



Future of cooperatives bright under Modi's leadership:
Shah



INDIA, EU
TO HOLD FTA TALKS AMID TRUMP TARIFF THREATS



Inspired by Chiranjeevi, director Visva Karun gears up for **DILRUBA**

QUOTE OF THE DAY
The pioneer

The data collected by the KCR admin said that upper castes constituted 21 per cent of the population, while the caste census found that it was only 15.28 per cent. The opposition hatched a conspiracy to suppress the rights of weaker sections and throttle their voices. Some people are trying to block the government's move to provide 42 per cent reservations to BCs at the initial stage itself. The BCs must defeat these conspiracies

- A Revanth Reddy, Chief Minister



DON'T MISS...

Rs11,600 cr allocated to 55 YIIR schools

Telangana Deputy Chief Minister Mallu Bhatti Vikramarka called the Rs11,600 crore allocation for 55 Young India Integrated Residential (YIIR) schools in a single day a historic moment for India. Speaking at a media conference on Sunday, he thanked Chief Minister A Revanth Reddy for issuing orders and allocating funds to the education department. Bhatti emphasised that these State-run residential schools will provide world-class education to poor, middle-class and underprivileged children. He said, "Students ...

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'Modi changed political culture'

BJP national president J P Nadda on Sunday asserted that Prime Minister Narendra Modi has changed the country's political culture by transforming anti-incumbency into pro-incumbency in the electoral landscape. Nadda, addressing a rally here, also pointed to the increasing vote share in favour of the BJP during the past three Lok Sabha elections. "Now, Modi has changed the country's political culture by transforming anti-incumbency into pro-incumbency. Pro-incumbency means that people...

-PAGE: 5

US tariff to hit pharma segment

Enhanced tariffs on pharma imports in the US can severely impact Indian drug manufacturers as it would lead to higher production costs, making shipments less competitive against products from other countries. Smaller drug firms operating on thin margins can face severe pressure potentially forcing consolidation or closure. The automobile sector, on the other hand, is expected to have a very minimal impact owing to the US being a small export market. Terming India as...

-PAGE: 8

Mumbai Indians to face Gujarat Giants

With two games left in the league stage, Mumbai Indians will look to make the most of the opportunity and push for a first-place finish on the WPL points table, starting with the clash against in-form Gujarat Giants here on Monday. UP Warriorz's win over Royal Challengers Bengaluru by 12 runs knocked the defending champions out from the race to the playoffs on Saturday, confirming the qualification for Delhi Capitals, Mumbai Indians and Gujarat Giants in the process. But what remains is the final...

-SPORTS

FOOD POISONING IN NARAYANA IIT ACADEMY, JUNIOR COLLEGE
200 students fall ill

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Over 200 students from Narayana IIT Academy, Kuntloor, and Narayana Junior College reportedly fell ill after consuming aloo kurma and chapati for dinner on Saturday night. The students experienced severe vomiting and stomach pain, prompting the college



Rachakonda Police visiting the students who fell sick

management to provide on-site medical treatment on Sunday. Despite the alarming situation, no official complaints have been lodged by students or parents. "Medical treatment is being provided within the academy itself," said Nagaraju, SHO of Hayathnagar police station. According to sources, both institutions receive food from the same kitchen, raising concerns about food safety standards. The Rachakonda Police Commissionerate officials visited the campuses on Sunday to assess the students' condition. In videos circulating online, two affected students shared their ordeal, stating, "We had severe stomach pain after eating aloo curry and chapati. Out of nearly 800 students, around 200 fell sick."

ROHIT, RAHUL SHAPE INDIA'S THIRD TITLE TRIUMPH

India clinches Champions Trophy



Beats New Zealand by 4 wickets

PNS ■ DUBAI

India sealed an unprecedented third Champions Trophy triumph with an unblemished record as Rohit Sharma combined his inherent freedom with steely resolve to inspire his side to a four-wicket win in a closely-fought final against New Zealand, here Sunday. India won the trophy without losing a match, reflecting their dominance in the tournament which they won back in 2002 and 2013. No other team has won the event thrice. Well-timed fifties by Daryl Mitchell (63) and Michael Bracewell (53) steered the Kiwis to 251 for seven after Indian spinners led by Kuldeep Yadav



applied the squeeze for a large part of their innings. Indian batters needed to capitalise on that fine effort of the bowlers, and Rohit, who many believe was featuring in his last ODI match for India, led from the front, slipping into his turbocharged version almost immediately. The chase of 252 grew tight in the business end while the Blackcaps

