



COMMUNIQUE

CONCERN, COMPASSION, CONSCIENCE

VOLUME - 15

ISSUE - 01

ST. JOSEPH'S UNIVERSITY

FEBRUARY 2023

Rs. 10

Realigning fast fashion with sustainable goals

Priyanka Gond

Forecasts for 2023 indicate that the fashion industry will have a challenging year as economic pressure increases globally. Businesses cannot afford to let their guard down as customers tighten their spending as the cost of living rises, inflation puts a strain on brands, and consumer concern over issues like sustainability, inclusion, fair pay, and working conditions has increased. To maintain a positive trend in 2023, businesses must ensure that they are acting in the interest of all.

Despite cotton being recyclable, less than 1% of cotton materials were recycled in 2020. The Ellen MacArthur Foundation estimates that the fashion industry generates 40 million tonnes of textile waste yearly, much of it wasteful. Fast fashion also has a human cost. Ac-



Upscaling scale-up fashion

Forbes

According to UNEP (2018) and WRI (2019), textile workers, particularly women, in developing countries are frequently paid pitifully and compelled to work long hours in abhorrent conditions. These conditions infringe on human rights too.

When textile waste is thrown, it comprises fragments of many types of fabric, natural

colours, chemical toxins, and machine oil, which will have terrible effects on the environment. Ruchika Bagri, an Indian fashion designer for Raj Couture, laments the presence of allergens in these substances, which can be fatal to some.

UNEP 2018 reports that the fashion industry is responsible for 8–10% of humanity's carbon

emissions, more than all international flights and maritime shipping combined. According to the Ellen MacArthur Foundation, if the fashion industry maintains its coursework, the carbon budget might increase to 26% by the year 2050.

People should wear sustainable apparel to stop these disasters. "Don't compromise for sustainability and shop from locally based brands rather than from fast fashion brands," advises So-

ham Seal, Indian fashion designer of GenerationGap. There are many environmentally friendly dyeing techniques, including EcoDyeing, stencil printing, and wood printing. Bagri recommends we "go back to the 70s".

Consumers can reuse their clothing by, for example, painting a worn-out pair of jeans with acrylic paint, advises Seal. Meanwhile, Bagri warns against purchasing embellished clothing and clothing with numerous colours.



Sustainable clothing solutions

OlgaKriger

'Aiming Down Sight' at conquering eSports

Srijit Ray

The gaming and eSports community of India was overjoyed as the government considered eSports an official sport on December 23, 2022. This marked a life-changing moment for all aspiring eSports players, as they now earnestly consider a full-time job as a professional eSports athlete.

India witnessed a boom in the eSports industry during the hard times of the pandemic. Restricted to indoors the youth explored new fields, and one such important arena was eSports. Mostly, gaming was done as a leisure and recre-

ational activity, but it soon led to a lot more than that.

Soham Nath, an aspiring eSports player, said there are plenty of upsides to being a professional gamer. It teaches teamwork, improves critical thinking and problem-solving ideas, improves reflexes and keeps your brain active at all times. Exercising regularly helps in improving performance as well. He plans on pursuing gaming as a side job as the notion of eSports is still budding. It is still not accepted in Indian society and young players receive hate and discouragement that demotivates them from going forward confidently with eSports. He has played various tournaments

both on mobile and PC but is unsure how to convert that to a full-time prospect. He points out that many young players will emerge now that eSports is officially considered a sporting event. India has the largest audience for gaming and ranks under 50 among the top eSporting countries in the world.

"India has the potential to dominate eSports globally as it has a lot of potential gamers who are now certain about their decisions regarding gaming as it is now officially recognised as a sport. A lot of hidden talents can come up and let their potential rule globally in the field of eSports," he says.

He points out that PUBG Mo-



Representational Image

BESTCASINOSITES.NET

bile was the turning point of the gaming industry. The PC counterpart of the game involves high-end gaming rigs and consoles, but the mobile version can be played on low-end phones and attracted a lot of young enthusiasts. Pointing out the craze over mobile gaming, he says, "In India, PC Gaming is not that popular, but Mobile Gaming surely is. In PC Gaming, the competition is much more difficult than gaming on mobile. Aiming in PC games is more difficult and has to be precise, the flexibility of movements or any other kind of doable actions are greater in a larger platform such as PC or consoles, as compared to a smaller platform such as mobiles."

Talking about his favourite games, he said, "I used to play

PUBG MOBILE during the lockdown. Currently, on mobile, I play Apex Legends Mobile & Call of Duty Mobile for competitive plays and Clash of Clans for fun. On PC, I play Valorant for competitive play and Fortnite, Overwatch 2 & Grand Theft Auto V for fun."

The money and fame involved in this industry made it popular among the youth. To reach the top, one needs to put in continuous hours of hard grind and practising game-relevant drills, and it is not as easy as it may sound. Despite these challenges, the fruits of hard work are immense. One can earn not only by winning tournaments but also by creating content on streaming platforms like YouTube.



COD WARZONE

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PlayerUnknown's Battlegrounds - mobile version

Wallpaper Flare

DREAMZ

Ladies P.G. Quality Service And Comfort Stay
Contact No: 9980454590 / 9886677422

Sword of Damocles over the 'Land of Mountains'

Ashish Bhandarkar

Nepal has always been a natural buffer between India and China because of its strategic geographical position on the southern slopes of the Himalayas. It has also fostered an age-old tug-of-war between the two giants for establishing a sphere of influence in the region. Nepal is a landlocked nation in South Asia with a population of 30 million and a GDP of 39.03 billion dollars as of 2022. The fundamental question here is, why does Nepal hold such a prominent tactical position in India's and China's foreign policy? The answer lies in the roller coaster of changing political dynamics the country has witnessed in its modern history.

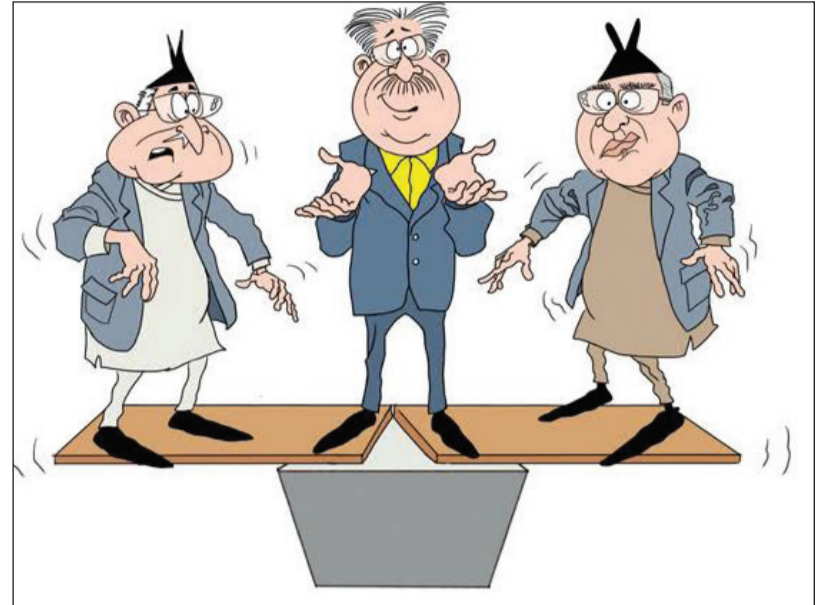
Considered to be the founder of modern Nepal, King Prithvi Narayan Shah from the Gorkha Dynasty amalgamated the petty kingdoms into a nation by declaring war against them in 1743; he unified the region under his rule in 1769. Realising the rise of European powers in the Indian subcontinent, he banned the entry of Christian missionaries to Nepal, successfully keeping it in isolation for a brief period, but eventually became a British protectorate in 1815. Prithvi Narayan Shah famously referred to Nepal as a "sweet potato between two boulders", referring to its colossal neighbours India and China. The Shah family ruled Nepal up until 2006.



