

CITY EVENTS

Gallery Dotwalk

The exhibition is curated by ace curator Premish Achari. The preview and walkthrough will display the works that are a mix of old and new thoughts by prominent artists.

Venue

Chitramayee State Art Gallery, Kavuri Hills, Jubilee Hills, Near Madhapur, Hyderabad October 11, 2024, 5.30 pm onwards. Show on view till October 16, 11 am to 6 pm.

The blacklist

Faria Abdullah live Brodha V live in concert

Venue

Rama Naidu Studios, Hyderabad October 13, Tickets available on BookMyShow

Rivaayat

A beautiful at home evening curated specially with our designer partners Shivan & Narresh.

Venue

Bobby Khandaris residence, 443, Jubilee Hills Rd. No 86, Filmnagar Phase 3 October 16, 6.30 pm onwards.

Bottle Art workshop

Join us for a lively and creative event where we turn ordinary bottles into extraordinary works of art! Participants are encouraged to bring their old bottles-whether they're from beer, water, or any other source-and engage in a hands-on bottle paint workshop

Venue

Trailing Ivy Cafe till November 17

Prateek Kuhad

Silhouettes tour.

Venue

Hyderabad international convention centre November 8

City Pioneer



HYDERABAD SATURDAY | OCTOBER 12, 2024

03

GHMC to instal smart poles in city

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

The Greater Hyderabad Municipal Corporation (GHMC) will be installing smart poles in the city for giving more services to the citizens.

A source from the GHMC said that for installing each pole, it would cost around Rs 10 lakh.

This project would be taken up in Public Private Partnership (PPP) mode. As a pilot project, around 100 poles would be installed at the Secretariat, Ameerpet and some other places in the city.

A GHMC official said that as a pilot project in the city these poles would be installed at four places in the city with around 100 poles.

These smart polls will have CCTV cameras with 360 degree coverage, public address system, Wifi spots, LED lighting, weather forecast and other facilities. This real-time surveillance will enhance the emergency response in the city.

The live footage will be monitored by the GHMC command control and inspect the respected area.

A source said, "For example, if a garbage vehicle would have not gone to a specific area, officers from the command control room will call that specific vehicle owner and ask the reason for their inaction."

"These CCTV cameras also work to identify potholes in the city."

Hyd seen as a city with better infrastructure: IT dept chief

SAMUEL JOSHUA samuelinjoshuamjmc@gmail.com ■ HYDERABAD

Emphasising that Bengaluru has fallen behind due to poor investment in transport and infrastructure, the advantage has now shifted to Hyderabad, said Special Chief Secretary of the IT Department Jayesh Ranjan. While launching the book *Beyond Biryani: The Making of a Globalised Hyderabad* by Dinesh C Sharma at the Guruswamy Centre on Friday evening, Jayesh said many now see Hyderabad as a city with better infrastructure.

He emphasised that this is the right time to write about Hyderabad's transformation. He mentioned that while cities like Mumbai, Delhi, Chennai and Calcutta were once seen as India's modern hubs, Hyderabad now



Jayesh Ranjan releasing the book *Beyond Biryani: The Making of a Globalised Hyderabad* by Dinesh C Sharma at the Guruswamy Centre on Friday

stands as a thriving city. He highlighted Cyberabad's development and the relocation of the airport as key changes. He also noted that Hyderabad hosted the first Global event of ADP's Annual Conference. Jayesh announced big ticket pro-

jects which Chief Minister A Revanth Reddy is planning, such as developing a satellite township near the airport and creating nine zones, including a medical tourism hub, life sciences clusters and a Net Zero Zone with dense forests.

Professionals to be invited for Poultry Expo

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Poultry professionals are invited to the upcoming Poultry India Expo 2024 happening from November 27 to 29 at Hitec Exhibition Centre.

Celebrating World Egg Day on Friday, members of the National Egg Coordination Committee (NECC) and the Indian Poultry Equipment Manufacturers Association (IPEMA) discussed the expo plans.

Firecracker sellers should seek permission before Oct 26

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Hyderabad Commissioner of Police CV Anand said that those who want to sell firecrackers on a temporary basis in the city limits should apply for permission before October 26.

Applicants desirous of possessing and selling explosives (firecrackers on the eve of Deepavali Festival) on temporary basis within the jurisdiction of the Hyderabad Police Commissionerate have to apply for permission with the Deputy Commissioner of

Police of all zones in the city. The applicants are required to apply manually for temporary licence in Form AE-5 of the Explosives Rules for necessary action from October 11 to 26. Applications submitted thereafter will not be accepted.

While applying for the permission, the applicants should enclose NOC from the Divisional Fire Officer, land permission, site plan of the shop (blueprint) copy and other documents and get original licence fee receipt for Rs 600 from a bank.

Online police permission system launched

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

The Cyberabad Police, in partnership with the National Informatics Centre (NIC), launched Cyberabad Police Permission Management System (CPPMS), a web portal aimed at digitizing police services and improving the efficiency of permission approvals.

The police said that all event-related permissions can be applied through a single online portal, eliminating the need to approach multiple offices. Event organizers are required to apply at least 10 days or 7 working days in advance to ensure smooth processing.

Railways' special drive for improving digitisation

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

The Ministry of Railways has launched a Special Campaign 4.0, focusing on digitisation, cleanliness, inclusivity and grievance redressal. Satish Kumar, Chairman and CEO of the Railway Board, held a review meeting via video conference on Friday with senior railway officials, including General Managers of Zonal Railways and heads of public sector undertakings.

The CEO shared key goals of the campaign, such as enhancing digitisation, improving cleanliness at campaign sites, freeing up space, generating revenue by disposing of scrap and addressing public grievances through platforms like RailMadad and CPGRAMS. Satish also highlighted inclusivity, with a focus on involving women and individuals with disabilities.



295 grievance applications received at Prajavani

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

In all, 295 grievance applications were received in Prajavani on Friday at the Mahatma Jyotiba Phule Praja Bhavan.

According to the officials, 90 applications were received for housing, 32 for minority welfare, 10 for home, 18 for electricity and 145 for other departments. Deputy Chairman and Vice-Chairman of the State Planning Commission G Chinna Reddy and Special Officer of Public Administration D Divya received the applications.

3RD T20 MATCH TODAY 2,600 police personnel to be deployed at stadium

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

The Rachakonda Police would deploy a total of 2,600 police personnel for security at Rajiv Gandhi International Cricket Stadium in Uppal on October 12 for the 3rd International T-20 Cricket Match to be held between India and Bangladesh (night match).

Ina ll, 250 policemen from the security wing, 400 from the traffic, 1,662 from law and order, 14 platoons of the TSSP, six platoons of Armed Forces, 2 Octopus teams, 10 Mounted Police, 10 Vajra and 2 fire tenders with a fire fighting squad will be deployed.

A total of 300 CCTV cameras are being installed, including the places at vehicle check points and parking places to cover the entire area. The Police said that laptops, banners, water bottles, cameras, cigarettes, electronic items, match box, lighters, sharp objects, binoculars, pens, batteries, helmets, perfumes, bags and outside eatables are banned at the stadium.

Mogulaiah's compound wall vandalised

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

After miscreants demolished the compound wall of Padma Shri awardee Darshanam Mogulaiah alias Kinnera Mogulaiah's land at Kuntloor village, the Hayathnagar Police registered a criminal case against the offenders.

The Hayathnagar Police conducted a preliminary investigation at that spot and said that the incident could have happened on Thursday night. A case has been registered.

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Safety kits distributed to toddy tappers

PNS ■ KUMURAM BHEEM ASIFABAD

MLA Harish Babu and MLC Dande Vital participated in an event organised by the Backward Classes Corporation on Friday at the Goud community grounds in Kaghaznagar town, Komaram Bheem district, where they distributed safety kits to toddy tappers. During the event, they stated that the Telangana government has designed these kits with the aim of ensuring the safety of the toddy tappers. They advised the workers to wear these kits before climbing the palm trees. Harish Babu assured that he would raise the issues faced by the Goud community in agency areas in the Assembly and work towards finding solutions. The event was also attended by BC Corporation ED Sajeevan, Excise CI Ravi, district Moka Debba president Kondra Manohar Goud, and Toddy Tapers Union Rama Goud were present.

