we may behold Him? In this age of the internet, one might argue that He could easily make His presence felt. Some may argue that God is unmanifest, yet we lack any tangible experience of such an entity. If God is indeed a reality without whom we cannot thrive, then why do some ideologies, such as communism, appear to manage so well, especially in certain countries? Why is there pervasive poverty and suffering in the world? If God possesses omnipotence as described, why does He not rectify these injustices? We encounter many ascetics on the streets, leading some to conclude that only those who have failed turn to God, while they believe they can manage without divine intervention. Perhaps they might consider turning to God later if the need arises. These excuses, however, varied, ultimately lead us to a sense of emptiness. In reality, it is often our ego that serves as the primary hindrance. We struggle to accept an entity so vast and incomprehensible, leaving us feeling insignificant and powerless. Another significant barrier lies in the acceptance of spiritual practices, which may seem unfamiliar and daunting. Yet, all these excuses only serve to deepen our sense of emptiness. Why not begin by praying for what we deeply desire? Even a child can pray and often does. If our prayers are sincere and aligned with righteousness, God may consider them.



The next step involves seeking guidance from God, who is eager to provide it. Given His omniscience, God communicates in various ways; to advanced devotees, He may impart intuition or even speak directly, while beginners may receive guidance through mediums such as family members, friends, or even seemingly random occurrences like messages in newspapers. It should be evident that following God's instructions is a wise course of action, yielding manifold benefits. Let us now explore some basic practices that are both accessible and highly rewarding. My personal favourite is 'darshan' — simply gazing upon an image or idol of God.

Observing God's benevolent countenance, we can feel His attraction towards us. However, it's crucial to remember that adherence to righteousness, or 'dharma,' is of paramount importance to God. While deity forms or images serve as focal points, God's presence transcends physical limitations, permeating all existence. Another simple yet profound practice is offering 'namaskar' — paying homage to God with folded hands. This act serves to humble our egos, which often obstruct our connection with the divine and hinder our interactions with fellow beings. As we persist in these practices, we will gradually experience God's responses, not necessarily through miraculous events, but through subtle yet discernible manifestations. We can liken this experience to connecting to the internet—where there is a network, there is connectivity. Similarly, God, omnipresent as He is, can be experienced in various ways. God's subtle presence is accessible to all. He eagerly awaits our approach, desiring nothing but our well-being. Let us cast aside our doubts and excuses and wholeheartedly commit to forging a deeper connection with the divine.

(The writer is a spiritual guide; views are personal)

# Iran strikes threaten regional stability

The assault, though primarily symbolic in nature, highlights the mounting tensions in the region. However, the US endeavours to uphold a balance of power



NILANTHA ILANGAMUWA



REUTERS

At a time when people in several countries in South Asia and East Asia were celebrating the traditional new year, Iran, the second-largest country in West Asia, launched a series of missile attacks targeting its arch-enemy Israel. Jordan and Saudi Arabia supported Israel and intercepted most of the missiles fired by Iran. The attack appears to be symbolic, aimed at boosting the morale of organisations such as Hamas in Palestine, Yemen's Houthis, pro-Iranian militias in Iraq and Hezbollah in Lebanon, all of which have declared war against Israel in West Asia, as well as countries like Lebanon and Syria, rather than engaging in an official war against Israel. This attack serves as a morale booster. Shortly after the attack, Hamas rejected the Cairo agreement, a result of discussions between top intelligence agencies, the CIA and Mossad, together with other stakeholders mediated by Egypt, concerning Israeli hostages.

However, many encouraged Israel to respond quickly. However, United States President Biden stated that he would not yield if attacks were made against Iran. It is seen as a matter of prior agreement by both parties rather than a threat. The truth is, that the US administration cannot afford to assist Israel in another war at this point. At a time when the country's reputation has been tarnished at the international level and when Biden's political power is extremely weak if the United States makes such an unwise decision, it will have to face unprecedented consequences shortly, similar to how the United States has caused irreversible damage to world peace and order. Elon Musk's recent statement that the possibility of the United States becoming the victim of a September 11-style surprise attack is very high seems to hold deep truth. The consequences of these conflicts may not only affect Washington or New York but also American military bases around the world. The likelihood of an attack similar to the one on Pearl Harbor is high. The United States cannot always continue to create military conflicts in other countries for its war trade and keep its superpower status as it desires. The superpower, as history has proven, will inevitably crumble at any



THE ATTACK BY IRAN WAS RETALIATION. IT IS A RESPONSE TO THE ISRAELI PROVOCATION AT THE IRANIAN CONSULATE IN SYRIA, A GROSS VIOLATION OF THE VIENNA CONVENTION WHICH CLAIMED THE LIVES OF THE IRANIAN REVOLUTIONARY GUARD CORPS

given point. Compared to its lifespan, the United States is a relatively young superpower in the grand scheme of civilisation, considering the collapse of great empires. Throughout history, mighty empires have risen and fallen, leaving lasting legacies. The Roman Empire, spanning from 27 BC to AD 476, peaked in the 2nd century AD, but internal strife, economic instability and external invasions, such as by the Visigoths and Vandals, led to its fragmentation. The Ottoman Empire, dominant in the 16th and 17th centuries across the Eastern Mediterranean, North Africa and Western Asia, declined due to internal conflicts and challenges from European powers like Russia and Austria. The Mongol Empire, founded by Genghis Khan in the 13th century, stretched from Eastern Europe to the Pacific Ocean, but internal divisions and the death of key leaders led to its fragmentation by the late 14th century. Lastly, the British Empire, spanning from the 16th to the 20th century, faced economic strain and nationalist movements, ultimately dissolving due to internal weakness and external pressures. These collapses, driven by political, military and socioeconomic factors, reshaped the world, underscoring the transient nature of power and the enduring impact of history on modern geopolitics and civilisation.

