



The Pioneer

Paper with passion since 1864

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QUOTE OF THE DAY

The Pioneer

The Palamuru Ranga Reddy Project is named after Jaipal Reddy. He not only played a pivotal role in bringing Hyderabad Metro but was also instrumental in Telangana formation. Hyderabad Metro can be named after him. This is a fitting tribute to him as he ensured that the Telangana Formation Bill was passed with live TV coverage disconnected and doors closed. Just because I have differences of opinion with him doesn't mean we don't recognise his efforts

- Revanth Reddy, Chief Minister

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'Biased and politically motivated'

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Khushbu slams Nayanthara exit rumours - calls reports "Absolute NONSENSE"!

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Khushbu slams Nayanthara exit rumours - calls reports "Absolute NONSENSE"!

PTI

DON'T MISS...

South Australia's Premier in Hyd

With Hyderabad rising as a major hub for technology and innovation in the startup ecosystem, South Australian Premier Peter Malinauskas engaged with top tech innovators in the city on Wednesday. This connection reinforces ties between Adelaide and Hyderabad businesses while celebrating the success of Hyderabad alumni. On this occasion, StudyAdelaide launched Employment Connect, the most extensive employment initiative by any Australian destination. This programme offers a wide range of job resources and ...

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'Insensitive' SC stays Allahabad HC ruling

The Supreme Court on Wednesday stayed the Allahabad High Court's recent ruling on grabbing of a woman's breasts and pulling the drawstrings of her 'pyjama' not amounting to an attempt to rape and said it reflected total "insensitivity" and "inhuman approach". Taking a strong exception to the high court's observations made in its March 17 verdict, the apex court termed it a "very serious matter". "In normal circumstances, we are slow in granting stay at this stage. But since the observations...

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Sikkim CM presents Rs 16,196 cr Budget

Sikkim Chief Minister Prem Singh Tamang on Wednesday presented in the assembly a budget of Rs 16,196 crore for the 2025-26 fiscal year with a focus on empowering youth, uplifting farmers, investing in infrastructure and ensuring financial discipline. The budget comprises Rs 11,028 crore of revenue expenditure and Rs 5,168 crore of capital outlay. The devolution of taxes from the Centre was estimated at Rs 5,519 crore, a leading source of receipts, along with Rs 2,600 crore that the central government...

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Iyer asked me not to worry: Shashank

Punjab Kings batter Shashank Singh's boundary-hitting spree in the final over of the Indian Premier League (IPL) match against Gujarat Titans left his captain Shreyas Iyer stranded on unbeaten 97 but the latter was not worried about his personal landmark. Iyer missed his maiden IPL ton by a mere three runs but his 42-ball knock, which featured nine sixes and five fours, powered PBKS to a massive 243 for 5 and helped them win their season opener by 11 runs. Shashank, who hit five of his six fours in the...

-SPORTS

Fight over Bhubharati and Dharani rocks Assembly

Cong to make it an issue during next elections
BRS to approach public with Dharani on its election agenda

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

The Assembly witnessed a fight between the Bhubharati and Dharani portals on Wednesday. The allegations and counter allegations made by Members of the ruling party and the opposition about Bhubharati and Dharani rocked the Assembly. Intervening while BRS Member Palla Rajeshwar Reddy was speaking, Revenue Minister Ponguleti Srinivas Reddy said there is now clarity on why the BRS government introduced the Dharani portal during the Assembly elections. Ponguleti said that Palla Rajeshwar Reddy is trying to hide the irregularities and injustice behind Dharani. "We will go to the people during the next elections with Bhubharati. Will the BRS face the elections with Dharani on its agenda? The people defeated the BRS and made it sit in the opposition. The voters clearly said that they don't want Dharani. They made it clear that the BRS government had erred by introducing Dharani. Everybody knows how the BRS government behaved



Intervening while BRS Member Palla Rajeshwar Reddy was speaking, Revenue Minister Ponguleti Srinivas Reddy said there is now clarity on why the BRS government introduced the Dharani portal during the Assembly elections

towards VROs and VRAs. It is ridiculous for BRS Members to speak about the future of VROs and VRAs. People are asking for VRAs. So we are restoring the VRA system. The Congress government will give special attention to VRAs and VROs," Ponguleti said. Earlier, while speaking on the demands for grants for the Revenue Department, BRS Member Palla Rajeshwar Reddy

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Bhu Bharathi to come into being in April

Revenue, Housing and Information Minister Ponguleti Srinivas Reddy launched a blistering attack on the BRS government during a discussion in the Assembly on Wednesday and accused the BRS of looting public funds by placing government advertisements in its own media outlets. He also outlined landmark reforms undertaken by the Congress government, including the rollout of the Bhu Bharathi Act in April, the revival of revenue services in villages and the implementation of the Indramma Housing Scheme. "The BRS government looted hundreds of crores through advertisements. Between 2014 and 2023, they misused public funds to expand their own publications," said Ponguleti.

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CM for SIT or CBCID probe on betting apps

Chief Minister Revanth Reddy came down heavily on the growing menace of online betting and declared that his government would not allow Telangana to become a hub for such additions. Addressing the Assembly on Wednesday during the ongoing Budget Session, he announced the formation of a Special Investigative Team (SIT) to probe online rummy, digital betting platforms and other gambling websites. He said the government will decide soon on appointing a SIT or ordering a CB CID probe on betting apps. "Betting frauds cannot be rooted out just by state-level probes. Neighbouring states and even countries should seriously investigate these networks," he said. He said the government is prepared to amend laws if necessary to ensure strict punishment. "Telangana is not the place for betting addiction. Anyone betting or managing these apps directly or indirectly will face strong action," he warned.

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Parliament passes Banking Bill to allow 4 nominees in bank a/c

Parliament on Wednesday passed the Banking Laws (Amendment) Bill, 2024, which allows bank account holders to have up to four nominees, with the Rajya Sabha approving it by a voice vote. Lok Sabha had passed the Banking Laws (Amendment) Bill in December 2024. Another change in the bill relates to redefining of term 'substantial interest' of a person in a bank. The limit is sought to be enhanced to Rs 2 crore from the current Rs 5 lakh, which was fixed almost six decades ago.

