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WORLD 9 HOUTHİ REBELS CLAIM DRONE ATTACK ON ISRAEL

MONEY 10 SENSEX, NIFTY TUMBLE AFTER FOUR DAYS OF RECORD RALLY

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SNEH: INDIA WOMEN'S TEAM WILL WIN ICC TROPHY SOON 10 SPORTS

INDIA AMONG MAJOR NATIONS HIT BY MICROSOFT OUTAGE

Flights, banks, media outlets disrupted globally Indian aviation sector affected

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

Microsoft users globally, including several in India, reported massive outages in services, with the outage tracking website Downdetector showing users flagging disruptions across various services. A new update from CrowdStrike, a cybersecurity software firm, is being cited as the cause of the outage, which has impacted Windows-based desktops and laptops. Globally, long queues formed at airports in the US, Europe, and Asia, including India, as airlines lost access to check-in and booking services at a time when many travellers are heading away on summer vacations. News outlets in Australia — where telecommunications were severely affected — were pushed off air for hours. Hospitals and doctor's offices had problems with their appointment systems, while banks in South Africa and New Zealand reported outages to their payment system or websites and apps. Some athletes and spectators descending on Paris ahead of the Olympics were delayed as was the arrival of their uniforms and accreditations, but games organisers said



MEITY is in touch with Microsoft and its associates regarding the global outage

disruptions were limited and didn't affect ticketing or the torch relay. Amid the massive global outage that hit operations of airlines, banks and businesses across the globe, Microsoft on Friday said it is aware of the issue affecting Windows devices due to an update from a third-party software platform. A Microsoft spokesperson said, "We anticipate a resolution is forthcoming." "We're aware of an issue affecting Windows devices due to an update from a third-party software platform," the

spokesperson said. The outage put operations of businesses and systems across the globe in a state of limbo. On outage tracking website Downdetector, users reported problems across Microsoft line-up including Azure, and Teams. Microsoft said it is investigating the issue "impacting users ability to access various Microsoft 365 apps and services." "Our services are still seeing continuous improvements while we continue to take mitigation actions," according to Microsoft 365 Status post on

social media. The glitch caused users to see the Blue Screen of Death error messages, and there are widespread reports of disruptions in international airlines, banks and media outlets. Union Minister Ashwini Vaishnaw said MEITY is in touch with Microsoft and its associates regarding the global outage and assured that State run NIC network was not affected. The IT Minister said the reason for this outage has been identified and updates have been released to resolve the issue. CERT too issued a technical advisory. "It has been reported that Windows hosts related to CrowdStrike agent 'Falcon Sensor' are facing outages and getting crashed due to recent update received in the product. The concerned windows hosts are experiencing a 'Blue Screen of Death (BSOD)' related to Falcon Sensor," CERT-In advisory said. A widespread Microsoft outage disrupted flights, banks, media outlets and companies around the world including India. Escalating disruptions continued hours after the technology company said it was gradually fixing an issue affecting access to Microsoft 365 apps and services. Continued on Page 8

RAJESH KUMAR ■ NEW DELHI

Multiple airports and airline operations on Friday faced major disruptions across the country due to outages of Microsoft Windows cloud service. Several airports suspended operations as services like bookings, check-in and boarding process including issuance of boarding passes were carried out manually, thereby taking longer than expected time and leading to long queues at airports. It caused chaos for several low-cost airlines, posing security concerns. The outage hit booking and check-in services of several airlines, including Air India, IndiGo, Akasa Airlines and SpiceJet. Flyers have been advised to get to the airport well in advance, as manual check-ins take more time. They have also been urged to carry dry food items and water in case the wait stretches. Airlines are posting updates on their social media handles to warn passengers about delays. Advising passengers to cooperate with airport staff during this period of disruption, the Ministry of Civil Aviation (MoCA) said it is 'committed' to minimising inconvenience



Stranded passengers at the Kempegowda International Airport Bengaluru amid Microsoft outage, in Bengaluru, on Friday. IndiGo, Air India Express, SpiceJet and Akasa at the Bengaluru airport began checking in passengers manually on Friday, issuing handwritten boarding passes, after a global Microsoft outage led to the Navitaire Departure Control System stalling PTI

and ensuring well-being of all travellers. The airports and airline operations, whose systems were based on Microsoft, faced significant disruptions since about 10.40 am on Friday. IndiGo, SpiceJet, Air India and Akasa saw disruptions in their online check-in and boarding processes across their networks, forcing them to switch to manual mode.

Airlines are facing issues in making fresh bookings; urging passengers not to make multiple bookings for a journey and urging them not to contact call centres — which are facing tremendous call volumes due to flight delays — unless their flight is scheduled to depart in 24 hours. Union Minister for Civil Aviation Ram Mohan Naidu said his Ministry and

Airports Authority of India (AAI) are actively managing the situation arising out of a global Microsoft outage, which severely impacted airport and airline operations in the country. The Civil Aviation Ministry in collaboration with AAI has implemented manual backup systems to maintain operational continuity, Naidu said in a statement. Continued on Page 8



Unease in NDA over Yogi's fresh order

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI/LUCKNOW

A fresh order by Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath directing the businesses in the Kanwar pilgrims route to display nameplates, has caused unease within a section of party as well as the BJP's partners in NDA like JD(U) and LJP. The Uttarakhnad Government too followed the suit and issued similar directives besides verification of the shops and its owners enroute the Kanwar pilgrimage which originates from Haridwar. The fresh order came after the controversial directives of Muzaffarnagar police which mandated the eateries enroute to display names of owners later to be withdrawn saying it was just optional advisory. Not only the Opposition but senior BJP leader Mukhtar Abbas Naqvi, Union Minister Chirag Paswan, JD(U) spokesman KC Tyagi amongst several others expressed concern over the communal directives. Congress said it as an "attack on the Constitution" and demanded the order be withdrawn. The BJP, which is in power at the Centre and in Uttar Pradesh, has defended the measure, claiming that it allows fasting Hindus who may want to eat at a pure vegetarian restaurant, where the likelihood of them being served 'satvik' food is higher. "Nameplate will have to be put on the food shops on the Kanwar routes across Uttar Pradesh. The decision was taken to maintain the purity of the faith of Kanwar pilgrims. Action will also be taken against those selling products with Halal certification," the Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister's office said. UP State Minister Kapil Dev

