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PAPER WITH PASSION

Nepal plays the hardball

Nepal is flexing its muscles by depicting Indian territories on its currency notes

In a recent development that has stirred regional tensions, Nepal has included certain disputed territories in its new currency notes. The move not only challenges India's sovereignty claims but also signals a significant alignment shift towards its northern neighbour, China. This seemingly innocuous act of updating currency notes has escalated into a diplomatic standoff and the growing influence of external powers in the region. The inclusion of the disputed territories, namely Lipulekh, Kalapani and Limpiyadhura, has sparked outrage in India, with officials condemning Nepal's actions as a violation of bilateral agreements and provocative steps that can further deteriorate the relations between the two countries. India has urged Nepal to respect sovereignty, return to dialogue and refrain from unjustified assertions. Earlier the relationship between New Delhi and Kathmandu became strained following Nepal's release of a political map in mid-May 2020, which incorporated territories like Lipulekh,



Kalapani and Limpiyadhura, previously depicted in India's November 2019 map. At the heart of the dispute lies historical ambiguity and differing interpretations of border demarcations. While Nepal claims that the territories rightfully belong to it based on historical treaties and cartographic evidence, India maintains control over these regions, citing its historical precedents and strategic imperatives. The dispute has simmered for decades, occasionally flaring up but never fully resolved.

The present move by Nepal has a lot to do with its new political leadership which is deliberately leveraging its proximity with China to browbeat India.

Besides, many other issues have also cropped up which have been a cause of concern for Kathmandu. India's Agniveer policy has also not gone down well with Nepal. What makes Nepal's move particularly noteworthy is its perceived alignment with China. Over the past few years, Nepal-China relations have strengthened considerably, fuelled by mutual economic interests and strategic cooperation. China has invested heavily in Nepal's infrastructure projects, including roads and telecommunications networks, enhancing connectivity between the two countries. Furthermore, Nepal's participation in China's Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) has deepened its economic dependence on Beijing, providing an alternative to traditional ties with India. Against this backdrop, Nepal's decision to incorporate disputed territories in its currency notes could be interpreted as a strategic gesture signalling its independence from Indian influence. It is indeed a reason to set off alarm bells in New Delhi and it should take some immediate steps to stop the drifting away of Nepal and becoming part of Chinese hegemony. It would be India's loss if Nepal also walked the Maldives' path. It is time to leverage historical India-Nepal ties and convince the new leadership that China is only going to use Nepal and suck it dry as it did many other nations.

PICTALK



Anganwadi workers take part in a voting awareness campaign ahead of the polling for Lok Sabha elections, in Jalaun PTI

Mastering self-leadership during work from home

As work dynamics evolve towards multi-location, knowledge-driven autonomy, employees' proactive task management is essential

While some suggest that work from home (WFH) offers greater autonomy, leading to increased family time and reduced commuting, others argue that it blurs the boundaries between work and home, potentially diminishing productivity. The co-location of work and home during WFH blurs the traditional separation between the workplace and the family domain. This integration can exacerbate conflicts between work and home responsibilities, resulting in heightened levels of job dissatisfaction, anxiety and disengagement from work.



As individuals possess finite personal resources such as energy and attention, focusing on one role often depletes resources for another. For instance, individuals working from home full-time may frequently transition between work responsibilities and home duties, such as pausing work to attend to childcare or household tasks. These transitions can further strain individuals' capacity to effectively manage both work and personal responsibilities. Boundary theory has become increasingly relevant in the context of WFH. Expanding upon this theory, it is observed that employees are more likely to transition between different roles on days when they are telecommuting compared to when they are physically present in the office. When employees work from home, both their work and home roles converge within the same physical space, creating a unique dynamic.

According to boundary theory, the nature of these role transitions can significantly impact conflicts between work and home domains. Certain types of role transitions may facilitate the blending of work and home responsibilities. For example, interrupting work to attend to familial duties, such as picking up children from

school, can lead to conflicts arising from the home encroaching upon work time (home-work conflict). Subsequently, resuming work after attending to such responsibilities may trigger conflicts stemming from work encroaching upon home life (work-home conflict).

Organisations play a pivotal role in supporting employees by offering flexibility, particularly on days when they work from home, thereby assisting them in managing conflicts that arise when their work and home roles intersect. However, relying solely on organisational support may not offer a comprehensive solution. The concept of self-leadership becomes invaluable during periods when employees face challenges arising from the blurred boundaries between work and home, particularly on remote workdays. The considerable expansion of remote and hybrid work in the aftermath of the pandemic underscores the importance for employees to proactively manage their responsibilities. Although remote work was not unprecedented,

its widespread adoption during and following the pandemic has been unmistakable. Evidence suggests that diverse remote work arrangements, encompassing hybrid models and full-time remote setups, are poised to remain prominent in the future of work. While remote work has revealed advantages such as increased flexibility and job satisfaction, its implementation has also presented new hurdles. These include diminished managerial support, which can dampen professional creativity, hinder the willingness to share new ideas and diminish confidence. The complexities of remote work, ranging from varying locations and home working conditions to frequent interruptions and diminished focus, emphasise the importance of self-leadership in today's professional realm. Moreover, in the remote work setting, there is a heightened need for adaptability and the ability to navigate challenges independently, which harmonises with the fundamental tenets of self-leadership. (The writer is associated professor, HR&OB, FIIB; views are personal)

Delhi school bomb hoax reflects rancor



PRAFULL GORADIA

The extremists might be unaware that their malicious actions could jeopardise the safety of their community. It falls upon the responsible segment of the community to rein in the extremists

The bomb hoax received by up to 285 schools in and around Delhi, reflects the burning anger among extremists. Although the threatening message from a Quranic text was dispatched from a Russian electronic source, evidentially, the email identities were sent from Delhi, most probably from Indians. The email was most offensive to quote; "Did you real think that there would be no answer for all the evil you have done? Since childhood, the fire of jihad has been lit in our hearts, we have become this fire, Inshallah who preside over just retribution". The extremists may not realise that their nefarious activity can endanger the safety of their community. It is for the responsible section or the community to control the extremists. If they think that it is for the law-and-order authorities only to deal with such mischief, they are mistaken. The police and others can do so only much and no more. In short, it is not their function to protect the goodwill of the responsible section of the minority. If they do not do so, the Indian people almost would gain the impression the responsible section is also somewhat sympathetic towards the extremists' activity.

Remember Partition is not a forgotten chapter of India's recent history. Pakistan and Bangladesh are standing minarets of Muhammad Ali Jinnah's Two Nation Theory whereby Hindus and Muslims cannot coexist in the same country. Hardly any Hindus have been allowed to remain in Pakistan, wherein Bangladesh non-Muslims are reducing in numbers by the week. Mohandas Gandhi told Dr Syama Prasad Mookherjee and Rajkumari Amrit Kaur the day before he was assassinated that India was a secular country because the division was a territorial and not religious one. This may have been a kind human gesture to protect the minority, but it was not the truth. Most Hindus, do not believe that it was not a division based on religion. The Hindu heart believes that it was the final settlement between Hindus and Muslims. Yes, Jawaharlal Nehru, Gandhi



and their followers are free to hold their views but that era has passed and a new age has dawned in India.

