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Published From: HYDERABAD DELHI LUCKNOW BHOPAL RAIPUR CHANDIGARH BHUBANESWAR RANCHI DEHRADUN VIJAYAWADA



QUOTE OF THE DAY

This is not the time to engage in politics. It is the time to work together for the people. The people are in trouble and so I went to the secretariat keeping politics aside. The previous government did not invite and did not meet Union Ministers when floods occurred.

- Bandi Sanjay Kumar, Union Minister

DON'T MISS...

AI Voice helps solve complicated...

Explaining the use of AI in the context of law in a panel discussion on the second day of the Global AI Summit 2024 on Friday, Senior Curator at Agami and Lead at OpenNyAI, Varun Hemachandran said that AI Voice is a crucial tool to bridge the language gap between technology and lawyers, especially in communities with literacy challenges. With 44 million cases pending and over 99 per cent of citizens unable to afford a lawyer, it takes 4 to 5 years to resolve a case. Hemachandran said that technology is essential...

-PAGE: 3

Thousands take part in human ...

Thousands of people across five districts of Imphal Valley on Friday took part in a series of human chain rallies to protest the recent drone and gun attacks in Manipur that resulted in two civilian deaths and 12 injuries. Participants also expressed dissatisfaction with the government's handling of the ongoing conflict in the state. Organised by the Coordinating Committee on Manipur Integrity (COCOMI), the rally saw school and college students in uniform, as well as women from various localities, lining up ...

-PAGE: 5

Carbon fibre will be produced by ...

Union Textiles Minister Giriraj Singh on Friday expressed confidence that the niche carbon fibre -- which is used in aerospace, civil engineering and defence as an alternative to metal -- will be produced by India in 2025-26. Currently, India does not produce any carbon fibre and relies completely on imports from countries such as the US, France, Japan and Germany. The European Union's proposed Carbon Border Adjustment Mechanism, a tax on embedded carbon imports, is expected to kick in ...

-PAGE: 8

Neeraj Chopra qualifies for...

India's two-time Olympic medal-winning javelin throw star Neeraj Chopra has qualified for this month's season finale of the prestigious Diamond League after finishing fourth in the overall standings at the end of its 14 series meetings across the world. The season finale will be a two-day affair on September 13 and 14 in Brussels. Chopra accumulated 14 points from his two second-place finishes in the one-day meets held in Doha and Lausanne. He skipped the last series meet in Zurich...

-SPORTS

SHIVRAJ SINGH CHOUHAN AFTER AERIAL SURVEY OF FLOOD-HIT AREAS

Rs 3,448 cr immediate SDRF aid to TG, AP

PNS ■ NEW DELHI/HYDERABAD

Agriculture Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan on Friday announced an immediate assistance of Rs 3,448 crore to mitigate the impact of floods in Andhra Pradesh and Telangana. Chouhan, who is in Telangana today after reviewing the flood situation in Andhra Pradesh, said: "No one needs to be disappointed. We are working to provide immediate help". Presently, the arrangement is being made to provide immediate assistance of Rs 3,448 crore under the State Disaster Relief Fund (SDRF), which also includes the central government's share, he said.

After providing immediate assistance, the government will think about making available fertilisers and seeds to farmers for the next crop, he added. The minister also assured the farming community that the Centre will provide appropriate compensation after the assessment of the crop damage. "We will ask the banks not to recover loans from farmers in times of crisis," he added. Chouhan conducted an aerial survey of crop damage in flood-hit areas of Meenavalu, Peddagopavaram, Mannur, and Kattleru, of Telangana. He also met people in Khammam and discussed their problems, an official statement said. The minister mentioned that Prime Minister Narendra Modi is concerned about the flood situation in Andhra Pradesh and Telangana.



'IT IS ONLY A RUMOUR'

Chandrababu: Estimates will be sent today

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

AP Chief Minister Chandrababu Naidu has made interesting comments in the context of reports that the Centre has announced Rs 3,300 crore as flood relief for Telugu states.

The CM made it clear that they have not yet received any information about the Centre's assistance for flood-affected areas in the state. He clarified that the announcement of Rs 3,300 crore flood assistance to AP and Telangana is just a rumour.



Provide funds to TG on par with AP: CM Revanth

- Telangana suffered a loss of Rs 5,438 crore due to floods: CM
- Relax norms for using disaster funds: CM

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Chief Minister Revanth Reddy briefed Union Agriculture and Rural Development Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan and Bandi Sanjay at the Secretariat on Friday. Before meeting the CM, the Union Ministers inspected flood-affected areas.

The Chief Minister said the state suffered a loss of around Rs 5,438 crore due to the flood as per preliminary estimations. The CM explained to the Union Minister that all departments are busy collecting details of actual damage. The damage will increase once a comprehensive assessment is made, he said.

Chief Minister Revanth Reddy held a meeting with Union Ministers Shivraj Singh Chouhan and Bandi Sanjay at the Secretariat on Friday. Before meeting the CM, the Union Ministers inspected flood-affected areas.

Deputy Chief Minister Bhatti Vikramarka, Ministers Tummala Nageswar Rao, Ponguleti Srinivas Reddy and CM's Advisor Vem Narender Reddy were also present.

-5-

No construction in buffer zones of lakes, even by govt: HC

REVAHNT CHITHALURI
revanth.chithaluri@gmail.com
■ HYDERABAD

Justice T. Vinod Kumar of the Telangana High Court said that the government also cannot construct anything in the buffer zones of lakes. Hearing a writ petition on Friday, the court said that buffer means buffer for the lake and not for roads or parks. This case is based on an order issued by the government barring new buildings and development projects within 50 meters of the Musi River for the Musi Riverfront Development Project.

The petitioner, Subbagari Ramakrishna Reddy, and others filed a writ challenging the government order. The petitioner told the court that the GHMC had issued an order asking him not to change the use of his land located in Amberpet.

When the counsel told the court that the government had ordered not to allow buildings 50 meters from the Musi River, the court said that no one could construct anything in the river's buffer zone.

Continued on Page 5

Centre will announce help only after estimating the loss: Bandi

'Went to the Secretariat keeping aside politics'

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

The Union Minister of State for Home Affairs, Bandi Sanjay Kumar, said the Centre will announce help only after estimating the loss due to floods. He said that they had discussed it all with Chief Minister Revanth Reddy.



"This is not time for politicking. It is time to work together for the people. The people are in trouble and so I went to the Secretariat keeping politics aside. In the past, the BRS government did not invite me and did not meet Central Ministers when

Central teams were touring the state and that the Centre would allot funds after estimating the loss.

-5-

BRS condemns 'rising crimes' against women

Harish, Sabita, other leaders visit assaulted tribal woman

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

BRS MLA Harish Rao, accompanied by Sabita Indra Reddy, Sunitha Laxma Reddy, Talasani Srinivas Yadav, Malla Reddy, MLA Mutta Gopal and former chairman Erolla Srinivas, visited

Gandhi Hospital to console the tribal woman from Jainoor, who is currently undergoing treatment after a brutal assault. The girl suffered serious injuries as her face was smashed with a stone.

-5-

Mahesh Kumar Goud is TPCC president

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

As expected, the AICC announced the current TPCC Working President MLC Bomma Mahesh Kumar Goud as the new TPCC President. AICC President Mallikarjuna Kharge appointed B. Mahesh Kumar Goud as the TPCC President with immediate effect on Friday.



B. Mahesh Kumar Goud is the fourth president of the Telangana Pradesh Congress Committee (TPCC) after the formation of Telangana state in June 2014.

The first leader to lead the party after the State was formed was Ponnala Lakshmaiah. He served as the TPCC president for nearly a year from March 2014 to March 2015.

Later, N. Uttam Kumar Reddy functioned as the TPCC president from March 2015 to June 2021. Revanth took charge on July 7, 2021, and continued till September 6, 2024.

The AICC went by the word of the outgoing TPCC President, Chief Minister Revanth Reddy, and appointed Mahesh Kumar Goud even though discussions had been going on regarding the new president for a long time. In the end, the party picked Mahesh Kumar Goud, who belongs to a BC community of South Telangana.

KCR conducts Navagraha homam and Chandi Yagam

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Amidst speculation about his re-entry into active politics, former Chief Minister K. Chandrasekhar Rao (KCR) has been hogging attention due to his spiritual programmes.

KCR conducted a series of special poojas and yagams on Friday at his farmhouse in Gajwel Erravalli in Siddipet district.

The spiritual function, involving a 'Navagraha homam' under the guidance of Vedic scholars, raised eyebrows among political observers as it coincided with the BRS's rising challenges.



It is reported that KCR conducted the yagam due to recent developments like losing power, facing medical issues and family members undergoing difficulties. The Chandi yagam was

-5-

-5-



HAPPY GANESH CHATURTHI

The Pioneer wishes its readers, advertisers, suppliers, vendors, and agents a happy Ganesh Chaturthi. As our offices will remain closed today (07-09-2024), there will be no issue of the paper on Tuesday (08-09-2024)

— Resident Editor

Happy Vinayaka Chavithi

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PAPER WITH PASSION

India the peacemaker

With Putin now suggesting that India could mediate in peace talks, India's role on the global stage continues to grow

The Russia-Ukraine war, which erupted in February 2022, has resulted in devastating human and economic losses...



Now, Putin suggests that this could serve as a basis for future discussions, with mediation from nations like India, China, and Brazil...

Prime Minister Modi's diplomatic stance has been underscored by his visit to Ukraine last month. During this historic visit, PM Modi met with Zelenskyy...

PICTALK



Giant panda cub Katyusha, the first panda bear born in Russia plays with her mother at a zoo in Moscow.

