

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.

Continued on page 5

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.

Continued on page 5



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.

Continued on page 5

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.

Continued on page 5

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/m³ to 386 µg/m³. 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/m³)-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/m³ 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/m³ on Diwali night. The highest levels were observed at Nehru Nagar, reaching 994 µg/m³, followed closely by Anand Vihar at 992 µg/m³, Pusa IMD at 985 µg/m³, Wazirpur at 980 µg/m³, and JLN Stadium at 963 µg/m³. Other affected areas are Okhla, CRRJ-Mathura 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.

Continued on page 5

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



8 MAY 1961
1 NOVEMBER 2024

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 Lakme 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.

Alarming surge in air pollution levels

IITR REPORT ON AMBIENT AIR QUALITY



PNS ■ LUCKNOW

The IITR report on Ambient Air Quality following Diwali 2024 reveals alarming increases in particulate matter levels. On Diwali night, PM2.5 levels surged to 324 µg/m³, representing a staggering increase of 184% from 114 µg/m³ recorded on the pre-Diwali night.

noted that while pollution levels were significantly elevated this year, they were somewhat lower compared to the previous year. The report detailed ambient air and noise monitoring conducted at four representative sites in Lucknow, which included two residential and two commercial areas.

Vikas Nagar the noisiest

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

The noise levels were measured at four locations during pre-Diwali, post-Diwali, and on Diwali night to assess the impact of firecracker use in the city. The noise levels were monitored during the daytime between 10 am and 2 pm, and at night between 9 pm and 12 midnight, for 20 minutes at each location.

age the eardrum and impair hearing ability. High noise levels can induce temporary or permanent hearing impairment. Firecrackers may also trigger issues such as annoyance, irritation, hypertension, stress, hearing loss, headaches, sleep disturbances, and respiratory problems such as allergic bronchitis, bronchial asthma, sinusitis, rhinitis, and laryngitis.

environments, elevated spaces adjacent to and higher than residential areas should be designed to easily disperse pollution, and such places should be designated for the combustion of firecrackers.

µg/m³ for PM10. Pre-Diwali, the 12-hour mean concentration of PM10 ranged from 158 to 207 µg/m³, averaging 181 µg/m³ during the day. In contrast, during Diwali, the average PM10 level soared to 451 µg/m³ at night.

increased to 33 µg/m³ on Diwali night, a 50% rise from the pre-Diwali measurement of 22 µg/m³. Nitrogen dioxide (NO₂) levels also remained within limits but increased to 44 µg/m³ from 33 µg/m³, representing a 33% rise.

the winter season begins in late October or early November, a drop in temperature and low wind speed creates favourable conditions for higher air pollution.

Inmate dies in jail, kin demand investigation

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

An inmate, Shanu Singh (27), died under suspicious circumstances in the Lucknow District Jail on Friday. Jail officials stated that Shanu died of a heart attack, but the deceased's mother contested this claim.

When contacted, Cantonment SHO Gurpreet acknowledged that the police were aware of the situation but claimed not to have much information. She then disconnected the call and ceased answering further calls.

death, arguing that such a claim did not make sense. The bereaved kin have appealed for an impartial investigation into the incident. Shanu's brother stated that their mother had seen Shanu shortly before his death and he appeared fit at that time.



NOTICE

I Have Changed My Name From Mohammad Rizwanul Haque To Rizwanul Haque S/O Nurul Haque R/O Golden Compound Plot No. 20 Araj No.73 Pokharpur Jajmau Kanpur.

NOTICE

I Have Changed My Name Spelling From Zainab Fatma To Zainab Fatima W/O Ziaul Haque R/O Golden Compound Plot No. 20 Araj No.73 Pokharpur Jajmau Kanpur.

NOTICE

My son Shivratna Singh is serving in the army whose Army N. is 3204260P Rank NK, my date of birth has been erroneously recorded as 10.06.1950 in the service record, my correct date of birth as per Aadhar card is 01.01.1949.

NOTICE

My husband Shivratna Singh is serving in the army, whose Army N. is 3204260P Rank NK, my date of birth has been erroneously recorded as 20.06.1985 in his service record, my correct date of birth as per Aadhar card is 05.03.1992.

NOTICE

I am working in the army, my Army N. is 3204260P Rank NK, in my service record my son's name is Atharv Pratap Singh, date of birth 17.10.2017 has been wrongly recorded, whereas according to the Aadhar card my son's correct name is Atharv Pratap Singh, date of birth 17.10.2018.

NOTICE

I am serving in the army, my Army N. is 3204260P Rank NK, in my service record my daughter's name Ananya Singh date of birth has been wrongly recorded as 11.12.2014, whereas according to the Aadhar card the correct name of my daughter is Ananya Singh date of birth is 11.12.2016.

Shivling, Nandi idol vandalised

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

Unidentified miscreants desecrated the Shivling and vandalised the idol of Nandi on the night of Diwali in Dhakwa village, in the Kasmandi Chowki area of Malihabad. A broken idol of Lord Nandi was later recovered from the canal. It is reported that this Shiv temple was built in 1947, making the idol 77 years old.

broken and damaged pieces of the Nandi idol were on the floor, with parts of the idol missing. Villagers indicated that the incident took place between 2 and 3 am. The angry villagers promptly informed the police about the incident, and the police arrived at the scene to investigate.

"Based on this, the accused are being identified. The idols have not been broken; they have been taken away. Investigation is ongoing," he said. However, the villagers contested the ACP's claim, insisting that the idols had indeed been broken and removed.

local police were informed, and a team that arrived initiated an investigation while also calming the upset villagers. The police asserted that the accused would be arrested soon.

Ornaments worth ₹15L stolen from jewellery shop

Lucknow (PNS): Taking advantage of lax police patrolling following Diwali, thieves made off with ornaments valued at over Rs 15 lakh from a jewellery shop in Indira Nagar during the night between Friday and Saturday. The miscreants broke the shutter of the shop to gain entry. The police are currently investigating the CCTV footage.

Floating structures bring water to remote villages in Sonbhadra

Sonbhadra (PTI): Floating structures, including a pump house and pipelines installed on water in the Dhanraul Dam, are providing an innovative solution to deliver water to local population in hundreds of villages in Uttar Pradesh's Sonbhadra district.

complications due to forest land regulations. "Considering these factors, technical experts decided to establish a floating pump house in the Dhanraul Dam," said Rohit Yadav, Additional District Magistrate for Namami Gange.

introduced 12 drinking water projects in Sonbhadra, benefiting lakhs of families across the district, according to officials. Villagers also expressed satisfaction with the scheme.

16-year-old Dalit girl raped by neighbour

Lucknow (PTI): A case of alleged rape of a 16-year-old Dalit girl by her neighbour has come to light in a village in the Ballia district of Uttar Pradesh, a police official said, adding that an accused has been detained in this connection.

ious sections of the BNS on Friday. He said that the accused's sister is the girl's friend, and added that she accused is her acquaintance. Additional Superintendent of Police Kripa Shankar said the crime scene was inspected with the forensic team and the accused has been detained and is being questioned.

gone to a doctor's clinic with her aunt. Shahid, who works at a salon nearby, called the girl and sexually harassed her. He also took some objectionable pictures of her. Upon returning home, the girl narrated the incident to her family who then approached the police, they said.

Following the incident, members of the Vishva Hindu Mahasangh and Bajrang Sena reached the police station and staged a protest, demanding action against the accused.

SP MLA booked for threatening witnesses

Varanasi (PTI): An FIR has been registered here against Samajwadi Party (SP) MLA Om Prakash Singh and four others for allegedly breaking into the house of a witness in a 2021 case against him and threatening him and his family members, police said on Saturday. The FIR was registered at Bhetpur police

station on Friday on the directions of a special MP-MLA court, they said. On the night of June 26, 2023, SP MLA from Jamania Om Prakash Singh, his son Ritesh Singh, Chittipur Corporator O P Singh, Nand Lal Keshri and an unidentified person barged into the house of Gautam Ghosh in

the Sundarpur area. Ghosh is the main witness in a case registered against Om Prakash Singh at Siga police station here in 2021, Bhetpur Station House Officer (SHO) Vijay Kumar Shukla said. The accused hurled abuses at Ghosh's wife and threatened to break her arms and legs if he testified in the case.

The same day, Ghosh received death threats on his mobile phone, the SHO said. Following the orders of the MP-MLA court, a case was registered against Om Prakash Singh, his son, OP Singh, Keshri and an unidentified person under relevant provisions of the BNS on Friday, Shukla said.

Man hangs self to death

Lucknow (PNS): In a tragic incident in the Gautampalli area on Thursday evening, a man identified as Shiva Valmiki (32) allegedly took his own life shortly after dropping his wife at the market for Diwali shopping. Shiva, a class IV employee at a government office in Jawahar Bhawan, was found hanging in his home around 5 pm.

Woman alleges attack by village head, associates

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

A village pradhan and his associates allegedly assaulted a woman after she refused to allow them to consume alcohol near her home on Diwali, in Malihabad's Amaniganj village. The attack reportedly escalated later in the day when her son and nephews were beaten in the market hours after they filed a police complaint, leaving one critically injured.

when neighbours gathered. Uma subsequently filed a complaint at Malihabad police station. However, about three hours later, her son Mohit Yadav, along with his cousins Rahul and Abhishek, was ambushed on their way back from the market. The accused allegedly surrounded the trio and assaulted them with sticks. Mohit sustained severe head injuries and was rushed to KGMU Trauma Centre, where he remains in critical condition.

राष्ट्रीय प्रौद्योगिकी संस्थान, कुरुक्षेत्र
NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF TECHNOLOGY KURUKSHETRA
 (Under the Ministry of Education, Govt. of India)
 KURUKSHETRA-136119 (HARYANA)
 Advt. No.: 96/2024

CONVOCATION - 2024

The 19th Convocation of NIT Kurukshetra will be held on 17th November, 2024. Hon'ble Governor of Haryana Shri Bandaru Dattatreya Ji will be the Chief Guest of the convocation. All eligible degree recipients are invited to attend the convocation. The final list of the degree recipients is uploaded on the Institute website. For registration schedule and other details related to the convocation, please visit the Institute website www.nitkr.ac.in regularly.

Sd/-
Registrar I/c

OFFICE OF THE CHIEF ENGINEER, MEGA LIFT BHUBANESWAR
 Plot no. A-8/2, Bhoinagar, Bhubaneswar, Odisha, PIN-751022
 E-Mail: cemlpwr.od@gmail.com
Government of Odisha "e" Procurement Notice
 Bid Identification No. 04ML/2024-25

On Line open tender is invited for EPC Contract (Turn Key Basis) for Mega Lift, Odisha

- Name of Work: Operation and Maintenance of existing 15 nos. schemes with intake points in Tel Basin having command area between 500 Ha. to 2000 Ha. in Megalift Cluster-XV in the districts of Sonepur, Boudh & Bolangir comprising all electro-mechanical & instrumentation equipments installed in pump house & MCC room including pumps and motors, switchyard & Transmission lines, intake well, Sump well, Rising main, Distribution chamber, Gravity main, complete distribution network by UGPL covering culturable command area of 20404.69 Ha. with operation of maintenance of all its 15 completed schemes including its power system connectivity, proper distribution of water to the ayacut including watch & ward with testing and calibration of all electro-mechanical components before the start of each irrigation period in the O & M period of 10 years on "Turn-key basis".
- O & M Period: 120 (One hundred twenty) calendar months.
- Date & Time of availability of bid document in the portal : 08.11.2024, 10 A.M.
- Last date/Time for receipt of bids in the portal : 07.12.2024 up to 5:00 P.M.
- Name & address of the officer inviting Bid : Chief Engineer, Megalift

A-8/2, Bhoi Nagar, Bhubaneswar, Pin - 751022
 Further details can be seen from the e-procurement portal "<https://tenders.odisha.gov.in/>"
 Chief Engineer, Megalift Bhubaneswar

OIPR-32504/11/0006/2425

राष्ट्रीय प्रौद्योगिकी संस्थान, कुरुक्षेत्र
NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF TECHNOLOGY KURUKSHETRA
 (Under the Ministry of Education, Govt. of India)
 KURUKSHETRA-136119 (HARYANA)
 Advt.No.95/2024

Admission to Ph.D. Program in Even Semester of Academic Year 2024-25

National Institute of Technology, Kurukshetra invites online applications via Google Form from Indian and Foreign nationals for admission to Doctor of Philosophy (Ph.D.) Degree Programmes on Full Time (Institute/CSIR-UGC-NET-JRF, Project), Visvesvaraya Fellowship Scheme, Self-Financed Full Time and Part Time seats for Academic Year 2024-25. Number of Seats, Online Application Form Link, and other relevant details along with Ph.D. Regulation are available on the Institute website: www.nitkr.ac.in under Admission 2024-> Ph.D. tab.

