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## Gandhi family wounded the Constitution: PM



Prime Minister Narendra Modi speaks in the Lok Sabha during the discussion on the 'glorious journey of 75 years of the India Constitution', in the ongoing Winter Session of Parliament. PTI

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Saturday said that the "Congress led by Gandhi family", having "tasted blood", repeatedly "wounded the Constitution", while his Government's policies and decisions since it took office in 2014, have been aimed at boosting India's strength and unity in line with the vision of the Constitution. In his 107-minute speech, outlining 11 'Sankalps' for 'Viksit Bharat', Modi accused the Gandhi family, from Nehru to Sonia Gandhi, of "doing everything

accentuate its contradictions and damage its unity. Training guns at the Nehru-Gandhi family of the Congress, he said they left no stone unturned to strike blows to the Constitution. "This family challenged the Constitution at every level," he said, adding that he was singling out the family as its members were in power for 55 years. The family, having "tasted blood", repeatedly wounded the Constitution, he said, citing several decisions of Jawaharlal Nehru, Indira Gandhi and Rajiv Gandhi when they held the office of Prime Minister. "Their next generation is also into the same game", he said in a swipe at the Leader of Opposition in the House Rahul Gandhi and his MP sister Priyanka Gandhi Vadra. The PM said leaders like him, and many others who came from ordinary families could never have reached where they did but for the strength of the Constitution, as he underlined his long commitment to its values. As Chief Minister of Gujarat, PM Modi said that his government celebrated the 60th year of the Constitution's adoption by placing a copy of the document on an elephant while he walked underneath barefoot in a symbolic gesture to highlight its supremacy. Slamming the Nehru-Gandhi family, he said India's first PM Jawaharlal Nehru "amended the country's guiding document to curb freedom of expression and his daughter Indira Gandhi imposed Emergency to defy a Supreme Court judgment that annulled her election as an MP".

"She throttled India's democracy and mutilated the Constitution" when the 25th year of its adoption was approaching, to save her chair as PM, he said, adding that "she also effected an amendment to protect the President, Vice president and herself from any legal challenge to their position with a retrospective effect. The country was turned into jail and the judiciary was throttled". "Rajiv Gandhi, who took over as PM after his mother's assassination, also amended the Constitution. This blot on the Congress cannot be washed off", Modi asserted. Without naming Rahul Gandhi, the PM said an "arrogant" person took the decision of the Cabinet when the Congress-led United Progressive Alliance (UPA) Government headed by the then PM Manmohan Singh was in power. The National Advisory Council (NAC), which was headed by Sonia Gandhi, was put "above" the Cabinet during the UPA rule, the PM added. While the makers of the Constitution took a considered decision to disallow reservation on the basis of religion and faith in the interest of the country's unity and integrity, the PM said that the Congress in its "greed for power" and to "appease its vote bank" pushed for it in violation of the constitutional spirit, he said. His government, Modi said, repealed Article 370 to "unify the country" and brought in GST to roll out "one nation one tax regime".

in their power to harm the Constitution". He said his Government "changed the Constitution for the betterment of dalits, women empowerment" and "removed Article 370 to unify the country". PM Modi emphasised that he was specifically targeting the family due to their prolonged rule, with its members in power for 55 years. Replying to a two-day debate in Lok Sabha on the 75th anniversary of the adoption of the Constitution, he took a swipe at the past Congress governments, accusing them of planting "poisonous seeds" in the country's diversity to

## Savarkar always blamed Constitution: Rahul Gandhi

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

Leader of Opposition Rahul Gandhi on Saturday accused the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP), and the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS) of being "supporters of Manuismriti" adding that "their supreme leader Savarkar always blamed the Indian Constitution". Participating in a debate in the Lok Sabha on the 75 years of the adoption of the Constitution, the Congress leader said that while talking of protecting the Constitution, the ruling party is "ridiculing" Savarkar. Drawing a parallel with the story of Eklavya who had to chop off his thumb as 'Guru Dakshina' to Dronacharya, Gandhi alleged that by creation of "monopolies" for the Adani Group in various sectors, bringing in the Agnipath scheme, firing teargas at protesting farmers, bringing in lateral entry and allowing paper leaks, the government was "chopping off" the thumb of the youth, tillers, backward class people and the poor. Gandhi said that he wants to tell every poor person that the Constitution protects them, but the BJP keeps attacking it, 24X7. He also reiterated his promise made on the floor of the House last session that a caste census will be conducted and the 50 per cent cap on reservation will be done away with to usher in a "new type of development" in the country. "I want to start my speech by



Leader of Opposition in the Lok Sabha Rahul Gandhi speaks in the House during the Winter session of Parliament, in New Delhi, Saturday. PTI

quoting your supreme leader Savarkar and his ideas on the Constitution of India and how he thought India should be run. He says, "The worst thing about the Constitution of India is that there is nothing Indian about it. Manusmriti is that scripture that is most worshippable after the Vedas, and which, from ancient times, had begun the basis of our culture, customs, thought, and practice. This book for centuries has codified the spiritual and divine march of our nation. Today, Manusmriti is law," Gandhi said. "Savarkar has clearly stated in his writings that there is nothing Indian about the Constitution and that the book that India is run by should be superseded by the Manusmriti," Gandhi said, "adding that this is what the fight is about. "It is nice that all of you are so-called defending the Constitution. But I want to ask you, do you stand by your leader's words? Do you support your leader's words? But when you speak about defending the Constitution, you are

ridiculing Savarkar, you are abusing Savarkar, you are defaming Savarkar," Gandhi said. Countering Rahul Gandhi's criticism of Savarkar, the BJP and its ally, Shiv Sena, reminded the Congress leader that his grandmother and former Prime Minister Indira Gandhi had hailed the Hindutva ideologue as a "remarkable son of India" and issued a postage stamp in his honour. Launching a scathing attack on the Congress, Shiv Sena MP Shrikant Shinde wondered whether Indira Gandhi was also anti-Constitution as she had praised Savarkar as a "remarkable son of India". He read out a letter written by Indira Gandhi to Pandit Bakhle of the Swatantryaveer Savarkar Rashtriya Smarak on the occasion of the freedom fighter's birth centenary celebrations. "Was your grandmother also anti-Constitution? You have the habit of speaking nonsense about Savarkarji.... But we revere Savarkarji, we are proud of him," Shinde said.



## BJP patriarch LK Advani in ICU, condition stable says hospital

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

Veteran Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) leader Lal Krishna Advani has been admitted in the ICU of Indraprastha Apollo Hospitals. "LK Advani ji, former Deputy Prime Minister of India, has been admitted to the ICU of Indraprastha Apollo Hospitals for medical management and investigations," the hospital said in a statement. "He is under the care of Dr Vinit Suri and is currently stable," it added. Suri is a senior consultant in the neurology department. The hospital, however, did not disclose any information on the reason for his hospitalisation. Persons associated with the 96-year-old were brought to the hospital about two days ago. He had been admitted to the same hospital earlier this year as well.

## Police lob teargas, 17 injured, farmers suspend march to Delhi

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

A group of farmers, who made a fresh attempt to march towards Delhi from Shambhu border point of Haryana on Saturday at around 12 pm, faced tear gas and water cannons launched again by the Haryana police. After that, they suspended their march to Delhi and announced a tractor march on December 18. Farmer leader Sarwan Singh Pandher said, "On December 16, a tractor march will be organised outside Punjab, and on December 18th, we have called 'Rail Roko' in Punjab. We appeal to all Punjabis to participate in 'Rail Roko' in large numbers... The Opposition should not run away from their role by just giving a statement." Ahead of the 'Dilli Chalo' foot march, Pandher compared the ongoing farmers' protest to the Parliament's Constitution debate. The clash took place when a group of 101 farmers, who had resumed their march from the Shambhu protest site on the Punjab-Haryana border around noon, reached the barricades set up by Haryana police. A few farmers were injured during the tear



Security personnel use, tear gas, water cannons to disperse farmers agitating at the Shambhu border. PTI

gas shelling and were taken to a nearby hospital by ambulances stationed at the site. Visuals from the Shambhu border showed police using tear gas to disperse the protesting farmers and stop them from marching towards the National Capital. Meanwhile, Congress leader Bajrang Punia visited the Shambhu border and expressed his dismay over the farmers not being allowed to march towards Delhi. Punia, a wrestler who joined the Congress ahead of the October 5 Haryana Assembly polls, also criticised teargas shelling and use of water cannons against the protesting farmers by the Haryana

security personnel. He also inquired about the health of the injured farmers at the civil hospital in Rajpura. Earlier in the day, Ambala Deputy Commissioner Parth Gupta and Superintendent of Police S S Bhoria tried to persuade the farmers to seek permission from Delhi authorities before continuing their march. However, the farmers stood firm on their decision to proceed, urging the security forces to let them pass. This is the third time the farmers have attempted to march towards Delhi. Previous attempts on December 6 and December 8 were also blocked by Haryana police.



## CAQM revises plan to tackle winter pollution

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

The Commission for Air Quality Management (CAQM) on Delhi-NCR air quality has issued a revised plan to tackle winter pollution, asking states to implement stricter measures when the air quality deteriorates and making it mandatory for schools to shift to hybrid learning on days with severe air pollution. "The Chief Secretaries of Delhi and NCR shall frequently review the actions and implementation of the GRAP especially when the air quality falls or is likely to fall in the 'Severe' or 'Severe + category (Stage III and beyond). The Commission may decide upon any exceptions and additional measures to the schedule of the GRAP, under different air pollution categories i.e., Stages I to IV, as per the prevalent AQI and weather

forecast," read the advisory. During the first stage, Discoms are advised to minimise power supply interruptions in NCR. According to CAQM, the total number of days with 'Good to Moderate' air quality in 2024 is 207 so far, which is the highest since 2018 (barring 2020, the COVID Year). The record highest number, six days with 'Moderate' AQI in 2024, as against only one day each in 2018, 2019 and 2020; '0' days in 2021 & 2023; and '2' in 2022. On the other hand, the number of days with 'Poor to Severe' AQI in December are also the lowest in the current year since 2018 i.e. only eight. A lowest avg AQI of 234 for the month of December (till 14th) has also been recorded in the current year 2024, since 2018, when the AQI has generally been in the range of '300-400' i.e. Very Poor," it said.

## The battle for, and of, New Delhi

RAJESH KUMAR ■ NEW DELHI

The prestigious New Delhi Assembly seat is likely to witness a fierce electoral contest with incumbent legislator, and Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) supremo, Arvind Kejriwal pitted against the sons of former Chief Ministers of Delhi, who have been fielded by the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) and Congress as their star candidates. The Congress party has fielded two-time former Member of Parliament (MP) and former Chief Minister (CM) Sheila Dikshit's son Sandeep Dikshit. Meanwhile, BJP senior leader and former MP, Parvesh Sahib Singh Verma, the son of former Delhi CM Sahib Singh Verma, on Saturday also claimed that he has been "asked to prepare for contesting from the New Delhi constituency". If this candidature materialises, the election will pit two scions of politician families against Kejriwal, making it a triangular battle of high-profile leaders. While the AAP and Congress have announced some candidates, BJP is still figuring out their list. The AAP has so far declared two lists with 31 names. According to poll experts, this election is more than just a political contest for Sandeep Dikshit, it is a chance for him to reclaim his family's legacy and 'settle old scores' in the New Delhi seat. Sources in the



Congress said a team which worked with Sheila Dikshit is still active in New Delhi which may help him to counter Kejriwal's narratives. Even in 2020, when it drew a blank in the Assembly polls for the second time in a row, the Congress had banked on the late Congress stalwart to revive its fortunes in what was once its citadel. The party's campaign song in 2020 had a line, "Ek Dilli thi vo jo Sheila ne khud seawali dhara. Fir se Congress salwari..." Some insiders say in the past 10, the Congress is out of power in Delhi and their leaders and workers have lost their connectivity with the people. Currently, the Congress has no face that connects with people. The New Delhi constituency is one of the smallest, numerically speaking, of the total 70 Assembly seats and is dominated by the government employees as voters. On the other hand, AAP convener has an advantage as he has a connection with people. Speaking at an event earlier on Friday, Kejriwal rejected the rumours that he

was going to shift from the New Delhi seat to some other constituency in the Assembly elections which are due in February next year. "There will be no change. I will contest from the New Delhi seat and Chief Minister Atishi from Kalkaji," he said when asked about the possibility of changing seats by them. Verma, a former West Delhi Lok Sabha MP, said, "My party has asked me to prepare for this seat." The list of BJP candidates is yet to come out, he added. The AAP supremo shot to fame in the political arena of the country by defeating then chief minister Sheila Dikshit from the New Delhi constituency in the 2013 Assembly polls by a margin of over 25,000 votes. He won the seat again in 2015 defeating BJP's Nupur Sharma by over 31,000 votes. In 2020, the last Assembly election, Kejriwal defeated BJP's Sunil Yadav by over 21,000 votes. Congress candidate Ramesh Sabharwal got just 3,220 votes in the New Delhi seat in the 2020 Assembly elections.

## Mo bus reduced to ashes in Cuttack

PNS ■ CUTTACK

A Mo Bus carrying several passengers caught fire on Saturday near Madhupatana Chhak in Cuttack city while it was on its way to Bhubaneswar. Fortunately, all the passengers were evacuated safely from the bus. As per sources, locals and passengers first spotted the fire. Soon after the fire was noticed, panic spread. The passengers then hurriedly exited the vehicle. As per reports, firefighters arrived promptly at the scene and extinguished the flames.



But by the time, the vehicle was reduced to ashes. The cause of the fire was currently under investigation with preliminary indications suggesting a possible electrical short circuit.

## CBI quizzes Bishnupada's driver in bribery case

NALINI SAHU ■ BHUBANESWAR

Officials of the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) on Saturday questioned Nursingha Satapathy, a driver of senior Odisha IAS officer Bishnupada Sethi, in connection with the seizure of Rs 10-lakh bribery money from a car. After emerging from the questioning session, Nursingha revealed that the officials primarily focused on the activities and whereabouts of Bishnupada Sethi. "The CBI officials asked me about where Bishnupada



Sethi goes after his office hours and with whom he interacts.

They also inquired about his location on the evening of December 7, Nursingha stated. He further disclosed that two other drivers associated with Bishnupada Sethi were also questioned as part of the ongoing investigation. "I have no involvement in the incident. I shared everything I knew with the officials," Nursingha added. The investigation into the bribery case has intensified following the arrest of three individuals on December 6. In light of these developments, the CBI summoned

Bishnupada Sethi and his driver to assist in the inquiry. According to the official summons, Sethi was required to appear at the CBI office in Bhubaneswar on December 11 at 10 am. This case has drawn significant attention due to the involvement of senior government officials. As the investigation progresses, the CBI is exploring various angles, including the roles of support staffs, to uncover the full extent of the alleged corruption network. Further details are awaited as the inquiry unfolds.

## Cold wave grips State as temp dips

PNS ■ BHUBANESWAR

Odisha is experiencing severe cold wave conditions with mercury dropping sharply across the State. Despite the late onset of winter, temperatures have declined steadily, intensifying the cold conditions significantly in a short span of time. According to the Indian Meteorological Department (IMD), the cold conditions are expected to persist throughout the coming week with no major changes in weather patterns. While skies are likely to remain clear, the temperature would dip further.

Temperatures in the interior districts of the State are expected to drop to around 9 degree Celsius while in most urban areas, the mercury is likely to fall below 15 degree. Light to moderate fog is expected in some areas of the districts of Jharsuguda, Sambalpur, Bargarh, Ganjam, Kandhamal, Kalahandi and Koraput over the next two days. The bone-chilling cold has disrupted normal life across the State. Adding to the discomfort is the dense fog causing a sharp reduction in visibility and posing risks for vehicular communications.

# On city outskirts Burglars decamp with valuables worth Rs 40L

From house that preparing for wedding

**PNS ■ BHUBANESWAR**  
In yet another incident of rise in property crimes on the outskirts of Bhubaneswar, a gang of six burglars broke into a duplex in a residential complex under the Pahala police station and allegedly fled with jewellery worth Rs 40 lakh on Saturday.

The incident occurred in the house of a family that was preparing for the wedding of one of their daughters.

Sources reported that the miscreants struck the duplex in the City Home complex under the Pahala PS when the family members were outside for wedding-related works.

As per initial reports, the gang fled with gold, diamonds,



wedding and also vandalised the CCTV system, taking away the cameras with them.

Later, police reached the spot, recovered footage from the DVR and began a probe.

The broad daylight burglary is the latest in a series of thefts that have incited con-

Bhubaneswar while also posing a considerable challenge for police force to track the criminals down.

In the past month alone, several cases of burglary and loot incident have been from various parts of the capital city, especially under the

field police stations.

Incidentally, on December 1, unidentified miscreants looted lakhs of rupees along with gold and silver jewellery from four flats of Vishal Garden Apartment located at Uttara Chhak under the Dhauli police station.

