



FIRST COLUMN MANY REASONS FOR THANKING GOD

God helps us in many ways, and the least we can do is thank Him for His generosity



AJIT KUMAR BISHNOI

Anyone, who has even tried to link with God either by praying or by chanting or by any other spiritual practice, would have benefited in some way. Because God can never be a debtor; He doesn't have to be. After all, He is the controller. I do many spiritual activities, and I am rewarded much beyond my expectations. How do I respond? I thank God profusely. This entitles me to more favours from God because thanking God is a high-class spiritual act. Over a long period of being in the shelter of God, many changes have occurred in my life. I am more peaceful; feel more secure; am 'sukhi' (happy); bad times don't last long; help comes, as required; guidance is generally available; etc. There are multiple reasons to thank God. I will detail a few. The first one has to be God's role in keeping the Creation going for our benefit. There have been many wars. But the world remains intact. Because God is the only entity, who could have prevented an all-out war like a nuclear war, which could have destroyed the world. God keeps the Creation going for His parts (The Bhagavad-Geeta 15.7). A businessman tries to keep his business going for his children, grandchildren, etc, but doesn't always succeed, because we all are limited; God is not.

God uses good souls, those who possess divine qualities to keep the Creation going. He rewards them in many ways including a better next birth. Shouldn't we thank God for this 'kripa' (grace)? The second reason to thank God profusely is for protecting good souls from demons. Lord Krishna has stated in verse # 16.6, "There are two types of living beings in this world: possessing divine qualities and having demonic qualities. Every person has either the predominance of divine or demonic qualities." Those with a preponderance of demonic qualities remain engaged in cruel acts. (16.4) There is a good percentage of such people. How do good people, i.e. having a preponderance of divine qualities, escape their attention?

God manages that. I cannot imagine living the way I do, i.e. with freedom and escape from being hurt by them. Believe me, I thank my Lord for this great mercy a lot, knowing how vulnerable I am. My third reason to be thankful to God is for bailing me out of all troubles, which make



their painful appearance due to my past bad/sinful acts, mostly in my past lives. I must have, otherwise I wouldn't be giving birth in this dukhalaya. God has promised this to all those who have God's consciousness. The fourth reason to thank God is for acting as karta (doer) in my life. There are five factors for accomplishing any task. These are: the place of action and the doer and many different kinds of instruments and many different efforts and fifth in this connection is the providence only." (18.14) Only God can control all the five. No human being has control over any other factor except being a doer. And when God is the karta, a task gets surely done. God does this kripa on us whenever He feels that it is according to dharma and we deserve it.

The fifth reason to thank God, especially by me is for God using me as His nimitta (instrument). I am one of many whom God has chosen. I suspect that all good people get this privilege, as Arjuna was. (11.33) The sixth reason to thank God one and all human beings is His mercy in allowing very simple spiritual practices like praying, naman (obedience), chanting and, yes, thanking. Once we begin doing them, God is in the picture. He doesn't wait for us to become His devotees; God begins to help us to become one. Because all these acts signal to God our intention to take His shelter. In my case, God has been micromanaging my life for a long time encouraging me to go on with my spiritual activities like writing spiritual texts such as articles and books. All the religions promote this act of thanking God. If we don't thank when we should we are becoming a debtor. I look for opportunities to thank others, and to God of course. He gives me plenty of reasons to be thankful.

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

Prioritising growth and regional development



A S MITTAL

The first budget by NDA-3 is anticipated to address the demands of stakeholders and States seeking assistance to bridge regional disparities



The NDA-3 government is gearing up to present its first budget on July 23. This budget carries high expectations as it is anticipated to outline a 5-year economic agenda and is expected to deliver substantially to meet the demands of stakeholders and states seeking assistance. Discussions are underway regarding the reinstatement of special status for states like Bihar and Andhra Pradesh, with demands from Janata Dal (United) and Telugu Desam Party (TDP) in exchange for their support for the BJP-led National Democratic Alliance government. Andhra Pradesh's CM, N. Chandrababu Naidu, has demanded Rs one trillion to support the state's industrial and infrastructure development. The demand for special category status for Bihar and Andhra Pradesh poses the crucial question of why a similar approach should not be adopted to accelerate and expand the industrial growth of Punjab, a landlocked border state. This expectation arises at a critical time when the state is experiencing a significant divergence in its industrial activities due to stagnant growth and reduced exports. These circumstances demand new measures to catapult the state to greater heights. In the mid-nineties, neighbouring hill states like Himachal Pradesh reaped the benefits of a central special industrial package, while Punjab faced significant setbacks as many major players expanded and shifted their operations to the hilly states.

The geographical disadvantage of being distant from seaports has led to certain investment disadvantages and stagnant growth in the industrial sector. Today, Punjab demands a level playing field to compete on an equal footing, as its key manufacturing industries have the potential to become an 'Engine of Growth.' Punjab inherited a fragile industrial base at the time of India's partition in 1947, which was further eroded with the creation of Haryana in 1966. The 1980s and 1990s were tumultuous due to terrorism and social unrest, impacting industrial growth in the region. Currently, Punjab only accounts for 5% of industrial units in the country, with a 3.6% Compound Annual Growth Rate (CAGR) in the industrial sector over the last five fiscal years. In contrast,



THE DEMAND FOR SPECIAL CATEGORY STATUS FOR BIHAR AND ANDHRA PRADESH POSES THE CRUCIAL QUESTION OF WHY A SIMILAR APPROACH SHOULD NOT BE ADOPTED TO ACCELERATE AND EXPAND THE INDUSTRIAL GROWTH OF PUNJAB, A LANDLOCKED BORDER STATE

neighbouring states like Haryana have demonstrated higher growth rates at 5.9%. Punjab is positioned 10th with a score of 58.95 in the Export Preparedness Index (EPI) ranking 2023, whereas Haryana holds the 5th position with a score of 63.65. It raises concern that Gujarat has the highest number of 8 districts among the top 25 districts in terms of export share, followed by Maharashtra with 5 districts, Haryana with one, and Punjab with none.

Moreover, in terms of foreign direct investments (FDI), Punjab ranks 12th, having attracted only 0.49% of FDI. This is in stark contrast to neighbouring Haryana, which ranks sixth with FDI equity inflows accounting for 4.17% of the total inflows. The erosion of industry is a pressing crisis in Punjab. Despite efforts by successive governments to attract investments, significant hurdles such as location disadvantage, law and order and frequent protests persist. One major issue is the location disadvantage, as Punjab's distance from seaports makes its industrial operations non-competitive in the global market.

Two years ago, CM Bhagwant Maan announced in the Vision Punjab conclave of ASSOCHAM that Punjab aims to become the first state in the country to own wagons (Punjab on wheels), offering a potential solution to dilute the freight burden. However, the success of this endeavour depends on the support from both the central and state governments. Punjab is an exceptional hub for textile yarn, bicycles, hosiery, tractors, automobile components, sports goods, engineering goods, and leather. These industrial clusters possess immense potential and can be further strengthened. Ludhiana proudly leads as the top producer of blended yarn and hosiery, as well

as the second-largest producer of polyester silk, fibre, and cotton yarn. It dominates woollen knitwear (95%) and hosiery (65%) exports, showcasing its strength in the global market. While China holds a dominant position with a 37% share, India is positioned with a 5% share in the global export market, and there is huge potential for expansion in export markets such as the USA, UAE, UK, Germany, France, and Australia.

Ludhiana also commands a remarkable 92% of India's total bicycle parts production and 75% of bicycle production, securing its position as the leading exporter of bicycles from India with an 80% share. While India lags behind China in bicycle exports, there is clear potential to aggressively expand global exports with untapped opportunities in the US, European countries, and Africa as burgeoning bicycle markets. Jalandhar holds a solid 45% share of the total production, with 75% of the country's sports goods being exported from the city.

Despite China's dominant position as the largest exporter of sports goods with a share of 42.2%, India's current 0.56% share of global exports signifies the untapped potential for Punjab's growth, with lucrative prospects in the USA, UK, Brazil, Germany, Mexico, South Africa, Colombia, and Argentina. Punjab plays a pivotal role, hosting one-third of total OEMs in the farm equipment segment and serving as the leading tractor manufacturer, contributing one-third to India's production. With a commanding share in exports, Punjab stands tall as the largest exporter.

