



NATION 5 UK EVACUATES BRITISH NATIONALS FROM LEBANON AS CONFLICT ESCALATES

SPORT 7 INDIA BAG U18 TEAM SILVER IN WOMEN'S SECTION AT ASIAN YOUTH ARCHERY

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Exit Polls indicate upsets

Congress to sweep Haryana

RAJESH KUMAR ■ NEW DELHI/ HARYANA

The exit polls have predicted a thumping majority for Congress in Haryana, after a decade. The ruling Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) is projected to trail significantly. According to the exit polls the regional parties will have considerable losses. With this, the political landscape of Haryana is set for a dramatic shift. The voter turnout was 61.19 percent till 8 pm on Saturday. The results will be declared on October 8. The Dainik Bhaskar poll predicted the Congress getting 44-54 seats and the BJP 15-29 seats in the 90-member Haryana Assembly. The Republic-Matrix poll put the Congress tally even higher at 55-62 seats as against the BJP's 18-24. According to NDTV's Poll of Polls, 55-62 seats are predicted for the Congress while the ruling BJP may win 20-32 seats. The Red Mike-Datansh exit poll gave the Congress 50-55 seats in Haryana and the BJP at 20-25, while the Dhruv Research poll pegged the Congress at 50-64 seats, BJP 22-32 seats, and others 3-8 seats. Peoples' Pulse exit poll



Voters wait in a queue to cast their votes at a polling station in Rohtak, Haryana. PTI

gave the Congress 49-60 seats and the BJP 20-32 seats in Haryana. Most exit polls pegged the Indian National Lok Dal (INLD) tally higher than that of the Jannayak Janta Party (JJP), while others were seen getting up to 10 seats. The ruling BJP is eyeing a

hat-trick while the Congress is hoping to make a comeback in the state after a decade. The other key contestants are Congress, JJP, INLD, Aam Aadmi Party (AAP), INLD, Bahujan Samaj Party (BSP), and Azad Samaj Party (ASP). Key candidates include Chief

Minister Nayab Singh Saini, BJP leaders Anil Vij and OP Dhankar, Congress leaders Bhupinder Singh Hooda and Vinesh Phogat, INLD's Abhay Singh Chautala, and JJP's Dushyant Chautala. The BJP's campaign was spearheaded by Prime Minister Narendra Modi, who addressed four rallies, where he attacked the Congress on several issues and said they kept every matter important for the country entangled, including the Ram temple issue. Congress leader Rahul Gandhi also addressed many public meetings where he said a "Congress storm" is on its way in Haryana and his party would form the government, which will be one for the poor and farmers, and a "mohabbat ki dukan" will be opened in every corner of the state.

Cliffhanger in Jammu and Kashmir

MOHIT KANDHARI ■ JAMMU

If exit polls are to be believed, a hung verdict is likely in Jammu and Kashmir Assembly polls. An overall voter turnout of 63.88 percent was reported in the polls, the first after post Abrogation of Articles 370 and 35-A. The results will be declared on October 8. The pre-poll alliance partners, the National Conference, and the Congress Party enjoy an edge over the rival Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP). However, the exit polls differed



on the question of the single largest political party in the fray. The India Today-CVoter exit poll predicted that the saffron party is likely to secure between 27 and 31 seats. The opposition's INDIA Bloc

(including the National Conference, Congress, and others) may bag around 11 to 15 seats in the region and Mehbooba Mufti's People's Democratic Party (PDP) is likely to get between 0-2 seats. In contrast, the Bhaskar Reporters poll predicted 20-25 seats for the BJP and predicted NC-Cong may get the lion's share of 35-40 seats while giving PDP 4-7 seats. According to their exit poll, 12-18 seats are likely to be bagged by the Independent candidates.

PM Kisan 18th instalment Over 30 lakh farmers in State benefit

PNS ■ BHUBANESWAR

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Saturday released the 18th instalment of the PM Kisan Samman Nidhi scheme. More than nine crores farmers received Rs 2,000 each.

Total 31,51,700 farmers in Odisha would be benefitted from the Central scheme. In the 17th instalment provided at Bargarh earlier, more than 29 lakh farmers of the State benefited. The Odisha Government has implemented the CM Kisan scheme along with the PM Kisan Yojana, under which Rs 4,00 is be-



ing provided to the small and marginal farmers in two instalments. The money is being provided to farmers under the DBT, said Chief Minister Mohan Majhi here at a function. The government is making efforts to include all eligible beneficiaries in the PM Kisan Yojana. The farmers can enlist their names at the Jan Seva Kendras in the blocks to get the benefits of the CM Kisan scheme and others schemes.

Baldevjew servitors resent quality of ghee

Supplied by OMFED

PNS ■ KENDRAPADA

Amidst the ongoing row over the alleged use of adulterated ghee in Laddu preparation at the Tirumala Tirupati Devasthanams, concerns have also been expressed over the quality of ghee at the Lord Baldevjew Temple here.

The servitors of the temple expressed resentment after they found some foul smell in the ghee supplied by the temple administration for the conduct of daily rituals.

Sources said that the ghee of

OMFED allegedly did not have any manufacturing date on its tin-pack. As the servitors denied using the ghee, the stock was subsequently changed. It is for the last 7 years that OMFED has been supplying over 1 quintal of ghee to the temple every month worth around Rs 1 lakh. Usually, a 15 kg tin pack is provided by the temple officials for the conduct of the rituals.

"The ghee was first used in morning rituals and when the servitors used the same in the afternoon, they found that it was not fit. We brought the matter to the officer of the endowment office and 1 kg ghee was supplied for night rituals. The ghee

packet did not have manufacturing date and batch number," alleged a servitor.

One Nityananda from the temple management said the temple provides ghee every month. "The current stock of ghee has some bad odour. We have brought it to the notice of authorities and got it exchanged. We do not know whether there is some adulteration in the ghee stock or not," Nityananda said.

The Endowment Officer said, "A ghee pack was not up to the mark and the matter was informed to the company. The tin did not have a manufacturing date. The stock was replaced subsequently."

LAcMMI Tier-II bus launch Private bus owners threaten stir from Oct 8

PNS ■ BHUBANESWAR

Opposing the launch of Tier-II buses under the Location Accessible Multimodal Initiative (LAcMMI) scheme, the Private Bus Owners' Association has once again warned of an indefinite strike from October 8.

The association warned the government to reconsider the decision on or before October 7 (6 pm) and warned to go off

roads across the State from October 8, coinciding with the commencement of the Durga Puja festivities.

"We had agreed on Tier-1 LAcMMI buses after much discussion. But, the previous government had unofficially promised to keep Tier-2 on halt. The government has changed but they are also planning to ply Tier-2 LAcMMI buses. They have already released the notification. So, we

have decided to hit the streets," said Nari Mohanty, president of the Bus Owners' Association, Jeypore.

"We are giving time till October 7 to the government to reconsider their decision. If the government fails to take any decision on or before 6:00 pm on October 7, no one can stop from resorting to strike," he added.

Similarly, Chagala Parichha, president of the Balangir Bus

Owners' Association said, "We will hit the streets after October 7. This will be our way of telling the government to listen to us. If they pay no heed, we will call for an indefinite strike in the days to come."

Notably, the LAcMMI buses were launched by the previous BJD government in phases across the State connecting the gram panchayat with block headquarters and district headquarters.

Ganja smuggler death: CB to probe police role

PNS ■ BHUBANESWAR

The CID, Crime Branch (CB) will now probe the mysterious death of a person whose was allegedly beaten by a police team to death in Kandhamal district. The deceased has been identified as Jyestha Bandaki.

Crime Branch DSP Rajat Ray will conduct an investigation into the incident. Earlier, action was taken against some police officials of the Gochhapada police station following allegations against police in the death of Jyestha.

Jyestha's body was found near Danganamu Ghat under

the Gochhapada police station on September 26. It was alleged that he was a ganja smuggler and his body was dumped. On September 26, he along with his friend was allegedly smuggling ganja and liquor on his motorbike when they were chased by police.

It was alleged that the cops mowed down their motorbike, leaving them seriously injured. While his friend managed to escape, Jyestha was caught and beaten up brutally by the cops, resulting in his death. On October 2, the Kandhamal SP suspended two cops and terminated three Home Guards in connection with the incident.

In city Gas leak at abandoned factory triggers panic

PNS ■ BHUBANESWAR

A gas leak incident was reported from an abandoned chemical factory at the Chandaka Industrial Estate in Bhubaneswar on Saturday evening.

Sodium hypochlorite, commonly known as bleach, got leaked from a cylinder at the chemical factory," said Director General of Fire Services Sudhanshu Sarangi.

Fire Service personnel along with fire tenders rushed to the spot and launched an operation to trace the cylinder. They used oxygen masks to search

the area and locate the cylinder. After tracing the cylinder, they sprayed a neutralising compound, limestone mixed with water, at the cylinder as part of a precautionary measure.

"The cylinder was shifted to an isolated place. The situation is under control as the gas detector machine did not show any concern for human life. The air standard was found to be normal in the area," Sarangi added.

The incident caused panic among the locals as the abandoned chemical factory is located close to a private school.

'Cancel OSSSC RI, ICDS exams'

Aspirants demand conduct of test in offline mode

PNS ■ BHUBANESWAR

Hundreds of aspirants under the banner of 'Students against Corruption' on Saturday demanded cancellation of RI, ICDS supervisors, ARI, Amin and SFS examinations conducted by the Odisha Subordinate Staff Selection Commission (OSSSC) alleging large-scale irregularities. The aspirants also de-



mandated that the examinations be conducted in offline mode and stern actions be taken against the authorities involved in the irregularities. They threatened a prolonged agitation if their demands are not fulfilled by

Sunday (September 6).

"Thousands of aspirants from various districts will join a protest at Lower PMG in Bhubaneswar and the government will be fully responsible for any incident arising out of the situation," warned

an aspirant.

The aspirants also sought intervention of Union Education Minister Dharmendra Pradhan over the alleged irregularities in the conduct of the examinations.

"The government doesn't want to stop selling of jobs in OSSSC," alleged Bibhuti Bhusan Mohapatra, a member of Students against Corruption.

However, no reactions could be obtained from OSSSC officials in this regard.

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Govt to rejig OSDMA 25 yrs after Super Cyclone

Focus to shift towards disaster risk reduction, resilience

PNS ■ BHUBANESWAR
The State Government has announced a significant restructuring of the Odisha State Disaster Management Authority (OSDMA) 25 years after it was established in response to the devastating 1999 Super Cyclone that killed more than 10,000 people. The focus will shift towards disaster risk reduction and resilience, aligning with na-

tional frameworks. The Revenue and Disaster Management Department has issued a formal notification in this regard. In the light of changing landscapes, it has become crucial to strengthen the OSDMA's organisational structure in line with national frameworks and guidelines and build its own capacity with a view to move from mitigation, preparedness, response and reconstruction to disaster risk reduction and resilience in a holistic manner," the notification read. The OSDMA will now have

four divisions, general, capacity building, project & technology and finance, with each division headed by an Executive Director. The Executive Director (General) and the Executive Director (Capacity Building) will be in the rank of IAS or OAS. The Executive Director (Projects & Technology) will be from the government's engineering departments or on deputation from the Telecom Department, Government of India. The Executive Director (Finance) will be in the rank of OFS (SS/SAG) to be sourced

from the government on deputation. In case of an OFS (SG)-cadre officer posted, he/she will be designated as Chief General Manager (F&A). Out of the total 102 staff positions of OSDMA, 10 posts have been abolished and 37 posts have been created. Notably, Odisha was the first State to set up a disaster management authority after the 1999 Super Cyclone. It was established six years before the National Disaster Management Authority (NDMA) instituted in 2005 following the Indian Ocean tsunami that killed over 25,000 people.

'Unfair': Naidu responds to BJD's war room jibe

PNS ■ BHUBANESWAR
Former Vice-President M Venkaiah Naidu has reacted sharply to Biju Janata Dal (BJD) leaders' statements alleging that the Raj Bhavan in Odisha has been turned into a war room for Jharkhand elections. Recently, Assam CM Himanta Biswa Sarma and Venkaiah Naidu visited Odisha and met Governor Raghuraj Das. They also stayed at the Raj Bhavan. "In response to some inaccurate comments by certain politicians as appeared in some



media reports, the Office of the former Vice President of India M. Venkaiah Naidu would like to clarify in unequivocal terms that no political colour should be attributed to his visit to any part of the country in

general and to Bhubaneswar recently in particular," read a press statement issued on Friday. Naidu was in Bhubaneswar to attend the convocation of Asian School of Business Management (ASBM) as chief guest as scheduled months ahead. As per protocol, he stayed at the Raj Bhavan and it is customary for the Governor and other dignitaries to call on the former VP as a courtesy. "We would also like to inform that no politics were discussed in any of these courtesy calls. No political motives should be ascribed to this courtesy call and dragging the Office of the former Vice-President of India into a political controversy of this nature, is patently unfair," the statement added

'Winning, losing part of politics'

Says Dharmendra on Naveen's lie remark
PNS ■ BHUBANESWAR
Union Minister Dharmendra Pradhan on Saturday remarked that winning and losing are inherent aspects of politics and urged BJP members not to be demoralised in view of BJD president and Leader of Opposition Naveen Patnaik's allegation that the BJP rose to power in Odisha through deceit and lies. Some people in Odisha used



to call the BJP a 'signboard party', he pointed out and said now, the party has the opportunity to serve the people. On October 2, Naveen Patnaik had taken a jibe at the BJP by stating that the latter can change the name of a scheme or colour of school uniforms, but cannot change the history of the State.

Baji Rout anniv to be held widely at govt level

Says CM
PNS ■ BHUBANESWAR
The birth anniversary of the country's youngest martyr Baji Rout would be observed extensively at the government level, said Chief Minister Mohan Charan Majhi attending a function to mark the Baji Rout Jayanti here on Saturday. The place of Baji Rout among the brave Odias is unique. Though his courageous deeds might have been confined to a few pages of history, his bravery created lakhs of Baji Routs to fight against the British government, said Majhi. In the month of October,



besides Baji Rout, many great leaders like Mahatma Gandhi, Lal Bahadur Shastri and Gopabandhu Das were born and made their sacrifices for the country. Now, time has come to spread the deeds of Baji Rout at the national level. It is commendable that the Baji Rout Memorial Foundation is holding his birth anniversary regularly, said the CM.

In Cuttack No firework competition during Ravan Podi

Directs High Court
PNS ■ CUTTACK
There will be no firecracker competitions during the Ravan Podi event in Cuttack on the occasion of upcoming Dussehra following a directive by the Orissa High Court. The High Court came up with the verdict while hearing an intervening petition filed by the Sarbadharma Sadharana Parishad. The court has given emphasis on a smooth conduct of the Ravan Podi event. The designated Advocate Committee has suggested use of only colourful firecrackers that

don't have any kind of harmful effect on the environment. As per the committee, it will strike a balance between culture and addressing environmental pollution. As per sources, all arrangements will be made at the lower Bali Yatra ground and directions have also been issued to the Cuttack Municipal Corporation (CMC) and the district administration to take necessary measures to maintain discipline during the Ravan Podi. The High Court has also ordered the DCP, Cuttack to ensure proper traffic management in view of the anticipated rush in the city during the upcoming festival.

Regional Sc Centre hosts State-level talk

PNS ■ BHUBANESWAR
The Regional Science Centre, Bhubaneswar, in collaboration with Directorate of TE and SCERT, Odisha, organised a State-level seminar for school students and facilitated the participants. The theme was "Artificial Intelligence: Potentials and Concerns." The programme commenced with an inaugural speech by Project Coordinator, Regional Science Centre, Bhubaneswar Praliptha Mishra. She congratulated the district level winners. Priyadarshini, Associate



Professor and Head, Department of Computer Science and Engineering, CV Raman Global University, Prof Manoranjan Satpathy, from Computer Science Department, IIT, Bhubaneswar, and Dr Subhankar Mishra as panists evaluated the performance of the participants and summarized the result. Out of 30 presentations in the seminar, Swati Swagatika Mohapatra of Panchayat Raj High School was judged as the best. She was selected for taking part in such a programme at Nehru Science Centre, Mumbai.

IIT-BBS honours Safai Mitras on Gandhi Jayanti

As part of 'Swachhata Hi Seva' drive
PNS ■ BHUBANESWAR
The Indian Institute of Technology (IIT) Bhubaneswar felicitated 25 housekeeping and horticulture staff with the Safai Mitra Award-2024 for their significant contributions to cleaning activities inside and outside the campus during the Swachhata Hi Seva - 2024 campaign. The awards were handed over by Director, IIT Bhubaneswar, Prof Shreepad Karmalkar on the occasion of



Gandhi Jayanti celebration at the institute. It may be mentioned that IIT Bhubaneswar joined the nation in the Swachhata Hi Seva special campaign. The institute organised a mass cleanliness drive on October 1 in which Prof Karmalkar, Prof Rajesh Roshan Dash, Dean (Student Affairs), Bamadev Acharya, Registrar and other senior faculty members and employees joined the housekeeping staff in cleaning the road in front of the main gate of the institute. On October 2, while celebrating the Birth Anniversary of Mahatma Gandhi, the members of the institute offered floral tribute to the Father of the Nation. Speaking on the occasion, Prof Karmalkar stressed on the prohibition of single-use plastic in the institute. Awards for poster competitions held earlier on Swachhata Hi Seva were handed over to the students and children of the campus. Prof Dash and Registrar Acharya also spoke on the occasion and highlighted the various initiatives being executed and planned to ensure the cleanliness of the institute premises.

150 hearing-impaired trained in hospitality sector

By State SSEPD
PNS ■ BHUBANESWAR
The State SSEPD Department has taken up an initiative to train 150 hearing-impaired youths from the State in hospitality operations, in collaboration with the Institute of Hotel Management (IHM), Bhubaneswar. The programme, designed to enhance skills and employability, is already showing promising results. The first batch of trainees will complete

their training in October, with many already receiving job offers from leading hospitality brands. In addition to their training success, it is reported that 13 of the talented trainees have been selected to participate in the prestigious National Abilitylympic Event, being held in Jamshedpur. The national platform will provide them with an opportunity to showcase their skills and compete with the best in the country.

In Baripada 30 girls accuse Lecturer of sexual harassment

PNS ■ BARIPADA
As many 30 girl students of a reputed college in Baripada have brought serious allegations of sexual harassment by a faculty member. In a written complaint, the students of Government Women's College, Baripada accused their Lecturer of sexual harassment and inappropriate behaviour. They accused him of making lewd remarks and gestures at them. Necessary action would be



taken against the Lecturer after a thorough investigation, college Principal Sagarika Singh said. "Students have brought harassment allegations against a Lecturer We are following the due process. We have an Internal Complaint Committee and a Sexual Harassment Cell. The complaints have been referred to the committee, which will investigate into the allegations and take necessary action," she added.

'Free Press cornerstone of democracy'

US Consulate holds training meet for scribes
PNS ■ BHUBANESWAR
A free and open Press is the cornerstone of any democracy, said Jennifer Larson, Consul General of the US Consulate General, Hyderabad addressing 30 Odisha journalists at the valedictory session of the "Countering Disinformation for Odisha Journalists" training programme held at the KIIT campus here on Friday.



