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Gandhi family wounded the Constitution: PM



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

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

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

accentuate its contradictions and damage its unity. Training guns at the Nehru-Gandhi family of the Congress, he said they left no stone unturned to strike blows to the Constitution. "This family challenged the Constitution at every level," he said, adding that he was singling out the family as its members were in power for 55 years. The family, having "tasted blood", repeatedly wounded the Constitution, he said, citing several decisions of Jawaharlal Nehru, Indira Gandhi and Rajiv Gandhi when they held the office of Prime Minister.

"Their next generation is also into the same game," he said in a swipe at the Leader of Opposition in the House Rahul Gandhi and his MP sister Priyanka Gandhi Vadra. The PM said leaders like him, and many others who came from ordinary families could never have reached where they did but for the strength of the Constitution, as he underlined his long commitment to its values. As Chief Minister of Gujarat, PM Modi said that his government celebrated the 60th year of the Constitution's adoption by placing a copy of the document on an elephant while he walked underneath barefoot in a symbolic gesture to highlight its supremacy. Slamming the Nehru-Gandhi family, he said India's first PM Jawaharlal Nehru "amended the country's guiding document to curb freedom of expression and his daughter Indira Gandhi imposed Emergency to defy a Supreme Court judgment that annulled her election as an MP."

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

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Savarkar always blamed Constitution: Rahul Gandhi

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

Leader of Opposition Rahul Gandhi on Saturday accused the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP), and the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS) of being "supporters of Manusmriti" adding that "their supreme leader Savarkar always blamed the Indian Constitution". Participating in a debate in the Lok Sabha on the 75 years of the adoption of the Constitution, the Congress leader said that while talking of protecting the Constitution, the ruling party is "ridiculing" Savarkar. Drawing a parallel with the story of Eklavya who had to chop off his thumb as 'Guru Dakshina' to Dronacharya, Gandhi alleged that by creation of "monopolies" for the Adani Group in various sectors, bringing in the Agnipath scheme, firing teargas at protesting farmers, bringing in lateral entry and allowing paper leaks, the government was "chopping off" the thumb of the youth, tillers, backward class people and the poor. Gandhi said that he wants to tell every poor person that the Constitution protects them, but the BJP keeps attacking it 24x7. He also reiterated his promise made on the floor of the House last session that a caste census will be conducted and the 50 per cent cap on reservation will be done away with to usher in a "new type of development" in the country. "I want to start my speech by

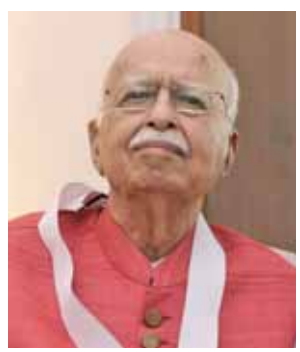


Leader of Opposition in the Lok Sabha Rahul Gandhi speaks in the House during the Winter session of Parliament, in New Delhi, Saturday

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

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

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BJP patriarch LK Advani in ICU, condition stable says hospital

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

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

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

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

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



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

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

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

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Photo: Ranjan Dimri

CAQM revises plan to tackle winter pollution

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

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

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

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The battle for, and of, New Delhi

RAJESH KUMAR ■ NEW DELHI

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



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

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

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Ayodhya Ram Temple is UP's most visited destination of the year

BISWAJEET BANERJEE/KAMLESH SRIVASTAVA ■ LUCKNOW

Uttar Pradesh has experienced a tourism surge, breaking records with an impressive 47.61 crore tourists visiting the state between January and September 2024. Ayodhya, home to the under-construction Shri Ram Temple, has emerged as the state's most visited destination, surpassing even the iconic Taj Mahal in Agra. According to the Uttar Pradesh Tourism Department, Ayodhya alone welcomed 13.55 crore domestic tourists and 3,153 international visitors during this period. The upcoming inauguration of the Ram Temple has played a pivotal role in drawing unprecedented crowds.

"The rise in Ayodhya's tourism is nothing short of phenomenal," said Rajesh Tiwari, a Lucknow-based travel agent. "We have seen a 70% increase in bookings for Ayodhya tours compared to last year. Devotees and cultural enthusiasts from across the country want to be part of this historic transformation." While the Taj Mahal remains a global icon, its tourist numbers have seen a slight decline in domestic visitors, though international arrivals rose from 26,84,825 in 2022-23 to 27,70,340 in 2023-24. The overall domestic tourist count to the Taj Mahal decreased by 1,93,298 compared to the previous year. "The Taj Mahal is still an essential stop for international tourists," remarked Suresh Gupta,

a tour operator from Agra. "However, domestic travelers now prefer spiritual and culturally significant sites like Ayodhya and Varanasi. People are looking for meaningful travel experiences that connect them to their heritage." Tourism Minister Jaiveer Singh highlighted the state's broader tourism success. "The tourism surge is not limited to Ayodhya," he stated. "Varanasi attracted 6.2 crore domestic tourists and 1.84 lakh foreign visitors. Prayagraj drew 4.80 crore tourists, including 4,790 foreigners. Mathura, the birthplace of Lord Krishna, saw 6.8 crore visitors, including 87,229 international tourists. Even Mirzapur recorded 1.18 crore visitors." The state's Buddhist circuit hub,



File photo: PTI

Kushinagar, also saw substantial growth, welcoming 16.2 lakh visitors, including 1.53 lakh international tourists. Agra, despite competition from Ayodhya, received 1.25 crore tourists, including 9.24 lakh foreigners. Tour operators remain optimistic. "We expect even higher numbers with the upcoming Pran Pratishtha ceremony at the Ram Temple," said Poonam Verma, a tourism consultant from Delhi. "Religious tourism has become a defining factor in Uttar Pradesh's tourism industry. Events like the Kumbh Mela, along with better infrastructure and connectivity, have boosted travel significantly." Industry experts believe that consistent marketing and improved facilities have helped

Uttar Pradesh build a strong global tourism presence. "The government's focus on religious tourism is commendable," noted Amit Sharma, a hospitality consultant. "We now see better hotels, guided tours, and easier transport options, making the state an attractive destination for all types of travelers." Other destinations like Siddharthnagar (86,215 visitors), Lakhimpur Kheri (46.5 lakh), Pilibhit (30.6 lakh), Bijnor (34.4 lakh), and Sonbhadra (19.4 lakh) also contributed to the state's growing tourism footprint. With the Ram Temple nearing completion and major religious events on the horizon, Uttar Pradesh is poised to strengthen its position as India's top cultural and religious tourism hub.

Dadar Hanuman temple won't be demolished, order stayed: BJP

PTI ■ MUMBAI

BJP leaders on Saturday claimed that a demolition notice issued by the Railways to a temple outside Mumbai's Dadar station has been stayed, with Maharashtra Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis saying it would be regularised as per rules. The assertions by the ruling party leaders came a day after Shiv Sena (UBT) chief Uddhav Thackeray slammed the BJP over the notice. BJP legislator Mangal Prabhat Lodha said the Dadar Hanuman temple will be protected. Lodha visited the shrine near Platform No. 12 at Dadar East, adjacent to the Central Railway station. He interacted with the temple trustees and

joined the 'aarti'. MLA Kalidas Kolambkar and members of Bajrang Dal and Vishwa Hindu Parishad were also present at the temple. Lodha said he had spoken with Union Railway Minister Ashwini Vaishnaw and an order has been issued to halt the demolition. Shiv Sena (UBT) chief Thackeray on Friday claimed that Railways had issued a 'fatwa' (edict) to bring down the 80-year-old Hanuman temple built by porters. Taking a dig at the BJP's "ek hai to safe hai" slogan, he said even temples are not safe in the saffron party's regime. After his temple visit, Lodha, who represents the Malabar Hill assembly constituency in the city, told reporters that the BJP-led governments at the



Centre and Maharashtra listen to the concerns over Hindutva and that of the people. "We understand the sentiments of the Hindu community regarding this

temple, and I assure you that no harm will come to this sacred place. Since we learnt about the situation, BJP leaders, and Bajrang Dal and Vishwa Hindu Parishad workers have all been in

contact with railway minister Vaishnaw," he said. The BJP leader said they have made every effort to protect the temple and would continue to do so. "Any attempt to politicise religious sentiments has been thwarted before it could succeed, and we have successfully saved the temple," he asserted. In a notice dated December 4 to the trustee/pujari of the temple, the Railways said the structure was an encroachment and constructed without authorisation on land owned by it. These structures are affecting the movement of commuters and vehicular traffic. It is also obstructing the construction of infrastructure works at

Dadar station, it said. The Railways had given a seven-day notice for the removal of the structure. Lodha said the notice has been stayed. Responding to a question about the temple, Fadnavis, who was at the 'Pune Book Festival 2024', said, "The process of classification of temples is underway. Ancient temples are preserved. The issue of Dadar Hanuman temple will be discussed with the railway administration and a solution will be found. We will regularise it as per the rules." His party colleague and former MP Kirit Somaiya also visited the temple on Saturday. He told the trustees that the railway officials had assured him the temple wouldn't be demolished.

