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2 CHB officials get six-month jail for trespass

Entered allottee's house sans notice

TRIBUNE NEWS SERVICE

CHANDIGARH, JULY 11

A local court has sentenced two officials of the Chandigarh Housing Board — Kailash Garg, SDE (Store) Enforcement, and Kirpal Singh, AE — to undergo six months of rigorous imprisonment for entering a house of an allottee without notice. Both officials have been held guilty of house trespass.

The court passed the order on a complainant filed by Vinod Kumar Bansal, a resident of Modern Housing Complex, Mani Majra, who had alleged that the officials visited his house on February 28, 2012, without any prior notice and threatened his wife.

Bansal stated that on the same day, he submitted a complaint with the CHB Secretary regarding the misbehaviour of the two officers and their act of forcibly entering his house. Instead of taking any action against them, the CHB Secretary issued a notice under Section 15 of the Capital of

Punjab (Development & Regulation) Act, 1952, to him, he stated.

Bansal said the accused had acted on the complaint of another resident of the complex. He alleged that officials illegally entered the house and insulted and threatened his wife.

The counsel for the complainant stated that as per the terms and conditions of the allotment, a prior notice of 24 hours should be given to the allottee for the inspection of the house.

The counsel for the officials argued that there was no criminal intention nor the same had been established by the complainant for provoking the ingredients of criminal trespass.

After hearing of the arguments, the court observed that the complainant proved the ingredients of Section 448 (house trespass) of the IPC against the accused Kailash Garg and Kirpal Singh beyond reasonable doubt. Hence, the accused were held guilty under Section 448 of the IPC and sentenced to undergo RI of six months each.

Court rejects untraced report by police, orders further probe

Issues direction in fraud case against ex-woman cop of Punjab

RAMKRISHAN UPADHYAY
TRIBUNE NEWS SERVICE

CHANDIGARH, JULY 11

A Chandigarh court has rejected an untraced report filed by the Chandigarh Police in a cheating case registered against former IPS woman officer of Punjab and some others six years back.

The UT police had booked former Assistant Inspector General (AIG) of police Amrit Brar in 2018 on a complaint filed by a retired IAS officer Sukhdeep Kaur Brar. Sukhdeep is a retired IAS officer currently residing in the USA.

In the complaint she has alleged that Amrit had forged

documents of her son Ajit Singh Brar to open an

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account in a bank at Sector 15 here.

A joint account had been operating in the name of her

son Ajit Singh Brar and her father-in-law Gurdarshan Singh Brar since 2012. In December 2013, she and her son got to know about the existence of another account. She filed the complaint on behalf of her son against Amrit and came to know that bank officials not only verified the documents of Ajit, but also opened an account in his name even when he was not present in India.

She is the widow of an IPS officer Arvinder Singh Brar, who was shot dead by terrorists in Patiala in 1987. At that time he was posted as SSP, Patiala. Amrit is the younger sister of the slain officer.

Sukhdeep, who appeared before the local court along with counsel Jatin Bansal Koshamir and Ramandeep Singh Gill stated that she was not satisfied with the investigation of the police and would raise an objection if the present untraced report was accepted by the court.

After hearing her version the court said in view of the statements of the complainant and facts and circumstances, the untraced report of the police would not be accepted. The court has directed the police to conduct further investigation in the case.



The two of the seven missing children being handed over to their parents at the Dera Bassi police station on Thursday. NITIN MITTAL

Two of 7 missing boys from Dera Bassi reunited with kin

DERA BASSI, JULY 11

Out of the seven minor boys missing from the Bhagat Singh Nagar locality in Dera Bassi since Sunday, two have been found and reunited with their parents, while five others have been traced in Mumbai.

The police said a 14-year-old and a 10-year-old boy were traced by the Delhi Police at a railway station. They said a police team brought them back, adding that another party has been dispatched to Mumbai to bring the other five. — TNS

Follow-up care lacking: Panel probing medical negligence

Complaint was filed against Sector 33 private hospital

TRIBUNE NEWS SERVICE

CHANDIGARH, JULY 11

A case of alleged medical negligence at a private hospital in Sector 33 here has come to light following the death of 74-year-old Amarjit Kaur. Her son Sukhwinder Pal Singh Sodhi had lodged a formal complaint detailing a series of alleged malpractices by Dr Harsimran Singh and Dr Parminder Singh that culminated in his mother's demise.

Following the complaint, a medical negligence committee was constituted under the chairmanship of Dr AK Attri, Director-Principal, Government Medical College and Hospital, Sector 32; Dr Suman, Director, Health and Family Welfare; Dr Sushil K Mahi, Medical Superintendent, GMSH-16; Dr Navin Pandey, Joint Medical Superintendent-cum-Associate Professor, and Dr Pawan Bansal, president, Indian Medical Association. The committee submitted its report on July 9.