"Your commitment to fact-checking and responsible journalism is commendable and sets a high standard for others to follow," Larson added. She underscored the significance of ensuring the public has access to accurate and verified information and high-

lighted how the programme equipped journalists with essential tools and techniques to effectively identify misleading information. Larson praised the US Consulate's involvement in this initiative, which provided fact-checking training for

Odia, Telugu and Urdu, journalists across Odisha, Andhra Pradesh and Telangana, respectively. Encouraging the participants, Consul General Larson urged them to continue utilising the skills and knowledge they gained to promote truth and transparency in their reporting. Among others, Gyan Ranjan Mohanty, KIIT Registrar; Sulochana Das, Bhubaneswar Mayor and Rajeev Panda, Associate Dean, School of Communication, KIIT, were present.

On BBSR outskirts Valuables looted from two temples

PNS ■ BHUBANESWAR
Thieves decamped with valuables from two temples under the Balipatna police station on the outskirts of Bhubaneswar on Friday night. The miscreants allegedly looted gold and silver ornaments, idols and other valuables from the Beleswar and Duladevi temples in the Baliapatna area in Khordha district. Local residents managed to nab a thief while another managed to escape. Banidhar Panda, priest of

both the temples, said, "Today morning, I saw that several silver and gold ornaments, idols and other valuables have been stolen by cutting the locks. The thieves also tried to break open the donation box but failed in their attempt." A local resident said, "Special Sola Puja is being performed here at the temple. This is a case of complete failure of police patrolling in the area. Though the area comes under the Commissionerate police, no focus is given on security here."

In city 2 persons critical as truck rams into car



PNS ■ BHUBANESWAR
Two persons, including the driver of a car, sustained life threatening injuries after their vehicle was hit by a Hyva at Damana Square in Chandrasekharpu here on Saturday morning. Both the injured were rushed to the Capital Hospital, where their conditions remained critical. A couple of other persons also sustained minor injuries in the mishap. Reports said the car was parked alongside the main road when the over-speeding

Hyva rammed into the car from the rear. The identities of the injured were yet to be ascertained. The intensity of the collision was so powerful that both vehicles were severely damaged. The truck driver also sustained minor injuries and was detained by the Chandrasekharpu police. The mishap led to a traffic jam at Damana Square which left many vehicles stranded for some time. A JCB machine was roped in to remove both the vehicles from the road to clear the traffic jam.

'PM changing narratives on Eastern India's dev sans action'

BJD Padayatra in Brahmapur highlights BJP govt's failures

PNS ■ BRAHMAPUR

The Biju Janata Dal (BJD) held a massive Padayatra in Brahmapur on Friday, demonstrating their commitment to Odisha's development while condemning the BJP's failures. The march began with floral tributes at the statue of Mahatma Gandhi and passed through key locations like the Old Bus Stand and Annapurna Market, before concluding at Biju Patnaik Park. At the park, the leaders paid their respects to legendary leader Biju Patnaik, followed by a large public gathering.



Senior BJD leader Debi Prasad Mishra led the rally. He sharply criticised the BJP, pointing out its failure during its nine years in coalition government to bring substantial progress to the State. Mishra accused Prime Minister Narendra Modi of "changing narratives on Eastern India's development without any real

action," contrasting this with the visible progress under former Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik's leadership, such as the redevelopment of Ramalingam Park and the construction of Brahmapur's stadium. Mishra also targeted the Union Government's preferential treatment towards

States like Andhra Pradesh and Bihar while neglecting Odisha, particularly through projects like Polavaram, calling it "a betrayal of Odisha's interests." Highlighting the rise in crimes against women, Mishra mentioned incidents like the Bharatpur Police Station case and the gang rape of a tribal woman in Nabarangpur, em-

phasizing the Union Government's failure to protect women. He also condemned the BJP for its economic policies, accusing it of selling off State's industries to private capitalists.

The Padayatra organised by spokesperson Tumbhath Panda saw the participation of a large contingent of BJD leaders, including district president Dr Ramesh Chandra Chyau Patnaik, working president Ch Dileshwar Reddy, former MP Chandra Sekhar Sahu, Brahmapur Mayor Sanghamitra Dalai, Deputy Mayor E Vivek Reddy, Brahmapur MP candidate Bhruu Baxipatra, BJD organisational secretary Manoj Mahapatra and several other prominent leaders and corporators.

Yeoman service Docs reach diarrhoea-hit K'mal villages by bikes

Led by CDMO
PNS ■ PHULBANI

Going beyond the nature of their duty and propped by the attitude of service, a team of doctors along with the Chief District Medical Officer (CDMO) of Kandhamal district rode bikes on rocky roads and waded through knee-deep stream water to provide treatment to patients suffering from diarrhoea at some remote areas under Kotagarh block in the district on Wednesday. As per reports, a couple of patients in Durgapanga gram panchayat passed away after suffering from diarrhoea in the last three days. Three more diarrhoea patients are currently undergoing treatment at Kotagarh hospital. Diarrhoea has spread its tentacles in villages like



Kanibaru, Sindhibali, Badipanga and Dimili. Similarly, three other patients have also died in the remote area after suffering from other diseases. After being informed about the spread of the contagious disease, Kandhamal CDMO Dr Bijay Kumar Panda along with a team of doctors reached the remote areas by riding bikes on rocky roads and wading through knee-deep water of a stream to take stock of the situation and provide treatment to the patients. "We reached the spot and took stock of the situation. Treatment was provided to all the affected patients. I think the problems could be solved by improving road communication in the area and providing proper drinking water facilities to the people," said Kandhamal CDMO Dr Panda.

In Bhadrak BJP leader thrashed by Jan Seva Kendra owner

For exposing bribe demand for Subhadra Yojana

PNS ■ BHADRAK

The State Government has repeatedly announced that any demand for bribe for the registration or for applying for the Subhadra Yojana is illegal, but some Jana Seva Kendras continue to violate the norms. In a recent case, a BJP worker in Bhadrak district has been hospitalised after being allegedly beaten up by a Jana Seva Kendra owner and his staffs for exposing their bribery. According to sources, the Sri Krishna Digital Seva Kendra at Kaithakola under Chandbali block in the

Dhamra police station area was allegedly demanding Rs 200 from applicants applying for the Subhadra Yojana. BJP Bhadrak district general secretary Abdul Ahmed Khan approached the Jana Seva Kendra owner and his employees. When confronted about the bribe, the owner along with his employees attacked Ahmed, leaving him critically injured. He was first admitted to the Bhadrak Hospital before being referred to the SCB Medical College Hospital in Cuttack. Despite a written complaint, no action has reportedly been taken against the Jana Seva Kendra owner and the other attackers. Meanwhile, Ahmed has sought intervention of the Bhadrak SP and demanded immediate arrest of the accused.

Repeated pleas ignored G'pati villagers build wooden bridge on their own

PNS ■ PARALAKHEMUNDI

Even after decades of independence, there are places in many interior pockets of Odisha where basic facilities are still a distant dream for people. Forget about roads and bridges, instances of people crossing rivers using tubes and cables are still normal in parts of the State. Take the example of Sarala Padar village under Mohana block in Gajapati district. Sans bridge, the residents of the village including the students in the region had to take a perilous journey through the river to reach panchayat office, school, college and hospital. Even though they have approached the block and the district administration several times to construct a bridge over



the river, their pleas have fallen on deaf ears, the villagers alleged. Fed up with the alleged negligence of the administration, the villagers have come forward to construct a wooden bridge all on their own.

"The previous Government never paid heed to our pleas in its 25 years of governance. No one is bothered about our plight. We have to risk our lives to wade through the river. Pregnant women of our village suffer the most," alleged a villager.

Echoing the same, another villager said, "We have approached BDO and Collector to draw their attention, but in vain. As our suffering did not end, we were left with no option other than constructing a temporary wooden bridge on our own."

Sarangi takes over as DIG SR Pledges tough stance on crime, Naxal activities

PNS ■ BRAHMAPUR

Senior IPS Sarthak Sarangi took over as the new Deputy Inspector General (DIG) of the Southern Range on Tuesday, with a strong focus on strengthening law enforcement and addressing critical challenges such as Naxalism and rising crime. Senior police officers from districts like Kalahandi, Kandhamal, and Rayagada welcomed Sadangi's leadership, pledging full cooperation in his mission. DIG Sarangi said that curbing Naxal influence in districts such as Kalahandi and Kandhamal will be a priority. "We are focusing on the suppression of Naxal activity and



will work closely with district SPs to develop an effective crime prevention strategy," the DIG said. Additionally, Sarangi highlighted plans to address the activities of hardcore criminals in districts like Rayagada and Boudh. In response to the rise in cybercrime, Sarangi noted that public awareness is crucial, but stronger measures from law enforcement will also be implemented. "We will not only expand awareness programmes but also ensure robust action against cybercriminals," he assured.

In Sundargarh 2 siblings allege third-degree by RPF

Police complaint lodged

PNS ■ SUNDARGARH

A police complaint has been filed on the charge of third-degree torture of two brothers by the Railway Protection Force (RPF) in Sundargarh. The victims were identified as Chhotelal Ichagutu and his brother Dumbi. Both of them have lodged a complaint in this connection at the K Balang police station in the district. As per the allegation by Ichagutu brothers, who are residents of Chhidakud village under the K Balang PS, the Bimalagarh RPF picked them over theft suspicion around

midnight and they were tortured throughout the night. Both of them sustained injuries in the process and are currently undergoing treatment at the K Balang Hospital. "The RPF took us over our suspected involvement in a two-month-old theft case. When we feigned our ignorance and innocence over the matter, they thrashed us mercilessly and tortured in different ways throughout the night. We have sustained severe injuries in the process," said Dumbi Ichagutu. "Both the patients have sustained several injuries in various parts of their bodies," said Dr Aparna Bhoi. However, no reactions were received from the RPF officials in this connection.

Endospine surgery for slipped disc available in Odisha



PNS ■ BHUBANESWAR

The two most common and painful ailments of the spinal cord and vertebrae-slipped disc and sciatica could now be successfully operated on with very less pain and cuts, said Dr PC Dey, noted endoscopic surgeon and orthopaedician, Modern Ortho Clinic, Nayapalli here. Dr Dey said the advanced 3D+4K 55" endospine surgery is now available in Odisha, which is first in the world. It is considered as a minimally-invasive technique.

He said that with the advent of advanced medical science like 3D+4K 55" endovision system, the treatment and surgeries of such diseases could be done with minimally-invasive techniques. Such techniques ensure lesser blood loss during treatment, smaller cuts or holes for surgeries and faster recovery of the patients. Dr Dey has already done more than 3,000 such cases in the last 17 years. He started his career as endospine surgeon in 2007 after taking the training from the technique pioneer Dr John Destandau of France.

B'pur Mahanagar BJD holds Padayatra



PNS ■ BRAHMAPUR

On the instruction of BJD Supremo and former CM Naveen Patnaik, Brahmapur Mahanagar BJD unit held a preparatory meeting for BJD Janasampark Pada Yatra cum membership enrollment drive on October 1. President Bijaya Chandra Samal presided. It was decided to commence the first phase of the drive from October 2 which will continue for two months and new members will be enrolled. On the occasion, BJD Ganjam district president Ramesh Chandra Caupatnaik, former MLA Brahmapur

Bikram Kumar Panda, Mayer Sanghamitra Dalai, Deputy Mayer E Vivek Reddy, many Corporators, former BDA Chairman Subash Chandra Moharana, Jagannath Sabata, Bhagaban Gantayat, Mamata Bisoyi, district general secretary Manoj Mohapatra, R Murali Mohan, City Youth president Ajit Panda, Sanjeet Panigrahi, Zonal president Jyoti Ranjan Sahu, T Tripati Patra, Students president Sobhon Nayak, many BJD Women, Youth and Students wings members attended. The Padayatra commenced on October 2 from the Gandhi Statue at Gandhinagar.

In Keonjhar Sorcery hunch: Man kills sister-in-law

PNS ■ KEONJHAR

The Keonjhar police detained Ganga Murmu (55) of Patna village under Ghasipura police station limits for killing his sister-in-law Sita Murmu (50), suspecting her to be practicing sorcery. The incident happened on Thursday. After receiving information, SDPO Anandpur, Prasanta Behera, IIC Ghasipura police station, Sunil Kar, along with police force, rushed to the spot on Friday morning and started an investigation with the help of a scientific team. According to the sources,

Ganga always thought that his sister-in-law Sita was practicing sorcery and most often put him in trouble. Nursing a grudge against her, Ganga went to Sita's home when she was alone and attacked her with an axe. Sita died on the spot. Police seized the body lying on the ground in a pool of blood. "As per the preliminary investigation it is a suspected witch hunting incident. After investigation the cause of death could be said. The accused is detained and under interrogation," said SDPO Behera.

NTPC Talcher-Thermal supports mountaineer



Under community dev drive

PNS ■ TALCHER

In a remarkable display of support for local talent, NTPC Talcher Thermal sponsored Bibharani Patra, a mountaineer from Odisha for her successful expedition to Mount Elbrus, the highest peak in Europe and Russia. The sponsorship falls under NTPC Talcher Thermal's community development initiative, aimed at fostering local talent and encouraging individuals to pursue excellence in diverse

fields. Hailing from Meramundali near Talcher, Bibharani, an accomplished mountaineer with previous feats including scaling Mount Stok Kangri in Ladakh and Mount Kilimanjaro in Africa, embarked on the challenging ascend of Mount Elbrus, located in the Russian Caucasus. With NTPC Talcher Thermal's unwavering support, her endeavor marks a significant achievement for the region, placing Odisha on the global mountaineering map. Speaking about the initiative, HOP and CGM, NTPC Talcher Thermal, Vijay Chand

stated, "We are extremely proud of Bibharani's achievement. Supporting local talent like hers aligns with our commitment to community upliftment and holistic development." Bibharani expressed her gratitude to NTPC Talcher Thermal for their support, stating, "This journey to Mount Elbrus has been a dream come true, and I am deeply thankful to NTPC Talcher Thermal for enabling me to take this step. Their belief in my ability has been a tremendous source of strength throughout the expedition."

Protect our livelihood: Street vendors to BeMC



PNS ■ BRAHMAPUR

The street vendors from Bijipur Gosainuagan on Thursday appealed to the Berhampur Municipal Corporation (BeMC) to reconsider its decision to shut down their stalls following a recent road accident in which a street vendor was run over by a car. For years, these vendors have supported their families by setting up roadside stalls, but in the past four days, the BeMC prohibited them from reopening their shops and removed their belongings as part of safety measures. The shopkeepers acknowledged the re-

cent accident but are seeking a compassionate solution from the authorities. "We have always relied on these small stalls for our livelihood. We are now left in a dire situation without any other means of sustenance. We respectfully urge the authorities to consider our plight and either allow us to reopen our shops or allocate an alternative space," a street vendor said. While the action taken by the BeMC seems to be aimed at enhancing public safety, the vendors are hoping for a balanced approach that ensures safety on the roads without disrupting their only source of income.

Illegal parking, cattle menace make NH-16 accident-prone

Awareness drive soon for truck drivers in Ganjam, Khordha, Jajpur

PNS ■ BHUBANESWAR

Road accidents have mainly become a concern along NH-16 running through Jajpur, Khordha and Ganjam districts due to illegal parking of heavy vehicles. Apart from illegal parking, stray cattle roaming on NHs have also become another headache leading to dangerous road accidents. The drivers parking heavy vehicles on both sides of National Highways are very nonchalant about their acts. "I have parked the vehicle on NH side for the very first time. I will soon drive the vehicle and not park it on the side of NH again," said A Murugan, a truck driver. Stray cattle moving on NH in Khordha has become a major cause of road accidents.



"Seven to eight cattle straying on NHs are getting killed on a daily basis. Moreover, human lives are also jeopardized due to severe road accidents because of the stray cattle," said Bharat Chandra Ghadei, driver of a heavy vehicle. In response, Khordha SP Abinash Kumar said that IICs of all the police stations will be directed soon to remove illegal parking and stray cattle from the NHs. "We have intensified patrol-

ling and asked all the IICs to remove unauthorized parking and stray cattle roaming on NHs. We will also conduct awareness programmes to sensitize people and solve the issue," said SP Kumar. As per the Transport Department, as many as 4,317 road accidents occurred in Odisha in 2022 and at least 2,043 persons lost their lives in the process. Moreover, at least 26,315 persons lost their valuable lives in five years between 2019 and 2023 in the State.

No Indo-Pak talks during SCO Summit: External Affairs Minister

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar on Saturday said here he will not hold bilateral talks with Pakistan during his upcoming visit to Islamabad to participate in the Shanghai Co-operation Organisation (SCO) summit in mid-October. India on Friday announced that he will travel to Pakistan to attend the conclave. "It (visit) will be for a multi-lateral event. I'm not going there to discuss India-Pakistan relations. I'm going there to be a good member of the SCO," he said at the sidelines of an event in the national capital. "But, you know, since I'm a courteous and civil person, I will behave myself accordingly," he added. Jaishankar noted that typically the Prime Minister attends such high-level meetings with

heads of state, but "it changes" sometimes. "So your question, I think, is, what am I planning for? Of course, I'm planning to go. In my business, you plan for everything which you're going to do, and for a lot of things which you're not going to do and which could also happen. I mean, you plan for that as well," he said. Jaishankar made these observations during an interaction with media while attending the Sardar Patel lecture on governance organised by the IC Centre for Governance. The SCO was founded as a political union of Central Asian nations Russia, China, the Kyrgyz Republic, Kazakhstan, Tajikistan, and Uzbekistan -- to discuss security and economic matters. India and Pakistan became permanent members in 2017. Jaishankar said the situation in

the Middle East is a "great cause of concern," as Israel intensifies its attacks in Lebanon. "The Middle East is not an opportunity. The Middle East is a cause of great concern and deep worry. The conflict is widening what we saw as a terrorist attack, then the response, then we saw what happened in Gaza. Now you are seeing it in exchange in Lebanon, between Israel and Iran. The Houthis are firing on the Red Sea. This is actually costing us. It's not that somebody is neutral and you benefit," he said. The External Affairs Minister added, "I would say honestly today, whether it is the conflict in Ukraine or the conflict in the Middle East West Asia, these are big factors of instability, big factors of concern. I think the entire world, including us, is worried about it." He also took a veiled dig at Pakistan, holding it responsible



for the derailment of the SAARC initiative. "At the moment SAARC is not moving forward, we haven't had a meeting of SAARC for a very simple reason -- there is one

member of SAARC who is practicing cross-border terrorism at least against one more member of SAARC, maybe more... Terrorism is something which is unacceptable and despite a global view of it if one of our neighbours continues to do it there cannot be business as usual in SAARC. That's the reason why the SAARC meeting has not happened in recent years -- but it doesn't mean that the regional activities have stopped. In fact, in the last 5-6 years, we have seen far more regional integration in the Indian subcontinent," he added. India has all along maintained that it will not hold bilateral dialogues with Pakistan until the latter stops breeding and fostering cross-border terrorism. India on Friday announced that the minister will travel to

Pakistan to attend a conclave of the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO) in mid-October. It will be for the first time in nearly nine years that India's External Affairs Minister will travel to Pakistan even as the ties between the two neighbours remain frosty over cross-border terrorism. Pakistan is hosting the SCO Council of Heads of Government (CHG) meeting on October 15 and 16. The last Indian External Affairs Minister to visit Pakistan was Sushma Swaraj. She had travelled to Islamabad in December 2015 to attend a conference on Afghanistan. The announcement on Jaishankar's visit was made by external affairs ministry spokesperson Randhir Jaiswal. "The External Affairs Minister will lead our delegation to Pakistan to participate in the SCO summit which will be

held in Islamabad on October 15 and 16," he said at his weekly media briefing. Meanwhile, speaking at the event, Jaishankar highlighted Sardar Patel's historical stance against involving the United Nations in disputes, particularly concerning Jammu and Kashmir, arguing that such actions could allow external powers to manipulate the situation. He noted that Patel believed it was more effective to address issues directly with Pakistan rather than through international frameworks. He highlighted that, like any other neighbour, India would like to have good relations with Pakistan but not by overlooking cross-border terrorism. Reflecting on Patel's pragmatic approach, he underscored the importance of realism as the foundation of India's foreign policy.

