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OF AMERICA

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CONTROL PRICE RISE: SITHARAMAN

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PUCOVSKI GETS CALL
UP FOR INDIA TESTS

VIJAYAWADA, FRIDAY NOVEMBER 13, 2020; PAGES 12 ₹3



the pioneer



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ANN SHEETAL TEAM
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CRICKETER KRUNAL PANDYA DETAINED AT MUMBAI AIRPORT

Cricketer Krunal Pandya was on Thursday detained at the Mumbai International Airport by the Directorate of Revenue Intelligence (DRI) for allegedly being in possession of undisclosed gold and other valuables, DRI sources said. Krunal had returned shortly after 5 pm by a flight from UAE when he was stopped at the airport by DRI personnel, the sources said. Krunal was part of the Mumbai Indians team which won its record fifth IPL title on November 10, defeating Delhi Capitals in the final match in Dubai.



RAM JANMABHOOMI TRUST HEAD MAHANT NRITYA GOPAL DAS CRITICAL

The condition of Ram Janmabhoomi Teerth Kshetra Trust president Mahant Nritya Gopal Das, admitted at the Medanta hospital here, continued to be critical on Thursday, a health bulletin issued by the hospital said. "His condition is critical but under control. He has been kept under the supervision of critical care experts," the bulletin said. Das was admitted to the hospital for thromboembolism. On Monday, the seer was taken to the government-run Shriram Hospital in Ayodhya after he complained of breathlessness, but doctors referred him to the Medanta hospital in Lucknow as his condition was "serious".



MAHAGATBANDHAN LOST BECAUSE OF CONG, ADMITS TARIQ ANWAR

Senior Congress leader Tariq Anwar on Thursday came out with the candid admission that his party, on account of its dismal performance in the Bihar Assembly elections, emerged as the weak link preventing the Mahagatbandhan (Grand Alliance) from forming its government in the state. He also expressed worry over entry of the AIMIM in Bihar. Anwar, an AICC general secretary, came out with a flurry of tweets calling for "urgent and deep introspection" over the debacle of the party, the second largest constituent of the opposition coalition, which contested as many as 70 seats but returned with a tally of just 19.



A-G GRANTS CONSENT FOR CONTEMPT PROCEEDINGS AGAINST KUNAL KAMRA

Attorney General K K Venugopal Thursday granted consent for initiation of criminal contempt proceedings against stand-up comic artist Kunal Kamra for his tweets which allegedly criticised the Supreme Court, saying the tweets are in bad taste and it is time that people understand that attacking the apex court brazenly will attract punishment. Venugopal said today people believe that they can boldly and brazenly condemn the Supreme Court of India and its judges by exercising their freedom of speech, but under the Constitution, the freedom of speech is subject to the law of contempt. "I have gone through each one of the tweets which you have annexed for consent to proceed by way of criminal contempt against Kunal Kamra," he said.



TODAY

ALMANAC

Month & Paksham: Ashwin & Krishna Paksha
Panchangam
Tithi: Trayodashi: 05:58 pm
Nakshatram: Chitra: 11:05 pm
Time to Avoid: (Bad time to start any important work)

Rahukalam: 10:36 am - 12:00 pm
Yamagandam: 02:48 pm - 04:12 pm
Varjyam: 08:58 am - 10:23 am, 12:00 am - 05:24 am
Gulika: 07:47 am - 09:12 am
Good Time: (to start any important work)
Amritakalam: 05:26 pm - 06:51 pm
Abhijit Muhurtham: 11:37 am - 12:22 pm

VIJAYAWADA WEATHER

Forecast: Partly cloudy
Temp: 31/22
Humidity: 72%
Sunrise: 06:20 am
Sunset: 05:40 pm
Current Weather Conditions Updated November 12, 2020 5:00 PM

Telugu States borrow, fall deeper into the debt trap

SNV SUDHIR
■ VIJAYAWADA

Reflecting the precarious financial situation of the two Telugu states, both Andhra Pradesh and Telangana have borrowed Rs 31,250 crore and Rs 22,961 crore respectively from the market in the first six months of the current financial year, 2020-21. Andhra Pradesh stands third — with only Maharashtra and Tamil Nadu ahead in the list — among the States when it comes to borrowing from the market to meet its expenses. Telangana stands sixth. With dwindling revenue receipts due to the Covid triggered financial crisis, both the Telugu States have opted for borrowing to fund the expenditure. This is more true of Andhra Pradesh which has been implementing its ambitious welfare agenda aggressively. Despite facing a massive financial crisis, mostly due to poor revenue receipts, the Andhra Pradesh government has been crediting amounts to the bank accounts of the beneficiaries of its various welfare schemes without missing any timeline as set by Chief Minister YS Jaganmohan Reddy in launching these schemes. Both the states have also approached the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) to tap all sources of revenues and have availed Special Drawing Facility (SDF), Ways and Means Advances (WMA) and Overdraft (OD) facilities to the tune of Rs 4,641 crore and Rs 3,514 crore respectively in September. Andhra Pradesh has availed Rs 1,182 crore under SDF for 30 days, Rs 1,939 crore under