In the complaint, Sodhi stated that on March 16, his mother suffered a femur fracture and was admitted to the hospital for surgery. He requested the latest and MRI-compatible implant for his mother and Dr Harsimran gave an assurance in this regard. However, just one day after the surgery Amarjit was

discharged.

Fifteen days later, on April 3, 2024, he returned to the hospital with his mother, who was disoriented and had a dangerously low sodium level. Despite these concerns, Dr Harsimran did not admit her and merely prescribed some medication. The following day she experienced severe seizures and was rushed to the GMCH, Sector 32, where she was admitted to the ICU and placed on a ventilator.

The GMCH staff required an MRI, but needed confirmation of the implant's compatibility. Dr Harsimran initially stated that the implant was MRI-compatible, but refused to give a written assurance, directing him to his father Dr Parminder Singh, who also refused to provide written confirmation. This delay pre-

vented the MRI and Amarjit's condition worsened. She passed away on April 16 after 12 days in the ICU.

Dr Harsimran Singh and Dr Parminder Singh maintain that the implant used was FDA-approved, CE-certified and MRI-safe, with specific guidelines for safe MRI practices. They assert that Amarjit's condition had been managed appropriately.

However, expert opinions and the committee's review paint a different picture. Prof PN Gupta, Prof Rohit Jindal and Associate Prof Ashwani Soni indicated that the patient was advised for hospital admission due to low sodium levels, but the recommendation was allegedly ignored by the private hospital doctors. This oversight com-

pared with inadequate communication about the implant's MRI compatibility contributed to Amarjit's

deteriorating condition and subsequent death.

Prof Sanjay D'Cruz from the GMCH-32 provided a detailed account of Amarjit's final days, highlighting her severe seizures, the hos-

pital's struggle to manage her condition and the complications from delayed MRI clearance. The final diagnosis included refractory septic shock, ventilator-associated pneumonia and new-onset refractory status epilepticus.

The medical committee concluded that while there were no complaints about the surgical procedure itself, the hospital's follow-up care was severely lacking. The doctors failed to manage low sodium levels according to protocol and did not provide crucial MRI compatibility information in a timely manner. These lapses in medical management led to further complications and ultimately Amarjit's death. The committee categorised the case as medical negligence.

Prof Sanjay D'Cruz from the GMCH-32 provided a detailed account of Amarjit's final days, highlighting her severe seizures, the hos-

Scared, didn't reveal earlier to have seen killing, says witness



TRIBUNE NEWS SERVICE

CHANDIGARH, JULY 11

A prosecution witness in the Sippy Sidhu murder case today told the CBI court that he was "frightened" so he did not claim himself to be an eyewitness to the alleged killing in his earlier four statements.

The reply of the witness came as the defence counsel conducted his cross-examination, which continued for over eight hours.

The CBI had claimed in the chargesheet that the witness had seen Kalyani Singh, the accused, and advocate Sukhmanpreet Singh Sidhu, aka, Sippy Sidhu, talking on the walking track in the Sector 27 park on September 20, 2015. The CBI had claimed that the eyewitness also saw an unidentified person entering the park and firing two

gunshots at Sippy Sidhu. Thereafter, he also saw Kalyani Singh firing two gunshots at the deceased.

The CBI claimed that the eyewitness also saw the accused and the unidentified person fleeing in two vehicles.

During the cross-examination, the counsel for the accused asked the witness as to why he never claimed himself to be an eyewitness to the incident in the statements given to the investigating agency in 2016, 2017, 2018, 2019 and 2020. It was only in the statement given on November 9, 2021, wherein he claimed himself to be an eyewitness to the alleged murder.

On this, the witness replied that he was "frightened".

The CBI claimed that the eyewitness was in touch with the deceased from September 18, 2015, to September 20, 2015, in connection with installation of CCTV cameras at his house in Mohali. They were planning to purchase CCTV cameras on September 20, the day of the murder. For this purpose, he had gone to meet Sippy Sidhu.

P'kula civic body begins installation of LED lights

TRIBUNE NEWS SERVICE

PANCHKULA, JULY 11

The Municipal Corporation, Panchkula, has started installation of LED lights in the city. The corporation which is supposed to replace over 18,000 conventional lights has procured 10,000 for the purpose.

Officials in the corporation said the MC had allocated Rs 9.10 crore for the project, aimed at replacing LED lights across the city. The MC managed to procure 4,000 lights, but the rest were not received in time.

