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MEA summons Canadian diplomat



MEA Spokesperson Randhir Jaiswal Image Source : VIDEO SCREENGARAB

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE/PTI ■ NEW DELHI

India on Saturday said it summoned the Canadian high commission representative and lodged a strong protest over Ottawa's allegations against Union Home Minister Amit Shah. "We had summoned the representative of the Canadian High Commission yesterday, a diplomatic note was handed over in reference to the proceedings of the Standing Committee on Public Safety and National Security in Ottawa on October 29, 2024," Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) spokesperson Randhir Jaiswal said. India protested in the strongest possible terms the references made by a Canadian minister about Shah and said that such "absurd and baseless" allegations will have serious consequences for bilateral ties between the two

countries, the MEA said on Saturday. The comments came after Canada's Deputy Foreign Affairs Minister David Morrison on Tuesday alleged that Shah ordered a campaign of violence, intimidation and intelligence-gathering targeting Sikh separatists inside Canada. Morrison had also told Canadian Parliament members of the national security committee that he had confirmed Shah's name to The Washington Post, which first reported the allegations. Jaiswal said this revelation that high Canadian government officials deliberately leaked unfounded insinuations to international media as part of a conscious strategy to discredit India and influence other nations only confirms the view that the Indian government has long held about the current Canadian government's political agenda and behavioural pattern.

Replying to queries during a weekly Press briefing, Jaiswal said such irresponsible actions will have serious consequences for bilateral ties. He said India summoned a Canadian High Commission representative on Friday and the official was served a diplomatic note to lodge the protest in strongest terms on the "absurd and baseless" references made by the Canadian deputy minister about India's Union Home Minister. While addressing the Parliament members, Morrison did not say how Canada knew of Shah's alleged involvement. The diplomatic relations between India and Canada deteriorated after Canadian Prime Minister Justin Trudeau said a year ago that Canada had credible evidence agents of the Indian government was involved in the murder of Canadian Sikh activist Hardeep Singh Nijjar in British Columbia

in June 2023. Dismissing the allegations as absurd, Indian government officials have consistently denied that Canada provided evidence. Last month, India recalled its high commissioner Sanjay Verma after the diplomat was named as 'person of interest' by Canada in its probe into Nijjar's killing. New Delhi withdrew its high commissioner and expelled six Canadian diplomats from its soil. Calling Canada's behaviour "the pits", Verma in an interview last week said India was backstabbed and treated in a most unprofessional manner by a country that is supposed to be a friendly democracy. "A handful of supporters of Khalistan have turned the ideology into a criminal enterprise, which indulges in a range of activities such as gun-running and human trafficking and yet the Canadian authorities turn a blind eye because they comprise a vocal electoral bank for local politicians," Verma said. India also accused Canada of indulging in "harassment and intimidation" of Indian consular staff by putting them under audio and video surveillance in "flagrant violation" of diplomatic conventions. "Yes, some of our consular officials were recently informed by the Canadian government that they have been and continued to be under audio and video surveillance. Their communications have also been intercepted. We have formally protested to the Canadian government, as we deem these actions to be in flagrant violation of relevant diplomatic and consular conventions" Jaiswal mentioned during the briefing. "By citing technicalities, the Canadian government cannot justify the fact that it is indulging in harassment and intimidation," he alleged.



Patrolling begins at Depsang

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The Indian Army has commenced verification patrolling at Depsang, the second friction point in eastern Ladakh, the government said on Saturday. Patrolling at Demchok had begun on Friday, a day after the Indian and Chinese troops completed disengagement at the two friction points in eastern Ladakh. Replying to a query at a weekly press briefing, Ministry of External Affairs spokesperson Randhir Jaiswal said following the disengagement agreement with China, the verification patrolling has begun on mutually agreed terms in both Demchok and Depsang. On Thursday, Indian and Chinese troops also exchanged sweets at several border points along the Line of Actual Control (LAC) on the occasion of Diwali. The traditional practice was observed a day after both countries completed troop disengagement at the two friction points, bringing a fresh thaw in Sino-Indian ties. Sources had earlier said that the areas and patrolling status were expected to be moved back to pre-April 2020 level.

Forces gun down three terrorists in Kashmir

MOHIT KANDHARI ■ JAMMU

A day after a large number of residents, and tourists were seen bursting crackers and lighting diyas during Deepawali celebrations at Lal Chowk, the old city area of Khanar in Srinagar witnessed its first anti-terrorist operation in the last 30 months. The forces gunned down Usman Lashkari, a commander of Lashkar-e-Toiba (LeT) by the joint team of security forces and four jawans including two Central Reserve Police Force (CRPF) and two Jammu and Kashmir Police (JKP) personnel received injuries in an over eight hour-long operation on Saturday. Meanwhile, two more terrorists, one suspected to be a foreign terrorist, were neutralised by the security forces in the Halkan Gali area of South Kashmir's Anantnag district on Saturday. Of the two terrorists killed, one was a foreigner, and the other a local. Their group affiliation was yet to be ascertained, official sources said. In another terror-related incident, a search operation was launched on Saturday after the movement of terrorists was observed in Jammu and Kashmir's Bandipora district. According to preliminary reports, a joint team of the Special Operations Group of JKP and the CRPF jawans had launched a cordon-and-search operation in Khanar early Saturday morning, following inputs about the presence of terrorists in the area. The search operation turned into an encounter as the terrorists opened fire at the search party, which retaliated, they said. The residential house, where a group of terrorists were hiding, was completely raised to the ground after it caught fire in the heavy



exchange of gunfire. Inspector General of Police, Kashmir range VK Birdi said, "the day-long operation has been completed. Security forces have killed a terrorist, who has been identified as Usman Lashkari. IGP said the slain terrorist was the commander of Lashkar-e-Toiba (LeT). He is a foreign terrorist and his role and involvement in the murder of Inspector Masroor has come to light and further investigation is being done in this regard." While the encounter was still going on President of the Jammu and Kashmir National Conference Dr Farooq Abdullah sparked off a fresh controversy by suggesting that terrorists should be captured rather than killed, to uncover the masterminds behind the recent surge in terror attacks across Jammu and Kashmir. Farooq Abdullah also demanded an investigation into the Budgam terror attack and said he doubted that it was done by the people who were trying to destabilise the government in Jammu and Kashmir.



Four sanitary workers run over by Kerala Express

PNS ■ KOCHI

Four sanitary workers were run over by the speeding New Delhi-Thiruvananthapuram Kerala Express at 3 pm on Saturday. The dead hailed from Tamil Nadu and were working for a firm hired by the Railways to remove the garbage and waste from railway tracks. Three bodies have been recovered and taken to the Government Hospital Shoranur for autopsy. Search for the fourth body, of that of a male, was called off by evening because of strong undercurrents in the river and fading lights. The Fire Brigade told media persons that a scuba team would be deployed on Sunday morning to retrieve the body. All the victims hailed from Villupuram in Tamil Nadu. The incident occurred when the workers were collecting plastic garbage thrown at the tracks by passengers of trains. They were working at Kochin Bridge built over the Bharathapuzha which comes immediately after the Shoranur Railway Station.

No longer a hoax, live cartridge found on Dubai-Delhi flight

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

In a major security breach, Air India on Saturday reported the discovery of an ammunition cartridge in the pocket of a seat on a flight from Dubai to Delhi on October 27. The cartridge was found on flight AI916 after it had landed at Indira Gandhi International Airport in the national capital, with all passengers safely leaving the plane. Following this, an FIR was registered under the Arms Act and a probe has been initiated. "One ammunition cartridge was found in the pocket of a seat of our flight AI916 after it had landed from Dubai at Delhi on October 27, and all passengers had safely disembarked," an Air India spokesperson confirmed. The airline emphasised that passenger and crew safety is its top priority and assured the public that it is working closely with airport security and law enforcement to ensure all protocols are observed and the matter is thoroughly investigated. The police shared news on Saturday, an Air India staff found the live round of ammunition during routine cleaning on a flight on October 27. Deputy Commissioner of Police (Indira Gandhi International Airport) Usha Rangnani said, "On October 27, Indira Gandhi International Airport Police registered an FIR under the Arms Act after Air India staff found a live round of ammunition during routine cleaning on a flight. "She added that



the case is under investigation and further details will be shared as the investigation progresses. However, this incident raises questions about potential lapses in security measures either at the Dubai departure airport or during the screening process, and investigators are expected to examine surveillance footage and passenger records as part of their probe. This comes after over 500 threat messages received by Indian carriers, many of which turned out to be hoaxes. Several air operators have reported such threats on their social media platforms, resulting in flight delays as thorough searches were conducted. To date, most of these threats have proven to be false alarms. Besides huge financial losses to airlines, these threats were spread across social media platforms, creating panic among the passengers.