The death of window shopping: How e-commerce stole the joy

Spontaneity has given way to algorithms, and the sensory delights of browsing have been replaced by sterile scrolling

Once upon a time, I was a passionate window shopper. I could spend hours gallivanting in a mall or a market, viewing and trying out things I didn't need...



once an opportunity to step out of our daily routines, to wander through aisles with no particular destination in mind...

ries and play a significant role in our attachment to the items we purchase. Online shopping, in contrast, offers a purely visual experience...

veniences, we must also consider what we are losing in the process. The act of shopping is not just a means to an end but a valuable experience in itself.



ASHA IYER KUMAR

veniences, we must also consider what we are losing in the process. The act of shopping is not just a means to an end but a valuable experience in itself.

(The author is a columnist and writing coach based in Dubai. Views are personal)

Sexism in politics: The unfinished battle



ARCHANA DATTA

The recent disparaging remarks by Donald Trump against Kamala Harris have once again spotlighted the rampant sexism entrenched in politics

The Republican presidential nominee Donald Trump's recent disparaging comments against her Democratic rival, Vice President Harris about her 'appearance', re-established the fact that 'sexism is very much alive in American politics'.



HARRIS' ENTRY INTO THE PRESIDENTIAL BATTLE HAS UNLEASHED A WAVE OF MISOGYNY, AND PERSONAL ATTACKS ON HER MARRIAGE AND STEPCHILDREN. SHE IS ALSO ACCUSED OF LEANING INTO 'BEING BLACK FOR POLITICAL EXPEDIENCY'

Research Centre). Along the party lines, 25 per cent of Republicans are of the view that 'men generally make better leaders than women, only 4 per cent said that women are better suited to lead.'

such behaviour and/or violence was intended primarily to dissuade them from continuing in politics. While 'young and feminist women parliamentarians are particularly targeted'...

arians aren't taken seriously... and male members have been often preferred for speaking on serious issues, while, women are only expected to raise soft issues.

(The author is former Director General, Doordarshan, All India Radio; views expressed are personal)

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

FALL FROM GRACE

Madam — Malayalam film Industry has been in a crisis since the release of Hema Committee report which has recorded sexual exploitation by senior artistes/technicians...

Gopalaswamy J | Chennai

TEACHERS' CONTRIBUTION TO THE SOCIETY Madam — The interruption of the Covid had been epochal and served to direct our focus on education, across the globe.

Eco-friendly Ganesha



With environmental concerns gaining too much ground, many of the well wishers of Lord Ganesha in the city have

started to conduct environmentally friendly Ganesha Utsav celebrations this year. So it is our earnest desire to avoid pollution. Paint from Ganesha Idols could form a deadly cocktail with oil spill on the sea may cause environmental problems after Ganapati immersion...

Jayanthi Ramaswamy | Mumbai

FOR THE LOVE OF FOOTBALL

Madam — Rarely do our politicians talk sense. It was heartwarming therefore, to hear the CM of UP, Yogi Adityanath, announce that a number of football stadia as well as a large number of football grounds will be prepared to give a boost to the "beautiful game".

Avinash Godbole | Dewas

emerges a rare opportunity for a seminal rethink or even reinvent with greater imagination and resolve. While planners and social scientists devise the content of education in a time horizon, its quality is entirely determined by the calibre, training and upgrade of the teachers and their leadership, creativity and innovation.

R Narayanan | Navi Mumbai

Send your feedback to: letterstopioneer@gmail.com



FIRST COLUMN

FINDING PEACE AMIDST THE CHAOS

Embrace divine shelter to overcome life's struggles



AJIT KUMAR BISHNOI

It may sound very insulting, but this is what most of us, if not almost all of us routinely do. Because it is so natural to do. We have a deep desire for something considered most dear. Or, we may not want to lose something considered crucial for our existence. So what do we do? We keep on thinking about it. Yes, we also do whatever we can to ensure it or should. What happens in most cases? We fall short because we are small, and helpless in the ultimate sense. God keeps control of Himself regarding the fruits of our actions. (The Bhagavad-Geeta 2.47) We have only been given the right to desire and do. (2.47) But we either don't give up trying by ourselves or with the help of others, if we choose to do that. Now worry sets in because we have set our hearts on it. And we hurt ourselves both in terms of mental health and physical health because they are so intertwined. Are we doomed? No, we are not, if we choose to do what we are expected to do, which is to approach God. That is why our scriptures, especially the Bhagavad-Geeta, persuade us to do that. I will cite some verses in this connection. The verse #18.62 goes like this, "In all respects take shelter of God only. By His mercy, you will achieve supreme peace." What does this mean? We will not suffer from mental problems, by which a quarter and more in the world are suffering. (9.22) Isn't what we want? You get started on this path and start becoming deserving. God will respond suitably. But our natures won't allow us to do what God wants us to do to qualify for His 'kripa' (grace). Even if we somehow curb our natures, our egos come in the way. For



Several developments in Bangladesh since the ouster of Sheikh Hasina raise the question: Is that country set to become a fundamentalist Islamist state and a cradle and exporter of Islamist terrorism? As of now, none of what the students who led the Anti-Discrimination Students' Movement (ADSM) have said indicates that they support fundamentalist Islam or terrorism. It is, however, not clear what they stand for. A report in the *Dhaka Tribune* (dated August 16, 2024) quoted Nahid Islam, one of the coordinators of the ADSM and an advisor in the interim government, as saying, "The spirit of the movement was to create a new Bangladesh, one where no fascist or autocrat can return." The same reported quoted him as saying that structural reforms were needed to achieve this aim, and that would require time.

One does not know what structural reforms they have in mind and the policies they intend to pursue. *The Tribune* report in question quotes Tahmid Chowdhury, another student leader, as saying that they were still working out their programme, which would be rooted in secularism and free speech. Reuters reported on August 16, 2024, that the students were contemplating forming their own party to carry their movement forward and bring a closure on the history of the last three decades when Bangladesh was governed either by the Awami League or the Bangladesh Nationalist Party. Not much has been heard about the matter since then. The question is whether the overwhelming majority of them share their leader's views. One needs to ask this as fundamentalist Islamist and terrorist organisations have been increasingly spreading their tentacles inside Bangladesh's colleges and universities. Consider the case of North South University (NSU), one of that country's best-known private universities. Professor Gias Uddin Ahsan, Dean of the School of Health and Life Sciences, and acting Pro-Vice-Chancellor, was arrested on July 16, 2016, along with two of his associates, for renting out his flat, and not informing the police about the fact of its being rented out and details of the tenants-which he was required to do. The flat was subsequently used by the

(The writer is a spiritual teacher, views expressed are personal)

Bangladesh: Terrorism redivivus?



HIRANMAY KARLEKAR

Some developments since the installation of the interim Government provides cause for concern



perpetrators of the terror attack at Holy Artisan Bakery restaurant in Dhaka on July 1, 2016. The University has suspended Professor Ahsan after his arrest. Earlier, it had dismissed four teachers for their links with the terrorist outfit, Hizb-ut Tahrir. Nibras Islam, one of the six identified as those attacking the Holy Artisan Bakery and killed by the police in the encounter that followed, was one of its students. Abir Rahman, one of those who attacked a police post guarding Bangladesh's largest eid prayer congregation at Sholakia in Kishoreganj on July 7, 2016, and was killed, was a student of NSU. The attack, which was repelled, led to three deaths. Quazi Mohammad Rezwanul Ahsan Nafis, who, in 2012, was convicted on the charge of attempting to blow up the New York Federal Reserve Bank, and of coming to the United States for waging jihad, had also been a student of NSU. Besides, all the young men-Sadman Yasir Mamun, Faisal Bin Nayeem Dwip, Ehsan Reza Rumman, Maksudul Hasan Anik, Nayeem Irad and Nafiz Imtiaz- arrested for killing the blogger and Ganajagan Mancha activist, Ahmed Rajib Haider, in 2013, were its students.



THE QUESTION IS WHETHER THE OVERWHELMING MAJORITY OF THEM SHARE THEIR LEADER'S VIEWS. ONE NEEDS TO ASK THIS AS FUNDAMENTALIST ISLAMIST AND TERRORIST ORGANISATIONS HAVE BEEN INCREASINGLY SPREADING THEIR TENTACLES INSIDE BANGLADESH'S COLLEGES AND UNIVERSITIES

Zia of the Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP) despite their being without a single first class." The report further stated that investigations by Prathom Also revealed that of the 122 teachers appointed during this period, 57 had been appointed by ignoring the recommendations of the Departmental Planning Committee and the number of posts advertised. Whether all this has caused a significant section of students to be influenced by militant fundamentalist Islam need to be seen, given the continued operations of terrorist organisations. A number of Bangladeshis had fought the Soviet forces occupying Afghanistan. The Soviet Union's defeat at the hands of the Mujahideen and withdrawal from the country in February, 1989, had boosted their morale as also that of militant Islamists the world over. Osama bin-Laden, who had been involved in the jihad and who harboured the vision of establishing sharia rule worldwide, helped the establishment of the Harakat-ul-Jihad-al-Islami Bangladesh (HUJIB) in 1992. The formation of Jama'at-ul-Mujahideen Bangladesh (JMB) and Jagrata Muslim Janata Bangladesh (JMJB), followed. Pressure from the United States and other Western countries following the large-scale violence unleashed by these organisations, compelled the Khaleda Zia government to act against them. More resolute action followed the ascent to power of the second Awami League-led government, with Sheikh Hasina as prime minister, in 2009. Nine Islamist terrorist groups were banned during her prime minister-ship. These included the JMB, Shahadat-e al-Hikma, Hizb ut-Tahrir, Hujji-B, Ansarullah Bangla Team and the last-named's subsequent reincarnation, Ansar al-Islam. The list also included Jamaat