Despite India's current 2.2% share, the potential for over 2 lakh tractors to be exported in the next 3 years to burgeoning markets such as Brazil, Argentina, Turkey, SAARC, and African nations is undeniable. Wish List: Priority Focus on PLI:

The Production Linked Incentives (PLI) scheme should be thoroughly re-evaluated to ensure it delivers the intended impact on competitiveness and scale. Monitoring its progress closely is critical.

The slow progress of the PLI scheme, especially in labour-intensive sectors like textiles, automobiles, and components, must be addressed urgently. To achieve broader goals such as enhancing exports, attracting significant investments, and generating employment, expanding PLI to new sectors like bicycles and sports goods is imperative to encompass the maximum number of MSMEs. Assertive GST Rationalization: There is an urgent need to rationalize the current GST structure to eliminate the complex hurdles created by multiple tax slabs. Transitioning from the existing structure to a simplified two or three-slab framework and providing exemptions for previously exempted items such as farm implements is crucial to streamline the system.

Critical Focus on Logistics Cost: Competitive and efficient logistics are the foundation for industrial growth. Policy-backed support for state-owned wagons in landlocked border states like Punjab is essential to address the over-freight burden and provide a level playing field to manufacturing hubs. Incentivizing labour-intensive and export-oriented industries in the upcoming budget is vital to driving the country's economic growth and employment generation.

(The Author is Vice-Chairman of Sonalika IITL Group, Vice-Chairman (Cabinet minister rank) of the Punjab Economic Policy and Planning Board, Chairman of ASSOCHAM Northern Region Development Council and President of Tractor and Mechanization Association. Views expressed are personal)

Cinema: A potent tool in global politics and cultural diplomacy

In our multipolar world, cinema has become a critical component of soft power, shaping global perceptions through its captivating narratives

Movies have evolved far beyond mere entertainment; they now play a significant role in global politics and cultural relations. Through creative expressions, films harness the ecosystem comprising key stakeholders to nurture and develop soft power dynamics and geopolitical equations. In the realm of geopolitics, movies are more than art; they are potent tools used by countries to showcase their soft power and expand their influence worldwide.

Through their film industries, nations share stories that resonate globally, reflecting their identities and serving as diplomatic instruments. Films offer profound insights into the societal dynamics of different countries, profound



CHAITANYA K PRASAD

enhancing communication and ushering in a new era where technology plays a pivotal role in shaping these interactions. The emergence of the new players can be attributed to the concept of Soft Power dynamics. This idea, coined by Joseph S. Nye, describes the ability to attract and persuade through culture, political ideals, and policies. In this context, cinema has become an essential component of Soft Power.

Cinema, as a medium and platform, acts as a catalyst to position soft power dynamics, decoding perceptions, perspectives and geopolitical stances globally. The portrayal on the big screen infuses fresh thinking into the policy debate dynamics, global issues and management of ideas in a

global framework, bound by multipolarity and instant communication. Many films in the past have mirrored multidimensional dynamics and impact on different ecosystems, nations and individuals. Cinema and foreign policy interface reinforces the global appeal of a concept, or idea leading to a dynamic framework for cultural diplomacy. Cinema as a medium has added a new tool to the dynamics of bilateralism, the use of creative tools in the portrayal of a new point of view, ideology and intervention along with better cultural understanding.

Cinema has emerged as a vehicle of Collaboration, Cooperation, Cohesion, Coordination, and Convergence — the 5Cs of cinema. On the global front, cinema breaks barriers, overcomes obstacles, and thrives on the creativity of both old and new players. It no longer caters solely to Western or Eurocentric narratives but embraces a diverse global perspective, which plays a crucial role in shaping cinema perceptions and adding a soft touch to global power dynamics. The importance of cinema in geopolitics has

grown significantly over recent years, with governments increasingly funding film projects that reflect their national interests and cultural heritage. Many countries use their film industries as a powerful tool for soft power to shape their global impression.

The impact of movies is greatly amplified by their global presence, thanks to the rise of streaming services that have revolutionised film distribution, making it easier for films from smaller markets to reach a worldwide audience. Platforms such as Netflix, Amazon Prime, and Hulu have democratised access to movies from various countries, allowing filmmakers worldwide to showcase their cultural stories without relying on traditional distribution.



Cinema transcends power structures by influencing public opinion and shaping international policies through its captivating narratives. Movies serve as platforms for discussions and political analysis, sparking conversations that can drive societal transformation. Filmmakers and actors act as ambassadors with significant sway, using their works to facilitate cultural exchange and international conversations. Cinema has become a platform for new ideas and concepts, driving integration through International Film Festivals. The role of cinema in today's world is incredibly significant. It serves as a diplomatic tool and a compelling medium to communicate ideas through storytelling, influencing inter-

national relationships. Beyond its audience, cinema has a far-reaching impact on global leaders, policymakers, and communities worldwide. It acts as an envoy, spreading messages of peace, empathy, and solidarity through engaging stories that mirror the complexities of human life. There is no doubt that cinema now transcends entertainment in contemporary society. Nations are recognising the power of cinema as a tool to promote their agendas and perspectives on the world stage, underscoring its importance in diplomacy.

(The writer is former additional DG, DFF and Festival Director, IFFI; Inputs by Zoya Ahmad and Vaishnavi Srinivasan. Views are personal)



MONEY MATTERS

TRA launches kit to detect unapproved pesticides in tea leaves

Tea Research Association (TRA), a body set up for scientific development of the industry, said on Monday that an equipment has been devised for the detection of unapproved pesticides in green leaves.



ClaySys Technologies to create 5,000 jobs in India

Kerala-based software consultancy and process automation company, ClaySys Technologies, has announced expansion plans and said it will increase the workforce in India and provide job opportunities for 5,000 people.



Amazon India announces new product ranges, deals for Prime Day 2024

Amazon India on Monday announced new product ranges and major deals for its annual shopping fiesta 'Prime Day 2024' on July 20-21.



ICAR to develop 100 new seed varieties, farm technologies

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Indian Council of Agricultural Research is working on plans to develop 100 new seed varieties and an equal number of farm technologies within a 100-day timeframe to bolster India's agricultural sector.

TRADE, INVESTMENTS AGREEMENT

Next round of talks between India, EU likely in September

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Senior officials of India and the 27-nation European Union (EU) are expected to hold the next round of talks for the proposed free trade agreement, which aims at boosting commerce and investments, in September, an official said.



India has started negotiations for a trade pact with the EU in 2007, but the talks stalled in 2013 as both sides failed to reach an agreement on key issues, including customs duties on automobiles and spirits.

India, EEU bloc finalising broad contours on proposed FTA: Official

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

India and the five-nation Eurasian Economic Union bloc are working to finalise broad contours and their terms of reference on a proposed free trade agreement, an official said.



free trade agreement are under stakeholder consultation internally in India and same with Russia and soon it will be exchanged so that the next steps can take place," he told reporters here.

Union Budget: Space industry demands tax holidays, PLI scheme

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Import holidays, GST exemption for components of launch vehicles, productivity-linked incentives (PLI) and government stepping in as a customer are some of the expectations of the private space sector from Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman as she presents the Union Budget next week.

Space Association (ISpA) and Satcom Industry Association (SIA-India) have sought greater government expenditure on the space sector in the form of an anchor customer for the nascent private sector.

BoM Q1 profit rises 47% to Rs 1,293 cr on improved interest income

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Bank of Maharashtra (BoM) on Monday reported 47 per cent jump in net profit at Rs 1,293 crore for June quarter FY24 as bad loans declined and interest income improved.



The Pune-based lender had clocked a net profit of Rs 882 crore in the year-ago period. Total income in the quarter under review rose to Rs 6,769 crore from Rs 5,417 crore a year ago.

as against 0.24 per cent in the year-ago period. BoM Managing Director and CEO Nidhu Saxena told reporters that Net Interest Margin of the bank improved to 3.97 per cent as against 3.86 per cent at the end of first quarter of previous fiscal.

