

Himachal Cabinet Approval to 3 New Municipal Corporations, Job Openings, Welfare Boosts

PNS ■ SHIMLA

Himachal Pradesh Cabinet on Saturday unveiled a series of impactful decisions aimed at urban development, employment generation, and social welfare...



Municipal Councils to Municipal Corporations and two Nagar Panchayats to Municipal Councils. Additionally, six new Nagar Panchayats will be established across the State...

Additional women, and divyang women with annual incomes below Rs 2.5 lakh, a provision of Rs three lakh for house construction under the HP Building and Other Construction Welfare Board was introduced.

will also be opened at the medical college, with seven posts to be created. Six posts will be created for the new Block Medical Office in Dehra, Kangra district; while four posts will be created for the upgraded Community Health Centre, Gumma, in Shimla district.

Sukhbir Steps Down as SAD president; Working committee meeting on Nov 18

MONIKA MALIK ■ CHANDIGARH

More than two months after the Sikhs' highest temporal seat, Akal Takht, declared Sukhbir Badal as 'tankhaiya' accusing him of violating the Sikh religious code of conduct, the 62-year-old on Saturday resigned from the post of the president of the Shiromani Akali Dal (SAD)...

Badal has been politically inactive, with Akal Takht Jathedar Giani Raghbir Singh clarifying that he was barred from participating in political activities until his 'tankhaiya' status was resolved.

Welcoming Sukhbir's resignation, former MP Chandumajra described it a necessary step for the party's revival. "SAD has weakened under Sukhbir's leadership. His resignation opens the path to strengthening the party and addressing the pressing issues of Punjab," he said.

SAD's working president Balwinder Singh Bhunder has called for an emergency meeting of the party's working committee on November 18 to discuss the resignation and outline the roadmap for organizational elections.

Punjab farmers warns govt to begin hunger strike from Nov 26 at Khanauri

PNS ■ CHANDIGARH

In a firm declaration of their discontent, farmer leaders hailing from Kisan Mazdoor Morcha and Sanyukt Kisan Morcha (Non-Political), led by Jagjit Singh Dallewal, on Saturday issued a stark warning to the government announcing their decision to escalate their protest with a hunger strike starting November 26 at Khanauri border if their demands remain unmet.

the government would be held accountable for any harm that befalls Dallewal during the hunger strike. They affirmed their commitment to continuing the protest, with other leaders ready to step up and lead if required.

Baba Siddiqui Murder: Punjab, Maharashtra Police Arrest Fazilka-Based Person

PNS ■ CHANDIGARH

In a major breakthrough amidst the ongoing drive to make Punjab a safe and secure state, Punjab Police's Anti Gangster Task Force (AGTF), in a joint operation with Maharashtra Police, on Saturday apprehended a Fazilka-based person in connection with the Baba Siddiqui murder case.

tance to the shooters involved in the murder of Baba Siddiqui," informed the DGP Punjab in post on his X handle (formerly Twitter). He said that the accused has been handed over to the Mumbai Police for further investigations.

Amid poor air quality, DCs in Haryana asked to 'assess situation' and shut schools till Class V

PNS ■ CHANDIGARH

Due to the rising pollution, the State Government on Saturday asked all the Deputy Commissioners to "assess the prevailing situation" in their respective districts and shut down classes in both Government as well as Private Schools for up to Class V.

The decision follows a turbulent period for Sukhbir Badal. On August 30, the Akal Takht Sahib held him guilty of decisions taken during his tenure as Deputy Chief Minister from 2007 to 2017, which allegedly harmed Sikh interests.

continue physical classes and issue necessary directions for holding online classes for up to Class 5th in the schools (Govt. and Private) in the interest of the health and safety of the students.

The AQI in several parts of Haryana continued to figure in the "severe" category on Saturday. According to the Central Pollution Control Board's Sameer app, that provides hourly updates on AQI, Jind recorded the highest AQI of 410 followed by Bhiwani (392), Panipat (357), Bahadurgarh (383), Kaithal (321), Rohtak (309), Charkhi Dadri (297), Kurukshetra (289), Karnal (285), Gurgaon (297), Panchkula (227) and Ambala (209).

Chandigarh Literary Society Set to Host the 12th Edition of 'CLF Literati 2024'

PNS ■ CHANDIGARH

The stage is set for a spectacular literary extravaganza as the Chandigarh Literary Society (CLS) gears up for the 12th Edition of 'CLF Literati 2024', scheduled for November 22-24 at the prestigious Chandigarh Lake Club.



ings, and panel sessions," she said. Book Launches and Literary Highlights One of the most anticipated events of the festival is the launch of 'Ratan Tata: A Life', a biography penned by Dr Thomas Mathew.

explore the lasting impact of the Jallianwala Bagh massacre, a turning point in India's freedom struggle. A standout session, 'Daddy in the Driver's Seat: A Single Father's Experiences', will feature Bollywood actor Tusshar Kapoor.

lawyers Pinky Anand and Saudamini Sharma will reflect on India's key legal milestones. A discussion on the power of poetry, 'Ink and Imagination: Crafting Poetic Worlds', will see Dr Sumita Misra in conversation with poet Aradhika Sharma.

Punjab role model for country by providing govt job to youth in every village: Kejriwal

PNS ■ CHANDIGARH

Arvind Kejriwal and Punjab Chief Minister Bhagwant Mann on Saturday together handed over appointment letters to 1,205 newly-recruited constables, out of total 1,746, in the Punjab Police.

improved under AAP's leadership. "When we took over, we had a big challenge before us. We accepted that challenge and we got support from the people of Punjab..."

Kejriwal in transforming key sectors such as education, health, power, and infrastructure, and emphasized that these would continue to be the top priorities of the Punjab Government.

He praised the AAP's approach to politics, which, in contrast to other parties, focuses on unity, progress, and welfare of the common people.

Hry CM directs officials to install white reflective stripes on highways to check road accidents

