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Gandhi family wounded the Constitution: PM



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

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

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

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

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. PTI

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in his writings that there is nothing Indian about the Constitution and that the book that India is run by should be superseded by the Manusmriti," Gandhi said, "adding that this is what the fight is about.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

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

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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 Chal' foot march, Pandher compared the ongoing farmers' protest to the Parliament's Constitution debate. The clash took place when a group of 101 farmers, who had resumed their march from the Shambhu protest site on the Punjab-Haryana border around noon, reached the barricades set up by Haryana police. A few farmers were injured during the tear



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

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

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

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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, Parvesh Sahib Singh Verma, the son of former Delhi CM Sahib Singh Verma, on Saturday also claimed that he has been "asked to prepare for contesting from the New Delhi constituency". If this candidature materialises, the election will pit two scions of politician families against Kejriwal, making it a triangular battle of high-profile leaders. While the AAP and Congress have announced some candidates, BJP is still figuring out their list. The AAP has so far declared two lists with 31 names. According to poll experts, this election is more than just a political contest for Sandeep Dikshit, it is a chance for him to reclaim his family's legacy and 'settle old scores' in the New Delhi seat. Sources in the



Congress said a team which worked with Sheila Dikshit is still active in New Delhi which may help him to counter Kejriwal's narratives. Even in 2020, when it drew a blank in the Assembly polls for the second time in a row, the Congress had banked on the late Congress stalwart to revive its fortunes in what was once its citadel. The party's campaign song in 2020 had a line, "Ek Dilli thi vo jo Sheila ne khud 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 Ramesh 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,

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



File photo: PTI

Uttar Pradesh has 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 Sonbadra (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.

STF nabs 4 accused for abducting doc

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

With the arrest of four accused on Friday night, the Special Task Force (STF) of Uttar Pradesh, Lucknow, claimed to have worked out the case involving the abduction of a Chinhat-based homoeopathic doctor, who was released after a ransom of Rs 7 lakh was paid.



THE ACCUSED HAVE BEEN IDENTIFIED AS RAM BABU VERMA, A RESIDENT OF GONDA (THE GANG LEADER), RAJAN KUMAR OF BASTI, AND AMIT KUMAR AND RAJ KUMAR YADAV, BOTH FROM GONDA DISTRICT

The accused arrested have been identified as Ram Babu Verma, a resident of Gonda (the gang leader), Rajan Kumar of Basti, and Amit Kumar and Raj Kumar Yadav, both from Gonda district. The STF team recovered Rs 1.13 lakh in cash, a car, four mobile phones, and an Aadhaar card from the accused. They were arrested near Goyal Height, Kisan Path, under the BBD police station area at around 11:30 pm on Friday.

Following the incident, and after the victim doctor returned home after paying the ransom, the STF was assigned the task of apprehending the culprits, who had been frequently changing their locations. On December 8, a team working under ASP (STF) Vishal Vikram Singh began gathering information to uncover the details of the sensational kidnapping of Dr Surendra Kumar Singh, a homoeopathy physician from the BBD police station area in Lucknow. As the investigation progressed, an informer provided crucial information that members of the gang responsible for Dr Singh's kidnapping on December 8 were expected to be near Goyal Height, Kisan

Path. Acting on the tip-off, the STF team nabbed the accused. During interrogation, the arrested gang leader, Ram Babu Verma, revealed that after completing his intermediate education, he enrolled in a DPharma course at Saket College in Ayodhya in 2021. It was there that he became good friends with Rajan Kumar, who was also studying DPharma at the same college. Rajan, along with his friends Amit Kumar and Raj Kumar Yadav, was renting a room at Gurukul Hostel in Matiyari. Ram Babu Verma, facing financial difficulties, confided in Rajan Kumar about his debts and asked him for a way to earn money. Rajan suggested that Dr Surendra Kumar Singh, a resident of Shivpuri Colony Kamta, operated a clinic and Diabetic Centre and held a franchise for BSS (Bharat Sevak Samaj) in Chennai, offering diplomas in Homoeopathy Pharmacy via distance education. Rajan further explained that Dr Singh was involved in admitting children for this programme and would travel to

any location when called for admissions. Rajan, who had previously rented a room at Dr Singh's house about 10 months earlier, knew the doctor's routine well. He informed Ram Babu that if Dr Singh were kidnapped, they could easily extort Rs 40-50 lakh. The gang then devised a plan. On December 8, they lured Dr Singh to Ayodhya Road, near Global Hospital, under the pretext of discussing money and documents for admitting five children into the DPharma programme. Upon Dr Singh's arrival in his car, the gang ambushed him. After engaging in conversation, they forcefully entered the car, beat him, and took control of the vehicle, pushing him into the back seat. They then drove around continuously in Basti and Gonda, threatening the doctor and demanding a ransom of Rs 20 lakh. After some negotiation, Dr Singh agreed to pay Rs 10 lakh. However, he later transferred only Rs 7 lakh after borrowing Rs 9 lakh from his son-in-law and a friend.

Sacrifices of Sikh Gurus unparalleled: Yogi

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

The 350th martyrdom year of Guru Teg Bahadur, the ninth Guru of Sikhism, will be commemorated across Uttar Pradesh with year-long celebrations. The event will be inaugurated on December 26 on the special occasion of Veer Bal Diwas from the Chief Minister's residence in Lucknow. This inauguration will be broadcast live in all the

gurdwaras of the state and will culminate in a grand ceremony next year. In a special meeting on Saturday, Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath stated, "The sacrifices of Sikh Gurus for the preservation of the nation and religion are unparalleled. Their festivals should be celebrated with traditional joy and enthusiasm throughout the state." The chief minister also direct-

ed that, starting from the next academic session, the inspirational stories of the Sikh Gurus' sacrifices and martyrdom will be included in the school curriculum. Additionally, under the chief minister's directive, a book detailing the life and legacy of Guru Teg Bahadur will be published. As part of the celebrations, a grand Maha Yagya featuring 11,000 Sahaj Paath recitations will also be organ-

ised. The chief minister instructed that a special ceremony to commemorate Veer Bal Diwas be organised across the state. He emphasised, "The Guru Granth Sahib should be recited, and all Granthis should be invited to participate in the programme. MPs, mayors, MLAs, MLCs, public representatives, and other dignitaries should also be invited to these events, which will be

held in gurdwaras across all districts." Highlighting the inspirational legacy of Sikh Gurus, the chief minister stated, "Their biographies and sacrifices should be incorporated into the school curriculum. Additionally, poetry, essay, and debate competitions on topics related to Sikh Gurus should be organised, and winning participants duly rewarded."

Property worth ₹34 cr of prime accused in triple murder case seized

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

The Lucknow police on Friday seized property worth approximately Rs 34 crore of the prime accused in the triple murder case in Malihabad in February 2024. National Security Act (NSA) was also invoked against the accused, Siraj Ahmed aka Lallan Khan. On February 2, 2024, Siraj Ahmed, along with his son Faraz and associates Furqan and Ashraf Lal, allegedly shot dead Muneer Ahmad Khan alias Taj (55), his nephew Hanzala Khan (15), and Hanzala's mother Farheen Khan (40) in the Mohammad Nagar area of Malihabad. The crime reportedly stemmed from a dispute over a land measurement exercise. A 50-second video of the incident went viral on social media.

The crime reportedly stemmed from a dispute over a land measurement exercise. A 50-second video of the incident went viral on social media.

The father-son duo, along with their associates, amassed significant assets through illegal means. Following their arrest and investigation, it was revealed that Siraj Ahmed and his associates accumulated movable and immovable assets worth about Rs 34 crore through their involvement in organised crime. In response, the police invoked Uttar Pradesh Gangsters and Anti-Social Activities (Prevention) Act (UP Gangsters Act) and seized these properties under Section 14(1) of the Act. On December 13 (Friday), the police seized these assets as part of their ongoing crackdown on professional criminals and organised crime syndicates. This move follows the approval of a gang chart and the registration of an additional case under the Gangsters Act. The seizure and NSA action are part of a coordinated effort by the Malihabad police, led by inspector-in-charge Satyendra Chandra Sahu, additional inspector Sachidanand, and other senior officers.



Firefighters try to douse a fire that broke out at Rakhi Mandi in Kanpur on Saturday

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AUCTION NOTICE

दिनांक 30.12.2024 अपरान्ह 3:00 बजे सहायक आयुक्त कार्यालय (एस. आर्. बी.) 110-माल रोड, लखनऊ में निष्क्रिय चोपित कम्प्यूटर/सर्वरों/उपकरणों, बैटरी आदि की नीलामी, सिक्किमिटी रु. 5,000/- नकद फर्म के ई-वेस्ट डिमेंशनल/रिसाइकलर सर्विसेज, जी. एस. डी. पंजीकरण, आधार, पैनकार्ड के साथ अपरान्ह 1:00 बजे. 2:30 बजे तक जमा करने उपरान्ह सामग्रीयों निरीक्षण करें। आई. पी. सिंह एण्ड सन्स।

NOTICE

I have changed my name YASEEN to MOHD YASEEN S/O NIZAM for future purpose. Add- KOT MOHAN UNNAO.

AUCTION NOTICE

दिनांक 24.12.2024 प्रातः 10:00 बजे क्वार्टर मास्टर डिपार्टमेंट कमांड अस्पताल (सेन्ट्रल कमांड), लखनऊ में पब्लिक ग्रांट स्टोर्स के अनुपयोगी, निष्क्रिय चोपित सामग्रीयों की नीलामी, सिक्किमिटी रु 10,000/- नकद, जी. एस. डी. पंजीकरण, आधार, पैनकार्ड के साथ जमा होंगे। आई. पी. सिंह एण्ड सन्स।

NOTICE

I Suman Devi W/o Sub Ranveer Singh army no. JC482129L, 4 Rajput R/o Gwalior (M.P) in my husband army service record my name entered Suman which is incorrect my correct name is Suman Devi vide affidavit dated 18.09.2024 before notary public. lucknow.

AUCTION NOTICE

दिनांक 18.12.2024 अपरान्ह 2:00 बजे सहायक आयुक्त कार्यालय (एस. आर्. बी.), 110-माल रोड, लखनऊ में निष्क्रिय कार्यालय फर्नीचर, अलमारीयों, रैक्स, अन्य सामग्रीयों आदि की नीलामी, सिक्किमिटी रु. 5,000/- नकद, जी. एस. डी. पंजीकरण, आधार, पैनकार्ड के साथ प्रातः 10:00 बजे - 12:00 बजे तक जमा करने उपरान्ह सामग्रीयों निरीक्षण करें। आई. पी. सिंह एण्ड सन्स।

NOTICE

I HAVE PURCHASED PLOT NO. 282 A Dated 05/05/1997 BLOCK E SCHEME No. 40 PANKI, KANPUR FROM JAGRANI W/O CHHEDILAL. CHAIN DEED DATED 28/10/1970 HAS BEEN LOST ANYWHERE, IF ANYONE USE CHAIN DEED WHICH IS ILLEGAL. RAM DULARE GAUR S/O PARMESHWAR GAUR, 282 A, E BLOCK, PANKI, HANUMAN MANDIR, PANKI, KANPUR.

