

TELANGANA BHU BHARATI

(Record of Rights in Land) Act, 2024



NEW RoR ACT - A NEW ERA FOR FARMERS

COMPLETE OVERHAUL OF THE EXPLOITATIVE DHARANI SYSTEM THAT TORMENTED FARMERS

Bhudhaar

- Just like Aadhaar for individuals, Bhudhaar gives a unique identity number to every landholding

Revenue Services at Village Level

- Revenue Officers in every village to deliver services

Registration of Legal Rights

- Record of rights provision to 38 E and XIII B certificate holders

Permanent Resolution of Land Disputes

- Robust 2-tier Appellate System, Special Land Tribunals
- Free legal aid for poor farmers

Regularization of Sadabainama

- Regularization of pending online Sadabainama applications

Meticulous Mutation Process

- Enquiry-based registration, followed by quick mutation, and opportunity to appeal
- Dispute-free mutation accompanied by map

Amendment of Land Records

- Updating digital records and provision to resolve Part-B cases

Providing Land Rights

- Record of Rights for Gramakantam and Abadi lands

PEOPLE'S GOVERNMENT: PATH TO PROGRESS AND WELFARE FOR ALL

QUOTE OF THE DAY
The pioneer
 Some MLAs are coming to the Assembly after consuming liquor in the morning. These Members don't know what they are saying in the House. A breath analyser test should be conducted on legislators before they enter the House
- Harish Rao, BRS MLA P2

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'We have to wait and watch to see how it pans out'

FOSTERING OF CHANGE & COMPASSION WITH 'SAMARPAN'

'Accent is not just used as a comedy, but emotion in Srikakulam Sherlock HOLMES'

DON'T MISS...

Women donate Rs 75K for orphans
 The Orphan Solidarity Day was celebrated on Wednesday by nearly 300 women from 21 slums gathered at the Mahila Vikasa Sangham Centre in Ramanthapur here. Every year, one day is observed as the Orphan Solidarity Day in each of the 14 such centres by Bala Vikasa women savings group members to celebrate the birthdays of all the orphans who have been adopted collectively by ...

Congress launches CHALO RAJBHAVAN protest



BJP & BRS shielding Adani: Revanth

PNS ■ HYDERABAD
 Chief Minister Revanth Reddy hurled a strong charge against the BJP and BRS governments on Wednesday during the Congress-led 'Chalo Raj Bhavan' protest and demanded a Joint Parliamentary Committee (JPC) probe into the allegations against the Adani Group. Revanth accused both parties of 'shielding' Adani and criticised their lack of accountability to the public. Speaking at the protest, Revanth emphasised the Congress's legacy of safeguarding India's image. "For 75 years, the Congress worked tirelessly to enhance the nation's global image. Adani and the Prime Minister have 'tarnished' it through 'unethical' practices. US investigation agencies reported that Adani bribed US firms, a scandal that Rahul Gandhi highlighted in Parliament. But the Prime Minister remained silent," he said. He alleged that the BRS is complicit in protecting Adani to ensure its survival.

Shah's remarks on Ambedkar trigger uprore



Opposition stalls Parliament, seeks HM's sacking

PNS ■ NEW DELHI
 A massive political row erupted on Wednesday as the Congress and other opposition parties launched an all-out attack on Home Minister Amit Shah for his remarks on B.R. Ambedkar and demanded his sacking. As opposition parties unitedly protested against Shah and stalled both houses of Parliament, alleging that his remarks had insulted Ambedkar and demanding his apology, Shah said that the Congress had distorted his comments under a malicious campaign after the discussion on the Constitution "established" that the opposition party was against Ambedkar and reservation. Parties like the Congress, Trinamool Congress, AAP, RJD, SP, Shiv Sena (UBT) and the Left protested against Shah inside Parliament and outside. Trinamool Congress MP Derek O'Brien submitted a notice to move a privilege motion against Shah in the Rajya Sabha, where the Home Minister made the remarks.

Mancherial civic body to be upgraded as corporation

The state government is reportedly actively considering a proposal to elevate Mancherial municipality to a municipal corporation by merging two municipalities and eight panchayats. Two months ago, the District Collector submitted proposals to upgrade the municipality into a corporation by merging Mancherial and Naspur municipalities, along with eight village panchayats under ...

Rs 2500 per month under Mahalakshmi Scheme

Proposal is under active consideration of TG

PNS ■ HYDERABAD
 The Telangana Government said that Rs 3,549.31 crore under the Vaddi Leni Runalu (interest-free loan) scheme for Self-Help Groups (SHGs) is pending for release for the period between April 2019 and November 2023. This information was disclosed in the Assembly in response to a starred question regarding the provision of interest-free loans to women's groups. The government said that additional measures including the proposal to provide Rs 2,500 per month under the Mahalakshmi Scheme are under active consideration. Under the Indira Mahila Shakti Policy announced in G O. Ms. No: 16 on January 14, 2024, the government is committed to providing interest-free loans amounting to Rs 1 lakh crore to SHGs in the next five years. The Panchayat Raj and Rural Development Department clarified that Rs 298.04 crore has already been released for the period from December 2023 to March 2024. An additional Rs 474 crore is due for payment from April 2024 to September 2024 which is currently being processed for release. The department also confirmed that loans up to Rs 5 lakh availed by SHGs from banks and StreeNidhi institutions are eligible for interest subvention under Vaddi Leni Runalu, as per GO Ms. No: 27 dated March 2, 2015. The reintroduction of the Vaddi Leni Runalu scheme is expected to alleviate the financial burdens on SHGs.

Govt dumps Dharani Portal

Minister Ponguleti tables Bhubharathi Bill in Assembly

KOLISHETTY VENKATESHWARLU venkat.k.warlu@gmail.com ■ HYDERABAD
 The TG Congress Government tabled the Telangana Bhubharathi Bill Records of Rights in Lands-2024 after scrapping the Dharani Portal introduced by the BRS government in 2020 as a one-stop destination for all agricultural land transactions and associated problems. Revenue Minister Ponguleti Srinivas Reddy introduced the Bhubharathi Bill on Wednesday in the Assembly stating that the 'Indiramma Government' is not dumping the Dharani Portal due to arrogance but only to solve problems faced by the people. "People faced a lot of problems due to the Dharani Portal. The Congress said that it would scrap the Dharani Portal after coming to power. However, KCR gave a call to the people to dump the Congress in the Bay of Bengal for declaring that it would dump the Dharani Portal in the Bay of Bengal. But the people dumped the BRS in the Bay of Bengal. Now the Congress Government is dumping the Dharani Portal in the Bay of Bengal. In place of Dharani, the Congress Government is introducing Bhubharathi to solve problems created by the Dharani Portal," the Minister said. Ponguleti said the government included the suggestions of BRS MLA T. Harish Rao (7 pages) and former BRS MP B. Vinod Kumar (5 pages) and kept the Draft Bill for 40 days on the website. The government took the suggestions of MLAs and intellectuals and included them in the Draft Bill. Revenue Minister Ponguleti Srinivas Reddy said the government is planning a survey to determine the current occupants of lands and after that, the lands would be given to the rightful owner to avoid land disputes. The government has proposed to restore 'Jamabandi', the process of reviewing and recording all sales of lands including gifts, transfers and sales of lands at the village level. Jamabandi was stopped after the enactment of the 2020 Act by the BRS Government. Village-level Revenue Officials (VROs) and Village Revenue Assistants (VRAs) were present in 10,956 villages. However, KCR abolished that system. A VRO will be attached to every revenue village to conduct Jamabandi, maintain a record of transactions and protect government lands. A record of all revenue data would be uploaded online. These records will be preserved and maintained by the Village Revenue Official. Strict action will be taken against

Central govt amends aircraft security rules

Against the backdrop of the recent spate of hoax bomb calls targeting airlines, the government has amended the aircraft security rules whereby perpetrators can face penalties and could even be barred from flying. The civil aviation ministry has amended the Aircraft (Security) Rules, 2023. Two new rules - 29A and 30A - have been introduced. In October, airlines received 666 hoax bomb threats while the total number of such threats stood at 999 this ...

Cong govt 'practising untouchability' against Ambedkar: Sanjay

PNS ■ HYDERABAD
 The Union Minister of State for Home Affairs, Bandi Sanjay Kumar, said the Congress Government is 'practising untouchability' and that Babasaheb Ambedkar has become its victim. Hyderabad's Ambedkar statue built with public funds remains unfinished and locked up, he said. Sanjay posted regarding this on Wednesday saying, "Untouchability is being practiced by the Congress Govt - Babasaheb Ambedkar is the victim!! Hyderabad's Ambedkar statue, built with public money, remains unfinished & locked up. No garlands on Jayanthi, Constitution Day, or Punyathithi. No public access! This is the real face of the Congress. From the past to the present, the Congress has a legacy of betraying Babasaheb, and their shameful neglect continues. While the BRS delayed the statue for their priorities, the BJP vowed to construct it within a year of coming to power. After the push by the BJP, construction started and now instead of completing it, the Congress is humiliating and dishonouring Dr Ambedkar's statue in Hyderabad."

Dil Raju takes charge as TSFDC Chairman

PNS ■ HYDERABAD
 Prominent film producer V. Venkata Ramana Reddy, popularly known as Dil Raju, took charge as the Chairman of the Telangana State Film Development Corporation (TSFDC).

IN SOLIDARITY WITH DRIVERS



BRS legislators drive auto to Assembly in protest

PARITALA RAVI MURDER AP HC grants bail to five accused

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA
 The Andhra Pradesh High Court on Wednesday granted bail to five persons accused in the high-profile murder case of former minister and TDP leader Paritala Ravindra (Paritala Ravi). The bail comes 18 years after the incident, which took place in January 2005. While appearing for the petitioners Narayana Reddy (A-3), Rekhamayya (A-4), Ranganayakulu (A-5), Vadde Konda (A-6), and Obireddy (A-8), advocate Swarupa Reddy submitted that in the present case, the applicants are not the prime accused and they are languishing in jail for more than 18 years. She further argued that they have good chances of acquittal as the court below has truly gone on ten-

INDIA CHARGES LOT OF TARIFF Trump threatens to impose reciprocal tax

PNS ■ WASHINGTON
 US President-elect Donald Trump has reiterated his intention to impose reciprocal tariffs in retaliation for the high tariff imposed by India on import of certain American products. Trump made these remarks on Tuesday and also said that India and Brazil were among countries that impose high tariffs on certain US products. "Reciprocal. If they tax us, we tax them the same amount. They tax us. We tax them. And they tax us. Almost in all cases, they're taxing us, and we haven't been taxing them," Trump told reporters on Monday. He made the remarks while responding to a question on a potential trade agreement with China. Trump said India and Brazil were among countries that impose high tariffs on certain US products. "The word reciprocal is important because if somebody charges us - India, we don't have to talk about our own - if India charges us 100 per cent, do we charge them nothing for the same? You know, they send in a bicycle and we send them a bicycle. They charge us 100 and 200. India charges a lot. Brazil charges a lot. If they want to charge us, that's fine, but we're going to charge them the same thing," Trump said at a news conference at Mar-a-Lago.

Govt sought Rs 4,100 crore WB loan for Musi Project: Kavitha

PNS ■ HYDERABAD
 BRS MLC K. Kavitha accused the Congress Government of deceiving the Council and the people of Telangana regarding the existence of a Detailed Project Report (DPR) for the Musi River beautification project. Kavitha unveiled crucial documents on Wednesday, exposing discrepancies in the Congress government's statements and actions escalating tensions. Responding to a question by BRS MLC Shambhipur Raju in the Council on Tuesday, the Congress Government had claimed that no DPR existed for the Musi project. However, MLC Kavitha presented evidence showing that DPR proposals had been sent to the World Bank on September 19 and that the Chief Minister had issued a GO on October 4 to hire consultants for DPR preparation. "The Congress has been caught in a web of lies. How can the government deny the existence of a DPR in the Assembly on December 17 while simultaneously presenting proposals to the World Bank?" Kavitha asked.

