

QUOTE OF THE DAY

A settlement has taken place between the Congress and the BRS and KTR's arrest will go to 'Kanchi.' The phone tapping case, the Kaleshwaram scam, the Formula E-Car Race scam, the Dharani scam and all other scams have gone to the wind. It is shameful on the part of the Congress Government not to arrest KTR even after knowing that KTR was behind the attack on the Vikanarabad Collector. The inability to arrest KTR exposes the Revanthy Reddy Government's inefficiency

- Bandi Sanjay Kumar, Union Minister

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'India accords priority to partnership with Nigeria'

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KARANVIR SHARMA

TAPPING REAL-LIFE EXPERIENCE FOR EMOTIONAL CONNECTIVITY

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'Devaki Nandana Vasudeva and Murari are poles apart,' clarifies Arjun JANDYALA

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New Crop Insurance Scheme from Rabi

The Crop Insurance Scheme has changed its approach, now requiring farmers to contribute their share of the insurance premium starting this Rabi season. This marks a shift from the previously implemented free crop insurance model. Despite the State government's earlier announcement that the free crop insurance scheme would continue for the current season, the Agriculture Department has issued a notification regarding the various crops covered under the crop insurance scheme and payable premium details as...

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'Polavaram to be completed in 5 yrs'

Lok Sabha Member Putta Mahesh Kumar has announced that the Polavaram project and the Chintalapati lift irrigation scheme will be completed within the next five years. The MP made this statement during his participation in the Karthika Samaradhana programme, which was held at a mango orchard near Nuzvid on Sunday. Speaking at the event, MP Mahesh Kumar shared his optimistic view on the progress of the two key projects, stating that both the Polavaram project and the Chintalapati lift...

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Shah reviews security situation in Manipur

Union Home Minister Amit Shah on Sunday reviewed the security situation in Manipur and directed top officials to take all possible steps to ensure peace in the Northeastern state, sources said. Shah held the meeting soon after he returned from Maharashtra after cancelling his election rallies there. The home minister reviewed the situation in Manipur with top security officials and directed them to take all possible steps to ensure peace, the sources said. Shah is expected to hold another detailed meeting...

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India's free trade pacts not paused

Negotiations for all the proposed free trade agreements, including those with the UK and European Union (EU), are progressing as per the schedule and the country's FTAs are not paused, a top government official has said. The official said that an impression is going around that FTAs are paused, which is not correct. "All our FTAs, whether it is with the EU or UK, all are progressing as per the schedule," the official said. In the coming weeks, a bilateral meeting is scheduled between the...

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ABUSIVE COMMENTS ON NAIDU, LOKESH

Vizag police register case against Kodali

The ex minister was booked based on complaint by a law student



PNS ■ VISAKHAPATNAM

A city-based law student, Satyala Anjana Priya, has filed a complaint against YSR Congress Party (YSRCP) leader and former minister Kodali Nani, prompting the Visakhapatnam police to register a case. The complaint was submitted to the 3rd Town Police Station in Visakhapatnam on Saturday night.

In her statement, Anjana Priya accused Kodali Nani of using abusive language and making personal insults during press conferences and assembly sessions throughout the five-year rule of the YSRCP. She specifically alleged that his comments targeted and defamed Telugu Desam Party (TDP) National President and Chief Minister Nara Chandrababu Naidu, as well as TDP National General Secretary Nara Lokesh. She also mentioned instances of body-shaming during official events. Anjana Priya claimed that these comments harmed her dignity and damaged her family's reputation, especially after being shared widely on social media.

Speaking to reporters on Sunday, Anjana Priya said, "As a responsible woman and law student, I am deeply hurt by such vulgar and offensive language being used on public platforms. In a thrilling final, she defeated Paasmeeri Marita of Belgium with a close score of 147-145.

In the semi-finals, Jyothi Surekha showcased her skill and determination by beating Roner Elisa from Italy to secure her place in the final. In the decisive match, she kept her composure and delivered a strong performance to outlast Marita and claim the gold medal.



Jyothi Surekha wins gold at World Indoor Archery meet

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

Telugu archer Vennam Jyothi Surekha has added another prestigious title to her impressive career by winning the Gold Medal at the GT Open World Indoor Archery Series in Strassen, Luxembourg, on Sunday. In a thrilling final, she defeated Paasmeeri Marita of Belgium with a close score of 147-145.

In the semi-finals, Jyothi Surekha showcased her skill and determination by beating Roner Elisa from Italy to secure her place in the final. In the decisive match, she kept her composure and delivered a strong performance to outlast Marita and claim the gold medal.

CBI arrests Waltair DRM for bribery

PNS ■ VISAKHAPATNAM

In a major development, Saurabh Prasad, the Divisional Railway Manager (DRM) of Waltair Division in Visakhapatnam, was arrested by the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) late on Saturday night for allegedly accepting a bribe of Rs 25 lakh from a contractor in Mumbai. The bribe was reportedly linked to a tender for the mechanical branch of the railways.

Prasad is said to have personally travelled to Mumbai to collect the money, unaware that the CBI had set up a covert operation to apprehend him. His arrest was followed by raids at several locations connected to him, including his residence in Mumbai, his bungalow in Visakhapatnam, and his office. The CBI team seized several incriminating documents and electronic evidence during these searches, which are now being examined.

The news of the arrest quickly spread on social media platforms like 'X' and WhatsApp, sparking widespread discussion. However, railway officials have remained tight-lipped, and the CBI has not yet released an official statement on the matter.

This arrest is the latest in a series of corruption cases involving senior railway officials. In July, the CBI arrested five senior railway officers, including the DRM of Guntakal, Vineet Singh, over similar allegations of financial misconduct. These repeated incidents have raised serious concerns about corruption within the Indian Railways.

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A senior railway official, speaking on condition of anonymity, expressed concern over the impact of such scandals. "The role of DRM is highly respected, and such incidents damage public trust and tarnish the department's image," he said.

Continued on Page 2



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3 boys killed as water tanker hits scooter

PNS ■ ONGOLE

Three boys were killed in a tragic road accident when a water tanker hit the scooter they were riding on, near the SC Colony at Koppolu village, close to Anjaneya Swamy temple, on Sunday.

According to the police, the boys were from the SC Colony and were riding towards their village when the speeding water tanker crashed into their scooter from behind. The impact instantly killed 17-year-old Kannadari Teshmanth. The other two boys, 7-year-old Vadde Vishal and 12-year-old Vadde Vikash, were seriously injured. They were rushed to the Government General Hospital (GGH), where Vadde Vishal succumbed to his injuries while undergoing treatment.

Vadde Vikash was later shifted to a private hospital, but he also passed away while receiving treatment. The police have registered a case and sent the bodies for post-mortem at the GGH. The tragic incident has left the SC colony in deep mourning.

Nara Ramamurthy Naidu laid to rest with full state honours

PNS ■ TIRUPATI/NARAVARIPALLI

The last rites of Nara Ramamurthy Naidu, former MLA of Chandragiri and brother of Chief Minister N Chandrababu Naidu, were performed with full state honours on Sunday in his native village of Naravaripalli. Ramamurthy Naidu, who had been unwell for some time, passed away on Saturday morning at AIG Hospital in Hyderabad.

His body was brought to Naravaripalli from Hyderabad on a special flight on Sunday at 7 AM, accompanied by family members, including Nara Lokesh. From Renigunta Airport, the body was taken to the village in an ambulance. Chief Minister Chandrababu Naidu was accompanied by his wife Bhuvaneshwari, daughter-in-law Brahmini, and other family members. The body was kept at the residence of Chandrababu Naidu in Naravaripalli for public viewing.

The Chief Minister was visibly emotional as he bid farewell to his brother. Many prominent leaders and celebrities from the Telugu states, including Maharashtra Governor C.P. Radhakrishnan, also paid their respects.

Along with Chandrababu and his son, Minister Nara Lokesh, other family members such as Indira, Rohith, and Girish were present during the ceremonies. The funeral procession began around 2:30 PM, with thousands of supporters, family, and well-wishers joining to pay their final respects.

In a deeply emotional moment, Chandrababu and Lokesh carried the bier of their beloved family member.

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TIDCO HOUSING PROJECT

BJP sees irregularities during Jagan rule

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

BJP legislators Vishnukumar Raju and Adoni MLA Parthasaradhi met Lanka Dinakar, Chairman of the Twenty-Point Programme (TPP) Implementation, to discuss irregularities in the TIDCO housing scheme during YS Jagan Mohan Reddy's tenure. The legislators urged Dinakar to present the findings to Chief Minister Chandrababu Naidu, emphasizing the damage caused to the Prime Minister's flagship housing scheme, Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana (PMAY), particularly in the case of TIDCO houses.

In a detailed discussion, the leaders, along with TPP Chairman Lanka Dinakar, reviewed the situation and agreed that the implementation of PMAY in Andhra Pradesh had been severely impacted under Jagan Mohan Reddy's leadership.

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PADDY PROCUREMENT

WhatsApp to simplify process

Minister Nadendla Manohar explained, "The farmers will first need to enter their Aadhaar number and verify their name. After that, they must select the purchasing centre where they want to sell their paddy. They will then be given three options for the date on which they wish to sell the grain."



PNS ■ GUNTUR

To make the process of selling paddy easier for farmers, the Civil Supplies Department has launched a special 'WhatsApp' service. Civil Supplies Minister Nadendla Manohar announced on Sunday that a WhatsApp number, 73373 59375, has been created to provide better services to farmers selling their paddy produce.

Farmers wishing to sell their paddy can simply send a "Hi" message to the WhatsApp number, and they will receive an automated response powered by Artificial Intelligence, guiding them through the process.

Minister Nadendla Manohar explained, "The farmers will first need to enter their Aadhaar number and verify their name. After that, they must select the purchasing centre where they want to sell their paddy. They will then be given three options for the date on which they wish to sell the grain."

The Minister further explained that the farmer will have to choose a date and a specific time slot for selling their paddy. There is also an option to select the type of paddy they wish to sell.

In the next message, the farmer will be asked to enter the quantity of paddy they want to sell. Once this information is provided, the farmer will receive a confirmation message with the details of the sale registration.

By following the steps on WhatsApp, farmers can easily register and sell their paddy. The Minister added that the government aims to introduce a concept called 'Ease of Doing Farm Service', similar to the 'Ease of Doing Business' initiative, to further streamline agricultural processes.

PM Modi receives Nigeria's 2nd highest national award

PNS ■ ABUJA

Nigeria on Sunday conferred its national award - the Grand Commander of the Order of the Niger - on Prime Minister Narendra Modi for his statesmanship and stellar contribution to fostering bilateral ties, making him the second foreign dignitary to receive the distinction.

In a ceremony at the State House, Nigerian President Bola Ahmed Tinubu conferred the national award on Prime Minister Modi.

"Honoured to be conferred with the 'Grand Commander of the Order of the Niger' Award by Nigeria. I accept it with great humility and dedicate it to the 140 crore people of India and the friendship of India and Nigeria," Modi said after receiving the award.

The prime minister thanked the government and the people of Nigeria for the honour.

The award citation notes that under the Prime Minister's visionary leadership, India has been positioned as a global powerhouse, and his transformative governance has fostered unity, peace and shared prosperity for all. This was the 17th such international award conferred on Modi by a country. Queen Elizabeth is the only foreign dignitary who was awarded GCOCN in 1969. In his remarks, Modi said the relations between India and Nigeria are based on mutual cooperation, goodwill and respect.

"As two vibrant democracies with dynamic economies, we have been working together for the well-being of the people of both countries," he said. Modi said that in his meetings with the Nigerian leadership, he discussed on making mutual cooperation strong and broad.

He said new possibilities have been identified in the economy, energy, agriculture, security, fintech, small and medium-scale enterprise and cultural sectors. Modi said Nigeria has a very big and positive role in Africa, and close cooperation with Africa has been a high priority for India.

"India and Nigeria will move forward together for the prosperity of the people of both countries and the entire African continent. We will give importance to the interests and priorities of the Global South, working in close coordination."



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TDP leaders pay homage to Rama Murthy Naidu

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

TDP leaders in Vijayawada paid heartfelt tributes to Nara Rama Murthy Naidu, former MLA and Chief Minister N. Chandrababu Naidu's brother, who passed away recently, on Sunday. The programme took place at the NTR District TDP office and at NTR Bhavan, the office of Vijayawada MP Kesineni Sivanath, also known as Chinni. The leaders remembered Rama Murthy Naidu's dedicated services to the State and to his constituency, Chandragiri.

TDP-Affiliated Telugu Mahila NTR district president and Proprietor Chennupati Usha Rani, SC Cell president Songa Sanjay Varma, Minority Cell president Sk Karimulla and others participated in the condolence meeting held at the NTR Bhavan at Grenada Colony in the city.