India to host four-nation Malabar naval exercise

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

India will host the four-nation Malabar naval exercise beginning Tuesday. The navies of India, the US, Australia and Japan will carry out a series of complex naval drills during the 'sea phase' of the mega war game. "Exercise Malabar 2024 is scheduled to take place from October 8 to 18, beginning with the Harbour Phase in Visakhapatnam, followed by the sea phase," the Indian Navy announced on Saturday. The Malabar exercise, which began in 1992 as a bilateral naval drill between the US and the Indian Navy, has evolved into a key multilateral event aimed at enhancing interoperability, fostering mutual understanding and addressing shared maritime challenges in the Indian Ocean and Indo-Pacific region. The exercise will feature the



participation of various Indian naval platforms, including guided missile destroyers, multi-purpose frigates, submarines, fighter aircraft and helicopters. "The exercise will focus on a broad range of activities designed to enhance cooperation and operational capabilities, including discussions on special operations, surface, air,

DRDO conducts successful VSHORADS flight tests

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

Defence Research and Organisation (DRDO) successfully conducted three flight-tests of the fourth generation, technically-advanced miniaturised Very Short Range Air Defence System (VSHORADS) at the Pokhran Field Firing Ranges in Rajasthan on October three and four, defence ministry said here on Saturday. Giving details, officials said the tests were carried out against high speed target, demonstrating very critical parameters of maximum range and maximum altitude interception. These development trials showcased repeatability of hit-to-kill capability of the weapon system in various target engagement scenarios covering approaching, receding and crossing modes. The development of VSHORADS missiles has been



completed and two production agencies have been engaged in the Development cum Production Partner (DcPP) mode. In these trials, the missiles realised through DcPPs have been successfully used, thus paving the way for early user trials and production in a short time span in line with Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi-led Government's vision of 'Aatmanirbhar Bharat'. VSHORADS is a Man Portable Air Defence System designed and developed indigenously by Research Centre Imarat

ICMR to study PCOS drugs' impact on fertility



PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

The Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR), is mulling to conduct a study to evaluate the efficacy of two Polycystic Ovarian Syndrome (PCOS) drugs in improving fertility and birth outcomes among women suffering from the ovarian condition. The drugs that have been recommended by experts for this purpose are Metformin and Inositol which are used in the treatment of PCOS, a hormonal condition that affects women of reproductive age. It's the most common endocrine disorder in women in this age group. A senior official from the apex health research body of the Union Health Ministry said that expression of interest (EOI) have been invited to undertake a multi-centric randomised controlled trial for evaluating the efficacy of Metformin vs Inositol to improve fertility and birth outcomes among PCOS women. PCOS is a complex disorder ranging from mild to severe disruptions in reproductive, endocrine and metabolic functions, with key features including irregular menstrual periods (anovulation), hyperandrogenism, insulin resistance and abnormal gonadotropin secretion. The prevalence of infertility in women with PCOS is high, varying between 70 and 80 per cent, the ICMR said in the EOI document.

Moreover, PCOS women have been found to have increased prevalence of pregnancy complications and less favourable pregnancy outcomes (live births, miscarriage, pregnancy rate) compared with women without PCOS, it stated. In contemporary practice, the use of Metformin and Inositol for the treatment of PCOS is widespread. "However, present evidence on the efficacy of these two drugs in terms of improvement in fertility and other related outcomes is insufficient," the ICMR said in a document. A Finnish study suggested that, as compared to placebo, metformin improved the pregnancy rate, live birth rate and ovulation rate in the studied population, the document said. However, a Cochrane review with meta-analysis including three other smaller studies reported that as compared with placebo, metformin may have only marginal benefit for live birth rate outcome. Additionally, there is very limited data available globally on the effectiveness of Inositol for PCOS women, especially for birth outcome and cycle regulation. "Evidence on the efficacy of both metformin and inositol in the Indian context is almost non-existent. To address the knowledge gap and to generate evidence on the management of PCOS for improving birth outcomes in the Indian context, the current ICMR call is being proposed," the document said.

BJP MP Nishikant Dubey accuses Congress of defaming Government

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Public Accounts Committee member and BJP MP Nishikant Dubey has accused the panel's chairman and Congress member K C Venugopal of raking up non-existent issues to defame the central government and destabilise the country's financial structure and economy. Dubey wrote to Lok Sabha Speaker Om Birla against Venugopal for allegedly misusing his position, bypassing the PAC's remit and working as part of a "tool kit" to damage the economy after reports emerged that the committee may summon SEBI Chairperson Madhabi Puri Buch, who has faced allegations of professional impropriety from US-based firm Hindenburg Research. He had written to Birla against Venugopal's "unconstitutional and disdainful" conduct on September 9. Incidentally, the PAC decided on October 4 to call Buch for deposition on



October 24. His strongly worded communication is a clear indication that the ruling BJP-led National Democratic Alliance, who are in a majority in the committee, are likely to resist any further move by Venugopal to put the regulator in a spot, signalling that its meetings over the issue will be stormy. Dubey claimed that political motivations were guiding the committee's chairperson after the Congress was "compelled" by voters to sit in

the world's third-biggest economy, devised a "tool kit" to defame it by attacking its financial structure and the economy by dubbing important organisations like SEBI as corrupt. Claiming that unverified allegations by a foreign company like Hindenburg against Buch were part of such a campaign, he alleged that the "India Chapter" of this toolkit has become active. "It used its position as is presently being used by K C Venugopal in the capacity of Chairman, Public Accounts Committee, to further defame the Government and damage the financial prospects of our economy. This time also, unverified allegations have been levelled against the SEBI Chief by a foreign entity viz., Hindenburg Research, which is notorious for targeting business houses, important functionaries and financial institutions of the country," Dubey told Birla. He also accused Venugopal of committing the "unconstitu-

tional and disdainful act of announcing an inquiry against the SEBI Chief by the Committee," which is against the constitutional provisions and in clear violation of parliamentary rules. "I request your goodness to restrain Mr K.C. Venugopal not to play at the hands of aforementioned 'tool kit and misuse his position as Chairman of Public Accounts Committee," Dubey told the Speaker. Citing rules, the BJP MP said the sole function of the Public Accounts Committee is confined to scrutinising the appropriation accounts of the Government of India and reports of the Comptroller and Auditor General of India. The committee, he alleged, has been made as a "surreptitious tool kit of some countries, inimical to the galloping strides which India has witnessed during the last decade under the exemplary leadership" of Prime Minister Narendra Modi.

Antarctica's greening signals alarming climate change effects

ARCHANA JYOTI ■ NEW DELHI

The coldest, windiest and most inhospitable ice-clad Antarctica Peninsula, a vast territory belonging to no one nation is witnessing a dramatic greening! Viewing this trend as a stark warning rather than a hopeful sign, climate change experts have raised alarms. Not without reasons. Vegetation, particularly moss and algae, have surged by more than tenfold over the last four decades from less than one square kilometer in 1986 to nearly 12 square kilometers by 2021. The rapid expansion of plant life highlights the profound impacts of global warming and the potential for cascading effects on the region's ecosystems, said researchers from the universities of Exeter and Hertfordshire, along with the British Antarctic Survey after analysing satellite data to document this phenomenon.

Published in the journal Nature Geoscience, the findings revealed that vegetation cover trend accelerated by over 30 per cent in recent years (2016-2021), adding more than 400,000 square meters annually, as per the study. In a previous study that examined core samples from moss-dominated ecosystems on the Antarctic Peninsula, researchers had found compelling evidence of dramatically increased plant growth rates in recent decades. Building on this base, the new study uses satellite imagery to confirm that a widespread greening trend is not only occurring but also accelerating across the Antarctic Peninsula. "The plants we find on the Antarctic Peninsula mostly mosses grow in perhaps the harshest conditions on Earth," said Dr Thomas Roland, from the University of Exeter. "The landscape is still almost entirely dominated by snow, ice and rock, with only a tiny frac-

tion colonised by plant life. "But that tiny fraction has grown dramatically showing that even this vast and isolated 'wilderness' is being affected by anthropogenic climate change." "As these ecosystems become more established and the climate continues to warm it's likely that the extent of greening will increase. "Soil in Antarctica is mostly poor or non-existent, but this increase in plant life will add organic matter, and facilitate soil formation potentially paving the way for other plants to grow." "This raises the risk of non-native and invasive species arriving, possibly carried by eco-tourists, scientists or other visitors to the continent," said Dr Olly Bartlett, from the University of Hertfordshire. The researchers emphasised the urgent need for further research to establish the specific climate and environmental mechanisms that are driving the "greening" trend.

Supreme Court dismisses electoral bonds review pleas

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

The Supreme Court has dismissed a batch of pleas seeking review of its February 15 verdict, which had scrapped the Modi government's electoral bonds scheme of anonymous political funding. A bench of Chief Justice D Y Chandrachud and Justices Sanjiv Khanna, B R Gavai, J B Pardiwala and Manoj Misra said there is no error apparent on the face of the record. The top court also rejected the prayer for listing the review petitions in an open court. "Having perused the review petitions, there is no error apparent on the face of the record. No case for review under Order XLVII Rule 1 of the Supreme Court Rules 2013. The review petitions are, therefore, dismissed," the bench said in its order dated September 25 that was uploaded today. The review pleas filed by advocate Mathews J Nedumpara and others contended that the matter related to the scheme falls in the



exclusive domain of legislative and executive policy. "The court failed to notice that even assuming the issue is justiciable, the petitioners there-in having not claimed any specific legal injury exclusive to them, their petition could not have been decided as if a private litigation for the enforcement of rights which are specific and exclusive to them," Nedumpara had submitted in his plea. He had said the court failed to notice that the public opinion could be sharply divided and the majority of the people of this country could probably be in support of the scheme, brought into existence by their elected representatives, and that they too have a right to be heard as much as the petitioners. "The court failed to notice that, if at all it is venturing into the forbidden domain of adju-

dicating upon a matter of legislative policy, they have a duty to hear the public at large and that the proceedings ought to be converted into representative proceedings," the plea had said. Holding that the 2018 electoral bond scheme was "violative" of the constitutional right to freedom of speech and expression and right to information, a five-judge Constitution bench headed by Chief Justice of India Chandrachud had scrapped the scheme. The top court had also directed the State Bank of India (SBI), the authorised financial institution under the scheme, to submit the details of electoral bonds purchased since April 12, 2019, to the Election Commission, which was asked to publish the information on its official website. Under the electoral bonds scheme, ruling parties can coerce people and entities to contribute, the apex court had said and rejected as "erroneous" the Centre's argument that it protects the confidentiality of the contributor which is akin to the system of

secret ballot. The electoral bonds scheme, which was notified by the government on January 2, 2018, was pitched as an alternative to cash donations made to political parties as part of efforts to bring transparency in political funding. On March 13, the SBI told the Supreme Court that a total of 22,217 electoral bonds were purchased and 22,030 redeemed by political parties between April 1, 2019 and February 15 this year. In a compliance affidavit filed in the apex court, the SBI said as per the court's direction, it has made available the details of electoral bonds to the Election Commission of India before the close of business hours on March 12. The electoral bond controversy had become a major poll issue during the Lok Sabha elections as the opposition alleged it was an "extortion racket", while the ruling BJP defended the scheme, saying it had a laudable objective of bringing transparency in poll funding.

Congress is being run by gang of urban Naxals: PM Modi

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ WASHIM (MAHARASHTRA)

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Saturday alleged that the Congress is being run by a "gang of urban Naxals", and asked people to unite to defeat the "dangerous agenda" of that party. He also accused the Congress of looting the poor and not improving their condition for its selfish politics.

"They (Congress) think that if we all unite, then their agenda to divide the country will fail," Modi said, addressing a rally in Washim district of Maharashtra after launching various projects. "Congress only knows how to loot the poor and keep them poor for its selfish politics. It only knows how to divide people. We have to be alert and remain united. Congress is run by a gang of urban Naxals," he alleged. Everyone can see how closely Congress stands with those people who do not harbour good intentions for India, Modi said. "Drugs worth thousands of crores of rupees were seized in Delhi recently. A Congress leader is suspected to be the kingpin. Congress wants to contest elections from the money it gets by pushing the youth towards drugs," he said.

The Indian Youth Congress had said on October 3 that Tushar Goel, the suspected



kingpin, was expelled from the organisation on October 17, 2022, for anti-party activities, soon after BJP spokesperson and MP Sudhanshu Trivedi charged the opposition party with having links with the drug dealers. Modi alleged that Congress' thinking has been foreign from the very beginning. "Like the British rule, the Congress family also does not consider Dalits, backward and tribals as their equals. They feel that India should be ruled by only one family. That is why they have always maintained a derogatory attitude towards the Banjara community," he said. "Saints from the Banjara community inspired culture and spiritualism. Britishers harassed the community, but

when they left, successive Congress governments continued the trend and prevented the community from coming into the mainstream," the PM alleged. The PM also accused the Congress of leaving no stone unturned to make the lives of farmers miserable. "The governments run by the Congress used the money meant for farmers and irrigation schemes for corruption," he alleged. Modi asked people to beware of the Congress propaganda of false assurance of farm loan waiver. "People in Telangana are still waiting for the loan waiver. In Karnataka, the Congress government stopped the irrigation schemes started by the BJP regime," he said.

Stating that Maharashtra has the capacity to lead the country to economic progress, Modi said the state government was giving double benefit to farmers in terms of financial assistance, in addition to what the central government was providing.

When the Maha Vikas Aghadi (MVA) government was in power, it put a speed breaker in the work of the Poharadevi pilgrimage centre upgradation, which was started during the chief ministership of Devendra Fadnis. But it has now been completed at a cost of Rs 700 crore, he said.

As long as MVA was in power in Maharashtra, it worked with only two agendas - to stop the projects related to farmers and to commit corruption in the money of these projects. The funds sent by the Centre were being diverted away from the beneficiaries by that government, he claimed.

The prime minister, who launched various initiatives of Rs 23,300 crore related to agriculture and animal husbandry sectors, expressed happiness over the completion of the Banjara Virasat Museum in Poharadevi.

This museum would introduce future generations to the ancient culture and vast heritage of the Banjara community, he said.

Removing 50 per cent cap on reservation necessary to protect Constitution: Rahul Gandhi

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ KOLHAPUR (MAHARASHTRA)

Congress leader Rahul Gandhi on Saturday said removing the existing 50 per cent cap on reservation is necessary to protect the Constitution, and asserted that the INDIA bloc will ensure the passage of laws to this effect in Parliament.

The Leader of the Opposition in Lok Sabha also attacked the BJP-led government, saying there was no use of bowing before Shivaji Maharaj after "scaring people, destroying the Constitution and institutions in the country". Holding a copy of the Constitution during an address in Kolhapur, Gandhi called it a symbol of Shivaji's ideas.

This is Rahul Gandhi's second visit to western Maharashtra in a month. He visited Sangli last month to unveil the statue of late Congress leader Patangrao Kadam. His party wrested the Kolhapur and Sangli Lok Sabha seats from Shiv Sena and BJP, respectively after losing them in 2014 and 2019. Speaking at the 'Samvidhan Samman Sammelan' here,



Gandhi said the Congress and the INDIA bloc, a coalition of over two dozen opposition parties, will also bring out laws to enable a caste-based census.

"We will ensure in Lok Sabha and Rajya Sabha that the 50 per cent cap on reservation is removed and no power can stop it. Removing this 50 per cent limit is necessary to protect the Constitution," he said.

Rahul said when his party talks of caste census, it wants to add two more aspects to it: to identify the population of each community and how much control they have over India's financial system. The caste-based census will help gather data on the population of various

The history of Dalits or OBCs was not being taught in schools, he said, alleging that efforts are now being made to erase that history.

The Congress leader said the public sector is being privatised, and stressed that it should be termed de-reservation. He accused the RSS and BJP of doing this for years. He called the Agniveer scheme - for short-term induction of personnel in the Army, Navy and Air Force - a ploy to snatch pension from 90 per cent of people. Earlier, speaking at an event, where Rahul unveiled a statue of Shivaji, Gandhi alleged that the warrior king's statue collapsed in the state's Sindhudurg district as the intentions and ideology of those in power were wrong. He said the intentions are visible and cannot be hidden.

"They built Shivaji Maharaj's statue and in a few days, it collapsed. Their intentions were not right. The statue gave them the message that if you built Shivaji Maharaj's statue then you have to follow his ideals. Which is why the statue collapsed because their ideology is wrong," he said.

Setting up Justice K Hema Committee unconstitutional: Kerala HC Lawyer

KUMAR CHELAPPAN ■ KOCHI

The setting up of the Justice K Hema Committee by the Kerala Government to study the sexual harassment faced by women artists in Malayalam film industry was an unconstitutional act, according to a highly respected lawyer in Kerala High Court.

K Ramkumar, senior advocate, who has fought many landmark cases including the infamous P Rajan case that shook the nation during the 1975-77 internal emergency days questioned the propriety of setting up a committee at the cost of the public exchequer. He also disclosed that the Government of Kerala cannot make any legislation based on the committee's report as cinematography law was an exclusive domain of the Centre as per the 7th schedule of Indian Constitution. "There are sufficient provisions in our judicial system to undertake investigation into sexual harassment faced by women in all sections of the society including the film industry. The Kerala Government has spent Rs 1.55 crore on the three-member Hema Committee that probed the sexual harassment faced by female artists. It was sheer waste of time and money," the veteran lawyer told The Pioneer in an exclusive interview.

He pointed out that the Kerala Government had set up a committee under the chairmanship of Adoor Gopalakrishnan, movie



maker who had been honored with Dada Saheb Phalke Award for his lifelong contribution to the world of cinema. Though Gopalakrishnan had submitted his findings with recommendations to the Government, nothing has happened," said Ramkumar. He said the Indian Parliament itself had passed two legislations, the Vishaka Guidelines in 1997 following a Supreme Court directive against sexual harassment at workplaces and the Sexual Harassment of Women at Workplace (Prevention, Prohibition and Redressal) Act 2013. Both these guideline and statute have sufficient powers to take on the aggressors and predators who torment women, said Ramkumar. The Kerala Government would have to answer an important question which the court is certain to ask. "The constitution of the Justice Hema Committee itself was an act of transgression as a Centre is the lone authority to enact legislation against

sexual harassment of women at workplaces. The seventh schedule of the Constitution that has enumerated the powers of the Parliament and State Legislatures under Lists 1 and 2 have made it clear that the Centre is the sole authority to enact laws under cinematograph films while the State is left with the responsibility of collecting entertainment tax accrued through exhibition of films," said Ramkumar. The Hema Committee report submitted to the Government in 2020 was kept as a State Secret for four years and it was released by the State under orders from High Court in September. The report opened a floodgate of scandals and spicy reports titled Me Too and has put many leading stars on the defensive. Film actor Mukesh, who is also a CPI(M) MLA, Siddique, film actor with Congress connections, Maniyan Pillai Raju, Idavela Babu, Baburaj and Jayasooraya are running helter-skelter as a consequence of the findings of the Hema Committee.