Following in step with the moving train of time is wise and not getting stuck in the mud of the past. Here, it is also wise to remember that Europe no longer welcomes emigrants and the USA is reportedly slow and shows of much reluctance. The only open space appears to be Africa. One of the loud messages of the Israel-Hamas war in Gaza is that emigrants are no longer welcome even in a West Asian country, whether Egypt, Jordan or any other. No neighbour has lifted their fingers toward the trigger for saving the Gaza Heights. One reminded of the ghazal by Talat Mahmood "Jayein to Jayein Kahan". Mughal emperor Akbar understood clearly even as a boy it could be easy to rule India if he made Hindus who were 95 per cent of his empire safe, happy and well-treated. As a sign of his impartiality between religions, he went, for Muslims to the extreme extent of not performing sunnat or circumcision on his son Salim who rose to become Jahangir,



PARTITION IS NOT A FORGOTTEN CHAPTER OF INDIA'S RECENT HISTORY. PAKISTAN AND BANGLADESH ARE STANDING MINARETS OF MUHAMMAD ALI JINNAH'S TWO NATION THEORY, WHEREBY HINDUS AND MUSLIMS CANNOT COEXIST IN THE SAME COUNTRY

The future emperor. This Islamic king, if he were not emperor, would have been accused of being a murtad; or apoState, fit for the death penalty. His eventual innovation was called Din-e-Ilahi. By implication, he was replacing Islam with a synthetic religion that would include people of all faiths. In practice, not a great deal happened but it was a gesture especially to the Hindus, how much he was prepared to go forward to placate their sentiments. This was not the end of his vision but in a way only the beginning. He abolished the vexatious; jaziya tax which Hindus had to pay to receive protection from the State. Whenever he conquered a Rajput territory Akbar offered the Hindu prince his territory back under the Mughal suzerainty, provided the prince was prepared to align with and even fight for the empire. That indeed was a generous gesture by not dispossessing the Rajput of the kingdom completely and ensuring him of a place in the empire. He often offered to marry a princess of the principality. If his hand was accepted, he did not ask the lady to convert to Islam. There was no better way of touching the

hearts of the Rajputs. In recorded history, no Muslim conqueror was this generous. In contrast, Aurangzeb was the opposite. He went down to desecrating and demolishing Hindu temples like Vrindavan, Mathura and Banaras. Humiliating Hindus and breaking their hearts was the preferred point in his agenda. To many, it would seem that being emperor and ruling Hindu India was merely his pastime. Alamgir Aurangzeb's vicarious cruelties extended much beyond the demolition of temples. When he brought down the Kashi Vishwanath temple at Banaras, he left the western gate of the Hindu edifice as it was, so that every worshipper would be reminded of what the Mughals had done. When he desecrated the Govind Dev temple at Vrindavan, he demolished the top two floors only, leaving the bottom two for the Hindus to see and feel the humiliation. What benefit could such conduct bring to a ruler? Only Aurangzeb could have known. (The writer is a well-known columnist, an author and a former member of the Rajya Sabha; views are personal)

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

POLITICAL DIATRIBE

Madam — Apropos the news article, "Modi's advice to RaGa: 'Daro mat, bhaago mat'" published on May 5, this is my response. Contesting from Wayanad as well as Rae Bareilly is "cowardice" of 'Shehzada' indeed. Still, contesting from Vadodara as well as Varanasi was an act of "supreme bravery" by a certain "Hindu Hriday Samrat"! Relentless stalking of the much-maligned "Pappu" and consistent character assassination of him provide direct testimony of who is in relentless fear of Rahul Gandhi! If Sonia Gandhi's adoption of the Rajya Sabha route proves her "escapist" mindset; hope this very same formula applies to S. Jaishankar to Ashwini Vaishnava also! Lots of thanks for shedding a deluge of tears for the "atrocities" upon women in Sandeshkhali; but please let at least a single teardrop make an appearance for the spine-chilling gangrape murder and forced cremation of the Dalit girl in Hathras, murder of the little Kathua girl after gangrape and torture for days within a temple, mass gangrape and murder of women in 2002 Gujarat and gangrape and murder of Kuki women in Manipur after getting paraded naked! A Constitutional representative claimed that Hindus are "second class citizens" in Bengal, implying which community is "first class." This is blatant communalism in our diverse democracy.

Kajal Chatterjee | Kolkata

RAHUL'S STRATEGY

Madam — Apropos the news article, "Rae Bareilly's new battlefield," published on May 4, this is my response. Gandhis have ended weeks of suspense with a twist and chose Rae Bareilly over Amethi for Rahul Gandhi, there is no doubt Rae Bareilly is a safer seat than Amethi in the current electoral context. Putting Kishori Lal Sharma in Amethi, who is an old Congress loyalist and served both Amethi and Rae Bareilly in

Pakistan on Indian elections



Apropos, "Pak wants Rahul as PM to weaken Govt. Modi," The Pioneer, May 3, this is my response. Whatever may be the political rhetoric of PM Modi linking the Congress party to Pakistan, the fact is that the latter desperately wants the Modi-led NDA Government to lose in the ongoing elections for many reasons. In contrast to the Congress party's soft approach against terrorism sponsored by Pakistan, the

Modi Government's zero-tolerance stance has triggered the surgical strike on the Balakot, the den of terrorists, in retaliation to the Pulwama attack in 2019. The abrogation of Article 370 in Jammu and Kashmir by the Modi Government has rattled Pakistan and it even failed to garner the support from the international community on the matter.

Add to this, the NDA Government's categorical stand to not initiate the talks to break the logjam between India and Pakistan as long as the latter aids and finances the terrorists to target India has put Pakistan in a disadvantageous position, even as it is embroiled in the economic turmoil - while it badly needs the trade with India. In these contexts, Pakistan strongly believes the BJP Government under Modi has severely jeopardised its machinations to target India and its interests as well.

N Sadhasiva Reddy | Bengaluru

Gandhi's absence, has in a sense provided a cakewalk to the Smiriti Irani. It will be after 25 years that there are no Gandhis in the fray from Amethi. Gandhi's not contesting from either of these seats would have been a bad political message and would have shattered the confidence of Congress workers. In the eventuality of Rahul Gandhi winning both Wayanad and Rae Bareilly, he has to leave either of the two and it would be better if he retains Wayanad to concentrate on the 2026 Kerala assembly elections and leave Rae Bareilly for his sister Priyanka Vadhra to contest in the by-poll. With this strategy, Gandhi would be able to revive the Congress in Uttar Pradesh because, without any Gandhi at the helm, Congress could not expect to revive itself in the State.

Bal Govind | Noida

this is my response. A Raj Bhavan employee who works in the telephone room and stays at the residential quarters on the campus itself, complained of molestation against West Bengal (WB) governor C V Ananda Bose on Thursday evening, introducing an element of the unprecedented in Bengal politics and pitting the Trinamool Government and the governor's office in direct conflict in the middle of an election season. It's important to investigate the allegations against Bose carefully. A central agency should investigate under a Supreme Court judge. If the TMC Government is found to be trying to defame him, it should be scrapped. If there is any truth to the allegations, the Governor should also be punished. The truth must be revealed and the innocent must be treated with full dignity.