The founder of modern Nepal, King Prithvi Narayan Shah Wikimedia Commons

sembly elections were held the same year. Bishweshwar Prasad Koirala of The Nepali Congress Party emerged victorious, forming the first democratic government in Nepal. In a drastic turn in 1960, King Mahendra dissolved the parliament and banned all

Maoist resistance brewing in the country with the current Prime Minister Pushpa Kamal Dahal, popularly known as 'Prachanda' leading the movement. In 1996, Prachanda ignited a decade-long civil war against the Nepalese Royal Government. The war



Dwindling Dynamics

Nepali Times

ist-center) became the contenders for power in Nepal. The Maoist and the Marxist - Leninists had rivalry due to ideological differences, whereas Prachanda and Deuba had bitter past exchanges with several attempts from both parties to assassinate each other. The Nepali political parties have always struggled to win the majority making the coalition government a trend in Nepali politics.

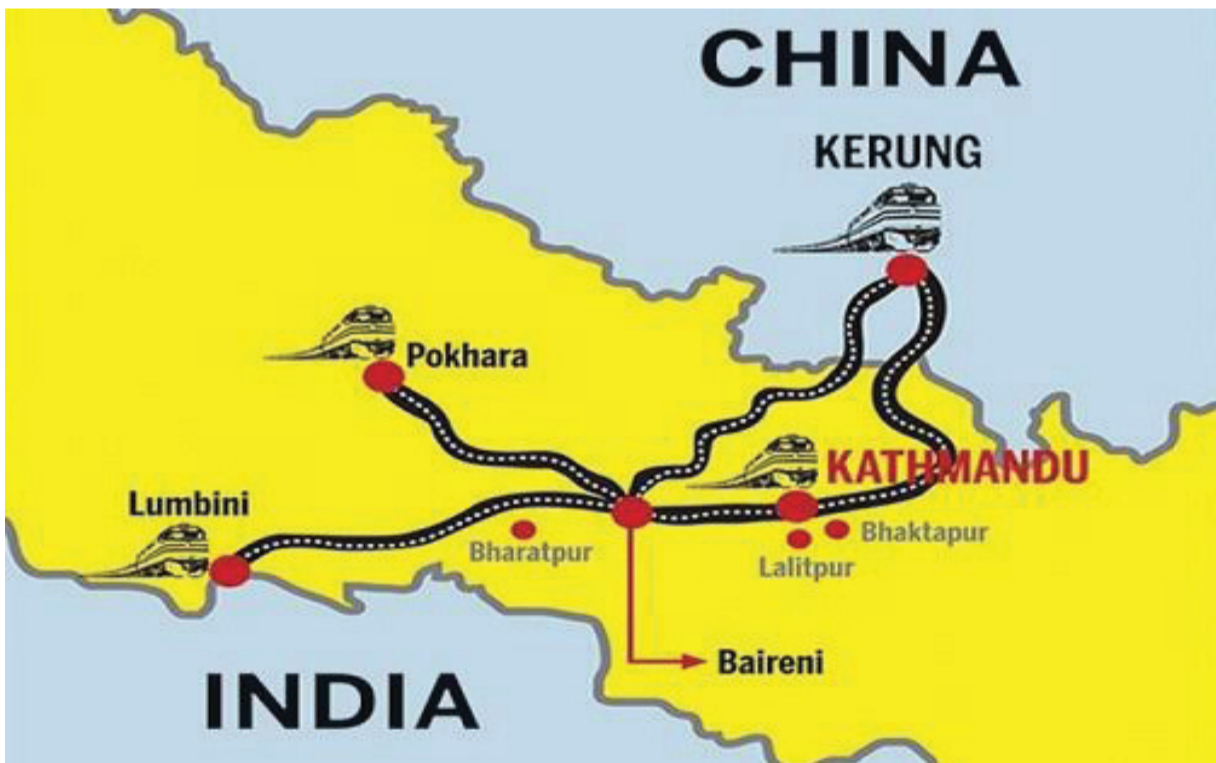
The November 2022 election in Nepal was a surprise for the world when Prachanda and KP Sharma Oli formed an agreement to govern Nepal for two and a half years on a rotational basis. This unlikely alliance of rivals has sparked debates over the future political turmoil Nepal might fall into. "The only ideological similarity shared by the two is their leaning towards China, in which the National Congress is perceived as pro-India. It will be interesting to see the future developments in Nepali politics," experts opine.

The Financial Action Task Force (FATF) visited Nepal on December 16 2022, right after the swearing-in of Prachanda as prime minister. They released a statement, threatening the country to be placed under the grey list for irregularities in legislation in money laundering and terror financing, demanding a detailed explanation on the issue by April 2023. According to the Kathmandu Post, 15 laws in the Nepali constitution need to be amended to meet the FATF standards.

The consequences of greylisting the economy have already been witnessed in the case of Pakistan which lost 38 billion in

2018-19, bringing the economy to its knees. For Nepal's already crumbling economy, this will be a huge blow as it is dependent on foreign aid, remittances and imports for its survival. Also, unlike Pakistan, Nepal doesn't have frequent lenders like Saudi Arabia and UAE to bail them out. This financial isolation of Nepal is a cause of concern for India as Nepal will be rendered vulnerable to the Chinese debt trap. A China-friendly Nepal situation will eventually manifest into a grave security threat for India.

Another major concern for India is China's deliberate moves after Prachanda's ascendancy to sign multiple infrastructure deals. Immediately after the elections, China lifted the blockade of three trade checkpoints on the Sino-Nepal border which were sealed for 35 months due to the Covid-19 pandemic, the most prominent deal being the second phase of China's Belt and Road Initiative (BRI). It is a cross-border railway line linking the Nepali cities of Pokhara and Lumbini to Southern China. Nepal is a landlocked country restricted by the Himalayan range in the North; India has been the only access to ports for Nepal. This project will offer an alternative route for trade, reducing the dependency of Nepal on India. This project was kept on hold by the previous Deuba government as the project is estimated to cost 8 billion, posing a major burden on its economy. The major concern for India is the increasing presence of China at its doorstep and the decreasing dependency of Nepal on India.



