Womenia

Shivaranjani Harish

Ramayana Kalpavrksam returns with a grand celebration of dance, music and devotion

The fourth edition of 'Ramayana Kalpavrksam,' presented by Shankarananda Kalakshetra and Natyarambha, celebrated India's epic heritage through a rich confluence of dance, music, and dialogue. Held at CCRT, Madhapur, the three-day festival offered audiences an immersive journey into the Ramayana through performances, talks, and interactive sessions. Conceived and curated by Padma Shri Dr. Ananda Shankar Jayant, the annual event continues to be a highlight of Hyderabad's cultural calendar

Sujata & Preetisha

Ananda Shankar & Raghav Krishna

Rekha Achyutani

Carnatic Fusion

Anna Rao Gangavalli

The fourth edition of 'Ramayana Kalpavrksam,' presented by Shankarananda Kalakshetra and Natyarambha, featured a galaxy of performances, talks, and interactive sessions. CCRT, Madhapur, was the venue for the three-day event (January 30th–February 1st, 2026). Always attended by an overflowing audience, the yearly event, conceived and curated by Padma Shri Dr. Ananda Shankar Jayant, has become an eagerly awaited star attraction in the cultural landscape of Hyderabad.

After the inauguration on the first day by Dr. Sandhya Purecha, Chairperson of the Sangeet Natak Akademi, the evening featured a poignant Odissi duet titled 'Seeta Haran', presented by Dr. Sujata Mohapatra and her daughter Preetisha. Sujata wore a green costume with blue borders, while Preetisha wore the same colours in reverse. Debiprasad Mishra's lighting effects created a tracery of lights moving in incandescent columns across the stage like glowing pillars, enveloping the artistes. The duo's synergy was in full play as they alternated in the role of Ravana, which was the highlighted sequence of the piece. As he abducts Sita, who is persuaded to step over the threshold of safety, the valiantly loyal Jatayu tries to rescue her. After a striking duel, the great eagle is defeated. Bleeding and torn, Jatayu expires in Rama's lap. Exquisite abhinaya was displayed throughout.

Next came Sandeep Narayan's Carnatic vocal concert, balancing classical rigour with contemporary sensibility and receiving exceptional audience recognition. Producing rapture, the swara alaap of Kambhoji was melodiously interpreted. Immersive Rama rasa was fully appreciated in the various other compositions in different ragas and languages, some requested by aficionados of the exceedingly popular singer.

Day two began at dawn with a deeply absorbing pravachanam on Sita Rama Kalyanam by the famous Chaganti Koteswara Rao. The divine marriage was described as the sacred union of Dharma and Shakti. He explained that Sita was central to the Avatar's unfolding to achieve the destruction of Ravana. A thought-provoking dialogue between Dr. Ananda Shankar and Raghava Krishna of BRHAT explored the role of the arts in reclaiming India's civilisation in a contemporary context. Dharma, truth, and art are inseparable, and knowledge elevates consciousness. Dr. Mohan Raghavan examined the Ramayana experience with regard to technology, while critiquing colonial interpretations of Indic texts.

Charusmitha Rao and Shivaranjani Harish presented 'Navarasa through the Ramayana', interspersing Bharatanatyam with design and storytelling. The evening was exciting with the mesmerising puppet-style dance drama 'The Ramayana' by Rangasri Little Ballet Theatre, Bhopal, where human puppets glided as though controlled by unseen strings. Entertainingly vibrant folk music by Bhungar Khan and the Manganiyar group Dharohar from Barmer, Rajasthan, with fast pacing and beats, energised the spectators at the day's conclusion.

The final day of the festival opened with Chaganti Koteswara Rao's discourse on Hanumat Darshanam. Hanuman's strength, devotion, and importance were extolled using the metaphor of the connecting knot of flowers in a garland, symbolising him as the link between Rama and Sita during and after their separation. Historian T. S. Krishnan delivered a talk drawing on his extensive research on South Indian temples, inscriptions, and literature, reflecting on the importance of awareness in shaping narratives. Rekha Achyutuni spoke about Dharmic parenting, noting that while modern education may lead to success, true happiness lies in Indian traditional approaches that nurture grounded and timeless Bharatiya values. An engaging and interactive quiz session followed, reinforcing key Ramayana themes.