Continued on Page 2

Govt waives handloom workers' loans up to Rs 1L

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

The government issued GO No: 56 waiving loans of handloom workers amounting up to Rs 1 lakh. The government sanctioned Rs 33 crore for this. Speaking on the occasion, Textile Minister Tummala Nageswara Rao said the government has taken many policy decisions during the year to put the handloom sector, which was neglected by the BRS government, back on track. "As soon as our government came to power, government departments/institutions/associations issued GO MS No: 1, I&C (TEX) Dept., dated 11.03.2024 to purchase clothes from TGSCO and steps have been taken to purchase from TGSCO. This will not only provide continuous employment to weavers but will also improve their livelihood and contribute to the development of the handloom industry," he said. The Konda Laxman Bapuji Indian Institute of Handloom

Technology (IIHT) has been established to keep up with technology and to upgrade skills in the handloom sector, he said. He said that a three-year diploma course (DHTT) will be offered to 60 students every year. The government has established a yarn depot in Vemulawada in Rajanna Siricilla district through GO MS: No: 18, Ind & Com (Tex) Dept., dated 05.10.2024, and a corpus fund of Rs 50 crore has been sanctioned for this, he added.

2



Some forces blocking 42% quota for BCs: Revanth

Says BJP leaders fear an increase in quota for BCs will anger Modi
Govt to name Asifabad Medical College after Konda Laxman Bapuji

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

BJP leaders fear that any increase in reservations for BCs will trouble Prime Minister Narendra Modi, Chief Minister Revanth Reddy said. "So after the TG Assembly adopted a resolution on caste census, the BRS and the BJP are criticising it as Modi is drawing flak for not accepting the demand for a caste census across the country," the CM said. The CM said that data collected during KCR's rule said that upper castes constituted 21 per cent of the population, while the caste census disclosed it was only 15.28 per cent. The CM said



the opposition has hatched a conspiracy to 'suppress' the rights of weaker sections and 'throttle' their voice. The CM said that some forces are blocking the government's attempts to provide 42 per cent reservation to BCs initially and called upon BCs to thwart these conspiracies. The CM was speaking while attending the Akhila Bharatha Padmashali Mahasabha meeting at the Nampally Exhibition Grounds on Sunday as chief guest. Agriculture Minister Tummala Nageswara Rao, CM's Advisor Vem Narendar Reddy, Mineral Corporation Chairman Eravatri Anil.

Continued on Page 2

Cong selects Vijayashanthi, Addanki, Naik

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■ HYDERABAD

At last the Congress announced its MLA quota MLC candidates on Sunday. The party's MLC candidates are Vijayashanthi, Addanki Dayakar and Kethavath Shankar Naik. The Congress allotted its fourth ticket to its alliance partner CPI. AICC General Secretary KC Venugopal said in a press release that Congress President Mallikarjuna Kharge has approved the following persons as Congress candidates in the biennial elections to the Legislative Council of Telangana



who would be elected by MLAs. The names are Addanki Dayakar, Kethavath Shankar Naik and Vijayashanthi. "We have decided to allot one seat to the CPI," Venugopal said in the press release. Entering the ticket race at the last

minute, cine actor-cum-politician and former MP Vijayashanthi succeeded in getting the MLC ticket. Vijayashanthi went to New Delhi on March 6 and met AICC President Mallikarjuna Kharge regarding this. Vijayashanthi, who claims to be a BC but had married a Kamma, got a ticket in the women's BC quota. It may be recalled that Vijayashanthi, who played an important role in

MLA quota MLC tickets

BRS boss picks Dasoju Sraavan

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

BRS chief K. Chandrasekhar Rao announced that senior BRS leader Dr Dasoju Sraavan Kumar would be the party candidate for the MLA quota MLC elections. KCR directed BRS Working President KT Rama Rao to supervise the nomination process of Dasoju Sraavan Kumar on Monday. It may be recalled that Dr Dasoju Sraavan started his political career as an ABVP student leader. Later, he joined Chiranjeevi's Prajarajyam. Later, he joined the BRS. Dr Dasoju Sraavan joined the Congress as he was not given an Assembly ticket in



BRS MLA quota MLC candidate Dasoju Sraavan with party Chief KCR

the 2019 elections. He quit the Congress in 2023 and joined the BJP. However, Dr Dasoju Sraavan joined

Continued on Page 2

TUNNEL COLLAPSE

Rescue teams find TBM operator Gurupreeth Singh's body

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Rescue teams removed soil and a body was pulled out from the SLBC tunnel located in Nagarkurnool district on Sunday. Kerala sniffer dogs detected the human remains at D-2 point, 100 meters away from the spot where the accident took place. The rescue staff removed the soil at that place and pulled out the dead body. The rescue team identified the dead body as that of Tunnel Boring Machine (TBM) operator Gurupreeth Singh. The search is going on to find out the remaining seven persons.

