











Editor's TAKE

Mark Carney to take on Voldemort

A known Trump critic, Mark Carney replaces Justin Trudeau as Canada's Prime Minister

In a historic political shift, Mark Carney has been announced as the next leader of the Liberal Party and the 24th Prime Minister of Canada, succeeding Justin Trudeau. Carney won the leadership race decisively, securing 131,674 votes, approximately 85.9 per cent of the ballots.

One of Carney's most immediate and critical challenges will be navigating Canada's relationship with the United States, particularly with former President Donald Trump returning to power. Trump's previous tenure was marked by a disdainful approach toward Canada, including imposing steel and aluminum, challenging trade agreements, and openly criticising the country's economic policies.

However, Carney's personal history with Trump presents an interesting dynamic. In the past, he has been openly critical of Trump's economic policies and even likened him to Voldemort, the infamous antagonist from Harry Potter.

Carney's leadership is expected to focus on economic stability, climate change initiatives, and maintaining Canada's social programs. Given his strong advocacy for sustainable finance, his administration may prioritise green investments, aligning Canada's economic policies with global climate commitments.

Mark Carney's rise to Canada's highest office brings a shift from Trudeau's leadership style to one deeply rooted in financial expertise and economic strategy. Under Mark Carney's leadership, Indo-Canada relations are expected to take a pragmatic and economically driven turn. He is likely to prioritise trade, investment, and economic collaboration with India.

Delhi's bold step towards sustainability

The newly elected Delhi government is setting ambitious goals for environmental sustainability and disaster resilience, with a strong focus on cleaning the Yamuna River, pollution control, and waste management

Cleaning the Yamuna river, pollution control, garbage management, and addressing climate and disaster resilience to ensure sustainable development are among the top priorities of the newly elected Delhi government. However, these ambitious goals can only be achieved with active community participation.

Delhi, the national capital of India, faces a complex web of hazards. From earthquakes and floods to human-induced crises such as severe air and water pollution, road accidents, and inefficient waste management, the city's vulnerabilities are escalating. Rapid urbanisation and a dense population further compound these risks.

Disaster management museums cum knowledge centres worldwide have demonstrated their potential to drive awareness and preparedness. The Kobe Earthquake Memorial Museum in Japan and the Tsunami Memorial Museum in Thailand have played pivotal roles in educating the public on natural and human-induced hazards and mitigating the risk with better response strategies.

Yamuna, the lifeline of Delhi, has been battling severe pollution for decades. Industrial waste, untreated sewage, and rampant encroachments have turned this once-pristine river into a toxic water body.



The newly elected government has placed Yamuna's rejuvenation at the forefront of its agenda, recognising that a clean river is fundamental to public health, biodiversity conservation, and sustainable urban development. However, government initiatives alone cannot restore the Yamuna.

Environmental sustainability and disaster resilience are deeply interconnected. Poor waste management contributes to urban flooding, air pollution exacerbates respiratory diseases, and deforestation heightens vulnerability to climate-induced disasters. The centre will function as a convergence point where experts, policymakers, students, and local communities come together to find innovative and practical solutions.



SATENDRA SINGH

Public engagement will be at the heart of this initiative. Schools, colleges, resident welfare associations, and corporate sectors will be actively involved in awareness campaigns, training sessions, and workshops. The younger generation, in particular, will be encouraged to take ownership of environmental stewardship, ensuring long-term impact.

This initiative is not just about creating another institution—it is about transforming

Delhi into a model city for resilience and sustainability. By integrating disaster risk reduction with environmental conservation, the centre will facilitate enhancing public safety, improve air and water quality, and promote sustainable urban planning.

As Delhi embarks on a new chapter under the leadership of the newly elected government, the time to act is now. The commitment to cleaning the Yamuna, controlling pollution, managing waste effectively, and building climate resilience must be translated into concrete actions.

(The writer is former executive director, National Institute of Disaster Management. Views expressed are personal)

The delicate strength of relationships

SECOND Opinion



SANJAY CHANDRA

Relationships are beautiful. However, I often view them through the lenses of the boundaries deeply ingrained during childhood and over the decades. I fail to grasp that human relationships are pure and unadulterated emotions.

I am the oldest child of my generation in the entire family. A lesson deeply ingrained into my psyche by my elders was that I needed to be mindful of the youngsters and guests came first. I discharged my responsibilities with the utmost care till I had my first setback in my early teens.

A few days into my first posting in the railways, I was asked to chair the farewell meeting of a retiring staff. I was the seniormost official in the gathering at the relatively young age of 25. I was taken aback when I was asked

to speak a few words. Eloquence is not my strong suit. I prefer brevity, or even silent brooding, over a long drawn flowery speech. I remember my impromptu words even four decades later. I compared the professional journey of everyone from the time of joining till retirement to the life of a rose and the fragrance that it spreads till the end.

A young neighbour told me that she finds me unduly sensitive to certain situations. She said that she, and probably many more, look up to me for guidance. She went on to mention that I need to curb my impulsive reactions. My response was that I am an extremely sensitive and emotional person, and I have spent a lifetime worrying about others.

This is a lesson I sometimes forget when imparting my words of wisdom to those dear to me. A long time as an

engineer has made me too rational and logical. I often find myself at the receiving end when I abruptly interrupt my wife as she starts talking about something bothering her, a situation that I may feel is beyond her control.

In author Mignon G Eberhart's words, "The complexity of human relationships is never simple to logic; it is like intricate lacework, but lacework made of steel."

To conclude, relationships are intricate, shaped by personal experiences, emotions, and deep-seated values. My journey has been one of constant learning—understanding that relationships cannot be governed by rigid logic but by sensitivity and empathy.

Over the years, I have also recognised my own need to evolve. While my rationality has served me well, it sometimes overshadows the simple act of listening. As my wife often reminds me that not every problem requires a solution—sometimes, people just need to be heard.