However, the deep state of the United States has certainly studied and comprehended global history better than many other countries. That is why the basic strategy of the United States has been to create new wars while talking about peace and turn those wars into long-term tragedies to keep uncertainties. This strategy can weaken its rivals and maintain its power continuously. These issues become clear when many conflicts are understood in their political and economic context. The ideology that Israel has contin-

uously pursued against Iran in national and international forums is not a single opinion or rivalry of Israel, but it is a long-term propagation through carefully selected facts and objectives together with the United States. On one hand, the West fuels wars against hostile countries. On the other, it manufactures internal crises in those nations by imposing international sanctions. This remains a persistent behaviour of the West. The thing that should not be forgotten here is that the attack by Iran was a retaliation. It is a response to the Israeli provocation on the Iranian consulate in Syria, a gross violation of the Vienna Convention, which claimed the lives of the Iranian Revolutionary Guard Corps. Iran's calculation, as some analysts pointed out, was that if it did not respond, Israel would seek to push back and degrade the axis of resistance across the region. However, it is unreasonable to think that Israel miscalculated its attack on the Iranian diplomatic site in Syria as Israel continues to keep deep intelligence penetration of IRGC and Hezbollah networks in Syria, making those networks highly vulnerable to Israeli attacks. Iran must uphold its reputation among its allies and address internal political crises effectively. Therefore, prioritising attacks conducted through proxies is advisable, while occasional skirmishes from both sides should be acknowledged.

Moreover, it is very important to consider the government's domestic policies and openly mention Iran's inherent weaknesses amid escalating tensions among some politicians and officials in Iran. They highlighted the many crises facing the Iranian government and warned against engaging in direct conflict with Israel without first addressing these pressing issues, which they argued would only worsen the situation. They emphasised the impor-

tant of prudent governance and effective crisis management and the need to mitigate ongoing crises to prevent system collapse.

Economic challenges and psychological instability in society are urgent issues that need to be addressed as they are now breeding grounds for enemy penetrations. They advocated the adoption of conciliatory policies to reduce tensions and promote harmony and empathy in Iranian society. The regime's repressive domestic policies, particularly regarding the mandatory hijab enforcement campaign, have fuelled widespread discontent and delegitimised the government. Recent anti-Israel actions, like seizing a cargo ship, have caused Iran's markets to react negatively. The national currency's value has hit a record low. President Ibrahim Raisi faces criticism and calls for a cabinet reshuffle to address economic hardships affecting many Iranians.

Over the years, Israel has demonstrated its capability in targeting Iranian nuclear scientists and infrastructure. Notably, the Stuxnet cyber-attack, jointly orchestrated by the United States and Israel, delivered a significant blow to Iran's nuclear ambitions. This proves that national interests are never compromised for domestic political issues, except for former President Trump. Stuxnet marked a pivotal moment, ushering in the era of cyberwarfare, where lines of code wielded the power to reshape geopolitical landscapes. Its impact reverberated globally, highlighting the evolving nature of warfare and the formidable role of technology in modern conflicts. In this situation, Iran cannot continue to be silent. It must prove its power numerically. Therefore, the recent attack was more a reputational-preservation move than a declaration of war.

(The writer is a Sri Lankan Journalist. Views are personal)

# Uttarakhand women: Agents of change in State politics

From leading environmental crusades to confronting social injustices head-on, they embody the spirit of the region, epitomising resilience and fortitude

Women in Uttarakhand are renowned for their extraordinary resilience and hard work, characteristics deeply rooted in their Himalayan heritage. Despite grappling with the challenges of life in this rugged terrain, Uttarakhand's women have consistently been at the forefront of social and environmental movements, epitomised by figures like Gaura Devi of the Chipko movement and Tinchari Mai (Deepa Nautiyal), who spearheaded the Anti-Liquor movement. These women have fearlessly confronted injustice, embodying the spirit of Uttarakhand. This article seeks to underscore the political engagement of women in Uttarakhand, shedding light on their role in bol-