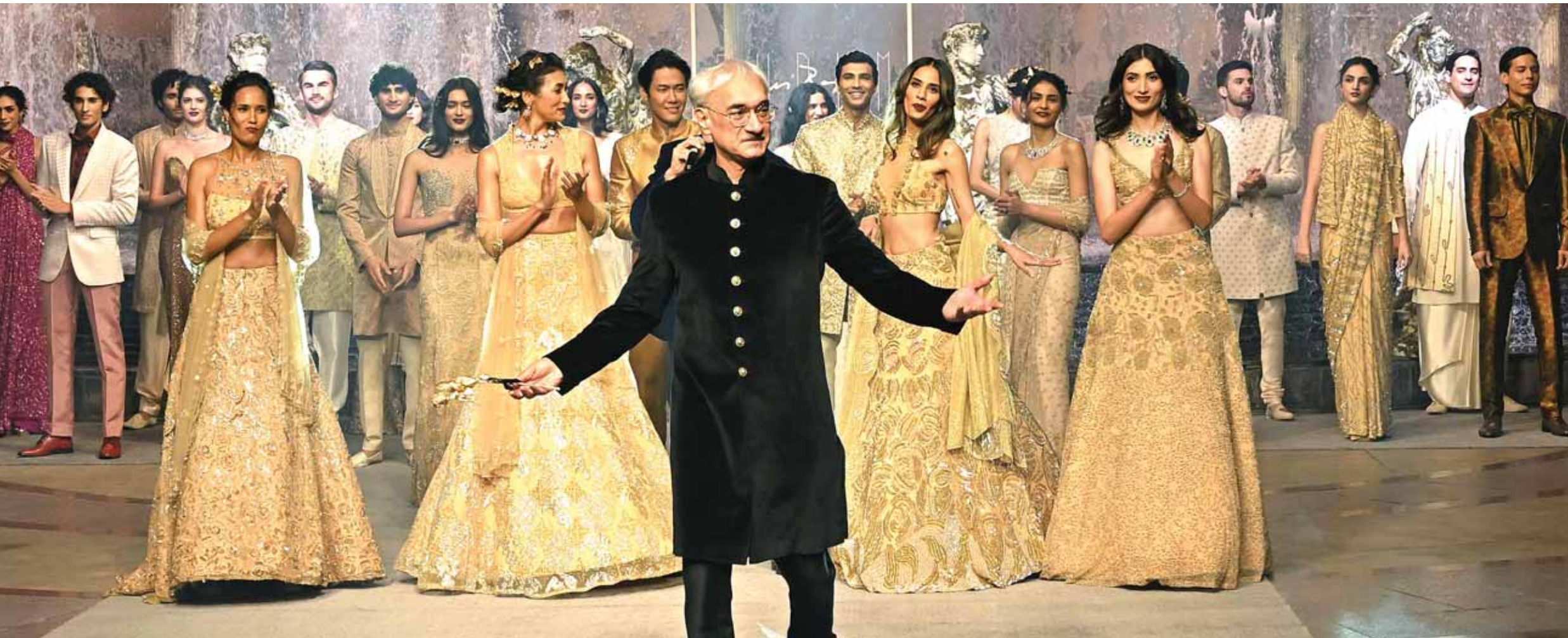
PNS ■ CHANDIGARH

To improve road safety during current weather situation and fog season, Haryana Chief Minister Nayab Singh Saini on Saturday directed the concerned authorities to install white reflective stripes on all national highways, state highways, and major roads across the State.

implement measures that prioritize the well-being of citizens. He also urged all road users to exercise caution and follow traffic safety guidelines during foggy conditions.

Cashless Medical Facility for Journalists on National Press Day Extending his warm greetings to the media fraternity on National Press Day, Saini announced the introduction of a medical cashless facility for journalists, similar to the benefits provided to government employees.

continuation of pension benefits even if a criminal case is filed against a journalist, and the provision that more than one member of a journalist's family can now receive pension benefits.



BY SAKSHI PRIYA

The unveiling of new label 'Aurum' by Ravi Bajaj at DLF Emporio was a stunning show filled with elegance and style. This exclusive fashion show highlighted Ravi Bajaj's newest collection, which focused on Indian wedding wear with a fresh twist. Known for combining traditional Indian elements with modern style, Bajaj's 'Aurum' collection was truly eye-catching. The fashion show set was a true masterpiece. A grand sculpture and an elegant fountain served as the central backdrop, creating a luxurious atmosphere that perfectly matched the opulence of the Aurum collection. These elements added to the evening's sophistication, making it a visual delight for all who attended. Models graced the runway in stunning outfits from the Aurum collection, complemented by beautiful jewellery from Rose, the official jewellery partner. The jewellery added an extra layer of elegance to the ensembles, enhancing the overall look with a balance of modern flair and traditional touches. The collection itself was a blend of opulence and refinement, showcasing innovative designs while respecting classic Indian traditions. Bajaj introduced unique elements like lace and organza in menswear, with some outfits even featuring pearls - a subtle yet luxurious detail. The womenswear was equally captivating, featuring lehengas that stayed true to the Ravi Bajaj style, with intricate designs that



SCULPTING WEDDING GLAMOUR IN GOLD

Ravi Bajaj's 'Aurum' collection, unveiled at DLF Emporio, showcased elegant designs that celebrated modern Indian wedding fashion in a luxurious setting.

were both elegant and timeless. The audience was treated to another surprise when Mr. Ajay Bijli, Founder of PVR Cinemas and a close friend of Ravi Bajaj, made a special appearance to close the show with a memorable performance. This unexpected moment added excitement to the evening, leaving the crowd in awe. One of the standout pieces in the collection was a white saree paired with a richly embroidered golden blouse. The blend of simplicity and luxury in this outfit captured the essence of Aurum - a collection designed to make a statement while maintaining elegance. For men, the collection included beautifully tailored kurtas with golden details, ideal for those who appreciate traditional Indian attire with a modern edge. Throughout the collection, a gold and white colour palette symbolised the joy and prosperity associated with Indian weddings. This theme offered a refreshing take on bridal wear, balancing traditional and contemporary styles to suit the



“ONE OF THE STANDOUT PIECES IN THE COLLECTION WAS A WHITE SAREE PAIRED WITH A RICHLY EMBROIDERED GOLDEN BLOUSE. THE BLEND OF SIMPLICITY AND LUXURY IN THIS OUTFIT CAPTURED THE ESSENCE OF AURUM - A COLLECTION DESIGNED TO MAKE A STATEMENT WHILE MAINTAINING ELEGANCE”



tastes of modern brides and grooms. The show also marked the grand reopening of the Aurum boutique at DLF Emporio, which now houses a stunning range of meticulously crafted menswear and womenswear. From regal sherwanis to luxurious lehengas, the boutique is a destination for those seeking elegant wedding attire that stands out for both quality and style. The launch of Aurum was not just a fashion show but a celebration of Indian culture, heritage, and modern luxury. Ravi Bajaj's ability to seamlessly combine traditional and modern elements made this collection a standout in the Indian fashion scene. With its focus on detailed craftsmanship and elegant design, Aurum offers a fresh perspective on wedding wear, making it a must-see for anyone interested in the finest Indian couture.

Chor Bizarre reopens its doors with Hosa Pop-Up

Chor Bizarre, the iconic restaurant celebrating its 34th anniversary this year, reopens its doors with an exciting two-day pop-up featuring *Hosa*, a celebrated South Indian restaurant from Goa. *Hosa* is bringing its unique culinary experience to New Delhi, offering a special set menu at Chor Bizarre before continuing its journey to Comorin in Gurugram. Known for its creative take on traditional South Indian flavours, *Hosa* will offer a special set menu for two days at each location, giving guests the chance to indulge in the bold and intricate tastes of South India. Located in *Siolim, Goa*, *Hosa* is part of *EHV International* and is situated opposite the iconic



St. Anthony's Church. The name "*Hosa*," meaning "new" in Kannada, reflects the restaurant's innovative approach to South Indian cuisine. Blending old-world charm with contemporary design, *Hosa* offers a dining experience that celebrates the diverse and rich flavours of the region. Awarded 'Best Modern Indian Restaurant' and 'Best Restobar' in Goa at the 2023 *Times Food & Nightlife Awards*, *Hosa* has also earned accolades for 'Best Modern



CHEF HARISH RAO

South Indian' and 'Best Cocktails' in 2024. The much-anticipated pop-up event will take place at *Chor Bizarre in New Delhi and Comorin in Gurugram*. The set menu is designed to introduce diners to *Hosa's* inventive South Indian cuisine. The menu, curated by *Brand Chef Harish Rao*, will feature signature dishes like *Cracked Potatoes* with cauliflower mousse, *Andhra Okra Masala* with peanut sesame curry and *Kari Dosa* with poached egg and bone marrow hollandaise. Highlights also include *Toddy Shop Prawns* with raw mango salad and a dessert of *Coconut Jasmine*, combining coconut ice cream, jasmine granita and almond crumble. This is a unique opportunity for food lovers in *Delhi* and *Gurugram*

to experience the bold and vibrant flavours that have made *Hosa* a favourite in Goa. *Chor Bizarre* and *Comorin*, allows us to showcase the depth and variety of South Indian cuisine in two dynamic settings."

