A blend

and

of legacy

innovation

The inaugural card

with a unique metal

of India, symbolising

a blend of legacy and

innovation. Designed

evolving preferences of affluent customers,

it delivers exclusive access to world-

class travel, luxury

and entertainment

services.

to cater to the

edition is crafted

alloy derived from the historic printing plates of The Times



**ASHWIN IS BACK IN** 

### CHENNA!



he majestic Gateway of India was the perfect backdrop as Times Internet, a digital arm of The Times of India Group, and ICICI Bank announced the launch of a super-premium co-branded metal credit card on Wednesday evening. Powered by Visa, the Times Black ICICI Bank Credit Card pro-

worth individuals (HNIs). Cardholders enjoy exceptional travel and lifestyle benefits, such as doorstep visa services, unlimited access to 1,300+ global airport lounges, complimentary stays at luxury hotels, exclusive invite-only events by The Times of India Group, and much more. Additionally, they earn reward points of 2.5% on international spends, and 2% on domestic spends, making every transaction a step towards pre-

vides exceptional experiences, travel benefits,

luxury lifestyle services and curated privileg-

es designed to cater to the tastes of high-net-

mium experiences. At the grand launch, Satyan Gajwani, Vice Chairman, Times Internet, said, "The Times Black ICICI Bank Credit Card is a testament to the shared vision of leading brands coming together to redefine luxury for India's affluent segment. Combining ICICI Bank's experience in financial services and Visa's global payments expertise with Times Internet's deep understanding of premium lifestyles, this card offers unparalleled experiences. Its distinctive metal Arjun Kapoor was design, crafted one of the guests from historic



The evening was marked by a special performance by Taufig Qureshi and his band 🎏

Times of India printing plates, reflects our commitment to innovation and tradition." Rakesh Jha, Executive Director, ICICI Bank, added, "This partnership aligns with our customer-centric approach and commitment to introduce compelling propositions that resonate with the refined tastes and preferences credit card is going to play an important role in the overall personal banking experience offered by ICICI Bank to its customers."

Sandeep Ghosh, Group Country Manager, India & South Asia at Visa, said, "Visa's partnership with Times Internet and ICICI Bank to co-create The Times Black ICICI Bank Credit Card, combines our global payments expertise with our partners' insightful understanding of consumer behaviour - especially,

the ambitious affluent." The spectacular evening was graced by luminaries from the business world. Guests were delighted to witness musical performances by Taufiq Qureshi and his band.

To learn more or apply for the card, visit timesblack.com or icicibank.com or visit your nearest ICICI Bank branch.

# REMAKES, COMPUTER GRAPHICS AND APTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE...



### **VENKAT PRABHU**

I did not send my directorial debut, Chennai 600028, to any festivals. SP Charan (the film's producer) learnt from that experience and sent his future films to festivals

### THOTA THARANI

Art directors from Mumbai used to say that they did seven films at once. But I've never done multiple films together until now. I'd advice everyone to do one film at a time



### **PRAVEEN KL**

The subplot involving Kushboo ma'am increased Varisu's length, so we had to kill her character. She was very gracious, and said that the film is bigger than anything else

Three notable personalities from the Tamil film industry shared valuable insights during their masterclasses at Chennai International Film Festival

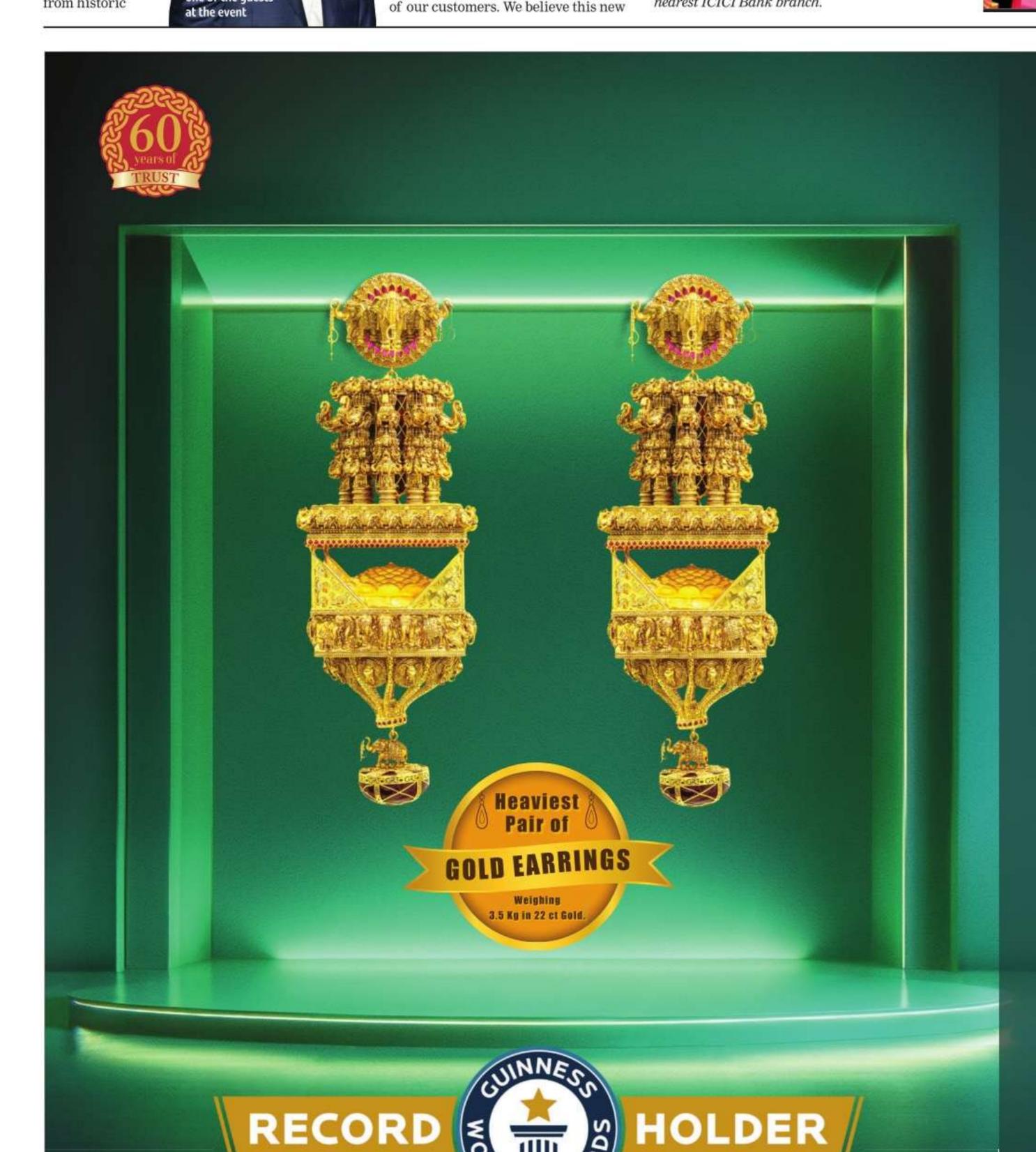
**P6** 



### Buzzstop

### **CHRISTOPHER NOLAN RECEIVES KNIGHTHOOD**

Christopher Nolan and his wife, Emma Thomas, have received knighthood and damehood, respectively. The director received the honours at Buckingham Palace on Wednesday. The Royal Family's official Instagram handle shared pictures from the ceremony and the caption read, "Arise, Sir Christopher Nolan and Dame Emma Thomas!" "He (the King) mentioned he had seen Oppenheimer and enjoyed it," Nolan said. Agencies





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# Luxury hotel plans lavish feats for Xmas & New Year



o celebrate Christmas and New Year, ITC Grand Chola has come up with an array of curated culinary experiences and joyous revelry. "Whether savouring a lavish feast or counting down to the New Year, every moment here is a celebration to cherish," states its management. They list out some of their Christmas specials:

MISTLETOE MAGIC DINNER Where: Madras Pavilion When: December 24, 7pm to

11.30pm Highlights: A festive feast featuring gourmet delicacies paired with soft beverages or select premium beverages Price: ₹5,200 (soft beverages) & ₹6,200 (select beverages), all-inclusive, per person

### THE CHOLA CHRISTMAS BRUNCH

Where: Madras Pavilion, Ottimo, Pan Asian, Avartana When: December 25, 12.30pm to 3.30pm

**Highlights:** Indulge in a sumptuous brunch featuring a variety of international and Indian specialties Price: ₹5,200 (soft beverages) & ₹6,200 (select beverages), all-inclusive, per person

### **ROYAL VEGA CHRISTMAS** BRUNCH

Where: Royal Vega When: December 25, 12.30pm to 3.30pm

Price: ₹4,250 (soft beverages) & ₹5,250 (select beverages), all-inclusive, per person

### À LA CARTE DELIGHTS Where: Café Mercara Express,

Peshawri, Fabelle When: Throughout the festive season

Highlights: Savour signature dishes and artisanal creations crafted for a memorable dining experience.

Level: Medium

"For New Year's Eve celebrations, patrons can bid farewell to 2024 and welcome 2025 with a

### MADRAS PAVILION

Theme: Spice Markets of the World When: December 31, 7.30pm to 11.30pm Price: ₹6,500 (soft beverages) & ₹7,500 (select beverages), all-inclusive, per person

night of glamour, music, and exceptional

culinary offerings," informs the team.