Indiramma govt working for benefit of poor: Ponguleti

The Revenue Minister accused the previous BRS government of failing to contributed to the growth of the States

PNS ■ KHAMMAM

Revenue Minister Ponguleti Srinivas Reddy on Friday asserted that the government is working diligently for the benefit of the poor. He emphasised that the Indiramma government has prioritised education and health-care. On Friday, he laid the foundation stone for a new Young Integrated school at Ponnekal under Khammam rural mandal. Speaking on the occasion, the Minister highlighted the fact that the government has allocated Rs 657 crore for providing basic facilities in government schools through the Amma Adarsha scheme within just three months. He criticised the previous government for not contributing anything significant to the people of the state over the past decade. He stated that 10,606 teaching posi-



Revenue Minister Ponguleti Srinivas Reddy laying the foundation for Young India Residential School at Ponnekal in Khammam on Friday

tions had been filled through the District Selection Committee (DSC) to provide quality education for underprivileged students. He also mentioned that the Indiramma government is focusing

The Minister pointed out that the Indiramma government is committed to integrated schooling, aiming to provide quality education irrespective of caste or religion. He announced that the government planned to build schools in every constituency with a budget ranging between Rs 125 crore to Rs 150 crore. He accused the previous government of burdening the people with debt. He added that since the Congress government took over, opportunities for skill development with investments of Rs 300 crore have been created.

The government has initiated the construction of integrated Gurukuls to provide international quality education for underprivileged students. In the first phase, 28 integrated residential schools are to be established across the state.

Bathukamma festival celebrated with grandeur in Peddapalli

PNS ■ PEDDAPALLI

Bathukamma festival, which has a history spanning centuries, symbolises Telangana's culture and was celebrated with grandeur on Friday. The festival was celebrated in every colony.

At the venues for the Saddula Bathukamma festival, women's games and songs drew great attention. Women beautifully adorned Bathukammas with various flowers. In some areas, creatively designed Bathukammas received awards from the local residents. This annual festival saw enthusiastic participation of girls.

The Saddula Bathukamma festival was grandly celebrated in various locations within the Peddapalli district, including Godavarikhani, Ramagundam, Peddapalli, Manthani, Sultanabad, Dharmaram, Kalva Shrirampur, NTPC, FCI, Basant Nagar, Julapalli, Eligaidu, Ramagiri, Kammanpur, Muttaram, Antargam, and Palakurthy.

Starting from 6 pm on Thursday, the celebrations continued with enthusiasm until midnight. District Collector



Koya Sree Harsha monitored the festivities, and special arrangements were made by Ramagundam Police Commissioner M Srinivas to ensure women faced no difficulties at Bathukamma venues. The police conducted continuous patrolling in specialised vehicles.

Public representatives and officials participated in the celebrations at various Bathukamma venues across the district, extending their best wishes to the Telangana girls for the Saddula Bathukamma festival.

'Put kids in young India Integrated Residential schools'

PNS ■ NALGONDA

The Congress government is constructing Young India Integrated Residential Schools to provide quality education to children from poor and underprivileged families. The education standards will be on a par with those provided in corporate schools so that the marginalised sections will benefit. Roads and Buildings Minister Komatireddy Venkat Reddy asserted on Friday. On Friday, he laid the foundation stone for the Young India Integrated Residential School at Gandham Vari Gudem near Nalgonda. The school will be built at a cost of Rs 300 crore and performed the Bhoomi Pooja for the construction of the school.

At a meeting held on this occasion, the Minister explained that the government has decided to establish Young India Integrated Residential Schools to provide quality education to students from underprivileged families in both English and Telugu media. He emphasised that these schools would be open to students from Scheduled Castes, Scheduled Tribes, Backward Classes, and minority communities irrespective of caste or religion. He also men-



Roads and Buildings Minister Komatireddy Venkat Reddy speaking at a meeting at Gandham Vari Gudem in Nalgonda district on Friday

tioned that the schools would offer all necessary facilities, including playgrounds, as sports would help students grow mentally.

He stated that with the foundation of these integrated residential schools, the Dasara festival has come a day earlier for Telangana. He revealed that under the first phase, integrated residential schools would be set up in 28 constituencies across the state with an investment of Rs 5,000 crore. The construction of the integrated residential school in Nalgonda would be completed within eight months. He urged parents

to enrol their children in these schools as educating the poor would help enrich and improve the quality of individual and family life. It would also contribute to the development of the State and the country, he said.

The minister further revealed that these schools are being built on a vast 25-acre plot of land, and similar schools would be established in every constituency across the state.

He mentioned that within ten months of coming to power, the government had provided employment to 70,000 people, and more job notifications would be issued soon. As part of the farmer welfare programme, he announced that the government had waived loans up to Rs 2 lakh rupees for farmers, and loans exceeding Rs 2 lakh rupees would also be waived in the near future. He reiterated that the government's mission is to implement welfare and development programs for the poor, farmers, and people of all communities in Telangana.

He added that although the water was released from the left canal of the Nagarjuna Sagar project, water could not reach the tail-end areas of the canal due to the growth of hyacinth.



BJP OBC Morcha national president K Laxman speaking to reporters at Wagla in Siddipet district on Saturday

Criticising Sanatana Dharma has become a trend: Laxman

PNS ■ SIDDIPEET

Criticising Sanatana Dharma in the name of secularism has become a trend for the sake of votes, said BJP OBC Morcha national president and Rajya Sabha Member K Laxman.

On Friday, he performed special prayers, along with his family at Sri Vidyadhari Temple at Wargal in the district. Speaking on the occasion, he mentioned that Prime Minister Narendra Modi has elevated the country to great heights during challenging times. Unlike in the past, India is emerging to become a global leader.

He emphasised that if the Hindu society becomes more aware, it will need to act with greater vigilance to counter the actions of secularists. He also remarked that it is encouraging to see the youth, despite their mechanical lifestyle, being drawn toward Dharma.

He stated that protecting Dharma would, in turn, protect everyone.

On the occasion of i Navaratri, as Prime Minister Narendra Modi is observing fast, Laxman encouraged everyone to participate in these sacred activities with devotion. He further praised the Wargal Sri Vidyadhari temple.

MLA urges Revanth to help make Shadnagar education hub

PNS ■ RANGAREDDY

At the foundation stone-laying ceremony for the Young India Integrated Residential School Complex in Kondurg, Shadnagar MLA Veerlapalli Shankar brought to the attention of the Chief Minister several pressing issues related to his constituency, particularly the lack of basic infrastructure and development.

In his speech, Shankar pointed out that the previous government had failed to prioritise education in the region, leaving behind no tangible developments in Jilleduchaudaryguda mandal. "Not even a table or chair was sanctioned," he remarked, underscoring the need for significant improvements. He expressed optimism that under the

Congress government, led by Chief Minister Revanth Reddy, institutions like IIT or Polytechnic colleges would soon be sanctioned, providing new opportunities for the youth.

The MLA further requested the Chief Minister to sanction essential facilities such as a primary health centre, police Station, or an integrated mandal complex for Jilleduchaudaryguda. He also drew attention to the underdeveloped Thandas in the constituency, noting that around 57-60 Thandas have been neglected, with SC/ST funds diverted by previous administrations. Shankar urged the Chief Minister to prioritize the development of these areas under the SC/ST sub-plan, as discussed in the Assembly.