Agarwal said most of the outlets with names of Hindu deities are run by Muslims and they sell non-vegetarian food. He said those outlets must be identified and prohibited. "This is not a matter about every food cart. Those who carry 'jal' from Haridwar and travel for 250-300 km cross this route to reach their destination. We had urged the district administration that all such people who run their dhaba/hotel after the names of Hindu deities are mostly from the Muslim community. Kanwariyas visit their shops where non-vegetarian food is sold. So, the name of the shop is after a Hindu deity, but non-vegetarian is sold there; all such establishments should be prohibited, they should be identified," the Minister said. Agarwal said they are not against the sale of non-vegetarian food but Kanwariyas would not eat from such outlets. "We have no objection to the sale of non-vegetarian food, Kanwariyas would not purchase it. We have only urged that non-vegetarian food should not be sold by opening shops after the names of Hindu deities; so the administration has acted accordingly. Politicians are giving it a Hindu-Muslim angle. But it is not a Hindu-Muslim matter, it is a matter of social harmony. People can sit and eat wherever they want, but they should have the knowledge of where they are sitting," Agarwal added. Naqvi slammed the decision and said the hasty orders may give rise to the disease of untouchability. "Faith must be respected, but untouchability must not be patronised," the former Union Minister in Narendra Modi's second term, said. Continued on Page 8

Centre to introduce six new Bills in Parliament

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

The Centre has listed six new Bills for introduction, including the one which seeks to replace the 90-year-old Aircraft Act, to provide enabling provisions for ease of doing business in the aviation sector, in the upcoming Parliament Session beginning Monday. Besides the Finance Bill, the Government has also listed 'The Disaster Management (Amendment) Bill' for introduction, consideration and passing. The proposed legislation aims to bring more clarity and convergence in the roles of different organisations working in the field of disaster management, a Lok Sabha bulletin issued Thursday said. The Bhartiya Vayuyan Vidheyak, 2024 seeks to replace the Aircraft Act of 1934 to provide enabling provisions for ease of doing business in the Civil Aviation sector. The Session beginning July 22 will conclude on August 12. Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman is scheduled to present the Union Budget on Tuesday, July 23. Other Bills listed for introduction and passage during the Session are the Boilers Bill to replace the pre-Independence era law, the Coffee (Promotion and Development) Bill and the Rubber (Promotion and Development) Bill. Lok Sabha Speaker Om Birla has also constituted the Business Advisory Committee (BAC), which decides the parliamentary agenda. The committee chaired by the Speaker has Sudip Bandyopadhyay (TMC), PP Chaudhary (BJP), Lavu Sri Krishna Devarayalu (TDP), Nishikant Dubey (BJP), Gaurav Gogoi (Congress), Sanjay Jaiswal (BJP), Dileshwar Kamait (JD-U),



Bhartruhari Mahtab (BJP), Dayanidhi Maran (DMK), Baijayant Panda (BJP), Arvind Sawant (Shiv Sena-UBT), Kodikunnil Suresh (Congress), Anurag Thakur (BJP) and Lalji Verma (SP) as members. The Centre has also convened an all-party meeting on Sunday ahead of the Monsoon Session. The meeting has been called by Parliamentary Affairs Minister Kiren Rijiju, the Ministry said in a statement. This will be Leader of Opposition and Congress MP Rahul Gandhi's first time at the customary Session-evening meeting of the floor leaders from all parties if he attends it. Another large party in the Opposition ranks, Trinamool Congress, has regretted it won't attend the meet. The Opposition parties under the INDIA Bloc too have convened a meeting of their Parliamentarians the same evening and another on July 22 morning ahead of the resumption of Parliament to discuss the strategy to raise the issues during the three-weeks-long Monsoon cum Budget session.



Shah for synergy among agencies to dismantle terror networks

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Home Minister Amit Shah on Friday chaired a high-level meeting with the various heads of security and law enforcement agencies to review the functioning of Multi Agency Centre (MAC) of IB, responsible for tackling security challenges in the country. Addressing the meeting Home Minister instructed heads of security agencies to adopt a whole-of-the-Government approach towards national security. He stressed upon greater synergy between all the agencies to dismantle the terror networks and their supporting eco-system, to address the evolving security threat scenario of the country. While reviewing the overall internal security situation in the country and the fight against terrorism, Shah impressed upon all the participants to increase engagement in the Multi Agency Centre and make it into a cohesive platform.

SC to review immunity to Guvs from prosecution

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

The Supreme Court on Friday agreed to examine the contours of Article 361 of the Constitution which grants 'blanket immunity' to Governors from any kind of criminal prosecution. The top court's order came on a plea of contractual woman employee of West Bengal 'Raj Bhavan' who has alleged molestation by Governor C V Ananda Bose and her wrongful confinement by the officials there. A bench comprising Chief Justice D Y Chandrachud and justices JB Pardiwala and Manoj Misra also issued a notice to the West Bengal Government on the plea of the woman and granted her liberty to make also the Central Government a party. It also sought the assistance of Attorney General R Venkataramani in dealing with the constitutional issue. At the outset, senior advocate Shyam Divan, appearing for the woman whose name has been redacted from the judicial records, said, "It cannot be that there is no investigation. Evidence has to be gathered right now. It cannot be deferred indefinitely till the Governor demits office." The plea said the immunity granted to the Governors under clause 2 of Article 361 cannot bar the investigation and moreover, the time is the essence in such probes. "The petition raises the issue pertaining to the ambit of the protection which is afforded to the Governor under clause (2)



Photo: Ranjan Dimri

of Article 361 of the Constitution," the bench said in its order of issuing notice to the State Government and others. The Article deals with the protection of President and the Governors and its clause 2 reads, "No criminal proceedings whatsoever shall be instituted or continued against the President, or the Governor of a State, in any court during his term of office." The woman petitioner has also sought directions to frame specific guidelines under which Governors enjoy immunity from criminal prosecution. "This court has to decide whether a victim like the petitioner can be rendered remediless, with the only option being to wait for the accused to demit his office, which delay will then be inexplicable during the trial, and render the entire procedure a mere lip service, without any justice to the victim herein," the plea said.

IAS officer Khedkar's career on the line as UPSC files FIR

TN RAGHUNATHA ■ MUMBAI

In twin disciplinary measures, Union Public Service Commission (UPSC) has launched criminal prosecution of a controversial probationary IAS officer Puja Manorama Diliprao Khedkar and also issued a show-cause notice to her for cancellation of her candidature from Civil Services Examination-2022/debarment from future examinations/selections. In a statement issued on Friday, the UPSC said it had conducted detailed investigations against

Puja Khedkar for her alleged "misdemeanour". "From the investigation, it has been revealed that she fraudulently availed attempts beyond the permission limit under examination rules by way of changing her name and the names of her father and mother, her photograph, her email id, mobile number and address," the UPSC said. The UPSC said it had initiated a series of actions against her, including a criminal prosecution by filing a First Information Report (FIR) with the police, and served her a show cause notice.



