magazine



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: DELHI I LUCKNOW I BHOPAL I BHUBANESWAR I RANCHI I RAIPUR I CHANDIGARH I DEHRADUN I HYDERABAD I VIJAYWADA

# BJP, Cong spar, EC responds

Commission (EC) on Saturday wrote to the national presidents of the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) and Congress, asking them to comment on complaints lodged by both parties against each other for poll code violations by star campaigners. In separate letters to BJP president Jagat Prakash Nadda and Congress chief Mallikarjun Kharge, the Commission asked them to comment on the alleged violations of the Model Code of Conduct (MCC) during campaigns for the upcoming Assembly elections in Maharashtra and Jharkhand, as well as bypolls in West Bengal, Punjab, Karnataka and several other states. The Commission shared the complaints with the two parties while seeking their responses.

The EC has sought formal responses from both the party presidents by 1 pm on Monday (November 18), while reminding them of the Commission's earlier advisory to them during the Lok Sabha election to keep star campaigners and leaders under check so that public decorum is not flouted and the model code is followed in its letter and spirit during campaigning. Top leaders of the two parties are campaigning in Jharkhand and Maharashtra for the ongoing Assembly polls in the two states. During the Lok Sabha election too, the poll authority had shared complaints filed by the two parties against the other's star campaigners, including Modi, the EC on November 13

Gandhi for his remarks during a rally, where he allegedly accused the BJP and the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS) of "promoting hate" and indirectly linked them to Mahatma Gandhi's assassination. The BJP argued that the comments violated the Model Code of Conduct (MCC) by inciting hatred and making unsubstantiated allegations. The BJP had making demanded that Rahul be reprimanded, censured and restrained from "handing out lies" during the election campaign. They also wanted

Kharge. While seeking action, they had cited Rahul's comments at a meeting in Mumbai on November 6 where he said that the BJP-RSS wants abolition of the Constitution. They also cited his comments about projects going out of Maharashtra to Gujarat, which the BJP claimed was wrong. Conversely, the Congress had complained to

an FIR against Rahul and



against Congress leader Rahul Home Minister Amit Shah alleging violation of Model Code of Conduct. Party leader Jairam Ramesh, in a post on X, accused the two BIP leaders of "divisive, false, and malicious speeches" in Maharashtra and Jharkhand. The Congress claimed that Shah's comments were inflammatory and divisive, breaching MCC guidelines. Complaining against Modi, the Congress had referred to Modi's remarks in Nashik and Dhule in Maharashtra on November 8 where the Prime Minister claimed that Jawaharlal Nehru, Indira Gandhi and Rajiv Gandhi were opposed to quotas for Dalits, tribals and Other Backward Classes (OBC), promoting terrorism in the country," the Congress has told the poll panel.Congress said this was "false, malicious and slanderous".

On Shah, they said the Home Minister accused the Congress and its allies of being against Dalits, tribals and OBCs and promoting terrorism in the country. Shah Shah, Gandhi and Kharge. against Prime Minister also claimed that the The BJP filed a complaint Narendra Modi and Union Congress was planning to do

away with the quota regime. The Congress called these allegations "false, divisive, malicious and slanderous". Meanwhile, a war of words continued between the BJP and the Congress on Sunday. Home Minister Amit Shah on Saturday attacked Jharkhand Chief Minister Hemant Soren saying he is "conspiring to provide reservations to Muslims through backdoor channels with the help of Congress" and warned that the BJP would thwart any such attempt. He also held Soren "responsible" for the declining tribal population.

provide reservations to Muslims through the backdoor with the support from Congress. I warn that BIP will not allow any such plans of Hemant Soren and Rahul Gandhi to succeed," Shah said addressing a rally at Jharkhand's Dumka.

"Hemant Soren is trying to

In Ranchi, Congress chief Mallikarjun Kharge on Saturday launched a fresh attack on Prime Minister Narendra Modi, accusing him Narendra Modi, accusing him of "eliminating freedom of speech" and imprisoning those who speak out against his mistakes. Kharge also labelled former Jharkhand Chief Minister Champai Soren, who joined the BJP from JMM, a "traitor," claiming there were many such people who betraved such people who betrayed those who nurtured them. "PM Modi has eliminated 'freedom of speech' from the country; he jails those who point out his mistakes. You are snatching people's rights. Is this democracy that you jail a tribal CM? They want to crush us, but we will keep raising our heads," Kharge said while addressing a rally

#### JHANSI HOSPITAL FIRE

# Negligence claimed 10 newborn lives



Uttar Pradesh Deputy Chief Minister Brajesh Pathak with others inside the Neonatal Intensive Care Unit (NICU) of the Maharani Laxmi Bai Medical College where a fire broke out, in Jhansi district, Saturday

BISWAJEET BANERJEE

Adevastating fire at the Special Newborn Care Unit (SNCU) of Maharani Laxmi Bai Medical College claimed the lives of 10 newborns late Friday night. Even as the Uttar Pradesh government has ordered a probe, initial investigations reveal glaring lapses in fire safety protocols, including expired fire extinguishers and non-functional fire alarms, which significantly delayed rescue operations.

The ward housed 55 newborns at the time of the incident. While 45 babies were rescued, the remaining succumbed to severe burns and asphyxiation. The fire quickly spread, engulfing the ward and cutting off access routes, leaving staff and firefighters scrambling to save the infants.

Evidence gathered from the site highlights that the fire extinguishers in the SNCU ward had expired years ago. One extinguisher bore a refill date of 2019 with an expiry in 2020, making it non-

operational for nearly four years. Many others had exceeded their service life by one to two years. Instead of being functional safety tools, these extinguishers were mere decorative relics, rendering them useless in containing

failed to prevent Friday's tragedy, exposing the negligence in maintaining critical equipment," Agarwal Amarnath Congress leader said. Further compounding the tragedy was the failure of the fire alarms installed in the SNCU. Witnesses reported no alarm sounding when the fire

broke out, delaying immediate evacuation efforts. delaying By the time smoke engulfed the ward, panic and confusion had spread, making rescue efforts more challenging.

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Deputy Chief Minister Brajesh Pathak refuted these

claims saying hospital's fire

safety systems were last inspected in February 2024, followed by a mock drill in June. "If what government claiming is true, one thing is

true that these measures

Chief Minister

#### PM announces ₹2 lakh ex-gratia

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ **NEW DELHI** 

 $\begin{array}{cccc} P^{rime & Minister & Narendra \\ Modi & on & Saturday \\ condoled & the & death & of \end{array}$ children in a fire that engulfed the children's ward of a medical college in Uttar Pradesh's Jhansi district and announced an ex-gratia of Rs 2 lakh for the next of kin of each deceased. At least 10 children died in a fire that engulfed the children's ward of the medical college in Jhansi district, officials said, as 16 others injured battled for life on Saturday.
"Heartbreaking! The fire

accident at Jhansi Medical College in Uttar Pradesh is

heart-wrenching. My deepest condolences to those who lost their innocent children in this. I pray to God to give them the strength to bear this immense loss," PM Modi was quoted as saying in a post in Hindi on X by the Prime Minister's Office (PMO).

In another post, the PMO said Prime Minister Modi has announced an ex-gratia of Rs 2 lakh from the Prime Minister's National Relief Fund for the next of kin of each deceased in the mishap in the fire accident at the Ihansi Medical College in Uttar Pradesh. The injured would be given Rs 50,000, the PMO said.



#### **Prohibitory** orders clamped in Imphal

PTI IMPHAL

Drotesters stormed the Presidences of two ministers and three MLAs in Manipur's Imphal on Saturday, demanding justice for the murder of demanding three persons in Jiribam district, police said. The mob attacks on legislators' houses prompted the Imphal West Imphal

administration to impose prohibitory orders in the district for an indefinite period.

According to an order issued by Imphal West District Magistrate Th Kirankumar, the curfew was imposed from 4.30 pm on Saturday. A mob stormed the residence of Health and Family Welfare Minister Sapam Kanjan in Lamphel Sanakeithel area, a senior officer said.

Lamphel Sanakeithel Development Authority's representative David told reporters, "Sapam assured us that the issues related to the killing of three persons will be discussed at a cabinet meeting and that the minister will tender his resignation if the government fails to honour the sentiment of the public."

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#### Temperature dips, AQI & challans rise in NCR

STAFF REPORTER

s colder winds swept A through the National Capital Region (NCR), Delhi witnessed a dip in temperature on Saturday with recorded minimum of 15.3 degrees Celsius at 8.30 am, marking a drop of nearly 0.3 degrees in just 24 hours, the Air Quality Index (AQI) remained in the severe other areas of NCR. category for the fourth consecutive days. A dense layer of smog continued to envelop the national capital, Noida,



An average AQI stood at 417, in the 'severe' category on Saturday. Sainik Farm was the

AQI stood at 458. Meanwhile, Delhi Traffic Police has issued around 550 challans, imposing a total fine of over Rs one Crore, to BS III petrol and BS IV diesel vehicles on Friday on the first day of the ban on these vehicles under the Graded Response Action Plan (GRAP)

A senior police officer said that they have issued a total of 293 challans for BS-III and BS-IV vehicles in the Eastern, Central and Northern ranges of the city. A total of 2,404 challans have been issued for not work affected area, where the having Pollution Under

Control (PUCC) certificates. While the New Delhi range has issued 63 such challans, the Western range issued 73 and the southern range issued 121 challans, the officials said. The New Delhi, southern, and

in Ranchi's Ormanjhi.

western ranges have also 322, 894, and 1,235 issued challans respectively for not having PUCC, they said. Deputy Commissioner of Police (Traffic) Rajiv Kumar Rawal said that they checked around 3,000 vehicles in the three ranges of the traffic police on Friday.

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A team of the Indian Air Force (IAF) during a bicycle expedition to Adi Kailash, Om Parvat and Lipulekh Pass. On Nov. 11, ten IAF cyclists reached Adi Kailash (16,000 ft), Om Parvat viewpoint (15,500 ft), and then accomplished Lipulekh Pass (16,750 ft)

#### **PM Modi leaves** for three-nation tour, G20 summit

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Saturday said he is looking forward to "meaningful" discussions at the upcoming G20 summit in Brazil that built upon its agenda for the grouping on India's presidency of the bloc last year. Modi made the comments in a

statement ahead of his five day visit to Nigeria, Brazil and Guyana. The prime minister's first destination will be Nigeria from where he will travel to Brazil. "In Brazil, I will attend the 19th G-20

Summit as a troika member. Last vear, India's successful presidency elevated the G-20 to people's G-20 and mainstreamed the priorities of the Global South into its agenda," the

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#### JNU becomes first univ to introduce **Indian knowledge traditions course**



PIONEER NEWS SERVICE **NEW DELHI** 

ountry's top university, Jawaharlal Nehru University, has taken the lead to introduce 'Indian knowledge traditions' (IKT) for students across all disciplines, including engineering and management, which will be taught as part of an elective course. The course will be offered across all schools and centres, with each department customising the content to suit its specific field. 'Indian Knowledge Traditions' refer to indigenous systems of knowledge

developed in India over centuries, covering areas like Vedic sciences, ancient engineering, traditional medicine and philosophical texts.

The University Grants Commission (UGC) has been advocating for the inclusion of IKT in academic curricula as part of its efforts to acquaint students with India's intellectual heritage and values and sources said several Central universities and institutions are drafting and designing similar courses to impart IKT in their campus.

At JNU, engineering students will study traditional practices of engineering, while management students may delve into ancient economic and administrative systems under the new course, the source said. Schools and centres will design syllabi tailored to their disciplines, ensuring relevance for students across various academic backgrounds, they added.

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#### **CJI expresses concern over** exodus of young talent

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Chief Justice of India (CJI) Sanjiv Khanna has expressed concern over the "exodus of young talent" from litigation practice and said there is a need to ensure their financial and social security. Speaking at the "Felicitation Function" organised by the Bar Council of India, Khanna said there is a need to create a minimum remuneration standard for young advocates in the first few years of their career.

"The exodus of young talent from litigation practice is not merely about personal choice rather it is symptomatic of the structural issues, such as meagre financial and social security in the profession, especially for the firstgeneration lawyers.

To attract the community of young lawyers dedicated to serving the public, we must work towards making the profession a more conducive space, address entry-level barriers and promote support," the CJI said.

Khanna said a concerning trend is being witnessed where bright young legal minds are increasingly gravitating towards corporate



law firms or quitting law altogether to managerial roles.

"While corporate practice or house roles certainly come with their own merit, we must ask ourselves -- are we, the torch-bearers of the legal community, somehow failing to guide young lawyers towards public interest work? Who will represent the common citizens in the future?" he said.

Khanna commended the Bar Council of India's recent recommendation for paying a stipend or remuneration to young lawyers in urban and rural areas.

"This would hopefully give early exposures to the young lawyers in the courtroom practice so that they can make informed career choices rather than defaulting towards the corporate path," he said.



#### **Ayush Ministry's Yoga at Work is iGOT topper**

PNS NEW DELHI

The much hailed Yoga Break at Workplace (Y-Break) programme of the AYUSH Ministry has been awarded a certificate of appreciation for its "outstanding performance on the iGOT Karmayogi Bharat Platform".

The award was presented by Dr Jitendra Singh, Union Minister of State for the Department of Personnel and Training (DoPT), to Dr Kashinath Samagandi Kashinath Samagandi,
Director, Morarji Desai
National Institute of Yoga (MDNIY), during the Valedictory Ceremony of the National Learning Week Karmayogi Saptah, held at Vigyan Bhawan. The Y-Break course had been completed by

officials. The five-minute yoga break is aimed at easy workouts that help people relax, destress, refresh, and refocus both mind and body during their

around 868,094 government

improve mood, and increases focus without being stressed. According to the official statement AYUSH introduced this protocol to focus on employees' health at workplaces. It is said to be beneficial across professions. Minister of State (Independent Charge) Ministry of AYUSH, Prataprao Jadhav said, "Fitness is essential for better workplace performance, and the Ministry of Ayush is committed to motivating and facilitating self-care through yoga. I congratulate Team Ayush and MDNIY for designing this impactful Y-Break programme." The Secretary of the Ministry of AYUSH, Vaidya Rajesh Kotecha added, "Our efforts are dedicated to designing practical yoga initiatives, like the Y-Break programme, that effortlessly fit into employees' schedules, helping them stay energized and productive throughout the day."

workday. That in turn helps

### **US returns over 1,400 Indian antiques**

PTI ■ NEW YORK

sculpture sandstone Alooted from Madhya Pradesh in 1980s and another in green-grey schist, looted from Rajasthan in 1960s are among the over 1,400 antiquities collectively valued at USD 10 Million that the US returned to India.

More than 600 more antiquities looted from India are scheduled to be repatriated in coming months. The pieces were returned at a ceremony with Manish Kulhary from the Consulate General of India here and Alexandra deArmas.



Group Supervisor from the Homeland Security Investigation of New York Cultural Property, Art, and Antiquities Group, according a statement from Manhattan District Attorney

Alvin L Bragg, Jr. At least 1,440 antiquities collectively valued at USD 10 million were returned to India at the event, Bragg said in a statement. The sandstone sculpture depicting a celestial dancer was looted from a temple in Madhya Pradesh in the early 1980's. The looters had cleaved the sculpture into two halves to facilitate smuggling and illicit sale and by February 1992, the two halves were illegally imported from London into New York, professionally reassembled, and donated to the Metropolitan Museum of Art

It remained on display at the Met, until it was seized by the Antiquities Traffic Unit (ATU) in 2023. The second sculpture, Tanesar Mother Goddess, carved from greengrey schist, was looted from a village of Tanesara-Mahadeva in Rajasthan. First documented in the late

1950s by an Indian archaeologist along with 11 other sculptures of mother goddesses, the Tanesar Mother Goddess and her fellow mother goddesses were stolen one evening in the early 1960s, the statement said on Wednesday

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The police stated that Tanzeem

had narrowly missed passing

the civil services exam by 13

marks, which made him plunge

Tanzeem, who holds an LLB

degree, had also practised at the

Supreme Court for a year. A

week ago, he returned from a

trip and reportedly stopped

# Oppn slams govt over Jhansi tragedy | Youth shoots self, critical

#### CM Yogi Adityanath should leave poll campaign and focus on poor medical facilities: AKY

PNS LUCKNOW

Samajwadi Party chief Akhilesh Yadav on Saturday said Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath should leave the election campaign for the ongoing bypolls in the state and focus on the poor condition of healthcare infrastructure and medical facilities.

He also said that the Bharatiya Janata Party government should pay Rs 1 crore 'samvednaa raashi' to all the bereaved families, who have lost their children in the tragedy at the Neonatal Intensive Care Unit (NICU) of Jhansi Medical College and added that "Gorakhpur should not be repeated".

The former chief minister of Uttar Pradesh, however, did not elaborate about Gorakhpur in his post on X.

The news of 10 children dying and many children getting injured due to fire in Jhansi medical college is extremely sad and worrying. Heartfelt tributes to everyone," Yadav said in his post on X in Hindi.

"The cause of the fire is being said to be a fire in the 'oxygen concentrator'. This is a direct case of negligence of medical management and administration or of poor-quality oxygen concentrator. Punitive action should be taken against all those responsible in this case. The chief minister should leave the election campaign and false claims of 'everything being fine' and focus on the poor condition of health and medical facilities," he said.

Yadav said "only the families who have lost their children

can understand the pain and

"This is not only a governmental responsibility, but also a moral responsibility. It is hoped that those involved in electoral politics will get it investigated honestly in this hour of family disaster and will bring about radical changes in their socalled health and medical ministry from top to bottom," he Taking pot-shots at UP Deputy

Chief Minister Brajesh Pathak,

health portfolio, Yadav said, "As for the 'health and medical minister' of UP, there is nothing to say to him because it is because of him that the health and medical system in UP has deteriorated so much today. The minister, who is busy making low-level comments of narrow-communal politics, may not even remember that he is the 'health and medical minister'. He neither has any power nor any willpower, he just has a plaque with his name on it.' "First of all, the UP BJP government should provide worldclass medical facilities to all the children suffering from burn injuries and give Rs 1 crore each as condolence money to all the bereaved families who have lost their children. Gorakhpur should not be

repeated," he added. Reacting to the incident, Bahujan Samaj Party chief Mayawati said the government must help the affected families

in every possible way. The extremely sad incident of the death of 10 infants due to fire in Maharani Laxmibai Medical College, Jhansi, UP, has naturally caused uproar and anger. Strict legal punish-



ment is necessary for the culprits for such fatal negligence. is impossible to compensate for such incidents, yet the government must help the affected families in every possible way," she said in a post on X in

The Congress demanded a judicial inquiry into the incident and strict action against the culprits.

The news of the death of 10 newborn babies and injuries to many due to a fire in the special newborn care unit of Maharani Laxmi Bai Medical College, Jhansi, is extremely heart-wrenching. We pray for peace to the souls of the deceased children, strength to their families and speedy recovery of the injured," the Congress' Uttar Pradesh unit said in a post on X.

The cause of the incident is said to be sparking in the oxygen concentrator. After all, how can such negligence happen in such a sensitive ward? This is the failure of the hospital, the Health department and Foolproof arrangements

this gross negligence in the hos-

should be made to avoid such incidents at sensitive places like hospitals. This case shows administrative negligence as well as the weakness and neglect of the government system," the party said and demanded a fair investigation into the incident and strict punishment to those responsible for the incident. The party also demanded compensation to the families of the victims. Communist Party of India (Marxist-Leninist) expressed deep grief, condolences and anger over the burning of 10 children in the neonatal intensive care unit (NICU) of Jhansi medical college hospital late on

Friday night.
CPI (ML) state secretary
Sudhakar Yadav said that the heart-wrenching incident had exposed the gross negligence of the Health department and taking responsibility for it, the health minister should resign. The CPI (ML) leader said that the Jhansi incident reminded of the BRD Medical College hospital incident in Gorakhpur in 2017 in which 33 children had died as there was no oxygen in

the hospital. He said the families of the deceased children should be given compensation of Rs. 25 lakh each instead of Rs 5 lakh. At least 10 children died in the fire that engulfed the children's ward of the medical college hospital while 16 others injured battled for life on Saturday. According to Jhansi District Magistrate Avinash Kumar, the fire broke out around 10:45 pm on Friday in the NICU of the Maharani Laxmi Bai Medical College hospital possibly due to an electrical short circuit.

The children, who were in the outer part of the NICU, were rescued along with some of those who were in the interior

PNS LUCKNOW

Ayouth preparing for civil services shot himself in Indira Nagar on Thursday. While attempting to shoot by placing the pistol's nozzle against his temple, his hand trembled, causing the bullet to miss its mark. As a result, he survived but remains in a critical condition and is currently on a ventilator in hospital.

The youth's friends informed police about the incident. When the police arrived at the scene and broke open the door, they found him lying in a pool of blood. He was immediately rushed to hospital, where he was put on ventilator.

An unlicensed pistol and a .32 bore cartridge were recovered from the room.