(The author is an electrical engineer with the Indian Railways and conducts classes in creative writing. Views expressed are personal)

Leaderspeak



Today, Prime Minister Navin Chandra Ramgoolam and I decided to give the India-Mauritius partnership the status of 'Enhanced Strategic Partnership'. We decided that India will cooperate in building the new Parliament building in Mauritius. This will be a gift to Mauritius from the Mother of Democracy. India and Maurities are connected not just by the Indian Ocean but by shared culture and values. We are each other's partners on the path of economic and social progress.

NARENDRA MODI, PRIME MINISTER OF INDIA

Letters to the Editor

From Goddesses to Subjugation

Madam —The editorial 'Beyond the rhetoric' should sensitise all the concerned. History presents the picture of women placed in high esteem and treated with dignity and honour. Even where men were ruling women were guiding them in the fields of diplomacy, finance and social issues.

However, in due course of time they have yielded to the dominance of men. Even today the society worships goddesses but keeps women in a tamed status. In spite of their fine and valuable contributions they should not learn and recite Vedas.

But women are springing up today proving themselves to be the best in every field. There are scenes of rape and denial their due rights also, which are the fallouts of the impulsive rulers' who still view the women gender as a subjugated section. Some sections justify this by calling them the dictum of the Gods.

If the government is really serious it can implement the deterrent provisions to stop the spate of rapes. Women are paraded nude in public, raped and murder in Manipur.

AG RAJMOHAN | ANANTAPUR

India Fights Cancer

Madam—It is with reference to the news "BJP to open 200 day care cancer centres this year: Nadda". Central government's proposal of opening 200 day cancer centres in the country in 2025-26 to provide basic facilities to cancer patients is a welcome move. It has also been planned to establish such centres in all districts in the next three years to treat cancer patients.

Among the new cases breast, cervix and lung cancer are the most frequently reported. Though India has some of the most advanced cancer treatment methods and technology, there are still gaps in access and affordability. There are also shortage of cancer care facilities, manpower and training. Early detection, screening, education, health promotion and tobacco control are important to prevent and control cancer. It is estimated that by 2050, there will be an 85 per cent increase in the number of new cancer cases and deaths in the WHO'S South East Asia region. It is unfortunate.

Therefore, there is an urgent need for continued efforts from clinicians, researchers and policy makers to collaborate and find the most effective strategies to serve cancer patients in the best way possible.

P VICTOR SELVARAJ | TIRUNELVELI

Self-Defence or Self-Reliance?

Madam —The recent report from the Stockholm Peace Research Institute which highlight the Arm Import by the countries has revealed some of the really interesting facts. The report designate India as the second largest arms importing country after Ukraine, followed by Qatar. Although, the fact is not shocking that India is the major arm importing country, because we had a long history of it.

Whereas, China make a drastic shift of altering its import status. It successfully managed to keep itself out of the top ten importer ranking, paving the way for domestic manufacturing of such critical arms and ammunition in their own country.

Arms are the basic need for self defence for any nation, which no country could ever think to avoid for. It is welcoming that despite India stand at the second position in the arm importing list, the import goes 9.3 per cent down in 2020-2024, compared to the arm trade figures of 2015-19.

In a bid to incline for self defence on our own, it is required that India must start satisfying its arm need on its own. We need to be self reliant for our self defence.

KIRTI WADHAWAN | KANPUR

SUPREME COURT MOOTS FOR DISABLED FRIENDLY PRISONS

Supreme Court had expressed concerns over the plight of disabled prisoners which is against the Disability Act 2016 passed by the Parliament and it is worth mentioning that during that Parliament session there was pandemonium and Disability bill was passed and all parties supported the bill and the Supreme Court said a petition highlighting the trauma and inhumane conditions suffered by Professor G Saibaba and the elderly Stan Swamy raised a "serious" issue about the lack of disabled-friendly accommodation and facilities in prisons across the country.

The PIL cited the instances of treatment meted out to Professor GN Saibaba and Father Stan Swamy to highlight the severe neglect of disabled prisoners and lack of disabled-friendly accommodation, washrooms and other facilities in jails.

Please send your letter to the letterstopioneer@gmail.com. In not more than 400 words. We appreciate your feedback.

While Stan Swamy passed away in 2021 while lodged in as an undertrial prisoner in the Bhima Koregaon violence case, Saibaba passed away last year a few months after he was acquitted and released from prison. The demise of Professor GN Saibaba, a scholar and human rights activist with disabilities, was directly attributable to his deteriorating health, exacerbated by prolonged incarceration and the inhumane conditions of his detention.

Stan Swamy also struggled with disability due to Parkinson's syndrome and died while in prison. He was denied medical treatment and basic support," the petition submitted. The PIL cited the instances of treatment meted out to Professor GN Saibaba and Father Stan Swamy to highlight the severe neglect of disabled prisoners and lack of disabled-friendly accommodation, washrooms and other facilities in jails.

YASH PAL RALHAN | JALANDHAR







## ANURAG BASU'S ANTHOLOGY METRO...IN DINO TO RELEASE ON JULY 4



Filmmaker Anurag Basu's anthology starring names such as Aditya Roy Kapur and Sara Ali Khan titled *Metro... In Dino* has been locked for a July 4 release. Along with Aditya and Sara, the film also stars Anupam Kher, Neena Gupta, Pankaj Tripathi, Konkona Sen Sharma, Ali Fazal and Fatima Sana Shaikh.

The makers of the film took to Instagram, to make the announcement. A caption read by T-Series Films on the photo-sharing app read: "When love, fate and city life collide magic is bound to happen! #Metro... In Dino brings the stories of heart from the cities that you love! Experience it on #July4th in cinemas near you"

Presented by T-Series and Anurag Basu Productions, the film beautifully captures the essence of modern-day relationships, their complexities, joys

and bittersweet realities. With Pritam's soulful music enhancing the narrative. *Metro... In Dino* is the spiritual sequel to Anurag Basu's previous critically acclaimed hit film *Life in a... Metro*, which was released in 2007. The film's dialogue are written by Samrat Chakraborty. The film is an anthology of 4 different heartwarming stories of contemporary couples. The film draws its title from the song *In Dino* from *Life in a... Metro*.

