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Israel, Iran in mortal combat



PTI/AP ■ JERUSALEM

Israel delivered its long-awaited response to Iranian missile attacks early Saturday by carrying out a series of airstrikes against the Islamic Republic. Under the cover of darkness early Saturday, Israel struck multiple sites in different parts of Iran. Explosions were heard in the capital, Tehran.

The Israeli military said its "precise and targeted strikes" hit missile air defence systems and "aerial capabilities" as well as missile manufacturing facilities used to produce weapons that have been used against Israel. Iran insisted the strikes caused only "limited damage."

The Iranian Foreign Ministry said Iran would respond to the airstrikes, calling them a clear violation of international law as it asserted Tehran's right to self-defence. Israel characterised Saturday's attack as a response to previous aerial assaults by Iran using missiles and exploding drones in April and another missile attack this month.

Many of those projectiles were shot down before reaching their targets. It was not immediately clear how hard a blow Israel dealt, with neither country providing detailed assessments of the destruction. Iran said the strikes targeted military bases in the provinces of Ilam, Khuzestan and Tehran.

Israel appeared confident in its battering of Iran's air defences, with military spokesman Rear Adm. Daniel Hagari saying that "Israel now has broader aerial freedom of operation in Iran."

The strikes did not appear to target facilities that would all but ensure a harsh Iranian response. Those most notably include Iran's oil infrastructure, the backbone of the OPEC member's economy, and its nuclear facilities.

President Biden earlier this month said he would not support an Israeli strike on Iranian nuclear sites. US officials felt they had secured agreement from Israel not to hit nuclear or oil sites after dispatching another air-defence missile battery and associated troops, though those

assurances were not set in stone. Israel signalled that the pre-dawn bombardment was the end of this attack. "The retaliatory strike has been completed, and its objectives have been achieved," Hagari said early Saturday, still the Sabbath in Israel.

Not long after, Iran's Civil Aviation Organisation said commercial flights would resume after being halted because of the airstrikes.

The Israeli attacks aimed to deter future aggression and "show we won't be silent," but to do so in a way that would minimise the embarrassment for Iran, said Yoel Guzansky, a researcher at the Tel Aviv-based Institute for National Security Studies.

The White House indicated that it wants the strikes to end the direct exchanges of fire between Israel and Iran, and warned Iran against responding.

British Prime Minister Keir Starmer said there was a "need to avoid further regional escalation" and called on all sides to show restraint.

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Take down threat posts: MeitY

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

In the backdrop of hoax calls to airlines in the last few days, the Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology (MeitY) has issued an advisory to all social media platforms to make "reasonable efforts" to "promptly" take down bomb threat posts or else "be held liable."

Issuing this advisory, the ministry also asked all social media platforms to adhere to provisions of the Information Technology (IT) Rules and Bharatiya Nyay Sanhita (BNS).

The ministry has cautioned online platforms that failure to comply with the IT Rules could result in the loss of their safe harbour protection under the IT Act. The provision currently shields platforms from legal liability for third-party content posted on their social media platforms.

"Airline travellers and security agencies are being affected due to such hoax bomb threats that disrupt the normal course of operations of the Airlines. The instances of malicious acts in the form of hoax bomb threats to such airlines lead to potential threat to the public order & security of the state [sic]," the IT Ministry said in an official statement.



"Such hoax bomb threats while affecting a large number of citizens also destabilises the economic security of the country. Further, the scale of spread of such hoax bomb threats has been observed to be dangerously unrestrained due to the availability of the option of 'forwarding/re-sharing/' reposting/re-tweeting' on the social media platforms," it added.

Over 250 flights were affected by over 250 hoax bomb threats, mostly through social media, in the last 10 days, bringing turbulence to India's domestic aviation industry. Even hotels, schools, hotels and other establishments have also received similar warnings. In its advisory, the IT Ministry also stated that all social media platforms will have to provide information on the matter to law enforcement agencies within 72 hours.

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West Delhi man arrested for hoax bomb call

STAFF REPORTER: A 25-year-old West Delhi resident was arrested for issuing a hoax bomb threat to the Indira Gandhi International (IGI) airport via a social media account, in an attempt to draw attention to himself. According to police, they received two bomb threat messages from a

social media account. Following standard security protocols, an investigation was launched, which ultimately revealed the threat to be a hoax. A case was registered at the IGI police station, and authorities traced the suspect through his account.

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US sends illegal visitors back home

PTI ■ WASHINGTON

The United States hired a chartered flight to deport Indian nationals who were staying in the country illegally, the Department of Homeland Security has said, noting that this has been done in cooperation with the Indian government. The charter flight was sent to India on October 22, the department said on Friday.

"Indian nationals without a legal basis to remain in the United States are subject to swift removal, and intending migrants should not fall for the lies of smugglers who proclaim otherwise," said Kristie A. Canegallo, a senior official performing the duties of Deputy Secretary of Homeland Security.

The statement said the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) continues to enforce US immigration laws and deliver tough consequences for those who enter unlawfully and encourages the use of lawful pathways.

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Indian cricketers break a record... of the worst kind



RISHABH MALIK ■ NEW DELHI

In a disappointing turn for Indian Cricket, Team India's record 12-year long test streak of winning the test series ended by New Zealand. New Zealand emerged victorious by winning the

second test in Pune by 113 runs, taking 2-0 lead in the three-match Test series and claiming the first test series win in India and away series in World Test Championship (WTC) cycle.

Indian Captain Rohit Sharma's side became the first in 12 years to lose the test series after MS Dhoni's unit back in 2012-2013 suffered the heavy defeat from England. From 2013, India won all 18 series at home, and recorded an unbeaten streak in the history of Test cricket. New Zealand had ended a 26-year-old drought of winning a test series in India. New Zealand has now become the third team to beat India in their own backyard after Australia and England.

This was not the first time India failed a spin test, in Pune last time Australia's Steve O'Keefe left arm orthodox spinner claimed six wickets in both the innings and helped Australia to win the test match.

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Substandard helmets must be trashed



RAJESH KUMAR ■ NEW DELHI

In a bid to enhance road safety and protect consumers from substandard helmets, the Department of Consumer Affairs has directed District Collectors (DCs) and District Magistrates (DMs) to launch a nationwide campaign targeting manufacturers and retailers who sell non-compliant helmets for two-wheeler riders. This comes as a response to the growing concerns over the quality of helmets available in the market and their critical role in safeguarding lives on the road. The Department has written to DCs and DMs in this regard. It is said that more than 85% of helmets used

by two-wheeler riders in India do not meet ISI standards. The ministry data shows there are 162 licences of manufacturers of helmets that have been cancelled/expired. Besides, till date total 27 search and seizure have been conducted on misuse of BIS Standard Mark/Violation of QCOs in regards to 4151:2015 and cases are filed in various courts. In 2023, road crashes in India claimed nearly 1.73 lakh lives and left 4.63 lakh injured, marking a record high. Two-wheeler riders, particularly those without helmets, accounted for 44 per cent of the fatalities.

According to the department, it has come to light that substandard helmets, which lack the requisite BIS certification, are being sold on the roadside. This poses a severe risk to public safety and has been linked to numerous fatalities in road accidents. Therefore, there is an urgent need to tackle this issue head-on. The Government has called for strict enforcement against manufacturers operating without BIS licences or using counterfeit ISI Mark, as well as retailers peddling these non-compliant products to unsuspecting consumers. Consumers can verify whether a helmet manufacturer is licensed by BIS through the BIS Care App or by visiting the BIS website.

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NC feeling the heat of 'dual control'

MOHIT KANDHARI ■ JAMMU

The top brass of the Jammu and Kashmir National Conference has started feeling the heat of 'dual control' in the corridors of power. After Omar Abdullah's swearing-in ceremony, the party leaders gave measured reactions to the Chief Minister's role in the presence of Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha at the helm of affairs.

However, the recent incidents of terrorist violence in which 12 innocent lives were lost in three separate incidents last week have once again provoked the leaders of the ruling party to flex their muscles in support of their demand for restoration of statehood to Jammu and Kashmir at the earliest.

On Saturday, Advisor to the Chief Minister Nasir Aslam Wani, who is also the Provincial President of the party (Kashmir division) told reporters on the sidelines of a function that Jammu & Kashmir cannot function effectively under its current "dual control" structure, where security remains under the Lieutenant Governor (LG) while other administrative functions are managed by the Chief Minister.

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ED detects irregularities in concert ticket sales

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

The Enforcement Directorate (ED) on Saturday said it has detected irregularities after it conducted raids in a money laundering case to probe "black marketing" of tickets of popular music concerts by British rock band Coldplay and actor-singer Diljit Dosanjh. The agency filed case for money laundering after conducting searches on Friday at 13 locations in five states -- Delhi, Maharashtra (Mumbai), Rajasthan (Jaipur), Karnataka (Bengaluru) and Punjab (Chandigarh) - after the federal investigation agency filed a criminal case under various sections of the Prevention of Money Laundering Act (PMLA).

While the 'Dil-Luminati' concert by Dosanjh is scheduled to be held over the weekend on October 26-27 at the Jawaharlal Nehru (JLN) stadium in the national capital, the Coldplay event 'Music of the Spheres World Tour' is slated for January 2025 at Navi Mumbai. The ED said in a statement that it initiated an investigation after numerous reports emerged that



FILE PHOTO

individuals and fans were being "deceived/cheated" through "fraudulent" ticket sales after the rapid sellout of entry passes. The agency took cognisance of multiple police FIRs filed in the case across the country, including one filed by online ticket booking portal BookMyShow, against several suspects "believed to be exploiting concert-goers."

The FIR alleges that these individuals engaged in selling counterfeit tickets and drastically inflated prices, taking advantage of the high demand for these coveted concerts, the ED said. It said these concerts were an "electrifying" and "highly

anticipated" announcement for music enthusiasts across India. Both events, it said, generated immense excitement and official ticketing partners like BookMyShow and Zomato Live reported that tickets were sold out in just minutes on their platforms, which "ultimately led to black-marketing of tickets at exorbitant prices."

Many fans have discovered that they were sold fake tickets or charged exorbitant prices for legitimate ones, the agency said. According to reports, the tickets were sold for Rs.32,000 to Rs.60,000. "Searches and investigation conducted by ED

has revealed information regarding multiple individuals known for providing such tickets, including fake tickets through social media using Instagram, WhatsApp and Telegram," the agency said.

The ED said several "incriminating" materials in the form of mobile phones, laptops, SIM cards, etc. Used in the ticket sales "scam" were seized during the raids. The searches were aimed at investigating the illegal sales of tickets, financial networks supporting these scams, and tracing the proceeds of crime generated from such illegal activities, it said.

In a related development, the Delhi High Court on Thursday sought the response of the Centre on a plea seeking a regulatory framework to regulate the resale of these concert tickets through authorised platforms. A bench of Chief Justice Manmohan and Justice Tushar Rao Gedela issued notice to Union Ministries of Information and Broadcasting and Electronics, and Information Technology, private entities Stubhub Inc, Viago Entertainment Inc and Bigtree Entertainment Pvt Ltd.



To market... to market... bumper-to-bumper

Hyper local markets are bursting at the seams as Diwali shopping peaks

BY ABHI SINGHAL

Ahead of the last Diwali weekend, the hyper local colony markets are bursting at the seams adding to the congestion in major areas connecting to such markets. This affects both pedestrian traffic as well motorists. All the major markets in the city like the Sadar Bazaar, Kamla Nagar Market, Lajpat Nagar market, Chandni Chowk market are the most congested areas.

The metro station Lal Quila which is the nearest to the Chandni Chowk market has lines of people waiting to exit the metro gates due to the rush. The Kamla Nagar market in North Delhi has been facing the same situation all along. But the hyper local markets have worse conditions on such days.

For instance, the influx of vendors selling Diwali items in the Rani Bagh market has led to severe congestion, making it difficult for pedestrians to navigate the market giving them a tough time.

The Rani Bagh market in the North West Delhi has become a difficult place to pass by with such heaps of people across the market which connects both Mahindra Park and Shakurpur Basti Railway Station. The season of lights is here, however, the headlights at the traffic jams are blinding and congestion fumes choke the lungs.

The problem is exacerbated by the lack of proper traffic management. Also, the vendors taking over the roadside selling either clothes or Diwali decoration items like the diyas, Lakshmi and Ganesha idols, Saraswati Charan Padukas, Rangoli colours, stencils, flower garlands, candles, clay lamps are majorly responsible for the over rush even at early hours of the day like 11 am, when the markets just starts to open.

To get a control over the situation the Delhi Police has barricaded at the entry side of the market to restrict vehicle entry but the situation remains chaotic at the other end. The absence of barricades at the exit point near the Shakurpur Basti



Photo : Abhi Singhal

Railway Station has resulted in a surge of vehicles on the connecting main road, contributing to the congestion from the morning 11 am.

The situation gets worse when the end of Rani Bagh market, which opens in front of the Shakurpur Basti Railway Station does not have the barricading, leading to excessive rush on the connecting main road. The e-rickshaws entering the market from the exit side make it even more difficult crowding the market by hindering the pedestrians' way. The absence of monitoring on entry and exits of the market are being advantaged by the e-rickshaws and the people locally living there. The grabbing of parking space of the two wheelers in front of the shops, on entry and exit sides, inside the market roads blocks the market from all sides.

Moreover, continuous in and out of 'Chota Hathi's' (a small tempo-like vehicle) carrying stocks for the shops makes the condition worse. Talking to a person shopping in the market on the

rush said, "does it feel like 12.00pm in the afternoon".

A shopkeeper said, "diwali tak esa hi rahega haal. Ye to kuch nahi hai aap shaam ko aaiye" (The condition of the market will remain the same till Diwali and at the evening time the condition is worse)". The other shopkeepers also emphasised the difficulty of movement in the market but said that it had been the same all these years due to Diwali.

Shockingly a roadside vendor revealed that they pay the big showrooms a generous rent for allowing them to sit outside the shops. A vendor named Sitaram and his wife, selling diyas on the Rani Bagh market road said, "hum kiraya dete hain shop ke malik ko aage saman bechne ka, to koi bhi kahe hum yahan se nahi hilenge" (I pay rent to the shop, so I will not move on anybody's saying)".

The situation in the market gets worsened in the evening hours when the traffic of pedestrians inside the market and vehicles on the connecting road goes out of hand.

Row erupts after another death in 'police custody'

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

Police have once again found themselves in a major controversy following the alleged custodial death of Mohit Pandey, a 32-year-old school dress supplier, at the Chinhat police station in Lucknow on Friday night.

torture on him, leading to his deteriorating condition. Mohit was then taken to the Chinhat Community Health Centre, where doctors deemed his condition serious and referred him to RML Hospital.

They added that the autopsy report would reveal any physical abuse he endured. Mohit and Sobharam operated a workshop that stitched school uniforms, ties, belts, diaries, and identity cards in the Zainabad locality near the Upton police outpost in Chinhat, where they also resided.