USD 55 million needed to implement WHO strategic preparedness, response plan

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

A whopping USD 55 million will be needed to implement the World Health Organization (WHO) Global Strategic Preparedness, Readiness, and Response Plan (SRPP) over next one year to combat the rising threat of dengue and other Aedes-borne arboviruses, now affecting at least 130 countries.

This plan aims to reduce the burden of disease, suffering, and deaths associated with these viruses, including Zika and chikungunya, by fostering a coordinated global response. Currently, an estimated four billion people are at risk of arbovirus infections, a figure projected to rise to five billion by 2050. Dengue cases have surged across all six WHO regions, with the number of reported cases nearly doubling each year since 2021. As of the end of August this year, there have been over 12.3 million dengue cases—almost double the 6.5 million cases recorded for all of 2023, as per the WHO statement.

The plan outlines priority actions to control transmission and offers recommendations to affected countries across various sectors, including disease surveillance, laboratory activities, vector control, community engagement, clinical management, and research and development, through a whole-of-society and



regional approach. Dengue is endemic in tropical and subtropical regions, particularly in South-East Asia, the Western Pacific, and the Americas. The situation is also critical in Africa, where countries face multiple health challenges amid conflict and natural disasters, straining already fragile health systems. In December 2023, the WHO classified the current global dengue upsurge as a grade 3 emergency—the highest level of alert. Dr Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus, WHO Director-General, stated, "From maintaining clean environments to supporting vector control and seeking timely medical care, everyone has a role to play in the fight against dengue. This plan is a roadmap to turn the tide against this disease, protect vulnerable populations, and pave the way for a healthier future." Welcoming the WHO's GSRP plan, scientist Dr. Kavita Singh, the South Asia

Director at the Drugs for Neglected Diseases Initiative (DNDi), emphasised the profound impact of climate change on disease patterns, particularly for dengue and other vector-borne illnesses. She expressed concern that the incidence of these diseases is rising globally, with new countries increasingly becoming hosts to these pathogens, which were once confined to specific regions. This shift is straining health systems, which are often ill-equipped to handle the surge in cases. Dr. Singh underscored the urgent need for coordinated global efforts to address not only the immediate threats posed by these diseases but also the underlying factors that facilitate their spread, including the escalating effects of climate change. Key factors driving the rapid spread of dengue include unplanned urbanization, inadequate water, sanitation, and hygiene practices, climate change, and increased international travel, said

Lt General Srivastava assumes charge of Srinagar based Chinara Corps



PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ JAMMU

Lieutenant General Prashant Srivastava Saturday assumed command of the strategic Srinagar-based Chinara Corps. Lt Gen Srivastava took charge from Lt Gen Rajiv Ghai, who assumed command as the director general of military operations at the Army headquarters, a defence spokesperson said. On assumption of command, Lt-Gen Srivastava paid obeisance at the Chinara War Memorial at Badami Bagh Cantonment, Srinagar, honoring the sacrifices of the Bravehearts for the Nation. A battle-hardened soldier, Lieutenant General Prashant Srivastava possesses extensive operational experience in Counter Insurgency and Counter terrorist Operations having served in both Jammu and Kashmir as well as the North East. He has commanded

the Counter Insurgency Force (Victor) in South Kashmir.

Meanwhile, Lt Gen Rajiv Ghai remained at the helm for the last 16 months. The period witnessed a strong security architecture facilitating peace and stability in the region. It saw the conduct of two incident-free Amarnath Yatras, the Parliamentary Elections in May 2024 and the Assembly Elections after a period of 10 years, in September to October 2024. The Corps achieved numerous successes in Counter Infiltration Operations on the Line of Control and Counter Terrorists Operations in the valley, thereby dealing a significant and crippling blow to the terror network. The new Chinara Corps commander said that integrated efforts of the civil society and the security forces are the way forward to dismantle the terror infrastructure and nefarious designs of the adversary.

Verbal spat intensifies before UP by-elections

BISWAJEET BANERJEE ■ LUCKNOW

As the by-elections for 10 seats in Uttar Pradesh approach, Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath and former Chief Minister Akhilesh Yadav have intensified their verbal attacks, signaling an escalating political showdown. Phrases like "kutte ki puchh (dog's tail)," "mafia," and "naak ragadna (rubbing nose)" have surfaced in this exchange, marking a sharp rise in political rhetoric between the two leaders.

Yogi Adityanath, known for his aggressive campaigning style, has focused his attacks on the Samajwadi Party (SP) and its governance record. Meanwhile, Akhilesh Yadav, leveraging social media platforms like X (formerly Twitter), has taken calculated yet increasingly sharp jabs at Yogi's leadership. While Yogi



emphasises his Hindutva agenda and criticises the law-and-order situation under SP's rule, Akhilesh portrays the BJP Government as authoritarian, often accusing it of using police power to stifle dissent. Akhilesh Yadav, traditionally more cautious in his attacks, has shifted to a more confrontational approach following SP's success in the 2024 Lok Sabha elections. SP secured 37 out of 80 seats in Uttar Pradesh, a significant

gain, while the BJP's count dropped to 33 from 62. This victory has emboldened Akhilesh, fueling his direct confrontations with Yogi Adityanath. The political landscape in Uttar Pradesh saw a dramatic shift with these results. SP's resurgence, after years of electoral setbacks, has positioned Akhilesh as a formidable challenger for the upcoming 2027 Assembly elections. His aggressive stance reflects the party's

determination to build on this momentum. Analysts predict that the verbal sparring between Yogi and Akhilesh will intensify as the 2027 assembly elections approach. Akhilesh has been rallying support through his PDA formula, aiming to consolidate Backward Classes, Dalits, and minorities into a solid voter base. Meanwhile, the BJP continues to rely on its core issues of Hindutva and nationalism, positioning Yogi as the state's face of this narrative.

This is not the first time the two leaders have clashed. During the 2022 UP assembly elections, their exchanges were rife with one-liners. Yogi had labelled SP's ideology as a combination of "Chola Samajwadi" and "Tamanachawadi" (gun-culture politics), while Akhilesh responded with his trademark

ridiculing Yogi's governance. With the upcoming by-elections being a matter of prestige for Yogi Adityanath, the stakes are high. Following the BJP's loss of ground in the Lok Sabha elections, winning these by-elections is seen as crucial for Yogi's political standing. His aggressive rhetoric mirrors his campaign style during the national elections, where he positioned SP as the main Opposition to the BJP's governance model. On the other hand, Akhilesh Yadav's growing confidence is evident in his strategies to consolidate voter support, particularly as his party eyes a larger contest in 2027. Political analyst Manoj Bhadra notes that this kind of intense, personal verbal exchange is relatively new in UP's political landscape, signaling not just a fight for power but also control over the narrative that will appeal to voters.

Ramachandran, Malayalam radio's icon breathes his last

KEMAR CHELAPPAN ■ KOCHI

M Ramachandran, renowned news anchorperson of All India Radio is no more. He passed away at his house in Thiruvananthapuram on Saturday. Ramachandran (91) was rated as the Melville de Mellow and Surajit Sen of Malayalam radio broadcasting for his diction, articulation, pronunciation and modulation while presenting news bulletins. De Mellow and Surjit Sen were pioneers of Radio broadcasting in the country. During the 1960s to 1990s Ramachandran was the Malayalees' window to the outside world. "Let it be regional, national or international news, Ramachandran had a distinct style of presentation and this made listeners drawn towards his news reading," said former



colleague, broadcaster and literary critic Dr M Rajeev Kumar. Dr Kumar said that his knowledge of Malayalam language and how to use words, sentences and phrases in its correct perspective made him quite different from other radio broadcasters. Ramachandran was the brain behind Kouthuka Varthakal, a bulletin featuring persons, places and events of cultural and historical importance. "His radio news reels based on the day's important events were a treat to the ears and

mind," reminisces Dr Rajeev Kumar.

When there was no round-the-clock TV news channels, Ramachandran and his team of broadcasters offered the listeners a birds eye view of the happenings in the world. "The election news bulletins presented by Ramachandran were held in high esteem by political leaders across the spectrum. His news bulletins were as popular as the Malayalam film songs broadcast by the stations of AIR," said M K Harikumar, Malayalam writer and a long-time fan of Ramachandran. There were many Malayalam films in which Ramachandran's news reading was mimicked by lead stars marking his stature as an iconic figure. Ramachandran is survived by his wife Vijayalakshmi and two children.

UK evacuates British nationals from Lebanon as conflict escalates

PTI ■ LONDON

The UK government on Saturday confirmed its final charter plane to fly British nationals out of Lebanon as the conflict between Hezbollah and Israel intensifies and tensions in the region escalate.



South Korean nationals and their family members arrive after being evacuated from Lebanon with a South Korea's military aircraft at the Seoul airport in Seongnam, South Korea, on Saturday.

"To everybody listening who may be in that position: now is the time to leave, we have got the plans in place. So please come forward and we can make sure that they are evacuated," Starmer once again urged British nationals still in the country to come forward to be evacuated.

security situation deteriorating, there is no guarantee other options to leave quickly will become available. I urge anyone who wants to leave to register now," Lammy said. The UK has been advising its nationals to leave Lebanon amid a deteriorating security situation: three chartered flights have left Beirut and more than 250 additional people have been able to leave the country in the last week.

children under the age of 18 are eligible for Sunday's flight, with dependents who are not British nationals requiring a valid visa. Sunday's flight will depart from Beirut-Rafic Hariri International Airport, and British nationals who have registered their presence with the government will be sent details on how to request a seat.

provide support to British nationals. An FCDO Rapid Deployment Team has also arrived in Lebanon to bolster the support offered by British Embassy officials. The UK reiterated its call for a ceasefire between Lebanon's Hezbollah and Israel to provide the space necessary to find a political solution that enables civilians on both sides to return to their homes in safety amid air strikes and ground incursions as the conflict escalates.

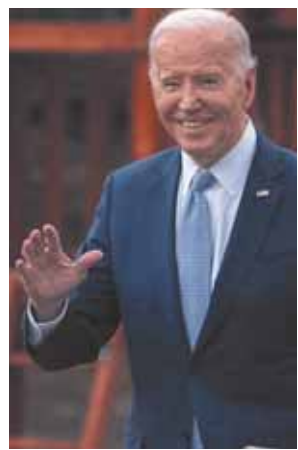
Biden: Don't know if Israel is holding up peace deal to sway US elections

AP ■ WASHINGTON

President Joe Biden had terse words for Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu on Friday, and said he did not know whether the Israeli leader was holding up a Mideast peace deal in order to influence the outcome of the 2024 US presidential election.

"No administration has helped Israel more than I have, none. None, none. And I think Bibi should remember that," he said, referring to the Israeli leader by his nickname. "And whether he is trying to influence the election, I do not know but I am not counting on that." Biden, in a rare appearance in the White House press briefing room, was responding to comments made by one of his allies, Senator Chris Murphy, D-Conn., who told CNN this week that he was concerned Netanyahu had little interest in a peace deal in part because of US politics.

As their views on the Gaza war diverge and their political futures hang in the balance. For Biden, a diplomatic deal would help resolve a deep divide among Democrats over the war and shore up support for Vice President Kamala Harris, making one fewer global conflict for her to manage should she win next month. Netanyahu has his own political concerns closer to home: His far-right coalition would abandon him if he stopped the war, and he could lose power and have to face his own legal problems. And Israel has been decimating Hezbollah's leadership, so there is little incentive to stop now.



Assembly that Israel would "continue degrading Hezbollah until all our objectives are met". Israel has pressed forward on two fronts, killing top Hezbollah leaders and pursuing a ground incursion into Lebanon and conducting strikes in Gaza that killed dozens, including children. And the nation has vowed to retaliate for Iran's ballistic missile attack this week.

decision yet on what type of response there would be toward Iran, though "I think if I were in their shoes, I would be thinking about other alternatives than striking oil fields." He pushed back against the idea that he was seeking a meeting with Netanyahu to discuss the response to Iran. He is not, he said. "I am assuming when they make a decision on how they are going to respond, we will then have a discussion," he said. But Netanyahu has grown increasingly resistant to Biden's public charm offensives and private pleading, prompting the president's more assertive pushback. And Biden has in turn publicly held up delivery of heavy bombs to Israel and increasingly voiced concerns over an all-out war in the Middle East.

European cities brace for pro-Palestinian rallies

AP ■ ROME

Hundreds of thousands of pro-Palestinian demonstrators were expected to take to the streets across Europe on Saturday calling for a cease-fire as the first anniversary of the Hamas attacks on Israel approached. Security forces in several countries warned of heightened levels of alert in major cities, amid concerns that the escalating conflict in the Middle East could inspire new terror attacks in Europe or that some of the protests could turn violent.

Events will peak on Monday, the date of the anniversary. By midday Saturday, thousands had gathered in central London's Russell Square amid a significant police presence. Some of the march's organizers had said they planned to target companies and institutions they claimed were "complicit in Israel's crimes," including Barclays Bank and the British Museum.

taking 250 people hostage and setting off a war with Israel that has shattered much of the Hamas-controlled Gaza Strip. More than 41,000 Palestinians have been killed since then in Gaza, according to the Gaza Health Ministry, which does not differentiate between fighters and civilians. It says more than half were women and children.

Hezbollah, which holds much of the power in parts of southern Lebanon and some other areas of the country, attacking the militants with exploding pagers, airstrikes and, eventually, incursions into Lebanon. Pro-Palestinian protests calling for an immediate cease-fire have repeatedly taken place across Europe and around the globe in the past year and have often turned violent, with confrontations between demonstrators and law enforcement officers.

Army deployed in Islamabad, Lahore amid PTI protests

PTI ■ ISLAMABAD/LAHORE

Pakistan authorities on Saturday called in the Army in Islamabad and Lahore to prevent rallies by supporters of jailed former Prime Minister Imran Khan, amid rising tensions. The call for protest was given by the Pakistan Tehreek-i-Insaf (PTI) party founder who has been incarcerated at Rawalpindi's Adiala Jail for more than a year.

streets in even bigger numbers to stop this carnage and stop Britain being drawn into it," Jamal said. In Berlin, a march is scheduled under the Brandenburg Gate to Bebelplatz on Sunday. Local media reported that security forces have warned of potential overload due to the scale of protests.

The PTI is protesting for the release of Khan, to express solidarity with the judiciary, and against inflation. Pakistan Army troops were deployed in Islamabad to ensure security as PTI supporters moved forward with plans for a protest. The army would remain in the city from October 5-17 to maintain law and order for the upcoming Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO) summit.

have been blocked and pillion riding has been banned, while mobile phone services remained suspended for the second consecutive day. The authorities also imposed Section 144, banning public gatherings, political assemblies, and demonstrations in the twin cities of Rawalpindi and Islamabad to outlaw any political assembly or protest.

Ukraine down Russian warplane

AP ■ KYIV

Ukrainian forces said they shot down a Russian fighter plane on Saturday

while Russia claimed it made gains in Ukraine's east. The Russian bomber was shot down near the city of Kostiantynivka in the

Donetsk province, head of the Kostiantynivka Military Administration Serhiy Horbunov was quoted as saying by Ukraine's

public broadcaster, Suspilne. Photos showed charred remains of an aircraft after it landed on a house that caught fire.

6 Pak soldiers, ultras killed in gunfight

PTI ■ PESHAWAR

Six soldiers, including an off-duty police officer, were killed in a gunfight in Pakistan's restive Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province, the military said on Saturday. In a statement, the military's media wing Inter-Services Public Relations (ISPR) said the exchange of fire took place on the night between October 4-5 at Spinwala area in North Waziristan district, bordering Afghanistan, during which six soldiers, including a Lieutenant Colonel, and "six Khwarij" were killed.

ity for the attack. The TTP was set up as an umbrella group of several militant outfits in 2007. Pakistan has officially declared TTP as 'Firma al-Khawarij' and the notification by the Interior Ministry emphasises the use of the term 'kharaji' (outlawed) along with the names of such terrorists. The Pakistani government has repeatedly accused the TTP of operating from sanctuaries in Afghanistan, a claim denied by the Afghan Taliban.

6 Pak soldiers, ultras killed in gunfight

There has been an uptick in the incidents of terrorism in Pakistan since the Taliban took over the government in Kabul in 2021, dashing hopes in Islamabad that a friendly government in Afghanistan would help to tackle militancy. Relations between the two countries have lately become strained, largely because of the TTP but also due to frequent border skirmishes.

Hundreds of containers have been placed in different parts of the city and also at all entry and exit points. A curfew-like situation is created around Minar-e-Pakistan, which is also closed for any general public entry for an indefinite period. A heavy contingent of police has also been deployed there. The government has also suspended cell phone and internet services in different parts of Lahore.

DISMANTLING AND OTHERS UTILITY SHIFTING. E-Tender Notice No. AP/EL/19/24-25. E-Tenders are invited by the undersigned for the following work. Sl. No. 1. Tender No. AP/EL/19/24-25. Name of work: At Allipurduar Division: Dismantling and other utility shifting at 15 nos. station under 'Amrit Bharat Station Scheme'.

Public Notice. This is to inform the general public that Mr. Shakil Ahmad Tamanna is the CPA holder of Flat No. 302, Front to Back Side, second floor without Roof Right, Property Bearing No. R2-90/B, area measuring 125 Sq. Yds., out of Khanna no. 450, situated at Gulshan Apartments, Gali no. 24, Tughlakabad Extn., Delhi 110019. He is in possession through Notarized CPA, ATS & Will dated 23.01.2007 executed by M/s. Kataria Builders Pvt. Ltd. in favour of Mr. Shakil Ahmad Tamanna in respect of said flat.

SIGNAL & TELECOM WORKS IN KATHIAR DIVISION. Tender Notice No.: N-2024-K-19. Date: 04-10-2024. E-Tender are invited by the undersigned for the following work: Tender No.: N-2024-K-19; Name of Work: Signal and Telecom work for yard remodelling of Forbesganj station in connection with bridge connectivity towards Narpatganj end. Tender Value: ₹1,21,48,153.89/- Earnest Money: ₹2,10,800/-. Date & time of closing of tender at 15:00 hrs. on 28-10-2024.

ICICI Bank PUBLIC NOTICE-TENDER CUM E-AUCTION FOR SALE OF SECURED ASSET. [See proviso to Rule 8(6)] Notice for sale of immovable asset(s). E-Auction Sale Notice for the sale of immovable asset(s) under the Securitisation and Reconstruction of Financial Assets and Enforcement of Security Interest Act, 2002 read with proviso to Rule 8 (6) of the Security Interest (Enforcement) Rules, 2002.

SBI STATE BANK OF INDIA Home Loan Centre, 59 Community Centre, Naraina Industrial Area Phase - 1, Near Payal PVR, New Delhi-110028. POSSESSION NOTICE [For Immovable Property under Rule 8(1)]. Notice is hereby given under the Securitisation and Reconstruction of Financial Assets & Enforcement of Security Interest Act, 2002 and in exercise of powers conferred under Section 13(12) read with Rule 9 of the Security Interest (Enforcement) Rules, 2002.