# 'My husband tried to kill me'

Constable's wife reveals murder attempt plot

**PNS ■ BALANGIR**  
In a shocking instance, a police constable's wife of Balangir district has brought serious accusations of 'attempt to murder' against her husband. She demanded his immediate arrest as she battled for life in the local hospital.

The heinous incident has been reported from a village under the Tusura police limits in the district.

According to sources, Nupur Biswal is married to Jyotiranjana Pradhan, a police constable. However, over reasons yet to be known, Jyotiranjana colluded with a friend to plot Nupur's murder on December 8. He took her to a forest where his



friend was waiting in a pre-planned manner.

The two then tried to stone her to death in the forest. Fortunately, local residents heard her scream and came to her aid and promptly admitted her to the hospital for treatment.

While police have managed to apprehend Jyotiranjana's friend Jagannath Pradhan, the

former has gone into hiding and is evading arrest. Meanwhile, the Balangir SP placed him under suspension from his duties.

Nupur narrated her harrowing ordeal. "Both of us were on leave; so, we had gone to my father-in-law's house. That day we had to go to see a bride for my brother-in-law.

My mother-in-law took the bus while my husband and I went by a scooter. Midway, he stopped the scooter on the pretext of attending nature's call," said she

"A friend of my husband was waiting when he stopped the scooter. Before, I could understand anything, they attacked me with a huge lock, which I think they had brought from home, in a pre-planned manner to kill me. They gagged me and took me 20m into the forest where they tried to kill me. However, I screamed for help, following which local residents present nearby rushed to my aid. The two then fled away. I was admitted to the hospital by the locals," she alleged.

Police still continues their search for Jyotiranjana as the investigation into these grave allegations proceeds.

# ECoR Shramik Sangh wins polls



**PNS ■ BHUBANESWAR**  
The Indian National Trade Union Congress (INTUC)-affiliated National Federation of Indian Railway Employees

and East Coast Railway (ECoR) Shramik Sangha has won in the secret ballot election held from December 4 to 6.

They got 18,461 votes that is 47.38% of the total votes polled. The NFIR also got a majority in 13 railway zones across the country.

Former MP and INTUC vice-president Dr Rama Chandra Khuntia has congratulated East Coast Railway Shramik Sangha general secretary Ramesh Sahoo for the victory.

Dr Khuntia also thanked the INTUC leaders and workers for working for the working class sincerely.

# BJP, BJD spar over Mahanadi water dispute

**PNS ■ BHUBANESWAR**  
Opposition BJD and ruling BJP on Saturday indulged in a political slugfest again over the Mahanadi water dispute. Senior BJD leader Prasanna Acharya lambasted the BJP by alleging that a dangerous situation is going to be created over the water of the Mahanadi river in Odisha near the border of the neighbouring State Chhattisgarh.

"Nothing has been resolved regarding the dispute over Mahanadi water in Odisha despite several rounds of discussions between the Centre and Chhattisgarh. The process of reaching any kind of solution is only prolonged. Let the 'triple-engine government' solve the issue in Odisha soon," said Acharya.

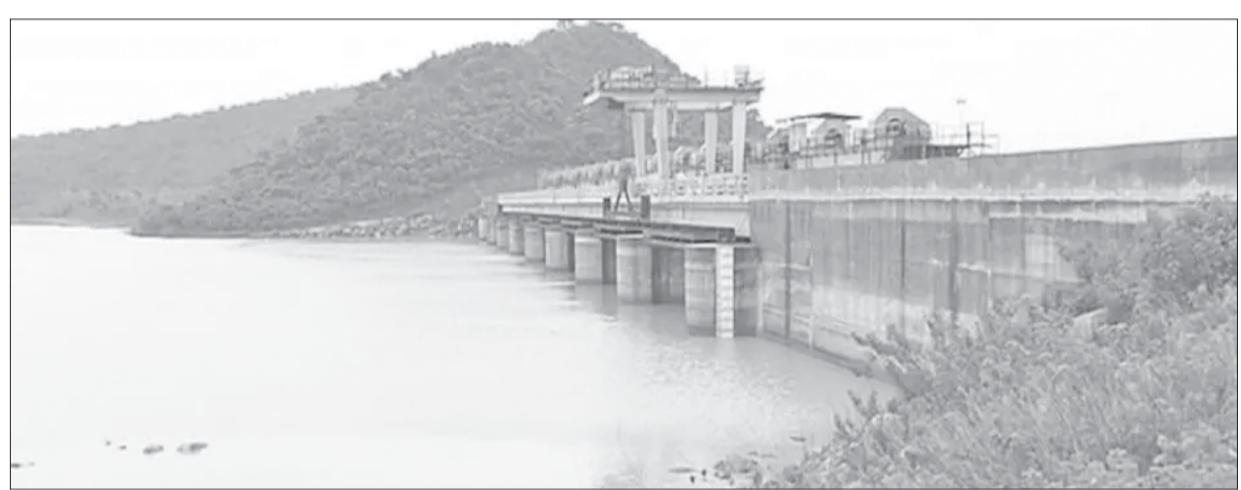
"The chairman of the

tribunal has now been changed and the issue will only be prolonged further because of this. By the time the issue is solved, Mahanadi will completely turn into a desert in Odisha," he added.

In response, Law Minister Prithviraj Harichandan lashed out at the BJD by saying that former Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik is only responsible for complicating the issue.

"BJD is telling unnecessary things. Politics is not done the way BJD did in a dramatic manner by refusing to accept any intermediate in the issue. He (Naveen) forgot about the problems of the Odisha people at that time. However, the BJP government will do whatever is required for the interest of the people and the Centre has full support for it. The previous government lost the battle due to their neglect," said Harichandan.

# Justice Trivedi new Mahanadi tribunal chief



**PNS ■ BHUBANESWAR**  
The Mahanadi Water Disputes Tribunal now has a new chairperson, tasked with resolving the long-standing river water conflict between Chhattisgarh and Odisha. Justice Bela M Trivedi has assumed the role following the departure of her predecessor Supreme Court's Justice AM Khanwilkar.

The tribunal was constituted in 2018 by a directive of

the Supreme Court to address the contentious water-sharing disagreements between the neighbouring States. The ongoing dispute concerns allocation of water from the Mahanadi river and its extensive basin, a critical resource for the region's agriculture and livelihoods.

Under the Inter-State River Water Disputes Act, 1956, the tribunal was formed after Odisha approached the Supreme Court seeking a reso-

lution to perceived inequities in water distribution. Odisha's intent was to secure a more equitable distribution of the river's water.

The resolution of such disputes is crucial in ensuring impartial resource allocation and maintaining harmony between the two States.

With Justice Trivedi now at the helm, there is renewed optimism that a fresh and unbiased perspective will help in navigating the complexities of the dispute.

Notably, both States are under the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) administration, adding a layer of political interest to the proceedings.

People from both States are keenly observing the tribunal's approach under its new leadership to discern how Justice Trivedi's direction may influence the tribunal's decisions. The resolution is seen not just as a legal triumph but as a crucial step towards sustainable management of river resources in India.

# Library Conf by OSA in city today



**PNS ■ BHUBANESWAR**  
The Odisha Society of the Americas (OSA), an organisation of non-resident Odias (NRO) in the United States, will host the '2024 Odisha Public Library Conference' on December 15 at the Bhanja Kala Mandap in Bhubaneswar.

The conference under OSA Odisha Public Library Initiative (OPLI) aims to underscore the need and benefits of having modern public libraries at every Gram Panchayat in the State.

During a Press conference on Friday, Nishikanta Sahoo, Chair and Ajay Mohanty, Co-Chair of OPLI informed on the details of the conference which will be attended by policymakers, and notable participants from diverse fields, including heads of pub-

lic libraries, media figures, authors, educators, social workers, scholars and students. The event will engage the attendees in comprehensive discussion on how modern libraries can empower communities under the State government.

The transformation of libraries has been significant in recent years globally. By integrating books with computer access and internet connectivity, modern libraries have become more user-friendly. They serve not only as centers for academic learning but also as venues for entertainment and skill development. Furthermore, they help achieve digital and financial literacy among youth, positioning rural libraries as vital community resource centers. OSA Odisha Library Network (OSA OLN) members Pranab Pani and Sunil Kumar Mishra were present.

# Mobile health unit by Aditya Alumina in R'gada

**PNS ■ RAYAGADA**  
Aditya Alumina Refinery, Kansariguda, a unit of Hindalco Industries Limited of Aditya Birla Group, launched a Mobile Health Unit (MHU) service under its CSR interventions.

The MHU service will provide doorstep healthcare services to 36 villages across Kashipur and Laxmipur blocks. Punaruthan Voluntary Organization has been entrusted with the responsibility of the project as implementing partner.

Chief Human Resource Officer, Hindalco Industries Limited Samik Basu flagged off the MHU van along with Unit



Head and president Aditya Alumina Mazhar Beig, Cluster HR Head, Odisha Mining and Minerals Krishna Padhi, senior leadership team and officials from Aditya Alumina Refinery, community representatives, opinion leaders and local villagers.

The MHU will extend doorsteps medical consultation with free medicine and reach out to each village through its well-equipped van with doctor, pharmacist and medicines.

# 662 category college assn postpones stir



After discussion with CM

**PNS ■ BHUBANESWAR**  
The proposed strike by the 662 category colleges union 'AONGLEA' before the As-

sembly on December 17 has been postponed.

The strike was to push for a single point demand i.e. implementation of service condition and pension. After discussion of the executive members of the association

with Chief Minister Mohan Charan Majhi on Thursday night, a decision was taken to defer the agitation.

The discussion was positive and CM Majhi assured AONGLEA president Golak Nayak, secretaries Dr

Gagan Beura and Satapuddin Ahmed and other executive members to resolve the issue very soon by bringing a uniform policy for the block grant lecturers and employees, said president Nayak.

# In Puri PKDA issues notice to under-construction plaza

**PNS ■ PURI**  
Government lands have been encroached in the Hadigohiri area under the Puri Municipality blatantly violating all the rules. Even making things worse, a business establishment identified as Nayak Plaza has allegedly been carrying out illegal construction on the encroached land.

As per reports, the Puri Konark Development Authority (PKDA) has issued a notice to the owner of Nayak Plaza in this connection. Sources said a three-storied building is being built without any permission and planning from the PKDA.

The construction of the building is being carried out at Plot numbers, 924, 1442 and 144 at Daitapada Saha.

The PKDA has issued a notice to stop the construction work immediately. The owner of the business establishment has also been directed to be present before the PKDA in person by December 17.

"We have issued a notice to the business establishment pertaining to the illegal construction work. He has been asked to submit the plan-related documents. If he fails to submit the relevant documents, necessary actions will be taken as per the provision in law," said PKDA Secretary Mayadhar Nayak.

# Int'l conf 'Purvodaya Perspectives' begins

Focus on India's rich maritime legacy

**PNS ■ BHUBANESWAR**  
The second edition of the International Conference on 'Purvodaya Perspectives: Reclaiming India's Maritime Heritage - Perspectives, Prospects and Prognosis' was inaugurated here on Saturday. Organized by The Energy Forum (TEF) in collaboration

with the Ministry of External Affairs, Government of India, and the Confederation of Indian Industry (CII), the two-day conference is poised to explore India's rich maritime legacy and its potential in shaping future strategies for sustainable development.

The inauguration commenced with a warm welcome extended by former Secretary to the Government of India and Trustee, The Energy Forum, Sidhartha

Pradhan followed by a series of inspiring addresses from esteemed dignitaries. Notable speakers included Minister of Odia Language, Literature and Culture Suryabanshi Suraj and Secretary East, Ministry of External Affairs Jaideep Mazumdar.

Highlighting the conference's objectives, Pradhan emphasized, "Purvodaya's maritime heritage represents a legacy of knowledge, culture, and con-

nectivity that has profound relevance for contemporary maritime strategies. This platform is a unique opportunity to bring together leaders and experts to reimagine India's role in the Indo-Pacific region."

Talking about the importance of the conference, Mazumdar stated, "The conference, the second by the Energy Foundation following the success of last year's inaugural event, highlights the

shared maritime heritage between India, especially Odisha, and Southeast Asia. Odisha's rich history, operational port, and strong industrial base position it to lead in maritime trade, exploration, and collaboration, fostering stronger ties in transport, energy, and tourism."

Minister Suraj praised the initiative by The Energy Forum and CII. Among others, Secretary General of BIMSTEC Indra

Mani Pandey, Ministry Counsellor, Embassy of Nepal, New Delhi Durapada Sapkota and Development Commissioner cum Additional Chief Secretary Anu Garg spoke.

The inaugural session set the tone for the event with its focus on the Indo-Pacific security and economic framework, maritime security, and the importance of regional organisations like BIMSTEC, ASEAN, and IORA.

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# In Kendrapada House owner held for raping woman health worker

**PNS ■ KENDRAPADA**  
The Aul police arrested one Rati Ranjan Behera (42) on Friday for allegedly raping a woman health worker of the Sanamanga Health Centre in Kendrapada district.

Behera also allegedly blackmailed the victim with the video of the incident and repeatedly raped her, the complainant alleged in her FIR lodged with the Aul police.

The victim alleged that she was staying on rent in the house of Behera. One day, finding her alone, he raped her and slyly video-graphed the incident. He later blackmailed her with the obscene video. He also snatched her ATM card and demanded Rs 50,000 from her.

Based on the FIR, police have arrested the accused and lodged a case under the relevant sections of the BNS. Later, Behera was sent to judicial custody after his bail plea was rejected.

In another incident, the Tantiapala Marine police have registered a case against a Home Guard for knocking at the doors of a woman at Kaithala village in an inebriated condition during late night by holding a liquor bottle in his hand.

Police have lodged a case against accused Abhisek Parida alias Babulu and begun investigating into the incident.

# CM announces Rs 4,000-cr cement plant in M'giri

**PNS ■ MALKANGIRI**  
Chief Minister Mohan Charan Majhi on Saturday announced plans to establish a mega cement factory in Malkangiri district that would provide employment to 2,000 people.

This will provide employment for about 2,000 people," he said. On the second day of his visit to Malkangiri, Majhi chaired a review meeting with district officials, which was attended by Minister for Social Security and Empowerment of the Disabled, ST and SC Development and School and Mass Education Nityanand Gand,

among others. Majhi emphasized the need for the urgent implementation of various schemes under the Scheduled Tribes and Scheduled Castes Development, Minority and Backward Classes Welfare Department, including the development of railway infrastructure, national highways, roads and rural development. He di-

rected officials to complete these projects on a priority basis. The CM stressed the need for appointing at least two teachers in every school. He also outlined plans for development through the Jeevan Jeevika Mission, aiming to bring Malkangiri on a par with the State's leading districts.

# BJD leader Bobby Das' brother Bhaba gets bail



**PNS ■ JAJPUR**  
Bhaba Das alias Lala, brother of senior BJD leader Pranab Prakash (Bobby) Das, walked out of jail after he was granted bail by the District and Sessions Judge, Jajpur, on Saturday. While he has been granted bail in four cases, he had applied for bail in another case.

A controversy had erupted after Bhaba Das and his supporters allegedly assaulted Dhamasala MLA Himanshu Sahoo on November 20, resulting in prohibitory orders imposed in Jajpur town.

Das had previously been granted bail in four of these cases. On this occasion, the District Judge approved bail in the final remaining case, allowing Das to be released pending further proceedings. The decision follows a series of legal manoeuvres and public demonstrations reflecting the local community's divided opinion on the issue.

# Pension fraud rocks Kendrapada village

**BDO lodges complaint against 65 'fake beneficiaries'**  
**RAJESH BEHERA ■ KENDRAPADA**

As many as 65 'fake beneficiaries' have been accused of fraudulently claiming old-age pensions through forged documents in a suspected scam in Argal panchayat of Kendrapada district.

The scam involved the misuse of vital identification documents, including voter ID cards and Aadhaar cards, enabling unqualified applicants to wrongfully benefit from the pension scheme. At least 303 individuals had applied for the pension scheme. Later, the block administration carried out physical verifications in collaboration with a medical team. However, out of 303 beneficiaries, only 240 attended the verification with around

65 beneficiaries remaining absent. Sources said the pension money was distributed without proper verification of documents. Proper verification of Voter ID and Aadhaar Cards prior to pension disbursement could have thwarted the fraud. The block authorities have now taken a stance to rectify these irregularities and ensure such lapses do not recur.

# In Kakatpur Cop helps woman begging to perform son's last rites



A havildar working under the Commissionerate Police has set a bright example for society by extending his helping hand to a hapless mother who was begging to perform the last rites of her only son in Kakatpur area in Puri district.

The havildar, who has earned massive praise from the local residents for his noble work, has been identified as Hrushikesh Nayak. As per reports, Panchei Dei from Lataharana village had lost her husband two years back. Her problems compounded when he recently lost her only son.