NLC India wins coal mine in Odisha

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

State-owned NLC India Ltd on Monday said that it has bagged a coal mine in Odisha. The coal produced from the mine will address the energy security of the country.



commercial coal block e-auction," the company said in a statement. This is the second coal mine won by the public sector enterprise after North Dhadu coal block (Western Part).

achieving more than 100 MTPA by 2030 from the present 50 MTPA. NLC India's core business is mining and power generation. Meanwhile, the coal ministry on Monday executed the Coal Mining Development and Production Agreements for three coal mines that were auctioned.

Mcap of BSE-listed firms hit new all-time high of Rs 455 L cr

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The market capitalisation of BSE-listed firms hit a new all-time high of Rs 455 lakh crore on Monday, helped by a record-breaking rally in equities.

of BSE-listed firms surged to a lifetime high of Rs 4,55,06,566.48 crore (US\$ 5.45 trillion). In two days of market rally, investors' wealth jumped Rs 3.85 lakh crore.

Sensex, Nifty race to record closing highs as PSU bank shares shine

PNS ■ MUMBAI

Benchmark Sensex and Nifty closed at new record high levels on Monday following buying in PSU bank shares and fresh foreign inflows.

JSW Steel, Tech Mahindra and Tata Consultancy Services were among the laggards.

"The Indian market continues to experience optimism driven by positive expectations from the upcoming Union Budget, robust FII inflows, and better-than-expected results from the IT sector.

"Additionally, the initial results from PSU banks have triggered a strong rally in the PSU index," said Vinod Nair, Head of Research, Geojit Financial Services.



The NSE Nifty rallied 84.55 points or 0.35 per cent to settle at an all-time closing high of 24,586.70. During the day, it surged 132.9 points or 0.54 per cent to hit a new record peak of 24,635.05.

Exports rise 2.56% to US\$ 35.2 bn ; trade deficit widens to US\$ 20.98 bn

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

India's merchandise exports in June increased 2.56 per cent to US\$ 35.2 billion despite global challenges, even as the trade deficit widened to US\$ 20.98 billion during the month.



trade deficit widened to a seven-month high of US\$ 23.78 billion. Cumulatively, the merchandise exports in April-June this fiscal climbed 5.84 per cent to US\$ 109.96 billion, and imports grew 7.6 per cent to US\$ 172.23 billion.

The trade deficit during April-June 2024 widened to US\$ 62.26 billion compared to US\$ 56.16 billion in the same period last year.

SURVEY FINDS 89% PEOPLE FACING CALL DROPS

9 in 10 use wifi to make calls through OTT

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Around 89 per cent of people surveyed have experienced call drops in the last three months and nine in 10 have used Wi-Fi networks to make calls through calling and messaging apps, online survey firm LocalCircles said on Monday.

to have received a total of 32,000 responses across different questions from 362 districts. The number of responses differed from question to question.

"89 per cent of subscribers surveyed face call connection and drop issues, Out of this 89 per cent, 38 per cent of them face it with over 20 per cent of their calls," the survey said.

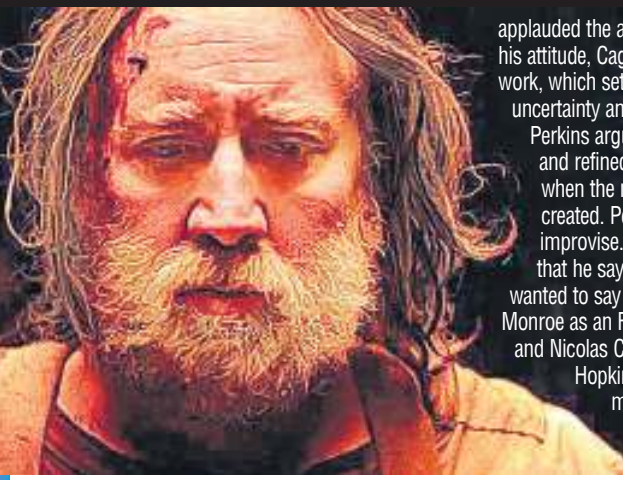


on call drop experience, 17 per cent indicated they face issues in more than half of their total phone calls while 21 per cent said that 20-50 per cent of their calls get dropped or disconnected.

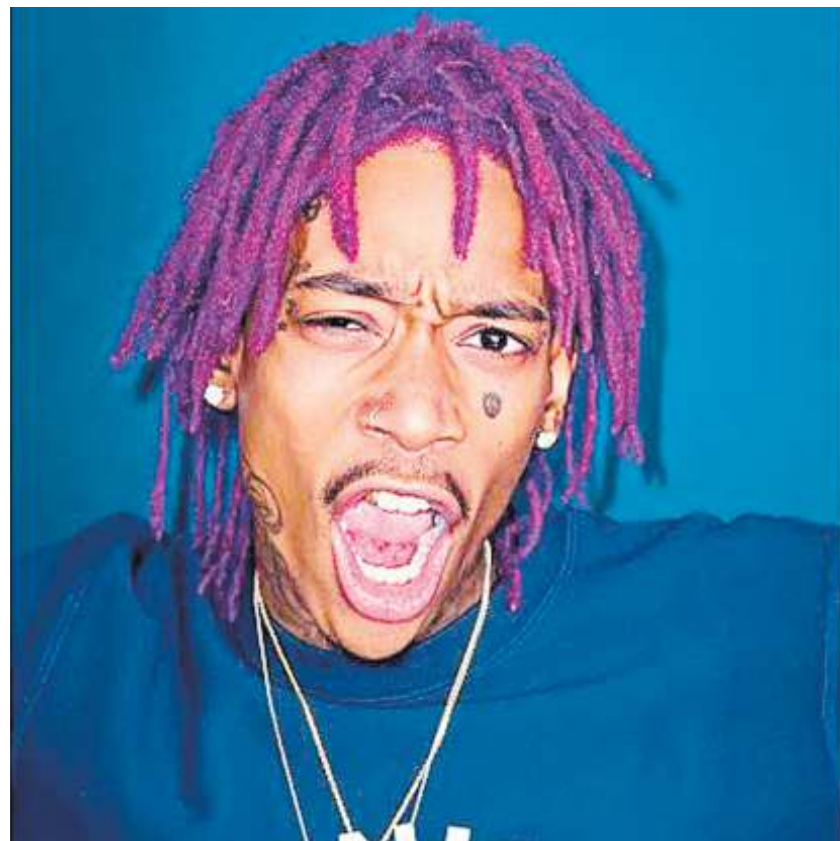
using OTT (internet calls and messaging apps like WhatsApp) platforms to make some of their calls," LocalCircles Founder Sachin Taparia said. Mobile subscribers have increased the use of OTT apps for making Wi-Fi calls in the last two years as they face call connectivity and drop issues with their mobile network, the survey said

DIRECTOR OF *LONGLEGS* ON METAMORPHOSIS OF NICOLAS CAGE

Nicolas Cage, who plays the evil main character in *Longlegs*, gave the part his all, according to writer-director Osgood Perkins. Perkins called Cage's portrayal of a demon-possessed serial killer "pivotal," calling it both respectful and thought-provoking. Cage's commitment to playing the role authentically gives the movie more depth and drama. His work with Perkins demonstrated his versatility as an actor and greatly enhanced the eerie and gripping storyline of the movie. Speaking with PEOPLE, Osgood 'Oz' Perkins claimed that Nicolas Cage's involvement in the entertainment sector often stands in stark contrast to the industry's typical rejections and difficulties. Occasionally, he said, the actor would see a script and say, "I'd love this and I want to do this." The actor's ability to recall every performance, movie and even song lyrics was compared to a machine by Perkins, who



applauded the actor's extraordinary speed and diligence. With his attitude, Cage shows his unshakable commitment to his work, which sets him apart in a Hollywood defined by uncertainty and disappointments. Perkins argues that Nicolas Cage's breadth of expertise and refined manner were evident from the beginning when the main character in *Longlegs* was being created. Perkins recalled, "He had no desire to improvise. He vehemently objected to my suggestion that he say whatever he wanted to say, insisting that he wanted to say exactly what was written." Starring Maika Monroe as an FBI agent like to Jodie Foster's Clarice Starling and Nicolas Cage as a serial murderer akin to Anthony Hopkins' renowned Hannibal Lecter, *Longlegs* is meant to be a playful homage to 1991's *The Silence of the Lambs*.