OFC AND PIJF CABLING ALONG WITH ASSOCIATED WORK. E-Tender Notice No. 06 of 2024-25. E-Tenders are invited by the undersigned for the following works: E-Tender No. N-2024-25-06-Dy. CSTE-NW. Name of work: OFC and PIJF cabling along with associated work at Maligaon Head Quarter area in connection with provision of Server Based IP EPABX system.

INDIA LOOK TO IRON OUT COMBINATION FLAWS, REGAIN FIGHT IN CRUCIAL T20 WC GAME AGAINST PAKISTAN

PTI ■ DUBAI

India will have to regroup quickly and iron out the imbalances in team combination when they face arch-rivals Pakistan in a crucial second group A match of the Women's T20 World Cup here on Sunday.

An early 58-run defeat to New Zealand on Friday has not just dented India's chances of entering the semifinals of the ICC showpiece, but it certainly has pushed them to a tight corner.

India's run-rate currently stands at a poor 2.99 and it makes big victories mandatory for them in the remaining three matches against Pakistan, Sri Lanka and Australia.

The Harmanpreet Kaur-led side was wretched in all three departments of the game against the Kiwis in its World Cup opener, and India now need a reversal within 24 hours.

It's tough but that is the path they have to tread against Pakistan, high on confidence after beating a strong Sri Lanka in the first match on Thursday. As a first step, India will have to sort out their combinations



ahead of the Pakistan game. They went a batter light against New Zealand to accommodate an extra pacer in Arundhati Reddy and it meant a wholesale rejigging of the line-up.

It forced the promotion of Harmanpreet to No. 3,

Jemimah Rodrigues to No. 4 and Richa Ghosh to No.5, not the usual slots for these batters. For instance, Harmanpreet, who is a solid presence at No. 4, has never made a fifty in her previous 19 gigs at No.3 and to make her play precisely at that position in a World Cup was

quixotic. The inclusion of three pacers was not wrong move on the hindsight as there was no dew and the Kiwis pacers made full use of a hard deck. But India made a hash of their three-pronged pace attack move, giving just one over to

Pooja Vastrakar, the third-best bowler in T20Is this year with 20 wickets from 16 matches. Also, the decision to go with the pace trio cost India the presence of left-arm spinner Radha Yadav, their second most successful T20I bowler with 22 wickets from 13 matches.

So, head coach Amol Muzumdar will need to take a long look at the combination as another defeat will seriously hamper India's chances of progressing to the last-four stage from Group A. But stats apart, India, particularly batters, looked mentally frozen against the Kiwis, evidenced by the highest individual score in their innings — a 15 by Harmanpreet. In that context, India might just think of adding Dayalan Hemalatha to bolster the batting. Though India have a head-to-head edge over Pakistan in T20Is, winning 12 out of 15 matches so far, they have the ammunition to stun any opposition. Their bowling is especially formidable with the likes of experienced Nida Dhar,

captain Fatima Sana and Sadia Iqbal leading the pack. However, Pakistan will keep a close eye on the fitness lead pacer Diana Baig after she suffered a calf strain in the match against Sri Lanka, limping out after bowling just one ball.

TEAMS (FROM):

India: Harmanpreet Kaur (c), Smriti Mandhana, Shafali Verma, Deepti Sharma, Jemimah Rodrigues, Richa Ghosh, Yastika Bhatia (subject to fitness), Pooja Vastrakar, Arundhati Reddy, Renuka Singh Thakur, Dayalan Hemalatha, Asha Sobhana, Radha Yadav, Shreyanka Patil (subject to fitness), Sajana Sajeevan

Travelling reserves: Uma Chetry (wk), Tanuja Kanwer, Saima Thakor.

Pakistan: Fatima Sana (c), Aliya Riaz, Diana Baig, Gull Feroza, Iram Javed, Muneeba Ali, Nashra Sundhu, Nida Dar, Omaira Sohail, Sadaf Shamas, Sadia Iqbal (subject to fitness), Sidra Amin, Syeda Aroob Shah, Tasmia Rubab, Tuba Hassan

Travelling reserve: Najiha Alvi (wk).



Luis Suarez criticises Uruguay coach Bielsa for mistreating team at Copa America

AP ■ MONTEVIDEO (URUGUAY)

Just-retired striker Luis Suarez has criticized Uruguay coach Marcelo Bielsa for the way he treated players during the Copa America, saying the "friction" hurts. Uruguay finished third at the Copa in July in the United States but Suarez said all was not well behind the scenes.

"There were situations at the Copa America that hurt me, but I didn't say them for the sake of coexistence," Suarez told the DSports TV channel. "Many players held a meeting to ask the coach to at least say good morning to us, but he didn't even say hello."

The relationship between Bielsa and the players was so bad that some are considering leaving the national squad, Suarez said. He retired his 17-year international career a month ago as Uruguay's all-time leading scorer.

"You can see that players go with the team and are not enjoying themselves," he said. "In their (club) teams they are having fun and smiling, but not with the national team. It hurts to see what is going on." Bielsa, who has coached Argentina and Chile, was hired by Uruguay in May 2023 to the end of the 2026 World Cup. He has Uruguay third in South American qualifying for the World Cup, and is preparing for qualifiers against Peru next Friday and Ecuador four days later.

Suarez asked Uruguay supporters "not to take it out on the players if something goes wrong." "We are arriving to a tough situation and very painful situations. The friction is going to keep happening and the players are going to reach their limit before exploding." Despite the team's success, Suarez said the atmosphere cultivated by Bielsa was not good, even at their training facility.

"At the Celeste Complex, employees are not allowed to come in and greet us and eat with us," he said. "They have to be careful even at the door they have to enter."



Sinner and Alcaraz breeze through Shanghai Masters openers

AP ■ SHANGHAI

Carlos Alcaraz and top-ranked Jannik Sinner showed no signs of fatigue from their China Open final earlier this week to advance with comfortable straight-set victories in their opening matches of the Shanghai Masters on Saturday.

The second-ranked Alcaraz, who beat the Italian in Beijing on Wednesday for his fourth title of the year, recorded his 10th consecutive win with a 6-2, 6-2 result against 19-year-old Shang Juncheng of China. The 21-year-old Spaniard won the first nine points of the match and four of seven break points as he rushed into a third-round meeting with another Chinese player, Wu Yibing.

"I'm not used to playing against players younger than me," Alcaraz said. "He has been playing good tennis lately, lifting his first ATP (title in Chengdu), so I'm pretty sure he's going to climb the rankings. I'm just happy to be able to win these kinds of matches."

Sinner, who is dealing with an ongoing doping case, had a comfortable 6-1, 6-4 outing against Taro Daniel of Japan for his 250th career win.

The Italian, who won the U.S. Open last month for his second major of the year, fired 12 aces and 38 winners. "I felt quite comfortable today," said the 23-year-old Spaniard, who next plays Tomas Martin Etcheverry of Argentina. "I feel in good shape also physically, which is very important for me. Of course I will try to improve for tomorrow's performance, but today I was serving really, really well, especially in important moments, and was moving well."

No. 65-ranked Jakub Mensik of the Czech Republic broke sixth-ranked Andrey Rublev seven times on his way to an upset 6-7 (7), 6-4, 6-3 victory. Yosuke Watanuki also had a surprise win, beating No. 35-ranked Brendan Nakashima 7-6 (4), 6-3. The Japanese qualifier plays either seventh-ranked Taylor Fritz of the U.S. Or French qualifier Terence Atmane next. Also, 24th-ranked Alexei Popyrin of Australia beat Miomir Kecmanovic of Serbia 6-3, 6-2. Later Saturday, third-ranked Alexander Zverev began his campaign against Italian qualifier Mattia Bellucci, while fourth-ranked Novak Djokovic faced Alex Michelsen of the United States.

Divanshi's second gold leads India's clean sweep at ISSF Junior Worlds

PTI ■ LIMA (PERU)

Indian pistol shooter Divanshi secured her second individual gold in the women's 25m standard pistol event, leading a remarkable clean sweep in the event at the ISSF Junior World Championship here.

India's young shooters added five more medals to their kitty, including two gold on Friday taking the tally to 21 medals to remain at the top of the standings — 13 gold, two silver and six bronze. Norway remained a distant second with 10 medals — four gold, three silver and three bronze — while China occupied third place (3-1-0). Divanshi dominated the event with a score of 564 out of 600, finishing ahead of teammate Parisha Gupta, who shot 559 for silver. Manvi Jain completed the Indian sweep with a bronze-winning score of 557,



marking India's first-ever clean sweep in this competition. Shikha Chaudhary narrowly missed a podium finish, placing fourth with a score of 554, just one point ahead of Estonia's Marja Kirss. In the corresponding junior men's event,

Suraj Sharma claimed gold with a score of 571, edging out Poland's Ivan Rakitski, who shot 568 for silver. Mukesh Nelavalli, who already has four gold medals in the championship, shot 568 but settled for bronze after a countback. Other notable performances included Harsimar Singh Rathia (565), Raajvardan Singh Patil (562), and Pradyumn Singh (562), who finished seventh, eighth, and ninth respectively in the junior men's event. In the junior women's 50m rifle prone event, Melvina Joel Gladson was the best Indian finisher, placing 14th with a score of 617.5. Prachi Gaikwad (616.7), Khushi (615.1), Aadhya Agrawal (614.2), and Anoushka Thokur (611.9) finished 19th, 26th, 27th, and 35th, respectively. In the team competition, Melvina, Prachi, and Anoushka's combined score of 1846.1 secured a sixth-place finish for India in the prone event.

India bag U18 team silver in women's section at Asian Youth Archery

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Promising archer Vaishnavi Pawar showed impressive presence of mind to help India clinch team silver in the recurve U-18 women's category at the 2024 Asian Youth Archery Championship in Chinese Taipei.

Vaishnavi took the first shot for the three-member Indian team, also comprising Pranjal Tholiya and Jannat, in every round and handled the pressure well as they pipped fancied South Korea in the semifinal in a shoot-off. In the gold medal round, India found themselves in a



similar situation, fighting back from a 2-4 deficit to force a shoot-off against Chinese Taipei, who

ultimately prevailed. "I am incredibly proud to represent India alongside my teammates. Beating South Korea in the semifinals was a significant milestone for us," Vaishnavi said. "Winning silver at the Asian Youth Archery Championship is a testament to our hard work and dedication, and it inspires me to aim even higher in the future."

The Maharashtra archer finished fourth in the trials to make it to the Asian Youth Archery Championships, also she had also reached the quarterfinals in the individual category.

Indian hockey captain Harmanpreet credits HIL for personal growth

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

National men's hockey team captain and ace drag-flicker Harmanpreet Singh, who has scored 205 goals in 234 international appearances, on Saturday credited the Hockey India League (HIL) for playing a pivotal role in his career development.

From being named the Upcoming Player of the Tournament in the 2017 HIL to becoming one of the world's top drag-flickers, it has been a tremendous journey for Harmanpreet who highlighted how the league has helped him grow after rubbing shoulders with some of the best international players.

"Hockey India League was a huge part of my development. The league provided me with a stage to enhance my skills by exposing me to different playing styles under different coaches," Harmanpreet said in a Hockey India (HI) release. "Playing in a League, sharing a dressing room with players from various countries opens



up your mind and provides you with multiple perspectives and ways of thinking. "All this was integral in the resurgence of Indian hockey and it certainly impacted our performance at the Tokyo Olympics where we won the bronze medal." Harmanpreet said there could be nothing better for Indian hockey than the HIL and all the country's players would be excited to take part in the League. "It will be a great opportunity

for the youngsters as well to rub shoulders with the best players from across the globe, observe the subtle differences in the way they think, the way they play and try to inculcate the good habits that they notice," he said. HIL is slated for a return after seven years in a new avatar that will see a women's tournament for the first time running concurrently with the men's event. The league will be played in two venues — Rourkela for

men and Ranchi for women — from December 28 to February 1. The sport's world governing body, FIH has given sanction of 10 years for HIL. The tournament will feature eight men's and six women's franchises. The player auction for the HIL 2024-25 will be held from October 13-15 in New Delhi. Each franchise will build a 24-player squad, consisting of at least 16 Indian players (with a mandatory inclusion of four junior players) and eight international stars. "The Hockey India League will be much bigger this time; there will also be a women's League that will run at the same time in both venues. "I am confident this experience will turn out to be invaluable for the Indian women's hockey team in their journey to be one of the best teams in the world," he said. Players will be auctioned in three categories with base prices of Rs 2 lakh, 5 lakh and 10 lakh each. "The auction is coming up soon and I would like to wish

all the best to all the players taking part. As for myself, I cannot wait to see which team I will represent and begin the hockey revolution again," he signed off.

AFFIDAVIT

By virtue of an affidavit made before Executive Magistrate, Parjang I, Rojalin Nath, aged about 18 years, D/o Kailash Nath (F), Jyotsnarani Nath (M) At/Po-Kankadasoda, Ps- Parjang, Dist-Dhenkanal, declare that in my adhaar and 10th Board Certificate my name is mentioned as Rosalini Nath. Hence Rojalin Nath and Rosalini Nath D/o Kailash Nath and Jyotsnarani Nath is one and same person for all purposes.

OFFICE OF THE SUPERINTENDING ENGINEER
UPPER KOLAB HEAD WORKS DIVISION
KOLABNAGAR, DIST.-KORAPUT, PIN-764011
e-mail Id-seukhwddivision@gmail.com

No.4144 Dated 03.10.2024

1st corrigendum to e-Procurement Notice No. SE-UKHWD-04-2024-25 dated 30.09.2024

a) The information provided in the NIT regarding class of contractor for the work "Reconstruction of Head Regulator structure of Anta distributary including downstream protection works" is to be read as Registered & licensed Contractors of CLASS C & B instead of Registered & licensed Contractors of CLASS D & C.

b) Revised date & time of availability of bid documents online: 05.10.2024 at 15.00 Hours to 17.10.2024 up to 17.30 Hours.

c) Period of online bidding is extended further up to 17.10.2024.

d) Date of opening of the bids on-line is rescheduled further as 18.10.2024 at 10.30 AM.

All other terms & conditions of the notice shall remain unaltered.

Superintending Engineer
U.K.H.W. Division, Kolabnagar

OIPR-32015/110010/2425

GOVERNMENT OF ODISHA
OFFICE OF THE SUPERINTENDING ENGINEER,
JHARSUGUDA (R&B) DIVISION, JHARSUGUDA
e-mail id: esrmedia2014@gmail.com Telephone: 06645-27242, Kallandhar Road, Jharsuguda, 768022

"e-Procurement Notice"
Bid Identification No-SE-R&B-JSG- 07 OF 2024-25.

1.	The Executive Engineer, Jharsuguda (R&B) Division on behalf of Governor of Odisha inviting percentage rate bid in Single cover system on ON-LINE mode from eligible contractors for Construction of Civil & Electrical Work as detailed in DTCN .
2.	Nature of Work :- Electrical works
3.	Estimated cost :- Rs. 9.09 Lakhs, to Rs. 18.00 Lakhs
4.	No. of work. :- 02 (Two) Nos
5.	Tender Cost :- Rs. 6000/- & Rs.4000.00 (as per DTCN)
6.	Class of Contractor :- SI No-1- Specialized Agency (Joint venture with MV/HT contractor SI No-2 -Electrical "HT"
7.	Availability of bid document in the website :- 10.00 A.M. of 07.10.2024 to 05.00 P.M. of 17.10.2024 (Cover-1)
8.	Date of opening of Technical Bid :- 11.00 AM on Dt. 18.10.2024
9.	The bidders have to participate in ON-LINE bidding only. Further details can be seen from the website https://tendersodisha.gov.in . Any addendum /corrigendum / cancellation of tender can also be seen in the said website .

Executive Engineer
Jharsuguda (R&B) Division

OIPR-34094/11/0008/2425

PANCHAYAT SAMITI OFFICE: PUINTALA
I-220 E-mail ID: oi-puintala@nic.in
No: Date: 03-10-2024

The Block Development Officer, Puintala on behalf of Governor of Odisha invites percentage rate bids in Single cover system to be received in online mode only for the construction works as detailed in the table below.

Sl. No.	Name of the work	Approximate Estimated Cost (in Rs.)	Cost of document (Rs)	Class of Contractor	Period of Completion	Name & Address of B.O./T
1	Construction of Additional Class Room at Duragapali UGHS	13,14,877	6000	C & D	Three Months	B.D.O., Puintala
2	Construction of Additional Class Room at Lakhapali Govt. PS	12,53,634	6000	C & D	Three Months	B.D.O., Puintala
3	Construction of Additional Class Room at Amhimunda Govt.PS	12,53,634	6000	C & D	Three Months	B.D.O., Puintala
4	Construction of Additional Class Room at Brahmanigali Govt.PS	12,53,634	6000	C & D	Three Months	B.D.O., Puintala
5	Construction of Additional Class Room at Banabahal NUPS	9,90,691	4000	C & D	Three Months	B.D.O., Puintala
6	Construction of Additional Class Room at Belbahali Govt. PS, Chhatamakha GP	9,90,691	4000	C & D	Three Months	B.D.O., Puintala
7	Construction of Additional Class Room at Bihibandh Govt. P.S.	9,90,691	4000	C & D	Three Months	B.D.O., Puintala
8	Construction of Additional Class Room at Gadaramunda Govt. PS	9,90,691	4000	C & D	Three Months	B.D.O., Puintala
9	Construction of Additional Class Room at Niljipali Govt. P.S.	9,90,691	4000	C & D	Three Months	B.D.O., Puintala
10	Construction of Additional Class Room at Padiabahal Govt.NUPS	9,90,691	4000	C & D	Three Months	B.D.O., Puintala
11	Construction of Additional Class Room at Talpali Govt. UPS	9,90,691	4000	C & D	Three Months	B.D.O., Puintala
12	Construction of Additional Class Room at Talpali Govt. UPS	9,90,691	4000	C & D	Three Months	B.D.O., Puintala

Date & Time of Sale & Receipt of Bids : Dt.05.10.2024, 3.00 PM to 23.10.2024, 6.30 PM
Date of Opening Bids : Dt.24.10.2024, 11.30 PM
Further details can be seen from the website : <http://tenderodisha.gov.in>

OIPR-19160/11/0004/2425 Block Development Officer, Puintala



GET READY TO SLAY

THE COLLECTION THAT REDEFINES STYLE!

The Orry x Flying Machine capsule collaboration offers a bold collection that celebrates youth, creativity and self-expression in every piece, says SAKSHI PRIYA

In an exciting development within the fashion industry, *Flying Machine* has teamed up with the sensational social media star *Orry* to launch a limited-edition capsule collection that promises to turn heads and make waves among the youth. *Orry*, a digital influencer renowned for his vibrant style and engaging content, has garnered a massive following on platforms like Instagram. His unique blend of charisma and fashion savvy resonates with Gen-Z consumers, making him an ideal partner for a brand like *Flying Machine*, which is celebrated for its edgy denim and youthful vibe.