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Madiga MLAs to go to Delhi for ministerial post

Madiga community MLAs decided to go to Delhi to meet the party high command and appeal to give one ministerial post to their community. On Wednesday, Madiga MLAs - Government Whip Adhuri Laxman, Vemula Veeresham, Kale Yadaiah, Thota Laxmikantha Rao and Mandula Samuel met Chief Minister A Revanth Reddy, Deputy Chief Minister Mallu Bhatti Vikramarka and Irrigation Minister N Uttam Kumar Reddy and submitted a memorandum appealing them to give proper representation to the Madiga community in the Cabinet. They said the Congress did not allocate a single seat to the Madiga community in the last parliamentary elections in Nagarkurnool, Peddapalli and Warangal constituencies. The Madiga community is in large numbers in these districts. At the same time, the Madiga community was not represented in the recent MLA quota MLC elections.

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Telangana demands fair, equitable water allocation

The Krishna Water Disputes Tribunal-II (KWDT-II), chaired by Justice Brijesh Kumar, heard the final round of arguments on Wednesday, with Telangana presenting a strong case for equitable water allocation between Andhra Pradesh and itself. The Tribunal will hear Telangana's arguments again from April 15 to 17. The senior counsel of Telangana, CS Vaidyanathan, outlined the state's water needs, stressing that Telangana is not seeking to deprive Andhra Pradesh of its legitimate share but wants only a fair share. He said that of the 512 TMCs of water internally allocated by unified AP, 323 TMCs were diverted to outside basin projects, while only 189 TMCs were utilised within the Krishna basin. The counsel argued that the current proposal to allocate 555 TMCs from the 75 per cent dependable water to Telangana would not harm Andhra Pradesh's in-basin usage. "AP has other sources, including drains in the Krishna Delta system that yields 43.2 TMCs and an additional 80 TMCs of Godavari water diverted through the Polavaram Project," he told the Tribunal. He also cited the Pattiseema Lift Irrigation Scheme, constructed downstream

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Fine rice for cardholders from March 30: Uttam

Irrigation and Civil Supplies Minister Uttam Kumar Reddy informed the Assembly on Wednesday that Telangana is all set to launch the distribution of fine rice to over 89 lakh ration cardholders from March 30, terming it a "revolutionary move in independent India." He said the government had decided to end the supply of coarse rice that was being rejected by nearly 80 per cent of PDS beneficiaries. "In the past, rice worth thousands of crores was distributed, but it never reached the poor. It was diverted elsewhere due to its poor quality," he said.

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Restore Land Grabbing (Prohibition) Act: BJP Prosecute KCR, Harish for bungling Kaleshwaram Project: BJP

The BJP's Sirpur Kagaz Nagar MLA, Palvai Harish Babu, demanded that the government should reintroduce the Land Grabbing (Prohibition) Act, which was abolished by the BRS government in 2016, to protect people from land grabbers. He appealed to the Congress Government to restore the Land Grabbing (Prohibition) Act on the lines of the Gujarat Land Grabbing Act, which will allow the government to take action against land grabbers. He also asked the government to introduce the Bhubharati Act as soon as possible. Speaking on the demand for grants for the Revenue Department, Harish Babu said that people faced a lot of problems due to Dharani. "The Congress Government did a good job by scrapping the Dharani portal. The Congress government also did a good job by restoring the VROs and

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Ruckus in Assembly over '30% commission remark' by KTR

The Telangana Assembly witnessed angry exchanges between the ruling Congress and the main opposition, BRS, after BRS leader KT Rama Rao claimed that Congress leaders were taking 30 per cent commission for awarding government contracts. KTR's allegation evoked a strong reaction from Deputy Chief Minister Mallu Bhatti Vikramarka and other Congress members, who demanded that the BRS leader withdraw his remark. Trouble started during

Continued on Page 2

Will there be a Cabinet reshuffle in TG?

A discussion is going on in Assembly lobbies and political circles indicating that the Cabinet would be reshuffled in addition to expanding it. Congress MLAs as well as opposition MLAs are discussing the shuffling of ministries. The discussion is mainly about the major ministries of Revenue, Finance, Industries, Housing, Agriculture, Irrigation and some other Ministries. Rumours indicate that these ministries would change hands. One opposition leader said on condition of anonymity that some ministries are going to change as per the Chief Minister's likes, and some other ministries are going to change as per the opinion of Ministers. He also said that some ministers would lose their additional ministries after the Cabinet expansion. He said that an exercise is already going on in this direction under the supervision of Congress high command. He also said the government will not remove any minister as all of them are seniors. Congress leaders have been saying that the Cabinet expansion and reshuffling of ministries would bring in change and would be helpful to the people. However, there is no clarity on whether the Chief Minister is going to fill all six vacant ministerial berths or just four of them.

Govt orchestrating a smear campaign Dileep dares probe into digital media expences

Former Digital Media Director Konatham Dileep on Wednesday hit back at the Congress government, accusing it of orchestrating a coordinated smear campaign. He said, "Digital Media Department's spending in 2023 was higher than in previous years due to the Telangana State Decennial Celebrations (Dashabdi Utsavalu), a major event organised by the then government in May 2023. The aim was to widely publicise the achievements of various departments over the past decade through both mainstream and digital media". He added, "As part of this campaign, the Digital Media Wing produced numerous promotional videos, advertisements, documentaries, a website, and a mobile app. The Information and Public Relations Department had allocated a separate

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TG power sector scaling up to meet demand, says Bhatti

Deputy Chief Minister Mallu Bhatti Vikramarka outlined the government's roadmap to meet Telangana's growing power demand and assured the Assembly that reforms and timely planning have helped to provide continuous, quality electricity even though the peak load surged to very high levels. "The demand for power in Telangana is increasing every day. It reached 17,162 MW in March 2025 from 13,668 MW in 2021. Despite the sharp rise, thanks to early reforms and contingency planning, we are supplying continuous electricity to all sectors without tripping or outages," Bhatti said on Wednesday while complimenting electricity staffers on behalf of the government. He said that Telangana is preparing for a peak demand of 24,215 MW by 2029-30 and 31,809 MW by 2034-35, as estimated by Central agencies. "With data centres, expansion of IT companies and new clusters coming up

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No urgent mentioning of plea for FIR SC on cash discovery at judge's home

The Supreme Court on Wednesday refused the urgent mentioning of a plea for Delhi Police to register an FIR over the alleged discovery of burnt wads of cash from the official residence of Delhi High Court judge Yashwant Varma. A bench headed by Chief Justice of India Sanjiv Khanna, however, assured petitioner advocate Mathews J Nedumpara that the plea would be listed by the registry. The petitioner said, "The only thing is that an FIR has to be registered against the judge. Your lordship has done a wonderful job...the publishing of the video of the burnt notes."

