

Adnan Sami: Don't drag me into politics



MUMBAI: Singer Adnan Sami has lately been on a slamming spree against anyone who has questioned his Padma Shri win. He has now declared that he is a musician and he shouldn't be dragged into political debates.

Soon after Sami was declared one of the Padma Shri recipients of the year, many felt he shouldn't have been given the award because he originally hails from Pakistan. It was also pointed out that while Sami opted for an Indian citizenship only four years ago, his father is a Pakistani security force veteran who fought against India during the 1999 Kargil War.

Sami has earlier declared that he shouldn't be held responsible for his father's action. Asked how he looked at the fact that Indian Muslims continue to be made accountable for what the Mughals and other Muslim invaders did to Hindus over centuries, he said: "First of all, the best thing about history is that it's past, and it should be kept in the past because that's where it belongs. God gave us eyes to look forward and not backward. The most important thing is we should forget all that because nobody from that era is alive today to answer these questions -- least of all you (the media) and I, or anybody for that matter."

"Secondly, this is all about politics. I am not a politician. I am a musician. Just like you wouldn't ask a politician about Raag Darbari, don't ask me about politics. All I know is that I am a musician. I spread love through my music. Even those who have issues with me, do listen to my music, and I am cool with that. God bless them and the Mughals, the Britishers, the Mongolians, Alexander the Great -- they may have died and they have done their bit, so let them rest in peace. Let's look towards what we can do for our country instead," said Sami, at the launch of his new song "Tu yaad aya".

Ever since his Padma Shri win, Sami has been facing social media ire. Among those who have objected is Congress spokesperson Jaiver Shergill, who slammed the BJP government for conferring Padma Shri on Sami, who became an Indian citizen only four years ago. Shergill shared a video on Twitter in which he can be seen lashing out at the government.

Shergill pointed out that on one hand, while retired Indian Army Junior Commissioned Officer Mohammad Sanaullah has been tagged as a "ghuspeethiya" in the NRC list by the Centre, on the other hand, Adnan Sami, whose father fought against India during the 1999 Kargil War, has been honoured with the Padma Shri.

Apple's Swift Playgrounds app now available for macOS

NEW DELHI: Apple has launched Swift Playgrounds app for Mac as part of company's Catalyst app initiative, designed to help bridge the software gap between its macOS and iOS platforms. The app requires no coding knowledge to use and is ideal for students who are just starting out with coding. "Swift Playgrounds is a revolutionary app for iPad and Mac that makes learning Swift interactive and fun. It requires no coding knowledge, so it's perfect for students just starting out. Solve puzzles to master the basics using Swift -- a powerful programming language created by Apple and used by the pros to build today's most popular apps," the company said in a statement.

"Swift Playgrounds is built around a collection of Apple-created lessons, using puzzles and an interactive 3D world.

"Now you can make robots do incredible things with code you write yourself. Learn to program-connected devices like the Sphero SPRK+, LEGO MINDSTORMS EV3, and drones by Parrot, and watch them come alive right before your eyes," the company added.

Swift Playgrounds for Mac is available from the Mac App Store and it is a free download.



Kashmir-Themed Photo Exhibition At Pune Music Fest

Agencies

PUNE: While everything about Pune's music Vh1 Supersonic festival was happy and vibrant, a slice of reality reflected in Manjiri Desle's photography. The Mumbai girl, who has just completed her BA in Photography, showcased her Kashmir-themed photographs at a painting and photography exhibition arranged by students at the recent Vh1 Supersonic music festival in the city.

"I am interested to learn about whatever is happening in Kashmir. Through my photographs, I want to highlight problems, whatever is going on in Kashmir right now. People are suffering there but their stories are not coming out. I felt maybe someone should take a step to highlight their condition," Manjiri told IANS, on why the idea of Kashmir-themed photography interested her.

She continued: "The main reason of bring-

ing Kashmir to Vh1 Supersonic is to highlight the condition of the people of Kashmir in front of the other parts of India. Over there people were protesting against revoking of Article 370. Just as protests are going on in Delhi's Shaheen Bagh now, Kashmir is also witnessing protests. Every where are military people roaming around. We can't think of growing up watching soldiers standing in front of our homes, but that's the life of kids over there. I have tried to reflect all of these in my photographs. This is why I documented Kashmir."

Manjiri, a resident of Palghar in the outskirts of Mumbai, revealed that she was always intrigued by Kashmir, and decided to visit the state soon after Article 370 was revoked last year.

"I was curious to know what is happening in Kashmir. I visited there in October after Article 370 was revoked. I stayed there for 21 days and I fell in love with Kashmir," said the 20-year old, adding that she did have some

unexpected and uncalled for experiences during her trip.