SHEETAL ARYA

stering democracy. The political participation of women in Uttarakhand can be delineated into two primary spheres: first, women assuming leadership positions within the political domain and second, women exercising their electoral rights as voters. Since the inception of the state, the representation of women in the legislative assembly has seen a significant

albeit gradual rise. From four women members in the first assembly, the number has increased by 50% in the 2022 elections, marking a commendable stride. However, despite this progress, women remain a minority in the assembly, constituting a mere fraction of the total members. Presently, the legislative assembly boasts eight women members, including three Dalit women, the highest number in Uttarakhand's history. Notably, Smt. Ritu Khanduri serves as the speaker, while Smt. Rekha Arya is the lone female minister in the cabinet. Despite these advancements, the disparity in political representation persists, underscoring the challenges women face in accessing political power. While women's representa-

tion in the parliamentary arena remains scant, with only two female MPs out of eight, the discrepancy between the female population (49%) and their political representation is stark. Despite their active participation in grassroots movements, women's presence in formal politics remains disproportionately low. Women in Uttarakhand constitute the backbone of the rural economy, grappling with issues like migration, environmental degradation and inadequate healthcare services. However, societal norms and economic constraints often deter their political involvement. Moreover, political parties' reluctance to field female candidates exacerbates this disparity. For instance, in the upcoming 2024 Lok Sabha



elections, the Congress has not nominated any female candidates, while the BJP has nominated only one, Mrs. Mala Rajya Laxmi Shah. Nevertheless, women voters in Uttarakhand have emerged as a formidable force, outnumbering men in recent elections. Their increasing political awareness, fueled by issues

coupled with higher literacy rates and government initiatives like reservation quotas, has galvanized their participation. Policies such as 30% horizontal reservation in government jobs and 50% reservation in Panchayats have bolstered women's political agency, enabling them to assume leadership roles at the grassroots level.

In the run-up to the 2024 Parliamentary elections, both major parties are vying for women's support, employing diverse strategies. Congress has pledged financial assistance and job reservations for women, emphasizing women's security and justice. Conversely, the BJP highlights its implementation of the Uniform Civil Code (UCC) as a milestone for women's rights,

coupled with grassroots mobilization efforts.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi's appeal among women voters, attributed to his grassroots connect and initiatives like the Women Reservation Bill, further consolidates BJP's electoral prospects. The "Modi factor" has resonated with Uttarakhand's women, contributing to BJP's continued dominance since 2017.

To bolster women's empowerment, the state government has allocated a substantial gender budget for 2024-25, earmarked for bridging gender disparities and promoting equality. Additionally, measures like deploying women employees to oversee polling booths and facilitating pregnant women's access to voting booths underscore the commitment to

inclusive governance.

In conclusion, Dr Ambedkar's assertion that a community's progress is contingent upon women's advancement holds for Uttarakhand. While women have historically been instrumental in social movements, their underrepresentation in formal politics remains a pressing concern. Addressing these challenges is imperative for ensuring women's political representation and expediting the state's development. As Uttarakhand gears up for the upcoming Chunarav Kauthig, with women comprising 48.1 per cent of the electorate, their increased participation promises to be a harbinger of democracy's triumph in the state.

(The writer is a research scholar; views are personal)





## POOJA BHATT:

# When I was making *Tamanna*, people came up to me saying, 'Production is not for women'

TEJAL SINHA

The 'Boss Lady', who has been an inspiration to not only people of her times but of the current generations too, is the one who ruled the 90s era with her hits at an early age itself. Right from her debut with *Daddy* and further going ahead with *Dil Hai Ke Manta Nahin*, *Sadak*, *Prem Deewane*, *Kranti Kshetra*, and so on, she has proved every now and then who Pooja Bhatt is, apart from being the daughter of the renowned director Mahesh Bhatt!

Apart from her finesse in acting, she has also donned the roles of producer and director. But of course, things didn't come to her plate as easily as they may seem. Recently, in one of our interviews with the star, she revealed her father was clear about not lying about whether she was good or not with her work and not giving the world the privilege of telling her that she can't act.

Now, as we go ahead and bring to you some personal insights, during our exclusive chat, she recalled the time when she had put on the producer's cap: "When I was making *Tamanna*, people had come up to me and were like it's not the work of a woman. Production is not for women. I made it." And guess what? *Tamanna* won Best Film on Other Social Issues at the 44th National Film Awards. But still, people didn't stop their bad talk there. "When I was making *Dushman* with Kajol, people pointed out, saying, 'Oh, you're taking a woman; now it's finished.' I was like, 'I'm going to do what I want to do, and here I am doing it.' When I became a producer, I was told why I wanted to become a producer. This is not for women; stick to acting and focus on your acting career. People are going to say so, and I was like, 'Do hell with you guys.'"

Going very much ahead, when she was back after a 21-year-long break with *Bombay Begums*, she recalled, "People were so generous. It was so overwhelming. The response I got for *Bombay Begums* was greater than that I got for my first 3-4 films to keep together. Even when I stopped, people were like, 'Why did you stop acting? When this came my way, I felt like life was bringing something to me. I just felt to take it upon myself to open the door to life, a dead life into my life! I did *Bombay Begums*, and I was privileged to play the part of a 49-year-old. The director would not want me to look younger, thinner, darker, or fairer. She just wanted me for what I was and who I was, and there can be no greater gift than a director can give an actor for who they are. You feel very comfortable in that person's gaze, and you want to give it your all. Being away from it for 21 years and understanding the nuances of filmmaking

and running a set has made me more respectful of the process. I can take instructions far better today and far more easily today."

