



We have to take BJP to new regions, Amit Shah tells workers
page 12



Two tankers attacked in Gulf of Oman, Iran calls for regional dialogue
page 14

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India, New Zealand share points after a washout at Trent Bridge
page 17



NEARBY



CBI files chargesheet in ashram rape case

NEW DELHI
The CBI has filed a chargesheet against self-proclaimed god-man Virender Dev Dixit for the alleged rape of a minor girl at his ashrams in Delhi and Uttar Pradesh in 1999. The agency had earlier declared a reward of ₹5 lakh for information leading to his arrest.
CITY PAGE 2

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FRIDAY REVIEW 8 PAGES
(IN TABLOID)

Modi, Xi meet in Bishkek, agree to speed up boundary talks

They also discussed the status of bilateral ties following the Wuhan summit

**KALLOL BHATTACHERJEE
ATUL ANEJA
NEW DELHI/BEIJING**
Prime Minister Narendra Modi and President Xi Jinping on Thursday agreed to expedite the dialogue on the India-China boundary issue for securing a "fair" solution. The two leaders met in Bishkek, the capital of Kyrgyzstan, where they will participate in the summit of the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO). "The two leaders have asked the Special Representatives to meet and carry forward the discussion and have instructed them to expedite the discussion in this regard for achieving a fair, reasonable and mutually acceptable solution," Foreign



Cementing ties: PM Modi greeting Chinese President Xi Jinping on the sidelines of the SCO summit in Bishkek. •PTI

Secretary Vijay Gokhale said, describing the interaction as "substantive in content." The two leaders discussed the status of the bilateral relationship since the Wuhan summit of April 2018, which came in the backdrop of tension following the 73-day Doklam standoff. The attention on the border issue acquires significance as the Chinese President is expect-

ed to visit India later this year for a summit with Mr. Modi. Mr. Gokhale clarified that the discussion was held in the presence of the Special Representatives. The last round of talks were held in November last, when Ajit Doval of India and Wang Yi of China met in Chengdu for the 21st round of talks between the Special Representatives. "President Xi Jinping very warmly confirmed his readiness to visit India this year. He said that he looked forward to discussing all issues from a strategic and long-term perspective and that both sides should begin intensive preparations for the visit," Mr. Gokhale said.
CONTINUED ON PAGE 12

A coast bruised



To safety: Fishermen rush to a shelter as a high tide hits the shore of Veraval under the influence of Cyclone Vayu that brought normal life to a halt in the Saurashtra region of Gujarat. The cyclone has since changed course. •VIJAY SONEJI (REPORT ON PAGE 9)

India will have its own space station, says ISRO chief Sivan

Modalities will be worked out after first manned mission

**SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI**

India plans to have its own space station, and the modalities for it will be worked out after the first manned mission, Gaganyaan, scheduled for August 2022, K. Sivan, Chairman of the Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO), said on Thursday. "We want to have a separate space station. We will launch a small module for microgravity experiments... that is our ambition," he told journalists here. A detailed report would be submitted to the government after the Gaganyaan mission.



Laying out plans: ISRO Chairman K. Sivan and Union Minister Jitendra Singh in New Delhi on Thursday. •SANDEEP SAXENA

Dr. Sivan said the proposed space station would weigh around 20 tonnes and serve as a facility where astronauts could stay for 15-20 days, and would be placed in an orbit 400 km above earth. The time frame for launch would be 5-7 years after Gaganyaan, he added.
CONTINUED ON PAGE 12

Easter blast mastermind linked to three IS cases

NIA continues searches in Coimbatore

**VIJAITA SINGH
WILSON THOMAS
NEW DELHI / COIMBATORE**

Zahran Hashim, the Sri Lankan mastermind of the April 21 Easter attacks, has emerged as a common link in at least three Islamic State-related cases, including the latest IS module busted in Coimbatore, a probe by the National Investigation Agency (NIA) has revealed. An NIA official said there could be "more members"

associated with the Coimbatore module, which had links with a Kerala module. The agency found that Ibrahim Shah, one of the five suspects detained on Wednesday, was close to Riyas Abubacker of the Kerala module, which had planned attacks in the State. "Searches will continue till the agency identifies all members of the module," said the official.
CONTINUED ON PAGE 12

Probe ordered after rescue team finds no survivors of AN-32 crash

Families of the personnel have been informed, says IAF

**SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI/GUWAHATI**

The Indian Air Force on Thursday ordered a probe into the cause of the crash of its AN-32 aircraft. The decision came after a team of mountaineers who reached the crash site in Arunachal Pradesh found no survivors. The Russian-made military transport aircraft with 13 persons on board crashed 35 minutes after taking off from Jorhat in Assam on

June 3. It was heading to the Mechuka Advanced Landing Ground in Arunachal Pradesh's Shi-Yomi district but lost contact with the ground agencies over the Payum circle in the adjoining Siang district. The 13 personnel on board have been identified as Wing Commander G.M. Charles, Squadron Leader H. Vinod, Flight Lieutenants R. Thapa, A. Tanwar, S. Mohanty and M.K. Garg, War-

rant Officer K.K. Mishra, Sergeant Anoop Kumar, Corporal Sharin N.K., Leading Aircraft Men (LAC) S.K. Singh and Pankaj, and Non-Combatant (enrolled) Putali and Rajesh Kumar. "Eight members of the rescue team reached the site in the morning. They found no survivors. The families were informed accordingly," an IAF spokesperson said.
AIR-DROPPED PAGE 12

Pak.-trained man behind CRPF attack: officials

**VIJAITA SINGH
NEW DELHI**
A day after five CRPF personnel were killed in an attack in south Kashmir's Anantnag -

the first major attack since the Pulwama suicide bombing in February - officials said the AK-47 toting, 'hardened' militant was not a local and was

trained in Pakistan. The official said the *fidayeen* acted alone, killing five personnel in the initial burst of fire.
DETAILS ON PAGE 12

U.S. open to talks on GSP with India, says Pompeo

**SRIRAM LAKSHMAN
WASHINGTON DC**
U.S. Secretary of State Michael Pompeo hinted that it was possible to reinstate the

Generalised System of Preferences, a scheme for preferential access to certain goods markets in the U.S., for India. The administra-

tion official is expected to discuss this and other issues during his New Delhi visit later this month.
DETAILS ON PAGE 13

Monty Chadha held from IGIA in real estate fraud case

'Developer duped buyers of ₹100 crore'

**SAURABH TRIVEDI
NEW DELHI**



Manpreet Singh Chadha in police custody. •PTI

The Economic Offences Wing of Delhi Police arrested vice-chairman of Wave Group Manpreet Singh Chadha alias Monty from the Indira Gandhi International Airport here on Wednesday night in connection with a real estate fraud case. He was allegedly trying to escape to Phuket in Thailand. He was produced before a magistrate in Saket court on Thursday and sent to 14-day judicial custody. Additional Commissioner of Police Suvashish Chaudhary said Mr. Chadha, the director of Uppal Chadha Hi-Tech Developers Private Limited, was arrested on complaints lodged by 29 investors who claimed to have been cheated by the firm in the name of proposed hi-tech township projects on NH-24, Ghaziabad.

eight months from the date of allotment letters. The 29 complainants had booked plots in 2005-06 and paid ₹4.5 crore to the developer. In 2009, the developer told the investors that all necessary approvals have been obtained and work will start soon. In 2011, the investors received a demand letter signed by the vice-president of the company but the name of the firm, the township, and the office address had changed and all payments were sought in the name of the new entity - Wave City NH-24, said Mr. Chaudhary.

MoU with GDA
During investigation it was found that the U.P. government had announced its 'Hi-Tech Township policy' in 2003, inviting real estate firms to develop smart townships with modern facilities in Ghaziabad, and Uppal Chadha Hi-Tech Pvt. Ltd. had entered into an MoU with the Ghaziabad Development Authority in 2005 for developing the project and started taking bookings for plots. However, the site plan was sanctioned only in 2013. Even after a gap of 14 years, the company neither provided plots to all the buyers nor refunded their invested amount.

Wrongful gains
The FIR, registered in January 2018, claimed that the developer duped buyers of over ₹100 crore and made wrongful gains by promising hi-tech townships with facilities such as helipad and proximity to metro station. The company launched the project in 2006, but its agents had started approaching the public for booking of plots in their proposed 'Hi-Tech Township' - Rosewood Enclave, Sunny Wood Enclave, Lime Wood Enclave and Crestwood Enclave - to be developed in the villages of Kachera, Dujana and Mehrauli on NH-24 in 2005 itself. They showed brochures and layout plans for the proposed township of about 1,500 acres. The possession of the plots was to be given within

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Delhi Palam Tomorrow
44°C A very hot day lies ahead. A partly cloudy sky is expected. There are chances of dust storm.

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Man held for fake news on CM, spouse

SYED SAJJAD ALI AGARTALA
The Tripura police on Thursday arrested a man from Delhi on charges of spreading fake news on social media about the family life of Chief Minister Biplab Kumar Deb.

Anupam Paul was made the prime accused in the case registered with West Agartala Police in late April.

"Our team traced Paul to a location in Delhi where he was arrested. He will be brought to Agartala by a flight tomorrow [Friday]," a senior police officer said.

The police had earlier arrested a freelance television journalist, Saikat Talapatra, and a police constable for sharing a Facebook post which claimed that the Chief Minister's spouse had filed a petition for divorce in a Delhi court. The arrested men were later released on bail.

Investigators also questioned Tripura Congress vice-president Tapas Dey for sharing the post against Mr. Deb. He was, however, not detained.

Movement to stop water privatisation

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT JAIPUR

A group of activists and conservationists have launched "Marching Blue" in Rajasthan to stop privatisation of water, while calling for steps to address the real issues confronting the water sector. The trust deed for establishing the international organisation's State unit was signed here on Wednesday.

Environmentalist Rajendra Singh, known as the Waterman of India, and Gandhian activist and Ekta Parishad president P.V. Rajagopal have extended support to the movement to protect water rights of people and generate awareness on conservation of water among the local communities.

Both of them termed the plan for privatisation of water "unnecessary and unwarranted".

Mr. Singh told *The Hindu* that global policies for privatisation of water resources and supply had led to immense suffering among people because of lack of accountability. "The State governments and political parties in India do not understand the consequences of privatisation of water. It will ruin the water sector," he said.

The Ramon Magsaysay Award winner said the water privatisation model adopted in Maharashtra had failed because of high costs and infringement of public rights.

"Marching Blue" will undertake a series of 'Jal Yatras' in Rajasthan and neighbouring States.

'Punjab releasing water to Pak. to prevent flooding'

Decision to discharge surplus taken by technical panel: CM

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT CHANDIGARH

Punjab Chief Minister Amarinder Singh on Thursday dismissed allegations that the government has been releasing water to Pakistan even as the State's canals are drying out. He said surplus water was being discharged as a precautionary measure to prevent flooding in the areas along Sutlej and Beas rivers.

The Chief Minister said that the allegations levelled by Punjabi Ekta Party chief Sukhpal Singh Khaira are "politically motivated and aimed at spreading disinformation".

"Khaira is a chronic attention-seeker with no credibility and no respect for truth," said Capt. Amarinder. He ad-



CM Amarinder Singh.

releasing excess supplies and get the benefit of power generation too. If it was not done now then excess water released through spillway would not only go waste, but would also cause flood damages in the areas located along Sutlej and Beas rivers, the committee found," Captain Amarinder said in a statement.

'No shortage'
He added that there was no shortage of water because of this discharge and the water requirement for sowing cotton was being fully met.

Water has also been released in all canals to meet the requirements for paddy transplantation which is due to start from June 13, said the Chief Minister.

ded that the decision to release excess water in a regulated manner was taken by a technical committee which involved all the partner States.

"A unanimous view emerged at the meeting that there was clearly surplus water and it would be appropriate to use it gainfully by

O.P. Chautala retained as INLD chief

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA CHANDIGARH

Ahead of the October Assembly elections in Haryana, the Indian National Lok Dal (INLD) reorganised its national body, retaining former Chief Minister

Om Prakash Chutala as the party president.

Ashok Kumar Arora, who had stepped down as the party's State unit chief recently, has been made the senior vice-president, a party release said on Thursday.

"After discussions with the State and district-level leaders, the national body of the INLD has been reorganised. Chaudhary Om Prakash Chautala remains the national president of the party," the release stated.

You let party down, Priyanka tells workers

Sonia Gandhi decries BJP poll tactics

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA RAEBARELI (U.P.)

Talking tough with her partymen, Congress general secretary Priyanka Gandhi Vadra said they let down the party in the Lok Sabha polls.

Accompanied by her mother and UPA chairperson Sonia Gandhi, who visited her constituency on a thanksgiving visit on Wednesday, Ms. Vadra pulled up party workers for failing to work. "I will find out the names of the workers who did not work for the party in the elections," she said, adding those who had toiled honestly and sincerely for the party know that from the core of their heart.

A visibly annoyed Ms. Vadra complained, "I am saying today from the bottom of my heart that you did not fight the elections sincerely."

"This is the time of struggle. Those who are nervous, those who are willing to compromise and those who are not ready to give their heart to this struggle... for



Priyanka Gandhi Vadra.

them I will leave no space in the Raebareli Congress and the U.P. Congress," she said.

"You make up your mind, if you want to work in right earnest, you have to struggle, this is all I have to say," she added.

'Crossing all limits'

In her first public address on Wednesday night after the general election results, Ms. Gandhi charged the ruling party with "crossing all limits of dignity" to stick to power. "Various tactics were adopted to woo voters. Everyone in this country knows whether what happened in the elections was moral or immoral," the UPA chairperson said.

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Odisha seeks ₹5,200 cr. for cyclone relief

State govt. holds meeting with NDMA

STAFF REPORTER BHUBANESWAR

The Odisha government has sought early release of ₹5,200 crore from the National Disaster Response Fund for carrying out rehabilitation in areas ravaged by Cyclone Fani.

A State government team, led by Chief Secretary Aditya Prasad Padhi, on Thursday held a meeting with a National Disaster Management Authority delegation which had toured the cyclone-affected districts.