The UPSC said "in fulfilling its Constitutional obligations, it stringently adheres to its Constitutional mandate, and conducts all its processes, including all examinations, with the highest possible order of due diligence without any compromise." "The UPSC has ensured the sanctity and integrity of all its examination processes with the utmost fairness and strict observance of rules," the statement said. "The UPSC has deservedly earned the trust and credibility of a very high order from the public,

especially the candidates. The UPSC is unequivocally committed to ensure that such a high order of trust and credibility remains intact and uncompromised," the statement added. It may be recalled that on July 16, their daughter and probationary IAS officer Dr Puja Manorama Dilip Khedkar — who is under scanner for alleged misuse of power and privileges — was ordered to return to her alma mater Lal Bahadur Shastri National Academy of Administration (LBSNAA), Mussoorie. Continued on Page 2



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PAPER WITH PASSION

Taking on terrorism

PM Modi's decision for full deployment in Jammu is a welcome step aiming to ensure the safety of the citizens

In a decisive move to bolster security and address rising concerns over terrorism, Prime Minister Modi has ordered a comprehensive deployment of security forces in the Jammu region. This strategic decision underscores the government's commitment to ensuring peace and stability in one of India's most sensitive areas. Jammu has been a focal point in the nation's ongoing fight against terrorism. The region has experienced a series of violent incidents in recent years, prompting heightened vigilance and response from the security forces. The Prime Minister's recent directive comes amid increasing reports of terrorist activities and attempts to disrupt the region's stability. Recently four army personnel were killed in Doda calling for immediate measures to bring such incidents to a halt. The full deployment will see an increase in the number of troops and resources allocated to the Jammu region. The operation will involve not only the deployment of additional army personnel but also enhanced coordination between various security agencies. This includes intelligence agencies, paramilitary forces, and local law enforcement.



The deployment strategy will concentrate on several key areas. Firstly, there will be an emphasis on enhanced surveillance and intelligence gathering to preempt and disrupt terrorist activities before they occur. Secondly, security forces will establish increased patrolling in vulnerable areas to deter potential threats and provide reassurance to the local population. Lastly, efforts will be made to engage with local communities to gather vital information and build trust, which is essential for effective counter-terrorism operations.

No wonder, Prime Minister Modi's decision has got support from various quarters, including political leaders, security experts, and the general public. The government has emphasised that this move is part of a broader strategy to address the challenges posed by terrorism and ensure the safety of the citizens in Jammu. In a statement, PM Modi highlighted the importance of maintaining vigilance and resilience in the face of such threats. He reassured the public that the government's primary objective is to safeguard lives and maintain peace in the region. The full deployment in Jammu represents a significant step in India's ongoing efforts to combat terrorism. It is expected that the increased presence of security forces and improved coordination will help in curbing terrorist activities and restoring normalcy in the region. As the situation evolves, the Government's commitment to a robust security framework will be closely watched. The deployment's effectiveness will depend on the successful execution of the strategies outlined and the ability to adapt to emerging challenges. But it would be a clear signal to the terrorists that India will not tolerate any mischief in its territory.

PICTALK



Devotees perform rituals at Amman temple during the Tamil month of 'Aadi', in Chennai

Modi 3.0: Banking sector optimistic about reforms



VIVEK SHUKLA

Over the years, Indian banks have grappled with scams, loan defaults, and rising NPAs. Recent Govt initiatives have led to significant recovery and a notable reduction in NPAs

The re-election of the Narendra Modi government at the centre has raised hopes for concrete steps to be taken towards making the banking sector more transparent and efficient. In recent years, Indian banks have faced more ups and downs than perhaps any other country's banks. Indian banks have been plagued by numerous scams, loan defaults, frauds, increasing non-performing assets (NPAs), and wrong policies of loan waivers, leading to their sinking or facing huge losses. While previous central governments took some steps to address these issues, their half-hearted implementation did not yield the desired results. Fortunately, the Modi government took swift action to address the irregularities in the banking sector, leading to a gradual improvement in the banks' condition.

Many banks are not only recovering from losses and moving towards profits but also bringing scams under control. Many fraudsters' assets have been seized to recover loans, banks have been recapitalized, and the burden of NPAs has been significantly reduced. Isn't it a positive situation that NPAs, which were 12.47% between 2013 and 2017, have gradually reduced to 3.2% in September 2023, even though the government's recapitalization of banks played a crucial role in this reduction? The question now is whether this current state of improvement in banks will continue in the future or will the adage "The fool returns home" prove true. Indian banks are witnesses to the fact that they have been sinking or suffering huge losses both before and after independence.

This turbulent state compels us to ponder that until the reform process continues for a long time, a permanent solution to the problem is not possible. A recent publication by senior writer Shri Pal Jain, "Bharatiya Bankon Ka Badalta Chehra" (The Changing Face of Indian Banks), analyzes these various aspects in detail. It provides a detailed account of scams, mega-fraudsters, fraudulent tricks, cybercrime in banking, the rise and fall of Yes Bank,



the web of NPAs, etc., both before and after independence. Additionally, it critically discusses the echoes of bank privatization, the economics of agricultural loan waivers, demonetization, the Jan Dhan scheme, the autonomy of the Reserve Bank, the increasing popularity and risks of digital banking, etc.

After independence, both private and public banks existed in the country, but numerous scams and failures occurred within them. Nonetheless, public banks remained a key driver of economic growth and business expansion. Private banks generally did not even open accounts for ordinary people. The nationalization of banks in July 1969 led to increased access to banks for the general public. During this period, many banks merged, which led to some positive outcomes. However, gradually, corruption, bribery, and political interference in public banks led to the issuance of huge loans to genuine and fake companies, many of which went unrecoverable or partially recoverable. This resulted in massive losses for both public and private banks.

In the early 1990s, liberalization policies were adopted, and shortly after, private banks like HDFC, ICICI Bank, Yes Bank, etc., became popular due to their use of modern technology (credit operations, debit



THE MODI GOVERNMENT HAS TURNED PROBLEMS AND CHALLENGES INTO OPPORTUNITIES, IN WHICH THE KEY CONTRIBUTION OF THE RESERVE BANK'S SUPERVISION CAN BE SEEN

operations, fast clearing of checks, insurance, mutual fund opening, etc.). The new products, schemes, and modern technology of private banks posed stiff competition to public banks. This forced public and other private banks to adopt new products, schemes, and modern technology. As a result, some improvement in the condition of public and private banks was recorded, but the wave of liberalization also saw a continuation of scams, bribery, corruption, and political interference.

Events like the Harshad Mehta, and Ketan Parekh scams, and the sinking of banks like Global Trust occurred during this period. In the first term of the Modi government, a major crisis arose due to scams in PNB Bank, PMC Bank and other cooperative banks. Yes Bank, and the flight of mega-fraudsters to foreign countries. The burden of NPAs of banks reached record levels. In this context, the commendable initiative of merging smaller banks with large public banks to reduce their number was taken. Meanwhile, India's trade continued to grow rapidly, maintaining liquidity in banks. The Reserve Bank's supervision was made more robust. Demonetization, the Jan Dhan scheme, housing schemes, and significant boosts were given to Atmanirbhar Bharat, manufacturing, and other sectors. In the meantime, the COVID-

19 pandemic struck, giving a severe blow to the economy. However, within a few months, the Modi government made concrete efforts to regain control over the economic front. During the pandemic, transactions via digital banking increased significantly, breaking all records worldwide.

