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'Diaspora will play key role in achieving viksit Bharat vision'

'HYD HAS BECOME MEDICAL TOURISM HUB'



Ram Charan shines, but Game Changer falters with outdated STORYLINE

QUOTE OF THE DAY The pioneer

While we aim for the Moon, it's time we learnt how to coexist responsibly on Earth. Future City is envisioned as a world-class hub on par with cities like New York, London, Seoul, Dubai and Tokyo. This exclusive service sector city will be designed to be pollution-free and climate-resilient, establishing Hyderabad as a global benchmark in urban planning

- Revanth Reddy, Chief Minister



DON'T MISS...

Crack down on nation-wide fraud

In a major operation to tackle the alarming rise in cyber fraud cases, the Cyber Crime police station, Hyderabad, conducted extensive crackdowns across Uttar Pradesh, Gujarat, Maharashtra, Karnataka, and Andhra Pradesh...

Rahul gets bail in defamation case

A special court in Pune on Friday granted bail to Congress leader Rahul Gandhi in a defamation case related to his alleged objectionable remarks on Hindutva ideologue V D Savarkar...

GST return, payment deadline extended

The government on Friday extended the deadline for filing monthly GST sales return form GSTR-1 and GST payment by 2 days after taxpayers reported technical glitches in the GSTN system...

India beat Ireland by six wickets

Pratika Rawal showcased maturity beyond her experience, while Tejal Hasabnis capped a memorable comeback, posting a fifty each, as India outplayed an inexperienced Ireland by six wickets to take a 1-0 lead in the three-match women's ODI series here on Friday...



Judge sentences Trump in hush money case

But declines to impose punishment

PNS ■ NEW YORK

President-elect Donald Trump was sentenced on Friday in his hush-money case, but the judge declined to impose any punishment. The outcome cements Trump's conviction before he returns to power while freeing him to return to the White House unencumbered by the threat of a jail term or a fine...

Manhattan Judge Juan M. Merchan could have sentenced the 78-year-old Republican to up to four years in prison. Instead, he chose a sentence that sidestepped thorny constitutional issues by effectively ending the case but assured that Trump would become the first person convicted of a felony to assume the presidency

Merchan could have sentenced the 78-year-old Continued on Page 2

'Will create wonders in TG'

Future City will compete with NY, London, Seoul: CM Revanth

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Chief Minister Revanth Reddy presented a transformative vision for Telangana during his address at the Confederation of Indian Industry (CII) National Council meeting held in Hyderabad. Emphasizing the state's commitment to sustainable growth, innovation and women's empowerment, he invited investors to partner with the government to "create wonders in Telangana."



Revanth reaffirmed the government's decision to make Hyderabad a "Net-Zero City." As part of the effort, 3,200 electric buses are being introduced into the TGSRTC fleet, and electric vehicle registration and road taxes have been waived to boost adoption

While prioritizing rural women's empowerment, he said. The CM outlined plans for Telangana's infrastructure development, including the construction of a 360-km Regional Ring Road (RRR) with radial roads connecting it to the ORR...



FIR against KTR & others for rally after ACB questioning

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

An FIR was registered against BRS Working President KT Rama Rao (KTR) and five others. This time, the case revolves around traffic violations and public nuisance during KTR's return from the Anti-Corruption Bureau (ACB) office on Thursday...

Tail-end farmers must receive adequate water: Uttam

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Farmers at the tail-end of the irrigation system should receive adequate water during the 2024-25 Yasangi (Rabi) season, Irrigation and Civil Supplies Minister Capt. N. Uttam Kumar Reddy said. Addressing a review meeting at the Jala Soudha on Friday...

The Sriram Sagar Project, launched in 1964, is constructed on the Godavari near Pochampad. It irrigates 9.68 lakh acres in Nizamabad, Jagtial, Karimnagar, Peddapalli and Warangal districts. Of this, 5,40,171 acres lie above the Lower Manair Dam (LMD), in Jagtial, Koratla, and Balkonda under Zone I, and Choppadandi, Karimnagar and Dharmapuri under Zone II. Below LMD, the project



CM Revanth Reddy addressing Collectors' meeting at Secretariat on Friday

CM pulls up Collectors over food poisoning, Indiramma Indla survey?

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Addressing a meeting of Collectors at the Secretariat on Friday, Chief Minister Revanth Reddy expressed concern over the frequent food poisoning incidents in government schools and residential schools, it is learnt. The Chief Minister asked the Collectors why food poisoning incidents are taking place even after

increasing the diet and cosmetic charges, it is learnt. He said the government is getting a bad name due to the frequent food poisoning incidents. It is learnt that the Chief Minister said that these incidents are occurring as Collectors are not visiting residential schools. It is learnt that the CM asked Collectors to visit residential schools every week and submit reports. It is learnt that the Chief Minister also expressed unhappiness at Collectors regarding the Indiramma Indla Survey...

BJP fields candidates for MLC elections

Puli Saroththam Reddy, Malka Komuraiah for teachers' constituencies, Anji Reddy for graduates' constituency

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

The BJP announced the names of its MLC candidates in two teachers' constituencies and one graduate constituency on Friday much before the Congress and the BRS. The BJP announced the name of Puli Saroththam Reddy (Warangal) for the MLC teachers' constituency Nalgonda-Warangal-Khammam. The party named Malka Komuraiah (Peddapalli) for MLC teachers' constituency Karimnagar-Nizamabad-Adilabad-Medak. C. Anji Reddy (Sangareddy) was



C Anji Reddy, Malka Komuraiah, Puli Saroththam Reddy picked for the MLC graduates' constituency Karimnagar-Nizamabad-Adilabad-Medak. Telangana BJP President G. Kishan Reddy announced these names as per the instructions of BJP President Jagat Prakash Nadda. Puli Saroththam Reddy was a School Assistant for around 21 years and as

Harish accuses govt of making U-turn on movie ticket prices

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Senior BRS MLA Harish Rao launched a scathing attack on Chief Minister Revanth Reddy, accusing him of backtracking on his Assembly declarations regarding cinema ticket prices and special privileges for films. He stressed that Revanth, who had earlier vowed in the Assembly not to grant special rights to films, reversed his decision in record time, leaving even chameleons

ashamed. Harish didn't spare Minister Komatireddy Venkat Reddy either and pointed out the Minister's promise in the Assembly that cinema ticket prices would not be increased. "Within a short time, these words too turned into empty promises," he said. "How can the Assembly retain its sanctity if promises made in it have no value? Granting permissions for movie ticket price hikes and additional shows is

Congress moves against KTR done in 'lottapeesu' manner: Bandi

KOLISHETTY VENKATESHWARLU venkat.k.warlu@gmail.com ■ HYDERABAD

Hinting that Chief Minister Revanth Reddy and BRS working president KT Rama Rao are hand in glove, the Union Minister of State for Home Affairs, Bandi Sanjay Kumar, said the "Congress is acting against the corrupt KTR in a 'lottapeesu' (useless) manner."