Police probing 'sabotage' of rly tracks in Malihabad incident

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

After the incidents of alleged sabotage of rail tracks in Kanpur, an incident involving the attempt to overturn a moving train by placing tree logs on the tracks has come to light in Malihabad.

whether a section of track is occupied or clear. The driver stopped the train and informed the officials. When the railway team arrived and inspected the area, wood and stones were found on the track.

"There could have been a huge loss of life due to this criminal conspiracy. The route was affected for a significant period because of this incident," he said.

Inspector's stolen bike recovered, stolen again

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

In a bizarre case, a stolen motorcycle recovered by the police was stolen again from inside the Chinhat police station premises, raising serious questions about police alertness.

searching for the motorcycle, it was found to be missing from the police station premises. When the storehouse in-charge was questioned, a search was conducted, but the motorcycle was still not located.

Wanted criminal arrested in encounter

Meerut/saharanpur (PTI): A man with over a dozen criminal cases against him was arrested following a police encounter in which he was shot in the leg, officials said on Saturday.

but he started tried to flee and fired at the police team. Police fired back in self-defense and he was shot in the leg, they said.

on Saturday. The man's wife and sister-in-law, who were riding pillion, sustained serious injuries and have been hospitalised, they said.

CLASSIFIEDS NOTICE

I Umakant R/o Village and post Asdhana, Kanpur. do affirm that in my service record and daughter's birth certificate her name by mistake was wrongly entered as Purva correct name Purva Verma for all future ref.

सूचना

सूचित किया जाता है कि पहले मेरा नाम इरशाद था जिसे बदलकर मैंने अपना नाम इरशाद अली पुत्र माजिद अली कर लिया है। अतः भविष्य में मुझे इसी नाम से जाना व पहचाना जाये। इरशाद अली पुत्र माजिद अली निवासी- शाहपुर सिदवी जिला बाराबंकी (M) 8528931886

NOTICE

I have changed my name from ZAFAR WASIM TO ZAFAR WASIM ANSARI S/O SALIM UR REHMAN ANSARI R/O 132/98, BABU PURWA T P NAGAR KANPUR for future purpose

NOTICE

I have changed my name from SABA To SABA ANJUM ANSARI W/O ZAFAR WASIM ANSARI R/O 132/98, BABU PURWA T P NAGAR KANPUR for future purpose

सूचना

मैंने अपने पुत्र अर्पित यादव एवं उसकी पत्नी ध्वनि बगडिया से सम्बन्ध विच्छेद करके उन्हें अपनी चल-अचल सम्पत्ति से बेदखल कर दिया है। उनके द्वारा किये गये किसी कृत्य व लेन देन से मेरा एवं मेरे परिवार का कोई वास्ता व सरोकार न होगा। सरोज यादव पुत्र स्व० मोहबत सिंह निवासी-1/ कॉम-1/2, आवास विकास नं०-3, अम्बेडकरपुरम, कल्याणपुर, कानपुर नगर।

Auction Notice

Auction Notice दिनांक 05.11.2024 मंगलवार 12:00 बजे सहायक आसूचना ब्यूरो, (एस.आई.बी), 110 माल रोड, लखनऊ में निम्नोक्त 27 वाहन क्रमांक UP32-BG-4204 (मारुति स्वीफ्ट डिजायर), UP32-BG-4160, 4161, 4162, 4163 (मारुति आल्टो K10), UP96-G-0187, UP30-G-0392 (टाटा सुनी), UP32-BG-4168, 4169, 4171, 4175, 4176, 4179, 4180, 4181, 4183, 6119, 4457, 4458, 5842, 5843, 5993, 4172, 4177, 2563, 4093 (सुपर स्पेलेन्डर) व UP32-BG-5841 (स्पोलेन्डर चार) मोटर साइकिलों की नीलामी होगी, विक्रयारंभिक रु० 10,000/- (दस सहस्रांश) प्रति वाहन व रु० 5000/- (पाँच सहस्रांश) प्रति वाहन हेतु नगद जी०एस०टी० व जी०एस०टी० का साथ साथ 10:30 बजे से 12:00 बजे तक जमा होगा। आई.पी. सिंह एडव. सन्त

Breast cancer survivors share journeys of strength, resilience

SHARMILA KRISHNA ■ LUCKNOW

They are women of extraordinary courage who have woven a tale of grit in their battle against breast cancer. Facing the ups and downs of life with exemplary fortitude, these women convey the message that any disease can be defeated with a positive attitude.

igate these effects," she explained. She noted that the surgery was cost-effective and not a financial burden, allowing her to be discharged the next day.

kept me active. My 23-year-old son advised me to think of it as a fever that would last seven to eight months. I programmed my mind to stay focused. I told myself to live freely because life and death are not in my hands," she said.

ahead. I needed to focus on my treatment. Once the treatment began, I never looked back and hardly felt any pain, as acceptance of my battle diminished the discomfort," she added.

Congress slams action against leader who slapped BJP worker

Varanasi (PTI): The Congress on Saturday slammed the action taken against an IYC leader and her family who allegedly thrashed a BJP worker here over "rape threats" issued by him on social media.

charges, the BJP said law treats everyone equally and no one had the right to take the law into their hands. Singh's counsel, meanwhile said the property was attached following a court order in view of her absence from the proceedings.

a woman to silently bear the threat of rape?" she said sharing a video of Jaiswal, in which she recounted her experience of facing online threats and the subsequent action by authorities in the case.

One killed, 2 hurt in road mishap

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

A man was killed while two others sustained grievous injuries when a mini truck lost control and overturned following a tyre burst on Sitapur Road in BKT police area on Saturday morning.

5-year-old girl raped; accused tantrik held

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

A tantrik allegedly raped a five-year-old girl in his hut in Mohanlaljanj on Friday after luring her with samosas, police said. When the girl shared her ordeal with her family, villagers beat up the tantrik and handed him over to police, who have registered a case in this regard.

deceased. "Prima facie, it appears to be a case of suicide. Further action will be taken on the basis of the post-mortem report," he added.

Meanwhile, a doctor running a private clinic in the Dubagga Malaha area was accused of molesting a woman patient who had visited his clinic for medical consultation.

कार्यालय नगर निगम, देहरादून सार्वजनिक निविदा सूचना। नगर निगम क्षेत्रांतर्गत 100 वार्डों में स्थित विद्युत पोल जो जैरो है जहाँ है उसी स्थिति में पोल क्योरक के माध्यम से विज्ञापन प्रदर्शित करने हेतु अनुभव की तिथि से कुल 02 वर्ष हेतु सार्वजनिक निविदा सूचना प्रकाशन की तिथि से दिनांक 09.11.2024 को अपराह्न 2:00 बजे तक पोल क्योरक विज्ञापन की ई०निविदा आमंत्रित की जाती है-

इंडियन बैंक Indian Bank (A Govt. of India Undertaking) POSSESSION NOTICE (for Immovable Property) [Under Rule-8 (1) of Security Interest (Enforcement) Rules, 2002] Whereas, the undersigned being the authorised officer of the Indian Bank under the Securitisation and Reconstruction of Financial Assets and Enforcement of Security Interest Act 2002, (Act 54 of 2002) and in exercise of powers conferred under section 13(12) read with rule 3, 8 and 9 of the Security Interest (Enforcement) Rules, 2002 issued a demand notice as detailed here in below calling upon the borrower to repay the amount mentioned in the notice within 60 days from the date of receipt of the said notice.

RSS endorses 'batengey toh katengey' spirit

PTI ■ MATHURA



Hindu unity is crucial for everyone's good and "we should be cautious" against forces that seek to divide in the name of religion, caste and ideology, RSS general secretary Dattatreya Hosabale said on Saturday virtually endorsing the "batengey toh katengey (divided we fall)" remark by Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath.

"If we discriminate/divide on the basis of language, state, upper and backward castes, then we will be decimated (Hum jaati, bhasha, prant agla-pitchda bhed se hum karengy toh hum katengey)," the leader of the BJP's ideological fountainhead told reporters on the second and concluding day of the Rashtriya Swyamsevak Sangh's national meet here.

He was asked about the "batengey toh katengey" slogan first made by Adityanath and subsequently flagged by Prime Minister Narendra Modi during his rally in Thane, Maharashtra on October 5. Hosabale stressed that while the statement itself is not the focus, the spirit behind it is significant.

"The issue is of Hindu unity. In fact, we often say that those who forget the Hindu thought invite disaster, lose their family, land and places of worship. The spirit is the same. The issue

is of unity in society. (Samaj ekatmata se nahi rahega toh .. itihaas kehta hai.. hum to kehte hain jab jab Hindu bhav ko bhoole aayi vipada mahaan bhai tootey dharti koi mitey dharma sansthan .. yeh hamara geet hai ... toh usko aajkal ki bhasha main aisa apne jo kaha ho sakti hai. Mudda kya hain. Samaj ki ekta," the RSS leader said.

Asserting that unity is essential for any nation, he said mere speeches are insufficient and real efforts are required to foster it.

"We have to inculcate it in our behaviour. The good thing is that many religious and other organisations are now understanding this and supporting it. Hindu unity is the RSS' pledge," he said, adding Sangh reflects the voice of the society.

"Hindu unity is for everyone's good, for global happiness and peace. Hindu unity is important to ensure one's safety and for world harmony. That is why we back Hindu unity and there are no two views on this," he said.

The RSS veteran cautioned that there were "forces" working to "divide Hindus" on religious and caste lines.

"Some forces seek to divide in the name of religion and caste, ideology and other ways so we have to be cautious against them," he said.

On October 5, Prime Minister Narendra Modi also flagged the issue of Hindu unity at a rally in Thane, Maharashtra where he said, "Agar hum batenge, toh bantney waley mehfil sajaenge (if we are divided, then those who seek to do so

would celebrate)." Asked about the meeting between Adityanath and RSS chief Mohan Bhagwat, he said that the chief minister had mainly come to discuss about the upcoming Kumbh in Prayagraj.

"He (Adityanath) said that efforts will be made to make this year's Kumbh more 'saarthak' (meaningful) and 'yashasvi' (successful) than the last time. He also presented the plans prepared for this to the Sangh officials," the RSS general secretary said.

Hosabale said that the main request of the chief minister was to encourage people from tribal society and their religious leadership to attend Kumbh as due to some reasons they are not able to reach in the numbers in which they should be represented.

He requested that the RSS also extend invitation to them so that all sections of society can participate in this sacred work, Hosabale added.

"He remarked that the Kumbh is not only a religious event but a national celebration that showcases the country's cultural unity," Hosabale said.

He said that those who bathe in the holy Ganga should also take the message of the Ganga's purity and environmental purity and spread this sacred thought to every corner of the country.

Man arrested for raping 16-year-old daughter

Saharanpur/Bareilly (PTI): A 16-year-old girl was allegedly raped by her father on multiple occasions here, police said on Saturday.

Superintendent of Police (Rural) Sagar Jain told PTI that the girl's mother died a decade ago.

On Thursday, the victim reached the police station and alleged that her father had raped her on several occasions. When she protested, he would beat her, Jain said. The victim informed the police that she had told her family members about the incident. Following this, the Panchayat had warned her father. But he continued to rape her, he said.

Based on her complaint, an FIR was registered and the victim was sent for medical examination. The accused was arrested and further investigation is underway, Jain added.

In another case, A pharmacist at the district hospital allegedly hanged himself to death in his house in the Izzatnagar area of Bareilly, police said on Saturday.

Neeraj Balmiki, 49, a resident of Delapir Kailashpuram Colony was found dead on Friday night, they said. Station House Officer (SHO) of Izzatnagar police station Dhananjay Kumar Pandey said Balmiki was upset over some family issues.

It appears to be a case of suicide, however, the matter is being probed, he said.

CM: Hindi a powerful unifier of nation

PNS ■ GORAKHPUR



Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath, on Saturday, said that Hindi was a powerful unifier of the nation.

Addressing the Samvadi Gorakhpur event, organised by a leading media group in Gorakhpur, Chief Minister Yogi remarked that Hindi played a vital role in connecting the leaders with the public during India's freedom movement.

"Only a language spoken from the heart can captivate people; Hindi has united the nation by serving as a strong communication bridge from North to South and East to West," he said.

"Efforts are often made to spread misconceptions about Hindi, yet it remains the strongest medium to connect the nation. Prime Minister (Narendra) Modi embraces this by frequently using Hindi, establishing dialogue not only within India but also on global platforms," the chief minister said.

The chief minister emphasised the significance of the Hindi language, the vision of a self-reliant India, the uplift of workers, and the value of local products. He noted that the Hindi language, regarded as the fourth pillar of democracy, plays a crucial role in raising public awareness and bringing societal issues to the government's attention.

"In our parliamentary democracy, the media has naturally been recognised as the fourth pillar. During the freedom struggle, newspapers and magazines fuelled a wave of public consciousness. Revolutionary groups and leaders were often associated with publications, striving to awaken the masses through platforms like Swaraj, Rashtra, and Dharmayug. Many poems and writings emerged that stirred the conscience of the nation," he remarked.

The chief minister also recalled the final words of Ram Prasad Bismil, hero of the Kakori Train Action, noting how his

words inspired countless young people to join the freedom movement.

Chief Minister Yogi observed that while Shyam Narayan Pandey celebrated the valour of Maharana Pratap in his writings, Subhadra Kumari Chauhan highlighted the courage and empowerment of Indian women by portraying Rani Lakshmbai of Jhansi. The words of Ramdhari Singh Dinkar, dedicated to the revolutionaries who sacrificed everything for India's independence, continue to inspire us all, he added.

He said, "Kalam aaj unki jai bol, jinhone matrubhumi ke liye sab kuch samarpit kar diya. Unke liye nahi jinhone satta ke liye swabhiman ke saath samjhauta kiya ho. This is the same inspiration that Bharatendu Harishchandra gave us."

Referring to the G-20 Summit, Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath noted that the event greatly enhanced India's image on the global stage, with Hindi serving as the official language of communication. He highlighted how the Government of India chose Hindi as the primary medium of expression for the summit.

The chief minister shared that participants from Germany at the G-20 Summit remarked that India's hosting of the event was unique and distinct from past summits.

Discussing the vision of a self-reliant India, the Chief Minister endorsed Prime Minister Narendra Modi's 'Vocal for Local' initiative. He explained that under the One District One Product (ODOP) scheme in Uttar Pradesh, the unique products of 75 districts are being developed and promoted.

The chief minister highlighted the courage and empowerment of Indian women by offering economic support to artisans and craftsmen in UP, with skilled artisans exporting products worth Rs 2 lakh crore annually.

He shared that through the Vishwakarma Shram Samman Yojana, rural artisans in Uttar Pradesh are receiving training and tools to help them achieve self-reliance in their traditional crafts.