WMA for 29 days and Rs 1,520 crore as OD for 17 days in September alone. Telangana availed Rs 1,240 crore under SDF for 30 days, Rs 1,576 crore under WMA for 30 days and Rs 698 crore as OD for 21 days during the same month. As per the RBI's latest bulletin, Andhra Pradesh is next only to Maharashtra to avail such high amounts of financial accommodation generally availed by state governments under various facilities. Maharashtra availed Rs 6,240 crore under various heads.

- AP's debt burden is Rs 3.02 lakh-crore at the end of March 2020, up from Rs 2,58,928 a year ago
- As per the Budget estimates, AP's debt burden is expected to go up to Rs 3,48,998 crore in the current fiscal.
- The AP government envisaged to dole out over Rs 75,000 crore in cash to people under various welfare schemes
- Estimated revenue deficit Rs 18,434 crore, while the estimated fiscal deficit Rs 48,295 crore

Centre widens stimulus ambit to boost economic recovery

■ FM unveils incentives for job creation, home sale deals small businesses

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman on Thursday announced tax relief on select home sale deals, enhanced credit guarantee programme for small businesses and provided incentives for new job creation as the government widened stimulus measures to boost the economy. The measures, that also include additional fertiliser subsidy and already announced production-linked incentive scheme for manufacturing units, totalled Rs 2.65 lakh-crore, taking the cumulative stimulus package announced since the lockdown to almost Rs 30 lakh-crore, or 15 percent of the Gross Domestic Product (GDP). It also includes additional funding for real estate developers and contractors, a new employment scheme and additional spending on the rural jobs plan. Sitharaman cited data, including increase in tax collections for goods and services, rise in energy consumption and improvement in bank credit, to state that the economy was seeing "strong recovery" taking root. The Indian economy has recovered from its worst-ever contraction of 24 per cent in the April-June quarter but will end up shrinking by close to 10 per cent in the fiscal year to March 2021. But she saw hope in the Reserve Bank of India predicting a strong likelihood of growth in the current quarter.



Positive news: Chiru is Covid negative

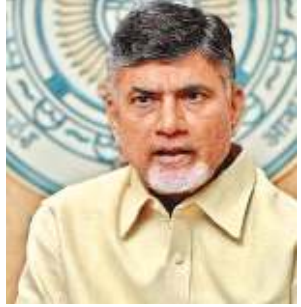
PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Actor-politician K Chiranjeevi on Thursday confirmed that he has tested negative for Coronavirus, days after he was tested positive. In a tweet on Thursday, Chiranjeevi said: "A group of doctors did three different tests and concluded that I am Covid-negative and that the earlier result was due to a faulty RT PCR kit." After he was tested positive on Sunday, Chiranjeevi started off with basic medication, but he didn't display any symptoms. As he had apprehensions over the test results, he got a CT scan for chest done at the Apollo Hospital, where doctors told him that there were no traces of the infection.

Jagan's 'Jungle Raj drove Salam family to suicide: Naidu

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

Describing the death of auto-rickshaw driver Abdul Salam and his family as "murder" and not suicide, TDP national president N Chandrababu Naidu on Thursday held the YSRC Government and the State Police Department solely responsible for the tragic turn of events that wiped out an entire family in Nandyal in Kurnool district. Naidu said that the suicide was merely the culmination of a series of non-stop atrocities being committed against the



BCs, SCs, STs and Muslim Minorities under the Jaganmohan Reddy's 'Police Raj'. "It was only after the Nandyal police terrorised and mentally tortured Abdul Salam that he lost all hope that he, his wife and his two children would be able to live in peace any longer. Their deaths seemed like an 'animal sacrifice' to the diabolical rule in AP," Naidu said.

