



AP Speaker donates 1-mth salary to Natl Defence Fund

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

Andhra Pradesh Legislative Assembly Speaker Chintakayala Ayyannapatru has donated his monthly salary of Rs 2,17,000 to the National Defence Fund. The contribution was made through an online transaction, reflecting his commitment to supporting the country's armed forces.

Speaking on the occasion, Ayyannapatru expressed pride in the bravery of the Indian Armed Forces in combating terrorism, describing it as a matter of great honour for every Indian. He highlighted the sacrifices made by soldiers who risk their lives to safeguard the nation, saying that his donation is a gesture of solidarity with them.

The Speaker also appealed to citizens to recognise the dedication and service of the armed forces, stating that such acknowledgment should inspire a spirit of nationalism among the people.

Jan Aushadhi shops at all GGHs in State



PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

In a significant move to make medicines more affordable, the Andhra Pradesh Health Ministry has sanctioned the establishment of Jan Aushadhi stores at all 17 Government General Hospitals (GGHs) across the state. The initiative, backed by Health Minister Satya Kumar Yadav, is aimed at reducing the exorbitant profit margins currently charged by private generic medicine stores.

At present, 23 privately-run generic medicine outlets operate in 16 GGHs, with Nandyal GGH lacking such a facility. These outlets have been found to charge profit margins between 50% and a staggering 600%. Investigations indicate that these stores offer only

30% to 40% of the necessary generic medicines, often driving patients towards costly branded alternatives. Further concerns have been raised over practices such as lack of billing, sales without prescriptions, and insufficient quality control.

To address these issues, the state government has decided to bring these outlets under the Pradhan Mantri Bharatiya Jan Aushadhi Pariyojana (PM-BJAP). The Indian Red Cross Society, a non-profit organisation, will manage the Jan Aushadhi stores, which will ensure a capped profit margin of just 15%. Medicines will be supplied by the Department of Pharmaceuticals, Government of India, with fixed maximum retail prices (MRPs) and sales monitored through dedicated

software to prevent overpricing and malpractice.

Minister Yadav also instructed officials to explore the possibility of extending Jan Aushadhi stores to District and Area Hospitals, where patient numbers are high, and significant cost savings can be achieved.

With strict billing, limited sales of branded drugs, and a focus on high-quality generic medicines, the Jan Aushadhi outlets are expected to significantly alleviate the financial burden on patients receiving treatment at government hospitals.

This initiative represents a major step towards enhancing affordability and transparency in the state's public health system.

PNS ■ VISAKHAPATNAM

In the wake of recent cross-border terrorist incidents and the launch of Operation Sindhur, the Union Government has marked several regions as sensitive, placing Andhra Pradesh's coastal stretch, particularly Visakhapatnam, under heightened surveillance due to its strategic importance in national defence operations.

The central directive has prompted the Andhra Pradesh State Government to activate emergency preparedness mechanisms, with a particular focus on healthcare infrastructure. "In view of the increased security threat, we have put all district hospitals on emergency alert. Leaves of medical and nursing staff have been cancelled, and they are to remain available round the clock," a senior official from the State Health

COASTAL SECURITY TIGHTENED

Emergency health measures in place at KGH & VIMS

Department confirmed.

King George Hospital (KGH), one of the region's key tertiary care centres, has begun urgent preparations to expand its emergency response capacity. "A dedicated 40-bed ICU is being established in the S-4 ward, and all critical care units are being reinforced to ensure uninterrupted medical support," said a senior administrator at KGH. "We've

ensured 24/7 staffing across trauma and emergency departments."

The Visakha Institute of Medical Sciences (VIMS) has also followed suit, issuing internal directives to revoke leave for all medical personnel and reinforcing emergency services. "We are aligning our preparedness with the guidelines issued by higher authorities. All departments have

been instructed to be on full operational alert," said a VIMS official.

With fears of further escalation, the State Government has instructed all districts to stock essential medical supplies, including trauma kits, ventilators, power backups, and ambulance fleets. Clear protocols have also been established to maintain tight coordination between the Health Department, district administrations, the police, and disaster response teams.

"All departments have been directed to function in close coordination. Full attendance is mandatory, and contingency plans are being reviewed at every level," said a spokesperson from the State Disaster Management Authority. The region remains under close watch as both civilian and defense agencies remain on alert amid a rapidly evolving national security landscape.

TTD presents 'Sare' to Tataiahgunta Gangamma



PNS ■ TIRUPATI

TTD Chairman BR Naidu, along with Executive Officer J Syamala Rao, ceremoniously presented the traditional Sare to Tataiahgunta Gangamma in Tirupati on Saturday evening, as part of the ongoing Gangaamma Jatara celebrations.

The annual folk festival, deeply rooted in local traditions, commenced on 6 May and will continue till 13 May in the temple town of Tirupati. The festivities began with special prayers offered to Sri Pundarikavalli Ammavaru at the Sri Govindaraja Swamy temple. The traditional Sare was then carried in a vibrant procession through the streets, marked by cultural fervour and devotion.

Speaking to the media, TTD Chairman B.R. Naidu said Gangaamma is revered as the sister of Sri Venkateswara Swamy, and devotees offer worship to the folk goddess with deep faith. He noted that the Jatara is celebrated in a distinctive manner that reflects the customs and

lifestyle of the people of Tirupati and its neighbouring regions.

He added that development works at the Tataiahgunta Gangaamma Temple are progressing swiftly with the support of TTD funds, and assured continued assistance for future improvements.

TTD EO Syamala Rao highlighted the tradition of presenting the Sare on the fourth day of the Chaitra month every year. He said that Rs 60 lakh has been allocated for the conduct of the Gangaamma Jatara, while additional developmental works costing Rs 3.5 crore are set to begin shortly.

Devotees from Tirupati, as well as from the neighbouring states of Telangana, Karnataka and Tamil Nadu, are expected to participate in large numbers.

Local MLA Srinivasulu, TTD Board Members G. Bhanu Prakash Reddy, Shantha Ram, Deputy EOs Shanthi and Lokanadh, YGO Sadalakshmi, AEO Muni Krishna Reddy and others were present.



YSRCP pays tribute to martyred soldier Naik

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

YSRCP leaders paid tribute to Agniveer Murali Naik, who was martyred in the India-Pakistan conflict, at the party's Central Office in Vijayawada on Saturday.

Party members placed floral wreaths at Murali Naik's portrait and observed a two-minute silence, praying for the peace of his soul.

MLC Lella Appi Reddy, Central Office In-Charge, praised Murali Naik's bravery and sacrifice, describing him as an inspiration for all Indian citizens.

"Murali Naik's courage in the face of adversity and his ultimate sacrifice will always inspire the nation. YSRCP stands resolutely by his family, offering them our full support," said Appi Reddy.

The party also announced that YSRCP President YS Jagan Mohan Reddy will visit Murali Naik's family in Kallithanda, Gorantla Mandal, Sri Satya Sai District, on May 13 to personally offer his condolences. Having already reached out to the family via phone, YS Jagan's upcoming visit will further honour the sacrifices made by soldiers and extend support to their families. The event was attended by key YSRCP leaders, including spokespersons Putta Shivashankar Reddy, Harshavardhan Reddy, senior leader Donthireddy Venareddy, YSRCP SC Cell Working President Kanakkaravu, and grievance cell coordinator Ankareddy Naga Narayana Murthy, among others.

NTR police invoke PIT NDPS Act against repeat ganja offender

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

In a crackdown on drug peddling, NTR District Police have invoked the stringent Prevention of Illicit Traffic in Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances Act, 1988 (PIT NDPS Act) against a habitual ganja dealer from Satyanarayanapuram.

The accused, Tummala Manoj (28), has allegedly been selling ganja near educational institutions and supplying narcotics to people involved in chain snatching and robbery, thereby endangering public safety and disturbing law and order in Vijayawada.

Citing the repeated threat posed by Manoj, NTR District Police Commissioner SV Rajasekhara Babu recommended to the state government on April 23 that the PIT NDPS Act be applied to detain him under preventive custody. The government approved the proposal and issued orders on May 9

Citing the repeated threat posed by Manoj, NTR District Police Commissioner SV Rajasekhara Babu recommended to the state government on April 23 that the PIT NDPS Act be applied to detain him under preventive custody. The government approved the proposal and issued orders on May 9.

Manoj, a resident of Nageswara Rao Pantulu Road, has a criminal history dating back to 2011 when his first ganja-related case was registered at One Town Police Station. Despite multiple arrests and jail terms, he reportedly continued drug peddling across various police station limits, including Kanchikacherla, Nandigama,

Jaggayyapeta, Bhavanipuram, Krishnalanka, Patamata, Machavaram, and even Visakhapatnam. In total, he has been booked in 28 cases related to drug trafficking.

On May 10, acting on the government order, a police team led by North ACP Sravanthi Rai and Satyanarayanapuram Inspector SVV Lakshmi Narayana took Manoj into custody. The operation was conducted under the direction of In-Charge Police Commissioner Sarvashreshtha Tripathi and supervision of West ADCP G Ramakrishna. Manoj has been lodged in Rajahmundry Central Jail.

Helmets distributed to TTD Employees

PNS ■ TIRUMALA

On Saturday morning, TTD Chairman BR Naidu distributed helmets to employees at his camp office in Tirumala. This initiative was introduced to enhance the safety of employees commuting between Tirumala and Tirupati, a decision which the TTD Trust Board Chairman had deliberated upon.

Speaking to the media, the Chairman explained that the move was part of the TTD's broader efforts to ensure the safety of its staff.

He further mentioned that Sri Jaladi Raghuram from Guntur and Mr. Naveen, the head of KCN Helmets in Delhi, had generously come forward to donate the helmets for this cause.

In the first phase of the ini-



tiative, 555 helmets, valued at approximately Rs 5 lakh, were donated. An additional 500 helmets are expected to be contributed within the next 15 days.

If these helmets meet the required standards for quality

and usage, another 5,000 helmets will be distributed," the Chairman added.

TTD Board Members Shanta Ram, VGOs Ram Kumar, Surendra, and other officials also attended the event.