Ansar Fil Hindal Sharqiya formed in 2018. Another seven Islamic extremist groups were blacklisted during her regime. These were Ulama Anjuman E Al Bayyinat, Neo-JMB, Dawlatul Islam Bangladesh, Hezbut Tawheed, At-Tamkin, Tamiruddin-Bangladesh and Towhidi Trust. Particularly active among these was the Ansar al-Islam, which played a major role in the murder of the bloggers, which began with the killing of Ahmed Rajib Haider in Dhaka on February 15, 2013 and continued until 2015. The Neo-JMB, however, is believed to have been behind the attack on the Holy Artisan Bakery which killed 23 persons, including three Bangladeshis, seven Japanese, nine Italians and one Indian. The tough measures that followed, had kept Islamist terrorism more and less under control. Following Sheikh Hasina's ouster, the Hizb-ut Tahrir (Hijb-ut) has been staging processions in different parts of Bangladesh and putting up posters articulating its ideology. On August 9, 2024, it held a rally in Dhaka demanding the establishment of an Islamic Caliphate in Bangladesh. Also, the statutes of two police officers who died fighting the terrorists at the Holy Artisan Bakery, have been destroyed and a Hijb-ut Tahrir poster has been found at the site. On its part, the interim government has released Jashimuddin Rahmani, the chief of the Ansarullah Bangla Team, now Ansar al-Islam. Neither all this nor the very cordial meeting Muhammad Yunus has had with leaders of the Jama'at and Hefazat-e-Islam, of course, indicates that the interim government supports Islamist militancy. Nevertheless, skating on thin ice is better avoided.

(The author is Consulting Editor, The Pioneer. The views are personal)

The United Nations' struggle for relevance in a changing global order

The United Nations faces unprecedented challenges that threaten its relevance in the modern world writes NAND KISHOR and AMAL CHANDRA

The United Nations (UN), a symbol of global cooperation since its founding in 1945, now finds itself at a pivotal moment. Established to promote international peace, security, and development, the organization faces growing pressure to reform in response to the ever-changing global landscape. However, despite widespread recognition of the need for restructuring, numerous obstacles hinder the reform process. Political, institutional, financial, legal, and socio-cultural barriers make consensus among member states difficult to achieve, thus stalling efforts to enhance the UN's relevance and effectiveness. Three critical areas demand attention—representation, effectiveness, and operational efficiency. Without

addressing these, meaningful reform remains elusive. One of the most significant barriers to UN reform is the veto power held by the five permanent members (P5) of the Security Council: China, France, Russia, the United Kingdom, and the United States. This power enables any of these nations to block resolutions, including those aimed at restructuring the UN. The P5's vested interest in maintaining their influential status has led to repeated failures to expand the Security Council to include new permanent members, such as India, which is the world's largest democracy. India's exclusion from permanent membership, despite its growing global influence, highlights a major flaw in the

UN's current structure. Similarly, other responsible powers, such as Japan and Germany, have long called for permanent seats on the Council. The reluctance of the P5 to share their privileged status stifles efforts to make the UN more representative of today's geopolitical realities. Another complicating factor is the principle of state sovereignty enshrined in the UN Charter. Many member states, particularly smaller or less powerful nations, are wary of reforms that they perceive as infringing on their sovereignty. These states fear that in a restructured UN, their voices might be drowned out by larger, more powerful countries. This divergence in priorities complicates efforts to build the broad consensus

necessary for substantial reform. While some states advocate for a more democratic and inclusive Security Council, others focus on regional issues or specific conflicts, making agreement difficult. The UN's effectiveness in addressing global challenges has been called into question, further complicating the reform debate. Public opinion and trust in the organization are crucial to its ability to implement meaningful changes. However, repeated failures to effectively address major crises, such as those in Afghanistan and Palestine, have eroded public confidence in the UN's capacity to respond to contemporary challenges. UN peacekeeping missions, a cornerstone of the organiza-



tion's efforts to maintain global peace, have also come under fire. Critics argue that these missions have often failed to prevent conflicts or protect civilians adequately. To enhance the effectiveness of peacekeeping operations, reforms must focus on improving the mandates, training, and resources available to peacekeepers. Additionally, addressing allegations of misconduct, including sexual

abuse and exploitation by peacekeepers, is essential to restoring the organization's credibility and ensuring accountability. These limitations highlight the urgent need for innovation and reform within the UN. Building and maintaining public trust is essential to securing the political and financial support necessary for any restructuring efforts. Efforts to improve the UN's operational efficiency, such as those initiated by former Secretary-General Kofi Annan, have demonstrated the institutional challenges of reform. While some administrative changes have been implemented, resistance from within the organization and differing priorities among member states have limited the

scope of these reforms. The UN's extensive bureaucracy presents a major obstacle to meaningful change. Established procedures and norms are deeply ingrained, making it difficult to implement significant reforms. Bureaucratic inertia often leads to resistance from within the organization, as staff and officials may be reluctant to change familiar processes and structures. Moreover, the UN's broad mandate, which covers peace and security, development, and human rights, adds complexity to any reform effort. This wide scope can lead to overlapping functions and responsibilities among different UN bodies, resulting in inefficiencies. Reforming the UN also involves navigating a com-

plex web of international law. Any proposed changes must comply with existing legal frameworks and secure broad international support. This legal complexity adds another layer of difficulty, as reforms must be not only politically acceptable but also legally sound. While the need for reform is widely acknowledged, the path to achieving it remains fraught with challenges. Political dynamics, institutional inertia, financial limitations, and legal hurdles all contribute to the slow pace of change. (Dr Kishor is the HoD of Politics and International Studies, at Pondicherry University and Chandra is an author, political analyst and columnist. Views expressed are personal)

'COLLECTING CHANDAS FOR GANESH CHATURTHI WAS ONE OF MY BEST CHILDHOOD MEMORIES'

TEJAL SINHA

It's finally the season when many of us await welcoming Ganapati Bappa to our house, blessing us with prosperity and happiness for the rest of the year.

What better could it be for us to bring you a memory of how Hyderabad celebrates Ganesh Chaturthi over the years for our special segment of Hyderabad, where our guest Dr. Srikanth Goggi, who dons multiple hats, including that of being a celebrity psychologist, hypnotherapist, professor and corporate coach, has also been known as Srikanth Acharya in the world of Telugu cinema.

Hyderabad holds a special place in his heart ever since he's been here in the city. Born in Delhi and of course, his father being an Army officer, travelling around due to his postings was an obvious but important part of his life. However, being in Hyderabad, ever since he recalls him to be of a 5-year-old, the city has been his favourite. Why? "No matter where I go, I only find peace when I'm back in Hyderabad," he shares while in a chat with us. The last posting his dad, he recalls, had was at Golconda. So, his childhood memories were all around Secunderabad!

"The people of Hyderabad have been very friendly," he shares as he goes on to recall how Hyderabad was a less crowded place with not much traffic. "There was also a lot of place to play outside; there were playgrounds." But one memory that has always stayed special is none other than the celebration of Ganesh Chaturthi. "I remember, we used to go to houses to collect chanda (dona-

tion) for Ganapati. That was like the best day. We used to go to Dhoolpet, the biggest hub where they prepare the idols. Now, if you see, you find the idols everywhere. We used to organise these grand poojas and every street had their own Ganapati pandal. We'd then visit the Kharatabad Ganasha, whose height just keeps increasing every year."

Another significance that the city holds for him is, "No matter the religion one belongs to, everyone

is one of the same, staying together. I remember, back then during my childhood, not everyone had a TV set in their house. So we all used to go to the neighbours house and watch the shows and films. Unlike these LCDs, there was this big television box. And again, my dad coming in his bullet with that 'dub dub dub' sound gets nostalgic. We had these hero cycles back then."

The legacy of food like the Irani samosa, chai and hotels has been something that was a must-visit every time his relatives came here. Then weekends were all about Zoo Park, Salarjung Museum, Charminar, Qutub Shahi Tombs and Golconda forts. Getting on the running buses to reach the colleges was again something he can never forget!

On the professional front, he had always wanted to get into acting. But of course things would take time. So, he worked with renowned magician "Shaado," also known as the Indian Houdini. His growing fascination with human psychology led him to pursue studies in clinical psychology, hypnotherapy, NLP and peak performance coaching. He transformed into an experienced therapist and successful coaching consultant, providing services for celebrities, athletes, companies, NGOs, PSUs and individuals, enriching their lives. He has motivated, inspired and assisted countless individuals through his television talks, coaching, training and therapy. The first Firewalk specialist in Telangana and AP, he has appeared over 2500 times on TV, both live and recorded. His acting career began with the Telugu movie Boy (2019), under the

mentorship of Vinay Varma, a renowned theatre artist, actor and casting director. He has also acted in various Telugu and pan-India movies such as DJ Tilla, Atharva, Tyson Naidu, Ismart Illalu, Wedding Dairies, Mr. Venkat Rao, Mannayi, Janaka Aiythe Yenaka and Pushpa 2 (The Rule).

"Vinay Varma played a major role in my acting career. I always wanted to play a psychologist and thanks to him, my debut role was that of a psychologist. At the very age of 14 years, I learned hypnosis. I used to perform these small mimimicries, little bits of magic. Eventually, from my 9th standard, I started doing stage shows, both on magic as well as hypnosis. Then, I developed interest in the field of psychology because I started reading books on personal development, self-improvement, memory training, meditation and these things. My father was instrumental in getting me books on hypnosis. He was my first guru who encouraged me. So that's how, once I became a clinical psychologist, I have started the institute on his name, GV Gopi

Vasdevacharya Institute of Psychology. I have done almost 10,000 plus shows all over India." He has also had the privilege to work with one of the associates of the renowned magician P.C. Sorcar.

