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Special Stories | Page 10

"With the demise of Shri Ramoji Rao, India has lost a titan of the media and entertainment sector,"



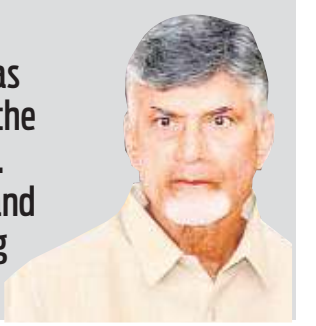
"Ramoji Rao Garu was extremely passionate about India's development. I am fortunate to have got several opportunities to interact with him and benefit from his wisdom"



Ramoji Rao is a visionary who ran Eenadu as a number one news daily for more than 5 decades even during the challenging times and also laid a strong foundation for TV industry by establishing Etv,



We are unable to digest that Ramoji Rao, who has reached the pinnacle in the media world, is no more. He is a classic example and an inspiration in fighting for rights



Telugus' newsman no more

End of an era in Telugu media

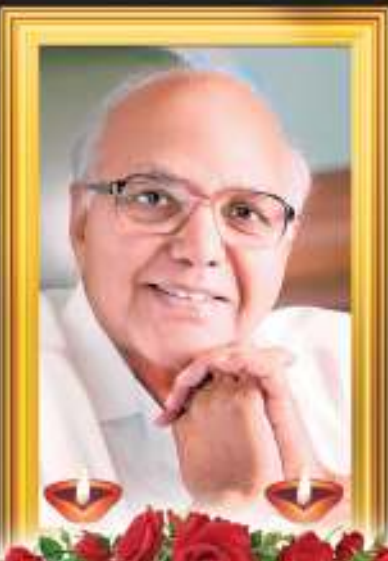
From ruling Telugu media to inviting technology to enrich it, the Telugu people's newsman Ramoji Rao's journey has been stupendous. From humble beginnings in the early sixties to becoming a media titan, Ramoji's journey has been like a 'nothing succeeds like a success story'. He reached towering heights in every chosen field, particularly Telugu media. He had proved the power of journalism and impeccably followed the values till the last. From chit funds to cinema to television, he diversified into different fields and made a mark for himself. With the stalwart's demise, Telugu people have lost a man of powerful pen and also a man with a penchant for perfection.

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Media baron and Ramoji Group chairman Ch Ramoji Rao, who revolutionised the news and entertainment industry, passed away at a hospital here early on Saturday. Ramoji Rao, who was admitted to the hospital on June 5 following respiratory problems, breathed his last at 4.50 am, according to Eenadu sources. The mortal remains were shifted to his residence in the famous Ramoji Film City near here. President Droupadi Murmu, Prime Minister Narendra Modi, Congress leader Rahul Gandhi, chief ministers of several states including West Bengal Chief

Minister Mamata Banerjee and film personalities mourned the death of Ramoji Rao. Former Vice President M Venkaiah Naidu, former Chief Justice of India N V Ramana, TDP chief N Chandrababu Naidu, Union Minister Nirmala Sitharaman, Telangana Deputy Chief Minister Mallu Bhatti Vikramarka, Jana Sena Party president Pawan Kalyan, BRS leader K T Rama Rao, superstar Chiranjeevi, several leaders from Telangana and Andhra Pradesh and film personalities paid homage to Rao at the Ramoji Film City. Ramoji Rao, who created a sensation in the media industry in undivided Andhra Pradesh with the Eenadu newspaper and ETV group

of channels, was a recipient of Padma Vibhushan. Ramoji Rao's rise to become the founder of Eenadu, the largest circulated Telugu daily, and a media mogul, from humble beginnings is legendary. The firms founded by him -- Eenadu newspaper, ETV bouquet of channels, the world's largest film city Ramoji Film City, Dolphin group of hotels, Margadarsi Chit Fund, film production company Ushakiran movies, Priya Foods and others provided jobs to thousands and continue to impact the lives of millions in Andhra Pradesh and Telangana and elsewhere.



**BORN: 16 NOV 1936
DIED: 08 JUNE 2024**

RAMOJI BUILT HIS TOMB IN RFC



PNS ■ HYDERABAD

The head of the Eenadu group of companies, C. Ramoji Rao, had finalised his final resting place in Ramoji Film City. The videos about 'Smriti Vanam' took everyone by surprise. Film actor Mohan Babu who paid condolences

said, "I have a 43-year-old relationship with Ramoji Rao. Whenever we met, he used to ask me to see his Samidhi where he would be buried. I used to say I came to visit you, not your tomb. He would say, I thought you were brave, aren't you? Why are you so scared? But I never went there."



LAST RITES WITH STATE HONOURS

Cherukuri Ramoji Rao, Chairman of the Ramoji Group of companies and Padma Vibhushan awardee, passed away this morning. The Telangana government has decided to conduct his last rites with State honours. Chief Minister Revanth Reddy, who is currently in Delhi for the CWC meeting, issued orders to the Chief

Secretary of the government from there. Following these orders, the Ranga Reddy District Collector and the Cyberabad Commissioner have been directed by the Chief Secretary to oversee the arrangements. Meanwhile, the Andhra Pradesh government has declared June 9 and 10 as mourning days to honour the

media baron. During this period, the national flag will be flown at half-mast on all official buildings across the state, and no official entertainment events will be held. Three senior government officials, RP Sisodia, Saiprasad, and Rajat Bhargava, will represent the Andhra Pradesh government at Ramoji Rao's last rites.

The journey of Ramoji Rao in the world of media, abiding by the ideologies he believed in, was unparalleled. His demise is a great loss to the media sector. I pray to God for his soul to rest in peace.

Pawan Kalyan



The demise of Ramoji Rao is shocking. He had rendered immeasurable services to the Telugu media for decades. I pray to God that his soul rests in peace and convey my sympathies to the bereaved family.

Jagan Mohan Reddy



Winning laurels even from detractors

B KRISHNA PRASAD

What is success in life? I had my moment of epiphany when I saw the tweets in 'X' of AICC leader Rahul Gandhi and former AP Chief Minister and YSRCP president YS Jaganmohan Reddy condoling the death of media baron Ramoji Rao. I gained a deeper insight into the normally ignored shade of the meaning of success: winning laurels from even one's bitter rivals. Ramoji Rao achieved that and how!

Ramoji Rao had declared publicly that he was an 'anti-Congressman'; yet Rahul Gandhi condoned his death on Saturday and hailed his contribution to Indian journalism. Jagan has aired his displeasure at Ramoji Rao umpteen times and even prevented Eenadu group's media arms from reporting on YSRCP's affairs and



activities. Still, Jagan issued a statement hailing Ramoji's services to journalism. This is success in all its splendour! Hats off to Ramoji Rao! Ramoji Rao -- with his business interests spread across media, film industry and FMCG sectors -- has pervaded almost all spheres of Telugu people's lives. At an individual level, one may agree with him or differ with

him, but none can resist standing in awe of him for his achievements.

I started my journalism career as a trainee reporter in Eenadu. Chairman Ramoji Rao interviewed me and took me into state bureau directly -- a rare opportunity to a fresh graduate. During my interview, then executive director of Newstoday (the news agency of Eenadu) said some good words about me to Ramoji Rao, like "He is intelligent". Ramoji Rao immediately sized me up, retorting: "What is intelligence here? He has to work hard, sincerely; that's all". To confess, I was a bit taken back at that comment then. But later in my days of managing a newspaper and a satellite television channel I realized out how brilliant and prescient he was to have commented like that.

Sonia Gandhi re-elected CPP chairperson

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Former Congress president Sonia Gandhi was unanimously re-elected as the chairperson of the Congress parliamentary party on Saturday, its leaders said. At a meeting of party MPs, Congress president Mallikarjun Kharge proposed Sonia Gandhi's name as the chairperson of the parliamentary party. The proposal was seconded by Gaurav Gogoi, K Sudhakaran and Tariq Anwar. Gandhi, 77, was elected to the Rajya Sabha in February.

Earlier, the Congress Working Committee (CWC) unanimously urged Rahul Gandhi to take on the mantle of the Leader of Opposition in the Lok Sabha and he told the party's top brass that he will take

Modi set to take oath as PM today

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Prime Minister-designate Narendra Modi is set to take oath on Sunday for a third straight term, equalling the feat of first prime minister Jawaharlal Nehru, as the head of a coalition government after two full tenures in which the BJP enjoyed a majority on its own. Hectic parleys involving BJP leadership and allies were on over the share of berths of different constituents of the National Democratic Alliance (NDA) in the new government.

Senior BJP leaders such as Amit Shah and Rajnath Singh besides party president J P Nadda have been consulting the allies, including Telugu Desam Party's N Chandrababu Naidu, JD(U)'s Nitish Kumar and Shiv Sena's

Union Minister posts for Kishan, Sanjay?

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Speculations are rife that Telangana BJP President G. Kishan Reddy will retain his Union Minister post. BJP General Secretary Karimnagar MP Bandi

Sanjay Kumar will also get a Union Minister post.

