

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." Yogi 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

illegal mining, cheating and cattle and forest crimes, and we have delivered on those promises." 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 conducted 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 western Uttar Pradesh, reducing



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 Samajwadi Party's divisive campaigns on social media. Yogi alleged that during Samajwadi Party's coalition

government, new scams surfaced daily. He stated that for the Bharatiya Janata Party, elections are a mission of service, while for Samajwadi Party and Bahujan Samaj Party, they are 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 partition was laid with the establishment of the Muslim League in

1906 in Aligarh. He remarked 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 like the Jewar airport, Film City and Toy City, which will primarily benefit the local population. He criticised previous Congress and Samajwadi Party governments for failing to promote 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 Singh.

Govt restructuring SMCs to enhance school management

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

To boost transparency in 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

Scheduled Castes, Scheduled 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 needed. 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 schools.

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 refined and welcoming experience. The renovation work, which is nearing completion, aims to enhance the convenience of tourists while beautifying the ghats. 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 Jhansi, Nageshwar Ghat Jhansi, 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 cent, Chhatnag Ghat at 90 per cent, Rasoolabad Ghat at 80 per cent, Balua Ghat at 80 per cent, Old Arail Ghat at 93 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 Kumbh's priorities, the Kumbh Mela administration is focused on providing high-quality 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 Fair in 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 world. Chief Minister Yogi also mentioned that since last year, his government has been promot-

ing 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 the event.

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 combat the cold wave and ensure timely relief. Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath has directed district magistrates, chief development officers, additional district magistrates, sub-divisional officers, and tehsildars to actively survey their regions and identify destitute, helpless, and vulnerable individuals at risk from the cold wave.

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 accident-prone 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.

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 destitute 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, sub-divisional officers, and tehsildars to actively survey their regions and identify destitute, helpless, and vulnerable individuals at risk from the cold wave.

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, Srivastava 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, Srivastava discussed the transactions with Abhishek, who denied sending any such messages. Realising the fraud, the company informed the police. Cyber Police Station 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 said.

Newly-wed couple among 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 Abhishek 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 Jharkhand. Khurshid's brother-in-law Mumtaz (45), Mumtaz's wife Ruby (32) and daughter Bushra (10) were also with them, the police said. 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 condolences 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 Maharajanji:** 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.

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

PTI ■ RAJGIR (BIHAR)

Defending 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 minute) 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

team continental tournament 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 the 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



some silly mistakes after a 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 deadlock continued after half time. The Indians came out with the same tempo after the change of ends and controlled the proceedings of the match. 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

Dubey's combined effort. The Indians continued their domination with relentless attacks on the Chinese citadel but was denied by the rival goalkeeper on several 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 22. Gill, one of the young heroes of India's last Border-Gavaskar Trophy triumph, is a batting mainstay and in 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 Yashvi 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 icing and he didn't take the field on the second day of the match simulation on Saturday although it is being seen more as a precautionary 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 story. 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 Pakistan Occupied 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 India 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 announced in due course. "A series of physical and digital engagements traversing iconic destinations, sporting events and key battles in the 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 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, 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 November 22.

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 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 Gujrathi. 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 streak with five wins and four



draws. Valentina Gunina trails her by a single point in second place, while Rapid Champion Aleksandra Goryachkina occupies third with 5 points. 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); Abbusatorov 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 Agrawal (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)

The boos from a crowd wanting more action were growing again when Jake Paul dropped his gloves before the final bell, and bowed to 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 79-73. Tyson came after Paul immediately after the opening bell and landed a couple of quick punches but didn't try much else the rest of the way. Even fewer rounds and shorter rounds, along with heavier gloves designed to lessen the power of

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 ago. 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 flight.