According to the information provided, Athar Alam and Rameez Niazi, residents of Indira Nagar, informed the police about the incident at around 7:30 pm on Thursday. They reported that their friend blood loss and worsening his Tanzeem Niazi, who resides in Dashrath Bhawan, Rajiv Nagar, had locked himself in his room. Upon receiving the information, the police reached there to carry out investigation.

Due to the self-inflicted gunshot, Tanzeem lost consciousness, leaving his room and bed soaked in blood. The police recovered an illegal pistol from the scene.

Tanzeem, who had been preparing for the civil services exam, reportedly shot himself in the head.

Enquiries revealed that neighbours heard a gunshot around 12:30 pm but dismissed it as the sound of a firecracker. The police observed blackening on his temple, indicating the gun was fired at close range.

The bullet, however, missed its intended trajectory, likely due to a tremor in his hand, and passed through his head. He lay unattended for several hours, leading to significant

communicating with his family on Wednesday night. Concerned, his family asked his friends to check on him. The police later found Tanzeem

into depression.

condition.

lying injured in his room and admitted him to hospital. Doctors confirmed the injury was caused by a firearm.

A subsequent search of the room by the police field unit uncovered a country-made pistol, live cartridges, and a spent

The police confirmed Tanzeem had attempted suicide and filed a case against him under the

## Fire breaks out in doctor's flat, family escapes unhurt

PNS LUCKNOW

fire broke out in a doctor's Aflat on the third floor of Askari Apartments, located next to ERA's Lucknow Medical College & Hospital in the Thakurganj area. Seeing the flames, nearby residents informed the fire brigade and police. The doctor showed courage and rescued all four members of his family who were trapped in the blaze.

With the help of three fire engines, the fire brigade personnel managed to bring the fire under control within an hour. During this time, all the household items

destroyed by the flames. Luckily though, the fire did not reach the kitchen, or it could have led to gas cylinder explo-

sion and casualties. According to reports, Dr Nikhil and his family were in their flat on the third floor of Askari Apartments. Around 11 pm on Friday, they were preparing to rest after dinner when they noticed flames and smoke rising from one of the rooms. Dr Nikhil managed to

get his entire family out of the

flat. Meanwhile, neighbours

began pouring water on the

fire, but the flames continued

to spread. Chowk fire safety

officer Pushpendra Yadav, who

flames within an hour by spraying water from three fire engines. Pushpendra, who prevented the gas cylinder from exploding, explained that the fire did

arrived on the scene after

being alerted, extinguished the

not reach the kitchen due to the timely efforts of the fire brigade. As a result, the gas cylinder remained unaffected and was safely removed. The water supply was deplet-

ed while combating the blaze, and the fire brigade had to draw water from medical college to continue their efforts. The cause of the fire in the flat

# Shocked parents stay put at Jhansi | Chain-snatching accused injured hospital waiting for charred bodies

was sleeping on the pavement mothers, and their families outside the children's ward of the medical college in Jhansi on Friday night when a fire broke out in the neonatal intensive care unit. He broke in through a window and managed to rescue some newborns but not his two daughters.

authorities for identification but to no avail. "I couldn't recognise them," said the griefstricken father, still desperate to find his daughters.

The blaze at the neonatal intensive care unit (NICU) that claimed the lives of 10 newborns, many of them born prematurely, has been doused but the air around is heavy with due to an electrical short cir-

Jhansi (PTI): Yakum Mansuri sorrow. Parents, mostly young who gathered outside the children's ward clung to one another, drawing strength in their darkest hour. The women's faces are hidden behind veils but their grief was palpable in their cries.

Santoshi, who gave birth just 11 Charred bodies of some babies days ago, sat on the ground by her palms. "I heard a noise and came running. But how could I save my child? There was no information, no one told us what was happening," she said in a voice shaking with grief, not ready to accept the loss of her child.

The fire broke out around

cuit. As the rescue operation unfolded, many anxious parents and their families kept a silent vigil, struggling to comprehend the scale of the tragedy that had struck them.

While 10 newborns died in the fire, 16 others remain critically injured. Among the heartbroken parents is Sanjana, who had just given birth to her first

"My cĥild was born after seven months and was admitted here. When the fire broke out, no one could save him. He died, the wailing mother told PTI Videos. Nearby, Sonu stood frozen, his face a mask of grief. He lost his seven-month-old son in the fire.

"My son had been admitted to the NICU for over a month.

When the fire broke out, we were not allowed to enter. They saved many children, but 10 were burned. One of them was my son," he said to PTI video, his voice cracking with pain. Sonu's brother Parsuram said, "We sold everything we had and took loans to buy medicine to ensure that he got the treatment he needed. Despite

demand from the government

that a judicial inquiry be con-

ducted into the incident and

strict action be taken against

BJP ally Rashtriya Lok Dal

also demanded a thorough

It is a moment of grief for the

families, who have lost their

children in the tragic incident

in Jhansi medical college. The

entire RLD family is standing

with them. The matter should

be thoroughly probed, and the

guilty person(s) should not be spared," RLD spokesperson

The Uttar Pradesh state secre-

tariat of the Communist Party of India (Marxist) also

expressed deep sorrow over the

death of 10 children in a fire in

the pediatric ward of Maharani Laxmibai Medical College in

Jhansi district. The party

expressed deep condolences

to the families of the deceased

children and held the medical

administration and the state

Anil Dube said.

the culprits," the party said.

probe into the incident.

The Uttar Pradesh government has announced Rs 5 lakh ex gratia to the parents of each deceased and also ordered a three-tier probe into the incident. Prime Minister Narendra Modi condoled the deaths and announced an assistance of Rs 2 lakh for the next of kin of

# in police encounter dies in jail

PNS LUCKNOW

An accused in a gold chain robbery case, who had been injured in a police encounter in Lucknow recently and was under medical treatment while being held in Gosainganj jail, died on Friday morning, sparking a controvergy to prevent serious crime.

The autopsy report revealed that he died due to illness. Several cases of chain snatching and robbery had been registered against him. The accused, Kamlesh Tiwari, a notorious robber, was injured in a police encounter in Jankipuram on October 22 and subsequently died in jail.

After the incident, the police conducted a post-mortem and handed over the body to his family. At present, the family has not made any allegations. ADCP (North) Jitendra Kumar Dubey said the accused had been receiving treatment and had died of illness

"The injury he sustained durnothing to do with his death," he added At around 9 pm on October 22,

the Crime Branch and Jankipuram police were conducting a checkpoint near Bhitauli crossing.

Meanwhile, two men on a scooter were seen approaching the checkpoint, and the police signalled them to stop. The two

men fled, evading police er, Shailbala (62), a resident of instructions, prompting a

During the pursuit, one of the suspects opened fire, and the police returned fire, injuring one of the suspects in the leg. The other suspect managed to escape. The injured man was taken into custody, placed in a to KGMU trauma centre.

The accused was later identified as Kamlesh Tiwari from Daulatganj in Thakurganj. Kamlesh had numerous robbery and chain-snatching cases registered against him throughout the city.

Previously, Kamlesh had allegedly robbed the gold chain of Vikas Kumar Singh's moth-

Jankipuram (Sector-F). The incident occurred when the elderly woman was taking a walk with her granddaughter. Two men on a scooter approached them, ostensibly asking for directions, before snatching her chain and fleeing towards the Akanksha campus. The police stated that the accused's death and the police encounter in which he was injured are unrelated.

The encounter took place on October 22, and he was given medical treatment before being sent to jail on the advice of doctors. The accused died in jail more than three weeks after the encounter," a police spokesman

#### STF nets two more members of 'digital arrest' fraud gang

Lucknow (PNS): The Uttar the fraud. Pradesh Special Task Force on Saturday arrested two members of an organised gang involved in cheating people by posing as officers from the CBI, Narcotics Control Bureau, or the Crime Branch through a digital arrest scam, officials said.

The accused used to defraud victims by pretending to be CBI, Narcotics, or Crime Branch officers, claiming they were making digital arrests. The arrested individuals have

been identified as Raj Kumar Singh from Rajasthan (currently residing in Noida) and Sandeep Dohre from Jhansi. The police recovered two mobile phones and 41 WhatsApp screenshots containing information related to the bank account kits used in

The arrests were made near the Summit Building in Vibhuti Khand. The police received a lead regarding their involve-ment after Dr Ashok Solanki, a victim, reported being defrauded of Rs 48 lakh. Based on technical expertise,

analysis, and information gathered from informers, the STF team arrested five individuals on November 14 from Hotel Dashan near the bus station in Gurugram, Haryana.

The two accused arrested on Saturday were part of this group, and the above-mentioned recovery was made from them. During interrogation, Raj Kumar Singh revealed that his friend Vivek Prajapati had introduced him to the scam. Vivek explained that if Raj Kumar

arranged for a corporate account, he would receive a 30% commission on the money deposited into the account. According to Raj Kumar's con-

fession, in March, his friend Pankaj travelled to Cambodia to undergo training in the fraud method known as 'digital arrest', where he received training from a Chinese company. After returning to India, Pankaj and Raj Kumar started working

together on the scam. In August, Vivek and Pankaj informed Raj Kumar that an ICICI account holder was coming to Noida, and they planned to use his account for the fraud. Sandeep Dohre, the other arrested accused, corroborated Raj Kumar's statements. The police are continuing their investigation into the case.

Samajwadi Party MP Virendra Singh on Saturday said he has complained to the Election Commission about an alleged community feast held at the office of BJP MP from Bhadohi Vinod Kumar Bind in violation

charge. News reports and social media posts claimed that the "party" was held on Thursday night where some people got angry and started fighting after being served only gravy instead of meat pieces in a mutton dish. When asked about it, Bind told

of the model code of conduct

even as the latter denied the

the rounds (on social media), did you see anything in them? No such incident took place at

my office. "It is being written that it was a mutton party. Yesterday evening people started telling me about this thing. If any such incident had taken place, I would have said... Such a big (news) channel they are, at least they should have applied their common sense," he said.

Asked if he is mulling any action against those who published the reports, Bind said, "At present, my son is not well. He is admitted at Medanta Hospital

SP MP complains to EC about 'party' at BJP MP office in Lucknow and has to undergo surgery. So, I am not focusing on these things.

Targeting Bind, SP Lok Sabha MP from Chandauli Virendra Singh said he has complained to the Election Commission over the issue and claimed that no action has been taken against the BIP MP till now. In the complaint, it has been said that organising such a party is a violation of the model code of conduct which is in force due to the ongoing bypolls, Singh said at a press conference. Bind was an MLA from Majhawan assembly constituency in Mirzapur district

and his election to Lok Sabha has necessitated the byelections. Majhawan is among the nine assembly seats where bypolls will be held on November 20. The Congress is not contesting the bypolls and supporting its INDIA bloc partner SP, while the BSP is contesting solo on all nine seats.

**AKY RALLY CANCELLED OVER FLYING PERMISSION** 

Muzaffarnagar: Samajwadi Party Chief Akhilesh Yadav's rally in the Meerapur assembly constituency was cancelled on Saturday after his chopper was denied permission to fly from Hindon. The rally was scheduled to be held in Kakroli village. SP district president Zia Choudhry told reporters, "The cancellation occurred after his (Yadav's) helicopter was not permitted to fly from Hindon

Airport." The SP announced that Yadav would now lead a road show on November 18 in the constituency. The former Uttar Pradesh chief minister would be seeking support for party candidate Sumbul Rana, who is contesting from the Meerapur seat. The by-election for the assembly constituency is set to take place on November 20.

#### 5-yr-old girl raped by teenage neighbour

Gorakhpur: A teenager allegedly raped a five-year-old girl in a village under the Ramkola Police Station jurisdiction, police said on Saturday. The crime was allegedly perpetrated Friday by the girl's 16-year-old neighbour, who she used to call uncle, they said. Khadda Circle Officer Umesh Chand Bhatt said the boy lured the girl to a room, where he raped her. He also threatened her to remain silent. Later, the victim complained of some pain to her mother who then approached police.

The juvenile has been booked

under the sections of the BNS and the POCSO Act. Bhatt said he would be under police supervision till legal proceedings begin. The victim's father runs a tea stall while the accused runs a barber shop and lives with his two sisters.

#### MENTALLY UNSTABLE MAN KILLS FATHER

**Ballia:** A mentally unstable man allegedly killed his 55year-old father in a village here on Saturday, police said. The incident took place in the morning when Jai Prakash

Chauhan and his son Mohit Chauhan were working in their field in Chandraul village in Ubhaon area, they said. "The duo was working when Mohit attacked his father with a spade, causing severe injuries," Circle Officer Mohammad Faheem Oureshi said. The victim was rushed to a nearby health centre where he was declared dead, he said. The police have arrested Mohit Chauhan and registered a case against him under relevant sections of the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita, he

### Oxytocin valued at ₹1.93 cr recovered in joint operation

PNS LUCKNOW

The North-Eastern Railway, Lucknow, under a joint operation involving the Crime Intelligence Branch, RPF and GRP recovered Oxytocin, a banned drug, worth Rs 1.93 crore, during a routine check of parcels at Charbagh railway station on November 14. The contraband was being smuggled from Bihar. The case pertains to the illegal marketing, transportation, and manufacturing of Oxytocin, a spokesman said.

Following the discovery of offences under the Drugs and Cosmetics Act and sections 318(4), 319(2), 338, 336 BNS, false declaration of parcels, and Section 163 of the Railway Act, the matter was handed over to GRP,

Lucknow. The action was carried out under the supervision of subinspector litendra Yadav, the investigating officer from the Railway police, with the assistance of GRP, Lucknow, Charbagh police station and other officials.

# Maurya evades comment on 'batenge toh katenge' query

**PTI** ■ PRAYAGRAJ

 $A^{
m mid}$  opposition criticism of Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath's "batenge toh katenge" slogan, his deputy Keshav Prasad Maurya on Saturday refused to comment on it, saying questions about it should be directed to the chief minister. "Do you, the media, want to create divisions between us, the deputy chief minister told news persons who asked him about the issue on the sidelines of a programme in support of the BJP candidate for

'If the honourable chief minister has made a statement, why do you need a comment from me? Whatever the chief minister says, any questions regarding his statement should be directed to him. We all work together for the development of the state," Maurya added.

The deputy chief minister also took aim at opposition parties, alleging that they were trying to impede India's progress.

The opposition parties want to halt the rise of the Phulpur assembly bypoll Aatmanirbhar Bharat and name of caste."

prevent India from becoming a developed nation. But despite their opposition, the people of India have made Modiji the prime minister and strengthened the BJP," he added.

Earlier, during a public address, Adityanath had said, "We had to wait 500 years in Ayodhya because we were divided. We endured humiliation in Kashi and Mathura due to our divisions. When we were divided, we were cut. Today, the biggest challenge facing India is those who seek to divide us in the

# SP has no relationship with development: Yogi

PNS LUCKNOW

Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath, launching a scathing attack on Samajwadi Party, accusing it of not having any relationship with development and strengthening the "mafia raj" in Uttar Pradesh. Yogi said that during SP rule, dangerous mafias linked to the party used to harm innocent Hindus, forcibly occupy their properties, kidnap traders, threaten their daughters, occupy religious sites, and disrupt festivals. He added that such chaos no longer exists in UP, as there are no curfews or riots anymore, and peace prevails. Yogi was addressing public meetings in Uttar Pradesh on Saturday. He said, "Every dreaded mafia

is closely linked to the Samajwadi Party. They rely on them for their livelihood and even provide them shelter. The atrocities faced by Jaya Pal and Puja Pal are well known. Bharatiya Janata Party MLA Krishnanand Rai along with Ramesh Yadav, Ramesh Patel, and seven others, were brutally murdered."

Ýogi was seeking votes in favour of BJP candidate Deepak Patel from Phulpur assembly seat and Surendra Diler from Khair. He said that the Samajwadi Party has no interest in development, youth, farmers, or traders. Their only principle is 'Sabka Sath, Saifai Parivar Ka Vikas' (development of the Saifai family).

He said, "We promised to make UP riot-free and take strict action against all mafias, including those involved in ern Uttar Pradesh, reducing

cattle and forest crimes, and we have delivered on those

Yogi added, "When the government works for the benefit of the youth and conducts fair exams, it bothers the Samajwadi Party. From day one, we made it clear that we would act against those playing with the future of the youth and crack down on cheating mafias. The government and recruitment boards are ensuring that competitive exams are con-

ducted with integrity."
Yogi emphasised that when talented youth join government services, it accelerates development and helps bring welfare schemes to the poor

more effectively. He said that, thanks to Prime Minister Narendra Modi's efforts, the Prayagraj Kumbh has been recognised worldwide as a cultural heritage symbolising humanity.

He criticised the Samajwadi Party for opposing initiatives like the Ram temple, Deepotsav, Dev Deepawali, fair examinations, development projects, and welfare schemes for the poor. He accused Samajwadi Party of believing in divisive politics, using caste to create divisions, and acting like adversaries.

Targeting Samajwadi Party further, Yogi remarked that when such people are in power, poor Hindus are left waiting for benefits, but they never receive the advantages of government schemes. He also highlighted that the Ganga Expressway will connect Prayagraj to west-



Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath addressing a by-election rally in Phoolpur, Prayagraj, on Saturday

travel time to Meerut to just 6-7 hours. He warned people against being misled by Samaiwadi Party's divisive campaigns on social media.

government, new scams surfaced daily. He stated that for the Bharatiya Janata Party, elections are a mission of service. while for Samajwadi Party and Yogi alleged that during Bahujan Samaj Party, they are Samajwadi Party's coalition a way to carry out corrupt

activities, exploit the public, and spread chaos.

Yogi, while addressing a gathering in Khair, highlighted that the foundation of India's parti-tion was laid with the establishment of the Muslim League in

that while Aligarh rejected their agenda, their plan to divide the nation on communal lines succeeded. He pointed out that the Muslim League was not founded in Karachi, Islamabad, or Dhaka, but in Aligarh, and likened their divisive tactics to those of the Samajwadi Party today, urging people to prevent such intentions from succeeding.

Listing the development projects, Yogi stated that the region's value would soon surpass Delhi's due to initiatives pass Delnis due to initiatives like the Jewar airport, Film City and Toy City, which will pri-marily benefit the local popu-lation. He criticised previous Congress and Samajwadi Party governments for failing to pro-mote development. mote development, accusing them of indulging in luxury and treating power as their inheritance while disregarding public welfare.

Reflecting on the tragic events of 1947, Yogi said over 10 lakh Hindus lost their lives because of division, emphasising that unity is crucial to avoid such tragedies again. He mentioned the establishment of Raja Mahendra Pratap Singh University and the Defence Manufacturing Corridor in Aligarh as transformative projects. He added that when the cannons from Aligarh roar towards the enemy, even Pakistan would tremble.

He contrasted the BJP's focus on dignity and progress for all with Samajwadi Party's alleged protection of criminals, such as those responsible for the murder of former MLA Malkhan

## Govt restructuring SMCs to enhance school management

to boost transparency in L the education system, foster community involvement, and enhance school management, the Yogi Adityanath government has expedited restructuring of School Management Committees (SMCs). This move aims to empower SMCs, making them pivotal in advancing children's rights and improving the quality of education.

The tenure of the School Management Committees formed for the current academic session 2022-23 is set to end on November 30, 2024. In light of this, the state government has decided to constitute new committees.

These committees will be formed by November 30 and become operational from December 1.

The state government is not only striving to strengthen students' educational rights through SMCs, but is also making continuous efforts to improve the quality of education. The restructured committees will now serve as a platform to promote community participation and actively involve parents in school development. This initiative aims to make the education system more effective and robust.

Additionally, it will facilitate the efficient implementation of various programmes and schemes being run under the Basic Education department

and Samagra Shiksha.
The formation of SMCs is mandatory under the Right of Children to Free and Compulsory Education Act, 2009 and the Uttar Pradesh Right of Children to Free and Compulsory Education Rules, 2011. This provision applies to all schools in the state, except for unaided institutions.

The new committees will consist of a total of 15 members, including 11 parents, with 50 per cent of them being women. The remaining four will be nominated members, comprising a local authority representative, an ANM, a lekhpal, and the headmaster or in-charge of the school. To ensure social harmony, representation from

Tribes, Other Backward Classes and weaker sections is mandatory in these committees.

Each committee will have a tenure of 24 months, aimed at giving members adequate time to ensure the improvement of education quality and the protection of children's rights. In emergencies, such as a pandemic, the tenure can be extended or shortened as need

The Yogi government has ensured complete transparency in the formation of these committees. An open meeting of parents will be organised for the restructuring process. In case of disputes during the selection process, confidential voting will be conducted under the supervision of the block education officer.

Dates for the formation of new committees will be decided at the district level. Parents' meetings will be convened through announcements and promotional efforts to encourage active participation.

The state government has also clarified the reasons for which membership in the committees may be terminated. These include death, a court conviction, or the transfer of a member. Any vacant positions will be filled through a consensus during an open meeting. Minister of State for Basic

Education (Independent Charge) Sandeep Singh stated that the government has clearly defined the duties of the committees. These include monitoring schools, preparing development plans, ensuring the proper utilisation of funds, overseeing student enrolment and attendance, and ensuring the regular presence of teachers.