UPI is making its mark not only in India but also abroad. Despite this, the health of banks cannot be considered worry-free. Sporadic bank scams are still occurring, digital banking frauds are on the rise, and the network of cybercriminals in banking is constantly expanding. This is causing serious damage not only to banks but also to account holders. A foolproof control over this issue has not yet been established. Shri Pal Jain correctly stated in the conclusion of his book, "Currently, most banks are moving towards profits. The Modi government has turned problems and challenges into opportunities, in which the key contribution of the Reserve Bank's supervision can be seen." However, until corruption, lending based on fake documents, and infiltration of cybercriminals into banking are stopped, the dream of bank strengthening and foolproof security will remain half-fulfilled.

(The writer is a senior journalist and author of two books; views are personal)

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

YET ANOTHER TRAIN ACCIDENT

Madam — It is shocking and heart-breaking to learn about yet another "heart-attack" train accident in India. This latest incident occurred in Uttar Pradesh on 18 July 2024. This time, the Dibrugarh Express, traveling from Chandigarh to Dibrugarh, derailed near Jhilaahi Railway Station in Gonda, Uttar Pradesh. The derailment of 10 to 12 coaches underscores the severity of this tragic accident. The immediate assistance provided by villagers is a noble and commendable act.

It is high time for the relevant Indian railway experts to convene and brainstorm foolproof solutions to prevent accidents such as train collisions, derailments, fires, rail-track crossings, signaling errors, and trains running late, which jeopardize the safety of passengers and other trains. These measures are crucial to saving lives, properties, and assets. We suggest implementing an additional charge of Re.1 on every train ticket as accident insurance. This small fee could significantly aid commuters from poor and middle-class families in the event of an accident, providing financial support if the family's breadwinner is lost. Additionally, it would contribute to government revenue.

We hope the relevant administrators and the army will promptly provide the necessary assistance, including medical care, financial support, hospitality, and alternative arrangements for the stay and expenses of those accompanying the hospitalized victims.

PV Srinivas Sreelekha | Secunderabad

HIGHER EDUCATION REVAMP

Madam — The government has planned to double higher education intake by 2030. This initiative, however, might do more harm than good given that the Indian organized sector currently lacks the capacity to absorb such a large influx of job seekers. While a less educated person can adapt more easily to employ-

Controversial bill withdrawn



The criticism from business and industry forced the Karnataka government to put the contentious reservation bill for

Kannadigas in private firms on hold. The Karnataka State Employment of Local Candidates in the Industries, Factories, and Other Establishments Bill, 2024, was cleared by the state cabinet. According to the bill, "any industry, factory, or other establishment shall appoint 50 percent of local candidates in management categories and 70 percent in non-management categories."

"It's baffling that Karnataka, India's tech hub and one of the best-performing states in terms of ease of doing business, has introduced this regressive bill. NASSCOM (National Association of Software and Service Companies) has cautioned the Congress government that the restrictions could force companies to relocate as local skilled talent becomes scarce. Karnataka would be well advised to quietly abandon the bill."

Bhagwan Thadani | Mumbai

Finding focus in an age of information overload



ASHA IYER KUMAR

The relentless influx of information highlights the futility of hoarding content and the ill effect it has on our intellect and well-being

In my weekly routine of phone and computer upkeep, there is a ritual that I detest — clearing my inbox. My mailbox is inundated with dozens of notifications and newsletters from sites that I have subscribed to. I don't understand the logic of getting so many letters delivered to me when I don't find time to open more than half of them.

Yet I desist from unsubscribing to them because all the emails carry loads of matter and meaning, gallons of insight and information, and heaps of dispensable literature. In my over-enthusiasm to stay up to speed with the times, I invite an excess of knowledge which eventually gets junked because my mind and memory are not commensurate with the incoming barrage.

With barrels of scattered information already laid to waste in the brain and fresh bulks languishing in the inbox, I have begun to see the futility of hoarding them. The writer and columnist in me is forever greedy to add fresh knowl-



edge in the hope of widening my horizons, but I am now beginning to burst at the seams with an overload. There is a lot out there to absorb into the intellect, and the attic is smarting, unable to withstand the pressure. All that finds a parking space on the internet is meant to grab attention and impact the reader, and how easily we have fallen prey to the enticements of the information age! We are now in an endless cycle of grazing and chewing anything that we see on our screens.

Our decision-making is based on external influences rather than on our convictions. Midway through research, we deviate and branch out to something unrelated, and then

we are all over the place, ferreting about, lost and unsure of what we had wanted in the first place. And oh, how does one deal with the digital amnesia that follows all the binge-reading of fluffy, oversimplified material created with the only intention of grabbing eyeballs and garnering views?

We don't read anymore; we skim through shorts. American journalist and writer Nicholas Carr, in his best-seller, The Shallows: What the Internet Is Doing to Our Brains highlights how the internet is changing us superficially.

He writes that browsing through huge quantities of information often results in shallow processing, preventing us from deeply

understanding the subject. It's time to know what I need and what I don't as a professional writer, compassionate human and rational thinker. I need to bring focus and mindfulness into my reading and information-gathering exercises so that I don't bombard my senses with junk.

Why do I need all the facts, figures and findings that exist on the information highway? I must learn to curate and consume stories that strictly contribute to my growth. Trying to catch up with every incident, comment and development around the world in the fear and guilt of missing out is overkill.

Not all that I find there is nourishment to my mind and soul; neither will they enhance my life experience on the whole. If only I can be discreet and prudent enough henceforth, I will perhaps be saved before I become a rubbish dump of useless narratives.

(The author is a columnist and author based in Dubai; views are personal)



FIRST COLUMN

TRANSCENDING DAILY TRIFLES

We can rise above minor disruptions in life by adopting spiritual path



AJIT KUMAR BISHNOI

Ravindra Nath Tagore prays for strength to raise his mind high above daily trifles. Why does such an exalted personality do so? Because daily trifles do capture our minds. Aren't we, souls, small, ignorant, helpless and unsafe in absolute terms? The word trifle is defined as something of little value. Trifles are matters that are not very important and those that do not merit a lot of consideration. Still, we are defeated repeatedly by them. Why? Because, as stated earlier, we are small, very small in the overall context, whatever we may feel we are. Sure enough, daily trifles bring us down. We go in cyclic thinking. Our minds drag us to small matters.

What is the solution? The first step is to accept that this happens and is very common. What we consider important may appear insignificant to others, but they are very important to us. Then, as our role model did we must pray for help. It makes a lot of sense for us as small entities. And help is available. We are not helpless in absolute terms; God is there to help. But we have to take His shelter; God will not force Himself on us. Why? Because that will be a violation of our free will. Then, we must avoid cyclic thinking. Can thinking of the same thing repeatedly provide solutions? Solutions come from other sources, mostly from God, if we step outside ourselves. We must not lose to our minds, which unfortunately, are our worst enemies, as warned by Lord Krishna in the Bhagavad-Geeta, "One should uplift self by self; shouldn't degrade self, because otherwise self will be enemy of self." (6.5) Control over the mind requires practice and detachment. (6.35) These are general instructions.

