

QUOTE OF THE DAY

The pioneer

BRS leader Sudhakar Reddy encroached on the Amberpet Bathukamma Kunta Lake in the name of the 'Neeru-Meeru' programme. I have evidence of Sudhakar Reddy's encroachment on Bathukamma Kunta Lake. The Bathukamma Kunta Lake is the first one encroached by BRS leaders in Hyderabad city. I will meet the Advocate General and give evidence regarding this. I request the Congress Government to revive the Bathukamma Kunta Lake and ensure that women can celebrate Bathukamma next year

- V. Hanumantha Rao, senior Congress leader

P4

'Can't accept Haryana verdict'

6

NO NEED FOR PANIC, ENOUGH OIL AVAILABLE IN THE WORLD

8

'Suhas' of late paternity experience elevated his PERFORMANCE'

P12

DON'T MISS...

Officials urged to promote use of...

West Godavari District Collector Chadalavada Nagarani stressed the need to encourage the use of drones in agriculture to make farming more profitable. An awareness and registration programme on the use of drones was organised by the DRDA, Agriculture Department, and Byrraju Foundation here on Tuesday. Addressing the gathering, Collector Nagarani said that promoting drones in agriculture could help farmers increase their profits by reducing pesticide wastage. She highlighted that drones enable...

Breakfasts should be high-carb for...

For losing weight, breakfasts should be high-carb for men and high-fat for women, suggested researchers, who created mathematical models depicting men's and women's metabolisms. They showed that metabolic processes in men responded better to a meal high on carbohydrates like oats and grains, while those in women responded better to a meal high on fat such as omelettes and avocados. While men are known to derive energy from metabolism of carbohydrates, women...

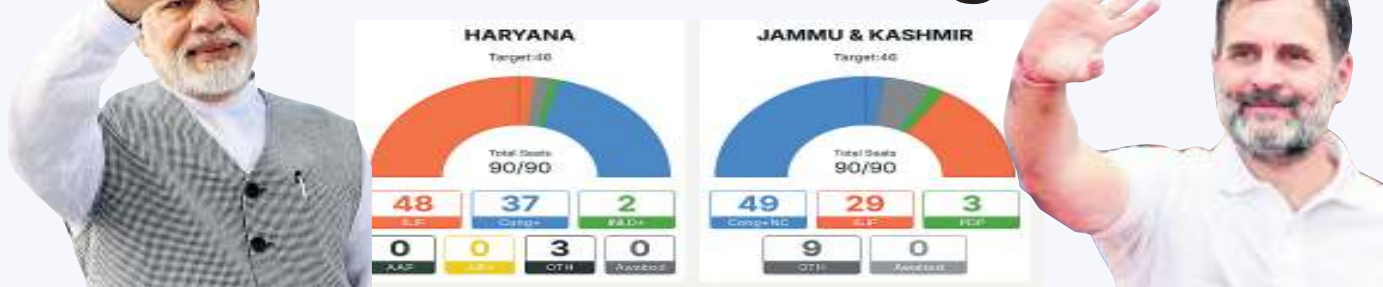
Rajasthan seeks investors'

Rajasthan Minister Rajyavardhan Rathore on Tuesday said the state is seeking investment from across sectors in the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) bloc. Speaking to reporters after a roadshow on 'Rising Rajasthan', the state's Minister for Industry and Commerce said, "We are appealing to all sectors in ASEAN, wherever and whatever they specialise in to participate in the development in Rajasthan". He cited Singapore as an example for its expertise in urban development, ports and airlines...

India's T20 marauders eye...

An India so dominant that Bangladesh is admittedly clueless about how to match the "skills and mentality" of Suryakumar Yadav's men. The script is not expected to deviate much when the two sides clash in the second T20 International here on Wednesday with the home team's young mavericks proving more than a handful for the full-strength visitors. Bangladesh have hardly looked like the plucky opponents that they are hyped to be but India have looked every bit the marauding force that...

Hat-trick for BJP in Haryana, J&K backs Cong-NC



PNS ■ CHANDIGARH/SRINAGAR

The BJP on Tuesday clinched a stunning hat-trick win in Haryana overcoming anti-incumbency and dashing Congress' hopes of a comeback while the National Conference-Congress combine pulled off a spectacular victory in maiden elections in Jammu and Kashmir after abrogation of Article 370 in 2019.

The BJP's decisive victory in the Haryana Assembly elections for which Chief Minister Nayab Singh Saini gave credit to Prime Minister Narendra Modi came as a big boost for the saffron party ahead of the crucial polls in Maharashtra, where along with its two allies it is bracing for a tough battle, and also in Jharkhand and Delhi. The BJP as well as the NC-Congress alliance got a comfortable majority in Haryana and J and K respectively where the Assemblies had an identical strength of 90.

While Saini, the 54-year-old OBC leader who was made CM just six months ago to replace Manohar Lal Khattar in an unexpected appointment, is likely to retain his post, NC President Farooq Abdullah announced that his son and party leader Omar Abdullah will be the chief minister, a post he had held between 2009 and 2014.

In a series of posts, Prime Minister Modi hailed BJP's performance in Haryana as a 'grand victory', saying politics of development and good governance has won. He also complimented the NC for its 'commendable' showing in J and K, and said he was proud of BJP's showing in the union territory.

Modi later addressed BJP workers at the party headquarters in Delhi and said people of Haryana have stamped out falsehood and that polls in J and K were a victory for India's Constitution and democracy.

He wished NC on its win and noted that the BJP was the largest party in terms of vote share.

EXIT POLLS GET IT WRONG YET AGAIN

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Exit polls, which had given a clear majority to Congress in Haryana and an edge to National Conference in Jammu and Kashmir, appear to have failed to feel the pulse of the voters once again.

The results of the assembly elections showed that BJP was set to form the government for a record third consecutive term in Haryana and the National Conference-Congress alliance comfortably coming to power in Jammu and Kashmir.

Virtually all exit polls had forecast more than 50 seats for the Congress in the 90-member Haryana assembly and showed the BJP struggling to cross the 30-figure mark.

CM apprises PM of AP's financial crisis

Says matching grants not provided for Central projects in last 5 years

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

Chief Minister N Chandrababu Naidu has informed Prime Minister Narendra Modi about the State's financial situation and the destruction caused during the previous regime over the past five years.

As part of his two-day visit to Delhi, the Chief Minister arrived on Monday and met with PM Modi and other Union Ministers.

Speaking to the media on Tuesday, he stated that he explained to the Prime Minister that no matching grants had been provided for Central projects in the last five years.

Naidu also discussed the Swarnandhra Vision Document and announced that work on the Polavaram Diaphragm Wall would commence soon. Additionally, he brought to the Prime Minister's attention the World Bank funds allocated for Amaravati.

During his discussions, CM Naidu requested the Prime Minister to expedite the completion of pending works related to National Highways across Andhra Pradesh. He mentioned the gas

- CM discusses Swarnandhra Vision Document with PM Modi.
- Announces the start of work on the Polavaram Diaphragm Wall.
- Requests completion of pending National Highway works.
- Discusses the establishment of the Visakhapatnam Railway Zone and requested additional railway lines.
- Clarifies that the tribal university in Saurur will continue without changes.
- Seeks a permanent solution for the Vizag Steel Plant, stressing its importance to public sentiment.

subsidy expected from the Centre and highlighted upcoming road and construction projects in Amaravati, scheduled to begin in December. The Chief Minister also spoke with Railway Minister Ashwini Vaishnav regarding the Visakhapatnam Railway Zone. He noted that the previous government had failed to provide land for the Railway Zone, but the current coalition government has successfully allocated the required land. The foundation stone for the Railway Zone works will be laid shortly.



Minor girl raped, Pawan condemns

PNS ■ KAKINADA

In a shocking incident, a 16-year-old girl was abducted and later allegedly raped at Madhavapuram dumping yard in Pithapuram on Monday evening.

Parents of the rape victim complained to the police on Tuesday. According to them, the 16-year-old girl was going home on foot. A man and a woman stopped the girl and asked her for an address at Sturvartpet. When the girl was telling the address, they sprayed a substance at the face of the girl and later they whisked her away in an auto rickshaw to the dumping yard, located at Madhavapuram on the outskirts. The man molested the girl. When the duo were carrying the rape victim, who was in an unconscious State, on their shoulder, to the auto-rickshaw, a ragpicker woman, on suspicion, questioned them.

The ragpicker woman identified the girl and informed the matter to her parents. The passersby apprehended the man and the woman. The girl was admitted to the CGH.

CM meets host of Union Ministers

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

The Chief Minister of Andhra Pradesh held meetings with several Union Ministers during his visit to New Delhi on Tuesday. He met Nitin Gadkari, Minister of Road Transport and Highways; Piyush Goyal, Minister of Commerce and Industries; HD Kumaraswamy, Minister of Steel and Heavy Industries; and Hardeep Singh Puri, Minister of Petroleum and Natural Gas, discussing multiple priority issues for the state.

In his meeting with Minister Gadkari, the Chief Minister focused on the overall development of National and State Highways in Andhra Pradesh. Key discussions included the development of the Vijayawada Eastern Bypass, support for State Highway improvements through Government of India grants, and fast-tracking the Kuppam-Hosur Greenfield Project to ensure timely completion. He also highlighted the need for the Mulapeta to Vizag greenfield coastal highway project, addressing restrictions on access to Bhogapuram Airport, and resolving choke points by constructing elevated structures that integrate flyovers and metro services. Additionally, he proposed upgrading the Hyderabad-Vijayawada expressway from 4 to 8 lanes to manage high traffic and reduce accidents, as well as developing a greenfield express highway from Hyderabad to Amaravati and an Outer Ring Road (ORR) for the Amaravati capital region. The Minister assured his commitment to fast-tracking these projects to enhance Andhra Pradesh's connectivity and economic growth.

During his meeting with Minister Goyal, the Chief Minister discussed the formation of a joint committee involving the Government of Andhra Pradesh, DPIIT, and the Ministry of Shipping to expedite the transfer of salt land for project development within a defined timeframe.

Court records Nag's statement in case against Surekha

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Actor Nagarjuna appeared in court and recorded his statement along with witness Yarlagadda Supriya in a defamation case filed against Minister Konda Surekha on Tuesday. The complaint was filed under Section 356 of the Bharatiya Nyay Sanhitha (BNS) in court on October 3.

The case was filed after Surekha allegedly spoke about the divorce between actor Naga Chaitanya and actress Samantha. In his statement, Nagarjuna told the court that he had a good image in the film industry. "A Minister made some false statements regarding Nagachaitanya's divorce with political intentions and it was published in the media and due to that my family suffered a lot," he said.

Witness Yarlagadda Supriya also gave her statements in court. She said that the Minister told the media that Nagachaitanya and Samantha were divorced due to a former minister in connection with the N Convention hall. The counsel for the petitioner said that Nagarjuna requested the court to take action against Surekha as per law. It is a private case and not a police case.

Inspector's mother kidnapped, murdered

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

In a shocking incident in Sri Satya Sai district, a 62-year-old woman was kidnapped and brutally murdered by her neighbour.

N Swarna Kumari, the mother of Dharmavaram Circle Inspector Nagendra Prasad, was allegedly abducted and killed by her neighbour, Venkatesh. The victim's body was later found on the outskirts of Madanapalle Town in Annamayya district.

According to K Venkataramana, Inspector of Madanapalle, Swarna Kumari, who lived alone in YSR Colony on the town's outskirts, she had been missing since 29th September. That morning, she was last seen riding pillion on Venkatesh's bike, reportedly heading to visit a priest on Punganur Road.

Physics Nobel goes to 2 AI scientists

PNS ■ STOCKHOLM

Two pioneers of artificial intelligence - John Hopfield and Geoffrey Hinton - won the Nobel Prize in physics Tuesday for helping create the building blocks of machine learning that is revolutionising the way we work and live but also creates new threats to humanity, one of the winners said.

Hinton, who is known as the Godfather of artificial intelligence, is a citizen of Canada and Britain who works at the University of Toronto and Hopfield is an American working at Princeton.

"This year's two Nobel Laureates in physics have used tools from physics to develop methods that are the foundation of today's powerful machine learning," the Nobel committee said in a press release.

Ellen Moons, a member of the Nobel committee at the Royal Swedish Academy of Sciences, said the two laureates "used fundamental concepts from statistical physics to design artificial neural networks that function as associative memories and find patterns in large data sets."

She said that such networks have been used to advance research in physics and "have also become part of our daily lives, for instance in facial recognition and language translation."

While the committee honoured the science behind machine learning and AI, Moons also mentioned its flipside, saying that "while machine learning has enormous benefits, its rapid development has also raised concerns about our future."

70th NATIONAL FILM AWARDS

President honours Mithun Chakraborty, other winners

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Only 15 of the over 85 recipients of the National Film Awards are women, President Droupadi Murmu noted on Tuesday while presenting the Dadasaheb Phalke Award to veteran star Mithun Chakraborty at the 70th National Film Awards that honoured cinema across the country.

"The total number of award winners today is more than 85. In most higher-education institutions, the number of girl students receiving awards exceeds that of male students."

"The impact these mediums have on creating awareness among people is not possible through any other medium," she added. Chakraborty, who was wearing an arm brace in his right hand, received the award amid loud applause from the spectators.