The committees will also be responsible for monitoring the quality of the Mid-Day Meal Scheme and other educational programmes.

Sandeep Singh emphasised that the committees have been involved in financial matters to maintain transparency and increase participation in development activities. Sub-committees will also be formed to oversee construction work in

# Prayagraj ghats being given grand makeover ahead of Maha Kumbh

PNS PRAYAGRAJ

In preparation for the Maha Kumbh 2025, the ghats of Prayagraj, a key site for devotees and tourists, are being given a grand makeover. On the lines of Kashi's ghats, the Uttar Pradesh government is renovating seven prominent ghats along the Ganga and Yamuna rivers to offer a more cent. Chhatanag Ghat at 90 per cent, Rasoolabad Ghat at refined and welcoming experience.

nearing completion, aims to enhance the convenience of tourists while beautifying the

These iconic ghats, central to the Maha Kumbh activities, are where devotees take holy dips in the sacred waters of the Ganga and Yamuna.

The rejuvenation focuses on creating an environment where visitors can comfortably spend time, reflecting the significance of the Kumbh Mela. The project is being carried out by the Construction and Design Division of Jal Nigam at a cost of Rs 11.01 crore. Project Manager Rohit Kumar Rana confirmed that the work is in its final stages, promising a transformed and vibrant experience for pilgrims during

the upcoming Maha Kumbh. The ghats being renovated include Balua Ghat, Kalighat, Rasoolabad Ghat, Chhatnag Ghat Jhunsi, Nageshwar Ghat Jhunsi, Mauj Giri Ghat and

Old Arail Ghat. Work completion on these ghats is impressive, with Mauj Giri Ghat at 90 per cent, Nageshwar Ghat at 85 per 80 per cent, Balua Ghat at 80 per cent, and Kalighat at 85 per cent. The beautification and infrastructure work are expected to be completed by November 30.

In line with the Maha Kkumbh's priorities, the Kumbh Mela administration is focused on providing highquality facilities to the pilgrims and tourists. The ghats are being modernised and beautified, with green spaces being developed to make the environment cleaner and

more appealing. The ghats will feature shelters, high-mast lights, drinking water facilities, and RO water systems. Mobile toilets and changing rooms are also being set up, along with benches for visitors to rest.

# UP has transformed into a key hub for MSME sector: Yogi

PNS NEW DELHI

Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath said that before 2017-18, Uttar Pradesh was seen as a big obstacle to India's development, with an environment of disappointment and frustration, but today, it had transformed into a key hub for the micro, small and medium enterprise (MSME) sector. He mentioned that the same UP has now transformed from being a barrier to becoming a state with unlimited potential. The chief minister was addressing the inauguration ceremony of the UP Pavilion at the India International Trade Delhi on Saturday.

The chief minister targeted the previous governments saying, "Uttar Pradesh was once untouched by development and viewed as a barrier to India's progress. However, the situation has completely changed. Today, UP is a key hub for the country's MSME sector, with 96 lakh micro, small and medium enterprises.

He further mentioned that the state's strengthened law and order have boosted investor confidence, attracting investment proposals worth up to Rs 40 lakh crore.

The chief minister stated that since 2018, inspired by Prime Minister Narendra Modi, the double-engine government has been promoting the One



CM Yogi Adityanath at the UP Pavilion, India International Trade Fair, in Delhi on Saturday

District, One Product (ODOP) initiative on global platforms. Through ODOP, the government has not only transformed the lives of millions of UP entrepreneurs but has also successfully connected crores of youth to jobs and employment opportunities, he added.

He emphasised that the India International Trade Fair, the largest trade fair in Asia, provides Indian MSME entrepreneurs a significant platform to showcase their products to the

Chief Minister Yogi also mentioned that since last year, his government has been promoting UP's products through the UP International Trade Show, held in Greater Noida.

In addition to over 2,000 Indian exhibitors, a significant number of foreign entrepreneurs participate in the event. This year, UP entrepreneurs received orders worth up to Rs 10,000 crore. He noted that at the Bharat Mandapam trade fair, products from various districts under the One District, One Product (ODOP) initiative are being showcased in the UP Pavilion. He highlighted a range of products, including sports goods from Meerut, silk sarees from

Banaras, chikankari from

Lucknow, and brass items from Moradabad.

Chief Minister Yogi emphasised that due to the collaboration between the Central and state Governments, MSME entrepreneurs now have no dearth of orders. The government continues to support these entrepreneurs by organising trade fairs and assisting with product design and packaging, he pointed out.

He described the trade fair as an excellent opportunity for UP's entrepreneurs and expressed gratitude to Prime Minister Narendra Modi for organising

#### Man killed by daughter-in-law over property dispute; 3 held

Shahjahanpur (PTI): A man was killed allegedly by her daughter-in-law and her relatives over a property dispute, police said on Saturday. The accused were identified as Shashi, the victim's daughterin-law and her relatives --Subodh Mishra and Shatrughan Mishra, they said.

Additional Superintendent of Police (Rural) Manoj Kumar Awasthi said, "The victim, Ramsevak (65), was found dead in his home in Rautapur Kala village, under the Khutar police station area, on Thursday morning. His family members discovered the body after he had been struck with a heavy object while he was asleep." During the investigation, police questioned the family and grew

suspicious of the victim's daughter-in-law, Shashi Mishra, and her relatives.

Awasthi said that Shashi, who had frequent arguments with her father-in-law, suspected that he might leave all his property to his daughter. Shashi, who was in close contact with her cousin, Subodh Mishra, reportedly called him on the night of the murder, saying, "This matter should be finished

Following further interrogation, Shashi, Subodh Mishra, and Shatrughan Mishra, another relative, admitted their involvement in the crime. The police have arrested the trio on charges of murder, and they have been sent to jail, the offi-

## **Government releases funds** for blankets, bonfires

PNS LUCKNOW

To combat the biting cold, the Uttar Pradesh government has released the first instalment of funds to districts, focusing on providing blankets and arranging bonfires for residents. With an allocation of Rs 20 crore, the initiative aims to extend relief to the destitute, helpless and vulnerable sections of society.

Chief Minister Yogi has emphasised the need for high-quality blankets and directed officials to ensure temporary shelter, food, clothing and medical aid for those in need, including refugees and the homeless.

Additionally, all district magistrates and divisional commissioners have been instructed to ensure temporary shelter, food, clothing and medical facilities for destitute individuals, refugees and affected people. The relief commissioner has allocated funds to all district magistrates, who have already issued tenders for the procurement of blankets and arrangements for bonfires. Relief Commissioner Bhanu risk from the cold wave.

Chandra Goswami stated that Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath stands firmly with the state's weaker sections and is committed to their welfare through various initiatives. To protect vulnerable and des-

titute individuals from the cold, the government has allocated Rs 17.55 crore to 351 tehsils for blankets and Rs 1.75 crore for bonfires, totalling Rs 19.3 crore in the first instalment. Districts like Ghazipur,

Bulandshahr, Gorakhpur, Sitapur and Lakhimpur Kheri have received the highest allocation of Rs 38.5 lakh. All divisional commissioners and district magistrates have been directed to take necessary measures to combat the cold wave and ensure timely relief.

Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath has directed district magistrates, chief development officers, additional district magistrates, subdivisional officers, and tehsildars to actively survey their regions and identify destitute, helpless, and vulnerable individuals at

Authorities have been instructed to ensure that no lives are lost due to extreme cold. Bonfires are to be set up at public places in urban and rural areas as needed. To mitigate fog-related accidents, the government has ordered timely installation of white thermoplastic road markings, reflectors, solar cat signs, and delineators along major roads, especially in accidentprone areas.

In addition, campaigns will ensure the application of yellow reflective strips on the rear of tractors and trolleys used in agriculture to reduce fog-related accidents.

The government has also instructed urban local bodies, including municipal corporations, municipalities, and nagar panchayats, to establish shelters and night shelters promptly. These facilities must display the manager's name and contact number. Senior district officials will conduct surprise inspections at night to monitor the arrangements and ensure compliance.

#### Minister's company accountant duped of ₹2.08 crore

Prayagraj (PTI): An accountant of a company owned by Uttar Pradesh cabinet minister Nand Gopal Gupta's was allegedly duped of Rs 2.08 crore by cyber frauds, police said on Saturday. On the complaint of Ritesh Srivastava, a case was registered on Thursday in the cyber police station against unidentified individuals under section 319 (2), 318 (4) of the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita and sections 66C and 66D of the Information Technology Act, they said.

Srivastava works for Icavo Agro Daily Private Limited, owned by the minister and managed by his son Abhishek Gupta. According to the complaint, Srivastava received a WhatsApp message on November 13 from a number displaying Abhishek's profile photo. The sender claimed it was a new number and sought sensitive financial information related to a proposed business meeting, the complainant said. Believing the message to be genuine, Sivastava shared the

company's account details on that number following the instructions of the company's director, it said. Subsequently, he was instructed to transfer Rs 68 lakh to a

client's account for finalising a business deal, followed by additional transfers of Rs 65 lakh and Rs 75 lakh into two separate accounts, he said in his complaint. Later that evening, Śrivastava discussed transactions with Abhishek, who denied sending any such messages. Realising the fraud, the company informed the police.

Cyber Police Sation in-charge Rajiv Tiwari said that all the three bank accounts in which the money was transferred were frozen with immediate effect. Further investigation in the matter is underway, he

#### 7 killed in road mishap Bijnor (PTI): Seven people, including a newly-wed couple, returning from Jharkhand died while two others were injured when a car hit a tempo from behind while overtaking another vehicle, police said on

Saturday. After being hit by the car, the tempo rammed into an electric pole around 2 am on Saturday near the fire station of Dhampur on the Dehradun-Nainital Highway, Superintendent of Police Abĥishek said. The tempo passengers were

thrown on the ground by the impact of the accident, he said. Jha said that all six people including the bride and groom died on the spot while the tempo driver Ajab Singh died while being taken for treatment. Two persons who were moving in the car have been injured, police said, adding the bodies of the deceased have been sent for post-mortem examination. Khurshid (65) of Tewari village of Dhampur was returning with his daughter-in-law Khushi (22) after getting his son

Visal (25) married in Iharkhand, Khurshid's brotherin-law Mumtaz (45), Mumtaz's wife Ruby (32) and daughter Bushra (10) were also with them, the police said.

**Newly-wed couple among** 

The SP said these people had come to Moradabad by train. From there they were going back to the village by a tempo. Other passengers, Sohail and Aman, were badly injured and they are being treated.

According to the police, prima facie the cause of the incident

was dense fog. Meanwhile, Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath has expressed deep condolences on the loss of lives in a road accident in Bijnor district, his office said on X.

In a post on X on Hindi, the UP Chief Minister Office said, "#UPCM @myogiadityanath has expressed deep condo-lences on the loss of lives in a road accident in Bijnor district. He has expressed condolences to the bereaved families of the deceased. The Chief Minister has instructed the concerned

district administration officials to reach the spot and expedite the relief work and immediately take the injured to the hospital for proper treatment. He also wished for the speedy recovery of the injured.

#### MAN HELD FOR **RAPING MINOR**

Maharajganj: A 16-year-old girl was allegedly raped by a youth after promising to marry her, police said on Saturday. The accused was identified as Namvar alias Mani (19), police said. According to police, the accused and the victim were in a relationship for the past one and a half months. He proposed her for marriage and allegedly raped her, Additional Superintendent of Police (ASP) Aatish Kumar Singh said.

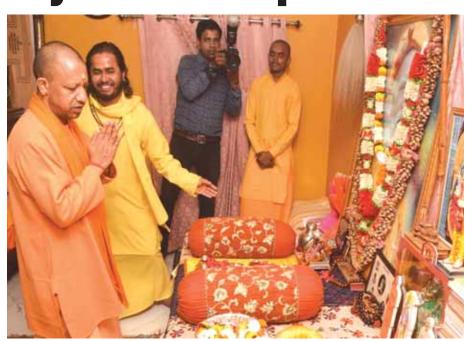
An FIR was lodged against the accused under relevant sections of the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita and the Protection of Children from Sexual Offences Act. Mani was arrested on Saturday morning and the matter is under investigation, Singh said.

# **CM** visits Satua Baba Ashram, offers prayers at temples

During his two-day visit, Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath went to Satua Baba Ashram here on Saturday. When he reached near Manikarnika Ghat amidst tight security arrangements, he was welcomed by Mahant Santoshanand who gave the former details about the place. At the ashram, the CM offered prayers to the shivling and garlanded the statue of Satua garlanded the statue of Satua Baba and paid his respects. Prior to that Yogi offered prayers at Kashi Vishwanath and Kal Bhairav temples. While returning after paying obei-sance at Kal Bhairav Temple, Yogi suddenly stopped on seeing a one-year-old girl playing in her mother's lap on the roadside and picked her up in his lap while pampering her. On seeing this, the people present there welcomed the CM by chanting 'Har Har Mahadev' as per the tradition of Kashi.

During this time, Uttar Pradesh Minister of State (Independent Charge) for Stamp and Court Fee and Registration Fee Ravindra Jaiswal, Zila Panchayat Chairperson Poonam Maurya, Gorakhpur MP Ravi Kishan and others

were prominently present. Earlier, on Friday late evening, after the inauguration of Dev Deepawali event at Namo Ghat, Vice-President Jagdeep Dhankhar, along with Governor Anandiben Patel and CM Yogi Adityanath and other guests boarded the cruise and



Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath at Satua Baba Ashram in Varanasi on Saturday.

boating, the tourists also rejoiced to find Yogi and other dignitaries and welcomed them blowing of conches and ringing of bells.

This time Dev Deepawali in with the slogan of 'Har Har Mahadev' and 'Jai Shri Ram'. All the dignitaries on the cruise, including the V-P and CM, accepted the greetings of the tourists by waving their hands and folding their hands. At Chet Singh Ghat, the grand view of 3D projection map view of 3D projection map-ping, laser show and fireworks on the sand across the Ganga river mesmerised everyone present. At all the ghats, grand maha aartis were seen welwitnessed the Maha Aarti of Coming the gods on the land Maa Ganga. During this, while of Kashi with the sound of

Kashi was full of amazing scenes. The light of millions of lamps on the banks of the Ganga presented a unique confluence of faith and devotion, while Pandey Ghat tion, while Pandey Ghat became the centre of special attraction, where Yogi's famous slogan 'Bantoga to Katoga' was engraved with 51,000 lamps. These lamps lit at Pandey Ghat caught the attention of the people and became a topic of discussion as many gathered at the ghate. many gathered at the ghats captured this unique scene in

cameras and shared their experiences on social media platforms. Dev Deepawali continued to trend on social media platform X. Users shared their experiences through the hashtag #DevDeepawali2024, due to which the festival was successful in attracting global attention. Under the Modi-Yogi government, Dev Deepawali of Kashi has now gone from local to global. More than 17 lakh diyas were lit on 84 ghats of Varanasi and grand fire-works illuminated the night, which people shared extensively on social media.

# Yogi visits hospital, enquires about health of former MLA



CM Yogi Adityanath at a hospital in Varanasi on Saturday to enquire about health of former MLA Shyamdev Rai Choudhary

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE VARANASI

Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath visited Oriana Hospital here on Saturday to enquire about the health of ailing former seven-time MLA from Varanasi City South assembly constituency Shyamdev Rai Choudhary, popularly known as Dada in the city. The chief minister enquired about the well-being of the ex-MLA and wished him a speedy recovery.

the CM also enquired from the doctors about the health and ongoing treatment of former MLA Shyamdev Rai Choudhary. He directed the

doctor concerned to ensure high-level medical facilities. Dada is a popular local politician, always associated with the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) since the Jan Sangh days and had won seven consecutive times from 1989 to 2017 from City South Assembly con-

stituency. Known for his simplicity he was often seen travelling by rickshaws and two or threewheelers even when he was an MLA.

During career, this 85-year- old politi-cian was inducted in the state government's ministry only once and was the only Bengali MLA in Uttar Pradesh.

# Maurya appeals to people to propagate Buddha's teachings and sermons

Deputy Chief Minister Keshav Prasad Maurya appealed to the people, especially the Buddhists, to widely propagate the teachings and sermons of Tathagata Buddha. He was speaking as the chief guest at the 93rd anniversary guest at the 1914 animversary programme of Moolgandha Kuti Vihar on Kartik Purnima organised by Mahabodhi Society of India, Sarnath here on Friday.

Maurya said this is the parliamentary constituency of the Prime Minister Narendra Modi who had said in his address to the world's largest organisation, the United Nations, that 'India has given the world Buddha, not war'. Addressing the people, Maurya said Ashoka the Great has the honour of being the emperor of the largest land area in the world. "Ashoka also came under the shelter of Tathagata Buddha and sent his sons, daughters and others to other countries to spread Buddhism", said the Deputy



Deputy Chief Minister Keshav Prasad Maurya addressing a programme at Sarnath in Varanasi on Friday

CM, adding that the language of conversation and propagation during the time of Tathagata Buddha and Ashoka

He said Gautam Buddha attained enlightenment in Bodh Gaya, but Uttar Pradesh is a state where he gave his 'First Sermon'. The biggest

characteristic of Tathagata Buddha is that he did not criticise anyone. In his speech, he also mentioned the places of Buddhism, Kushinagar, Shravasti, Sankissa and Kaushambi and also told about the development work

In the beginning, he lit a lamp in front of the statue of Lord Buddha and praised him and received blessings. He was welcomed by Buddhist monk Sumitananda Thero. The Deputy CM visited the Mahabodhi tree and also participated in the Deepdan programme outside the Kuti Vihar. Earlier, a procession was taken out by the students in honour of Lord Buddha and a welcome song was presented.

In this programme, Robertsganj MLA Anil Maurya, Mahabodhi Society of India President Mahendra Singh and General Secretary P Siwali Thero, special guest Gyebul Jigme Nomche, Ramesh Chandra Negi and other Buddhist monks were present.

## DTO: TB is not an incurable disease

Under the National Tuberculosis Eradication Programme (NTEP) and TB Mukht Bharat Abhiyan (TB Free India Campaign), nutrition potlis (packets) were distributed at Urban Community Health Centres (UCHCs), Durgakund, Kashi Vidyapeeth, Chowkaghat, Shivpur, Bhelupur, Manduadih, LBS Hospital Ramnagar and PHC Harhua on the occasion of Nikshay Diwas on Saturday. On the occasion under the direction of Chief Medical Officer (CMO) Dr Sandeep Chaudhary, District Tuberculosis Officer (DTO) Dr Piyush Rai distributed nutrition *potlis* to 15 adopted patients at UCHC Durgakund. The DTO said that TB is not an incurable disease. "At present, medical science has progressed a lot. In the district, better treatment of TB patients is being done in government hospitals but the most important thing is that the patient has to get his complete treatment he/she misses taking medicine even for a single day, it can prove to be harmful", he said.

the district since January 2024 Currently, a total of 7,002 patients are undergoing treatment, out of which 673 patients are multi drug resistant (MDR). There are currently 56 designations of the c ed microscopy centres (DMCs) and four CB-NAAT labs and seven TrueNet labs in the district. A total of 2,568 Nikshay Mitras are registered in the district and so far 13,400 poshan potlis have been distributed and 46 gram panchayats have been declared TB free in the year 2023. Along with government hospitals, private hospitals are also taking this campaign forward. Under the Nikshay Poshan Yojana, patients are now being given an amount of ₹1,000 instead of ₹500 per month in their accounts from November 2024, he informed. He said coughing for two weeks, loss of appetite, weight loss and fever are the main symptoms of TB disease. "It should not be ignored. Those who are coughing for more than two weeks or there is blood in the sputum while coughing should immediately get their sputum tested at the nearest government hospital", he said, adding that if the disease is detected on time, it can be prevented from spread-

# **NP Singh assumes** charge as BLW GM

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE VARANASI

Naresh Pal Singh has assumed charge as General Manager (GM) of Banaras Locomotive Works (BLW) here on Saturday. Singh, an alumnus of IIT-Roorkee (Electrical Engineering) of the year 1987, joined Indian Railways as

IRSEE in the 1988 batch.
He had worked in various capacities (Loco Shed, Loco Operation, Traction Distribution, General Services etc) in the Divisions of Central Railway (CR). He had also worked in Central Railway as Chief Electrical Engineer (CEE/Rolling Stock) and Additional Divisional Railway Manager (ADRM/Operations),

Mumbai. He also worked in MRVC as Chief Electrical Engineer (CEE/Project). Before joining BLW, he was working as Principal Chief Electrical Engineer (PCEE) CR since

September 1, 2022. Singh has vast experience in maintenance and operation of electrical and diesel rolling stock and traction distribution and general services assets during his tenure in CR. He initiated major energy saving projects and other innovative methods in loco maintenance,



New BLW GM NP Singh

major innovative ideas for maintaining live line OHE. One major project is for replacement of aerial earth conductor with optical fibre ground wire (OPGW) on OHE mast in 2x25kV traction system is also under progress, which will provide reliable communication path for Kavach and other S&T signal requirement in addition to previous earning through non-fare revenue (NFR) and spare optic fibre

important projects i.e. Floating Solar Power Plant of 10 MW and Battery Energy Storage System of 20x4 MW for traction power in CR.

cores.