Shadnagar MLA V Shankar speaking at a meeting at Kondurg in Ranga Reddy district on Friday



Munugode MLA Komatireddy Rajgopal Reddy speaking at a meeting at Kalwakuntla village in Nalgonda district on Saturday

Rajgopal vows to develop educational institutions

PNS ■ MUNUGODE

The foundation stone for the Young India Integrated Residential School was laid at Kalwakuntla village Munugode mandal with the aim of providing quality education to students from poorer sections. The event was attended by Munugode MLA Komatireddy Rajgopal Reddy.

In his speech, Rajgopal Reddy referred to the school as a temple of learning, underlining that the initiative is more than just a school—it is a step toward building a better society. He said that he took the responsibility of

establishing 50 schools in the region and stressed the need for development of Munugode, especially in education and healthcare.

He highlighted the inclusive nature of the project. He also condemned the presence of belt shops in the constituency, urging people to take a strict stance against such establishments to foster the development of education and healthcare in the region.

He thanked Chief Minister Revanth Reddy for sanctioning the school. He also reflected on his own political journey, expressing gratitude to the people of Munugode for their continued support.



Villages shocked as monkey carcass found in water tank

PNS ■ NIRMAL

A monkey carcass found in a Mission Bhagirath Scheme at Nigwa village under Kubhher mandal in the district caused quite a stir among the villagers.

Though the carcass was found in the tank on Friday, it was not known when the monkey fell into the tank and died. The villagers said that they had been drinking the water being supplied from the tank for a long.

The incident caused an alarm in the village. The villagers said that they checked the tank after a foul smell emanated from it on Friday.

They were shocked to find the carcass in the tank.

The workers from the gram panchayat arrived and removed the carcass from the tank and cleaned it. Villagers are afraid of the health risks since they drank contaminated water. They are criticising gram panchayat officials and workers for their laxity in clearing the tank daily.

They suspect that the monkey could have fallen into the tank while trying to drink water, or it might have fallen in during a scuffle with other monkeys. The villagers are upset that the tank's lid was not properly secured.

Residential school will produce world-class students: Min

PNS ■ PEDDAPALLI

Information Technology Minister D Sridhar Babu on Saturday said that the construction of the Young India Integrated Residential School building would be completed by next Dasara.

While laying foundation stone for Young India Integrated Residential School building on Friday at Adavi Somanapalli village in Manthani constituency, Sridhar Babu said that the Congress government is setting up these educational institutions to prepare world-class students.

In an effort to strengthen the education system and provide quality education to underprivileged children, Sridhar Babu said that significant importance is given to education.

Speaking on the occasion, Minister Sridhar Babu emphasised that the establishment of Young India Educational Institutions aims to produce world-class students.

He mentioned that the government is gradually implementing the promises made to the people, including free travel for women in RTC buses, free electricity up to 200 units, a subsidised cylinder at Rs 500, and the Indiramma Housing Scheme for the homeless which will begin next month.

He highlighted the fact that the Congress government has swiftly addressed the District Selection Committee (DSC) recruitment issue, completing the process in record time, resulting in the appointment of over 11,000 new teachers.

He also mentioned that a young local resident, Shrawan Kumar, has secured a job as an SGT. The government has transparently completed the long-pending teacher promotions and transfers over the past ten years and has set up a commission to improve the education sector.

To provide education without caste or religious discrimination, the government will establish one Young India



Information Technology Minister D Sridhar Babu speaking at a meeting at Adavi Somanapalli in Peddapalli district on Friday

Integrated Educational Institution in each assembly constituency, accommodating students from SC, ST, BC, and minority backgrounds on a single campus.

The integrated educational institution will offer international standard education from 4th to 12th grade, featuring modern amenities such as digital smart boards in classrooms, computer labs, and a library with over 5,000 books on the 25-acre campus.

To promote sports, facilities for cricket, football, basketball, and tennis will be provided in the Young India Integrated Educational Institutions. The construction of these institutions will be completed by the next Dasara, providing students with an opportunity to receive international-level education in one place.

The event was attended by Peddapalli MP Gadam Vamsikrishna, District Collector Koya Sree Harsha, Manthani Municipal Chairperson Rama, Roads and Buildings Executive Engineer Bhav Singh, BC Welfare Officer Anil, Excise Superintendent Mahipal Reddy, public representatives, officials, and others.

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PAPER WITH PASSION

India acts East

PM Modi visits Laos for the 21st India-ASEAN Summit; says the 21st century belongs to India and ASEAN

Prime Minister Narendra Modi's visit to Laos for the 21st India-ASEAN Summit reestablishes India's diplomatic engagement with Southeast Asian nations. With a focus on enhancing connectivity and resilience, Modi announced a comprehensive 10-point action plan aimed at fortifying the India-ASEAN partnership. This initiative not only underscores the importance of regional collaboration in a time of global uncertainty but also highlights the potential for growth within the 21st-century landscape, which PM Modi asserts 'belongs to India and ASEAN.'



PM Modi emphasised the critical need for friendship and cooperation among India and ASEAN countries, especially as tensions rise globally, with conflicts affecting various regions. He reiterated that India-ASEAN friendship, coordination dialogue and cooperation are essential at a time when several parts of the world are facing conflicts and tensions. The summit also coincides with the review of a decade of India's Act East Policy, which has significantly contributed to the doubling of India-ASEAN trade to over USD 130 billion in the past ten years. The Prime Minister's vision for deeper ties with ASEAN encompasses several key areas. One of the important initiatives is the enhancement of connectivity, marked by the establishment of direct flight connections with seven ASEAN nations. This move aims to facilitate easier travel and trade, further integrating the economies of the region. In the realm of technology, PM Modi announced the launch of fintech connectivity with Singapore, setting a precedent for future collaborations across the ASEAN region. This initiative promotes technological advancement and financial inclusion, essential for emerging economies. Cultural ties are also a focal point, with efforts to restore shared heritage in Laos, Cambodia, Vietnam, Myanmar and Indonesia reflecting India's commitment to preserving regional history and identity. Moreover, Modi stressed the urgency of completing the ASEAN-India Free Trade Agreement (AITIGA) review to unlock greater economic potential for both parties. He highlighted the significance of educational exchanges. Over 300 students from ASEAN countries have benefitted from scholarships at Nalanda University, fostering deeper educational ties. As regional tensions persist, especially concerning maritime disputes in the South China Sea and the ongoing crisis in Myanmar, PM Modi's Indo-Pacific Oceans Initiative underscores the need for collaborative efforts in ensuring regional stability and security. This approach, along with a commitment to humanitarian cooperation, highlights India's readiness to support ASEAN nations in times of natural disasters. India's vision is firmly anchored in a people-centric approach, indicating a commitment to sustainable development that addresses the needs and aspirations of citizens across both regions. Indeed India and ASEAN nations have much in common; they share heritage and values which date back to centuries. It is time to revive them.

PICTALK



An artist paints effigies of the demon king Ravana on the Dussehra, in Prayagraj

A new era of global opportunities awaits India in higher education

With initiatives like 'Study in India' and the recognition of qualifications of other countries, India is positioning itself as a growing hub for international education

