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Meiyazhagan: A tale of bonds

Irene George

Weaving a heartwarming tale of familial bonds and camaraderie, *Meiyazhagan* takes the audience on a realistic take on relationships and emotions. With simple yet engaging storytelling, C Prem Kumar returns with another narrative of two individuals who spend a life-changing night.

The film follows the life of Arulmozhi Varman (Aravind Swamy), who returns to his hometown after 22 years to attend a wedding. There, he meets a free-spirited and witty relative (Karthi). In a series of events, he is forced to stay back in his native for a night, and his journey of self-transformation forms the rest of the story.

The remarkable performances of Aravind Swamy and Karthi and their on-screen chemistry stand out in the movie. The supporting roles, although with limited screen time, brought out the raw emotions of each family member. The magic of Mahendiran Jayaraju's frames captured the essence of the picturesque landscape of Thanjavur and added beauty to the screenplay, where the plot takes the audience to conversations that reveal the culture, politics, history, and the need to hold on to one's roots. Govind Vasantha's soulful music brought life to the story, where subtle melody and powerful lyrics complemented the emotions of the characters. It is a must-watch movie for those who love to watch a bittersweet story that stands out of the ordinary.

Economic crisis fuelled change; IMF doors knocked

Tharun Adithya

The newly elected Sri Lankan government's primary focus for the first 100 days is to re-engage the International Monetary Fund (IMF) to salvage the ongoing economic crisis caused by corruption engaged in by two major parties, the United National Party (UNP) and the Sri Lanka Freedom Party (SLFP), opined Suchith Abeyewickreme, a well-known civic activist. Even though the government had filed for bankruptcy, they still needed to rely on and require support from the IMF. This economic crisis led to protests, as people felt their economy was undermined and policy decisions were hastily made without any serious planning, he said in an interview with *The Beacon* about the newly elected government.

On September 21, Sri Lanka held its presidential elections, and Anura Kumara



The laughter of victory

The Hindu

Dissanayake, a National People's Power (NPP) coalition candidate, was elected President. The recent elections marked a significant shift in the country's political landscape since its independence. Voters have rejected the two major mainstream parties and elected a new government. This is the first time the electorate

has chosen a candidate from a family without political affiliations. "The former president of Sri Lanka, Premadasa, comes from a non-elite background. Yet, he sought alliances with members of elite families to gain power, presenting himself as one of them," opined Abeyewickreme. The current

political party is gaining popularity among ordinary families, making it easier for average citizens to relate to their leaders, especially with the current economic crisis.

Abeyewickreme said, "This crisis is difficult for people, as their economic lifestyle has been greatly affected. The government has

even mentioned capitalising on the IT and tourism sectors and bringing new industries to combat the issue." He also said that the reason for approaching the IMF again for negotiations is to create and maintain long-term stability that benefits the government and citizens. They will discuss certain aspects of protecting and improving the economic reforms with the IMF. The "financial fraud" committed by the previous government is still being investigated, he said. Sri Lanka's crisis debt stems from events over 20-30 years ago. The government has been borrowing heavily from different countries and donors, mainly for big-scale development projects, even road infrastructure. Abeyewickreme expressed that this 'historical political change' occurred due to the ongoing crisis. In the long run, the government needs to acknowledge the situations that affect the people.

Crew members refute allegations against Zafar

Prachi Pradhan

The money laundering and criminal conspiracy allegations against director Ali Abbas Zafar by Pooja Entertainment are baseless and false, said Geetha Menon (name changed), an assistant director of *Bade Miyan Chote Miyan*. Speaking to *The Beacon*, Menon revealed that the controversy arose from misuse of subsidies provided during international shoots.

She opined that the subsidy received from Abu Dhabi was not used to pay the crew members, including the actors and associate directors. She blamed Pooja Entertainment



Fraud fallout

Streamingdue

for holding back the payments to the technicians for almost 8-9 months after filming. "Even after the film was released, many technicians were not paid for almost 5, or 6 months. It was only after the Abu Dhabi subsidies that the payments were cleared," she said.