### OTTIMO CUCINA ITALIANA

Theme: Magical Italy Highlights: A curated Italian set menu blending rustic charm with contemporary finesse When: December 31, 7.30pm to 11.30pm Price: ₹6,500 (soft beverages) & ₹7,500 (select

beverages), all-inclusive, per person

### **PAN ASIAN**

Theme: Asian Lounge Vibes Highlights: An interactive culinary spread set against ambient deep house music When: December 31, 7.30pm to 11.30pm Price: ₹6,500 (soft beverages) & ₹7,500 (select beverages), all-inclusive, per person

### **AVARTANA**

Theme: Kimaya - A 13-Course Indian Dining Experience

When: December 31, 7.30pm to 11.30pm Price: ₹6,500 (soft beverages), & ₹7,500 (select beverages), all-inclusive, per person

### **ROYAL VEGA**

Theme: Khaas Khasa - A Vegetarian Feast Highlights: Celebrate the season's bounty with a regal vegetarian feast crafted from the freshest ingredients.

When: December 31, 7.30pm to 11.30pm Price: ₹4,750 (soft beverages), & ₹5,750 (select beverages), all-inclusive, per person

### THE CHEROOT, TRANQUEBAR Theme: Velvet and Neon Party

Highlights: Groove to electrifying beats by Kevin and CP and Interstellar Price: ₹6,500, all-inclusive per person.

### À LA CARTE OPTIONS

signature dishes

Where: Peshawri, Café Mercara Express When: December 31 Highlights: Personalised dining with

HOW

TO PLAY

A number

may appear

just once in

each row

or column.

Eliminate

numbers by

darkening

cells. (see

example)

Darkened

cells must

never be adia

cent in a row

or column.

cells must

Unmarked

repeat

For reservations: 044 22200000 Email: mytable.itcgrandchola@itchotels.in

HOW

# Cloud kitchen opens diner in city for foodies & night owls



t was in 2021 that Roll Away by Radio Room was started, as a cloud kitchen. "Thanks to the overwhelming love and demand from foodies across Tamil Nadu, we're now rolling out our very first physical outlet in Chennai," informs Mohammed Zahir Naina, the managing director of Social Restaurants Pvt Ltd, which also owns dining destinations like Radio Room Chennai, Broken Bridge Café by Radio Room, and House of Cheese, in

the city.

Their newest dining destination will stay open until 2am every day, he informs. "The first location is on TTK Road and will be a perfect spot for a midnight snack or a quick bite for those burning the

midnight oil," he adds. Naina states that the place is "pocket-friendly yet



nothing is carried over to the next day". "Plus, with our kitchen having a five-star hygiene

daily —

absolutely

uncompromising

on quality, with

freshly prepared

everything

certification, diners can indulge in our food with total peace of mind," he adds.



According to him, the menu features "signature kathi rolls, a selection of appetisers and kebabs, including both vegetarian and non-vegetarian bestsellers, ensuring there's something for everyone to savour".

"In 2024, we introduced Hukkum Biryani, crafted exclusively for biryani lovers. Available with mutton,

chicken, and paneer, this biryani is fit for a royal feast," he says.

Revealing the firm's plans for the next financial year, he shares. "In 2025-26, we're set to launch 10 outlets in iconic locations across Chennai. Following that, we are planning to take the flavours on the road, expanding to Tier-2 cities like Coimbatore, Salem, Trichy, and Madurai."

# Easy-to-make dips for your Christmas party



**INGREDIENTS:** Cream cheese, cranberry

sauce, orange zest, and chopped walnuts.

**METHOD:** Spread softened cream cheese

on a plate, layer with cranberry sauce, and

crackers or crusty bread.

sprinkle walnuts and zest on top. Perfect with

CARAMELISED ONION DIP **INGREDIENTS:** Caramelised onions, sour cream, cream cheese, mayonnaise, and garlic powder.

**METHOD:** Sauté onions until golden, mix with other ingredients, and chill. Excellent

with chips or

crudités.

VEG. RESTAURANT

Spreading love and vegetarianism Advar Ananda Bhavan - Chennai

> **ROASTED RED PEPPER HUMMUS INGREDIENTS:** Canned chickpeas, roasted red peppers, tahini, garlic, lemon juice, and olive oil. **METHOD:** Blend all ingredients until smooth. Adjust salt and lemon to taste. Pair with raw vegetables, breadsticks, or pita.

PESTO AND RICOTTA DIP

lemon zest, parmesan cheese.

**INGREDIENTS:** Ricotta cheese, store-bought pesto,

toasted baguette.

METHOD: Whisk ricotta and pesto together, top with

parmesan and zest. Serve with breadsticks or

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THE DAILY CROSSWORD

### **LEISURE**

### **SUDOKU CHALLENGE**

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

Games

TO PLAY Fill in the grid so that every horizontal row, every vertical column and every 3x3 box contains the digits 1-9, without repeating the numbers in the same row. column or box. You can't change the digits already given in the grid. Every puzzle has one solution.

**AND GAMES EVERY DAY** Play now! Scan the QR code or visit toi.in/games

### **TIMES HITORI**

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

create a single continuous area, undivided by darkened cells. Every time you darken a cell, you can automatically circle its vertical and horizontal neighbours, which means they cannot be eliminated. Any cell "sandwiched" between neighbours of the same value can be circled. (e.g. 646) 6. A "triple" is a special case of sandwich. Circle the centre cells, and

5 6 2 4 3 7 6 3

0 6 7 6 5 2

Example

DGAAE

PPIIT

GITWGY

EELTVW

Rearrange the

letters in the

jumbles, one

letter to each

square/circle,

to make four

ordinary

words

four word

### **LOOP THE LOOP**

12 3 2

(Fig A)

Not allowed

(Fig B)

### RULES

	Connect adjacent date with vertical
•	Connect adjacent dots with vertical
	or horizontal lines, creating a single
	loop (Fig A).

· Crossovers or branches are not allowed (As shown by dotted lines in Fig B).

 Numbers in the puzzle indicate the number of lines that should surround it, while empty cells may be surrounded by any number of lines.

· You can't draw lines around zeroes. Each puzzle has just one unique solution.

HOW TO BEGIN:

Begin with the zero next to 3. Since no lines can be drawn around zero, mark crosses around it, as shown. Now there is a cross in one space around 3. So we know the three lines of 3 can only be drawn in the remaining three spaces. Next, these lines can only be extended in one

direction each. Continue, using the same logic.

SCRAMBLE

Hints: Keep eliminating possibilities by marking crosses in spaces

between dots where a line isn't possible, i.e., if you have already completed required lines or where a line extension may create a branch or cause a deadend (Fig B).

HOW TO PLAY

ing word as indicated

Now arrange the letters in the

circles to form the answer to

the riddle or to fill in the miss-

Many people despise wealth,

Rochefoucauld (4,2,4)

\_, - Francois de La

SCORPIO: You might re-

ceive a good fortune as

an unexpected bonus or

monetary winnings.

There is every chance of

shifting your partnership

up to a new and more

intimate level. The door

is open for you to come

to terms with yourself

about who you are and

SAGITTARIUS: Today will

find you calm and as-

what you want

but few know how to

# GARFIELD ARCHIE REALLY STARTED SOMETHING WHEN HE

BURP

**ENJOY A HOST OF** 

**ENGAGING PUZZLES** 



NOW A BUNCH OF OTHER STUDENTS HAVE PITCHED IN! LOOK HOW EFFICIENT!



darken the ends. (e.g. 6 6 6









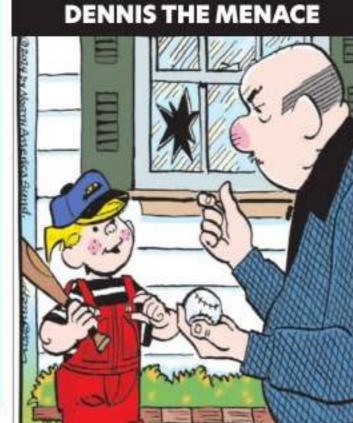
How many words of four

shown in today's puzzle?

or more letters can you

make from the letters





"YOU WANT ME TO SIGN THAT, MR. WILSON?"

### ARIES: Don't be disappointed if you aren't satisfied immediately. You have additional work to do to let go of your resentments, fears and insecurities. Set longterm goals and find sat-

isfaction in your progress. You must practice patience on every level. TAURUS: You may want

to spend more time solo. You may make a confrontation of some kind between you and your partner

GEMINI: You may face difficulties at work, and you will have a tendency to be lethargic. Today you may be feeling a bit low emotionally. It is time to embrace the new and more sincere way of relating. CANCER: This is a day to buckle down and take care of business. This day is forcing you to look at

something that you have not wanted to acknowledge. You need to watch you are not trying to hang concerned. LEO: Focus on details, hard work, and doing a good job. You spend too much time at work on a day. You

you will be back to normal again. VIRGO: If things have reached a critical point between you recently, then you will need to do something about this. You would rather run a million miles than have to deal with a situation today.

LIBRA: You may be almost paralysed when it comes to making up your mind about anything to do with your professional life. What a wonderful way to experience new things.