GOVT ANNOUNCES RS 25 LAKH COMPENSATION

Chief Minister Revanth Reddy and Irrigation Minister Capt. N. Uttam Kumar Reddy expressed deep sorrow over the death of Gurpreet Singh in the SLBC tunnel accident. Chief Minister Revanth Reddy announced a compensation of Rs 25 lakh to the bereaved family. The body of Gurpreet Singh, hailing from Punjab, was recovered on Sunday from the SLBC tunnel, where an accident occurred recently. Gurpreet was working as a Tunnel Boring Machine (TBM) operator in the SLBC tunnel. He was employed by the American company Robinson.

Showdown over Waqf Bill, Trump likely

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Parliament's Budget session resumes on Monday amid indications of an 'EPIC' showdown between the government and the opposition which is planning to raise issues such as the alleged manipulation of electoral rolls, the fresh bout of violence in Manipur and India's handling of the Trump administration. The focus of the government will be on getting Parliament nod for the demands for grants, completion of the budgetary process, seeking approval for the Manipur budget and passage of the Waqf Amendment Bill. Home Minister Amit Shah is expected to move a statutory resolution seeking Parliament approval for the proclamation of President's Rule in Manipur. Finance Minister Nirmala

Parliament Budget session from today

Sitharaman is also scheduled to table the budget for Manipur on Monday. Manipur has been under President's Rule since February 13 after the resignation of Chief Minister N Biren Singh.



The opposition said it is set to corner the government over the issue of duplicate Electoral Photo Identity Card (EPIC) numbers. The Trinamool Congress has taken the lead in flagging the issue,

following which the Election Commission declared that it would take corrective measures within the next three months. The Election Commission had rejected the Trinamool Congress claim that the voter lists were manipulated to allow voters from other states to exercise their franchise in West Bengal. The poll body also made it clear that while the EPIC numbers of some voters "may be identical", other details such as demographic information, Assembly constituency and polling booth are different. Trinamool Congress leaders are meeting the Election Commission on Monday and have also rallied other opposition parties, including the Congress, DMK, Shiv Sena-UBT, to raise the issue in both Houses of Parliament during the second part of the Budget session.

'If a script doesn't let me sleep at night, that's when I say yes to it'

Vardhan Puri, grandson of the legendary Amrish Puri, is carving his own path in Bollywood with a passion that runs deep in his veins. Despite being born into a family of celebrated artists, he is determined to create a legacy of his own, guided by the invaluable lessons his grandfather instilled in him. In a heartfelt conversation with The Pioneer, Vardhan reflects on his journey so far, from his intense debut in Yeh Saali Aashiqui to embracing the charm of romantic comedies with Bobby Aur Rishi Ki Love Story

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Carrying the weight of a cinematic legacy can be daunting, but for Vardhan Puri, grandson of the legendary Amrish Puri, it is a source of immense pride rather than pressure. With a deep-rooted passion for storytelling and a relentless drive to carve his own niche, Vardhan is steadily building a filmography that reflects both his versatility and commitment to his craft.

In an exclusive conversation with *The Pioneer*, he delves into his journey, the experience of working on *Bobby Aur Rishi Ki Love Story* and his aspirations for the future.

For him, acting is not just a profession—it is a calling, a way of life. Reflecting on his early years in the industry, he credits *Yeh Saali Aashiqui* as his first love, a film that pushed him to explore complex characters and prepared him for the challenges ahead.

"That film keeps giving and giving," he says with a smile. "It was my first love, my first child and a movie I'm extremely proud of. Playing two distinct characters in my debut was challenging but also immensely rewarding. It was a great warm-up into what my career would lead to. Doing something so difficult early on served as a preparatory platform for me as an actor." With an inclination toward dramatic and intense roles, he found himself craving a shift in tone. He wanted to explore something lighter, something that would challenge him in an entirely different way.

"Comedy is the most difficult genre to attempt," he states. "As a theatre actor, I was always known for my drama and comedy. So when Kunal Kohli offered me *Bobby Aur Rishi Ki Love Story*, I said yes in a split second. It was such a simple decision. And honestly, doing this film has changed my life." *Bobby Aur Rishi Ki Love Story* is a romantic drama that blends nostalgia with modern emotions, a signature of Kunal Kohli's storytelling. He describes it as a film with the same soul as *Hum Tum*, one that is lighthearted, musically rich, and emotionally grounded.

"It stands out because of its strong emotional core. Kunal sir has such a deep understanding of romance and rom-coms and that trans-

lates beautifully on screen. The film isn't just about romance—it's also extremely funny. That balance is what makes it special."

A crucial aspect of any romantic film is the chemistry between its leads and Vardhan found an incredible co-star in Kaveri Kapur. Their bond evolved naturally, strengthening over time and translating seamlessly onto the screen. "Kaveri and I became inseparable on set. Initially, we were just getting to know each other, but as we started readings—even on Zoom calls—our chemistry kept growing. Kunal sir could see the progression, and once he said, 'Yes, the chemistry is perfect,' we flew to London for the shoot."