American rapper **Wiz Khalifa** arrested in Romania!

Over the weekend, American rapper Wiz Khalifa was arrested in Romania on accusations of smuggling illegal substances. Reports claim that the incident took place at the Costinesti resort in Constanta county during a music event where Khalifa was performing. The Directorate for Investigating Organized Crime and Terrorism (DICOT) said in a statement to AFP that Khalifa had more than 18 grams of marijuana on him when he performed at the festival, in addition to using the drug onstage. "We make it clear that the investigated persons benefit from the procedural rights and guarantees provided by the Code of Criminal Procedure, as well as the presumption of innocence, throughout the

entire criminal process," DICOT stated in a statement. After being placed under custody, Khalifa was eventually freed. The rapper was seen being led out the festival grounds by a number of Romanian police officers in a video that has been made public. Khalifa, whose real name is Cameron Jibril Thomaz, said in a post on X that he wasn't disrespecting Romania by lighting up the stage. "They were very respectful and let me go," he wrote. "I'll be back shortly. Next time, though, avoid using a huge a** joint."



'SHE SAID YES'! MOUNI TO BECOME LAUREN GOTTLIEB'S BRIDESMAID

The Bollywood actress Lauren Gottlieb, who debuted in the film *ABCD: Any Body Can Dance* in 2013, will soon be getting married to her longtime partner Tobias Jones. She is also overjoyed that actress and close friend Mouni Roy has consented to be one of her bridesmaids on her special day. On Monday, the actor announced on Instagram that Mouni had accepted to be a bridesmaid in her wedding and shared photos of the two of them together. Sharing the pictures, Lauren wrote, "She said YES to being my Bridesmaid (heart emoji) @imouniroy Mouni Darling, from the moment we met I knew we were destined to be friends! You love BIG and LOUD and are so unapologetically authentically YOU, and I want to leave you this love note as strongly as I've felt your support all these years". "We pick right where we left off when we see each other, regardless of how far apart we are or how long it has been since we spoke," she continued. "I am confident that this is why we will always be friends. When we first started working together at the beginning of our careers, we were essentially children. We have both discovered the love of our lives and are now comfortable with who we truly are." Here Lauren also admitted that she is very happy to have Mouni in her life, sharing "I'm so grateful to have your guidance on my journey forward as I get married, you are going to be the most stunning Bridesmaid (love emojis)."

Young Sheldon spinoff announced!

The launch date for *Georgie & Mandy's First Marriage*, a *Young Sheldon* spinoff, has been revealed by CBS for the upcoming fall season. As per reports that the show's release date is October 17, 2024, at 8:00 p.m. The seven-season run of *Young Sheldon* closed in May and this spinoff picks up where that show left off. It was revealed at a TCA session that *Young Sheldon* has confirmed that Zoe Perry, Annie Potts and Raegan Revord will return to the show as Georgie's mother, grandmother and sister, respectively. Iain Armitage has expressed interest in returning to the show, although it is yet unclear if he would play Sheldon Cooper once more. He stated in an interview that he would be thrilled and delighted to be called back to reprise the role. In addition, he voiced excitement about the next show, saying he can't wait to watch it on his couch. Audiences have apparently been thrilled by Montana Jordan

and Emily Osment's performances. Though members from the Cooper family will feature in *Georgie & Mandy's First Marriage*, it should be highlighted that the makers want the spinoff to be seen as more than just a straight-forward continuation of *Young Sheldon*. They intend to preserve its connections to the original series while giving it a unique personality. It seems sense that executive producer Steve Holland chose to give *Georgie & Mandy's First Marriage* a unique feel, especially in light of the show's switch from a single to a multi-camera format. This change may help create a different comedy tone and feel from *Young Sheldon* while preserving the continuity of well-known characters and stories in a comparable environment. On October 17, 2024, *Georgie & Mandy's First Marriage* will debut on CBS, so fans should mark their calendars for that date.



FUN

ARCHIE



CALVIN AND HOBBS



GARFIELD



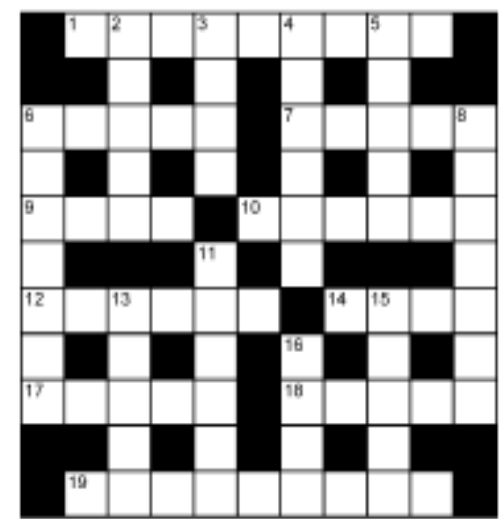
REALITY CHECK



SPEED BUMP



CROSSWORD



NANCY



SUDOKU

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Yesterday's solution

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

- ACROSS
- People in jail
 - Mugs and other things made of baked clay
 - The centre of your eye
 - The least difficult
 - Have a quarrel
 - Author
 - Things to play with
 - Speed competitions
 - Flat dishes
 - Something you imagine while asleep
 - Mistakes
 - 15
 - The part along the side or end of something
 - 16
 - A boat with sails
 - 17
 - Flour is made from this
 - 18
 - Scientific study of the sun, moon, planets and stars
 - 19
- DOWN
- Answer
 - 2
 - A fine glossy fabric
 - 4
 - Almost
 - 5
 - Correct

GINGER MEGGS



ACTING SCENES TO HEALING DEEDS

Since his most recent reel, Dr. Mickey Dhamejani, who portrayed a youthful Hrithik Roshan in *Koi Mil Gaya*, has gained a lot of attention. He talks to *The Pioneer* exclusively about his acting career, his pursuit of becoming an ophthalmologist and his denial of seeking acting opportunities



TEJAL SINHA

Back in the 2000s, there was this l'il guy who enraptured the hearts of the audience pretty well. His stint as a child actor in *Koi Mil Gaya*, playing the role of young Hrithik Roshan brought him into the eyes of one and all. Dr. Mickey D. Dhamejani is currently all over social media for all the right reasons!

The child actor is now an ophthalmologist. His young beginnings in notable Bollywood films includes *Koi Mil Gaya*, *Krrish*, *Dhai Akshar Prem Ke*, *Ishq Vishq*, *Aitbaar* featuring Mr Bachchan, *Dosti* featuring Akshay Kumar and even ventured into Hollywood with a role in *Eat Pray Love* alongside Julia Roberts. He also showcased his versatility playing memorable roles in TV serials like *Gharwali Uparwali aur Sunny* and a double role in *Phir Bhi Dil Hai Hindustani*.

"I was 5 and back then, the decision was taken by my parents," begins Dr. Mickey in a quick interaction with *The Pioneer*. "I was this cute little child who had this possibility of acting. I used to dance in front of the screens, as described by my father. I used to remove my t-shirt and dance to *Oh Oh Jaane Jaane* and other Anil Kapoor and Salman Khan's songs. I used to always enjoy and be like *aise duniya mai rahunga mai* and that's how it maybe started."

Things since then went on pretty organic for him. All the recognition and things coming his way, he goes on to credit his parents for the same for balancing all very well. However, his mumma made sure his studies weren't effected in any way. Always a top ranker in school and also coming from a family of doctor's education was an important aspect. Even on the sets, he recalls, how his mother used to teach him for the exams.

"That was a lovely time," speaks the *Koi Mil Gaya* star, as he speak of his experience working on the sets of the film. "It was a different role for Hrithik as well. He had to play a certain disabled child and there was a way that he had to speak in, the way he walked and even how his fingers were kept. Before the shoot happened, I used to go to his house in Juhu. He and Rakesh Roshan uncle used to teach me everything. Though it was not a very big part, the interaction became like that with them. I learned from Hrithik Roshan and then I performed. Even on the sets, he used to teach me all the shots. It was amazing and they were very humble people."