Gasp! PM 2.5 is 92 per cent higher this year

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

The 12-hour (from 8 pm to 8 am) reading of Particulate Matter 2.5 (PM2.5) concentration on Diwali night was 34 per cent higher than Diwali night in October 2022, going from 289 µg/m to 386 µg/m. Moreover, PM2.5 levels this year were more than twice as high as the average night-time pollution recorded over the seven nights before Diwali. In its Diwali air pollution analysis, the Centre for Science and Environment (CSE) has highlighted that the average concentration of PM 2.5 during this Diwali (6 am to 4 pm) was 92 per cent higher, compared to last year. However, the unique pattern of Diwali trend this year was sudden sharp increase at night and also quicker dissipation the day after. The reasons behind this late build up and early dissipation of pollution on Diwali day were warm atmospheric conditions with relatively more efficient natural ventilation and adequate wind in the city. This is supposed to be one of the warmest October this year. "PM 2.5 levels that were already rising steadily



during the preceding five days leading up to Diwali, showed a marked increase of 46 per cent from October 28 through October 31. By midnight on October 31, PM2.5 hit a peak of 603 microgram per cubic metre (µg/m)-13 per cent higher than Diwali peaks observed in both 2022 (when Diwali had occurred on October 24) and 2023 (on November 12)," it said. According to analysis, the PM2.5 was in the poor category during the afternoon of October 31. But the evening build-up peaked to hit the severe levels

during midnight, and stayed elevated until early morning next day. This time the dissipation has occurred quicker compared to previous years - not lasting as a smog episode (that is remaining elevated at severe level for at least three consecutive days). It came down to more moderate levels of 97 µg/m by noon. Interestingly, the daytime (6 AM to 4 PM) air pollution on Diwali day showed comparatively higher levels. The average PM2.5 concentration during the day was 92 per cent higher than last year's Diwali

daytime average that was affected by the deeper inversion conditions of the winter. This reflects high local and regional pollution aided by the sharp increase in the share of farm fires. The analysis further highlighted that there was a massive build-up of pollution in different parts of the city on Diwali night - hitting severe levels and increasing the peak exposure levels for a large section of the population. This year, 9 out of 38 air quality monitoring stations recorded PM2.5 concentrations exceeding the critical threshold of 900 µg/m on Diwali night. The highest levels were observed at Nehru Nagar, reaching 994 µg/m, followed closely by Anand Vihar at 992 µg/m, Pusa IMD at 985 µg/m, Wazirpur at 980 µg/m, and JLN Stadium at 963 µg/m. Other affected areas are Okhla, CRRIMathura Road, Karni Singh Stadium, Lodi Road, Siri Fort. According to analysis, there was sudden and sharp escalation in farm fire count on the day of Diwali and that combined with the change of wind direction to north westerly. This increased the share of its contribution to Delhi's air quality by 27 per cent.

Goodbye Gudda, your legacy lives on Rohit Bal was a storyteller, weaving his experiences and emotions into timeless garments

BY SAKSHI PRIYA

India's fashion world bid a heartfelt farewell to Rohit Bal, the visionary designer and cultural icon who transformed Indian couture with unmatched elegance, imagination and artistry. On Friday, the fashion industry mourned the loss of Bal, a legend whose work defined Indian fashion for over three decades. Affectionately called "Gudda" as in the fashion community, he passed away at 63, in Delhi after a prolonged illness, leaving behind a legacy that will resonate through generations. A true pioneer, Bal redefined Indian fashion with his bold yet refined approach. Renowned for his exquisite craftsmanship and meticulous attention to detail, he blended traditional Indian aesthetics with modern sensibilities. From designing costumes for the popular Indian game show 'Kaun Banega Crorepati' to creating breathtaking couture, Bal infused a sense of cultural poetry into each piece. His creations were more than garments, they were expressions of identity and creativity that made every wearer feel special. His passing marks a profound loss not only for the fashion world but also for countless admirers who were



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captivated by his ability to turn fabric into art. Bal's final show in October, titled 'Kaaynaat: A Bloom in the Universe', was a moving tribute to his creative spirit, celebrating the beauty of nature and cosmic wonder. Concluding Lakmé Fashion Week X FDCI with this enchanting finale felt like a poignant farewell from a designer who made elegance look effortless. Actress Ananya Pandey wore the showstopper outfit that embodied Bal's timeless, graceful vision. Each piece showcased that day was an example of his devotion to beauty, detail and imagination. It was a fitting close to a career dedicated to

redefining luxury in India. The Fashion Design Council of India (FDCI) honoured Bal with a heartfelt statement: "We mourn the passing of legendary designer Rohit Bal. As a founding member of the FDCI, his blend of traditional patterns and modern sensibilities redefined Indian fashion, inspiring generations. His legacy of artistry and innovation will endure. Rest in peace, Gudda - you are a legend." Bal's influence extended beyond the runway, celebrated for his gift of connecting with audiences and bringing his designs to life through stories. His work featured intricate embroideries and rich fabrics,

celebrating India's diverse heritage. In an industry often driven by fleeting trends, Bal's designs stood out for their timelessness and authenticity. More than just a designer, Bal was a storyteller, weaving his experiences and emotions into each creation. His passing serves as a reminder of life's fragility and the lasting power of true artistry. As India bids farewell to Rohit Bal, his creations, vision and spirit will continue to live on, ensuring his influence endures in every piece that tells his story. His legacy will inspire future generations of designers, honouring his extraordinary journey in the world of couture.

SPINNERS DO THEIR JOB WELL, TIME FOR BATTERS TO SALVAGE PRIDE

PTI ■ MUMBAI

Exploiting the spin-friendly conditions, Ravindra Jadeja and R Ashwin chiselled through the New Zealand batting line-up to bring India to a stage from where they can force a face-saving victory in the third Test which is now headed for an intriguing finish.

New Zealand ended day two at 171 for nine with an overall lead of 143, which might look small but even a target in the vicinity of 150 will pose serious challenge for the Indian batters, considering the fast deteriorating Wankhede track.

This was after half-centuries from Shubman Gill (90) and Rishabh Pant (60) and a crucial 38 not out from Washington Sundar gave India a slender 28-run lead as they put on board 263.

A total of 15 wickets fell on the second day, underlining the fact that life won't be easy for the hosts while batting fourth.

Ashwin (3/63) found his rhythm while Jadeja (4/52) added four more dismissals after his 5/65 in the first essay to keep India's hopes alive to avert a clean sweep at home for the first time.

Ajaz Patel (7) was at the crease when Jadeja cleaned up Matt Henry (10) for the penultimate wicket on the final ball on the second day.

Will Young's gutsy 51 was the only resistance from the Kiwis who succumbed to pressure, after Patel (5/103) recorded yet another five-wicket haul.

Having made a subdued impact so far, Ashwin's delight on getting Rachin Ravindra (4) stumped was evident as he beat the charge of the batter with bounce and turn.

With Glenn Phillips (26) using the long handle to a good effect, Ashwin cleaned up the New Zealand batter for another crucial breakthrough.

Young, who batted as solid as he did in the first innings, was Ashwin's third victim giving the bowler catching practice after being outfoxed on a carrom ball.

The 37-year-old Ashwin made impact beyond his bowling when he took an outstanding catch to end a stubborn 50-run association between Young and Daryl Mitchell (21), who, for a passage of play, threatened to take the game away.

Young and Mitchell had steadied the ship after New Zealand's top-order was blown away, but the latter's charge against Jadeja proved costly as he did not get the distance in his stroke.

From mid-off, Ashwin covered 19 metres running sideways to his left and put in a fabulous dive to complete the dismissal, post which New Zealand crumbled further.

Tom Blundell (4) chopped one onto his stumps off Jadeja while Ashwin cleaned up Phillips, who had switched to aggressive batting knowing New Zealand desperately needed more runs.

At the start of Kiwis' reply, Akash provided a rare sight of a pacer disturbing a batter's furniture on turning track when he dismantled



Tom Latham's (1) off and middle stumps in the first over. Earlier, India's progress suffered a severe blow with the exit of Pant towards the end of the morning session, as its effects were felt acutely when play resumed post lunch. From Pant's dismissal in the 38th over to India eventually folding in the 60th, the team managed eight fours and two sixes - the wicketkeeper-batter alone hit that many during his brisk half-century earlier. Patel, finding the right length, reaped rewards as the Kiwi spinner claimed another five-for at the Wankhede Stadium, following up his world record 10/119 in the first innings of the 2021 Test here.

where at times he has plundered runs for fun.

Sarfraz failed to read the length of his first ball and went for a mighty sweep against Patel in his pomp, but was beaten by the bounce and turn on the next.

He might have fallen on the third ball when it bounced off his glove but there was no silly point.

But he had to walk back when the bounce and turn had the ball settling in 'keeper Tom Blundell's gloves after kissing the shoulder of his bat.

Gill, who showed no flaws in his 146-ball stay with seven fours and a six - longest for any batter in this Test - was also among Patel's victims on the day as the Mumbai-origin Kiwi spinner had him caught at the first slip after a fine knock.

Jadeja (14) too was caught at first slip, albeit off Glenn Phillips, as Washington waged a lone battle among the three all-rounders scoring a brisk 36-ball 38 not out with four boundaries and two sixes.

Having ceded control to New Zealand in final minutes of the opening day's play with an embarrassing collapse, India showed better resolve to make a speedy recovery.

Pant's quickfire 60, laced with eight fours and two sixes, was instrumental in taking the advantage away from the Kiwis who were gifted three unexpected wickets by the Indians with batting mainstays Virat Kohli (4) and Yashasvi Jaiswal (30) committing harakiri.

Virat Kohli drops hints of staying with RCB till 2027

PTI ■ BENGALURU

Virat Kohli has dropped elaborate hints that he would like to continue playing competitive cricket till 2027 with an aim to complete 20 years with Royal Challengers Bengaluru after being retained by the franchise for a hefty fee of Rs 21 crore.