Modi is going to take oath as the Prime Minister for the third time on Sunday evening. All BJP MPs from Telangana will attend the oath taking ceremony of Modi.

Eknath Shinde, to finalise their share of representation in the government.

There is a view that heavyweight portfolios like home, finance, defence and external affairs besides education and culture, two ministries with strong ideological hues, will be kept by the BJP, while its allies can get anywhere between five to eight cabi-

net berths.

While leaders like Shah and Singh are seen within the party as a certainty in the new Cabinet, former chief ministers who have won the Lok Sabha polls like Shivraj Singh Chouhan, Basavaraj Bommai, Manohar Lal Khattar and Sarbananda Sonowal are strong contenders for joining the government.

AISF seeks probe into NEET paper leakage

PNS ■ HYDERABAD
The All India Students Federation (AISF) sought an inquiry into the NEET exam paper leakage...

Thousands take fish prasadam for lungs-related problems

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Thousands of people, along with their families, travelled from across the country to take part in the annual fish prasadam distribution...



Hundreds of police personnel were on duty in the queue sections and throughout the grounds, with bomb detector checks at the entrance

tioned that he also suffers from asthma with breathlessness during winter. "We heard about this fish medicine administered by the Bathini family but didn't believe in superstitions...

TGSRTC arranges special buses for Group-I exam today

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Telangana State Road Transport Corporation (TGSRTC) has arranged adequate buses from various places to examination centres and return journey of the candidates...

TGPGCET 2024 to be held from June 10 to 13

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

The examination will be conducted in Hyderabad and Warangal. Candidates must visit the centre in advance to be familiar with the location of the test centre...

The Jawaharlal Nehru Technological University on Saturday announced that it will conduct the Telangana PG CET on behalf of the Telangana Council of Higher Education (TGCHE).

TG DPH issues advisory for monsoon season

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Telangana Director of Public Health and Family Welfare (DPH) on Saturday issued an advisory for the monsoon season in Hyderabad.

out, especially during dawn and dusk. Do not consume repellents orally; Maintain drains to prevent water stagnation; Septic tanks should be covered with a mesh...

IMD forecasts rainfall till June 10

Telangana witnessed a huge amount of rainfall in Rangareddy, Vikarabad, Sangareddy, Yadadri, Nalgonda and Khammam...

Excise Police seize drugs worth Rs 1.25 lakh

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

The State Task Force (STF) of the Excise department nabbed a seller and seized 0.01 grams of 25 pads of Lysergic acid diethylamide (LSD) in the Medchal area on Saturday.

Food safety teams continue raids on restaurants in city

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

The Task Force team of Food Safety conducted raids at Concu, Hotel Asian Pavillion and Sri Kaling Raacharika Ruchulu restaurants on Saturday and found some irregularities.



In the Asian Pavillion they found that semi-prepared foods like maida roti, chicken sambal, beetroot sambol, chicken karoge, veg shawarma and crispy chicken...

Fitness Certificates for the food handlers were not available and the FBO. Pest control records were not available and cockroaches found in the kitchen.

Lok Adalat settles 10,35,520 cases in a day

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

The National Lok Adalat has settled 10,35,520 cases on Saturday, among them 5,81,611 were pre-litigation cases, and a total of 4,53,909 cases pending at courts were settled in all the districts across the State...

Trumpet rally raises awareness on Rapture of the Church

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

A rally to raise awareness of the Rapture of the Church and the Second Coming of the Lord Jesus Christ was held in the city. Organised by the Trumpet Festival Fellowship, the rally took place on Saturday...

Gollapalli, was the chief guest. The rally saw participation from around 300 people from various Christian denominations in Secunderabad and Hyderabad...

Buddhavanam to be made a tourist and spiritual resort

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Minister for Tourism and Culture Jupally Krishna Rao said that under the leadership of Chief Minister A Revanth Reddy Buddhavanam in Nalgonda will be developed as a tourist and spiritual destination.

Bharat Gaurav Kshetra Yatra begins

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

The Bharat Gaurav train designated for Kshetra Yatra began its journey from the Secunderabad railway station on Saturday.

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Eluru, Rajahmundry, Samalank, Vizag (Pendurthi) and Vizianagaram. The Ayodhya - Kashi: Kshetra Yatra, Bharat Gaurav train which commenced its journey is running with 100% full occupancy.

position - 2 AC, 3AC and sleeper coaches. Reflecting the patronage of all segments, rail passengers from both Secunderabad station as well as other stations have availed both AC as well as Non-AC train services.

Three held for murder over affair

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

The Begumpet Police on Saturday arrested three persons for killing a man over an affair. The primary accused was identified as Kammala Sathosh and two others were identified as Syed Raza and Golla Harshavardhan.

The primary accused took Ayyappa to his house where the accused's father Narsigh Rao and brother Nagaraju beat up the victim and suggested he be taken to the police. Santhosh coerced the victim into confessing the affair.

TG AITUC leader scoffs at staff being outsourced

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Telangana All India Trade Union Congress (AITUC) Deputy General Secretary M Narasimha on Saturday expressed dismay over the State and district-level staff being outsourced in the National Health Mission (NHM).

ees who have been working in the National Health Mission for the last 16 years should be made regular on a separate basis. In fact, 80 per cent of the work in the family health department is done by the people working in this health mission, but the government does not recognise them.

Ranjith bags scholarship for US varsity meet

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Ranjith Kumar, a resident of Huzur Nagar in Suryapet district in Telangana, has been awarded a full scholarship to attend the prestigious Acton University Conference in Grand Rapids, MI, USA from June 24 to 27.



"I am honoured to have been selected for this incredible opportunity," said Ranjith. "The Acton University Conference is a renowned event that brings together the brightest minds from around the world to explore the foundations of a free society."



BRS demands removal of Adityanath Das from Post

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Former Agriculture Minister Singireddy Niranjan Reddy has called for the immediate removal of Adityanath Das from his position as an advisor to the Telangana Irrigation Department.



Former ministr S Niranjan Reddy speaking at a media conference in Hyderabad on Saturday

Niranjan Reddy alleged that the appointment signified the influence of former Andhra Pradesh Chief Minister N Chandrababu Naidu over Telangana even before the new government was sworn in.

He questioned whether Telangana Chief Minister Revanth Reddy would act in the state's best interest or succumb to Naidu's directives out of fear of losing his position.

He expressed doubt over whether Das, who has been fighting for Andhra's interests for the past decade, could now do justice to Telangana.

He expressed dismay over the decision to overlook these experts in favour of Das, who has a track record of working against Telangana.

GNEI hosts national-level online project competitions

PNS ■ RANGAREDDY

Guru Nanak Educational Institutions recently held "Virtual Vista 1.0," a national-level online project competition aimed at bringing students from across the country together to showcase their innovative ideas and creativity.



Participants in national-level project competition hosted by Guru Nanak Educational Institutions recent in Ranga Reddy district on Saturday

Vihan Vijayvargiya, Aditi Jingre, and Ira Joshi from Acropolis Institute of Technology and Research, Madhya Pradesh. Dr Kritika Sutraye, Assistant Professor at Grand Valley State University, South Dakota

Managing Director HS Saini praised the organisers for successfully conducting such a significant event and expressed their gratitude to the esteemed guests.

Telangana Medical Council busts unauthorised hospital

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

The Telangana Medical Council (TGM) on Saturday conducted raids at Kodrupaka and Bahupeta in Karimnagar and busted an unauthorised hospital and an unauthorised lab.

The inspection team was led by Dr Rajkumar. The staff at these hospitals is 10th and intermediate pass and they were practising allopathic medicine.

During the inspection it was revealed that a person identified as Jakkani Lakshminarayana has been practicing allopathic medicine for 25 years without minimum education in Kodurupaka Nilojipalli village under the name of Karuna Clinic.

BharatPe orderd to pay Rs 22k to consumer in Nalgonda

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

The Nalgonda District Consumer Disputes Redressal Commission, consisting of Mamidi Christopher, S Sandhya Rani, K Venkateshwarlu ordered BharatPe to pay Rs 22,080 to a consumer, Kommuri Mahesh Babu, before July 6.



Maahesh Babu purchased swipe machine from BharatPe of Rs 7,080 through online payment in 2023. He submitted to the court that the swipe machine failed to work properly within one week of its purchase.

The Complainant communicated the problem to the BharatPe by telephone and by way of electronic mail conversation, but the problem was not solved.

The Counsel for the respondent said that as per the policy, when anyone takes the BharatPe swipe machine, there is a free look up period policy according to which within seven days of the date of delivery of the machine, the merchant is entitled to get full refund of the payment upon its return.

After hearing the case, the court ordered that the BharatPe is liable to refund the cost of the swipe machine from BharatPe of Rs 7,080, and compensation of Rs 10,000, For mental agony Rs 3,000 and costs for costs of the case is Rs 2,000 to consume.

People taught bitter lesson to KCR, Jagan: Vivek

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Congress MLA from Chennai Vivek Venkataswamy on Saturday said that the people of Telangana and Andhra Pradesh had taught a fitting lesson to former chief Ministers K Chandrasekhar Rao and YS Jagan Mohan Reddy in the Assembly and Lok Sabha elections.