GIMSR Hospital secures NABH accreditation

PNS ■ VISAKHAPATNAM

The GITAM Institute of Medical Sciences and Research (GIMSR) Hospital has achieved a major milestone by securing Full Accreditation from the National Accreditation Board for Hospitals and Healthcare Providers (NABH). With this recognition, GIMSR becomes the third teaching hospital in Andhra Pradesh to be accredited under NABH's rigorous 6th edition standards, reinforcing its position as a leading centre for advanced medical care and education.

Speaking to media persons on Saturday, Dr. Gitanjali Batmanabane, Pro Vice-Chancellor of GIMSR, described the achievement as a validation of the hospital's steadfast commitment to delivering safe, high-quality, and patient-centric healthcare. She noted that the accreditation brings greater public confidence and pro-



The institute becomes the third teaching hospital in Andhra Pradesh to be recognised under NABH 6th edition standards, reaffirming its commitment to excellence in healthcare and medical education

motes a culture of transparency, benefitting not just patients, but also healthcare professionals, students, and associated insurance stakeholders.

Highlighting the strides made by the hospital, Dr. Krishna Karthik Bhogavalli, Head of Operations and NABH Lead at GIMSR, detailed the significant infrastructural developments undertaken in recent years. These include an expanded

750-bed facility, 16 modular operating theatres, a cutting-edge Cath Lab, and a modern Dialysis Unit. The hospital is also equipped with round-the-clock emergency services, advanced cardiac life support (ACLS) ambulances, and ded-

icated ICUs, enhancing its capacity for critical care.

Dr. V.V. Narasimham Rao, Hospital Superintendent, said that GIMSR offers a wide range of general and super-specialty services and is empanelled under several pub-

lic healthcare schemes, including NTR Vaidyaseva, Biju Swasthya Kalyan Yojana (BSKY), Employees Health Scheme (EHS), and Employees' State Insurance (ESI). The hospital has partnered with prominent third-party administrators (TPAs) to enable seamless cashless insurance services for eligible patients.

NABH Coordinator Dr. Prabhavathi emphasised that the recognition not only reflects the institution's commitment to quality in healthcare delivery but also underlines its growing stature in medical education. She added that the accreditation provides a robust platform for future advancements in both clinical and academic domains. The certification marks a moment of pride for GIMSR, further establishing it as a benchmark-setting institution dedicated to clinical excellence and educational leadership in the healthcare sector.

Traffic police crackdown on foreign students driving without licences

PNS ■ VISAKHAPATNAM

The Visakhapatnam city traffic police have launched a special drive targeting foreign students enrolled at Andhra University and its affiliated institutions, checking for valid driving licences and vehicle registrations.

The initiative comes amid growing concerns over the increasing number of international students operating vehicles without proper documentation. According to Prof. E. Dhanunjay Rao, Registrar of Andhra University and Dean in-charge of International Students' Affairs, the university currently hosts

around 1,144 students from over 60 countries, with nearly 800 from African nations alone.

During a series of random checks at foreign student hostels across the city, traffic personnel found that barely 10 per cent of the students possessed valid driving licences. Authorities also noted a worrying trend: many students were found to be using second-hand two-wheelers without appropriate registration or legal ownership transfers.

Jayaprakash, in-charge Deputy Commissioner of the Road Transport Authority (RTA), clarified the legal stipulations for foreign nationals driving in India.

Only 10% of international students at Andhra University were found to hold valid licences; a special camp on campus is likely



During a series of random checks at foreign student hostels across the city, traffic personnel found that barely 10 per cent of the students possessed valid driving licences. Authorities also noted a worrying trend: many students were found to be using second-hand two-wheelers without appropriate registration or legal ownership transfers

"Students residing in India for less than a year must use an international driving licence issued by their home country. Those staying for over a year are required to obtain a learner's licence and subsequently a permanent Indian driving licence by submitting relevant documents, including passport, visa, and proof of ICCR scholarship," he said.

With enforcement measures now being stepped up, officials warned of stricter penalties. "Until recently, we imposed fines of Rs 5,000 on violators. Going forward, we will seize vehicles if students are caught driving without valid licences," said

Additional DCP (Traffic) K. Praveen Kumar.

In response to the situation, Prof. Dhanunjay Rao said the university is considering facilitating compliance for students. "I plan to request the traffic and RTA departments to hold a special licensing camp on the Andhra University campus to help international students regularise their documents," he said on Tuesday. The enforcement drive is expected to continue in the coming weeks as authorities aim to ensure safer roads and greater awareness among the city's foreign student community.

Govt committed to safeguarding children's health: Minister Durgesh

PNS ■ RAJAHMUNDRY

Minister for Tourism Development Kandula Durgesh has reaffirmed the government's commitment to safeguarding children's health and providing them with nutritious food.

He was speaking at the 'Chinnari Arogyam' programme organised by GAIL here on Saturday. The Minister stressed the importance of prioritising the safety and healthcare of infants during their early stages, which are crucial for both physical and mental development.

Minister Durgesh highlighted various initiatives being undertaken by the Naidu-led coalition government to protect the health of women and children. He noted that nutritious food is being supplied to pregnant and lactating women across the State.

Calling for collective social responsibility, the Minister urged all stakeholders to help identify underweight and malnourished children and ensure they receive the necessary support to regain good health. He emphasised the need to provide children living with HIV with appropriate nutrition to improve their quality of life and



longevity. He instructed officials to take steps to regularly provide nutritious food to malnourished children.

District Collector P. Prasanthi stated that the core aim of the initiative is to identify those who lack access to healthcare and nutritional support and raise awareness among them. She added that steps are being taken

to involve the medical and health departments in this effort.

She further noted that awareness campaigns are being conducted to educate parents on child nutrition and healthcare. Special attention will be given to children aged 6 months to 6 years who are severely malnourished, as well as those affected

by tuberculosis, HIV, sickle cell anaemia, thalassemia, and other serious illnesses. These children will be provided with "Child Health" kits and subject to regular health monitoring.

Collector Prasanthi said 1,448 children with severe malnutrition and 95 children with serious illnesses have been identified in the district under

the Balamitra initiative and mapped for health support services.

Joint Collector S. Chinna Ramudu, GAIL Manager Y.A. Kumar, Women and Child Welfare Officer K. Vijaya Kumari, GAIL Deputy GM (HR) Deevi Prabhakar, and Deputy DMHO Vasundhara were also present.



Collector launches book on civil defence preparedness

PNS ■ BHIMAVARAM

West Godavari District Collector Nagarani on Saturday released a book titled 'Yuddam Maku Vodu - Anivaryamaite Edurkonenduku Memu Siddham' (We Do Not Want War - We Are Ready to Face It If Necessary), compiled by the District Prohibition and Excise Department based on guidelines from the Ministry of Civil Defence.

The launch event was held at the Collector's Camp Office.

Speaking on the occasion, Collector Nagarani emphasised that war results in immense loss of life and destruction of economic resources, which no country can afford. She underlined the importance of resolving conflicts through dialogue and diplomacy.

"Even nations not directly involved in war suffer its consequences. If war becomes inevitable, citizens, along with the armed forces, must be prepared to face the situation," she remarked.

The Collector noted that the

booklet aims to raise awareness among the general public, including untrained civilians, to help them respond effectively during wartime situations. She instructed the District Prohibition and Excise Officer to ensure the wide distribution of the booklet to officials at the district, division, and mandal levels.

Superintendent of Police Adnan Nayeem Ashmi and Prohibition and Excise Officer Dr R. Kumareswaran were among those present at the event.



MP lays stone for fire station at Nandikotkur

PNS ■ NANDYALA

Nandyala MP Byreddy Shabari laid the foundation stone for the construction of a fire station building in Nandikotkur town on Saturday. The facility is coming up near the indoor stadium.

Speaking on the occasion, the MP said the government had sanctioned Rs 2.21 crore for the

project. She emphasised the urgent need for a fire station in Nandikotkur, noting the absence of fire prevention services in the constituency. She assured that the construction would be completed swiftly.

Municipal Chairman Dasi Sudhakar Reddy and other officials were present at the ceremony.

Govt provides infrastructure to enthusiastic entrepreneurs to establish units: Collector

PNS ■ BAPATLA

District Collector J Venkata Murali has said that the enthusiastic entrepreneurs will be provided all required infrastructure to establish industries.

The district Collector, flanked by MLA V Narendra Varma, performed bhoomi pooja for the construction of the MSME factory complex at Kondabotlapalem village near here on Saturday.

Speaking on the occasion, the Collector highlighted the government's intentions of creating an entrepreneur from every household. The MSME Industrial Parks are being established in every Assembly constituency in the district as part of encouraging entrepreneurs. The identification of land and construction of MSME park were launched expeditiously as per the Chief Minister's directions, the Collector highlighted.

"Initially, an MSME park will be established in the 4.5 acres of land, adjacent to the national highway. The government has sanctioned Rs 12 crore for the construction of MSME Park. The building of the park consists of three floors, 80 rooms and 30 godowns. All required infrastructure is being provided to the flatted factory complex to



start production," the Collector asserted.

The Collector observed that if self-help groups of women, youths come forward to make products, they would be allotted space to them in the building complex. Steps are being taken to ensure that all infrastructure facilities are available at the MSME Park; he mentioned, adding facilities like roads, electricity, buildings, godowns and toilets will be made available.

The Collector asked the enthusiastic entrepreneurs to come and start their products at the MSME Park and urged

people to take advantage of the opportunity. MLA Narendra Varma reiterated that the Government aimed to make enthusiastic youths as entrepreneurs.

The MLA maintained that the Central and State Governments are jointly supporting the establishment of Micro, Small and Medium scale industries, stating the Flatted Factory Complex will become a center for all types of products. Godowns would also be constructed so that farmers can store their crops, the MLA asserted.

RDO P Gloriya, APIIC Guntur Zonal Manager Narasimha Rao and Industrial officer Y Ramakrishna were among those who were present.

YSRCP condemns police 'brutality' against Vidadala

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

The YSR Congress Party (YSRCP) has strongly condemned the alleged police high-handedness by Palnadu district police, led by Circle Inspector Subbaraidu, against former minister Vidadala Rajini at Manukondavaripalem, near here, on Saturday.

According to the party, Rajini was visiting a local family when she questioned the arrest of YSRCP activist Srikanth Reddy. In response, she was allegedly pushed aside by CI Subbaraidu, who proceeded to detain Srikanth. The YSRCP termed the incident a "shameful act" against a former woman minister and a clear sign of the breakdown of law and order in the State.