Union Minister of State for Home Affairs Bandi Sanjay Kumar addressing the media at Karimnagar on Friday

KTR is lashing out at the CM. I have a doubt that Revanth might have struck a deal with KCR," Sanjay said. Speaking to the media at Karimnagar on Friday, Sanjay asked whether KTR is a freedom fighter who fought for the nation. Did KTR launch a

Can shed old ideas for 'nation first' cause: PM

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Prime Minister Narendra Modi has said he is willing to discard old ideas and embrace new ones as long as they fit into his essential ideology of "nation first". Appearing for the first time in a podcast, which was hosted by Zerodha co-founder Nikhil Kamath and released on Friday, Modi said he sees his success in how he prepares a team who can deftly handle things, as he asserted that there are many young politicians with potential. He declined to name any, saying it will be injustice to many others. Modi said it has been his life's mantra that he may make mistakes but will not do anything wrong out of bad intentions. He said, "When I became (Gujarat) chief minister I said I will not spare any effort to work hard. I will not do anything for myself. And,



thirdly, I am human and I can make mistakes. But I will not do anything wrong out of bad intentions. I have made it a mantra of my life. Mistakes are inevitable. I must have made mistakes. I am a human too, not a god." When Kamath asked him if he has planned for the time beyond him, training those he has faith in, not for today but after 20-30 years, Modi

said, "I can see people with a lot of potential. When I was in Gujarat, I would say that I want to go after preparing (team) for the next 20 years. I am doing it. My success lies in how I prepare my team who will be able to deftly handle things. This is my benchmark for me." He said politics needs continuous entry of good people who put mis-

Modi said he sees his success in how he prepares a team who can deftly handle things, as he asserted that there are many young politicians with potential. He declined to name any, saying it will be injustice to many others. Modi said he sees his success in how he prepares a team who can deftly handle things, as he asserted that there are many young politicians with potential. He declined to name any, saying it will be injustice to many others. Modi said he sees his success in how he prepares a team who can deftly handle things, as he asserted that there are many young politicians with potential. He declined to name any, saying it will be injustice to many others.













## FIRST COLUMN

### HOMESCHOOLING: AN OPTION WORTH EXPLORING

While it comes with challenges, its benefits make it an increasingly compelling choice



SAKSHI SETHI

Childhood is a short season, and homeschooling gives a child more time to truly enjoy it. In recent years, homeschooling has seen a significant rise in popularity as parents increasingly opt to educate their children at home rather than through traditional schooling systems. This shift reflects a combination of concerns about conventional education and the desire for more tailored learning experiences. One of the primary reasons parents choose homeschooling is the ability to customise education to suit their child's unique needs.

There is no denying that curriculum is a valuable tool but at the same time a terrible master. Traditional classrooms often struggle to accommodate different learning paces and styles, whereas homeschooling allows parents to tailor lessons, fostering deeper understanding and engagement. Many parents cite dissatisfaction with public or private school systems as a motivator for homeschooling. Issues such as overcrowded classrooms, underfunding, and lack of individual attention can negatively impact the quality of education. Additionally, concerns over bullying, peer pressure, and exposure to harmful influences prompt parents to seek alternatives.

Homeschooling allows families to integrate their cultural, ethical, or religious values into the curriculum. Parents can teach their children in alignment with their personal beliefs, creating an educational experience that reflects their family's principles. Unlike traditional schooling, homeschooling offers flexibility in schedules and teaching methods. Families incor-



porate travel, extracurricular activities, or non-traditional subjects into their routine, enhancing the learning experience. This adaptability appeals to families seeking a more balanced lifestyle.

Unlike traditional schooling, homeschooling offers flexibility in schedules and teaching methods. Families can incorporate travel, extracurricular activities, or non-traditional subjects into their routine, enhancing the learning experience. This adaptability appeals to families seeking a more balanced lifestyle. While homeschooling offers many benefits, it is not without its challenges. Parents often need to dedicate significant time and effort to planning and teaching. Additionally, concerns about socialisation can arise, as homeschooled children may have fewer opportunities for peer interaction. However, many families address this by participating in extracurricular activities, and community events. Homeschooling is not a new phenomenon.

In olden times, education often took place at home, with parents or private tutors guiding the learning of their child. The rise of formalised schooling in the 19th and 20th centuries shifted education to institutions, but homeschooling remained a choice for families who sought alternatives. Modern homeschooling driven by educational reformers and parents seeking greater control over their children's education began gaining traction in the 1970s and 1980s. Today, it continues to evolve, integrating technology and innovative teaching practices. Technology undoubtedly has played a pivotal role in making homeschooling more accessible and effective. It has also enabled collaboration and connection among homeschooling communities. Online learning platforms, virtual classrooms, and educational applications such as Scholastic Kids, Udemy, Duolingo, Funbrain and many more provide parents with resources to create comprehensive curricula. The shift to homeschooling reflects a broader desire among parents to take control of their children's education and provide a more personalised, values-driven learning environment. While homeschooling comes with its challenges, the benefits of flexibility, individualised attention and alignment with family priorities make homeschooling an increasingly appealing choice for families worldwide.

(The writer is an educator; views are personal)

# Junta faces collapse amid escalating defeats



HIRANMAY KARLEKAR

Losses across key regions, coupled with mass defections and severe military setbacks, suggest a crumbling grip of Military on power in Myanmar



By all indications, 2025 is going to be, militarily, a dismal year for Myanmar's ruling junta. It is clearly losing its war against the opposition National Unity Government (NUG) and its armed wing, the People's Defence Force (PDF), ethnic armed organisations (EROs), and the Three Brotherhood Alliance (Henceforth the Alliance). Comprising the Myanmar National Democratic Alliance Army (MNDAA), active in the Kokang Special Region of northern Shan State, the Ta'ang National Liberation Army (TNLA), also active in the Shan State and the Arakan Army (AA), based in the Rakhine State in the country's western part, the alliance has been acting in close cooperation with the PDF and other ethnic armies.