Bidyut Kumar Chatterjee | Faridabad

ALLEGATION RESPONSE

Madam — Apropos to news report, "Woman staffer files complaint against Bengal Governor," published on May 3,

Send your feedback to: letterstopioneer@gmail.com



FIRST COLUMN SUDARSHAN KRIYA: A KEY TO A PEACEFUL LIFE

A transformative path overcoming addiction with redemption



RAVI VALLURI

Some years ago, while I was posted at Gorakhpur, an Art of Living devotee happened to read my maiden book, *The Matter of the Mind*, wherein I narrated the efficacy of the Sudarshan Kriya technique and how it extricated me from the cesspool of alcoholism. Today by the grace of Sri Sri Ravi Shankar and the breathing technique of Sudarshan Kriya I am sober. The devotee connected me to a psychiatrist and soon along with two other faculty members, we began conducting courses for alcoholics and drug addicts at a rehab centre. They were around 40 and we were three. Some looked menacing, others disenchanted, a few engulfed by ennui. But in our arsenal was the potent cassette of Sudarshan Kriya enveloped with the divine benediction of Gurudev.

We began with gentle warm-ups. This was followed by pranayama and finally Sudarshan Kriya. A few hardened addicts attempted to derail the Kriya. But the febrile minds gradually settled as the rhythms of Soham resonated in the dingy hall.

Meaning of Sudarshan Kriya

The unique breathing technique of Sudarshan Kriya is the fulcrum of the Happiness Programme of the Art of Living. Su means proper, Darshan implies vision and Kriya is a purifying action.

Through the actions of our breath, we appreciate a proper vision of who we are. It is momentous to understand that nature runs on a rhythm. For instance, the sun rises and sets at a particular time, similarly, seasons arrive and exit at predetermined times.

Our emotions, feelings and thoughts are all cast in the symphony of rhythm. We are unable to distinguish between cacophony and symphony in this frenetic pace of life which is cannonaded by innumerable thoughts. When sounds are harmonised by the syllable of Soham we can term it as magical music.



Enlightenment is not accruing anything providential but harmonising our whole being rhythmically. During the breathing process participants feel varied sensations, emotions, laughter and weeping among others. Chanting "Soham" to match one's breath with a Guru's guidance is a relaxation technique that releases stress and promotes relaxation. Studies show that it can improve heart rate, cognitive function, breathing patterns and calmness in both mind and body. It may also have positive impacts on the endocrine system and potentially prevent Alzheimer's disease. This technique increases the body's energy levels.

This wonderful knowledge and wisdom have triggered humaneness to blossom. Every cell and particle of the body overflows with jollity and life is abundant with the glow of love and the body becomes the wick. Love and belongingness become a natural process of our inner being if practised unfailingly.

Several practitioners feel they can practice the breathing technique at home. But that is only walking half the path. It is indispensable and paramount that one must practice the technique daily and attend the follow-up once a week, where a certified Art of Living teacher plays the chant of Soham in Gurudev's voice as it reinvigorates the body and mind. One should also be wary of imitations available on YouTube these days. Breath is the very kernel of our very existence.

(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)

Consequences of illusionary conspiracy



NILANTHA LANGAMUWA

The wounds from the Easter Sunday Massacre linger, but within Sri Lankans' resilience lies a beacon of hope, illuminating a path forward amidst profound despair

After the Easter attack tragedy, there arose a chorus, delving into the search for a "mastermind" behind the barbaric attack. Known as the Easter Sunday Massacre, on 21st April 2019, eight suicide bombers detonated themselves, targeting selected places in Colombo and Batticaloa, resulting in the deaths of over 260 innocent people and injuring hundreds more. A former Attorney General, a key figure in this discourse, ignited speculation by suggesting a possible hidden agenda. However, his evasion of the court and avoidance of investigators seeking clarification on his previous Statements only intensified suspicions. Politicians, social activists, journalists and even ordinary citizens unwittingly propagated a conspiracy theory based on prejudices and unverified media reports.

From my perspective, this conspiracy theory inadvertently served a unique purpose amid the chaos and irregularities. It acted as a temporary balm, diluting the rising tide of animosity against Muslims and briefly restoring social equilibrium. Without it, the nation risked a recurrence of the 1983 ethnic riots, albeit on a larger scale. Yet, as the conspiracy theory gained traction, it altered the societal psyche, fostering normalcy among diverse ethnic groups, albeit with attempts by some to exploit the situation. What remains lamentable is that this theory misled the public and squandered an opportunity to establish a socio-legal framework for preventing future occurrences.

During my conversation with Malith Jayathillake, former National List Member of Parliament and head of the Sectoral Oversight Committee on National Security appointed by then-President Maithripala Sirisena, the overlooked reality became stark. The report he presented in February 2020 outlined proposals for formulating and implementing laws to ensure national security, eradicate new terrorism and extremism by fostering unity among races and religions. Regrettably, this invaluable contribution by lawmakers was largely ignored. Jayathillake dismisses the notion of a conspiracy behind the attacks, recognising instead a meticulously planned suicide mission inspired by the ideology of the Islamic State.

Concurrently, Dr Ameer Ali from Murdoch University's School of Business and Governance dispels conspiracy notions, attributing the attack to subsequent political manipulation. Yet, in probing the roots of extremism, he identifies a turning point in 1977 when the country embraced the free market. Within certain segments of the Muslim communities, exclusivism emerged, alienating inclusivism and sowing the seeds for the proliferation of extreme ideas within the societal fabric. In the aftermath of the tragedy, about a month later, I engaged in an interview with Jonah Blank, a Principal Investigator and Senior Political Scientist for RAND Corporation. Blank astutely highlighted two critical aspects of the Easter Sunday bombings in Sri Lanka. Firstly, he emphasised that the attack was a result of political negligence rather than being solely classified as an intelligence failure by various parties. Secondly, Blank pointed out that the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (ISIS) did not choose Sri Lanka; rather, Sri Lankan extremists opted for allegiance to ISIS. Addressing the ongoing political crisis in the country, Blank remarked, "When the



AMID THIS TURBULENT PERIOD, THE FIFTH ANNIVERSARY OF THE EASTER MASSACRE SERVES AS A DISTRESSING REMINDER OF THE COLLECTIVE RESPONSIBILITY TO LEARN FROM THE PAST AND FORTIFY THE NATION AGAINST POTENTIAL THREATS

nation's two top officials are locked in open conflict, they can't cooperate to ensure the safety of the citizens." Despite my interview with Blank becoming a talking point in various media circles and social groups, rational arguments and factual information struggled to counter the persistence of conspiracy theories.

Complicating matters further, a full four years following the tragic incident, a British television channel not only fuelled baseless speculation but later begrudgingly admitted to a shocking lack of substantial evidence backing the allegations. These unfounded claims stemmed from a lone source purportedly recruited by a United Nations agency, casting a dark shadow over the entire narrative.

Amidst the discourse, I observed a political theatre unfolding, overshadowing the much-needed societal discussion. Those involved seemed more focused on accusing one another rather than earnestly seeking the truth. In the last five years since this barbaric attack, committees appointed by the President and Parliament have conducted investigations, producing lengthy reports. However, there is a noticeable absence of dialogue about future threats and the potential aftermath.

The tragic events unfolded against the backdrop of a nation grappling with its political identity and leadership struggles. Blank's insights into political negligence shed light on a systemic issue that extended beyond intelligence failures. Sri Lanka's socio-political terrain, marred by internal conflicts and power struggles, created an environment ripe for extremist ideologies to take root. The intricate web of political discord, coupled with a failure to prioritise national security, laid the groundwork for the devastating Easter Sunday attacks. As the media frenzy surrounding conspiracy theories intensified, genuine efforts to understand the

root causes of the attack were drowned out. Blank's observations about the political crisis resonated deeply, underscoring the importance of unity among leaders during pressing times of national peril. However, the cacophony of blame-shifting and finger-pointing persisted, hindering the nation's ability to address the multifaceted challenges posed by this emerging social phenomenon.