Let me take up some of the most common daily trifles. Someone is not well in the family. Surely, one would be disturbed. But one must go beyond it. There will be duties like getting medical help. What more can be done? Many of us do pray, but the prayer should be more for guidance than just cure. Why? Because major sicknesses are the results of our impious/sinful past acts. God will not act interfere in it, but God can guide us to deal with it effectively. God does also help if one is a devotee of God. Are we? There is nothing to despair, guidance is a great help. The next matter which keeps the mind occupied is financial trouble. Mostly,



it is a paucity of funds, which hurts. The 'Karamphala Principle' is very clear. We get parents, birthplace, minds, looks, intelligence, wealth and lifespan according to what we deserve based on our 'Karmas' in our past lives. Can anyone explain otherwise about someone getting richer by billions in a short period? If it was hard labour, this was impossible. So we have to accept this reality and try to manage with what we have. Yes, wastage in showing off, etc. can be surely avoided. The third trifle, if we can call it as such, is being in trouble.

We should swear to ourselves not to act foolishly from now onwards. Troubles will still come but they will be less. Here also God can help, but, as pointed out earlier, we must take shelter from God. Then, not only any trouble but God promises to get us out of all troubles. (18.58) But again there is a rider. We must not continue to act in wrong or bad ways. The fourth problem that gets almost all of us is getting attached to results. This is illogical because what can we control? Is God not the sole controller? We have been advised by Lord Krishna to strictly stick to our role, i.e. to act dutifully. (2.47) Because what we will end up with is not just based on what we have done recently, but earlier like last life. I have given just four examples, but the underlying philosophy is to act properly from now onwards and remain in shelter in God. Then, daily trifles will not bother me so much. We will be able to get over them soon. What do I do? I seek guidance and help from God for anything that bothers me. Surely, God has taken charge of my life. Yes, God is micromanaging it.

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

The critical role of family planning in women's health



SUDHA SHARMA

The awareness about contraception can significantly enhance women's health and contribute to better population management in India

World Population Awareness Fortnight, starting from July 11th, brings attention to the fact that India is the most populous country in the world, having surpassed China last year. According to UN projections, India's population is expected to peak at 1.7 billion in 2064, beyond which it will decline. Out of 4 births each second across the world, one birth occurs in India. It is important to understand what can be done to balance the resources with the requirements of the population in the country. With only 2.4% of the world's land, India supports 17.76% of the world's population.

Nowhere is a discussion on contraception and mother and child health services more relevant and meaningful than here. Demographers use a parameter called Total Fertility Rate (TFR), which is the number of children a woman has in her lifetime. The TFR, which should be 2.1 for the population to remain steady, has already dipped below 2 in 2022. But keeping it within that range will require constant efforts to increase the awareness of the youth and adolescents towards these matters. Moreover, family planning offers many more benefits beyond the prevention of pregnancies. Uttar Pradesh ranks first among the states in India with a population of 257 million and a TFR of 2.18 (2015-16). It is relevant to mention here that our country was the first to launch an official family planning program way back in 1952. In the decades that have followed, the options have increased and so have the availability and accessibility.

With the basket of contraceptive choices available at all government hospitals free of cost, social marketing of contraceptives, and home delivery of contraceptives by ASHAs in rural areas, accessibility to these methods has improved. This has translated to an increase in the Couple Protection Rate by 13%, which is 67% at present, and a decrease in unmet need for family planning of 3.5%, which now stands at 9.4%. The country has made substantial progress in the delivery of family planning services across the country. The reach of family planning services has extended from target couples to eligible couples to all women and adolescent girls and should extend to all men of reproductive age.

Their share in decision-making and supporting women in using these methods makes it imperative for them to have this information as well. They can make an important contribution. If the present discussion gives a message that each couple should be forced to use a contraceptive to limit family size to stabilize the population, that is not true.

Family planning methods should help to fulfil the unmet needs of 9.5% of couples and help many others plan pregnancy at a proper time. According to the Guttmacher Institute, India Country Profile, 2022, between 2015 and 2019, there were a total of 485 lakh pregnancies annually in India, of which 44% were unintended. Of these, 2/3rd of these unplanned pregnancies ended in abortion. It is these couples who are in dire need of contraception.

These abortions could have been avoided had they received counselling and proper contraceptive measures at the right time. Contraception is not just a method of preventing unwanted pregnancies. It is a means to provide freedom to couples to exercise their reproductive rights. The freedom to choose when to plan a pregnancy,



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cy. It essentially allows responsible voluntary decision-making based on correct knowledge, the right attitude, and access to quality services, which together promote the welfare of the family unit and contribute to the social development of the country. Contraception prevents unwanted pregnancies and many more unwanted situations that follow. For married couples, it allows them to time their pregnancies and help determine the number of children in the family. It also helps in timing the births, particularly the first and last, about the age of the mother, which is particularly important because teenage pregnancies and pregnancies at a maternal age of 35 years or more carry their risks. Each of these aspects is very important for the welfare of all family members. So, family planning has to emerge from whispers in private quarters to a basic human right and an important aspect of family health and social welfare. Contraceptives are primary prevention for pregnancy and primordial prevention for high-risk pregnancies.

These high-risk pregnancies, if not detected in time and managed properly, can lead to serious complications and even deaths. At the individual level, the morbidity and mortality of the mother and newborn associated with an unplanned pregnancy can be avoided. If all couples had access to family planning services, it would help reduce maternal deaths by 25% and infant deaths by 20%.

Apart from deaths, the diseases associated with HRP (20-30%) are also prevented. High-risk pregnancies are those pregnancies where the mother/baby has an increased risk of adverse outcomes. This could be due to anaemia, high BP, or high sugar levels during pregnancy. Pregnant women with obesity, twin or breech pregnancy,

history of preterm labour, or cesarean section are also HRPs.

This is particularly true for teenage and elderly pregnancies because they have a higher share of morbidity. Moreover, pregnancies beyond the age of 35 have a high risk of congenital anomalies. So, preventing these births improves the quality of the population and reduces the burden on parents in particular and society in general. It also reduces early and late fetal deaths.

Women's health also benefitted from the improvement of nutritional status and the reduction of complications by addressing modifiable risk factors before the next conception, like weight reduction, management of medical illnesses, and allowing a reasonable gap of at least 3 years between two deliveries. Proper use of contraceptive methods would also reduce the need for abortions and thus decrease abortion-related complications like septic abortions and even death.

This issue is most sensitive for unmarried girls who are forced to seek abortion services at unrecognised centres and are unable to seek normal pregnancy care. This also calls for greater awareness about emergency contraceptive pills. Good health of the infant and siblings, proper care, nutrition, and reduced vulnerability to diseases are all seen in families with a limited number of children. Hence, contraceptives play an important role in the overall well-being of the family. Thus, the importance of contraception for the health of women and children is clear and government facilities, NGOs, and private providers are all working to offer and improve family planning services.