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

AP ■ SYDNEY

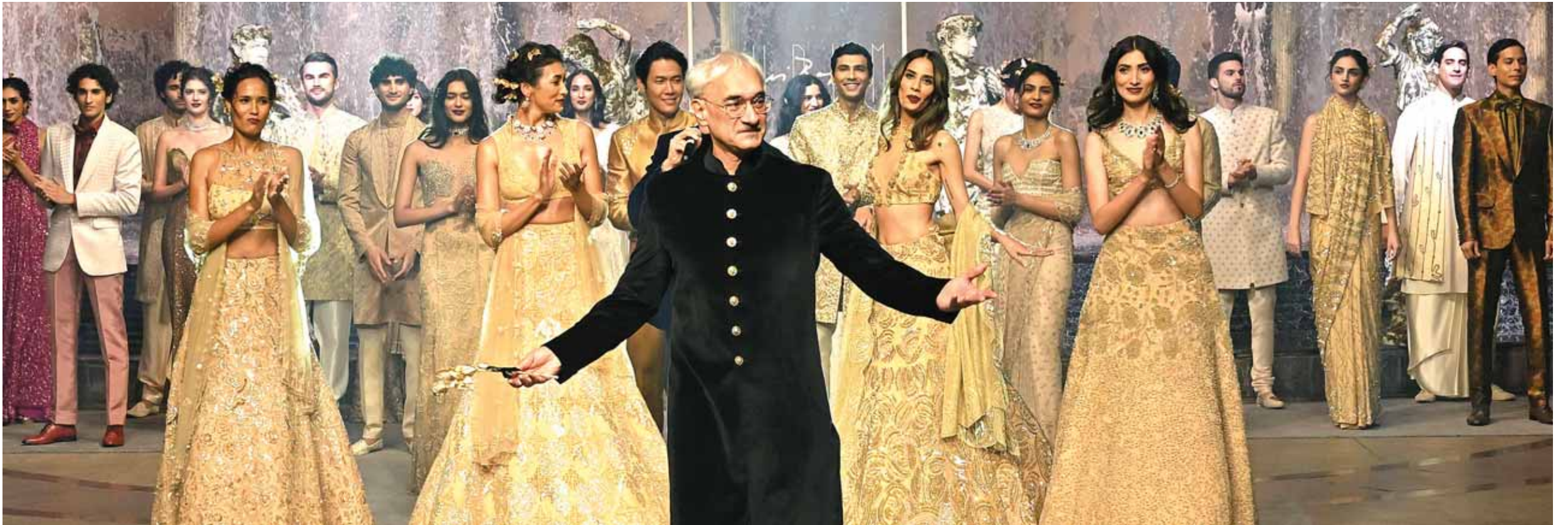
Fast bowler Spencer Johnson grabbed a career-best 5-26 and propelled Australia to a 13-run win over Pakistan as the home team clinched the three-match T20I series with a game to spare Saturday. Johnson sliced through the top order and Pakistan crumbled to 134 all out in the final over that gave Australia 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. The home team couldn't

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. Harris struck twice in his first over when Fraser-McGurk couldn't clear Salman Ali Agha at cover and Sufiyan Muqem, playing his first T20 since making his debut



at the Asian Games last year, took a splendid catch at point to dismiss Inglis for zero. Abbas Afridi then ended Short's 17-ball knock with a brilliant slower ball to knock back the 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 Muqem'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

boundary off the bat for nine overs. Rizwan tried to break the shackles and smashed the first boundary off Spencer in the 10th over but was caught by a diving 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 balls. 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 last over.



BY SAKSHI PRIYA

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



SCULPTING WEDDING GLAMOUR IN GOLD

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

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



“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”



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 on wedding wear, making it a must-see for anyone interested in the finest Indian couture.

PHOTOS: PANKAJ KUMAR

Chor Bizarre reopens its doors with Hosa Pop-Up

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



name "Hosa," meaning "new" in Kannada, reflects the restaurant's innovative approach to South Indian cuisine. Blending old-world charm with contemporary design, Hosa offers a take on traditional dining experience that celebrates the diverse and rich flavours of the region. Awarded 'Best Modern Restaurant' and 'Best Restobar' 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 in Gurugram. The set menu is designed to introduce diners to Hosa's inventive South Indian cuisine. The menu, curated by Brand Chef Harish Rao, will feature signature dishes like Cracked Potatoes with cauliflower mousse, Andhra Okra Masala with peanut sesame curry and Kari Dosa with poached egg and bone marrow hollandaise. Highlights also include Toddy Shop Prawns with raw mango salad and a dessert of Coconut Jasmine, combining coconut ice cream, jasmine granita and almond crumble. This is a unique opportunity for food lovers in Delhi and Gurugram to experience the bold and vibrant flavours that have

made Hosa a favourite in Goa. Chef Harish Rao says, "We're excited to bring Hosa's South Indian flavours to New Delhi and Gurugram, reimagining traditional dishes for the food lovers in 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 (non-vegetarian) | INR 1300 (vegetarian)
Reservations: Chor Bizarre: +91 99106 01574, Comorin: 0124 4984 224