Additionally, the Mukhyamantri Yuva Udyami Yojana is creating new employment opportunities by offering interest-free loans to young entrepreneurs, he added.

Chief Minister Yogi emphasised the importance of reviving the tradition of writing and dialogue, noting that Hindi cinema and newspapers have brought global recognition to the Hindi language.

He underscored the need to further strengthen Hindi in the digital age, asserting that the vision of a self-reliant and developed India can be achieved by valuing language, handicrafts, and skilled craftsmanship. Only through pride and respect for Indian culture and language can the nation be led toward a strong future, he added.

Bypoll: BJP takes care of caste arithmetic, winnability factors

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

Apparently drawing a lesson from the disastrous performance in June 2024 Lok Sabha elections in Uttar Pradesh, the ruling Bharatiya Janata Party has applied caution in selection of candidates for the bypolls to nine assembly seats in Uttar Pradesh. The party has taken care of caste arithmetic and winnability factors in candidate selection. Poor ticket distribution was considered one of the main reasons for the setback faced by the BJP in the 2024 Lok Sabha election, where the ruling party could not secure a majority on its own.

Now the BJP appears to be on a course-correction mission, as can be understood from the candidates it has declared for the assembly bypolls, in Uttar Pradesh. In UP, the BJP is down to 33 seats from 62 in 2019.

In nine poll-bound assembly constituencies, three had BJP MLAs and four had Samajwadi Party MLAs. One MLA each from BJP allies Rashtriya Lok Dal (and NISHAD Party had the other two seats. The BJP has given the Meerapur seat of Muzaffarnagar to RLD to contest and has declared candidates for the remaining eight seats, with a target to win at least six.

The most notable is the fact that four of the nine SP candidates are Muslims, while the none of the BJP candidates are

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In Muslim-dominated Kundarki, which has elected only a Muslim MLA in the last three decades, the BJP has fielded Ramvir Singh Thakur, a Rajput, to let Muslim votes get divided among SP and Bahujan Samaj Party. Ghaziabad is a strong seat for the BJP, having elected a BJP MLA thrice in the last four elections. Here, the BJP has fielded Mayor Sanjeev Sharma, a Brahmin, against a Jatav SP candidate and BSP's Bania candidate.

The BJP looks to win for the third consecutive time in Alickar's Khair by giving a ticket to Surendra Diler, the son of former Hathras MP, the

late Rajvir Singh Diler. Surendra might get sympathy votes.

Karhal is the seat vacated by SP national president Akhilesh Yadav. Here, the SP has fielded Akhilesh's nephew, Tej Pratap Yadav, while the BJP has fielded Anujesh Yadav, a relative of Yadav's, making it a contest within the first family of the Samajwadi Party.

Former MLA Deepak Patel has been fielded in Phulpur, which will help the BJP get Kurmi votes, which saw an attrition from the BJP in the last two elections. Patel is the son of former Phulpur MP Keshari Devi Patel.

In Katherai seat of Ambedkar Nagar, the BJP has fielded former BSP MLA Dharam Raj Nishad, who was elected three times consecutively from there. He can help the BJP get Nishad, Dalit, and Extremely Backward Classes (EBC) votes.

In Majhawan of Mirzapur district, the BJP has fielded former MLA Sushimta Maurya, who had won in 2017. While the seat has a majority population of Nishads and Brahmins, it also has a substantial Maurya population.

In Kanpur's Sisamau, where the SP has fielded the wife of convicted MLA Irfan Solanki, Nasseem Solanki, the BJP has fielded Suresh Awasthi, who lost to Solanki in 2017 and then in Arya Nagar in 2022. It will help the party win Brahmin votes, which are in substantial numbers in the constituency.

Process begins to cancel arms licences of main accused's kin

Bahraich (PTI): The district administration has begun the process to cancel four arms licences of the family of Abdul Hameed, the main accused in the Bahraich violence case in which a youth named Ram Gopal Mishra was killed.

The administration has also started an investigation into the reasons that prevented an ambulance from not reaching on time after Mishra was shot. A senior official gave this information on Saturday.

District Magistrate (DM) Monika Rani told PTI that instructions have been given to cancel the arms licences of the family of Abdul Hameed, the main accused in the incident that took place in Maharajganj on October 13.

"We have received information from media and other sources that his family has four arms licences, although the actual number of licensed weapons could not be confirmed yet. But in this regard, the in-charge officer of ordinance (city magistrate) has been asked to take full details and submit a report," she said.

She said previous records about when and who issued these arms licenses and on what basis are also being checked.

Mishra (22), a resident of Rehua Mansoor village, died after being shot during the violence during the Durga idol immersion procession in Maharajganj town under Hardi

police station on October 13. After this, tensions spread in Mahsi, Maharajganj and Bahraich city.

On the incident that took place in Maharajganj, Rani said, "In a viral video, Ram Gopal Mishra is seen being taken to the hospital on a bike, the authenticity of the video is being investigated."

It was also heard that when Mishra was shot, the ambulance could not come on time to take him, and the tehsildar present there refused to take the injured youth in his official vehicle.

In this regard, Rani said the tehsildar has denied this allegation.

People are also claiming that the vehicle of a village head was parked at the spot, who refused to give it to for the injured Mishra.

Rani said as soon as the complaint was received, the tehsildar was removed and attached to the district headquarters, adding investigation of the entire incident has begun.

"We are also looking into the reasons for the ambulance not reaching the spot," she said.

According to Rani, the situation in the district is now completely normal and there is no tension in the Mahsi-Maharajganj area with banks, markets and other institutions starting to operate.

On Saturday, people

Yogi warns against negligence in addressing public grievances

PNS ■ GORAKHPUR

Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath has issued firm directives to officials, emphasising that there must be no delay or negligence in addressing public grievances and assisting victims.

"If any negligence occurs, appropriate action will be taken against those responsible," he stated.

While addressing public concerns during the Janata Darshan held at the Gorakhnath temple on Saturday morning, the chief minister instructed, "If there are any obstacles in resolving an individual's issue, these should be identified and swiftly addressed. If any case is intentionally left unresolved at any level, the accountability of the responsible officials should be ensured."

At the Janata Darshan, held in front of Mahant Digvijaynath Smriti Bhawan within the temple complex, the chief minister

met with approximately 300 individuals and listened to their concerns.

Reiterating his government's commitment to resolving every individual's issue effectively, he urged people not to worry about anything, or feel distressed. He further instructed the administrative and police officials present to resolve public issues in a timely, fair and efficient manner.

In certain cases, he asked officials to investigate reasons for any lack of administrative support and ensure immediate assistance for all affected individuals.

The chief minister directed strict legal action against those involved in land grabbing. He assured those seeking housing and other essential needs that every eligible person would benefit from government welfare schemes. He instructed officers to ensure housing under the PM Awas Yojana or Mukhyamantri Awas Yojana for those genuinely in need and deprived of shelter.

As in previous Janata Darshan sessions, several individuals came requesting financial assistance for medical treatment. In response, Chief Minister Yogi directed the officers to expedite the hospital estimate process and submit it promptly to the government, assuring that sufficient support would be provided from the Chief Minister's Discretionary Fund for necessary treatment.

Many women, accompanied by their young children, attended the Janata Darshan, where the chief minister warmly greeted them, offering chocolates along with his blessings to the children.

After offering prayers to Guru Gorakhnath and paying respects at the Samadhi Sthal of his Guru, Brahmachin Mahant Avedyanath, Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath visited the gushala within the Gorakhnath temple complex on Saturday morning.

Two accused arrested for cow slaughter

Sultanpur/Bareilly (PTI): Two people have been arrested on Saturday for their alleged involvement in cow slaughter, police said. The police recovered 100 kgs of cow meat, an iron hook, an iron knife and four calf legs from the possession of the accused, they said.

According to police, they received information about cow slaughter in Dhelha village on Friday. Following this, they reached the spot and arrested Hashim Ali and Aslam Ali. The police buried the recovered meat in a pit, they said.

SHO of Kotwali police station Akhandev Mishra said that a case was registered against the accused under the Uttar Pradesh Prevention of Cow Slaughter Act. Further investigation is underway.

Meanwhile, in a suspected case of revenge attack over an old dispute, a man was allegedly beaten to death by four persons in the Bareilly district, police said on Saturday. The incident took place on

Friday night under the Shahi police station area when the victim, Ravi (21), was returning home from a function with a few other people. The attackers, identified as Aman, Akash, Subhash and Shripal, confronted Ravi and thrashed him with sticks and iron rods. They also fired in the air to intimidate the bystanders, police said, adding that three others -- Deepu, Sonu and Gaurav -- also sustained injuries in the attack.

"Ravi who sustained critical injuries succumbed to his wounds at the hospital. A case has been registered based on a complaint filed by the deceased's wife." Additional Superintendent of Police (North) Mukesh Chandra Mishra said. The police suspect the incident to be a fallout of an old dispute between the attackers and Ravi's younger brother Amit. One of the accused has been taken into custody while efforts are on to trace the others, the officer said.

Deepotsav to bring spirit of India together in Ayodhya

PNS ■ LUCKNOW/AYODHYA

The UP government is set to celebrate a very special Deepotsav this year, marking the first Deepotsav after the consecration of Lord Ram's idol on January 22, 2024. This eighth consecutive Deepotsav since 2017 will bring the spirit of India together in Ayodhya, with Ramlila performances by artists from six countries and a vibrant showcase of art and culture by national and state talents.

A grand procession of 250 artists will showcase Uttar Pradesh's rich heritage through folk dances, while an additional 240 artists from other states will perform in Ayodhya. Furthermore, 800 artists will engage audiences across various venues with folk dances and singing. Over three days (October 28 to 30), more than 1,200 artists from India and abroad, and across states will captivate the Deepotsav audience, immersing them in a spirit of devotion.

International troupes from

Malaysia, Myanmar, Indonesia, Cambodia, Thailand, and Nepal, as well as local groups, will perform Ramlila, enriching this historic Deepotsav. A vibrant procession will also take place, featuring 250 artists performing traditional dances, including Farahi, Bahurupiya, Awadhi folk, Bamrasiya, Tharu, Deewari, Dhobiya, Rai, Dhedhiya, Mayur and other tribal folk dances rooted in India's folk culture.

Over 240 artists from various states will showcase their traditional folk dances at Deepotsav, including Kashmir's Rauf, Uttarakhand's Chhapeli, Haryana's Ghoomar, Madhya Pradesh's Baredi, Punjab's Bhangra/Gatka, Maharashtra's Dhol Tasha, Gujarat's Dandiyar-Garba, Himachal Pradesh's Shirmour Nati, and Chhattisgarh's Gandi dance. Additionally, artists from 15 states, including Sikkim, Assam, Chandigarh, Madhya Pradesh, Jharkhand, Bihar and Rajasthan, will present the diverse art and culture of their regions in Ayodhya over the



three-day celebration. Under the guidance of the Yogi government, Ayodhya will host spiritual and cultural programmes at various locations for three days. Approximately 800 artists will present folk dances and songs at venues such as Guptra Ghat, Badi Devkali, Ram Ghat, Birla

Ranjana Nev from Saharanpur will stage a dance performance on the Ramayana.

PREPARATIONS IN FULL SWING

Preparations for Deepotsav are in full swing, transforming Ayodhya into a vision of Treta Yuga for three days (October 28 to 30). Ram nagari is being beautifully adorned, and, in a unique initiative, a striking 'Pushpak Viman' is being crafted, captivating all who see it. With Ram Lalla now seated in the grand temple, this year's Deepotsav will be celebrated on an even grander scale to mark Lord Ram's arrival. The event will feature 25 lakh diyas illuminating 55 ghats, including Ram Ki Paidi. For the first time, 10,000 local residents will also have the opportunity to participate in the festival, making this Deepotsav a truly community-centered celebration.

The Tourism department has appointed agencies for the beautification of Ayodhya, including Vivid India Advertising and Marketing

Company. According to Savina Jaitley from the company, a 'Pushpak Viman' is being constructed at the rear of Lata Chowk using eco-friendly canvas instead of flex to keep Ayodhya pollution-free. Standing at 36 feet high and 24 feet wide, this 'Pushpak Viman' will sit two feet off the ground and serve as a selfie spot.

The 'Pushpak Viman' will feature fiber statues of Mata Sita, Lord Ram, his three brothers, and Hanuman. Lord Ram's statue will be 5 feet 10 inches, Mata Sita's 5 feet 4 inches, with Hanuman seated at their feet. Jaitley noted that while her team has arrived from Delhi and Lucknow, the artisans are local. An eight-foot-high Ram Darbar is also being constructed at Ram Ki Paidi, where the deities will be seated, alongside 11 themed gates throughout Ayodhya Dham, including three within Ram Katha Park. To further adorn the path to the Ram temple, four main gates will be decorated and 10 quintals of flowers have been ordered for this.

1,954 students to be conferred degrees at IIT-BHU convocation

PNS ■ VARANASI

The Indian Institute of Technology-Banaras Hindu University will celebrate its 13th Convocation Ceremony on October 28, marking a significant milestone for 1,954 graduates from various disciplines.

The event, to be held at the Swatantrata Bhawan, will bring together faculty, students and their families to commemorate years of dedication and academic excellence.

The ceremony will honour graduating students and recognise 60 exceptional medalists for their outstanding achievements in academics and leadership, with medals presented by Union Education Minister Dharmendra Pradhan, who will be the chief guest.

The most prestigious honours of the day will be the President's Gold Medal and the Director's Gold Medal. The President's Gold Medal, presented for the highest academic performance across all undergraduate programmes, will be awarded to Aditya Kumar Nayak of Chemical Engineering. The Director's Gold Medal, honouring all-round excellence, will go to Bhavya Malhotra of Electrical Engineering, in recognition of her academic achievements, leadership, and active participation in extracurricular activities.

Additionally, 17 MTech students will be recognised for their academic distinction, including Atith Vidyadhar Chitnis (Biochemical Engineering), Sharon Roy (Biomedical Engineering),



The President's Gold Medal will be awarded to Aditya Kumar Nayak of Chemical Engineering, while the Director's Gold Medal will go to Bhavya Malhotra of Electrical Engineering



Akash Gupta (Ceramic Engineering), Rubal Jain (Chemical Engineering), Himanshu Yadav (Civil Engineering, RP Singh Gold Medal), Akhil Rao (Computer Science & Engineering), Harsh Hasmukhbhai Shah (Decision Sciences & Engineering), Akhil Kumar Jha (Electrical Engineering), Sriharsha Deevi (TN Srivastava Memorial Award), Gummuluri Pavan Kumar (Electronics Engineering), Suvrateshwar Kumar Dwivedi (Sanjeev Memorial Gold Medal in Electronics Engineering), Ashis Halder (Materials Science & Technology), Tejasvi Singh (Mechanical Engineering), Devendra Pratap Singh (SK Memorial Gold Medal for MTECH in Mechanical Engineering), Dhruva Mehrotra (Metallurgical Engineering), Jatin (Pharmaceutical Engineering), Sagar Acharjee (Chemistry),

and Anubhav Mishra (Physics). In the Integrated Dual Degree (IDD) category, outstanding performances will also be recognised, including Aditi Sammi (Biochemical Engineering), Alagu Oviya KP (Bioengineering), Parvathaneni Divya Sree (Ceramic Engineering), Nanwani Lavina Ajay (Industrial Chemistry), Piyush Kumar (Civil Engineering), Dhruv Gupta (Computer Science & Engineering), Antara Banerjee (Electrical Engineering, Power Electronics), Eeshan Ketkar (Materials Science & Technology), Masetty Gayathri (Mathematics and Computing), Lisa Khuntia (Mechanical Engineering), Sai Saswat Tripathy (Metallurgical Engineering) Jayant Jain (Mining Engineering), Sagorika Nag (Pharmaceutical Engineering and Technology) and Pathma Eswaran (Engineering Physics).