Crystal-gazing is a hazardous business. Nevertheless, a fling at it is warranted by the unfolding events in that star-crossed country. A report under the headline, 'Junta's Writ Only Runs in One-third of Myanmar: NUG', (datelined January 6, 2025), in the news website The Irrawaddy, cited the NUG as stating that the military regime controlled only 107 of the country's 330 townships. The PDF and EROs fully or partly controlled 144 townships or 44 per cent of the country. The website, which enjoys a high-measure of credibility, carried an article by Maung Kavi (datelined January 8, 2025) under the headline, 'Myanmar Junta Boss warns resistance as Regime Loses Ground Nationwide', saying that the NUG had further claimed that nearly 1,500 of the junta's soldiers and police personnel had defected to the civil disobedience movement and 480 of them had taken up 'revolutionary duties'. The report titled 'Junta's Writ Only Runs in One-third of Myanmar: NUG', further states that 315 officers were killed and 127 injured in course of the last year. In the same period, 53 senior officers ranging in rank from colonel to major general, were either killed, injured, or taken prisoner. Among the rank and file, 14,093 soldiers and border guard policemen were killed and 7,363 injured. Anti-regime groups seized 741 junta



THE ODDS ARE NOW RAPIDLY STACKING UP AGAINST THE JUNTA. NO DOUBT, THE LATTER HAS TANKS AND OTHER ARMoured VEHICLES, ARTILLERY AND AIR FORCE TANKS AND ARMoured VEHICLES ARE VERY DIFFICULT TO DEPLOY IN THE AREAS DOMINATED BY THE ETHNIC FORCES

positions. They were mostly captured by ethnic armies, but 162 were taken by PDF and People's Defence Teams in Sagaing, Magwe, Mandalay, Bago and Tanintharyi regions.

The military lost in 2024 some 140 battalions and two regional commands - Northern Shan Command in northern Shan State and Western Command in Rakhine-plus one regional operations command, five military operations commands, six operational bases, two airbases, 17 border guard police bases, as well as many infantry and light infantry battalions, and artillery, logistics, signal, and military engineering units.

While one should not take the NUG's claims at face value reports from the ground indicate that the Sit-Tat (as the junta's army is called) has suffered severe body blows during the last year. The Three Brotherhood Alliance has gained significant ground since launching its offensive, code-named Operation 1027, on October 27, 2023. The AA had established control over almost the entire Rakhine State by April, 2024. In a major development, the MNDAA claimed on July 31, 2024, that it had captured Sit-Tat's military base in Lashio, a city in Shan State close to the border with China, and its airport. This was a major loss for the junta.

As Vivek Shankar has pointed out in a piece in The New York Times datelined August 5, 2024, the 'city of Lashio and its airport lie on a crucial trade corridor to Yunnan Province in China, which is spending hundreds of millions of dollars on a high-speed rail link and other infrastructure projects on both sides of the border.'

Besides gains in the north, the anti-junta forces had captured four towns in northern Mandalay.

According to a report by Andrew Nagemson published in Al Jazeera dated September 23, 2024, their capture had placed them within striking distance of the city of Mandalay, Myanmar's second largest urban centre, with a population of nearly two million.

On October 8, 2024, the Sit-Tat suffered a serious reverse with the fall of the township of Pinlebu to the Kachin Independence Army (KIA), an important part of the coalition of forces fighting the junta, and its allies. Located on the border of the Sagaing Region and Kachin State, its capture opened up to the opposition forces the routes leading to the Kawlin township and the surrounding areas.

Besides its geo-strategic significance, the township's fall is important for what it revealed of the Sit-Tat's state. A report by Saw Lin, published in the news website, The Irrawaddy, on October 14, 2024, cites the NUG as claiming that the junta's troops, numbering 800, were defeated despite 670 airstrikes and the dropping of over 5,000 bombs, that around 70 junta soldiers were killed, 275 were missing, 225 were wounded, 48 surrendered and 102 captured during the fighting. Around 400 firearms and other military equipment were seized.

In keeping with the trend, the Junta had ceded three townships and the Western Command headquarters in Rakhine State in December, 2024, as the ethnic Arakan Army gained control over 14 of the 17 townships in the westernmost state. On January 1, 2025, the Sit-Tat retreated from a heavily-fortified police station in Sagaing Region's Budalin Township after a yearlong siege by regional resistance forces, making it easier for the latter to operate in the region.

According to Maung Kavi's report

cited earlier, the junta, which has been losing towns and bases to EROs in Rakhine, Chin, Kachin and Karen states, has not been able to launch any military operation to retake the northern Shan State, almost the whole of which it had lost in 2024. The Sit-Tat is in a bad way.

Its morale is low. There is internal discord. Several three-stars generals have been removed. Many younger officers are unhappy as they recognise that almost the entire country is against them. According to a piece by Ye Myo Hein (datelined May 4, 2023) featured by the United States Institute of Peace, it was found the Sit-Tat, whose "head-count," showed a "strength of a total 300,000-400,000 before the coup," showed that it currently "had a strength of about 150,000 personnel."

Roughly 70,000 are combat soldiers. At least 21,000 service members have been lost through casualties, desertion and defection since the coup. At this troop level, the Sit-Tat is barely able to sustain itself as a fighting force, much less a government.

The odds are now rapidly stacking up against the Junta. No doubt, the latter has tanks and other armoured vehicles, artillery and air force. Tanks and armoured vehicles are very difficult to deploy in the areas dominated by the ethnic forces. With densely forested mountainous terrains, deep gorges and steep climbs, these are ideal for staging ambushes. Moreover, air-strikes and artillery do not win wars, even when backed by heavily armed and trained infantry. Otherwise, the United States would have swept to a victory in Vietnam.

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

# Real-time travel assistance: Transforming the Indian travel experience

From the integration of cutting-edge technology to the emergence of unique destinations, the way we explore has been redefined

The travel industry in India has undergone a significant transformation in the past decade. The advent of technology, the emergence of unique destinations, and travellers' shifting preferences have reshaped the way we experience travel. While convenience and connectivity have expanded exponentially, so have the challenges that come with travelling through this vast and diverse country.

In such a scenario, the idea of real-time travel assistance is much more than a luxury, gradually becoming a necessity. India is a land of incredible diversity, which often presents challenges for travellers, both domestic and international. With 28 states and countless languages, customs, and tradi-

tions, exploring India can be as overwhelming as it is enriching. A misplaced document, a language barrier, or a medical emergency in an unfamiliar city can turn a dream vacation or a crucial business trip into an overwhelming ordeal. This is where the concept of real-time assistance steps in, bridging the gap between exploration and ease.