Even with *Krrish*, he recalls travelling with them in the same car and flight to Manali. And having to work and share a close association with the 'Roshan's', he shares, "I really look up to them as diligent people. The kind of work that they have done in the industry in their genre is extremely commendable. I really look up to them. They brought in the superhero concept in India. Back then *Koi Mil Gaya* and *Krrish* were genre-defining projects!"

As our exclusive conversation continued, he was only able to recollect his good memories from the projects he had worked on. He has learned a great deal about life from this educational experience. Mickey's passion for education and his parents' aspirations led him to pursue a career in medicine. "I'm a very scientific and logical person. I do my reasoning with a lot of data and that's always the way how I function. That time the decision was made and I wanted to complete my education. And thus, I completed my graduation." Today, a distinguished ophthalmologist, specialising in Refractive cataract and Lasik surgeries, he holds many degrees such as MBBS, MS (Ophthalmology),



FICO (London) and MRCS (Edinburgh). Getting into ophthalmology was a personal encounter for him. As a child, he had a high-powered glasses. Even during the shooting he recalls how it used to get difficult after removing his specs. "My mother was never counselled well by the doctors. Back then, you didn't have Google to search. There was always a lot of stress at home and people used to always misguide her. All of those myths remained unsolved. I've always wanted to learn more about it. My mother had a cataract during my MBBS, which exposes you to all the disciplines, at a very young age. At that point, I realised how vital eyes are and that I needed to pursue an ophthalmology master's degree."

In fact, he also goes on to reveal, "I have my own Lasik done. I have 6/6 vision. Lasik as a concept is very beautiful and again, not very well understood and counselled to the world. People are always afraid of getting an eye surgery done. That is what now I channelise into. If people want to get brid of their glasses, these solutions are amazing."

In a nutshell, he has given so many years into this practice. He aims to become a much-established doctor and have hospitals across the country. Acting does remain his core passion. However, "If a big opportunity comes my way and something that inclines with my values, it's definitely going to be a win-win solution." Dressing up, working environment and creating bonds on the sets is something that he really misses about acting at times.

Talking of his most viral reel, he shares that there was no intention to get viral. It was something, he shares that naturally happened. "I have always been sharing reels around eye care. This was just a thought of putting this in reel and see how it does. My patients did come and tell me *'sir aapko kahin dekha hai'*. And this one Sunday, I told my editor let's just put this and see. The plan was to make a doctor's reel only. And to my surprise, it was all over the media."

In the very same reel, there was a comment saying 'Jaadu came and removed his father's specs in *Koi Mil Gaya* and Jr. Hrithik became an eye doctor.' And an overwhelmed Dr. Mickey laughs his heart out and shares, "I did try to reply to most of them but then it became beyond my reach. It kind of became true also for them. I did have very thick glasses and that scene became true to me after my Lasik, *'mujhe sab dikhra hai'* (we laugh). The surgery has now become a matter of magic which happens in minutes these days. It was very real and thus it worked out well."

Presently, he is in the process of understanding what could lead to his goal of eventually becoming this healthcare provider, who is also serving not just one or two hospitals in the city, but is a national-level health provider. He aims to provide quality healthcare to everybody. "Be it Lasik or any eye surgery, the machines are pretty expensive and thus, the treatments get expensive. Not everybody gets access to the latest technologies. What I have figured is if I can manage this sort of a pan-India level, I can give the best of technology at affordable prices."

Meanwhile, as we head towards the end of the chat, he also denies looking for offers in acting at the moment.

Alert! Dengue puts your brain and nervous system at risk

Dengue, typically recognised for its flu-like symptoms, can also have severe repercussions for the brain and nervous system, highlighting the need for heightened awareness and timely intervention. While the common symptoms of dengue include high fever, severe headache, pain behind the eyes, joint and muscle pain, rash and mild bleeding, the virus can also lead to much more serious neurological conditions.

One of the significant neurological complications of dengue is encephalitis, which is the inflammation of the brain! Encephalitis can cause severe headaches, confusion, paralysis of body, seizures and even coma. Meningitis, the inflammation of the coverings of the brain and spinal cord, can also occur, leading to symptoms like severe headaches and neck stiffness. Another critical condition is myelitis, which involves the inflammation of the spinal cord, potentially resulting in paralysis and other serious neurological symptoms!

Dengue encephalopathy is a particularly severe manifestation where the brain is directly affected by the virus or the body's immune response to it. Symptoms of dengue encephalopathy include changes in mental state, unusual behaviour and, in extreme cases, unconsciousness. Recognising and treating this condition promptly is crucial to prevent long-term neurological damage.

Additionally, dengue can trigger Guillain-Barré Syndrome (GBS), an autoimmune disorder where the immune system mistakenly attacks the nerves. This condition results in muscle weakness, paralysis and potentially life-threatening breathing difficulties that require intensive care. The immune response to virus can trigger various secondary demyelinating disorders in brain. The dengue virus can directly infect the nervous system, causing inflammation and nerve damage. Furthermore, the immune response to the virus can lead to excessive inflammation and secondary demyelinating disorders in the brain, resulting in various neurological symptoms.

Dengue also heightens the risk of strokes due to bleeding (hemorrhagic stroke) or blood clots (ischemic stroke). This increased risk arises because dengue affects blood vessels and the blood's ability to clot. Consequently, close monitoring of patients for any signs of stroke is essential.

Early warning signs of dengue-related neurological problems include persistent headaches, stiff neck, confusion, seizures and sudden weakness. Early detection and treatment are vital to prevent long-term neurological damage. Diagnosing dengue-related brain and nerve issues involves clinical evaluation, MRI or CT scans, and lumbar puncture to analyse spinal fluid. Treatment focuses on managing symptoms, reducing inflammation, and providing supportive care, which may include antiviral medications and immunotherapy.

Awareness of the neurological risks associated with dengue is vital for both prevention and early intervention. Preventive measures include controlling mosquito populations, using protective clothing and repellents and eliminating standing water where mosquitoes breed. Educating patients and communities about these risks and ensuring prompt and appropriate treatment can help mitigate severe complications associated with dengue.

Understanding the potential neurological impact of dengue underscores the need for comprehensive medical care and timely intervention. By staying informed and vigilant, we can better protect ourselves and our communities from the serious neurological consequences of dengue. Comprehensive medical care and patient education are essential in addressing the neurological impacts of dengue, highlighting the importance of vigilance and informed action in combating this serious health threat.

(The author, Dr. Pooja Anand, is an Associate consultant, Neurology, at Paras Health.)



AARTI SREENATH

From the humble environs of Arunachal Pradesh, where he toiled as a labourer's son, to the electrifying world of breaking, Passang Tamang's life trajectory is an evidence to the transformative power of dance. A chance encounter with a breaking jam in Siliguri, while working in a *lachcha paratha* factory, ignited a spark within him that would irrevocably alter his destiny.

"The world didn't accept me until I became a breaker." Passang confides, his voice a mix of determination and gratitude. Breaking, he found, was more than just a dance form; it was a passport to a world of acceptance, camaraderie and self-discovery.

For Passang, breaking transcended class boundaries. "Dance unites everyone," he explains, "and when I got involved in breaking and met like-minded people, it helped grow my confidence." The dance form offered him a sense of belonging, a brotherhood he cherishes deeply. His crew, he insists, is his "second family," a sanctuary where he is unconditionally accepted.

Passang's journey has been marked by challenges, but his resilience, honed through breaking, has been his steadfast companion. "Breaking makes me feel confident, so I don't feel any hesitation or nervousness," he shares.

The dance form has equipped him with the mental fortitude to navigate life's hurdles with an unwavering spirit. His transformation from a labourer's son in a small town to a prominent figure in a breaking community is a story of sheer determination and passion. The grit and persever-

ance required to master breaking have seeped into his approach to life, enabling him to overcome obstacles that once seemed insurmountable.