They said that Rama Murthy Naidu has strived a lot for the party as well as the cadre development. He was developed as one of the most important leaders in the TDP, they added. They extended their condolence to Rama Murthy Naidu's family members in this regard. They added that he represented the Chandragiri Assembly constituency from 1994 to 1999.

Meanwhile, many TDP leaders attended Rama Murthy Naidu's condolence meeting held at the party district office at Auto Nagar in the city.



New Crop Insurance Scheme from current Rabi

Notification issued on crops covered in the scheme and premium payable amounts

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

The Crop Insurance Scheme has changed its approach, now requiring farmers to contribute their share of the insurance premium starting this Rabi season. This marks a shift from the previously implemented free crop insurance model. Despite the State government's earlier announcement that the free crop insurance scheme would continue for the current season, the Agriculture Department has issued a notification regarding the various crops covered under the crop insurance scheme and payable premium details as well as the deadline for it.

The deadline for premium payment concluded on November 15 for commercial crops. Farmers must pay their premiums by December 15 for black gram, groundnut, green gram, and other crops. The premium payment deadline for Rabi paddy is December 31. However, the deadline for the commercial crop insurance premium payment was ended before the government's announcement, i.e. on November 15.

The State government is implementing the Pradhan



Mantri Fasal Bhima Yojana (PMFBY) and the Rabi Weather-Based Crop Insurance Scheme (RWBCIS) starting this season. According to Agriculture and Horticulture Minister K. Atchannaidu, the new crop insurance scheme will take effect from the next Kharif season. While the free crop insurance scheme will remain in force for the Rabi season, the department has begun collecting premium amounts from farmers this season.

Under the new crop insurance scheme, the premium collected will be 1.50 per cent from farmers for food grains and oilseeds, while it will be five per cent for commercial crops based on the total sum insured.

The remaining premium will be covered by the State and Central governments. The government also announced that crop insurance will be available for mangoes starting this year.

The last date for commercial crops, such as cashew nuts, was November 15. The payment deadline for farmers' contributions to crop insurance for black gram, green gram, maize, groundnut, and others is December 31 for paddy. Meanwhile, the government is going to implement the crop insurance scheme not only for farmers who took crop loans from the banks, but also for those who did not take the loans.

Interestingly, the premium contributions required from farmers differ between the PMFBY and RWBCIS. Farmers cultivating paddy, black gram, groundnut, green gram, and other crops must pay 1.50 per cent of the premium based on the respective crop sum insured to avail themselves of the crop insurance scheme under PMFBY. However, under the RWBCIS, the farmers' premium contribution for these crops is

only 0.20 per cent of the sum insured. There are differences in the payment of premiums for both PMFBY and RWBCIS.

Based on the sum insured, the government is collecting premiums from the farmers to implement the crop insurance scheme. The State government ensured the paddy, maize and other crops- Rs.41,000 to Rs.42,000, maize-Rs.42,000, black gram, and green gram - 20,000 per acre. However, the sum insured for the jowar is Rs.19,000 and Bengal gram is Rs.38,000 per acre.

However, P. Jamalajah, general secretary, Andhra Pradesh Koulu Rythula Sangam (Tenant Farmers) Association, told The Pioneer the government should implement a uniform premium payment system for all crops in the State. Paddy farmers in the Krishna district are to pay their contribution for the crop insurance is Rs.84 per acre. However, it is Rs.126 in the NTR district, Rs.500 in Eluru, and Rs.630 in Srikakulam and Vizianagaram districts. So, the government should rectify the difference in the premium to be paid by the farmers in various districts, he added.

Call to withdraw 1 pc additional surcharge on State GST

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

Malladi Vishnu, YSR Congress Party's Vijayawada Central constituency coordinator and former MLA, has accused the State government of preparing to impose financial burdens on the public under the pretext of flood relief. He expressed strong discontent over Chief Minister N Chandrababu Naidu's request to the Central government for a one-per cent additional surcharge on the State GST, characterising it as an unreasonable burden on the already struggling populace.

During a press conference here on Sunday, Vishnu criticised the coalition government for its failure to secure the necessary funds from the Centre, stating that shifting the financial burden onto citizens is inappropriate. He raised pointed questions about the management of hundreds of crores in donations received for flood relief efforts, questioning where those funds had gone. Instead of seeking assistance for a state already in debt,



Vishnu noted that the government is essentially telling flood victims that they will be taxed to aid their recovery, a situation he claims is unprecedented in the country

Vishnu remarked that it was peculiar for the government to request tax cooperation. Vishnu noted that the government is essentially telling flood victims that they will be taxed to aid their recovery, a situation he claims is unprecedented in the country. He questioned the estimates provided by Central teams regarding flood damage and called for the State government to release a White Paper detailing the assistance provided to victims, as well as the total donations received and the aid announced by the Centre.

Vishnu lamented that rising prices of essential goods and increased electricity charges have made it increasingly difficult for ordinary citizens to make ends meet. He warned that if the government moved forward with additional taxation, there would be no viable living conditions for people in the State, urging immediate withdrawal of the proposed one per cent increase on GST surcharge. He added that if the government did not heed these warnings, the YSRCP would launch a large-scale movement against such measures.

GVMC unveils plan to clear 24 lakh tonnes waste from Kapuluppada

Project aims to clear the dumping yard by October 2, 2025

PNS | Visakhapatnam

GVMC Commissioner P. Sampath Kumar has launched an ambitious plan to rid the Kapuluppada dumping yard of 24 lakh tonnes of accumulated waste, following a directive from Chief Minister N. Chandrababu Naidu. The project aims to clear the yard by October 2, 2025, addressing a longstanding environmental issue that has plagued the city for years.

"Kapuluppada dumping yard has become a major source of pollution over the years," said Sampath Kumar. "Our goal is to eliminate all legacy waste and transform the area into a green space. This is a critical step for the city's environmental health and future sustainability."

The Kapuluppada yard, covering 100 acres, is the main dumping ground for GVMC's



Public-Private Partnership model, has established a 'Waste to Energy' plant. This facility processes 750 tonnes of wet waste per day, converting it into bio-CNG for local industries. In addition, materials like plastics, glass, and paper are separated for recycling, while construction debris is repurposed into bricks.

Despite these efforts, the legacy waste remains a significant hurdle. Sigma Environmental Solutions Pvt Ltd has been using bio-mining techniques to extract recyclable materials. So far, 9.5 lakh tonnes of waste have been cleared, freeing up 33 acres of land. "We have already made significant progress," said Sampath Kumar. "By clearing 9.5 lakh tonnes, we've reclaimed 33 acres. We're committed to meeting the October 2025 deadline."

To mitigate these challenges, the Jindal Company, under a



Seminar highlights neurological issues among diabetics

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

Dr P Nataraj, a renowned neurologist, has said that long-term diabetes patients often experience increased blood sugar levels, adversely affecting the brain and nerves in various ways. One critical issue noted was the narrowing of blood vessels in the brain, which can lead to reduced blood circulation and even strokes.

Speaking at a scientific awareness seminar organised by the SHO Hypertension and Diabetic Club and the Humanity Voluntary Service Society at Guntur on Sunday, Dr Nataraj outlined the neurological challenges faced by diabetes patients. He emphasised the widespread effects of diabetes on the human body, particularly on the brain and nervous system.

Dr Nataraj explained that diabetes does not spare any organ and influences physiological functions, leading to significant changes in their structure and performance. Moreover, Dr Nataraj spoke about two primary types of nerve issues arising from diabetes: peripheral neuropathy and autonomic neuropathy. He described peripheral neuropathy as causing abnormal changes in peripheral nerves, leading to a loss of sensation making it difficult for patients to feel pain from wounds, thus risking severe infections and complications. He advised diabetic patients to exercise caution with their feet and legs, as neglecting any injuries can lead to serious consequences.

Speaking at a scientific awareness seminar organised by the SHO Hypertension and Diabetic Club and the Humanity Voluntary Service Society at Guntur on Sunday, Dr Nataraj outlined the neurological challenges faced by diabetes patients

In discussing autonomic neuropathy, Dr Nataraj noted that it affects the nerves controlling internal organs, causing abnormalities that can alter temperature regulation, heart rate, blood pressure, and digestive processes. He also mentioned potential changes in vision during the night, underscoring the importance of regular medical check-ups for diabetics to monitor these issues.

Dr T Seva Kumar, president of the Service Health Organisation, encouraged patients not to overlook neurological problems, reiterating that maintaining proper blood sugar levels can help mitigate these health risks. T Dhanunjaya Reddy, the chairman of the Humanity Voluntary Service Society, stated that such awareness seminars and free medical camps aim to educate the public about the rapidly growing prevalence of diabetes.

Garikipati highlights supreme power of Goddess

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

Renowned spiritual leader and Padma Shri awardee, Dr Garikipati Narasimha Rao, emphasised that there is no power greater than the divine form of Jagannmata in the universe, and no one more compassionate than the Goddess herself. He was speaking at the concluding session of the "Sri Kanakadurganandalahari" series, held at KBN College. The event was jointly organised by the Sri Durga Malleshwara Swamy Varla Devasthanam, Indrakeeladri, and the SKPVV Hindu High Schools Committee.

Dr Garikipati explained that the Goddess, in her form as Jagannmata, is the protector of all living beings in creation. He elaborated on how she has manifested in various forms to safeguard her devotees, especially during times of adversity, and pointed out her significant role in protecting great saints. He also highlighted the



scientific power behind mantras and delved into the mysteries of mantra, tantra, and yantra.

The preacher discussed the incarnations of the Goddess—Vishalakshi, Kamakshi, and Kanakadurga—and their role in protecting the world. He noted that even the most accomplished man cannot attain righteousness without the presence of a wife, emphasising that mar-

riage is not merely a physical union but a deeply spiritual bond. Drawing a parallel with a mother's unconditional love for her child, he explained that the Goddess, in her form of Shakti, also bestows boundless love and care upon her devotees.

Dr Garikipati further touched upon the devotional poetry of great saints such as Adi Shankaracharya, Pothana, and Kalidas, offering

insights into their spiritual significance and meanings.

The event was graced by several dignitaries, including Durga Temple Executive Officer KS Ramarao, KBN College Secretary Dr T Srinivas, Hindu High Schools Committee President T Sheshaya, and G Vijay Kumar. They all felicitated Dr Garikipati Narasimha Rao for his enlightening discourse.



Interstate chain snatching gang nabbed, Rs 24L booty recovered

PNS ■ CHITTOOR

The Chittoor police have arrested a six-member interstate gang involved in chain snatching and recovered stolen goods worth Rs 24 lakh.

Superintendent of Police (SP) Manikhantha Chandolu informed the media on Sunday that the police team arrested the gang in Palamaner and recovered 330 grams of gold jewellery, silver ornaments, and

four motorcycles.

The gang, which had been operating for the past two years, was involved in a series of chain snatchings, thefts, burglaries, and bike lifting across Chittoor district and neighbouring states. Police have stated that the gang members were responsible for numerous criminal activities in the region. The arrested gang members are being questioned, and further investigations are underway.

VMRDA plans to set up EV charging stations

Stations require minimal land, with facilities for accommodating two cars and two two-wheelers

PNS ■ VISAKHAPATNAM

To tackle the insufficient charging infrastructure for electric vehicles (EV), the Visakhapatnam Metropolitan Region Development Authority (VMRDA) has introduced a new policy by inviting tenders to select Charging Point Operators (CPOs) to set up and manage EV charging stations. This move aligns with the growing trend of EV adoption in Visakhapatnam, particularly among car and two-wheeler owners.

VMRDA has identified underutilised spaces in prime areas of the city for establishing

these charging stations. These stations require minimal land, with facilities capable of accommodating two cars and two two-wheelers in compact setups.

"Promoting electric vehicles is not just about cleaner energy; it's about creating the right infrastructure to support their growth," said Vishwanathan, Commissioner of VMRDA. "We are utilising vacant spaces in the heart of the city to set up these charging stations. The revenue-sharing model allows companies to benefit while contributing to the EV industry."

Six vacant sites have been



earmarked for the first phase of this initiative, with tenders already called. Companies interested in setting up EV stations must submit applications to the VMRDA office by November 28, along with a

refundable Earnest Money Deposit (EMD) of Rs 50,000. "We are thrilled with the response from companies. Several experienced players in this sector have shown interest. These partnerships will

not only increase the availability of charging stations, but also ensure that they are efficiently managed," Commissioner Vishwanathan added. "To begin, the service will be available at two loca-

tions in Central Park, Women's Degree College, Gurajada Kalakshetram in Siripuram, Tenneti Park, and the new commercial complex in MVP." The initiative aims to establish a robust charging network to support the rising EV population. Vacant sites will be utilised for the stations, with more spaces to be allocated based on future demand. Companies awarded the tenders will be allowed to operate the charging stations for 10 years, after which the land will revert to VMRDA.