**The Need for Immediate Support:** Travelers today demand solutions that are immediate, efficient, and humanised. The expectations from travel experiences are no longer confined to curated itineraries and luxury stays. Safety, comfort, and resolution to unexpected issues are just as critical to creating memorable journeys. Whether it's assis-



HARISH KHATRI

tance in locating a nearby pharmacy late at night, navigating bureaucratic hurdles in a foreign environment, or finding reliable medical aid during emergencies, travellers increasingly rely on services that ensure a smooth journey. Real-time assistance goes beyond static travel guides or pre-recorded helplines. It operates as a different system where timely, empathetic, and

accurate support becomes a part of the travel experience. It is this proactive approach that helps mitigate common traveller challenges and allows for a seamless journey, irrespective of the destination.

**Empathy in Travel Assistance:** A game-changer at its core, real-time travel assistance is about offering humanised solutions. Travellers often find themselves in vulnerable situations where a touch of empathy can go a long way. Imagine being stuck at a remote train station with no one to guide you to your next stop or dealing with a sudden health scare in a busy urban centre where you don't know the language.

These are moments when an empathetic, knowledgeable professional on the other end



of a call or chat can provide not just solutions, but also reassurance. It is this empathy paired with technology that is revolutionising travel assistance in India. Real-time support services aim to address the emotional and logistical needs of travellers in equal measure.

**Utilising Technology to Enable Seamless Experiences:** The amalgamation of technology and travel assistance has unlocked possibilities previously deemed unattainable. Advanced algorithms, live

tracking, and geo-location services now enable assistance providers like India Assist to respond with precision and speed. Right from helping a traveller recover a lost wallet, guiding them to the best transport options, or facilitating emergency care, technology serves as the backbone of real-time assistance. Moreover, AI-powered systems can predict and preempt potential challenges, ensuring that travellers are equipped with solutions even before they face a problem. Combined with human expertise, such systems provide an unprecedented level of service that adapts to the ever-changing needs of travellers.

**A Vision for the Future of Indian Travel**  
As India continues to grow as

a preferred travel destination for global tourists and a thriving market for domestic explorers, the need for reliable, real-time support systems will only increase. From first-time solo travellers to seasoned professionals on the move, everyone stands to benefit from a travel arena where assistance is no longer a reactive measure but an integral part of the journey.

The impact of such assistance goes beyond individual convenience. It enhances the overall travel ecosystem, fostering trust and confidence among travellers. When individuals feel supported, they are more likely to venture into less-explored destinations, bolstering local economies and creating new tourism opportunities. Real-time assistance also

aligns with India's vision of creating a more inclusive and welcoming travel environment. Addressing the unique needs of every traveller, be it accessibility, safety, or cultural understanding — opens the doors to a more diverse and enriching travel experience. As we move forward, the travel industry must imbibe the ethos of real-time assistance, not as an add-on service but as a core pillar of the travel experience. After all, the most unforgettable journeys are not just about the destinations we visit — they are about the challenges we overcome and the moments of human connection that transform challenges into memories.

(The writer is founder and MD of India Assist; views are personal)





## ‘HYD HAS BECOME MEDICAL TOURISM HUB’

VAISHNAVI TIKKA  
vaishnavi.tikka@gmail.com

Hyderabad has rapidly emerged as a leading hub for medical excellence and healthcare infrastructure in India. The city boasts of robust healthcare system, featuring world-class hospitals, research centers and medical institutions. Renowned facilities like Apollo Health City, Care Hospitals and KIMS, along with specialized centers for oncology, cardiology and orthopedics, provide top-notch medical services to both domestic and international patients.

Among the distinguished medical professionals contributing to the city's growing reputation is Dr Sujeeth Kumar Bashetty, a well-known doctor with over 17 years of experience. He strongly believes in the philosophy: "Earn your success based on service to others, not at the expense of others." Originally from Nizamabad, he is now settled in Hyderabad, where he has made significant contributions to the medical field. Well, he was one of those accomplished health experts, who had saved over 2,000 patients during the COVID-19 for free. He completed his MBBS, MS (General Surgery), FIAGES (Minimal Access Surgery), FAIS, FALS (Advanced Laparoscopic Colorectal Surgery), DIPMAS (Minimal Access Hernia Surgery) and FICRS (Robotic Surgery). Currently, he serves as a Professor and Senior Consultant Laparoscopic & Robotic Surgeon in the Department of General, Surgical GI and Laparoscopic Surgery. He is also affiliated with Apollo Health City, Jubilee Hills, and Apollo Clinics, Manikonda.

In a conversation with *The Pioneer*, Dr Sujeeth shares that he first visited Hyderabad when he was in 5th grade for a small vacation at his aunt's house. That was his first experience of the city. He mentioned that during his visit, he explored places like the Salar Jung Museum, Birla Planetarium and Zoo Park.

Born and raised in Nizamabad, he was a scholarly student, scoring 526 in his 10th grade. He said that he is someone who is always open to new experiences. Inspired by the respect doctors commanded, he decided to pursue a career in medicine from a young age. He shares, "I always wanted to do service." He also recalls a memorable incident where a boy reached out to him and suggested that he start a foundation. "A boy contacted me and suggested that I start a foundation and eventually, it came into the picture."

Reflecting on his association with Hyderabad, Dr Sujeeth said, "I used to look at Apollo Jubilee since my childhood. It was always my wish to work there and I am glad I got the opportunity. All the senior doctors I got inspired by are now

my colleagues."

When comparing his hometown with Hyderabad, he described, "Hyderabad is a much bigger place than my hometown and here, I get to meet more intellectual people than at the district level. It provides better opportunities and the technology is also better here. Hyderabad has become a medical tourism hub, where people from countries like Australia come for medical treatment and also visit the city's tourist attractions."

When asked about Hyderabad's iconic features, he commented, "The first thing that comes to mind when we hear about Hyderabad is Biryani for food and Birla Temple for places."

Dr Sujeeth's journey is truly inspirational. Despite being offered numerous job opportunities, he chose not to accept them in order to establish something different and helpful to people. He has always believed in service. He is also well-known for providing free services to around 3,000 patients during the Covid-19 pandemic. Additionally, he ran a clinic where he offered free treatment to patients who visited.

He further shared that Hyderabad, as a city, has expanded a lot over the years. "I have observed a lot of improvements since the first time I visited. Hyderabad is like an extended family to me," he added.