The *Dil Hai Ke Manta Nahin* star was recently seen playing the character of Anita Verma in *Big Girls Don't Cry*, winning many accolades for the same.

Sharing some personal relatable aspects from the series, she strongly explains, "What I related to a lot was these young girls who are kind of like Anees character, for example, where she comes from this dysfunctional home, and supposedly the parents are trying to put on this facade. I mean, my parents were not like that, but I remember feeling relief when my parents decided to kind of sit me down and say that, you know, this relationship of ours is technically over but will never be over as far as you are concerned. That, for me, was such an important conversation. I realised the relationships are not made on paper or broken on paper either. Your father might shift from your geography, but he never stops being your father. In the conversation that Anees has in her head, she says that guys don't do it for me. It was also where she became the parents of her parents. That comes to a point in children's lives when you got to come and be generous back with your parents too."

Well, as we head towards the end, how could we not ask her about her darling niece Raha? In fact, in one of the posts wishing Pooja a happy birthday, Mahesh Bhatt shared how he could see the resemblance of Pooja's attributes to those of his granddaughter.

"I'm glad you are the first one who has read it clearly," she gleefully enthuses adding, "He felt the wide eyes of looking into the world and the passion and that is something that you bond with."

Infact, as we went on ahead, she shares that she still looks at the world with wide eyes and still gets butterflies in my stomach when she gave her first shot. "I feel so excited when I have a show coming out. We had a countdown before 12 and I couldn't sleep after that. Nitya was like even after so many years you feel like this and I was like the day I stopped feeling like this that means I am dead. The day we lose is the day when we die." sAnd so, "I just hope I always have the attributes of glorious Raha and if there's one thing that I'll fight not only with the world but even myself is to hold on to the child in me. No matter how cruel the world gets, it's a cruel place to live in right now and as an artist, you cannot be separated from it. Our job is to feel and if I can't only feel good and edit the bad. There's so much magic around you and as an adult, we tend to ignore the magic and thus it's important to keep the child within you alive."



Actress-director-producer Pooja Bhatt, who has been very much known as the Boss Lady, recalls the time when she was degraded for donning the cap of a producer, her mark as 'Pooja Bhatt' post her 21 years of hiatus, and more.

## Shattering stereotypes to become Telangana's first transgender PMEGP loan recipient

Asha Ashadam, a transgender photographer from Telangana who has had her share of struggles to set up her photo studio and take up her passion for photography, gets candid with *The Pioneer*, sharing her journey and hardships in this exclusive chat.

RASHMI BHUMIREDDY

Asha, as we are all aware, refers to hope. Well, that's what kept Asha Ashadam, a transgender person from Telangana, keep up the zeal to set up a photo studio here. In the heart of adversity, Asha's journey is one of her extraordinary strength, determination, and victory of the human spirit. Asha faced societal judgment and personal tribulations. However, her firm desire to thrive led her to a transformative encounter with the transgender community, a pivotal moment that became the catalyst for her journey.

Asha holds a PG Diploma in Hotel Management from the city and lives in Karimnagar. She has always had a zeal to do something around photography, and it was in 2017 that she became a photographer.

Speaking to *The Pioneer* about her journey, Asha shared, "I have a huge passion for photography. I love to take photos for my community, especially when there are events such as birthdays, weddings, and baby photo shoots. These photographs capture everyone in our community. The community members appreciated my talent and motivated me to pursue photography. Though I have learned photography on my own, I am still not aware of how to design or edit photos and make them creative and memorable. Since then, my desire to learn Photoshop and editing has led me to enroll in a computer training institute."

This decision has turned a new leaf in her life. When she enrolled in a computer training institute to learn Photoshop and editing, Asha encountered various challenges due to her gender. She said that, being transgender, her classmates looked down on her and made fun of her. Not only her classmates, but society negatively treats her due to her gender issues. At one point, she even asked her professor, Shanti, to teach her

separately. However, her professor didn't approve her request but instead asked her to focus on classes.

On witnessing her burning passion, Shanti encouraged her to pursue Photoshop and editing courses. Asha blindly followed her professor's words; she completed her course in photo and video editing. She also overcame several societal judgments and personal tribulations.

During her journey as a professional photographer, the Karimnagar collector advised her to approach We Hub and apply for a PMEGP loan. This small piece of advice changed her entire life.

We Hub was the place where Asha could showcase her talent to the world. She became the first transgender person in Telangana to acquire a Prime Minister's Employment Generation Programme (PMEGP) loan.

This is where the WE Hub came into play. Asha said, "WE Hub is like God sent it to me. I am very grateful to the officials, as they have supported and guided me from the start of setting up a studio. With their aid, I have finally set up my own photography and design studio. Since then, a lot of opportunities have come where I can showcase my talents. People began appreciating my work. Currently, two more members are working with me."

However, Asha still faces societal judgment. She said, "Upon knowing my gender, some firms or clients don't approve of giving opportunities to me, while others give me opportunities upon seeing my work. So, no matter how many hurdles life throws at me, my talents speak volumes about me. I have confidence in my talents and myself. I only request that people around me change their perspective on transgender people. It's really pathetic to witness such people having narrow mindsets in the fast-moving world."