NOTICE

Notice- My Son High School & Intermediate education documents his name mentioned as Arnab Srivastav whereas in Aadhaar no. 368496575852 his name is Abhimanyu Srivastav which should be update in his Aadhaar card as Arnab Srivastav. Manoj Kumar Srivastav.

NOTICE

I Taha son of Mohammad Qasim Asad holder of indian passport no.T2381405 issued at Dubai (UAE) on 10/03/2021, resident of Dharanmapur, Karanda, Ghaziपुर, UP do hereby announce to change my name from Taha to Taha Mohammad with immediate effect.

आवश्यकता है

आवश्यकता है। मदरसा इस्लामिया, वरिगडुड़ी, रामनगर बागमसी-221008 में जिन को (1) अस्सिस्टेंट टीचर (तालीफिया)-7 (सात) पर, आयु-न्यूनतम 18 वर्ष अर्हता: आलिय या यूई इन्टर या हाईस्कूल केन फेइज 9300-34800 ग्रेड 4600/- के मॉड्यूल लेवल 6 में रु. 35400/- (2) अस्सिस्टेंट टीचर (फैकालिया) 3 (तीन) पर, आयु-न्यूनतम 20वर्ष अर्हता: स्नातक/सम्कक्ष 50 प्रतिशत अंको से तथा आलिय/इन्टर यूई (3) वैकल्पिक विषय टीचर (फैकालिया) 2 (दो) पर आयु 20 वर्ष न्यूनतम अर्हता: संबंधित विषय में स्नातक/सम्कक्ष 50 प्रतिशत अंको से तथा यूई/अर्धो/पारसी से सुग्री/मीलवी से अलिय स्तर का प्रमाणपत्र अथवा मान्यता प्राप्त मदरसे से कराई एवं यूई/अर्धो/पारसी सहित आलिय से अलिय स्तर का प्रमाणपत्र (4) अस्सिस्टेंट टीचर आलिया (सुग्री/मीलवी) 1 (एक) पर, आयु-न्यूनतम 21 वर्ष अर्हता: अर्धो/पारसी/दीनगत से स्नातकोत्तर/सम्कक्ष तथा फैकालिया कक्षाओं का तीन वर्ष का शैक्षणिक अनुभव (5) वैकल्पिक विषय टीचर (सुग्री/मीलवी) 2 (दो) पर आयु-न्यूनतम 21 वर्ष अर्हता: संबंधित विषय में स्नातकोत्तर 50 प्रतिशत अंको से या प्रशिक्षित स्नातक 50 प्रतिशत अंको से इस्के साथ आलिय या इन्टर यूई अंको (2), (3), (4) व (5) ह्यू वेन-पेइज 9300-34800 ग्रेड पे 4800/- के मॉड्यूल लेवल 7 में रु. 44900 अथवा शी 30-30 अर्धशिक्षीत अर्धो/पारसी मदरसा सेवा विधियामातवी 2016 चथा संबंधित के अनुसार, अर्ध अथवा/दिवानक 06.01.2025 ई. तक आवेदन करे पूर्ण पता मी नो अवश्य लिखें। आलिय अख्दर (मैनर) 9455447739

NOTICE

I Amina daughter of Mohammad Qasim Asad holder of indian passport no.T8286120 issued at Dubai (UAE) on 07/08/2019, resident of Dharanmapur, Karanda, Ghaziपुर, UP do hereby announce to change my name from Amina to Amina Mohammad with immediate effect.

NOTICE

I Push Lata M/o SEP Abhimanyu singh army no. 3024851N, 4 Rajput R/o Balia (UP) in my son's army service record my name entered Pushalata Devi which is incorrect my correct name is Push Lata vide affidavit dated 20.09.2024 before notary public. lucknow.

NOTICE

I, Sgt Anand Kumar Singh (ret'd), Service No. 767505-G & my wife Suman Singh, hereby inform that the date of birth of our daughter, Aastha Singh, has been mistakenly recorded as 07-05-2007 instead of 07-05-2008 in the IAF service records. Also 07-05-2008 is mentioned in her school records, birth certificate and Aadhaar. Therefore, 07-05-2008 is to be accepted as valid date of birth in all records.

Maha Kumbh: 350 shuttle buses to facilitate smooth travel for devotees

PNS ■ LUCKNOW/PRAAYAGRAJ

The Uttar Pradesh State Road Transport Corporation (UPSRTC) will deploy 350 shuttle buses to facilitate smooth travel for visitors and devotees during the Maha Kumbh 2025 in Prayagraj. A dedicated team of 22 officers will oversee the system's efficiency and ensure seamless operations during the Maha Kumbh, which will take place from January 13. Service manager, Moradabad, Anurag Yadav has been appointed as incharge of this initiative. Minister of State for Transport (Independent Charge) Dayashankar Singh said that to handle emergencies effectively, Quick Response Teams (QRTs) have been deployed on seven routes leading to Prayagraj. These teams, equipped with interceptor vehicles, will consist of UPSRTC enforcement officers and technical staff who can address any immediate requirements. The QRTs aim to ensure swift assistance in case of operational or technical issues during the fair. He further said that the eight temporary bus stations have been built within the fair

2 unauthorised drones intercepted

Mahakumbh Nagar (PNS): In an effort to safeguard the 45 crore devotees expected to attend the Maha Kumbh 2025, the Uttar Pradesh government has deployed a robust anti-drone system in Mahakumbh Nagar. With strict measures in place against unauthorised drone flights, the police intercepted two drones flying over Mahakumbh Nagar, and notices have been issued to the operators. On the directions of Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath, the police in Mahakumbh Nagar have heightened their vigilance to ensure the safety of devotees at the grand event. Senior Superintendent of Police Rajesh Dwivedi stated that special measures are being implemented to protect the over 45 crore devotees attending the event from across the country and abroad. "An anti-drone system has been activated in the Maha Kumbh fair area. On the very first day, a high-tech anti-drone system successfully shot down and deactivated two drones flying without permission. Notices have been issued to the operators," he said. Dwivedi emphasised that drones will not be allowed to fly in the Maha Kumbh fair area without prior approval. Permission must be obtained

from the police in advance for any drone operations. Strict action will be taken against anyone found operating drones without authorisation. A highly advanced anti-drone system has been deployed in Mahakumbh Nagar to ensure the safety of devotees. To manage this system, experienced experts have been brought in, and they have immediately taken their positions in the fair area. These experts are stationed at a central location, continuously monitoring all drones flying in the vicinity. On high alert 24/7, they have the capability to disable any suspicious drone mid-flight if necessary. The number will increase significantly, with 7,000 buses—including 6,800 ordinary buses and 200 AC buses—operational on Mauni Amavasya, one of the most significant bathing festivals. Furthermore, 200 city electric buses will also function as shuttles on these key dates. Managing Director of UPSRTC Masoom Ali Sarwar stated that under the instructions of the transport minister, they have accelerated prepara-

tions for the Maha Kumbh. He further said that Gaurav Verma has been appointed as the fair officer for UPSRTC. Mobile diesel dispensing units, referred to as 'browsers', will be stationed at temporary bus depots to ensure uninterrupted fuel supply. Additionally, UPSRTC's toll-free number (1800 1802 877) and WhatsApp helpline (9415049606) will be operational 24/7 to assist devotees throughout the event.

area to manage the influx of visitors. These stations are staffed by chief manager-level officers from the headquarters, supported by retired advisors. Additionally, temporary workshops have been set up near these bus stations to address any technical problems in buses arriving from outside regions. The transport minister also announced that 2,000 buses will be deployed in the first phase of the fair. For the main bathing dates in the sec-

ond phase, the number will increase significantly, with 7,000 buses—including 6,800 ordinary buses and 200 AC buses—operational on Mauni Amavasya, one of the most significant bathing festivals. Furthermore, 200 city electric buses will also function as shuttles on these key dates. Managing Director of UPSRTC Masoom Ali Sarwar stated that under the instructions of the transport minister, they have accelerated prepara-

Labourer dies in roof collapse

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

The roof of a house in Mohanlalganj collapsed while it was being demolished on Saturday afternoon, causing a labourer to be seriously injured after being buried under the debris. He later succumbed to injuries. Police reached the spot as soon as the information was received. With the help of local people, the injured labourer was taken to the hospital, where doctors declared him dead. It was reported that Omprakash (60), a resident of Mau village, had come to Mohanlalganj to work as a labourer. The roof of a house under construction was being demolished when, around 1 pm, it suddenly collapsed, causing Omprakash to be buried under the debris. Fellow labourers pulled him out of the rubble. Upon receiving the information, the police took him to the hospital, where he died during treatment. Family members then beat up the landlord. On receiving information about the incident, the family members of the deceased arrived at the scene, expressed their anger and attacked the landlord. The family members claimed that the labourer died due to the negligence of the contractor who was overseeing the work. They also accused the doctors of failing to provide timely treatment. Omprakash is survived by his wife Sushila Devi, and five children: Santosh, Yogesh, Shivam, Manish, and Lakshmi. Inspector, Mohanlalganj, said that the investigation into the case has begun and further necessary action is being taken after receiving a complaint from the victim's family.

Govt removes Noida chairman removed after HC indictment

Lucknow (PNS): The Uttar Pradesh government on Saturday removed Anil Kumar Sagar, Chairman of the New Okhla Industrial Development Authority (Noida) and Principal Secretary, Industry, from both positions following an indictment by the Lucknow bench of the Allahabad High Court. The bench, headed by Justice Pankaj Bhatia, directed the state government to take action against the chairman. If no action was taken, the court warned, it would be forced to order an inquiry by the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) into the serious corruption charges against the officer. The next hearing of the case is scheduled for December 16. In response to the court's directive, the state government removed Sagar from both posts on Saturday, placing him in waiting. Anil Kumar Sagar faces charges related to the arbitrary approval

and cancellation of real estate projects in Noida. The High Court also uncovered several discrepancies in the affidavit filed by the Noida chairman before the court. Sagar, who also served as the Principal Secretary of Industry, issued three contradictory orders in similar cases, where in one instance he approved a project, while in another, he cancelled it.

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B-762
GOVERNMENT OF ODISHA
OFFICE OF THE CHIEF CONSTRUCTION ENGINEER, SOUTHERN (R&B) CIRCLE, BERMAMPUR
Phone : 0680-2281582, e-mail : ccescbam@gmail.com
INVITATIONS FOR BIDS (IFB) [e-Procurement]

Bid Identification No. CCE, S.R.C (R&B)-BAM-13/2024-25 No. 4172 / Dated: 11.12.2024

- The Chief Construction Engineer, Southern (R&B) Circle, Bermampur on behalf of Governor of Odisha invites percentage rate bid in double cover system in ONLINE MODE from eligible contractors for construction of Road works as detailed in the table below.
- Nature of work : Road Works
- No. of work : 04 Nos.
- Tender Cost : Rs.10,000/- (online)
- Class of Contractor : "A" Class and "Special" Class
- Availability of Bid document in the Website : From 20.12.2024 10.00 AM to 03.01.2025 5.30 PM
- Date of Opening of Bid : 04.01.2025 at 11.30 A.M.
- The Bidders have to participate in ONLINE bidding only. Further details can be seen from the website <https://tendersodisha.gov.in>.
- Any addendum / corrigendum / cancellation of tender can also be seen in the said website only.