Physically challenged woman burnt to death during clash in Nuh village

PTI ■ GURUGRAM

A physically challenged woman was burnt to death during a violent clash between two groups in Laharwadi village of Haryana's Nuh district over the arrest of the accused in an eight-month-old murder case, police said on Saturday. The family of the woman, identified as Shehnaz, alleged that she was set afire by the rival group. The 24-year-old woman suffered from a walking disability and died on the spot. "The death of the woman in clash between two groups is a matter of investigation. We

are investigating to find out the truth in the matter," said Pradeep Kumar, Deputy Superintendent of Police, Punhana. Tension prevailed in the village after the incident on Friday and a large contingent of police personnel have been deployed to maintain peace, the police said. According to the police, a youth named Rizwan was murdered in Laharwadi village eight months ago over a dispute over dumping soil in a field. The clash on Friday occurred between groups supporting the victim and accused, and the woman Shehnaz belonged to the family of the accused.

Thousands of passengers impacted by technical issues on IndiGo flights on Istanbul-India sector

RAJESH KUMAR ■ NEW DELHI

Thousands of passengers continue to be impacted by technical issues faced by IndiGo flights on the Istanbul-India sector after their flight to Delhi and Mumbai was cancelled on Friday due to a technical issue, the Consulate General of India, Istanbul, has stepped in to aid passengers. As hundreds of passengers scheduled to fly to India remain stranded, IndiGo despatches two Airbus A321 planes to Istanbul which will likely bring the fliers back in around 20 hours. The airline's flights on December 11 to both Delhi and Mumbai were delayed by almost two days. Then Istanbul-Delhi of December 13 was also delayed, adding to the number of flyers stranded there. IndiGo was asked to take care of passengers. Other steps by the government will be



considered after the report of IndiGo is received," a civil aviation ministry official said. The Consulate was in touch with the airlines regularly and responding to all calls from passengers. The passengers were provided lounge, stay, and food. Turkey had abolished visa on arrival for eligible Indian travellers in April 2014. All Indian passport holders need to have an

electronic visa (e-visa) or a sticker visa issued by a Turkish diplomatic or consular mission abroad in order to be able to enter into Turkey. Which means that a significant number of IndiGo passengers stuck at Istanbul airport were not able to leave the airport. Passengers took to social media to express their frustration about the long wait and lack of adequate

facilities at the airport. Meanwhile, another IndiGo flight to Jeddah, Saudi Arabia, was on Saturday forced to make an emergency landing at the Jinnah International Airport in Pakistan's Karachi city following a medical emergency onboard. The aircraft, which departed from New Delhi, was in Pakistani airspace when a male passenger fell seriously ill, according to sources from the Civil Aviation Authority (CAA). On Thursday, hundreds of IndiGo passengers were stuck at Istanbul airport after their flights to Delhi and Mumbai were delayed. They were stranded for over 24 hours, and many took to social media to complain about the delays and lack of facilities. There was a cascading effect on the airline's scheduled flights on the two routes. IndiGo, on Friday evening,

said all necessary steps were taken to ensure customers were apprised and provided with refreshments and accommodation, where possible. On Saturday, IndiGo said its flight 6E 12, operating from Istanbul to Delhi, was cancelled due to a technical issue. The cancellation happened on Friday. The airline operates two daily flights to Istanbul with leased Boeing 777 aircraft -- one from Delhi and another from Mumbai. "Alternative aircraft have been arranged to transport passengers to their destination. We sincerely regret the inconvenience caused and appreciate their understanding in this matter," the airline said in a statement on Saturday. Details about the number of passengers who were booked on the cancelled flight on Friday could not be immediately ascertained.

NIA chargesheets accused in terror attack case on pilgrim bus in Reasi

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ JAMMU

The National Investigation Agency (NIA) on Saturday charge-sheeted Hakim Khan alias Hakim Din, accused in the case relating to the terrorist attack on a bus carrying pilgrims from Shiv Khori, Ransoo to Katra. Hakim Din, a resident of the Bandrahi area of the Rajouri district, was arrested almost six months ago by the Jammu and Kashmir police for sheltering and providing logistics support to foreign terrorists behind the gruesome attack on a pilgrim bus on June 9, 2024. The foreign terrorists had paid a paltry sum of Rs 6000 to Hakim Din for acting as their guide and extending other logistic support. A total of nine pilgrims were killed and 41 others were injured in the



terror attack which coincided with the swearing-in ceremony of Prime Minister Narendra Modi for a third term in succession. According to a spokesman of the National Investigation Agency (NIA), the agency has arrested accused Hakim Khan @ Hakim Din under various IPC and UA(P) Act sections. The Ministry of Home Affairs had handed over the probe in the case to the NIA.

NIA investigations revealed, "Hakim Din had confessed to being part of the conspiracy behind the attack, which was executed by three terrorists with his active logistic support. Besides providing them with food and stay arrangements, he had helped the terrorists in identifying the attack spot, an NIA spokesman said. Further investigations in the case RC-02/2024/NIA/JMU are continuing.

The battle for, and of, New Delhi

From page 1

In 1993, Kirti Azad won from the New Delhi Assembly seat on a Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) ticket. Sheila Dikshit won the seat as a Congress candidate in 1998, 2003 and 2008. Interestingly, the Congress list has also drawn criticism for apparent nepotism, with tickets going to Mudit Agarwal and Shivank Singhal, sons of senior Congress leaders. The Congress on Thursday announced its first list of 21 candidates for the upcoming Delhi Assembly elections which include 12 first-time candidates, signalling the party's intent to

inject fresh energy into its campaign. Key names among them are Mudit Aggarwal from Chandni Chowk, Aruna Kumar from Narela, and Shivank Singhal from Adarsh Nagar. Prominent party members Jai Kishan, Ragini Nayak, and Anil Bharadwaj will contest from Sultanpur Majra, Wazirpur, and Sadar Bazar, respectively. The Congress and the AAP are partners in the INDIA Bloc but are rivals in Delhi and Punjab. Earlier this week, Kejriwal ruled out any possibility of alliance with the Congress in the upcoming Assembly polls in the National Capital.

Savarkar always blamed Constitution: Rahul Gandhi

From page 1

The House witnessed tumultuous scenes when Leader of Opposition Rahul Gandhi sought to respond to Shinde's remarks, but was disallowed by the Chair. "I had asked this question to Indira Gandhi when I was younger. Indira Gandhi said Savarkarji compromised with the British, wrote a letter to the British and asked for forgiveness from the British," he said. "Indira Gandhi said (Mahatma) Gandhiji went to jail, (Jawaharlal) Nehruji went to jail and Savarkarji sought forgiveness. This was the position of Indira Gandhi," he said. He narrated the story of Eklavya from the epic Mahabharata and said that just like Dronacharya got Eklavya's thumb cut, this government is chopping off the thumb of the

country. When this Government hands over the country's assets to Adani, then the thumbs of small and big industries and businessmen of this country are cut, he said. Referring to his visit to Uttar Pradesh's Hathras, Gandhi said he met the family of the woman who was allegedly gangraped and killed. He said the victim's family is locked in the house, while the accused roam free. "Where is this written in the Constitution that the family of the person raped be confined to a house. This would be written in your (BJP) book not in the Constitution," he said. The INDIA Bloc will facilitate the relocation of the family if the government does not do it, he added. Gandhi also referred to the Sambhal violence, saying five innocent people lost their

lives. He accused the BJP of spreading division in the society. The ideology of the INDIA bloc has brought the Constitution to the country and "we all together protect the Constitution", he said. Quoting BR Ambedkar, Gandhi said, "If there is political equality but no social and economic equality, political equality will be destroyed." "These are the words of Ambedkar ji and today it is clear that political equality has ended. There is no social equality and there is no economic equality either. That is why our next step will be caste census. We want to show the country whose thumbs have you cut? We want to show the Dalits, Adivasis, backward classes, farmers, labourers whose thumbs have been cut off by the Government?" he said.