**I USED TO LOOK AT APOLLO JUBILEE SINCE MY CHILDHOOD. IT WAS ALWAYS MY WISH TO WORK THERE, AND I AM GLAD I GOT THE OPPORTUNITY. ALL THE SENIOR DOCTORS I GOT INSPIRED BY ARE NOW MY COLLEAGUES**

**IN AN EXCLUSIVE CHAT WITH THE PIONEER, DR SUJEETH KUMAR BASHETTY, A PIONEER IN LAPAROSCOPIC AND ROBOTIC SURGERY, SHARED HIS JOURNEY FROM HUMBLE BEGINNINGS IN NIZAMABAD TO BECOMING A RENOWNED MEDICAL PROFESSIONAL IN HYDERABAD**



## JEANNE MERCHANT'S Heartfelt melody continues to spread joy beyond

Jeanne Merchant is a name synonymous with passion, excellence and innovation in the music industry. As a multifaceted musician, voice coach and performer, Jeanne has carved a niche for herself by blending technical brilliance with soulful artistry. Her extraordinary ability to channel emotion into every note she sings has not only captivated audiences but also set a new standard for modern music.

Her musical roots run deep. Having sung rigorously in diverse styles such as R&B, Soul, Jazz and Gospel, she brings a versatility to her artistry that resonates across genres. Her talent has allowed her to collaborate with prominent names in Bollywood and international music, earning her a reputation as a sought-after artist and mentor. Beyond the microphone, she has dedicated over a decade to cultivating the talents of budding vocalists, helping them find their voice and build thriving careers. Her students consistently credit her for transforming their musical journeys with her expertise, patience, and personalized approach to teaching.

Her latest offering, *Jesus You're The Miracle*, is a testament to her ability to bridge tradition with modernity. This vibrant pop anthem encapsulates the true essence of Christmas—hope, love and divine wonder—while delivering a sound that feels fresh, dynamic and accessible to listeners of all ages. Her vision for this track was clear: to create a song that not only celebrates the birth of Christ but also resonates with a modern generation eager for uplifting and meaningful music.

"Lyrically, the song speaks to the miracle of Jesus' presence in our lives, reminding us of the peace and joy He brings—feelings especially profound during the festive season."

Musically, it features a captivating blend of contemporary beats, layered harmonies and Jeanne's powerhouse vocals. The production seamlessly combines traditional Christmas elements with a modern pop sensibility, making it a standout track in any holiday playlist.

"In an era where holiday music often feels repetitive, *Jesus You're The Miracle* breathes new life into the genre."

The song appeals to both devout listeners seeking a spiritual connection and music enthusiasts

looking for an upbeat, feel-good anthem. Its modern production and relatable message ensure it stands out as a beacon of positivity during the holiday season.

With this track, Jeanne Merchant once again proves her ability to innovate while staying rooted in the timeless themes of faith, love and celebration. "It's more than just a Christmas song; it's an anthem for anyone who believes in miracles and the transformative power of faith."

As you add *Jesus You're The Miracle* to your holiday playlist, let Jeanne Merchant's rich vocals and heartfelt lyrics inspire you to embrace the true spirit of Christmas—a season of miracles, joy and unshakable hope.



## Alarming disparity: Men's TBI death rate significantly higher than women's

PNS|HYDERABAD

Latest study has highlighted the alarming disparity in the impact of traumatic brain injuries (TBI), particularly emphasising how men are three times more likely to die from these injuries compared to women. The study, which analyzed US mortality data from 2021, underscores the persistent and disproportionate toll that TBI takes on older adults, men and certain racial and ethnic groups.

Published in the peer-reviewed journal *Brain Injury*, the research identifies suicides as the leading cause of TBI-related deaths, followed by unintentional falls. These fatalities continue to disproportionately affect specific groups, especially men and older adults.

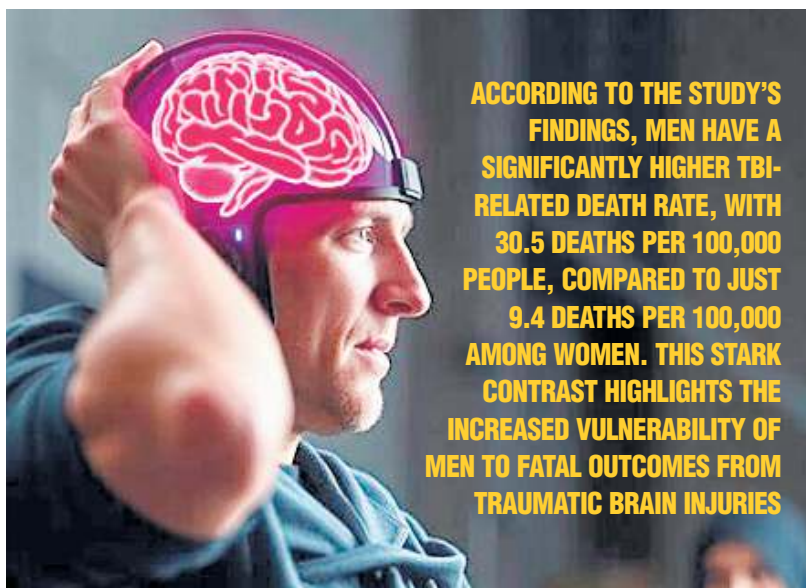
According to the study's findings, men have a significantly higher TBI-related death rate, with 30.5 deaths per 100,000 people, compared to just 9.4 deaths per 100,000 among women. This stark contrast highlights the increased vulnerability of men to fatal outcomes from traumatic brain injuries.

Alexis Peterson, lead author of the study and researcher at the National Center for Injury Prevention and Control at the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), emphasized that older adults are particularly at risk. "Unintentional falls are a significant cause of TBI-related death in older adults," Peterson stated, underscoring the vulner-

ability of this demographic in the face of such injuries. The study delves into various factors contributing to TBI deaths, including the severity of injuries resulting from incidents like falls or motor vehicle crashes. It also explores how sex and age interact to influence outcomes. Men, as they age, tend to experience worse outcomes from TBI, while postmenopausal women often fare better in similar circumstances, suggesting hormonal and physiological factors play a role in recovery and survival.

Peterson called for more tailored prevention strategies, particularly for at-risk groups. She also highlighted the importance of early intervention by healthcare providers and the need for culturally sensitive care to reduce TBI-related deaths and improve recovery outcomes. "Healthcare providers play a critical role in reducing TBI-related mortality, and implementing early interventions and culturally aware care can significantly help at-risk populations," she emphasised.