Off-camera, the duo shared countless laughs, keeping the mood light and fun, a reflection of the film's genre.

"If you caught us between takes, you'd see us laughing our lungs out. We just had so much fun, and that energy translated into our performances. We weren't trying to fit into a mold—we wanted our characters to feel real, to feel believable. And I think that approach really worked." Born into a family of celebrated actors, Vardhan is keenly aware of the expectations that come with the Puri name. Yet, rather than

feeling burdened by it, he embraces it with gratitude. "My grandfather, Amrish Puri, is my god. I pray to him. But I don't feel any pressure—I only feel a sense of responsibility. Every artist is unique, and I believe in creating my own path rather than emulating someone else's journey. My grandfather's career was different, my journey is different, and I just want to make him proud in my own way." His grandfather's advice still rings in his ears—discipline, punctuality, and persistence make an actor.

"He always told me, 'Cinema cannot be a part of your life—it has to become your entire life.' He warned me against distractions, against losing focus, and reminded me that my purpose is to entertain and bring happiness to people. That lesson has stayed with me."

The Puri family's contribution to cinema extends far beyond Amrish Puri. Vardhan is deeply aware of the lineage he comes from, tracing back to the legendary K.L. Saigal, his grand-uncles Chaman Puri and Madan Puri and Om Puri, whom he considers family. "We are a family of entertainers. And that's a privilege, not a pressure. I wake up every day with stars in my eyes, thinking about what story I can tell next, what character I can bring to life."

Having played intense, dramatic roles, Vardhan is eager to explore more lighthearted characters in the future.

"I love doing dramatic roles, but this rom-com was such a breath of fresh air. Now, I really want to do an out-and-out comedy. Filmmakers, please offer me comedies!" he laughs. "I'm already reading some scripts, and hopefully, I'll lock in something soon." Vardhan's aspirations go far beyond just playing specific roles. His vision is to be a storyteller who leaves an impact on audiences, shaping narratives that resonate deeply.

"I want to tell stories that have social relevance without being preachy. I want to play characters that are both challenging and relatable. I want to be the hero, the villain—anything and everything—because we only have one life. I'm hungry to explore unique stories, and I believe the world is my oyster. I'm just raring to go."

My grandfather, Amrish Puri, is my god. I pray to him. But I don't feel any pressure—I only feel a sense of responsibility. Every artist is unique, and I believe in creating my own path rather than emulating someone else's journey. My grandfather's career was different, my journey is different, and I just want to make him proud in my own way.



Check-in and doze off!

With stress and sleep deprivation on the rise and India being the world's second most sleep-deprived nation after Japan, the demand for sleep-focused vacations is growing. According to Skyscanner's Travel Trends 2024 Report, an impressive 85% of Indian travellers are now more mindful of their sleep, with 20% even considering sleep as one of the main activities for their next holiday. The global market for sleep tourism was estimated at \$74.54 billion in 2024.

Once regarded as merely incidental to travel, sleep is now becoming the main event. Sleep tourism—a concept gaining global popularity—has begun to find its footing in India, as travelers increasingly prioritize rest and relaxation over the hustle of conventional sightseeing and packed itineraries.

From tranquil Himalayan retreats to luxurious urban sanctuaries, India is redefining relaxation with its sleep-focused travel. These sleep vacations are not just about catching up on rest—they're a way to disconnect from the chaos of modern life and indulge in the art of slumber. Customised programs, including aromatherapy, yoga nidra sessions and sleep-enhancing cuisine, ensure that guests leave not only well-rested but also rejuvenated, ready to take on the world.

This World Sleep Day, on March 14th, let's make India rethink its travel plans.

The Westin Resort & Spa, Himalayas

Since opening in early 2023, it has established itself as a leading destination for sleep tourism, surrounded by the tranquil beauty of Uttarakhand's lush foothills. The resort's 141 thoughtfully designed guestrooms, featuring

private balconies with stunning valley views, offer signature comforts such as the Heavenly Bed, ensuring a deeply restorative stay. For added indulgence, the Royal Garden Villa and Garden Suites with Plunge Pools create serene havens for relaxation. At the heart of its wellness offerings, the Heavenly Spa provides expertly curated treatments, combining global wellness practices with Ayurvedic traditions to enhance relaxation. It redefines sleep tourism as a holistic and rejuvenating retreat.