Pooja Entertainment has

filed a case against Zafar, accusing him of money laundering and claiming he misappropriated funds meant for the movie's production. However, the *Bade Miyan Chote Miyan* crew strongly backed the director, with many members sharing their support on social media platforms like

Instagram and X (formerly Twitter). A legal associate, George (name changed) said Zafar could have filed a defamation suit against Pooja Entertainment under Section 499 of the Indian Penal Code (IPC), stating the offences under defamation.

Menon said that Zafar had helped them out of goodwill to clear a few payments, not the production house. The assistant director said that Pooja Entertainment's delayed payment was a big issue with the production house, which has made recent films like *Bell Bottom*, *Ganapathy*, and *Bade Miyan Chote Miyan*.

Honouring santoor maestro's legacy

Sai Lakshmi PG

BENGALURU: Tribute concerts have gained popularity, especially when honoring accomplished musicians who have passed away, as audiences often resonate with the music they have grown up listening to, said Sandhya, curator of events at the Bangalore International Centre (BIC).

The BIC organised "The Eternal Echo" on September 29 to honor the late santoor maestro, Pandit Shivkumar Sharma. The event aimed to bridge the gap between present-day audiences and Indian classical music, with a lineup of esteemed musicians highlighting Sharma's influence on generations of musicians. Sharma has been a resonating figure in the classical music genre due to his role in popularising the santoor, from a local instrument to a staple in Indian classical music.

Sandhya added that blending the santoor into classical music presents a unique challenge, highlighting Sharma's crucial contribution to changing the instrument's role in the genre. "Shivkumar is a bit of a polarising figure in classical music. He revamped it for the classical music scene in India," she said.

Peshwa's legacy: A hereditary anomaly

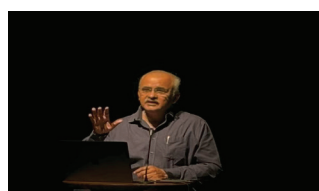
Manjari Chatterjee

BENGALURU: Uday S. Kulkarni, author of "Raghoba," opined that the hereditary nature of the Peshwa office (chief minister of the Maratha Empire in India) represented a historical anomaly, stating that "hereditary prime ministership" was unprecedented. At his book reading at Bangalore International Centre (BIC), he discussed the development of the Maratha Empire through the hereditary succession principle.

In an interview with *The Beacon*, he said, "The

practice began when Balaji Vishwanath, the first Peshwa served Chhatrapati Shahu, leading to his son, Bajirao I, inheriting the role of Peshwa. Shahu upheld feudal beliefs, insisting on hereditary principle." Internal succession feuds became common among these families. He observed that this principle of hereditary succession extended beyond the Peshwas, impacting influential Maratha lineages like the Gaikwads, Bhonsles, Sindhias, and Holkars.

Kulkarni noted that Chhatrapati Shivaji, the greatest Maratha Peshwa,



Maratha chronicles

Manjari C

sought to rid Persian cultural influence by replacing Persian titles with indigenous equivalents. Officially, Bajirao was designated as "Pandit Pradhan," but the English called him Peshwa. This transition from Persian to indigenous terminology in official correspondence clearly showed Shivaji's intent

Reforms in POCSO mooted

Krishnapriya M

Activists and lawyers are vouching for a legal reform in cases where minors are criminally charged under the Protection of Children from Sexual Offences (POCSO) Act 2012 for engaging in consensual activities. They are questioning whether the act was intended to regulate adolescent behaviour, as discussed in the Implication of the POCSO Act in India on Adolescent Sexuality: A Policy Brief by Enfold Proactive Health Trust, published by multiple United Nations organisations.

Anindita Pattanayak, a lawyer and legal researcher at Enfold Proactive Health Trust who is part of the campaign, said that people working in the child rights field believe it is more important to understand why children engage in risky activities rather than criminalising behaviour that is a normal developmental stage in human life. "We are not saying that there's no problem with adolescent sexuality. There are problems. But criminal law is not the best solution to that problem," she added.