

metroPLUS

THE HINDU

What is kettlebell lifting, a sport that is gaining steady popularity in Tamil Nadu? P2

ALL ABOUT SHALIN'S SATIRE, SEEING RED P4



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At the Tamil Nadu Government Music College, under the shade of blooming mango trees, a group of senior citizens are gathered to practise the age-old Tamil martial art form, Silambam. They cautiously learn footwork and combine it with the circular movement of the bamboo staff while the instructor, also a senior citizen, walks around the group often correcting his students' form. For these few hours, age is not a point of discussion here.

Chitra Subramani, a 60-year-old former dance teacher, was among the senior citizens who signed up for the course. "I have always been interested in learning different kinds of art forms, not just dance. The Tamil Nadu Government Music College opened up the Silambam course while I was still working, and I applied to join just for fun," she says of this one-year course with certification. The Music College also has other folk art form courses like Oyilattam and Thappattam in their curriculum which are open for senior citizens now, thanks to a recent revision of age restriction for students.

Whether through structured classes or personal exploration, an increasing number of older adults are choosing to stay engaged. While previously, elders often took up hobbies like knitting, weaving and indulging in daily soaps, the retired generation of the 21st Century are deciding to spend their time with martial arts, water sports, visual art or financial education.

Some of these hobbies offer physical benefits, but their emotional and social impact is often more significant. According to a 2023 study published in the scientific journal *Nature Medicine*, hobby engagement among adults aged 65 and older was associated with better mental wellbeing, including fewer depressive symptoms, higher self-reported health, greater happiness, and increased life satisfaction.

"Older people get lonely unless they do something with their time. Something that is therapeutic for them, and helps them re-discover their talents. We identify and locate such elders, and try to include them in activities such as painting, yoga and more," says Sabita Radhakrishna, founder of Udhavi, an NGO and networking platform for senior citizens in the city. "We also conduct a workshop on the nitty gritty of life insurance. Elders are often unaware of these things, so we organise interactive talks," she says, adding



Out of office

As more community-driven spaces mushroom across the city, Chennai's seniors are turning to unconventional hobbies to make the best use of their time

that these workshops are done in collaboration with a senior solutions start-up called Grey Up.

Another hobby that older adults are flocking to is tech education. Dexterity with smartphone use has become a necessity to lead an independent life. Organisations like HelpAge India, Easy Hai and ElderAid Wellness have specialised help guides and courses in digital literacy. "When we look at the elder care sector, it is very lopsided towards healthcare. During COVID, people realised the importance of digital literacy. Unfortunately, due to a lot of online scams, elders have been afraid of getting too friendly with technology, but we help them," says Santosh Abraham, founder of ElderAid Wellness, adding that they have guides which are mailed or sent via WhatsApp for topics ranging from ordering groceries to identifying online scams.

Fun, informal activities like karaoke nights, film screenings, and community singing sessions are also becoming popular ways to bond. "We do quite a lot of musical nights where we get a live band to play songs from old films, and a lot of elders enjoy them and sing along. One time, we had a 90-year-old throw her walking stick and stand up to dance," says Sabita, laughing. All activities conducted by Udhavi are broadcast on their WhatsApp groups, and seniors can register to join these groups, through the NGO's website.



Sound body, sound mind
Movement is also a key element in many of the hobbies taken up by senior citizens. At the Academy of Modern Danse (@academy_of_modern_danse on Instagram), Kokila Hariram conducts a weekly class at the Russian Cultural Centre tailored to senior citizens. "We have a Bollywood dance class for ladies in the morning and a lot of mothers and grandmothers join this. Most of my adult classes are for salsa, ballroom, or jive, and I have elders over 60 joining those," she says. "Everything they're doing uses muscle power, and that stimulates the brain."

Turning back time (Clockwise from left) Senior citizens learning Silambam at Tamil Nadu Government Music College; a drawing workshop; water aerobics. B JOTHI RAMALINGAM, R RAGU AND SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

For 71-year-old former English teacher Meena Thomas, learning salsa helped ward off oneliness while keeping fit. "I am not disciplined enough to go to the gym or workout, but I feel like this kind of exercise make me happy. I always thought I had two left feet, but Koki told me anyone can dance. She can make a door dance," she says, adding that she picked salsa because she found some friends who had joined the class. Meena started dancing when she was 63.