Finally, Asha proves the meaning of her name by capturing precious moments at special ceremonies or occasions.



Haemophilia is a rare bleeding disorder manifested by the inability of the blood to clot. The disease occurs due to alterations in genes that regulate our body to stop bleeding. As we celebrate World Haemophilia today, *The Pioneer* brings to you a detailed write-up on Haemophilia. Haemophilia A and B are the most common. It is caused by alterations or mutations in the F8 or F9 genes, respectively, on X chromosomes. The genes associated with haemophilia A and B, F8 and F9, respectively, provide instructions for producing clotting factors VIII and IX. Mutations in these genes result in reduced or non-functional clotting factors, leading to bleeding disorders. The severity of haemophilia in affected individuals can vary depending on the specific mutation and the level of clotting factor present in their blood. Haemophilia C, caused by a deficiency in factor XI located on an autosome, however, is rare. Haemophilia A/B is an X-linked recessive genetic disorder. This means that the affected gene responsible for haemophilia is located on the X chromosome. Since males have one X and one Y chromosome (XY) and females have two X chromosomes (XX), haemophilia primarily affects males. Females can be carriers of the haemophilia gene if they inherit one normal X chromosome and one with a mutation, but they usually do not show symptoms themselves.

Dr. Dipanjan Datta, a BGCII Level II certified genetic counsellor at Renew Healthcare, shares that though haemophilia A and B have treatment in the form of factor and gene therapy, males affected by haemophilia suffer from various co-morbidities, including joint pain, bone-related issues, swelling, and internal bleeds, apart from excessive bleeding even in minor injuries. Undiagnosed, in the case of mild haemophilia, surgery or an accident can cause death! Thus, the diagnosis of the disease is of utmost importance. "Affected individuals are diagnosed through biochemical testing of the factors. Genetic testing can confirm the diagnosis of haemophilia and help in understanding the specific type and severity of the condition. A carrier female will have normal factor levels in most cases. Thus, female family members may choose to undergo carrier testing by genetic studies to determine if they carry a mutation in the F8 or F9 gene, which could be passed on to their children. Biochemical testing is not a suitable method, as biochemistry might be normal."

## DEMYSTIFYING HEMOPHILIA

### HEMOPHILIA AND PREGNANCY

Up to 50% of neonatal males with severe haemophilia have no previous family history. In these cases, there is a 90% chance that the mother is a carrier, with risk to the next male child.

A family tree should be constructed to assess the likelihood of haemophilia carrier status in at-risk female families.

### RISKS IN PREGNANCY FOR MOTHER AND BABY:

The levels of clotting factors VIII and IX should be checked before an invasive procedure or in association with bleeding symptoms. Carriers of haemophilia are at increased risk of bleeding with invasive procedures, termination, spontaneous miscarriage, and at the time of delivery. Male neonates with haemophilia are at increased risk of bleeding, including intracranial hemorrhage (ICH), extracranial hemorrhage (ECH), and iatrogenic bleeding following delivery.



Dr. Kinjal Kothari, Associate Consultant Obstetrician Gynecologist, Manipal Hospital, shares, "The baseline factor level should be determined before the onset of pregnancy. Before pregnancy, the general health of women who are carriers of haemophilia should be optimised. Genetic counselling should be provided to women at risk. Carriers of severe haemophilia should be offered a preimplantation genetic diagnosis. Antenatal care should be delivered in the context of a multidisciplinary team setting with hematologists and obstetricians with expertise in this field. Maternal factor VIII/IX should be checked at booking, before any antenatal procedure, and in the third trimester. Drugs like tranexamic acid, desmopressin (DDAVP), and recombinant factor VIII/IX can be considered given the altered clotting factor profile. A clear plan for the intrapartum care of a carrier and the baby should be available in advance of 37 weeks of gestation. The woman should be seen in the anesthetic clinic, and the neonatologists should be informed of the intended delivery of a baby with haemophilia. A decision regarding the timing and mode of delivery should be agreed upon jointly between the woman and the multidisciplinary team."

There needs to be a full assessment of the advantages and disadvantages of the mode of delivery and consideration of obstetric factors, maternal bleeding risk, patient preference, and reproductive expectations.

"Measures should be taken to

ensure expertise and necessary resources are available at all times.

External cephalic versions and the use of ventouse and mid-cavity forceps should be avoided for male babies at risk of haemophilia. Experienced clinicians should be involved in decisions about whether or not to perform a central neuraxial anesthetic technique, and the woman should be given all the information she needs to make an informed choice based on the level of clotting factors.

To minimise the risk of postpartum hemorrhage (PPH), it is important to recommend or offer active management of the third stage of labour & management should be guided by the results of factor assays," shares Dr. Kinjal.