Courtyard by Marriott, Ahmedabad

Nestled in India's first UNESCO World Heritage City, it offers an immersive sleep tourism experience where luxury meets mindfulness. The thoughtfully designed rooms, inspired by Ahmedabad's heritage, provide a serene haven for restful slumber, blending mid-century sophistication with local artistry. Elevating the sleep experience, Explore Spa's signature rituals—First Taste + First Touch and Last Touch + Last Taste—prepare the mind and body for deep relaxation, leaving guests rejuvenated. Complemented by a Wellness Epicurean Menu, the spa ensures holistic well-being, making it a perfect destination for those seeking restful escapes and a journey into sleep tourism.

The Westin Goa

Set amidst the vibrant charm of North Goa, it offers an inviting escape where rest and rejuvenation take centre stage. Surrounded by lush green hills and the lively beaches of Anjuna, the hotel balances Goa's energy with a serene retreat inspired by the philosophy of susegad. The thoughtfully designed spaces, rooted in biophilic principles, create a soothing environment that fosters deep relaxation. At the Heavenly Spa, therapies like the Abhyanga and Sports Massage ease tension and prepare the body for restorative sleep. Together, the tranquil setting and wellness-focused amenities make it an ideal destination for sleep tourism.



'SONGS LIKE UDAA UDAA UDAA BRING LIFE TO A FILM'

PNS| EXCLUSIVE

Renowned playback singer Shaan, often called the 'Golden Voice of India', has mesmerized audiences for decades with his soulful renditions. Known for his romantic melodies of the 2000s, Shaan has won multiple Filmfare and IIFA Awards and remains one of India's most beloved voices. Shaan, the celebrated Golden Voice of India, brings his powerful presence to *Kuch Sapney Apne*, lending his soulful voice to the uplifting anthem *Udaa Udaa Udaa*. With decades of musical mastery, Shaan connects deeply with the film's themes of love, trust and inclusivity. As a champion of social change, he reflects on how music transcends boundaries, fostering acceptance and challenging societal norms. Through his heartfelt rendition, Shaan reminds us

The Pioneer had an opportunity to quickly chat with the renowned singer Shaan, for his latest song Udaa Udaa from Kuch Sapney Apne as he delves into being part of it.

that music is not just a melody, but a force capable of transforming minds and shaping a more inclusive world.

Now, he lends his voice to *Udaa Udaa Udaa*, a vibrant and uplifting track from *Kuch Sapney Apne*—a film that delves deep into love, trust and acceptance, not just in queer relationships but in all human connections. In an exclusive conversation with *The Pioneer*, Shaan shares his thoughts on the film's message, the power of music in shaping mindsets, and why he believes inclusivity is more important than ever.

For Shaan, the emotional core of *Kuch Sapney Apne* struck a chord.

He believes the film addresses a subject that, while widely discussed, still carries deep societal challenges. "Social rejection is something we may learn to navigate, but when it comes from our own family—especially our parents—it can make life extremely difficult," he says. "*Kuch Sapney Apne* sensitively explores this issue and I'm truly grateful to be a part of a film that carries such a strong and necessary message."

Shaan's contribution to the film comes in the form of *Udaa Udaa Udaa*, an energetic and uplifting track that complements the film's narrative beautifully. Reflecting on his experience recording the song,

he says, "It was an absolute joy to sing! The song is packed with positivity and high energy, so it felt like a breeze. Songs like these bring so much life to a film." Music has long been a force for change, and Shaan firmly believes in its ability to shift mindsets, especially on social issues such as LGBTQ+ rights.

"Music speaks louder than words," he says with conviction. "It has the power to communicate a message without sounding preachy or overbearing. A song can make you feel, reflect, and embrace perspectives that words alone might not." With *Kuch Sapney Apne*, Shaan is proud to be associated with a project that champions

inclusivity. He strongly believes that 2025 and beyond should be about moving forward with sensitivity and acceptance.

"I have always stood for equal representation and inclusivity," he states. "It's heartening to see more films addressing these important themes. We need to create art that reflects and respects everyone's experiences. I'm honored to contribute to a film that takes a stand for LGBTQ+ rights and social progress." With *Udaa Udaa Udaa*, Shaan once again proves that music can be a beacon of hope, joy and change. As *Kuch Sapney Apne* makes its way to audiences, his voice will carry not just melody, but a powerful message of love and acceptance.

what's brewing?



Anika Khara

Chandrika

Radha Devineni

Rajani

Padmini

Lakshmi

Dr.Nilima

Rajetha

Geeta

Sujatha

Aarithal

Madhavi Chowdary

Celebrity Secrets celebrated International Women's Day in grand style at Room9, Jubilee Hills, highlighting strength, grace, and inspiring journeys. Dr. Madhavi Chowdary, the Founder of Celebrity Secrets, honored women from various fields who have made significant contributions to society. The event also marked the unveiling of the Celebrity Secrets Beauty Magazine, adding an extra layer of excitement to the occasion.