The availability of better client-friendly methods, from daily pills to once-a-week pills, lactational pills, self-administered three-monthly injections, devices work-

ing for 10 years, along good follow-up facilities, have made modern women's lives easier. What remains is to connect the dots so that maximum benefits can be reaped from the services. What also needs to be worked upon is the change in attitude of not only the clients but also the caregivers. The clients need to work upon the hesitation in accessing these services and the caregivers need to refrain from underscoring the importance of family planning services. Let us all reflect on our roles as stakeholders in this solvable problem which is so important for our health and progress. In conclusion, the discourse on contraception and maternal health underscores the critical need to prioritize reproductive rights and access to family planning services.

As we bridge the gap between rights and reality, it is imperative to foster an environment where informed choices and comprehensive education empower individuals and couples.

Collaborative efforts among government bodies, NGOs, healthcare providers, and the community are essential to ensure that family planning services are accessible, acceptable, and utilized effectively.

By doing so, we not only enhance maternal and child health but also reduce the risk to women arising from unplanned pregnancies, high-risk pregnancies, and abortion-related complications which are entirely preventable. So, let us all contribute to the broader socio-economic development of our nation. The journey towards a healthier, more informed society begins with each of us advocating for and embracing the significance of contraception in our collective well-being.

(The writer is Assistant Professor, Department of Community Medicine in MLB Medical College Jhansi UP. Views are personal)

How restaurants can save water and promote sustainability

Initiatives like the 'Blue Star Rating' demonstrate how restaurants can conserve water, writes SONIA GROVER and NATHANIEL BHAKUPAR DKHAR

A restaurant, a place to tantalize one's taste buds and enjoy conversations with friends and family, is the picture that comes to mind, yet no one can imagine that these restaurants can also be a place to conserve a huge amount of water and inculcate water-conscious behaviour. Water often plays a supporting role, unnoticed yet indispensable. Water is needed for everything from kitchen operations to guest services. The world is increasingly becoming conscious of environmental sustainability, and the restaurant sector is one of the main ones where water conservation practices could result in huge water savings. We are witnesses to the recent water stress situation in Bangalore city, where residents had to face a severe water

crisis, and there is almost a perpetual shortage of around 500 million litres every day. Limited water sources, a depleting groundwater table, and erratic monsoon patterns have all conspired to bring Bangalore to this crisis. Demand-side water management strategies are needed to salvage the situation and balance the disproportion of water demand and supply gaps.

This common urban water stress scenario calls for every demand sector, including the hospitality sector, to shoulder the responsibility of water conservation. Mission Life, launched by the Hon'ble Prime Minister of India, Shri Narendra Modi, called for lifestyle-related changes for environmental conservation.

Mission LIFE puts an individual and collective duty on everyone to live a life that is in tune with Earth and does not harm it.

As part of this mission, a global call for ideas and papers (GCIP) was launched, and the best 5 entries were awarded to pilot test their ideas. One of the award-winning ideas led by Dr. Sonia Grover focused on - Promoting water conservation in restaurants through the 'Blue Star Rating' system. The team pilot tested this idea in a few restaurants in Delhi that were selected on a random basis in the North Delhi and the New Delhi Municipal Corporation (NDMC) areas of Delhi. Restaurants were in different categories, including fine dining, casual dining, and state canteens. The two main

tasks of this project included developing a star rating system to grade and score the restaurants based on the water-saving interventions adopted by the restaurants.

These included both technical and behaviour change-related interventions. This rating framework is called the 'Blue Star Rating'. This was developed because ratings serve as a powerful tool for quantifying and monitoring interventions toward water-saving practices. This includes behaviour change by providing feedback, promoting awareness, fostering healthy competition, incentivizing action, leveraging social influence, and informing policy decisions, all of which ultimately lead to huge water savings and a ripple effect. The second important



task was to visit the restaurants to identify water-saving potential through simple interventions such as low-flow aerators, which facilitate reducing the flow rate of water from faucets. They achieve this by mixing air into the water stream, which maintains the pressure while using less water. This results in decreased water consumption without compromising the functionality of the faucet. It's one of the

most cost-effective solutions to save water in both commercial and residential settings. For handwashing taps, it was observed that flow rates at some restaurants were as high as 15 litres per minute. By installing these aerators, the flow rates were reduced on average by a range of 30-60%, which is a significant saving. In addition, for some taps, the flow was regulated by adjusting the pressure valves to optimize the flow. Also, visible leakages were fixed to save the water. With just these few interventions, around 5000 litres per day of water were saved in just less than 50 restaurants. Delhi has around 1,00,000 eateries, both organized and unorganized. If all of these restaurants strive towards water conservation

with such simple solutions, the amount of water saved can help us tide over the water stress situation to a significant level. If a Blue Star Rating is placed in the system, restaurants can be encouraged to take more water-saving interventions that are feasible and economically beneficial for them. Together, this sector can elevate water conservation, which also makes business.

For restaurants, adopting water-saving practices not only helps to mitigate environmental impact but also reduces operational costs. Water savings easily translate into monetary benefits accrued due to reduced utility bills. Simple yet effective measures like low-flow faucets and repairing leaks promptly are small adjustments that yield signif-

icant savings over time. In addition, sensitizing staff ensures the sustainability of the interventions undertaken. By championing sustainability through various interventions, restaurants can inspire consumers to consider the environmental implications of their choices. Restaurants can also be a platform for learning by engaging diners through information, education, and communication (IEC) collateral to raise awareness about the restaurant's water-saving initiatives, which can foster a sense of community around sustainability.

(Dr Sonia Grover is Senior Consultant and Nathaniel Bhakupar Dkhar is senior research scientist at Mu Gamma Consultants, Gurugram; views are personal)



Photos: Pankaj Kumar

THE ART OF CONTRASTS

Experience the resonance of nature in Seema Pandey's exhibition, "Between these lines in this space I root and grow" captured through the lens of black and white contrasts, says SAKSHI PRIYA