The CJJI, who has stopped the practice of oral mentioning of cases for urgent listing, said, "Don't make public statements." Another petitioner in the case said if such a case was against a common citizen, then several probe agencies such as the CBI and ED would have gone after them. "This is quite enough. The plea will come up accordingly," the CJJI said. Nedumpara and three others moved court on March 23 for FIR and challenging the 1991 judgement in the K Veeraswami case, in which the top court ruled that no criminal proceedings could be initiated against a judge of the high court or the top court without

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Editor's TAKE

Mending ties with China

The ongoing talks with China are a step in the right direction to resolve pending issues

As the saying goes, you can choose your friends, but changing your neighbors is no easy feat. That's why maintaining good relations with them is crucial. However, this is often easier said than done—especially when the neighbor in question is China, making the task even more challenging.

The Working Mechanism for Consultation and Coordination (WMCC) meeting in Beijing was a step toward normalising relations between the two nations following their agreement to disengage military forces in the Ladakh sector of the Line of Actual Control (LAC).

The discussions at the WMCC meeting revolved around implementing agreements reached during the Special Representatives' meeting on the boundary question in December. The talks were described as "positive and constructive," with both sides exchanging views on early resumption of cross-border cooperation.

Resolving border tensions would create a stable environment for trade and investment. Both countries are major economies, and fostering better relations could lead to increased economic exchanges.

Resuming the Kailash-Mansarovar yatra would promote cultural ties and strengthen people-to-people exchanges. Such initiatives foster goodwill and mutual understanding between the people of both countries.

An agreement on effective border management mechanisms would ensure peace and prevent potential flare-ups along the LAC. Confidence-building measures would allow both countries to focus on development rather than military posturing.

India's rise to AI global leadership

India's rise as a leader in AI is all about driving innovation, however, its true success lies in making AI accessible, inclusive, and transformative, write VINAY PATHAK and SANDEEP JOSHI

The journey of Artificial Intelligence (AI) from an unattainable goal to becoming a real-world changer has happened within a short period. For an emerging nation like India, AI is more than just a technological breakthrough; it is a powerful catalyst poised to reshape the country's future.

In recent decades, India has been employing AI step by step, simultaneously starting with school studies and competing with countries that are front-runners in the global AI arena. The path, which is marked by commitment, far-reaching planning, and the promotion of equal economic growth, demonstrates the country's readiness to employ the latest technology for the common good.

This became evident with India playing a crucial role at the recent AI Summit in Paris, where India showcased its noteworthy progress in the field of AI.

India's journey to the top of AI is profoundly linked with the wider narrative of development and progress. The first corners of AI research in India were practised at the campuses of top colleges and research laboratories. Undergraduate and graduate students at institutes such as the Indian Institutes of Technology (IITs) and the Indian Institute of Science (IISc) are the ones who started an AI era in India.

India's emergence as a powerful force in the IT revolution not only placed the nation on the global stage but also laid the foundation with robust, flexible infrastructure, transforming emerging technologies into tangible realities. Indian IT professionals, known for their problem-solving skills, started using AI in real-life applications, from healthcare diagnosis to stock market predictions.

As the capabilities of AI become more evident day by day, cities in the different part of nation start adopting technology to address challenges and improve governance. Potential of AI became increasingly evident, cities and states across nation start adopting technology for improvement of governance and to address challenges. Today, AI-driven initiatives are transforming urban landscapes, making cities smarter, more efficient, and more liveable.



In agriculture, healthcare, and education, with predictive analytics for crop management, telemedicine services, and personalised learning platforms. Tamil Nadu Artificial Intelligence Mission (TNAIM) aims to position the state as a leading AI hub, focusing on governance, social welfare, and economic development. Karnataka is at the forefront of AI adoption in education and governance.

These city and state-level initiatives are part of a larger national movement driven by visionary policies and initiatives. The "AI for India 2030" initiative provides a structured approach to integrating AI across the socio-economic fabric of the country.

lights India's innovative use of AI capabilities to handle massive gathering of public by AI-powered tools.

On one hand it helped in the security and seamless operation and on the other hand set a global benchmark for event management.

India's role in AI is not surprisingly only a technological one; today it is a socially responsible one too. As a leader in the world, India acknowledges AI's ethical dimensions and, thus, is aiming to build a framework that will ensure transparency, fairness, and responsibility in the development of this innovative technology.

The digital Maha Kumbh in Prayagraj highlights India's innovative use of AI capabilities to handle massive gathering of public by AI-powered tools.

framework to neutralise the biasness of data.

On the domestic front, while the Union Budget allocated ₹5000 Crore for AI education, another major accomplishment was made when Meta announced the gigantic underwater cabling project for boosting digital infrastructure.

Rapid developments in the field of AI in India puts the country at a special vantage point of responsibility. The nation's achievements stand as a model for other developing countries as to how technology can be used for inclusive and sustainable development.

(Vinay Pathak is assistant professor, IIT and Sandeep Joshi is senior tech journalist. Views expressed are personal)

A small inconvenience for a safer, better world

SECOND Opinion



ASHA IYER KUMAR

The late-night flight from Dubai to Chennai landed smoothly. My mind was full of expectations about a large family gathering at a wedding the next day.

"No, no, nothing except what I am wearing," I blurted. "The bangles you are wearing seem to be new."

"No, these are my everyday bangles," I said wrenching a bangle from my wrist and showing him the white film of soap settled in the grooves.

"If you are hiding any gold with you other than this, you must declare it now," the officer said, a tad menacingly. "I yanked my mangalsutra out. 'Don't show, just answer me.' The instruction wasn't rude, but it was firm. He called a lady subordinate and asked her to take me for a full-body frisk."