"We are now in the phase of rehabilitation. The ₹1,000 crore released after Prime

Minister's announcement has been exhausted and we request for early release of ₹5,200 crore from the NDRF," said Mr. Padhi.

The State government has requested the NDMA to direct the telecom companies to have a definite standard operating procedure and preparedness for dealing with disaster situations as communication and data transfer is of crucial importance in relief work.

"The disbursement of compensation also suffers due to lack of data connectivity," said the Chief Secretary.

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For further details please logon **Delhi Govt website https://govtprocurement.delhi.gov.in (Tender ID No. 2019_DTL_174026_1, 2019_DTL_174076_1, 2019_DTL_174096_1, 2019_DTL_174098_1 & 2019_DTL_172077_1)** respectively and **DTL website www.dtl.gov.in (Unique No. DTL-6720-120619, DTL-6721-120619, DTL-6726-130619, DTL-6727-130619 & DTL-6714-120619)** respectively.

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JUNE 19 5:00pm भूगोल, पर्यावरण एवं लेखन कौशल संवर्द्धन Sachin Arora
JUNE 20 इतिहास तथा कला एवं संस्कृति की समग्र रणनीति Hemant Jha 2:00pm
JUNE 21 5:00pm सामाजिक मुद्दे एवं सामाजिक न्याय Dharmendra
JUNE 22 5:00pm अंतर्राष्ट्रीय संबंध एवं सामंसारिक मुद्दे Sharad Tripathi
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Karnataka Cabinet expansion today
BENGALURU
The Karnataka Cabinet, headed by Chief Minister H.D. Kumaraswamy, is set for the expansion on Friday and two Independent legislators — R. Shankar (seen on the left in the picture) and H. Nagesh — will be inducted into the Cabinet. It is seen as an attempt to douse discontent in the governing Congress-JD (S) coalition.

No recommendation letters till July 15: TTD
TIRUMALA
The TTD on Thursday reiterated its stance not to entertain any kind of VIP recommendation letters till July 15. Despite the summer vacations coming to an end, the town continues to witness heavy rush. However, VIPs coming in person will be extended with courtesies they deserve, it said.

'No move to hand over Bhadrachalam to A.P.'
TIRUMALA
Telangana Minister for Endowments Indrakaran Reddy on Thursday ruled out handing over of Bhadrachalam to Andhra Pradesh. "Bhadrachalam has been an integral part of Telangana and will remain so," the Minister said.



Tracking the source: An expert holding a bat which was captured for conducting test near Kochi

47 people off Nipah surveillance in Kerala

They had contact with infected person, and were under home quarantine

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT KOCHI
Forty-seven of the 330 people who had direct/indirect contact with the Nipah patient in Kerala and were under home quarantine have been removed from the surveillance list. With regard to the rest, the incubation period for any viral fever will be ending in the coming days and they will be released from home quarantine, depending on their health status.

The Kerala government will take a decision on declaring the district free of Nipah after all the people who had come in contact with the Nipah-positive person are free of the threat, said District Collector Mohammed Y. Saifurulla at a briefing to the media on Thursday.

Last meeting
On the progress of Nipah-prevention activities, Mr. Saifurulla said it was the last meeting of the inter-departmental core committee that was reviewing the activities in the past 11 days since the Nipah scare hit the district. However, the Health Department, under the District Medical Officer and the District Surveillance Officer, would continue to the review the situation for Nipah or other communicable disease, such as H1N1, said Mr. Saifurulla.

reached here from various States and agencies had analysed 1,798 deaths in the month of May. No connection to the Nipah virus was found in these analyses, Mr. Saifurulla said. Experts, including virologists, epidemiologists and researchers in zoonotic diseases and other animal studies, are in the process of collecting bat and pig samples from various localities to trace the source of the Nipah infection.

Jagan seeks to corner Naidu over defections

Six-time MLA Tammineni Sitaram elected Speaker

STAFF REPORTER AMARAVATI

Andhra Pradesh Chief Minister Y.S. Jagan Mohan Reddy's remark that his predecessor N. Chandrababu Naidu had lured 23 YSR Congress Party (YSRCP) MLAs into the Telugu Desam Party (TDP) and protected them from disqualification by dictating terms to the then Speaker Kodela Siva Prasada Rao led to a furore in the State Assembly on Thursday.

"Had I lured a few MLAs from the TDP, it would have lost its Opposition party status. But I did not do that as there would be no difference between me and Mr. Naidu. Given a chance, some TDP MLAs would join the YSRCP but I will not resort to horse-trading because I want it [the TDP] to survive," he observed.

While congratulating six-time MLA Tammineni Sitaram on his unanimous election as Speaker of the As-



Welcome hug: A.P. Chief Minister Y.S. Jagan Mohan Reddy greeting Speaker Tammineni Sitaram on Thursday.

sembly, Mr. Jagan drew the members' attention to the inaction of Dr. Siva Prasada Rao on the defected YSRCP MLAs, four of whom were made Ministers, and said that instead of upholding democratic values, Mr. Naidu did not allow the axe to fall on them by "controlling" the Speaker.

What Mr. Naidu and Dr. Siva Prasada Rao did was in blatant violation of the Anti-Defection Law (ADL) enshrined in the Tenth Schedule of the Constitution, Mr. Jagan said. He added that Mr. Naidu had stooped so low that he prevented the YSRCP from moving a no-confidence motion against Dr. Siva Rao to avoid its repercussions.

A.P. seeks cooperation of Telangana in resolving issues

M. RAJEEV HYDERABAD

The Andhra Pradesh government has asked the Telangana government to cooperate in resolving all pending issues arising out of the State's reorganisation "simultaneously and comprehensively" in the interests of the people of the two States.

The request comes in the light of the Andhra Pradesh government's decision to hand over all the blocks in the State Secretariat complex in Hyderabad to the Telangana government. The

Andhra Pradesh government, in a communication reportedly addressed to the Telangana government, recalled the issues that had been pending resolution between the two States since bifurcation.

Power utilities
The division of assets, liabilities and employees pertaining to the 41 institutions under Schedule IX, for instance, remained unresolved even after the Andhra Pradesh government had issued relevant orders based

on the Sheela Bhida Committee recommendations. The allocation of employees of the power utilities too was not resolved while the division of assets, liabilities and employees of 142 institutions under Schedule X was still pending. In respect of bifurcation of A.P. Bhavan in Delhi, the expert committee had placed two options before the Telangana government, but it rejected both. Another issue was apportionment of cash credit between the civil supplies corporations.

More English medium sections in Karnataka schools

Demand in government schools outstrips seat availability; decision after meeting with Chief Minister

TANU KULKARNI BENGALURU

The popularity of English medium in government schools in Karnataka has caught both principals and government officials by surprise. The Department of Public Instruction (DPI) has decided to allow those government schools offering English as a medium of in-

struction to start additional sections if the demand is more than the number of seats available. The department will issue an official order to schools shortly. "This was decided after a review meeting with Chief Minister H.D. Kumaraswamy. However, schools can start additional sections only if there are trained teachers

available to instruct students in English," said P.C. Jaffer, Commissioner for Public Instruction. This academic year, the department introduced English medium sections on a pilot basis in 1,000 government primary schools. According to official data, nearly 300 of the 1,000 schools are being flooded

with applications for the English medium sections, with demand outweighing the number of seats. The government's decision to teach students in English was a controversial one, which was opposed by Kannada writers, academicians, and a section of the elected representatives. However, parents as well

as the School Development and Monitoring Committee have submitted requisitions to officials seeking additional English medium sections in schools. Parents attributed the demand to the fact that it was no longer possible for them to obtain a seat under the RTE quota in private schools in most neighbourhoods.

Sea erosion wreaks havoc along Alappuzha coast

Residents want government to construct sea wall immediately

STAFF REPORTER ALAPPUZZHA

Sea erosion continues to wreak havoc in the coastal areas of the Alappuzha district. A number of houses have been taken away by the sea in Ambalappuzha. High swell waves that have lashed the coast since the onset of the southwest monsoon have damaged several houses. The situation is not very different in Cherthala, Thrikunnapuzha and Arattupuzha, among other places. Officials said on Thursday that five houses had been destroyed in Ambalappuzha

in the last five days. According to local residents, the problem is severe in areas having no sea walls. "Even before the start of the monsoon, strong waves have begun to rattle the coast. The intensity has increased in the last couple of days. The fierce waves have already damaged a few houses. The rest of the houses are on the verge of being washed away," said Santhosh, a resident of Neerkunnam near Ambalappuzha. The residents have alleged apathy on the part of authorities in constructing a sea wall. "When the coastal erosion becomes severe, authorities would visit the place and promise us all help. But nothing happens. They want us to move to relief camps. Instead of shifting us to camps, the government

should find a permanent solution to the issue," said a resident. On Tuesday, members of the fishing community laid siege to National Highway 66 near Ambalappuzha demanding immediate construction of a sea wall in the region. **Rocks laid**
Meanwhile, the Irrigation Department has taken steps to lay rocks at Ottamassery, Neerkunnam and other coastal areas of the district to save houses from strong waves. "A total of six houses — five in Ambalappuzha and one in Karthikappally taluk — have been destroyed in the rain fury. Moreover, 80 houses have suffered damage in the district, including 10 on Thursday," said an official.



Gone with the sea: A house destroyed in sea erosion at Neerkunnam, near Ambalappuzha in Kerala. ■SURESH ALLEPPY

Airport privatisation: Pinarayi to meet PM

Against involvement of Adani group

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT THIRUVANANTHAPURAM
Kerala will approach Prime Minister Narendra Modi to prevent handing over the Thiruvananthapuram international airport to Adani Enterprises Limited (AEL) that emerged as the highest bidder for managing, operating, and developing the infrastructure of the Airports Authority of India-managed airport for the next 50 years.

Reiterating the stance of the government against handing over the airport to the private operator in the Assembly on Thursday, Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan said he will meet the Prime Minister on June 15 in

New Delhi and demand suspension of the handing over the premier airport of the State to the AEL. The private group cannot operate and develop the airport without the support of the State government. The Chief Minister said the Centre should either continue with the existing arrangement under the AAI or entrust the airport to the State government. The government has taken all possible steps to prevent handing over the airport set up in 1932 and a case filed by the State and the Kerala State Industrial Development Corporation (KSIDC) is pending in the High Court.

Maradu: govt. to protect flat owners

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT THIRUVANANTHAPURAM

The Kerala government will take steps to protect the interests of 349 families facing displacement following the Supreme Court order to demolish five apartment buildings at Maradu in Kochi for violation of Coastal Regulation Zone (CRZ) norms, Minister for Local Self Governments A.C. Moideen has said. Replying to a submission by M. Swaraj of the CPI (M) in the Assembly on Thursday, the Minister said the government was with the 349 families who would have to move out of these apartments. "The government cannot prevent the execution of the Supreme Court order. But, we will not ditch the homeless," he said. Mr. Swaraj said many would be in dire straits as they had invested all the savings for buying the flats.

Woman given burial after 31-day ordeal

Court had banned burials at cemetery

STAFF REPORTER KOLLAM

Annamma can finally rest in peace as the body of the 75-year-old, that has been kept in a morgue at Sasthamkotta since May 15, was finally buried here on Thursday. Her body was buried in a concrete vault in Jerusalem cemetery at Thuruthikkara in Puthoor amidst threats and protests, ending a 31-day-long ordeal for the family. The funeral took place in the presence of the police and revenue officials as the residents launched a protest, some of them threatening to commit suicide. Annamma, a Dalit Christian who belongs to Jerusalem Mar Thoma Church at Thuruthikkara, died on May 14 due to age-related ailments. But the church authorities refused to bury her body in the cemetery citing a court order prohibiting

burials to prevent contamination of nearby water sources. The parish has only 28 families which have been using the cemetery for many years. Some four years ago, the residents approached a court opposing the burials and later the bodies of the parishioners were taken to another cemetery under the Mar Thoma Church. But this church also denied permission to the family of Annamma, pointing out lack of space as the reason. Later, a High Court order approved burial after the construction of a concrete vault, but the family was asked to wait for over 20 days, the time needed for the concrete to set. The completion certificate was issued after the stipulated time, finally allowing the family to conduct the funeral.

Dalit houses are 'Maharajula' colonies

Dalit Shakti Programme founder claims they were once Indian kings

K.M. DAYASHANKAR KARIMNAGAR

Dalit colonies, mostly found on the outskirts of villages, are being renamed 'Maharajula' colonies (king's colonies) in the integrated Karimnagar district of Telangana, thanks to the cultural movement launched by Dalit Shakti Programme founder Visharadhan Maharaj. Visharadhan Maharaj had been fighting for their rights including educating them so that they do not remain oppressed any more. He also claimed that the Dalits were once rulers of the country and one Jamboo Maharaj ruled India. He had also been campaigning that Madigas (who were called Maha Adigas) should suffix their names with Maharaj. Visharadhan Maharaj participated in a walkathon covering 5,000 km from October 2017 to April 14, 2018, wherein he empowered Da-



Happy residents: Several Dalit colonies are being renamed as 'Maharajula' colonies in Karimnagar district.

lits by placing a symbolic crown on their heads stating that they were kings and once rulers. He asked them not to remain suppressed and lead a respectable life. **Suffix Maharaj**
Inspired by him, Dalits started changing their names by suffixing with Maharaj. Besides, they also started re-

naming the Dalit colonies as Maharajula colonies with much pomp and gaiety. In some villages, Visharadhan Maharaj had personally visited and unveiled the sign boards of Maharajula colonies. "The social stigma of being called Madiga has changed now and we feel proud to be called Maharaj,"

said Kanukuntla Laxman Maharaj of Urturu village at Manakondur mandal. For several years, Madigas could not reveal their sub-caste and only said that they belonged to the SC community because of the stigma associated with it, he said. **'Happy and excited'**
"When Visharadhan Maharaj told us that we were once rulers and belonged to the King Jamboo family, we were very happy and excited. The word Madiga sounds bad and calling us Maha Adigas was quite natural and respectful," he added. When people called our colonies Harijanwada, Dalit colonies or SC colonies, we were humiliated. But, now we are feeling proud to be called residents of Maharajula colonies, he added. He thanked the movement that literally changed the mindset of people about Dalits.