TTD sanctity under threat: TDP

■ Varla Ramaiah wants Subba Reddy to resign over inappropriate email

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

Stating that it was a matter of grave concern that the spiritual pre-eminence of the Tirupati Tirumala Devasthanams has come under serious threat because of the unholy practices of the YSRC Government, TD Politburo Member Varla Ramaiah on Thursday demanded the resignation of the TTD Chairman YV Subba Reddy. "He should resign immediately, considering the series of controversies that have threatened the sanctity of the Seven Hills over the past 17 months," Ramaiah said, pointing to the unsavoury incident in which an employee of the Sri Venkateswara Bhakti Channel was involved leaving devotees in a state of shock. In a statement here, the TDP leader said that too much political interference was taking place in TTD affairs ever since the YSRC came to power.



Modi, Biden to speak at 'mutually convenient time'

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Prime Minister Narendra Modi and United States President-elect Joe Biden will speak with each other in due course at a mutually convenient time, the Ministry of External Affairs said on Thursday and asserted that India-US ties enjoy bipartisan support in America.

Thick fog draws tourists to Chintapalli

SUMIT ONKA
■ VISAKHAPATNAM

A thick blanket of fog covered Chintapalli in Vizag Agency on Thursday as the temperature dropped to single digit — 9 degree C — for the first time this winter. The rainfall activity predicted over the next four to five days may further bring down the mercury. After going viral on social networking platforms, pictures of the blanket of fog are now drawing visitors to the hills of the Eastern Ghats. Youngsters from Vizag and other parts of the region are flocking to Lammasingi, Tajangi, and a few other areas in and around Chintapalli of Vizag Agency to experience the cool and foggy weather conditions. The Regional Agriculture Research Station (RARS) at Chintapalli in Vizag Agency records the temperature at Chintapalli. Based on it, the temperature of surrounding areas Lammasingi and Tajangi are calculated by deducting 1 degree C to 2 degree C. The minimum temperatures are sliding day by day in the Agency.



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THE LEGEND RETURNS

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CHILD-REARING

Paternity leave on priority?

Paternal leaves have long been a hot topic of discussion. But when celebrities set the trend, it gets people talking, writes SHIKHA DUGGAL as she talks to actor Ruslaan Mumtaz and dads on the issue



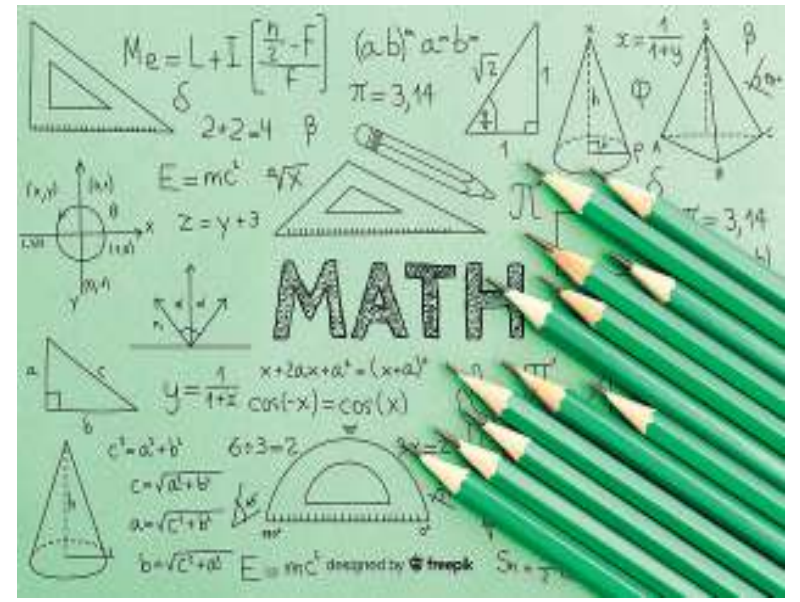
Virat Kohli will be missing three out of the four test matches in Australia to be with wife Anushka Sharma as the couple prepares to welcome their first child in early January. The BCCI has granted paternity leave to the Indian captain. He will return after the first test against Australia in Adelaide. Hence, gone are the days when it was only women who would be at home taking care of their child and depend on the men functioning as the bread earners. Though, we're to abide by the law of nature of a mother having to be available for her child 24x7, emotionally and physically as it's the mother who delivers the child, the father plays an equally important role too. A father is expect-

ed to be emotionally and physically available for both mother and child before and after the delivery. When dads take paternity leave, the whole family benefits. Fraternities don't always offer paid parental leave to men and even when they do, some men don't feel they can justify taking it. But if we want fathers to be equal parents, they need an equal opportunity to parent in those early weeks and months. That's why we love to see high-profile fathers talking about paternity leave. Actor Ruslaan Mumtaz is here to show the world how it's done — by playing this important role in raising his child and that can change attitudes everywhere. "Nurturing a child is not something that only my wife is entitled to do, majority of us men think that our duty begins when the child