This research highlights the urgent need for continued awareness, prevention, and treatment strategies to address the disproportionate impact of traumatic brain injuries, particularly for vulner-



**ACCORDING TO THE STUDY'S FINDINGS, MEN HAVE A SIGNIFICANTLY HIGHER TBI-RELATED DEATH RATE, WITH 30.5 DEATHS PER 100,000 PEOPLE, COMPARED TO JUST 9.4 DEATHS PER 100,000 AMONG WOMEN. THIS STARK CONTRAST HIGHLIGHTS THE INCREASED VULNERABILITY OF MEN TO FATAL OUTCOMES FROM TRAUMATIC BRAIN INJURIES**

able populations such as men and older adults. As the study shows, a deeper understanding of the factors influencing TBI outcomes is essential to reducing these fatalities and improving long-term care.

**WHAT DO DOCTORS HAVE TO SAY?**

Dr Venkat Kumar, neurologist and certified life-care planner shares, "Traumatic brain injuries (TBIs) are a major health concern, with a higher incidence in men than in women. Several factors contribute to this disparity, from lifestyle choices to

biological differences. Understanding these factors is key to addressing the higher prevalence of TBIs in men and improving prevention and treatment strategies."

**RISKIER BEHAVIOURS**

One of the primary reasons men are more likely to experience TBIs is their tendency to engage in riskier behaviours. Men are more often involved in activities that carry a higher likelihood of injury, such as contact sports, military service and physical altercations. These activities increase the chances of head trauma, making men more

vulnerable to TBIs than women, who generally engage in these activities at lower rates.

**WORK-RELATED INJURIES**

Another significant factor contributing to the higher incidence of TBIs in men is their greater representation in hazardous occupations. Men are more likely to work in physically demanding jobs that involve exposure to heavy machinery, construction sites, or other dangerous environments. The risk of accidents in these jobs, which often result in head injuries, is a key factor in the higher rate of TBIs in men.

**GENDER-BASED PERCEPTIONS**

Society's gender-based perceptions also play a role in how men experience TBIs. In many cultures, there is a tendency to downplay or misinterpret men's injuries. Men may be less likely to report symptoms or seek medical attention for fear of being seen as weak or vulnerable. This societal pressure, combined with the expectation to recover quickly and return to work or physical activities, can delay diagnosis and treatment, potentially leading to worsened outcomes.

**GENETICS AND SEX HORMONES**

Genetics and sex hormones play a crucial role in how the body reacts to injury, including traumatic brain injuries. These factors can influence inflammation, oxidative stress and mitochondrial function, all of which are critical in brain injury recovery. Studies suggest that testosterone, a hormone present in higher levels in men, can influence the severity of TBI outcomes by affecting neuroinflam-

matory responses and brain cell damage.

**NEUROPLASTICITY**

Neuroplasticity—the brain's ability to repair itself after injury—also differs between men and women. Research indicates that men and women may have varying levels of neuroplasticity, which could affect how their brains recover from TBIs. While neuroplasticity plays a critical role in recovery, gender differences in brain structure and function may impact the efficiency of this process.

**EXTRACEREBRAL TRAUMA**

Men and women may experience different patterns of extracerebral trauma, which refers to injury outside the brain but that still impacts brain function. These types of injuries, including damage to the neck, spine, or facial bones, can complicate the aftermath of a TBI. The way the body responds to such trauma can vary between genders, affecting recovery timelines and long-term outcomes.

The higher incidence of traumatic brain injuries in men can be attributed to a combination of risky behaviours, work-related dangers, societal expectations and biological factors. Understanding the reasons behind this disparity is crucial for developing targeted prevention strategies, improving early diagnosis and ensuring that both men and women receive effective care for brain injuries. Recognising the unique challenges that men face when dealing with TBIs can ultimately lead to better health outcomes and more personalised approaches to treatment and recovery.

# what's brewing?



Reenu Sharma

Sweta Jadeja

Rita Garg

Pinky Reddy

PARTY



Surmandal hosted the "Triveni-Music & Dance Festival Season 2" at Ravindra Bharathi, featuring a mesmerising performance by Ustad Shahid Parvez in Hyderabad. The event was inaugurated by Shailaja Ramaiyer, IAS. Conceptualised by Mohan Hemmadi, Triveni is a tribute to the legendary trio of Indian classical music: Bharat Ratna Pandit Ravi Shankar, Ustad Allah Rakha Khan and M.S. Subbulakshmi.



Divya Choudhary

Sailaja Reddy

Deepa Bansal and Natasha

Simran Kaur Jadeja

The Vault The Trunk Show was inaugurated by philanthropist and entrepreneur Pinky Reddy at Taj Deccan, marking the beginning of a one-day luxury shopping extravaganza. Organised by a team of five dynamic women - Rita Garg, Sweta Jadeja, Reenu Sharma, Simran Kaur Jadeja and Divya Choudhary - the event offered a unique and exclusive shopping experience, showcasing a curated selection of high-end fashion, jewellery and lifestyle products.

Photos by- SV Chary



Annapurna Studios has made history by launching India's first Dolby certified postproduction facility for cinema and home, unveiled by acclaimed filmmaker SS Rajamouli in the presence of actor Nagarjuna Akkineni, Vice Chairman of Annapurna Studios. Notably, Rajamouli's Oscar-winning film RRR, which was the first Indian film to release in Dolby Cinema, was showcased at the event, marking a landmark moment for the Indian film industry.



GEF India has adopted the Kotha Cheruvu lake in Hyderabad as part of its environmental sustainability initiatives. The project aims to restore and preserve the lake, promoting local biodiversity and benefiting the surrounding community. Unveiled by Sarfaraz Ahmad, I.A.S - Commissioner, HMDA, this initiative is a significant step towards ecological conservation.