# Ganjam Dist Journalists' Assn GB meet held



**Office bearers nominated**  
**PNS ■ BRAHMAMAPUR**  
The annual general body meeting of Ganjam District Journalists Association, affiliated to OJ, conducted its annual general body meeting here on Sunday. While president of the association Prakash Panigrahi presided over the meeting, general secretary Sadasiba Panda read out the annual report. State secretary and district incharge Prasanna Paikaray, former district president Hari Hara

Patr and Rabindra Panda attended the meeting and stated that OJ is one of the disciplined and active organisations which relentlessly fights for the rights of journalists. In the meeting, journalists from different blocks of the district attended. Among others, discussions were made on enhancement of Gopabandhu health insurance for journalists to Rs 10,000, inclusion of father and mother in the scheme, pension and security for journalists etc.

On the occasion, the founder member of Ganjam District Journalists Association and senior journalist Rabindra Moharana was felicitated. At the end of the meeting, selection of office bearers of Ganjam for coming two years were finalized unanimously. Selected persons were Sadasiba Panda as president, A Raja Rao and Rajgopal Padhy as vice presidents, Santosh Kumar Mishra as general secretary, Meghanad Das and Santosh Kumar Panda as secretaries, Sudhir Nahak as treasurer and Ashok Kumar Mahankuda was nominated to State unit as executive member.

# High-decibel DJs, laser light Unregulated wedding rallies a menace for B'swar residents



**UBACHAK MOHANTY ■ BALESWAR**  
Of late, unregulated processions during the ongoing wedding seasons have posed a serious menace for the denizens particularly for the elderly persons, pregnant women, newborns and ailing persons.

The residents are facing a tough time on account of the processions especially due to playing high decibel DJs, bursting of crackers and throwing of laser light. Despite violation of the rules and regulations, the enforcement agencies hardly act against them. According to the general public, the administration becomes active during immer-

sion processions of idols following pujas and then they go to deep slumber. "The high decibel producing DJs coupled with the laser lights are in fact life threatening. One may die of cardiac arrest due to high eardrum rupturing sounds and is likely become blind due to laser light. There are instances where people suffered uneasiness due to playing of DJs and meeting accidents after laser light fell on them. Most importantly none of the DJs adhere to the prescribed sound limits. There are incidents of mobile phone screens becoming out of order following its exposure to laser light during procession. These processions also create serious traffic inconveniences for the commut-

# In Subarnapur Newborn girl found abandoned on roadside

**PNS ■ SONEPUR**  
A newborn girl was found abandoned on the roadside in Tulundupali village under the Binka police station in Subarnapur district on Saturday morning. A local resident found the baby and rushed her to the Binka Community Health Centre. The condition of the baby girl was stated to be stable. Later, the infant was shifted to the District Headquarters Hospital.

Santosh Nayi, the man who rescued the infant, said, "I found the child lying by the road, and I have no idea how long she had been there in the cold. Once I realised she was still alive, I quickly rushed her to the hospital." "We received the infant today. She is currently in a stable condition, but when she arrived, she was hypothermic. We have referred her to the DHH. Based on her health and growth, she appears to be a newborn," said a Binka CHC doctor. Meanwhile, as the couple that rescued the infant is childless for nearly 17 years, they have expressed their desire to adopt her.

# Community radio broadcasters' meet held at Konark

**Focus on disseminating Nipun Odisha message**  
**PNS ■ KONARK**



A two-day State-level workshop for community radio broadcasters was conducted at Konark. The workshop, organized by the Young India with support from the UNICEF, witnessed participation from 25 representatives across 20 community radio stations in Odisha. The key focus was on enhancing awareness and capacity-building for disseminating the objectives of the Nipun Odisha initiative, which emphasizes improving foundational learning in children through mother tongue education and

behavioural change. Experts such as Dr Sugata Roy, SBC Specialist, UNICEF, Lalita Patnaik, Education Specialist-UNICEF, Prashant Dhal, Chakradhar Sahoo and Radio Expert Dr Ashok Kumar Panigrahi highlighted the role of community radio in promoting grassroots education reforms. Discussions revolved around how broadcasters could tailor their programmes to engage stakeholders like parents, teachers,

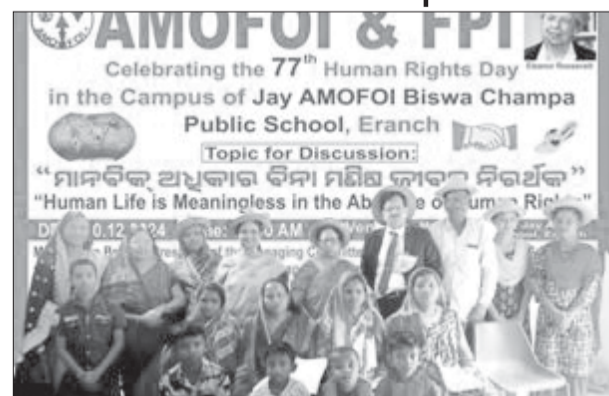
communities in transforming their behaviours for better child-centric education. President of Odisha Community Radio Association SA Safique moderated the workshop, while prominent attendees included representatives from the Odisha Government, child rights advocates, and educationists. Notable contributions were made by Manoj Kumar Tripathi (District Child Protection Officer, Puri) and Pratap Kumar Raut (educationist).

President of Young India and popular community media specialist Ansari informed that the campaign will extend over two months, with community radio programmes being aired in 20 districts, reaching nearly 10,000 villages. The initiative aims to create mass awareness on improving early education and nurturing positive behaviours in stakeholders such as parents, teachers, and local communities under NIPUN-Odisha Campaign.

# 'Quality English medium edu can promote human rights'

**Human Rights Day held in Eranch school**  
**PNS ■ BHUBANESWAR**

The Freethought Party of India in league with AMOFOI and Jay AMOFOI Biswa Champa Voltaire Public School, Eranch, (Niali) celebrated the 77th World Human Rights Day in Eranch on December 10. President of the Managing Committee of the Jay ABC Voltaire Public School Niranjan Behera presided over the event. Dr Bidhuprava Rath, a writer-cum-social reformer, joined the event as chief guest. FPI general secretary, B Ramchandra CST Voltaire delivered the welcome address underlining the



importance of quality English medium education for promotion of human rights in India and other countries of the world. Madam Dr Bidhuprava Rath said that no human being can lead his/her happy life without human rights. She gave credit to Lord Macaulay (1900-1959) for introducing

English Medium modern education in India in 1835 as a result of which some Indians like Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel, Dr BR Ambedkar and Dr Rajendra Prasad among others did become champions of human rights. She said that all the children of the SC, ST, OBC families and all those coming from "poor

high caste sections be given free quality English medium education so that caste system and all blind beliefs would be stamped out. Books written on Sir Girish Chandra Patnaik and other eminent personalities were distributed among the students and their parents. Madam Swapna Bijayini of AMOFOI, Sarojini Mohapatra, former Principal of the school, Madam Sumitra Senapati, present Principal of the School and president of the function Behera, who is the Sarapanch of Eranch Grampanchayat emphasized the point that India needs global standard quality English medium education all over the country covering all villages and this would make India not only casteless but also free it from all blind beliefs.

# Congress slams PM Modi's 11 resolutions as hollow, demands discussion on Adani issue

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

The Congress on Saturday termed as "hollow" Prime Minister Narendra Modi's 11 resolutions articulated in his speech in the Lok Sabha and said if the BJP has zero tolerance on corruption then why doesn't it discuss the Adani issue. The opposition party also questioned why Prime Minister Modi, Union Home Minister Amit Shah and Defence Minister Rajnath Singh were not present in the House when Leader of Opposition Rahul Gandhi spoke while participating in a two-day debate on the "Glorious Journey of 75 Years of the Constitution of India".



Prime Minister Modi on Saturday said that the Congress, having "tasted blood", repeatedly wounded the Constitution while his government's policies and decisions since it took office in 2014 have been aimed at boosting India's strength and unity in line with the vision of the Constitution. Asked about the PM's remarks, Congress leader Priyanka Gandhi Vadra likened his over 110-minutes speech in

the Lok Sabha to a "double period of mathematics" from school and said it "bored us". She slammed Prime Minister Modi's 11 resolutions as "hollow" and said if there is zero tolerance towards corruption then why doesn't the BJP agree to a discussion on the Adani issue.

"PM has not spoken one thing which is new, he has bored us. It took me decades back, I felt like I'm sitting in that double period of Mathematics," she said. "Nadda ji was also rubbing hands but as soon as Modi ji looked at him, he started acting as if he is listening attentively. Amit Shah also had his hand on head, (Piyush) Goyal ji was going off to sleep. It was a new experience for me. I had thought that the PM will say something new, something nice," she said. Congress general secretary in-charge organisation K C Venugopal said, "On a debate about India's Constitution, the PM once again decided to bring out his tired old speech about the Congress instead. While the people were expecting an answer from him on the injustice and inequality facing Indian society, he chose to

bring up stale narratives against the Congress, which have lost all resonance among the public." "Truth is, he has no answer to the allegations regarding the Adani mega scandal, nor does he have a response to the growing instances of caste and religious divisions created by his own regime," Venugopal said. "It was only blame game against the Congress. In yesterday and today we exposed government's deeds on Adani. They are using entire machinery to give everything to one person. Whenever we talk of the Constitution they did not respect Parliament. When LoP spoke, the prime minister, home minister and defence minister was absent, either they are scared of Rahul Gandhi or they don't believe in opposition politics," Venugopal said.

# Congress did not give Ambedkar his due: Union Minister Kiran Rijju

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

Union minister Kiran Rijju on Saturday tore into the Congress for not giving BR Ambedkar his due, as he questioned the opposition's claims that minorities were being denied their rights. Intervening in the debate in the Lok Sabha on 75 years of the adoption of the Constitution, the parliamentary affairs minister cautioned that "our words and actions should not diminish the image of the country in the world fora". Rijju was the first speaker on the second day of the debate in the Lower House. While India has given equal voting rights to all, some claim that minorities have no rights in the country, Rijju said in an apparent jibe at the opposition. In his over an hour-long speech, Rijju suggested that the Congress should "apologise" to

Ambedkar to "lessen its sins". He alleged that "you" (apparently the Congress) made Ambedkar lose in the 1952 parliamentary polls. Rijju also questioned the delay in bestowing Ambedkar with the Bharat Ratna and asserted that the chief architect of the Constitution was conferred with India's highest civilian honour after a government supported by the BJP came to power at the Centre. Continuing his tirade, Rijju cited Ambedkar as saying that while Jawaharlal Nehru delivered more than 2,000 speeches in 20 years, he never spoke about the welfare of Scheduled Castes "even once". "Pandit Nehru is always for Muslims," the minister, said quoting Ambedkar. Citing a document, Rijju said while Ambedkar wanted reservation indefinitely till equality was achieved, Nehru advocated for it to be in place for 10 years. A day after

several opposition leaders claimed in the Lower House that the rights of minorities were shrinking, the Union minister said India not only provided legal protection to minorities, it also had a provision for affirmative action to protect their interests. Rijju said successive governments worked for the welfare of minorities. "The Congress has also done that, I am not undermining its role." The minister also cited a survey to claim that minorities, including Muslims, were facing discrimination and hate crimes in many nations. The situation in neighbouring Pakistan, Bangladesh and Afghanistan where minorities are facing persecution is well-known, he said. Groups seek refuge in India as they feel this country is safe for them, Rijju added and wondered why such narratives on minorities' rights were being floated.

# Is Adani unparliamentary word: Priyanka Gandhi in her maiden speech



PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

Congress MP Priyanka Gandhi Vadra on Saturday questioned why 'Adani' was expunged from her speech and asked if it is an unparliamentary word. In her maiden speech in the Lok Sabha on Friday, Priyanka Gandhi had said it seems Prime Minister Narendra Modi has not understood that it is "Bharat ka Samvidhan" and not "Sangh ka Vidhan". Asked about BJP's criticism of Leader of Opposition in Lok

Sabha Rahul Gandhi's speech, she told reporters on Saturday, "This is the job of the BJP. They don't want to talk on real issues. The speech that I have given, only Adani has been expunged from it." "Is Adani unparliamentary word? They can take anyone's name, we can't take Adani's name?" she said. The newly elected Wayanad MP claimed during a debate on the Constitution in the Lok Sabha that had it not been for the Lok Sabha poll results, the ruling party would have started changing the Constitution.

# Tripura to have 1.14 lakh 'lakhpati didis' by end of current fiscal: CM Manik Saha



PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ AGARTALA

Lauding the Tripura Rural Livelihood Mission (TRLM) for spearheading women empowerment, Chief Minister Manik Saha on Saturday asserted that the northeastern state will have 1.14 lakh 'Lakhpati Didis' by the end of the current fiscal. At present, the state has 83,000 'Lakhpati Didis' who earn Rs 1 lakh or more annually by engaging

themselves in activities of self-help groups (SHGs). While addressing the inaugural programme of SARAS Mela at Badharghat International Fair Ground in West Tripura district, the chief minister said the success of SHGs has changed the rural economy over the last few years. "The number of SHGs, which was only 4,000 before 2018, has now increased to 52,000. Altogether, 4.73 lakh rural women got engaged in various self-employment trades. The government has allocated Rs 69 crore as revolving fund so far (after the BJP came to power in Tripura) and Rs 626.97 crore community investment fund has been channelised to the SHGs," Saha said. Showering praise on the role of TRLM, which works under the state

government's Rural Development Department, Saha said "The number of 'Lakhpati Didis' in the state will increase from 83,000 at present to 1.14 lakh by the end of the current financial year. The initiative has strengthened the socio-economic condition of the women living in rural areas." Saha also highlighted the success of organising SARAS mela, an annual event to showcase and sell the products made by different SHGs. "The sale proceeds of SARAS Mela, which was Rs 1.5 crore in the 2022-23 fiscal, has grown to Rs 4.5 crore in the 2023-24 fiscal. The increase mirrors the success of SHGs," he said. Is Adani unparliamentary word: Priyanka Gandhi on words expunged from her maiden speech

New Delhi, Dec 14 (PTI) Congress MP Priyanka Gandhi Vadra on Saturday questioned why 'Adani' was expunged from her speech and asked if it is an unparliamentary word. In her maiden speech in the Lok Sabha on Friday, Priyanka Gandhi had said it seems Prime Minister Narendra Modi has not understood that it is "Bharat ka Samvidhan" and not "Sangh ka Vidhan". Asked about BJP's criticism of Leader of Opposition in Lok Sabha Rahul Gandhi's speech, she told reporters on Saturday, "This is the job of the BJP. They don't want to talk on real issues. The speech that I have given, only Adani has been expunged from it." "Is Adani unparliamentary word? They can take anyone's name, we can't take Adani's name?" she said.

# India, Indonesia to strengthen bilateral defence ties during Navy Chief's four day visit

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

India and Indonesia will review the entire spectrum of their bilateral defence ties and explore ways to further enhance them during Navy Chief Admiral Dinesh K Tripathi's visit there for four days beginning Sunday. Giving details here on Saturday, navy officials said this visit is part of ongoing efforts to further consolidate bilateral defence relations between India and Indonesia, in line with the deepening Comprehensive Strategic Partnership, with a focus on enhancing Naval Cooperation. During the visit, Admiral Tripathi is scheduled to engage in bilateral discussions with top level Indonesian Government and defence officials including Lt General Sjafrie Sjamsuddin (ret'd), Defence Minister of

Indonesia, General Agus Subiyanto, Commander of Indonesian Armed Forces and Admiral Muhammad Ali, Chief of Staff of Indonesian Navy. The discussions are expected to cover a broad spectrum of defence cooperation areas, particularly maritime security, joint training initiatives, and exploring avenues for further strengthening the operational collaboration between the two navies. The visit underscores the strong maritime relations between the two countries conforming to the shared vision of India-Indonesia Maritime Cooperation in the Indo Pacific. The existing maritime cooperation between the two Navies encompasses a range of activities, including joint exercises, port visits, and training initiatives aimed at building capacity.