As evening approached, Shrinivasa Varakhedi, Vice-Chancellor of the Central Sanskrit University, delivered a scholarly address on the epic's ethical framework and its continued relevance today. The festival concluded exuberantly on a high note with a classical fusion concert led by music producer Mahesh Raghavan. Tradition was reimagined in Carnatic music tailored to contemporary tastes while staying rooted in heritage. The medley of blended vocals and instruments was a spectacular finale, heartily enjoyed by the huge audience, who expressed their admiration with tremendous applause.

Also set up were a host of Kala Grama artisanal stalls with local merchandise, including a Ramayana Dolls display, which was eye-catching and thronged with customers.

Kalpana Iyer, the original 'Ramba Ho' girl, reveals she danced barefoot despite bleeding feet for the song

In an exclusive conversation, Bollywood veteran star Kalpana Iyer, the woman of the moment, opened up about the grit and physical toll behind her iconic dance performances.

The actress' is currently stirring headlines, as a recent video of her dancing to her legendary number "Ramba Ho" at the age of 70 took the internet by storm.

Talking to IANS, the actress recalled her early years in the industry as a dancer. Kalpana spoke candidly about dancing through pain, bruises, and bleeding feet, long before comfort and vanity became industry norms.

"I started dancing at 17, and I have never complained. I have shared green rooms, danced barefoot with scraped and bloodied soles, during Ramba Ho and have even done Raja Hindustani

barefoot with injury. I didn't have time to complain; I just worked and kept moving focusing on the opportunities that came my way and was so grateful for it. Dance has brought me so much joy in my life," she said, reflecting on an era where perseverance mattered more than privileges.

For Kalpana, in her own words, dance was never just a performance but a calling that demanded complete surrender, regardless of physical hardship.

Speaking about today's generation of performers, Kalpana was generous in her praise, stressing that comparisons between any eras of Bollywood is unfair.

"These days, girls have to put in a lot more effort. We did too, I don't deny that, but today you can see the detailing and the investment producers make. The more effort you put in, the more is invested in you. They look beautiful, their clothes are gorgeous, and some of them dance exquisitely. Times have changed and I respect that completely. I have immense love for all these girls and I truly wish them well," she shared.

Taking a trip down memory lane, Kalpana explained that it were her stark features and individuality that defined her success. She credited her slim frame, long legs, and expressive movement for setting her apart in her time, while also acknowledging the role of camera work.

From songs like 'Jab Chhaaye Mera Jaadu' and 'Hari Om Hari' to many hit movies, she described her journey as fulfilling and unique. Now open to a second innings, Kalpana said she is willing to explore any role, as long as it respects her age and comfort, adding that she is even open to playing a naani or daadi..

The actress further also clarified a long-held myth about Ramba Ho shoot.

Kalpana revealed that the song was not shot in Goa, as widely believed. "We had shot at Nataraj Studio in Mumbai. Prema and I danced in a dance studio, right in front of Ramanand Sagar's office," she said, offering a behind-the-scenes detail.

CROSSWORD

ACROSS

1 Precious metal (4)
4 Capital of the Bahamas (6)
8 Ten decibels ? (3)
10 A day in Rome (4)
13 Diminish (8)
14 Change for Norma Jean (7)
15 Worships (6)
17 Receding (9)
21 Bear lair (3)
22 Vane directions ? (3)
23 The unit of electrical resistance (3)
26 Set right (9)
27 Young ones of cows (6)
28 Calls for (7)
32 The rules of state etiquette (8)
34 Take it easy (4)
35 Resv. Bank of India (3)
36 Mental health (6)
37 Sumerian sun god (4)

DOWN

1 Stern (4)
2 Sly look (4)
3 Actress Lamarr (4)
5 Scrape off (6)
6 Jamaican popular music (3)
7 Jittery (6)
9 Sir Hutton of cricket (3)
11 Stunned or confounded ? (5)
12 Temptress (5)
15 Assert or affirm (4)
16 Cheering words (4)
18 Prison room (4)
19 Discerns or observes (4)
20 Our country, abbr. (3)
23 Schindler of "Schindler's List" (5)
24 Repairs (5)
25 Ranges or extents (6)
26 Cutting reply (6)
28 Beetle (3)
29 Italian island (4)
30 Subsequent (4)
31 Doe's mate (4)
33 Have or possess (3)

Solution to February 2

SUDOKU

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		7	5					
	4		1					
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7	6	3	4	1	8	5	2	9
2	5	1	3	6	9	8	7	4
8	9	4	5	2	7	1	6	3
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9	8	6	1	7	2	4	3	5
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Solution to February 2

Mona Singh on mistakes: They are lessons that help you grow as a human being

Actress Mona Singh strongly believes that mistakes are an essential part of life and should be treated as lessons rather than burdens to carry forward.