Among the BTech medalists, Pokala Gouthami Sree will be recognised as the top female achiever in Chemical Engineering, while Navvay Dhinra and Geetika Singh will be honoured for excellence in Civil Engineering. Darshil Agrawal will be awarded for his outstanding performance in Computer Science & Engineering, and Ruhi Asitkumar Joshi will receive the highest CPI among female students in the same field. Muskan Gupta will be honoured for her achievements in Environmental Engineering. Anish Kumar will lead Mechanical Engineering, with Shreya Sinha as the top female in the discipline. Aryan Gupta will be awarded for excellence in Metallurgical Engineering, with Tisha Sharma as the top female achiever in this field. Harshit Kumar and Vidushi Gupta will also be acknowledged for their achievements in Mining Engineering.

Additional honours will go to Hritwik Bhardwaj and Monisha Mondal for outstanding performance in Pharmaceutical Engineering, with Shubham Kumar Singh receiving a special award for leadership and academic excellence in the same field. Akriti Shukla will be recognised for exceptional performance in Engineering Physics, and Vedant Mishra will receive the Best Thesis Award in the same discipline. The convocation will celebrate graduates and IIT-BHU's commitment to academic excellence and the shaping of future leaders.

22-year-old woman found hanging

Prayagraj (PNS): A 22-year-old woman allegedly hanged herself to death in Barha of Khiri police station area of Meja in Prayagraj on Saturday afternoon. Police reached the spot after getting the information and after questioning, sent the body for the post-mortem examination. As per reports, Saraswati Devi, wife of Kamlesh Advaisi, a resident of Barha police station Kheri, was home alone after her husband, had gone to the field to work. Around 1 pm, when sister-in-law Deepa called out, she did not get any response. When she went inside, she found Saraswati Devi hanging from the ceiling. The family members reached the spot and informed police. Upon being informed, police reached the place and sent the body for autopsy. Saraswati Devi got married a year ago in Khadihwa village of Chakghat police station in Madhya Pradesh. Police said it was not clear why the woman chose to end her life. Khiri police station in-charge Ashish Singh said that the body had been sent for autopsy. "The reason for her death will be ascertained once we get the post-mortem report," he added. Meanwhile, the body of a 40-year-old man, identified as Vijay Kumar Mishra, was found in a hotel room in Civil Lines, Prayagraj, on Friday. Police broke open the door and recovered the body. A post-mortem conducted on Saturday confirmed the cause of death as heart failure. Civil Lines Inspector Ram Ashray stated that Mishra, a lawyer, resided in Gangotri Nagar Colony in Shivpur, Varanasi. He had come to Prayagraj to renew his ID card at the bar. On Friday, his wife attempted to call him several times, but he did not respond. Concerned, she contacted Varanasi police, who then reached out to their Prayagraj counterparts. After speaking to Mishra's fellow lawyers, the police discovered he was staying in a hotel in Civil Lines. Civil Lines police reached the location and began their investigation. Looking through the window, they spotted his body on the floor. The family informed the police that his mother had recently passed away, and he had been feeling upset.

'Make roads pothole-free'

PNS ■ VARANASI

Uttar Pradesh's Finance and Parliamentary Affairs Minister and minister in-charge of the district, Suresh Khanna, on Saturday, directed the Public Works Department (PWD) to re-inspect all the roads with immediate effect and get them repaired to make 100 per cent roads pothole-free. Chairing a meeting of the District Planning Committee here on Saturday, Khanna said that in line with the chief minister's aim to make the state a trillion-dollar economy, the main focus was on agriculture and related sectors such as milk, fisheries, etc, and the manufacturing and service sectors.

In the meeting attended by 19 members of the district panchayat and 13 corporators besides officials, the minister reviewed various schemes of 38 departments. He expressed displeasure over the low registration in PM Suryaghar Yojana as compared to the target and asked the public representatives to make all possible efforts to promote the scheme so that maximum number of people could get its benefits. He directed the officials to organise camps to resolve the problems being faced by the people in this scheme and to rectify them with immediate effect. In the review of NEDA, Babu Ji Kalyan Singh Gram Unnati Yojana, Deendayal Upadhyaya Solar Gramin Bazaar Yojana, the public representatives were directed to inform the government about the installation of lights. Khanna directed the officials to give information of all the government subsidised schemes to the public representatives and also include their suggestions. "Solution of public problems should be everyone's priority. Varanasi being the prime minister's parliamentary constituency, everyone's attention is on it so everyone should do special work with extra caution to make the city an ideal one," he said.

On the complaint by the public representatives about the electricity department continuously giving wrong bills to consumers, the minister expressed strong displeasure and asked the officials concerned to check it with immediate effect. He said electricity bills should not be given to the consumers without monitoring. Khanna asked the officials to organise a meeting with all the MLAs and public representatives of the district on November 5 for various projects of the tube well and irrigation departments, their modernisation, renovation etc so that all the public representatives could be provided with tube wells and means of irrigation as per the demand in their area. He instructed the officials to inform the local public representatives about



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the foundation stone laying, inauguration, training of farmers, seed distribution etc under all the schemes over the phone and also invite them. "Ensure their maximum participation," he added.

In the review of Jal Nigam, the minister directed the officials concerned to do random checking on the restoration scheme of Jal Jeevan Mission and asked them to send proposals for Pradhan Mantri Awas only for those eligible persons who fulfilled the prescribed eligibility criteria and release the second installment of toilets being built under Swachhata Abhiyan only after geo-tagging so that there was no problem in ODF Plus scheme.

The local corporators raised the issue of the dilapidated buildings of primary schools of Shivala, Bhairon Nath and Bhadaini, on which the minister directed the officials to send a proposal for the repair of the dilapidated government school buildings and get them repaired under the Kayakalp scheme.

Pradhan to inaugurate six projects

PNS ■ VARANASI

The Indian Institute of Technology-Banaras Hindu University is set to lay the foundation stones of projects worth Rs 400 crore to enhance its academic and research capabilities. The foundation stones will be laid by Union Education Minister Dharmendra Pradhan, following the 13th Convocation ceremony scheduled for October 28.

The projects include Centenary Innovation and Research Park (CIRP) which will have six floors apart from the ground floor (Ground + 6 floors). This state-of-the-art

building will feature a convention area, digital library, committee rooms, a reception area with a waiting lounge, 16 passenger lifts, a goods lift, laboratories, faculty chambers, halls for research officers, and a control room; and Centenary Defence and Precision Engineering Hub (CDPEH) which will also have six floors apart from the ground floor. This hub aims to be a leader in defence and precision engineering, incorporating essential systems such as uninterrupted power supply (UPS) system, fire fighting and alarm systems, along with 16 passenger lifts.

Besides, the projects include Malviya Student Activity and Computing Centre (MSACC) with ground and two floors. The MSACC will consist of two blocks, featuring a 500-seat auditorium, a cultural activity centre, student computing facilities, offices, merchandise shops, toilet blocks and a projection room; new hostels for boys and girls, each with still (parking) and 7 floors and each having 524 double-seated rooms. Comprehensive amenities will include internal water supply, fire safety systems, 16 passenger lifts, diesel generator sets, and water tanks; staff housing

which includes Type-II Apartments: 80 (Still + 10) and Type-III Apartments: 40 (Still + 10), each apartment complex having modern amenities including fire safety measures, wash basins, taps, bathroom fittings, and ample parking. IIT-BHU Director Prof Amit Patra stated that these projects are designed to foster innovation, enhance research capabilities and improve facilities for students and staff. These developments are a testament to IIT-BHU's commitment to creating a world-class educational environment and promoting excellence in technology and engineering.

Green fireworks, laser show on Dev Deepawali



PNS ■ VARANASI

This November 15, the sacred city of Kashi will come alive, as millions gather to witness the world-famous Dev Deepawali. Under the Yogi Adityanath government's leadership, the city has prepared a captivating experience for the visitors with a stunning confluence of a laser show and vibrant fireworks set to the hymns of Lord Shiva (Shiv Bhajan).

This year's celebration promises an enchanting sight, as the sky above the revered river Ganga lights up with colorful patterns and intricate fireworks. Both banks of the north-flowing river Jahnvi (Ganga) will be adorned with shimmering lights, and Kashi's iconic semi-circular ghats will glow in the soft light of earthen lamps, creating a celestial garland across the riverscape.

Moreover, a special green fireworks display will take place on the sands near the Ganga Gate of the grand Shri Kashi Vishwanath Dham, synchronised to the mystical hymns and melodies dedicated to Lord Shiva.

Notably, the Yogi government has planned an impressive arrangement of 12 lakh lamps, complemented by laser shows and fireworks, to ensure this

year's Dev Deepawali is truly divine and unforgettable. Deputy Director of Tourism Rajendra Kumar Rawat said that this year's Dev Deepawali in Kashi would be a unique blend of traditional art and advanced technology. For the first time, green fireworks and a laser show, set to the music of Shiv bhajans, will create a magical 10-minute display using America's ultra-modern Fire One Firing system. Visitors to Kashi will enjoy the iconic Ganga Aarti along with green fireworks lighting up the sands across the river. Manoj Gautam, CEO of Axis Communication, the company behind the green fireworks, shared that the show will cover about 1.5 kilometres along the river's sandbank, featuring 9 to 10 music tracks, including 'Har Har Shambhu' and 'Shiv Tandava', celebrating Lord Shiva. The sky will light up with rainbow-coloured fireworks, creating vivid images that will be visible from afar. Sanjay Pratap Singh, India head of the company, added that the green fireworks are environmentally friendly, producing sounds below 70 decibels. The mix of fireworks, lasers and music will offer an awe-inspiring experience, with vibrant colours and patterns illuminating the sky.

Health dept alert for Diwali, Chhath

PNS ■ VARANASI

The district administration is busy completing preparations for the successful organisation of Deepotsav, Diwali, Bhai Dooj, Chhath festivals and Dev Deepawali. Along with this, the Health department has also directed the district level government hospitals to ensure medical arrangements for any emergency during these festivals. Chief Medical Officer Dr Sandeep Chaudhary said that there was a possibility of increase in air pollution during these festivals hence arrangements for treatment of respiratory patients should also be ensured.

In view of the instructions issued by the principal secretary (health), the CMO said that emergency services in all hospitals should be run smoothly round the clock and an adequate number of doctors and staff should be deployed in emergency services, especially for cases of burns due to fire-crackers, road accidents due to alcohol consumption, food poisoning and eye injuries. He said arrangements for proper treatment should be ensured for such cases.

The CMO said along with this, beds should be kept reserved for respiratory and burn patients and all necessary equipment for investigation and pathology should be kept functional. The officials in-charge of 108, 102 and Advanced Life Support (ALS) ambulance services were directed to ensure timely availability of ambulances in any emergency situation. The CMO said that leaves should not be granted to doctors and paramedical staff during festivals except for unavoidable reasons. He said availability of doctors at community

health centres (CHCs) should be ensured and all doctors should maintain coordination with all units so that referral up and referral down could be done smoothly. The CMO asked the officials to ensure availability of medicines and necessary equipment in all government hospitals in advance. Doctors and paramedical staff engaged in emergency duty were instructed to ensure that they remained present in the hospital as per the prescribed dress code and time and carry out medical work so that no adverse situation arose in case of any contingency.

Cyclothon by CORE raises awareness on cleanliness

PNS ■ PRAYAGRAJ

The Central Organisation for Railway Electrification (CORE), Prayagraj, organised a cyclothon (cycle rally) on Saturday as part of the special campaign 4.0 of 'Swachhata Pakhwada'. The main objective of the rally was to raise public awareness about cleanliness and environmental protection. The rally, flagged off by Deputy General Manager Kalyan Singh, passed through Subhash Crossing, Hanuman Temple, Bhardwaj Rishi Ashram, and Chandrashekhar Azad Park. During this time, an awareness campaign was conducted regarding cleanliness and environmental protection, with speeches delivered to the public along the route, encouraging people to use bicycles as much as possible. Present on the occasion was Deputy Finance Advisor and Chief Accountant KK Srivastava, Senior Assistant Finance Advisor AKL Srivastava, Assistant Executive Engineer Phool Chand, and Public Relations Officer Vimal Kumar.

CALL FOR HONESTY, INTEGRITY

Indian Railways has a fully digitised infrastructure, allowing every task and issue to be monitored through a dashboard, which enhances transparency and efficiency. Despite having stringent laws like the Prevention of Corruption Act and the PMLA, corruption persists, highlighting a significant social issue. A senior IRAS Officer in North Central Railway (NCR) emphasised that values such as honesty and integrity should be instilled from childhood through role models like parents and teachers. Unfortunately, many adults fail to practise what they preach, leading to a disconnect between words and actions. "To achieve zero tolerance for corruption, we must first change ourselves and set a positive example for future generations. Vigilance at all levels is crucial, alongside appropriate mechanisms for reporting and addressing corruption. While exemplary punishment for corrupt practices is necessary, care must be taken not to penalise unintentional mistakes. Fostering a culture of integrity will ultimately lead to a more ethical society," he added.

Production of organic manure begins in BLW

Varanasi (PNS): An innovative process of making eco-friendly organic manure by reusing the organic waste coming out of the premises has now been started at Banaras Locomotive Works. BLW General Manager SK Srivastava inaugurated the project by cutting the ribbon. The project will make a significant contribution towards reducing the emission of harmful gases on the campus and maintaining climate balance. Dry leaves, cut bushes and other organic waste collected in BLW premises will be finely sorted and chopped and microbial culture, nano catalyst and essential nutrients will be added to it. After mixing these elements, the organic waste will be covered by putting it in six special beds of 4x10x4.5 metres, and the temperature will be controlled by automatic sensors. In this process, microbes and nano catalysts will convert organic waste into valuable organic manure within a month. The general manager said that this project would play an important role in reducing the emission of harmful gases.