"By addressing the infrastructure gap, we are making EV adoption more practical and accessible for the public. This is a step toward a sustainable and cleaner Visakhapatnam," said the VMRDA Commissioner.



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PAPER WITH PASSION

Left turn ho!

Anura Kumara Dissanayake's election triumph could prove to be a turning point for Sri Lanka's politics and South Asia

Sri Lanka has done it again. After electing Anura Kumara Dissanayake as President his left-leaning party has secured a majority in the parliament, which gives Anura a complete control over Sri Lanka. What is more startling is that his party has decimated the Tamil parties in the northern Sri Lanka, which was the stronghold of Tamil parties. This is indeed a stunning political shift. Anura Kumara Dissanayake, leader of Sri Lanka's National People's Power (NPP), has achieved a resounding victory in the country's parliamentary elections, winning 123 out of 225 seats in Sri Lanka's Parliament. This outcome, which comes barely two months after Dissanayake's election as President on September 21, marks a pivotal moment in the nation's political landscape and could have significant ramifications not only for Sri Lanka but also for the wider South Asian region. Dissanayake's rise to prominence is both unexpected and historic. His party, despite winning only 42 per cent of the presidential vote, has managed to galvanise a



broad cross-section of Sri Lankan society, particularly in regions where other political forces have traditionally held sway. His victory represents a rejection of the traditional political elites that have long governed the island since its independence in 1948, and it signifies the growing appeal of his platform advocating for economic revival and social justice. Notably, the NPP's win in the Jaffna district—a historically Tamil-majority area in the northern part of Sri Lanka—has surprised political pundits. For decades, Tamil ethnic parties have dominated this region, a legacy of the civil war (1983-2009) that left a deep divide between the Tamil minority and the Sinhalese-majority government.

This victory in Jaffna is symbolic of a new approach to ethnic relations in Sri Lanka. Traditionally, the Tamil population has been wary of Sinhalese-majority leaders, given the traumatic history of the civil conflict, where over 100,000 lives were lost according to conservative UN estimates. Dissanayake's success in these areas suggests that many Tamils are willing to embrace a new kind of leadership, one that offers economic promise and a path forward, beyond ethnic divisions. Dissanayake's victory carries significant implications for the future of Sri Lanka. First and foremost, his strong mandate gives him the political capital needed to implement his economic revival agenda, which is urgently needed as Sri Lanka grapples with economic instability and growing debt. Dissanayake has long advocated for Marxist economic policies, including land reforms, wealth redistribution and greater state control over key industries. If successful, his administration could lead to a reshaping of Sri Lanka's economy, potentially benefiting marginalised communities, including Tamils and other ethnic minorities. Dissanayake's popularity, especially among younger voters and ethnic minorities, suggests a growing demand for alternative political solutions. But can he live up to people's expectations, bring about radical changes and maintain ethnic harmony? That is the big question only time can tell!

PICTALK



Labourers thresh paddy at a field on the outskirts of Amritsar

The smog capital of India

As Delhi battles a toxic mix of seasonal stubble burning and local pollution sources, its residents are exposed to severe and potentially life-threatening health risks



RAJDEEP PATHAK

The National Capital Territory of Delhi, which is home to nearly 30 million people, has been grappling with dangerously high pollution levels for over two weeks. On Wednesday, November 13, 2024, the air quality index (AQI) across Delhi remained in the 'very poor' category, marking the 15th consecutive day when residents faced increased health risks from the polluted air. According to official data (the Air Quality Early Warning System for Delhi, managed by the Central Government), this situation will likely persist for at least six days. In parallel, the city is also experiencing an unusually warm spell that defies typical seasonal trends, adding complexity to an already challenging situation for residents. This grim forecast highlights the role of unfavourable meteorological conditions that limit the dispersal of pollutants, essentially trapping them close to the ground. The AQI measures levels of harmful pollutants in the air, with a higher value indicating a greater concentration of pollutants. While an AQI between 300 and 400 is considered "very poor," levels above 400 are classified as "severe," meaning the pollution is severe enough to affect even healthy individuals.

The IMD has reported that the typical winter season may not arrive in Delhi as quickly as expected, thereby disrupting long-established weather patterns that typically bring cooler, less polluted air to the region. The dense fog mixed with thick smog has created a near-total obscuration, as citizens found themselves enveloped in a hazardous blend of pollutants and moisture resulting in keeping daytime temperatures lower than expected for this time of year — because of fog and smog — although overall temperatures remain warmer than the seasonal norm. This combination of high pollution and unusual weather patterns has compounded the health concerns for residents, particularly the elderly, children and those with respiratory ailments. Delhi's persistent air pollution crisis is fuelled by a combination of local and regional sources.



There are many contributors to this game, the primary being: vehicle emissions, industrial activities, construction dust, and the neighbouring states of Punjab and Haryana which engage in the seasonal burning of crop residue.

The primary pollutant in Delhi's air, according to IQAir — a global air quality monitoring agency based in Switzerland — is PM2.5, a fine particulate matter that can penetrate deeply into the lungs. Earlier this month, parts of Delhi recorded Air Quality Index (AQI) levels as high as 1,133, placing them in the "hazardous" category. Prolonged exposure to such elevated PM2.5 levels poses serious health risks, including respiratory infections, asthma attacks and even heightened mortality rates among vulnerable populations. Warmer-than-normal temperatures hinder the ability of pollutants to disperse, as colder temperatures usually facilitate the movement of these particles away from the urban air layer.

The combination of stagnant weather conditions, pollution, and warm temperatures has created a perfect whirlpool of the smog's persistence over Delhi, making it more difficult for the city to "breathe" as it would in cooler conditions. Health experts believe that exposure to high levels of pollution can lead to short-term

effects like coughing, throat irritation and chest tightness. In the long term, the risks increase substantially, with studies linking air pollution exposure to chronic respiratory diseases, lung cancer, heart disease, and even impacts on cognitive functions. Air pollution is a severe health crisis in India, causing between 1.2 million and 1.8 million premature deaths each year. The 7 million annual deaths from air pollution worldwide exceed those from COVID-19, as well as combined fatalities from war, homicide, car and plane accidents. Clean air is essential for human health, yet scientific studies continue to reveal new health risks linked to air pollution, including respiratory diseases, heart issues, stroke, and lung cancer, as well as emerging links to premature births, diabetes, and brain damage.

Poor air quality can also worsen outcomes for COVID-19 by increasing vulnerability to respiratory illnesses. Dr David R Boyd, Institute for Resources, Environment and Sustainability, University of British Columbia, CA, Associate Professor in law, policy and Sustainability in his paper "The Human Rights to Breathe Clean Air" published in The National Library of Medicine (2019) necessitates the urgency for treating air pollution as a human rights issue and that "Air pollution on

today's scale, clearly violates the rights to life and health, the rights of the child and the right to live in a safe, clean, healthy and sustainable environment" and that there is an urgent need to voice that the legal support of a human rights issue, since Dr David says that "The human rights perspective changes everything — because governments have clear, legally enforceable obligations to respect, protect, and fulfil human rights. As Delhi battles yet another season of toxic air, the health and wellbeing of millions are at stake. The situation demands urgent and coordinated action from the government, industry, and residents (read citizens). Sustainable improvement requires systemic changes to reduce pollution at its source. While the road to a cleaner, healthier Delhi may be long, there is hope in ongoing technological and policy developments aimed at reducing pollution. As more people become aware of the critical importance of air quality, public support for environmental initiatives will continue to grow, fostering a collective movement toward cleaner air and a better quality of life for all Delhiites and others who visit to see the grandeur of the Capital City. When... It's in our hands!"

(The writer is Programme Executive, Gandhi Smriti and Darshan Smriti; views are personal)



THE DENSE FOG MIXED WITH THICK SMOG HAS CREATED A NEAR-TOTAL OBSCURITY, AS CITIZENS FOUND THEMSELVES ENVELOPED IN A HAZARDOUS BLEND OF POLLUTANTS AND MOISTURE RESULTING IN KEEPING DAYTIME TEMPERATURES LOWER THAN EXPECTED

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

INFANT LIVES LOST

Madam — The shocking fire accident in the neonatal intensive care unit (NICU) of Maharani Laxmibai Medical College in Jhansi, Uttar Pradesh, in which at least 10 newborn babies died due to burns and suffocation and some still struggling for their lives, is really heart-wrenching. Just a few months back, a devastating fire in a newborn care unit of a children's hospital in Delhi had claimed the precious lives of infants. Lack of preparedness, readiness to tackle fire accidents, be it due to short circuit or any other sort and lack of awareness on what to do in case of such incidents make us victims to infernos. The death of these little innocent infants poses a big question: when are we really going to learn our lessons? Be it hospitals or hotels, movie halls or malls, people may not have the slightest bit of idea about the escape routes, layouts and other possible ways of escape in case of an inferno. Staff of the concerned establishments should be prepared to rescue or at least guide the guests to safety. Intensive care units and baby care units should definitely have safety arrangements so that such fire accidents can be prevented. Buildings should have a common way to exit that anyone, irrespective of age and gender, should be able to identify and escape immediately. Buildings should have proper fire and electricity safety devices and these must be checked occasionally. Staff, especially in sensitive places like hospitals, schools, and hotels, should take part in mock drills and be ever ready in case of emergency. Schools and colleges should include fire disaster management lessons in their physical education curriculum so that we can groom citizens who can face such emergencies boldly, wisely, and bravely and even help the weak and those who are very young.

M Pradyu | Kannur

BULLDOZER RULE ENDS

Madam — The spirit of the verdict should sensitise all the concerned. Bulldozing the structures of those who are branded as

Secure online transactions



The rapid growth of digital payments, from banking to shopping, has made everything done online nowadays; it has opened doors for scammers as they continue to evolve their methods to con people in newer ways. Cybercriminals are

employing new tricks to defraud individuals, like fake UPI transaction images, net banking fraud through emails, etc. And from common citizens to government officials, no one is untouched by these scammers.

There are various things that we must do if we fall prey to such scammers, like contacting authorised customer care centers, reporting incidents immediately to the National Cyber Crime Helpline, documenting everything, keeping strong passwords, and staying informed through social media, etc. A strong and rigorous awareness campaign has to be started by the government of India so that these scammers do not have a free run & individuals are safe.

Bal Govind | Noida

criminals and those of communally ostracised is an act that proclaims the rule of a dictator and the death of democracy. The rule of law is thrown in bins and the individual's whims and fancies of the persons at the helm of power prevail only in a totalitarian state.

The salient feature of the verdict is the part that recommends payment of compensation to the victims. The bureaucratic section should stick to the statutory provisions and should not dance to the tunes of those in power, as persons in power may come and go but laws prevail forever. Also, those who permit illegal constructions in the water areas should be penalised by making them compensate the victims when such structures are razed. But the crux of the issue is the corruption and avaricious attitude of the political bigwigs to enjoy a monopoly in enjoying asset accumulation by demolishing dissents and oppositions. The real solution to such issues could emerge only from a people's movement against corruption.

A G Rajmohan | Anantapur

DELHI POLLUTION CRISIS

Madam — The Delhi Chief Minister Atishi has directed all educational institutions, particularly the primary schools, to shift to online classes while going by the very high risk of AQI in the state. The Delhi civic authorities started implementing methods like sprinkling water with dust suppressants on roads, as well as mechanised sweeping that would help settle dust, which also came into effect. There is a ban on non-essential constructions in the world's most polluted capital. The air quality has worsened to the level that the image of the Taj Mahal appears to be a kind of ghost at the moment. The manmade calamity by worsening air conditions and the cleaning up of the image by the Delhi government's AAP has become like a war for them, which is symbolic of the party's election symbol, the 'Broom', to rebuild their unclean image nearing the elections along with other major issues.