These dance classes are populated by both women and men. P Mahalingam, 71, chairman of Door Sabha Nigam Limited, has always been a man of rhythm. "I used to learn Kathak, but had to stop because of some health reasons. I joined salsa classes when I was in my mid 50s, then learned tabla," he says.

Older people get lonely unless they do something with their time. Something that is therapeutic for them, and helps them re-discover their talents

SABITA RADHAKRISHNA
FOUNDER, UDHAVI

As much as dance is for the mind and body, water is too. With the harsh summer settling in, swimming and water-based exercises are becoming popular fitness options for older adults. "Many senior citizens who have joint pains are advised to walk in water by their physiotherapist because water is easier on the joints. You weigh less in the water and are able to move more easily," says Jeffery Vardon, who conducts water aerobics classes tailored for senior citizens.

While older adults may face hurdles – from digital literacy and mobility issues to financial planning – community outreach and tailored support systems can go a long way. As the lines between ageing and activity continue to blur, hobbies are proving to be tools for self-discovery, connection, and vitality. In reclaiming their time through curiosity, many older adults today are proving that retirement is not an end, but a return – to self, to community, and to all the things that make life feel full.

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The best kind of fish are what fishermen recommend. But most consumers of seafood go in for varieties that they have been cooking for years. The annual 61-day ban on mechanised boats is now on in Tamil Nadu, and there is no better time to veer from pomfret and seer and try something new.

S Ethiraj, a fisherman from Nochi Kuppam, recommends *kilicha*. "It is pure white in colour and has a grey upper body. The size of a finger, it can be used to make *kuzhambu* as well as *varuval*," he says. The 38-year-old owns a fibre boat and says that he usually hauls in a mix of fish varieties every day. "I spread these out on the side of the road at Nochi Kuppam and sell them for either ₹100 or ₹200 depending on how much the customer wants," he says.

The varieties he catches vary through the year, based on wind and water currents. "These days, apart from a lot of *kilicha*, we are also bringing in *mulian*," he says, adding that it too is pure white



Following little fish

With the ban on fishing using mechanised boats now on in Tamil Nadu, it is a good time to give smaller, lesser-known varieties of fish a try

with a tinge of grey. "I recommend that it be cut into three pieces and fried," says Ethiraj. *Kili meen* or parrot fish is also in this season. "The flesh is sweet, just like crab meat," he adds.

Another small fish that can be

bought off fibre boats is *velli udan*, named after the sheen of the moon. "The flesh is soft, and one can keep eating it," he says, adding that he can pop in up to 50 of these tiny fish during a meal. *Karapodi*, the flat, diamond-shaped fish, is another

A mixed bag Small fish are tasty and are easy on the pocket as well. M PALANIKUMAR

favourite of the fisherfolk, often caught by fibre boats. "An adult can consume up to 25 of these fish at one go," he says.

Independent researcher A Bhagath Singh, one of the authors of the recently-released book *Seasoned by the Sea*, says that now that the bigger boats do not head out to sea, those who ply smaller vessels try their hand at line fishing. "Sheela is among the varieties that they catch and can also be spotted at the city's markets," he points out, adding that it can be cooked in a fragrant *kuzhambu* cooked in a base of tamarind and sliced sour mangoes. "Mango adds a delicious sourness to the *kuzhambu* that enhances the flavour of tamarind," he explains.

Mathi or sardines, a mainstay of the West Coast, is also making its way into the nets of fibre boat fishermen of the Coromandel Coast this past few weeks, according to Bhagath. "They seem to be migrating along this route due to the water currents," he says: "This season's *mathi* is also

oily and will be delicious if fried with just a little bit of spice."

Fishermen also sell what they refer to as *periya sankara*. "This is a variety called *thendal*, that looks like *sankara*, but is much bigger," says Bhagath. Jai Vinodh, a fisherman who has a shop near the Ashtalakshmi temple at Elliot's beach, says that the ban period is also when fibre boat fishermen can work in peace. "They can go to sea without the fear of their nets being cut off by the trawlers," he says. While some of these fishermen also own large nets and motors that power their vessels deep into the sea to catch big fish, many of them have small nets weighing around just five kilograms.

