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77% of Indian Firms Expect AI to Transform Workplaces, But Execution Lags: Report

New Delhi: Around 77% of Indian companies believe artificial intelligence (AI) will significantly reshape workplaces, yet only 19% have begun redesigning office spaces and operations to match this shift, according to a new JLL report. The study highlights a 58-percentage-point gap between recognising AI's impact and taking practical action. According to the survey of more than 2,200 CEOs, CFOs and real estate leaders across 21 countries, India outperformed the global average on all eight AI-readiness indicators. The report found that 58% of Indian companies expect their workforce to grow over the next three to five years,

while 62% believe AI will enhance human roles rather than replace them, indicating that businesses see AI as a tool for productivity rather than job cuts. A major challenge, however, is the shortage of skilled talent. For the first time in 15 years of the survey, 46% of Indian firms identified skills shortages as the biggest barrier to AI adoption, compared with 35% citing budget constraints. JLL Managing Director Ajit Kumar said the skills gap should be viewed as an opportunity because organisations can build capabilities through training and external hiring more easily than waiting for additional funding. The report concludes

that companies investing in AI skills, workplace infrastructure and employee readiness are likely to lead India's workplace transformation over the coming decade.

The report also noted that:

56% of Indian companies actively track AI trends, compared to 46% globally.

45% have introduced AI-related employee training and change-management programmes, above the global average of 36%.

19% of Indian firms have reached the most advanced stage of using AI in real estate operations, compared to 15% globally.

Overall, 47% of Indian organisations are actively rolling out AI initiatives, against 42% worldwide.

58% of Indian companies expect their workforce to grow over the next three to five years

62% Indians believe AI will enhance human roles rather than replace them



India Emerges as World's Second-Largest Supplier of Seafarers

New Delhi: India has emerged as the world's second-largest supplier of seafarers, strengthening its position as a key contributor to the global maritime industry. According to the BIMCO-ICS Seafarer Workforce Report 2026, India currently contributes 311,936 maritime professionals, accounting for 12.16 per cent of the global seafaring workforce. The report places India behind only the Philippines while surpassing China, the Russian Federation and Indonesia. This marks a remarkable rise from 2015, when India ranked fifth globally with just 5.2 per cent of the world's seafarers. Over the past decade, the country's share has more than doubled, reflecting significant progress in maritime education, training and policy reforms. India has also strengthened its presence in the officer category, supplying 140,718 officers, which represents 13.41 per cent of the global officer workforce. In addition, 171,218 Indian ratings account for

11.29 per cent of the world's ratings serving aboard merchant vessels, making India one of the largest and most skilled maritime manpower providers. The report estimates the global seafaring workforce at 2.57 million, while demand stands at 2.55 million, indicating an increasingly tight labour market. It also highlights a continuing shortage of qualified officers worldwide, positioning India as a crucial partner in meeting the future manpower needs of the global shipping industry. Welcoming the report, Union Minister for Ports, Shipping and Waterways Sarbananda Sonowal described India's rise as a result of sustained reforms and visionary leadership over the past decade. He said India's transformation from the fifth-largest supplier of seafarers in 2015 to the second-largest in 2026 reflects the government's commitment to strengthening the maritime sector through world-class training, digitalisation of seafarer



services, modern infrastructure and globally benchmarked standards. The minister also announced the government's ambitious "Mission 20%", which aims to increase India's share of the global seafaring workforce from 12.16 per cent to 20 per cent. The initiative focuses on expanding maritime training capacity, enhancing onboard training opportunities, strengthening industry-academia partnerships, leveraging digital technologies and creating greater opportunities for young

Indians, particularly women, to pursue careers at sea. "India's vision is to ensure that one in every five seafarers serving on merchant ships anywhere in the world is an Indian, recognised globally for professionalism, competence and excellence," Sonowal said. Report underscores India's growing strategic importance in the international maritime sector and highlights the country's potential to play an even greater role in addressing the global shortage of skilled seafarers in the coming years.