"Curd rice," I said. He asked me to open it. I opened it without batting an eyelid. When I was cleared, I was left with two trays full of assorted items waiting to be repacked. I was annoyed, but only slightly.

like the one Kannada actress Ranya Rao had been caught for in Bengaluru. I had an obligation as a law-abiding citizen to let the officers perform their duty. I could not blame them. Smugglers came in all sizes, shapes and genders these days and they carried out daring acts that belied stereotypes.

On my return flight to Dubai, I was stopped again at the security checkpoint. I was asked to follow rules? As much as we may hate the hassle, isn't it a small price to pay for the peace of mind that comes with knowing these checks are in place?

"Flying is a serious profession. Do not carry your worries beyond this point," the signage read. By the same token, let us not carry resentment against those who uphold the rules, for, more often than not, their vigilance is the reason the world still has some order.

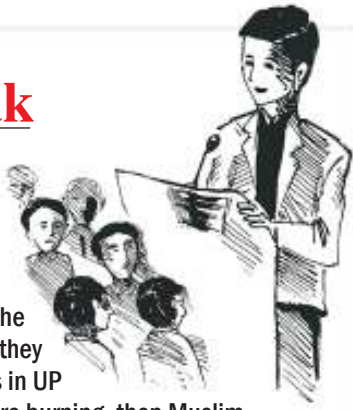
(The author is a Dubai-based columnist and writing coach. She has published six books. Views expressed are personal)

Leaderspeak



In Uttar Pradesh, Muslims are the safest. If Hindus are safe, then they are also safe. If there were riots in UP before 2017, if Hindu shops were burning, then Muslim shops were also burning. If Hindu houses were burning, then Muslim houses were also burning. And after 2017, the riots stopped. They will have the freedom to practise all religious customs. But can 50 Hindus be safe among 100 Muslim families? If there is smoke or someone is being hit, we should be careful before we get hit.

YOGI ADITYANATH, CHIEF MINISTER OF UTTAR PRADESH



Letters to the Editor

The perils of suppressing democracy

Madam — The turmoil in Turkey (26-3-25) should serve as a warning to all those who attempt to establish a dictatorship under the guise of cleansing democracy. It is perhaps a human weakness to suppress opposition and expect unquestioning praise, even for one's misdeeds and mistakes.

Parliament meet to discuss Waqf

Madam—The Central government has called a meeting of all Members of Parliament to discuss the Waqf Amendment Bill 2024 in a conference room within the Parliament complex. The meeting will provide MPs with a briefing on the proposed amendments to Waqf laws.

Chinese company surges ahead of Tesla

Madam—It is often said that an industrialist or businessman should not abandon their business to become a permanent player in the game of politics. Instead, they should fulfill their political responsibilities solely through donations to their preferred parties. If they fail to do so, their business and trade may suffer the consequences.

JUDICIARY UNDER SCRUTINY: THE NEED FOR ACCOUNTABILITY

As proposed by the headline "Dhankhar holds meet over cash controversy" (March 26), the controversy surrounding the unaccounted cash found at the residence of Delhi High Court Judge Yashwant Varma is bound to have far-reaching implications. This issue raises serious concerns about the erosion of public faith in the judiciary.

inquiry into this matter could expose deeper systemic issues within the judiciary. The absence of accountability in the institution is fostering public disillusionment. Citizens' trust in the Indian judiciary may wane due to the lack of an alternative mechanism.



PNSHYDERABAD

Beyond textbooks, bringing finance to life

Financial literacy is a crucial life skill that empowers students to make informed decisions about money from an early age. **Manish Rastogi**, CEO of Zee Learn Ltd, discusses going beyond theory, using interactive activities like budgeting exercises, real-world case studies and entrepreneurial projects to ensure students grasp essential financial concepts

or saving for specific needs. Storytelling, case studies and real-world scenarios help students develop critical thinking and problem-solving skills in finance," he explains.

One of the most engaging aspects of the FLIP initiative is Culmination Week, which takes place every December. During this event, students apply their financial skills in a real-world setting by setting up stalls, creating and selling handmade artifacts and food items, earning money, saving their profits and donating a portion to charity. This hands-on experience helps students understand the principles of earning, saving and sharing in a practical and meaningful way.

"MLZS conducts, in December, a dedicated Culmination Week on the successful completion of the FLIP module for the year. During this week, Mount Literans set stalls, create and sell artifacts, food items, earn, save and share them with the needy," he says.

Starting from the academic year 2024-25, financial literacy assignments and projects will be graded and included in students' report cards, further reinforcing the importance of financial education. Additionally, students are introduced to entrepreneurial concepts, including the difference between a businessman and an entrepreneur, as well as how to set SMART (Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant and Time-bound) goals.

They recognise the importance of incorporating digital tools and apps into financial education. In today's technology-driven world, financial transactions and investments are increasingly conducted online, making digital financial literacy a necessity. The institution encourages students to use interactive digital platforms to enhance their understanding of budgeting, saving and investing. "In an era marked by rapid technological advancements, we encourage leveraging educational apps and online resources focused on financial literacy. Many interactive tools are designed to make learning about money engaging and accessible for children," he explains.

However, while technology provides many benefits, Zee Learn also ensures that students are educated on the risks associated with digital financial transactions. Rastogi emphasises that students must develop a responsible approach to using financial technology to ensure their safety. "While exposing learners to technology and its benefits, we also ensure they understand the potential risks, especially when using digital platforms for money transactions," he notes.

Financial education does not stop at school. Rastogi highlights the critical role parents play in reinforcing financial literacy at home. Zee Learn actively involves parents by encouraging them to have open discussions with their children about money, budgeting and saving. He believes that involving children in financial conversations at an early age helps them develop a responsible and informed approach to money management.

"Parents serve as the primary influencers in shaping their children's attitudes and behavior towards money. We encourage them to have open and age-appropriate discussions about financial matters. Involving children in financial conversations helps demystify the topic and fosters a healthy attitude towards money," he says.

Setting family savings goals is another practice they encourage, as it provides children with real-life demonstrations of financial planning. He believes that financial literacy should be a shared responsibility between schools, parents and society.

They remain committed to continuously evolving and expanding its financial literacy curriculum. He acknowledges that education is an ever-evolving process and that financial literacy programs must be periodically updated to reflect changing economic dynamics.

"Education is an ever-evolving process that needs periodic transformations, both from a micro and macro perspective. Our focus is core education—making our students global citizens while supplementing them with life skills like financial planning," he shares.