"They travel not more than five kilometres into the sea, and come back with an interesting mix," explains Vinodh. He suggests customers head to the seashore to buy directly from fishermen. A good place to start is the Nochi Kuppam market by the Lighthouse. "Many beaches have kabaddi pitches near which fishermen spread their nets in the morning as soon as they come back from the sea," he says. "The best time to buy from them is from 6am to 11am."



Madras on a monumental scale

Massive: Large Format Paintings from Madras, brings rarely seen, large-scale works into focus. The exhibition features major paintings by Achuthan Kudallur, C Douglas, and Velu Viswanadhan, artists deeply rooted in the formative years of the Chola Mandal Artists' Village. Alongside them are expansive works by C Krishnaswamy, G Gurusanth, Maanas Udayakumar, and K Jayachander – emerging voices shaped by the Madras School in the post-2000 era.

To paint large is not simply to scale up. It is a demanding process – physically, emotionally, and technically. For these artists, large format becomes a site for immersive exploration.

@Ashvita's, Mylapore. On till May 31. 11am to 7pm. For details, call 8925478388

Weight and watch
Rohith G, Vignesh Hariharan and Sharmila Kumari Pinjala at The Hammer kettlebell academy in Kolathur. SRINIVASA RAMANUJAM



Shot on OnePlus

#FramesofIndia

Eat, pray, lift

Heard about kettlebell lifting? Here's how a group of people in Tamil Nadu are faring in the sport

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A training session is in the works on the second floor of Kolathur's The Hammer Fitness gym, on a particularly hot April morning.

Kettlebell coach Vignesh Hariharan is at work, teaching 55-year-old Sharmila Kumari Pinjala the proper method to lift and sustain a weight for a solid period of time. Sharmila, currently a zumba and Pilates instructor based out of Bengaluru, first heard the word 'kettlebell' only five years ago when one of her students suggested she introduce it in her dance-cum-fitness sessions.

"I have always been scared of weights. Though I am into fitness, I have never been a gym person. I was sceptical because I didn't know if I would be able to lift even more than two kilograms," she laughs, reminiscing about a time before her attempt to take on a certification course

in kettlebell lifting.

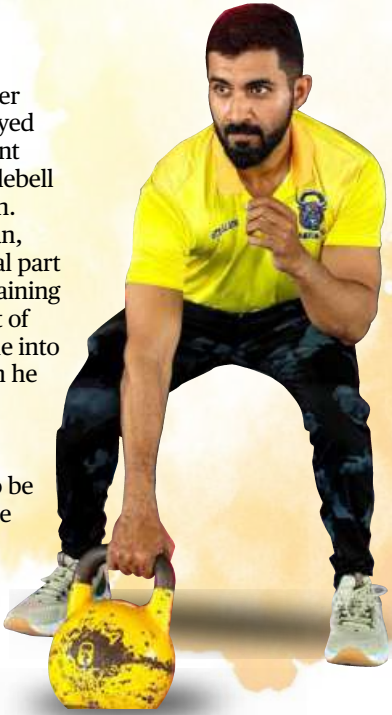
Today, she is beaming with joy as her first tryst with any sport has resulted in a gold medal part of the OALC (one-arm long cycle) 30-minute category and a bronze in the OALC 10-minute category at the recently-held 12th GSIF Kettlebell National Championship in Goa.

Winning a rich tally of medals, the nine-member Tamil Nadu team displayed their prowess at the event that showcased top kettlebell players across the nation.

For Vignesh Hariharan, who has been an integral part of the city's kettlebell training circuit, this is a moment of reckoning. Vignesh came into popularity in 2019 when he was crowned World Champion in Australia, thus becoming the first person in South India to be awarded the title. "In the Goa event, we had a nine-year-old and a 55-year-old taking part. As a coach, that gave me great joy," says Vignesh, who also

participated in the event, clinching three gold medals in different categories.