They said, "Initially, we changed the LED lights on A roads. Now, the work to replace LED lights on B and C roads will be carried out with the help of these newly received 10,000 LED lights."

The project was approved by the Directorate of Urban Local Bodies and installation of CCMS panels for smart lighting system in the city under the Divya Nagar Scheme. The municipal corporation has also set up the command and control centre for monitoring the smart lighting system.

College admissions: Experts counter figures, say cut-offs high this year too

CUT-OFF OUTSIDE UT POOL

Colleges	BCom	BBA	BCA
GGDSD-32	(107.20)	(99.20)	(105.00)
GCCBA-50	(106.37)	(96.60)	(100.00)
PGGCG-11	(105.78)	-	(101.40)
PGGC-11	(105.40)	(97.20)	(102.60)
DAV College-10	(104.80)	(96.40)	(99.40)
GGS-26:	(103)	-	(96.11)
SGGS-26:	(104.60)	(95)	(97.20)
MCM Dav-36:	(105.60)	(97.20)	(103.40)
PGGCG-42:	(103.80)	-	(100.80)
PGGC-46:	(105.36)	(95)	(90.60)
DSCW-45:	(102.20)	(94.60)	(96)

CUT-OFF FOR UT POOL

Colleges	BCom	BBA	BCA
GGDSD-32	(106.80)	(98)	(98.7)
GCCBA-50	(103.00)	(95.40)	(93)
PGGCG-11	(101.84)	-	(91.60)
PGGC-11	(104.68)	(98.51)	(103.51)
DAV College-10	(101.60)	(97.60)	(100.83)
GGS-26:	(94.88)	-	(79.40)
SGGS-26:	(98.92)	(87.60)	(100)
MCM Dav-36:	(105.60)	(90.80)	(79.40)
PGGCG-42:	(101.40)	-	(96.56)
PGGC-46:	(102.80)	(87.20)	(89.44)
DSCW-45:	(86.80)	(90)	(83.63)

AKASHDEEP VIRK
TRIBUNE NEWS SERVICE

CHANDIGARH, JULY 11

While the digits suggested a dip, experts claimed that the cut-offs this year are as high as last year, considering the classification of the New Education Policy (NEP 2020) for realising the provisional merit list for admissions to 11 local affiliated colleges.

The Department of Higher Education (DHE) released the cut-offs for both centralised and non-centralised courses late on Thursday evening. An estimated 16,000 seats

were allotted by the virtue of merit.

The first online counselling for seats under the UT pool would be held on July 12 (from 10 a.m. onwards); the counselling for seats outside UT would be held on July 13 (from 10 a.m. onwards).

The second online counselling session is set to be held on July 18 for the UT pool and on July 19 for the outside UT pool.

Speaking about the reason behind the dip in rankings, GGDSD College, Sector 32 Principal Dr. Ajay Sharma said, "Regarding admission

cut-offs, there have been significant changes in evaluation criteria as per NEP 2020. Previously, four marks (each) were awarded to every commerce subject for admission to the BCom course, resulting in a total score of 16 marks for all four subjects. However, this weightage has now been reduced from four to two, decreasing the overall weightage for four commerce subjects from 16 to eight. Similar patterns were followed for other courses."

While GGDSD College remained the first prefer-

ence for the toppers among the private colleges, Sector 11 Postgraduate Government College remained the top choice among the government colleges.

"The highest marks were recorded at 116.40 per cent (outside the UT pool), while this year it has been 107.20 per cent. If you consider the NEP rules, the score is even higher than last year," said a professor of SGGS College, Sector 26. He added, "For the UT Pool, last time it was recorded at 114.98 per cent, whereas the cut-off this year is 106.74 per cent."

Rlys advisory on trains

CHANDIGARH, JULY 11

Due to blockage of platform number 1 at the Chandigarh Railway Station, the Northern Railways has issued an advisory to travellers of short-origination/short-termination of trains, from July 12 to August 9.

According to the Railways, train number 15012 (Chandigarh to Lucknow) has been short originated and will now operate from Ambala Cant.

On July 15, 22 and 29 and August 5, train number 12528 (Chandigarh to Ramnagar) will operate from the Ambala Cant as well. Train no. 14629 (Chandigarh to Ferozpur Cant) will now short-originate from Mohali from July 13 to August 10. From July 12 to August 9, train no. 12241 (Chandigarh to Amritsar) will short originate from Kharar.

The railway station is undergoing renovation. — TNS

Two city fencers selected for Indian team

TRIBUNE NEWS SERVICE

CHANDIGARH, JULY 11

Pranshi Arora, a student of Government Model Senior Secondary School, Sector 10, and Purvasha, a student of MCM DAV Women's College, Sector 36, have been selected to represent India in the upcoming Junior and Cadet Commonwealth Fencing Championships 2024.