Flying Machine, the pioneering homegrown denim brand in India, has evolved significantly since its inception in 1980. Known for its trendy and spontaneous designs, the brand has made a concerted effort to revamp its image and align itself with the tastes of the modern consumer. With a renewed focus on Gen-Z, this collaboration with *Orry* is a strategic move to tap into the vibrant energy of young fashion enthusiasts.

The *Orry x Flying Machine* collection embodies a perfect blend of funky colours and oversized silhouettes, catering to individuals who dare to stand out. Featuring a range of unisex items such as T-shirts, shirts, vests, caps, bucket hats, jorts, parachute pants and classic jeans, the collection captures the essence of contemporary street style. *Orry's* distinct aesthetic shines through each piece, encouraging wearers to express their individuality through bold fashion choices.

A standout feature of this collaboration is *Orry's* hands-on involvement in the design process. His creative input ensures that the collection reflects his signature style, with playful slogans like "L&R H&R" and "Can I live" adding a fun twist. This level of engagement not only enhances the authenticity of the collection but also resonates with consumers looking for genuine connections with brands. The vibrant designs and oversized fits are more than just fashion statements; they are an invitation for young people to embrace

their identities and showcase their unique personalities. *Shailesh Chaturvedi*, Managing Director and CEO of Arvind Fashions, expressed his excitement about the collaboration, highlighting the shared appreciation for Korean and Japanese fashion aesthetics. This partnership reflects a broader trend within the fashion industry, where global influences meet local sensibilities, creating a dynamic fusion that appeals to the youth. With oversized pieces and an androgynous flair, the collection exemplifies a modern approach to dressing that celebrates diversity and self-expression.



Photo: Pankaj Kumar

The *Orry x Flying Machine* collection will be available at select *Flying Machine* stores throughout India, as well as on popular online platforms like *Myntra* and *NNNOW*. This accessibility ensures that young fashion lovers can easily engage with the collection and incorporate these statement pieces into their wardrobes.

The *Orry x Flying Machine* collaboration signifies a bold new direction in youth fashion. By merging *Orry's* vibrant style with *Flying Machine's* denim legacy, this collection captures the essence of modern youth culture, inviting individuals to express their identities through fashion. With its funky colours, oversized designs and engaging slogans, the collection is not just about clothing, it represents a movement towards embracing individuality and creativity in everyday style. As excitement builds around this launch, both *Orry* and *Flying Machine* are poised to make a significant impact on the fashion landscape, paving the way for a new era that celebrates the dynamic spirit of today's youth.

NEW OFFERINGS



CELEBRATE NAVRATRI WITH A SPECIAL THALI

This Navratri, elevates your festive dining experience at *Seasonal Tastes in The Westin Gurgaon*, with a specially curated Navratri Bhog Thali. Enjoy a harmonious blend of authentic flavours, including *Sabudana Vada*, *Khata Mitha Kaddu* and *Sabudana Kheer*. Perfect for both festival observers and food enthusiasts, this thali offers a delightful journey through the essence of Navratri. Experience a soul-satisfying meal that celebrates the spirit of the season.

DETAILS

Dates: October 3 - 12, 2024
Location: The Westin Gurgaon
Price: INR 1,499 plus taxes
Availability: A-la-carte menu for lunch and dinner

CELEBRATE SAKETOB

Join this October for a month-long sake celebration at *Guppy!* Indulge in specially curated sake cocktails, tasting flights and enjoy a Buy 1, Get 1 free offer on sake. Delight in options like the Sake Highball and Sake Bombs and join for Sake Sing-along karaoke nights and live music every Wednesday, Thursday and Sunday.

DETAILS

Location: 28, Main Market, Lodhi Colony, New Delhi
Timings:
Lunch: 12 PM - 4 PM
Dinner: 6 PM - 12 AM
Price for Two: INR 3700 approx. (including cocktails)
Reservations: 011 24690005/6, +91 965018500



CULINARY FUSION EXPERIENCE

Indian Accent celebrates 15 years with an exclusive culinary collaboration with Nadodi. Chefs *Shantanu Mehrotra* and *Yashin Sirwardhana* will create a 9-course menu blending inventive Indian flavours with South Indian and Sri Lankan influences. Expect an unforgettable dining experience showcasing the best of both culinary worlds.

DETAILS

Date & Time: 9th October 2024, 7 pm onwards.
Location: Indian Accent, New Delhi.
Price: INR 7,900++ per person; Additional INR 5,500++ for wine pairing.
Reservations: +91 1166175151; 9871117968.



Disclaimer: The Pioneer does not endorse or promote the consumption of alcoholic beverages.

TAAZA KHABAR

A CONTINUED TALE OF GREED AND REDEMPTION

With a strong cast and engaging storyline, the new season of 'Taaza Khabar' is a must-watch, says ABHI SINGHAL

Maintaining high standards in the second season is a challenge but *'Taaza Khabar'* continues to shine with its new season. This web series emphasises how greed can destroy lives, especially in today's fast-paced world. Directed by *Himank Gaur*, the new season retains the stellar cast from Season 1, including *Bhuvan Bam* as *Vasant Gawde*, *Shriya Pilgaonkar* as *Madhu*, *Deven Bhojani* as *Mehboob*, and *Prathamesh Parab* as *Raja Chaturvedi*. A notable addition this season is *Javed Jaffrey*, who plays the character of *Yusuf Akhtar*.

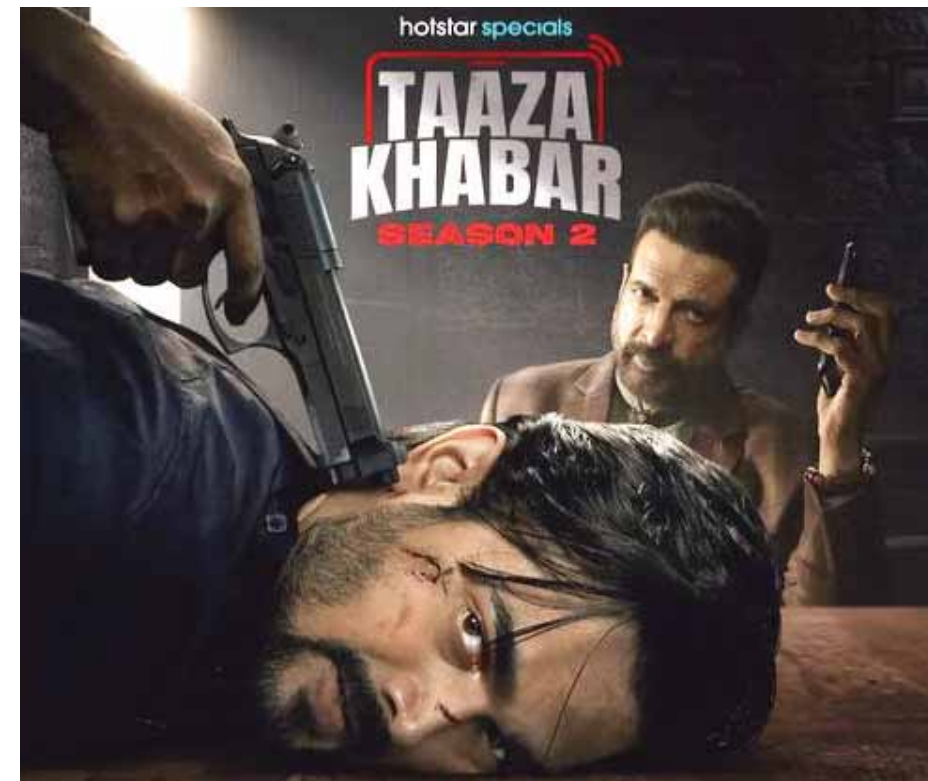
Released on *Disney Plus Hotstar*, the series offers a beautifully crafted storyline, continuing to revolve around *Vasant Gawde (Bhuvan Bam)* and his boon, *'Taaza Khabar'*. The first three episodes are gripping, portraying *Vasant's* efforts to free himself from the crushing debt on his shoulders. Although the series is primarily a comedy and thriller, it connects on a deeper, emotional level by exploring themes of right and wrong. The mix of genres adds depth, keeping the audience invested throughout.

In the world of filmmaking, both a strong script and excellent acting can make or break a series, and *'Taaza Khabar'* excels in both the departments. The characters truly outdo themselves this season. *Bhuvan Bam* shines as *Vasant*, improving even further from the first season with his impeccable comedic timing and reactions.

Javed Jaffrey, known for his comedic roles, plays the antagonist this time. His portrayal of a villain driven by malevolence, political power, and money brings intensity to the show. *Shilpa Shukla's* character *Aapa* perfectly complements *Jaffrey's* dark, twisted role. The addition of *Jaffrey's* character brings much-needed energy to the new six-episode arc.

Shriya Pilgaonkar (Madhu), *Vasant's* love interest, has fewer scenes this season, but her presence is felt at key moments. *Prathamesh Parab's* portrayal of *Raja*, *Vasant's* loyal friend, is heartwarming and crucial to the emotional core of the show.

The witty dialogues, penned by *Abbas Dalal* and *Hussain Dalal*, add layers to the characters and elevate the humour in the series. The use of foul language, reflective of the protagonist's world,



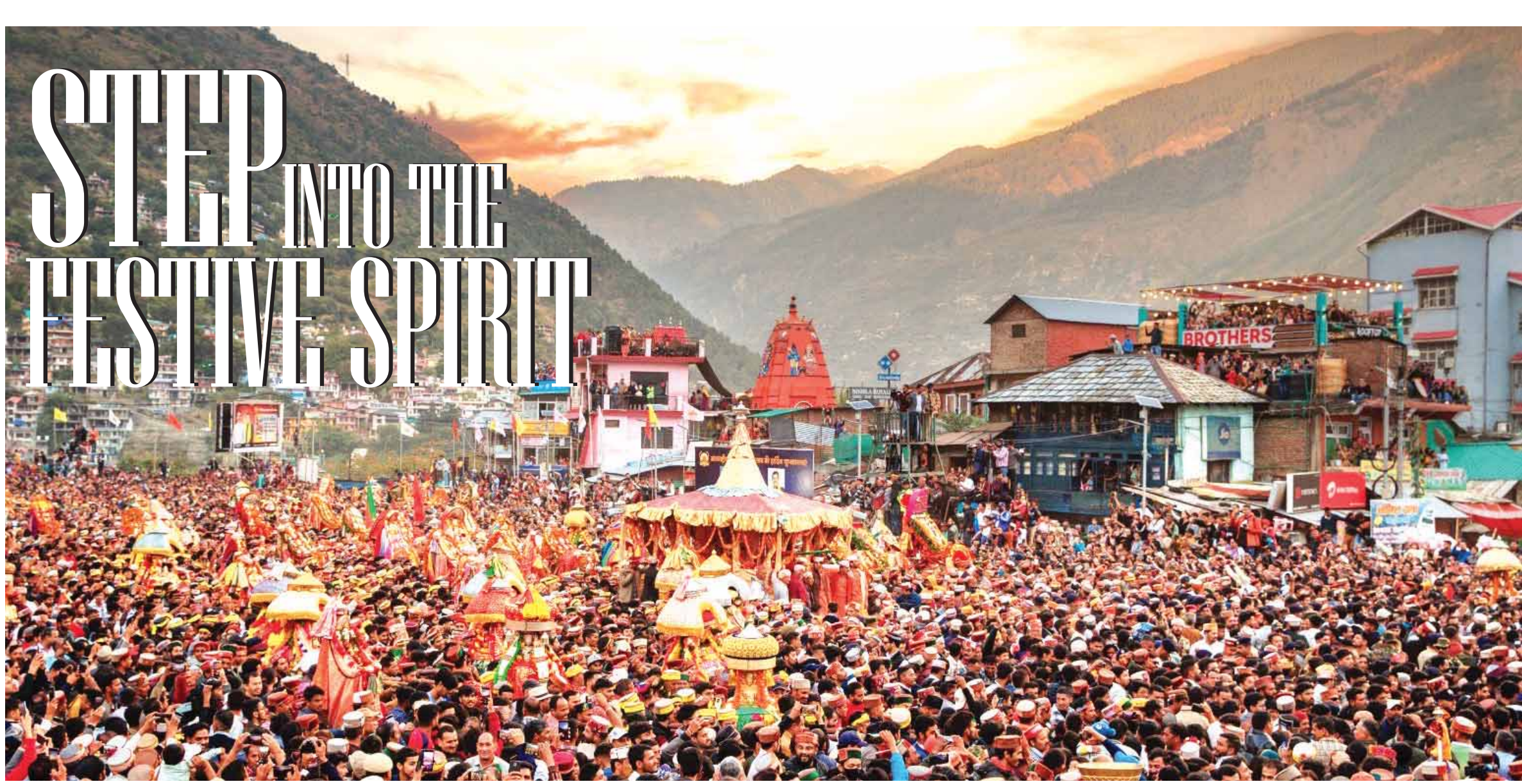
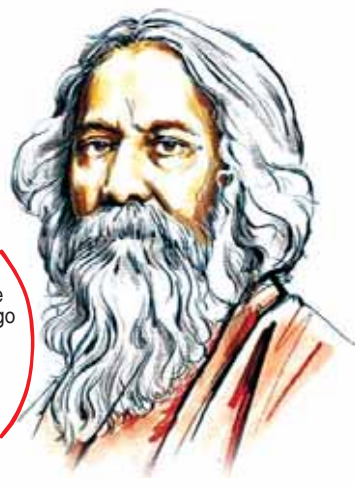
adds authenticity to the setting. However, the flashbacks intended to give depth to the characters feel dull and add very little to the overall plot. These moments do not significantly enhance our understanding of *Vasant's* mental processes or the reasons behind his choices. Despite this, the overarching narrative is a reality check for the modern world, showing the rise and fall of *Vasant*, whose boon quickly turns into a curse, alienating him from his loved ones, including *Madhu* and his parents. The music in *'Taaza Khabar'* perfectly

complements the scenes, with songs like *'Kaan Hai'* by *Faridkot*, *'Rajarshi Sanyal'*, and *'IP Singh'*, and *'Hoke Majboor'* by *Mohan Kannan*, *Akshay*, and *IP Singh*, adding emotional depth. The *Baba* theme and *Kathak* theme further enhance the storytelling, giving the audience a rich auditory experience.

Overall, *'Taaza Khabar'* is a must-watch. Its engaging scenes and witty dialogues keep viewers on the edge of their seats, eager to see what happens next. While the show hints at a potential third season, an official confirmation would only add to the growing excitement among its fanbase.

'Rating: 4/5'

"Now, I ask, has the time
come at last when I may go
in and see thy face and
offer thee my silent
salutation?"
— Rabindranath Tagore



STEP INTO THE FESTIVE SPIRIT

Kullu Dussehra is a vibrant festival in Himachal Pradesh that brings the Kullu valley to life with colourful processions, traditional music, and cultural performances. Celebrated in honour of Lord Raghunath Ji, this annual event attracts visitors from all over, creating a sense of community and joy, writes **SAKSHI PRIYA**



Kullu Dussehra, celebrated in the picturesque valley of Kullu in Himachal Pradesh, is a vibrant week-long festival that goes beyond just religious observance. It brings together centuries-old traditions, the unity of hundreds of local deities and the incredible artistic expression of the region. *Kullu Dussehra* has a distinctive flavour, embracing the valley's culture, history and devotion. This year, the International *Kullu Dussehra* Festival is set to take place from 13th to 19th October 2024, offering visitors a chance to immerse themselves in the vibrant festivities while also appreciating the breathtaking scenic beauty and natural wonders of this enchanting region.

The origins of *Kullu Dussehra* date back to the 17th century when *Raja Jagat Singh*, a ruler of Kullu, brought the idol of Lord Raghunath Ji to the valley. From then on, Lord Raghunath Ji became the central deity of the festival and *Kullu Dussehra* has been celebrated in His honour ever since. What sets this festival apart is its spirit of inclusion, with over 300 local deities from surrounding villages joining the celebrations. These deities, carried on beautifully decorated palanquins, are accompanied by their devotees, musicians and dancers, creating a lively and spiritual atmosphere as they converge at Dhalpur Maidan in Kullu. The festival begins on 13th October with the grand Rath Yatra, a procession where Lord Raghunath Ji is placed in a chariot and pulled through the streets by devotees. This procession marks the beginning of a week filled with devotion, music and dance. The streets come alive with the sounds of traditional instruments, the colourful sight of waving flags and the energy of people who have come from far and wide to participate in this sacred event. The Rath Yatra is not just a religious act; it's a celebration of the unity and shared faith that binds the people of Kullu together.

Kullu Dussehra is not only a spiritual gathering but also a cultural festival that showcases the rich artistic heritage of the region. Every evening, the open-air auditorium at Lal Chand Prarthi Kalakendra becomes a stage for performances by local, national and international artists. From traditional Himachali folk dances like the Nati to contemporary performances, the festival offers a diverse range of cultural experiences. This year, approximately 15 international cultural troupes will participate, bringing their unique traditions and performances to Kullu. These performances reflect the universal language of art, reminding everyone of the shared human connection through culture.

On 14th October, the Cultural Parade takes place, showcasing a vibrant display of traditional attire, music and dance from across India and the world. This parade highlights the rich diversity of cultures, where each troupe brings its own distinct flavour to the celebrations.

"Kullu Dussehra beautifully showcases our cultural richness and serves as a reminder of the bonds that unite us as a community." - Sushil Kumar Singla, Principal Resident Commissioner of Himachal Pradesh Sadan, New Delhi



Sunder Singh Thakur CPS and Sushil Kumar Singla, Principal Resident Commissioner Government of Himachal Pradesh, New Delhi

The sight of dancers in traditional costumes, performing to the rhythmic beats of their native instruments, creates a colourful experience that celebrates unity in diversity. The Cultural Parade embodies *Kullu Dussehra's* inclusive spirit, welcoming different cultures to come together in celebration. A highlight of *Kullu Dussehra* is the performance of Lalhri, a traditional dance native to the Kullu Valley. Passed down through generations, Lalhri is not just a dance but a form of storytelling, where each graceful movement and musical note carries the history of the region. Watching the dancers perform in their traditional attire is like stepping back in time, where the cultural legacy of Kullu comes alive through the art of movement and music. This performance encapsulates the very essence of the festival, where tradition and heritage are celebrated and preserved.

The spiritual climax of *Kullu Dussehra* takes place on 19th October with the symbolic Lanka Dahan, marking the return of nearly 300 deities, or devidevatas, to their homes. This significant day begins as the Raja approaches Lord Raghunath Ji, causing all music and dance to pause. After the Raja circumambulates the chariot, the procession moves towards Lanka by the river Beas. Here, bushes and grass are set ablaze, symbolising the burning of Lanka. The flames create a captivating spectacle, while the Lanka Dahan ceremony reinforces values of justice, morality, and goodness, highlighting the festival's importance in uniting the community.

The penultimate day features the

Muhalla ceremony, an event filled with joy, music and festivity. Villagers from across Kullu gather at Dhalpur Maidan, setting aside their daily lives to participate in this lively celebration. The deities, surrounded by flags and accompanied by traditional music, pay their respects to Lord Raghunath Ji. The Muhalla is a vibrant reflection of the community spirit that defines *Kullu Dussehra*, where unity and togetherness are celebrated in a colourful display of devotion.