At the Prestigious Shridharani Art Gallery, Artist Seema Pandey's solo exhibition, "Between These Lines in This Space I Root and Grow," invites viewers into a meditative exploration of black and white contrasts. This collection, a culmination of two years of dedicated artistry, threads personal and environmental landscapes into a visual journey of tranquility and contemplation. Through these lines, Seema Pandey weaves moments, memories and dreams, creating an ever-evolving narrative of being and becoming. The exhibition features over 100 miniature and larger artworks that reflect Pandey's keen observations and creative explorations. Each piece is a tribute to her holistic and free-spirited approach to art, drawing inspiration from diverse surroundings, memories and imaginations. The intriguing title, "Between These Lines in This Space I Root and Grow," encapsulates the essence of her journey, merging the personal with the universal, the immediate with the timeless. The concept behind this exhibition is deeply rooted in Seema's acute observation and



awareness of her environment. Over two years, she meticulously curated this project, with a two-month execution phase that saw her transforming mental images into artistic expressions. From coffee shops to her home surroundings, each locale provided a unique influence that was retrofitted into her studio work. This process resulted in a collection rich in techniques, autobiographical inputs and a celebration of the natural world. Seema Pandey's art is a harmonious blend of personal experiences and natural elements. She finds inspiration in everything around her, particularly nature. Trees, skies and weather changes are recurring motifs in her work, reflecting her deep connection to the

environment. Even indoor structures in her artworks are infused with elements of nature, highlighting her fascination with the organic world. This integration of autobiographical glimpses and natural themes creates a narrative that is both personal and universally relatable. One of the most striking aspects of this exhibition is Seema's use of black and white contrasts. This palette enhances the themes and emotions expressed in her artworks, creating a visual dialogue that is both bold and nuanced. The black and white tones bring out the subtleties of her subjects, allowing viewers to delve deeper into the layers of meaning within each piece. This choice of palette also underscores the exhibition's themes of

resilience and the human spirit, offering a stark yet serene visual experience. Seema's creative process is as captivating as her final pieces. She began with small format drawings and eventually transitioned to larger surfaces, maintaining the same style and technique. One notable piece is a depiction of a tree with flowers, created using thread. This meditative work invites viewers to contemplate the interconnectedness of nature and the human experience. The exhibition also features artworks that move away from box-like combinations to embrace circular motifs. These pieces explore themes of womanhood, personal history, and the fluidity of time, offering a dynamic contrast to the linear compositions and enriching the visual experience with movement and continuity. In addition to trees and circular motifs, Seema's exhibition includes depictions of rock formations, which serve as timekeepers of an orchestrated rhythm. These rocks, both stark and evocative, represent links to the past, present, and future. Seema's minimalist approach is evident in her use of thread and needle, which she

employs to decode a womanly story. These humble materials are transformed into evocative resources, guiding viewers to discover deeper sensibilities through the parallel lines of falling rain, the symmetry of bare trees, and the arrangement of flower forms. Seema Pandey's ability to correlate disparate content into a cohesive whole is a hallmark of her artistic prowess. Her exhibition fuses the vertical with the horizontal, the past with the future, creating a sanctum of art that is both contextual and unconventional. This approach allows viewers to engage with the artworks on multiple levels, uncovering new angles of contrasts and connections with each viewing. Seema Pandey's work is a power of art to reflect, discover and inspire. Through her intricate lines and thoughtful compositions, she invites us to see the world through her eyes, finding beauty and meaning in the spaces between. This exhibition is not just a display of artworks but a journey of discovery, where each piece offers a glimpse into the artist's soul and the endless possibilities of artistic expression.

A Celebration of Nature's Elegance

Laxmi Gupta's exhibition, "The Flower Always Sheds Its Fragrance," beautifully intertwines art and nature, highlighting the resilience and beauty of flowers, says SAKSHI PRIYA



Photos: Pankaj Kumar

Stepping into the serene ambiance of Triveni Kala Sangam, visitors are transported into a world where art and nature intertwine seamlessly in Laxmi Gupta's latest exhibition, "The Flower Always Sheds Its Fragrance." This alluring showcase of artworks is an attestation to Gupta's deep-rooted admiration for the natural world, particularly the ethereal beauty of flowers and their profound impact on our environment and well-being. The exhibition unfolds like a poetic journey through lush landscapes and vibrant gardens, each artwork a tribute to Gupta's skillful portrayal of nature's splendor. Known for her mastery of color and texture, Gupta's paintings exude a sense of tranquility and wonder, inviting viewers to explore the intricate details and layered compositions that define her work. At the heart of Gupta's artistic exploration lies a profound connection to nature. Her fascination with flowers, sparked during the isolation of the COVID-19 lockdowns, blossomed into a series of paintings that reflect both personal introspection and a broader environmental message. Through her art, Gupta seeks to capture not just the visual allure of flowers but also their symbolic significance as bearers of hope, resilience and natural beauty. The inspiration behind her thematic focus on flowers, Gupta shared, "During COVID-19, confined to our homes, I found solace in daydreams of leisurely walks and the simple joy of gathering wildflowers. It was a time when everyone seemed gloomy and subdued, and the vibrancy of flowers became a beacon of positivity for me. They symbolise resilience and the ability to thrive despite adversity, which resonated deeply with me." Gupta's artistic journey is characterised by a harmonious blend of mediums and techniques.



From the precise lines of pen and ink to the fluidity of watercolors and the depth of acrylics, each artwork reflects her meticulous attention to detail and her commitment to exploring the interplay of light, color and form. This diversity of approaches ensures that each piece in the exhibition offers a unique perspective on the natural world, inviting viewers to contemplate its beauty from various angles. Central to Gupta's artistic philosophy is her belief in the transformative power of art. Beyond aesthetic pleasure, her paintings convey a subtle yet powerful message about the importance of environmental conservation and the symbiotic relationship between humanity and nature. By highlighting the delicate beauty of flowers and their role in sustaining biodiversity, Gupta encourages viewers to pause and reflect on the fragility of our natural surroundings and the urgency of preserving them for future generations. The exhibition not only showcases Gupta's technical prowess but also invites viewers on an emotional journey through her creative process. Each artwork tells a story, capturing fleeting moments of beauty and inviting contemplation on themes of growth, resilience

and the interconnectedness of all living things. Through her use of vibrant colors and intricate compositions, Gupta creates a visual narrative that celebrates the beauty of nature, inspiring viewers to reconnect with the natural world and appreciate its wonders. As visitors explore "The Flower Always Sheds Its Fragrance," they are greeted by a rich tapestry of emotions and sensations. Gupta's ability to evoke a sense of wonder and reverence for nature through her art is a witness to her skill as a storyteller and her deep-seated passion for the environment. Each painting serves as a window into Gupta's artistic soul, inviting viewers to experience the world through her eyes and discover the profound beauty that surrounds us all. Laxmi Gupta's exhibition is not merely a display of artistic talent but a celebration of nature's timeless elegance. Through her evocative paintings, Gupta invites us to pause, reflect and reconnect with the natural world, reminding us of the importance of preserving its beauty and diversity. "The Flower Always Sheds Its Fragrance" is a tribute to the enduring power of art to inspire, uplift and enrich a deeper appreciation for the wonders of our planet.

FILM REVIEW

Bad Newz: Fresh Trio Saves a Predictable Film

BY SAKSHI PRIYA

Buckle up for laughs with *Bad Newz*, a Bollywood comedy that throws everything at the wall and sees what sticks, resulting in a wild ride of humor and chaos. Directed by Anand Tiwari, the movie stars the charming Vicky Kaushal as Akhil Chadha, National crush Tripti Dimri as Saloni Bagga and everyone's favourite Ammy Virk as Gurbir Pannu. The film is a rollercoaster of craziness and hilarity, with a surprising plot that keeps you engaged from start to finish. The story centers on Saloni, who unexpectedly becomes pregnant without knowing who the father is. The plot takes a wild turn when a paternity test reveals that it is a case of heteropaternal superfecundation - a medical marvel you'll have to look up!