Pranshi Arora



Purvasha

Chandigarh Fencing Association officials con-

firmed their participation in the international cham-

pionships, scheduled to be held in Christchurch (New Zealand) from July 12 to 19. Secretary of the local association Munish Sharma said, "The selection of Pranshi and Purvasha reflects their talent and dedication to the sport. They have demonstrated their prowess in fencing consistently, earning this opportunity to compete at the international level."

COURT NOTICE
(U/o 5, Rule 20 CPC)
IN THE COURT OF MS. AMBIKA SHARMA CIVIL JUDGE JR. DIV., CHANDIGARH
ICICI BANK LTD
Vs.
ANSHUL INDUSTRIES
SUIT FOR RECOVERY
CNR No. CHCH02-002792-2023
Next Date:- 04-09-2024
PUBLICATION ISSUED TO:
ANSHUL INDUSTRIES
R/O VILLAGE AZAMPUR,
NURPUR BEDI, TEHSIL ANANDPUR SAHIB RUPNAGAR, PUNJAB
In above titled case, the defendant(s)/ respondent(s) could not be served. It is ordered that defendant(s)/ respondent(s) should appear in person or through counsel on 04-09-2024 at 10:00 a.m.
For details login to https://highcourtchd.gov.in/?trs=district_notice&district=Chandigarh
Dated, this day of 06-07-2024
Civil Judge, (Jr. Division) Chandigarh

Four in police net for phone snatchings

TRIBUNE NEWS SERVICE

CHANDIGARH, JULY 11

Four mobile phone snatchers, who used to target pedestrians and cyclists, have been arrested by the UT police in three cases. A mobile shop owner, who bought the snatched phones, has also been nabbed, leading to the recovery of 40 phones worth around Rs 5 lakh.

Three snatching incidents were recently reported from the area under the jurisdiction of the Sector 31 police station wherein motorcycle-borne miscreants had fled with phones.

The police said one of the teams nabbed two suspects, who had snatched a phone from a cyclist in Sector 47 on July 5. The police said the suspects, identified as Akshay (21) and Rahul (24), both residents of Ram Darbar, were arrested on July 10. The snatched mobile phone and a motorcycle with a fake number affixed on it were recovered.

The police said two other snatchers — Sagar (20), who works as a safai karamchari in Chandigarh MC, and Vivek (20), a student, both residents of Ram Darbar, were also held in two cases. Mobile phones and a motorcycle were recovered from them.

During interrogation, the suspects revealed that they used to sell snatched phones to a shopkeeper, named Santosh (44). Later, he was also held and 40 phones recovered.

COURT NOTICE
(U/o 5, Rule 20 CPC)
IN THE COURT OF MS. AMBIKA SHARMA, CIVIL JUDGE JR. DIV., CHANDIGARH
ICICI BANK LTD.
Vs.
JHUMAR GULERIA
SUIT FOR RECOVERY
CNR No. CHCH02-002791-2023
Next Date:- 04-09-2024
PUBLICATION ISSUED TO:
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In above titled case, the defendant(s)/ respondent(s) could not be served. It is ordered that defendant(s)/ respondent(s) should appear in person or through counsel on 04-09-2024 at 10:00 a.m.
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Dated, this day of 06-07-2024.
Civil Judge (Jr. Division) Chandigarh

AIR QUALITY INDEX

CHANDIGARH	144
PANCHKULA	162
MOHALI	176

401-500 SEVERE
301-400 VERY POOR
201-300 POOR
101-200 MODERATE
51-100 SATISFACTORY
0-50 GOOD

Waste collection fee waived for residential units in P'kula

Urban Local Bodies Dept gives nod to MC proposal for waiver

TRIBUNE NEWS SERVICE

PANCHKULA, JULY 11
The Municipal Corporation will not collect solid waste management (SWM) charges from residents of Panchkula now.

The corporation had sent a proposal to the Urban Local Bodies Department seeking waiver of the garbage collection charges levied on households. The proposal has been accepted and processed by the department. As such, the charges implemented in April last year have been waived. The same will now be borne by the local body itself.

Officials said the charges were being collected from all residential, commercial and institutional units under the MC ambit.



Vehicles dump waste at the Jhuriwala site in Panchkula.

The monthly user fee for residential areas was Rs 50 for units up to 50 sq m area, Rs 100 for sites above 50 sq m and up to 200 sq m, Rs 200 for units of sizes between 200 and 500 sq m, Rs 250 for units measuring between 500 and

1,000 sq m and Rs 350 for properties above 1,000 sq m in area. The same was collected along with the property tax charges.