City Pioneer

the pioneer

HYDERABAD | THURSDAY | DECEMBER 19, 2024

04



CITY EVENTS

Kuchipudi Dance

By Sri Sal Natarajalaya Academy

Venue

Ravindra Bharathi On: 19-Dec-24 (1:30 pm to 5 pm)

52nd ISAME Forum 2024 Meeting

By Lions International

Venue

Hyderabad International Convention Center - HICC (10.1 km) On: 19-Dec-24 to 21-Dec-24 (10 am)

Reiya Lifestyle Exhibition

By Kanakavalli

Venue

Kanakavalli On: 19-Dec-24 to 21-Dec-24 (10 am)

37th National Hyderabad Book Fair

Venue

NTR Stadium On: 19-Dec-24 to 29-Dec-24

Christmas Bazaar

Exhibition-cum-Sale

Venue

Lulu mall Till December 31, daily at 10:00 am

NYU CARNIVAL

With singer KARTHIK

Venue

Boulder Hills, Hyderabad December 31

Weekend kids cooking camp

Master cooking and baking in 09 fun weekends

Venue

Culinary Guru Institute, Hyderabad. Till January 11, 2025.

Youth commits suicide after losing money in online betting

PNS ■ RANGAREDDY

A youngster tragically lost his life to the perils of online betting, highlighting the devastating impact of this growing menace among the youth. The incident happened in Pettulla (Tulekalan) village under the Ibrahimpatnam police station limits on Wednesday.

According to reports from the police and locals, Chenamoni Sivalingam, a resident of Pettulla village under Ibrahimpatnam mandal, had been engaging in online betting for some time. Over the past few weeks, he became deeply addicted to betting, leading to significant financial losses. Unable to repay the mounting debts and financial distress, he reportedly took the extreme step of ending his life.

Sivalingam allegedly poured diesel on his body and set himself on fire at his home two days ago when no one else was present. He was immediately rushed to Osmania General Hospital by local residents for emergency treatment. Despite their efforts, Sivalingam succumbed to his injuries while undergoing treatment on Wednesday.

The police have registered a case and are investigating the matter further.

Invisible Scars Foundation launches Project Humraahi

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

A Hyderabad-based NGO, Invisible Scars Foundation (ISF), launched Project Humraahi with support from the Infosys Foundation. This initiative aims to support survivors of domestic violence and abuse. On Wednesday, ISF announced an MoU with the Nirmaan Foundation to skill survivors and help them gain financial independence.

Project Humraahi provides free online services to Indian survivors, including awareness programmes, mental health support, and legal counseling, shelter, and livelihood assistance. Survivors can access these services from home, eliminating the need for travel to counseling centers or courts. This model also allows access across time zones.

The initiative addresses financial hardships faced by survivors, offering all services at no cost.

ISF calls for collaboration with corporations and organisations to expand its reach and create safe spaces for survivors. Domestic violence and abuse affect millions worldwide, and ISF aims to support 500,000 survivors in the next five years.

ISF Director, Viivek Verma stated this is more than a helpline; it's a symbol of hope.

He highlighted that ISF is dedicated to raising awareness, policy advocacy, and building a nationwide network to support survivors of gender-based violence.



Information and Technology Minister D Sridhar Babu and National President of ITServe Alliance Jagadeesh Mosali exchanging the MoU's at the State Secretariat in Hyderabad on Wednesday.

TG govt inks MoU with ITServe Alliance to generate 30K jobs

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

In a significant move to decentralise IT growth and promote regional development, the Government of Telangana signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with ITServe Alliance, one of the largest associations of IT companies in the United States, on Wednesday. This collaboration aims to generate 30,000 new jobs in Tier-II and Tier-III towns.

Information and Technology Minister D Sridhar Babu welcomed the partnership, emphasising that bringing IT opportunities

to smaller towns would empower communities and replicate Hyderabad's IT success across the state. He highlighted that Telangana's talent pool is the state's greatest asset, and efforts would be made to skill and reskill the local workforce, reducing migration to urban areas like Hyderabad and easing city congestion.

To support this initiative, the Telangana government has agreed to allocate land in Hyderabad's Financial District for ITServe member companies to set up office spaces. The Minister noted that this aims to create a strong

synergy between regional and urban operations, positioning Telangana as a comprehensive hub for IT growth.

Meanwhile, The National President of ITServe Alliance, Jagadeesh Mosali appreciated the MoU as a vital step toward driving growth and collaboration. He noted that ITServe member companies would benefit from tapping untapped talent in Tier-II and Tier-III towns, creating sustainable employment opportunities. The MoU also focuses on workforce development through skilling and reskilling initiatives to build a strong pool of industry-

ready talent from local communities.

The MoU was signed in the presence of Jayesh Ranjan, Special Chief Secretary, Industries and Commerce and IT Departments, Government of Telangana, as well as members of ITServe Alliance.

This partnership signals a new era of decentralised IT growth in Telangana, with a focus on sustainable employment, infrastructure development, and nurturing local talent in emerging towns like Mahbubnagar, Warangal, Karimnagar, Khammam, and Nizamabad.

Rashtrapati Nilayam to host 'Udyan Utsav' from Dec 29



PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Rashtrapati Nilayam in Secunderabad, one of the Presidential Retreats, will host a 15-day Flower and Horticulture Festival, 'Udyan Utsav', from December 29.

President Droupadi Murmu, who arrived in Telangana on December 17 for a five-day visit, reviewed preparations for Udyan Utsav and the

amenities for visitors on Wednesday.

She inaugurated an eatery by Mitti Café and a souvenir shop at the Visitor Facilitation Centre of Rashtrapati Nilayam, according to an official release.

The President also visited the campus compost unit to observe the compost-making process and expressed hope that this unit would serve as an example by producing organ-

ic manure from garden waste.

The Udyan Utsav, organised in collaboration with the Department of Agriculture and Farmers Welfare, the National Institute of Agricultural Extension Management (MANAGE) Hyderabad, and the Indian Council of Agricultural Research, aims to celebrate nature and promote environmental conservation and sustainability through public participation, the release stated.

Visitors will have the opportunity to learn about innovations and technological developments in agriculture and horticulture by exploring thematic stalls and participating in workshops.

Rashtrapati Nilayam remains open to the public throughout the year, except during the President's southern sojourn, the release added.

Police tightlipped over next step in Pushpa 2 case

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Questions are raised over the next course of action by police officers in Allu Arjun - Pushpa 2 case, which resulted in the tragic death of a woman and left a child in critical condition at hospital after stampede at the cinema theatre. Investigation officers, who remain tight-lipped on the case, have pointed out that further action rested with the Home Department. They also suggested the possibility of approaching the Supreme Court to challenge the four week interim bail granted to Allu Arjun. The investigation team clarified that the Telangana High Court's verdict prohibits intervention by a lower division court, making the Supreme Court the next legal recourse. Meanwhile, three individuals remanded in connection with the Pushpa 2 case, which unfolded during the film's premiere at Sandhya Theatre, are being questioned with one of them having filed a petition for bail. Higher officials overseeing the case told *The Pioneer*, "The case is under investigation, and the next steps will be determined soon."

Food safety officials flag unhygienic conditions at restaurants

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

The Telangana Food Safety Commission conducted inspections in Kacheguda and Narayanguda on Wednesday and found multiple violations.

The Task Force inspected Mubarak Arabi Mandi House in Kacheguda and noted several hygiene violations. Synthetic food colours were found and discarded due to suspected use in prepared food. Raw chicken was stored uncovered on a drain. The kitchen floor was littered with food waste, windows lacked insect-proof screens, and the washing area had stagnant water and accumulated waste.



Task Force officials inspecting a restaurant in Hyderabad on Wednesday

Kitchen lights were without proper fixtures, and refrigerators were unhygienic. Open dustbins were observed, and while food in refrigerators was covered, it was not labeled.

Vegetables and non-vegetarian items were stored together. The false ceiling in the storage area was broken. Food handlers wore dirty aprons, and essential records like pest control, water analysis, medical records, and FOSTAC certificates were unavailable.

The Task Force team also inspected Mehfil Biryani Darbar in Narayanguda and found that walls were greasy and sooty, with patchy floors and stagnant water. Drains were clogged, and refrigerators were unhygienic with unlabeled food. The exhaust system was oily, and racks lacked proper wall gaps. Some food items were stored on the ground instead of racks. Storage walls and floors were dirty. Medical records and FOSTAC certificates for food handlers were also unavailable.

The Task Force team stated that a notice will be issued, and further action will be taken accordingly.



Women from slums with orphans on the occasion of Orphan Solidarity Day celebrations on Tuesday in Hyderabad

Women from 21 slums donate Rs 75,000 for orphans

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

The Orphan Solidarity Day was celebrated on Wednesday by nearly 300 women from 21 slums gathered at the Mahila Vikasa Sangham Centre in Ramanthapur here.

Every year, one day is observed as the Orphan Solidarity Day in each of the 14 such centres by Bala Vikasa women savings group members to celebrate the birthdays of all the orphans who have been adopted collectively by them.

"For most children, birthdays are a time when parents bring cake, and new clothes, and celebrate grandly at home. As orphans, we do not experience that. But Bala Vikasa ensures we never feel left out."

They organise a grand celebration just for us bigger than a regular birthday party. They find a big venue, bring us new clothes, invite everyone, and arrange a great lunch. On this day, all eyes are on us as we stand together on stage. It's a moment of pure joy, and we feel truly special.

These celebrations make us feel valued and loved beyond words," said Rachana, who has been attending the Solidarity Day celebrations every year since she got enrolled into the Orphan Solidarity Program.

In the run-up to this day, many of the women savings groups members of Bala Vikasa from across the Telugu states contribute 100-200 rupees from their earnings as a donation to support the orphans' education.

An amount of Rs 50,000 was raised by the women of the Ramanthapur centre and Rs 25,000 was raised by the women additionally through local donors.

These funds will be pooled together with the donations raised from all the 14 centres and used to support expenses such as tuition, books, clothing, and accommodation, ensuring a brighter future for these children.

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05



Pro-poor approach of RIMS Adilabad earns praise

Rajiv Gandhi Institute of Medical Sciences performed 1,532 complicated surgeries so far in 2024

PNS ■ ADILABAD

Instead of referring complex cases to hospitals in Hyderabad or neighboring Maharashtra, the doctors at Rajiv Gandhi Institute of Medical Sciences (RIMS) has now been successfully performing the most challenging neurology and oncology surgeries. This remarkable achievement has earned widespread praise for RIMS.

The hospital, which once referred complicated surgeries to hospitals in Hyderabad or nearby Maharashtra, has now become a hub for intricate procedures in neurology, oncology, and other specialties.

So far this year, the doctors RIMS has successfully conducted over 1,532 surgeries, a substantial rise from just 646 surgeries performed in 2023.

Notable surgeries include the removal of a six-kilogram stone from the abdomen of Ranjana, a resident of Ankapur in Nizamabad district, on June 17.

In September, doctors at RIMS successfully removed a cancerous tumor from the ribs of a patient, followed by another surgery to extract

cancer cells from the lungs of Abhishek, a local resident. Another remarkable procedure was the removal of a 1.5-kilogram tumor from the neck of a woman named Narsava.

The RIMS has been performing a range of complicated surgeries in oncology, neurology, knee replacements, and plastic surgery, services that would have cost poor patients between Rs 3 lakh and Rs 10 lakh if carried out in private hospitals.

In one case, Naitam Lakshmi Bai from Palsi (K) village under Talamadugu mandal, lost consciousness due to a head injury.

A CT scan revealed a blood clot in her brain, which was successfully removed by neuro surgeon Dr Vijay Mohan.

RIMS Director Dr Rathod Sai Singh emphasised that the hospital has nearly stopped referring patients to other facilities, as it is now well-equipped to handle complicated surgeries.

Govt likely to upgrade Mancherial Municipality as corporation

PNS ■ MANCHERIAL

The state government is reportedly actively considering a proposal to elevate Mancherial municipality to a municipal corporation by merging two municipalities and eight panchayats. Two months ago, the District Collector submitted proposals to upgrade the municipality into a corporation by merging Mancherial and Naspur municipalities, along with eight village panchayats under Hajipur mandal.

