



Yamuna grows toxic veggies?

BISWAJEET BANERJEE ■ LUCKNOW

The Yamuna River's water has become so polluted that it is no longer safe for drinking, bathing, or even irrigation, a shocking revelation made by the Central Water Commission's latest report, 'Status of Trace and Toxic Metals in Indian Rivers'. The study exposes dangerously high concentrations of heavy metals such as chromium, nickel, and lead, threatening to unleash a public health crisis in cities like Agra and Mathura.

According to the report, water samples collected from three locations in Agra, including Poiya Ghat, and one in Mathura revealed alarming levels of these toxic metals. Agra and Mathura are now ranked among 187 worst-hit cities nationwide, where three or more hazardous metals were found in river water, earning them the grim distinction of having the "worst" water quality in the country.

The data is damning. In Agra, nickel levels touched 28.87 micrograms per liter, chromium soared to a staggering 135.15 micrograms per liter, while lead reached 23.41 micrograms per liter—several times above permissible limits. In Mathura, chromium was recorded at 138.02 and 0.55 micrograms per liter at different sites, while nickel stood at 56.04 micrograms per liter. Experts have warned that prolonged exposure to such contamination can trigger



skin diseases, ulcers, lung damage, weakened immunity, heart conditions, kidney failure, liver malfunction, and even cancer. What makes the situation worse is that Agra's water treatment facilities are woefully unequipped to handle such a toxic onslaught. The city's two major water treatment plants, Jiwani Mandi and Sikandra Water Works, are still stuck with outdated technologies that can only test for basic parameters like turbidity, color, pH, TDS, hardness, coliform, and E. coli. Heavy metal detection is entirely outside their scope. Sikandra's 144 MLD MBBR plant, which supplies water to nearly half the city, lacks the necessary filtration systems to remove deadly metals. "We currently don't have equipment to detect heavy

metals in Yamuna water. Samples are tested at external labs occasionally, but there's no real-time monitoring," admitted Arvendra Rajput, General Manager of the Waterworks Department. The root cause of this toxicity is an unchecked flow of industrial waste into the Yamuna. Electroplating units, chemical factories, welding and refining plants, foundries, and even the automotive industry are said to be dumping hazardous waste into the river with impunity. Pollution from pesticides, detergents, and fertilizers has further aggravated the crisis. Environmentalists have slammed regulatory bodies for failing to enforce pollution norms. "If the Pollution Control Board claims to have stopped factories from discharging waste into the

Yamuna, how are such dangerous levels of heavy metals still present in the river? This report exposes the regulatory failures and calls for immediate corrective action," said Dr. Sanjay Kulshreshtha, an environmental expert. Echoing similar concerns, environmentalist Shachindra Sharma issued a stark warning: "The toxic state of the Yamuna River is a ticking time bomb for both public health and the environment. Strict regulations and immediate steps are essential to prevent irreversible damage." With the specter of a full-blown environmental disaster looming large, experts are urging swift government action before the Yamuna turns into an irreversible toxic nightmare.

Special SC Bench to hear validity of Places of Worship (Special Provisions) Act

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

With multiple petitions seeking surveys in mosques, claiming they were once temples, the Supreme Court has constituted a special Bench of three judges headed by Chief Justice of India Sanjay Khanna to hear a batch of petitions challenging the constitutional validity of the Places of Worship (Special Provisions) Act, 1991 on December 12 at 3.30 pm. Justices Sanjay Kumar and KV Viswanathan are the part of the special Bench. The 1991 law prohibits conversion of any place of worship and provides for the maintenance of the religious character of any place of worship as it existed on August 15, 1947. The law, however, made only one exception -- dispute over the Ram Janmabhoomi-Babri Masjid in Ayodhya. The petitions filed by many Hindu organisations argue that the 1991 law created an "arbitrary and irrational retrospective cut-off date" of August 15, 1947, for maintaining the character of the places of worship or pilgrimage against encroachment done by "fundamentalist-barbaric invaders and law-breakers". The Union Government has yet to file its counter-affidavit in the matter, despite the several extension times given by the Supreme Court. On July 11, 2023, the Court asked the Union to file the counter by October 31, 2023. The SC is already seized about six petitions, including the PIL



File photo: Ranjan Dimri

filed by Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) leader Subramanian Swamy and lawyer Ashwini Upadhyay against certain provisions of the law. The management committee of, Anjuman Intezamia Masjid, Varanasi, in its plea filed through lawyer Fuzail Ahmad Ayyubi, filed an intervention application in the top court seeking dismissal of the pending pleas against the 1991 law on the ground that they were based on "rhetorical and communal claims" that could disrupt communal harmony and the rule of law. Upadhyay, in his PIL, sought setting aside of Sections 2, 3, 4 of the Places of Worship (Special Provisions) Act, 1991 on various grounds, including that these provisions took away the right of judicial remedy to reclaim a place of worship of any person or a religious group. While Swamy wanted the apex court to "read down" certain provisions to enable Hindus to stake claim over the

Gyanvapi Mosque in Varanasi and the Shahi Idgah Mosque in Mathura. The Managing Committee of the Gyanvapi Mosque has filed an intervention before the Supreme Court on Friday on pleas challenging the validity of the Places of Worship Act 1991. It said that the consequences of the declaration sought by the petitioner that the Act was unconstitutional "are bound to be drastic." The mosque committee further underscored the potential "drastic consequences" of overturning the law, citing incidents like the Sambhal case, where a recent survey order reportedly triggered widespread protests and resulted in six fatalities. The committee warned that repealing the Act could lead to a surge in disputes over religious sites across the country, prompting tensions in "every nook and corner" while threatening communal harmony.

Repatriate B'deshis staying illegally: Nizamuddin locals

RAJESH KUMAR ■ NEW DELHI

Amid the killing of Hindus in Bangladesh, a delegation of prominent Ulemas and residents of the Hazrat Nizamuddin Dargah and Basti Hazrat Nizamuddin area met with Lieutenant Governor Vinai Kumar Saxena on Saturday and demanded a special drive to identify and repatriate Bangladeshis staying illegally in the city. The delegation further demanded that Bangladeshi people should not be given employment by any establishment and those who have given employment to them should remove them. Meanwhile, sources in the Delhi police said there is not much information about the exact number of Bangladeshis in Delhi. In a statement, the Lieutenant Governor's office said, reiterating that they were worried about the situation of their Hindu brethren and other minorities in Bangladesh and worsening state-of-affairs in the country, the delegation demanded stringent action against Bangladeshis staying illegally in Delhi. In a letter submitted to Saxena, the delegation said they should not be provided rented accommodation or jobs in any establishment. According to the statement, the delegation demanded that illegal Bangladeshi infiltrators should not be given houses on rent and those houses who have already rented out their premises should evict them.

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US denies backing anti-India agenda

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

The United States Embassy on Saturday rejected the Bharatiya Janata Party's allegations that organisations funded by the US State Department, and elements in the American "deep state" were behind attempts to destabilise India through targeted attacks on Prime Minister Narendra Modi, and business tycoon Gautam Adani. A spokesperson at the US embassy described the allegations as "disappointing" and asserted that the US government has been a champion of media freedom around the world.



Two murders in a day, AAP raises law and order issue

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Two murders in different colonies rocked Delhi on Saturday, with the ruling Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) government blasting the Centre over the law and order situation in the National Capital. A 52-year-old businessman was shot dead by two unidentified assailants during his morning walk in Shahdara while a man was stabbed to death during a brawl in South Delhi's Govindpuri. The brazen killings and increased criminal activities have raised concerns about public safety and the efficacy of law enforcement in Delhi. Reacting to the two incidents, AAP national convener Arvind Kejriwal said that criminals have become "fearless" under the BJP rule. "After the firing in Vishwas Nagar, now news of stabbing is coming from Govindpuri. Under the BJP rule, criminals have become completely fearless," he wrote on X. These

latest crimes are sure to result in a major slugfest between the Centre and other political parties over the increasing lawlessness as the Delhi Police and law and order in the national Capital come under the jurisdiction of the Union Home Ministry. The AAP is going to make law and order an electoral issue when Delhi holds Assembly polls in February. In Shahdara, at least eight rounds were fired at the victim, identified as Sunil Jain, near the Yamuna Sports complex. Jain who ran a business of utensils, was returning home on a scooter, when two motorcycle-borne unidentified attackers opened fire at him in the Farsh Bazar area. Shahdara Deputy Commissioner of Police Prashant Gautam confirmed that the police received a PCR call at 8.36 am, and at least seven bullets were fired at Jain after which the accused fled the scene.

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December 21 is World Meditation Day, UNGA adopts resolution co-sponsored by India



Representative photo

PTI ■ UNITED NATIONS

India co-sponsored a UN General Assembly draft resolution that was unanimously adopted to proclaim December 21 as World Meditation Day. India, including Liechtenstein, Sri Lanka, Nepal, Mexico and Andorra, was a member of the core group of countries that guided the unanimous adoption of the resolution titled 'World Meditation Day' in the 193-member UN General Assembly on Friday. "A day for comprehensive well-being and inner transformation! Glad that India along with other nations of the core group guided the unanimous adoption of the resolution on the declaration of December 21 as World Meditation Day @UN General Assembly today (Friday)," India's Permanent Representative to the UN Ambassador Parvathaneni Harish said in a post on X. He said India's leadership in

overall human wellbeing stems from "our civilisational dictum of #VasudhaivaKutumbakam - the whole world is one family". Harish noted that December 21 marks the Winter Solstice, which in Indian tradition is the beginning of "Uttarayana - an auspicious time of the year, especially for inner reflection" and meditation. It also falls exactly six months after the International Day of Yoga commemorated on June 21, which is the Summer Solstice. Recalling that India had in 2014 taken the lead in declaring June 21 as International Day of Yoga, Harish said that in a decade, it has become a global movement which has led to common people across the globe practising yoga and making it part of their daily lives. A press release by the Permanent Mission of India to the UN said India's instrumental role in the adoption of the resolution on

World Meditation Day was a "testimony to its firm commitment to overall human wellness and global leadership on this front in tune with our civilisational dictum of Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam". The declaration of World Meditation Day comes at a time when various regions of the globe witness conflicts and growing tensions, the mission said. It underlined that meditation is rooted in ancient practices and is an effective tool to achieve inner transformation and peace in the modern day. It is aimed at comprehensive human well-being, including mental, emotional, physical and spiritual dimensions. It prepares human beings to cope with several modern-day issues such as heightened anxiety and stress and brings about harmony between mind and body, humans and nature. "Modern science attests to the numerous benefits of meditation and its profound impact on our lives. It has been scientifically proven that regular meditation significantly reduces stress, and enhances cognitive and physical functions," the Indian mission added. The resolution, introduced by Liechtenstein, was also sponsored by Bangladesh, Bulgaria, Burundi, the Dominican Republic, Iceland, Luxembourg, Mauritius, Monaco, Mongolia, Morocco, Portugal and Slovenia.



ISKCON centre in Bangladesh burnt down: Radharaman Das

PTI ■ KOLKATA

The International Society for Krishna Consciousness (ISKCON) on Saturday alleged that its centre in Dhaka district in neighbouring Bangladesh was burnt down earlier in the day. Iskcon Kolkata vice president Radharamn Das told PTI that the targeted attack on members of the community and members of the Vaishnavite order goes on unabated as "vandals set ablaze idols inside the temple at the Namhata property". He said in a post on X handle, "ISKCON Namhata Centre burned down in Bangladesh. The deities of Sri Sri Laxmi Narayan and all items inside the temple were burned down completely. The centre is located in Dhaka. Early morning today, between 2-3 AM, miscreants set fire to the Shri Shri Radha Krishna Temple and the Shri Shri Mahabhagya Lakshmi Narayan Temple, which fall under the Hare Krishna Namhata Sangha, located in

Dhour village, under the jurisdiction of Turag Police Station, Dhaka district. The fire was initiated by lifting the tin roof at the back of the temple and using petrol or octane. Address: H-02, R-05, Ward-54," he said in the post. Das claimed that attacks are continuing and despite the ISKCON drawing the attention of the interim government in Bangladesh, not much is being done by the police and administration to assuage their grievances and address their concern. "Iskcon India has expressed concern about the safety of Hindus in Bangladesh and urged its monks and followers from Bangladesh not to wear 'tilaks' and practice their faith discreetly. The targeted attacks continue," he had earlier said. The Iskcon Kolkata vice president also expressed concern over arrested Hindu community leader Chinmoy Krishna Das's safety following his denial of bail and the violent attacks.

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Dubai returned dulha brings baraat, but dulhan gayab...

RANI SINGH RAJPUT ■ CHANDIGARH/ NEW DELHI

The stage was set and the wedding party was ready to bring home the beautiful bride chosen by their Dubai-returned groom. The wedding had been planned online and this was the first time everyone, including the groom, would be meeting the lawyer-bride, or so they thought. However, Deepak Kumar (24) and his entourage of 150 'baraatis' were shocked when they arrived in Moga, Punjab, only to find his

bride "missing", adding insult to injury they also realised that the wedding venue did not exist. A month ago returned from Dubai to Jalandhar, Punjab to marry one Manpreet Kaur. Kumar had been talking to her via Instagram for three years, but had never met her in person, the police said. After realising he had been duped, Kumar lodged a police complaint against Kaur. Kumar told the police that he along with his family had travelled all the way from Mandiali village in Jalandhar to Moga for the

wedding at the venue that had been chosen by the bride and her family. Upon reaching Moga, the bride's family reportedly told Kumar that some people will escort him and his family to the wedding venue. However, even after waiting till 5 pm, no one showed up, Kumar said. He added that they had asked the locals about the wedding venue named 'Rose Garden Palace' but were told that there was no such place in Moga. The groom said that he worked as a labourer in Dubai and had been in



REPRESENTATIVE PHOTO

touch with Kaur through the platform Instagram for the past three years. Kumar said he had seen Kaur's photos but never met her in person. Their parents had arranged the wedding over phone calls, police officials said, adding that Kumar also claimed to have transferred Rs 50,000 to Kaur earlier. His father Prem Chand said that 150 'baraatis' came for the wedding, and that he had already hired taxis, paid for catering and a videographer. Kaur reportedly hails from Moga and had earlier told

Kumar that she works in Ferozepur, he said. The groom's father said that the marriage was fixed after speaking to Kaur's parents over the phone, and guests were invited for the wedding. Meanwhile, Moga Assistant Sub-Inspector Harjinder Singh said they have received a complaint from Deepak Kumar. Singh said that the complaint was lodged after the groom's family could not reach the bride as her phone was switched off. Further investigation in the matter is underway, he said.

Kashmir-based NGOs under scrutiny

MOHIT KANDHARI ■ JAMMU

The investigating agencies probing the role of facilitators and sympathizers responsible for rehabilitating illegal immigrants from Myanmar in and around vital security installations in Jammu have gathered credible evidence against some of the Kashmir-based Non-Governmental Organisation (NGOs) who have deployed their young volunteers to assist them. Meanwhile, a senior Cabinet minister in the Omar Abdullah-led government Saturday reacted to the media reports claiming the power/water supply lines to plots housing illegal immigrants from Myanmar have been disconnected by the local administration in Jammu. Speaking to media persons in Jammu, Jal Shakti Minister Javed Ahmed Rana on Saturday said the water supply will not be snatched to the slums housing the illegal immigrants, pending a call from the Centre on their deportation. "The government is duty-bound to ensure water supply to all human beings. We will ensure water supply to them (Rohingyas) on humanitarian grounds till the government of India takes a call on their issue," Rana, who is also minister for forest, ecology and environment, and tribal affairs, told reporters. According to reports, these Kashmir-based volunteers run childcare centers where they impart elementary education to kids and also extend health care facilities to women. The same volunteers also distribute different aid materials to needy families in these illegal settlements. During the current drive launched by the Union Territory administration to verify the credentials of these immigrants, camping across different clusters in Jammu, the field agencies were stunned to record the number of vehicles owned/parked in these settlements, especially in the Bhatindi, Sunjwan and Narwal Bala area of Jammu. Ironically, these illegal immigrants have purchased the majority of vehicles from



locals without completing any paperwork. So far traffic police authorities and the office of the Regional Transport Officer have not launched any drive to seize these vehicles. Some of these illegal immigrants have also purchased e-rickshaws and ferried passengers without any scrutiny. Few others manage mobile ice cream carts. The majority of these illegal immigrants are also using smartphones and have acquired SIM cards from the local market without facing any scrutiny. A large number of Rohingyas also run their shops/eating joints, provision stores, tailoring shops, mobile repair shops, and meat shops, and purchase all items from different traders in Jammu to earn their livelihood. Another section is working as sanitation workers and are hired by the contractors working with the Jammu Municipal Corporation. Several hotels have also recruited and relied on these sanitation workers for cleaning floors and toilets. On the other hand, women also earn their livelihood by working as domestic workers and daily wage laborers. Minor children also work as rag pickers and collect garbage.

Enforcement Directorate seizes ₹13.50 crore in alleged bank fraud case

T N RAGHUNATHA ■ MUMBAI



In simultaneous raids carried out at seven locations in Mumbai and Ahmedabad, the Enforcement Directorate (ED) officials on Saturday seized proceeds of alleged crimes worth Rs. 13.50 Crore in connection with an alleged fraud in the Nashik Merchant Cooperative (NAMCO) Bank, in Malegaon town in north Maharashtra. Acting on a complaint registered with Malegaon Chavani Police Station in Nashik district of Maharashtra on November 7 against NAMCO Bank, the ED conducted raids on seven locations in Mumbai and Ahmedabad and made the seizure of Rs. 13.50 crore. It may be recalled that following a complaint, the police had lodged a FIR last month on mystery deposits of huge money of more than Rs 100 Crore in 14 newly-opened bank accounts at the NAMCO Bank. In its FIR, the police named the prime suspect as Siraj Harun Memon, who operates a hot and cold beverages agency, and his accomplices who used "identity documents of various innocent persons (obtained by false promises / monetary considerations) to layer and transfer the proceeds of the crime". Upping the ante over the case, Bharatiya Janata Party's

former MP Kirit Somaiya alleged that the case was an alleged 'Vote-Jihad' matter and suspicious transactions took place in multiple states just weeks before the November 20 2024 Maharashtra Assembly polls. The investigations by the ED revealed that at least five similar accounts were also maintained with the Bank of Maharashtra (BoM) Nashik Branch. During its investigations, the ED went into the money trail of 'debit transactions' made through various modes of online banking channels from the 14 accounts at NAMCO Bank and the 5 accounts with BoM. The ED found during its investigations that a majority of the funds through the debit transactions from these accounts were transferred to 21 sole proprietary concerns. A detailed analysis of the bank statements of the 21 sole proprietor-concerns where the hundreds of crores of rupees of funds were transferred through online banking channels, and these in turn were further routed to various other firms/companies said to be fake accounts. Subsequently, the analysis revealed that the huge monies were withdrawn in cash from these dummy accounts, including by Nagani Akram Shafi and Vasim V. Bhesaniya. The duo then distributed the cash to various entities through 'angadiyas' (traditional personal couriers) or 'hawala' operators in Ahmedabad, Surat and Mumbai. The ED contended that the Bhesaniya-Shafi duo, later arrested for money-laundering charges, worked under instructions of one Mehmood Bhagat alias Challenger King. In November, the ED had carried out around 25 searches in Ahmedabad, Surat, Nashik and Mumbai and laid its hands on bank balances of Rs 5.20 crore, plus incriminating documents, digital evidence, bank deposits and other deals, etc.

Woman faces triple talaq, purportedly after supporting Sambhal police action

BISWAJEET BANERJEE ■ MORADABAD

A woman from the Kathgar area of Moradabad alleged that her husband gave her triple talaq after she expressed support for police action during the recent Sambhal violence. The woman has filed a complaint with the Senior Superintendent of Police (SSP), seeking justice. According to the woman, she married her current husband in December 2021 after her first marriage ended in divorce in 2021. She claimed her second husband, who works in a local firm, initially promised her marriage after

allegedly sexually assaulting her in Gurugram. To evade legal trouble, he married her on December 17, 2021. The woman, who has three children, alleged that her husband soon began demanding dowry and harassing her. She further accused him of inappropriate behavior toward her daughter and claimed that her brother-in-law also attempted to sexually assault her. The situation escalated on December 4, when the woman visited her husband's office. While standing nearby, she was reportedly watching a YouTube video showing people pelting stones at the



police during the Sambhal violence. Her husband arrived and questioned her about the video. When she defended the police's right to respond

in self-defense if attacked, her husband allegedly became furious, called her a "kafir" (non-believer), and divorced her by pronouncing triple talaq on the spot. SSP Satpal Antil has directed the Kathgar police station in-charge to investigate the matter thoroughly and take appropriate action. Advocate Abhishek Sharma emphasised that every citizen has the right to freedom of expression under Article 19 of the Indian Constitution, which includes the right to express opinions, whether in support or criticism of any entity. The police investigation is ongoing.