For appointments: ANUPAM V KAPIL 9822042295 or anupamvkapil@gmail.com See what the stars have in store for

you - according to your moon sign.

sured when all is chaos. You have a plan, a system inevitable. Don't be concerned with this change in and a way out. Everyone else will be so eager for you to bail them out that it could be a while before they get mad and come after you. Others will note your commitment. Don't ignore your obligations today. The important thing is for you to stay in the present moment.

CAPRICORN: You and you've been hesitant to reveal your concern because you're afraid of hurting their feelings. You have been feeling a touch obsessed by someone who seems to defy your natural charm on to the past as far as a certain relationship is and beauty. If you aren't careful you might end up working at cross-purposes to your own heart. AQUARIUS: Past mistakes can create a brief panic.

Steer clear of old rivals during the next few days. may suffer the pangs of passion, but by tomorrow 
The difficulty is probably associated with an old pattern of behaviour that is limiting your emotional expression. You'll need to face reality with some items. You continue to get irritated and agitated. PISCES: It isn't that you are avoiding an issue; it's just that your priorities are different than everyone else's. Your sombre demeanour can spur you on to work harder and make the changes necessary for your happiness. Minimise your own desires, you will be able to take advantage of the moment.

By Rich Norris

**ACROSS** 1 Mishandle, as a grounder 5 Accelerated sci. class

14 Colorful deepwater

15 Hospital prep area 16 Aviation milestone 17 Hook 20 Sentimentality 21 IMO relative 22 Orangutan, e.g. 23 Chilly product prefix

24 Line 33 Basic decision-maker 34 Weak poker hand 35 Actress Zadora 36 Sometime in the past 37 Inconsiderable

38 Fantasy franchise letters 39 Amanda Gorman's "An We Owe" 41 Prefix with -genarian 42 Sinker 46 Plant sci. 47 "A spider!"

51 "Sadly, yes" 56 Hook, line, and sinker 59 New Rochelle campus 60 Hook, line, and sinker, 61 One on a seal 62 "Yep, already spotted

63 Hard to navigate

64 John or Paul, but not

Ringo or George

48 Take by force

DOWN 1 Danceable songs 2 Gp. whose most populous member is 3 Citizenship recitation

20/12/2024 Thursday's Puzzle Solved IMOUT ROCKHOUND TRIALSISEVO FRONT BEATBOXER LOWGEAR LAPDESK TABROOSTS JETSETTER CANOER THE COG AQUINAS ARTSALE BUNNYCHOW INTEL TAPSEALS MARKSPITZ INEPT ALEEOKRA STYNE NSFW ©2024 Tribune Content Agency, LLC 4 Ship in a late 19th 37 Equinox mo.

7 Julie who played Rita on "Dexter" 8 Lithium- battery 9 Reveal, in verse 10 Tried to influence with 11 Order (around) 12 Director Kazan 13 Good-looking? 18 "Snow Angel" singer

19 Key type 23 Barbecue rod 24 Slide on a seat 25 Vrbo listing 28 Victor Vasarely's movement

38 "You have a century tragedy 5 Simple program dictionary, don't you?" 6 Lead-in to fall 43 "Pygmalion" playwright, for short 44 Grounds for excommunication 45 Drinks with scones 48 "Captain America:

26 The Owls of the NCAA 27 Jumping chollas, e.g.

29 Frenzied 30 Holocene, for one 31 Tucci's "Road to Perdition" role 32 Deck with kings and queens

a UNESCO World Heritage Site 51 Turquoise hue 52 Low state 53 Shape of some chicken nuggets, briefly

The First Avenger'

backdrop, briefly

50 Italian volcano that's

49 Spanish flowers

54 First course, 55 Generous offer 57 Young' 58 Long or short

measure

### **SOLUTIONS TO GAMES/PUZZLES**

TIMES SUDOKU 5 9 8 8 7 7 9 8 3 6 2 4 19896187 1 6 4 5 2 9 3 7 7 2 1 6 3 4 5 8 9 5 9 8 1 7 2 4 3 š 2 × 3 8 4 9 2 5 1 7 6 9 6 8 1 9 7 8 2 9 65378412 8 9 4 6 7 9 2 8

LOOP THE LOOP 3 3 3 3 1 \* 5 \* 1 \* 5 \* 0 \* 5 \* 5 5 3×5× × 2 × 5 × × 1 × × 3 3 × 5 × 5 \* \* × 3 × × × × × × × × × 3

### SPELLATHON

redo, reed, rode erred, order, ORDERED, redder, deer, doer, erode, eroded,

SCRAMBLE

how to give it away. - Francois de La Rochefoucauld

Answer: Many people despise wealth, but few know Words: Adage, pipit, twiggy, twelve

**Today's Ratings:** 

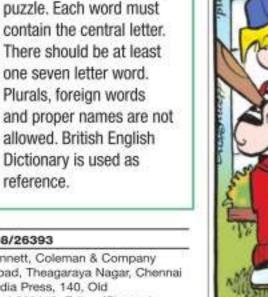
08-average 109-good 1

11-outstanding

In making a word, a letter can be used as many times as it appears in the

reference.

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# Thank you and congrats: K-Town stars tell Ashwin

After announcing his retirement after the third Test between India and Australia on Wednesday, cricketer Ravichandran Ashwin returned to Chennai on Thursday

Thank you @ashwinravi99 for all the incredible memories and congratulations to all your achievements over the years, Indian cricket will certainly miss a champion bowler. Looking forward to seeing you in yellow very soon

Congratulations on your legendary nternational ashwinravi99 brother! Your

all-round abilities, passion, dedication, and sheer brilliance on the field have inspired millions. Wishing you success and happiness in whatever you do in life! See you soon in yellove jersey

Harish Kalyan 📀 @iamharishkalyan

Thank you for all the wonderful memories and legacy you've left us with dear @ashwinravi99 brother, You truly are the OG 🚑 🤎

#ThankYouAshwin

@TheVishnuVishal

Proud of you @ashwinravi99.. LIFE beyond the boundary line is going to be even more interesting...Make the most of it... what a performer you have been.. INSPIRATIONAL!! Wishing you the best ... Have a great time ahead...

Sathish 🔮 @actorsathish

The greatest mastermind tactician and match winner cricket has ever witnessed. This void will be impossible to fill. Thank you @ashwinravi99 bro for the wonderful 14 years of service to Indian cricket 3 6 0

### **EVENTS**

MARGAZHI CONCERTS Narada Gana Sabha's Isai Natya Nataka Vizha: KS Vishnudev at 10am. Madhumitha Doraiswamy at 12.15pm, B Suchitra at 2pm at Mini Hall, Sarayu Sai at

1.45pm, Gayathri Girish at 4pm, and Dr Rajeswari Sainath at 7pm, at Narada Gana Sabha, TTK Road, Alwarpet. Madhuradhwani: J Sarvesh at 10am, Sankar

Santhanagopalan at 11.30am, Ananth Mysore at 1.30pm, Chitra Srikrishna at 3pm, Balasubramanya Masti 4.30pm, and Nanditha Ravi at 6.30pm, at Arkay Convention Center, Luz, Mylapore.

Sastra Satsangh: Madhusudhanan Kalaichelvan at 7am, and U Jaya Vigneshwar at 4pm, at SASTRA Chennai Campus, Vadapalani.

Krishna Gana Sabha: Lalgudu GJR Krishnan and Viiayalakshmi at 4pm, and Indira Kadambi at 7pm, at Krishna Gana Sabha. Maharajapuram Santhanam

Salai, T Nagar. Naada Inbam: Sumathi Krishnan at 10am, Iyermalai AB Selvam at 4pm, and R Parthasarathy at 6.45pm, at Raga Sudha Hall, Mylapore.

Kartik Fine Arts Festival: S. Swarathmika at 10am. Srividya Vasudevan at 12.15pm, Prithvi Harish at 2pm, Sharanya Sriram at 4pm, and Savita Sriram at 6.15pm at Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan, Mylapore.

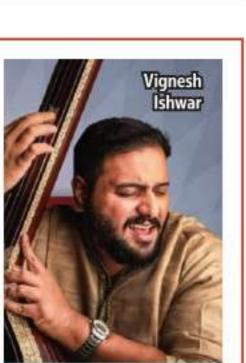
Global Heritage Music Festival: RK Shriramkumar at 4.45pm, Anil Srinivasan and Sikkil Gurucharan at 7pm, at Sri Sankara Vidyashramam Matriculation Higher Secondary School Auditorium, Thiruvanmiyur.

Rasika Ranjani Sabha: Bhushany Kalyanaraman at

10am, and Vijay Karthikeyan at 6pm, at Sundareswarar Hall, 30/11, Sundaresrwar Street, Mylapore. Brahma Gana Sabha: Rohini

Srinath at 1.15pm, Vishwas Hari at 2.30pm, Pattabhiram Pandit at 4pm, and Sid Sriram at 6.15pm, at RR Sabha, Mylapore. Bharat Kalachar Margazhi

Mahotsav: Celebrating Mohammed Rafi melodies by Sauray Kishan and Jayarajagopalan, at Sri YGP



The Mylapore Fine Arts Club: Shishir Kumar at 9am, Barghay Hariharan at 10.15am, Vignesh Ishwar at 4pm, and Dr Nithyashree Mahadevan at 6.30pm, at Mylapore Fine Arts Club.