Zee Learn plans to introduce new modules that will help students stay updated with financial trends and technological advancements.



a strong foundation in financial management, allowing them to navigate real-world financial challenges with confidence.

He firmly believes that financial literacy is more than just an academic subject—it is a crucial life skill that prepares students to make informed financial decisions throughout their lives. He sees schools as playing a vital role in shaping students' financial habits and believes that it's approach ensures students are empowered with financial knowledge without any commercial bias. "Schools serve as the cradle of knowledge, offering a unique opportunity to instill financial values early on. We advocate for a curriculum that imparts practical financial skills without commercial intent. By introducing basic financial principles in schools, we empower students to navigate the complexities of an ever-changing economic landscape. Such knowledge fosters a sense of financial responsibility and resilience," he says. By fostering financial literacy from a young age, they aim to develop well-rounded individuals who are capable of making sound financial decisions in the future.

To ensure financial literacy is not just a theoretical concept, the FLIP program includes engaging and interactive activities. One of the key exercises asks students to analyse their financial standing by answering three critical questions: "Where am I?", "Where do I want to go?", and "How do I get there?" Another module requires students to imagine a scenario in which they must save money for a course they plan to join in the future. These exercises encourage students to think critically about their financial goals and develop a plan to achieve them.

"In one of the MLZS FLIP modules, students analyze their financial standing, set future financial goals, and develop a plan to achieve them. They are also encouraged to create budgets for real-life situations, such as planning vacations

SERVING PASSION & INNOVATION

Chef Nayanjyoti Saikya on food, music, and cultural connections

TEJAL SINHA
 tejal.sinha30@gmail.com

From sketching engineering diagrams to plating up gourmet masterpieces, Chef Nayanjyoti Saikya's journey is a feast of passion, creativity, and unexpected twists. Hailing from Assam, his love for cooking started in childhood, but it was his victory in *MasterChef India Season 7* that turned his culinary dreams into reality. Today, he's not just a chef—he's a storyteller, weaving flavors and culture into every dish. As he takes the spotlight at Zomaland's Table for Everyone, Chef Nayan isn't just serving food—he's serving experiences, proving that the best recipes come from following one's heart.

Saikya's love for food started at a young age, growing up in a joint family where cooking was an everyday affair. He recalls, "I was barely eight or nine years old when I first became fascinated by cooking. My mother and aunts would prepare the same dish, yet each version tasted different. That intrigued me. It made me realise that food is an art and every cook has their own signature style."

Despite this deep-rooted interest, he initially pursued engineering and even worked for a company for three months. However, during the COVID-19 lockdown, his passion for food reignited. He began experimenting with flavours, innovating new dishes, and eventually received an invitation to participate in *MasterChef India*.

Competing in *MasterChef India Season 7* was a turning point for Saikya. While initially nervous about how he would perform, stepping into the *MasterChef* kitchen felt surreal. "When I met the chefs for the first time, I felt like my life had come full circle. I had no complaints. That's when my journey truly began," he shares.

Winning the competition opened up new opportunities—brand collaborations, television appearances and a growing fanbase.

In an exclusive chat with *The Pioneer*, Chef Nayanjyoti Saikya delved into his culinary philosophy, his transition from engineering to the world of gourmet cuisine and his passion for showcasing Northeastern Indian flavors. His journey from *MasterChef India* champion to an industry trailblazer has been marked by a deep commitment to storytelling through food

However, the journey was not without its challenges. A few months ago, he opened his own restaurant, only to face unexpected hurdles. "It was tough, but we didn't give up. We recently re-opened the restaurant, and it's doing great. I couldn't be happier," he says.

Saikya's time on *MasterChef India* changed his perspective on food. Initially drawn to European and Asian cuisines, he soon realised the lack of representation of Northeastern Indian food. This realisation turned into a mission. "Our ingredients and flavors deserve recognition. Many parts of India—and even the world—are unaware of the richness of Northeastern cuisine. I want to change that."

He now actively incorporates Northeastern elements into global dishes. At Zomaland's Table for Everyone, one of his featured creations is Pani Pitha served in a taco format—an innovative blend of Assamese tradition with international appeal. For Saikya, food is more than sustenance—it's a means of storytelling and connection. Inspired by the film *The Hundred-Foot Journey*, he believes in the power of food to evoke memories. "Whenever I meet someone, I connect with them through food. Their culinary inspirations, the stories behind their dishes—it all fascinates me. Cooking is my love language and sharing food is my way of expressing care."

The Table for Everyone event aligns perfectly with this belief, focusing on meaningful conversations over great food. "I want attendees to experience the effort and thought behind each dish. I hope they leave with a deeper appreciation for the flavours and the cultural stories embedded in the food." At Zomaland, Saikya is hosting a live cooking demo and masterclass, blending the magic of cooking with electrifying DJ beats. He shares, "Today, I'm making a unique vegetarian burger infused with special herbs. I used to be shy about cooking in front of an audience, but now I enjoy explaining the process and watching people react to my creations."

Music plays an essential role in his cooking process. "When I'm baking, I prefer soft lo-fi music. When I'm grilling or barbecuing, I love country music. The right atmosphere enhances the entire culinary experience." The Magic of Sharing Zone at the event embodies the joy of sharing food and stories. For Saikya, this philosophy is deeply personal. "I travel solo a lot, and food has always been my way of connecting with strangers. Whether it's cooking during a camping trip or buying ingredients from a local market, I love sharing stories through food."

For the event, he has carefully curated a menu that reflects his Assamese roots while celebrating Kolkata's rich culinary heritage. "Initially, I wanted to include more European and Pan-Asian dishes, but the other chefs encouraged me to focus on regional flavors. We're incorporating ingredients like kasundi (Bengali mustard sauce) and prawns in a curry inspired by local flavors." One of the highlights of Saikya's menu at Table for Everyone is his prawn curry cooked with coconut and pineapple—a dish close to his heart. "A similar dish won me the *MasterChef* title. It represents my journey and the fusion of different Indian flavors. I want attendees to experience the same emotions I felt when I created it."

As someone who constantly pushes creative boundaries, Saikya believes in making food an experience. "Most people enjoy trying new flavors, but they may not always realise the effort behind each dish. Today, I'm bringing together elements from South India, North India, and the Northeast, all on one plate. I want people to remember these flavors long after the event is over."