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EDITORIAL

India's Journey to a \$10 Trillion Economy

India stands at a defining moment in its economic history. Having emerged as one of the world's fastest-growing major economies, the nation has set its sights on an ambitious milestone—becoming a \$10 trillion economy within the next decade. While the target is bold, it is not beyond reach. Achieving it, however, will require sustained reforms, robust infrastructure, technological innovation, and inclusive growth that benefits every section of society.

Over the past decade, India has laid a strong foundation for long-term economic expansion. Digital transformation through initiatives such as Digital India, the rapid adoption of UPI-based digital payments, the expansion of highways, airports, and railways, and policy reforms like the Goods and Services Tax (GST) have strengthened the country's economic framework. Manufacturing initiatives under 'Make in India' and Production-Linked Incentive (PLI) schemes are attracting global investments, while India's startup ecosystem has become one of the largest in the world. Yet, rapid economic growth cannot rely on a few sectors alone. Manufacturing must expand significantly to create millions of jobs for India's young workforce. Agriculture, which still supports nearly half the population, needs modernization through technology, irrigation, and better market access. At the same time, service sectors such as information technology, finance, tourism, healthcare, and education must continue to evolve to remain globally competitive.

Infrastructure remains another key pillar. Reliable power supply, world-class logistics, ports, industrial corridors, and smart cities can reduce business costs and improve productivity. Equally important is investment in human capital. A skilled workforce equipped with digital and technical expertise will determine whether India can seize opportunities in artificial intelligence, semiconductor manufacturing, renewable energy, biotechnology, and advanced manufacturing. However, economic expansion must also be inclusive. Rising income inequality, unemployment, regional disparities, and environmental challenges cannot be ignored. Growth that leaves behind rural communities, small businesses, or vulnerable populations will ultimately weaken the economy's long-term resilience. Sustainable development, women's workforce participation, financial inclusion, and quality education must therefore remain central to India's growth strategy. The global economic landscape also presents both opportunities and risks. As multinational companies diversify supply chains away from traditional manufacturing hubs, India has a unique chance to establish itself as a global production and export center. At the same time, geopolitical tensions, climate change, inflation, and technological disruptions demand policy stability and strategic planning. India's journey to a \$10 trillion economy is about more than achieving an impressive number. It is about creating quality jobs, reducing poverty, fostering innovation, improving the standard of living.

Reservations Are Not the Real Issue.. The Caste System Is

Over the past few days, a major debate has been taking place on social media. Some people are demanding that reservations should be abolished, while others argue that if reservations are to be removed, the caste system must first be eliminated. Although these views often appear emotional, the issue is actually about the Constitution of India, social justice, and democratic values. Many people see reservations as a special privilege or a political benefit. However, the makers of the Indian Constitution, especially Dr. B.R. Ambedkar, never intended reservations to be a permanent right. They introduced them as a constitutional measure to address centuries of social, educational, and economic discrimination. Reservations are a form of affirmative action, designed to provide equal opportunities to communities that were historically excluded. The caste system in India has never been just a social identity. For centuries, it determined a person's opportunities in life. It influenced who could study, what occupation they could pursue, who could hold positions of power, and who could enjoy social respect. As a result, many communities were denied access to education, land, public employment, and social mobility. Reservations were introduced to correct these historical inequalities and promote a more equal society. This raises an important question: If caste-based inequalities still exist, how can we remove



the constitutional mechanism created to reduce them? The answer should not come from emotions or slogans, but from constitutional values and social realities. Even today, it is difficult to say that caste has disappeared from Indian society. Research continues to show that caste influences marriage patterns, political representation, access to education, land ownership, employment opportunities, and social mobility. Therefore, any discussion about reservations must also include a serious discussion about caste-based inequality. The Constitution guarantees equality before the law. At the same time, it also allows the government to take special measures for socially and educationally backward communities. This is reflected in constitutional provisions such as Articles 15(4), 16(4), and 46, which enable affirmative action to promote equality of opportunity. These provisions are not against equality.. they are instruments to achieve it. At the same time, it is also rea-