begins interacting with us. No, it doesn't work like that at all. Giving a child due attention and care is not the sole job of a mother who has brought him/her in this beautiful world. Luckily for us, Raya stepped into this serene world amid the lockdown and I was there for him 24x7. I bathed him, helped him expel gas by patting his back, put him to sleep and also change his diapers. hilariously, I was on a forced paternity leave for which I am extremely thankful I, as it has totally changed my perception towards parenting it helped me realise how important taking paternity leave is so why not apply this best spent time on your self growth as well," shares the actor of *Balika Vadhu* fame. Parenting is both the mother and father's responsibility. It is normal and

important for a man to be an equal partner in parenting. It was in 1999 when Indian law legalised paternity leave for male employees but only few organisations follow it. Although it was only for 15 days for fathers as compared to 26 days for mothers because they are primary caregivers. But still, many men are reluctant to take paternity leaves. The major reason could be the toxic masculinity that perceives child-rearing and paternity leave as womanly. The perspective relegates that men should be focussing on their careers, however, Arshdeep Bhardwaj, who owns the renowned brand name Crivly in Hyderabad says, "Family dynamics are changing with time. While a baby brings joy, it also brings some drastic changes in your lives. Mommies can-

not deal with everything so fathers have to step up their game and come to their rescue and that's exactly what Virat has done. Now, granting paternity leaves in the corporate sectors depends upon the company's diverse protocols. Family policies are always a hot topic in our corporate culture! Paid paternity leaves does make a difference, parents can bond on a new level. Caregiving just doesn't limit to feeding, it also includes giving medical attention, ensuring insurances, filing work and abundant affection towards your newly born. So, don't think twice to take time off for your child." With the hope that paternity leaves give way to more gender equal relations, it will mark the role of a father as well, in child rearing because it's not just a mother's last resort.



Mathematics karo, aagey badho

After playing a whippy, warm and an extraordinary woman who's heading for numbers by consistently entertaining audiences with her latest edutainment flick *Shakuntala Devi*, actress Vidya Balan is now associating with Cuemath, the math learning edtech platform as its new brand ambassador. Set up in 2013 by visionary teacher and founder Manan Khurma, Cuemath is among the top edtech brands in India having imparted an impressive 25 million+ classes to more than 40,000 students across geographies so far and it continues to grow from strength to strength. Mathematics is a one-of-a-kind subject that makes a man methodical in life — it brings order to our life and prevents chaos. It's the cradle of all creation without which, the world perhaps can't move. Everyone needs and uses basic math in their day-to-day lives and the latest commercial by Cuemath tackles math in a fun manner by laying out a situation where a child is able to order more pizza for less money due to the application of math he's been learning with Cuemath, resulting in him making better decisions and maximizing fun. Excited about her association on becoming Cuemath's new face, Vidya Balan said, "I attended a Cuemath demo class while researching for my last film.

Imagine my surprise when 45 minutes into the demo, I learnt to visualise math concepts with simulations. I never thought I could SEE Math! I was further astonished when the teacher gave me an example saying two medium 8" pizzas have less pizza as compared to one large 12" pizza. WOW, I have been ordering pizzas the wrong way. It's the area of the pizza that matters and not the diameter! It's this Cuemath way of making math fun and taking the anxiety off it that appealed to me immensely. This is the future of learning." Anyone can learn math with proper guidance and Cuemath is here to do this! It's born with a vision to help students learn math the right way and overcome difficulties they face due to traditional blackboard learning. CEO Manan Khurma says, "With our classes, we have steered clear of the traditional board teaching method. We help children learn Math organically by visualising concepts from different points of view, building their own mental models and algorithms, developing logical reasoning by finding multiple answers, and applying math in everyday thinking and problem solving." So, the more mathematical we are in our approach, the more successful we will be. Take this tool into your hands, log onto Cuemath and make your life simpler and easier.

From Darkness to Light: This festival, donate!

