GIRISH BASAVARAJ: CHAMPION OF CRICKET, DENTISTRY, AND COMMUNITY



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THE Indian Sun PLUS

SEPTEMBER 2024
VOLUME 14 ISSUE 172

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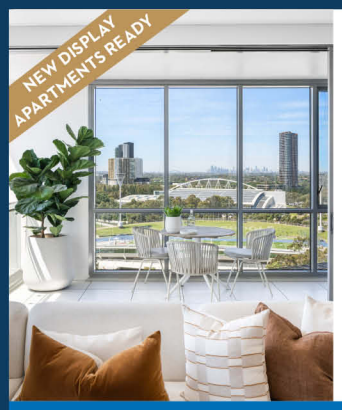
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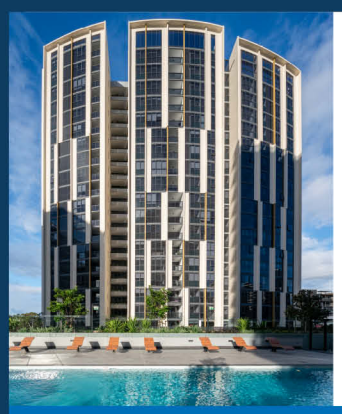
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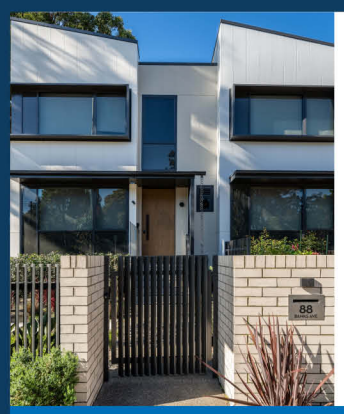
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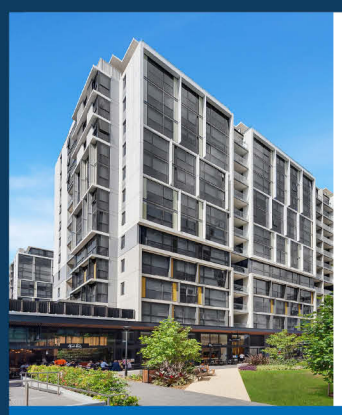
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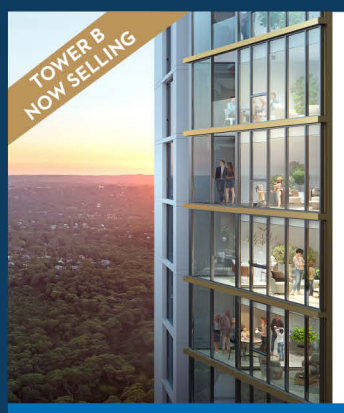
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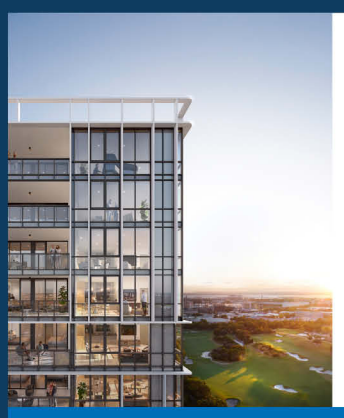
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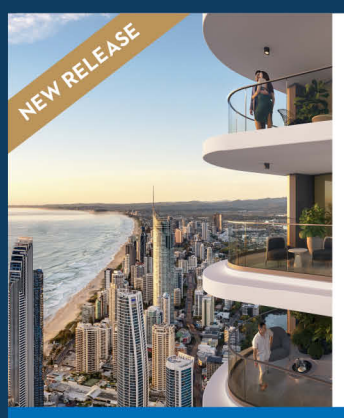
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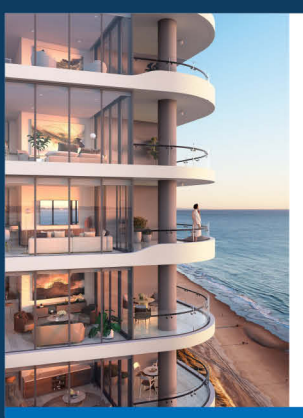
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EDITOR'S NOTE

QUEENSLAND SPRINGS TO LIFE WITH COLOURFUL CELEBRATIONS OF INDIAN CULTURE



Dear Readers,

Spring is truly in the air, and Queensland has embraced it with a burst of colour, energy, and celebration. As the sun shines brighter, the vibrant festivities around the state remind us of the richness of culture, diversity, and unity that bind our communities together. From Townsville to Brisbane and up to Cairns, the celebration of Indian culture is in full swing, each event a testament to the growing bonds between Australia and India.

The 10th edition of India Fest in Townsville was nothing short of a spectacle. Held on 24 August, at Riverway, the festival transformed the area into a vibrant hub of music, dance, and traditional food stalls. With over 25,000 attendees, it was a celebration of the richness and vibrancy of Indian culture. From the beautiful replica of the Taj Mahal to Bollywood and folk performances, the festival encapsulated the spirit of community. Townsville's Mayor, Troy Thompson, reminisced about his youthful admiration for cricket legends like Sunil Gavaskar, highlighting the connection that transcends borders. His praise for the children's prayers and national anthem performances truly struck a chord, underlining the significance of passing cultural traditions to the younger generation.

Equally impressive was the support from the local and state officials. Aaron Harper, representing the Premier, spoke about the power of events like India Fest in promoting unity. The financial backing from major sponsors, including Bravus Mining and Resources, demonstrates how local businesses see value in fostering cultural connections. The festival was not just a display of colour and music; it was a celebration of inclusion, unity, and the shared future of our diverse communities. Deepika Chaudhary's heartfelt closing speech reminded everyone of the growing success of India Fest and its importance to the people of Townsville and beyond.

Across Queensland, in Brisbane, the Indian Consul General Neetu Bhagotia took centre stage at a significant multicultural function held at Queensland's Parliament House. Hosted by Leader of the Opposition David Crisafulli, the event underscored the vital role that cultural communities, especially the Indian diaspora, play in shaping Queensland's identity. Bhagotia's presence signified a deepening relationship between India and Queensland, which has been strengthened further with the opening of the new Consulate in Brisbane. The Consulate serves as an essential hub, connecting the Indian community with their homeland while helping them integrate into Queensland's diverse society. As Bhagotia stood alongside Queensland's political figures, it was clear that the ties between India and Australia are stronger than ever, particularly in trade, education, and cultural exchange.

Another Brisbane highlight was the Grand Janmastami—Krishna Leela event, hosted by BAPS Brisbane on 31 August. This festival, celebrating the life of Lord Krishna, was a night filled with mesmerising performances, devotion, and a sense of unity. With vibrant re-enactments and traditional dances, the audience was taken on a journey through Krishna's life. The communal dinner afterward only enhanced the feeling of togetherness, as people from all walks of life came together to share in the joyous celebration.

And up north, the Cairns Indian Festival made its grand debut on 17 August, in Fogarty Park, becoming a sensation in its own right. With over 6,000 attendees, the festival brought the best of Indian culture to the heart of Cairns. The Cairns Natya Crew's dynamic performances were a crowd favourite, and Mayor Amy Eden's delight over the local food reflected the growing appreciation for Indian cuisine in Australia. Events like these go beyond entertainment; they foster deeper connections and bring communities together in a way that few things can.

This spring, Queensland's Indian festivals have created a stronger sense of belonging, unity, and pride in our shared heritage. As the celebrations continue, they remind us all of the power of diversity in shaping a brighter future for Queensland. Whether it's the bustling streets of Townsville, the halls of Parliament House, or the parks of Brisbane and Cairns, Indian culture is being embraced with open arms. Here's to more vibrant, colourful celebrations and the continuing friendship between our two nations.

Warm regards,
NICK ATTAM
Editor, The Indian Sun—Queensland

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COMMUNITY FESTIVAL



India Fest Townsville draws record crowds, celebrates 10 years of cultural unity

***India Fest Townsville 2024**, organised by Deepika Chaudhary & team on 24 August at Riverway, featured Mayor Troy Thompson & MP Aaron Harper*

OUR REPORTER
@the_Indian_Sun

The 10th edition of India Fest Townsville, held on 24 August 2024, transformed Riverway into a vibrant hub of colour, music, and community spirit. Drawing an impressive 25,000 attendees, the festival showcased the richness of Indian culture, creating a lively atmosphere that captivated the crowd.

Riverway Circuit came alive with traditional food stalls, mesmerising Bollywood and folk dance performances, and a stunning fireworks display that lit up the evening sky. One of the standout features of the event was a replica of the Taj Mahal, which became a popular photo spot for visitors, offering a taste of India's cultural grandeur.

Townsville's Mayor, Cr. Troy Thompson, **<TURN TO #9>**











❮CONTINUED FROM #8❯
attended the festival as the Chief Guest and shared warm memories of his youth, recalling legendary Indian cricketers like Sunil Gavaskar and Kapil Dev. He praised the efforts of the India Fest Team for organising such a successful event and expressed his enjoyment of every aspect of the celebration. The Mayor also took a moment to commend the children who performed the opening prayers and national anthem, noting their beautiful costumes and impressive performances.

Aaron Harper, Member for Thuringowa, representing the Premier of Queensland and the Minister for Multicultural Affairs, spoke about the festival's importance in promoting cultural diversity and unity. Harper shared his appreciation for Indian cuisine, especially the offerings from local favourite Masala, and highlighted the festival's role in bringing communities together, with support from Multicultural Queensland playing a crucial role in making this possible.

Rajesh Gupta, Head of Finance at Bravus Mining and Resources, expressed pride in his company's ongoing sponsorship of the festival. Gupta reflected on the last decade of India Fest's success, praising the team for their dedication and noting how Bravus has supported the event over the years. He emphasised the significance of the festival to both the Indian ❮TURN TO #10❯







COMMUNITY FESTIVAL























<CONTINUED FROM #9> community and the broader Townsville region.

In the afternoon, Andrew Willcox MP joined the festivities, enjoying the vibrant atmosphere and lending his support to this key cultural event.

India Fest Townsville President, Deepika Chaudhary, expressed her gratitude to the community for their support. In her closing speech, she thanked the sponsors, volunteers, and everyone involved in making the festival a success. Chaudhary highlighted the ongoing growth of India Fest and looked **<TURN TO #11>**

<CONTINUED FROM #10> forward to welcoming everyone back for another exciting celebration next year.

The event's major sponsors included Bravus Mining and Resources, Townsville City Council, Multicultural Queensland, and several local businesses, all contributing to the festival's success.

As India Fest Townsville celebrated its 10th anniversary, the festival's success demonstrated the strength of community spirit, cultural exchange, and the lasting bonds created through such celebrations.