MD of Injaz International arrested

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT BENGALURU

While the Special Investigation Team (SIT) has begun investigations into the multi-crore scam involving the IMA Group of Companies, a man who was on the run after duping many using the same modus operandi as that of IMA was nabbed by the Karnataka police on Thursday. Central Crime Branch sleuths arrested the managing director of Injaz International, a Bengaluru-based finance firm, who had been absconding since April after allegedly duping people in the name of 'Halal investment'. He had not returned their money. The accused, Misbaud-S. Mukarram, was allegedly running investment schemes by luring depositors with promises of returns as high as 25% since 2016.

IN BRIEF

**Promoters of DHFL look to raise \$1 billion**

NEW DELHI
Promoters of DHFL are in talks with private equity firms and are expecting to garner \$1 billion (about ₹6,900 crore) by selling nearly 50% of their holdings, sources said. The Wadhawan family, who are the promoters, currently holds close to 40% stake in the firm. The sale proceeds will enable DHFL to substantially reduce its debt-to-equity ratio and restart the business to its full potential, they added.

Jet tanks 23% after trading curbs on shares

NEW DELHI
Shares of Jet Airways on Thursday cracked over 23% after the stock exchanges decided to impose restrictions on its stock trading from June 28. The scrip plummeted 23.18% to hit a multi-year low of ₹84.80 on the BSE. On the NSE, shares plummeted 23.30% to hit a multi-year low of ₹84.60. The restrictions are part of measures to curb excessive volatility, a circular said.

Reserve Bank to pump in ₹12,500 cr. on June 20

MUMBAI
The RBI said it will infuse ₹12,500 crore into the financial system through bond purchases on June 20. The decision was based on a review of the evolving liquidity conditions and assessment of the durable liquidity needs going forward, RBI said. The purchase of government securities under the open market operation for ₹12,500 crore will be conducted on June 20. PTI

Acer to launch 'super thin' laptops

Company targets Indian gaming products market with its Predator series

MINI TEJASWI
BENGALURU

Taiwanese hardware, advanced electronics and mobility devices manufacturer Acer Inc. is betting big on the India market.

The company said it had been witnessing a significant traction in the country's gaming products market with its newly launched Predator series of gaming PCs.

The company's consumer business has been growing at 10% year-on-year while gaming alone contributed to 15% of its revenues last year.

India already has a large community of hardcore gamers and the improved bandwidth situation is only helping the community grow, the company said.

Chandras Panigrahi, CMO and Consumer Business Head, Acer India, said: "We are going all out in In-



Size matters: Acer India's Chandras Panigrahi says 'thin & light' is the way forward for computing devices.

dia. The country is emerging as a sizeable gaming device market, offering a huge opportunity for us. We already have a 40% market share in the gaming PC segment."

According to Mr. Panigrahi, 'thin & light' is the way forward for computing devices. The company will soon

launch super thin (less than 970 gm) laptops and notebooks. "We will be able to do this as we are the global leader in cooling technologies."

"The number of PC and laptop refresh buyers are also on the rise in the country. People want to do away with bulky laptops, notebooks,

tablets and devices," he said.

Acer has also embarked on a refresh mode in India, after having completed two decades of operations here. The company will refresh and relaunch several of its product lines such as Back to School, Back to College and TravelMate series.

Govt. projects

There is appetite for smart devices among governments and public sector enterprises. "We are already part of many critical government projects. We will further increase our focus on this sector," Mr. Panigrahi added.

Acer anticipates decent demand for its recently introduced ConceptD series (machines for professional and amateur creatives) among design houses, agencies, movie makers, artists and architects.

Auto, telecom to remain subdued in FY20: ICRA

Cement, steel sectors are likely to pick up

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
MUMBAI

Auto, auto components and telecom sectors are likely to remain subdued in financial year 2020 (FY20), while cement, construction and steel sectors are likely to pick up in FY20, according to ICRA's performance review and outlook for the Indian corporate sector.

In the automobile sector, the demand will remain subdued for most segments in FY20 owing to rising ownership cost and subdued rural demand.

"For commercial vehicles, slowing industrial growth, surplus capacity due to revised axle load norms, weak freight rates and rising ownership cost are some of the key challenges," said Shamsheer Dewan, vice-president and sector head, ICRA.



es. For passenger vehicles, rising ownership cost, subdued demand from metros and tier 1 cities, weak demand from fleet operators and slowing rural demand are some of the key challenges," said Shamsheer Dewan, vice-president and sector head, ICRA.

slowdown in automobile sales, the auto component industry is expected to grow between 10-11% in FY20 supported by increasing content per vehicle owing to transition to BS-VI and safety norms.

In telecom, despite consolidation and deleveraging plans, credit metrics are likely to remain weak for the firms.

ICRA expects cement demand growth of around 8% in FY20. This growth is likely to be driven by housing, primarily rural housing and affordable housing, and improved focus on infrastructure segments.

The construction companies are likely to benefit from an healthy order book position.

Despite expectation of

BPCL ropes in STFC to fund truckers for diesel

Scheme to aid small transporters

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
MUMBAI

State-owned Bharat Petroleum Corporation Limited (BPCL) has roped in Shriram Transport Finance Company (STFC) to fund truckers for diesel purchase under its "Fuel now, pay later" scheme.

Confirming the development, P. S. Ravi, ED, retail, BPCL, said, "Small transporters, due to their lesser financial capabilities, were in look out for high quality fuelling, associated services and financial solutions to build their business and growth. In arrangement with Shriram Transport, they will get money and



there is no need to carry cash. This partnership addresses the need for fuelling. BPCL has the highest market share in the top 20 national highways."

This scheme is aimed at targeting small truck owners with less than 10 trucks, constituting about 75% of the diesel sales.

Grofers to expand its warehousing capacity

Online grocery start-up to invest ₹280 crore

N. ANAND
CHENNAI

Online grocery start-up Grofers has drawn up a ₹280-crore plan to expand its warehousing capacity within the next 18 months to meet its growth needs, said a top official.

"Currently, we have a storage capacity of 2.1 million sq.ft.," said Albinder Dhindsa, co-founder and CEO, Grofers. "This would be increased to 2.5 million sq.ft. by December 2019 and to 3.5 million sq.ft. by December 2020," he said.

Grofers has 25 warehouses in 10 cities. It plans to add



Albinder Dhindsa

seven more warehouses by December 2019. The expansion would cost about ₹80 crore for the first phase and ₹200 crore for the second phase. The new warehouses would come up in Chennai, Bengaluru and Hyderabad.

On funding, he said the firm had recently raised ₹1,400 crore. Most of it would be deployed in infrastructure development.

Mr. Dhindsa hinted that the company planned to go for initial public offering (IPO) by 2021. Prior to that, it might raise funds from existing investors once again. Till now, the firm had raised ₹350 million.

"We have been growing at 10% to 15% month-on-month and our prices are lower than others by 12% to 15%. We don't deal in fruits, vegetables and dairy items," said Mr. Dhindsa.

Call for more capital to regional banks, NBFCs

Bankers seek small savings rate review

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI

The upcoming Budget should include provisions for increasing capital to regional banks and creating a dedicated liquidity window for the NBFC sector, the heads of banking industry told Finance Minister Nirima Sitharaman on Thursday during a pre-Budget consultative meeting.

The bankers also stressed on the need for an enhanced role for the Financial Stability and Development Council (FSDC), the setting up of a debt exchange traded fund, and the need for a review of the interest rates of the small sav-

ings schemes.

The meeting was attended by Minister of State for Finance Anurag Thakur, Finance Secretary Subhash C. Garg, Expenditure Secretary Girish Chandra Murmu, Revenue Secretary Ajay Narayan Pandey, Financial Services Secretary Rajeev Kumar, Disinvestment Secretary Atanu Chakraborty, Chief Economic Advisor K.V. Subramanian among others.

The banking industry was represented, among others, by Reserve Bank of India Deputy Governor N.S. Vishwanathan and State Bank of India Chairman Rajnish Kumar.

THE HINDU GROUP

A SPECIAL PUBLICATION FROM THE HINDU GROUP

This coffee-table book opens a window to the practice of Buddhism in Japan, right from its arrival in that country 1,000 years ago to its growth through the worship of deities of Indian origin. Benoy Behl's images illuminate the pages and present an invaluable account of Japan's links with Hinduism and with its Buddhist past

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VANGMAYI PARAKALA

Over two months ago, Bumble, the dating-app-turned-networking-suite ran a smart campaign. Get on the app, sign into its professional networking vertical called Bizz, and match with Priyanka Chopra-Jonas — this would get you a shot at interning as a marketing assistant on the sets of the upcoming movie *The Sky Is Pink*, a project that she is co-producing with Ronnie Screwvala and Siddharth Roy Kapur.

Now, to further the buzz around Bizz, they're kicking off Find Them On Bumble, a campaign in Mumbai, Delhi, and Bengaluru, which will spotlight women entrepreneurs and women-driven businesses in India. Faces from different fields and backgrounds, and of all ages, have been brought on board. This includes the likes of Karishma Mehta, founder and CEO of the Humans of Bombay website; Pooja Dhingra, pastry chef and owner of the Le15 Patisserie chain; Falguni Peacock, luxury bridal-wear designer and co-founder of Falguni Shane Peacock; Namrata Purohit of the Pilates Studio; and Imaan Javan, a solar energy developer to name a few. "The idea is to go from digital to physical, and to encourage other women who may have similar aspirations, to connect and learn from them," says global director of strategy at Bumble, Priti Joshi, who is currently in India to oversee the campaign. "We'll also be doing offline events, which will also give our users the opportunity to potentially meet some of these women in real life," she adds.

Bumble entered India only in December 2018. They came in not as a dating site as they did in the United States four years ago, but as a "full suite" networking platform. This followed a laudable evolution narrative that came from the company keeping its ear to the ground. In early 2017, noticing a surge in Bumble users only looking for friends after romantic partners were found, the



BUMBLE PUSHES BIZZ

All business (above) Priyanka Chopra at the Bizz launch in New York; screenshots from the app
SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

Surpassing 10 lakh users in India, Bumble is now putting its might behind its professional networking mode, Bizz

company went on to scale up the 'BFF mode' for platonic relationships. Again, people had soon started making 'friends' in line with their professional interests. What they haven't compromised on through this trajectory, is their women-first credentials, pushing that forward aggressively in India with sometimes problematic slogans like "ambitious, not loose" or "curious, not loose".

Regardless, in half a year, Bumble has surpassed 10 lakh users in the country. Joshi says that Indian Bumble users have taken to the

app's different modes in record numbers: "In India 60% of the female users are using more than one mode on Bumble, much higher than in other countries. It just goes to show that Indian women aren't just looking for empowered connections in love, or friendships or career — they want it all." Before leaving for India, Joshi talked about the company's specific interest in Bizz for the Indian market, and consequently, on their learnings of the business, art, and entrepreneurial climate for women in the country. Edited excerpts.

It's been six months in India. How have users taken to the platform?
We had over 1 million registered users in India in just four months following our launch — and we have a total of over 60 million users in 150 countries around the world. We are very excited about this initial growth in our market in India. Women in India have made the first move over 2.5 million times. They are sending twice as many messages as women in the rest of the world. We're especially excited to see that our female user base in India has grown more

than 1.5x faster than males, since launch.
Is the common perception of Bumble as a dating site deterring those who want to use the professional Bizz mode and not Date?
We understand that a lot of individuals might be in committed relationships — so the app has a provision where you can hide Date mode, so that you only have the other two, BFF and Bizz, showing up. Should you be interested in a romantic partner again, you can reintroduce the Date mode right back.

Are all three modes optional then?
No, you cannot turn off Bizz and BFF. The idea is that with Date mode, you find one person to stay committed to for a long time. You don't really need to go back on it. But from a BFF and Bizz standpoint, the need to connect with possible friends or professional contacts will vary at different times in your life.

In your experience in India, do you sense a pattern of emerging change in the country's career landscape?
Not yet, since its only been a few months — but in a year's time maybe we should connect to see a time shift. What's exciting as I'm digging into the metrics is that a majority of Indian women on Bizz are looking to network, find a mentor, a partner. They're looking for real, authentic one-to-one professional connections to go through a [work] experience together. They're also exploring the ideas of what it means to be a mentor or a mentee. The other interesting thing is that industry-wise, while marketing is one of the biggest categories, most of the Bizz users are interested in the arts — creatives, people in fashion, artists. Tech and media are the next few industries. That's a wonderfully diverse set.

What is different about a Bizz user when compared to users on popular professional networking sites like LinkedIn?
I can't speak for others, but what I can tell you is that, a lot of our younger women [on Bizz] are looking for internships and part-time work, which aligns with what we'd have hypothesized. In women over 30, interest in tech fields tends to be a little bit higher. In women younger than this, an interest in the arts is high. This is what we're seeing in the last four to five months. It'll be easier over time to see how that changes or flows.

POP-UP

Listen to the artists

Atulyakala provides a platform for artists with hearing and speech impairment



When Smriti Nagpal was 23, she met Amit Vardhan, an artist with hearing loss, who worked for an NGO. He had earned a Masters Degree in Art from the College of Arts, in the city, but had found no avenues to use it for his livelihood. The meeting, now six years ago, inspired her to start Atulyakala, an initiative to bridge this gap, and give artists with speaking and hearing impairment a platform to showcase and sell their work. Smriti's own experience with her siblings, both hearing impaired fed into her understanding of the problem. Fashioned as India's "first deaf-run lifestyle brand", Atulyakala facilitates its employees to contribute to society and break any ableist stereotypes.