OIPR-34103/11/0016/2425
Sd/- (Ashis Kumar Nayak)
Chief Construction Engineer (IC),
Southern (R&B) Circle, Bermampur

GOVERNMENT OF ODISHA, "e-PROCUREMENT NOTICE"
OFFICE OF THE CHIEF CONSTRUCTION ENGINEER, KHORDHA (R&B) CIRCLE, KHORDHA
WORKS DEPARTMENT
Short Tender call Notice
E-mail: rbrcirclekhurda@gmail.com

Bid Identification No. CCE-Khordha (R&B) Circle-21/2024-25 Memo No - 2472 Dt. 12.12.2024

The Chief Construction Engineer, Khordha (R&B) Circle, Khordha on behalf of Governor of Odisha inviting percentage rate bid in double cover system in ONLINE MODE from eligible contractors for Building works as detailed in the table below:

1. Nature of Work	: Buildings Work
2. No of Work	: 1No
3. Tender Cost	: Rs. 10,000.00 (On-Line)
4. Class of Contractor	: B & A Class
5. Availability of Bid document in the Website	: From 10.00 AM of Dt. 16.12.2024 up to 05.00 PM of Dt. 23.12.2024 at 11.30 AM
6. Date of opening of Bid	: Dt 24.12.2024 at 11.30 AM
7. The Bidders have to participate in ONLINE bidding only. Further details can be seen from the Website: https://tendersodisha.gov.in . Any Addendum / Corrigendum / Cancellation of tender can also be seen in the said website.	

OIPR-34127/11/0023/2425
Chief Construction Engineer, Khordha (R&B) Circle, Khordha

Yogi: SGPPI setting high standards in healthcare, medical education

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath on Saturday stated that Sanjay Gandhi Postgraduate Institute of Medical Sciences (SGPPI) is setting high standards in healthcare and medical education, not just in Uttar Pradesh but across North India. Highlighting its quiet yet impactful progress, he said the institute is achieving excellence and scaling new heights. The CM was speaking at the 41st Foundation Day celebrations of SGPPI in Lucknow. Highlighting the institute's success, CM Yogi said, "SGPPI is currently performing robotic surgeries and is now advancing towards becoming a centre for utilising AI to enhance patient care. This reflects the institute's remarkable progress."

He further mentioned that in 2024 alone, SGPPI registered 1,16,000 patients, treated 48,600 of them, and conducted over 14,000 surgeries. The institute successfully completed 114 kidney transplants, 32 bone marrow transplants, one liver transplant, 591 open-heart surgeries, and 319 robotic surgeries.

These achievements underscore SGPPI's excellence and its growing contribution to healthcare, he noted.

During the event, CM Yogi released the institute's coffee-table book. He also honoured faculty members and students for their outstanding research and exemplary performance. The CM stated that SGPPI has significantly increased its pace over the past seven years, and the next five years will be even more crucial for the institute. Departments that were once unimaginable are now being established, and the institute is working in mission mode with full commitment, he remarked.

Highlighting a unique achievement, the CM mentioned that SGPPI is the first institution in the country to receive Rs 500 crore through CSR funds. "These funds are being used to



Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath and Deputy CM Brajesh Pathak at the SGPPI's 41st Foundation Day celebrations in Lucknow on Saturday

support initiatives like the Saloni Heart Foundation, which provides life-saving heart surgeries for children. Additionally, a shelter home (Rain Basera) is being constructed with CSR support," he stated. He added, "Every patient seeks quality care, and to meet this demand, doctors need to triple their efforts. The government will ensure all necessary resources are provided." Reflecting on the challenges during the COVID-19 pandemic, he noted that at that time, 36 districts in Uttar Pradesh lacked ICU beds. On the director's suggestion, the Tele-ICU facility was introduced, saving thousands of lives. He added that six medical colleges have already been

integrated into the Tele-ICU system in the first phase, and efforts are underway to connect all medical colleges in the state to this facility in the future. The CM further pointed out that between 1947 and 2017, only 12 medical colleges were established in the state. However, in 2023 alone, 13 government medical colleges became operational, admitting students for the first time. Additionally, three government colleges under the PPP model and two private medical colleges were inaugurated, making a total of 18 new medical colleges this year. "The government has now opened medical colleges in 65 districts, ensuring that every district has access to modern healthcare. Free dialysis ser-

vices have been introduced in all districts, along with the establishment of blood separator units in blood banks. The state also organises 'Mukhyamantri Jan Arogya Mela' every Sunday to provide free healthcare services," the CM stated. Highlighting the impact of Ayushman Bharat scheme, CM Yogi said that over 9 crore people in Uttar Pradesh are benefiting from Ayushman cards, with over 5,25,000 gold cards issued recently.

Senior citizens above 70 years are also eligible for free health insurance coverage of Rs 5 lakh per year under the Ayushman Vayam Vandana Yojana. The CM also mentioned that Rs 73 crore was disbursed from the Chief

Minister's Relief Fund in the last year alone to the Homi Bhabha Cancer Hospital for the treatment of over 21,000 patients. He assured that no poor patient would face hurdles in treatment due to lack of funds, as the government is fully committed to providing financial assistance for healthcare.

On this occasion, Deputy CM Brajesh Pathak, Minister of State for Health Mayankeshwar Sharan Singh, Principal Secretary (Health and Medical Education) Partha Sarthi Sen Sharma, SGPPI Director Dr RK Dhiman, Vice-Chancellor of Geetam Institute of Medical Science and Research Prof Geetanjali Batman Bane, etc were present.

Admn reopens Sambhal temple closed since 1978 riots

PTI ■ SAMBHAL

The Sambhal administration on Friday reopened a temple locked since 1978 following communal riots in the town. Officials said the temple, a stone's throw from the Shahi Jama Masjid, was opened after authorities "stumbled" on it during an anti-encroachment drive. The Bhasma Shankar temple houses an idol of Lord Hanuman and a Shivaling. The temple had remained locked since 1978 after the communal riots that led to the displacement of the local Hindu community, locals claimed.

Sub-Divisional Magistrate (SDM) Vandana Mishra, who was leading a campaign against electricity theft in the area, said, "While inspecting the region, we stumbled upon this temple. Upon noticing it, I immediately informed the district authorities."

"We all came here together and decided to reopen the temple," Mishra said, adding that the temple had been closed for decades and the local residents confirmed it had been locked since 1978.

The temple also has a well nearby by which the authorities plan to reopen.

Weeks after four people died in a violence over a court-ordered survey of the Shahi Jama Masjid in this Uttar Pradesh district, the administration has launched a campaign to tackle encroachments and power theft in areas around the Mughal-era mosque.

Local residents shared their memories of the temple, with many highlighting its importance as a religious site for the community.

The temple, located in Khaggu Sarai is just over a kilometre away from the Jama Masjid which is situated in Kot Garvi area.

Mukesh Rastogi, a resident of Kot Garvi, said, "We had heard a lot about this temple from our ancestors. It is an ancient temple but it was closed long ago because people only a particular community lived there. "We have heard that this tem-



Security personnel inside the temple reopened on Saturday

PTI

ple must be at least 500 years old," he said. Vishnu Shankar Rastogi, 82-year-old patron of the Nagar Hindu Mahasabha, shared his personal connection with the temple.

"I have lived in Khaggu Sarai since my birth. After the 1978 riots, our community was forced to migrate from the area. This temple, dedicated to our Kulguru, has been locked since then," Rastogi said.

"Around 25-30 Hindu families, including ours, used to live in the Khaggu Sarai area. After the 1978 riots, we sold our house and left this place," Rastogi said. He said it is an ancient temple and was known as Bhasma Shankar temple. It was called the temple of the Rastogi community, he added.

"Earlier, the people of our community used to come here for worship," he said. Sanjay Sankhydhara, a resident of Sambhal, said he has heard

a lot about this temple. "People's sorrows were relieved by visiting here. But it was closed for a long time. Now the people here will visit again and earn the benefits of virtue," he said.

Violence had taken place in Sambhal on November 24 over surveying of the Mughal-era Shahi Jama Masjid. Four people were killed and several, including police personnel, were injured in the violence.

An imam of another mosque in Sambhal was on Friday fined Rs 2 lakh for allegedly using a loudspeaker at high volume, officials said.

The incident took place in the Anar Wali Masjid in the Kot Garvi area, according to administration officials.

The imam was directed to refrain from similar conduct for the next six months, according to an order passed by the SDM.

Criminal linked to cases in UP, Delhi killed in encounter

PTI ■ MEERUT/NEW DELHI

A criminal wanted in connection with several cases in Uttar Pradesh and Delhi was killed in an encounter with police in Uttar Pradesh's Meerut district during the early hours of Saturday, officials said.

Anil alias Sonu Matka (39) — a known associate of the Hashim Baba gang in Delhi — had been wanted in multiple cases, including the killings of a man and his nephew in the national capital's Farsh Bazar area on Diwali (October 31). "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," said Additional Director General of Police (STF) Amitabh Yash.

The officer added that the Baghat native was a known associate of the Hashim Baba gang and had a bounty of Rs 50,000 on his head. He was involved in numerous robbery and murder cases in 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. According to Delhi Police officers, two sophisticated pistols and 10 live rounds were seized from Matka. One officer said, "Matka was travelling on a motorcycle. When he was signalled to stop, he opened fire at the police party. He suffered gunshot wounds in the retaliatory firing."

Matka was identified as the shooter in the October 31 killings of Akash Sharma and his nephew Rishabh in Delhi. The two were bursting firecrackers in front of their home in Farsh Bazar when they were shot dead by two assailants. One of the assailants was arrested and he revealed that Matka was the shooter. Matka had been absconding since then, the officer said. He was also wanted in a robbery case in Delhi's Lahori Gate and the Delhi Police had declared a reward of Rs 50,000 for information on his arrest. Another officer said Matka was involved in a robbery of Rs 1.5 crore at an office in Karol Bagh on October 7.

Drive against power theft near Sambhal mosque

PTI ■ SAMBHAL

Weeks after four people died in a violence over a court-ordered survey of the Shahi Jama Masjid in this Uttar Pradesh district, the administration has launched a campaign to tackle encroachments and power theft in areas around the Mughal-era mosque. The comprehensive drive aims to revitalise the area and crack down on illegal power connections, district officials said on Saturday.

District Magistrate Rajender Pensiya confirmed that the administration was taking steps to address encroachments around the historical mosque. Violence erupted during the November 24 survey as protesters gathered near the mosque and clashed with security personnel, leading to stone pelting and arson. Four people died and several others were injured in the clashes. The police have denied allegations that it fired at the protesters. "We are marking the area as it is in the documents and ensuring it is cleaned up. There is a

well nearby, which we are in the process of reviving," Pensiya said.