Genetic testing involves analysing a person's DNA to identify mutations in the F8 or F9 genes from blood or buccal swabs. In cases where there is a family history of haemophilia, invasive diagnostic methods like chorionic villi sampling and amniocentesis, followed by specific targeted genetic testing around 11 weeks (about 3 months) of pregnancy, can help determine the status of the fetus. This can help families make informed decisions about the pregnancy and prepare for the care of a child with haemophilia. Alternatively, pre-implantation genetic testing can be performed by taking a biopsy of the embryos formed by IVF at 5th day and screening for the targeted mutation. This process is called PGT (M), which can help to identify healthy embryos without the trauma of repeated abortions after prenatal diagnosis.

Genetic testing and genetic counselling can play a pivotal role in diagnosis and management. Understanding the genetic basis and inheritance patterns helps predict recurrence risk and plan a healthy baby.

Haemophilia is a rare bleeding disorder, manifested by the inability of the blood to clot. The disease occurs due to alterations in genes that regulate our body to stop bleeding. As we celebrate World Haemophilia today, *The Pioneer* brings to you a detailed write up on Haemophilia.

# what's brewing?



Renowned personalities including Hariteja, Navya Swamy, and Niharika Sood, alongside sports anchors Neha and RJ Ravali, graced the inauguration of Dryby's second branch in Khajaguda, Hyderabad.

RJ Ravali

Navya, Amogha Sunkara and Hariteja

Lalitha

Neha

Tanusha, Amogha Sunkara and Umadevi

Niharika Sood

PARTY

Photos by- SV Chary



Buffalo Wild Wings Kokapet, announced "Spectrum Sparkle," a special event dedicated to raising awareness about autism spectrum disorder. The event aimed to foster understanding, acceptance, and support for individuals on the autism spectrum and their families. Through Spectrum Sparkle, Buffalo Wild Wings Kokapet sought to create a welcoming environment where everyone feels included and valued.



Masoom Minawala, a global influencer, entrepreneur, and investor announced the release of her first-ever book, 'She'll Never Make It'. The book is about Masoom's journey from being ridiculed to proving everyone wrong. This part memoir part self-help book is packed with secrets from Masoom on how to build a new-age business and survive in a dynamic world.

In the UPSC Civil Services 2023 results declared on Tuesday, students of Reflections IAS Academy in Ashok Nagar continued their winning streak by bagging more than 23 All India Services. Donuru Ananya Reddy (AIR-3), Nandala Saikiran (AIR-27), Benzo P Jose (AIR-59), Ravula Jayasimha Reddy (AIR-104), and Ashwin Manideep Kakumanu (AIR-148) were among the rank holders from the institute.



The third anniversary of Ramesh Neuro & Critical Care (RNC) Hospital was celebrated on Tuesday, marking their relentless commitment, groundbreaking thinking, and outstanding service to the healthcare industry. The recent inauguration of cathlab and endoscopy facilities in Block C has been another proud moment for RNC.

Apple Green Diamond, proudly announces its pivotal role in enhancing one of India's most sacred traditions. The revered Ram Temple, now boasts a crown adorned with exquisite gemstones, including multiple Emeralds and a unique Ruby, courtesy of Apple Green Diamond's "Diamondlite from Japan."

## FUN

### ARCHIE

### CALVIN AND HOBBS

### GARFIELD

### REALITY CHECK

### SPEED BUMP

### CROSSWORD

1	2	3	4	5
6		7		8
9	10	11		
12		13	14	
15				
16	17		18	
19				

### NANCY

### SUDOKU

9			7					
2	7	4				9	1	
8	3		5		4			
		5					7	
		2	1	9				
3			4					
	3		4			5	6	
7	4			5	2	3		
			2				4	

### GINGER MEGGS

### ACROSS

- Squirmed about
- Tidy
- The cold ocean at the North Pole
- Perhaps
- A gloved fighter
- Permitted by law
- The remains of a fire
- Become smaller
- A fruit with a stone
- Always ready to give or share

### DOWN

- Dutch buildings with spinning blades attached
- Country with capital Rome
- Jump over
- Health professionals
- 7 in Roman numerals
- An annual festival for Christians
- Burning strongly and flaming brightly
- A greeting
- The body's covering
- Cured meat from a pig

**Yesterday's solution**

7	4	8	3	5	1	2	9	6
2	1	9	6	4	7	8	3	5
3	6	5	8	9	2	7	4	1
6	9	1	7	8	4	3	5	2
5	8	2	1	6	3	9	7	4
4	3	7	5	2	9	6	1	8
8	2	4	9	3	5	1	6	7
1	5	3	2	7	6	4	8	9
9	7	6	4	1	8	5	2	3

**SOLUTION**

S	D	S	S	S
R	O	A	B	O
A	R	O	M	E
U	R	R	O	N
G	O	D	D	N
H	O	L	E	I
T	E	A	R	S
L	E	A	T	E
R	E	C	O	V
S	T	E	E	G

# SHREYAS TALPADE TO PLAY A DEVOTED PANDIT IN *Love You Shankar*

K. RAMYA SREE

Actor and dubbing artist Shreyas Talpade has garnered significant attention from Telugu audiences following his Hindi dubbing for Allu Arjun's character in *Pushpa*. Now, he is set to captivate audiences once again with his upcoming film, *Love You Shankar*, a composite animated film scheduled for a grand theatrical release on April 19 in Hindi, Telugu, Tamil, and Kannada languages. Set against the backdrop of the sacred city of Banaras, *Love You Shankar* promises to enchant viewers with its heartwarming tale of faith, friendship, and adventure. The film revolves around the endearing bond between an eight-year-old boy and Lord Shiva, offering a wholesome family entertainment experience.