On the occasion of International Women's Day, Poultry India/IPEMA organized a special event to celebrate and recognize the significant contributions of women in the poultry sector. The program brought together IPEMA members and women entrepreneurs from across the industry to honor their achievements and discuss ways to foster greater female participation in poultry. Speakers during the event highlighted the challenges women face in the sector, praising their resilience, courage, and determination in overcoming obstacles.



Sandya Jalla



Minister Konda Surekha inaugurated a silk exhibition at the Indian Silk Gallery, located at Sathya Sai Corporation in Srinagar Colony. The exhibition will be available for customers until the 16th of this month. The event was attended by Dr. Arun Kumar, Head of the Ministry of Textiles Weavers Service Center; Dr. Praveen Kumar, Happy Sridevi, Edu Entrepreneur Y. Sailaja; Indira Gummala; and Sandya Jalla.



Indira Gummala



Happy Sridevi

PARTY



The Mahila Dakshata Samithi Educational Institutions in Gangaram, Chandanagar, Hyderabad, celebrated International Women's Day with great enthusiasm. The event brought together a distinguished gathering of leaders, philanthropists, and educators to honor the invaluable contributions of women. Sudha Dev ji Varma, the First Lady of Telangana, was warmly received by Dr. Saroj Bajaj, President of the institution. The event was also attended by Usha Gopalratnam, a successful business consultant and philanthropist and Lalitha Kanodia, a well-known philanthropist.

PHOTOS BY- SV CHARY

Sphoorthy Engineering College hosted the Creative Carnival Talent Hunt, organized by Clicktalks in association with TASK. The event provided a platform for students to showcase their talents in singing, dancing, photography, and short film making, focusing on social themes like women's safety, addiction, global warming, and drug abuse.



The Women's Leadership Awards was held at the HICC Novotel in Hyderabad by Hybiz.Tv. Telangana State Women's Commission Chairperson Nerella Sharada and TGOILFED Managing Director Shaik Yasmeen Basha, along with Dr. Preethi Adusumilli, Founder of Sisiro International Aesthetic Academy and Mrs. India Crown Winner and Sunita G. Kumar, Chairperson of Maa Research Foundation, attended the event.

FUN

ARCHIE



CALVIN AND HOBBS



GARFIELD



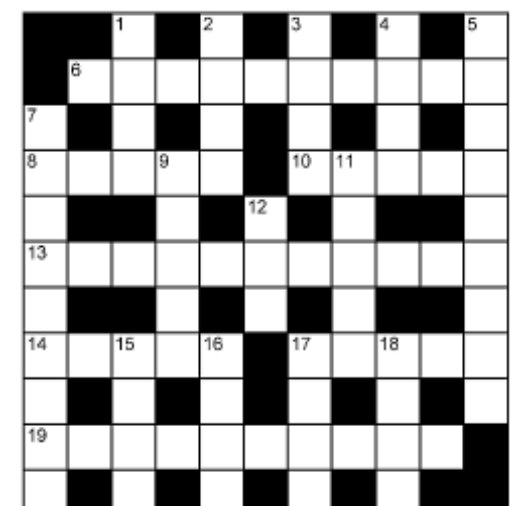
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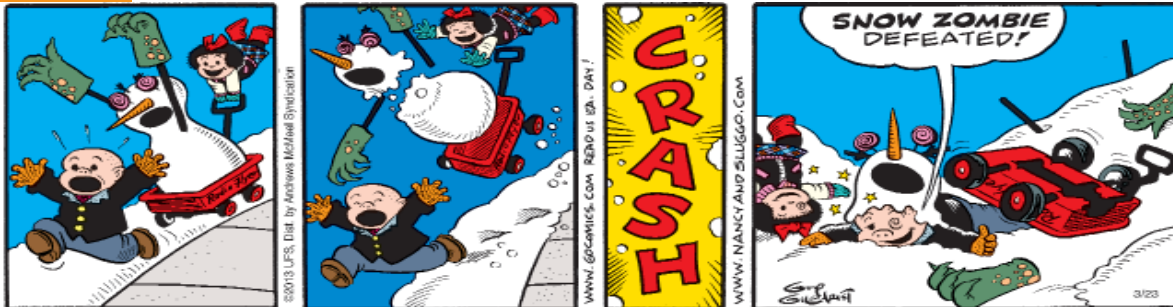
SPEED BUMP



CROSSWORD



NANCY



SUDOKU

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Yesterday's solution

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

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

- 6 Job
- 8 A sung musical drama
- 10 A short part of a play
- 13 Refusing to obey orders
- 14 To cook vegetables or meat in an oven using fat
- 17 Listen to music and news on this
- 19 Somewhere students go

- 11 Porcelain
- 12 Fast aeroplane
- 15 This chemical liquid burns
- 16 Held by ropes
- 17 Take a break
- 18 A fruit from a palm tree