Former Minister Ambati Rambabu decried the police's conduct as "inhumane and reprehensible", pointing to what he described as a pattern of targeting YSRCP leaders, including the recent early morning arrest of a Dalit woman leader in Kantheru.

Former Ministers Perni Nani and Rambabu, MLC Lella Appi Reddy, former MLA Gopireddy Srinivas



Reddy, and constituency coordinators Donthireddy Vema Reddy and Diamond Babu visited Ms. Rajini's residence in Chilakaluripet to express solidarity.

They accused the ruling dispensation of systematically harassing opposition leaders and warned that such incidents reflected the deteriorating state of policing in Andhra Pradesh.

The YSRCP demanded the immediate suspension of CI Subbaraidu, a full inquiry into the "illegal" arrest of Srikanth Reddy, and accountability from the government.

"Such thuggery will not silence us," said Rambabu, vowing legal and public action to seek justice.

Opposition leaders & govt employees faced problems during BRS rule: Mahesh

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Opposition leaders and government employees faced many problems during BRS rule, TPCP Chief B. Mahesh Kumar Goud said.

He said Panchayat Secretaries should compare the difference between the 10 years of BRS rule and the 15-month Congress rule.

"During the 10-year BRS rule, except for top officials, all lower-level officials were harassed. KCR ruled the state for 10 years, mocking democracy and trampling on the constitution like Tughlaq. We achieved people's rule after getting liberated from the 10-year rule of the BRS Tughlaq," Mahesh said.

Participating in the Athmeeya Sammelan of Panchayati Raj secretaries held at Pedda Amberpet on Saturday, the TPCP chief said the BJP and the BRS are conspiring to blame the Congress. The BJP and the BRS are using Artificial Intelligence to launch venomous campaigns against the Congress using fake images, he said.

He said he can understand the seriousness of the Panchayat Secretaries' prob-



TPCP Chief B Mahesh Kumar Goud addressing the village secretaries Athmeeya Sammelan at Pedda Amberpet on Saturday

lems. However, the Congress Government is fulfilling the promises that it had made, one by one, by putting the state on the right track even though there are financial constraints, he said.

"You (Panchayat Secretaries) have the responsibility to support the government. I am confident that we will govern as per public opin-

ion and come back to power after our current term," he said.

He said that making mistakes is natural, however, the Congress has a habit of correcting mistakes. Only if villages are strong can state governments and the Centre function effectively, he added.

"The responsibility of improving the condition of vil-

lages lies with Panchayat Raj Secretaries. The fact that the concerned Minister Seethakka has accepted the demands of Panchayat Secretaries means that the CM also has accepted the demands. We will discuss the legal demands of Panchayat Secretaries with Panchayat Raj Minister Seethakka and try to resolve them with the CM," he said.

Three killed as lorry overturns



PNS ■ BAPATLA

Three people were killed when a lorry carrying granite slabs overturned at Thimmarajupalem village in Parchur mandal on Saturday.

Police said the lorry was transporting granite slabs from Martur to Guntur when it overturned on the road, killing Palaparathi Srinu (25), Talluri Prabhudas (37), and Tammuluru Surendra (26).

All the deceased were travelling on the lorry at the time of the accident. The police have registered a case and shifted the bodies to the Government General Hospital for postmortem. The lorry driver is absconding.



Citizen Force Cancer Club launched to support patients

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

In a move to combat the growing threat of cancer, the Citizen Force Cancer Club — a voluntary service initiative — was formally launched in Vijayawada on Saturday. The club aims to raise awareness, promote early diagnosis, and support cancer patients, particularly those from disadvantaged backgrounds.

The inauguration was graced by Prof NK Goyal, President of the CMAI Association of India and a veteran in the telecom industry, who served as the chief guest. He underscored the crucial

role of voluntary organisations in building a healthier nation and assured his full support for Citizen Force's vision of a cancer-free society.

Citizen Force Foundation Founder and Managing Director Pinnamsetti Ramesh Babu outlined the club's key objectives, including cancer prevention education, timely access to quality treatment, and rehabilitation for survivors. He emphasised the importance of emotional support, noting that mental strength plays a vital role in recovery.

The initiative also envisions establishing a state-of-the-art

cancer hospital and research centre. Oncologists Dr N Subba Rao and Dr Vemuri Varaprasad highlighted the increasing cancer burden and stressed the need for early detection and community involvement. They lauded the club's efforts in offering accessible diagnostic services and financial aid.

Radiologist Dr GV Mohan Prasad described the launch as a new chapter in the fight against cancer. Actress and social worker Chandrani Das expressed her pride in supporting the cause, calling it a meaningful opportunity to serve society.

"CAKES ARE HEALTHY TOO, YOU JUST
EAT A SMALL SLICE"
— MARY BERRY

VINTAGE VIBES MODERN MUNCHIES

Set against the colonial backdrop of Lutyens' Delhi, SOCIAL's new outlet celebrates bold tastes and bites, says ABHI SINGHAL

With already 56 outlets in operation, SOCIAL, the hyped café-bar has opened its 57th outlet in Connaught Place, and it is nothing short of a love letter to Delhi's past. The newest outlet has its walls in the heart of the capital, Lutyens' Delhi. SOCIAL blends the charm of India's postal legacy with the brand's signature edge, creating a one-of-a-kind dining and cultural experience.

Bold Flavours, Big Cravings

SOCIAL's food offering continues to impress, and Connaught Place SOCIAL is no exception. The menu is a mix of crowd favourites and exclusive new creations, catering to every mood and palate. The *Butter Chicken Biryani* is a must-try, rich, creamy and indulgent. The *Crispy Corn Chakna* and *Fully Loaded Nachos* are perfect bar snacks, while *Old School Chicken Tikka* and *Paneer Tikka* bring smoky, satisfying flavours to the table. The *Hot Tennesse Chicken Wings* in the Munchies section is delicious and juicy with fried chicken wings tossed in a delicious hot sauce. Vegetarians will also enjoy the *Bell Pepper Pizza*, a zesty and cheesy delight. From the momos section the

SOCIAL SUBSTANTIALS

From the special section you have many options like the *Classic Mac N Cheese Pasta*, *Keema Spaghetti Pasta*, for the main course lovers — *Kadhai Paneer*, *Dal Makhani*, *Punjabi Kadhi Chawal* and much more to savour.

momo lovers can enjoy *Classic Veggie Momos* and other variations, with street taste and dough softer like no other.

A Cultural Playground

More than just a café or bar, the Connaught Place SOCIAL is set to become a buzzing cultural hub like its other outlets. With plans to host live music, curated performances, and artistic pop-ups, it is designed as a space where Delhiites can connect, create and celebrate. It is not just about the food or ambience, it is an experience in itself.

FACT SHEET

Connaught Place Social
Address: First Floor, The Colonnade, Plot No 5, Middle Cir, Block B, Connaught Place, New Delhi, Delhi 110001
Price for Two: ₹1,600

BEVERAGES TELLING A STORY

No SOCIAL experience is complete without its legendary cocktails. Signature drinks such as *The Pink Pound*, *Trip on the Drip*, and the spa-inspired *Thai Malish* are just the beginning. The drink *LLIITS* — (Longest Long Island Iced Teas) remains the crowd's favourite also delivering a potent punch and plenty of personality to the beverage lovers.

CHOOSING IS YOUR POWER

The #Atmanirbhar China Box in the menu is where you can make your own combos by customising what you want to get added in there. You have the options of Fixes — paneer, chicken, prawn; Sauces — hot garlic, shezwan, social sexo and more; Carbs — fried rice, hakka noodles, steamed rice and the egg fried rice. Your choice, your taste!

If you are a shake lover you can go for the Oreo Chocolate Shake that would come in with a great presentation of a plant served in a mud pot. The Ferrero Rocher Shake is a bit thick and the after-taste is something different, chances only the Ferrero Rocher lovers might like it.

OFFERINGS AND VIBES AT SOCIAL

Connaught Place SOCIAL keeps on curating an exceptional lineup of events, featuring artists, musicians, and cultural experiences that reflect the soul of the city.

From intimate performances, Mehfil Nights to thought-provoking gatherings, Connaught Place SOCIAL is where history and contemporary culture converge to create something truly extraordinary already loved and approved by the people at other outlets having the same fun and experience.

AMBIENCE: A POST OFFICE REIMAGINED

Inspired by the nostalgia of the Indian Post Office, this café-bar brings the bygone era of handwritten letters and telegrams alive through its immersive design. Every corner pays homage to the past, from vintage currency notes and old postal stamps to framed letters, telegrams, and even sorting tables repurposed as service counters. The grand oval-shaped bar draws inspiration from British-era teller windows, and the palette of deep reds, forest greens, and rich wooden textures instantly transports guests to a sepia-toned memory lane. The vibe is old-world yet electric, making it ideal for work, play or both.

THE CRISPY CORN CHAKNA AND FULLY LOADED NACHOS ARE PERFECT BAR SNACKS, WHILE OLD SCHOOL CHICKEN TIKKA AND PANEER TIKKA BRING SMOKY, SATISFYING FLAVOURS TO THE TABLE

Flame-Kissed Feasts Worth the Hype

Although The Pit is undoubtedly a haven for non-vegetarians, even the vegetarians were left satisfied — a achievement in a meat-forward dining experience.



I've just returned from an unforgettable evening at *The Pit*, a new barbecue and grill restaurant that has opened its doors at the Global Foyer Mall on Golf Course Road, Gurgaon. And if there's one thing I can't stop doing — is singing its praises.

The Pit feels like a breath of smoky, deliciously seasoned fresh air. While many restaurants attempt to replicate the charm of an authentic barbecue pit with mixed results, this one has not only captured the essence but elevated it to a whole new level.

We began with a delicate *chicken skewer* — perfectly tender, juicy, and lightly charred. Baby corn, often relegated to side-dish status, emerged as a star in its own right, boasting a succulent texture and rich smoky finish. The *Chilli Dog* was indulgent,

while the *Mushroom Sando*, served in pillowy soft bread, was a savoury treat even the non-meat eaters couldn't resist.

Then arrived the true evening heroes. The *Buttery Garlic Prawns* were decadently rich, while the meatloaf provided the kind of comforting depth reminiscent of classic American diners. The *Philly Cheese Sub* was packed with flavour, the *Chicken Wings* had just the right kick, and the pork belly — simply outrageous. The smoked grilled chicken came with crisped, golden skin and melt-in-the-mouth meat. The *Lamb Chops* were cooked to tender perfection, and the *Humble Jacket Potato* stood out enough to be a main course.