As the release date draws near, Shreyas Talpade shared his excitement about the film's multi-language release. "Today, language is not a barrier for the audience if they like a particular story," expressed Shreyas, adding, "I will be extremely happy if it works in all those languages that we are releasing it in, especially Telugu, considering I dubbed for a Telugu film that made major business in Hindi. So I would really like it if the Telugu fans also gave the same kind of love to our film, *Love You Shankar*, when it was released there."

In this exclusive interview, Shreyas provided insights into his character in the film, portraying a devoted pandit whose faith is put to the test by unfortunate events. He praised director Rajiv Ruia's narrative sensibilities and expressed gratitude for being part of the project: "My role is that of a man who works as a pandit in a temple and has a sweet family. There are certain events that happen to them that are very unfortunate. And after that, how his faith is restored, how his belief in the deity and Lord Shiva basically come to his rescue, is what my character is all about in this film."

He further continued, "I heard the story, and I was pretty impressed with the

way the director was dealing with the narrative, especially. These days, there are not too many children's films coming, and Rajiv has successfully done quite a few in the past, including *Ganesh*. His sensibilities and his psyche pretty much understand the psyche of kids. So I went with my gut feeling, and I said, Okay, let me give it a shot and see how it works out. I am glad that I said yes because I completely enjoyed the experience of working in this one."

Regarding the film's mythological theme, Shreyas clarified that *Love You Shankar* is a completely fictional story, blending elements of classic Hindi masala films with modern children's adventure tales. He expressed hope that the fusion would resonate with audiences upon release.

Reflecting on his experiences during filming, Shreyas fondly recalled shooting at the serene ghats of the river Ganga as one of the most memorable moments. He emphasised the film's underlying themes of faith and belief, which he believes resonate deeply with viewers. He shared, "The moment we stepped into Ganga, it was extremely calm and serene, and I think there are very few locations that have that kind of vibe and atmosphere. So that is something that I will never forget. We would sit for hours in front of the balcony and keep looking at the river flowing calmly and beautifully. The biggest takeaway from films like these is faith and our belief in whatever we believe in, whether it is God, nature, superpowers, or super energy. I think it is films like these and stories like these that just reinforce our faith and belief system in that power. So when you are part of a film that deals with your spirituality or your culture, I think it's very satisfying, and there are a lot of takeaways that you take from stories like these."

Shreyas further expressed eagerness to explore roles in various languages, includ-



ing Telugu, Tamil, Malayalam, Kannada, and others. He hinted at an upcoming collaboration with a South Indian production house, showcasing his commitment to diverse linguistic and cultural experiences. They are releasing the film in Hindi, but it is also going to be released in multiple languages.

When asked about his involvement in *Pushpa 2*, Shreyas revealed that dubbing has not yet begun, as the film is still in the shooting process. He expressed anticipation for the project and affirmed his readiness to commence work once production concludes.

In preparation for his role in *Love You Shankar*, Shreyas credited director Rajiv Ruia for simplifying his approach. He recounted immersing himself in the ambiance of Banaras, observing local pundits to enhance his portrayal of the character: "My director, Rajiv Ruia, made my job a lot easier here. When I went there, he asked me to just take a stroll around the ghats of the Ganga and said, You will see a lot of pun-



Actor and dubbing artist Shreyas Talpade, who has captivated the Telugu audience with his Hindi dubbing in *Pushpa*, gets candid with *The Pioneer* about his upcoming multilingual film, *Love You Shankar*.

dots over there, either performing some pujas or, you know, maybe chanting some mantras and things like that. And you can go around and have a look. I just went around at a local observing, whatever I could, whatever they do, and I just, and of course then there is a certain character sketch that the director has in mind, so I combined the two and tried to perform it to the best of my ability." In conclusion, Shreyas encouraged audiences to embrace *Love You Shankar* as a beautiful adventure film suitable for the entire family. He emphasised the film's educational value, providing insights into faith and beliefs while offering a delightful cinematic experience.

## Market Mahalakshmi is a unique blend of love and family entertainment



Director VS Mukkesh, who is coming up with *Market Mahalakshmi* on April 19, shares some interesting insights on the film.

*Mahalakshmi* to life. Reflecting on his transition from short films to feature films, Mukkesh shared, "I've made a lot of short films on the TeluguOne YouTube channel, close to 100+ videos, and there are videos on other channels too. I met Akhilesh and narrated the *Market Mahalakshmi* script, which then began my feature film journey."

Discussing the film's unique premise, Mukkesh emphasised, "Many people claim their films touch on new points. Honestly, we did touch on a new point that has not been explored until now, and that's going to be a major conflict. I don't want to exploit this sensitive topic for promotions. We couldn't reveal it in the teaser or trailer, as it would spoil the experience."