Amid this turbulent period, the fifth anniversary of the Easter massacre serves as a distressing reminder of the collective responsibility to learn from the past and fortify the nation against potential threats. The committees' findings, though crucial, must be more than backdated analyses; they should serve as a foundation for proactive measures and policies to safeguard Sri Lanka's future. The narrative must evolve beyond the immediate aftermath to address the lingering societal scars and instil a renewed sense of resilience and preparedness.

After spending nearly five years immersing myself in a myriad of materials and conducting extensive interviews with numerous sources on this heinous crime, I am compelled to acknowledge the absence of any substantive facts supporting conspiracy theories. Instead, what emerges is the chilling reality of negligence and deliberate ignorance in addressing extremism and the imperative need for robust deradicalisation efforts. I opt to accentuate the triumph of our adversaries—a triumph exacerbated by the gross negligence and underestimation displayed by defenders of national security and political stability.

Our genuine focus must now pivot resolutely towards preventing the recurrence of such crimes and sculpting a secure future for our nation, a nation that has too often lived amidst violence rather than peace, grappling with both internal and external threats. The repercussions of the Easter massacre extend

far beyond the economic sphere, infiltrating into an unprecedented degeneration of societal values. Regrettably, as we mark the fifth anniversary of the attacks, a pressing and profound necessity emerges for a narrative shift—one that moves beyond unsubstantiated accusations aimed at specific individuals. We must transcend the cycle of blame and retrospective scrutiny, opting instead for thorough approaches that delve into the underlying causes of extremism, fanaticism and terrorism regardless of ethnic or religious affiliations. This calls for a holistic approach, encompassing not only the reinforcement of intelligence and security protocols but also the fostering of a society that celebrates inclusivity, empathy and constructive discourse.

The journey toward healing and rebuilding necessitates a sincere effort from all corners of society. Ultimately, the aftermath of the Easter Sunday bombings underscores the resilience of the Sri Lankan people in the face of immense adversity. Looking forward, it is paramount to harness this collective strength and channel it into comprehensive strategies. These must not only confront immediate threats but also lay the foundations for a future characterised by security and harmony. The lessons distilled from this tragedy should propel the nation towards a collective commitment—a commitment to unity, understanding and the prevention of recurring horrors. Otherwise, in a society where the majority languishes in a deep slumber, indulging in unproven conspiracies and scapegoating a select few, we will only rouse from our stupor when the next tragedy inevitably befalls us.

This is the second part of the article on five years of Easter attack in Sri Lanka. concluded (The writer is a Sri Lankan journalist. Views are personal)

Pakistani YouTubers: The art of subtle propaganda

As consumers of digital content, it is crucial to discern between genuine discourse and agenda-driven narratives

Today's warfare is increasingly characterised by information warfare tactics. Social media serves as an ideal weapon for conducting modern conflicts where the battle for narratives and perceptions plays a crucial role in shaping outcomes. In this digital context, the emergence of Pakistani YouTubers has garnered significant attention in India over the past five years. Their channels span various genres from reaction videos to those featuring interactions with common people in Pakistan and podcasts and discussions on geopolitics. However, a closer look reveals a subtle yet concerning trend in their content. Initially, these YouTubers sought to attract Indian viewership by praising India



SULAGNA MOHANTY

unabashedly. They lauded India's policies and economic growth and even expressed admiration for Prime Minister Modi and the BJP. Their narratives echoed sentiments of unity and regret over the partition, portraying India's economic liberalisation in the 1990s as a commendable move. This strategic approach garnered them millions of Indian subscribers. Even edu-

cated Indians appreciated such rare, seemingly sane views and analyses from Pakistani youth.

At first, it was perplexing to witness the sudden change in tune from Pakistan, a country historically marred by animosity towards India. Suddenly, Pakistani YouTubers were singing praises for Jawaharlal Nehru as the best Prime Minister and socialism as the ideal policy for India. This abrupt shift raised eyebrows, especially considering Pakistan's track record of hostility towards India over the past 70 years. So, it begged the question how was it that Pakistanis have only now discovered virtues in Indian leaders and policies that they previously overlooked or actively opposed? But still, these

YouTubers were embraced by Indians with open arms, evident from the predominance of views and comments on their videos from India.

However, as time passed, their mask began to unravel. Channels focusing on geopolitics gradually began to push their agenda subtly. Considering Pakistan's precarious economic situation, these YouTubers advocated for the resumption of trade with India which was halted by their Prime Minister Imran Khan in 2019 as a protest against India's decision to revoke Article 370 in Kashmir. They openly criticised Imran Khan's decision, labelling it as foolish given the adverse impact it had had on Pakistan's economy. However, recently when the

Indian Government did not reciprocate to the India-Pak trade agenda, these YouTubers' tones shifted dramatically towards anti-India and pro-China propaganda. Suddenly, they started painting India as a regressive Hindu country with an authoritarian Government where minorities as well as the democracy are allegedly in grave danger. Now, they consistently invite guests onto their channel providing them with a platform to perpetuate anti-India and anti-Indian narratives.

It is striking how these Pakistani YouTubers seldom address the pressing issues within their own country. They seem conspicuously silent on the plight of minorities particularly the violence perpetrated against them.

While they are quick to produce videos condemning alleged injustices against Muslims in Palestine and India, they conveniently overlook similar atrocities within Pakistan.

Some YouTubers remain silent on the oppression of Muslims in China, despite evidence of human rights abuses against Uighur Muslims in Xinjiang. This raises questions about the sincerity of their activism and suggests geopolitical influences on their narrative.

Furthermore, it is noteworthy that these Pakistani YouTubers also openly criticise their Government and army, a rarity in Pakistan where dissent against the establishment is often met with severe repercussions. This raises suspi-

cions about their affiliations, true intentions and ulterior motives behind their digital presence. One cannot help but wonder if these YouTubers are planted by some foreign agencies to serve as mouthpieces for their agenda.

Here, the concern is that many Indian youths, unaware of this shift, continue to consume their content, inadvertently perpetuating the agenda. Many Indian intellectuals and geopolitical experts have begun to criticise these YouTubers for their manipulative tactics. Interestingly, this manipulation is not only limited to India but has been extended to Bangladesh too as these podcasters churn out videos portraying the 1971 war as a mistake. They label West Pakistan's attempt to

suppress and colonise East Pakistan as evil and this new narrative aims to attract Bangladeshi viewers first and subtly push their agenda later. In the era of information, overload critical thinking is our best defence against manipulation.

Hence, it is imperative to recognise and address this subtle propaganda and analyse the content the Indians consume. As consumers of digital content, it is crucial to discern between genuine discourse and agenda-driven narratives. Everyone needs to realise and understand that India stands for peace and brotherhood but not at the expense of its national security.

(The writer is an academician; views are personal)



DIVYA'S DEADLY MOTION POSTER FROM SAVI-A BLOODY HOUSEWIFE UNVEILED

After an endearing performance in *Yaariyan 2*, Divya Khosla is ready to enchant the audience with *Savi - A Bloody Housewife*. Playing the titular role, she will be seen alongside Anil Kapoor

and Harshvardhan Rane. As the team gears up to release the film's teaser on May 6, they treated fans to a motion poster, sparking off discussions as to what Divya's role is all about. In the motion poster, we see a woman carrying a bag of vegetables, and soon it transitions into her hand covered in blood as she carries a gun. This stance of *Savi* is piquing a lot of interest in fans! The film is directed by Abhinav Deo and produced by Mukesh Bhatt, Bhushan Kumar, and Krishan Kumar. Shiv Chanana and Sakshi Bhatt have joined in as co-producers. From the initial looks of it, *Savi - A Bloody Housewife* appears to be a thriller; however, the story behind a simple housewife picking up a deadly weapon will only unfold on May 31st.