Girish with his wife, Smitha, and daughter, Aarvi // Pic supplied

Girish Basavaraj: Champion of cricket, dentistry, and community

Girish Basavaraj excels in dentistry, cricket, and cultural leadership, enriching Townsville through his diverse passions

NICK ATTAM
@the_indian_sun

Girish Basavaraj, affectionately known as GB, has become a pillar in Townsville, seamlessly blending his passion for cricket, dentistry, and community engagement into a life that inspires those around him. With his Gold City Bulls recently clinching the Mendi Constructions Tropical Big Bash 2024 title, Girish's journey has come full circle. The win not only highlights his success on the cricket field but also exemplifies his deep commitment to the community, making him a beloved figure in Townsville.

Girish's story began in the bustling city of Bengaluru, where his family's dental practice laid the foundation for his professional journey. After earning his degree from Bapuji University (Davangere), he built his career on a philosophy rooted in precision and patient care. While dentistry was his chosen profession, cricket was never far from his heart. From the streets of India to the fields of Charters Towers, the game of cricket played a significant role in shaping his identity.

Upon arriving in Australia, Girish faced the challenge of adapting to local regulations while ❮TURN TO #13❯



Girish's Gold City Bulls recently clinching the Mendi Constructions Tropical Big Bash 2024 title // Pic supplied

<CONTINUED FROM #12>
introducing a new style of care that fused his Indian heritage with Australian healthcare standards. His decision to establish his practice in Charters Towers, a town known for its warmth and strong sense of community, proved to be both challenging and rewarding. Starting out with a small clinic, Girish focused on fostering relationships with his patients, building trust that went beyond mere treatments. Today, his Gold City Dental Clinic is thriving, a testament to his dedication and the trust he has earned in the community.

But it's Girish's commitment to cricket that has truly brought him into the limelight. Through his sponsorship and involvement in local cricket, Girish has transformed the Gold City Bulls from a regular cricket team into a community-driven powerhouse. The team, which represents his dental clinic, embodies the values Girish holds dear: hard work, teamwork, and community engagement. His passion for the game goes beyond the field, with Girish organising events like "Family Day Out," where players and their families come together to celebrate the sport. These gatherings have fostered a unique sense of unity, making the Gold City Bulls much more than just a cricket team.

The recent triumph of the Gold City Bulls at the Tropical Big Bash is a reflection of the leadership Girish brings to everything he touches. The team's success, anchored by standout players like Dan Gartrell and Brenton Edwards, is the result of careful planning, strategic leadership, and Girish's ability to inspire both players and supporters alike. His cricketing journey, however, doesn't stop at the Big Bash. The Gold City Bulls have also made their mark in **<TURN TO #14>**


Girish's with his colleages at Gold City Dental Centre // Pic supplied

While dentistry was his chosen profession, cricket was never far from his heart. From the streets of India to the fields of Charters Towers, the game of cricket played a significant role in shaping his identity



Girish with his wife, Smitha, and daughter, Aarvi // Pic supplied



Girish (bottom left) with the victorious Gold City Bulls team // Pic supplied



Behind every successful individual stands a strong support system, and for Girish, his wife, Smitha, and daughter, Aarvi, play a crucial role in his journey

CONTINUED FROM #13 veterans' cricket, participating in the Veterans Cricket Masters Tournament, where they finished as runners-up in the over-40s category. Girish's vision is clear: cricket is not just a sport but a way of bringing people together, and his ambition to expand the Bulls' legacy includes plans to promote women's and junior cricket in the region.

Girish's involvement with the community extends far beyond the cricket pitch. As the director of the Sri Siddhi Vinayak Cultural Centre (SVCC), he plays a key role in promoting multiculturalism in Townsville. His efforts to bring the Indian community together through cultural events have earned him widespread admiration. The SVCC has become a vital part of Townsville's cultural landscape, contributing to a greater understanding of Indian traditions while enriching the town's vibrant tapestry of multiculturalism.

For Girish, the connection between cricket, community, and culture is natural. He sees cricket as a vehicle for bridging cultural divides, and his efforts to promote the game among younger generations speak volumes about his commitment to inclusivity. His dream of establishing a junior cricket team is a reflection of his desire to nurture the sport and provide opportunities for the next generation to experience the joy of cricket. Girish's leadership has ensured that the Gold City Bulls are more than just a team; they are a symbol of unity and collective spirit, drawing fans from all walks of life.

Behind every successful individual stands a strong support system, and for Girish, his family plays a crucial role in his journey. His wife, Smitha, and daughter, Aarvi, have been steadfast in their support, accompanying him on his journey from India to Australia. Their presence has provided Girish with the strength to pursue his passions while maintaining the delicate balance between professional and personal life. Even their dog, Chilli, has become an integral part of their close-knit family, reflecting the warmth and joy that Girish values in both his professional and personal endeavours.

Girish's journey has not been without challenges. From adapting to a new country and overcoming cultural barriers to expanding his dental practice and transforming a local cricket team into a community brand, he has faced each obstacle with resilience and determination. His story serves as an example of how dedication to one's profession and love for the community can create lasting change. As Girish continues to build on the success of both his dental practice and the Gold City Bulls, his influence in Townsville is only set to grow.

For the people of Townsville, Girish's story is one of inspiration. He has managed to fuse his professional life with his personal passions, creating a legacy that reaches far beyond the boundaries of his dental clinic. His ability to unite people through sport, culture, and healthcare makes him a truly unique figure in the community.

With the Gold City Bulls' victory in the Tropical Big Bash and Girish's continued involvement in veterans' cricket, the future looks bright for this driven individual. His plans to expand the reach of cricket in Townsville, alongside his dedication to patient care, highlight a man who is deeply invested in his community's well-being. Girish Basavaraj is more than just a dentist and a cricket enthusiast—he is a community leader, a cultural ambassador, and a man with a vision that continues to inspire those around him

GOLD CITY BULLS







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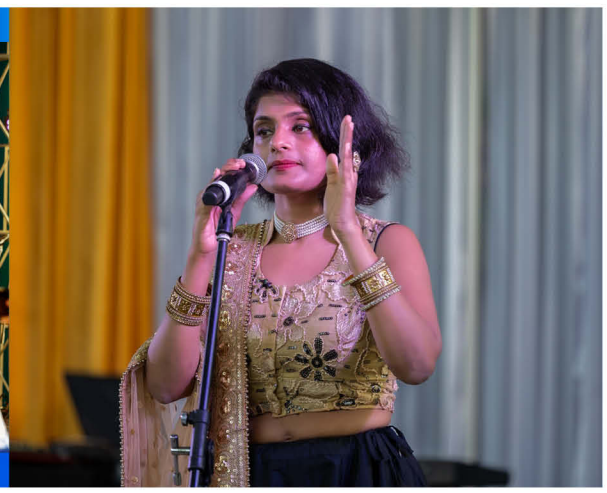
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Cairns festival ignites with Indian colours

On 17 August 2024 at Fogarty Park, **Cairns Indian Festival** debuted, organised by Cairns Hindu Samaj, with guests like Cairns Mayor Amy Eden and David Crisafulli MP







NICK ATTAM
@the_indian_sun

The Cairns Indian Festival made its vibrant debut on 17th August 2024, transforming Fogarty Park into a bustling celebration of Indian culture. Over 6,000 attendees flocked to the event, which became the talk of the town for its lively performances, delicious cuisine, and the strong sense of community it fostered.

As the park filled with the sounds of Bollywood hits and traditional dance, the crowd was treated to an array of performances that truly brought the festival to life. ❮TURN TO #18❯



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COMMUNITY FESTIVAL















<CONTINUED FROM #16> Among the many highlights was the Cairns Natya Crew, whose dynamic dance routine left everyone in awe. The crew, featuring talented performers like Dhanya Shaj, Suresh Kesavan, Kavi Kris, Harmanpreet Kaur, Renuka Bisht, Rashmi Rao, and Sabiya Sandhu, captured the audience's attention with their passion and skill.

But the festival wasn't just about the performances. The food stalls drew just as much attention, offering a rich variety of Indian dishes that satisfied every craving. From the spicy tang of chaats to the sweet indulgence of gulab jamuns, there was something to delight every taste bud. Even Cairns Mayor Amy Eden was impressed, singling out the tamarind sauce on her samosa as 'insanely delicious'. Her remarks reflected a broader appreciation for the Indian community's contributions to the local culture.

The festival also attracted praise from local dignitaries. David Crisafulli MP, Leader of the Opposition of Queensland, applauded the event, noting the positive atmosphere and the significant role the Indian community plays in the region. Nick Attam, Queensland editor of The Indian Sun, contributed to the occasion by delivering a speech and presenting an award, underscoring the festival's importance in the community.

Beyond the festivities, the day was a testament to the spirit of togetherness that defines Cairns. Stallholders like Lisa Conyers of REVO Rideshare were thrilled with the response, engaging with visitors interested in the company's new ride-share concept. Meanwhile, the Cairns Hindu Samaj used the opportunity to promote their 'NO Plastic' theme through the children's performances, a message that resonated well with the audience.

Recognition was also given to local figures like Chef Daulat Singh Panwar, who was honoured with the Community Impact Award for his service during the December floods. His efforts, along with those of others, highlighted the festival's role in bringing the community closer.

As the day drew to a close, the success of the Cairns Indian Festival was undeniable. The event not only celebrated the richness of Indian culture but also strengthened the bonds within the Cairns community. With such enthusiastic participation, the festival has set the stage for an even more exciting celebration next year.

For everyone involved—organisers, sponsors, volunteers, and attendees—the festival was a triumph. It has set a new standard for cultural events in Cairns, leaving everyone eagerly anticipating what's to come.



Gujarati Samaj Townsville

Presents

Garba Nights

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Dress Code : Traditional

Dates and Time

1st Weekend

Saturday 5th October 2024 (6pm Onwards)
Sunday 6th October 2024 (6pm Onwards)

2nd Weekend

Saturday 12th Oct 2024 (6pm Onwards)
Sunday 13th Oct 2024 (6pm Onwards)

Venue

Townsville Table Tennis Association 60 Charters Towers Rd, Hermit Park QLD 4812

Contacts

Mahendra Patel : 0430 589 735
Gaurav Patel : 0403 702 652
Ketan Chaudhari : 0403 613 542

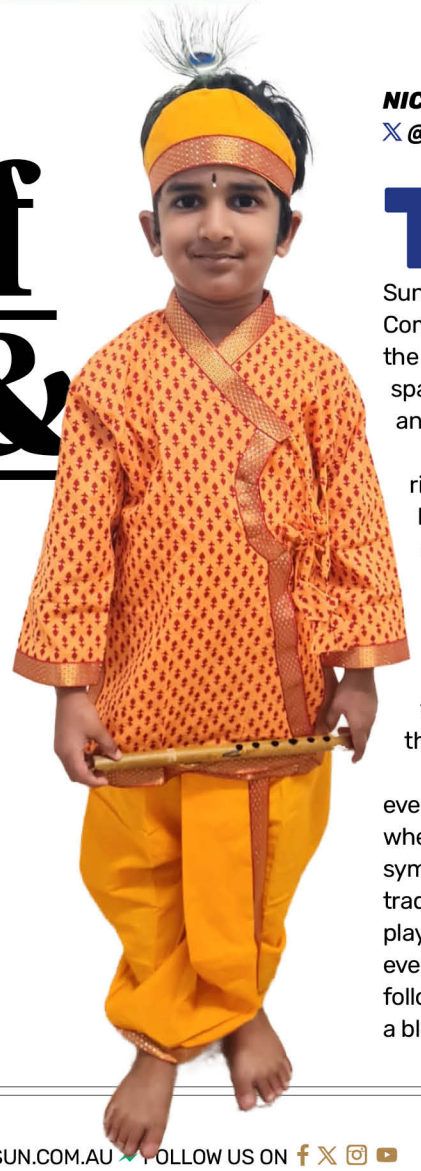
Light Snacks Provided - RSVP Must

Book Your Tickets Now

Gujaratisamajtownsville

Celebrating Sri Krishna Janmastami: A joyous evening of devotion & festivity

Cairns Hindu Samaj's **Sri Krishna Janmastami** celebration at Brinsmead Community Hall united the community in vibrant devotion, dance & tradition



NICK ATTAM
@the_indian_sun

The Cairns Hindu Samaj (CHS) hosted a vibrant celebration of Sri Krishna Janmastami on Sunday, 26 August, at the Brinsmead Community Hall. From 6 PM to 8 PM, the hall was transformed into a sacred space brimming with devotion, joy, and community spirit.