101 farmers resume their march to Delhi today

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

Punjab farmer leader Sarwan Singh Pandher said on Saturday that they have not received any message from the Centre for talks to address their issues and added that a group of 101 farmers will again begin their march to Delhi on December 8. In a related development, farmer representatives and agricultural stakeholders urged the government to provide cheaper long-term credit, implement lower taxes, and double the PM-KISAN income support during a comprehensive pre-budget consultation with Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman on Saturday. Addressing the media at Shambhu on the Punjab-Haryana border on Saturday, Pandher said 16 farmers suffered injuries and one of them lost hearing ability because of the teargas shelling by Haryana security personnel. Except four injured farmers, the rest of them have been discharged from hospital, he said, adding, "We have not received any message from the Centre for holding talks. The (Narendra) Modi government is in no mood to hold talks." He further said the Sanyukta Kisan Morcha (Non-Political) and Kisan Mazdoor Morcha have already decided that a 'jatha' of 101 farmers will again march towards the national capital on Sunday noon in a peaceful manner. As part of a call given by the farmer unions SKM (Non-Political) and Kisan Mazdoor Morcha, a 'jatha' of 101 farmers began its march to Delhi on Friday from their protest site at the Shambhu border to press for their demands. The 'jatha' was stopped by multilayered barricading erected by Haryana security personnel. Undeterred by prohibitory orders, the farmers attempted to force their way through the barricades but were stopped by security personnel who lobbed multiple tear gas shells to force



them to go back to their protest site at Shambhu, which falls in Punjab. Meanwhile, the two-hour meeting saw a detailed discussion of proposals, aimed at addressing multiple challenges in the agricultural sector, with key demands focusing on financial relief, market reforms, and strategic investments. Bharat Krishak Samaj Chairman Ajay Vir Jakhar emphasised the need for targeted interventions to boost agricultural productivity and farmer welfare. Primary demands included reducing interest rates on agricultural loans to as low as 1 per cent and increasing the annual PM-KISAN instalment from Rs 6,000 to Rs 12,000. Farmers' bodies also strongly advocated for zero-premium crop insurance for small farmers under the Pradhan Mantri Fasal Bima Yojana. Taxation reforms were a critical component of the proposals, with stakeholders calling for GST exemptions on agricultural machinery, fertilisers, seeds, and medicines. The PHD Chambers of

Commerce and Industry requested a reduction of pesticide GST from 18 per cent to 5 per cent. Jakhar proposed a targeted investment strategy of Rs 1,000 crore annually for eight years, focusing on specific crops like chickpeas, soybean, and mustard to enhance National agricultural productivity. This approach aims to strategically enhance crop yields, reduce import dependence, and improve national nutritional security, he told PTI after the meeting. Bhartiya Kisan Union (BKU) Speaker Dharmendra Malik demanded a comprehensive review of the Minimum Support Price (MSP) mechanism, seeking calculations that include land rent, farm wages, and post-harvest expenses. He also demanded the display of agricultural machinery prices on company websites, improvement in mandi infrastructure, widening MSP coverage beyond 23 commodities, disallowing imports below MSP levels and fixing minimum export prices only in emergencies. PHD Chambers of Commerce and Industry Chairman (Agriculture committee) RG Agarwal called for a reduction in GST on pesticides from 18 per cent to five per cent, while highlighting the need to curb the sale of smuggled and fake pesticides while ensuring data protection for new molecular developments. More ambitious proposals included constitutional reforms, such as adding agriculture to the Concurrent List and establishing a central Indian Agricultural Service. Minister of State for Finance Pankaj Chaudhary and senior officials from finance and agriculture ministries attended the meeting, which included representatives from farmer producer companies, agricultural associations, and corporate sectors.

Gurugram municipality forms dedicated Sanitation Security Force

PARVESH SHARMA ■ GURUGRAM

The Municipal Corporation of Gurugram (MCG) has formed a dedicated Sanitation Security Force (SSF) to monitor the growing waste management and cleanliness challenges in the district. The SSF has already seized six vehicles while monitoring various places in a single night. Additional Commissioner of MCG Dr. Balpreet Singh said that monitoring and action against those who throw garbage and debris in the city has been further increased. "The force has caught six

vehicles from Laser Valley Sector-29, Fountain Chowk, Khandsa Road Sector-37, Devi Lal Colony, Jawahar Nagar and Kataria Chowk while monitoring various areas on Thursday-Friday night," he said. He added that some of the vehicles caught were also without numbers, for which the process of legal action is being adopted. Apart from this, some vehicles have also been using the name of MCG and dumping illegal garbage. "All the vehicles have been seized and FIRs have been registered against their owners or drivers in the concerned police stations," he

added. "We appealed to the citizens of Gurugram to inform MCG about those who dump garbage or debris illegally, so that action can be taken by the SSF on time. Also, keep an eye on such vehicles which are working using the name of the MCG. Cooperation of all citizens is expected in making the city clean," he asserted. Meanwhile, the civic body is installing CCTV cameras at all the secondary garbage collection points located in the MCG limits. CCTVs have been installed at eight locations, while work on the remaining six will also be

completed this month. Soon all the 14 secondary garbage collection points of the corporation will be monitored by the cameras. CCTV cameras have been installed in front of Atul Kataria Chowk, Sheela Mata Mandir, Roshanpura Sabzi Mandi, Beriwalla Bagh, Chakarpur, Bandhwadi Khandsa and Court Parking. Apart from this, the work of installing CCTVs at the secondary garbage collection points located in areas like Badshahpur, Fazilpur, Sikandarpur, Chauma, Carterpuri and Dhanwapur will be completed by the end of December.

Vijay Goel leads padyatra to protest Delhi's garbage problem and 'Landfill Mountains'

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

Former Union Minister Vijay Goel will lead a padyatra on Sunday from Machhli Bazaar to Ghazipur to protest the persistent issues of garbage and 'Landfill Mountains' in Delhi under the AAP government. "The Kejriwal government has done nothing for the past 10 years and keeps asking for more time every year," Goel said in a statement. Goel said that instead of reducing, the landfill mountains are only growing larger. Goel also hit out at the Aam Aadmi Party (AAP), saying, "If (Arvind) Kejriwal stops



handing out freebies, AAP candidates wouldn't even be able to save their deposits in elections, let alone form a government. The AAP Government has no significant achievements to show to the people, apart from distributing freebies. In this obsession with 'free, free, free', the Kejriwal government has turned Delhi into a garbage dump." Goel said that there is no sign of relief for Delhiites from the towering garbage dump yards at Ghazipur, Bhalswa, and Okhla for the next four years. The Kejriwal-led MCD has extended the deadline to clear these landfill sites to December 2028.

ISKCON centre in Bangladesh burnt down: Radharaman

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Since the installation of the interim government and the dislodging of the Awami League from power in August, ISKCON properties have come under attack at various places across Bangladesh in the past four months. West Bengal BJP president and Union minister Sukanta Majumdar in a post on X said, "Strongly condemn the horrific arson attack on the #ISKCON Namhatta Centre in Dhaka, Bangladesh, which destroyed the Deities of Sri Sri Laxmi Narayan and sacred temple items." "This is an unforgivable act of hatred against a place of worship. Immediate action must be taken to bring the culprits to justice and ensure the safety of religious minorities," the Union Minister of State for Education said.

Two murders in a day, AAP raises law...

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A team from the local police station was immediately dispatched to the scene. He was rushed to a hospital but succumbed to his injuries," police said. Police added that they are looking into the CCTV cameras installed in the area to identify the accused. Jain's family said neither he had any enmity with anyone nor received any threats. Meanwhile, in Govindpuri, an 18-year-old scrap shop worker died of stab wounds he suffered in a fight with his neighbours over a common toilet not being flushed. Sudheer was rushed to a hospital with multiple stab wounds, reportedly made with a kitchen knife, in his chest, scalp, and face. He died at the hospital. His brother Prem, 22, is still undergoing treatment and a friend, Sagar, was given a discharge. The fight broke out late Friday night between the siblings and a family who lived on the first floor of a building in lane number 6 of Govindpuri. According to

police, Bhikam Singh, his wife Meena, and their three sons Sanjay, 20, Rahul, 18, and a minor boy attacked the three youths, when Sudheer objected to the toilet not being flushed. "Both parties were tenants on the first floor of the building and had a common toilet. The quarrel started when Bhikam's youngest son used the common toilet and didn't flush," police said in a statement. A case of murder has been registered and Bhikam and his family have been apprehended for investigation, they said. Sagar Malik, a neighbour, said that the victims were beaten up with rods and knives. "Bhikam's family called the police and told them that their mother was attacked," Malik said. Sudheer's cousin, Sanjiv Saxena, who lives in the same building said the incident took place around Friday 11.30 pm. Sudheer was a native of Uttar Pradesh's Mainpuri and paid Rs 3,000 per month in rent for the house which he shared with his brother, an e-rickshaw

driver. Bhikam Singh works at a building materials shop and had shifted to the building around 45 days ago. Holding Union Home Minister Amit Shah responsible for Rohingyas and Bangladeshi immigrants staying illegal in Delhi, AAP convener Arvind Kejriwal questioned, "Who brought the Rohingyas to Delhi? Rohingyas are either coming from Burma or Bangladesh. How did they cross the border? That was also Amit Shah's responsibility. After crossing the border, how did they reach Delhi? That was Amit Shah's responsibility as well; he is the country's Home Minister. Who settled them in Delhi? It was Amit Shah who settled them. So, he knows where the Rohingyas are. If Rohingyas are in Delhi, why aren't they being caught? If Rohingyas are committing crimes, why aren't they being apprehended? Why isn't the Delhi Police catching them? Why isn't Amit Shah taking action? This is what pains me," Kejriwal added.

US denies backing anti-India agenda

From page 1

"The US government works with independent organisations on programming that supports professional development and capacity building training for journalists. This programming does not influence the editorial decisions or direction of these organisations," the official said, confirming the US funding to

OCCRP and other organisations. The OCCRP, headquartered in Amsterdam, is a media platform that largely focuses on stories relating to crime and corruption. The BJP had referred to a French media report and said it revealed that OCCRP is funded by the US State Department's USAID, along with other "deep state figures" like George Soros and the

Rockefeller Foundation. "The United States has long been a champion of media freedom around the world. A free and independent press is an essential component of any democracy, enabling informed and constructive debate and holding those in power accountable," the US embassy official said. Last month, US prosecutors charged Gautam Adani, 62, his nephew Sagar

and other defendants for paying over USD 250 million in bribes between 2020 and 2024 to Indian government officials to win solar energy contracts on terms that could potentially bring in more than USD 2 billion in profit. Following the charges, the Congress demanded a thorough investigation into the charges and accused the government of shielding him.

Repatriate B'deshis staying illegally: Nizamuddin locals

From page 1

"Delhi residents must be directed that if they find that any illegal Bangladeshi infiltrators are living in their neighbourhood, they should provide the information in this regard to the police," read the statement. It also said that the Delhi Police and the Municipal Corporation of Delhi (MCD) should be directed to remove any encroachments on government land, footpaths, parks and other public places by such people.

"Any documents like Aadhar Card, Voter ID, or any other government document acquired illegally by Bangladeshi infiltrators be cancelled immediately. If any Masjid or Madarsa has given shelter to such infiltrators, they should immediately evict them. A special drive be launched to identify such infiltrators and they be sent back to Bangladesh," the letter read. Citing "a sudden spurt in the number of illegal immigrants" in the national capital, Lieutenant-Governor

Vinai Kumar Saxena's office has written to the Chief Secretary, Delhi Police Commissioner, and other senior officials, asking them to take urgent action last month. Saxena also directed the civic agencies, Municipal Corporation of Delhi (MCD), New Delhi Municipal Council (NDMC) and Chief Secretary of Delhi to be on "alert" as these illegal immigrants may approach them to get fake citizenship and election identity cards. The BJP leaders in Delhi have been

accusing the ruling A for patronising the Rohingyas and Bangladeshi living illegally in the city. Diplomatic ties between the two nations have been strained since Nobel laureate Muhammad Yunus assumed interim leadership in Bangladesh after Sheikh Hasina's ouster in August. Several Hindus and Hindu organisations have come under attack in Bangladesh since the unceremonious removal of Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina in August. Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP)

leaders Suwendu Adhikari, Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath, BJP national president JP Nadda, Assam Chief Minister Hemanta Biswa Sharma and several other leaders have also demanded to remove Bangladeshi infiltrators. It is learnt that there are two crore Bangladeshi immigrants illegally staying in India. The rise in the number of illegal Bangladeshi immigrants, which almost equals the size of the entire population of Australia.

Deteriorating law and order: Man strangulates mother in West Delhi

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

A 22-year-old man strangulated his mother in west Delhi after she refused to give him a share from the property if he gets married, police said on Saturday. The accused, Sawan, who is a carrier tempo driver, made an alibi about his mother, Sulochana, being killed by someone and her earrings being stolen, they said. Deputy Commissioner of Police (west) Vichitra Veer said a PCR call was received at 8.30 pm on Friday, in which the caller Sawan said that his mother had been killed by someone and her earrings were missing. Local police reached Khayala area but the crime scene did not suggest the aspect of robbery, as there was no ransacking of the place and the valuables were found intact in the house, Veer said. An FIR of murder was registered and the investigation was taken up in the matter, he said.



Sulochna's elder son Kapil (27), who works as an accountant, was also verified to gather more information about the events leading to the incident, the officer said. Meanwhile, teams were also working on technical information collection and questioning the neighbours, he added. During the investigation, the younger son's conduct, Sawan, was found suspicious. After a thorough exercise of local enquiry and collection of technical data, Sawan was asked specific and pointed questions, the DCP said in a statement. Sustained questioning, based

on facts, made him admit his crime, the statement said. During interrogation, Sawan revealed that Kapil's marriage was fixed recently after which, he also approached his mother about getting married to a girl whom he knew for some time, it said. He said that his mother scolded him upon hearing about the marriage and threatened him that if he mentions it again it would lead to him not getting a share from their property, the statement said. It upset Sawan, who claimed to have given all his earnings to his mother. Hurt by that, he planned to kill his mother, the officer said. The police said he created alibis to mislead the investigation but the team connected the dots leading to the detection of the crime within a few hours. Sulochna's husband had expired in 2019 and she has two unmarried sons. Police said further investigation in the matter is underway.

Man held for involvement in killing pregnant woman, burying her body

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

A 19-year-old man was arrested for allegedly being involved in killing a seven-month pregnant woman and burying her body in a pit in Haryana, police said on Saturday. Two people were arrested earlier in the matter, including the woman's boyfriend, they said. The accused has been identified as Sohiti alias Ritik, a resident of Sonapat district in Haryana, the police said. According to the police, on October 21, the 19-year-old woman, who was seven months pregnant, was reported missing from her residence in the Nangloi area. Preliminary investigation revealed that her partner, Saleem alias Sanju, along with his associates Sohiti and Pankaj, conspired to abduct her under

the pretext of eloping, a police officer said. They strangulated the woman and took her body to Madina Village in Rohtak, Haryana where they buried the body, Deputy Commissioner of Police (crime) Satish Kumar said. On October 24, a case was registered and two of the accused -- Saleem and Pankaj -- were arrested, but Sohiti remained at large, the DCP said. Based on a tip-off, a police team laid a trap near Singhasan Banquet, Rohtak on Friday and nabbed Sohiti, Kumar said. Sohiti admitted his involvement in the planned murder and as per his confession, on the day of the incident, Saleem approached him with a plan to kill his pregnant partner, police said. The three abducted the woman, strangulated her, and buried her body, they added.

AAP intensifies attack on Centre after series of violent incidents in city

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

The Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) has intensified its attack on the Centre following a series of violent incidents in the city, accusing it of neglecting Delhi's law and order situation ahead of the upcoming Delhi Assembly elections. AAP National Convener Arvind Kejriwal expressed grave concern over the worsening law and order situation in Delhi, directly holding the BJP and Union Home Minister Amit Shah responsible. Meanwhile, Delhi Chief Minister Atishi on Saturday met the family of the victims of the Govindpuri stabbing at AIIMS and declared that Delhi has become a crime capital. The former Delhi chief minister expressed alarm over a series of violent incidents, including a businessman being



shot during a morning walk, a senior citizen's murder in Panchsheel Enclave, a surge in extortion calls and a double-stabbing in Govindpuri that occurred this morning. "People are panicked and law and order has been crippled. Senior citizens are frightened, women feel unsafe and gang wars are happening. Drugs are being sold in all corners of Delhi. Where is the Delhi Police? Where is the home minister? Kejriwal said. Over the BJP's claims that Rohingyas are behind some of the crimes,

he said, "If they are Rohingyas, why hasn't the home minister stopped them at the Myanmar and Bangladesh borders? And if they've entered Delhi, why hasn't Delhi Police arrested them? Instead of politicising the issue, they should focus on ensuring the safety of Delhi's people." AAP leader Saurabh Bharadwaj, a minister in the party-led government in Delhi, claimed the assailants fired 6-7 rounds of bullets at Jain. In his social media post, Bharadwaj described Delhi as a "crime capital." Lambasting the BJP central government, Atishi asserted that criminals roam fearlessly, and if law and order aren't restored, Delhiites will teach them a lesson. She called out the BJP-led Central Government for neglecting its sole responsibility in the capital: maintaining law and order.

Uncertainty over poll tickets prompts BJP leaders to cross over to AAP

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

Uncertainty over Delhi Assembly poll tickets has prompted half a dozen BJP leaders to cross over to AAP while many more could soon make the switch, BJP leaders said on Saturday. Elections to the 70-member Delhi Assembly are due in February. The BJP, which has been out of power since 1998, was routed by AAP in the 2015 and the 2020 elections, managing three and eight seats, respectively. In recent weeks, six BJP leaders who unsuccessfully contested the 2020 polls joined AAP and the Arvind Kejriwal-led party has already fielded three of them. Three others -- Pravesh Shunty, Jitender Singh Shunty and Surinder Pal Singh Bittu -- are also likely to be fielded by AAP. Ratan was defeated by Raaj



Kumar Anand, a former minister in the AAP government, in the Patel Nagar seat by a margin of more than 30,000 votes. Earlier, Brahm Singh Tanwar, BB Tyagi and Anil Jha joined the ruling party and were fielded from the Chhatarpur, Laxmi Nagar and the Kirari constituencies. Tanwar and Jha had lost the 2020 polls from the same seats by narrow margins.

"The exit of mid-level functionaries and leaders from the BJP will continue as there is uncertainty over being considered for tickets due to factors such as outsiders being given priority and delay in announcement of candidates," said a senior party leader. The process may speed up as AAP is actively scouting for potential candidates from the BJP with experience to replace its sitting MLAs facing anti-incumbency, he claimed. A BJP front organisation in-charge said, "I have been associated with the BJP for two decades. I have been asking for a ticket to contest the assembly polls since the last two elections. I am not sure my name is even being considered this time and it forces me to take some decision about my future career." A party office-bearer rued that a number of prominent

leaders from the Congress and AAP who recently joined the BJP were being considered as frontrunners for tickets. There are more than a dozen leaders from both parties who are now in the BJP. These former MLAs with experience of contesting multiple elections were once considered as threats to the aspirations of local BJP ticket-seekers. These leaders include Arvinder Singh Lovely, Naseeb Singh, Tarvinder Marwah, Neeraj Basoya and Raaj Kumar Chahuhan -- all former MLAs who quit the Congress to join the BJP in recent months. Lovely is a former Delhi Congress president and minister in the city government. AAP leaders now in the BJP include former ministers Kailash Gahlot and Anand, and ex-MLAs Kartar Singh, Manoj Kumar and ND Sharma.

CM Atishi urges students to actively participate in politics

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

Delhi Chief Minister Atishi on Saturday urged students to actively participate in politics, cautioning against leaving critical decisions to the "worst kind of people". Speaking at the Founder's Day celebration of St. Stephen's College, Atishi recounted her time as a student there and how politics was once dismissed as a "dirty business" and an unlikely career choice. She urged the youth to rethink their perception of politics, emphasizing that meaningful change is only possible through active engagement. "India is not destined to stay the same. It can change, and we are the ones who can bring that change. But for that, we must engage with politics and democracy." The Delhi Chief Minister highlighted the



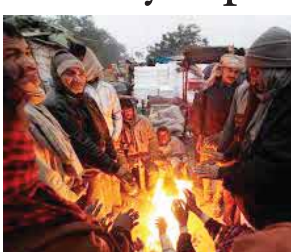
transformative impact of the AAP government's policies, including free bus rides empowering 11 lakh women daily, while reflecting on the struggles and sacrifices her team faced since 2015 in combating vested interests to bring change. During this, Right Reverend Dr. Paul Swarup, the Chairman of the College and the Bishop of Derry, Professor John Burgess, Principal of St. Stephen's College were also present. Looking back at her time in St.

Stephen's, the Chief Minister reminisced about being part of the Social Service League, organizing blood donation camps, and holding evening classes for children of the college's non-teaching staff. "This college instilled in us an ethos of service. Today, I urge all of you to carry that ethos forward. Yes, be successful in your careers, but remember that your actions shape the society and country you live in," she said, according to a statement. She explained that disengaging in politics leaves crucial decisions about education, healthcare, and safety in the hands of others, the statement said. "When educated, well-meaning young people stay away from politics, we allow the most important decisions of our lives to be made by the wrong people," she asserted.