SPECIAL MENTION

First, the cocktails. The *Jamuntini* — a bold twist on a martini made with frozen fresh jamun was beautifully balanced. What impressed me most was

the Pit's refusal to cut corners: no artificial syrups, no pre-mixes — just real ingredients. This commitment to quality shone through every drink.



Punjabi Food Passion on a Plate

At Pind-e-Zaika, the essence of Punjab wasn't just served but was celebrated in flavours, writes ABHI SINGHAL

The taste of Punjab came alive at *Shangri-La Eros New Delhi* during the much-celebrated *Pind-e-Zaika* pop-up at *Tamra*. This exclusive culinary event paid tribute to the lively food culture of Punjab — a land known for its robust flavours, warm hospitality, and rich culinary heritage.

At the heart of the experience was *Chef Tikka Manpreet Singh*, a master of Punjabi cuisine whose deep-rooted knowledge and royal kitchen experience shaped every dish served. Chef Singh brought his culinary magic to *Tamra*, presenting a feast that captured the soul of Amritsar and beyond. Guests were treated to a menu steeped in authenticity and nostalgia, each dish telling a story of Punjab's bold spices and traditional cooking methods.

Signature creations by Chef like *Ferozpur Railway Mutton Curry*, *Tikka Singh Da Meat Tarrivala*, and *Paneer Bharwein Aam Ras* delighted meat

lovers and vegetarians alike, while classics such as *2 Din Walli Dal* and *Murgh Dahi Kali Mirch Walla* offered comforting, hearty bites. The Vegetarian delicacies like *Chooran Walli Bhindi* and *Chakunder Moongphali Di Tikki* added earthy depth to the spread.

The last of the meal were the awaited desserts such as *Rau Di Kheer* that provided a sweet end to this cultural journey.

FLAVOUR REVIVAL

Guests were treated to a menu steeped in authenticity and nostalgia, each dish telling a story of Punjab's bold spices. Chef Tikka Manpreet Singh brought his culinary magic to *Tamra*, presenting a feast that captured the soul and ingredients of Amritsar. A celebration of Punjab's rich culinary legacy unfolded in New Delhi.



PAWAN SONI
COLUMNIST
Food critic and founder of the Big F Awards

"TO DESCRIBE MY MOTHER WOULD BE TO WRITE ABOUT A HURRICANE IN ITS PERFECT POWER"
— MAYA ANGELOU



A LOVE THAT FILLS EVERY ROOM

There's a quiet moment that no one sees. When the child falls asleep and the house is finally still, she looks at the bills, the dishes, the dreams. Her body aches, her heart carries stories no one knows. But she smiles. She touches her child's head gently and the storm inside her calms. She's not just raising a child. She's building a future. She's breaking cycles. She's rewriting what family means. She is not "incomplete." She is overflowing with love, with grit, with grace.



WHAT THE WORLD DOESN'T APPLAUD

There are no awards for showing up every single day. No medals for enduring courtrooms, stigma, or sorrow. No headlines for skipping meals so the child can have music lessons. Yet her victories are real. It's in the child who says "Mummy, I'm proud of you." In the teacher who says "She's a confident girl." In the friend who whispers "You've raised a good human." She doesn't need applause. But she deserves reverence.

All in a mother's heart

Honouring the strength, sacrifice and love of mothers who shape lives everyday, says SAKSHI PRIYA



LET'S RAISE A TOAST

Single mothers don't want our pity. They want policies that recognise their reality. Workplaces must support single-parent households with flexible hours, maternity protections and empathy. Schools must stop insisting on a father's name. Landlords must stop asking questions. Society must stop staring. Because the truth is, she's doing the work of two, often better than both. So this Mother's Day, forget the marketing fluff. Let's raise a toast not just to mothers, but to her struggle, to her tears, her to-do lists, her tucked-away dreams. To the child she is raising, not despite the odds, but because of them. She doesn't need the world's permission to feel whole. She is the world.

Behind every Princess is a mother who built the castle, her arms were walls, her love was the roof that sheltered us: She built a castle called home. She wasn't just my mother — she was my quiet warrior, my constant support, my compass. She carried the weight of the world with grace and never once let it touch us. In every small act of love, in every silent sacrifice, she became the hero I looked up to — strong, steady and endlessly giving.

She Plays Every Role

I've watched her for as long as I can remember. Every morning, she was up before dawn, while the rest of us still lay asleep. The clock had barely struck 5 and already, she was in the kitchen, kneading dough, stirring pots, packing lunchboxes. She worked so we could live well. By the time I was out of bed, she had already created a day's worth of meals, packed in containers, ready for the day ahead. Yet, it was never just about the food she cooked. It was about the sacrifices that went unnoticed, the sleepless nights when she stayed awake with her thoughts and fears, the extra hours at work to make sure there was enough to cover everything. She wanted us to rise above, to have a future filled with possibilities. She worked tire-

lessly, not just to earn a living, but to teach us how to make a living, to instill in us a sense of responsibility, and above all, to ensure that we knew how to survive on our own.

Home is where mother is

Behind every princess, there's a mother who builds the castle. And hers was no fairy tale. It wasn't made of gold or jewels, but of small moments, long days, late nights and endless sacrifices. It was built on love, hard work and the quiet promise to give us everything she never had. Her arms were the walls that held everything together and her love was the roof that sheltered us, no matter how heavy the storms outside. She didn't ask for recognition or reward.

There was no applause for the countless hours she spent working, no accolades for the patience she showed, no thank-yous for the love she gave. She did it because, in her eyes, this was what a mother does. This is what love looks like when it is unconditional. She stood for herself. She stood for us. She built a life out of nothing, piece by piece, brick by brick. She never faltered, never gave up, even when the world around her seemed to crumble. Her resilience was our inheritance. Her strength was our foundation. I think of her now

— how, even when her own dreams were delayed, she never let us doubt that we could chase ours. Her own struggles became lessons for us. She showed us what it meant to fight through life's challenges, to face hardship without complaint and to always, always rise above. Her courage wasn't loud, but it was constant. Her love wasn't flashy, but it was fierce. And every time she came home with hot meals, a tired smile on her face and no complaint on her lips, I saw the warrior she was. She wasn't just my mother — she was my hero.

Not all mothers were created equal

Some are widowed. Some are separated. Some walked away from violence. Some never married. But all of them made a decision: to protect, to nurture and to carry forward, alone. No woman dreams of doing it all by herself. But when life left them no choice, they stepped up. They didn't wait for rescue. They became their own rescue. And in a country where every festival, every form, every social event insists on a father's name or a husband's shadow, single mothers stand tall, unapologetic and unbroken. People question with stares not realising, how her child is thriving, happy, well-adjusted, deeply loved. Because presence matters more than tradition.



SHE CREATES A COCOON OF NORMALCY IN A WORLD THAT OFTEN REFUSES TO ACCEPT. BUT SHE DOESN'T NEED THEIR APPROVAL. HER CHILD'S SMILE IS HER STAMP OF SUCCESS

WRAPPED IN LOVE

Maneyoon (name changed) is a woman whose life in the remote hills of Arunachal Pradesh is a quiet yet powerful story of resilience and love. She works for an NGO, dedicating her time to helping others and her greatest responsibility is the tiny bundle she carries every day. Wrapped securely in a simple towel, her baby rests close to her chest as she moves through her work, a reminder that she balances a career and motherhood, fiercely protective and unyielding in her devotion.

The towel holds not just a baby, but the weight of her dreams, the sacrifice of every moment spent away from her child, and the quiet strength that allows her to keep going. As she walks from task to task, with her little one cradled in that cloth, she shows what it means to love fiercely, to fight for her family, and to never stop, no matter the odds. Her journey is one of quiet determination.

The world does not pause for her, but she continues, motivated by the soft breaths of her baby against her chest. Every step she takes is a reminder of the sacrifices she makes and the strength she draws from her love for her child.

Balancing work and motherhood is never easy, but for Maneyoon, it's a daily act of love, and each moment is a treatment to her resilience. Her story is one of unspoken heroism, filled with sacrifices, tears and moments of vulnerability. She seeks neither applause nor recognition. Her quiet strength, her devotion to her family and the love she carries in her heart show that even the smallest acts of courage can create lasting impact.

IN HER OWN WORDS

Aastha Kumari (name changed), a teacher and single mother, lives alone with her 10-year-old son and 15-year-old daughter in Pakur, Jharkhand. Balancing work, family and the emotional weight of raising two children on her own, she navigates the daily struggles with strength and determination.

What's the hardest part of being a single mother?

"Not having someone to share the daily decisions with. Big or small, I have to figure it out alone, whether its school fees, health scares, or just what to cook for dinner when I'm exhausted."

What do you wish people understood?

"People assume things or ask too many personal questions. But over time, I've learnt to tune it out. My focus is my child and our life. That's what matters and single mothers don't need sympathy. Just understanding and basic respect. We're doing our best, just like everyone else."

What keeps you going?

"My kids smile. When I see them going to school in their uniforms, laughing and learning, I feel everything is worth it."

MOTHERHOOD WITH STRENGTH AND GRACE

Nitu Singh is a single mother of two daughters, from Ranchi, Jharkhand, who has built her life with strength. She is someone who finds joy in the little things, the quiet presence of animals. Life hasn't always been kind, but she has met each challenge with steady resilience and a generous heart. Her roles are many, animal activist, organic farmer, social worker, and a dedicated member of the Khadi Board.

But beyond the titles, she is simply a woman who gives herself fully to whatever she does. In her presence, there is calm. In her silence, there is strength. And in her daily acts of service often unseen, often unspoken, there is the quiet courage of a woman who has chosen compassion as her path. She stands not in the spotlight but in the light of her own making, built from years of selfless care, honesty, and a belief in doing good — quietly, steadfastly, beautifully.

WHAT'S THE HARDEST PART OF BEING A SINGLE MOTHER?

The hardest part of being a single mother is being oneself. You want a companion to live your single life with and that person is nowhere to be found so sometimes, it hurts. But once you understand this, it becomes easier to handle yourself.

AND THE BEST PART?