EVENT DETAILS
Chor Bizarre, New Delhi - November 17th, Comorin, Gurugram - November 19th & 20th
Pricing: INR 1600 (non-vegetarian) | INR 1300 (vegetarian)
Reservations: Chor Bizarre:

11:11 (GYARAH GYARAH)

Gyarah Gyarah, showcases brilliant acting and explosives cases to keep you gripped to the screens, says **ABHI SINGHAL**

As 2024 draws to a close, it's the perfect time to reflect on the Indian gems the year offered in the world of entertainment. One such standout is *Gyarah Gyarah*, streaming on *Zee5*. This web series has captured the audience with its gripping narrative, complex characters, and masterful storytelling, making it an absolute must-watch before the year ends. Directed by *Umesh Bist*, this Indian adaptation of the acclaimed South Korean series *Signal* blends time travel, suspense, and crime drama across eight thrilling episodes. The show takes viewers on an engaging journey through timelines set in 1990, 2001, and 2016, cleverly weaving out past and present events.



The narrative centers around *ACP Vamika Rawat* played by *Kritika Kamra*, rookie inspector *Yug Arya* acted by *Raghav Juyal*, and seasoned cop *Shaurya Anthwal* (*Dhairya Karwa*). The plot unfolds as *Yug* stumbles upon an old walkie-talkie that mysteriously allows him to communicate with *Shaurya* from 2001. Together, they work to solve cold cases while grappling with the paradoxes of time travel. *Kritika Kamra* delivers a nuanced performance as the determined and layered *Vamika*. *Raghav Juyal* impresses as the enthusiastic and headstrong *Yug*, showcasing his brilliant acting skills. *Dhairya Karwa*, portraying *Shaurya*, brings a grounded depth to his role as the conflicted and persistent investigator. *Harsh Chhaya*, *Gautami Kapoor*, and *Nitesh Pandey* contribute strong supporting performances, adding richness to the screenplay. One of the standout elements of *Gyarah Gyarah* is its well-crafted dialogues, which successfully blend intensity and relatability, enhancing character depth. The exchanges between the leads, particularly during high-stakes moments, are impactful and elevate the drama but feel forcefully like the abusive words. Additionally, shot in dark places the series benefits from a background score that amplifies its tension and emotional resonance. The music subtly shifts across timelines, reflecting the tonal changes in each era, and helps immerse the audience further into the narrative. The show captures the intricacies of its genre by keeping audiences engaged with constant twists and cliffhangers, tying them to different cases in the past and present. While inspired by *Signal*, *Gyarah Gyarah* incorporates a distinctly Indian flavour, setting it apart from the original. Critics praised its gripping screenplay, atmospheric cinematography, and suspenseful pacing. However, there were shortcomings, including inconsistent rules of time travel and underdeveloped minor characters. The lack of resolution in its finale also left viewers yearning for closure, yet it effectively sets the stage for a potential second season. With a runtime of 4.5 hours, this series is an ideal binge-watch for fans of mystery and time-travel dramas. Its combination of stellar performances, intriguing storytelling, sharp dialogues, and immersive music ensures it remains a highlight of 2024's streaming lineup. Whether you're a fan of thrillers or innovative storytelling, *Gyarah Gyarah* offers an experience that shouldn't be missed.



Abhishek Sadhu, General Manager, Shangri-la Eros New Delhi at Grappa with Chef Brian Chang, Corporate Development Chef at Burger and Lobster and the culinary team.



PHOTOS: PANKAJ KUMAR

SHANGRI-LA OPENS TO BURGERS AND LOBSTERS

For the first time in India, the seafood epicureans *Burger & Lobster* have debuted at *Grappa Bar, Shangri-la Eros New Delhi*. The *Burger & Lobster* have been known globally for perfecting two ingredients, promising to delight food lovers with a playful yet elegant dining experience that has delighted palates from *London* to *New York*. So, crack into claws, indulge in buttery goodness, and savour juicy burgers without hesitation.

Chef Pillai takes you to experience Kerala's rich flavours with modern twists at his first-ever North India pop-up at The Westin Gurgaon, New Delhi, writes **ABHI SINGHAL**



SAVOURING KERALA'S RICH FLAVOURS



Dispelling the long-held notion that South Indian cuisine revolves solely around idli, dosa, and sambar, 21 Michelin-star Chef Suresh Pillai brought a culinary extravaganza to North India with his first-ever pop-up at The Westin Gurgaon, New Delhi. The experience was a symphony of Kerala's authentic flavours, masterfully infused with Chef Pillai's signature modern tweaks and twists. From the aromatic embrace of the South spices to the delicate finesse of seafood delicacies, the pop-up menu was an ode to South India's rich gastronomic heritage taste. The extraordinary culinary journey took the eaters through the vibrant flavours of Kerala, in collaboration with renowned Restaurant Chef Pillai (RCP). The mouth-watering dishes were a presentation through an exclusive 10-course tasting menu curated by Chef Pillai. It all started with the welcome drink of the season, *Aarambam*, a bit of a sour drink. The meticulously curated vegetarian and non-vegetarian menus transported guests straight to the heart of Kerala, offering a true taste of the region's culinary treasures. Each dish was crafted with precision and passion, showcasing the soul of Kerala's



“THE METICULOUSLY CURATED VEGETARIAN AND NON-VEGETARIAN MENUS TRANSPORTED GUESTS STRAIGHT TO THE HEART OF KERALA, OFFERING A TRUE TASTE OF THE REGION'S CULINARY TREASURES”

cuisine, from its spices blending to its delicate yet robust flavours. For the Hors d'oeuvres, there was the mouth watering *Sambharam Kadumanga*, blending the Kerala summer butter milk & pickled mango inside paani poori. One sitting in North India would never imagine blending paani poori with a South Indian twist, which stole the show. “We created a menu from the Kerala essence, for example, our paani poori, one of the starters, actually, it's a North Indian paani poori out of it's a buttermilk we used to serve in Kerala along with a mango pickle. So the puri, we stuff with the mango and the cold buttermilk generally you say chach.” explained Chef Suresh Pillai, excited about his first pop up in the north side. As guests savoured the thoughtfully crafted hors d'oeuvres, the starters gracefully took center stage, led by the *Pazham Pori Chaat*. This Kerala-inspired masterpiece featured golden, batter-fried banana fritters a bit crispy on the outside, tender within, elevated by a drizzle of honey-yogurt blend that perfectly balanced sweetness and creaminess. Following this, guests were treated to *Cauliflower Porippu*, a dish that beautifully showcased Kerala's rich spicy taste. Crispy, marinated cauliflower florets were deep-fried to golden perfection and then stirred with *thenga porippu*—an aromatic blend of grated coconut, fragrant curry leaves, and a hint of chili powder. The starters in both the vegetarian and the non-vegetarian segments were a delightful interplay of textures and flavours, with the crunch of the cauliflower perfectly complementing the earthy, spicy-sweet coconut mixture. The main course featured Chef Suresh Pillai's signature dishes recommended by himself, offering both vegetarian and non-vegetarian options that embodied the essence of Kerala's culinary artistry. For vegetarians, there was *Paneer Nirvana*: tender marinated cottage cheese, pan-fried to perfection, and then slow-cooked in creamy coconut milk. The dish was elevated with the earthy flavours of ginger, green chilies, and aromatic curry leaves, all beautifully encased in a banana leaf for a touch of traditional authenticity. For non-