City experiences its coldest morning on Saturday, mercury dips to 7.1 degrees

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

Delhi experienced its coldest morning of the season on Saturday, as the mercury dropped to 7.1° Celsius, three degrees below the season's average while the air quality index dropped to 233 again in the 'poor' category, after a brief respite of three days. Ayanagar was the coldest area which recorded the minimum temperature of 6.6 degree Celsius. The maximum temperature was recorded at 25.4 degree Celsius, one notch above the normal in the national capital. Meanwhile, the primary pollutants on Saturday were PM2.5 and PM10, with PM2.5 levels recorded at 93.2 µg/m and PM10 levels at 185.4 µg/m at 2 pm. These fine particles pose significant health risks as they can penetrate deep into the lungs and enter the bloodstream. Of the 38 air quality



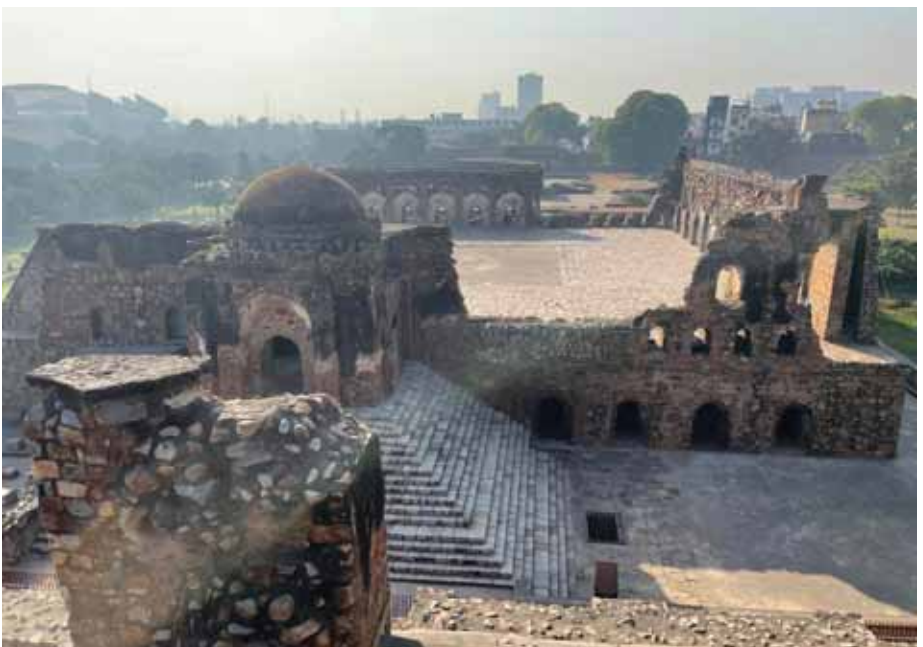
monitoring stations in the city, two reported air quality in the 'very poor' category on Saturday, 30 were in the 'poor' category, and the rest recorded 'moderate' air quality, according to the Sameer App. However, several areas witnessed a "moderate" AQI. It was 194 at Mathura Road, 200 at Delhi Technological University (DTU), 194 at the Karni Singh shooting range and 192 at Dilshad Garden, according to data from the Central Pollution Control Board (CPCB). Areas such as Alipur (AQI 231), Ashok Vihar (225), Bawana (262), and Burari (274) reported

particularly concerning levels. A thin layer of smog engulfed several areas around Delhi-NCR, including India Gate and Barapulla. According to the Air Quality Early Warning System for Delhi, air quality in the city will likely remain in the 'poor' category on Sunday and Monday, while it is expected to deteriorate to 'very poor' on Tuesday. Delhi's air quality has been reeling in "very severe", "severe", "very poor" and "poor" categories post Diwali. IQ Air real time data showed AQI at 157 while PM2.5 concentration is currently 12.9 times the World Health Organization annual PM2.5 guideline value. However, hyperlocal analysis of different hotspots revealed that the Chandpur Village, northwest Delhi was the highest polluted area at 391 µg/m3, followed by President's Estate in central Delhi at 385 µg/m3 and Bawana at 373 µg/m3.

MCD launches its Heritage Walk program

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

The Municipal Corporation of Delhi (MCD) has launched its Heritage Walk program to help citizens explore and connect with Delhi's historical landmarks and cultural heritage. The initiative aims to provide an engaging experience of the city's rich culture and heritage while promoting awareness about its architectural and historical significance. The Heritage Walk will take place on the first and third Saturdays of each month, starting at either 8:00 AM or 11:30 AM. The events, will feature walks, interactive sessions on the history of classical music and dance, Urdu poetry and associated activities across Town Hall, Purani Dilli, and the Qutab Minar vicinity. Citizens can participate without prior registration, making it accessible to all history and culture enthusiasts. During



the walk, participants will learn about the historical relevance of iconic sites, accompanied by expert guides who will share fascinating facts, stories, and

cultural insights. The inaugural walk, titled Safarnama Minar-e-Zareen, was held on Saturday at Feroz Shah Kotla at 8:30 AM. Feroz Shah Kotla is an

iconic site dating back to 1354 AD, built under the Tughlaq dynasty. This location serves as a prime example of Delhi's architectural grandeur and

historical depth. During the inaugural heritage walk, MCD Commissioner Ashwani Kumar and senior officials of MCD were also present. Speaking on the occasion, MCD Commissioner Ashwani Kumar emphasized the importance of such programs in fostering a deeper connection between citizens and their city. "Through the Heritage Walk program, we aim to bring history alive and encourage people to appreciate the history and cultural fabric of Delhi," he said. He added, "As a participant in today's walk, I gained detailed insights about the history of the citadel city. The walk dovetailed anecdotes, funny tidbits from history and the proud feeling of glorious heritage we inherit. It was overwhelming to stand near Asoka's pillar and learn his message of Dhamma, respect to all and piety which is still relevant in today's society."

BJP amplifies its campaign against ruling AAP Government

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

In a move to consolidate its political foothold in the national Capital, the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) has amplified its campaign against the ruling Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) government, focussing on what it termed as public dissatisfaction and the promise of a "double-engine government" to transform Delhi. The election office of the BJP for the upcoming Delhi Assembly polls was inaugurated at the Pant Marg headquarters of the party's state unit on Saturday in the presence of senior leaders. The slogan 'Ab Nahi Sahenge, Badal Kar Rahenge' (will not tolerate now, will bring change) as a theme for the feedback exercise for the manifesto, was given by Panda on the occasion. BJP leaders,

speaking on the occasion, said the people of Delhi have had enough and now they want to remove AAP from power to get relief from dirty water supply, damaged roads, expensive electricity and high levels of pollution. Delhi BJP chief Virendra Sachdeva performed a 'havan' along with his wife with the party's state election in-charge Baijayant Panda, election coordination committee chairman and Union minister Harsh Malhotra, MPs, Ramvir Singh Bidhuri, Manoj Tiwari, Kamaljeet Sehrawat, Bansuri Swaraj, Yogendra Chandolia, Praveen Khandelwal and others in attendance. Delhi BJP President Virendra Sachdeva, while addressing party workers and the press, said there was a "prevailing sentiment of dissatisfaction among the

people of Delhi." Commenting on the poster released by the BJP on Saturday, which says, 'Ab nahi sahenge, badal kar rahenge' (we will not tolerate anymore, we will bring change) Sachdeva remarked that it was the people's slogan. This is the slogan of the people of Delhi. When we were preparing the manifesto engaging with the people and meeting traders, Residents Welfare Associations, and speaking to the public at large, including those living in slums, everyone shared the same opinion, they want to be free from Arvind Kejriwal. They will no longer tolerate him and want change," Sachdeva said. He further emphasised that this dissatisfaction has turned into a collective call for change. "It is from this



sentiment that the call for change has arisen — we will no longer tolerate this, we will bring change, and we will form the BJP government in Delhi," he added. The BJP has framed its campaign around the idea of aligning Delhi's governance with the policies and vision of Prime Minister Narendra Modi. "The people of Delhi understand that only a double-engine government, one at the state and the other at the Centre, can bring real development to the national Capital," Sachdeva stated, asserting that Delhi's improvement requires synergy between the local and central governments. Panda and other leaders also flagged off a fleet of vans that will tour across Delhi to gather feedback from the public for the party

manifesto for the Assembly polls. "All the vans flagged off from the Delhi BJP office will travel to 14 different districts, where BJP workers will be present. An in-charge has been appointed for each van according to its respective district. Public suggestions will be collected in suggestion boxes placed in these vans, and based on these suggestions, the BJP will prepare its Sankalp Patra for the upcoming 2025 assembly elections," Panda said. Convener of the Sankalp Committee and MP Mr. Ramveer Singh Bidhuri stated that a better and comprehensive Sankalp Patra (resolution document) will be prepared by the committee. Elections for the 70-member Delhi Assembly are due to be held in February next year. The BJP out of power in Delhi since 1998,

is making all-out efforts to end the dominance of the Aam Aadmi Party led by Arvind Kejriwal. Meanwhile, in a caustic comment over the BJP's slogan, AAP supremo Kejriwal claimed the "will bring change" motto of the opposition party reflected that it intends to stop all the works done by his party's government in Delhi. In a post on X, he said "They have today officially announced that they will change everything. It means, the 24-hour electricity supply will stop and there will be long power cuts with bills of thousands of rupees, free bus travel for women will end, all schools will be ruined, Mohalla Clinics will be shut and free medicines and treatment will stop." He asked people to vote carefully since the BJP has made its intentions clear now.

Government committed to make school education accessible: PM Modi

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Saturday said his government has taken another big decision to make school education as accessible as possible with the Cabinet approving the opening of 85 new Kendriya Vidyalayas.

He asserted that while the step will benefit a large number of students, many new employment opportunities will also be created.

"Our government has taken another big decision to make school education as accessible as possible. Under this, 85 new Kendriya Vidyalayas will be opened across the country. While this step will benefit a large number of students, many new employment opportunities will also be



created," Modi said in a social media post. The prime minister said the government is committed to providing school education to every section of the society in accordance with the National Education

extent," Modi said in another post in Hindi. The prime minister also said his government is determined to improve connectivity across the country. "In this direction, our government has approved the Rithala-Kundli corridor under the fourth phase of Delhi Metro in the National Capital Region. This will make commuting between Delhi and Haryana easier," Modi said. The Union Cabinet approved on Friday the opening of 85 new KV's and 28 new NV's. It also gave its nod to expanding one KV. The opening of these new KV's will provide an opportunity for over 82,000 students to receive affordable and high-quality education across the country. The total estimated requirement of funds for the

ED attaches fresh assets worth ₹388 Crore in Mahadev online betting case

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI/RAIPUR

The Enforcement Directorate (ED) on Saturday said it has attached fresh assets worth about Rs 388 crore in its ongoing money laundering investigation into the Mahadev online betting case in which various high-ranking politicians and bureaucrats from Chhattisgarh are alleged to have been involved.

These include movable assets - investment made by Mauritius-based company Tano Investment Opportunities Fund related to Dubai-based "hawala operator" Hari Shankar Tibrewal through FPI and FDI - and properties in Chhattisgarh, Mumbai and Madhya Pradesh in the name of promoters of multiple betting apps and websites, panel operators and associates of the promoters, the federal agency said in a statement.

A provisional order was issued under the Prevention



of Money Laundering Act (PMLA) on December 5 to attach these assets with a total value of Rs 387.99 crore, the Enforcement Directorate (ED) said.

Tibrewal is being investigated by the agency in this case.

The ED has issued multiple such orders during this investigation and with the latest order, assets worth Rs 2,295.61 crore have been either frozen, attached or seized so far.

Eleven people have been arrested in this case and the ED has filed four chargesheets. The agency has alleged in the

Rajnath Singh to visit Russia on Sunday, witness commissioning of Indian naval warship

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

Defence Minister Rajnath Singh will embark on a three-day trip to Russia on Sunday to witness the commissioning of a stealth warship into the Indian Navy and hold talks with his Russian counterpart Andrey Belousov on the expansion of bilateral cooperation in co-production of military hardware.

The Russian-manufactured multi-role stealth guided missile frigate INS Tushil will be commissioned on Monday in the coastal city of Kaliningrad. The warship, billed as one of the most technologically advanced frigates globally, is expected to significantly bolster the Indian Navy's operational capability in the Indian Ocean, a region that has witnessed increasing Chinese forays. Chief of the Naval Staff Admiral Dinesh K Tripathi

will accompany Singh to the commissioning ceremony. Defence Minister Singh will pay an official visit to the Russian Federation from December 8 to 10, an official readout said on Saturday.

It said Singh and Belousov will co-chair the 21st meeting of the India-Russia Inter-Governmental Commission on Military and Military Technical Cooperation (IRIGC-M&MTC) in Moscow on December 10.

The defence minister's visit to Russia comes five months after Prime Minister Narendra Modi travelled to Moscow and held summit talks with Russian President Vladimir Putin. In the talks, both sides decided to further bolster two-way defence ties.

Singh and Belousov will review the entire range of multi-faceted relations between the two countries in the field of defence, including military-to-military and

Union Health Ministry determines compensation for patients with faulty Johnson & Johnson implants

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

Giving a ray of hope to patients who received faulty implants manufactured by DePuy International Limited (now Johnson & Johnson Private Limited) in India, the Union Health Ministry has reconstituted a central panel of experts to determine the compensation for affected individuals.

A recent public notice issued by the Drugs Controller General of India (DCGI) informed the public about the reconstitution of this committee.

"The central expert committee is reconstituted under the chairmanship of Dr Ajay Kumar Shukla, Professor of Orthopaedics, RML Hospital (New Delhi), to determine the quantum of

CISF sets up Quality Control Unit to enhance aviation security



PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

CISF has set up a quality control unit to "enhance" the "operational efficiency" of its aviation security wing that provides a counter-terrorist cover to 68 civil airports of the country.

An spokesperson for the paramilitary force said on Saturday that the Internal Quality Control Unit (IQCU) will play a "crucial" role in

establishing "world-class" security procedures and technology for the airports that are used by lakhs of domestic and international passengers every day.

The initiative is in compliance with the National Civil Aviation Security Quality Control Programme (NCASQCP) of 2024 issued by the Bureau of Civil Aviation Security (BCAS) and the Aircraft (Security) Rules of 2023, he said.

The BCAS, under the civil aviation ministry, frames security policies for the Indian civil aviation sector. The new unit will bring about uniformity in civil aviation security procedures and training, recommend new technology available world over, allow internal audits of CISF security units and their protocols and identify "gaps" for improvement.

The unit will be part of CISF's Aviation Security Control Center (ASCC) - located in the national capital - which works as a centralised base for coordinating security at all 68 civil airports that are under the security ambit of the force.

The latest system will also cover the airports that come under Regional Connectivity Scheme (UDAAN), the spokesperson said.

"The IQCU will be led by a senior CISF officer and a team of certified aviation security instructors will run it," he said.

The about 1.80 lakh people-strong Central Industrial Security Force, under the Union home ministry, is the national civil aviation security force and it has deployed around 50,000 personnel to guard the 68 airports.

Maharashtra opposition stages walkout over EVM manipulation allegations

T N RAGHUNATHA ■ MUMBAI

Still to recover from a shocking defeat in the recent Maharashtra Assembly polls, the Opposition Maha Vikas Aghadi (MVA) on Saturday staged a walkout from the Maharashtra Legislative Assembly during the first day of the oath-taking ceremony, alleging that the BJP-led MahaYuti registered a landslide victory in the Assembly polls because of the manipulation of Electronic Voting Machines (EVMs).

However, the MLAs belonging to the MVA - comprising the Congress, Shiv Sena (UBT) and NCP (SP) may take oath on Sunday, the second and final day of the oath-taking ceremony. While the MVA MLAs staged a walk out en masse from the State Assembly, two MLAs belonging to the Akhilesh Yadav-led Samajwadi Party took oath. The three MVA constituents collectively account for 46 MLAs in a 288-member State Assembly as against the combined strength of the ruling MahaYuti - comprising BJP, Shiv Sena (ES) and NCP (Ajit Pawar) of 235 in the House. After staging a walkout from the House, the MVA leaders gathered near the statue of Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj and explained their stage a walk from the State Assembly.

Talking to media persons, state Congress President and senior party MLA Nana Patole said: "Despite the BJP alliance forming the government after the state assembly elections, the public sentiment is that this government does not reflect their votes. It is not a government of the people's mandate. The sentiment of the people in Maharashtra mirrors that of the majority in the state. Respecting public opinion, members of the Mahavikas Aghadi (MVA) have decided not to take their oath today." "We boycotted the oath-taking ceremony as democracy is being murdered

by the use of EVMs. This is not the mandate of the public, it is the mandate of EVM and the Election Commission of India," said Shiv Sena (UBT) MLA Aaditya Thackeray, who is the leader of the legislature party. Meanwhile, pro-tem Speaker Kalidas Kolambkar - who is administering oath to the newly elected members - administered oath to a majority of 235 ruling MVA members on Saturday. He will complete the administration of oath-taking to rest of the new members on Sunday.

On Monday, there will be election to the post of Speaker of the Legislative Assembly, which is a mere formality considering the small strength of the Opposition.

This is for the first time in the history of Maharashtra, that there would not be a Leader of the Opposition (LoP) in the State Assembly.

The Opposition MVA - comprising Congress, Shiv Sena (UBT) and NCP (Sharad Pawar) - put up a pathetic performance by winning a meagre 46 seats. While the Shiv Sena (UBT) secured 20 seats, the Congress and NCP (SP) won 16 and 10 seats respectively. Such was the rout of the MVA in the polls that there will be no Leader of the Opposition (LoP) in the State Assembly. Because, none of the MVA constituents - Congress, Shiv Sena (UBT) and NCP (Sharad Pawar) - has won 10 per cent of the total 288 seats in the House to stake a claim for the LoP's post. In view of the fact that none of the Opposition parties - including Congress, Shiv Sena (UBT) and NCP (SP) - managed to get even ten per cent of the total 288 seats, Fadnavis was earlier asked if there will be a leader of the Opposition in the State Assembly. "We will treat the Opposition with respect. As far as LoP is concerned, it is a decision to be taken by the Speaker," the chief minister said.

Health Minister JP Nadda launches 100-day TB elimination campaign



PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI/CHANDIGARH

Health Minister J P Nadda on Saturday said the rate of decline of tuberculosis incidence in India has doubled since 2015 and is ahead of the global average.

Nadda said this while inaugurating a nationwide campaign in Haryana's Panchkula to reduce such cases and mortality due to it. The 100-day TB elimination campaign will be implemented in 347 districts of 33 states where the prevalence of the disease is higher.

The campaign is focused on enhancing detection, reducing diagnostic delays and improving treatment outcomes.

"Under this programme, we have taken detection, tests, treatment and supportive strategies forward in an accelerated way. I feel this 100-day programme will prove to be a milestone in making a 'TB-mukt Bharat' and it will have a far-reaching impact," Nadda said.

The Union health minister highlighted the country's long struggle in its fight against tuberculosis, saying that at one time TB meant a 'slow death'.

"Even family members

suffering from TB were isolated to prevent its spread. Since 1962, there have been many campaigns against tuberculosis, but in 2018 the prime minister put forth a vision to end TB much before the 2030 deadline of the Sustainable Development Goals." "We changed strategies to achieve the aim. Services have been decentralised and now, 1,73,000 AAMs (Ayushman Arogya Mandirs) will have the facilities to detect and treat tuberculosis," the Union health minister said.

He also informed the gathering that molecular technologies have been introduced for TB detection. Also, a new and shorter regimen of tuberculosis treatment has been started which will help increase compliance and fight TB, he said.

In 2014, there were 120 laboratories for TB detection and their number has now reached 8,293, said Nadda.

He highlighted that the rate of tuberculosis incidence decline in India has doubled from 8.3 per cent in 2015 to 17.7 per cent now, which is much ahead of the global average.

Deaths due to tuberculosis have also reduced significantly in India by 21.4 per cent in the last 10 years, he said.

"Ni-kshay support worth Rs 3,338 crore has been provided through direct benefit transfer to over 1.17 crore tuberculosis patients," the minister said and underscored the government has increased Ni-kshay poshan amount recently from Rs 500 to Rs 1,000 and added energy boosters for the nourishment support for TB patients.

Ni-kshay Poshan is not only a policy decision, this is a financial commitment for people in the health sector to eliminate TB, he said.

Nadda said the government has now made it mandatory for even private practitioners to notify any new tuberculosis patient so that their treatment can be followed up immediately.

"This might look like a small step but it has led to an eight-fold increase in the rate of TB notifications in the private sector," Nadda said.

73 complaints against obscene ads on private TV channels addressed: Govt tells Parliament



PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

Seventy-three complaints have been received against obscene and vulgar advertisements on private television channels by the regulatory bodies over the past three years, the government has told parliament.

In a written reply in the Rajya Sabha, Minister of State for Information and Broadcasting L. Murugan said the complaints were "suitably" addressed by a three-level grievance redress system. Murugan said the mechanism, established under the Cable Television Networks (Amendment) Rules, includes self-regulation by broadcasters, self-regulation by self-regulating bodies of the broadcasters, and an oversight mechanism of the central government.

The minister said appropriate

action is taken wherever violation of the Advertising Code is found by issuance of "Advisories, Warnings, 'Apology Scroll' Orders and Off-air orders."

In reply to a separate question, Murugan said OTT platforms are required to adhere to the Code of Ethics under Part-III of the IT (Intermediary Guidelines and Digital Media Ethics Code) Rules, 2021.

"These codes are self-regulatory in nature," the minister said.

Murugan said these Code of Ethics require the publishers not to transmit any content which is prohibited by law and to undertake age-based self-classification of content into five categories, based on general guidelines provided in the Rules.

The guidelines provide that while undertaking such self-classification, the context of the period depicted in such content and the contemporary standards of the country and people to which such content relate, are to be kept in mind, he said. Murugan said the Code also provides that the OTT platforms will put in place adequate safeguard for restricting age inappropriate content for children.

Opposition Christian MPs urge Church body to support Muslims on Waqf issue

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Christian community should take an in-principle stand on the Waqf Bill as it affects minority rights enshrined in the Constitution, Christian MPs are learnt to have told the Catholic Bishops' Conference of India (CBCI) at a meeting in the national capital.

CBCI, the apex body of Catholics in India, called a meeting on December 3 of all Christian MPs.

The meeting was attended by around 20 MPs, most of them from opposition

parties. TMC's parliamentary party leader Derek O'Brien, Congress MPs Hibi Eden, Dean Kuriakose, Anto Antony, and CPI (M) MP John Brittas were among the MPs who attended the meeting, while union Minister of State George Kurian joined later, a source who was present at the meeting told PTI. CBCI president Archbishop Andrews chaired the meeting, the first such held in decades.