Sharing her thoughts, the actress said that when she makes a mistake, she prefers to reflect on it, learn from it, and move on, rather than feeling guilty or weighed down by it. According to her, that is the only way to truly move ahead in life.

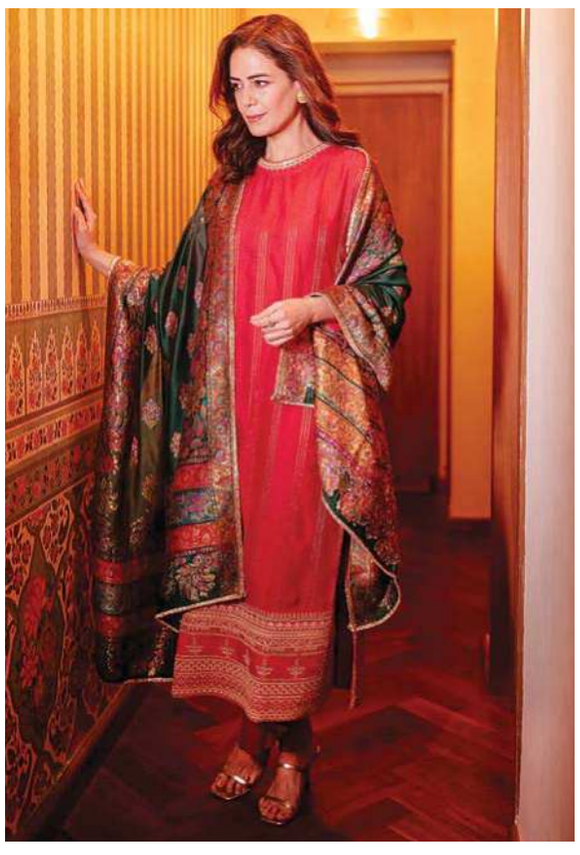
Asked whether she ponders over the mistakes she makes or has learnt to accept them and move on, Mona, who is all set to be seen in the second season of the Netflix series 'Kohrra', said: "That's the only way to go forward in life, I think — and not treat it as a mistake or feel guilty about it and carry that baggage. It's a lesson."

Mona added that life constantly teaches people valuable lessons, often through the people who enter their lives.

She said: "And I think that's what life does. It keeps teaching us those lessons. People come into our lives for a certain reason."

She shared that some relationships last, while others fade with time, but each one serves a purpose and leaves behind a learning experience.

"Some stay, some go. But they always teach you a lesson. And I think that's very, very human. And that's the way forward, if you don't want to stay bitter and want to grow and evolve as a human being," said the actress.



The new chapter of 'Kohrra' also stars Barun Sobti and Rannvijay Singha. The second season will stream on Netflix starting February 11. In the new season, Barun reprises his role as the sharp-witted investigator Amarpal Garundi, who teams up with a new character played by Mona to solve a complex, dark murder mystery of a woman.

'Kohrra' season 2 is scheduled to premiere on February 11. Created and written by Gunjit Chopra, Diggi Sisodia, and Sudip Sharma, Season 2 brings a fresh case and a new pairing, rooted once again in Punjab's bleak, wintry terrain where silence often speaks louder than a confession.

A Film Squad Production in association with Act Three, produced by Saurabh Malhotra, Sudip Sharma, Manuj Mittra, and Tina Tharwani, Season 2 also marks an important creative evolution for the series.

Talking about Mona, she is widely recognised for playing the eponymous heroine in the soap opera 'Jassi Jaissi Koi Nahin'. The actress is also known for her work in 'Kya Huaa Tera Vaada', 'Pyaar Ko Ho Jaane Do', and 'Kavach... Kaali Shaktiyon Se'. She made her film debut with a supporting role in Rajkumar Hirani's comedy-drama '3 Idiots' in 2009.