'Never give up'
For the uninitiated, the sport of kettlebell originated in Russia and is still practised by Russian army personnel to



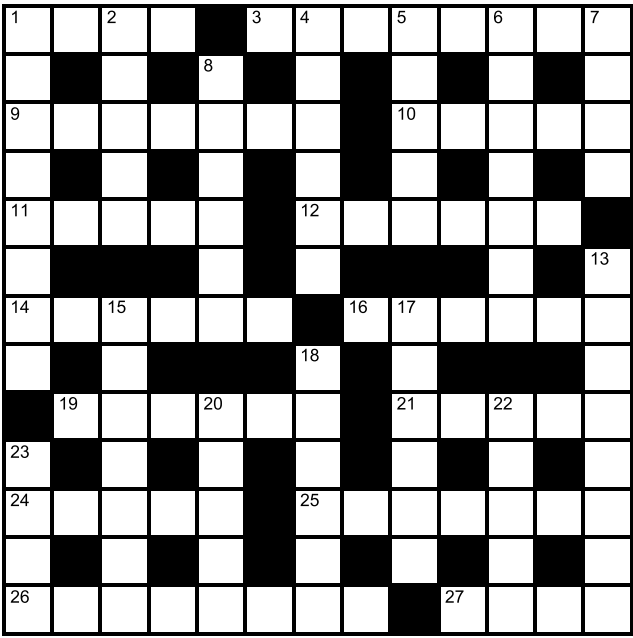
hone their physical and mental strength. In Russia, the sport is known as *girevoy*, and athletes are called *gireviks*. "It can be played from by a wide group of people, ranging from the age groups of eight to 80. But it will test your patience; that's when the sport gets intense," says Vignesh.

Rohith G, a 26-year-old clinical sports physiotherapist, knows a thing or two about this. In his recent outing at Goa, Rohith reached a breaking point when he got a deep cut in his left hand during the first five minutes of the competition. "I was just not able to hold the kettlebell. I was about to give up, but my team pushed me on from the sidelines."

Rohith was at about 100 repetitions when he was mentally ready to quit but thanks to powerful words of encouragement, he pushed himself to reach 285 repetitions. "It is a cardio workout and helps build endurance. It keeps the heart healthy, but the most important aspect of kettlebell lifting is learning to never give up," says Rohith, who regularly trains with his pink kettlebell, that weighs eight kilograms and costs around ₹4,500, at home. He then sends video footage to his coach.

His aim? "To win a gold in Asia and World Championship and then train more athletes." He certainly looks up to his coach Vignesh, who has already produced four World Champions and five National Champions since the time the latter became a World Champion himself. This is despite the fact that a couple of years were lost in adapting to COVID-related lockdowns. He says, "Kettlebell lifting is picking up at a fast rate in the country now, with more awareness about the sport's benefits to overall fitness and health. From here, up is the only way to go."

METROPLUS QUICK CROSSWORD #1 (Set by Doppelganger)



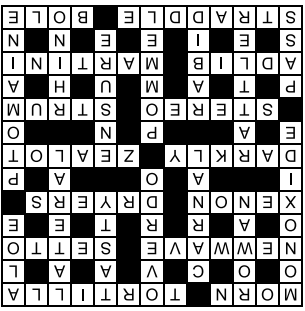
- Across**
- 1 First part of the day (4)
 - 3 Mexican roti (8)
 - 9 Movement in French cinema in Late 1950's and 60's (3,4)
 - 10 Ali would do this? (3-2)
 - 11 Type of lamp used in photography (5)
 - 12 Moisture extractors (6)
 - 14 Gloomily (6)
 - 16 Member of militant Jewish sect in 70 AD (6)
 - 19 My record player at home plays _____ sound (6)
 - 21 One can play a guitar this way (5)
 - 24 Speak without tele-promoters (2-3)
 - 25 Bond likes his shaken, not stirred (7)
 - 26 A high jump style(8)
 - 27 Friable earthy clay (4)

To play The Guardian Quick Crossword, The Hindu Cryptic crossword, Sudoku & other puzzles online, scan the QR code.



- 8 Flesh-eating (6)
- 13 Compounds from putrefying animal tissues (8)
- 15 Something to be avoided (7)
- 17 Do this to make safe (6)
- 18 Handle on gymnastic equipment (6)
- 20 Avoid this dog (5)
- 22 It can have one or two horns? (5)
- 23 Something found in the mountains (4)

Solution No. #1



Rites, rebellion and realisation

Through the lens of Theyyam, director KP Rajeev brings forward a timeless story of caste oppression and injustice

Aditi S Bade

In a world where theatre often bends toward entertainment or intellectual abstraction, director and playwright KP Rajeev's *The Guests of God* lands somewhere in between, offering both a compelling story and socio-cultural commentary. Set in a rain-ravaged 18th-century kingdom in Kerala, and deeply rooted in the ritualistic art form of Theyyam, the play returns to Chennai for a second staging on May 3.