"I did my postgraduate degree at Osmania University in clinical psychology. And I started practicing here in Hyderabad in the different centers and corporate hospitals." Going ahead, what's something that he likes and dislikes about the city? While the friendly people that the city has are something he loves about the city, on the other hand, the traffic is something that irks him much.

"Traffic is something that I've always witnessed here in the city since the beginning. That's something that has never changed. There are times people do not give place to ambulances as well."

But again, talking of well-being, "Hyderabad has got very good technology, infrastructure and highly qualified, dedicated professionals. People here are professional and not commercial. You do have black sheep in this profession as well. But infrastructure-wise, Hyderabad is very good. Here what I feel is this is a world-changing field, mental health. Those days, there were very few referrals to the psychiatrist and the clinical psychologist. There was not much awareness and a lot of stigma around it, which has now changed. Thanks to the media, you people are doing a fabulous job in bringing awareness, writing articles and helping people to understand what actually the worth of mental health and well-being is."



Hailing from Delhi and making Hyderabad his home, both personally and professionally, Dr. Srikanth Goggi, aka Srikanth Acharya, dons multiple hats, including actor and psychologist. For our special segment of Hyderabad, he takes us through his memorable Ganesh Chaturthi days and his love for the city

Penning spotlight with twisting path to stardom

AARTI SREENATH

Niren Bhatt's remarkable journey from a celebrated Gujarati playwright to a leading screenwriter in mainstream cinema is defined by versatility and innovation. Known for his work on hit films like *Munhya*, *Bala*, *Made in China*, *Wrong Side Raju*, *Stree 2* and *Bhedhiya*, he has seamlessly transitioned from the world of theatre to the silver screen. His writing portfolio also includes the popular TV show *Taarak Mehta Ka Ooltah Chashmah*, which played a pivotal role in establishing him as a prominent name in the industry. His ability to blend humour, social commentary and engaging narratives has made him a sought-after talent across multiple mediums, including television, OTT, and films. His love for storytelling began in childhood.

"I started writing my first play when I was in standard three," he recalls. His passion for the craft continued throughout his school and

college years, where he was recognised with College Youth Festival Awards, State Awards and even National Awards for his work in theatre. However, his initial career path was far removed from writing. "I worked in the corporate world briefly, but I knew my heart wasn't in it. Writing was my true calling."

In 2007, he took a crucial step by relocating to Mumbai to seek out writing possibilities. It wasn't long before he found success with the immensely popular television show *Taarak Mehta Ka Ooltah Chashmah*, which gave him the financial stability to focus on more creative projects. "That show was a turning point," he admits. "It gave me the freedom to experiment with other formats like films and music albums."

Balanced creativity with structure across different mediums has been one of his strengths. He believes that you need to understand the mediums very carefully. "Television and OTT platforms are more about character development, while cinema focuses on plot and visuals. Writing for each requires a different approach. With OTT, you get more freedom. A series allows you to explore characters in much greater depth—over 400 to 500 minutes compared to the 120 minutes you get in films."

His versatility is evident in his projects like *Bala* and *Made in China*, where he deftly blends humor with social messages. "Cinema is a medium to engage and entertain people. If you want to convey a social message, it should be subtle and woven into the story rather than preached directly," he notes.

Discussing the art of writing sequels, he further goes on to reflect on the challenges involved: "Writing a sequel is tricky because you need to understand what made the original

successful while also adding something fresh. For 3-2, I studied successful sequels and incorporated elements that stayed true to the essence of the original but enhanced the film."

Going ahead, working on films like *Stree* brought its own unique set of challenges, particularly in terms of the shooting conditions. "The first schedule was shot during the monsoons and we faced heavy rains and illnesses among the crew. The second schedule in winter was better, but the cold was brutal, especially during the shoot of the *Aaj Ki Raat* song."

When asked about his unique blend of comedy and horror in *Stree*, he explains, "Fear and humour complement each other well. When someone is scared, their reactions can be quite funny. It's all about creating situations where the two can intersect naturally."

Collaboration with actors like Rajkumar Rao, Shradha Kapoor and Varun Dhawan has been one of the highlights of his career. The dedication these actors show, he says, is incredible. For example, "During the shoot of *Bala*, we were filming in Delhi under sweltering heat and high pollution levels. Our actors had to endure the discomfort of wearing wigs and heavy costumes for long hours, yet they never complained. Varun shot in the freezing jungles of Arunachal Pradesh, dealing with leeches and other challenges, but his commitment never wavered."

For aspiring writers, he offers sound advice: "Draw inspiration from life, not just from films. The more experiences you have, the better

writer you'll become. Cinema reflects real life, so it's important to observe people, their behaviour and emotions. That's where the best stories come from. Immerse yourself in a variety of literature—novels, comics, Pulp novels, graphic novels and cultural texts. This exposure will enrich your creativity and storytelling abilities." He believes one needs to read to write better!

Looking ahead, he hints at exciting projects in the pipeline. "We're working on expanding the cinematic universe we've been building. One of the upcoming projects is a vampire-themed film, tentatively titled *Thama*. It will mostly feature Ayushmann Khurrana and will be a significant addition to our universe. There are many films and a couple of OTT shows also," he confirms.

Niren Bhatt's journey is one of creativity, resilience and a deep commitment to the art of storytelling. From the stage to the screen, his ability to adapt and innovate continues to captivate audiences and there's no doubt that his future projects will be just as compelling as his past work.



In an exclusive chat with *The Pioneer*, the popular screenwriter and lyricist Niren Bhatt discusses his formative journey, working on projects like *Taarak Mehta Ka Ooltah Chashmah* and movies like *Stree* and *Bhedhiya*. He also discusses his prowess in the field!

Navigating new Canadian student visa landscape

Canada has emerged as a top choice for international students seeking higher education abroad. The country offers a unique blend of academic excellence, cultural diversity, and personal growth opportunities. Students from around the world, including India, are drawn to Canada's renowned universities, welcoming cities, and exceptional quality of life. This combination of factors makes Canada an attractive destination for those looking to expand their horizons while pursuing academic goals. Moreover, compared to other popular study destinations, Canada provides a more affordable option for pursuing higher education.

Recent changes in Canadian study permit regulations

To ensure a smooth transition for international students, it's crucial to stay informed about recent updates to study permit and post-graduate work permit requirements. The Canadian government has recently introduced a two-year cap on study permit approvals, targeting 360,000 new permits for 2024. This represents a 35% decrease from the previous year. Additionally, provincial and territorial caps will be implemented, such as a 50% reduction in Ontario.

Understanding Canada student visa

For international students planning to pursue higher education in Canada, obtaining a Canada Student Visa is mandatory. This legal document, issued by the Canadian government, is essential for all foreign students who meet the eligibility requirements and provide the necessary documentation.

Study permit: A gateway to Canadian education

A study permit, also referred to as a student visa, is a crucial document issued by Canadian immigration authorities. It grants international students permission to study in Canada and is required for enrollment in designated learning institutions (DLIs). These DLIs are educational institutions approved by provincial or territorial governments to accept international students.

Eligibility criteria for Canada study permit

To be eligible for a Canada Student Visa, applicants must meet several requirements. First and foremost, students must be fully vaccinated with an approved vaccine, such as AstraZeneca/COVISHIELD or Bharat Biotech Covaxin. They must also have received acceptance from a designated learning institution. Financial capacity is another crucial factor. Applicants need to demonstrate sufficient funds to cover tuition fees, living expenses for themselves and any accompanying family members, and return transportation costs. Additionally, a police verification certificate showing a clean background and no criminal record is required. Health is also a consideration in the application process. Students must undergo a medical examination and provide a

certificate confirming their good health.

Essential documents for Canada study visa application

Once accepted by a Canadian college, students should begin the visa application process. For a September intake, it's advisable to start the process around June. The required documents for a Canada Student Visa application include a valid passport, an acceptance letter from a designated learning institution, proof of sufficient funds, passport-sized photos, and medical examination results. Language proficiency is also a key component of the application. Students must provide English language proficiency exam scores, such as IELTS or TOEFL. A statement of purpose outlining study plans is another crucial document. For undergraduate or non-degree programs, a provincial attestation letter is necessary.

Navigating Canadian visa application process

The application process for a Canada student visa involves several steps. First, applicants should check the current processing time on the Canadian consulate website. As of now, the processing time for Indian students is approximately six weeks. Applicants can choose from three application methods. The online method involves scanning documents, paying fees, and providing biometrics at a Visa Application Centre (VAC). The paper method requires downloading the application kit, following instructions, and submitting the required documents. This option is primarily for those with disabilities or non-national residents. The port of entry method allows in-person applications for Ukrainian nationals, US citizens/residents, or residents of Greenland, Saint-Pierre, or Miquelon. To assist with the application, students can complete the VFS Consent Form. There is a non-refundable processing fee, along with additional fees for family members if applicable. After submitting the application and supporting documents at the nearest VFS office, applicants receive a tracking number. If the application is approved, students must provide their passport to receive a Temporary Resident Visa and a Letter of Introduction.

Embracing Canadian educational journey

Pursuing higher education in Canada offers a unique opportunity for personal and academic growth, cultural immersion, and independence. By understanding the eligibility criteria, required documents, and application process for a Canada Student Visa, international students can navigate the process with confidence. Canada's esteemed universities, welcoming cities, and high quality of life continue to make it a top destination for those seeking a world-class education in a diverse and inclusive environment.

(The author, Gaurav Batra, is the CEO and Founder of Infinite Group.)