An overview of China's Belt and Road Initiative (BRI Project)

Northeast now

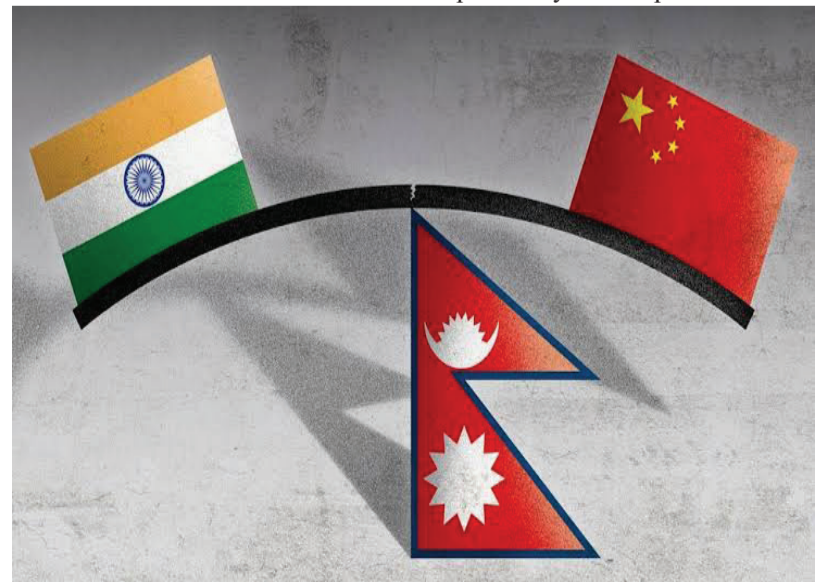
Vikas Yadav (name changed), a commandant in the Indian army, credited the second quantum shift in the history of Nepal to Jung Bahadur Rana, who became the Prime Minister of Nepal in 1846 and consolidated absolute power in his hands, making the Shah rulers mere figureheads. He was responsible for the first bureaucratic and judicial reforms in the country. He initiated a hereditary rule of Ranas as prime minister of Nepal until a democratic movement in 1951 reinstated King Tribhuvan Shah as the head of the state. His son King Mahendra Shah implemented the first constitution of Nepal in 1959, and the first national as-

active political parties declaring the country an absolute monarchy and implementing an oppressive panchayat system. Nepal's current political turmoil can be traced back to these events.

In the latter half of the 20th century, the country witnessed a long-standing resistance movement against the monarchy, compelling King Birendra Shah to introduce constitutional reforms and establish a multi-party constitutional monarchy in 1990. In May 1991, Nepal held its second parliamentary elections making Girija Prasad Koirala the second democratically elected Prime Minister of Nepal. Amidst these radical changes, there was a

officially ended in 2006 when King Gyanendra relinquished his power making Nepal, a federal democratic republic. A comprehensive peace accord was signed by then Prime Minister Girija Prasad Koirala and Maoist leader Prachanda. This period is considered a dark period in Nepal as it resulted in 17,000 casualties, and several war crimes and crimes against humanity.

The new republic saw the emergence of three political factions. Sher Bahadur Deuba of the Nepali Congress, KP Sharma Oli of the Communist Party of Nepal (Unified Marxist-Leninist) and Pushpa Kamal Dahal of the Communist Party of Nepal (Mao-



'A sweet potato between the juggernauts'

Chanakya Forum

Serving equality with 'pride'

Anuja Jose

The time is 03:15 pm, 11th January. Walking into the premises of WeWork Galaxy on Residency Road, a bright yellow food truck stands out next to the towering building. Positivity and mouth-watering aroma waft from the truck as I walk closer, the words 'PRIDE CAFE' painted proud and loud. A warm, welcoming smile is thrown my way by an employee who rushes to greet me. "Welcome to Pride Cafe!". As I look around the small yet attractive establishment, hope for the LGBTQIA+ community rekindles in me. Yet another day in the fight for equality.

Bengaluru has a new notch on its belt, one among its long list of LGBTQIA+ support initiatives. Launched on January 9, 2023, the drive to start Pride Cafe was borne by the need to bring around financial independence within the community on a workplace level.

"The idea was to create a sustainable business for the LGBTQIA+ community, where they own the project and run it by themselves," says Rekha G, the project leader of Pride Cafe. She opined that placing them in occupations where they are equal to the cisgender population is important as there is a huge imbalance of power. Food brings people together; a project involving the food industry that could help them sustain as well as bridge the separation.

This initiative is led by Solidarity Foundation, an NGO based in India supporting sex workers and gender and sexual minorities. Shubha Chako, the executive director, played a monumental role in getting this

innovative project started. "Solidarity Foundation is our baby," Rekha says, with a touch of pride in her voice. The project's collaborators include WeWork Galaxy as the location partner, the CSR partner Amadeus, and Agape Hospitality Consultants.

Currently, there is one functioning truck, which serves breakfast, lunch, beverages and snacks from 9 am to 6 pm. "The response has been great so far and people love the food," she says, with a grin on her face. "It has been a difficult process, reaching here, but it looks very encouraging so far," she added.

I catch up with an employee, Sasha, who is from the LGBTQIA+ community. With a kind smile and a cafe badge adorned on her uniform, she talks about her experience working for the community to be seen and heard.

The idea came forth around two years ago with "a lot of running around and calling people up", Sasha recalls the attempts of getting the initiative started until it came to fruition. This is a new beginning for the Solidarity Foundation. Being involved in this was a very exciting prospect for Sasha. Having completed her Bachelor's in Hotel Management she felt elated that she could help the community folks.

She emphasises that this program isn't just about a source of income but it is about the empowerment of the community that is misunderstood; to live a normal life, unafraid and proud of who they are. Being a trans person, she considers herself very lucky to have had her parents' support



to express herself as who she truly is. Ours is a society that looks down on the trans community. She expressed her concern about how many of them don't get a chance to feel secure since most parents tend to disown them.

When asked about how she wanted the public to view this initiative, she says, "I wish everyone looks at this with an open mind." She explained that a lot of precautions had been taken to safeguard the identity of the employees as only some of them were out. "Everyone is equal and deserves respect." Humility and acknowledging everyone as one, she felt would help debunk the stereotypes associated with the community.

Awareness is a huge part of who we are in society today. Dialogue at a very egalitarian level is long overdue. Rekha, confident about this project, says, "It is high time you start talking and accepting all these difficult conversations which have been put into the background. It is very easy to behave like you're unaware; 'I'm not aware of this, I don't have anybody around me like this.'"

There is a giant leap to be made ahead to carve out an equal space and in this corner of Bengaluru, "food is helping us reach there."



The Pride Cafe food truck

Restaurant India



Vihaan J Muralidharan

Special Arrangement

“

I did not fit into the stigma of what femininity should be and how a girl should behave.

Putting pride over prejudice

Anuja Jose

Vihaan J Muralidharan is a 21-year-old student at the Tata Institute of Social Sciences (TISS) living his life as a proud transman.

Assigned female at birth, Vihaan did not fit into the gender roles and norms that society has imposed on a 'female'. "I always knew that I was different but I didn't know the terminology for it," he recalls, on being a kid who felt uncomfortable with gender-based clothes.

He moved to Kochi for high school from Tamil Nadu, where he was born and brought up. Kochi gave him a lot more exposure to the community, where he researched and accepted himself for who he was. "In a society like ours, it is considered taboo. We grow up making fun of the community, always ridiculing them." He felt like accepting himself was more difficult for him than telling others.

Through the years, he has slowly gone through the process of transformation using hormone therapy at a renowned hospital in Kochi. He talks about bad experiences he had to deal with along the way. "There were people who thought they could have an opinion or a say in my life." With the support of his family and friends throughout his journey, he feels a lot more confident about himself.

His life has altered significantly in a positive way: From discovering he couldn't live with his previous identity any longer to feeling at ease with the changed self. Though outwards, he looks masculine, has facial hair and a hoarse voice, he says in a hoarse voice, he feels that gender dysphoria is something that never really goes away. Vihaan commented on the commercialisation of the LGBTQIA+ community, visibly during Pride month. He resented the double standards of society, yearning for a meaningful upliftment.



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A legacy of cultural diversity

Aileen Raju

A culturally diverse state with a combination of several religions, customs, and languages, Kerala might be portrayed as a chain assembled from coloured beads, with the Malayalam language serving as the thread that connects the beads. Its cultural legacy dates back millennia.