She began sourcing products and connecting with people at the design-school level. "These schools had reservation for those with deafness. I was able to find them in 70% of the art schools I had heard of. Also, I had access to the communities and groups built by them, because of my siblings. So I put the word out in these groups, which really helped us," she says.
Nagpal, who earned her master's degree in Social Innovation and entrepreneurship from The London School of Economics and Political Science in 2018, hires people specific to different job profiles in Atulyakala. There are sketching artists and graphic designers, among others. It also welcome interns or volunteers who want to learn the Indian Sign Language (ISL), and be part of this community. Atulyakala has also put up stalls and kiosks at many big-ticket events like the Jaipur Literature Festival, The Lil Flea and Horn Ok Please in Delhi.
Now, their upcoming pop-up and sign language session aims to unite retail and ISL learning sessions, under one roof. The session will be conducted by one of their employees, and is open to all.
Smriti, who joined the National Association of the Deaf when she was 16, says, "I never wanted our decisions to be based on charity. A bigger challenge is that charity has been associated with sympathy — these people do not need it. They can offer you amazing products that you can buy."

Register on Insider.in; 14th-16th June; 12pm-9pm, Blue Tokai Cafe Roasters, Safdarjung Enclave; nearest metro: Green Park
SONAKSHI GOEL

FOOD SPOT

Rekindling an old relationship

Daitchi in South Extension market hasn't lost its way with flavour



RAHUL VERMA

When I see people going gaga over food trucks, I shrug. Long before them, we were lining up before what was known as a van. In many parts of Delhi, there'd be a dilapidated van parked in some corner, selling mostly Chinese food. When we couldn't afford restaurant food — and that was often — we bought our soup and chow mein from them, at rates that we wholly approved of.

One such van was in the South Extension Market. We went there all the time, but once in a while — when somehow the pockets were crisp with notes — we used to go to a restaurant in the other part of the market: South Ex 2. This was Daitchi, and we — a group of close friends — just loved the food there. I can't recall when I went there



Just like old times Vegetable noodles and chicken with pak choi from Daitchi • SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

last, but it was possibly in the late '70s or early '80s. And then, a few days ago, we ordered from Daitchi — and it was like meeting a long-lost friend, and finding that we still liked the same kind of music, and read the same books.
Let me start at the beginning. A friend has moved to South Extension Part 2. We went to see her house and stayed back for dinner. Her kitchen was not functioning

yet, so I had a brainwave. "Let's order from Daitchi," I said. The others hadn't eaten there, but were willing to give it a try. So I called the restaurant up (26257511) and asked for a plate of vegetable noodles, vegetable fried rice (both ₹370), assorted vegetables in hot garlic sauce (₹ 320 — there was, as you've guessed, a vegetarian among us), chilli chicken and chicken with pak choi (both ₹380). The food arrived within half

an hour. We sat down to dinner — and I discovered that the food was as good as ever.
The rice and the noodles had been lightly tossed with the vegetables. I didn't have the friend's vegetable dish, but focused on the two chicken preparations. One was a dry dish — the chicken had been stir-fried with pak choi, and the flavours of the greens had nicely sharpened the light taste of the chicken,

cooked with chopped green chillies, onions and ginger. I enjoyed the chilli chicken immensely. It wasn't that blackish-brown soya colour that most chilli chicken dishes come in, and hadn't been overwhelmed by bell pepper and onion chunks, as they often are. It was appetizingly pale in colour, and the sauce was light and superb, with just the right amounts of pepper and onions in it. The dishes were a bit hot, I must admit, but I, for one, wasn't complaining.
The helpings were good, too. There were five of us, and the hostess had some leftovers for dinner the next day. We didn't ask for the pork dishes, which were a particular favourite of mine when we used to go there. They still have quite a few dishes — such as pork roast, ribs and double-fried pork — on the menu. Next time!
I am glad our friend has moved to South Ex. It's ended up reviving an old and once much nurtured relationship. I should now look up the van.
The writer is a seasoned food critic

PRODUCT

Diamond Disruptors



Italian heritage brand FILA recently launched the successor to their Disruptor shoes, the limited edition Disruptor 2. In this bold update, the shoes are crafted with a silver glitter upper and silver laces with the Disruptor 2's full glove leather lining, rubber outsole, molded EVA midsole, and a signature saw tooth bottom. The Disruptor 2 was declared Footwear News' 2018 Shoe of the Year. Despite the bulky design, the FILA Disruptor II is lightweight and adds some pep to your step thanks to its platform shoe-like design.

₹24,999; available at VegNonVeg, B6, Safdarjung Enclave; nearest metro: Green Park

For listing or to be featured here, email us at delhimetro@thehindu.co.in

5 EVENTS WORTH-YOUR-WHILE



TALK **Gandhi matters**

Raza Foundation is organising Gandhi Matters, a series of monthly talks on the Mahatma to commemorate his 150th birth anniversary. Today is the 9th edition of this series, a lecture "Negotiating Violence: Gandhi's Way" by Neera Chandhoke, a former Professor of Political Science at Delhi University.
VENUE: Kamaladevi Complex, India International Centre, Lodhi Road
TIME: 6:30 p.m.



FILM **Thai film festival**

The Royal Thai Embassy is organising its annual Thai film festival titled "Namaste Thailand 2019". The third edition of the three-day film festival commences today. It will feature six films, including the 2018 *Friend zone*. A special free Thai green curry also will be given to the audience at the screening.
VENUE: PVR Cineams, Select Citywalk
TIME: 2 p.m. onwards



MUSIC **Karan Mahajan live**

Tonight, The Piano Man Jazz Club is hosting the Delhi-based Karan Mahajan band, live. Led by the guitarist and composer Karan Mahajan, the band's repertoire is a collection of original compositions by the musician. The band also dabbles in other genres including traditional blues, funk, and soul music.
VENUE: B 6-7/22 Safdarjung Enclave Market
TIME: 9 p.m. onwards



FOOD **Summer special**

1911, an all-day diner at The Imperial, has a special summer salad and barbecue. On offer are grilled New Zealand lamb chops, pepper crusted tenderloin, and more. There is also pickled beetroot and orange salad, as well as melon and mozzarella salad. Round it off with *paan* or *anjēr* kulfis from Daniell's Tavern.
VENUE: 1911, The Imperial
TIME: 12:30 p.m. - 2:45 p.m.



MUSIC **Fantastic Fridays**

Lekka, a singer-cum-songwriter from Delhi, will sing pop-rock with her four- or five-piece band, including an acoustic guitarist and a pianist. She has been listed as one of the top 12 artists on South Asia's English music show *The Stage*, Season 3.
VENUE: Saints N Sinners, GF-21 Global Foyer, Golf Course Road, Sector 43, Gurugram
TIME: 9:30 p.m. onwards

ON BOARD CAFÉ INDIA

All set for the India Vs Pakistan match in Manchester? Our Sports Reporter takes us back to a time when Indian food was scarce on cricketing tours, and the team craved *rajma-chawal*

VIJAY LOKAPALLY

Around 20 years ago, there was a suggestion to the Board of Control for Cricket in India that the team, when travelling overseas, be extended the facility of taking along a cook. There were of course 'in-house chefs' available, but you couldn't expect Sachin Tendulkar to dish out *bain-gan bharta* for the whole team at every meal. (Tendulkar recently cooked it for Mother's Day, and posted the video on Twitter. He'd cooked some for us in the hotel kitchen in Bulawayo, Zimbabwe. He also makes a mean steak).

The team members (both players and journalists) who had a tough time finding food were the vegetarians, especially the wicket-takers, like Anil Kumble, Venkatesh Prasad, Javagal Srinath; and run-getters like Pravin Amre, VVS Laxman. It is another matter that Srinath allowed himself the freedom of a non-vegetarian meal once in a while.

The Indian team had a willing cook in Sandeep Patil. He loved to cook. "I have cooked for a gathering of 50," he boasts today. Patil, however, had his limitations: "You get the *masalas* and I will serve you the most delicious food," he would tell his team-mates. They still remember the finger-licking experience at parties hosted by Patil. He would cook everything from *khichri* to *biryani*. He'd personally buy, cut and clean the meat and vegetables. He loved feeding people and would only eat once the first round was done.

The cricketers, however, weren't lucky to always have Patil travelling with them. So they discovered ways to find their food friends, or *mamoos* (uncles), on tours to the West Indies, Kenya, New Zealand. A few players were champions at befriending the expatriates and inviting themselves to dinner. Laxman was the most popular in places like the West Indies and Australia, where families from Andhra would compete to host him and a few others. At the end of the day's play, the vegetarians waited eagerly for Laxman to whisper, "In the lobby at 7." The word was spread discreetly.

In New Zealand, the team had a generous *mamoo* in Mori



Just like home From *rajma* rice to *khichri* and *biryani*, the former Indian cricket team managed to find a taste of home while touring • VV KRISHNAN, GETTY IMAGES/ISTOCK



mosas, *bhaji pakodas* and burgers. At the Queen's Park Oval in Port of Spain, the stalls selling *aloo-roti* did brisk business. There was a special discount for the Indian media and we were allowed to jump the long queue, in order to rush back to the Press Box as play resumed.

Then there were the High Commissioner's dinners, where the cricketers were pampered with food of their choice. In places like Zimbabwe, Kenya, and the West Indies, such dinners were much-awaited in the '90s. In later years, the players found easy access to Indian food through friends and new restaurants coming up.

Rahul Dravid had found a nice one in Adelaide and we would frequent the place. Of course, Dravid was the least fussy about food, just as Tendulkar, Sourav Ganguly, Ajit Agarkar, Harbhajan Singh and Yuvraj Singh, were. They all learnt to enjoy Chinese, Italian, Continental and Japanese delicacies too. Today too, the current team is well-adjusted, and enjoys world cuisines. But they don't have a bunch of amusing stories to tell on using haricot beans (used in baked beans) as a substitute for *rajma*.



Patel, a lovable Gujarati businessman, who loved taking care of the cricketers. He would bring different kinds of Indian food, he never ate non-vegetarian food, but would sometimes bring it for the team. Patel often drove 240 kilometres or more to deliver food cooked in the morning and served fresh for his cricket 'friends'. The team adored the elderly Patel for his selfless service.

The Indian media had a wonderful cook in VV Krishnan, our photographer, who was, however, selective in inviting people to our room (we always ended up sharing). He preferred the vegetarians. "The non-veg guys can eat anywhere," was his simple reasoning. His *rice-rajma* combination was a hit with the cricketers, who looked forward to an invitation from Krishnan. With his little cooker and heater, it was a sight to behold as Krishnan engaged himself in preparing dinner for four or five

sportsmen. He had a splendid support staff: Kumble fetching and cleaning the rice, Ashish Nehra preparing salad, Zaheer Khan setting up the table, Ajay Jadeja assisting on some instructions. Sunil Gavaskar and Kapil Dev would drop by. A few others would not mind doing the dishes. The VV Krishnan Café was a huge hit with cricketers.

Indian food was an attraction at most grounds in England and New Zealand, where families set up eateries in vans, offering sa-

CAPTAIN COOL

MS Dhoni holds the record of closing out a match with a six, on nine occasions for India, in ODI cricket.



POOCH CAFE



PEANUTS



HAGAR THE HORRIBLE



CALVIN AND HOBBS



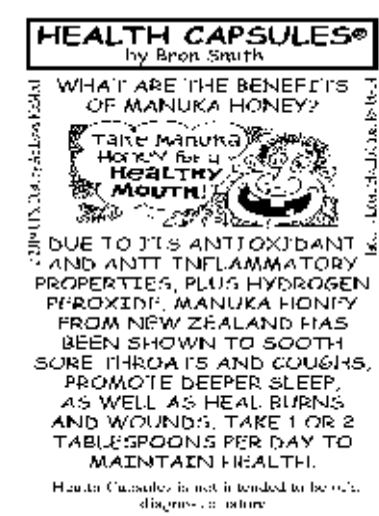
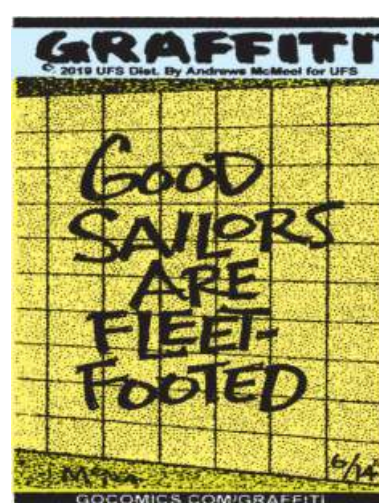
TIGER



WUMO



PEARLS BEFORE SWINE



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- Down
- 1 Browbeat (6)
- 2 Beatles drummer (5)
- 3 Look with the power to inflict harm (4,3)
- 5 Sailing vessel (5)
- 6 The - thing (7)
- 7 Beer and lemonade mixture (6)
- 8 Building site revolver? (6,5)
- 14 Coincide partly (7)
- 15 Samuel Johnson's biographer (7)
- 16 Horizontally (6)
- 17 Popular music of Jamaica origin (6)
- 19 Tiny fly (5)
- 21 Approximately (5)

- Across
- 1 Flung (6)
- 4 Rules or regulations adopted by an organisation (6)
- 9 Brief and to the point (7)
- 10 Short surplice worn by Catholic priests - to act (anag) (5)
- 11 Stratospheric layer of gas - invigorating sea air (5)
- 12 Lured (7)
- 13 Timeless cob (anag) - food (11)
- 18 My house in France? (4,3)
- 20 Partial or comparative darkness (5)
- 22 Lubricated (5)
- 23 Soon (poetically) (7)
- 24 Group of seven performers (6)
- 25 Provide with garments (6)

Solution will appear in The Hindu dated June 15, 2019.

Solution No. 13095

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In Arunachal Pradesh, the Asiatic golden cat wears new colours

Scientists have found that its coat comes in five other shades and types: cinnamon, gray, melanistic, ocelot and tightly rosetted



Wide wardrobe: The various colour morphs of the Asiatic golden cat: (clockwise from top left) cinnamon, golden, gray, tightly rosetted, ocelot and melanistic. • ZOOLOGICAL SOCIETY OF LONDON

RAHUL KARMAKAR
GUWAHATI

Golden is no longer the only colour the elusive Asiatic golden cat can be associated with. Its coat comes in five other shades in Arunachal Pradesh, scientists have discovered.

The Asiatic golden cat (*Catopuma temminckii*) is listed as near threatened on the International Union for Conservation of Nature's Red List of threatened species. It is found across eastern Nepal

through north-eastern India to Indonesia.