sonable to review the reservation system. In a democracy, every public policy should be open to discussion and evaluation. We should ask whether reservations are reaching the communities that need them most, whether implementation is effective, and whether changes are needed based on current social and economic realities. However, these discussions must be guided by research, reliable data, and constitutional principles, not by misinformation or social media narratives. Dr. B.R. Ambedkar's vision was never limited to reservations. His larger goal was to build a society free from caste discrimination, where every individual would enjoy equal dignity and equal opportunities regardless of birth. If India truly becomes a caste-free society with equal opportunities for everyone, the need for reservations would naturally decline. The real question is whether we have reached that stage. Therefore, the debate should not be limited to asking, "Should reserva-

tions continue?" The more important question is, "Has India overcome caste-based inequality?" Only after honestly answering that question can we have a meaningful discussion about the future of reservations. Ultimately, India's goal should not be to continue reservations forever, but to build a society where they are no longer necessary. This requires the elimination of caste discrimination, quality public education, equal economic opportunities, social reforms, and a strong commitment to constitutional values. Questioning reservations while ignoring the caste system addresses only the symptom, not the root cause. The real solution lies not in slogans against reservations, but in building a society where equality, dignity, and opportunity are available to every citizen. That is the path shown by the Constitution of India, and that is the true spirit of democracy.



-Mahesh Goud

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Tesla Opens Body Shop in India

New Delhi: Electric vehicle maker Tesla has expanded its after-sales presence in India by opening its first approved body shop in Pune, Maharashtra, while also launching test drives for the 2026 Model Y Premium Rear-Wheel Drive and Model Y L. The authorised body shop will provide Tesla owners in Maharashtra with collision repair and maintenance services using genuine Tesla parts, trained technicians, and company-approved repair processes. The facility also offers software-based diagnostics aimed at ensuring vehicle safety, performance and reduced service time. To strengthen customer outreach, Tesla has begun offering test drives of its latest Model Y variants in Pune and nearby areas. Interested customers can book test drives through the company's official website or customer support. The 2026 Model Y Premium Rear-Wheel Drive is priced at ₹50.89 lakh, offers a WLTP-certified range of up to 500 km, accelerates from 0-100 kmph in 5.9 seconds, and provides 2,138 litres of storage space. Deliveries are scheduled to begin in July 2026. Tesla has also introduced the Model Y L, a three-row, six-seat all-wheel-drive SUV priced from ₹61.99 lakh. It delivers a WLTP-certified range of up to 681 km, reaches 0-100 kmph in 5 seconds, and offers 2,539 litres of cargo capacity. The company said the new body shop and expanded test-drive programme reflect its commitment to enhancing the ownership experience in India, adding that Pune's growing EV market and strong industrial ecosystem make it a key location for expanding sales and customer support.



7.1-Magnitude Earthquake Hits Japan

Tokyo: A 7.1-magnitude earthquake struck southwestern Japan on Tuesday, prompting the Japan Meteorological Agency (JMA) to issue tsunami advisories for the Ariake Sea and Yatsushiro Sea. The quake occurred at 4:27 p.m. local time in Kumamoto Prefecture at a depth of 10 kilometres, according to the JMA. Authorities were monitoring the situation, and no major damage or casualties had been reported immediately after the tremor. The latest quake comes amid a series of recent seismic events across Japan. On June 26, a 5.6-magnitude earthquake struck Yamaguchi Prefecture, injuring 10 people and recording lower 6 on Japan's seven-level seismic intensity scale. The tremor briefly raised concerns about possible volcanic activity at Mount Fuji, but the JMA confirmed that no abnormalities were detected. Earlier, on June 25, a 6.9-magnitude earthquake hit the eastern coast of Iwate Prefecture, with strong shaking felt across parts of northern Japan and even in Tokyo. No tsunami warning was issued following that event. Japan, located along the seismically active Pacific Ring of Fire, experiences frequent earthquakes and maintains one of the world's most advanced earthquake and tsunami monitoring systems. Authorities have advised residents in the affected coastal areas to remain alert and follow official safety instructions until the tsunami advisory is lifted.