All interested candidates may fill the Google Form latest by **November 20, 2024, 03:00 p.m.** If the application is incomplete or any information is found misleading/false at any point during or after the admission process, the candidate's candidature/admission will be cancelled and the application fee will not be refunded in any case. Please visit Institute website regularly for any announcement or updates in this regard.

Sd/-
Registrar I/c

BJP-SP 'alliance' fighting UP bypolls: Maya

PTI ■ LUCKNOW

Bahujan Samaj Party (BSP) chief Mayawati on Saturday accused the BJP and Samajwadi Party (SP) of being "hand in glove" in the run-up to the November 13 bypolls to nine Assembly constituencies in Uttar Pradesh in which the BSP is going solo on all seats. Addressing a press conference here, the former UP chief minister also slammed the two parties for their "misleading" slogans — BJP's 'Batenge toh Katenge' (divided we fall) and SP's 'Judenge toh Jeetenge' (united we win) — and said these are designed to divert people's attention from the real issues.



Bahujan Samaj Party president Mayawati addressing a press conference in Lucknow on Saturday

Comparing the rule of BSP, SP and now the BJP in Uttar Pradesh, Mayawati pitched her regime (2007-2012) as the best in terms of law and order. "BSP se Judenge toh Aage Badhenge, Surakshit Rahenge (people will progress and remain safe in BSP's company)," Mayawati said, as she reiterated her "BJP-SP together" charge to blunt SP's claim of BSP being "BJP's B team." "Ever since the bypolls were announced and the BSP decided to go solo on all nine seats, the BJP-SP alliance has lost its sleep. Except for a couple of bypolls, BSP has not contested by-elections here," Mayawati said at the presser. "They have so far been contesting elections with a mutual understanding, but now with the BSP contesting the bypolls, the troubles of their 'alliance' have increased. "To divert public attention, now the BJP has invoked 'Batenge toh Katenge' slogan while SP says 'Judenge toh Jeetenge' and are busy popularising them," Mayawati added. The BSP supremo's remarks

came hours after Deputy Chief Minister Keshav Prasad Maurya sought to delink the BJP from the 'Batenge toh Katenge' phrase used by Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath at Agra in August this year whose "spirit" was subsequently endorsed by the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS). "We will not let the opposition succeed with its dirty game of calling 'Batenge toh Katenge' BJP's slogan. Our party's slogan is the one coined by our top leader Prime Minister Narendra Modi, which is 'Sabka Saath, Sabka Vikas.' 'Batenge toh Katenge' was part of a speech, and not a party slogan," Maurya told PTI. Maurya later posted on X: "Ek hain toh Safe hain" (united we are safe) — this proclamation by Prime Minister Narendra Modi is the guarantee of a developed India and the well-being of all. 'Ek Bharat-Samath Bharat' Meanwhile, Mayawati said that people must not fall for such "empty" slogans as the "BJP has proved that its rule in UP

has been the best." "To hide their weaknesses, the BJP and SP are going to the people with such slogans but the fact is that their alliance is misleading the voters, something which the masses need to be aware of," she said. She also alleged that during SP's rule, the government was run mostly by criminals and mafia, and not by officials. "And now it seems the SP is trying to discreetly suggest to such criminals that they would be safe only if they help the SP and its alliance win the bypolls to be in a position to form the government later. We have information on this," she claimed. "We are only trying to tell the voters that they will be safe only if they stay away from these two parties. The time has come for the people to reject the parties that promote such vulgar, vicious and narrow-minded slogans. That is why these bypolls are so important," Mayawati added. The bypolls are scheduled for November 13 in Katehari

SP, BJP locked in slogan war

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

Ahead of the by-elections to nine seats of the Uttar Pradesh assembly, the ruling Bharatiya Janata Party and the opposition Samajwadi Party are locked in an intense war of slogans. The salvo was first fired by Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath when he gave the call to Hindus to unite or perish — "batenge toh katenge". Samajwadi Party, pursuing caste-based identity politics which is per se divisive politics, is rattled by the slogan. The party has already forged the PDA (Pichhda, Dalit, Alpsankhyak) social coalition to stop the saffron juggernaut in the state political arena. The BJP has targeted the SP and the opposition INDIA block for pursuing the pernicious agenda of uniting Muslims and dividing Hindu community for its narrow political ends. Making desperate attempts to sound offensive, SP is struggling to counter the gauntlet thrown by the BJP to consolidate the Hindu voters ahead of the by-elections to nine seats of UP assembly. The SP has launched a poster war with the slogan 'judenge toh jeetenge' (united we will win) in response to the offensive by the BJP. Polling for nine assembly seats in UP will take place on

November 13, with the campaigning period set to end on November 11. While the BJP has engaged all its ministers in the constituencies going to bypolls, the SP, barring its candidate in Karhal, has seen its leaders largely absent from the campaign trail. However, campaigning is expected to intensify following the conclusion of the festival week. Akhilesh Yadav wrote in a post on X, "Their 'negative slogan' is a symbol of their disappointment and failure." He continued, "This slogan has proven that the 10 per cent of the voters they have left are also on the verge of slipping away. That is why they are attempting to unite them through fear, but nothing of the sort will happen. Negative slogans have an impact; in fact, since the emergence of this disappointing slogan, their remaining supporters are even more disheartened, realising that those they thought were strong have shown weakness, despite being in power." He added, "The 'ideal state' envisioned in our country is based on 'abhaya', not 'bhaya' (fear). It is true that only the fearful sell fear, because only those who possess fear will market it." Yadav further stated, "This slogan ('batenge toh katenge')

will be recorded as the 'worst slogan' in the history of the country and will serve as the last 'literal nail' in the coffin of his (Yogi Adityanath's) political downfall." He advised the BJP to change its negative views and attitudes, suggesting that a positive outlook is beneficial for the country and society. "Today's society should be positive; the BJP is not needed!" he concluded, using the hashtags #NoToNegativePolitics. In response to Yadav's lengthy tweet, UP's Deputy Chief Minister Keshav Prasad Maurya mocked, "SP chief Shri Akhilesh Yadav's PDA is actually an illusion—it is not an alliance of backward-Dalit-minority, but of 'familyism-riot-criminal'. On the other hand, BJP's 'PDA' stands for Progress, Development and Good Governance! The BJP has propelled the country forward on the path of development by firmly fulfilling its commitment to good governance and a corruption-free India. Now the public knows who has brought the real PDA: the one who believes in the progress of the country, and the one who only believes in false slogans." He added the hashtags #Part_of_Development, #GoodGovernance, and #Corruption_Free_India.

(Ambedkar Nagar), Karhal (Mainpuri), Meerapur (Muzaffarnagar), Ghaziabad, Majhawan (Mirzapur), Sishamau (Kanpur city), Khair (Aligarh), Phulpur (Prayagraj) and Kundarki (Moradabad). Votes will be counted on November 23.

Eight of the seats fell vacant after their MLAs were elected as MPs in the Lok Sabha polls earlier this year, while the byelection in Sishamau was necessitated following the disqualification of SP MLA Irfan Solanki, who has been convicted in a criminal case.

In the 2022 Assembly elections, Sishamau, Katehari, Karhal, Milkipur and Kundarki were won by the SP, while the BJP emerged winner in Phulpur, Ghaziabad, Majhawan and Khair. The Meerapur seat was won by the Rashtriya Lok Dal (RLD).

Fatwa against SP candidate Naseem Solanki

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

A Barelvi Sunni Muslim cleric has issued a fatwa against Samajwadi Party candidate Naseem Solanki who is contesting by-election from Sisamau constituency in Kanpur Nagar. Her fault was that she visited a Hindu temple and performed puja rituals on the occasion of Diwali. The fatwa was issued by Maulana Mufti Shahabuddin Razvi Barelvi, president of All India Muslim Jamaat. He ruled that Solanki's actions were against Islamic principles, calling her a "criminal under Sharia law" and asking her to seek forgiveness and recite the kalma anew. Naseem Solanki recently visited the Vankhandedshwar Temple and offered 'jalabhishek'. She also lit diyas in the temple as part of the Diwali celebrations. Videos of her acts were widely circulated on social media by Samajwadi Party supporters. However, the video sparked controversy among Muslim voters and within the Muslim community. Maulana Shahabuddin Razvi Barelvi said in a statement that as per the basic tenets of Islam, idol worship was strictly forbidden. "In Islam, only Allah is considered worthy of worship, and any form of idol worship, be it by a man or woman, is 'haram' and impermissible," he added. He stated that the practice of worshipping idols in any form is seen as a 'fitna' or deviation from Islamic principles, rendering the person a "criminal" in the eyes of Sharia.

He added that Solanki's actions were self-chosen and not performed under any apparent pressure, suggesting she willingly participated in the rituals. The maluna urged her to repent, stating, "As per Sharia, she must ask for forgiveness and read the kalma again to reaffirm her faith." The cleric said that if someone, regardless of gender, engages in such acts under compulsion or without understanding the implications, they could repent without severe penalties under Islamic law. In such cases, individuals are advised to seek forgiveness through prayer and refrain from similar acts in future, as these may otherwise endanger their faith and alignment with Islamic teachings, he added. "If done unknowingly or under duress, they should repent and recite the kalma, reinforcing their commitment to Islam," he said. Naseem Solanki is the wife of jailed former MLA Irfan Solanki. She is contesting the by-election for the Sisamau constituency following her husband's conviction in a criminal and his disqualification from the membership of the UP assembly. In June this year, Irfan Solanki was imprisoned for harassing a woman, setting her house on fire and beating her son in an attempt to grab her land in Kanpur in 2022. Since her nomination, Naseem Solanki has participated in several community events, including the Vankhandedshwar Temple visit, after which the controversy erupted.

'RLD expanding party base'

Lucknow (PNS): Rashtriya Lok Dal national spokesperson Anil Dubey met party chief and Union minister Jayant Chaudhary in New Delhi on Saturday and held discussions on ensuring the victory of National Democratic Alliance candidates in the UP assembly by-elections and the expansion of the party in Purvanchal, Central and Bundelkhand regions of the state. Talking to newsmen in Lucknow, Dubey said the RLD was expanding its base beyond UP in other states like Jammu and Kashmir where it contested unsuccessfully the recent assembly election. "Our party is gaining popularity among the masses across the country. Our party chief Jayant Chaudhary is a Union minister while the ideology of late prime minister, Bharat Ratna Chaudhary Charan Singh, has pan India recognition. RLD leader late Ajit Singh was also a very popular leader and he always remained in mainstream politics," he said while explaining the factors which added to the credence to RLD at the country level.