The evening's program featured a rich tapestry of traditional activities, beginning with soulful Bhajans and a heartfelt Puja that set a serene tone for the festivities. Participants were then treated to a lively display of Ras Garba, showcasing the energetic dance forms that are an integral part of the celebration.

One of the highlights of the evening was the Handi Fod ceremony, where attendees witnessed the symbolic breaking of an earthen pot, a traditional practice associated with the playful exploits of Lord Krishna. The event concluded with a beautiful Aarti, followed by the distribution of Prasad, a blessed offering ❮TURN TO #21❯







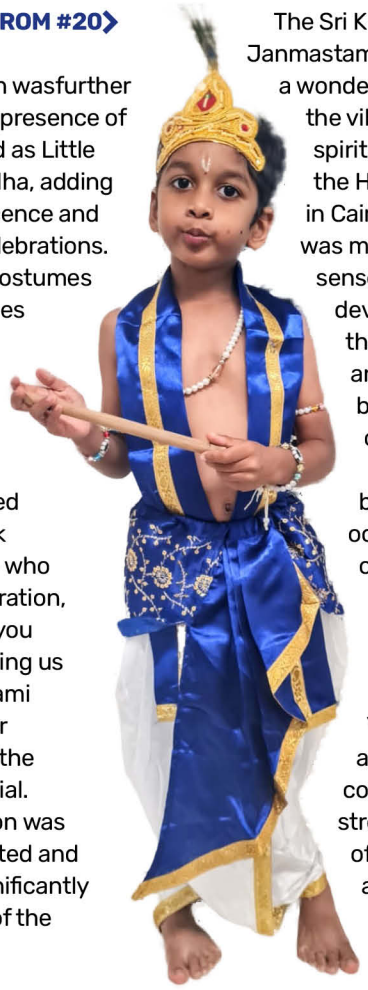


《CONTINUED FROM #20》

shared with all.

The occasion wasfurther enriched by the presence of children dressed as Little Krishna and Radha, adding a touch of innocence and charm to the celebrations. Their adorable costumes and performances delighted the attendees, embodying the essence of the festival.

CHS extended a heartfelt thank you to everyone who joined the celebration, stating, "Thank you so much for joining us at the Janmastami celebration! Your presence made the event truly special. Your participation was deeply appreciated and contributed significantly to the success of the event."



The Sri Krishna Janmastami celebration was a wonderful testament to the vibrant cultural and spiritual traditions of the Hindu community in Cairns. The evening was marked by a deep sense of unity and devotion, reflecting the rich heritage and the strong bonds within the community.

As we look back on the joyous occasion, we extend our gratitude to all who attended and made the event memorable. Your support and involvement continue to strengthen the fabric of our community and enrich our shared cultural experiences.





Teeyan Mela 2024: A joyous cultural celebration in Mackay

On 24 August at Andergrove Community Hall, Harpreet Kaur & Veerpal Kaur organised the vibrant **Teeyan Mela 2024**, celebrating Indian culture



NICK ATTAM
@the_indian_sun

The evening began with a serene ambiance as Ashwini, Meera, and a group of dedicated volunteers adorned the photos of revered Gurus with beautiful decorations. The atmosphere was filled with reverence and devotion, as participants chanted praises and reflected on the profound teachings of their spiritual leaders.

The Teeyan Mela 2024, held on Saturday, 24 August, was a vibrant celebration of culture and community at the Andergrove Community Hall. The event, which ran **TURN TO #23**







<CONTINUED FROM #22> from 4 PM to 9 PM, was a delightful showcase of Indian traditions and community spirit, drawing together families and friends from across the region.

Organised by Harpreet Kaur and Veerpal Kaur, the Teeyan Mela was a resounding success, featuring an array of activities that highlighted the rich cultural heritage of the Indian community. Attendees enjoyed traditional performances, folk dances, and a variety of Indian culinary delights, making for a truly immersive cultural experience.

The event was marked by its lively atmosphere, with the community coming together to celebrate through music, dance, and delicious food. The organisers were thrilled with the turnout and the enthusiastic participation of all who attended.

Harpreet Kaur and Veerpal Kaur expressed their gratitude to everyone who joined in the festivities, noting that the presence and participation of the community made the event special and memorable.

Teeyan Mela 2024 not only showcased the vibrant traditions of the Indian community but also provided a wonderful opportunity for cultural exchange and community bonding.

The organisers extend their thanks to all attendees for making Teeyan Mela a memorable celebration. For those who missed out, stay tuned for more community events and opportunities to engage in cultural celebrations in Mackay.





'Power Star' Pawan Kalyan's birthday celebrations in Townsville

OUR REPORTER
@the_indian_sun

The fans of 'Power Star' Pawan Kalyan gathered in full force in Townsville, Australia, to celebrate the beloved actor's birthday with unmatched enthusiasm and excitement. The event was a testament to the deep admiration and loyalty that Pawan Kalyan inspires among his fans, making it a memorable evening filled with joy and devotion.

A cinematic celebration: The fans' tribute

The highlight of the celebration was a special screening of Pawan Kalyan's iconic film "Gabbar Singh." The movie brought together a diverse group of die-hard fans, including Pawan, Sanjay, Satish, Prasanth, and many others. The venue was charged with energy as the fans cheered, clapped, and even danced to their favourite scenes, showcasing the impact of Pawan Kalyan's on-screen charisma.

Pawan, a dedicated fan known for his unwavering support of Pawan Kalyan, spoke passionately about the star's influence. "Pawan Kalyan isn't just an actor to us; he's an inspiration. His movies bring so much joy and positivity into our lives," said Pawan, who played a significant role in organising the event. Sanjay, another enthusiastic fan, echoed these sentiments: "We have been fans for years, and celebrating his birthday like this, even thousands of miles away from India, is truly special."

Fans like Nick, Chakri, Mani, Rajsekhar, Reshma, Abhi, and Vamshi also shared stories of their admiration for Pawan Kalyan, reminiscing about the powerful characters he has portrayed over the years. "It's not just about the movies; it's about the person behind them. Pawan Kalyan has a way of connecting with people, and that's why we are all here today," said Nick.

A touch of political pride, but mostly a fan moment

While there was a presence of political admiration at the event, led by Ram, the Queensland State Convenor of the Jana Sena Party, the focus remained largely on the cinematic celebrations. Ram acknowledged Pawan Kalyan's influence in politics but emphasised that the event was primarily about celebrating his film career.

However, the heart of the celebration was with the fans who came together purely out of their love for Pawan Kalyan's movies. "Tonight is all about the fans," said Prasanth. "We are here to celebrate our hero and the joy his films bring into our lives."

Uniting fans across borders

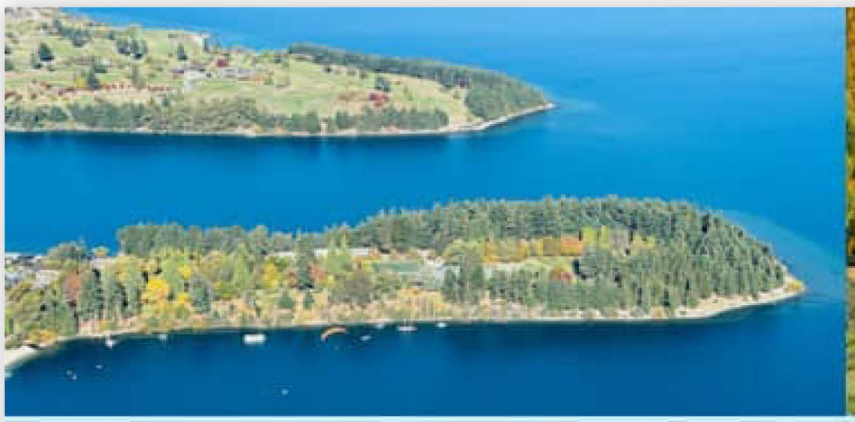
The gathering highlighted how Pawan Kalyan's appeal transcends borders and unites people through shared passion. Fans cut a large birthday cake and shared memories of their favorite Pawan Kalyan moments, creating a warm, community atmosphere.

For many, like Reshma and Vamshi, the event was less about political affiliations and more about coming together to honor a star who has touched their hearts with his performances. "It's about celebrating his journey as an entertainer," Reshma shared. "We're all here because of the joy he brings us."

A memorable night for die-hard fans

The evening ended on a high note, with fans dancing and singing in celebration of their favourite star. The excitement and energy of the night lingered long after, as everyone left looking forward to more such fan moments and, of course, Pawan Kalyan's future films.

Pawan Kalyan's birthday celebration in Townsville was a vibrant tribute to the star's impact as an actor and the loyalty of his fans. It was a night where fans, led by die-hards like Pawan and Sanjay, came together to celebrate their hero in a truly memorable way.





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Dates: 12th – 18th Oct

7 days itinerary for stunning south island:

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2. Te Anau Lake
3. Milford sound
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10. Lake Hawea
11. Queenstown (Finish)

Tour details:

1. **Configured for**: Indian parents and families
2. **Vehicle**: 11-seater van or 8-seater SUV
3. **Languages**: Hindi, Punjabi and English
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Fiesta and Diwali to light up Pine Rivers Park

NICK ATTAM
@the_indian_sun

The Multicultural Fiesta and Diwali Festival of Lights is set to bring a vibrant fusion of cultures to Pine Rivers Park, Strathpine, on 12 October 2024. Organised by the Multicultural Association of Caboolture and Surroundings Inc., this event marks the 25th anniversary of the Fiesta, a fixture in the community since 1999, and promises to be a lively celebration of diversity.

