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## INDIA LIFTS DREAM WORLD CUP



Team India erupts in celebration after South Africa's Reeza Hendricks, right, leaves the field after losing his wicket to India's Jasprit Bumrah, centre, with his arms raised, during the ICC Men's T20 World Cup final cricket match between India and South Africa at Kensington Oval in Bridgetown, Barbados, on Saturday. PTI

PTI ■ BRIDGETOWN (BARBADOS)

On an emotion-filled day, India ended their years' wait for a global trophy, overcoming South Africa, who choked at the business end of the match by seven runs to emerge champions in the T20 World Cup here. It was India's second T20 World Cup victory after they had won it in 2007 under the legendary MS Dhoni in South Africa, and first since winning the Champions Trophy in 2013. Star batter Virat Kohli, who was an upcoming cricketer 17

years ago, made his first fifty of this tournament in the final — a classy 76 off 59 balls with six fours and two sixes that carried India to a competitive 176 for seven. Then the Indian bowlers, led by Arshdeep Singh (2/20) and Jasprit Bumrah (2/18), worked their magic as they did throughout this tournament, limiting South Africa to 169 for eight to propel India to their second T20 World Cup. There were pockets of fight from the Proteas, who were playing in their maiden World Cup final. Heinrich Klaasen threatened

India with a 52 off 27 balls (2x4, 5x6) but Hardik Pandya (3/20) snatched the crucial wicket to bring the game decisively in favour of India. But a large chunk of the credit should go to Kohli for anchoring the innings and pushing India to a fighting total. He completed his fifty in 48 balls, but the knock was what precisely India needed the early dismissals of skipper Rohit Sharma (9), Rishabh Pant (0) and Suryakumar Yadav (3), which had reduced India to a worrying 34 for three.

However, Kohli had an able partner in Axar Patel (47, 31 balls, 1x4, 6x4) during the fourth wicket alliance that produced precious 72 runs to ease the early nerves. After the run-out of Axar, who took on SA bowlers bravely, another left-hander Shivam Dube (27 off 16 balls, 3x4 1x6) gave some late steam to Indian innings. **Brief scores:** India: 176/7 in 20 overs (Virat Kohli 76, Axar Patel 47; Keshav Maharaj 2/23) beat South Africa: 169/8 in 20 overs (Henrich Klaasen 52, Jasprit Bumrah 2/18, Arshdeep Singh 2/20) by 7 runs.

## JD(U) invokes Bihar Package Bond

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

The Janata Dal (U), a major partner in the NDA Government at the Centre, on Saturday urged the Central Government to consider either special category status or a special package for Bihar underlining the party's important role in the formation of the Prime Minister Narendra Modi-led Government. The party's national executive meeting held in the national Capital flagged price rise and unemployment as "burning issues", as its political resolution expressed the confidence that the National Democratic Alliance (NDA) Government would take more effective steps to handle them. In the meeting chaired by JD (U) president and Bihar Chief Minister Nitish Kumar, the party appointed Rajya Sabha MP Sanjay Kumar Jha as its working president since he enjoys good rapport with the BJP leadership and is considered to be very good at crisis management. Meanwhile, Congress took the opportunity to ask JD (U) to pass a Cabinet resolution for the special status in Bihar where it's in alliance with the BJP and simultaneously hoped that another major partner of NDA, TDP, too would gather courage to press demand for a special package.



Bihar Chief Minister and JD(U) leader Nitish Kumar during the party's National Executive Meeting in New Delhi on Saturday. PTI

JD (U) was part of Congress-led INDIA Bloc before the Lok Sabha polls while TDP was looking for a Third Front until it joined hands with BJP. The JD (U) resolution called for extensive probe into paper leak cases to ensure stringent action against the guilty and maintain the credibility of central competitive exams. "There is also a need for Parliament to enact a strong law against leaks of examination papers," it added. The JD (U)'s decision to include a special package as an alternative to its historical push for special category status for Bihar marked a pragmatic climbdown as the Modi Government had cited the 14th Finance Commission's report to rule out special category status for any more states.

Kumar's decision to appoint his confidant Jha as the party's working president, a position not held by anyone, gives ample hint of his inclination to maintain better coordination with the BJP and drive a helpful bargain as Jha has good ties with the party's national leadership. A former Minister in Bihar, Jha was originally in the BJP and served as its link with Kumar before crossing over to the JD (U). Seen as competent, likeable and low-profiled, the Mithilanchal leader has long been a trusted aide of his ageing mentor who has burnt his fingers in the past due to shifting loyalties of his ostensibly reliable colleagues, including former JD(U) president RCP Singh, now in the BJP.



## Fresh dates for UGC NET

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

Alleged irregularities in the conduct of competitive exams, the National Testing Agency (NTA) has released fresh dates for cancelled and postponed examinations, announcing the UGC-NET will now be held from August 21-September 4. The University Grants Commission-National Eligibility Test (UGC-NET) was cancelled a day after being conducted on June 18 as the Education Ministry received inputs that the integrity of the exam was compromised. Union Education Minister Dharmendra Pradhan said the question paper was leaked on the darknet and circulated on the Telegram app. The matter is being probed by the CBI. The UGC-NET is a test to determine the eligibility for the award of Junior Research Fellowship, for appointment of assistant professors and admission to PhD courses.

## Tragedy hits Army in Ladakh

MOHIT KANDHARI ■ JAMMU



A Junior Commissioned Officer (JCO) and four other soldiers returning from a military training exercise were reportedly swept away by a flash flood while crossing the Shyok river near the Line of Actual Control (LAC) in the Nyoma-Chushul area of Ladakh early Saturday morning. The soldiers, belonging to the field artillery unit, were crossing the river bed in a T-72 Tank at the time of the incident. Due to the sudden rise in water levels, the soldiers could not move out of the tank which was stuck in the river bed and were swept away by strong currents. Rescue teams were rushed to the location but they failed to save them. The soldiers who sacrificed their lives in the line of duty have been identified as Ris MR K Reddy, Dfr Bhupender Negi, LD Ekeidaung Teibam, Hav Subhan Khan (6255 Fd workshop) and Cfn S Nagraju. In a post on X, Fire and Fury Corps said, "GOC Fire and Fury Corps and All Ranks salute the Bravehearts who made supreme sacrifice, in the line of duty in Ladakh on 29 Jun 24 and offer deep condolences to the bereaved families in this hour of grief." "Rescue teams rushed to the location but due to high water level and strong currents the rescue mission didn't succeed and the tank crew lost their

lives. The Indian Army regrets the loss of five brave personnel while being operationally deployed in eastern Ladakh. Rescue operations are still underway," the post explained. Earlier, on August 19, 2023, a JCO, along with eight other soldiers, lost their lives when an Army truck they were travelling in veered off the road and plunged into a deep gorge near Kiari in Leh district. Since the May 2020 stand-off between the Indian and Chinese troops several soldiers of the Indian Army have sacrificed their lives during operational duties in the region. Even as the two sides completed disengagement from several areas following extensive diplomatic and

military parleys, the stand-off continues in the cold desert region. Meanwhile, Defence Minister Rajnath Singh expressed grief over the unfortunate accident. In a post on X, the Defence Minister said, "Deeply saddened at the loss of lives of five of our brave soldiers in an unfortunate accident while getting the tank across a river in Ladakh. We will never forget the exemplary services of our gallant soldiers to the nation. My heartfelt condolences to the bereaved families. The nation stands firm with them during this hour of grief." Congress president Mallikarjun Kharge said he was deeply distressed by the news of the accident and the loss of lives.

## Exchange of fire reported along LoC

PTI ■ MENDHAR/JAMMU

A brief exchange of fire was reported along the Line of Control (LoC) in Jammu and Kashmir's Poonch district, official sources said on Saturday. The firing from across the border was reported on a forward Indian post in Krishna Ghati sector late Friday night, prompting retaliation by the Army troops guarding the LoC, the sources said. They said there was no casualty in the firing, which lasted for a brief period. The vigil was intensified to ensure that there is no infiltration by terrorists.

## Delhi siblings rescued Bollywood style

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI



Two siblings, aged three and eleven, kidnapped from Laxmi Nagar on Saturday by a man posing as a parking attendant, were rescued after a dramatic three-hour car pursuit by the Delhi Police, straight out of a Bollywood thriller. The daring rescue unfolded as officers chased the suspect across the city, ultimately saving the children. The suspect, who demanded a staggering ₹50 lakh ransom from the parents, had abducted the children on

Friday night when they had briefly left them in a vehicle while they stepped into a nearby confectionery shop. Little did they know, their

errand would end up in the abduction of their children. According to police, the chase involving around 20 police vehicles culminated in the

kidnapper abandoning the car with the children inside before escaping. The vehicle was eventually found abandoned in the Samaypur Badli area after a relentless pursuit spanning approximately 100 to 150 kilometres. Deputy Commissioner of Police (East) Apurva Gupta reported receiving information about the kidnapping at 11:30 pm on Friday. The children's father informed the police that they were sitting in the car in front of Hira Sweets shop on Vikas Marg in the Shakarpur area.

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Center of Excellence in Forensic Science Training to be setup in Haryana: Union Home Minister

PNS ■ CHANDIGARH

Union Home Minister, Amit Shah proposed the establishment of a training institute at the Center of Excellence for training and laboratory testing facilities in forensic science...



Shah was speaking at the MoU signing ceremony between the Haryana government and the National Forensic Science University...

which is now becoming a reality. With the establishment of the National Forensic Science University, Haryana is taking the lead...

HARYANA GOVT AND NFSU SIGN MOU TO BOOST FORENSIC SCIENCE COLLABORATION

To facilitate and further strengthen the development of collaborative pursuits in the fields of forensic and prosecution training, research and testing of forensic samples...

Haryana Chief Minister, Nayab Singh Saini said that the establishment of this center will greatly benefit the criminal justice system...

The MoU signing ceremony was held in the presence of Union Home Minister, Amit Shah, Union Minister of Power, Housing and Urban Affairs, Manohar Lal, Chief Minister, Nayab Singh Saini...

Punjab Police busts two more Pak-based Drug Cartels

PNS ■ CHANDIGARH/AMRITSAR

Punjab Police has busted two more Pak-backed drug smuggling rackets with the arrest of six persons after recovering 8kg heroin and three pistols...

ed father and son among four persons while they were cracking a deal of 2kg heroin consignment near village Nurpur...

The arrested persons, who were delivering the drug consignment, have been identified as Balbir Singh and his son Aakashdeep Singh...

The development came a day after the Amritsar Commissionerate Police busted two cross-border drug smuggling cartels being operated by Pakistan-based smugglers...

SSP Amritsar Rural Satinder Singh said that as per preliminary investigations, all the arrested accused persons in both the cases were directly in touch with Pakistan-based smugglers...