In response, the officials of the Municipal Administration asked the municipalities to provide a detailed information for the formation of the Mancherial Municipal Corporation.

To gather essential data, officials have been conducting a survey to assess factors, such as the population of the villages and municipalities, tax revenue, cultivable lands, and other relevant details.

Once the survey is complete, a notification to officially declare Mancherial as a municipal corporation is expected to be issued in January or February. The district officials have proposed merging the following villages with the Mancherial municipality: Vempalli, Mulkalla, Gudipeta, Chandanapur, Narsingapur, Kottapalli, Pochampad, and Namnur.



boundaries of the new municipal corporation has recently gone viral on social media. Gudipeta, which now hosts the headquarters of the 13th special battalion, is also home to a developing medical college and a central school.

Additionally, an industrial hub is being planned near Vempalli and Mulkalla, along with an IT park and an auto nagar in the region. The creation of the municipal corporation is expected to accelerate development in these surrounding villages.

Since the formation of Mancherial district in 2016, the town has been growing rapidly with new colonies emerging on its outskirts.

In recent years, the municipalities of Naspur and Kyatanapalli have already been merged. Although proposals to upgrade Mancherial Municipality to a Municipal Corporation were delayed during the BRS regime due to political reasons, a clearer picture is expected to emerge before the panchayat elections scheduled for January.

According to the 2011 census, the combined population of these villages is 1.63 lakh, but it has since grown to around 2.50 lakh. The total area of the proposed municipal corporation would cover 150 square kilometers.

A map outlining the proposed

Free breakfast scheme launched in Kodangal

PNS ■ KODANGAL

In a significant move to improve the nutritional support for government school students, the state government has launched a free breakfast programme. This initiative, aimed at addressing the needs of students in government schools, follows the recent increase in diet charges for students in school welfare hostels.

The pilot phase of the programme is being implemented in Kodangal, the home constituency of Chief Minister Revanth Reddy. The scheme has benefited a total of 24,000 students across 312 government schools in the region. The Hare Rama Movement Charitable Trust has been tasked with preparing and distributing the breakfast. A large kitchen facility has been set up in Kodangal to prepare the meals daily, and students are arriving at school early to enjoy the nutritious and tasty breakfast. This programme spans several mandals in Kodangal Assembly, including Kodangal, Bomraspet, Daultabad, Dudyala, Kosgi, Madduru, Kothapalli, and Gundumahal.



Legal Aid Society of ICFAI Law School, in collaboration with the District Legal Services Authority, Ranga Reddy, and ANKITA NGO, holding a legal aid camp at Shankarpally in RR district on Tuesday

ICFAI Law School holds legal aid camp for construction workers

PNS ■ RANGAREDDY

In a bid to empower construction workers, ICFAI Law School, Hyderabad, in collaboration with the District Legal Services Authority (DLSA) of Ranga Reddy District and ANKITA NGO from Bandlaguda, organised a Legal Aid Camp at the Community Hall in Ganesh Nagar Colony, Shankarpally Mandal, on Wednesday.

The camp aimed to facilitate the distribution of Building and Other Construction Workers (BOCW) cards, critical documents under the Building and Other Construction Workers (RE&CS) Act, 1996. These cards grant workers access to various government welfare schemes, ensuring better legal and financial support. This initiative stemmed from the joint efforts of the Legal Aid

Society of ICFAI Law School and ANKITA NGO, emphasizing their commitment to social justice.

The event commenced at 12:30 pm and was attended by P. Sridevi, Senior Civil Judge and Secretary of the DLSA, Ranga Reddy District, who served as the Chief Guest.

Addressing the gathering, she underscored the importance of labour cards in enhancing workers' welfare and emphasized the role of legal awareness in securing fundamental rights.

Prof Y Pratap Reddy, Dean of Undergraduate, Postgraduate, and Research Studies at ICFAI Law School, delivered the welcome address, reiterating the institution's dedication to community outreach and social justice.

PM Arun Kumar, an alumnus from the Batch of 2024, attended as a special invitee and

encouraged active participation in similar initiatives to create lasting community impact.

In addition to distributing BOCW cards, health screenings were conducted for the workers, further supporting their well-being.

Members of ICFAI Law School's Legal Aid Society actively assisted in the event, ensuring a smooth process and addressing workers' queries.

The event, anchored by Aishwarya, marked a significant milestone in empowering construction workers. By providing access to welfare schemes, health benefits, and financial security, the camp reflected the collaborative efforts of ICFAI Law School, ANKITA NGO, and DLSA Ranga Reddy in uplifting marginalized communities and promoting social equity.

Principal hits two Class 8 students; parents protest

PNS ■ YADADRI BHUVANGIRI

An incident involving the principal hitting two students with a pipe, resulting in injuries, has come to light at the Lothukunta Adarsha School in the Yadadri-Bhuvanagiri district. Akshitha and Akhila, both students of the 8th grade at the Lothukunta Adarsha School, were drinking porridge on the morning of December 12. Principal Rahisunisa Begum expressed anger over students "dilly-dallying in consuming the porridge and hit them with a pipe. Fearing the consequences, the students did not tell their parents about the injuries and returned to school the next day.

The principal later asked the students how they were feeling and took them to a private hospital. The doctors confirmed that both students had fractures and bandaged their injuries. Since the next two days were holidays, the incident remained undisclosed. On Monday, the parents confronted the principal, who apologised and promised not to repeat such a mistake, offering to cover the hospital expenses.

When asked to explain, Principal Rahisunisa Begum stated that she had only hit them lightly to enforce discipline and that she had also hit them when they were playing volleyball and injured their hands. On Tuesday, the Mandal Education Officer (MEO) Bhaskar visited the school to conduct a full investigation and promised to submit a report to the District Education Officer.



Two girls students who suffered injuries after principal hit them at Adarsha School in Yadadri Bhuvanagiri district on Monday

Ex-CBI JD Lakshminarayana calls for unity among farmers

PNS ■ JAGTIAL

In recognition of role of farmers, former CBI Joint Director VV Lakshminarayana declared, "In this world, the true God is the farmer. There is no VIP greater than farmers." during his visit to Lakshampur village in Jagtial district. Speaking at an event organised by the Youth for Anti-Corruption (YAC) organisation, he emphasised the vital contribution that farmers make to society and the economy.

Drawing inspiration from Mahatma Gandhi's belief that a nation's progress is closely tied to

the development of its villages, the YAC organisation annually honours panchayats that exemplify progress and ethical governance. This year, the focus is on farmers adopting organic farming methods and innovative agricultural practices.

The Lakshampur Farmers Mutual Aid Cooperative Society, founded in 1999 with just 20 members, has expanded to over 500 members, including farmers from four villages. These farmers grow a wide range of crops, including turmeric, paddy, chilli, groundnuts, sesame, and corn, as well as various vegetables and horticultural products. The cooperative provides essential financial support, helping farmers thrive in their agricultural ventures.

In his address at the cooperative, Lakshminarayana underscored the importance of unity among farmers, stating, "Success can be achieved when farmers work together in unity." He expressed pride in the coopera-

tion's growth, adding, "Having 570 members from 14 villages is a matter of pride. Crop rotation is a key for farmers to maximise their profits."

He also encouraged a shift towards organic farming and emphasised the significance of food processing, advocating for local produce to reach global markets. "Without farmers, there is no country, there is no world," he said, calling for legislative changes that support the agricultural community.

The event was attended by Ashok Kumar, retired Agriculture Assistant Director for the Government of Andhra Pradesh, YAC founder Rajendra Palnati, YAC media secretary G Jayaram, Komati Ramesh Babu, Pradeep Reddy, G Hariprakash, B Rajesh, former Producers Organisation Chairman Pannala Tirupati Reddy, Ganga Reddy, and various members of the YAC team, along with the villagers of Lakshampur.

Table with columns: Sl. No., Nature of the land, Extent of land, Name of the Pattadar & Enjoyer, Date of issue, Extent. Includes Government of Telangana Revenue (LA) Department Form-VI Preliminary Notification and Schedule.



Students having lunch at Zilla Parishad School at Bazarhatnur in Adilabad district in open space on Tuesday

Students forced to have lunch in open space

PNS ■ ADILABAD

In the district of Adilabad, at the Zilla Parishad Secondary School in the town of Bazarhatnur on Tuesday, students have their midday meal under the open space. The school has over 250 students, and they are forced to eat on the school grounds under scorching heat.

In the District Parishad Secondary School in Bazarhatnur, over 250 students have been sitting under

the scorching heat every day to have their lunch.

During the previous government, as part of the "Mana Ooru - Mana Badi" programme, a dining hall was sanctioned and walls were also constructed. The work, however, did not progress for reasons best known to authorities.

As a result, the students have no shade to sit in while eating and they are forced to have their lunch under the hot sun.



Former CBI Joint Director VV Lakshminarayana with students at Lakshampur village in Jagtial district on Tuesday



FIRST COLUMN

THE POWER OF POSITIVITY

By embracing spiritual self-reflection and cultivating positivity, we can rise above turmoil



RAJYOGI BRAHM KUMAR NIKUNJ JI

Nowadays there seems to be a crisis, disappointment and conflict of duality at every step of life. How do we deal with this? How do we prevent the self from becoming pessimistic or disheartened? Today the great modern disease of human consciousness is all about looking outward to find means to derive happiness without examining the inner self, values, attitudes and motives; relying and depending more on the external signals and hoping for the best. However, in practicality, life cannot be created with such hopes, as there are no shortcuts to achieving happiness. In today's world, no individual and nothing can create a permanent state of wellbeing within us, as it is our prerogative and responsibility. The external factors can contribute, guide and inspire us but ultimately our life is what we make out of it.

True happiness or a lack of it does not come from external things but from what is inside oneself. For example, money is not the means to happiness nor is it the cause of one's unhappiness. In reality, it is our attitudes and values that determine the use or misuse of external instruments, whether that is money, a person, an event or an object. A life that has value and is worthy of living is only possible when there is a reflective examination through which there can be illuminating change. So, to reorientate our consciousness, we would require a consciousness based on self-knowledge i.e the knowledge of the spiritual self which creates self-respect and positivity, enabling us to gain the right perspective on life which in turn would help us to deal with any kind of negativity in a balanced and less painful way. Accordingly, with positivity, we



experience inner strength to cope with external issues affecting the sense of balance in our lives. When we are more positive towards ourselves, obviously we express the same attitude towards others and in all situations. Inner strength also comes when we interact with others in such a way that love, peace and happiness are honestly expressed and experienced.

The pivotal point is "honesty" because there cannot be a sense of fulfillment through falsehood, imitation or duality expressed through attitude. Hence the need of the hour is to live a life based on "Eternal Spiritual Principles" that would allow us to keep a positive attitude towards the self and others, thereby making our life joyful rather than conflicting or a bundle of confusion. Spirituality is not a system or technique of worship or ritual, it is in essence, knowing how to lead a life and through this knowing there is happiness. A spiritual person has found that spark of eternal reference within, which gives him or her not only deep contentment but also a sense of purpose. The first prerequisite for spirituality is a life that functions appropriately and thinks and cares about one's self in the most decent way. Thinking and caring about one's self inappropriately creates too much dependence on others, too many needs, too many demands, too much possessiveness.

So the right way to proceed is to first examine oneself and then acknowledge the positive and the negative traits within us. By doing so, we get the courage to change whatever needs to be transformed without any kind of fear and, without pretence. The basis of successful change for betterment is to understand the attitudes, feelings and motives that drive us for the change by accepting the original positivity of the self, the immortal goodness of the soul. It is this goodness of the self that forms the foundation of our dignity as human beings. The expression of this original goodness in our life is what is called 'divinity' which makes us truly human. So let us awaken the expression of the divine within us to live a fulfilling joyful life amidst all the chaos & crisis around.