CELEBRATE WITH GRANDEUR & DEVOTION

Enhance your home with the Antique Lord Ganesha Idol by IGP.com, which embodies wisdom and knowledge. Crafted from resin, this ivory-toned idol features intricate details that bring Lord Ganesha's visage to life. With dimensions of 18 cm x 8 cm x 20 cm, this idol is perfect for any religious setting or as a cherished gift of good wishes.

GANESH CHATURTHI X ORRA FINE JEWELLERY

This auspicious Ganesh Chaturthi season, elevates your festive spirit with ORRA Fine Jewellery's exclusive diamond pendants, inspired by the divine charm of Lord Ganesha. Each pendant is meticulously crafted to blend traditional symbolism with contemporary design, offering a unique piece that radiates both spiritual significance and modern elegance. Echoing spirituality and serenity is this diamond Ganesha pendant embellished with 0.124 carat diamonds in 18Kt rose gold, a great adornment for traditional attire
Price - 47,352

Celebrate Ganesh Chaturthi in style with our curated list of must-have products to make your festivities extra special. We've handpicked everything you need to welcome Lord Ganesha into your home with love and joy. Discover the best products to elevate your celebrations and bring the divine blessings of Bappa into your life!

SWEET GIFT OF ELEGANCE

Celebrate the birth of Lord Ganesha this Ganesh Chaturthi by gifting your friends and family a present that stands out with its blend of sweetness and health benefits. HoneyAllDay presents a fantastic alternative to traditional gifts that are both delicious and healthy. Its products are filled with many antioxidants and antibacterial properties that enhance and strengthen the immune system



ADORN YOUR HOMES WITH TRADITIONAL YET CONTEMPORARY DECOR



THOUGHTFUL GIFTS FROM IGP

Gift your loved ones a blend of well wishes and prosperity with this exquisite Ganesha Idol and Badam Modak combo. The Ganesha idol, intricately crafted from high-quality resin, features a shining gold-finish crown and delicate ornaments that enhance its aesthetic appeal. Accompanying the idol are delicious badam modaks, each a perfect fusion of finely ground almonds.



Transform your living space with Fabindia's festive home décor offerings. From vibrant cushion covers and intricately designed table runners to traditional brass lamps, their collection adds warmth and elegance to your home.

GANESHA IDOLS THAT ARE MUST-HAVES

For those who appreciate rustic charm of traditional art, Ashnam Terracotta Abstract Ganesha is an excellent choice. This piece beautifully merges contemporary design with the timeless allure of terracotta, presenting Lord Ganesha in a distinct abstract form. Perfect for those who enjoy blending modern aesthetics with traditional elements, this sculpture can serve as a striking centerpiece in any home.



FESTIVE LOOK

Complete your festive look with Ganesh Chaturthi Fabindia's exquisite jewellery collection. Choose from a variety of traditional and contemporary designs, including gold-plated earrings, bangles and necklaces that perfectly complement your festive attire, adding a touch of elegance and grace to your celebrations.

SENSE OF CALM DURING FESTIVE SEASON

Indulge in Fabindia's range of personal care products, crafted to bring a sense of calm and rejuvenation during the festive season. Discover toxin-free skincare and bath essentials, including aromatic oils, soaps and body lotions, that pamper your senses and prepare you for the festivities.



Minister Seethakaa, along with film star and popular comedian Ali launched the T-shirt and Finishers' Medal for the World's Largest Cancer Awareness Run, "Quambiant Global Grace Cancer Run-2024." The run is to be held on October 6, across the globe in physical and virtual formats



On the occasion of 78th birthday of Sardar Vallabhai Patel, an organisation named Satya Sangeeth International by Omkar Raju has awarded around 50 people from various industries with Chief Guests- Vakulabharanam Krishna Mohan Rao-Telangana BC Commission ChairPerson, Dr. Geetanjali Annareddy- Doctor, socialite & entrepreneur Sreeja Reddy- socialite & entrepreneur in Ravindra Bharathi



Pathcare Labs Private Limited, Hyderabad, announced the launch of its division PATHCARE LIFESCIENCES, a speciality diagnostics segment.



Katrina Kaif has partnered with Xiaomi India. The actress-entrepreneur will serve as the brand ambassador for the brand's various products, including a diverse range of smartphones, TVs, tablets and more.



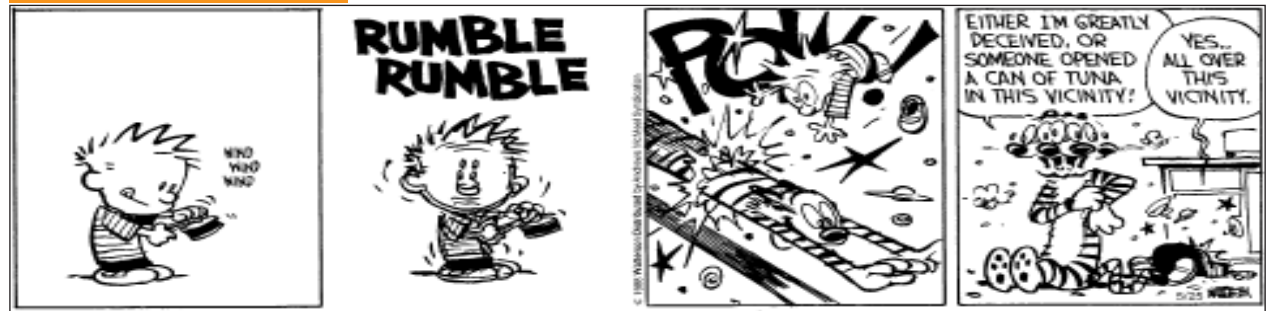
Apollo Hospitals Group has contributed Rs1 crore (Rupees One Crore) to the Chief Minister's Relief Fund in response to the recent devastating floods caused by torrential rains across multiple districts. Dr. Sangita Reddy, joint managing director of Apollo Hospitals had met Chief Minister, A. Revantha Reddy at the Secretariat in Hyderabad.

FUN

ARCHIE



CALVIN AND HOBBS



GARFIELD



NANCY



GINGER MEGGS



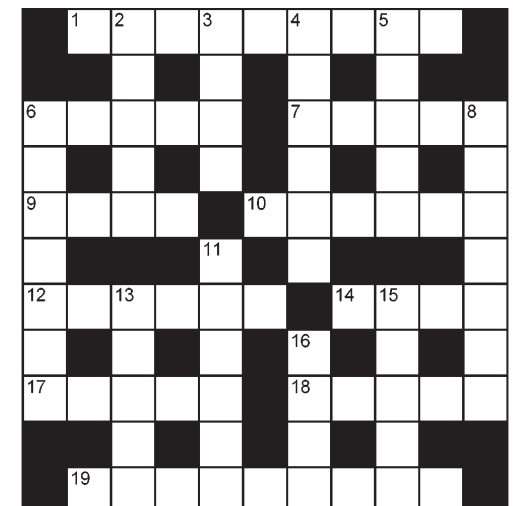
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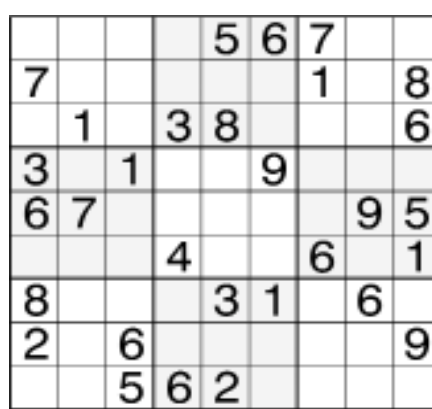
SPEED BUMP



CROSSWORD



SUDOKU



Yesterday's solution
 6 4 9 2 5 8 7 1 3
 3 8 7 6 9 1 2 5 4
 5 1 2 7 3 4 9 8 6
 4 6 8 3 2 5 1 9 7
 2 9 1 4 6 7 8 3 5
 7 5 3 8 1 9 4 6 2
 1 7 4 5 8 6 3 2 9
 8 2 5 9 7 3 6 4 1
 9 3 6 1 4 2 5 7 8

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

ACROSS

- 1 A four-sided shape
- 6 A month
- 7 A number of people or things together
- 9 Change direction
- 10 A road in a town
- 12 To tremble or shake a little
- 14 Female horse
- 17 Choose by votes
- 18 A grown-up
- 19 Put together from parts

DOWN

- 2 Mistake
- 3 Chatter
- 4 These are longer in winter

SOLUTION 840



35-CHINNA KATHA KADU: A GOOD FAMILY WATCH

SURESH KAVIRAYANI

Popular actor Rana Daggubati has always been on the forefront of supporting small films and once again, with the latest film *35—Chinna Katha Kadu*, he has once again done it. Lately, numerous small movies have been performing well at the box office and this particular film also had a successful release. In the upcoming days, there will be several major film releases, creating an opportunity for smaller films to shine. *35—Chinna Katha Kadu* is directed by Nanda Kishore Eemani, starring Rachakonda Vishwadev and Nivetha Thomas in the lead roles. Vivek Sagar composed the music.

STORY

Prasad (played by Vishwadev Rachakonda), who works as a bus conductor, resides in Tirupathi with his wife Saraswathi (played by Nivetha Thomas), a housewife and their two sons Arun and Varun. The family is content except for their eldest son, Arun. He struggles in Math and constantly questions teachers about the concept of

zero having no value, stating that adding one before zero should not result in ten but instead remain as zero. This is how Arun sees things. Chanakya (played by Priyadarshi), Arun's mathematics teacher, becomes furious and refers to Arun as a Zero before demoting him from sixth grade to fifth grade. Arun must sit in fifth grade with his brother, Varun. Arun's suspension from school resulted from a single event. In order to remain in school, he must achieve a minimum of 35 marks in mathematics. Arun's mother, Saraswathi, who did not pass the 10th grade, chose to see it as a challenge. What followed and did Arun receive 35 marks? Did he successfully complete the math course? What Chanakya did in the end is the crux of the story.