After apprehending both the drug smugglers identified as Gurbhje Singh and Jaskaran Singh, both residents of village Manj in Amritsar...

He said that further investigations are being conducted to unearth the whole network of drug suppliers, dealers and their buyers...

In another intelligence-led operation, Yadav said that the Patrolling party teams of Amritsar Rural Police have arrested...

CM Mann says Punjab govt following footsteps of Maharaja Ranjit Singh

PNS ■ SANGRUR

Punjab Chief Minister Bhagwant Mann on Saturday said that his government in the state was following the footsteps of Sher-E-Punjab Maharaja Ranjit Singh...

even toured the state in disguise during night to feel the pulse of his subjects. He said that due to his love and affection towards people Maharaja Ranjit Singh was a true monarch of masses...

Addressing the gathering during a state level function to mark the death anniversary of Maharaja, Mann said that Maharaja Ranjit Singh was a great emperor who practiced the ethos of secularism and socialism...

He said that following the footsteps of Maharaja Ranjit Singh, the state government has initiated a number of pro people schemes for welfare of every strata of society...

MC Chandigarh to strictly enforce single-use plastic ban from July 1

PNS ■ CHANDIGARH

To reduce the use of single-use plastic items and promote sustainability, the Municipal Corporation Chandigarh has decided to start imposing significant fines on shopkeepers, traders, and citizens found violating the single-use plastic ban from July 1...

YAD reposes faith in leadership of Sukhbir Badal



PNS ■ CHANDIGARH

With a bitter power struggle going on in the Shiromani Akali Dal (SAD) after its poor performance in the Lok Sabha elections, the Youth Akali Dal (YAD) on Saturday reposed complete faith in the leadership of Sukhbir Singh Badal...

BJP by sacrificing the party's principles only to fulfill their ulterior motives.

Speaking on the occasion, Badal explained the entire sequence of events of the last more than two months in detail to the YAD rank and file. "I could have easily acquiesced to an alliance with the BJP but I refused the same because I was being told to arrive at a seat settlement without any discussion on the core issues of Punjab including the status of 'Bandi Singh, farmers and the issues like the State's river waters and State capital. I did so because I could not betray the Panth, farmers and Punjabis at any cost..."

in opportunistic politics. I am committed to following the ideals of the SAD and will continue to do so", he added.

The SAD president listened to suggestions from the YAD leadership including suggestions that fresh blood be infused in the party by giving representation in electoral politics to youth. Badal said the party was devising a programme to give meaningful responsibilities to the youth wing and make it even stronger.

YAD president Sarabjit Singh Jhijher appealed to the youth to defeat the conspiracies to weaken the SAD by creating divisions in the party by shunning opportunistic elements. He urged the youth to beware of central agencies that were being used to take control of the religious affairs of the Sikhs...

Empowering women through scheme to provide Rs 1500 per month to women: Himachal CM

PNS ■ SHIMLA

Himachal Chief Minister Sukhvinder Singh Sukhu on Saturday said that the State Government has announced the Indira Gandhi Pyari Behna Sukh-Samman Nidhi Yojana, providing Rs. 1,500 per month to women aged 18 and above with an aim to uplift the socio-economic condition of women of the State...

Rs. 3.27 crore to 7,280 women in Haroli of district Una. Moreover, the scheme has already been rolled out for benefiting women across the state. In Himachal Pradesh 48,000 women have been receiving their first three-month installment of Rs. 4,500 each.

He said that the implementation of this scheme in Lahaul and Una districts has already shown positive results. The financial assistance provided under this scheme is a

significant step towards gender equality and women's empowerment, enabling them to lead more self-reliant and dignified lives.

"Indira Gandhi Pyari Behna Sukh-Samman Nidhi Yojana stands as a testament to the government's efforts to ensure that every family benefits from this transformative initiative," he said, adding that the government is also making efforts to stabilize the state's economy despite numerous challenges...

Punjab AAP holds protest in Jalandhar against Kejriwal's arrest

PNS ■ JALANDHAR / CHANDIGARH

The Punjab unit of AAP on Saturday held a protest in Jalandhar against the arrest of party convener and Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal by the CBI.



Several senior state party leaders, including some ministers and MLAs, slammed the Centre over Kejriwal's arrest and accused it of trapping him in "false" cases. The protesters also burnt the effigy of Prime Minister Narendra Modi, condemning the BJP-led government at the Centre for putting the Delhi chief minister behind bars.

in jail but you cannot imprison his thinking," he said. Health Minister Balbir Singh claimed Kejriwal was put behind the bars despite the central agencies not being able to find a money trail and with no recovery of money. "He is the party national convener and became Delhi's chief minister with a big mandate," Singh said while strongly condemning the arrest.

Carrying placards that read "stop misuse of ED and CBI" and "release Kejriwal", the AAP protesters raised slogans against the Union government at the protest site in Jalandhar district.

Addressing a gathering of protesters, minister Dhaliwal slammed the BJP-led government and alleged the voice of democracy was being "suppressed". He accused the BJP of trapping the AAP national convener in "false" cases. "What happened in the last few days had never happened in the history of the country," said Dhaliwal, referring to Kejriwal's arrest by the CBI and called it a "shameful act". "You can keep Kejriwal

Aadmi Party and Arvind Kejriwal by any means. BJP is afraid of Arvind Kejriwal's honest politics. That is why CBI and ED filed false cases against Arvind Kejriwal and deliberately put him in jail, he alleged.

Minister Lalchand Kataruchak said that in the last two years ED and CBI did not find a single penny from AAP leaders. The entire case is false and fake. The Modi government is harassing AAP leaders through ED and CBI. The investigating agencies do not have any evidence against anyone. He said that CBI's action against Arvind Kejriwal is completely illegal and unconstitutional. He should be released as soon as possible.

AAP leaders also protested in Chandigarh, police detained protesters, stopped them from going to the BJP office. In Chandigarh too, Aam Aadmi Party leaders protested against the arrest of Kejriwal by the CBI. AAP leaders and workers who were going to the BJP office for the protest were stopped by the Chandigarh Police and taken into custody.

AAP Chandigarh unit tweeted and criticized the BJP central government for this and said that the Modi government is misusing the ED and CBI to keep Kejriwal in jail, but all the conspiracies of the BJP will fail and truth will prevail.

BJP will fight Haryana poll alone under Nayab Saini's leadership, to form govt again: Amit Shah

Chandigarh: Union Home Minister Amit Shah on Saturday said the BJP will fight the upcoming Haryana assembly elections alone under the leadership of Chief Minister Nayab Singh Saini, and exuded confidence the party will come back to power with full majority for its third consecutive term.



Haryana Chief Minister Nayab Singh welcomed Union Home Minister, Amit Shah at Panchkula on Saturday.

Addressing BJP leaders and workers during a meeting of the party's extended state executive at Panchkula here, he said they should have no doubt that the BJP will have no tie-up for the state polls which are due before October this year.

Haryana have made an important contribution in making Modi prime minister for a third time. The media was not allowed to cover the proceedings of the meeting.

address, Shah infused fresh zeal and enthusiasm in party workers.

Under the guidance of Prime Minister Narendra Modi and the leadership of Chief Minister Nayab Singh Saini, the BJP will form the government in Haryana for the third time with full majority, Shah told the workers.

BJP leader Kiran Choudhary said that during his

Union Education Minister Dharmendra Pradhan, who is also the BJP's election in-charge for Haryana, Chief Minister Saini, party's co-in-charge Biplab Kumar Deb and Union Minister Manohar Lal Khattar were present during the second session of the meeting which took place in

the multipurpose hall of the Tau Devi Lal stadium in Panchkula.

Also among the attendees were Rajya Sabha member Subhash Barala, Lok Sabha MPs Naveen Jindal and Dharambir Singh, Haryana Assembly Speaker Gian Chand Gupta, and former MP Kuldeep Bishnoi.

Senior leaders OP Dhankar, Ram Bilas Sharma, ministers Mool Chand Sharma, JP Dalal, Kanwar Pal and Aseem Goel, MLAs, and former ministers including Anil Vij and other leaders were also present. Senior state-level BJP leaders, office-bearers and around 4,500 party workers from all 90 assembly constituencies attended the meeting.

After the meeting, Shah also met state unit office-bearers. The party organised an exhibition at the venue, highlighting the state government's initiatives and schemes, including the abolition of minimum monthly charges for domestic electricity consumers and providing minimum support prices on 14 crops. (Agencies)





# UP to promote rooftop solar subsidy scheme

PTI ■ LUCKNOW

The Uttar Pradesh government will launch an awareness campaign to promote the Centre's 'PM Surya Ghar Yojana' a rooftop solar subsidy scheme in Ayodhya, Varanasi, and Gorakhpur. The new initiative will add to the state's ongoing programmes and schemes to boost generation and use of solar energy. The campaign will be based on the Integrated Marketing Communications (IMC) module. In line with Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath's vision, the Uttar Pradesh New and Renewable Energy Agency (UPNEDA) has begun implementing the



action plan, according to an official statement. The state government has allocated Rs 2 crore for the two months long campaign and started the process of roping in an agency to manage and execute the initiative. Initially, UPNEDA will run

the campaign in three major cities, including Ayodhya, Varanasi, and Gorakhpur, to increase public awareness and acceptance of the Pradhan Mantri Surya Ghar Yojana and boost the number of beneficiaries under this scheme, the statement said. The promotional activities

will include displaying banners, installing billboards at strategic locations, setting up booth camps, and distributing pamphlets during various events at universities, colleges, and schools. Besides, UPNEDA will also use radio and newspaper advertisements in Ayodhya, Gorakhpur, and Varanasi. Ayodhya and Varanasi are already being developed as solar cities, and this comprehensive campaign will now pave the way for increased awareness and promotion of solar energy in Gorakhpur as well, the statement said. According to officials, a solar city could fulfil at least 10 per cent of its energy demand through solar power.

# MVN Aero One pre-leases 3 lakh sq ft to co-working operator in Gurugram

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Realty firm MVN Aero One has pre-leased 3 lakh square feet office space to co-working operator Spring House in its upcoming project in Gurugram. The office space has been given in the upcoming project 'MVN Aero One Mall' located in Sector-37 D, Dwarka Expressway, Gurugram, Haryana. The company will develop 15 lakh square feet area over the next 4 years in the first phase of this mixed-use project comprising retail and workspaces.