India offers tremendous opportunities in various sectors, the education is no different. Internationalisation of this sector was envisaged in the National Education Policy 2020 (NEP), and the Government of India has taken effective steps over the last 4 years towards achieving this goal. Initiatives such as Study in India, Foreign Higher Educational Institutions (FHEIs) setting up campuses in India, collaborations between Indian institutions and FHEIs, and mutual recognition of qualifications between governments are already seeing positive results. Enabling FHEIs to set up their campuses in India was allowed through Gujarat International Finance Tec-City (GIFT City) regulations as well as by the University Grants Commission (UGC). These regulations aim to attract top-ranked global universities and institutions to India and offer Indian students a chance to avail global certifications at comparatively affordable costs in their home country. We have already seen Deakin University operationalise its



campus in July this year and the University of Wollongong preparing for their launch, both at GIFT City. The University of Southampton (UK), ranked 80th in the 2025 QS World Rankings, became the first university to receive a Letter of Intent (LoI) from the Indian Government to establish its campus in India. We are also seeing Indian institutions set up campuses overseas as part of the internationalisation initiative. IIT Delhi has set up its first international campus in Abu Dhabi and IIT Madras has located its first overseas campus in Zanzibar. The UGC Institutions of Eminence (IoE) guidelines enable IoEs to set up their campuses overseas and BITS Pilani and Manipal Academy took advantage of the window to do their forays outside India. While there is a lot of inter-

est from other private universities to set up campuses overseas, formulating an enabling framework through regulations by the government would catalyze this interest further. In May 2022, the government revamped the collaboration guidelines to allow for joint degree, dual degree and twinning programmes between Indian institutions and FHEIs. We have already seen a lot of traction in this space, with Manipal Institute of Technology tying up with Deakin, the University of Australia, and Shoolini University offering dual degrees with the University of Melbourne being some recent examples. Studying in India is another initiative towards the internationalisation of the Indian education system. It is a flagship programme of the Government of India in line with PM Modi's vision. The website portal acts as a single window system for admission and visa applications for foreign students wanting to pursue higher education in India, with more than 60,000 students already registering through this portal. The

baton of internationalisation of education is also being taken forward through the signing of the Memorandum of Understanding (MOUs) and the Mutual Recognition of Qualification (MRQ) Agreement between India and other countries, which aims to facilitate student and faculty exchanges. There are around 50 plus active MoUs (including France, and Germany) with a few under negotiation. MRQs have been signed with a few countries as well and some are under negotiation. A fabulous start to an era of transformation of the Indian education landscape! Is there a need to do more? A more targeted approach, probably through a campaign run with Indian consulates in overseas countries, could further the cause of internationalisation. FHEIs are now rethinking their strategy. Possibly an opportunity for India to tap - open an FHEI campus in India and offer itself as an alternate education hub in the region. (The writer is Partner, Deloitte India, inputs by Guncha Prakash, Assistant Manager, Deloitte India; views are personal)



SAHIL GUPTA

Strengthening RTI Act with practical reforms



SUBHASH CHANDRA AGRAWAL

As the Right to Information (RTI) Act completes 19 years, it is time to amend the rules and expand its scope to ensure it continues to serve its purpose effectively

The Right to Information (RTI) Act, implemented on October 12, 2005, marked a monumental step toward government transparency and accountability in India. Over the years, the Act has been instrumental in exposing corruption and various scams, empowering citizens to demand information from public authorities. However, while the Act has undeniably brought about significant reform, certain amendments to the RTI rules—not the Act itself—are necessary to prevent misuse, streamline the process, and reduce the burden on the courts.

Addressing Misuse and Unnecessary Litigation

One of the key challenges facing the RTI framework today is the misuse of the system by individuals and groups, often leading to unnecessary appeals and challenges in courts. The Central Information Commission (CIC), tasked with handling RTI appeals, is often burdened by frivolous cases that clog the system and delay the resolution of genuine complaints. Amendments to the RTI rules, particularly in the area of public-private partnerships (PPPs), sports bodies, and cooperatives, could alleviate some of this pressure.

By declaring PPPs, sports bodies, and cooperatives as public authorities under the RTI Act, a significant amount of time and resources could be saved. These entities often handle substantial public funds, and their exclusion from RTI coverage has raised questions about transparency. Including them under the Act would not only enhance accountability but also reduce the number of cases that reach Information Commissions and courts, streamlining the entire RTI process.

Bringing Government Allotments Under RTI

A critical area that requires attention is the issue of government land and accommodation allotments. Many government-owned properties are allotted at subsidised rates, often raising concerns about favouritism or corruption. To address this, all such allotments should be brought



under the purview of the RTI Act. Moreover, future allotments should be made conditional upon compliance with the Act, ensuring that beneficiaries are transparent about the process and accountable to the public. This move would further reduce the burden on Information Commissions, as it would discourage non-compliant beneficiaries from evading public scrutiny. It would also provide citizens with a tool to question and monitor how public resources are being allocated, contributing to more transparent governance.

Streamlining High Offices' RTI Applications

High offices such as those of the President, Prime Minister, and Chief Ministers often receive RTI applications that may not be directly related to their functions. To improve efficiency, these offices should only address RTI applications that pertain specifically to their roles. Any other applications should be returned to the applicant, along with advice on which department or authority they should approach instead. This measure would reduce the workload on these high offices while ensuring that citizens receive the information they seek from the correct sources.

Bringing Private Sector Banks Under RTI

The financial sector has long been an area where greater transparency is needed, particularly in light of recent scan-

“ONE OF THE KEY CHALLENGES FACING THE RTI FRAMEWORK TODAY IS THE MISUSE OF THE SYSTEM BY INDIVIDUALS AND GROUPS, OFTEN LEADING TO UNNECESSARY APPEALS AND CHALLENGES IN COURTS”

dals and issues of financial mismanagement. While public sector banks are already subject to RTI, the private sector remains outside the Act's purview. This is a matter of concern, given the extensive use of public funds by private banks and the critical role they play in the economy. To address this gap, private sector banks should be brought under the RTI Act. This would allow citizens to seek information about their financial practices, thereby increasing accountability in the sector.

Standardising RTI Fees and Preventing Misuse

Another issue that plagues the current RTI framework is the inconsistency in application fees across states. RTI fees should be standardised nationwide at Rs 50, which would cover the cost of 20 photocopied pages. Furthermore, no fees should be charged for appeals. These changes would simplify the process for citizens and eliminate confusion regarding varying charges in different states. However, there is also a need to address the misuse of free RTI applications by certain vested interests. For instance, contractors have been known to exploit Below Poverty Line (BPL) workers by having them file RTI requests on their behalf, thus avoiding fees. To prevent this, the free provision for BPL applicants should be limited to 20 pages. Any additional pages should incur a nominal charge, ensur-

ing that the system is not abused while still providing free access to information for genuinely disadvantaged individuals.

Enhancing Accessibility and Digital Integration

To further streamline the RTI process, post offices across the country should accept post-free RTI applications. This would make it easier for citizens, particularly those in rural areas, to file applications without worrying about postage costs. In addition, a mandatory requirement for ID proof, as seen in states like Punjab and Haryana, should be implemented nationwide. This would prevent misuse of the RTI system and ensure that applications are being filed by genuine individuals seeking information. The introduction of online RTI portals has been a positive step in recent years, but there is still room for improvement. All states should adopt the National Informatics Centre (NIC)-designed RTI websites, which allow for greater standardisation and ease of use. These portals should feature auto-emailed responses and alerts, keeping applicants informed of the status of their requests. Moreover, outdated state-specific RTI laws, such as the Delhi RTI Act, should be repealed in favor of the national RTI Act to ensure uniformity across the country. (The writer is a RTI activist; views are personal)

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

INDIAN WORKERS ARE OVERBURDENED

Madam — “Work more, take less” is the mantra of the Indian employers of all sectors who are hell-bent on extracting more and more work from their employees while the emolument is not parallel to the labour at all. Consequently, stress tends to percolate through the workplace as shown by two work-related deaths of young employees in private companies. An International Labour Organisation (ILO) report that Indians work 46.7 hours per week, much higher than their American, Japanese, South African and Chinese counterparts, speaks volumes about the workload taken by an average Indian worker.

It is documented in other papers, too, that more than sixty percent of the Indian workers are stressed at work, while in general the Asian countries' workforce is more burdened by work. The primary cause for all this can be traced to the burgeoning unemployment in the country and the dearth of the right job for the right person. Employers' proclivity to recruit less to save their coffers has compounded the problem. Egoistic and haughty employers, fretting and fuming over no real reason, have pushed an already overstressed Indian worker to the edge. There is no time to waste: balancing work with rest should engage everyone's attention including that of the government.