The meeting's agenda included the role of Christian MPs in

supporting and protecting the community and its rights, increasing attacks and threats against minorities, especially Christians, and misuse of FCRA to target Christian institutions. The source said a senior opposition MP suggested that the community leadership should also highlight "positive points, the important role being played by the community today" and "not just be only reactive to negative news." A suggestion made was to convey to the government

and the public that three out of four students in Christian institutions, were in fact from different communities. One MP said that there is a need to put a stop to "photo ops," and stressed that the Christian leadership should take a stand to "call out those who are not protecting the Constitution." Another MP who attended the meeting confirmed that multiple opposition MPs raised strong objections to certain provisions of The Waqf (Amendment) Bill, now under the consideration of

the Joint Parliamentary Committee (JPC). The Bill, among other things, changes the composition of the Central Waqf Council and Waqf Boards to include non-Muslim members. Another MP from Kerala told PTI that the issue of seats for Anglo Indians (all Christians) in Lok Sabha and 10 state assemblies being abolished was also raised, and Foreign Contribution Regulation Act (FCRA) licences of some Christian organisations being targeted

and cancelled in recent years was also brought up. "The meeting was held in a cordial atmosphere but the MPs sharply criticised the church leadership's handling of its relationship with the government since 2014. One MP even suggested it was getting 'transactional', a leader who attended the meeting told PTI. By the time, Kurien, a BJP leader and Union minister, came most opposition MPs were done speaking, the source said. Two BJP MPs, both Christians, were absent.

President Murmu lays foundation for six projects in Odisha

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ BANGRIPOSI (ODISHA)

President Droupadi Murmu on Saturday laid the foundation for six projects in Odisha, including three new railway lines, worth a total of Rs 6,400 crore. Bangriposi-Goramahisani, Buramara-Chakulia and Badampahar-Keonjhar are the railway lines for which the foundation stones were laid by Murmu in the presence of Odisha Chief Minister Mohan Charan Majhi, Railway Minister Ashwini Vaishnav and Union Tribal Affairs Minister Jual Oram, among others.

The President also virtually laid the foundation for three other projects in Rairangpur - Tribal Research and Development Centre,



Dandbose Airport and a sub-divisional hospital. Addressing a gathering on the occasion, the President expressed confidence that the rail projects and the airport would boost transportation, commerce, and business in the region.

The new 100-bed hospital would provide better health facilities to the locals, she said. Noting that Odisha is getting benefitted from the 'Purvodaya' vision of the central government, the President said development of the entire region is getting

accelerated through various welfare schemes on education, skill development, health, tourism and transportation. Murmu said that Eklavya Model Residential Schools are being established for tribal children. She said

more than 100 new Eklavya Model Residential Schools are being established in Odisha, including 23 in Mayurbhanj district. She expressed confidence that after getting education from these schools, tribal children would be able to contribute towards the progress of society and the country. According to railway sources, the 82-km Badampahar-Kendujhar line will pass through Mayurbhanj and Keonjhar districts. The project will be developed at an estimated cost of Rs 2,106 crore. The 86-km-long Bangriposi-Goramahisani line will be built at an expenditure of Rs 2,549 crore. It will facilitate the movement of passengers and freight and contribute to

the economic growth of Mayurbhanj district, they said. Similarly, the 60-km Buramara-Chakulia line, connecting Mayurbhanj district with Jharkhand's East Singhbhum district, will be built at a cost of Rs 1,639 crore. The new rail line will improve access between these mineral-rich areas and boost the local economy by enhancing the transportation of goods, particularly for the industrial sector. Murmu on Saturday ended her five-day tour of Odisha during which she attended a series of events including the Indian Navy Day celebration at Blue Flag Beach in Puri on December 4 and Ouat's 40th convocation in Bhubaneswar on December 5.

Broken protocol, undertaken several tours of native Mayurbhanj: Murmu

PNS ■ ODISHA



President Droupadi Murmu said she has broken the protocol and undertaken several tours of Odisha and her native Mayurbhanj district in order to speed up development work. "Generally, there is no provision of visiting own state and district as the President. However, I broke the protocol and came down here frequently because of the difficulties faced by the people of this area. Keeping in view the requirements of this area, I do whatever is possible

on my part," Murmu said. Noting that the love and affection of the people have drawn her to the place, Murmu said she always remains concerned about the development of her native place despite being busy with important work.

Assam CM Himanta expands his Cabinet

PNS ■ GUWAHATI

Assam Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma on Saturday expanded his cabinet with four BJP MLAs sworn in as ministers. Governor Laxman Prasad Acharya administered the oath of office to the four new ministers - Prasanta Phookan, Kaushik Rai, Krishnendu Paul, and Rupesh Goala at the Srimanta Sankardeva Kalakshetra here. The chief minister and members of his cabinet were present on the occasion. Phukan is a four-time MLA from Dibrugarh, Paul a two-time MLA from Patharkandi while Rai and Goala are first-time MLAs from Lakhimpur and Doom Dooma respectively. Phukan and Goala represent the Upper Assam tea districts of Dibrugarh and Tinsukia respectively while Paul and Rai are from the two Barak Valley districts of Sribhumi (formerly Karimganj) and



Cachar. Sarma now heads a 19-member council of ministers. Tea Welfare and Labour minister Sanjay Kishan, who represents the Tinsukia constituency, resigned from office on Thursday, to pave the way

for Goala with both representing the tea tribe community. Kishan has since been appointed as the Chairman of the Assam Food and Civil Supplies department. Parimal Suklabaidya had resigned from the Himanta

Biswa Sarma cabinet after he was elected to the Lok Sabha from Silchar (SC) constituency earlier this year. All the new ministers thanked the chief minister for including them in his ministry. They also pledged to serve the people and work

for the development of the state. The ministers are yet to be allocated their portfolios with the chief minister likely to reshuffle and redistribute the departments among the 19 ministers by Saturday evening. The newly sworn-in ministers will attend their first cabinet meeting later tonight. Sarma heads the NDA alliance government in the state with two Asom Gana Parishad (AGP) ministers Atul Bora and Keshav Mahanta and United Peoples' Party, Liberal (UPPL) U G Brahma members of his cabinet. The ruling NDA has 84 members in the 126-member state assembly. The chief minister and 14 other ministers were sworn in on May 10, 2021. Sarma expanded his ministry on June 9, 2022, with the induction of two BJP legislators Nandita Garlosa and Jayanta Malla Baruah as ministers.

Rock bolt technology successfully treating active landslide zones: BRO

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ UTTARKASHI



Border Roads Organisation (BRO) on Saturday said the rock bolt technology is successfully treating active landslide zones in the hilly areas of Uttarakhand where landslides occur almost regularly in the hill areas of the State, especially during the monsoon season, blocking roads and causing inconvenience to Chardham pilgrims, and often claiming lives. Active landslide zones on Gangotri and Yamunotri highways have been a major issue for the Chardham pilgrims as well as the local people for years, the official said. The Australian rock bolt technology involves removing loose landslide debris by soil nailing in soil and rock bolting in bedrock, BRO Commander Vivek Srivastava said. It is being used at present in

the treatment of active landslide zones in Raturisera and Bandarkot on Gangotri highway in Uttarkashi district, he said. The technology was used earlier too in the treatment of Nalupani and Chungi Badethi landslide zones which had long been active along the highway and the good results at the two points encouraged authorities to apply it elsewhere too, he said. The technology is 90 per cent effective in preventing landslides, the BRO official

said. In the widening work done under the Chardham road project, landslide zones active for years have been treated successfully with this technology. The same technique is now being used in Raturisera and Bandarkot, he said. The official said that Rs 19.8 crore is being spent on this work in Raturisera and Rs 9.3 crore in Bandarkot. The target is to complete landslide treatment work at both places using the technology by March next year, he said.

Eight-fold rise in per capita income needs to be achieved to realise goal of Viksit Bharat by 2047: Dhankhar

PNS ■ PATNA/MOTIHARI

Vice President Jagdeep Dhankhar on Saturday asserted that an eight-fold rise in per capita income needs to be achieved to realise the goal of "Viksit Bharat" (developed India) by the year 2047. Addressing the second convocation ceremony of Mahatma Gandhi Central University in Bihar's Motihari, Dhankhar also expressed hope that the country, which was currently the "fifth largest economy" in the world, would "soon leave Germany and Japan behind". Lavishing praise on the Narendra Modi government at the Centre, without taking any names, Dhankhar said, "The last 10 years have been marked by eradication of a culture of corruption and middlemen seem to have been eliminated. The world looks at us with surprise as we keep marching towards getting our due place on the global stage. We are the fifth largest economy as of now but



things are looking up and soon we will leave Germany and Japan behind." "The onus is on young people like the students present here. We must strive to raise the per capita income to eight times of what it is today. This would require our youth to make sacrifices." Dhankhar also spoke of the progress made in Bihar under the Chief Ministership of Nitish Kumar, who was not present on the occasion. Without mentioning the JD(U) supremo by name, the

Vice President said, "I was an MP when your current CM was a Union minister. So much has been achieved in the state under his stewardship. He has drawn lessons from our past in which we saw grim episodes like the country's gold reserves being pledged". The allusion was to the Prime Ministership of late Chandra Shekhar in 1990 when, in the wake of a severe financial crisis, the Reserve Bank of India had to pledge several tonnes of gold with foreign banks to raise loans. Earlier, the Vice President planted a sapling in memory of his deceased mother as part of "Ek Ped Maa Ke Naam (One tree for mother)" drive. At the convocation ceremony, he said, "People must not be sceptical of the impact their individual efforts could have. Consider this Ek Ped Maa Ke Naam campaign and imagine how much difference it could make to our environment if all 140 crore people plant just one sapling each".

that day," said the 74-year-old Vice President, adding: "The onus is on young people like the students present here. We must strive to raise the per capita income to eight times of what it is today. This would require our youth to make sacrifices." Dhankhar also spoke of the progress made in Bihar under the Chief Ministership of Nitish Kumar, who was not present on the occasion. Without mentioning the JD(U) supremo by name, the

SP quits MVA alliance in Maharashtra

T N RAGHUNATHA ■ MUMBAI

In an expected fallout of the United Opposition front's debacle in the recent Maharashtra Assembly polls, the Samajwadi Party (SP) walks out of the Congress-led Maha Vikas Aghadi (MVA) citing many reasons, including lack of coordination among the coalition partners on seat-sharing issues and the Uddhav Thackeray-led Shiv Sena (UBT)'s stand on the Babri Masjid demolition. Announcing his party's decision to quit the MVA, State SP President Abu Azmi said that there was absolutely no co-ordination between his party and the MVA constituents on the seat-sharing process and there were also differences on various issues during the electioneering. "There was absolutely no co-ordination between my party and the main MVA constituents during the seat-sharing process as well as campaigning.. They never called us for meetings or joint



rallies. They used to avoid sharing each other's campaign platforms and all this resulted in the MVA parties' massive debacle in the Assembly polls," Azmi said. The SP, which had sought 12 seats from the MVA, contested six seats in the State Assembly polls and bagged two. While Azmi himself won from Mankhurd-Shivajinagar (Mumbai), Rais Kasam Shaikh romped home Bhiwand East in Thane district. "Shiv Sena (UBT) chief Uddhav Thackeray, at an

internal meeting, told party colleagues and workers to aggressively pursue the Hindutva agenda (ahead of the civic polls). On December 6, the party posted a message on social media in favour of Babri mosque demolition. How can this be tolerated?" Azmi asked. One of the main reasons for the SP's exit from the MVA is a post put out on micro-blogging site "X" by Uddhav's personal assistant and MLC Milind Narvekar, hailing the demolition of the Babri Masjid. The post carried

photographs of late Shiv Sena founder Balasaheb Thackeray, former Maharashtra Chief Minister and MLC Uddhav Thackeray and his son Aaditya Thackeray, who is an MLC from Worli in Mumbai. "Yesterday, (Dec. 6), a SS (UBT) leader posted a social media message claiming credit for the (undivided) party on the razing of the Babri Mosque demolition (1993). How can we tolerate this?" Azmi asked. "Such posts hurt our sentiments and go against the values of unity and respect for all communities. We are here to promote harmony, not divide people," Azmi said. Azmi made it clear that the SP stood for secular values, saving democracy and the Constitution, and hence it would not side with any party adopting such a communal approach. Asked if his party's decision to quit the MVA would affect the status of the SP national party chief Akhilesh Yadav vis-à-vis his equations with INDIA block, Azmi was non-committal.

Mayawati hits out at SP, Congress for 'exploiting' Sambhal violence for political gain

BISWAJEET BANERJEE ■ LUCKNOW

Bahujan Samaj Party (BSP) Chief Mayawati on Saturday lashed out at the opposition parties, accusing the Samajwadi Party (SP) and Congress of using the recent violence in Sambhal for political gains. She alleged that instead of raising public welfare issues in Parliament, the opposition was focused on manipulating Muslim voters by creating divisions within the community. Speaking at a press conference in Lucknow, Mayawati claimed, "The SP and Congress are not concerned about national issues. They are using the Sambhal violence as a political tool to serve their vested interests. They are even trying to create a divide between Turk and non-Turk Muslims." She urged the



Muslim community to be wary of such political tactics. The BSP supremo also took aim at Dalit MPs from various political parties, accusing them of remaining silent on issues concerning caste oppression to please their political bosses. She highlighted the plight of Hindu minorities, especially Dalits, in Bangladesh, alleging that they face widespread atrocities. "Despite being elected by the Dalit community, many MPs stay quiet on such issues. Whether it is the oppression of Dalits in

India or the persecution of Hindu minorities in Bangladesh, they have failed to raise their voices," she said. Mayawati linked the historical oppression of Dalits to what she called Congress's "casteist conspiracy" during India's Partition. She alleged that Hindu-majority areas like Jessore and Khulna, from where Dr. B.R. Ambedkar was elected to the Constituent Assembly, were deliberately handed over to Pakistan, forcing Ambedkar to resign and return to India. Demanding urgent action, Mayawati urged the BJP-led central government to facilitate the return of persecuted Dalits and Hindus from Bangladesh. She warned that if the government failed to do so, the BSP would see no difference between the BJP and Congress on the issue of Dalit welfare.

If country is secure, 'religion is safe': Yogi

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ VARANASI

Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath on Saturday said if the country is secure, then "religion is safe" which will ensure that "we also are safe". He stressed that "Bharatiyata (Indianness) and Sanatan have the power to unite everyone". Adityanath was speaking at the centenary celebration of the establishment of Vihangam Yog Sant Samaj held at Swarved Mahamandir Dham, the UP government said in a statement. Praising the contributions of Sadhguru Sadafal Dev Maharaj, who founded the Vihangam Yog Sant Samaj, the chief minister said he told the world that a true yogi cannot sit idle looking at the conditions of the country and society. Adityanath emphasised



Prime Minister Narendra Modi's belief that all work should be done while prioritising the country's interest and urged everyone to rise above individual, societal, sectarian and religious boundaries. "If the country is safe then religion is also safe. If religion is safe then we are also safe," Adityanath said while advocating actions that conform with India's Vedic-

spiritual tradition and the values of Sanatan Dharma. The chief minister also spoke about the development works undertaken in Prime Minister Modi's parliamentary constituency Varanasi in the last 10 years. "Be it health or education, Kashi is shining today in various aspects of development and along with Kashi, the entire UP is moving ahead under the guidance of PM Modi. Now

we are seeing the vision of 'Ek Bharat-Shreshtha Bharat', where there is development as well as respect for heritage," he said. "If we get good leadership, the results are pleasant. Today, there is respect for heritage and also a big campaign for public welfare through development," he said. He credited Modi for taking the tradition of Yoga to the global stage. "People in more than 175 countries are associated with Yoga. Whenever Yoga will be discussed, it will inspire a feeling of reverence towards the sages of India in the minds of citizens across the world," Adityanath said. He noted that due to the prime minister's efforts, UNESCO recognised Maha Kumbh as an intangible cultural heritage of humanity in 2017. The UP chief minister paid tributes to Sadhguru Sadafal Dev

Maharaj, who was born in a small village in Ballia in 1888 and founded the Vihangam Yog Sant Samaj in 1924. "Vihangam Yog Sant Samaj is determined to connect crores of devotees through its efforts by building a divine and grand temple through Swarved Mahamandir Trust, as well as to take India's yoga tradition and spiritual flow to the people," he said. "Maharaj took the spiritual campaign forward and also stated that a true yogi-saint cannot sit idle looking at the conditions of the country and society. "When the country was bound by the shackles of slavery, Sadhguru Sadafal Dev Ji Maharaj, with his spiritual practice, participated in the freedom movement to free the country from foreign slavery and associated himself with the call of the country's first freedom struggle from Barrackpore," he said.

South Korean President Yoon's impeachment fails

Ruling party boycotts vote, public protest likely to intensify

AP ■ SEOUL

A South Korean legislative push to impeach President Yoon Suk Yeol over his short-lived imposition of martial law fell through on Saturday after most lawmakers from his conservative governing party boycotted the vote. The defeat of the motion is expected to intensify public protests calling for Yoon's ouster and deepen political chaos in South Korea, with a survey suggesting a majority of South Koreans support the president's impeachment. Yoon's martial law declaration drew criticism from his own ruling conservative party, but it is also determined to oppose Yoon's impeachment apparently because it fears losing the presidency to liberals. Impeaching Yoon required support from two-thirds of the National Assembly, or 200 of its 300 members. The opposition parties who brought the impeachment motion had 192 seats, but only three lawmakers from PPP participated in the vote. The motion was scrapped without ballot counting because the number of votes didn't reach 200. National Assembly Speaker Woo Won Shik called the result "very regrettable" and an embarrassing moment for the country's democracy that has

been closely watched by the world. "The failure to hold a qualified vote on this matter means we were not even able to exercise the democratic procedure of deciding on a critical national issue," he said. Opposition parties could submit a new impeachment motion after a new parliamentary session opens next Wednesday. There are worries that Yoon won't be able to serve out his remaining 2 1/2 years in office because his leadership took a huge hit. Many experts say some ruling party lawmakers could eventually join opposition parties' efforts to impeach Yoon if public demands for it grow further. If Yoon is impeached, his powers will be suspended until the Constitutional Court decides whether to remove him from office. If he is removed, an election to replace him must take place within 60 days. Woo repeatedly urged ruling party members to return to the chamber to participate in the vote, waiting several hours for them to come. At one point, Democratic Party leaders visited a hall on the floor below the main chamber where PPP lawmakers were gathered, attempting to persuade them to vote. After being blocked from entering, they angrily accused the conserva-

tives' leadership of preventing its lawmakers from voting freely. Earlier Saturday, Yoon issued a public apology over the martial law decree, saying he won't shirk legal or political responsibility for the declaration and promising not to make another attempt to impose martial law. He said would leave it to his party to chart a course through the country's political turmoil, "including matters related to my term in office." "The declaration of this martial law was made out of my desperation. But in the course of its implementation, it caused anxiety and inconveniences to the public. I feel very sorry over that and truly apologise to the people who must have been shocked a lot," Yoon said. Since taking office in 2022, Yoon has struggled to push his agenda through an opposition-controlled parliament and grappled with low approval ratings amid scandals involving himself and his wife. In his martial law announcement on Tuesday night, Yoon called parliament a "den of criminals" bogging down state affairs and vowed to eliminate "shameless North Korea followers and anti-state forces." The turmoil resulting from Yoon's bizarre and poorly-thought-out stunt has paralysed South Korean politics and

sparked alarm among key diplomatic partners like the US and Japan. Tuesday night saw special forces troops encircling the parliament building and army helicopters hovering over it, but the military withdrew after the National Assembly unanimously voted to overturn the decree, forcing Yoon to lift it before daybreak Wednesday. The declaration of martial law was the first of its kind in more than 40 years in South Korea. Eighteen lawmakers from the ruling party voted to reject Yoon's martial law decree along with opposition lawmakers. Yoon's speech fuelled speculation that he and his party may push for a constitutional amendment to shorten his term, instead of accepting impeachment, as a way to ease public anger over the martial law and facilitate Yoon's early exit from office. Lee Jae-myung, the leader of the main liberal opposition Democratic Party, told reporters that Yoon's speech was "greatly disappointing" and that the only way forward is his immediate resignation or impeachment. His party called Yoon's martial law "unconstitutional, illegal rebellion or coup." The passage of Yoon's impeachment motion appeared more likely Friday when the chair of Yoon's party called for his



South Korea's main opposition Democratic Party leader Lee Jae-myung, bottom centre, and his party members stage a rally to denounce President Yoon Suk Yeol's apology over Tuesday's martial law declaration at the National Assembly in Seoul on Saturday. The signs read, 'Punish'.

removal on Friday, but the party remained formally opposed to impeachment. On Saturday, tens of thousands of people densely packed several blocks of roads leading up to the National Assembly, waving banners, shouting slogans and dancing and singing along to K-pop songs with lyrics changed to call for Yoon's ouster. Protesters also gathered in front of PPP's headquarters near the Assembly, angrily shouting for its lawmakers to vote to impeach Yoon. A smaller crowd of Yoon's supporters, which still seemed to be in the thousands, rallied in

separate streets in Seoul, decrying the impeachment attempt they saw as unconstitutional. Lawmakers on Saturday first voted on a bill appointing a special prosecutor to investigate stock price manipulation allegations surrounding Yoon's wife. Some lawmakers from Yoon's party were seen leaving the hall after that vote, triggering angry shouts from opposition lawmakers. On Friday, PPP chair Han Dong-hun, who criticised Yoon's martial law declaration, said he had received intelligence that during the brief period of martial law Yoon

ordered the country's defence counterintelligence commander to arrest and detain unspecified key politicians based on accusations of "anti-state activities." Hong Jang-won, first deputy director of South Korea's National Intelligence Service, told lawmakers in a closed-door briefing Friday that Yoon had ordered him to help the defence counterintelligence unit to detain key politicians. The targeted politicians included Han, Lee and Woo, according to Kim Byung-kee, one of the lawmakers who attended the meeting.

