



**WORLD 5**  
THREE KILLED, EIGHT HURT IN  
KNIFE ATTACK IN GERMANY

**SPORT 7**  
INDIA U17 GEAR UP FOR  
INDONESIA CHALLENGE IN BALI

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## Unprecedented Unified Pension Scheme by Modi Government



Prime Minister Narendra Modi meets a delegation from Joint Consultative machinery for Central Government employees, at his residence in New Delhi on Saturday PTI

**RAJESH KUMAR ■ NEW DELHI**

The Narendra Modi government on Saturday approved an assured 50 per cent of salary as pension for government employees under Unified Pension Scheme (UPS), which aims to provide assured pension, family pension and assured minimum pension. The new scheme will benefit 23 lakh central government employees. The new scheme will be implemented from April 1, 2025 and employees will have

the option to choose between the National Pension Scheme (NPS) and UPS. Existing central government NPS subscribers will also be given the option to switch to UPS. This UPS, in addition to gratuity will incorporate a lump sum payment after superannuation. Notably, UPS will also be applied retroactively to government employees who retired from 2004 onwards. While announcing the details of the scheme after the cabinet meeting, Union Information and Broadcasting Minister

Ashwini Vaishnaw announced the UPS that government employees will now be eligible to get 50 per cent of the average basic pay drawn over the last 12 months before the superannuation as pension. "The Centre has constituted a committee that held 100 meetings with several top organizations, including the RBI and the World Bank, to make decisions on this scheme. "Government employees have demanded some changes in the New Pension Schemes. For this, Prime Minister

Narendra Modi constituted a committee under the chairmanship of Cabinet Secretary TV Somanathan. This committee held more than 100 meetings with different organisations and nearly all the states." There's a difference between how PM Modi works and the opposition works," Vaishnaw said. "Unlike the opposition, PM Modi believes in holding extensive consultations. Following extensions consultations with everyone, including Reserve Bank of India and World Bank, the

committee has recommended a Unified Pension Scheme. Today, the Union Cabinet has approved this Unified Pension Scheme, and it will be implemented in the future," he added. Under the assured pension scheme, the beneficiary will get 50 per cent of the average basic pay drawn over the last 12 months prior to superannuation for a minimum qualifying service of 25 years. The pension drawn will be proportionate for lesser service period up to a minimum of 10 years of service. As a part of the assured minimum pension, the beneficiary will draw Rs 10,000 per month on superannuation after minimum 10 years of service. Under the assured family pension, the beneficiary will get 60 per cent of pension of the employee immediately before his/her death. The assured pension, assured family pension and assured minimum pension will receive benefits of inflation indexation. Dearness relief will be based on All India Consumer Price Index for Industrial Workers (AICPI-IW) as in case of serving employees.

## PDP Manifesto: Mehbooba Mufti throws down the Kashmir gauntlet

**MOHIT KANDHARI ■ JAMMU**



Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) president Mehbooba Mufti with other party leaders and candidates during the release of the party's election manifesto ahead of the State Assembly elections, in Srinagar, on Saturday PTI

Joining the chorus with the National Conference over the resolution of the Kashmir issue, Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) Chief Mehbooba Mufti Saturday observed that the unconstitutional and illegal revocation of Articles 370 and 35A in 2019 has further complicated the Kashmir issue, deepening the sense of alienation among the people of the region. Releasing her party's election manifesto ahead of the Assembly polls in Srinagar, the former Chief Minister declared that if the National Conference (NC) and Congress were willing to accept the PDP's manifesto and align with its stand on resolving the problems of Kashmir, she would support their alliance without contesting any seats. She said, "Alliance and seat sharing are faraway things. If the National Conference and Congress are ready to adopt our agenda, we will say they should contest on all seats, we will follow them because, for me, solving the problem of Kashmir is more important than anything else..." she said. Mehbooba Mufti clarified that the upcoming elections are not just about Statehood or seat sharing, but about larger goals. "For me, this election is not about Statehood or seat sharing... We have a bigger

goal... We are fighting for dignity, for the resolution of the Kashmir issue." "When we allied earlier, we had an agenda, when we allied with the BJP, we had an agenda which they agreed to but the alliance between the National Conference and Congress is not happening on the agenda, it is happening on seat sharing," she added. "The PDP is resolute in its pursuit of restoration of the constitutional guarantees that were unjustly scrapped and is committed to restoring Jammu & Kashmir to its original status, ensuring that the voices of its people are heard and their rights are safeguarded". She also committed to facilitating the return of Kashmiri Pandits to the Valley, emphasizing that her party

would take all necessary steps to ensure their safe return. Mehbooba Mufti said her party is committed to the revocation of AFSPA. She also batted for the resumption of the cross-LoC trade between India and Pakistan and urged the Union Home Minister to relaunch the services soon by extending banking services to the traders on both sides of the LoC. The manifesto titled 'People's Aspirations' also talks about creation of a regional free-trade area and shared economic market, striving for revocation of the Public Safety Act (PSA), Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act (UAPA) and Enemy Act, as well as its commitment to revocation of Armed Forces Special Powers Act (AFSPA).



## MVA hits the streets over macabre Badlapur rape

**PTI ■ LATUR**

The Opposition Maha Vikas Aghadi held a protest in Latur on Saturday as part of its Statewide stir against the sexual assault on two girls in a school in Badlapur in Thane district and the Maharashtra Government's alleged mishandling of the case. Workers of the Congress, Shiv Sena (UBT) and NCP (SP) wore black arm bands and masks to cover their mouths as part of the protest, which was held at Rajarshi Chhatrapati Shahu Maharaj Chowk in the morning. They shouted slogans against the State and Union Governments and said concrete steps must be taken to tackle crimes against women. The MVA had called for a 'Maharashtra bandh' on Saturday but it had to be withdrawn after the Bombay High Court on Friday restrained all parties and individuals from proceeding with it. Meanwhile, BJP workers on Saturday demonstrated in Thane against the

Maha Vikas Aghadi, accusing the Opposition parties of trying to politicise the alleged sexual abuse of two minor girls at a school in Badlapur. Protesters, led by BJP's Thane district president Sanjay Waghule and MLA Sanjay Kelkar, assembled in front of Ahiyadevi memorial amid rains and demanded swift justice for the victim girls. "This is a severe incident which has devastated the family members of the victims. However, leaders of MVA are busy politicising this tragedy. They are trying to defame Maharashtra," Waghule alleged. Kelkar alleged that MVA leaders are eyeing power and lack sensitivity. Local BJP leaders, former corporators, women wing members, and other office-bearers joined the protest. The MVA staged protests across Maharashtra, accusing the Mahayuti Government of inefficient handling of the Badlapur incident, which triggered a massive rail roko demonstration on Tuesday.

## Bestial Assam rapist meets his end in a pond

**PTI ■ GUWAHATI**

The prime accused in the rape of a minor girl allegedly escaped from police custody, jumped into a pond and died on Saturday morning at Dhing in Assam's Nagaon district, police said. The villagers of Borbheti, the family home of the accused, have taken a decision not to participate in his funeral prayers and not allow his burial in the village graveyard. Nagaon Superintendent of Police Swapneel Deka told reporters that the accused, who was arrested on Friday, was taken handcuffed to the location where the crime was allegedly committed for a re-creation of the crime scene around 3.30 am. "The accused hit out at a policeman, escaped from police custody and jumped into the pond," Deka said. The SDRF was immediately informed, a search operation was launched and his body was recovered after nearly two hours, he added. The policeman was also injured and admitted to a hospital, the SP said. The other two accused are still absconding and search was continuing with raids conducted at several places on Friday night. The 14-year-old girl was allegedly raped by three persons who came on a motorcycle and surrounded her while she was returning home from tuition on her bicycle at Dhing on Thursday evening. She was left injured and unconscious



on the roadside near a pond, before being rescued by locals who informed police. Meanwhile, villagers of Borbheti held a meeting on Saturday morning and took three decisions regarding the crime committed by the youth. "We have decided not to allow his burial in the village graveyard, not participate in his 'janaza' (burial prayers) and social boycott of his family," a village elder Md Shahjahan Ali Choudhury told PTI. "The village youth's crime has shamed us and we cannot allow his burial in the community graveyard," he added. Meanwhile, a march was also taken out from the village mosque to protest against the incident. Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma had said on Friday that stern action will be taken against the culprits. Sarma, who is currently touring the three districts in Barak Valley, had said on Friday night that there is a difference between Assam and Bengal in dealing with such cases.

## India will miss your thunder, Shikhar Dhawan

**RISHABH MALIK ■ NEW DELHI**

India's opening batsman and Champions Trophy winner Shikhar Dhawan announced his retirement from professional cricket both international and domestic through a social media post on Saturday morning. In the retirement video message he stated "As I close this chapter of my cricketing journey, I carry with me countless memories and gratitude. Thank you for the love and support! Jai Hind!" Dhawan last donned the Indian jersey in an ODI against Bangladesh in 2022 and T20I in Sri Lanka in 2021. Dhawan has not been part of the Test team since 2018, after the England Tour. From his thunderous arrival in Test cricket in Mohali against Australia in 2013, he scored 187 under the leadership of Dhoni, later in the career Shikhar found a permanent spot in India's opening slot with Rohit Sharma for the first time, which helped the Team India in winning the Champions Trophy in 2013 in England. He was a leading run scorer in the tournament with 363 runs in the bank. From where there was no looking back for Dhawan in 2015 World Cup, Dhawan scored 338 runs in five innings and one hundred. In the 2015 ODI World Cup, he was

India's top run-getter with 412 runs in eight matches and two hundreds. Overall, Dhawan has featured for India in 167 ODIs, scoring 6793 runs including 17 centuries and 39 half-centuries. His average in the format stands at 44.11 in test cricket, Dhawan's career always known for his ICC tournaments performances back from under 19 World Cup to 2019 his big scores marked a significant badge on his career. His centuries in ICC World Cups and Champions Trophy stood out in One Day Cricket. Dhawan's career will always be remembered for his opening partnership with Rohit Sharma which they started with the white ball cricket from the 2013 ICC Champions Trophy. Both openers have 5148 partnership runs and are the fourth-highest among all opening pairs, next only to Ganguly-Tendulkar, Adam Gilchrist-Matthew Hayden and Gordon Greenidge-Desmond Haynes. It took only 140 - Innings by Dhawan to reach 6000 ODI runs which are the fifth fastest in World ODI Cricket. The left hand opening batsman also had some low points in career in the 2019 World Cup after scoring a century against Australia in the Oval. He suffered a thumb injury which ruled him out from the World Cup which has been the talking point of India's loss in Semi Finals.



## CBI probe into Laxmanananda murder sought



**Sanatani bodies hold demo in BBSR**

**PNS ■ BHUBANESWAR**

Demanding a CBI investigation into the murder of Swami Laxmanananda Saraswati, members of various Sanatani organisations staged a demonstration in

Bhubaneswar on Saturday. They marched towards the State Assembly on the Mahatma Gandhi Road. "Odisha is a peace-loving State and Swami Laxmanananda Saraswati was a saint. He was working for the welfare of the neglected, ignored, and exploited tribals, but people from a certain community were jealous

of him and created many obstacles for him, ultimately killing him. Till date, the actual perpetrators have not been punished. Even the previous BJD-led government did not do justice to this case. So, we are demanding that the current BJP-led government take action and order a CBI enquiry," said a demonstrator.

## Amid din in Assembly over quota issue Censure motion passed against 2 BJD MLAs

**PNS ■ BHUBANESWAR**

The Odisha Assembly was adjourned till 4 pm for the fifth consecutive day on Saturday amid acrimonious scenes after a censure motion was passed against two BJD MLAs for their unruly behaviour towards Speaker Surama Padhy the previous day. Earlier on Saturday, BJD and Congress MLAs trooped into the Well and threw leaflets over the ST, SC and OBC reservation issue during Zero Hour even as the BJP accused the Opposition of mis-



behaving with the Speaker and demanded an apology, forcing the Speaker to adjourn the House for an hour. Government Chief Whip Saroj Pradhan brought the censor motion against BJD MLAs Romancha Biswal and Madhab Dhada, who had attempted to climb atop the Speaker's podium on Friday to draw attention to the recent

hooch tragedy in Ganjam district. When the House reassembled on Saturday, the Opposition continued sloganeering against the government for failing to implement reservations for SCs, STs and OBCs as per the population count. "In Odisha, 54% of the population belongs to OBC

while around 40% are from SC/ST communities. But reservations have not been made accordingly. They are not getting due reservation in technical and medical institutes," Congress Legislature Party Leader Rama Chandra Kadam told reporters. He demanded a caste census and an OBC commission in the State. Speaking to the media, BJD MLA Arun Sahoo said the SCs and STs are getting 20% reservation in the ongoing admission to 2,200 MBBS seats while they deserve 38.75%. "There is no reservation for OBC/SEBC in engineering, medi-

cal and general educational institutes. Though they deserve 27%, the government should at least implement 11.25% reservation for them in technical and professional courses as is the case with jobs," he said. The Opposition termed the censure motion amid the quota demand as unfortunate and reminded the ruling BJP of the dal throwing incident involving the then MLA and current CM Mohan Charan Majhi and fellow BJP legislator Mukesh Mahaling in 2023 when a woman Speaker was on her seat.



# Crorepati OSRTC FA& CAO arrested

**PNS ■ CUTTACK**  
The Vigilance police on Saturday arrested and forwarded to court Bijaya Kumar Mangaraj, Financial Advisor and Chief Accounts Officer (FA & CAO), Odisha State Roads Transport Corporation (OSRTC), Bhubaneswar for possession of disproportionate assets (DA).



The Vigilance, during raids on the properties of Mangaraj, has detected assets to the tune of 162 per cent of his known sources of income, which he could not account for satisfactorily. During house searches, movable and immovable assets worth crores of rupees were unearthed in the names of Mangaraj and his family members. Mangaraj's assets include two double-storied buildings

at New Colony, Palasuni, Rasulgarh, Bhubaneswar, a double-storied bungalow in Ernakulum, Kerala, two high-value plots in prime areas of Bhubaneswar, bank deposits, investment in PPF and shares of Rs 1.48 crore, gold jewellery weighing 500 grams, two four-wheelers (Hyundai Asta and Kia Seltos) and household articles worth over Rs 17 lakh. After search, inventory and further inquiry, the income, expenditure and assets of Mangaraj were calculated and

## BMC Engineer's property to be confiscated

**PNS ■ BHUBANESWAR**  
The Authorised Officer, Special Confiscation Court, Bhubaneswar on Saturday passed an order for confiscating the immovable and movable assets to the tune of Rs 5.87 crore of Subash Chandra Mishra, a former Municipal Engineer, Bhubaneswar Municipal Corporation (BMC). The assets to be confiscated include two double-storied buildings, a single-storied building and three plots in Mouza Rajarani, Bhubaneswar and Bhipur, bank and insurance deposits, investment in shares and gold ornaments of



over 2.5 kg. Earlier, Mishra had been charge-sheeted by the Vigilance for possession of the aforesaid assets as disproportionate to his known sources of income. During investigation, the concerned properties were attached, and the authorised Officer of Confiscation Court was moved by Vigilance for confiscation of the same. he was found in possession of disproportionate assets which were 162% in excess of his

# Years after elder sister's death Schoolgirl missing after jumping to Mahanadi

**PNS ■ SAMBALPUR**  
In a tragic turn of events, a Class-IX girl student, Kajal Sahani, while on her way to school, jumped into the Mahanadi river in Sambalpur on Saturday morning for reasons yet to be known. Shockingly, Kajal's elder sister Kabita had also died a similar death after getting drowned as a child. On being informed, Fire Service personnel and local police rushed to the spot to launch a rescue operation. However, Kajal was missing in the river during the filing of this report. Like any other day, Kajal left for school. However, she did not go to the school. She left behind her school bag and cycle

before plunging into the water body. The reason for her extreme step was yet to be ascertained. Family members said there was no fight or any such thing between them. "I was jogging here. Before I could understand anything, the girl kept her cycle and jumped into the river," said an eyewitness. Kajal's wailing mother said, "She bought two biscuits and ate one before leaving for school. Nothing had happened in the family for her to take the drastic step. I even told her not to go to school as it was raining." Her father said, "I sell gupchup for a living. The school is answerable to what my daughter did."

# 3 illegal liquor units demolished in city



## Huge quantity of country liquor seized

**PNS ■ BHUBANESWAR**  
Three illegal liquor distillation units were bulldozed at Salia Sahi in Bhubaneswar following a raid by the Commissionerate Police on Saturday. A huge amount of country liquor and manufacturing equipments were seized during the raid. After receiving intelligence inputs, a police team led by city DCP Prateek Singh and other senior officials reached the spot and conducted the raid.

A secret underground chamber was found inside a room during the raid. Illegal trading of country liquor was going on in the secret chamber. Various luxurious goods and Wi-Fi facilities were there in the secret chamber. "We have detained some persons in connection with the case. Some others are still at large. We have identified all of them and they will be nabbed soon," said Singh. Notably, many of the slums in the capital city have become a safe haven for illegal liquor and narcotics trade. The Commissionerate police's 'Basti Ku Chala' community policing initiative has failed to achieve the desired results.

## Ratna Bhandar repair Start inspection with latest technology: SJTA ASI DG

**PNS ■ PURI**  
A day after all the empty cupboards and chests were shifted from the Shreemandir's Ratna Bhandar, the Shree Jagannath Temple Administration (SJTA) has written a letter to the ASI DG to start inspection work soon. In the letter, SJTA Chief Administrator Arabinda Padhee has asked the ASI DG to use the latest technology and start the survey work in both inner and outer chambers of the Ratna Bhandar, the treasure trove of Lord Jagannath. The inspection works assume significance as earlier apprehensions were expressed regarding presence of some secrete tunnels or chambers inside the Ratna Bhandar. The SJTA has also urged the ASI to ensure that the repair works have no adverse impact on the temple. The ASI has also been urged to conduct the necessary inspection through IIT or CBRI-like institutions that have the relative expertise. Once the necessary survey and inspection works are completed, a process will then be undertaken for the repair works. This will subsequently lead to the next process of counting and valuation of the ornaments and other valuables which have been shifted to a temporary strong room. All the valuables kept in the cupboards and chests were shifted to the temporary strong room near Khata Seja Ghara and Changada Ghara in two phases on July 14 and 18.

# 2 Odia scientists get Bhatnagar Award from Prez

**PNS ■ BHUBANESWAR**  
President Droupadi Murmu on Thursday awarded two Odia scientists with the prestigious Vigyan Yuva - Shanti Swarup Bhatnagar Award at the Rashtriya Vigyan Puraskar 2024 award ceremony held at the Rashtrapati Bhavan in New Delhi. Dr Swarup Kumar Parida was conferred with the coveted award for his contribution to Agricultural Science while Dr Digendranath Swain was felicitated by the President for his contribution to Space Science and Technology.



Dr Parida is currently engaged as a scientist at the New Delhi-based National Institute of Plant Genome Research (NIPGR) while Dr Swain is the EXMD/STR at Vikram Sarabhai Space Centre, ISRO, Thiruvananthapuram. He has made outstanding contributions in supporting structural qualification tests using DIC and other experimental techniques. In the first edition of the Rashtriya Vigyan Puraskar, at least 33 awards were presented to distinguished scientists in four categories - Vigyan Ratna, Vigyan Shri, Vigyan Yuva and Vigyan Team.

# 'Problems of OPTCL contractors to be addressed'

**PNS ■ BHUBANESWAR**  
Deputy Chief Minister Kanak Vardhan Singh Deo, who also holds the portfolio of Energy Department, has assured that the new BJP government would address the problems faced by Odia electrical contractors of the Odisha Power Transmission Corporation Limited (OPTCL). A team of OPTCL Electrical Contractors' Association led by president Amiyakanta Das and general secretary Ashok Ray called on Singh Deo on Tuesday. During the meeting, the team apprised the Deputy CM about the apathetic attitude of government officials towards Odia electrical contractors despite their selfless efforts in restoration of electricity during the natural calamities in the State.