# BJP demands apology from CM Sukhvinder Singh Sukhu for eating 'jungli murga'

PTI ■ SHIMLA

The Himachal BJP on Saturday demanded an apology from Chief Minister Sukhvinder Singh Sukhu for allegedly encouraging his associates to eat "Jungli Murga" (Grey Junglefowl), which is an endangered species, during a dinner in a remote area in Shimla. Sukhu responded by saying that he does not eat oily and non-vegetarian food due to health reasons. He further said eating non-vegetarian food is a way of life in villages and accused the opposition leaders of making an issue out of it. The BJP's statement came after a video went viral on the internet, in which Sukhu is seen saying, "Inko do Jungli Murga, hume thodi khana hai (Give them Jungli Murga, I don't want to eat)". Sukhu then asks his companions if they wish to eat the dish. The video was shot at the remote Tikkar area of Shimla district, where the Chief Minister was having dinner

with Health Minister Dhani Ram Shandi and other officials on Friday night and the particular dish was listed on the menu. "Jungli Murga (Grey Junglefowl) is an endangered species listed in Schedule I of the Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972, and the Wildlife (Protection) Amendment Act 2022. Hunting and eating this species is illegal," said BJP spokesperson and state social media in-charge Chetan Bragata in a statement issued on Saturday. Meanwhile, Leader of Opposition Jai Ram Thakur pointed out that there are provisions for imprisonment and fines for hunting and eating "Jungli Murga." He accused the CM of not only having the dish featured on the dinner menu but also encouraging his associates to eat it. BJP MLA from Dharamshala, Sudhir Sharma, said that while the CID is still probing who leaked the samosa enquiry report, another controversy has emerged regarding the serving of "Jungli Murga." He

called on the forest department to take action in this matter. The incident of three boxes of samosas and cakes being mistakenly served to the CM's security staff during an event on October 21, instead of him, has taken on disproportionate significance following a CID probe that termed the mix-up an "anti-government" act. In a video byte, Sukhu responded by saying, "The villagers served the chicken for dinner, but I refused as I do not eat it and now Jai Ram Thakur is making an issue out of it." "I do not eat oily and non-vegetarian food due to health reasons," he later added in a statement, insisting that opposition leaders have no real issue and are merely trying to tarnish the image of the villagers. Despite being an endangered species, hunting and eating the Grey Junglefowl, which is considered delicious, is reportedly a common practice in rural areas of the state, particularly during the winter months.

# Congress apologised for Emergency but BJP silent on its own actions: NC MP Mian Altaf Ahmad

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

Opposition MPs on Saturday accused the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) of attacking the Constitution, with National Conference (NC) MP Mian Altaf Ahmad saying while the Congress apologised for imposing Emergency, the ruling party has been silent on its own actions. Participating in a debate on 75 years of the adoption of the Constitution, Ahmad slammed the BJP for bifurcating the state of Jammu and Kashmir into two union territories. "Congress has apologised for the Emergency but you are silent on various things you have done... Congress toppled elected governments, but you divided our state into two Union Territories, which was unnecessary," he said. Communist Party of India (Marxist) Leninist Liberation MP Raja Ram Singh named activists like Stan Swamy, who was jailed



in the Bhima Koregaon case and died in the prison, Umar Khalid, Gulfisha and Meeran Haider, who have been arrested on the allegations of links with the 2020 Delhi riots. "What Constitution are we talking about?" he said. Singh said the idea of economic equality is also enshrined in the Constitution and there should be a proportional difference in the salary of the president and a peon. "You want a peon for Rs

5,000 but the CEO gets paid Rs 2.5-3 crore... Government is encouraging growing economic disparity," he said. The MP also slammed the BJP for wanting to keep "Gandhi in one pocket, and Savarkar in the other pocket." "This double standard would not work. BJP is playing with the Constitution, they want to bring communal fascism in this country," he said. "The first chapter of the

Constitution has the figure of Buddha on it, don't try to replace it with the Gita," he said. The Revolutionary Socialist Party (RSP) MP N K Premchandran also pointed out at the growing divide between rich and the poor and said the directive principles speak about minimising inequalities. He accused the BJP government of trying to concentrate wealth and means of production in a few hands. "The fruit of so-called economic development is not reaching the poor and the marginalised," he said, adding that B R Ambedkar had warned that economic and social inequalities will destroy the foundation of democracy. He also said the secular fabric of the country was under threat. He said people of the country did not give absolute majority to the BJP because they wanted to protect the secular character of the nation.

# Sikkim CM Tamang launches NPHCE

PTI ■ GANGTOK

Sikkim Chief Minister Prem Singh Tamang on Saturday launched the National Programme for Health Care of Elderly (NPHCE) aimed at catering to the needs of senior citizens in the state. The key initiatives under the programme include the establishment of a 20-bed geriatric ward at STNM Hospital and 10-bed wards in all the district hospitals, specialised OPDs, and the distribution of mobility aids like spectacles, hearing aids, and wheelchairs, an official said. "This programme ensures a holistic approach to address the needs of Sikkim's elderly and retired population and help them lead healthier, happier and more fulfilling lives," the chief minister said after launching the health initiative at a function at his official residence Mintokgang. State Health Minister GT Dhungel was present on the occasion. The programme aims at providing affordable, high-quality healthcare services for senior citizens and retired individuals, the official said.

# WHO report sounds alarm: drowning claims 300,000 lives annually, may claim 7.2 Million by 2050

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

The Global Status Report on Drowning Prevention, released by the World Health Organisation (WHO) on Friday has painted a grim picture of the global toll of drowning, which claimed over 300,000 lives in 2021-equivalent to 30 deaths per hour. Alarmingly, it said, if current trends persist, over 7.2 million lives, predominantly children, could be lost to drowning by 2050. More so, with climate change increasing the frequency and intensity of flooding, drowning prevention becomes an urgent priority, as 75 per cent of flooding deaths result from drowning.



Drowning remains a huge burden given that it is the third leading cause of death for children aged 5-14 years and the fourth leading cause for those aged 1-4 years. As per the report, 92% of drowning deaths occur in low- and middle-income countries with the South-East Asia Region (including India) accounting for 28% of

global deaths in 2021. While global drowning deaths have decreased by 38% since 2000, progress varies significantly. For example, the European region saw a 68% drop, while South-East Asia achieved a 48% decline. Data limitations exclude deaths caused by natural disasters (e.g., floods) or water transport, likely underestimating the true scale. Only 33% of countries offer national programmes to train bystanders in safe rescue and resuscitation. Just 22% of countries include swimming and water safety education in school curricula. Without significant investment in drowning prevention,

economic losses could reach \$4 trillion globally by 2050, as per the report which emphasises the need for multi-sectoral involvement to address drowning, including government, education, health, and infrastructure sectors. Providing day care for pre-school children and teaching school students basic swimming skills could help protect millions of lives in countries with high rates of drowning, the report states. Investing in drowning prevention efforts would not only save lives, it could help prevent economic losses of about \$4 trillion that could occur by 2050 if efforts are not taken to stem the crisis, the report points out.

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

In a wake-up call to the escalating challenges of climate change, a new report by researchers from the Indian Institutes of Technology (IIT) Guwahati and Mandi has identified at least 11 districts in India, including Patna (Bihar), Alappuzha (Kerala), and Kendrapara (Odisha), as being at 'very high' risk of experiencing both floods and droughts, necessitating immediate intervention. The climate risk assessment report compiled jointly by the two IITs in collaboration with the Centre for Study of Science, Technology and Policy (CSTEP), Bengaluru, categorised 51 districts in

India under the "very high" flood risk category, with 118 more as "high" risk. States like Bihar, Assam, Jharkhand, Odisha, and Maharashtra are most affected, said the study that assessed risks across 600 plus districts. India's heavy dependence on the monsoon underscores the critical nature of these risks. Variability in rainfall-leading to either droughts or excessive floods-directly impacts agriculture, livelihoods, and rural economies, said the report. "India's agrarian society is deeply dependent on the monsoon, making the challenges posed by climate change, such as droughts and excessive rainfall, increasingly critical. This report, a collaboration

between DST, SDC, provides a comprehensive risk assessment for over 600 districts, offering invaluable insights for effective mitigation strategies," noted Devendra Jalihal, the IIT-Guwahati director. The study integrated climatic hazards, exposure and vulnerability to offer a comprehensive view of district-level risks to aid in disaster risk reduction and highlight the direct impact on people and livelihoods, paving the way for data-driven adaptation planning. "Climate change is one of the most formidable challenges of our time, impacting agriculture, livelihoods, and every aspect of life. No single entity can address this alone - it requires collective efforts and

innovative frameworks. Through this report, we take a significant step towards identifying vulnerabilities, assessing sensitivity and addressing challenges faced by local communities at risk," said Anita Gupta, head of scientific divisions in the Department of Science and Technology. "Translating these findings into on-ground actions is essential, and the insights must reach every stakeholder at both national and state levels. This is just the beginning, as India moves forward with a balanced adaptation and mitigation strategy to achieve a cleaner, greener and climate-resilient future. Together, we will fast-track our goals for a Viksit Bharat and a Net Zero Bharat by 2047," Gupta added.

# 11 Indian districts at very high risk of both floods and droughts: IIT climate risk report

# Protests erupt in Kolkata over doctor's rape and murder case, Opposition alleges CBI's inefficacy

PTI ■ KOLKATA

A day after two key suspects in the rape and murder of a doctor at the RG Kar hospital got bail, the Left parties and the Congress on Saturday took out protest rallies at various locations in Kolkata, alleging that the CBI has "failed" to deliver justice in the case. They also alleged that the ruling Trinamool Congress (TMC) in West Bengal and the BJP-led Centre have a "tacit understanding". The Congress took out a procession from Rabindra Sadan area to the CBI office at Nizam Palace in southern Kolkata and criticised the central probe agency for its alleged inability to frame charges against the two accused in the case. During the procession, Congress activists were seen holding the party flags aloft and chanting slogans like "We



demand justice" and "Bihar chai Tilotoma (Tilotoma wants justice)". The police stopped the Congress activists from entering the Nizam Palace, which led to a scuffle between the protesters and the police personnel. Hundreds of people took part

in a rally, organised by the West Bengal Junior Doctors Front (WBJDF), from Karunamoyee to another CBI office at CGO Complex in Salt Lake area, covering a distance of one kilometre. Junior doctors' forum organised the march to protest the "delay in framing

charges by the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI)" against all the "conspirators" in the rape and murder of the woman doctor at RG Kar Medical College and Hospital on August 9. The parents of the deceased medic also participated in the rally. "We will fight for justice

and it is our right," said the mother of the deceased doctor. The protesters were holding placards which read "If the system has failed, we will make it function to deliver justice". In a separate rally, SUCI (Communist) activists marched from Karunamoyee to the CGO Complex in Salt Lake, while a rally was taken out by SFI, the students' wing of the CPI(M), in College Street area in the northern part of the city. The Sealdah court in Kolkata had on Friday granted bail to RG Kar Medical College and Hospital's ex-principal Sandip Ghosh and former officer-in-charge of the Tala Police Station Abhijit Mondal in the rape and murder case of the on-duty doctor. They were granted bail after the CBI "failed" to file a charge sheet against them within the mandatory 90-day period.

# Fake notice sent to UP Governor in land inheritance case

BISWAJEET BANERJEE ■ LUCKNOW

In a shocking incident, an unidentified miscreant sent a forged legal notice to the Uttar Pradesh Governor in connection with a land inheritance case pending in Malihabad Tehsil court. The matter came to light when the notice file reached the district collectorate from the Raj Bhavan, prompting the Governor to express displeasure and direct strict action, sending officials into a frenzy. The case involves a dispute between Meera Pal and the village council over inheritance rights, which are currently under consideration in the court of Tehsildar Vikas Singh. According to officials, the miscreant fabricated a regular legal notice by forging the court's seal and the signature of the Tehsildar's assistant. The notice, dated October 29 with a hearing date of November 8, was speed-posted from Lucknow to the



Raj Bhavan on November 11. Tehsildar Singh clarified that under the Uttar Pradesh Revenue Code 2006, computerized notices are automatically generated for parties involved in inheritance disputes under Section 34. "The Governor is not a party in such cases, and no such notice was issued from the tehsil," he confirmed. Sub-Divisional Magistrate (SDM) Saurabh Singh stated that the fake notice aimed to tarnish the tehsil's reputation. "Someone used a forged

court seal and signature, creating a false notice and sending it via speed post from Lucknow," he said. While the letter from the Raj Bhavan has yet to reach Malihabad, an investigation is underway to trace the culprit. "Strict action will be taken against the person responsible," assured SDM Singh. The incident has raised concerns about potential misuse of official seals and documents, prompting officials to tighten security measures in administrative offices.

# Malkangiri will get cement factory soon: Odisha CM Majhi

PTI ■ MALKANGIRI (ODISHA)

Focusing on the overall development of tribal-dominated districts, Odisha Chief Minister Mohan Charan Majhi on Saturday announced plans to set up a mega cement factory in Malkangiri district that would provide employment to 2,000 people. "A cement factory with an investment of Rs 4,000 crore will be set up in the district. This will provide employment for about 2,000 people in Malkangiri," the CM said. On the second day of his visit to Malkangiri, the CM chaired a review meeting with district officials, which was attended by minister for social security and empowerment of the disabled, scheduled tribes and scheduled castes development, minority and backward classes welfare, and school and mass education Nityanand Gand,



Nabarangpur MP Balabhadra Majhi, Malkangiri MLA Narasinh Madakami, Chitrakonda MLA Mangu Khil, southern revenue officer Rupa Roshan Sahu, southern range DIG Nitish Shekhar, district collector Ashish Elohim Patil, and forest officer Pratap Kattapalli. Majhi emphasised the need for the urgent implementation of various schemes under the Scheduled Tribes and Scheduled Castes Development, Minority and Backward Classes Welfare

Department, including the development of railway infrastructure, national highways, roads, and rural development. He directed officials to complete these projects on a priority basis. Highlighting the importance of education, the CM stressed the need for appointing at least two teachers in every school. He also outlined plans for development through the Jeevan Jeevika Mission, aiming to bring Malkangiri on a par with the state's leading districts.

# Senior Congress leader E V K S Elangovan passes away at 75

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ CHENNAI

Senior Congress leader and former Union Minister EVKS Elangovan died due to age-related ailments at a private hospital here on Saturday, the hospital said. He was 75. The legislator from Erode East constituency has not been keeping well for over a month. He was admitted to a hospital here on November 11. Born in Gobichettipalayam on December 21, 1948, Erode Venkata Krishnasamy Sampath Elangovan served as Union Minister of state for Petroleum, later as MoS for Industries and Commerce and MoS for Textiles, he was instrumental in abolishing the CENVAT. He was the grandnephew of Periyar Ramasamy. His father Sampath was associated with the Dravidian movement and later merged his faction with

the Congress. His mother Sulochana Sampath served as AIADMK organising secretary. Elangovan was fondly called as "Tanmana Thalaivar" by the Tamil Nadu Congress workers. He entered politics in the 1980s and was elected as MLA from Sathyamangalam constituency, Erode district, in 1984 while in alliance with the AIADMK. He unsuccessfully contested from Bhavanisagar Assembly constituency after joining actor Sivaji Ganesan-led political party "Tamizaga Munnetra Munnani." Ganesan had then thrown his weight behind the Janaki AIADMK faction. Following the merger of the AIADMK groups, Ganesan dissolved the political party and Elangovan rejoined the INC. After 2009, he contested in two parliament elections and was defeated at Erode and Theni.

# PM Modi pays tributes to Raj Kapoor on 100th birth anniversary

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Saturday paid tributes to celebrated actor-filmmaker Raj Kapoor on his 100th birth anniversary, hailing him as "the eternal showman". He said in a social media post, "Today, we mark the 100th birth anniversary of the legendary Raj Kapoor, a visionary filmmaker, actor and the eternal showman! His genius transcended generations, leaving an indelible mark on Indian and global cinema." The prime minister had recently met members of the Kapoor family, which has produced several successful actors, to commemorate his legacy. Born on this day in 1924 in what was then undivided India and is now part of Pakistan, Kapoor was the son of stalwart actor Prithviraj Kapoor and grew



to become not only a successful actor but also one of the greatest filmmakers of the Hindi film cinema. His screen portrayal of a common man wedded to working-class values

coupled with an eye for talent in various aspects of film-making, not least in music, created a popular cinema that won the hearts of people in India as well as abroad.

# Air Chief Marshal Amar Preet Singh urges graduating cadets to uphold IAF's honour and traditions



PTI ■ HYDERABAD

Chief of Air Staff, Air Chief Marshal Amar Preet Singh on Saturday urged the graduating cadets from the Air Force Academy near here to uphold the ethos, traditions and honour of the Indian Air Force (IAF). He served as the reviewing officer of the Combined Passing Out Parade of the IAF

at the Air Force Academy near here. Addressing the cadets, Singh said their career is not only challenging but also honourable. He further said whether in the sky or on the ground, the officers have a vital role to play in operations and should make sure that they understand their role. Exhorting the newly commissioned officers to be future leaders and

commanders, the IAF chief said the responsibility should be a motivating factor in their lives. "You are the future leaders and commanders, not just air warriors, and you will chart the destiny of Indian Air Force. Let this huge responsibility not wear you down, but be a motivating factor in your lives," he said. If the young officers let the core values of Indian Air Force, mission, integrity, and excellence be their guiding beacons, while they navigate through their careers, they will never go wrong, he said. Singh urged them to uphold the ethos, traditions and honour of the Indian Air Force. Every aspect of their service life, from professional learning to executing assigned missions and tasks, cultivating leadership, and later passing on the mantle to

their juniors, will have an impact on how the Indian Air Force navigates trials and tribulations ahead, he added. The CGP of the 214th Course commemorates the successful completion of pre-commissioning training for flight cadets across various branches of the Indian Air Force (IAF). The CGP also witnessed the commissioning of the first batch of Weapon Systems Branch officers into the IAF. During the ceremony, the IAF Chief conferred the 'President's Commission' on the graduating trainees. The event included the presentation of 'Wings' and 'Brevets' to flight cadets, as well as officers of the Indian Navy, and Indian Coast Guard, and one officer from a friendly foreign country upon their successful completion of training.