Auditorium, T Nagar. Sri Parthasarathy Swami Sabha Isai Vizha: Lec-dem by RK Shriramkumar with K Arun Prakash at 8.30am, Dushyanth Sridhar at 10am, Sri Sri Sisters at 12.30pm, Aditya Madhavan at 2pm, Dr Cherthala KN Ranganatha Sharma at 4pm, and Dr Pantula Rama at 6,30pm. at Vidya Bharathi, 55, Bheema Sena Garden Street

The Music Academy: Dr NS

Mylapore.

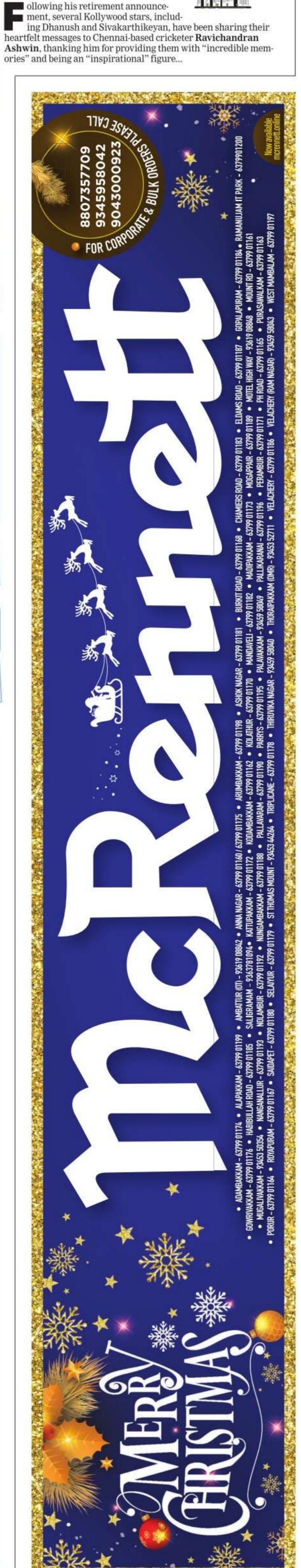
Lekshmy at 9am, Kruthi Bhat at 11.45am, Trivandrum Dr NJ Nandini at 1.30pm, S Mahathi at 4pm, and the Malladi Brothers at 6.45pm, at The Music Academy, Royapettah Naadhabrahmam Sangeetha Raga Mahothsavam: Poornima Arvind, CV Shruthi and MS Varadhan at 5pm, and R Ramprasad at 6.45pm, at Gowri Hall, West Mambalam. Sri Thyaga Brahma Gana Sabha: Shruti Ramesh at 1pm, Hrishikesh and Priyanka Chary at 2.15pm, Sunil R Gargyan at 4pm, and Ramakrishnan Murthy at

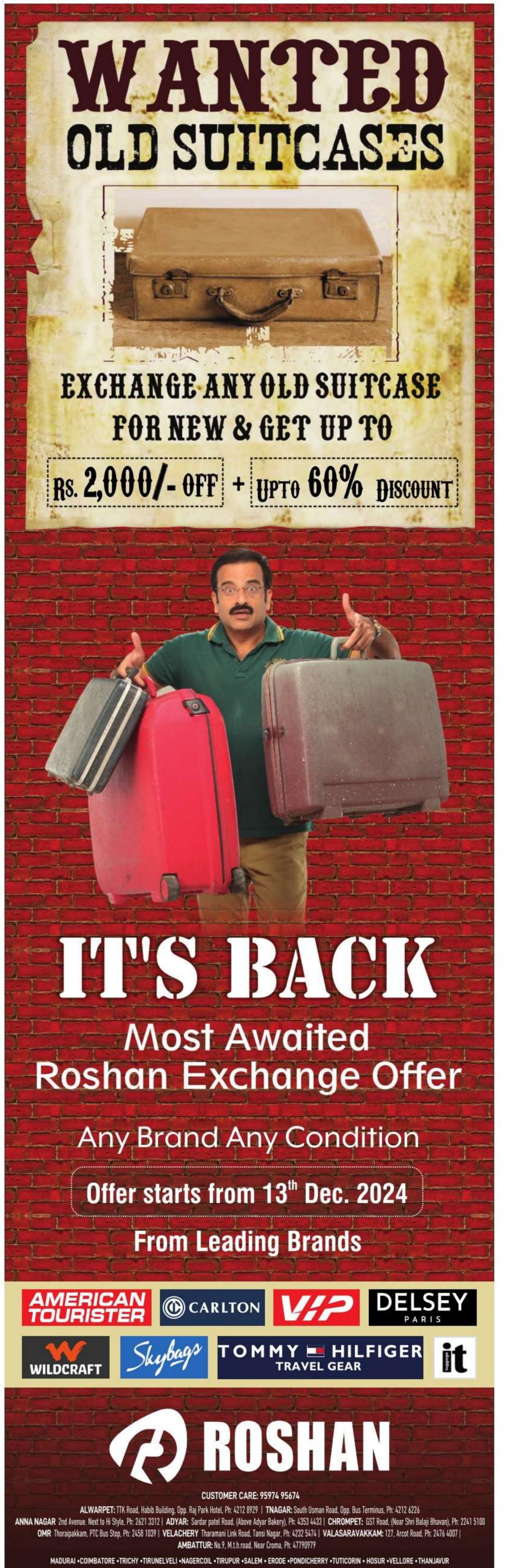
T Nagar. The Indian Fine Arts Society: Bhagyashree Sivakumar at 2pm, Dr S Nithyasree at 3pm, Sangeetha Swaminathan at 4.30pm, and Abishek Raghuram at 7pm, at Ethiraja Kalyana Nilayam, TTK Road, Alwarpet.

6.30pm, at Vani Mahal,

Ekaantha Sangeetha Seva: Krithika Natrajan, Haritha Narayanan, and Vijay Ganesh at 6am, at Sri Srikara Anjaneya Raghavendra Swamy Sannidhanam, Mylapore.

Email us at chennaitimes@timesofindia.com





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Lego Winter Christmas Playground to ring in the

Sneha and exclusively

and Christmas cheer,

"Inaugurated by actress

designed for kids aged five

to 14, this event promises a

magical blend of creativity

"This is a one-of-a-kind

offering children an unforgettable

experience," says the management.

extravaganza that brings the world-

famous toy brand and its charm to

According to the management, at

the playground, children can explore

themed play zones, build their own

themselves in festive workshops.

"It's not just about play — it's

fostering collaboration, and letting

the management states and adds,

kids dream big, one brick at a time,"

"We have taken our festivities up by

a notch this year by partnering with

Lego creations, and immerse

about sparking imagination,

young minds in India," they add.

festive spirit.

# City mall partners with toy brand and sets up Christmas playground



Few activities at the Lego Winter Christmas Playground

at EA Mall:

- Build-A-Wonderland: A space where kids can create their own Lego masterpieces inspired by the Christmas season.
- Lego photo-ops: Interactive setups for families to capture magical moments amid life-sized Lego sculptures.
- Workshops & contests: Daily workshops led by Lego experts, where children can learn building techniques and compete for exciting prizes.

and massive Christmas trees to interactive Lego-themed installations, EA Mall has

The management says that beyond the playground and the mall's regular attractions like premium shopping, dining, and entertainment, there are other Christmas events which include carols, a Santa parade, mascot photo-op, etc.

transformed into a wonderland."

"The celebrations don't stop at Christmas! We have lined up a series of events to ring in the New Year with performances from African acrobats, K-Pop artistes and Brazil Samba dancers," they inform.

"The Lego Winter Christmas
Playground is open every day until
December 25. Tickets are available on
an online booking platform and at the
registration counter at the mall.
Experience the magic of Christmas
and New Year like never before at EA
Mall," the management concludes.

Restopub serves up diverse dishes & beverages for Chennai's gastronomes



he Madras Taproom is a space
designed to bring people together
over great food and innovative
drinks," says its management, adding,
"The pub is more than a dining destination and was started by seasoned pub
enthusiasts with over a decade of experience in
Bengaluru's pub

scene."
"Spread
across two
floors and
over 17,000 sq
ft, our outlet's
ambience

reflects Chennai's dynamic spirit, combining modern aesthetics with warm, welcoming interiors. It's an ideal venue for casual meetups, family gatherings, and celebrations. The idea is to bring a Bengaluru kind of ambience to Chennai,"

"The eclectic menu has been curated by renowned Chef Koushik, fondly known as the 'Mad Chef', offering

flavours that you won't find anywhere else," the management informs.

Divulging more details about the pub's menu, they say, "The diverse menu features 100 dishes, 45 beverages, and five des-

serts to cater to a wide range of tastes and preferences. Some of the dishes on offer include spanakopita, Thai curry, muttai 65, and avakkai urulai, among others."

Furthermore, they say that the destination also has a pool table, where guests can "challenge their friends, enjoy a round, and make memories, adding an extra layer of fun to their evening".