11:11 (GYARAH GYARAH)

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

As 2024 draws to a close, it's the perfect time to reflect on the Indian gems the year offered in the world of entertainment. One such standout is Gyarah Gyarah, streaming on Zee5. This web series has captured the audience with its gripping narrative, complex characters, and masterful storytelling, making it an absolute must-watch before the year ends. Directed by Umesh Bist, this Indian adaptation of the acclaimed South Korean series Signal blends time travel, suspense, and crime drama across eight thrilling episodes. The show takes viewers on an engaging journey through timelines set in 1990, 2001, and 2016, cleverly weaving out past and present events. The narrative centers around ACP Vamika Rawat played by Kritika Kamra, rookie inspector Yug Arya acted by Raghav Juyal, and seasoned cop Shaurya Anthwal (Dhairya Karwa). The plot unfolds as Yug stumbles upon an old walkie-talkie that mysteriously allows him to communicate with Shaurya from 2001. Together, they work to solve cold cases while grappling with the paradoxes of time travel. Kritika Kamra delivers a nuanced performance as the determined and layered Vamika. Raghav Juyal impresses as the enthusiastic and headstrong Yug, showcasing his brilliant acting



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



Abhishek 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.



PHOTOS: PANKAJ KUMAR

SHANGRI-LA OPENS TO BURGERS AND LOBSTERS

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

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the pioneer agenda

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



In the enchanting Coastal city of Goa, where the sea whispers the dream and the sand carries the tale, the grand curtains would be raised for the International Film Festival of India (IFFI) for the world. The IFFI is the only South Asian festival accredited by the International Federation of Film Producers' Associations (FIAPF). Now, being held in Goa since 2004, IFFI is not only the grand festival for the films showcase but it's a platform, where Indian cinema interacts with world cinema, where filmmakers connect with audiences, and where the magic of storytelling is truly celebrated. This year, IFFI has received 1,676 submissions from 101 countries, highlighting its expanding global influence after all these years. The International Film Festival of India 2024 will showcase over 180 international films from 81 countries, including 15 world premieres, 3 international premieres, 40 Asian premieres, and 106 Indian premieres. Featuring celebrated titles and award-winning films from around the world, this year's festival promises to make a powerful impression on audiences and on the world of cinema.