Speaking to the media after having darshan of Lord Sri Venkateswars Swamy on Saturday along with his MP son Vamshi Krishna, Vivek said that even Narendra Modi too lost support of people and the seats won the NDA is proving it.

Vivek said that NDA government tried to win the elections threatening opponents through ED and CBI. However, the people observed everything and gave good majority to the Congress in Telangana. He said that he is happy that the people ensured the victory of his son Vamshi Krishna.

BJP has the richest and poorest MPs of Telangana

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

BJP has the richest and poorest MP elects in Telangana. In terms of wealth, Konda Vishweshwar Reddy from the Chevella constituency is identified as the richest MP, with declared assets worth Rs 1,969 crores.

This highlights the ongoing challenge of achieving gender balance in political representation. The report also noted the voting trends in different constituencies. The Malkajigiri constituency recorded the highest number of NOTA (None of the Above) votes, with 13,366 voters opting for this choice,



reflecting a significant level of voter dissatisfaction. R. Raghuram Reddy from Khammam received the highest number of votes among all MPs, securing 7,66,929 votes, which accounts for 61.31% of the votes in his constituency. He is closely followed by Asaduddin Owaisi from Hyderabad, who received 6,61,981 votes, or 61.30% of the votes. The Forum for Good Governance has compiled this data based on the affidavits submitted by the MPs, providing a comprehensive overview of the current parliamentary landscape in Telangana.

Primary Health Sub-Centre in Shadnagar flooded due to heavy rain

PNS ■ RANGAREDDY

At Nehru Colony in Shadnagar town, the Anganwadi Centre, which also houses a Primary Health Sub-Centre, was inundated following heavy rains. The flooding caused significant disruption, with medicines floating in the water, including those intended for children, babies, and pregnant women.



Asha workers trying to drain the rainwater at primary health centre in Shadnagar on Saturday

The Primary Health Sub-Centre is to vaccinate children every Wednesday and Saturday. However, due to the flooding, Asha workers were seen using buckets to remove the rainwater to salvage the medicines and maintain some semblance of normal operations.

This flooding issue is not new. The health sub-centre has been attached to Anganwadi centre and despite repeated complaints from officials and public representatives, no permanent solution has been found.

Will Shadnagar constituency see development under Congress rule at least?

PNS ■ RANGAREDDY

Shadnagar constituency, situated near the Hyderabad metropolis, is grappling with multiple issues. Decade-old problems, including non-execution of vital irrigation projects by successive governments, persist.

Lakshmidivipalli in Chowdhariguda mandal, part of the Palamuru-Rangareddy lift scheme, has remained unfulfilled, causing frustration among locals. Many believe that KCR's decision to merge Shadnagar with Rangareddy district was driven by the interests of previous BRS government leaders, who encouraged real estate development in the constituency.



Veeripalli Shankar

The misalignment between the Mahabub Nagar constituency's Parliamentary jurisdiction and its combination with the Rangareddy district is also a point of contention.

Farmers awaiting the completion of the Lakshmidivipalli Reservoir face ongoing disappointment. The reservoir has been a recurrent campaign promise during elections, yet no substantial progress has been made.

Shadnagar constituency has been under the rule of the ruling party for three consecutive terms since the formation of Telangana state.

YSRCP to file complaints, move courts

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

The Krishna district YSRCP leaders have accused TDP and JSP leaders and activists of resorting to attacks against YSRCP members.

TDP, JSP ATTACKS

Speaking to the media on Saturday, former ministers Kodali Sri Venkateswara Rao (Nani), Perni Venkataramaiah (Nani), and others alleged that YSRCP leaders and activists have been deliberately targeted by TDP and Jana Sena Party members following the elections.

He stated that YSRCP leaders have been under attack since the day of vote counting, and accused TDP and Jana Sena Party rowdy groups of behaving like hooligans following their election victory. Nani alleged that TDP MLAs are orchestrating these attacks with Chandrababu Naidu's support, influencing the state DGP and police to neglect their duties.

Nani further accused TDP rowdies of threatening the police and preventing YSRCP leaders from attending meetings. He criticized the police for not taking action against TDP goons and for failing to register complaints after the attacks.

Kodali Nani said, "YSRCP leaders and activists are being deliberately targeted after the elections. TDP and Jana Sena Party are attacking us to scare YSRCP leaders and activists. The police are not responding to the attacks."

Expressing concern over the deteriorating law and order situation, Nani said the party will approach the High Court regarding the attacks on YSRCP. He stated that they would file cases against the attackers and the 'mute spectator' police officials. Nani also mentioned that party leaders will visit Krishna district in the next two days to meet the injured cadre. "We will protect the party activists."

All set for Group1 exams today

PNS ■ NALGONDA

District Superintendent of Police Chandana Deepti, said in a statement that all security arrangements have been put in place for the Group-I preliminary examination to be held on Sunday.

to enter the examination centres from 9 am and the gates of the centres will be closed at 10 am and no one will be allowed to enter after 10 pm.

Candidates must follow the instructions on the hall ticket.



Along with the admit card, the candidates are required to carry a valid photo identity proof such as Aadhaar Card / Driving License / Voter ID Card / Passport / Driving License.

If the photograph does not appear correctly on the hall ticket, 3-colour photographs should be taken and the hall ticket should be signed by a gazetted officer.

"If you can reach out and touch and love and be with wildlife, you will forever be changed, and you will want to make the world a better place."
— Terri Irwin



INVASIVE SPECIES THREATEN WAYANAD WILDLIFE SANCTUARY

Senna spectabilis planted with good intentions has become an ecological nightmare, swiftly overtaking large areas of the sanctuary. Its unchecked growth not only threatens biodiversity but also triggers a chain of ecological and economic repercussions, affecting both wildlife and local communities

Approximately one-fifth of the Earth's surface is threatened by invasive species. These biotic invaders, benefiting from rapid reproduction and a lack of natural predators, outcompete native species for vital resources like food, water, and habitat, posing a significant threat to biodiversity and ecosystem stability.

The Wayanad Wildlife Sanctuary (WWS), nestled in the heart of the Nilgiri Biosphere Reserve (NBR), is a biodiversity hotspot, brimming with a rich variety of flora and fauna. The sanctuary serves as a habitat for a substantial population of Asian elephants, along with over 3,700 documented species of plants and animals. Spanning an area of 344.44 km², the sanctuary is comprised of four distinct ranges: Sulthan Bathery, Muthanga, Kurichiat, and Tholpetty. Each range, with its distinct characteristics, adds to the rich tapestry of the WWS, making it a vital and vibrant hub of ecological diversity. However, this ecological paradise is under severe threat from several invasive species, including *Senna spectabilis*, *Lantana camara*, and *Acacia* species. This is particularly noticeable in the case of *Senna spectabilis*, which has proliferated aggressively throughout the WWS and beyond, affecting the NBR and the corresponding ecological continuum of three southern Indian states of Kerala, Tamil Nadu, and Karnataka. A decision made in good faith by the forest department in 1986 to plant *Senna spectabilis*, an ornamental tree with striking yellow flowers, has morphed into an ecological disaster. Little did one know, that this tropical American tree had a notorious history of invading continents, including parts of Asia, Africa, and Australia. By the time the mistake was realized, *Senna* had stealthily spread into many parts of the sanctuary. It expanded from covering less than 16 km² in 2013-2014 to 89 km² in 2019 and now stands at a staggering 123.86 km². Considering the total area of the sanctuary is 344.44 km², *Senna* has already engulfed 35% of it. If this trend is not curbed, the entire sanctuary could be swamped within a decade, turning it into a dense *Senna* forest.

A 2021 study has revealed that the Asian elephant, a significant inhabitant of the sanctuary, is aiding the spread of the invasive *Senna spectabilis*. The elephant's dung provides a fertile environment for the *Senna* seeds to sprout, with a single pile of dung found to contain



BKP SINHA



ARVIND K JHA

“A SINGLE SENNA POD HARBOURS OVER A HUNDRED SEEDS, AND A MEDIUM-SIZED TREE CAN YIELD AT LEAST ONE LAKH SEEDS. THE INVASIVE NATURE OF THE SENNA SPECIES HAS HAD A SIGNIFICANT IMPACT ON THE LOCAL ECOSYSTEM. IT HAS DISPLACED NATIVE VEGETATION BY MONOPOLIZING THE AREA AND INHIBITING THE GROWTH OF SPECIES LIKE GRASS, BAMBOO AND SEVERAL OTHER MINOR FOREST PRODUCE

approximately 2000 seeds. The study also found other mammals, such as the chital and the Indian crested porcupine, contributing to the spread of *Senna*. The researchers observed that the fruiting period of *Senna* trees in the summer coincides with a high concentration of elephants in Wayanad due to their seasonal migration. This synchronicity could potentially expedite the plant's dispersal across the landscape, particularly in micro-habitats commonly inhabited by elephants.