In the vibrant streets of Siliguri, Passang's encounter with breaking was serendipitous. The rhythmic beats and dynamic moves of breakers captivated him, offering a glimpse into a world far removed from the confines of the factory. He

began practicing diligently, often late into the night, driven by an unquenchable thirst to master the art. The physical demands of breaking, with its intricate footwork and powerful spins, were initially daunting. However, Passang's unwavering commitment saw him through.

He recalls the countless hours spent perfecting each move; the bruises and aches are merely milestones on his path to mas-

tery. His dedication paid off, as he soon became a recognised figure in the local breaking scene.

Passang's eyes gleam with ambition as he speaks of his aspirations. "I love breaking as an art form that has no boundaries," he declares. He envisions a future where the North East, with its unique blend of cultures, becomes a thriving hub for breaking, mirroring the vibrant scene in

Nepal. His journey to the Top 16 of the India finals of *Red Bull BC One* is just the beginning. The ultimate goal? To stand tall as the world champion!

The support from his crew has been instrumental in his journey. They have become his mentors, friends and family, providing a network of support that extends beyond dance. "My crew is my second family," Passang emphasises. Their shared experi-

ences and collective passion for breaking have forged bonds that are unbreakable. Together, they have navigated the highs and lows of the breaking scene, celebrating victories and learning from setbacks.

As he continues to push the boundaries of his craft, Passang carries with him the hope of inspiring countless others to find their voice, their identity and their place in the world through the rhythm and movement of breaking. His story is inspirational for aspiring breakers, especially those from underprivileged backgrounds. Passang's journey illustrates that, with passion and perseverance, one can transcend their circumstances and achieve greatness.

Red Bull BC One is the biggest and most prestigious one-on-one-breaking competition in the world. Every year, thousands of breakers compete for a chance to represent their country at the World Final. For Passang, participating in this competition is more than a personal achievement; it is a testament to his journey and the transformative power of breaking. His progress in the competition reflects not just his skill but also his resilience and unwavering spirit. With every battle, he gets closer to his dream of becoming the World Champion, a title that would signify not just his mastery of breaking but also his triumph over adversity.

As Passang Tamang continues his journey, he remains grounded in his roots, drawing strength from his past while relentlessly pursuing his future. His story is a celebration of the power of dance to break barriers, unite people and transform lives. Through his journey, Passang hopes to inspire others to embrace their passions, overcome their fears and find their place in the world, just as he has found his through the dynamic and exhilarating world of breaking.



Bboy Passang faced numerous obstacles in his quest to leave his imprint on the world! He talks about his incredible journey, his discovery of dance's transformational potential and his obsession with the art form with *The Pioneer*.

REMEMBER THEIR FACES: KOHLI SAYS GOOD LUCK TO INDIA'S OLYMPIC-BOUND ATHLETES

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Indian cricket's reigning superstar Virat Kohli has urged the nation to get behind its Olympic-bound contingent, asking the fans to join him in supporting the athletes as "they inch closer to the podium with dogged determination" in the quadrennial showpiece starting July 26 in Paris.

In a little over a minute long video post on social media, featuring some Paris-bound athletes like javelin thrower Neeraj Chopra and boxing hope Nishant Dev, Kohli said it is time for India to be recognised as a global sporting powerhouse.

"There was a time when the world could only think of India as a land of snake charmers and elephants. Over time, that has changed. Today we are known to the world as the largest democracy, a global tech hub," he said.

"We are known for cricket and Bollywood, for start-up unicorns and as the fastest growing economy in the world. So, what is the next big thing



for this great nation? Well, that will be more gold, more silver and more bronze," he added.

He then went on to address Indian sports fans, asking them to support the 118-strong group of athletes, who

would be aiming to better the country's best ever performance of seven medals achieved in the previous

Games in Tokyo.

"Our brothers and sisters are headed to Paris, hungry for medals. A billion of us will be watching them nervous and excited as our athletes set foot in the tracks and fields and courts and rings.

"Every neighbourhood, every corner of India will hear a chorus of voices chanting 'India, India, India'. Join me in remembering their faces as they inch closer to the podium with the dogged determination of waving the Tiranga with pride. Jai Hind and good luck India." Kohli, who is currently in London on a break after India's T20 World Cup triumph in the West Indies last month, said in his monologue.

Most of the Indian competitors are currently training abroad and will head to the French capital from their respective bases. India's medal hopes will rest on shooting, badminton, wrestling, and boxing aside from the expectations of a second successive podium finish from Chopra, who scripted history with his javelin throw gold in Tokyo.



It is good thing that everyone performing: Gill on competition for openers' slots

PTI ■ HARARE

The competition for the openers' slots has intensified following India's T20 series win in Zimbabwe and for contender Shubman Gill, that can only be a "good thing".

Gill, who is expected to open alongside Yashuvi Jaiswal in the three T20Is in Sri Lanka later this month, was the leading run getter in the five-match series in Harare. He was not part of the T20 World Cup squad in the USA and the Caribbean.

For the major part of the series, India played as many as four openers in the playing eleven and all of them did well including Gill, Jaiswal, Abhishek Sharma and Rituraj Gaikwad.

Gill captained India's second string team and played as an opener in all the five matches with Jaiswal joining him at the top from the third game onwards.

For the first two games, he opened with Punjab teammate Abhishek Sharma who scored a hundred and a fifty in his debut series. Among the four openers, Gill had the lowest strike rate, 125.92, compared to Jaiswal's 165.88, Gaikwad's 158.33 and Abhishek's 174.64.

"It's a good thing that everyone's performing. It shows that everyone is hungry and nobody is ready to take it easy. For any country or board, that's always a good thing," said Gill on Sunday referring to the openers.

Following the retirement of Rohit Sharma and Virat Kohli from T20Is, the selectors will have a problem of plenty when it comes to picking the openers for the Sri Lanka series.

"Anyone who got the

opportunity grabbed it with both hands. The openers to bowlers to all-rounders to spinners, everyone made a mark and I think the selectors have now seen everything and it's up to them to name the squad for the next series," he said after India's 4-1 series win over Zimbabwe.

On captaining the team through the series, Gill said he enjoyed every bit of the challenge.

"One thing about captaincy I feel is how much confidence you can show in your players. I try to do that and make them believe that if you try and execute the plans, the results will always follow," Gill said.

"After losing the first match, we were under a bit of pressure. It's not easy to play back to back games and the series was planned in a way that there were two back-to-back games, a couple of days rest and then again back-to-back games.

"It's never easy playing a series like that but I think the way we came back after losing the first T20I was really remarkable." India bounced back to win the series 4-1 after losing the opener.

"Seeing everyone hungry and so quickly adapting to the situation and assessing the conditions was truly spectacular to watch," said Gill. With the ball moving around in the powerplay, the opener thought it was important to be a little cautious early in the innings.

"I think, as per the conditions of the wicket, there were some challenging conditions, especially in the powerplay, the ball was always doing something or the other. As an opening batter, my focus was to see out 4-5 overs and not concede any wicket," he added.

Our planning is that he will not be there in Pakistan: Bailey on Warner in Champions Trophy

PTI ■ SYDNEY

Australian national selector George Bailey has said that the national team plans to move on from the recently-retired David Warner despite the southpaw's desire to be considered for the Champions Trophy in Pakistan next year.

The 37-year-old Warner retired from international cricket following the T20 World Cup in the Americas last month, where the Aussies failed to progress beyond the Super 8 stage. However, he had insisted that he will keep the door open for a return for the Champions Trophy, a One-Day International format ICC event.

"Our understanding is that David is retired, and [he] should be commended on what has been an incredible career across all three formats. Certainly, our planning is that he won't be there in Pakistan," Bailey was quoted as saying by ESPNcricinfo.

Warner had a decent run during the T20 World Cup, finishing as the side's second-highest run-scorer, after Travis Head.

On his remarks on making a comeback during the Champions Trophy, Bailey said that Warner might be "stirring the pot",



with the team planning "to transition to some different players".

"You never know when Bull's joking...think he's just stirring the pot a bit. He's had a wonderful career, can't celebrate it enough, and think as time goes

by, his legacy of what he has done for Australia and we reflect back on that, the legend of a player is only going to continue to grow," added Bailey.

"But, as far as this team goes and the journey to transition to some different players, in his case across all three formats, it's going to be exciting."