Encroachments along drains, particularly in areas around the mosque, have been an ongoing concern. The district administration launched a dedicated encroachment removal campaign in the Chandausi city on Friday and is expanding it to other parts of Sambhal. "The campaign will continue for two to three months and all encroachments will be cleared," Pensiya said.

He clarified that a thorough assessment of the situation would be carried out after the cleanup around the Shahi Jama Masjid. The senior official said the authorities discovered widespread electricity theft during a surprise inspection at several local mosques and residential areas.

"We conducted a check on loudspeakers at religious sites on Saturday and uncovered illegal electricity connections in around 250 to 300 houses, mosques and madrasas," he told reporters.



Security personnel during a crackdown on electricity theft in Sambhal on Saturday

PTI

The district authorities uncovered a case in which 150 to 200 houses were drawing power from a single distribution unit. "An entire roof has been converted into an illegal power distribution unit," Pensiya said

and added that an FIR would be filed against those responsible. Superintendent of Police Krishna Kumar Bishnoi said the authorities were checking the use of loudspeakers at temples, mosques and other religious

sites. Saturday's crackdown targeted locations with suspected illegal power connections within the Nakhasa police station jurisdiction.

"We have uncovered significant power theft in these areas, with

electricity being supplied through illegal connections to entire neighbourhoods," Bishnoi said. "In some cases, the electricity is being provided from makeshift power connections atop a mosque minaret."

The police are identifying all those involved and profiting from these illegal connections. "Action will be taken under the Uttar Pradesh Gangsters and Anti-Social Activities (Prevention) Act if any material benefits are being collected using unlawful means," Bishnoi said. With cases already being registered with the electricity department, the drive is expected to continue for several days, sources said. District officials also announced plans to make Sambhal "100 per cent electricity theft-free".

The goal is part of the district administration's broader commitment to improving infrastructure and cracking down on illegal activities. As part of the drive, a mosque imam was fined Rs 2 lakh for allegedly using a loudspeaker at high volume on Friday.

Jailor attacked in Jhansi, police suspect role of prison guard's sons

Jhansi (PTI): A jailor of the district jail here was injured in an attack by unidentified assailants on Saturday, with the police suspecting that a prison guard's sons were involved in the incident.

The incident took place in Navabad area around 12.30 pm when Kasturi Lal Gupta (50) was pulled out of his car and thrashed with sticks and rods, Station House Officer (SHO) Dipendra Kumar Singh.

The injured is undergoing treatment at the district hospital, he said. Preliminary investigations suggest that the attack may be linked to the recent transfer of a prison guard, Kamlesh Yadav, to Hamirpur jail, the officer said.

It is suspected that Yadav's sons were angered by the transfer and targeted the jailor, Singh added. Further investigation in the matter is underway, he said.

8-year-old boy killed in celebratory firing

Lucknow (PTI): An eight-year-old boy was killed after suffering bullet injuries during celebratory firing at a wedding function in Deoria district, police said on Saturday.

The incident occurred in Garouna village on December 9, when Abhinandan (8) alias Kanha went to watch fireworks along with his friends, Bhola and Abhishek, they said.

Abhinandan was hit when some people opened celebratory firing during the wedding function, the police said.

The boy was taken to a medical college for treatment where he died during treatment, they added. Following his cremation, an FIR was registered on Friday evening based on the complaint lodged by his mother, Maya Devi, a police officer said.

He said that Abhinandan's father, Niranjan Vishwakarma,

confirmed the events and said that his son was at his maternal uncle's house when the incident occurred. SP Sankalp Sharma said, "A case has been registered in the matter and efforts are underway to identify those who were responsible for the celebratory firing."

16-YEAR-OLD GIRL STABBED TO DEATH

Meanwhile, a 16-year-old girl was stabbed to death by a man from her village in Balrampur district on Saturday, police said. The incident took place when the girl from Samda village, who is in class eight, was riding her bicycle, they said.

They said that she was taken to the hospital where doctors declared her brought dead. According to police, the accused, Dharampal Chauhan (19) has been arrested,

Additional Superintendent of Police Namrata Srivastava said. A case has been registered based on the complaint of the girl's brother.

Meanwhile, a woman allegedly hanged herself to death in Eldeco Udyan-2 on Friday night. Her body was found hanging from the iron mesh in the courtyard, identified as Aarti (35), lived with her husband Dilip Kumar and sons Veer and Ved in Ashraya Colony, Eldeco Udyan-2. The family originally hails from Mahura Kala village in Gosaiganj. According to Dilip Kumar, everyone had dinner together on Friday before going to sleep. When he got up at 3 am on Saturday, he discovered her hanging with a dupatta tied around her neck. Dilip is an e-rickshaw driver and the couple had married in 2015.

Govt continues to promote millets

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

As part of its continued efforts to promote Shri Anna (millets) cultivation and support farmers, the Uttar Pradesh government has procured 28,631 metric tonnes of jowar, surpassing the target of 20,000 metric tonnes, in the ongoing Kharif season, an official statement said.

So far, the government has purchased 73,246 metric tonnes of millet from 13,617 farmers, and 29,773 metric tonnes of jowar from 6,335 farmers. Shree Anna procurement will continue until December 31, 2024, ensuring farmers get fair prices for their produce, the statement added.

The government has also transferred Rs 200 crore to the registered millet growers' accounts through the transparent Direct Benefit Transfer (DBT) system. The payments are being processed within 48 hours of procurement, ensuring quick financial relief to farmers, the

statement said. The state government is prioritising Shri Anna to enhance public health and increase farmers' income. Under the leadership of Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath, the state is actively promoting the cultivation of Shri Anna varieties such as millet, jowar, and maize, according to the statement. It is worth mentioning here that the government is procuring coarse grains and paddy at the minimum support price (MSP). The MSP for millet is Rs 2,625 per quintal, while jowar (hybrid) and jowar (maldandi) are priced at Rs 3,371 and Rs 3,421 per quintal, respectively. Maize is being procured at Rs 2,225 per quintal. Meanwhile, the state has also purchased over 23 lakh metric tonnes of paddy from 3,27,915 farmers to date. The government is ensuring fair prices for farmers by purchasing paddy and coarse grains at the prescribed MSP for the Kharif marketing year 2024-25.

To facilitate this, the state has

established 306 purchase centres for millets and 79 centres for jowar across identified districts, making it easier for farmers to sell their produce at guaranteed rates. These centres are open daily from 9 am to 5 pm. Farmers visiting these centres benefit from proper arrangements, including seating, drinking water, shade, and facilities for drying crops, the statement said. This initiative not only supports farmers financially but also promotes the cultivation of nutritious coarse grains like millet and jowar, aligning with the government's focus on agriculture and public health, the statement added.

The government has set ambitious procurement targets of 220,000 tonnes of millet, 15,000 tonnes of maize, and 20,000 tonnes of jowar, with purchases continuing until 31 December 2024. This initiative ensures fair prices for farmers while boosting the production of nutrient-rich crops, according to the statement.

Chaudhry advises students to embrace resilience and continuous learning

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ VARANASI

“Don’t chase money, chase making a difference. A sense of accomplishment is what drives human beings”, were the golden words shared by Zscaler CEO, Chairman and Founder, Jay Chaudhry with the graduating students as he delivered the 104th convocation address at Swatantrata Bhawan in Banaras Hindu University (BHU) here on Saturday. The illustrious alumnus exhorted students to strive with a positive attitude towards life and look for their area of passion and fall in love with learning. Chaudhry advised the students to embrace resilience and continuous learning as they step into their future. Emphasising that success comes from dedication, adaptability and taking risks, he urged them to be bold and not fear challenges but view them as opportunities to grow. “Your future is in your hands”, he said, reminding the students that life is full of ups and downs and figuring out the areas of weakness and improving on them is very, very important. Sharing his personal journey from a humble background to becoming a global tech icon, Chaudhry underscored the importance of finding opportunities out of adversities. He recalled how his parents, from a small-scale farming family, struggled to make sure that their children got a good education. “Adversity is a wonderful thing. Adversity makes you figure things out, what to do and how to do?”, said Chaudhry while mentioning how adversities in his childhood helped him develop the work ethic. “We always come across opportunities. If you work hard, you do good things, good things happen to you. They may not happen every time, but nine



out of 10 times, people who work hard and go the extra mile, good things happen to them”, he added. Reflecting on his own experiences at BHU, Jay Chaudhry spoke about his fond memories on the campus, walks across Ganga ghats, and strolls in the Lanka area. Crediting BHU for the success he got in his life, the 1980 Bachelor of Technology in Electronics Engineering passed out inspired students to work hard, be diligent, honest and strive with a positive outlook in life in order to achieve excellence. The chief guest said the day of graduation marks a new beginning for students and it is up to them to choose the direction they wish to head, while having an adapting nature as life demands them to be. In his address, Vice-Chancellor (V-C) Prof Sudhir Kumar Jain shared the significant progress made by the university for its growth by hiring and nurturing talent, deployment of resources and building culture and governance. He listed the university’s initiatives for holistic development of students, empowering faculty members,

infrastructure development and promoting excellence in education and research. The V-C mentioned the progress made by the university in strengthening its alumni engagement and informed that it now has a database of nearly 62,000 alumni records. Prof Jain said the university community is exuberant in celebrating the academic success, personal growth and start of a new journey of graduating students. “The world you are stepping into is one of immense opportunity but also unprecedented complexity. The challenges ahead require not only technical expertise but also a commitment to ethics, collaboration and lifelong learning”, he said, reminding students to be mindful of two fundamental traits throughout their lives: values and gratitude. “Always remember that values and ethics will be your greatest partners in your personal and professional growth and never forget to express your gratitude – to not just to your teachers and families but also to the society. Let this gratitude motivate you to give back to the society”, Prof Jain told stu-

dents. A total of 34 medals were conferred on 30 students from the dais during the convocation ceremony at Swatantrata Bhawan. These included Chancellor’s Medals, Maharaja Vibhuti Narayan Singh Gold Medals, and BHU medals. As part of the 104th convocation, 14,072 degrees are being presented to students across institutes and faculties. These comprise 867 PhD, 21 MPhil, 5,074 postgraduate and 8,110 undergraduate degrees. Besides, 544 medals are being conferred upon students at various degree distribution programmes. Institutes and faculties are holding their degree distribution programmes at different venues across BHU campus. Registrar Prof Arun Kumar Singh announced the names of the students who were presented the medals. Rector Prof Sanjay Kumar welcomed the guests and the gathering. The ceremony concluded with a vote of thanks by the Registrar. Prof Padmini Ravindranath conducted the programme while Prof Panchajani Mishra recited the mangalacharan at the beginning of the programme.