# Lecture on employment opportunities in Sanskrit

Under the Training and Placement Cell of Banaras Hindu University (BHU), a lecture on employment opportunities in Sanskrit concluded in Sanskrit Section at Mahila Mahavidyalaya (MMV), BHU on Saturday. The lecture began after garlanding the statue of Pt Madan Mohan Malaviya. After introduction of the topic and welcome speech, section head Prof Shantilal Salvi felicitated the guest by giving a memento. The programme was presided over by the MMV Principal Prof Rita Singh. Dr



Pawan Kumar Pandey of Sankrit Department, Nagrik Varanasi on Saturday

A lecture on Sankrit job opportunities being held at Mahila Mahavidyalaya BHU in Varanasi on Saturday

PG College, was the keynote speaker in the programme. This college is affiliated with Veer Bahadur Singh Purvanchal University (VBSPU). He said through Sanskrit one can go to IAS, PCS and other administrative posts, along with this there are many employment opportunities available at various posts of state level TGT, PGT besides senior and junior research scholars, translators etc. In this way, detailed discussion was held and more than a 100 stu-dents participated in the programme. The programme was conducted by Shivani Kumari and the vote of thanks was proposed by Devi Prasad Mishra.

seminar on the topic of A seminar on the topic -Maha Kumbh -2025 and Harmony' was organised in the auditorium of Prayagraj Divisional Office of North Central Railway (NCR) on Saturday. It was inaugurated by the railway officials and guests by lighting the ceremonial lamp. The programme was presided over by Dr Raj Bihari Lal Srivastava, Principal CMP Degree College. It was inaugurated with the welcome speech by Additional Divisional Railway Manager/ General Administration, Sanjay Singh. Senior Divisional Commercial Manager/Coaching Himanshu Shukla expressed his views on

Dr Rai said that 15,880 TB

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE PRAYAGRAJ

patients have been registered in ing to other patients.



the historical and cultural heritage of India and informed about the preparations made by the Railways for Maha Kumbh-2025. He said the ancient city known for knowledge and Ganga is known for its culture all over the world. Senior Divisional Commercial

Manager/Coaching said the

seminar has been organized to make Maha Kumbh-2025 unforgettable, to provide excel-lent services of the Railways to the devotees coming for Sangam snan and to make this huge and wonderful gathering successful with the cooperation of all. Purushottamcharya Maharaj presented his views on

nation in the seminar. He highlighted the importance of unity of the society with religious, historical and mythological examples. Senior advocate and social

the culture and religion of the

worker, Alok Pandey, informed about the efforts being made for social harmony in the country and their results.

Social worker and Sampark Pramukh/RSS/Eastern Uttar Pradesh, Manoj, called for working together with a spirit of service for social harmony in Mahakumbh-2025. The dignitaries said the Kumbh Mela tradition has spiritual, social and cultural significance in the lives of crores of people living around the world.

### Pressures faced by adolescents discussed



Self-management awareness programme being held at CHGS in Varanasi on

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE VARANASI

The psychological counsellors of the Wellbeing Services Cell, Banaras Hindu University (BHU), hosted a self-management awareness programme for 300 Central Hindu Girls School (CHGS) students of grades 9 to 12 here on Saturday.

The programme focused on enhancing self-management, emotional awareness and decision-making skills through activities like laughter exercises and relaxation techniques.

The counsellors discussed the pressures faced by adolescents and the importance of selfmanagement, empowering students with time management skills and resilience. The programme received a positive feedback from the participants.

NATIONAL WELLBEING CONCLAVE: The first

National Wellbeing Conclave-2024 was convened by the Union Ministry of Education at IIT-Hyderabad recently. Over 200 institutions, including premier IITs, IIMs, NITs and state and central universities participated in it. The Banaras Hindu University

(BHU) was represented by the Associate Dean of Students (Student Development) Prof Nishat Afroz, Chairperson of Student Wellbeing Initiative, Faculty of Social Sciences Prof Sandeep Kumar and two students of the Institute of Agricultural Sciences -Hardik Rai and Aarushi Sharma.

The overall objective of this conclave and many such in the time to come is an integrated approach to promote positive mental health, resilience and wellbeing. BHU initiative towards focus on the wellbeing of students has been appreciated at the conclave.

#### Kashi Sansad Khel Pratiyogita date partially revised: CDO PIONEER NEWS SERVICE VARANASI

Under Kashi Sansad Khel Pratiyogita-2024 (Kashi MP Sports Competition-2024), the competition was scheduled to be organised at the zone and development block level between November 17 to 20. As November 17 is Sunday, the date of the said competition was partially revised and the now the same will be organised from November 18 to 21. Giving this information, Chief Development Officer (CDO) Himanshu Nagpal directed all

the officers concerned and sports associations to ensure the safe organisation of the competition by informing the participants of all the events as per the revised date.

#### Foodies relish food of their choice



PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ PRAYAGRAJ

 $T^{\text{he Ethel Higginbottom}}_{\text{School \& College associated with SHUATS organised}}$ EHSC fete here.

There was a fun-filled atmosphere in school premises. The fete was inaugurated by Manager Dr Samala Masih by cutting of ribbon, followed by the release of multi-coloured balloons in the sky. After the

release of balloons Father Lalchung from SHUATS prayed for the well-being of the

students and parents.
The teachers of EHSC worked tirelessly in setting an array of food stalls offering a variety of delicious snacks and exciting games. The foodies relished the food of their choice. The DJ was the busiest person as all the dance lovers were grooving to the peppy numbers on the dance floor. To ensure that the tiny tots did not feel left out, special swings were set up for them as well. The main attraction of the fete

was the lucky draw. The principal of the school lauded and commended everyone who had contributed in making the endeavour such a huge success. **BEATEN UP:** A sub-inspector who went to clear the traffic jam in Gogti under Tharwai police station area was allegedly beaten up by some unidentified youths in a car who also snatched his mobile, gold chain and ₹5,000. The S-I in plain clothes, who had also introduced himself, has registered a case against four unknown people at the Tharwai police station. The police is searching for the accused on the basis of the car number. ACP Chandrapal Singh said that the car number belonged to Prayagraj. The accused are being searched and will be arrested soon.

# Home Ministry urges peace in Manipur

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE

Urging people to maintain peace in Manipur, Union Home Ministry on Saturday said all security forces deployed in Manipur have been directed to take necessary steps to restore order and peace in the State as the security scenario remained "fragile" in the past

few days.
"The security scenario in Manipur has remained fragile for the past few days.

Armed miscreants from both communities in conflict have been indulging in violence leading to unfortunate loss of lives and disruption in public order," said the Ministry in a statement.

and disruptive activities. It said important cases have maintain peace, not believe in been handed over to the NIA rumours and cooperate with



for effective investigation. "The security forces have been directed to take necessary steps to restore order and peace. Strict action The Home Ministry said strict action would be initiated against anyone trying to indulge in violent activities," said Ministry,

the security forces to maintain law and order in the

State. A fresh cycle of violence erupted in Manipur last Monday after 11 suspected militants, who allegedly attacked a police station and adjoining CRPF camp with sophisticated weapons in Manipur's Jiribam district, were killed in an exchange of

fire. A day later, six civilians, including women and children were abducted by armed militants from the same district. Seeing the fragile situation, the Centre reimposed the

Armed Forces (Special Powers) Act in Manipur's six police station areas, including the violence-hit Jiribam on Thursday. The fresh order came after

the Manipur government imposed AFSPA in the entire state on October 1, barring 19 police station areas that include these six. The police stations excluded

Manipur the from government's October 1 order were Imphal, Lamphal, City, Singjamei, Sekmai, Lamsang, Patsoi, Wangoi, Porompat, Heingang, Lamlai, Irilbung, Leimakhong, order were Imphal, Lamphal, Irilbung, Leimakhong, Thoubal, Bishnupur, Nambol, Moirang, Kakching, Jiribam. An area or district is notified as "disturbed" under AFSPA to facilitate the operations of

the armed forces. AFSPA gives armed forces operating in disturbed areas sweeping powers to search, arrest and open fire if they deem it necessary for maintenance of

The police station areas where AFSPA has been reimposed are Sekmai and Lamsang in Imphal West district, Lamlai in Imphal East district, Jiribam in Jiribam district, Leimakhong in Kangpokpi and Moirang in Bishnupur. More than 200 people have been killed and thousands rendered homeless in ethnic violence between Imphal Valley-based Meiteis and adjoining hills-based Kuki-Zo groups since May last year. The ethnically diverse Jiribam, which was largely untouched by the clashes in Imphal Valley and the adjoining hills, witnessed violence after the mutilated body of a farmer was found in a field in June this year.

#### BJP claims some Muslim bodies asking community to vote for INDIA bloc, demands strict action

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE **NEW DELHI** 

The BJP on Saturday alleged that some Muslim bodies are trying to vitiate the poll atmosphere in Maharashtra and Jharkhand by appealing to their community members to vote for the INDIA bloc on the lines of religion, and urged the Election Commission and the Supreme Court to take action in the matter.

Addressing a press conference at the BJP headquarters here, party national spokesperson Gaurav Bhatia said All India Muslim Personal Law Board's functionary Maulana Sajiad Nomani has said that the outfit has decided to support Maha Vikas Aghadi (MVA) on 269 seats and other non-BJP parties on a few seats in Maharashtra Assembly polls. He said that Nomani has

appealed to the Muslims to vote for the MVA, saying the outcome of the 2024 outcome of the Maharashtra Assembly elections will have an impact



not only on the future of the state but also on the future of the entire country.

Earlier the Jamiat Ulema-i-Hind's Lohardaga unit appealed to the Muslims to vote en bloc for the Congress-JMM-RJD-CPI (ML) Liberation combine in Jharkhand, Bhatia claimed.

"This is called vote jihad," he said, adding, "This is the height of appeasement politics" by the MVA in Maharashtra and Congress-JMM in Jharkhand. Bhatia said that an appeal for votes made on the basis of religion amounts to corrupt

"It cannot be tolerated in a democracy like ours where

elections have to be as pure as Mother Ganges. It's a very worrisome trend that we have seen that for the lust of power, the Congress, Sharad Pawar, Uddhav Thackeray are ready to appease, adopt infiltrators and say 'I love you' to illegal immigrants," he said.

He said illegal immigrants can be a threat to national security but it doesn't matter to the INDIA bloc parties. Bhatia said when Prime Minister Narendra Modi gave a "positive slogan" for national unity, saying "ek rahoge toh, safe rahoge", the INDIA bloc raised objections even though "a wise person, even a child would say this is the mool mantra for the progress of the country".

"When Ulema, All India Muslim Personal Law Board and other (Muslim) outfits come out in the open and appeal to all Muslims to come together, it's our appeal to the Election Commission and the Supreme Court to ensure that no political party vitiates the

#### Anurag Srivastava appointed as India's next high commissioner to Mauritius



PIONEER NEWS SERVICE **NEW DELHI** 

Seasoned diplomat Anurag Srivastava has been appointed India's next high commissioner to Mauritius, an island nation that has emerged as a strategic player in the Indian Ocean region.

Srivastava, a 1999-batch Indian Foreign Service (IFS) diplomat, is currently serving as a joint secretary helming the Nepal-Bhutan division at the headquarters of the Ministry of External Affairs

He will succeed incumbent K Nandini Singla.

Srivastava is expected to take up the assignment shortly, the MEA said in a brief statement on Saturday. Prior to his appointment ioint as secretary in the Nepal-Bhutan Oxford University.

division in March 2021, he served as the spokesperson in the MEA for nearly a year. Srivastava also served as India's ambassador to Ethiopia and the African Union from September 2016

to February 2020.

In his nearly 25-year-long career as a diplomat, he also served in many Indian missions abroad, including as the head of the political wing at New Delhi's High Commission in Colombo and had a stint at India's Permanent Mission to the United Nations in Geneva.

In Colombo, he was closely involved in the formulation and implementation of India's development projects in Sri Lanka. He has also held different positions in the foreign office in New Delhi, including in the Pakistan-Afghanistan-Iran division. Srivastava obtained degrees in

engineering and business management followed by a brief stint in the corporate sector before joining the foreign service. He also has a postgraduate diploma in diplomatic studies from

## Own-source revenue for panchayats remains low at ₹59 per capita

PTI NEW DELHI

Own Source Revenue (OSR) generation for panchayats remains low, with the income through tax collected by the rural local governance bodies per capita between 2017 and 2022, on an average being just Rs 59 according government data. Even as the generation of OSR

for panchayats has come into focus to give these rural bodies more financial autonomy, according to the data compiled by the Panchayati Raj ministry, between 2017 and 2022, only an amount of Rs 5,118.98 crore was raised as OSR by the panchayats.

This comes down to Rs 59 per capita and Rs 2.27 lakh per panchayat over the five-year period for 2.25 lakh gram panchayats across the country. The total population coming

under these panchayats was more than 86.95 crore in the said period. Among the states, Gujarat

collected the highest amount

as OSR at Rs 829.75 crore,

while Kerala came second

collecting Rs 802.95 crore. Andhra Pradesh, which raised Rs 791.93 crore, occupied the third position, followed by Karnataka (Rs 627.56 crore), Tamil Nadu (Rs

516.3 crore) and West Bengal (Rs 435.17 crore). In terms of the per capita OSR raised by the panchayats, Goa topped the list with Rs 1,635 raised in taxes per person, followed by Puducherry, which raised Rs 757 per

However, according to the information shared by the

capita.

ministry at the conclave, Arunachal Pradesh, Bihar, Iharkhand, Manipur, Nagaland, Sikkim, Uttar

Pradesh, the Andaman and Nicobar Islands, Dadra and Nagar Haveli and Daman and Ladakh Lakshadweep are among the states and Union territories that do not have OSR rules. Andhra Pradesh, Assam, Chhattisgarh, Goa, Gujarat, Haryana, Himachal Pradesh, Karnataka, Kerala, Madhya Maharashtra. Pradesh, Mizoram, Odisha, Punjab,

Rajasthan, Tamil Nadu, Telangana, Tripura, Uttarakhand, West Bengal Tripura, and Puducherry, meanwhile, have framed these rules. The total 15th Finance Commission fund allocation to rural bodies is around Rs 2.36 lakh crore (2021-22 to

2025-26). Of this, around 60 per cent is "Tied Grants", which include heads like drinking water supply, harvesting, rainwater sanitation and maintenance services, while around 40 per cent is "Untied Grants" for improving basic services. For panchayats to generate

OSR, the states may authorise them to levy taxes, duties, tolls and fees, and it strengthens the panchayat identity as a local government through tax-based OSR. However, limited elected representatives' hesitance and administrative limitations

often restrict it. Matching grants based on OSR have been used as one of the ways by the Centre to encourage panchayats, like in the Andaman and Nicobar Islands, up to three times of the OSR is given as incentive.

#### RaGa criticises Yogi's Government over newborns death in Jhansi

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE

Congress on Saturday condoled the death of children in a fire at a medical college in Uttar Pradesh's Jhansi district and demanded a probe into the matter as well as strict legal action against those found guilty of negligence.

Hitting out at the Yogi Adityanath government, Leader of Opposition in the Lok Sabha Rahul Gandhi said such tragic incidents happening one after another in Uttar Pradesh raise many serious questions about the negligence of the government and administration. At least 10 children died in a fire that engulfed the children's ward of the medical college in Jhansi, officials said, as 16 injured children battled for life on Saturday.

District Magistrate (DM) Avinash Kumar told reporters that the fire broke out around 10.45 pm on Friday in the Neonatal Intensive Care Unit (NICU) of the Maharani Laxmi Bai Medical College possibly due to an electrical

**JNU becomes** 

first univ to...

The university approved the

short circuit. In a social media post Congress president Mallikarjun Kharge said, "The news of the death of innocent children in the accident that took place at the medical college in Jhansi, Uttar Pradesh is extremely painful. Our deepest condolences to the families of all the children who died in this heartbreaking accident. May god give their families the strength to bear this sorrow." "We demand from the government that the causes of this accident be investigated and strict legal action should be taken against whoever is guilty of such negligence," he said. Rahul Gandhi also condoled the loss of lives in the tragic accident.

"I am deeply saddened by the news of the death and injury of several newborn children in the tragic accident at Jhansi Medical College. I express my deepest condolences to the bereaved families. Such tragic incidents happening one after another in Uttar Pradesh raise many serious questions about the negligence of the government and administration," said Rahul.

#### PM Modi leaves for threenation tour, G20 summit

From page 1

PM Modi, Chinese President Xi Jinping and United States' President Joe Biden will be among the leaders to attend the summit in Rio de Janeiro on November 18 and 19. India is part of the G20 troika along with Brazil and South Africa. "This year, Brazil has built upon India's legacy. I look forward to meaningful discussions in keeping with our vision of 'One Earth, One Family, One Future'. I will also use the opportunity to exchange views on furthering bilateral cooperation with several other leaders," the prime minister said.

Induction of the 55-nation African Union as a permanent member of the G20 and managing to produce a leaders' declaration overcoming deep divisions over the Ukraine conflict were seen as major Mohamed Irfaan Ali.

presidency of the G20 last year. On his trip to Nigeria, PM Modi said it will be an opportunity to "build upon our strategic partnership that is based on shared belief in democracy and pluralism". The PM is travelling to the country on a two-day visit from November 16-17 at the invitation of President Bola Ahmed Tinubu.

This will be my first visit to Nigeria, which is our close partner in the West African region, Modi said. "I am also eagerly looking forward to meeting the community and friends from Nigeria who have sent me warm welcome messages in Hindi," he said.

In the third and final leg of his trip, Modi will visit Ğuyana from November 19 to 21 at the invitation of President

# **Negligence claimed 10 newborn lives**

From page 1

Eyewitnesses described the fire spreading rapidly, blocking the main entry point. Firefighters attempted to access the ward through the rear but were initially unsuccessful. Eventually, they smashed windows to reach the trapped infants.

Praminder Singh Chandel, a para-medics told this reporter that thanks to its ground-floor location, firefighters managed to rescue several newborns. However, those in the inner

unit of the SNCU were the ward boy acted quickly, severely affected, with some activating fire extinguishers. unable to survive due to severe burns. "If this had occurred on an upper floor, the rescue operations would have been even more challenging," he said. The SNCU ward is divided into two units: an external unit

and an internal unit. Rescuers prioritised evacuating babies from the external unit, but the conditions inside the ward made it difficult to save all the children.

Chief Minister Deputy Brajesh Pathak expressed deep sorrow over the incident, stating, "This is an extremely tragic event." Initial reports from eyewitnesses suggest the fire began due to sparking in an oxygen concentrator, which then caused the flames to spread

Pathak further explained that However, the presence of oxygen accelerated the spread of the fire. "Staff and family members worked together to rescue as many children as possible," he added.

The tragedy has sparked widespread outrage, with

demands for accountability. A high-level probe has been ordered to investigate lapses in fire safety and the hospital administration's negligence.
Deputy CM Pathak has assured stringent action against those responsible, calling the incident a "failure

of the system." The Deputy CM said that the main point of all three investigations is to identify the cause of the fire and the person responsible and take strict action. He also said that after conducting DNA tests, the bodies of the dead babies will be handed over to their

The fire unleashed scenes of chaos and heartbreak as parents rushed towards the burning ward. Some, disregarding their own safety, attempted to enter the ward but were restrained by firefighters. The SNCU

typically houses newborns suffering from conditions like jaundice and pneumonia, many of whom are only a few hours or days old. Each baby is identified by a slip bearing the mother's name on a ribbon tied around their ankle. However, in the chaos of the evacuation, many identification tags were lost, leaving parents frantically searching for their children. One such woman, Rani Sen, recounted her ordeal late into the night. Her three-day-old nephew, admitted due to illness, went missing during the evacuation. "We haven't been able to locate him since the fire. No one is giving us any answers," she said, sobbing. As parents mourn their irreparable loss, the tragedy serves as a grim reminder of the cost of negligence in public

proposal during a meeting last month and has asked all schools to submit their suggestions for finalising the syllabus. According to sources, the elective may be rolled out from the next academic session and will be available as an optional course alongside students' main fields of study. These electives will carry academic credits and, as per UGC recommendations, five per cent of a student's total credits at the undergraduate and postgraduate levels should be dedicated to IKT courses. To promote India's traditional knowledge systems, JNU recently also established centres for Hindu, Jain, and

campus.

Jawaharlal Nehru University has 13 schools, with each has 13 schools, with each housing multiple centres dedicated to specialised academic disciplines. There are 38 centres within these schools. Additionally, the university has set up eight special centres to further enhance its academic effections. enhance its academic offerings.