"I have come on this stage once again thanks to your blessings... Nothing was handed to me on a platter, I struggled a lot. But today, after receiving this award, I have stopped complaining.

Thank you God, you gave me everything back and with interest," the 74-year-old, said in his speech. Malayalam film "Aattam" won the top prize of the best feature film.

Ekarshi said winning three National Awards for his debut movie was special. "It is a huge honour for us. It really helps in the viewership of the film all the more on the international level..." Ekarshi said.

Sooraj R Barjatya received the best director award for "Uunchai".

The award for best actor went to Shetty for the Kannada hit "Kantara".

"Every film impacts society. Our goal is to make a difference. We strive to create meaningful stories that resonate with people," Shetty said. Menen (Tamil film "Thiruchitrambam") and Parekh (Gujarati movie "Kutch Express") were named joint winners in the best actress category.

"Uunchai" registered another win with Neena Gupta earning the best supporting actress accolade. This is her second award in the category.

Pavan Malhotra was named the best supporting actor for the Haryanvi film "Fouja".

First-time filmmaker Pramod Kumar won the award for best debut film of a director for "Fouja".

"Kutch Express" too scooped up two other National Awards -- best feature film promoting national, social and environmental values, and best costume design for Niki Joshi.

Rahman won the National Film Award for Mani Ratnam's "Ponnyin Selvan - I", which was also named the best Tamil film.

5.50 cr workdays to be provided under NREGA for 2024-25 FY: Deputy CM



PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

Central government is Rs 300 should be paid. A compensation of Rs 50,000 should be paid to the family of a labourer, in case of death, or disabled at the workplace, he stated. He said that the main purpose of Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act is to provide salaried employment for at least 100 days in a year to rural families in the villages, where they reside, to establish sustainable assets and improve their livelihoods. "It has been decided to provide 25.50 crore workdays under the NREGA for the financial year 2024-25. It has also been decided to provide 100 days of work to 8 lakh families, so far 17.95 crore workdays have been provided while 1.30 lakh families," he made it clear. The deputy Chief Minister said that it has been decided to construct 3000 km of cement roads, and 500 km BT roads during the 2024-25 FY. He highlighted that it has also been proposed to dig up 65,000 horticulture ponds and 25000 farm ponds and set up 22,525 Gokulalu. He directed the Collectors to complete the construction of roads by the Sankranti festival. Panchayat Raj principal secretary Seshibhushan Kumar, Commission KrishnaTeja and other officials were present. Pawan Kalyan directed the Collector to make arrangements to organize 'Palle Panduga' programmes from October 14 to 20 in all districts.

Support Alapati in Grad MLC poll: Kollu

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

Minister for Mines, Geology, and Excise, Kollu Ravindra, has called on TDP leaders and members to support Alapati Rajendra Prasad, the former minister nominated by the TDP as the MLC candidate for the Krishna-Guntur Graduate Constituency in the upcoming elections. Minister Ravindra stressed the importance of securing a victory for Rajendra Prasad, who had sacrificed his Tenali Assembly Constituency ticket for Minister Nadendra Manohar in the recent general elections. The TDP leadership has officially nominated former minister Alapati Rajendra Prasad for the Krishna-Guntur Graduate MLC Constituency. TDP leaders are currently organising meetings at the constituency level to introduce Rajendra Prasad to local party leaders and members. Introduction meetings for Alapati Rajendra Prasad were conducted at Machilipatnam and Gannavaram in Krishna district. During a meeting in Gannavaram, MLA Yarlagadda Venkata Rao introduced Alapati Rajendra Prasad to party leaders and members. Speaking at the gathering in Machilipatnam, Minister Ravindra urged party leaders and members to work towards securing the votes of graduates for MLC candidate Rajendra Prasad. He praised the voters for their support in the recent general elections and encouraged graduates

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and teachers to cast their votes for Rajendra Prasad in the upcoming MLC elections. Furthermore, Minister Ravindra highlighted Chief Minister N. Chandrababu Naidu's efforts for the state's development and his commitment to creating job opportunities through BPCL. He urged party leaders and members to register graduates as voters in the Krishna-Guntur Graduate Constituency, emphasising that it is a collective responsibility. Additionally, he instructed the leaders to reach out to graduates who pursued high-

Pregnant women left without medicare at Chintapalli Hosp

50 to 100 women visit the hospital daily for routine health check-ups

PNS ■ PADERU



Expectant mothers awaiting medical care

Medical services for pregnant women have come to a sudden halt at the Chintapalli Area Hospital, leaving dozens of expectant mothers without crucial care. With one doctor resigning and two others on leave, services like ultrasound scanning and health checks for pregnant women have been suspended. The hospital typically serves pregnant and lactating women from 11 primary health centres (PHCs) in Chintapalli and GK Vedhi mandals. On any given day, 50 to 100 women arrive at the hospital for routine health check-ups. Additionally, women from surrounding areas such as Seeleru, Dharakonda, Pedavalasa, GK Vedhi, Korukonda, and Tajangi depend on the hospital for ultrasound scans. Under the Prime Minister's Safe Motherhood Campaign, health check-ups for pregnant women are usually conducted on the 9th and 10th of every month, but this month's appointments are now in jeopardy. The disruption stems from recent staffing changes. Dr S Praveena, one of the three female doctors at the hospital, resigned just two days ago to join Paderu Medical College as a senior resident. Another doctor, Srilatha, is currently on maternity leave, and Dr. Sudhasaradha has been on leave for the past four days.

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Unfortunately, many doctors are unwilling to work in tribal areas." Despite the ongoing issues, Dr Prabhavathi assured that alternative doctors will be arranged to minimise disruption for pregnant women. "We will do everything in our power to ensure pregnant women do not face discomfort during this time," she added. This staffing crisis has placed added pressure on healthcare services in the region, affecting not just Chintapalli but neighbouring mandals as well.

Vizianagaram gears up for a grand festival

Celebrations to reflect district's illustrious past

PNS ■ VIZIANAGARAM

Minister for MSME, SERP, and NRI Affairs, Kondapalli Srinivas, has announced that preparations are underway for a grand festival to celebrate Vizianagar district's rich historical legacy and enhance its reputation. "We are committed to making this festival a reflection of Vizianagar's illustrious past," Srinivas said during an inspection of festival venues on Tuesday. "These celebrations will remind us of our district's heritage and contribute to its growing reputation." The Minister, accompanied by MLA Pusapati Aditi Vijayalakshmi Gajapathiraju, inspected Vizzy stadium's newly built multi-purpose indoor stadium and instructed officials to finalise preparations for its opening. He emphasised the need for a 160 KV transformer to ensure power supply and recommended installing floodlights, nets, and improved security measures at the stadium. "The stadium needs to be fully equipped for upcoming competitions, and it is crucial to ensure the safety and comfort of athletes and spectators," he said. The festival will feature



Utтарandhra-level sports competitions at Vizzy stadium, showcasing the district's sporting spirit. Srinivas highlighted the importance of accommodating athletes, providing transportation facilities, and inaugurating the new indoor stadium during the festival. He criticised the previous government for neglecting the stadium's completion, now 95 per cent done. "The previous administration failed to prioritise the stadium's completion. We are committed to opening it now and bringing back the district sports schools, which are crucial for the youth." MLA Aditi Gajapathiraju reaffirmed their focus on raising Vizzy stadium to interna-

No lapses on Moola Nakshatram, officials warned

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

Vijayawada Municipal Corporation Commissioner HM Dhyanchandra held a teleconference on Tuesday with department heads and officials engaged in fieldwork in connection with the Dasara Sarannavaratri festivities. During the meeting, he emphasised that there is likely to be a significant influx of devotees on the day of Moola Nakshatram. He instructed the



HM Dhyanchandra

officials to ensure that devotees do not face any difficulties or inconveniences. He commended the staff for their efforts so far in maintaining proper arrangements. He directed them to ensure there are no lapses on Moola Nakshatram Day. The officials were instructed to check on the staff attending to devotees and to make sure that drinking water is provided to those standing in line, without any delay.

Challenging gynaecological surgery performed on 29 YO

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

In a remarkable feat, the doctors of Ankura Hospital, Vijayawada, have successfully performed a challenging gynaecological surgery on a 29-year-old woman, who was suffering from abdominal distention (a tight and swollen abdomen). An open Myomectomy was performed on the patient by the doctors, thereby curing her of the discomfort and preserving her fertility. Speaking about the surgery,

Dr Pujita Myneni, Senior Obstetrician, Gynaecologist, and Laparoscopic Surgeon, said, "The patient presented with abdominal distention. Further investigations revealed that she had a large fibroid, which required immediate care. Hysterectomy is normally recommended for patients with such large fibroids. However, keeping in mind the age of the patient, we preferred to proceed with Myomectomy that would remove only the portion with fibroids."

Students in a spot as AU keeps postponing pre-PhD exams

PNS ■ VISAKHAPATNAM

Hundreds of research students, enrolled in the Transdisciplinary Research (TDR) hub at Andhra University, are facing uncertainty as their pre-PhD examinations continue to be postponed. Over 400 students, including part-time and executive PhD candidates, were scheduled to take their exams this year. However, technical delays and changes in university administration have halted the exam process. Many students, who have been preparing for these exams, are now left waiting indefinitely. "We've been ready for months, but the repeated postponements have put everything on hold," said one candidate. These delays

Concern among students over future of TDR hub



not only affect the exams, but also the next stages of their research, including the requirement to publish in Scopus-indexed journals and complete their thesis submissions. The research students have been urging the university to take swift action to resolve the issue. "We've been waiting for too long," another student complained. "We need clear direction and timely exams so we can move forward with our research." In addition to the exam delays, there is growing concern among

students over the future of the TDR hub itself. After the new coalition government came to power, Andhra University appointed a new Vice-Chancellor (VC) and other officials. Shortly after, allegations of corruption and irregularities in TDR hub admissions were raised, leading to an investigation by a special committee formed by the VC. "As soon as the new VC took charge, many complaints about corruption in TDR admissions surfaced," explained a research student. "We're worried about what will happen to our programmes now that admissions have been suspended for the next

NTPC Simhadri hosts CSR stakeholders' meet

PNS ■ VISAKHAPATNAM

NTPC Simhadri conducted a successful CSR Stakeholders Meet on Tuesday, reaffirming its commitment to Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) under CC-CSR policy guidelines. The meeting brought together key stakeholders from various sectors to discuss ongoing and upcoming development initiatives. Chief General Manager Sanjay Kumar Sinha expressed gratitude to local communities for their cooperation, crediting their support as a critical factor behind the power station's success. "Though we operate within budgetary constraints, our focus remains on implementing impactful CSR projects," he said. NTPC Simhadri has contributed extensively to infrastructure, healthcare, education, water supply, and skill development, making Parawada mandal one of the most developed regions in Anakapalle district. BB Patra, AGM (HR), emphasised the importance of



two-way communication for enhancing NTPC's CSR initiatives. "Our goal is to create sustainable impact by working collectively, ensuring that the development of our neighboring communities goes hand-in-hand with the growth of NTPC," said Patra. The event featured a comprehensive presentation of CSR activities from the previous year and plans for financial year 2024-25. Stakeholders shared feedback and suggested further community development needs during the interactive session. Prominent attendees included representatives from government departments, medical officers, and principals from local Junior Colleges.

Prof. Krishna wins IGU Lifetime Achievement Award

He is Dean of the School of Science at GITAM

PNS ■ VISAKHAPATNAM

Prof Kolluru Sree Krishna, academic and researcher, has been awarded the Dr Hari Narain Lifetime Achievement Award in Geoscience for 2024. The prestigious recognition, bestowed by the Indian Geophysical Union (IGU), acknowledges his exceptional contributions to the field of Earth and Ocean Sciences. Prof. Krishna, who serves as the Dean of the School of Science at GITAM Deemed to be University, has dedicated over four decades to understanding the intricacies of Plate Tectonics and Lithospheric Dynamics. Throughout his academic journey, Prof. Krishna has inspired countless students at institutions such as the Academy of Scientific & Innovative Research (AcSIR),



University of Hyderabad, and GITAM. His pioneering research has shed light on the evolution of the Indian Ocean lithosphere, contributing significantly to the exploration efforts of ONGC, DGH, and GAIL. In recognition of his outstanding contributions, Prof. Krishna has been honored with several awards, including the JC Bose National Fellowship, the Shanti Swarup Bhatnagar Prize, and fellowships from the Indian Academy of Sciences, Indian National Science Academy, and National Academy of Sciences, India. His expertise was also instrumental in India's successful claim for extended seabed territory at the United Nations. Expressing his gratitude, Prof. Krishna said, "It is truly great news to join the club of very eminent Geoscience researchers in the country. This recognition will inspire me to pursue my passion for some more years." The Dr. Hari Narain Lifetime Achievement Award will be formally presented to Prof. Krishna at the IGU annual convention, scheduled to take place from December 3-5, at Banaras Hindu University (BHU) in Varanasi.