Having entered the twilight zone of his illustrious career, speculations are rife about how long the 36-year-old would continue in top flight cricket having endured a prolonged lull for the last four years since the start of COVID-19.

Kohli has been playing for RCB ever since IPL's inception in 2008 and is the leading run-scorer in the competition, amassing over 8,000 runs at a healthy if not spectacular strike rate of 131.97, including eight hundreds and 55 fifties.

"At the end of this cycle, it is going to be 20 years that I am going to be playing for RCB and that in itself is a very, very special feeling for me," Kohli told 'RCB Bold Diaries' indicating that he aims to continue for at least another three years till 2027.

"I have never thought that I am going to play so many years for one team, but the relationship has truly become special over so many years. He reiterated that he doesn't see himself playing for any other franchise.

"I don't see myself anywhere other than RCB, and I am very happy that it happened. I am very excited that I got a chance to create a strong new squad in this auction, something that we are really looking forward to as a franchise, as a team," Kohli said in RCB's Bold Diaries video.



He also pondered on the fact that he shared a close bond with the franchise and its fans, while his goal would be to win the elusive title.

"I am super excited as ever as everyone knows what RCB means to me. It's been a very, very special relationship over so many years, which continues to grow stronger, and what I have experienced playing for RCB is truly special. I hope that the fans and everyone who's connected to the franchise feel the same way," he continued.

"I am also just looking forward to this cycle. Obviously, the goal is to win the IPL title at least once in the next cycle."

He promised that RCB will leave no stone unturned to win their elusive IPL title.

"We are going to give it our best shot as always and try to make everyone proud of the way we play our cricket. A big shout out to the fans for your unwavering support over so many years. I am really grateful, really thankful," Kohli concluded.

KOHLI WILL BE A KEY TO RCB'S SUCCESS; ANDY FLOWER: Meanwhile,

Zverev beats Tsitsipas and joined by Rune, Humbert, Khachanov in Paris Masters semis

AP ■ PARIS

Alexander Zverev advanced to the semifinals of the Paris Masters by beating Stefanos Tsitsipas 7-5, 6-4 and knocking the Greek player out of contention for the ATP Finals.

The third-seeded German saved the only break point he faced.

Zverev, the French Open runner-up, next faces 2022 champion Holger Rune for a shot at the title. He's into his third Paris semifinals in the past four years, though he's never won the hard-court tournament.

The first break point opportunity came in the 11th game as Tsitsipas struggled with his first serve. Zverev got the break for 6-5 on an unforced error.

Tsitsipas then saved two set points but squandered his only break point chance with his 17th unforced error before Zverev



closed out the set.

Zverev broke again in the third game of the second set to take full control. He rattled off 12 straight points in his final three service games.

With the victory, Zverev became the first player born in the 1990s to record 100 wins over top-20 players. Daniil Medvedev is on 99.

The 10th-seeded Tsitsipas, who reached the ATP Finals for five consecutive years,

had 28 unforced errors to 18 winners.

Rune outlasted Alex de Minaur 6-4, 4-6, 7-5 in a 2 1/2-hour baseline fight. Rune improved to 3-2 against the Australian.

Grigor Dimitrov's hopes of making the ATP Finals were set back after the 2023 finalist was upset by 2018 champion Karen Khachanov 6-2, 6-3 for the first time. Khachanov lost their four previous matches.

Dimitrov was 10th in the race to the top-eight ATP Finals in Turin.

Khachanov improved to 12-1 in the last three weeks after winning the Almaty title and reaching the Vienna final.

He'll face in the semifinals local hope Ugo Humbert, who defeated Jordan Thompson of Australia 6-2, 7-6 (4) a day after stunning Carlos Alcaraz.

Humbert has reached his first Masters semifinal, and he's the first Frenchman to go this far in Paris in seven years.

Two-time Olympic medallist Lily Owsley signs for Delhi SG Pipers

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Delhi SG Pipers on Saturday announced the acquisition of England's woman hockey midfielder and superstar Lily Owsley for the upcoming season of Hockey India League (HIL). The 29-year-old two-time Olympic medallist will be replacing 28-year-old Dutch midfielder Xan de Waard following her pull-out from HIL this season due to personal reasons.

Owsley is one of the most highly decorated players in English hockey, having won the gold medal at the Rio Olympics 2016, followed by the bronze in Tokyo 2020.

Besides, she also won the gold and silver at the Commonwealth Games in Birmingham 2022 and Glasgow 2014, respectively.

Owsley also clinched two European Championship medals - gold in London 2015 and bronze in Amstelveen 2017.

"Losing Xan de Waard, undoubtedly one of the best players in the world, is a setback for the team. But, being able to replace her with a 2-time Olympic medal winner, Lily Owsley, is a big relief," said Delhi SG Pipers women's team coach Dave Smolenaars in a statement.

"She will bring in her experience, leadership and high-speed play to help the team reach its potential."

It will be the inaugural edition of the Women's HIL, slated to get underway on December 28, comprising four teams, with the other three sides being Odisha Warriors, Rarh Bengal Tigers and Soorma Hockey Club. The tournament final takes place in Ranchi on February 1 next year.

F1 braces for more Verstappen-Norris drama and Hamilton to drive Senna's car

AP ■ SAO PAULO

Max Verstappen suggests he won't change his aggressive driving this weekend at the Brazilian Grand Prix as he bids for a fourth successive Formula 1 title.

Lando Norris needs a win at Interlagos in Sao Paulo to maintain any realistic title hopes.

New elements could spice up the clash between the drivers, who have received penalties in the past two races in Austin, Texas and Mexico for their boldness on the track.

Interlagos has a new tarmac, rain is expected all weekend, and Verstappen received a five-place penalty on the grid after he and Red Bull decided to use a new engine.

Friday's free practice was not a good omen for Verstappen; he finished 15th, more than one second behind Norris, who clocked the best lap in his McLaren. Ferrari's Charles Leclerc, who also has a shot at the title, was sixth.

The sprint race qualifier in the afternoon was better for

Verstappen; he was fourth but almost one second behind leader and Norris teammate Oscar Piastri. Norris was second.

Saturday will feature the penultimate sprint race of the season and a tribute to three-time world champion Ayrton Senna, who died 30 years ago. Seven-time F1 champion Lewis Hamilton will drive a McLaren once steered by Senna in front of 60,000 fans.

Norris closed the gap on Verstappen to 47 points in Mexico after a furious encounter that caused penalties to the Dutchman amounting to 20 seconds. The British driver was penalized in the previous race at the U.S. Grand Prix as he battled the defending champion.

Leclerc, 70 points behind Verstappen, told media on Thursday he was not expecting a leading performance by his team this weekend.

The Monegasque driver also had to face the stewards in Brazil for swearing in a press conference after

the Mexican GP last weekend. He was fined 10,000 euros (almost \$11,000), of which half is suspended as long as there is no further breach of a similar nature within the next 12 months.

"During the hearing Leclerc expressed his regret for his momentary lack of judgment and shared that he understood his responsibility as a role model for the sport," the stewards' decision said.

Verstappen was punished with one day of community service for the same reason during the Singapore GP.

CHALLENGES FOR VERSTAPPEN AND MCLAREN: Verstappen said in Mexico that F1 has become over-policed. Upon his arrival in Brazil, he said he didn't care about critics of his aggressive driving. Though he and Norris claim to have a respectful relationship, another showdown is expected between the two in Sunday's race. The McLarens are expected to have the upper hand.

Verstappen has won twice at the 84-



year-old Interlagos circuit, including last year, when Norris finished second.

Verstappen's last victory was 10 races ago in Spain in June, after a period of seven wins in the first 10 races.

"We want to do well, but of course it also needs to be possible. We still

have a good lead," Verstappen said. "I just try to enjoy the moment, try to just always optimize the performance."

The earliest the title could be won by Verstappen is in Las Vegas on Nov. 24. For Norris to have a chance, he will likely have to take the title fight to the December finale

in Abu Dhabi.

Norris' bid is a tough one, and McLaren has a better chance of dethroning Red Bull in the constructors' championship. Ferrari jumped ahead of Red Bull to second in the standings after Carlos Sainz Jr's win in Mexico.

Red Bull, which has won the last two constructors' titles, is third.

Another challenge for drivers at Interlagos is the new asphalt. McLaren's Piastri was not excited about it on the first day of practice.

"I think everybody was thrown off a bit by just how bumpy the track was," Piastri said.

HAMILTON HONORS SENNA: For the second time in his life, Mercedes' Hamilton will be on board a McLaren once driven by Senna, who died in 1994 after crashing during the San Marino GP. Hamilton will steer Senna's title-winning MP4/5B after Saturday's sprint race. Weeks ago, Honda and McLaren said they would bring the car that allowed the Brazilian to clinch the 1990 drivers' championship.

During his time at McLaren, Hamilton drove Senna's MP4/4 car around Silverstone in 2009 for a British TV program.

"It will be an emotional experience," Hamilton said in Sao Paulo. He arrived at Interlagos for Thursday's media day wearing a shirt that read "rest in peace, Ayrton Senna" and pants in the color of the Brazilian flag. "Every time we come here it's an opportunity to do that (honor Senna), and I think so many of the drivers also do that," Hamilton said. "But I never in a million years thought I'd ever get to drive Senna's car here."