With Zomaland's Table for Everyone, Saikya hopes to create not just a culinary experience but lasting memories. "Food can tell a story, and I want my dishes to leave an impression—something people will cherish and talk about for years to come."



The rising hub for homebuyers and investors

Navi Mumbai, envisioned as a counter-magnet to Mumbai's burgeoning population and infrastructural challenges, has matured into a city that harmoniously blends affordability, robust infrastructure and sustainable urban planning. This evolution positions Navi Mumbai as an increasingly attractive destination for homebuyers seeking both value and quality of life.

STRATEGIC INFRASTRUCTURE DEVELOPMENTS ENHANCING CONNECTIVITY

Central to Navi Mumbai's appeal is its strategic infrastructure projects aimed at enhancing connectivity and fostering economic growth.

■ **Mumbai Trans Harbour Link (MTHL):** This ambitious 21.8-kilometer six-lane bridge connects Sevre in South Mumbai to Chirli in Navi Mumbai. Upon completion, it will be India's longest sea bridge, significantly reducing travel time between Mumbai and Navi Mumbai, thus acting as a catalyst for economic growth.

■ **Navi Mumbai International Airport:** Situated near Panvel, this greenfield airport is designed to handle up to 9 million passengers annually in its initial phase. Its development is expected to bolster the region's economic landscape, attracting businesses and enhancing the real estate market.

■ **Navi Mumbai Metro Expansion:** The upcoming metro lines aim to improve intra-city connectivity, linking key nodes and reducing commute times. This development is anticipated to make Navi Mumbai more accessible and livable, further enhancing its attractiveness to homebuyers.



WELL-PLANNED URBAN DEVELOPMENT AND QUALITY OF LIFE

Navi Mumbai's urban planning emphasises sustainable growth, with well-laid-out sectors, ample green spaces and a focus on reducing congestion. The city's design includes wide roads, efficient public transport systems and dedicated zones for residential, commercial and industrial activities, contributing to a balanced urban environment.

The presence of numerous parks, recreational areas and water bodies enhances the quality of life, offering residents a serene environment away from the hustle and bustle of Mumbai's core. Lower population density compared to Mumbai ensures less crowded public spaces and a more relaxed lifestyle.

EMERGING RESIDENTIAL HOTSPOTS

Several nodes within Navi Mumbai have emerged as prominent residential hotspots, reflecting the growing confidence of homebuyers and investors in the region's potential.

■ **Kharghar:** Known for its well-developed infrastructure, educational institutions and recreational facilities, Kharghar has seen a steady rise in housing demand. Its proximity to the upcoming international airport and metro connectivity further enhances its appeal.

■ **Ulwe:** Strategically located near the proposed Navi Mumbai International Airport and the MTHL, Ulwe is witnessing rapid development. The planned coastal road and metro projects are expected to improve connectivity, making it a promising investment destination.

■ **Taloja:** With the upcoming metro connectivity and its location adjacent to the Mumbai-Pune Expressway, Taloja is emerging as a budget-friendly residential hub. The area's growth potential is attracting both end-users and investors seeking long-term appreciation.

SUSTAINABLE URBAN PLANNING INITIATIVES

Navi Mumbai's development has been guided by principles of sustainability. The city's planning includes extensive green belts, efficient waste management systems and initiatives aimed at reducing the carbon footprint. These measures not only preserve the environment but also enhance the living experience for residents. The emphasis on creating self-sufficient nodes with necessary amenities reduces the need for long commutes, thereby decreasing traffic congestion and pollution. This thoughtful urban planning ensures that as the city grows, it does so in a manner that is both sustainable and conducive to a high quality of life.

ECONOMIC GROWTH AND EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES

The infrastructural developments in Navi Mumbai are not just enhancing connectivity but are also driving economic growth. The upcoming airport, improved road networks and metro connectivity are attracting businesses, leading to job creation and increased commercial activities. The presence of various industrial zones and IT parks within Navi Mumbai provides employment opportunities, making it a self-sustaining urban agglomeration. This economic vibrancy adds to the city's appeal for homebuyers who seek proximity to workplaces along with residential amenities.

INVESTMENT POTENTIAL AND FUTURE PROSPECTS

The convergence of robust infrastructure, strategic location and sustainable planning positions Navi Mumbai as a promising investment destination. Property values in key areas have shown consistent appreciation and with the completion of ongoing projects like the MTHL and the international airport, this trend is expected to continue.

Investors are particularly drawn to the region due to the potential for high returns on investment, driven by increasing demand for residential and commercial spaces. The city's growth trajectory suggests a bright future, making it an opportune time for both homebuyers and investors to consider Navi Mumbai as a viable option.

Navi Mumbai's evolution into a smart choice for homebuyers is a testament to its balanced approach to development. The city's blend of affordability, enhanced connectivity through landmark infrastructure projects, sustainable urban planning and emerging residential hubs like Kharghar, Ulwe, and Taloja, collectively create a compelling narrative for its bright future. As Navi Mumbai continues to grow and evolve, it stands as a model for planned urban development, offering a harmonious blend of modern amenities and quality living spaces.

(The author, Raajesh Prajapati, is the Chairperson - PR & Communications, CREDAI-MCH, the apex body of the real estate industry in the Mumbai Metropolitan Region (MMR))





Lasiya



Snapchat is deepening its commitment to India's growing creator community with the launch of its first-ever Snapchat Creator Connect event in Hyderabad. The initiative, which marks a turning point for regional digital engagement, will empower local talent, foster industry collaborations, and enhance opportunities for creators to grow their audiences, monetize their content, and scale their digital storytelling efforts. Notably, Natural Star Nani made his debut on Snapchat during this event, further underscoring the platform's dedication to connecting with India's vibrant entertainment industry.

Lahari



Pranavi



Bhatia



SnehaLatha



Pravalika



Harika

PARTY

Photos by - SV Chary



Ryan International Group of Institutions inaugurated two new campuses in Hyderabad at Kompally and Gandhi Maisamma near Outer Ring Road's Exit #5, marking a significant milestone in its national expansion strategy. This launch builds upon the group's existing strong presence in the city, which already includes Ryan International School at Kondapur and the Johnson Grammar School at Habsiguda and Mallapur Campuses.