The OPTCL contractors are not getting work regularly despite their expertise while non-Odia contractors are getting contracts at higher bid having no offices in the State, they complained to the Minister. Besides, the price of rate contract holders of OPTCL has not been hiked for a long period despite increased labour and material cost, they further said. They requested the Minister to consider providing regular work to rate contract holders of the OPTCL. "The Deputy CM has assured to consider our demands and prioritise Odia contractors in electrical contracts of the OPTCL. He said would consider our grievances sympathetically and take necessary measures after the departmental secretary takes charge," said Odisha Electrical Contractors' Association president Amiyakanta Das.

# Guv to apprise CM about scribes' health insurance

**PNS ■ BHUBANESWAR**  
Governor Raghubar Das has instructed for immediate renewal of the Gopabandhu Health Insurance Scheme for working journalist. The Governor also said he would hold discussions with Chief Minister Mohan Charan Majhi, who holds the Information and Public Relations portfolio, regarding the matter. On Friday, a delegation of the weekly, fortnightly and monthly newspapers had met the Governor regarding their problems. The State Government is providing health insurance of Rs 5 lakh to a working journalist and his family from 2018. Every year before August, the insurance period lapses and a new card is issued. But this year, till now, new cards have not been issued. The Governor assured the delegation that appropriate steps would be taken to fulfil their demands. Among others, senior journalists Pradyumna Mohanty, Hrushikesh Mohanty, Bijaya Panda, Ajay Das and Ashok Das were present.



# Use tech to increase agri production: CM

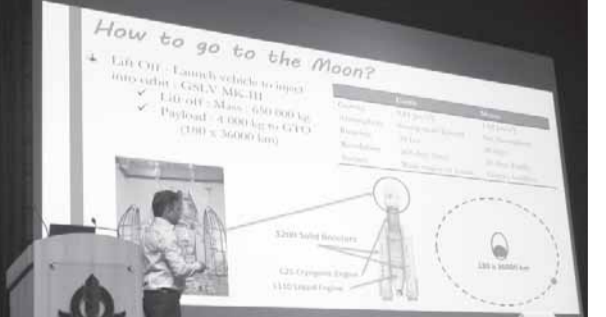
**OUAT foundation day held**  
**PNS ■ BHUBANESWAR**  
The Odisha University of Agriculture and Technology (OUAT) has played an important role in the agricultural development of the State, said Chief Minister Mohan Charan Majhi at the OUAT's 63rd foundation day celebration here on Saturday. It is important to increase and be self-sufficient in the production of seeds, vegetables, fish, eggs, fruits and flowers. The previous government started potato, onion, jackfruit and many other missions, but all of them failed. So, the State should be self-sufficient in them. For this, the OUAT has to play an important role, said Majhi and urged the scientists to develop new technologies to increase production.



Inspired by the Prime Minister, the Odisha Government has started many schemes for the development of farmers. The PM Kisan and CM Kisan schemes have been started for the farmers in Odisha. Besides, the Minimum Support Price (MSP) of paddy has been increased to Rs 3,100. The money would be credited to the accounts of farmers in 36 hours through DBT. Besides, the infrastructure is being strengthened in the mandis, said the Chief Minister. On the occasion, Majhi inaugurated a 1,008-seater auditorium in the premises of the OUAT.

# Chandrayaan-3 testament of India's commitment to space exploration

**IIT-BBS holds talk on sidelines of observing Nat'l Space Day**  
**PNS ■ BHUBANESWAR**  
The Indian Institute of Technology (IIT), Bhubaneswar, has joined the nation in celebrating the first National Space Day on Friday (August 23) as a commemoration to India's success of Chandrayaan-3 Mission last year. As part of the celebration, the institute organised a seminar on 'Chandrayaan-3 and Aditya-L1 Mission: ISRO's Unprecedented Journey to study the Moon and Sun'. Dr Kuldeep Negi from ISRO addressed on the occasion and shared his experience. Currently serving as a Section Head in the Flight Dynamics Group and Associate



Project Director of Chandrayaan-4 at the UR Rao Satellite Center (URSC) of the Indian Space Research Organization (ISRO), Bengaluru, Dr Negi is responsible for designing trajectories for geospacecraft, interplanetary and lunar missions. In his address, Dr Negi explained: "Chandrayaan-3 is a testament to India's commitment to space exploration. ISRO has set a benchmark by demonstrating soft landing on lunar surface by its lunar

challenges in Chandrayaan-3 mission and spaceflight trajectory design with respect to the mission. The seminar explained the target lunar orbit trajectory design for the Composite Module and then the multi-phase powered descent trajectory design for the Lander Module. Dr Negi also highlighted that Aditya-L1's manifold-based trajectory design is instrumental in planning halo orbits around L1. The seminar concluded with a discussion on ISRO's strategic frontier for space exploration. IIT Bhubaneswar Director Prof Shreepad Karmalkar felicitated Dr Negi on the occasion. Dr Vijayakrishna Kari, Professor-in-Charge (Seminar) coordinated the programme while faculty members, staff and students of the institute participated in large numbers.

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# 6 trucks smuggling sand from JSpur seized

Hand of inter-State racket suspected

KAHNU NANDA  
JAGATSinghpur

In a startling incident, six sand-laden trucks with AP and Tamil Nadu registration numbers were seized by Biridi police on Thursday night, while the vehicles were illegally transporting sand from the Chasikhanda Ghat from the Beluakhai river.

Preliminary investigation revealed that the trucks after loading sand from the sand quarrying point were on the way to Cuttack when a group of local villagers intercepted the vehicles near the Balia store on Cuttack-Machhagaon NH-55 and informed police. Soon,



a police team swung into action.

The truck drivers, who are non-Odias, could not furnish documents, valid transit passes in Form-Y issued by the Tehsildar and a permission letter for such transportation from the authorised Ghat lessee.

The trucks had come to

administration, they managed to lift the sand, almost clandestinely, it is alleged.

Ramakrushna Parija from Hajipur under Biridi block, who first told police and Biridi revenue authority about the theft of sand, said since the quality of the Odisha sand earns good price in the southern States with each loaded truck costing Rs 85,000 to Rs 90,000, the covert operation was going on. On the other hand, District Mining Officer Satish Tarai refuted the allegation of an inter-State racket operating in Jagatsinghpur district.

"We have issued a show cause notice to the lessee of the Ghat under OMMC rules in connection with the incident and are waiting for his response," he added.

Jagatsinghpur to dispatch cement on Thursday, and questions were raised by the residents about how these trucks had been loaded with sand. So, it is suspected that an inter-State sand smuggling racket was behind the incident.

Taking advantage of slack monitoring and surveillance mechanisms by the civil ad-

## Nat'l Space Day observed at Paradip Port

PNS ■ PARADIP

On August 23, 2023, India achieved a historic milestone when the Chandrayaan-3 lander successfully completed a soft landing on the Moon. The remarkable accomplishment made India the fourth country to accomplish this feat and the first to land on the lunar South Pole. In recognition of the extraordinary achievement, Prime Minister Narendra Modi has declared August 23 as National Space Day.

Accordingly, the National Space Day with the theme "Touching Lives While Touching the Moon: India's Space Saga" to honour and take pride in the collective achievements was organised by the Paradip Port Authority (PPA).

A series of activities were undertaken at the Paradip Port. Drawing and essay competi-



tions were held among local school students, where they exhibited creativity and explored the cosmos. A fancy dress competition on space theme was conducted among the kids of 'V' point KG school. PPA Secretary UR Mohan Raju encouraged the students and awarded them with prizes and certificates.

Students of the Kendriya Vidyalaya, Paradip Port participated in various forms of activities. There were speeches by students stating the importance of the day. Power point was shown encasing the future course of action of ISRO. Models were showcased of CHANDRAYAAN-3 and students brought the chart paper by doing the diagrams of the space day.

## INBRIEF

### Female JE ends life in Baleswar

Baleswar: A female Junior Engineer (JE) was found hanging with a dupatta under mysterious circumstances in her rented house in Bhograi on Saturday. The deceased, a native of Mayurbhanj district, was identified as Monalisa Hembram (26) and was working as a JE in Bhograi block. Her staffs said she had attended a meeting at the block office before returning to her residence on Friday evening. The owner of the deceased's rented house revealed that a man used to visit her for the last six months identifying him as one of her siblings.

### Rape accused gets 10-year RI in Baleswar

Baleswar: Special Judge, POCSO, Ranjan Kumar Sutar awarded 10 years' RI and Rs 5,000 fine to a rape accused on Saturday. The convict Bharat Sethi of village Antapara under the Simulia police limits had engaged a minor girl, a Plus Two student, of his area in flesh trade in Andhra Pradesh after kidnapping her promising to marry. "The court after examining 12 witnesses and 19 exhibits sentenced him under the POCSO Act. The court further ordered a compensation of Rs 4 lakh for the victim to be paid through DLSA," said Special Public Prosecutor Pranab Kumar Panda.

### CUO students demand justice for Kolkata rape victim

Koraput: Students, staffs and faculty members of the Central University of Odisha (CUO) organised a candle march in the campus here demanding justice for the lady doctor who was



brutally raped and murdered at the RG Kar Medical College Hospital, Kolkata. The procession concluded with the observation of two minutes of silence for the peace of the departed soul. Vice-Chancellor Prof Chakradhar Tripathi led the procession in the presence of faculty members.

### Cobra bites chicken, swallows eggs

Jajpur: A five-feet-long venomous cobra bit a chicken and swallowed her eggs before getting rescued by a snake helpline member. The incident took place in the house of one Rangadhar Patra in Mundamal village under the Jajpur Road police station on Saturday. The video of the snake's rescue has gone viral on social media.



## Partition Horrors recalled at Baripada



### BJP observes Remembrance Day

PNS ■ BARIPADA

The Partition Horrors Remembrance Day was observed here by the Mayurbhanj district unit of BJP. A public meeting was held to commemorate the occasion.

The meeting was convened by BJP State media panellist Kavi Vishnu Satpathy and was attended by a galaxy of leaders and a large number of intellectuals of the town and the district. Baleswar MP and former Union Minister Pratap Chandra Sarangi and State Urban Development Minister

Dr Krushna Chandra Mohapatra graced the meeting as the chief speaker and the chief guest respectively. Baripada MLA Prakash Chandra Soren and BJP district president and former MLA Kandra Soren were the guests of honour on the occasion.

Speakers spoke of the horrible happenings of the partition days that took place across the Indian sub-continent. Glowing tributes were paid to lakhs of horror-victims of those dark days which were marked by large-scale loot, arson, rape and genocide.

A large number of women and youths attended the programme.

## Rape of disabled girl NHRC seeks ATR from K'pada DM, SP

PNS ■ KENDRAPADA

The National Human Rights commission (NHRC) on August 21 sought for an Action Taken Report (ATR) within four weeks from the district Collector and SP of Kendrapada concerning rape of a 30-year-old physically disabled girl and her impregnation by a man.

Acting on a petition filed by rights activist Sagar Jena of Endor village, the apex rights panel gave such a direction.

Activist Jena in his petition mentioned that one Kabir Behera, a resident of Nayagarh

village, staying in a rented house near the victim's house, allegedly by taking advantage of the physical disability of the victim, raped her. As the victim cannot speak, so she failed to inform the matter to anybody.

But she recently underwent pain on her abdomen for which her mother took her to the district headquarters hospital for treatment. The test report revealed the victim to be 7 months' pregnant. After the victim somehow identified who the culprit was, her mother lodged an FIR at the Sadar police station.

## In Sambalpur

# Man gets 17-yr RI for sexually assaulting minor boy

PNS ■ SAMBALPUR

The POCSO Court in Sambalpur on Thursday awarded 17 years of rigorous imprisonment to a man for sexual assault on an eleven-year-old minor boy. The convict has been identified as Suman Pradhan (28) under Rairakhol police station in Sambalpur district.

According to reports, the incident took place on May

23, 2014 when the minor boy along with his two friends was playing and plucking mango near the local Panchayat Office. The convict forcibly took the victim to the backside of the Panchayat Office for the heinous act. The other boys rushed to the village and informed the people about it. The villagers, including the Sarpanch, reached the spot and caught the convict red-handed. Subsequently, convict

Suman managed to escape, and the boy was rescued by the villagers, who took him to his home. The parents registered a case at Rairakhol Police Station on the same day.

Suman was booked under Section 377 of the IPC besides Section 4 of the POCSO Act. The court, under Section 377, sentenced the convict to 10 years RI and also slapped a fine of Rs 50,000. In default, the convict will have to undergo

rigorous imprisonment of further six months. Additionally, under Section 4 of the POCSO Act, the convict was awarded 7 years of rigorous imprisonment and a fine of Rs 50,000, failure of which will result in an additional six months of RI.

The judgement was delivered by Judge Abhilash Senapati after recording the testimonies of 11 witnesses. The case was taken up by public prosecutor Santosh Panda.

## K'pada gastroenteritis-hit villagers hold Yajna

To appease village deity as they believe disease a fallout of divine curse

PNS ■ KENDRAPADA

In the remote village of Charipokharia under Bhitargada Gram Panchayat under Rajnagar block in Kendrapada district, the villagers on Wednesday organised Chandi Patha, Hanuman Chalisa, Havan and Yajna at the Panchubarahi temple to appease the deity and get them protected from the gastroenteritis, which has affected the village and its neighbourhood very badly since the last week.

According to reports, as many as four persons have died and more than 100 persons have been affected in the last few days in five GPs under Rajnagar block due to the gastro enteritis infection. The worst affected village is Charipokharia. Every day, the number of patients is rising



despite the fact that a medico team has camped in the affected village and is providing treatment to the sick patients.

Scared that the disease might be the fallout of the anger of the presiding deity of the village, the villagers taking the advice of the elderly persons of the locality organised Chandi Patha and Hanuman Chalisa Patha to appease the deity.

Meanwhile, around two dozen people of the area, including children, are currently receiving treatment at various places, including Rajnagar CHC, District Headquarters Hospital, Kendrapada and also SCB Medical College and Hospital. The situation is under control and improving as

several patients were cured and discharged from hospitals, informed medical officer of Rajnagar Dr Rashmiranjan Mohanty.

Medical and para medical teams have been engaged at the village to provide treatment by opening a temporary camp. In the last 4 days, as many as 49 persons were affected in Charipokharia village whereas a family of Okilapala was affected as per official record of Rajnagar CHC. A sizable number of affected people are women, elderly persons and children.

According to Dr Mohanty, the outbreak of gastro-enteritis has started from the pond water of Charipokharia. Around 50 families, who were

inhabiting the pond, were affected as they used the contaminated pond water. About 2/3 members of a family were affected with gastro-enteritis in the last four days.

Meanwhile, door-to-door surveillance has been going on by para medical staff, whereas the village tube well has been disinfected. Water sample has been collected from the village pond and tube well and it was sent to the laboratory for examination. The village pond has also been disinfected, besides the villagers have been asked not to use the pond water. A red flag has been fixed to prohibit the villagers from using the pond water, stated Dr Mohanty.

## Coach Das honoured with Iconic Sports Award



PNS ■ PARADIP

Sanjay Das, a former renowned volleyball player of Paradip Port and a respected national-level coach, was honored with the prestigious Iconic Sports Award-2024.

The accolade recognises his significant contributions to the sport of volleyball. The award was presented to Das during the Raksha Bandhan celebration event held in Bhubaneswar.

Das is a prominent figure in the volleyball community, having trained numerous players who have excelled under his guidance. His dedication to the sport and his role in nurturing talents have earned him widespread respect.

Following the announcement of his award, many sports enthusiasts, volleyball players, and well-wishers extended their heartfelt congratulations to Das.

# Mahendragiri Hills a favourite tourists' destination

Govt needs to do more to improve amenities

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ PARALAKHEMUNDI

The Mahendragiri Hills in Gajapati district is not less than a blessing of nature towards humankind as it has all attractions for nature-lovers and also for those interested in history.

Mahendragiri Hills is also treated as treasure trove of biodiversity, housing rare and threatened species of flora and fauna apart from its immense mythological significance.

Mentioned as Mahendra Parvata, the hill finds place in the pages of mythological texts. The same finds place in legends associated to all the four yugas.

The hill is situated amongst the Eastern Ghats at an elevation of 4,925 feet.

The hill is spread across the neighbouring Ganjam district and the Srikakulam border of Andhra Pradesh. Mahendragiri is the second highest mountain peak in Odisha.

The hill is surrounded by forested hills on three sides. From the top of hills such as Singaraj (1,516 metre), Mahendragiri (1,501 metre) and Devagiri (1,392 metre), you can see the Bay of Bengal.

The hill eco-system acts as a transitional zone between flora and fauna of Western Ghats and the Himalayan biogeographic zones making the region an ecological estuary of genetic diversities.

It plays a pivotal role in maintaining the ecological balance and controlling climate of the entire south Odisha and Srikakulam district in Andhra Pradesh. The fragile ecosystem is also being treated as a critical habitat of Saora



(Saura) and Kondh tribe, local researchers said.

The hill ecosystem includes 388 species of animals, 27 species of mammals, 165 species of birds, 23 species of snakes, 15 species of amphibians, 3 species of turtles, 19 species of lizards, 100 species of butterflies and 36 species of moths.

Officials said the hill ecosystem is the only high-altitude

dry evergreen shola forest in the State. It also represents 40 per cent of reported higher plant species in Odisha. For this, the State Forest Department has declared Mahendragiri as a Biodiversity site.

Mahendragiri is the foremost of the seven "Kulagiris" or principal mountains of India. It has been referred to in

ancient literature, accounts and epigraphy. It finds mention in the works of poets Kalidas, besides Sarala Das and Radhanath Ray.

There are three temples on the top of the hill. These temples are named after the Pandavas and their mother Kunti. Odia Mahabharata author Sarala Das attributes the establishment of the

Gokarnesvara Sivalinga to Pandavas, who are said to have visited Mahendragiri during their exile.

The Kunti temple is 30-foot high and is at one end of the flat top of the hill. The temple has been plastered with lime after thorough repairs.

The Yudhisthira temple that rises abruptly from the ground level is in the "Triratha" style and is on the other side of the hill's flat top. The outer walls are devoid of any sculptural decoration excepting four Chaitya arches.

The Bhima temple is assumed by scholars to have been built just after the Gupta period and appears to be the oldest of these temples. It is made of five huge square blocks of stones and has a low and squat tower, square sanctum, squat Sikhara and flat roof. The doorway is narrow and the walls do not have any niche. This temple is often regarded as the Gokarnesvara temple of the place.

In this background, tourists, students and nature lovers are very often visiting the site every day. To visit Mahendragiri one needs to reach Burukhat. From there one needs to travel 7 km on ghat roads to reach the top of the hill. After reaching the top point, one can trek a few meters to reach the Bhima temple.

Behind the Bhima temple, one can enjoy the beauty of the site with feelings within the clouds and mountains with greenery all around.

As there was a huge demand from the tourists to make arrangements for night stay at such a natural beauty, the Odisha Forest Department is developing beautiful eco-tourism cottages at the top of the hills.

The cottages have been beautifully designed in the line with houses made in Himachal Pradesh and Kashmir. The construction work is on the last leg and very soon the cottages will be dedicated to the people,

sources said.

However, the locals demanded better connectivity to the site from both sides. The connecting roads are in bad shape for which the tourists are facing difficulties to reach at Burukhat. But the road from Burukhat to the top of the hill is in good condition. Still, the road needs expansion for free passage of vehicles from both sides, the locals said.

There is a connecting road from Ganjam side also, but it is in a sorry state as no maintenance has been done for a long time and the heavy rain completely washed away the black top road in the hilly area. The road in the lower parts (completion of Ghat road) is completely okay, they said.

If the hilly road from Ganjam district side will be completely reconstructed, the tourists can directly visit on the smaller distance road from Brahmapur and it will also help the locals in livelihood support, the locals asserted.