It is that magical time of the year when twinkling, glittering lights, are all over the place in the evenings, on the roads, malls, markets and homes. Light from earthen diyas, candles, sky lanterns, fairy lights not only illuminate the darkest corners of our homes, streets and thoroughfares, but also light up a ray of hope in our hearts and minds, dispelling fear and despair. After all, it is Deepawali, the festival of lights, which leads us from darkness to light. And yet, in this extraordinary year (definitely not for the right reasons) Diwali is already being touted as a dampener — hundreds of families which were affected by floods in some parts of the city are still reeling under its effect, with their homes and possessions damaged and them being dependent on relief for sustenance. Goonj, an NGO that works mainly towards using surplus material, usually old (and in rare cases, new too) clothes for recycling and helping marginalised women, has been working in flood affected localities of Hyderabad, but has been struggling with shortages of relief material, some of it,

thanks to public perceptions. "Somehow, people, including corporate groups think that donating clothes will help the flood-affected when actually the need is to tackle hunger and disease. Priority should be food grains and medicines, not clothes frankly," says Arpita, who works full-time at Goonj, Hyderabad. But kudos to the NGO for turning around and recycling scrap material into festive and colorful bags, baskets, durries (mats) and dupattas under its Green By Goonj campaign. This year, they have also turned to social media to spread the message and Goonj Diwali Live Store on Instagram is trending fairly well. So are the jholas/denim bags, masks, scrunchies sold by the Green by Goonj on Amazon this festive season. Elsewhere, foodpreneurs and entrepreneurs, whose Diwali business plans, especially related to corporate gifting, have gone kaput this pandemic-struck year, are going ahead with new launches and innovations. "We are working on about 30 corporate gifting hampers from our brand The Good Box, which made premium-end, luxury gift hampers for



corporates, this year, with fewer goodies, compared to the hundreds did earlier," shares Nimisha Dugar, co-owner at Morsel & Tisane, along with her husband

Amrit Dugar. "We used to do about 3-4 pre-Diwali catering parties, but that's a thing of the past now. But sweets, especially Indian *mithai* is something, which

no Indian family can do without during Diwali. So we wanted to launch a *mithai* brand with Indianness at its core on those lines," adds Nimisha. And so, Barfi — Handcrafted Gourmet *Mithai* was launched by the Dugars just around Dussera. While the base maybe the ubiquitous motichoor laddoos or barfi, the flavouring

(natural extracts, no essences or preservatives or Dalda is the promise) could be a little more global, like raspberry, lavender and even a champagne or vodka or wait for this, a JagerBomb one! Or how about Persian Love Barfi or even a Lemon Raspberry Truffle one this season? The traditionalists can be happy with the totally Indian paan gulkand coconut laddu. And the luxury-obsessed will order in 24-karat gold leaf laddus or the matcha truffles and the White chocolate, pistachio and cranberry truffle. Newbie restaurant in Filmnagar, Cravery which opened and then shut right before lockdown, reopening in August and wowing diners with its unique line of desserts, has also launched an avant garde array of

Diwali treats which are bound to create ripples, both for the taste and the smartness of their crafting. For example, the local delight Kaddu Halwa has been given a "tarty" makeover along with its more popular cousin Gajar Ka Halwa and presented as part of the festive delights are Calabash Cheese Tart and Gajorer Cheese Tart. The first being a "buttery kaddu halwa tart dressed with ras malai cream" and the second a "crumbly gajar halwa tart topped with swirls of ras malai cream". Even the Andhra sweet Pu-ran Poli (polelu) is being turned around in a cookie version, the Ubbatti cookie, "puffy puran poli sandwich stuffed with creamy

lentils" Tempting much? And all of my privileged and well-to-do friends and readers who can afford to help themselves to these gourmet *mithai* and desserts, please also take some time and money out for donating to the less privileged, this Diwali. As NGOs like Goonj are exhorting, please donate new clothes if possible, as well as utensils, blankets, dry rations and the like. Or endorse their products online, like those bags and mats by Goonj. And yes, dear readers, wish you all A Happy Diwali!!



SWATI SUCHARITA, Senior journalist



Amazon Prime Video green-lights *Mirzapur 3*

A mazon Prime Video on Thursday announced they were renewing popular crime drama series *Mirzapur* for a third season.

The season two of the show, which became the most-watched show on the streamer in India within just seven days of its release, debuted last month.

The second season of *Mirzapur* not only recorded one of the highest completion rates but remarkably almost half of the viewers who completed the series, binge-watched the second season within just 48 hours of its launch, setting a new bench-



mark, the streamer said in a release.

The second season also saw a new set of actors such as Vijay Varma, Priyanshu Painyuli, and Isha Talwar being introduced.