A P Thiruvadi | Chennai

Send your feedback to: letterstopioneer@gmail.com

Let us be comfortable with silence to discover inner self



ASHA IYER KUMAR

Silence is empowering, it not only gives peace but also strength and clarity. It invites us to reconnect with our inner calm, a solitude we often shun

I am writing this column from the quiet environs of an Alpine valley in Germany. The winter has set in, turning the skies grey and the air bleary. This small town in Bavaria withdraws into its living rooms as early as 4.30 pm when darkness falls and then there is only silence all around, made palpable by the dwindling traffic and people on the streets. For someone who is used to the non-stop noise of metropolitan Dubai, this silence is new and comforting. The downtime it offers is not everyone's cup of tea though, for silence can be disconcerting to many. Its virtues are disregarded and it is taken as a sign of lethargy and dispiritedness, an absence of inspiration and the ultimate sign of an introverted personality. In a world teeming with sounds, silence has become something of an endangered species. It is the quietude that we collectively fear as if the absence of words leaves us exposed, untethered, and somehow incomplete. When conversations taper off,



there's often an instinctual drive to fill the void, a compulsion to keep the hum of interaction alive lest silence brings its "awkwardness" into the room. But I often wonder, is silence something to be avoided? Or is it, in fact, a sanctuary we have lost touch with, one that could lead us back to ourselves? I think of the times I have seen people — close friends, even strangers — grapple with the discomfort of a pause, reaching for words as if they were life preservers in a sea of quiet. We are, it seems, constantly seeking refuge in noise, hoping it will drown out whatever solitude and reflection might stir in us if given the chance. Silence is perceived as

emptiness, a fearful space, rather than a fertile ground for connection and self-discovery. We are conditioned to believe that engagement is strength and that silence, somehow, signals inadequacy. To be quiet in conversation is almost seen as a failing; we are regarded as "shy" or "distant." Yet, silence has its richness, a subtle power that invites us into the fullness of presence, something words cannot always offer. In silence, we are called to listen, not only to others but also to our inner voice and perhaps that's where the unease begins. The quiet holds a mirror up to us, revealing what lies within when the outside world fades to a hush. Silence invites us to reconnect with an inner calm, a solitude we often shun. Instead of fearing what might emerge in the absence of chatter, we might learn to find comfort in simply being — without the compulsion to fill every moment with talk. In this way, silence is not a void; it is an invitation to pause, to settle our racing minds and to let the

dust of daily life drift gently to the ground. Consider, too, the depth that silence brings to relationships. When we share a moment of quiet with someone, we are not erasing the connection; we are deepening it. It is in these pauses that we see each other most clearly, unfiltered by words, and held by the simple act of shared presence. Yet, our tendency to fear silence as awkward makes us miss the power of these moments — times when we could breathe alongside one another, unburdened by the need to perform or impress. It is time we learn to embrace silence not as an absence but as a presence — a steady, gentle force that grounds us when words have exhausted their role. For in those quiet spaces, we can find not just peace, but a reservoir of strength and clarity, one that restores rather than depletes, and brings solace to our weary souls. (The author is a columnist and children's writing coach based in Dubai; views are personal)



FIRST COLUMN

SERVANT LEADERSHIP

Servant leadership redefines leadership, emphasising the leader's role as a servant to their team



SAKSHI SETHI

In an increasingly complex and interconnected world, the traditional top-down leadership model is often insufficient for addressing the challenges organisations and communities face. The concept of servant leadership approach which, prioritises service to others over self-interest, has emerged as a vital alternative for fostering trust, collaboration and sustainable success.

Servant leadership is grounded in a set of key principles such as empathy, awareness, commitment to growth, stewardship that distinguish it from traditional, top-down leadership models. Trust in leadership across industries is at an all-time low, exacerbated by scandals, corporate greed and exploitative practices. By putting people first, servant leaders create a foundation of reliability and authenticity that restores faith in leadership.

Nowadays modern employees seek more than just a paycheck. They want meaningful work, supportive environments and leaders who genuinely care about their growth and wellbeing. Servant leadership aligns with these expectations by fostering empowerment, empathy and commitment to growth. This approach helps organisations attract and retain top talent in competitive job markets. Servant Leadership has proven effective in various contexts, from corporate settings to community organisations. Companies like Southwest Airlines and Starbucks have integrated servant leadership into their management philosophies, resulting in loyal employees and strong customer relationships. In education, servant leadership fosters supportive environments where teachers and students thrive. Similarly, nonprofit organisations benefit from servant leaders who prioritise the needs of the communities they serve.



It is often believed that, in times of crisis, such as economic downturns or global pandemics, organisations with servant leaders are more likely to thrive as these leaders provide stability and reassurance to their teams; prioritise people over profits during tough times and even empower employees to adapt and innovate. In an era where businesses are held accountable for their societal and environmental impact, servant leadership helps organisations fulfill their social responsibilities. By focusing on stewardship and community building, servant leaders ensure that their organisations contribute positively to society.

While servant leadership offers numerous benefits, it is not without its challenges. Its emphasis on service, empathy and community-building can sometimes create complexities, especially in environments that demand rapid decision-making or highly competitive strategies. Undeniably, this approach is a compassionate and effective approach in many scenarios but is not a one-size-fits-all solution. To succeed, it must be carefully balanced with the demands of the organisation and tailored to the specific context in which it is applied. By placing the wellbeing and development of others at the forefront, servant leaders foster trust, collaboration and sustainable success. In an era where ethical leadership is more important than ever, adopting the principles of servant leadership can lead to profound, lasting impact not just within organisations, but in society as a whole. By serving first, leaders ultimately inspire and empower others to achieve their fullest potential.

In essence, servant leadership is about flipping the traditional power dynamic. Instead of a command-and-control approach, servant leaders focus on collaboration, ethical behaviour and the empowerment of others to create more effective and meaningful outcomes. In a world that increasingly demands empathy, collaboration and accountability, servant leadership is more than a philosophy it is a necessity.

(The writer is an educator; views expressed are personal)

Supreme Court strikes down 'bulldozer injustice'



K S TOMAR

By reinforcing legal safeguards, the Apex Court seeks to restore public trust in the justice system and ensure that no citizen is denied their constitutional rights

A historic Supreme Court verdict against "bulldozer justice" promises broad legal, social, and administrative impacts, addressing concerns around the unchecked, high-handed demolition of properties linked to criminal accusations. Such actions have often violated the fundamental tenets of the Indian Constitution. This ruling holds direct implications for BJP-ruled states like Uttar Pradesh, Rajasthan, Madhya Pradesh, Haryana, Assam and the Delhi Municipal Corporation, which have been accused of misusing administrative powers to punish marginalised sections of society without due legal process.

The concept of "bulldozer justice" was notably invented by Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister, Yogi Adityanath, earning him the nickname "Bulldozer Baba" among supporters. The Court's verdict marks a setback to the UP government, though CM may not express regret for actions nullified by the ruling, which had previously jeopardised the constitutional guarantees afforded to all Indian citizens.

Social Implications Protection of Marginalised Communities: The ruling acknowledges that bulldozer justice has disproportionately impacted marginalised groups. By mandating due process, the Court aims to prevent biased or retaliatory actions against vulnerable communities, promoting equal treatment under the law.

Public Trust in the Rule of Law: By condemning bulldozer justice, the Supreme Court seeks to rebuild public confidence in lawful governance, fostering trust that the state will not bypass legal safeguards to punish alleged offenders.

Awareness and Advocacy: This judgment may empower civil rights groups to challenge arbitrary demolitions, advocating for the rights of those affected by unilateral property destruction. Administrative and Policy Impact.

Reduced Arbitrary Actions: Administrative bodies may now face restrictions against immediate demolition practices that bypass judicial processes, holding them accountable to legal frameworks designed to protect against arbitrary punishment. This could encourage a fairer and more equitable application of laws.

Policy Revisions at the State Level: States that have regularly employed demolitions as a form of "bulldozer justice" may need to revisit their policies, ensuring alignment with constitutional rights to property and due process. This could result in tighter guidelines and even statutory changes.

Limit on Executive Power: The Court's disapproval of unilateral demolition reinforces the separation of powers, signaling that executive decisions must strictly adhere to legal boundaries.

Legal and Judicial Consequences Strengthened Due Process: The ruling reaffirms that demolitions must respect due process, requiring legal scrutiny rather than administrative discretion. This will likely lead to the implementation of judicial approval for demolition orders, protecting citizens' rights against arbitrary state actions.

Increased Judicial Oversight: The ruling could result in heightened court involvement in cases where demolitions serve as punitive responses to alleged crimes, particularly in cases involving minority or marginalised groups.

Pressure for National Guidelines: The Supreme Court suggested nationwide stan-



ADMINISTRATIVE BODIES MAY NOW FACE RESTRICTIONS AGAINST IMMEDIATE DEMOLITION PRACTICES THAT BYPASS JUDICIAL PROCESSES, HOLDING THEM ACCOUNTABLE TO LEGAL FRAMEWORKS DESIGNED TO PROTECT AGAINST ARBITRARY PUNISHMENT

dards for property demolitions related to criminal cases, which could formalise rules for state authorities to follow, reducing current ambiguities.

Supreme Court Justices BR Gavai and KV Viswanathan made impactful assertions, noting that demolitions based solely on accusations violate fundamental rights. The Court emphasised the presumption of innocence and mandated a 15-day notice period, allowing tenants or owners time to challenge demolition orders or make necessary arrangements. This highlights the right to shelter under Article 21 of the Indian Constitution.

The Court warned that contempt proceedings could follow violations of these guidelines and responsible officials may face compensation liabilities for restitution. This ruling stemmed from controversial demolitions in Rajasthan and Madhya Pradesh, alongside a Jamiat-Ulama-i-Hind petition challenging demolitions in Delhi's Jahangirpuri in 2022. Data show that state laws on demolitions were often violated in Uttar Pradesh, a state pioneering "bulldozer justice."

The Uttar Pradesh Urban Planning and Development Act, 1973, requires a minimum 15-day notice before unauthorised structures can be removed, with a right to appeal. However, the 2022 demolitions, where structures were razed without due process, led to the Jamiat-Ulama-i-Hind's petition to the Supreme Court.

In another significant instance, former Chief Justice Chandrachud, before his retirement on November 9, and Justices JB Paridwala and Manoj Misra directed the Uttar Pradesh government

to pay Rs 25 lakh as compensation to a man whose home was demolished in 2019 for a road-widening project.

The Court expressed concern over state actions that could potentially use demolitions as selective reprisals, noting that citizens' voices must not be stifled by the threat of losing their homes. In Rajasthan, demolition laws under Section 245 of the Rajasthan Municipalities Act, 2009, require prior written notice detailing the grounds for eviction.

Following communal tensions in Udaipur, authorities issued a quick notice before demolishing a house on alleged forest land encroachment, contravening local law requirements for a reasonable response period. Section 91 of the Rajasthan Forest Act, 1953, restricts eviction orders to be issued only by a Tehsildar.

The Madhya Pradesh Municipalities Act, 1961, stipulates that any unauthorised building alteration or construction may be removed, but only after notice. However, this was ignored when a labourer's home was demolished immediately after his son's arrest, raising rights violation concerns.

Under the Delhi Municipal Corporation Act, 1957, the commissioner can remove illegal structures but must give reasonable opportunity for owners to dispute the action.

The Jahangirpuri incident in 2022 highlighted the need for due process, intensifying scrutiny on such practices. In Haryana, demolitions are governed by Section 261 of the Haryana Municipal Corporation Act, 1994, which mandates a notice period with an opportunity to contest. However, after communal violence in Nuh

in 2023, authorities demolished over 440 structures, mostly affecting Muslim households. Although similar to Delhi's DMC Act, Haryana's compliance period is notably shorter—only three days, leaving owners little time for appeals.

Strengthening Accountability: The Supreme Court's new guidelines aim to check arbitrary demolitions and uphold legal protections, particularly for vulnerable tenants. These regulations emphasise that adequate notice, transparency, and due process must be integral to any demolition order. While state laws vary, adherence to these guidelines will be essential in ensuring that demolitions respect both legal and constitutional rights, strengthening administrative accountability.

A Fundamental Shift in the Justice System: The Supreme Court of India's recent ruling against "bulldozer justice" was a response to cases where properties of individuals accused of crimes, especially those involving communal violence, were demolished without legal due process. The Court underscored that demolitions must be legally justified and cannot bypass established procedures. It criticised this practice for disproportionately impacting marginalised communities, violating human rights, and eroding public trust. In essence, this ruling reaffirms the constitutional right to due process, expected to curb the trend of using demolitions as extrajudicial punitive measures. The ruling marks a shift toward a justice system grounded in fairness, procedure, and accountability.

(The author is a political analyst and strategic affairs columnist; views are personal)

Tackling the epidemic of diabetes and hypertension: Urgent action needed

Lack of awareness and limited early screening make these two lifestyle diseases rampant

Diabetes and hypertension are two interconnected yet distinct chronic diseases that collectively strain public health. Both conditions share underlying risk factors, such as unhealthy diets, physical inactivity and high stress levels. They also frequently co-occur, accelerating the onset of severe complications and amplifying each other's impact.

Diabetes and hypertension significantly increase the risk for cardiovascular diseases, chronic kidney disease, stroke, and eye disorders, forming a "double-edged sword" for health. In particular, hypertension, when combined with diabetes, can increase the likelihood of heart disease and stroke. Management of these conditions in India is challeng-



PANKAJ BHARDWAJ

ing due to lack of awareness, inadequate early screening and inaction, particularly in rural and resource-poor areas. More than half a billion people are living with diabetes globally. This is only expected to more than double in the next 30 years, in almost every country, according to a Lancet study. When it comes to hypertension, over a billion people—

1 in every 4 men and 1 in 5 women—are living with this condition, which ranks as one of the leading causes of premature death worldwide. In addition to this, WHO states that more than 50 per cent of people with diabetes and about 46 per cent of adults living with hypertension don't even know about their condition.