Ganapathi Bhat | Akola

INDIA-MALDIVES RELATIONS IMPROVE

Madam—India and its neighbour Maldives recently concluded a bilateral summit and agreed upon numerous deals. This came after a strain of ties between the two nations for almost one year after Mohamed Muizzu became president of the Island nation. India came forward to help the Maldives recover from its economic distress by signing a currency swap deal of around 385 million dollars. The two nations also agreed to enhance strategic and defence cooperation in the future. This visit has

Sports promote social unity



From time immemorial, sports have always been more than just games; they are powerful agents of social change, capable of uniting people, breaking down religion and caste barriers, and driving positive transformations in society. From local community

games to international tournaments, sports have a unique way of bringing people together, fostering a sense of community, and promoting health and well-being. One of the most compelling aspects of sport is its ability to bridge cultural gaps. Whether it's a small-town soccer match or the grandeur of the Olympic Games, sports create a common ground where individuals can connect and share experiences.

This shared passion fosters mutual respect and understanding, promoting peace and camaraderie among different cultures. The impact of sports on society is profound, touching on aspects of culture, economy, and personal development. As we move forward, embracing the positive aspects of sport while addressing its challenges will ensure that it continues to be a powerful force for good in the world.

Ranganathan Sivakumar | Chennai

THE BJP WINS HARYANA

Madam — Contrary to all expectations and predictions, the BJP was able to retain Haryana for the third time. All pollsters, analysts and exit polls have been proved wrong. Politics is an unforgiving game and the defeat of the Congress has created ripples in opposition unity as the Congress will have lost its bargaining power.

The victory for BJP will undoubtedly give them a lot of confidence to face assembly elections in Jharkhand and the all important Maharashtra. It is not in the best interests of Indian democracy to use caste equations to try and win elections. All parties are guilty of the practice of pandering to particular castes for gaining their votes. Time and again, it has been seen that in a one-to-one fight, the Congress is no match for the well-oiled BJP election fighting machinery.

Anthony Henriques | Mumbai

Send your feedback to: letterstopioneer@gmail.com



FIRST COLUMN

OVERCOMING ANXIETY: THE RIGHT WAY

Mindfulness, mental resilience and stress-relieving activities are essential to combat anxiety



RAVI VALLURI

Sameer was armed with a degree in management from an estimable institute. Having specialised in the field of marketing management, he was well versed in the 4Ps of marketing. At this juncture of his life, the young trainee fantasised about joining an FMCG company, earning an exorbitant salary and over a period acquiring an opulent property in an up-market area of the town. But there was an element of hesitation in his mind about successfully crossing the final hurdle – the interview. As the mind was not in the present moment and instead fixated on the future it remained anxious and continuously agitated. Thus, it was not in a state of equilibrium, equipoise, or equanimity. Meanwhile, Siddhartha, his school mate majored in architecture and apprenticed at a celebrated architectural firm in the city. Siddhartha however, was not content in designing buildings. He possessed a febrile mind that ached to pursue a greenfield area called entertainment design. The strapping self-taught himself and acquired ultra-modern and newfangled skill sets. Fortified with the newly acquired knowledge he prepared a portfolio consisting of visionary and ingenious graphics, sketches and paintings. Yet, mentally he was anxious, tense and strained as to what lay in future. It is a normal human tendency to be apprehensive before anxious situations as it is not in the present moment. Several individuals become splenetic and waspish. Invariably there is a churning in the abdomen region and the mind is subsumed with anxiety. Arjuna, in possession of a lethal arsenal, was numbed seeing the mammoth army of the Kauravas. This, even though Lord Krishna was his charioteer! At zero hour, before the showdown at Kurukshetra, he lay down his weaponry. The consummate warrior could not distinguish between righteousness and malevolence. The demons in his mind were



eventually dispelled through the Vishwarupa Darshan of Lord Krishna and the song celestial – The Bhagavad Gita. Psychologists have advanced a two-pronged strategy to combat such inhospitable states, firstly by closely monitoring the piquant state and taking prompt and effective action and second, by avoiding and blunting the situation. Monitoring involves taking several proactive steps which help in the preparation of the mind. Advanced and well-rehearsed preparation before a significant event; this is tapasya and no one can relax on this ground. The mind should be resolute and robust, to practice incessantly like the celebrated archer Arjuna. In the process, the individual de-clutters the mind and gets rid of the baggage of anxiety and fear. The Inoculation Technique is another effective strategy. An individual insulates the self against the perils of stress through constant exposure to rehearsals and role-playing.

This mentally toughens up the candidate to be prepared for the scrutiny and appraisal with utmost confidence and credence. Further, adopting a positive dispensation is invaluable. In addition, there are blunting tactics and strategies which help to augment the above. It is perspicacious and canny to drown in physical activity. It could be going for long walks, swimming, hitting the gym, taking up a sport or learning yogic techniques to de-stress the mind. These activities release endorphins which assuage the mind. Simultaneously, an individual will appear chiselled and smart. There are other ways to remain happy. For instance, join the Happiness Programme of the Art of Living to learn the unique rhythmic breathing technique of Sudarshan Kriya which calms the body and mind. Learn pranayama and various techniques of meditation to remain in the present moment. Only when a human being is in the present moment is he insulated from anxiety and manages inexpedient and onerous situations?

(The writer is the CEO of Chhattisgarh East Railway Ltd. and Chhattisgarh East West Railway Ltd. He is a faculty of the Art of Living; views are personal)

‘Fourth transformation’ of Mexico embraces inclusivity



NILANTHA ILANGAMUWA

Claudia Sheinbaum’s leadership promises to reshape the nation’s trajectory away from its violent past, embracing inclusive and human-centred policies

Claudia Sheinbaum’s swearing-in on October 1 as Mexico’s first female President marks a transformative moment not only for gender equality but also within the broader historical trajectory shaped by violence, revolution and the ongoing pursuit of justice. In a nation long burdened by colonial legacies and systemic inequality, her presidency signals a paradigm shift towards more inclusive and human-centred governance. Declaring a “fourth transformation,” Sheinbaum’s leadership reflects the weight of Mexico’s tumultuous history and the lives lost in its struggles. Her rise to power disrupts the deeply entrenched male-dominated political sphere, accentuating the resilience of women fighting for representation in a country plagued by gender-based violence and femicide. Historically, Mexico has undergone significant transformations marked by bloodshed and resistance. The country’s struggle for independence from Spanish colonial rule in the early 19th century was fuelled by revolutionary fervour and the desire for self-determination. Statesmen like Miguel Hidalgo and José María Morelos emerged as symbols of resistance, galvanising the population against colonial oppression. The violent conflicts that followed laid the groundwork for a nation striving for autonomy, albeit at a considerable human cost. In the late 19th and early 20th centuries, the divide between church and state catalysed further revolutions and conflicts. The Liberal Reform, led by figures such as Benito Juárez, sought to dismantle the power of the Catholic Church and establish a secular state.

This period was marked by violence and civil strife, as conservative factions resisted these changes. The Mexican Revolution of 1910 further exemplified the nation’s tumultuous journey, with leaders like Emiliano Zapata and Pancho Villa rallying for agrarian reform and social justice. The revolution, while transformative, came at a heavy price, resulting in the loss of countless lives and widespread suffering. The bloodshed that characterised these early transformations stands in stark contrast to Sheinbaum’s vision for the fourth transformation, which she advocates as a path of non-violence and reconciliation. She seeks to distance her administration from the militarised approach that has defined previous efforts to combat crime and violence. In her inaugural speech, she emphasised that “we must turn the page on the cycles of violence that have plagued our country.” By framing her presidency as a continuation of a peaceful and humanistic governance model, she aims to redefine Mexico’s political structure.