# Nepal Army Chief General warns of future challenges for military leaders due to emerging technologies

PTI ■ DEHRADUN

The future environment for military leaders will be full of challenges due to the emergence of disruptive new technologies, said Nepal Army Chief General Ashok Raj Sigdel as he reviewed the IMA's passing-out parade for the autumn course on Saturday. He called upon the gentlemen cadets passing out of the Indian Military Academy (IMA) to be ready for such challenges and said they can embark on their exciting new journey with confidence, as they have received the best training available in the field. "The job ahead is not easy. You will face a future environment that is invariably multi-domain, multi-theatre, and multi-sectoral. The challenges will be multi-pronged due to the emergence of disruptive



technologies, but you can go forth with confidence because you have received the best training," General Sigdel said, addressing the cadets. A total of 491 cadets passed out of the IMA on Saturday, including 456 from India and 35 from friendly countries. "Valour will carry you through difficult times, and wisdom will help you carve out the best path forward," General Sigdel said. As the cadets step into their new roles as military leaders,

their endurance will be tested, as they will be required to perform their duties in extreme climatic conditions - ranging from the highest altitudes to the lowest depths, from the coldest glaciers to the hottest deserts, and from the loneliest jungles to the densest urban centers, he added. Their skills and the values of valour and wisdom instilled in them at the IMA will stand them in good stead, General Sigdel said. He praised the

cadets for their immaculate turnout and flawless drill, saying it reflected their high level of training. General Sigdel further congratulated the cadets and wished them the best on their exciting new journey. He said they should serve their respective nations with the highest degree of professionalism and integrity. Describing military service as the most honourable career, he said it demands a lifelong pursuit of growth and excellence. General Sigdel also expressed his gratitude for being invited to the Passing Out Parade (POP) at the IMA, which has a global reputation for excellence as a military training academy. A colorful parade and drill were presented by the passing-out cadets at the IMA's drill square, set against the backdrop of the historic Chetwode Building.

# Kerala Education Minister warns of strict action over leaked SSLC, class 11 question papers

PTI ■ THIRUVANANTHAPURAM

Kerala Education Minister KV Sivankutty on Saturday warned of stringent action against those behind the leak of question papers for SSLC and class 11 Christmas examinations. "The Director General of Education will lodge a complaint with the DGP regarding the incident," he told reporters here. According to recent media reports, the question papers of Class 10 English and Class 11 Mathematics for the Christmas examinations were leaked and circulated on YouTube channels before the exams. He also said action would be initiated against YouTube channels that published the leaked question papers. "The government will

collect information about teachers from the Public Education Department who are associated with private tuition centers, and they will be subjected to an investigation," the Minister stated. Criticising the YouTube channels that published the leaked question papers, he said such actions only bring them "notorious fame." "Although the current exams are not pivotal to students' future, it is crucial to uphold the credibility of the examination system," he added. The Minister reiterated that teachers are already prohibited from engaging in private tuition, and strict action has been taken against those violating the department's directives. "We will release the figures of those soon," he added. A release issued by the

General Education Department on Saturday said the Director of General Education will soon lodge a complaint with the State DGP and Cyber Cell regarding the leak of plus one question papers for the Christmas examination and its appearance on a YouTube channel. Strict security measures are in place across all stages, including the preparation and distribution of question papers. Describing the incident as a "very serious matter", the release said the culprits would be identified and brought before law. The Department of Public Education added that no compromises would be tolerated in ensuring the integrity of school examinations.

# Allu Arjun released from jail after spending a night in custody over stampede incident



PTI ■ HYDERABAD

Actor Allu Arjun was released on Saturday morning from the jail where he spent the night after being arrested in connection with the death of a woman in a stampede here during the premiere of his latest film. Arjun had to spend Friday night in prison despite the Telangana High Court granting him bail, as the authorities had not received

a copy of the bail order until late last night. "He has been released," Ashok Reddy, his counsel, told reporters at the Chanchalguda prison. After reaching home, Arjun thanked his followers and others across the country for their love and support and said he is a law-abiding citizen and respects the law. "I'll cooperate with them and I'll do the needful. And very importantly, I would like to give my condolences once again to the family. It (death of a woman) is very very unfortunate," he told the media. On his arrest, the 42-year-old actor said he believed in the law and respected it. "When the law is taking its course, I should not deal with the case, so I should not talk about it. From a legal standpoint, I would not like to talk about it," he

said. Arjun said it was a challenging time for his family. A 35-year-old woman died and her eight-year-old son was hospitalised on December 4 during a stampede-like situation at the Sandhya Theatre in Hyderabad when thousands of fans jostled to have a glimpse of the actor at the premiere of the blockbuster "Pushpa 2: The Rule." Following the incident, the city police registered a case against Allu Arjun, his security team, and the theatre management under different sections of Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita (BNS) at the Chikkadpally police station based on the complaint lodged by the deceased woman's family. Reiterating that he would support the family of the deceased, the actor said he

has been going to theatres to watch films for the past 20 years. From the prison, the star directly drove to his family production house, Geetha Arts and spent some time there. After reaching home, he was hugged by his son, wife and other family members. Arjun was driven out through the Prison Academy gate at around 6.45 am, sources said. Ashok Reddy claimed that the prison authorities did not release the actor despite having got the High Court order copy. "You should question the government and the department why they have not released the accused. The High Court order is very specific. Forthwith, the moment you (prison authorities) receive the order, (they should) release him. Despite the

clear order, they have not released, they have to answer. This is an illegal detention. We will take legal steps," Reddy said. According to the counsel, Allu Arjun was kept in jail as a "special category prisoner." The "Pushpa" actor was arrested from his residence on Friday morning unfolding a day-long dramatic turn of events. After the arrest, Allu Arjun was produced in a local court which remanded him to 14 days' judicial custody. However, his lawyers moved the HC and secured interim bail. Arjun was lodged in Chanchalguda prison shortly before the HC spelt its order. Meanwhile, police stepped up security outside the star's city residence anticipating a surge of fans post his release.



I feel bad that I missed the opportunity, but I can re-create it: Patidar hopes for India return

PTI ■ BENGALURU
Rajat Patidar's international career did not take off as he would have liked, but the Madhya Pradesh batter is confident of "re-creating" the opportunity through domestic matches and don the India jersey again.

during an interaction here on Saturday. Patidar has accepted his "failure" and has moved away from that disappointing space. "I think acceptance is the key. You have to accept that there will be failure in the cricketing journey. So, it's important for me to face it and learn from it."



427 runs at an average of 53.37 with a hundred and a fifty. Patidar is also the third highest run-getter in the ongoing SMAT behind Ajinkya Rahane (432) and Bihar's Sakibul Gani (353) with 347 runs from nine matches at a strike-rate of 182.63 with four fifties.

big scores. I have never paid attention to that," he said. Patidar also received a confidence-booster when Royal Challengers Bengaluru retained him ahead of the IPL auction.

However, Patidar has an immediate goal to accomplish, guiding Madhya Pradesh to their maiden SMAT title against Mumbai on Sunday at a venue where they won the Ranji Trophy two seasons ago.

Assam govt not taking initiative to identify sporting talents, says Bhogeswar

PTI ■ SIVASAGAR (ASSAM)
Assam's first Arjuna Awardee sprinter Bhogeswar Baruah has criticised the state government's sports policy, saying it is not taking enough initiatives to identify and nurture talent in rural areas.



Baruah, who won gold and silver at the Asian Games in 1966 and 1970 respectively, accused the government of encouraging only those who have achieved success on their own.

Baruah said earlier 2 to 3 such camps used to be organised annually but questioned why they have stopped. "You go and ask the Director of Sports. They have not organised a camp for so many years! Why is it not happening nowadays?" he remarked.

Baruah claimed he had requested the concerned officials several times to hold sports camps, but there has been no response. "I had even sought equipment saying that we would hold a camp. Give at least one set of hurdles for doing training. You need 10 hurdles in one line, but we sought five for training purposes. There is no jumper, pole vaulter -- nothing is available," he claimed.

currently organising the second edition of 'Khel Maharan', aiming at identifying and nurturing rural talent through grassroots-level competitions. "All sports persons are in the villages. We have to search and nurture them. Rural sports is the only way to find real talents, otherwise we won't get it," Baruah said when asked about 'Khel Maharan'.

1st T20I: Under-fire Harmanpreet's India face gritty West Indies

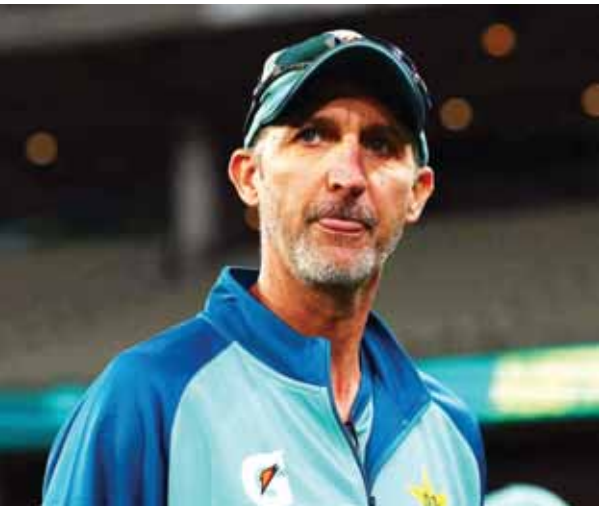
PTI ■ NAVI MUMBAI
Her poor leadership under constant scanner, a beleaguered Indian captain Harmanpreet Kaur will need to quickly pick up pieces from the Australia series debacle as hosts take on West Indies in the opening game of the three-match WT20I series starting here on Sunday.



series against New Zealand at home and were blanked by Australia during the subsequent 50 over series Down Under. While Harmanpreet's own batting form has been better than many, it is her unimaginative leadership that is causing a lot of problems as the team is still playing archaic brand of cricket across both white ball formats.

quick turnaround from their forgettable ODI tour of Australia which ended in a 0-3 rout with the visitors being thoroughly outplayed in all departments. Having lost the final ODI in Perth last Wednesday, Kaur and her side will not get enough time to rest and recover as they have made it to the DY Patil Stadium here for the series opener.

Gillespie resigned as Pakistan's Test coach over selection dispute



PTI ■ KARACHI
Jason Gillespie decided to step down from his role as Pakistan's red-ball coach after not being consulted on the selection of the national squad for the upcoming two-Test series in South Africa.

former Australian player feel alienated in major decisions about the team," the source said. "First despite his request the board didn't renew the contract of high performance coach Tim Nielsen and then the Test squad for the SA series was announced without consulting him," he added.

AFFIDAVIT
I, Satyabhama Behera, D/o Bhimsen Sethi, At-po-Kukudang, Ps- Angul, Dist:Angul,W/o Late Nabakishore Behera declare that here of the name of Satyabhama Sethi be called not by my former name of Satyabhama Behera but my assumed name Satyabhama Sethi for all purposes.

Amir announces retirement from international cricket

PTI ■ KARACHI
Controversial Pakistan left-arm pacer Mohammad Amir bid adieu to international cricket on Saturday, months after coming out of retirement to play in the T20 World Cup.

spot-fixing charges and was briefly jailed for his crime, had retired from all forms of international cricket in 2020. However, he changed his mind and returned to play in T20 World Cup earlier this year. "After careful consideration, I have taken the difficult decision to retire from international



cricket. These decisions are never easy but are inevitable. I feel this is the right time for the next generation to take the baton and elevate Pakistan Cricket to new heights!" he wrote on his social media handles.

"Representing my country has been and always will be the greatest honour of my life. I would sincerely like to thank the PCB, my family and friends and, above all, my fans for their continuous love & support," he added.

AFFIDAVIT
I, Rashmipriya Mallick. W/o-Siba charan Mallik At-Zillanasi, Post-Taladanda. PS-Kujang, Dist-Jagatsinghpur. Odisha. Pin-754141 declared here by this affidavit No-551/ dated 12.11.2024 that my name and date of birth wrongly written as Rashmipriya Mallick and Dob-10.07.1966 instead of Rashmipriya Mallick dob-25.09.1966 in my husband's Army service record. Hence onwards I shall known as Rashmipriya Mallick and my date of birth is 25.09.1966 for all future purpose.

OFFICE OF THE JAGATSINGHPUR MUNICIPALITY, JAGATSINGHPUR. No 4376 / Date 13/12/2024. Tender Notice No. 4372 / dt. 13/12/2024. Bid Identification No: EOJ/JSPURM/W\_01/2024-25.

OFFICE OF THE MUNICIPAL COUNCIL, BHADRAK. INVITATION FOR BIDS (Through E-Procurement). Tender Reference No.04/BM/2024-25. Tender Call Notice No. 6032 / BM /dttd. 12.12.2024.

Government of Odisha, Office of the Superintending Engineer, Rural Works Division, Jharsuguda. Bid Identification No. Online - SEJISG - 09 of 2024-25. NOTICE INVITING TENDER FOR ROAD WORK IN ODISHA.

GOVERNMENT OF ODISHA OFFICE OF THE SUPERINTENDING ENGINEER RURAL WORKS DIVISION-II, BALASORE. e-procurement Notice for Road works. Bid Identification No e-procurement Notice No.03/ SERW-II/BLS/ 2024-25.

GOVERNMENT OF ODISHA OFFICE OF THE SUPERINTENDING ENGINEER RURAL WORKS DIVISION-II, BALASORE. e-procurement Notice for Buildings works. Bid Identification No e-procurement Notice No.04/ SERW-II/BLS/ 2024-25.



“Elegance is not being noticed, it’s about being remembered.”

Walking into “Shubhrajyotsna,” you are instantly transported to a world of delicate artistry and enduring tradition. The event, hosted by Princess Manjari Mishra of Ayodhya, was a heartfelt tribute to her late mother, Rani Jyotsna Mishra. Every detail of the event reflected the deep connection between heritage and craftsmanship, creating an environment that felt both majestic and intimate. The inauguration saw the presence of iconic figures like Padma Shri Hema Malini, Padma Bhushan Sudha Murthy and Padma Vibhushan Sonal Mansingh. Their words of admiration for Rani Jyotsna Mishra and her daughter’s efforts added depth to the event. The venue was an aesthetic masterpiece, with every corner adorned with designs that captured the essence of Ayodhya’s cultural legacy. The stunning collection of textiles and accessories from Shilpmanjari, Princess Manjari’s artisanal atelier, was the highlight. From soft velvets to the intricate zardozi and gota-patti embroidery, each piece displayed a level of craftsmanship that was nothing short of breathtaking.

The showcased clothing celebrated the rich tradition of Indian fashion. The embellished sarees, paired with elegant cummerbunds and shawls, exuded a sophistication that stood out in a world often focused on fast fashion. These garments were steeped in tradition but had a contemporary appeal, making them versatile for any occasion. Princess Manjari’s personal style, marked by subtlety and grace, was evident in each piece, which was not only a reflection of her cultural roots but also a vision of elegance. In addition to the sarees, the accessories collection stole the show. Beaded potlis, embroidered belts and delicate hairbands were inspired by the flora, fauna and folklore of India. These accessories were carefully designed to complement the clothing, with each piece telling its own unique story. The work was rich in detail, from the vibrant designs to the tiny beads and pearls that added a touch of opulence. Princess Manjari also created the “Shubhrajyotsna,” perfume, which holds a special place in her heart as a tribute to her mother. The perfume’s floral and woody notes perfectly reflect Rani Jyotsna’s essence. Princess Manjari shared that her mother always loved the ingredients included in the fragrance and through this perfume, she feels her mother’s presence will always be with them. The scent acts as a beautiful reminder of Rani Jyotsna, carrying her spirit with every use.

The collections from Shilpmanjari also featured the Panchatantra Collection, where the spirit of folklore was brought to life through clothing



# IN EVERY THREAD, A STORY

Through “Shubhrajyotsna,” Princess Manjari Mishra breathes new life into Ayodhya’s fashion heritage, honouring her mother’s elegance and vision, says **SAKSHI PRIYA**



adorned with vibrant animal and bird motifs. This collection honored the mythical tales that are part of India’s collective memory, blending tradition with creativity. Similarly, the Darbar Collection offered rich velvets and satin robes, reminiscent of the royal courts of yore. These regal garments, embellished with semi-precious stones, evoked the grandeur of royal darbars, where opulence was essential. The garments from Shilpmanjari are not just pieces of clothing; they are embodiments of history, heritage and art. Each design is thoughtfully crafted to celebrate the elegance of royalty while making it accessible for modern-day wearers. The quality of the fabrics, the precision of the embroidery and the cultural inspiration that runs through every piece make them truly timeless. Shubhrajyotsna beautifully blends the past with the present, offering a rare glimpse into a world where tradition meets modern style. The event not only celebrated exquisite craftsmanship but also highlighted the importance of preserving our cultural heritage. True beauty lies in the details, where tradition and creativity come together and every piece tells its own meaningful story.