The second season was watched in over 180 countries within seven days of its release on the service, the release said. Aparna Purohit, Head of India Originals, Amazon

Prime Video India said, the overwhelming response on the new season of *Mirzapur* is a testament to the streamer's commitment and efforts. "Over the last two years, viewers continued

to engage with the immersive universe of *Mirzapur* and its characters. The love that they have showered on the show for this season has been unprecedented," Purohit said in a statement. Ritesh Sidhwani, Producer, Excel Entertainment, said, "Across two gripping seasons, *Mirzapur* has become a global sensation and we couldn't be happier associating with Amazon Prime Video to make this happen! The show's massive fandom and the viewers' magnitude of love towards the new season was seen through reactions on social media within days of its release, and we are truly humbled by the response."

Selena Gomez set to play mountaineer Silvia Vasquez-Lavado in biopic

Singer-actor Selena Gomez will play Silvia Vasquez-Lavado, the Peruvian mountaineer and social entrepreneur in a biopic to be helmed by *Mayans MC* co-creator Elgin James.

According to *The Hollywood Reporter*, the film is titled *In the Shadow of the Mountain* and is based on an

upcoming memoir of the same name by Vasquez-Lavado.

Vasquez-Lavado who became the first Peruvian woman to summit Mount Everest and the first openly gay woman to complete the Seven Summits, a challenge to climb the highest mountain on each continent.

Her story has found home in *One Community*, an impact-focused co-finance company which backed Michael B Jordan's legal drama *Mercy*, given she is a victim of childhood assault and neglect who found healing and power in mountaineering.

Vasquez-Lavado's work in survivor circles has been heralded, particularly her efforts to organise treks to Mt Everest's base camp for other women who have endured abuse.

Gomez will also produce through her July Moon Productions. Vasquez-Lavado and Lara Love Hardin of Idea Architects are on board to executive produce.

Oscar winner Donna Gigliotti and her Tempesta Films banner are producing.

Akshay Kumar, Kiara Advani starrer *Laxmii* shatters records!

One of this year's most anticipated Bollywood movies, *Laxmii* starring Akshay Kumar and Kiara Advani that was released has gone on to shatter records! Within hours of its release the movie has broken all previous records set by any other Bollywood blockbuster to become the

biggest opener for an OTT platform. The horror-comedy movie that sees Akshay Kumar in a never-before-seen role of transgender piqued the interest of millions of fans who logged in to catch the first day first show of the blockbuster film and made it the most watched movie on the platform.

Actor Akshay Kumar said, "I am overwhelmed and overjoyed by the response that *Laxmii* received. It's heartening to know that audiences and fans from across the country logged on to watch the movie within hours of its release. Who doesn't love beating records - whether it's at the box-office or opening night on streaming platforms. Nothing is comparable to this feeling of euphoria." *Laxmii* is the story of a man possessed by the ghost of a transgender. The family entertainer has been directed by Raghava Lawrence the film also stars Ayesha Raza Mishra, Sharad Kelkar, Tarun Arora, Ashwini Kalsekar, Manu Rishi Chadha, Rajesh Sharma and others.



SANIA MIRZA set for digital debut as herself in fiction series

Tennis ace Sania Mirza will make her digital debut with the series, *MTV Nishedh Alone Together*, and says the show aims to raise awareness about tuberculosis (TB). Sania will play herself in the fiction series.

A digital spin-off of the TV show "MTV Nishedh", which premiered in January this year, the "self-shot-at-home" series spotlights the need to raise awareness around TB and

throw light on the importance of proper medication, especially in the Covid-19 era.

"TB continues to be one of the most chronic health issues in our country. With about half of the diagnosed cases under the age of 30, there is an urgent need to tackle fallacies around it and drive a perception change," Sania said.

"*MTV Nishedh Alone Together* conveys that in a unique and impactful way.

The youth of today is more aware, sensitive, and conscious about issues that plague our country. TB is a continuing menace, and its impact has only worsened through the pandemic. The fight to curb TB is more difficult now than ever and that's what prompted me to come on board. As someone who is in a place of influence, I hope my presence helps in some way to collectively fight the societal conventions and bring about a positive change," she added.

The show will explore the challenges of a young couple, Vicky and Megha (played by Syed Raza Ahmed and Priya Chauhan). Sania will be seen discussing the challenges young couples faced during the lockdown.

The show also features Akshay Nalwade and Ashwin Mushran.

The five-episode series will launch on the social media handles of *MTV India* and *MTV Nishedh* in the last week of November.