The best part you show your children what it means to love oneself. How to trust oneself. Sometimes it can be difficult, but when you learn to trust yourself and teach your children the same, everything becomes easier.

ARE SOCIETAL EXPECTATIONS DIFFERENT FOR SINGLE WOMEN IN THE WORKPLACE?

Definitely yes. Society does not look at a single mother from the lens of motherhood. She is judged as a woman. Instead of helping her, people keep a sharp eye on her every activity. People judge you, create difficulties, or present



you differently. Men do not respect women, they often engage in character assassination.

HOW DO YOU HANDLE ASSUMPTIONS ABOUT YOUR PERSONAL LIFE?

Only assumptions can be made about my personal life, it cannot be interpreted. The one who has not even seen a glimpse of my struggle, what can they guess? I follow the theory of "Let it go" and "less communication, less reaction."

WHAT ADVICE WOULD YOU GIVE TO OTHER SINGLE MOTHERS?

Being a single mother is a matter of pride. Surely, we must have some special capability—that is why God chose us for this role. And I am happy with it.

HOW DO YOU BALANCE WORK LIFE?

Balancing between both, raising growing children and working, is the most difficult part. It depends on the situation. Time management is the key, which makes coordination easier. This is my life, and I have the right to live it while setting boundaries.

ARE YOU JUDGED AND HOW YOU REACT?

I don't care what others think about my life, because those who haven't stood with me in my struggle, what opinion can they have about my life?



STORIES OF LOVE AND SACRIFICE

Motherhood, in all its forms, is a journey of love, sacrifice, and resilience. Whether it's a protective single mother rediscovering her identity, a woman navigating the harsh realities of poverty, or a surrogate learning the true meaning of love, these four films and series explore the multifaceted nature of being a mother. From Helicopter Eela to Mimi, each story delves into the emotional complexities and transformative power of motherhood, showing that no matter the circumstance, a mother's love knows no bounds.

Helicopter Eela (2018)

Starring Kajol, Helicopter Eela follows a single mother who, after dedicating her life to her son, returns to college to rediscover her dreams. The film explores the balance between motherhood and personal growth.

Maid (Netflix Series, 2021)

Maid is about Alex, a young single mother who, after

escaping an abusive relationship, becomes a maid to support her daughter. The series highlights the struggles of poverty, trauma, and resilience in single motherhood.

Gilmore Girls (2000-2007 and 2016)

This beloved series centers on the close relationship between single mother Lorelai and her daughter Rory. It celebrates unconditional love, sacrifices and the complexities of being a mother and daughter.

Mimi (2021)

Mimi tells the story of a young woman who becomes a surrogate mother and faces unexpected challenges. The film explores themes of motherhood, sacrifice, and societal judgment, showcasing the strength of a woman's love.



RECIPES

CRISPY FRIED HONEY WONTON (VEG)

Round, tender Chinese dumplings, stuffed with carrots, cabbage, chopped coriander and seasonings, fried into golden perfection for a steaming hot relish.

INGREDIENTS

- Dark Soya
- Light Soya- 2ml
- Butter-2gm
- Ginger-2gm
- Honey-25ml
- Carrot-15gm
- Salt-2gm
- Cabbage-40gm
- Bean-10gm
- Spring Onion-2gm
- Refined Oil-50ml
- Sesame Seed- .5 gm
- Coriander leaf- 1gm
- Broth Powder- 10gm
- Paneer - 8gm
- Roll Sheet- 2pieces
- Black Pepper - 1gm
- Sugar- 10gm

METHODS

- Boil the chopped vegetables and the fry them with the paneer. Keep the broth aside.
- Add few pinches of pepper to the broth to create a spicy streak and mix properly.
- Meanwhile cut the roll sheet in 8pieces.
- Sautee the veggies in honey, lemon, butter and dark soya.
- Stuff the Wonton wrappers with the delicious, sautéed veggies.
- Add some refined oil in the pan & fry them at low to medium flame till light brown.
- Drain out the oil and soak it on a tissue paper.
- Garnish total 8 pieces of Crispy Fried Wontons and garnish it with Sesame seeds and coriander leaves.



(Courtesy: Chef Ram Bahadur Budhathoki, Head Chef- Chowman Chain of Chinese Restaurants)



PAN FRIED CHILLI PANEER

Diced marinated paneer, sautéed with fresh vegetables, tossed in Oyster sauces; with the luxury base of red wine.

INGREDIENTS

- Broth Powder
- Chilli Paste
- Oyster Sauce
- Red Wine
- Sesame oil
- One large Paneer cube diced into pieces.
- Shredded Vegetables including Capsicums, Onions & Carrots

METHOD

- Saute the chopped celery & veggies, along with the diced paneer cubes in a frying pan.
- Add some salt and broth powder, squeeze in some Chilli Paste, and Oyster Sauce with a few drops of Red wine for a luxurious aroma.
- Drop a few spoons of Sesame oil and do the final garnishing with spring Onions

KAYA - DEWY RADIANCE LUXE KIT

Step into the world of radiant skincare with this luxurious combo of Kaya Youth Protect Sunscreen, Brightening Day and Night cream, Brightening Beads Cleanser and Everyday Cleansing Wipes. Curated with advanced brightening solutions, it helps unveil luminous, even toned, and glowing skin. A perfect gift for someone special — or a well-deserved treat for yourself.

Price - INR 2100



THE ULTIMATE SELF-CARE HAMPER: HERMERCY EDITION

Celebrate the moms who do it all with this thoughtfully curated self-love hamper. Packed with body-safe, comfort-driven essentials from ultra-thin sanitary pads and cramp relief patches to intimate wipes, a plush, reversible mood toy, and a luxe satin eye mask, this set covers everything from period care to everyday pampering. Whether it's for winding down or powering through, it's the perfect gift to show her she deserves some her-time too.



GULABO BLUSH, IBAEUTY

A serum-infused tint crafted specially for brown skin tones, it hydrates, plumps, fights breakouts, and adds the perfect radiant flush. Whether you're treating your mom or indulging in a little self-love, it's skincare with a pop of pigment—made to celebrate beauty in every shade.

Price: INR 840/-

TRAYA DEFENCE SHAMPOO

A gentle yet powerful cleanser that rejuvenates hair follicles, strengthens roots, and reduces breakage-related hair fall. Enriched with antioxidants and natural ingredients, it supports the scalp's barrier and improves overall hair texture. Key Benefits include



WHAT'S NEW



FIAMA LUXURY GOLD COLLECTION GIFT SET

Your search for the perfect luxurious gift ends with Fama Luxury Collection Gift Set. There is nothing that screams festive more than Gold, and with this pack give a special sparkling gift to your loved ones this If you are looking for the perfect gifting option, Fama Luxury Gold Collection Gift Set would make you stand out and

EUPHORIA SUNGLASSES, OPIUM EYEWEAR

Blending the classic appeal of round and square frames, these uniquely designed hexa shades are the perfect gift for the mom who loves to stand out in style. With their contemporary flair and all-day comfort, they're a chic, fashion-forward addition to her everyday essentials—because she deserves to shine in every season.



Price: INR 3,690/-

O.P.I RAPIDDRY QUICK-DRY NAIL POLISH

This is seafoam green that captures the essence of calm ocean waves and sunny beach days. This refreshing, cool-toned shade is the perfect balance between a soft pastel and a vibrant pop of color, offering a tranquil yet invigorating vibe. The creamy, smooth finish of this beautiful green evokes images of serene coastal waters, making it an ideal choice for anyone looking to add a touch of beachy elegance to their look.



Price: INR 550/-

BIO-OIL SKINCARE OIL

Stretch marks can impact confidence and emotional well-being, making you feel self-conscious about your skin. Enter Bio-Oil Skincare Oil, a globally trusted specialist in scar and stretch marks care. It is the first skincare oil clinically proven to improve scars and stretch marks.



Price: 975/-

SOOTHE & BRIGHTEN WITH HIMALAYA DARK SPOT CLEARING TURMERIC FACE SHEET MASK

Give your skin a refreshing break with the Himalaya Dark Spot Clearing Turmeric Face Sheet Mask. It reduces dark spots, evens skin tone, and leaves your skin feeling hydrated and nourished; it is ideal for sensitive skin after a long day under the sun.



Price: INR 75.00 per sheet mask

DECONSTRUCT FLUID BRIGHTENING SUNSCREEN SPF 50+ PA++++

Deconstruct's Fluid Brightening Sunscreen is a lightweight, silicone-free and water-resistant formula designed to deliver powerful sun protection with added skincare benefits. Offering broad-spectrum defense against both UVA and UVB rays, it combines advanced sun filters like Butyl Methoxydibenzoylmethane, Benzophenone-3 and Ethylhexyl Salicylate for comprehensive protection.



HOROSCOPE



ARIES

Aries, your sharp focus and tenacity bring career wins, but emotional growth demands effort. Balance assertiveness with empathy to strengthen relationships and thrive personally.



TAURUS

Taurus, success is near—but only if you face emotions head-on. Tap into your hidden talents, accept support and let inner strength guide you through pressure and change.



GEMINI

Gemini, your mind is buzzing with ideas and breakthroughs. Though challenges linger, support surrounds you. Stay optimistic—success, connection, and unexpected admiration are all within reach.



CANCER

Cancer, your dedication wins appreciation, but pride may create distance. Stay balanced, listen more and lean on family—both for emotional strength and wise decision-making.



LEO

Leo, your charm shines bright, attracting admiration and opportunities. Just curb ego and impulsiveness—patience, balance and openness to love will lead to true personal growth.



VIRGO

Virgo, career success and admiration are yours for the taking—just don't let worry and hypersensitivity dull your shine. Stay grounded, trust support and lead with calm confidence.



LIBRA

Libra, career wins and social recognition await—but don't let emotions cloud your joy. Stay balanced, nurture connections and rise stronger from recent disappointments.



SCORPIO

Scorpio, your drive and charm light the path to success, but pride may block it. Seek support, stay grounded and let emotional clarity guide your week.



SAGITTARIUS

Sagittarius, your loyalty earns respect, but stubbornness may strain bonds. Balance work with rest, speak kindly, and trust your inner wisdom—it'll guide love and success alike.



CAPRICORN

Capricorn, discipline and determination define your path, but delays and doubt may test you. Stay steady—this week brings breakthroughs, thrilling moments and a long-overdue emotional recharge.