Aditya Roy Kapur and Ananya Pandey part ways after two years of relationship!

Rumours have been circulating for several days that Ananya Pandey and Aditya Roy Kapur have split up. The rumours appear to be genuine. According to reports, the actors split up about a month ago, and their 'break-up has rocked' their closest friends. A close friend of the two actors said, "They broke up almost a month ago. They were going quite well, and the breakup came as a shock to all of us. They are cordial with each other. Ananya is trying to move on; of course, there's hurt. She is spending time with her new furry friend. Aditya is also trying to deal with the situation maturely." Aditya and Ananya had been dating for over two years. Last month, the latter's cryptic post went viral. That post suggested that they had broken up. Ananya Pandey's rumoured relationship with Aditya Roy Kapur has frequently made headlines. While the couple has never publicly declared their relationship, their public appearances and multiple confessions during interviews provide ample evidence of their connection.



Alia Bhatt will grace the Met Gala for the second time

Alia Bhatt, for the second time, will be attending the Met Gala 2024. She made her debut in 2023, donning Prabal Gurung couture. The actress was sighted at Mumbai's Kalina airport as she left for New York. Alia Bhatt is one of the few Indian celebrities who will attend the Met Gala in 2024.

Her designer's identity is now unknown. The actor chose Prabal Gurung couture to match the Met's theme of 'Karl Lagerfeld: A Line of Beauty', the last time. Kendrick Lamar's bold claims against Drake in new diss track *Not Like Us*

THE FAST & FURIOUS 11 will start shooting soon, confirms director

The Fast and Furious 11 is rumoured to be the franchise's final chapter, and the director has provided the most recent information on it. The Vin Diesel-led franchise is one of Hollywood's most successful action films, with the excitement and adrenaline rush of the vehicle pursuit keeping fans on edge. The first film, *The Fast and the Furious*, was released in 2001 and was based on Ken Li's Vibe magazine piece Racer X. It included Paul Walker, Vin, Michelle Rodriguez, Jordana Brewster, and others. Last year, the ninth part of the movie *Fast X* portrayed the late actor Paul in flashbacks. Vin's character, Dominique Toretto, also known as Dom, became a popular meme on social media.

11 has been pushed back to 2023 due to the Hollywood Strikes. In an interview, director Louis Leterrier provided a hopeful update on the project, including the delayed release date. *The Fast & Furious 11* director, Louis Leterrier, has reportedly announced that the film will begin filming next year and be released in 2026. He went on to say, "It's filming early next year, and it's coming out in 2026, which will be exactly to the day, 25 years since the first one came out." According to rumours, *The Fast & Furious 11* was originally scheduled to be released on April 4, 2025, but movie is now projected to arrive in 2026. *Fast X*, the 2023 installment, grossed \$704.8 million worldwide and is now available on Amazon Prime Video.



interested in dating ChampagnePapi to protect their little sister. He says, "To any b* They talk to him, and lil' sister from him." Lamar then takes a dig at Drake's 2021 album before calling him a "pedophile." He raps "Certified Lover Boy? Certified paedophiles. Why you trollin' like a b*tch? Ain't you tired? Tryna strike a chord and it's probably A-Minor." It should be noted that these are unsubstantiated allegations made by Lamar!



FUN

ARCHIE



CALVIN AND HOBBS



GARFIELD



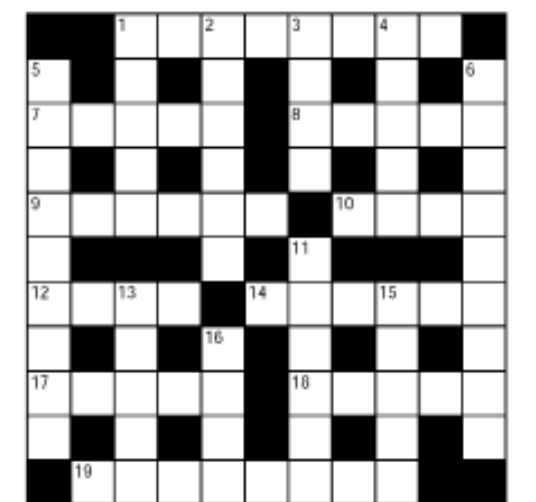
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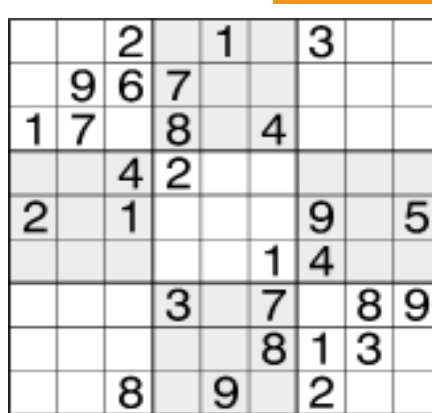
CROSSWORD



NANCY



SUDOKU



Yesterday's solution
 8 9 4 5 3 2 1 6 7
 6 7 5 8 1 9 3 4 2
 3 1 2 4 6 7 5 9 8
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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.

ACROSS

- Beard
 - Movements of the sea caused by the moon's pull on the Earth
 - A sour oily fruit from a tree
 - One of the continents
 - An alcoholic drink
 - Look at something for a long time
 - Me
 - A type of small bird
 - A clothing size
 - A chart of months and days
- DOWN**
- Broader
 - A six-legged creature
 - Round handle
- SOLUTION**
- | | | | | | | | | |
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| N | O | S | T | R | I | L | E | S |
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UNLOCKING 'SECRETS' WITH SCRUPULOUS RESEARCH



Bringing some BTS behind the making of the much-appreciated documentary *The Secrets of Buddha Relics*, *The Pioneer* connects with the director and producer, sharing some insights on the same.

TEJAL SINHA

Asthiyon Ki Rahasyamayi Khoj—*The Secrets of Buddha Relics* explores the greatest mystery, which has been streaming on Discovery + Originals, bringing the origins, cultural significance, and mystical tales surrounding the relics of Gautam Buddha. *Secrets of the Buddha Relics* follows the previous two incredibly successful series, *Secrets of Sinoli* and *Secrets of the Kohinoor*. The show, developed by writer/director Neeraj Pandey, produced by Shital Bhatia, co-directed by Raghav Jairath, and hosted by actor Manoj Bajpayee, dives into Gautam Buddha's final days.

The Pioneer gets on a quick call with the director, Raghav Jairath, and producer, Shital Bhatia, to go through the BTS of making the series. During this, we realised that research was integral to the series and the *Secrets* franchise.

A THREE-AND-A-HALF-YEAR RESEARCH

Raghav Jairath: "After we did the *Secrets of Sinoli*, we explored other topics and had about 10 research ideas and topics that we were looking at, which takes a great deal of time. For *Buddha Relics*, we began the research three to three and a half years ago. After that, Neeraj Sir

had an extreme closeness to *Buddha Relics*. He inspired us to work on this documentary. It was just two years before we started our entire focus on this documentary, where we had to start with the original textbooks that were closest to that time. During this, we realised that everybody knows the story of Gautam Buddha's life, but very few know the story of his last three months. What got us closer to the documentary was the fact that relics had never been formed before this. That took us towards the story, and if you see, in today's time, Gautam Buddha never travelled in Bihar and never out of India, but you find his sutras and relics all over."