# BJP blasts Congress for supporting anti-national NC

**PIONEER NEWS SERVICE** NEW DELHI

The BJP on Saturday criticised Congress extending support to National Conference (NC) manifesto which promotes ideas like dividing the Nation, enforcing two constitutions and Kashmir and opposing the National Flag and said it exposed Congress anti-national thinking. These assertions were made here during a joint conference by BJP National General Secretary Tarun Chugh and Delhi BJP President Virendra Sachdeva. Chugh said Congress has always sided with those who seek to break the nation. The Congress's support for the NC's manifesto raises many questions. This manifesto by the National

Conference is an attempt to re-establish terrorism and separatism in Jammu and Kashmir. The manifesto's declaration to reinstate Articles 370 and 35A has full support from Rahul Gandhi and the Congress. Chugh questioned Congress and Rahul Gandhi on their stance regarding Articles 370 and 35A. He asked whether Congress supports dividing Jammu and Kashmir and implementing two constitutions in the region. Congress needs to clarify its position on these issues. He said Congress is repeating its historical mistakes by playing a dangerous game in alliance with the National Conference. He further questioned whether Congress is backing Pakistan's agenda. An effort is being made to establish terrorism



and separatism in Jammu and Kashmir, and Congress's hand in this conspiracy is evident. Congress should clarify if a state party is collaborating with a party from another country and supporting this anti-national agenda. The NC's manifesto clearly States that separatists currently in jail, who were involved in bomb blasts and in implementing

Pakistan's agenda in Jammu and Kashmir, will be released. The Abdullah family advocates for this, and the Gandhi family supports them, Chugh claimed. He said Congress is standing with those who seek to strip citizens of their rights, revoke reservations, and return to the pre-August 5, 2019, status of Kashmir. The NC manifesto is an announcement to remove the Constitution introduced by Dr B R Ambedkar, and Congress, along with the Abdullah family, is trying to uproot it. The BJP will not allow this to happen under any circumstances. Congress must clarify whether it supports the manifesto that proposes renaming Shankaracharya Hill to Takht-e-Suleiman. Rahul Gandhi, who never visited Jammu and Kashmir in his 50 years but is

now playing snow ball there, should remember that the only reason the tricolour flies at Lal Chowk, where he is enjoying ice cream, is because of Prime Minister Narendra Modi, he said. Delhi BJP President Sachdeva said in its lust for power, Congress has repeatedly played with the unity and security of the nation. By allying with the National Conference in Jammu and Kashmir, Congress is revealing its vile face. The party stood with stone pelters and continues to support them. Sachdeva also questioned Rahul Gandhi, who is nurtured by foreign values and visits temples only during elections, about whether he intends to provoke another Hindu-Muslim riot by renaming Shankaracharya Hill.



## Union Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan addresses soya farmers' insurance issue

**PIONEER NEWS SERVICE** NEW DELHI

Union Agriculture and Farmers Welfare Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan has directed officials to immediately resolve the problem of pending insurance schemes of soybean crop. He gave this instruction while interacting with farmers in Nanded, Maharashtra on August 21, Agriculture Ministry said here on Saturday. Giving details, officials said farmers of Parbhani district informed the Union Minister about the problem of pending insurance claims of Rs 200-225 crores of their soybean crop. In this regard, the Minister gave instructions to the Agriculture and Farmers Welfare Officials to immediately resolve the problem. Department of Agriculture and Farmers Welfare held a meeting of the National Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) in this regard on August 22. In the meeting, the TAC rejected the objection lodged by the insurance company on crop cutting experiments and directed the insurance company to pay the pending claims. Due to this decision, pending claims of Rs 200 to 225 crores are to be paid to about 2,00,000 farmers of Parbhani district. On Saturday, the Central Technical Advisory Committee has issued an order to the concerned insurance company to pay the due claim within one week in this regard.



## Gadkari promises to expedite iconic Telangana, Andhra bridge

**PIONEER NEWS SERVICE** NEW DELHI

Union Road Transport and Highways Minister Nitin Gadkari has assured he will expedite the construction of a double-decker cable-stayed iconic bridge between Telangana and Andhra Pradesh over the Krishna River, the Telangana government said on Saturday. The assurance came during a meeting with Telangana Tourism and Excise Minister Juppally Krishna Rao in New Delhi. Gadkari responded positively to Rao's request to fast-track the project and assured him that all necessary procedures would be completed, with tenders set to be launched by September end, an official statement said. The Rs 1,082.56 crore-bridge, connecting Somashila in Telangana and Sangameswar in Andhra Pradesh, has been pending for two years due to various reasons. Rao, during the meeting, had an extensive discussion on the bridge construction, which falls in the Kollapur constituency, as well as various national highway development projects in the Mahabubnagar district. The bridge is expected to promote ecotourism and temple tourism in Telugu-speaking States, provide a safer route to commuters, and reduce travel distance from Telangana to Tirupati by 70-80 kilometers, cutting down travel time by at least 90 minutes. Slated to come up against the backdrop of the Srisailem reservoir and Nallamala forest, the bridge will connect the Lalitha Someshwara Temple on the Telangana side with the Sangameswar Temple on the Andhra Pradesh side. Rao also requested Gadkari to take steps to upgrade the 203.5 km road from Alampur "X" Road (NH-44) to Nalgonda (NH 565) into a national highway.

## PM Modi to honour 11 lakh Lakhpati Didis, inaugurate Rajasthan Museum today

**PIONEER NEWS SERVICE** NEW DELHI

Prime Minister Narendra Modi will give certificates and felicitate 11 lakh new Lakhpati Didis, who recently became Lakhpati (millionaire) during the third term of the NDA Government at an event in Jalgaon in Maharashtra on Sunday. Later at 4.30 pm, on the same day i.e. on Sunday, the Prime Minister will also attend the concluding ceremony of the Platinum Jubilee celebrations of the Rajasthan High Court, to be held at the High Court Campus, Jodhpur. The Prime Minister will also inaugurate the Rajasthan High Court Museum. At the Lakhpati Didi Sammelan in Jalgaon, the Prime Minister will also interact with the beneficiaries from across the country and release a Revolving Fund of Rs 2,500 crore which will benefit about 48 lakh members of 4.3 lakh Self-Help Groups (SHG). He will also disburse bank loan of Rs 5,000 crore which will benefit 25.8 lakh members of 2.35 lakh SHGs. During his Independence Day speech last year, Modi had announced the 'Lakhpati Didi'



scheme to provide skill development training in skills like plumbing, LED bulb making and operating and repairing drones to 20 million women in villages across the country. Since the inception of the scheme, one crore women have already been made 'Lakhpati Didis'. The government has set a target to make 3 crore 'Lakhpati Didis'. 'Lakhpati Didi' refers to women who are capable of earning at least 100,000 rupees annually. To benefit from this scheme, women must be part of a self-help group. Currently, there are about 83 lakh self-help groups in the country, involving approximately 9 crore women.

## NHRC proposes enhancing elderly care, to focus on dignity, rights, awareness

**ARCHANA JYOTI** NEW DELHI

With aging parents increasingly being seen as a 'burden' by their children amid the disintegration of the traditional family structure, a panel of experts from the Core Group of the National Human Rights Commission (NHRC) on Elderly Care has proposed a series of measures to protect and support India's rapidly growing elderly demographic. NHRC member Dnyaneshwar Manohar Mulay emphasised the importance of old age homes, stressing that they should not be viewed as mere holding facilities with a stigma attached. "Instead, these homes should provide an environment that promotes health, quality of life, and dignity for their residents," said Mulay at a meeting held recently. He also informed the group members who are working in the sector at the grassroots to ensure complaints of abuse against elderly people can be registered at the NHRC portal. As per the minutes of the meeting made available recently, Dr Abha Chaudhary, Chairperson, NGO Anugraha called for a comprehensive need-assessment to identify challenges faced by the elderly, particularly the most marginalised. She also advocated for a culturally suitable action plan and the creation of SOPs for stakeholder preparedness. Dr Abha posed the question of exactly how many welfare schemes and support programs there are for the 'most marginalised' section among the elderly, for example- those crossing 80 years of age etc. she also highlighted how India



needs a more culturally and socially suitable Himanshu Rath, from Agewell Foundation flagged the issue of lack of district tribunals for elderly issues and stressed the importance of making elderly aware of their rights. He also proposed integrating moral education in schools and reducing duplication in schemes. Dr S Siva Raju, Professor at Tata Institute of Social Sciences (TISS) emphasised the role of family in elderly care and applauded the Andhra Government's Wallet Scheme. He also advocated for "Private sector involvement and NHRC's facilitative role in raising awareness." Rajiv Manjhi, Joint Secretary, Union Health Ministry highlighted achievements in healthcare provisions for senior citizens and the need for spe-

cialised care professionals while Harimohan Sharma, of United Rural Development Services, Manipur addressed connectivity issues and inadequate funding for old age homes in Manipur. He suggested increasing funding and number of beneficiaries, and improving hospital empanelment. Gargi Lakhpanal, from Vriddh Care NGO, discussed the importance of ground-level implementation, mental health programs, and awareness campaigns for elderly care. The members also sought incorporating education about elderly care and respect into school curricula to foster understanding and empathy among young people. "Encourage youth involvement in elderly care through volunteer programs and community service initiatives," they said.

## Even minor brain injuries in youth may lead to dementia, progressive neuro-disease: Study



**PIONEER NEWS SERVICE** NEW DELHI

Even minor brain injuries sustained in youth, such as concussions--classified as traumatic brain injuries (TBIs)-- may have long-term consequences such as dementia, a progressive neuro-disease, according to a study. Published in JAMA Network Open, the research found that early-life TBIs are

linked to increased risks of memory problems and dementia later in life. The team from the University of Cambridge analysed MRI scans of 617 people aged 40 to 59. They also studied their medical histories, focusing most specifically on whether they had had brain injuries anytime during their life. About 36.1 per cent of the participants reported having experienced at least one brain injury that was serious enough to

have caused them a minor concussion. Further, MRI scans showed that 1 in 6 of the participants had higher than normal instances of cerebral microbleeds and other symptoms of what is described as evidence of small vessel disease of the brain. People with at least one TBI were also more likely to smoke cigarettes, had more sleep problems, were more likely to have gait issues, and suffered from depression. The team noted that the more TBIs a person had, the more such problems became apparent. Those who experienced a TBI in their youth also had a higher risk of memory problems than did patients with cardiovascular disease, high blood pressure, or diabetes -- increasing their likelihood of developing dementia, the researchers found. Analysing MRI scans and medical histories of 617 individuals, the study revealed that those with a history of brain injuries showed more symptoms of small vessel disease and were more likely to experience related issues such as depression and gait problems. The researchers have called for more research into the long-term impacts of TBIs, particularly regarding memory retention problems and possible associations with the development of dementia.

## Bulldozer justice completely unacceptable, must stop: Priyanka

**PIONEER NEWS SERVICE** NEW DELHI

'Bulldozer justice' is completely unacceptable and must stop, Congress Leader Priyanka Gandhi Vadera said on Saturday, days after the house of a man who allegedly indulged in violence in Madhya Pradesh's Chhatrapur district during a protest was demolished. In a social media post in Hindi, Priyanka Gandhi said, "If someone is accused of a crime, then only the Court can decide his crime and punishment. But punishing the family of the accused as soon as the allegation is made, taking away the roof from their heads, not following the law, disobeying the Court, and demolishing the house of the accused as soon as the allegation is made - this is not justice." This is the "height of barbarism and injustice," Priyanka Gandhi said. There should be a difference between the lawmakers, the law keepers and the law breakers, she stressed, adding that Governments cannot behave like criminals. Following the law, Constitution, democracy and humanity are the minimum conditions of governance in a civilised society, Priyanka Gandhi said. "One who cannot fulfil 'rajdharm' can neither work for the welfare of the society nor the country. Bulldozer justice is completely unacceptable, it must stop," she said.



The house of the man who allegedly indulged in violence during a protest against remarks by seer Ramgiri Maharaj was demolished on Thursday. Ramgiri Maharaj had allegedly made objectionable remarks against Islam at Shah Panchale village in Sinnar taluka of Maharashtra's Nashik district during a religious event some days ago. Members of the Muslim community had organised a protest on Wednesday, but it descended into violence, leading to injuries to two policemen and damage to several vehicles. "The house of Shahzad Ali under Kotwali police station limits was demolished. We had registered a case against 150 people for the violence on Wednesday. We had named 46 people," an official had said.

# Button size batteries pose serious threat to toddlers, warns study

**PIONEER NEWS SERVICE** NEW DELHI

Small and seemingly benign, which are commonly found in household items such as remote controls, hearing aids, and key fobs can be a serious hazard for toddlers if ingested by them, says a study. A team of researchers warned that children who did not have the button battery removed within six hours were almost eight times more likely to die. Those younger than two years old who had swallowed a button battery with a diameter of at least 2 centimetre were the

most at risk for serious damage or death, said the team from the University of Sydney after they analysed over 400 cases of button battery damage worldwide. They stressed that a child's age, the size of the button battery, and a delayed diagnosis combine to create a "perfect storm", which can lead to severe harm. Lead author Christopher, a professor at the University of Sydney in Australia, urged clinicians to be mindful of "a potential button battery ingestion when dealing with acute onset respiratory or gastrointestinal symptoms in young

children". The findings are published in World Journal of Pediatrics. In view of these unseen threats, the researchers said that in order to protect children, the industry needs to redesign button batteries. This is because current standards only focus on child resistant packaging and product compartments. Current, Australia is the only country in the world that has introduced first-ever mandatory safety standards for child-resistant packaging of button batteries. Tran added that when a child swallows a button battery, it can cause a chemical reaction in the



oesophagus that creates a solution that burns and dissolves the tissue inside the child's throat. About 26 per cent of injuries from swallowing button bat-



teries resulted in burns to the child's oesophagus, with 23 per cent being extremely

severe. Burning can cause a hole in a major vein or artery, causing fatal blood loss. Nearly 9 per cent of complication cases resulted in death, with bleeding being the most common symptom of fatality. A growing number of everyday home gadgets, such as watches, hearing aids, remote controls, and toys, rely on button batteries as tiny power sources. Button batteries, however, pose a risk to inquisitive young children who may swallow them unintentionally or put them in their mouths, noses, or ears without being able to express what has happened. Button batteries contain cor-

rosive chemicals that can cause severe burns to the esophagus, stomach, and intestines. The most common initial symptoms of a button battery swallowing in a child are choking, difficulty feeding, and coughing. However, over time these symptoms change (for example, vomiting, drooling) and may be mistaken for other health issues such as gastroenteritis or a respiratory infection. The researchers also emphasised the need to raise awareness among parents about the possible risks associated with button batteries, the necessity of storing batteries safely, and the proper disposal methods.



# Three killed, eight hurt in knife attack in Germany

AP n SOLINGEN (GERMANY)

A large-scale search was underway Saturday in the western German city of Solingen after three people were killed and at least eight others wounded, five of them seriously, in a knife attack at a festival. "The police are currently conducting a large-scale search for the perpetrator," police said in a statement. They have assembled a large number of forces around Solingen city center, including special units. "Both victims and witnesses are currently being questioned," they said. Police have also established an online portal where witnesses can upload information relevant to the attack. People alerted police shortly after 9:30 pm Friday to an unknown attacker having wounded several people with a knife on a central square, the Fronhof. Police said that the perpetrator was on the run, and

## Terrorism not ruled out

**Solingen (AP):** A prosecutor says a terrorist motive has not been ruled out in a knife attack in western Germany in which three people were killed and seven wounded. Markus Caspers told a news conference on Saturday that authorities are still looking into what is behind the attack in the city of Solingen during a community festival on Friday evening. A 15-year-old boy was arrested early Saturday but police said he was not the perpetrator.

that they so far had only very thin information on the assailant. They said they believe the stabbings were carried out by a lone attacker and gave no information about the identities of the victims. The "Festival of Diversity," marking the city's 650th anniversary, began Friday and was supposed to run through Sunday, with several stages in central streets offering attractions such as live music, cabaret and acrobatics. One of the festival organizers, Philipp Muller, appeared on stage on Friday and asked festi-

valgoers to "go calmly; please keep your eyes open, because unfortunately the perpetrator hasn't been caught." Solingen has about 1,60,000 residents and is located near the bigger cities of Cologne and Duesseldorf. German Chancellor Olaf Scholz said on Saturday that the perpetrator of the attack must be caught quickly and punished with the full force of the law. "The attack in Solingen is a terrible event that has shocked me greatly. An attacker has brutally killed several people. I have just

spoken to Solingen's mayor, Tim Kurzbach. We mourn the victims and stand by their families," Scholz said on X.

German President Frank-Walter Steinmeier also spoke to the mayor of Solingen on Saturday morning.

"The heinous act in Solingen shocks me and our country. We mourn those killed and worry about those injured and I wish them strength and a speedy recovery from all my heart," Steinmeier said in a statement on Saturday. "The perpetrator needs to be brought to justice. Let's stand together — against hatred and violence."

There has been concern about increased knife violence in Germany, and Interior Minister Nancy Faeser recently proposed toughening weapons laws to allow only knives with a blade measuring up to 6 centimeters to be carried in public, rather than the length of 12 centimeters that is currently allowed.

# US Government approves sale of anti-submarine warfare gear to India

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE n NEW DELHI

The US Government has approved a proposed \$52.8 million deal with India for anti-submarine warfare sonobuoys and related equipment for the Navy. The deal now awaits final approval from the US Congress.

This announcement comes during Defence Minister Rajnath Singh's ongoing four-day visit to Washington, where he held talks with his US counterpart, Lloyd Austin, and National Security Advisor (NSA) Jake Sullivan.

Moreover, India and US on Thursday inked two major agreements - Security of Supplies Arrangement (SOSA) and Memorandum of Agreement regarding the Assignment of Liaison Officers. As regards the proposed deal, the US will supply the systems through the Foreign Military Sale (FMS) route. It means that the US Government will stand guarantee for all the terms and conditions of the contract.

The sale includes AN/SSQ-53G High Altitude Anti-Submarine Warfare (HAAWS) sonobuoys, AN/SSQ-62F

HAAWS sonobuoys, AN/SSQ-36 sonobuoys, as well as technical publications, and other logistics. "The estimated total cost is \$52.8 million," the US Defence Security Cooperation Agency (DSCA) said.

This proposed sale aims to bolster US-India strategic relations and enhance India's anti-submarine warfare and deterrence capabilities, particularly for its MH-60R helicopters.

"This proposed sale will support the foreign policy and national security objectives of the United States by helping to strengthen the United States-India strategic relationship and improving the security of a major defense partner which continues to be an important force for political stability, peace, and economic progress in the Indo-Pacific and South Asia regions," the DSCA said.

"The proposed sale will improve India's capability to meet current and future threats by enhancing its capacity to conduct anti-submarine warfare operations from its MH-60R helicopters. India will have no difficulty absorbing this equipment into its Armed forces. The proposed sale of this equipment and support

will not alter the basic military balance in the region," it added. Meanwhile, Singh discussed evolving geopolitical situation, key regional security issues and defence industrial collaboration with NSA Sullivan, Defence Ministry said here on Saturday.

The Defence Minister also interacted with the senior leaders of the US defence industry at a round-table organised by US India Strategic Partnership Forum in Washington DC.

The round-table was attended by a large number of US defence and technology companies.

Singh emphasised that India welcomes US investment and technology collaboration, and is ready with a skilled human resource base, robust pro-FDI and pro-business ecosystem, and large domestic market. India looks forward to closely working with US across the domains of defence for capability building and for an abiding technology and industrial partnership which can address emerging challenges, he added. Later, the Defence Minister briefly met a delegation from US India Business Council. Earlier, he held a bilateral

meeting with US Secretary of Defense Lloyd Austin in Pentagon, Washington. They held wide-ranging discussions on bilateral defence cooperation, industrial collaboration, regional security and other international issues.

The Defence Minister highlighted the various co-development and co-production opportunities in India in the areas identified in the India-US Defence Industrial Cooperation Roadmap, which was adopted last year.

Both Ministers expressed happiness on the conclusion of the Security of Supplies Arrangement (SOSA) between India and US. The SOSA encourages the defence industrial ecosystems of both countries to work together, and enhances the supply chain resilience.