The economic model embraced by Sheinbaum’s administration marks a significant departure from the neoliberal policies that have dominated Mexico for decades. The neoliberal framework, characterised by deregulation, resource exploitation, privatisation, and an emphasis on unethical free-market principles, has often exacerbated social inequalities and marginalised vulnerable populations. In contrast, Sheinbaum’s “Mexican Humanist” approach seeks to prioritise social welfare, equity, and sustainable development. This shift is not merely a matter of policy but represents a broader socio-political transformation in the way governance is conceived. Sheinbaum advocates for a model that empowers communities and fosters inclusivity, stating, “We must build



IN THE CONTEXT OF CLAUDIA SHEINBAUM’S PRESIDENCY, THE ENDURING LEGACY OF CIA COVERT OPERATIONS AND FOREIGN INTERVENTIONS LOOMS LARGE

a Mexico where no one is left behind.” This vision reflects a recognition that systemic issues require collective solutions and that the voices of marginalised communities must be heard in the decision-making processes that affect their lives.

Yet, while Sheinbaum’s approach has garnered support from many, it also faces criticism and scepticism from those who question the feasibility of her proposed reforms. Critics argue that the structural challenges posed by organised crime and entrenched political corruption may undermine her efforts to implement meaningful change. The harsh realities of violence and inequality persist, and many Mexicans remain wary of promises that may be difficult to fulfil in the face of overwhelming opposition. The historical backdrop of Mexico’s political volatility illuminates the formidable challenges in achieving authentic progress, as the legacies of colonialism, imperialism, and systemic oppression remain deeply ingrained.

The ongoing struggles for justice and equality have come at a profound cost, with the violence woven into Mexico’s history continuing to influence the present and complicate future paths.

The Zapatista movement, which arose in the 1990s in response to neoliberal policies and the marginalisation of Indigenous communities, stands as a powerful testament to the fight for social justice. Led by Subcomandante Marcos, the Zapatistas championed self-determination, autonomy, and the acknowledgement of Indigenous rights, challenging dominant political narratives and inspiring a new generation of activists, including Sheinbaum. Yet, their movement also reveals the challenges inherent in revolutionary politics; while their promise of non-violence and social justice aligns with Sheinbaum’s vision, navigating the realities of power and governance often demands difficult compromises. The pressing challenge remains: how to dismantle deeply rooted systems of inequality and violence without mirroring the oppressive methods of the past. Sheinbaum’s fourth transformation for Mexico calls for a reevaluation of economic policies and a fundamental shift in political culture, emphasising transparency, accountability, and democratic principles that prioritise the needs of the many.

She stresses the importance of restoring faith in institutions and rebuilding the nation’s social fabric. However, the ongoing issues of alleged corruption and political machinations, exacerbated by her predecessor López Obrador’s concentration of power and undermining of democratic institutions, raise concerns about the sustainability of her reforms. In the context of Claudia Sheinbaum’s presidency, the enduring legacy of CIA covert operations and foreign interventions looms large. Historically, the United States has intervened in Latin America to safeguard its interests, often undermining democratic governance and social justice. The repercussions of these interventions have fostered a deep-seated distrust and scepticism toward foreign influence in Mexico’s internal affairs. As Sheinbaum endeavours to establish a nation committed to human rights and social justice, she must grapple with the pervasive effects of these historical injustices and the Western media narratives that distort the actual picture of Mexican society. In terms of international relations, Sheinbaum vehemently opposes foreign intervention, particularly regarding the US blockade against Cuba, which harms ordinary cit-

izens rather than the government. She advocates for cooperation rather than militarisation in addressing drug-related violence, emphasising that the drug market is intricately linked to US consumer demand. As she aptly stated, “We must honour our past, learn from our struggles, and build a future that reflects the aspirations of all Mexicans.” Yet, the pursuit of a more just and equitable Mexico demands collective action, engagement from diverse communities, and a steadfast commitment to dismantling systemic barriers, as Sheinbaum seeks to embody the hopes of a nation shaped by resilience and struggle. However, the structural challenges, as Enrique Dussel, an Argentine-Mexican philosopher, explained in his writings, continue to haunt Mexico, posing real threats to the stability of political leadership. He emphasises the need for integrating diverse cultural perspectives and fostering dialogue from the Global South, as seen in his concept of transmodernity. Dussel also highlights the coloniality of power, illustrating how historical injustices persist in contemporary governance, perpetuating inequality. Furthermore, his ethics of the Other calls for recognising the experiences of marginalised individuals as central to any discourse on justice. Additionally, the aporia of borders illustrates the contradictions communities face at national edges, such as the Mexico-US border, where ideals of freedom and security often clash. Addressing these issues demands a nuanced approach that acknowledges the voices of those usually left unheard, which presents a significant challenge for the historic administration of Dr Sheinbaum.

(The writer is a journalist and author; Views expressed are personal)

Half of the world’s GDP at risk due to environmental degradation

The conservation and restoration of depleted forests are essential steps to combat climate change

Climate change has become an important challenge for the whole world. Conservation and restoration of depleted forests can become a necessary step to deal with this challenge.

Regarding this, many companies around the world have pledged to plant over 12 billion trees in the next seven years. The report published by the World Economic Forum on Nature and Biodiversity on January 18, 2024, clarifies that half of the world’s GDP, i.e. about \$44 trillion, is in danger. Which is due to the loss of nature.

To save it, more than 100 companies have pledged to conserve, restore and plant new trees of over 12 billion



RAJEEV AACHARYA

trees in more than 100 countries. This report states that companies around the world are working together through the World Economic Forum’s It.org initiative.

It aims to support the global movement to protect over 12 billion trees by 2030. In January 2024, It.org welcomed this resolution by

five new companies Bharat Heavy Electricals (BHEL), Burberry China, Go To Group, RPG Enterprises and Vale. Member companies of It.org are committed to implementing the goal in line with the Paris Agreement to save trees and reduce carbon emissions. Tree conservation is not only important for environmental sustainability, but it is also a part of our cultural and religious heritage. Trees learn from each other. That research was published on May 28, 2024 in the Current Forestry Reports magazine of Springer Nature, America.

This research is based on the topic that how trees planted in agro-forestry and urban forestry can learn from each

other and flourish. According to the research, both systems can be seen as natural solutions. Both systems also have similarities in ownership and management responsibilities. For example, most of the agricultural land in the Global North is privately owned, just as a large part of the green cover is seen in cities.

Increasing the density of trees improves air quality. The Indian Institute of Science (IISc), Bangalore conducted a study in 2023 on the role of trees in the urban environment. This study was mainly done in urban areas of Bangalore. It was found that trees in urban areas play an important role in improving air quality as well as controlling



temperature. In this research, it was told that the higher the density of

trees, the greater the increase in air quality and the effect of heat can also be reduced.

This study also found that the mental and physical health of people living in green areas improves. The density of trees prevents soil erosion.

A study conducted by the University of Sydney, Australia, says that dense cover of trees can control the flow of water and help prevent soil erosion. This study also stated that the conservation of trees helps in reducing the effects of climate change. All these studies confirm how important the conservation of trees is for our future. In Indian culture, importance has been given to the conservation of trees since the beginning. According to Matasya Purana, “Dashakoopasama Vaapi, Dashavaapisamo

Hradah. Dashahradasamo Putro, Dashputrasamo Drumah.” That is, one tree is equal to ten sons. Similarly, it is said in Vishnu Purana that the person who plants a tree earns virtue not only in his life but also for the coming generations. Planting and caring for trees has been described as an important religious and social work in Indian scriptures. At present, planting trees is not only to save lives but also to save the earth. Let us take resolve to conserve nature. Each one of us must take a pledge to plant at least 5 trees, only then this disaster of global warming can be dealt with. *(The writer is an environmentalist; views are personal)*

Hyderabadi Queen who's all about empowering modern Maharanis in Hyd

FROM THE LUSH LANDSCAPES OF ASSAM TO THE BUSTLING STREETS OF HYDERABAD, DR SUDHA JAIN HAS FOUND HER HOME HERE IN THE 'CITY OF NIZAMS'. IN AN EXCLUSIVE CHAT WITH THE PIONEER, SHE DISCUSSES HER ALLURE FOR THE CITY, INITIAL MEMORIES HERE AND MORE



AARTI SREENATH
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Meet Dr Sudha Jain, a powerhouse of passion and purpose from Hyderabad. This dynamic woman isn't just a Ph.D. holder; she's also the former Miss India Asia Pacific (2017-18), using her title to advocate for women's empowerment.