"Some experiences were unexpected. For example, after I landed in Srinagar, I discovered the hotel I had booked from here was shut! I had to put up in another hotel that had no staff and no chefs. There were only two caretakers, who allotted me a room. I learned that all the tourists and staff had run away because just the previous day there had been a grenade attack," she recalled.

However, the brave girl didn't feel scared for even a minute and, in fact, is looking forward to visiting Kashmir again soon.

"Had I been scared, I wouldn't have visited Kashmir. I felt so good over there because the people were very nice and friendly. I did not know anyone but I was greeted warmly by the local people. I got to explore a lot, I learned and understood a lot of things. I was touched by their love. I am hoping to go back soon. I want to document a whole lot of stuff," signed off Manjiri.

Illegal extraction of housing raw material from water bodies goes unabated in Kashmir

SRINAGAR: The failure of administration to implement the ban it imposed on illegal extraction of stones, sand and boulders from different water bodies across Kashmir valley might turn out to be a serious environmental disaster in coming years, signs of which are already visible.

As per official sources, administration in all the districts of Kashmir has repeatedly ordered a blanket ban on illegal extraction of all sorts of river bed material from rivers, nullahs, water bodies, tributaries and offshoots in the valley, and earth from the karewas, carried out in any manner, from or method.

The administration, however, has been unable to implement its own orders and the extraction continues right under the nose of the administration. The practice goes unabated across the southern districts especially and its peripheries.

"There is a nexus between this mafia and some government agencies, allowing illegal extraction of housing raw material. This has endangered the embankments of the streams across southern areas," a local resident Gul Mohammad of Shopian said. On the other hand the environmental experts have expressed horror at the unabated practice, saying that a disaster is looming environmental hazards.

"The extraction of sand, stones and boulders not only cause loss to mineral deposits but also changes the bed leveling of these streams which also change its course in wake of a flood," said a source at geology and mining department. As per official figures, dozens

discriminate extraction of stones, boulders and sand from the streams has left the nearby residential areas more prone to floods. The practice has also damaged the adjoining roads, streets, bunds and have caused noisy environment in these areas.

violators a free hand. The residents appealed concerned authorities several times to conduct the on-spot inspection to know the scale of damage and impacts on the adjacent areas but that never happened, said residents of Shopian. On this matter police officials



of sensitive sites are being vandalized by the practice as of now, where the extraction of sand, stones and boulders is going on round the clock.

There are around 554 mineral blocks in J&K, of which 261 are in the 10 districts of Kashmir. Of these 261 blocks, each of which measures a maximum of 10 hectares. A significant number of the mineral blocks are situated along the banks of river Jhelum, considered a lifeline in J&K.

People living close to these streams complained that the in-

"Everyday dozens of heavy load carriers are extracting tonnes of stones for about five to six hours. Heavy vehicles including tippers, tractors and JCB machines are mainly used by drivers and contractors," said Imtiyaz Ahmad a local who lives close to Rainb Ara in Shopian. People today even took to the streets and lodged a protest against the load carriers for resorting to heavy extraction of housing material at Rambiarra in Shopian.

Despite assurances from authorities that it would be stopped, they failed to stop it and allowing

said that they have arrested many load carrying drivers in connection with illegal extraction. "Mere police cannot do anything unless other concerned departments cooperate," they said.

When contacted a senior official of geology and mining department, said that they are often charging fine through challans besides seizing dozens of vehicles and handing them to police.

"We cannot stop the illegal extraction unless people and other concerned departments cooperate with us," he added. (KNT)

SHORT TAKES

Google completes takeover of Looker after UK green light

NEW DELHI: Alphabet Inc.-owned Google said on Thursday it has completed its \$2.6 billion buyout of privately held big-data analytics firm Looker Data Sciences after winning clearance from Britain's competition watchdog.

Google announced the cash deal in June, the first major acquisition for its new cloud business Chief Executive Officer Thomas Kurian. The deal aims to build upon the success of Google Cloud's BigQuery, a tool for managing large datasets.

Looker's tool enables analysts and other workers to define calculations for items such as revenue or high-value customers and then visualize trends in their data without writing complicated scripts. It competes with Tableau Software Inc, Domo Inc and Microsoft's Power BI.

The Competition and Markets Authority said its probe found the deal would not adversely impact quality of service or competition in the market for data analytics tools and software.

The CMA added that the deal was unlikely to lead to increased prices or lower quality as the two are not considered close competitors by businesses who use business intelligence tools as they can choose from other providers including Microsoft, Oracle, Tableau, SAP and IBM.

Google's cloud computing division is a distant third globally to Amazon.com Inc and Microsoft Corp in terms of revenue from renting infrastructure and other computing tools to businesses.

"Although Google had the ability to make it difficult for rivals to access the Google-generated data they need from online advertising and web analytics services, there was no strong evidence they would have the incentive to do this," the CMA found.