UP sets new benchmark in compassionate governance

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

In a heart-warming gesture, Diwali 2024 brought a unique light to women and children shelter homes across Uttar Pradesh. Acting on the directive of Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath, the state officials "adopted" these homes for the festival, spending quality time with the inmates and sharing in the celebrations. This initiative by the Yogi government has set a new benchmark in compassionate governance, as officials dedicated their personal time to bring joy and warmth to the lives of shelter home residents. During the celebrations, officials visited the children's homes with their families, lit lamps with the children, distributed sweets, and checked in on their well-being. For many inmates, the celebration created a rare, joyful family atmosphere. Children expressed how special it felt to celebrate the festival with so

many people, something they had not experienced before. The officials, by spending time and sharing festivities, made the children feel like valued members of society. On the instructions of Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath, Chief Secretary Manoj Kumar Singh issued an order directing officials to "adopt" women's and children's homes across the state and celebrate the festival with the inmates. This initiative brought new energy and joy to these homes, giving the children and women a sense of family connection. The officials went beyond a routine inspection, making a sincere effort to connect emotionally with the children. Thanks to this initiative, Diwali became an unforgettable experience for the young residents. This Diwali, officials not only shared joy but also pledged to support the education of children in women's and children's shelter homes. The government order clarified that offi-

cial are encouraged to assist these children academically at their own level. Many pledged to provide tuition, school supplies, and other educational materials. Chief Minister Yogi's initiative aimed to go beyond formality, fostering a sense of responsibility in society towards these children and women. This distinctive celebration sends a message of societal harmony. Alongside the children, officials lit lamps, created colourful rangolis and celebrated Diwali with sparklers instead of firecrackers. The initiative emphasises that these children are an integral part of society, deserving connection and inclusion. This Diwali initiative fostered a unique bond of harmony between society and the administration, deepening a spirit of service among officials. Their efforts are not only bringing joy to the lives of these children and women but are also conveying a powerful message about the importance of indi-

vidual contributions to society. This approach represents a new model of social service, inspiring a vision for its broader application in the future. Director of Women's Welfare Department Sandeep Kaur highlighted that the initiative aimed to provide emotional and educational support to children and women in care homes across the state. She emphasised that the time spent by officials with the inmates brought a sense of family connection. "This initiative has set a new example of social service, inspiring others to extend their support as well," Kaur said. The Diwali celebration in women's and children's homes this year stands as a remarkable effort by administrative officials to promote a spirit of social service. It brought joy and positivity into the lives of these children and women, with plans to continue similar programmes during future festivals to keep this spirit alive.



UP Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath during 'Janta Darshan' programme at the Gorakhnath Temple, in Gorakhpur district

SI suspended for 'assault' on two officials during road rage in Bahraich

Bahraich (PTI): The Uttar Pradesh Police on Saturday suspended a sub-inspector, acting on a purported video that showed him assaulting two officials, both brothers, after a road accident. Superintendent of Police (SP) Vrinda Shukla, in a statement, said a probe into the video revealed the road rage incident took place in Bahraich district on the day of Diwali. The video of the incident is doing the rounds on social media since Thursday evening. Sub-Inspector Abhishek Singh, in-charge of the Tikoni Bagh police outpost, has been suspended due to allegations that he thrashed two officials on the side of a road, said the statement released by the police media cell on Saturday. The district police chief said, "A video showing Tikoni Bagh outpost in-charge Harikesh Singh engaging in rude behaviour with two youths is circulating on various social media platforms. Taking immediate action, the outpost in-charge has been suspended." According to the police, the complainant Prakash Gupta, a resident of Basheer Ganj in Bahraich's Kotwali Nagar police

station area, said SI Singh allegedly thrashed his two twin sons — Lav Gupta, a civil manager at Ayodhya Airport, and Kush Gupta, a branch manager at Aryavart Bank in Bahraich. Prakash said the incident took place on Thursday when both his sons were riding their Bullet motorcycle through the crowded Basheer Ganj intersection. During this time, Singh was allegedly reversing his private car, which had tinted windows, in an improper manner. Gupta said Lav and Kush collided with Singh's car, causing them to fall and suffer injuries. When the brothers objected to Singh's reckless driving, the officer reportedly became angry. Together with a constable present at the scene, Singh verbally abused the brothers, acted aggressively, and physically assaulted them with kicks and punches, the complainant claimed. Bystanders intervened to separate the officer and the brothers, he said. The victims' father said a complaint regarding the incident was filed with SP Vrinda Shukla and a written complaint was submitted to the Kotwali Nagar police station.

Maha Kumbh 2025 to enhance tourism sector in Prayagraj

PNS ■ PRAYAGRAJ

The Yogi Adityanath government is making efforts to enhance the tourism sector in Uttar Pradesh with the upcoming Maha Kumbh in Prayagraj poised to play a crucial role in this initiative. It is anticipated that over 45,000 families will benefit from direct or indirect employment opportunities linked to this grand event. Notably, to boost tourism, a series of training programmes are being conducted across Prayagraj. These initiatives aim to enhance the skills of vendors and service providers, ensuring they are well-prepared to cater to the influx of visitors during the Maha Kumbh. In addition to supporting existing businesses, these training programmes are expected to create new sources of employment around various religious tourist sites, further contributing to the economic growth of the region. The government has undertaken several initiatives to revitalise the tourism sector in Uttar Pradesh, including approving the new Tourism Policy 2022 on November 16, 2022, that enhanced tourism in the state. The policy aims to attract

an investment of Rs 20,000 crore and create jobs for 10 lakh people. A key focus is to connect service providers in the tourism industry with skill development and management training. The Prayagraj Maha Kumbh is serving as a major platform for this effort. Regional Tourism Officer of Prayagraj, Aparajita Singh, mentioned that a training campaign has been launched for all service providers who will interact with tourists during the Maha Kumbh. This includes training for boatmen, tour guides, street vendors and others in skill development and management. The Yogi government is enhancing the role of boatmen who operate in the rivers near religious sites in Uttar Pradesh by increasing their income and developing their skills. The Tourism department is providing training to 2,000 boatmen for this purpose. A memorandum of understanding has been signed with Manyavar Kanshiram Tourism Management Institute and another institution to facilitate this training. So far, 300 boatmen have received skill development training, enabling them to take on the additional role of

river guides alongside their boating duties. This initiative aims to create job opportunities for thousands of boatmen and improve the overall environment of tourist destinations. To further boost tourism, the Tourism department is also focused on enhancing the capabilities of service providers at these sites. To achieve this, they are offering skill development and management training to 1,000 tour guides in Prayagraj. This training is being led by Assistant Professor Prakhari Tiwari from Manyavar Kanshiram Tourism Management Institute in Lucknow. According to Tiwari, seven batches of tour guides have already been trained, with 420 tour guides now ready to provide their services after completing the programme. There is a pressing need to build a pool of trained workers in the tourism sector to ensure quality service for visitors. This skilled manpower will be crucial for accommodating the large number of tourists expected at the Maha Kumbh. The regional tourism officer points out that the Tourism department is committed to enhancing the skills of all service

providers linked to the tourism industry. In addition to training tour guides and boatmen, the department is also focusing on street vendors and taxi drivers in the city. Street vendors play a vital role in the urban economy, supplying essential goods to the locals while also interacting with tourists. Training for these vendors is essential for improving their customer service skills and promoting cleanliness at tourist sites. The Tourism department has initiated training for 600 street vendors and 600 taxi drivers in Prayagraj, with 250 street vendors and 120 taxi drivers already trained. The new tourism policy is proving to be a game changer for the sector, creating numerous employment opportunities. The provision of skill development and management training for these service providers ahead of the Maha Kumbh is likely to create employment for the youth on a large scale and increase their incomes. Singh estimates that over 45,000 families will benefit from this training initiative, gaining direct or indirect employment and fostering new job opportunities around religious tourist sites.

BUVM urges traders to ensure 100 per cent voting in assembly polls

Mathura (PTI): Ahead of the voting for the assembly elections in Jharkhand and Maharashtra, and bye-elections in different states including, traders body Bhartiya Udyog Vyapar Mandal has appealed to traders to ensure hundred per cent voting. "Hundred per cent voting is a must for knowing the real verdict. Though the Election Commission through district magistrates has been organising programmes for hundred per cent voting in the Lok Sabha and assembly elections, but in absence of mass support to such programmes, it seems the desired results are not coming. "We will first present an example through hundred per cent voting and then in subsequent elections, we will have dialogue with other organisations to join our endeavour," Ravikant Garg, president of the Bhartiya Udyog Vyapar Mandal told PTI on Saturday. "I think we can contribute a lot in this novel programme since a large number of industrialists, small and big traders all over the country are members of our association. Since traders always take part in

programmes of social and national importance, morally it is their duty to present an example before the entire society," Garg said. He added that the office bearers of the organisation will travel in the areas where elections have been announced to spread awareness. They have also been instructed to hold camps at the booth level to motivate voters and provide them drinking water facility on the day of voting, Garg said. The Election Commission on October 15 announced bypolls on nine seats in UP, leaving out Milkipur (Ayodhya) due to a court case. The bypolls will be held in Katehari (Ambedkar Nagar), Karhal (Mainpuri), Meerapur (Muzaffarnagar), Ghaziabad, Majhawan (Mirzapur), Sishamau (Kanpur city), Khair (Aligarh), Phulpur (Prayagraj) and Kundarki (Moradabad). Eight of these seats fell vacant after their MLAs were elected as MPs in the Lok Sabha polls, while bypoll is being held on the Sisamau seat due to the disqualification of SP MLA Irfan Solanki, who was convicted in a criminal case.

Devotees throng Annapurna temple on Annakut Mahotsav

PNS ■ VARANASI

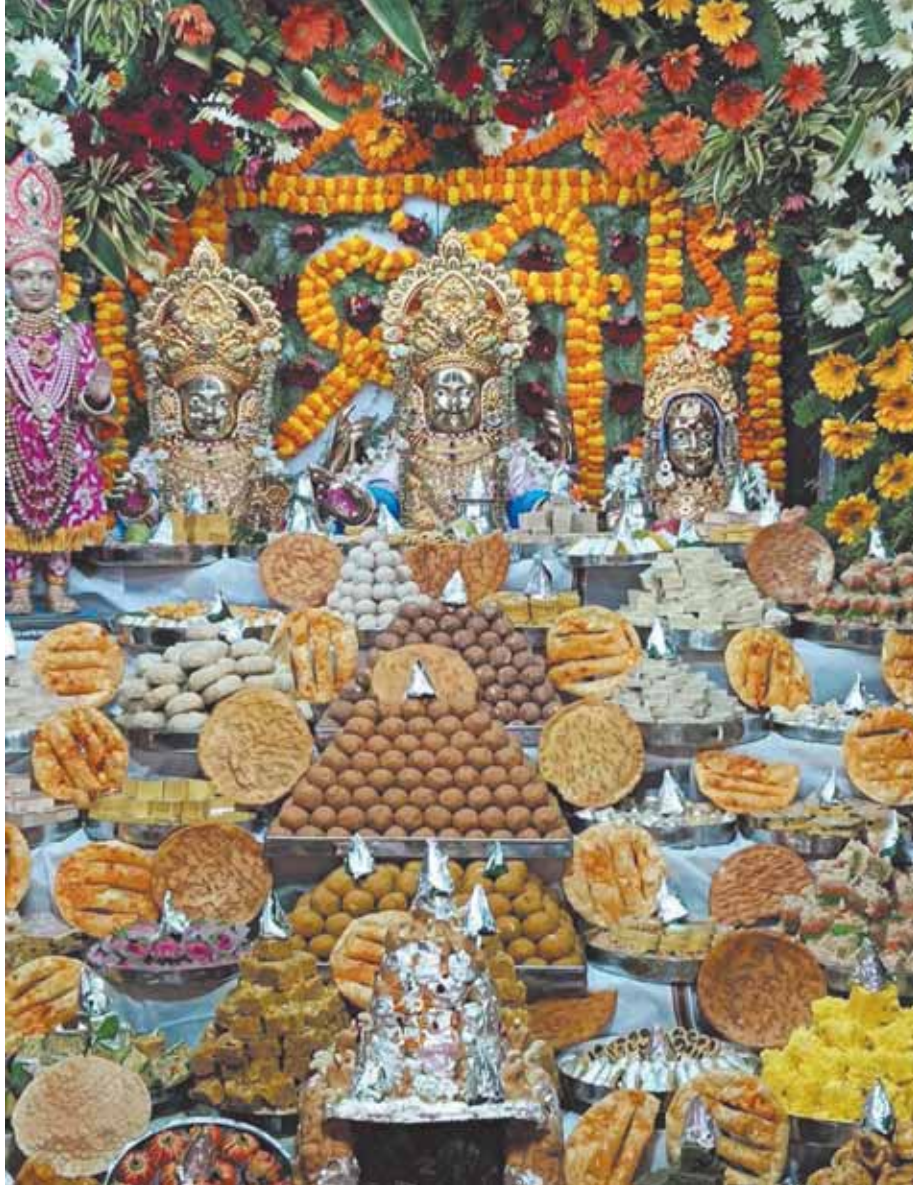
Annakut Mahotsav was celebrated at various temples, including Kashi Vishwanath and adjoining Annapurna Mandir, here on Saturday amidst traditional gaiety and religious fervour. Though the festival is celebrated a day after the Deepawali, but this year, it was postponed by a day due to the extension of Amavasya period for two days when the festival of Deepawali is held.