Not everyone was excited about Hamilton driving Senna's car. "We have a lot of love for Hamilton, but he will be racing anyway," former driver Rubens Barrichello told TV Band. "I have Interlagos in my heart. The thing is, I think it should be a Brazilian driver."

Senna won six races in the season he drove the car that Hamilton will steer around Interlagos.



CHASING REFLECTIONS A COUTURE DREAM

Sara Ali Khan lit up the runway as the showstopper for *Abhinav Mishra's* latest collection, 'The Man in the Mirror'. Drawing inspiration from Rajasthan's *Kalbeliya* dance, the collection showcased vibrant colours, intricate mirror-work, and elegant silhouettes, says **SAKSHI PRIYA**

The runway lights illuminated the venue and as the audience held their breath, the showstopper Sara Ali Khan emerged, radiating elegance and confidence. Dressed in a breathtaking ensemble from *Abhinav Mishra's* latest collection, she set the tone for a night that celebrated not just fashion but a rich blend of Indian culture. Her stunning ensemble featured delicate floral motifs beautifully embellished with mirrors, sequins and crystals, adding a touch of opulence to the muted tones. The regal silhouette flowed gracefully while maintaining a refined structure, with each detail thoughtfully executed to create a harmonious blend of artistry and sophistication. Couture Runway Showcase, titled "The Man in the Mirror," was a stunning ode to the craftsmanship of mirror-work, which has become a hallmark of his designs. This year, the collection arrived just in time for the festive season, captivating guests with its vibrant celebration of weddings and cultural traditions. A standout segment of the collection was 'Kalbeliya,' inspired by the folk dance of the same name, deeply rooted in Rajasthani culture. Each piece drew from the Kalbeliya tribe's distinctive style, showcasing colourful motifs and intricate patterns that reflect their nomadic heritage. This

segment was not only a visual delight but also a tribute to the artistry that often goes overlooked in modern fashion. *Mishra's* designs in 'Kalbeliya' captured the essence of the tribe, incorporating a palette of bold colours like black and ivory, paired with unexpected combinations found in traditional attire. Each ensemble was meticulously handcrafted, adorned with floral motifs, geometric patterns and an array of embellishments, including pearls, sequins and his signature mirrors. The luxurious fabrics, silks, soft wool, and sheer materials flowed beautifully, ensuring that every piece felt ethereal and festive. Silhouettes varied from traditional lehengas and anarkalis to contemporary kaftans, providing something for every wedding function. The blouses featured daring necklines and chic short kurtas, while the kaftans introduced a modern twist to the classic designs. This fusion of styles ensured that the collection appealed to a wide audience, from brides to modern women seeking elegance. In addition to bridal wear, *Mishra's* collection highlighted the versatility of mirror-work across both menswear and womenswear. The show reflected his commitment to reviving this ancient craft while seamlessly blending it with contemporary aesthetics.



EACH ENSEMBLE WAS METICULOUSLY HANDCRAFTED, ADORNED WITH FLORAL MOTIFS, GEOMETRIC PATTERNS AND AN ARRAY OF EMBELLISHMENTS, INCLUDING PEARLS, SEQUINS AND HIS SIGNATURE MIRRORS. THE LUXURIOUS FABRICS, SILKS, SOFT WOOL, AND SHEER MATERIALS FLOWED BEAUTIFULLY, ENSURING THAT EVERY PIECE FELT ETHEREAL AND FESTIVE

Reflecting on the significance of the event, *Mishra* expressed his excitement: "I'm thrilled to present 'The Man in the Mirror,' a personal presentation that invites you into my imaginative world, where the craft of mirror-work takes centre stage. This showcase is a serene, star-lit wonderland blending tradition and modernity." The atmosphere was enhanced by exquisite jewellery from *The House of Rambhajos*, known for its stunning polki and diamond pieces. The décor, envisioned by Rani Pink, transformed the venue into a mesmerising oasis, reminiscent of a desert under a starlit sky. As the final looks hit the runway, *Abhinav Mishra's* "The Man in the Mirror" revealed itself as more than just a collection; it was a nod to the rich stories and traditions of Indian couture. The show captivated the audience with its emphasis on the beauty of mirror work and the importance of preserving heritage crafts in modern fashion. With his blend of classic and contemporary elements, *Mishra* once again proved why he's a standout in couture, ensuring that Indian craftsmanship continues to shine worldwide.



Photos: Pankaj Kumar

NEW OFFERINGS



THE WRITTEN CANVAS

Art Konsult presents "The Written Canvas: Letters to Keshav Malik from Artists and Thinkers," an exhibition honoring the birth centenary of acclaimed art critic and poet Keshav Malik. This rare collection of letters, featuring correspondences with cultural icons like Harivansh Rai Bachchan, Krishen Khanna and F.N. Souza reveals Malik's profound influence on Indian art and thought. Dive into the timeless art of letter-writing and experience the cultural dialogues that shaped India's artistic heritage.

EVENT DETAILS

Venue: Annexe Art Gallery, India International Centre, New Delhi

Dates: November 4 - November 9

Timings: 11:00 a.m. - 7:00 p.m.

REDISCOVER AUTHENTIC CHINESE FLAVOURS

Radisson Blu MBD Hotel Noida is thrilled to introduce an all-new menu at RED (Rare Eastern Dining), offering an authentic journey into the world of Chinese cuisine. Curated by Executive Chef Sachin Malik and Master Chef Ghanshyam Thapa, the menu presents a range of dishes from delicate dim sums to bold Sichuan flavours and creative reinterpretations of classic recipes. Standouts include Truffle Edamame, Exotic Green Vegetables with Liqueurice, and Sichuan specialties like Mapo Tofu and Braised Aubergine with Peppercorn. Enjoy these dishes with cocktails inspired by Chinese heritage, including the Dragon on the Sky and Junshan Island Sundowner.

DETAILS

Venue: RED, Radisson Blu MBD Hotel Noida

Timings: 7:00 - 11:30 PM

Price for Two: Rs 4500 (plus taxes)

For reservations: 858590779



FACES OF RESILIENCE

Faces in my Window by Nelofer Currimbhoy, at the Open Palm Court Gallery, Habitat Centre, captures the resilience and spirit of those often overlooked. With each photo, Currimbhoy's lens brings viewers face-to-face with the untold stories of survival on the streets of Delhi. An entrepreneur, author and photographer, Currimbhoy's work extends beyond photography. Her docu-stories, like Ratni's Red Lipstick, highlight lives of perseverance, reflecting her passion for capturing human resilience. Influenced by Gandhi and Mother Teresa, her art is both an homage to her subjects and a call for empathy. Step into Faces in my Window for a poignant glimpse into lives that often go unseen.



EVENT DETAILS

Exhibition Open Till: November 5, 2024

Venue: Open Palm Court Gallery, Habitat Centre, New Delhi

LONELY PLANET A FAILED ROMANTIC DELIVERY

A lacklustre narrative undermines *Lonely Planet's* visual appeal, writes **ABHI SINGHAL**

Shot with landscapes around Morocco giving a beautiful backdrop, *Lonely Planet* is an addition to the old woman young man romantics list. The film is an American Netflix romantic drama directed by *Susannah Grant*. The movie stars *Laura Dern* as *Katherine Loewe* and *Liam Hemsworth* as *Owen Brophy*. The film plots around a writer, *Laura Dern* and explores her romantic angle with *Owen Brophy* after they meet on a retreat of writers. *Laura Dern* as *Katherine Loewe* has been shown as a successful female novelist who comes on a writers retreat to overcome a struggling love life due to a separation from her longtime partner. *Liam Hemsworth* as *Owen Brophy* comes on the same retreat with her girlfriend *Lily Kemp* (played by *Diana Silvers*), whose first novel becomes a best seller. Changing attitude of *Lily Kemp* on the retreat creates a rift between her and her boyfriend *Owen Brophy*, after which *Owen finds* himself attracted towards *Katherine Loewe* after meeting her closely in some sudden circumstances.