Buddhist studies on the

#### **Prohibitory** orders in **Imphal**

From page 1

Protesters also stormed the house of Consumer Affairs and Public Distribution Minister L Susindro Singh, another senior officer said. Agitators in Sagolband area of Imphal West district gathered in front of the residence of BJP legislator RK Imo, who is also the son-in-law of Chief Minister N Biren Singh, and raised slogans demanding an "appropriate response from the government" over the killing of three persons and urging the authorities to "arrest the culprits within 24 hours". Protesters, who had come to meet Keishamthong constituency's independent legislator Sapam Nishikanta Singh at his residence at Tiddim Road, targeted the office building of a local newspaper owned by him after they were told that the legislator was not present in the state, a senior officer said. The mob destroyed some temporary structures in front

# Temperature dips, AQI & challans rise in NCR

From page 1

A fine of Rs 10,000 is imposed on motorists for not having a valid pollution under control (PUC) certificate. These challans get released from courts. Private BS III petrol and BS IV diesel vehicles were banned from roads with violations inviting a penalty of Rs 20,000. Diesel and petrol inter-state buses from the NCR cities to Delhi are also banned.

According to IQ Air, PM2.5 concentration is currently 40.8 times the World Health Organization annual PM2.5 guideline value. The air quality index (AQI) of Delhi's Shadipur was recorded at 457 ('severe plus') at 9am, according to the Central Pollution Control Board (CPCB). The stations that

(436), Bawana (438), Burari Crossing (424), CRRI Mathura Road (424), Dwarka Sector 8 (415), IBHAS Dilshad Garden (408), Jahangirpuri (445), Major Dhyan Chand NAtional Stadium (413), NAtional Stadium (413), Mandir Marg (411), Mundka (423), Narela (449), Nehru Nagar (424), North Campus DU (436), Patparganj (427), Punjab Bagh (425), Pusa IMD (400), RK Puram (401), Rohini (426), Shadipur (454), Sonia Vihar (420), Vivek Vihar (436), and Wazirpur

According to the Air Quality Early Warning System of the Indian Institute of Tropical Meteorological (IIŤM), mainly smog conditions with predominant surface wind from west/northwest

recorded above 400 AQI were: direction with wind speed Alipur (435), Anand Vihar reaching 10 to 16 kmph prevailed during the past 24hr. Shallow fog reported at Palam airport. Palam airport recorded lowest visibility 500 m during 0700 to 0800 hours which improved IST which improved thereafter becoming 700m at 0830 hours IST. Safdarjung airport recorded lowest visibility 300m during 0730 hours to 0830 IST which improved thereafter becoming 400m at 0900 hours IST. "The predominant surface

wind is likely to be coming from northwest directions in Delhi with wind speed 06-12 kmph. The predicted maximum mixing depth of wind speed is likely to be 2000 m. The ventilation index lower than 6000 m2/s with average wind speed less than 10 kmph is unfavourable for

dispersion of pollutants," it Meanwhile, the Decision

Support System for Air Quality Management in Delhi pointed out that the transport sector is the most significant contributor at 12.444 per cent. While the residential sector contribution is 3. 123 per cent, industries contributed 2.565 per cent, construction 2. 156 per cent, energy sector 1.017 per cent, waste burning 1.171 per cent, and road dust 0.945 per cent.

The Delhi government has formed 84 teams from the Transport Department, and 280 teams from the Traffic Police have been deployed to enforce the ban. After conducting a surprise inspection at the Kashmere Gate Inter-State Bus Terminal, Environment Minister Gopal

Rai claimed that BS-IV buses from neighbouring states continue to arrive despite the

The Commission for Air Ouality Management (CAQM) held a review meeting on implementation of the GRAP III, on Saturday and directed all stakeholders that the noncompliance of dust control measures by Construction & Demolition sites resulting into possible adverse impact on air quality in NCR must be dealt with strongly and all actions for levying Environmental Compensation (EC) and closure should be taken against such units till full compliance is achieved.

"Further, inspection for C&D sites must be intensified and actions for non-compliance are also required to be taken

with a uniform approach. It was also highlighted that with the invocation of Stage-III of GRAP, it is imperative that the numbers of Mechanical Road Sweeping (MRSMs)are Machines (MRSMs) are augmented without further delay," it said. The Commission has also directed to intensify the challan for non-possession of PUC and impounding End-of-Life (EoL) vehicles by traffic police and transport departments of NCR states considering their huge potential to deteriorate air quality further.

Officials of concerned agencies shall be held accountable for any laxity in the enforcement of the Commission's directions and the same may attract action under provisions of CAQM

#### **US returns over 1,400 Indian antiques**

From page 1

By 1968, the Tanesar Mother Goddess was in a Manhattan gallery and after passing through two other collectors in New York, the Met accessioned the Tanesar Mother Goddess in 1993, where it remained on display until it was seized by the ATU in 2022, it added.

These antiquities were recovered under several ongoing investigations into criminal trafficking networks, including those of alleged antiquities trafficker Subhash Kapoor and convicted trafficker Nancy Wiener, the

statement added. "We will continue to investigate the many trafficking networks that have targeted Indian cultural heritage," Bragg said. The statement said that during

of the office building, he

Bragg's tenure, the District Antiquities Attornev's Trafficking Unit recovered just over 2,100 antiquities stolen from more than 30 countries and valued at almost USD 230 million. It said about 1,000 antiquities, including more than 600 antiquities looted from India and recovered earlier this year, were scheduled to be repatriated in the coming months.

# Protesters gather at UN climate talks in global day of action as progress on a deal slows

AP ■ BAKU (AZERBAIJAN)

Hundreds of activists formed a human chain outside one of the main plenary halls at the United Nations climate summit on what is traditionally their biggest protest day during the two-week talks. The demonstration in Baku, Azerbaijan will be echoed at sites around the world in a global "day of action" for climate justice that's become an annual event. Activists waved flags, snapped their fingers, and hummed and mumbled chants in a silent protest, with many covering their mouths with the word "Silenced."

Demonstrators held up signs calling for more money to be pledged for climate finance, which involves cash for transi-

adapting to climate change. It comes as negotiators at the venue try to hammer out a deal for exactly that — but progress has been slow and observers say the direction of any agreement is still unclear.

#### TIRED BUT INSPIRED. **ACTIVISTS VOW** TO KEEP FIGHTING

Lidy Nacpil said protesters like

her are "not surprised" about how negotiations are going. But past wins — like a loss and damage fund that gives developing nations cash after extreme weather events exacerbated by climate change keep organisers going, said Nacpil, a coordinator with the Asian Peoples' Movement on about this," she said. Essop says she's "not very" optimistic

pressure," she said of the action. We know we're not going to get the results that the world needs in this round of negotiations, but at least to bring us many steps closer is our hope, is our aim." She added: "I think we have no option but to keep fighting ... It's the instinctive response that anyone, any living being, living creatures will have, which is to fight for life and fight for survival.

Tasneem Essop said she was inspired by the action, which was challenging to organise. "To be able to pull off something where people feel their own power, exercise their own power and get inspired in this creative way, I'm super excited



but knows next week will be pivotal. "We can't end up with a bad deal for the peoples of the world, those who are already suffering the impacts of climate change, those who need to adapt to an increasing and escalating crisis," she said. "We fight until the end."

## ON A DEAL FOR CLIMATE CASH, THERE'S NOT MUCH PROGRESS

Negotiators at COP29, as the talks are known, are working on a deal that might be worth hundreds of billions of dollars to poorer nations. Many are in the Global South and already suffering the costly impacts of weather disasters fueled by climate change. Several experts have said USD 1 trillion to compensate for such damages and to pay for a cleanenergy transition that most countries can't afford on their own. Samir Bejanov, deputy lead negotiator of this year's climate talks said in a press conference that the climate finance talks were moving too slowly. "I want to repeat our strong

encouragement to all parties to make as much progress as possible," he said. "We need everyone to approach the task with urgency and determination." Observers were also disappointed at the pace of progress. This has been the worst first week of a COP in my 15 years of attending this summit," said Mohamed Adow, of climate think tank Power Shift Africa.

"There's no clarity on the cli-

of the finance or how it's going to be made accessible to vulner able countries."

"I sense a lot of frustration, especially among the developing country blocks here," he said. Panama environment minister Juan Carlos Navarro agreed, telling The Associated Press he is "not encouraged" by what he's seeing at COP29 so far. "What I see is a lot of talk and very little action," he said, noting that Panama is among the group of countries least responsible for warming emissions but most vulnerable to the damage caused by climate change-fueled disasters.

"We must face these challenges with a true sense of urgency and sincerity," he said. "We are dragging our feet as a planet.'

# Biden to press Xi on N Korea's ties with Russia

**AP** ■ LIMA (PERU)

President Joe Biden is expected to use his final meeting with China's leader, Xi Jinping, to urge him to dissuade North Korea from further deepening its support for Russia's war on Ukraine. Saturday's talks on the sidelines of the annual Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation summit in Peru come just over two months before Biden leaves office and makes way for Republican President-elect Donald Trump.
It will be Biden's last check-in

with Xi - someone the Democrat saw as his most consequential peer on the

world stage.
With the final meeting, officials say Biden will be looking for Xi to step up Chinese engagement to prevent an already dangerous moment with North Korea from further escalating.

Biden on Friday, along with South Korean President Yoon Seok Yul and Japan's Prime Minister Shigeru Ishiba, condemned North Korean leader Kim Jong Un's decision to send thousands of troops to help Moscow repel Ukrainian forces who have seized territory in Russia's Kursk border region. Biden called it "dangerous and destabilising cooperation".

White House officials also have expressed frustration with Beijing, which accounts for the vast majority of North Korea's trade, for not doing more to rein in Pyongyang.

Biden, Yoon and Ishiba spent to US and South Korean intelligence officials. And the US,

#### Japan's minister visits Ukraine to stress concern over North Korean troops

Kyiv (AP): Japan's foreign minister arrived in Kyiv on Saturday to discuss North Korea's deepening military alliance with Russia, including the deployment of thousands of troops to support Moscow's war in Ukraine.

Iwaya will meet his Ukrainian counterpart, Andrii Sybiha, to reaffirm Japan's "strong support" for Ukraine against Russia's invasion and to discuss further sanctions against Moscow, Japan's Foreign Ministry said.

High on the agenda was Tokyo's "grave concern" over growing military cooperation between North Korea and Russia, the ministry said. According to US, South

most of their 50-minute discussion focused on the issue, agreeing it "should not be in Beijing's interest to have this destabilising cooperation in the region, according to a senior administration official who spoke on condition of anonymity to discuss their pri-

vate conversations. The North Koreans also have provided Russia with artillery and other munitions, according to US and South Korean intelKorean and Ukrainian intelligence assessments, up to 12,000 North Korean troops have been sent to Russia as part of a major defence treaty between the countries.

Last week, Ukrainian officials said Ukraine and North Foreign Minister Takeshi Korean troops engaged in small-scale fighting while Ukraine's army fired artillery at North Korean soldiers in Russia's Kursk border region, where Ukraine launched a surprise push on August 6. The agreement requires both countries to use all available means to provide immediate military assistance if either is attacked.

Iwaya's visit comes after the Ukrainian capital was attacked overnight by Russian

Japan and South Korea have issues, technology and Taiwan, expressed alarm over the self-ruled democracy that Pyongyang's stepped-up cadence of ballistic missile

Kim ordered testing exercises in the lead-up to this month's US election and is claiming progress on efforts to build capability to strike the US mainland.

Biden and Xi have much beyond North Korea to discuss, including China's indirect support for Russia, human rights

drones, damaging residential buildings and infrastructure in Kyiv's Obolon district. No casualties were reported. Ukrainian air defences neutralised up to a dozen drones, said the head of Kyiv's military administration, Serhii Popko. Russia attacked Ukraine with 83 Shahed drones in the early hours of Saturday morning, the Ukrainian air force reported. Of those, 55 were shot down, while another 30 veered off course or were lost

Meanwhile, Russia's Ministry of Defense said that it had destroyed 35 Ukrainian drones, including 20 over the western Kursk region and 11 over the Bryansk region.

after electronic jamming, it

Beijing claims as its own. There's also much uncertainty about what lies ahead in the US-China relationship under Trump, who campaigned promising to levy 60 per cent tariffs on Chinese imports. Already, many American companies, including Nike and eyewear retailer Warby Parker, have been diversifying their

sourcing away from China.

Shoe brand Steve Madden says

it plans to cut imports from China by as much as 45 per cent next year.

"When Xi meets with Biden, part of his audience is not solely the White House or the US government," said Victor Cha, an analyst at the Centre for Strategic and International Studies in Washington. "It's about American CEOs and continued US investment or trying to renew US investment in China and get rid of the perception that there's a hostile business environment in

China." White House national security adviser Jake Sullivan said Biden administration officials will advise the Trump team that managing the intense competition with Beijing will likely be the most significant foreign policy challenge they will face. Administration officials are concerned that tensions between China and Taiwan could devolve into all-out war if there is a miscalculation by either side, with catastrophic consequences for the world. Sullivan said the Trump administration will have to deal with the Chinese military's frequent harassment of its

regional neighbors. Skirmishes between the Philippine and Chinese coast guards in the disputed South China Sea have become a persistent problem. Chinese coast guard ships also regularly approach disputed Japanesecontrolled East China Sea islands near Taiwan.

#### Israeli troops reach deepest point in Lebanon since Oct 1

**AP** ■ BEIRUT

Tsraeli ground forces reached Itheir deepest point in Lebanon since they invaded six weeks ago, before pulling back early Saturday after fierce battles with Hezbollah militants, Lebanese state media reported.

Israeli troops captured a strategic hill in the southern Lebanese village of Chamaa, about 5 kilometres from the Israeli border early Saturday, the state-run National News Agency reported. It said Israeli troops were later pushed back from the hill. It added that Israeli troops detonated the Shrine of Shimon the Prophet in Chamaa as well as several homes before they withdrew, but the claim could not be immediately verified.

Israel's military said in a state-

ment that its troops "continue their limited, localised, and targeted operational activity in southern Lebanon." The military did not immediately respond to requests for comment on the Lebanese media reports. The push on the ground came as Israeli warplanes pounded Beirut's southern suburbs as well as several other areas in southern Lebanon, including the port city of Tyre. The morning strike in Beirut hit an area known as Dahiyeh, which the Israeli military called a Hezbollah stronghold, saying its planes had hit multiple sites



Smoke rises after an Israeli airstrike on Dahiyeh, in the southern suburb of Beirut, Lebanon, on Saturday

used by the militant group. Residents were given advance warning by Israel, and it was not immediately clear whether there were any casualties.

The increase of violence came as Lebanese and Hezbollah officials are studying a draft proposal presented by the US earlier this week on ending the war. Since late September, Israel dramatically escalated its bombardment of Lebanon, vowing to cripple Hezbollah and end its barrages in Israel. More than 3,400 people have been killed in Lebanon by Israeli fire — 80 per cent of them in the eight weeks according to Lebanon's Health Ministry.

On Friday, Lebanon's caretaker prime minister apparently urged ran to try and convince Hezbollah to agree to a ceasefire deal with Israel, which would require the group to pull back from the Israel-Lebanon border. The proposal is based on UN Security Council resolution 1701, which ended the last Israel-Hezbollah war in the summer of 2006.

A copy of the draft proposal was handed over earlier this week by the US ambassador to Lebanon to Parliament Speaker Nabih Berri, who has been negotiating on behalf of Hezbollah, according to a Lebanese official. The official who spoke on condition of anonymity because he was not authorised to speak about the secret talks said Berri is expected to give Lebanon's response on Monday. Another Lebanese politician said Hezbollah officials had received the draft, were studying it and would express their opinion on

# massive job cuts in US

Entrepreneur-turned politician Vivek Ramaswamy, who along with Tesla owner Elon Musk has been nominated in-charge of the Department of Government Efficiency, has indicated a massive cut in federal government jobs in the United States. "Elon Musk and I are in a position to start the mass deportations of millions of unelected federal bureaucrats out of the DC bureaucracy. That, too, is how we're going to save this country, Ramaswamy, an Indian American, said at an event in Mar-a-Lago in Florida on Thursday.

"I don't know if you've got to know Elon yet, but he doesn't bring a chisel. He brings a chainsaw. We are going to be taking it to that bureaucracy. It's going to be a lot of fun," he

said.
"We've been taught to believe over the last four years that we have become a nation in decline, that we're at the end of the ancient Roman Empire. All we have is to fight over the scraps of some shrinking pie. I don't think we have to stay as that nation in decline. I think with what happened last week, we're back to being a nation in our ascent. Ă nation whose best days are actually still ahead of us,"

Ramaswamy said. "It is going to be morning in America, the start of a new dawn, the start of a country where our kids are going to grow up and we're going to tell them and mean it, that you get ahead in the United States again with your own hard work and commitment and dedication, that you're free to speak your mind at every step of the way, that the best person gets the job regardless of their colour," he said.

Meanwhile, Musk and Ramaswamy announced that they will livestream every week to update the American said.



public on the progress of the works by the Department of Government Efficiency (DOGE). "Our goal is to shave the size of government and to be as transparent as possible with the public. Weekly 'Dogecasts' will start soon,"

Ramaswamy said. "DOGE's job is to create a government of a size and scope that our Founders would be proud of. Elon Musk and I look forward to fulfilling the mandate given to us by President Trump," he said. Ramaswamy, however, argued that too much bureaucracy means less innovation and higher costs.

"That's a real problem with the US Food and Drug Administration (FDA), Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NRC), and countless other 3-letter agencies," he said, adding, "They are utterly agnostic to how their daily decisions stifle new inventions and impose costs

that deter growth. We are assembling the brightest minds in the country. This is the equivalent of a modern Manhattan Project. I think the major problem holding our country back is a federal bureaucracy. Target that cost, save the money, restore self-governance," Ramaswamy

# Ramaswamy indicates | Indian family froze to death | Family of Israeli-American **crossing Canada-US border**

**AP** MINNEAPOLIS

On the last night of their lives, Jagdish Patel, his wife and their two young children tried to slip into the US across a near-empty stretch of the Canadian border.

Fahrenheit (minus 38 Celsius) that night in January 2022 as the family from India set out on foot to meet a waiting van. They walked amid vast farm fields and bulky snowdrifts, navigating in the black of an almost-moonless night.

Wind chills reached minus 36

The driver, waiting in northern Minnesota, messaged his boss: "Make sure everyone is dressed for the blizzard conditions,

Coordinating things in Canada, federal prosecutors say, was Harshkumar Patel, an experienced smuggler nicknamed "Dirty Harry." On the US side was Steve Shand, the driver recently recruited by Patel at a casino near their Florida

homes, prosecutors say. The two men, whose trial is scheduled to start Monday, are accused of being part of a sophisticated human smuggling operation feeding a fastgrowing population of Indians living illegally in the US. Both

have pleaded not guilty. Over the five weeks the two worked together, documents filed by prosecutors allege they spoke often about the bitter cold as they smuggled five groups of Indians over that quiet stretch

"16 degrees cold as hell," Shand messaged during an earlier trip. "They going to be alive when they get here?"

On the last trip, on Jan 19, 2022, Shand was to pick up 11 more Indian migrants, including the Patels. Only seven survived. Canadian authorities found the Patels later that morning, dead from the cold. In Jagdish Patel's frozen arms was the body of his 3-year-old son, Dharmik, wrapped in a

#### DREAMS OF LEAVING INDIA

The narrow streets of Dingucha, a quiet village in the western Indian state of Gujarat, are spattered with ads to move

"Make your dream of going abroad come true," one poster says, listing three tantalising destinations: Australia. USA." This is where the family's deadly journey began. Jagdish Patel,

39, grew up in Dingucha. He

and his wife, Vaishaliben, who was in her mid-30s, lived with his parents, raising their 11year-old daughter, Vihangi, and Dharmik. (Patel is a common Indian surname and they are unrelated to Harshkumar Patel.) The couple were schoolteachers, local news reports say. The family was fairly well off by local standards, living in a well-kept, two-story house with a front patio and a wide veranda. "It wasn't a lavish life," said Vaibhav Jha, a local reporter who spent days in the village. "But there was no urgent need, no desperation."

Experts say illegal immigration from India is driven by everything from political repression to a dysfunctional American immigration system that can take years, if not decades, to navigate legally.

But much is rooted in economics, and how even low-wage jobs in the West can ignite hopes for a better life. Those hopes have changed Dingucha. Today, so many villagers have gone overseas — legally and otherwise — that blocks of homes stand vacant and the social media feeds of those who remain are filled with old neighbours showing off hous-

# hostage pleads with Biden, Trump to bring back hostages

Over the past two weeks, the political landscape around the negotiations for a cease-fire in Gaza have undergone a dramatic transformation. The American elections, the firing of Israel's popular defense minister, Qatar's decision to suspend its mediation, and the ongoing war in Lebanon all seem to have pushed the possibility for a cease-fire in Gaza further away than it has been in more than a year of conflict. Still, some families of the dozens of hostages who remain captive in Gaza are desperately hoping the changes will reignite momentum to bring their loved ones home though the impact of Donald Trump returning to the White House and a hard-line new defense minister in Israel remains unknown.