It is safe to argue that lack of awareness is the biggest problem here. Both conditions have become the largest, silent, dual epidemics currently challenging India. The Cost of Inaction: Tertiary treatment for complications from advanced diabetes and hypertension—such as heart disease, kidney failure, or stroke—is exponentially more costly than primary health interventions. In 2024, reports from different

Insurance companies showed that the cost of a kidney transplant in public sector hospitals in India generally goes up to 6 lakhs.

This estimate is significantly lower than in private hospitals, which can go up to INR 15 lakhs or more, due to higher administrative and facility fees. Similarly, cardiac surgery can range anywhere between Rs 1 lakh and Rs 15 lakhs. In contrast, medication for diabetes and hypertension cost potentially up to only Rs 10,000 yearly, which is otherwise completely free of cost if obtained from a Government hospital.

Thus, investing in primary care interventions is far more cost-effective and sustainable than managing advanced complications. Reducing the



Burden: Encouraging people to take ownership of their health and get regular check-ups could prevent costly treatments.

One person's decision to monitor their blood pressure or blood sugar levels could save thousands in healthcare costs—covering medication, hospital beds and medical staff—funds that could otherwise be allocated to proactive community health services.

This alone could lead to a decrease in the incidence of severe complications, ultimately saving lives and reducing the overall societal cost.

A Path Forward: Our country needs to work on three fronts parallelly: first, increasing awareness campaigns, second, enhancing access to screenings and third, ensuring widespread support for affordable primary care.

Educating communities, especially in rural areas, about the importance of early detection can create a more health-conscious society that seeks intervention before these conditions spiral.

At the same time, the government's initiatives, such as the National Programme for Prevention and Control of Cancer, Diabetes,

Cardiovascular Diseases and Stroke (NPCDCS), need robust on-the-ground implementation to reach every corner of the country. The National Programme for Prevention and Control of Cancer, Diabetes, Cardiovascular Diseases, and Stroke (NPCDCS) was launched in 2010 by the Government of India, as a game changer.

It aims to reduce the burden of non-communicable diseases (NCDs) through early diagnosis, management, and health promotion. The programme focuses on four major NCDs—cancer, diabetes, cardiovascular diseases, and stroke—due to their high prevalence and impact on public health. It equips our communities to battle hypertension and dia-

betes through accessible screenings and preventive care. By catching issues early and promoting lifestyle change, we're not just treating diseases—we're transforming health outcomes and reclaiming years of productive life across India.

Conclusion: Addressing diabetes and hypertension isn't just a medical issue; it's a societal one. India's battle against these diseases demands the willingness of individuals to seek preventive care, awareness of the risks, and action by both govt and citizens to implement and utilise early detection programs. Only then can we mitigate these silent but pervasive epidemics and prevent a looming healthcare crisis.

(The author is a public health expert; views are personal)

what's brewing?



DILJIT DOSANJH UNLEASHES FURY POST-HYD SHOW

Punjabi star Diljit Dosanjh sang modified lyrics to his chartbusters *Lemonade* and *5 Taara* at the Hyderabad show of his Dil-Luminati India Tour 2024 tour on Saturday. This was days after he received a notice from the Telangana government directing him to not sing any songs promoting alcohol, drugs or violence at the concert. Clips of the famous singer-actor from the gig are circulating online where he can be seen singing *Tainu teri coke ch pasand aa Lemonade* instead of *Tainu teri daaru ch pasand aa Lemonade* from the song *Lemonade*.

Similarly, the lyrics in *5 Taara* became *5 taara hotel ch* instead of the original *5 taara theke utte*.

During the show, Diljit spoke to the spectators alluding to the notice, which also restricted the singer from using children on stage. "If an artist comes from outside the country, they can sing or do whatever they want, there's no tension. But when your artist is coming home to perform, you have a problem, you create trouble. But

I'll tell you something. God is with me, I won't let this go," he said.

The 40-year-old called out naysayers questioning how his concerts were going housefull.

"Many people are unable to digest why such big shows are happening. How are these tickets getting sold in two minutes? Bro, I've been working for a long time now. I did not become famous in a day," he added.

Diljit also addressed the black marketing of his shows' tickets, urging victims to alert authorities in the first hour of the incident by calling on 1930, the toll-free helpline number for reporting online cybercrime.

"Some people buy tickets early so that they can sell it again. This has become a norm. This happens in big international shows even today. This will be fixed in time, the government is trying to work on this."

Jonathan Bailey confirms return to Bridgerton for season 4

Jonathan Bailey has confirmed his return to *Bridgerton* for the upcoming fourth season of the hit Netflix series. The actor, who became a fan favourite for his portrayal of Viscount Anthony Bridgerton, made the announcement during an appearance on *Late Night with Seth Meyers*, where he shared his enthusiasm about reuniting with the *Bridgerton* family, as per The Hollywood Reporter.

Bailey, who led the second season alongside Simone Ashley, will once again join the ensemble cast for the next chapter of the Shonda Rhimes-produced period drama. The actor revealed that he would be "reuniting with the family next week" as production for season four begins.

"It changes every year, you know, every two years," Bailey joked, referencing the show's rotating lead cast, as per The Hollywood Reporter. Each season of *Bridgerton* focuses on a different member of the Bridgerton family and with each new lead comes a fresh dynamic for the beloved period series.



Bailey, 36, expressed his excitement about the show's evolving format. "What an amazing thing to be a part of," he said, reflecting on his time with *Bridgerton*.

Looking ahead to season four, Bailey also shared his support for the new cast members, including his onscreen brother Luke Thompson and the recently announced addition, Yerin Ha, who will take centre stage as the lead couple in the upcoming season.

"There's going to be lots of space for new people to come in and Luke and Yerin are gonna be great," Bailey said, adding, "So I'll always pop back and say hello," as per The Hollywood Reporter.

Season four of *Bridgerton* will centre on Benedict Bridgerton, the second son of the Bridgerton family. While *Bridgerton* fans are eager for new episodes, there is still no official release date for season four. However, according to *Bridgerton* producer Brownell, viewers may have to wait up to two years before the next season arrives on Netflix.



AB's nuanced portrayal leaves Shoojit in 'awe'

In a recent heartfelt reflection, director Shoojit Sircar opened up about the powerful performance delivered by Abhishek Bachchan in the upcoming film *I Want to Talk*. Shoojit shared an emotional anecdote, highlighting the profound impact of Abhishek's portrayal of Arjun Singh, a character grappling with a terminal illness.

Speaking about the film, Shoojit revealed a conversation he had with Bachchan during the shoot, where the actor, in character as Arjun Singh, shared a deeply poignant line: "I am now married to cancer, so now I have to take it with me." This raw, yet uplifting, perspective encapsulated the essence of Arjun's journey—one of acceptance, strength, and resilience in the face of an inevitable fate.

"The way he smiled and spoke about the character's challenges, it gave me the force to move forward with the project," Shoojit shared, acknowledging how Bachchan's nuanced portrayal brought an empowering energy to the film.

For Shoojit, this was not just a film about illness, but one about living life fully, even in the face of hardship. "I laughed every day and with every scene because of the way Abhishek brought this character to life," the director said. Abhishek's role, according to Shoojit, is a tribute to human spirit and the way we can find strength, even in the most difficult circumstances.

I Want to Talk is slated to release in theatres on November 22, 2024. The film also stars Johnny Lever and Ahilya Bamroo and is produced by Ronnie Lahiri and Shoojit Sircar under Rising Sun Films.

ROHIT SHETTY'S REALITY CHECK TO NEW STARS 'Prove yourself on big screen not mobile screen'

Rohit Shetty, known for directing some of Bollywood's biggest blockbusters, recently shared his thoughts on the younger generation of actors. In an interview, alongside casting director Mukesh Chhabra, Shetty reflected on stardom and compared the new crop of stars with seasoned actors like Ajay Devgn, Shah Rukh Khan and Akshay Kumar, with whom he has worked extensively.

Shetty described Ajay Devgn as a "secure" actor who allows his co-stars to shine, contrasting this with the insecurities he perceives in many of today's younger stars. "The new stars are insecure people. They are too much into social media, which is not the real world. One thing about social media is that 90% of followers and articles are paid. They need to go out in the world. Buying followers or having paid articles won't help after two years. Ultimately, you will have to prove yourself on the big screen, not the mobile screen," he remarked.

Offering advice to young actors, Shetty emphasised the importance of conviction and embracing opportunities, regardless of their scale. "My biggest advice to the younger generation is never to think of any work as big or small. You just have to follow your conviction. For instance, when Salman Khan's movies weren't working, he did *Jeet* with Sunny Deol. He saw it as an opportunity to move forward. This quality in stars is now fading. People are scared of failure... and the moment this fear goes, there will be progress."



Priyanka Chopra teases Citadel Season 2, says, 'Finishing it up strong'

Priyanka Chopra, one of the busiest stars in the entertainment world, is gearing up for the highly anticipated second season of *Citadel*. Balancing her professional commitments with personal life, Priyanka shared a glimpse of her packed schedule on Instagram, giving fans a sneak peek into her "working Saturday."

In a video shared from her car, Priyanka said, "It's a working Saturday, you know, finishing it up, strong." She also posted a stunning selfie, donning a black leather jacket, minimal makeup and a sleek ponytail. The actress looked effortlessly stylish while updating

her followers about her day. In *Citadel Season 2*, Priyanka will reprise her role as Nadia Singh alongside Richard Madden as Mason Kane. The upcoming season will also introduce new cast members, including Rahul Kohli, Merle Dandridge and Michael Trucco, while Stanley Tucci and Lesley Manville return in key roles. Produced by the Russo brothers, the espionage thriller first premiered on April 28, 2023 and the six-episode follow-up is set to stream on Prime Video soon, with the release date yet to be announced.



FUN

ARCHIE

CALVIN AND HOBBS

GARFIELD

NANCY

GINGER MEGGS

REALITY CHECK

SPEED BUMP

CROSSWORD

1	2	3	4	
5				6
7		8		
9			10	
			11	
12	13	14	15	
17			16	
19				

SUDOKU

7			6		4			
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	9	3					8	
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				4	5			
3		7						6

Yesterday's solution

5	9	7	6	3	4	2	1	8
2	8	3	1	9	5	4	7	6
1	6	4	7	8	2	9	5	3
4	3	8	5	1	7	6	2	9
7	2	5	9	6	3	1	8	4
6	1	9	2	4	8	5	3	7
8	4	2	3	5	6	7	9	1
3	5	1	4	7	9	8	6	2
9	7	6	8	2	1	3	4	5

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

- Large stone buildings built in ancient Egypt as tombs
- Steel pins knocked into wood
- Call in on
- Get
- A song sung by one person
- Have a lie down
- Thin cord for tying parcels
- Fabric
- Defrosts
- So smooth it is difficult to get hold of

DOWN

- Indicate direction with your finger
- Moscow is in this country

STATIONS

S	T	A	T	I	O	N		
R	O	L	D	A	L	S		
E	D	H	E	T				
T	O	W	E	R	A	N		
C	V	E	R	A				
H	O	N	E	Y	S	E		
R	E	N	V	I	G			
R	E	C	I	P	E			
E	D	I	C	E				
F	G	E	N	E	R	I	O	S

THE SABARMATI REPORT

Fearless attempt marred by flawed misstep

TEJAL SINHA
tejal.sinha30@gmail.com

The *Sabarmati Report* is influenced by a tragic event in history, in which a coach of the Sabarmati Express was set ablaze close to the town of Godhra in Gujarat. The train journeyed from Ayodhya to Ahmedabad, leading to the deaths of several individuals, primarily Hindu pilgrims coming back from a religious event in Ayodhya. The blaze was allegedly initiated by a mob and victims were unable to escape, when the carriage was consumed by fire. The event triggered extensive violence throughout Gujarat, resulting in communal clashes that persisted for many weeks. The incident, which is one of the darkest pages in history, continues to haunt millions of Indians.

PLOT

The movie centers around Samar Kumar (played by Vikrant Massey), a Hindi journalist entangled in the office politics of the newsroom. The story develops as Samar, with the assistance of a youthful journalist called Amrita Gill (played by Raashii Khanna), works to reveal the reality of Godhra to the public. The film's plot revolves around the search for truth and a major media outlet's attempt to conceal it.

HIGHLIGHTS

The highlights of *The Sabarmati*

Report include the chilling recreation of the Godhra Train Burning sequence, a pivotal moment in the film. The intense courtroom confrontation between Samar and the politician is another standout scene. The film effectively uncovers the conspiracy behind the riots, exposing shocking truths. Thought-provoking themes of justice, accountability and communal tensions are woven throughout. The film's technical aspects, including haunting cinematography, a haunting background score and skillful editing, add depth. Impactful moments including the climax, where a powerful verdict is delivered, Amrita Gill's emotional testimony and hard-hitting dialogue will make you hooked.