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PAPER WITH PASSION

One year of Gaza war

With no clear end in sight, the war in Gaza risks becoming a protracted conflict that destabilises the entire West Asia

As the Gaza war enters its second year, the devastation continues to deepen, turning a political and military confrontation into a full-blown humanitarian crisis. The conflict, which began as a violent flare-up between Israel and Palestinian militants, has now drawn in regional players like Lebanon and Iran, making the prospects for peace even more elusive. The war's impact has rippled across borders, leaving countless civilians trapped in a spiral of violence, displacement and suffering. One year into the war, Gaza's population bears the brunt of the ongoing violence. Entire neighbourhoods have been reduced to rubble, essential infrastructure is in ruins, and thousands of lives have been lost. With over two million people crammed into a strip of land roughly 140 square miles, Gaza was already grappling with poverty, unemployment and limited access to basic services. The war has exacerbated these challenges to catastrophic levels. Hospitals are overwhelmed, clean water is scarce and electricity is available for just a few hours a day. The United Nations has described the situation as a humanitarian disaster. Around half of Gaza's population is now displaced, living in overcrowded shelters or temporary camps, with limited access to aid. The ongoing blockade of the strip has further restricted the entry of essential supplies, worsening the plight of ordinary citizens. Children, in particular, are facing the harshest consequences, with many losing access to education and mental health support, which adds another layer to the enduring trauma of the war.



What began as a localised conflict between Israel and Hamas has now escalated into a broader regional confrontation, with Lebanon's Hezbollah and Iran's proxy forces becoming increasingly involved. Hezbollah, the powerful Shia militant group based in Lebanon, has launched attacks on northern Israel, adding a new front to the war. This has drawn in Israeli forces, threatening to destabilise Lebanon, a country already grappling with its own internal crises. Iran's involvement, through its support of Hezbollah and various Palestinian factions, has further complicated the conflict. Tehran's backing of these groups is part of a broader regional strategy, aimed at countering Israeli and the US influence in the West Asia. As Iran's involvement grows, so does the risk of a wider regional war. The US and other global powers have expressed concern over the possibility of an all-out confrontation between Israel and Iran. Diplomatic efforts have been ineffective so far, with talks breaking down repeatedly. The involvement of Hezbollah and Iran signals that the war is no longer confined to Israel and Gaza but is part of a larger geopolitical struggle, further complicating any peace process. In Gaza, the humanitarian situation will continue to deteriorate unless there is an immediate intervention. The conflict has reached a point where military solutions alone cannot resolve the underlying issues. The time is running out, the UN must intervene to avert a crisis that could snowball into a regional catastrophe.

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PICTALK



Devotees carry an idol of Goddess Durga to a puja venue, in Nadia

The rich heritage of Indian astrology and its global Influences

Indian astrology, deeply rooted in the Vedic traditions, has a history that intertwines spirituality, mathematics and cosmic wisdom

Indian astrology has a long and rich history. It all starts with the Vedas. The Yaga rituals prescribed in the Rigveda demanded accuracy in all respects. The Yagasalai — the tent where the rituals are performed — had to be built with precise measurements. The means and methods to compute these measurements later evolved into Vastu or Indian architecture. The Yaga rituals were to begin at an auspicious time, when planetary positions aligned in a certain order. The methods to compute such auspicious times — Muhurta, in Sanskrit — paved the way to the development of astronomy and astrology in India. Indian astronomy has a long and strong association with scholars from the other ancient civilisations. Suryasiddhanta, one of the ancient Indian treatises on astronomy, begins with the author's prayer to the Sun God asking Him to reveal the secrets of the universe. The Sun God then appears and advises the seeker to go and meet Turamaya in the Romaka country to learn more about cosmological systems and their calculations.



Experts in the field, including Dr Ebenezer Burgess who translated the text to English, opine that Turamaya mentioned in the text is the great astronomer Ptolemy, and Romaka stands for Roman Egypt. Indian predictive astrology too has a strong bond with Greece. One of the very first texts on predictive astrology, which is still widely used by Indian astrologers, is the Yavana-Jataka, or the Greek Horoscopy, authored by Sphujiddhvaja Yavaneswara. The word Yavana derives from Ionian, and broadly means Greece. Another text of the same lineage is the Vruddha-Yavana-Jataka, or the Great Greek Horoscopy. The ancient astrological texts often mention the Greek astrologers and astronomers with reverence and respect. Indian astrology made its mark through Varahamihira, who is considered as the fore-

most authority of ancient times. His text, the Horasastra is the most widely used astrological text. Varahamihira was a Maga-Brahmin, Priestly class of Hindus who worshipped Sun. It should be noted that his book on the lives of philosophers, Diogenes Laertius writes that the great Democritus learned from Magi-Priests. This could be the class of Varahamihira. It should be noted that Varahamihira was also a great mathematician and an astronomer who authored detailed treatises on these subjects. Indian kings and the elite class had their own team of astrologers, who advised them on the military strategies. Astrology was one of the chief components of Indian knowledge system and was metaphorically mentioned as the eye of the Veda. Under this branch, many subjects developed including astronomy and mathematics. Later, when the Mughal invaders tried to attack this knowledge system in the northern part of India, the center of Indian intellectual debates and studies shifted to the south of India. Astrology to Mathematics thrived in south

India. At the south they developed their own system of horary astrology, a detailed method of predicting the future, and named it Ashtamangala Prashna. In the field of Mathematics, the great Madhava of Samgamagrama independently discovered Infinite Series for the Trigonometric Functions, which is known today as the "Madhava-Gregory-Leibniz Series." India and Indian Astrology contributed heavily towards the development of science — specifically in the fields of astronomy, astrology, and mathematics. We always appreciated and respected scholars from civilisations and cultures foreign to us too. In the Veda, there is a line "Yatra Viswam Bhavatyeka Needam" which means, here the world becomes a single nest. In the arena of knowledge systems, we lived up to it. The world was a single and simple nest to us. Many birds, scholars and intellectuals, from many trees, many countries, resided in that nest harmoniously. (The writer is a vedic scholar based in Kerala; views are personal)



PARAPPANANGADI U PANIKAR

Sports: A catalyst for social change and unity



SANTOSH KUMAR BISWAL

Sports have long transcended mere competition, emerging as a profound social force capable of uniting diverse communities and inspiring meaningful change

Nelson Mandela, a Black nationalist and the first Black president of South Africa, once asserted, "Sport has the power to change the world. It has the power to inspire. It has the power to unite people in a way that little else does. It is more powerful than governments in breaking down racial barriers. It laughs in the face of all types of discrimination." This sentiment underscores the profound influence sports can have on society. Recently, Indian shooter Manu Bhaker, the first female athlete from her country to win an Olympic medal in shooting, echoed this sentiment, emphasising that one does not have to pursue conventional careers like medicine or engineering. She expressed that "sports life is a beautiful life," showcasing how sports can be a fulfilling and empowering path. The release of the Ga-Mashie Boxing Heritage photobook and video in Ghana highlights the socio-cultural dimensions of sports, suggesting that these occurrences should not be viewed in isolation but rather as part of a broader sociological and anthropological landscape. Throughout history, from ancient traditions to contemporary contexts, sports have blurred the lines between sociology and anthropology, influencing everything from local culture to global events.

Breaking Down Barriers Sports possess a unique ability to dismantle barriers related to race, gender and disability. Historically, they have served as a battleground for challenging exclusionary practices and promoting inclusivity. In ancient Greece, for instance, Spartan girls participated in physical training and competed in sports, an early testament to gender equality in athletics. Ghana, renowned for producing world-class boxers, has long viewed the sport as a symbol of hope and resilience. Racial integration in sports has often signified broader societal changes. A landmark moment in American history was Jackie Robinson's breaking of Major League Baseball's colour barrier in 1947. His courage in facing racial hostility while excelling on



the field not only inspired future generations of athletes but also set the stage for the Civil Rights Movement.

Catalyst for Social Change Beyond unification, sports have historically acted as powerful catalysts for social change. Athletes often leverage their platforms to advocate for justice and equality, using their visibility to challenge societal norms and highlight injustices. The Paralympic Games, which began in 1960, have been instrumental in promoting inclusion and accessibility for athletes with disabilities. Sports icons like Muhammad Ali, Jackie Robinson, and Billie Jean King have used their influence to push for racial and gender equality. Ali's refusal to be drafted into the Vietnam War due to his opposition to racial injustice is one of the most significant acts of protest in sports history. The 1968 Olympics in Mexico City became a global stage for protest when American sprinters Tommie Smith and John Carlos raised their fists in a Black Power salute during the medal ceremony, drawing attention to the struggles of African Americans and other marginalised groups.

Moreover, sports diplomacy has been a strategy for nations to ease tensions. A notable example is the 1971 "Ping-Pong Diplomacy" between the United States and China, where a simple table tennis match opened the door to diplomatic relations between



THE 1971 'PING-PONG DIPLOMACY' BETWEEN THE UNITED STATES AND CHINA IS A PRIME EXAMPLE, WHERE A SIMPLE TABLE TENNIS MATCH OPENED THE DOORS TO DIPLOMATIC RELATIONS BETWEEN TWO SUPERPOWERS

the two superpowers.

Community Development Sports play a crucial role in community development, especially in underserved areas. Youth sports programmes provide numerous benefits, including improved physical health, enhanced social skills, and academic achievement. For many, these programmes serve as a safe haven, offering structure, mentorship, and opportunities that might otherwise be unavailable. At the community level, sports unite people around common goals. Local teams often foster a sense of pride and identity, bringing communities together to support their athletes. This sense of unity not only strengthens social bonds but also helps reduce crime rates and enhance community cohesion.

Cultural Dimensions of Sports

The sociological and anthropological impact of sports is undeniable. In India, for instance, sports reflect a complex interplay of caste, community, gender, and sexuality. Historical traditions such as 'Mallakhamb', an ancient Indian martial art that blends yoga and exercise, illustrate how sports can embody cultural heritage. Similarly, traditional games like 'Kabaddi' in Odisha and 'Jallikattu' in Tamil Nadu showcase the socio-cultural significance of sports in various regions. Sports events and local traditions can serve as powerful

tools for social change, transforming communities and promoting inclusivity. The 1995 Rugby World Cup in South Africa is a prominent example, where sports helped bridge the divide between black and white South Africans during Mandela's presidency.

A Continuing Legacy

The stories of athletes who have championed justice, the communities transformed by sports initiatives, and the barriers dismantled through athletic achievement illustrate the transformative power of sports. The recent resurgence of movements like Black Lives Matter has reemphasised the social power of sports. Athletes across various leagues have taken stands against racial injustice, using actions like taking a knee during the national anthem to raise awareness. Major sports organisations have embraced these movements, reflecting a growing recognition of the role sports play in advancing social justice. As we look to the future, it is evident that sports will continue to be a powerful force for good, uniting people, inspiring change, and contributing to a better world. The power of sports to foster connection and advocate for justice is more important than ever.

(The writer is associate professor and head, Journalism and Mass Communication, Rama Devi Women's University, Bhubaneswar; views are personal)

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

IS 'MAKE IN INDIA' JUST A SLOGAN

Madam — This refers to the write-up on Make in India (October 7). Make in India is more a slogan than a solution. This is because the investments made in the production sector come from FDIs, FII or FPIs which are basically known as butterfly capital that tend to fly away anytime for little more benefit offered elsewhere. They are coming in without any conditionality like increasing employment, exports, or tax income. China utilised the system of foreign capital coming into China by imposing conditions like employing the locals, ensuring exports, bringing in new technology, etc.

With such conditions, the country could transform itself from Make in China to Made in China and is able to threaten even the most advanced economies. The Indian model is functioning under 'Ease of doing business' where land, power, tax benefits and cheap labour are offered with the least monitoring, control or regulatory system in vogue or muted. The example of Samsung is to explain this. The management is facing a prolonged strike by the workers on basic demands like a hike in wage and the right to form a union of their choice. The government is neither able to convince the management nor compel them to respect the law of the land. All under the fear of losing future investments. Therefore, Make in India is a slogan but not a solution, as even after some decades the country will have no scope under the present system to transform to Make in India.

AG Rajmohan | Anantapur

OBAMA BACKS KAMALA HARRIS

Madam — That former President of the United States (US), Barack Obama, is all set to undertake a 27-day campaign for Democratic Party presidential candidate Kamala Harris should be music to the latter's ears. Obama came to power in 2009 with high expectations, riding on the catchy 'yes, we can' slogan, and

Antarctica turning green



Images of some regions of Antarctica's icy landscape turning green definitively ring as an alarm bell to the whole globe and give a grim message alerting mankind to watch where we are heading to. This dramatic transformation, with its icy landscape increasingly turning green, reveals that the rate of this change has accelerated by over 30 per cent in recent

years. Scientists and environmentalists say that this "greening" of the Antarctic Peninsula, highlights the urgent consequences of a warming period and the tenfold rise underscores the significant impact of climate change.

A study made between 1986 and 2021 by researchers has revealed that an increase in the vegetation cover across the Antarctic Peninsula has soared from less than one square kilometre to nearly 12 square kilometres within a period of 35 years, which according to the global clock is a short period. Global players, heads and the whole global community must come together and chalk out urgent measures to check this because if this is kept unchecked and ignored it will end up in disaster resulting in an apocalypse.

M Pradyu | Kannur

STAMPEDE AT AIR SHOW

Madam — Stampede is an expected incident in mass gatherings. The Air show at Marina Beach was a much-awaited event for the nation to inspire youth to be a part of the armed forces. Events like this must be planned meticulously by the state government to create an enthusiasm amongst the youth to be a part of the armed forces. Unfortunately, the stampede and deaths of five civilians during the show have left a void in the magnificent showcase of Indian Air Force power.