"Today's workforce seeks more than just a workspace; they desire an environment that inspires creativity, enhances productivity, and

integrates seamlessly with lifestyle amenities. By integrating Spring House Co-Working with our luxury retail experience, we're meeting this demand head-on..." said Varun Sharma, Founder and Managing Director, MVN Aero One. This concept not only redefines the traditional office space but also sets a new standard for integrated, upscale commercial environments, he added. The company expects an annual rental income of Rs 40-45 crore from this 3 lakh square feet area. The company, which develops luxury projects, is building a

housing project in Bengaluru. According to real estate consultant Vestian, there are around 50 major flexible space operators in the country. The top 10 players hold more than 80 per cent of the total flexible office space portfolio. A Vestian report mentioned that flexible office spaces broadly include dedicated desks, hot desking, co-working spaces, and serviced and managed office spaces. While co-working centres are at the most flexible end of the spectrum, managed offices would be at the less flexible end, Vestian noted.

# European jewellers using services of Mega CFC for quality testing

PTI ■ MUMBAI

The services of a modern common facility centre developed at a special economic zone (SEZ) here are now being used by European jewellers for quality testing, an industry official said. The Bharat Ratnam Mega CFC (Common Facility Centre) at the SEEPZ (Santacruz Electronic Export Processing Zone) SEZ in Mumbai was inaugurated by Prime Minister Narendra Modi in January. The centre has been operational since March 15. Ravi Menon, CEO, Mega CFC, said that the CFC has state-of-the-art machines and technology and it is helping improve the output in terms of quality, productivity and yield of the finished jewellery and further boosting gem and jewellery exports. "Besides Indian players using this facility, now European jewellers have also started using the services of the CFC for quality testing," Menon said. He said that a team of senior officials of certain European jewellery firms has visited the



centre earlier this month. Their lab managers have also visited the CFC, Menon added. SEEPZ accounts for 10.26 per cent of total gem and jewellery exports from India and 85 per cent of studded jewellery exports. Colin Shah, Head - Working Group, Bharat Ratnam Mega CFC said that the centre houses modern equipment, including Asia's first 3D metal printer, and smaller units can use these machines at a nominal fee which helps

simplify manufacturing and boost productivity. He said that the centre, set up at a cost of Rs 93 crore, also provides training to jewellery makers besides having a software centre and a tool room. Shah also said that a proper system is there to protect designs of jewellers. He said: "We are not here to make profits. This will help to create more jobs in MSMEs and it helps to make world standard products and not affected jobs."

# Confident of over USD 800 bn exports in goods, services this fiscal: Goyal

PTI ■ MUMBAI

India's goods and services exports are expected to cross USD 800 billion this fiscal despite global challenges, Commerce and Industry Minister Piyush Goyal said on Saturday. In 2023-24, the shipments stood at USD 778.2 billion (goods USD 437.1 billion and services USD 341 billion). He said that the global situation is serious as war is still ongoing between Ukraine-Russia and Israel-Hamas, and the Red sea crisis. The minister added that there are also elections in some of the major democracies like in Europe. "In such a situation it's a positive sign that our exports are growing (9 per cent growth in May) and ... This also reflects that the world wants to do trade and investments with India. We are confident that this year we will have over USD 800 billion exports and it will be a historic record," Goyal told reporters here. He was here to participate in a programme of gems and jewellery exporters.



Goyal added that for the USD 800 billion exports, the ministry is working on specifics with Indian missions abroad and export promotion councils. He added that last year the current account deficit (CAD) has also reduced... Our exports will increase, manufacturing will get a boost. India recorded a current account surplus of USD 5.7 billion or 0.6 per cent of GDP in the March quarter. This is the first time in ten quarters

that the crucial metric of the country's external strength has turned into surplus mode. In the year-ago period, the current account deficit stood at USD 1.3 billion or 0.2 per cent of GDP, and the same was USD 8.7 billion or 1 per cent of GDP in the preceding quarter ending December 2023. India's merchandise exports rose by 9.1 per cent to USD 38.13 billion in May even as the trade deficit widened to a seven-month high of USD 23.78 billion during the

month, according to the latest government data. He added that focus on electric vehicles will help in reducing oil imports. The ministry is also holding a series of meetings with plantation boards, including spices, rubber, tobacco, tea and coffee, to promote exports especially those of value added goods. Further, he said that India has taken up on priority the issue of ban on imports of Russian-origin unpolished diamonds by the European Union (EU) and G7 nations to protect the interest of the domestic diamond polishing industry. "Our ministry and the gems and jewellery export promotion council are continuously in touch with the European Union and G7 nations," Goyal said, adding in the last meeting, India took up the matter strongly. "Still we are in touch with them to ensure that Indian industry does not have an impact," the minister said. G7 countries — Canada, France, Germany, Italy, Japan, the UK, and the US — are major markets for Indian diamond exports.

# Setty to become new chairman of SBI; FSIB recommends him as successor of Khara

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Government appointment selection panel FSIB on Saturday selected senior-most managing director Challa Sreenivasulu Setty for the position of Chairman of country's largest lender State Bank of India (SBI). Setty, who was appointed managing director in January 2020, currently looks after International Banking, Global Markets and Technology verticals. He will succeed Dinesh Kumar Khara, who will be superannuating on August 28, when he turns 63, the upper age limit for the position of SBI Chairman. Financial Services Institutions Bureau (FSIB), the headhunter for directors of state-owned banks and financial institutions, interviewed three candidates on June 29, 2024 for the position. "Keeping in view their performance in the interface, their overall experience and the extant parameters, the Bureau recommends Challa Sreenivasulu Setty for the position of Chairman in SBI," FSIB said in a statement. As per the convention, the chairman is appointed from a pool of serving managing directors of SBI. Usually, senior-most managing director becomes chairman of the bank. The final decision on FSIB recommendation would be taken by the Appointments Committee of the Cabinet headed by Prime Minister Narendra Modi. Setty, who also headed various task forces/committees formed by the Government of India, had earlier looked after the retail and digital banking portfolio of the bank. A Bachelor of Science in Agriculture and also, a Certified Associate of Indian Institute of Bankers, he started his career with SBI in 1988 as a Probationary Officer. Across a career spanning over three decades, he has rich experience in corporate credit, retail, digital and international banking and banking in developed markets. Setty has held key assignments in State Bank of India, including Deputy Managing Director - Stressed Assets Resolution Group, Chief General Manager and General Manager in Corporate Accounts Group, Deputy General Manager in Commercial Branch, Indore and VP & Head (Syndications) in SBI, New York Branch. FSIB is headed by Bhanu Pratap Sharma, former secretary of Department of Personnel and Training (DoPT). The members of the government-appointed selection panel are Financial Services Secretary, Department of Public Enterprises Secretary and an RBI Deputy Governor. Other members of the headhunter are Animesh Chauhan, former chairman and MD of erstwhile Oriental Bank of Commerce, RBI's ex-executive director Deepak Singhal, and others.

# Gujarat Govt signs MoUs with IBM, Microsoft for enhancing AI capabilities

PTI ■ GANDHINAGAR

The Gujarat government on Saturday signed memorandums of understanding with software giants IBM and Microsoft, and the National Association of Software and Service Companies (NASSCOM) for promoting the use of Artificial Intelligence technologies in the state. The MoUs were signed in the presence of Chief Minister Bhupendra Patel, a government release said. IBM and the Department of Science and Technology, Government of Gujarat, entered into a MoU to establish and promote an "AI Cluster" to foster innovation and collaboration among financial institutions at Gujarat International Finance Tec (GIFT) City, it said. Microsoft and the Department of Science and Technology signed an MoU to establish an Artificial Intelligence Center of Excellence in GIFT City. The



AI Center will focus on key technologies such as machine learning, cognitive services and bot services. The department also signed another MoU with NASSCOM to enhance AI capabilities in the state. Prime Minister Narendra Modi has prioritized futuristic technology to propel India towards becoming the world's third-largest economy, chief minister Patel said. "Our aim is to keep Gujarat among the

top industrial states by promoting futuristic technology such as AI," he said. "Gujarat has emerged as a global gateway to the future. In response to the growing demand for skilled workforce in emerging industries leveraging advanced technologies, the state government has launched the Up Skilling Industry Ready Talent Program under the IT and ITES policy," the CM added. Sandeep Patel, Managing Director of IBM

India-South Asia, said AI is a "pivotal need of the hour" and would be a driving force for India's development. Through IBM's advanced AI platform and cloud infrastructure, fintech firms in GIFT City can develop actionable AI software, bolstering their ability to provide AI-driven digital solutions across the banking, financial services, and insurance sectors. Additionally, IBM will collaborate on developing AI curriculum for state schools and universities, the release said. This program has invited expressions of interest from universities and course providers across the state to participate in training youth in deep technology. IBM, NVidia, AWS, TCS, and L&T EduTech have committed to providing courses under this initiative, the release added. Additionally, four state universities - GTU, IITRAM, P.D.E.U and Ganpat University - have joined as aggregators, it said.

# Exporters' body urges Minister to restore IES benefits for all

PTI ■ KOLKATA

A body of exporters has written to Union Commerce and Industry Minister Piyush Goyal, expressing concerns over the extension of the Interest Equalisation Scheme (IES) for only two months and exclusively for MSMEs. Federation of Indian Export Organisations (FIEO) president Ashwani Kumar highlighted that the scheme has so far benefitted not only MSMEs but also merchant exporters and large manufacturing companies at a lower rate of two per cent for 410 tariff lines, covering labour-intensive products. The current scheme, valid till June, provides pre and post-shipment rupee export credit, offers a two per cent interest equalisation rate for manufacturers and merchant exporters dealing with specified 410 export items, and a higher rate of three per cent for MSME manufacturers exporting under any of these items.



Kumar pointed out that the exclusion of these categories from the extended scheme will severely impact labour-intensive exports, which have already been struggling in recent years. He urged the minister to intervene and restore the status quo, citing the export sector's challenges, including increased freight rates, longer voyage times, and rising interest rates.

Kumar warned that the withdrawal of IES benefits will blunt the competitive edge of exporters and hinder growth momentum. In contrast to FIEO's demand for an extension of the scheme benefits at a higher rate, the Director General of Foreign Trade (DGFT) restricted the benefits to MSMEs and capped the total outlay of the scheme at Rs 750 crore.