Coconut Pudding, a light and fluffy treat infused with the delicate flavour and soft flesh of the tender coconut, alongside the *Coco Nutty Choco Brownie*, a decadent eggless chocolate dessert enriched with crunchy nuts and fragrant coconut, served with a scoop of creamy ice cream. Non-vegetarian diners were treated to the *Palada Cheesecake*, a unique fusion dessert layering the traditional Kerala *Palada* (rice flakes) flavour atop a crisp, crusty base, offering a delightful blend of tradition and sophistication to end the meal on a sweet note. The evening was further elevated by a curated selection of handcrafted cocktails, each a testament to artistry in mixology. Highlights included the refreshing *Toki Highball*, blending Toki Suntory Whisky with soda water and a grapefruit twist, and the zesty *Toki Orchard Sour*, featuring green apple, lemon, and a silky egg white foam. Gin enthusiasts indulged in the crisp *Roku Gin & Tonic* with ginger accents and the floral *Roku Hibiscus Highball* with hibiscus cordial and fizz. Whiskey lovers relished the bold *Jim Beam Orange Fashioned* with aromatic bitters, while the indulgent *Haku Caramel Espresso Martini*, combining Haku Japanese Craft Vodka with caramel and espresso, provided a decadent finish to the cocktail lineup. Chef Suresh Pillai's pop-up at The Westin Gurgaon, New Delhi was an experience that will redefine the perception of South Indian cuisine. With his signature modern twists on Kerala's rich culinary traditions, Chef Pillai transported guests on a culinary journey that celebrated both the simplicity and complexity of Kerala's vibrant flavours.

vegetarians, the highlight was the *Neymeen Nirvana*, Chef Pillai's iconic creation. The main course also offered a rich tapestry of Kerala's culinary heritage, featuring dishes like *Ulli Theeyal*, a dark, flavourful curry of slow-roasted coconut, shallots, and tamarind, and *Baby Corn Vendaka Manga Muringa Charu*, an Alleppey-style coconut mango curry with baby corn, okra, and tender drumsticks. *Kathrikai Thakkali Roast* brought tangy and spicy South Indian flavours to life with marinated brinjal and tomatoes in a rich onion-tomato gravy. Accompaniments included the delicate, lacy-edged *Appams*, perfect for mopping up curries, and the soft, flaky *Malabar Nool Porotta*, rounding out a meal that celebrated Kerala's diverse and bold flavours. For dessert, the menu delighted both vegetarian and non-vegetarian guests with indulgent creations. Vegetarians savoured the *Tender*

The Vibrant Flavours OF KOREA

Le Meridien brings Korea's rich flavours, authentic dishes, and timeless traditions to the heart of New Delhi

TEAM AGENDA



Korean food is a vibrant and flavourful cuisine celebrated for its unique balance of colors, textures, and tastes. Rooted in centuries-old traditions, it emphasises fresh, seasonal ingredients, often fermented, to create deep, savoury flavours and nutritional richness. The Korean dining experience is distinctive, with meals commonly featuring a variety of side dishes, or *banchan*, that range from spicy kimchi to delicate pickled vegetables. Key staples like rice, vegetables, and meats are skillfully combined with ingredients like *gochujang* (a spicy-sweet red pepper paste) and *doenjang* (fermented soybean paste) to create dishes that are as visually stunning as they are delicious. From the sizzling sounds of *bulgogi* on a grill to the comforting warmth of a bubbling *jjigae* stew, Korean food offers a sensory journey into a culture that values harmony, balance, and bold, memorable flavours. Food lovers in New Delhi had a culinary treat from Korea right in New Delhi as Le Meridien celebrated the unique flavours of Korean cuisine with its much-anticipated Korean Food Festival. Running till November 17th, 2024, this gastronomic event was an immersive dining experience, highlighting traditional and contemporary Korean dishes at its 'The One' restaurant. The festival is a feature of *Le Meridien New Delhi's* annual '+1 Celebrating Flavours of the Globe' initiative under the '+1 for the Leap Year' campaign, bringing exotic, authentic global flavours to the heart of India. The Korean Food Festival's dinner buffet had been meticulously curated by Chef Young-Hwan Jang, Chef de Partie at AC Hotel by Marriott Seoul Gangnam. With over two decades of culinary expertise and a deep-rooted passion for Korean cuisine, Chef Jang has flown in from Seoul to offer guests an authentic taste of his homeland, blending

“FOOD LOVERS IN NEW DELHI HAD A CULINARY TREAT FROM KOREA RIGHT IN NEW DELHI AS LE MERIDIEN CELEBRATED THE UNIQUE FLAVOURS OF KOREAN CUISINE WITH ITS MUCH-ANTICIPATED KOREAN FOOD FESTIVAL”

traditional Korean staples with innovative techniques to appeal to a global palate. “We are thrilled to showcase the diverse and flavourful cuisine of Korea through this festival,” said Meena Bhatia, Vice President and General Manager of Le Meridien New Delhi. “This event aligns perfectly with our +1 Celebrating Flavours of the Globe initiative, a highlight of our annual '+1 for the Leap Year' initiative, and we believe it will offer our guests a truly unforgettable dining experience,” she added. The menu showcased a range of traditional Korean dishes, crafted to deliver the distinctive flavours and textures that define this cuisine. Guests can look forward to sampling dishes like *Acorn Salad*, a refreshing and nutritious delicacy; *Gimbap Avocado*, Korea's beloved seaweed rice rolls with a modern twist; *Spring Onion Pancake*, a savoury delight that's perfect for

sharing; the spicy and comforting *Stir-fried Rice Cake (Teokbokki)*; and a cooling *Chilled Seafood Salad*, perfect for Delhi's warm evenings. Each dish on the buffet spread has been carefully prepared by Chef Jang to ensure an authentic taste of Korea. “I am excited to bring the vibrant flavours of Korea to Le Meridien New Delhi,” shared Chef Young-Hwan Jang. “Through this festival, we aim to introduce guests to the diverse range of Korean dishes, from classic comfort foods to innovative culinary creations,” he quips with a smile. This unique dining experience went beyond just food—it invited guests to embark on a journey through Korea's rich culinary heritage. From the spicy and savoury flavours that Korean cuisine is known for, to innovative twists on traditional dishes, the festival offers a deep and delicious dive into Korean culture and flavours.