(The writer is a spiritual educator and popular columnist; views are personal)

Education: From Kothari Commission to NEP-2020



J S RAJPUT

The educators and policymakers are called upon to transcend ideological divides and lead India toward inclusive progress and innovation



The most comprehensive initiative in education in post-independence India was the report of the National Commission on Education, usually referred to as the Kothari Commission. It submitted its report entitled "Education for National Development" on June 29, 1968. The first two sentences say it all: "The destiny of India is now being shaped in its classrooms. This, we believe, is no rhetoric." It was this report that led to the first national education policy of 1968. For the first time, science and mathematics became compulsory for both boys and girls up to tenth standard! Yes, it was generally believed that only boys could handle the tough subjects of science and mathematics, and girls could opt for lighter options of spinning weaving, home science; and the like! The compulsory study of science and math was resisted and opposed as being unjust and unfair to girls! This one change transformed the lives of millions of girls and has brought global accolades to the Indian advancements in the world of science, technology, ICT and space research. Policies once formulated and formalised deserve support in vigilant implementation, persistent monitoring, and scrutiny based on their relevance 'in the great enterprise of national reconstruction'. India today has great challenges ahead, both national as well as global. It has the manpower and enough experience to confront these successfully. In the third decade of the 21st century, it's the quality of education and skill acquisition that would equip India shall remain its prime contributory tool against every challenge. The content and process of education shall have to specifically equip itself against nurtured negativity, increasing mutual distrust and ballooning bitterness in public life. Solutions shall certainly not emerge from those that thrive only on negativity and are ill-equipped to see light and positivity around them.



THE CONTENT AND PROCESS OF EDUCATION SHALL HAVE TO SPECIFICALLY EQUIP ITSELF AGAINST NURTURED NEGATIVITY, INCREASING MUTUAL DISTRUST, AND BALLOONING BITTERNESS IN PUBLIC LIFE

Who must come forward and accept responsibility to normalise such an unacceptable socio-cultural environment? Why not ask the Gandhi ji? Once, before independence, one Dr Mote posed a query to Mahatma Gandhi: what he thought was the greatest problem facing his country! The expected answer could have been, in those days, related to slavery, poverty, illiteracy, ill health, or in the social context. While narrating it in his Gandhi Katha, Narayan Desai tells the audience: that the answer was the 'callousness of the intellectuals'. Narayan Desai Goes ahead: "Give it a thought. If we stand by and watch the poor blaming their poverty on fate, Gandhi is relevant today. If we can see the callousness of the intellectuals, then Gandhi is relevant today. What are the problems according to intellectuals? 'Why X or Y has become Vice-Chancellor and not me! They think only of this and are unaware of other social issues'. Their concerns for critical social, cultural, social cohesion and religious amity are minimal. One's obvious inference would be that solutions to major national concerns shall - and must - emerge from institutions and the educated and the learned responsible for attaining their stated objectives. It includes the dilapidated structures running Sarkari schools, much sought-after private schools, and the universities. It also includes the glittering campuses of national institutions that have brought international repute to our educational enterprise. So, mainly it points out to teachers; from primary schools to

professors of the universities, and researchers working in institutions of science, technology, psychology, social sciences and every other area. One wishes each one of them recalls the assessment of Gandhi shuns away the dreaded callousness and strives to create centres of dialogue and discussions on improving the life and living standards of our people, particularly the 'last man in the line' who was so dear to the Mahatma! At first glance, the existing climate makes such a transformation rather impossible! Despite all the odds, sincere attempts must be launched to create institutional think tanks with open boundaries that provide for healthy academic, scholarly and intellectual deliberations, not constrained but individual ideological affiliations. For an academic, who shapes the lives of numerous individuals, it is the well-being of others that must precede his own! And this is no rhetoric or a cliché in the Indian context and culture. For a broad-minded person, this becomes a must, an integral part of his thought and action and hence, an achievable premise. This is the main task of every teacher preparation institution, from where it shall percolate to schools via teachers trained there, and then to the establishment and the society. After the education policies of 1968, 1986 and 1992, and a gap of around three decades, another policy formulation comes before the nation in the shape of the National Education Policy; NEP-2020. It has been under implementation for the last four years. Having

been associated with the implementation and also policy formulations, one could venture to infer that the NEP-2020 was prepared with unprecedented enthusiasm from teachers, scholars academics institutions, organisations and individuals. As the process was long overdue and rightly very extensive, it inspired active participation from practically every section of society. Unfortunately, its implementation stands hampered in certain states on grounds that may not necessarily be academic. India has a developed well-knit interactive system of the national and state-level bodies and institutions that have learnt over the years how to arrive at a national consensus in the sectors of education and teacher education. This institutional strength of consultation, collaboration and cohesion need not be diluted in cases where the union and state governments belong to different ideological affiliations. Intellectuals in education and research must convincingly internalize that they are making the future of individuals and creating the future of India. No one else is destined and better placed than them to reconstruct India. The moment each one of them expands his horizons, thinks holistically, and takes a long-term view, the road ahead would emerge very clearly; how to proceed individually and also collectively to see the intellectual callousness and lead the nation on the right path. *(Professor Rajput works in education, social cohesion and religious amity. He is Atal fellow with the PMML, New Delhi; views expressed are personal)*

Guarding digital India: The urgent need for cybersecurity in a rapidly evolving digital space

India has the potential to lead the world in cybersecurity innovation, but achieving this requires more than technological solutions

In the fast-evolving digital landscape of India, a silent battle is being fought—not with traditional weapons but through malicious code, complex algorithms, and increasingly sophisticated cyberattacks. As the country embraces its "Digital India" initiative, the rise of cyber threats demands immediate attention. Protecting the digital future requires strong cybersecurity frameworks, skilled professionals, and widespread public awareness. The call for "Digital Guards" or "Cyber Warriors" has never been more urgent. The scale of the digital threat is staggering. The Indian Computer Emergency Response Team (CERT-In) recorded 53,117 security incidents in 2017. By October



VINAY PATHAK

2023, this number soared to an alarming 1.32 million—a twentyfold increase that exposes critical national vulnerabilities. Globally, the situation is no less concerning. Operations like INTERPOL and AFRIPOL's 2024 Operation Serengeti, which arrested over 1,000 cybercriminals across 19 African nations, underscore the scale of the problem. These operations identified over 35,000 victims and uncovered

financial losses nearing \$193 million, demonstrating the global reach and devastating impact of cybercrime. Phishing remains a primary weapon for cybercriminals, accounting for 22 per cent of all incidents. These attacks manipulate victims into revealing sensitive information or downloading malicious software. For instance, 15 SpyLoan malware apps on Google Play, downloaded over 8 million times, went beyond data theft to harass and extort victims, underscoring cybercriminals'

growing ingenuity. The economic toll of these attacks is devastating. About 65 per cent of Indian enterprises have been forced to pay ransoms to recover critical data, with average demands reaching \$4.8 million. Recovery costs add another \$1.35 million per incident, straining even large corporations. Smaller businesses, lacking resources for robust cybersecurity measures, are particularly vulnerable. This systemic vulnerability has been termed the "cybersecurity poverty line," where approximately 60 per cent of Indian companies lack the infrastructure and expertise to defend themselves against cyber threats. High-traffic online shopping periods, such as Black Friday and Cyber Monday, are prime



targets for cybercriminals. During these events, fraudsters employ phishing scams, fake e-commerce websites, and malware to exploit consumers and businesses alike. Recent high-profile incidents highlight these vulnerabilities. In November 2024, a ransomware attack on Blue Yonder disrupted Starbucks' operations, forcing a return to manual processes. Similarly, McLeod Russel's system com-

promise sent shockwaves through the corporate sector, emphasising the interconnectedness of digital systems and the widespread disruptions that a single attack can cause. India's cybersecurity preparedness is worryingly insufficient. Only 4 per cent of Indian enterprises have robust infrastructure capable of withstanding advanced attacks. This shortfall is a national security concern, as cyberattacks transcend corporate interests, threatening essential services and critical infrastructure. Initiatives like the Cyber Challenge 2024, a joint effort by the Delhi Police and CyberPeace Foundation, offer hope. This programme engages developers, engineers, and cybersecurity experts to

craft innovative solutions using cutting-edge technologies such as AI, blockchain, and quantum computing. Collaboration with institutions like DRDO, MeITY, and the National Forensic Science University underscores the comprehensive approach needed to address these challenges. Experts emphasise that cybersecurity must move beyond being an IT department's responsibility to become a core component of every organisation's strategy. This shift involves continuous employee training, regular security audits, investments in advanced technologies, and fostering a culture of vigilance. Drawing inspiration from global models like the European Union's GDPR, India could implement strin-

gent cybersecurity standards, offering subsidies for small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) to invest in security measures and penalising negligence in cyber protection. As digital transformation accelerates across sectors such as finance, healthcare, education, and government services, robust cybersecurity is no longer optional—it is a fundamental necessity. The path forward demands a collaborative effort. Government agencies, private enterprises, educational institutions, and cybersecurity professionals must unite to build a resilient digital ecosystem. *(The writer is Assistant Professor Indian Institute of Information Technology sonapat Haryana; views are personal)*

Hyderabad



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FOSTERING CULTURE OF CHANGE & COMPASSION WITH 'SAMARPAN'

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In the depths of adversity, a spark of compassion can ignite a movement. For Courtney Lalotra, founder of Samarpan Trust, that spark was fanned into a flame by a poignant encounter with an abandoned special-needs child during her volunteer work in India. She has devoted her life to uplifting marginalised communities through a multi-faceted approach to education, healthcare and social welfare. The child's death left a profound impact on Lalotra and ignited her desire to address the systemic issues affecting vulnerable populations. "Caring for that child opened my eyes to the glaring gaps in the social welfare system," Lalotra shared in an exclusive chat with *The Pioneer*, as she goes on to add, "Millions of children and women were suffering due to systemic neglect and I knew something had to be done."

This experience became the foundation of Samarpan Trust, which was built to uplift and empower women, children and families in vulnerable situations. She elaborated, "The struggles I witnessed within these communities—and the realisation of their immense potential—motivated me to create a platform that protects, educates and empowers. At its core, Samarpan is driven by the belief that every individual deserves dignity, opportunity and a chance to thrive, no matter their circumstances." The trust stands out for its integrated approach, addressing healthcare, education and social welfare as interconnected pillars of development. She explained that the organisation combines healthcare initiatives with educational programs, ensuring that children are healthy enough to attend school and succeed academically. "Healthcare, education and social welfare are inseparable. For example, when we provide healthcare support to children, we're not just treating illnesses—we're enabling them to learn, grow and dream without limitations. Similarly, our skills training programs for women tackle systemic poverty and inequality, empowering families to become self-reliant and resilient," she remarked.

This approach reflects the trust's commitment to fostering sustainable development. She believes that by addressing these interconnected challenges, the trust creates a ripple effect of positive change within the community.

They employ a comprehensive system to assess its impact, using both quantitative and qualitative metrics. The trust places equal emphasis on qualitative outcomes. "For us, the impact is more than just numbers. It's about real stories of transformation—women becoming financially independent, children achieving educational milestones and families breaking free from cycles of poverty," she explained.

To refine and improve its programs, Samarpan conducts regular reviews, incorporates community feedback. "We see our role as dynamic. We're constantly learning and evolving to meet the needs of the communities we serve."

Healthcare forms a crucial component of their initiatives, as access to quality care remains a significant challenge for marginalised communities.

They have partnered with local doctors to organise free medical camps, dental health checkups and health awareness programs.

"We also focus on women's health," Lalotra said. "Through our sanitary pad distribution drives, we address menstrual hygiene—an often overlooked yet essential aspect of women's well-being." These efforts ensure that even the most economically disadvantaged individuals have access to essential healthcare services.

Then comes education, which remains a cornerstone of their work. Its Girls' Education Program (GEP) sponsors the education of underprivileged girls at risk of child labour, early



marriage, or dropping out of school. "We go beyond sponsorship by offering career counselling, computer training, English courses, job training and internships. This comprehensive support system gives girls the tools they need to succeed."

They also operate free schools for the children of daily wage laborers, where students are taught up to a second-grade level before being enrolled in government schools. Special needs daycare centers provide safe spaces for children with disabilities, where individualised education plans are designed by experts.

The trust's Virtual Interaction Interchange program connects children with global volunteers via video calls, helping them improve their English and confidence. Adult literacy programs further extend the trust's mission, ensuring that even parents in marginalised communities have the opportunity to learn to read and write. Samarpan's vocational training programs in tailoring, handicrafts and other skills have been pivotal in empowering women to achieve economic independence. "We've partnered with international markets to ensure that these women earn fair wages for their handmade goods. It's not just about income—it's about dignity, leadership, and creating change-makers within their communities."