A number of resident welfare associations in the city had earlier submitted representations to the corporation to cancel the charges. Residents claimed that the MC had at the time of allocation of the tender for the purpose decided to bear the expenses.

During the General House meeting of the corporation this year, councillors had protested against the waste collection charges being levied on residents. Following this, the MC sent a proposal to the Urban Local Bodies Department.

MC officials said the corporation was tasked with collection of Rs 50 crore as waste collection charges every year. Zonal Taxation Officer Akash Kapoor said, "The garbage collection charges have been removed from the online property and garbage tax collection portal."

Pair of UT heritage chairs fetches ₹11.55L in Luxembourg auction

Protection cell member Ajay Jagga takes up issue with Centre

TRIBUNE NEWS SERVICE

CHANDIGARH, JULY 11
In yet another auction of UT's heritage items, a pair of armchairs was sold for Rs 11.55 lakh in Luxembourg on July 9. The chairs were designed by Swiss architect Pierre Jeanneret, cousin of Swiss-French architect Le Corbusier, who had planned Chandigarh.

Demanding protection of UT's heritage articles from being auctioned overseas, Ajay Jagga, a member of Heritage Items Protection Cell, Chandigarh Administration, in a letter to S Jaishankar, Minister for External Affairs (MEA), Gajendra Singh Shekhawat, Minister of Culture and Minister of Tourism, and Saurabh Kumar, Ambassador of India to Luxembourg, stated that in response



to his last representation on the same issue, the Ministry of Culture took action and asked the agencies like Archaeological Survey of India (ASI) to look into the matter. However, the MEA was yet to take cognisance of the matter, he added.

"In continuation of my earlier submissions for protection of national heritage from being auctioned all over the world, I am submitting this communication regarding

the latest auction conducted by an auction house in Luxembourg on July 9. In fact, heritage articles are being auctioned regularly in foreign countries without any resistance from the Government of India," he added.

In the letter, he requested that the Indian Embassies in foreign countries must be sensitised about the Indian heritage, so that they could raise the alarm on getting information about such auctions.

Back-to-back accusations, UT policemen taking law for a ride!

AMIT SHARMA

TRIBUNE NEWS SERVICE

CHANDIGARH, JULY 11
Corruption accusations against police officers have cast a shadow over the integrity of khaki.

This year alone, 12 police personnel, a retired SP and a home guard in Chandigarh have faced action, including four FIRs filed by the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI). The allegations range from bribery and abuse of power to collusion with criminal elements.

Interestingly, three instances have been reported in the past less than 10 days.

In the recent incident, the CBI had laid a trap at the Sec-

tor 26 police station after a graft complaint was received against an assistant sub-inspector (ASI). The ASI had escaped after the complainant allegedly delivered Rs 20,000 bribe to favour her brother in an attempt-to-murder case.

On July 3, the police booked Inspector Rakesh Kumar, ASI Surjit Singh and home guard Jaswinder Singh for allegedly duping three persons of Mohali of Rs 18 lakh on the pretext of providing them jobs in Punjab Police. All three cops were also suspended by the department.

A day before on July 2, four cops, including an inspector, were suspended by the

department for their alleged connivance with cybercriminals in concealing and suppressing the evidence. The case pertained to an instant

loan app fraud. The Police Department had claimed that cops had served a notice on one of the accused but didn't proceed against him, provid-

ing benefit to the accused.

These incidents have not only eroded public trust in law enforcement but also highlighted systemic issues within the police force.

Although senior police officials claim of taking strict measures to root out corruption, critics argue that more substantial reforms are needed to address the underlying causes and prevent such incidents in the future.

RK Garg, president of Second Innings Association, a senior citizens' body, said the situation called for greater transparency and accountability in the Police Department, including regular audits and stricter oversight

mechanisms. "Restoring faith in the system will require significant effort and commitment from all levels of the force," Garg added.

Earlier, on April 10, the CBI had arrested SI Balwinder Singh, who was posted at the Sector 17 police station, and ASI Harmeet Singh, who was posted at the PO and Summon Cell, for allegedly accepting a bribe of Rs 10,000 for not registering an FIR against Anil Kumar, who had been accused of stealing a cheque in 2019.

The CBI had in April booked three UT policemen — two inspectors and a sub-inspector — and a former SP in connection with two FIRs.

Mohali councillors protest outside Mayor's office

MOHALI, JULY 11

Fed up with dirty roads, piles of garbage in their wards and choked sewage lines, six councillors of the Mohali MC staged a protest outside Mayor Amarjit Singh Sidhu's office this morning. They waited for three hours, but the Mayor did not come to the office.

