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Ola resumes bike-taxi; set to go all electric

Afiya Amreen

BENGALURU: Ola S1 pro electric scooters is all set to reinstate bike-taxi services from September 16th onwards in Bengaluru.

The co-founder and CEO of Ola, Bhavish Aggarwal, took to social media 'X' and announced the "restart of the bike taxi service in Bengaluru". Additionally, the company is also planning to manufacture its very own all-electric scooters in the next 6-7 months. The electric scooters are pocket-friendly. It costs Rs 25 for 5 km and Rs 50 for 10 km.

They are very comfortable, and environment friendly, and therefore this operation is expanded nationwide. Junior production manager of Ola, Shrijit KS in a talk with The Beacon stated "Ola's all-electric plans are to double its electric vehicle manufacturing frequency from one million units per annum to two million units per annum within the next 6-9 months. The company and the team are very optimistic about its financial progress and along with this the upcoming ones would heighten its revenues and profit."

Ola Electric Scooters recently secured a \$140 million funding round led by Singapore's sovereign fund, Temasek, which valued the company at \$5.4 billion.

He added that they will be starting Ola bike-taxi services in a less than 100,000 population town in Karnataka said Shrijit.

Soul Force Warrior upholds velvet revolution

Fiona Vaz

BENGALURU: In an enlightening address delivered yesterday, retired Justice Santhosh Hegde emphasised the crucial role of peace and non-violence in shaping a nation's path. He drew a connection between these principles and Mahatma Gandhi's philosophy, termed "Soul Force" by the book's author. St. Joseph's University and Sarvodaya International Trust organised a book release ceremony on September 19 on the campus. Ambassador Pascal Alan Nazareth released his book entitled Gandhi: The Soul Force Warrior in Kannada, Telugu, and Urdu editions. Justice Hegde, during his address, stated, "I find the true facts of Mahatma Gandhi's non-violence movement are behind this principle of what the author calls Soul Force. I also went through the foreword written by His



Dignitaries releasing the new editions of the book.

Pratham Basu

Highness the Dalai Lama." Endorsing the book, he urged the students to familiarise themselves with the contribution of the principle of non-violence to the freedom movement. Referring to his book, Alan Nazareth explained that he had delved into multiple definitions of revolution about various

ideological movements and examined recent global revolutions, such as the world wars and colonial atrocities. Despite the 20th century being declared the bloodiest in history, it was also the era that gave birth to a new kind of revolution led by Gandhi. "Gandhi revolutionized revolution itself," he declared.

Soul Force is the spiritual essence that underpins Gandhi's revolutionary concept. After India's independence, revolutions emerged globally, starting with Rosa Parks in the US. Her refusal to yield her bus seat ignited a movement led by Martin Luther King, which bankrupted the city

bus company within months, highlighting the transformative potential of nonviolent action. Gandhi shattered the belief that bloodshed was essential for societal change, affirming that the power of God's spirit resides within us, guiding our pursuit of truth and justice. In addition to the book release, a short documentary on the soulful struggle of South Africa was screened. The book release event garnered support from distinguished figures from various walks of life, including Archbishop Peter Machado, Justice MN Venkatachaliah, Lord Parekh, and Professor Kiran Jeevan, among others.

"Within 50 years of India's independence, a Dalit becomes the president of India, a measure of the revolutionary equality of Gandhi's achievement."
- P. A. Nazareth
(Retd. I.F.S.)

Terrific taala of the triumphant tamate

Aatreyi Bose

BENGALURU: Taala Tamate is the first ever large-scale collaborative performance piece to bring together the instrument Tamate or Parai, and the stories of marginalised artists intertwined with it, to the limelight.

On September 17, Beru Art Space, Adavi Arts Collective, Samarugam and Aravani Art Project performed this piece at Shoonya Center for Art and Somatic Practices. Parai has been looked down upon as a musical instrument played by dalits, and made from animal skin or hides. Parains are scorned for their

loud instrumental work surrounding funerals and dismissed, said Naren, the lead musician from Adavi Arts. Thus, the choreography is aimed at acknowledging the social realities in a loud liberating manner.