Bhutan and China were known to have two morphs of the golden cat – one the colour of cinnamon and the other with markings similar to the ocelot, a small wild cat found in the Americas.

Indian scientists from the Zoological Society of London (ZSL), an international conservation charity, and University College London (UCL) have discovered six colour morphs of the golden

cat in Dibang Valley of Arunachal Pradesh.

The findings have contributed to an evolutionary puzzle because no other place on earth has so many colours of wild cats of the same species.

The study, published in the June edition of *Ecology*, the Ecological Society of America's journal, aims to uncover a "greater understanding of human-wildlife interactions" in the region. "But we ended up discover-

ing a group of entirely different-looking animals on camera traps with an inkling they were of the same species," said Sahil Nijhawan, who led the field study for two years with local collaborators Iho Mitapo and Jibi Pulu from the Idu Mishmi tribe.

Mr. Nijhawan is an India-based scholar and British Academy Fellow at ZSL's Institute of Zoology and UCL.

The Idu Mishmis, he said, were aware of the different shades of the golden cat.

The community believes that the cat, particularly its melanistic (dark pigmentation as opposed to albinism) morph, possesses great powers and thus observe a strict taboo on hunting the cat.

Within the six colour morphs recorded, an entirely new colour morph was also found. The "tightly-rosetted" morph named after the leopard-like rosettes on the coat, now sits alongside cinnamon, melanistic, gray, golden, and ocelot types.

Instagram priest Luis Salazar breaks the mould in Venezuela

He joins anti-government protests and participates in rallies

REUTERS
CARACAS

Venezuelan priest Luis Antonio Salazar has built a solid social media following over the past two years preaching the Bible over Instagram, breaking the mould of the country's conservative Catholic church.

Now he has raised his profile further by showing his support for opposition leader Juan Guaido and joining massive anti-government protests dressed in his cassock, offering blessings one moment and running from tear gas the next.

"If the people are on the street, you have to be with the people," the former male beauty pageant contestant said in his office in eastern Caracas, decorated with a cross and pictures of the Virgin Mary. "Since January 23, I started going into the streets to accompany the people."

Mr. Salazar, a friar of the Capuchin order who was once a contestant in a Ven-



Luis Antonio Salazar takes a selfie with a follower.

zuelan survival reality show, uses his iPhone to film a video series called "Living the Gospels", a modern take on theology broadcast on Saturdays to 30,000 Instagram followers.

The one-minute videos discuss concepts such as inner peace through references to animated film *Kung Fu Panda* and the 2000 action comedy *Miss Congeniality*.

"For me, he's like the rock-star priest, the millennial priest," said student Carol Alvarez, 23, who hopes Mr. Salazar will lead her con-

firmation ceremony. Mr. Salazar also holds traditional Sunday mass that combines the youthful demeanour of his social media videos with Catholic prayers and traditions.

One such mass in May brought about 400 attendees – most significantly older than his typical Instagram audience – who stood in line to greet him and take selfies.

His sermons often elaborate on the Instagram posts. "I explain quickly and (explain) how people can use it in their lives," he said. "People tell me 'if someone can explain it to me, I'll understand it, use it in my life.'"

Mr. Salazar said he got involved in the protests against President Nicolas Maduro because being political is part of being Venezuelan: "From the peasant who harvests potatoes to Juan Guaido, the president in charge... we all talk about politics. I cannot exempt myself."

Trump makes 'Prince of Whales' error

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE
WASHINGTON

There he blows again.

U.S. President Donald Trump's erratic spelling habits on Twitter spouted again Thursday when he wrote about having recently

met with the "Prince of Whales".

That would be Charles, Prince of Wales, whom he met last week at the Second World War commemoration in Britain. The error prompted a wave of hilarity online,

with one Twitter critic asking if the president had made the mistake "on porpoise".

Mr. Trump, who has some 61 million Twitter followers, quickly corrected the original tweet.

Excellent Performance by Aakashians in AIIMS 2019

OUR STAR PERFORMERS IN TOP 10 RANKS

1 RANK	Bhavik Bansal Classroom	2 RANK	Vishwa Vadodaria Distance
3 RANK	Akshat Kaushik Classroom		

4 RANK	Chetanya Mittal Distance	6 RANK	Arunangshu Bhattacharyya Distance	10 RANK	Stuti Khandwala Distance
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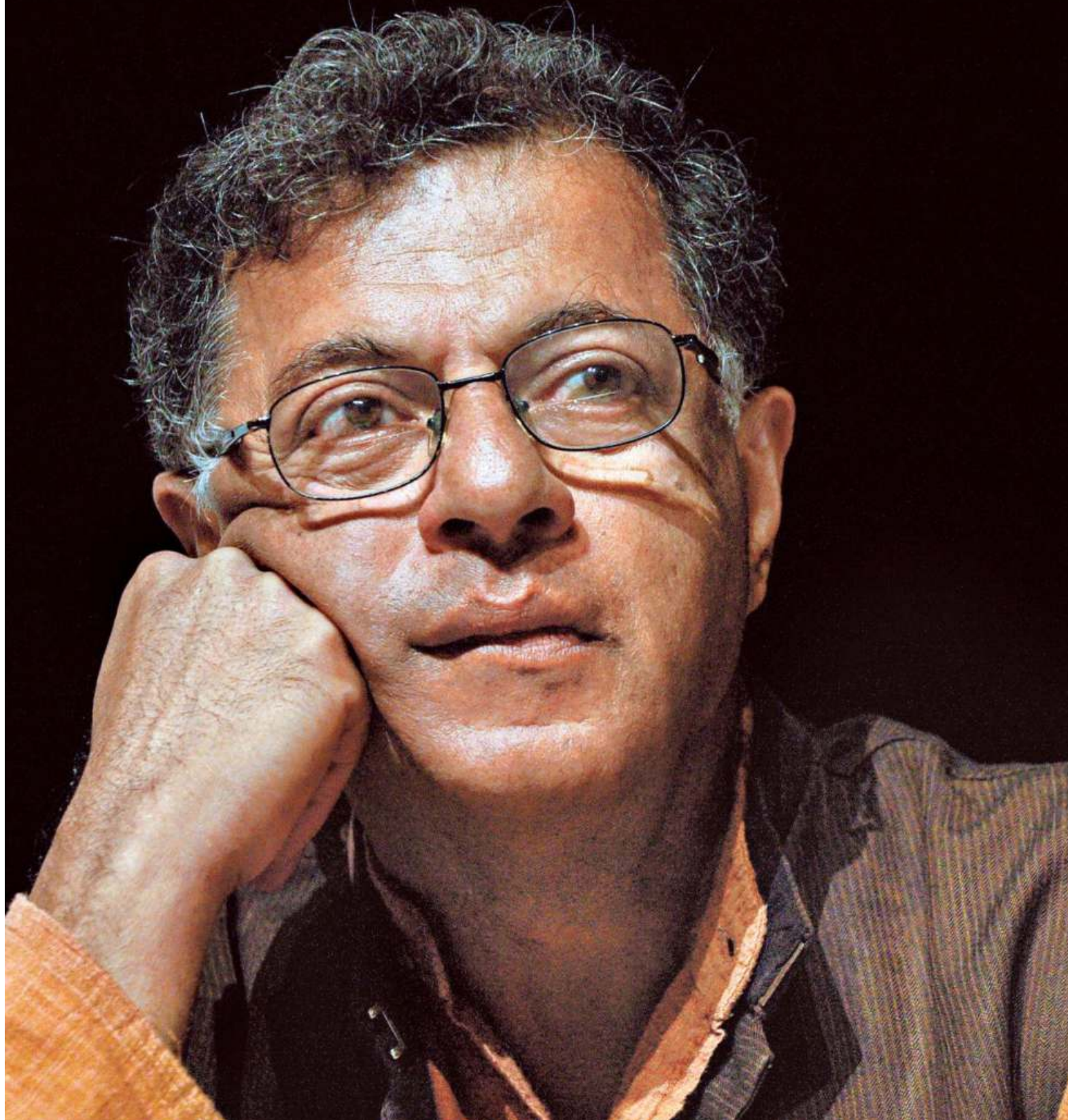
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FRIDAY REVIEW

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Transcending boundaries



Girish Karnad was a global figure, but he kept his relationship with his roots intact **Pages 4, 5 & 6**

INSIDE Stars on stage



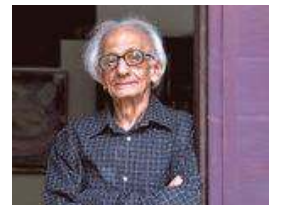
The SPIC MACAY convention saw sterling performances by stalwarts of Indian classical and folk music **P2**

Shrine for Shakti



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A nuanced account



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'Leila' dares to ask questions'



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In harmony Violinists GJR Krishnan and Lalgudi Vijayalakshmi
■ MANOJ SAMUDRA

A touch of class

Violinists GJR Krishnan and Lalgudi Vijayalakshmi charmed with their unique style at the early morning concert during the convention

C S PANCHAMAKESAN
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Violin, as an instrument of music, is believed to have originated in Europe and became known in India during the Raj days. It is amazing how this western instrument got adopted to Indian Classical music fold in the 19th Century and has carved a niche since then both in Hindustani and Carnatic music

The legend Lalgudi Jayaraman gave violin playing a unique status in Carnatic music and enabled violin to be a solo event in concerts instead of being just an accompaniment to vocal musicians. Keeping the tradition alive, the illustrious family is carrying the baton through the Lalgudi Siblings Shri GJR Krishnan and Lalgudi Vijayalakshmi - the two children of Lalgudi Jayaraman. They have been performing together as violin duo and have taken Carnatic instrumental music to ethereal heights by their unique style of melody and whispering soft touch.

The pair gave a scintillating performance early this week at JNU as part of overnight classical music exposure to about 1200 children from all over India as part of SPIC MACAY Convention. What was unique about this concert was the timing - classical music at Brahma Muhurt - the pre-dawn auspicious hours. They performed from 2 a.m. and appropriately heralded the sun rise towards the end of their concert. Classical music is to be experienced rather than experimented to understand the depth and spirituality of its divine facets and that is exactly what GJR Krishnan and Vijayalakshmi succeeded to portray to the wide awake audience.

They are masters of notes and weaved magic as melody wafted in from Gandharva Lok and descended softly to envelope every one in a feathery embrace. Starting with Ananda Bhairavi, they played Shyama Sastri Kriti Marivere which set the tone and tenor of the concert. As the name suggests, the raga brought the mood of happiness. Scholars swear that Shyama Sastri's Marivere Kriti has given a form to raga Anandabhairavi.

Although Carnatic music does not have time zones like Hindustani music, still there are some ragas which when heard in the stillness of early hours fill the heart with tranquillity. Nalinakanti, the 27th Melakarta raga is one such. The duo brought out the pleasant and romantic hues of this raga as their bows feather touched strings as they played Thyagaraja Kriti, "Manavyala" set to Adi Tala. This was followed by raga Mohanam song "Mohanarama" of Thyagaraja.

Traditional musicians as they are with distinguishing pedigree, the pair invariably performs RTP in all their concerts which music connoisseurs eagerly anticipate. They crafted a beautiful Hamsanandi raga with synchronised notes of golden hue as if ready to herald the dawn. The Pallavi "Swagatham subha swagatham arunodaya swaprakasha" was first sung by Vijayalakshmi and the violins took over the notes with breathtaking beauty in all its gentleness.

(Continued on page 7)

Stars on stage

The SPIC MACAY convention saw some sterling performances by the stalwarts of Indian classical and folk music

MANJARI SINHA
.....

The 7th International Convention of Spic Macay, in association with Jawaharlal Nehru University (JNU), concluded with a night-long concert, opening with the sonorous santoor by Pt. Shivkumar Sharma on 8th evening and culminating with the tranquil Dhrupad recital by Ustad Wasifuddin Dagar, next morning. The delectable Hindustani vocal by Vidushi Prabha Atre, the intense Koodiyattam performance by Vidushi Kapila Venu and the compact and mutually integrated Carnatic violin duet by Vidwan Lalgudi GJR Krishnan & Vidushi Vijayalakshmi were the other attractions of the sumptuous overnight feast.

Regaling with ragas

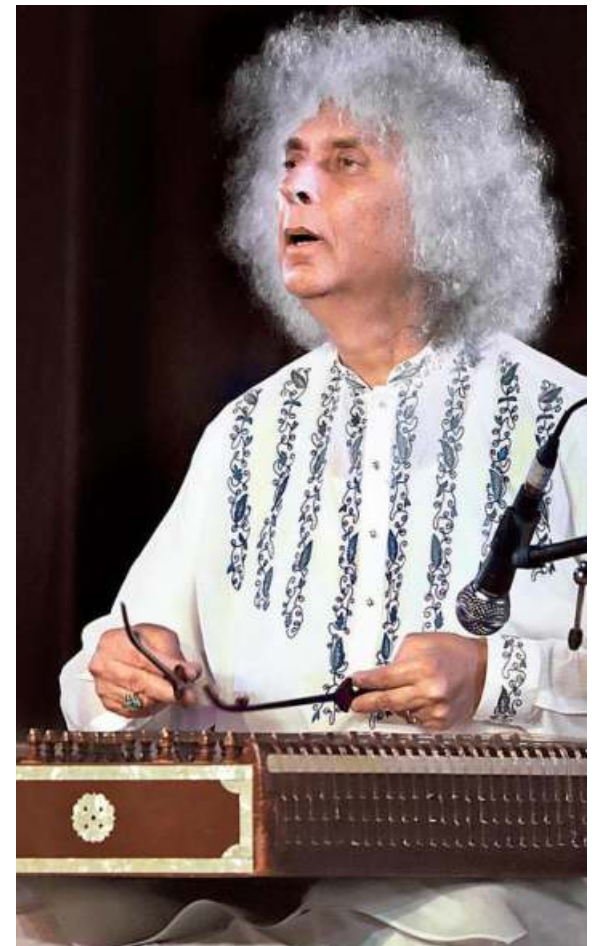
Pt. Shivkumar Sharma heralded the night-long concert with one of the most melodious evening ragas of Khamaj Thaata, Jhinhoti but before that he shared his long association with the SM right from its inception. "Nobody had earlier thought of a concept and initiative like this, when Dr. Kiran Seth took the pioneering step of redeeming our forgotten heritage and culture in which music plays an important role. He took a resolve to inculcate an awareness and a sense of belonging amongst our youth, who lured by the Rock and Pop music, were getting averse to their own classical and folk traditions. And we all joined hands in realising his dream."