Her journey to Hyderabad unfolds like a heartwarming narrative, rich with anecdotes and serendipitous connections. After nearly two decades in the city, she reflects on her early days with a blend of nostalgia and humor. "Chennai was my first experience in the South," she chuckles. "It's a beautiful city, but I often felt like an outsider. It was always, 'Oh, you're from the North?' But Hyderabad was different. People would smile and say, 'Your Hindi sounds nice,' even if it hinted at a northern twang."

When she first arrived in Hyderabad, she carried the usual apprehensions about moving to a new place, particularly after her time in Chennai. However, she was pleasantly surprised. "Hyderabad didn't just accept me; it embraced me with open arms," she recalls. The locals were not only welcoming but genuinely curious about her northern roots. "They would ask me about the weather in Assam and show real interest in my background. It was refreshing."

For her, Assam remains a cherished backdrop from her childhood, where the air was crisp, winters required woolen clothes and life flowed in harmony with the Brahmaputra River. "Assam was all about bungalows. In contrast, Hyderabad's high-rises and fast-paced life were new to me. But the warmth of its people more than made up for the lack of a winter season," she reminisces.

Her connection to Hyderabad soon deepened, transforming it into a sense of home. "Before I knew it, I was buying a bungalow here and settling in. It wasn't just a city I moved to; it became mine," she smiles. Sudha's journey from a newcomer to a proud Hyderabadi is filled with moments that have shaped her love for the city.

She fondly recalls an early experience at an exhibition that took her by surprise. "Back then, exhibitions were rare. At one event, someone complimented my jawline, saying it was 'hexagonal,' which is apparently quite unusual," she laughs. "It's one of those quirky interactions that make Hyderabad so interesting."

She contrasts Hyderabad's bustling lifestyle with Assam's simplicity, where traditional meals and a sense of community prevail over fast food. Yet, she appreciates Hyderabad's dynamic nature, where every lane has its own charm and people are always ready to welcome guests. "Hyderabad is two cities in one," she describes. "It's alive and buzzing at night, but in the morning, it has a vibrant energy that makes you feel like you belong."

Reflecting on how the city has shaped her career, she notes, "Hyderabad has been exceptionally supportive. It's a place where you can pursue your passions, and the community truly rallies behind you. Since I started in the industry, the relationships I've built here have been invaluable. The people I've met, especially in the fashion and beauty sectors, have helped me grow immensely."

As she discusses her experiences, she touches on the challenges she has faced, particularly regarding the changing dynamics of her clientele. But rather than dwelling on the negative, she remains optimistic. Her resilience and positive outlook have further enabled her to navigate industry challenges while cherishing the unforgettable moments and connections she has made in Hyderabad.

Each experience, whether glamorous or challenging, has contributed to her growth, making her journey uniquely fulfilling.

Her journey in Hyderabad is more than just a chapter in her life; it's a vibrant assortment woven with art, culture and deep-rooted connections. She passionately discusses the nuances of judging in the fashion industry, emphasising that the role is far from superficial.

Her reflections on Hyderabad showcase both her admiration and critical insights.

While she respects a few local judges, she notes, "There are only two or three judges here who I believe can fit anywhere in India. Their presence motivated me to create new hashtags for my work, breaking free from the traditional celebrity-based judgments." Her desire to shift towards more genuine assessments reveals her vision for growth in the fashion world, one that values substance over superficiality.

Her commitment to promoting Hyderabad's handloom industry is particularly notable. She beams with pride when talking about her efforts to support local artisans, especially weavers from Pochampally and Bhuvangiri. "The handloom sector is thriving in Hyderabad," she shares. Not long ago, she organised a press meet for weavers, attracting coverage from 17 leading newspapers. "I've registered copyrights for their unique motifs, ensuring recognition and protection for each weaver's work," she adds. Her efforts aim not only to uplift individual artisans but also to ensure that their cultural heritage is preserved and celebrated.

Yet, her love for Hyderabad extends beyond fashion and art. It's the spirit of the people that endears the city to her. "Hyderabad has vibes of royalty, yet it's incredibly open to adopting new things," she reflects on the city's unique blend of tradition and modernity. From the rich heritage of Charminar to the casual warmth of a roadside chai stall, she finds joy in the city's simplicity and hospitality. "In Lucknow, food is royal and the presentation is classic. But here, it's casual and effortless. You'll walk into a place and they'll serve you a bun with chai, and you just sit and enjoy," she remarks with a smile.

Her story embodies the essence of a city that welcomes newcomers with open arms, blending tradition and modernity in a unique tapestry of culture. As she continues to thrive in the fashion industry, advocating for local artisans and embracing her roots, she inspires others to navigate their paths with resilience and authenticity. With a heart full of gratitude for the serendipitous moments that have shaped her life, she reminds us that true belonging often arises from the simplest acts of kindness, making Hyderabad not just a city she lives in, but a home she cherishes deeply.



Embryo freezing for DINKs

DINK, an acronym for Double Income, No Kids, refers to couples who both have incomes from jobs or investments and do not have children. In India, the number of DINK couples is growing rapidly, with an estimated annual increase of 30%. These couples typically have higher disposable incomes and lead flexible lifestyles. The term gained popularity in the late 20th century as more women pursued higher education and careers, resulting in dual-income households. This shift has influenced changing perspectives on parenthood.

Why is DINK on rise?

Some of the common reasons for the rise in DINKs approach follows:

Financial pressure: Raising children comes with significant financial responsibility. Contrary to the common perception, not all DINK (Double Income, No Kids) couples have excess funds. Many urban and rural couples, particularly those with lower incomes, face financial challenges. The expenses of raising and educating children pose a major concern on their shoulders.

Career-focused: In today's world, both men and women are highly driven by their career ambitions to become proficient in their professional lives in order to achieve financial stability and compete with rising inflation. They are focused on dedicating their time, energy and resources to build robust finances that support themselves and their lifestyle. As a result, many individuals choose to prioritise their careers over starting a family in their early years, leading to declined fertility and lower chances of conception later on.

Personal requisites: Some couples face medical conditions that make pregnancy high-risk, leading them to prioritise their health. For some couples, mental health is a priority, and they choose to minimise stress in their lives by avoiding the demands of parenthood.

Environmental concerns: Many DINK couples have concerns about the ongoing looping environmental dangers. Acknowledging the serious risks like climate change and global warming pose to humanity, many are apprehensive about the potential negative impact on their children's future and consider not going ahead on the path to parenthood.

Embryo freezing - An intervention for the better?

Embryo freezing, or embryo cryopreservation, is a method of freezing and storing embryos for future use, allowing individuals to preserve their fertility. This technique can be beneficial for DINKs individuals looking to explore parenthood at a later stage or anyone wishing to postpone parenthood, offering them the option to delay rather than forgo the possibility of starting a family later.

For the creation of an embryo, an embryologist retrieves the egg and then fertilises one or more of the harvested eggs with the sperm of a partner or donor. The embryo is monitored as it grows in a petri dish over five to seven days. During this period, genetic testing is conducted, especially if the egg or sperm donor is known to carry certain genetic conditions.

At this stage, the highest-graded embryos are frozen through a process called vitrification. The embryos are quickly frozen by immersion in liquid nitrogen, turning them into a glass-like state. This rapid freezing method prevents the formation of ice crystals, which increases the embryos' survival rate and viability after thawing.

Success rates of embryo freezing

The possibility of pregnancy from an embryo transfer is primarily influenced by the woman's age at the time the embryos are created. These procedures are most beneficial for individuals aged 35 or younger leading to the highest success rates for pregnancy. Furthermore, over 95% of frozen embryos successfully survive the thawing process.

(The author, Dr Parul Gupta, is a fertility specialist at Nova IVF Fertility, Vasant Vihar.)