The story explores an understanding romance between *Laura* and *Liam*. The story tries to emphasise on the importance and need of having an understanding partner with whom you can feel light and help you grow, but doesn't fall up to the point. Talking about the characters the cast seems to have overplayed their



part due to the weak plot. *Owen* doesn't have deep talks with his love interest, which is the want of the movie. *Laura's* character has been too into herself killing the expectations of what the audience really wants. *Lily Kemp's* character feels like a character played without an effort. *Lonely Planet* fails to deliver the truly wanting script because of its weak plot. It tries to land up to a space of the fantasy world where

the guy meets the woman and they fall in love, with all the butterflies which is actually not the demand of the film. The film's pacing is uneven, with certain scenes dragging while others feel rushed. The ending doesn't compliment the story at all and becomes too flat. The movie can be too boring for the people who love the romantic genre as it doesn't live up to the standards. The 96 minutes drama has been failing

to deliver a desired thoughtful romance being a romantic genre. Summarising, *Lonely Planet* is a missed opportunity. It has the potential to be a poignant and thought-provoking exploration of love and loss, but it settles for a generic and formulaic approach. While the stunning Moroccan landscapes are a visual treat, the film's lackluster script and characters ultimately leave a lot to be desired. **Rating - 2.5/5**

"Nothing is easy in cricket. Maybe when you watch it on TV, it looks easy. But it is not. You have to use your brain and time the ball"
— Rohit Sharma



SHAMI FINISHED THE **ICC CRICKET WORLD CUP 2023** AS THE TOURNAMENT'S LEADING WICKET-TAKER, WITH AN IMPRESSIVE **24 WICKETS** ACROSS SEVEN MATCHES. HIS REMARKABLE PERFORMANCES INCLUDED **THREE FIVE-WICKET HAULS** AND A **FOUR-WICKET HAUL**, HIGHLIGHTED BY A **CAREER-BEST 7/57** AGAINST NEW ZEALAND IN THE SEMI-FINALS

Mohammad Shami has been pushing the boundaries of pace and redefining the role of fast bowlers. His comeback adds depth to India's bowling attack, and his journey inspires the youngsters writes GYANESHWAR DAYAL

THE COMEBACK MIAN

After nearly a year away from the field, 34-year-old Indian pacer Mohammad Shami is set to make his highly anticipated comeback. Having missed out due to an ankle injury that sidelined him since November last year, Shami has been seen practicing hard on the main pitch at the M Chinnaswamy Stadium in Bengaluru, following the first Test between India and New Zealand. With a five-Test tour of Australia approaching this November, fans are eagerly awaiting the return of one of India's most formidable fast bowlers.

After a year-long hiatus, Mohammad Shami, India's lethal pace bowler, has returned to international cricket with renewed vigour, reminding fans of his remarkable skill and unyielding determination. Shami's journey back to the pitch is not just a testament to his resilience, but also an inspiring comeback story that showcases his unwavering commitment to the game. With career-defining spells and an uncanny knack for turning games in India's favor, Shami's return has once again fortified the Indian bowling lineup.

In 2023, Shami delivered an outstanding season, claiming 56 wickets in 27 innings and earning the prestigious Purple Cap in the IPL. He finished the ICC Cricket World Cup 2023 as the tournament's leading wicket-taker, with an impressive 24 wickets across seven matches. His remarkable performances included three five-wicket hauls and a four-wicket haul, highlighted by a career-best 7/57 against New Zealand in the semi-finals.

Despite battling a persistent heel issue, Shami's dedication to cricket was unwavering, playing a crucial role in India's World Cup journey. Since India's defeat to Australia in the ODI World Cup final in November 2023, Shami has been sidelined. He was initially selected for India's two-Test series in South Africa in December 2023, but fitness concerns prevented his participation. In January 2024, Shami travelled to London for specialized injections to treat his ankle. Following this treatment, he was advised to gradually resume physical activity. Unfortunately, the injections did not bring the desired relief, leading to surgery on his Achilles tendon. Following a prolonged break due to injuries and personal challenges, Shami's return has been nothing short of extraordinary, proving that his time away from the game did little to diminish his prowess. "Every comeback has its own set of challenges but cricket has always been my calling. Being on the field and playing for the country puts me on cloud nine", Says Shami. Known for his high-velocity deliveries and pinpoint accuracy,



Shami has remained dedicated to refining his craft, training rigorously to ensure his return was one for the books. His work with renowned trainers and sports psychologists was instrumental in fortifying both his physical and mental resilience, setting the stage for a triumphant return to the Indian squad.

Returning from a prolonged injury is always a test of resilience, particularly for a cricketer under the global lens. The mental challenges of injury can be as tough as the physical ones, with constant scrutiny adding to the pressure. Shami's journey reflects the dedication required to overcome these obstacles, as he not only returns to the sport but does so with a renewed sense of self-belief.

Comeback after an injury is not easy, the biggest setback is psychological apart from the physical challenge. And if it extends for a year the challenge is immense. "I had one resolve to be back on the field and play for the country. And if the goal is clear God gives you resilience and courage to withstand the storm. I practiced and maintained my poise and worked on my game and fitness and my overall wellbeing." Says Shami with a smile.

Shami's transformation has not been limited to his athletic pursuits. In addition to his rehabilitation, he recently underwent a hair transplant as his hairline had thinned. Now when he will be back on the field he would be sporting the look of a younger man with flowing hair. "Indeed it was his perseverance and health regime that the results were better than we expected," says Dr Arika Bansal, at Eugenix Hair Sciences Shami's choice of Eugenix highlights the clinic's reputation for delivering outstanding hair restoration results. Dr. Pradeep Bansal also expresses his gratification working with Shami, calling it "an honour to serve an eminent cricketer who exemplifies resilience." Indeed, the results have not only enhanced Shami's appearance but also reignited his confidence, adding a renewed energy to his presence on and off the field.

Mohammed Shami's home ground is Eden Gardens in Kolkata, where he made his Test debut against the West Indies in 2013. Shami has always had a special connection with India's cricketing venues, with the Eden Gardens, his home ground in Kolkata being particularly close to his heart. He considers the iconic stadium to be his lucky ground, where he has delivered several memorable performances. "Eden Gardens has a special vibe; the crowd and atmosphere push you to go that extra mile. There's no place quite like it." He quips. Shami has now earned a name for him as a right-arm fast-medium bowler. He's known for his ability to swing the ball at pace, and for his reverse swing. He hails from Amroha, Uttar Pradesh. Shami was a mainstay in India's T20 World Cup teams in 2021 and 2022. In the 2023 World Cup, he was India's highest wicket-taker.

The Uttar Pradesh government is building a mini-stadium and gymnasium in Shami's village, Sahaspur Alinagar, to honor him. The stadium will be built on one hectare of land and will also include an open gym and race track. Shami's journey has been marked by significant challenges, both on and off the field. Despite setbacks, he has shown a profound level of mental toughness, using the time off to focus on his inner resilience. He once remarked, "The game of cricket teaches you a lot about life. It's a test of patience, hard work, and mental strength." His perspective has evolved to not only focus on physical fitness but also to prioritize mental well-being, which has been a key element in his recent comeback. When asked who he finds the hardest batsman to ball, he simply smiles and replies, "No one!"

Shami's return has not only bolstered India's pace attack but has also brought in a seasoned leader for the younger bowlers. His experience and ability to read the game are assets that elevate the team's overall performance. Known for his tactical approach, Shami's presence is invaluable, particularly in high-stakes matches, where his sharp instincts and seasoned techniques shine.

As Shami steps back into the limelight, his journey stands as a testament to grit and resilience. The Indian cricket fraternity and millions of fans eagerly watch as he once again takes to the pitch, embodying the spirit of Indian cricket at its finest.

Photo: Pankaj Kumar



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

WYNN MACAU DEBUTS DRUNKEN FISH

DINING REDEFINED!



Avibrant tribute to Chinese culture, Drunken Fish at Wynn Macau, led by Executive Chef Henry Zhang, redefines luxury dining by marrying tradition with contemporary flair. Chef Zhang's innovative approach spotlights the ocean's rarest treasures, enhanced with China's revered national liquor, Moutai, creating an exceptional culinary experience.

In Chinese mythology, the creature Kun lives in deep, shadowed waters, where light barely reaches its vast form. Rising to the ocean's surface, Kun morphs into Peng, a radiant bird soaring to lofty altitudes and casting its expansive shadow below. Symbolising transformation and boundless ambition, this legend mirrors human potential, urging us to transcend limitations. Inspired by this myth, Wynn Macau presents its latest venture, Drunken Fish, or 'Jiu Kun,' under Zhang's expert vision. This dining experience showcases a lavish seafood spread featuring prized ingredients such as French blue lobsters, Sri Lankan crabs, and

Malaysia's famed 'king of river fish,' all crafted using traditional Chinese techniques with modern twists. "Our philosophy respects tradition while embracing innovation," Zhang affirms.

EXCEPTIONAL SEAFOOD, ARTFULLY CRAFTED

Drunken Fish employs an array of traditional Chinese techniques that amplify the natural flavours and nutrients of the seafood. Steaming preserves freshness, while stir-frying ensures a delightful texture, and braising and poaching add layers of aromatic richness. The restaurant offers a wide range of preparations, inviting guests to explore local and global flavours, including spicy Sichuan, Hong Kong-style, and a fusion of Singaporean, Thai, and Japanese influences. This diverse approach results in a stunning variety of dishes designed to satisfy every palate.

Cooking with Moutai is an exhilarating process that demands balance to enhance rather than overpower a dish's flavour. At Drunken Fish, this unique liquor is used in two signature offerings, demonstrating the culinary finesse required to incorporate Moutai's distinct, pungent essence without it overshadowing the seafood's natural taste.

SAVOUR THE EXPERIENCE

A highlight of the menu is the Moutai flambe' crispy chicken, a dish that harmonises tradition with innovation. The crispy skin and tender meat, infused with the distinct flavour of Moutai, create an unforgettable taste experience. Another standout is the red-spotted grouper with pickled tomato, chili, and bean sprouts—a nod to the traditional sour soup of the Miao and Dong ethnic groups of Guizhou, where the liquor subtly enhances the fish's freshness. Additionally, the empurau, a rare Malaysian fish steamed in soy sauce using Cantonese methods,

presents a remarkable delicacy, available only in select seasons and prized for its exquisite taste.