Leadership development programs equip women with the confidence and skills to advocate for their rights and inspire others. "When women become leaders in their communities, the ripple effect is extraordinary," she explains. Let's not forget sustainability, which is a key priority for Samarpan. Lalotra explains how the trust builds community ownership and develops scalable models, such as tuition centres run by program graduates. "One of our graduates, Anita, started a study center on the roof of her slum home. It's these grassroots efforts that inspire us and prove the impact of our programs," she says.

Despite challenges such as resource constraints and cultural stigmas, the founder believes in the importance of community advocacy and flexibility. "Listening to the community and involving them in the solution design is critical. Every challenge is an opportunity to innovate and grow."

Looking ahead, Samarpan plans to expand its initiatives into mental health counselling, environmental sustainability and digital education. "We're exploring e-learning centers that focus on AI and coding to bridge the digital divide in rural areas. The future lies in equipping communities with the tools to thrive in a rapidly changing world."



In an exclusive chat with *The Pioneer* for our special segment of **Community Wise**, **Courtney Lalotra**, the visionary founder of Samarpan Trust, delves into the transformative journey of her organisation, which has been at the forefront of empowering marginalised communities in India through a multi-faceted approach to education, healthcare and social welfare



Ayurveda's global renaissance

In a world gripped by chronic illnesses, mental health crisis and a burgeoning demand for holistic wellness, an ancient Indian healing tradition is quietly making its way into the heart of modern healthcare. Ayurveda, a 5,000-year-old system of medicine, is experiencing a renaissance that stretches far beyond its Indian roots, finding resonance in Western societies and influencing global health landscapes. Sitting at the intersection of science, sustainability and spirituality, Ayurveda offers a holistic paradigm that prioritizes balance—of body, mind, and spirit—over symptom management. For centuries, Ayurveda's principles of prevention, nature alignment and personalised care were embedded within India's cultural tapestry. Today, in an era of integrative healthcare, its appeal transcends borders.

"With chronic disease and lifestyle disorders on the rise, particularly in Western nations, Ayurvedic medicine offers a new and powerful context for illness," says Dr. Monica B Sood, the visionary CEO of Navjivan Group and Chairperson of the National Unity & Security Council in India. "It advocates addressing the primary causes of afflictions, not just treating symptoms. This perfectly aligns with today's global consciousness around prevention and sustainable living." Ayurveda's principles have been adopted piecemeal across global wellness trends—yoga, mindfulness and plant-based diets—but its broader philosophy has long struggled to gain mainstream credibility in the West. Skepticism around its scientific rigor and misconceptions about its efficacy have often relegated it to niche circles.

The landscape, however, is shifting. With initiatives such as scientific research collaborations, university courses abroad, and cross-border trade of certified Ayurvedic products, the system is inching closer to global acceptance. "Scientific research on Ayurveda has steadily increased," Dr. Sood explains, "paving the way for meticulous and standardised implementation in Western societies." The result is a new openness toward this ancient science, particularly in areas grappling with unsustainable healthcare models. "Ayurveda's compatibility with contemporary sciences like nutrigenomics, psychology and immunology allows it to adapt seamlessly to diverse cultural and geographical settings," she adds.

This integration was a focal point during Dr. Sood's recent address at the UK Parliament, where she advocated for closer India-UK collaborations in health and wellness. "I highlighted India's transformational economic trajectory and immense potential to forge partnerships with the UK in health, education, and green energy," she says. "Combining India's historic work in preventive medicine with the UK's innovations in medical research can lead to solutions for global challenges—from mental health and chronic conditions to pandemic readiness."

Specifically, Dr. Sood envisions joint research initiatives and innovation hubs bridging ancient and modern sciences. "I hope this dialogue leads to tangible outcomes, such as collaborative medical research, Ayurvedic integration into mainstream care, and accessible healthcare solutions for underserved populations." Despite its growing traction, Ayurveda still faces significant hurdles. Scientific validation through rigorous clinical trials remains



limited, and a lack of standardised regulatory frameworks undermines trust. Misconceptions persist, particularly in urban centers where allopathic medicine dominates. "There's skepticism about Ayurveda being unscientific," Dr. Sood concedes. "We need scientific backing, frameworks for integration, and public education to overcome these barriers."

Globalisation adds another layer of complexity. "Many traditional practices were passed down orally and face extinction. Meanwhile, inconsistent quality control and overharvesting of medicinal plants threaten sustainability. We need policy reforms, global collaboration, and tailored responses to safeguard indigenous knowledge." These challenges are particularly pronounced in efforts to establish Ayurvedic hospitals abroad. Cultural barriers—dietary habits, language differences, and entrenched preferences for allopathy—can slow progress. Yet, Dr. Sood sees an opportunity. "These hospitals can act as ambassadors of Ayurveda," she explains. "They can retain authenticity while adapting to local customs, offering structured, scientifically validated care that bridges cultural gaps."

In remote and underserved regions, digital platforms could hold the key to Ayurveda's accessibility. Combining ancient principles with next-generation technology, these platforms promise to revolutionise Ayurvedic care. "Artificial intelligence can enable personalised health recommendations based on individual prakriti," Dr. Sood says, referring to Ayurvedic body types. "Blockchain can authenticate medicinal products, while telemedicine can connect patients with skilled practitioners globally."

Wearable technology could integrate Ayurvedic principles into real-time health tracking, while virtual platforms may foster global communities where patients, practitioners, and researchers collaborate. "Such platforms will drive large-scale studies and scientific validation," she emphasises. "If applied strategically, Ayurveda could evolve into a global wellness movement." Amid growing mental health concerns worldwide, Ayurveda offers a refreshingly holistic approach. By addressing the mind-body connection, it emphasises prevention, resilience and daily practices to foster mental well-being. "Ayurveda's philosophy of balance sees mental health not as isolated brain chemistry but as a dynamic interplay of physical, emotional and spiritual factors," Dr. Sood explains.

Practical interventions, such as incorporating dinacharya (daily routines) and pranayama (breathing exercises) into school curriculums, could transform educational spaces. "Herbs like brahmi and ashwagandha, known for their cognitive and stress-relief properties, can complement synthetic therapies," she notes. Ayurveda's role in addressing chronic and complex illnesses—such as Alzheimer's, diabetes, epilepsy and cancer—represents one of its most exciting frontiers. "Brahmi and ashwagandha show immense potential in slowing cognitive decline and supporting brain health," Dr. Sood says. "In diabetes care, herbs like methi and gurmur improve insulin sensitivity, targeting root metabolic imbalances." Perhaps most groundbreaking is Ayurveda's emerging role in oncology. Herbs like giloy and turmeric are being studied for their anti-inflammatory and anti-cancer properties. "They not only help control chemotherapy side effects but may also inhibit tumor growth," Dr. Sood explains. "It's a remarkable fusion of ancient wisdom and modern science."

As global healthcare systems reach breaking points, Ayurveda's potential as a sustainable, accessible, and holistic medical model has never been more profound. "It's time to view Ayurveda not as an alternative but as a complementary pillar of integrative medicine," Dr. Sood says.

By championing scientific validation, fostering global partnerships, and preserving its sustainability, Ayurveda may emerge not just as India's gift to the world, but as a necessary framework for the future of human health. "The answers to modern healthcare crises may lie in ancient wisdom," Dr. Sood concludes. "We must ensure that Ayurveda's resurgence is global, inclusive, and forward-looking. Only then can its full potential be realised."

Dr. Monica B Sood, honoured at the Global Excellence in Leadership Summit & Awards (GELSA) 2024 at the UK Parliament, champions a visionary roadmap for India-UK collaboration—merging Ayurveda, healthcare and education to forge a robust partnership for 2030. In an exclusive conversation with *The Pioneer*, Dr. Sood shared insights on her groundbreaking efforts and the path forward



Your wedding wonderland with royal retreats

Today's new-age couples are increasingly seeking customised, immersive and stress-free wedding experiences at exotic locales. While most talk of weddings in Tuscan vineyards or islands of Maldives, Rajasthan in India is home to some splendid locations that add opulence, grandeur and royalty to a wedding celebration. With wedding destinations like Udaipur, Jaipur and Jodhpur, the region is just perfect for anyone seeking a celebration that is a cut above the rest.

Beyond ordinary: While the Pink City, is known for gorgeous havelis and palaces that can host grand weddings, the Lake City offers luxury beyond imagination and Jodhpur gives a peek into the vibrant Rajasthan culture on a grand scale. An expert wedding consultant has insider knowledge of hidden gems at these locations and offers clients an experience that is beyond ordinary. In sync with the values, personality and aesthetics of the couple, these cities reflect Indian culture and make the wedding a unique experience.

Cultural uniqueness: Rajasthan is known for folk songs and dances, henna artists and traditional art forms that can keep the guests enamoured and engaged for hours. When weaved expertly by the wedding consultants into the wedding at the destination, they can literally create the most enjoyable wedding. The groom entering in a vintage car or on elephants is an experience that can only be curated here. This cultural journey and celebration of deep-rooted customs adds authenticity to the experience of the couple along with the guests.

Gastronomic delight: Rajasthan is a storehouse of elaborate culinary experiences that consist of mouth-watering, authentic snacks, starters, and delectable dishes like kachori, dal bati choorma, bajre ki roti with chutney, ker sangri, etc. For non-vegetarians too, there is an array of choices, with lal maas beating all the dishes on the menu. Desserts such as ghe-

war and malpuas are also popular. Add to it the hospitality of Rajasthan that will feed the guests with love and in a traditional way.

Perfect guest experience: Although the couple is the main emphasis, destination wedding consultants understand that every guest's experience is equally important. They frequently plan carefully planned pre- and post-wedding activities to make everyone feel valued and pampered. Private tours, spa services and more can be included. This careful preparation guarantees that visitors depart with priceless memories and a sense of having been a part of something genuinely remarkable. And nothing can match the vast options that Rajasthani cities have to offer.

Technology infusion: The planning of opulent vacation weddings has changed due to technology. Virtual site tours, digital planning tools and personalised professional advice at every stage are now available. Couples can stay informed and involved even when they are separated by great distances thanks to the virtual consultations and real-time planning updates that many consultants provide. Additionally, guests can take advantage of interactive experiences such as personalised apps that provide event specifics and improve the experience for all participants.

Seamless experience: A destination wedding comes with its own set of complex logistics issues. Getting married can create more fuss about who gets the visa and who can travel such long distances. Rajasthan is closer to most Indian cities, making its important cities a popular choice for couples who want to get married at a gorgeous location.

While all the aforementioned factors make Rajasthan the most ideal wedding destination, always remember that a professional wedding consultant can be instrumental in making the event a spectacular one, with personalised touch and unforgettable memorabilia for the couple as well as the guests.

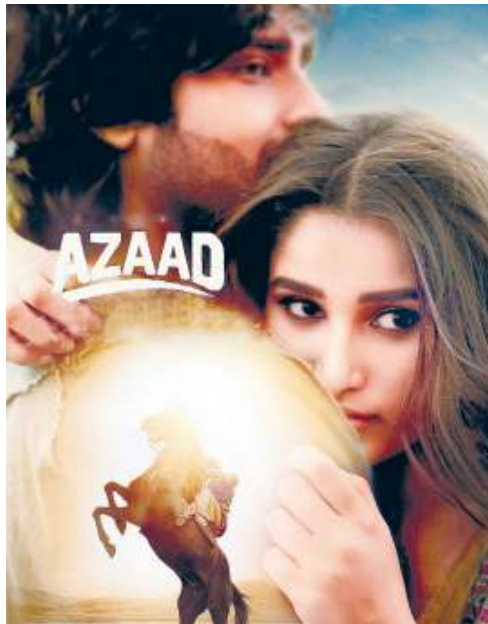


2025's EPIC MOVIE EXTRAVAGANZA

The year 2025 is already creating waves in the world of cinema with its stellar lineup of movies. A perfect blend of action, comedy, drama, romance and larger-than-life storytelling awaits audiences. From seasoned stars to exciting new faces, the big screen will be the ultimate destination for moviegoers. Here let's have a look at the top theatrical releases to watch out for:

Azaad:

This periodical drama directed by Abhishek Kapoor marks the foray of debutants Rasha Thadani and Aaman Devgan to Indian cinema. The film, also starring Ajay Devgn and Diana Penty, is hugely anticipated by the audiences and the recently released song have caught the eyeballs.