Gutar Gu 2: Predictable romance as plot falls flat

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PLOT

Vishesh Bansal and Ashlesha Thakur's show *Gutar Gu* is back again and delves deeper into their love story. Now, they are in a long-distance relationship since she moved to Ahmedabad. The show will investigate if their love can withstand time, along with other unknowns. Will they choose to break up or will they decide to give their relationship a chance?

HIGHLIGHTS

The heart of this season lies in the shift from young love in season one to a more mature but still adolescent relationship. Ritu, a visual arts student in Ahmedabad, and Anuj, an engineering student in Bhopal, attempt to navigate the obstacles of their distant relationship. The show depicts the struggles of young love spread over long distances with a sense of predictability that is both familiar and constricting.

DRAWBACKS

You can predict the plot developments: envy-fueled arguments, unwanted input from friends, a new person entering the picture, and a 'break-up party' that seems more like a ritual than a heartbreaking event. Although the series is known for its relatable content, there is a chance it may fall into clichés from time to time. The story follows typical patterns and does not aim to shock; rather, it relies on common themes in long-distance relationships. The consistent belief that physical separation will result in cheating, envy in everyday scenarios and a friend interfering in a rela-

tionship, appear to be clichés in romantic stories that viewers have witnessed numerous times.

PERFORMANCES

The lead actors give strong enough performances to carry the show, even when the script lacks depth for them to work with. The chemistry between Ashlesha and Vishesh feels authentic; their interactions capture the mix of first love's innocence and youthful frustration. Anuj's choice to join a college play in order to go to Ahmedabad shows a charming side of young love, highlighting the extravagant actions that are common in such relationships, even when they seem ridiculous.

TECHNICAL ASPECTS

Gaurav Chatterji's music is undeniably impressive. The mellow, gentle music that plays consistently in the episodes is worth keeping and can effortlessly be added to the collections of modern romantics. Unlike season 1, Sriram Ganapathy's cinematography. However, there are times when pacing suffers in a few parts, here and there.

VERDICT

With that being said, at times this season doesn't have enough at stake to capture interest. Despite the refreshing light-hearted tone, the series may feel like it is just coasting along due to the lack of real tension and emotional depth, failing to truly capture the complexities of a developing relationship. This might not meet the expectations of those looking for a thorough exploration of love and relationships. For those seeking a delightful, simple-to-understand series that doesn't require much effort from viewers, this show is a perfect match.



Directed by: Saqib Pandor ■ Produced by: Guneet Monga Kapoor's Sikhya Entertainment

Cast: Ashlesha Thakur, Vishesh Bansal ■ Written by: Garima Kunzru and Gunjan Saxena

Cinematography by: Sriram Ganapathy ■ Streaming on: Amazon MX Player

Rating: 2.5/5

what's brewing?

ART EXHIBITION

Gallery Dotwalk has announced its Siren's Lullaby, curated by Premjish Acharia Contemporary art exhibition that delves into the depths of the human subconscious through the lens of dreams. This immersive showcase was one of the largest contemporary art exhibitions, held at the Chitramayee State Gallery of art, available till October 16. The event was inaugurated by Dr. Lakshmi and Anju Poddar.

PHOTO GALLERY:

- Anju Poddar
- Ravinder Reddy
- Amaresh
- Dr. Lakshmi
- Maredu Ramu
- Sudhakar Chippa
- Ramani
- Sreejith and Pramjish
- Srinidhi
- Sai

PARTY

Anchor and actress Sreemukhi inaugurated the 3-day Rang Ratri Dandiya celebrations at Om Convention, Narsingi, Hyderabad. The event featured a dazzling array of Dandiya and Garba nights, along with an exclusive Bathukamma celebration.

EMPOWERING JOURNEY OF MANUSHI CHHILLAR

Miss World 2017

Miss World Manushi Chhillar attended an event in Jaipur, which was organised by the Indian Revenue Service (IRS) Women's Wing IRSLA. During the event, the actress addressed the female IRS officers and spoke about women empowerment and the importance of setting life goals. The event witnessed the presence of several renowned personalities including Meenakshi Ranga, Renu Armitabh, Mahendra Ranga, Rajesh Dhingra and CK Jain.

WALKATHON

On the occasion of the World Arthritis Day, The Indian Rheumatology Association-Hyderabad Chapter organised a meet focusing on raising awareness around arthritis. The event was attended by Dr Beerappa, Director, NIMS, along with Dr Narsimulu, President elect -API, Dr Liza Rajasekhar, Dean, NIMS and Dr Vara Prasad-President, Rheumatology association Hyderabad chapter, among the other dignitaries.

WORLD EGG DAY CELEBRATION

The National Egg Coordination Committee (NECC), in collaboration with the Indian Poultry Equipment Manufacturers Association (IPEMA) celebrated the World Egg Day at Bhagat Singh Nagar, Phase II, Hydernagar. Uday Singh Bayas, President, IPEMA/Poultry India, K. Rama Krishna, CPI State Secretary, Andhra Pradesh and Lakshman Pudi, Founder, Arogya Diet, were among the other attendees of the event.

FUN

ARCHIE

SHHH! IT'S MY BABY SISTER'S BEDTIME! I JUST TUCKED HER IN AND READ TO HER!

MOST PEOPLE READ STORY-BOOKS! THIS IS YOUR HIGH SCHOOL TEXTBOOK!

HEY, IT PUTS ME TO SLEEP!

HENRY SCARVELLI SINGS BIG-DIMMY 9-30

CALVIN AND HOBBS

CAN I USE THE GARDEN SHOVEL?

WHAT DO YOU WANT IT FOR?

HOBBS AND I ARE GOING ON AN ARCHAEOLOGICAL EXPEDITION.

IF YOU'RE LOOKING FOR FOSSILIZED REMAINS, YOU SHOULD DIG THROUGH YOUR ROOM.

HA HA. SOMEDAY I'LL NAME AN AUSTRALOPITHECUS WOMAN AFTER YOU!

GARFIELD

IT'S OKAY, GARFIELD...

I SEWED THE STUFFING BACK INTO YOUR BEAR

COOL-LOOKING SCAR THERE, POOKMAN

REALITY CHECK

YEAH I'M NOT A BIG FAN OF THE POP-IN

SPEED BUMP

SORRY-DID I STARTLE YOU?

CROSSWORD

NANCY

I'M SICK OF ALL THESE REBOOTS AND RESTARTS

WHY CAN'T SOMETHING THAT'S GONE STAY GONE?

LOOK, I KNOW YOU HATE POLLEN BUT THAT'S STILL A PRETTY HARSH WAY TO TALK ABOUT SPRING

SUDOKU

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

Yesterday's solution

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

ACROSS

- Altering
- To cook something in an oven
- Last
- Failed to remember
- Injured by a bullet
- Stink
- An award for a successful university student
- One of the planets
- Lift up
- Tree limbs

DOWN

- Sit on this
- The writer of a book
- Birthday present
- Follows eighth
- Favoured, liked better
- Squashed
- Look very carefully for something
- Mistake
- Siraps controlling a horse
- Part of the face

SOLUTION

S	I	M	P	L	E	S	T	A
P	O	O	N	A				
A	R	M	Y	D	R	E	A	M
C	M	S	T	A	M			
E	G	I	P	T				
S	A	M	R	I				
H	U	G	H	M	I	T		
I	T	S	R	M				
P	R	O	T					
A	T	A	A					
W	C	I	R	C	L	A	R	

Rules

- Each row and column can contain each number (1 to 9) exactly once.
- The sum of all numbers in any row or column must equal 45.

DIFFICULTY RATING: ★★★★★

GINGER MEGGS

GINGE, WHAT'S A LOBBYIST?

WHEN PUTTING CHEESE IN THE TRAP, ALWAYS LEAVE ROOM FOR THE MOUSE

I THINK IT'S A BLOKE WHO CAN'T FIND HIS HOTEL ROOM KEY. I KNEW YOU'D KNOW.