Phulpur bypoll: BJP candidate wealthiest

PNS ■ PRAYAGRAJ

In the by-election to the Phulpur assembly seat in Prayagraj, BJP candidate Deepak Patel is the wealthiest candidate compared to others. This has been confirmed in the affidavit he submitted with his nomination papers. He is fond of expensive cars and owns two Fortuner and a Mercedes-Benz, which is said to have a current value of around Rs 75 lakh. Similarly, his wife Richa Singh Patel has an MG Gloster, valued at approximately Rs 32 lakh. Additionally, they own a Colt pistol from the USA, worth about Rs 5 lakh. According to Deepak Patel's affidavit, he possesses movable and immovable property worth about Rs 23 crore, while his wife Richa has property valued at approximately Rs 1.5 crore. They also have gold ornaments worth about Rs 22 lakh and one gram of silver. Richa has 600 grams of gold and silver ornaments weighing 2 kg, valued at around Rs 45 lakh. SP candidate Mujtaba Siddiqui

Youth killed in road mishap

Prayagraj (PNS): A youth was killed after being crushed by a roadways bus on Friday. The incident took place in the area under Manda police station in Prayagraj when 25-year-old Anish Kumar Sonkar fell off his motorcycle following a collision with another bike. Anish was going to Mirzapur to visit relatives with his friend on Friday. As soon as he reached Mirzapur Bhatavra road at around 7:30 pm, a high-speed bike coming from the opposite direction collided with his motorcycle. Before Anish Kumar could get up, a bus coming from behind ran over him, leading to his death

on the spot, while the fellow rider was seriously injured. Anish's mother Tara Devi, who had been waiting until late at night, heard the news of his death, she fell unconscious. Anish was the only brother among 6 siblings. He supported his father by working with a private company in Mumbai. He had returned home from Mumbai on October 21 and went to Mirzapur on the advice of a friend living next door. The local police station in-charge, Anand Singh, stated that Anish was going to Mirzapur on a bike to visit relatives with his friend Kajju.

Effervescence: IIIT-A students showcase talent

Prayagraj (PNS): Fashion shows and group dances marked the second day of 'Effervescence', organised by the Student Gymkhana of the Indian Institute of Information Technology, Allahabad (IIIT-A), on Saturday. The fest will conclude on Sunday evening with a programme featuring the famous singer Sanam Puri and his team in the sports ground of the institute. The second day brought even more excitement, with 'La Frenze', an offline duet dance competition, kicking off the morning at the auditorium. The intellectual atmosphere was charged with 'Cognoscentia at CCS', testing participants' knowledge across various domains. The afternoon featured 'Carpe Diem', an electrifying dance extravaganza, followed by engaging debates at 'Crossroads'. The evening schedule included 'Psychedelia', a showcase by the institute's music society, followed by 'Ala Mode', a fashion show celebrating style and creativity, and a stage play titled 'Innovation'.

Amit Shah to inaugurate passenger terminal at Petrapole

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

Union Home Minister Amit Shah will inaugurate the newly-constructed passenger terminal and a cargo gate named as 'Maitri Dwar' at the India-Bangladesh land border crossing in West Bengal on Sunday. The crossing at Petrapole is the largest land port in South Asia and is a vital gateway for trade and commerce between India and Bangladesh. The union home minister will inaugurate the passenger terminal building and 'Maitri Dwar' at land port Petrapole in West Bengal on Sunday, an official statement said. Petrapole (India)-Benapole (Bangladesh) is one of the most important land border crossings for India-Bangladesh both in terms of trade and passengers movement. Nearly 70 per cent of land-based trade (by value) between India and Bangladesh takes place through this land port



which is under the administrative control of the Land Ports Authority of India, a wing of the Ministry of Home Affairs. It is also the eighth largest international immigration port of India and facilitates movement of over 23.5 lakh passengers annually between India and Bangladesh.

The new passenger terminal at Petrapole is a significant addition to the region's infrastructure and it set to enhance the travel experience between India and Bangladesh, the statement said. With its robust construction and advanced technological systems, the terminal promises safety, efficiency, and comfort for all users.

Designed to reflect the grandeur of international transport hubs, the terminal at Petrapole is equipped with all modern facilities such as VIP lounges, duty free shop, basic medical facility, infant/baby feeding room, food and beverages outlets etc. The terminal has a passenger handling capacity of 20,000 per day, and will house immigration, customs, and security services under one roof. Its built-up area is of 59,800 sq m. The government has also implemented an automated entry and exit systems through flap barrier integration. "Prime Minister Narendra Modi has provided the Land Ports Authority of India a new momentum, direction and dimension to take forward our cultural and trade relations with all South Asian countries," the statement said. This ambitious project is set to redefine infrastructure and service standards, enhancing the travel experience between India and Bangladesh and position-

ing itself as a pivotal hub in Asia. Maitri Dwar is a joint cargo gate at zero line agreed by both the countries. Shah had laid its foundation stone on May 9, 2023. In response to the daily cross-border traffic movement at Petrapole, which sees approximately 600-700 trucks per day, the Land Ports Authority of India established the new common second cargo gate and named it as Maitri Dwar. This dedicated gate for cargo movement is aimed at easing and streamlining the flow of goods between the two nations. The introduction of Maitri Dwar is anticipated to significantly accelerate the release and clearance of goods at the border, thereby enhancing trade efficiency, the statement said. The gate is equipped with modern day facilities such as automatic number plate recognition, boom barriers, facial recognition cameras and access-controlled entry and exit points for trucks from India and Bangladesh.

PM Modi, Spain PM to inaugurate C-295 aircraft facility in Gujarat



PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

Prime Minister Narendra Modi and his Spanish counterpart, Pedro Sanchez, will inaugurate the Tata aircraft complex in Gujarat's Vadodara on Monday for manufacturing C-295 aircraft by Tata Advanced Systems. The Prime Minister's Office (PMO), in a statement on Saturday, said this will be the first private sector final assembly line for military aircraft in India. During the visit to his home state, Modi will also launch

development projects worth more than Rs 4,900 crore in Amreli. The PMO said 40 aircraft will be built in the Vadodara facility as part of the agreement, while aviation behemoth Airbus will deliver 16 aircraft directly. Tata Advanced Systems is responsible for making these 40 aircraft in India and this facility will be the first private sector final assembly line (FAL) for military planes in India. It will involve the full development of a complete ecosystem, from manufacture to assembly, test and qualification, to deliv-

ery and maintenance of the complete life cycle of the aircraft, the statement said. Apart from the Tatas, leading defence public sector units, such as Bharat Electronics and Bharat Dynamics, as well as private micro, small and medium enterprises will contribute to this programme. Modi had laid the foundation stone for the Vadodara final assembly line in October 2022. In Amreli, the prime minister will inaugurate the "Bharat Mata" Sarovar in Dudhala. This project was developed through a collaboration between the state government and the Dholakia Foundation under the public-private partnership (PPP) model. Various rail, road, water and tourism projects, among others, to be inaugurated by Modi will benefit the citizens of Amreli, Jamnagar, Morbi, Devbhoomi Dwarka, Junagadh, Porbandar, Kachchh and Botad districts of the state, the statement said.

Priyanka Gandhi promises to fight for Wayanad's interests

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

Congress leader Priyanka Gandhi Vadra on Saturday said her first journey as a public representative of Wayanad is not her first as a "public fighter" as she asserted that fighting for democracy, justice and values enshrined in the Constitution is central to her life. In an open letter to the people of Wayanad, after she filed her nomination papers from the constituency, she told them that she would work with them closely and help address their challenges. Urging people to elect her as an MP in the November 13 bypoll, she promised that her work would serve to deepen



the bond with them and that she would do all she could to fight for them and represent them in the way that they wish to be represented in Parliament. She said the people of Wayanad will be "my guides and teachers" in this journey, which is her first as a public

representative. "Fighting for democracy, for justice and for the values enshrined in our constitution is central to my life. I look forward to carrying this battle for all our futures forward with your support and will be deeply grateful to you if you choose to make me your MP," she said in her letter. "My Dear Sisters and Brothers of Wayanad, A few months back, I travelled to Chooramala and Mundakkai with my brother. I saw the devastation brought by the landslide and the depth of the loss you suffered. I met children who had lost everyone they loved, mothers who were grieving for their children and families whose entire lives had been washed

away by the rage of nature. "Yet, through the darkness of the tragedy that befell you, what shone through to me was your immense courage and fortitude as a community. You rallied together with a strength I have not seen before. Doctors, public representatives, volunteers, social workers, teachers, nurses, housewives, everyone was doing whatever they possibly could to help one another," she said. She said as she was returning home, she felt that it would be an honour to represent the people of Wayanad in parliament. She said Rahul Gandhi explained to her the struggles of the people of Wayanad and briefed her about the issues that need attention and resolution.

Gandhi family is not above law: BJP spokesperson Gaurav Bhatia

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

The BJP on Saturday accused Congress leader Priyanka Gandhi Vadra of "non-disclosure of essential information" regarding her and her husband Robert Vadra's assets in her affidavit to contest the Lok Sabha bypoll from Kerala's Wayanad. BJP national spokesperson Gaurav Bhatia claimed that Priyanka Gandhi is in violation of the Supreme Court's directive to poll candidates to make a full disclosure of their, their spouse's and dependents' assets. "The Supreme Court order is binding on all citizens. The Gandhi family is not above law. There can be only one out-



come. If somebody furnishes wrong information in the affidavit, they have no right to contest elections," Bhatia told reporters here. The date for a scrutiny of the nominations by poll officials is October 28 and the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) has been targeting the Congress general secretary over her affidavit in the run-up.

Referring to the alleged grab of National Herald assets by the Gandhi family, Bhatia said Priyanka Gandhi's affidavit made no mention of her ownership of shares in Associated Journals through a couple of trusts. This amounts to non-disclosure of essential information, he said. The affidavit, he added, mentioned Vadra's three firms

while omitting his stakes in two other companies. The BJP leader said his charge is based on "irrefutable" documents. He asked Priyanka Gandhi to respond to the allegations to inform the public about her stand on the issue. The Congress will have to comply with the law or there will be serious consequences, Bhatia said, adding that the BJP will take all necessary and effective steps as it follows the Constitution. The Gandhi family, he alleged, thinks that it can ignore the law and befool people. No one should harbour such an illusion, he added. The bypoll to the Wayanad Lok Sabha constituency is scheduled to be held on November 13.

Centre appoints 29 new joint secretaries across departments

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

In a major bureaucratic reshuffle effected by the Centre, 29 joint secretaries have been appointed in different government departments. Officers from various central services, including the Indian Defence Accounts Service (IDAS), Indian Railway Service of Electrical Engineers (IRSEE), Indian Audit and Accounts

Service (IA&AS) and Indian Revenue Service (IRS) among others have been appointed to these key joint secretary (JS)-level posts, as per an order issued by the Personnel Ministry. IDAS officers Praveen Kumar Rai and Rakesh Kumar Pandey, and IRSEE officer Rajesh Gupta have been appointed as joint secretaries in the Home Ministry, said the order dated October 25.

Raj Kumar, a 1999-batch IA&AS officer, has been named as Director (Finance) in the Central Reserve Police Force (CRPF) under the Ministry of Home Affairs for a tenure of five years, it said. Deepak Agarwal, a 2000-batch Indian Administrative Service (IAS) officer of Uttar Pradesh cadre, has been appointed as Managing Director (JS level), National Agricultural Marketing

Federation of India (NAFED), the order said. IAS officers Chauhan Sarita Chand and P Bala Kiran have been appointed as Joint Secretary, Department of Administrative Reforms & Public Grievances and Department of Personnel & Training, respectively. Bhavna Saxena, a 1996-batch Indian Police Service (IPS) officer of Andhra Pradesh cadre, has been appointed as

CEO, Central Adoption Resource Authority (CARA) under the Ministry of Women & Child Development, the order said. Anjan Kumar Mishra, a 1998-batch Indian Ordnance Factories Service (IOFS) officer, has been named as Secretary, Petroleum & Natural Gas Regulatory Board (PNGRB) under the Ministry of Petroleum & Natural Gas. Niraj Kumar, a Central Secretariat Service (CSS) offi-

cer, has been appointed as Joint Secretary, Ministry of Development of North Eastern Region, the order said. Kesang Yangzom Sherpa, a 1995-batch IRS (Income Tax cadre) officer, will be Joint Secretary, Department of Commerce. Premjit Lal has been appointed as Executive Director, India Trade Promotion Organisation (ITPO), Balamurugan D will be Joint Secretary, Ministry of Corporate Affairs and Rama



Shankar Sinha has been named as Joint Secretary, Department of Animal Husbandry and Dairying. Senior bureaucrats Rajat

Agarwal and Ved Prakash Mishra have been appointed as joint secretaries in the Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change.

Substandard helmets must be...

From page 1

While emphasising the need to spread awareness among citizens on the matter, Nidhi Khare, Secretary, Department of Consumer Affairs said, "Helmets save lives, but only if they are of good quality. This initiative is crucial in removing unsafe helmets from the market and educating consumers about the importance of BIS-certified products. We urge all stakeholders to actively participate in this campaign for the safety of our citizens." Notably, the government has already made wearing a helmet mandatory under the

Motor Vehicles Act 1988. The helmet is a crucial safety measure for two-wheeler riders to prevent fatalities in road accidents. Helmet is a critical product and manufacturing of substandard/non-ISI helmets adversely impacts the safety of the user. However, the effectiveness of a helmet is highly dependent on its quality. Sub-standard helmets do not adhere to the prescribed standards and fail to provide the necessary protection, undermining the very purpose of wearing them. This initiative underscores the government's

commitment to consumer protection and road safety. By removing sub-standard helmets from the market, the Department aims to prevent avoidable road accident fatalities and promote high-quality safety gear. The Department's branch offices have been instructed to engage continuously with district administrations and police departments to support this campaign. The Ministry of Road Transport and Highways (MoRTH) has enforced the Quality Control Order (QCO) as of June 1, 2021, mandating that all helmets comply with the BIS standard

IS 4151: 2015. Any helmet manufactured or sold without this certification violates the Bureau of Indian Standards Act, 2016. It has been observed that many helmets sold on roadsides lack the mandatory BIS certification, posing significant risks to consumers. India accounts for the highest number of road accident deaths in the world, although mishaps in the US are almost six times more than in India. According to the report, 33 per cent of all road accidents and 35 per cent of fatal accidents took place on national highways and expressways.

NC feeling the heat of...

From page 1

Speaking at an art exhibition for amateur artists in Srinagar, Wani highlighted that a unified governance model, achieved through the restoration of statehood, is essential for addressing J&K's unique challenges. "J&K is not like other states. We have made commitments to the people, and we will fulfill them," he said, adding that the government should restore statehood. Reiterating that the National Conference is committed to fulfilling all the promises made with the people, Wani said the people of

J&K just need to show some patience as little time has passed since government formation. Regarding the Chief Minister's meetings with the Home Minister, Defence Minister, and Prime Minister, he said these discussions aimed to resolve common people's issues, and they assured support for J&K's progress. He also stated that the people mandated the National Conference, and the party is committed to resolving common issues, as J&K has been without elected representation for the last ten years.