AQUARIUS

Aquarius, hard work pays off, but avoid complacency. Balance romance and reality, reconnect with family and nurture your creativity. Stay grounded, even amid emotional turbulence and lead with humility.



PISCES

Pisces, your creativity and charm draw new opportunities, but avoid being overly sensitive. Embrace support from loved ones, balance career and family and open up to romance.

The Pioneer AGENDA

"Reflecting on where I came from helps me to appreciate and balance what I have now"
— Meghan Markle

The root of conflict

The roots of the conflict lie in the McMahon Line, a boundary drawn during the 1914 Simla Convention between British India and Tibet, which China does not recognise. This disagreement led to the Sino-Indian War of 1962

The border

This is the closest point to the China border civilians are allowed. Yet, there are no visible Chinese posts - only a mountain separating the two sides.

The dispute

The Indo-China dispute over Arunachal Pradesh is a long-standing territorial conflict. Arunachal Pradesh, shares a 1,129 km border with China and has been a point of contention since the 1950s

All quiet on Eastern Front!

As we trace the winding roads, climb misty hills, and meet the soldiers who call this unforgiving terrain home, we begin to understand the true cost of peace, the quiet dignity of service, and the powerful contrast between performative nationalism and the real courage of standing a post, writes **GYANESHWAR DAYAL**

As we prepare to leave Machuka in Arunachal Pradesh for the Indo-China border, there is a quiet thrill among us — the anticipation of witnessing firsthand how our borders are guarded, and what it takes to man some of the harshest terrains on Earth, where temperatures in winter can plummet to minus 50 degrees Celsius.

Our motorcade departs early. The road to the Palang border is smooth, winding through the hills in a journey that takes roughly two hours. The landscape is breathtaking. Arunachal Pradesh, after all, boasts the highest forest cover in India — nearly 85 percent of its area is blanketed in lush greenery.

As we ascend, human habitation becomes sparse. Villages dwindle to mere clusters of one or two houses. Along the way, we pass cascading waterfalls, jagged rock formations, and spiritual landmarks — a temple, a monastery, and a Gurudwara — their small prayer flags fluttering in the crisp April breeze. Our driver points to a rock formation said to resemble Lord Hanuman, believed by locals to guard the border.

We stop. The resemblance is uncanny. Some of us clasp our hands in awe, others close their eyes in silent prayer. Some simply marvel — it's more a matter of faith than reason.

In such places, we often see what we believe. The breeze turns colder, the road bumpy. At a check post, our permits are verified, and headcounts taken. We're reminded to

THE DISPUTE

China claims approximately 90,000 square kilometers of the state's territory as part of its "South Tibet" region, a claim India strongly rejects, asserting full sovereignty over the area. Tensions persist through periodic border incursions, diplomatic protests, and military standoffs, such as the one in Tawang in 2022. Despite several rounds of talks, both countries have yet to reach a permanent resolution. The issue remains a sensitive and strategic concern for India, especially as China continues to object to Indian infrastructure development and visits by Indian leaders to the region.

avoid photographing army installations. As we move on, the drizzle begins, but the weather remains pleasant enough to continue.

We halt briefly near a waterfall where an army post — resembling a cottage perched on the hillside — overlooks the path. After a few more vehicle checks, we arrive at the point where we must proceed on foot for the last kilometre. This is the furthest civilians are allowed. Soldiers are scattered across the area, many relaxed, and temporary army quarters dot the landscape.

A flat expanse, roughly the size of a football field, serves as both a helipad and an open-air gym. Today, it's a cricket pitch where soldiers are engaged in a friendly match, a large cutout of "I Love My India" standing behind them — a popular selfie spot for visitors. We are told this is the closest point to the China border. Yet, there are no visible Chinese posts — only a mountain separating the two sides. The actual border lies less than a kilometre away as the crow flies, but it takes eight days on foot for a patrol party to reach it due to the unforgiving terrain.

Our guide, a young soldier named Dinesh from Haryana, dressed in track pants and a jacket, walks with us, sharing valuable insights. The Indo-Tibetan Border Police (ITBP) and the Indian Army primarily man this area. Though the border has been mostly peaceful, the Galwan clash changed the equation, prompting both nations to increase infrastructure and presence.

Guarding such a remote frontier is no small feat, before confronting any adversary, soldiers must first withstand the brutal elements. I learn that the ground beneath my feet lies buried under six feet of snow in winter, the only colour visible then being white. Today, however, it is a vibrant green, with moss-covered trees and camouflaged posts that blend seamlessly into the landscape, invisible from even 100 meters away. Patrolling is conducted for six months of the year; during the harsh winter — from November to March — neither side sends patrols. When active, patrols consist of 20 or more soldiers and take eight days to complete a round. To mark

their presence, they leave behind biscuit wrappers and empty cans — a subtle, silent message acknowledged by the Chinese in kind.

I ask Dinesh if he has ever seen Chinese soldiers up close, and whether they ever exchange words. He smiles: "Not usually. Sometimes from a distance. But we're not here for pleasantries. We do our job, they do theirs. The tension and vigilance, however, are constant." On our way back, we pass a riverbank where the remains of a crashed helicopter lie — a tragic reminder of a pilot who lost control two decades ago. The wreckage still rests there, undisturbed. We are now at the foothills of the mountain that separates two powerful nations. Even in an age of fighter jets and missiles, human presence on the ground remains vital.

Life here is grueling. Soldiers are posted for three years at a stretch. Though patrolling stops during the deep winter, the posts remain manned. Troops live in modest cabins, warmed by diesel generators, with minimal mobile connectivity, far from their families. Many hail from southern India — some have never seen snow before. Now, they must wear snow boots and brave temperatures reaching — 40°C in winter. It is a job like any other — but far tougher, far riskier. As I return, breathless from the climb back to base, a thought lingers: How many of our politicians — who so readily cry for war and challenge China or Pakistan — would be willing to send their own children here? Or come themselves? For that matter, how many of us would be willing to take up this ultimate duty of courage and endurance?

It's easy to indulge in armchair patriotism — to forward nationalistic messages on WhatsApp and challenge enemies from behind our screens. But it is here, at the post, where true patriotism is tested. We must ask ourselves: do we really mean it, or are we simply excusing ourselves by saying "it's not my job"? Fair enough if it isn't — but let us not make it harder for those who do. They have families too. They have children waiting. They have mothers — especially today, on Mother's Day — waiting with pride, and with prayers.



LIFE HERE IS GRUELING. SOLDIERS ARE POSTED FOR THREE YEARS AT A STRETCH. THOUGH PATROLLING STOPS DURING THE DEEP WINTER, THE POSTS REMAIN MANNED. TROOPS LIVE IN MODEST CABINS, WARMED BY DIESEL GENERATORS, WITH MINIMAL MOBILE CONNECTIVITY



'My aim is never to replace the original... instead, become a new chapter in the same book'

CHAT-O-CINO



At a time when remixes often feel hollow or commercial, Jubin Nautiyal proves that a reimagined classic can still move you—if it's sung with heart. In an exclusive chat with *The Pioneer*, Jubin dives deep into the emotional and artistic pulse of his latest musical trifecta—*Tu Tu Hai Wahi*, *Tumhe Dillagi* and *Parwardigara*. These aren't just recreated songs, but deeply personal journeys tied to his childhood, heartbreaks and spiritual path. From collaborating with stalwarts like Pt. Ajoy Chakrabarty, weaving emotions with Jonita Gandhi and Rochak Kohli, he reveals what it takes to breathe life into classics without stealing their soul

TEJAL SINHA
tejal.sinha30@gmail.com

When Jubin Nautiyal sings, time slows down—and hearts listen. Whether he's breathing new life into timeless classics or delivering soul-stirring originals, his voice wraps around your emotions and refuses to let go. In a music world often saturated with trends, the *Paataan Lambiyen* singer stands out by doing what few can: making you feel—deeply, instantly and honestly. With 2025 already ringing with his signature sound, he returns with a powerful trio of releases that are more than just music—they're cinematic experiences of the heart. From reimagining the beloved *Tu Tu Hai Wahi* alongside Jonita Gandhi for Netflix's *The Royals*, to channeling the spiritual energy of *Parwardigara* with the legendary Pt. Ajoy Chakrabarty in *Kesari Chapter 2* and honoring Nusrat Fateh Ali Khan in *Tumhe Dillagi* for *Raid 2*, Jubin isn't just revisiting old hits—he's creating new memories for a new generation. As we first begin discussing about *Tu Tu Hai Wahi*, he smiles warmly—I grew up listening to this song. It's one of those timeless melodies that just stays with you. So, when I was asked to reimagine it, I was excited but also cautious. The idea wasn't to change it drastically. I just wanted to present it in a way that the current generation could emotionally connect with. His collaboration with Jonita Gandhi was equally special. "It was smooth, honestly. There was this effortless energy

between us. We weren't just trying to sing well—we were trying to create something emotionally honest. Something that would feel real to anyone who heard it. The chemistry in a duet is more about the emotion than technique." The *Tum Hi Aana* vocalist's take on *Tumhe Dillagi* stands as a tribute to the legend himself, Nusrat Fateh Ali Khan. "There's this immediate sense of reverence you feel when you're asked to sing something originally performed by someone like Nusrat sahab," he says, almost reverently. "You don't touch a song like that unless you're ready to bring your entire soul into it." For him, it was deeply personal. "There've been moments in my life where I've felt that kind of love—that longing, that vulnerability. That's what I tried to bring into the song. It's not about showing your range; it's about showing your truth." Working with Rochak Kohli and lyricist Manoj Muntashir made the process even more meaningful. "Rochak brings such sensitivity to his compositions, and Manoj bhai—his words always hit the heart. They helped shape the song in a way that felt both new and yet respectful of the original." If *Tumhe Dillagi* speaks of human emotions, *Parwardigara* is pure spiritual surrender. "This song is a prayer. You don't perform it, you surrender to it," Jubin shares softly. "Before recording, I spent time in silence. I just sat with the words. I didn't want to sing it unless I really felt it." The experience was elevated by working with Pandit Ajoy Chakrabarty. "It was one of the greatest honours of my life. Just being in his presence is a lesson. His voice doesn't just sing—it paints, it meditates. Watching him record was like watching devotion take form." Fusing classical elements with contemporary production was no small feat, but Jubin believes the essence lies in intention. "The key is respect. We used classical ragas as the foundation and layered them with modern sounds—but never at the cost of the soul. It's always a balance." He admits that recreating beloved classics is no easy task. "It's like walking a tightrope. You don't want to overdo it, and you don't want to be too safe either. My aim is never to replace the original. Instead, I try to become a new chapter in the same book. That's all I can do—tell the story with sincerity." Before stepping into any recreation, the *Humnava Mere* singer takes time to understand the original. "I listen to it again and again—trying to catch the emotional state of the original singer. Their pauses, their breath, their silences. Then I ask myself—what am I feeling when I sing this now? And that's where my version begins." In a world obsessed with going viral, Jubin believes the power of real emotion will never fade. "Trends come and go, but what people remember are the moments when they truly felt something. No matter how digital everything becomes, real emotions still connect." He's also deeply involved in the visual storytelling of his songs. "For me, the music video should enhance what I'm singing—not distract from it. It's like painting—each shot, each frame should reflect the emotion of the song." Despite his ever-evolving style, Jubin remains rooted in Indian musical traditions. "My roots are everything to me. They ground me. Classical, folk, devotional—that's where I started. And as long as I'm honest in my approach, I can try new things without losing myself." With *Tu Tu Hai Wahi*, *Tumhe Dillagi* and *Parwardigara*, Jubin Nautiyal has not just redefined what a recreation can be—he's reminded us that when music is made with heart, it doesn't matter if it's old or new. It just matters that it's true.