Learning is inherent in the process of education and ceasing to question indicates a lack of learning. It is the duty of the teacher to address the doubts of children when they have many. Only when you are able to achieve effective learning can you place all the blame on the children. The film began by focusing on a Brahmin family, depicting their day-to-day activities. The interactions between Prasad and Saraswathi depict their deep understanding and mutual love and respect for each other. The scenic setting in Tirupathi and the lovely atmosphere indicate that we are viewing a K Viswanath movie. The focus gradually shifts from the family to the school and children with the arrival of the math teacher, Chanakya Varma.

Arun inquired about his queries, which made Chanakya furious, leading him to instruct Arun to move to the back of the classroom. From this point on, the directors depict the children's friendship, their actions against the Chanakya teacher and their petty arguments. The pace of the storytelling slows down due to the numerous scenes, and it picks up some seriousness and emotional depth after Arun is suspended from school. Saraswathi saw it as a challenge when her tenth attempt at calling failed, so she made the decision to become her son's teacher. The interac-

tions between Saraswathi and Chanakya are very well portrayed and the director presented them in a meaningful manner with thought-provoking dialogues. Towards the conclusion, a specific scene becomes emotional as Prasad checks the marks while Arun pours water on the mirror. Though there are a few hiccups and the narration is also a bit slow, one should watch this film along with their kids. The dialogues are meaningful and well written. The cinematography and the ambience looks complete natural. The music is also good.

PERFORMANCES

Nivetha Thomas is the one who shines the most in artist performance. She is a skilled and established actress who once again portrayed the role of a mother. She handled her emotions and expression well, particularly the Tirupathi accent. For sure, this part will be unforgettable for her. Vishadev Rachakonda also receives a substantial role and he performs exceptionally in it. His acting comes across as extremely natural. This one is new for Priyadarshi; he defends his Chanakya Varma role more than his previous ones. Bhagya Raj, Gautami and Krishna Tej delivered strong performances. All children are outstanding, with Arun standing out the most.

VERDICT

In conclusion, *35—Chinna Katha Kadu* is a recommended movie to watch. Director Nanda Kishore Eemano deserves praise for both creating a strong storyline and eliciting strong performances from all the actors. This film is devoid of action, comedy, cop out dialogues and massy songs; it's a pure and contemplative piece. You ought to watch with your children.

ANALYSIS

There are rare opportunities to watch quality films that are intellectually stimulating without relying on intense action, violence, or other excessive elements. This is a great movie and director Nanda Kishore Eemani deserves all the

Cast: Vishwadev Rachakonda, Nivetha Thomas, Priyadarshi, Gautami, Bhagyaraj, Krishna Teja, Abhay and others

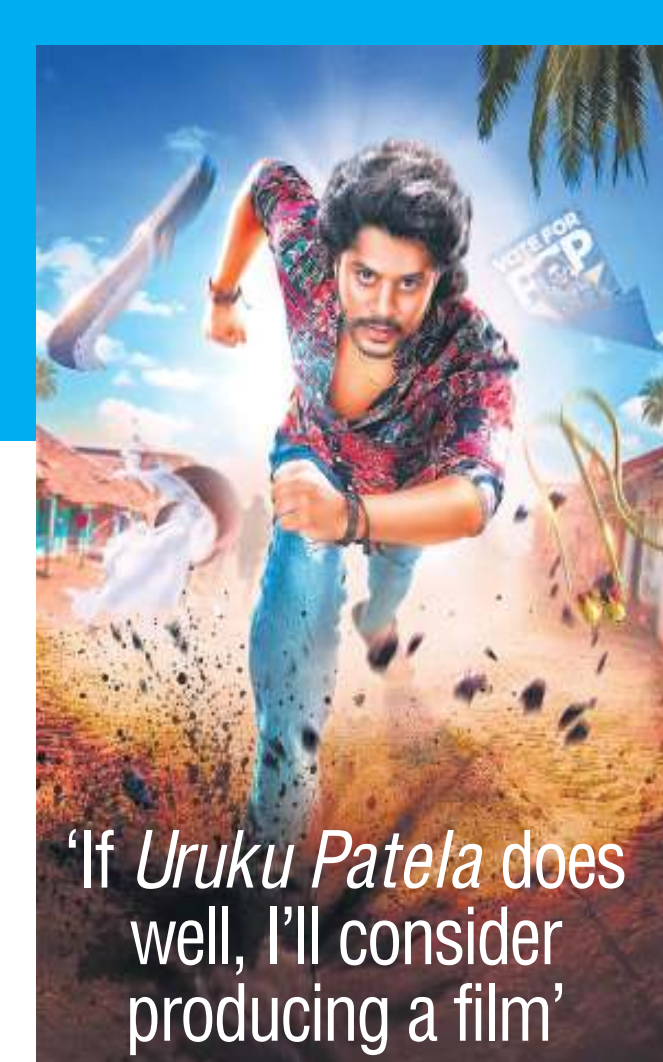
Writer and Director: Nanda Kishore Eemani

Producer: Sravan Yerabolu, Siddharth Rallapalli

Music: Vivek Sagar

Cinematographer: Niketh Bommi

Rating: 3/5



'If Uruku Patela does well, I'll consider producing a film'

PNSJ HYDERABAD

Actor Tejus Kancherla, who brought in a remarkable performance with *Hushaar*, is all set to enrapture the hearts of the audience with the upcoming film *Uruku Patela*. Basically, after *Hushaar*, which was released in 2018, Tejus did get opportunities and had heard many scripts; he was looking for a script that brings a fresh new story. However, when director Vivek Reddy presented the story of *Uruku Patela*, he was quite excited. "We developed the script together and now the movie is complete. The script was prepared, and we presented it to numerous producers. Even though everyone enjoyed the story, nobody was ready to allocate the required funds. In the end, my father caught wind of the story, enjoyed it and chose to bring the film to life." The film, with the tagline "Get Unrifified", is set in a Telangana backdrop with an accent that is easily understandable to everyone. "Since I was born and raised in Hyderabad, the accent wasn't an issue for me. The teaser and trailer provide a glimpse into the film's plot and tone. We aimed to give audiences a hint about what to expect, which is why we released these promotional materials," shares the *Uu Samayal Arayil* actor.

Uruku Patela, is intended to be justified by the content and will keep you laughing from start to finish, affirms the lead actor.

The female lead, Khushboo Choudary, hails from Uttarakhand. "Upon watching her reel, I reached out to her and she attended workshops and performed as instructed. Filming went smoothly without any problems," shares the actor, adding, "If this film does well and proves profitable, I might consider producing future projects. However, I won't be handling both production and acting simultaneously, as it's quite challenging." The film is directed by Vivek Reddy under the Lead Edge Pictures banner and produced by Kancherla Bala Bhanu. The music is composed by Praveen Lakkaraju, and cinematography is handled by Sunny Kurrapati. Meanwhile, he shares, "Uruku Patela is a film that the whole family can enjoy together. It's filled with humour. Inspired by various superstitions I read about during the lockdown, we crafted this story as a blend of thriller and comedy for complete entertainment." He further reveals, "I have a desire to direct in the future. I'm open to contributing to stories that come my way and love writing. If I find a role that excites me and seems fun, I'm open to doing special roles." The teaser and trailer have heightened expectations for the film, which will be released today as a Vinayaka Chavithi special.



Aishwarya Lekshmi's first glimpse from Sai Durgha Tej's film

Sai Durgha (Dharam) Tej is taking his time with film projects because he is proceeding at a steady pace and being selective about the films he chooses. His upcoming project is with director Rohith KP and they are currently shooting. However, the creators decided to reveal the first look of actress Aishwarya Lekshmi as the character Vasantha from the movie

as a sneak peek. Following the hits of *Virupaksha* and *Bro*, Sai Durgha Tej is now taking his time to work on his upcoming project. Currently, he is presenting Rohith KP as the director of this movie. As per reports, the actor has slimmed down and unveiled a total transformation. Sai Durgha Teja gained a significant amount of weight after the accident, but

now he has gotten in shape and toned up for this film, according to the source. Aishwarya Lekshmi has appeared in numerous Malayalam and Tamil films in the past and she has also ventured into producing a Tamil film. She is a skilled actress and is currently starring as the main character alongside Sai Dhurgha Tej in this film.

Because it is focused on performance, they have brought in Aishwarya Lekshmi. For her birthday, the creators unveil her initial appearance. The filming of the movie is currently taking place on a huge set built in RFC, Hyderabad. Sai Durgha Tej plays a strong role in this intense, historical action movie.



Nithiin, Shalini welcome their baby boy

Actor Nithiin had married his lady love, Shalini Kandukuri in 2020. The couple, who had announced their pregnancy ear-

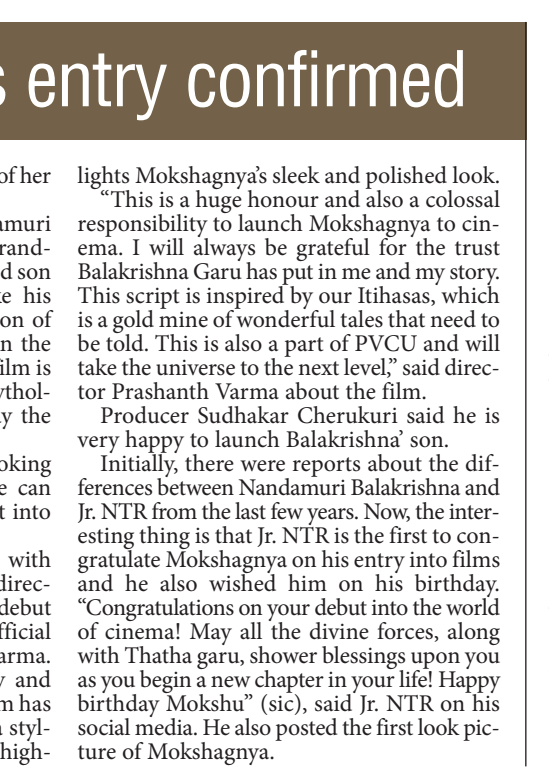
lier, on Friday announced delivering a baby boy. "We are delighted to share that actor Nithiin and his wife Shalini have been blessed with a baby boy. Both mother and baby are healthy and doing well," read the statement issued by the team. On the workfront, he is presently filming for *Thammudu*, directed by Sriram Venu, in the forests of Maredumilli in East Godavari district. It is anticipated that *Thammudu*, a film produced by Dil Raju, will be released in December of this year. He is aiming to release Venky Kudumula's *Robinhood* next year. The producers of the movie are Mythri Movie Makers and the leading lady is Sree Leela.