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

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

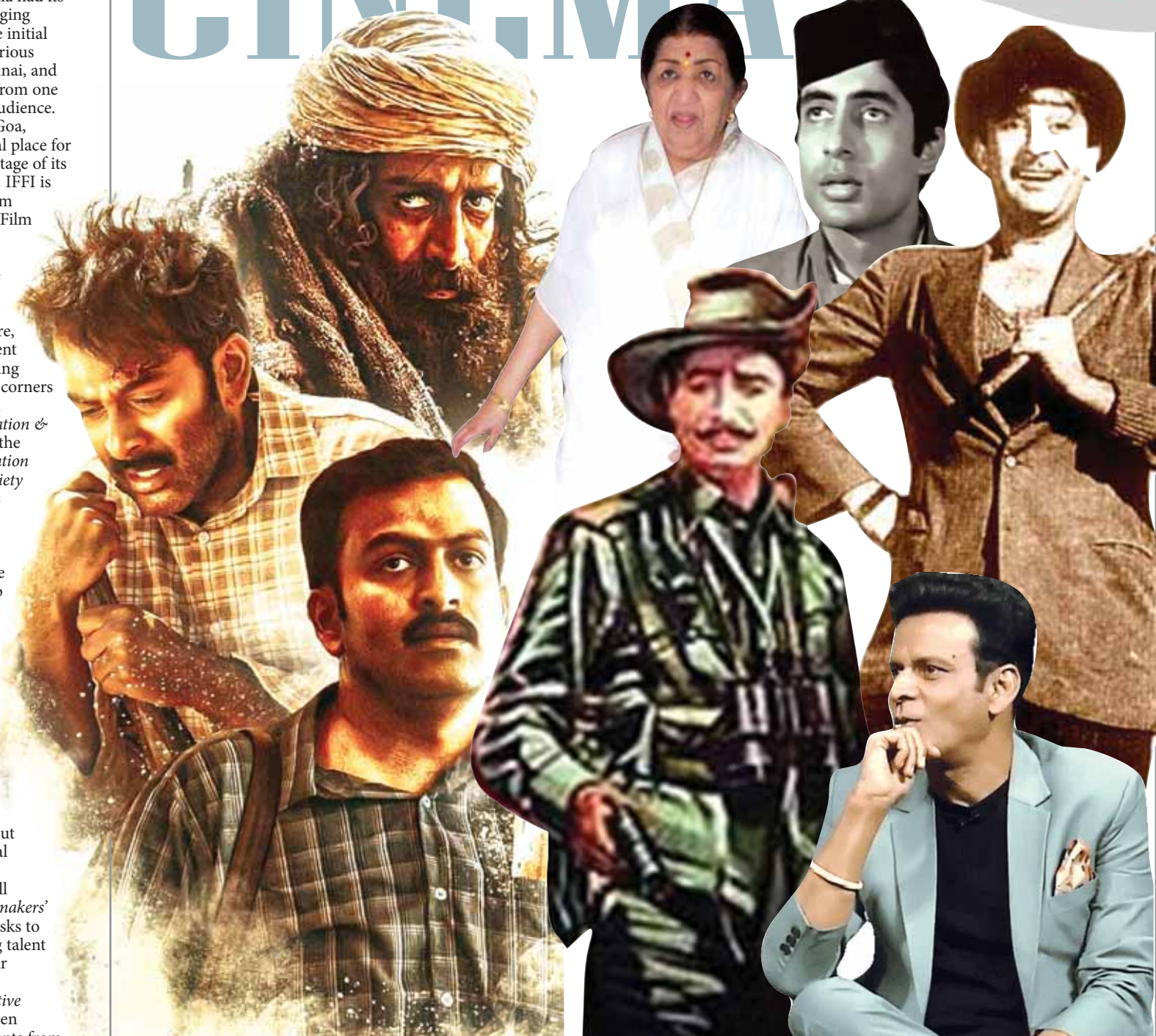
With IFFI continuously taking place in Goa, has helped the state develop a thriving ecosystem that supports film tourism. Local businesses, artists, and artisans benefit from the influx of visitors, and the festival has become a key driver of economic and cultural growth in the region. During the curtain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

The 55th edition of IFFI in 2024 will showcase the theme of 'Young Filmmakers' - "The Future is Now". The theme asks to embrace the timeless and the young talent in our country and recognising their potential in shaping the future of creativity. The initiative of the Creative Minds of Tomorrow platform has been enhanced to support 100 young talents from 75 in the previous editions. 400 young film students, from Film Schools across the country, are being facilitated by the Ministry to attend IFFI. The festival will give tributes to cinema legends, and retrospectives on iconic careers. The Country Focus section will allow viewers to experience the best of international cinema, linking to cultural exchange. The Country of Focus for IFFI 2024 will be Australia. This will be made sure by a dedicated package of Australian films giving a strong presence at the festival. A Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) has been signed between Screen Australia & NFDC, for participation by leading Australian filmmakers in the festival and the Film Bazaar, and a showcase by AusFilm, promoting Australia's unique filming locations & co-productions.

Apart from Australia, in partnership with the British Film Institute, the United Kingdom will be showcased as the "Treaty Country", presenting British cinema through a carefully crafted package. Celebration of the pioneers is very important to lead the way, give examples, and keep the generations inspired by looking over to the people who have done it no others. Like every other year, the stars of the cinema, keeping up with the entertainment industry would be facilitated by awards at the IFFI 2024. The IFFI's prestigious Golden Peacock Award,

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

GRAND CELEBRATION OF CINEMA



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

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

experience for the audience. *Mastering the Unseen* with Manoj Bajpayee, Sunil Srinivasan; *Centenary Special: ANR - Celebrating the Life and Works of Akkineni Nageswara Rao*. This centenary special will celebrate the legendary actor & producer Akkineni Nageswara Rao (ANR), whose contributions to Indian cinema have been unparalleled, with celebrated actor and his son 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 Chatteraj. Addition will be *Lata Mangeshkar Memorial Talk: Musical Theatre in India* with A R Rahman.