PHOTOS: PANKAJ KUMAR



## THE NEW LIFESTYLE LANDMARK

By **TEAM VIVA**

In the fast-paced life of Noida, where long commutes and traffic have become a daily struggle, *Rcube Monad Mall* has emerged as a refreshing new destination, offering everything from shopping and dining to entertainment, all in one place. Located in Sector 43, this modern mall is quickly becoming the heart of the community, redefining urban living with convenience, luxury and family-friendly experiences. “We are incredibly proud to introduce *Rcube Monad Mall* to Noida, a place that is more than just a shopping destination; it represents our commitment to creating sustainable and innovative urban spaces that enhance the quality of life for the communities we serve,” said Mr. Anuj Malhan, Founder at *Rcube Projects Pvt Ltd*.

*Rcube Monad Mall* isn’t just another commercial centre; it’s a thoughtfully designed neighbourhood hub. As *Richa Malhan*, shares, “We wanted to create a destination close to home, offering everything you need within minutes.” The mall is a one-stop shop for all things lifestyle, from retail stores featuring popular brands like *Lifestyle* and *Fab India* to essential services like salons and beauty parlours, all just moments away from nearby residential communities.

For families, this mall is a game-changer. It offers a variety of experiences for all ages, from Funky Island, an interactive play zone for kids, to family-friendly dining options like *McDonald’s* and *Popeyes*. For parents looking for a place to unwind, the *Birch bar* provides the perfect space to relax, while *MovieMax Edition*, Noida’s first luxury cinema with all-recliner seating, promises a premium movie experience. But the vision doesn’t stop at shopping and entertainment. The Mall is committed to sustainability and plans to make the mall pet-friendly in the future, ensuring that even furry friends can enjoy the experience. This commitment to creating a space that caters to families, friends and pets alike reflects the mall’s dedication to improving the quality of life for everyone.

In a world that often feels rushed, *Rcube Monad Mall* stands as an example of a slower, more connected way of living. It’s a space that blends convenience, luxury and community, offering a new, more human-centric approach to the modern lifestyle. Whether you’re sipping coffee in the morning, enjoying lunch with family or watching a movie in the evening, *Rcube Monad Mall* has everything you need to make the most of your day and it’s right in the heart of Noida.

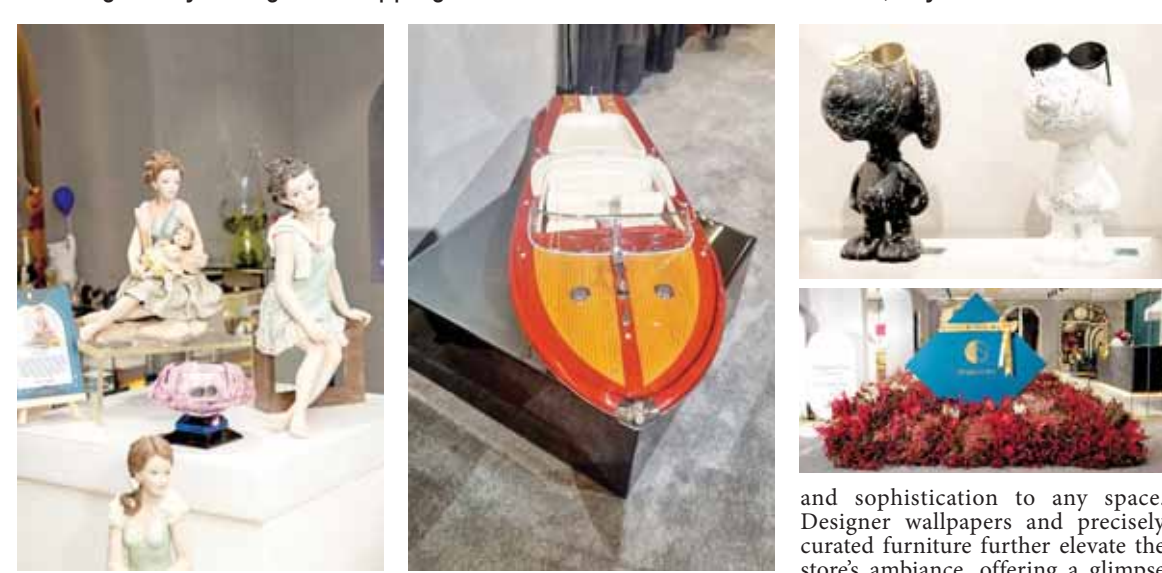


PHOTOS: PANKAJ KUMAR  
Richa Malhan, Founder at Rcube Projects Pvt Ltd.

## Bringing Luxury Home Décor to Delhi

Maison Sia’s store in Delhi is a walking luxury taking the shopping of home décor to a whole new level, says **ABHI SINGHAL**

Maison Sia has launched its flagship store in Delhi, setting a new benchmark for luxury home decor in India. The boutique is a refined space that mixes global craftsmanship with Indian sensibilities. The store presents a curated collection of design pieces by internationally renowned names like Jean-François Lemaire and Glasremis, each reflecting a unique story that transcends borders. These works which are handpicked for their artistry and innovation, are a reflection of the brand’s philosophy of offering sophisticated design solutions. *Vratika Gupta*, the founder of *Maison Sia*, notes, “India’s emerging luxury design market, with its hunger for authentic and extraordinary experiences, perfectly mirrors *Maison Sia*’s creative philosophy.” The store is not just a retail space but a statement of how the brand fuses the best of global and local design. Featuring a collaboration with the esteemed furniture brand *EDRA*, the Delhi store also marks the debut of



like funky showpieces namely *Leblon Delienne*, *Sas Atelier*, different-sized candles, and heavy coffee table books, the boutique also features exquisite lighting solutions, with each piece crafted from responsibly sourced materials, adding character

*Amaran* is an action war film that tells the inspiring story of *Major Mukund Varadarajan*, a brave Indian Army officer. While the film boasts strong performances, particularly from *Sivakarthikeyan* and *Sai Pallavi*, it unfortunately succumbs to the familiar tropes of the genre. *Sivakarthikeyan* delivers a commendable performance, effectively portraying the transition from a carefree college student to a dedicated soldier. His physical transformation and portrayal of *Mukund*’s unwavering commitment to duty are particularly noteworthy. *Sai Pallavi*, as always, is a force of nature, delivering an emotionally resonant performance that captures the strength and resilience of a grieving wife. Her portrayal of *Indhu*’s internal struggles, her unwavering love for *Mukund*, and her ultimate acceptance of his sacrifice are truly moving. *Rahul Bose* provides a solid supporting role as the commanding officer, adding gravitas to the film. The film’s plot, while emotionally charged, follows a predictable trajectory. The narrative, unfortunately, lacks originality, relying heavily on familiar tropes seen in countless other army-related films. The fast-paced nature of the film often leaves little room for viewers to fully process the emotional impact of certain



**CINEMATIC RUSH WITH FAMILIAR BEATS**  
Amaran keeps the audience bound with the action but succumbs to the familiar tropes of the genre, writes **ABHI SINGHAL**



scenes. The film could have benefited from a slower pace, allowing for greater emotional depth and character development. The soundtrack features some catchy tunes. While some songs may appeal to a specific audience, they do little to enhance the narrative or elevate the emotional impact of the film. The background score, however, effectively builds tension and adds to the overall atmosphere of the film. The film undoubtedly aims to create strong emotions, and in some instances, it succeeds. The scenes depicting the love story between *Mukund* and *Indhu*, as well as the poignant moments of grief and loss, are genuinely moving. However, the film’s reliance on melodrama and predictable plot points sometimes undermines its emotional impact. The film could have benefited from a more nuanced portrayal of the complexities of war and its impact on the soldiers and their families. *Amaran* is a well-intentioned film that pays tribute to the sacrifices made by our soldiers. While the performances are commendable, and the film boasts some emotionally resonant moments, its predictable plot and reliance on familiar tropes prevent it from reaching its full potential.

Rating: 3.5/5



"The future belongs to those who believe in the beauty of their dreams"  
— Eleanor Roosevelt



# CELEBRATING THE RICH CULTURE OF NORTHEAST INDIA



The Ashtalakshmi Mahotsav 2024 brought the traditions, art, and flavours of the eight northeastern states to the national stage, celebrating their unparalleled cultural richness at the Bharat Mandapam in New Delhi, says **ABHI SINGHAL**

**T**he Ministry of Development of North Eastern Region (DoNER) took a remarkable step in celebrating and showcasing the diverse culture and vibrant traditions of Northeast India. In an effort to bring the essence of this unique region closer to the heart of the nation, the Government of India concluded the first edition of the *Ashtalakshmi Mahotsav*, a festival that honoured the unparalleled cultural heritage of the eight northeastern states. Held in the national capital Delhi, the event resonated with the lively spirit, colours, and flavours of the region, leaving an indelible impression on visitors.

The festival's name, "Ashtalakshmi," has been derived from the eight northeastern states namely Assam, Arunachal Pradesh, Meghalaya, Manipur, Nagaland, Mizoram, Tripura, and Sikkim, which were often referred to as the 'Ashtalakshmi' or the eight forms of prosperity. These states played an important role in enriching India's cultural, social, and economic fabric, making them indispensable contributors to the nation's diversity. True to its name, the festival served as a lively celebration of the region's unparalleled beauty, artistic heritage, and deep-rooted traditions.

The *Ashtalakshmi Mahotsav 2024* was a three-day event held from December 6th to 8th at the Bharat Mandapam in New Delhi. The event provided a grand platform to showcase the region's thriving textile industry, elegant artisanal crafts, and distinct Geographical Indication (GI) products. It was a unique opportunity for the audience to engage with the intricate artistry and cultural richness of the northeastern states.

The festival's inauguration was graced by Prime Minister Narendra Modi, whose presence underscored the government's commitment to promoting and uplifting the northeastern states. The opening day featured an impressive array of performances and exhibitions, offering a glimpse into the vibrant artistic traditions of the region. A key highlight of the day was a spellbinding performance by the renowned *Shillong Chamber Choir*, whose unique fusion of traditional and contemporary music set a magical tone for the festival. The choir's soulful melodies were accompanied by traditional dance performances and folk music, providing an alluring and enriching cultural experience for the attendees.

One of the major attractions of the *Ashtalakshmi Mahotsav* was the food journey through the region's diverse cuisines, each dish telling a story of its own. Visitors had the opportunity to

savour an array of flavours that beautifully captured the essence of the Northeast. Assam's simple yet delectable offerings included rice, fish curry, and traditional pitha. Arunachal Pradesh presented its flavourful rice-based dishes like *Thukpa* and *Zan*, often prepared with locally sourced ingredients like bamboo shoots. Manipur delighted the crowd with healthy delicacies such as *Eromba* and *Singju*, which highlighted the region's love for fresh vegetables and aromatic spices.

Nagaland's bold flavours took centre stage with dishes like *smoked pork* and *Akhumi*, while Mizoram's milder but equally delicious offerings included *Bai* and *smoked pork*. Tripura brought forth an exquisite blend of Bengali and indigenous influences with dishes like *Wahan Mosdeng* and *Mui Borok*. Meghalaya's hearty preparations, such as *Jadoh* and *Dohneiiong*, resonated with the region's rich culinary heritage, and Sikkim's popular *Phagshapa* and *Momos* emphasised fresh ingredients and simple yet delightful flavors. Together, these dishes created a vibrant gastronomic experience, allowing visitors to relish the authentic taste of Northeast India.

The second day of the Mahotsav continued to captivate audiences with a mesmerising blend of music and artistry. *Pangpari*, a talented singer-songwriter from Aizawl, Mizoram, enchanted the audience with her emotive blend of pop, indie, and jazz. Her heartfelt performance seamlessly merged modern music with traditional influences, offering a soulful



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**THE ASHTALAKSHMI MAHOTSAV NOT ONLY CELEBRATED THE TRADITIONS AND CULTURAL HERITAGE OF NORTHEAST INDIA BUT ALSO PROVIDED A SIGNIFICANT PLATFORM FOR THESE STATES TO GAIN BROADER NATIONAL RECOGNITION.**

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experience. Following *Pangpari* was *Sofiyum*, a Lepcha folk fusion band from Gangtok, Sikkim, that enthralled the crowd with its unique blend of traditional *Lepcha* folk songs and contemporary musical styles. Their performance beautifully illustrated the importance of preserving cultural heritage while adapting it to modern sensibilities.

The day also featured the Eastern Elements Unplugged session, an innovative musical experience that fused the *Blues* with *Raga jazz*, highlighting eco-friendly and ethically produced garments as a part of the growing global discourse on sustainability.

Prominent designers from the region showcased their creations, each bringing their unique vision and dedication to preserving the Northeast's sartorial traditions. *Jejum Gadi* from Arunachal Pradesh mesmerised with nature-inspired, gender-neutral designs. *Bambi Kevichusa* from Nagaland showcased her exquisite bridal wear while promoting sustainable craftsmanship. *Richana Khumanthem* from Manipur collaborated with local weavers to present garments that told stories of the region's weaving traditions.

Other notable designers included *Patricia Zadeng* from Mizoram, who focused on

uplifting female artisans, and *Daniel Syiem* from Meghalaya, whose work highlighted the indigenous fabric *Ryndia*. *Karma Sonam Bhutia* from Sikkim revived the traditional art of nettle-weaving, while *Priyanka D Patwari* from Assam and *Jyotsana Dev Verman* from Tripura brought their distinct styles to the event. Together, these designers painted a vivid picture of the Northeast's creative and cultural potential.

The final day of the *Ashtalakshmi Mahotsav* was a fitting conclusion to the three-day celebration, featuring a series of breathtaking performances. *Basavdutta Chongtham* (BASAV) from Manipur attracted the audience with her emotive vocals and poetic storytelling, while *FeatherHeads Haokui*, a Tangkhul Naga folk band, delivered lively renditions that celebrated the oral traditions of the Tangkhul tribe.

Adding a traditional touch was the graceful *Peacock Dance* (Kaa Kingnara Kingnari) from Arunachal Pradesh, which showcased the beauty and elegance of Tai Khamti culture. The festival's final act, *Imnainla Jamir*, an exceptional electric guitarist from Nagaland, brought a modern twist to the celebration. Her performance blended Western music with Indian influences, embodying the fusion of tradition and innovation that defines the artistic spirit of Northeast India.

The *Ashtalakshmi Mahotsav* not only celebrated the traditions and cultural heritage of Northeast India but also provided a significant platform for these states to gain broader national recognition. Through its rich array of performances, exhibitions, and culinary delights, the festival strengthened the cultural bonds between India's diverse regions and highlighted the immense potential of the northeastern states. It was a tribute to the spirit and resilience of the people of the Northeast India, whose contributions continue to enrich the nation's cultural and social fabric.

"IF YOU REALLY WANT TO MAKE A FRIEND, GO TO SOMEONE'S HOUSE AND EAT WITH HIM...THE PEOPLE WHO GIVE YOU THEIR FOOD GIVE YOU THEIR HEART"  
— CESAR CHAVEZ

# A TASTE OF TOKYO IN THE HEART OF DELHI



Boya Restaurant at Chanakyapuri, Delhi, is a gastronomic gem with finely curated dishes from celebrity chef Augusto and equally tastefully done interiors, writes **TEAM AGENDA**



## Basko: All-Day Culinary and Cocktail Experience



By **TEAM AGENDA**

Step into *Basko*, the newly launched culinary bar in Noida, where ambiance, impeccable service and gastronomic artistry converge to create an unparalleled dining experience. Perched on a stunning rooftop, *Basko* exudes contemporary elegance with its warm, inviting interiors that seamlessly transition from a relaxed daytime haven to an energetic evening hotspot.

*Basko's* menu is a curated journey across global cuisines, featuring standout dishes like the *Lebanese Breaking Balloon*, a feast for both the eyes and palate, and the *Balochistan Raan*, a richly spiced lamb delicacy slow-cooked to perfection. Adventurous foodies will love the *Basko Surf & Turf Wings* and the umami-packed *Sesame Crusted Tofu with Teriyaki Glaze*.

The handcrafted cocktail program elevates the experience further, with offerings like the *Basko Ball*, blending buttery popcorn flavors with refreshing twists, and the *Picante Twist*, a fiery delight for spice lovers. Each sip is as inventive as it is indulgent. With its exceptional service, vibrant social atmosphere, and thoughtfully curated events, including live performances and exclusive launches, *Basko* is redefining Noida's dining and entertainment scene. It's more than a restaurant; it's a destination where every visit feels like a celebration.