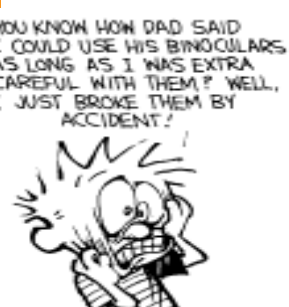


FUN

ARCHIE



CALVIN AND HOBBS



GARFIELD



REALITY CHECK



Punarnavi Bhupalam spoke to NAGARAJ GOUD on landing *Permanent Roommates* remake, giving the role her own take and breaking the ice with co-star Udbhav Raghunandan among other things

FOUND ANU CHALLENGING BUT MY THEATRE STINT AND PAVAN HELPED: PUNARNAVI



Punarnavi Bhupalam is a little nervous ahead of what will be her biggest solo release career-wise, *Commit Mental*. The five-episode web series, an official remake of *Permanent Roommates*, drops on aha from today. But she admits to have given all she got to it. "My character Anu gave a lot of scope to exhibit a wide range of emotions. I gave my 100 percent to it," she tells us.

It was through Tamada Media that she landed the project. "I have good connections with them and they approach me frequently whenever they find something appropriate for me. It is how they first spoke about *Permanent Roommates* remake sometime back, asking me to audition for the lead role. I watched the show when it first streamed in 2014, and I'm a big fan of it. I was in immediately after the audition," she recalls, adding that she never felt nervous about matching up to the standards set by Nidhi Singh.

"I was pretty confident about my part before we went to the floors. I was sure that I would give it my own take as my body language is different to that of Tanya (Nidhi). It was a challenging role but then my theatre stint came in handy." Director Pavan Sadineni, who stepped into the show at the eleventh hour as a director after original choice Kowshik Beemidi couldn't take it up due to health reasons, was another factor that helped her craft immensely. "The project looks like a new show altogether because of what Pavan brought to the table as a showrunner-director. It was tough for me to shoot after the lockdown but Pavan's entry meant that I and Udhav could focus solely on our work. He was very clear with his vision and ensured that everything went smooth. If it wasn't for him, the project wouldn't have been ready for Diwali," she rhapsodizes.

She goes on, "The way he interacts with his actors helped me a lot as it built a lot of confidence in me. He is not someone who boasts off his credentials. For him what counted the most was the screenplay and how effectively he narrated the story. The project is a remake at the end of the day but he owned it. The original streamed seven years ago when resources were, to an extent, limited. Now, we are in 2020 and resources are unlimited. He used all these to his advantage." Giving a peek into her role Anu, she shares that it is going to be the same as the original but at the same time different. "Anu is an independent, strong

and level-headed young woman who is soft inside but hard outside. She loves her boyfriend Phani (played by Udbhav Raghunandan), with whom she is in a long-distance relationship of three years, immensely. So, when all of a sudden he lands in front of her door and pops up the marriage question, she gets a shock. It's a difficult piece of news for her to digest. She is practical about a lot of things and doesn't believe in rushing. Phani, on the other hand, is impulsive," she states.

The show hinges a lot on the chemistry between the lead pair and Punarnavi mentions that it took time for her to break the ice with Udbhav. "Back in March, when we participated in the test shoot, it wasn't easy. We were uncomfortable and it was awkward too as we barely knew each other. After Pavan joined us, it became easier. We went out, spoke about personal lives and got to know each other, which helped immensely for our roles. On shoot days whenever I didn't like anything he did, I'd tell him politely. It was vice-versa with him as well. Combined with Pavan, we became best of buddies," she notes fondly.

Her monologue in the trailer received thumbs-up from everyone and she states that it was the same dialogue she was asked to reel during the audition. "On actual shoot day, all it took for me to give a right take was two shots," she concludes with a grin.

Avika Gor is in love



Popular actress Avika Gor on Wednesday confirmed that she is dating Milind Chandwani, who runs an NGO called Camp Diaries. The diminutive actress, who played the leading lady in films like *Cinema Chooipista Maava*, *Uyyala Jampala* and *Raju Gari Gadhi 3*, met Milind during one of his NGO workshops. As they started working on the cause of various projects, they got to know each other well before love blossomed.

Sharing pictures with Milind from a Goa vacay, Avika wrote on Instagram, "La vie en rose. My prayers have been answered. I have found the love of my life! (Shiroo ke alava) This kind human is mine. And I'm his.. forever. We all deserve a partner that understands us, believes in us, inspires us, helps us grow & truly cares for us. But, most of us feel that it's impossible to find such a partner. So, it feels like a dream, but it's real! So so so real! I pray for all of you... I want u all to feel what I'm feeling today....(sic)."