## FUN

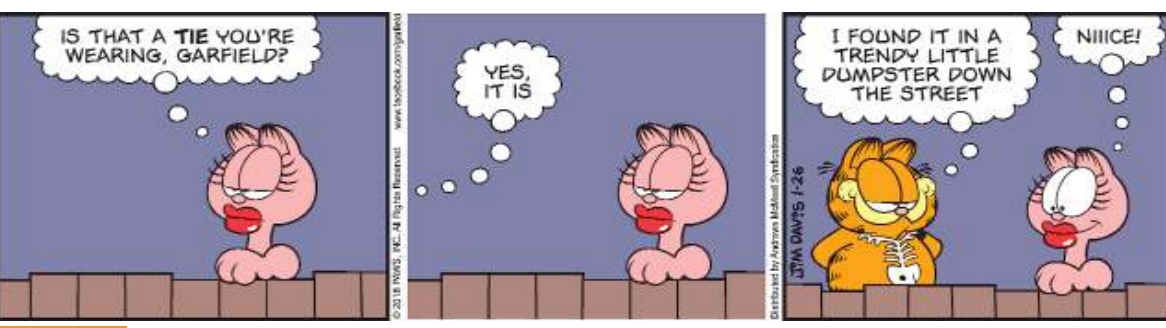
### ARCHIE



### CALVIN AND HOBBS



### GARFIELD



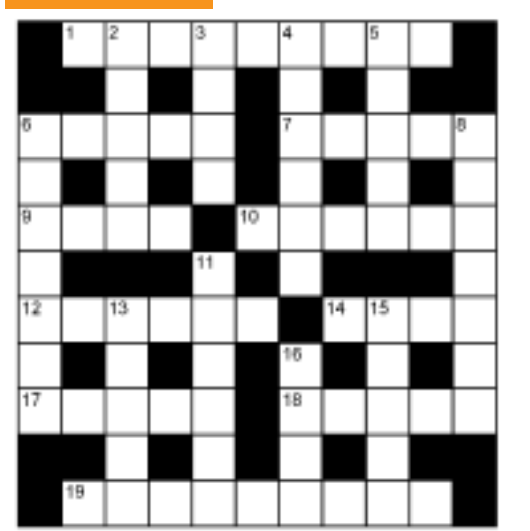
### REALITY CHECK



### SPEED BUMP



### CROSSWORD



### NANCY



### SUDOKU



Yesterday's solution

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

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

- Saying again
- These brown fruit grow on a palm tree
- Go after
- Nut from an oak tree
- Frequently
- This grows on heads

DOWN

- More than is needed
- A compass direction
- Had a conversation

SOLUTION

P	A	L	E	A	N	T		
A	L	I	G	E	D			
F	L	A	T	E	R			
A	N	A	C	H	E	R		
C	H	E	S	E				
T	E	E	P	A	R	T		
T	E	E	T	H				
R	A	O	T	I	N	G		
S	K	I	P	P	I	N		

### GINGER MEGGS



# Ram Charan shines, but *Game Changer* falters with outdated storyline

SURESH KAVIRAYANI  
sureshkavirayani@gmail.com

The New Year of 2025 kicked off with a high-budget film like *Game Changer*, which was released on Friday. Starring Ram Charan, Kiara Advani and Anjali in lead roles, this film is directed by the popular filmmaker Shankar Shanmugam. The movie also features prominent actors like Srikanth, Samuthirakani, Jayaram, Sunil, Rajiv Kanakala, Naveen Chandra and others in key roles. *Game Changer* has been one of the most anticipated films of the year, especially for Ram Charan, as it marks his solo release after the massive success of *RRR*. The film took nearly three years to complete and expectations are high due to the star-studded cast and the big budget. Dil Raju is the producer. Here's a breakdown of the story and what the film offers.

## Story:

The plot of *Game Changer* revolves around Chief Minister Satyamurthy (Srikanth), who falls ill and is admitted to the hospital. His son and Minister, Mopidevi (SJ Suryah), aims to become the Chief Minister. While Satyamurthy wants to leave behind a clean government in his final year, Mopidevi disagrees. Enters Ram Nandan (Ram Charan), an honest and sincere IAS officer who takes charge as the collector of Visakhapatnam. The conflict between Ram Nandan and Mopidevi ensues as Ram Nandan strives to shut down the illegal operations run by Mopidevi and his allies.

In a flashback, Ram Nandan falls in love with Deepika (Kiara Advani) in college. However, their relationship faces a roadblock when Ram Nandan becomes an IPS officer, which Deepika disapproves of as she wanted him to pursue an IAS career. Eventually, Ram Nandan becomes the collector of Vizag and seeks to marry Deepika. Meanwhile, the chief minister passes away and before his death, he names Ram Nandan as his successor in a video message. Mopidevi, however, plans to seize power. The film unfolds as Ram Nandan fights to hold his ground, and his connection with Appanna (also played by Ram Charan) comes to light. The story follows Ram



Nandan's journey as he confronts Mopidevi and unravels the larger political conspiracy.

## Analysis:

Director Shankar is renowned for his grandiose visuals, aesthetic songs, and high production values. However, in recent years, he seems to have lost his touch. While Shankar has directed several successful films in the past, such as *Gentleman*, *Oke Okkadu*, *Bharateeyudu*, *Aparichithudu* and *Sivaji*, his recent works, including *Bharateeyudu 2*, have struggled at the box office. His signature style seems outdated and *Game Changer* lacks the innovative spark that his previous films showcased.

The story, penned by Karthik Subbaraj, follows the familiar trope of an honest IAS officer battling a corrupt politician. While the story touches upon relevant themes, the execution feels outdated and predictable. The screenplay fails to captivate the audience, with the romantic track between Ram Charan and Kiara Advani coming across as boring and outdated. Similarly, the comedy sequences featuring Vennela Kishore and Brahmanandam fall flat, failing to evoke laughter.

While the concept of an IAS officer taking on a corrupt minister should have made for an engaging political drama, Shankar's outdated approach undermines the potential of the story. There is a lack of realism and depth in the narrative, making the film feel artificial and far from convincing. Some scenes are

**CAST:** Ram Charan, Kiara Advani, Anjali, SJ Suryah, Samuthirakani, Srikanth, Jayaram, Sunil, Naveen Chandra, Rajiv Kanakala, Vishwanth and others

**MUSIC DIRECTOR:** S. Thaman

**CINEMATOGRAPHER:** Thiru

**STORY:** Karthik Subbaraj

**PRODUCERS:** Raju and Shirish

**DIRECTOR:** Shankar

**RATING:** 2.5/5

cinematic to the point of being unrealistic, with moments that seem detached from the current political landscape.

Anjali's character, though powerful, lacks the depth and emotion it could have had. The second half, which focuses on Appanna's character, shows potential, but after that, the film quickly loses momentum, and the climax becomes unnecessarily dragged out.

## Performances:

Ram Charan carries the entire film with his strong performance. As Ram Nandan, an IAS officer and in the flashback as Appanna, he brings energy and conviction to his roles. His portrayal of both characters is commendable,

and he succeeds in anchoring the film with his stellar screen presence.