Bollywood actress Deepshikha Nagwal, along with Dr HBS Lamba MD Welcome New Wembley products LLP, Sanjay Aggarwal, MD Sirca Paints India Ltd during the signature agreement of both the company at Aerocity in New Delhi on Saturday PTI

# Titan launches jewellery brand Tanishq in Bangladesh

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Titan Company on Saturday said it is launching its jewellery brand Tanishq in Bangladesh as part of expansion plans in the international market. On Friday, the Tata Group-managed firm signed a JV agreement to this effect with Rhythm Group which will make Tanishq available across the Bangladesh market, according to a joint statement. The joint venture will commence with the opening of the manufacturing facility in Narayanganj, in Bangladesh, it added. Besides the domestic market, Titan is expanding Tanishq's presence in the international



market and operates 17 stores across the UAE, US, Qatar, Singapore and Oman. Its watch business has a presence in SAARC, MENA (Middle East and North Africa), Southeast Asian regions. In the last few years, it has focused on growing its

flagship jewellery brand Tanishq overseas. Rhythm Group is a prominent entity in Bangladesh that was established in 1972 to produce desi textile fabrics and since then it has expanded into several verticals. "Through this joint venture

Titan aims to combine Tanishq's unparalleled artisanship and brand legacy with Rhythm Group's strong market presence and local expertise in Bangladesh, to manufacture and sell jewellery to discerning Bangladeshi consumers," it said. Titan Company MD C K Venkataraman said: "Together, we will leverage our combined strengths to elevate the jewellery industry in Bangladesh and make Bangladesh the hub for making Tanishq Exquisite Jewellery for the world." Titan Company is a joint venture between Tata Group and Tamil Nadu Industrial Development Corporation (TIDCO).

T20 WORLD CUP ON COURSE TO BECOME MOST IMPORTANT ICC EVENT, REVEALS PLAYER SURVEY

PTI ■ BRIDGETOWN (BARBADOS)

A player survey has revealed that the T20 World Cup is closing the gap in the race to become the "most important" ICC event to players around the world, marking a shift from the dominance of the ODI World Cup.

Compared to 2019 when 82 percent of players picked Test cricket as the most important format, it's only 48 percent right now.

Players from India, Pakistan and Afghanistan are among those who are not represented by the WCA since they are not unionised.

Responses were sought from players of other major cricket nations, including Australia, England, New Zealand, South Africa, Bangladesh and West Indies.

According to the WCA, the sample size for this year's survey was around 330 professional players from 13 different countries, with the majority of them being current internationals.

There is a higher proportion of female respondents in 2024. In the current edition of the T20 World Cup, the much-awaited clash between arch-rivals India and Pakistan garnered a staggering 256 million viewing hours in India alone.



Gayle attributes low-scoring matches in US to jet-lagged and tired wickets

PTI ■ BRIDGETOWN (BARBADOS)

Chris Gayle, the West Indies World Cup ambassador, attributed the numerous low-scoring games in the USA leg of the tournament to "jet-lagged and tired" pitches.

According to the ICC, drop-in pitches were prepared in Florida since late December, employing proprietary techniques honed over a decade at Adelaide Oval in Australia.

The drop-in pitches prepared for the tournament were transported from Florida to New York in semi-trailer trucks for installation at Nassau County International Cricket Stadium, which proved to be one of the most difficult wickets for batting during the tournament.

"It's been a low-scoring World Cup without a doubt, and the wicket is on the slower side sometime. It's a batting format... Going to give bowlers edge from time to time, bowlers pretty much in control of T20 World Cup," Gayle said during a press conference on Friday.

The tournament will conclude with the final between India and South Africa at Kensington Oval in Barbados. "Barbados has been one of the best for batting, hope batters are going to get some runs tomorrow."

"We want to see better surface but the wicket in States was a bit jet-lagged as well, as we know. It was tired, all that travel from Australia, didn't get time to recover properly. That's why we had some low-scoring games," Gayle added.

The development of the pitches was undertaken by Adelaide Oval Turf Solutions,



led by renowned Adelaide Oval head curator Damian Hough.

The drop-in square - the type used around the world including at Adelaide Oval and Eden Park - was curated in Florida and transported by road to New York via a convoy of more than 20 semi-trailer trucks in April.

The matches in New York took place at a state-of-the-art 34,000-seat modular stadium located at Eisenhower Park in Nassau County, east of Manhattan. The former West Indies captain lauded the ICC for efforts to promote the game in mainland America.

"The ICC did a fantastic job, the trophy tour, did well to promote the game within the US. They have taken the trophy to the football games, baseball games, they have done a very good job from the marketing point of view," Gayle said.

Coming back to the big-ticket title clash, Gayle said lead pacer Jasprit Bumrah could decide India's fate against South Africa. Inaugural edition winners India and first-time finalists South Africa will battle it out

at the Kensington Oval in their bid to be crowned the world champions in the game's shortest format.

"India are going to be so hard to beat. They bat so deep and in Jasprit Bumrah, have a world-class death bowler who can break the hearts of the opponents," Gayle wrote in a column for the ICC.

"In contrast, I picked South Africa as a dark horse before the tournament began, and it is very special to see them finally reach their first final after so many semi-final upsets. "Getting over the hump and winning a World Cup is so special and if they can do it, it will create memories that will last a lifetime for the players and the nation."

The final pits two undefeated teams with India seeking to reclaim the trophy they last won in the 2007 edition, and South Africa seeking to etch their name on a senior World Cup trophy for the first time.

Gayle found it tough to predict a winner. "It is going to be so hard to call - with two teams who have played clean and aggressive cricket throughout the tournament," he said.

India record highest-ever team total in women Test cricket

PTI ■ CHENNAI

India on Saturday recorded the highest team total in women's Test cricket, amassing 603 for six declared on day two of the one-off match against South Africa here.

India surpassed that mark when Richa Ghosh hammered a four in the first ball of the 109th over bowled by Annerie Dercksen.

Eventually, India declared at 603 for six in 115.1 over following the dismissal of Ghosh for 86. Much of the credit for the feat goes to Indian openers -- Shafali Verma (205) and Smriti Mandhana (149) -- who shared a stand of 292 -- the highest



opening partnership in women's cricket. India were also well served by Jemimah Rodrigues (55) and skipper Harmanpreet Kaur (69). On Day 1, India had finished on 525 for four, having posted the highest-ever single-day total in a Test match. They broke the previous record held by the Sri Lankan men's team - 509 for nine -- against Bangladesh in Colombo in 2002.

Sharma lies tied seventh in Italian Open golf

PTI ■ ROME

Indian golfer Shubhankar Sharma fired identical 68s in his first two rounds to be tied seventh in the Italian Open on the DP World Tour here.

The Indian star, who is headed to the Olympic Games in August, had five birdies against two bogeys in the second round.

In the first round, he had three birdies and an eagle against two bogeys. Sharma has had a modest season with a best of T-7 in Singapore Classic as his best and was T-16 at Hero Dubai Desert Classic, one of the marquee events on the Tour.

The other Indian in the field Om Prakash Chouhan missed the cut with rounds of 72-71. Gunner Wiebe took a one-stroke lead into



the weekend after carding a second round 69 at Adriatic Golf Club. The American started the second day in a three-way tie for the lead on seven under after his first round of 64 but had to remain patient after a level par front nine,

with a bogey on the 17th, cancelling out a gain on the 15th.

He made his second birdie of the day on the first hole, his tenth, and then birdied the par four fifth to move to two under on the day.

The 35-year-old parred his final four holes to sign for a nine under par total after 36 holes, one stroke ahead of Germany's Jannik de Bruyn, who got a last minute spot into the event.

One stroke further back on seven under are last week's KLM Open runner-up Marcus Kinhult, Denmark's Sebastian Friedrichsen, Adrian Ottagui of Spain and South African Brandon Stone.

Canada's Aaron Cockerill and Sharma share the seventh spot on six under, while 14 golfers are tied for ninth place on five under par, including home favourites Edoardo Molinari and Andrea Pavan.

12-time National champion Muddappa begins season on winning note



PTI ■ CHENNAI

India's fastest rider Hemanth Muddappa began his 2024 campaign on a positive note with a double win at the opening round of the MMSC-FMCSI Indian National Motorcycle Drag Racing Championship at the Madras International Circuit (MIC) at Irungattukottai on Saturday.

Muddappa, who won the National drag titles a record 12 times, continued his successful association with team Mantra Racing, and the combination dished out another stellar performance in the first round, missing the triple by a whisker.

He started with a hard-fought victory in 4-stroke 551 to 850cc Super Sport class clocking a blistering 8.630 seconds to edge out Hyderabad's Mohammed Riyaz, who timed 8.675 seconds. Altaf Khan, also from Hyderabad, came third.

The Bengaluru-based rider then took the start for the 851 to 1050cc Super Sport final run, but lost to Mumbai's Anvay Patil by eight hundredths of a second.

Mantra Racing's Muddappa clocked 8.294 seconds to Patil's 8.286. Muddappa's teammate Sujan Prasad SP came third in 8.448s.

But Muddappa was in his elements in the 4-stroke 1051 to 1650cc Super Sport class, where he logged a quick 08.063 seconds to take his second victory of the day.

He beat Bengaluru's Mujahid Pasha (8.103s) and Aymaan Baig, who came third in 8.117s. Astride the Suzuki Hayabusa, the reigning champion in the Unrestricted class clocked 8.251 seconds for a tie with city-mate Pasha, who had clocked the same time but was a lesser reaction time, that was used to break the deadlock. Alimon Saidalvi came third.

Malvika shocks Kristy to enter semifinals of US Open

PTI ■ FORT WORTH (US)

India's Malvika Bansod stunned Scotland's Kristy Gilmour in a thrilling three-game match to advance to the women's singles semifinals of the US Open Super 300 badminton tournament here.

The 22-year-old from Nagpur, ranked 49th, registered a 10-21 21-15 21-10 win over Kristy, a 2014 Commonwealth Games silver medallist. Malvika had defeated Kristy at the Hylo Open in 2022 when the Scot shuttler had retired in the second game due to an injury. The Indian had lost



twice to Kristy in the past. The Indian, who had won the Azerbaijan International challenge this year, will face sixth seeded Japanese Natsuki Nidaira next.

In men's singles, Priyanshu Rajawat produced a good show but couldn't get past fourth seed Lei Lan Xi of China, losing 21-15 11-21 18-21 in a quarterfinal match that lasted just over an hour. Second seed Treesa Jolly and Gayatri Gopichand lost 17-21 21-17 19-21 to Japanese sixth seed Rui Hirokami and Yuna Kato to also end their campaign in the last eight round.

Verstappen holds off McLaren challenge to take 3rd sprint race victory of season at Austrian GP

AP ■ SPIELBERG (AUSTRIA)

Max Verstappen held off an early attack by Lando Norris before pulling away from the two McLarens to comfortably secure his third sprint race victory of the year Saturday at the Austrian Grand Prix.

Verstappen finished 4.616 seconds ahead of McLaren's Oscar Piastri to make it three wins out of three in sprint races this season, with Norris another 0.732 seconds back in third.

Norris started second behind Verstappen and stayed glued to the Red Bull for the first few laps, using his DRS to attack the championships leader.

Norris even managed to overtake Verstappen briefly on lap five after a daring move on the straight leading into a sharp turn, but the Dutch driver responded by quickly retaking the lead at the next corner. Norris ended up being overtaken by his teammate as well during that sequence, but Piastri could not seriously challenge Verstappen after that and the Red Bull driver gradually extended his lead over the 23-lap race. Verstappen said the key was to get out of the range of the McLarens' DRS system, which allows the chasing driver to reduce the drag by opening up the rear wing of his car to get a burst of speed.