Ram Pothineni and Harish Shankar's project on hold

Director Harish Shankar had previously announced his collaboration with Ram Pothineni during the promotional events for his film *Mr. Bachchan*. Shankar's project and Puri Jagannath's *Double iSmart*, starring Ram Pothineni, were both released simultaneously. Although there was a conflict, Shankar remained optimistic about the success of both films and teased his next collaboration with Pothineni. Yet, new updates indicate that the movie involving Harish Shankar is presently delayed. Reports suggest that Shankar's film *Mr. Bachchan* was not successful commercially and likewise, *Double iSmart* did not do well in terms of box office performance. Therefore, Ram

Pothineni has chosen to postpone his partnership with Shankar. According to reports, Ram Pothineni has decided to collaborate with a fresh director who has just experienced major accomplishments. This director, who had success and won awards with their last film, presented a story to Ram, who was impressed and gave the project the green light. Ram Pothineni seems to have chosen to change directors because of Shankar's recent underwhelming movies and the continuing negative media coverage around the director. Therefore, Ram has chosen to proceed with the new director. A formal declaration about this upcoming partnership is anticipated to be announced shortly.



It's official, Mokshagnya's entry confirmed

The wait is over! From the past few months, there have been reports about Nandamuri Balakrishna's son Mokshagnya's entry into the films. Nevertheless, it has now been confirmed and officially announced with the unveiling of Mokshagnya on his birthday. The director of the film is Prashanth Varma, with Sudhakar Cherukuri as the producer. Balakrishna's

younger daughter Tejeswini is also part of her brother's debut film by presenting it. Continuing the legacy of the Nandamuri family, Nandamuri Mokshagnya, the grandson of Nandamuri Taraka Rama Rao and son of Nandamuri Balakrishna, will make his much-awaited debut under the direction of Prasanth Varma, who is riding high on the success of *HanuMan*. The story of the film is based on an ancient legend from our mythology with an entertaining narrative, say the makers. In the first look, Mokshagnya is looking handsome and stylish. With this, one can understand that he worked hard to get into the right shape. There are many reports that, along with Singeetham Srinivasa Rao, a few other directors names come out for Mokshagnya's debut film, but now it all ends with the official announcement of director Prashanth Varma. To celebrate Mokshagnya's birthday and build anticipation for his debut, the team has unveiled this, still showcasing him in a stylish and sophisticated avatar. The image high-

lights Mokshagnya's sleek and polished look. "This is a huge honour and also a colossal responsibility to launch Mokshagnya to cinema. I will always be grateful for the trust Balakrishna Garu has put in me and my story. This script is inspired by our Itihasas, which is a gold mine of wonderful tales that need to be told. This is also a part of PVCU and will take the universe to the next level," said director Prashanth Varma about the film. Producer Sudhakar Cherukuri said he is very happy to launch Balakrishna's son. Initially, there were reports about the differences between Nandamuri Balakrishna and Jr. NTR from the last few years. Now, the interesting thing is that Jr. NTR is the first to congratulate Mokshagnya on his entry into films and he also wished him on his birthday. "Congratulations on your debut into the world of cinema! May all the divine forces, along with Thatha garu, shower blessings upon you as you begin a new chapter in your life! Happy birthday Mokshu" (sic), said Jr. NTR on his social media. He also posted the first look picture of Mokshagnya.

Rashmika's appearance at NGE office fuels *Sikandar* excitement

Earlier on Friday, Rashmika Mandanna was seen at the Nadiadwala Grandson Entertainment (NGE) office, where she appeared poised and stylish in a white top tucked into jeans, complemented by sunglasses and white sneakers. Her visit comes in anticipation of her upcoming film *Sikandar*, as she had gone there for a look test for the film. Rashmika's appearance at the NGE office has heightened the excitement surrounding *Sikandar*. The film, which pairs her with Salman Khan, is already generating considerable buzz. Fans are eager to see how Rashmika's charm and acting prowess will blend with Salman's magnetic screen presence. Rashmika's growing popularity and her ability to connect with audiences across different regions make her a highly valuable addition to this high-profile project. *Sikandar* is one of the most awaited films of 2025, featuring Salman Khan in the lead role alongside Rashmika Mandanna. Directed by A.R. Murugadoss, the film is currently in production. Fans are eagerly looking forward to seeing this duo on screen as they bring this exciting project to life.





Neeraj Chopra qualifies for Diamond League season finale in Brussels

PTI ■ NEW DELHI
 India's two-time Olympic medal-winning javelin throw star Neeraj Chopra has qualified for this month's season finale of the prestigious Diamond League after finishing fourth in the overall standings at the end of its 14 series meetings across the world. The season finale will be a two-day affair on September 13 and 14 in Brussels. Chopra accumulated 14 points from his two second-place finishes in the one-day meets held in Doha and Lausanne. He skipped the last series meet in Zurich on Thursday. The 26-year-old is two points adrift of Czechia's Jakob

Vadlech. Grenada's Anderson Peters and German star Julian Weber occupy the top two spots with 29 and 21 points respectively. Peters had pipped Weber in the Zurich meet. Chopra, who won gold in the Tokyo Olympics in 2021 and added a silver to his kitty in the Paris edition last month, has been struggling with his fitness this season. The Haryana-lad has talked about a groin injury troubling him since before the Olympic Games that has come in the way of his quest to hit the 90m mark. The Indian finished second in the Lausanne Diamond Leg, bested by Peters, who threw 90.61m. In Paris Olympics, Pakistan's Arshad Nadeem had

taken the gold with a monster throw of 92.97m. "First goal, go to the doctor and make my groin 100 per cent fit and also I will be technically better and try to throw far again," he had said last month about his plans for this year and the coming one. Chopra had won the Lausanne leg in 2022 and 2023 and finished second behind Vadlech in the winner-takes-all finale in Eugene, USA, last year. Each Diamond League season finale champion is awarded a prestigious "Diamond Trophy", USD 30,000 prize money and a wild card for the World Athletics Championships. The DL finale will mark the end of Chopra's season.



Gagan Narang lauds performance of Indian athletes at Paris Paralympics

PTI ■ NEW DELHI
 London Games bronze medalist shooter and India's Chef de Mission at the Paris Olympics, Gagan Narang on Friday heaped praise on the country's para athletes for their performance in the ongoing Paralympics. The Indian Paralympic contingent has already bagged a record 25 medals in this edition of the quadrennial showpiece with 5 gold, 9 silver and 11 bronze and is currently placed at the 16th position in the medal tally. When asked about his analysis of the Paris Olympic Games, the former shooter said he hasn't done it yet. "I haven't done my analysis of the Paris Olympics yet, everybody has spoken about it. But the most important thing right now is that in the

Paralympics we are performing well, we are on the 16th position today. "A fantastic effort by our Paralympians. They surpassed the Tokyo Paralympics medal tally, looking forward for more medals," Narang told PTI. Videos on the sidelines of the Media Photojournalist Trust's photo exhibition event at the Press Club of India. Narang also shared his thoughts on his love for photography and expressed his admiration for the photos he saw at the exhibition. "Fantastic exhibition indeed, photographers are lifeline of journalism. They give us a perspective and no AI (Artificial Intelligence) can replace them. I wish, pray and help the association to do this function every year. Fantastic effort and great pictures," he concluded.

India's fast bowling makes them difficult to beat in Australia: Marnus Labuschagne

PTI ■ MUMBAI
 Star batter Marnus Labuschagne reckons fast bowlers make India a "difficult" side to beat in Australian conditions as the hosts look to end their barren run in Border-Gavaskar Trophy which has lasted nearly a decade. India have won every bilateral Test series against Australia since losing 1-2 in an away affair in 2014-15. They have recorded identical 2-1 series wins in 2018-19 and 2020-21 Down Under to remain on top. "India's fast bowling is very good, which is really what brings them in Australian conditions and make them such a tough team to beat in Australian conditions," Labuschagne told Star Sports. The middle-order mainstay

termed the rivalry as 'tough' irrespective of where they are playing. "There is always high anticipation. To these two teams, it doesn't matter where we're playing, if it's in England, Australia, or India, it's always a tough contest," he said. Australia spinner Nathan Lyon termed Indian players as "superstars" while hoping to revive his on-field rivalry with India spinner Ravichandran Ashwin. "I've always said throughout my whole career (that) I want to compete against the best and you look through the whole Indian line-up, the whole squad, there's absolute superstars everywhere," he said. "I know Ashwin, we debuted around similar times and we've competed against each other in



a number of series. I have got nothing but respect for him. He is an absolute master in the craft of off-spin bowling and it's been an absolute privilege to play against him and learn off him," said Lyon. All-rounder Cameron Green reckoned the five-Test series

between India and Australia starting on November 22 at Perth could be a "preview" for the final of the World Test Championship next year. India lead the WTC table for 2023-25 cycle with 68.52 percentage points and 74 points, followed by Australia

with 62.50 percentage points and 90 points. The WTC final will be played at Lord's from June 11-15 next year and could feature both the current top two teams once again. India have featured in the summit clashes of the WTC on both occasions but have lost to New Zealand (2019-21) and Australia (2021-23). "Every single point is pretty crucial for the World Test Championship. Any way you can kind of (or) get an idea of (to) how to get one up on your opponent, we'll try and take," Green said. "If it is a bit of a preview for a World Test Championship final again, yeah, we've been trying to get as much information out of India and see how we can win it again," he added.