SJ Suryah plays a significant role as the antagonist, Mopidevi. While he has delivered strong performances in the past, his accent here seems ill-suited for the Telugu audience, which detracts from his impact. Anjali, portraying Parvathi, delivers a solid performance, but her character could have been better developed. Despite her powerful presence, her role lacks the emotional weight it could have carried. Srikanth steps into a different role compared to his usual image, but his performance doesn't leave a lasting impression. Jayaram's role is underwhelming, and Sunil's comedy does not hit the mark. Samuthirakani's performance is average, while the other supporting actors do not stand out.

## Technical Aspects:

The technical aspects of *Game Changer* are undoubtedly one of the film's strengths. The cinematography by Thiru is visually stunning, capturing the grandeur of the film's high-budget sequences. The songs, though choreographed beautifully in some visually impressive locations, do not live up to the high standards one might expect from a Shankar film. Thaman's music, especially the songs, falls short of expectations and the background score feels average. The dialogue delivery in some scenes is thought-provoking, but the overall screenplay and emotional depth are lacking. Despite the film's impressive visuals, the film's technical elements do not make up for the weak narrative.

## Verdict:

*Game Changer* fails to meet expectations, as it falls short in terms of both story and execution. While Ram Charan's performance is commendable and the film has some grand visuals, the outdated and predictable story, along with a lack of emotional depth, make it a letdown. Shankar's once-innovative approach now feels stale and the film struggles to stay relevant in the current political and cinematic landscape. For those expecting a fresh and exciting political drama, *Game Changer* may not deliver. The film's commercial appeal might help it to some extent, but its longevity remains uncertain without a compelling story to back it up.



## Brahmi and his son Raja Goutham in *Brahma Anandam*



Swadham Entertainment, known for its successful films like *Malli Raava*, *Agent Sai Srinivasa Athreya* and *Masooda*, is coming up with a unique entertainer titled *Brahma Anandam*. The movie stars legendary comedian Brahmanandam and his son Raja Goutham in lead roles, alongside Priya Vadlamani and Aishwarya Holakkal in key roles. Directed by debutant RVS Nikhil and produced by Rahul Yadav Nakka, *Brahma Anandam* promises to be a captivating film with a refreshing concept. The film is slated for release soon and the makers have kickstarted promotions with the launch of a lyrical song.

As part of the promotional activities, a melodious song titled *Anandamaaye* was released on Thursday. Composed by Sandilya Pisapati, with lyrics penned by Sri Sai Kiran, the song is beautifully rendered by Manisha Eerabathini and Yashwanth Nag.

Director RVS Nikhil has portrayed the lead pair as two individuals with contrasting personalities and opinions, adding depth to their characters. With its catchy tune and meaningful lyrics, the song is expected to strike a chord with listeners. Sandilya Pisapati's music composition is a highlight of the track, further enhancing its appeal.

With promising performances from its cast and a unique storyline, *Brahma Anandam* is shaping up to be an engaging entertainer that audiences can look forward to.

## Nala Jilakara Mogga captures the heart of Uttarandhra

Actress Anandhi, known for her powerful performances, is set to deliver another memorable role in the highly anticipated film *Garividi Lakshmi*. Produced by TG Vishva Prasad and TG Krithi Prasad, the film aims to showcase the rich cultural heritage of the Uttarandhra region, with the beloved folk song *Nala Jilakara Mogga* playing a central role in its narrative. *Nala Jilakara Mogga*, a timeless folk song cherished by generations, is renowned for its poetic beauty and cultural significance. The song draws a captivating analogy, comparing the elegance of a young woman to the delicate Nala Jilakara Mogga (cumin bud), symbolising purity, simplicity and grace. Its lyrical message conveys a profound truth: a woman's natural charm and inner beauty far surpass material wealth, jewelry, or even the most exquisite sarees. The song owes much of its fame to the tireless efforts of Garividi Lakshmi, a celebrated Burra Katha artist. Her remarkable work in preserving and

popularizing Uttarandhra's folk traditions, particularly during the 1990s, has cemented her place as a cultural icon in the region's history.

With its powerful storytelling and authentic representation of the folk traditions of Uttarandhra, *Garividi Lakshmi* promises to capture the essence of the region both visually and sonically, offering audiences an immersive cultural experience.

## VENKATESH HAD RECORDED THE SONG IN JUST 20 MINUTES : ANIL RAVIPUDI

Director Anil Ravipudi talks about his upcoming film *Sankranthiki Vasthunnam* and why he auditioned experienced actress Aishwarya Rajesh for the role of *Bhagyam*

PNS|HYDERABAD

Director Anil Ravipudi, known for delivering continuous box office hits, is now gearing up for *Sankranthiki Vasthunnam*. The film stars Venkatesh in the lead role, with Aishwarya Rajesh and Meenakshi Chaudhary playing the female leads. Interestingly, despite Aishwarya's extensive filmography, the director decided to audition her for the role of *Bhagyam*.

"It's a very important role, and she needed to speak in the Godavari accent. To understand her body language, I auditioned her for the part. She's an exceptional performer and did an outstanding job," said Anil Ravipudi about Aishwarya. He added that she will receive great recognition for her performance in this role. Anil also spoke about Meenakshi Chaudhary, describing her as a disciplined actress.

Reflecting on his collaboration with producer Dil Raju, Anil said, "I started working with Dil Raju with my first film, *Pataas*. It's been almost ten years now. I prefer working with people I share a good bond with and I want to continue this association," he added. This marks Anil's third collaboration with Venkatesh, and he shared that their working relationship has grown into a deep friendship. "Venkatesh garu and I have become best buddies through this journey," said the director. He also elaborated on the genre of the film: "I tried something different with Venkatesh in this movie. While it has entertainment, it also includes elements of crime and adventure. The second half takes on a completely unique tone. Even if I were to make an action film with Venkatesh garu, I wouldn't miss adding the entertainment quotient," Anil shared.

Actor Venkatesh also surprised everyone by singing a song for the film. Whose idea was it? "Venkatesh liked the song so much that he wanted to sing it himself. He recorded it in just 20 minutes, and even music director Bheems was surprised. It came out really well," said Anil Ravipudi

## STANDALONE

Allu Arjun celebrates his dad, Allu Aravind's birthday in style! Marking the special occasion on Vaikuntha Ekadashi, this was the first celebration post the blockbuster success and controversy surrounding *Pushpa*. The highlight? A cake featuring *Pushpa*'s iconic palm with '*Pushpa Ka Baap*' written on it—truly a fitting tribute to the star and his journey!