Price: ₹2,000 for two (alcohol included)
Address: The Madras Taproom, 37, Red Cross Road
(Montieth Road), Egmore
Contact: 9403890830/ 9077812345

# Gandhi's garland remains unsold at auction in London

garland worn by Mahatma Gandhi during the historic 1930 Dandi March failed to meet its estimated guide price of £20,000-£30,000 (₹21.5-₹32.2 lakh) at a UK auction last week. The garland had been

gifted to Gandhi
by Nanduben Kanuga, wife of his physician, Dr
Balvantrai N Kanuga, as the Salt March passed near
their Ahmedabad home. Presented in folded paper
wrappers inscribed in Gujarati, it was featured in
Lyon & Turnbull's "Islamic and Indian Art" auction
in London.

The garland

is adorned

intricate

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threadwork

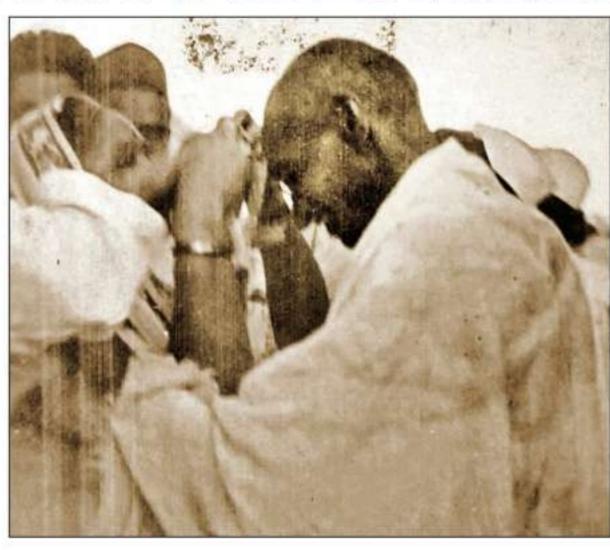
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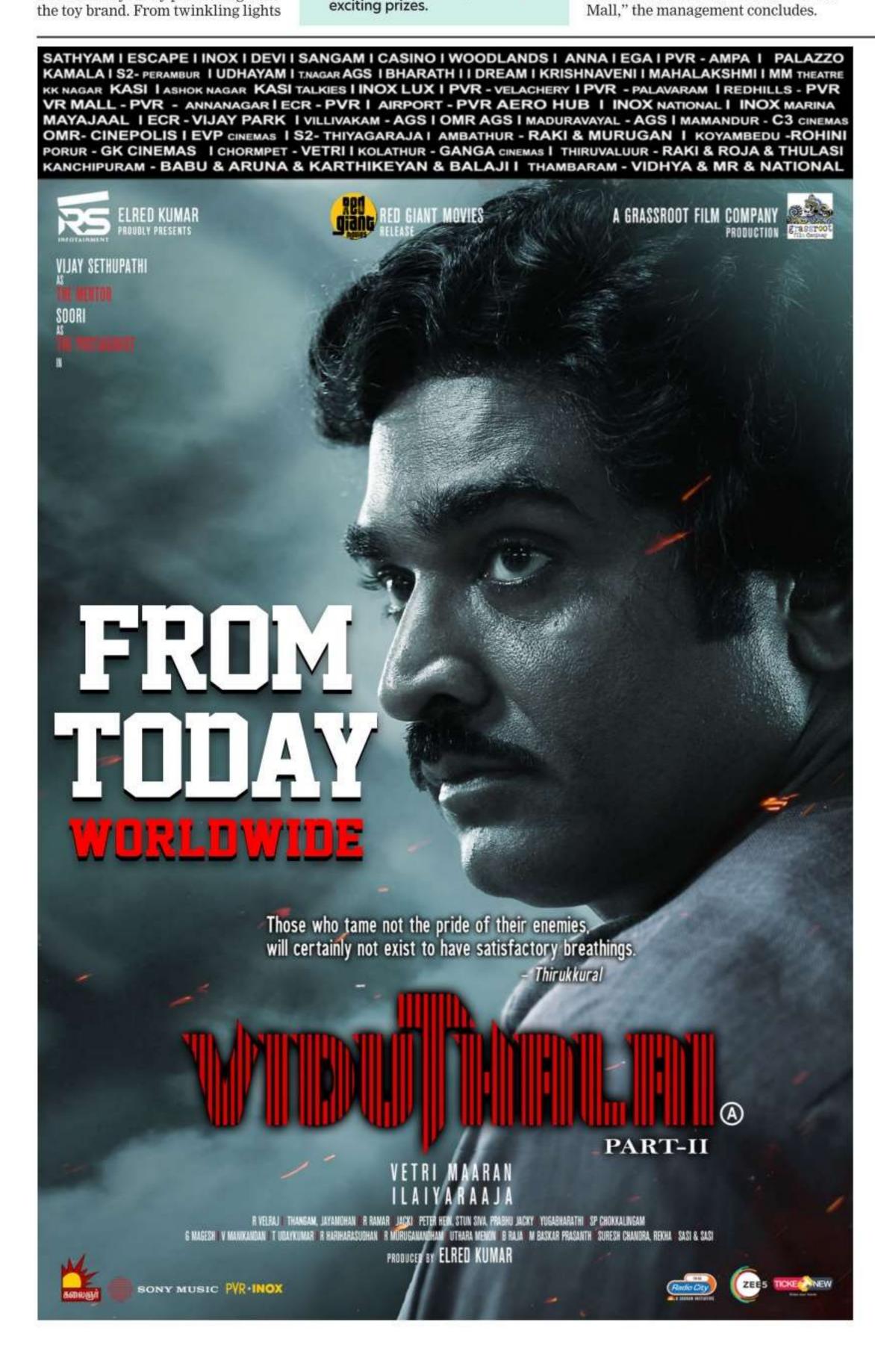
gold tinsel

silver

"I am surprised that Gandhi Garland did not find a home on the auction day," said Kristina Sanne, head of sale at the auction house.

Agencies







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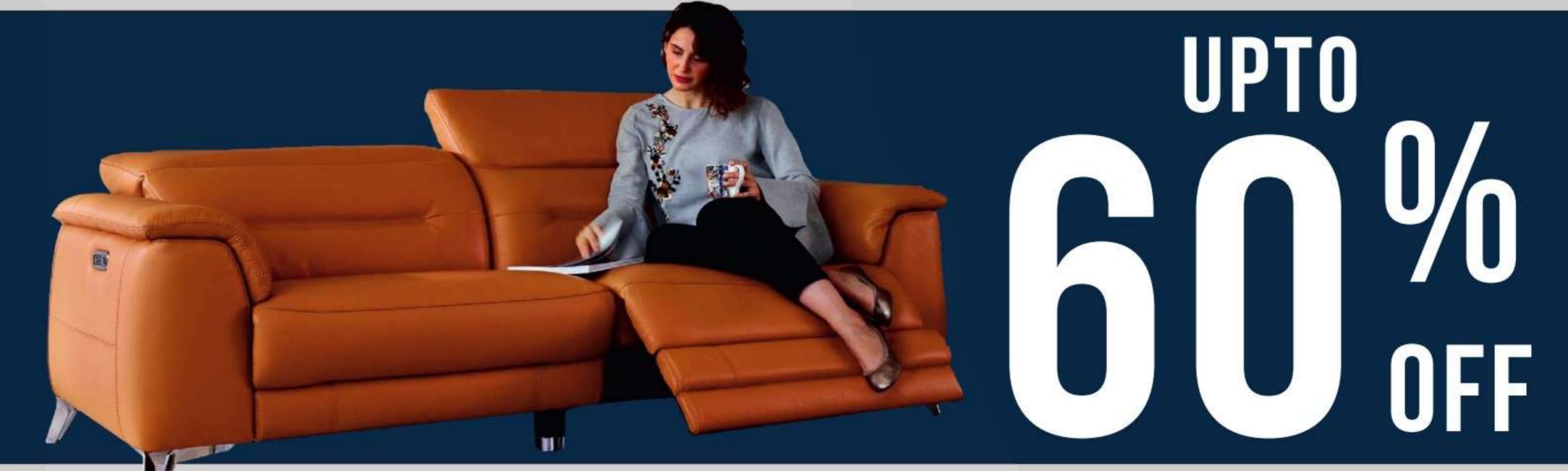
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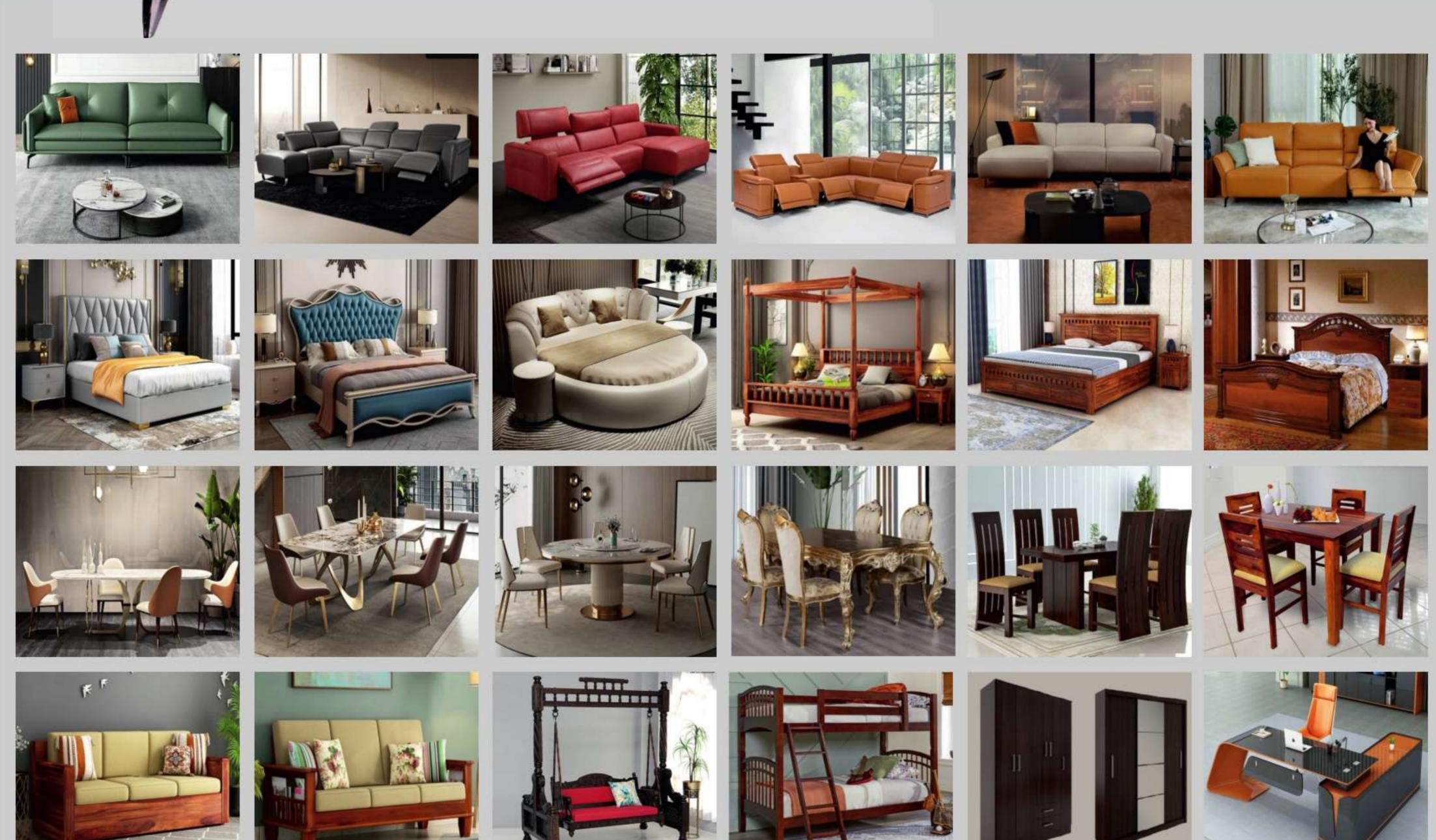
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# 'I did part-time job in a theatre just to be able to watch films'