A course has been established by the fusion of indigenous art forms, language, literature, architectural style, music, festivals, cuisines, archaeological sites, heritage centres, and so on. Kerala's culture is a mixture of Aryan and Dravidian civilisations that have ripened and intermingled through the ages, with influences from other parts of India and abroad.

People in Kerala have been involved in the sphere of art and culture for many years, preserving its legacy and innate aesthetic qualities. However, most individuals were locked in homes throughout

the pandemic. But this year's literary and cultural gatherings, on the other hand, seek to emphasise each district's area speciality, said Ajai P Mangattu, writer and journalist. Literature is a cultural activity that fosters an inclusive culture drawing people together, he opined.

Kerala's natural beauty inspired its indigenous population to develop unique rites and traditions which were profoundly entwined with the ecological idyll that wraps the state. Spiritual and artistic traditions were immensely inspired by the enthralling scenery that surrounded them, and they were further influenced by traders and travellers from all over the world.

Arts, literature and tradition have helped preserve the culture and legacy of Kerala and Keralites have always cherished their culture and old rituals hence will go to a great extent to preserve them.



A Biennale is so much more than a collection of random art collisions. The theme of biennale stems from an unflinching belief in the strength of story as strategy, the revolutionary force of ink, and the transformative fire of satire. The Kochi-Muziris Biennale aims to evoke the ancient cosmopolitan history of Kochi and its fabled progenitor: The ancient port of Muziris.

The Kochi-Muziris Biennale is India's first international contemporary art festival that began over a decade ago. The Department of Cultural Affairs of the then Kerala government invited two artists, Riyas Komu and Bose Krishnamachari, to help arrange a worldwide forum for art in India. It created a platform for the exhibition and de-

bate of new Indian and worldwide aesthetics and art experiences. It also introduced contemporary international visual art theory and practices in India that fostered dialogue among artists, curators, and the general public.

"Not every artist in the world gets a gallery to display their work. We don't go looking into his or her biography, background, or how fa-

mous he or she is as an artist. What counts for the biennale is that he is an artist," said Bose Krishnamachari, founding member and President of Kochi Biennale Foundation.

The Biennale seeks to create a new lexicon of cosmopolitanism and modernity rooted in the life and daily experience of this ancient commercial port, which has been a melting pot of many communal identities for more than six centuries. Kochi, the cultural hotspot of Kerala, is one of the few places in India where pre-colonial traditions of the cultural plurality is still alive. These traditions predate the ideals of multiculturalism, and globalisation, that emerged after the Enlightenment.

Indian artworks at the Biennale are more blended into the culture and customs of Kerala. Tribal-based art, such as Theyyam, nature-related performances, and other kinds of Indian art was featured. It was primarily concerned with the general issues in Indian society.

This year's Biennale is unique; most contemporary art and installations were left to the public to interpret and bring forth their creative perspectives. Their objective is to convey modern international visual art philosophy, reassembling a lost cultural legacy via conversation between artists, curators, and the general public.

This Biennale has unquestionably contributed to the evolution of the cultural and artistic aspects of Kochi. It provides a much-needed platform for analysing the change in cultural heritage and abundance of art forms that have long been a part of Kochi offering a glimpse of the society.

Kochi-Muziris Biennale: A cultural reset

Aileen Raju

Where words meet waves

Aileen Raju

The fresh experiences and ideas of each generation have layered themselves over the previous writings, creating a discernible timeline in literature. The old traditions live on in Malayalam manuscripts as well as verbally in performing arts like Koodiyattam, Kathakali and Ottan Thullal. Regional folk songs and stories as well as translations from other languages have made their

Authors held interviews on the beach, and people spoke about their favourite books. Kozhikode beach is a reminder of Kerala's historical importance as a spice trading centre and possessed all of the attractions for staging a cultural event.

"The distinction between art and artist is determined by the context of a given piece. We typically love a person's artwork or what is shown to our eyes rather than knowing who made the artwork," said Ajai P Man-



A panel discussion at Kerala Literature Festival

@keralalifest

way into written literature.

The Kerala Literature Festival, one of the greatest cultural events in the nation and India's second-largest literature festival, celebrated its 6th edition in the Kozhikode region, honouring words, ideas, and the coming together of a worldwide community. This created and enabled space for debates with the best intellectual minds on literature and all other pertinent themes of contemporary significance for the benefit of a civilised and educated society.

This year's festival was unlike any other, with toes in the sand, the breezy beach, and a literary feel.

gattu, writer and journalist. It is not always essential to acknowledge the presence of an artist, but there may be times when we are required to do so, he added. A writer's work may or may not be related to their personality, therefore, whether the reader likes or dislikes the author's works is up to the reader. There may be times when an audience like an artist for reasons other than their artwork.

Each of these festivals has brought so much to the table for those who love to explore and ponder over literary culture and can also be seen as an extension of the state's intellectual and academic integrity.



The visionaries behind the art

@kochibiennale



One of the art galleries at Biennale

@kochibiennale



The CM of Kerala inaugurating KLF

@keralalifest

Feast of the Epiphany

A historical perspective

Jenett Jose

The festival season does not always end with Christmas. The Pindikutthi Perunnal, sometimes known as just Pindi Perunnal, is a well-known festival in places such as Irinjalakuda and Kunnamkulam of Kerala. Most Irinjalakuda residents, regardless of caste or creed, look forward to the event for at least two or three months before the festival.

Pindi Perunnal is also known as the Epiphany Feast in the Thrissur region of Kerala. Epiphany is a historic and noteworthy feast for Christians who follow Saint Thomas. The followers of Saint Thomas celebrate Denaha as an important feast to remember the baptism of Jesus in the Jordan River.

"Pindi Perunnal celebrations first became famous after Portuguese missionaries arrived in India, primarily with the commemoration of St. Sebastian's Pindi Perunnal. With the arrival of the Portuguese, people began to show devotion to St. Sebastian," said Father Dr Sinto Chittilappilly, professor of Church History, at St Joseph Pontifical Seminary, Aluva.

The spread of smallpox and chickenpox in those times killed a large number of people. Devotion to St. Sebastian was believed to prevent the diseases. The devotion towards the saint spread like wildfire in Kerala, where many believed that his prayers offered the best protection from the plague. The saint's fervour expanded to other countries and towns.

"There was a period when there were no means to treat or stop the widespread diseases, such as smallpox and chickenpox, and people were buried alive. People then began to pray to St. Sebastian with a strong sense of faith. This is the reason why Saint Sebastian's Feast is always the most popular celebration," he added.

Pindi Perunnal is primarily prevalent in northern regions of Kerala like the Thrissur district. In front of homes, an exceptionally decorated plantain trunk is placed and numerous paper torches or flags in various colours are fastened to it. The family walk around singing the Syriac hymn 'El Paiya', which means 'God is light', the night before the Denaha festival. During this period, unique dishes are prepared, particularly ones with meat. Some parishes hold contests to determine whose plantain is best adorned. Many churches have special prayers.

During the festival days, St. Sebastian's statue is brought out for public adoration. The dazzling display of fireworks, the music of various band groups, beaded decorative umbrellas, and various types of crosses made of gold, silver, bronze, wood, and so on all contribute to the procession, which is a popular event.

On Saturday morning, the primary celebrations begin. Drummings that go through Irinjalakuda's main streets signal the festival's beginning. Each family goes through the 'Sacred Arrow' rituals, which begin on Saturday. To remember the arrows that penetrated Saint Sebastian's body, there is a symbol known as the 'Sacred Arrow'. This is brought to each home so that the residents can venerate it and make offerings. A large number of fireworks accompany the Sacred Arrow as it is carried to the painted chariots. This occurs on Monday and Saturday.