A Meal Worth Revisiting

Located in Sector 66, Gurugram, Poiz is an inviting dining destination that combines a vibrant atmosphere with a diverse menu. After three visits, it's evident that Poiz offers a delightful experience for food enthusiasts and social diners alike, writes **PAWAN SONI**

It's rare for me to visit a restaurant multiple times before writing a review, but Poiz, a beautiful new addition to the dining scene, compelled me to return three times to fully capture its essence. Poiz boasts an artistic, expansive interior, blending elegant indoor seating with a spacious patio featuring its own bar and an inviting open dining area. While many restaurants of this size tend to cater heavily to the nightlife crowd, Poiz strikes a perfect balance: a well-curated bar selection with inventive cocktails for the social set, and a menu that delights families and party goers alike. Certain dishes have become my go-to orders, each offering something special. The *Lychee Chaat*, a Thai-inspired creation, is an absolute must-try. Bits of lychee and avocado sit atop a crispy rice puff base, accompanied by a flavourful *Nam Jim Sauce*—one bite, and you won't want to stop. The *Chicken Chilli Dim Sum* features a delicate wrapper and pairs perfectly with the accompanying sauces. Another standout is the *Taiwanese Mushrooms*, crisp-coated and served with pickled chilli



and a sweet-sour sauce, accented by crunchy peanuts for extra texture. Not every dish was flawless. The nachos were slightly too salty for my taste. However, the ramen from their global menu made up for it with its rich, layered flavours. It's a generous portion, perfect for a hearty appetite or sharing with friends. My companions thoroughly enjoyed the *Lamb Adana Kebab* as much as they did the sushi. While Poiz has a wide range of Indian dishes, I found myself drawn to the global offerings, including their expertly crafted *Neapolitan pizza*. A meal here would be incomplete without the *Belgian Nutella Chocolate*. This dessert not only excels in taste but also impresses in presentation. The smooth *Belgian chocolate* and *Nutella sweetness* are cleverly balanced with blueberries and hazelnuts, creating a perfect finale. For those in the area, Poiz is well worth a visit. Ratings: (Out of 5) Food: 4.25 Ambience: 4.25 Service: 4.0 Drinks: 4.0 Overall: 4.25 Address: Poiz, 2nd Floor, AIPL Joy Street, Sector 66, Gurugram

the pioneer agenda

"Hum Dono" was accepted in a very big way. It was the official entry at the 1962 Berlin Film Festival"
— Dev Anand



In the enchanting Coastal city of Goa, where the sea whispers the dream and the sand carries the tale, the grand curtains would be raised for the International Film Festival of India (IFFI) for the world. The IFFI is the only South Asian festival accredited by the International Federation of Film Producers' Associations (FIAPF).

Now, being held in Goa since 2004, IFFI is not only the grand festival for the films showcase but it's a platform, where Indian cinema interacts with world cinema, where filmmakers connect with audiences, and where the magic of storytelling is truly celebrated.

This year, IFFI has received 1,676 submissions from 101 countries, highlighting its expanding global influence after all these years. The International Film Festival of India 2024 will showcase over 180 international films from 81 countries, including 15 world premieres, 3 international premieres, 40 Asian premieres, and 106 Indian premieres. Featuring celebrated titles and award-winning films from around the world, this year's festival promises to make a powerful impression on audiences and on the world of cinema.

Talking about the past, the journey of the International Film Festival of India (IFFI) dates back to 1952 when India was struggling to find its cinematic voice post-independence. The Government of India had organised the first IFFI which was held in Mumbai, and it showcased 40 films from 23 countries. The IFFI 1952 marked the first time India had its own international film festival, bringing global cinema to Indian shores. The initial editions of IFFI were held across various Indian cities, including Delhi, Chennai, and Kolkata, with the festival traveling from one city to another to reach a broader audience.

The past 20 years spent by IFFI in Goa, contributed to Goa being the official place for the IFFI keeping in mind the advantage of its cultural vibrancy and scenic beauty. IFFI is a unique one distinct from other film festivals worldwide. Known as the "Film Festival of Goa," IFFI blends seamlessly with Goa's local culture, attracting an international audience to India's favourite tourist destination.

Goa's vibrant art scene, beach culture, and heritage architecture complement the festival's spirit, creating an inviting space where cinema lovers from all corners of the world can gather for a shared celebration. The Ministry of Information & Broadcasting, in collaboration with the National Film Development Corporation (NFDC) and the Entertainment Society of Goa (ESG), is set to host the 55th International Film Festival of India (IFFI) in Goa from 20th to 28th November 2024.

With IFFI continuously taking place in Goa, has helped the state develop a thriving ecosystem that supports film tourism. Local businesses, artists, and artisans benefit from the influx of visitors, and the festival has become a key driver of economic and cultural growth in the region. During the curtain raiser event for the IFFI in New Delhi, Dr. L. Murugan, highlighted the festival's prestigious role on the global stage. He said, "IFFI has become a landmark event, not just for India but internationally, comparable to global festivals such as Cannes." The 55th edition of IFFI in 2024 will showcase the theme of "Young Filmmakers" - "The Future is Now". The theme asks to embrace the timeless and the young talent in our country and recognising their potential in shaping the future of creativity. The initiative of the Creative Minds of Tomorrow platform has been enhanced to support 100 young talents from 75 in the previous editions. 400 young film students, from Film Schools across the country, are being facilitated by the Ministry to attend IFFI.

The festival will give tributes to cinema legends, and retrospectives on iconic careers. The Country Focus section will allow viewers to experience the best of international cinema, linking to cultural exchange.

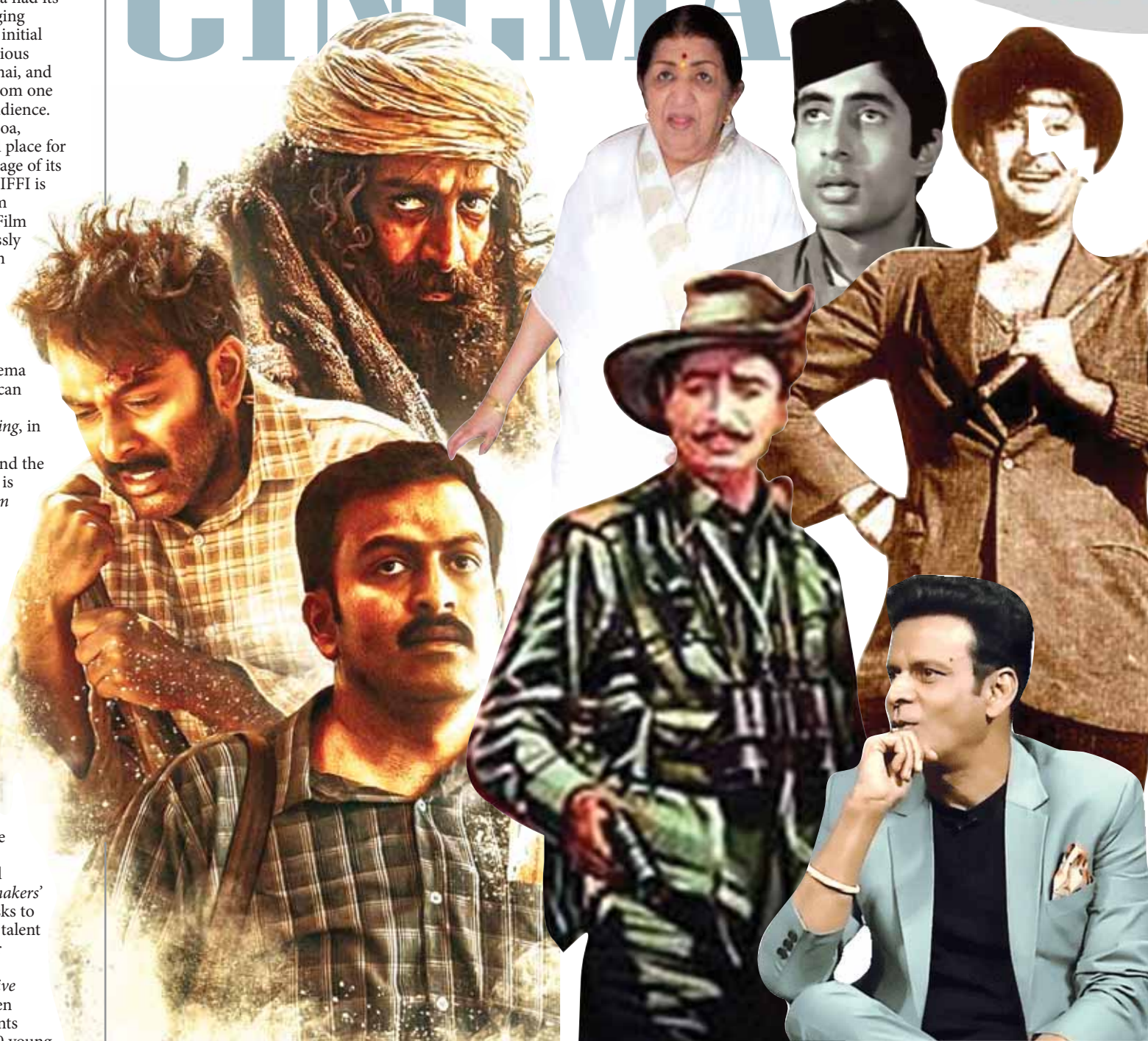
The Country of Focus for IFFI 2024 will be Australia. This will be made sure by a dedicated package of Australian films giving a strong presence at the festival. A Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) has been signed between Screen Australia & NFDC, for participation by leading Australian filmmakers in the festival and the Film Bazaar, and a showcase by AusFilm, promoting Australia's unique filming locations & co-productions.