Drunken Fish at Wynn Macau offers a captivating dining experience that celebrates traditional Chinese flavours while embracing innovative culinary techniques. The warm and welcoming setting, accentuated by custom hand-bent aquariums and a chic turquoise Moutai bar, creates an ideal atmosphere for seafood lovers. With a menu that skillfully blends familiar and daring dishes, each visit promises a memorable journey for the senses. Interactive auctions of fresh seafood and exclusive liquors on weekend evenings add to the allure, ensuring each dining experience is as engaging as it is delectable.

(Awarded the "Best Food Writer in the Country" by the Indian Culinary Forum, WACS, and the Ministry of Tourism, Rupali Dean writes on food and travel.)

Wynn Macau's Drunken Fish redefines Chinese dining with bold seafood creations and Moutai-infused dishes crafted by Executive Chef Henry Zhang, writes RUPALI DEAN



Oktoberfest on a Platter

This Oktoberfest season, Smoke House Deli, in collaboration with United Breweries, brings a month-long celebration featuring a host of special culinary delights

BY SHARMILA CHAND

Our Oktoberfest menu captures the essence of the celebration through bold, vibrant flavours thoughtfully crafted to elevate the beer experience," says Chef Shamsul Wahid, Group Executive Chef, Impresario Entertainment & Hospitality Pvt Ltd. "We've curated a unique selection, including Pizza Dogs, Panuzzos, and Tramezzas, blending tradition with modern innovation. It's a menu designed to surprise and delight, offering a fresh, exciting take on Oktoberfest while staying true to the festive spirit," he adds.

SPECIAL MENU

The well-crafted menu offers a variety of small plates, hearty mains and indulgent desserts, all crafted to pair perfectly with your favourite brews. There's a selection of Pizza Dogs, Panuzzos, and Tramezzas, alongside other delectable dishes. It's more than just a meal—it's a festive feast in true Smoke House Deli fashion, where great food meets great beer for a celebration you won't forget. Start your feast with a delicious selection of Pizza Dogs, each offering a unique twist on a classic favourite. Try the Plant-Based Sausage Dog, topped with mozzarella and tomato. For a smoky kick, the Smokin' Chicken Frank is loaded with ketchup, mustard, citrus chilli, and gherkin relish. Meat lovers won't want to miss the Bolognese Dream Dog, featuring a chicken frank and bold paprika for an unforgettable flavour.

Next, indulge in Panuzzos—a lineup of hearty sandwiches that bring bold flavours and fresh ingredients to the table. Enjoy the Mediterranean, packed with nutty hummus, grilled vegetables, and finished with tahina, or the Classic Caprese, featuring tomato, mozzarella, herby basil, and

black pepper. For something a bit more savoury, try the Chicken Balsamico with balsamic chicken, tomato, onion, and fresh greens, or the A-BLT, with crispy bacon, lettuce, avocado, and tomato for a satisfying crunch. Tramezzas truly pack a punch of flavour in every bite, perfect for those who crave a satisfying yet balanced meal.

Do not miss the Truffle Shuffle, a decadent mix of brie and truffle oil tossed with oyster, shiitake, and button mushrooms. For a more comforting option, the Deli Roast brings together roast chicken with hollandaise and caramelised onions. If you're craving something richer, try the BLT Molten Brie, combining bacon, brie, tomato, and lettuce, or go for the crispy, creamy combination of

The Pollo Frito, featuring fried chicken and a creamy egg salad. For a heartier choice, the Shroom Smash blends a tenderloin patty with grilled mushrooms for a deliciously savoury experience. And of course, no Oktoberfest is complete without beer! Pair these delicious dishes with a variety of beers from United Breweries, available in buckets of 4 and 8, specially selected to enhance your dining experience and bring the festive spirit to life.

SIGNATURE VEG DISHES

- Plant Power Frank (Pizza Dog) – Italian-style hot dogs served with French Fries (Plant-based sausage, mozzarella and tomato).
- Classic Caprese (Panuzzo) – Crispy, stuffed turnover pizza sandwiches served with French Fries (Tomato, fresh mozzarella, basil, EVOO & ground black pepper).
- Truffle Shuffle (Tramezza) –



Folded pizza sandwiches served with French Fries (Brie, truffle oil tossed oyster, shiitake & button mushrooms).

NON-VEG DISHES

- Bolognese Dream Dog (Pizza Dog) – Italian-style hot dogs served with French Fries (Minced mutton bolognese, chicken frank and paprika).

- Chicken Balsamico (Panuzzo) – Crispy, stuffed turnover pizza sandwiches served with French Fries (Creamy, diced balsamic chicken, tomato, onion & fresh greens).
- The Shroom Smash (Tramezza) – Folded pizza sandwiches served with French Fries (Smashed tenderloin patty & grilled mushroom).

SIGNATURE COCKTAILS

- Peach House – Bitter Ginger Roku Gin, Peach Schnapps & Ginger Beer.
- Nobel Nectar – Hendrick's Gin with Fresh Cucumber Juice & Elderflower Tonic.
- Gimlet Di Basilico – Roku Gin, Limoncello, Basil Oil & Shiso Leaf.

COMFORT MEETS SOPHISTICATION

Smoke House Deli is renowned for its contemporary culinary experience, offering guests comfort food in a casual and relaxed ambience. The menu is curated using locally sourced ingredients, elevating familiar dishes into gastronomic masterpieces. Smoke House Deli is celebrated for its diverse range of modern European cuisine, featuring exceptional grills, artisanal pizzas, exquisite charcuterie, fine spirits, delectable bakes, sumptuous desserts, and a variety of pastas. Each outlet reflects a Deli-style architecture, telling the tales of the unique history and landmarks of its locale, adorned with whimsical décor, creating the perfect setting for memorable dining experiences. It's an ideal destination for a family meal, a romantic date, or a catch-up with friends, offering a versatile and inviting atmosphere for any occasion.

"For over a decade, Smoke House Deli has evolved from a café into a cherished classic, known for its beautifully crafted food and memorable experiences," says Chef Shamsul. "At the core of our ethos is a deep commitment to serving comfort food made from ethically sourced, wholesome ingredients. What truly sets us apart is the attention to detail—whether it's sourcing organic produce from local farms or handcrafting every dish with care. Our whimsical décor, combined with novel offerings and a thoughtfully curated, ever-changing menu, strikes the perfect balance between indulgence and mindful eating. This creates a warm, inviting space that has been cherished by our guests for years."

Sharmila Chand is an author, columnist, and journalist who writes on Food, Travel, Culture, and Lifestyle.



Vegan Wonders: Where to Eat Next!

BY TEAM AGENDA

MISS MARGARITA

Miss Margarita features a newly launched menu with a dedicated section for vegetarian and vegan dishes, showcasing its commitment to inclusive dining. Highlights include Classic Guac 'N' Chips with fresh guacamole, Avocado Agua Chile, Charred Sweet Potato & Crispy Cauliflower Tacos, and Stuffed Chilli and Chipotle Potato Skewers, all designed to please plant-based diners.

BEEYOUNG BREWGARDEN

BeeYoung Brewgarden offers an exciting range of vegan cocktails that emphasise innovative drinking options. Signature drinks include Hearts on Fire, Pulp Fiction, and Nutta Sour, along with unique choices like Trufflesome and To Beer, or Not to Beer. These cocktails reflect the venue's dedication to flavourful, inclusive beverages.

ROSE CAFE

Located in Malviya Nagar, Rose Cafe is known for its extensive vegan menu featuring hearty soups, fresh salads, and delicious pastas and pizzas. Diners can enjoy options like Roasted Tomato & Basil soup, Big Greek salad, and Aubergine Parmigiana, all within a cosy atmosphere that makes it a must-visit for vegans.

GUPPY AND THE GRAMMAR ROOM

Guppy and The Grammar Room are celebrated for their creative vegan offerings, focusing on fresh, seasonal ingredients. These restaurants provide inviting spaces for diners to enjoy delightful plant-based meals that highlight vibrant flavours and sustainability.

LIVING IT UP IN AN AIRBNB IN LONDON

When planning my trip to London, selecting the perfect Airbnb was crucial. I focused on vibrant neighbourhoods, safety and charming details to ensure an unforgettable experience in this bustling city

BY AKANKSHA DEAN

RELYING ON AIRBNB

For my travels, I have relied on Airbnb with unwavering confidence. Whether transitioning between flat shares or advising friends, it remains my top choice. The perks include local insights, a genuine neighbourhood experience, and costs often lower than hotels but far superior to hostels. While some listings require minimum stays, and occasionally hosts can be problematic, the advantages far outweigh the drawbacks. Thus, I enthusiastically recommend London Airbnbs.

SELECTING THE NEIGHBOURHOOD

When selecting my Airbnb in London, the area was my first consideration. If you have a specific itinerary in mind, staying nearby is a no-brainer. Each neighbourhood in London feels like its own city, so I explored options that sparked my excitement. For a taste of the hipster scene, Hackney, Brixton, and Shoreditch were perfect choices. For luxury, Westminster, Soho, Fitzrovia, or Kensington beckoned, while Hampstead, Islington, and Greenwich offered a cosy, local vibe. These insights gave me a clearer picture of what each neighbourhood had to offer.

I opted for a two-bedroom flat in Marylebone. Nestled between Hyde Park and Regent's Park, this area embodies serene sophistication in London's heart. Its upscale charm provided easy access to Mayfair, Westminster, and The City, as well as the captivating shopping, dining, and majestic architecture of the iconic West End. It's truly a refined oasis amidst the bustle. My Airbnb was within walking distance of Marylebone Station, Tesco, and a couple of delightful restaurants, including one that served amazing Vietnamese food and another renowned for its Fish and Chips.