Introducing the raga and the proceeding of his concert, he explained the importance of alaap-jod in creating the mood of the raga and requested the young audiences not to bother about understanding it but just listen and enjoy the music. Surprisingly, the alaap lasted just 10 minutes and the jod-jhala another five minutes. Maybe, he didn't want to test the patience of the younger audiences with his usual contemplative alaap and the endearing inwardness.

This was followed with a Madhya-Vilambit composition set to Jhap-tala. His reflective technical virtuosity, kept scale and proportion with striking layakaris that pirouetted on the rhythm with quiet aplomb. Inspired by him, Ram Kumar Mishra played on tabla, a Tisra Jati rhythmic work accurately fitting into the Khand-Jati Chhand of the jhaptaal, i.e. equally dividing the fractions of 12 matra units to exactly fit into the 10 beats cycle of jhaptaal. This admirable precision got him an approving glance by the maestro and an instant applause from the discerning audience.

The second bandish of the main raga was a medium-paced composition of subtle delicacy and beauty in the lyrical addha theka of teen-tala that gradually proceeded towards another composition in drut teentala leading to the jhala, a riot of wit and virtuosity but not at the cost of his



Maestro at his best (Clockwise from top) Pt. Shivkumar Sharma; Teejan Bai; Prabha Atre ■ MANOJ SAMUDRA



pitch-perfect tunefulness. Pt. Shivkumar Sharma also obliged with the delicious dessert, fulfilling the request for a Pahadi Dhun which had the flavour of Dogri folk songs and flashes of the superhit film-songs of 'Silsila', that he directed with the pseudonym 'Shivahari', along with Pt. Hariprasad Chaurasia.

Vidushi Prabha Atre took the stage there after accompanied by Vinod Lele on tabla, Siddheshwar Bicholkar on harmonium and her senior disciple Ashwini Modak who provided her an ideal vocal support, as and when required.

Initiating the young audience, she first spoke about the vital and minimum information about music like the melody and rhythm and how Hindustani musicians express their thoughts through statements comprising the swaras of the raga; she opened her concert with the timely

raga Jog. The 87-year-old apologised for the initial hiccups and attributed it to age, but in no time warmed up and mesmerised the audience with her extraordinary aesthetic sensibility, presenting her own compositions in the main raga and the following Bageshree, adorned with a variety of sargam and aakar taans. On request, she also obliged with her popular Dadra, 'Jamuna kinare...' before concluding with raga Kaushik-Ranjani, her own creation with compositions in Rupak and Teentala, culminating into a Tarana in Drut Ektala.

Diverse genres

Apart from other memorable evening concerts by the stalwarts of Hindustani and Carnatic music, there was also Gurmat Sangeet by Bhai Manohar Singh, quwwali by Warsi Brothers and Pandavani Gayan by the Padma Vibhushan awardee Teejan Bai who presented Krishna-Arjun samvad in her own inimitable Pandavani folk style from Chhattisgarh. Watching her sing with her tambura that became the mace of the mighty worrier Bhim, when she enacted his valour during Duhshasan-Vadha, it was difficult to believe it was the same Teejan Bai who needed the support of two volunteers to climb the stage!

The Piano Man

Art in the time of social media frenzy

Visibility at the cost of focussed learning. Is it the modern sensibility?

ANIL SRINIVASAN



Growing up, I was told to focus on music lessons to the exclusion of all other thoughts. In an almost philosophical bent to pedagogy, my music teacher Anna Abraham, who passed away a couple of years ago, would ask me to focus on the process, and not the outcome. It was also a gentler age, we did not have the Internet, or the ability to compare ourselves to reality show winners.

I write this essay in Sydney, Australia, at the tail end of the Sydney Music Festival. A common thread that emerged out of conversations with parents of talented children reflects a change that I find both drastic and worrying.

Earlier in this column, I talked about pushy parents. This time it's going to be on what I would term "outcome-itis".

Parents and children alike are questioning the point of learning music. I see aspirations among many to gain visibility and perform arangetrams (a big event in the South Asian cultural calendar) and concerts. Surely the pursuit of art is for its own sake, and not with these purpose-filled agendas.

Stressful environment

What amazes me is how the South Asian community both within and outside Asia has quickly moulded itself on a singular model of achievement re-

.....
It's worrying to see young learners looking for instant gratification rather than focussing on sustained learning

ardless of the domain. Money, fame and, whenever possible, going viral have become the markers of artistic achievement. This is a dangerous and stressful environment for our children to grow up in, and I do fear the heightened importance given to instant gratification.

Parents are now proudly showing off the number of likes their son/daughter got for a distorted presentation of what was once a Carnatic kriti. Worse, these children put up wild hashtags such as "#CarnaticFunk" or "CarnaticGrunge" or even "CarnaticHipHop".

In the cases of the classical arts, I am frequently at the receiving end of criticism when I tell people that someone being a viral sensation or getting huge number of followers and likes on social media does not automatically translate to being good at something.

Depth is becoming passé. As is longevity of the learning process. There is also a lack of sustained interest (probably caused by rapidly declining attention spans). While it is easy to dismiss these as just temporary fads, I wonder if we are in the danger of misreading sensation as modern sensibility?

In research terms, my questions would be: Are we entering an era where a little bit of everything is better than a lot of one thing? Are we defining today's idea of musical achievement purely on the basis of external validation and its resultant metrics?

The same would hold good for students of Western classical music or Hindustani music students.

My teacher would have been extremely upset to see this change. She would have told me to stop being distracted and just focus on playing my Bach better.

The writer is a well-known pianist and music educator



Hidden in the Himalayas

Shrine for Shakti in the Land of the Shakthas

The legendary episodes speak volumes of the rich historical background attached to the temple for Goddess Bhimakali

J. RAMANAN AND VRINDA RAMANAN



Apple orchards, rich green forests of pine and deodar,

overflowing watercourses, the snowcapped range of Srihand Mahadev, deep ravines of the River Sutlej, colourful wild flower fields and neat farms surround the historical temple of Bhimakali which is situated in the small village of Sarahan, 'the gateway to Kinnaur', in Himachal Pradesh at an altitude of 2,150 mt. This valley of the gods, famously known in the Puranas and epics as 'Kinnar Khand' is 160 km from Shimla.

When Lord Vishnu disembodied Sati's body with his Sudarshana chakra, different parts of her body fell at different places creating Shakti peetas. Her left ear fell at this site, where the Bhimakali temple stands.

In another instance, when there was a war between the demons and the Gods, who were led by Lord Vishnu, the Gods focused their mental strength and created a fire from which emerged goddess Adisakti. They presented her with different items such as a white tiger, a crown, clothes, water, conch, chakra, lotus garlands, etc. One of her eight

avatars appeared at Sarahan as Bhimakali.

Story of a demon

The legend revolves round the thousand-armed Banasura, who was the first of the hundred sons of Bali and the great grandson of Prahlad, a devotee of Lord Mahavishnu. Banasura's daughter, Usha, fell in love with Anirudha, who appeared in her dream. Her friend Chitrlekha, who was well-versed in performing magical tricks, brought Anirudha to Usha, when he was asleep. When Krishna learnt of his grandson's abduction, a war between Banasura and Krishna ensued, in which the demon king was defeated. Lord Krishna got his grandson Anirudha married to Usha and gifted the kingdom of shonithpur (Sarahan) to Banasura, which he and his descendants

ruled thereafter. It is believed that Banasura brought the river Sutlej from its source in Manasarovar to flow through his kingdom.

An example of Indo Tibetan architecture, this traditional temple has been built in the kath-khuni style where strong walls are built interlocking wood and stone. The stone images date back to the Kushan era. The top storey of this temple is dedicated to the idol of goddess Bhimakali who is represented as a virgin. The second floor holds the icon of Parvati, the daughter of Himavan and the consort of Lord Siva.

Goddess Bhimakali is the presiding deity of the Bushahr kings. There are shrines for Lord Narsinga, Raghunath and Bhairava in this 800-year-old temple complex.



Atop the hills Shakti shrines on the Himalayas (Top) A close-up view



1938 - 2019

His soul was Kannada



He remained seated in his domain but allowed the fragrances from the 'others' to permeate his work.

Though his plays were translated into several languages of India and the world, Girish Karnad's thoughts and emotions had their moorings in Kannada. He was a global figure, but he kept his relationship with Kannada language and writing intact

VIVEK SHANBHAG

A few minutes before Girish Karnad was seen off from his home for the last time, on the family's request, I read a small excerpt from his play, *Nagamandala*, before the small gathering of friends and relatives. Karnad was sleeping motionless. Arjun Sajjani read a conversation from *Hayavadana*, in English. There was no particular reason for me to choose the passage that I read. When I picked his complete plays, I saw there were markings on that specific page in *Nagamandala*. I had little idea why they were there. However, I decided to read what had been touched by him. Rani's distress in waiting for Nagappa, her happiness on his arrival, confiding her worries in him... the power that those lines had left me emotional. Rani's anxiety, the falsity of marital relationships, the fragmented nature of human ties -- I began to realise the extraordinary skill with which he had captured all of this in Kannada. Keeping to the ebb and flow of the language, he had taken control of

Rani's tumultuous thoughts -- my heart was full. That evening, I read the English translation of the play. I glanced through the English translation of other plays as well. When I returned to Kannada, I felt it is in Kannada that one gets to savour the richness of his plays.

This is more a comment on the poetic quality of Karnad's plays and less on the merit of the translations. The structure of his plays are so immaculate and the meaning so deep, that even when one feels that are have lost in translation, it has seen successful productions across the world.

Karnad clearly knew where his spirit would blossom, he was aware of those creative moments when thoughts and emotions materialised in a particular language: it is precisely because of this reason that he gave up the desire of becoming an English poet and decided to be a playwright in Kannada. It is perhaps important to recall what he says in his autobiography about the birth of his first play, *Yayati*. "The characters came alive with conversation and started walking before my eyes. I, like a stenogra-

pher, began to put it down on paper. I have never experienced an intensity such as this ever after."

Fortunately for Karnad, since such an experience was at the beginning of his career, he realised that the sources of his creativity were in Kannada.

The lyricism of his plays, the flow of dialogue, and the latent sorrows of his characters could be captured only in Kannada. The mad dreamer *Tughlaq*, can be made sense of completely only in Kannada. Kapi-la, Padmini and Devadutta of *Hayavadana* belong to Kannada. So are Basava-Bijjala of *Taledanda*. Rani of *Nagamandala*, Tipu, Nittile of *Agni Mattu Male* -- they all live in Kannada. This may sound disappointing to those who have read Karnad in several other languages, but a creative writer can be completely experienced only in his mother tongue. This also becomes the reason for his greatness, like in the case of Karnad.

When plays were being used to

fight social battles, to lampoon, to laugh, to be entertained, and to celebrate mythological stories, Karnad, for the first time, gave voice to the angst of the modern man, when Puru cried: "What is the meaning of all this, God?"

For the first time, he showed the possibility of theatre becoming a tool to express rational and philosophical worries. With this, he ushered a new tradition in Kannada theatre. His second play *Tughlaq* and later *Hayavadana* have gone on to become classics and serve as evidence to him being a forerunner on this path.

It was Karnad who showed that it was possible to construct a play without any structural flaws. If one reads his excellent critical essays on *Mrichchakatika*, *Kakana Kote*, and *Harijanwara*, it becomes clear how he imagined a total theatrical process, as also his constant search for that perfect structure. The dialogues in his play are so deeply interconnected that whichever part

of the play you touch you can experience the whole. If you eliminate any one thing, the whole structure collapses. I know personally how hard he worked to achieve this perfection. I was the first reader of his play, *Maduve Album*. It was a manuscript that came after several drafts. He gave permission to publish the first three scenes to Desha Kaala, the literary magazine I used to edit. Till his end, Karnad wrote by hand and did not use the computer. So, after it was keyed in and the magazine pages designed, I sent the proof to him.

The manuscript that came back was so full of corrections that typing it all over again was a better idea than to incorporate corrections. It came back with corrections one more time. When I sent it the third time, with the deadline hemming in, I requested him to make any other corrections in the book that would be published. He had the patience to work on a manuscript for years. Exactly like a musician who

tirelessly works on a raga till he captures it completely.

Not just that, each time his plays went for a reprint, Karnad used to make changes.

For instance, you can see the changes in *Tughlaq* from the first edition to now. To put it in his own words, he could not cut off connections with any of his plays till the very end. All his plays have received wide acclaim. The country's leading directors, actors and actresses have directed and performed them. Even then, he never stopped revisiting them.

For him, the final goal was not a successful performance of the play. The plot, language, and text had a connection with the soul of the writer, and he constantly explored it. This struggle was important for him. Unfortunately, he was such a luminous persona that many gossiped over this side of him and its importance.

Never did Karnad use his fame, popularity, contracts and position to

promote his writing. He never believed that awards were achievements. That is precisely why he refused to be honoured after winning the Jnanpith. It is for the same reason that Karnad shunned state funeral. He was someone who knew the value of a writer's privacy. Even with his global reach, he retained a fond relationship with Kannada. In today's times when writing is directly linked to global capital, Karnad's pursuits seem spiritual.

With all awards, accolades and fame, he never lost the zeal and excitement to make changes to a play that has already seen several reprints. Though he traversed many realms, he kept his private relationship with language and writing intact. Precisely why his being was rooted in Kannada and in no other place.

The author is an acclaimed Kannada writer.

Translated from Kannada by Deepa Ganesh

Speaking from a creative space

In Karnad's imagination there were no boundaries, his pursuit of art and truth had an unfailing honesty

T.M. KRISHNA

Art is a deceptive word. Its sheer utterance convinces us that, within its interior, exists a magic potion which brings life together in all its profundity. It also suggests that the various mediums of art are somehow connected through a mystical channel. There cannot be anything more untruthful than this. Art has no unseen powers of its own, and it is also a deeply divided world. What art offers is unknown doors and windows through which we can perceive life. It is the responsibility of the artist to knock on the doors and open the windows.