Apart from Australia, in partnership with the British Film Institute, the United Kingdom will be showcased as the "Treaty Country," presenting British cinema through a carefully crafted package.

Celebration of the pioneers is very important to lead the way, give examples, and keep the generations inspired by looking over to the people who have done it no others. Like every other year, the stars of the cinema, keeping up with the entertainment industry would be facilitated by awards at the IFFI 2024. The IFFI's prestigious Golden Peacock Award, granted for Best Film will remain one of the

As every year, uniting global storytellers, the International Film Festival of India 2024, is an allure and will transform Goa into a vibrant heaven for film enthusiasts, cinema pioneers, and aspiring young talents, writes **ABHI SINGHAL**

GRAND CELEBRATION OF CINEMA



Also, through workshops, masterclasses, panel discussions, and networking events, IFFI 2024 will provide a learning platform for aspiring filmmakers, creating an inclusive space for cinematic celebration and growth.

Panel Discussions like *Women Safety and Cinema* with renowned panelists Imtiaz Ali, Suhasini Manirathnam, Kushboo Sundar, Bhumi Pednekar; *Stories that Travel*, a panel that would explore the art of storytelling that travels beyond its origins, addressing the themes, techniques, and emotional core that allow films to reach and impact diverse audiences worldwide with Farrukh Dhondy, Anna Saura, Tanishta Chatterjee, Vani Tripathi Tikoo and Lucy Walker. Each panel discussion would be a new learning for all present at the festival. *Culture As Context for Cinematic Storytelling* with panelist Dr. Sacchidanad Joshi, Amish Tripathi, Bharat Bala will be a major learning

experience for the audience. *Mastering the Unseen* with Manoj Bajpayee, Sunil Srinivasan; *Centenary Special: ANR - Celebrating the Life and Works of Akkineni Nageswara Rao*. This centenary special will celebrate the legendary actor & producer Akkineni Nageswara Rao (ANR), whose contributions to Indian cinema have been unparalleled, with celebrated actor and his son Nagarajuna being the speaker; *From Big Screen to Streaming* in conversation with Manisha Koirala and Vikramaditya Motwane; *Celebrating the Life and Works of Raj Kapoor - 'The Greatest Showman'* with Ranbir Kapoor; *Empowering Change: Women Leading the Way in Cinema* with giving women led hits Kriti Sanon and Rudrani Chatteraj. Addition will be *Lata Mangeshkar Memorial Talk: Musical Theatre in India* with A R Rahman.

Masterclasses by the pioneers in the cinema industry, giving insights about the highs and lows will be conducted every year on all the days of the 7-day festival. *Power of Failure*, a masterclass by Anupam Kher will be sharing his journey, highlighting how failures acted as the catalyst for his growth and success. Another one by Philip Noyce on *How to Succeed in New Hollywood*. To all this will be the addition of Stephen Woolley an English filmmaker giving a masterclass on *Film Production and its Stages* will be valuable. The National Film Development Corporation (NFDC) will also be hosting the much-anticipated *Film Bazaar* from November 20 to 24, transforming Goa into a bustling hub for filmmakers, producers, distributors, and cinema enthusiasts from across the globe. Since its inception, *Film Bazaar* has established itself as South Asia's premier film market, providing a platform for fresh voices and unique cinematic narratives from the region to take the global stage. The *Film Bazaar* has since grown to become the international film market for South Asia. It serves as a meeting place for prospective creative and financial cooperation between South Asian and foreign filmmakers, producers, sales representatives, and festival programmers. From November 20 to 24, 2024, the 18th *Film Bazaar* at IFFI 2024 will take place at the Marriott Resort in Goa. This year, the IFFI promises not just a cinematic showcase but a festival brimming with cultural exchange, artistic celebration, and an unwavering commitment to the future of films in the country and globally. From illuminating conversations to inspiring mentorship and unforgettable screenings, IFFI 2024 is set to transcend expectations, offering a truly transformative experience for film lovers worldwide.

most revered honours, while the Silver Peacock Awards for Best Director, Actor, and Actress highlight individual excellence. In recent years, IFFI has expanded its awards to reflect evolving cinematic trends. A new award of Best Debut Indian Director has been an addition this year to recognise young filmmaking talent across India.

The ICFT UNESCO Gandhi Medal honours films promoting peace and tolerance, and the Special Jury Award highlights outstanding narrative and technical achievements, often bringing unique works into the spotlight.

The festival's commitment to fresh talent shines through the Best Debut Feature Film award, which encourages bold new voices, while the Indian Panorama section fosters Indian cinematic diversity. To embrace modern storytelling forms, IFFI introduced awards for animation, VR, and documentaries, alongside the "Excellence in Film Craft" award for behind-the-scenes talent. The Satyajit Ray Lifetime Achievement Award will be awarded to the Philip Noyce of Australia.

This year, new categories—such as the "Innovative Use of Technology" and a sustainability-focused award—honour advancements like CGI and address global issues, positioning IFFI as a festival at the forefront of positive change.

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RESTORED CLASSICS OF THEIR ICONIC FILMS, INCLUDING AWARA (1951), HUM DONO (1961), DEVADASU (1953), DADASAHEB PHALKE'S KALIYA MARDAN (1919), AMITABH BACHCHAN'S DEBUT MOVIE SAAT HINDUSTANI (1969), AND SEEMABADDHA (1971) WILL BE SCREENED AT THE FESTIVAL.
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Screenings, as usual, will remain a core attraction, with highly anticipated films like the world premiere of *Zero Se Restart* on 21st November 2024 in INOX Panjim, *Jab Khuli Kitaab* by Saurabh Shukla on 26th November 2024 in INOX Panjim, Asia premiere of *Hazaar Vela Sholay Pehlila Manus* on 24th November 2024 in INOX Panjim, Asia premiere of *The Mehta Boys*, directed by Boman Irani on 25th November 2024 in INOX Panjim.