Combining the longstanding Fiesta with the Diwali Festival of Lights, which has been celebrated in the area since 2019, the event will run from 1 pm to 7 pm. Attendees can expect an array of cultural performances, workshops, and food stalls, showcasing the traditions and flavours of the many cultures that enrich the region. The event, now a highly anticipated feature on the local calendar, highlights the strong sense of community that has been built over the years.

The organisers are inviting locals and community leaders to join in the celebration and share their experiences and insights. Whether through performing or simply attending, the community's involvement is seen as key to the ongoing success of the Fiesta. With this year's milestone, the organisers hope to further strengthen the bonds that unite the area's diverse populations.

As the park prepares to light up with performances and festivities, the event serves as a reminder of the importance of community engagement and cultural integration. The combination of Diwali, a festival known for its message of light overcoming darkness, with the annual Fiesta, only deepens the significance of the event in promoting unity and harmony among the local population.

From delicious food to captivating performances, the event is expected to draw people from all walks of life, reflecting the spirit of inclusion that has made the Multicultural Fiesta and Diwali Festival a cornerstone of local life.



The South Asian Genes and Health in Australia (SAGHA) study

THE UNIVERSITY OF QUEENSLAND
AUSTRALIA

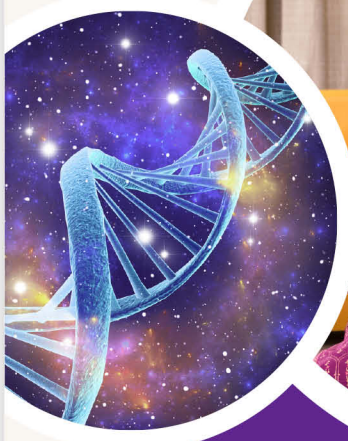
Interested in the role of genes on heart health?

Want to help improve healthcare for future generations of South Asians in Australia?

Register your interest to participate in the SAGHA Study.

DID YOU KNOW?

- South Asians make up ~25% of world's population but less than 2% of genetic study participants
- Greater South Asian representation in research will help improve healthcare for future generations of Australian South Asians





Registrations now OPEN

ELIGIBILITY:

- South Asian ancestry (Indian, Pakistani, Bangladeshi and/or Sri Lankan heritage)
- Living in QLD
- Over the age of 18
- Australian Permanent Residents or Citizens

FOR MORE INFORMATION VISIT OUR WEBSITE: HTTPS://SAGHAUS.ORG/ OR SCAN QR CODE

Contact the research team at sagha@.uq.edu.au or Dr Sonia Shah (Project Lead) at sonia.shah@imb.uq.edu.au if you have any questions.

HREC 2022_HE001388



Dr. Tata and Team:

The Heartbeat of Healthcare in Home Hill


Dr. Dwija Karumanchi


Dr. Mounika Cherabudla

> **In small communities, you get to know your patients deeply, not just as individuals but as part of their families and community. This understanding helps in providing more holistic and effective care"**
>
> DR. SARAT C.V. TATA

INDIRA LAISRAM
@indira_laisram

In the quiet rural community of Home Hill, nestled just outside Townsville, Dr. Sarat Chandra Viswanadh Tata has become an integral figure, not only as a healthcare provider but as a key part of the community.

As the owner and head doctor of Home Hill Surgery, the sole healthcare provider in the area, Dr. Tata's journey from Nellimarla, India, to becoming a vital force in rural Australian healthcare is one defined by adaptability, perseverance, and a deep connection to his patients.

"Working in rural healthcare has profoundly shaped my approach to patient care," says Dr. Tata.

Reflecting on his early days in Nellimarla to his current practice in Home Hill, he emphasises the importance of a personalised approach in rural areas, where advanced medical facilities are often scarce.

"In small communities, you get to know your patients deeply, not just as individuals but as part of their families and community. This understanding helps in providing more holistic and effective care," he adds.

Taking over Home Hill Surgery presented an opportunity for Dr. Tata to enhance the quality of care and bring a fresh perspective to the practice. Despite the challenges—three of his doctors left at short notice in early 2024—he assembled a new team of dedicated professionals, each bringing unique skills and a passion for community-focused healthcare.

Together, they offer services that range from women's health and chronic disease management to mental health and skin cancer care.

Since 2014, the surgery has grown to meet the evolving needs of the community. The COVID-19 pandemic brought the need for adaptability in healthcare, with Home Hill Surgery quickly transitioning to telehealth services and reinforcing infection control protocols.

The Dynamic Team

Dr. Tata acknowledges the importance of his new team comprising—Dr. Mounika Cherabudla, Dr. Priyanka Rapelli, 〈TURN TO #30〉




Dr. Pavani Ganapathi

CONTINUED FROM #29 Dr. Pavani Ganapathi and Dr. Dwija Karumanchi.

Dr. Tata's wife, Dr. Pavani Ganapathi, has been an essential pillar of support. From handling administrative tasks to spearheading community outreach, her involvement has been vital in ensuring the clinic's smooth operations.

"Her unwavering support has allowed me to focus on patient care and strategic development," says Dr. Tata.

The couple's partnership has extended beyond the clinic, with her recently joining the practice as a GP, strengthening their professional and personal bond.

Dr. Mounika Cherabudla joined the team in July 2024. With experience in India, the UK, and Townsville, she specialises in women's health and chronic diseases.

As a GP, she enjoys practicing holistic healthcare—dealing with ailments but also mental and social factors which give her a good opportunity to understand where the disease arises and learn more about the patients through GP care.

She also enjoys working with the community's elderly, which has broadened her understanding of 'complete medicine'.

Dr. Cherabudla's approach to holistic healthcare, addressing not just physical ailments but also mental and social factors, aligns well with Home Hill Surgery's patient needs.

Dr. Dwija Karumanchi, originally from Tiruvuru and trained at MIMS Vizianagaram, completed her Master's in Health Services at Griffith University. She also passed her Australian exams and interviews for a GP position at Home Hill Surgery, joining Dr. Tata's clinic.

She relocated to Home Hill from Brisbane in February 2021 with her husband and their three-year-old daughter.

"Moving with a family has been a significant change in many ways, but I don't regret it since starting work here. Joining Home Hill Surgery as the only female doctor in the practice has been a unique opportunity. I've had the chance to work with many wonderful women who have welcomed me warmly," she says.

"Dr. Tata has TURN TO #31



Dr. Sarat Chandra Viswanadh


Dr. Priyanka Rapelli

CONTINUED FROM #30 always been supportive and encouraging, and all our colleagues are incredibly lovely and supportive of each other. Our main goal is to ensure that patients receive the best care and treatment. As a team, it's our responsibility to make sure patients are well cared for," she adds.

Dr. Karumanchi is also grateful for the community's support and says the positive feedback received from home visits to those in need highlights the impact of their work.

Dr. Priyanka Rapelli is the newest member of the team at Home Hill Surgery. She graduated from Ukraine and worked in her home country of India for three years before moving to Sydney, where she gained her first experience in General Practice.

"I love serving patients and learning new things," she shares, adding that she's already begun settling into the peaceful and welcoming atmosphere of Home Hill.

"Working as a GP at Home Hill Surgery provides valuable exposure to general practice in regional towns, allowing me to experience and practice various aspects of the field. I have also learned about the local culture and traditions, which I believe is crucial for providing effective healthcare to the Burdekin community. I am very glad to be a part of Home Hill Surgery, where we work as a family and as a team," she says.

A Vision for the Future

Under Dr. Tata's guidance, Home Hill Surgery continues to evolve. The practice has expanded its services to include women's health, chronic disease management, mental health, and skin cancer care. The COVID-19 pandemic underscored the need for adaptability, prompting the clinic to swiftly implement telehealth services and reinforce infection control measures.

Dr. Tata's dedication to improving community health and his ability to build a skilled and compassionate team ensure that Home Hill Surgery remains a cornerstone of rural healthcare.

With the new team's diverse expertise and shared commitment to patient care, the practice is well-positioned to meet the evolving needs of the Burdekin community.

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Ganeshotsav 2024

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Hindi Diwas

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हिंदी भाषा के माध्यम से

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- हिन्दी कविता, सस्वर पाठ, संस्मरण;
- हिंदी सांस्कृतिक प्रदर्शन एवं प्रस्तुतियाँ;
- हिन्दी श्रीमद्भगवद्गीता वितरण;
- हिंदी भजन और गाने।

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Indian Consul General strengthens Queensland-India ties at Parliament event

Indian Consul General **Neetu Bhagotia** strengthened India-Queensland ties at a multicultural event in Parliament House

NICK ATTAM
@the_indian_sun

Indian Consul General in Brisbane Neetu Bhagotia took centre stage at a key multicultural function held at Queensland's Parliament House, reinforcing the strengthening relationship between India and Queensland. The event, hosted by Leader of the Opposition David Crisafulli, was a celebration of Queensland's diverse cultural communities, showcasing their role in shaping the state's identity. Bhagotia's presence at the event marked a pivotal moment for the Indian community in Queensland, reflecting the growing ties between the two regions.

Bhagotia's involvement comes at a time when the Indian population in Queensland is expanding, with many Indian-origin residents contributing to the state's economic and cultural landscape. The newly opened Indian Consulate-General in Brisbane, where Bhagotia serves as Consul General, has become an essential hub for fostering diplomatic, trade, and cultural relations. This consulate plays a crucial role in ensuring that the Indian community in Queensland remains well-connected, not only with their homeland but also in their integration



David Crisafulli used the event to outline his party's commitment to multiculturalism, emphasising inclusion and diversity as key pillars for Queensland's future

into Queensland's multicultural society.

The event at Parliament House was more than a celebration of multiculturalism; it was an opportunity to highlight ongoing initiatives aimed at building stronger, more inclusive communities. Bhagotia's presence underscored the significance of India's role in Queensland's evolving identity. Her participation echoed the broader efforts of the Indian government to strengthen ties with Australia, particularly in areas of trade, education, and cultural exchange.

Strengthening Ties with India

As Bhagotia continues her work at the Consulate-General in Brisbane, her presence at such events highlights the shared goals between Queensland and India. With increasing numbers of Indian migrants calling Queensland home, the consulate has been a key player in facilitating smoother relations between the two regions. Beyond diplomatic efforts, the consulate is actively involved in cultural exchange programs, business ventures, and community initiatives that strengthen the bonds between India and Queensland.

The Indian community in Queensland is not just growing in numbers; it is also becoming more visible in various sectors, from business to education and beyond. Bhagotia's involvement in these efforts showcases India's commitment to fostering positive relations with Queensland, while ensuring that the Indian diaspora feels supported and integrated within their new home.

Crisafulli's Multicultural Connect program aligns well with these goals, as it promises to provide crucial infrastructure for communities that have long struggled without permanent spaces. For Queensland's Indian community, this means the potential for dedicated facilities that can serve as cultural hubs, meeting places, and venues for events that celebrate their heritage.

As Bhagotia and Crisafulli continue to champion multiculturalism in Queensland, the relationship between India and Queensland looks set to grow stronger. Both leaders are playing their part in ensuring that multiculturalism remains at the heart of Queensland's identity, while fostering the connections that will drive future cooperation between India and Queensland.