Gulshan Kumar & T-Series in association with Anurag Basu Productions Pvt Ltd present *Metro... In Dino*. Directed by Anurag Basu, music by Pritam, produced by Gulshan Kumar, Krishan Kumar, Anurag Basu and Taani Basu the film will release on July 4, 2025.



## Sonam Bajwa brings the fire in *Deewaniyat*

Actress Sonam Bajwa says she is "thrilled to bring the fire" in the upcoming film *Deewaniyat*, where she will be seen starring alongside actor Harshvardhan Rane.

Sonam took to Instagram, where she shared a motion poster of the film, with the actress saying the lines: "Tera pyaar pyaar nahi teri zid hai, jisse tu paar kar raha hai woh har hadd ki hadd hai. Jal jaungi mit jaungi par khaati hoon main kasam. Tere ishq main jhuk jaaon main nahi woh sanam. Tere liye mere dil main mohabbat nahi nafrat hai tujhe tabahh jo kardegi woh meri Deewaniyat hai." Taking to the caption section, she wrote: "So thrilled to bring the fire of love to #Deewaniyat!"

An intense saga of passion & heartbreak, starring alongside the amazing @harshvardhanrane! Directed by @milapzaveri, produced by @amulvmohan and @anshulmohan under @vikirmotionpictures. Written by @mushtaqsheikh and #MilapZaveri. Rolling soon. Releasing late 2025! Can't wait for you all to witness this madness of love! Sonam, who is celebrated star in Punjabi cinema, also has Hindi films *Housefull 5* and *Baaghi 4* in her kitty. According to a statement, *Deewaniyat* is not just a love story, it's a film where music plays a significant role in bringing its emotions to life.

Produced by Amul V. Mohan and Anshul Mohan under Vikir Motion Pictures, the team behind the acclaimed *The Sabarmati Report* and directed by Milap Milan Zaveri known for his emotionally charged storytelling.

The film is written by Mustaq Sheikh and Milap Milan Zaveri. *Deewaniyat* is set to go on floors in the coming months. The film is gearing up for a theatrical release in late 2025.

Talking about *Baaghi 4*, the actress will be seen alongside Tiger Shroff. It was December 2024, when it was announced that Sonam will be joining the cast of the film, which also stars beauty queen Harnaaz Sandhu.

## Randeep Hooda embraces his darkest role yet in *Jaat*

Randeep Hooda is set to unleash his most menacing avatar yet in the upcoming crime action thriller *Jaat*. The makers recently revealed the first-look character poster of Randeep, and it's nothing short of chilling and gory. Fans are in for a shocking transformation as Randeep steps into the role of Ranatunga, a ruthless gangster who will go head-to-head with Sunny Deol in what promises to be a high-octane showdown.

Known for his intense performances, Randeep has played many complex characters, but he admits Ranatunga is on another level of brutality.

Speaking about his role, Randeep shared, "I've played dark and layered characters before, but Ranatunga is pure evil. He's violent, unhinged and operates with a kind of brutality that even shocked me while performing it. *Jaat* is a film that dives into a world of raw, unapologetic crime, and my character sits at the center of that storm. I think out director Gopichand Malineni was so very clear about how he envisioned this character and I completely took on what he has imagined for this role." With *Jaat*, Randeep Hooda is set to push the boundaries of villainy, bringing a character that will shock, terrify, and leave a lasting impact.

## 'I'm grateful that I get to do the work I love'

Shreya Chaudhry, who recently won the best actress award for *Bandish Bandit Season 2* at IIFA 2025, opened up about the challenges of being compared to star kids in the entertainment industry.

In a candid conversation, Shreya opened up about navigating the pressures of fame, while also addressing the rising influence of social media stars and star kids in the industry. When asked about the pressures of making her mark in an environment increasingly dominated by influencers and star kids, the actress expressed a refreshing sense of self-assurance.

Shreya shared, "I've always believed that comparisons don't help. My mom once told me that no one's shine can dim mine, and I live by that. Everyone's journey is unique, and I just focus on giving my best. As long as I'm working hard and staying true to myself, I'm happy."

Speaking about winning the IIFA award, Chaudhry stated, "It's absolutely a dream come true. I am so grateful to the entire IIFA team, the jury, everyone who voted for me, and the audience. It was a big dream of mine. When I started my journey, I used to imagine that one day I would get an award. When it actually happened, I was so shocked and nervous that I barely managed to compose myself to give a speech. Deep down, though, I just want-

ed to scream and dance! I am truly happy and grateful!"

Further, Shreya Chaudhry shared her thoughts on the challenges of stepping into the second season of *Bandish Bandits*. When asked if she felt the pressure to outdo herself, the actress mentioned, "I wasn't stressed about outdoing myself. I just really wanted to do justice to the beautiful writing and was excited for people to watch it. I'm grateful that I get to do the work I love, and I'm especially thankful to the audience for waiting patiently for the show despite the gap between seasons."

*Bandish Bandit Season 2*, directed by Anand Tiwari, also stars Ritwik Bhowmik, Naseeruddin Shah, Divya Dutta, Sheeba Chaddha, Atul Kulkarni, Rajesh Tailang and Kunaal Roy Kapur.

The first season of *Bandish Bandits* was released in August 2020.