A single *Senna* pod harbours over a hundred seeds, and a medium-sized tree can yield at least one lakh seeds. The invasive nature of the *Senna* species has had a significant impact on the local ecosystem. It has displaced native vegetation by monopolizing the area and inhibiting the growth of species like grass, bamboo and several other minor forest produce.

The *Senna* tree employs a unique method of colonizing its surroundings. It releases specific substances, known as allelochemicals, either directly onto the target plants or indirectly into the surrounding soil. These allelochemicals interfere with the normal growth processes of other plants, providing the *Senna* tree with a competitive advantage. The dominance of the *Senna* tree has significant implications for the livelihoods of rural and tribal people who rely on non-timber forest produce, like amla or gooseberry, for sustenance. Many edible items like berries, mushrooms, and wild tubers, which were once a significant part of the tribal diet, are gradually disappearing from the forest.

The bitter leaves and irritating bark of *Senna* do not find favour with herbivores resulting in a decline in their numbers in the area. This has had a cascading effect on the region's tiger population, which has decreased from 120 in 2018 to 84 in 2023. The scarcity of prey in the *Senna*-dominated areas is believed to be driving tigers to migrate in search of richer hunting grounds. Similarly, elephants are moving into areas outside the forests in their quest for food and water. Unfortunately, this has led to increased human-elephant conflicts, resulting in a backlash against the preservation efforts of elephants. The ecological disruption has had an unexpected benefit for local communities. With fewer wildlife incursions, settlements near the jungle have seen a significant drop in crop damage and cattle lifting incidents. The data from the past three years shows a downward trend in compensation claims



by farmers for crop raids. In the fiscal year 2021-22, there were 734 cases of crop damage reported in the border agrarian hamlets of WWS. This figure fell to 475 in 2022-23, and in 2023-24, the number has further decreased to just 93 cases. Similarly, cattle lifting cases have also seen a decline, from 83 cases in 2021-22 to a mere 19 in 2023-24. While the decrease in human-wildlife conflict might be viewed as a positive development by those seeking to address this issue, the underlying causes warrant serious concern. Locals like Mr. Stanley Augustine, a member of the Biodiversity Management Committee of Poothadi village, find these changes deeply troubling, particularly from the standpoint of the rural economy. The area is witnessing a worrying decline in agricultural productivity and an increasing trend of farmers abandoning their paddy fields. The forests too are under mounting pressure. The real challenge, therefore, lies in re-establishing equilibrium in the WWS while simultaneously securing the future of the human communities in the area. In response to these challenges, the Forest Department has launched an initiative known as the 'Senna Eradication and Forest Regeneration

Project'. The project, supported by the National Bank for Agriculture and Rural Development, has a budget of Rs 5.31 crore. The initiative is currently being implemented in the Kurichiat and Muthanga forest ranges, to eradicate *Senna* from 1,672 hectares. To further support this initiative, the sanctuary authorities are exploring partnerships with the newsprint industry, taking inspiration from Tamil Nadu. The state government there has allowed the Tamil Nadu Newsprint and Papers Ltd (TNPL) to extract invasive trees like Wattles and *Senna* for paper production. In return, TNPL compensates the Forest Department and employs various extraction techniques, attempting to turn an ecological challenge into an opportunity for resource utilization. In some areas, invasive plants, including *Senna*, are being repurposed to manufacture furniture. *Senna*, in particular, is valued as a timber source for making lightweight furniture and other wooden products. There is hope that policy changes could permit the extraction of *Senna* from forest areas and its subsequent sale outside. Such changes could potentially motivate the local community to actively participate in clearing the forest of this invasive plant.

The process of removing the *Senna* tree, however, is fraught with challenges. Traditional methods such as uprooting, girdling, and herbicide application for eliminating *Senna* from the area are labour-intensive, costly, and environmentally damaging. Uprooting large *Senna* trees could disturb the soil, leading to erosion, especially in hilly areas that receive high rainfall.

Techniques like girdling and felling can inadvertently harm non-target species. Moreover, the use of herbicides may contaminate water sources and negatively impact the area's biodiversity. Additionally, the resilience of the *Senna* tree is evident in its ability to regenerate from lateral roots, which complicates its eradication. Given these challenges, it is clear that innovative and sustainable strategies are needed to manage and ultimately remove the *Senna* species while simultaneously assisting the re-establishment of local species.

As we forge ahead, conservation measures must be holistic, encompassing not only the immediate environs of the sanctuary but also the larger watersheds and catchment areas that feed into the rivers. This holistic approach is particularly significant for Wayanad, the source of the Kabini River. The health of this river is essential for sustaining the lives and livelihoods of communities across Kerala, Karnataka, and Tamil Nadu. Notably, initiatives are in progress to increase the flow of the Kabini River—a major tributary of the Kaveri River—to address the issue of water scarcity in Bengaluru.

The situation in Wayanad is a stark reminder of the domino effect triggered by the introduction of invasive species. The ecological and economic ramifications are far-reaching, impacting not just the wildlife within the sanctuary but also the lives and livelihoods of communities dwelling in its vicinity and beyond. The fight to save Wayanad is a race against time. If immediate and decisive action is not taken, the future of this biodiversity hotspot and the well-being of the millions who depend on it hang in the balance. Wayanad's plight serves as a cautionary tale, urging us to prioritize rigorous scientific evaluation before introducing any new species in an area and to act swiftly and collaboratively in the face of ecological threats posed by invasive species.

(The writers are Former Principal Chief Conservator of Forests, UP and Maharashtra; views expressed are personal)



DISCOVER THE DESERT SERENGETI AND ENCHANTING ISLAND OF BUTTERFLIES

Sharjah creates a 'la African Safari' in the Desert and its commitment to nature shines at Al Noor Island, writes **GYANESHWAR DAYAL**

Sharjah, a jewel in the crown of the United Arab Emirates, boasts a captivating terrain that marries the charm of golden deserts with the allure of pristine coastlines along the Arabian Gulf. The landscape is punctuated by rolling sand dunes, tranquil oases, and rugged mountains that rise in the eastern region, creating a picturesque backdrop to its vibrant cityscape. Sharjah's climate is characterized by its arid nature, with hot summers that see temperatures soar, and mild, pleasant winters that offer a refreshing respite. The gentle coastal breeze, coupled with the serene desert air, weaves a unique atmospheric tapestry, making Sharjah a place of both stark beauty and subtle elegance. However, it lacks the lush green vegetation and abundance found in tropical climates. Yet, this absence is masterfully compensated by human ingenuity, as nature is carefully crafted and enhanced through thoughtful intervention.

Sharjah has been a beacon of cultural heritage in the region. However, not many people know its commitment towards nature. In fact, it has one of the rarest treats around the world to showcase which has never tried elsewhere on the large scale. Sharjah's commitment to preserving nature and promoting biodiversity is exemplified through its innovative projects, notably creating Serengeti and Sawana in the heart of the desert and organising the African Safari in the desert. As if that was not enough it also has a full-on nature conservation project at in Al Noor Island which hosts thousands of species of plants and birds and has a unique Butterfly House. These initiatives reflect Sharjah's dedication to balancing development with sustainability and fostering a deep respect for the natural world.

A 'LA AFRICAN SAFARI' IN THE DESERT

Sharjah's African Safari, set against the backdrop of the Arabian Desert, is a testament to the emirate's vision of creating unique and sustainable tourism experiences. This ambitious project recreates the diverse ecosystems of Africa, providing a sanctuary for a wide range of species in an environment that mirrors their natural habitats. The African Safari in Sharjah is not just a tourist attraction; it is a conservation effort aimed at protecting endangered

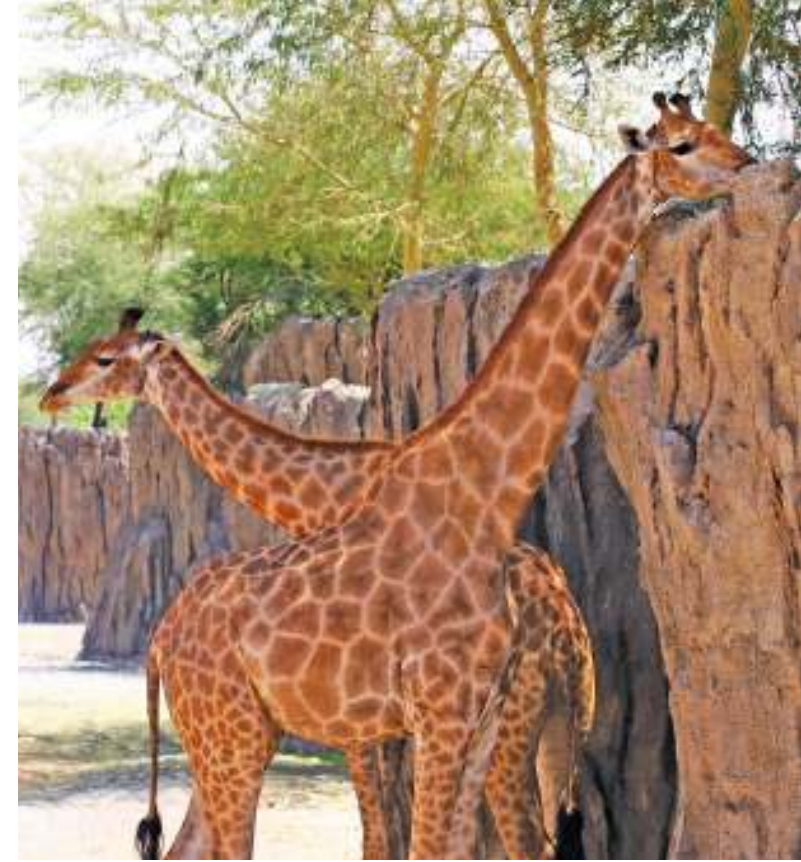


species and educating the public about wildlife and ecosystems. The park hosts animals such as giraffes, zebras, elephants and various species of antelope, living in conditions that closely resemble their native habitats. This approach ensures that the animals can exhibit natural behaviours, contributing to their well-being and offering visitors an authentic experience. Sharjah's African Safari employs sustainable practices to minimise its environmental footprint. This includes the use of renewable energy sources, water conservation techniques, and eco-friendly infrastructure. The park also engages in breeding programs for