Key member of Hashim Baba gang killed in encounter

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

A criminal wanted in connection with several cases in Uttar Pradesh and Delhi and a key member of Hashim Baba Gang was killed in an encounter with police in Uttar Pradesh's Meerut district during the early hours of Saturday. The deceased identified as Anil alias Sonu Matka (39) who hails from East Gokulpur in Delhi allegedly shot dead a property dealer and his nephew on Diwali this year, and was also wanted in the Karol Bagh robbery of Rs 1.5 crore in 2022. He was critically injured in an encounter during a joint operation by the Delhi Police Special Cell and UP Special Task Force (STF). Later, he succumbed to his injuries during treatment at the hospital.



Matka was wanted in connection with several crimes in Delhi and Uttar Pradesh, including the killings of a man and his nephew in the national capital's Farsh Bazar area and was also carrying a bounty of Rs. 50,000. The encounter broke out in the early hours of Saturday in Merrut's TP Nagar area after the police received input about his location. The

operation, carried out by the Special Task Force (STF) in collaboration with the Delhi Police Special Cell, resulted in an exchange of gunfire. Matka sustained injuries and succumbed during treatment, the police confirmed. "He was involved in several serious crimes, including a spate of robberies and murders across Delhi and Uttar Pradesh," he added. After the encounter, the police seized two

sophisticated pistols, 10 live rounds and a bike from Sonu Matka. "The encounter took place in the jurisdiction of TP Nagar police station. The joint operation was conducted by the Special Task Force (STF) of the Uttar Pradesh Police and the Delhi Police's Special Cell," Additional Director General of Police (STF) Amitabh Yash said. The officer added that the Baghpat native was involved in numerous cases of robbery and murder in both Uttar Pradesh and Delhi. "During the encounter, Matka suffered critical injuries and subsequently succumbed to them while undergoing treatment," Yash said. The police are investigating the matter. In a statement, STF Meerut SP Brijesh Singh said, "Sonu Matka was an infamous

gangster from Delhi. The Special Cell of Delhi Police received input about his location in TP Nagar Ved Vyas Puri. Delhi Police informed the STF about the input. In a joint operation, both teams reached Ved Vyas Puri at 7 AM." Earlier on September 24, The Delhi Police special cell interrogated gangster Hashim Baba in connection to the killing of a Delhi Gym owner Nadir Shah. Hashim Baba was taken into custody by the special cell from Tihar jail on a production warrant. Police sources said Hashim Baba and associates planned the killing of Nadir Shah from inside the Tihar jail. Despite a crackdown on gangsters using mobile phones inside jail after the killing of Sidhu Mosewala the gangsters were able to use phones to plot the killing.

Gandhi family wounded the Constitution: PM

From page 1

The PM hailed India's journey since the adoption of the Constitution in 1949 as "extraordinary", asserting that the country's ancient democratic roots have long been an inspiration for the world. India is not only a big democracy but it is the mother of democracy, he said in the Lok Sabha replying to a two-day debate on the 75 years of the adoption of the Constitution. Modi said India

has resolved to become a developed country by 2047 and its unity is the biggest requirement to achieve the goal. "Our Constitution is the basis of our unity," he said. Modi said India defied all apprehensions about its democratic future after independence and added its Constitution has brought the country to this stage. He paid tributes to the makers of the Constitution and the country's citizens for living up to the spirit of its makers. Those

involved in the making of the Constitution were well aware that India was not born in 1947 or turned democratic in 1950, he said, citing remarks of eminent personalities like Purushottam Das Tandon and Bhim Rao Ambedkar. Women were given voting rights by the Constitution, Modi said, adding the country is now seeing women-led development. He lauded the parliamentarians for the unanimous passage of the law to give reservation to

women in the Lok Sabha and State Assemblies. In his speech, PM Modi laid out 11 Sankalps, which he said would guide the nation towards becoming a "Viksit Bharat" (developed India) by 2047. "1. Both governments and citizens will perform their duties diligently. 2. The development of every region and society will be prioritised - Sabka Saath Sabka Vikas. 3. A zero-tolerance policy against corruption. 4. People must have pride in the law

and its implementation. 5. Moving away from a slavery mindset. 6. Eradicating nepotism in politics. 7. Honouring the Constitution. 8. Ensuring reservations are not based on religion and safeguarding them. 9. Leading in women-led development. 10. Focusing on the development of both states and the nation. 11. Promoting the idea of "Ek Bharat Shreshtha Bharat", out lined Modi about his vision for India by 2047.

CAQM revises plan to tackle winter...

From page 1

Poor air quality, driven by unfavourable weather conditions, usually persists for long periods during winter, from November to January. During this time, Delhi frequently enforces restrictions under the Graded Response Action Plan (GRAP), which categorises air quality into four stages: Stage I (Poor) with AQI between 201 and 300, Stage II (Very Poor) between 301 and 400, Stage III (Severe) between 401 and 450, and Stage IV (Severe Plus) for AQI above 450. During the second stage, the advisory asked for mechanical/ vacuum sweeping and water sprinkling of the identified

roads on a daily basis. Enhance the number of shifts / hours of deployment of such machines to further intensify mechanised sweeping. People are advised to use public transport and minimise use of personal vehicles and use technology, take less congested routes, even if slightly longer. According to the revised plan, inter-state buses from NCR states, except those EVs and those running CNG or BS-VI diesel, will not be allowed to enter Delhi under Stage II. This provision earlier came into effect under Stage III. Resident welfare associations will also be required to provide electric heaters to staff involved in sanitation, gardening, and other services,

in addition to security staff, to prevent open burning of biomass or solid waste during winters. "Do not idle your vehicle, also turn off the engine at red lights. Prefer hybrid vehicles or EVs to control vehicular pollution. Keep the engines of your vehicles properly tuned. Do not drive/ply end of life/ 10/15 years old Diesel/Petrol vehicles," it said. Persons with disabilities are exempt from restrictions imposed on BS-III petrol and BS-IV diesel cars in Delhi and the districts of Gurugram, Faridabad, Ghaziabad, and Gautam Budh Nagar under Stage III. The Delhi government has been directed to ban diesel medium goods vehicles (MGVs) with BS-IV or older

standards, except those carrying essential goods or services, within the city under Stage III. Similarly, non-essential diesel light commercial vehicles (LCVs) of BS-IV or older standards, registered outside Delhi, will not be allowed to enter the city. Previously, such restrictions applied only to BS-III vehicles. It advised people to walk, or use cycles, for small distances during the stage III and choose a cleaner commute. "Share a ride to work or use public transport. People, whose positions allow working from home, may work from home," it said. The panel has also mandated that schools and colleges in Delhi, Gurugram, Faridabad,

Ghaziabad, and Gautam Budh Nagar shift classes up to Class V to hybrid mode (both online and offline) under Stage III. Students and parents will have the option to choose online education wherever it is available. Under Stage IV, which is invoked when the AQI crosses the 450 mark, schools in Delhi and NCR districts will be required to conduct classes for students from Class VI to IX and XI in the hybrid mode. The Delhi and NCR State Governments have also been directed to stagger timings for public offices and municipal bodies under Stage III. The Centre may decide on similar staggered timings for central government offices in Delhi-NCR.

Police lob teargas, 17 injured...

From page 1

Punjab farmer leader Jagjit Singh Dallewal, whose fast unto death entered the 19th day on Saturday, said the lives of those farmers, who are committing suicide because of the alleged wrong policies of governments, is more valuable than his. His remark came a day after the Supreme Court directed the Centre and Punjab government representatives to immediately meet him, provide him with medical help and persuade him to break his indefinite fast saying his life was precious. Dallewal (70), a cancer patient, has been on a fast-unto-death at the Khanauri border between Punjab and Haryana since November 26 to press the

Centre to accept the agitating farmers' demands, including a legal guarantee of MSP on crops. Doctors have already recommended his hospitalisation, saying he has turned weak because of the prolonged fast. During his brief address to the media at Khanauri, Dallewal thanked the apex court for expressing concern over his health. "The honourable Supreme Court says that my life is more valuable than the agitation. But I believe that the lives of those farmers, who are committing suicide due to the wrong policies of the government are more valuable than my life," said Dallewal. Earlier, the agitating farmers had made two attempts, on

December 6 and 8, which were thwarted by the Haryana security personnel who fired tear gas shells and used water cannons to disperse them. A total of 22 farmers were then injured. The farmers under the banner of SKM (Non-Political) and KMM have been camping at Shambhu and Khanauri border points between Punjab and Haryana since February 13 after their march to Delhi was stopped by the security forces. Besides a legal guarantee on the minimum support price (MSP) for crops, the farmers are demanding a debt waiver, pension for farmers and farm labourers, no hike in the electricity tariff, withdrawal of police cases and "justice" for the victims of the 2021 Lakhimpur Kheri violence.