I listen to it again and again—trying to catch the emotional state of the original singer. Their pauses, their breath, their silences. Then I ask myself—what am I feeling when I sing this now? And that's where my version begins

TRENDING

PERSON

COL. SOFIA QURESHI & WING COMMANDER VYOMIKA SINGH



In a historic first, Col. Sofiya Qureshi and Wing Commander Vyomika Singh led the official briefing for Operation Sindoor. Their leadership marks a significant milestone in the increasing role of women in India's defense operations.

VIDEO

INDIA'S MISSILE STRIKE



India's latest missile strikes on nine terror targets in Pakistan and Pakistan-occupied Kashmir (PoK) have garnered significant attention, with videos of the operation going viral on social media platforms. The footage showcases the precision and scale of the strikes, leading to widespread discussions and reactions online.

MOVIE

SUBHAM

Samantha Ruth Prabhu's debut as a producer with the Telugu horror-comedy *Subham* has garnered early acclaim, with critics praising its unique blend of humor and suspense. Directed by Praveen Kandregula, the film showcases fresh talent and aligns with Samantha's vision for her production house, Tralala Moving Pictures.



SONG

BESOS



Jacqueline Fernandez's latest single *Besos* is a high-energy global pop-dance track featuring catchy vocals by Shreya Ghoshal and Karl Wine, with vibrant choreography and a fusion of international and desi sounds. Making a surprising debut, cricketer Shikhar Dhawan appears in the music video alongside Jacqueline, showcasing his charisma and dance moves in a glamorous, high-impact performance.

PICTURE

RCB FANS' VIRAL GOAT RITUAL

Three fans from Karnataka's Mariyamanahalli village were arrested after performing a goat sacrifice in front of a Virat Kohli cutout, celebrating RCB's victory over CSK. The incident went viral on social media, leading to swift police intervention.



Mothers who care for all but themselves: Experts sound alarm on sandwich generation burnout

HEALTH TALK

PNS|HYDERABAD

They wipe away their parents' tears after hospital visits, pack lunch boxes for their children and often head to work with barely a moment to breathe. These women, caught between caregiving roles at both ends of the age spectrum, belong to the unsung tribe known as the 'Sandwich Generation.' 'Sandwich Generation'—especially women's health issues—usually go unnoticed. This generation of women face a unique health challenge as they are busy caring for both aging parents and their own children. On this Mother's Day, experts urge women in this bracket to give themselves permission to pause and take out time for their own health checkups and carve out non-negotiable self-care time. Their good health is the main pillar of a happy and healthy family.

Caught between aging parents and growing children, women of the 'Sandwich Generation' are juggling dual caregiving roles—often at the cost of their own health. On this Mother's Day, experts are raising red flags about the rising mental, emotional and physical toll on these multitasking moms. From hormonal imbalances and lifestyle diseases to depression and chronic fatigue, the consequences of caregiver burnout are real and growing. The call is clear: it's time these mothers prioritise self-care, not as a luxury, but as a non-negotiable part of family well-being

DOUBLE DUTY, DOUBLE THE TOLL

Dr. Anil Gomber, Internal Medicine and Diabetologist, Apollo Spectra Hospital, Chirag Enclave Delhi, "We often come across daughters who are heavily pressed due to the de facto decision-makers for elderly parents' medical needs and also the emotional support system for their children. This dual challenge leads to health problems for themselves as they gradually neglect their own arthritis, irregular periods, or even heart health. Very often they are busy with coordinating physiotherapy or hospital or doctor visits for their parents. We need to understand their additional challenges such as healthcare logistics—transport, prescriptions, diet among others for parents. All these women do while managing their children's school, home studies, sports, and social life relentlessly." Caregivers' burn especially for women is significant and they need to cope up with these challenges for a healthy life for themselves. Families should come forward to lessen the dual burden women carry. With shared

responsibilities these multitasking mothers can get some relief to focus on their own health.

A CASCADE OF CHRONIC SYMPTOMS

Dr. Deepak Gupta, Senior Consultant, Internal Medicine, Sri Balaji Action Medical Institute, Delhi, "We can say that women in the 'Sandwich Generation' are obviously in a very demanding position. It is not uncommon for us to routinely see women in their late 30s to early 50s presenting with chronic fatigue, migraines, gastrointestinal disturbances, and even early signs of lifestyle diseases like hypertension or Type 2 diabetes. These health issues are often result of women's constantly oscillating between responsibilities—coordinating medical care for aging parents while attending PTMs or helping with homework for young children. We consider 'caregiver burnout' as a common phenomenon but in the case of 'Sandwich Generation,' it is more layered. They are not only emotional anchor of the family but also carry the weight of everyone's schedules, worries and

sickness. This anchoring can lead to sleep deprivation, poor eating habits, and reduced time for exercise or preventive checkups."

HORMONAL HEALTH: THE IGNORED CHAPTER

Dr. Charu Lata Bansal, Senior Consultant, Obstetrics & Gynecology, Cocoon Hospital, Jaipur, "We have been witnessing the plight of many women in their 40s and 50s from the 'Sandwich Generation.' First of all, they are completely unaware that they're entering perimenopause or facing hormonal imbalances because they're

too focused on caring for others. Their caregiver burnout includes irregular cycles, mood swings, weight gain, or low libido. It is a pity that families brushed off these symptoms as 'stress' when they actually need medical attention. This neglect can lead to long-term reproductive and metabolic issues." According to experts, women must understand that caregiving doesn't mean sacrificing their own hormonal health. On Mother's Day, they urge every woman in this age group to prioritise an annual gynecological checkup.

THE WEIGHT OF EMOTIONAL LABOR

Dr. Sapare Rohit, Consultant Psychiatry, SPARSH Hospital, Yelahanka, Bangalore, "Mental health issues are yet another serious concern for the Sandwich Generation—particularly women. We have been seeing them with symptoms of depression or anxiety. Unfortunately, they do not even realize it because they're so used to it. Yes, we do understand their struggle in maintaining their teens emotional upheaval at the same time when they also need to get their aging parents checked up for dementia, hypertension, Diabetes, heart or respiratory issues. Moreover, many of them cannot bear the blame of not having enough time for parents or children. This feeling drains them emotionally. Over time, this guilt can spiral into low self-worth, irritability, sleep disturbances, and even panic attacks. We advise them to go for therapy that helps. There is an urgent need to create awareness among the Sandwich Generation, especially women."

Dr. Sapare Rohit, Consultant Psychiatry, SPARSH Hospital, Yelahanka, Bangalore, "Mental health issues are yet another serious concern for the Sandwich Generation—particularly women. We have been seeing them with symptoms of depression or anxiety. Unfortunately, they do not even realize it because they're so used to it. Yes, we do understand their struggle in maintaining their teens emotional upheaval at the same time when they also need to get their aging parents checked up for dementia, hypertension, Diabetes, heart or respiratory issues. Moreover, many of them cannot bear the blame of not having enough time for parents or children. This feeling drains them emotionally. Over time, this guilt can spiral into low self-worth, irritability, sleep disturbances, and even panic attacks. We advise them to go for therapy that helps. There is an urgent need to create awareness among the Sandwich Generation, especially women."

TIME FOR THE FAMILY TO STEP IN

On Mother's Day, society should celebrate not just the nurturing role of mothers, but also recognize the silent resilience of those balancing care on both ends of the age spectrum. Experts give a clarion call to family members that they should step in, share responsibilities, and check in on the caregiver's overall health.





Du Se

NO GODFATHER, NO BACKUP—JUST DAMODAR PRASAD'S GUTS, GRIT AND BLOCKBUSTERS!

Kanuri Damodara Prasad, son of renowned producer and businessman Ranjith Kumar, stepped into the world of responsibility far earlier than most. After losing his father at the tender age of 17, Damodara Prasad didn't crumble. Instead, he faced life head-on, launching his own business ventures and secretly financing films while building powerful contacts across the Old City of Hyderabad to Mumbai and beyond. By the age of 21, he had already earned a reputation for being mature, bold and determined—qualities that would later define his journey in the film industry. Operating behind the scenes in those early years, he was known for making daring settlements and deals that gave him a unique standing in the industry.

But it was in 2011 that he truly came into the limelight. Damodara Prasad revived his father's iconic production banner, Ranjith Movies, with the hit film *Ala Modalaindi*, starring Nani and directed by Nandini Reddy. The film's success marked a new chapter not only for the banner but also for Telugu cinema, introducing a new wave of refreshing storytelling. Since then, Damodara Prasad has followed in his father's footsteps as a producer, backing several notable films and contributing significantly to the industry's growth. Like his father before him, he is also actively involved in shaping the future of Telugu cinema through his roles in the Telugu Film Chamber of Commerce and the Producers Council. In an exclusive conversation with *The Pioneer's* Suresh Kavirayani, Damodara Prasad opens up about his journey—from personal loss and secret deals to becoming a respected industry leader carrying forward a legacy with pride and passion.