The Defence Ministry said Friday it suspended three military commanders including the head of the defence counterintelligence unit over their involvement in enforcing martial law. Vice Defence Minister Kim Seon Ho has told parliament that Defence Minister Kim Yong Hyun ordered the deployment of troops to the National Assembly after Yoon imposed martial law. Opposition parties accused Kim of recommending to Yoon to enforce martial law. Kim resigned Thursday, and prosecutors imposed an overseas travel ban on him.

Syrian troops rush to defend Homs

AP ■ BEIRUT

The Syrian army withdrew from much of southern Syria on Saturday, leaving more areas of the country, including two provincial capitals, under the control of opposition fighters, the military and an opposition war monitor said. The redeployment away from the provinces of Daraa and

Swaida came as Syria's military swell large numbers of reinforcements to defend the key central city of Homs, Syria's third largest, as insurgents approached its outskirts. The rapid advances by insurgents is a stunning reversal of fortunes for Syria's President Bashar Assad, who appears to be largely on his own, with erstwhile allies preoccupied with their own conflicts. His chief international backer, Russia, is busy with its war in

Ukraine, and Lebanon's powerful Hezbollah, which at one point sent thousands of fighters to shore up his forces, has been weakened by a year-long conflict with Israel. Iran, meanwhile, has seen its proxies across the region degraded by Israeli regular airstrikes. Rami Abdurrahman, who heads the Syrian Observatory for Human Rights, a Syria war monitor, reported Saturday that Iran's military advisers

have started leaving Syria. He added that Iran-backed fighters in eastern Syria, mainly from Afghanistan and Pakistan, have withdrawn into central Syria. The shock offensive began November 27 led by the jihadi Hayat Tahrir al-Sham group, or HTS, during which gunmen captured the northern city of Aleppo, Syria's largest, and the central city of Hama, the country's fourth largest city. The group has its origins in al-Qaida and is considered a terrorist organisation by the US and the United Nations. HTS leader Abu Mohammed al-Golani told CNN in an exclusive interview Thursday from Syria that the aim of the offensive is to overthrow Assad's government. The Britain-based Observatory said Syrian troops have withdrawn from much of the two southern provinces and are

sending reinforcements to Homs, where a battle is looming. If the insurgents capture Homs, they would cut the link between Damascus, Assad's seat of power, and the coastal region where the president enjoys wide support. The Syrian army said in a statement Saturday that it has carried out redeployment and repositioning in Swaida and Daraa after its checkpoints came under attack by "terrorists." The army said it is setting up a "strong and coherent defensive and security belt in the area," apparently to defend Damascus from the south. Since Syria's conflict broke out in March 2011, the Syrian government has been referring to opposition gunmen as terrorists. In the gas-rich nation of Qatar, the foreign ministers of Iran, Russia and Turkey were scheduled to meet to discuss the situation in Syria. Turkey is a main backer of the rebels seeking to overthrow Assad.

Road mishap in Ivory Coast leaves 26 dead

AP ■ ABIDJAN (IVORY COAST)

A fiery crash involving two minibuses in Ivory Coast on Friday killed at least 26 people and injured 28 more, authorities said. The two vehicles collided in Brokova, a village in the centre west of the country, the transportation ministry said in a statement without providing further details. However, the statement said an investigation was launched. Ten of the 26 killed died in a fire that followed the collision, according to the ministry. Videos from the scene from local media outlets showed the two vehicles in flames. "The Minister of Transport invites, once again, all road users to be more vigilant in road traffic, by respecting traffic regulations," the statement read. Accidents are common in the west African country due to dilapidated roads and reckless driving, killing over 1,000 people annually, according to the ministry. Last month, 21 people were killed and at least 10 others injured in a road accident. Earlier this year, a tanker truck crashed into a bus in northern Ivory Coast, leaving 13 people dead and injuring 44.

Iran poised to raise stock of weapons-grade Uranium: IAEA chief

AP ■ MANAMA (BAHRAIN)

Iran is poised to "quite dramatically" increase its stockpile of near weapons-grade uranium as it has started cascades of advanced centrifuges, the head of the International Atomic Energy Agency warned Friday. The comments from Rafael Mariano Grossi came just hours after Iran said it conducted a successful space launch with its heaviest payload ever, the latest for its programme that the West alleges improves Tehran's ballistic missile programme. The launch of the Simorgh rocket comes as Iran's nuclear programme now enriches uranium at 60%, a short, technical step from weapons-grade levels of 90%. While Iran maintains its programme is peaceful, officials in the Islamic Republic increasingly threaten to potentially seek the bomb and an intercontinental ballistic missile that would allow Tehran to use the weapon against distant foes like the United States. The moves are likely to further raise tensions gripping the wider Middle East over Israel's continued war on Hamas in the Gaza Strip and an uneasy ceasefire holds in Lebanon. However, Iran may as well be preparing the ground for possible talks with the incoming administration of President-elect Donald Trump, who in his first term unilaterally withdrew America from Tehran's nuclear deal with world powers. The US intelligence community in a report released Thursday said that while "Iran is not building a nuclear weapon" it has "undertaken activities that better position it to produce one, if it so chooses." The Iranian debate over seeking the bomb "risks emboldening nuclear weapons advocates within Iran's decision-making apparatus and shifting the thinking of current and future Iranian elites about the utility of nuclear weapons," the report added.

PUBLIC NOTICE

Information is given to public in large that Mohammad Zahid who is/are purchasing the Plot bearing No. B-91, New No. B-91-A, area measuring 50 sq. Yds. Out of Kharsa no. 576, situated in the area of Village Bindapur, Delhi state, Delhi colony known as Partap Garden, Uttam Nagar, New Delhi-110059 from / through Harpreet Singh Ganga Ram Goyal & Shri. Rajesh Kumar Goyal S/o Shri. Aarti Chand who was the owner by virtue of Notarized GPA. ATS & Will dated 21.12.2021 and the subject property is going to be mortgaged by Aditya Birla Housing Finance Ltd. In Shri. Ram Prasad Chaurasia S/o Mr. Shiv Shankar Prasad, Mr. Naveen Kumar S/o Shri. Vinod Kumar & Mr. Mohit Kumar Gupta S/o Shri. Murali Lal & Mr. Manoj Kumar Jain S/o Shri. Ra. Kumar. Jain are alive and any person having any type of claim/right/interest over the said property is/are may inform undersigned within 07 days at below mentioned address.

NCR LAW ASSOCIATES
Advocates & Consultants
A-98, Sector-8, New Vajra Nagar, Ghaziabad, (U.P.)-201009

PUBLIC NOTICE

To be known to all: RAVINDER KUMAR MONGRA S/O SH. NARENDER KUMAR MONGRA R/O SFS FLAT NO.44-D, POKHRI-C, GANGOTRI ENCLAVE, ALAKANDA, NEW DELHI-110019 purchaser/owner of DDA SFS Flat No.44-D, Third Floor, Cat-II-Pocket-C, Gangotri Enclave, Alakanda, New Delhi-110019, have applied for certified copies & amp; freehold in DDA. The original documents i.e. DEMAND-DUM-ALLOTMENT LETTER of the above said flat has been lost. An LR No. 2950138/2024 dated 29/11/2024 to this effect has been lodged in P.S. Crime Branch, Delhi. Any person(s) claiming any right, interest, having any objection or found in possession of original documents, may write/contact with above named person at above address/Phone No. 9910497597 with in 15 days from the date of publication of this notice. The person claiming any right, interest, objection with respect to this property, can personally inform or write to Deputy Director (Housing) or Director (Housing), Delhi Development Authority, Vikas Sadan, New Delhi-110023.

PUBLIC NOTICE

It is informed to all concern that Sh. Kirli Kumar Maheshwari S/o Late Sh. Ram Charan Lal R/O 61 Navjeevan Vihar New Delhi-110017 is the owner of Plot No. A-25, Sector-56, Noida G. D. Nagar U.P. He has executed a Notarized Agreement to sell dated 09/07/2001 in favour of Sh. Harpal Singh S/O Late Sh. Rishal Singh R/O Village Khuram Pur P.O. Aterana, Dist. Sonapat Harayana and Smt. Puspita Lata D/O Late Sh. Tahar Singh R/O 2, Sector-22, Noida dated 09/07/2001 and Registered G.P.A. in favour of Smt. Puspita Lata D/O Late Sh. Tahar Singh R/O 2, Sector-22, Noida in Book No.-IV volume no. 311 on page no. 109 to 112. Document no. 762 Dated 09/07/2001 at Sub. Registrar (1), Noida. Now the said above Plot is going to be transferred through the said registered G.P.A. in favour of Sh. Shamant Singh S/O Sh. Baney Singh R/O A-55 Sector-59 Noida U.P. If anyone has any objection, he/she may file his/her objection along with the sufficient proof in the Residential Plot Department of Noida Authority, Sector 6 Noida within the 30 days from the date of publication of this notice.

SARASWATI COLLEGE OF EDUCATION SOCIETY®
R. K. GUPTA MARG, CHARKHI DADR1-127306

सूचना

सरस्वती कालेज ऑफ एजुकेशन सोसाइटी, चरखी ददरी के आजोवन सदस्यो को सूचित किया जाता है कि सोसाइटी को सदस्य सूची को सोसाइटी एक्ट 2012 के अनुसार पूर्ण करने हेतु आजोवन सदस्यो से पंजीकृत डाक के माध्यम से निर्धारित प्रपत्र में सूचना भर्कर मागो गई थी । लेकिन काफी सदस्यो की सूचना निर्धारित प्रपत्र के माध्यम से अभी तक उपलब्ध नहीं हुई है। इस संदर्भ में सोसाइटी की कार्यकारी को मीटिंग एवं सोसाइटी की आम सभा में भी सदस्य सूची को सोसाइटी एक्ट 2012 के अनुसार पूर्ण करने के संदर्भ में प्रस्ताव को अनुमोदित किया हुआ है। जिन सदस्यो ने अभी तक निर्धारित प्रपत्र के अनुसार सूचना नहीं दी है। उन सभी सदस्यो को सूचित किया जाता है कि सोसाइटी कार्यालय में संपर्क करे और अपना प्रपत्र भर्कर दिनांक 28-12-2024 तक जमा करवाए। अन्यथा आपको तब तक सोसाइटी के चुनाव में वोट डालने का अधिकार नहीं होगा जब तक आप अपनी सदस्यता को सूचना प्रपत्र में भर्कर सोसाइटी कार्यालय में जमा नहीं करवा देते है। इस संदर्भ में यदि आपको कोई जानकारी लेनी है तो आप सोसाइटी के महासचिव से मोबाइल एवं ईमेल के माध्यम से संपर्क कर सकते है संपर्क सूत्र 9812122440 व ईमेल-scoe75society@gmail.com

(राधेश्याम ऐन), अध्यक्ष (सूचना अग्रवाल), महासचिव

PUBLIC NOTICE

I, Mr. Shaheed Ahmed (Aadhar No. 9198-0907-9948) S/O Mr. Basheer Ahmed R/O F-400-A, Gai No. 15, Jawahar Park, Laxmi Nagar, Delhi-110092, in the above named document, do hereby solemnly affirm and inform that I have dis-owned my son Mr. Injar Ahmed, my daughter-in-law Mrs. Kausar and their children Mr. Ayan Ahmed and Ms. Altaba Beebi from my all moveable and immovable properties due to their mis-behave and non co-operative behavior towards me and other family members. I will not be responsible and/or have any liability of my son Mr. Injar Ahmed, my daughter-in-law Mrs. Kausar and their children Mr. Ayan Ahmed and Ms. Altaba Beebi.

Shaheed Ahmed

PUBLIC NOTICE

To be all know that Sh. Pramod Kumar Tyagi S/o Sh. Prakash Vir Shastri R/O W-53 Saket New Delhi-110017 that the original documents of House No. H-10307 at Saket, New Delhi-110017 have been lost/ misplaced the Demandum allotment letter. Handing over the possession letter and possession Slip An FIR/N.C.R.No-2376576/2024 dated 07/12/2024 has been lodged. Any person(s) claiming any right interest and having any objection or found the original documents may write/contact in Sh. Pramod Kumar Tyagi (M) No.971798710 within 15 days from the date of publication of this notice or can personally inform/ write Deputy Director (L.A., L.A-B (RESL.), DDA, C-2 Block, 3rd floor, Vikas Sadan IIA, New Delhi-110023.

PUBLIC NOTICE

Public notice is hereby given that my client DHRUV KABIR S/o MS. JYOTI KUMARI R/O Usha Sadan New Ulaq Colony, Ulaq Pkharina, Ulaq, Begusaraj, Bihar-851134 has rescinded all relations from his father MR. Arjam Alam with immediate effect officially and unofficially. He also declares that his mother MS. JYOTI KUMARI will be treated as only his parent. He will not be responsible for any act and consequences related with Mr. Arjam Alam.

(Ganpat Singh) Advocate
Ch No. :440, Lawyers Block, Saket Courts, New Delhi-110017.
M: 9891774116, 885121895.

PUBLIC NOTICE

General public is hereby informed through notice that my client Mr. Madan Goyal, S/O Radhey Shyam is hereby given that Madan Goyal has agreed to mortgage the residential property 4/2621 Street No. 7 -Bhári Colony, Shahdara, Delhi-110032 free from all encumbrances. The right, title, ownership, interest in this property lies with me. Any person having any right, title, interest, claim or demand of any nature whatsoever in respect of the said flat, is hereby required to make the same known in writing along with the documentary proof thereof, of to the undersigned at E BLOCK E-622, LAWYERS CHAMBER BLOCK KARKARDOOMA COURT-110032 within fourteen days from the date of publication hereof, failing which the negotiations shall be completed, without any reference to such claims and the claims if any, shall be deemed to have been given up or waive.

KAPIL SHARMA (Advocate)

आर्यभट्ट महाविद्यालय दिल्ली विश्वविद्यालय
ARYABHATTA COLLEGE (UNIVERSITY OF DELHI)
(Accredited with grade A+ by NAAC)

Adv. No. AC/Adv.(T)/2024/001 Date:07.12.2024

Online applications are invited in the prescribed Application Form from eligible candidates for appointment to the post of Assistant Professor, in the Academic Pay Level 10 of the 7th Central Pay Commission Pay Matrix, in the College. The last date for receipt of application is **27.12.2024 or within 21 days from the date of publication of the advertisement in the Employment News, whichever is later.** For details, please visit the College website, www.aryabhatacollege.ac.in.

Any addendum/corrigendum shall be posted only on the College website.

PRINCIPAL

छत्तीसगढ़ पर्यावरण संरक्षण मंडल
पर्यावास भवन, सेक्टर-19, नवा रायपुर, अटल नगर, जिला-रायपुर (छग.) 492002, Email add-hocceb@gmail.com

//सर्वसंबंधितों को सूचना//

भारत सरकार, पर्यावरण, वन एवं जलवायु परिवर्तन मंत्रालय, नई दिल्ली की अधिसूचना दिनांक 14.09.2006 (यथा संशोधित) के तहत सर्व संबंधित को सूचित किया जाता है कि मैसर्स हाई टेक सूर्य सीमेन्ट एण्ड स्टील प्राइवेट लिमिटेड, ग्राम-बिस्ता व मोहभड़ा, तहसील-बिस्ता, जिला-बिलासपुर स्थित खसरा क्रमांक 302/1/क, 302/1/ग, 322, 323, 324, 325, 326, 327/2, एवं 17 (फॉट), कुल क्षेत्रफल 7.22 एकड़ (2.92 हेक्टेयर) में पृथ्वी में जारी पर्यावरण स्विकृति अनुसार स्टैंड प्लान सीमेन्ट ग्राइंडिंग यूनिट क्षमता-1,000 (2 गुणा 500 टन) उन प्रांतिन में परिवर्तन किये बिना 90 प्रतिशत से अधिक रॉ मैटेरियल एवं 100 प्रतिशत उत्पाद का परिष्करण सेल के स्थान पर रॉ मैटेरियल एवं उत्पाद का परिष्करण सड़क एवं रेलमार्ग से किये जाने के पर्यावरण स्विकृति हेतु लोक सुन्वाई बावत छत्तीसगढ़ पर्यावरण संरक्षण मंडल में आवेदन किया गया है। उक्त परियोजना के संबंध में आपत्ति /सुझाव/टीका-टिप्पणी इस सूचना के जारी होने के दिनांक से 30 दिवस के अंदर क्षेत्रीय अधिकारी, छग. पर्यावरण संरक्षण मंडल, बिलासपुर के कार्यालय में मौखिक अथवा लिखित रूप से कार्यालयीन समय में प्रस्तुत की जा सकती है। इस परियोजना के लिए लोक सुन्वाई दिनांक 10/01/2025 को प्रातः 11:00 बजे, ग्राम मोहभड़ा, पन्हॉन्ने 10, राओनॉन्ने बिस्ता, तहसील-बोदरी, जिला-बिलासपुर (छग.) में स्थित भूमि ख-नॉ 322, 325 में निश्चय की गई है। सूचित हो कि लोक सुन्वाई के दौरान भारत सरकार, पर्यावरण, वन एवं जलवायु परिवर्तन मंत्रालय, नई दिल्ली के ऑफिस में कोर्डम F No. 22-25/2000-1A, III दिनांक 14.09.2020 तथा कोरोना वायरस के नियंत्रण एवं रोकथाम हेतु शासन द्वारा जारी समस्त दिशा-निर्देशों का अक्षरशः पालन कराया जाना अनिवार्य होगा।

ई.आई.ए. अधिसूचना दिनांक 14.09.2006 (यथा संशोधित) के प्रावधानों के अनुसार ड्राफ्ट ई.आई.ए. रिपोर्ट, कार्यपालनकार की प्रति (हिन्दी व अंग्रेजी में) एवं इसकी सी.डी. (साफ्ट कॉपी) जन सामान्य के अवलोकन/पठन हेतु कलेक्टर, कार्यालय कलेक्टर, जिला-बिलासपुर, मुख्य कार्यालय अधिकारी, कार्यालय, जिला पंचायत बिलासपुर, जिला बिलासपुर, अनुविभागीय अधिकारी (रो.), कार्यालय, अनुविभागीय अधिकारी (रा.) बिस्ता, जिला-बिलासपुर, कार्यालय मुख्य महाप्रबंधक, जिला व्यापार एवं उद्योग केन्द्र बिलासपुर, जिला-बिलासपुर, मुख्य नगर पालिका अधिकारी, कार्यालय नगर पंचायत-बिस्ता / बोदरी, जिला-बिलासपुर, क्षेत्रीय अधिकारी, क्षेत्रीय कार्यालय, छत्तीसगढ़ पर्यावरण संरक्षण मंडल, व्यापार विहार पं. दीनदयाल उपाध्याय फार्क के पास, बिलासपुर, सारंपच/सचिव कार्यालय ग्राम पंचायत-मोहभड़ा, झल्फा, मुडीगण, मुकुट, लितरा, बौडसरा, नगरीदी, धमनी, धौराभद्रा, परसदा, बिकेटकुली, बरतोली, केवांडी, गुमा, बोहारडीह, नवागांव, हथनी, करही, सिलवारी, उदताल, अमरी अकबर, अमरीकांपा, उत्तगन, गोहडी, सेंगर, काया, पेण्ड्रीडीह, घोघरा, उमरिया, दारी, निपनिया, हरदी, हरी, अरंया, सम्बलपुरी, तहसील-बिस्ता / बोदरी, जिला-बिलासपुर (छग.) डायरेक्टर, पर्यावरण, वन एवं जलवायु परिवर्तन, मंत्रालय, भारत सरकार, इंदिरा पर्यावरण भवन, वायु विंग, जोरबाग रोड, नई दिल्ली, क्षेत्रीय अधिकारी, एकीकृत क्षेत्रीय कार्यालय, भारत सरकार, पर्यावरण, वन व एवं जलवायु परिवर्तन मंत्रालय, अरुण्य भवन, नार्थ ब्लॉक, सेक्टर-19, नवा रायपुर अटल नगर, रायपुर एवं मुख्यालय, छत्तीसगढ़ पर्यावरण संरक्षण मंडल, पर्यावास भवन, नार्थ ब्लॉक, सेक्टर-19, नवा रायपुर अटल नगर, रायपुर (छग.) में रखी गई है।

सदस्य सचिव
छत्तीसगढ़ पर्यावरण संरक्षण मंडल,
नवा रायपुर, अटल नगर, जिला-रायपुर (छग.)

NY cops push to identify CEO killer, FBI offers reward

AP ■ NEW YORK

The gunman who killed the CEO of the largest US health insurer likely left New York City on a bus soon after the brazen ambush that has shaken corporate America, police officials said. But he left something behind: a backpack that was discovered in Central Park. Nearly four days after the shooting of UnitedHealthcare CEO Brian Thompson, police still did not know the gunman's name or whereabouts or have a motive for the killing. Investigators were looking at whether the shooter may have been a disgruntled employee or client of the insurer, Chief of Detectives Joseph Kenny told reporters. The FBI announced Friday night it was offering a USD 50,000 reward for information leading to an arrest and conviction. Video of the gunman fleeing Wednesday's shooting showed him riding a bicycle into Central Park and later taking a taxi to a bus terminal that offers commuter service to New Jersey and Greyhound routes to Philadelphia, Boston and Washington, D.C, according to Kenny. Police have video of the man entering the bus station but no video of him exiting, leading them to believe he left the city, Kenny said. Investigators on Friday found a backpack in the park that had been worn by the gunman during the shooting, police said, following a massive sweep to find it in a vast area with lakes and ponds, meadows, playgrounds and woods. Police didn't immediately reveal what, if anything, it contained but said it would be analyzed for clues. The gunman made sure to conceal his identity with a mask during almost all of his time in the city, including during the attack and while he ate, yet left a trail of evidence in view of the nation's biggest city and its network of security cameras.