Proposal to withdraw PuVVNL privatisation decision passed at ‘Bijli Panchayat’

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ VARANASI

In a huge ‘Bijli Panchayat’ held at Hanumanji Temple located in Bhikharipur here on Saturday, a proposal to withdraw the decision of privatisation of Purvanchal Vidut Vitran Nigam Limited (PuVVNL) was passed and sent to Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath. Hundreds of electricity workers and general consumers participated in it. The Vidut Karmchhari Joint Sangharsh Samiti, UP announced that on the December 17 a similar Bijli Panchayat of employees, farmers and domestic consumers will be organised in Agra. The office-bearers of the Vidut Karmchhari Sanjukt Sangharsh Samiti UP led by its state convener Shaileendra Dubey said seven years ago in 2020, a decision was taken to privatise PuVVNL. After talks with the joint action committee (JAC), in the written agreement made on October 6, 2020 with the Finance Minister of UP Suresh Khanna and the then Energy Minister Shrikant Sharma, it is

clearly stated that the decision to privatise PuVVNL is withdrawn. It is also written in the agreement that no privatisation of any kind will be done anywhere in the energy corporations of UP without taking the employees into confidence. The JAC said now this unilateral decision of privatisation is a blatant violation of the written agreement made on such a large scale, which is extremely unfortunate. “The privatisation is a big conspiracy. This conspiracy will be exposed as soon as the request for proposal (RFP) document is issued. Everyone understands in whose interest it is to hand over the land of the entire 21 districts to private houses for just one rupee”, said state convener Shaileendra Dubey, questioning that what is the meaning of privatising the assets of PuVVNL worth billions of rupees on the basis of a reserve price of only ₹ 1,500 crore without getting it audited by the CAG? The JAC leaders alleged that the assets of PuVVNL and Dakshinchal Vidut Vitran Nigam worth billions of rupees are being sold to private com-

panies for a pittance, which neither the employees nor the common consumers will accept. They said the biggest blow from privatisation will be on the consumers. Tata Power and Adani Power operate in Mumbai. The electricity rates for domestic consumers in Mumbai are ₹17-18 per unit. The maximum electricity rate for domestic consumers in UP is ₹6.50 per unit. “It is clear that as soon as privatisation happens, the electricity rate for farmers and domestic consumers in UP will immediately increase to ₹10 per unit or more”, they added. The Bijli Panchayat of Varanasi unanimously rejected the privatisation of PuVVNL and demanded from the government that the proposal of privatisation should be withdrawn immediately in the interest of consumers and employees so that there is no unnecessary industrial unrest in the energy corporations. After the ‘Bijli Panchayat’, consumers and employees peacefully marched on foot to the headquarters of Purvanchal Vidut Vitran Nigam. No management offi-

cial was available at the headquarters to take the memorandum. Therefore, on the instructions of the JAC, everyone went back peacefully. Earlier, the election of office-bearers of JAC of Purvanchal has been held. In the presence of Shaileendra Dubey, Avinash Kumar was elected unopposed as the convener of Purvanchal, while Narendra Verma and Ramkumar Jha as co-conveners and Ankur Pandey as media secretary in charge. On the call of JAC, the power employees and engineers of all the energy corporations including the districts, observed ‘Anti-Privatisation Day’ through a huge gathering at Hanuman Temple (Bhikharipur). While addressing the gathering, the speakers informed that a nationwide ‘Anti-Privatisation Day’ was observed in protest against the privatisation of electricity in UP and Chandigarh and protest meetings were held in all the districts and projects across the country. The meeting was addressed by Shaileendra Dubey, Avinash Kumar, Ashish Kumar Mayashankar Tiwari and others.

Swiss ambassador visits ISARC

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ VARANASI

Varanasi (PNS): The International Rice Research Institute (IRRI) South Asia Regional Centre (ISARC) welcomed the Swiss Ambassador Maya Tissafi as well as the Head of International Cooperation, Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC) India Office Philippe Sas and the Head of Culture and Legal Affairs, Embassy of Switzerland Simone Schaefer here on Saturday. The visit was aimed at strengthening partnerships and exploring new ideas for sustainable agriculture and climate-resilient rice systems. The ambassador and the accompanying delega-



tion were welcomed by Director of ISARC Dr Sudhanshu Singh. He introduced the guests to ISARC’s state-of-the-art facilities, such as the Speed Breed Lab and experimental farm. The delegation visited various research and innovation centres of ISARC, including GHG Plot and Regenerative Agriculture (sustainable farming experi-

ments), Mechanization Centre and Speed Breed Facility (demonstration of new farming techniques and faster methods of crop development), state-of-the-art laboratories (such as GIS, Plant and Soil Lab and Computational Biology Lab) and Ed-Tech Studio (for knowledge sharing and capacity building). During the presentation and discussion, Dr Singh highlighted the pioneering work of ISARC. He explained how ISARC is playing a vital role in promoting low emission and sustainable rice production technologies. Senior Scientist, ISARC, Dr Prakashan, spoke

on low emission rice technologies and their dissemination under the project supported by SDC. Other senior scientists discussed developing sustainable solutions to combat climate change through national and international collaboration. At the end there was a discussion between the ISARC team and the delegation on future collaboration opportunities. Praising ISARC’s achievements, Tissafi said, “IRRI is a symbol of excellence in rice research and sustainability. I am inspired by the commitment and innovation here to solve agricultural challenges.”

IFFCO’s Phulpur Unit-II secures first position in UPSECA

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ PRAYAGRAJ

The IFFCO’s Phulpur Unit-II has received the first position in the Uttar Pradesh State Energy Conservation Award (UPSECA)-2024, while Phulpur Unit-I was awarded a certificate of appreciation under it. This honour was given in a ceremony organised under the aegis of Uttar Pradesh New and Renewable Energy Development Agency (UPNEDA). This prestigious award was given on Saturday by the Secretary of Uttar Pradesh New and Renewable Energy Development Agency during a programme organised in Lucknow, which was received by Nishit Narayan, Chief Manager (Process), present as a representative of IFFCO Phulpur unit. This achievement of IFFCO Phulpur units reflects their commitment towards energy conservation and sustainable development. These awards are a testament to the excellent efforts made by both the units



in the field of energy efficiency and judicious use of resources. Senior Executive Director (Unit Head) of IFFCO Phulpur Unit, Sanjay Kudesia, said the IFFCO family is feeling proud to receive this honour and it inspires to continue working in the interest of farmers and the environment. All employees along with IFFCO Officers’ Association president Anurag Tiwari and general secretary Swayam Prakash, IFFCO Employees’ Union president Pankaj Pandey and general secretary Vijay Kumar Yadav expressed joy and happiness.

BHU urologist attends AAAU Congress

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ VARANASI

Varanasi (PNS): The Russian Society of Urology (RSU) and the Arab Association of Urology (AAU) recently invited Dr Yashasvi Singh, a renowned urologist from the Institute of Medical Sciences, Banaras Hindu University (IMS-BHU), as a distinguished speaker at the 21st Annual Arab Association of Urology (AAAU) Congress. The event, held in Qatar recently, brought together leading international experts in the field of urology. Dr Yashasvi Singh, an associate professor of Urology specialising in uro-oncology and neuro-urology, delivered groundbreaking presentations that highlighted his cutting-edge research and clinical innovations. One of his key contributions was on the ‘miRNA correlation with prostate biopsy’, a revolutionary technique poised to redefine the diagnostic and therapeutic approaches to prostate cancer. This research promises to significantly improve patient outcomes, marking a paradigm shift in the early detection and management of prostate cancer. Dr Singh also shared his insights on the ‘role of thoracic CT scans in renal cancer patients’.

Saving energy a national responsibility: GM

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ VARANASI



GM NP Singh inaugurating the closing function of the Energy Conservation Week at BLW in Varanasi on Saturday.

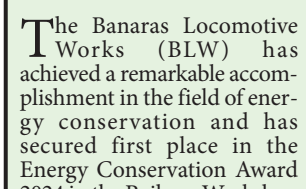
The Energy Conservation Week concluded successfully at Banaras Locomotive Works (BLW) here on Saturday. Various awareness programmes were organised throughout the week with the aim of making the people aware of the importance of energy conservation to Programmes like awareness rally, essay writing, quiz, drawing competition and street play organised during the week raised awareness towards energy conservation. During the closing ceremony of the programme, the chief guest and General Manager (GM) Naresh Pal Singh in his address highlighted the importance of energy conservation and said saving energy is a national responsibility. He said by using ener-

gy judiciously, we can not only save resources but can also face global challenges like climate change. He also highlighted various projects going on in BLW towards energy conservation and added that the BLW family successfully celebrated Energy Conservation Week from December 7-14 as per the instructions of the Railway Board. The GM said awareness and participation are important in achieving the target of Net Zero Carbon Emission of the Government of India by the year 2070 and the 2030 target for railways. “More than 60 per cent of the energy is consumed in the BLW Colony area and this energy consumption can be reduced by using solar energy, energy efficient appliances and green building concepts. Let us contribute together towards energy conservation and make this campaign a success”, Singh said. Principal Chief Electrical Engineer (PCEE) Sushil Kumar Srivastava said the limited energy resources are coming to an end. “We all should minimise the use of electricity in our daily lives. When traveling alone, instead of using big vehicles, bicycles or motorcycles can be used, which can save a lot of energy”, he said.

Chief Electrical Service Engineer (CESE) Bhardwaj Chaudhary gave detailed information about the week-long programmes organised during Energy Conservation Week through a power point presentation. During the week, energy conservation awareness rally was organised on December 7, quiz competition on December 9, essay competition on December 10, painting competition on December 11, street play on December 12, awareness among employees on December 13 and the closing ceremony on December 14. On the occasion of the closing ceremony, the students and BLW employees who performed excellently during the week were awarded and honoured by the GM. The programme was also attended by Principal Chief Materials Manager (PCCM) Rajneesh Gupta, Principal Chief Mechanical Engineer (PCME) Subroto Nath, Principal Chief Medical Officer (PCMO) Dr Devesh Kumar, Principal Chief Personnel Officer (PCPO) Janardan Singh, Chief Design Engineer, Electrical MK Gupta, Chief Mechanical Engineer (CME/Production) Sunil Kumar, Chief Design Engineer

BLW achieves milestone

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ VARANASI



The Banaras Locomotive Works (BLW) has achieved a remarkable accomplishment in the field of energy conservation and has secured first place in the Energy Conservation Award 2024 in the Railway Workshop Sector by Uttar Pradesh New and Renewable Energy Development Agency (UPNEDA). Giving this information at closing function of Energy Conservation Week here on Saturday, GM Naresh Pal Singh said that this honour is the result of BLW’s continuous commitment towards energy conservation and use of new technologies. “Various innovations have been adopted to



reduce energy consumption along with the use of solar energy, energy efficient equipment and green energy. This honour from BLW will promote awareness towards energy conservation not only in railways but in the entire region”, he said, adding that the BLW family feels proud of this achievement and will continue to work towards the goals of energy conservation in future as well.

(Mechanical) Praveen Kumar, Chief Electrical Engineer (Loco) MK Singh, Chief Safety Officer (CSO) SB Patel, Chief Quality Assurance Manager Ram Jann Choubey, Principal of Technical Training Centre (TTC) Jitendra Agarwal, Deputy Chief Vigilance Officer Dharmendra Kumar, Deputy General Manager (Anuj Katiyar, Assistant Electrical Engineer Gulam Sarwar and Public Relations Officer (PRO) Rajesh Kumar along with other department heads and a large number of officers and employees. In the end, Deputy Chief Electrical Engineer (Maintenance) Neeraj Singh proposed the vote of thanks.