Vikram Rathour, Rangana Herath added to New Zealand coaching staff

PTI ■ AUCKLAND
 Former India batting coach Vikram Rathour and Sri Lanka spin great Rangana Herath were on Friday added to New Zealand's coaching staff ahead of Tests against Afghanistan and Sri Lanka. New Zealand will play a one-off Test against Afghanistan before heading to Sri Lanka for a two-Test series. The one-off Test against the Afghans will be held at the Greater Noida Sports Complex Ground from September 9 to 13. The Kiwis are also due to play a three-Test series against India in October-November. While Herath has been appointed for Tests against Afghanistan and Sri Lanka as New Zealand's spin bowling coach, Rathour will be with the Kiwi side only for the contest against Afghanistan.



Rathour had a successful run as India's batting coach under head coach Rahul Dravid. His tenure ended after India's T20 World Cup win in June this year. The addition of Rathour and Herath

was announced by New Zealand Cricket on their website. "Sri Lankan spin maestro Rangana Herath has been appointed as spin-bowling coach for the three upcoming

Tests in Asia, replacing former Pakistan spinner and coach Saqlain Mushtaq who was originally announced to fill the temporary role before pulling out to take up a position with the Pakistan Cricket Board," New Zealand Cricket said in a statement. Head coach Gary Stead said, "We're really excited to introduce Rangana and Vikram into our Test group." "Both men are held in high regard in the world of cricket and I know our players are really looking forward to the opportunity to learn from them." Stead hoped Herath's expertise as a left-arm spinner will help New Zealand's Ajaz Patel, Mitchell Santner and Rachin Ravindra. "For our three left-arm orthodox spinners in particular, Ajaz, Mitch and Rachin, having the chance to work with Rangana across three Tests on the sub-continent will be hugely beneficial," he said.

Kerala seeks football collaboration with Argentina

PTI ■ THIRUVANANTHAPURAM
 Football-crazy Kerala is seeking collaboration with the Argentine Football Association (AFA), with a high-level delegation headed by State Sports Minister V Abdulrahiman holding a meeting with its office-bearers in Madrid, Spain. In a Facebook post, Abdulrahiman, who is currently in Madrid, said on Friday that the collaboration with AFA will be a huge investment for Kerala and expressed his desire to make this a reality as soon as possible. "The possibility of considering Kerala as a venue for international friendly matches



was discussed. As part of this, the association representatives expressed interest in visiting Kerala soon. AFA also expressed interest in setting up football academies in Kerala in collaboration with the state government," he said. According to the minister, the AFA said that the Argentine fan community in Kerala has always been warmly

welcomed. Commenting on their meeting, the AFA said: "Together with the delegation from the Government of Kerala, headed by V Abdulrahiman, Minister of Sports, we had the opportunity to share initiatives and projects that will surely materialize in the short term." In recent years, the association has established itself as one of

the most important and popular sports brands in this strategic market through its global expansion strategy, it said in a statement. "In this context, our institution is working on developing sports and commercial projects in different parts of the country, with the aim of continuing to expand our brand and being closer to the fans of the Argentine National Team in India," it added. The AFA also thanked the Government of Kerala for "this important visit." Meanwhile, the Abdulrahiman-led delegation also visited various sports development centres in Madrid and met with officials from the Spanish Higher Sports Council.



Indian Hockey can aim for gold in next Olympics: Sreejesh

PTI ■ PATNA
 Riding high on the success of winning a bronze medal in Paris - ending a four-decade-long dry spell - the Indian hockey team now aims to build on this momentum with hopes of clinching gold at the Los Angeles Olympics in 2028, ace goalkeeper P R Sreejesh said on Friday. The former national team captain, who announced his retirement after the Paris Olympics, told journalists in the Bihar capital that he saw the state as the future "sports hub". "I see many positive developments in Bihar, particularly at the sports complex in Rajgir, which now features an astro turf and will host the women's Asian Cup Trophy tournament later this year," Sreejesh remarked. He added, "I see no reason why Bihar cannot emerge as the country's next sports hub. I have met sports department officials



here and found many initiatives, like establishment of a sports university, quite impressive." Sreejesh, who has taken up a new assignment as the coach for the junior men's hockey team, said he had set his eyes on the next Asia Cup and revealed that he was drawing inspiration from former cricket team captain Rahul Dravid. After a successful playing career, Dravid, known as "The Wall" for his steadfast batting, has made significant contributions as head coach of the Indian cricket team, helping it to new heights.

Sreejesh broke into a wide grin that like his own skills earned him the sobriquet "The Great Wall of Indian Hockey". At 36, Sreejesh reminisced about his experiences at the Paris Olympics and expressed hope that the national team would "revive the old glory of Indian hockey" by aiming for gold in Los Angeles and performing well in tournaments leading up to the 2028 Games. "We have a very talented team. Krishan Pathak, who has succeeded me, is an excellent goalkeeper," Sreejesh said, highlighting the importance of managing pressure and taking time to unwind between games. A fan of Harry Potter, Sreejesh confessed that his love for fiction has provided him with a means of escape from the intense pressures of competitive sports, helping him navigate the challenges of his demanding career.

Errani and Vavassori win US Open mixed doubles title in Young's final match before retiring

AP ■ NEW YORK
 Sara Errani and Andrea Pannofino won the U.S. Open mixed doubles title with a 7-6 (0), 7-5 victory Thursday over Taylor Townsend and Donald Young, who fell just short of a Grand Slam title in his final match before retiring. Errani, who won a career Grand Slam in women's doubles with fellow Italian Roberta Vinci, added her first career mixed doubles title to the Olympic gold medal in women's doubles she won last month with Jasmine Paolini.

"It's incredible for me this year. It's amazing," Errani said. Townsend and Young, who have been friends since they were kids, were given a wild card into the event for what was the 35-year-old Young's final tournament. The former top-ranked junior hadn't played much in recent years, having made the switch to pickleball. "Obviously wasn't the result we wanted," Young said, "but I can't think of a better spot, place to go out in, having watched that as a kid, and playing with someone I've known our whole life. It's pretty

cool for me." He and Townsend made their way through the draw, knocking off defending champions Anna Danilina and Harri Heliövarra in the quarterfinals. But Errani and Vavassori, the No. 3 seeds, dominated the tiebreaker and then won the match by breaking Townsend's serve. Errani hadn't played a mixed doubles event for eight years before partnering with Vavassori at Wimbledon. They were knocked out in the first round, then reached the quarterfinals at the Olympics before coming to New York.



AP ■ SEOUL
 Australia fell to a shock 1-0 loss to Bahrain at home in the opening game of the third round of Asian World Cup qualifying. Meanwhile, South Korea was held to 0-0 by the Palestinians in Seoul. Despite losing all six previous games against Australia, Bahrain won thanks to an own goal from Harry Souttar with a minute remaining on the Gold Coast. Abdulla Al-Khalasi's cross from the left side of the area hit the defender and flew past goalkeeper Mat Ryan. Australia dominated the game but was reduced to 10 men when Kusini Yengi was red-carded after 77 minutes for a reckless tackle. "It's not the way that we want to start our campaign, a loss at home, but we have to go away and improve," Australia winger Craig Goodwin said. "We have to look at the positives. This is the first game, there are nine games to go." Bahrain is second in Group C behind Japan, which thrashed China 7-0 in Saitama. First-half headers from midfielder Wataru Endo and winger Kaoru Mitoma put Japan in control by the break. Then Takumi Minamoto scored twice in quick succession and Junya Ito, Daizen Maeda and Takefusa Kubo also found the target to make it a painful evening for China. Also in Group C, Saudi Arabia was held to a 1-1 draw by Indonesia in Jeddah. Ragnar Oratmangoen scored for Indonesia but Musab Al-Juwayr equalized before the break for Roberto Mancini's team. Salem Al-Dawsari missed a late penalty. The 18 teams remaining in Asian qualification have been divided into three groups of six. The top two from each qualify automatically for the 2026 World Cup while the six teams that finish in third and fourth will advance to the fourth round where there are two more places on offer. South Korea last missed out on the World Cup in 1982 and got off to a poor start in Group B due to the Palestinians. South Korea missed chance after chance - captain Son Heung-min hit the post - but could not find a way through a determined defense from a visitor that has never reached this stage before. The Palestinians almost snatched what would have been a stunning victory in added time. Through on goal, Wessam Abu Ali's shot was saved by Jo Hyun-woo. "It was a difficult match, but we were able to come away with a good result because we brought all the players that we could get our hands on," Palestinian coach Makram Daboub said. "I am extremely happy to bring joy to our fans in Palestine." Iraq is above Korea in Group B after a 1-0 win over Oman in Basra while Jordan drew 1-1 with Kuwait. Iran got off to a winning start in Group A, defeating Kyrgyzstan 1-0 thanks to a first half goal from Inter Milan striker Mehdi Taremi. Uzbekistan is level on three points after a 1-0 victory over North Korea. United Arab Emirates is top of the group with a 3-1 win at Asian champion Qatar.