Right from the morning the people started thronging Annapurna temples to get a glimpse of Annakut Mahotsav. The rush was also seen at other temples including Kashi Vishwanath Temple.

The Annakut Mahotsav of Annapurna Mandir is most famous where quintals of 56 dishes were offered to the deity. The festival also marked the end of the 5-day festival which started with Dhanteras. Mahant Shankarpuri and others were also present. The idol was offered 56 bhogs (dishes), followed by grand Bhog aarti and then quintals of sweets were offered at Kashi Vishwanath Temple.

The festival was also celebrated in many adjoining temples in Gyanvapi premises including Surya, Saani, Kailash, Rani and other temples. Besides, a big bhandara was also organised at Swaminarayan Temple (Machoudhari).

At Maa Annapurna Mandir, the golden idol of the goddess was taken out once in a year for darshan of Maa Annapurna on the auspicious occasion of Dhanteras Parv, which lasted for five days this year, instead of four days. The reference of this gold idol of Maa Annapurna is seen in Bhisma Purana and other ancient books. Its evidence is available since 1601 AD, which was the time of



Annakut Mahotsav being celebrated at Annapurna Mandir in Varanasi on Saturday

Mahant Keshav Puri. To maintain law and order, elaborate security arrangements were made and senior district and police officers camped there to keep watch on the situation.

The rush of devotees was also seen in Shri Kashi Vishwanath Dham to offer prayers to Goddess Annapurna. This idol of the goddess Annapurna was installed at Kashi Vishwanath

Dham three years ago by Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath when it was brought back from Canada. The idol was stolen from the city more than 100 years ago.

Man killed in road mishap

Prayagraj (PNS): A 35-year-old man was killed and another sustained critical injuries after the motorcycle they were travelling on collided head-on with another bike in front of Sainik Law College in Jagatpur, in the Ultraon police station area of Prayagraj, late on Friday night. As the two high-speed bikes collided with each other, one of them hit the divider. As a result, Awadhesh Singh, a resident of Dokri police station in Handia, who was sitting behind, died on the spot. The rider sustained serious injuries.

Police sent the body for post-mortem examination. According to reports, Awadhesh Singh from Dhokri was returning home for the Diwali festival when he asked for a lift from Ram Murat, who was on his bike. Ram Murat was returning home late in the evening with Awadhesh Singh as a passenger. As they reached in front of Sainik Law College in Jagatpur, a man named Lalsahab collided with their bike at high speed. This caused the bike to go out of control and hit the divider, resulting in Awadhesh Singh's death on the spot.

The person sitting behind Lalsahab also sustained injuries. Lalsahab fled the scene on his bike. Ultraon police station in-charge Pankaj Tripathi stated that the incident occurred late in the evening. The police arrived at the scene and sent the injured to the CHC in an ambulance. Meanwhile, a senior journalist, Devendra Kumar Rai, alias Lucky, a resident of Prayagraj, died in a road accident late on Friday night. The accident took place near Karbala police station. He was returning to Civil Lines on his bike when he collided with a divider at high speed. Lucky (40) suffered serious injuries and succumbed to them. Lucky had worked for various TV channels and was associated with the city cable network in Prayagraj. He had gone to meet BJP leader Anurag Sant at his home on Friday night and met with the accident while returning.

Govardhan Puja shobha yatra taken out



Govardhan Puja procession being taken out in Varanasi on Saturday

PNS ■ VARANASI

The families of Yaduvanshi (Yadavs) celebrated Govardhan Puja, offering prayers to Lord Krishna who lifted the Govardhan mountain to save the lives of the people, with traditional gaiety and religious fervor here on Saturday. Though the festival is celebrated a day after Diwali, but due to extension of Amavasya duration, this year it was postponed by a day.

On the occasion, a grand 'shobha yatra' was taken out. It was watched by thousands of people when it passed through various areas of the city. Under the auspices of Govardhan Puja Samiti, the traditional Govardhan Puja was celebrated at Govardhan Dham (Khirkhiya Ghat). During the 'shobha yatra' procession, the participants dis-

played Manari Kala (Lathbaji). It was attended by Samajwadi Party MP from Azamgarh, Dharmendra Yadav, and many other dignitaries. The samiti took out its procession from Hathua Market with several tableaux which attracted the attention of the people. The Yadavs, wearing saffron scarves, also burst firecrackers and displayed their traditional art. When the 'shobha yatra' reached Lahurabir, several tableaux joined it amidst the beat of drums, dhols and nagaras. The artistes also presented Raasilas highlighting the important events of life of Lord Krishna.

The 'shobha yatra', which started from Hathua Market, passed through Lahurabir, Piplani Katra, Maidaganj, Visheshwarganj, Mukhimganj and Machoudhari and culminated at Khirkhiya Ghat vari-

ous cultural programmes were organised. Earlier, the SP workers gave a grand welcome to Dharmendra Yadav on his arrival in the city. The SP parliamentarian, who came on a day-long visit to Kashi to participate in the Govardhan Puja festival, reached Shri Kashi Vishwanath Dham and offered prayers at Kashi Vishwanath and Kal Bhairav temples. On reaching Kashi Vishwanath Corridor, Dharmendra Yadav was welcomed by SP workers who presented him angavastram under the leadership of former SP city president Vishnu Sharma. Prominent among those who welcomed Dharmendra Yadav were Mallu Yadav, Rahul Yadav, Manoj Yadav, Triloki Yadav, Shyam Yadav, Manoj Chourasiya, Durga Yadav and Manish Yadav.

Bade Hanuman Temple Corridor work to be completed soon

PNS ■ PRAYAGRAJ

Preparations for the Maha Kumbh to be held in Prayagraj have gained momentum. In this context, the target is to complete the work on the Shri Bade Hanuman Temple Corridor, located on the banks of Sangam, within a month. Regarding this, Prayagraj Development Authority (PDA) Vice-Chairman Dr Amit Pal Sharma has instructed the relevant agency to complete the corridor work within a month so that devotees attending the Maha Kumbh do not face any difficulties in visiting the Bade Hanuman Temple.

In anticipation of the Maha Kumbh, the temple corridor for Bade Hanuman, who is regard-

ed as the 'Kotwal of Sangam City', is being constructed on the lines of Kashi Vishwanath and Vindhyachal, incorporating many nearby small and large temples. Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath has issued strict instructions to ensure that the construction of the corridor is completed on time. The CM is personally monitoring the progress of this work to ensure timely completion. The construction is being carried out in two phases by the Prayagraj Development Authority. Officials claim that the first phase will be completed between November 30 and December 15. Currently, the process of build-

MAHA KUMBH 2025

ing the boundary wall is ongoing. A total of 11,589 square metres of land has been identified for the construction of the temple corridor. Within this, the grand sanctum sanctorum and Parikrama Path of the Bade Hanuman Temple will occupy 535 square metres, while 2,184 square metres has been earmarked for the corridor area.

The corridor is being constructed at a cost of Rs 40 crore. In addition to the pathway in the corridor area, 6,176 square metres of land has been proposed for shops selling worship items, prasad, flower garlands,

and services for devotees, along with 760 square metres for the walking Parikrama Path. Dr Amit Pal Sharma stated that the construction of the Bade Hanuman Temple Corridor is progressing rapidly in the Sangam area. The target has been set to complete the construction work within a month.

PREPS ON TO HELP TOURISTS REACH SANGAM BY AIR
The Mela Authority is consistently taking necessary steps to ensure that devotees attending the Maha Kumbh in Prayagraj in January next year do not face

any difficulties. To alleviate the challenges faced by ordinary devotees due to the arrival of VVIP guests, both from India and abroad, at Maha Kumbh 2025, the Mela Authority is planning to establish an air corridor. Through this VVIP air corridor, tourists will be able to reach Sangam directly by air. Those arriving by flight will be transported to the Mela area by helicopter after landing at the airport. To facilitate this, preparations are underway to construct a heliport at the Boat Club located on Yamuna Bank Road, allowing tourists to transfer directly to Sangam by steamer after arriving by helicopter from the airport. Additionally, if tourists wish,

they will also have the option to go directly to the Tent City, with cab facilities available for this purpose. Arrangements are being made to operate this service from six in the morning to six in the evening. Furthermore, plans are being developed to provide tourists arriving by helicopter with a panoramic view of Sangam before they land at the heliport. This special service is expected to commence on January 10; however, the Mela Authority aims to start it in the second week of December during the proposed programme of Prime Minister Narendra Modi. ADM, Kumbh Mela, Vivek Chaturvedi stated that this type of facility is being introduced for the first time.

Youth found dead, kin allege murder

PNS ■ PRAYAGRAJ

Tension prevailed after the body of a youth was found in a bush near Amiliya Khurd in the Meja area on Saturday. Soon, a large number of villagers gathered at the scene. Upon receiving the information, Meja SHO Rajesh Upadhyay, along with ACP Ravi Gupta, arrived at the location. During their investigation, the police discovered an Aadhaar card in the youth's pocket, after which the body was identified as that of Mandeep Yadav (20) from Chandelankapura (Kolahi) in the Karchana police station area.

Upon receiving the news, family members reached the place. The police sent the body for post-mortem examination. Investigations revealed that the youth was killed by a blow to the head. Consequently, the police registered a murder case and initiated an investigation. As per reports, on Saturday, children were playing cricket in the playground of Amiliya Khurd village when their ball went into the bush. As they searched for it, they discovered the body of a youth lying there. The news spread quickly, drawing a large crowd. Meja Road police outpost

incharge Ankush Kumar confirmed that the deceased's Aadhaar card was found in his pocket, leading to his identification as Mandeep Yadav, son of Banwari Yadav. The family said that Mandeep had left home for Sirsa market on his bicycle on October 30. When he did not return by evening, they began searching for him, but to no avail. On Saturday, Mandeep's body was discovered in the bush at Amiliya Khurd. The family alleged that Mandeep was murdered and his body was disposed of there. They alleged that there had been a dispute between Mandeep and one Suraj Patel from Bagha village in Meja. Suraj had allegedly called Mandeep to Meja for a settlement. The Meja police have sent the body for post-mortem examination. The incharge of the Meja Road police outpost said that apart from head injuries, multiple wounds were found on the body. Mandeep was the youngest of two brothers. His father Banwari Yadav works for a private company in Mumbai. Based on a complaint from Banwari Yadav, the Meja police have registered a murder case against four individuals, including Suraj Patel. The accused are currently being sought.