Michael Gracey's Better Man, an Australian film that provides an engrossing look at the life of music artist Robbie Williams, who is played as a chimpanzee by Jonno Davies in a ground-breaking motion-capture performance, will have its Asia premiere to kick off the festival. The honours of the opening feature film of the 55th edition of the IFFI will be done by Swatantra Veer Savarkar, directed by Randeep Hooda, a powerful portrayal of a revolutionary figure. Adding to that the opening non-feature film will be *Ghar Jaisa Kuch* directed by Harsh Sangani. Restored classics of their iconic films, including *Awara* (1951), *Hum Dono* (1961), *Devadasu* (1953), *Dadasaheb Phalke's Kaliya Mardan* (1919), Amitabh Bachchan's debut movie *Saat Hindustani* (1969), and *Seemabaddha* (1971) will be screened at the festival.



A SPIRITUAL GETAWAY

Kurukshetra, one of Hinduism's most revered pilgrimage destinations, is where ancient spirituality converges with modern comforts, writes **SANTANU GANGULY**

Though Kurukshetra is a significant pilgrimage site for Hindus and is located close to Delhi, it has not always attracted large numbers of visitors. Mentioned in various Hindu scriptures, particularly the *Mahabharata*, Kurukshetra holds great spiritual importance. According to *Acharya Some Nath Gautam*, priest at the *Katyayani Temple*, visiting all the ancient temples here would require at least a year. This journey, known as the *Kurukshetra 84 Kos Parikrama*, encompasses numerous sacred and historical sites. However, modern pilgrims often focus on the most important temples, holy places, and archaeological monuments due to time constraints.

The city offers a variety of accommodation options, from budget-friendly 2- and 3- star hotels to numerous dharamshalas. For those seeking luxury, the *Noormahal Palace* in Karnal stands out as Haryana's only 5-star hotel, offering exceptional amenities such as a spa, jacuzzi, modern gym, and fine dining. Blending heritage with modern comforts, this ultra-luxurious hotel features the *Frontier Mail* restaurant, housed in a life-sized train compartment from the historic *Frontier Mail*. The restaurant's ambience evokes the 19th century, with interiors reflecting the Mumbai-Peshawar route.

A visit to Kurukshetra typically begins at *Brahma Sarovar*, Asia's largest man-made water body, stretching 3,600 feet long, 1,500 feet wide, and 45 feet deep. According to Hindu mythology, the lake was created by Lord Brahma at the dawn of the universe. *Brahma Sarovar*, along with the nearby *Sannihit Sarovar*, is fed by underground channels from the *Bakra Nangal Dam*. The ancient *Shiva Temple* here is believed to have been established by Lord Shiva himself. Between the two lakes lies the



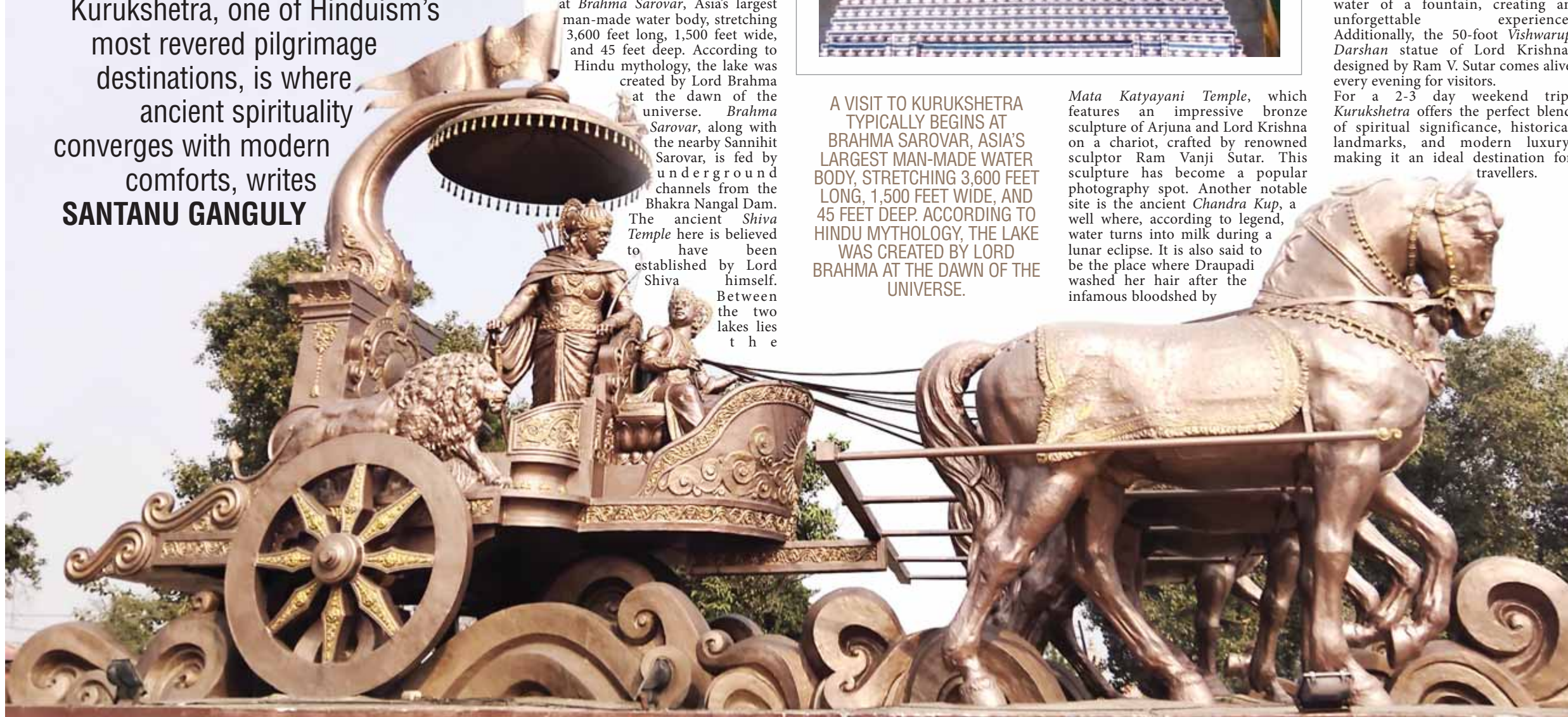
A VISIT TO KURUKSHETRA TYPICALLY BEGINS AT BRAHMA SAROVAR, ASIA'S LARGEST MAN-MADE WATER BODY, STRETCHING 3,600 FEET LONG, 1,500 FEET WIDE, AND 45 FEET DEEP. ACCORDING TO HINDU MYTHOLOGY, THE LAKE WAS CREATED BY LORD BRAHMA AT THE DAWN OF THE UNIVERSE.