Crisafulli's Multicultural Vision

David Crisafulli used the event to outline his party's commitment to multiculturalism, emphasising inclusion and diversity as key pillars for Queensland's future. The centrepiece of this commitment is the recently announced $5 million Multicultural Connect grants program, aimed at supporting not-for-profit multicultural organisations across Queensland. The program will offer grants of up to $500,000 for infrastructure projects, allowing these groups to establish or upgrade permanent facilities.

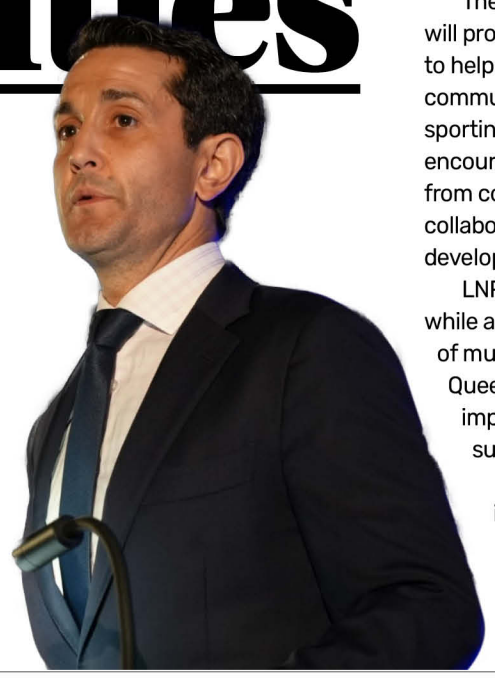
Many multicultural organisations in Queensland operate without the necessary infrastructure to support their growing communities. Crisafulli noted that the Multicultural Connect grants would help fill this gap, ensuring that these organisations have the resources to support year-round activities, beyond one-off cultural celebrations. The LNP's initiative seeks to create lasting support for multicultural groups, allowing them to thrive in permanent spaces, whether for cultural, sporting, or social activities.

The Indian Consul General's participation in the event added weight to Crisafulli's announcement, particularly in the context of Queensland's Indian community, which continues to grow. Bhagotia's presence was a symbol of the partnership between India and Queensland, and the announcement of the Multicultural Connect grants further solidified the commitment to supporting communities like the Indian diaspora.



Crisafulli's multicultural push promises to build stronger communities

David Crisafulli announces LNP's $5 million Multicultural Connect grants, aiming to boost Queensland's multicultural infrastructure



NICK ATTAM
@the_indian_sun

Queensland's multicultural communities could soon receive a major boost, with the LNP announcing a $5 million Multicultural Connect grants program if elected in October. This initiative is part of the LNP's broader "Right Plan for Queensland's Future" and is aimed at supporting not-for-profit multicultural organisations across the state, many of which currently lack permanent facilities.

The program, spread over four years, will provide grants of up to $500,000 to help groups build or upgrade community halls, meeting spaces, or sporting facilities. Crucially, the initiative encourages matched contributions from community groups, offering a collaborative approach to infrastructure development.

LNP Leader David Crisafulli, while addressing a large gathering of multicultural communities in Queensland, highlighted the importance of this program in supporting the state's diversity.

"The Multicultural Connect initiative is about giving these groups a permanent home, helping them celebrate their

〈TURN TO #37〉







CONTINUED FROM #36 heritage and support each other," Crisafulli said. "As the son of migrants, I know how vital it is for these communities to have a place to call their own, to connect, and to thrive. This plan goes beyond one-off celebrations and delivers year-round infrastructure."

Crisafulli underscored that the grants would help growing communities that have expanded from small beginnings, often without a space to host gatherings or organise events.

John-Paul Langbroek, Shadow Minister for Multiculturalism, echoed Crisafulli's sentiment, emphasising that this investment would allow multicultural communities to invest in much-needed facilities.

"Our multicultural organisations are growing, but many lack the facilities to meet their community's needs. These grants will make a real difference, enabling them to establish the venues they need," Langbroek explained. "The LNP's investment will not only provide funds but will also work alongside existing funding streams for services and events."

Langbroek highlighted that this initiative is part of the broader effort to build better communities across Queensland. Multicultural groups are set to play an essential role in fostering inclusivity and enriching the state's social fabric, and the LNP's commitment is positioned as a key step in ensuring their growth.

If elected, the LNP's Multicultural Connect program could see diverse communities across Queensland flourish, with infrastructure that facilitates connection and inclusion.

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For More Information:
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Saritha-0422268407 Sudha-0411398085 SriKala-0420371469 Surekha-0432448871
Srikanth-0402506070 Ravi-0425347529 Kumar-0433360029 Prabhakar-0401085707



From Goan Roots to Aussie Dreams: The Zaneta Mascarenhas story

A trailblazing MP, advocates for diversity, climate action, and workplace culture reform



INDIRA LAISRAM
@indira_laisram

Born to Indian immigrant parents of Goan descent, Zaneta Mascarenhas's story stands out. She turned her dreams into reality by embracing both her heritage and the country she now calls home.

Zaneta made history when she was elected to the seat of Swan in Western Australia (WA), becoming not only the first female member in 101 years but also the first person of colour to hold the position (more on that later).

Her parents moved from Kenya to settle in Western Australia, where she was born in Kalgoorlie. She grew up in Kambalda, "a nickel mining town where Dad was a fitter and Mum was the kindy cleaner."

"When my dad considered moving to Australia, he was told that he had the right skills but was the wrong colour. Despite this, Australia was the country he deeply wanted to go to, and of all the places he could have ended up, he chose the Goldfields in Western Australia," says Zaneta.

Despite being a small country town, Kambalda was rich in diversity. She grew up surrounded by skilled migrants from all over the world, experiencing the best ❮TURN TO #39❯

CONTINUED FROM #38 of both multicultural and regional Australia.

Zaneta's first job, which she loved, was on the checkout at Woolies. When her supervisor bullied her to tears in front of customers, she saw firsthand the importance of being part of a union.

At 18, she moved to Perth to study science and engineering at Curtin University. She later served as Curtin Student Guild President and NUS West President, leading the fight against the Liberals' attempts to dismantle student unions and raise university fees. She went on to work as an engineer on mine sites across regional WA and Victoria for about 15 years.

She recalls, "When I was preselected to work as an engineer and warned that it would be a tough game, I had little doubt that it was something I could handle."

This resilience as a female in a male-dominated field has been a cornerstone of her journey toward running for parliament.

Backed by her experience as an engineer in the field of decarbonisation and climate action, Zaneta was motivated to run for federal parliament to advocate for stronger climate change policies.

She reflects, "I was deeply proud that, within the first two weeks of being elected, we increased our greenhouse gas emissions target to 43% by 2030. We didn't have to legislate this target, but we did it to send a strong signal to both the community and the investment sector. And the truth is, both the community and investors responded positively."

"We've also introduced a target of 82% renewable energy by 2030. I believe my experiences have contributed to achieving these policy outcomes," she says.

Zaneta is enthusiastic about the opportunities decarbonisation offers Australia. She believes Australia should lead global efforts by leveraging its renewable energy and resources, and by evaluating its economy and exports to significantly reduce global carbon emissions.

Zaneta's 2022 election victory, defeating Liberal Kristy McSweeney with a 12 per cent swing, became a cause célèbre. She made history as the first woman to win the Perth seat of Swan in its 101-year history.

"I didn't realise during the campaign that this would be possible until someone pointed it out. It wasn't until a mother and son came to my office, and the mother resembled my own mum, that it hit me. For over a century, people like her would have been sitting across from a white man to advocate for them. That's when I truly understood why diversity matters—we need more perspectives in parliament to address biases and improve policies for everyone," she says.

"And from a cultural diversity perspective, this is the most diverse parliament we've ever had. However, all political parties still need to do more, and I'm proud that in Western Australia, we've elected people from multiple cultural backgrounds, including Chinese, Malaysian, Egyptian, Indian, and Afghan," she continues.

She is using her voice now to highlight the importance of improving workplace culture, drawing from her mining industry experience. "My dad worked in the resource sector for decades. He's from a generation of metal workers where losing fingers in workplace accidents was all too common—he lost half a finger himself. When I joined, the industry had shifted to prioritising safety, even at significant financial costs."

Similarly, she notes the 47th parliament has seen a notable cultural shift compared to the 46th. The addition of a childcare centre in Parliament House, formerly a bar, and changes like votes ending by 6:30 p.m. reflect this transformation.

"There's still more to do. In fact, we've introduced policies in parliament that allow penalties for bullying and harassment, including docking up to five percent of a politician's salary or removing them from parliamentary committees. Politicians are now being held to higher standards."

So how does she balance motherhood and being a community leader? "I feel like the word 'balance' isn't quite right because it's difficult to do it all. A big part of it is being available to your community. I'm fortunate to have an amazing husband, and my mum is super supportive as well."

As a Member of Parliament, Zaneta has much to offer. She shares her experiences from living in Bangladesh for almost a year and what it taught her. "People there love music, there's so much vibrant colour, delicious food, and warmth. Sometimes Western culture feels so grey and monochrome, but I came back with a deep love for bright colours, which I've embraced ever since.

"Visiting family in Goa, India, multiple times during that year also connected me more closely to both Goa and Bangladesh, and that experience stays with me."

Importantly, Zaneta advocates for all Australians, regardless of background, to have the opportunity to reach their full potential through a sense of belonging, good employment, and education.

"One of the most important lessons my engineering background taught me is the principle of root cause analysis. In engineering, unless you address the root cause, you can only mitigate symptoms but never truly fix the problem. This principle applies to government, democracies, and bureaucracies too. If we want effective solutions for our communities, we need to understand and tackle the root causes of issues," she says.

"I was deeply proud that, within the first two weeks of being elected, we increased our greenhouse gas emissions target to 43% by 2030"

ZANETA MASCARENHAS



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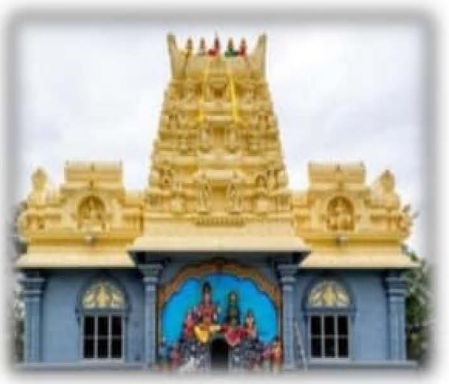
Program	Time
Special Pooja to Lord Ganesha	9.00 AM
Annathanam (Free Lunch)	11:30am
Sankalpam (Homam & 108 Sangabishekam)	4:30 PM
Maha Deepa Arathanai	6:30 PM
Special Vasantha Mandapa Pooja	7:00 PM
Lord Vinayakar Circumambulation Inner and Outer Veedhi (Pathway)	7.30 PM
Annathanam (Dinner)	6:30 PM onwards

Temple will be open from 7:00 AM to 1:00 PM & 4:30 PM to 9.00 PM for Swamy Dharshanam.