Venkat also revealed

films.

that he wishes to make movies

in genres that he hasn't explored yet and

informed that his next movie will be in a

new genre compared to his previous

had a misconception that commercial films wouldn't be screened at festivals. Now that I know they do, I hope my next commercial movie will be screened here," began Venkat Prabhu during his masterclass.

"I did not send my directorial debut, Chennai 600028, to any festivals. SP Charan (the film's producer) learnt from (that experience) and sent his future films, like Aaranya Kaandam, to festivals," he added.

### 'MANKATHA WAS A VERY CHALLENGING FILM IN MY CAREER'

Speaking about his relationship with actors Ajith and Vijay, the director said, "Mankatha was a very challenging film in my career. Ajith sir and I have been very close ever since we acted together in Ji (2006). He had recommended me to many people in the industry after watching Chennai 600028. I narrated Mankatha's full script to Ajith sir only a couple of days before the shoot began. In fact, I got the nod from both Thala and Thalapathy (with whom he made The Greatest Of All Time) after narrating only the basic idea to them."

About Maanaadu and SJ Suryah's acclaimed performance in the film, Venkat said, "When we came up with Maanaadu, there was no time loop concept. Also, the SJ Suryah you see in Maanaadu is a controlled SJ Suryah. It was a wonderful experience working with him."

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### time job in a theatre to watch films'

Reflecting on how

his passion for films started, he shared, "I used to watch a lot of films, which led me to write. When I was studying in the UK, I did a part-time job in a theatre just to be able to watch films, for it was expensive to watch films there."

# Computer graphics is a boon, if you know where to use it: Thota Tharani

alking to a room full of film enthusiasts, Thota Tharani said observation and then dedication are a must to become an art director. "We don't know from where we will get the inspiration," he said.

Stating that his profession is underappreciated, the celebrated art director shared, "Art directors from Mumbai used to say that they did seven films at once. But I have never done multiple films together."

He further added, "I'm doing three films at the same time now, but I didn't plan it that way. The films I was supposed to do in the March-April and June-August periods got pushed to November. When I used to work with Mani (Ratnam) sir, I did one film at a time, and in between, I did my paintings. But my preference would always be films. I would advice everyone to do one film at a time."

The art director also touched upon reuniting with Mani Ratnam for the Ponniyin Selvan films three decades after their last collaboration, Bombay (1995). "We worked as closely in Ponniyin Selvan as we worked on all our films from Pallavi Anu Pallavi to Bombay," he stated.



Al is the future; you either run with it or it will overtake you, says editor Praveen KL

raveen KL, who made his film debut with *Chennai*600028 and went on to work in films such as
Maanaadu, Mankatha, and Aaranya Kaandam,
delved into the tough decisions he has had to make as an
editor, during his masterclass session at CIFF.

Sharing an example, he spoke about the time when he had to cut a subplot featuring Kushboo Sundar from Varisu. "The subplot increased the film's length, to reduce which we had to kill some characters. Kushboo ma'am was gracious about it and told me she was OK with it," he revealed.

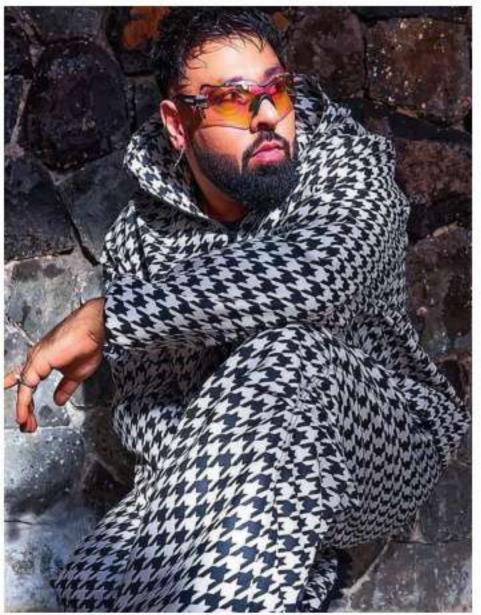
About the current generation of filmmakers, he said, "I have seen that today's generation is very open to ideas. I'm doing Vijay sir's son Jason Sanjay's film. He is very receptive and ready to take input."

Interestingly, Praveen is in favour of artificial intelligence and its usage in the creative space. "AI is the future, so please don't run away from it. You either run with it or it will overtake you," he said.





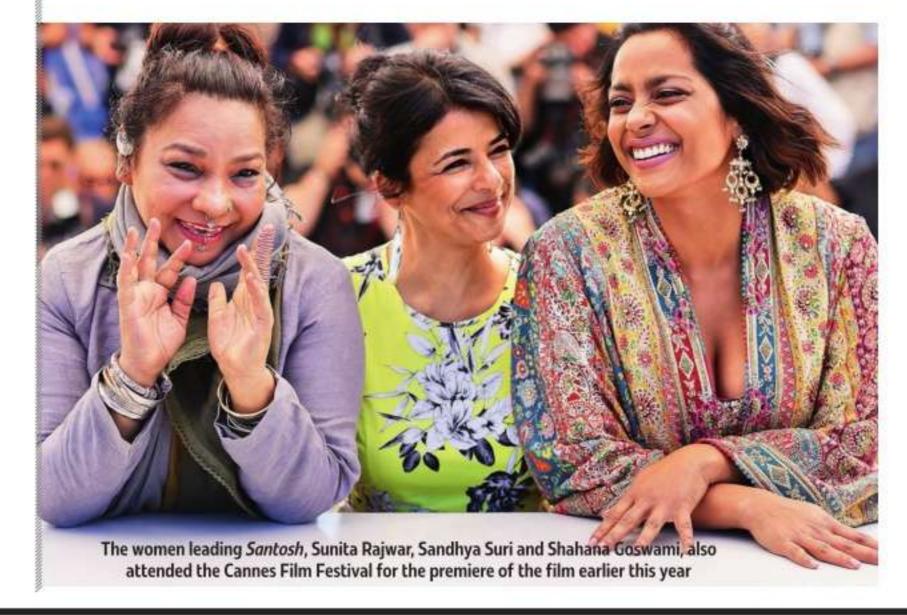
## We always drive responsibly: Badshah on traffic challan



n Tuesday, Gurgaon Traffic Police had issued a challan of ₹15,000 after an SUV carrying Badshah was found driving on the wrong side of the road. The alleged incident took place on December 15 when Badshah had made a special appearance at Karan Aujla's concert. Due to heavy traffic, the SUV, which was part of Badshah's convoy, drove on the wrong side of the road, catching the attention of some passersby, who filmed the act. "Three vehicles were found travelling on the wrong side of the road. Rapper Badshah was seen getting down from one of the cars, which has been detected and challaned as per the rules," Deputy Commissioner of Police (Traffic), Gurugram, Virender Vij, said.