Mata Katyayani Temple, which features an impressive bronze sculpture of Arjuna and Lord Krishna on a chariot, crafted by renowned sculptor Ram Vanji Sutar. This sculpture has become a popular photography spot. Another notable site is the ancient *Chandra Kup*, a well where, according to legend, water turns into milk during a lunar eclipse. It is also said to be the place where Draupadi washed her hair after the infamous bloodshed by

Dushasana. The *Kali Kamli Temple*, built by Kali Baba of Bengal in the 19th century, is a siddha peeth located near *Brahma Sarovar*. *Devi Kup*, also known as the *BhadraKali Temple*, is one of the 51 *Shakti Peethas* and Haryana's only such temple. *Pandit Satpal Sharma* explains that the temple holds significance for Lord Krishna and Balarama, who visited before the *Kurukshetra War*. Devotees continue to donate clay, ceramic, or silver horses here, a tradition rooted in sacred history. Special pujas for *Maa Kali* and *Lord Shani* are held every Saturday.

The *Shthanu Mahadev Temple* is another important site, where Lord Krishna and the Pandavas sought Lord Shiva's blessings before the war. Nearby, the historical *Harsh ka Tilla* and *Sheikh Chillli's Tomb* offer fascinating insights into the region's past. History enthusiasts can also explore the *Sri Krishna Museum* and *Kurukshetra Panorama*, which showcases key artifacts. For children and astronomy lovers, the *Kalpna Chawla Planetarium* provides a fun and educational experience. In the coming years, the *ISKCON Temple*, currently under construction and expected to be completed by 2026, will be a must-visit site. At *Jyotisar*, where Lord Krishna delivered the *Bhagavad Gita* to Arjuna, visitors can enjoy an impressive light and sound show, which reflects on the water of a fountain, creating an unforgettable experience. Additionally, the 50-foot *Vishwarup Darshan* statue of Lord Krishna, designed by Ram V. Sutar comes alive every evening for visitors.

For a 2-3 day weekend trip, *Kurukshetra* offers the perfect blend of spiritual significance, historical landmarks, and modern luxury, making it an ideal destination for travellers.



EXPLORING DAMAN

A Coastal Escape with Cultural Riches

Nestled between Gujarat and Maharashtra, Daman enchants travellers with its unique blend of colonial allure, scenic beaches, and relaxed vibe, writes **NEETA LAL**

The lovely city of Daman, an erstwhile Portuguese colony, offers a unique blend of colonial charm with a laid-back vibe. The administrative capital of the union territory of *Dadra and Nagar Haveli*, it is located between Gujarat and Maharashtra and attracts high footfall from a diverse set of travellers. Peppered with colonial buildings showcasing a rich syncretic culture, the city's stately *Nani Daman Fort* and the *Church of Bom Jesus* give one a taste of history, while *Jampore Beach* and *Devka Beach* make for Instagram-friendly settings for a day of relaxation.

But perhaps what makes Daman such a terrific destination for weekend getaways is its tourism infrastructure, including smooth interconnecting motorways, buzzy restaurants, and good hotels. Our abode for a staycation is the award-winning *The Deltin Daman*, the city's only five-star hotel. Known for its stellar service and facilities, it mercifully comes without the high tariff of upscale hotels in Mumbai and other metros. A world-class spa, gourmet cuisine at its multiple restaurants, a large swimming pool, health club, gym, and plush accommodation ticked all the boxes for a fabulous and memorable stay. For business travellers, the hotel houses 30,000 sq ft of business space catering to large events such as corporate conferences and weddings. The hotel's sustainability efforts are also commendable, with strict



procedures in place to prevent water waste in kitchens, guest rooms, and laundry, along with recycling used water for its expansive gardens. As the *Deltin* group is synonymous with world-class casinos, the theme is reflected in the hotel's design and architectural elements. Its stunning lobby flaunts a chandelier featuring hearts, spades, diamonds, and clubs (the four suits in a deck of cards) strung together. This theme is also reflected in the glass walls enclosing the lobby. The hotel's ergonomic and well-furnished rooms are equipped with HD TVs, HD satellite programming, mini-bars, high-speed internet connectivity, in-room safes, 24x7 room service, and early check-in options, among others. Our Presidential Suite also came with an efficient butler who took care of our every need, including



restaurant and spa bookings as well as sightseeing tours. Close proximity to *Jampore Beach*, *Mirasol Water Park*, *Devka Beach*, *Dominican Monastery*, and *Moti Daman Fort* made our local explorations seamless and pleasurable.



What's a good vacation without good food? Indeed, for gastronomes like us, the hotel turned out to be a delight with three award-winning restaurants to explore. One of our lunches was at the *Emperor* restaurant, which features an extensive menu with *Korean*, *Chinese*, *Thai*, and *Japanese* offerings. Interestingly, the chefs here have reinvented many dishes to offer an imaginative take on classics. Thus, our fusion lunch featured *pillowy soft lotus stem and chicken Chettinad baos* as well as *black sesame chicken tikka baos*. The *prawn and chicken dim sums* were similarly delicious, while the *garlic-infused noodles and chicken in Hainanese sauce* transported us to China, sans passports and air tickets! Another lunch at *The Vegas all-day dining* was also a treat for the taste buds. The spacious eatery offers multi-cuisine buffets with a vast selection of salads, Indian and continental dishes, desserts, and more. The buffet includes a separate section for Jain food – so vegetarians can rejoice too. Being unabashed carnivores, we dug

into flavour-packed *laal maas*, piping hot breads, *gobhi and bhindi sabzi*, *raita*, and *salad*. Dessert was the *creamiest ras malai* on this side of the *Daman Ganga river*, garnished with a silver varq and date syrup!

Semi-comatose from so much good food, we pledged to skip dinner. But that was not to be, as we were informed that the chefs had prepared choice delicacies for us at the poolside *Mediterranean-inspired BBQ and grill restaurant, Sky High*. After eyeing the selection of inventive dips with *Middle Eastern snacks, empanadas, and pizzas* with innovative toppings, our pledge to "go easy" on food went out the window!

To slake our thirst, we visited *Whiskys Bar*, which offers an exclusive collection of single malts. The *Poolside Bar* and *Juice Bar* kept us refreshed with health drinks and fresh juices. There's no shortage of entertainment at the hotel either. *The Den* – an atmospheric indoor family space – features foosball, billiards, carom, chess, and more. There's even a creche for young parents who want to leave their little ones under supervised care while they unwind. The property's three azure swimming pools (including a kids' pool) are a major attraction. After a quick swim on day two, we headed to the spa, where a

rejuvenating body massage and facial left us feeling reborn!

After spending three wonderful days at *The Deltin Daman*, we're led to wonder how, in today's fiercely competitive hospitality landscape, the hotel consistently maintains such high standards. "As ours is the only five-star hotel in Daman, our top-notch service and facilities are unmatched by any other hotel in the area," says the hotel's dynamic general manager, *Akarsh Mathur*. "We cater to all requirements, whether it's a weekend getaway or an ideal wedding, by customising our services to suit all needs. Our spacious rooms are the largest in their category, and our ample indoor and outdoor event spaces, as well as our large river-shaped swimming pool, are among the features that make our hotel a top choice for discerning guests. Our F&B has also received rave reviews."

Mathur believes that with higher disposable incomes and "revenge travel," Indian guests are prepared to pay competitive rates for excellent services. "The demand for upscale local tourism destinations has grown exponentially, and hotels no longer have to rely on foreign tourists from overseas to fill their rooms. If you provide great service and pay attention to guests' needs, the property will always be buzzing," he adds. Indeed, who can fault that flawless logic?

Neeta Lal is an international award-nominated, Delhi-based editor and senior journalist.