They also welcomed the signing of the Memorandum of Agreement between India and US regarding the Deployment of Liaison Officers. India shall be accordingly deploying the first Liaison Officer to the Headquarters Special Operations Command in Florida, US.

# Shipwreck, manslaughter probe into Italy's superyacht sinking

AP n ROME

Prosecutors in Italy said Saturday they have opened an investigation into shipwreck and manslaughter after a superyacht capsized during a storm off the coast of Sicily, killing seven people onboard. Termini Imerese prosecutor Ambrogio Cartosio confirmed the investigation but said no suspect is currently identified. "We are only in the initial phase of the investigation. We can't exclude any sort of development at present," he told reporters at a news conference. The main question investigators are focusing on is how a sailing vessel deemed "unsinkable" by its manufacturer, Italian shipyard Perini Navi, sank while a nearby sailboat remained largely unscathed.

Rescuers on Friday brought ashore the last of seven bodies from the sinking of The Bayesian, a 56-metre British-flagged luxury yacht that went down in a storm near the Mediterranean island in southern Italy early Monday. The sailboat was carrying a crew of 10 people and 12 passengers.

The body was believed to be that of Hannah Lynch, 18, the daughter of British tech magnate Mike Lynch. His body was recovered Thursday. He had been celebrating his recent acquittal on fraud charges with his family and the people who had defended him at trial in the United States. His wife, Angela Bacares, was among the 15 survivors.

Civil protection officials said they believe the yacht, which featured a distinctive 75-metre aluminum mast, was

struck by a tornado over the water, known as a waterspout, and sank quickly. Rescuers struggled for four days to find all the bodies, making only slow headway through the interior of the wreck lying on the seabed 50 metres below the surface.

"The Lynch family is devastated, in shock and is being comforted and supported by family and friends. Their thoughts are with everyone affected by the tragedy," a spokesperson for the family said in a statement issued Friday.

The other five victims are Christopher Morvillo, one of Lynch's U.S. lawyers, and his wife, Neda; Jonathan Bloomer, chairman of Morgan Stanley's London-based investment banking subsidiary, and his wife, Judy; and Recaldo Thomas, the yacht's chef.

# Rain claims 11 lives in China

PTI n BEIJING

Torrential rains have left at least 11 people dead and 14 others missing in the city of Huludao, northeast China's Liaoning province which left a trail of destruction causing heavy damage to the roads and bridges amounting to USD 1.44 billion, official media reported on Saturday.

The latest round of heavy rainfall caused severe damage in Huludao, particularly in the city's Jianchang County and Suizhong County, state-run Xinhua news agency reported. Roads, power lines, communication networks, houses and crops were badly affected. Currently, roads and communication networks are gradually being restored in affected areas and efforts are being made to search for the missing persons. According to preliminary figures, 188,757 people in Huludao have been affected, with losses amounting to 10.3 billion yuan (about USD 1.44 billion).



People gather to mark Ukraine's Independence Day on the Place des Nations in front of the European headquarters of the United Nations in Geneva, Switzerland, on Saturday.

# Palestinians' shrinking 'humanitarian zone' faces food scarcity

AP n DEIR AL-BALAH

Young girls screamed and elbowed each other in a crush of bodies in southern Gaza, trying desperately to reach the front of the food line. Men doled out rice and chicken as fast as they could, platefuls of the nourishment falling to the ground in the tumult. Nearby, boys waited to fill plastic containers with water, standing for hours among tents packed so tightly they nearly touched. Hunger and desperation were palpable Friday in the tent camp along the Deir al-Balah beachfront, after a month of successive evacuation orders that have pressed thousands of Palestinians into the area that the Israeli military calls a "humanitarian zone."

The zone has long been crowded by Palestinians seeking refuge from bombardment, but the situation grows more dire by the day, as waves of evacuees arrive and food and water grow scarce. Over the last month, the Israeli military has issued evacuation orders for southern Gaza at an unprecedented pace.

At least 84 per cent of Gaza now falls within the evacuation zone, according to the UN, which also estimates that 90 per cent of Gaza's 2.1 million residents have been displaced over the course of



the war. Thirteen evacuation orders have been issued since July 22, according to an Associated Press count, significantly reducing the size of the humanitarian zone declared by Israel at the start of the war while pushing more Palestinians into it than ever before. The increased crowding of evacuees can be seen in satellite photos.

"The food that reaches us from the charity is sufficient for the people in our camp," said Muhammad Al-Qayed,

who was displaced from Gaza City and now lives along the beach. "Where do the people who were recently displaced get food from? From where do we provide them?"

Another displaced Palestinian, Adham Hijazi, said: "I have started thinking that if there is no food, I will go and drink seawater to endure it. I am talking seriously. I will drink water and salt."

The military says the evacuations are necessary because Hamas has launched rockets from within the humanitarian

zone. In posts on X, the military's Arabic-language spokesperson, Avichay Adrae, has instructed Palestinians to flee immediately, saying the military will soon operate "with force" against Hamas militants in the area.

Yasser Felfel, originally displaced from northern Gaza, has watched his camp swell with waves of evacuees.

"There were 32 people in my tent. Now there are almost 50 people, people I don't know," he said. "A week ago, there was a lot of food left over. We had breakfast, lunch and dinner. Today, because of the number of people who came here, it is barely enough for lunch."

In August alone, the evacuation orders have been issued roughly every two days and displaced nearly 250,000 people, the UN said.

"Many people here have been displaced more than 10 times. They're exhausted and broke," said Georgios Petropoulos, the head of the UN's Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs in Gaza.

A pair of satellite photos taken over the last month shows the impact of the orders. The imagery, obtained from PlanetLabs and reviewed by the AP, shows that tent camps along the coast grew more densely packed from July 19 to Aug. 19.

# Iranian hackers targeted accounts of Biden, Trump camp staffers: Meta

AP n WASHINGTON

The same Iranian hacking group believed to have targeted both the Democratic and Republican presidential campaigns, tried to go after the WhatsApp accounts of staffers in the administrations of President Joe Biden and former President Donald Trump, Meta Platforms said Friday.

Meta said it discovered the network of hackers, who posed as tech support agents for companies including Microsoft and Google, after individuals who received the suspicious WhatsApp messages reported them. Meta's investigators linked the activity to the same network blamed for the hacking incident reported by Trump's campaign.

The FBI this week said a hack by Iran of the Trump campaign and an attempted breach of the Biden-Harris campaign was part of a broader Iranian effort

to interfere with the US presidential election.

A statement Friday from Meta, the parent of Facebook and Instagram, said that the hackers had tried to target the WhatsApp account of individuals in the Middle East, the United States and the United Kingdom, as well as political and diplomatic officials — including unidentified officials associated with the Trump and Biden administrations. A "small cluster" of accounts was blocked by Meta, the company said.

"We have not seen evidence of the targeted WhatsApp accounts being compromised, but out of an abundance of caution, we're sharing our findings publicly, in addition to sharing information with law enforcement and our industry peers," Meta said in a statement.

US intelligence officials say Iran's increasingly aggressive use of cyberattacks and disin-

formation has several motives: to confuse and polarise voters in an effort to undermine confidence in US democracy, to erode support for Israel, and to oppose candidates that it believes will increase tension between Washington and Iran. Iran has vowed revenge against Trump, whose administration ended a nuclear deal with Iran, reimposed sanctions and ordered the killing of an Iranian Gen. Qassem Soleimani.

In July, Director of National Intelligence Avril Haines said Iran's government gave covert support to American protests against Israel's war against Hamas in Gaza. Groups linked to Iran posed as online activists, encouraged campus protests and provided financial support to some protest groups, Haines said.

Messages left with the Trump and Harris campaigns were not immediately returned Friday.

# Fasting and puja can coexist in Bangladesh, says adviser

PTI n DHAKA

The Religious Affairs Adviser of the interim government in Bangladesh has asserted that there is no problem in observing fasting and puja at the same time in the country as he called for building a harmonious state where all faiths coexist peacefully. Bangladesh saw several incidents of violence against members of Hindu, Buddhist and Christian communities following the fall of the Sheikh Hasina-led government earlier this month. The Bangladesh National Hindu Grand Alliance said the minority community faced attacks and threats in 278 locations across 48 districts since the fall of the Hasina-led government. Several Hindu temples, homes and busi-

nesses of the minority community in Bangladesh were destroyed this month amidst the student-led unrest against quotas in government jobs. Thousands of Bangladeshi Hindus have been trying to flee to neighbouring India to escape the violence.

Speaking to Muslim devotees before Friday's Jumma prayers at Hazrat Usman Jame Masjid in the Halishahar area of Chattogram district, Religious Affairs Adviser Dr AFM Khalid Hossain called for building a country of religious harmony where people of all faiths would live peacefully, the state-run BSS news agency reported.

"I want to give the nation a harmonious state. Bangladesh is a country of communal harmony.

There is no problem in observing fasting and puja at the same time in this country. Everyone will practice and publicise his or her own religion freely. It is a civic right of all," he said.

In the changed situation after the fall of the Awami League government, some miscreants attacked and vandalised the places of worship and houses of Hindus, Buddhists and Christians, Hossain said. "Propaganda has also been spread in some foreign media to tarnish the image of the country," he said, adding that those who are trying to destroy communal harmony will be tackled by taking stern actions. Hossain sought everyone's cooperation to maintain law and order and a harmonious environment in Bangladesh.

# Philippine police look for preacher wanted for child abuse

AP n MANILA

Hundreds of police officers backed by riot squads raided a vast religious compound in a southern Philippine city Saturday in search of a local preacher accused of sexual abuse and human trafficking, police officials said.

A supporter of the group, called Kingdom of Jesus Christ, reportedly died due to a heart attack during the massive police raid that started at dawn in the group's compound in Davao city, livestreamed online by a local TV network owned by the group, police said, adding that the death was not related to the police operations. Officers brought equipment that could detect people behind cement walls. But by mid-afternoon, they found no sign of Apollo Quiboloy in the compound — some 30 hectares

(75 acres) that includes a cathedral, a school, a living area, a hangar and a taxiway leading to Davao International Airport.

Quiboloy and his lawyer have denied the criminal allegations against him and his religious group, saying these were fabricated by critics and former members, who were removed from the religious group after committing irregularities.

Quiboloy's followers, many filming the police raid with their cellphones, yelled at the police, questioning the legality of the raid and pronouncing the innocence of Quiboloy, who was a close supporter and spiritual adviser of former President Rodrigo Duterte. Duterte had criticised previous attempts by large numbers of police to arrest Quiboloy as overkill.

Quiboloy claims to be the appointed son of God. In 2019,

he claimed he stopped a major earthquake from hitting the southern Philippines.

Police Brig. Gen. Nicolas Torre III, who led the raid, said officers wanted to serve warrants for the arrest of Quiboloy for various criminal cases, including child abuse and human trafficking. He justified the large deployment, saying there were more than 40 buildings and structures to be searched in the religious compound, where large numbers of Quiboloy's followers heckled and opposed the raid noisily.

"We won't leave here until we get him," Torre told reporters as sirens blared in the background. "We have no-bail warrants for Quiboloy and four others for very grave crimes, including human trafficking, child abuse and other cases." In 2021, United States federal prosecutors announced the

indictment of Quiboloy for allegedly having sex with women and underage girls who faced threats of abuse and "eternal damnation" unless they catered to the self-proclaimed "son of God." Quiboloy and two of his top administrators were among nine people named in a superseding indictment returned by a federal grand jury and unsealed in November 2021. The superseding indictment contained a raft of charges, including conspiracy, sex trafficking of children, sex trafficking by force, fraud and coercion, marriage fraud, money laundering, cash smuggling and visa fraud.

Quiboloy's group said then that he was ready to face the charges in court, but he went into hiding after a Philippine court ordered his arrest and several others for child and sexual abuse. The Philippine Senate has

separately ordered Quiboloy's arrest for refusing to appear in committee hearings that was looking into criminal allegations against him.

President Ferdinand Marcos Jr. has urged Quiboloy to surrender and assured him of fair treatment by authorities. When he was mayor of Davao city and later as president, Duterte appeared in Quiboloy's news program to promote his police-enforced drug crackdowns, which left thousands of mostly poor suspects dead. Duterte and his police officials have denied authorising extrajudicial killings of drug suspects, but he openly threatened drug dealers with death when he was in office. The International Criminal Court has been investigating the widespread killings under Duterte's campaign against illegal drugs as a possible crime against humanity.



# Have sacrificed a lot in my personal life to achieve success in sports: Para badminton player Suhas

PTI | NEW DELHI

His eyes firmly set on the top-podium finish in Paris after missing gold in the last edition of the Paralympic Games, para badminton player Suhas LY is hoping to bring smiles on the faces of his family, which has sacrificed a lot as he has pursued his goal with single-minded determination for the last three years.

A 2007 batch IAS officer, Suhas won the silver (SL-4 category) at the Tokyo Paralympics. He served as the District Magistrate of Gautam Buddha Nagar during the Covid times and was also the DM of Prayagraj.

An Ajuna awardee, Suhas is currently posted as the secretary and director-general of Youth Welfare and Prantiya Rakshak Dal, a department under the Uttar Pradesh government.

Suhas admits the journey to become the best in the business has not been easy. "I have sacrificed my personal life a lot. I dedicated my personal life to sports. In the last six months, besides my job, I have been devoting considerable time to my sport," Suhas told PTI in an interview ahead of the upcoming Paralympic Games in Paris, where he is a medal prospect.

"You cannot get everything in life, everyone has to prioritise



things when you aspire to represent the country. You should enjoy whatever you are doing. Enjoy the process. "The real secret is to enjoy what you do," he added.

Suhas is married to Ritu Suhas, a PCS officer currently posted as ADM (Administration) in Ghaziabad.

His daughter Saanvi is five-years-old and son Vivaan is two-years-old.

Suhas said the real backbone behind his success in sports is

the unstinted support of his family. "Without their (family) support I wouldn't have been what I am today. They never stopped me from pursuing my dreams in badminton. They always backed me and motivated me to achieve greater heights in my sport," he said.

Suhas is currently ranked world No.1 in his category and aspires to win gold but says he is not taking any pressure. "Everything is going good till

now, the preparation, the run-up to the Games. But I don't want to take pressure. I can't be complacent because every match start from 0-0, I don't want to think too much ahead," he said.

"This time every match is a knockout as I am starting from the pre-quarterfinals. The real focus will be to apply myself in every match, just go and perform to the best of my abilities."

Even though he will be starting as one of the

favourites, Suhas is pragmatic. "I will be taking it one match at a time. I never ever imagined in my life I would be playing the Paralympics and be a professional badminton player. I was always into studies after my disability, but through sports I got a mission in life," he said.

"I believe in taking things as they come; focus on efforts and the results will automatically follow. I hope I become an inspiration for many," Suhas added.



## Preparing for the Paralympics, Paris reminds residents and visitors that "game is not over"

AP | PARIS

With the Olympics behind it, Paris is getting ready for the next big sporting event on the calendar this summer: the Paralympics.

Organizers are taking advantage of the post-Olympics lull in the French capital to get ready for events ranging from wheelchair rugby to para athletics during the Aug. 28-Sept. 8 games.

The Place de la Concorde, the historic square in the heart of Paris, has been bustling with construction activity since the Olympics closed on Aug. 11.

The site, which hosted skateboarding, breaking and 3x3 basketball during the Olympics, will host the opening ceremony next Wednesday. Organizers are promising a groundbreaking 'spectacle,' as thousands of athletes and tens of thousands of spectators gather for the event, which marks the first time the opening ceremony will take place outside a stadium.

Most other Olympic venues will remain in place. The Château de Versailles will host para equestrian events, the Grand Palais will welcome wheelchair fencing, and the venue beneath the Eiffel Tower, which hosted beach volleyball during the Olympics, will now host blind football, an adaptation of soccer for visually impaired players.

For the organizers, the goal for the Paralympics is clear: to keep up the enthusiasm that the Olympics brought to Paris.

"We want to use the same exact recipe," said Tony Estanguet, head of the Paris 2024 organizing committee. "The Olympics were the first leg of the match, and now comes the second leg with the Paralympics. It will be equally as spectacular."

Both Paris 2024 and the International Paralympic Committee have launched a campaign titled "Game is not over," with ads throughout the French capital encouraging locals to come and watch the Paralympic events.

"French fans who missed the chance to see the Olympics live now have a second shot," said IPC President Andrew Parsons. "Paris will be alive, tickets will be affordable. It's the perfect show for families."

In the period between the two sports events, however, Paris has slowed down considerably. August is normally the month

when many Parisians go on vacation, and leave the city for coastal towns or the countryside. As a result, the streets are notably quieter, and many businesses, including restaurants, are closed until September. Some Parisians who have remained in the city are taking advantage of the relative calm to catch their breath after the Olympics.

"I think we all needed a break after cheering so much," said Alexia Latour, a 27-year-old accountant meeting friends at the Parc Monceau, a park in the upscale 17th arrondissement of Paris. It hosted one of the liveliest fan zones during the Olympics. Now, the buzz has faded, and the fan zone has become a peaceful space for family activities. Instead of live sports, the large screens at the moment show family-friendly movies and concerts.

"We went from 2,500 visitors to fewer than 100 a day, mostly locals," said Alex Lemaistre, who oversees activities at the fan zone. "Our goal is to keep the Olympic spirit going, but it's pretty difficult. Now we don't have French athletes like Léon Marchand to cheer us up."

Yann Nguyen, 51, who came to the fan zone for an afternoon musical performance, said he wasn't sure Paris would manage to keep the Olympic excitement levels going into the Paralympics.

"I find it a bit odd that they didn't start the Paralympics right after the Olympics closing ceremony," Nguyen said. "September is the start of the new school year here. I'm not sure how they will keep the festive atmosphere going."

Despite the quieter streets, security remains a visible and constant presence. Armed police officers patrol key areas, a reminder of the heightened security measures in place during the Olympics. French Interior Minister Gerald Darmanin earlier this week said some 25,000 police officers will be deployed during the Paralympics.

Police forces also will be deployed during the Paralympic torch relay - the flame is set to arrive Sunday in France from Stoke Mandeville, a village that is widely considered the birthplace of the Paralympic Games.

Celta Vigo beats Valencia 3-1 for second straight win to start La Liga season

Madrid, (AP) Celta Vigo marked the 101st anniversary of the club's founding with a 3-1 win over Valencia on Friday for a second straight league win to start the season.

It marked the first time since 2015 the Galician club has won its first two matches of the season and handed Valencia a second straight loss.

Celta's captain and talismanic striker Iago Aspas was again at the heart of events. He scored for the second game in a row and then missed a penalty shortly before halftime.

Diego Lopez had put Valencia ahead after 14 minutes when he converted from close range after a goalmouth scramble, but Celta equalized midway through the first half when Oscar Mingueza volleyed home to complete a neat team move.

Aspas' goal came five minutes later when the 37-year-old forward took a weighted throughball from Mingueza and finished perfectly into the bottom corner.

Valencia keeper Giorgi Mamardashvili then saved Aspas' spot kick in first-half injury time but Fran Beltrán added the third goal on the hour mark with a classy strike from the edge of the penalty area.

Valencia's run of nine games without a win - dating back to last season - is its worst under one coach since Gary Neville led the club in 2016 and it faces a difficult third match next week at Athletic Bilbao's San Mames arena.

"The team is hurting," said Valencia midfielder Pepelu. "We don't want to look at the fixture list. It's up to us to go to the San Mames and compete."

Villarreal beats Sevilla Ayozze Villarreal slotted home a volley in the fifth minute of injury time to give Villarreal a 2-1 away win over Sevilla.

The visitors had taken the lead with its first attack of the match after just one minute as Arnaud Danjuma - who also scored early against Atletico Madrid in the opening round - netted with a poised finish from 15 yards out.

Sevilla's equalizer came in first-half stoppage time, as Dodi Lukebakio controlled a long pass and volleyed home.

Both sides had goals disallowed after video reviews before Pérez's late winner for Villarreal.