At its surface, the play begins with a crisis involving a ruler who is least concerned about people starving in his kingdom. A theft then takes place at the palace where the queen's diamonds vanish and this awakens people across caste and class lines. "They don't know who the thief is, but they come together to seek justice. The story unfolds from there about what happens when people from different walks of life are forced together but united by a cause," Rajeev says.

Rajeev layers this production against the backdrop of Theyyam, an art form practised predominantly in North Kerala and Southern Karnataka. "It's around 2,000 years old and was practised by the marginalised. During the ritual, the performer becomes the deity, and the community gathers to share their miseries. Theyyam as an art form was formed to fight injustice," Rajeev explains.

While the story is in a historical setting, Rajeev insists that its themes remain urgent. "When you go to smaller towns and villages, you realise that caste is very



much alive. This play is a reminder of that invisible divide (sic)."

Despite the gravity of its themes, Rajeev says the play avoids sermonising. "There is no moral high ground. It is all told in down-to-earth, human language. People behave differently in different situations. That ambiguity of morality and of justice is what we wanted to explore," he says.

Rajeev, who wrote and directed the play himself, says



the overwhelmingly positive reception after the first performance prompted its restaging.

This performance is also significant as *The Guests of God* marks the first commercial outing for Rajeev's theatre group, Ekata. "We have done four plays before, always as fundraisers or passion projects. This time, we wanted to see where we stand, commercially. But none of us are doing this for profit. Whatever comes in, goes into improving production quality."

With its roots in ritual and its eyes on contemporary relevance, *The Guests of God* is a play offering conversation between the past and present; gods and people; oppression and the fight for justice.

The Guests of God will be performed on May 3, 2025, 6.30 pm at Museum Theatre, Egmore. Tickets are available on BookmyShow.



A pop of green A drone shot of the portrait made with microgreens on the school terrace. SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

Sprouting talent

Teachers and students of Union Christian Public School came together to make a microgreens portrait of former President APJ Abdul Kalam for the 10th anniversary

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For students of Union Christian Public School, a recent project brought about a host of learnings – meticulousness, patience and trust in the process.

For the school's 10th anniversary, a special initiative called Sprout to Inspire, had students of classes X and XII come together to create a massive garden patch – 34 feet x 29 feet in dimension –

resembling the face of India's former President Dr APJ Abdul Kalam. It was then sown with microgreens and nurtured. The unique art project was laid out on the terrace of the school building.

"It has been 10 years since the former President passed away. We were commemorating 10 years as well. There are many values that students can imbibe from him while knowing about his inspirational journey," says Nisha Anil John, principal of the school.

Art teachers Natasha Agnelo and Kathleen Peiries, along with Mathematics teacher Samuel Don began working on this project nearly a year ago. "We started off with researching the microgreens we could use and planted samples of more than 15 microgreens. These included purple basil, fenugreek, and mustard. These were planted in small patches for us to see which would work best," says Kathleen.

The experiments also

included testing which soil and irrigation techniques work best. Natasha says that while mustard finally was the best choice given how it grew uniformly, they worked on designing and measuring out the recycled cardboard pieces which made up the frame in the shape of Abdul Kalam's face.

For Olin Joy, a Class XII student, the challenge soon gave way to excitement. "We were involved in several steps – from bringing up the soil to the terrace in small quantities, helping lay it out evenly and sowing the seeds. I feel like I now know a lot more about gardening and we were thrilled to see the final output when the greens started to grow," he says. With over 50 students working together guided by their teachers, Abigail Zandra, also a Class XII student, says that they learnt to work well as a team and distribute work.

"After having learnt about Abdul Kalam a few years ago in school, many of us felt inspired by his life, and his strides in research," Shruti Vinod, another student adds.

The reason for picking microgreens was simple. "Microgreens were chosen given how nutrient-rich they are, and the teachers too felt that this would encourage students to grow them at home. After working on this, we are sure many more students will be confident to take up gardening and make greener spaces," Kathleen says.