DRAWBACKS

However, *The Sabarmati Report* does have its own drawbacks. The film's graphic violence and disturbing imagery may be triggering for some viewers, while its emotional intensity could overwhelm certain audiences due to the sensitive subject matter. Pacing issues arise, with some scenes feeling rushed or dragging and the emphasis on melodrama slightly detracts from the fact-based narrative. The film's messaging sometimes feels heavy-handed, with themes feeling forced or didactic and the portrayal of complex political and social issues lacks nuance. Additionally, some historical inaccuracies or creative liberties are taken and the tone unevenly balances drama, thriller and social commentary elements.



DIRECTED BY: Dheeraj Sarna
PRODUCED BY: Balaji Motion Pictures and Vikir Films Production
CAST: Vikrant Massey, Raashii Khanna, Ridhi Dogra, Barkha Singh, Nazneen Patni, Hella Stichmair, Aryan Ardent, Sundip Ved, Prince Kashyap, Sandeep Kumar, Rohit Ameriya, Al Arjun, Anjali Nadig and Tushar Phulke
WRITTEN BY: Arjun Bhandegaonkar, Avinash Singh Tomar and Vipin Agnihotri
MUSIC BY: Kartik Kush, Akhil Sachdeva, Anu Malik and Arko
RATING: 3/5

PERFORMANCES

Vikrant Massey can effortlessly embody any character. True that! Just like always, Massey being a skilled actor, effortlessly adapts to

any role he is assigned, whether it be a black or white character. Describing his excellent performance as a Hindi journalist would be an understatement. This experienced actor really

stands out as Samar. Even though his dialogues make a strong impression, as usual, it is his eyes that do the speaking. With flawless

execution, Ridhi Dogra portrays Manika as a strong and no-nonsense individual, unwavering in her convictions. Dogra masterfully blends strength, passion and unwavering self-assurance, making Manika an unforgettable figure. Her character is marked by unapologetic assertiveness, sharp intellect and empathetic yet unflinching commitment to truth and justice. Meanwhile, Raashii Khanna shines in her role as Amrita. She brings a strong sense of depth and sincerity to her character, fully honouring the script.

Her character embodies vulnerability, courage and determination, conveying emotional depth through poignant portrayals of pain, loss and struggle for justice. Amrita's narrative arc showcases inner strength, navigating complex emotions from grief to anger and ultimately, hope. Her story evokes empathy, making her relatable and endearing to audiences.

TECHNICAL ASPECTS

Cinematography by Amalendu Chaudhary captures the stark real-

ities of riot-torn Gujarat, employing muted colors and stark lighting to convey the somber mood. The cinematography's blend of close-ups, wide shots, and aerial views creates a visceral experience. The editing by Manan Sagar is crisp, seamlessly interweaving multiple narrative threads. The background score by the team is haunting and evocative, amplifying tension and emotional depth. The sound design effectively recreates the chaos and intensity of the riots. Production design meticulously recreates the early 2000s setting, adding authenticity. The film's visual effects are subtle yet effective, enhancing key sequences.

Despite these, *The Sabarmati Report* has some technical drawbacks. The pacing occasionally falters, with uneven editing transitions disrupting the narrative flow in a few scenes. Certain visual effects appear inconsistent and lacking in polish.

VERDICT

The Sabarmati Report offers an intriguing perspective on a pivotal event in Indian history, despite some narrative detours. While its intentions occasionally waver, the film regains focus for an impactful climax. Decent performances from the cast elevate the viewing experience. It's a worth watching for those interested in fact-based dramas and social commentaries, but with tempered expectations.

Karanvir Sharma tapping real-life experience for emotional connectivity

AARTI SREENATH
aarti.sreenath9@gmail.com

Karanvir Sharma, known for his gripping portrayals of Shaurya Sabarwal in *Shaurya Aur Anokhi Ki Kahani* and the intense Haider Akhtar in *Rab Se Dua*, has made a mark in the world of Indian television. His performances, marked by their emotional depth and raw intensity, have earned him recognition and a dedicated fan base. But as the actor reflects on his career, it's clear that his aspirations go far beyond just the small screen.

Starting from his early days in television, he speaks humbly about his journey from his initial projects like *Zid* to his most latest popular roles.

As *The Pioneer* connects exclusively with the talented actor, we were struck not just by his humility, but also by his palpable sense of anticipation. "The most defining moment of my career is yet to come," he says with a confident hint of mystery in his voice. "The milestone I'm waiting for will happen next year. That's what keeps me motivated. It reminds me that there is always room for growth."

It's not often that you meet an actor who speaks with such conviction about their future and yet, Karan's words resonate with an unmistakable energy. Despite having achieved significant milestones in his career including his memorable turn in *Shaurya Aur Anokhi Ki Kahani*, a role that won him acclaim for its depth he believes the best is yet to come.

What sets him apart from many of his peers is his unwavering commitment to his craft. He doesn't let the fame or success of a role dictate his next step. *The Zid* fame explains, "I've always been someone who chooses roles based on the strength of the character, not the recognition it brings. Whether it's a hit show or a movie, what matters to me is the story and the character I'm portraying. That's where my focus lies."

He stresses that a show's success is not just the responsibility of the actors, but a collective achievement. When comparing his approach to film roles and television roles, the *Rab Se Hai Dua* actor explains that in television, linear storytelling allows for a more continuous flow, while in films and web series, the narrative structure can be non-linear, requiring a different kind of preparation. He points out that both mediums have their unique challenges and demands but emphasises that, regardless of the format, his passion to understand the craft remains consistent.

As he reflects on his transformative performances, his complex portrayal of Shaurya, a man torn between his beliefs and his love for *Anokhi*, or *Haider Akhtar*, the conflicted man at the heart of *Rab Se Dua*, he reveals the depth of his preparation. "For me, it's all about drawing from real-life experiences," he says, leaning in thoughtfully. "I observe people around me, I read, I watch films and sometimes, it's just a fleeting moment that sticks with me. I recall a time when I saw a girl sitting silently in a hospital, her face a canvas of emotions. I didn't know her, but when I approached her, she broke down and shared everything with me. That moment became a source of inspiration for my role as Haider."

He delves into the emotional depth of his performances, particularly in roles like Shaurya Sabarwal in *Shaurya Aur Anokhi Ki Kahani* and Haider Akhtar in *Rab Se Dua*. He shares a

deeply personal story about a moment in a hospital where he encountered a girl in a state of emotional distress, which later influenced his portrayal of Haider. This story highlights his approach to acting, using life experiences and the emotions of those around him as a foundation for his performances. He reflects that this empathy and deep connection with his characters are what make his portrayals resonate with audiences.

This ability to tap into real emotions is what makes his performances so believable.

Moving on to his role in *Safal Hogi Teri Aaradhna*, Sharma speaks about how the success of the show has affected his approach to acting. He remains grounded and focused on the character rather than external metrics like TRPs or fame. For him, the essence of a successful show lies in the collaborative effort—quality writing, skilled direction and the right team coming together to create something meaningful. He speaks about how the technical aspects of the show, such as high-quality cinematography and the involvement of experienced professionals, elevate the final product.

Despite his growing fame and popularity, he remains grounded, a quality that seems to define him both as an actor and a person. "What excites me most right now is not the success, but the journey ahead," he says, his eyes gleaming with optimism. "As much as I enjoy my work, I'm always looking ahead. I know that the kind of work I'm meant to do will come. Until then, I will continue to learn, grow and evolve."

As for connecting with his audience, as he reflects on his presence on social media, noting that he doesn't actively follow trends or algorithms. Instead, he focuses on authenticity. He believes that his work speaks for itself, rather than using social media to build influence. This honest approach to his career resonates with his philosophy of being an entertainer, not an influencer.

To unwind from the intensity of his professional life, he has now turned to spirituality and meditation, seeing it as a tool for staying grounded and maintaining a sense of peace amid the pressures of fame and a demanding career.

With such a mindset, it's clear that he is not just carving a path in Indian television; he's paving the way for a career that promises to transcend the medium. And while he waits for that defining moment to arrive, there's little doubt that when it does, he will be ready to take on whatever challenges lie ahead.

In a world full of fleeting trends and short-lived fame, his dedication to his craft and his belief in the power of storytelling sets him apart as one to watch in the years to come. His reflections offer valuable insights for aspiring actors and a broader audience looking to understand the complexities behind a successful career in entertainment.

Karanvir Sharma, the talented actor behind *Shaurya Aur Anokhi Ki Kahani* and *Rab Se Dua*, sits down with *The Pioneer* for an exclusive conversation, as he reflects on his journey, he reveals a sense of anticipation and conviction about his future, hinting that the best is yet to come



BORN HEALTHY, BORN STRONG:

Maternal health for premature birth prevention

Premature birth, defined as delivery before 37 weeks of pregnancy, is a significant global health challenge, often leading to long-term complications for the baby and emotional and financial stress for families. According to WHO's last data about 287,000 women died during and following pregnancy and childbirth in 2020. However, optimising maternal health and ensuring responsible fertility treatment can significantly reduce the risk of premature birth. Raising awareness about these factors is crucial for improving outcomes for both mother and child.

Maternal health: The foundation for full-term pregnancy

The journey toward a healthy pregnancy begins with the mother's overall health. Conditions such as hypertension, diabetes, obesity and infections can significantly increase the risk of preterm labour. Regular preconception health checks help identify and manage these risk factors early. Moreover, adopting a balanced diet, maintaining a healthy weight, staying physically active and avoiding harmful substances like tobacco and alcohol create an optimal environment for a full-term pregnancy.

During pregnancy, prenatal care is essential. Frequent check-ups allow healthcare providers to monitor fetal growth, manage any emerging complications and provide timely interventions. Expectant mothers are encouraged to take prescribed prenatal vitamins, especially folic acid and practice stress management, as stress hormones are linked to preterm labour.

Responsible fertility treatment: A critical role

Fertility treatments, such as in-vitro fertilization (IVF), have been a boon for couples struggling with infertility. However, they come with their own set of risks, including multiple pregnancies—a leading cause of prematurity. Responsible practices, like transferring a single blastocyst embryo during IVF and opting for advanced techniques like PGT-A and

transferring single Euploid embryo and other advances like CAPA IVM (In Vitro Maturation), can minimise these risks. CAPA IVM requires minimal hormonal stimulation, reducing the chance of ovarian hyperstimulation and lowering the likelihood of multiple pregnancies, thereby promoting safer outcomes for both mother and baby.

Global progress and the need for awareness

According to the World Health Organisation (WHO), the maternal mortality ratio worldwide has improved significantly, declining from 441 deaths per 100,000 live births in 1985 to 223 deaths per 100,000 live births in 2020. However, at the halfway mark to 2030, the goal of reaching a global maternal mortality ratio (MMR) of 70 maternal deaths per 100,000 live births remains elusive. This progress reflects advancements in maternal health care, yet challenges like premature birth persist.

Empowering women through awareness

Awareness and education are key to preventing prematurity. Couples planning a family should consult healthcare providers early to understand their health status and the safest fertility options. Additionally, healthcare professionals must emphasise the importance of maternal health and responsible fertility practices during consultations.

Preventing premature births requires a collaborative effort between individuals, families and healthcare systems. By prioritising maternal health and advocating for safer fertility treatments, we can help more babies enjoy the benefits of a healthy, full-term start in life. Awareness is the first step toward ensuring that every child has the best possible chance to thrive.

(The author, Dr. Sai Manasa Darla, is the clinical head and fertility specialist at Oasis Fertility.)

India beat Japan 3-0 to top league stage

PTI ■ RAJGIR (BIHAR)

Defending champions India stormed into the semifinals of the Women's Asian Champions Trophy with an unbeaten record, defeating Japan 3-0 here on Sunday. Continuing her stellar form, star striker Deepika netted a quickfire brace from penalty corners in the final quarter to seal the victory, following vice-captain Navneet Kaur's opener in the 37th minute. With this win, India topped the league stage with maximum 15 points from five matches, ahead of Olympic silver medallists China (12 points). India will take on fourth-placed Japan in the semifinal on Tuesday, while China will play third-placed Malaysia in the other last-four game. Deepika, the tournament's leading scorer, now boasts 10 goals, including four field goals, five penalty corners, and one penalty stroke, underscoring her dominance. In the day's other matches, Malaysia beat Thailand 2-0, while China defeated South Korea by an identical margin. The Indians secured their



first scoring chance in the form of back-to-back penalty corners in the eighth minute but Deepika's flick from the

second effort was brilliantly saved by Japanese goalkeeper Yu Kudo. India earned another penalty corner in

the 13th minute but yet again wasted the chance. The Indians continued to dominate and secured their

fourth penalty corner in the 25th minute but once again Kudo rose to the occasion and made three brilliant

saves to deny the hosts. A minute after the change of ends, Kudo again came to Japan's rescue to deny Deepika. India eventually broke the deadlock in the 37th minute through Navneet's brilliant reverse hit to the second post. Deepika's brilliance The Indians continued their domination and earned three back-to-back penalty corners in the 47th minute and star dragflicker Deepika finally found the back of the net with a powerful low dragflick to open her account. A minute later, the Indians secured another set piece and this time too Deepika struck again with a powerful flick into the top right corner, effectively sealing the match. Credit must also go to the Indian defence, led brilliantly by Udita and Sushila Chahu, as they didn't let the Japanese take a single shot at the Indian goal. Skipper Salima Tete, Neha and Sharmila Devi too were brilliant in the midfield, creating numerous chances for the forwardline with their runs and neat dribbling skills.