DOWN

- 1 Painful throb
- 2 Hawaiian dance
- 3 Overtake
- 4 Pleasant
- 5 A job with a syringe
- 7 Marvellous
- 9 A plant's anchors in the soil

SOLUTION

S	L	E	E	P	I	S	L	O
I	X	C	A	A				
C	O	P	E	H	O	K	E	
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R	O	M	E	C	H	O	S	E

Inspired by Chiranjeevi, director Viswa Karun gears up for *Dilruba*

SURESH KAVIRAYANI
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Director Viswa Karun is all set to make his directorial debut with *Dilruba*, starring Kiran Abbavaram and Rukshar Dhillon. The film is slated for release on March 14. In a candid conversation, Karun shared insights into his filmmaking journey, how he got his break and what inspired him to enter the world of cinema.

Karun's love for cinema began early. Coming from a family of educators, he grew up surrounded by literature. "Both my grandfathers were teachers and our house was filled with literary books. I developed a habit of reading from a young age," he shared.

Born and raised in Tadepalligudem and Bhimavaram, Karun pursued a degree in B. Pharmacy before deciding to chase his filmmaking dreams. "I always knew I wanted to be a director," he said. His defining moment came when he watched *Mugguru Monagallu*, a film in which Chiranjeevi played triple roles. "As a child, I thought there were three real Chiranjeevis! My grandfather explained that it was just the magic of cinema. That's when I decided—I want to be a filmmaker," he recalled.

Karun had no industry connections when he set out to become a filmmaker. "I roamed around production offices, trying to find opportunities," he admitted. His first break came when his friend Vicky asked him to write scenes for Naladamayanthi. "I wrote 22 scenes and received Rs 2,500 as my first paycheck. Unfortunately, the film never saw the light of day," he said.

Determined to succeed, Karun



Director Viswa Karun, who is making his debut with *Dilruba*, speaks about his journey, inspiration behind this film and more

took on various writing and advertising gigs. His persistence paid off when *Ranga Ranga Vaibhavana* director Gireeshaya introduced him to veteran writer Vijayendra Prasad, the mastermind behind *Baahubali* and *RRR*. Karun worked on the script for *Jaguar*, starring Nikhil Kumaraswamy (grandson of former Prime Minister Deve Gowda), under the mentorship of director Mahadev Swamy.

"I spent one and a half years working on *Jaguar*. After that, I felt ready to chart my own path," he said. He then contributed to *Chalo* (starring Naga Shaurya and Rashmika Mandanna) and even worked briefly with Ram Gopal Varma and Dil Raju's production house before landing a stint with producer DVV Danayya. It was during this time that *Dilruba* started taking shape.

Karun's collaboration with Kiran Abbavaram happened by chance. "I met Kiran a few years ago and narrated a story to him. He liked my storytelling style but wasn't con-

vinced by the story itself. He told me to come back with a stronger script," he recalled. Determined, Karun worked on a new concept and reapproached Kiran. "When I narrated *Dilruba*, he loved it. He listened for just 40 minutes before giving his approval," Karun shared.

Despite Kiran's growing success, especially after *Ka*, the actor gave Karun complete creative freedom. "Before shooting began, we discussed everything in detail. Kiran never interfered—he just told me, 'Take your time, but make a great film,'" Karun said.

Discussing the film's theme, Karun explained that *Dilruba* explores emotions rarely addressed in mainstream Indian cinema. "Words like 'sorry' and 'thank you' are common in Western culture, but here, apologizing is often difficult. In *Dilruba*, the protagonist struggles with apologizing for something that isn't his fault, which creates tension in his relationships," he revealed.

Another key element of the story is how the protagonist views his ex-girlfriend. "Many people treat their exes as enemies, but before love, there was friendship. Even after a breakup, that friendship can still exist. Checking in on an ex shouldn't be taboo—that's something we explore in *Dilruba*," Karun said.

He also addressed comparisons to recent films with similar themes, like *Sankranthiki Vasthnam* and *Return of the Dragon*. "Though the core idea might seem familiar, the way we present it on screen is completely fresh. *Dilruba* offers a unique perspective on love and relationships," he assured.

With *Dilruba* set to release on March 14, Karun is ready to introduce his vision to the world. From childhood inspiration to working with industry veterans, his journey reflects passion, perseverance and an unwavering love for storytelling.