Starring Parvateesam and Praneekaanvika in lead roles, *Market Mahalakshmi* delves into the intricacies of love and family dynamics. Mukkesh shared insights into the casting process, stating, "I chose Parvateesam and an unknown actress because they fit the characters perfectly. As a debut director, it was challenging to attract established stars. This project was about proving my directorial capabilities." With meticulous attention to detail, Mukkesh ensured that the film's authenticity resonated with audiences. "The film will be close to reality because I know a man who loved a vegetable seller girl and married her. The film is based on a real-life love story. I've also observed a few people in the markets," he revealed.

From innovative promotions to a crisp runtime, Mukkesh highlighted the efforts put into every aspect of *Market Mahalakshmi*. Expressing confidence in the film's success, he remarked, "With confidence, I can say that even if only one person watched my film in theaters, they'll surely like it."

K. RAMYA SREE

In the bustling world of Tollywood, where innovation is revered, director VS Mukkesh brings forth a refreshing narrative in his upcoming film, *Market Mahalakshmi*. Set to hit theaters on April 19, this film promises to captivate audiences with its intriguing storyline and heartfelt performances.

In an interaction with the media on Tuesday, the director shed light on the journey of bringing *Market*



Super Good Films, is coming to the audience with another crazy project. *Bhavanam* is a suspense thriller directed by Balachari Kurella, starring Saptagiri, Dhanraj, Shakalaka Shankar, Ajay, Malvika Satheshan, and Sneha Ulal in lead roles. Produced by RB Chaudhary, Wakada Anjan Kumar, and Virendra Seervi! Recently, the first look and teaser of *Bhavanam* was released, and it got an incredible response.

## Samyuktha Menon all set to make her Bollywood debut

In the glitzy realm of Tollywood, one name has been shining brighter than ever: Samyuktha. With a string of consecutive successes under her belt, this talented actress has quickly ascended the ranks to become a household name synonymous with meaningful roles and stellar performances.

Since her debut in the industry, Samyuktha has captivated audiences with her versatility and charm. Her journey to stardom reached new heights with five consecutive super hit films. Each role showcased her depth as an actress and solidified her status as a rising star in Tollywood.

Currently, Samyuktha is gearing up for two highly anticipated projects. She is set to star opposite Nikhil in the Pan India movie *Swayambhu*, promising audiences an unforgettable cinematic experience. Additionally, she is slated to be the leading lady in Sharwanand's upcoming film, further solidifying her presence in the industry.

However, amidst her flourishing career in Telugu cinema, rumours have been swirling about Samyuktha's potential foray into Bollywood. Speculation is rife that she has received an enticing offer for an interesting project in Hindi cinema. Recently, photos of Samyuktha at the Hyderabad airport, bound for Mumbai, have sent social media into a frenzy, fuelling further speculation about her Bollywood aspirations. It seems that Samyuktha is on the brink of making a significant announcement regarding her Bollywood debut. As she sets her sights on new horizons,

the actress is poised to conquer hearts on a national scale with her talent and dedication. With her sights set high, Samyuktha is ready to mesmerise audiences across the country with her enthralling performances.

## NIDHII AGERWAL REPORTEDLY JOINS THE RAJA SAAB SETS

One of the Tollywood star heroes, Prabhas is a pan-Indian actor with a strong filmography that includes the Marathi-directed film *The Raja Saab*. Bollywood actor Sanjay Dutt plays a key role in the horror comedy. According to the most recent information, Nidhi Agerwal, the *iSmart Shankar* beauty, has started working on *The Raja Saab* sets in Hyderabad. This schedule, which will run for a few days, includes scenes where she is seen with Prabhas that are being canned. We'll soon have more information regarding this continuous schedule available. In addition to Nidhi Agerwal, Malavika Mohanan plays the key female role in the movie. This film is financially supported by the renowned production company People Media Factory, and Thaman is the music director.

## Bhale Unnade welcomes Singeetam Srinivasa Rao on board

Hailed as one of the legends of Indian cinema, Singeetam Srinivasa Rao had faded into the shadows, leaving behind a legacy of timeless classics. But now, like a phoenix rising from the ashes, he returns to the limelight in a stellar role, breathing life into the silver screen once again.

In the eagerly awaited film *Bhale Unnade*, Rao joins hands with the charismatic actor Raj Tarun, promising audiences a cinematic experience unlike any other. With music by the talented Shekar Chandra Musical and direction by J Sivasai Vardhan, expectations soar sky-high with this announcement. Singeetam



Srinivas' mere presence commands attention, drawing viewers into a world of intrigue and excitement.

Welcoming him aboard, the makers released a small video that showed him shooting some scenes. The makers announced: The legendary #SingeetamSrinivasaRao who has enthralled us all these years is now back again in another stellar role. Welcome aboard sir! #BhaleUnnade (sic)."

Recently, a new song from the film was released and it received a good response from the audience.

While N.V. Kiran Kumar is producing the film as its Production No. 1 under the Ravikiran Arts banner, director Maruthi's Maruthi Team Product is presenting it. Actress Manisha Kandkur is making her acting debut in Tollywood with this movie.