Swiatek leads Poland comeback over Czechs to set up BJK Cup semi against Paolini's Italy

AP ■ MALAGA (SPAIN)

Iga Swiatek won in singles and doubles to lead Poland's 2-1 comeback against the Czech Republic in the Billie Jean King Cup. Poland will meet Italy in the semifinals after Jasmine Paolini likewise won her singles and doubles matches to lead Italy back for a 2-1 win over Japan. Marie Bouzkova beat Magdalena Frech 6-1, 4-6, 6-4 to give the Czech Republic a 1-0 lead on the indoor hard court in Malaga's Palacio del Deportes. The second-ranked Swiatek leveled the score after she held on for a 7-6 (7), 4-6, 7-5 win over Linda Noskova. The five-time Grand Slam winner then went back on the court after a short break to help Katarzyna Kawa beat Katerina Siniakova, the world's top-ranked doubles player, and Bouzkova 6-2, 6-4. "Let's enjoy this one. For sure it was an exhausting day and some really tough matches, but I am really happy we won that last one," Swiatek said. She added that she hadn't played doubles in three years and praised Kawa's well-placed passing shots in the doubles lane as key to victory. Swiatek showed no sign that she was worn down by the back-to-back matches that combined for 3 hours, 50

minutes of playing time. The Polish pair converted all four break chances and hit more winners, 29-18, than the Czechs. Poland is seeking its first title. The Czech Republic is an 11-time champion, second only to the United States' 18 titles. ITALY EYES SHOT AT CONSECUTIVE FINALS The fourth-ranked Paolini, a finalist at Wimbledon and the French Open, defeated Moyuka Uchijima 6-3, 6-4 to level the tie 1-1. She then helped Sara Errani beat Shuko Aoyama and Eri Hozumi 6-3, 6-4 to seal the quarterfinal win. Japan took the early lead when Ena Shibahara defeated Elisabetta Cocciaretto 3-6, 6-4, 6-4. Uchijima stole Paolini's first service game. But that was only a blip in an otherwise dominant showing by the Italian. Paolini broke Uchijima four times and hit 17 forehand winners to secure the straight-set victory. In doubles, the Italians broke the Japanese four times and made just 14 unforced errors to 23 by their rivals. "Japan is a tough cookie, as you say in English," Italy captain Tathiana Garbin said. "They played with a lot of courage so it was fun to watch this kind of level. My players, they played unbelievable doubles, so we made it.

West Indies chase down 219 to beat England by five wickets in 4th T20



AP ■ GROS ISLET (ST. LUCIA)

Shai Hope and Evin Lewis made half centuries in a rapid 136-run opening stand as the West Indies completed a record run chase to beat England by five wickets in the fourth Twenty20 international. Hope made 54 from 24 balls and Lewis made 68 from 31 balls, with seven sixes and four fours, in a partnership which lasted only 9.1 overs but enabled the West Indies to reach a winning target of 219 on Saturday. The West Indies' confident start was shaken when Lewis, Hope and Nicholas Pooran fell to consecutive balls in the 10th over. But captain Roston Chase put the innings back on track with 38 from 23 balls and Sherfane Rutherford competed the chase with successive sixes and an over to spare. There were 32 sixes in the match, 16 from each team. "We had to assess the

conditions. That's one thing we struggled with in the first three games in the power play," Hope said. "We've been losing some early wickets so the main thing was to try and understand what was the best remedy, to understand the conditions and come out of the power play on top." England already had won the five-match series after winning the first three matches by eight wickets, seven wickets and three wickets respectively. Every match in the series and in the previous three-match one-day series has been won by the team winning the toss. After being sent in, Phil Salt and Jacob Bethell who both have deep roots in the Caribbean made swift half centuries as England made 218-5 to equal the highest first innings total at the Darren Sammy Stadium. Bethell who was born and raised in Barbados made an unbeaten 62 from 32 balls

while Salt who was born in Wales but raised in Barbados made 55 from 35 balls at the top of the order. Will Jacks (25), Jos Buttler (38) and Sam Curran (24) also contributed to England's innings of 218-5. The West Indies made a speedy start in pursuit of that total. Hope reached his half century from 23 balls, the West Indies were 69-0 after the power play and their hundred came up in only 7.3 overs. Lewis was more watchful than Hope at first but when he began to hit out it was with enormous power. He reached his half century from 26 balls and the longest of his sixes traveled 105 meters. The century partnership between Hope and Lewis came from only 45 balls and they had looked impregnable until Lewis played an awkward shot to a ball from Rehan Ahmed which he skewed to Dan Mousley. Hope was run out next ball for the second time in consecutive matches and Pooran was bowled first ball as the West Indies slumped to 136-3. Powell restored some of the early momentum with his 38 before falling lbw to John Turner in his T20 debut. The West Indies needed 21 from the last three overs with five wickets in hand, then 15 from two. After edging towards the target in singles, Rutherford finally found the middle and blasted consecutive sixes from Mousley to clinch the win.

McGrath urges Australia to 'go hard' on emotional Kohli

PTI ■ MELBOURNE

Pace legend Glenn McGrath feels Australia have the "ammunition" to target an "emotional" Virat Kohli, who will be under pressure if he gets off to a poor start at the five-match Test series for the Border-Gavaskar Trophy, starting in Perth from November 22. India have won the last four Test series against Australia, including two Down Under. However, they head into the much-anticipated five-Test assignment on the back of a 0-3 series whitewash at the hands of New Zealand at home. "Without a doubt, especially after coming off a 3-0 loss



against New Zealand, you've got plenty of ammunition to back yourself up," Fox Cricket quoted McGrath as saying on 'CODE Sports'. "So put the pressure on them and see if they're up for it," he added. Kohli, who has been India's batting mainstay for over a

decade, has struggled with form in Test cricket recently. In the six matches he's played this year, he has averaged just a mere 22.72. With the injured Shubman Gill out of contention from the first Test and skipper Rohit Sharma's participation also in doubt, Kohli will feel the pressure of leading the batting line up. However, the 36-year-old has a penchant of eking out his best in Australia. Kohli has an impressive average of 54.08 in the four Australia tours he has been a part of. And McGrath warned that targeting Kohli aggressively could also lift him, especially if he manages to keep his emotions in check.

Need to be proactive against Ashwin, and not allow him to settle: Smith

PTI ■ MELBOURNE

Australian batting talisman Steve Smith wants to adopt a proactive approach against Ravichandran Ashwin in the upcoming Border-Gavaskar Trophy to avoid his struggles against the Indian spinner during the 2020-21 series. Ashwin had nicked off Smith thrice during that rubber, and later in 2023 the Indian off-spinner dismissed the Aussie twice as he could only make 22 runs against his old foe. "I don't like getting out to off-spin in Australia. But he's also a very good bowler and he came in with some decent plans. There were a couple of occasions where he got on top of me," Smith told the Sydney Morning Herald. "But then I got on top of him at the SCG when I was a bit more proactive (Smith made 131 and 81 at Sydney). So, that's key for me. Just be proactive against him and not let him settle and bowl the way



he wants to," he added. Ashwin's Test bowling average stands at a modest 42.15 in Australia compared to his home average of 21.57. Smith hoped to land the first blow on the 38-year-old to gain an early upper hand in the five-match series, beginning at Perth from November 22.

The Tamil Nadu man recently said that he had worked out Smith after some initial struggles against him. "I think I've kind of figured out what he does or how he bats, I've had an edge over him. I've had the wood over him," Ashwin had told Channel Seven. But Smith did not read too much into it.

"Ashwin and I have had some good battles over the years. When you have five matches, if someone gets on top of another player, they could have 10 innings against them. "So, you're facing those mental challenges each game, and if it goes one way early, they will feel under pressure against that player. There's nowhere to hide in five games like there are in a two-game series," said the New South Wales man. The 35-year-old, who is 315 shy of 10,000 Test runs, will bat at his favoured No. 4 slot against India after opening the innings for four Tests earlier this year. It was not a successful experiment and Smith hoped to hit the ground running early from a position where he made runs at an average in excess of 60. "I always makes your summer better when you start well. It gives you a lot of confidence. It's about not overthinking things. It's playing each ball as it comes and keeping it simple.

US Open runner-up Fritz back in another big final and faces Sinner again for ATP Finals crown

AP ■ TURIN (ITALY)

Taylor Fritz is starting to make reaching big finals a habit. He feels like he belongs among the very best players in tennis, too. The American followed his runner-up finish at the U.S. Open by beating Alexander Zverev 6-3, 3-6, 7-6 (3) on Saturday to play for the trophy at the ATP Finals. "I have believed that I belong, that I'm one of the best players," Fritz said. "It's not results-based. It's more I can feel how I'm playing. This week is huge." In Sunday's final, Fritz will face top-ranked Jannik Sinner — the player he lost to in the U.S. Open final. Sinner also beat Fritz in straight sets in the group stage this week. Sinner advanced with a rapid 6-1, 6-2 win over Casper Ruud. Fritz became the first American finalist since James Blake lost the 2006 final to Roger Federer. The last American to win the elite eight-man event was Pete Sampras, who beat Andre

Agassi in 1999. "I trust my game and I trust my level and I don't feel nearly as uncomfortable in these situations anymore because I've been playing the top guys at big events a lot lately," Fritz said. "I'm getting more comfortable in the moment. I'm really, really confident in my game." Fritz upbeat after loss to SinnerFritz came away encouraged from his 6-4, 6-4 loss to Sinner on Tuesday. "I felt much more comfortable from the baseline. ... I had chances to break him in both sets," Fritz said. "He had an equal amount of chances, and he took his. He played the big points better than I did. It didn't feel anywhere near as one-sided as the Open." Sinner noted that Fritz "played a great match." "The difference was just a few points. Tomorrow will be very similar. ... But finals are always different than group matches." Fritz trying to match Gauff's Fritz wins the trophy, it will mark an American sweep of the season-ending events

after Coco Gauff won the WTA Finals last week. Fritz's run in New York made him the first American man to reach a Grand Slam singles final in 15 years. He's playing at the ATP Finals for the second time. On debut two years ago, he beat Rafael Nadal in his opener and made it to the semifinals, losing to Novak Djokovic. "It's awesome to come back and already go a step further," Fritz said. "I'm all about always trying to do better than the year before." At the start of the week, Fritz told The Associated Press his "career has always been a very steady progression and just improving a little bit each year." Fritz has Zverev's numberit was Fritz's fourth consecutive victory over Zverev, who replaced Carlos Alcaraz at No. 2 in the rankings this week. "He's an uncomfortable player for me," Zverev said. "It's no secret." Fritz also beat Zverev at Wimbledon and the U.S. Open, plus the Laver Cup. Fritz will finish year at career



highFritz was already assured of finishing the year in the top five for the first time and he'll rise to a career-high No. 4 on Monday. Zverev has seen Fritz's improvement up close —

especially on one key stroke: "His forehand used to break down quite a lot. ... I feel like the ratio is a lot more towards winners now." It was a matchup of big servers between the 6-foot-5 (1.96-meter) Fritz and the 6-

foot-6 (1.98-meter) Zverev, and when Fritz broke Zverev for 4-2 in the first set, it marked the first time that Zverev lost a service game in four matches in Turin. Eventually, though, the match turned into a physical

duel from the baseline. Fritz rallied from 0-40 and held his serve for 3-2 in the third after a nine-minute game full of long rallies — winning one such exchange that lasted 30 strokes. Fritz was then under

pressure one service game after another but somehow managed to keep holding. Fritz got ahead early in the tiebreaker and finished Zverev off with an audacious inside-out forehand winner on his first match point. Fritz finished with 15 aces to Zverev's 10 in a match that lasted 2 hours, 20 minutes. "I felt like statistically and shot-wise, my level maybe was even higher than his until the important moments. That's where I kind of blew it," Zverev said. "This one will hurt more than the other few." Doping case hangs over SinnerSinner is playing at home for the first time since it was announced before his U.S. Open title that he tested positive in two separate drug tests this year. A decision to clear Sinner of wrongdoing was appealed by the World Anti-Doping Agency in September and a final ruling in the case is expected next year. Last year, Sinner lost the final to Djokovic, who withdrew injured this year.