West Delhi man arrested for...

From page 1

As many as 33 flights received bomb threats including two at Indra Gandhi International Airport (IGIA) on Saturday. More than 300 domestic and international flights have received bomb threats via social media in the past 13 days. The accused was arrested from the Rajapuri area located in Delhi's Uttam Nagar and confessed to the act saying that he did it after seeing similar incidents on television, hoping to gain attention. Deputy Commissioner of Police (IGI Airport), Usha Rangnani identified the accused as Shubham Upadhyay (25), who is an unemployed person and is only 12th pass. Deputy Commissioner of Police Rangnani said, "During the intervening night of October 25th and 26th, two suspicious and

potential bomb threat messages were received at IGI Airport via a social media account. Immediate action was taken, and standard security protocols were followed. A case was promptly registered under various sections of BNS, and an investigation was initiated. During the investigation, the threat was found to be a hoax," the DCP stated. According to aviation sector sources, 11 flights each of IndiGo, Air India and Vistara received the threats on Saturday. In a statement, an Air India spokesperson said a number of its flights were subject to security threats received on social media on Saturday. "Following the laid down protocols, relevant authorities were immediately alerted, and all security procedures strictly adhered to, as per guidance from the regulatory authorities," the spokesperson said.

US sends illegal visitors...

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Since June 2024, when the Securing the Border Presidential Proclamation and accompanying Interim Final Rule went into effect, encounters between ports of entry along the southwest border of the US have decreased by 55 per cent. In fiscal year 2024, the DHS removed or returned over 160,000 individuals and operated more than 495 international repatriation flights to more than 145 countries, including India, the statement said. It said the department regularly engaged with foreign governments throughout the hemisphere and around the world to accept repatriations of their nationals without a legal basis to remain in the US. This was one tool among many that the US used to reduce irregular migration, promoted the use of safe, lawful and orderly pathways, and hold transnational criminal networks accountable for smuggling and exploitation of vulnerable people, it said. Over the last year, DHS has removed individuals from a range of countries worldwide, including Colombia, Ecuador, Peru, Egypt, Mauritania, Senegal, Uzbekistan, China, and India.

Meanwhile, a day after the US homeland authorities announced the deportation of Indian nationals who were staying in that country illegally, sources on Saturday said it was a result of the cooperation on migration and mobility between the two nations. As part of this cooperation, both sides are engaged in a process to "deter illegal migration", they said. This week's flight demonstrates the Department's continued commitment to pursuing "sustained cooperation" with the Indian government and other international partners to reduce and deter irregular migration and jointly work to counter human smuggling, it added. Sources said the move was a result of the India-US cooperation on migration and mobility. This is being done to "create more avenues" for legal migration from India to the US. The latest deportation of Indian nationals by a chartered flight is the result of this cooperation, the sources added. Such deportations "have been happening" for several years, they said. In the fiscal year 2024, the DHS removed or returned over 1,60,000 individuals and operated more than 495 international repatriation flights to more than 145

Israel, Iran in mortal combat

From page 1

Iran could attempt another direct bombardment, though doing so risks provoking yet another direct Israeli attack on its territory at a moment when its defences are weakened. It could also encourage allied militant groups such as Hamas in Gaza and Hezbollah in Lebanon to intensify their attacks, though both have suffered serious blows in their ongoing wars with Israel. "Iran will play down the impact of the strikes, which are in fact quite serious," predicted Sanam Vakil, the director of the Middle East and North Africa programme at the London-based think tank Chatham House. She said Iran is "boxed in" by their own military limitations, economic constraints from sanctions and by the US election outcome," which could affect the course of further escalation or diplomatic outreach.

Indian cricketers break...

From page 1

For the Kiwis, Santner became Player of the Match (7/53 and 6/104) 13 wickets in the game and 33 runs with the bat on first innings heralded a remarkable triumph for New Zealand, who mastered the conditions and played better cricket than India to beat Rohit Sharma's team in their own game. After a historic low 46 all-out in the Bengaluru test, Pune test defeat has raised so many questions about the batting ability to perform in upcoming (BGT) Border Gavaskar Trophy. Although Rohit Sharma stated post match "I don't doubt anyone's ability, but batters must trust their plans." Jaishwal fought a lone battle of sorts with nine fours and three sixes with a score of 77 runs on 65 balls and gave a needy partnership of 62 runs with Shubman Gill. But none of the famed Indian batters, including mainstays Rohit

Sharma and Virat Kohli, could pose any challenge to the Kiwis. From a steady 81/1 at lunch, the home team lost six wickets for 97 runs, struggling to negotiate Santner who yet again spinned his magic around the Indian batters. Indian all-rounder Washington Sundar marked his presence in the comeback match England test match at Ahmedabad in 2021. He registered his career best figures of (7/59 and 4/56) 11 wickets in the game and handy 39 runs with the bat. This defeat means that India stay on top in the WTC table with 98 points but their percentage points (62.82) got hit badly as Australia are now marginally behind at 62.50. The series loss is a major setback for India, who were aiming to consolidate their position at the WTC standings. The team will need to regroup and learn from the mistakes to prepare for their next assignment.

Take down threat posts...

From page 1

"In addition to the above, the IT Rules, 2021 obligates the intermediaries to provide information under its control or possession, or assistance to the Government agency which is lawfully authorised for investigative or protective or cyber security activities, for the purposes of the verification of identity, or for the prevention, detection, investigation, or prosecution, of offences under any law for the time being in force, or for cyber security incidents, well within the stipulated timeframes (as soon as

possible but not later than 72 hours)," it stated. Earlier this week, the authorities of Kolkata, Bhubaneswar and Jharsuguda airports received threats about the presence of bombs on different flights but those later turned out to be a hoax. Security was strengthened at the airport after the incident. As per standard protocol, the airport premises were checked. Some planes which were mentioned in the threat were also taken to the isolation bay and thoroughly checked, an official said, adding it turned out to be a hoax.

Commonwealth nations adopt 1st ocean declaration

Former British colonies seek reparatory justice

AP ■ APIA (SAMOA)

Commonwealth countries adopted Saturday their first ocean declaration during their summit held for the first time in the Pacific island nation of Samoa as calls from some of Britain's former colonies for reparatory justice for the trans-Atlantic slave trade grew louder.

The Apia Ocean Declaration was announced during the closing session of the 27th Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting, or CHOGM, and calls on all 56 Commonwealth nations to protect the ocean in the face of severe climate, pollution and over-exploitation.

More than half the Commonwealth members are small countries like Samoa, many face significant, some even existential, threats from rising seas.

While the environmental threat was foreshadowed as a predominant theme going into the summit, the transatlantic slave trade from Britain's colonial history dominated the discourse through the opening days.

'A line in the sand' declaration: The Apia Commonwealth Ocean Declaration for One Resilient Common focuses on recognising maritime boundaries amid

sea-level rise, protecting 30 per cent of oceans and restoring degraded marine ecosystems by 2030, and urgently finalising the Global Plastics Treaty. It also calls for ratifying the high-seas biodiversity treaty, developing coastal climate adaptation plans, and strengthening support for sustainable blue economies.

Samoa Prime Minister Fiame Naomi Mataaafa said in a statement released by her office that it was fitting for "our first ocean declaration" to be adopted "in the Blue Pacific continent given climate change has been recognised as the single greatest threat to the security and well-being of our people."

The Commonwealth represents a third of the world's population, and 49 of its 56 countries have a coastline. The organisation says 25 of its members are increasingly impacted by climate change, rising sea levels, growing temperatures and increasing ocean acidity — impacting sea life, ecosystems and the communities that depend upon them.

Mataaafa said the declaration must become "a line in the sand" for the world to collectively transform "ocean exploitation into protection and sustainable stewardship."

Outgoing Commonwealth Secretary-General, Patricia Scotland said in a statement



Britain's King Charles III and Queen Camilla attend the bestowing and farewell ceremony on the final day of the royal visit to Samoa at the Siumu Village in Apia, Samoa, on Saturday. AP/PTI

they were "immensely proud of this achievement" which "sets the standard for forthcoming international meetings, generating momentum for ocean protection as we head towards COP29 in Azerbaijan in November, and next year's UN Ocean Conference."

Slavery justice conversation to continue: Calls from some of Britain's former colonies for a reckoning over its role in the

trans-Atlantic slave trade was the thorniest issue at the summit and specifically reparatory justice.

King Charles III, who attended his first Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting as sovereign, said in his address on Friday history couldn't be changed but that he understood "the most painful aspects of our past continue to resonate."

Although he stopped short of mentioning financial reparations, which some leaders at the event urged, his remarks were seen as an acknowledgment of how strongly many felt about the issue in countries that Britain once colonised.

Included in the 52-point official Leaders Statement on Saturday was a paragraph that urged a "meaningful, truthful, respectful conversation" to

build a fair future.

The communique also directed the Commonwealth secretary-general to engage governments and stakeholders in reparatory justice consultations, with a special focus on the impact on women and girls.

"(The communique) agrees that this is the time for conversation," said Britain's Prime Minister Keir Starmer at a press conference in Apia on Saturday. "But I should be really clear here. In the two days we've been here, none of the discussions have been about money. Our position is very, very clear in relation to that."

"Let me first be clear that the slave trade, slave practice, was abhorrent, and it's very important we start from there. Abhorrent is the right word."

Earlier Saturday, Shirley Ayorkor Botchwey, the Minister for Foreign Affairs and Regional Integration in Ghana, was announced as the incoming Secretary-General of the Commonwealth.

Botchwey, who has urged financial reparations for the past enslavement of colonised people, replaces Patricia Scotland of the United Kingdom who had been in the post since 2016.

Antigua and Barbuda was also announced as the host for the next CHOGM in 2026.

10 officers dead in attack on police convoy in Iran

AP ■ DUBAI

An attack on an Iranian police convoy Saturday in the country's restive southern province of Sistan and Baluchistan killed at least 10 officers, authorities said.

Details remain scarce over the attack in Gohar Kuh, some 1,200 kilometres southeast of the Iranian capital, Tehran.

Initially, reports simply described an attack by "miscreants" without more information. But shortly after, Iranian state media said 10 officers had been killed.

HalVash, an advocacy group for the Baluch people of Afghanistan, Iran and Pakistan, posted photos and video of what appeared to be a disabled truck painted with the green stripe used by Iranian police vehicles. One graphic photo shared by the group showed what appeared to be the corpses of two police officers in the front seat of the truck.

HalVash said the attack appeared to target two security force vehicles and all those riding in them were killed. The truck appeared to have only damage from bullets, rather than any explosive being used.

The state-run IRNA news

agency said that Eskandar Momeni, the country's interior minister, ordered an investigation into the incident that it described as causing the "martyrdom of a number of police."

Authorities identified no immediate suspects for the attack, nor did any group claim responsibility. The assault came after Israel launched a major attack across Iran early Saturday morning.

The Baluch regions across the three nations have faced a low-level insurgency by Baluch nationalists for more than two decades. Verifying information remains difficult in Iran's Sistan and Baluchistan, which for decades has been home to violence involving heroin traffickers.

The province is one of the least developed parts of Iran. Relations between the predominantly Sunni Muslim residents of the region and Iran's Shiite theocracy have long been strained. Typical attacks involve hit-and-run assaults by militants in the region, like the Sunni militant group Jaish al-Adl, that kill a few security officials at a time. However, there have been mass casualty attacks by militants in the past.

Georgia votes in election which could take it toward EU or into Russia's orbit

AP ■ TBILISI (GEORGIA)

Georgians go to the polls Saturday in a ballot many citizens are treating as a make-or-break vote on the opportunity to join the European Union.

The pre-election campaign in the South Caucasus nation of 3.7 million people has been dominated by foreign policy and marked by a bitter fight for votes and allegations of a smear campaign.

Some Georgians complained of intimidation and being pressured to vote for the ruling party, Georgian Dream, while the opposition accused the party of carrying out a "hybrid war" against its citizens.

Ahead of the election Bidzina

Ivanishvili — a shadowy billionaire who set up Georgian Dream and made his fortune in Russia — vowed again to ban opposition parties should his party win.

Georgian Dream will hold opposition parties "fully accountable under the full force of the law" for "war crimes" committed against the people of Georgia, Ivanishvili said at a pro-government rally in the capital Tbilisi Wednesday. He did not explain what crimes he believes the opposition has committed.

Many Georgians believe the parliamentary election may be the most crucial vote of their lifetimes. It will determine whether Georgia gets back on track to EU membership or if it embraces

authoritarianism and falls into Russia's orbit.

"It's an existential election," Georgian President Salome Zourabichvili said.

Around 80% of Georgians favor joining the EU according to polls and the country's constitution obliges its leaders to pursue membership of that bloc and NATO.

But Brussels put Georgia's bid for entry to the EU on hold indefinitely after the ruling party Georgian Dream passed a "Russian law" cracking down on freedom of speech in June. Many Georgians fear the party is dragging the country towards authoritarianism and killing off hopes it could join the EU.

The opposition parties have ignored Zourabichvili's request to unite into a single party but have signed up to her "charter" to carry out the reforms required by the EU to join.

Zourabichvili told the Associated Press she believed most Georgians would mobilize to vote "despite some instances of intimidation, in spite of use of state resources ... and the use of financial resources" by the government.

Georgian Dream took out billboards across the country contrasting black-and-white images of destruction in Ukraine with colorful images of life in Georgia alongside the slogan, "Say no to war — choose peace."

Justice Afridi sworn in as Pak Chief Justice

PTI ■ ISLAMABAD

Justice Yahya Afridi took oath as the 30th Chief Justice of Pakistan on Saturday in a ceremony attended by top government officials. He replaced Qazi Faez Isa, who retired on Friday after reaching superannuation at the age of 65.

President Asif Ali Zardari administered the oath to the new chief justice as required under the Constitution of Pakistan. Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif, cabinet ministers, services chief, other officials and leading civilians attended the ceremony held at the President's House.

Justice Afridi was nominated as chief justice by a Special Parliamentary Committee (SPC) formed after the recently adopted 26th Constitutional Amendment, which brought numerous changes to the judiciary. The SPC decided on the appointment against the previous rule by which the senior-most judge became the top judge under the seniority principle.

Under the old rule, senior puisne judge Justice Mansoor Ali Shah would have become the next chief.

Justice Afridi was the third on the seniority list of the judges and was among the top three judges sent to the SPC to nominate one as the chief justice.