AAP councillors Aruna Vashisht (Ward 25), Gurmeet Kaur (Ward 50), Gurpreet Kaur (Ward 37), Ramanjeet Kaur (Ward 39) and Ramanpreet Kaur (Ward 28), Congress councillor Pramod Mitra (Ward 36) and ex-councillor Rajni Goel were part of the protest. — TNS

Five FIRs already registered this year against eight cops and a home guard

GRAFT, FRAUD AMONG CHARGES LEVELLED

JULY 9 ASI booked for allegedly accepting ₹20,000

JULY 3 Inspector, ASI and home guard booked for allegedly duping three persons on the pretext of providing them jobs in Punjab Police

JULY 2 Four cops, including an inspector, suspended for their alleged connivance with cybercriminals

APRIL 16 Inspector and a retired SP booked by CBI for illegally obtaining the location of two mobile phone numbers of a woman and her husband

APRIL 15 CBI case against an inspector and SI for favouring an accused in sexual harassment case

APRIL 10 SI and an ASI nabbed by CBI for allegedly accepting ₹10,000 bribe

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On board

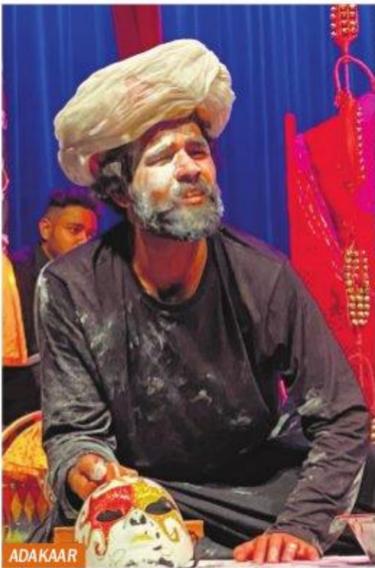
Actress Kubbra Sait, known for her roles in *Sacred Games* and *Jawaani Jaaneman*, has boarded the cast of veteran filmmaker David Dhawan's upcoming film.

VICKY, AMMY'S DAY IN JAIPUR



Actors Vicky Kaushal and Ammy Virk spent some time in Jaipur while promoting their upcoming film

Bad Newz. Vicky took to Instagram, where he shared pictures and clips from his visit to the Pink City along with co-star Ammy.



ADAKAAR

NONIKA SINGH

ONE moment, celebrated theatre person Kewal Dhaliwal offers us a slice of history like his recently held production (July 2 in Amritsar) Asghar Wajahat's *Jis Lahore Nahi Vekhya O Jamyai Nai...* as a cautionary tale. If at times poetry's deep metaphors mirror in his actors' bodies, right now he is toying with a play by Amarjit Grewal on artificial intelligence. A voracious reader, before him lie at least 20 scripts, including one by Harish Jain on Shaheed Bhagat Singh's trials, which will be staged in the near future. Clearly, no subject is out of Kewal's radius.

Every now and then, he visualises a parallel in the world's best playwrights' universal truths and Punjab *di mitti*. Soon, he will be staging an adaptation of Irish playwright Samuel Beckett's *Waiting for Godot*, relating it to farmers' issues. Earlier, in Ibsen's play *Enemy of the People* he instantly sensed politics around water problem, a concern that plagues Punjab's depleting and toxic water level. When he came across *The Resistible Rise of Arturo Ui* by Bertolt Brecht, he felt as if the play had been written with Punjab in mind and made the story of small-time goons turning into political heavyweights ring true for Punjab.

His latest play on Rani Jindan (staged in May this year), the youngest wife of Maharaja Ranjit Singh, and mother of Maharaja Duleep Singh, he observes, required no tailoring. For the tale of the indomitable woman, who stood up against the British, shall be forever relevant in context of Punjab and *Punjabiyaat*. Of course, he had to be inventive, chose the narrative style and conceived it with just five actors. In his play *Sheesh* on Guru Teg Bahadur, since you can't depict Sikh gurus in flesh and blood, he reflected him via a chorus. Apart from the peerless sacrifice of the great *guru*, the contemporariness of oneness, as well as diversity, was driven through the portrayal of Aurangzeb's daughter Zebunissa too.