Girish Karnad not just knocked on the doors; he broke a few down. The windows remained ajar until his

very last breath. He saw an universe where nothing was beyond reach, unquestionable or passé. In his imagination, everything converged into a moment, his moment of happening and all that was strewn across lives and spaces became his story, screenplay, and characters.

He was a traditionalist in the sense of someone who continued with the Indian tradition where each storyteller creates realities from realities, stories from stories. Much like A.K. Ramanujam suggested in his seminal essay, *Three Hundred Ramayanas*, Girish Karnad created numerous mythologies of his own, never bound by any one narrative. In Girish Karnad's hands, every character, place, event and possibility flew in directions unseen. But

all of them had a purpose and that was his today, the world around him, and his own turmoil.

I also said earlier that the world of art is a divided house. But it is not a singular division; it is so fragmented that we rarely listen or see each other. When we encounter one another, more often than not we are lost and floundering. Hence, it is not surprising that the art we make is just pleasurable and nothing more. Girish Karnad had this ability to walk across oceans of difference in

culture, language, tradition, craft, technique and intention and somehow immersed himself in numerous art forms. This did not mean he understood the grammar of these forms, but that he was able to experience the aesthetic in its completeness. We often use the word inter-disciplinary just because people dabble with different things. But here was an inter-disciplinary artist who was able to charge his life with the sensibility of multiple artistic traditions. He remained seated in his domain but al-

lowed the fragrances from the 'others' to permeate his work.

Another often heard title is that he was a public intellectual. You could define a public intellectual as one who ruminates on issues of existence with openness so that everyone might engage with them. It is understood that such an individual has reflected upon the questions that he or she poses. I would go a step further and say that this individual also has the unique ability to distance herself or himself (a form of selflessness) from the

discourse at hand. The truth of the matter is that there have been and there are very few who would fit this description. Girish Karnad was a rare public intellectual. The words and the actions of his characters were Girish Karnad's open deliberations. This might be true of many playwrights and storytellers, but what set Girish apart is the unfailing honesty that remained in each of his telling. This did not mean he was always right or had the answer; it just meant that he was willing to be wrong. Not once can he

ever be faulted for being dishonest or obligational. He always said what he wanted and that is exactly why his stories always hit us hard; they were mercilessly true. Here was a fearless man who was not limited by boundaries.

I will end with a personal story. When I was to perform on November 17, 2018 in New Delhi, a concert that had been 'postponed' under unusual circumstances and was then reorganised by the Delhi government, he sent me a kind email, which said:

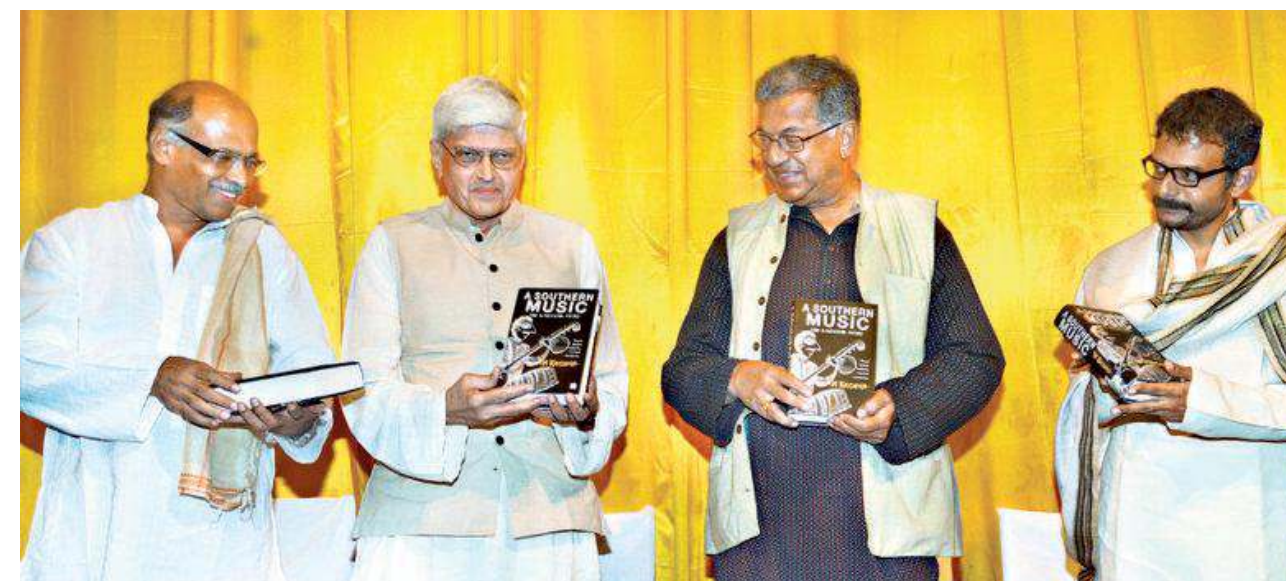
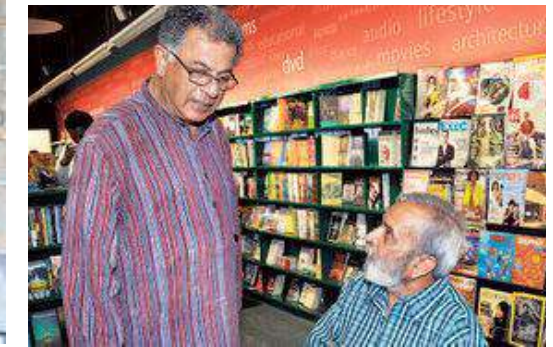
Dear Krishna, More power to you! May the horizons resonate with your voice.

Girish Karnad treasured this country as a land of multiple voices, of disagreements, the non-singular and frontally took on right-wing bigotry. He was not just personally courageous, but was also always there for friends and co-travellers.

The author is Carnatic vocalist, public speaker and writer on human choices, dilemmas and concerns



A journey of memories (from left) Girish Karnad with M. Balamuralikrishna, with Raghavendra Khasnis, with U.R. Ananthamurthy ■ THE HINDU ARCHIVES ■



Meeting of minds Girish Karnad with Gopalkrishna Gandhi, Capt. Gopinath and T.M. Krishna, with Preumal Murugan

PHOTO: BHAGYA PRAKASH K.





Timeless work An untitled work by Prabhakar Barwe

The twain shall meet

“Astitva” celebrates the work of Prabhakar Barwe, an unassuming artist who loved to play with space and form

UMA NAIR
.....

“Astitva” by Prabhakar Barwe (1936-1995) at the NGMA is about an odyssey in reverie - dulcet images of forms that celebrate the illuminating illusions of space, recreating the language of the mundane and bringing it forward to the islands of memory. The viewer can choose between being either suspended in the oscillation of time or transfixed in the depths of understanding the rudiments of revealing abstraction through objects.

The title recalls a note by Barwe’s friend and artist Lalita Lajmi: “Prabhakar Barwe was a dear friend of mine and a painter who combined a poetic approach to art with an analytical mind. Together, we formed a group called ‘Astitva’, meaning ‘Existence’. I used to visit his studio - a tiny room filled with his canvases - in Girgaon, near Gamdevi Temple, very often. He was so profound, always brilliant in his ideas; a unique artist, with unique works.”

Space and form

Those words form the fulcrum of this suite of works. To look at the cluster of drawings as well as paintings is to be drawn into a synthesis that essays analogies of space as important as form, whether defined by forms or not.

Barwe once stated that when space becomes as eloquent as form, the imagery of the painting turns gainful in meaning. When you look at his works from the ‘80s, you understand that space and form must have a dialogue with one another. Barwe elevates the subject as well as the object, and transforms the canvas into a vehicle that invites viewers to examine their own experience of the material world.

What ascends the upper reaches of the mind are Barwe’s choice of subjects. They are varied but offer a genteel insight into his working. Explaining his choice of subject matter, years ago, Barwe wrote: “However ordinary or commonplace it may look at first sight, if it is based on self experience and if it springs directly from the heart, it becomes self evident, a valid aesthetic experience in a work of art.”

Barwe’s choice of subjects also affirm his understanding of the conceptual devices of surrealism as he placed a series of simple objects and ephemeral shapes in a atypical compositions. Paintings for Barwe were about arranging a few isolated forms on canvas, and giving each form its own right to existence, without disturbing all the other adjacent forms/objects.

Continued abstraction

As an artist, Barwe believed in the power of the visual experience, created by concrete components which he synthesised within his own language of continuing abstraction.

Indeed these paintings illustrate his sensibility and his explorations in the sparseness of intensity and intention. Perhaps making it an embodiment of abstraction being “like a thought-free space of the mind, or like an undivided, unruffled mental state”. You walk away remembering Barwe’s words: “My effort is to examine how and where the concrete and the abstract meet in the course of such journeys.”

(“Astitva” is on display at the NGMA, New Delhi, till July 28)

A visionary playwright

Rooted in Indian tradition, Girish Karnad’s plays will continue to converse with the contemporary world

DIWAN SINGH BAJELI
.....

As a playwright, Girish Karnad has left an indelible impact on the history of contemporary Indian dramaturgy. He was rooted in the cultural tradition of his soil with a deep understanding of Western dramatic aesthetics and craft. His two plays - “Tughlaq” and “Hayavadana” - have helped redefine the form and structure of drama.

Arguably, Karnad is the first contemporary Indian playwright whose works have been staged and discussed abroad with keen interest. As a public intellectual and writer, he discussed Indian cultural ethos and theatre on international platforms. Originally written in Kannada, “Tughlaq” was first staged in English in Mumbai and its presentation by National School of Drama under the direction of E. Alkazi in Hindustani catapulted “Tughlaq” to national fame. It appeared on the Kannada stage later. Karnad and his works are respected by Delhi theatre-lovers and theatre practitioners have great fascination to perform his plays, especially “Tughlaq”.

Timeless appeal

Bhanu Bharti’s mega production of “Tughlaq” staged against the backdrop of the ruins of Ferozshah Kotla’s open lawns in 2012 gave the play greater dimension. The stage design with a number of levels, exploring the space vertically and horizontally captured historical vista, minimal use of property, highly trained and experienced performers with lighting effects by veteran light designer R.K. Dhingra created an aura that cast spell on the audience.

Bhanu says, “In the ‘50s and ‘60s, we had versatile playwrights in most of the Indian languages like Mohan Rakesh, Badal Sircar, Vijay Tendulkar, Girish Karnad and Dharavir Bharati.

After 50 years, if we look back, we only find Bharti’s ‘Andha Yug’,



Raising the bar Yashpal Sharma as Tughlaq in Bhanu Bharti’s adaptation of Karnad’s play

■ SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

which was initially not rated high, and Karnad’s ‘Tughlaq’ that have emerged as modern classics in the history of contemporary Indian theatre.”

Elaborating his point further, Bhanu says, “Girish Karnad explored mythology and history with the vision of a modernist, resulting in the creation of great theatrical works. I feel it is either mythology or history which helps us in the wider understanding of human situation.”

In fact, the more we watch Tughlaq, the more we discover its multiple layers and its striking relevance with contemporary India, starting with the Nehruvian era. Within the historical canvas, Karnad created the character of Aziz.

Eminent Kannada critic Kirtinath Kurtkoti once commented, “Strictly speaking, it is a parody. The result of this parody is that it provides the comic double of a serious character in order to give an image of complete truth,” Bhanu adds, “I feel this play dissects deeper to enable us to understand human condition politically and socio-logically against the panoramic backdrop of history.”

In recent years, Prof. K. S. Rajendran is mostly

staging Karnad’s plays such as “Agni Aur Barkha”, “Wedding Album”, and “Bali” for Hindi audience in Delhi. His production of “Agni Aur Barkha” elicited critical acclaim and had several houseful shows. He says, “Karnad achieved the fine art of blending the best of Western dramaturgy and Indian theatre tradition, ‘Hayavadana’ changed the entire concept of play production and acting style. I discovered similar artistic intricacy in ‘Nagamandala’ and ‘Bali’.”

“Hayavadana” has been staged by a number of times by noted directors like B. V. Karanth and Satyadev Dubey. Incorporating folk elements, it projects a mysterious world where dolls speak, Goddess Kali commits a blunder that creates complications which defy resolution.

There is a character with features of half-horse and half-human and a boy who is inarticulate. All these complicated situations are interwoven into a metaphor that reflects the dilemma of a woman and leaves the conflict between the body and mind unresolved.

define the structure of “Nagamandala”.

It has the main plot and a sub-plot and some mysterious elements like the love relationship between Rani, neglected by her husband, who keeps her under lock and key, and a serpent. Then there is an old blind woman and his son. Yakshini takes away blind woman’s son. Last year, an amateur group from Dehradun brought Nagmandala to Delhi which mesmerised the audience with its emphasis on the serpent, Rani’s true lover and her saviour.

Karnad wanted from directors to display fidelity to the work of playwright. A few years ago, Prasanna while directing his play “Agni Aur Barkha” for the National School of Drama had edited some portions of the original script. When it came to the notice of Karnad, he lodged a strong protest against the pruning of his script. This led to a debate about the relationship between the director and the playwright. However, the matter was resolved with NSD restoring the original script in the subsequent productions.

Dramatic masterpieces

As the chairman of Sanjeet Natak Akademi, he was the brain behind organising Nehru Shatabdi Natya Samaroh in 1989 in Delhi which was planned as a retrospective of modern Indian theatre. It was truly a great Indian theatre festival in which dramatic masterpieces were featured under the directions of Indian theatre legends like Utpal Dutt. It was Karnad’s idea that young theatre practitioners and audience should watch great productions staged in the course of the last five decades.

As a public speaker and activist, he raised his voice for saving the secular fabric, freedom of expression and composite culture.

Indeed Karnad will be remembered for years to come through his works, especially “Tughlaq”.