For further information please contact T. Surendran on 0422 335 498







Temple Website: http://www.sriselvavinayakar.org Follow us on (click the icons):
4915-4923, Mt Lindesay Highway, South Maclean, Queensland-4280, Australia, Phone: +61 422 335 498

Sikh aviator leads by example for future generations



Sergeant Jagmeet Singh // Pic supplied



OUR REPORTER
@the_indian_sun

Sergeant Jagmeet Singh of 11 Squadron has shared his personal journey, highlighting the unique challenges and triumphs he has faced as a Sikh in the Australian Air Force. Growing up surrounded by military influence, with both grandfathers having served in World War II and a cousin currently in the Indian Army, Singh always knew he wanted a career in the military.

His move to Australia in December 2006 marked a significant turning point. By January 2007, he had already taken the first steps towards fulfilling his dream by visiting Defence Force Recruiting. Shortly after, Singh returned to India to marry Kiran, who then moved to Australia with him. Only four months later, he commenced his basic training at Wagga Wagga.

Singh's journey was not without its hurdles. Upon arriving at Recruit Training School, his identity as a Sikh man with a beard and turban posed unique challenges. He had to seek special permissions to maintain his religious appearance, but thanks to the unwavering support of his superiors, Singh navigated these challenges successfully. He believes he was one of the first to wear a turban in the Air Force, a distinction that came with the responsibility of educating others on cultural practices and the proper way to wear the turban and badge.

Over the years, Singh has seen significant progress within the Defence Force concerning cultural diversity. Policies now better reflect the diversity within the ranks, and ❮TURN TO #43❯

CONTINUED FROM #42 the Article of Faith is included in the dress manual. Singh hopes his efforts have made it easier for future generations to serve without compromising their cultural or religious identities.

As a strong advocate for diversity and multiculturalism, Singh recently participated in a major LGBTQIA+ ally project. His motivation stemmed from his own experiences of feeling different and his desire to ensure everyone feels included and accepted. His ability to relate to those who look or identify differently has been a cornerstone of his advocacy.

One of Singh's proudest moments came during Indo-Pacific Endeavour 2023, where he represented the Air Force in India. Returning to his birth country in uniform, he felt an immense sense of pride. In addition to his logistics role, Singh served informally as a linguist and local guide, helping to bridge cultural and language barriers between the two countries. He recalls fondly breaking down the spice levels and engaging with local children in street cricket, reflecting his dual identity and the connection between his two Interactions with the Indian Navy were particularly rewarding for Singh. Despite the differences in operations, he found common ground and mutual respect, enhancing his sense of community both in India and within the Air Force. This experience was his first opportunity to work in India since joining the Air Force 15 years ago, and it left a lasting impression.

Singh's commitment to the military extends to his family. His oldest son recently joined the Air Force cadets, eager to follow in his father's footsteps. Singh's children take pride in his uniform and are always excited about new experiences and adventures that come with their father's military career.

Sergeant Jagmeet Singh's journey is a testament to resilience, cultural pride, and the pursuit of inclusivity. His story not only paves the way for future generations but also reinforces the importance of diversity within the Australian Defence Force.





Local knowledge, global vision: Aju Mathew's journey in Cairns real estate

***Aju Mathew**, Cairns real estate expert, blends market knowledge & community spirit for client-focused success*

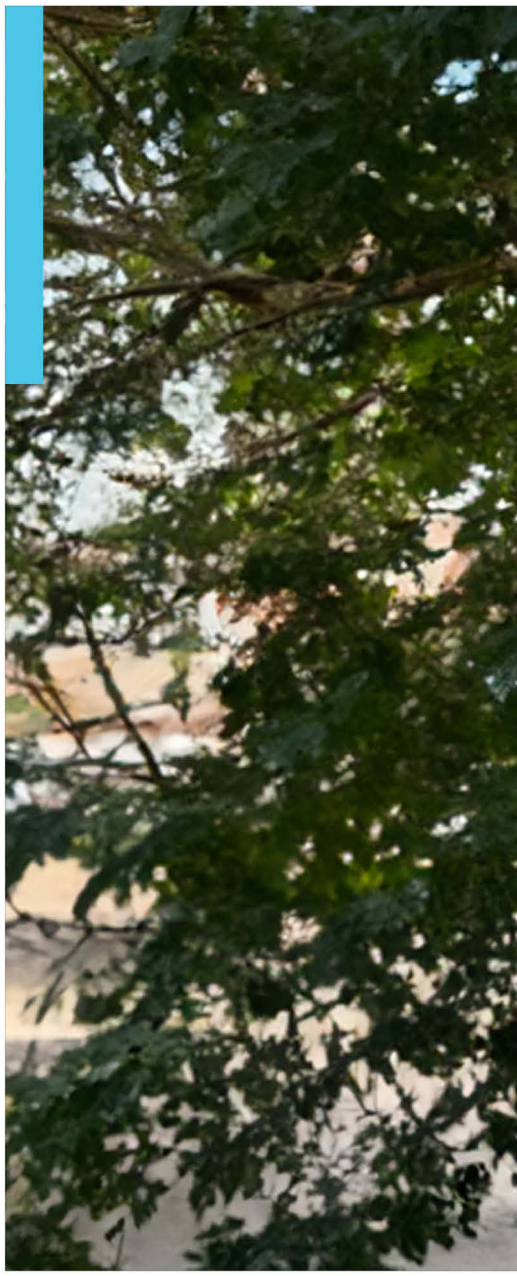


OUR REPORTER
@the_indian_sun

Aju Mathew stands as a prominent figure in Cairns' real estate scene, combining his 13 years as a Cairns resident with a commitment to community-driven initiatives. As part of PowerHouse Property, he has made a name for himself through his unique approach—one that blends expertise with genuine care for people.

Aju's deep involvement with the local Indian community has been instrumental in fostering a sense of unity and support. Co-founding the Cairns chapter of the Global Organisation for People of Indian Origin (GOPIO), Aju's leadership has extended beyond property, touching lives in ways that strengthen cultural ties. His role in supporting the growth of this community mirrors his professional ethos—building relationships, nurturing trust, and ensuring that every client feels valued.

With an academic background that includes a Bachelor of Commerce (BCOM), Master of Commerce (MCOM), MBA, and a Master of 〈TURN TO #45〉



CONTINUED FROM #44 Social Work (Professional Qualifying), Aju is highly qualified in both business and social fields. This educational foundation has provided him with the tools to succeed in real estate, ensuring he approaches every transaction with a deep understanding of both financial and social dynamics.

Stepping into the world of real estate, Aju's background in sales, customer service, and marketing laid a strong foundation. His wide-reaching network has not only facilitated seamless transactions but has also opened doors to a plethora of opportunities for buyers and sellers alike. This ability to connect people with properties that suit their needs has been the cornerstone of his real estate career, allowing him to navigate the often challenging Cairns property market with ease.

PowerHouse Property is well-known for its hands-on, community-centred approach, and Aju embodies this in every aspect of his work. His knowledge of the Cairns market is extensive, and his focus on client satisfaction is unwavering. From finding families their dream homes to guiding investors through the intricacies of property ownership, Aju delivers with precision and care. Whether it's a first-time home buyer or an investor looking for the next big opportunity, Aju approaches every transaction with the same passion and dedication.

As Cairns continues to thrive, PowerHouse Property is expanding its reach by opening new offices in Townsville and Brisbane. This strategic move positions Aju and his team to better serve clients across Queensland, reinforcing their presence in key growth areas.

Cairns itself has seen remarkable growth, with house prices rising by 21 per cent year-on-year, and Aju has been at the forefront of helping families navigate these changes. The median house price in Cairns sits at approximately $596,000, and units have similarly increased, with a median price of $361,000. In a market marked by such high demand, and with rental vacancy rates at a historic low of 0.7 per cent, Aju's expertise is invaluable. His clients benefit from his ability to not only spot the right opportunities but also to secure them in a competitive environment.

Beyond the numbers, Aju is a family man. His strong connection to his wife and three daughters is central to who he is, both personally and professionally. The values he upholds at home are the same ones he brings to his work: honesty, integrity, and a commitment to doing right by those he serves. This connection to family life adds another layer to his service, as he understands the emotional weight of buying or selling a home.

As Cairns continues to thrive, Aju Mathew remains a key player in the property landscape. His ability to balance market knowledge with personal attention sets him apart in an industry that is often fast-paced and transactional. When clients work with Aju, they aren't just engaging a real estate agent; they are partnering with someone who genuinely cares about their success and wellbeing.

Whether guiding families to their perfect home or helping investors tap into lucrative opportunities, Aju's approach is always thoughtful and client-focused. The future of Cairns real estate looks bright, and with professionals like Aju leading the way, local families and investors alike are in good hands.



As Cairns continues to thrive, PowerHouse Property is expanding its reach by opening new offices in Townsville and Brisbane. This strategic move positions Aju and his team to better serve clients across Queensland



Krishna Fest brings Brisbane together in grand celebration

***ISKCON Brisbane** celebrated Janmastami 2024 at The Croatian Club in Rocklea*

NICK ATTAM
@the_Indian_Sun

The ISKCON Brisbane community recently celebrated Sri Krishna Janmastami in grand style at The Croatian Club in Rocklea. Held on Tuesday, 27 August 2024, this year's festival was acclaimed as the largest and most vibrant Janmastami event in Brisbane, attracting a diverse audience for a day of cultural and spiritual festivities.

The Croatian Club, located at 164 Dunn Rd, Rocklea QLD 4106, was transformed into a lively celebration hub. The event featured a captivating lineup of dance and theatre showcases, bringing to life the story and teachings of Lord Krishna through colourful performances. These artistic expressions offered a deep and enriching experience for attendees.

Central to the festival were the sacred rituals that imbued the event with spiritual significance, allowing participants to engage in traditional practices and connect with the essence of Janmastami. The ceremonial chanting of hymns and devotional activities created a reverent and festive atmosphere. **<TURN TO #47>**









<CONTINUED FROM #46>

Visitors enjoyed a variety of market stalls offering gifts, clothing, and the much-loved prasadam—delicious sanctified food that is a staple of ISKCON festivals. These stalls provided not only tasty treats but also unique items that added to the festival's vibrant experience.