The result Villarreal four points from two games, while Sevilla has one point.

# Jannik Sinner fired two of his team members over his positive steroid tests in March

AP | NEW YORK

Jannik Sinner fired his fitness trainer and physiotherapist because of his two positive steroid tests in March and said Friday at his pre-U.S. Open news conference - his first public comments on the matter - that he knew he was innocent but worried what the case's outcome would be until finding out he wouldn't be suspended.

Sinner's fitness trainer, Umberto Ferrara, and his physiotherapist, Giacomo Naldi, have been at the 23-year-old Italian's side during his rise over the past two years, which included his first Grand Slam title at the Australian Open in January and ascension to the No. 1 ranking in June.

"I'm not feeling that confident to continue with them," Sinner said. "Now I just need some clean air."

The International Tennis Integrity Agency (ITIA) announced this week that Sinner failed two drug tests - one during a tournament in Indian Wells, California, and one eight days later - but that it was determined the banned anabolic steroid Clostebol entered his system unintentionally through a massage from Naldi.

"Obviously it has been a very tough moment for me and my team," Sinner said. "It still is, because it's quite fresh."

Play begins Monday at Flushing Meadows. Sinner is the top-seeded man and is



scheduled to meet first-round opponent Mackie McDonald, an American ranked 140th, on Tuesday.

"Of course it's not ideal before a Grand Slam," Sinner said with a chuckle about the timing of the news. "But in my mind, I know that I haven't done anything wrong. I had to play, already, (for) months with this in my head, but just (was reminding) myself that I haven't done really anything wrong. I always respect these rules - and I always will respect these rules - of anti-doping."

He is considered one of the leaders of the next group of male tennis stars who will succeed the Big Three of Roger Federer, Rafael Nadal and Novak Djokovic. Sinner is 48-5 with a tour-leading five titles in 2024 and tuned up for the U.S. Open by winning the hard-court Cincinnati Open on Monday.

"He's an incredible player, and, you know, (governing) bodies made a decision. They went

and did that; he's cleared to play. That's pretty much what I have to say about it," said Frances Tiafoe, the American who lost to Sinner in the final at Cincinnati. "All the best to him in the U.S. Open."

Sinner's defense was that Ferrara purchased an over-the-counter spray that contained Clostebol in Italy, then gave it to Naldi, who used it on a cut finger. Sinner said Naldi then gave him a massage.

The investigation found that Sinner had a trace amount of the steroid in his system, a point he illustrated Friday by using eight fingers to count out the number of zeroes before the "1" in the amount: .000000001.

Asked whether he thinks the episode will affect his reputation, Sinner said: "We will see now - now, moving forward. Because this, I can't really control."

He also called the outcome "a relief."

"Of course I was worried,"

Sinner said, "because it was the first time for me - and hopefully the last time that I am in this situation, position."

Sarabjot says he barely got to train with Manu before 10m air pistol mixed event in Paris Bengaluru, (PTI) Sarabjot Singh, who partnered with Manu Bhaker to win India's first ever Olympic medal in a mixed shooting event, on Saturday said they "barely" got to train together in the run-up to their event.

Bhaker and Sarabjot scripted history with a bronze medal in the 10m air pistol mixed team shooting event at the Paris Games.

"My training was due at 9, hers was due at 12, individually. Mixed session lasted for 30 minutes, before which she trained separately, and I separately.

"Our conversation was usually brief and limited to Apna 100 per cent dha hai (we have to give our 100 per cent). Apart from that, we enjoyed some banter. Sometimes I would make fun of her, sometimes she would of me," recalled Sarabjot.

Sarabjot also revealed his longtime fandom for Yusuf Dikec and said he has been looking up to the Turkish shooting icon for inspiration since 2011.

"I have been watching his (Yusuf's) videos since 2011. He has always been like this. He is 51 today. Even though I have tried, I could not match his

perfection. If I had the chance, I would ask him what he eats," said the 22-year-old from Dheen village of Haryana during an interview with PUMA India.

Sarabjot said that his pistol is engraved with SSINGH30, comprising his initials and a significant date in his journey. "I didn't give it a name. When I achieved my personal best at the 2022 Asian Games in Hangzhou, I got the weapon engraved with 'SSINGH30'. That is my best weapon. Because my medal (gold) came on September 30 and that was a significant achievement," he said.

The athlete also shared that he has had to deal with his fair share of setbacks in his journey. Meditation, and a rare yogic technique called Trataka, helped him.

"The main technique is to look at the candle flame with eyes open for three minutes, and then imagine for two minutes. I used to keep it directly in front of my eyes.

"Complete darkness in the room, complete peace, silence. My eyes would water; it was not easy. The most important thing is visualisation in shooting," said Sarabjot.

In conclusion, the Olympic medalist stated his ambition for the 2028 Los Angeles Games.

"LA '28; iska colour change karna hai (LA '28, I want to change its colour)," said Sarabjot, gesturing toward his glittering bronze medal.

# Under sea and over land, the Paris Paralympics flame is beginning an exceptional journey

AP | PARIS

Two weeks after French star swimmer Léon Marchand extinguished the Olympic flame to close the Paris Olympics, the spotlight is now on its Paralympic counterpart.

The flame will be lit on Saturday in Stoke Mandeville, a village northwest of London widely considered the birthplace of the Paralympic Games. The flame will then travel to France under the English Channel for a four-day relay from Atlantic Ocean shores to Mediterranean beaches, from mountains in the Pyrenees to the Alps.

Its journey will end in Paris on Wednesday during the Paralympics opening ceremony - with the lighting of a unique Olympic cauldron attached to a hot-air balloon that will fly over the French capital every evening during 11 days of competition.

**THE FLAME IS LIT:** The lighting ceremony of the Paralympic Heritage Flame on Saturday will be held in Buckinghamshire, where the Stoke Mandeville Games were first held in 1948 for a small group

of wheelchair athletes who had sustained spinal injuries during World War II.

The man behind the idea was Ludwig Guttman, a Jewish neurosurgeon who fled Nazi Germany and worked at Britain's Stoke Mandeville hospital. At the time, suffering a spinal injury was considered a death sentence, and patients were discouraged from moving. Guttman made the patients sit up and work muscles, and hit upon competition as way to keep them motivated.

Those later grew into the first Paralympic Games, which took place in Rome in 1960. The Heritage Flame ceremony in Stoke Mandeville was first held ahead of the London Paralympics in 2012.

**CROSSING THE CHANNEL:** The flame will then cross the sea like its Olympic twin did when it arrived in France from Greece in May - but this time via the Channel Tunnel. That marks the start of the Paralympic relay.

A group of 24 British athletes will embark on the underwater journey through the 50-kilometer long (30-mile) tunnel. Midway through, they will hand over the flame to 24



French athletes who will bring it ashore in Calais. It will be used to light 12 torches, symbolizing 11 days of competition and the

opening ceremony.

**4 DAYS, 1,000 TORCHBEARERS AND 50 CITIES:** Once on French soil, the flame's 12 offshoots will

head in different directions to kick off the Paris Olympics' encore and aim to rekindle enthusiasm for the Games.

Among 1,000 torchbearers will be former Paralympians, young para athletes, volunteers from Paralympic federations, innovators of advanced technological support, people who dedicate their lives to others with impairments and people who work in the non-profit sector to support carers.

They will take the flame to 50 cities across the country to highlight communities that are committed to promoting inclusion in sport and building awareness of living with disabilities.

An exceptional flame will be lit in Paris on Sunday to commemorate the 80th anniversary of the liberation of the French capital from Nazi Germany occupation during World War II.

**HIGHLIGHTING PARA SPORT INFRASTRUCTURE AND INNOVATION:** The relay will highlight places that are committed to developing para sports, as well as places where famous Paralympians grew up, such as Lorient, home of double Paralympic sailing gold medalist Damien Seguin.

The relay will go through Châlons-en-Champagne, which has the only gymnasium in France designed to

facilitate access to sport for people with intellectual disabilities. And Rouen, Chartres, and Troyes, which offer a range of disciplines, from sledge hockey to para tennis, para triathlon, adapted baseball and para climbing.

The flame will stop in Chambly, which, with its three sports facilities adapted for para sports, has served as a training camp location alongside Deauville and Antibes.

**MEET THE STAR OF THE GAMES - THE CAULDRON:** On Wednesday, the 12 flames will become one again when the relay ends in central Paris after visiting historical sites along the city's famed boulevards and plazas before lighting the cauldron during the three-hour opening show.

The cauldron is the first in Olympic history to light up without the use of fossil fuels. It uses water and electric light and is attached to a balloon. It made a stunning first flight at the Olympics opening ceremony.

Each day of the Paralympics, the cauldron will fly more than 60 meters (197 feet) above the Tuileries gardens from sunset until 2 a.



# INDIA U17 GEAR UP FOR INDONESIA CHALLENGE IN BALI

PTI n NEW DELHI

The Indian men's U17 team is gearing up to face Indonesia in two friendly matches in Bali on Sunday and next Tuesday. On Friday night the Blue Colts played a practice match against local side Bali United FC U20 at the Samudra Kuta Stadium, which ended in a 2-2 draw. Mohammad Sami and Mohammad Arbash scored the goals for India. Coached by Ishfaq Ahmed, India U17s are preparing for next month's SAFF U17 Championship, to be held in Bhutan, and the subsequent AFC U17 Asian Cup Qualifiers, which will be hosted by Thailand in October. They had been training in Srinagar for over a month and a half before their trip to Indonesia. "We tried and tested our entire squad in yesterday's practice match," said Ahmed. "The main eleven only played in the last 25 minutes. The other players got the chance to play and I'm really happy about that. "Bali United are one of the top teams here and they had five players from the Indonesia national U20 team, so we could compete physically with them and judge our level. "The training facilities here are nice. Everything has been top class, which is ideal for us to prepare for the main tournaments coming up. The climate is pleasant. The hosts



have been really helpful, accommodating all our requests. So far, so good here," the coach added. It would perhaps come as a surprise but there isn't much difference in temperatures between Srinagar and Bali, which ranges between 20 to 25

degrees celsius at this time of the year. However, being an island, Bali is more humid. The Blue Colts have also had to adjust from training in the artificial pitch at the TRC Ground in Srinagar to the natural grass pitches in Indonesia, but that isn't much

of an issue, according to Ahmed. The SAFF U17 Championship will take place on an artificial pitch at the Changlimithang Stadium, while AFC U17 Asian Cup Qualifiers will be held on natural grass at the Chonburi Stadium.

After a couple of days on the island of Bali, Ahmed and his boys are eager for the Indonesian challenge. Highlighting how crucial it is to play such friendly matches, Ahmed said, "I think it's extremely important for our players to get exposure against

some of the best teams in the region. The Indonesian age-group teams are doing really well. This is the kind of competition we will face in the future." The matches will be held at the Kapten I Wayan Dipta Stadium in Gianyar.



## Pushing Boundaries: Sukant Kadam's journey to Paralympics

PTI n NEW DELHI

Aged 10, Sukant Kadam fell on a cricket field and it altered the course of his life. A severe knee injury, followed by multiple surgeries, left him severely disabled and kept him away from sports for nearly a decade.

More than two decades later, the mechanical engineer-turned-para-shuttler is poised to make his debut at the Paris Paralympics, determined to bring home a medal for India. "I didn't understand the gravity of the situation then," Kadam, who competes in the SL4 category for athletes with standing/low mobility impairments, told PTI during an interview. "I focused on my studies and earned a mechanical engineering degree. It was during college that I got exposed to so many sports, and that's when badminton caught my attention." The sport gave him a new direction in life, and after completing his education, the 31-year-old dedicated himself fully to building a career in para-badminton. "My dream was just to have India written on my T-shirt," he said. "I could never have imagined coming this far. Now, my focus is on returning with a medal from the Games."

Reflecting on his early years, Kadam shared how he quickly adapted to his new reality. "Because I was 10, it was easy to accept and adapt in day-to-day life. I didn't understand that this was a major setback; I wasn't thinking about it that much," he said. Kadam's journey was not without challenges, including facing discrimination. "It's difficult to say no to that," he admitted. "But growing up in a small town, I didn't take it personally. Today, I might understand the emotions, but back then, I didn't let it affect me. If I had, it would have led to self-doubt and hindered my preparation for life."

The turning point in Kadam's career came in 2012, when he watched Saina Nehwal win bronze at the London Olympics and Girisha

Nagarajegowda claim silver in high jump (F42) at the Paralympics. These achievements opened up his mind to new possibilities. In July 2015, Kadam joined the Nikhil Kanetkar Badminton Academy as an assistant coach. The role allowed him to sustain himself financially while mastering the nuances of the sport. Kadam's dedication paid off. He has since secured four bronze medals at the World Championships (2019, 2022, 2024) and three at the Asian Para Games (2018, 2022). As he prepares for his Paralympics debut, Kadam has placed a strong emphasis on mental training. "A lot of athletes think about the medal and the podium, and then they mess up right at the start," he said. "It's crucial to stay in the present. Mental strength is about 60-70% of the game at this level. If someone is stronger than you physically, you need to outlast them mentally. I've worked hard on that."

This time, Kadam has also had the luxury of time to prepare. "This is the first time I've had a full three months to prepare, and I've made the most of it," he said. "My team and I have focused on strength, technique, and endurance." Despite his impressive track record, a gold medal has so far eluded him. But Kadam is determined to change that in Paris. "We've taken past failures as learning experiences," he reflected. "There are opponents I need to push myself harder against because they are stronger on the circuit."

Yet, Kadam remains confident in his preparation and abilities. "With the experience I have, I'm confident in myself. I just need to push a little further to change the colour of the medal," he said. As he gears up for the biggest test of his career, Kadam's eyes are set firmly on the top prize. "It's not a mental barrier," he said of his previous losses. "But I'm determined to push through and get that better colour in Paris."



## Sarah and Vishal win mixed doubles Open at Monsoon Pickleball Championship

PTI n MUMBAI

Australia's highest-ranked women's player Sarah Burr teamed up with Vishal Masand to win the Mixed Doubles Open at the Monsoon Pickleball Championship 2.0 here. The final was a closely contested match with Isha Lakhani and Jason Taylor pushing the Australians in the corner, but the experienced Burr proved to be the deciding factor as they won 2-0 on Friday night. The fourth day of the championship saw winners in six categories with Burr and Masand, Dev Shah, Nicola Schoemen, Shlok Gaba, Janhavi Iyer, Priyanka Mehta in the 30+ Mixed Doubles, U18 Boys Singles, U18 Girls Singles, U14 Boys Singles, U14 Girls Singles and 40+ Women's Singles respectively. The 40+ Men's singles will be played on Sunday with Dhiren Patel and Himanshu Dewaskar set to face off. The professional mixed doubles category has its final on Sunday with Jay DeVilliers and Emilia Schmidt up against local hero Armaan Bhatia and Megan Fudge. Favourites Jay and Emilia beat Harsh and Naimi Mehta in the semi-finals and Armaan Bhatia with Megan Fudge defeated Quang Duong and Pei.

# India A stare at defeat against Australia A

PTI n GOLD COAST (AUSTRALIA)

India A are staring at a defeat against Australia A after the visitors crumbled against the home team's spin attack, slumping to 149 for six in their second innings on the third day of the unofficial one-off women's Test here on Saturday. Chasing a victory target of 289, built around Maddy Darke's unbeaten 105, India A looked to build a foundation but rival spinners — Charli Knott (2/27), Grace Parsons (2/27) and Lilly Mills (1/15) — struck in regular intervals. The visitors lost 5 wickets for just 42 runs across 21 overs. At stumps, Raghuvi Bist (16) and Uma Chetry (10) were at the crease with India A still needing 140 runs to win with four wickets in hand.



Resuming at 164 for 7, Australia A produced a tough resistance with Darke doing bulk of the scoring en route to an unconquered 105. Overnight batter Lilly Mills (7) was the first to go as off-spinner Minnu Mani took her match haul to 11 wickets. But Darke and Grace Parsons (35) added 75 runs for the ninth wicket as Australia A posted 260 in their second innings in 92 overs. In reply, Priya Punia (36) and Shweta Sehrawat shared 37 runs for the opening stand before host captain Charlie broke the opening stand by trapping the latter. Punia and Shubha Sathesh (45) then added 52 but off-spinner Lilly sent the opener back with Georgia Voll taking a catch in the covers. Leg-spinner Parsons then removed Tejal Hasabnis (6)

with a beauty, while pacer Tess Flintoff got rid of Shubha Sathesh as keeper Darke did the rest but the batter was not too happy with the caught-behind decision. India A skipper Minnu Mani became the fifth wicket to fall as India A lost half the side for 130 in 57th over. Parsons then dismissed Sajeevan Sajana with Hancock taking the catch in the off side. Raghuvi and Uma then kept India A's hopes alive by negotiating the rest of the overs before stumps. **Brief Scores: Australia A 212 and 260 all out in 92 overs (Emma de Broughe 58, Maddy Darke 105 not out; Minnu Mani 6/92) lead India A 184 and 149 for six in 68 overs (Shubha Sathesh 45; Charli Knott 2/27, Grace Parsons 2/27) by 140 runs.**

# Indian shooting contingent for Paralympics leaves for Paris

PTI n NEW DELHI

Pistol marksman Manish Narwal on Saturday expressed confidence in the Indian shooting contingent surpassing its Tokyo Paralympics medal tally at the upcoming Paris Games, saying the "intense" training would hold the team in good stead. A 10-member shooting contingent, including rifle exponent Avani Lekhara, Mona Agarwal and Narwal, will compete at the Chateauroux Centre near Paris from August 30. India had won two gold, a silver and two bronze medals at the Tokyo Paralympics. "Our preparations have been intense, and we are eager to



give our best shot in Paris. We aim to surpass our previous performance and bring more medals home," said Narwal, who had won the 50m pistol

(SH1) gold in Tokyo and will be competing in 10m air pistol at the Paris Games, before the team's departure on Saturday.

Besides Narwal, Avani and Mona, the other members of the shooting contingent are Amir Ahmad Bhat, Rudransh Khandelwal, Rubina Francis,

Unahalkar, Sidhartha Babu, Shriharsha Devaraddi and Nihal Singh. The spotlight will be on reigning Paralympic champion Avani, who had made history by becoming the first woman shooter from India to win two medals in Tokyo. The Jaipur shooter, then 19, had clinched gold in 10m air rifle and 50m rifle 3-positions (SH1). She would look to replicate her gold medal-winning performances in Paris. The Paralympic Committee is expecting a record-breaking 25-plus medals in Paris and the performance of the shooting team will have a great impact on the overall tally.

PTI n NEW DELHI

Para sports has undergone a sea change in terms of perception and support in the last two decades, and these changes together with continuous backing to athletes can power India to 50 medals in the 2036 edition, reckons the legendary Devendra Jhajharia. From winning just one Paralympics gold 20 years ago to clinching five yellow metals in 2021, para sports in India has come a long way. India are bidding for the 2036 Olympics and Paralympic Games, and Paralympic Committee of India (PCI) President Jhajharia is upbeat that by then India will have the potential to break into top-10 in the medal tally. Jhajharia, the most decorated Paralympian of the country, won his first Paralympics gold in the 2004 Athens edition in F46 javelin throw event. He added another gold in Rio 2016 and a silver in Tokyo in 2021. The F46 classification is for athletes with arm deficiency, impaired muscle power or impaired passive range of movement in arms. "We won 19 medals in Tokyo, now we have a target of 25 in Paris. In

# Vision is to win 50 medals in 2036 Paralympics when India hopefully host Games: Jhajharia

2028 Los Angeles, we can aim for more than 30 medals and 40 plus in 2032. And by 2036, when hopefully India hosts Paralympics, we can win 50 medals and be in top-10," the 43-year-old Jhajharia told PTI in an interview. "We have the vision, we will progress steadily. We have started identifying talented junior players so that they can be trained for 2028 and 2032 Paralympics through CSR (Corporate Social Responsibility)," he added. India have sent a 84-member team -- the largest ever -- at the Paris Paralympics to be held from August 28 to September 8. Jhajharia, who was elected as PCI chief in March, said there has been a tremendous change in para sports in the country in the last 20 years and in the way people accepted specially-abled people taking up to sport. "There was a time when people



asked me why I was taking up javelin throw, why I was wasting my time and life. But now when a para athlete lifts a javelin, people say go and try to become a Sumit Antil or Devendra Jhajharia. "There has been a lot of changes in this country in para sports, the way people see it and the way the government treats para-sports in the same way as able-bodied sports. "In 2004 Athens Paralympics, I competed with money from my own pocket. Now our para athletes enjoy the same world class facilities enjoyed by the able-bodied athletes and they also get to train and compete abroad." India won 19 medals (5 gold, 8 silver and 6 bronze) in Tokyo Paralympics for a 24th place in the tally and Jhajharia predicted that the country will win more than 25 medals in Paris and finish in top-20 in the tally.