STEP OUT



Jamdani, reimagined

This summer, look to revisit Bengal's looms and interesting styles from around the world. Gulmohar Calcutta is reimagining the jamdani. Jamdani was a regular feature in the wardrobe of Mughal royalty. This collections span across saris, dresses, menswear, and handwoven fabrics by the metre. The brand will showcase its creation at an exclusive pop-up. @Studio Samasta, Alwarpet, on May 2 and 3, from 10am to 7pm. For details, call 9840342842.



Get ready to LOL

Ready to laugh, learn, and explore the quirks of history? Berty Ashley, hosts a fun and engaging history-themed session – Historically Speaking. At this lighthearted and interactive event, geek out about your favourite period in history and understand its connections in today's world. Tickets are priced at ₹300 (50% redeemable at venue). @The Board Room, Mylapore. On May 7, 7pm onwards. For details, call 9500043194.

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Rage on

Power, patriarchy and anger come to the fore in Chennai-based actor and director Shalini Vijayakumar’s *Seeing Red*, a 30-minute film shot entirely using an iPhone

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At her residence in the city, Shalini Vijayakumar sits cross legged, and is a picture of calm when she talks about her film *Seeing Red*. This is ironic, given how the film feels like an ode to rage; a feminine rage that feels like a ticking time bomb, ready to explode.

The 30-minute film was one among the four selected for this year’s MAMI Select: Filmed on iPhone initiative to showcase emerging filmmakers from across the country. The slapstick satire, set in 1986 and shot entirely on an iPhone 16 Pro Max, chronicles how a regular morning in a traditional household turns chaotic owing to the appearance of a ghost. The kicker? Only the women in the house are able to see her, and the men scuttle about in fear, at their wits end about what to do.

“The idea for *Seeing Red* germinated from me being the black sheep of my family. Despite having the privilege and freedom to act on my choices, my decisions have not been very welcome. How my mother has been impacted by all of this and the system, inspired me to write it,” says Shalini.

Her relationship with her mother, and the guilt she has had to wrestle with led her to introspect. “Women over generations have dealt with unprocessed anger. How would it be if my mother, or any woman, just gave into the urge to scream at all the fear and shame we are often forced to hold on to?” she asks.

In *Seeing Red*, Shalini says the men have embraced ‘benevolent chauvinism’, and this manifests itself in how they react to the three women from their orthodox family who attempt to make their voice heard. “They are immediately told that all of this is for their good. There are a handful of people asking me if I am targetting a community, but I am not. The issues you see in the film are systemic and can be placed in any other power system, and it will still remain the same. I chose this setting because of how familiar I am with it,” she says.



Bolstered by an ensemble cast comprising Shivaani Harikumar, Sahana Sundar, Soundarya Saravanan, Preethi Bharadwaj, Manasvini Kannan and led by actor and comic Badava Gopi, the film was shot in four days. Shalini was mentored by director Vetrimaaran, who she says was straightforward with his feedback. “Working on a short timeline meant that I often needed a jolt from getting too indulgent. His insights were valuable,” she says.

The film opens bombastically, with the family thrown into utter chaos with the appearance of the ghost, and this, she shares, was a conscious writing choice. Having been influenced by Bell Hooks’ writing, and the films of K Balachander for his social commentary and Visu for how he presented large family units,

Shalini quotes Phoebe Waller Bridge on her choice to opt for a slapstick satire to drive her point home. “Disarm the audience with comedy, then punch them in the gut with drama when they least expect it,” she says.

Shalini, who co-wrote the film with her partner Roju, says that they were on an equal footing when it came to their anger about caste and gender power structures at play. “For instance, we see the labour of women being exploited for close to nothing, and anytime a woman attempts to speak, she is asked to work hard and keep quiet. I might have set the story in the 1980s but the patriarchy still remains all too familiar,” she adds.

Since its release on YouTube, *Seeing Red* is inching close to 500k views, and has hundreds of comments from people who have discussed its many details.

Enthused by the reception the film had at its premiere in Mumbai and on YouTube, Shalini hopes to take her work to more festivals.

“The feedback has been eye-opening, and it has taught me how keenly the audience observes. This is something I will remember and carry forward,” she adds.