Hopefully the venue, climatic condition and safety of the viewers are kept in mind while the state government plans such brilliant airshows. The magnitude of the event was such that the roaring Chennai shore saw the best of the showcase by the air warriors and the applause by the audience was one of immense enthusiasm.

Mythili Vinod | Secunderabad

Send your feedback to: letterstopioneer@gmail.com

Ganapathi Bhat | Akola



FIRST COLUMN NAVIGATING THE WORLD OF EXTREMES

Yoga meditation, combined with values, is our best hope for navigating these turbulent times



RAJYOGI BRAHMA KUMAR NIKUNJ JI

The world we live in today is full of extremists who seek to exert control over humanity. Unfortunately, a large part of the population is now influenced by factions that adopt agitative approaches to fulfil their social, economic, political, or religious demands. They are termed extremists because they abandon moderation, resorting to over-assertiveness, rigid attitudes, and a lack of appreciation for the views and interests of other communities or groups. In the process, what often gets sacrificed is any possibility of dialogue or mutual understanding, leading to a cycle of retaliation and resentment.

A closer look at society today reveals that, to some extent, we are all extremists in one way or another. Science and technology are racing toward their extremes. Trade, commerce, and consumerism have adopted a global, expansive form, becoming multinational and mega-scale. The world's largest corporations have achieved levels of influence and control that were once unimaginable. Corporate expansion and monopolistic behaviour continue to push the boundaries of ethics, often leaving smaller businesses struggling to survive.

Environmental pollution has reached disastrous proportions due to unchecked industrial expansion and the selfishness of a few. Entire ecosystems are being pushed to the brink, and climate change is now a pressing global crisis. A small number of individuals and corporations continue to profit at the expense of the planet's future. The increasing use of the internet is contributing to an overwhelming flood of information.



The rapid expansion of cities and transportation networks, have also brought their share of chaos. While these extremes might be seen as signs of development, they come with significant trade-offs, including the erosion of quality of life, mental well-being, and social cohesion. However, amidst all these extremes, the most concerning trend is the rise of anger, jealousy, hatred, violence, greed, and lust. These emotions are spinning out of control, leading to a breakdown in family structures and social harmony. Consumerism, commercialism, and materialism are shaping the very fabric of society, convincing people that their worth is tied to what they own rather than who they are. This pursuit of material success has left many spiritually impoverished, disconnected from their inner selves, and chasing superficial goals that do little to provide lasting fulfillment.

The current trends give us cause for concern, as we witness increasing divisions, social unrest, and the degradation of our environment. The question now becomes: how long can we continue down this path before we reach a breaking point? In such times, when self-control and moderation have all but vanished, and extremism has become the norm, we must learn how to restore our inner calm and balance. Yoga meditation, combined with values, is our best hope for navigating these turbulent times. Meditation can help us return to a state of self-control, calmness, and equilibrium. It purifies the mind and quenches our deep thirst for peace. Through meditation and the cultivation of moral and spiritual values, individuals can learn to be fully engaged in life yet detached from material cravings. They can contribute to the world without succumbing to greed and excess, achieving a balance between material success and spiritual well-being. So, let us make yoga and meditation a daily practice, not just for physical health but to combat the extremism we face within ourselves and in the world around us. Only through this inner journey can we reclaim the purity and peace that seem so elusive in today's fast-paced, hyper-connected world.

(Writer is a spiritual educator & popular columnist; views are personal)

Ten years of Swachh Bharat: The road ahead



B K SINGH

From improved groundwater quality to managing solid and liquid waste, the mission's impact has been substantial, but the journey towards a cleaner India must continue



Swachh Bharat Abhiyan was launched by PM Narendra Modi on the occasion of Gandhi Jayanti in 2014. The mission has completed ten years and during this period 120 million families have been provided access to safe sanitation at their homes. The rural household latrines have transformed the lives of the masses, especially about human health and well-being. It has cut open defecation and UNICEF's report in 2018 indicates that there is a saving of 5.2 per cent of GDP in a year on this count. The other observed benefits are preventing pollution of groundwater, less infant mortality and better attendance for girl children in schools. Though nearly 4000 cities are certified to have maintained hygiene and cleanliness, the challenge for users and managers is to keep it all functional and used continuously.

The golden decade of Indian sanitation is being celebrated this year starting from 17th September 2024 (PM's birthday) to 2nd October 2024, Gandhi Jayanti. Let me examine in this piece as to what are the hits and misses of the mission and also indicate the possible roadmap for the future. Civic agencies and local bodies have done their bit for the success of the mission. The annual ranking of city corporations on this front has made them highly competitive. Cities like Indore, Mysuru and Lucknow and several others have secured high ranks, which has induced other city corporations to do more work for better ranks. The segregation of solid wastes into wet and dry has taken a big leap. The processing of urban wastes which used to be 18 per cent in 2014 has gone up to 80 per cent today. The management of solid waste disposal sites has remained a challenge. The generation of electricity and biofuel from dry wastes has not picked up as yet. However, use of the wet wastes to generate compost and biogas is relatively better performing. More innovation, use of technology



THE INTRODUCTION OF BIO-LATRINES IN TRAINS HAS BEEN QUITE A REVOLUTION. BEFORE 2014 TRAIN TRACKS EVEN ABETTING THE PLATFORMS USED TO BE FILLED WITH HUMAN EXCRETA, A REPULSIVE SITE THAT NO ONE LIKES TO LOOK AT. THIS HAS BEEN OVERCOME THROUGH WONDERFUL INNOVATION

and investment can be a game changer. The bigger problem is the management of nearly 220 million tonnes of waste in the landfills around many cities. Mountains of garbage at Ghazipur, Okhala, Bhalswa and Bandhwari in and around the national capital have been engaging the attention of governments, experts and Courts for quite some time, but no workable solution has been found. Liquid wastes are a more serious problem. The civic agencies allowing sewage to flow through open drains have to ensure that all such drains are concealed, lest the sewage mixes with the flood water and can find its way into urban water bodies. Further, the sewer lines carrying household sewage and the soak pits are to be periodically checked and repaired so that no leakage takes place and underground aquifers are not contaminated. A sewage treatment plant (STP) provided at the inlet point of a water body should be functional and no untreated sewage should be allowed to ingress into the water body without treatment. Local bodies and municipalities must ensure that individual houses do not connect their sewer line to stormwater drains, which often happens in thickly populated slums. The water flowing in stormwater drains ends up in the water body directly without going through any treatment. The mixing of sewage in the stormwater drains can be quite harmful and must be prevented at all costs. Bengaluru's city corporation used to generate 1400 Million litres per day (MLD) of sewage in 2005-06 and 2006-07, however, less than 400 MLD used to go through STP. Going through STP does not mean that

the said quantity was treated; often the managers of STP switched off power mischievously to save on cost. At present 1700 MLD sewage is generated, and nearly three-quarters of it goes through STP. The story in other metropolitan cities is similar. STP capacity has to be increased across the country to prevent the contamination of groundwater, which is otherwise the source of many water-borne diseases. Further, there should be stricter vigilance on the management so that these do not malfunction. Plastics and polythene have become the parts of our lives. It has its share of impacting our health and also that of wild animals and livestock. Especially single-use plastics are thrown haphazardly and find their way either into the mountain of garbage or into the water bodies. It is also directly consumed by livestock, wild animals as well as aquatic life, some of which suffocate and die. Imagine fishes feeding on it and our non-vegetarian friends relishing fishes. Microplastics are in all our blood and are a very big health hazard. The introduction of bio-latrines in trains has been quite a revolution. Before 2014 train tracks even abetting the platforms used to be filled with human excreta, a repulsive site that no one likes to look at. This has been overcome through wonderful innovation. However, as the trains pass through the outskirts of big cities, the dumps containing plastics and polythene are seen on either side. It is often very painful to watch. We need to make changes in our behaviour and ensure that the uses are brought to a minimum. We must honour the ban on single-use plastics imposed by the

central government. Education and awareness campaigns must be run this fortnight when we are celebrating the golden decade of Indian sanitation. Burning of debris is often found to be an easy method in the dry season to get rid of weeds and garbage. Punjab and Haryana farmers after harvesting the paddy are in the habit of burning the stubble to prepare the field for growing wheat. Unfortunately, the season of stubble burning coincides with a weather system that has practically no vertical circulation of air and oxides of nitrogen and carbon emitted during burning do not escape into the upper atmosphere resulting in smog all around big cities. This causes difficulties in breathing and is a serious health hazard for the citizens. Most aware citizens have been preventing any burning of weeds and garbage in their neighbourhood. This fortnight provides an opportunity to conduct many education and awareness campaigns. When plastics and polythene are burnt along with garbage and weeds, more obnoxious gases are emitted and it may be very difficult to stay around. All such emissions are greenhouse gases and find a place in the upper atmosphere when the weather pattern is favourable. Among these gases, carbon dioxide is a nonreactive compound and it stays in the atmosphere for hundreds of years. It accelerates the temperature rise. We are already facing adverse consequences in the warming world. We must bring changes in our behaviour.

(The writer is Retired Principal Chief Conservator of Forests, Head of Forest Force, Karnataka; views are personal)

How shared decision-making and digital solutions are transforming healthcare

Digital innovations like the Ayushman Bharat Digital Mission offer hope for improving communication and fostering patient autonomy in healthcare decisions

In the evolving landscape of healthcare, patient satisfaction and engagement as equal partners in their care journey have become pivotal. The quality of the patient experience—how well they feel cared for—greatly influences their perception of healthcare services. Many countries, such as the United Kingdom and Australia, have recognised this and introduced standards that emphasize active patient involvement to improve care outcomes. Shared decision-making (SDM) has gained significant global traction as a means to promote patient autonomy and foster truly patient-centered care.



SHUCHIN BAJAJ

process where patients and healthcare professionals work together to make informed decisions about treatment plans. This collaboration spans various aspects, from immediate treatment needs to long-term care plans, such as advance care planning. Healthcare providers play a crucial role in facilitating this process by offering clear information and supporting patient

deliberation, empowering individuals to make decisions based on their preferences, values, and informed consent. Engaging patients in the decision-making process is essential to improving healthcare outcomes and experiences. When patients are confident and well-informed, they are more likely to choose treatments that align with their personal beliefs and preferences. This also increases health literacy, leading to better long-term decisions and greater satisfaction. Active patient participation can result in faster recovery times, reduced anxiety, and improved adherence to treatment plans. Patients who are actively involved in their care tend to have better outcomes, including improved overall well-being and quick-

er recovery from illness or surgery. Moreover, patients who feel respected and valued in the decision-making process tend to develop stronger relationships with their healthcare providers. This trust benefits both the patient and the provider, often leading to better treatment outcomes and reducing the risk of medical litigation. In today's healthcare environment, where patient-centered care is increasingly prioritized, the active participation of patients is key to achieving meaningful and lasting improvements. From a business perspective, higher patient satisfaction can lead to more returning patients, better reviews, and an increase in foot traffic for healthcare providers.

Challenges of Patient Engagement in India: In India, the desire for more patient involvement in healthcare decisions is growing, but significant barriers remain. Many patients report feeling inadequately informed about treatment plans even after consenting to surgery, often seeking external sources of information. A study conducted at a tertiary hospital revealed that although all patients were aware of their diagnosis, less than one-third knew about the risks of their treatment or alternative options. Consequently, many sought answers outside their treating doctor, demonstrating a gap in communication between patients and providers. Patient involvement in treat-

ment decisions is largely limited to high-end healthcare institutions such as tertiary care centers, academic hospitals, or high-cost therapies. Overworked clinical staff in India often lack the time to engage patients meaningfully in the decision-making process. **Leveraging Digital Solutions for Better Patient Care:** Digital technologies offer significant hope for improving patient engagement. These innovations enhance patient deliberation, promote self-responsibility, and strengthen patient-provider interactions. For resource-limited, overburdened healthcare systems like India's, digital solutions can save clinicians' time while boosting patient engagement, making them especially suit-

able for low-resource environments. India's Ayushman Bharat Digital Mission (ABDM) aims to create an interoperable ecosystem that engages all healthcare stakeholders, providing tools to promote patient autonomy and facilitate patient-centered care. The convergence of global discourse, national policies, rising patient demand for participation, and available digital solutions presents an excellent opportunity to mainstream this approach across India. One of the significant ways digital solutions enhance patient engagement is by providing patients with access to comprehensive health records. When patients have control over their health information,

they can make better-informed decisions, improving their involvement in the care process. For clinicians, access to long-term records enables more personalized treatment options. Through the ABDM, patient records are linked by a unique 14-digit Ayushman Bharat Health Account (ABHA), ensuring that all health data—from diagnostics to treatment histories—are stored in one place. This enables providers to help patients make informed decisions based on accurate, comprehensive histories, while patients can participate actively by accessing their records at any time. *(The writer is Founder & Director - Ujala Cygnus Healthcare Services; views are personal)*

Grammy winner Cissy Houston loses battle with Alzheimer's at 91

Cissy Houston, the Grammy-winning singer of soul and gospel music and mother of the late Whitney Houston, passed away at her New Jersey residence at the age of 91. The experienced musician who performed alongside Aretha Franklin, Elvis Presley and other celebrities was receiving hospice care due to Alzheimer's disease.