## FUN

### ARCHIE



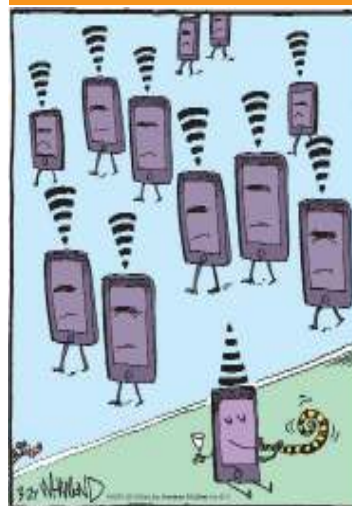
### CALVIN AND HOBBS



### GARFIELD



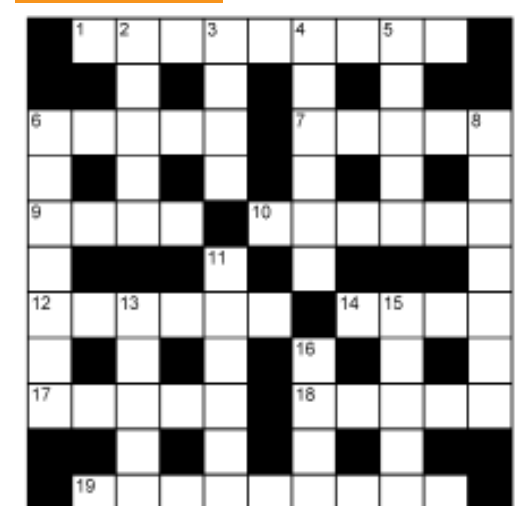
### REALITY CHECK



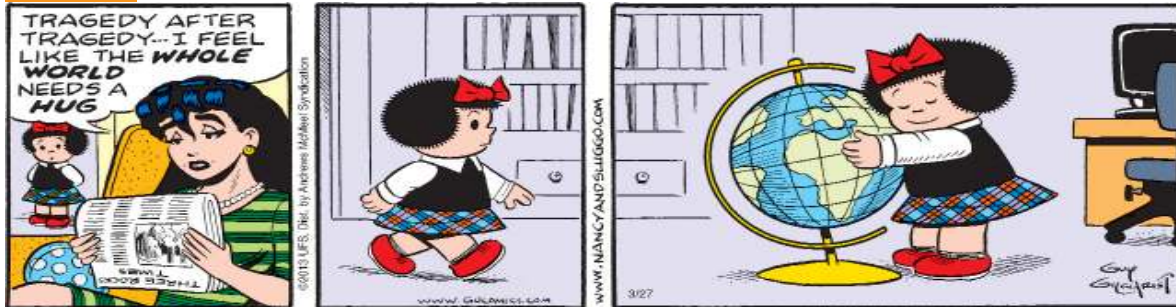
### SPEED BUMP



### CROSSWORD



### NANCY



### SUDOKU

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

Yesterday's solution

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

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

### ACROSS

- A four-sided shape
- A month
- A number of people or things together
- Change direction
- A road in a town
- To tremble or shake a little
- Female horse
- Choose by votes
- A grown-up
- Put together from parts
- Baggy
- An old object
- Someone sick in hospital
- Middle
- Thoughts
- Make laugh
- A baby sheep

### DOWN

- Mistake
- Chatter
- These are longer in winter



### GINGER MEGGS



## BEYOND WILLPOWER, A QUEST AGAINST JUST 'ONE PUFF'

FATIMA HASAN  
 hasanfati1982@gmail.com

**E**very year, on the second Wednesday of March, No Smoking Day is observed to raise awareness about the importance of quitting smoking. This year, No Smoking Day carries the theme "Unmasking the Appeal"—highlighting the deceptive allure of smoking and encouraging people to see through its false glamour.

On this occasion, *The Pioneer* had an exclusive conversation with Dr. V.S. Gideon, Managing Director of Living Sober Rehabilitation Center, to understand how smoking develops as an addiction, the importance of quitting and the ways to successfully overcome it.

Dr. Gideon explains that smoking is an addiction that affects the brain. It is classified as a brain disorder and there is no known cure for it. He elaborates that addiction is driven by dopamine, a chemical in the brain that generates a feeling of satisfaction. "Every person has dopamine, which is also known as the 'feel-good' factor. When you experience pleasure from smoking, dopamine is released. Over time, this leads to addiction," he says.

Initially, smoking may start voluntarily, often due to peer pressure or passion, but over time, the brain begins to crave that pleasurable feeling. "An extra release of dopamine makes the brain recognize smoking as a source of increased happiness. Eventually, the brain rewires itself, sending altered messages that say: 'If I don't smoke, I cannot function.'"

Many believe quitting smoking is simply about willpower, but Dr. Gideon dismisses this notion. He asserts that there is no medicinal cure for smoking addiction. Some organizations may prescribe medicines, but even the World Health Organization (WHO) has stated that there are no medications that can permanently eliminate smoking addiction. "At our rehabilitation center, we don't just prescribe



medicines. Instead, we follow a compassionate approach, sitting with smokers, understanding their addiction, and identifying their triggers," he explains. The Living Sober Rehabilitation Center focuses on creating awareness about addiction and helping individuals recognize their vulnerabilities rather than simply offering a quick fix. One of the biggest challenges of quitting smoking is dealing with withdrawal symptoms. These include palpitations, tremors, sweating, hallucinations, sleeplessness, irritability, and aggression. Dr. Gideon emphasizes that quitting smoking must be an abrupt decision. "If a person smokes ten cigarettes a day and tries to reduce it gradually, the brain will still demand the original quantity. More often than not, people relapse and end up smoking even more," he warns.

Instead of slowly cutting down, he advises quitting entirely and seeking professional support to manage withdrawal. The rehab center provides holistic programs such as meditation, yoga, and therapy sessions to help individuals cope with cravings and maintain long-term sobriety. "Meditation calms the brain and helps people quit smoking, but it does not work unless they are fully committed," he states.

While support from family and friends is important, quitting smoking is ultimately an individual commitment. He asserts, "A person makes the decision to smoke, and similarly, the decision to quit must come from them." That said, family members play a key role in providing moral support. They need to understand that smoking addiction is a brain disorder and support their loved ones in their recovery journey. A positive social circle can encourage a person to quit, but the effort must come from the individual.

Dr. Gideon strongly discourages substituting cigarettes with e-cigarettes or vaping, calling it an ineffective solution. "When a person is addicted to one substance, their brain records that addiction. Switching to another substance does not help because the brain still craves the original source of pleasure," he explains. Instead, quitting must be absolute and final, with no alternatives.