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In Mirpur, Pakistan-occupied (PoK), the Pakistani army opened fire on its own civilians, killing more than 20 people. Others were injured.

20 Killed in PoK

Pakistan Cracks Down on Poll Boycott Protests

Rawalakot: At least 20 people were killed and more than 50 injured in the past 24 hours as Pakistani security forces launched a violent crackdown on protesters boycotting the so-called legislative elections in Pakistan-occupied Kashmir (PoK), according to local sources. The worst violence was reported from Rawalakot's Dreik Eighth area, where security personnel allegedly opened fire on demonstrators demanding an election boycott. Among those killed was Usman Nazir, brother of Joint Awami Action Committee (JAAC) spokesperson Umar Nazir Kashmiri. Sources claim that around 80 people have been killed since anti-election protests began on June 5. Videos circulating on social media purportedly show bodies lying on roads after security forces fired on protesters. Local social media influencer Aqeel Bhai appealed to the international community, saying

Rawalakot was "filled with dead bodies and the wounded" and urged global media to highlight the situation. The Awami Action Committee (AAC), which is spearheading the election boycott campaign, has accused Islamabad of using excessive force to suppress dissent. Pakistan has reportedly deployed over 14,000 security personnel across PoK for the elections, with snipers stationed at key locations. Protesters allege that authorities have used live ammunition and long-range tear gas shells, while internet, mobile, electricity and water services have been disrupted in several areas. The so-called PoK Assembly elections are being conducted in three phases until August 10. Polling in the Mirpur division was held on July 27, while voting in the Muzaffarabad division and refugee constituencies is scheduled for August 2, followed by the Poonch division on August 10.