"We had 54 participants in Tokyo and now we have 84 in Paris, the largest ever, and our target in Paris is 25 medals and may be double-digit gold out of that, though I feel the colour of the medal is not that important than winning it." Para-athletics officials said the country will win at least 12 medals and minimum five gold in Paris. Asked about this, Jhajharia said, "Out of India's 84 participants in Paris, 38 are para-athletes and naturally they will win more medals. "There is a reason for para-athletes doing extremely well at global level. We are taking part and doing well in several top-class international events, whether it's Grand Prix events or World Championships." Jhajharia, who is leaving for Paris on Sunday, will not be a part of the Indian contingent as a para-athlete but as an official, and he became nostalgic recollecting his last Games in Tokyo three years ago. "When I see a player throwing javelin, I suddenly become a player again. When Sumit Antil was throwing javelin the other day, I was having a different feeling inside that should I also start javelin throw again."





# Spa Therapies To Rejuvenate You In Monsoon Season!

By SHARMILA CHAND

facilitate energy flow. Enhanced with warm herbal bundles and rose quartz crystals, this treatment offers a truly holistic experience."

### HOT STONE THERAPY

**Kinwani House, Narendranagar**

**K**avinder Besoya, COO, Aalia Collections says, "Hot stone therapy is a specialized form of massage that uses smooth, heated stones to enhance the therapeutic benefits of traditional massage techniques. This therapy is particularly beneficial during the monsoon as it gives relief from Muscle Aches and Joint Pains. The damp and humid weather of the monsoon can often exacerbate muscle aches and joint pains. The heat from the stones helps to relax and loosen tight muscles, providing relief from discomfort and stiffness. It also aids in Blood Circulation. The warmth from the hot stones dilates blood vessels, which enhances blood flow throughout the body. This improved circulation can help in reducing inflammation and promoting

Looking to pamper yourself with a soothing treatment in this rainy season? We bring rejuvenating spa therapies that harmonize the body, mind, and spirit. Embark on a cooling journey to inner peace and vitality. Do not let the humid weather get to you. Indulge yourself into stimulating therapies that will help you feeling refreshed and energized.

### KU NYE TREATMENT

**The Ritz-Carlton, Bangalore**

**S**heric Dorairaj Director of Spa, The Ritz-Carlton, Bangalore says, "At The Ritz-Carlton Spa, Bangalore, our experiences are thoughtfully designed to harmonize the mind and body, offering an ideal sanctuary. Our signature Ku Nye treatment is perfect for the rainy season. Rooted in traditional Tibetan techniques, it incorporates cupping, acupressure, and a soothing scalp massage to alleviate tension and



healing, which is especially useful during the monsoon when the body might feel more sluggish. Stress Reduction is another benefit of therapy. The monsoon season can sometimes bring about a feeling of lethargy and low energy. Hot stone massage promotes deep relaxation and helps in reducing stress and anxiety. The soothing heat combined with the massage techniques can uplift your mood and improve overall well-being.

Finally, it enhances Immunity. Regular hot stone massages can boost the immune system by improving lymphatic drainage and circulation. This is particularly important during the monsoon season when the risk of infections and illnesses is higher."

### KARKIDAKA CHIKITSA

**Fazlani Natures Nest**

r. Shubbhata Thorat, Senior Wellness Consultant (Naturopathy)

says, "Karkidaka chikitsa, also known as karkidaka chikitsa in Ayurveda is a time-honored tradition in Kerala which holds numerous health and wellness benefits. It is an ancient practice specifically created to experience the healing power of nature during the monsoon, as during this time the body is more receptive to receive the therapies due to the cold and moist environment. The treatments are aimed to detoxify the body and mind, boosts the immune mechanism and restore to balance the doshas (vata, pitta and kapha) to promote the overall health and well being as during the monsoon it is believed that the rainfall increases the chances of various water borne diseases through drinking water, drainage water leading to typhoid, viral fever etc. and often aggravates certain health conditions like arthritis, asthma, rhinitis etc. The goal of karkidaka chikitsa is to mobilize the toxins and help in eliminating them by Snehana and Swedanam treatments. The therapy helps to boost immunity. When the body's ojas (immunity) levels went down, it can lead to invasion of many disease-causing pathogens. The karkidaka kanji helps in strengthening the immune system of the body."

### PANCHAKARMA THERAPY

**Niraamaya Retreats Surya Samudra, Kovalam, Trivandrum**

**D**r Bejoy Mathew, Spa Head says, "Panchakarma, a cornerstone of Ayurvedic therapy, offers numerous health benefits by cleansing and rejuvenating the body. The key benefits of Panchakarma treatment are Detoxification, Improved Digestion, Stress Reduction, Rejuvenation, Pain Relief, Weight Management, Hormonal Balance and Enhanced Sleep Quality. During the



monsoon season, Panchakarma therapy offers tailored treatments that cater to individual constitution and health needs. From boosting immunity against illnesses to enhancing skin health with improved texture and clarity, each session is overseen by qualified Ayurvedic practitioners."

### INDIAN ABHYANGA & SHIRODHARA

**Sheraton Grand Bengaluru Whitefield Hotel & Convention Center**

na Roy, Director of Operations, says,

"Welcome to our spa oasis, where the monsoon season brings a unique opportunity for rejuvenation and renewal. As the raindrops softly patter outside, our sanctuary awaits to cocoon you in tranquility and healing. Experience the ancient wisdom of Ayurvedic treatments tailored to harmonize mind, body and spirit during this season of natural balance. Let the gentle rhythm of our therapies melt away stress and tension, leaving you refreshed and revitalized. A full-body warm oil massage serves as a potent recharge and rejuvenator for both mind and body. Abhyanga, the Ayurvedic massage technique, is particularly recommended during the monsoon season to support a healthy and healing system for overall well-being. Shirodhara

massage is a profound Ayurvedic therapy where warm, medicated oil flows continuously onto the forehead, known as the 'third eye'. This ancient practice promotes deep relaxation, calming the nervous system and relieving stress and anxiety. It also enhances sleep quality by harmonizing natural sleep patterns, making it a valuable treatment for overall well-being and mental clarity in Ayurvedic tradition."

### TAN LEPA RITUAL

**The Leela Palace New Delhi**

nupam Dasgupta, Area Vice President (North India) and General Manager at The Leela Palace New Delhi says, "Embark on a voyage of rejuvenation this monsoon with the Tan Lepa Ritual at The Leela Palace New Delhi, igniting your body's natural vitality. From the tranquil Algae gel to the revitalizing Marma point massage, each phase invites you to rediscover balance and vitality. Feel your senses awaken, tensions melt away, and your essence uplifted as you indulge in this Ayurvedic-inspired odyssey of detoxification and renewal."

— She is an author and independent Journalist, who writes on Food, Travel, Art, Holistic Wellness and Lifestyle chand.sharmila@gmail.com

## EVENTS THIS WEEK

# Join the Ultimate Shopping Extravaganza at Monkey Bar!

**G**et ready for a shopping event like no other at Monkey Bar, New Delhi! The Wishing Chair is hosting "The Big Blowout Sale," featuring 14 women-led lifestyle brands offering everything at a remarkable 50% off. This one-day extravaganza presents an incredible opportunity to shop a diverse range of products, including stylish jewelry, chic fashion, trendy accessories, and unique home decor all under one roof. Monkey Bar, with its vibrant and welcoming atmosphere, provides the perfect setting for this exciting sale. Located in the iconic pyramid glass building in Vasant Kunj, it's the ideal venue to host this special event. Whether you're looking to refresh your wardrobe, find unique gifts, or discover distinctive items for your home, this sale has something for everyone.

In addition to fantastic discounts, attendees can enjoy special cocktails that perfectly complement the lively mood of the event. Gather your friends and family for a fun-filled Sunday of shopping. With a high-energy ambiance and an array of enticing offers, this event promises to be a memorable experience. The Big Blowout Sale is free to attend, making it accessible to all. It's not just about the great deals but also about supporting women-led businesses and celebrating local entrepreneurs. Each participating brand has been carefully selected to ensure a high-quality and diverse shopping experience. Don't miss this unique opportunity to experience the best of women-led lifestyle brands at unbeatable prices. For updates and more information, follow Monkey Bar on Instagram: @monkeybarind. Come for the deals, stay for the fun, and enjoy a fantastic day of shopping at Monkey Bar!

MONKEY DELHI & THE WISHING CHAIR PRESENTS

## THE BIG BLOWOUT SALE

25 AUGUST | 12 PM TO 7 PM  
MONKEY BAR, VASANT KUNJ, NEW DELHI

All our favourite, women-led brands under one roof with the best deal in the wildest sale of the season!

MINIMUM 50% OFF

Participating brands: Gado, patrika, KANELLE, HOUSE OF FETT, HAPPY SPACE, Doodlage, afterdark.co.in, nouvelle, PASHIMA, STORM, OBJEOTRY, बंगला १२३, लोहाडी

### EVENT DETAILS:

Date: Sunday, August 25 Time: 12:00 PM - 7:00 PM  
Venue: Monkey Bar, Vasant Kunj, New Delhi  
Entry: Free

# Discover the Spirit of Art: ATMAN

**A**rt aficionados and cultural enthusiasts are warmly invited to experience "ATMAN," an extraordinary art exhibition showcasing the work of rising artist Niyamat Mehta. This highly anticipated event, presented in collaboration with Artix India and Arushi Arts, promises an immersive exploration of the human spirit through a collection of evocative sculptures that delve deeply into themes of introspection and self-discovery. Niyamat Mehta, at just 25 years old, has rapidly emerged as a distinctive voice in the art world. Her innovative approach and profound artistic vision have garnered considerable attention, making "ATMAN" a must-see event. The exhibition features a series of sculptures that are not only visually striking but also rich with emotional and philosophical depth. Each piece is a reflection on the essence of self and the journey inward, inviting viewers to engage with art that challenges and inspires. The venue for this transformative exhibition is The Claridges, New Delhi, an elegant setting that complements the contemplative nature of Mehta's work. The sophisticated atmosphere of The Claridges provides the perfect backdrop for the sculptures, enhancing the overall experience of the exhibition. Visitors will have the opportunity to explore the

Will be exhibited @ Artix India with Arushi Arts

## ATMAN

30TH AUG to 01ST SEPT '24

Venue: The Claridges  
Time: 11:00 AM to 06:30 PM

@niyamat\_mehta  
www.niyamatmehta.com

reflecting Mehta's commitment to making art accessible to a wide audience and fostering a greater appreciation for contemporary artistic expressions. This exhibition is an excellent opportunity for art lovers, collectors, and those new to the art scene to experience the impact of Mehta's work. Whether you are looking to deepen your understanding of contemporary art or simply wish to enjoy a thoughtful and engaging art experience, "ATMAN" offers something for everyone. Mark your calendars and take advantage of this unique chance to witness the creative brilliance of Niyamat Mehta. For additional updates and insights into the artist's work, follow Niyamat Mehta on Instagram at @niyamat\_mehta. Don't miss this chance to be part of an unforgettable artistic journey that promises to leave a lasting impression. Experience the art of introspection and self-discovery with Niyamat Mehta's "ATMAN" and be part of an exhibition that explores the profound depths of the human spirit.

### EVENT DETAILS:

Dates: 30th August - 1st September 2024  
Time: 11:00 AM - 6:30 PM  
Venue: The Claridges, New Delhi  
Entry: Free



"If things happen for the good, I say that Lord Krishna wished it so, and if anything goes against me, even then I say Lord Krishna wanted it to happen that way"  
— Sushma Swaraj



## Janmashtami THE CELEBRATION OF DIVINE BIRTH

As devotees gather to honour his birth, the tale of Krishna's miraculous arrival inspires hearts, reminding us of the enduring power of faith and the timeless victory of good over evil, writes **DIVYA BHATIA**

In the stillness of the midnight hour, when the world is wrapped in darkness, a divine light descends upon the earth, heralding the birth of Lord Krishna. Janmashtami, a festival that transcends time, celebrates this miraculous moment when the cosmos rejoiced, and the universe conspired to bring forth a savior destined to restore dharma and vanquish evil. As the bells ring out and devotees gather in reverence, the story of Krishna's birth is retold—an epic tale of love, courage, and the triumph of righteousness. It is a night when the heavens dance in celebration, and hearts are filled with the timeless wisdom of the one who forever changed the course of humanity. Krishna Janmashtami, also known as Krishnashtami, Janmashtami, or Gokulashtami, is a major Hindu festival celebrated with devotion across India and by Hindu communities worldwide. This occasion marks the birth of Lord Krishna, the eighth avatar of Vishnu, whose life and teachings inspire millions. Observed on the eighth day (Ashtami) of the dark fortnight (Krishna Paksha) in Shravana Masa (amanta tradition) or Bhadrapada Masa (purnimanta tradition), Janmashtami typically falls in late August. The festival is not just a religious event but a celebration of the values Krishna embodied.

Krishna's birth is a tale of divine drama in Hindu mythology. Born to Queen Devaki and King Vasudeva in Mathura, his arrival was marked by peril. Devaki's brother, the tyrant King Kamsa, imprisoned the couple after hearing a prophecy that foretold his death at the hands of their eighth child. Kamsa had already killed six of their children. To protect Krishna, Vasudeva secretly transported the newborn across the Yamuna River to Gokul, where he was raised by Nanda Maharaj and Yashoda. Krishna's escape and triumph over Kamsa symbolize the victory of good over evil, a central theme of Janmashtami. The festival reminds devotees of the eternal struggle between righteousness and wickedness, urging them to uphold virtue. Krishna's life represents divine intervention that restored justice, reinforcing the timeless value of standing against injustice. The metaphor of Janmashtami is rich in symbolic meaning, depicting the eternal battle between good and evil and the soul's journey toward spiritual awakening. Kamsa symbolizes the destructive ego, while Devaki represents human consciousness carrying divine potential. Vasudeva symbolizes human will aligned with divine purpose. Krishna, the incarnated soul, nurtured in a righteous environment, eventually overcomes the ego (Kamsa) to establish peace and harmony, reflecting the soul's journey to transcend ego and realize its divine nature.

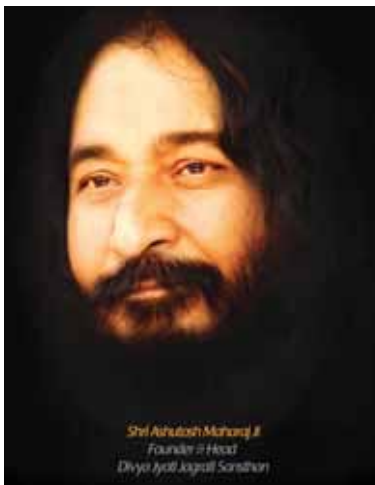
Sadhvi Tapeshwari Bharti Ji of Divya Jyoti Jagrati Sansthan eloquently describes the metaphors surrounding Krishna's birth, noting that Kamsa represents the ego, with its demon-like qualities such as arrogance, pride, and ignorance. According to her, Devaki symbolizes the part of the human self that harbors consciousness, while Vasudeva represents the will attuned to divine command. Krishna, as the incarnated soul, must separate from the



### Where to celebrate?

DJJS Shri Krishna Janmashtami 2024 at Dwarka, New Delhi Divya Jyoti Jagrati Sansthan (DJJS) celebrates Shri Krishna Janmashtami Mahotsav 2024 under the theme "Darshan Itihaas Ka, Parivartan Aaj Ka" (Recalling the Values of the Past & Transforming the Present) on August 25th and 26th, 2024. The festival will be held at DDA Ground, Sector 10, Dwarka, New Delhi, starting from 7 PM each evening. This year's celebration features several unique and innovative elements designed to enhance the festival experience. A major highlight will be the Environment Conservation initiative, showcased through a remarkable Govardhan Mountain 3D Model. Echoing Lord Krishna's dedication to environmental preservation in the

Govardhan Leela, this massive, cutting-edge model will incorporate digital and lighting elements. The model will also feature Sankalp/pledge placards representing various commitments to environmental conservation. The event will unfold with captivating performances, including 15 dance ballets and theatrical presentations depicting significant episodes from the life of Jagatguru Shri Krishna. Key performances will include dramatic interpretations of the 'Slaying of Tyrant Ruler Kansa', 'Virat Roop Darshan of Shri Krishna', 'Slaying of Kaliya Snake', 'Paundraka-The Fake Krishna', 'Devotion of Social Reformer Meera Bai', and 'Joyful Birth Celebration of Lord Krishna'.



lives toward devotion, humility, and love. In today's world, marked by pandemics and conflict, Krishna's divine wisdom is essential. This festival is a key moment to reconnect with dharma and strengthen the bond with the Supreme Personality. In today's chaotic world, Krishna's teachings provide insights for managing stress, leading an ethical life, and fostering personal growth. The Bhagavad Gita's emphasis on equanimity and detachment offers tools for navigating modern pressures. Krishna's principles of selfless duty and moral values guide ethical decision-making and achieving a balanced life. His focus on self-realization encourages introspection, helping us understand our true selves amid distractions. This philosophy extends to Janmashtami foods, chosen to reflect Krishna's principles of balance, purity, and nourishment. The simple, nutrient-rich ingredients like fruits, nuts, seeds, and grains not only sustain the body but also maintain mental clarity and spiritual focus. Just as Krishna's teachings guide us toward a balanced life, these foods nourish both body and soul, reinforcing the connection between what we consume and how we live.

Dr. Sangeeta Tiwari, Clinical Nutritionist at Artemis Lite, NFC, New Delhi, explained that Janmashtami foods are designed not only to sustain energy during fasting but also to offer numerous health benefits. Ingredients like fruits, nuts, seeds, dairy, and gluten-free grains such as buckwheat and amaranth provide essential nutrients that support overall well-being. Fruits are rich in vitamins and antioxidants, aiding hydration and digestion. Nuts and seeds offer healthy fats and proteins for sustained energy and brain health. Dairy ensures gut health and muscle support, while grains like buckwheat provide slow-releasing carbohydrates to

maintain energy levels. Together, these foods ensure balanced energy, digestion, and hydration during the fast, promoting overall health. Janmashtami is more than just a celebration of Lord Krishna's birth; it is a profound reflection on the eternal struggle between good and evil, the importance of righteousness, and the path to spiritual awakening. As devotees

## RECIPES

### Black rice and coconut kheer

By Aditi Dixit, Chief, CYK Hospitalities

#### INGREDIENTS

##### FOR BLACK RICE KHEER

- Black Rice (washed & soaked) - 50 gms
- Coconut Milk - 500ml
- Full fat Milk - 1 ltr
- Jaggery - 135 gms
- Coconut (fresh, grated) - 80 gms
- Cashew nuts (fried) - 30 gms
- Raisins (fried) - 30 gms
- Walnuts (fried) - 20 gms
- Chironji (fried) - 10 gms
- Cardamom Powder - 5 gms
- Cinnamon Powder - 3 gms
- Ghee - 45 gms

##### FOR FOXNUT ROSE PRALINE

- Granulated Sugar - 200 gms
- Foxnut (roasted) - 15 gms
- Rose petals - 8 gms

#### METHOD

##### OR FRIED NUTS

- In a pan, add ghee and let it warm.
- Once the ghee is moderately hot add raisins and fry them. Once done take the raisins off, drain the excess ghee in the pan



and let it cool down.