BEING CAREFUL OF THE CONFLICTING VIEWS

Shital: "The research on such subjects is extremely difficult and sensitive at the same time because there are so many conflicting views. If you are getting to the bottom of the story, figure out the right way of presenting it because you can easily hurt someone's sentiments. We have to be extremely careful that we don't take sides, and we need to bring it out as close to reality as possible.

Raghav: "It was extremely challenging, but we zeroed in on the right experts who have spent enough time on this subject. They are the main ones who have been researching this for the past two to three decades, and so on. Once we spoke to them, they become our guiding force. But there are a lot of conflicting facts because Buddhism in today's time has three versions. We have different stories. We decided to tell the story that was closest to history.

CREATING ENTERTAINMENT VS. FACTUAL PROJECT

Raghav: "Anything factual can be told in an entertaining way. I think conducting research in the right manner is something we have been striving for. You can tell anything in the right manner; you just need to find the right method, and that comes with the right timing and guidance.

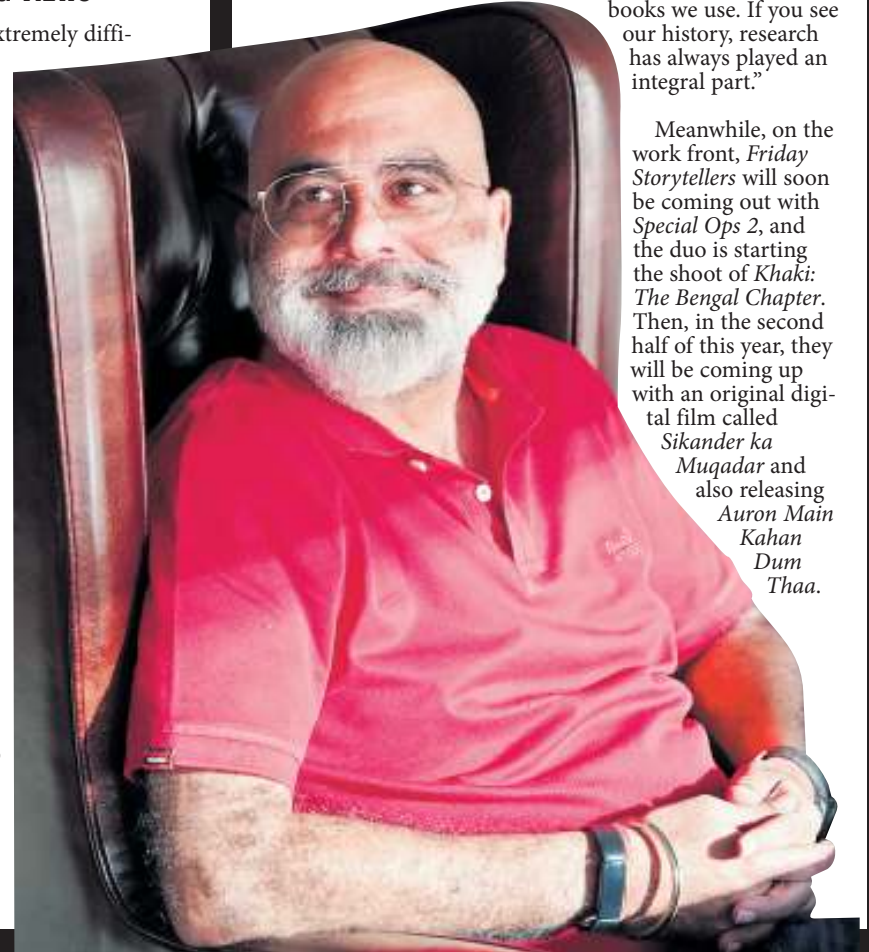
PROJECTS LIKE THIS COME WITH A HIGHER RISK

Shital: "I've never looked at subjects like this as risky or not. We look at content that excites us and tells the story.

A STORY WITH AN INDIAN HISTORY COMES WITH A GREAT RESPONSIBILITY

Raghav: "You are absolutely right. It is a very big responsibility, and we are constantly checking the facts. People come back to it, the education system starts using it, and a lot of schools have gotten in touch with us from the first documentary itself that we can play in the school's auditorium. It becomes a very big responsibility for our expert panels, research teams, and the books we use. If you see our history, research has always played an integral part."

Meanwhile, on the work front, *Friday Storytellers* will soon be coming out with *Special Ops 2*, and the duo is starting the shoot of *Khaki: The Bengal Chapter*. Then, in the second half of this year, they will be coming up with an original digital film called *Sikander ka Muqadar* and also releasing *Auron Man Kahan Dum Thaa*.



Legacy of modern timelessness

SUBODHINI PUROHIT

Where the essence of individualised style reigns supreme, transcending the fleeting whims of passing trends, the launch of Spring-Summer Collection 24 of Raghavendra Rathore Jodhpur is viewed as the famous hub of specially designed *Bandhgalas*, with his name being inked into the pages of Indian style history.

The "Rathore Look" encapsulates class and great taste that mirror grand colourfulness accumulating an Indian as well as a global customer base of the most prominent.

He says, "The Spring-Summer Collection 24" draws inspiration from personalised dressing rather than following trends. It emphasises recycling and reinventing classic styles for a timeless appeal, with a focus on versatility for different occasions. The collection merges traditional and contemporary elements, offering a variety of silhouettes and colours chosen for their timeless elegance and adaptability."

He preserves the heritage and embraces modernity in his collection. Handcrafted



elegance at Raghavendra Rathore Jodhpur: each stitch reveals years of painstaking detail and classic style. Every piece of clothing is carefully thought out and chosen, exhibiting a well-balanced blend of traditional techniques and modern design elements. "With meticulous attention to detail and a dedication to tailored design solutions, it envisions and selects pieces that reflect the individual style and comfort. Through the seamless integration of classic methods and contemporary design features, it provides a bespoke journey that is both immersive and personalised."

Excellence in fashion is where celebrity and artistry combine to create a remarkable, bespoke, elegant tapestry. "We've had the honour of dressing some of the most famous people in the world for more than thirty years. The designs are adorned by several Bollywood and Hollywood stars. At RRR, we've had the privilege of crafting personalised ensembles for notable figures like Amitabh Bachchan, Saif Ali Khan, Anil Kapoor, Duchess of York Sarah Fergusson, Diljit Dosanjh, and many others over the past three decades. Each encounter has left a lasting impression. The iconic *Jodhpur Bandhghala*, a timeless classic, not only holds global recognition but also stands as a wardrobe staple for gentlemen, transcending seasons and settings; it remains a cornerstone of my vision and collections."

Prioritising personalised style over fads, he says, he breathes new life into classic fashion, creating lasting charm suitable for various events. "The Raghavendra Rathore Jodhpur SS 24 collection seamlessly merges traditional and modern elements, presenting a wide array of styles and colours meticulously selected for their timeless appeal and versatility. Additionally, their dedication to sustainability shines through its use of eco-conscious materials and ethical production methods, showcasing a thoughtful approach to fashion," signs off the designer.

Celebrated designer Raghavendra Rathore, who recently launched his Spring-Summer Collection, gets candid with *The Pioneer*, sharing some details about the collection, crafting designs for the biggies of the industry, and more.