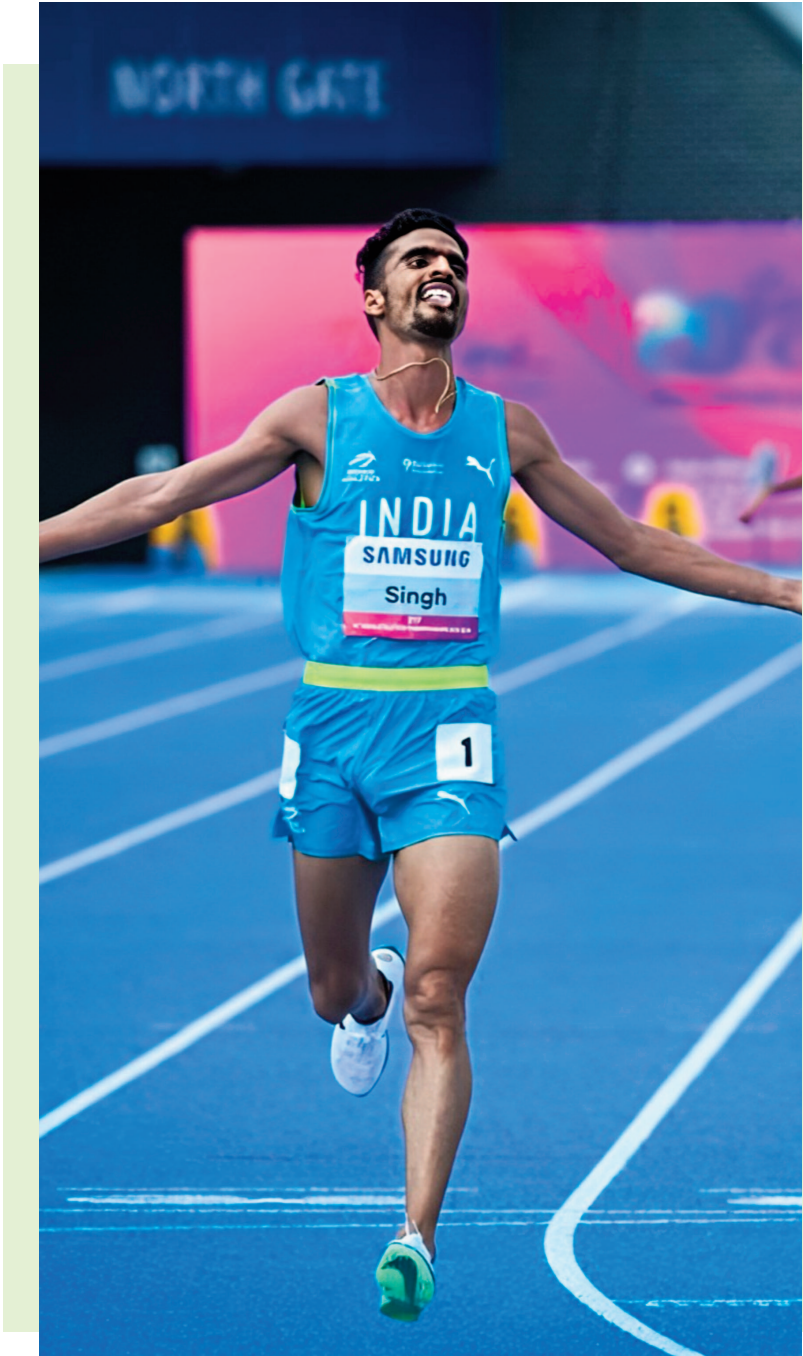
From Abuse to Glory

Sharmila Wins Historic Para Athletics Gold

New Delhi, July 28: Sharmila Dhankar scripted history by winning India's first-ever Commonwealth Games gold medal in para athletics, ending a 20-year wait with a stunning performance in the Women's Shot Put F57 event at the Glasgow 2026 Commonwealth Games. The 40-year-old produced a season-best throw of 9.81 metres to claim gold, while fellow Indian Shilpa K. Shyla secured bronze, giving India a memorable double podium finish. Born in Haryana's Chitrauli village, Sharmila contracted polio at the age of two, leaving her with permanent impairment in her left leg. Despite growing up in a financially struggling family, her biggest challenges came later in life. Married at just 19, she reportedly endured years of domestic abuse and harassment over dowry demands be-

fore escaping the marriage with her two daughters. Her life changed in 2018 when she married Ajit Singh, who encouraged her to pursue para sports. Under Paralympian coach Tek Chand, she began training in shot put and quickly rose through the ranks, winning gold at the 2021 Para National Championships. Sharmila narrowly missed medals at the 2022 Birmingham Commonwealth Games and the 2023 Asian Para Games, finishing fourth in both competitions. Financial hardships, including the sale of the family home, failed to deter her determination. Her perseverance paid off in Glasgow, where she became India's first Commonwealth Games para athletics gold medallist. President Droupadi Murmu, Prime Minister Narendra Modi, and Union

Sports Minister Mansukh Mandaviya congratulated her on the landmark achievement. Looking ahead, Sharmila hopes to compete alongside her daughters, who are training in athletics, and has set her sights on the upcoming Asian Games in Japan. She also dreams of buying a new home, calling sport her "second birth."