The main festival is on Sunday. The special mass for the feast is normally presided over by the diocese of Irinjalakuda. In the evening, everyone wearing a new attire joins the parade. Families and friends gather from all over to participate in the celebrations. It's a real experience that can only be had; it cannot be described. A sizable fire spectacle that is well-known throughout Kerala follows the parade.



A fusion of fire and lights

Darsan Media Irinjalakuda

Religion refined into culture

Celebrating festivals with people of different cultures helps spread happiness. Making memories with the near and dear ones during the festivals serves as a source of enjoyment. Perunnal has always been a celebration of culture. All kinds of religious folks gather together and celebrate. Since the early days, it has always been that way.

Processions, fireworks and colourful cultural events that last for three days serve as symbols of Irinjalakuda Pindi Perunnal. These occasions are legendary for adding their unique cultural flavour across the globe.

Irinjalakuda includes members of all communities and they all participate and celebrate perunnal together. There are some liturgical practices followed in processions and the holy mass during the days. The area and streets will be crowded with vendors selling a variety of items throughout the festival's week-long run to attract shoppers.

The main reason why so many people are devoted to St. Sebastian is that in the early days when smallpox was widespread, devotion to the saint was thought to be the only preventive and curative remedy.

"The festival is for people. People have always been welcomed to church since the beginning. The most important part that people from all religious backgrounds, not just Christians, engage actively throughout those three days is the most significant factor in what marks Perunnal celebrations as unique," said Father Dr Rejoy Pazhayatil, Director of VidyaJyoti, Irinjalakuda. This is why it is considered to be a celebration of peace and unity, which heightens the charm of Kerala's celebrations.

"A Hindu custom known as 'Mudiyattam' (a tribal folk dance) is performed at the church feast of Saint Sebastian in the Thazhekad Church of the Irinjalakuda Diocese," he added.



'Valiyankadi Ambu' celebration

Facebook



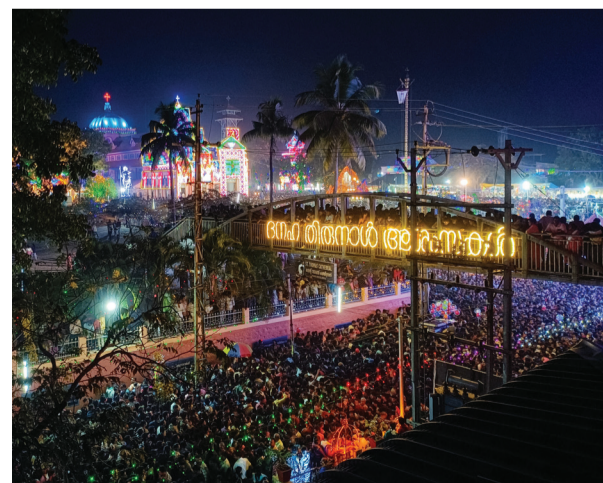
Perunnal procession gathering in front of the church

Darsan Media Irinjalakuda



Irinjalakuda church on the day of the Feast

Jenett Jose



A crowd gathered in Irinjalakuda

Jenett Jose

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All lives matter: Debunking a systematic practice

Sowmya A

Every year a large number of animals are killed for human consumption, mistreated and abused. While people are aware of the cruelty meted out at them while they are turned to consumption-worthy products such as meat, dairy and honey, they aren't aware of the presence of animal products and by-products in daily use products like makeup, skin-care, hair-care,

clothing and other accessories.

Many advocate shifting towards veganism will put an end to this violence. The rising awareness and interest of people towards veganism has resulted in the introduction of vegan restaurants and products related to makeup, skincare, clothing and accessories without animal content. Many animal welfare activists and lifestyle influencers have also started to preach the benefits of veganism to human beings through social

media platforms like Instagram.

Nila Arun (name changed), who has been on Instagram since 2021 as an anonymous beauty influencer, says, "Most of the beauty brand products contain ingredients like collagen, beeswax, squalene, elastin, keratin, carmine, lanolin, etc, that are extracted from animals." As these ingredients are primarily used in almost all the beauty products like serums, lipsticks, lip balms, moisturisers, nail and hair-care products, a large number of animals



The beeswax extracted from the beehives

Organic Gardener



Squalene, primarily extracted from sharks is used in skincare products

WUSA9

are abused and killed, she says.

Expressing that the situation is gradually changing for the better, Nila says that Indian beauty brands like Plum Goodness, FAE beauty, Dr Sheths, Simply Nam and Juicy Chemistry have taken the beauty industry to the next level by acting as vegan beauty brands. "These brands also broke the myth that vegan beauty products don't work really well as they contain synthetic alternatives," she says.

Beauty tools such as makeup brushes are also made from animal hair. Brands like MARS cosmetics, Praush beauty, and Simply Nam have makeup brushes that are made from synthetic hair. Many beauty brands have also stopped testing their products on animals as well. "It is good to see when beauty brands take such initiatives," she expresses.

Thamarai Rangasamy, an

ethical vegan and animal activist, says that it is sad how we are exploiting animals for our own use. Besides killing animals for our food, we are killing them for luxury and lifestyle purposes. Marine animals are killed for skin care ingredients like collagen and squalene. A large number of elephants are killed and smuggled for their tusks. Sheep, cows and pigs are killed for leather, which is used for accessories such as wallets, handbags, and backpacks, she laments.

Despite having alternatives such as synthetic leather, some people still choose to buy leather that is made out of animals. To save animals from this type of cruelty, we should boycott the products made out of animals, Thamarai continues. "Change should begin with us. Isn't it our responsibility to preserve the other species?"

An ancient way of life or a modern fiasco?

Sowmya A

When people shifted towards fitness, therapy, art, gardening and vlogging during Covid, a few transformed their eating habits by adopting vegetarianism and veganism. Although these two have existed for years, veganism witnessed a rise in followers.

Despite the growing interest in veganism among people, several factors such as nutritional value and acceptance in the household stop some from going vegan. The notion that there's no nutritional value in vegan food and being a vegan in an Indian household doesn't work is a stereotype, say those practising veganism.

Roshni Sanghvi, a plant-based nutritionist and body transformation specialist, said, "A vegan diet is the only diet that has all essential nutrients." Minerals and vitamins are the essential nutrients that cannot be produced by the body; instead, those nutrients come from the plant kingdom and not the animal kingdom, she explained.

Sanghvi said that the vegan diet from an Indian perspective is the *roti, sabzi* and *dal chawal*. As plants are more economically feasible than animals, it is the cheapest diet and is accessible to everyone. Using plant-based proteins to build muscle is much healthier than using animal-based proteins since the former



The staple meal of an average Indian

Boldsky.com

is not carcinogenic like the latter. When we are on a plant-based diet, we are less susceptible to things like hormonal fluctuations and insulin resistance which is a long-term health issue.

Samaran Thamarai, animal activist and founder of LIFE (Liberation and Independence For Earthlings), said, "Eighty per cent of what we eat in a South Indian household is vegan by default." The food consumed can be made vegan just by eliminating a few ingredients like ghee. He doesn't want to go in for a fancy label 'vegan', he said. Considering himself to be kind to

animals, it didn't make sense for him to eat an animal while helping others. This made him go vegan, he explained.

Being the largest group of nutritional experts on the planet, The Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics has concluded that a plant-based diet is nutritionally adequate for all stages of human life. "As far as I know, Vitamin B12 is the only nutrient not naturally found in plant-based foods as well as it isn't found naturally in animal products, but it can be supplemented or fortified," Samaran said.