"I think maybe there is new hope," said Varda Ben Baruch, the grandmother of Israeli-American hostage Edan Alexander, 20, a soldier kidnapped from his base on the Gaza border during the Hamas attack on October 7, 2023. Alexander's parents, Adi and Yael Alexander, who live in tain party."

Trump and President Joe Biden in Washington and pleaded with them to work together to bring all the hostages home in a single deal. "As a grandmother, I say, coop-

New Jersey, met this week with

erate — Trump wants peace in this region, Biden has always said he wants to release the hostages, so work together and do something important for the lives of human beings," Ben Baruch said.

She said neither leader offered specific details or plans for releasing the hostages or restarting negotiations for a Gaza cease-fire.

Talks have hit a wall in recent months, largely over Hamas' demands for guarantees that a full hostage release will bring an end to Israel's campaign in Gaza and Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's vows to continue fighting until Hamas is crushed and unable

"We're not involved in politics, not American and not Israeli, the families are above politics, we just want our loved ones home," she said. "Edan was kidnapped because he was Jewish, not because he voted for a cer-

#### **'Gazprom stops** flow of natural gas to Austria' Vienna (AP): Russia's state-

owned natural gas company Gazprom stopped supplies to Austria early Saturday, according to the Vienna-based utility OMV after it said it would stop payments for the gas following an arbitration award.

The official cutoff of supplies before dawn Saturday came after Austrian Chancellor Karl Nehammer on Friday held a news conference to emphasise his country has a secure supply of alternative fuel for this winter. OMV said it would stop paying for Gazprom gas to its Austrian arm to offset a 230 million-euro (USD 242 million) arbitration award it won from the International Chamber of Commerce over an earlier cutoff of gas to its German subsidiary. The Austrian utility said in an email that no gas delivery was made from 6 a.m. on Saturday. OMV said it has sufficient stocks to provide gas to its customers in case of a potential disruption by Gazprom, and said storage in Austria was at more than 90 per cent. Russia cut off most natural gas supplies to Europe in 2022, citing disputes over payment in rubles, a move European leaders described as energy blackmail over their support for Ukraine against Russia's

## Antiquities valued USD 10 million returned to India by US

 $A^{\text{sandstone sculpture loot-}}_{\text{ed from Madhya Pradesh}}$ in 1980s and another in greengrey schist, looted from Rajasthan in 1960s are among the over 1,400 antiquities collectively valued at USD 10 million that the US returned to India.

More than 600 more antiquities looted from India are scheduled to be repatriated in coming months. The pieces were returned at a ceremony with Manish Kulhary from the

Consulate General of India here and Alexandra deArmas, Group Supervisor from the Homeland Security Investigation of New York Cultural Property, Art, and Antiquities Group, according to a statement from Manhattan District Attorney Alvin L Bragg, Jr.

At least 1,440 antiquities collectively valued at USD 10 million were returned to India at the event, Bragg said in a statement. The sandstone sculpture depicting a celestial dancer was looted from a temple in Madhya Pradesh in

the early 1980's. The looters had cleaved the sculpture into two halves to facilitate smuggling and illicit sale and by February 1992, the two halves were illegally imported from London into New York, professionally reassembled, and donated to the Metropolitan Museum of

Art (Met). It remained on display at the Met, until it was seized by the Antiquities Traffic Unit (ATU) in 2023. The second sculpture, Tanesar Mother Goddess, through two other collectors gate the many trafficking net- ated in the coming months.

carved from green-gray schist, was looted from a village of Tanesara-Mahadeva ' Rajasthan.

First documented in the late 1950s by an Indian archaeologist along with 11 other sculptures of mother goddesses, the Tanesar Mother Goddess and her fellow mother goddesses were stolen one evening in the early 1960s, the statement said on Wednesday. By 1968, the Tanesar Mother Goddess was in a Manhattan gallery and after passing

in New York, the Met accessioned the Tanesar Mother Goddess in 1993, where it remained on display until it was seized by the ATU in

2022, it added. These antiquities were recovered under several ongoing investigations into criminal trafficking networks, including those of alleged antiquities trafficker Subhash Kapoor and convicted trafficker Nancy Wiener, the statement

added. "We will continue to investiworks that have targeted Indian cultural heritage," Bragg said.

The statement said that during Bragg's tenure, the District Attorney's Antiquities Trafficking Unit recovered just over 2,100 antiquities stolen from more than 30 countries and valued at almost USD 230 million.

It said about 1,000 antiquities, including more than 600 antiquities looted from India and recovered earlier this year, were scheduled to be repatri-

# India stun Olympic silver medallist China 3-0 to book semis berth

efending champions India stunned Olympic silver medallist China 2-0 to seal a semifinal spot at the women's Asian Champions Trophy hockey tournament here on Saturday.

India scored two field goals through Sangita Kumari (32nd miniute) and skipper Salima Tete (37th) before tournament's highest scorer Deepika (60th) converted a penalty corner in the final minute.

The win against world No. 6 China was India's fourth consecutive win in the tournament. The hosts are now on top of the standings with eight points from four games. China have dropped to the second place with six points from four matches.

India will square off their round robin campaign against

Japan on Sunday.
The top four teams from the six

will qualify for the semifinals. India were the offensive from the word go and created most of the opportunities without any success as the Chinese defended deep into their own territory and relied on counter attacks.

India secured their first real chance in the opening minute of the game in the form of back-to-back penalty corners but wasted both opportunities.

Minutes later, Sharmila Devi essayed a precision pass to Sunelita Toppo, whose first-touch opened up the Chinese defence, giving Deepika a one-on-one situation with the opposition goalkeeper, who came out on top to deny the Indian forward.

China also secured a penalty corner in the first quarter but the Indian defence stood tall. Both the sides were cagey in the first quarter with India making



bright start. India secured their second

penalty corner in the 21st minute but to no avail. Five minutes later, India secured another penalty corner but Manisha Chauhan's flick was saved by second Chinese goalkeeper Ting Li and Lalremsiami's try from the rebound went wide as the

The Indians came out with the same tempo after the change of ends and controlled the proceedings of the match.

deadlock continued after half

Their efforts finally bore fruit in the 32nd minute when Sangita deftly met with Sushila Chanu's defence splitting pass from the midfield.

Five minutes later, the Indians doubled their lead with another fine field goal. It was skipper Salima who found the target after she was neatly set up by Beauty Dung Dung and Preeti

The Indians continued their

domination with relentless attacks on the Chinese citadel but was denied by the rival goalkeeper on . occasions.

The Chinese too tried their best but credit must go to the resolute Indian defence which stood firm.

Desperate for goals, China withdrew their goalkeeper with little over three minutes to go and the move backfired as India scored their third goal in the final minute of the game. Sangita secured India's fourth penalty corner with her smart stickwork in the final minute and Deepika rose to the occasion flicking the ball to the right corner for her seventh goal of the tournament.

Meanwhile in other matches of the day, Japan beat Malaysia 2-1 while Korea defeated Thailand 4-0.



#### Blow for India as Shubman Gill fractures left thumb, all but out of Perth Test

PTI ■ NEW DELHI/PERTH

India were dealt a telling blow on Saturday after star top-order batter Shubman Gill sustained a left thumb fracture which is likely to rule him out of the opening Test of the Border-Gavaskar Trophy at the Optus Stadium in Perth, starting November

a batting mainstay and in seen more as a precautionary case skipper Rohit Sharma opts out of the first Test, India's top-order could look

very thin.

Gill got hurt while fielding on the second day of the intra-squad match

simulation. He was seen in considerable pain and immediately left the field for further scans.

According to a BCCI source privy to the development, Gill has indeed fractured his left thumb and with less than a week left for the Test to start, it will be near impossible for the stylish right-hander to get fit in time for the opening match.
A thumb fracture generally

takes around 14 days to heal after which one is expected to start his regular net sessions. Since the second Test in Adelaide starts from December 6, there remains a possibility that he will get fit in time for that match. Gill's absence could be

massive for the national team as he is not only a stable number three batter but in case of Rohit's absence, he

could be considered for opening the innings with Yashasvi Jaiswal.

The other man in contention, Lokesh Rahul, has a bruised elbow after getting hit by a Prasidh Krishna short ball on the opening day of the intra-squad match and was forced to leave the field. Rahul's bruised area needed

22. Kanus bruised area needed icing and he didn't take the field on the second day of the match simulation on Gavaskar Trophy triumph, is Saturday although it is being measure

In case Gill is absent, Abhimanyu Easwaran could be in line for his Test debut as India do not have too many options left.

However, if skipper Rohit, who was blessed with a baby boy, decides to join forces with three days of training, then it would be a different

Mohammed Shami, who has bowled more than 43.2 overs, took seven wickets and scored 37 runs in Ranji Trophy, is certainly going to join the team before the second Test.

The last day of the match simulation will happen at the WACA on Sunday after which India A squad, barring reserve players, will be back to India and join their respective state teams for the Syed Mushtaq Ali Trophy. The main squad will then

move to Optus Stadium in Perth where they will have three net sessions from Tuesday to Thursday before going into the Test starting Friday.

# ICC begins Trophy Tour for Champions Trophy in Pakistan, POK cities dropped

**PTI** ■ ISLAMABAD

Cities in Occupied Pakistan Kashmir (PoK) found no mention in the Champions Trophy tour unveiled by the ICC on Saturday as the world body moved in swiftly to have them dropped from the host country's itinerary following India's strong objection.
The Trophy Tour will now

comprise Karachi, Rawalpindi and Islamabad, apart from Abbottabad in the Khyber Pakhtunwala Region.

The Trophy Tour starts in Islamabad, the capital city of Pakistan, and will travel to other cities of the nation --Taxila and Khanpur (November 17), Abbottabad (November 18), Murree (November 19) and Nathia Gali (November 20) before concluding in Karachi (November 22-25). Most of these cities are tourist attractions,

Earlier, on November 14, the PCB had announced the Trophy Tour, which included cities like Skardu, Hunza and Muzaffarabad, which fall in the PoK region, a disputed territory between idia and Pakistan



The PTI reported on Friday that the Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI) secretary Jay Shah had raised strong objections with the ICC to PCB's Trophy Tour plans in the PoK region. However, the global body took swift action to eliminate those cities from the tour as revealed on Saturday.

Following the Trophy Tour in Pakistan, it will tour Afghanistan (November 26-28), followed by Bangladesh (December 10-13), South Africa (December 15-22), Australia (December 25-January 5), New Zealand (January 6-11). England

(January 12-14) and India (January 15-26). The cities for the Trophy Tour outside Pakistan will be

"A series of physical and digital traversing iconic destinations, sporting events and key battles in the international cricket international cricket calendar form the Trophy Tour schedule, during which fans will also be treated to a content series titled 'Champion on Tour' that will document the Trophy Tour's journey around the world through the lens of food, music and cricket," ICC said

in a release

Pakistan is the defending champion of the event, having won the title at The Oval in London in 2017, defeating India in the final. As for this edition, India has As for this edition, India has reportedly denied travelling to Pakistan for the tournament, and the ICC is working with PCB to find a possible solution to it, including hosting it in a hybrid model or shifting the competition out of Pakistan competition out of Pakistan, possibly the United Arab Emirates (UAE) or South Africa.

Sources in the PCB yesterday said the trophy tour was planned in consultation and with the approval of the ICC and it was not a unilateral decision of the PCB.

"If they had issues they should have notified the PCB immediately before announcing the trophy tour. Anyways the PCB as hosts and commercial partners of the ICC is cooperating as always with them," another source said.

The trophy would now be taken to Islamabad, Taxila, Abbottabad, Murree, Nathiagali and Karachi with the trophy tour ending on

#### India Blitz 2024: Carlsen, Lagno lead; Praggnanandhaa close second

**PTI** ■ KOLKATA

World No. 1 Magnus Carlsen and three-time World Women's Blitz champion Kateryna Lagno Blitz occupied the top spot while India's R Praggnanandhaa took second place at the halfway mark of the Tata Steel Chess India Blitz 2024 here on Saturday. Carlsen concluded the first

nine rounds with an impressive 6.5 points out of a possible 9. The Norwegian maestro had a dominant start, but his momentum was halted in round eight by Arjun Erigaisi, who defeated him in spectacular fashion in just 20 moves. In the final round of the day,

Carlsen settled for a draw against Vidit Gujarathi. Young Indian prodigy Praggnanandhaa tailed him closely in second place with 6 points, recovering remarkably after losing his first three games to register six consecutive wins. Erigaisi and Russia's Daniil Dubov are tied for third with 5.5 points each.

In the women's section, Lagno led the field with 7 points, maintaining an undefeated five wins and four streak with



Valentina Gunina trails her by a single point in second place, while Rapid Champion Aleksandra Goryachkii occupies third with 5 points. Goryachkina Goryachkina had a strong start with three consecutive wins but managed only four draws in the remaining six games.

Standings (Round 9): Open Section: Magnus Carlsen (6.5); R Praggnanandhaa (6); Arjun Erigaisi (5.5); Daniil Dubov (5.5); Vidit Santosh Gujrathi (5); Abdusattorov Nodirbek (4); Wesley So (3.5); Narayanan S L (3.5); Nihal Sarin (3.5) and Keymer Vincent (2). Women's Section: Kateryna

Lagno (7); Valentina Gunina (6); Aleksandra Goryachkina (5); Divya Deshmukh (4.5); Vantika Ágrawal (4.5); Koneru Humpy (4.5); Harika Dronavalli (4); Alexandra Kosteniuk (4); Vaishali R (3.5) and Nana Dzagnidze (2)

# Jake Paul beats 58-year-old Mike Tyson as the hits don't match the hype

**AP** ■ ARLINGTON (USA)

 $T^{\text{he boos from a crowd wanting}}_{\text{more action were growing again}}$ when Jake Paul dropped his gloves before the final bell, and bowed toward 58-year-old Mike Tyson. Paying homage to one of the biggest names in boxing history didn't do much for the fans that filled the home of the NFL's Dallas Cowboys on Friday night.

Paul won a unanimous decision over Tyson as the hits didn't match the hype in a fight between the 27-year-old YouTuber-turned-boxer and the former heavyweight champion in his first sanctioned pro fight in almost 20 years.

All the hate from the pre-fight buildup was gone, replaced by boos from bewildered fans hoping for more action in a fight that drew plenty of questions about its legitimacy long before it happened. The fight wasn't close on the judge's cards, with one giving Paul an 80-72



edge and the other two calling it 79-Tyson came after Paul immediately

after the opening bell and landed a Even fewer rounds and shorter couple of quick punches but didn't try much else the rest of the way.

rounds, along with heavier gloves designed to lessen the power of flight.

punches, couldn't do much to generate action.
Paul was more aggressive after the

quick burst from Tyson in the opening seconds, but the punching wasn't very efficient. There were quite a few wild swings and misses. Tyson mostly sat back and waited for Paul to come to him, with a few exceptions. It was quite the contrast to the co-main event, another slugfest between Katie Taylor and Amanda Serrano in which Taylor kept her undisputed super lightweight championship with another disputed decision.

It was the first sanctioned fight since 2005 for Tyson, who fought Roy Jones in a much more entertaining exhibition in 2020. Paul started fighting a little more than four years

The fight was originally scheduled for July 20 but had to be postponed when Tyson was treated for a stomach ulcer after falling ill on a

## Johnson's 5-26 earns Australia a 13-run win over Pakistan to clinch T20I series

 $F_{\text{grabbed a career-best 5-26}}^{\text{ast bowler Spencer Johnson}} \\ \text{some fixed by a career-best 5-26} \\ \text{and propelled Australia to a 13-1} \\ \text{some fixed by a career-best 5-26} \\ \text{some fixed 5-26} \\ \text{so$ run win over Pakistan as the home team clinched the threematch T20I series with a game to spare Saturday.

Johnson sliced through the top

order and Pakistan crumbled to 134 all out in the final over that gave Australia a decisive 2-0 lead in Josh Inglis' first series as skipper.

Usman Khan made a fighting 52 and Irfan Khan scored unbeaten 37 but the visitors otherwise struggled with Johnson's pace on a bouncy wicket with captain Mohammad Rizwan (16) the only other batter to cross the double-

figure mark. Australia, beaten by Pakistan 2-1 in the preceding ODI series, will eye a sweep Monday at Hobart.

capitalize on a whirlwind start and ended up at 147-9 after Inglis won the toss and elected to bat. Fast bowler Haris Rauf put the brakes on Australia's rapid start with 4-22 and Abbas Afridi bowled well in the death overs to finish with 3-17.

Matthew Short (32) and Jake Fraser-McGurk (20) posted Australia's fastest-ever 50 in T20s off 20 balls with both Shaheen Shah Afridi and Naseem Shah going for plenty of runs inside the power play.

Pakistan was sloppy in the field with at least four dropped catches. Fraser-McGurk was dropped by Naseem at third man in Afridi's expensive first over which went for 21 and Shah conceded 16 in his first over.

Haris struck twice in his first over when Fraser-McGurk couldn't clear Salman Ali Agha at cover sweep Monday at Hobart. and Sufiyan Muqeem, playing his home team couldn't first T20 since making his debut



at the Asian Games last year, took boundary off the bat for nine a splendid catch at point to dismiss Inglis for zero.

Abbas Afridi then ended Short's stumps as Australia slipped to 61-3 in six overs.

Marcus Stoinis (14) was also twice dropped on 0 and 6 before he played a reverse sweep to Muqeem's left-arm spin straight to deep point and Glenn Maxwell, whose 43 had earned Australia a 29-run win Thursday,

holed out to deep mid-wicket after scoring a 20-ball 21.
Rauf picked up the wickets of Tim David (18) and Xavier Bartlett (5) in his return spell before Aaron Hardie made 28 runs off 23 balls to lift Australia's

total. Babar (3) flicked Bartlett's first ball straight to Nathan Ellis at deep square leg and Australia didn't allow Pakistan to score a

overs. Rizwan tried to break the shackles and smashed the first boundary off Spencer in the 10th 17-ball knock with a brilliant over but was caught by a diving slower ball to knock back the David at mid-on off the next ball. Spencer then found the edge of Agha's bat off the next delivery before Usman and Irfan combined in a 58-run stand. Inglis couldn't hold on to a sharp

edge of Usman against Adam Zampa's leg-spin when he was on 12 and then Short misjudged a catch over his head when the batter reached 41 before he completed his half-century off 34

Johnson broke the threatening stand when he had Usman caught at short fine leg with a sharp short delivery in the 16th over. Zampa took two wickets in his last over to finish with economical figures of 2-19 before last man Rauf got run-out in the

BY SAKSHI PRIYA

he unveiling of new label 'Aurum' by Ravi Bajaj at DLF Emporio was a stunning show filled with elegance and style. This exclusive fashion show highlighted Ravi Bajaj's newest collection, which focused on Indian wedding wear with a fresh twist. Known for combining traditional Indian elements with modern style, Bajaj's 'Aurum' collection was truly eve-catching. was truly eye-catching.
The fashion show set was a

true masterpiece. A grand sculpture and an elegant fountain served as the central backdrop, creating a backdrop, creating a luxurious atmosphere that perfectly matched the opulence of the 'Aurum' collection. These elements added to the evening's sophistication, making it a visual delight for all who attended.

Models graced the runway in stunning outfits from the 'Aurum' collection, complemented by beautiful jewellery from *Rose*, the official jewellery partner.

The jewellery added an extra layer of elegance to the ensembles, enhancing the overall look with a balance of modern flair and traditional touches.

The collection itself was a blend of opulence and refinement, showcasing innovative designs while respecting classic Indian traditions. Bajai introduced unique elements like lace and organza in menswear, with some outfits even featuring pearls - a subtle vet luxurious detail e womenswea was equally captivating, featuring lehengas that stayed true to the Ravi

SCULPTING

Bajaj style, with intricate designs that were both elegant and timeless. The audience was treated to another surprise when Mr. Ajay Bijli, Founder of PVR Cinemas and a close friend of Ravi Bajaj, made a special appearance to close the show with a memorable performance. This unexpected moment added excitement to the evening, leaving

the crowd in awe. One of the standout pieces in the collection was a white saree paired with a richly embroidered golden blouse. The blend of simplicity and luxury in this outfit captured the essence of 'Aurum' - a collection designed to make a statement while maintaining elegance.
For men, the collection included

beautifully tailored kurtas with golden details, ideal for those who appreciate traditional Indian attire

with a modern edge.
Throughout the collection, a gold and white colour palette symbolised the joy and prosperity associated with Indian weddings. This theme offered a refreshing take on bridal wear, balancing traditional and



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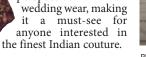


Ravi Bajaj's 'Aurum' collection, unveiled at DLF Emporio, showcased elegant designs that

contemporary styles to suit the tastes of modern brides and grooms. The show also marked the grand reopening of the 'Aurum' boutique at DLF Emporio, which now houses a stunning range of meticulously crafted menswear and womenswear. From regal sherwanis to luxurious

lehengas, the boutique is a destination for those seeking elegant wedding attire that stands out for both quality and style.