Two BLW, 11 NER employees retire

PNS ■ VARANASI

Two employees of Banaras Locomotive Works retired in October. In a farewell ceremony organised here on Saturday, BLW Officer Chief Personnel Officer Janardan Singh gave farewell to Ravindra Kumar and Lal Murat by presenting them medals and folders. On this occasion, Singh suggested to the retired employees to invest their accumulated wealth in government institutions only. He also advised the retired employees to stay healthy and remain associated with work related to social welfare and spend most of the time with their families. BLW Staff Council joint secretary Shrikant and members Amit Kumar and Manish Singh gave best wishes to the retiring employees and presented them gifts. With the cooperation of the accounts and personnel department, lump sum payment was made to the retired employees. The programme was conducted by Senior Personnel Officer (Headquarters) Raj Kumar Gupta. Earlier, 11 employees of various departments of Varanasi Division of North Eastern Railway who retired on October 31 were paid their final amount of Rs 4,72,43,790 in a simple ceremony Chaired by Divisional

Railway Manager Vineet Kumar Srivastava on Friday. On the occasion, Senior Divisional Personnel Officer Sameer Paul, Senior Divisional Finance Manager Rajesh Kumar, Assistant Personnel Officer Ramesh Upadhyay, along with inspectors and employees of accounts and personnel departments were also present. Addressing the farewell function, the DRM, wished all the retired employees a very happy Diwali and Chhath. He said the railway employees had an important role in all the records being established on Indian Railways today. He advised the retired employees to do regular exercise and yoga to stay healthy and spend the remaining time in fulfilling their social and moral obligations.

He said that for the past years, all the employees retiring from Varanasi Division were paid their dues on the day of their retirement and this was possible due to coordination and hard work of the officers and employees of the accounts and personnel departments. The DRM gave service medals to all the retiring employees and wished them a good life ahead and expressed gratitude for their long and remarkable services. Sameer Paul also honoured all the retiring employees by garlanding them.

Stage set for Ganga Utsav in Kashi

PNS ■ VARANASI

With the resolve to make the river Ganga clean by controlling pollution and conserving it, the annual National Ganga Utsav will be organised across the country on November 4 by the Jal Shakti Ministry, National Clean Ganga Mission and Namami Gange. As part of this campaign, a cleanliness awareness drive was organised by Namami Gange from Ganga Dwar of Shri Kashi Vishwanath Dham on Saturday to appeal to people to participate enthusiastically in the Ganga Utsav to celebrate the cultural prosperity settled on the banks of the

Ganga. In coordination with Namami Gange Kashi region coordinator and Varanasi Municipal Corporation cleanliness brand ambassador Rajesh Shukla, foreign tourists from Greece along with local citizens also appealed to take steps towards cleanliness by carrying the national flag for the national river Ganga. Many polluting materials were disposed of by cleaning the Ganga bank. Shukla said that Namami Gange's effort was to connect more and more people, especially youth and students, for the continuity and purity of Ganga through Ganga Utsav. The effort is to contribute to creating a positive environ-

ment towards making other rivers of the country pollution free, he added. After starting the project in 2014, the government started work on cleaning the river Ganga. In every state from Uttarakhand to West Bengal, a large number of STPs (sewage treatment plants) were set up, a ban on polluting industrial units along the river was enforced and work to clean the river water was done. Under the scheme, a total of 467 projects worth Rs 39,080.70 crore were started till June 2024. Out of these, 292 projects have been completed. Apart from this, 200 sewerage infrastructure projects have been started at a cost

of Rs 32,071 crore to lay 5,282 km of sewerage network. Shukla said the main pillars of the Namami Gange project were sewerage treatment infrastructure, river bank development, river surface cleaning, biodiversity, afforestation, public awareness, industrial waste monitoring, Ganga village etc. According to him, Ganga Utsav will be organised on November 4 at Namoh Ghat in the city under the aegis of District Ganga Committee. Prominent among others also involved in the event were Ved Prakash Bajpai, Sanatan Paul, Ramchandra Pandey, Ravi Singh and foreign tourists from Greece.

Special campaign by CORE concludes

Prayagraj (PNS): 'Special Campaign 4.0 of Swachhta Pakhwada', organised by the Central Organisation for Railway Electrification (CORE) from October 2, concluded with Deepotsav by lighting diyas (earthen lamps) in the office premises. "The earthen lamp is considered a symbol of 'Panch Tatva'. It is made by melting clay with water, representing the earth and water elements. Once crafted, it is dried in sunlight and air, symbolising the sky and air. It is then hardened by heating it in fire, representing the ele-

ment of fire. According to religious beliefs, lighting an earthen lamp during worship provides courage and valor to the seeker. Additionally, it is said to bring happiness and prosperity to the household," Chief Electrical Engineer, CORE, SS Negi said. For the first time in the history of CORE, an attractive rangoli was created in the office premises, and the entire office was illuminated by lighting earthen lamps. All officers and employees of the CORE office participated in the lamp lighting.

Door-to-door garbage collection in BHU from tomorrow

PNS ■ VARANASI

Banaras Hindu University announced that starting from November 4, a door-to-door garbage collection service will be launched at 8 am to maintain a clean and hygienic environment within the university campus. The sanitary and support services department of the university will carry out the garbage collection at source, ensuring waste is collected from residential areas, administrative buildings, hostels and other establishments on the

campus. This initiative is part of the university's broader commitment to cleanliness and environmental sustainability. Residents have been advised to separate their waste into biodegradable, non-biodegradable and hazardous categories using the colour-coded bins -green bin for biodegradable waste (food and vegetable waste for composting), blue bin for non-biodegradable waste (plastic, glass etc.) and red bin for hazardous waste (sprays, paints, electronics etc).

Two youths saved from drowning

PNS ■ PRAYAGRAJ

Two youths were saved from drowning in the Ganga river by soldiers from the flood relief team of the 42nd Battalion PAC late on Friday evening. After Diwali and the subsequent worship, many families recognise the importance of bathing in the Ganga and travel to Sangam nose for this purpose. In such situations, accidents can occur while bathing at the Sangam. Even after sunset on Friday, many youths arrived at Sangam to bathe, during which two of them were rescued from deep water in the Ganga. After receiving first aid, they

were taken to hospital. Ajay Kumar (35) and Manoj Kumar (38), residents of Jayantipur Sulemsarai in the Dhoomanganj police station area, went to Sangam for taking a dip after offering prayers late on Friday evening. While bathing, they began to drown in deep water. Acting swiftly, Naik Mithlesh Kumar Rai from the flood relief team of the 42nd Battalion PAC and his team members jumped into the Sangam. After a concerted effort, the team successfully rescued both youths. After administering first aid, they were taken to hospital. Their families were informed and they rushed to the hospital.

BJP says it stands for credibility of promises under PM Modi, Congress for crisis

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

BJP on Saturday asserted that it stood for credibility of promises made to people under Prime Minister Narendra Modi's leadership and the Congress for crisis of credibility, as the ruling party fired a fresh salvo at its rival in a war of words between them over unkept poll pledges.

BJP spokesperson Sudhanshu Trivedi told the media that the ruling party had gradually stepped up the scope of its welfare schemes, ranging from health insurance to free grains and cash transfer for farmers, by resorting to first creation of wealth followed by its

distribution as the size of the Indian economy grew over the past decade.

"We believe in first the creation of wealth and distribution. The Congress stands for creation of corruption and destruction of wealth," he said, citing a host of alleged unfulfilled promises of Congress-led governments in different states.

A day after Mallikarjun Kharge claimed that "Modi ki guarantee" was a cruel joke on people after the prime minister had seized on the Congress president's advice to his state colleagues that they should be guided by budgetary constraints in making poll announcements, the BJP

made a fresh charge.

Was Kharge speaking the truth on Friday or a day before, Trivedi said mockingly, suggesting that the Congress president's attack on the BJP was made under pressure to cover up for what he had said earlier.

Trivedi cited the construction of the Ram temple, abolition of Article 370, construction of more than 14 crore houses for the poor, opening of over 51 crore Jan Dhan accounts, and India's tough stand against Pakistan on terrorism under Modi to assert that his government had walked the talk.

As a veteran Congress member who has served in senior positions, Kharge has



seen leaders such as PV Narasimha Rao and Pranab Mukherjee, who deftly handled the economy under difficult circumstances, and is now seeing the party under the grip of urban

Organisation) data suggested that its account holders had grown to 25 crore compared to 11 crore a decade ago.

He also cited a host of infrastructure work, including the construction of houses for the poor, 74 airports and 37 kilometres of road per day, and asserted that all these activities had led to a lot of employment.

India is now third in auto manufacturing and second in mobile phones manufacturing and if anyone still cannot see the country's development, then there is some serious weakness in their sight and mindset, the BJP spokesperson said.

When the BJP was in power

in Karnataka, it was the top state in attracting investment while Maharashtra under the Congress-led alliance's rule had slipped, he said, adding that the situation was reversed after the BJP came to power in the western state while losing to the Congress in the southern state.

"The brains of some parties are so empty that they end up emptying the treasury when in power," he said.

The Congress, Trivedi alleged, had lost the ability to govern, noting that its promise to provide one woman in every household Rs 1 lakh annually would have cost the country Rs 31 lakh crore even though its entire budget was only about

Rs 27 lakh crore. It was like a Ponzi scheme promise and could be part of a well thought-out conspiracy as the Congress believes in triggering chaos, he said.

Citing the welcome Modi received recently in the US, Russia and Ukraine from their top leaders, the BJP spokesperson said it was a testimony to the prime minister's standing. Any attempt to belittle him will have no impact on his popularity, reputation and image, he added.

To a question, he refuted opposition MP Asaduddin Owaisi's claim on Waqf boards, saying these were not religious bodies but constituted for land management.

India records 17.7 per cent decline in TB incidence from 2015 to 2023: WHO report

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

India has recorded a 17.7 per cent decline in tuberculosis incidence from 237 per lakh population in 2015 to 195 in 2023, which is more than double the global decline of 8.3 per cent, Health Ministry sources have said citing a WHO report.



In its Global TB Report 2024 released on October 29, WHO has acknowledged the tremendous progress India has made in closing the gap of missed tuberculosis cases since 2015, the sources said.

"In 2023, India is estimated to have had 27 lakh TB cases, of which 25.1 lakh were diagnosed and put on treatment. This has buoyed India's treatment coverage to 89 per cent in 2023 from 72 per cent in 2015, thereby bridging the gap of missing cases," an official source said.

The tuberculosis budget saw a historic 5.3 times leap in allocation from Rs 640 crores in 2015 to Rs 3400 crores in 2022-23. The WHO report noted that a majority of the funding for the TB programme comes from government resources.

Over the years, India has been able to scale up state-of-the-art molecular diagnostic tools, introduce newer and more efficacious treatment regimens and provide free screening, diagnosis and treatment to all tuberculosis patients.

The source said WHO has "acknowledged a drop in India's tuberculosis incidence from 237 per lakh population in 2015, to 195 per lakh population in 2023 accounting for a 17.7 per cent decline.

"This is more than double the pace of decline as compared to the global decline of 8.3 per cent," the source said.

The Health Ministry sources asserted that the leap in coverage has been due to the momentum India has created around tuberculosis case finding and reflects the efforts of decentralisation of healthcare services through over 1.7 lakh Ayushman Arogya Mandirs in the country.

While WHO had downsized its estimation of tuberculosis mortality in India last year, the current report documents the sustained reduction in deaths due to the disease achieved by India from 28 per lakh population to 22 per lakh population, a 21.4 per cent decline, they said.

The government has been able to strengthen and expand the National TB Elimination Programme with sustained domestic financing, official sources said.

The government is procuring over 800 artificial intelligence-enabled portable chest x-ray machines to complement India's extensive TB laboratory network, the largest in the world with 7,767 rapid molecular testing facilities and 87 culture and drug susceptibility testing laboratories, the sources said.

"This acknowledgement by WHO signifies the paradigm shift India has brought to tuberculosis care over the past eight years. In October, the government announced the enhancement of support under Nikshay Poshan Yojana (NPY) from Rs 500 per month to each patient for the entire duration of the treatment to Rs 1,000," another source said.

To date, Rs 3,202 crore has been disbursed to 1.13 crore beneficiaries through Direct Benefit Transfer under the scheme. While enhancement of NPY support will benefit all 25 lakh tuberculosis patients in a year, the introduction of Energy Dense Nutritional Supplementation (EDNS) would cover approximately 12 lakh under-nourished TB patients.