- Put cashew nuts, walnuts and chironji in the ghee and lightly stir them till golden brown. Once done take them off the pan and drain the excess and let it cool down.



##### FOR ROSE FOXNUT PRALINE

In a heavy bottom pan take granulated sugar and let it melt nicely and slowly.

- Do not stir the sugar while it is melting.
- Bring the sugar to a beautiful bronze shade, and pour it on a silicon mat or a well oiled granite top or thali.
- Once poured, put roasted fox nuts and

dried rose petals on it and keep it aside in a well ventilated room.

- Once done, break it randomly and store in an airtight container.

##### FOR KHEER

- Soak washed black rice for at least 30 minutes. Once done, dry them in the air for another 30 minutes. Blitz it very coarsely for 2-3 seconds and keep it aside.

- Take all the milk in heavy bottomed kadai and cook the milk till first boil.
- Add the grated coconut flesh to the milk, stir it for 2-3 minutes.
- Once done, add black rice to the milk and cook it for at least 40-45 till the rice is cooked and milk is reduced to half, take it off the cooktop to rest for a minimum of 3-4 hours.
- In a different pan take jaggery and 50 ml water and cook it and make a syrup.
- Once the syrup is cooled down add the syrup to cold kheer for the sweetness.
- Adjust the sweetness according to the taste and add cardamom powder.
- Add fried nuts to kheer and leave some for garnish.
- Pour the kheer in a beautiful bowl, garnish it with fried nuts, coconut flakes and rose fox nut praline.

### Kaju Badam Astrian laddo, Safawi khajoor and Manna Anjeer

By Richard Charlie, Chef, Namaste Dwaar Resort

#### INGREDIENTS

- Almond-50gm
- Cashew - 50gm
- Pista- 30gm
- Melon seed- 25gm
- Raisin - 25gm
- Pure ghee- 25 ml
- Dates- 20 gm
- Fig - 20 gm
- Apricot - 20 gm
- Jagary - 15gm



#### METHOD

- On a medium flame add the desi ghee and roast the almonds and cashew until slightly aromatic, add pista and roast again for 2 to 3 min.
- Roast melon seed and raisin in a small amount of ghee until it cracked
- Add dates and fig to the mixture and roughly blend it partially
- Add jagary into it according to taste and mix all the ingredients together,
- Keep it in a cool and dry place for 45

min and then again mix well by adding the chop nuts and dry fruits

- Make small round balls according to your size and your delicious and healthy laddoo are ready to serve

**HEALTH TIPS**— dry fruit laddoo are full of vitamin E, magnesium and full of Zinc, and other essential nutrients Which helps in giving energy to the body organs If a person feel low in energy, a good note of dry fruit and dates laddoo will make you feel rejuvenated of energy.

### Sahi tukda

Amandeep Singh Executive Sous Chef, The Westin Mumbai Garden City

#### INGREDIENTS

- 6 slices of bread
- 1 cup milk
- 1 cup sugar
- 1/4 cup ghee (clarified butter)
- 1/4 cup cashews, chopped
- 1/4 cup almonds, chopped
- 1/4 cup raisins
- 1/2 teaspoon cardamom powder
- A pinch of saffron strands (optional)
- Silver vark (edible silver foil), for garnish (optional)

#### METHOD

- Trim the edges of the bread slices and cut them into smaller pieces or quarters.

- Heat ghee in a pan over medium heat. Fry the bread pieces until they turn golden brown and crisp. Remove them from the pan and set them aside on a paper towel to drain excess ghee.
- In the same pan, add cashews, almonds, and raisins. Sauté them until they are golden. Remove and set aside.
- In another pan, bring the milk to a boil. Reduce the heat and add sugar, cardamom powder, and

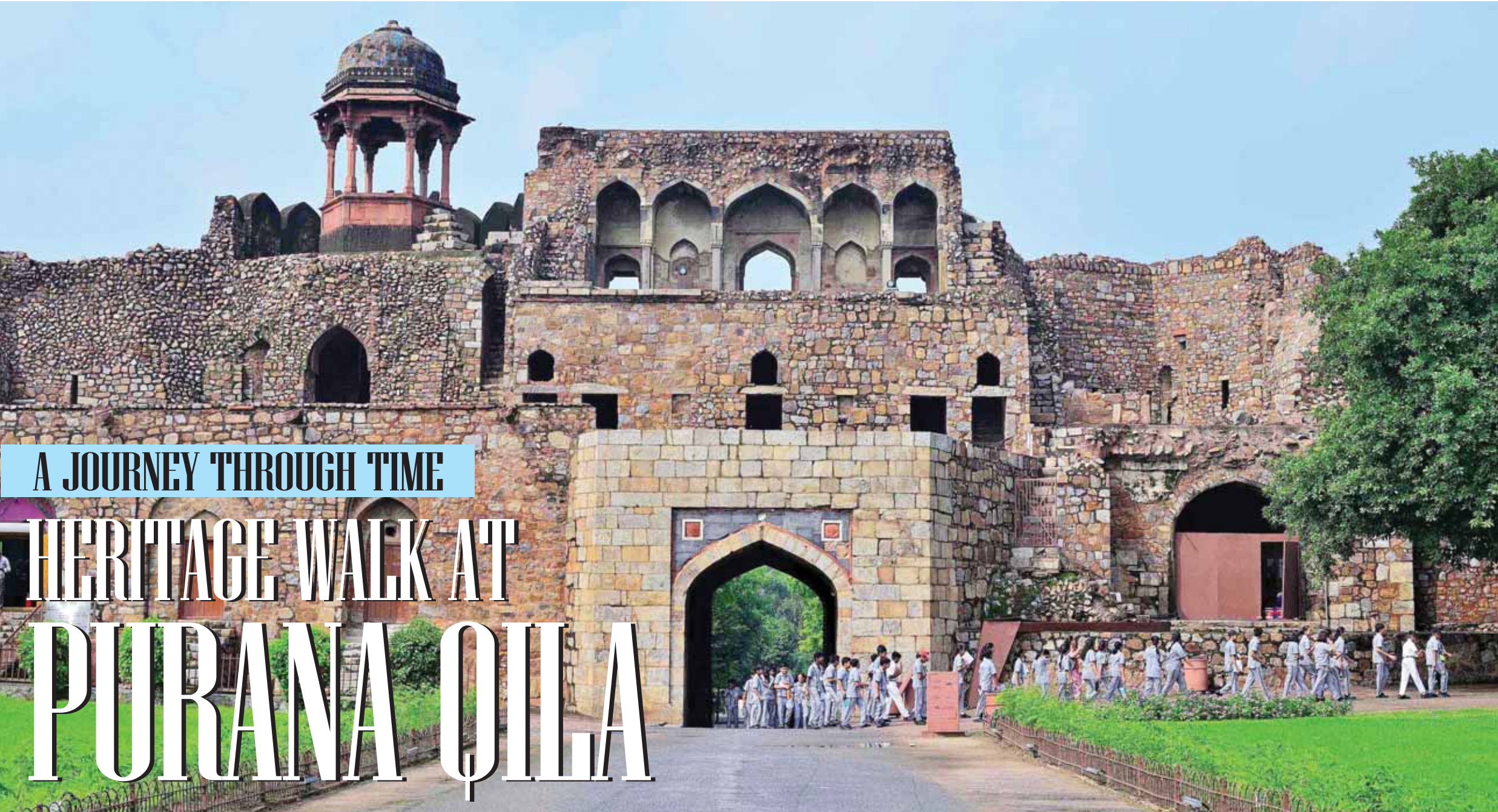


saffron strands (if using). Mix well and let it simmer for a few minutes until the sugar dissolves and the milk thickens slightly.

- Add the fried bread pieces to the milk mixture. Gently mix to ensure the bread is coated with the milk.
- Allow the bread to soak in the milk for about 10-15 minutes, letting it absorb the flavors.
- Serve the Double Ka Meetha warm, garnished with fried nuts and silver vark.

come together to celebrate this festival, they are reminded of the timeless wisdom that Krishna imparted, wisdom that continues to guide humanity toward a life of purpose, peace, and harmony. In a world that often feels disconnected from spiritual values, Janmashtami serves as a beacon, illuminating the path of righteousness and divine love.





**A JOURNEY THROUGH TIME**

**HERITAGE WALK AT  
PURANA QILA**

Historian **Vikramjit Singh Rooprai** led a captivating Heritage Walk through Purana Qila, offering participants a blend of history and architectural insights. This immersive experience highlighted the fort's significance, revealing hidden stories and the interconnectedness of its historical and ecological aspects, writes **SAKSHI PRIYA**

As part of his second series of the Delhi Heritage series, historian and author Vikramjit Singh Rooprai led an insightful walk through Purana Qila, one of Delhi's most famous and second-most visited forts. Inspired by his upcoming book, *Delhi Heritage: Top 10 Forts*, this exclusive Heritage Walk offered a select group of history enthusiasts rare insights and thoughtful details about the fort that are not widely known. Against the backdrop of the ancient walls of Purana Qila, Rooprai embarked on a journey to unravel the secrets of this historic fort, blending myth, history and architecture as he explored one of Delhi's most significant yet often overlooked monuments. Purana Qila or the "Old Fort," is one of Delhi's oldest forts, with a history that stretches back centuries. It is often overshadowed by more famous landmarks like the Red Fort and Qutub Minar, yet it holds a crucial place in the narrative of Delhi's evolution. The fort's origins are shrouded in mystery, with legends linking it to the ancient city of Indraprastha, the legendary capital of the Pandavas from the Mahabharata. Rooprai, with his deep knowledge and passion for Delhi's history, made it clear that much of this association is based on later folklore rather than historical evidence. The fort as we see it today is primarily the work of two great rulers, Emperor Humayun and Sher Shah Suri, whose contributions to its construction have left a lasting legacy. The exploration began at the grand entrance of the fort, the Bada Darwaza, where the sheer scale and architectural prowess of the structure immediately impressed upon visitors the importance of this site in Delhi's history. Rooprai explained how this massive gate, with its towering height and intricate carvings, served as a formidable barrier, protecting the fort's inhabitants from invaders. The Bada Darwaza, like much of the fort, reflects a blend of Islamic and Hindu architectural styles, a syncretism that has always been a hallmark of Delhi's culture. This gate is not just an entrance but a symbol of the fort's strategic importance in the defense of the city. As the group moved deeper into the fort, Rooprai guided them towards the imposing Talaqi Darwaza, a gate that remained sealed for centuries until it was rediscovered in the early 20th century. The name "Talaqi," meaning "separation," intrigued many. Rooprai mentioned that if we look closely at the interior detailing at the top of Talaqi Darwaza, we can still see some remnants of its original colors, a subtle yet vivid reminder of the fort's rich past. He narrated how this gate, with its intricate carvings and lofty chhatris (domed pavilions), had been sealed shortly after its construction, its purpose shrouded in mystery. Some historians speculate that it might have been closed due to superstitions or security concerns, while others believe it was simply never completed. As Rooprai spoke, it was easy to imagine the fort as it once was, a bustling hub of activity, a place where history was made. One of the most captivating aspects of the walk was Rooprai's discussion about the



**“PURANA QILA OR THE “OLD FORT,” IS ONE OF DELHI'S OLDEST FORTS, WITH A HISTORY THAT STRETCHES BACK CENTURIES. IT IS OFTEN OVERSHADOWED BY MORE FAMOUS LANDMARKS LIKE THE RED FORT AND QUTUB MINAR, YET IT HOLDS A CRUCIAL PLACE IN THE NARRATIVE OF DELHI'S EVOLUTION.”**

inscriptions near Talaqi Darwaza, discovered by the British during their restoration efforts. These inscriptions explore the preservation of "the house of Humayun," adding a layer of intrigue to the fort's history and sparking curiosity about their true meaning. During the walk, Vikramjit emphasised the challenges of accessing historical resources, sharing anecdotes about the British efforts to clean and preserve the gates. These efforts uncovered inscriptions pleading to "save this house of Humayun," a phrase that sparked debate among historians. Some interpreted it as a reference to Emperor Humayun, while others saw it as a metaphorical plea to protect the sanctity of the site. The architectural grandeur of Purana Qila is not just limited to its gates. The fort's walls, towering over the surrounding landscape, are a witness to the engineering prowess of the time. Built using large stone blocks, the walls are interspersed with bastions and watchtowers, which would have provided a vantage point for the fort's defenders. Rooprai pointed out the changes that had occurred over the centuries, especially the eastern wall, which once overlooked the Yamuna River. The river, which has since shifted its course, played a crucial role in the fort's defense, providing a natural barrier against invaders. Today, the fort's strategic location remains evident, offering stunning views of the city and a reminder of its importance in Delhi's history. Ecological insights were also an integral part of Rooprai's narrative. He highlighted the green layer on the lake within the fort, which plays a crucial role in supporting various forms of life, including fish and birds. This lake, once a part of the Yamuna River's floodplain, has



now become an isolated water body. Rooprai discussed how the lake's ecosystem is a delicate balance, with the green algae on the surface providing oxygen for aquatic life while also serving as a breeding ground for insects that are crucial for the survival of birds and other animals. Any disruption to this delicate ecosystem could have a significant impact, underscoring the interconnectedness of human history and the natural environment. The tour culminated at Humayun Darwaza, another significant gate of the fort. Rooprai highlighted how much of the fort's construction, including these gates, may have been initiated by Humayun himself, despite the popular attribution to Sher Shah Suri. The Humayun Darwaza, with its grand archways and intricate tile work, stands as a symbol of the Mughal emperor's ambition to create a lasting legacy. The fort's story, Rooprai noted, is one of resilience, evidence to a city that has been

built, destroyed and rebuilt countless times. Through this walk, Rooprai not only guided the visitors through the physical space of Purana Qila but also through the complex narrative of Delhi's history. He emphasised that while Purana Qila is often overshadowed by more famous structures like the Red Fort, it remains an essential part of Delhi's heritage, a silent witness to the city's evolution. The active involvement of a 14-year-old boy during the walk was particularly noteworthy. Deeply engrossed in the exploration, the boy actively engaged with Vikramjit, asking thoughtful questions that enriched the experience for everyone present. His curiosity and enthusiasm reflected the walk's success in sparking interest across different age groups, showing the importance of making history accessible and exciting for all generations. The boy's questions ranged from the significance of the inscriptions to the architectural details of

the fort and Rooprai patiently answered each one, providing insights that captivated both the young participant and the older attendees. As the tour came to an end, Rooprai left the group with a deeper appreciation for this ancient site. Purana Qila was no longer just an old fort but a living part of Delhi's rich and varied history, a place where myths and facts converge, creating a story that is both beautiful and complex. Through his insights, Rooprai had brought Purana Qila to life, making the past palpable and the stories within its walls a part of the present. The fort's layers of history, from its ancient origins to its role in the Mughal Empire, were laid bare, offering a glimpse into the lives of those who walked its grounds centuries ago. Vikramjit Singh Rooprai's approach to history is not only informative but also deeply engaging. His ability to work together factual history with the legends surrounding Purana Qila makes the past resonate with present-day audiences. He reminds us that history is not just about dates and events but about the stories of people, places and cultures that have shaped our world. This walk was more than just a tour - it was a journey through time, offering a rare insight into the layers of history that have shaped Delhi. It's clear that such events are crucial in building a deeper appreciation for the rich heritage that surrounds us. Rooprai's work is a tribute to the importance of preserving and sharing our history, ensuring that future generations can continue to learn from and be inspired by the past. The *Heritage Walk* at Purana Qila was an enlightening experience that left the participants with a profound respect for the history and architecture of one of Delhi's oldest forts. Through Rooprai's expert guidance, the group gained not only knowledge but also a sense of connection to the city's past. The walk was a reminder that history is all around us, waiting to be discovered and that by exploring it, we can gain a better understanding of the world we live in today.





# SLY GRANNY'S NEW MENU PROMISES A MEMORABLE CULINARY FARE!

Nestled in the vibrant heart of Delhi's Khan Market, Sly Granny has finally unveiled its much awaited new menu which boasts of blending classics with contemporary flair

BY SHARMILA CHAND

On a sultry afternoon, I walk in at Sly Granny in Khan Market to see how the mischievous adorable Granny is wooing her diners with the new menu. The buzz here perks up my mood, almost all tables occupied with diners busy chatting and eating, servers attending hurriedly with spectacular food, the colorful décor with pictures from Granny's travels amp up the spirits and build my appetite all the more. I love the cheery vibes, lively music, quirky flair, and finally get a table to settle down. Sly Granny is damn interesting, what a vibrant personality, I think to myself.

"Yes, she is," says the Co-Founder, Rahul Khanna. "Sly Granny is the embodiment of a wickedly sassy, witty, and sly character—she's a mashup of everything quirky and cool. We've designed the restaurant to be as layered and unpredictable as Granny herself, blending her love for art, music, travel, entertainment, and pop culture into every nook and cranny. Whether it's the quirky décor, the eccentric vibe, or the adventurous menu, every aspect of Sly Granny is a nod to her multifaceted personality. She's constantly evolving, just like our space, making sure that every visit feels like a new, exciting chapter in her ever-entertaining story."

## INDIGENOUS & CONTEMPORARY FOOD SYMPHONY

The new menu features seasonal Indian produce which is carefully selected and mindfully prepared for all cuisines here. For example, Indian amla (Gooseberry) is picked and used in salads. Lotus stem and sweet potato is popular as chips.



CHEF ANUBHAV MOZA  
SLY GRANNY

Hemp seed from the state of Uttarakhand is processed to make a dip which is used in mezza platter. Similarly jackfruit is braised with bbq sauce and used in making tacos. It is evident that the focus is to keep the menu fresh, seasonal with a flair of contemporary techniques and yet highlight the importance of Indian produce.

Anubhav Moza, Assistant Brand Chef explains, "Our new menu at Sly Granny is a vibrant tapestry of Granny's eclectic passions—each dish is inspired by her travels, her love for music, quirky art obsessions, and her unapologetic affection for good drinks and pop culture. We've infused her playful spirit into every bite, blending

classic flavors with unexpected twists. Granny's food is all about the joy of discovery, where each dish tells a story of her adventures and her ever-evolving taste. It's a celebration of the bold and fun, in the world of gourmet. Our aim to give healthy and seasonal fresh produce from the farms in India and serve in European flavors. For example, amongst other indigenous produce, we also use phalsa, another Indian berry for making compote and serving with our chocolate desserts."

The meal begins with 'Shish Tawook Broccoli' - a fusion of chargrilled broccoli and tender Shish Tawook. The addition of sautéed chickpeas and a kale-mashed potato makes it a delightful combination. Next up is the 'Greek Vegetable Medley' with Candied Pumpkin adding the fun element. Spiced pumpkin steak is an interesting variation served with seasonal vegetables and creamy tahini, a great way to showcase myriad flavours and textures. Not to be missed is the intriguing 'Roots & Halloumi', a symphony of slow-roasted carrots, beetroot, sweet potato, and savoury halloumi complemented by labneh, chilli garlic oil, and candied walnuts - a true delight for discerning palates.

For Seafood aficionados, the Herb-Crusted Salmon, served with crème fraiche, pan-tossed vegetables, and a delicate beurre blanc sauce embodies coastal elegance at its best. Also gracing the menu is the Paprika Chicken and Caramelized Onion Pizza - a perfect harmony of paprika-infused



chicken, caramelised onions, jalapeños, and savoury goat cheese atop a crispy crust, promising a burst of flavours. For me Granny's Mezza, spectacular in its presentation and taste, turned out to be the best. With spiced pita, lavaash, cheese cracker, yam kebab, falafel, spinach and cheese borek, and the showstopper 'Hemp seed dip', marinated olives, pickled greens, I couldn't have been happier. 'Pesto Al Genovese' comes next. A lovely rendition of pasta along with broccoli, asparagus in basil pesto, tossed with burrata crumble. I especially loved the texture of the pesto-creamy, like velvety.