This twist sets the stage for a series of comedic events. The film's greatest strength lies in its humor. The script is sharp and witty, relying on well-timed deliveries from the cast. Discussing the plot's details would spoil the fun, but let's just say it follows a familiar Bollywood arc of love, marriage, divorce and (somewhat predictable) reconciliation. There's even a humorous nod to the famous American TV show *FRIENDS*, where an actor humorously quotes Rachel's (Jennifer Aniston) line, "No uterus, no opinion." Friends fans, keep an ear out for this familiar line delivered with perfect comedic timing. The movie is filled with references to old Bollywood songs and dialogues, which add nostalgic depth to the narrative. These elements are not just thrown in for the sake



of it, they add a layer of depth and connect with the audience on an emotional level. Director Anand Tiwari has skillfully integrated these elements into the narrative, making them feel integral to the story rather than mere add-ons. An unexpected appearance by Neha Sharma wows the audience and Pati Patni Aur Woh actress Ananya Pandey's special entry is an ironic and delightful surprise. Director Anand Tiwari balances comedy with

moments of genuine emotion, exploring themes such as dreams, relationships and familial bonds. Despite its comedic exterior, the movie subtly values these connections. Ammy Virk's performance deserves special mention. His comedic timing and on-screen presence add a lot to the film. The chemistry between Vicky Kaushal and Tripti Dimri is another highlight. They bring a natural ease to their roles that makes their on-screen relationship believable and engaging. Kaushal, in particular, looks incredibly charismatic and handles the comedic elements with finesse. However, it's crucial to manage your expectations. *Bad Newz* might be light-hearted and entertaining, but it doesn't aim to be anything

groundbreaking. Unlike its possible namesake, *Good Newz*, this film isn't a game-changer. It's only the fresh pairing of the trio that saves *Bad Newz* and shines in an otherwise completely predictable film. Despite all its positives, *Bad Newz* is best approached with tempered expectations. It's a fun ride but it won't leave a lasting impact. It is a delightful comedy that entertains with its sharp humor, nostalgic references and charming performances. The film delivers on its promise of comedy but doesn't aim to be anything more. It's a one-time watch, but don't expect too much or your *Bad Newz* movie date might end up being a bad date for you. So grab your popcorn, sit back and enjoy this fun-filled ride, just don't take it too seriously. **Rating:** 3/5

BOOK REVIEW

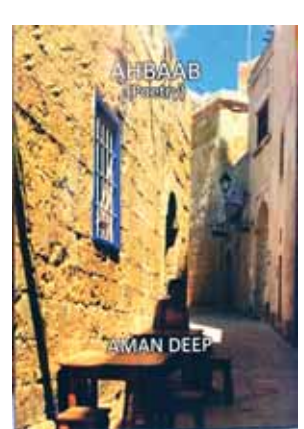
A Triglot Journey Through Poetry and Emotion

Experience the profound depth of human connections in AMAN DEEP'S triglot poetry collection, 'AHBAAB', says SAKSHI PRIYA

AHBAAB by the Poet Aman Deep Sidhu Chatha is an eloquent collection of poems that grub around into the rich concept of "Ahbaab" - a term encompassing friends, lovers and loved ones. Presented in a unique triglot format, this collection features couplets in Urdu, Hindi and English, following the precedent set by Deep's earlier work, *Ifsha*. The translations aim to capture the essence of the original verses, allowing for a nuanced and interpretative reading experience rather than a strict word-for-word approach. The publication of *Ahbaab* by Ferntree Publishing attests to the literary value of this collection. The book is thoughtfully divided into sections, each exploring various facets of

human emotions and experiences. Titles such as *SHAAAYARI AUR HUM*, *ISHQ*, *SHOKHI AUR NAZAAKAT* and *GUFTGU* guide readers through themes of love, beauty, conversation and spirituality. Each poem within these sections resonates with profound emotional undertones, blending traditional poetic forms with contemporary sensibilities. For instance, *SHAAAYARI AUR HUM* reflects on the nature of poetry itself, capturing the poet's humility and the intrinsic beauty of poetic expression. *ISHQ* highlights the universality of love while acknowledging the rarity of true passion and *SHOKHI AUR NAZAAKAT* explores the complexities of friendships and relationships, emphasising

the delicate balance between personal adornment and the nurturing of meaningful connections. *GUFTGU* celebrates the beauty of conversation, underscoring the joy and liberation found in sincere dialogues. The collection also goes into spiritual and philosophical realms. Sections like *BANDAGI* examine the profound relationship between the divine and the human, illustrating the poet's sense of being cherished by a higher power. Meanwhile, *ROOH KI BAATEN* offers reflections on the soul's journey, emphasising its timeless nature and the mysteries that lie beyond human comprehension. Deep's poetic style is characterised by its simplicity and depth, employing everyday language



AHBAAB (Poetry)
Author: Aman Deep | Publisher: Ferntree
₹ 500.00

imbued with profound insights, making her poetry both accessible and thought-provoking. The triglot format



enriches the reader's experience, enabling an appreciation of the lyrical beauty of Urdu poetry alongside the Hindi and English translations. Deep's interpretative freedom is evident as she revisits her original thoughts, presenting them with renewed clarity and emotion. *Ahbaab* is a beautiful journey of shayari that reaches deep into the reader's heart. It

directly captures the essence of the reader's experience, making every section a magical reflection of human emotion. Each piece of poetry in the book brings to light the significance of those who are no longer part of one's life, showcasing the stages of emotions that words often fail to describe. Aman Deep's heart and mind are palpably present in her work, revealing the challenges and beauty of writing a collection so deeply rooted in human connection. The book, originally written in Urdu, carries a profound resonance with the human mind and heart, with each line reflecting a deeper connection. The translations into English and Hindi adding another layer of depth to the work. Each chapter establishes a

profound connection with every line of the poem, touching the reader's heart and evoking wonder at the magic embedded in the words. This intricate interplay of emotion and language makes *Ahbaab* a remarkable and unforgettable literary journey. In addition, it is a poignant and introspective compilation that beautifully captures the myriad shades of human emotions and experiences. The triglot presentation enhances its uniqueness, making it a significant contribution to contemporary poetry. With themes ranging from love and beauty to spirituality and philosophical musings, *Ahbaab* invites readers to embark on a reflective journey, enriching an appreciation for the simple yet profound

moments in life. Deep's authentic poetic voice resonates deeply, making *Ahbaab* a must-read for poetry enthusiasts and anyone interested in exploring the depths of human connections. Arguably, *Ahbaab* stands as a tribute to Aman Deep's literary prowess and her ability to weave complex human emotions into poetic forms. The collection's unique triglot format, combined with its profound thematic explorations, ensures that it will leave a lasting impression on readers, inviting them to reflect on their own connections and experiences. This is a collection not to be missed, offering a rich and resonant journey through the landscape of human emotions.
Photo: Pankaj Kumar