Jaishankar, Thai counterpart discuss bilateral ties, multilateral cooperation

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar and his Thai counterpart Maris Sangiampongsa discussed bilateral ties, multilateral cooperation and regional developments during a meeting in Delhi on Saturday.

In a social media post, Jaishankar said Sangiampongsa's visit for the Royal Kathina ceremony "exemplifies the longstanding historical and cultural relations" between the two countries. The Thai minister is scheduled to depart India on Sunday. Jaishankar also shared pictures of the meeting at the South Block.

"Delighted to meet FM @AmbPoohMaris of Thailand today in Delhi. His visit for the Royal Kathina ceremony exemplifies the longstanding historical and cultural relations between our two countries. We discussed India-Thailand ties, multilateral cooperation and regional developments," he said. Royal Kathina is a traditional Buddhist ceremony.



Sangiampongsa's first official visit to India was during July 11-13 for the second BIMSTEC Foreign Ministers' Retreat, hosted by the external affairs minister in New Delhi.

On July 12, Jaishankar held a bilateral meeting with Sangiampongsa and hosted a lunch in his honour. During that meeting, the two ministers reviewed progress across various areas of partnership.

The two ministers also exchanged views on issues of mutual interest and reiterated their commitment to closer cooperation in sub-regional, regional and multilateral fora. The Ministry of External Affairs had said.

In accordance with the vision of the two prime ministers, the ministers reaffirmed the mutual desire for a stronger India-Thailand partnership, it had said.

Thailand is a key partner for India in the ASEAN. India's 'Act East' policy, which is in its tenth year, finds convergence with Thailand's 'Act West' policy. Interactions between Jaishankar and the Thai foreign minister have contributed to further strengthening of bilateral ties, it had added.

SC to hear Rajoana's plea seeking commutation of death sentence

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

The Supreme Court is scheduled to hear on November 4 a plea by Balwant Singh Rajoana, convicted in the 1995 assassination case of the then Punjab Chief Minister Beant Singh, seeking commutation of his death sentence to life term due to an "inordinate delay" in deciding his mercy petition. A special bench of Justices B R Gavai, P K Mishra and K V Viswanathan will hear the plea of the former Punjab Police constable.

On September 25, the top court had sought responses from the Centre, the Punjab Government and the administration of the Union Territory of Chandigarh on Rajoana's plea. In his plea, Rajoana has sought directions to the Centre and the Punjab government to commute his death sentence "due to inordinate delay" in its execution and in deciding the "mercy petition filed on his behalf".

Rajoana was convicted in Beant Singh's assassination



case. The former chief minister and 16 others were killed in a blast at the entrance of the civil secretariat in Chandigarh on August 31, 1995. A special court had sentenced Rajoana to death in July 2007. Rajoana has said that in March 2012, a mercy petition under Article 72 of the Constitution was moved by the Shiromani Gurdwara Parbandhak Committee (SGPC) on his behalf. On May 3 last year, the apex court had refused to commute his death sentence and said the competent authority could deal with his mercy plea.

In his fresh plea filed in the top court, Rajoana has said he

has undergone a total sentence of about 28 years and eight months, of which he served 17 years as a death row convict. It has been over a year since the top court directed the competent authority to decide on his mercy petition, he said. The plea referred to an April 2023 order of the top court in a separate matter in which it directed all States and appropriate authorities to decide the pending mercy petitions at the earliest and without any inordinate delay.

"Despite the above directions, the mercy petition of the petitioner herein has been kept pending. It is submitted that this extraordinary and inordinate delay in deciding his mercy petition, for reasons beyond the petitioner's control and not attributable to him, is an infringement of his right to life guaranteed under Article 21," said the plea, adding that the issue of keeping mercy petitions pending for long and the incarceration of the convict has come up for consideration before the apex court in numerous cases.

Modi destroyed dignity of PM's post with hollow promises: Priyanka

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

In a scathing attack on Prime Minister Narendra Modi, Congress leader Priyanka Gandhi on Saturday said the prime minister has "destroyed" the dignity of the highest post of the country by repeatedly making "hollow promises" to 140 crore Indians.

She also said that instead of worrying about the Congress, Modi should work on "restoring the dignity of his post by resorting to truth". Her remarks came after Modi on Friday said the Congress stands "badly exposed" in front of the people for promising to them what the party knows it will never be able to deliver.

The prime minister launched a fierce attack on the opposition party as he seized

of Congress President Mallikarjun Kharge's comments that the Congress' state units should make promises that are properly budgeted.

He also said the developmental trajectory and fiscal health in the Congress-ruled states of Himachal Pradesh, Karnataka and Telangana is going from bad to worse.

Hitting back at the prime minister, Priyanka Gandhi said in a post in X in Hindi, "Mahatma Gandhi used to say 'Truth is God'. 'Satyameva Jayate' written in Mundaka Upanishad is our national motto. These mottos establishing truth became the ideals of the Indian freedom movement, the reconstruction of India and public life.

"In a country where truth is the basis of thousands of years

of culture, the person sitting on the highest post should not resort to falsehood." The allegations levelled by the prime minister against the Congress are far from the truth, she said.

"The Congress started fulfilling the promises made to the people as soon as it formed the government, without waiting for the next elections. Be it Karnataka, Telangana or Himachal Pradesh, people's money is being put into their pockets everyday through guarantees," the Congress general secretary said in the post.

The prime minister has understood that his words no longer have any value before the country's people, she claimed.

Sharpening her attack on Modi, Priyanka Gandhi continued, "The '100 days plan', 'taking opinion of 20

lakh people for the roadmap for 2047', '2 crore jobs every year', '100 smart cities', 'bringing back black money', 'reducing inflation and unemployment', 'doubling farmers' income', 'bringing rupee at par with dollar' and 'bringing Achche Din' -- these are all promises which have been proven false and now the people of the country have no faith in them."

Congress' media and publicity department head Pawan Khara also slammed the prime minister, saying the latter has lowered the dignity of his post by resorting to false promises.

Claiming that the Congress governments have fulfilled their promises in the states ruled by them, Khara alleged in a video statement that Modi had to even delete a post attacking the party out of fear of being fact-checked.

We are in touch with US authorities: MEA on sanctions on entities

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

In the wake of the US imposing sanctions on several individuals and entities, including from India, for allegedly supporting Russia's military-industrial base, the MEA Saturday said New Delhi is in touch with Washington to clarify issues.

MEA spokesperson Randhir Jaiswal, in response to a query during his weekly briefing, also said India has a "robust legal and regulatory framework" on strategic trade and non-proliferation controls.

"We are also a member of three key multilateral non-proliferation export control regimes," he added. "In keeping with India's established non-proliferation credentials, we are working with all relevant departments and agencies to sensitise Indian companies on applicable export control provisions as also inform them on new measures being implemented that could impact Indian companies in certain circumstances," Jaiswal said. The US has imposed



sanctions on 275 individuals and entities, including 15 from India, for allegedly supporting Russia's military-industrial base. The US Department of Treasury said in a statement on Thursday that companies from China, Switzerland, Thailand, and Türkiye have also been slapped with sanctions for supplying Russia with advanced technology and equipment that it desperately needs to support its war machine.

In addition to disrupting global evasion networks, this action also targets domestic Russian importers and producers of key inputs and other material for Russia's military-industrial base, the statement said. Jaiswal on Saturday said, "We have seen these reports of US sanctions." "We are also in touch with the US authorities to clarify issues," he added.

Forces gun down three terrorists in Kashmir

From page 1

"It should be investigated. How is it that the government has come and this is happening? I doubt that it was done by the people who were trying to destabilise the government...If they (terrorists) are caught then we will get to know who is doing this. They should not be killed, they should be caught and asked who is behind them...We should check if there is an agency who is trying to destabilise Omar Abdullah," Dr Abdullah observed.

Reacting strongly to Abdullah's statement questioning the rise of terror attacks in J&K, Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) General Secretary Tarun Chugh said Abdullah should ask his mentors across the border about spilling blood in J&K. He said "everyone knows that Pakistan is a factory of

terrorism and has been disrupting peace in J&K for so long. People also know that Abdullah has been siding with Pakistan openly asking the Indian government to hold talks. Abdullah's double standards must be exposed to make sure that J&K does not stop growing on its path of peace and development." The Army's Srinagar-based Chinari Corps said in the late evening on Friday that troops spotted "suspicious movement" in the general area Panar in north Kashmir's Bandipora.

"On being challenged, terrorists opened indiscriminate fire and escaped into the jungle," the Army said. A search operation is underway in the area, it added.

In the Jammu region, General Officer Commanding of Jammu-based White Knight Corps Lieutenant General Navin

Sachdeva on Saturday visited Jammu and Kashmir's border district of Rajouri and reviewed the security situation and operational preparedness.

Lt. General Sachdeva's visit to Songri in the Rajouri sector comes a day after his tour of Navapanchhi in the Kishtwar district. Many parts of the Jammu region, including Rajouri and Kishtwar districts, have recorded terrorist movements over the past several months, prompting police and other security agencies to intensify anti-insurgency operations.

In a post on X, the White Knight Corps said Lt Gen. Sachdeva was accompanied by the general officer commanding counter-insurgency force 'Romeo' to Songri in the Rajouri sector. "GOC underscored the need for unwavering commitment in maintaining peace and security in the region," it said.

Patrolling begins at Depsang

From page 1

Foreign Secretary Vikram Misri on October 21 said in Delhi that an agreement was finalised between India and China following negotiations over the past several weeks and that it would lead to a resolution of the issues that

arose in 2020.

The agreement was firmed up on patrolling and disengagement of troops along the LAC in eastern Ladakh, a breakthrough to end the over four-year standoff. The move marked a significant development in the pursuit of reduced

tension along the LAC in eastern Ladakh since the fierce clash in the Galwan Valley in June 2020 that marked the most serious military conflict between the two sides in decades. The ties between the two Asian giants had nosedived following the clash.

Gasp! PM 2.5 is 92 per cent higher...

From page 1

According to the Ministry of Agriculture data the fire count had increased from 60 on October 30 to 605 on October 31. Punjab accounted for the highest share at 80 percent, followed by Uttar Pradesh at 13 percent, and Haryana at 7 percent. North-westerly winds prevailed during the day on October 31, amplifying the impact of stubble burning on Delhi's air quality.

According to an analysis, Diwali night this year had higher NO2 levels compared

to last year's Diwali night. NO2 levels in the last three years have been higher on Diwali night and also the nights preceding it, which is indicative of congestion and high traffic conditions in the city leading to the festival night. ITO had the highest NO2 levels in the city with a night-time average of 182 µg/m³. JLN Stadium and Patparganj with 104 µg/m³ and 101 µg/m³ were the other NO2 hotspots on Diwali night. Lodhi Road with just 2 µg/m³ of NO2 was the least affected area in the city.

Four sanitary workers run over by Kerala Express

From page 1

Though there were ten workers in the team, six of them ran to safety while the remaining four (Lakshmanan, Valli, Rani and Lakshmanan) could not make it and were run over by the speeding train.

Till the time of going to press, the Railways remained tight-lipped about the details of the accident. The Railways had no answers to queries like whether the workers had been informed to stay away from the bridge as the super-fast train was approaching the bridge.

No longer a hoax, live cartridge...

From page 1

According to a police officer, an Air India staff found the live round of ammunition during routine cleaning on a flight on October 27. "A complaint was immediately lodged with the Airport Police by Air India, strictly adhering to the laid down security protocols" the airlines added on action taken. A cartridge, commonly known as a round or shell, is a type of pre-assembled ammunition packaging a projectile (bullet), propellant, and primer within a casing, typically made of metal. Cartridges are designed to be fired from

firearms, and their presence on an aircraft is strictly prohibited due to security concerns.