I was not driving that day. I was being driven in a Vellfire and we always drive responsibly - Badshah posted on Instagram Stories

# The team stood by Sandhya Suri like a rock: Shahana Goswami



Niharika Lal

ilmmaker Sandhya Suri's Santosh, starring Shahana Goswa mi in the role of a young widow who inherits her husband's job as a police constable due to a government scheme, will compete for the Best International Feature Film category. The UK had submitted Sandhya Suri's debut as its entry for the Best International Feature Film category at the 97th Academy Awards. "I'm more than

thrilled," shares Shahana as she talks about the film's selection. "It feels good to know that people have connected with the film and taken the time to watch it. Watching 85 films or even choosing which films to watch is a lot of work, so the fact that *Santosh* has been watched and voted for makes me really happy. I'm incredibly proud of the entire team, especially Sandhya, for writing and directing this as her first feature film. The whole team stood by her like a rock, creating this together with passion and hard work to bring her vision to life," she adds.

but you should know where

He added, "You can use

graphics where you want, but

don't use them unnecessarily.

to use it."

This is what I feel.'

Recalling the moment she found out about the shortlist, Shahana says, "I actually had a beautiful moment of discovering it. I got a message from my friend Archana in Chicago saying, 'BABE CON-GRATULATIONS' That's when I realised, 'Oh, sh\*t, it's happened!"

# Magical mayonnaise



t doesn't get any better than this! I'm in the legendary Napoleon 111 lodge, nestled amid the ancient and stunningly beautiful forest, parks, lakes of Bois de Boulogne. A short drive from Paris, this triple-Michelin-starred temple to gastronomy, presided over by the brilliant Chef Frédéric Anton, dazzles.

It's all thanks to the passionate and talented hospitality business leader Helene Pietrini that I get a taste of Chef Anton's high-flying understatement and razor-sharp precision, which infuses his cook-

ing. We lunch in the relaxed, cosy and daylight-bathed La Ferme du Catalan and the tastes and textures implode with elegant simplicity. I'm most thrilled to find my forever favourite Eggs Mimosa, elegantly dressed.

We lunch with Mehdi Sgard and I'm so happy to meet our very own talented chef from Kolkata, Nairit Mukherjee with Chef Anton, celebrity chef and Meilleur Ouvrier de France, who

worked under maestro Joël Robuchon, and has been showered with three stars over 18 years. I've been his fan ever since I dined in his two-starred Jules Verne perched on the Eiffel Tower.

**TASTY TALES** 

Rashmi Uday Singh

Applauded at the recent glittering awards, held in Paris, the global benchmark of excellence, Helene Pietrini spearheads these awards celebrated as the definitive "ranking of rankings", bringing together over 1,100 sources to identify the world's finest culinary and hospitality achievements. I've been admiring Helene's commitment to support female empowerment in the industry, ever since I've known this high-octane, tall blonde when she was director of the most influential global restaurant awards, which crown the best restaurants. bars and hotels in the world.



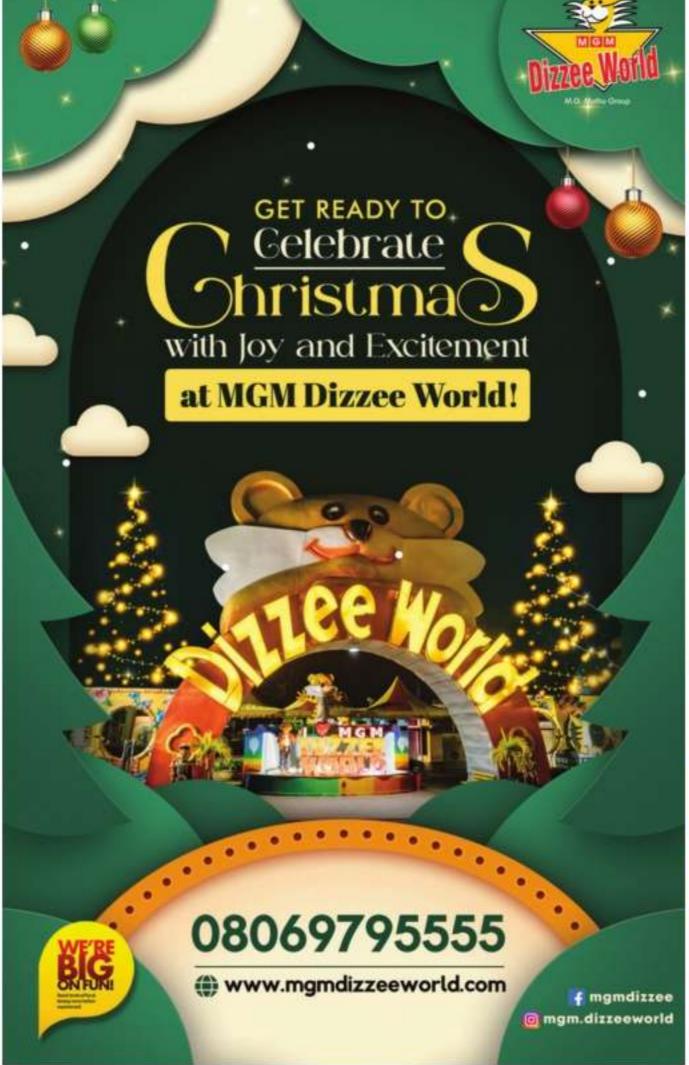
Over a memorable meal, in conversation with four hospitality stars, I'm dazzled and floored.

DID YOU KNOW THERE'S A GLOBAL ASSOCIATION OF MAYONNAISE?

Here it is: My most surprising and exciting learning curve. Not only is there a global association of mayonnaise @ASOM\_oefmayo, but Chef Anton has been its president for the past five years. I learnt cooking from my mother, who was not only a fabulous cook, but also held cooking classes and wrote a cookbook. I made mayonnaise regularly, but today, I learn a lot more. From Chef Anton, I learn the criteria for the winning mayonnaise champion. Specifically, the egg-cooking method calibre test is important. The texture and taste of mayonnaise, of course. Once you make the perfect mayonnaise, the Eggs Mimosa is made by scooping out the yolk, mashing it and adding whatever you fancy... mustard, tuna, chopped onions, et al.

To make the perfect mayonnaise, whisk the yolk with a dash of mustard, salt, and add a dash of vinegar. Chef Anton's secret ingredient is to add a soft boiled egg in the mixer. Drip the oil very slowly, and spike with a dash of vinegar. We've learnt this from the best of the best!









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'Singing in multiple languages is a very underrated attribute'



Yaar Inda Muyalkutty from Paayum Puli is one of my favourites among the songs I have sung. I sang it for D Imman sir. It's a very unique song, especially the way the melody is constructed. It's also a romantic number, something that I'm known for. So, it's very close to my heart

### CONTINUED FROM 1

### 'NO ONE HAS EVER DUBBED US PAN-INDIAN SINGERS'

Armaan sang the Hindi and Tamil versions of Jab Tak in M.S. Dhoni: The

Untold Story

There are many singers, including Sonu Nigam *ji*, Shreya Ghoshal ma'am, and myself, who sing in multiple languages. But no one has ever dubbed us pan-Indian singers. It's a little sad that people don't see the variety that some of us bring to the table. A lot of us sing in more than 12 languages, which is an incredible feat in itself as it's not easy. You wouldn't find singers in other countries singing in more than one or two languages. I feel it's a very underrated attribute that gets missed by people.