Dayanand Akhilesh, the director of Taala Tamate said, "If a poem can speak, why can't the beats of Parai too? Does it ask you if it's too heavy for you to listen to, or is it your ignorance? Since Parai is a circle, I wanted to connect every cause from the circle of life. Let it touch everything, like gender, caste, and other social issues." He also

brought in props inspired by crematory rituals, like a pyre, a water-filled pot, and fire.

Blurring the boundary of the stage, performers aspired to challenge every structural hierarchy to echo the spirit of freedom, fun and celebration in an interactive performance space. We wanted to break the barrier between the artists and the audience, as that is also a hierarchy, added Akhilesh.

The narratives of Dalit and transgender artists here seek to express the underlying struggle of existence amidst the mundanities of life. Tara, an artists and performer from the Aravani Art Project said,

"As a transgender woman we are so used to dancing on the streets for various occasions. Coming from the streets to represent our stories in Taala Tamate, I want people to see and understand where we come from. I hope we find the respect in society that everyone is equally deserving of." This is a social movement to realise what discrimination feels like, to a lot of individuals — it comes from a reality where humans treat, behave and think about each other in a certain way that makes it harder to breathe free for a few of us, added Ganesh, an anti-caste performer.

Bengal tea industry unhappy

Utsav Pradhan

The decrease in prices under the new system has made it difficult for tea planters to meet the set obligations, undoubtedly affecting their financial stability, said Sourav Pahria, the Tea Board's deputy chairman.

Tea planters in Bengal on September 18 requested the Tea Board of India to revert to the English auction system, due to a notable decline in tea prices since the introduction of the new "Bharat Auction system". There is a dip in the tea auction price from Rs 206.07 per kilo in 2022 to Rs 189.09 this year.

"The change in auction systems has put added financial pressure on tea producers. Many of them had financial obligations and commitments based on previous price expectations," said Sourav. This change has particularly affected the auction centres of Calcutta, Siliguri, and Guwahati.

Atul Asthana, head of the Consultative Committee of Plantation Associations (CCPA), emphasised the negative financial impact and the existing financial obligations.

Nipah under control in Kerala

Sen Michael Mathew

Post the COVID-19 wave, residents of Kerala have been cautious about the new emerging epidemic, and to their relief, the Nipah virus which created days of fear in the state, is under control.

The measures of contact tracing and surveillance help track the spread and bring it under control. It's been four consecutive days and no new cases have been found.

Speaking about the origin and effects of the virus, Dr Akhil Devassya, a practitioner at Nirmala Hospital, Kochi



Nipah testing at Kozhikode said, "This virus transmits through the air. With a life of 3-5 hours in the air it is easy to enter the human respiratory system and it is mainly spread through droplets. The government guidelines for treating patients to give proper oxygen, and medicines like antibiotics to be given accord-

ing to the body nature of the patient.

The state has gainfully managed to overcome this health challenge, with successful containment efforts. The collective effort has instilled confidence in the community, leading to a decline in fear and anxiety in people's minds.

Vasantha's canvas vision

Stephy Ann Vinod

Bengaluru: Art forms in India have been encouraged in different ways from time immemorial. Looking up at our temples and sculptures we see art as a social symbol.

Keeping intact the essence of this creation, Vasantha Art Group is organising an art and painting exhibition at ChitraKala Parishad, Bangalore from September 18 to 24. The event aims to showcase its achievements in the past six months, giving artists and painters a sense of accomplishment. Marking three years of their

short-term courses, with beginner and advanced stages of learning, Vasantha helps Indian artists climb up the ladder of the art market. "I started painting in 1976 until in 2003 when I retired from my work of art.

At that time the participating artists did not get enough recognition for their work and talent and thus we decided to promote our artists and travel by planning exhibitions in different cities of India." Malyadri K, a senior artist, and organiser of Vasantha Arts, said to The Beacon. The 14th group show had 22 engaged student participants.