Earlier, an Air India flight AI 216 which was set to return to New Delhi on Monday received a bomb threat. It is the second hoax call that Nepal's Tribhuvan International Airport has received within a week, officials confirmed. The Air India flight which landed at 2:41 pm (Nepal Standard Time) on Monday afternoon at Tribhuvan International Airport had received a bomb threat prompting authorities to activate the emergency protocol.

Attack on central Israel injures 11 as Iran's leader promises punishing response

AP ■ JERUSALEM

An attack on a central Israeli town early Saturday injured 11 people as Iran's Supreme Leader vowed a punishing response to Israel's attack last week.

The pre-dawn strike on Tira, which followed air raid sirens across central Israel, was one of several barrages fired from Lebanon early in the day. Many of the projectiles were intercepted by Israeli air defences, while others landed in unpopulated areas.

The Magen David Adom emergency service said 11 people were hurt by shrapnel and glass shards in a direct strike on a building in Tira, a predominantly Israeli Arab town. Three were in moderate condition, while the others suffered milder injuries.

Footage showed significant damage to the roof and top floor of the three-storey build-

ing and cars below. Lebanon's Iran-backed Hezbollah group claimed responsibility for firing missiles toward the Israeli military's Unit 8200 base in Gilot on the edge of Tel Aviv and for attacking central Israel's Palmachim Air Base with explosive drones, saying they "scored precise hits on targets." Israel's military has not confirmed either base was targeted or hit.

Hezbollah said the Saturday dawn missile attack directed at Gilot was in retaliation for the "massacres" that are being committed by Israel. It was likely that the claim was linked to the strike on Tira, which is about 20 kilometres away from Gilot.

Tamar Abdel Hai, a resident of Tira, said that the attack was frightening. "I call upon all the leaders in the Arab world and the leaders in Israel and to everyone who can help to end this war. It's enough," he said.

Hezbollah also said that its fighters have fired salvos of rockets into northern Israeli towns including Dalton, Yesud HaMa'ala and Bar Yohai. The early Saturday attacks may be only a precursor to a more severe strike against Israel.

Meanwhile, Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, Iran's supreme leader, on Saturday threatened Israel and the US with a punishing response over attacks on Iran and its allies following Israel's October 26 airstrikes that targeted Iran's military bases and other locations.

"The enemies, whether the Zionist regime or the United States of America, will definitely receive a crushing response to what they are doing to Iran and the Iranian nation and to the resistance front," Khamenei said in video released by Iranian state media.

A further attack by Iran, which has already launched two direct attacks against Israel this year,

could push the wider Middle East closer to a broader conflict. Israel is already battling the Iran-backed militant group Hamas in the Gaza Strip and Hezbollah in Lebanon.

The fight against Hezbollah has weakened the group but has also taken a heavy toll on southern Lebanon and other parts of the country.

On Friday, Israel launched dozens of intense airstrikes across Lebanon's northeastern farming villages, killing at least 52 people and wounding scores more, the Lebanese Health Ministry reported.

Since the conflict between Israel and Hezbollah erupted in 2023, more than 2,897 people have been killed and 13,150 wounded in Lebanon, according to a Health Ministry update early Friday. United Nations agencies estimate that Israel's ground invasion and bombardment of Lebanon has displaced 1.4 million people.

Residents of Israel's northern communities near Lebanon, roughly 60,000 people, have also been displaced for more than a year.

Israel has also stepped up its offensive against Hamas' remaining fighters in Gaza, raising concerns about humanitarian conditions for civilians still there. The World Health Organisation has said it plans to finally resume its polio vaccination campaign on Saturday, but only in Gaza City as towns further north remain inaccessible as Israel tightens its siege.

Israel's war in Gaza has killed more than 43,000 Palestinians since October 7, 2023, when Hamas militants killed roughly 1,200 people in Israel and took some 250 hostages back to Gaza. Health officials inside Hamas-run Gaza do not distinguish between civilians and combatants, but say more than half of the dead in the enclave are women and children.



Usha Vance smiles as her husband Republican vice presidential nominee Sen. JD Vance, R-Ohio, speaks at a campaign rally on Friday in Selma, NC. AP/PTI

It's fight to finish in races that will determine control of Congress

AP ■ WASHINGTON

The final doors are being knocked, ads are blaring and candidates are making a last pitch to voters. Even with the high-energy final push, the races for control of Congress are at a stalemate, essentially a toss-up for the House and fight to the finish for the Senate.

The outcome of Tuesday's election will shape the country's future, determining whether the new White House has allies or sceptics on Capitol Hill — or faces a divided Congress like this past session, which has been among the most tumultuous and unproductive in modern times.

As voters assess their presidential options between Republican Donald Trump and Democrat Kamala Harris, they also are sizing up who will represent them in Congress.

"This is why I'm an independent," said voter Gary Motta of Cuyahoga Falls, Ohio, who isn't happy with either choice for president, as he showed up at an early Sunday morning event for Republican Kevin

Coughlin, who is trying to unseat Democratic Rep. Emilia Sykes. The struggle for control of Congress has gone on for months. Candidates have tussled over the big issues — the economy, the border, reproductive health care and the future of democracy — but also over Congress itself, which had a chaotic session as the GOP-led House ousted its speaker and barely fended off government shutdowns. This is the first presidential election since the January 6, 2021, attack on the Capitol, and many Republican lawmakers who voted against certifying Democrat Joe Biden's White House win over Trump are up for reelection.

Republican candidates, many backed by the former president, are finding themselves having to answer for him on several fronts. Among them is the decision by the Supreme Court, with three justices who were nominated by Trump, that ended the right to abortion access.

Democrats face tough questions over the Biden-Harris record on the US-Mexico border and on inflation during

their time at the White House. Most of the closely contested House campaigns are being waged beyond the presidential swing states, including in New York and California, where Republican Kevin McCarthy, who was ousted as speaker and then left Congress, had made inroads in his home state. Democrats under New York's Hakeem Jeffries, the party's House leader, are now trying to win them back.

Starting Saturday, California Rep. Pete Aguilar, the Democratic caucus chairman, is making a nine-stop swing through the Golden State to win back seats.

"There's a lot of energy out there," said Washington Rep. Suzan DelBene, who leads the Democratic Congressional Campaign Committee, in an interview from Omaha, Nebraska, a surprising battleground, after a swing through New York. "We're just working hard to get out the vote."

She said there are "tons of volunteers on the ground, lots of energy, people very, very focused." They understand there's a lot at stake.

Israel pummels Lebanon and Gaza

AP ■ BEIRUT

Israel launched dozens of intense airstrikes across Lebanon's northeastern farming villages on Friday, killing at least 52 people and wounding scores more, the Lebanese Health Ministry reported.

In central Gaza, Palestinians recovered the bodies of 25 people killed in a barrage of Israeli aerial attacks that began Thursday, hospital officials said.

The latest violence comes against the backdrop of a renewed diplomatic push by United States President Joe Biden's administration, days before the presidential election, to reach temporary cease-fire deals. Israel's emergency services said seven people were injured before dawn Saturday in attack in the central town of Tira. Three projectiles crossed into Israel from Lebanon, Israel's military said, and some were intercepted.

The Magen David Adom service said two of those injured were in moderate condition from the attack, and the others had milder injuries. A photo the service released showed damage to what

appeared to be an apartment building. Israel has stepped up its offensive against Hamas' remaining fighters in Gaza, pulverizing areas in the north and raising fears of worsening humanitarian conditions for civilians still there.

In Lebanon, Israel has broadened its strikes in recent weeks to bigger urban hubs, like the town of Baalbek, home to 80,000 people, after initially targeting smaller border villages in the south, where Hezbollah conducts operations. Iran-backed Hezbollah doubles as a major political party and provider of social services in Lebanon.

Hezbollah began firing rockets, drones and missiles from Lebanon into Israel in solidarity with Hamas immediately after the Hamas-led Oct. 7, 2023, attack on Israel, which triggered the war in Gaza. The yearlong cross-border fighting boiled over to full-blown war on Oct. 1, when Israeli forces launched a ground invasion of southern Lebanon for the first time since 2006.

In Lebanon's Bekaa Valley — where small villages, olive groves and wineries nestled between the country's mountain ranges had largely been spared the

worst of Israeli bombardment until recently — Israel conducted a series of heavy airstrikes Friday, killing at least 52 people, driving more families to flee with whatever they could carry and sending thick plumes of smoke over the horizon.

Intensified Israeli airstrikes on and around the northeastern city of Baalbek after Israel issued evacuation warnings have prompted 60,000 people to flee, emptying nearby villages, said Hussein Haj Hassan, a Lebanese lawmaker representing the region.

In Lebanon, rescuers searched for survivors after airstrikes killed nine people and brought down a building that had housed 20 people in the town of Younine. Further Israeli strikes killed 12 people in the town of Amhaz and 31 others across at least a dozen villages in Lebanon's northeast, bringing the total death toll to 52, the Health Ministry said. The bombardment left 72 people wounded, the ministry added.

There was no immediate comment from Israel on the deadly strikes.

In Lebanon's capital, Israeli planes pounded the southern suburb of

Dahiye overnight and early Friday for the first time in four days, spreading panic after a rare lull. The Israeli military, which warned residents to evacuate at least nine locations in Dahiye, said it hit Hezbollah weapons manufacturing sites and command centers.

There were no reports of casualties from Dahiye, where fears of Israeli bombings drive a mass outflow of residents each night. Bulldozers rumbled through clouds of dust and smoke Friday, clearing rubble from the pulverized roads where Israeli warplanes had reduced dozens of buildings to their skeletal remains. Formerly home to families and businesses, mid-rise apartment blocks were left open to the breeze, walls blown off and furniture buried. Hezbollah supporters in several locations raised the group's bright yellow banner atop the rubble. Since the conflict between Israel and Hezbollah erupted in 2023, more than 2,897 people have been killed and 13,150 wounded in Lebanon, the Health Ministry reports, not including Friday's rising toll. Health authorities say that a quarter of those killed were women and children.

B'desh Hindus rally to demand protection from attacks

PTI ■ DHAKA

Tens of thousands of minority Hindus rallied Friday to demand that the interim government in Muslim-majority Bangladesh protect them from a wave of attacks and harassment and drop sedition cases against Hindu community leaders.

About 30,000 Hindus demonstrated at a major intersection in the southeastern city of Chattogram, chanting slogans demanding their rights while police and soldiers guarded the area. Other protests were reported elsewhere in the country.

Hindu groups say there have been thousands of attacks against Hindus since early August, when the secular government of Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina was overthrown and Hasina fled the country following a student-led uprising. Muhammad Yunus, the Nobel peace laureate named to lead an interim government after Hasina's downfall, says those figures have been exaggerated.

Hindus make up about 8 per cent of the country's nearly 170 million people, while Muslims

are about 91 per cent. The country's influential minority group Bangladesh Hindu Buddhist Christian Unity Council has said there have been more than 2,000 attacks on Hindus since August 4, as the interim government has struggled to restore order.

United Nations human rights officials and other rights groups have expressed concern over human rights in the country under Yunus. Hindus and other minority communities say the interim government hasn't adequately protected them and that hard-line Islamists are becoming increasingly influential since Hasina's ouster.

The issue has reached beyond Bangladesh, with Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi voicing concern over reports of attacks.

While the administration of United States President Joe Biden has said it is monitoring Bangladesh's human rights issues since Hasina's ouster, US presidential candidate Donald Trump has condemned what he described as "barbaric" violence against Hindus, Christians, and other minorities in Bangladesh.

In a post on X, he said: "I strongly condemn the barbaric violence against Hindus, Christians, and other minorities who are getting attacked and looted by mobs in Bangladesh, which remains in a total state of chaos."

Hindu activists have been staging protest rallies in the capital, Dhaka, and elsewhere since August to press a set of eight demands including a law to protect minorities, a ministry for minorities and a tribunal to prosecute acts of oppression against minorities. They also seek a five-day holiday for their largest festival, the Durga Puja.