Going Native

A nuanced account of human bonds

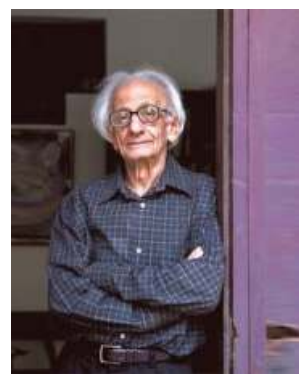
Krishna Baldev Vaid's diary captures the changing dynamics of intimacy between him and his most trusted friend

SHAFEY KIDWAI

In the era of immensely popular variants of digital diary - Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, blog and vlog, which are primarily enmeshed in self-publicity, trivia, and enthusiastic enumeration of all that one longs for, can one look for another alternative? The other option is the good old diary, the most intimate means of communication that makes one feel a sensation of typographies of emotions reflected in intense friendship and rivalries, anguish and ecstasy, introspection and mapping others' behaviour.

The inherent potentiality of a personal narrative that goes beyond the conscious effort of self-mythologisation and turns attention to the changing dynamics of intimacy and a growing sense of disenchantment with the most trusted friend is meticulously explored by a renowned Hindi author Krishna Baldev Vaid in his diary, "Abra Kaya Cheez Hai, Hawa kaya Hai", that appeared recently.

Raj Kamal has published the diary that presents a poignantly narrated nuanced account of the sordidness and mundane aspects of life and acquaints us with the strong bond of friendliness and subsequently unnoticed lessening of Vaid's



relationship with legendary writer Nirmal Verma.

The diary, using a couplet of Ghalib as its title, is replete with pulsating anecdotes and tosses off observations of loathsome underthings and one comes across with a strong sense of admiration, affection, wit, frailties and freakishness that bind Krishna Baldev Vaid and Nirmal Verma together. The diary portrays elegantly honest confessions of Vaid about his once most trusted friend.

According to a noted Hindi critic Ashutosh Bhardwaj, the mercurial interconnectedness between the two writers is central to unlock the creative oeuvre of both the authors. Spelling out the changing pattern of the relationship lasting over 50 years, Ashutosh, in his perceptive article "Diary ka Darpan", uploaded by Samalochna, an e-journal of

Hindi, asserts that the dairy, spread over many volumes, is fully braced for acquainting the readers with the creative import of Vaid and Verma who are not familiar with works of the writers. Arun Dev who edits the magazine with a curious eye and critical acuity opines that the author deftly delineates many layers of the hidden personalities of Vaid and Verma and it produces a stimulating critical debate.

For the author, there exists a distinct analogy between Franz Kafka's much-debated but undelivered letter to his father and convivial conversation between two Hindi stalwarts as Vema says, "My entire writing is directed at you", and Vaid reciprocates, "I know that your entire writing is directed at me."

Bhardwaj says it closely resembles with Kafka's first

sentence of his letter in which the internationally-acclaimed novelist and short story writer declared that his entire writing is nothing but a detailed letter addressed to his father.

The diary's seemingly wrapped moral rectitude overshadows a chronology of anxiety, resentment, frustration and ennui as Vaid painfully observes, "Once Nirmal established himself, he started playing me down. I got signals from many quarters that he ripped up my works and criticised me. In the beginning, he admired me, now, if someone praises me, he becomes suspicious; his visible astonishment makes it clear that he underrates me. It certainly manifests his insecurity that I am evenly matched. Perhaps I am better than him as he gets amused when somebody criticises me. Contrarily, I ensure that no one casts aspersions on him in my presence. I too have reservations about his writings, but I never deny his merits even in my mind."

Nirmal also wrote a diary, and one has to analyse the unduly hostile remarks of Vaid in the backdrop of Nirmal's elucidation.

Celebrated writer Krishna Sobti surfaces time and again in the conversation and letters of Nirmal and Vaid. We get to know that Namwar Singh once remarked that Sobti fully exploited their later developed belligerence, but Vaid did join issue with him (Verma).

The short sentences remarkably demonstrate Vaid's witty and ironical observation, but they also make these qualities invisible quite often. The publication of the diary and an exciting debate initiated by Samalochan proves that literature can still provide succour to us.

Telling Voices

All for love

Nicola Yoon, whose book, "The Sun Is Also A Star" is a love story with an immigration angle, shares her own experience of struggling to find happiness as an immigrant

SUDHAMAH REGUNATHAN

"Love is the thing that everyone wants. And I don't just mean like romantically - love of your art, love of your friends, your family, your children..." Making this statement that goes straight to the heart of the readers



is Nicola Yoon, whose book, "The Sun Is Also A Star", has just been released as a movie. She adds that she wants her young readers, "... to consider who they are and their place in the world. How they can become better people and... I think a lot of that can be done by knowing yourself, loving yourself and learning to love other people."

A love story with an immigration angle, the book has won accolades on many counts. Yoon, herself an immigrant, says, "My father wanted to be an actor. And America was just so much possibility...so you could be anything. You could get anywhere on merit. There's this big, wide world open to you. So that's what America's always meant to me as an immigrant... When I came, I thought America was going to be like a new world. But it was not. We moved to Brooklyn and it was different. I felt out of place a lot...and that feeling persists in a certain way... The book is not autobiographical but it was definitely inspired by my feeling in moving to a new country."

Yoon builds on that idea saying, "Immigration is like happiness... Happiness doesn't just come. You have to pay attention. You have to really fight for it. Immigration is a brave and hopeful commitment, one that requires work... For example, in Jamaica, everyone is black so I got to be myself in a way that I cannot here...the expectations if you are an African American are different. You get put into a box and you have to fight against that. I have always been fighting that..."

Interesting characters

Yoon tells us about her characters, "The girl Natasha is a science minded girl facing deportation and Daniel is a poetic boy and he is trying to convince her to fall in love with him over the course of twelve hours in New York city. But they are also immigrant kids...Natasha is Jamaican American and the boy is Korean American...I am Jamaican, my husband is Korean...I really wanted to talk about immigration and how you exist in the space between things. I always say I am Jamaican American but I actually exist in the space between those words. I think on an average, teenagers feel like that. They are kids but almost adults...the story of becoming..."

Growing up in Brooklyn, Yoon went to the Cornell University where she built a career in finance. But when she wrote two New York bestsellers, that part of her career became a thing of the past. "I am a grumpy person when I do not write. I am a better person when I write," says Yoon, telling us what led her out of her cushy financial career.

...A touch of class

Continued from page 2

One could visualise the sun being cajoled and coaxied to break out and lit the horizon and dispel the darkness. It was Brahma Muhurt when they played RTP and effect was ecstasy and exuberant optimism of a day ahead. This was followed by Sadashiva Brahmendra song "Manasa Sancharare" in raga Sama and the concert concluded with a Desh Raga Tillana composed by their father and guru.

The concert left all with a deep sense of piety and inner peace which is the hallmark of GJR-Viji combo. Akshay Ananthapadmanabhan and BS Purushottam unobtrusively provided admirable support to GJR and Vijayalakshmi which embellished the programme. Their tani was crisp and precise.

https://t.me/TowardsTomorrow 'Leila' dares to ask questions'

EVENTS

INDIA HABITAT CENTRE
JUNE 14CONVENTION CENTRE
FOYER

A solo painting exhibition by Simaran Toor.

THE STEIN AUDITORIUM
Ghalib ki Zameen, an evening of music and poetry festival 2019.INDIA INTERNATIONAL CENTRE
JUNE 14

C.D. DESHMUKH AUDITORIUM

IIC Summer Festival of Carnatic Music: Flute recital by Raghuraman Govindarajan from Delhi, a disciple of R. Thyagarajan and Dr. N. Ramani, followed by Carnatic vocal recital by Uma Money from Bangalore, a disciple of Dr. R.K. Srikantan and Neyveli Santanagopalan.

INDIA INTERNATIONAL CENTRE
JUNE 15

C.D. DESHMUKH AUDITORIUM

Summer Sonata - A festival of Opera, Ballet and Concert Films, dedicated to the memory of Dr. R.P. Jain, curated by Sunit Tandon.

Opera screening: A Master At Work - Carlos Kleiber conducts Beethoven, Mozart and Brahms. Carlos Kleiber was perhaps the most highly regarded conductor of the late 20th century, but has left

the musical world with a frustratingly small number of recordings. Hence this video recording of a concert given in 1996 is all the more to be treasured, capturing his minimal but poetic gestures, his utter command of the score and his hypnotic hold over the orchestra. Featuring Beethoven's Coriolan Overture, Mozart's Symphony No. 33 in B flat major and Brahms' Symphony No. 4 in E minor.

INDIA INTERNATIONAL CENTRE
IIC ANNEXE

IIC and Embassy of Peru present The Colonial Art of Peru - Paintings of the Cuzco School. Cuzco School of Painting is the most distinctive and major school of painting in Spain's American colonies which evolved during the 17th and 18th centuries in the old Inca capital of Cuzco. Indian and Mestizo artists transformed formal and iconographical types from European art to

create a uniquely American style of religious painting, characterized by brilliant colours, flattened space, and a strongly decorative aesthetic. On view are contemporary reproductions of some of these paintings. The exhibition opened on June 12 and will remain on view till 18 June.

Subjects include anecdotal biblical narratives, hieratic figures of the Virgin and saints, and gaily dressed archangels. The origins of the school can be found in the many Flemish engravings and European paintings that were taken to Peru from Spain, as well as in works by European artists such as the Italian mannerist painter and Jesuit Bernardo Bitti, who was active in Peru and Bolivia between 1575 and 1610.

Huma Qureshi on what makes the latest Netflix original series special

MURTAZA ALI KHAN

If the book was disquieting, the trailer was equally compelling. After an anxious wait, it's time to dive into Leila's stream of consciousness. Based on dystopian alternate reality novel of the same name by Prayaag Akbar, the Netflix original is helmed by noted filmmaker Deepa Mehta who has co-directed the six-episode series along with Shankar Raman and Pawan Kumar. "Leila" stars Huma Qureshi as the central character of a woman named Shalini whose three-year-old daughter Leila mysteriously disappears after the tragic death of her husband.

As part of the promotions, Netflix invited us to Greater Noida's Gautam Buddha University where the last leg of "Leila" was being shot. The university's humongous circular library served as the perfect setting for Leila's dystopian world. On its sidelines, a casually dressed Huma was taking small sips of coffee from her Starbucks mug. Gradually, she opened up on the challenge of working with three directors on the series, and how platforms like Netflix are providing a new lease of life to creative storytelling.

Grace and poise
Huma Qureshi; in
a still from the
series ■ AFP



Excerpts:

How do you see "Leila" is relevant to our times?

"Leila" is something that's very dear to me. It tells a story that's very relevant. "Leila", although it is set in a dystopian world, is essentially about empowerment which tells the journey of a woman in search of her lost daughter. "Leila" got me excited right from the very moment I met Deepa and she shared her vision. What makes it so special is its context. I believe there is no story without a context. You see there are so many stories that we come across but not every story is able to touch us deeply. Hopefully, with "Leila" you will experience something that stirs up your deepest feelings. I don't think that India has ever seen anything like "Leila" before. So the challenge is big and that's what we all are trying to achieve as a team.

How do you see the show's dystopian setting? How does it affect you as a performer?

The thing with a dystopian setting is that as a performer you have to deal with situations that you hardly have any references for. I think that's what makes it that much more exciting. Also, it would make a lot of people to imagine themselves in those impossible situations. Also, what is dystopia? It is es-



What is dystopia? It is essentially a utopia that's sold to you by those who run the show

entially a utopia that's sold to you by those who run the show. We all are sold dreams but do we ever get what we are promised? What if the reality is not as rosy as the dream that you were sold? I think Leila explores that. Leila dares to ask questions that the society usually doesn't allow us to ask.

What is it like to be directed by three different individuals while playing the same character?

It has been a great learning experience for me. Deepa, Shankar, and Pawan have contributed so much to what the screenwriters had initially put together and what the book originally was. So, it is quite an interestingly balanced system that Netflix has managed to put together internationally where we have different directors working in harmony.

Take, for example, the case of "Mindhunter". David Fincher has directed that show with, I think, three other individuals. Speaking of "Leila", I have enjoyed working with all the three directors. I think they all bring their unique experiences with them to the whole thing. Interestingly, with all three, I have managed to explore another side of my character. With each episode I was actually able to add another dimension because I didn't like to play the character in a monotone. Just like in life we all make mistakes and learn from them. So while working with three different directors I somewhere managed to have that gradual progression in the character arc in that sense.

How faithful is the Netflix series to the novel on which it is based?

Firstly, Prayaag has written a wonderful book. I really loved reading it. But what we have

managed to do with the show is that we have taken the book as a base and have really given it wings. When you watch the show you will be really surprised to see how the series builds on the book.

There are certain elements which Prayaag only briefly touched in the book and we have really taken them to the next level. The world that we have built is far more diverse and richer in terms of how the society is.

Already there have been some comparisons between "Leila" and "Handmaid's Tale". How do you see the similarities between the two?

Well, I don't think "Leila" is anything like "Handmaid's Tale". The two are very different shows. Of course, I would really like Elisabeth Moss to watch "Leila" and I personally love "Handmaid's Tale". I know the one-line sounds deceptively similar to Handmaid's but it is very different and when you watch it you will realise that. But, I understand that there would naturally be some comparisons. It's like when you do a romantic film it's bound to be compared to "Romeo Juliet". It's as basic as that. Leila is so rooted in India and our culture that I think it will be nothing like "Handmaid's Tale".

As someone who has extensively worked in the Mumbai film industry as well as done some interesting projects down south, how do you look upon the web as an entertainment platform?

To be honest, it is a big breath of fresh air and a sigh of relief because what was happening not just in India but the world over was that we were getting restricted with this struggle to do certain box-office numbers. Filmmakers and artists were forced to try and streamline their work into a certain mould.

It was like following some sort of a checklist to deal with, with sword hanging on our heads. What the coming of Netflix and other players has done is that now you just need to focus on telling a good story and that story need not have songs for the sake of it or a certain set formula to it. It is so liberating.

Today, internationally, some of the best work is happening on these kinds of platforms. With this show, I know my target audience is not just 1500 screens across India but that it is actually going to reach more than 190 countries. For me, that is fascinating.