Fostering community through compassion

the United States of America International University in recognition of her exceptional dedication and service to public welfare. Despite her young age, Miss Naidu's influence has crossed borders, gaining her recognition from countries all over the world.

During the event, she was given the opportunity to address the British Parliament, delivering a moving speech about her goal and vision for a better world. Furthermore, a moving two-minute cinematic presentation shed light on Naidu's journey and the transformative influence of her work.

Her journey exemplifies the power of compassion and the significant impact that individuals, regardless of age, can make on society. As she continues her journey to promote good change and improve communities around the world, her legacy will inspire future generations to follow in her path.

Although unable to attend owing to parliamentary commitments, Prime Minister Rishi Sunak personally invited Miss Naidu to a special high tea, expressing his appreciation for her remarkable work and dedication. In his heartfelt greeting, Prime Minister Sunak stressed that the honorary doctorate is a testament to Naidu's remarkable skill and unshakable dedication to public service.

"This award is a testament to Kalasha Naidu's extraordinary dedication and remarkable contributions to society," remarked Prime Minister Sunak. "Her tireless efforts have touched the lives of countless individuals across the globe, and her achievements serve as a beacon of excellence in the field of public service. I am personally delighted to extend this invitation to Naidu and look forward to celebrating her accomplishments over high tea and a tour of the Parliament."



Recently, the United Nations Global Peace Council (UNGPC) held a historic ceremony in the majestic Palace of West Minister, also known as the House of Lords or the London Parliament, to award the prestigious title of "Globally the Youngest Social Worker" to Kalasha Naidu. She was acknowledged at the occasion for her remarkable contributions to worldwide public service.

Naidu received an Honorary Doctorate from the United Nations General Assembly and



Aghora look by Raamz creates revolution in T'wood

SHIKHA DUGGAL

Raamz, also known as Raamz, started his career in fashion in Hyderabad before transitioning into the acting business. He is well-known for his work designing costumes for Tollywood celebs. His creations frequently combine modern aesthetics with classic southern workmanship! He was born in Razole, a town in Andhra Pradesh. A self-taught designer, who started out creating costumes for movies in south India also created the sets for around twenty different films. *Enthiran*, starring Rajinikanth, is amongst his best creations.

For our Tollywood segment, it was only fitting to interview this self-made designer, who starts out by saying, "Our Tollywood movies served as a huge inspiration to me from my childhood itself. I'm not kidding! Call me a movie buff, but I noticed the kinds of clothes that our celebs in Tollywood were sporting. I joined the Tollywood film industry, but I'm a costume designer now, to feed my inner *keeda!* I now admire the way the celebrities in the Tollywood industry dress."

The costume designer-turned-actor, in the exclusive video interview, knowing some insider information shares, "I can only say that I find 'school' in Tollywood films. My mentors are the directors and actors who I have been working with up to this point. Since the film director is the one who pitches the idea in the end, I didn't see the necessity of investing money in a fashion school. Thus, why waste money? In actuality, when I first started learning about fashion and styling, my wife was of huge help. The unstoppable partnerships of today are a result of the way we approach superstars. Let's celebrate with a toast."

Raamz, along with his wife, have dressed actors like Vijay Deverakonda, Rana Daggubati, and Nagarjuna over the years, after gaining their big break with Sukumar's 2007 film

Jagadam. He has also contributed to Rajinikanth's *Robot* as a designer!

Well, moving ahead, he shares, "You may say I'm a bad student, but I eventually realised that education won't benefit me in the long run. I should work in the creative industry! I went now in order to comprehend South fashion. Before starting to work on celebrity costumes, it was crucial for me to learn the distinctions between a worldwide, Indian, and local designer. What even does the term 'aesthetics' entail in the context of fashion? I had no idea. I realised what aesthetics were when Amitabh Bachchan donned one of my fashion couture pieces."

Isn't it a dream come true when one gets to work with the megastars of the industry? So was he! Starting his work in the film business, working with Chiranjeevi, he recalls, "Thanks to my wife's viral look that she made for him a few years back. It was referred to as his 'best look' upon entering the motion picture business. Is that even possible to imagine? He especially expressed his gratitude to us through his daughter. And how could I forget my work on the movie *Akhanda*, in which I gave the lead actor, Nandamuri Balakrishna, an *Aghora* look? That turned out to be a recent trend as well! The director approached me and explained how my appearance contributed to the movie being a revolution during the pandemic."

Speaking further on his involvement in Telugu feature films, he emphasises, "The reason I was able to get these films, *Pachhis* or *Fighter Raja*, is the quantity of successful directors I have previously collaborated with. Additionally, technicians were helpful! I became overly excited about scouting film ideas for me to act in while working as a costume designer." A detailed discussion about the costume designer-turned-actor's next film, *Fighter Raja*, will be covered in our upcoming exclusive interview, so stay tuned!

Raamz, well-known for his work in the Tollywood industry, gets candid with *The Pioneer*, sharing his formative days in the industry, working with legendary superstars of the South, creating revolution with NBK's *Akhanda* look, and more.



Teja Sajja unveils trailer for Getup Srinu's *Raju Yadav*

Jabardasth fame Getup Srinu is making his debut as a lead actor with wholesome entertainer *Raju Yadav*, which marks the directorial debut of Krishnamachary. K. Prashant Reddy and Rajesh Kallepalli, together, are producing the movie under the banners of Sai Varunavi Creations and Charisma Dreams Entertainment. The previously released teaser and songs got superb response. As the makers are planning to release the movie soon, they have come up with the theatrical trailer. Super Hero Teja Sajja unveiled the trailer.

The trailer opens with the incident that led to all the grief in the life of *Raju Yadav*. While fielding on the cricket ground, he is hardly hit by a ball, and because of this, he can't move his facial muscles. He will always be seen with a smiley face, which brings him all the troubles. Doctors suggest an operation that requires a lot of money. He moves to Hyderabad and takes up a cab driver job to earn money. Fortunately, he finds a girl who loves his smile very much. Unfortunately, she too leaves him.

The story of the movie is based on real incidents, and director Krishnamachary made it an out-and-out entertainer. Getup Srinu is exceptional in the titular role. He makes us smile and miserable in different situations. Ankita Kharat played the female lead.

Sai Ram Uday of D.F.Tech impresses with his camera work, whereas Harshvardhan Rameshwar's background score is one of the major highlights. The production design is adequate for the genre of the movie.

Raju Yadav is scheduled for its worldwide release on May 17.



SURIYA WRAPS UP DUBBING FOR *KANGUVA*

In a significant development for the highly anticipated film *Kanguva*, actor Suriya has completed dubbing his portions, marking a milestone in the production's journey. The news comes as a testament to the progress made by the cast and crew, signaling a step closer to the film's much-anticipated release.

With Suriya's dubbing completed, the focus now shifts to the extensive post-production phase, which is expected to span over three months. This crucial stage will involve intricate work in computer graphics (CG), visual effects (VFX), and animation, aimed at enhancing the cinematic experience and bringing the director's

vision to life with precision and finesse. *Kanguva* is poised to make a mark on a global scale, with plans for its release in an impressive 32 languages. This ambitious endeavour underscores the film's universal appeal and the anticipation surrounding its arrival among audiences worldwide.

As excitement mounts and anticipation builds for the release of *Kanguva*, fans and cinephiles alike are eagerly awaiting further updates and glimpses into the cinematic marvel that awaits. Stay tuned for more exclusive insights and announcements as the journey towards the release of *Kanguva* unfolds.