Her daughter-in-law Pat Houston shared a statement, "Our hearts are filled with pain and sadness. We lost the matriarch of our family. Mother Cissy has been a strong and towering figure in our lives. A woman of deep faith and conviction, who cared greatly about family, ministry and community. Her more than seven-decade career in music and entertainment will remain at the forefront of our hearts." Pat added, "Her contributions to popular music and culture are unparalleled. We are blessed and grateful that God allowed her to spend so many years with us and we are thankful for all the many valuable life lessons that she taught us. May she rest in peace, alongside her daughter, Whitney and granddaughter Bobbi Kristina and other cherished family members."



Al Pacino and Noor Alfallah go separate ways

Hollywood legend Al Pacino, who is known for *Scarface*, *The Godfather*, *House of Gucci* and others, has ended his relationship with film producer Noor Alfallah.

The couple, who had a significant age gap, seemed to grow closer during the pandemic, even welcoming their son Roman into the world in June 2023, as per reports. The actor was recently quizzed about his current romantic status and he made it clear he was flying solo, stating, "No. I have friendship," when asked if he was in a relationship.

A spokesperson for the actor further explained to the publication that the pair have transitioned from partners to friends and are jointly dedicated to raising their child: "Al and Noor are very good friends, have been for years and are co-parents to their son Roman."

Al Pacino, whose romantic history includes high-profile relationships with stars like Diane Keaton, Beverly D'Angelo and

Kathleen Quinlan, is also a father to three other children. Alongside his newborn Roman, he has a 34-year-old daughter Julie with acting coach Jan Tarrant and 23-year-old twins Anton and Olivia with actress Beverly D'Angelo.

As per further reports, in his forthcoming memoir *Sonny Boy*, the actor refers to marriage as "an entrance to the pain train," sharing his personal take on commitment with 'People' magazine, "Everything's a ticket to the pain train. A ticket or nothing. 'Are you going to go or not?' 'No, I'll stay here. I'll stay here at the station; I'm not getting on'."

He also elaborated on his perspective of relationships, suggesting that while marriage might work for some, it never felt right for him, as he said, "(Marriage) can suit you, by all means. But I just didn't feel it ever suited me for some reason. I loved living together (with women) and then it depends on who you are getting along with."

"If you live together with someone, there's got to be... you have to have this communion. If you don't, it's almost an invasion," he added.

ARJUN 'HOUNDED' ROHIT FOR WORK AFTER WATCHING GOLMAAL 3

The much-awaited trailer for *Singham Again* by Rohit Shetty is finally out. It is noteworthy that it is the initial project where Rohit Shetty and Arjun Kapoor work together, with Kapoor portraying the antagonist. Arjun's depiction of a contemporary Raavan in the trailer has drawn focus, thanks to his intimidating appearance that leaves a powerful impression.

Arjun Kapoor shared his astonishment at being involved in the high-energy trailer launch while interacting with the media.

Reflecting on his earlier attempts to collaborate with Rohit, Arjun said, "I feel honored and blessed that Rohit sir chose me for this film. I've gone to cinema halls to watch *Golmaal* and *Singham*. In fact, I even reached out to him to express my desire to work with him. I also wanted to collaborate with Ajay, sir. I didn't realise dreams could come true to this extent! I'm a bit overwhelmed by that."

Arjun Kapoor revealed that it was after watching the third installment of *Golmaal* that he persistently reached out to Rohit Shetty. He shared, "Whenever I saw 'Rohit Shetty and team,' I wanted to be a part of that team. I watched *Singham* at Chandan Cinemas and *Singham Returns* at Gaiety. After watching *Golmaal 3*, I hounded him to express how much I wanted to work with him." The action entertainer can be seen as a contemporary interpretation of the Ramayana, with a star-studded cast consisting of Ajay Devgn, Kareena Kapoor Khan, Akshay Kumar, Ranveer Singh, Deepika Padukone, Arjun Kapoor, Tiger Shroff, Jackie Shroff, and Ravi Kishan. At the same time, *Singham Again* is scheduled to come out in theaters on November 1 and go head-to-head with *Kartik*.



SLB's latest revelations of Love & War have us hooked

Sanjay Leela Bhansali's upcoming epic saga *Love & War* has been in the headlines ever since it was announced. Starring Ranbir Kapoor, Alia Bhatt and Vicky Kaushal, the film is eagerly awaited by the audience. While SLB has always mesmerised viewers with his remarkable cinema, everyone is excited to see what he brings to the table with *Love & War*. Amid growing anticipation, SLB was seen sharing major updates about the film.

In an interview, Bhansali stated that it's a film he is very excited about. "It's a very special film because it's now not in the period; there are no pillars, no more costumes, no more horses; it's contemporary. It's different; the music is different." He continued by saying that he enjoys making it and has wonderful actors. Regarding Ranbir, SLB stated that he is collaborating with the star after 18 years.

Furthermore, the anticipation builds for SLB's next *Love & War*. It's thrilling to look forward to the monumental collaboration of Sanjay Leela Bhansali and the talented trio of Ranbir Kapoor, Alia Bhatt and Vicky Kaushal on the big screen in the film. The film will be released on March 20, 2026.

RHEA CHAKRABORTY RETURNS TO ROADIES

Rhea Chakraborty is back with a bang, returning as a gang leader in the latest season of *MTV Roadies*! After a thrilling victory in the previous season, where her leadership and strategic instincts led her team to the top, she's ready to claim her position as one of the most formidable leaders once again. Her presence in the last season showcased her ability to mentor and motivate contestants with both strength and empathy, cementing her as a key figure in the competition. This season, Rhea is bringing even more fire and determination. With her signature fearless attitude and a keen sense of strategy, she's looking to build another powerhouse team. Her return is highly anticipated and fans are eager to see her dynamic approach to the challenges, both mental and physical, that *Roadies* throws her way. She has proven that she can balance being a tough competitor with offering a nurturing side to her team, which is exactly what helped her secure the win last time. Rhea's return is not just about defending her title but also about solidifying her legacy as a gang leader. Her journey on *Roadies* is a testament to her resilience and she's once again ready to take on the competition with renewed energy.



STANDALONE

Zeenat Aman took the audience on a nostalgic journey - the first edition of Carvaan LIVE's *Yeh Shaam Mastani*. Held at the Sri Shanmukhananda Chandrasekarendra Saraswathi Auditorium in Sion, the event was a heartfelt tribute to the golden era of Bollywood, blending music, nostalgia and stories that have shaped Indian cinema.



FUN

ARCHIE



CALVIN AND HOBBS



GARFIELD



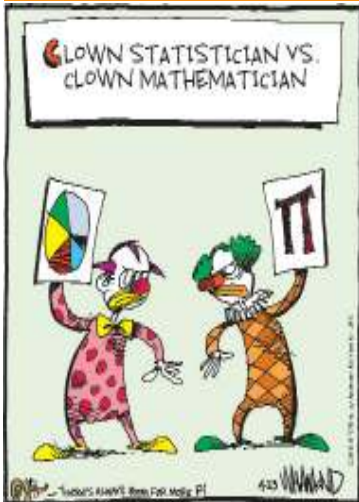
NANCY



GINGER MEGGS



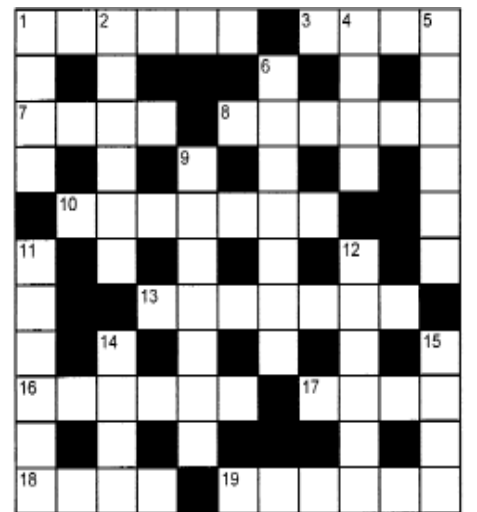
REALITY CHECK



SPEED BUMP



CROSSWORD



SUDOKU



Yesterday's solution

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

- 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

- Cleaned with water
- A wartime explosive
- One quarter of thirty-six
- A robber at sea
- Old-aged
- Using a shovel
- Talented, skillful
- Wicked
- Gritty stuff on the beach
- Connected together
- Pieces of cut bread
- Not level
- Stitched
- Pleased

DOWN

- Close and open one eye quickly
- Unmarried
- Egg-shaped



FROM STUDYING MECHANICAL ENGINEERING TO ENGINEERING FASHION

SHAMKHAN BECOMES 'KINGMAKER' OF FASHION SHOWS

Stepping into the spotlight, Shamkhan A is currently all over the news for being the director of the latest Miss Universe India pageant. *The Pioneer* has the fashion show's new emperor on board, taking us through his transition from mechanical engineering to fashion shows, directing the recent pageant and more



Uncovering patterns keeping you in depression!

With Mental Health Day approaching, it's crucial to shed light on the realities of depression and dispel the damaging myths surrounding it. By addressing these misconceptions, we aim to foster better understanding and support for those affected by this condition.

Understanding nature of depression

Depression is often misunderstood, shrouded in myths that prevent proper understanding and treatment. One of the most prevalent misconceptions is the idea that those suffering from depression simply don't want to be happy. This belief fails to consider the complexities of the condition and the wide range of contributing factors that lead to its onset.

It's not about willpower

Contrary to popular belief, depression is not a reflection of weak will or lack of personal strength. No one consciously chooses to feel miserable or remain stuck in a cycle of sadness. Just as one cannot "will" themselves out of a physical illness, a person cannot overcome depression solely through determination. It is a complex condition that often requires professional intervention and supportive care. Another common misconception is that depression is solely triggered by external factors, such as life traumas or undesirable circumstances. While these can certainly play a role in its development, they don't fully explain why or when depression begins.

Complex interplay

Biologically, depression is linked to chemical imbalances in the brain. Neurotransmitters like serotonin, norepinephrine and dopamine—responsible for regulating mood—can become disrupted, leading to the symptoms of depression. This biochemical disturbance impacts normal brain function and can be a significant factor in the onset of the disorder. Psychologically, depression often stems from negative thought patterns and self-perceptions. Persistent self-criticism, distorted beliefs about oneself and a negative worldview can feed into a cycle of depression. These cognitive patterns reinforce feelings of hopelessness and despair, making it challenging to break free. Social factors also play a crucial role. A history of trauma, exposure to stressful life events, social isolation, or a lack of meaningful support systems can all contribute to the development and persistence of depressive symptoms. These external influences may not only exacerbate the condition but also impact the speed of recovery.

Overcoming mental hurdles

When someone is experiencing depression, they are often met with one of two unhelpful responses—either a dismissal of their feelings or a pathological lens that views them as lacking something vital, like happiness, competence, or stability. This stigma perpetuates harmful narratives and deepens the individual's sense of helplessness, causing them to retreat even further.

A more compassionate and respectful approach to mental health can make a significant difference. While it's important to acknowledge one's grief, shifting to a kinder, more understanding view of the illness can foster a renewed sense of self-worth and improve self-esteem.

Challenge voice of depression

One of the key symptoms of depression is the presence of an automatic, unhelpful inner voice. This voice may discourage self-care or personal growth, making the sufferer feel that nothing is worth the effort. Recognising this inner dialogue is the first step toward overcoming it. For example, depression may make everything seem monotonous or pointless. In response to the thought, "Why bother?" one could say, "It's better than sitting idle and feeling worse." With time, this small shift in perspective can weaken the grip of automatic negative thoughts, leading to positive changes in behavior and emotions.

Incorporate deep breathing and meditation

One of the most effective and accessible tools for managing depression is conscious deep breathing. Deep breathing helps activate the parasympathetic nervous system, which is responsible for calming the mind and body, reducing stress and bringing about mental clarity. Simple breathing exercises such as box breathing (inhaling for four counts, holding for four counts, exhaling for four counts, and holding for four counts) can be practiced daily to improve mood and overall well-being. Similarly, meditation can be a powerful tool for regulating emotions and thoughts. Mindfulness meditation, for example, allows individuals to observe their thoughts without judgment, creating space to detach from negative thinking patterns. By spending just a few minutes a day meditating, one can gradually build resilience to the emotional ups and downs that accompany depression. Meditation also promotes a sense of inner peace and balance, helping to alleviate the mental fog that often comes with depressive episodes.

(The author, Anurag Rishi, is a holistic wellness expert.)



TEJAL SINHA
 tejal.sinha30@gmail.com

In the world of fashion, glamour and pageantry, Shamkhan A stands out as a talent that's been behind some astonishing fashion shows; Miss Universe India being his latest work. Beginning his journey by studying to be a mechanical engineer, he however found his calling in engineering fashion shows. From a fashion choreographer, Shamkhan has now evolved into a show director and worked for Miss India Earth, Miss India International, Miss India Globe and many more.

Looking back at his journey, which really started off as a model back in 2013 and continued for the next three years, he later started working as a professional choreographer and directing shows in 2017.

"I began as an event coordinator in my youth organisation at Lovely Professional

University," begins Khan in an exclusive chat with *The Pioneer*. During that time, he coordinated and worked on several shows and events.

Going ahead, he recalls, "It was during my college days itself that I started choreographing, being the team head for the fashion team."