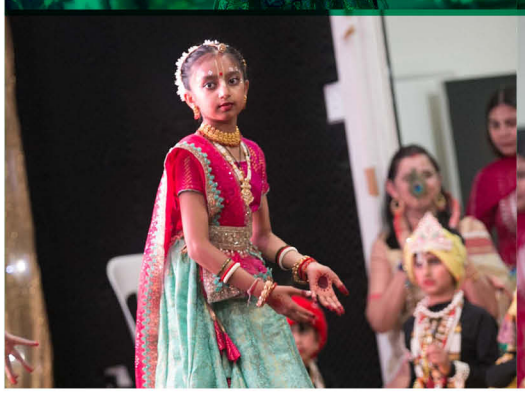
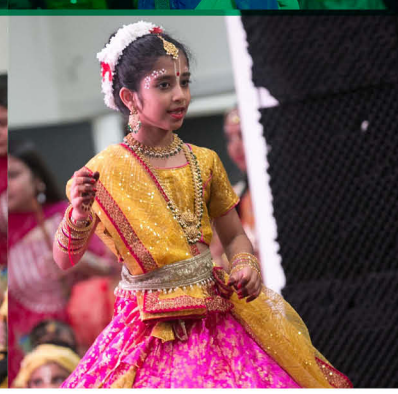
Among the distinguished guests, Milton Dick MP shared his reflections on the festival through social media: "Tonight I was honoured to speak at the Janmastami festival, which marks a significant day in the Hindu calendar. Honouring the birth of Lord Krishna, a symbol of love, compassion, and selflessness. Feeling grateful to be a part of this special occasion with hundreds of locals—that reminds us of the timeless values that bring our community together."

The event was a testament to the dedication of the ISKCON Brisbane team and the broader community's commitment to celebrating Lord Krishna's birth. It served as a powerful reminder of the shared values of love, compassion, and unity that underpin the festival and bring people together.

For those who missed the event or wish to relive the experience, photos and highlights are available on the ISKCON Brisbane website. For more information about future events and celebrations, please contact Somendra Krsna das at 0433 242 148.

The Janmastami festival at The Croatian Club was a significant and joyous occasion that showcased the rich cultural and spiritual tapestry of the ISKCON community in Brisbane.





Krishna Leela brings Brisbane to life with colour and devotion

***BAPS Brisbane** hosted Grand Janmastami 2024, featuring vibrant performances & heartfelt devotion at St Paul's School*

NICK ATTAM
@the_Indian_Sun

Brisbane came alive on 31 August 2024, as BAPS Brisbane hosted the Grand Janmastami – Krishna Leela event. A night filled with vibrant devotion, mesmerising performances, and vivid dances, it was a celebration honouring the life and journey of Lord Krishna.

Held at St Paul's School in Bald Hills, the event attracted families, devotees, and cultural enthusiasts from all corners of Brisbane. Janmastami, one of the key festivals in the Hindu calendar, commemorates the birth of Lord Krishna. The event transported attendees through each chapter of Krishna's life, from his playful childhood to his teachings in the Bhagavad Gita. Through captivating drama, soulful music, and traditional dance performances, every phase of Krishna's story was brought to life.

The centrepiece ❮TURN TO #49❯





















<CONTINUED FROM #48> of the evening was the dramatic re-enactment of Krishna Leela. The performance, set against elaborate backdrops, gripped the audience with its storytelling and beautifully choreographed scenes. Performers in vibrant traditional attire gave life to Krishna's divine tales, drawing cheers and applause throughout the evening.

As the performances came to a close, the festivities continued with a communal dinner, fostering a warm sense of togetherness. Guests enjoyed a delightful meal, and in true spirit of inclusivity, the entire event was free and open to the public, welcoming everyone to share in the joy.

This celebration of Janmastami was more than an event—it became a moment of unity and joy for the Brisbane community, marking the occasion with a blend of devotion, culture, and shared festivity.



Ganesh Chaturthi unites Townsville in spirit and song

Sri Siddhi Vinayak Cultural Centre's Ganesh Chaturthi 2024 *united Townsville in devotion, tradition, & vibrant celebration*





NICK ATTAM
@the_Indian_Sun

Townsville's Sri Siddhi Vinayak Cultural Centre came alive in September 2024 with the vibrant and spiritually charged celebrations of Ganesh Chaturthi, drawing devotees from near and far. This year's festivities were filled with meaningful activities that brought the local community together in devotion and celebration.

One of the highlights of the event was the Ganesha idol-making activity held on September 1st, where participants of all ages gathered to mould their own clay idols of Lord Ganesha. The hands-on experience gave a personal touch to the religious observance and fostered a creative connection with the deity. Alongside this, attendees were treated to a delicious Telugu brunch, with traditional dishes adding a culinary delight to the cultural atmosphere.

The main ❮TURN TO #51❯













CONTINUED FROM #50 celebration unfolded on 7 September, featuring the sacred Ganapathi Puja and Shankabhishekam rituals. Devotees offered prayers, chanted mantras, and performed rituals with conch water, creating an uplifting spiritual ambiance. Throughout the day, the air was filled with the sounds of Aarti and Bhajans, devotional songs that had everyone united in their reverence for Lord Ganesha.

As is tradition, a feast of vegetarian Prasadam followed the ceremonies, providing nourishment both spiritual and physical to all present. The Utsavam, a colourful procession, carried the celebration through the streets, culminating in the Visarjan, the immersion of the Ganesha idol in water, marking the deity's symbolic return to Mount Kailash.

The following day, the centre hosted a unique spiritual practice called Eka Dina Laksha Archana, during which devotees chanted the thousand names of Lord Ganesha, enhancing the deep sense of connection with the divine.

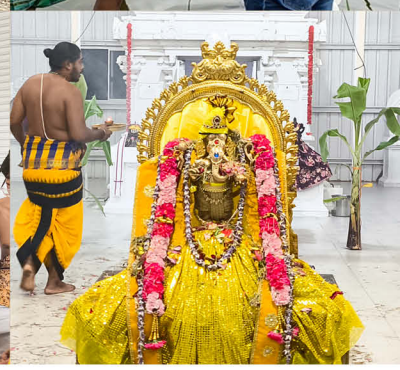
Local dignitaries, including Townsville Mayor Troy Thompson and Division 4 Councillor Kristian Price, attended the event, acknowledging the cultural contributions of the Indian community to the city. Their presence underscored the growing recognition of cultural diversity in Townsville.

The Sri Siddhi Vinayak Cultural Centre's Ganesh Chaturthi celebration provided more than just a religious observance—it was a moment for the community to come together, share in a rich cultural heritage, and strengthen bonds that transcend faith and background.











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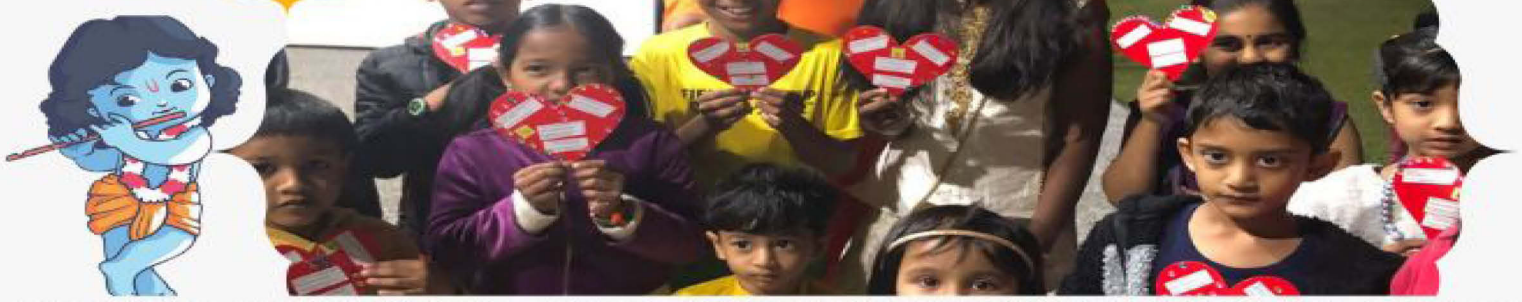
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Kalyanam Priests

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Sri Bharath Solanki
Sri Murali Krishna

Akshadha Preparation

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Mani V - 0422 334 327
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Townsville City Council

Gold City Bulls secure big win at Tropical Big Bash 2024



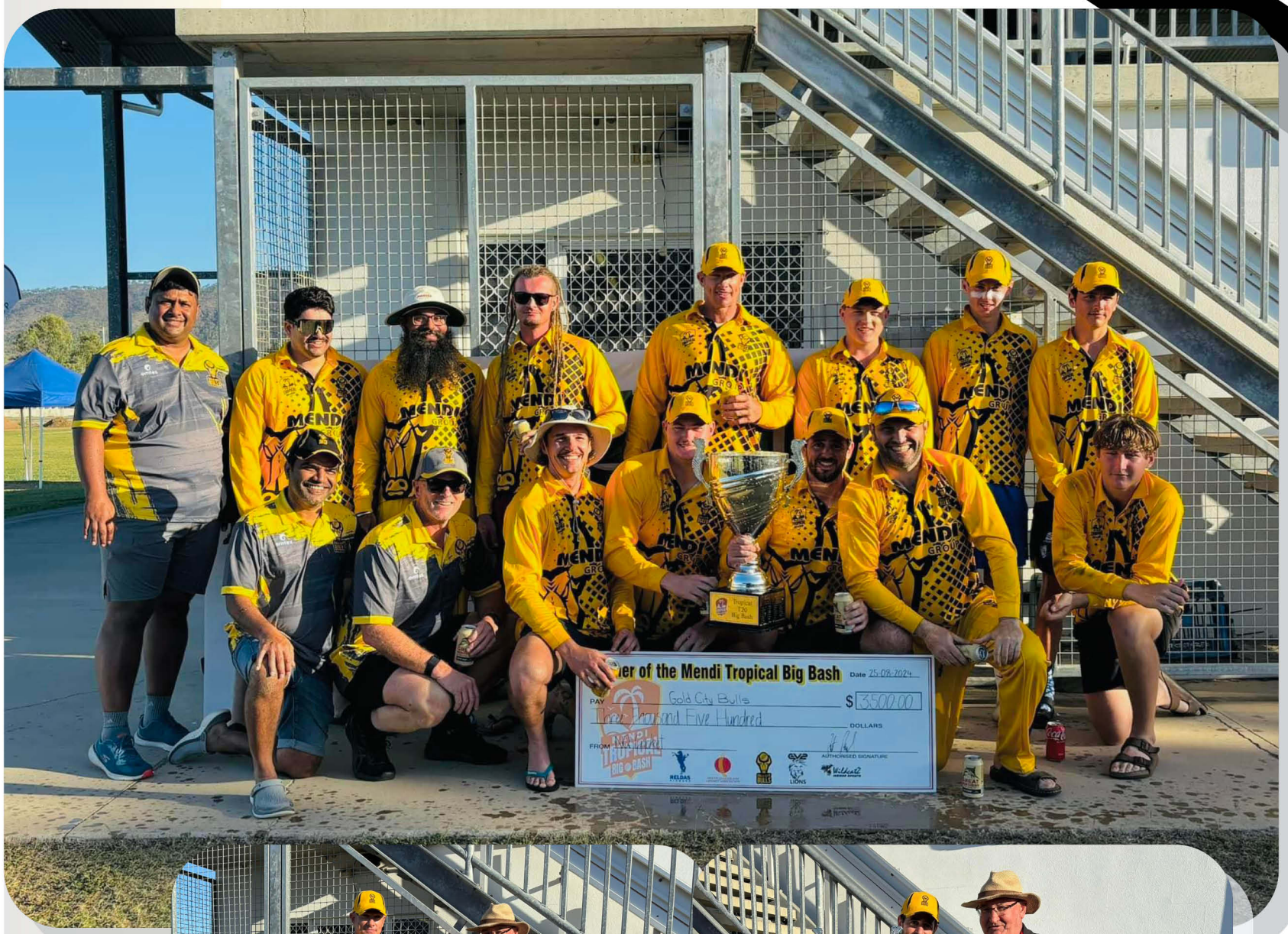
Dr. Girish Basavaraj's **Gold City Bulls** clinched the Mendi Constructions Tropical Big Bash 2024 title



OUR REPORTER
@the_indian_sun

The Gold City Bulls stormed to victory at the Mendi Constructions Tropical Big Bash 2024, capturing the tournament title with sheer grit and determination. Their triumph wasn't just a reflection of skill on the field, but a clear display of the team's dedication and passion for the sport. The Gold City Bulls is owned by Dr. Girish Basavaraj.