CHENNAI BOY'S ROUTE TO REEL REAM

Born and raised in Chennai, I come from a Telugu-speaking family—my parents, Ranjith Kumar and Prema Ranjith, hail from Krishna district and nearby villages. My father was well-educated and my mother also completed her graduation. I studied at Padma Seshadri School, T. Nagar branch, until Class 6. As the Telugu film industry began shifting from Chennai to Hyderabad, my father moved there to continue his work. I was a calm and focused student, known for being good with academics and making friends easily. Some of my close friends included Allari Ravi Babu, my cousin Nani, Chandra, and many others. In 1978, I moved to Hyderabad and joined Little Flower School in Abids for Class 7 onwards. I pursued my Intermediate studies at Pragathi Vidyalaya College in Kapadia Lane, Sultan Bazar. However, due to my large circle of friends, my parents decided to shift me to Alphonso Junior College in Ameerpet for my second year.



DAD CRAFTING CLASSICS

My parents came from a wealthy agricultural background, and my father, Ranjith Kumar, went on to become a stalwart in the Telugu Film Industry. He established his own production house, Ranjith Movies, and produced a number of acclaimed films. Highly respected in the industry, he served in several film bodies, including the Telugu Film Chamber of Commerce, and played a key role in the Film Nagar Housing Society. His filmography included not just commercial hits, but also thought-provoking cinema, with some films even winning State-sponsored Nandi Awards. He collaborated with legendary actors like NTR, Krishna, and Narayana Rao, and worked with iconic directors such as K. Balachander.



STARTED BUSINESS AT YOUNG AGE

After completing my Intermediate, I joined Badruka College to pursue my degree. If my father had been alive, he would have wanted me to study at a Sainik School, but after his passing, my studies took a downward turn. During my first year of B.Com, I failed almost all of my subjects. The owners of Badruka College were family friends and I had some batchmates from influential families, including the grandson of Pragathi College's owner and the son of DGP Nair. I am still in touch with many of these friends. Despite the struggles in my studies, I ventured into business. I started a screen printing and advertising company called Cinema Ads, and both businesses were doing well. While studying, I managed my businesses, and I also listened to discussions at home when people came to settle debts with my family. These experiences left a lasting impact on me.



SHOWDOWN WITH P. JANARDHAN REDDY

My mother's cousins ran Hotel Sarovar in Abids at that time, and my mother suggested that I join them. I became involved in the hotel business and started a new bar and kitchen called Manasa Sarovar. I frequently traveled to Mumbai to bring liquor for the bar, and the business thrived. I was in this business until 1991. At a young age, I was overseeing the hotel operations. Khairatabad MLA P. Janardhan Reddy, who had control over many top hotels and maintained a strong union with hotel staff, came to my hotel to initiate a union with my staff. I refused to allow him inside and when he tried to enter with his men, a confrontation broke out. We eventually closed the hotel in 1991, but the issue with Janardhan Reddy had started a year before that. Our rivalry escalated, and I decided to visit him at his residence in Domalguda. He greeted me with tea, and I made him a proposal: I offered to let him run my hotel business for one year and keep all the profits, hoping to show him the challenges of running a hotel. He didn't respond, but I made my offer and left. The hotel was eventually closed in 1991.



FINANCING FILMS IN SECRET

Since my mother and grandparents didn't want me to enter the film industry, I decided to secretly finance several films. My name was never associated with these projects, but I provided the necessary financial support and formed secret partnerships with many filmmakers. I managed these affairs discreetly and efficiently. My mother insisted that I complete my degree, so I rented a room on Kapadia Lane with four of my friends. I attended tuition and completed my degree with first-class honors. While continuing to finance films, I built a vast network of contacts. I also helped with financial settlements, and through all these activities, I gained numerous connections from all walks of life.

LOVE MARRIAGE THAT LED TO A CAREER SHIFT

I had a love marriage. I met my wife in Visakhapatnam—she's originally from Chennai. Our wedding was a memorable event, attended by prominent personalities like Chandrababu Naidu, N. Janardhan Reddy and several others. After marriage, I ventured into the clothing business, which I ran for a few years. However, I realised it wasn't something I enjoyed. In 2007, I decided to close that chapter and finally pursue my true passion—film production.



FIRST OFFICIAL FILM AS PRODUCER

As I mentioned earlier, I had secretly financed many films because my family was against my involvement in the film industry. But officially, I stepped into production with the film *Ala Modalaindi*, which released on January 21, 2011. Before taking that step, I had to convince my mother, grandparents and other family members. Although they initially disapproved, they eventually agreed to support my decision. From 2007, I began listening to scripts and during that time, Nandini Reddy approached me with a story that immediately struck a chord. I liked it and decided to back the project. We began filming in 2009, with Nani as the lead actor and Nithya Menen making her Telugu debut. The project took a while to complete due to long breaks between schedules, but we finally released it in early 2011. The film turned out to be a success, and that marked the beginning of my journey as a producer in the Telugu film industry.



YOUNG SON'S EARLY RESPONSIBILITY

After my father passed away, I couldn't forget the words he spoke to me at the hospital. I don't know how, but the responsibility of everything seemed to fall on me automatically. I was studying Intermediate first year at the time and had many friends. My mother and grandparents didn't want me to take on my father's legacy as a producer because they believed it had not been successful. My father passed away on June 11, 1984, at the age of 46. My mother was a housewife, and being the eldest son, I naturally felt the weight of responsibility. After the 11th day of mourning, some people came forward claiming that my father had debts with them. There were others who were supposed to pay him money, and my father had maintained a diary where he had noted down everything—who had borrowed money from him and whom he owed money to. However, there were also people whose names didn't appear in the diary, and they came to our house asking for money. We couldn't be sure if my father had really borrowed from them. With my grandparents by my side, we managed to settle everything. My father was a very liberal man and never once pressured me about my studies. On the other hand, my mother was quite strict and would get serious with us if we didn't study well. But my father would always tell her not to scold us, as he didn't want to force anything on us.



DAD WALKING THROUGH HIS LAST MOMENTS

I still vividly remember the day he gave a party at a hotel in Abids one afternoon. Soon after, he began feeling uneasy and was taken to Hyderabad Nursing Home in Abids. Despite being unwell, he chose to walk up the ramp instead of taking the lift. Our family doctor—and relative—Dr. P. Rao attended to him.

WHEN NTR GARU STAYED AT OUR HOTEL



My family members were running a hotel named Apsara in Visakhapatnam. In 1991, due to some mismanagement, my uncle requested me to come and take charge of the operations. I moved to Vizag in November that year. It was a peaceful place and I had many friends there. Within four months, I managed to bring the hotel and its staff under proper control. Hotel Apsara was well-known in the region, and many film stars used to stay there. Even N. T. Rama Rao Garu, the legendary actor and politician, stayed at our hotel during his visits. He had a powerful presence. He would wake up at 3:30 in the morning and personally call me for any arrangements. I made sure everything he needed was taken care of. He visited our hotel twice while I was managing it, and I had the privilege of assisting him both times.

NTR'S FAIRNESS LEFT A LASTING IMPRESSION

One memorable incident occurred in 1995, when N. T. Rama Rao Garu was serving as the Chief Minister of Andhra Pradesh. He was staying at our Apsara Hotel in Visakhapatnam. While coming down in the elevator with his security personnel, the lift got stuck midway due to overcapacity. Its limit was ten people, but many more had entered alongside him. His security team immediately began shouting at me, blaming the hotel for the malfunction. I remained calm and didn't respond. A technician was called, and within minutes, the issue was resolved and we exited the lift safely. To my surprise, NTR Garu reprimanded his own security team. He firmly told them, "Only a few people should accompany me in the lift. The rest can use the stairs." He clearly understood it wasn't the hotel's fault but an error in judgment by his team. That moment revealed his fairness, leadership, and humility. He knew my father well, and that mutual respect carried over. I continued managing the hotel until 1995.



STILL HERE BECAUSE OF MY FAMILY

Looking back, I owe my strength and survival to my mother, my cousins and close friends who stood by me through every moment of sorrow and joy. I am still here because of their unwavering support.



LOST MY FATHER WHEN I WAS 17

I still remember the day my father was admitted to Hyderabad Nursing Home and later transferred to St. Teresa Hospital. The doctors diagnosed him with a heart attack and began treatment. The following evening, he wanted to see the kids, so I went to the hospital with my mother. The staff led me inside, and there he was, lying in bed. He looked at me and, with a bit of emotion, said, "You are the eldest, and you have to take care of your mother and brothers." His words lingered with me as his blood pressure fluctuated, so I stepped outside. My mother stayed at the hospital, so I went to my uncle's house in Banjara Hills. The year 1984 was a major turning point in my life, following the sudden demise of my father. At the time, he had suffered a heart attack, and doctors advised an immediate pacemaker surgery. The pacemaker was being flown in from Mumbai. Although the flight landed at Begumpet Airport, it took nearly half an hour to reach the hospital. Tragically, before the device arrived, my father passed away. The next afternoon, around 3:30 PM, a car came to pick me up and take me home. My grandfather had bought a palace in 1960 from an Englishman who had worked with the Nizam, and we lived there. As I walked through the 40 steps and into the large hall, I saw my father's body. I was just 17, and I couldn't fully comprehend what was happening. My mother was crying, and I could hear people talking about my father, but I didn't cry at that moment. That night, alone in my room, I recollected everything about him and finally broke down. At that age, it takes time to fully register such a loss. Many of my college friends, relatives, and industry people came to pay their respects.

DAD'S WISE WORDS

My father once told me something that has stayed with me forever: "It's easy to enter the film industry, but it's very difficult to exit at the right time." He also said, "Cinema is an art. Respect the art first, then do business. The money will follow." Sadly, that philosophy is being lost today. Now, many treat cinema purely as a business, ignoring the creative soul of it.

CHANGING DYNAMICS OF CINEMA

Earlier, the face of the industry was defined by veteran producers—those who ran film bodies and liaised with the government. Today, actors and directors have taken center stage, while mediators have become powerful players between producers and directors. Inexperienced individuals, including many NRIs, have entered the industry, investing large sums without truly understanding cinema. When their investments failed, some approached the Film Chamber for help. That's why I started conducting monthly sessions at the Chamber building—to guide and create awareness among new producers about the realities of filmmaking.