endangered species, playing a crucial role in global conservation efforts. By fostering a connection between visitors and wildlife, the safari park encourages a greater appreciation for the natural world and the importance of its preservation.

AL NOOR ISLAND: WHERE SERENITY AND ART COME TOGETHER

Nestled in the heart of Khalid Lagoon, Al Noor Island is a testament to Sharjah's vision of blending nature, art, and culture. Since its opening in 2015, this picturesque island has become a beloved destination for both locals and



tourists, offering a serene escape and a feast for the senses. Al Noor Island is more than just a park; it is an embodiment of Sharjah's commitment to enhancing the quality of life through innovative public spaces that foster a connection with nature and the arts. Al Noor Island spans 45,470 square meters and is adorned with a rich variety of flora, creating a verdant oasis in the middle of the city. The island's landscaping features over 70,000 plants and trees from around the world, carefully curated to thrive in the local climate. This lush greenery provides a habitat for diverse wildlife, including numerous bird species that find sanctuary on the island. The meticulously maintained gardens offer visitors a tranquil environment to unwind and connect with nature.



The Butterfly House

One of the island's crown jewels is the Butterfly House, an architectural marvel that houses over 500 exotic butterflies. The structure itself, designed with intricate latticework inspired by Islamic art, is a sight to behold. Inside, the climate-controlled environment mimics tropical conditions, allowing butterflies to flourish year-round. Visitors can walk among the butterflies, witnessing their delicate beauty up close and learning about their life cycles and ecological importance. The Butterfly House is not only a visual delight but also an educational experience, emphasizing the significance of conservation.

Art Installations and Sculptures

Al Noor Island is dotted with stunning art installations and sculptures, seamlessly integrating art with nature. These pieces,

created by renowned artists from around the world, add a layer of cultural richness to the island. Notable installations include the "OVO" art sculpture, a glowing egg-shaped structure that symbolizes rebirth and renewal, and the "Torus" sculpture by David Harber, which captures the interplay of light and shadow.

The island caters to visitors of all ages with its well-designed children's playground and exercise facilities. The playground is equipped with safe, modern equipment that encourages imaginative play, while the exercise stations offer adults a chance to stay active in a scenic setting.

Night Illumination

As the sun sets, Al Noor Island transforms into a magical landscape illuminated by artistic lighting. The island's pathways and installations glow with soft, colourful lights, creating an enchanting atmosphere. This nighttime transformation offers a unique experience, making evening visits to the island particularly memorable.

Al Noor Island exemplifies Sharjah's dedication to sustainability and environmental preservation. The island employs eco-friendly practices, such as using solar energy for lighting and maintaining a commitment to water conservation. These efforts ensure that the island remains a green and sustainable haven for future generations.

Al Noor Island also plays a vital role in community engagement and education. It regularly hosts workshops, guided tours, and cultural events that promote environmental awareness and appreciation for the arts. These programs aim to foster a sense of responsibility and connection to the natural world among visitors.

Al Noor Island as its African safari is a shining example of Sharjah's innovative approach to nature conservation with cultural enrichment. This serene oasis offers a retreat from the hustle and bustle of city life, inviting visitors to explore its lush landscapes, admire its art installations, and engage with its diverse flora and fauna. Through Al Noor Island, Sharjah demonstrates its commitment to creating spaces that nurture the soul, inspire the mind, and promote a sustainable future. Whether you're a nature lover, art enthusiast, or simply seeking peace and tranquillity, Al Noor Island is a destination that promises to captivate and inspire.

Bookmark these boutique destinations for a summer getaway

BY RUPALI DEAN

STERLING PARK, KALIMPONG

Where? Ringkingpong Rd, Kalimpong, Khasmahal, Kalimpong, West Bengal. Nestled in the scenic mid-range of the Himalayas, at a lofty 4,100 feet above sea level lies Kalimpong—a perfect fusion of serene mountain vistas and vibrant cultural encounters, offering an enchanting getaway for those in search of an unforgettable holiday experience. This cultural hub, blending influences from Indian, Chinese, Nepalese, and Tibetan traditions, provides a captivating and immersive retreat.

Perched atop a hill with a panoramic view of the snow-capped Himalayan peaks, Sterling Park Kalimpong resides in a historic edifice once owned by the Maharaja of Dinajpur, allowing guests a peek into a majestic bygone era. The vistas of Mt Kanchenjunga and other majestic peaks like Pandim and Narsingh, alongside the historic Jelep-la and Nathu-la Passes, resonate with old tales of the Silk Trade Route winding through Lhasa to Tibet. This mountain retreat, situated away from the urban hustle of downtown Kalimpong, exudes an aura of old-world charm with its colonial-era architecture adorned with intricate woodwork, vintage furnishings, and spacious verandahs, transporting guests



back to a nostalgic age. The lavishly appointed rooms and suites boast breath-taking views of the majestic Himalayas, creating a perfect sanctuary for relaxation. Guests can unwind on the cosy patio, indulge in the finest Darjeeling tea, or revel in the tranquillity of the lush courtyard surroundings. The signature restaurant, Kokomendo, beckons visitors with a diverse array of Indian, Continental, Chinese, Nepalese, and Tibetan delicacies. Together with Sterling Park Kalimpong, Darjeeling, and Gangtok Orange Village, they form a delightful mountain circuit in the Eastern Himalayan foothills, promising an

unforgettable journey for nature and culture enthusiasts alike.

BAREFOOT BUNGALOW, CHAMBA

Where? Buranskhanda, Chamba-Mussoorie Road, Buranskhanda, Dehradun, Uttarakhand. Set amidst the enchanting Himalayan landscape, Barefoot Bungalow, a luxurious 3-bedroom homestay in Buranskhanda, offers a sublime escape from the routine of daily life. Located just 25 kilometres from the renowned hill station of Mussoorie, this serene refuge captures the essence of tranquillity and natural beauty in the Garhwal Himalayas.

At the heart of Barefoot Bungalow lies a deep commitment to hospitality, where a dedicated team of professionals ensures that guests are pampered and well looked after. This pet-friendly haven features a personal butler and a talented in-house chef named Arjun, who delights guests with delicious home-cooked meals. The cosy wooden interiors create a warm hill station ambience, perfect for creating memorable evenings by the bonfire, accompanied by live music performances or the inviting glow of an indoor fireplace. Guests at Barefoot Bungalow can indulge in a culinary delight at the glasshouse restaurant, where they

can watch their meals being freshly prepared in a live kitchen setting. The expansive 14,000-square-foot private garden, embellished with ponds and meticulously landscaped, provides a lush sanctuary for relaxation and reflection. And to top it all off, sweeping views of the majestic snow-capped Himalayan range serve as a breath-taking backdrop to this picturesque retreat.

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ONENESS, RISHIKESH

Where? Rishikesh, Badrinath Highway, Byasi, Uttarakhand. Cocooned within a Lower Shivalik mountain valley, 30 kilometres away from Rishikesh, this resort is

a harmonious blend of river, flora, and fauna, inviting guests to embark on a mesmerizing journey where nature's wild beauty takes centre stage and showcases a diverse array of Sal, Haldu, Figs, and Mulberry trees, forming a biodiverse sanctuary. This lively mountain retreat encourages visitors to immerse themselves in the wilderness, surrounded by monkeys, langurs, wild cats, the elusive Black Bear, and the captivating Scarlet Minivet. It's commitment to ecology shines through in the careful planting of 30,000 saplings of over 50 medicinal plants, fostering a flourishing ecosystem that embodies the ethos of the resort.

As the Ganges flows below, resonating with the sacred energy of Devprayag, spirituality becomes intricately woven into the fabric of Oneness. Guests can luxuriate in unparalleled comfort within the Luxury Cottages, each intricately designed to provide a unique and immersive stay. From the spacious and finely appointed rooms to the breath-taking views of the gardens and mountains, every aspect has been thoughtfully curated to offer an unforgettable escape. Beyond being just a resort, on offer is an immersive journey.