**Hours of Operation:** 11 AM to 1 AM, Monday to Sunday  
For Reservations, Please Contact: 95991 99499  
**Address:** Basko, 6th Floor, Starling Mall, Sector 104, Noida, Uttar Pradesh, 201303

Chanakyapuri, Delhi's diplomatic enclave, has welcomed a new culinary star, *Boya* Restaurant. This contemporary dining destination promises a delightful experience that blends innovative gastronomy with an inviting ambience. Helmed by the celebrated *Chef Augusto*, who is both the Executive Chef and Chief Operating Officer (COO), *Boya* has quickly become a beacon for food connoisseurs and culinary adventurers alike.

**A CULINARY VISION REALISED**  
*Boya* represents my vision of creating a dining experience that celebrates authenticity while embracing creativity," shares *Chef Augusto*. "Every dish on the menu has been crafted with passion, ensuring that it tells a story, evokes an emotion, and leaves a memorable impression." True to his words, the menu at *Boya* is a masterpiece that showcases an eclectic mix of global flavours with a modern twist.

The restaurant's menu is a symphony of carefully curated dishes that highlight seasonal ingredients and culinary finesse. Signature offerings include the succulent *Charcoal-Grilled Lamb Cutlets* infused with exotic spices and the delicately balanced *Miso-Glazed Black Cod*, a dish that perfectly marries sweet and savoury notes. Vegetarians will rejoice at the *Truffle-Scented Wild Mushroom Risotto*, which *Augusto* describes as "a warm embrace in a bowl."

"For me, food is more than just sustenance; it's an art form," *Chef Augusto* explains. "Every



ingredient is chosen with care, and every preparation is a homage to its origin." This ethos is evident in every bite, where the harmony of textures and flavours takes centre stage.

An Ambience That Speaks Volumes  
The allure of *Boya* extends beyond its food. The restaurant's design is a visual treat that complements the culinary journey it offers. With its understated elegance, *Boya* combines modern architecture with subtle cultural motifs. The interiors are adorned with warm, earthy tones, ambient lighting, and bespoke art pieces that create an atmosphere of refined comfort.

"We wanted *Boya* to be more than just a place to eat," says *Chef Augusto*. "It's a space where people can connect, celebrate, and create

memories." This philosophy resonates throughout the establishment, from the welcoming staff to the thoughtful table settings.

The open kitchen design adds another layer of intrigue, allowing diners to witness the chefs in action. The theatrical display of culinary craftsmanship not only enhances the dining experience but also reinforces the transparency and authenticity that *Boya* embodies.

**A TOAST TO CRAFTSMANSHIP**  
*Boya's* beverage programme is equally impressive, featuring a curated selection of wines, artisanal cocktails, and non-alcoholic options. The Sommelier's Selection highlights rare vintages and regional specialities, while the signature cocktails, like the *Citrus Bloom Martini* and *Smoked Maple Old Fashioned*, are crafted to perfection.

"Our drinks menu is an extension of our culinary philosophy," *Augusto* notes. "It's about balance, creativity, and ensuring every sip complements the flavours on the plate." The mocktails, such as the refreshing *Basil Lemonade* and the exotic *Lychee Rose Fizz*, are equally delightful, catering to diverse palates.

**ACCOLADES AND ANTICIPATION**  
Despite its recent launch, *Boya* has already garnered acclaim from critics and

patrons. Food enthusiasts have praised the restaurant for its innovative menu and impeccable service. Many have also commended *Chef Augusto's* ability to create an experience that feels both luxurious and personal.

"The response has been overwhelming," says *Augusto*. "It's heartening to see diners appreciate the effort and thought we've put into *Boya*. For us, this is just the beginning."

**A MUST-VISIT DESTINATION**  
Whether you're a seasoned foodie or simply looking for a memorable meal, *Boya* Restaurant is a destination that should be on your radar. With its exceptional menu, stunning ambience, and the genius of *Chef Augusto* at the helm, *Boya* is set to redefine the dining landscape in Delhi.

"*Boya* is not just a restaurant; it's a celebration of life, flavours, and togetherness," *Augusto* concludes. "We're here to create moments that linger long after the last bite." In a city teeming with culinary options, *Boya* shines bright as a testament to what passion, creativity, and excellence can achieve. Make your reservations soon, this is one dining experience you won't want to miss.



## UNIQUE DUAL DINING EXPERIENCE

Experience two different worlds at *Blaq* and *Wyte*, with both daytime relaxation and rocking nightlife on the rooftop, writes **TEAM AGENDA**

Under the open sky and also for people loving indoors, *Blaq* and *Wyte* in the Defence Colony, opens its doors to a chilling concept for the food and party lovers. With a unique concept of both daytime and evening preferences with flair and sophistication one side of the place is *Blaq* and the other is referred to as *Wyte*. With doors above the urban hustle, *Blaq* and *Wyte* promises a meal and a mood with slices of the heavens on both sides.

*Blaq's* menu specialises in Pan Asian cuisine, featuring signature dishes like *crunchy iceberg vegetable dumplings*, *Chengdu Lamb*, and *Tuna Tataki*. By day, *Blaq* is a refined dining destination, but after 9 PM, it transforms into a lively party space with led displays and Asian-inspired cocktails, creating a nightlife experience.

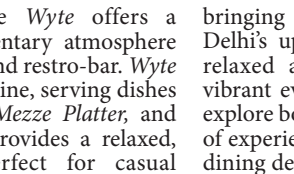
On the other hand, the *Wyte* offers a contrasting and complementary atmosphere as a day-themed chill cafe and resto-bar. *Wyte* features Mediterranean cuisine, serving dishes like *Lamb Adana Kebab*, *Mezze Platter*, and *Stuffed Camelloni*. *Wyte* provides a relaxed, airy ambience that's perfect for casual

gatherings or unwinding over a leisurely meal. Its bright and inviting decor makes *Wyte* an ideal daytime spot for savouring a curated selection of Italian and Mediterranean dishes in a laid-back setting.

"The *Blaq's* interiors feature black and gold, highlighting how black enhances the prominence of other colours. Our vision was that without black, other colours wouldn't stand out as much.

*Blaq* evolved into a proper party destination after 9-10 p.m., catering to Delhi's party crowd. However, we noticed a demand from guests seeking a more relaxed and conversational ambience. That inspired *Wyte*, chill space with subdued music where guests can unwind, enjoy their food and drinks, and connect," said *Nikhil Sharma*, Founder of *Blaq* and *Wyte*.

Together, the place offers a great chill time from day to night bringing its own unique flair and appeal to Delhi's upscale dining scene. Whether it's a relaxed afternoon at *Wyte* or an elegant, vibrant evening at *Blaq*, guests are invited to explore both spaces and embrace the full range of experiences offered in this exceptional dual dining destination.



# A PERUVIAN EXTRAVAGANZA

By **TEAM AGENDA**



Delhiites experienced a rare glimpse of Peru's vibrant culture and cuisine during the Peru Festival, organised by the Embassy of Peru in Delhi. The event was inaugurated by H.E. Mr. Javier Manuel Paulinich Velarde, Ambassador of Peru to India, who kicked off a week-long celebration promising an immersive journey into the culinary and cultural treasures of the South American nation. Held at Le Méridien, the festival quickly became a highlight for food enthusiasts, culture lovers, and those passionate about exploring global traditions. The grand inauguration set an engaging tone, featuring mesmerising performances of traditional Peruvian music that captivated attendees. The event was launched by the distinguished ambassador alongside senior executives of Le Méridien, underscoring the shared values of cultural exchange and hospitality. The heart of the *Peru Festival* lay in its culinary offerings, curated by renowned Peruvian Chef



*Julio Castillo*. Guests indulged in an authentic menu featuring iconic dishes such as *ceviche*, *lomo saltado*, *anticuchos*, and *aji de gallina*. Dessert lovers enjoyed classics like *suspiro a la limeña* and *picares*, paired with traditional beverages such as *pisco sour* and *chicha morada*.

*Chef Castillo* highlighted Peru's rich and diverse culinary heritage, shaped by Indigenous, Spanish, African, and Asian influences. "Food is the soul of our culture, and we're thrilled to share this with the world," he said.

Le Méridien's Marketing Manager *Gitanju Jetly* echoed this sentiment, stating, "The Peru Festival exemplifies our commitment to celebrating global cultures and connecting our guests to enriching experiences. This partnership allows us to bring the vibrancy of Peru's heritage to our guests in a unique and memorable way."

The *Peru Festival* was an instant hit, drawing crowds eager to savour the sights, sounds, and tastes of Peru. The event offered Delhiites an opportunity to immerse themselves in the essence of Peruvian culture without leaving the city—a chance that visitors embraced wholeheartedly.

By **TEAM AGENDA**

If you've ever found yourself dreaming of a regal feast fit for royalty, look no further than the heart of Lucknow, brought to life at *Tamra, Shangri-La Eros New Delhi*. Here, home chef *Mansi*, a culinary prodigy from the UP Khatri community, delighted food lovers with an exquisite journey through Lucknowi *Dawat*, a celebration of *Awadhi* cuisine, reimagined with a deeply rooted respect for tradition. *Chef Mansi*, whose expertise in authentic *Awadhi* flavours is steeped in generations of family recipes, hosted a unique pop-up event at the renowned international cuisine restaurant. Her cooking, inspired by the women of her family, honoured the vegetarian traditions of her community while introducing a delightful array of North Indian delicacies. Focusing on slow cooking and seasonal ingredients, she brought life to every dish, from the rich *Zaffrani Biryani* to the soul-soothing *Dal*. The evening began with *Shammi Kababs*, delicate, spiced patties of minced meat, their tender texture and bold flavours setting the stage



## REGAL FLAVOURS OF LUCKNOWI DAWAT



for what was to come. Then, guests were treated to *Khasta* and *Aloo* – the crisp, golden kachoris paired with tangy potatoes in a tomato gravy, a comforting prelude to the main course.

For the grand finale, the *Zaffrani Biryani* emerged as the hero – tender meat and fragrant rice slow-cooked under a blanket of saffron-infused steam, capturing the essence of *Awadhi* luxury. The *Nihari*, a slow-cooked stew of tender meat, braised overnight with aromatic spices, was a hearty winter delight, while the vegetarian dishes like *Lauki Musallam* – a stuffed gourd in a rich gravy – and the fresh, zingy *Nimona*, stole the spotlight.

The evening ended with the indulgent *Phirni*, a saffron-flavoured rice pudding crowned with dry fruits and silver wafers, served in charming earthenware bowls.

*Chef Mansi's* Lucknowi *Dawat* was not just a meal, but a celebration of culture, heritage, and culinary craftsmanship, a truly magical experience at *Tamra*, where tradition and innovation met with warmth and hospitality.

## FACT SHEET

### BLAQ

Address: D-21, Third Floor, Defence Colony, Delhi - 110024  
Contact Number: 9582222702, 9582222703  
Timings: 5 PM - 1 AM

### WYTE

Address: D-21, Third Floor, Defence Colony, Delhi-110024  
Contact Number: 9582221704, 9582221705  
Timings: 12 PM - 1 AM



In the heart of Westminster, London, St. James' Court offers a unique blend of Indian warmth and British charm, loved by Bollywood stars, says **RUPALI DEAN**

**S**t. James' Court, a luxurious retreat nestled in the heart of Westminster, exudes an irresistible charm that makes it a favourite among the glitterati. This opulent hotel seamlessly blends grandeur with the warmth of Indian hospitality, creating a setting that feels as if it's been plucked straight from a glamorous film set.

Celebrities such as the Bachchans, Ajay Devgan, Sunil Shetty and Manisha Koirala have often sought solace here, drawn by its enchanting ambience and impeccable service. From the moment you enter its grand lobby, the elegance of marble floors and the soft glow of chandeliers whisk you into a world of sophistication. The melodious strains of a grand piano fill the air, offering a romantic atmosphere perfect for both lively conversations and intimate moments. Cosy nooks adorned with vibrant artworks provide ideal spots for quiet reflection or a relaxing chat over chai, making the hotel a discreet haven for stars escaping the public eye.

evoked the splendour of royal living, ensuring guests a sumptuous retreat after a day of exploring. A standout feature is the renowned Jiva Spa, where rejuvenating treatments transport visitors into a state of bliss, proving that relaxation here is an art form perfected.

Conveniently located just a ten-minute stroll from Victoria Station, the hotel is a prime base for discovering London's iconic attractions. Landmarks such as Westminster Abbey and Big Ben are just a leisurely walk away, while St. James' Park offers stunning views and peaceful pathways. This enchanting locale has not only captured the hearts of tourists but also photographers and filmmakers seeking inspiration.

**Where Bollywood Glamour Meets Exquisite Cuisine**

**D**ining at St. James' Court is a culinary adventure designed to impress even the most discerning Bollywood stars. With an array of dining options, each venue celebrates global cuisines with a touch of flair.

TH@51 Restaurant & Bar delivers an international menu catering to diverse palates, making it a hotspot for both locals and globe-trotting celebrities. For a quintessentially British experience, Kona reimagines afternoon tea with innovative themes that are as Instagram-worthy as they are delicious.

For authentic Chinese cuisine, The House of Ming offers a menu inspired by Sichuan and Cantonese traditions, guaranteed to captivate any A-lister. Meanwhile, the Michelin-starred Quilon presents a vibrant tribute to the culinary treasures of India's southwest coast, each dish weaving a story that could easily inspire a Bollywood screenplay.



For those drawn to adventurous Indian flavours, a short cab ride to the Bombay Brasserie unveils a modern twist on traditional recipes, reminiscent of a Bollywood blockbuster reinterpreting a classic tale.

As evening falls, the Hamptons Bar beckons with masterfully crafted cocktails, set against the soothing melodies of a resident pianist. In the summer, the TH@51 Courtyard transforms into a magical alfresco dining venue, complete with fairy lights, offering an experience straight out of a romantic Bollywood scene.

**Blending Indian Hospitality with British Elegance**

**S**t. James' Court not only boasts exceptional cuisine but also offers beautifully appointed rooms and suites that balance luxury with comfort. Thoughtfully designed, these spaces are perfect for families and friends, echoing the ensembles often seen in Bollywood films.

With its unique combination of Indian hospitality and British sophistication, St. James' Court has earned its place as a favourite among Bollywood's elite. It is more than just a luxury hotel; it is an elegant canvas capturing the essence of a magical getaway.

For stars who seek not only opulence but also a serene escape from the crowds, St. James' Court stands as a testament to comfort, charm, and an unforgettable London experience.

**Where?** 54 Buckingham Gate, London SW1E 6AF, United Kingdom

— Rupali Dean, awarded 'Best Food Writer in the Country' by the Indian Culinary Forum, WACS, and the Ministry of Tourism, writes on food and travel

**Where Luxury Meets Holistic Wellness In Perfect Harmony**

A luxurious sanctuary of tranquility and wellness, Jetwing Lagoon is a perfect retreat for holistic wellness, says **SHARMILA CHAND**

**S**ri Lanka beckons, a land where vibrant city life is in synergy with calming pulse of pristine beaches. Adding to the Sri Lankan hospitality is a luxury wellness haven, Jetwing Lagoon, a signature masterpiece originally envisioned in 1965 by legendary architect Geoffrey Bawa, as his first resort design project.

**REVIVE. REJUVENATE REFLECT**

Nestled between the quiet Negombo lagoon and the gorgeous Indian Ocean, this luxury wellness resort embraces the serenity of the inland waters for a perfect island retreat. As I step in, a feeling of calm and peace embraces me. I walk from the reception towards the suites, crossing the centrepiece 100 metre swimming pool which boasts of being one of the largest in the region. To my utmost pleasure, I have the company of one pretty egret following me in the garden. She stops when I go towards the staircase as my suite is located on the first floor. We look at each other conveying the message of 'see you' later.

Suites here are epitome of luxury and mine is lagoon facing while featuring all modern amenities. With the sunrise, I look forward to my bespoke wellness plan which begins with yoga and meditation session. And yes, meeting my friend once again in the garden.

There is something about the air at the resort that comforts, heals, and brings in peace. An in-house Senior Ayurvedic Physician, Dr. Gayathri Nissanka awaits, ready to curate a wellness plan following a personalised consultation.

**WELLNESS ETHOS**

Dr Gayathri explains, "At Jetwing Lagoon, the Wellness Experience is thoughtfully crafted around five key pillars: Mindfulness, Nutrition, Movement, Rest, and Community.



The wellness packages integrate these pillars, ensuring that every guest embarks on a transformative journey that inspires lasting lifestyle changes. From slow flow yoga and meditation sessions, luxurious spa treatments, age-old ayurvedic treatments, and nourishing wellness cuisine, we provide a comprehensive approach to rebalancing and restoring your body, mind, and spirit."