Afridi was elevated to the apex court in June 2018. He took oath as the youngest chief justice of the Peshawar High Court (PHC) in December 2016. Born on January 23, 1965, and hailing from Kohat Frontier Region, he also has the distinction of becoming the first chief justice of the high court from the erstwhile Federally Administered Tribal Areas.

Russian strikes in Ukraine kill 2 teenagers, injure 20

AP ■ KYIV

A Russian drone strike killed a teenager in Kyiv during a nighttime barrage on the Ukrainian capital that lasted for hours, officials said, while four people were reportedly killed in a missile attack on central Ukraine that also left at least 20 injured.

According to Kyiv Mayor Vitalii Klitschko, the drone slammed into a 25-storey apartment block Friday night in the city's west, killing a 15-year-old girl and injuring five others. Ukraine's Emergency Service said 100 people were evacuated following the strike, which damaged several apart-

ments on the building's upper floors.

Serhii Popko, who heads Kyiv's local military administration, said that Russian forces overnight pummeled the city for 7 1/2 hours. Air raid sirens wailed throughout the night, and Popko said that Ukrainian air defence shot down up to a dozen Russian drones.

Also late Friday, a Russian missile hit a residential area in the central city of Dnipro, killing a 14-year-old and three others, said regional Gov. Serhii Lysak, adding that at least 20 others were injured including an 8-year-old and teenagers. The wife and teenage daughter of a local policeman were

pulled dead from the rubble, police reported. The attack damaged over a dozen apartment buildings, private houses and a medical facility.

A man and woman died after a Russian drone dropped explosives on a village in the southern Kherson region, local prosecutors said, while a 61-year-old woman was killed by shelling in the northeast.

In the Kyiv province, which surrounds but does not include the capital, flying debris from a drone attack killed a woman, Ukraine's Emergency Service reported. A 13-year-old boy was wounded elsewhere in the region, it said.

Taiwan wants to join IMF to get financial protection from China

AP ■ WASHINGTON

Taiwan, a major economy the size of Poland but absent from global organisations, is making a longshot push to join the International Monetary Fund, the 190-country organisation that offers members emergency loans and other financial assistance.

"Taiwan's membership at the IMF would help boost financial resilience," the Taipei Economic and Cultural Representative Office in Washington said during this week's IMF and World Bank annual meetings. The office serves as Taiwan's de facto embassy in the US.

The push is part of a wider

effort to boost the self-governed island's global status. Taiwan also is seeking to participate in the UN World Health Organisation's annual World Health Assembly and join Interpol. The US and its allies are Taiwan's supporters.

But China, which sees Taiwan as a breakaway province and threatens to annex it by force, has blocked such efforts and insists it represent Taiwan in international forums. The island is now designated as "Taiwan Province of China" in IMF literature.

In 2020, then-President Donald Trump signed legislation making it US policy to advocate for Taiwan's membership or

observer status in international organizations such as the IMF.

The US State Department said the world "stands to benefit from Taiwan's expertise and resources to address some of today's most difficult global challenges." It said it will continue to support Taiwan's membership in international organizations where statehood is not required and encourage Taiwan's meaningful participation in groups where its membership is not possible.

The IMF had no comment on Taiwan's efforts to gain membership. The US has the biggest say within the group, but China is also influential, having more

voting power than any other country except for the United States and Japan.

Bo Li, who had worked as vice governor of the People's Bank of China, now serves as the IMF's deputy managing director.

The idea for Taiwan to join the IMF is to protect the democratically ruled island from a financial assault by China, which is determined to seize the island, by force if necessary.

While Washington is worried over a military conflict in the Taiwan Strait, analysts and observers have raised concerns that Beijing could wage an economic and cyber war to force a surrender from Taiwan.

Italy's homage to fascist defeat in WWII battle, sparks opposition criticism

AP ■ ROME

Italy's far-right government has sparked wide criticism after celebrating a major World War II battle, praising the defeated fascist soldiers who lost their lives.

In a social media post on Wednesday to commemorate the 82nd anniversary of the 1942 battle of El Alamein in Egypt, Italy's defence ministry paid homage to the Italian soldiers "who sacrificed their lives for our freedom."

It described the Italian and Nazi loss to the Allies as "heroic and tragic."

The second El Alamein battle took place in Egypt in October 1942 and was won by the Allies thanks to a huge effort involv-

ing about 190,000 men. It marked the defeat for the German-led Axis and a major blow to its ambitions in North Africa.

Thousands of Italians were among those killed or captured in the battle, fought under the fascist regime of dictator Benito Mussolini.

The Italian centre-left opposition slammed the government's commemoration, with the Five Star Movement stressing it was "inopportune" to say that Italian troops had fought for freedom.

"Italian boys in El Alamein did not fall for our freedom, as ambiguously claimed by the Ministry of Defence, but were sent to die by the fascist gov-

ernment," Gianfranco Pagliarulo, president of the national partisans' association, ANPI, said on Thursday.

Italian Premier Giorgia Meloni leads the far-right Brothers of Italy party, which traces its roots to the neo-fascist movement that emerged after Mussolini's fall.

Meloni has tried to distance her party from its neo-fascist past and has openly condemned all totalitarian regimes, including fascism.

But the opposition has repeatedly accused the premier and some of her closest allies of refusing to firmly declare themselves "anti-fascist."

Meloni has made no comment on the current controversy.

US approves \$ 2b in arms sales to Taiwan

AP ■ TAIPEI

The United States has approved USD 2 billion in arms sales to Taiwan, including the first-time delivery to the self-ruled island of an advanced surface-to-air missile defence system, in a move sure to anger China.

Taiwan's presidential office on Saturday thanked Washington for greenlighting the potential arms sales. Under the island's new president, Lai Ching-te, Taiwan has been stepping up defence measures as China increased its military threats against the territory it claims as its own. Beijing last week held war games encircling Taiwan for the second time since Lai took office in May.

The US is Taiwan's strongest unofficial ally and its laws bound it to provide Taiwan with the means to defend itself.

"Strengthening Taiwan's self-defence capabilities is the foundation for maintaining regional stability," Taiwan's presiden-

tial spokesperson Karen Kuo said.

The potential sales package includes three National Advanced Surface-to-Air Missile Systems (NASAMS) and related equipment valued at up to USD 1.16 billion, according to the US State Department's Bureau of Political-Military Affairs.

It also includes radar systems worth an estimated USD 828 million. The Chinese government did not immediately comment on the potential arms sales. The NASAMS system has been battle-tested in Ukraine and will help to strengthen the Taiwanese army's air defence capabilities, Taiwan's Defence Ministry said.

China's war games last week were aimed at practising the "sealing off of key ports and key areas" around Taiwan, according to Chinese officials. Taiwan counted a record one-day total of 153 aircraft, 14 navy vessels and 12 Chinese government ships.

US Pres race remains very tight

PTI ■ ATLANTA

Just 10 days ahead of the Election Day, the US presidential race remained very tight with both Vice President Kamala Harris and former President Donald Trump locked in a dead heat for the popular votes in most swing states.

The final nationwide CNN poll found that 47 per cent of likely voters support Democrat Harris and an equal 47 would endorse Republican Trump in the elections.

In the final New York Times/Siena College national poll from October 20 to 23, the two aspirants are tied at 48 per cent. The remaining four per cent are yet to decide on their preference.

A separate poll conducted by the Financial Times and the University of Michigan's Ross School of Business, showed that 44 per cent of respondents trust Trump to handle the economy as against 43 per cent for Harris.

An analysis by FiveThirtyEight



poll tracker, however, showed that Harris is having a slight edge over Trump with 1.7 percentage points.

To win the race for the White House, the successful candidate will have to secure 270 of the 538 electoral votes up for grabs. The seven key swing states which are seen to be crucial to determine the election results are Georgia, Michigan, Arizona, Pennsylvania, North Carolina, Wisconsin and Nevada.

With almost all surveys throw-

ing up a very tight race, both Trump and Harris are stepping up their efforts to garner more popular votes in the last stretches of their campaign trails.

In the last rounds of rallies, Harris has been focusing on reproductive rights for women. The Vice President held a rally in Houston on Friday where she focused on why reproductive rights of women are very

fundamental.

Harris was joined at the rally by music icon Beyonce.

In the rally, Beyonce said she wasn't there as a celebrity or a politician, but as a "mother."

"I am here as a mother who cares deeply about the world my children and all of our children live in, a world where we have the freedom to control our bodies," she said, throwing support to Harris's focus on reproductive rights for women.

The singer urged Americans to "sing a new song" and support Harris.

There are strict abortion bans in Texas and 13 other US states. The Democratic presidential nominee has been pressing for removal of the ban saying women must have reproductive rights.

In his closing rounds of the campaign, Trump has been highlighting his anti-migration views.

"We are like a garbage can for the rest of the world to dump the people that they don't want," Trump said on Friday in Austin.

Suicide blast kills 8 in northwest Pak

PTI ■ PESHAWAR

At least eight people, including six law enforcement personnel, were killed and many others injured on Saturday in a suicide attack targeting a police picket in Pakistan's restive Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province.

The blast occurred at the Aslam Check Post in Mir Ali tehsil of the North Waziristan tribal district bordering Afghanistan, according to sources.

Riding three-wheelers, the bombers hit the check post and vehicles of the security forces, killing at least eight people, including four policemen, two soldiers and two civilians.

Many others were also injured in the blast and were shifted to the Miran Shah Hospital. According to sources, the casualty figure may rise.

Pakistan has experienced a spike in terrorism since the Taliban returned to power in Afghanistan in 2021. Most ter-

ror incidents are reported in provinces bordering the neighbouring country — Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and Balochistan. Around a dozen militants were eliminated during anti-terrorism operations by the security forces in the North Waziristan district this month.

A report published by the Centre for Research and Security Studies (CRSS) think tank earlier this month said that the third quarter of 2024 saw a sharp increase in fatalities of terrorist violence and counter-terrorism campaigns with a 90 per cent surge in violence in the country.

The total fatalities from three quarters of this year surpassed the total fatalities recorded for the entire of 2023, with 722 deaths including civilians, security personnel, and outlaws.

Nearly 97 per cent of these fatalities occurred in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and Balochistan — marking the highest percentage in a decade.

INDIA LOOK FOR CONSISTENCY FROM BATTERS TO SEAL SERIES

PTI ■ AHMEDABAD

India will seek a better performance from batters in their quest to seal the series when they face New Zealand in the second women's ODI here on Sunday.

Even though India won the first match comfortably by 59 runs, batters squandered starts as their innings were littered with multiple 30s and 40s. The hosts would want a change of script in this match, and skipper Smriti Mandhana will have to lead the charge, which in the last match was done by debutant Tejal Hasabnis.

The elegant left-hander got out for eight in the opening match, continuing her lean run over the last month or so.

She can fall back upon the memories of a fine run against South Africa earlier this July when she cracked runs for fun, including two big hundreds.

Along with Mandhana's form, the Indian camp will also keep an eye on the fitness of regular skipper Harmanpreet Kaur, who missed the previous match with an unspecified niggle.

On the bowling front, India will be delighted with debutant pacer Saima Thakor's impressive performance the other night, along with left-arm spinner Radha Yadav's return to wicket-taking



form in this format. On the other hand, New Zealand's severe blow as talismanic all-rounder Amelia Kerr was ruled out of the series with a left quadriceps muscle tear that

she sustained in the first match.

Kerr, who will return home on Sunday, will require approximately three weeks to recover from her Grade One injury. "We're really gutted for Melie," said White Ferns head coach Ben Sawyer. "We know how disappointed she is to not be able to play these games. Everyone knows how much of an integral part of this team Melie is so we'll certainly miss her but we're wishing her a speedy recovery," said Sawyer. Kerr was the standout performer for New Zealand in the first ODI with a four-wicket haul. She will not be replaced in the squad with the final game of the series to be played in three days' time.

TEAMS (FROM):

INDIA: Harmanpreet Kaur (c), Smriti Mandhana, Shafali Verma, D. Hemalatha, Deepti Sharma, Jemimah Rodrigues, Yastika Bhatia, Uma Chetry, Sayali Satgare, Arundhati Reddy, Renuka Singh, Tejal Hasabnis, Saima Thakor, Priya Mishra, Radha Yadav, Shreyanka Patil.

NEW ZEALAND: Sophie Devine (c), Suzie Bates, Eden Carson, Lauren Down, Izzy Gaze, Maddy Green, Brooke Halliday, Polly Inglis, Fran Jonas, Jess Kerr, Amelia Kerr, Molly Penfold, Georgia Plimmer, Hannah Rowe, Lea Tahuhu.



Ali and Khan lead Pakistan to nine-wicket win, clinching series against England

AP ■ RAWALPINDI

Spinners Noman Ali and Sajid Khan suppressed England's batting attack inside three days and earned Pakistan a long-awaited and series-clinching nine-wicket win in the third and final Test on Saturday.

The 38-year-old left-arm spinner Ali and off-spinner Khan, 31, had grabbed all 20 wickets on a recycled second Test pitch to level the series last week and yet again clipped the batters on an engineered dry surface by sharing 19 wickets as England was dismissed for 112 on Day 3.

It was England's lowest innings total in Pakistan, eclipsing its previous score of 130 all out in Lahore in 1987.

Pakistan, which got a meaningful 77-run first innings lead, reached 37-1 at the stroke of lunch to notch its first home series win since 2021 when it beat South Africa 2-0.

Skipper Shan Masood (23 not out), who lost six successive test matches as captain before England got beaten in the second test, sealed the win with a six over long-off against Shoaib Bashir after smashing four successive boundaries to Jack Leach.

"It's special," Masood said. "The first win came after a long time and it was backed up by a series win ... it's about character. To be here and

standing as the winning team, it's the most special thing for us." Leach grabbed the only wicket to fall when he successfully went for an lbw television referral against Saim Ayub, who made eight.

The win was a sweet revenge for the home team, which was knocked over by England 3-0 when it last toured Pakistan two years ago under the captaincy of Ben Stokes.

England's batting folded meekly against the spin duo for the second time around as Ali followed his three wickets in the first innings with 6-42 on a wicket which was dried out by industrial-sized giant fans and outdoor heaters.

Khan grabbed 4-69 to add to his first innings six-wicket haul as England batters couldn't negotiate the variable bounce and the turn Khan and Ali extracted of the pitch.

England won the first test by an innings and 47 runs before Pakistan succeeded in its ploy to reuse the same surface in Multan to counter England's aggressive batting and recalled both Ali and Khan for the remaining two test matches.

"Disappointing," said Stokes, who missed out on England's memorable win in the first test recovering from torn hamstring, but returned to lead the side in tougher conditions for his batters. "We got thrown some challenges over these last two games and weren't able to stand up to them, credit to

Pakistan."

Resuming on a precarious 24-3, Joe Root (33) and Harry Brook (26) cut down the deficit to 11 runs before England lost wickets in cluster.