The launch of 'Aurum' was not just a fashion show but a celebration of Indian culture, heritage and modern luxury. Ravi Bajaj's ability to seamlessly combine traditional and modern elements made this collection a standout in the Indian fashion scene. With its focus on detailed craftsmanship and elegant design, Aurum offers a fresh perspective







PHOTOS: PANKAJ KUMAR

## Chor Bizarre reopens its doors with Hosa Pop-Up

hor Bizarre, the iconic restaurant celebrating ✓its 34th anniversary this year, reopens its doors with an exciting two-day popup featuring *Hosa*, a celebrated South Indian restaurant from Goa. Hosa is bringing its unique culinary experience to New Delhi, offering a special set menu at *Chor Bizarre* before

continuing its journey to Comorin in Gurugram. Known for its creative take on traditional Indian South flavours, Hosa will offer a special set menu for two days

at each location. giving guests the chance to indulge in the bold and Restaurant' and 'Best Restobar' intricate tastes of South India. Located in Siolim, Goa, Hosa is part of EHV International and is situated opposite the iconic St. Anthony's Church. The



name "Hosa," meaning "new in Kannada, reflects the restaurant's innovative approach to South Indian cuisine. Blending old-world charm with contemporary design, Hosa offers a dining experience

region. Awarded Modern in Goa at the 2023 Times Food & Nightlife Awards, Hosa has also earned accolades for 'Best Modern South Indian' and 'Best Cocktails' in 2024. The





CHEF HARISH RAO

much-anticipated pop-up event will take place at *Chor* Bizarre in New Delhi and Comorin inventive

The menu, curated by *Brand Chef Harish Rao*, will feature signature dishes like Cracked Potatoes with cauliflower mousse, Andhra Okra Masala with peanut sesame curry and Kari Dosa with poached egg and bone marrow hollandaise. Highlights also include Toddy Shop Prawns with raw mango salad and a dessert of Coconut Iasmine, combining coconut ice cream, jasmine granita and almond crumble. This is a unique opportunity for food lovers in *Delhi* and *Gurugram* to experience the bold and vibrant flavours that have

made *Hosa* a favourite in *Goa*. Chef Harish Rao says, "We're excited to bring Hosa's South Indian flavours to New

in Gurugram. The set Delhi menu is designed Gurugram, reimagining traditional dishes introduce diners to Hosa's for the food lovers in South Indian cuisine.

these cities. Collaborating with our own group restaurants, Chor Bizarre and Comorin, allows us to showcase the depth and variety of South Indian cuisine in two dynamic settings."

**EVENT DETAILS** Chor Bizarre, New Delhi – November 17th, Comorin, Gurugram – November 19th & 20th

Pricing: INR 1600 (nonvegetarian) | INR 1300 (vegetarian)

Reservations: Chor Bizarre: +91 99106 01574, Comorin: 0124 4984 224



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

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

s 2024 draws to a close,

and present events. The narrative centers around ACP Vamika Rawat played by Kritika Kamra, rookie inspector Yug Arya acted by Raghav Juyal, and seasoned cop Shaurya Anthwal (Dhairya Karwa). The plot unfolds as Yug stumbles upon an old walkie-talkie that mysteriously allows him to communicate with Shaurya from 2001. Together, they work to solve cold cases while grappling with the paradoxes of time travel. Kritika Kamra delivers a nuanced performance as the determined and layered Vamika. Raghav Juyal impresses as the enthusiastic and headstrong Yug, showcasing his brilliant acting Yug,



Dhairya skills. Karwa. portraying *Shaurya*, brings a grounded depth to his role as the conflicted and persistent investigator. Harsh Chhaya, Gautami Kapoor, and Nitesh Pandey contribute strong supporting performances, adding richness to the screenplay.

One of the standout elements

of Gyarah Gyarah is its wellcrafted dialogues, which successfully blend intensity and relatability, enhancing character depth. The exchanges between the leads, particularly during high-stakes moments, are impactful and elevate the drama but feel forcefully like the abusive words. Additionally, shot in dark places the series benefits from an background score that amplifies its tension and emotional resonance. The music subtly shifts across timelines, reflecting the tonal changes in each era, and helps immerse the audience further into the narrative.

The show captures the intricacies of its genre by keeping audiences engaged with constant twists and cliffhangers, tying them to different cases in the past and present. While inspired by Signal, Gyarah Gyarah incorporates a distinctly Indian flavour, setting it apart from the original. Critics praised its gripping screenplay, atmospheric cinematography, and suspenseful pacing. there However, shortcomings, including inconsistent rules of time travel including and underdeveloped minor characters. The lack of resolution in its finale also left viewers yearning for closure, yet it effectively sets the stage for a potential second season. With a runtime of 4.5 hours, this series is an ideal bingewatch for fans of mystery and time-travel dramas. Its combination of stellar intriguing performances, storytelling, sharp dialogues, and immersive music ensures it remains a highlight of 2024's streaming lineup. Whether you're a fan of thrillers or innovative storytelling, Gyarah Gyarah offers an experience that shouldn't be missed.



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



SHANGRI-LA

OPENS TO BURGERS AND LOBSTERS For the first time in India, the seafood epicureans Burger & Lobster have debuted at Grappa Bar, Shangri-la

Eros New Delhi. The Burger & Lobster have been known globally for perfecting two ingredients, promising to delight food lovers with a playful yet elegant dining experience that has delighted palates from London to New York. So, crack into claws, indulge in buttery goodness, and savour juicy burgers without hesitation.

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Lucknow, November 17, 2024

# and the pioneer of th

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



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

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

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

Talking about the past, the journey of the International Film Festival of India (IFFI) dates back to 1952 when India was struggling to find its cinematic voice post-independence. The Government of India had organised the first IFFI which was held in Mumbai, and it showcased 40 films from 23 countries. The IFFI 1952 marked the first time India had its own international film festival, bringing global cinema to Indian shores. The initial editions of IFFI were held across various Indian cities, including Delhi, Chennai, and Kolkata, with the festival traveling from one city to another to reach a broader audience. The past 20 years spent by IFFI in Goa, contributed to Goa being the official place for the IFFI keeping in mind the advantage of its cultural vibrancy and scenic beauty. IFFI is a unique one distinct from other film festivals worldwide. Known as the "Film Festival of Goa," IFFI blends seamlessly with Goa's local culture, attracting an international audience to India's favourite tourist destination Goa's vibrant art scene, beach culture,

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

With IFFI continuously taking place

in Goa, has helped the state develop a thriving ecosystem that supports film tourism. Local businesses, artists, and artisans benefit from the influx of visitors, and the festival has become a key driver of economic and cultural growth in the region. During the curtain raiser event for the IFFI in New Delhi, *Dr. L. Murugan*, highlighted the festival's prestigious role on the global stage. He said, "IFFI has become a landmark event, not just for India but internationally, comparable to global

festivals such as Cannes,". The 55th edition of IFFI in 2024 will showcase the theme of 'Young Filmmakers' – "The Future is Now". The theme asks to embrace the timeless and the young talent in our country and recognising their potential in shaping the future of creativity. The initiative of the *Creative Minds of Tomorrow* platform has been enhanced to support 100 young talents from 75 in the previous editions. 400 young film

enhanced to support 100 young talents from 75 in the previous editions. 400 young film students, from Film Schools across the country, are being facilitated by the Ministry to attend IFFI.

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

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

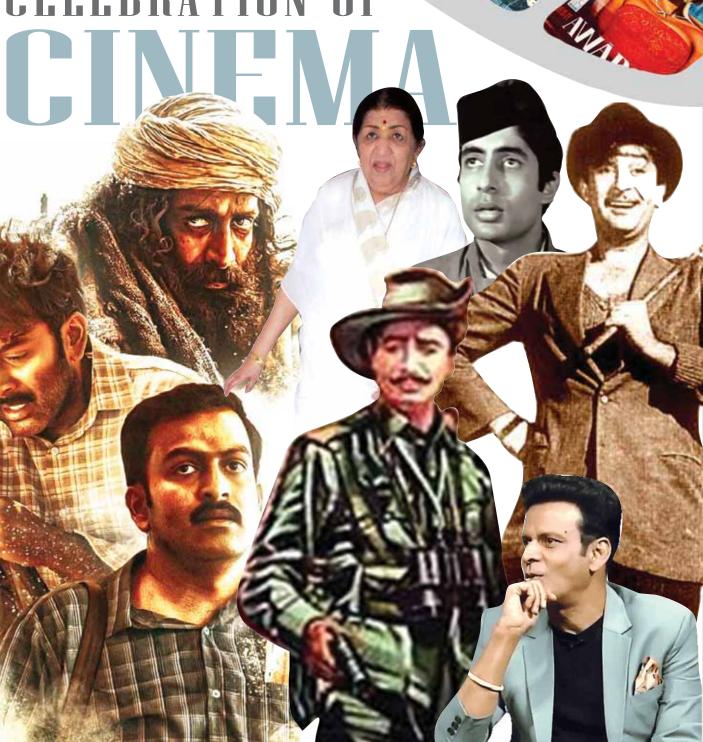
Apart from Australia, in partnership with the *British Film Institute*, the *United Kingdom* will be showcased as the "Treaty Country," presenting British cinema through a carefully crafted package.

Celebration of the pioneers is very important to lead the way, give examples, and keep the generations inspired by looking over to the people who have done it no others. Like every other year, the stars of the cinema, keeping up with the entertainment industry would be facilitated by awards at the IFFI 2024.

The IFFI's prestigious Golden Peacock Award,

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

GRAND CELEBRATION OF



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

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

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

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



RESTORED CLASSICS OF THEIR ICONIC FILMS, INCLUDING AWARA (1951), HUM DONO (1961), DEVADASU (1953), DADASAHEB PHALKE'S KALIYA MARDAN (1919), AMITABH BACHCHAN'S DEBUT MOVIE SAAT HINDUSTANI (1969), AND SEEMABADDHA (1971) WILL BE SCREENED AT THE FESTIVAL.



forefront of positive change.
Screenings, as usual, will remain a core attraction, with highly anticipated films like the world premiere of *Zero Se Restart* on 21st November 2024 in INOX Panjim, *Jab Khuli Kitaab* by *Saurabh Shukla* on 26th November 2024 in INOX Panjim, Asia premiere of *Hazaar Vela Sholay Pehlila Manus* on 24th November 2024 in INOX Panjim, Asia premiere of *The Mehta Boys*, directed by *Boman Irani* on 25th November 2024 in INOX Panjim.

Michael Gracey's Better Man, an Australian film that provides an engrossing look at the life of music artist Robbie Williams, who is played as a chimpanzee by Jonno Davies in a ground-breaking motion-capture performance, will have its Asia premiere to kick off the festival.

The honours of the opening feature film of the 55th edition of the IFFI will be done by Swatantrya Veer Savarkar, directed by Randeep Hooda, a powerful portrayal of a revolutionary figure. Adding to that the opening non-feature film will be Ghar Jaisa Kuch directed by Harsh Sangani.

Restored classics of their iconic films, including Awara (1951), Hum Dono (1961), Devadasu (1953), Dadasaheb Phalke's Kaliya Mardan (1919), Amitabh Bachchan's debut movie Saat Hindustani (1969), and Seemabaddha (1971) will be screened at the

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

Panel Discussions like Women Safety and Cinema with renowned panelists Imtiaz Ali,

festival.

Also,

Cinema with renowned panelists Imtiaz Ali, Suhasini Manirathnam, Kushboo Sundar,
Bhumi Pednekar; Stories that
Travel, a panel that
would explore the art
of storytelling that
travels beyond its

origins, addressing the

themes, techniques, and

emotional core that allow

films to reach and impact

diverse audiences worldwide with Farrukh Dhondy, Anna Saura, Tanishta Chatterjee, Vani Tripathi Tikoo and Lucy Walker. Each panel discussion would be a new learning for all present at the festival. Culture As Context for Cinematic Storytelling with panelist Dr. Sacchidanad Joshi, Amish Tripathi, Bharat Bala

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

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

IFFI 2024 is set to transcend expectations,

film lovers worldwide.

offering a truly transformative experience for

EATING IS NOT MERELY A MATERIAL PLEASURE. EATING WELL GIVES A SPECTACULAR JOY TO LIFE AND CONTRIBUTES IMMENSELY TO GOODWILL AND HAPPY COMPANIONSHIP. IT IS OF GREAT IMPORTANCE TO THE MORALE

— ELSA SCHIAPARELLI

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

# SAVOURING KERALA'S RICH L'I A VOIT ID C



ispelling the long-held notion that South Indian cuisine revolves solely around idli, dosa, and sambar, 21 Michelin-star Chef Suresh Pillai brought a culinary extravaganza to North India with his first-ever pop-up at The Westin Gurgaon. New Delhi

The Westin Gurgaon, New Delhi.
The experience was a symphony of Kerala's authentic flavours, masterfully infused with Chef Pillai's signature modern tweaks and twists. From the aromatic embrace of the South spices to the delicate finesse of seafood delicacies, the pop-up menu was an ode to South India's rich gastronomic

heritage taste. The extraordinary culinary journey took the eaters through the vibrant flavours of Kerala, in collaboration with renowned *Restaurant Chef Pillai* (RCP). The mouthwatering dishes were a presentation through an exclusive 10-course tasting menu curated by *Chef Pillai*.

It all started with the welcome drink of the season, *Aarambam*, a bit of a sour drink. The meticulously curated vegetarian and non-vegetarian menus transported guests straight to the heart of Kerala, offering a true taste of the region's culinary treasures. Each dish was crafted with precision and passion, showcasing the soul of Kerala's

cuisine, from its spices blending to its delicate yet robust flavours.

For the Hors d'oeuvres, there was the mouth watery *Sambharam Kadumanga*, blending the Kerala summer butter milk & pickled mango inside paani poori. One sitting in North India would never imagine blending paani poori with a South Indian twist, which stole the show.

"We created a menu from the Kerala essence, for example, our pani poori, one of the starters, actually, it's a North Indian pani poori out of it's a buttermilk we used to serve in Kerala along with a mango pickle. So the puri, we stuff with the mango and the cold buttermilk generally you say chach." explained *Chef Suresh Pillai*, excited about his first pop up in the north side.

As guests savoured the thoughtfully crafted hors d'oeuvres, the starters gracefully took center stage, led by the *Pazham Pori Chaat*. This Keralainspired masterpiece featured golden, batter-fried banana fritters a bit crispy on the outside, tender within, elevated by a drizzle of honey-yogurt blend that perfectly balanced sweetness and creaminess. Following this, guests were treated to *Cauliflower Porippu*, a dish that beautifully showcased Kerala's rich spicy taste. Crispy, marinated cauliflower florets were deep-fried to golden perfection and then stirried with *thenga porippu*—an aromatic blend of grated coconut, fragrant curry leaves, and a hint of chili powder.

The starters in both the vegetarian and the non-vegetarian segments were a delightful interplay of textures and flavours, with the crunch of the cauliflower perfectly complementing the earthy, spicy-

sweet coconut mixture. The main course featured Chef Suresh Pillai's signature dishes recommended by himself, offering both vegetarian and non-vegetarian options that embodied the essence of Kerala's culinary artistry.

THE METICULOUSLY

**CURATED VEGETARIAN** 

AND NON-VEGETARIAN

MENUS TRANSPORTED

**GUESTS STRAIGHT TO** 

THE HEART OF

KERALA, OFFERING A

TRUE TASTE OF THE

REGION'S CULINARY

TREASURES

Paneer Nirvana: tender marinated cottage cheese, pan-fried to perfection, and then slow-cooked in creamy coconut milk. The dish was elevated with the earthy flavours of ginger, green chilies, and aromatic curry leaves, all beautifully encased in a banana leaf for a touch of traditional authenticity. For non-



vegetarians, the highlight was the Neymeen Nirvana, Chef Pillai's iconic creation.

The main course also offered a rich tapestry of Kerala's culinary heritage, featuring dishes like *Ulli Theeyal*, a dark, flavourful curry of slow-roasted coconut, shallots, and tamarind, and *Baby Corn Vendaka Manga Muringa Charu*, an Alleppey-style coconut

Alleppey-style coconut mango curry with baby corn, okra, and tender drumsticks. Kathrikai Thakkali Roast brought tangy and spicy South Indian flavours to life with marinated brinjal and tomatoes in a rich onion-tomato gravy. Accompaniments included the

delicate, lacy-edged Appams, perfect for mopping up curries, and the soft, flaky Malabar Nool Porotta, rounding out a meal that celebrated Kerala's diverse and bold flavours. For dessert, the menu delighted both vegetarian and non-vegetarian guests with indulgent creations. Vegetarians savoured the Tender

Coconut Pudding, a light and fluffy treat infused with the delicate flavour and soft flesh of the tender coconut, alongside the Coco Nutty Choco Brownie, a decadent eggless chocolate dessert enriched with crunchy nuts and fragrant coconut, served with a scoop of creamy ice cream. Non-vegetarian diners were treated to the Palada Cheesecake, a unique fusion dessert layering the traditional Kerala Palada (rice flakes) flavour atop a crisp, crusty base, offering a delightful blend of tradition and sophistication to end the meal on a sweet note.

The evening was further elevated by a curated selection of handcrafted cocktails, each a testament to artistry in mixology.

artistry in mixology. Highlights included the refreshing Toki Highball, blending Toki Suntory Whisky with soda water and a grapefruit twist, and the zesty Toki Orchard Sour, featuring green apple, lemon, and a silky egg white foam. Gin enthusiasts indulged in the crisp Roku Gin & Tonic with ginger accents and the floral Roku Hibiscus Highball with hibiscus cordial and fizz.

Whiskey lovers relished the bold *Jim Beam Orange Fashioned* with aromatic bitters, while the indulgent *Haku Caramel Espresso Martini*, combining Haku Japanese Craft Vodka with caramel and espresso, provided a decadent finish to the cocktail lineup.

cocktail lineup. Chef Suresh Pillai's pop-up at The Westin Gurgaon, New Delhi was an experience that will redefine the perception of South Indian cuisine. With his signature modern twists on Kerala's rich culinary traditions, Chef Pillai transported guests on a culinary journey that celebrated both the simplicity and complexity of Kerala's vibrant flavours.

# The Vibrant Flavours OF KOREA

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

TEAM **AGENDA** 

orean food is a vibrant and flavourful cuisine celebrated for its unique balance of colors, textures, and tastes. Rooted in centuries-old traditions, it emphasises fresh, seasonal ingredients, often fermented, to create deep, savoury flavours and nutritional richness. The Korean dining experience is distinctive, with meals commonly featuring a variety of side dishes, or banchan, that range from spicy kimchi to delicate pickled vegetables. Key staples like rice, vegetables, and meats are skilfully combined with ingredients like gochujang (a spicysweet red pepper paste) and doenjang (fermented soybean paste) to create dishes that are as visually stunning as they are delicious. From the sizzling sounds of bulgogi on a grill to the comforting warmth of a bubbling jjigae stew, Korean food offers a sensory journey into a culture that values harmony, balance, and bold, memorable flavours.

Food lovers in New Delhi had a culinary treat from Korea right in New Delhi as Le Meridien celebrated the unique flavours of Korean cuisine with its muchanticipated Korean Food Festival. Running till November 17th, 2024, this gastronomic event was an immersive dining experience, highlighting traditional and contemporary Korean dishes at its 'The One' restaurant. The festival is a feature of Le Meridien New Delhi's annual '+1 Celebrating Flavours of the Globe' initiative under the '+1 for the Leap Year' campaign, bringing exotic, authentic global flavours to the heart of

India.

The Korean Food Festival's dinner buffet had been meticulously curated by Chef Young-Hwan Jang, Chef de Partie at AC Hotel by Marriott Seoul Gangnam. With over two decades of culinary expertise and a deep-rooted passion for Korean cuisine, Chef Jang has flown in from Seoul to offer guests an authentic taste of his homeland, blending





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

traditional Korean staples with innovative techniques to appeal to a global palate. "We are thrilled to showcase the

diverse and flavourful cuisine of Korea through this festival," said Meena Bhatia, Vice President and General Manager of Le Meridien New Delhi. "This event aligns perfectly with our +1 Celebrating Flavours of the Globe initiative, a highlight of our annual '+1 for the Leap Year' initiative, and we believe it will offer our guests a truly unforgettable dining experience," she added

The menu showcased a range of traditional Korean dishes, crafted to deliver the distinctive flavours and textures that define this cuisine. Guests can look forward to sampling dishes like Acorn Salad, a refreshing and nutritious delicacy; Gimbap Avocado, Korea's beloved seaweed rice rolls with a modern twist; Spring

Onion Pancake, a savoury

delight that's perfect for

sharing; the spicy and comforting Stir-fried Rice Cake (Tteokbokki); and a cooling Chilled Seafood Salad, perfect for Delhi's warm evenings. Each dish on the buffet spread has been carefully prepared by Chef Jang to ensure an authentic taste of Korea.