Kejriwal writes to Shah, requests meeting concerning law and order in city

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

Former Delhi Chief Minister and AAP convener Arvind Kejriwal has written to Union Home Minister Amit Shah, requesting a meeting to discuss concerns related to law and order in Delhi. Kejriwal expressed his concerns, highlighting that despite Delhi's law and order being under the control of the central government, the city is increasingly being referred to as the "crime capital" both within India and abroad.

In a letter to Shah, the former Delhi chief minister claimed that the city was being called the country's "crime capital" as he cited the recent bomb threats to numerous schools as well as the IGI airport. The letter

comes ahead of the Delhi Assembly polls scheduled to be held in February 2025.

"It's so shameful that under your watch, our grand capital due to failure of law and order is being called rape capital, gangster capital, drug capital," Kejriwal said. Crimes against women are rising, extortion gangs are active everywhere, drug mafia is spreading across the city and people are harassed by mobile phone and chain snatching incidents, he claimed.

In the past six months, more than 600 schools, more than 100 hospitals, malls and airport have received bomb threat messages, he said and questioned, "Why aren't the culprits being arrested?".

Due to these bomb threats, children and their parents in Delhi are living in constant



fear. Have you ever thought about the children and their parents when the schools are vacated and the students are sent back home, he asked Shah.

He said Delhi's law and order was under the Centre and emphasised that Shah needed to act and cooperate to immediately rectify the situation.

Among the 19 metro cities, Delhi is the number one in terms of crimes against women and murders. Drug-related crimes registered a 350 per cent rise since 2019, an average of three women are raped every day and businesspersons regularly receive extortion calls, Kejriwal claimed. "These statistics are evidence of the dilapidated law and order situation," he said.

Kejriwal said he was going

among the people and found "deep concern" among them towards law and order. "Now the biggest question of the people is if they don't deserve a better law and order condition in the national capital?" he said. The situation is very poor and law and order must be brought back on track by rising above politics, Kejriwal wrote to Shah seeking time for a meeting. In a scathing attack on Kejriwal, BJP MP Manoj Tiwari accused him of neglecting critical issues in the national capital. Tiwari criticised the AAP government and alleged that 21,000 deaths in Delhi over the past decade were linked to water pollution.

He said Kejriwal had failed to address worsening pollution, halted pensions

for the elderly and neglected the issuance of ration cards for the poor. He further accused Kejriwal of

protecting "illegal Bangladeshi infiltrators and Rohingyas" and blamed him for Delhi's deteriorating law and order.

Earlier this week, Kejriwal attacked Home Minister Amit Shah and said that the BJP is no longer able to handle the law and order situation in the national capital.

"Amit Shah ji has ruined Delhi. He has turned Delhi into a jungle raj. People are living a life of terror everywhere. BJP is no longer able to handle the law and order situation in Delhi. The people of Delhi will have to unite and raise their voices," Arvind Kejriwal posted on X.

Delhi Govt submitted CAG reports to LG after 497 days delay, claims Raj Niwas

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

Raj Niwas on Saturday claimed the Delhi government submitted the long-pending Comptroller and Auditor General (CAG) reports to Lt Governor Vinai Kumar Saxena after 497 days delay, to seek his permission fearing an adverse order by the Delhi High Court.

Giving details, officials said it took the fear of an adverse order by the Delhi High Court for the AAP Government to hurriedly submit the long-pending CAG Reports to the LG for making it possible for the reports to be made public, by placing them in the Assembly.

Earlier, the Delhi government on Thursday informed the Delhi High Court that Chief Minister Atishi, who holds the finance portfolio, has sent the CAG reports related to liquor

No.	Report No. & Year	Report	Period	Marked to Finance Minister by the Department	Nos. of days file kept by Finance Minister/ Chief Minister
1	Report No. 1 of 2022	State Finances Audit Report	Year ended 31.03.2021	09.08.2023	490 days
2	Report No. 2 of 2022	Performance Audit on Prevention and Mitigation of Vehicular Air Pollution in Delhi	Year ended 31.03.2021	09.08.2023	490 days
3	Report No. 3 of 2022	Revenue, Economic, Social and General Sectors & PSUs	Year ended 31.03.2021 & 31.03.2021	09.08.2023	490 days
4		Finance Accounts	2021-22	09.08.2023	490 days
5		Appropriation Accounts	2021-22	09.08.2023	490 days
6	Report No. 1 of 2023	Performance Audit Report on Children in Need of Care and Protection	(2018-19 to 2020-21) Year ended 31.03.2021	09.08.2023	490 days
7	Report No. 2 of 2023	State Finances Audit Report	Year ended 31.03.2022	02.08.2023	497 days
8		Finance Accounts	2022-23	21.02.2024	294 days
9		Appropriation Accounts	2022-23	21.02.2024	294 days
10	Report No. 1 of 2024	Performance Audit on Regulation and Supply of Liquor in Delhi	2021-22 to 2021-22	08.03.2024	278 days
11	Report No. 2 of 2024	State Finances Audit Report	Year ended 31.03.2023	11.07.2024	153 days
12	Report No. 3 of 2024	Public Health Infrastructure and Management of Health Services	Year ended 31.03.2023	24.09.2024	78 days
13	Report No. 4 of 2024	Performance Audit Report on Functioning of Delhi Transport Corporation	Year ended 31.03.2022	10.12.2024	2 days
14	Report No. 5 of 2024	Revenue, Economic, Social and General Sectors & PSUs and Performance Audit of the Department of H&W and Compliance Audit	Year ended 31.03.2022	10.12.2024	2 days

duty, pollution and finance to the Lieutenant Governor for placing before the state assembly.

According to Raj Niwas, out of these 14 pending CAG Reports, 11 pertain to the time when Arvind Kejriwal was the Chief Minister of Delhi. The reports include those on DTC, Public Health and Mohalla Clinics, State PSUs, where huge bungling and failings of the AAP Government are said to be detailed.

Following a writ petition filed by the Leader of Opposition in the Delhi Assembly in the High Court seeking directions of the Court to the Government to lay 14 long-pending CAG Reports on the Table of the House, the Government in a move to save face hurriedly sent 12 reports on 11.12.2024 at 03:30 PM just a day before the hearing and two reports on 12.12.2024 at

07:50 PM to the LG Secretariat, after the hearing had concluded.

It may be noted that it was only in pursuance of the fervent requests made by the LG office to the Finance Minister and other functionaries to place the CAG reports with the LG office and thereafter on account of the present Writ Petition, that the Finance Minister of Delhi, currently also functioning as the Chief Minister of Delhi has released the long pending CAG reports and forwarded them to the LG office only on 11.12.2024.

According to Leader of Opposition in Delhi Assembly, Vijendra Gupta the reports were withheld intentionally to suppress critical findings and avoid scrutiny. He claimed the reports were forwarded at the last minute to avoid an adverse court order.

AAP Govt discriminates against Assembly constituencies represented by BJP alleges Vijender

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

Leader of Opposition in the Delhi Assembly and convener of BJP's Chargesheet Committee Vijender Gupta on Friday alleged that the AAP government deliberately obstructs developmental works and discriminates against the assembly constituencies represented by BJP MLAs in Delhi.

"Over the past decade, the government has failed to allocate sufficient funds for these constituencies," Gupta claimed, adding that the BJP issued eight charge sheets against the AAP government regarding developmental issues in constituencies represented by their MLAs. He said, "With these eight, the Delhi BJP has now released charge sheets for a total of 33 constituencies. The constituencies covered



in today's charge sheets include Rohini, Vishwas Nagar, Laxmi Nagar, Gandhi Nagar, Badarpur, Karawal Nagar, Rohtas Nagar, and Ghonda. The tagline for the charge sheets is "Delhi sarkar kangal, Sheesh Mahal me Kejriwal".