The jungle-themed comedy features Akshay Kumar, Arshad Warsi, Disha Patani, Raveena Tandon, Lara Dutta and Paresh Rawal, along with several other actors. The film helmed by Ahmed Khan promises chaotic humor and quirky characters and expected to be released in 2025.

Housefull 5:

Sajid Nadiadwala's Housefull 5 directed by Tarun Mansukhani features Akshay Kumar, Abhishek Bachchan, Riteish Deshmukh, Sonam Bajwa, Nargis Fakhri and Jacqueline Fernandez and promises to be a laughter riot for the fans and the audiences which will release in 2025.

Jaat:

Jaat features Sunny Deol in the massiest avatar. The film directed by Gopichand Malineni promises to be a commercial potboiler for the fans and the audiences and features Randeep Hooda as the antagonist. This also stars Vineet Kumar Singh, Saiyami Kher and Regina Cassandra and is set to release in theatres in April 2025.

Risky Romeo:

Risky Romeo neo-noir comic tragedy that combines elements of romance and drama, with Kriti Kharbanda and Sunny Singh in exciting lead roles and directed by Abir Sengupta.

David Dhawan's untitled entertainer:

2025 will see the return of David Dhawan's magic to the big screens. The film headlined by Varun Dhawan, Mrunal Thakur and Maniesh Paul promises to be a vibrant entertainer that appeals to audiences of all ages.

Son of Sardaar 2:

Son of Sardaar 2 brings action, comedy, and emotions in perfect balance starring Ajay Devgn, Mrunal Thakur, Kubra Sait, Sanjay Dutt and Ravi Kishan which promises to be a crowd-puller entertainer.

Game Changer:

The Ram Charan and Kiara Advani starrer Game Changer is one of the most anticipated films of the year. The pan-India political thriller explores themes of power and justice. The film is gearing up for release in nationwide cinemas on January 10th, 2025.

War 2:

YRF's Spy Universe continues to expand with the hugely-awaited War 2. The film stars Hrithik Roshan and Jr. NTR in a high-octane action thriller along with the powerhouse performer Kiara Advani.

Sky Force:

This film from Maddock Films marks the directorial debut of Sandeep Kewlani and Abhishek Anil Kapur. The film starring Akshay Kumar, Veer Paharia, Nimrit Kaur and Sara Ali Khan is a tribute to India's Air Force and blends patriotism with high-octane action.

Sikandar:

The high-octane action adventure Sikandar reunites Salman Khan with the producer Sajid Nadiadwala. The film directed by A.R. Murugadoss brings Salman in a larger-than-life role alongside Rashmika Mandanna. The film is set to release in cinemas on Eid 2025.



Deva:

Deva starring Shahid Kapoor, Pooja Hegde and Kubbra Sait is touted as an action thriller that is set to leave audiences spellbound. The film directed by Rosshan Andrews is set to release in cinemas on January 31, 2025.

Sunny Sanskari Ki Tulsi Kumari:

Sunny Sanskari Ki Tulsi Kumari directed by Shashank Khaitan is a rom-com starring Varun Dhawan, Janhvi Kapoor, Maniesh Paul, Sanya Malhotra and Rohit Saraf. The film explores love in modern times and promises to be a complete entertainer, with Varun Dhawan and Maniesh Paul taking charge. It is expected to release in cinemas on April 18, 2025.



Welcome to the Jungle:

Welcome To The Jungle is the third installment in the Welcome franchise.



This December, Nexus Hyderabad Mall invites shoppers to immerse themselves in the enchanting world of Jungle Tales Décor, where the jungle comes alive with lifelike, interactive wild animal installations. Combining entertainment with a touch of education, this unique adventure, which began on Wednesday, promises an unforgettable experience that brings the magic of the wild to life.

PARTY



The vibrant city of Hyderabad is once again hosting the Lions 52nd ISAME Forum 2024, after 15 years. Held at the Hyderabad International Convention Centre till December 21, the forum is set to welcome 1,600 delegates from 20 countries. This grand gathering, representing India, South Asia and the Middle East (ISAME), features high-profile participants, including the International President Fabrício Oliveira and other prominent Lion leaders from around the globe.

Kenvue has released a new evidence report highlighting the critical role of fluids, electrolytes and energy (FEE) in managing non-diarrheal illnesses, including fevers, respiratory infections, viral illnesses, heat exhaustion and general weakness. The report reveals that only 3 out of 10 physicians recommend FEE solutions for most patients with non-diarrheal illnesses, indicating a significant gap in knowledge, attitudes and practices (KAP) in this area.



Ashoka One Mall is celebrating the festive season with its grand Ashoka One Christmas Carnival, running until January 26, 2025. Visitors can enjoy exciting shopping deals, exclusive discounts from participating stores, and a host of fun-filled activities, including live performances and interactive events. The carnival promises to captivate visitors of all ages, ensuring a memorable holiday experience for everyone.



Beauty Garage Professional made a remarkable impression at the Professional Beauty India Expo, held at Hitec Hall in Hyderabad. The two-day event, which brought together top industry players to showcase innovations in the beauty and salon sectors, saw exceptional footfall and customer engagement at Beauty Garage Professional's stall.

FUN

ARCHIE



CALVIN AND HOBBS



GARFIELD



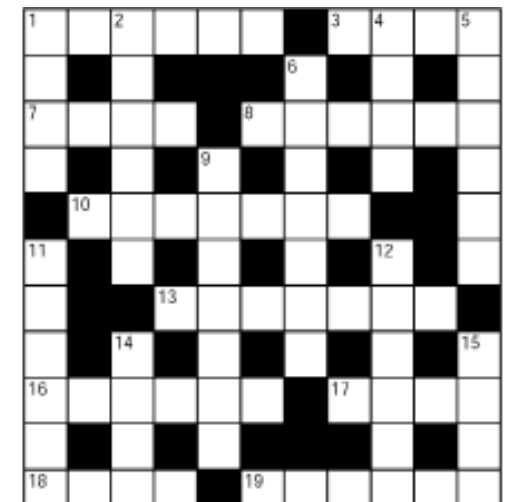
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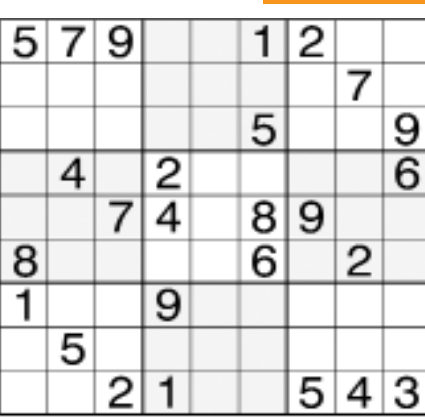
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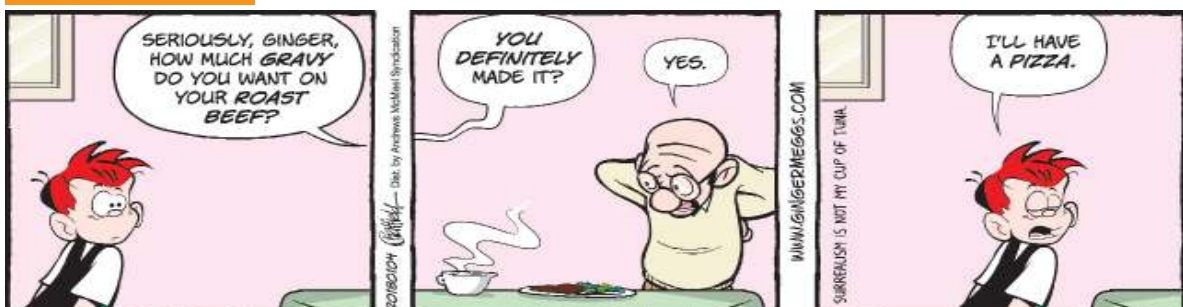
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Rules
• Each row and column can contain each number (1 to 9) exactly once.
• The sum of all numbers in any row or column must equal 45.

ACROSS

- 1 Connected together
 - 3 Mix black and white to make this colour
 - 7 Shift
 - 8 Ottawa is the capital city of this country
 - 10 Very unusual
 - 13 Baby cats
 - 16 Funny circus performers
 - 17 Munch on
 - 18 Painful to touch
 - 19 Almost
- DOWN**
- 1 Leap
 - 2 Ask to come
 - 4 Use a book
 - 5 Every twelve months
 - 6 Badly behaved
 - 9 A sick person in hospital
 - 11 Building blocks made from baked clay
 - 12 A weight to stop a boat drifting
 - 14 Bitter-tasting
 - 15 Not at home
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GINGER MEGGS



'Accent is not just used as a comedy, but emotion in *Srikakulam Sherlock Holmes*'



SURESH KAVIRAYANI
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The recent trend of films featuring regional accents continues with the upcoming movie *Srikakulam Sherlock Holmes*, which showcases the Srikakulam accent. Writer Mohan is making his directorial debut with this film, which stars Vennela Kishore in the title role, along with six other actors, including Ananya Nagalla, Muralidhar Goud and Ravi Teja Mahadasyam. "This is not just a comedy film, but also an emotional one," said director-writer Mohan about the film. He added that the story is set in the backdrop of 1991. "The accent is not used for just comedy in this film; it's an emotion," said the director.

Talking about the story, Mohan said that former Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi visited Visakhapatnam before he left for Sriperumbudur, where he was assassinated. "When a big incident happens, people don't think about a small incident that happened at the same time. So, I took the true

story of Rajiv Gandhi and wrote a fictional story of *Srikakulam Sherlock Holmes* and linked both in my story. If you want to know how I linked them, you have to watch my film," he said. Interestingly, most of the work for this film is not related to Srikakulam. "Most of the artists are from Telangana, including Vennela Kishore. They took it as a challenge and learned the Srikakulam accent for this film," said Mohan. He added that he too started watching videos of Srikakulam-related content and the accent. "I am from Guntur, but I know about Srikakulam, so I asked everyone to watch the videos related to the accent and also spoke with that accent in the office until the film was completed," he said.

The director said that Vennela Kishore is playing the character of the detective, Sherlock Holmes. "In general, a female lead or some other people assist the detective, but in my film, his father and mother are his assistants. They wanted their son to become a police officer, but he didn't, so he ended up as a private detective," said Mohan.

Producer Ramana Reddy wanted to make a film and was listening to many stories. "At that time, I

narrated this story to him, he liked it and immediately wanted to start," he said, explaining how this project came together.

When they put *Srikakulam Sherlock Holmes* as the title, the distributor Vamsi Nandipati suggested adding a tag to it, otherwise, people may not register. "Many people, especially the rural ones, didn't know Sherlock Holmes. So, we added the tag *Chantabbai Taluka*, because Chiranjeevi did a detective film *Chantabbai* and this Taluka is popular with Pawan Kalyan's Pithapuram constituency, so that's how we put the tagline," explained the director.

The director said that all the characters in this film are important. "In the last 40 minutes of the film, it definitely takes everyone into a spell-bound state, and producer Vamsi Nandipati bought this film after watching that only," said Writer Mohan.

Mohan hails from Guntur and worked with popular director EVV Satyanarayana, Posani Krishna Murali and then Jeevitha Rajasekhar. "When I worked with Jeevitha and Rajasekhar, I toured most of the areas in Srikakulam district with them when they campaigned for a political party. Actually, Rajasekhar only started calling me Writer Mohan, thus my name has this prefix," said Mohan. When he worked with EVV, there were many people with Mohan's name, "so he put the prefix Writer to my name, because I am from the

Writing Department," he said.

The film was mostly shot near Nellimarla of Vizianagaram district, near Bhemili and then Ramoji Film City. "It's a period film and I wanted to capture the 90s look for my film. So, I didn't get many places, so I shot most of the film," said the director.