The actress added that marriage is not the cards in the near future. "My heart is so full and the feeling is precious. I thank God for giving me this experience that's going to be most important chapter of my life... Haha... Nahi nahi, not getting married or anything so soon... Lekin log kya kahenge wale thoughts toh ab jaa chuke hai.. isiliye is pyaar ke baare mein khule aam batana chahti thi.. I feel so blessed and I feel this emotion right now for someone who

entered my life with the intention of just making me smile.. Today I can proudly say that this idiot is making my heart smile.. I love you from the bottom of my heart. Thanks for completing me (sic)," she concluded her note on Instagram.

Milind, too, confirmed their relationship on his verified Instagram account on Wednesday.

He wrote, "Life is really unpredictable and you find the right people when you least expect them. This kind soul entered my life to help me create a larger impact with the children that I worked with. She got so immersed in our work that I almost forgot that she was a well-known celebrity. She hosted our trainings at her house, taught our kids drama and dance, took care of them when we traveled for competitions, helped us raise more funds and so much more. Her kindness, humility and cheerful nature kept me in awe of her everyday. She stood with me when things got really hard and ensured that I never felt low."

"Today, I'm happy to share that this beautiful soul is an integral part of my life. No no, not getting married yet, but yes, we are together. I love her. Oh wait, she's reading this as well. I love you, beautiful," he added.

Avika is right now shooting for an untitled Telugu project, which is the official remake of Marathi hit *Happy Journey*. A fantasy drama, it narrates story of a sister (played by Avika) who helps her brother (Naveen Chandra) to make the journey back to happiness after an unfortunate event shatters him inside.

Kalyaan Dhev, Ann Sheetal team up for Ramana Teja's next



Kalyaan Dhev, who has commenced the filming of Sridhar Seepana's untitled family entertainer sometime back, has now green-lit *Aswathama* director Ramana Teja's second film. Ram Talluri's SRT Entertainments is producing it jointly with Subham Entertainments. It was launched in Hyderabad on Thursday, with Venu Udagula and Venky Kudumula gracing it as guests. Kalki fame Desharaj Saitej has penned the film's story, while Mahati Swara Sagar is on board for music. Suresh Ragutu will be the director of cinematography.

Speaking to *The Pioneer*, film's director Ramana said he loved the treatment of the story. "It is a love story which will unfold like a suspense thriller," he stated. On his choice of Kalyaan, he said he was on the

lookout for a mainstream actor who hasn't been explored much as an actor. "Kalyaan was that. He was a boy next door in Vijetha but when I saw some photo shoot stills of him with a beard during the lockdown, I felt I found my lead. I was travelling with writer Desharaj around that time with the story. It was an instant yes from Kalyaan after the narration." Ramana is looking to take the Hyderabad-set film to floors from next month. "It will be shot in multiple schedules with proper safety measures in place. The idea is to wrap it up by February-end," he revealed.

While he is looking at theatre actors to fill the supporting actors' category, he did sign on his female lead. "Ann Sheetal (Malayalam *Ishq* fame) has been roped in as the leading lady. Her choice too, boiled down to the fact that she is fairly new. I want the story to be highlighted," he noted.

With *Aswathama* ending up as an average grosser, Ramana wants to strike it big with the untitled project. "I gave my 100 percent to my maiden film but you know it happens in the industry... This time around, I'm careful as I've learned from my mistakes and I don't want to repeat them again," he asserted.



Sudhakar's next in the backdrop of lockdown 1.0

With *Nuvvu Thopuraa* dashing his hopes of finding his footing in Telugu cinema, actor Sudhakar Komakula is out to try his luck as a lead once again. He is introducing *Nuvvu Thopura*'s story writer Aju Mahakali as a director with the film titled *Reset*. Aju, who has a diploma in filmmaking from New York Film Academy, said that Sudhakar agreed to do the film immediately after the narration. "It's a crime comedy thriller which unfolds during lockdown 1.0. Sudhakar plays a unique role in it. His world opens up after the lockdown. The filming will begin from next month," the director said. Sukha Studios, Highlight Visuals and Kaarabondhi Productions are jointly producing it.

ACHARYA BACK ON SETS

With megastar Chiranjeevi quarantined at home after testing positive for COVID-19, Koratala Siva resumed the filming of *Acharya* in Hyderabad on Thursday — three days behind the original plan. The director is filming portions that don't involve Chiru as of now.

In the socio-political entertainer, Chiru plays the role of an ex-naxalite who fights to protect nature's natural resources. Kajal Aggarwal has been cast opposite him, while Ram Charan will be playing a significant supporting role.