His feelings of directing the Miss Universe India pageant have been no less than an overwhelming and proud moment. Having already directed many more shows, including Miss India and Miss India International, Miss India Tourism and Miss Asia Pacific, he enthuses, "My ultimate goal in the pageant industry is to direct Miss Universe and Miss India, where the contestant goes for Miss World. With this opportunity, my dream had come true. With Miss Universe India, I had to work a lot compared to other beauty pageants. I knew I had to give it my all." But, of course, for him to

reach where he is today, he had to fight the odds, convincing his parents and the pressure he had to choose the fashion world over mechanical engineering.

With Miss Universe, "They have changed a lot of criteria, like the age; married women can participate and even transgender people. It was all about womanliness and freedom. I took this as an inspiration to direct the pageant this time."

Beyond a doubt, the Miss Universe India was a success, but guess what? Shamkhan doesn't take any of it as a challenge, though the time frame was one of it. He took it up as a strength over challenge. Further comes a revelation: "We had completed the entire work of the Miss Universe India pageant in just 2 days."

He went on to credit his national director of the Miss Universe organisation, Nikhil Anand, for being a great support to me. "He has always inspired me a lot. He's been very supportive and has given me complete authority to do the event with ease. I had no pressure to work in any certain way and use my own creativity. He is someone who has had the past experience of working with Miss Earth as well as Miss International. He put in his confidence that I could finish the work even if given a day."

Working on this pageant was a "smooth transition" for him. As we went ahead in this chat, we wondered how

he keeps up with his creativity. "Depends on the project," he says.

Not only is he a beauty pageant director, but he also directs runway shows. And so, "It all depends on the designer, the national director and how we'd blend it with the particular season. It's a collection of group work that goes behind."

Just like in a movie, where the director takes charge of the entire process, he says, similarly, the fashion show director is important behind the success of a show and controls the entire functioning.

Not long back, he had finished working on two back-to-back shows, one of them being Miss Universe India and the other one being Miss Global India.

Tour de Force into depths of Madhubani painting

AARTI SREENATH
 aarti.sreenath9@gmail.com

Synopsis

Mithila Art: A 360 Degree Review of Madhubani Painting presents an extensive exploration of Madhubani painting, a traditional art form that hails from the Mithila region of Bihar, India. This anthology compiles essays and artworks from a diverse group of contributors, offering insights into the history, techniques and cultural significance of this vibrant art form. The book examines the intricate patterns, themes and stories depicted in Madhubani paintings, making it an essential read for art enthusiasts, students, and cultural historians alike. Through a multidisciplinary lens, the editors highlight how Madhubani art serves as both a visual delight and a vital narrative of the socio-cultural fabric of India.

Background

The editors—Binita Mallik, an accomplished artist and curator; Dr. Minu Agarwal, a respected art historian and Dr. Laura Zizka, an international art consultant—bring their diverse expertise to the compilation. Their backgrounds not only enrich the narrative but also ground it in historical and contemporary contexts. The book aims to raise awareness about the preservation of this ancient art form, which faces challenges in the modern era due to commercialisation and the pressures of globalisation. By showcasing the work of both established and emerging artists, *Mithila Art* serves as a platform for dialogue about the importance of cultural heritage in an increasingly homogenised world.

Themes and arguments

A central theme of *Mithila Art* is the interplay between tradition and modernity. The book delves into how Madhubani painting has evolved over time while remaining deeply rooted in cultural traditions. The editors argue for the significance of cultural preservation and underscore the role of women artists

in keeping this art form vibrant and relevant. Many contributions highlight the themes prevalent in Madhubani art—such as nature, mythology and social issues demonstrating that these works are not merely decorative but carry profound narratives that reflect the lives and beliefs of the people who create them.

Another critical argument presented is the idea that Madhubani painting serves as a means of empowerment for women in the region. Historically, women were the primary artists in this tradition and the book examines how this art form has provided them with a voice and a means of financial independence. This empowerment aspect enriches the narrative and adds depth to the discussion about gender roles in art.

Style and tone

The writing style varies significantly among the contributions, ranging from scholarly essays rich in historical detail to personal narratives by contemporary artists that are reflective and engaging. This diversity makes the book accessible to a wide audience, from art scholars to casual readers. The tone throughout is celebratory and informative, inviting readers to immerse themselves in the beauty and complexity of Madhubani art. The editors maintain an inviting atmosphere, encouraging a dialogue about the art form rather than simply presenting information.

Characterisation

While the book primarily focuses on the art form itself, it does introduce key artists and their contributions to Madhubani painting. Profiles of notable figures, such as Shanti Devi and Ganga Devi, help to humanize the art and provide insight into the lives of the creators and the cultural contexts that inspire their work. These personal stories are woven into the narrative, illustrating how each artist interprets and expands upon the traditions of Madhubani painting.

Structure and pacing

Mithila Art is well-organised, with clear sections dedicated to various aspects of Madhubani painting, including its historical roots, artistic techniques and contemporary relevance. Each chapter flows logically into the next, creating a cohesive reading experience that encourages readers to engage deeply with the material. The pacing is steady, allowing readers to absorb the information without feeling overwhelmed. The editors have done an admirable job of balancing academic rigor with engaging storytelling.

Visuals and presentation

The book is beautifully presented, featuring high-quality reproductions of Madhubani paintings that are both vibrant and detailed. These visuals not only enhance the text but also serve as a testament to the beauty and intricacy of the art form. The layout is thoughtfully designed, with images accompanying relevant text, allowing readers to appreciate the connection between the written word and the visual art. The quality of the images invites readers to linger on each page, appreciating the colors and details that characterise Madhubani art.

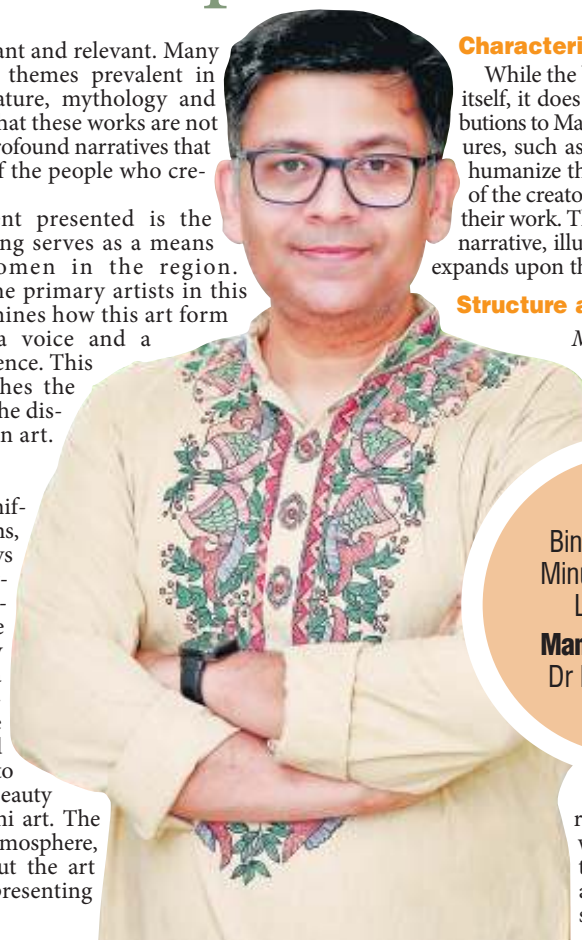
Critique and evaluation

Overall, *Mithila Art* is a valuable resource for anyone interested in Indian art and culture. Its strengths lie in its comprehensive approach, scholarly contributions, and stunning visuals. The editors have successfully created a narrative that intertwines history, personal stories and cultural critique. However, some readers may find certain academic sections dense, which could limit accessibility for those unfamiliar with art history. A glossary of terms or a more extensive introduction to the cultural context could have further enhanced the reader's experience.

Conclusion

In conclusion, *Mithila Art: A 360 Degree Review of Madhubani Painting* is an essential addition to the library of art lovers, students and cultural historians. It effectively celebrates the rich heritage of Madhubani painting while advocating for its continued relevance in contemporary society. By bridging traditional practices with modern interpretations, this book invites readers to appreciate the enduring beauty of Madhubani art and the stories it tells. Whether you are an art enthusiast or a casual reader, this book offers insights that are both educational and inspiring, making it a highly recommended read for anyone looking to deepen their understanding of this unique and beautiful art form.

Editors:
 Binita Mallik, Dr. Minu Agarwal, Dr. Laura Zizka
 Managing editor:
 Dr Prashant Das



India look to fix batting woes, bolster NRR against Sri Lanka in Women's T20 WC

PTI ■ DUBAI

On a sticky wicket after a mixed start to the campaign, India will look to fix their batting woes to bolster their net run rate when they take on bottom-placed Sri Lanka in their third and penultimate Group A match of the T20 Women's World Cup here on Wednesday. It has not been smooth sailing for the Indians in the showpiece event so far, having lost to New Zealand by 58 runs in their tournament-opener and then scampering home in 18.5 overs against arch-rivals Pakistan while chasing a modest 105. India's main problem in the tournament so far is the performance of their batters, especially the explosive opening combination of Shafali Verma and vice-captain Smriti Mandhana.

While Shafali scored just 2 and 32 in the first two games, Mandhana also fared poorly managing 12 and 7 runs. And it's time the duo fires in unison to ease the pressure on the middle-order. To make matters worse for India, skipper Harmanpreet Kaur, who scored 15 and 29 retired hurt, is doubtful for the match against Sri Lanka after suffering a neck injury while batting against Pakistan. The likes of Jemimah Rodrigues, Deepti Sharma and Richa Ghosh too need to step up with the bat and share the burden of responsibility. While medium pacer Arundhati Reddy sparked against Pakistan with the ball, returning with figures of 3/19, she would look for more support from the likes of fellow pace colleagues Renuka Singh and Pooja Vastrakar, who didn't play the previous game because of an injury.



The Indian team relies heavily on Deepti Sharma in the spin department but she hasn't quite managed to hit her strides in the tournament so far. Young off-spinner Shreyanka

Patil and leg-spinner Asha Shobhana have done a decent job, picking up a few wickets. The Indians will need to lift themselves in all departments of the game as in Australia a strong opponent awaits them

in their last group match. India will not only need to win but record a victory big enough against Sri Lanka to boost their Net Run Rate (NRR) before the do-or-die league game against defending

champions Australia on October 13. Sri Lanka might have lost both their opening matches, but the islanders won't be an easy opponent for India, especially after the win in the Asia Cup final in

August. India opener Shafali admitted that Sri Lanka are no longer only dependent on their skipper Chamari Athapaththu. "There was a time when Chamari was the one scoring most of the runs and taking wickets, but in the Asia Cup, her entire team performed well. They've improved a lot, which is why they won the cup," Shafali has said. "Chamari carries the pressure of being a key player, and it's inspiring to see how she handles it and performs for her country." India pacer Renuka also knows how important it is to dismiss the Sri Lankan skipper cheaply as she can take the game away in a flash with her audacious strokeplay. "Chamari Athapaththu is very interesting. She's the only one from Sri Lanka who takes the team to the other side. I try to get her out as soon as possible

because if she is set, she can take over the match. So I have a plan on how to get her out," Renuka has said. **Teams (From):** India: Harmanpreet Kaur (c), Smriti Mandhana, Shafali Verma, Deepti Sharma, Jemimah Rodrigues, Richa Ghosh (wk), Yastika Bhatia, Pooja Vastrakar, Arundhati Reddy, Renuka Singh Thakur, Dayalan Hemalatha, Asha Shobhana, Radha Yadav, Shreyanka Patil, Sajana Sajeeran Sri Lanka: Vishmi Gunaratne, Harshitha Samarawickrama, Hasini Perera, Anushka Sanjeevani (wk), Nilakshika Silva, Chamari Athapaththu (c), Kavisha Dilhari, Ama Kanchana, Inoshi Priyadarshani, Shashini Gimhani, Achini Kulasuriya, Sugandika Kumari, Sachini Nisansala, Udeshika Prabodhani, Inoka Ranaweera.