The gunman arrived in New York City on Nov 24 and shot Thompson 10 days later outside his company's annual investor conference at a hotel just blocks from Radio City Music Hall and Rockefeller Center. The gunman got off a bus that originated in Atlanta and made several stops along the way, Kenny said. Police have not determined where he got on the bus. Investigators have a list of passengers, but none of them would have had to provide an ID when they climbed aboard, Kenny said. Investigators believe the suspect used a fake identification card and paid cash, Kenny said, when he checked in at the hotel, which has a café along with shared and private rooms and is blocks from Columbia University. Investigators have tested a discarded water bottle and protein bar wrapper in a hunt for his DNA. They also were trying to obtain additional information from a cellphone found along the gunman's escape route. Photos of the suspected shooter that were taken in the lobby of a hostel on Manhattan's Upper West Side appear to from the only time he removed his mask, Kenny said. The images, showing a man smiling in the lobby of the HI New York City hostel. They are among a collection of photos and video circulated since the shooting — including footage of the attack, as well as images of the suspected gunman at a Starbucks beforehand. "From every indication we have from witnesses, from the Starbucks, from the hostel, he kept his mask on at all times except for the one instance where we have him photographed with the mask off," Kenny said. His roommates at the hostel also said he didn't speak to them. Nothing of investigative value was found in a search of the suspected shooter's hotel room.

Focus on batting as demoralised India look to avoid series defeat against Aus

PTI ■ BRISBANE

A desperate India will need their under-fire batters to step up in the second Women's ODI against Australia here on Sunday, as the visitors aim to avoid yet another series loss Down Under.

India's batting woes continued as the tourists were bundled out for 100 in the series opener, leading to a demoralising five-wicket defeat, their heaviest in terms of balls remaining since ODIs were reduced to 50 overs a side.

India have never won a series Down Under and they will have their task cut out against a quality Australian side, which showed no signs of rust despite playing in the format after a gap of nine months.

On the other hand, it was the Indians who appeared under-prepared as the squad

was unable to train together as some of the players were competing in domestic T20 tournaments while others played in the Women's Big Bash League.

Additionally, one of their two practice sessions here was washed out due to rain.

After opting to bat, the Indian batters were unable to capitalise on good batting conditions.

They lost wickets at regular intervals, were unable to stitch partnerships, and were done in by Megan Schutt's brilliant spell with the new ball.

"We were expecting a good score if our batters had applied themselves better. If we had more runs on the scoreboard, anything could have happened," India coach Amol Muzumdar conceded after the match.

With the batting inconsistencies continuing from the New Zealand



series, time is running out for India, who will host the ODI World Cup next year.

The Indian think tank will be keen to stabilise their batting and bowling line-up ahead of the marquee event.

Even though the bowlers had a small target to defend, they did well to pick five wickets. The only silver lining in an otherwise forgettable outing for India was pacer Renuka Thakur and young leg-spinner Priya Mishra.

The tourists will have to regroup fast and having already played a game here, they will hope to give a better account of themselves.

"The major thing we talked about was that one match doesn't make you a good team or a bad team. We played a match and it did not go our way. It's fine, we'll take a step back and evaluate

what we could have done better. We have played some good cricket this year we will take it from there.

"The conditions are a little different then we are used to but we will be able to adjust to it," pacer Titas Sadhu said on the eve of the second ODI.

Meanwhile, Australia produced an almost flawless performance despite missing regular skipper Alyssa Healy.

Veteran pacer Schutt registered career-best figures of 5/19 before young opener Georgia Voll impressed on debut.

Australia will be keen on putting up a similar display to seal another series win against India but the hosts are unlikely to take Harmanpreet Kaur and Co lightly.

"India cannot be underestimated and we will not make the mistake of

being complacent. I think the Indian batsmen will come back strongly in the next match but I have worked a lot on my bowling and I hope to maintain this rhythm," she had said after the first match," Schutt had said after the opener.

Teams (from):

India: Harmanpreet Kaur (c), Smriti Mandhana (vc), Priya Punia, Jemimah Rodrigues, Harleen Deol, Uma Chetry, Richa Ghosh (wk), Tejal Hasabnis, Deepthi Sharma, Minnu Mani, Priya Mishra, Radha Yadav, Titas Sadhu, Arundhati Reddy, Renuka Singh Thakur, Saima Thakor

Australia: Tahlia McGrath (c), Ashleigh Gardner (vc), Darcie Brown, Kim Garth, Alana King, Phoebe Litchfield, Sophie Molineux, Beth Mooney, Ellyse Perry, Megan Schutt, Annabel Sutherland, Georgia Voll, Georgia Wareham

India's nemesis Head powers Australia with blazing ton

PTI ■ ADELAIDE

Travis Head continued to be a thorn in India's flesh with a counterattacking 141-ball 140 and powered Australia to a dominant 332 for eight at dinner on the second day of the pink ball Test here on Saturday.

Thanks to Head's eighth Test century, which he reached in 111 balls after toying with India's formidable bowling attack, Australia have taken a 152-run first innings lead as they looked to restore parity in the five-match series after the 295-run hammering in the opener at Perth.

Head, who got off the mark with a cracking boundary off Jasprit Bumrah (4/59), got a reprieve on 76 as Mohammed Siraj failed to complete the catch despite getting both hands to it after the batter tried to slog-sweep R Ashwin, having just smashed his third six against the off-spinner.

Amid the rejoicing around Head's century at the Adelaide Oval, Siraj was rewarded for his discipline as he had Alex Carey caught behind following a faint outside edge with Australia's lead crossing 100.



Desperate to prevent Australia from swelling their lead further, India took the second new ball the moment it was made available to them, and their lead pacer Bumrah too was brought back into the attack.

Bumrah, however, pulled up and was seen holding his adductor muscle as the physio attended to him. Fortunately for India, Bumrah was up on his feet quickly and ready to bowl again, even as Head flicked him for two boundaries in between.

During his knock, Head played some incredible shots, including a pick-up

six over Siraj over deep square leg, but the pacer had the last laugh as he brought his innings to an end when he cleaned him up with a yorker.

In all, Head struck 17 fours and four sixes. Earlier, Rohit Sharma giving his strike bowler Bumrah only four overs in the first session was a bit strange, and so were some of his field placements. Then, in another surprising move, he started the proceedings after tea with Ravichandran Ashwin instead of the fast bowlers.

Luck, though, was with Ashwin as Mitchell Marsh

decided to walk off despite a half-baked appeal by the Indian team.

Seeing Marsh heading in the direction of the dressing room, Richard Illingworth raised his finger too, but replays clearly showed there was a gap between bat and pad.

Unperturbed by all these, Head went about his task in the manner he does best -- dictating the terms to the bowlers with his free-flowing strokes.

None of the Indian bowlers, including Bumrah, looked like they could cause problems for Head.

Straight after tea, the aggressive left-hander employed a late cut against Bumrah to send the ball in the gap between gully and backward point. And he continued in same vein until he was dismissed.

This was after Marnus Labuschagne regained form with a composed half-century.

Labuschagne (64), whose place in the team was debated prior to this game owing to his prolonged lean run with the bat, registered his 26th half-century and then launched himself into a flurry of boundaries in what

were worrying signs for India.

But promising all-rounder Nitish Reddy cut short Labuschagne's innings as the batter tried to guide him through gully only for Yashuvi Jaiswal to hold on to the sharp catch.

Looking to fight their way back into the game after Australia's dominance on the opening day, India got an early breakthrough through who else but Bumrah.

Playing in only his second Test after a forgettable debut in Perth, Nathan McSweeney had no answer to one of many excellent deliveries from Bumrah, which straightened a fraction after landing on the perfect length and all the batter could do was get a little nick while trying to defend after getting stuck on the crease.

Steve Smith's poor run of form continued as the former captain got out in the most unfortunate fashion. Smith looked to flick a Bumrah delivery tickling down the leg side but only ended up edging it to the keeper Rishabh Pant who completed a neat catch diving to his left.

Rohidas is world's best rusher, says TN Dragons head coach Van Eijk

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Tamil Nadu Dragons Dutch head coach Rein Van Eijk believes Olympic-medal winning India defender Amit Rohidas is the best "first rusher" in the world and hopes his multiple skills will benefit the franchise in the upcoming revamped Hockey India League (HIL).

Two-time Olympic bronze medallist, Rohidas is one of the best first rushers in the world when it comes to defending penalty corners. As if that was not enough, the player from Odisha is also a potent dragflicker and a senior member of the Indian men's team.

"For us, getting Amit (Rohidas) was obviously the one thing that we wished for. He's the number one rusher in the world and a warrior in his style of play. He defends and leads by action, which will be a great motivation for the team. He is able to play multiple positions, can also dragflick," Van Eijk told PTI in an exclusive interview.

Rohidas has 200 international caps to his credit and has scored more



than 25 goals.

Rohidas will be complemented by Paris Olympics silver medallist Moritz Ludwig of Germany, another elite rusher, ensuring a solid defence for Tamil Nadu Dragons from set pieces.

"I think there are four top rushers in the world. Obviously, Amit Rohidas is probably the number one of those four, but Moritz Ludwig, the German player that we've gotten, is in the top four as well. So our corner defense should be very solid," said Van Eijk, coach of Germany's 2023 Under-21 World Cup-winning side. The coach reserved special

praise for young India striker and Tamil Nadu player Karthi Selvam.

"With Karthi, we have a very talented forward. His performances in the 2022 Asia Cup and Asian Champions Trophy showed his strength. His goal-scoring ability and explosiveness bring all the good. He's also physically very imposing and very strong on the ball.

"I think scoring nine goals in the game where they won 43-0 with the Tamil Nadu hockey unit says a lot about his qualities. I hope that this can be his way back into the Indian men's national team to solidify his spot," Van Eijk said.

India dismiss Australia for 337, trail by 157 runs

PTI ■ ADELAIDE

Travis Head struck a sensational century while Marnus Labuschagne returned to form with a resolute fifty as Australia took a 157-run first-innings lead over India on day two of the pink ball Test here on Saturday.

For India, the peerless Jasprit Bumrah (4/61) and Mohammed Siraj (4/98) were the most successful bowlers as Australia has all out for 337 in reply to India's 180.

Local hero Head, who was dropped twice, made the most of his reprieves as he struck almost a run a ball 140 in front of his home crowd.



He smashed 17 fours and four maximums in his 141-ball knock as the game drifted away from India.

Siraj put an end to Head's entertaining knock, which allowed the Australian lower order to bat with freedom.

However, Bumrah dismissed Pat Cummins off the last ball of the second session while Siraj struck with the first delivery after dinner to get Mitchell Starc, before sending back Scot Boland to end the Australian innings.

Everton vs. Liverpool postponed because of Storm Darragh

AP ■ LIVERPOOL

The Merseyside derby between Everton and Liverpool was postponed on Saturday because of Storm Darragh, which brought dangerous winds and rain to the west coast.

The Premier League match was due to kick off at 12.30 p.m. U.K. Time, but Everton issued a statement in the morning to say it would not go ahead.

The Met office said parts of Wales had experienced wind gusts of over 90 mph.

"Storm Darragh continues to bring strong winds across the UK, with red, amber and yellow wind warnings in force," the office said on social media.

Aston Villa will host



Southampton in a 3 p.m. Kickoff. The team urged fans to use extra time to get to Villa Park in Birmingham.

"We want to advise all supporters to allow extra time for travel to today's game due to poor weather conditions across the country. Please take extra care and stay safe. We look forward to seeing you at

the game," the team said in a statement.

Three other games were scheduled in the Premier League on Saturday.

Manchester United was hosting Nottingham Forest at 5:30 p.m. Local time. United has not commented on the storm.

In London, Brentford was

hosting Newcastle, and Crystal Palace was hosting Manchester City. Both games are at 3 p.m.

Brentford and Palace both said their games will be played.

"Today's match is still scheduled to go ahead despite the bad weather," Brentford said. "Please travel safely, plan ahead, and allow extra time for your journey."

Storm Darragh was expected to "gradually ease from late morning as it crosses the UK, so the strongest winds in the west will start to reduce through Saturday," Met Office chief meteorologist Steve Willington said.

Everton and league leader Liverpool issued nearly identical statements about the postponement.

"Following a Safety Advisory Group meeting at Goodison Park, attended by officials from both clubs, as well as representatives from Merseyside Police and Liverpool City Council this morning, it was decided that, due to the risk to safety in the local area due to strong wind gusts, and an amber severe wind warning that remains in place until 6 a.m. On Sunday, today's fixture should be postponed on safety grounds," Everton's statement read.

"We apologize for the inconvenience caused and thank supporters for their understanding. Whilst we appreciate this will be deeply disappointing for supporters, the safety of fans, staff and players is of paramount importance."

Milestones galore as England leads New Zealand by 533 runs in the 2nd test after 2 days

AP ■ WELLINGTON

England led New Zealand by 533 runs with five second-innings wickets in hand Saturday after another day of extraordinary incidents and milestones, including a hat-trick on the second day of the second test at the Basin Reserve.

At stumps, England was 378-5 in its second innings with Joe Root 73 not out and captain Ben Stokes unbeaten on 35.

Root was among the history-makers Saturday, reaching his 100th score of 50 or more in tests. When he reached his 65th half century, which goes along with his 35 centuries, he became the fourth player after Sachin Tendulkar, Jacques Kallis and Ricky Ponting to achieve that feat.

When Stokes declares, possibly overnight, New Zealand will have to achieve the highest successful fourth-innings run chase in test history to win the match and

level the three-match series. England won the first test by eight wickets in Christchurch.

The record successful fourth innings total currently sits at 418, achieved by the West Indies against Australia at St. John's in the Caribbean 21 years ago.

Under any normal circumstances, Stokes probably would have been happy to declare by now, confident in his bowlers' ability to defend such a mammoth lead.

But the match has progressed so fast and so far with 783 runs being scored and 25 wickets falling on the first two days, that three full days are still available to New Zealand reach its winning target. Most other winning fourth-innings totals in tests have had some element of a time constraint.

The pitch at the Basin Reserve which has been bathed in sunshine on the first two days also is becoming more docile. Stokes came to the crease 30



minutes before stumps Saturday and immediately hit a four and a six in the first over he faced from Matt Henry, then another six in what seemed a tacit announcement of an impending declaration. By declaring overnight, Stokes will allow the England bowlers to rest and start fresh on the third day.

The England second innings also saw two batters fall in the 90s, Jacob Bethell on 96, just short of his maiden test century, and Ben Duckett on 92. Harry Brook made 55 to go with his 123 in the first innings and his 171 in the first innings of the first test.

All of those innings would which on any normal day of cricket have notable on their own. But they came one after the other and in quick succession so that Gus Atkinson's historic achievement of the morning session seemed somehow distant.

Atkinson became the 15th

English bowler and the first since Moeen Ali in 2017 to take a test hat-trick.

The Surrey pacer claimed the last three wickets of New Zealand's first innings, dismissing Nathan Smith, Matt Henry and Tim Southee with consecutive deliveries as England bowled out New Zealand for 125 to take a 155-run first-innings lead.

"It feels good," Atkinson said. "I've never really thought about getting a hat-trick until I was at the end of my run and I was on a hat-trick. (It ends the year nicely.)"

Atkinson bowled Smith (14) with the third ball of the 35th over of the innings. Smith dangled his bat at a delivery wide of off stump, tried too late to leave the ball but managed only to deflect it onto his stumps.

That brought out Henry, a competent batter with an average of almost 20 in tests, who received a ball which bounced sharply from just short of a length and reached

chest high. Henry tried to fend the ball away but it skewed from the splice to Duckett in the gully.

That left Southee to face the hat-trick ball. The veteran seamer in his last test series averages 15.6 and has hit 95 sixes in an illustrious career.

Southee clearly was expecting another short ball, the field was set for it. But the delivery from Atkinson was full and straight, struck the batter on the front pad and clearly was going on to hit middle stump.

Atkinson is a statistical marvel who, in just his 10th test, has taken 12 wickets in an innings (12-106 against the West Indies at Lord's in July) and scored a century (118 against Sri Lanka at Lord's in August). He now adds a hat-trick to that already impressive resume.

Atkinson was not privy to Stokes' thoughts about a declaration.

"I'm not really sure what the plans are to be honest," he said.



FEATHERS OF COUTURE

Fashion is a language, a story told through fabric and beads, a canvas that speaks of cultures and dreams. When Suneet Varma takes the stage, the fabric transforms into poetry. His latest collection, *Quetzalli*, unveiled in collaboration with PATRÓN Tequila, is a masterpiece that bridges continents, blending the fiery soul of Mexico with the intricate elegance of Indian couture. The evening sparkled with sophistication at The Upper House by Tivoli as Varma's designs graced the runway. Each model brought the audience into a world where tradition and innovation existed side by side. The inspiration? A journey to the legendary Hacienda PATRÓN in Jalisco, Mexico, where tequila is an art form in itself. *Quetzalli* emerged not as a tribute to tequila but to the shared spirit of meticulous craftsmanship that defines both cultures.

The collection redefined the colour black, giving it depth, allure and richness. Sheer black gowns adorned with intricate lacework were delicately touched with hints of gold that shimmered under the lights, like secrets waiting to be discovered. These weren't just clothes; they were symbols of confidence, elegance, and a celebration of womanhood. Accessories played a crucial role, with statement necklaces gleaming in antique gold and belts cinching the waistlines of capes and gowns, adding structure to the delicate. Ornate headpieces gave the models an almost regal aura, transforming the runway into a scene of modern-day queens.

Suneet Varma's artistry lies in storytelling. In *Quetzalli*, lace represented Mexico's ancient traditions, while embroidery techniques showcased India's unparalleled craftsmanship. The

Suneet Varma's *Quetzalli* collection fuses Mexican craftsmanship with Indian couture, celebrating elegance, heritage and artistry, says **SAKSHI PRIYA**



silhouettes flowed effortlessly, structured yet soft, tailored yet fluid. From tiered skirts with voluminous ruffles reminiscent of traditional Mexican dresses to contemporary separates designed for the modern woman, the collection was versatile, sensual and unmistakably Suneet. Silver, drawing inspiration from PATRÓN's meticulous tequila-making process, starting with hand-harvested Weber Blue Agave and crafting exceptional varieties like Silver, Reposado, Añejo and the ultra-premium El Cielo, was used to add a touch of refinement and sophistication to the pieces. Sheer capes adorned with metallic motifs floated behind models, reflecting the mystical energy of the Quetzal bird, after which the collection is named.

The collection also celebrated the art of working with feathers in Mexico, known as plumeria. This technique, highly valued in pre-Hispanic and colonial Mexico, was reflected in the dramatic feather details seen on some pieces in the collection. Suneet Varma's use of this ancient art form was a

reflection of his respect for both Mexican heritage and the craftsmanship behind each element of his designs. The feather details were used not just as decoration but as an integral part of the concept, evoking the elegance and mysticism of Mexico's rich history.

Varma's designs aren't limited by time or trends, they are experiences. *Quetzalli* is for the woman who wants to walk into a room and own it. Whether it's an evening gala, an intimate dinner, or a rooftop soiree, these pieces make the wearer the focus without needing to speak. The grand finale brought the audience to its feet as the designer himself took a bow amidst applause. Dressed impeccably, Suneet Varma acknowledged the partnership that made *Quetzalli* possible. It wasn't just fashion; it was a celebration of how heritage can evolve and adapt without losing its essence.

Fashion is more than just clothes, it's a way of life. *Quetzalli* captures this ethos, blending two cultures while staying true to artistry. It's about reimagining tradition, embracing innovation, and celebrating the craftspeople who bring every stitch and bead to life. As the night ended, the buzz in the air was filled with admiration for Varma's genius and the journey of *Quetzalli*. In the hands of Suneet Varma, fabric becomes a storyteller and *Quetzalli* tells a tale that stays with you long after the runway lights dim. For now, it's not just a collection; it's a legacy waiting to be adorned.

Suneet Varma says, "This collaboration with PATRÓN Tequila brings together our shared passion for artistry and heritage. The *Quetzalli* collection reflects a fusion of refined couture and Mexico's rich culture, honoring both PATRÓN's craftsmanship and my vision for elegance."

j Viva la moda, viva la herencia!

PHOTOS: PANKAJ KUMAR



THE TALE OF LOVE, OBSESSION AND REVENGE RETURNS

After nearly three years, *Yeh Kaali Kaali Ankhein* makes its much-anticipated return to Netflix with Season 2. Directed by Sidharth Sengupta, the web series brings back its gripping narrative style while aiming to keep the audience engaged with a fresh dose of action. The cast features Tahir Raj Bhasin, Shweta Tripathi, and Anchal Singh in the lead roles, supported by notable performances from Saurabh Shukla, Surya Sharma, and Arunoday Singh.

The second season picks up right where the first left off, resuming the suspenseful narrative with the abduction of Purva, played by Anchal Singh. The creators have consciously tried to maintain the series' intensity, diving straight into the action from the first episode. This decision sets a fast-paced tone that remains consistent throughout the season. While the relentless action

sequences and tightly woven plot aim to fascinate the audience, the series struggles to break new ground. While effective in parts, the continuous focus on action begins to feel repetitive, causing the narrative to lose the unique spark that made the first season stand out. Despite the attempt to maintain the thrill, the over-reliance on similar storytelling techniques limits its ability to surprise and entertain viewers fully.