Friday's protest in Chattogram was hastily organised after sedition charges were filed Wednesday against 19 Hindu leaders, including prominent priest Chandan Kumar Dhar, over an October 25 rally in that city. Police arrested two of the leaders, angering Hindus.

The charges stem from an event in which a group of rally-goers allegedly placed a saffron flag above the Bangladesh flag on a pillar, which was considered disrespecting the national flag.

Rescuers end search after canopy collapse

AP ■ NOVI SAD

Serbian rescuers stopped searching for survivors on Saturday after pulling out 14 bodies from underneath tons of concrete from a fallen canopy at the entrance of a railway station in the northern city of Novi Sad.

Serbia's government declared Saturday a day of mourning as officials promised a thorough investigation into Friday's collapse of the roof that fell on people sitting below it. The dead included a 6-year-old girl and a citizen of North Macedonia while three people were seriously injured, Interior Minister Ivica Dacic said.

Doctors said the injured ranged from 18 to 24 years old and remained in life-threatening condition on Saturday.

The train station has been renovated twice in recent years, and critics of Serbia's populist government attributed the disaster to corruption and sloppy renovations. Members of the opposition planned to protest in front of the station later on Saturday.

Officials have insisted that the canopy had not been part of the renovation work.

Kemi Badenoch elected new Conservative Party chief, UK Opposition Leader

AP ■ LONDON

Kemi Badenoch on Saturday became the first Black woman to lead Britain's Conservative Party as she succeeded Rishi Sunak in the House of Commons as the Leader of Opposition.

The 44-year-old Nigerian-heritage parliamentarian defeated former Cabinet minister Robert Jenrick after a three-month leadership election following Sunak's resignation after the Tories suffered a bruising general election defeat on July 4. The shadow secretary of state for Housing, Communities and Local Government began by thanking her predecessor — who was the first British Indian leader of the party.

"I want to thank Rishi, no one could have worked harder in such difficult times. Rishi, thank you for everything you did. We all wish you and your wonderful family the very best for the future," said Badenoch in her acceptance speech.

Sunak took to social media to extend his support. "Congratulations to Kemi Badenoch on being elected Conservative Party leader. I know that she will be a superb leader of our great party. She will renew our party, stand up for Conservative values, and take the fight to Labour. Let's unite behind her," he said.

British Prime Minister Keir Starmer also congratulated the new Opposition leader and welcomed her as the "first Black leader of a Westminster party" as a proud moment for the country.



"I look forward to working with you and your party in the interests of the British people," he said.

After a phased election process that had whittled down the finalists in the leadership race to just two, Badenoch bagged 53,806 votes to beat Jenrick who won 41,388 from the Tory membership who had voted via online and postal ballots over the last month.

Bob Blackman, the chair of the influential Tory 1922 Committee of backbench MPs, announced the result in London as the returning officer.

He revealed that the election had 131,680 eligible electorate of Conservative Party members up and down the UK, with a turnout of 72.8 per cent.

"Another glass ceiling shattered," Blackman said as he announced the party's new leader.

Badenoch, Member of Parliament for North West Essex, has long been popular among the Tories since she ran in a previous leadership race in 2022.

"Our party is critical to the success of our country. But to be heard, we have to be honest, honest about the fact that we made mistakes, honest about the fact that we let standards slip. The time has come to tell the truth... to stand up for our principles, to plan for our future, to reset our politics and our thinking, and to give our party and our country the new start that they deserve. It is time to get to business, it is time to renew," she said, pledging to get the party ready for government in time for the next election in 2029.

Having previously served as business and trade secretary and dealt with free trade agreement (FTA) talks with India, Badenoch indicated during the course of the Tory leadership campaign that she blocked the deal over demands for more visas.

"As business secretary, even as I was trying to do things to limit immigration, we had an India FTA where they kept trying to bring in migration and I said no. It's one of the reasons why we didn't sign it," Badenoch reportedly told 'The Telegraph'.

Both candidates had put immigration in the spotlight during the campaign, with Jenrick singling out India as one of the countries that should be subjected to tough visa restrictions across all categories unless it takes back its nationals who enter Britain illegally.

Badenoch, meanwhile, condemned new migrants bringing their disputes from India to cause unrest on the streets of the country.

Zelenskyy urges allies to take steps before N Korean troops reach front

AP ■ KYIV

Ukraine's President Volodymyr Zelenskyy urged its allies to stop "watching" and take steps before North Korean troops deployed in Russia reach the battlefield. Zelenskyy raised the prospect of a preemptive Ukrainian strike on camps where the North Korean troops are being trained, and said Kyiv knows their location. But he said Ukraine can't do it without permission from allies to use Western-made long-range weapons to hit targets deep inside Russia.

"But instead ... America is watching, Britain is watching, Germany is watching. Everyone is just waiting for the North Korean military to start attacking Ukrainians as well," Zelenskyy said in a post late Friday on the Telegram messaging app.

The Biden administration said Thursday that some 8,000 North Korean soldiers are now in

Russia's Kursk region near Ukraine's border and are preparing to help the Kremlin fight against Ukrainian troops in the coming days.

On Saturday, Ukraine's military intelligence said that more than 7,000 North Koreans equipped with Russian gear and weapons had been transported to areas near Ukraine. The agency, known by its acronym GUR, said that North Korean troops were being trained at five locations in Russia's Far East. It did not specify its source of information. Western leaders have described the North Korean troop deployment as a significant escalation that could also jolt relations in the Indo-Pacific region, and open the door to technology transfers from Moscow to Pyongyang that could advance the threat posed by North Korea's nuclear weapons and missile programme. North Korean Foreign Minister Choe Son Hui met with her Russian counterpart in Moscow on Friday.

Pak parliamentary body approves bill to raise number of SC judges to 25

PTI ■ ISLAMABAD

A Pakistani parliamentary panel has approved a controversial bill to increase the number of judges in the Supreme Court from 17 to 25 despite its disapproval by the opposition lawmakers who termed it an attempt to manipulate the judiciary.

"The Supreme Court (Number of Judges) (Amendment) Act 2024" which sought to increase the number of judges from 17 to 25 was moved in the Senate last month by independent senator Abdul Qadir to deal with the rising number of "pending cases". It was then referred to the

Senate Standing Committee on Justice, which met on Friday and its meeting was chaired by Senator Farooq H Naek of the Pakistan Peoples Party.

The committee approved a bill proposing an increase in the number of judges in the Supreme Court (SC) from 17 to 25 despite opposition from the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) and Jamiat Ulema-e-Islam (JUI). After the committee's approval, the bill would be presented to the Senate for discussion.

The bill aims to address the issue of delay in cases. About 60,000 cases are pending in the apex court. However, the opposition alleges that the gov-

ernment would pack the court with the choicest judges to influence cases about leaders of Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf.

After the bill was moved last month, PTI leader Ali Zafar said that the government should have introduced reforms in the lower judiciary instead of talking about increasing the number of judges in the SC.

"This is called court-stacking," he said, adding that several African, Latin American, and Asian countries in the past had increased the number of judges in the superior judiciary in line with the same practice.

"The purpose is to take over the court system by bringing those

judges who are favourable to a certain regime."

Separately, the government on Friday presented in the Senate a controversial ordinance promulgated by President Asif Ali Zardari in September giving a dominant role to the Chief Justice of Pakistan in the formation of benches.

The Supreme Court (Practice and Procedure) (Amendment) Ordinance 2024, was laid in the house by Minister for Law and Justice Azam Nazeer Tarar and referred to the standing committee concerned by the deputy chairman.

The ordinance changed the composition of the committee

that forms benches and fixes cases under the Supreme Court (Practice and Procedure) Act, 2023.

The three-member committee originally comprised the Chief Justice and two senior judges of the court. Now it will consist of the Chief Justice, the next most senior judge, and a judge to be picked by the Chief Justice.

Another significant change is the handling of cases under Section 184(3) of the Constitution, as the ordinance makes it mandatory to document why a particular case is considered a matter of public importance before it is taken up by the court.

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.

Gill fell short of his century while others continued to disappoint. Perhaps, there was no greater disappointment than to see Sarfaraz Khan looking like a fish out of water during his four-ball struggle, failing to open his account at his home turf

where at times he has plundered runs for fun.

Sarfaraz 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 IPL 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,

following Kohli's retention, RCB head coach Andy Flower admitted that while the retention itself is not surprising, he would be the key to RCB's success in the coming years.

"Virat's retention won't come as much of a surprise to anyone in India. He is and will be a key to RCB's success in the future. He was sensational last year. He was one of the leaders who propelled us into the playoffs despite a poor first half of the season," he told JioCinema.

Besides Kohli, RCB has also retained two more players - Rajat Patidar (Rs 11 crore) and Yash Dayal (Rs 5 crore). As a result, RCB will have a purse of Rs 83 crore heading into the mega auction tentatively scheduled later this month.

The franchise would also contain three Right To Match (RTM) cards, allowing it to retain three more players (an uncapped player and two capped players), or three capped players).

Glenn Maxwell, Mohammed Siraj, Faf du Plessis and Cameron Green are among the top RCB players set to go under the hammer.

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.

Mohun Bagan SG say AFC 'recognised' club's decision to forego match in Iran

PTI ■ KOLKATA

Mohun Bagan Super Giant Mon Saturday said the Asian Football Confederation has "recognised" the top Indian club's pullout from their AFC Champions League 2 match in Iran last month as a case of force majeure.

Keeping the players' "safety and security" in mind, Mohun Bagan SG last month decided to forgo their October 2 match against Tractor FC in Iran due to the volatile situation prevailing in the West Asian nation at the time.

The continental body reacted promptly and the Kolkata-based club was withdrawn from the tournament, pending further decision on the matter.

According to the MBSG, the AFC has now recognised their concerns but added the club remained withdrawn from the



tournament.

"On 2nd November 2024, Mohun Bagan Super Giant has been communicated by the Asian Football Federation (AFC) that in response to the club's appeal, the AFC Competitions Committee has decided to recognise the matters raised by Mohun Bagan SG as an event of force majeure," the club said in a statement.

"Consequently penal consequences, as per clause 5.7

of AFC Champions League 2 Competition Regulations shall not apply to Mohun Bagan SG." MBSG added in their statement, "However, in terms of AFC Champions League 2 Competition Regulation clauses 5.5 and 5.6 even in case of force majeure events MBSG shall stand withdrawn from the tournament for ongoing season."

Mohun Bagan SG were scheduled to play Tractor FC on October 2 in a Group A

match of the ACL - the continent's second-tier club competition.

However, the players expressed their unwillingness to travel to Iran, which was then in a state of mourning following the death of a prominent general of the Revolutionary Guard in an Israeli air strike.

Mohun Bagan had taken the decision to not travel to the country after Iran launched missiles on Israel, escalating political tensions between the two countries.

Meanwhile, the AFC had rescheduled matches across its tournaments due to the security situation in Iran, weeks after Mohun Bagan Super Giants were "withdrawn" from competitions, forcing the Indian club to accuse the continental football body of "unequal treatment".

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, Rajasthan Hockey Club 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.

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



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

seamlessly blending it with contemporary aesthetics. 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 Liguorice, and Sichuan specialities 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: 8585907779



FACES OF RESILIENCE

Faces in my Window by Nefolar 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 the 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



WYNN MACAU DEBUTS DRUNKEN FISH

DINING REDEFINED!



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



A vibrant 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 skilfully 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.)

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.



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 Nuttea 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. Markapur Road railway station serves as the gateway for devotees bound for Srisailem, with convenient connections to this revered destination. Upon arrival, travellers can hire autos for ₹30 to reach Markapuram bus stand, where buses run regularly to Srisailem. The 2.5-hour journey, costing ₹250, offers breathtaking views of the lush landscape, especially during the monsoon season. After arrival, the Shiva temple is within walking distance from the bus stand. Affordable accommodations, such as Kakatiya Anna Satra Sangam (?1100), cater to pilgrims' needs.



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 Palthal 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 mendoovada. 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.



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

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

Pursuit of happiness

Let us welcome the new year with open arms and let 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)