Poorna Porkalai, a corporate

employee, says, "Being in a vegetarian household, shifting towards veganism was the best choice." Porkalai, who went vegan in August 2020, says that Indian families treat with meat and milk primarily and often use it regularly, and that's why people who want to go vegan are unable to do it. She says that going vegan in an Indian household isn't easy as most families disapprove of veganism, believing it has fewer nutrients than meat and milk. "But I didn't face any such problems," she added.

When asked about the difficulties she's facing as a vegan, Porkalai expressed that looking at the ingredients of almost everything she gets, is a frustrating and difficult thing. "But I've gotten used to it," she added. Pointing out the variety that vegans have now compared to many years back, she says that a vegan diet is very much extensive for all people. Porkalai reveals that social media is the main reason for the popularity of veganism, and vegans, including her, are very proud of it. "The vegan community is growing all over the world," she expressed.

Veganuary, a month-long campaign by the Vegan Society, UK, encourages people to explore veganism in January by encouraging people to be vegan for 31 days. The Vegan Society revealed that this year more than 629,000 people worldwide signed up to try vegan food, and more

than 800 new vegan products were introduced as a part of Veganuary.

Priya Dharshini, a 21-year-old student from Chennai, said that it's good to see people's concern towards the environment and climate change, but a lot of vegan people are spreading hatred against people who eat meat. "I could see a lot of people abusing food influencers who eat meat by commenting on their social media posts like 'eating dead bodies of animals.' They don't understand that they are abusing humans by asking fellow people not to abuse animals. They often forget that there's something called preference."

It takes nothing away from a human to be kind to an animal

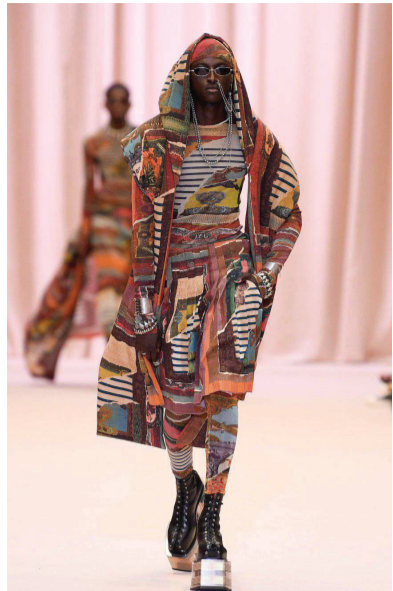
Joaquin Phoenix

Top 10 trends to take the fashion world by storm

Priyanka Gond

Winter to spring transition is a fascinating time, especially for aesthetics in fashion; out with the bulky jackets, knits, and boots and in with the lighter layers, dresses, and a feeling of liberation, as fashion movements develop from catwalks, social media, and the countless influencers that transform our outfits.

The Golden Globe Awards on January 10 finally featured some global icons like Taylor Swift, Lady Gaga, and Rihanna, who all intend to elevate the standards in fashion this year. There is a lot to anticipate in terms of 2023 trends.



Paris Winter Show 2022 Jean Paul Gaultier

Prints

“From our fave Spongebob characters to out-of-this-world prints, fashion is anything but boring thanks to these kitsch yet cool patterns and pieces,” said GCDS. “Expect exotic fruits, flowers, leopard print, zebra print, and snake print, not to mention geometric or abstract patterns, XXL logos, cartoons, and futuristic prints, spanning the real and the virtual,” adds Seal. There will be something for absolutely every taste. This trend was spotted on the catwalks of Roberto Cavalli, Gucci, Dolce & Gabbana, and Saint Laurent.



Cruelty-free fashion Vogue

involves the transformation of old fabrics and utilising them in the production of new clothing. It goes a long way to prevent wastage as materials that are no longer in use are repurposed for newer garments.



Bold and beautiful Bella Victoria

Embellishment

According to Bagri, accessorising your look with embellishments may elevate you to the next level. Sweaters with embellished buttons, heels with jewels, and jeans with diamond-like details are just some of the trends we'll see come to life.



Dawning vegan leather Alasdair McLellan

Leather

Although there are many ways to make leather, we are unaware of apple leather which uses leftover apple waste from the fruit juice and compute industry. From oversized leather jackets to leather dresses, boots, and bags—and even leather fingerless gloves, the biker chic aesthetic is on-trend.

Drape skirts

“The traditional lehengas have received a stylish update as draped skirts take over the wedding fashion industry,” suggests Bagri. It's con-



Indo-Western fusion Ridhi Mehra

temporary, fuss-free, and wouldn't interfere with your much anticipated sangeet performance. The fusion draped skirts represent a woman who is deeply rooted in heritage while yet being rebellious. No wonder fashion girls are obsessed.

IN A WORLD FULL OF PEOPLE TRYING TO FIT IN, STAND OUT WITH ETHNIC WEAR



Making a statement Lyst.com

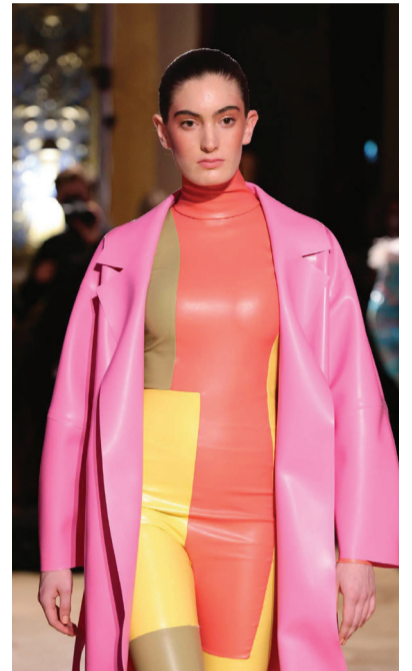
Boiler Suit

A boiler suit sounds like an easy thing to wear this year. You put on the practical one-piece, and voila, ready to go! However, it turns out that there is a science to dressing the boxy classic, and model Gigi Hadid knows all the insider secrets. Despite their more raw, mechanic-like vibe, the catwalk star has been wearing them incessantly for the past few years, always making them feel polished and fashionable.

Colour-block

For the year 2023, the an-

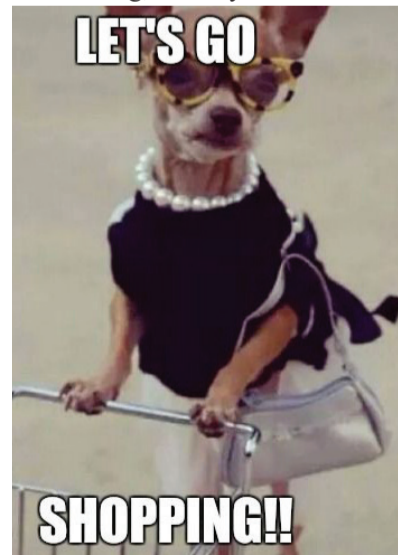
STYLE IS A WAY TO SAY WHO YOU ARE WITHOUT HAVING TO SPEAK -Rachel Zoe



A new way of blocking Lifestyle Asia

swer is colour-blocking, which isn't precisely a new thought but rather a look that always feels new and interesting. This time around, two-toned items and certain styling decisions have brought forth vibrant, saturated colour combinations in designer collections from New York, London, and Milan. Despite how far away spring 2023 seems, colour-blocking is a style that we can all attempt now, which is excellent news.