One of the most difficult aspects of quitting smoking is the possibility of relapse. Dr. Gideon emphasizes that the brain never forgets addiction. Even years after quitting, certain situations can trigger intense cravings. "Patients need to understand that addiction is a lifelong battle. That's why we tell them that quitting smoking is a maintenance program, not a one-time cure," he explains. To suppress cravings, individuals must follow structured sobriety techniques. If they consistently apply these techniques, they send a strong message to their brain that they have quit smoking for good.

**In an exclusive conversation with The Pioneer, Dr. V.S. Gideon, Managing Director of Living Sober Rehabilitation Center, breaks down the science of smoking addiction, the struggles of withdrawal and why quitting requires more than just willpower**



A common concern among those quitting smoking is weight gain. Dr. Gideon dismisses this as a misinterpretation of health recovery. "Smoking deteriorates physical health. When a person quits, their efficiency improves, their appetite returns and they eat better. It's not about gaining weight—it's about regaining health," he says. While quitting smoking is a personal decision, government intervention is necessary to reduce smoking rates. Dr. Gideon criticizes the lack of strict implementation of smoking bans. "The government imposes fines and penalties for smoking in public places, but how many people are actually penalized?" he questions.

He believes stronger policies, stricter enforcement, and better awareness initiatives are needed to truly combat smoking addiction. Dr. Gideon urges smokers to make the decision to quit and follow through with determination. "Addiction is powerful, but your will to quit can be stronger. The first step is believing in yourself," he says.

For those struggling to quit, he strongly advises seeking professional counseling. "Meeting a de-addiction counselor is the first and most effective step to overcoming triggers," he adds. At Living Sober Rehabilitation Center, individuals receive personalized therapy and structured recovery programs that focus on long-term sobriety rather than temporary solutions. "It's not just about quitting for a few weeks—it's about quitting for life," he concludes.

## Add touch of tradition to your Holi feast

The vibrant festival of Holi is approaching, bringing with it the perfect opportunity to gather with loved ones, celebrate the joy of colours and indulge in delightful traditional Zaikedar delicacies that make the occasion even more special. Zeeba Basmati Rice is the ideal component for creating delectable dishes that will enhance your Holi feast with its exceptional quality and unparalleled texture.



Enjoy a range of delicious recipes that will bring everyone to the table this Holi and make your celebrations unforgettable with it. **Enjoy Holi with ideal combination of tastes and colours!** Basmati Rice to make a vibrant and nourishing vegetable biryani this Holi. The combination of long, slender grains, aromatic spices and fresh veggies will not only be a visual feast but also please all palates. A warm, sugary bowl of Gulabi Gud Chawal is the epitome of jubilation. This dish, made with rice cooked with jaggery, ghee, cardamom and saffron, giving it a wonderful aroma and the perfect amount of sweetness. A must-have to make your Holi festivities sweeter. This festive Holi Special Pulaao, cooked with rice, is infused with dried fruits like cashews, almonds, and raisins. The superior quality of the rice combined with the richness of the dry fruits makes it

an ideal dish for a Holi feast. Make a traditional Kheer using rice to end your Holi meal on a delicious note. With its thick, creamy texture, fragrant cardamom and saffron flavors, and a sprinkle of crushed nuts, this dessert is a decadent and comforting treat to share with your loved ones. Holi is a season of joy, togetherness and of course, Zaikedar delectable cuisine. By preparing tasty dishes that bring joy and happiness to your celebrations, you can make your Holi even more memorable. Make it the main component in all your Holi dishes, from colorful pulaos to delectable puddings and enjoy with your family and loved ones.



## COLOURS & CHILL

**C**elebrate the festival of colours with a breathtaking long weekend getaway! Whether you're looking for serene backwaters, lush green hill retreats, or coastal escapes, these five destinations are perfect for creating vibrant Holi memories. Plan your escape and capture the essence of Holi at these stunning, Instagram-worthy locations.

**Niraamaya Retreats Backwaters & Beyond, Kumarakom**  
 Set on the tranquil banks of Lake Vembanad, it offers an idyllic escape amidst 8 acres of lush tropical gardens. Enjoy the serenity of Kerala's backwaters while indulging in luxury at this five-star Ayurveda resort. From world-class wellness therapies and gourmet dining to sunset boat rides, this retreat is a picture-perfect setting for your Holi weekend getaway. Capture the beauty of backwaters with dreamy sunset cruises, relax in a luxury Ayurveda spa and indulge in gourmet regional and international cuisine with scenic views.

**The Tamara Coorg**  
 For those who love nature and aesthetic landscapes, it offers a dreamy setting amidst coffee and spice plantations. Wake up to the soothing sounds of waterfalls, enjoy gourmet meals, and relax with luxury spa treatments—all while soaking in the natural beauty perfect for your Holi weekend content. Stroll through stunning plantation trails, hike to hidden waterfalls, indulge in gourmet dining, and immerse yourself in Holi celebrations set against a lush green backdrop, making every moment truly picture-perfect.

**The Tamara Kodai**  
 Nestled in the charming hill station of Kodaikanal, it blends colonial elegance with modern luxury, making it a perfect escape for a picture-perfect Holi getaway. Breathe in the crisp mountain air, capture serene landscapes and indulge in gourmet dining with breathtaking panoramic views. Experience rejuvenation at the Elevation Spa, embark on scenic nature trails, and savor gourmet meals on long weekend, all set in a luxurious hilltop retreat that offers the perfect balance of relaxation and indulgence.

before at this luxurious cliffside retreat in Kovalam. With private heritage cottages, an Ayurvedic spa, and breathtaking ocean views, this wellness resort offers an unforgettable experience on long holi weekend and stunning seaside content. Enjoy rejuvenating wellness treatments at the Ayurvedic spa, indulge in private candlelit dinners by the pool and take in panoramic sea views from secluded beaches—perfect for capturing golden-hour shots and making lasting Holi memories.