DETAILS MATTER

When considering my stay, I focused on price points, assessing my overall budget and daily accommodation expenses. In London, Airbnbs typically range from £30 for a private room to £80-£100 for an entire unit. Prices climb as you approach Central London. I always seek discounts for first-time stays, ensure my flat has a kitchen to save on meals, and choose a location within walking distance of must-see sites. This time, the Airbnb I liked was



roughly £300 over my budget for the entire stay. I messaged the host on the app, and they kindly waived the extra cost. While it may not be paramount for everyone, the details matter when finding the perfect Airbnb in London. I prioritise essentials like Wi-Fi, a washing machine, a tea kettle, microwave, toaster, hairdryer, lift, and air conditioning. I also appreciate visually appealing rooms, often with a splash of colour or, if I'm fortunate, a lovely view. This time, I enjoyed a spacious terrace adjacent to the living room, offering beautiful views and sunlight.

SUPERHOST FOR THE WIN

When browsing for an Airbnb, I always make it a point to delve into the reviews. No matter how visually appealing a property might be, a poor host can mar the entire experience. I pay particular attention to feedback from other women, as safety is my foremost concern when selecting accommodations. While security measures are in place, one can never be too cautious. If I encounter a single negative review over something trivial, I typically brush it off. However, if there are multiple red flags, it's wise to take your hard-earned pounds elsewhere. I personally favour the "Superhost" option. These hosts often come with glowing reviews and little extras that enhance the stay dramatically. Though some might say it's controversial, I recommend booking your London



Airbnb well in advance — falling in love with a place only to discover it's fully booked is disheartening. Once you find an Airbnb that fits your budget and has good reviews, seize the opportunity and don't look back. After finalising my travel plans, I saved two or three potential Airbnb options. I compared them and made my booking a month in advance. Exploring London was the true highlight of my trip. Visiting London without indulging in afternoon tea is akin to going to Paris and skipping the Eiffel Tower.



LONDON EXPERIENCES

My tea experience began at Sketch, nestled in a stunning 18th-century building in Mayfair. I was enchanted by the restaurant's signature pink dining room, adorned with whimsical artwork by David Shrigley. By night, this charming tea room transformed into a

vibrant restaurant and cocktail bar led by renowned French chef Pierre Gagnaire. For more culinary adventures, I discovered the modern European flair of The Ivy Cafe Marylebone, the Art Deco elegance of The Wolseley, the fresh seafood at Scotts Mayfair, and the decadent Austrian charm of Fischer's Marylebone. No shopping spree is complete without a visit to Selfridges on Oxford Street, a landmark since 1909, followed by a stroll down Marylebone High Street, where boutiques like Le Labo and Lululemon await. Culturally, I explored The Wallace Collection, housed in a historic Marylebone townhouse, featuring masterpieces by Titian, Rubens, and Rembrandt. I also visited the renowned British Museum nearby. I discovered a world of luxury at the UK's premier shopping destination, Bicester Village. Just a train ride from Marylebone, I explored over 150 chic boutiques in the charming Oxfordshire countryside. With brands like Gucci, Armani, and Givenchy, I indulged in a rich retail

experience and enjoyed savings of up to 60%. As a special guest, I even received an extra 10% off the Village price—truly a shopper's paradise. Surrounded by beautiful parks, my London experience was truly unforgettable.

THE LAST LEG

As my journey from London began, I couldn't help but feel excitement for my return home after a good two weeks in London. I had chosen a Premium Economy seat with Virgin Atlantic after extensive research. For those who don't know, Virgin Atlantic, founded by Richard Branson in 1984, stands out as a refreshing alternative to conventional carriers. Flying in Premium, simply called Premium, was a transformative experience. The leather seats offered noticeably more space than standard Economy, with an extra inch of width and enhanced recline, making the long-haul flight far more comfortable. I appreciated the adjustable headrest and the additional luxuries, like a pull-out footrest. The in-seat entertainment system, Vera, featured a 13-inch screen packed with an impressive selection of films. Ultimately, my upgrade was a brilliant choice, making the journey back home a truly enjoyable experience. Akanksha Dean is an independent food & travel writer, a chef, and a catalyst. She is the first Indian to have trained at Osteria Francescana in Modena, Italy, rated as the world's best restaurant in 2016 and 2018.



Srisailem: A journey to spiritual splendour

Discover Srisailem, the "Kailash of the South," where spirituality meets natural beauty. This sacred Andhra Pradesh town offers a profound journey through ancient temples, serene landscapes and cultural wonders, says VISHESH SHUKLA

With a spirit of adventure and a heart full of curiosity, I set out from Bhubaneswar, the vibrant capital of Odisha, on a journey that promised to be extraordinary. Boarding the Yesvantpur Superfast Express, excitement coursed through me as I made my way to a small town in Andhra Pradesh, often called the "Kailash of the South." This enchanting place is home to Sri Mallikarjuna Swamy, one of the twelve sacred Jyotirlingas, and Goddess Bhramaramba, one of the eighteen Mahashakti Peethas, giving it an aura of deep spiritual significance. Nestled in the picturesque Nandyal district, Srisailem is a town where natural beauty and profound spirituality merge, offering a treasure trove of experiences waiting to be uncovered.



The Mallikarjun Swami and Mata temple, a primary attraction, welcomes devotees until late evening. Local eateries like Trishul Family Restaurant provide delicious refreshments. Srisailem's well-organised transport and amenities ensure a hassle-free experience for pilgrims, making the spiritual journey truly unforgettable.

JOURNEY TO SERENITY

After a refreshing night's sleep, one can start the morning with a visit to the ancient



Hatkeshwar Mahadev Temple, where Lord Shiva defeated the demon Tripurasura. Following the blessings of Lord Shiva, visitors often head to the unique Sakshi Ganapati Swamy temple, where Lord Ganesha is depicted seated with a pen and paper,

recording devotees' wishes to fulfil them. As the sunlight gently touches the mountains, the Paldhara-Panchdhara waterfall awaits, captivating visitors with its serene beauty. Covering all the scenic spots, I proceeded to Pothal Ganga, where I enjoyed a ropeway ride and boating on the Krishna River, savouring the serene view of the Srisailem reservoir. After visiting the major sites, I stopped for brunch at a local hotel serving delicious idli, dosa, and menduvada. Satisfied with my meal, I returned to my place to rest and took a two-hour nap.

SOUVENIRS OF SRISAILEM

The next morning began at 5 AM. After checking out of the hotel, I enjoyed a hearty dosa breakfast before taking an express bus from Srisailem to Markapur for ₹200. I reached Markapur railway station around 10:15 PM to board the Vasco-da-Gama Shalimar Express. With around eight hours left in my journey, I had breakfast from the train's pantry car and spent some time reading. As the journey concluded, I was met with an enchanting surprise—the breathtaking beauty of Chilika Lake, which unfolded before me as the train traversed its waters. Unaware of its majesty, I found myself mesmerised by this unexpected sight, a perfect conclusion to an extraordinary journey.



THE RELATION BETWEEN PRACTICAL AND SPIRITUAL SPHERES IN MUSIC IS OBVIOUS, IF ONLY BECAUSE IT DEMANDS EARS, FINGER, CONSCIOUSNESS AND INTELLECT
— LUCIANO BERIO

YOUR WEEK AHEAD

MADHU KOTIYA



ARIES March 21-April 19

This week holds promise, particularly in the realm of finances, where opportunities to enhance your resources appear promising, especially at the start of the week. Celebrations and gatherings underscore your achievements, bringing joy and festivity to your social and work life. At home, the atmosphere is cheerful, with significant contributions from women who bring vitality, creativity, and joy, enriching the lives of those around them with their nurturing roles. The week might also herald joyful family events, such as welcoming new beginnings or celebrating expansions that bring family members closer. As the week closes, expect a shift in your perspective, leading to fresh insights that could significantly benefit your future path. This period is marked by positive transitions and communal happiness.

Lucky number 7 | Lucky colour Rose Pink
Lucky day Sunday



LEO July 23-Aug 22

This week calls for a balanced approach, especially for those who naturally lead with charisma and passion. Emotions may run high, but it's crucial to channel this energy wisely rather than letting impulsiveness or a rigid stance guide your actions. Opportunities may arise that could significantly enhance your circumstances. However, these same opportunities could slip through your fingers if not handled with care due to tendencies toward stubbornness or indifference. Respect for oneself is important, but it's equally vital to maintain respect towards others. Watch for new developments that might stir envy among competitors. Be cautious, as you might also attract negative intentions from others. Remain vigilant about your environment and the motivations of people around you, especially those you employ or who assist you in your daily activities.

Lucky number 11 | Lucky colour Violet
Lucky day Monday



SAGITTARIUS Nov 22-Dec 21

This week, you will experience a noticeable surge in vitality and purpose. Your endeavors are backed by a universal alignment that propels you toward success. All your energies are harnessed effectively, guiding you to make significant progress in important areas of your life. You possess both the clarity and the resolve to tackle challenges and turn your ambitions into achievements. A joyful event at home may also occur, bringing fulfillment to a longstanding wish. This could relate to family joy, particularly through children, who may achieve significant academic success or secure opportunities they have been hoping for. Your confidence in your abilities and spiritual support is robust, fostering a conducive environment for positive developments. The possibility of significant transactions involving real estate could also arise, marking a prosperous period.