‘Chess develops decision-making ability’

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ VARANASI

Postmaster General (PMG) of Varanasi Region Colonel Vinod Kumar said chess develops decision-making ability and this brain game has a great role in infusing enthusiasm and energy in the monotonous and boring environment of the office. He was inaugurating the workshop organised for Varanasi region workers here on Saturday. “Regular practice of chess can also prevent Alzheimer’s disease, which often occurs in old age, because in the game of chess, the player has to keep an eye on his moves as well as opponent’s every move, due to which the development of every cell of the body, especially the brain cells, takes place through the flow of energy”, Col Kumar said. A chess workshop was organised in the auditorium of the Regional Office, Varanasi. The workshop was started by Assistant Superintendent Pallavi Mishra by welcoming the PMG Col Vinod Kumar, General Secretary of Varanasi District Chess Organisation Vijay Kumar and international standard chess player and chess referee in Senior National Arbiter Tushar Saraswat. During the workshop, the postal employees of Regional Office, Varanasi were taught the importance of chess and the moves of chess pieces like king, queen, camel, horse, elephant and pawn. The postal employees learnt with

great interest about the special move of the king in which the king exchanges places with the elephant that is castling. The moves of pawns in the game of chess were also discussed and it was explained how a pawn can be promoted with its full move and become queen, camel, horse, elephant. Inspector Aniket Ranjan, out of curiosity, asked questions on other moves of chess. After understanding all the aspects of chess in detail, a practice match was also organised among the postal employees in which all participated enthusiastically. Tushar, who was conducting the workshop, appreciated the interest of the postal employees towards chess and assured that certainly one of them will reach a high level in this game. Accountant Paban Naskar expressed his gratitude to the PMG, workshop trainers and postal workers of the regional office in Varanasi for the successful conduct of this workshop. At the conclusion of the workshop, postal workers Shambhu Prasad Gupta, Saurabh Kumar, Naushad, Anand Pradhan, Manish Mishra and all others expressed their gratitude to the PMG for conducting this excellent workshop. Vicky Kumar said earlier he was only interested in cricket, but after this workshop his interest in chess has increased and now he will always play this game. Pankaj Kumar now considers chess as a hobby.

Symposium organised

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ PRAYAGRAJ

The Department of Applied Sciences, IIT-Allahabad organised a one-day symposium on Emerging Trends in Quantum Science and Technology on Saturday. The symposium was followed by a meeting where experts from national institutes and faculty members of IIT-A joined in a discussion on starting a M-Tech programme in Quantum Information and Technology. The programme is expected to start in the academic session starting from July 2025. Eminent scientist and Shanti Swarup Bhatnagar Award winner Professor Aditi Sen De of Harishchandra Research Institute and senior faculty of IIT Madras, Professor Ranjit Kumar Nanda delivered lectures outlining different aspects of quantum technologies. Experts from C-DAC Pune also joined the meeting. Director in charge Prof OP Vyas and Dean Academic & Research (in charge) Prof Pavan Chakraborty applauded the initiative taken by the faculty members of IIT-A to open such a unique programme at IIT-A. Dr Srijit Bhattacharjee and Dr Akhilesh Tiwari of Department of Applied Sciences coordinated the meeting and the symposium. Dr Pramod Kumar, head, Department of Applied Sciences, provided valuable input during the meeting. The HoD, Department of IT, Dr K P Singh and HoD, Department of ECE, Dr Sanjai Singh and incharge (Academic and Research) Prof Pavan Chakraborty also joined the meeting.

Peshwai of Juna Akhara taken out

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ PRAYAGRAJ

The peshwai i.e. royal procession of Sripanchdashnam Juna Akhara and the Devtra Yatra of Kinnar Akhara were taken out on Saturday. Maha Kumbh is starting from January 13 and sadhus and saints from all over the country have started arriving here a month before this event.



The procession of Juna Akhara, the largest Akhara was taken out in a royal style and entered the Mela area. More than 10,000 Naga Sadhus from the country and the world participated in it. On Saturday the saints of Juna Akhara rode on chariots. More than 65 Mahamandaleshwars, including Acharya Mahamandaleshwar Swami Avdhesanand, participated in this peshwai. A huge convoy of Juna Akhara left for entry at 12:30 pm from Maugiri Ashram situated on the banks of Yamuna. Naga sadhus were moving ahead. Guru Dattatreya’s Charan Paduka was also mounted on a chariot. Juna Akhara spokesperson Srimahant Narayan Giri said the peshwai was taken out with full pomp and show. More than 10,000 Naga sadhus participated in it. More than 65



Mahamandaleshwars rode on different chariots. Juna A large number of kinnar chariots were also present in it. Acharya Mahamandaleshwar, Mahamandaleshwar, Jagadguru, Peethadheeshwar, Mahant and other office-bearers took part in the peshwai. Jagadguru Swami Narendranand Saraswati, President of Juna Akhara Mahant Premgiri, Gargacharya Muchkund Peethadheeshwar Swami Mahendranand Giri, Jagadguru Swami Bhuvaneshwari Giri were also present during the procession. On the other hand, two drones flying without permission were caught in the Mahakumbh Mela area on

Saturday. Both were put in deactivated mode. The police have issued a notice to the people who were flying them. Senior Superintendent of Police of Mahakumbh Nagar, Rajesh Dwivedi said the anti-drone system has been activated in the Mahakumbh area. He said drones cannot be flown in the Mahakumbh area without permission at any cost. For this, permission will have to be taken from the police in advance. Strict action will be taken against those who operate drones without permission. He said that for this experienced experts have been called here.

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 Fadnis 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 Prabhakar 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, Fadnis, 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 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, Puhana. 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 has been 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 Hakam 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 Hakam 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.

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 "Bichar 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.

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 Dullewal, 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. Dullewal (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, Dullewal 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 Dullewal. 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.

SOUTH KOREA'S PARLIAMENT IMPEACHES PRESIDENT YOON

AP ■ SEOUL

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.

The National Assembly passed the motion 204-85. Yoon's presidential powers and duties were subsequently suspended and Prime Minister Han Duck-soo, the country's No. 2 official, took over presidential powers later Saturday.

The Constitutional Court has up to 180 days to determine whether to dismiss Yoon as president or restore his powers. If he's thrown out of office, a national election to choose his successor must be held within 60 days.

It was the second National Assembly vote on Yoon's impeachment after ruling party lawmakers boycotted it last Saturday. Some People Power Party lawmakers had since said they would vote for Yoon's impeachment as public protests intensified and his approval rating plummeted.

National Assembly Speaker Woo Won Shik said Yoon's impeachment was an outcome driven by "the people's ardent desire for democracy, courage and

dedication."

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!"

In a central Seoul plaza, another huge crowd gathered supporting Yoon, but they grew subdued after hearing he had been impeached. Both rallies have largely been peaceful.

The new leader bolsters the country's security posture: Yoon issued a statement saying he would "never give up" and calling for officials to maintain stability in government functions during what he described as a "temporary" pause of his presidency.

"I will carry with me all the criticisms, encouragement and support directed toward me, and I will continue to do my utmost for the country until the very last moment," Yoon said.

Yoon's December 3 imposition of martial law, the first of its kind in more than four decades in South Korea, lasted only six hours, but has caused massive political tumult, halted diplomatic activities and rattled financial markets. Yoon was forced to lift his decree after parliament unanimously voted to overturn it.

Han, who became the acting leader, ordered the military to bolster its security posture to prevent North Korea

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.

South Korea's executive power is concentrated with the president, but the prime minister leads the country if the president becomes incapacitated. Han is a seasoned official and has previously held a string of top government posts such as trade and finance and was the ambassador to the US. He also served as a prime minister from 2007-2008. After declaring martial law, Yoon sent hundreds of troops and police officers to the parliament to try to impede its vote on the decree, before they withdrew after the parliament rejected Yoon's decree. No major violence occurred.

Opposition parties and many experts accuse Yoon of rebellion, citing a law that categorises as rebellion the staging of a riot against established state authorities to undermine the constitution. They also say that a president in South Korea is allowed to declare martial law only during wartime or similar emergencies and has no right to suspend parliament's operations even under martial law.

The impeachment motion alleged



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. AP/PTI

that Yoon "committed rebellion that hurts peace in the Republic of Korea by staging a series of riots." It said Yoon's mobilization of military and police forces threatened the National Assembly and the public and that his martial law decree was aimed at dis-

turbing the constitution.

Yoon remains defiant: In a fiery speech on Thursday, Yoon had rejected the rebellion charges, calling his order an act of governance. The conservative Yoon said he aimed to issue a warning to the main liberal opposi-

tion Democratic Party, calling it "a monster" and "anti-state forces" that he argued has flexed its legislative muscle to impeach top officials and undermine the government's budget bill for next year. He claimed the 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.

Observers say Yoon's speech suggested a focus on legal preparations to defend his martial law decree at the Constitutional Court, even as opinion surveys showed more than 70 per cent of South Koreans supported his impeachment. A survey released Friday put Yoon's approval rating at 11 per cent, the lowest since he took office in 2022. Some of Yoon's claims don't align with testimony by some military commanders whose troops were deployed to the Assembly.

Most notably, Kwak Jong-keun, commander of the Army Special Warfare Command, said that after martial law was announced, Yoon called him and asked for his troops to "quickly

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. In 2016, parliament impeached Park Geun-hye, the country's first female president, over a corruption scandal. The Constitutional Court upheld her impeachment and dismissed her from office.

In 2004, President Roh Moo-hyun was impeached at parliament over an alleged election law violation but the court later overturned his impeachment and restored his presidential powers. Roh jumped to his death in 2009, after he had left office, amid a corruption scandal involving his family.

Yoon has been banned from leaving South Korea: He has the presidential privilege of immunity from criminal prosecution but that doesn't extend to allegations of rebellion or treason. Subsequently, Yoon could be investigated, detained, arrested or indicted over his martial law decree, but many observers doubt that authorities will forcefully detain him because of the potential for clashes with his presidential security service.

Yoon's defence minister, police chief and the head of Seoul's metropolitan police agency have been arrested. Other senior military and government officials also face investigations.

Shoot them down: Trump on mystery drone sightings

PTI ■ WASHINGTON

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.

These drones were first spotted in New Jersey a few days ago and are now being seen in other areas as well.

The federal government and the White House have so far maintained that these do not pose any national security threat and nor there is any evidence of a foreign hand in it. The appearance of the mystery drones, however, continues to be the subject of investigation.

"Mystery Drone sightings all over the Country. Can this really be happening without our government's knowledge? I don't think so," Trump said on Friday in a post on Truth Social, a social media platform owned by him.

"Let the public know, and now. Otherwise, shoot them down!!! DJT," he said with his personal signature at the end of the post.

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.

The Department of Homeland Security and the FBI are investigating these sightings, working closely with state and local law enforcement to provide resources, using numerous detection methods to better understand their origin, White House National Security Communications Advisor John Kirby told reporters.

He added that "... upon review of available imagery, it appears that many of the reported sightings are actually manned aircraft that are being operated lawfully."