**DoubleTree by Hilton Goa Panaji**  
 Located along the Mandovi River, it offers a peaceful winter escape. The property's modern amenities, riverside dining and proximity to Panjim's vibrant culture create a perfect blend of relaxation and exploration. Immerse yourself in festive colors, relax amidst stunning landscapes and experience warm hospitality. Whether you're seeking vibrant celebrations or tranquil moments, this destination promises the perfect blend of excitement and relaxation.

**Novotel Goa Resort & Spa**  
 A short four-minute drive from Candolim Beach, it is a tropical escape with Bali-inspired aesthetics and lush greenery. Overlooking paddy fields and hills, this resort features serene water bodies, a vitality pool with private cabanas, and Goa's only Turkish Hammam at the Warren Tricomini spa. With 121 bright and comfortable rooms, a supervised kids' club, and diverse dining options—including a swim-up pool bar—this resort blends luxury, adventure and relaxation for the perfect Holi weekend retreat.

**Niraamaya Retreats Surya Samudra, Kovalam**  
 Experience a beachside Holi like never

## Making far-reaching changes in intl trade

PN\\$HYDERABAD

**T**his young visionary is changing the face of international trade with a sharp sense of opportunity and a talent for leadership! This young entrepreneur, Nikhil Agrawal, has raised one of the biggest seed rounds in the sector because of his special combination of technological know-how and business savvy. His leadership has changed how companies handle international trade by fostering innovation and creating high-performing tech teams. He is dedicated to breaking down barriers to international trade and realising India's potential, having traveled much and developed a love for empowering entrepreneurs. **Excerpts from the interview:**

**Your path—from computer science and business studies to co-founding a firm funded by Y Combinator and then creating Pazago—indicates a unique combination of technical expertise and strategic vision. In retrospect, do you consider yourself more of a businessman who understands technology or a technologist who understands business?**  
 I've always worked at the nexus of business and technology, which are inextricably linked. I consider myself as a business developer with a thorough understanding of technology, not only as a tool but also as a force multiplier capable of radically altering entire sectors. I see firsthand how technology could streamline intricate financial decisions at Alinea Invest. I discovered at Credit Karma how automation and data may generate enormous efficiencies on a large scale. A continuation of that idea is Pazago, which transforms a dispersed, relationship-based sector into an organised, data-driven ecosystem. This viewpoint has influenced my leadership style. I don't just build technology; we make technology that solves practical problems, boosts commercial results and builds confidence in a historically untrustworthy industry.

**You grew up observing your father as he experienced the highs and lows of being an entrepreneur. Was there a specific instance—perhaps a crisis he handled or a choice he made—that influenced your perception of what starting a business actually entails?**  
 One of my first experiences with true entrepreneurship was observing my father manage a supply chain issue in his company. There was no clear indication of when a shipment that was delayed would be fixed. Businesses depend heavily on connections, trust and sometimes, uncertainty. I recall witnessing the irritation, the phone calls and the continuous back and forth. That experience stayed with me. In trade and supply chains, where companies are compelled to rely on hope instead of procedure, visibility and certainty, it made me acutely aware of the problems.

**Having studied in Boston and London, worked in Silicon Valley and now run a business in India, you have been exposed to a variety of entrepreneurial cultures. What do Indian entrepreneurs frequently misunderstand about global scaling?**  
 The most common misperception about India is that its economy still

mostly relies on services. In actuality, India is quickly developing into a product-driven, deep-tech ecosystem. It's an antiquated notion that Indian businesses excel at execution but struggle with creativity. The finest solutions in India aren't simply catching up; they're setting global standards. Take a look at how the country jumped ahead in fintech, digital payments and supply chain technology. However, Indian businesspeople frequently misjudge how difficult it is to scale internationally. Regulatory environments, purchasing patterns and market expectations differ greatly and what works in India does not necessarily apply to other countries. Expanding is only one aspect of scaling worldwide; another is deeply localising without sacrificing operational effectiveness.

**How do you handle the conflicting demands of being a youthful founder, where you must not only be fearless and innovative but also win over seasoned investors and business experts who might doubt your background?**

In a conventional, high-stakes business like cross-border trading, the only way to gain trust is to produce outcomes, both regularly and in large quantities. Until you demonstrate that you know the business better than everybody else in the room, age is merely a consideration. In addition to discussing transformation, we have built it by putting it into practice. I collaborate with leading exporters from a variety of industries, have helped our clients cut shipment delays by more than 30% and have developed an end-to-end fulfillment infrastructure that applies process rigour to a previously disjointed industry. People want you to be disruptive when you're young, but true disruption comes from creating something that functions better rather than just creating noise. We have gained the confidence of investors and industry participants in this way.

**Many business owners talk about having a "lightbulb moment"—a singular realisation that a system is flawed and ready for change. When did you have that encounter?**

It was the identification of patterns in hundreds of exporter discussions, not a single instance. Every company I talked to had the same problems: they didn't know what their orders were, they didn't have a systematic method for handling logistics or quality control and delays and cost overruns were just "part of the business." It dawned on me then: a \$400 billion industry that relies on WhatsApp chats, Excel sheets and intuition. Rebuilding the entire process from the ground up with technology, structure and openness was the goal, not just fixing one inefficiency.

**Which tactics have been successful in changing attitudes?**  
 Showing people how technology works is more difficult than persuading them that it does. Exporters don't mind change; they just object to it if it seems dangerous, difficult, or unrelated to their processes. Our approach has been to demonstrate benefit right away and onboard people gradually. We begin by addressing one issue at a time, such as visibility, quality control, or order management efficiency,



rather than expecting them to completely revamp their operations overnight. Naturally, they embrace the entire stack after realising the impact.