Lucky number 4 | Lucky colour Saffron
Lucky day Sunday



TAURUS April 20-May 20

This week, your emotional and sentimental nature will be particularly prominent, offering you an opportunity to express nurturing qualities towards those you care about. Your instinctive ability to heal and counsel will draw others to seek your guidance. However, amidst this emotional engagement, there's a risk of overlooking your professional obligations. Stay vigilant as your straightforward nature could be exploited. It's crucial to strategize and implement new plans aimed at enhancing stability and securing your financial future. Passive daydreaming won't suffice; staying focused on your objectives and managing your emotions effectively are essential to making tangible progress. Keep an eye on your goals and temper your sensitivities to navigate this period successfully.

Lucky number 22 | Lucky colour Lemon Yellow
Lucky day Wednesday



VIRGO Aug 23-Sep 22

This week, you might experience a sense of isolation and a disconnect from daily engagements. This could stem from romantic disappointments or a break in a close relationship, impacting your emotional state. Challenges in your professional life are also evident, as your diligent efforts seem to yield little to no progress. Patience is key during this period. It's important to stay prepared and alert, as you may face some opposition. Recognizing and harnessing your strengths will be crucial in navigating these obstacles. As you approach the resolution of these challenges, expect a transformative shift within yourself. Support may arrive in the form of an influential individual who will play a significant role in guiding you. This guidance will spark a renewal in creativity and optimism, prompting innovative approaches in various aspects of your life.

Lucky number 9 | Lucky colour Burgundy
Lucky day Wednesday



CAPRICORN Dec 22-Jan 19

This week, you may find yourself navigating a mix of emotions and detachment in personal relationships. Couples might face several challenges that seem minor but can evoke strong reactions like tears, loud arguments, and eventual agreement. In professional settings, your approach is kind and benevolent, contributing positively to your reputation. You might experience some unexpected financial benefits, enhancing your sense of security. Your ability to effectively handle both personal and financial matters will be evident, showcasing your competence. Your commitment and reliability make you a trusted figure at work. A natural curiosity drives your desire to learn and succeed, potentially making you a source of inspiration for others. Throughout this period, your integrity and courage in standing up for your beliefs could set a powerful example for those around you.

Lucky number 8 | Lucky colour Aqua
Lucky day Friday



GEMINI May 21-June 20

This week finds you wielding significant influence and determination. Your ability to lead and inspire others stems not from physical prowess but from your strategic position and charisma. You maintain a strict and disciplined approach, leaving little room for emotional considerations. This may lead to challenges in your personal relationships, potentially causing rifts or disappointments in romantic connections. Family dynamics may become strained, particularly regarding significant life choices, as disagreements over such decisions could emerge, possibly involving maternal opposition. Midweek, you might feel overwhelmed by pressure, finding it difficult to make decisions autonomously. However, as the week concludes, you will experience both financial and emotional enrichment. Support from an elder, likely a paternal figure, will provide you with both balance and guidance, setting a foundation for future achievements.

Lucky number 2 | Lucky colour Grass Green
Lucky day Friday



LIBRA Sep 23-Oct 22

Currently, you may experience a strained relationship, which could bring significant emotional discomfort. However, embracing these challenges can fortify your resilience and prepare you for future hurdles. Remember, true bravery emerges only in the presence of fear. Should an opportunity arise, it's essential to push past your uncertainties and seize it with determination. Now is the moment to pursue your aspirations vigorously, casting aside all doubts and obstacles. If you sense that your efforts have fallen short or the outcomes aren't as fulfilling as anticipated, take time to reassess your strategies and explore alternative avenues. By doing so, you're more likely to align yourself with a path that leads to success. By week's end, you may find yourself encountering opportunities for increased financial gain or an enticing proposal.

Lucky number 13 | Lucky colour Indigo
Lucky day Saturday



AQUARIUS Jan 20-Feb 18

This week presents an opportunity for profound influence and decisive actions. You'll find yourself in scenarios where engaging directly with influential figures is not only possible but beneficial. Your ability to navigate these interactions showcases your knack for leadership and strategic thinking. You'll be seen as a source of inspiration, providing guidance and stability to those around you. Enjoy a sense of control and respect, as your balanced approach to life's challenges allows you to make sound decisions. Your presence commands respect, as you are known for your fairness and unwavering commitment to your principles. This period highlights your talent for overseeing the bigger picture without losing sight of your core values, ensuring that emotions do not cloud your decision-making process.

Lucky number 16 | Lucky colour Mustard
Lucky day Tuesday



CANCER June 21-July 22

This week, take some time to unwind and recharge. Prioritize healing through various wellness practices, from mindful exercises to enjoying nature's subtle offerings and ensuring adequate rest. This will equip you to handle the brisk pace of upcoming events. Your professional life appears dynamic, with potential positive shifts in your current role, possibly signaling a promotion or financial reward. Responsibilities at home, particularly involving children, will also demand your attention, bringing both joy and some additional expenditure. Romantic gestures could lead to planning special getaways with loved ones. For those unattached, the period is ripe for encountering significant connections that could lead to long-term commitments. Enjoy a sense of closeness with your partner as the weekend approaches, reinforcing your bond.

Lucky number 15 | Lucky colour Grey
Lucky day Tuesday



SCORPIO Oct 23-Nov 21

You possess remarkable strength, potentially even overwhelming at times. Your deep perceptiveness and sharp intuition enable you to penetrate to the core of any matter. Your analytical abilities are at their peak, making the realization of your ambitions significantly more attainable. This period marks an excellent opportunity to dispel any obscurities that have obscured your true understanding and to sever ties with past constraints that have limited your progress. It's an ideal time to prioritize your objectives and pursue personal growth. A profound spiritual renewal is also on the horizon. Engage in activities that harmonize you with the natural world, such as walking, yoga, meditation, or even pursuing a sport at a professional level. Rather than resisting life's flow, allow it to guide you forward.

Lucky number 10 | Lucky colour Burgundy
Lucky day Thursday



PISCES Feb 19-March 20

Individuals born under your sign possess an expansive potential that enables profound transformations and creations according to their will. While unraveling all mysteries may not be feasible for everyone, you excel as a mentor to those eager to delve into their psyche to unlock their latent capabilities. Your focus on spiritual growth and introspection can significantly enrich lives and bring about transformative changes. You hold a strong belief in the principle of fairness and the reciprocal nature of actions. The choices you make continuously shape your future outcomes, advocating for deliberate and positive decisions to cultivate desirable experiences. Such clarity in thought ensures the realization of goals and resolves many of life's challenges. A significant journey may soon be forthcoming, presenting new opportunities for growth and exploration.

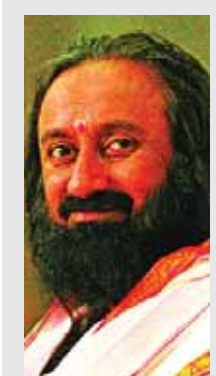
Lucky number 20 | Lucky colour Magenta
Lucky day Friday

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Pursuit of happiness

Let us welcome the new year with open arms and alet go of the negativity that holds us back.
Only a heart bereft of pessimism can embrace happiness

GURUSPEAK



Sri Sri Ravi Shankar
Spiritual Guru

HAPPINESS is the one thing that everybody is seeking. People do find happiness but it is momentary; for couple of hours or days. True happiness is when you find inner stability and comfort. You know you are connected to something unimaginably bigger and that there is an unshakable power within you. Here are a few pointers to ensure that happiness simply wells up in you.
HEALTH: In India, "swastha" refers to one who is established in oneself. A healthy person has a smile on the face, love in the heart and strength and vitality in the body. Seeing life with the eyes of wisdom makes negative emotions go away and you start smiling from the core of your being.
ATTACHMENTS: These cause feverishness that take away peace of mind. You are in pieces and fall prey to misery. Your first step is directing your attachment to the Knowledge and the Divine. Your



non-attachment to the mundane is your charm. Your attachment to the Divine is your beauty.
PROBLEM: Five steps to solve a problem are as follows: 1) Accept

the problem and see it as a challenge. 2) Know that the problem is not real. 3) Know that nature has provided you the solution even before giving you

the problem. 4) If it concerns people, keep in touch with them instead of avoiding them. 5) Talk less and give time a chance.
INSECURITY: How much time

have you spent being insecure and gloomy? It builds up toxins in your body. Know that there are good people in the world who will come to your help. There is a

power which will guide you and help you out. With this wisdom and understanding, get over your insecurity.
NEGATIVITY: This mindset needs a hook to hang on — this person or that thing. Negativity or aversion for even one person can guarantee a one-way ticket to hell — you need nothing else! Don't focus on the support of negativity; look at the seed. In a negative atmosphere, be like a drop of ghee and float.
SUCCESS: My parameter for success is an undying smile, a confidence that cannot be shaken and a fearless attitude. Take life not as a struggle but as a challenge; not as a suffering but a way to express the multitude of emotions.
Break through all the barriers and feel that you are Blessed. This is the one and only step you have to take — the rest will happen happily enough.
(www.artofliving.org)