'Sly Tiramisu' looks outstanding to conclude gastronomic journey as it's a decadent ensemble of mascarpone-soaked sponge, coffee ice cream, cocoa crunch, caramel popcorn, and Baileys ganache, an exquisite finale to an exceptional meal. But I go for 'Chocolate Torte' - absolutely heavenly with strawberry ice cream, hazel nut crunch and phalsa compote that refreshes my palate.

## NEW SEASONAL COCKTAIL MENU

Whether you're a seasoned cocktail connoisseur or simply seeking a refreshing beverage, there is a drink for everyone to enjoy.

Sly Granny has revisited historical favourites and given them a modern twist. Take, for instance, the "Castel Del Monte," which captures the essence of the Italian sunshine in a delightful blend of gin, roasted pineapple, Campari, and sweet vermouth. For a spicy kick, "Wildcat of Bombay" offers a fiery concoction of tequila, yellow pimento, lemon, cilantro, and a hint of jalapeno that will get the evening going. These reinventions honour bar classics while adding a unique Sly Granny flair. The new cocktail menu is inspired by flavours from around the world, ensuring that every sip takes you on an exotic adventure. From the cinematic streets of India to the serene landscapes of Italy, the drinks are crafted to transport you to different corners of the globe with just one sip. Not forgetting the classics, The "Posh G&T" elevates the traditional Gin & Tonic with cucumber, rosemary, mint, and a touch of citrus. Whisky lovers rejoice with "The Betty Ford Tribute," a sophisticated mix of whisky, orange,

kaffir lime, jaggery, and lemon. For a touch of nostalgia, indulge in "Granny's Dirty Martini," a perfectly balanced dirty martini with your choice of vodka or gin.

There's a wide selection of non-alcoholic refreshing mocktails as well. The "Almodovar" is a vibrant blend of watermelon juice, peppermint, and a touch of saline, while "Jungle Love!" takes the heat up with guava juice, basil, Granny's hot sauce, and a hint of jalapeno yet is a perfect cooler on a hot day.

## TO CONCLUDE

Sly Granny not only wows it's discerning diners with all day dining menu, but also offers Breakfast on weekends, serving some classic and of course, some of her quirky breakfast dishes from 8:30 am to 11:30 am.

Go and explore Granny's new menu, renowned for its culinary wizardry and vibrant atmosphere. Chef Anubhav Moza's dedication to culinary excellence is evident throughout the menu, making Sly Granny Khan Market a must-visit destination for food enthusiasts seeking refined flavours and unforgettable dining moments.

## CHECK OUT

Sly Granny  
4, Khan Market, New Delhi

Sharmila Chand is an author and journalist who writes on Travel, Food, Culture and Lifestyle

# THE PINNACLE OF GOURMET EXCELLENCE

The Purple Plate, under the visionary leadership of Ishaan Kapoor, has redefined the luxury catering landscape. With a meticulous approach that combines traditional flavours with contemporary techniques, the company delivers unparalleled experiences, making each event a memorable celebration of taste and elegance, says **SAKSHI PRIYA**

In the world of luxury wedding catering, where every detail is meticulously planned and executed, The Purple Plate has emerged as a distinguished leader. Since its inception in January 2017 by Ishaan Kapoor, this innovative company has set new standards in opulent dining experiences. Combining traditional flavours with contemporary techniques, The Purple Plate has catered over 2,000 global events, earning a reputation for excellence and creativity.

What truly sets The Purple Plate apart is its relentless pursuit of perfection in every aspect of its service. The company follows a rigorous 21-step process to ensure each dish meets the highest standards of quality and presentation. This meticulous approach is complemented by a unique policy of catering one event per day. This exclusivity allows The Purple Plate to offer unparalleled personalised service, ensuring that every detail of the event receives the utmost attention and care. A hallmark of The Purple Plate's service is its innovative use of interactive live stations and pass-around dishes. These features are designed to create an engaging and memorable dining experience. Interactive live stations allow guests to interact with chefs, watch the culinary process and customise their meals. This not only adds an educational and entertaining element but also deepens the connection between guests and the food. Pass-around dishes, on the



other hand, enhance social interaction by circulating among guests, encouraging mingling and conversation in a relaxed and informal setting. The Purple Plate's philosophy blends traditional and modern culinary techniques, starting with a deep respect for classic recipes and enhancing them with contemporary methods and innovative presentation. This approach ensures each menu respects culinary heritage while offering fresh and engaging experiences. As the company looks to the future, it aims to incorporate artificial intelligence for personalised menu recommendations, introduce more plant-based and locally sourced ingredients, and explore immersive dining through augmented and virtual reality. These forward-thinking innovations will elevate the dining experience and solidify

**WHAT TRULY SETS THE PURPLE PLATE APART IS ITS RELENTLESS PURSUIT OF PERFECTION IN EVERY ASPECT OF ITS SERVICE. THE COMPANY FOLLOWS A RIGOROUS 21-STEP PROCESS TO ENSURE EACH DISH MEETS THE HIGHEST STANDARDS OF QUALITY AND PRESENTATION. THIS METICULOUS APPROACH IS COMPLEMENTED BY A UNIQUE POLICY OF CATERING ONE EVENT PER DAY**



The Purple Plate's leadership in luxury catering. The Purple Plate's dedication to excellence extends beyond

culinary artistry to a deep commitment to sustainability. The company integrates eco-friendly practices by carefully planning to

reduce food waste, using biodegradable materials and sourcing local ingredients, thus supporting communities and minimising its carbon footprint. As it prepares to enter the Middle Eastern and Asian markets, The Purple Plate will adapt its offerings to regional tastes while upholding its high standards. Through comprehensive training, the team will be well-prepared to navigate cultural nuances, ensuring that exceptional catering experiences are delivered across diverse global settings. Ishaan Kapoor's background in hospitality management and culinary arts has played a crucial role in The Purple Plate's success. His extensive training and practical experience have provided him with a profound understanding of both the operational and creative aspects of luxury catering. Kapoor's commitment to quality and

innovation is reflected in every event. As he puts it, "We're not just serving food; we're crafting an experience that combines artistry and excellence in every bite." Beyond its culinary achievements, The Purple Plate remains deeply committed to making a positive impact on society. By supporting NGOs like Shanti Sahyog, the company demonstrates its dedication to giving back and using its success to contribute to meaningful causes. This commitment to social responsibility not only reflects The Purple Plate's values but also sets a precedent for the hospitality industry, showcasing the importance of community engagement and ethical business practices. In every dish and every event, The Purple Plate strives to deliver not just an exceptional dining experience, but also a lasting positive impact.





**YOUR WEEK AHEAD**

MADHU KOTIYA



**ARIES** March 21-April 19

This week, you might find yourself at a critical juncture, faced with the need to distance yourself from certain aspects of your life that no longer contribute positively to your growth. It's a time for deep emotional introspection and the bravery to step away from situations that fail to fulfill you. Your natural tenacity and zest for life will play pivotal roles as you manage this period of transition. Current influences suggest a time ripe for reflection, urging you to contemplate your core values and long-term aspirations. Although the process of letting go can be challenging, it's essential for your personal development. Approach this phase with determination, and you'll discover that the new directions you're taking are more aligned with your true desires, promising greater contentment and fulfillment.

Lucky number 6 | Lucky colour Fawn  
Lucky day Wednesday



**LEO** July 23-Aug 22

You may be encountering a phase where responsibilities seem overwhelming and the potential for burnout is high. This period is characterized by a heavy load of duties that could lead to stress if not managed carefully. It's crucial to recognize the importance of delegating tasks and taking moments for self-care to prevent exhaustion. Utilize your inherent leadership skills and determination to navigate through these challenging times. By prioritizing and balancing your responsibilities effectively, you can lighten your load and pave the way for a more manageable and fulfilling path forward. Embrace flexibility in your approach and remain open to adjusting your strategies as situations evolve. This adaptability will be key in overcoming obstacles and maintaining your well-being.

Lucky number 19 | Lucky colour Mint  
Lucky day Thursday



**SAGITTARIUS** Nov 22-Dec 21

This week promises a period of plentiful creativity and nurturing vibes. It symbolizes growth and the enjoyment of life's simple pleasures. Current cosmic energies are particularly supportive of your personal and creative endeavors. This makes it a perfect time to explore your artistic inclinations or to deepen relationships. Your inherent enthusiasm and optimism will significantly boost your creative output and help in manifesting your desires. By tapping into your creative core and welcoming the richness around you, you will discover that this week holds many rewarding and satisfying experiences, enhancing both your personal growth and joy. Embrace this opportunity to flourish and allow yourself the space to explore new ideas and connections.

Lucky number 7 | Lucky colour Lavender  
Lucky day Friday



**TAURUS** April 20-May 20

This week may be challenging as concerns and stress could dominate your thoughts. These feelings often lead to restlessness and significant mental strain. It's essential to tackle these issues directly instead of allowing them to grow. Focus on tangible solutions and don't hesitate to seek support when necessary. Your resilient nature will be crucial in managing these difficult emotions. Keep in mind that you possess the strength to surpass these hurdles with patience and determination. To navigate this period more smoothly, prioritize taking care of yourself and aim to adopt a more optimistic and productive outlook. Remember, challenges are temporary, and addressing them head-on will pave the way for clearer skies ahead. Embrace your inner strength as you move through the week, reinforcing your resolve with each step forward.

Lucky number 17 | Lucky colour Mauve  
Lucky day Monday



**VIRGO** Aug 23-Sep 22

This week underscores the significance of achieving balance and harmony in your routine. It's an ideal time for blending various facets of your existence to establish a stable equilibrium. The celestial alignments at play encourage a pursuit of moderation, urging you to avoid extremes in all areas. Use your sharp analytical skills to pinpoint where imbalances might exist and thoughtfully adjust. Cultivating patience is key now, as is approaching each interaction with calmness and thoughtful diplomacy. Integrating the different elements of your life thoughtfully will help you maintain a balanced outlook, ultimately fostering a greater sense of well-being and harmony. This approach will not only improve your personal satisfaction but also enhance your interactions with others, leading to a more peaceful and productive environment.

Lucky number 22 | Lucky colour Mustard  
Lucky day Sunday



**CAPRICORN** Dec 22-Jan 19

This week brings an emphasis on emotional exploration and the pursuit of romantic interests. You need to get connected to your inner self and Listen to your heart's deepest desires. Current celestial energies support embracing your emotional facets and seeking experiences that enrich your soul. This period is opportune for engaging in creative endeavors or deepening personal relationships. Trust in your instincts and let your passions and empathetic nature be your guides. Although you are typically recognized for your pragmatic approach, this is a time to allow emotions to take precedence. Do not shy away from letting your feelings lead the way, and be open to exploring new possibilities. This approach could unlock doors to fulfilling experiences that resonate deeply with your aspirations and dreams.

Lucky number 23 | Lucky colour Olive  
Lucky day Monday



**GEMINI** May 21-June 20

This week heralds a period of joy, clarity, and success for you. Expect a surge of energy and enthusiasm that makes challenges feel more manageable and opportunities more accessible. Embrace this bright period by pursuing projects and relationships that bring you happiness. Your natural charm and wit will be particularly effective in connecting with others and achieving your objectives. Enjoy the spotlight and let your optimism inspire those around you. This is an excellent time to shine and show your best self, making the most of the vibrant energy surrounding you. It's a time to move forward confidently, allowing your unique talents to lead the way to new achievements and positive encounters.

Lucky number 9 | Lucky colour Amber  
Lucky day Friday



**LIBRA** Sep 23-Oct 22

This week may bring emotional challenges or heartache, signaling a period where you might face difficulties in your personal connections. Such times often indicate separation, disappointment, or conflict. The current cosmic energies highlight a need for healing and addressing any emotional wounds. While this phase may be tough, it is crucial to process these emotions and lean on the support of loved ones. Your innate sense of balance and fairness will be your guide through these trials. Embrace this opportunity to reflect and grow from these experiences. Concentrate on self-care and constructive communication to help you navigate these difficulties, allowing you to emerge stronger and more resilient. This approach will pave the way for recovery and renewed strength, fostering personal development and emotional clarity.

Lucky number 8 | Lucky colour Peach  
Lucky day Wednesday



**AQUARIUS** Jan 20-Feb 18

This week encourages you to harness your intellectual strength and clarity of mind. Embrace your ability to think independently and make decisions with a clear, objective perspective. Current celestial influences are emphasizing the importance of effective communication and the confident assertion of your viewpoints. Your natural aptitude for critical thinking and analysis will be especially valuable during this period. Now is an opportune time to resolve any lingering issues or to approach complex challenges with a rational and structured strategy. Have confidence in your judgment and assertiveness as you move through the week. Trusting in your analytical skills will lead you to discover practical and valuable solutions. By maintaining a focus on clear and reasoned thinking, you'll navigate through any situation with success.

Lucky number 21 | Lucky colour Indigo  
Lucky day Sunday



**CANCER** June 21-July 22

This week centers on enhancing stability, security, and prosperity in your life. You are currently in a strong position to achieve your practical goals, with supportive cosmic energies that encourage the solidification of your financial foundation. Embrace your natural nurturing tendencies to foster a supportive environment both for yourself and those around you. Your adept management of resources will be particularly noticeable, making it an opportune time for wise investments or strategic long-term planning. Rely on your instincts and practical abilities to confidently overcome any obstacles, ensuring a fruitful week ahead. Emphasize creating and maintaining a secure base to maximize your success during this period. This proactive approach will empower you to harness opportunities and cultivate growth, paving the way for sustained achievement and satisfaction.

Lucky number 11 | Lucky colour Saffron  
Lucky day Tuesday



**SCORPIO** Oct 23-Nov 21

This week signals a period of managing multiple responsibilities effectively and striving for balance. The need for adaptability and resourcefulness comes into play as you navigate through various commitments. It's essential to prioritize and remain flexible during this time. You might find yourself balancing professional duties, personal engagements, and financial considerations. Your natural knack for dealing with complex scenarios will prove beneficial, but take care not to stretch yourself too thin. Keeping a steady pace and being open to adjusting your strategies as necessary will help you stay on track. By maintaining organization and focus, you'll be able to handle your obligations successfully and achieve a sense of equilibrium.

Lucky number 10 | Lucky colour Teal  
Lucky day Saturday



**PISCES** Feb 19-March 20

This week is set to focus on themes of generosity and the equilibrium between giving and receiving. You might find yourself engaged in charitable efforts or looking to balance your financial resources. The celestial energies currently at play emphasize the importance of nurturing others while ensuring your own needs are also addressed. Tap into your innate compassion to guide these interactions, aiming for outcomes that are beneficial for all involved. By embracing a spirit of generosity and striving for balance in your exchanges, you will enhance your relationships and establish a supportive atmosphere both for yourself and for those around you. This approach will not only contribute to your personal growth but also build a network of shared support and mutual respect.

Lucky number 16 | Lucky colour Brown  
Lucky day Thursday

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THE TUNING FORK



CV Srikantha

# Chaturashrama - Our space is our Ashrama - The way of life through the 4 ashramas

I am planning to go and stay in an ashram for a few days' said a friend. 'But' ... 'you already are staying in one,' I responded. I was not surprised by the bewildered questioning look on her face. An ashram usually brings visions of a secluded hermitage monastic space, serenity, hills, rivers, trees, forests, and maybe huts or spaced out structures with meditation yoga rooms etc. Our ancient texts and scriptures affirm that every stage of our life is an *asharama* ('srama' or efforts towards spiritual learning, growth). The concept of *Chaturashrama*, - The structure of the 4 stages or phases of life from youth to old age, fascinatingly captures the mental, physical, psychological, intellectual, emotional, and spiritual journey. A guide to Dharma through different responsibilities, duties, personal growth, social contribution, goals and spiritual pursuits and fulfilment at each phase.

**Brahmacharya Ashrama (Student hood):** A phase, typically from childhood to youth, an individual focuses on education, gathering knowledge (including scriptures), acquiring skills, celibacy and preparing for adulthood

responsibilities. A period of disciplined Shrivana (Listening), *Manana* (Reflection) and *Nididhyasana* (Deep Contemplation and Assimilation) under the guidance of a Guru. The application however differs. The Pandavas and the Kauravas all had their *Brahmacharya* under the same Guru Dronacharya - yet their paths led inversely. *svikrt: cf. kirtu i cPN ijiPNrA fK: Lrqtjpekt; i u fj\*; fr u Roj'AA8* "A disciple, who respectfully bows down to the teacher and sincerely inquires, and learns does not suffer from spiritual decay nor does he show haste." This highlights the qualities during the *Brahmacharya* - dedication, humility, respect, and devotion to learning and the Guru.

**Grihastha Ashrama (The Householder):** This phase transitions the individual into matrimony, raising and taking care of children and family, create wealth, pursues a career or profession. It is characterized by fulfilling worldly duties, managing relationship responsibilities, and participating and adding value actively to the individual's social and economic ecosystem. In the Ramayana, Lord Rama and Mata Sita exemplify the

ideal *Grihastha* life. After their marriage, Rama fulfills his duties as a prince and later as a king, while Sita supports him as a devoted wife and queen. They navigate through challenges and responsibilities, demonstrating righteousness (Dharma) and upholding societal norms. *dharmārtha-kāma-mokṣākyaiṅ ya ichech chreya ātmanah ekañ hyeva haresh tatra kāraṇaṅ pāda-sevanam* As Sri Krishna says in Shrimad Bhagavatam 'Any person who desires the fruits of the four principles righteousness, wealth, desire, and liberation should engage himself in these duties with integrity as a devotional service to the Lord to attain fulfilment'

**Vanaprastha Ashrama (The Hermit-Forest Dweller):** A big transition - first step to detachment. To calibrate the self into gradual retirement and withdrawal from worldly duties can be a very challenging one. Particularly coming after a phase of building wealth, relationships, family and societal bonds in the earlier *Grihastha ashrama*. Here, individuals are expected to gradually relinquish materialistic pursuits and responsibilities and slowly start focussing more on

spiritual pursuits, self-reflection, and handing down their learnings, and wisdom to the next generations, preparing for the baton exchange. After the war and completing their duties as rulers and householders, Dhritrashtra and then the Pandavas retire to the forest to engage in meditation, and contemplation on the deeper aspects of life. *duclFKL; /eik ore-/eekl rA fl f) eçlrtePNlr l q la plb u HoryeAA* (Mahabharata, Anushasana Parva) In the Mahabharata, the Anushasana Parva "The Vanaprastha, who practices the vows of righteousness, seeks perfection and happiness, not attainable on earth.

**Sannyasa Ashrama (The Renunciation):** Complete renunciation and detachment from all materialistic attachments. Individuals now dedicate themselves entirely to spiritual pursuits, seeking *Moksha* (liberation) living a modest, ascetic life, disengaging from all kinds of material activities and desire. They are engrossed in elevating themselves into the higher realms. In the Bhagavad Gita, Lord Krishna explains the principles of Sannyasa. He explains that true renunciation is not just physical

renunciation but also mental detachment. *clE; kula cEz. Ma U; kl a l U; kl a dO; ks fonA l cclE QYr; kxa cçlçR; kxa fop(k. kAA kāmānāñ kārmaṅāñ nyāsāñ sannyāsāñ kavaṅyo viduḥ sarvā-karma-phala-tyāgaṅ prāhus tyāgañ vichakṣhaṅāḥ* He says - Giving up of actions motivated by desire is what the learned understand as sanyās. Relinquishing the fruits of all actions is what the wise declare to be tyāg. The Ashramas provide a blueprint for harmonizing worldly duties, with spiritual aspirations and goals, encompassing the spectrum of life. The references to the four Ashramas come through the principles of Purishartha Karmas. It provides a meaningful map that helps making our journey profoundly purposeful.

— The writer is a versatile professional with 3 decades in corporate experience & I leadership roles, excelling in several areas as a ICF Certified Mentor Life Coach, Corporate Coach, Spiritual Intelligence Coach & CXO Coach. Spiritual counselor, Astro & Vastu consultant (25+ years of grounding in Vedanta philosophy) and a Motivational speaker. He is a Dale Carnegie's T3 graduate