Addressing the media, Gupta stated, "The AAP government discriminates against constituencies represented by BJP MLAs, failing to allocate sufficient funds for developmental works." He said the charge

sheets will be shared with residents of these constituencies to expose how the AAP government conspires to stall development in these areas.

He pointed out that in his Rohini constituency, the government forcibly renamed a school built for 2,500 children as a 'School of Excellence'. "Currently, the school has only 200 students, and not a single child is from Rohini or its nearby areas," he alleged.

He also accused the government of not allocating even a single rupee for local roads under the Chief Minister's Road Reconstruction Scheme, which has an annual provision of Rs1,000 crore. "In 2021, 2,000 CCTV cameras were purchased for Rohini constituency, but their installation was halted on Kejriwal's orders.

Six city schools receive bomb threats, third instance this week: Officials

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

At least six Delhi schools received a bomb threat on Saturday, officials said, marking the third instance of threat emails being sent to schools in the national capital this week. Meanwhile, the Delhi Police Special Cell has identified a private school student responsible for sending a bomb threat email to a school in Paschim Vihar. According to the Special Cell, this individual is not connected to the group bomb threat emails sent to many schools in Delhi on Friday.

"We received a call about a bomb threat at Delhi Public School, RK Puram, at 6:09 am," a Delhi Fire Services official said. The fire department, local police, dog squads and bomb detection teams reached the

school and launched a search operation, the official said. Five more schools, including Ryan International School in Vasant Kunj and Gyan Bharati School in Saket, received the same email from the same sender, he further said.

A police official said nothing suspicious was found after search and inspection in any of the schools. The mails were sent from "childrenofallah@outlook.com" email id at 1:47 am. According to a source, the email read, "Allah sees your efforts to resist his punishment. But they are futile. For no mortal being can escape the judgement of Allah. The Prophet Muhammad declares all who go against Allah enemies to the world. We see your attempt to stop us. It will not



work. The Prophet Muhammad has allowed the children to burn in the sacred flame of Allah."

"On Saturday where students may not be there in your buildings is when the buildings shall be brought down. Our bomb vests are blessed by the Prophet Muhammad. They shall not fail their goal. Our children are brave servants of Allah. They shall complete their task," the source said quoting the email. On Friday, about 30 schools received bomb threats over email, triggering a multi-agency search of their premises. Prior to that, at least 44 schools received similar emails on Monday. The police had declared those threats as hoaxes after nothing suspicious was found during searches.

According to police, the student who had sent the

threat email to his own school in Paschim Vihar, and after tracing the IP address, the police team traced his home. Upon questioning, the child admitted to the act and was later counselled. The boy told police that he sent the mail after seeing media reports about several schools in Delhi getting bomb threats. He believed that he would not get caught as none of the accused in the earlier cases had been caught yet, the source said. He was let off with a warning to his parents to keep a watch on his behaviour.

The threatening emails raised concerns among parents and staff, though the police assured that investigations are ongoing and safety remains their priority. No explosives or hazardous materials have been found in any of the schools so far.

Since the beginning of the year, around 300 bomb threats have been made to different schools, sending parents, children, cops and administrators into a tizzy. However, the Delhi police seem helpless in tracking down the perpetrators as most of these communications were made using tools like virtual private networks (VPNs) or the Onion Router, aka Tor, which helps mail users remain anonymous. On Friday, the person who sent bomb threat to six schools on Friday used a New Zealand-based email service.

Police used advanced tech and pressed into service specialized cybercrime units like CIU (Counter-Intelligence Unit) and IFSO (Intelligence Fusion & Strategic Ops), but the were far from making a breakthrough.

MCD introduces two reforms in factory licensing ecosystem

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

The Municipal Corporation of Delhi (MCD) on Saturday introduced two reforms in the factory licensing ecosystem, aimed at simplifying regulations and providing much-needed relief to factory owners across the capital.

"These changes, approved by MCD Commissioner Ashwani Kumar, are expected to benefit thousands of industrial operators, streamline the process, and unlock access to government schemes and financing opportunities," a statement by the police said. It added, "One of the key reforms involves the rationalization of the previously complex and confusing floor-wise factory license policy. Factory owners who operate manufacturing processes on multiple floors of a building will now be able to apply for a single factory license rather than multiple licenses for each floor."

The new guideline includes single ownership wherein factory owners with manufacturing operations across different floors in a



single building will only need one factory license, provided the activities are integral to the same factory. It also includes single GST number in which if the factory operates under a single GST number, the owner will be required to obtain only one industrial license, as long as the activities on different floors align with the declared factory activities in the GST. Further, if the factory operates under multiple GST numbers across different floors, separate licenses will be required for each floor that corresponds to a distinct GST-related. Also,

in cases where different owners run separate factories on various floors, each owner will be required to secure a factory license for their respective floor. "This reform is designed to reduce bureaucratic hurdles and provide clarity for factory owners, while ensuring compliance with safety and building regulations, including fire safety standards, environmental norms, and the Unified Building Bye-Laws 2016," he said. In another landmark decision, the MCD will now grant factory licenses to the actual occupiers or tenants

of industrial plots in relocation schemes, such as those in Narela, Bawana, and Badli. This decision addresses a long-standing demand from factory operators in these areas, who have previously faced obstacles in obtaining licenses due to restrictions on the transfer or subletting of plots.

Previously, factory operators in these relocation industrial plots, operating under sub-lease or GPA agreements, were unable to obtain factory licenses because the plots' perpetual lease agreements did not allow for transfer or subletting without consent from the Delhi State Industrial & Infrastructure Development Corporation (DSIIDC). Under the new policy, factory operators will be eligible for factory licenses if they meet environmental and safety requirements, including securing the necessary consent to operate from the Delhi Pollution Control Committee (DPCC) and a Fire Safety Certificate from the Delhi Fire Service. However, the license will be revoked if the factory is closed by the DSIIDC, Lease Executing Authority, or

DPCC. Additionally, factory operators will need to submit an affidavit stating that no industry is operating at the old location from where the relocation took place. These reforms are expected to have a significant impact on more than 25,000 factory owners, particularly in relocation of industrial areas. The ability to obtain factory licenses will provide these operators with greater access to finance from banks and other financial institutions. It will also enable them to take advantage of various government schemes and programmes aimed at promoting industrial growth and business development. By simplifying the factory licensing process, the MCD aims to foster a more efficient, transparent, and business-friendly environment in Delhi, contributing to the broader goal of improving the ease of doing business in the capital. These changes mark an important step towards empowering factory operators, ensuring their compliance with safety standards, and enabling them to fully participate in economic growth initiatives.

Delhi Police convenes Inter State Border Coordination Meeting

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

Ahead of the upcoming Delhi Assembly Election slated to be held early next year, an Inter-State Border Coordination Meeting was convened on Saturday by the Delhi Police aiming to strengthen cross-border coordination with the bordering districts of Uttar Pradesh and Haryana to ensure seamless security and prevent any disruptions during the electoral process.

The meeting, which was held under the chairmanship of Joint Commissioner of Police (Jt. CP)/ Southern Range S.K. Jain, witnessed the participation of senior police officers of Haryana and Uttar Pradesh. The DCPs of South, South East, and South West Districts of Delhi Police were also present. During the meeting, Jain emphasized the importance of vigilance and collaboration, stating, "Our collective efforts and steadfast coordination will be the cornerstone of a secure electoral process. By maintaining high levels of preparedness and cooperation, we can effectively prevent any



unlawful activities that threaten peace and integrity during the elections." The meeting focused on several critical areas to ensure a smooth and fair election process, including strengthening border security. To ensure this, the police decided on joint manning of inter-state border check-posts, installation of CCTV cameras at critical locations and conducting intensive vehicle checks to curb the smuggling of liquor, contraband, and other illegal items.

The police will also focus on cracking down on illicit activities including special focus on preventing the smuggling of liquor and

tackling bootlegging operations, which are often rampant during elections and suppression of illegal firearms circulation and apprehension of individuals involved in their distribution.