Masterclasses by the pioneers in the cinema industry, giving insights about the highs and lows will be conducted every year on all the days of the 7-day festival. *Power of Failure*, a masterclass by Anupam Kher will be sharing his journey, highlighting how failures acted as the catalyst for his growth and success. Another one by Philip Noyce on *How to Succeed in New Hollywood*. To all this will be the addition of Stephen Woolley an English filmmaker giving a masterclass on *Film Production and its Stages* will be valuable. The National Film Development Corporation (NFDC) will also be hosting the much-anticipated *Film Bazaar* from November 20 to 24, transforming Goa into a bustling hub for filmmakers, producers, distributors, and cinema enthusiasts from across the globe. Since its inception, *Film Bazaar* has established itself as South Asia's premier film market, providing a platform for fresh voices and unique cinematic narratives from the region to take the global stage.

The *Film Bazaar* has since grown to become the international film market for South Asia. It serves as a meeting place for prospective creative and financial cooperation between South Asian and foreign filmmakers, producers, sales representatives, and festival programmers. From November 20 to 24, 2024, the 18th *Film Bazaar* at IFFI 2024 will take place at the Marriott Resort in Goa. This year, the IFFI promises not just a cinematic showcase but a festival brimming with cultural exchange, artistic celebration, and an unwavering commitment to the future of films in the country and globally. From illuminating conversations to inspiring mentorship and unforgettable screenings, IFFI 2024 is set to transcend expectations, offering a truly transformative experience for film lovers worldwide.

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 Mamus* 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

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

SAVOURING KERALA'S RICH FLAVOURS



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



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

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



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

The Vibrant Flavours OF KOREA

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

TEAM AGENDA

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



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

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

sharing; the spicy and comforting *Stir-fried Rice Cake (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**

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



sauce, accented by crunchy peanuts for extra texture. Not every dish was flawless. The nachos were slightly too salty for my taste. However, the ramen from their global menu made up for it with its rich, layered flavours. It's a generous portion, perfect for a hearty appetite or sharing with friends. My companions thoroughly enjoyed the *Lamb Adana Kebab* as much as they did the sushi. While Poiz has a wide range of Indian dishes, I found myself drawn to the global offerings, including their expertly crafted *Neapolitan pizza*. A meal here would be incomplete without the *Belgian Nutella Chocolate*. This dessert not only excels in taste but also impresses in presentation. The smooth *Belgian chocolate* and *Nutella sweetness* are cleverly balanced with blueberries and hazelnuts, creating a perfect finale.

For those in the area, Poiz is well worth a visit.
Ratings: (Out of 5)
Food: 4.25
Ambience: 4.25
Service: 4.0
Drinks: 4.0
Overall: 4.25
Address: Poiz, 2nd Floor, AIPL Joy Street, Sector 66, Gurugram



A SPIRITUAL GETAWAY

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

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

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

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



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

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

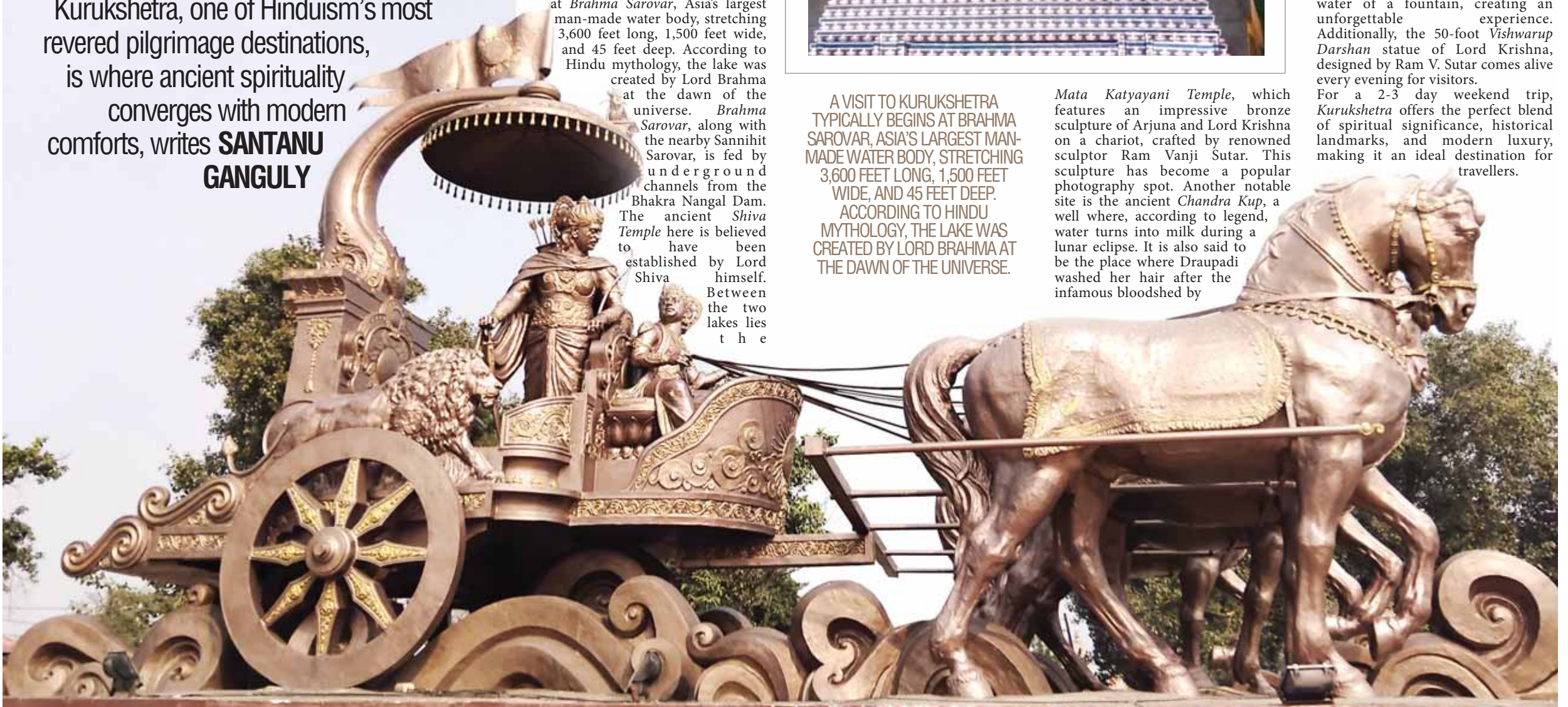
Dushasana.