Dedicated to theatre for nearly five decades, if he has imbibed the passion and commitment of theatre thespian and his *guru*, the late Gursharan Singh, he has married the same with his training in India's best theatre school, the prestigious National School of Drama. Unlike many other pass-outs who are smitten by the glamour of Bollywood, Kewal preferred to return to his



IK SEEMANTO

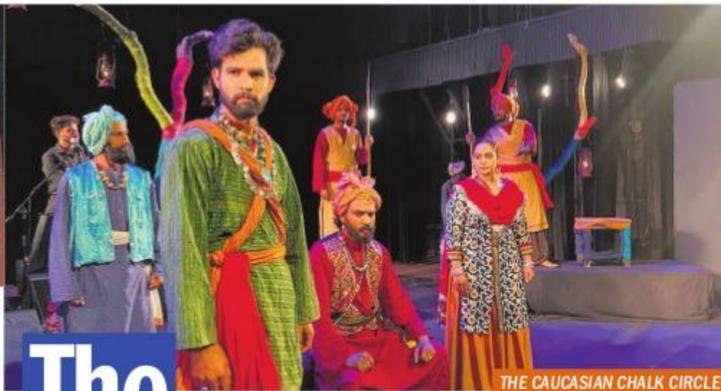
Renowned theatre person Kewal Dhaliwal, whose latest production *Jis Lahore Nai Vekhya O Jamyai Nai* drew crowds, believes in the constant flow of work. For him, it is all about *ek muthi khuli, doosri tayar*

PHOTO: VISHAL KUMAR



roots, the nooks and crannies of Amritsar he grew up in and transformed it into a thriving hub of theatre.

Former president of Punjab Sangeet Natak Akademi, prolific writer-director, be it as the organiser of theatre festivals, he has just finished a 10-day festival bridging the divide between two neighbouring nations... there are no half-measures in his life. Much-lauded *Shi-*

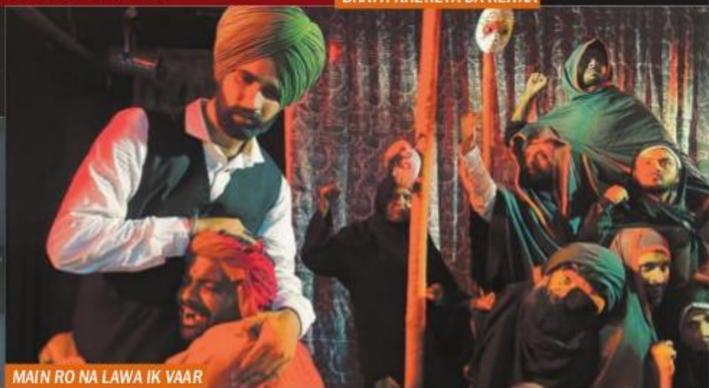


THE CAUCASIAN CHALK CIRCLE

The world is his STAGE



Partition is a subject close to my heart as my family suffered during the cataclysmic event. My recent production Asghar Wajahat's *Jis Lahore Nahi Vekhya O Jamyai Nai...* not only talks about the pain and anguish of those displaced, but also has a contemporary ring since religion continues to be weaponised.



BHATH KHEREYA DA REHNA

MAIN RO NA LAWA IK VAAR

romani Natakaar is not a sum of parts, but a complete whole in every mantle he wears.

Today, as he is a subject of many PhD students, his productions are known as much for their visual language as the subtexts woven in. Interestingly, when he writes, the director in him is not only alive and kicking but keenly aware of how it will be staged. Precisely the reason

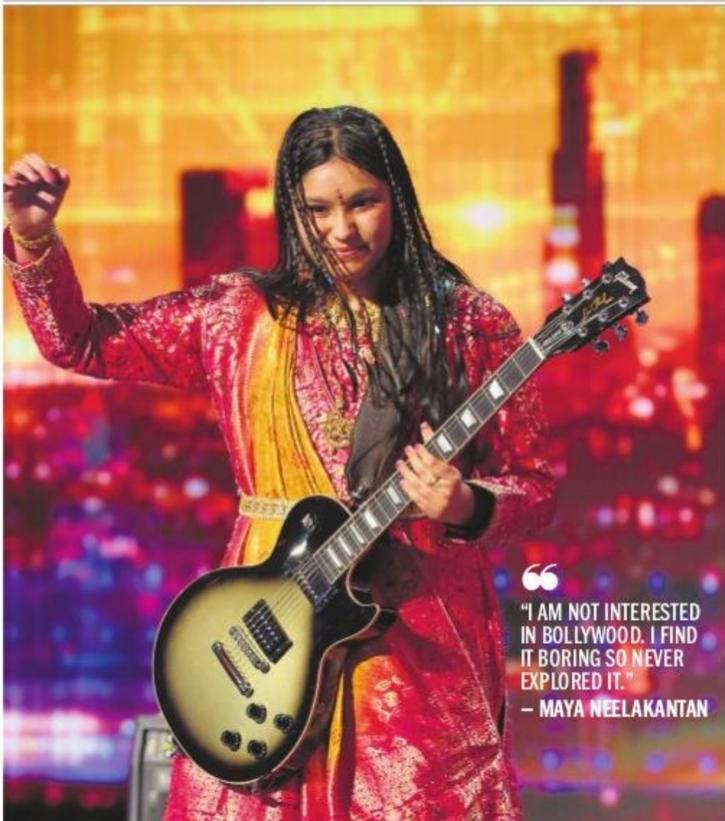
why he enjoys directing eminent writer Swarajbir's plays for, "he leaves ample room for a director to explore."