The Australians will have a young squad during their upcoming tour of the United Kingdom, which includes limited-overs meetings against Scotland and England.

With the likes of Matthew Wade, Mitchell Starc and Glenn Maxwell missing out, Bailey said the Kangaroos might see a more youthful squad going forward, with an eye on the next T20 World Cup in 2026.

"I don't think there's anyone who's not there that we've put a line through permanently besides David (Warner). This is the way we are going with this squad," he continued.

"The next T20 World Cup is 2026, so I imagine there may be some more changes than what we are seeing in this squad. But specifically, to those guys (Starc and Maxwell), no we haven't had any conversations about where they think their T20 journey may finish.

Rohit says he will continue to play Tests and ODIs at least for a while



PTI ■ DALLAS (USA)

India captain Rohit Sharma says he will continue to play Test and ODI cricket "at least for a while" after ending his T20 international career with a World Cup win last month. Rohit has been on a break since the title win in the West Indies and is set to miss the limited-overs tour of Sri Lanka later this month, which includes three ODIs.

"I just said it. I don't look that far ahead. So clearly, you will be seeing me play at least for a while," the 37-year-old said at an event here on Sunday night.

His statement was reiteration of a position he made clear after announcing his T20 retirement after the final in the West Indies in which India defeated South Africa by seven runs.

Earlier this month, BCCI secretary Jay Shah had confirmed that Rohit will captain India in the ongoing World Test Championship cycle and the Champions Trophy next year in February-March.

Rohit had led India in the 2022 T20 World Cup where the team was ousted in the semifinals by eventual champions England.

A year later, India reached the final of the 50-over World Cup at home under his leadership, but succumbed to Australia in the summit clash at Ahmedabad. Rohit left T20Is with 4231 runs from 159 matches, having made five hundreds and 32 fifties.



Cummins to miss Australia's limited-overs cricket tour to England and Scotland

AP ■ MELBOURNE

World Cup-winning skipper Pat Cummins will be rested for Australia's upcoming limited-overs tour to Britain and Mitchell Starc will miss the Twenty20 portion of the trip as part of a workload management program.

Australia is scheduled to play three T20s against Scotland and five one-day internationals against England in September.

Cricketer Australia said Cummins' absence was part of a "pre-planned, long-term load management strategy" as part of preparations for the Champions Trophy next year. Mitchell Marsh, who led Australia at the recent T20 World Cup in the United States and Caribbean, will be captain for the tour.

Veteran opener David Warner has retired and wicketkeeper Matthew Wade wasn't selected, with selectors looking at the future.

Young batter Jake Fraser-McGurk was included in both the ODI and T20 squads after being a designated traveling reserve for the T20 World Cup. "This tour gives us a great opportunity to bring in some new players in the absence of David Warner and Matthew Wade, as well as giving some senior players time to prepare for the home summer and a busy first half of next year," George

Bailey, Australia's selection chairman, said. The likes of Fraser-McGurk, Spencer Johnson, Xavier Bartlett and Aaron Hardie "are exciting prospects to join the likes of Cameron Green, Nathan Ellis and Josh Inglis in the white ball setup," Bailey said. "With the Champions Trophy next year... There has been a lot of planning invested into these next six months.

"That has included gradual integration of new players into our white ball squads who have earned international opportunities via excellent form."

Australia is the World Cup champion in the 50-over format and holder of the World Test Championship title, but didn't reach the semifinals of the T20 World Cup.

T20 squad: Mitch Marsh (captain), Xavier Bartlett, Cooper Connolly, Tim David, Nathan Ellis, Jake Fraser-McGurk, Cameron Green, Aaron Hardie, Josh Hazlewood, Travis Head, Josh Inglis, Spencer Johnson, Marcus Stoinis, Adam Zampa.

ODI squad: Mitch Marsh (captain), Sean Abbott, Alex Carey, Nathan Ellis, Jake Fraser-McGurk, Aaron Hardie, Cameron Green, Josh Hazlewood, Travis Head, Josh Inglis, Marnus Labuschagne, Glenn Maxwell, Matthew Short, Steve Smith, Mitchell Starc, Adam Zampa.

Mental conditioning camp ahead of Paris Olympics will help India handle pressure better: Abhishek

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Indian men's hockey team forward Abhishek feels the mental conditioning camp the players underwent at renowned adventurer Mike Horn's base in Switzerland ahead of the Paris Olympics has helped them prepare for high-pressure situations.

The Indian team has completed a three-day mental conditioning camp at Horn's base and are slated to play a

few practice matches in the Netherlands before making their way to Paris Games. The expectations from the team will be high after India's bronze medal win at Tokyo Olympics. India will start their Paris Olympics campaign against New Zealand in their first Pool B match.

"After months of focusing on the physical aspect of the game, this camp is exactly what we needed," Abhishek said in a Hockey India release. "The team has been spending time



connecting on and off the field, improving our bond and learning to handle high-pressure situations better," he said.

Abhishek, who has played 74 matches for India since his international debut in 2022, is set for his maiden appearance at the Olympics. "Ever since I was 14, it has been my dream to play for India in the Olympics." Abhishek asserted that he is someone who doesn't buckle under pressure. "The pressure in big tournaments

doesn't deter me or change my approach. I just try to execute on the pitch," he said. For Abhishek, playing for India in the Olympics will be an achievement which is far beyond what his family had thought.

"When I started doing well in hockey, the most we expected was a government job. Seeing me reach this level is thrilling for them. My brother, especially, has always been my biggest supporter," he said.

Indian cricket has lot of depth but transition should be gradual: Vikram Rathour

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Outgoing batting coach Vikram Rathour knows that a tough transition period awaits India in the near future but having worked with the available talent pool, he feels the side is well-equipped to handle the phase provided it unfolds in a "controlled and gradual manner".

While Virat Kohli and Rohit Sharma will still play ODIs and Tests for now, India will have to grapple with the transition phase in another couple of years when they move towards the last phase of their respective careers?

"It is never going to be easy to replace people of Rohit and Virat's calibre," Rathour, also a former selector, told PTI in an exclusive interview. "The recently-concluded series against Zimbabwe (on Sunday) gave us some glimpse into how the T20 team will look like in future. But we still have a few years in Test and ODI cricket to get to that point," said one of the key members of Rahul Dravid's coaching team.

Having served as both national

selector and one of the coaches of the senior team, Rathour has an inside view of Indian cricket's talent pool and he finds it reassuring.

"I won't be too concerned about it. We have a lot of depth in Indian cricket. There are lots of very talented and skillful players who are coming through the system. The only thing we need to make sure is the transition is done in a controlled manner. It needs to be gradual.

He feels that by the time, Rohit and Kohli bid adieu to all formats, the younger stars would be well-settled, forming the nucleus for the next 10 years.

"I am hoping that by then, players like Shubman Gill, Rishabh Pant, Yashasvi Jaiswal, Dhruv Jurel to name a few, would establish themselves and will make the transition smooth.

"In ODIs also, we have experienced players like Shreyas Iyer, KL Rahul and Hardik Pandya to take over," Rathour said in a confident analysis. Just as Kohli and Rohit carried



India's batting on their shoulders for more than a decade, the next decade could well belong to Gill and Jaiswal. "There are many exciting players coming through but these two are equipped to play all three formats for a long time. They are going to be the

backbone of Indian batting in years to come," the former Punjab skipper said. Rathour was a good sounding board for Dravid in the last three years and when he says that Rinku Singh would make a good Test batter, the statement does carry weight.

"When I see him (Rinku) bat in nets, I can't find any technical reasons why Rinku cannot be a successful Test batter. I understand he has made his name as a terrific finisher in T20 cricket but if you look at his first-class record, he is averaging in high 50s. He (Rinku) is also blessed with a very calm temperament. So all these factors indicate that if given an opportunity, he can develop into a Test cricketer," Rathour said.

"ALWAYS TOLD VIRAT TO BELIEVE IN HIS METHODS": One question that Rathour would face at every second press conference during his tenure was Kohli's extended lean patch after the 2019 World Cup and he maintained it was a "phase that everyone has to go through". "There were no technical issues that we worked on specifically during this phase. The constant messaging to him was to keep working hard and believe in his methods. Eventually he came back stronger and an even better player," he said.