India's T20 marauders eye another big win; Bangladesh hope for turnaround



PTI ■ NEW DELHI

An India so dominant that Bangladesh is admittedly clueless about how to match the "skills and mentality" of Suryakumar Yadav's men. The script is not expected to deviate much when the two sides clash in the second T20 International here on Wednesday with the home team's young mavericks proving more than a handful for the full-strength visitors. Bangladesh have hardly looked like the plucky opponents that they are hyped to be but India have looked every bit the marauding force that loves to intimidate on home turf. So, even with key players such as Rishabh Pant, Axar Patel, and Jasprit Bumrah rested, India's remarkable depth in white-ball cricket shone through in a comfortable seven-wicket victory in the opening game in Gwalior. One man who made a strong statement of intent in that game on Sunday was Sanju Samson. Confirmed by Suryakumar as an opener for the series, Samson has been in and out of the national set up since his debut in 2015 and his lack of consistency has been a major contributing factor. In the series-opener in Gwalior, the keeper-batter, who usually comes in the middle order, revelled in his new role as opener and played some delightful strokes in his 19-ball 29, showcasing his ability to play freely in the powerplay. However, he couldn't convert his promising start, much like his opening partner Abhishek

Sharma, who showcased sheer power before running himself out. With first choice openers Yashasvi Jaiswal and Shubman Gill rested for this series, both Samson and Sharma would be keen to prove they can go beyond mere cameos. The duo would look to seize this opportunity here and get a big score on Wednesday night in front of, what is likely to be a sellout crowd. The stakes are higher for the 29-year-old Samson, who is aiming to solidify his position as wicketkeeper in the absence of Pant. With the T20 World Cup still two years away, a series of consistent performances as both opener and wicketkeeper could make him a strong contender for future selections in the white-ball formats. The hosts are unlikely to tinker with their playing XI after everything went India's way in the opener. Debutant Mayank Yadav dazzled with his fiery pace, while fellow first-timer Nitish Kumar Reddy made a mark as a seam-bowling all-rounder, a rarity in Indian cricket. Arshdeep Singh capably led the pace attack and mystery spinner Varun Chakaravarty made a striking comeback after staying away from the national team for three years. He will be eyeing the spin all-rounder's spot left vacant by Ravindra Jadeja as will Washington Sundar. On the other hand, the tourists will have to regroup quickly if they want to fashion a turnaround and stay alive in the three-match

series. Bangladesh, who went with more or less than same side they fielded at the World Cup earlier this year, have the advantage of experience but the side has just not been able to crack the T20 format. "I wouldn't say we played badly. We are a better team than this. We haven't done well in this format for a long time, but I don't believe we are such a bad team," captain Najmul Hossain Shanto conceded in Gwalior. Batting continues to remain their weak link and it wasn't a surprise to see the side struggle against India's disciplined bowling attack. Senior players like Liton Das and Mahmudullah have to get their act together. The Bangladesh bowlers have the ability to spice up things but against India's formidable lineup, they would need plenty of runs on the board. **India:** Suryakumar Yadav (C), Abhishek Sharma, Sanju Samson (wk), Rinku Singh, Hardik Pandya, Riyan Parag, Nitish Kumar Reddy, Tilak Varma, Washington Sundar, Ravi Bishnoi, Varun Chakaravarty, Jitesh Sharma (wk), Arshdeep Singh, Harshit Rana, Mayank Yadav. **Bangladesh:** Najmul Hossain Shanto (C), Tanzid Hasan Tamim, Parvez Hossain Emon, Tawhid Hridoy, Mahmud Ullah, Liton Kumer Das, Jaker Ali Anik, Mehedi Hassan Miraz, Shak Mahedi Hasan, Rishad Hossain, Mustafizur Rahman, Taskin Ahmed, Shoriful Islam, Tanzim Hasan Sakib, Rakibul Hasan.

Jaiswal can play in any conditions, needs mental adjustment for Australia tour: Lara

PTI ■ MUMBAI

India opener Yashasvi Jaiswal is equipped to "play in any conditions" but will need to make some mental adjustments for the upcoming tour of Australia, the legendary Brian Lara said here on Tuesday. Jaiswal has established himself as a vital cog in the Test side with 929 runs in only eight matches this year at 66.35, his two centuries and six fifties putting him as the leading run-scorer for India in 2024. "He has got the ability to play in any conditions. I saw him in the Caribbean. Obviously, the pitches in Australia are slightly different, but if you take that sort of strength that you have, you're going to play good cricket in any conditions. "I expect to see him do well," Lara told the media during the launch of the International Masters League. The West Indies great said Jaiswal will need to make some mental adjustments to continue his success Down



Under. "I think the adjustment is upstairs," said Lara, pointing towards his head when asked if the Indian opener will have to make any adjustments. "The adjustment is your ability to back your talent in whatever conditions. I say this with a pinch of salt because conditions in India have changed. "With the IPL you've got international players coming. You are feeding your players a different level of competition, which is great, so I don't think there's much that he has to do

technically," he added. "I just think, mentally, travelling away from home, playing against Australia on their shores is a different beast. But I believe that the Indian team that I've seen going to Australia over the last couple of occasions, are very capable of winning," he said. Lara picked Jaiswal and another southpaw Abhishek Sharma as the "two most exciting Indian batters" right now. "Jaiswal and Abhishek Sharma. First of all, they're left-handers. They're very young. They play

the game in a style, very attacking and very stylish," he said. "Of course the relationship I have had with them over the last couple of years has been very special. It's great to see them go from strength to strength," he added. Lara said having a "good plan" will be crucial for India's success in the Border-Gavaskar Trophy, which will comprise five Tests for the first time. "You have got to have a plan. And your plan has to be something that when it comes to fruition, you get the success," he said. "When you're coming up against Australia, you've got to have a damn good plan, and you've got to be able to soak in pressure because they're going to apply a lot of pressure. "From an Indian scenario, they've got to play good cricket. They've got to believe in themselves and they've got to play each session at a time. They can't think way beyond that," he added. While the former West Indies

captain praised India's aggressive approach to force a result in the rain-hit Kanpur Test against Bangladesh to try and earn World Test Championship points, Lara said such an outcome is not possible every time. "(It was) not just (about) the points. It's a situation where India knows that they have the advantage in terms of being the better playing team against Bangladesh, and they've got to put themselves," he said. "They've got to give themselves the opportunity. I love the way that they went about it in such a short space of time to put Bangladesh under pressure. The performance by India with the bat was always to put Bangladesh under pressure. "Test cricket is about attrition. Not every single day you're going to have 2-3 days washed out. I want to see a lot of games going into the fourth and the fifth day. I want to see batters holding on, battling if they have to battle. Bowlers being as disciplined as possible."

Two years just flew by enjoying highs, lows of my game: Arshdeep

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

T20 World Cup-winner Arshdeep Singh doesn't like fretting over the future or dwelling on the past. The left-arm pacer prefers to embrace the present. The 25-year-old, who is leading the Indian pace attack in the ongoing three-match T20I series against Bangladesh, made his debut just two years ago but has already played 55 T20Is, including two World Cups. "I am enjoying my game and didn't even realise how these two years flew by. I just try and stay in the present, enjoy the highs and lows, that is my focus," Arshdeep said ahead of the second T20I against Bangladesh on Tuesday. "My life's mantra is to enjoy the present. Today is my rest day so I will enjoy my rest today. Kal ka Kal dekhenge (Will think about tomorrow when it comes). The T20 World Cup is two years away,



very far I don't think much about the future," he added when a question on his future was thrown his way. The Punjab pacer, who honed his red-ball skills in county cricket last season and put up a stellar display in

the Duleep Trophy recently, has been making a case for a maiden Test cap too but doesn't want to talk about that. "I want to do my best in all the formats wherever I get the opportunity," he said

Asked what difference he has felt in his white-ball skills since becoming an all-format player, Arshdeep said, "I enjoy that we can see how quickly you can adapt to the conditions, ground dimensions and format.

"It gives opportunity to the players to explore their skills. How he can take wickets in different ways, how to absorb pressure. "Playing in different formats teaches players a lot. In red ball, you get more over to bowl, it teaches you patience, here (in T20s) you don't need patience, you have to think about what a batter can do." The hosts lead the series 1-0 and the second game is expected to be a high-scoring affair. In the five matches that the Arun Jaitley Stadium hosted in the IPL earlier this year, teams crossed the 200-run mark eight times. "We (Punjab Kings) didn't have a match here in the IPL this season but seeing the scores at this ground, I didn't feel like seeing the wicket. "We will come tomorrow and assess the conditions and make plans accordingly. The coach and captain will check the wicket and tell us the plan," Arshdeep said.

England off to brisk start after Agha century propels Pakistan to 556 in 1st test

AP ■ MULTAN (PAKISTAN)

England chipped at Pakistan's massive 556, three-centuries total by reaching 96-1 at stumps on day two Tuesday of the first test. Pakistan started the day on 328-4 and was spearheaded by Salman Ali Agha's unbeaten 104 and Saud Shakeel's 82. On a pitch which still looks good for batting with little help for fast bowlers or spinners, England raced at nearly five-runs-per-over as Zac Crawley smashed 11 fours in his unbeaten 64. Joe Root was not out on 32. England lost stand-in captain Ollie Pope without scoring in the second over to a stunning one-handed catch by a diving Aamer Jamal at midwicket off

Naseem Shah. England trails Pakistan by 460 runs. Pope had to open the innings after Ben Duckett injured his left thumb while grabbing a sharp chest-high catch of No. 11 Abrar Ahmed in the slips that finally ended England's heat-sapping 5 1/2 sessions on the field at Multan Stadium. Whether Duckett bats was yet to be determined. England's Jack Leach took 3-160 and Shoaib Bashir 1-124 but Pakistan dominated both spinners. Brydon Carse's long wait for his first wicket in his debut test came on Tuesday, which he finished with 2-74. Gus Atkinson (2-99) and Chris Woakes (1-69) toiled without finding any reverse swing on the green square. England did well in the first



session and allowed Pakistan only 69 runs with Carse breaking the resistance of nightwatchman Naseem, who gloved a legside catch after scoring his test-best 33. Naseem denied England a breakthrough for 1 1/2 hours and braved a couple of blows. He got a knock on the back of his helmet when he was struck hard by an Atkinson short ball and also received brief treatment when Carse struck the batter's right thumb off another short ball before round-the-wicket worked for the right arm fast bowler. Leach had Mohammad Rizwan caught at mid-off for a 12-ball duck. Shakeel, who began the day on 35, showed plenty of resistance and raised his half-century with a swept boundary off

Bashir. Shakeel was undone by the off-spinner after lunch and feathered a low catch to Root in the slips. Agha took charge with meticulous drives and sweeps. His third test century followed tons by captain Shaban Masood (151) and Abdullah Shafique (102) on day one. Agha gave Pakistan an ideal finish on the benign pitch. In the company of Shaheen Shah Afridi (26), Agha hit 10 boundaries and three sixes in his 119-ball knock to propel Pakistan past 550. England was scratchy late in Pakistan's innings as wicketkeeper Jamie Smith missed an easy stumping of Abrar, and Atkinson couldn't judge a catch over his shoulder before Root folded the innings.

'SUHAS' OF LATE PATERNITY EXPERIENCE ELEVATED HIS PERFORMANCE'



Janaka Ayithe Ganaka director Sandeep Reddy shares insights on his film, its development and the inspiration behind it



SURESH KAVIRAYANI
sureshkavirayani@gmail.com

As the Dasara festival approaches, several Telugu films are set to hit the screens, one of them being *Janaka Ayithe Ganaka*. Directed by Sandeep Reddy, with Suhas playing the lead role, the film is slated for release on October 12. The makers have already screened the film in various cities, receiving positive responses. "We've shown the film to people ranging from young kids to 90-year-olds and they all appreciated and enjoyed it," said Sandeep. The idea for the film, Sandeep revealed, was inspired by people in his own circle of family and friends. "I come from a middle-class background and I like telling stories that reflect that experience," he said. In *Janaka Ayithe Ganaka*, the protagonist sues a condom company, and the film also highlights issues like the exorbitant fees in private schools. "One school asked for an Rs. 8 lakh donation for a fourth-class student. I've included facts like these in the film, along with middle-class emotions and a courtroom drama," Sandeep explained. The film is narrated in a humorous yet emotionally resonant manner. "I've always been a fan of Jandhyala and his films. If you like his style, you'll definitely enjoy my film," said Sandeep, adding that there are no adult dialogues in the movie. "It's a clean entertainer and the censor board has already cleared it with a U/A certificate." Sandeep initially narrated the story to Naga

Chaitanya, who responded positively. However, due to his commitments to Sekhar Kammula's film, Naga Chaitanya couldn't take up the project. "I then approached Dil Raju Garu, who accepted the story immediately and suggested Suhas for the lead role," Sandeep shared. He also praised Suhas' exceptional performance. "During the shoot, Suhas' wife gave birth and that personal experience helped him connect deeply with the story." The director noted that while films like *Vicky Donor* and *Badhaai Ho* have succeeded in Bollywood, such out-of-the-box stories are rare in Telugu cinema. "When Dil Raju accepted my story right away, I was a bit surprised. But Telugu audiences always support good films and I'm confident they'll appreciate this one too." Sangeethana, the female lead, has a well-defined role, Sandeep said. "After considering many actresses, I randomly found Sangeethana on Instagram. We conducted a workshop before filming to fine-tune her language skills. She dubbed her own lines and speaks just like a native Telugu girl." "It's a hilarious film that people will thoroughly enjoy, I can assure you," Sandeep concluded, speaking with confidence about *Janaka Ayithe Ganaka*.

Get ready to fall in love with Megna Mukherjee because she's all set to woo the Telugu audience with her debut, in *Baraabar Premistha*. In an exclusive chat with *The Pioneer*, she discusses her humble beginnings, from modelling to the film industry, getting onboard, learning Telugu and more

New face alert! Megna enters spotlight with *Baraabar Premistha*

TEJAL SINHA
tejal.sinha30@gmail.com

A debut into the world of Telugu cinema is heading towards its release! Having placed multiple feathers in her hat, Megna Mukherjee is now all set to woo the Telugu audience with her mesmerising beauty and extremely talented prowess.

Which movie, you ask? Well, it's the upcoming film *Baraabar Premistha*, starring none other than the 'attitude star' Chandrabhass.

The former Miss India Finalist has been one artiste in the Indian entertainment industry who's shown the spirit and vibe of being a go-getter for all the right reasons. One of the finest trained jazz dancers in the industry, as far as her acting chops are concerned, she'd gone viral last year in an advertisement with Sourav Ganguly for all the right reasons.