Advertisement for AU Small Finance Bank Limited, featuring a table with borrower details, loan amounts, and descriptions of mortgaged properties. The table includes columns for Name of Borrower, 13(2) Notice Date & Amount, Description of Mortgaged Property, and Date of Possession Taken.

Advertisement for Centre for Cultural Resources and Training, detailing recruitment for Group-A posts in CRTR-reg. It includes application details, pay levels, and contact information for the recruitment officer.

Advertisement for South Indian Bank, detailing an auction sale notice for immovable assets under the Securitisation and Reconstruction of Financial Assets and Enforcement of Security Interest Act, 2002. It lists the names of the borrowers and guarantors involved.



Govt. of Haryana

“दीनदयाल उपाध्याय जी ने हमें अंत्योदय का मार्ग दिखाया था। यानि जो समाज की आखिरी पंक्ति में हैं, उनका उदय। 21वीं सदी का भारत इसी विचार से प्रेरणा लेते हुए अंत्योदय के लिए काम कर रहा है। जो विकास के आखिरी पायदान पर है, उसे विकास के पहले पायदान पर लाने के लिए काम हो रहा है।”

- नरेन्द्र मोदी



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**Venue - Anaj Mandi, Panipat**

**Sh. Bishamber Singh**

Minister of State (I.C.)  
for SEWA, Haryana

**Sh. Subhash Sudha**

Minister of State (I.C.),  
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**Sh. Mahipal Dhanda**

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SO PLEASE, OH PLEASE, WE BEG, WE PRAY,  
GO THROW YOUR TV SET AWAY, AND  
IN ITS PLACE YOU CAN INSTALL A LOVELY  
BOOKSHELF ON THE WALL  
— ROALD DAHL

# FROM THE PEN OF A GROUNDED POET

It is important to note that Neerada is as much a Nature poet as she is a people's poet, says SWATI PAL

How many of us have had to be admonished for things not being aligned? The books in our book case in the days when books were bought and read? The clothes in our cupboard? The shoes in the closet? How many of us were ticked off at school perhaps for the tie being askew or the pair of socks not climbing up at the same place on each leg? Or the writing in our notebooks being asymmetrical? For the better part of my childhood and those of my friends, there was a constant, relentless push and shove towards alignment and well, we certainly rebelled at it as young people! A part of me still does and thus when I chance upon a poppy flower for example, in a neat bed of chrysanthemums in the college gardens, I cannot deny that my heart lights up with joy at this break in the order of things!

So when I was invited to read and speak on this utterly delightful collection of poems called 'Alignment' by Neerada Suresh, I cannot deny that my interest was instantly piqued by the title and I immediately read the title poem. Rohan Kaul's home and his partner, Promilla simply came alive by the word picture painted by Neerada Suresh in her rib tickling comparisons between the state of the house in the absence and presence of Rohan. There is a certain glee in the air when Rohan is away as things lie unaligned and unfettered; the same things, to quote, *But when Rohan Kaul is in, Newspapers stand stacked, Compressed, breathing in. Shoes align themselves Awed, open mouthed. Paintings, curtains, Cushions, sofas All tell a tamed tale.*

The fact is that while alignment is not only, politically speaking an important credo that nations strive for and while it may have its merits, alignment can often come at great cost. It may be the cost of freedom, it may be about being 'tamed' as Neerada put it; it may leave us in gaping fear and thus 'open mouthed'. The hope perhaps lies in Promilla who, as the poem ends with *defies A certain kind of alignment.* Don't let the light and bubbling language deceive you, this poem has far greater implications if we read it closely and it is this deceptive mirth that the

poem has which makes the poem, like many others by her, such a joy to read. Neerada is a grounded soul. Her poems reflect that and she makes poetry out of the ordinary quirky eccentricities and foibles that fill all of our lives. A poem that really clicked with me is *Of Lists*. It has that elegant humour that seems to be a characteristic trait of Neerada's, the wonderful ability to laugh at one's self. It begins with the declaration *I am one For lists.* And then, with great good humour she narrates how fishing out her list from her bag full of things makes the list redundant as she involuntarily lists from memory and then she swears, *Under my breath Now to list down A set of instructions How not to forget Getting across The list you make.* I cannot recall the uncountable times that I have had to strip my entire bag to find a list and then found it much later. It is such a relatable experience and that is what endears the reader to Neerada's poetry, the sheer relatability of the experiences.

Life and the times as we live them are the focus of Neerada's poetry. We talk for example about how communication between people now is held ransom by the cell phone. Neerada converts our trite conversations into a poem which she entitles, *The New Normal.* *New normal is Sitting side by side On a sofa With no eye contact Chatting of this and that These are the first few lines and the poem ends with the sad fact that the new normal is: And at all times Not facing each other But thumb twitching On the mobile through Inane vicarious clips Of far and near ones And total strangers Never once glancing Directly or even sideways Smiling at each other.* Modes of communication or rather the language of communication comes up again in another poem called *Version 3.0* where the poet talks about her journey from the deep south up north 'travelling light with nothing/more than



a bilingual tongue'. Subtly yet strongly commenting upon the Rashtrabhasha issue, she says, *At the workplace, monolingual, mute Biding time mastering a language National though notional, Opening floodgates of ecstasy mouthing My own tongue, my mother tongue, At regional gatherings.* This is such striking comment upon the way in which so much in our relationships with people, so much of our identity, so many of our needs, are determined by the fluency with which we speak different languages. But are we accepted because we speak the required language or do we remain strangers divided by our regional differences, not explicitly stated but always there? Do we, in turn, become one with the region of our profession or adoption or do we still dream of lands we associate most with the tongue that comes easiest and naturally to us, our mother tongue? These are questions to think about. Neerada makes you think.

She makes you laugh and cry as well, sometimes together. One such poem is *When my brother fell sick* in which the poet describes her brother who was bedridden after a botched up eye surgery. She writes about his courage, *He still smiles as always. Not once did he Lament this plight, foul mouth The surgeon or contemplate Suing. Resigned at once To a possible, partial vision In his bad eye, pacified His wife, my raging sisier in law. His expressive eyes Now inscrutable Behind the dark glasses. But his smile had the same texture and tinge Of the smile he sported When Mother died And he lingered by her one last time.* The poem is such a beautiful reminder that warriors are not found only on the battlefield; there are many who soldier on heroically confronted by the vicissitudes of life. The brother you read about will surely capture your heart and become your hero.

One of the characteristics of Neerada's poems in 'Alignment' is that there is a lot said through implication which is sometimes sensuous and can get your heart beating a bit faster. For example, in the poem *Delete*, the poet writes about *Your unsolicited Picture on FB And she goes on to say, The familiar contours Of your face Traced out a trillion times Through summer and winter Stood out embossed On my finger tips. The best option now For the photo shopped version, Press delete To wipe out that sting Of dormant memories Off my fingertips.* This is a brilliant use of synesthetic imagery and one can literally feel the tingling in the tips of one's fingers. A poem that ends with a delightful twist is *Chrysanthemums* where the unnamed 'he' always came when the chrysanthemums bloomed and he always asked if they were dahlias or marigolds, and the poet says *Too polite to correct She'd smile- a wide smile*

*Her lashes lowered and The chrysanthemums paled Into insignificance. The evening Stretched to its elastic limits Catapulted into night. What she didn't know was That he had always known They were chrysanthemums.* There is the sweetness of romance in these lines that is unmistakable and so appealing; one can almost imagine the whole scene played out in one's head. Tea I carries the same fragrance of romance very delicately framed, implied through such lines as *While I made tea On a rusty stove He stood watching Leaning by the door When Mother died, I like the cut of your dress As though it were a cue To turn the stove on to sim And let the simmering within Come to a boil.* Coming back to the pictorial quality of the poems, a reason why many of the poems in fact can be almost dramatically played out in the imagination is the kind of detailing that Neerada works into her poems. Take the poem *Of Haystacks*. This entire poem is literally painted with an eye for the minutest of details and it reads *The cotton tree stood In its slender trunk With its bursting pods Of parachuting blobs As the turbaned, earth hued Cart man, cushioned On bales and bales Of golden yellow straw Came swaying, swinging Whistling to the orchestra of The hoof clicking clap dance Of the ambling bullocks.* Colour, sound, movement all seemed fused almost like a motion picture being played out on the printed page. And of course the symbolism, the personification is discernible, as is the use of alliteration in the swaying swinging, cart cushioned, clicking clap. This lends a wonderful rhythmic motion to the scene and has been really cleverly used.

Again, in *The Breadfruit Tree*, the poet describes the tree, *We didn't make much Of the breadfruit tree That stood sentry like*

*By the boundary wall Spilling its bickering spread Over the neighbour's roof Dropping yellow leaves Plopping crow eaten messy fruits* Like I said, the tree, pretty much like the haystacks in the previous poem, comes to life in the mind's eye. If brevity is the soul of wit, Neerada really aces it in her short poems, two of which are *Absence* and *Sorrows*. *Absence, Distance Were surefire Terminators Of whatever was Between us I thought, But they Like rings in trees Add girth, depth Linking the past With the present, Casting shadows Of decay Into the future* Direct and simple, the simile is so apt and new- the rings on the trees and the passage of time. It's important to note that Neerada is as much a Nature poet as she is a people's poet. In *Sorrows* she says, *Sorrows Like a newborn Arranged itself In my arms Purring in content As if to say Never let me go For the reward Of great truths To be reaped And revealed In the future.* Those who carry their sorrows with them will feel that the poem is made for them. But that's the magic of Neerada's pen, she will make her readers feel that the people, places, thoughts and experiences are theirs that she writes about. Read her, you will feel at home.

— Swati Pal, Professor and Principal, Janki Devi Memorial College, University of Delhi, has been a Charles Wallace; John McGrath Theatre Studies and Fulbright Nehru fellowship, scholar. She has published on theatre, creative and academic writing, education and translates from Hindi to English. In *Absentia* is a collection of her poems

# Journey to an expanded self awareness

The book opens in the present-day scenario, where a rather unsure Loveena of mid-thirties is boarding a train to Pathankot.

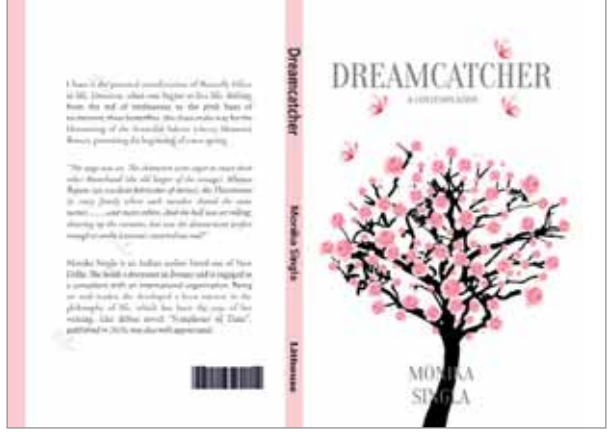
Her already raw senses are over burdened by the onslaught of experience of a train station environment.