Engage in a variety of inclusive activities, ranging from leisurely beach moments to captivating stargazing sessions. For our younger guests, an array of kid's activities awaits. Furthermore, optional activities such as Fun Family Float and Memory Plantation present distinctive and memorable experiences.

Go for an adventure intertwined with the allure of unspoiled wilderness. Your expedition commences with experienced guides guiding you through a brief hike, unveiling the untouched beauty of the Lower Shivalik mountains. The path then seamlessly transitions to a unique river crossing experience via a raft, adding a touch of thrill to your sojourn.

(Awarded the 'Best food writer in the country' by the Indian culinary forum, WACS and the Ministry of Tourism, Rupali Dean writes on food and travel)

GAJRAJ RAO, the Newgen method actor, redefines the cinematic experience by performing even non-descript roles with élan. This journey explores the nuances of his method acting, writes **GYANESHWAR DAYAL**

THE METHOD HIS MADNESS

Gajraj Rao, a name that resonates with authenticity and a deep understanding of character portrayal, has carved a niche for himself in the Indian film industry through a blend of meticulous method acting and a rich repertoire of roles. Rao's journey from the sidelines to the spotlight is a testament to his dedication, perseverance, and exceptional talent. Gajraj Rao's foray into acting was marked by a series of small but significant roles that gradually built his reputation as a reliable character actor. Born in Durgapur, Rajasthan, Rao's initial years in the industry were filled with struggles and uncredited roles. His career began in the late 1990s, with minor roles in films and television. However, his ability to imbue even the smallest roles with depth and realism did not go unnoticed. Rao's breakthrough came with the 2018 film *Badhaai Ho*, where he played Jeetender Kaushik, a middle-aged man who discovers his wife's unexpected pregnancy. The film's success catapulted Rao into the limelight, earning him critical acclaim and several awards. His portrayal of Jeetender Kaushik was lauded for its warmth, subtlety, and humor, marking a significant shift in the perception of middle-aged characters in Indian cinema. What sets Gajraj Rao apart is his approach to method acting. Rao's dedication to his craft involves deep immersion into his characters. He often spends extensive time understanding the background, motivations, and nuances of the roles he portrays. This approach allows him to deliver performances that are both authentic and relatable. Method acting, a technique pioneered by Konstantin Stanislavski and later popularized by Lee Strasberg, emphasizes the psychological and emotional aspects of character development. Rao's use

of this technique involves drawing from his own experiences and emotions to bring a character to life. His preparation often includes detailed research, observing people with similar backgrounds to his characters, and even adopting their mannerisms and speech patterns. Rao's impact on modern Indian cinema extends beyond his performances. He represents a shift towards more realistic and nuanced storytelling in Bollywood. Films like *Shubh Mangal Zyada Saavdhan* and *Lootcase* further showcase his versatility, moving away from stereotypical depictions to more layered and authentic characters. In contemporary cinema, method actors like Gajraj Rao are redefining the narrative. They are moving away from the star-centric approach to one that values story and character depth. This trend is visible in the rise of content-driven films and web series that focus on everyday stories and real-life issues. And the time is ripe for such experiments. "Twenty years back I, Pankaj Tripathi, Nawazuddin Siddiqui and many others could not imagine of getting a significant role. Hindi cinema is more democratic and character

driven and gives chance to everyone," says Rao. Method actors today are increasingly collaborating with directors and writers to develop well-rounded characters. They are involved in the creative process from the early stages, contributing to script development and character arcs. This collaborative approach results in performances that are not just believable but also deeply engaging. While method acting is rewarding, it is also challenging. The emotional toll of deeply immersing oneself in a character can be significant. For Rao, balancing the intense preparation required for his roles with his personal life is a constant challenge. However, his passion for acting and his commitment to his craft continue to drive him forward. "I have theatre background where script is very important which all of us cherish. Then we prepare for the role meticulously. What viewers see on the screen is culmination of that preparation." Looking ahead, Gajraj Rao's journey seems poised for further success. With the increasing popularity of OTT platforms and a growing

audience for nuanced storytelling, actors like Rao are likely to find even more opportunities to showcase their talent. His upcoming projects are eagerly awaited by fans and critics alike, who expect nothing short of brilliance from this seasoned actor. Gajraj Rao's journey as an actor is an inspiring tale of perseverance, talent, and the power of method acting. His contributions to Indian cinema have paved the way for more realistic and relatable storytelling. As he continues to explore new horizons, Rao remains a beacon of authenticity and excellence in the world of acting, embodying the transformative power of method acting in modern cinema. In the film *Maidaan*, Gajraj Rao excels in his role by bringing a nuanced depth and authenticity that enhances the movie's historical and emotional landscape. The film, directed by Amit Ravindernath Sharma, chronicles the golden era of Indian football from 1952 to 1962, focusing on the life of Syed Abdul Rahim, the coach who led the Indian team to remarkable victories. Rao portrays a pivotal character whose support and conflict with the protagonist add layers to the narrative, showcasing his ability to seamlessly blend into the historical setting while delivering a performance that is both compelling and resonant. His meticulous approach to embodying his character contributes significantly to the film's overall impact, making *Maidaan* a captivating tribute to a lesser-known yet glorious chapter of Indian sports history.



Photo: Pankaj Kumar/Pioneer

WHAT SETS GAJRAJ RAO APART IS HIS APPROACH TO METHOD ACTING. RAO'S DEDICATION TO HIS CRAFT INVOLVES DEEP IMMERSION INTO HIS CHARACTERS. HE OFTEN SPENDS EXTENSIVE TIME UNDERSTANDING THE BACKGROUND, MOTIVATIONS, AND NUANCES OF THE ROLES HE PORTRAYS. THIS APPROACH ALLOWS HIM TO DELIVER PERFORMANCES THAT ARE BOTH AUTHENTIC AND RELATABLE

Reflections on Acting, Challenges and Audience Influence

MAHESH THAKUR shares insights into his illustrious acting career, spanning television and cinema. From memorable roles to industry evolution, he reflects on the challenges and successes that have shaped him as an artist. In a conversation with **SAKSHI PRIYA**, he also opens up about his recent show *Aangan Aapno Kaa*, shedding light on his experience playing a father's role in this heartwarming project

What motivates you to continue acting and how do you view the role of the audience in your career?
I get the audience's love and reaction. Being an actor means experiencing the audience's reactions, which keep me going. They encourage me to do better. I would say it is the audience that inspires me to act.

Among the numerous characters you've portrayed, which role has been the most memorable for you and why?
I think a role that is very different from my personality would be Tej Singh Oberoi from *Ishqbaaz*. That character is nothing like me and I had to create a persona that was really nasty, cunning and thought differently. It's a really interesting character that I played, so I would definitely give credit to that role. Generally, the roles I play are similar to my personality and I feel that's not very challenging but the role in *Ishqbaaz* was challenging. Playing the honorable Prime Minister Narendra Modi was also challenging because it is difficult to embody a character who is very much in the public eye. Another challenging role was playing Sadhu Vaswani. All these characters are memorable because they are different from who I am.

You've often played positive characters. Did you relish the opportunity to portray a villain in *Ishqbaaz*, and how did you approach that transformation?
First of all, in television, we have very different ways of working. The episodes and scripts come on set, so we don't have time to

do much homework. My basic approach in the initial days when I worked on any television character, which is very different from the rest, is to do a lot of reading. I read one to six episodes, and once I am done with reading, I try to get into the character and experiment with different voice modulations in my own space. I try taking pauses when delivering dialogues and ensure that I don't repeat certain expressions. In *Ishqbaaz*, my character was so negative that I didn't want my kids to watch it, as they were very young at that time.

What have been some of the biggest challenges and successes in your acting career and how have they shaped you as an artist?
One of the biggest challenges in my acting career was transitioning to television. When I started doing daily soaps, I realised that you put in just as much hard work as you do in films but it's for one telecast. After that, it's gone and often forgotten. As actors, we used to be very particular about giving a fantastic shot, striving for perfection. However, in television, you don't have much time. You get only a few minutes and maybe 4 to 5 takes to get the shot right. No matter how perfect a shot I gave, there was always room for improvement, but in television, it often goes unnoticed because it airs only once and then it's long gone. This was a learning experience for me, helping me understand that, at the end of the day, actors are a product of the writing and direction. It's not just about the actor. Many actors in the

industry think it's all about them, believing that their performance alone makes a movie or show a hit. But that's not true. It's teamwork that makes a project successful. TV has taught me humility as an actor. It made me realise that while an actor might attract the audience for the initial viewing, it's the combined effort of the entire team that makes a lasting impact.

You've seen the television industry evolve over the years. How do you think it has changed, and what are your thoughts on the current trends in TV shows and content?
Yes, definitely. The sensibility has changed. Audiences are now more open to rich subjects and they have a say in what they want to see. You can't disregard the audience today. You have to be very careful. People always try to bifurcate between whether a film is for villagers, town people or two-tier towns. I think that divide is disappearing. We have to ensure that the content generated is not just to cater to one segment, as the divide is reducing between these three categories, thanks to the internet. Everyone now has access to all sorts of content. So, as a content creator, you have to keep everyone in mind, not just a single type of audience.