In the coming months, police said that they will monitor criminal elements. "We will identify and surveillance musclemen and other criminal elements to maintain peace during the elections. We will carry out swift execution of Non-Bailable Warrants (NBWs) and make concerted efforts to apprehend wanted criminals and proclaimed offenders," an officer said, adding that they will also work on enhancing intelligence sharing.

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

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

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



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

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

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

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

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

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

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

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

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

Is Adani unparliamentary word: Priyanka Gandhi in her maiden speech



PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

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

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

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



PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ AGARTALA

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

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

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

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

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

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

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

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

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

PTI ■ SHIMLA

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

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

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

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

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

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



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

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

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

Sikkim CM Tamang launches NPHCE

PTI ■ GANGTOK

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

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

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

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



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

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

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

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

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

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

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

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

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

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

PTI ■ KOLKATA

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



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

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

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

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

Fake notice sent to UP Governor in land inheritance case

BISWAJEET BANERJEE ■ LUCKNOW

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



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

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

Malkangiri will get cement factory soon: Odisha CM Majhi

PTI ■ MALKANGIRI (ODISHA)

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



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

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

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

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ CHENNAI

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

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

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

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

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



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

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

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



PTI ■ HYDERABAD

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

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

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

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

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

PTI ■ DEHRADUN

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



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

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

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

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

PTI ■ THIRUVANANTHAPURAM

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

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

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

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



PTI ■ HYDERABAD

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

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

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

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

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

SOUTH KOREA'S PARLIAMENT IMPEACHES PRESIDENT YOON

South Korea's parliament on Saturday impeached President Yoon Suk Yeol over his stunning and short-lived martial law decree, a move that ended days of political paralysis but set up an intense debate over Yoon's fate, as jubilant crowds roared to celebrate another defiant moment in the country's resilient democracy.

Hundreds of thousands of people gathered near the parliament roared in jubilation, waved banners and brandished colourful K-pop glow sticks, as a lead activist shouted on stage, "We have preserved the constitutional order!"

from launching provocations by miscalculation. Han asked the foreign minister to inform other countries that South Korea's major external policies remain unchanged, and the finance minister to work to minimize potential negative impacts on the economy by the political turmoil, according to Han's office.



A participant holds up a banner before a rally to demand South Korean President Yoon Suk Yeol's impeachment outside the National Assembly in Seoul, South Korea. (inset) President Yoon Suk Yeol.

deployment of troops was meant to maintain order, rather than disrupt it. Democratic Party leader Lee Jae-myung called Yoon's speech a "mad declaration of war" against his own people.

destroy the door and drag out the lawmakers who are inside." Kwak said he didn't carry out Yoon's orders. Yoon is the third South Korean president impeached while in office.

Shoot them down: Trump on mystery drone sightings

US President-elect Donald Trump has called for the "shooting down" of the mystery drones that have been appearing in various parts of the country.

The White House on Thursday said there was no evidence yet that the reported drone sightings pose a national security or a public safety threat or that they have a foreign nexus.

Jersey has reported several incidents of unattributable drone sightings at night, alarming both residents and local law enforcement.

A federal appeals court has left in place a mid-January deadline in a federal law requiring TikTok to be sold or face a ban in the United States, rejecting a request made by the company to halt enforcement until the Supreme Court reviews its challenge of the statute.

injunction after a panel of three judges on the US Court of Appeals for the District of Columbia Circuit sided with the US government and rejected their challenge to the law.

Court denies TikTok's request to halt enforcement of potential US ban until Supreme Court review

The Justice Department had opposed TikTok's request for a pause, saying in a court filing last week that the parties had already proposed a schedule that was "designed for the precise purpose" of allowing Supreme Court review of the law before it took effect.

line, House Select Committee on the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) Chair John Moolenaar and Ranking Member Krishnamoorthi on Friday wrote to Apple CEO Tim Cook, Google CEO Sundar Pichai and TikTok CEO Shou Chew.

PUBLIC NOTICE: It is to inform to the public at large that Mr. Karam Singh has acquired First Floor without roof...

PUBLIC NOTICE: It is to inform to the public at large that Mrs. Shabana has acquired Plot No. 9, measuring 250 sq. yds. out of Khata No. 1661 Min. at Main Road...

LOST & FOUND: I, Jaba Sen Menon D/o Deva Prasad Sen Mazumdar, R/O Flat No. A.302 Saranah Apartments, Plot No. 34, I/P Extension, Patparganj, Delhi-110092, solemnly and sincerely swear and state that I am the duly constituted attorney of Shri Krishan Kumar Gupta...

THE PIONEER CLASSIFIED CHANGE OF NAME: I, Sudesh D/o Dhara Singh W/o Lt. Sh. Ranvir Singh R/o 18, Goodwill Apartment, Sector-13, Rohini, Delhi-110085, I have changed my name Sudesh Kumari to Sudesh. And also in my Driving License wrongly return name of my husband as Ranbir Singh but my husband correct name is Ranvir Singh.

PUBLIC NOTICE: It is to inform to the public at large that Mr. Rakesh Kupta who is purchasing the Freehold Plot No. F-63, Ground Floor, Area Measuring 50 sq. yds. Situated at Gali No. 2, East Vinod Nagar, Delhi...

Indian-origin OpenAI whistleblower dies by suicide in San Francisco

A 26-year-old Indian-origin former employee of the artificial intelligence giant OpenAI has died by suicide in San Francisco, authorities said.

initial investigation," SFPPD officer Robert Ruca wrote in a statement. Balaji spoke to the Times in October, saying he was one of the researchers who worked gathering data to train OpenAI's programmes like GPT4, which users interact with through the chatbot ChatGPT.

GOVERNMENT OF ODISHA OFFICE OF THE CHIEF CONSTRUCTION ENGINEER, SOUTHERN (R&B) CIRCLE, BERHAMPUR: Bid Identification No. CCE, S.C (R&B)-BAM-13/2024-25 No. 4172 / Dated: 11.12.2024

GOVERNMENT OF ODISHA OFFICE OF THE CHIEF CONSTRUCTION ENGINEER, KHORDHA (R&B) CIRCLE, KHORDHA: Short Tender call Notice Bid Identification No. CCE-Khordha (R&B) Circle-21/2024-25 Memo No - 2472 Dt. 12.12.2024

GOVERNMENT OF ODISHA OFFICE OF THE CHIEF CONSTRUCTION ENGINEER, KHORDHA (R&B) CIRCLE, KHORDHA: Bid Identification No. CCE-Khordha (R&B) Circle-21/2024-25 Memo No - 2472 Dt. 12.12.2024

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Time has come for US Congress to act on Bangladesh: Thanedar

Raising the issue of attacks on minority Hindus in Bangladesh, Indian-American Congressman Shri Thanedar has said that the time has come for the US Congress to act.

law enforcement and security services to deal with the challenge," White House National Security Communications Advisor John Kirby said at a news conference. Indian-American Congressman Raja Krishnamoorthi has urged members of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee to address the issue of violence against minorities, primarily Hindus, in Bangladesh during the confirmation hearing of Senator Marco Rubio for the top diplomatic position. The date of his confirmation hearing has not been announced yet. A large number of Indian-Americans recently held a march from the White House to the US Capitol over alleged attacks on Hindus in Bangladesh.

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

PTI ■ BENGALURU

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

Patidar's six innings against England earlier this year produced just 63 runs, but the right-hander has shown impressive touch in the first half of the Ranji Trophy and the ongoing Syed Mushtaq Ali Trophy.

"I enjoyed going to the Test team. But sometimes I feel bad that I missed the opportunity. But it's alright sometimes things don't go your way," Patidar said

during an interaction here on Saturday.

Patidar has accepted his "failure" and has moved away from that disappointing space.

"I think acceptance is the key. You have to accept that there will be failure in the cricketing journey. So, it's important for me to face it and learn from it.

"I have just accepted it and I am moving forward. It's a part and parcel of the game. I can re-create the opportunity," he added.

In that context, the 31-year-old has taken a bold first step, scoring a good amount of runs in domestic tournaments.

From five Ranji Trophy matches, the Madhya Pradesh captain has made



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

The powerful right-hander said trusting his skills was the reason behind his good run.

"I am just trying to back my strength in the areas where I am going to hit, like I was doing in the last couple of years. I am just trying to find out the same pattern that I was playing in the IPL.

"My mantra is to play one ball at a time. I try to put my impact on the opposition for my team. I don't try to get

big scores. I have never paid attention to that," he said.