Yet her insecurities are deep seated in her psyche and are result of the generational trauma she endured during her growing up years

by the hands of her equally tormented mother Neena, reviews DEEPAK KUMAR JHA

The ("Dreamcatcher") is the story of Loveena, the protagonist of the book who is a sensitive soul. It beautifully narrates the journey through her trials and tribulations, her realisations, her pains and her metamorphosis and an ultimate 'coming of age' which leaves her in a state of expanded awareness of self as well as her surroundings and people there in. Author Monika has orchestrated her sound knowledge of literature, language and the subject & object to bring on paper the story of a child Loveena, till she finds solace passing through life's labyrinth, unfortunately all nurtured in close walls of her family. The just published book revolves around Loveena's mother Neena who attained motherhood through Loveena after a long wait of ten years. Neena's intensity

thus shifted to being extra protective about her daughter from the negativities of the world. Having brought up in a rather affluent and rich family, she desires nothing less for her daughter. And even though Loveena had both her parents-Neena and her father Dev, it was her mother and mother's stories which were to carve her life and make her the person that she would become. And the story's trajectory thus turns to Loveena's mother Neena's life. Neena's husband Dev was a victim of his own sense of helplessness for his lack of understanding the business of Neena's father and inability to take it up for posterity, even though he was the sole son-in-law the family had. His job as an assistant professor of history in the university projected him as most suitable boy for Neena, when a friend of Neena's



father told him about Dev and his docile nature. Quite obviously Neena's father believed it to be the significant trait suitable for her pampered daughter. As Neena entered Dev's life and his house after her wedding, it was bustling with Dev's family. Neena was immediately overwhelmed by the sheer number



of people and was unable to adjust to this new environment which was totally unlike her solitary and exclusive upbringing in an affluent household. Sensing Neena's hesitation and reservations, Dev's family too accepted her into their family but without completely absorbing her into their lives. So, even though

Neena was married into Dev's family she could never truly become a part of it. Dev's detachment or lack of desire to correct this situation further acerbated the relationships. Troubled relations with in-laws, Dev's indifference clubbed with an anguishing wait of ten years to attain motherhood further fed Neena's sense of mistrust and suspicions and her belief that the world was a dangerously bad place. Loveena who was born as a happy child with a calm, pleasing, innocent disposition was always eager to embrace everybody, never earned approval for her behaviour from her mother. Neena always dismissed these traits as incompatible with the ways of world. Thus, growing up, Loveena's world protected by her mother, remained confined within the four walls of the palatial house with the house help Babli as a constant companion who

too gets married leaving behind a void in Loveena's life. Finally, Loveena finds her suitor in Sanand and her engagement to him was greeted as the most welcome news by everyone later on which did not worked due to triggers of Neena's fears. For Loveena this incident proved to be the one which augmented her belief in Neena's words that world is a bad place. Her father Dev too gone followed by passing of Neena. Loveena finally married, not to start a family but only to drown the haunting hollowness of her soul into joys and laughter. Vikram was a colleague of Loveena and the only thing she knew about him was that he was a divorcee with two grown up kids. Soon this too developed a marital conflict. Unable to handle this situation any longer Loveena decides that she needs to get

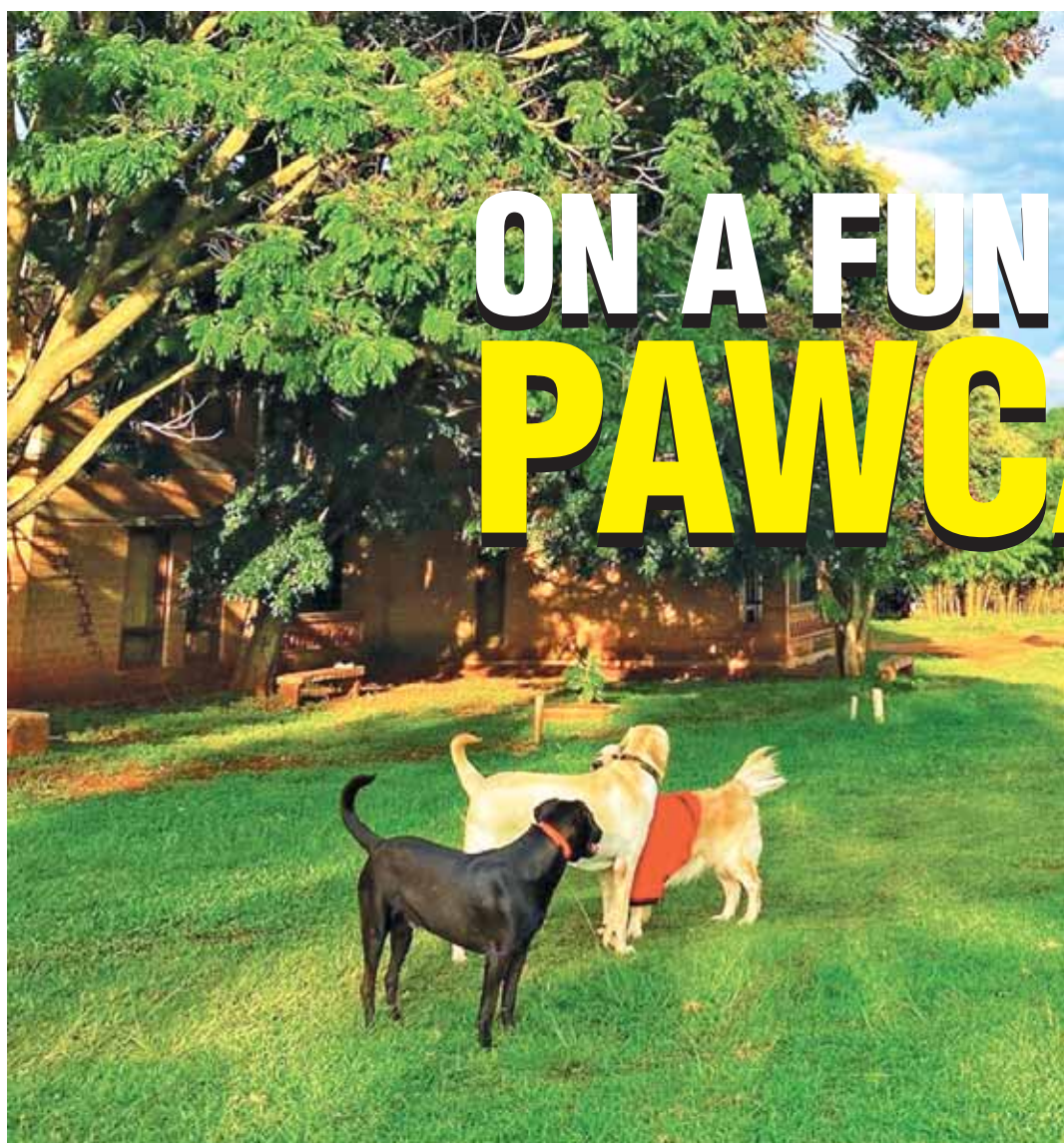
respite from her choppy life that and decides to leave the house and Vikram. She goes looking for solitude in a place away from the chaos of the city, away from the prodding eyes of the society. Her life's journey takes a new turn as she arrives at Pathankot where she embarks upon a spiritualistic journey. Armed with the strength of her soul and her renewed faith in life and self and the world in general, Loveena finally finds herself ready to go back to place from where she herself had once run away from all her life challenges a long time back. Her tumultuous relationship with Vikram's place was when she had shunned everything to cross over into next phase of her life. She was now ready to go meet Vikram as a new person. But this time she isn't running away. This time she is running towards meeting life head-on.

**DREAMCATCHER**  
Author:  
Monika Singla  
Publisher: ISPCK  
Price: ₹295

"Disease is an experience of a so-called mortal mind. It is fear made manifest on the body"  
— Mary Baker Eddy



## ON A FUN FILLED PAWCATION!



Indulge in exciting activities with your pets and make a holiday with them truly special, writes SHARMILA CHAND

Whether indulging in gourmet cuisine for your pets, celebrating their birthdays, pampering them with grooming sessions or participating in fun activities, there's something to enrich every experience during a vacation with furry members. There are a range of pet-friendly hotels and resorts that are more than happy to welcome you and your loyal companion. From luxury resorts to cozy retreats, these properties ensure complete comfort and are a haven both for you and your four-legged buddy.

### COMFORT MEETS LUXURY AT PRESIDENT, MUMBAI - IHCL SELEQIONS

Looking to celebrate your pet's birthday? Go for a Pawcation at President, Mumbai - IHCL SeleQions.

"We have curated a well thought out pet-friendly vacation concept known as Pawcations," says Afzal Khan, General Manager. "We understand that pets are cherished members of the family, and we strive to create a comfortable and enriching environment for them during their stay. Hence we provide pet-friendly amenities like plush pet beds and bedding, engaging toys, and a gourmet pet menu crafted by our culinary experts." Embracing a pet-friendly policy, the hotel team makes sure the guests' comfort is enhanced by offering the services of on-call pet caretakers, as per specific requirements. Moreover, if there is any health related issue, there is a specialist veterinarian on call. Not to forget pet grooming services with prior appointments, exclusive pet toiletries, and designated pet-friendly zones. "We not only organize elaborate party with delightful high tea and fun outdoor activities for furry birthday boys and girls but also make sure the service is professional with warmth and care. Our team undergoes regular comprehensive training programs to understand animal behavior, hygiene protocols, and proper handling procedures. We also invite external pet trainers and behaviorists to train our staff regularly, ensuring they are well-equipped to interact with pets and provide top-notch service. Hence, we take great pride in being a pet-friendly destination," concludes Khan with a smile.