Looking back on your time working with Sridevi, is there a specific scene or moment from *Malini Iyer* that stands out in your memory?
Sridevi Ma'am was and will always be a legend because she was one of the first heroines where movies were made if she said yes to a project, like



Chandni, Lamhe, and all these beautiful films she was a part of. No matter how much I say about her or praise her, it will always be less.

Recently, you are working on a project, *Aangan Aapno Kaa*. How has your experience been playing the father's role in this project?
I am playing the character of a dad, and it's great. As I said, you need a good team of actors, and we have a very good team here,

especially my daughter, with whom I am very close and interact with often. There are always lots of hugging scenes, giving love, and treating them like babies, so we have to get into a very comfortable zone. Even on the set, they call me Papa instead of Mahesh Ji, and I am good with that. They are very sweet co-actors.

What was your experience like working on *Dil, Dosti Dilemma*, especially considering the

fantastic team of women involved, from the director to the producer?
Dil, Dosti Dilemma was great fun because we had a fantastic team filled with women, from the director to the producer. It was nice seeing all the women coming into action and working so brilliantly as a team. I enjoyed my time in *Dil, Dosti Dilemma*, and it was shot beautifully. The story was one of the simplest out there on the streaming platform. You can watch it and have a great time with your loved ones. It was an extremely sweet story, and I just loved working on the project.

How do you approach acting in different mediums like films, television and web series? Do you have a preference among these mediums?
An actor is always an actor; they should not choose any medium. The only difference between TV and film is not that much. The major difference between working in front of the camera and on stage is significant. When you go on stage, there is a difference in working in front of the camera. In front of the camera, you have to take care of lights, know which dialogue to say and when and work with the cameraman, co-actors and director, so there are lots of things happening in one shot. It's pretty complicated for a person who starts straight in TV and film because lots are happening on sets. When you do a stage, it's all about you. You forget your line, you're supposed to carry on; you are not supposed to stand blank on the stage because you have a live audience watching you. So, that's more challenging,

I feel, for actors working on stage because it's all about dialogue delivery, trying to work on body language, so much is happening on stage that it's more of a challenge rather than working in the medium of TV and film. Acting on TV and film is also challenging but not as challenging as the stage. Also, if you're good on stage, it doesn't mean you can be good in front of the TV and camera because you have to control your expression and not go too loud because TV is a subtle medium. One thing I learned about the theatre is that in theatre, you have to pronounce your words; you cannot speak loudly. The last person sitting on the back bench in the auditorium should be able to listen to you. It's not about raising your voice; it's literally pronunciation which goes right up to the end.

Many actors look up to your career. What piece of advice would you give to someone just starting out in television acting?
To all the new actors, hang in there. Hanging in doesn't mean losing your patience, balance or giving up. This is one of the most difficult professions you could choose. If you have multiple choices, I would say let acting be the last one you go for. But if you are going for it, then be resilient. You have to be there because you never know when the right break will happen for you and when things will start working in your favor. Don't give up. If you are an actor, you should think about it as always being an actor; otherwise, you will never get anywhere. So, choose your profession wisely.



MURALI RAMASWAMY
Sr. Journalist

Hoping against hope, I replied: "No Sir, I would be a flexible peg in any hole" Ramoji Rao laughed heartily, with the cheeks on his face aglow like that of a child. My 'interview' with the Eenadu group's legendary chief ended thus, rather hopelessly.

Reminiscences of an aspiring journalist

Journalism has a charm of its own. Back in the late Eighties; while I was eagerly pursuing PG Diploma in Journalism from Rajendra Prasad Institute of Communication and Management, Mumbai (Course offered by Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan-Hyderabad branch), my dad drew my attention to an advertisement put out by the Eenadu Group. The advertisement was issued on behalf of 'Newstime', English daily of the group which was then looking for trainee sub-editors/reporters. I applied, though at that point of time I had not completed my journalism course. They held a written test and later I had one round of interview with the editorial head, SR Ramanujan, who was also the daily's Executive Editor. Along with me, three others had cleared the written test and the first round of interview to reach the next level: interview with Ramoji Rao in his cubicle on the fifth floor of the Eenadu building in Somajiguda. With great trepidation I entered what I perceived would be a torture chamber for an 'interview' with the man, who, my friends had forewarned me, was "a very strict man", "stickler for punctuality", "tough taskmaster", this and that. But Ramoji Rao asked me what sounded like straightforward questions drawn from current affairs; nothing else about me, my qualifications, experience or whatever. To be honest, I was not abreast of current affairs then. So, I could give mostly wrong answers or unconvincing ones, often fumbling and bumbling. He listened to all of them poker-faced. Then he took what I perceived was his parting shot: "You don't know what is happening around you and you want to be a journal-

ist. If we hire you, don't you think you would be a square peg in a round hole?" Hoping against hope, I replied: "No Sir, I would be a flexible peg in any hole" Ramoji Rao laughed heartily, with the cheeks on his face aglow like that of a child. My 'interview' with the Eenadu group's legendary chief ended thus, rather hopelessly. Subsequently, I got my appointment letter! Frankly speaking, I am still not sure whether it was due to the interview or in spite of it. As a trainee sub-editor/reporter, I learned the ropes the hard way under a

tough taskmaster, Ramanujan, who reflected in toto Ramoji Rao's philosophy of giving nothing but the best for readers of Newstime, which unconventionally was never after government or private ads as a matter of policy then.

Luckily for me, I never had to go to Ramoji Rao for anything significant after my first and traumatic interaction with him. In my entire 14-year long service or vanvaas in Newstime, I met him maybe three or four times along with others—that is *naluguritho Narayana*, usually to get mementoes or just greet the great personality on special occasions like Newstime anniversary. Since such meetings were few and far between, we had to introduce ourselves every time. Given my 'encounter' with him before I was hired, I always introduced myself rather sheepishly. I did secure All-India Chandrakant Vora Gold Medal and Kulapati Silver Medal as well as cash prize in PG Diploma Journalism course. But, I never had the courage to update him on my academic attainments during such fleeting moments. After all, he was hands-on and practical always.

What I appreciated most during my stint in Newstime was the congenial learning atmosphere under a perfectionist boss (Ramanujan) who doubled up as a benevolent dictator. Thanks to him, and his boss who always trusted his lieutenants whole-heartedly, there was little left for me to learn in any other organization thereafter. Learning his never complete, but few organizations foster a culture of learning. Hats off to Eenadu group, whose products hold key positions in media houses (you name it, somebody or the other from Eenadu Group is there or going to be there!).



BUDDHAVARAPU RAJESWARA PRASAD

Achieving remarkable heights in every field one chooses is not everyone's cup of tea. Rarest of the rare are those who reach Himalayan heights with perseverance and penchant for perfection. Media baron Ramoji Rao is one among those stalwarts, whose legacy

We know Ramoji Rao as the one who enriched Telugu media by his singular contribution. His contribution towards enriching Telugu cinema, with diverse and socially relevant themes, also stands on a high pedestal.

stands tall and whose motivational spirit is everlasting. We know Ramoji Rao as the one who enriched Telugu media by his singular contribution. His contribution towards enriching Telugu cinema, with diverse and socially relevant themes, also stands on a high pedestal. The movies that Ramoji Rao made were not run-of-the-mill type. They had subjects that were contemporary and socially relevant. Making movies is something and making them with a clearly defined purpose is wholly different. As a movie maker, Ramoji Rao's contribution is great and laudable. He chose objective-

oriented subjects, thereby making movies that left deep imprints on society. Bearing the stamp of a man who strongly believed that cinema could be used as a medium to depict ideals worthy of emulation in society, most of Ramoji Rao's movies went on to become masterpieces, ranking on par with industry classics. For, their subjects are so relevant that even today and they never lose their appeal and contemporariness. From women empowerment to wholesome entertainment, we have every genre from Ramoji Rao, who believed that through cinema one could reform society and purge it of all its ills as



Maker of moving movies



well as obstacles to progress. Almost all of the movies had something that stirred and stimulated thought in society. He entertained, enthralled, and engaged people with themes that not only got awards, accolades, but wide public appreciation. From Anandam to Mayuri, Ramoji Rao's movies stand out for their social-

ly relevant subjects. With Prathigathana, he stirred society by elucidating and pronouncing so strongly that oppression and suppression had to face its ugly end. Not only this, in the movie *Mayuri*, the penetrating message conveyed is that nothing can stop a woman if she is determined and committed to her task, physical frailties notwithstanding. Mounaparatham is also a movie made to establish the rights of women, who are deceived and oppressed. From establishing the rights of the downtrodden to elevating the concept of self-sustenance and women empowerment, the movies made by the media mogul are very moving and conceptually marvelous. His Sitara cine magazine brought richness to cinema journalism and added value to reviews. Concerning cinema Ramoji Rao's contribution is holistic and perennially inspiring.