This year, there are more trends since anybody with influence can develop them. According to Seal, anyone could be fashionable as long as they can nail the correct vibe. Choose colours that go well with your skin tone. Bagri exclaims that how you carry yourself is what makes you stand out. Also, not to forget accessorising, she says.



Readers after reading this Pinterest



Paris Fall Show 2022 Off-white

Off-white

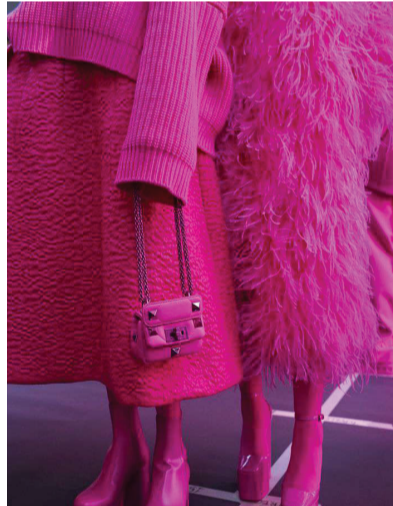
“In the memory of the late Virgil Abloh, American Fashion designer, Off-White, they are going to glorify the colour this year,” assumes Indian Fashion Designer of GenerationGap, Soham Seal. There will be an exhibition in honour of the designer and fashion polymath, who passed away last October at the age of 41 from rare cancer, much to everyone's surprise.



A new way to go to the office Vogue

Blazers

The days of wearing a blazer just to work are long gone. Because of the blazer's almost limitless adaptability, purchasing one is much more of an investment than a passing whim. “From large to cropped, blazers will continue to be a hot fashion,” predicts Seal. Bagri predicts that we can see a lot of airport looks in style this year.



In a Barbie-world Valentino

Hot Pink

“Shades of pink can make a bold statement,” says Indian fashion designer of Raj Couture, Ruchika Bagri. There'll be plenty of colours this year, especially due to the new “Barbie” movie coming out in July.

HOW MUCH PINK IS TOO MUCH PINK?

Sustainable wear

Recycling is already a major trend in the fashion industry; what is relatively new is upcycling. This

A goodbye to Pazhayidam after 16 years

Jesbin Sam Mathew

Pazhayidam Mohanan Namboothiri, the owner of the catering service 'Pazhayidam', is considered to be the king of cooking at Kalolsavam, a state youth festival in Kerala. He, who has been serving authentic delicacies throughout his long-spanning career, narrated his journey and of his brand 'Pazhayidam'. The allegations levelled against him during the recent Arts Festival have put an end to 16 years of the contract to cook for the event.

Namboothiri was accused of not serving non-vegetarian food at the Arts Festival by Dr Arunkumar, a former anchor of Twenty Four News and a lecturer in the Department of Political Science, University of Kerala. Offering only vegetarian delicacies at the Arts Festival was interpreted as promoting casteism and saffronisation. But, Namboothiri, the owner of the brand says that the menu

and taking up many exams, he could not get a white-collar job. When he was 26 years old, he started a business providing stationery to schools, colleges and hospitals as he gave up on his dream of a government job. When his business venture failed, it pushed him to the brim to take his own life.

In an attempt to give up his life, he boarded a bus at the busiest intersection. When the bus reached Kuravilangad junction, he noticed the Kalakaumudi magazine with M.T. Vasudevan Nair's cover picture at a shop which published the novel 'Randamoozham'. As Namboothiri is a great fan of the author M.T. Vasudevan Nair, he got off the bus just to read the novel. As he bought the magazine, the first chapter of the novel started with the line the sea was black. Reading the line, he felt that the black sea resembled death. He was so driven by the views of life as stated by him in the first chapter that he wondered what the next issue would be.



Pazhayidam Mohanan Namboothiri

Special Arrangement



Adding soul to recipes

@pazhyidamfoodventures

for the festival is decided by the government, and if they allow non-vegetarians, it can be served. The same team has served meat for other events. The brand Pazhayidam holds unquestionable credibility built upon quality and affordability, he said.

Born into a middle-class Namboothiri family in Kottayam, Namboothiri faced several obstacles during childhood. The fact that he started as a 'Dehanna' (the Malayalam word for cooking) is just fortuitous. When he was younger, he was not interested in becoming a chef. Nobody in his family shared his expertise in the kitchen. He wanted to pursue a white-collar job just like the people he grew up with in his 20s. Despite completing his post-graduation in Physics

Having the desire to read the next issue of the magazine, he dropped the idea of taking his life. Considering it as one of the crucial moments of his life, he regrets how foolish it is to commit suicide.

Becoming a chef or a priest were the two options left for him. Opting for the cooking profession, he joined as an assistant to Malamel Neelakandan Namboothiri, a cook whom he met at a gathering.

Namboothiri established himself as a reputed cook at the Kottayam District Arts Festival by serving delicious meals at an affordable price. Later, he was in charge of the kitchen at the District Science Fair in Kottayam. At the State Arts Festival in Ernakulam in 2006, Namboothiri oversaw

the kitchen and he eventually transformed it into 'Nala' (a popular mythological character known for his culinary skills) in the Arts festival storehouses. There are many better chefs in Kerala than him, but none receive opportunities or media exposure like him, he said. The festival has contributed immensely to his reputation as the Nala in the Storehouses. He said, while cooking, he feels stressed. Just like how students wait for their results, he waits for feedback from customers. The fame of Pazhayidam's food has even reached the Prime Minister of the country. In 2016, he served a Kerala feast to VVIPs who attended the BJP National Committee meeting in Kozhikode as guests, including Prime Minister Narendra Modi.

Despite achieving a lot of

years in the field of culinary, Kalolsavam's experience delivered a jolt to his career.

Fortunately, these controversies against him and his business did not have any impact on his loyal customers, and many continue to support him. "Food was never meant to be about caste, yet the issue seems to be exaggerated by a few people for their gains. In my opinion, serving vegetarian food is much more convenient than the hassle of preparing non-vegetarian food," says Alex Mathew, a high school teacher.

"The brand is well known for its taste, but hearing controversies about the brand is quite disappointing," said Biju Mathews, a parent who participated in the festival. He also questioned the people for injecting casteism into the minds of the younger generation through food.



The Pazhayidam team

@pazhyidamfoodventures

"It's a pity that caste, even today, has its defenders."

-B R Ambedkar

The hierarchy of caste in India, right from the Chaturvarna system, has always been a sinister ploy. But how abominable is it to have caste defenders even today, in the 21st century? How ironic it is to witness an institution named after India's first Dalit vice president being marred by alleged caste discrimination?

The KR Narayanan National Institute of Visual Science and Arts (KRNNIVSA), Kerala, has been boiling for quite some time, as the students launched a protest, demanding the resignation of the director of the institute, Shankar Mohan. Multiple accusations of discriminating against the students and staff based on caste were out in the media, which shook the state. From manipulating the reserved category seats to making the sanitation staff

lets with bare hands. He and his wife were also accused of practising open caste discrimination, as the workers said to THE CUE NEWS that they were asked their caste, asked to take bath and change their clothes before entering the house.

This ignited a spark, after which a number of them came up alleging caste discrimination and other injustice they face at the institution. This includes the denial of reservation seats to students of backward castes, food subsidies, and more. "Though there are students who are eligible for reservation, they are here on merit. This is because the institution set up an internal cut-off mark, stating that 'substandard students' will enter otherwise. By 'substandard', the director implies clear-cut casteism," said Aswin Krishna, a first-year student of the institute. "We are not saying this out of nowhere; we have got clear evidence," he said.