### PAMPERING PETS AT 'OUR NATIVE VILLAGE ECO RESORT', BENGALURU

At 'Our Native Village Eco Resort', nestled in the serene village of Hesaraghatta, guests can indulge in a memorable vacay with the joy of bonding with their beloved pets amidst nature's embrace. "Whether exploring our sprawling grounds or immersing yourself in our cultural experiences, every moment promises a harmonious blend of luxury, responsible tourism and eco-conscious living, adhering to our pet-friendly policy," tells Antharaj A, The Operations Manager. He adds, "We get repeat guests who have enjoyed their staycation in seamless harmony with their furry companions. As a proud pet-friendly establishment, the retreat provides essential amenities, including a variety of dog foods, water bowls, leashes, floor mats, and cozy blankets. The sprawling grounds offer ample space for pets to roam freely amidst lush lawns and village paths, perfect for leisurely strolls and bonding moments." Designed with meticulous care, the dedicated pet bathing area combines comfort with rustic charm, ensuring a refreshing bath experience for furry companions. Specially prepared food ensures pets receive nutritious meals, supporting the commitment to sustainability by minimizing environmental impact. "Complete with all necessary amenities, the resort's natural charm

reflects our dedication to pampering pets just as we do for our human guests. While the guests rediscover childhood joys playing village games like gilli danda and kite flying, their pets act as best cheerleaders!" Antharaj says with a smile.

### DISCOVER PET-FRIENDLY RETREAT AT MYSA ZINC JOURNEY BY THE FERN

Pet parents looking to take a break and hit the road with their fur babies, look no further than MYSA Zinc Journey by The Fern, a premier resort located in Nani Devati, Gujarat. Renowned for its serene ambiance and top-notch amenities, this resort stands out as a haven for pet lovers, offering an exceptional blend of comfort, luxury, and pet-friendly hospitality. Naveen Vaishnav, Squad Champion at the Resort says, "Committed to pampering four legged guests, at MYSA Zinc Journey by The Fern, pets are warmly welcomed and cherished. Furthermore, the property offers a range of facilities, making this resort the ideal choice for travellers with pets. The resort offers 24 elegantly designed rooms and villas, each providing ample space for you and your pets to relax." Spread across 9 acres within the scenic Glade One Golf Resort, the resort features beautifully landscaped gardens and open spaces perfect for the four legged to explore and enjoy. For a leisurely stroll or a brisk walk, the serene pathways and green expanses offer a perfect retreat for them and their owners.

"At the resort we offer dedicated services and facilities that include comfortable bedding and special dietary options for your furry friends. Our chefs cook as per pets' liking and specifications, we don't have printed menus as we believe in curating for them. While your pets enjoy the outdoors, you can indulge in a variety of resort activities. From the challenging 9-hole Gary Player-designed golf course to rejuvenating spa treatments and a sparkling swimming pool, here is the unique blend of luxury and pet-friendly hospitality. Located just a short drive from Ahmedabad, this resort provides a tranquil retreat where you and your pets can relax and rejuvenate," adds Vaishnav.

### BONDING IN A NURTURING ENVIRONMENT

Nestled amidst the serene landscapes of Taj Fort Aguada Resort & Spa, Taj Holiday Village Resort & Spa and The Yellow House, lies a haven not just for humans but also for their beloved furry companions. Embracing the bond between pets and their owners, we proudly declare ourselves a pet-friendly resort, where wagging tails and happy barks are as much a part of the atmosphere as the rustling of leaves and gentle lapping of waves. "As the pet's comfort is paramount, we provide cozy & comfortable beddings to ensure their good night's sleep. Offering a range of soothing amenities such as gentle shampoo, conditioner, and nourishing paw and nose butter - these products are carefully chosen to keep your pet looking and feeling their best throughout their stay. Beyond physical comfort, we cultivate a nurturing environment where every aspect of your pet's experience is thoughtfully considered. Our dedicated staff is trained to provide attentive care and ensure that all pets receive personalized attention and affection, says Sanchita Banerjee Rodrigues, MarCom for North Goa Resorts. Fitness is of utmost importance. Whether it's a leisurely morning walk or an evening romp under the setting sun, the scenic surroundings provide the perfect backdrop for the pets to stay active and happy. "Understanding that pets thrive when they can engage in physical activities, we offer a variety of opportunities for them to stay active and happy amidst our scenic

surroundings. Whether it's a leisurely morning walk along our lush trails or an energetic romp during the enchanting sunset hours, every moment outdoors is tailored to keep pets healthy and stimulated. Providing designated areas where they can engage in interactive play and socialize with other furry companions under the watchful eye of our attentive staff. These supervised activities not only keep pets physically fit but also mentally stimulated, ensuring a well-rounded experience during their stay." When it comes to pets' dining, Chef Nishant Diwakar Executive Sous Chef of Taj Fort Aguada being a pet parent himself takes keen interest in designing and planning of the pet menus of Taj North Goa Resorts. He firmly believes as important a balanced diet is to us humans, our furry friends require the same amount of attention. We provide specially curated menu for them to get the perfect amount of nutrient & a tasty treat. From dishes made with bacon & chicken bones to drool over to waffles made of yoghurt, banana & pumpkin. The team goes beyond basic sustenance to provide culinary experiences that enhance their stay and contribute to their overall enjoyment.

### A PERFECT GETAWAY WITH PETS!

At Bengaluru Marriott Hotel Whitefield, there are special pet fiestas and brunches that create memorable moments for pets and owners alike. For long-staying guests, there is a unique touch of companionship—a small fish in a pot to keep them company. "At our hotel, we pride ourselves on providing an immersive experience with cozy beds, engaging toys, and meticulously sanitized play areas, creating a haven for our four-legged guests," tells Anjali Naik, Director of Sales and Marketing. She adds, "Pets have access to our dining outlets and lush lawns, where they can relax and play freely. Our exclusive pet menu offers health-centric, salt-free options for their dining pleasure. Our commitment to creating a pet-friendly environment goes beyond mere accommodation, offering a truly immersive and delightful experience for both you and your beloved companion."

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



# TANGRA TALES

Kolkata, Bengalis the world over, and Tangra, share a very special culinary heritage and culture, going far back in history. **SHOBORI GANGULI** got to relive the bond at the Westin Gurgaon recently



Most people familiar with the trademark Chinese cuisine of Kolkata would know about Tangra. An erstwhile tannery on the eastern outskirts of then British Calcutta, soon to become famous as the city's Chinatown, this tiny colony was populated by Hakka origin Chinese folk who came to India to work in the tanneries, their craft and art soon to become synonymous with the finest leather accessories in the subcontinent. The womenfolk worked home kitchens to supplement meager household incomes. Today, the tanneries are all gone but Tangra has left its signature on a cuisine now globally known as Hakka Chinese. Recently, I had the fortune to relive some childhood memories of anniversaries and birthdays most often spent at some restaurant or the other in Tangra, wolfing down Golden Fried Prawns, Chicken dimsums, Hakka noodles, prawns sauted in garlic and red chillies, the list goes on. The Westin Gurgaon, New Delhi, hosted a



CHEF HO CHI MING

nine day culinary pop up aptly called Tales of Tangra which promised an "explosion of flavours" from Kolkata's Chinatown. The event featured a specially curated menu by Guest Chef Ho Chi Ming from The Westin Pune Koregaon Park. By sheer geography, one can easily identify the unique Kolkata-Chinese culinary bond, the two regions in such close physical proximity, underlining the very special nature of the food not be found anywhere else in the world despite Tangra's journey as an Oriental cuisine beyond the frontiers of Bengal. The menu at Westin was indeed meticulously planned by the Chef to capture the essence of this legendary fusion cuisine, tracing its roots back to an era long ago when Chinese immigrants in then Calcutta, blending their traditions with Indian culture to script and create Chinatown's culinary

proress. Unfortunately, none of that history now remains, except in the hands of home and professional chefs, who still keep the history of Chinatown resonating with contemporary approaches, and of course, special twists given to recipes long lost. While Chef Ho did put up a great show with his Scallion Crepes, Homestyle Taro Cakes, Kari Fish Dumplings, Sweet and Sour Prawns, Four Season Green Beans, Crispy Chilli Garlic Potatoes, Tangra style authentic Hakka noodles, the menu had a huge vegetarian accent. With the world turning to vegetarianism each passing day, this is only understandable. But one fervently hopes that Hakka Chinese seafood will always have its patrons surviving in some corner or the other in the world. Chef Ho's passion for Asian cuisine was apparent in the innovations he brought to each dish. His approach, affability and commitment to authenticity were truly welcome. Chef Amit Dash, Multi Property Executive Chef for The Westin Gurgaon, New Delhi said, "We are



excited to host Chef Ho Chi Ming and present Tales of Tangra to our patrons. This pop-up is a tribute to the rich cultural tapestry and culinary excellence of Tangra and a testament to our commitment to continue offering our guests diverse and exceptional dining experiences." The soups ranged from Manchow, Assorted Vegetables, Ginger, Cilantro Broth, Hot and Sour soup, non vegetarian bits like prawns and chickens were only add-ons. Personally, I feel a soup or broth must stew in its original juices and not be relegated to add-ons for a vegetable broth. It makes a critical culinary difference in terms of taste, texture and aromas. All in all, it felt good to taste a bit of Tangra far away from its original shores of Kolkata right in the heart of Delhi. Long live Tangra's signature Hakka cuisine.

## Disappointing Service Mars Fine Dining Experiences



**PAWAN SONI** ventures to The China Kitchen at Hyatt Regency, New Delhi, famed for its peking Duck. While the star dish impressed, but the experience is marred by inattentive services

I recently visited The China Kitchen at Hyatt Regency New Delhi, renowned for its exquisite Peking Duck, which I consider among the best in the National Capital Region. Some might argue that Hakkasan in Mumbai outshines it, but my personal experiences at Hakkasan in Abu Dhabi and a pop-up at Shangri-La Delhi didn't include the duck, so I can't compare. Nonetheless, my recent dining experience at The China Kitchen, despite the superb duck, left me dissatisfied, primarily due to subpar service. The evening began on a sour note with a lackluster welcome. We received no warm greetings or guidance to our table, and no one offered us menus or water, despite the sweltering Delhi summer. The absence of hospitality was in stark contrast to the standards one expects at a 5-star property. When we ordered our first dish, a gomain salad, I specifically requested extra sesame dressing on the side, a preference I had made clear to the server. However, the salad arrived without the extra dressing and was neither cold nor flavorful, lacking the acidity and vibrant tastes I anticipated. The China Kitchen could learn a thing or two from China Garden, which excels at this dish in the city. Fortunately, the other dishes like chicken shao mai dumplings, edamame dim sum, and honey chilli lotus roots were much better. Yet, the service remained mechanical and impersonal. There were no smiles, no proactive plate changes, and no clearing of the



table. Even the chef who came to carve the duck remained silent, possibly due to a language barrier, but a smile would have gone a long way. The hostess who prepared the pancake rolls also wore a stony expression while she stood near our table for some time preparing the pancakes. Despite enjoying most of our meal, we quickly finished and left, paying over Rs18,000 (including a 10% service charge) without any drinks. I contemplated asking for the service charge to be waived but refrained, considering how dependent the staff might be on these tips. I was particularly disappointed when my request for duck salt and pepper was denied because we had ordered only half a duck, a decision that seemed unnecessarily rigid. A little more flexibility and hospitality could have made all the difference, especially when very few order it. Attentive and friendly



service could have transformed our dining experience. Even though the food was largely enjoyable, the lack of warmth and attention overshadowed it. Similar was our experience just a day prior at Pullman hotel where a friend hosted his daughter's



birthday party at their all-day dining restaurant Pluck. Orders were mixed up, a sparkling wine cork flew in the air missing the patrons without any apology from the server, prawns vanished from the buffet spread, and orders either took a lot of time or were

completely missed. Something has happened to that smiley and polite star hotel service, especially after COVID. Fresh batches are seeing fewer takers, most experienced staff have either left the industry or are moving abroad for better wages and work



conditions. What remains is the new service levels. Either we will get used to it or start paying them the wages they truly deserve to retain deserving candidates. — Author is a food critic and founder of the Big F Awards. He can be reached at Pawan.Soni@indianfoodfreak.com



**YOUR WEEK AHEAD**

MADHU KOTIYA



**ARIES** March 21-April 19

This week, you'll find yourself in a cheerful state of mind, enjoying a sense of fulfillment and contentment. Expect a swift victory of some kind, such as a successful outcome in a competition or interview, where your dedication and strategic planning will be rewarded. You'll experience a surge of prosperity coupled with spiritual growth. Any previous limitations or obstacles you faced will start to fade away, enhancing your sense of liberation and tranquility. There's a hint of upcoming travel, possibly international, that could enrich your experiences. Midweek brings a period of relaxation; you may choose to step back from certain activities during this reflective phase. In the coming weeks or months, you'll find opportunities to resolve disputes or engage in significant discussions.