EDITORS GUILD HAILS RAMOJI RAO AS TRAILBLAZER

PNS ■ NEW DELHI
The Editors Guild of India on Saturday condole the death of its former president Ramoji Rao, the founder of Eenadu daily and the ETV network. Rao breathed his last in Hyderabad early on Saturday. The Guild said Rao would be best remembered as being a media owner who on several occasions took on the establishment and fearlessly spoke truth to power. "He was a trailblazer in many ways. Besides launching the multi-edition Eenadu daily, he was the head of the Telugu news and entertainment network, ETV, and also set up the Ramoji Film City," it said in a statement. The Guild said Rao would remain an icon and continue to inspire journalists of this country. Rao was a recipient of the Padma Vibhushan.

APCS PAYS TRIBUTES TO RAMOJI RAO

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA
State Government Chief Secretary Neerabh Kumar Prasad on behalf of the Andhra Pradesh State government paid tributes to media baron Ramoji Rao chairman at Ramoji Group at Ramoji Film City in Hyderabad on Saturday.

Pedaparupudi mourns its greatest son Ramoji Rao

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

A pall of gloom descended over Pedaparupudi village in the Pamarru constituency of Krishna district, the birthplace of Ch Ramoji Rao, following the news of his sudden demise on Saturday morning. Villagers and close associates gathered to pay floral tributes to his portrait and praised his numerous contributions to the village. The community set up a tent in the village square, where they displayed a portrait of Ramoji Rao and chanted 'Johar Ramoji Rao' in his honour. Members of the Ramoji Foundation, along with several villagers, travelled to Hyderabad to pay their final respects.

Village Sarpanch Ch Sameera, along with friends and villagers, including Paladugu Chandrasekhar, Garapati Baburao, Ratna Prasad (Nani), Kanagala

Village Sarpanch Ch Sameera, along with friends and villagers, including Paladugu Chandrasekhar, Garapati Baburao, Ratna Prasad (Nani), Kanagala Parvathi, Nagaboina Srinivasa Rao, Paladugu Sandhyarani, Lavanya, and Nagaboina Ramana, were among those who gathered to honour Rao's memory

Parvathi, Nagaboina Srinivasa Rao, Paladugu Sandhyarani, Lavanya, and Nagaboina Ramana, were among those who gathered to honour Rao's memory. Paladugu Chandrasekhar remarked that Ramoji Rao, who hailed from a humble agricultural background, achieved extraordinary success and his passing has deeply affected the villagers. Chandrasekhar highlighted Rao's significant contributions to both Telugu states and the nation, noting that he was a valuable asset to the Telugu people.

Rao's philanthropic efforts in Pedaparupudi, especially in providing employment opportunities for the youth, were particularly lauded. Ramoji Rao was born on November 16, 1936, in Pedaparupudi, Krishna district, to Venkatasubbamma and Venkata Subbarao. His ancestors were originally from Perisepalli village in the district. After the death of his grandfather Ramayya, his family moved to Pedaparupudi. Born just 13 days after his grandfather's demise, Rao was named

Ramaiah in his memory. However, he later changed his name to Ramoji Rao upon joining primary school, a name he carried throughout his life. He was raised with great care as the only son among three children, alongside his elder sisters Rajyalakshmi and Ranganayakamma. Rao's education began in Gudivada High School in 1947, where he completed his schooling before pursuing intermediate and B.Sc. degrees at Gudivada College. On August 19, 1961, Ramoji Rao married Ramadevi, originally named Ramanamma, the second daughter of Tatineni Venkata Subbaiah and Vanidevi of Penamaluru. Pamarru M.L.A. Kumar Raja expressed his grief over Ramoji Rao's sudden passing and extended his deepest condolences to Rao's family. Ramoji Rao's legacy of service and impact on the community and beyond will be remembered and cherished by all who know him.

Pawan Kalyan condoles death of Ramoji Rao

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

Jana Sena chief and MLA K Pawan Kalyan has condoled the death of Eenadu group chairman Ch Ramoji Rao. In a message here on Saturday, Pawan Kalyan said that the sudden demise of Ramoji Rao shocked him.

The journey of Ramoji Rao in the world of media, abiding to the ideologies, which he believed, was unparalleled. "His demise is a great loss to the media sector. I pray to god for his soul to rest in peace," Pawan Kalyan stated. Ramoji Rao strongly emphasized that the media has a social responsibility and created awareness on various issues including the Right to Information Act



and water conservation, The JSP chief added. Pawan Kalyan conveyed his sympathies to the bereaved family. Meanwhile, Pawan Kalyan paid homage to the mortal remains of Ramoji Rao in Hyderabad. He condoled the bereaved family members. "I thought of meeting Ramoji Rao

after taking the oath. But unfortunately, he passed away. Ramoji Rao has produced hundreds of journalists and most of the present journalists are from Eenadu Journalism School," Pawan Kalyan told the media. He also recalled that Ramoji Rao had strived a lot for the development of Telugu cinema.

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Rajinikanth, Chiranjeevi, Allu Arjun, Ram Charan and Jr NTR were among the prominent cinema personalities who expressed grief over the demise of media baron Ramoji Rao, the founder of Eenadu Group and Ramoji Film City. Rao, who revolutionised the news and entertainment industry, died at a hospital in Hyderabad early on Saturday. He was 88. In a post on X, Rajinikanth remembered Rao as his mentor and well wisher and said he is "deeply saddened" by his death. "The man who created history in Journalism, Cinema and a great kingmaker in Politics. He was my guide and inspiration in my life. May his soul rest in peace."

@Ramoji_FilmCity," the veteran star wrote. Chiranjeevi posted an emotional message on X, saying that Ramoji Rao, who was like a mountain that never bowed down to anyone, has reached the heavenly abode. Allu Arjun said Ramoji Rao was a "pioneer and an inspiring visionary" and he has a deep respect for the media baron. "I feel his aura every time I shoot at #RFC. His unparalleled contributions to the media, cinema, and many other industries will never be forgotten. Heartfelt condolences to his family and loved ones. May his great soul rest in peace," he wrote on X. The Ramoji Film City (RFC) has been recognized by Guinness World Records as the world's largest film city.

Rajinikanth, Chiranjeevi, Allu Arjun and Ram Charan pay tribute to Ramoji Rao

Thousands of films, including SS Rajamouli's two-part blockbuster 'Baahubali', in almost all Indian languages and some in Hindi, have been shot at the Ramoji Film City on the outskirts of Hyderabad. "RRR" stars Ram Charan credited Ramoji Rao for transforming the landscape of regional media with Eenadu. "The establishment of Ramoji Film City, the world's largest film studio, has become a landmark destination for filmmakers worldwide. Shri Ramoji Rao Garu will be

remembered forever for his warm personality and remarkable contribution to the Telugu people. My deepest condolences to his family and his admirers," he added. Charan's "RRR" co-star Jr NTR said visionaries like Ramoji Rao are "one in a million". He recalled working on his debut movie "Ninnu Choodalani" (2000), which was produced by Rao. "A media tycoon and a giant of Indian cinema, his absence is irreplaceable. The news that he is no longer with us is very sad. I will never forget the

memories when I was introduced to the Telugu film industry with the film 'Ninnu Choodalani'. May his soul rest in peace and convey my deepest condolences to his family," he wrote on X. Filmmaker SS Rajamouli, the director of "Baahubali" and "RRR", said Rao should be honoured with Bharat Ratna, the country's highest civilian honour. "ONE man with his 50 years of resilience, hardwork and innovation provided employment, livelihood and hope for millions. The only way we can pay tribute to Ramoji Rao garu is conferring him with 'BHARAT RATNA'," he wrote on X. Allu Arjun commented on Rajamouli's post, saying, "I had the same feeling in my heart sir. You spoke my heart. Thank you for voic-

ing it." Venkatesh Daggubati said Ramoji Rao garu was a "true visionary whose revolutionary work in Indian media has left an unforgettable legacy." "His contributions to journalism and cinema have inspired so many. He will be missed dearly. Heartfelt condolences to his loved ones. May his soul rest in peace," he added. Actor Kajal Aggarwal said she is deeply saddened by Rao's death. "My heartfelt condolences to his family during this difficult time. His legacy will continue to inspire many. May his soul rest in peace. Om Shanti," read her post on X. Actor-politician Kishu Kumar said, "Deepest condolences at the demise of a legend, a pioneer in the world of cinema, founder of

#RamojiRaoStudios, Shri #RamojiRao gaaru. May his soul rest in peace. Om Shanti." Actor Varun Tej said the demise of Ramoji Rao has left a significant void in the world of journalism and the film industry. "May his soul rest in peace," he posted. Music composer Thaman S recalled the support Ramoji Rao provided him during his journey in cinema. "I am deeply Saddened by the loss of Shri Ramoji Rao Gaaru. He gave us the best recording & technical support in the year 2012 to 2016 when we did all our musical works at Symphony Recording Studios (Ramoji Film City). His support towards our musical journey would always be UNFORGETTABLE," he posted on X.