Patidar also received a confidence-booster when Royal Challengers Bengaluru retained him ahead of the IPL auction.

"Yes, definitely, RCB is a big franchise and I love playing for RCB. So it (retention) gave me a lot of confidence that they retained me."

Patidar's name is doing rounds within RCB circles as their prospective captain for IPL 2025 after the franchise released Faf du Plessis.

He was open to that challenge.

"Of course, if I get an opportunity to lead RCB, that is what I am there for, and I will be happy. But it all depends on the franchise," he said.

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

Incidentally, they had beaten Mumbai that time and Patidar had made 122 in MP's six-wicket victory.

The captaincy sits light on his shoulders.

"I have learnt a lot out of it. I have enjoyed learning the tactics. I love seeing players and anticipating what they can do.

"I have learnt a lot about captaincy from my coach (Chandrakant Pandit). Everybody knows that he is the best coach in India," he said.

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

PTI ■ SIVASAGAR (ASSAM)

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

"It is sad to say that there is no production of sports persons anywhere in Assam. Earlier, we used to organise camps to attract new talents, but it is not happening anymore," Baruah, a gold medallist in 800m at the 1966 Asian Games, told PTI.

The 84-year-old said the government has engaged so many coaches who could be sent to districts to organise such camps and impart training, but such initiatives are not happening.

"If there is no coaching, how will we produce sports persons? If any sports event takes place, the kids are just taken there to participate. If there is no training or camp, how will our children progress?

"If there is any tournament, children are called and taken to participate -- this is Assam's sports policy," Baruah said.



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

"Has the government made anyone a sports person? Government is not identifying and picking up talents from the ground. When someone shines, only then the government comes into the picture. That is what

Baruah said earlier 2 to 3 such camps used to be organised annually but questioned why they have stopped.

"You go and ask the Director of Sports. They have not organised a camp for so many years! Why is it not happening nowadays?" he remarked.

Baruah claimed he had requested the concerned officials several times to hold sports camps, but there has been no response.

"I had even sought equipment saying that we would hold a camp. Give at least one set of hurdles for doing training. You need 10 hurdles in one line, but we sought five for training purposes. There is no jumper, pole vaulter -- nothing is available," he claimed.

Asked if he spoke to the state Sports Minister regarding this, Baruah said due to his age he could not meet him to discuss the matter.

Reflecting on the future of sports in Assam, Baruah said: "I can't say anything. I will say what is right. There has been no camp at all during the tenure of the present government." The Assam government is

currently organising the second edition of 'Khel Maharan', aiming at identifying and nurturing rural talent through grassroots-level competitions.

"All sports persons are in the villages. We have to search and nurture them. Rural sports is the only way to find real talents, otherwise we won't get it," Baruah said when asked about 'Khel Maharan'.

In 2021, the Assam government had decided to observe Baruah's birthday September 3 as 'Sports Day'. Baruah heaped praise on Asian Games gold medalist runner Hima Das and Olympic medalist boxer Lovlina Borgohain, saying their success is largely due to the efforts of their parents.

"There is nothing that the government should take credit for," he added.

Baruah recalled advising Das on improving her running technique.

"Earlier, she used to run straight. Later, I told her to bend slightly forward and she is doing accordingly. I asked her to bend her upper body. Now, she is doing well. Her body is very strong," he commented on the sprinter.

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

PTI ■ NAVI MUMBAI

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

India have won each of their last eight T20Is against the West Indies in the shortest format since November 2019. But to maintain this dominating run, India will have to dig deep from rapidly depleting reservoirs of both resources and confidence to keep the ship afloat.

It has not been a smooth ride for the Indian skipper whose questionable selection calls during the Australia ODI series left everyone wondering as to how long the national selectors will persist with her despite Smriti Mandhana well and truly ready to take over the mantle. This is India's first T20 series after the inglorious T20 World Cup exit where the only consolation was a hard-earned win against Pakistan. India after that won an ODI



series against New Zealand at home and were blanked by Australia during the subsequent 50 over series Down Under.

While Harmanpreet's own batting form has been better than many, it is her unimaginative leadership that is causing a lot of problems as the team is still playing archaic brand of cricket across both white ball formats.

The profligate Shafali Verma has been ignored by the selectors once again even though her chances of doing well in T20Is in Indian conditions is way better where she can employ her cross batted game.

First-up, India will need a quick turnaround from their forgettable ODI tour of Australia which ended in a 0-3 rout with the visitors being thoroughly outplayed in all departments.

Having lost the final ODI in Perth last Wednesday, Kaur and her side will not get enough time to rest and recover as they have made it to the DY Patil Stadium here for the series opener.

The packed schedule — three T20Is with a gap of one day each — will further test the fitness and morale of the team that is low on confidence and without their preferred players in Pooja Vastrakar, Shreyanka Patil, Yastika Bhatia, Priya Punia and most importantly, Verma.

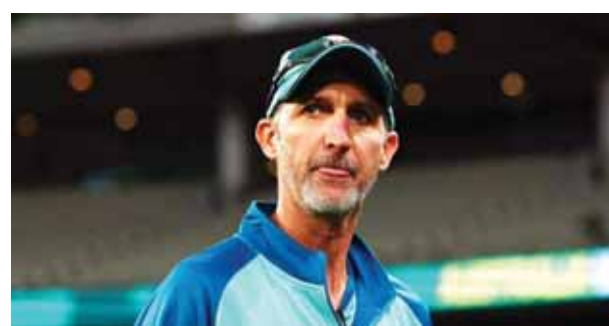
Gillespie resigned as Pakistan's Test coach over selection dispute

PTI ■ KARACHI

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

A well-informed source, familiar with the developments, revealed that some officials in the Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB) had created a difficult environment for Gillespie, who just a month ago had even been offered the job of head coach of the white-ball squad "Circumstances were created to make the former Australian player feel alienated in major decisions about the team," the source said.

"First despite his request the board didn't renew the contract of high performance coach Tim Nielsen and then the Test squad for the SA series



was announced without consulting him," he added.

The source said that while Gillespie was aware that the board had stripped him of say in the selection matters, he expected as head coach, he would be consulted by the selectors in the selection of any series.

"Gillespie was also not happy that while refusing to renew contract of Nielsen whom he had recommended the board preferred to bring in Shahid Aslam from the national

Amir announces retirement from international cricket

PTI ■ KARACHI

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

Amir, who was banned from cricket for five years between 2010 and 2015 on spot-fixing charges and was briefly jailed for his crime, had retired from all forms of international cricket in 2020.

However, he changed his mind and returned to play in T20 World Cup earlier this year.

"After careful consideration, I have taken the difficult decision to retire from international cricket. These decisions are never easy but are inevitable. I feel this is the right time for the next generation to take the baton and elevate Pakistan Cricket to new



heights!" he wrote on his social media handles.

"Representing my country has been and always will be the greatest honour of my life. I would sincerely like to thank the PCB, my family

The pacer, who was 19 then, had deliberately overstepped along with fellow quick Mohammed Asif at the behest of former skipper Salman Butt and they were all caught. All three were briefly jailed in the UK, where fixing is a crime but were later released.

The ICC banned them for five years between 2010 to 2015. Only Amir made a successful return to international cricket and was the hero of Pakistan's Champions Trophy triumph over India in 2017 in the UK.

A key member of Pakistan's team over the years, he featured in 36 Tests, 61 ODIs and 62 T20Is since making his international debut in June 2009.

He took 271 international wickets and scored 1,179 runs across the three formats and was a part of the 2009 ICC T20 World Cup-winning side.

The announcement comes a day after all-rounder Imad Wasim decided quit international cricket.

Both Amir and Wasim came out of retirement earlier this year after being assured of selection for the tours of Ireland and England, as well as the World T20 Cup, by the board and its selectors, who believed the two could help Pakistan perform well in these assignments.

Unfortunately, that didn't materialise, and neither has he been picked by the national selectors for any of the matches since the World Cup. Amir's final outing in Pakistan colours came in June this year during the T20 World Cup against Ireland in Lauderhill, USA.

In 2020, Amir announced a dramatic end to his international cricket career, alleging that he has been "mentally tortured" by his national board's management.

New Zealand wastes good start, finishes at 315-9 on Day 1 of 3rd test against England

AP ■ HAMILTON (NEW ZEALAND)

New Zealand steadily squandered a good start, slumping from 172-2 to 231-7 before rallying to 315-9 at stumps Saturday on the first day of the third test against England.