Making a point A still from *Seeing Red*; and (inset) Shalini Vijayakumar.
KARISHMA HARINATH AND SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT



Past forward
Nagarjuna and Naga Chaitanya; (below) a view of the Annapurna Studios. SIDDHANT THAKUR, SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT



established Ramanaidu Studios and the late superstar Krishna launched Padmalaya Studios, accelerating the Telugu film industry’s move to Hyderabad.

Supriya Yarlagadda, executive director and Nagarjuna’s niece, says, “A few decades ago, studios in Mumbai, Kolkata, Chennai and Hyderabad were cultural hubs where actors, writers and producers collaborated. The atmosphere nurtured creativity – it was quite unlike today’s corporate model.”

While several older studios in other cities shut down, Annapurna adapted, becoming a comprehensive filmmaking destination with in-house post-production facilities.

Need for a film school
As he witnessed the studio’s growth, Nageswara Rao was keen to address another void – the lack of formal training for filmmaking aspirants. “Much of the learning was informal, passed down by directors or department heads. A proper film school had become essential,” says Nagarjuna.

Amala Akkineni took over the reins of the film school after Nageswara Rao’s passing. Films, documentaries and web series made by students and alumni of the film school are showcased at recognised international film festivals.

Nagarjuna, Amala, and Chaitanya agree that the challenge ahead lies in keeping pace with rapidly evolving technology. “I think films will increasingly be shot on studio floors, as filmmakers now create entire worlds for their stories,” Chaitanya observes.

The journey of a studio

As Hyderabad’s Annapurna Studios marks its 50th year, Nagarjuna Akkineni, Amala Akkineni and Naga Chaitanya hold forth on the studio’s evolution

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Inside the expansive Annapurna Studios and its Annexe in Hyderabad, film units are busy shooting feature films, television shows, and web series across its 12 floors and backlots. Elsewhere, teams are at work in post-production, shaping content for final release. Meanwhile, students at the Annapurna College of Film and Media are learning the fundamentals of filmmaking. The energy is dynamic. “My father would have had tears in his eyes if he had heard that,” says actor-producer Nagarjuna Akkineni.

The studio, established by veteran actor-producer Akkineni Nageswara Rao and named after his wife, marks its 50th year. It played a key role in shifting the Telugu film industry from Chennai (then Madras) to Hyderabad. Today, Annapurna Studios houses India’s first Dolby Atmos Premier Sound Mixing Facility and a virtual production stage.

Reflecting on its origins, Nagarjuna recalls, “I wonder how my father envisioned it all. It was rocky terrain, full of shrubs and snakes.” As a teenager, he witnessed conversations between his father and elder brother Venkat Akkineni as the foundation stone was laid in 1975. The studio opened in 1976.

The beginning
Secretary, produced by D Ramanaidu and starring Nageswara Rao and Vanisri, was the first film made at Annapurna Studios. Nageswara Rao was firm in his belief – producers who wanted to work with him had



Naga Chaitanya cherishes childhood memories of accompanying his grandfather, Nageswara Rao, on a golf cart as he surveyed the upkeep of the studio floors

to film in Hyderabad. “Dad lost out on several films because of that,” recalls Nagarjuna.

But gradually, projects began to take shape. “Films like *Premabhishekam*, which was shot here, became major hits. That sentiment worked in favour of the studio, and helped cement Hyderabad as a base for Telugu cinema.”

In the following decade, D Ramanaidu

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Let the games begin

Can you name four films in which ‘Action King’ Arjun has acted as hero? Or, can you name four films in which Sivakarthikeyan and Soori came together on the big screen? If you are into film trivia and other fun games, the content at *Samodu Velayadu* might strike a chord with you. Hosting this show for a few years now is Sam Vishal, whom audiences might remember as a shy, soft-spoken singer. This movie-based game show was launched during the pandemic in March 2020, with guests tuning in from their living rooms to play fun, quirky movie-themed games. Currently it is its fourth successful season, it is streaming on Media Masons YouTube channel. The show has already featured celebrities like Kavin, Rio, Sandy Master, Ammu Abhirami and Sivaangi, among others, apart from many digital trending stars.

NOT SUPER. NOT HEROES. NOT GIVING UP.

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