Historically, *Kullu Dussehra* has also been a major commercial event. It once served as a trading hub where villagers would sell their crops, handicrafts and other goods. Traders from regions like Lahaul and Ladakh would bring products such as pashmina shawls, carpets and local herbs, creating a bustling marketplace. Today, this tradition continues with the Artisan Showcase, where award-winning artisans display their crafts, from textiles to woodwork. Visitors can purchase these handmade items, taking home a piece of Kullu's rich artistic heritage and supporting the local economy.

For those who enjoy food, *Kullu Dussehra* is a culinary journey that showcases the flavours of Himachal Pradesh. The food courts at the festival serve traditional dishes such as siddu (a type of steamed bread) and madra (a rich chickpea curry), offering a taste of the region's culinary traditions. Alongside these local delicacies,

international cuisine is also available, ensuring that visitors can enjoy a wide variety of food during the festival. The culinary experience is an integral part of *Kullu Dussehra*, reflecting the valley's agricultural richness and its connection to the land.

This year's *Kullu Dussehra* will also feature the Ambassador's Meet on 18th October, presided over by *Shri Sukhvinder Singh*, the Hon'ble Chief Minister of Himachal Pradesh. The event will bring together resident ambassadors from various countries, promoting cultural exchange and enriching trade ties. The Ambassador's Meet reflects *Kullu Dussehra's* growing global recognition, where tradition meets modernity on an international stage. This blend of cultural celebration and diplomatic engagement adds a new dimension to the festival, highlighting its significance beyond the local community.

Beyond its vibrant cultural performances and religious rituals, *Kullu Dussehra* offers a diverse range of entertainment options for visitors of all ages. Families can enjoy amusement rides like toy trains and swings, while sports enthusiasts can engage in competitions such as

volleyball, kabaddi and tug-of-war. The open-air performances continue late into the night, ensuring that the festivities are alive with music, dance and laughter. As the festival progresses, visitors will also have the opportunity to explore the natural beauty of the Kullu Valley, which offers breathtaking views of snow-capped peaks, lush green valleys, and flowing rivers. Many visitors choose to explore nearby attractions such as the Great Himalayan National Park, Bijli Mahadev Temple, and the historic Hadimba Devi Temple in Manali, combining the spiritual experience of *Kullu Dussehra* with the serene beauty of Himachal Pradesh's natural landscape.

As Kullu prepares to host this grand celebration, it's essential to reflect on the significance of festivals like *Kullu Dussehra* in preserving and promoting cultural heritage. The festival not only showcases the artistic traditions of Himachal Pradesh but also serves as a reminder of the unity and community spirit that festivals inspire. It brings together people from different walks of life, whether they are locals, tourists or international dignitaries, all coming together to celebrate the rich cultural legacy of the region.

Kullu Dussehra is a festival that everyone should experience at least once in their lifetime. It's not just a celebration; it's a living tradition that continues to evolve while staying deeply rooted in the values of the community. The festival's grandeur, coupled with the warm hospitality of the people of Kullu, makes it a truly unique experience. As the date approaches, excitement is building, and the town of Kullu is gearing up to welcome visitors from all over the world. It's a time of joy, devotion and celebration, an event that leaves a lasting impression on all who attend.

The International *Kullu Dussehra Festival 2024* is set to be a spectacular event that will showcase the best of Himachal's culture, art and traditions. *Kullu Dussehra 2024* promises to be a celebration unlike any other. From the grand Rath Yatra to the vibrant cultural performances, from the symbolic Lanka Dahan to the bustling artisan markets, the festival offers a diverse range of experiences for all who attend. Whether visitors are drawn by the spiritual devotion, the artistic performances or the natural beauty of the valley, *Kullu Dussehra* is a festival that speaks to the heart, offering a unique glimpse into the soul of Himachal Pradesh. As the festival approaches, everyone is encouraged to mark their calendars and experience this remarkable celebration from 13th to 19th October 2024. It's a perfect opportunity to enjoy the magic of Kullu Valley, where tradition, culture and community come together in a festival of life, love and joy!



THE ORIGINS OF KULLU DUSSEHRA DATE BACK TO THE 17TH CENTURY WHEN RAJA JAGAT SINGH, A RULER OF KULLU, BROUGHT THE IDOL OF LORD RAGHUNATH JI TO THE VALLEY. FROM THEN ON, LORD RAGHUNATH JI BECAME THE CENTRAL DEITY OF THE FESTIVAL AND KULLU DUSSEHRA HAS BEEN CELEBRATED IN HIS HONOUR EVER SINCE

A TASTE OF THE NEW

EXCITING RESTAURANTS SHAPING NCR'S FOOD SCENE



The food scene in the NCR is heating up, with a host of new eateries making their mark, each worth a visit. This month, I sampled a few, and here are my impressions.

LITCHI BISTRO

Nestled in the culinary hub of Malviya Nagar, *Litchi Bistro* offers a creative world cuisine menu alongside freshly brewed coffee from their in-house roastery. The spacious open patio outshines the indoor seating, creating a vibrant atmosphere. Two dishes I highly recommend are the *Spicy Tuna Taco*, served on a crisp Nori sheet with a kick from sriracha mayo and *the Korean Bacon*, a miso-marinated pork belly. The latter is so exceptional that I would return just for this dish.

AVARTANA AT ITC MAURYA

This is easily the most intriguing restaurant I've explored this year. *Avartana* offers set-course menus ranging from 7 to 13 courses, priced from Rs. 2,950 upwards per person. The cuisine is a contemporary interpretation of South Indian ingredients, far from the traditional dishes we usually associate with the region. I'll be doing a detailed review soon, as it's hard to choose favourites when each dish is stellar. It's no surprise that *Avartana* ranks 44th among Asia's 50 best.

689, GURGAON

Six Eighty Nine at Two Horizon brings Quorum Club's finesse into the public domain. This Asian restaurant draws inspiration from Japanese cuisine, with a clever twist of Japanese ingredients across its offerings. A standout dish is the *Flame-Kissed Avocado* from the *Robotayaki* section. The buttery avocado, glazed with soy-mirin, perfectly balances saltiness and sharpness, with a



zing from shichimi lime. Ideal for those who enjoy Asian flavours and refined cocktails without the distraction of loud music.

TEPPANYAKI AT EEST, WESTIN GURGAON

Gurgaon finally has a live *Teppanyaki* counter. What was once

Eest's *Omakase* section has been revamped to accommodate a *Teppanyaki* grill. The sauces are fresh, the ingredients top-notch and Chef Jatin engages with diners to craft dishes tailored to their preferences. The food here is as delicious as it is healthy, ensuring my return visit soon.

ROOM XO, AIPL JOY CENTRAL, GURGAON

The new party hub, *Room XO*, features one of the largest bars in the city, offering high-energy music, creative cocktails, massive screens and a performance bar. The food, curated by celebrity chef *Sabyasachi Gorai*, complements the lively atmosphere. With the same founders as *Studio XO*, this spot is set to be the next big thing in Gurgaon's nightlife.

THANKS AND BEYOND, NEHRU PLACE, DELHI

Veteran nightlife impresario *Priyank Sukhija's* latest venture at *Epicuria Mall* offers three distinct zones. 'Thanks' is a casual dining space, 'And' is the outdoor area, and

'Beyond' is a high-energy bar. For a great time, I recommend the Tequila-based *Picante*, *the Sheesha*, and *the Tuna on Toast*.

PIRATES OF GRILL GRANDE, CYBERHUB, GURGAON

Buffets just went gourmet, thanks to the famous *Banga Brothers*, who have redefined the concept with their Grande edition of *Pirates of Grill*. The quality, variety, and pricing are a revelation - priced at around Rs. 1,000 per head; the spread rivals the best à la carte restaurants. Standout items include *the Benne Dosa* with *Podi Masala*, possibly the best in the NCR and *Dim Sum* that would hold its own in any reputable dim sum restaurant. Don't miss the *Grilled Pineapple*, an old favourite or *the Indianised Meatballs* with shredded ghee cauliflower and cheese, a delightful fusion.

Now that you're in the loop on the hottest dining and nightlife spots in the NCR, where are you heading tonight or later this week? Let me know at pawan.soni@indianfoodfreak.com.

Explore NCR's newest hotspots, serving up bold flavours and vibrant atmospheres for those looking to experience the best in dining and nightlife



PAWAN SONI
Food critic and founder of the Big F Awards



FROM KOLKATA TO DELHI: THE TASTE OF TWO CITIES

While Durga Puja is celebrated across the country, it is at a different level in Kolkata. The rhythm of the dhak, the vibrant atmosphere and the exquisite food transport you to another world, writes DIVYA BHATIA



A visit to Kolkata revealed the grandeur of the festivities, showcasing stunning pandals and creating cherished moments. As a foodie, I was captivated by the culinary extravaganza, especially the traditional *Bhuribhoj* and *Bengali Thali*. The unforgettable flavours of *Basanti Polao*, *Aloo Bhaja*, *Begun Bhaja*, *Potol Bhaja*, *Luchi* and *Chholar Dal*, paired with *Mishtoi Doi* and *Rasgulla*, left a lasting impression. The magic of these dishes lies in the love behind their preparation. Bengalis savour their meals in small courses, enhancing the authentic flavours of their cuisine. While I've felt a festive spirit in Delhi, it cannot match Kolkata's enchanting transformation during Durga Puja. However, Delhi offers its own take on Bengali cuisine, and this year, I explored delightful recipes from young chefs, ensuring that whether you're in Kolkata or elsewhere, you can enjoy traditional Puja dishes.

CHEF GAUTAM KUMAR'S RECIPE FOR GOBINDOBHOG GURER PAYESH

Chef *Gautam Kumar*, Executive Chef at Foodlink F&B Holdings (India), brings over 20 years of experience in regional Indian cuisine. He emphasises fresh, locally sourced ingredients and has held prestigious positions at top hotels like *Shangri-La* and *Grand Hyatt Delhi*. His innovative approach has garnered numerous accolades, and one of his favourite dishes is *Gobindobhog Gurer Payesh*.

GOBINDOBHOG GURER PAYESH

Kheer, or 'payesh' in Bengali, is a sweet rice and milk dish beloved in Bengali culture. Offered to the goddess *Durga* as 'bhog,' it is shared among devotees after the puja. Made with date palm jaggery, 'nolen gud kheer' is a healthier alternative to sugar, especially popular during *Durga Puja*. *Sharing Payesh* symbolises unity and harmony among family members. *Durga Puja*. *Sharing Payesh* symbolises unity and fosters harmony among family members.



INGREDIENTS

- 1 litre full-fat milk
- 50 grams Gobindo bhog rice
- 150 grams nolen gur (date palm jaggery)
- ¼ teaspoon salt
- ¼ teaspoon green cardamom powder
- 20 grams cashew nuts
- 10 grams raisins (soaked and drained)
- 10 grams ghee

METHOD

- **Soak the Rice:** Soak the rice in water for 30 minutes, ensuring not to over-wash it to retain as much starch as possible. After soaking, drain the rice and spread it out to dry.
- **Coat the Rice:** Coat the soaked rice with ¼ teaspoon of ghee and set aside.
- **Prepare the Raisins:** Soak the raisins in water until swollen.
- **Fry Cashews:** Heat ghee in a pan and fry the cashews until golden. Set aside.
- **Boil the Milk:** Boil the milk in a heavy-bottomed pan, simmer for 15 minutes, and add cardamom powder.
- **Cook the Rice:** Add the ghee-coated rice to the milk and cook on low heat until fully cooked. The rice should be soft and mushy when mashed between your fingers, as it will firm up while cooling. Stir gently to prevent burning and release starch, which thickens the payesh.
- **Thicken the Payesh:** Ensure the rice is fully cooked; the payesh should be slightly thicker than desired, as the gur will thin it out.
- **Add Gur:** Turn off the heat and mix in the gur, salt, soaked raisins, and fried cashews, keeping the heat off to prevent curdling. Gently fold everything together, cover the pan, and let the residual heat melt the gur completely. Serve the payesh hot or cold in a bowl, garnished with fried cashews and soaked raisins.

RECIPE FOR NARKEL NI CHINGRI

Chef *Gagandeep Singh Bedi*, Director of Culinary at *Roseate Hotels & Resorts*, specialises in reviving regional Indian cuisines and creating signature dishes at *Kheer*. He focuses on organic produce and minimising food waste.

NARKEL NI CHINGRI RECIPE

One of his standout creations is *Narkel ni Chingri*, a delightful prawn dish cooked in coconut milk. This recipe exemplifies Chef *Gagandeep's* commitment to authentic flavours and sustainable practices. Here's how to make it:

INGREDIENTS

- 500g prawns, cleaned and deveined
- 200ml fresh coconut milk
- 75g fresh grated coconut
- 1 large onion, finely chopped
- 1 tsp ginger paste
- 1 tsp garlic paste
- 2-3 green chilies, slit
- ½ tsp turmeric powder
- ½ tsp red chili powder
- 40ml mustard oil
- Salt to taste
- Fresh coriander for garnish

INSTRUCTIONS

- Marinate the prawns with turmeric and salt for 15 minutes.
- Roast the grated coconut on medium flame until golden brown.
- Heat mustard oil in a pan until smoking, then reduce heat.
- Sauté onions until golden brown, then add ginger and garlic paste.
- Add green chilies, turmeric and red chili powder, stirring well.
- Add marinated prawns and cook until pink (5-7 minutes).
- Pour in coconut milk and simmer for 5-10 minutes.
- Add roasted grated coconut and cook for an additional 2-3 minutes.
- Adjust seasoning and garnish with fresh coriander and Serve hot with steamed rice for a delicious meal!



Navratri: The essence of Satvik food

BY TEAM VIVA

The festival of Navratri is filled with a spirit of devotion and celebration. During these nine auspicious days, millions across India follow a special dietary regimen, abstaining from regular food and opting for Satvik meals. While these dishes are rooted in tradition, chefs at hotels like *Le Meridien, New Delhi* have taken the opportunity to elevate this sacred cuisine with contemporary flavours, ensuring that even the most discerning food lovers can enjoy fasting meals with a gourmet touch. Navratri food is characterised by simplicity, with ingredients that align with spiritual purity. Common dishes consumed during this period have been improvised by Chef *Setuu Gupta*. Here are the dishes:

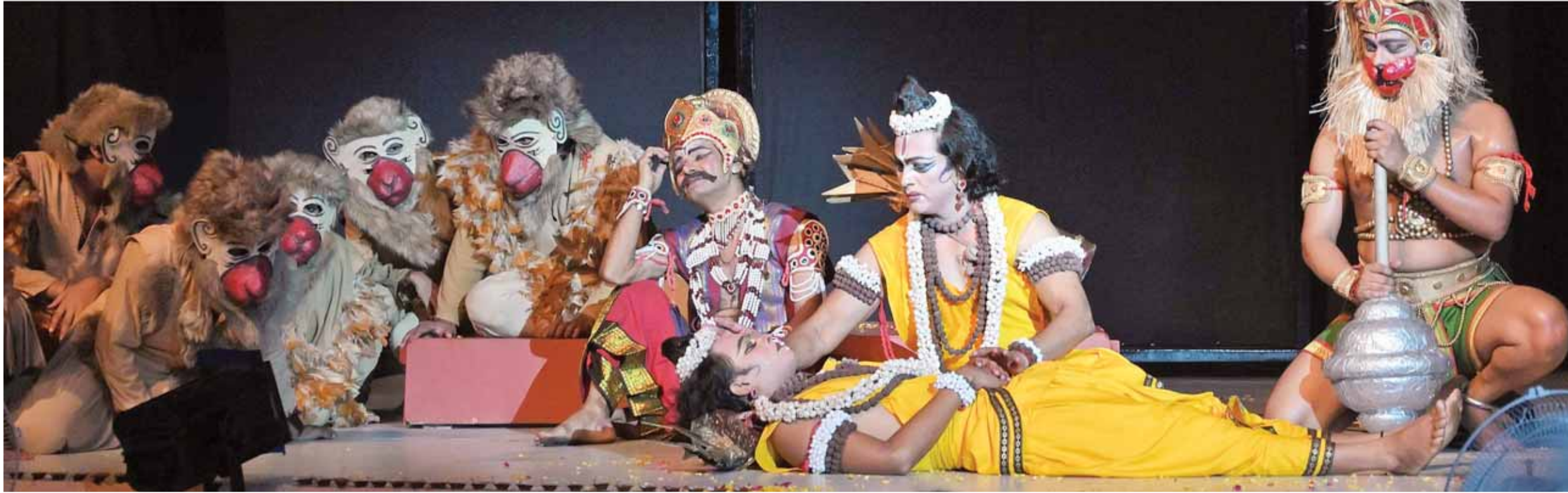
- **'Kuttu ki Puri' (Buckwheat Flour Puri)** - A deep-fried, gluten-free flatbread made from buckwheat flour, which is one of the staples during Navratri.
- **'Sabudana tikki'** - A light and flavorful dish made with soaked tapioca pearls, peanuts, and mild spices like cumin, offering a fulfilling yet easy-to-digest meal.
- **'Paneer Tikka'** - Cottage cheese cubes marinated in yoghurt and mild spices, then grilled to perfection. Paneer dishes are popular as they provide a protein-rich option for those fasting.
- **'Samak Rice Pulao'** - This is made from barnyard millet, often called "vrat rice," and is cooked with mild spices and



vegetables to offer a flavorful alternative to regular rice.

- **'Anjeer ka Halwa'** - A dessert made from figs, slow-cooked in milk and flavoured with cardamom, is a popular sweet indulgence for the fasting period.
- **'Makhana Curry'** - A creamy salty pudding made from foxnuts (makhana) and curd flavoured with spices and nuts for a rich taste.
- **'Kacche Kale Sabudana Tikki'** is a crispy snack made from raw banana, sabudana (tapioca pearls), green chilies, and spices. Shallow-fried and enjoyed during fasting periods like Navratri, it offers a flavourful and energising treat.
- **'Arbi Singara Kadhi'** - is a flavourful curry made with colocasia (arbi) and water chestnuts (singhara), simmered in a spiced yoghurt-based gravy. It's thickened with singhara flour and seasoned with mustard seeds, curry leaves and chilies for a tangy, savoury dish. Navratri food has always been about maintaining purity and simplicity, but at *Le Meridien, New Delhi*, Chef *Setuu Gupta* and his team have shown that fasting meals can be both humble and sophisticated. By elevating traditional dishes with innovative techniques, they ensure that guests not only honour their spiritual commitment but also indulge in a culinary journey that excites the senses. This fusion of faith and flavour is a testament to the evolving nature of India's food culture, where tradition and modernity walk hand in hand.

Photo: Pankaj Kumar



CELEBRATING NAVRATRI

A SPECTACULAR DANCE-DRAMA EXPERIENCE

With the festive spirit of Navratri, *Shriram Bharatiya Kala Kendra* presents a captivating dance-drama that brings the timeless tale of the Ramayana to life, highlighting the struggle between good and evil and the victory of righteousness, says **SAKSHI PRIYA**

October marks the arrival of a magical time in India, where the festive spirit fills the air and people from all walks of life come together to celebrate the rich cultural heritage passed down for generations. Among the many stories and traditions that take centre stage during this season, none are as cherished or as timeless as the story of the Ramayana. Retold through art, music, dance and drama, the Ramayana during Navratri is more than just a mythological tale; it's a reminder of the eternal struggle between good and evil, love and loss, and the ultimate victory of righteousness. One of the most iconic ways to experience this story is through the grand production of "Shri Ram" by the *Shriram Bharatiya Kala Kendra*. For 68 years, this dance-drama has been a hallmark of Delhi's festive calendar, drawing audiences into the epic saga of the Ramayana. The production spans 24 days during the Navratri festival; it's not just a performance but an experience, a journey through time and a deep dive into India's cultural and spiritual heritage.