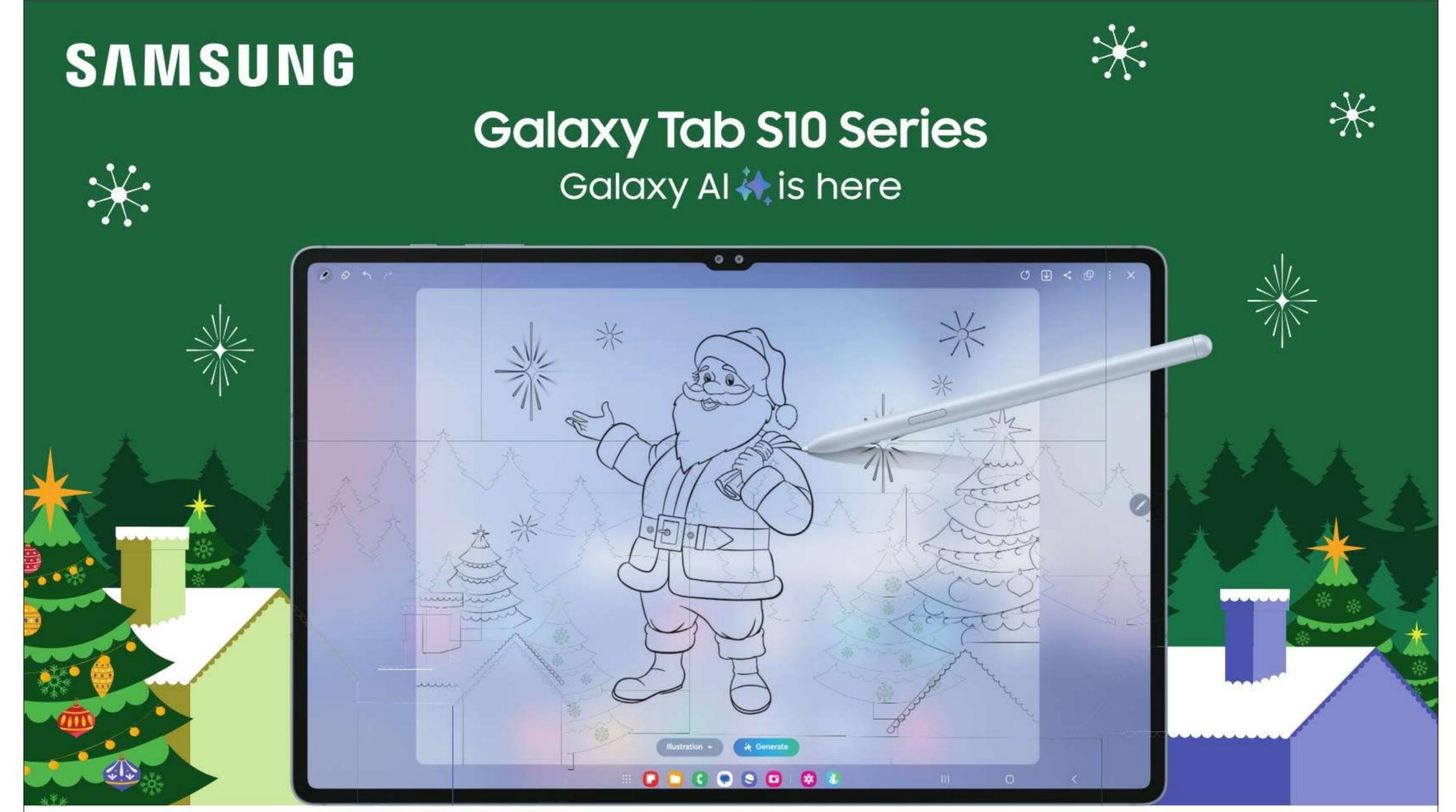
### 'WHENEVER I SING JAB TAK, FANS WOULD ASK ME TO SING KONJAM'

I sang Jab Tak for M.S. Dhoni: The Untold Story in Hindi and recorded it in Tamil as Konjam. Usually, when you sing the same song in different languages, the other language versions don't get enough love compared to the original. But in this case, Konjam became a massive hit in Tamil Nadu, and whenever I sing Jab Tak, fans would stop me and say, 'Please sing Konjam.' It's a blessing to sing the same song in different languages.

### ON THE COMPOSERS HE WANTS TO COLLABORATE WITH...

I really love what Anirudh has been doing. I have had the chance to collaborate with him on projects, but I'm yet to do a Tamil song with him. I would also love to work with Yuvan Shankar Raja sir. I have already met and hung out with them and collaborated with them on a few Hindi projects. But I would love to sing in Tamil for him.





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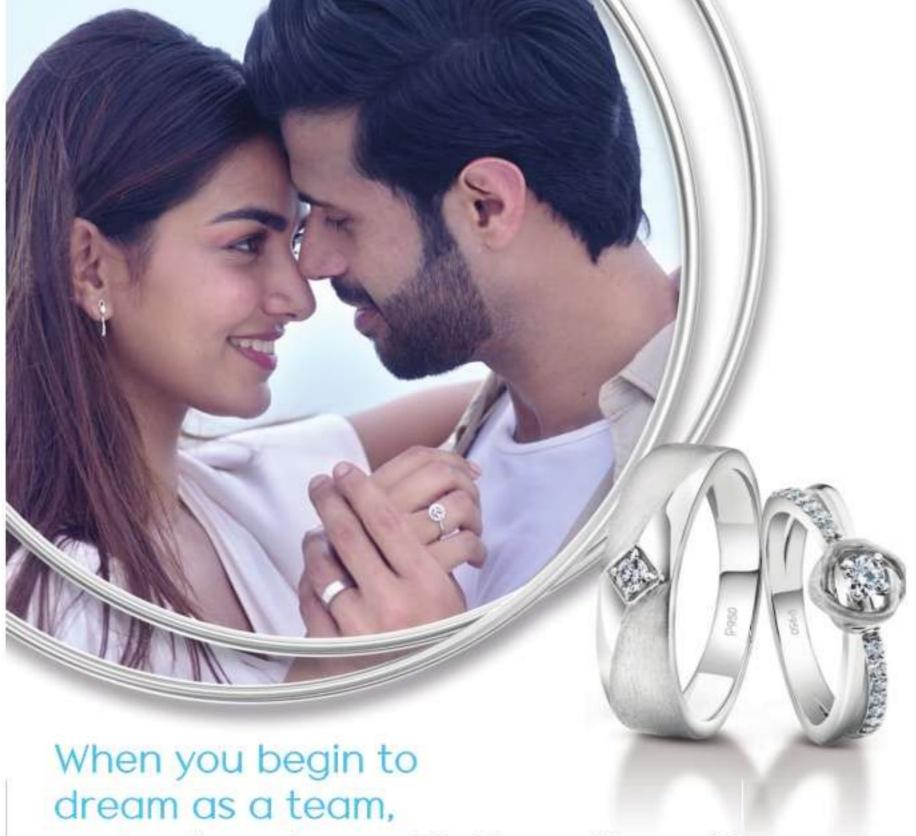




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sporting a new look these days. The actor has ditched his signature beard for a sleek handlebar moustache and neatly trimmed stubble. But that's not all! He's also back in front of the camera after a brief hiatus, looking rejuvenated and ready to take on new challenges. "After my last two films, I took a short break. Now, I'm on the lookout for something new," he reveals. From headlining a new talk show to sharing the screen with Dulquer Salmaan in an ambitious period film and producing exciting projects, Rana has a packed slate ahead. Excerpts from a recent press conference.

### 'MY SENSE OF RELEVANCE COMES FROM STAYING CURIOUS'

osity pushes him to

"If something new is happening, I want to know about it. If it's exciting, I like to be a part of it in some way," says Rana, reflecting on how he manages to stay relevant in an ever-evolving industry. The actor-producer's curi-

explore new avenues.
"That's where my sense of relevance comes from. I like to keep one foot in the future to explore what's happening in different parts of the world." Rana also attributes his awareness to his reading habits. "I read a fair number of books — probably not as much as I'd like to, but enough to keep myself informed," he adds.

The south film industry is unique. Unlike the singular identity of H'wood or B'wood, we have four distinct film industries, each with its own language and culture

### 'I am focused on exploring new avenues'

Prabhas and Rana Daggubati in

Baahubali Part 2

The physical demands of Baahubali and Nene Raju Nene Mantri, Rana says, forced him to take a short break. "Those projects required some denting and painting work on my body," he quips. While those genres have become mainstream, Rana is now in search of something new. "I'm focused on exploring new avenues in the industry. I've been in the film industry for a long time, starting with sound and editing, moving to visual effects, and eventually, becoming an actor and producer. Now, I wear all these hats simultaneously," he states.

# 'SOUTH FILM INDUSTRY IS A CREATIVE AND HARDWORKING COMMUNITY THAT GENUINELY ENJOYS MAKING FILMS'

Rana takes pride in showcasing the vibrant diversity of south Indian cinema. "The south is unique. Unlike the singular identity of Hollywood or Bollywood, we have four distinct film industries, each with its own language and culture," he explains.

"We're a creative, hardworking community that genuinely enjoys making films."

Talking about his journey growing up around studios from a young age, he says, "I grew up on the streets around the studio. From the age of five to now, as I approach 40... Everything in my life has happened here."

'NOBODY KNEW PRABHAS AND ME WERE WORKING ON BAAHUBALI PART 1 IN MUMBAI'

Reflecting on how cinema and its audiences have evolved, Rana recalls moments that stand out. "Teja Sajja's *Hanu-Man* captivated the entire country, transcending regional boundaries.

# 'Not bothered by negativity on social media'

Rana believes in breaking the facades often seen on social media. "Social media is misunderstood. As our audience grows, the connection diminishes, and facades emerge," he states. On handling negativity, he remarks, "I never aim to criticise or hurt anyone — it's not in my nature. This generation is drowning in information necessary and unnecessary. Just as people once grew obese from unlimited food, we now face an 'information obesity.' An information diet is essential to filter what truly matters."

When Prabhas and I were working on Baahubali Part 1 in Mumbai, nobody knew us. Films are always bigger than the stars," the actor notes. TNN



### Sanjay Dutt visits the Golden Temple with Yami, Aditya & their son

anjay Dutt, who is in Amritsar to shoot his next film, took some time off from his schedule to visit the Golden Temple with Aditya Dhar. They were joined by the director's actress-wife, Yami Gautam, and their son, Vedavid. A photo of the trio seeking blessings at the gurdwara has gone viral.

Last month, Aditya had visited the gurdwara with Ranveer Singh, who shared photos from the visit on Insta.

Sanjay Dutt, Yami Gautam, Aditya Dhar

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