Sri Kalasudha Telugu Association, which celebrates the glory of Telugu people in Chennai by presenting Ugadi Awards every year, is gearing up for this year's Ugadi Awards. The Ugadi Awards Program will be held on 30th of this month at the Music Academy in Royapettah, Chennai. The organizers explained the details of this program at a program held at the Hyderabad Film Chamber today. On this occasion



As a part of its latest CSR initiative, UST, has elevated the infrastructure facilities of Mandal Parishad Primary School in Beeramguda, Hyderabad, Telangana, in a continuous effort to support education and community development with improved resources. As a part of the program, UST equipped the Beeramguda school with a modern audio system comprising an amplifier, speakers, and microphones for seamless announcements.

AKAIINDIA EXPANDS ITS PRODUCT LINE

AkaiIndia, a leading consumer electronics brand with a strong presence in televisions, audio, washing machines, and home appliances, has announced the launch of its latest range of air conditioners. The new lineup introduces three distinct series—Akai Siaschen (Heavy Duty), Akai Niligree (Economy), and Akai Kashmir (Hot & Cold)—each designed to cater to India's diverse and extreme climate conditions. Built on Akai's legacy of Japanese precision, innovation, and reliability, these air conditioners deliver outstanding cooling performance, energy efficiency, and long-lasting durability. Akai's new range of ACs is available in 3-star and 5-star ratings, with capacities ranging from 1 ton to 2.25 ton, and features a backlit remote. The range offers a combination of 8-in-1 Flexi Cooling mode, Ayurvedic Filter, PM1 Filter, and 4-Way Swing options. Additionally, it comes with a 1-year comprehensive warranty, a 5-year warranty on the PCB, and a 10-year warranty on the compressor for Inverter ACs, as well as a 5-year compressor warranty for Fixed Speed Split ACs. The price range starts from Rs 30990.

FUSION OF TRADITION AND INNOVATION

Start the New Year on an auspicious note with a unique 18-month calendar created by Cycle Pure, centered around the timeless teachings of the Bhagavad Gita. Designed to make the profound wisdom of the Gita relevant to contemporary generations, this elegantly crafted calendar offers clarity and guidance for navigating everyday dilemmas. A first of its kind, the calendar features 18 striking portraits of Lord Krishna, each hand-drawn and rendered in 13 traditional Indian art forms, including Tanjore, Mysuru, Madhubani, Phad, Pattachitra, and Rajasthani miniature art, among others. These traditional artworks have been brought to life using modern printing techniques, and the calendar even "glows in the dark," allowing devotees to keep the divine presence of Lord Krishna in sight both day and night.



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FUN

ARCHIE



CALVIN AND HOBBS



GARFIELD



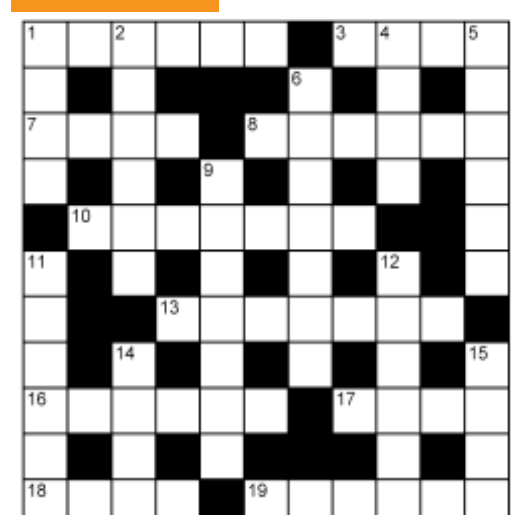
REALITY CHECK



SPEED BUMP



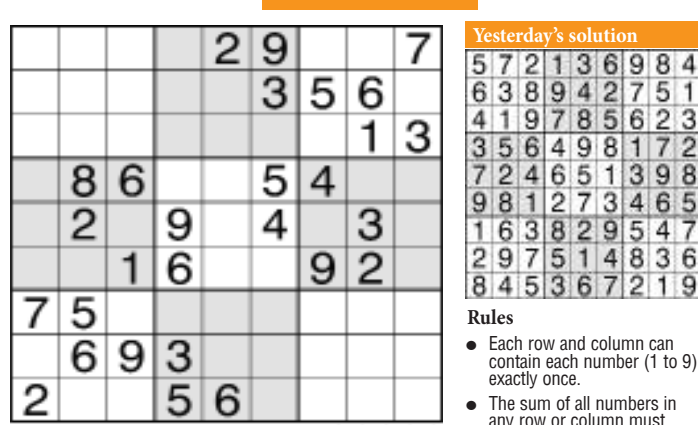
CROSSWORD



NANCY



SUDOKU



ACROSS

- 1 Baking instructions
- 3 Factual
- 7 Play this with two sticks
- 8 Rub to a shine
- 10 Young hen
- 13 Fake document
- 16 Extra-intelligent person
- 17 Finished
- 18 Playthings
- 19 Almost
- 6 From another country
- 9 A sea creature with many arms
- 11 Aeroplane trip
- 12 Motorist
- 14 Jealousy
- 15 Large group of soldiers

DOWN

- 1 Traveled by horse
- 2 Captured
- 4 Water from the sky
- 5 Breathe out



GINGER MEGGS



DIFFICULTY RATING: ★★☆☆☆

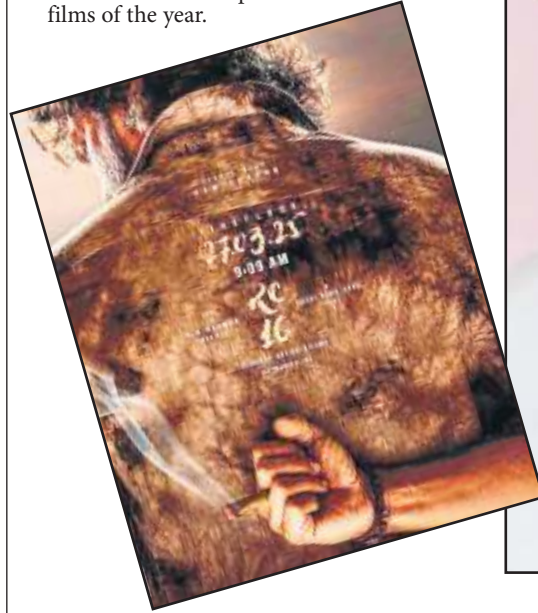


CHIRANJEEVI'S NEW FILM WITH ANIL RAVIPUDI ANNOUNCED – BUT VISHWAMBHARA FACES UNCERTAIN FUTURE!