**How do you envision fostering trust in an industry that has historically been dominated by interpersonal interactions?**

I prioritise responsibility and predictability over technology. **Consistent execution:** All exporters are certain that their orders will be fulfilled accurately and that we will identify problems before they become serious ones. **Partnership mentality:** We're an extension of their company, not just a platform, making sure that quality assurance, logistics and currency risk management run well. **Human touch:** We strengthen the relationship layer with data-driven decision-making and real-time support, rather than eliminating it when we automate procedures.

**Many founders discuss "building with impact," but what does that imply in real life, in your opinion?**

Impact, in my opinion, is more about tangible results than lofty declarations. There will be a significant impact if we can increase trade's predictability, effectiveness and profitability for companies. It involves tackling significant, real-world issues on a large scale. Every choice made is motivated by the same question: Does this make life easier for exporters? An impact occurs if a Mumbai seafood exporter avoids cargo rejection as a result of our technology anticipating a possible quality issue. There will be an impact if a business owner can stop chasing around freight forwarders, shipping lines and suppliers via email and WhatsApp in order to follow an order. There will be an effect if a Gujarat factory receives payment more quickly as a result of our integrated financial solutions streamlining trade financing.

**What would the perfect future look like, where your vision is completely realised?**

Imagine a world in which cross-border trade functions with the same accuracy and predictability as an online purchase, free from delays, quality rejections and supply chain inefficiencies. That is the future we are creating! Every stage of an export order is automated, transparent and completely integrated in this world, from sourcing to fulfillment to payments. Exporters no longer have to spend weeks tracking down information, resolving conflicts, or figuring out complicated compliance issues. Rather, their integrated financial solutions. AI-powered suggestions and real-time insights make international trade simple. Which prediction is the most audacious? Technology will make exporting as simple as domestic sales within the next ten years. Trade finance will be quick and integrated into transactions and AI will predict disruptions before they occur.





# RAM JAGADISH: COURT IS INSPIRED BY CASES, BUT A WORK OF FICTION

**I was inspired by many cases, but I wrote a completely fictional story. To ensure authenticity, I thoroughly studied the POCSO Act and consulted police officials, court authorities, and legal experts**



**R**am Jagadish is making his directorial debut with *Court: State Vs A Nobody*, featuring Priyadarshi in the lead role. Actor Nani, along with Prashanthi Tipirneni, is producing the film. The movie will be released tomorrow (March 14) and ahead of the release, the director shared his thoughts about the project. Ram Jagadish previously worked as an assistant director on *Urvashi Rakshasivo* and *Ra Ra Krishnaya*. He also made a short film that won him an award.

Speaking about *Court*, he revealed that the film's backdrop revolves around the POCSO Act. "I came across a real case, and after reading about it, I became curious and started researching further. There are similar cases in Telangana and Andhra Pradesh that I wanted to address on screen. I studied multiple case files before crafting the story," he said.

However, he clarified that the film is not based on any specific individual or real-life incident. "I was inspired by many cases, but I wrote a completely fictional story. To ensure authenticity, I thoroughly studied the POCSO Act and consulted police officials, court authorities, and legal experts," the director added.

When asked what makes his film different from other courtroom dramas, Ram Jagadish pointed to its unique romantic subplot. "In my film, there is also a love story, which I believe is a first in the courtroom drama genre," he said. The director also shared how long he waited to narrate the story to Nani. "I waited nearly eight months to get a chance to narrate my story to Nani. When the moment finally came, I presented it for two and a half hours and he patiently listened. Once I finished, he simply said, 'Welcome to Wall Poster Cinema.' That was a huge moment for me," he recalled.

He further explained that many people are unaware of the POCSO Act, which is why he wanted to explore it in-depth through this film.

Roshan and Sridevi play the lead roles in the film. "We held auditions before finalizing these actors. Roshan, who plays Chandu, worked extremely hard for the role. For Jabilli's character, we struggled to find the right actress. We needed a Telugu-speaking newcomer with a passion for acting. After an extensive search, a friend of mine sent me Sridevi's Instagram profile, and I immediately felt she was perfect for the role," he shared. After auditioning her, he was convinced she was the ideal choice for Jabilli. Actor Priyadarshi shares a close bond with Ram Jagadish.

"I shared everything with him. When I first told him about this story, he instantly wanted to be a part of it and even asked me not to narrate it to anyone else. That's how he came on board," the director revealed.

Sivaji also plays a crucial role in the film. "His character is something everyone will relate to because we all have someone like him in our families," he added.

Ram Jagadish believes *Court* is a film that will connect with all audiences. "This story belongs to everyone, and people should watch it to reflect on their own lives," he said. He also shared Nani's reaction after watching the film. "He told me, 'I am proud of you, Jagadish,' which was the best compliment I have ever received," he concluded.



## 'Majority of supporters come in favour of Gaddar Film Awards'

**T**elangana Film Development Corporation (TFDC) Chairman Dil Raju held a media conference to provide updates on the upcoming Gaddar Film Awards. He announced that a committee had finalised the guidelines for these prestigious awards.

"For films released between June 2014 and December 2023, we have decided to present a Best Film Award," said Dil Raju. Starting from 2024, the awards will expand to include all major categories across different departments of filmmaking. He confirmed that the event is scheduled to take place in April.

"We are working to make this a grand event with the full support of the TFDC and the film industry. The government has requested us to organise a large-scale

event, so we are starting preparations immediately," he stated.

Dil Raju also addressed concerns regarding the previously planned Simha Awards under the BRS government. "After the formation of Telangana, some filmmakers applied for Simha Awards and even paid fees to the TFDC. However, the awards never materialised. We are now refunding the amounts that were paid at that time," he clarified. A dedicated committee of industry professionals has been formed to oversee the awards process. "The jury will be finalized within a week, after which they will begin their work," Dil Raju stated.

He also mentioned that the Gaddar Award trophy design would be finalised within the same timeframe.

When asked about the Telugu Film

Chamber of Commerce also announcing its own film awards, Dil Raju dismissed any concerns about competition. "They are not competing with the government awards. Anyone can give awards and there is nothing wrong with that," he said.