They raised the queries to Adoor, but it shocked them further. Not only



The protest slogans against casteism

Special Arrangement

An 'Artistic' Annihilation of Caste

Megha Mukundan

district collector passed an order to shut the institution down. As they understood that their voices were amplified enough to shake the government, they launched "the art of protest", to heighten the pressure.

"We were denied the academics as the institute was shut down, so we decided to resume our learning at the protest area," said Aswin Krishna, talking to Communique. They started organising their classes and workshops in the auditorium, which was supported by guests and celebrities who came down there to conduct classes for them. This includes the sessions of director/cinematographer Amal Neerad, and Rajeev Ravi, directors including, Jeo Baby, Kamal KM, and B Unnikrishnan, came up in solidarity with the students, which made the protest more severe.

By screening different films, conducting music concerts, and hosting live sessions of prominent personalities from the film industry, the institute turned into a place of resistance. "Adoor said students should study, not protest. But we are taught to be an artist and moreover human beings. An artist will not stay silent if injus-

tice prevails. This is our learning process and everyone who gets out of this institute will speak about this, their cinema will speak about this," Krishna said, and he sounded so firm.

Even though Shankar Mohan stated that his resignation has nothing to do with the controversies, and denied the allegations again and again, the power of a protest that shook management is a sigh of relief.

Contd. on page 10...

We are filmmakers. We will speak about this. Our cinema will speak about this.



The sanitation workers and the students of KRNNIVSA

Special Arrangement

of the institute clean the toilet of his house, the allegations stood strong. He was confident, as he was backed by the legendary filmmaker Adoor Gopalakrishnan, the chairman of the institute. "We can't breathe", read the students' placards, and Kerala, the land of literates, buried its head in shame.

On the 48th day of the protest, the director submitted his resignation letter, stating that his term had ended. A few staff, who were allegedly supporting the director, also resigned later. On the 50th day, the students called off their strike, as the state accepted all their demands. A week later, Adoor stepped down from his position.

Here is how a collective resistance of a handful of filmmakers and their art brought a nefarious system down.

The Beginning

The incident came to light in December 2022, when a group of sanitation workers of the institution raised allegations against Shankar Mohan. He was accused of making them do the domestic chores at his house, which included cleaning toi-

there was no action taken against the director, but Adoor also denied all the allegations, besides passing derogatory comments on the female workers who raised complaints. He also said that students who aim to study, won't go on strike. The authorities took strict actions against the students who were a part of the protest. Students who went on to attend the 27th International Film Festival of Kerala were personally targeted as the institute cancelled their accommodations. They also alleged the protesting students had connections with extremist groups.

The art of protest and solidarity

Of all resistances, those expressed through art are the strongest. When the students of KRNNIVSA were denied justice, they unleashed all the powers of an artist in them, to launch what they call "the art of protest". What Kerala then witnessed was the wall of solidarity that was built around them by prominent filmmakers, litterateurs, media, students and youths.

The protest started off on De-

ember 5, 2022, by boycotting classes and students restricting outsiders to enter the campus. With no measures forthcoming, they intensified their resistance by going on a hunger strike from the 20th day of the protest. Not only did the director or the chairman not respond directly to the students, but also the



The contemporary conversational band Oorali performs in solidarity

Special Arrangement

'The king is naked'

The privileged misuse the power, and it takes courage to call them out. Aloor Gopalakrishnan, the chairman of KRNNIVSA, the progressive filmmaker of his age, stubbornly backed the accused and made offensive statements; the ruling government issued an order to shut down the institution and later extended the shutdown period; Shankar Mohan, the director of a national film institute, decided that art should oppress

the oppressed; and the authorities nodded to this or stood silent. The protest calls out a whole bunch of people who have the power to do whatever they want. History should remember this struggle and bravery of the students, who were not afraid to point out that 'the king is naked'.

Reacting to the incident, the state award-winning director Jeo Baby said that this has to be resisted strongly. "I have seen discrimination in the institute with my own eyes," he narrated his experience of directing a film for the

final year students in December 2021. Though the student could have had his diploma, the institution withheld it out of a personal grudge, misinforming the student that it was Baby who was responsible for the final project. "I had a clear agreement signed about the terms and conditions and I had to file my statement against the institution in the court to support the student," he said.

In an era where we try to bring inclusivity in every walk, it is quite shameful that a set of renowned artists do the opposite. They rein-

force the concept of Dalits being 'the others' and try to make them feel the same. It is not easy for the students, the staff, or for anyone to point it out to them. Yet, they did. They refused to accept the injustice and stood up for themselves. "They are film students, they will make films, and the system will stink," Jeo Baby affirmed.

'We need to breathe'

The caste system and the systematic division that it created are firmly

rooted in our country. It is unfortunate that the caste still has its upper hand that degrades human dignity. "My birth is my fatal accident", the students quoted Rohith Vemula, a student of the University of Hyderabad who committed suicide after facing severe caste discrimination in 2016. Their hashtags #SAVEKRNNIVSA, #WECANTBREATHE are symbols of brutal casteism and the fight against it. Their movement is a metaphor that urges everyone to stand up, at least now, so that we all can breathe. Equality is not a favour, it is a right.



Above: Anti Aloor posters at IFFK
Below: An interactive session at the protest by director/screenwriter Sanju Surendran



Facebook Above: The sanitation workers addressing the protest
Below: Prominent Malayalam filmmakers in solidarity with the protesters



Marching to the beat of their own drums

Srijit Ray

Universe in a Crayon (UIC), a Kolkata-based band, started its musical journey in 2019. The aim was to produce and arrange tracks at respective home studios, a unique concept compared to traditional jam and rehearsal-based bands. Their genre is very niche and makes them one of the very few bands in the city that produce instrumental progressive metal-

core and post-rock music. The band consists of Anurup Guha Thakurta, Soumyadeep Deb, Suraj Saha, Prasenjit Ray and Rohan Chakraborty. The first three are on guitars, Ray on keyboards and Chakraborty on drums. All of them are involved in jobs as well as academics, so it is challenging for them to rehearse. Making time for band practice in itself is a big task. Anurup Guha Thakurta,

says their music is well-appreciated in the city, and it motivates them. It takes more than a couple of days to develop a song as they do original music, mostly along with a few covers. "We do covers sometimes, but it's mostly to pay tribute to our heroes who have shaped our music taste and inspired us in our respective journeys," he says.

As for the music industry in Kolkata, he mentions the revival of rock and metal music. "I would say our band is definitely doing something that hasn't been done in our city before. We are attempting to take the instrumental prog metal world into some new directions with our creativity," he says.

The first home demo of the song 'Shooting Star' was launched in April 2020 on YouTube. It was just a scratch recording mixed in an amateur way and put out into the world. It reached a huge audience the response overwhelmed



Strumming away to glory Special Arrangement



Conquering stages Special Arrangement

them. Recently, they put out their first EP 'Somewhere In Between' on YouTube. Very enthusiastically, he says, "Our most memorable gig was when we opened for Indian post-rock giant 'aswekeepsearching' at The Princeton Club." He loves playing every song they make but puts Drive on top of his list. These songs definitely leave a mark on their audience, and they

plan on making UIC really big in the country. He also says, "The ultimate goal of the band is to constantly keep pushing the creative potentials and boundaries that we have and creating music that has an impact on the people who listen to it. We also want to make sure we are always moving forward and creating something that we ourselves are moved by and love."

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Published by the Institute of Communication & Media Studies and produced by students of MA (Journalism & Mass Communication) of St. Joseph's University, P.O. Box 27094, Lalbagh Road, Bangalore - 560 027.

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