The *Kali Kamli Temple*, built by Kali 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*, which showcases key artifacts. For children and astronomy lovers, the *Kalpna Chawla Planetarium* provides a fun and educational experience.

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

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



EXPLORING DAMAN

A Coastal Escape with Cultural Riches

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

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

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



into flavour-packed *laal maas*, piping hot breads, *gobhi and bhindi sabzi*, *raita*, and *salad*. Dessert was the creamiest *ras malai* on this side of the *Daman Ganga river*, garnished with a silver varq and date syrup! Semi-comatose from so much good food, we pledged to skip dinner. But that was not to be, as we were informed that the chefs had prepared choice delicacies for us at the poolside *Mediterranean-inspired BBQ and grill restaurant, Sky High*. After eyeing the selection of inventive dips with *Middle Eastern snacks, empanadas, and pizzas* with innovative toppings, our pledge to "go easy" on food went out the window!

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

facial left us feeling reborn! After spending three wonderful days at *The Deltin Daman*, we're led to wonder how, in today's fiercely competitive hospitality landscape, the hotel consistently maintains such high standards. "As ours is the only five-star hotel in Daman, our top-notch service and facilities are unmatched by any other hotel in the area," says the hotel's dynamic general manager, Akarsh Mathur. "We cater to all requirements, whether it's a weekend getaway or an ideal wedding, by customising our services to suit all needs. Our spacious rooms are the largest in their category, and our ample indoor and outdoor event spaces, as well as our large river-shaped swimming pool, are among the features that make our hotel a top choice for discerning guests. Our F&B has also received rave reviews." *Mathur* believes that with higher disposable incomes and "revenge travel," Indian guests are prepared to pay competitive rates for excellent services. "The demand for upscale local tourism destinations has grown exponentially, and hotels no longer have to rely on foreign tourists from overseas to fill their rooms. If you provide great service and pay attention to guests' needs, the property will always be buzzing," he adds. Indeed, who can fault that flawless logic?

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



**YOUR
WEEK
AHEAD**



MADHU KOTIYA



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 issues within the household demanding both your time and resources, potentially causing setbacks at work.

Lucky 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.

Lucky number 2 | **Lucky colour** Yellow
Lucky 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 or unions.

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
Lucky 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 11 | **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
Lucky day 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 without fear.

Lucky number 22 | **Lucky colour** Orange
Lucky day Thursday

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GURUSPEAK



Sri Sri Ravi
Shankar
Spiritual Guru

"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 speech"

KEEPING 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 speech."

Tapas (penance) for the speech is to speak only those words that do not rattle the minds of others. Krishna 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 you do.

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.