Director Anil Ravipudi has officially confirmed his upcoming film with Chiranjeevi, revealing that the Megastar's character is named Shankara Vara Prasad, his real-life name. The film is slated for a Sankranti 2026 release, with shooting set to begin soon. However, this announcement raises questions about Chiranjeevi's much-hyped film *Vishwambhara*, directed by Mallidi Vassista. The project, which had an impressive teaser launch, is now reportedly facing major post-production hurdles due to subpar VFX. Sources suggest that Chiranjeevi himself is unhappy with the visual quality, leading to rework on the graphics and additional reshoots. With Anil Ravipudi's film now taking priority, there is speculation that *Vishwambhara* may be pushed further, possibly releasing after the new project.

Ram Charan's explosive first look for *RC16* drops today!

Ram Charan is fully immersed in *RC16*, his upcoming film directed by Buchi Babu Sana, known for the blockbuster *Uppena*. Co-starring Janhvi Kapoor, the film is a massive pan-India project bankrolled by Mythri Movie Makers and Sukumar Writings. Ahead of Charan's birthday on March 27, the team is set to unveil his first look today. A pre-look poster already stirred excitement, showcasing a rugged and intense avatar. With Kannada superstar Shiva Rajkumar in a pivotal role and AR Rahman composing the music, expectations for *RC16* are sky-high. The film is being crafted with stunning visuals, a massive budget and world-class production values, making it one of the most anticipated films of the year.



Khushbu slams Nayanthara exit rumours – calls reports “Absolute Nonsense”!

Speculation was rife that Nayanthara had walked out of Sundar C's *Mookuthi Amman 2*, following reports of alleged conflicts between the actress and the director. However, Sundar C's wife and actress-turned-politician Khushbu has dismissed these rumors.

A Tamil YouTube channel claimed that Sundar C was frustrated with Nayanthara's scheduling issues and was considering replacing her. Khushbu, however, took to social media to set the record straight, confirming that the shoot is progressing smoothly and that Nayanthara remains fully committed to the project.

The sequel to the 2020 blockbuster *Mookuthi Amman*, which was a hit in both Tamil and Telugu (Ammoru Thalli), is being mounted on a grand scale, with Nayanthara reprising her divine role. Khushbu dismissed the rumours as attempts to jinx the film's success.



Allu Arjun & Trivikram's mythological film to shake Indian cinema

Producer Naga Vamsi has teased an exciting mythological film featuring Allu Arjun and Trivikram Srinivas. Unlike conventional epics like *Ramayana* and *Mahabharata*, the upcoming film explores an unheard-of story, promising to shock and surprise

audiences across India. While promoting his latest venture, *Mad Square*, Naga Vamsi expressed immense confidence in the project, emphasizing that Trivikram and Arjun are deeply engaged in discussions. He also hinted at the film being a high-budget spectacle,

reinforcing the trend of large-scale storytelling in Indian cinema.

Meanwhile, Vamsi raised concerns about theatre allocation for small films, revealing that *Mad Square* is struggling to secure adequate screens due to industry politics.

Back-to-back blockbusters! will Rashmika's winning streak continue with Salman Khan's *Sikandar*?

Rashmika Mandanna is on a roll! The actress is delivering one blockbuster after another, cementing her place as Bollywood's lucky charm. She first grabbed attention with *Animal*, where she starred opposite Ranbir Kapoor. Directed by Sandeep Reddy Vanga, the film became a massive success despite mixed reviews, giving Rashmika her first big break in Hindi cinema. She then followed it up with *Pushpa 2*, alongside Allu Arjun. The film not only shattered records in Telugu but also created history as one of the highest-grossing Telugu films in Hindi-speaking regions. Rashmika didn't stop there. Her next Hindi film, *Chhaava*, a

historical drama starring Vicky Kaushal, also turned out to be a huge blockbuster. With this, Rashmika achieved a rare hat-trick of consecutive hits, solidifying her status as a lucky mascot in Bollywood. Now, she is set to pair up with none other than Salman Khan in *Sikandar*, directed by AR Murugadoss. This high-budget action entertainer is slated for release on March 30. Given her track record, all eyes are on *Sikandar*—will Rashmika bring her magic touch to Salman Khan's box office success? The big question remains: Can Rashmika Mandanna continue her dream run and add another blockbuster to her name? We'll find out when *Sikandar* hits the screens this Sunday!

Sreeleela's career at crossroads – will *Robinhood* revive her success?

Young actress Sreeleela took the Telugu film industry by storm with her debut in *Pelli Sanda*, where she starred opposite Roshan, son of veteran actor Srikanth. Though the film didn't perform well commercially, Sreeleela became an overnight sensation. She then starred alongside Ravi Teja in *Dhamaka*, which turned out to be a massive hit. Her electrifying dance moves were one of the highlights, earning her widespread appreciation. Following this success, Sreeleela signed multiple films, sometimes working two to three shifts a day. However, she struggled to replicate the success of *Dhamaka*. Films like *Skanda*, *Aadikeshava* and *Extraordinary Man* all bombed at the box office. Even her big-ticket project *Guntur Kaaram*, where she starred opposite Mahesh Babu, turned out to be an average performer. While *Bhagavanth Kesari* was

a success, its credit largely went to Balakrishna's star power rather than her role. Despite entering the industry with a bang, Sreeleela has faced more setbacks than hits. Now, all eyes are on her upcoming film *Robinhood*, where she stars opposite Nithiin for the second time.

Directed by Venky Kudumula, the film is crucial for her career. Interestingly, Rashmika Mandanna was initially cast as the female lead but had to opt out due to scheduling conflicts, paving the way for Sreeleela. "I spoke to Rashmika on the sets of *Pushpa 2* and she wished me all the best," Sreeleela revealed during promotions. With *Robinhood* marking her comeback after a gap, she is eagerly hoping for a much-needed box office hit. Will this film turn her fortunes around? The answer lies in the audience's verdict!