"The United States Coast Guard is providing support to the State of New Jersey and has confirmed that there is no evidence of any foreign-based involvement from coastal vessels. And, importantly, there are no reported or confirmed drone sightings in any restrict-

ed airspace," Kirby said.

In a joint statement, the Department of Homeland Security and FBI also said that there was no evidence yet that the reported drone sightings pose a national security or a public safety threat or have a foreign nexus.

"We are supporting local law enforcement in New Jersey with numerous detection methods but have not corroborated any of the reported visual sightings with electronic detection. To the contrary, upon review of available imagery, it appears that many of the reported sightings are actually manned aircraft, operating lawfully. There are no reported or confirmed drone sightings in any restricted air space," the statement read.

In a letter to the DHS, FBI and the Federal Aviation Administration, Senator Kirsten Gillibrand, Senate Majority Leader Chuck Schumer and Senators Cory Booker and Andy Kim said that "since late November, communities in the New York City area and northern New

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

They highlighted that "the potential safety and security risks posed by these drones in civilian areas is especially pertinent considering recent drone incursions at sensitive military sites in and outside of the continental United States over the past year." Congressman Josh Gottheimer from New Jersey on Friday urged federal law enforcement agencies, led by the FBI and DHS, to allow state and local law enforcement to deploy assets that can safely take down drones that "should not be in our skies".

He wrote a letter to the FBI, DHS and the FAA, asking them to immediately brief the public.

"They also need to work closely with state and local law enforcement to give them the equipment they need to monitor drone activity. There is clearly too much of it here in Jersey and other parts of the country," Gottheimer said.

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

AP ■ WASHINGTON

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.

Attorneys for TikTok and its China-based parent company, ByteDance, are expected to appeal to the Supreme Court. It is unclear if the nation's highest court will take up the case, though some legal experts have said they expect the justices to weigh in due to the types of novel questions it raises about social media, national security and the First Amendment.

TikTok is also looking for a potential lifeline from President-elect Donald Trump, who promised to "save" the short-form video platform during the presidential campaign.

Attorneys for TikTok and ByteDance had requested the

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. The statute, which was signed by President Joe Biden earlier this year, requires ByteDance to sell TikTok to an approved buyer due to national security concerns or face a ban in the US.

The US has said it sees TikTok as a national security risk because ByteDance could be coerced by Chinese authorities to hand over US user data or manipulate content on the platform for Beijing's interests. TikTok has denied those claims and has argued that the government's case rests on hypothetical future risks instead of proven facts.

In the request filed last week, attorneys for TikTok and ByteDance had asked for a "modest delay" in enforcement of the law so that the Supreme Court could review the case and the incoming Trump administration could "determine its position" on the

matter.

If the law is not overturned, the two companies have said that the popular app will shut down by January 19, just a day before Trump takes office again. More than 170 million American users would be affected, the companies have said.

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.

The appeals court issued its December 6 ruling on the matter in line with that schedule, the Justice Department filing said.

Meanwhile, two influential US lawmakers, including Indian-American Raja Krishnamoorthi, have asked Google and Apple to remove TikTok from their app stores ahead of a potential ban on the video-sharing platform next month.

Ahead of the January 19 dead-

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.

The lawmakers asked Cook and Pichai to prepare to remove TikTok from their play stores by January 19. In their letter to the TikTok CEO, they urged Chew to "immediately execute a qualified divestiture".

All three letters come after the DC Circuit Court's 3-0 opinion that upheld the Protecting Americans from Foreign Adversary Controlled Applications Act.

In the letters to Cook and Pichai, the lawmakers said, "Today, we sent a letter to TikTok highlighting that Congress has provided ample time—233 days and counting—for the company to take the necessary steps to comply with the law and pursue a divestment that protects US national security."

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

PTI ■ WASHINGTON

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

"The crowds of the majority have destroyed Hindu temples, Hindu deities and Hindus who are practising their religion in peace," Thanedar said on the floor of the US House of Representatives on Wednesday.

"The time has now come for the United States Congress to act and the US government to act... every possible tool in our hands needs to be used to ensure that such atrocities in Bangladesh against Hindus stop right away," he said.

Thanedar has consistently raised the issue of alleged violence against Hindus in

Bangladesh since the fall of the Sheikh Hasina government.

"Since 1971, when Bangladesh got its freedom from Pakistan, there have been numerous occasions where minority Hindus have been attacked. More recently, we have seen a Hindu priest being arrested and his lawyer was murdered," he alleged.

On Thursday, the White House said President Joe Biden was closely monitoring the situation in Bangladesh and the United States will hold the Bangladesh interim government accountable for ensuring the protection of religious and ethnic minorities in the country.

"The security situation in Bangladesh has been difficult following the ouster of the former prime minister. And we have been working closely with the interim government to enhance the capability of their

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 position of secretary of state.

President-elect Donald Trump has nominated Senator 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.

Four arrested for vandalising, damaging Hindu properties in north Bangladesh

PTI ■ DHAKA

Law enforcement agencies on Saturday arrested four people for vandalising and damaging houses and shops of the Hindu community and the local Loknath temple in Sunamganj district in north Bangladesh.

Police also filed a case against 150-170 people, mentioning the names of 12 of them.

Alim Hossain, 19, Sultan Ahmed Raju, 20, Imran Hossain, 31, and Shajahan Hossain, 20, were arrested for vandalism in the Doarabazar area of Sunamganj district earlier this month, a press release from the Chief Adviser's press wing here.

On December 3, a Facebook post by Akash Das, a resident of the Sunamganj district, sparked tensions in the district. Even though he deleted the post, screenshots spread widely, leading to violence in the area,

state-run news agency Bangladesh Sangbad Sangstha (BSS) said quoting the press release. Local police arrested Das immediately, but, amid concerns over his safety, transferred him to another station.

On the same day, a mob vandalised and damaged the homes, shops, and local Loknath temple of the Hindu community.

The district Superintendent of Police, Deputy Commissioner (DC), and the army personnel rushed to the place and brought the situation under control.

The police identified the accused involved in the incident and filed a case against 150-170 people, mentioning the names of 12 people on Saturday, the BSS added.

Earlier on Tuesday, Bangladesh acknowledged 88 incidents of communal violence against minorities, primarily Hindus, following the ouster of then-pre-

mier Sheikh Hasina in August. Interim government head Muhammad Yunus press secretary Shafiqul Alam also said that 70 people have been arrested in those incidents.

He made the disclosure a day after Foreign Secretary Vikram Misri flagged regrettable incidents of attacks on minorities and conveyed India's concerns, including those related to the safety and welfare of minorities, during his meetings with the Bangladeshi leadership in Dhaka.

A total of 88 cases have been filed in incidents related to minorities from August 5 to October 22, Alam told reporters.

There have been a spate of incidents of violence against Hindus and other minorities, as well as attacks on temples in Bangladesh in the last few weeks that triggered strong concerns in New Delhi.

Indian-origin OpenAI whistleblower dies by suicide in San Francisco

PTI ■ NEW YORK

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

Suchir Balaji was found dead inside his Buchanan Street apartment in San Francisco on November 26 on Thanksgiving Day.

The medical examiner's office determined the manner of death to be suicide and police officials said there is "currently, no evidence of foul play."

"The Office of the Chief Medical Examiner (OCME) has identified the decedent as Suchir Balaji, 26, of San Francisco," the office's Executive Director David Serrano Sewell said.

"The manner of death has been determined to be suicide. The OCME has notified the next-of-kin and has no further comment or reports for publication at this time."

The San Francisco Police Department (SFPD) said in a statement that officers responded to a residence on the 100 block of Buchanan St. at about 1:15 pm for a well-being check. "Officers and medics arrived on scene and located a deceased adult male from what appeared to be a suicide. No evidence of foul play was found during the initial investigation," SFPD officer Robert Rueca 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 GPT-4, which users interact with through the chatbot ChatGPT.

OpenAI was "devastated" that Balaji had passed away, the San Francisco Chronicle reported.

"We are devastated to learn of this incredibly sad news today and our hearts go out to Suchir's loved ones during this difficult time" OpenAI said in a statement.

Balaji was known for whistleblowing the blockbuster artificial intelligence company which is facing a swell of lawsuits over its business model. Balaji's death comes three months after he publicly accused OpenAI of violating US copyright law while developing ChatGPT, a generative artificial intelligence programme that has become a moneymaking sensation used by hundreds of millions of people across the world, the report said.

Its public release in late 2022 spurred a torrent of lawsuits against OpenAI from authors, computer programmers and journalists, who say the company illegally stole their copyrighted material to train its programme and elevate its value past USD 150 billion.

In an interview with the New York Times published on October 23, Balaji argued that OpenAI was harming businesses and entrepreneurs whose data were used to train ChatGPT.

Balaji left OpenAI because he no longer wanted to contribute to technologies that he believed would bring society more harm than benefit, the report added.

"If you believe what I believe, you have to just leave the company," he told the outlet, adding that "this is not a sustainable model for the internet ecosystem as a whole."

Turkey to reopen its embassy in Syria for first time since 2012

AP ■ ANKARA (TURKEY)

Turkish Foreign Minister Hakan Fidan says that Turkey's Embassy in Syria's capital of Damascus will reopen on Saturday, for the first time since 2012.

In an interview with Turkey's NTV television Fidan said a newly appointed interim charge d'affaires had left for Damascus on Friday together with his delegation.

"It will be operational as of tomorrow," he said.

The Embassy in Damascus had suspended operations in 2012 due to the escalating security conditions during the Syrian civil war. All embassy staff and their families were recalled to Turkey. Earlier on Friday, thousands of Syrians gathered in Damascus' historic main mosque for the first Muslim Friday prayers since the ouster of President

Bashar Assad, while giant crowds celebrated in the capital's largest square and across the country.

The gatherings were a major symbolic moment for the dramatic change of power in Syria, nearly a week after insurgents swept into Damascus, ousting the Assad-led state that had ruled the country for a half century with an iron grip. It came as US Secretary of State Antony Blinken met with allies around the region looking to shape the transition, calling for an "inclusive and non-sectarian" interim government.

Blinken arrived in Iraq on a previously unannounced stop after talks in Jordan and Turkey — which backs some of the Syrian insurgent factions. So far, US officials have not talked of direct meetings with Syria's new rulers.

The main insurgent force, Hayat Tahrir al-Sham, has been working to establish

security and start a political transition after seizing Damascus early Sunday. The group has tried to reassure a public both stunned by Assad's fall and concerned over extremist jihadis among the rebels.

The insurgents' leadership says it has broken with its extremist past, though HTS is still labeled a terrorist group by the United States and European countries.

HTS's leader, Ahmad al-Sharaa, formerly known as Abu Mohammed al-Golani, appeared in a video message Friday congratulating "the great Syrian people for the victory of the blessed revolution."

"I invite them to head to the squares to show their happiness without shooting bullets and scaring people," he said. "And then after we will work to build this country and as I said in the beginning, we will be victorious by the help of God."

Huge crowds, including some insurgents, packed Damascus' historic Umayyad

Mosque in the capital's old city, many waving the rebel opposition flag — with its three red stars — which has swiftly replaced the Assad-era flag with its two green stars.