Lucky number 4 | Lucky colour Maroon  
Lucky day Friday



**LEO** July 23-Aug 22

Last week was a whirlwind of activity for you, balancing both home and work with remarkable determination. Your methodical approach ensured that everything was handled without compromising the quality, allowing you now to step back and enjoy a well-deserved break. It's a time to savor the results of your diligence. As you've managed to uphold both your professional and personal commitments successfully, you find your environment more supportive and harmonious. Your capabilities in handling relationships and business matters have not only strengthened your stature but have also set you as an inspiration for others. This period marks a significant opportunity for growth in your ventures, and any work-related travel could bring back rewarding outcomes, boosting both your professional standing and familial pride.

Lucky number 16 | Lucky colour Mint  
Lucky day Thursday



**SAGITTARIUS** Nov 22-Dec 21

This week, you may find yourself on a quest for fairness in various areas of your life. However, the journey won't be straightforward, as it is marked by conflicts and confrontations. You might experience feelings of restriction, both mentally and physically, leading to a sense of demoralization and irritation. Amidst this chaos, with opposing forces at play, it becomes crucial to focus on maintaining balanced health habits and making discerning choices that favor personal well-being. Assume accountability for your actions and interactions, thoughtfully considering the advantages and disadvantages. Despite these obstacles, a sense of triumph is within reach. You'll navigate through this tough phase, emerging better equipped to handle future challenges. As the week concludes, opportunities for new beginnings or travel may arise, promising resolution to issues related to relationships or personal assets.

Lucky number 12 | Lucky colour Ivory  
Lucky day Friday



**TAURUS** April 20-May 20

This week brings a focus on emotional expression and deep connections. You naturally wear your heart on your sleeve, showcasing your emotions openly, which will enhance the bonds in your relationship. Expect a surge of closeness and mutual understanding with your partner, reinforcing your emotional ties. Additionally, this period is marked by potential gains in wisdom and the possibility of influential learning opportunities or mentorships that can guide you through significant life decisions. Your ability to articulate your thoughts impressively will serve you well, making you feel effective and acknowledged in your endeavors. High-ranking professionals can anticipate recognition and accolades. It's a pivotal time where your choices will significantly shape your journey, emphasizing the importance of focused decision-making.

Lucky number 14 | Lucky colour Magenta  
Lucky day Monday



**VIRGO** Aug 23-Sep 22

At this moment, you stand at a pivotal juncture, faced with the need to make an important decision quickly. This period proves favorable for professionals like doctors and judges, who are likely to achieve recognition in their fields. A disciplined approach is essential to master the challenges ahead. You might face some health concerns and feelings of frustration; however, remember to appreciate the positives in your life. As the week progresses, expect a subtle shift that brings equilibrium. You'll experience renewed energy and a brighter outlook. Peace and joy will follow, enhancing your personal achievements. Support from others will play a key role in your accomplishments, leading to tangible rewards. Expect to receive what is rightfully yours, reinforcing a sense of justice and fulfillment.

Lucky number 5 | Lucky colour Coral  
Lucky day Tuesday



**CAPRICORN** Dec 22-Jan 19

You are entering a phase that calls for relaxation and recuperation. Embrace the serenity and strength this period offers. If you've recently experienced physical or emotional challenges, this is a time for healing. Soon, you may encounter a scenario requiring critical thinking, where clarity and understanding will emerge. Stay observant, as resolving such matters can be complex, possibly leading to confusion or a standstill. However, the latter part of the week promises a shift towards positivity. You may find yourself contemplating a new endeavor that demands quick action and courage. This is your moment to shine—step forward confidently and tap into your innate ability to navigate exciting challenges. There may also be joyful personal developments, possibly related to family expansion. Harness this burst of creativity and enthusiasm to maximize your opportunities.

Lucky number 1 | Lucky colour Mustard  
Lucky day Monday



**GEMINI** May 21-June 20

This week, your emotions may feel overwhelming, potentially overshadowing your usual judgment. Minor household issues could escalate, causing significant stress and leading you to seek solace away from worldly concerns. You might find yourself pondering drastic changes in your personal life, which could divert your focus from day-to-day duties. However, this period of turmoil is only temporary. As the week progresses, your previous endeavors will start to bear fruit. Recent investments are likely to yield substantial rewards. It's crucial to shake off any lingering confusion and gain a clearer perspective on your life's direction. This might involve stepping back from your typical patterns of thought and behavior to explore new ideas and perspectives. Such shifts will not only enhance your performance but also guide you toward a more balanced and impartial outlook.

Lucky number 3 | Lucky colour Lavender  
Lucky day Wednesday



**LIBRA** Sep 23-Oct 22

You often seek harmony, elegance, and the finer things in life, yet sometimes these seem just out of reach. Recently, you may find yourself overwhelmed by fears and worries, grappling with sleep disturbances, feelings of guilt, and emotional distress. Despite these challenges, it's important to remember that not all is lost. There's a gleam of hope, a fresh perspective or opportunity on the horizon that can help you emerge from this phase. Around the middle of the week, expect a surge of positive news—perhaps a heartfelt gesture or a new opening that could enhance your relationships and bring you emotional and physical strength. Stay patient; with time, the clouds will clear, and stability will return.

Lucky number 8 | Lucky colour Indigo  
Lucky day Wednesday



**AQUARIUS** Jan 20-Feb 18

This week presents a mix of challenges and opportunities, weaving through periods of emotional intensity and conflicting desires. You might start the week feeling a dip in financial stability, as incoming resources could be inconsistent. It's essential to navigate this time with patience, recognizing that this phase is only temporary. Engaging in meditation, yoga, or creative pursuits could prove beneficial in restoring your balance and helping you navigate through these turbulent times. Adopting a measured approach in your interactions, especially with those in senior positions, will be crucial. Avoid letting impulsive reactions disrupt the harmony and progress you've achieved thus far. Stay grounded and cautious, steering clear of misguided beliefs, and consider refreshing your perspective to better face the challenges ahead.

Lucky number 15 | Lucky colour Forest Green  
Lucky day Friday



**CANCER** June 21-July 22

This week, you may notice a significant shift in your demeanor, transitioning from a reflective and intense state to a more affectionate and nurturing one. Those in leadership roles, particularly at the helm of large organizations, might find their natural empathy tested as they encourage independence in others. Your loyalty remains unwavering to those you hold dear, yet it's wise to remain cautious with boundaries. By mid-week, your creativity and imagination could soar, allowing you to delight in a blend of fantasy and reality. This inner transformation will likely bring you a sense of fulfillment, enriching both your material and spiritual life, leaving you feeling content and joyful. Embrace these changes as they come, viewing them as opportunities for personal growth and deeper connections.

Lucky number 11 | Lucky colour Peach  
Lucky day Sunday



**SCORPIO** Oct 23-Nov 21

A shift in location or a new beginning is on the horizon, bringing with it a rise in your current standing or role. You're prepared to embrace challenges to achieve your goals, driven by a restless desire for progress and excitement. A new, intense romantic or artistic connection might soon make its way into your life. As the week progresses, expect an influx of joy, achievements, and possibly some thoughtful gifts, enhancing friendships and personal contentment. A sense of nostalgia may wash over you, prompting reunions with old friends and family members. A positive energy surrounds you, rejuvenating your spirit. Signs point towards harmonious domestic life, with potential celebrations like home renovations or family gatherings, allowing for meaningful moments with those you cherish.

Lucky number 10 | Lucky colour Rust  
Lucky day Sunday



**PISCES** Feb 19-March 20

This week marks a transition as you move away from a challenging phase, feeling a sense of relief and lightness. Family matters will take precedence, demanding more attention amidst less than ideal circumstances. You might find yourself at a crossroads, having held on to a situation that no longer serves your well-being, and it's time to embrace change. This moment holds considerable weight in determining your future; the decisions you make now are crucial. Challenges may arise from unresolved issues or lingering negative feelings towards someone. The coming days offer a chance to address and settle these conflicts, paving the way for healing and growth. Embrace your natural instincts and creativity to navigate through this. By week's end, a significant breakthrough promises to reignite your enthusiasm and determination, bolstering your spirit to pursue your aspirations boldly.

Lucky number 3 | Lucky colour Cherry 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



**GURUSPEAK**  
SRI SRI RAVI SHANKAR

# Do you pray?



where you are. Unless you are lit in devotion to the Divine, your life will remain restless. In devotion, longing will arise in you. And when there is longing, true prayer happens by itself. Be sincere in your prayers. Do not try to outsmart the Divine. The mind has the tendency to forget the Divine. What type of time do you give the Divine? Usually, you give the leftover time; when you have nothing else to do, no guests to attend to, no parties to attend to, you go to the Divine. This is not quality time. Give prime time to the Divine. You will be rewarded. If your prayers are not answered, it is because you have never given quality time. Four types of people go to God. One, is those who seek the truth (knowledge and freedom). Two, the wise ones (gyanis). Three, the ones who seek material comforts (wealth). Four, the ones who are in misery. The wise one does not pray for something. His life itself is a prayer. If at all you have to pray for something, pray for the happiness of all the people in the world. 'Loka Samastha Sukhinou Bhavantu' (May Everybody Be Happy). — He is a Spiritual Guru