"I am excited to bring the vibrant flavours of Korea to Le Meridien New Delhi," shared Chef Young-Hwan Jang. "Through this festival, we aim to introduce guests to the diverse range of Korean dishes, from classic comfort foods to innovative culinary creations," he quips with a smile.

This unique dining experience went beyond just food—it invited guests to embark on a journey through Korea's rich culinary heritage. From the spicy and savoury flavours that Korean cuisine is known for, to innovative twists on traditional dishes, the festival offers a deep and delicious dive into Korean culture and flavours.





# A Meal Worth Revisiting

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

T's rare for me to visit a restaurant multiple times before writing a review, but Poiz, a beautiful new addition to the dining scene, compelled me to return three times to fully capture its essence. Poiz boasts an artistic, expansive interior, blending elegant indoor seating with a spacious patio featuring its own bar and an inviting open dining area. While many restaurants of this size tend to cater heavily to the nightlife crowd, Poiz strikes a perfect balance: a well-curated bar selection with inventive cocktails for the social set, and a menu that delights families and party goers alike. Certain dishes have become my goto orders, each offering

goers alike.
Certain dishes have become my goto orders, each offering something special. The Lychee Chaat, a Thai-inspired creation, is an absolute must-try. Bits of lychee and avocado sit atop a crispy rice puff base, accompanied by a flavourful Nam Jim sauce one bite, and you won't want to stop. The Chicken Chilli Dim Sum features a delicate wrapper and pairs perfectly with the accompanying sauces. Another standout is the Taiwanese Mushrooms, crisp-coated and served with pickled chilli and a sweet-sour

sauce, accented by crunchy peanuts for extra texture.

Not every dish was flawless. The nachos were slightly too salty for my taste. However, the ramen from their global menu made up for it with its rich, layered flavours. It's a generous portion, perfect for a hearty appetite or sharing with friends.

My companions thoroughly enjoyed the *Lamb Adana Kebab* as much as they did the sushi. While Poiz has a wide range of Indian dishes, I found myself drawn to the global offerings, including their expertly crafted *Neapolitan Exam*.

A meal here would be incomplete without the Belgian Nutella Chocolate. This dessert not only excels in taste but also impresses in presentation. The smooth Belgian chocolate and

smooth Belgian chocolate and Nutella sweetness are cleverly balanced with blueberries and hazelnuts, creating a perfect finale.

For those in the area, Poiz is well worth a visit.
Ratings: (Out of 5)
Food: 4.25
Ambience: 4.25
Service: 4.0
Drinks: 4.0

Overall: 4.25 Address: Poiz, 2nd Floor, AIPL Joy Street, Sector 66, Gurugram



I HAVE PLACED MY FAITH IN HUMANITY, BUT FAITH IN THE UNIVERSAL BECOMES MEANINGLESS WITHOUT FAITH IN THE INDIVIDUAL --- PANCHALI DRAUPADI



# GETAWAY

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

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

and archaeological monuments due to time constraints.

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

A visit to Kurukshetra typically begins at Brahma Sarovar, Asia's largest at Branma Sarovar, Asias largest man-made water body, stretching 3,600 feet long, 1,500 feet wide, and 45 feet deep. According to Hindu mythology, the lake was created by Lord Brahma at the dawn of the A VISIT TO KURUKSHETRA Brahma universe. Sarovar, along with the nearby Sannihit Sarovar, is fed by TYPICALLY BEGINS AT BRAHMA SAROVAR, ASIA'S LARGEST MAN-MADE WATER BODY, STRETCHING underground 3,600 FEET LONG, 1,500 FEET channels from the WIDE, AND 45 FEET DEEP. Bhakra Nangal Dam. ACCORDING TO HINDU ancient Shiva Temple here is believed

established by Lord

himself

Between

the two



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

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

every Saturday.
The Sthanu Mahadev Temple is another important site, where Lord Krishna and the Pandavas sought Lord Shiva's blessings before the war. Nearby, the historical Harsh ka Tilla and Sheikh Chilli's Tomb offer fascinating insights into the region's past. History enthusiasts can also explore the Sri Krishna Museum and Kurukshetra Panorama, showcases key artifacts. For children and astronomy lovers, the Kalpana Chawla Planetarium provides a fun and educational experience.

In the coming years, the ISKCON Temple, currently under construction and expected to be completed by 2026, will be a must-visit site. At Jyotisar, where Lord Krishna delivered the Bhagavad Gita to Arjuna, visitors can enjoy an impressive light and sound show, which reflects on the water of a fountain, creating an unforgettable experience. Additionally, the 50-foot *Vishwarup* Darshan statue of Lord Krishna, designed by Ram V. Sutar comes alive

every evening for visitors.

For a 2-3 day weekend trip,

Kurukshetra offers the perfect blend
of spiritual significance, historical landmarks, and modern luxury, making it an ideal destination for

travellers.



#### EXPLORING

# A Coastal Escape with Cultural Riches

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

**¬**he lovely city of *Daman*, an erstwhile Portuguese colony, offers a unique blend of colonial charm with a laid-back vibe. The administrative capital of the union territory of Dadra and Nagar Haveli, it is located between Gujarat and Maharashtra and attracts high footfall from a diverse set of travellers.

Peppered with colonial buildings showcasing a rich syncretic culture, the city's stately Nani Daman Fort and the Church of Bom Jesus give one a taste of history, while Jampore Beach and Devka Beach make for Instagramfriendly settings for a day of relaxation.

such a terrific destination for water waste in kitchens, guest infrastructure, including smooth recycling used water for its interconnecting motorways, expansive gardens. buzzy restaurants, and good As the Deltin hotels. Our abode for a staycation synonymous with world-class is the award-winning The Deltin casinos, the theme is reflected in Daman, the city's only five-star the hotel. Known for its stellar service architectural and facilities, it mercifully comes stunning lobby flaunts a without the high tariff of upscale chandelier featuring hearts, hotels in Mumbai and other spades, diamonds, and clubs (the metros. A world-class spa, gourmet cuisine at its multiple strung together. This theme is also restaurants, a large swimming reflected in the glass walls pool, health club, gym, and plush accommodation ticked all the ergonomic and well-furnished boxes for a fabulous and rooms are equipped with HD memorable stay.

For business travellers, the hotel houses 30,000 sq ft of business connectivity, in-room safes, 24x7 space catering to large events such room service, and early check-in as corporate conferences and options, among others. commendable,



But perhaps what makes Daman procedures in place to prevent weekend getaways is its tourism rooms, and laundry, along with

hotel's design and elements. four suits in a deck of cards) TVs, HD satellite programming,

hotel's Our Presidential Suite also came sustainability efforts are also with an efficient butler who took with strict care of our every need, including



ATTENDED TO STATE







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



What's a good vacation without good food? Indeed, for gastronomes like us, the hotel turned out to be a delight with three award-winning restaurants us at the poolside Mediterraneanto explore. One of our lunches was at the Emperor restaurant, which features an extensive menu with Korean, Chinese, Thai, and Japanese offerings. Interestingly, the chefs here have reinvented

many dishes to offer an imaginative take on classics. Thus, our lunch featured pillowy soft lotus stem and chicken Chettinad baos as well as black sesame chicken tikka baos. The prawn and chicken dim sums were similarly delicious, while

the garlic-infused noodles and chicken in Hainanese sauce transported us to China, sans passports and air tickets! Another lunch at The Vegas all-

day dining was also a treat for the taste buds. The spacious eatery offers multi-cuisine buffets with a vast selection of salads, Indian and continental dishes, desserts, and unabashed carnivores, we dug rejuvenating body massage and

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

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

To slake our thirst, we visited Whiskys Bar, which offers exclusive collection of single malts. Poolside Bar and Juice Bar kept us refreshed with health drinks and fresh juices.

There's no shortage of entertainment at the hotel either. *The Den* – an atmospheric indoor family space - features foosball, billiards, carom, chess, and more. There's even a creche for young parents who want to leave their little ones under supervised care while they unwind.

The property's three azure swimming pools (including a kids' more. The buffet includes a pool) are a major attraction. After separate section for Jain food - so a quick swim on day two, we vegetarians can rejoice too. Being headed to the spa, where a

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

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

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





















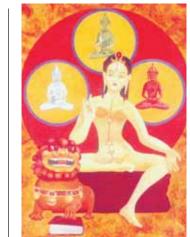




**ARIES** March 21-April 19

This week might fall short of your expectations, especially in financial matters. At work, you may find yourself grappling with indecision, leading to a backlog of uncompleted tasks and disorganized planning. It may seem wise to delay certain commitments or travels due to confusion. However, as the week progresses, you'll discover a more grounded approach, helping you manage your responsibilities better. You may also benefit from distant connections, which could open new avenues. It's important to engage more actively with your team, as they'll be relying on your guidance. This proactive stance will boost your confidence and encourage networking. Nevertheless, the week could end on a challenging note with family tensions or health ssues within the household demanding both your time and resources, potentially causing setbacks at work.

ucky number 12 | Lucky colour Sky Blue Lucky day Tuesday



#### **LEO** July 23-Aug 22

This week presents a challenging period marked by a strong drive and a somewhat confrontational demeanor. Your focus is intensely set on professional achievements, leaving little room for emotional considerations. The workload is heavy, creating a sense of being weighed down by responsibilities. Progress may seem distant and difficult to grasp, leading to frustration. Midweek, expect a notable change in your personal or professional life, possibly involving the arrival or departure of a key figure. This could stir impulsive reactions or decisions, adding to the already high stress levels. While travel might be on your agenda, it's important to seek moments of calm. Meditation could prove beneficial in restoring your sense of balance and enhancing decision-making

Lucky number 11 | Lucky colour Rose Red Lucky day Saturday



#### **SAGITTARIUS** Nov 22-Dec 21

This week emphasizes the need for structured efforts and self-discipline. A sense of disarray might cloud your interactions, particularly with a significant other. Although solutions and clarity are within reach, you might find yourself hesitating to embrace the truth, possibly due to apprehension about the consequences. Midweek could bring challenges, potentially involving legal matters that may not be in your favor. These situations could lead to disappointment, so it's crucial to stay composed and maintain your health. Be cautious with your words and avoid confrontations. This period calls for introspection and recuperation. Take this time to rest, reassess your strategies, and heal. By withdrawing momentarily, you can regain strength and return ready to tackle any obstacles. Remember, this is just a transient phase, and with patience, things will stabilize.

Lucky number 17 | Lucky colour White Lucky day Monday



#### TAURUS April 20-May 20

This week is set to be particularly rewarding for you. A longstanding project is likely to reach completion, bringing a sense of achievement and relief. The opportunity to move into a new residence might present itself, whether through a winning bid, a housing scheme, or relocating to a newly built home. Expect social gatherings to enrich your days, as you reconnect with family and friends, creating a nurturing and joyful environment. Your innate confidence and charisma serve as a beacon, inspiring those around you. Your persuasive communication skills will draw people towards you, encouraging more sincere and cooperative interactions. Your leadership qualities shine, making you a central figure in your community. As the week closes, a deepened spiritual practice through rituals and meditation will further enhance your creative energies, rounding off a fulfilling week

ucky number 2 | Lucky colour Yellow u**cky day** Thursday



#### VIRGO Aug 23-Sep 22

This week promises substantial financial growth and contentment. You excel in your professional arena, applying your knowledge practically and efficiently. Known for your meticulous approach, you adhere strictly to schedules and protocols, ensuring every task is managed with precision. This disciplined approach secures a stable financial foundation, enhancing both security and comfort. There's potential for significant financial gains, possibly from unexpected sources, boosting both your finances and self-esteem. Consider this period a prime time for career advancement, possibly through a promotion, or explore new opportunities such as a fresh project or role. Embrace this phase of self-reflection and celebrate your achievements. Resourcefulness will be key; use what you have wisely and remain open to learning. This zest for new knowledge will prove beneficial in your career

Lucky number 13 | Lucky colour Lavender Lucky day Thursday



#### CAPRICORN Dec 22-Jan 19

This week heralds a period of fruition for your consistent efforts. It kicks off with a focus on diligence and improvement in your professional endeavors. You will find yourself engaging more deeply with the intricacies of your tasks, showing enhanced dedication and sharpening your focus. Your challenges, though demanding, will enrich you with valuable insights and professional growth. As you navigate these complexities with your skills and intelligence, you will find reasons to celebrate your achievements and feel a sense of pride. Additionally, this week offers a profound opportunity for spiritual renewal and deeper connections. As the week draws to a close, powerful transformative energies emerge, potentially leading to significant personal healing. For some, this period might also bring joyful affirmations in personal relationships, including commitments

Lucky number 16 | Lucky colour Mint **Lucky day** Friday



#### **GEMINI** May 21-June 20

This week promises a diverse range of experiences, touching on personal connections, empathy, fulfillment, assertiveness, and significant material gains. As you begin your week, you'll notice early successes in your financial endeavors, with an uptick in profitability as days pass. Your balanced and open-handed approach at work will foster a harmonious atmosphere. Travel also features prominently in your plans, potentially including international or leisure trips on water. Midweek, domestic responsibilities will demand your attention, yet you'll manage to strike a harmonious balance between your career and home life. As the week draws to a close, you will be in a position to reap the rewards of your hard work. You'll find yourself in good health, brimming with creativity and surrounded by positivity.

Lucky number 18 | Lucky colour Forest Green ucky day Monday



#### LIBRA Sep 23-Oct 22

This week unfolds with a quest for strategies and solutions to help navigate and complete significant challenges effectively. You might find yourself on the brink of completion, grappling with the final hurdles but ultimately discovering the resilience to push through. As the days progress, a sense of romance permeates, prompting quality time with your loved ones. The latter part of the week turns auspicious for exploring investments in real estate or other significant acquisitions. Many will experience a fortunate phase, with promising opportunities enhancing overall well-being and zest for life. The support and camaraderie of family members will significantly uplift your spirits, leading to joyful interactions and memorable outings.

Lucky number 1 | Lucky colour Brown **Lucky day** Sunday



#### AQUARIUS Jan 20-Feb 18

This week heralds a period rich with fulfillment and opportunities. Blessings seem to be plentiful, enhancing all aspects of life—be it love, prosperity, or overall contentment. There's also a notable surge in organizational skills and creative inspiration, paired with a sharp intuition. Harness this vibrant energy to bolster your cognitive faculties. Across the board, from finances to spiritual and emotional wellness, expect gratifying outcomes. Matters of relationships take a front seat, aligning well with your intentions and plans. If you're eyeing new professional ventures, this period could bring promising developments. Your health and ability to influence, coupled with strong communication and leadership traits, are at their peak, making it easier to navigate through challenges with grace and effectiveness

Lucky number 3 | Lucky colour Slate Grey <mark>Lucky day</mark> Wednesday



#### CANCER June 21-July 22

Surprising shifts are about to unfold in your life, leading you to a place of pride and confidence, empowering you to face the world's challenges. You will find success in an area where hope had previously dwindled. Your achievements might spark envy among others, yet those who truly support you will celebrate your victories. This period marks a successful overcoming of past struggles, with your accomplishments being recognized and openly celebrated. Joy and fulfillment draw from previous experiences, enriching your present. As the week closes, you'll find comfort in cherished memories of earlier days, reconnecting with the essence of your youth and enjoying moments with younger companions. Embrace this time of personal evolution and community connection.

**Lucky number** 20 | **Lucky colour** Coral Lucky day Wednesday



#### SCORPIO Oct 23-Nov 21

This week, your focus intensifies around professional endeavors Embrace risk as a pathway to potential gains. Your innovative ideas are ripe for execution, allowing you to tackle projects that seemed daunting before. Your boldness is your greatest asset now, pushing you to transcend usual limitations effortlessly. A significant challenge has captured your attention, and you possess the flair to master this task with distinct finesse. As the week progresses, prepare for a rigid, yet beneficial, interaction with a senior female relative. Heeding her practical advice could prove advantageous. Enhance your cognitive abilities by engaging in intellectually stimulating activities. Delve into thought-provoking literature or tackle complex puzzles, paving the way for profound revelations in your personal growth journey.

Lucky number 15 | Lucky colour Peach **Lucky day** Wednesday



#### PISCES Feb 19-March 20

Partnerships and collaborative efforts will pave the way for achievement, fostering a sense of unity and smooth cooperation in your professional environment. You will embrace your values and uphold your dignity, infusing your career and lifestyle with creativity and vibrancy. The horizon appears promising with opportunities that signal prosperity, especially as recent ventures show signs of success and growth. In your professional life, the possibility of a new role may soon materialize. Collaboration is crucial at this time, and any discussions are likely to yield positive outcomes. There is also a touch of the spiritual influencing your journey. Families anticipating the joy of a new addition will likely receive joyful news. With a clear vision and foresight, you approach future possibilities with confidence, ready to explore new territories

Lucky number 22 | Lucky colour Orange Lucky day Thursday

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# GURUSPEAK

Sri Sri Ravi Shankar Spiritual Guru

That is called the penance of speech"

# Rekindle your spirit with silence

EEPING silence is very useful. It purifies our speech. Deep silence is the mother of creativity. No creativity can come out of one who is too busy, worried, over-ambitious or lethargic. There is no need to maintain silence in our daily routine but there is also no need to speak too much. If you maintain some silence, you will think before you speak. If you keep talking, you yourself will not understand what you are saying. Have you ever observed the impact of

your speech on others? Often we do not bother to notice this, we go on blabbering. We just want to say all that we want to say and become free. No, you must see what impact your speech has on others. There is a beautiful couplet in the Bhagavad Gita which says, "The words that do not rattle the minds of people and which is truth; truth which is benevolent and which is pleasant, those type of words are to be spoken. That is called the penance of

Tapas (penance) for the speech is to speak only those words that do not rattle the minds of others. Krishna was the most skillful because his silence was so deep. Sometimes we think we are right and, perhaps, we are right. You may be speaking the truth, it may be benevolent, it may be good for the other person as well but if it is not pleasant and it is rattling the other person's mind then it is not



complete. This is not an easy thing to do. It requires skill — not to rattle anyone's mind or give them pain. So speak words that are pleasant, true and benevolent but ensure that you don't speak pleasing lies. Don't crush the minds and hearts of others with your unpleasant words. Now how do we do this? You may say, "I don't intend to hurt anybody but hurtful words just fly out of my mouth. What do I do?"

Silence and meditation awaken our potential and abilities. That is why everyone should remain silent and meditate for a while. Yog and Vedanta have been referred to as the highest forms of knowledge and that is what they are. The inner space or your inner form can be

experienced through them. Your brain benefits so much from this. Depending on the situation, we must accept whatever is happening around us. If we are sitting in meditation and a phone is ringing somewhere, we must accept it instead of getting irritated. Take it as background music. As Shri Krishna says in the Bhagavad Gita, as long as something or the other is occupying our mind, we cannot go into meditation. So surrender your sankalpa (intention) during meditation. Afterwards, when you are working on something, put everything into it. We do the opposite; during meditation we keep thinking about all we have to do and while working we think that God will look after

everything. Put everything into any work

Take a sankalpa (intention) about what you want in the future. Then form a plan accordingly. Worry drains you of energy and strength. You don't gain anything. You acquire inner strength through silence. In spite of all that, if it comes, if it happens then you can't do anything about it, then just ask for forgiveness. When you are getting into silence ask for forgiveness — "By my thought, word or deed if I have done anything or caused any hurt to someone, may I be forgiven." That completely uplifts us from being bogged down.

Some questions can be answered only in silence. It is the goal of all answers. If an answer does not silence the mind it is "no" answer. Thoughts are not the goal in themselves. Their goal is silence. Deep silence is the mother or source of creativity. When the body, mind and spirit are in tune with each other, then creativity happens. When you are tired, exhausted, stressed, over-ambitious or lethargic, when you are not in touch with yourself, your creativity and talents are stifled. When feverishness clogs your head, your mind is not clear; poetry cannot dawn, no creative thought will come. Meditation and yoga can clear your mind and kindle skills and creativity in you. It puts you in touch with the space of silence within you and

becomes an unending well-spring of creativity. It relieves you of stress and strain, strengthens your nervous system and mind, releases toxins, makes you more capable and enhances you in every way. The easy way to silence the thoughts is to arouse feelings. For through feelings only peace, joy and love dawn. And they are all your very nature.

To the question, "Who am I?" the only relevant answer is silence. You need to discard all answers in words, including "I am Nothing" or "I am the Cosmic Self or "I am the Self" — and just stick to the question "Who am I?" All other answers are just thoughts. Thoughts can never be complete. Only silence is complete. And spirituality is a harmonious blend of outer silence and inner celebration; and inner silence and outer celebration. When you ask the question, "Who am I?" you get no answer, there is silence. That is the real answer. This solidified silence is wisdom, is knowledge. You are solidified silence, awareness. A thousand hours of speech cannot equal one glance: a hundred glances cannot equal a minute of silence. Prayer within breath is silence. Love within Infinity is silence. Wisdom without word is silence. Compassion without aim is silence. Action without doing is silence. Smiling with all the Existence is silence. And God is nothing but solidified silence.