Those who keep lamenting how onerous it is to survive on theatre alone, his mantra is simple — think what you can give to theatre and not the other way around. Any wonder with Kewal there is no hiatus. For others might abide by 'the land must lie fallow' dictum, Kewal believes in *ek muthi khuli, doosri tayar*, forever in the state of preparedness... *Balle balle* Punjab might be a misnomer for naysayers, he believes it's this indefatigable spirit that saves Punjab and is the *raison de etre* behind his irrepressible positive energy, which shows no signs of ebbing.

Pride in Kapil's achievements

As many of his *shagirds* like Kapil Sharma touch dizzying heights of success, Kewal Dhaliwal has no 'I wish' moments of vacillation. He takes pride in Kapil's achievements, as well as of many in Punjabi film industry like Amrinder Gill, who too have learnt the ropes of performing arts under his *chattarchaya*. Recently, Kewal too was seen in the Punjabi film *Shayar*.

Incidentally, long time ago he rubbed shoulders with the now CM of Punjab Bhagwant Mann in Punjabi comedy *Koko de Bache*. Bollywood, however, is an occasional dalliance and not an *affaire d'amour*.



All of 11, Chennai girl Maya Neelakantan, took the stage of America's *Got Talent* by storm with her guitar rendition

SHEETAL

Eleven-year old guitarist from Chennai, Maya Neelakantan has taken the world by storm after her debut stage performance at America's *Got Talent*. Maya's rendition of Papa Roach's *Last Resort*, which showcased her equal love for thrash metal and Carnatic music, was praised for its West meets East fusion. Maya shared, "I already chose the song *Last Resort* a couple of weeks ahead of my performance and practiced it for a week while in the US for the audition round."

While Maya's father introduced her to thrash metal much later, Carnatic music reached her ears through her grandmother when she was two years old. Maya had earlier performed just once in her grandmother's *ashram*, where she played Carnatic music in front of 30-50 people for an hour-and-a-half. She was 10.

Child prodigy

She first expressed her desire to learn the guitar at the age of six after watching a music video of Metallica's *For Whom the Bell Tolls*. Interestingly, it also happens to be the first song she ever learnt on guitar. "I just really loved how everybody was having so much fun.



Manali memories

Maya celebrated her tenth birthday in Manali and the trip is forever etched in her mind. For, one she got a call from America's *Got Talent* while she was enjoying a family vacation in the lap of Himalayas, and, secondly, she had fun trying adventure sports like para-gliding and river-rafting.

The way the band members acted and went crazy. I wished to play like these guys. The video made a big impact on me," she added. Other than music, Maya enjoys playing Playstation with her younger brother. "Also, I

am a fast reader and enjoy documentaries, especially those based on animals."

Love for bindis

Mesmerised by her traditional avatar in AGT performance and those head-bangs, one wonders whether it was an attire for the occasion or her lifestyle indeed. "I always wear a *bindi* and love accessorising myself with bangles, *jhunkas* and necklaces. Pairing these with traditional attire is my way of representing the fusion of thrash metal and Carnatic music," she explains.

If thrash metal leaves Maya pumped up, the other awakens the spirituality and divinity in her soul. "I think these are two opposite ends of a spectrum and as I am trying to combine them together to make a genre of my own."

Heart's wish

Maya had an opportunity to witness Carnatic musician Nithyasree Mahadevan perform live, but wasn't that lucky when it came to her thrash metal favourites. She hopes to perform with them live someday. "Although I have met and jammed with all of my favourite musicians from different bands, I am sure it would be a memorable and surreal moment when I get to perform with them live on stage."

Maya, who is enrolled in online schooling, as she shuttles between Chennai and Sydney, Australia, counts Adam Jones (Tool), Gary Holt (Exodus/Slayer), Alex Skolnick and Eric Peterson (Testament), and her guru 'Guitar' Prasanna as her inspirations.

"I AM NOT INTERESTED IN BOLLYWOOD. I FIND IT BORING SO NEVER EXPLORED IT."
— MAYA NEELAKANTAN