The cast of *Yeh Kaali Kaali Ankhein* Season 2 brings their characters to life with relentless dedication, providing the primary reason for viewers to stay invested in the series. Arunoday Singh delivers a compelling performance as the contract killer Aditya Hafeez, embodying a skilled kidnapper's intense and menacing aura with his brooding demeanor and serious expressions. His portrayal is both convincing and impactful,

Yeh Kaali Kaali Ankhein Season 2 fascinates with its cast and narrative but falls short of delivering the unpredictability that thriller fans crave, writes **ABHI SINGHAL**



adding a layer of depth to the narrative.

Tahir Raj Bhasin once again shines as Vikrant Singh Chauhan, the tormented protagonist at the heart of the story. Bhasin's performance is an example of his remarkable acting prowess, as he portrays Vikrant's inner turmoil and determination with precision. His serious and gritty portrayal further solidifies his reputation as a versatile actor capable of commanding attention with every scene.

Shweta Tripathi returns as Sikha, the love interest of Vikrant, although her role is noticeably reduced in this season. Despite her limited screen time, Tripathi ensures that her presence is felt in all the key moments. The character's development takes an unexpected turn as Sikha finds herself married to a new police officer, adding an intriguing layer to the storyline.

A notable new addition to the

cast is Gurmeet Choudhary, whose performance as Guru, a close friend of Purva, makes an immediate impression. Choudhary makes out a distinctive space for himself in the series, bringing a fresh dynamic to the plot. His character's arrival stirs up the narrative, introducing a sense of unpredictability and piquing the audience's curiosity about the unfolding events.

While the show's thrilling plot and dramatic twists may resonate with a general audience, it may fall short of expectations for ardent crime and thriller enthusiasts. The plot, while engaging in parts, tends to feel stretched as it goes into repetitive themes, leaving the story feeling somewhat incomplete. Despite these shortcomings, the series manages to sustain interest, largely due to its talented cast and their performances.

RATING: 3/5

"It is in literature that the concrete outlook of humanity receives its expression"
— Alfred North Whitehead



It is a paradox of sorts: while people's reading habits are at an all-time low, there is a flood of writers producing content on virtually every subject. From fiction and non-fiction to cookbooks and travelogues, the book market is booming like never before. The Indian publishing industry was valued at approximately INR 500 billion in 2019, with projections indicating growth to INR 800 billion by 2024. This sector significantly contributes to India's economic development, fostering learning, education, and employment for over 1.2 million people.

Recent reports suggest that the industry is expanding at a compound annual growth rate (CAGR) of around 19.4%, with some estimates as high as 25%. This growth is particularly notable in the printbook market, which is anticipated to see substantial increases in value. Educational books dominate the sector, while the increasing adoption of eBooks and digital content is transforming the industry. Despite a decline in print publishing revenues due to shifting consumer preferences towards online books, magazines, and newspapers, the combined revenue from print and digital publishing continues to grow, illustrating that publishing as a whole is not in decline.

India has approximately 19,000 publishers. The publishing industry in India is vibrant but scattered, with no single association having more than 1,000 members. Evaluating publishers can be challenging, as it involves considering factors such as market size, reputation, genres covered, and influence on the literary landscape. Among the prominent names in Indian publishing, Penguin Random House India stands out as a major player, recognised for its diverse portfolio, literary excellence, and global reach. It publishes celebrated authors such as Arundhati Roy and Salman Rushdie, establishing itself as a giant in the industry.

HarperCollins India, established in 1992, is another notable publisher with a strong presence across genres, including fiction, self-help, and business books. It is home to renowned authors like Amitav Ghosh, Chetan Bhagat, and Paulo Coelho. Rupa Publications, one of India's oldest and most respected publishers, specialises in Indian fiction, biographies, and academic works, with imprints such as Rupa, Oak, and Fingerprint.

Bloomsbury India launched in 2002, has also made a mark in the industry with its high-quality literary fiction, non-fiction, children's books, and academic texts. Together, these publishers play a vital role in shaping India's literary landscape and catering to the evolving preferences of readers. But when it comes to writers it is another story. Given the size of the country, even a small percentage of people trying their hand in writing becomes large in absolute terms. However, not all are equally talented or taught. Of course, creativity cannot be taught in school, but style and form can be. With very few institutions that hone the craft of writing the writing suffers and only a handful of writers stand out in the ocean of mediocrity.

Of course, Books cannot be strictly categorised as good or bad; they are simply those you cherish and those you don't. Some books resonate deeply, while others leave you wondering who they were written for. Even so, labelling a book as 'bad' feels unfair; what one dislikes might be perfect for someone with different tastes or standards. But having said that it is also true some books leave a bad taste in the mouth for almost all. Though the number of writers is swelling, which is indeed a good thing that cannot be said about the quality of books written by them. There is a

Where are the bold, thoughtful voices that once defined Indian literature? As commercial pressures dominate, the true art of writing seems increasingly overshadowed, writes
GYANESHWAR DAYAL

The write thing!

As they say, it is easy to write a book but difficult to make a person read it. To make it readable it needs to be worth the time and effort of the reader – give him or her some insights, information or perspective he didn't have or make him laugh or cry if that is intended. Translating thoughts into words is an art that deserves to be approached with seriousness. To do so, one must often seclude themselves, almost in a spiritual sense, and dedicate their focus to the act of writing. Writing retreats are an excellent opportunity to refine your skills, learn the ropes, and gain insight into the publishing industry. Mentors, often editors from the industry, along with established writers, offer valuable tips and guidance.

In a world increasingly characterised by distractions, writing retreats have emerged as sanctuaries where budding writers can focus, grow, and thrive. These retreats offer a unique blend of solitude, community, and professional guidance, making them appealing to anyone passionate about honing their craft. Writing retreats often take place in idyllic settings, mountains, beaches, countryside estates, away from the hustle of daily life. This change of scenery not only inspires creativity but also provides the peace needed to concentrate on storytelling. Many retreats combine workshops, one-on-one mentoring, and group discussions, creating a collaborative yet personal environment. Fortunately, we have many literary retreats to choose from, some good, others very good!

TheWriteScene's Landour Writers' Retreat recently unfolded as a vibrant tapestry of inspiration and creativity. Founded by award-winning author Deeba Salim Irfan, this retreat was not just a gathering of minds but a sanctuary for writers from across India, offering them the opportunity to refine their craft in the tranquil surroundings that once inspired the renowned author Ruskin Bond. "I founded the Landour Writing Retreat to provide aspiring writers with the support they need to thrive. Drawing from my own experience as a published and award-winning author, I understand the challenges and rewards of the writing journey. The serene setting of Landour inspires creativity and focus. Beyond Landour, I organise retreats in picturesque locations like Kangra Valley, India, Slovenia and Lapland (Northern Lights) fostering a global community of writers. I also

The Allure of Writing Retreats

Writing retreats emerge as havens for writing enthusiasts, offering serene surroundings to inspire creativity and refine their craft.



curate the English and Filipino sessions of the Tabbib Literary Festival in Dubai, a platform for diverse voices and literary exchange." Deeba says with a smile and a sense of satisfaction.

The sense of community is another powerful draw. Writing can be a solitary endeavour, and retreats allow participants to connect with like-minded individuals. "Writing is a solitary profession. You sit alone with memory and imagination, both equal parts dangerous and exciting. Writing retreats are a warm hand extended in time, nudging you on, picking

you up and sometimes, putting you back on track" says author and lawyer Sonia Chauhan. The Landour Writing Retreat is one such retreat. From the hosts to the sessions to the participants, it was a motivating journey. Sharing ideas, receiving feedback, and networking with peers and mentors can be incredibly motivating and lead to lifelong creative partnerships. What participants feel is indeed writ large on their faces, "the Landour Writing Retreat was more than a getaway, it was a turning point in my writing journey. I discovered the art of truly listening to my inner voice. The retreat's emphasis on discipline balanced with creativity taught me to treat writing as both a craft and a calling. Sessions by seasoned experts from the publishing industry added technical depth, knowledge, and insights into demystifying the process of writing and publishing in India," says Bijetri Roy, an upcoming writer in her own right.

Additionally, retreats often invite established authors, editors, and publishers to guide participants. This access to industry professionals offers budding writers' invaluable insights into the craft of writing and the business of getting published.

growing trend among new Indian authors to just write and have a book under their name. This is perhaps more true of writers writing in English than in other Indian languages. Many recent books feel amateurish and hastily written. It's frustrating to see many careless writings being passed off as literature, leaving readers feeling duped.

Many books are being churned out with similar themes as if other streams have dried up — ala Bollywood which tends to produce similar films after a blockbuster, hoping to cash in on the success. Others who experiment often end up with juvenile themes and shallow characters. It seems the trend began with the overwhelming success of Chetan Bhagat. While Bhagat's book was light and entertaining, its success led many aspiring writers to believe they could replicate his formula without effort—by simply injecting Bollywood-like clichés into their stories. Many times writers succumb to commercial temptations, trying to publish which would get them a filmmaker like Slumdog Millionaire after the film adaptation's Oscar triumph. Thus, we have a trend: literature crafted to satisfy a superficial public demand, rather than to challenge or inspire.

No doubt publishing is a business like any other and must make a profit. It also has to compete with the reader's attention span of human goldfish- the GenZ. But that often comes with a big price tag. Where are the bold, thoughtful voices of Indian literature? Where are the Salman Rushdies, Amitav Ghoshes, R.K. Narayan, and Anita Desais of today? Literature thrives on diversity, but the current scene of Indian writing in English seems weighed down by opportunists chasing fame over craft. And make no mistake this trend is here to stay. It is all over -- visible in the literature festivals even in the reputed ones.

For many budding talents, the challenge isn't just about writing—it's about finding the time and discipline to do so consistently. Writing retreats provide structured schedules that balance writing time with relaxation, fostering a productive rhythm. They also encourage writers to step out of their comfort zones, experiment with new styles, and confront creative blocks.

"The Landour Retreat was a perfect combination of creativity-sparking processes, sufficient unstructured time to allow writing whenever one entered a flow, and quality discussion time with a bunch of like-minded people who write because they love to, and who felt like long-known friends even though we had all just met. The insights shared by publishing industry professionals at the Retreat were invaluable eye-openers for me, says gratified Nilanjana, an avid reader and a writer.

In recent years, writing retreats have gained immense popularity, driven partly by the rise of remote work and digital nomadism. People now seek fulfilling, creative experiences that go beyond their day-to-day routines. As more people explore writing as a career or serious hobby, the demand for such retreats has surged. This trend reflects a cultural shift toward valuing personal storytelling and self-expression. Networking at retreats is also a valuable opportunity to build connections that could open doors to literary agents, publishers, and collaborative opportunities. "India's literary scene is a dynamic blend of tradition and modernity, marked by its linguistic diversity and exploration of contemporary themes like gender, mental health, and identity. Regional narratives and translations are gaining prominence, while digital platforms and self-publishing empower emerging voices. Young writers experiment with genres like fantasy and speculative fiction, and women authors tackle issues of patriarchy and empowerment. International accolades, such as Geetanjali Shree's Booker Prize win, highlight India's global literary impact," says Rajul, who is a well-known mentor and editor.

Writing retreats are more than just creative getaways; they are transformative experiences that equip writers with the tools, confidence, and connections needed to succeed. Whether you're an aspiring novelist, a poet, or a memoirist, a writing retreat could be the spark that ignites your literary journey.

The Art of Authentic Kashmiri Dining

Kashmirana serves authentic Kashmiri food with a cosy setting, bringing the flavours of Kashmir to Gurugram



FOODFREAK

Pawan Soni
Food critic and founder of the Big F Awards

My friends have been dedicated patrons of *Kashmirana*, a Kashmiri restaurant nestled in Rodeo Drive that's gained a steady following in its five years. They've shared their experiences numerous times, so I was eager to see what the buzz was about on my first visit. *Kashmirana* has a cosy vibe with a mix of comfortable table seating and a few low tables for those looking to linger. My wife aptly described the interiors as reminiscent of a houseboat's warmth and charm. We found ourselves indulging in a variety of dishes, given her vegetarian preference. In the non-vegetarian starters, the Tabakmaaz and mutton seekh kebabs were both outstanding. The Tabakmaaz had that perfect crispiness, yielding to the fatty richness inside, while the mutton seekh had a delicate, hollow centre that retained a satisfying bite - some of the juiciest I've had in Gurgaon. My wife, on the other hand, enjoyed the lotus root fritters (nadrus chips), cut into long, crispy strips and coated with a flavourful, addictive spice blend. In the mains, the rista and goshtaba were delightful, with the same signature spongy meatballs but distinct gravies that made each dish memorable. I prefer bigger balls but these tasted as good. On the vegetarian side, the haaq, rajma, and nadru yakhani shone brightly, leaving us no choice but to pack up the leftovers - vegetarian for us and non-vegetarian for my friends. And if I say we loved the non-veg, it's only fair to note the vegetarian options were no less satisfying. Traditional brassware enhanced the authenticity of the experience, and the kehwa added an extra layer of warmth, perfect for the season. Though the phirni was good, I've had more refined versions. However, the dry fruit-laden shufta, cooked in desi ghee, was a decadent finale. *Kashmirana's* portions are ample, the pricing fair, and the food impressive, especially as the restaurant filled with fellow Kashmiris as we dined, a clear testament to its authenticity and popularity among those who truly know this cuisine.



RATINGS (Out of 5):
FOOD: 4.0 | **AMBIENCE:** 3.75 |
SERVICE: 4.0 | **OVERALL:** 4.0

ADDRESS: KASHMIRANA, 1ST FLOOR, RODEO DRIVE, SECTOR 49, GURUGRAM | **PHONE:** 85953 99049

The Heart of Odisha's Cuisine

Chor Bizarre's Odia pop-up brings an authentic, unique taste of Odisha, writes **TEAM AGENDA**



Left to right - Culinary Collaborator Mona Lisa Bal, Chef Srinivasulu. A and Actor & Filmmaker Nandita Das

When one thinks of India's diverse culinary landscape, it's easy to be drawn to the well-known dishes of the north or the spicy delights of the south. But what about the understated flavours of Odisha? Often overshadowed by its more famous counterparts, Odisha's cuisine is a hidden gem, rich in taste and steeped in tradition. The recent *Odia pop-up* at Chor Bizarre, the iconic Asaf Ali Road, New Delhi restaurant, offered a rare opportunity to experience the unique vegetarian dishes of Odisha, expertly curated by actor-filmmaker Nandita Das and her culinary collaborator Mona Lisa Bal. The event was an exciting foray into the lesser-known corners of Indian cuisine, offering an authentic glimpse into the simple yet bold flavours of Odisha. With the restaurant's long-standing reputation for bringing regional Indian cuisines to the forefront, this pop-up felt like a welcome celebration of the state's rich culinary heritage, especially for those in New Delhi who may not have had the chance to explore it. The carefully crafted vegetarian menu showcased the simplicity and brilliance of Odia cuisine. The meal began with "Ghole Dahi" (Odia Chhhas), a traditional yogurt-based drink that was both refreshing and tangy, setting the tone for the meal ahead. It was the perfect introduction to a menu that relied on fresh, local ingredients and a delicate balance of spices. The starters were a real treat, with dishes like "Biri Boda with Dhaniya Chutney" (Lentil Fritters with Coriander) and "Besara Chhatu Potra Poda" (Mushrooms with Mustard in Banana Leaf) capturing the essence of Odisha's cooking style. The lentil fritters were crispy on the outside, soft on the inside, and paired beautifully with a fresh coriander chutney that added a burst of flavour. The mushrooms, cooked with mustard and wrapped in banana leaves, offered a smoky, earthy flavour that exemplified the depth of Odia culinary techniques. When it came to the main courses, the dishes truly shone. "Dahi Baingan" (Shallow Fried Eggplant with Tempered Yogurt) was a standout, with its crisp, golden eggplant and creamy, tangy yogurt creating a delicious contrast in texture and taste. "Dalma," a hearty lentil and vegetable stew with coconut, was a comforting dish, light yet full of flavour. The



addition of "Kusala Saaga" (Amaranth Leaves with Garlic) and "Santula" (Sautéed Vegetables with Five Spices) further exemplified the region's love for vegetables, bringing out the freshness and natural taste of the ingredients in every bite. The accompaniments were the perfect complements to the main dishes. "Chakuli Pita," a soft, chewy flatbread made with lentils and rice, was ideal for scooping up curries, while the steamed "Bhaata" (rice) acted as a neutral base to balance the complex spices. No meal would be complete without dessert, and Chor Bizarre didn't disappoint. "Kheer Sagar" (Chhena Balls in Thickened Milk) offered a rich and creamy end to the meal, while "Chhena Podo," a baked chhena dessert, had a beautiful caramelised flavour that left a lasting impression. The vegetarian menu was, without a doubt, the star of the pop-up. However, it's worth noting that the non-vegetarian thali also garnered rave reviews, with guests praising its perfect blend of spices and execution. Chor Bizarre's ability to balance both vegetarian and non-vegetarian offerings with such precision only further cements its reputation as a destination for authentic regional cuisine. The *Odia pop-up* at Chor Bizarre was an enlightening and flavoursome journey into the heart of Odisha's culinary culture. For those who have yet to explore the delights of Odia cuisine, this pop-up provided a rare and memorable experience, showcasing the region's unique approach to vegetarian dishes that are as healthy as they are flavourful. With its emphasis on fresh ingredients, simple yet creative preparations, and a deep respect for tradition, this pop-up was a celebration of the incredible variety India's regional cuisines have to offer.



When it comes to coffee culture, *First Coffee* has always been a name synonymous with quality, creativity and bold flavours. Co-founded by the dynamic trio of Sohrab Sitaram, Shiv Dhawan and Chandini D Purnesh, this café has been a favourite haunt for caffeine enthusiasts and foodies alike. Their latest revamped menu is here to take your coffee and snack experience to the next level. Packed with innovative offerings, trendy beverages and classic delights, the menu is designed to cater to every palate. Whether you're a matcha enthusiast, a fan of indulgent pastries or someone who loves a good sandwich or wrap, *First Coffee* has you covered.

COMFORT AND CONVERSATIONS: *First Coffee's* interiors feel like a warm hug. With cosy seating, soothing earthy tones and the irresistible aroma of freshly brewed coffee, the café offers the perfect setting for everything from a quick catch-up to a leisurely workday. The ambience strikes a delicate balance between modern design and laid-back charm, making it a space you'll want to stay in.

TRENDY SIPS: THE MATCHA LATTE
 Among the highlights of the new menu is the Matcha Latte, a drink that's as vibrant as it is intriguing. Known for its earthy, slightly grassy flavour, matcha has become a favourite among those looking for a trendy yet healthy alternative. While it might take some getting used to for first-timers, it's a sip worth acquiring. *First Coffee's* version offers a creamy, balanced taste that pairs beautifully with savoury bites like the paneer tikka sandwich or the chickpea Veggie wrap.

NEVER GO OUT OF STYLE: As much as *First Coffee* excels in innovation, they also understand the value of keeping things classic. Their Classic Iced Coffee remains a cornerstone of the menu, offering a refreshing pick-me-up that's as dependable as it is delicious. Perfectly brewed and served chilled, it's a reminder of why *First Coffee* became a beloved name in the first place.

SWEET DREAMS IN EVERY BITE: Sweet tooth? You're in for a treat. The new menu introduces the incredible range of pastries. First up is the freshly baked Choco-Berry Dream Doughnut, a decadent creation that combines the richness of chocolate and custard with a fresh twist of blueberry jam and shaved chocolate on top. If you're a fan of chocolate, the Choco Truffle Eclairs are not to be missed. They combine deep, indulgent chocolate flavours with just the right amount

MORE THAN JUST A COFFEE!

First Coffee's revamped menu combines innovative flavours, trendy beverages and classic favourites, creating the perfect coffee and snack experience, writes **TEAM AGENDA**

of berry sweetness, making them the perfect treat for anyone with a sweet tooth. For something a bit more adventurous, the Blueberry Passion Eclairs and the Nutella Cinnamon Roll are a must-try. The cinnamon roll, in particular, is topped with marshmallows and toasted seeds, adding extra texture and sweetness to every bite.

SAVOURY DELIGHTS: The savoury offerings on the menu are just as impressive. The Truffle Mushroom Sandwich is a symphony of flavours, combining truffled mushrooms, caramelised onions and gooey cheese. It's rich, satisfying, and indulgent. For a spicier kick, the Chipotle Veggie Sandwich features Mexican-inspired vegetables and melted cheese layered on hearty Italian bread. Wrap lovers will adore the Chickpea Veggie Wrap, a flavour-packed burrito-style wrap filled with spicy chickpeas, and tangy pickled onions. Pair it with a side of their crispy Classic Fries for a meal that's as comforting as it is filling.

SWEET AND SAVOURY PAIRINGS: The new menu is designed with pairings in mind, offering a curated experience that complements every dish. Enjoy their signature Crunchy Hazelnut Smash for a heavenly mix of chocolatey sweetness and nutty richness. Or, pair the bold Flaky Chicken Seekh Wrap with a soothing Ginger Tea and Masala tea for a balance of spice and warmth.

If you're in the mood to experiment, the Cascara Thunder, a refreshing mix of cascara syrup over ice and lemonade, offers a zesty complement to the bold flavours of wraps. Each pairing has been thoughtfully created to elevate your dining experience.

DESSERTS AND SIDES THAT DELIGHT: *First Coffee* has also introduced indulgent sides and desserts that are worth savouring. The Korean BBQ Potato and Chicken Poppers are perfect companions to their wraps and sandwiches, while the Brookie, a fusion of brownie and cookie, is a dessert dream come true.