RAHUL GAVE US SPACE AND HONEST FEEDBACK": Rathour and Dravid made their Test debuts in the same series against England in 1996 and have played against each other in domestic cricket even before that. A three-decade relationship helped when they came together as back-room staff. "Rahul is the best coach that I have worked with, who gives you lots of space to work, is open to suggestions and will provide you an honest feedback. "One of the first discussions we had was about changing the batting template in T20 cricket. We agreed that we needed to bring in more intent and aggression in our batting approach," he revealed. Rathour said a case in point was Axar Patel, who fixed their problem of a decent batting option at number eight. "That made a massive difference and gave the batters in top order lot more freedom to bat." Axar was always a good batter and all he needed was opportunity to express himself fearlessly with an "uncomplicated technique".

MARUTHI TO REMIX 80'S HINDI HIT FOR RAJA SAAB

Prabhas is currently enjoying the success of *Kalki 2898 AD* and he is holidaying abroad. The actor will return back this month and he is expected to resume the shoot of *Raja Saab* directed by Maruthi.

The entire shooting part that does not need Prabhas is completed and the top actor has to allocate 50 days to complete this horror thriller. The film also has ample amount of entertainment throughout.

As per the new update, Maruthi is in plans to remix a super hit Hindi song from the 1980s in *Raja Saab*. The song will come at the right time and Prabhas will shake leg with all the three beauties in the special song. Maruthi and the film's music director Thaman are on a hunt to finalize the number and acquire the rights of the super hit song.

Prabhas will return to his vintage looks, and his character will have a lot of fun, according to Maruthi. The

remix song is expected to be the album's centerpiece. The heroines of *Raja Saab* are Malavika Mohanan, Nidhi

Agerwal and Riddhi Kumar. People Media Factory produced the film, which will be released in the first quarter of 2025. More improvements will be publicly announced by the developers soon. Prabhas will also begin shooting Sandeep Reddy Vanga's *Spirit* this year, with Hanu Raghavapudi's *Fauji* scheduled for next year.



SIVAKARTHIKEYAN REVEALS HIS THIRD CHILD'S NAME

Kollywood star Sivakarthikeyan is currently filming *SK 23* with director A.R. Murugadoss. In June 2024, he and his wife, Aarthi, welcomed a newborn boy. Today, Sivakarthikeyan revealed that they have called their child Pavan

Sivakarthikeyan and released a video of the traditional naming ritual. The actor is happy to have another child, joining his older children, Aradhana and Gagan. On the professional front, Sivakarthikeyan has finished filming *Amaran*, directed by Rajkumar Periasamy, which is set to be released in September 2024.

Kiran Abbavaram's KA teaser compels all with suspense

On social media, there has been a lot of buzz around Kiran Abbavaram's latest film, *KA*, in recent days. The makers piqued interest with a compelling concept poster and title reveal. To add to the mystery, they released the film's teaser on Kiran Abbavaram's birthday, which is directed by Sujith and Sandeep.

The teaser lives up to the intriguing title, revealing a riveting story set in the village of Krishnagiri. Kiran Abbavaram plays a postman with an unusual propensity of reading other people's letters. However, when night sets, his character takes on a darker tone, including strange killings. The teaser suggests a mix of socio-fantasy elements, accentuated by a mysterious horoscope machine. Audiences can expect a more elaborate trailer soon to provide additional details, which will be accompanied by Sam CS's excellent background score.

Kiran Abbavaram is poised to impress audiences with his performance in this historical mystery thriller, which marks his debut venture into pan-Indian cinema. The female leads of the film include Thanvi Ram, who was well-known in 2018 and Nayan Sarika from *Gam Gam Ganesha*. Vara Laxmi presents *KA*, which is produced by Srichakraas Entertainments, and promises an amazing movie experience.



Bromance kickstarts shooting

The film *Bromance* began shooting on Monday after a pooja ceremony in Kochi attended by the cast and crew, which included Shyam Mohan and Sangeeth Prathap, who play Arjun, Mathew and Premalu.

Bromance is written by Arun, Raveesh Nath and Thomas P Sebastian. Notably, Arun and Raveesh previously worked together on *Jo and Jo* (2022) and *Journey of Love 18+* (2023). The couple also co-wrote the latter's directorial debut, *Samadhana Pusthakam*, which is set to be released in theaters on July 19.

In *Bromance*, Kalabhavan Shajohn and Binu Pappu play major parts. The planned film's technical group includes cinematographer Akhil George, editor Chaman Chakko and music director Govind Vasantha. It is created by Ashiq Usman and distributed by Central Pictures.



Maar Muntha Chod Chinta promo out now

Double ISMART's second single (promo) *Maar Muntha Chod Chinta* a peppy dance is out. The makers have dropped the promo of the song which gives us a glimpse in to this foot tapping dance number which is nothing less than a party! The film is directed by maverick filmmaker Puri Jagannadh. The duo earlier tasted success together with *iSmart Shankar*, a blockbuster. The movie also stars Sanjay Dutt as the antagonist. Kavya Thapar is the lead actress opposite Ram. *Double ISMART* will be released in Telugu, Tamil, Kannada, Malayalam and Hindi languages. The movie is produced by Puri Jagannadh and Charmee Kaur on Puri Connects banner on August 15 2024.



Polimera 2 distributor faces serious allegations!

Producer Vamsi Nandipati, a close friend of 'Geetha Arts' producer Bunny Vas, is currently facing claims from the producer who released the *Polimera 2* film.

For the unknown, Vamsi appeared as a distributor and distributed the film *Polimera 2*, created by Goulu Krishna Prasad. And now Vamsi has indicated that he will produce *Polimera 3* on a large scale. Here's the twist. Goulu Krishna Prasad filed a police complaint on Monday, stating that Vamsi Nandipati threatened to kill him after the former urged him to 'share' the proceeds from the release of *Polimera 2*.

Krishna Prasad filed a complaint alleging that despite the film's 30 crores gross, Vamsi Nandipati, who distributed it globally, has not given him any share. "When I confronted him about my share, he threatened to murder me and warned of grave consequences if I filed a complaint."

Krishna Prasad, the producer of *Polimera 2*, has now asked personal security for himself, citing a fear for his life!



Chaithra, Meetha join the starry cast of Siddharth 40

Chaithra Achar, a Kannada actor who has built a name for herself, is preparing to make waves in Tamil cinema with two significant projects. She is currently filming director Raju Murugan's forthcoming project and is about to begin shooting Siddharth's 40th movie today.

The film is directed by Sri Ganesh and produced by Shanthi Talkies, which is known for the popular *Maaveeran* starring Sivakarthikeyan. *Siddharth 40* also stars veteran actors Sarath Kumar and Devyani in key roles.

Chaithra Achar, who stars alongside Siddharth, acknowledged her excitement: "This is the first project I signed in Tamil and it's incredibly special. I'm eager to be a part of a young team and look forward to working with Siddharth. The director is not only competent, but also a wonderful writer and I am excited to work with such a dynamic team. The excitement for this project has been palpable for the last three months and now that production has begun, I couldn't be happier."

Chaithra Achar also has *Uttarakaanda* and an upcoming suspense thriller with debutant Hari in Kannada.

Following the news of Sarath Kumar and Devyani joining *Siddharth 40*, the producers also announced the addition of Meetha Raghunath to the cast. Meetha last appeared in the 2023 romantic comedy *Good Night*, opposite Manikandan K.

This will be Shanthi Talkies' second production attempt, following last year's Sivakarthikeyan-starrer *Maaveeran*, which completed one year after its release on Sunday.



P I C T A L K

Over the past few years, fans of actor Suriya have been indulging in worthy activities such as book donation, blood donation and planting saplings. Last year, when over 2000 fans donated blood on the occasion of his birthday, actor Suriya promised his fans that he will join them next year.

Ahead of his birthday on July 23, actor Suriya donated blood along with his fans.

More than 400 fans have already donated blood on the occasion of their favourite star's birthday. Pictures and videos of the *Kanguva* actor have been going viral over the internet inspiring many more to join the cause and do the good deed.