Gulveer Wins CWG Silver

Glasgow, July 28: Indian long-distance runner Gulveer Singh scripted history by becoming the first Indian man to win a medal in the 10,000m at the Commonwealth Games, clinching a silver medal in a thrilling race held under heavy rain at Scotstoun Stadium. Gulveer clocked 27:49.78 to finish second behind Australia's Ky Robinson, who claimed gold in 27:48.93, while David Mullarkey of the Isle of Man took bronze. The achievement marks India's first medal in the men's 10,000m event at the Commonwealth Games and the country's first medal in the discipline since Kavita Raut's bronze in the women's race at the 2010 Delhi Games. Running against a strong field that included several African athletes and World Championships medallist Daniel Ebenyo, Gulveer executed a tactical race. After staying with the leading pack for most of the race, he surged in the closing stages, overtaking Mullarkey in the final 200 metres to secure silver. Training under Scott Simmons in the United States, Gulveer has emerged as one of India's leading distance runners in recent years, consistently breaking national records and delivering strong international performances. The silver also continued India's impressive athletics campaign at the 2026 Commonwealth Games. Earlier, Sarvesh Kushare had won silver in the men's high jump. Meanwhile, India's national record holder Pooja bowed out of the women's high jump after clearing 1.77m but failing to cross 1.82m in three attempts.

Indian duo secure Bronze

In Shooting, India's Sonam Uttam Maskar and Himanshu Dhillon secured the bronze medal in the 10m Air Rifle Mixed Team event at the ongoing ISSF World Cup Rifle/Pistol/Shotgun in Hangzhou, China today. The Indian duo delivered a consistent performance, finishing with a combined score of 441.2 points, with both shooters contributing 220.6 points each to seal the bronze medal.



Harjinder Kaur wins Silver Medal in Weightlifting. Finishes at 2nd spot in 69kg category.

Style of the Day



Rashi Khanna

Kangana's
'Cockroaches'

Remark Sparks Row

BJP MP and actor Kangana Ranaut has triggered a fresh political controversy after describing participants of the Cockroach Janata Party (CJP)-led student protests as "cockroaches" and "Generation Gutter" in a series of social media posts. Reacting to videos of the protests at Delhi's Jantar Mantar, Kangana alleged that the demonstrations reflected "filth, garbage and ugliness." She questioned the upbringing of the protesters and criticised what she called their abusive language and behaviour, claiming the videos were "puke-inducing." In another post, the Mandi MP targeted women protesters, alleging that many claimed independence while remaining financially dependent on their families. She also defended those confronting protesters over their social media content, saying criticism was an "equal and opposite reaction" to their actions, invoking Newton's third law of motion. Kangana's remarks came days after the 36-day student agitation ended following the Centre's acceptance of key demands, including the resignation of former Union Education Minister Dharmendra Pradhan. The actor's comments drew sharp criticism from Opposition leaders and social media users. Congress leaders Renuka Chowdhury and Imran Pratapgari condemned her remarks, accusing her of insulting the country's youth. Many social media users also termed her comments "offensive" and "hypocritical," pointing to her previous controversial statements against protesters and political opponents. Kangana's posts have since gone viral, intensifying the political debate over the student protests and freedom of expression on social media.



Srinidhi Introduced as 'Swarna' in AK 47

The makers of Aadarsha Kutumbam House No: 47 (AK 47) have unveiled the introductory video of Srinidhi Shetty's character, Swarna, from the upcoming family entertainer starring Venkatesh. Sharing the video on social media, production house Haarika & Hasine Creations introduced Swarna with a light-hearted caption, while hinting at the humorous chemistry between the lead characters. The promo features Chittibabu (Venkatesh) complaining about his wife, saying women have "attitude but no gratitude." As he speaks, he notices Swarna smiling and waving from a neighbouring balcony, praising her cheerful nature. The scene ends with the revelation that Swarna was actually smiling at someone else, adding a comic twist. The makers recently also introduced Rohith Nara as part of the cast, with his first-look poster suggesting he plays a police officer. Directed by Trivikram Srinivas, the film marks the celebrated filmmaker's first directorial collaboration with Venkatesh, although the duo previously worked together when Trivikram wrote the blockbuster Nuvvu Naaku Nachav. Originally referred to as Venky77, the film has generated strong buzz following the blockbuster success of Venkatesh's Sankranthiki Vasthunam. Aadarsha Kutumbam House No: 47 (AK 47) is scheduled for a worldwide theatrical release on October 2, 2026.