He also noted that while not everyone may support the initiative, the majority are in favour of it. "If 51% of people are speaking positively about the awards, that's a good sign. For everything, 49% will always be against it, but that doesn't matter—the majority support is what counts," he concluded. There are awards in honour of Telangana pride Paldi Jayaraj and late actor Kantha Rao in this Gaddar Film Awards. Dil Raju said apart from Telugu cinema, they are also giving importance to Urdu Cinema.

## Nani, Vijay end rivalry rumours with a reunion pose

**O**ver the past few days, a war of words has erupted between the fan groups of actors Nani and Vijay Deverakonda. Social media has been buzzing with heated arguments, with both sides posting negative comments about the actors, sparking widespread discussion in the film industry. Despite multiple appeals from actors urging fans to stay united and refrain from negativity, fan wars have continued. A few days ago, tensions escalated as the clash between Nani and Vijay Deverakonda's supporters intensified on social media.

Vijay Deverakonda first gained recognition through his role in *Yevade Subramanyam* (2015), where Nani played the lead. The film, directed by Nag Ashwin and featuring Malavika Nair as the female lead, was released on March 21, 2015. As it marks its 10th anniversary, the movie is set to be re-released on the same date this year.

To commemorate the milestone, Nani, Vijay Deverakonda and Malavika Nair reunited to recreate the iconic bike scene from the film. The gesture comes as a strong message to their fans, putting an end to rivalry rumours and emphasising their camaraderie.

Since his breakout roles in *Arjun Reddy* and *Geetha Govindam*, Vijay Deverakonda has risen to Pan-India fame, while Nani has continued to grow as a star in Telugu cinema. Seeing both actors come together for this special moment sends a clear message that there are no differences between them. The reunion picture of Nani, Vijay and Malavika is now making waves on the internet, proving that true friendships in the industry remain strong despite fan-driven rivalries.



## Soundarya's husband clears air on land dispute, defends Mohan Babu

**L**ate actress Soundarya left an indelible mark on Telugu cinema with her exceptional performances. She acted alongside all the leading actors of her time and was regarded as one of the top actresses of her era. She lost her life in a tragic helicopter crash on April 17, 2004, while travelling for a political campaign supporting her brother's entry into politics. At the time of her passing, she was set to work on two films—one with Mohan Babu and another mythological film with Balakrishna.

Years after her demise, Soundarya's name has resurfaced in the news following a complaint filed by a resident of Khammam. The individual approached the district collector and police, alleging that actor Mohan Babu had illegally occupied Soundarya's land in Jalpally and constructed a house on it. Furthermore, the complainant accused Mohan Babu of conspiring in her death and demanded an investigation, urging authorities to reclaim the property for the government.

Amidst these serious allegations, Soundarya's husband, G. S. Raghu, has



issued an open letter refuting all claims. He firmly stated that neither he nor his late wife had any land or property dealings with Mohan Babu.

In his letter, Raghu expressed his long-standing association with Mohan Babu, calling him family and asserting that the actor never wished harm upon Soundarya or their family. He urged the public not to believe the false rumors and to put an end to the misinformation. "For the past few days, false news has been circulating regarding property in Hyderabad involving Mohan Babu sir and my wife, the late Soundarya. I want to categorically deny these baseless rumors. To clarify, I confirm that Mohan Babu sir has not illegally acquired any property belonging to my wife," Raghu stated.

He further requested the media and public to stop spreading such unverified news. "Since this is completely false, I request everyone to stop sharing and believing these unfounded claims. Let this matter be put to rest once and for all," he concluded.



## Samantha returns to Telugu cinema with an impactful cameo in *Paradha*

**D**irector Praveen Kandregula, known for his critically acclaimed Netflix film *Cinema Bandi*, is set to return with his latest project, *Paradha*. Backed once again by renowned filmmakers Raj and DK, the film has already generated buzz with its eerie and intriguing teaser.

Starring Anupama Parameswaran in the lead, *Paradha* delves into the disturbing and archaic practice of Sati in remote villages. The film also features Sangita and Darshana Rajendran in key roles. With its gripping premise and intense storytelling, *Paradha* has piqued the curiosity of audiences.

In an exciting update, sources close to the project have revealed that actress Samantha Ruth Prabhu will be making a special cameo appearance in the film. It has been a while since Samantha was seen in a Telugu film, making this cameo highly anticipated among her fans.

Her role is said to come at a crucial point in the narrative, delivering an unexpected twist that will leave the audience captivated. The scene featuring Samantha is expected to be shot soon and insiders suggest it will be one of the film's stand-out moments.

With *Paradha* nearing completion, the addition of Samantha's cameo has only heightened excitement for the film. Fans are eagerly awaiting to see how her character will contribute to the storyline and the overall impact of the film.



## Sam CS to elevate Jack: *Konchem Krack* with his signature background score

**S**iddhu Jonnalagadda, widely recognized as *DJ Tillu* from the blockbuster *Tillu Square*, is gearing up for his next film, *Jack: Konchem Krack*. Directed by Bommarillu Bhaskar, the film features Vaishnavi Chaitanya of *Baby* fame as the female lead and is set to release on April 10. The teaser hints at a fresh and exciting genre explored by Siddhu and Bhaskar.

Adding to the excitement, renowned music composer Sam CS has been brought on board to score the film's background music. Sam CS recently worked on select portions of the background score for *Pushpa 2*, starring Allu Arjun and directed by Sukumar. He has become one of the

most sought-after music directors in South Indian cinema, and now, his music will enhance *Jack: Konchem Krack*.

Sam CS has earned immense popularity with a series of hit compositions. His recent work on the sensational blockbuster *Pushpa 2* and the web series *Suzhal 2* has captivated audiences, showcasing his musical brilliance. With him on board, fans are eager to see how he will elevate Siddhu Jonnalagadda's on-screen presence and enhance his signature swag with a dynamic score.

Produced by BVSN Prasad, the film also features Prakash Raj, VK Nareish, and Brahmaji in key roles.