According to Arab TV stations, the Friday sermon was delivered by Mohammed al-Bashir, the interim prime minister installed by HTS this week.

The scene resonated on multiple levels. The mosque, one of the world's oldest dating back some 1,200 years, is a beloved symbol of Syria, and sermons there like all mosque sermons across Syria had been tightly controlled under Assad's rule. Also, in the early days of the anti-government uprising in 2011, protesters would leave Friday prayers to march in rallies against Assad — before he launched a brutal crackdown that turned the uprising into a long and bloody civil war.

The interim prime minister, al-Bashir, had been the head of a de facto administration created by HTS in Idlib, the opposition's enclave in northwest Syria. The rebels had been bottled up in Idlib for years before fighters broke out in a shock offensive and marched across Syria in 10 days.

Al-Sharaa, HTS' leader, has promised to bring a pluralistic government to Syria, seeking to dispel fears among many Syrians — especially its many minority communities — that the insurgents will bring a hard-line, extremist rule.

Another key factor will be winning international recognition for a new government in Syria, a country where multiple foreign powers have their hands in the mix. The Sunni Arab insurgents who overthrew Assad did so with vital help from Turkey, a longtime foe of the US-backed Kurds.

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

PTI ■ BENGALURU

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

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-boost from 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: 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 medalist 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

is happening nowadays," he said.

Baruah said it has been almost 6 to 7 years that any sports camp has been organised in the state.

"If they (government) were interested, I would have also taken interest. I would have definitely gone to the ground and given tips to the athletes. When the government has no idea, no intention, no aim, what can I do?" he said.

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 a 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

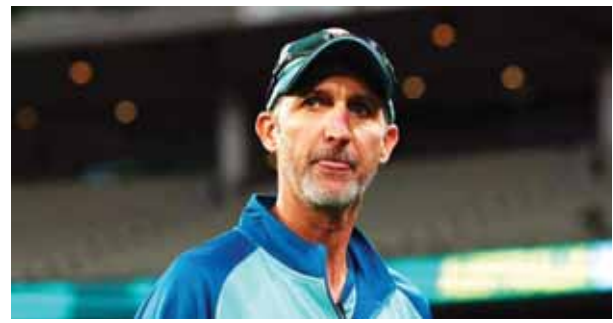
PTI ■ KARACHI

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

cricket academy as a coach into the support staff on recommendation of interim white ball head coach and senior selector Aaqib Javed," the source added.

He said that in recent weeks, Gillespie's calls were not being regularly answered by some officials, which irked him. This was particularly frustrating as he had agreed to serve as interim coach for the white-ball series in Australia, where Pakistan won the ODI series for the first time since 2002.

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

and friends and, above all, my fans for their continuous love & support," he added.

Amir had been involved in the infamous spot-fixing scandal that rocked the cricket world in 2010.

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



THE NEW LIFESTYLE LANDMARK

By TEAM VIVA

In the fast-paced life of Noida, where long commutes and traffic have become a daily struggle, *Rcube Monad Mall* has emerged as a refreshing new destination, offering everything from shopping and dining to entertainment, all in one place. Located in Sector 43, this modern mall is quickly becoming the heart of the community, redefining urban living with convenience, luxury and family-friendly experiences. "We are incredibly proud to introduce *Rcube Monad Mall* to Noida, a place that is more than just a shopping destination; it represents our commitment to creating sustainable and innovative urban spaces that enhance the quality of life for the communities we serve," said Mr. Anuj Malhan, Founder at *Rcube Projects Pvt Ltd*. *Rcube Monad Mall* isn't just another commercial centre; it's a thoughtfully designed neighbourhood hub. As *Richa Malhan*, shares, "We wanted to create a destination close to home, offering everything you need within minutes." The mall is a one-stop shop for all things lifestyle, from retail stores featuring popular brands like *Lifestyle* and *Fab India* to essential services like salons and beauty parlours, all just moments away from nearby

residential communities. For families, this mall is a game-changer. It offers a variety of experiences for all ages, from Funky Island, an interactive play zone for kids, to family-friendly dining options like *McDonald's* and *Popeyes*. For parents looking for a place to unwind, the Birch bar provides the perfect space to relax, while *MovieMax Edition*, Noida's first luxury cinema with all-recliner seating, promises a premium movie experience. But the vision doesn't stop at shopping and entertainment. The Mall is committed to sustainability and plans to make the mall pet-friendly in the future, ensuring that even furry friends can enjoy the experience. This commitment to creating a space that caters to families, friends and pets alike reflects the mall's dedication to improving the quality of life for everyone. In a world that often feels rushed, *Rcube Monad Mall* stands as an example of a slower, more connected way of living. It's a space that blends convenience, luxury and community, offering a new, more human-centric approach to the modern lifestyle. Whether you're sipping coffee in the morning, enjoying lunch with family or watching a movie in the evening, *Rcube Monad Mall* has everything you need to make the most of your day and it's right in the heart of Noida.



PHOTOS: PANKAJ KUMAR

Richa Malhan, Founder at Rcube Projects Pvt Ltd.

Bringing Luxury Home Décor to Delhi

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

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

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



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



Featuring a collaboration with the esteemed furniture brand EDRA, the Delhi store also marks the debut of *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 *Sivakarthiskeyan* and *Sai Pallavi*, it unfortunately succumbs to the familiar tropes of the genre. *Sivakarthiskeyan* 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

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"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.

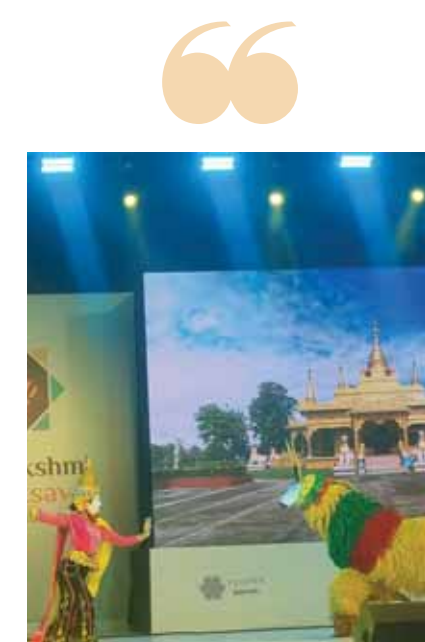
The *Ashtalakshmi Mahotsav 2024* was a three-day event held from December 6th to 8th at the Bharat Mandapam in New Delhi. The event provided a grand platform to showcase the region's thriving textile industry, elegant artisanal crafts, and distinct Geographical Indication (GI) products. It was a unique 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 *Akhuni*, 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 *Dohmeiong*, resonated with the region's rich culinary heritage, and Sikkim's popular *Phagshapa* and *Momos* emphasised fresh ingredients and simple yet delightful flavours. 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



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.



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*, delivering a fresh perspective on regional music. The performances underscored the Northeast's incredible ability to adapt its traditional art forms to contemporary frameworks, creating something entirely unique and memorable.

A major highlight of the festival was the *Ashtalakshmi Fashion Show*, which celebrated the rich textile heritage of Northeast India. Curated under the creative direction of renowned fashion stylist and show director *Prasad Bidapa*, the fashion show presented a stunning amalgamation of traditional handlooms and contemporary designs. The event emphasised sustainable fashion, 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. *Jenjum 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 Khanti 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**



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 specialties, 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.



Basko: All-Day Culinary and Cocktail Experience



By **TEAM AGENDA**

Step into *Basko*, the newly launched culinary bar in Noida, where ambience, 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 flavours 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.



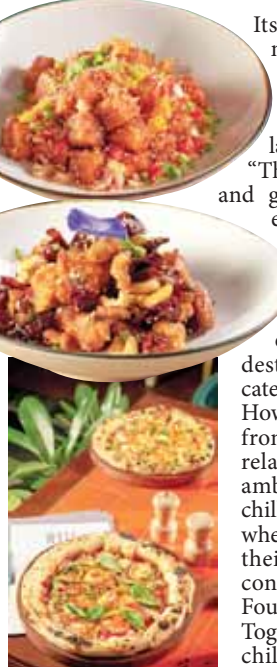
Hours of Operation: 11 AM to 1 AM, Monday to Sunday
For Reservations, Please Contact: 95991 99499
Address: Basko, 6th Floor, Staring Mall, Sector 104, Noida, Uttar Pradesh, 201303



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 Cannelloni*. *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*, a chill space with subdued music where guests can unwind, enjoy their food and drinks, and connect," said *Nikhil Sharma*, Founder of *Blaq and Wyte*.

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

A PERUVIAN EXTRAVAGANZA

By **TEAM AGENDA**



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



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

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

Le Méridien's Marketing Manager *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 waq, 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.

A Serene Oasis of Elegance

The hotel's fairy-tale-like courtyard, shared with the adjacent *Taj 51 Buckingham Gate*, offers a tranquil oasis featuring a picturesque fountain encircled by lush greenery. It's an ideal setting for celebrity sightings or impromptu photoshoots. This serene environment allows guests to unwind, far removed from the city's hustle and bustle, making it a sanctuary for those seeking both luxury and tranquillity.

The accommodation at *St. James' Court* is a sensory delight, blending modern design with Indian elegance. Rich textiles and intricate details

evoke 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.



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



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

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 into

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

THE LOCAL NARRATIVE

Step out of the resort and explore fascinating tales of Negombo and its surrounding regions.

For the birding enthusiasts, a journey through the historic Dutch canals that lead to the famed mangroves of Muthurajawela in the south, or the lush open sanctuary of Anawilundawa to the north are great natural aviaries abound with a number of endemic and migratory species that can be spotted on special excursions. For the adventure seekers, there are water sports to indulge in adrenaline-filled experiences on a sunny Negombo afternoon.

Take a city tour and discover history and culture at every turn. How the ruined Dutch Fort reflects Negombo's colonial legacy, while the bustling Lellama Fish Market pays tribute to its roots as a traditional fishing



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

ROMELLO PERERA
General Manager, Jetwing Lagoon

village. I was not surprised why Negombo is also fondly known as 'Little Rome' as it is home to outstanding collection of churches. Also, do not miss the 300-year old Angurukaramulla Temple, which abounds in a number of ancient murals while a large Buddha statue stands as an icon prominently.

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



VRIGO 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

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

THE TUNING FORK



C V Srikanth

Thoughts shape reality; regulate them to transform your destiny.

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.

The Spiritual significance of food



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. Everyday 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 ...

अन्नादभवन्निभूतानि पर्जन्यादन्नसम्भवः। यज्ञाद्भवति पर्जन्यो यज्ञः कर्मसमुदभवः।।
'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 Bhagavat Gita describes this as

आयुरुक्तं च बलं योग्यं सुखं प्रीतिविवर्धनम्। रसः स्थिरा हृद्वा आहारः सात्त्विकप्रियाः ॥
'Foods that promotes life span, purity, increase virtue, strength, health, happiness, and satisfaction, which are juicy, succulent, wholesome, naturally tasty, 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 यत्करोषि यदस्नासि यज्जुहोषि ददासि यत् | यत्तपस्यसि कौन्तेय तत्कुरुष्व मदर्पणम् ॥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.