TG to Launch First Television Awards

Telangana government has initiated the process of instituting its first-ever Television Awards, with Cinematography Minister Komatireddy Venkat Reddy holding a meeting with the Television Awards Committee to finalise the framework for the prestigious honours. The meeting, attended by Film Development Corporation (FDC) Managing Director Mukunda Reddy, who also serves as the committee chairman, focused on the award's name, logo, categories and venue. Speaking at the meeting, the minister said television continues to be one of the most popular sources of entertainment, especially for women and senior citizens, and stressed the need to recognise excellence in the industry. The proposed awards will honour television artistes, technicians, producers, serials, television programmes and children's films that promote positive social values. The committee has proposed naming the awards after former Prime Minister P. V. Narasimha Rao. Komatireddy said the proposal would be discussed with Chief Minister A. Revanth Reddy, noting PV Narasimha Rao's contributions as a statesman, polyglot and architect of India's economic reforms. The minister directed the committee to finalise the award guidelines, logo and name at the earliest, ensuring that both reflect the cultural identity of Telangana. He also emphasised that the selection process must be completely transparent. The FDC has been asked to identify two or three suitable venues for the awards ceremony. A final decision on the award name, logo, venue and other arrangements will be taken after consultations with the Chief Minister.



Avoid Hate: Allu Arjun

Allu Arjun has launched an insurance coverage scheme for members of his fan association, the Allu Arjun Fans Association (AAFA), while urging fans to stay away from hatred and online trolling. The initiative was unveiled during the AAFA Annual Summit 2026, attended by fan association leaders from Andhra Pradesh, Telangana, Karnataka, Kerala, Tamil Nadu, Maharashtra and Odisha. Addressing the gathering, Allu Arjun thanked his fans for their unwavering support and encouraged them to keep their passion alive. Sharing a message on positivity, the actor compared human energy to a battery that gradually depletes through the day. He advised fans to invest their time and energy wisely instead of wasting it on negativity. "If you don't like someone, don't waste your time hating or trolling them. Don't spend even one per cent of your energy on things that don't make you happy," he said. He urged fans to focus on what they truly love, adding that time and energy are valuable resources that should be used meaningfully rather than on unnecessary conflicts. The actor also encouraged fans to channel their efforts into positive activities and relationships that bring them happiness. The newly launched insurance programme aims to provide financial security and support to members of the AAFA, marking a first-of-its-kind welfare initiative by the fan association. On the professional front, Allu Arjun is currently shooting for his upcoming sci-fi action entertainer Raaka, directed by Atlee.

Dimple Hayathi Returns to Kuchipudi Roots



Dimple Hayathi has resumed formal training in Kuchipudi, reconnecting with the classical dance form she has practiced since childhood. Sharing pictures from her training sessions on Instagram, Dimple described Kuchipudi as "not just an art form, but a meditation that aligns the body, mind and soul." She expressed gratitude to her guru, Madhurima Narla, saying the journey has been deeply transformative. The actress revealed that although she has performed numerous Kuchipudi recitals from a young age, she had never shared that side of her life publicly. After entering the film industry, she was away from regular practice for some time and is now happy to return to her roots. Dimple Hayathi is currently working on director Sampath Nandi's period action drama Bhogi, starring Sharwanand in the lead role. Recently, the makers unveiled her first-look poster as Mandaram, introducing her as a bold and powerful character. Dressed in a striking red saree and set against a rustic 1960s backdrop, the poster hinted at a fearless personality central to the film's narrative. Set in the early 1960s along the Telangana-Maharashtra border, Bhogi is a period action thriller. Sharwanand plays Ganga, while Anupama Parameswaran appears as Kandula Sulochana Rani, with Dimple portraying the fiery Mandaram. The film is expected to showcase intense action blended with a strong period setting.