A GRAND STAGE AND CAPTIVATING ATMOSPHERE

From the moment visitors arrive at the venue, they are welcomed by an impressive stage representing ancient Ayodhya. The meticulous attention to detail in the stage design is evident, featuring intricate patterns and vibrant colours that transport the audience to the heart of the Ramayana. The lighting shifts throughout the performance, enhancing the emotional depth of each scene. As the performance commences, the atmosphere buzzes with excitement and anticipation. Artists in elaborate costumes fill the stage, celebrating the arrival of their lord Ram. The traditional music accompanying their movements resonates with the audience, enveloping everyone in the festive spirit. The dance-drama format allows for a seamless blend of storytelling and art; classical Indian dance forms like Kathak, Bharatnatyam and Odissi take centre stage, where each gesture and expression conveys deep emotion. The opening scene beautifully showcases themes of community, love, and unity, drawing everyone into the celebration.

A DIVINE BEGINNING

The story begins with the birth of Lord Ram and his brothers, as the people of Ayodhya rejoice in the arrival of their beloved prince. The joy on stage is visible, reflecting the warmth and happiness of the occasion. The scenes that follow take the audience on a journey through Ram's life, from his education in scriptures and warfare to his marriage with Sita, highlighting the trials he faces along the way.

What makes this story captivating is not just Ram's destiny as a divine figure but his humanity. From a young age, Ram exemplifies virtues of humility, patience and wisdom, shaping his actions throughout his life. This sense of divine purpose, combined with Ram's ability to empathise with ordinary people, makes his character relatable and inspiring to devotees during Navratri. As "Shri Ram" beautifully portrays, Ram's early years symbolise the joys of life and the weight of



"'SHRI RAM' IS MORE THAN JUST A RETELLING OF THE RAMAYANA; IT IS AN EDUCATIONAL TOOL, A COMMON CONNECTION BETWEEN GENERATIONS, AND A TRIBUTE TO INDIAN TALENT IN DANCE, POETRY AND DESIGN"



Photo: Pankaj Kumar



responsibility he must bear as the future ruler. The early relationships that shape him, including his bond with his brothers Lakshman, Bharata and Shatrughna, each play an essential role in the unfolding drama.

THE JOURNEY OF LORD RAM AND HIS BROTHERS

As the story progresses, spectators witness the formative years of Ram alongside his brothers, training under Vishwamitra. This segment showcases the dedication and brotherly camaraderie that define their relationships, expressed through intricate choreography that highlights their commitment to duty. The physical movements and emotional expressions of the dancers capture the essence of loyalty, honour, and sacrifice, core values that resonate throughout the Ramayana. The portrayal of Ram's marriage to Sita is another highlight of the performance. The ceremony is beautifully staged and thoughtfully executed, illustrating the depth of love and devotion between the two characters. Sita is depicted with grace and strength, captivating the audience as she expresses her hopes and dreams. The artistry of this scene reflects the timeless nature of love, with each gesture drawing the audience deeper into their narrative. This portrayal captures the essence of their divine union while reminding the audience that true love involves enduring hardship and remaining steadfast in faith.

THE RISE OF CONFLICT

The story takes a dramatic turn with the introduction of Ravana. The portrayal of Ravana brings an air of tension and complexity, masterfully performed by a talented artist whose commanding presence leaves a lasting impression. The audience feels the weight of impending conflict as the stage transforms into a realm where good clashes with evil. One of the most gripping moments comes when Ravana sends a golden deer to tempt Sita, leading to the separation of Ram and Sita. The tension during this scene is visible, as Sita's innocence and longing are powerfully conveyed. This pivotal moment marks the beginning of trials that will test Ram's love and resolve.

The fierce confrontation between Lakshman and Surpanakha highlights themes of loyalty and honour. The

choreography in this segment is intense, illustrating the raw emotions involved in defending family honour. Lakshman's decisive action in cutting off Surpanakha's nose showcases the protective instincts that run deep within the characters of the Ramayana.

THE BATTLE OF GOOD AND EVIL

As the narrative escalates, the stage transforms into a dramatic battlefield. The choreography during these scenes is breathtaking, with performers moving in perfect synchrony to depict the chaos of war. Ram's battle against Ravana becomes the climactic moment of the performance, showcasing the bravery and determination of the forces of good. The audience is enthralled as Ram ultimately conquers Ravana, a victory resonating with the core message of the Ramayana: righteousness prevails in the face of evil. The final scenes, where Ram returns to Ayodhya to be crowned king, are a celebration of joy and mastery. The atmosphere fills with colour and light, reflecting the happiness of the citizens of Ayodhya as they welcome their lord home. This ending serves as a poignant reminder of the importance of justice, duty, and the values that bind communities together.

THE SIGNIFICANCE OF "SHRI RAM"

Under the artistic direction of Padmashri *Shobha Deepak Singh*, the show has evolved over the years while retaining its essence. *Singh*, Chairperson of SBKK, beautifully articulated this sentiment when she stated, "Shri Ram" is more than just a retelling of the Ramayana; it is an educational tool, a common connection between generations, and a tribute to Indian talent in dance, poetry, and design." Her words resonate throughout the venue, emphasising the importance of preserving and celebrating Indian culture. The entire production is a tribute to the dedication of the artists and the meticulous planning that went into its execution. Every detail, from the stunning costumes to the intricate choreography, was carefully curated to create a seamless experience for the audience. This performance not only entertains but also educates, providing insights into the values



of loyalty, courage, and righteousness at the heart of the Ramayana.

A CELEBRATION OF CULTURE AND COMMUNITY

The performance of "Shri Ram" is not just an artistic display; it is a celebration of culture and community. The universal messages of love, sacrifice, and the struggle against adversity resonate deeply, reminding everyone of the cherished values in our lives. The lighting is masterfully used to reflect shifts in tone, from the warmth and joy of Ram and Sita's union to the ominous darkness of Ravana's plans. As the scenes transition, the stage transforms fluidly, drawing the audience deeper into the narrative.

The costumes are a visual feast - rich, vibrant and steeped in historical authenticity. Each character, from Ram and Sita in their royal attire to Hanuman and his monkey warriors, is dressed to reflect their roles and the cultural and mythological significance of their actions. The grandness of the set and costumes adds a layer of magic to the story, allowing the audience to fully immerse themselves in the spectacle.

Embracing the Spirit of Navratri The festival of Navratri is a time for reflection, devotion and celebration, beautifully captured in the performance of "Shri Ram." This production highlights the strength of unity and the importance of standing up for what is right while encouraging a shared understanding of our cultural values. As the Navratri celebrations continue, performances like "Shri Ram" inspire us to reflect on the deeper meanings of the Ramayana and the victory of good over evil.

With performances scheduled until 26 October 2024, families have the chance to experience this iconic production together, witnessing the brilliance of Indian art and culture come to life on stage. So, as we gather with friends and family to celebrate Navratri, let us carry forward the lessons of the Ramayana in our hearts. May this festive season fill our lives with joy, love, and an unwavering commitment to righteousness. Wishing all readers a blessed Navratri filled with love and light!





YOUR WEEK AHEAD

MADHU KOTIYA



ARIES March 21-April 19

This week begins with an international touch, whether it's receiving uplifting news from afar or having a family member travel overseas. Expect a flurry of activity, suggesting potential overseas travel for work. Stay prepared for swift movements and transitions. In legal domains, anticipate favourable outcomes that might require decisive action on your part. Health-wise, if you've been under the weather, you'll find yourself mending and returning to your usual activities. As the week concludes, joy emerges from family matters, particularly involving your children who may excel academically or bring surprising news of a potential marriage, leading to joyful wedding preparations. For those already wed, expect deepening bonds and enhanced stability in your relationship.

Lucky number 9 | Lucky colour Teal
Lucky day Friday



LEO July 23-Aug 22

If you're feeling the need to escape the everyday turmoil and start anew, consider reflecting on your past experiences and future aspirations. Gaining mental clarity is essential for a smoother transition, helping you shift from chaos to calm and positivity. Making conscious decisions is crucial because once actions are taken, they can't be reversed. The principle of reaping what you sow always holds true, emphasizing the importance of your choices. This week, some may find themselves connecting deeply with a special someone, experiencing a profound synergy reminiscent of two luminaries that, although bright on their own, radiate even more brilliantly together. This connection can bring significant joy and fulfillment, enhancing the journey ahead.

Lucky number 12 | Lucky colour Red
Lucky day Tuesday



SAGITTARIUS Nov 22-Dec 21

This week promises a series of significant shifts, especially in your professional life. You may find yourself navigating through a rapid succession of events that could reshape your career landscape favorably. However, if you've been riding a high wave recently, stay vigilant as challenges loom on the horizon. Be cautious of deceptive individuals who might be scheming behind your back, potentially leading to a loss of what you've diligently worked for, which could be quite distressing. As the week closes, your bold and dynamic nature will come to the forefront. You'll find yourself invigorated, and ready to tackle any challenge without hesitation. Your ability to make quick, effective decisions will enhance, driven by a proactive and energetic approach to life.

Lucky number 14 | Lucky colour Fuchsia
Lucky day Wednesday



TAURUS April 20-May 20

This week calls for patience and minimal social interactions. Embracing practices like yoga and meditation could greatly enhance your sense of peace. Reflecting on the recent challenges in both your professional and personal life, it's crucial not to let these setbacks cloud the current period. An optimistic outlook reveals promising opportunities for financial growth. Engaging in new business ventures could prove lucrative. Your natural intuition might become a useful tool in navigating straightforward scenarios, leveraging your fair and analytical disposition to transition from negativity to positivity smoothly. This approach will not only clear your mind but also deepen your understanding of financial and emotional matters, guiding you towards a more enlightened state.

Lucky number 13 | Lucky colour Saffron
Lucky day Monday



VIRGO Aug 23-Sep 22

The week begins with notable challenges. Recent endeavors have piled on numerous obligations, making you feel overwhelmed and stuck in your current circumstances. This sense of confinement may make you hesitant to make bold moves. Additionally, there may be individuals who seem opposed to your success, adding to the strain. However, amidst these trials, remember that you possess an inherent strength capable of overcoming these hurdles. Drawing on this positive energy will be crucial as you navigate through the week. By week's end, a calming presence will replace the earlier turmoil, allowing you to distance yourself from worldly concerns. Supported by your loved ones, you'll find yourself relaxing into a state of profound contentment and joy, reinvigorated by the peace that envelops you.

Lucky number 5 | Lucky colour Maroon
Lucky day Wednesday



CAPRICORN Dec 22-Jan 19

This week, you have every reason to celebrate your achievements. A stable financial foundation brings you both security and comfort. For many, these rewards stem from diligent effort and personal commitment. Your aspirations for prosperity are now coming to fruition. Take a moment to reflect on your riches, both tangible and spiritual. The recognition of your hard work may manifest as advancements or salary increases, boosting your self-assurance. You stand as a dependable beacon for those around you, drawing everyone's focus. Your balanced perspective allows you to view situations uniquely. As the week closes, you'll find yourself deeply engaged in reflective practices, seeking to understand the depth of your own insight.

Lucky number 8 | Lucky colour Black
Lucky day Friday



GEMINI May 21-June 20

This week, your innate kindness, generosity, honesty, and tranquility shine through. Some individuals may embark on a budding relationship brimming with promise that could blossom into profound joy and love. This period marks a significant phase where your deepest aspirations might begin to materialize, guided by a strong internal intuition. Professionally, your tenacity, swift responses, and unwavering commitment to your objectives help you navigate challenges effortlessly. Your hard work is likely to gain recognition and commendation from your peers, affirming your efforts. This is a time to relish the rewards of previous challenges that have now been surmounted. As the week wraps up, expect to find yourself in festive spirits, celebrating recent successes with a significant gathering or a festive event.

Lucky number 2 | Lucky colour Mint
Lucky day Thursday



LIBRA Sep 23-Oct 22

This week, be wary as envy surrounds your accomplishments, and others may attempt to tarnish your reputation. There's a possibility of encountering obstacles that could disrupt your plans dramatically. Additionally, there's a risk that your own talents could be misdirected to work against you. Remember, the primary challenge comes from within. You might face disputes and resistance at work, where your proposals could be rigorously questioned by doubters. It's crucial to maintain your composure and seek amicable resolutions when possible, while steadfastly pursuing your goals. As the week closes, you might find yourself drawn to familiar places. A trip back to places filled with memories and reuniting with loved ones could rejuvenate your spirits and restore a positive outlook.

Lucky number 7 | Lucky colour Lavender
Lucky day Saturday



AQUARIUS Jan 20-Feb 18

This week, a significant emotional journey begins, characterized by an evolving intensity of feelings, culminating in a period of significant personal insight and potential fulfillment of deep-seated desires. As the days progress, you may find yourself grappling with a challenging home situation, feeling weighed down by nostalgia or a sense of loss. However, as the week draws to a close, there is a noticeable shift towards a more uplifting scenario where you may discover newfound peace and happiness. In resolving life's challenges, a change of scenery could be on the horizon, whether through a strategic move or a professional relocation. Significant figures in your professional life are likely to influence these transitions, marking a pivotal moment in your journey.

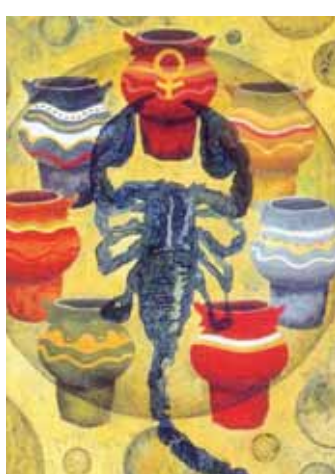
Lucky number 11 | Lucky colour Gold
Lucky day Tuesday



CANCER June 21-July 22

This week marks a phase of deep satisfaction as a long-held dream comes to fruition. You find yourself in a joyful union or embarking on a career path that fills you with pride. Riding a wave of bliss, you feel the support of a higher power enriching your journey. Recognition for your perseverance and tenacity inspires others, while guidance from a mentor proves to be incredibly beneficial. Your commitment to a balanced and harmonious approach to life strengthens. As the week closes, your interactions are characterized by fairness and responsibility. You secure a role that promises emotional and financial rewards, brightening your prospects for the future. Your outlook is optimistic as you navigate forward, ready to embrace new opportunities with open arms.

Lucky number 4 | Lucky colour White
Lucky day Sunday



SCORPIO Oct 23-Nov 21

At the start of the week, some individuals might find themselves overwhelmed by their emotions. Minor issues, whether related to personal health or family matters, could cause tension. This period encourages introspection and expressing oneself through writing. As the week progresses, a shift occurs, bringing a surge of enthusiasm and energy. This phase is characterized by a strong sense of leadership and commitment to responsibilities, possibly coinciding with new responsibilities or projects. The latter part of the week signals a significant period of change, marking the arrival of new professional opportunities. These changes are poised to positively influence one's future, setting the stage for lasting improvements in personal and professional life.

Lucky number 3 | Lucky colour Turquoise
Lucky day Monday



PISCES Feb 19-March 20

Throughout this week, individuals prone to deep empathy are especially attuned to the needs of others. They naturally excel in nurturing roles, offering their support and guidance generously. Their compassion extends widely, ensuring that those who seek their help find solace and assistance. Known for their capability to address and manage the challenges faced by others, they blend resilience with a profound capacity to care. Not only are they mentally and physically robust, but they also possess an indomitable spirit characterized by bravery and endurance. Their unique approach to action is guided by a clear, unaffected rationale. This week, many will find themselves impressed by these intrinsic traits, strengthening bonds and forming meaningful connections with those dear to them.

Lucky number 10 | Lucky colour Olive
Lucky day Thursday

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Is boredom a blessing or a curse?

There are 365 days in a year and there are so many years in your life. If for one or two days you feel you are wasted, life is a failure, it's okay, never mind!

GURUSPEAK



Sri Sri Ravi Shankar
Spiritual Guru

Take a few moments to sit down, be open to boredom, and you'll effortlessly move into a deep meditative state

IN an ocean, the waves keep coming non-stop, it doesn't get boring! Birds sing the same song, every morning, all their life, they don't get bored! It is only human beings who get bored! 'Oh! Once again the same thing'. And why do you get bored? It is because of memory. You remember whatever you have done before, so you get bored. Memory is both a blessing and a curse. It is because you get bored that you feel the need to look for something different, something new, and that is how creativity comes up; you look for the ultimate. Otherwise, you could have remained like an animal doing the same thing every day. But, you can't do it because you get bored!

So, in that sense, boredom is a blessing. Because you get bored, you move on, you look forward, you become a seeker and you rise higher. At the same time, boredom is also a curse because it doesn't

allow you to be centred and steady in one place. So your mind aimlessly keeps jumping from one place to another. Because you get bored of everything, you can't enjoy anything. There are two different paths that boredom leads you to. Boredom is a blessing when it leads you to wisdom. Boredom is a curse when it leads you to frustration and depression. Because you are bored, you can't enjoy it, and when you can't enjoy it you get depressed and frustrated. Or, because you are bored you wake up and begin with a quest.

When life feels dull, there's this magical moment where everything becomes lively. You can repeat the same thing over and over, and it won't bother you. It's like finding a spring of life. Just let go of the past, be like a carefree child, and every moment becomes priceless.

You move ahead and you look into the Self which is fresh all the



time! The Self is ever new. Because you are bored with the ephemeral, the surface, you go deep into the Self. So boredom is both a blessing and a curse. A blessing because it takes you away from the routine monotonous life, makes you aware and brings life into you.

And it is a curse because it doesn't let you stabilise. People who are in love don't get bored. The heart knows no boredom. The head knows boredom.

In life both are essential, the heart and the head. If you are only

in the heart, it is no good. And if you are only stuck in the head, that is also no good. Balancing both is Yoga. Spirituality is balancing the heart and head together. Anyone who feels that they are a failure, just wake up! So what?! Life is eternal.

Meditation acts like a bridge connecting your head and heart. Take a few moments to sit down, be open to boredom, and you'll effortlessly move into a deep meditative state. Otherwise, that boredom might just lead you to sleep. It's a choice — either you sleep, become more sluggish, or you seize the opportunity of boredom to delve into a deep meditation.

There are 365 days in a year and there are so many years in your life. If for one or two days you feel you are wasted, life is a failure, it's okay, never mind!

On a full moon, if it is cloudy and the light cannot shine on the Earth, the moon does not get

upset. If on one full moon night, you cannot see the moon rising, so what? The moon is still there. Like that, inside you there is potential, there is divinity which is so complete. If it has not come to the surface in one day, never mind! You have all the great qualities. If some do not exhibit on a particular day, never mind.

Don't blame yourself, don't analyze yourself too much. We start analysing ourselves too much; to the extent that we feel upset and down. We are so hard on ourselves. I am saying this to those who feel bad about themselves. NEVER MIND, WAKE UP! Never mind if these many years are wasted. The future is bright and there is still so much for you to do. All regrets happen only when you are looking at the past. If you are walking and your head is turned backwards, then that is called regret. Turn your head and look forward, and you will see the future is always bright.