He also shared that there are many writers at present and there were many stories with them. "Everyone wanted to become

directly a director now, earlier they started with assistant, associate and then director. He used to learn the work, but now they don't want to work and want to become directors," said Writer Mohan. He added that many writers didn't get a proper name when they worked for a film. "That's another reason many writers are turning to direction," he said.

When asked about his strong point, he said comedy. "When I worked with EVV Satyanarayana, I learnt this from him," he said. He said he didn't feel that he got the chance of direction very late. "I don't feel it. I learnt all the basics all these years and also settled with my family. Now, I got the chance to direct a film, so I can do it without any pressure," he concluded.



Writer Mohan, known for his work as a writer, is now making his directorial debut with *Srikakulam Sherlock Holmes*. Ahead of the film's release, he shares his insights on the film and speaks about his journey

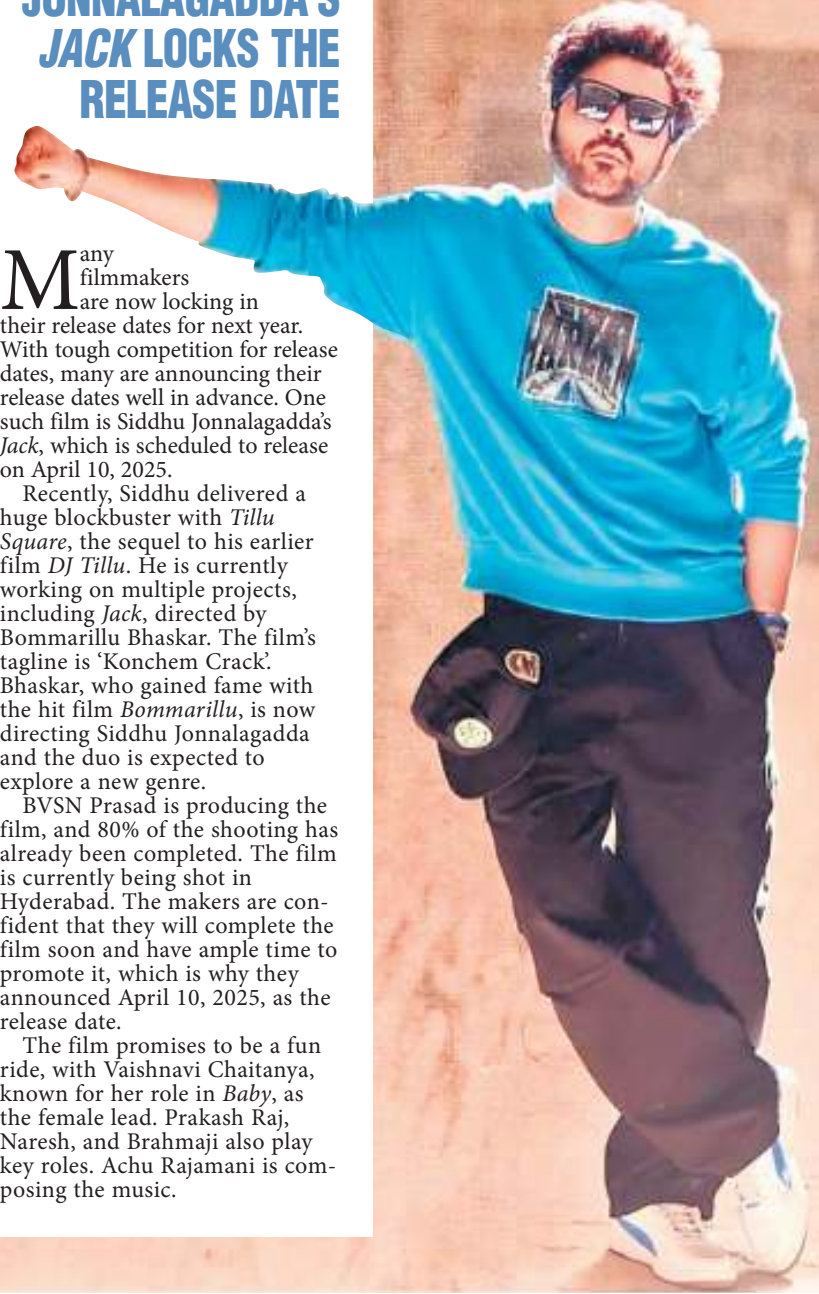
SIDDU JONNALAGADDA'S JACK LOCKS THE RELEASE DATE

Many filmmakers are now locking in their release dates for next year. With tough competition for release dates, many are announcing their release dates well in advance. One such film is Siddhu Jonnalagadda's *Jack*, which is scheduled to release on April 10, 2025.

Recently, Siddhu delivered a huge blockbuster with *Tillu Square*, the sequel to his earlier film *DJ Tillu*. He is currently working on multiple projects, including *Jack*, directed by Bommarillu Bhaskar. The film's tagline is 'Konchem Crack'. Bhaskar, who gained fame with the hit film *Bommarillu*, is now directing Siddhu Jonnalagadda and the duo is expected to explore a new genre.

BVSN Prasad is producing the film, and 80% of the shooting has already been completed. The film is currently being shot in Hyderabad. The makers are confident that they will complete the film soon and have ample time to promote it, which is why they announced April 10, 2025, as the release date.

The film promises to be a fun ride, with Vaishnavi Chaitanya, known for her role in *Baby*, as the female lead. Prakash Raj, Naresh, and Brahmaji also play key roles. Achu Rajamani is composing the music.



Srilakshmi honoured with lifetime achievement award at Bullitera Awards

Every year, VB Entertainment's Boppana Vishnu presents the Bullitera Awards and this year, he presented the awards for 2023-2024 at Shilpakala Vedika in Hyderabad. Many film and TV personalities attended the event, including popular director SV Krishna Reddy, producer Atchi Reddy, Ambika Krishna, JD Lakshmi Narayana, actor Puri Akash and actress Archana.

On this occasion, senior actress Srilakshmi was honored with the Lifetime Achievement Award. In addition to this, awards were also given to TV artists, social media influencers, and YouTubers. Boppana Vishnu also provided financial assistance to ten artists.

Srilakshmi, who received the Lifetime Achievement Award, expressed her grat-

itude saying, "I am thankful to the Bullitera Award for recognising my work in films over the years. They have recognised me for acting in films for so many years and presented me with this award. First and foremost, I would like to thank my guru Jandhyala garu. Then, I would like to thank all the directors with whom I have worked." She added that she is grateful to all the audiences who have always shown special affection for her. "I will continue to entertain you like this," she said.

Apart from Srilakshmi, other award recipients at the function included *Bigg Boss* fame Dane Manasa, actress Archana, *Bigg Boss* fame Bebakka, Prithviraj, who has completed 30 years in the industry, Divya Vani, Ritu Chowdhury, Bullet Bhaskar, Ram Satyanarayana and Madala Ravi.

Nani shoots in Kashmir for *Hit 3*

Nani is moving quickly from one film to another. After completing his work on his earlier film *Saripodhaa Sanivaaram*, he swiftly shifted his focus to his next project. The actor is currently in Kashmir, shooting for the film *HIT: The 3rd Case*. Directed by Dr. Sailesh Kolanu and produced by Prashanti Tipirneni, the film is the third installment in the *HIT* franchise. The film promises to be a gripping crime thriller, presenting Nani as a HIT officer. The unit has begun filming a fresh schedule in Kashmir, where they are shooting an intense action sequence featuring Nani and a team of fighters, along with other crucial scenes. Production is progressing smoothly, with the makers having already announced the film's release date. Srinidhi Shetty, known for her role in *KGF*, is playing the female lead. Nani's transformation for this role is striking, with a complete makeover to fit his character's tough, dynamic persona. The makers have already announced that the film is set to hit the screens on May 1, 2025.



Kiccha Sudeep's *Max* releases on Dec 27

Kannada Superstar Kiccha Sudeep's new action thriller *Max* is all set for a grand theatrical release in Telugu on December 27th by Asian Suresh Entertainments.

Versatile Actor Varalaxmi Sarathkumar and Happening Tollywood Actor Sunil played key roles in this film directed by Vijay Kartikeya. Kollywood renowned producer Kalaipuli S. Thanu bankrolled this project under V Creations in association with Kiccha Sudeep's Kiccha Creations. The teaser is already hyping the expectations on the movie as Kiccha Sudeep is seen playing a powerful police officer Arjun Mahakshay. Featuring the intense action and thrilling story, this film is now the most awaited release from Kannada.



Neha Shetty to sizzle in a special song for PK's *OG*

Actress Neha Shetty, known for her role in *DJ Tillu*, is set to sizzle in an item song in Pawan Kalyan's upcoming film *OG*. Directed by Sujith, the film's shooting is currently underway in Thailand. Although Pawan Kalyan is the main lead, he will not be featured in the item song, according to a source. The makers are now shooting a special song featuring Neha Shetty, as announced by the actress on her Instagram story.

Neha Shetty expressed her excitement, stating that she is ready to start shooting in Bangkok and saying "Let's Roll". This confirmation has sparked curiosity among audiences, especially given her popularity for her role as Radhika in *DJ Tillu*. With the *OG* shoot underway in Thailand, Neha Shetty has joined the sets, indicating that she has begun filming the special song.

Pawan Kalyan, who is currently serving as the Deputy Chief Minister of Andhra Pradesh, is committed to completing the films he had signed before taking office. These films include *Hari Hara Veera Mallu*, *OG* and *Ustaad Bhagat Singh*. Having recently completed *Hari Hara Veera Mallu*, Pawan Kalyan is expected to wrap up *OG* soon, provided he allocates a few days for the shoot. With Neha Shetty on board for the special song, the makers are confident that they can secure Pawan Kalyan's dates and complete the film.



STANDALONE

Ace producer Dil Raju has taken charge as the chairperson of the Telangana Film Development Corporation (TFDC), marking a significant milestone in the Telugu film industry. As a renowned producer, Dil Raju brings his extensive experience and expertise to the role, which is expected to boost the growth of Telugu cinema.

Third Test between India and Australia ends in a draw

PTI ■ BRISBANE

India escaped with a crucial draw in the weather-hit third Test against Australia after intermittent rain wiped out majority of play on day five, leaving the five-match series tantalisingly locked at 1-1. Resuming the day at 252 for nine, India batted for 24 balls and were all out for 260 in their first innings. With limited time left in the day to force a result after majority of the morning session was rained out, the Australian batters came out all guns blazing and stuttered to 89 for seven in 18 overs before making a brave declaration, giving India at least 54 overs to chase down 275. Bad light and rain forced an early tea break soon after with India at 8 for no loss in 2.1 overs. The rain got heavier as the time passed and no play was possible thereafter. The absorbing series is nicely poised going into the Boxing Day Test in Melbourne. India would have fancied chasing 275 on day five but weather

helped them immensely in the game controlled by Australia. Jasprit Bumrah (3/18) was brilliant as usual in the second innings with Mohammed Siraj (2/36) and Akash Deep (2/28) offering good support. Australia's approach in the second essay was brave and questionable at the same time. Nathan McSweeney (4) and Marnus Labuschagne (1) went after balls outside the off-stump and perished while Usman Khawaja (8) and Mitchell Marsh (2) fell to good deliveries. Wickets falling in a heap did not impact Australia's approach as they kept going for the big hits. Skipper Cummins chipped in with two sixes and as many fours before the declaration. In the morning session, lightning and subsequent rain allowed only 24 balls to be bowled. The warning of severe weather was flashed on the digital scoreboard at the Gabba shortly after India were bowled out for 260 in their first innings, handing Australia a lead of 185 runs. Akash Deep (31) was the last man



out, stumped off a Travis Head delivery, bringing an end to a 47-run stand with Jasprit Bumrah (10 not out). The duo had done well to avoid the follow-on on day four. Players were asked to remain in the dressing room and fans were requested to take shelter away from the fence after the visitors were all out. The forecast was largely clear for Brisbane from Thursday onwards but the entire game has been adversely impacted by bad weather with rain forcing multiple stoppages for four out of five days. Only day two of the game was not impacted by weather as Australia coasted to 405 for seven on the back of memorable hundreds from Head and Steve Smith. Going into the fourth Test beginning December 26, India have major concerns in both batting and bowling departments which they must address. Barring K L Rahul, who has been India's standout batter on the tour, the star-studded line up has not found a way to negotiate the threats posed by the Australian

pace attack. Skipper Rohit Sharma has been woefully short of runs and after the hundred in Perth, superstar Virat Kohli has struggled with ball outside the off-stump. Majority of the batters have been guilty of playing away from their bodies in challenging conditions. They will need to curb their white-ball instincts to make an impact at MCG. On the bowling front too, it has been effectively a one man show with Jasprit Bumrah doing the heavy lifting in all the games. Mohammed Siraj bowled in the Brisbane Test with a niggler, leaving a question mark over his fitness ahead of the Melbourne game. Akash Deep, who played ahead of Harshit Rana, bowled well in the game but did not have a lot of luck, especially against Smith. He is expected to retain his place the eleven. India have picked three different spinners in the first three Test. It remains to be seen what strategy they adopt for the Boxing Day Test.