Led by captain Sam Lowry, the Bulls, a team representing North Queensland Gold City Dental Clinic, proved to be an unstoppable force throughout the competition. The team's performance 〈TURN TO #57〉



Led by captain Sam Lowry, the Bulls, a team representing North Queensland Gold City Dental Clinic, proved to be an unstoppable force throughout the competition

CONTINUED FROM #56 was nothing short of outstanding, with key players like Daniel Gartrell and Brenton Edwards emerging as stars. Gartrell snagged the Player of the Final award, while Edwards was named Player of the Big Bash, highlighting the depth of talent within the squad.

The Tropical Big Bash, known for its high level of competition, sees teams selected through a professional auction process, similar to international cricket leagues. This adds a thrilling dynamic to the tournament, bringing out the best in players and organisers alike. The Bulls' ability to navigate through the challenges of the tournament with such poise only cements their status as a powerhouse in the local cricket scene.

While their success on the field was impressive, the Bulls are also making waves off the pitch. With special appreciation going to manager Vilton Crasto and coach Darren Frakes, the team's cohesive efforts are clear. The support of the local community and the strong leadership within the team have played an integral role in shaping the Bulls' winning spirit.

The Bulls aren't just a talented cricket team; they're deeply embedded in the community, symbolising unity and sportsmanship. Their involvement goes beyond the game, with initiatives like the Family Day Out and community events fostering a tight-knit bond between players, supporters, and their families. This connection strengthens the team's identity, making them not just a group of cricketers but a community-driven collective that rallies people around the sport.

The Gold City Bulls' recent participation in the Veterans Cricket Masters Tournament further demonstrated their prowess, finishing as runners-up in a competition for players over 40. Their commitment to cricket at every level is evident, with plans to continue growing the game, including the introduction of women's and junior teams.

As the Gold City Bulls bask in the glow of their recent win, it's clear their journey is far from over. With the community behind them, their future looks bright, both on and off the cricket pitch.


ith Unconditional Team
LA TROBE UNIVERSITY
CITY OF MELBOURNE
Blackmagicdesign
G'day India
3AW MELBOURNE

Dalanglin Dkhar brings stories of carers to the forefront

INDIRA LAISRAM
@indira_laisram

As the mother of a 13-year-old autistic son, Dalanglin Dkhar has firsthand experience as a carer and deeply understands the challenges involved.

Too often, carers are overlooked and viewed merely as people doing a job. Dhkar is determined to change this perception.

"What we go through is life-changing. It's a commitment that consumes most of our lives. I know I will be a carer until the day I die, and many others are in the same situation," says Dkhar, who lives in Canberra.

Driven by a strong desire to "share with the community who and what a carer is," Dkhar's new documentary, Unconditional, explores the experiences of four carers. Through their personal stories, the film aims to raise awareness and build empathy.

Hailing from Meghalaya, Northeast India, Dkhar believes it is crucial to shed light on the challenges carers face. When a loved one is diagnosed with a disability or illness, families often step into the role of primary caregivers, taking on lifelong responsibilities without formal training.

These carers, Dkhar explains, bear significant physical, emotional, and financial burdens, often sacrificing their own well-being and social lives. Despite their vital role, informal carers—who provide unpaid care—remain largely unrecognised.

This invisible workforce supports millions of Australians, highlighting the reality that most people will either become a carer or require care at some point in their lives. In 2018, 2.65 million carers in Australia supported more than 4 million people with disabilities and 3.8 million older Australians aged 65 and over (ABS, 2019).

"The journey of Unconditional began with my PhD research, where I aimed to provide an authentic and intimate description of a carer's lived experience. I combined my background in documentary filmmaking with research," shares Dkhar.

She was fortunate to have Carers ACT as the industry partner for her project.

"I am so grateful for the funding. Since I had been out of the industry for a long time, I didn't have the necessary contacts. I then found a local production team in Canberra and focused on interviewing and engaging with the people featured in the film," she says.

Dkhar describes the film as a social impact project. By revealing the real lives of carers beyond stereotypes, she hopes it will foster greater understanding, recognition, and awareness of this often-invisible community.

"Change starts at the community level. While research on carers exists, it often remains within academic and policy circles. My film aims to bridge this gap, making research accessible and raising awareness within communities," says Dkhar. Her Master's project at UTS, Sydney, 'The Narrow Path', won several awards and was screened internationally.



The film is also intended to help various organisations—government, educational institutions, mental health agencies, and others—better recognise and support the needs of carers.

"Due to the exhaustive and continuous nature of this role, and full commitment to the person they care for, carers have little time or energy to advocate for their own needs. Being time-poor and exhausted, most carers sacrifice social activities and community events," says Dkhar.

She continues, "Due to their multiple roles and responsibilities, carers are always short on time to complete daily tasks, leading to stress, anxiety, and burnout. The real cost of caring is not well known by society.

"In 2015, carers saved the government about $7 billion through their unpaid work. If this work had to be done by others, it would be financially unfeasible for the government. Despite their significant sacrifices, carers never question their compensation; they dedicate their heart and soul to providing the best care for those they love."

Unconditional was recently screened at The Indian Film Festival of Melbourne (IFFM).

Dkhar, who is also involved in strategy and policy work with carer advocacy organisations, reflects, "I have learned many things from my son, such as the importance of being present in the moment. He has shown me that life is about more than just being part of the rat race; there's so much more to experience and appreciate beyond that."



Rima Das brings her filmmaking vision to Melbourne's IFFM

INDIRA LAISRAM
@indira_laisram

Noted filmmaker from Assam, India, Rima Das has turned her lens on Melbourne for her latest project. She contributed to My Melbourne, a film series by the Indian Film Festival of Melbourne (IFFM), where directors spotlight real stories of gender, sexuality, race, and disability within Melbourne's diverse community.

Das joined an iconic team of directors, including Imtiaz Ali, Kabir Khan, and Onir, to craft four remarkable short films that celebrate Melbourne's core values of diversity and inclusivity. My Melbourne premiered on the festival's opening night on Thursday.

Das worked on Emma, one of the four films, which tells the story of a talented deaf dancer struggling with self-doubt and discrimination. Her journey takes a turn when she meets another deaf dancer, whose inspiration helps her embrace her uniqueness and discover her true self.

"It was truly a wonderful experience working on Emma. It's an unforgettable film for us because it addresses disability. It was also my first time working with an authentic cast, which makes this film especially significant," says Das, who is in Melbourne for the ongoing Indian Film Festival.

The experience also gave her a profound sense of purpose. She reflects, "Sometimes stepping out of our comfort zones to try new things can be daunting, but through this film, I realised how blessed and honoured I was to work with such incredibly talented individuals. They are truly special, and inclusivity is not just a buzzword—it's a necessity. It's not about sympathy but about empathy, respect, and providing opportunities. I believe this film will spark conversations and drive positive change."

It also allowed her to learn and evolve as a filmmaker. Emma was Das's first film working outside India, and while she initially had some fears about collaborating with an Australian cast and crew, she found that the universal emotional connection among people helped her bond with the diverse team. She describes the experience as a "beautiful challenge".

Das began her filmmaking journey with her first short film, Pratha, in 2009. However, it was in 2017 that she made a significant breakthrough when her film Village Rockstars was selected from 28 entries in India to become the first Assamese film to be submitted for the Oscars. The film also won India's National Award for Best Film and Best Editor.

The film follows the story of Dhunu, a girl from a village in Assam who dreams of owning a guitar and forming a rock band. Das, who grew up in the small village of Kalardia in the Kamrup district of Assam, says, "Sometimes, you imagine things, but having lived that life in Kalardia really helped me, along with a lot of other good influences. I truly lived Dhunu's life."



Rima Das

The recognition changed Das's life. "Not just my life, but our lives," she shares. "It gave me the courage and confidence, especially since I don't come from a film school. There were many doubts, but it provided a kind of conviction and validation, you could say."

She adds, "Now I get access to the film fraternity; my life is easier ... a lot of good things."

Above all, Das is known for her versatility in filmmaking, taking on multiple roles—from writing and directing to editing and costume design—making her a true one-woman crew.

"(But) I didn't have a choice," she modestly explains.

Growing up in a small place, Das recalls an environment where films were "meant to be watched, not made." The idea of becoming a filmmaker never even crossed her mind during those early years.

It wasn't until later in life that Das began to see herself as a storyteller, channelling her passion for cinema into a groundbreaking career.

The shift came when she moved to Mumbai to pursue acting, driven by her childhood passion. However, feeling "limited" by the city's opportunities, she discovered new inspiration in world cinema and realised her true calling was to tell stories. She returned home to start her journey as a filmmaker.

And instead of waiting for producers or "lacking the courage to approach" them, she bought a camera and started making films independently. It gave her freedom, and despite the challenges, Das enjoyed working on her own projects.

Her next project is a sequel to Village Rockstars, which is coming very soon, she shares.

Das's films have long been a kind of a collective hearth, and in that sense, coming to Melbourne is starting to feel the same. "Coming to Melbourne feels like coming home; I always love coming back," she says.



Woolworths net set go

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WHAT IS IT?

Girls-Only Come & Try Skills and Fun Clinic for Girls Aged 8-13

WHEN:

Friday September 27
9am-12.30pm

WHERE:

Riverway Cricket Nets

COST:

FREE

For more info:
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Scan to Register OR Search: QLD Cricket Community Programs - Townsville at www.playhq.com

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TOWNSVILLE CRICKET

TOWNSVILLE CRICKET BLAST HOLIDAY PROGRAM

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Four hours of Cricket fun for Boys and Girls age 5-11. No experience neccasary.

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9am-1pm

WHERE:

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Golf Links Drive

COST:

$45 - includes sausage sizzle & Blast pack

Scan to Register OR Search: QLD Cricket Community Programs - Townsville at www.playhq.com

WHAT IS IT?

Girls-Only Come & Try Skills and Fun Clinic for Girls Aged 8-13

WHEN:

Friday September 27
9am-12.30pm

WHERE:

Riverway Cricket Nets

COST:

FREE

TOWNSVILLE GIRLS ONLY COME & TRY CRICKET HOLIDAY PROGRAM



For more info:
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