Mitchell Santner hit the last ball of the day for six to reach his fourth test half century and was 50 not out while Will O'Rourke had yet to score. The New Zealand tail added 76 runs in the last eight overs of the day to bring some balance back into the game after the failure of the middle order.

After a 105-run opening partnership between Tom Latham and Will Young, New Zealand enjoyed the rare experience of holding the upper hand over England in a series which so far has been one-sided in favor of the tourists.

England holds an

unassailable 2-0 lead, winning the first test in four days by eight wickets and the second in three days by 323 runs. In those seven days, New Zealand only occasionally had a dominant session.

But England won the toss and chose to bowl and by lunch New Zealand was 93-0 At that point it appeared England captain Ben Stokes might have misread or over-estimated the conditions when he decided to send New Zealand in. The pitch at Seddon Park had a slight green hue and warm conditions and puffy clouds seemed to offer the promise the ball would swing.

Instead, there was a firm brown surface under a thin cover of grass and the day warmed quickly, burning off the overcast so that the ball neither seamed or swung to any great extent.

Latham and Young set a sound platform for the New



Zealand innings when they put on 105 for the first wicket, the Kiwis' best opening partnership in 28 tests.

Young was selected in place of Devon Conway whose wife has just given birth to their first child.

There already was a clamor for his selection as Conway had made only 21 runs in

four innings in the first two tests of this series and Young was Player of the Series and averaged almost 50 when New Zealand swept India 3-0 at home in October and

early November.

Young played with boldness from the start Saturday and was 42 not out at lunch including 40 runs from boundaries. At 42 he surpassed 1,000 runs in test cricket and became the first New Zealander since Stephen Fleming to achieve that milestone without making a test century.

Rachin Ravindra made 18 with four well-hit boundaries and seemed set when he played loosely at a wide ball from Brydon Carse and was caught by Ben Duckett in the gully. There was an anxious pause when the television umpire checked for a no ball but there was no reprieve for Ravindra and this time no bad news for Carse who bowled Williamson with a no-ball in the second test.

Kane Williamson reached 44 with every sign of authority on his home pitch on which

he averages 94. Then he clamped down on a ball from Matthew Potts which bounced back onto his stumps and he tried vainly to kick it away.

Potts marked his return in place of the rested Chris Woakes with figures of 3-75 and the prized wicket of Williamson.

"I didn't have a great view of it. I was a bit confused but then I saw a bail drop down by his feet and it was pure elation after that," Potts said.

"It was a massive wicket at that point in the innings. It's less about personal milestones and achievements of getting good players out but, at that key point in time, Kane could have taken the game away from us."

In quick succession New Zealand lost Daryl Mitchell (14), Glenn Phillips (5) and second test century-maker Tom Blundell (21), all to unwise shots.

Santner and Matt Henry put on 41 for the eighth wicket before Henry (8) was brilliantly caught by Harry Brook off Stokes.

Brook first caught the ball standing on the boundary rope at fine leg, threw it up in the air and stepped over the boundary, then caught it again as he stepped back into the field of play.

That brought out Tim Southee in his 107th and last test for New Zealand. Southee will retire at the end of the series aged 36 and as New Zealand's second-highest test wicket-taker with 389.

Southee, who received a guard of honor from the England fielders when he walked out, hit the second ball he faced for the 96th six of his career and the fourth ball for the 97th. England took the second new ball and Southee hit the first ball bowled with it for his 98th six.



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

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

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

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



IN EVERY THREAD, A STORY

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



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

PHOTOS: PANKAJ KUMAR



Bringing Luxury Home Décor to Delhi

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

THE NEW LIFESTYLE LANDMARK

By TEAM VIVA

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

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

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

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



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

Maison Sia has launched its flagship store in Delhi, setting a new benchmark for luxury home decor in India. The boutique is a refined space that mixes global craftsmanship with Indian sensibilities. The store presents a curated collection of design pieces by internationally renowned names like Jean-François Lemaire and Glasremis, each reflecting a unique story that transcends borders. These works which are handpicked for their artistry and innovation, are a reflection of the brand’s philosophy of offering sophisticated design solutions.

Vratika Gupta, the founder of *Maison Sia*, notes, “India’s emerging luxury design market, with its hunger for authentic and extraordinary experiences, perfectly mirrors *Maison*



Sia’s creative philosophy.” The store is not just a retail space but a statement of how the brand fuses the best of global and local design.



Featuring a collaboration with the esteemed furniture brand *EDRA*, the *Delhi* store also marks the debut of *Maison Sia*’s first furniture line,

Maison Sia x *Edra*. The synergy between local architects, such as *Seza Architects*, and international design houses has shaped a unique and immersive shopping experience. With luxury home décor products like funky showpieces namely *Leblon Delienne*, *Sas Atelier*, different-sized candles, and heavy coffee table books, the boutique also features exquisite lighting solutions, with each piece crafted from responsibly sourced materials, adding character and sophistication to any space. Designer wallpapers and precisely curated furniture further elevate the store’s ambiance, offering a glimpse into a world of design where quality and creativity meet. *Maison Sia*’s Delhi flagship store signals the brand’s commitment to bringing global design luxury narratives to India’s most refined design enthusiasts.

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



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



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

Rating: 3.5/5

Get in touch at vivacity@dailypioneer.com

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



CELEBRATING THE RICH CULTURE OF NORTHEAST INDIA



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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

A TASTE OF TOKYO IN THE HEART OF DELHI



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



Basko: All-Day Culinary and Cocktail Experience



By **TEAM AGENDA**

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

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

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



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

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

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

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

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



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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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



UNIQUE DUAL DINING EXPERIENCE

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

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

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

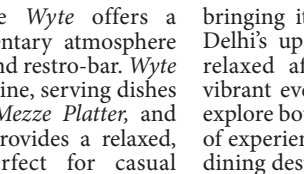
On the other hand, the *Wyte* offers a contrasting and complementary atmosphere as a day-themed chill cafe and resto-bar. *Wyte* features Mediterranean cuisine, serving dishes like *Lamb Adana Kebab*, *Mezze Platter*, and *Stuffed Camelloni*. *Wyte* provides a relaxed, airy ambience that's perfect for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

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

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

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

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



A PERUVIAN EXTRAVAGANZA

By **TEAM AGENDA**



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



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

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

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

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

By **TEAM AGENDA**

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



REGAL FLAVOURS OF LUCKNOWI DAWAT



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

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

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

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

FACT SHEET

BLAQ

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

WYTE

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



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

St. James' Court, a luxurious retreat nestled in the heart of Westminster, exudes an irresistible charm that makes it a favourite among the glitterati. This opulent hotel seamlessly blends grandeur with the warmth of Indian hospitality, creating a setting that feels as if it's been plucked straight from a glamorous film set.

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

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

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

Where Bollywood Glamour Meets Exquisite Cuisine

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

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

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



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

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

Blending Indian Hospitality with British Elegance

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

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

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

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

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

Where Luxury Meets Holistic Wellness In Perfect Harmony

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

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

REVIVE. REJUVENATE REFLECT

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

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

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

WELLNESS ETHOS

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



FACTS:
Jetwing Lagoon
Pamunugama Rd, Negombo 11504,
Sri Lanka Phone: +94 312 233 777

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

MINDFUL DINING

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

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

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

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

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

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

THE LOCAL NARRATIVE

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



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

TO CONCLUDE

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



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

DR. GAYATHRI NISSANKA
Senior Ayurvedic Physician,
Jetwing Lagoon



YOUR WEEK AHEAD

MADHU KOTIYA



ARIES March 21-April 19

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

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



LEO July 23-Aug 22

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

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



SAGITTARIUS Nov 22-Dec 21

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

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



TAURUS April 20-May 20

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

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



VIRGO Aug 23-Sep 22

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

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



CAPRICORN Dec 22-Jan 19

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

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



GEMINI May 21-June 20

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

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



LIBRA Sep 23-Oct 22

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

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



AQUARIUS Jan 20-Feb 18

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

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



CANCER June 21-July 22

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

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



SCORPIO Oct 23-Nov 21

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

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



PISCES Feb 19-March 20

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

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

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The Spiritual significance of food

THE TUNING FORK



CV Srikanth

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

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

Thoughts shape reality; regulate them to transform your destiny.



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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Now you can write to us at agendapioneer@gmail.com