**MINDFUL DINING**

Dining at the Resort is a journey through a wholesome culinary experience. Designed to nourish the body, mind, and spirit in harmony with serene surroundings, wellness cuisine is at the heart of the culinary philosophy at Jetwing Lagoon. The culinary philosophy focuses on the use of fresh, natural, and nutrient-rich ingredients, thoughtfully prepared to enhance health, vitality, and balance. Every dish is crafted with care, prioritising plant-based whole foods while also offering lean meats and seafood, ensuring a diverse

"The culinary experience at Jetwing Lagoon goes beyond taste-it is about embracing a mindful approach to eating that supports your overall well-being. From vibrant salads and nourishing soups to revitalising juices and herbal teas, our menu is designed to rejuvenate your senses and restore your energy, creating a holistic dining journey that aligns with the tranquil ethos of our resort."  
**ROHAN FERNANDO**  
Executive Chef, Jetwing Lagoon

menu that caters to a variety of dietary preferences. There is a commitment towards preserving the integrity of each ingredient, avoiding processed foods and artificial additives.

Set within the tranquil surroundings of the resort, 'Blue Lagoon' restaurant lives up to its name with a spacious, serene setting that overlooks the stunning Negombo Lagoon. Inspired by the impressive length of the swimming pool, '100 Meters' is the Poolside Bar with a menu as extensive as its name. Have your pick from tropical cocktails and mocktails, or from a range of international beverages and spirits. Here at the Pool Bar, you will also find refreshing station, featuring fresh juices, smoothies, detox beverages, and selected mocktails.

'Pier Dining' turned out to be my favourite. On a cloudy evening, I chose to dine at the table set up right at the edge of gentle waters of the Negombo Lagoon. An open-air setup on a private pier that extends out into

the open expanse of the lush landscapes is truly a memorable experience.

**THE LOCAL NARRATIVE**

Step out of the resort and explore fascinating tales of Negombo and its surrounding regions. For the birding enthusiasts, a journey through the historic Dutch canals that lead to the famed mangroves of Muthurajawela in the south, or the lush open sanctuary of Anawilundawa to the north are great natural aviaries abound with a number of endemic and migratory species that can be spotted on special excursions. For the adventure seekers, there are water sports to indulge in adrenaline-filled experiences on a sunny Negombo afternoon. Take a city tour and discover history and culture at every turn. How the ruined Dutch Fort reflects Negombo's colonial legacy, while the bustling Lellama Fish Market pays tribute to its roots as a traditional fishing



"With luxurious villa-styled rooms sprawling expansively in a harmonious blend of tropical modernism, spaces bathed in natural light and lush gardens that transcend the calm of the gentle waters, Jetwing Lagoon is a sanctuary of peace and tranquility for a wellness getaway that rebalances, restores and revives."  
**ROMELLO PERERA**  
General Manager, Jetwing Lagoon

**TO CONCLUDE**

In this serene environment, worries melt away as you prepare to embark on a transformative journey. So go ahead and discover an iconic sanctuary meticulously designed to welcome guests seeking rejuvenation amidst luxe pampering.



"Besides therapies we also curate specific meals that align with guests' individual health goals. For a more interactive experience, we let guests join the chefs in preparing nutritious dishes, offering a hands-on journey into wellness cooking. This immersive approach allows you to savor the satisfaction of dining on meals you've crafted yourself. Such experiences go beyond just dining—they offer a chance to connect with nature, embrace wellness, and enjoy mindful eating in the tranquil atmosphere of Jetwing Lagoon."  
**DR. GAYATHRI NISSANKA**  
Senior Ayurvedic Physician, Jetwing Lagoon



**YOUR WEEK AHEAD**

MADHU KOTIYA



**ARIES** March 21-April 19

This week is pivotal for addressing any outstanding debts or loans. You may find yourself approached by friends or relatives seeking financial assistance for significant life events, like a wedding. Fortunately, you are well-placed to offer the necessary support, whether emotional or financial. Engaging in charitable activities could also be fulfilling during this period. While financial stability enhances your ability to enjoy life luxuriously, mid-week might bring a wave of daydreaming and fantastical thinking. You may find yourself indulging in various pleasures, from dining and fashion to leisure activities. However, be wary of your shifting desires, as they could lead to confusion and dissatisfaction. Staying grounded and setting clear, realistic goals is essential.

**Lucky number** 11 | **Lucky colour** Peach  
**Lucky day** Monday



**LEO** July 23-Aug 22

You possess a commanding presence and a strong inclination for things to unfold according to your expectations. Your meticulous nature shines even brighter than usual, filling your surroundings with dynamism and vigor. However, an excess of any trait can lead to distancing, conflicts, and an overall unpleasant atmosphere. This might cause some peers to either shy away from or challenge you, potentially leading to disagreements or differing views. It's essential for you to channel your abundant energy into more productive activities. Fortunately, you are endowed with robust health, a respectable position, and significant influence. Although you lead in your pursuits, maintaining a harmonious environment could enhance your achievements even further. Despite this, such balance may seem elusive. Your dominant traits could risk the reputation you've painstakingly built.

**Lucky number** 13 | **Lucky colour** Pink  
**Lucky day** Wednesday



**SAGITTARIUS** Nov 22-Dec 21

This week may bring some health challenges that require you to step back and focus on recovery. You might need to undergo medical care, which will necessitate a brief pause from your usual activities. Fortunately, you will not be alone during this time, as your partner will provide unwavering support and comfort. This period is also an opportune time to deepen your spiritual connections. Engaging in spiritual practices and exploring your inner faith can significantly bolster your resilience and help you regain your balance. Embrace a path that emphasizes compassion, kindness, and love towards everyone. Family relationships will strengthen, allowing for open communication and shared insights. You may find yourself drawn to spiritual study and devotion, particularly in seeking peace and recovery.

**Lucky number** 2 | **Lucky colour** Ivory  
**Lucky day** Sunday



**TAURUS** April 20-May 20

This week, you may find yourself embracing a leadership role through your ability to influence and manage others effectively. Your capacity to understand and address the needs of those around you could strengthen your position. However, be aware of a contingent who may not appreciate your approach. These individuals might attempt to undermine your efforts, potentially impacting outcomes that include negotiated agreements or opportunities for which you've been competing. As the week progresses, you may feel a sense of fatigue from shouldering heavy responsibilities on your own. It would be wise to consider sharing tasks and authority more broadly. Delegating effectively can not only ease your workload but also enhance overall productivity and job satisfaction.

**Lucky number** 4 | **Lucky colour** Teal  
**Lucky day** Saturday



**VIRGO** Aug 23-Sep 22

This week presents an opportunity for growth and financial security, offering a sense of victory in achieving your goals. You'll find yourself enjoying various forms of entertainment and a satisfying home life, which could lead to fulfilling personal desires. As the week progresses, you may find yourself focusing on emotional achievements, potentially receiving positive news related to relationships or deepening bonds with significant others. However, be prepared for a phase where you might experience some confusion and a feeling of detachment. By the week's end, you'll find it beneficial to adapt and integrate new perspectives into your life. Embracing change and discarding outdated practices will help you maintain your balance and face future challenges with renewed confidence.

**Lucky number** 15 | **Lucky colour** Green  
**Lucky day** Friday



**CAPRICORN** Dec 22-Jan 19

This week, you might find yourself overwhelmed by emotions and sentimentality. Challenges may arise, steering things away from your desired outcomes and causing considerable emotional turmoil. Health concerns could also add to your stress, prompting you to focus more on well-being. It's a time to manage your finances wisely; prudent budgeting is essential. Mid-week calls for a systematic approach to navigate through these challenges effectively. Prioritize a balanced diet and disciplined lifestyle to maintain your overall health. As the week progresses, expect improvements in your professional life, which in turn could boost your financial situation. Satisfaction and joy will grow towards the weekend, and a significant personal goal, such as acquiring a property, may be within reach, enhancing your sense of achievement and well-being.

**Lucky number** 16 | **Lucky colour** Amber  
**Lucky day** Thursday



**GEMINI** May 21-June 20

Last week brought some rewarding outcomes, but caution is advised moving forward. Upcoming challenges at work may include conflicts and arguments with a domineering colleague. This period may be marred by criticism, underhanded competition, and harsh words. Midweek could see you coming under the influence of a negative individual, devoid of ethical considerations, potentially pushing you toward decisions that clash with societal norms. Despite these hurdles, your resolve remains firm. With confidence and determination, you'll navigate through these obstacles successfully. By the week's end, your integrity and truthfulness will shine through, earning you recognition and respect. This reaffirmation of your status will be a significant morale booster, allowing you to hold your head high amidst challenges.

**Lucky number** 6 | **Lucky colour** Lavender  
**Lucky day** Tuesday



**LIBRA** Sep 23-Oct 22

The upcoming week heralds a phase of enjoyment, recognition, and well-being. Positioned favorably, you are poised to reap the benefits of your dedication and perseverance, coupled with divine favor. This period accentuates your equitable and magnanimous traits, enhancing your leadership capabilities. Your integrity and altruistic nature resonate well with the flow of events, garnering admiration and influence among peers and admirers who value your counsel. At home or in professional settings, your role as a guiding figure is set to receive accolades from those close to you. However, as the week draws to a close, remain vigilant. Being proactive in managing these risks is advisable to maintain your current trajectory. Always remember, taking precautions is more prudent than seeking remedies after the fact.

**Lucky number** 21 | **Lucky colour** Saffron  
**Lucky day** Tuesday



**AQUARIUS** Jan 20-Feb 18

This week starts with a need for you to make significant decisions. It's important to approach these choices with a clear, objective mindset, as they could have profound impacts on your life or someone close to you. Expect some competition or conflicts at work; it's wise to avoid confrontations and adopt a more yielding approach during this time. Midweek might bring challenges, possibly criticism from a higher-up, which could leave you feeling downhearted. To combat this, engaging in meditation or following a spiritual practice could help restore your confidence and mental balance. Stay focused on your goals or aspirations, as this focus is crucial now. By the week's end, the atmosphere lightens, bringing a sense of positivity. Issues begin to resolve, and there might be developments in personal relationships, potentially involving commitments or heartfelt connections.

**Lucky number** 22 | **Lucky colour** Copper  
**Lucky day** Saturday



**CANCER** June 21-July 22

This week begins with a surge of activity for you, pushing emotional considerations to the background. You'll find yourself faced with a professional opportunity requiring immediate attention and sharp skills. Embrace this chance to act decisively, as your clear communication and refined approach will pave the way for future benefits. As the week progresses, expect significant financial transactions. This period will also highlight your philanthropic side, as you feel compelled to assist those in need. Revisiting your financial commitments will be key during this time, ensuring that debts are settled responsibly. The latter part of the week brings developments in personal relationships. You may find yourself forming a new partnership or deepening existing ties, bringing a sense of fulfillment in love.

**Lucky number** 9 | **Lucky colour** Ocean Blue  
**Lucky day** Friday



**SCORPIO** Oct 23-Nov 21

This period is proving increasingly demanding for those with intense and focused energy. The pressure to excel is pervasive, affecting not only professionals but also students immersed in their academic pursuits. Both groups would benefit greatly from taking time to relax and heal. This is a crucial moment to restore balance, ensuring you're equipped to tackle future challenges without succumbing to fatigue. Such stress can cause irritability and may even impact emotional stability. Health-wise, it's wise to prioritize well-being through regular check-ups and ensuring adequate rest, particularly for women who might experience physical discomfort mid-week. Additionally, tension in professional relationships could escalate into conflicts. It's essential to manage your responses and invest time in rejuvenation. Balancing your busy schedule with moments of leisure can prevent potential discord at work or home.

**Lucky number** 8 | **Lucky colour** Gray  
**Lucky day** Saturday



**PISCES** Feb 19-March 20

This week is brimming with energetic potential for those who channel their creativity constructively. However, without a clear goal, efforts may falter. Focus is crucial in harnessing your dynamic energy for productive outcomes. Family matters demand your attention and compassion. Neglecting any health concerns could lead to significant financial consequences, so preventative measures are advisable. Midweek might present challenges, including personal separations and financial setbacks, potentially straining relationships. Yet, resilience and mental fortitude can provide necessary support during these times. As the week concludes, numerous opportunities may emerge, but be mindful not to overlook them due to preoccupation with personal pursuits. Engaging in discussions and journeys could enhance your emotional well-being. For those in relationships, this period fosters greater understanding and connection.

**Lucky number** 19 | **Lucky colour** Red  
**Lucky day** Thursday

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# The Spiritual significance of food

THE TUNING FORK



CV Srikanth

Food is just a part of a balanced diet... For us it is about what goes into it and how we consume it - a spiritual act. Across cultures and beliefs, the spiritual significance of food mirrors the deep connection between us, nature, nourishment, and the divine. It is the 'Sutradhar' the common thread running through belief systems, occasions, connect of self with nature, community sharing, mindfulness, and holistic wellbeing. In Christianity, the Eucharist involves the symbolic consumption of bread and wine, representing the body and blood of Christ. In Sanatan Dharma, Annaprashnasignifies the initiation of feeding the first grain to a baby according to family customs.

The spiritual purport of variety and ingredients - cooked rice as the beginning of life, variety of fruits for Naivedyam or Bhog to God as a gratitude to Him being the provider, clarified butter (ghee) in rituals symbolizes the cosmic connect. Cinnamon and cloves signify energy givers and absorbers, sweets for auspicious beginnings, Ganesh Chaturthi brings in Modhakand Teej / Raksha Bandhan announces Ghehar. Pongal (the festival) beckons Pongal - The dish, Dhokar Dalnarings in Puja festivities in Bengal.

Thoughts shape reality; regulate them to transform your destiny.



Simple water is so inspiringly sacrosanct - 'Mindfulness and Gratitude' - Sprinkling water with recitation of mantras (invoking the divine within), is a way of seeking blessings, purifying oneself & the food making us more receptive eating - to be aware and present during meals bringing sanctity. Festivals ring in the community sharing embodying principles of generosity and hospitality. A recommended spiritual practise is Upavasa (Staying near Oneness) or abstinence from food signifying a direct connect to the Self- an act of self-

discipline and sacrifice abstaining from all the four forms chewing, licking, swallowing, and drinking. Going within to Purge and Purify for heightened awareness. As per Vedic traditions, food is intertwined with spiritual evolution and the attainment of higher consciousness. In the Taittiriya Upanishad, the concept of "Annam Brahma" (Food is Para Brahman - The One and Only Supreme) encapsulates that food is not just material sustenance but embodying the divine consciousness (Para Brahman). Taking our connect with

Annam to another level of spiritual awareness. Every offering to God is Bhog or Naivedyam. Central to Vedic rituals is Yajna (rituals with sacred fire and mantras) - where offerings, including food, are made into the sacred fire as a deference to the Deities. Krishna explains in the Bhagavat Gita ...:

अन्नादमवन्तिभूतानिपर्जन्यादन्नसम्भवः | यज्ञादमवतिपर्जन्योयज्ञः कर्मसमुद्भवः | 'All beings are born from and subsist on food. Food is produced by rains. Rains arise from the performance of sacrifice (Yajna), and sacrifice is produced by the performance of prescribed duties.'

A brilliant explanation of the interrelation between food, sustenance (rain), and the performance of sacrificial duties (Yajna). We are what we consume. The idea of Ahara (food) and Vihara (lifestyle) - Sattvic (simple) Ahara and Spiritual Evolution in Ayurveda is exceptional. Everything is composed of 5 basic elements (Pancha Mahabhootas), Earth (Prithvi), Water (Appu), Fire (Teja), Air (Vayu) Ether (Akasha). So, the Panchabhuta components of ingested food nourishes their respective elements in the body. Correct Ahara is the best medicine - essentially saying that Ahara and Vihara are agreeable to metabolism and constitution of an individual.

The gunas qualities of sattvic foods considered to promote clarity of mind and spiritual growth. The Bhagavad Gita describes this as

आयुरुस्त्वचबलारोग्यसुखप्रीतिविकर्मानां | रस्याः सिन्ध्याः स्थिरा हृद्या आहाराः सत्त्विकक्रियाः || 'Foods that promotes life span, purity, increase virtue, strength, health, happiness, and satisfaction, which are juicy, succulent, wholesome, naturally tasteful, nourishing and pleasing to the heart, are dear to those in the mode of purity, goodness and righteousness (Sattva).'

Consuming Sattvic food supports physical health, nurtures a harmonious state of mind for spiritual practice. Food is Prasad when consumed with piety-with Blessings and Gratitude यत्करोति यदश्नाति यज्जुहोति ददाति यत् | यत्पश्यति कोन्तेय तत्कुरुष्व मदपंगम ||27|| 'All that you do, you eat, you offer as oblation & gift, and all austerities that you perform, do them as an offering to Me'

Surrendering of one's actions, including that of consuming food, as a pious offering fosters spiritual growth. It is not food and eating. It is spiritually evolving with masterful compositions of gratitude, mindfulness, self-discipline, interweaving us with nature and divine awareness. It is about 'Prana' - The Life Force.

Now you can write to us at [agendapioneer@gmail.com](mailto:agendapioneer@gmail.com)