The deal has also been approved by the U.S. Department of Justice and the Austrian Federal Competition Authority.

"We believe we will be uniquely positioned to address the data analytics and business intelligence demands of even more enterprises globally, across all industries," said Kurian in a statement announcing the completion of the acquisition.

IndiGo launches Hindi website to strengthen its regional footprint

NEW DELHI: In a move to strengthen its regional footprint, IndiGo has launched its Hindi website. The first private airline in the country to do so, IndiGo now offers a Hindi interface for customers where they can get all the information about products and services. In a move to strengthen its regional footprint, IndiGo has launched its Hindi website. The first private airline in the country to do so, IndiGo now offers a Hindi interface for customers where they can get all the information about products and services. (Reuters)

In a move to strengthen its regional footprint, IndiGo has launched its Hindi website. The first private airline in the country to do so, IndiGo now offers a Hindi interface for customers where they can get all the information about products and services. The website will let customers efficiently avail information related to flights, discounts, schedules and also book flights.

Over the last few years, the consumption and demand for content in regional languages has increased significantly in the country. India clocked 637 million internet users as of March 2019, with Hindi content consumption witnessing a growth of 94% over 2018-19. With Hindi fast becoming the other language of choice for accessing the Internet, it makes sense for IndiGo to launch their website in Hindi for this market and deepen consumer connect.

William Boulter, Chief Commercial Officer, IndiGo said, "We are pleased to announce the launch of our website in Hindi language. The growing prominence of regional content and customer's demand for accessing the internet in Hindi, has been a key driver for us to include regional outreach as an important part of our consumer connect strategy. This step also ties in with the government's vision of empowering every Indian to travel by air with ease. Our endeavour is to deliver a hassle-free experience, from the time the customer opens our website till the time they reach their destination.

"We will continue to offer affordable, on-time, hassle-free and courteous experience across our extensive network," Boulter added.

BOTTOM LINE

37000 Grade II & III teachers being trained under Samagra Shiksha across J&K

JAMMU: To train around 37000 Grade II and Grade III teachers across Jammu and Kashmir, a Five-Day capacity building Programme for Key Resource Persons (KRPs) commenced here today.

The Capacity Building programme is being held under Samagra Shiksha in association with the NCERT, at Jammu University.

As per organisers, around 240 KRPs will be trained by NCERT faculty over the five days, who would further train 37000 Grade II and Grade III teachers (erstwhile

RREts) on cascade mode at their respective DIETS.

Training shall be provided on modules like: Understanding Learner, Multi Grade Teaching Learning, Pedagogy of languages, EVS, Maths and Sciences, School Based Assessment, Pre School Education and Inclusive Education.

The training programme has been named as IMPACT- (INTEGRATED MULTIDISCIPLINARY PROFESSIONAL ADVANCEMENT COURSE FOR TEACHERS) by NCERT. The aim of this capacity

building programme, IMPACT is to improve the learning outcomes at elementary level and offer a platform for teachers to develop their skills on aspects related to Competency- Based learning and testing, Learning centered pedagogy, School Safety and Security, Personal Social Qualities and Inclusive Education.

The orientation is being conducted on the instructions of Lieutenant Governor J&K he gave while reviewing the functioning of Department in recent past. He

had proposed that an extensive training programme must be conducted for Grade II and III teachers.

Taking the step forward, Directorate of Samagra Shiksha took the initiative in association with NCERT, Delhi and constituted a group of Key Resource Persons (KRPs) who shall further impart the training to Grade II & III teachers in their respective districts.

Prof. M. K. Dhar, Vice Chancellor, University of Jammu, who was the chief guest, also appreci-

ated the efforts put in by Samagra Shiksha in organizing such kind of training programme.

Prof. Dhar stressed that regular capacity building is the need of the hour for teachers at all the levels. New skills and pedagogical competencies need to be inculcated among the teachers that can be useful in classroom environments, he added.

At the inaugural session, Prof. H. K. Sanapathy apprised the participants that this training will provide a platform for trainees

to acquire modern pedagogical skills.

At the end, State Project Director Samagra Shiksha, Dr. Arun Manhas, presented vote of thanks wherein he expressed his gratitude to the dignitaries especially, Prof. Dhar, who facilitated the department in providing all kind of infrastructural support for successful conduct of the programme. Dr. Manhas also advised the trainees to take maximum benefit of the programme and to disseminate the acquired knowl-

edge bank upto the last and real beneficiary- the students.

Later, the groups segregated and proceeded to different classrooms for training sessions.

Among other present at the programme were Prof. Ranjana Arora-NCERT; Prof. Veena Pandita, Chairperson J&K BOSE; Director School Education Jammu- Anuradha Gupta; Chief Education Officer Jammu- Kulbir Singh; Field Officer Samagra Shiksha, Peerzada Mushtaq and senior Officers of School Education Department.