Will go to Melbourne with confidence: Rohit

PTI ■ BRISBANE

Indian skipper Rohit Sharma hailed the resilience of the lower-order batters after his team managed to salvage a crucial draw in the rain-hit third Test against Australia here on Wednesday, saying the side it has given the renewed confidence for the remaining series. With the five-match Border-Gavaskar Trophy now tied 1-1, Rohit believes the team's morale will be high during the Boxing Day Test in Melbourne. "I mean, we will take that. Obviously to have interruptions like that wasn't great, but going to Melbourne at 1-1 pretty much gives us that confidence to go out there and pull things towards us," Rohit said at the post-match presentation. "The situation we were in just after lunch (on Day 4), needed someone to stand up and take us through, we knew with the weather, we knew it wasn't going to be a full game." Opener KL Rahul once again shone, top-scoring with 84 before Ravindra Jadeja (77) put up a lower-order resistance. Then the last duo of Akash Deep (31) and Jasprit Bumrah (10 not out) put on a gritty 47-run partnership to help India avoid follow-on

before they were all out for 260 in reply to Australia's big first innings score of 445. "Credit to (Ravindra) Jadeja, the way he played and (KL) Rahul, the way he played was magnificent at the top of the order, the fight that Akash Deep and Bumrah (gave) was great to watch, we have seen them work so hard at the nets (on their batting)." Despite the challenges posed by intermittent rain and lightning on the final day, India's bowlers held their own in the second innings. Bumrah was particularly brilliant, taking 3/18, while Akash Deep and Mohammed Siraj chipped in with two wickets each. Australia's bold approach in the second innings saw them declare at 89/7, setting India a target of 275 in 54 overs, but bad light and rain ensured no further play was possible after the early stages of the chase. "Coming to the bowling, Bumrah was outstanding, Akash Deep is a feisty cricketer, always wants to be involved in the game, very new to international cricket, he has worked hard at the nets, still new to international cricket, but he has put in the hard yards..." "There are people in the group to put their hand across and help him going forward. As he

showed with the bat, these are the sort of characters we needed in the team," Rohit added. Cummins rues not leading 2-1 Australia captain Pat Cummins lamented the impact of rain on the game's outcome. "Would be better to be 2-1, lot of rain, nothing we can do about it. We set a huge total and felt like we were right ahead of the game throughout," said Cummins. Australia also suffered a heartbreak with pacer Josh Hazlewood ruled out of the entire series with a calf strain. "Poor Josh, one of those things, few rain breaks probably helped, Starc and I were able to push through. "Day 5 here can be up and down, there wasn't much cricket played on it, felt challenging when the ball was new and hard." Cummins also highlighted the positives that his team could take from the match. "(Steve) Smith and Head's innings' were fantastic, Alex Carey too... (Nathan) Lyon looked really good, Starc got wickets, just about ticked off every box." On the Boxing Day Test, Cummins said: "That will be amazing, one of those things here in Australia that you wake up and can't wait for."

Head confident he'll be 'fine' for Boxing Day Test in Melbourne

PTI ■ BRISBANE

Australia's man in form, Travis Head, played down concerns over his fitness after appearing to struggle with a potential groin issue during the rain-marred drawn third Test against India at the Gabba here on Wednesday. Head said he expects to be "fine" for the Boxing Day Test in Melbourne. The five-match series is tied 1-1 going into the Boxing Day Test after the drawn affair. "Very pleased with the way I am batting at the moment. Just a little sore, but I should be fine (before the next game)," Head, who was adjudged the player of the match, said after the game. The 30-year-old, who has been in red-hot form with 409 runs at an average of 81.80 this series, noticeably struggled to run between the wickets during his brief innings of 17



on day five. At times, he was seen clutching his groin, raising concerns among the commentators. Former pacer Brett Lee called the visuals "worrying signs", noting Head's limited movement, while Indian great Ravi Shastri also expressed concern, describing the potential injury as a "body blow" for Australia, given Head's big role in the batting lineup. Head did not take the field during India's second innings, fuelling further speculation. "Travis, he'll be fine. It's a bit of a tight quad. He'll be fine for Melbourne," asserted his captain Pat Cummins.

The left-hander further reflected on his approach this series, attributing his success to adapting well to challenging conditions and staying composed at the crease. "Challenging wicket. I had to work through the gears. I had different plans, pleased I could get through those. Good partnership with (Steve) Smith," he said on their centuries, contributing to their 241-run massive stand. "I just try to sum up the conditions well. What I've done well this series is assess the conditions. Pleased with the tempo I've batted with. Pretty relaxed communication. "Felt like he was back in his rhythm, and he gives me full freedom and confidence knowing he's going to be there for a long while. I feel like I am playing the situation in front of me," he added.

Pacer Ihsanullah returns to action after injury fiasco

PTI ■ KARACHI

Promising young Pakistan pacer Ihsanullah has returned to competitive cricket in the ongoing Champions Cup T20 tournament in Rawalpindi after being sidelined since late 2022 following a botched diagnosis of his injury. The Pakistan Cricket Board had appointed an independent medical panel to oversee his rehabilitation, following prolonged issues with his treatment and recovery. Ihsanullah emerged as a bright prospect during the 2022 Pakistan Super League to be fast-tracked into Pakistan's white-ball squads for T20 and ODI matches. However, his progress was halted by an elbow injury, which led to significant scrutiny of the PCB's medical management. The independent medical panel discovered that the injury had been misdiagnosed, and appropriate treatment was not initially recommended. Ihsanullah had also not adhered to his rehab properly. This mismanagement eventually prompted the resignation of the PCB's head of medical panel, Dr Sohail Saleem. During his treatment, Ihsanullah even underwent an elbow surgery but he was later sent to England to see a specialist by the independent medical panel who ruled out another surgery but recommended a new rehab programme for the player. At one stage even the PCB officials appeared to lose patience with the young bowler for not taking his recovery seriously and then he even blamed the PCB for his prolonged forced absence from cricket. Meanwhile, Pakistan's seasoned allrounder, Shadab Khan is also facing fitness issues while captaining a team, in the Champions Cup which forced him to miss a few games of the event and he has not even bowled frequently.

Mitchell Santner replaces Williamson as New Zealand white-ball skipper

PTI ■ AUCKLAND

Left-arm spinner Mitchell Santner was on Wednesday appointed the New Zealand white-ball captain, officially taking over the role from Kane Williamson who stepped down following the T20 World Cup in June. Santner, who has represented New Zealand in 243 internationals, will take on the permanent leadership mantle of both the ODI and T20 sides. Santner has previously led the team in 24 T20s and four ODIs. The 32-year-old will begin his full-time captaincy tenure in the upcoming T20 and ODI series against Sri Lanka in late December and early January. The Sri Lanka marks the beginning of a heavy run of white ball cricket for the side, including an ODI Tri Series in Pakistan in February, followed by the ICC Champions Trophy and a home T20 and ODI series against Pakistan to conclude the home summer.



"It's obviously a huge honour and a privilege to be asked," said Santner in a NZC statement. "When you're a young kid the dream was always to play for New Zealand but to have the opportunity to officially lead my country in two formats is special. "It's a new challenge and I'm excited to

get stuck into the important period of white ball cricket that we have ahead of us." Santner, who most recently led the side in last month's T20 and ODI series in Sri Lanka, is one of just four players to have represented New Zealand over 100 times in both ODI and T20I cricket and is widely regarded as one of the top white ball bowlers in world cricket. He first led the side in a T20 against West Indies at Bay Oval in November 2020 and became New Zealand's 24th ODI captain when he led the side in the only ODI against Scotland in Edinburgh in 2022. New Zealand head coach Gary Stead said Santner was a great fit for the role. "Mitch is a fantastic team man and leads by example in all facets of the game," said Stead. "He's an incredibly calm and collected personality and he has a huge amount of respect in the changing room, which will serve him well."

Australian captain Cummins denies momentum in India's favour after draw

PTI ■ BRISBANE

Australia captain Pat Cummins is not bothered if India walked away with momentum from the drawn third Test but is pleased that they did not let the visitors exploit better batting conditions in the first innings. Australia, who largely controlled the third Test, declared their second innings at 89/7 to set India a 275-run target but rain prevented an exciting climax. "(I) can't say I've ever been scared of momentum — don't really care about that. I think we can take a lot from this week," he told media after the end of the contest. "A couple of great partnerships, to be sent in on a (fresh) wicket and score 450 (445) and then managing to bowl India out for 250 (260) when the wicket, the conditions were probably a little bit better. We can take a lot from that," he said. Ashwin is one of the all-time greats. While the contest expectedly ended in a draw with the series

tied 1-1, India's spin great Ashwin announced his immediate retirement from international cricket. Cummins said Ashwin's decision midway through the series was surprising. "Yeah, (the timing was) a bit of a surprise. He's obviously been a fantastic player all around the world really. There aren't too many finger spinners that have that kind of longevity. He'll go down as one of the all-time greats." "(He was) always a fantastic competitor, (we) had a lot of battles against him over the years here in Australia as well over in India. Just a massive respect from our change room to the career that he's had," he said. The home skipper said the Brisbane Test was one of the most frustrating games due to the number of times players were forced off the field. "It's right up there. I can't remember (in the past) even coming close (to) the amount of times we were on and off throughout the five days," he



said "Especially here in Brisbane, I feel like it normally just pelted down for a couple hours and then you're back on and it's clear... yeah, frustrating. (It) felt like we were ahead of the game for pretty much all of it, but not to be," he added.

Hazlewood to miss remainder of series, Head will be fine. Cummins lamented that pacer Josh Hazlewood has been ruled out of the series due to injury but said Travis Head would be fine from a "tight quad" trouble. "Josh won't be part of the series, which is a real shame. Travis, he'll be fine. It's a bit of a tight quad. He'll be fine for Melbourne," Cummins said. "It's really tough. It's kind of in the story of the last few summers. The extra layer to that is probably one of the most disciplined, professional sports people you'd ever meet." Cummins said while talking further on Hazlewood. "The way he trains and prepares and goes about... when he's at home, he's in the gym every second day, every day doing whatever it needs to take to try and minimise injuries." "That's an extra kind of blow knowing how much he has put into his body over the last few years to try and play as many Test matches as he can." He continued, "We value him. Unfortunately, he'll miss this

series. I don't know when exactly he'll be right to go again. Even in the little snippets you've seen this series, how much we rate him, how much of an impact he can have." Cummins said it has been a tough series for top-order batters while backing Australia rookie Nathan McSweeney ahead of the team's selection for the remaining two Tests. "The trend in world cricket, pretty much all around the world, is (that) the top three is really hard place to bat at the moment. Particularly here in Australia, the wickets are tough," he said. "I've been really impressed with the way he's (McSweeney) gone about it even today. Someone's starting out his career still being selfless enough to go out there and try and play shots rather than just trying to preserve and get a score." "I'm really impressed with him. Again, (he) hasn't probably scored the runs that he would (have) liked, but he has played some important knock that have set up a win in Adelaide and a really good result here," he added.