Amitabh Bachchan wraps up shooting for *Vettaiyan*

Megastar Amitabh Bachchan says he has finished shooting for the Tamil film *Vettaiyan*, fronted by Rajinikanth. The movie is directed by T.J. Gnanavel of *Jai Bhim* fame and backed by Lyca Productions. Bachchan, who last worked with Rajinikanth in the 1991 film *Hum*, shared the update on the project on his personal blog.

"Another day at work comes to an end, and the end too of this project, for me... But ever the dissatisfaction of a doubt, when in reflection, whether the work done was to satisfaction and whether there shall be an opportunity to have another try to redo and maybe improve the previous. There is ever the apprehension that the Production or the

Director may not give you another chance... but as you reminisce at night, it disturbs you and you wonder... So a request has been made and there is promise that the opportunity to redo and improve shall be given... but let us see... (sic)" the 81-year-old wrote alongside a series of pictures from the film set in Mumbai. *Vettaiyan*, billed as an entertainer with a message, marks Rajinikanth's 170th feature film. It also stars Fahadh Faasil, Rana Daggubati, Ritika Singh, Manju Warrier, and Dushara Vijayan in key roles. Anirudh Ravichander is attached to compose the music for the movie, produced by A. Subaskaran of Lyca Productions.



SALAAR: PART 1 to release in Japan on July 5

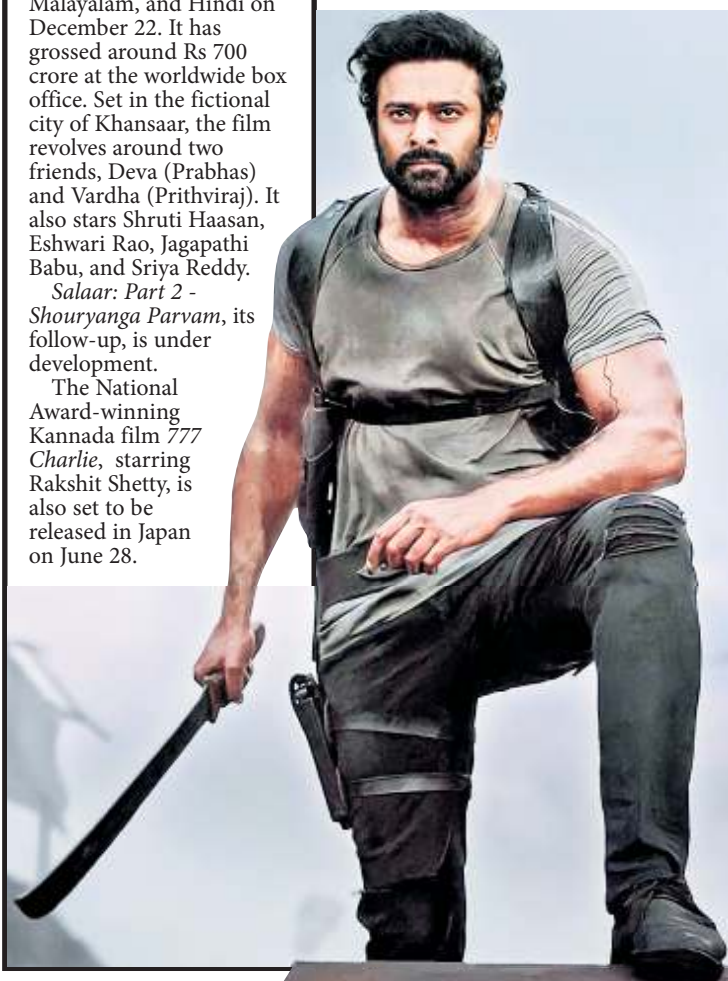
Salaar: Part 1 - Ceasefire is scheduled to hit Japanese theaters on July 5, the makers have announced.

Directed by Prashanth Neel and produced by Hombale Films, the Telugu movie stars Prabhas and Prithviraj Sukumaran in the lead. Production house Hombale Films shared details about the Japan release of *Salaar: Part 1 - Ceasefire* on its official Instagram page on Saturday.

"Indian action entertainer *Salaar* will be hitting Japanese audiences on July 5th! #Salaar #Prabhas," the banner said in the post.

Besides Telugu, *Salaar: Part 1 - Ceasefire* was also released in Kannada, Tamil, Malayalam, and Hindi on December 22. It has grossed around Rs 700 crore at the worldwide box office. Set in the fictional city of Khansaar, the film revolves around two friends, Deva (Prabhas) and Vardha (Prithviraj). It also stars Shruti Haasan, Eshwari Rao, Jagapathi Babu, and Sriya Reddy.

Salaar: Part 2 - Shouryanga Parvam, its follow-up, is under development. The National Award-winning Kannada film *777 Charlie*, starring Rakshit Shetty, is also set to be released in Japan on June 28.



INDIAN 2 RELEASE STANDS POSTPONED

The eagerly awaited release of *Indian 2* starring the legendary Kamal Haasan, is set to ignite cinema screens with anticipation and excitement. Initially speculated to hit theaters in June, recent reports indicate a slight shift in plans, with sources now suggesting a July release.

While an official announcement is yet to be made, enthusiasts eagerly await confirmation from the makers regarding the revised release date. With expectations running high, fans are bracing themselves for an immersive cinematic experience.

Behind the scenes, the film's production team is diligently working towards completion, with one song sequence remaining to be shot. Once this final piece falls into place, anticipation is expected to skyrocket as promotional activities roll out one by one.

As the countdown begins for the release of *Indian 2*, cinephiles across the nation are poised on the edge of their seats, eagerly awaiting further updates and the official announcement of the film's much-anticipated premiere date.



Taapsee eyes two more releases this year

After *Dunki*, Taapsee Pannu is all set to grace the silver screen with not one but two exciting releases in 2024. Following the success and critical acclaim of *Hasene Dhiruba*, audiences are eagerly anticipating her upcoming ventures, *Phir Aayi Hasene Dhiruba* and *Khel Khel Mein*, each promising a unique cinematic experience.

In *Phir Aayi Hasene Dhiruba*, Taapsee reunites with Vikrant Massey in the much-anticipated sequel to the gripping thriller. The first installment left viewers spellbound with its intriguing plot and stellar performances, setting high expectations for its sequel. With Taapsee leading the cast, the film is poised to deliver another thrilling ride filled with suspense and mystery, making it a must-watch for fans of the genre.

Adding to the excitement is *Khel Khel Mein*, an ensemble film featuring Taapsee alongside industry veterans Akshay Kumar, Fardes Khan, and Vaani Kapoor. Scheduled for release around Akshay Kumar's birthday on September 6, the film has already begun generating buzz among fans. Promising a delightful blend of entertainment and intrigue, *Khel Khel Mein* showcases Taapsee's versatility as an actor, further solidifying her reputation as one of Bollywood's most talented performers.

Following her recent success in *Dunki*, Taapsee continues to challenge herself with diverse roles across genres. While *Phir Aayi Hasene Dhiruba* keeps audiences on the edge of their seats with its gripping narrative, *Khel Khel Mein* offers a refreshing take on comedy and drama, showcasing Taapsee's prolific range as a performer. With these two exciting projects on the horizon, Taapsee is poised to entertain audiences once again with her exceptional talent and unwavering dedication to her craft.

CAPTURED IN A SWEET MOMENT:

Newly-wed Mega Prince Varun Tej and Lavanya Tripathi shared an adorable gaze during their recent vacation.