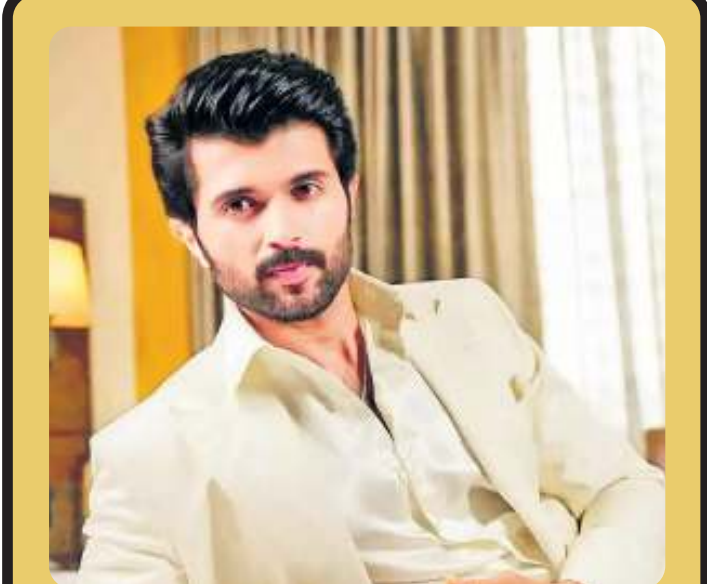
Directed by Sampath V Rudra, the film is jointly being produced by producers Geda Chandu, Gayathri Chinni and Venkateswar Rao. The *Baraabar Premistha* team is all set to head toward the promotions of the film and here we have the lead actress for an exclusive chat. "I am very excited," expresses Megna with an immense sense of excitement for her debut. "The shoot has been completed and it's ready for release. The film will mostly be releasing by October end or the first week of November. It's all going to happen in the next 30-40 days! The promotions will start in the next few days. I'm super excited because this is going to be my first Telugu movie. I've been preparing for it, learning Telugu for this and my future projects."

Acting was something she knew that she had to take forward ever since she was about 15 years old. She had to go through her own process, which included performing in the school plays, making her shine up for herself, of course with no idea about how industry worked. "It was then that I got an opportunity to participate in Times Fresh Face and then a year later, Miss India happened," she harks back, adding, "Along with that, I was doing my college. I began auditioning for television commercials; I locked a few and did a few. One of them went viral. It was with Sourav Ganguly that went viral." These opportunities opened the doors for Megna, as she had begun getting in talks for films and web series. "It was then that this film came to me; I did the look test and here I am making my debut," she enthuses with great regards.

A new language, a new industry—were you a little nervous? We ask her and she quickly affirms, "On the first day, I was very nervous because I didn't know the language. I've

grown up in Mumbai. It was nerve-wracking for me. I don't know how I'd perform here. Never wanted language as a barrier. However, our director was so confident that as long as I emote, I'll be able to do my lines well. He gave me the confidence largely to believe in myself and not be afraid of speaking in a new language." But getting the right slang? She adorably asks us, "Ela Unaru" and we laugh out loud. "I began working a month before the film started. Every day, I was learning my lines with a Telugu teacher. She helped me a lot through the process. I was learning a language that I had no idea about. But now I actually understand everything that everyone is saying around. I've picked up a few words and a few sentences—maybe 15% of the language. I even had a person on the set who was constantly helping me with the lines."

Baraabar Premistha is a story about two college-going youngsters who are around 19-20 years old. They hail from two different villages and both of the villages have a rivalry. Though Megna and Chandrabhass' characters both hate each other initially, they eventually fall in love later. Overcoming the obstacles—what happens next—you'll have to watch on the big screen. "My character's name is Bujamma and everyone calls her Bujji. I'm a 20-year-old girl in this film who's not shy, doesn't have inhibitions and doesn't tolerate bad attitudes from anyone. My character is not this stereotypical shy girl. That usually is, you know, what you expect in a love story. I think my character in the film is also someone who speaks out what comes to her mind and I'm also someone like that in my real life." Going ahead, she also speaks of her camaraderie with her co-star. "What really helped me was that I think we were of very similar age. I was 23. He was 24. We were almost the same age. There was some kind of relatability while we were working together. We did shoot for 5-6 months. We became good friends over a period of time. We've laughed together, cried together and fought with each other, but I think that's how you become a really good friend." *Baraabar Premistha*, she reveals, was shot in three different locations: Hyderabad, Karimnagar and Kerala. "Ideally, it was like you start your day at 6 AM, you get ready and you do your first shot by 8:30ish. Everyday was a different experience, emotionally and work-wise. But let me tell you, the best thing about the South is that you wrap up the work at 6 every day. You get to have your own little me time," she gleefully shares as we were about to end the interview. But again, there was something she had to say to our dearest readers: "I actually have signed another film, but I can't talk too much about it because it's not been announced yet. I would love to tell the audience that I hope I can make a small place in your heart. I've worked really hard and I hope people go watch the film."



Injury prevention or fitness frenzy; VD keeps his physiotherapist close

Upon seeing the initial appearance of Vijay Deverakonda and director Gowtam Tinnanuri's movie, the actor's transformation piques everyone's interest. Vijay consistently puts forth his maximum effort in each film and diligently strives to embody the character. The movie is not officially titled, but the creators refer to it as *VD12* and it falls under the action genre. Bhagyashree Bhorse plays the main female role. Vijay Deverakonda is being extra cautious to avoid injuries as he dips his toes into the action genre for the first time. According to a source, "Vijay Deverakonda is all set to explore the action genre in *VD 12*. To avoid injuries while preparing for his action-packed role, the actor always has his physio with him. His physio is always there while shooting the action sequences, so that he is able to complete it without any injury." This update truly demonstrates Vijay Deverakonda's awareness of personal safety and well-being, making it quite interesting. It also emphasises the actor's dedication to creating an exciting entertainment with *VD 12* by putting in a lot of effort. The film is scheduled for release on March 28, 2025 by the makers.

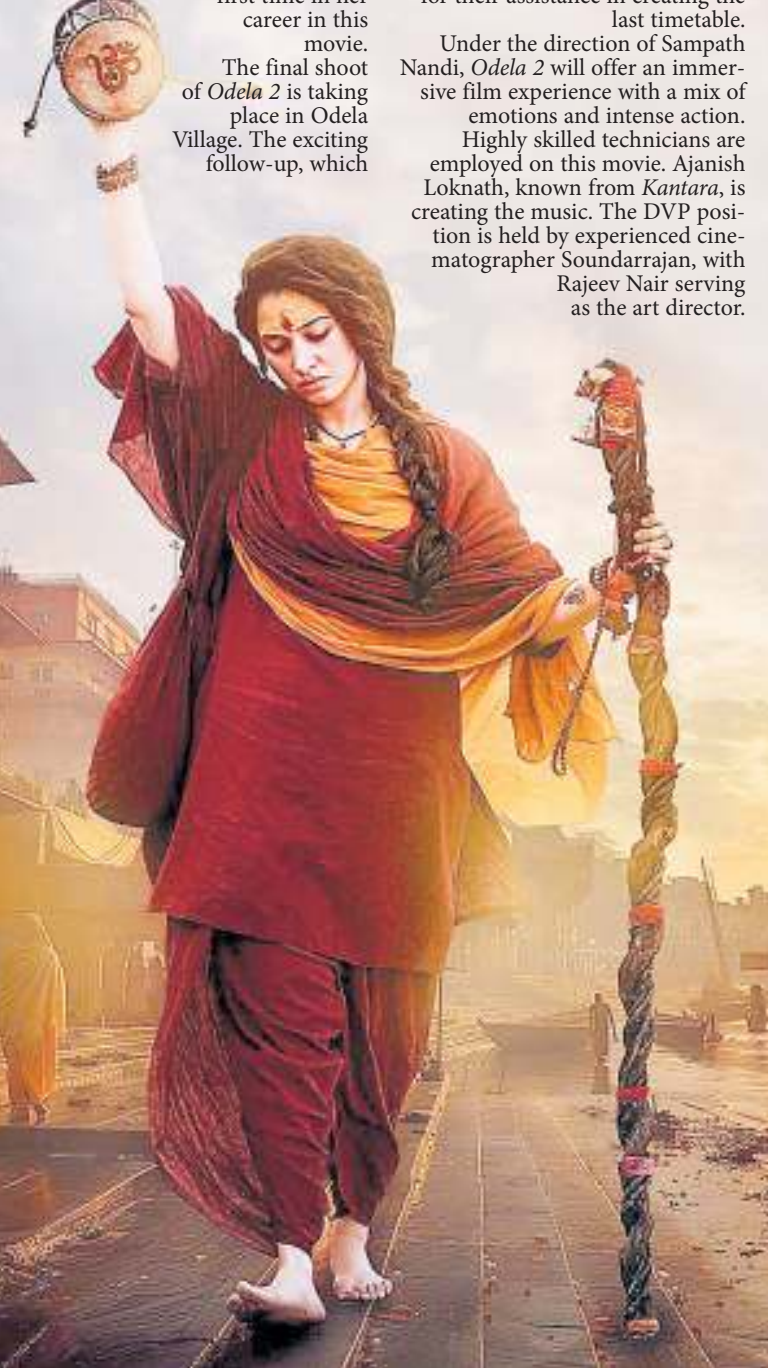
I DON'T PARTICULARLY LIKE WATER, SO UNDERWATER SCENES ARE TOUGH FOR ME: JR NTR

Jr NTR is feeling content despite the mixed reception of his film *Devara*, as it has performed well at the box office and is on its way to becoming a blockbuster. The setting of the movie is the ocean and the creators built a large set in Hyderabad specifically for this purpose. Some action scenes take place underwater on screen, but executing them during filming is extremely challenging. The actor discusses the challenging scenes and how they were filmed underwater. "The underwater sequences, along with the shark scenes, took us about 35 days to shoot and it wasn't easy," he explained. Water added another layer of complexity to the process. "I don't particularly like water; I'm more of a mountain person, so it was tough," he admitted. Yet, as an actor, he understands the necessity of facing extreme situations, regardless of personal comfort. The physical demands of underwater filming were intense. "Being in the water for long periods took a toll on my health," he added, highlighting the challenges posed by the winter cold and the rigors of constantly getting in and out of the pool. Despite these hardships, the rewards of seeing the film's release and receiving applause made the struggle worthwhile. "When you see the applause—especially for that sequence—it makes you forget the hard work." One of the more technical aspects of underwater filming involves breath control. "As for how long I can hold my breath? About a minute, which is enough to get the shots," he explained. However, the depths they filmed at—around 10 to 12 feet—added another layer of difficulty, with pressure changes requiring constant ear adjustments. "Visibility is tough; after removing my goggles, everything becomes a blur," he described, adding that chlorine often resulted in red eyes. "It was thrilling enough to keep doing it every day. It truly was a beautiful experience," said Jr NTR.



Odela 2 lands in Odela village for final schedule

Tamannaah Bhatia, Madhu Creations, and Sampath Nandi are all working together to bring a new and exciting character to life in the highly awaited sequel *Odela 2*. This movie, directed by Ashok Teja, is the sequel to the 2021 blockbuster hit *Odela Railway Station*. The initial glance, poster and behind-the-scenes material have already caused a stir. Tamannaah is portraying Shivashakti (Naga Sadhu) for the first time in her career in this movie. The final shoot of *Odela 2* is taking place in Odela Village. The exciting follow-up, which began in Kashi with Mahadev's blessings, is currently being filmed in Odela Mallanna Kshetra. Key scenes are being filmed by the team at the picturesque sites of the famous Odela Mallanna temple and village. Tamannaah, Murali Sharma, Hebba Patel, Yuva, along with other actors, are taking part in the filming. This is the first time Tamannaah is filming in Odela village. The producers expressed their appreciation to the Odela villagers for their assistance in creating the last timetable. Under the direction of Sampath Nandi, *Odela 2* will offer an immersive film experience with a mix of emotions and intense action. Highly skilled technicians are employed on this movie. Ajanish Loknath, known from *Kantara*, is creating the music. The DVP position is held by experienced cinematographer Soundarajan, with Rajeev Nair serving as the art director.



Emraan Hashmi suffers injury while shooting *Goodachari 2*



Emraan Hashmi, sustained an injury while filming for *Goodachari 2*. The actor Adivi Sesh takes on the lead role, while Vinay Kumar serves as the director. Per the producers, Emraan Hashmi was filming a high-octane action scene that required him to leap from a distance and sustain a neck injury. The creators stated that the injury is not serious and the actor is in good condition. Adivi Sesh is the main actor in *Goodachari 2*, which is the follow-up to the successful movie *Goodachari*. Adivi Sesh's previous movie *Major* was launched in various languages such as Hindi, Tamil, Kannada and

Malayalam, excluding Telugu. Therefore, the actor is currently strategizing to launch *Goodachari 2* in multiple languages. The source explains that is the reason why they enlisted Bollywood actor Emraan Hashmi for an important part! The Bollywood actor has recently agreed to be in another Telugu movie called *OG* alongside AP Deputy Chief Minister Pawan Kalyan. The actor is very occupied in the southern region with these two movies. The makers mentioned that the team of *s* will start a foreign schedule shortly to film crucial scenes with the main cast. The movie will be coming out in 2025.