MAHESH BABU DOMINATES THE RE-RELEASE TREND IN TOLLYWOOD

Superstar Mahesh Babu has established himself as the undisputed leader in Tollywood's re-release trend. It all started with *Pokiri*, which became a massive success upon its re-release, inspiring other stars to follow suit. Following *Pokiri*, Mahesh Babu's *Okkadu*, *Businessman* and *Murari* also had successful re-releases, with *Murari* performing like a fresh theatrical release. The trend continues with *Seethamma Vakitlo Sirmalle Chettu*, his blockbuster multi-starrer with Venkatesh, which re-released on March 7 and has been drawing strong box-office numbers. Despite many other star re-releases, Mahesh Babu remains the most successful in this space. While Pawan Kalyan's *Gabbar Singh* managed decent collections, other stars like Ram Charan, Jr. NTR and Allu Arjun haven't seen the same level of impact. With *Seethamma Vakitlo Sirmalle Chettu* still performing well, Mahesh Babu solidifies his position as the reigning superstar of re-releases in Tollywood.

Despite busy schedule, Nagarjuna remains *Bigg Boss* host

There have been speculations that Nagarjuna might step down as the host of *Bigg Boss Telugu* due to his busy acting schedule. The veteran actor is currently working on multiple projects, including *Kuberaa*, which stars Dhanush and *Coolie*, where Rajinikanth plays the lead. Both films are being made as multilingual releases in Telugu and Tamil.

Given his packed schedule, rumors suggested that Nagarjuna might not return for the reality show. However, a source close

to the show's organisers has confirmed that he will continue as the host.

"We have not approached anyone else to host the show, as Nagarjuna has already agreed to return," said the source.

Nagarjuna has been the face of *Bigg Boss Telugu* since its third season and has successfully hosted five seasons so far. The first season was hosted by Jr. NTR, followed by Nani in the second season. The upcoming ninth season is expected to begin in September 2025, with Nagarjuna once again taking the reins.



GV Prakash's debut as producer ends in disaster

GV Prakash Kumar, a well-known music composer with over 100 films to his credit, recently made his debut as a producer with *Kingston*, which was released on March 7. The film also marked his 25th appearance as an actor. Prakash had high hopes for this project, calling it one of his most ambitious films.

Kingston is a fantasy thriller with a horror backdrop, featuring extensive graphics and a significantly higher budget compared to his previous films. Marketed as a sea-adventure thriller, the makers claimed it was a concept never explored before in Indian cinema.

However, despite the hype, *Kingston* failed to make an impact from day one. The film opened to disastrous box office numbers in both Telugu and Tamil markets. Audiences outright rejected it, and even the weekend collections showed no improvement. Critics also gave the film poor reviews, citing a confusing narrative structure with excessive flashback sequences. With such a weak performance, the film is now poised to incur significant losses for its makers.

Sreeleela surprises Chiranjeevi on Vishwambhara sets

Megastar Chiranjeevi is currently filming *Vishwambhara* at Annapurna Studios and on Saturday, he received an unexpected but pleasant surprise from actress Sreeleela.

Sreeleela, who was also shooting at the same studios for her upcoming project, learned that Chiranjeevi was on set and decid-

ed to visit him. Since it was International Women's Day, Chiranjeevi made sure she didn't leave empty-handed.

Despite not expecting her visit, Chiranjeevi quickly arranged for a thoughtful gift. He presented Sreeleela with a goddess idol, making the moment even more special. The actress was thrilled by the gesture and later took a self-

ie with the megastar to commemorate the occasion. Sreeleela is set to make her Tamil and Hindi film debuts this year. She is starring in *Parasakthi*, directed by Sudha Kongara, in Tamil and will be seen opposite Kartik Aaryan in a Hindi film directed by Anurag Basu. Meanwhile, Chiranjeevi is wrapping up *Vishwambhara*, which is nearing completion.



Kalyan Ram's next titled *Arjun S/o Vyjayanthi*

After a year without releases, Nandamuri Kalyan Ram is back with an exciting new project. While he made a mark as a producer with *Devara: Part One*, starring his brother Jr. NTR, he is now returning as the lead in *Arjun S/o Vyjayanthi*.

The film, directed by Pradeep Chilukuri, will see legendary actress Vijayashanthi in a pivotal role. The makers recently unveiled the title and first-look poster, confirming that Kalyan Ram plays Vijayashanthi's son in the film.

A major highlight is Vijayashanthi's return as a cop, reprising her iconic character name, Vyjayanthi, from *Kartavyam*—a film that released



nearly 35 years ago. Known for her powerful police roles, she will once again don the uniform, adding nostalgia and intensity to the film.

Arjun S/o Vyjayanthi is an action-packed thriller produced by Ashok Vardhan Muppa and Sunil Balusu, with Saiee Manjrekar as the female lead. Bollywood actor Sohail Khan has been cast as the antagonist.

The poster captures the high-octane energy of the film, depicting Kalyan Ram and Vijayashanthi walking amidst fire and metal chains in a factory-like setting. The film is currently in production, and the makers are expected to announce the release date soon.