'Devaki Nandana Vasudeva and Murari are poles apart,' clarifies Arjun Jandyala

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Superstar Mahesh Babu's nephew Ashok Galla returns to the big screen with his second film, *Devaki Nandana Vasudeva*, directed by Arjun Jandyala of *Guna 369* fame. Scheduled for release on November 22, the film has already created buzz, especially after the launch of its intriguing trailer, which hints at a mythological touch.

When asked about the apparent trend of mythological themes in Tollywood, Arjun Jandyala clarified, "It's not about following a trend. Prashanth Varma gave this story before his film *HanuMan* was released. Initially, I was supposed to work on a film for producer Balakrishna, but during that time, Prashanth Varma also narrated this story to Ashok Galla. Ashok liked it and we decided to proceed with this project first."

Jandyala further explained that Prashanth Varma was impressed by his debut film *Guna 369* and had trusted him to direct this story. "We understand each other well, and the synergy helped bring the story to life beautifully," he shared.

Regarding the film's mythology-inspired backdrop, he elaborated, "The trailer clearly indicates references to Krishna and Kamsa from ancient mythology. For instance, the villain's death being foretold to occur at the hands of his sister's third son is just one element. However, the movie has many surprises in store for the audience."

Reflecting on the four-year gap since his first film, *Guna 369* (2019), he attributed it to external factors. "The pandemic caused delays for everyone. I've been working on this project for the past year and a half, so it's not really a gap as much as a dedicated focus on making this film."

He also revealed making a few changes to the original story provided by Prashanth Varma. "I had some ideas and discussed them with Prashanth, who supported and agreed to the changes. He was pleasantly surprised when he saw the final film."

One of the movie's standout features is a special idol of Lord Krishna integral to the story. "The idol's connection to the narrative is crucial and the sequence featuring it is sure to be a highlight," said Jandyala. While visual effects play a role, he assured that they are natural and do not overpower the storytelling.

After the trailer's release, comparisons were drawn to Mahesh Babu's classic *Murari*. Jandyala addressed this, saying, "Although both films involve supernatural elements, the concepts and stories are entirely different. In *Devaki Nandana Vasudeva*, the protagonist faces life-threatening obstacles and how he overcomes them is the crux of the narrative. The story seamlessly blends action, emotion and commercial elements."

The film was shot in Vizianagaram near Visakhapatnam, a choice driven by the story's requirements. "There is a specific temple in Vizianagaram that provides the perfect backdrop and a fresh visual experience for the audience," he explained.

Miss India Manasa Varanasi makes her debut in this film as the female lead. Jandyala praised her performance, saying, "Her role is pivotal and she has portrayed a strong character with perfection. She was the ideal choice for the role." The filmmaker admitted that working on a story provided by a successful director like Prashanth Varma was a challenge. "It was a huge responsibility, but I took it as a challenge and worked hard to ensure the film's success," he concluded confidently.

ASHOK GALLA AND MANASA VARANASI ARE SET TO PLAY THE LEAD ROLES IN DEVAKI NANDANA VASUDEVA. AHEAD OF ITS RELEASE, DIRECTOR ARJUN JANDYALA DISCUSSES THE FILM, COMPARISONS WITH MAHESH BABU'S MURARI AND THE CHALLENGES HE FACED DURING ITS MAKING.



Maha Sandram promises intense action drama

The Telugu film industry continues to witness a wave of distinctive projects as new-generation filmmakers experiment with fresh and unique subjects. Joining this trend is *Maha Sandram*, an action drama featuring Navneet Raina in the lead role. The film is being produced by Seshu Ravella and Karthikeya V, with the story, screenplay and direction also helmed by Karthikeya V.

The project was formally launched with a puja ceremony attended by Damodara Prasad, Secretary of the Telugu Film Chamber of Commerce, along with prominent directors N. Shankar and Samudra. Speaking at the event, Karthikeya expressed his excitement for the

film, saying, "It's an action film with a lot of emotions." He also highlighted that the movie will introduce new artists and technicians, adding, "The story has some interesting twists and turns and we will start the shoot soon."

Maha Sandram is being made as a bilingual film in Telugu and Hindi, catering to a broader audience. Regarding the title, the director shared, "For this story, the title *Maha Sandram* is apt. I will reveal more details about the film in the coming days."

With production set to begin soon, *Maha Sandram* promises an engaging blend of action, emotion and surprises, making it a project to look forward to.

'Teaser is just a glimpse, don't form negative assumptions'

Dharma and Aishwarya Sharma take the lead in *Drinker Sai*, a film with the tagline "Brand of Bad Boys." Produced by Basavaraju Srinivas and directed by Kiran Tirumalasetti, the story is said to be inspired by real-life events. The film is gearing up for a grand theatrical release soon. In a unique promotional move, the teaser was launched by celebrities portraying everyday roles such as an auto driver, electrician, AC mechanic, motor mechanic, waiter and coolie.

Speaking about the film, director Kiran Tirumalasetti explained, "The protagonist's name is Sai and he drinks excessively, which is why we named the film *Drinker Sai*. The teaser contains a few curse words, but these are commonly used in real life. Those who might form a negative impression after watching the teaser will change their perspective once they see the full movie. I'm confident the audience will appreciate it."

Aishwarya Sharma, the female lead, expressed her gratitude to the director for entrusting her with the role. "I'm thrilled to bring this beautiful story to the Telugu audience. *Drinker Sai* will touch your hearts with its engaging love story," she said. Dharma, who plays the protagonist, credited his parents for their encouragement and support. "I've reached this stage because of the motivation provided by my parents," he shared. Addressing concerns about the teaser, he added, "The teaser is just a glimpse of the film, so don't form negative assumptions. *Drinker Sai* is a heartfelt love story with many elements that will entertain and resonate with everyone."



Dolly Dhananjaya on his intense role in Zebra



Dolly Dhananjaya, best known for his portrayal of Jali Reddy in *Pushpa*, is now set to play one of the lead characters in the upcoming film *Zebra*, alongside Satya Dev. Directed by Eswar Karthik, the film is scheduled to release on November 22 in Telugu and four other languages.

Speaking about his role, Dhananjaya said, "I played a powerful and intense gangster character." He explained that the film features two interconnected worlds: one centered around a bank and the other around gangsters. "Director Eswar crafted the story based on some true incidents. It delves into financial crimes within the banking system, something we've all heard about but rarely understand in detail. This film explores how such crimes occur," he elaborated.

Dhananjaya praised the director's storytelling approach,

saying, "Eswar narrated the story in a way that's easy for everyone to understand. When he first shared the script with me, I was immediately intrigued. It was a well-bound script."

The actor also highlighted the film's entertainment quotient. "While the story is intense, it also includes comedy and other entertaining elements. The director has skillfully blended everything into a screenplay-driven film," he shared.

On working with co-star Satya Dev, Dhananjaya said, "He's a very good friend of mine, and I had a great time working with him."

Expressing his gratitude towards the Telugu audience, Dhananjaya said, "The Telugu audience has embraced me ever since *Pushpa*. Jali Reddy remains a memorable role for me. I hope to continue receiving good opportunities in Telugu cinema in the future."

PUSHPA 2 FEVER: #WHYPATNA TAKES OVER SOCIAL MEDIA

Pushpa 2: The Rule, one of the most anticipated films of the year, has kept audiences on the edge of their seats since its announcement. With the electrifying teaser and music already setting the stage for the film's massive arrival, the excitement has only intensified with the announcement of a grand trailer launch event on November 17.

What makes this launch even more intriguing is the location, Patna. The makers have chosen the historic Gandhi Maidan as the venue for the trailer's big reveal, expecting around 10,000 fans to attend the event. This choice of Patna has left fans and netizens buzzing, prompting the trending hashtag #WhyPatna across social media as people speculate about the reason behind selecting this particular city for such a monumental event.

Ahead of the trailer release, the makers dropped a striking new poster, along with an ominous caption that reads: "HUMONGOUS DESTRUCTION LOADING." The trailer will be released today at 6:03 PM, and the event at Gandhi Maidan will begin from 5 PM onwards, with fans able to tune in via a live stream on YouTube.

Directed by Sukumar, *Pushpa 2: The Rule* stars Allu Arjun, Rashmika Mandanna, and Fahadh Faasil, and is produced by Mythri Movie Makers. The film is set to release on December 5, 2024 and with its high-octane storyline and larger-than-life spectacle, it's poised to make a massive impact at the box office.



Hombale Films sets release date for Kantara: Chapter 1

The much-awaited *Kantara: Chapter 1* is all set to hit theatres on October 2, 2025, aligning with the festive occasion of Dussehra. As Hombale Films gears up for its next pan-India

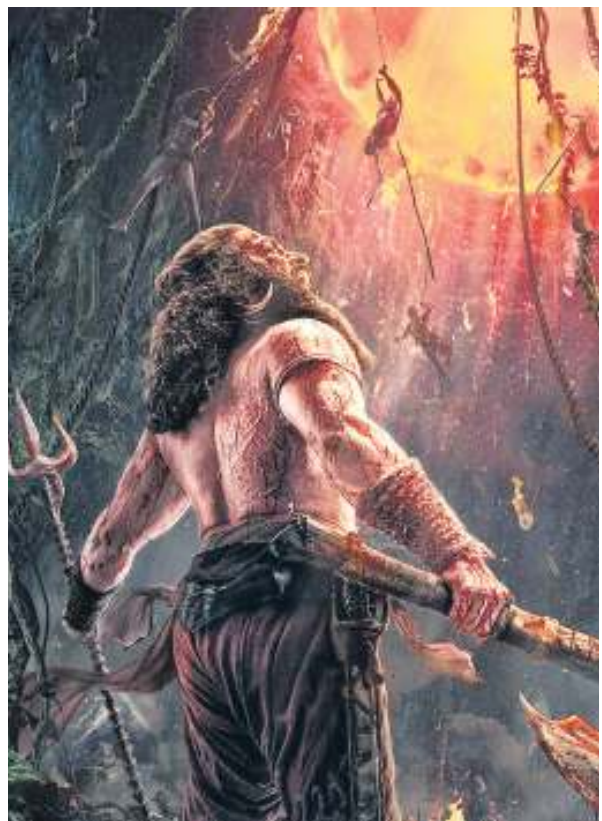
cinematic extravaganza, expectations are soaring following the immense success of *Kantara*. Renowned for delivering grand and authentic storytelling, Hombale Films has spared no effort in

crafting this visual spectacle. The film's production has brought the historic Kadamba Empire to life in Kundapur, featuring meticulously detailed architecture and immersive settings that promise to transport audiences to a bygone era of valor, culture and mysticism.

Leading this ambitious project, actor-director Rishab Shetty has poured immense effort into his role. To bring authenticity to his character, he trained extensively in Kalaripayattu, one of the world's oldest martial arts rooted in Kerala's rich tradition. His determination to master the form ensures his portrayal embodies resilience and cultural depth.

The *Kantara* franchise initially captivated audiences by introducing the world to the vibrant folklore of the Konkan region. With its compelling narrative, stunning visuals, and heartfelt performances, the film resonated deeply with viewers across borders, becoming a global phenomenon. Its authentic depiction of local traditions and rich storytelling established a dedicated fanbase and set the stage for this highly anticipated chapter.

With the announcement of its release date, excitement for *Kantara: Chapter 1* has reached new heights.



Chay & Sobhita's wedding card takes internet by storm

Akkineni Naga Chaitanya and Sobhita Dhulipala on December 4 at Annapurna Studios, Hyderabad. The couple has started sending out wedding invitations and gifts to family members and close friends and their wedding card has now gone viral on social media.

The wedding card prominently mentions both sets of Naga Chaitanya's grandparents—Akkineni Nageswara Rao and Annapurna and Daggubati Rama Naidu and Rajeshwari. It also acknowledges his parents, listing his mother Lakshmi and her hus-



band Sarath, as well as his father Nagarjuna and stepmother Amala. The auspicious time for the wedding ceremony, or Muhurat, is set for 8:13 PM, followed by dinner. Interestingly, the bride's full name is written as Lakshmi



Sobhita on the card. Naga Chaitanya was previously married to actress Samantha Ruth Prabhu in

2017, but the couple parted ways in 2021 after a few years of marriage. Following their divorce, Chaitanya began dating actress Sobhita Dhulipala and now the two are ready to tie the knot.

On the professional front, Naga Chaitanya's upcoming film *Thandel* is all set for release on February 7, 2025. Meanwhile, Sobhita is busy with multiple projects, including web series and films.

The wedding cards have become a trending topic online, with fans eagerly discussing the details of the much-awaited ceremony.