WHY YOU'LL LOVE IT: *First Coffee's* new menu blends trendy offerings like the Matcha Latte with timeless classics like the Iced Coffee, creating a menu that caters to every taste and preference. Add in the cosy, welcoming ambience and you have a café that's more than just a place to grab a coffee, it's a destination.

FACT SHEET
LOCATIONS:
 Cyberhub, Gurugram
 Pacific Mall, Jasola
 Pacific Mall, NSP

Co Founders : Sohrab Sitaram and Shiv Dhawan

Nestled gracefully in the foothills of the Kumaon region in Uttarakhand, Mukteshwar is a serene and unspoiled retreat that has yet to gain the limelight it truly deserves. Perched at an elevation of 2,171 meters, this picturesque hill station is located approximately 51 kilometers from the bustling town of Nainital. Mukteshwar offers you an idyllic escape for those seeking solace amidst nature's bounty and a peaceful respite from the chaos of urban life.

The Journey to Mukteshwar

The journey to Mukteshwar is as scenic as the destination itself. Once you cross the town of Nainital and continue your ascent, the winding roads begin to carve through the hills, offering a thrilling experience of hairpin bends and steep curves. The air grows crisper, and the lush greenery surrounding you seems to come alive, offering a visual treat to your senses. The long stretches of forested hills and cascading valleys make the drive a captivating experience, setting the stage for the calm that awaits you.

A Gateway to Himalayan Grandeur

Formerly known as Muktesar, Mukteshwar serves as a gateway to the majestic Himalayas, providing breathtaking views of snow-clad peaks. The Himalayan panorama here includes the towering Nanda Devi, the second-highest peak in India, standing tall as a symbol of nature's grandeur. The pristine mountain air and serene ambiance work like a balm, calming your soul and rejuvenating your spirit. Mukteshwar's unspoiled beauty makes it an ideal destination for mindful activities such as meditation, yoga, or simply soaking in the peace of the surroundings.

Mukteshwar Dham: A Spiritual Treat

The town derives its name from the revered Mukteshwar Dham, an ancient temple dedicated to Lord Shiva. Believed to be over



5,350 years old, this temple is not only a place of worship but also a testament to the spiritual and historical richness of the region. Located 21 kilometres from the town centre, the temple is perched atop a hill, offering mesmerizing views of the valley below. To reach the temple, visitors must embark on a short yet rewarding trek of about 15 minutes. There are two paths leading to the temple: one with well-paved stairs and another with a steep incline, allowing visitors to choose based on their preference and stamina.

Zero Point: A Viewpoint like No Other

Just a short walk from the Mukteshwar Dham lays Zero Point, a spot that offers unparalleled views of the Himalayan range. The 10 to 15-minute walk to this viewpoint is well worth the effort, as the vistas that greet you are nothing short of magical. A small entry fee of Rs. 60 is required, but the sight of the towering peaks bathed in golden sunlight or shrouded in misty clouds is a reward far greater than the cost. Zero Point allows visitors to fully immerse themselves in the raw beauty of the mountains, leaving an indelible mark on their hearts.

Why Mukteshwar?

Mukteshwar is more than just a destination, it is an experience that soothes the mind, body, and soul. Whether you are looking to relax in silence, embrace the beauty of nature, or embark on a spiritual journey, this quaint hill station has something for everyone. With its charming landscapes, rich history, and spiritual essence, Mukteshwar stands as a testament to the timeless beauty of Uttarakhand's Kumaon Hills. The place is a must visit if you want to detox yourself.

WAY TO MUKTESHWAR

Mukteshwar promises not just a tranquil retreat but also a journey filled with stunning views. Whether you prefer flying, riding a train, or driving through scenic routes, the travel itself becomes part of the adventure. From picturesque landscapes to steep turns on the mountain roads, each mode of transport offers a unique charm. Comfortable travel options ensure that reaching this beautiful destination is as delightful as staying there.

Mukteshwar by Road

Mukteshwar is well-connected by road, lying 353 km from Delhi, 51 km from Nainital, and 42 km from Haldwani. State-run buses link Mukteshwar with nearby Uttarakhand cities, including Kathgodam. Luxury buses are also available on the Delhi-Kathgodam route, with buses departing from Delhi's ISBT. The journey from Delhi to Kathgodam takes about 8 hours. For those driving from Delhi, follow NH 24 to Rampur, then NH 87 to Ranibagh. From Ranibagh, take the state highway to Bhowali, and finally another state highway via Ramgarh to Mukteshwar.

Mukteshwar by Train

Kathgodam Railway Station is the closest railhead to Mukteshwar, offering connections to major cities like Delhi, Lucknow, and Kolkata. From Kathgodam, travelers can hire taxis or take buses to reach Mukteshwar conveniently.

Mukteshwar by Air

The nearest airport to Mukteshwar is Pantnagar Airport, located 111 km away. Another option is the Jolly Grant Airport in Dehradun. From both airports, travelers can hire taxis to reach Mukteshwar comfortably.

THE SCENIC AND SIMPLE MUKTESHWAR

Mukteshwar is a quite destination that will help you discover your calmer self, writes **ABHI SINGHAL**



As someone who lives for the thrill of discovering untouched destinations, my recent journey to Jihar Village was a revelation. Nestled in the Almora district of Uttarakhand, this unspoiled hamlet, perched at an elevation of 2,171 meters, offers a serene escape from the chaos of modern life. It lies about 45 km beyond the ever-popular Jim Corbett National Park, yet few venture this far—a detail that adds to its charm. What awaited me was a perfect blend of natural beauty, cultural heritage, and heartwarming simplicity. The drive to Jihar was nothing short of mesmerising. The winding road was flanked by pine forests and occasional streams that glistened under the sunlight. Accompanied by lovely music in the car, I was lost in the serenity of the place. Two jackals darted across the path at one point, a reminder of the region's rich wildlife. As I drew closer, the snow-capped peaks of the Himalayas greeted me, reaffirming that I had made the right choice to explore this lesser-known gem. For accommodation, I opted for Nivriti Summit View, a boutique property near Basot village. Travelling with my family, I needed a place that catered to both comfort and scenic beauty, and this property delivered on all fronts. The first thing that struck me upon arrival was the sheer grandeur of the views. On one side, the majestic Himalayan ranges seemed close enough to touch, while on the other, the



endless valley stretched into a picturesque horizon. The sight of the Ramganga River winding its way below added to the allure. The property, with its six thoughtfully designed rooms, was a sanctuary in itself. Each room had large windows that framed the surrounding beauty like a painting. What made the stay even more special was the personal touch of the owner, Randhir Brar, whose love for travel and nature was evident in every corner. From curated books to artistic décor, every detail told a story. My mornings began with the golden glow of Nanda Devi, and my evenings ended with a cup of tea as Trisul's snowy peaks reflected the last light of the day. The highlight for my children was the sprawling garden—a perfect space to play and unwind. For me, it was the property's glasshouse rooms, which allowed me to gaze at the stars from the comfort of my bed. The culinary experience was equally memorable. While I enjoyed

Escape to Peaceful Jihar

From stunning Himalayan vistas and hidden waterfalls to the charm of Nivriti Summit View, my journey to Jihar was a perfect blend of adventure, tranquillity, and warm hospitality, writes **DIVYA BHATIA**



their continental offerings, the Kumaoni dishes—prepared with fresh, local ingredients—stole the show. Don't miss the chance to savour dishes like Bhatt ki Churdhani and Aloo ke

Gutke, prepared with expertise. After a full day of relaxation, we set out the following morning to explore Jihar. Our first stop was the Bona Devi Temple, a revered shrine nestled deep within the forests. Located about 14 km from Kalason Basot, the temple is more than 250 years old and steeped in local legend. It houses a Shivling, a pillar of Kaal Bhairavnath,



and the sacred hearth of Harju Devta. The moment we stepped into the temple premises, a serene calmness enveloped us, as though the place radiated an abundance of positive energy. However, it wasn't just the spiritual aura that captivated us. The temple offers stunning panoramic views of the Himalayan range and the five regions of Salt—Talla, Malla, Vichalla, Palla, and Valla. Its potential for spiritual tourism is undeniable, but its tranquillity must be preserved. Next on the itinerary was a hidden waterfall, about 25 km from the property, towards Almora. Accessible only on foot, the path to the falls remained elusive until a local guide helped us navigate the terrain. From the road, it appears like a modest stream cascading down the mountainside, but once you hike up, the scene transforms. The effort was worth it. At the top, I was greeted by a crystal-clear pool fed by cascading waters. Taking a dip in the cool, pristine water felt like nature's own therapy. A jungle walk leading to a secluded spot by the Ramganga River was another unforgettable highlight. Nivriti Summit View

arranged a picnic lunch for us there, and it was nothing short of magical. Surrounded by the sounds of rustling leaves and flowing water, the experience felt like stepping into another world. The locals mentioned occasional sightings of leopards, though they assured us these majestic creatures had never harmed anyone—a testament to the harmonious coexistence of humans and wildlife here. Evenings back at the property were spent stargazing. The clear skies above Jihar unveiled the Milky Way in all its glory, a humbling reminder of the universe's vastness. It's rare to find a place where time slows down, where each moment invites introspection and wonder. Jihar, with its unpretentious beauty, offers precisely that. In today's fast-paced world, places like Jihar remind us of the beauty of simplicity. It's not just a destination; it's an experience—a chance to slow down, breathe, and reconnect with what truly matters. Whether you're a nature lover, an adventure seeker, or simply someone looking to escape the crowds, Jihar promises memories you'll treasure for a lifetime.

HOW TO GET TO JIHAR

Reaching Jihar is part of the adventure. The nearest airport is Pantnagar, about 140 km away, while Kathgodam railway station is 100 km from the village. From these points, the scenic drive to Jihar is best enjoyed in a private cab or local bus.

YOUR WEEK AHEAD

MADHU KOTIYA



ARIES March 21-April 19

This week holds significant promise, particularly in financial matters. You may find yourself receiving substantial gains early in the week. Celebrations are in order, with joyful gatherings that underscore your recent successes in your professional life. Happiness permeates the home front as well, with key contributions from the women in your life, who display remarkable health, creativity, and energy. Their nurturing roles enhance the joy and unity of those around them. The week may also feature meaningful family events such as the joyous arrival of a new family member or the initiation of a lucrative opportunity, bringing loved ones together to share in the collective joy. As the week closes, expect a shift in perspective that could profoundly reshape your approach to life, setting the stage for enduring benefits.

Lucky number 3 | **Lucky colour** Amber
Lucky day Tuesday



LEO July 23-Aug 22

This week calls for measured actions and a calm demeanor. Embracing moderation rather than giving in to impulsive reactions will serve you well. Opportunities that could significantly improve your circumstances may arise, yet there's a risk of undermining these prospects through unchecked pride or a dismissive attitude. While self-respect is crucial, maintaining a balance with how others perceive you is equally important. You might find that new beginnings in your endeavors could stir envy among competitors. Stay vigilant as you could become the target of negative intentions. It's wise to be observant and understand the motivations of those around you. Secure your valuable possessions and keep a close eye on those who have access to your personal space or property.

Lucky number 9 | **Lucky colour** Magenta
Lucky day Thursday



SAGITTARIUS Nov 22-Dec 21

This week, you'll find yourself feeling invigorated and full of life, ready to tackle any obstacles that come your way. There's a sense of cosmic alignment that seems to enhance your efforts, steering you towards successful outcomes. Your energy is well-placed, boosting areas of your life that need the most attention. With a clear vision and unwavering resolve, you're set to conquer your highest aspirations. At home, the atmosphere buzzes with the promise of significant events that bring joy and fulfillment. A deep-seated wish of yours may finally come to fruition, possibly linked to family growth or children's achievements, which might include academic successes or securing opportunities they've eagerly sought. Your belief in your abilities and a higher power greatly shapes your reality, fostering a positive environment that encourages you to achieve remarkable things.

Lucky number 5 | **Lucky colour** Turquoise
Lucky day Monday



TAURUS April 20-May 20

This week is heavily influenced by your emotional and sentimental nature. You may find yourself in a nurturing role, eager to care for those close to you. Your compassionate demeanor makes you a source of solace and advice for many, although this could distract you from your professional responsibilities. Be mindful of those around you, as there's a risk that your straightforward approach might be exploited. It's essential to strategize and act decisively to ensure stability and financial security. Without active efforts and concrete plans, mere wishful thinking won't yield the desired results. Stay focused on your objectives and manage your emotions effectively to navigate through the week successfully.

Lucky number 15 | **Lucky colour** Crimson
Lucky day Sunday



VIRGO Aug 23-Sep 22

This week, individuals born under Virgo may experience a sense of isolation and a disconnection from everyday activities. Challenges in personal relationships, such as a break-up or a marital strain, could be impacting your emotional well-being. You might also find obstacles in your professional life; despite diligent efforts, progress seems stalled. This period requires patience and resilience. Stay prepared to counter any resistance you face as this may be the final test before you achieve your objectives. An influential figure may emerge to assist you, providing the support needed to overcome your current challenges. Expect a shift towards spiritual growth and a surge of new ideas. This fresh perspective will infuse your endeavors with innovation and a stronger sense of self-assurance.

Lucky number 6 | **Lucky colour** Olive
Lucky day Saturday



CAPRICORN Dec 22-Jan 19

This week, you may find yourself navigating a mix of emotions and detachment in your personal relationships. Minor irritants could lead to disagreements, but ultimately, decisions will be reached mutually. In your professional life, your kindness and generosity will shine, enhancing your reputation. Unexpected financial gains could provide a sense of security, bolstering your ability to handle both personal and professional challenges with skill and efficiency. Your reliable and devoted nature will make you a trusted figure at work. A natural curiosity will drive your desire to acquire new knowledge, fueling your success and making you a source of inspiration for others. You will uphold strong ethical standards, advocating for your beliefs and demonstrating integrity in all your endeavors.

Lucky number 13 | **Lucky colour** Maroon
Lucky day Friday



GEMINI May 21-June 20

This week, you demonstrate a compelling sense of authority and determination. Your strength lies not in physical prowess but in your ability to lead and inspire others to action. Your charismatic yet firm approach garners respect, although it leaves little room for emotional considerations. This could lead to some challenges in personal relationships, possibly causing strain or even separation. Family tensions may arise, particularly with maternal figures possibly opposing your choices in personal partnerships, leading to disagreements. Midweek, you might find yourself overwhelmed, struggling to make autonomous decisions due to these pressures. However, by week's end, you will find both financial and emotional enrichment as a respected elder, possibly a paternal figure, steps in to support you. Their fair and generous actions will lay the groundwork for your future achievements.

Lucky number 7 | **Lucky colour** Indigo
Lucky day Wednesday



LIBRA Sep 23-Oct 22

In the coming period, you may encounter situations that test the strength of your relationships, potentially leading to deep emotional impacts. Embrace these challenges as they arise; they are opportunities for personal growth and resilience. Fear of not meeting expectations or achieving success might loom large, yet remember that true bravery emerges from confronting and mastering these fears. Should a new opportunity present itself, seize it with confidence and move decisively toward your aspirations. Let go of any reservations and clear any obstacles from your path. If recent achievements seem less significant than anticipated, take time to reassess and refresh your strategies. By week's end, you could find yourself in a more prosperous position, with increased financial prospects or an attractive proposal coming your way.

Lucky number 1 | **Lucky colour** Lavender
Lucky day Wednesday



AQUARIUS Jan 20-Feb 18

This week presents a dynamic and steady phase for you, marked by significant authority and confidence. You find yourself in a scenario where confronting and engaging with influential individuals is not only possible but likely. This period allows you to relish a surge of energy and maintain strong connections with those around you. You may find yourself acting as a guiding figure, providing advice, setting goals, and fostering a sense of security for others. There's a harmonious alignment of your physical, mental, and emotional states, enhancing your decision-making prowess. Your presence demands respect, as you consistently uphold your principles, make fair judgments, and speak honestly. Your ability to maintain a clear vision ensures that emotions do not cloud your decisions, positioning you as a leader who views the broader context of any situation.

Lucky number 4 | **Lucky colour** Fuchsia
Lucky day Sunday



CANCER June 21-July 22

This week is a time for rejuvenation. Step away from the whirlwind of your daily activities and allow yourself some moments of relaxation. Embrace self-care by engaging in activities that refresh both your physical and mental well-being—consider routine health screenings, engage in mindful exercises, take leisurely strolls, and ensure you are getting ample rest. Such practices will equip you to navigate the energetic pace of life that lies ahead. Your professional life may soon pulsate with new opportunities and potential advancements such as raises or promotions. At home, expect to be more involved with family duties, especially in attending to children's needs, which could increase your expenditures. Additionally, consider planning a getaway that promises romantic undertones and quality family time.

Lucky number 10 | **Lucky colour** Teal
Lucky day Saturday



SCORPIO Oct 23-Nov 21

Currently, you possess a significant intensity and strength, which enhances your ability to understand the core of any situation distinctly. Your sharp insights and deep perceptiveness are at their peak, simplifying the process of achieving your objectives. This period is optimal for dispelling any confusion that has obscured your inner truths and for releasing the constraints of your past that have impeded your progress. Focus is now essential on your aspirations, accompanied by a profound spiritual enlightenment. Dedicate your time to harmonizing with the natural world—engage in morning or evening walks, embrace practices like yoga and meditation, or even consider participating in sports at a professional level. Embrace the flow of life's currents, allowing them to guide you forward naturally.

Lucky number 14 | **Lucky colour** Coral
Lucky day Sunday



PISCES Feb 19-March 20

Individuals born under this sign possess boundless potential, enabling them to transform and craft their reality as they see fit. While it is not feasible for everyone to uncover every mystery, these individuals often lead others to explore and tap into their own depths to unveil untapped capabilities. Known for their deep spiritual focus, they wield considerable power to enrich and fundamentally change lives. They adhere to a strong belief in balance and fairness, understanding that every action triggers a corresponding reaction, echoing the principles of cause and effect. To cultivate positive outcomes, they maintain a mindset geared toward making decisions that align with their desired results. This clarity of thought facilitates the full realization of their goals and alleviates many of life's challenges. Anticipate a significant journey or change in the near future.

Lucky number 17 | **Lucky colour** Purple
Lucky day Friday

Madhu Kotiya is a tarot card reader, spiritual healer, and Founder, MShezaim Institute of Tarot and Divination. Contact details: madhu@indiatarot.com, www.indiatarot.com, M: 9873283331

The Power of a Thought

THE TUNING FORK



CV Srikanth

‘Cogito, ergo sum’ ... I Think therefore I am. ...
René Descartes
If you have decided to read this. Stop. Think what you are thinking now. Because ... Whether you think you can or you think you can't, you're right! The only thing absolutely in our power is our Thought. It shapes our reality. Influences our emotions. Translates to actions. And ultimately defines the quality of our lives. This concept is deeply embedded in various philosophical and spiritual traditions, including ancient Indian wisdom, emphasizing the profound impact of our mental processes, manifesting into our experiences. In the realm of Vedic philosophy, the Nature of thoughts is not just merely a fleeting phenomenon. They are powerful forces that can create or destroy. The idea that “you become what you think” resonates with many ancient texts, highlighting the significance of cultivating positive thoughts.

“यथा संकल्पते मनः तदनुसम्यद्यते”
“As the mind thinks, so it becomes.”

The quality of our thoughts directly influences our reality. A positive mindset attracts positive experiences. Positive Thinking is not merely wishful thinking. It is a conscious effort to reshape our cognitive patterns. This idea is echoed in various scriptures that advocate for a mindset centred on optimism and well-being.

“असतो मासद्गमय”
“Lead me from the unreal to the real.”

This shloka from the Brihadaranyaka Upanishad encourages individuals to move from ignorance to knowledge. By focusing on positive and truthful thoughts, we navigate through the complexities of life towards clarity, peace and Holistic wellbeing. A thought is energy. Almost impossible to stop from flowing in. Having a sizeable impact effect on every facet of our life. What however is possible and should be the goal is to regulate them conscientiously so as to have them supportively influence and nourish our present moment. How we nurture our thoughts is in our control. Thereby we can manage how they impact us. If we



allow the negative to nest within for a long period, we create a cyclic trap which is detrimental. It is important to emphasize here that when we stay on and nourish thoughts, we become what we think. Yet ... we must recognise that and understand that we are not our thoughts. We

have the ability to rise above them. Meditation and mindfulness practices are vital in harnessing the power of our thoughts. They help in cultivating consciousness, allowing us to observe our thoughts without attachment. This detachment is crucial in

understanding the transient nature of thoughts. “शान्ताकारं युज्यते ननु शुभं त्विदं नाम्”
“Peaceful in form, resting on a serpent, Lord of all beings, O yogis...”
This shloka refers to Lord Shiva, symbolising inner peace and

mastery over the mind. Through practices that promote mindfulness, we can align our thoughts with tranquillity and purpose. The power of thoughts extends beyond the individual. It influences our ecosystem. The teachings of the Upanishads highlight the interconnectedness of life and the importance of collective positivity. The power of our thoughts is a profound truth recognised in ancient Indian philosophy. By cultivating positive, constructive thoughts, we can transform our reality, contribute to our well-being, and enhance our connections with ourselves, others and the Universe. As we navigate through life's challenges, our thoughts hold the key to our experiences, shaping our destinies with each conscious choice we make. As Raman Maharishi said - The degree of freedom from unwanted thoughts and the degree of concentration on a single thought are the measures to gauge spiritual progress. We are the seat of limitless Power - through our thought. Just One Thought can make all the difference!! I Think therefore I am.