Brook got a thick edge when he tried to cut Ali and the left-arm spinner had Stokes lbw off an armed ball which the England captain awfully tried to leave. England was still trailing by two runs when Jamie Smith (3) charged down the wicket to Khan and had his off stump knocked over and England slipped to 6-75.

Khan then ended Root's grim resistance by finding the outside edge before England's tail folded quickly against the spin duo.

"The lads trained hard but when you get out in the middle it can be completely different," Stokes conceded.

The 2-1 series win was Masood's first series win since he was appointed test captain last year, but lost six test matches in a row. Australia routed Pakistan 3-0 under Masood's leadership and Bangladesh recorded a stunning 2-0 win in Pakistan before England racked up record-breaking 823-7 decl. To hand Masood another defeat.

"We'd like to dedicate this (series win) to the people of Pakistan, who've been through a lot," Masood said. "Hopefully this will put a smile on people's face, and hopefully we can have full houses."



India one win away from U17 Asian Cup qualification

PTI ■ CHONBURI (THAILAND)

India are one step away from qualifying for the AFC U17 Asian Cup in Saudi Arabia, needing a crucial victory over hosts Thailand in their final Group D match here on Sunday.

With two wins from two games, the Ishfaq Ahmed-coached India Colts sit level on points with Thailand but trail on goal difference, making this clash a must-win to secure the top spot and an automatic berth in the tournament.

Friday's hard-fought 1-0 victory over Turkmenistan kept India's hopes alive and showcased their resilience, with a well-timed strike from Ningthoukhongjam Rishi Singh clinching the game.

However, Thailand's massive 19-0 rout of Brunei Darussalam later that day sent a clear signal, pushing them to the top of the group with an astounding goal difference.

India had earlier defeated Brunei 13-0, while Thailand opened their campaign with a solid 2-0 win over Turkmenistan.

The group stakes are high: a draw will see Thailand qualify as group leaders, while only a win will guarantee India's direct entry to the final tournament.

However, there is a rider. India could still make it through as one of the five best second-placed teams, depending on results from other groups.

Head coach Ishfaq Ahmed, however, is keeping the team focused on a single goal -- victory.

"For us, that's the way. We just

play for three points. We will give our best as we do in every match. Whatever we have left in us, we will put that on the line," said the Indian coach.

Rishi, who scored his second goal for India, adding to his header against Nepal in the SAFF U17 Championship semi-final, said, "I am very happy to score the winning goal and help the team. I'd like to thank my teammates and coaches. We are ready for the last game against Thailand."

Backed by an ardent home crowd, Thailand pose a considerable challenge.

The hosts boast an unbeaten 2024 record, scoring 21 goals in the qualifiers and reaching the ASEAN Championship final, where they narrowly lost to Australia on penalties.

They also defeated the UAE 4-2 in a pre-qualifier friendly, making them a formidable team to face.

"We are both very good sides. And when you beat these are the kind of teams playing a good brand of football, only then you deserve to qualify for the final tournament," Ahmed said.

"Our biggest challenge is to recover since there's just a day's gap between matches and we've played twice in the heat and humidity of 4 pm here."

"But yeah, we even saw Thailand, who have only played at 8 pm, had a couple of players getting cramps in the first game."

"So, I'm extremely proud of my boys with the strength they've shown and I have no complaints. Hopefully, we get three points and qualify tomorrow," concluded Ahmed.

Manika Batra upsets Szocs to enter quarterfinals of WTT Champions



PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Star Indian paddler Manika Batra shocked World No.14 Bernadette Szocs of Romania to enter the women's singles quarterfinals of the WTT Champions event in Montpellier, France. The world No. 30 Indian won 3-1 (11-9 6-11 13-11 11-9) in 29 minutes against the eighth-seeded Szocs in a round of 16 match on Friday night.

Batra, a multiple Commonwealth Games

medallist, saved two game points in the third game to keep her nose ahead and then sealed the tie in the next game, converting her second match point.

Batra now enjoys a 6-5 lead in the head-to-head record against Szocs.

She had also defeated Szocs in India's 3-2 win over Romania in the pre-quarterfinals of the Paris Olympics.

Batra will next face China's Qian Tianyi on Saturday.

World No. 21 Qian stunned top seed and compatriot Wang Yidi 3-0 (11-7 11-9 13-11) in another round of 16 match. Batra had defeated USA's Lily Zhang 3-0 (11-4 11-8 12-10) in the first round. The other Indian in fray in women's singles, Sreeja Akula had lost 2-3 (11-6, 7-11, 1-11, 11-8, 8-11) against world No. 13 Adriana Diaz of Puerto Rico in the first round.

McLaren loses appeal over Norris penalty as F1 title fight with Verstappen moves to Mexico City

AP ■ MEXICO CITY

Among an unexpectedly tight championship battle between Max Verstappen and Lando Norris, their teams brought the fight to the Mexico City Grand Prix over an officiating dispute in last week's race.

McLaren lodged a complaint into the penalty Norris received last week at the United States Grand Prix - a step in trying to get it overturned and put three-time reigning world champion Verstappen back within his reach.

The appeal was denied late Friday night.

Norris received a five-second penalty for passing Verstappen off the track late in the race in Austin, Texas. The two were racing for third at the time, and the penalty gave the final podium finish to Verstappen.

The change in position widened Verstappen's lead to 57 points headed into Sunday's race at Mexico City, and there are only five races remaining to decide the title.

Norris has maintained he did nothing wrong and, along with

many other drivers, argued that Verstappen should have been penalized for his defensive driving.

"He did what he thought was right, and I did what I thought was right. I still disagree, and as a team, we disagree," Norris said.

"It is something I am sure we will discuss as it has been a big talking point since last weekend. A lot of other drivers didn't agree with it, teams didn't agree with it."

The same stewards who levied the penalty at the USGP heard the appeal via video conference late Friday afternoon.

Verstappen argued in Mexico that F1 has become over-policed - he was ordered to serve community service for swearing in a news conference in Singapore last month - and joked he needs to keep a copy of the rulebook inside his car to keep up with all the regulations.

"I think we are getting to a stage where I always need the book in the car. If you look of course over the years, the book has grown quite a lot," Verstappen said.

"It is definitely over-regulated."



But seven-time champion Lewis Hamilton seemed to side with Norris, claiming Verstappen has routinely received favorable treatment from the stewards.

"I mean, it's always been a gray area. That's why he's got away with it for so long," Hamilton said.

"They probably need to make some adjustments for sure. We do have inconsistencies weekend in, weekend out,

obviously, depending on which stewards are there."

"And as a sport, we do need to level up on all areas," he continued.

"We look at, like, other global sports, they have full-time refs for example, and I'm sure that wouldn't be a bad thing for our sport."

PERMANENT STEWARDS: The situation is so tense between the drivers and the FIA, the regulatory body for

F1, that George Russell said a driver-only meeting was planned for Friday evening.

Among the topics is the idea of hiring permanent stewards who regulate every grand prix on the F1 schedule, the new crackdown on cursing, and transparency over where monetary fines go when collected by the FIA.

Russell also received a five-second penalty in Texas for forcing Valtteri Bottas wide, which he isn't fighting.

"I thought my penalty was harsh, but probably correct," Russell said. "Looking at Lando's, I think that was probably correct as well, but Max should probably have got a penalty for running off the track."

Russell is a director of the Grand Prix Drivers' Association and said the drivers had agreed to meet privately following their regularly scheduled briefing. "Between us, we'll talk with the FIA and understand their viewpoint first," Russell said.

"And then we can judge. At the end of the day, the stewards are doing the best job they can. They're trying their hardest,

and they do have a set of guidelines which they follow.

We've spoken about consistency in the past, the only way you can have consistency is if you have the same stewards at every single race weekend.

"And at the moment, they are very experienced, but they are here as almost volunteers," he continued.

"It is not a professionally paid job, and if you look at football as an example, even though there is still controversy, a referee, they are professionals and that is their full-time job."

He said financial fines levied against drivers and teams should go to fund permanent stewards. "Collectively, from the drivers and the GPDA, we have asked about the financial fines and where they are going. We have been asking for a bit of transparency on this front," Russell said.

"It does seem a little bit ridiculous that if a driver gets a 50 grand fine for walking over a race track, but if that 50 grand fine is going towards financing the best stewards in the world, maybe we won't be so upset about it."

Inter Miami beats Atlanta United 2-1 in Messi's MLS playoff debut

AP ■ FORT LAUDERDALE (US)

Lionel Messi had chances at goals late and time again, only to keep being denied. Turns out, all he needed to do was deliver the right pass at the right time.

Jordi Alba turned a pass from Messi into the go-ahead goal in the 60th minute, Luis Suarez also scored and Inter Miami beat Atlanta United 2-1 on Friday night in the opening game of a best-of-three first round Major League Soccer playoff series.

It was not the easiest of openers for the Supporters Shield winners, the No. 1 overall seed in the MLS Cup playoffs - a team that set a league record with 74 points in the regular season, 34 points ahead of wild-card Atlanta in the standings.

Saba Lobjanidze scored for Atlanta, which got eight saves from goalkeeper Brad Guzan. Game 2

will be November 2 at Atlanta - the last road game of the season, no matter what, for Inter Miami. Game 3, if necessary, will be November 9 in Fort Lauderdale.

"It's going to be difficult for us," Inter Miami coach Gerardo "Tata" Martino said.

"It's going to be difficult as this rival has been throughout the season."

Inter Miami's first-ever home playoff game and Messi's MLS playoff debut was sold out - Messi games almost always are, everywhere in the world - and MLS even had a camera isolated on him throughout the match, streaming that view on TikTok. There were plans to also show the match live on a massive screen in New York's Times Square; that ended up getting called off Apple will schedule a viewing of another match there.

Atlanta was the only team that beat



Inter Miami when Messi was in the lineup this season, and it was almost like the eight-time Ballon d'Or winner - and finalist for MLS MVP honours - knew it wouldn't be easy.

"It gets settled on the field," Messi said in an interview taped before the playoffs, one that MLS teased on social media and said will be distributed on its Season Pass platform. "Anything can happen in a match."

And for 60 minutes, the scoreboard said these teams were even.

Suarez scored with the match barely a minute old, and Messi had three high-quality chances later in the half.

minute; this time, Guzan punched it over the crossbar. And in the 29th minute, it wasn't Guzan that denied Messi - it was the post. The rebound came to Inter Miami's Marcelo Weigandt and his shot got punched away by Guzan.

If not for Guzan, it could have been 2-0, 3-0, maybe even 4-0 at that point.

Instead, it was 1-1 at intermission. Lobjanidze got behind the defense and beat Drake Callender from close range in the 39th minute, and Atlanta - which won at Chase Stadium in May - was all square going into the second half.

"We were frustrated," Martino said. In the 52nd minute, Messi's direct kick from 25 yards nearly gave Inter Miami the lead again but curled just wide of the post to Guzan's left. The breakthrough came about eight minutes later, with Messi getting

lifted into the air by Alba in celebration after the goal.

"We've got to keep our heads up and we've got to go again," Guzan said.

"We've had our backs against the wall for quite some time now. And when our backs have been against the wall, we've found a way. Our backs are against the wall now. We've got to go into Game 2 and we've got to win."

The night took a bad turn for Inter Miami late. Ian Fray, a South Florida native who has already dealt with three ACL tears, left in the 90th minute after a non-contact injury left him unable to put any weight on his right leg. There was no immediate word on the severity of Fray's injury.

"It was a very good game ... But we're not feeling as satisfied as we could because of Ian," Martino said.



THE RUNWAY OF CREATIVITY

As the curtains closed on Lakme Fashion Week, the event celebrated innovation and artistry. With breathtaking collections from designers like Rohit Bal, Payal Singhal and KALKI, it showcased the essence of craftsmanship and sustainability. The grand finale, featuring Bal's Kaaynaat: A Bloom in the Universe, elegantly captured the spirit of nature, marking a spectacular conclusion to the season

BY SAKSHI PRIYA

Lakme Fashion Week, presented by the Fashion Design Council of India, celebrated the artistry and innovation of over 20 acclaimed designers this season. With collections that ranged from the whimsical to the sustainable, the event showcased the dynamic evolution of Indian fashion. Esteemed designers such as Rohit Bal, Monisha Jaising and Tarun Tahiliani took centre stage, each unveiling their unique visions. This year's week-long event not only highlighted the richness of contemporary Indian aesthetics but also served as a platform for emerging talent, making it a vibrant tapestry of creativity and elegance.

The festivities kicked off with péro's enchanting collection, "HELLO péro," which marked its 15th anniversary in collaboration with Hello Kitty. This joyful presentation blended playful nostalgia with modern design, featuring vibrant textiles inspired by everyday delights like cherries and cupcakes, infused with the spirited essence of Japanese Harajuku street style. The show radiated with richly embroidered garments and a cheerful palette of pinks, reds, and yellows, exemplifying the artistry behind handcrafted textiles and the spirit of modern Indian fashion.

Day 2 showcased the R|E|lan Circular Design Challenge during Sustainable Fashion Day, where seven visionary finalists presented their imaginative collections. The air buzzed with excitement as Ritvik Khanna's Rkive City captured the coveted title, embodying innovation and eco-consciousness. This initiative, in collaboration with the UN in India, underscored the fashion industry's commitment to sustainability while nurturing emerging talent, setting the stage for a greener, more creative future.



Photos: Pankaj Kumar

On Day 3, Payal Singhal celebrated 25 years of her illustrious label with the stunning "Tazhib" collection. The show, which opened with the enchanting Shriya Saran, featured a delightful mix of deconstructed Anarkalis, chic corset cholis, and ruffled lehengas crafted from luxurious fabrics like organza and velvet. Drawing inspiration from Mughal artistry, the collection sparkled with intricate embroideries and iridescent embellishments, perfectly marrying traditional craftsmanship with modern aesthetics, making it ideal for the

upcoming festive season. On Day 4, Monisha Jaising unveiled "The Sailing Bride 2.0," a breathtaking collection for the modern holiday bride. Shalini Passi opened the show in a stunning metallic kaftan that beautifully blended contemporary glamour with heritage detailing. Monisha's designs featured fluid drapes and playful co-ord sets in serene ocean hues, culminating in a show-stopping moment when Riddhima Kapoor dazzled in a Banarasi-inspired gown. This day also highlighted

Lakme Salon and designer Samant Chauhan's enchanting "Ethereal Bloom Collection," featuring Bollywood star Dia Mirza as the showstopper. This collection celebrated the modern Indian bride with its vibrant colours and elegant styles, setting new standards for bridal elegance. Day 4 of Lakme Fashion Week marked a grand closing with the highly anticipated launch of Tarun Tahiliani's luxury prêt line, OTT. This collection seamlessly fused traditional Indian aesthetics with contemporary design, showcasing a stunning array of reimagined classic garments, from

saris to trench coats. Aditi Rao Hydari captured the audience's attention in a corset-style bodysuit paired with a flowing wrap-around skirt, epitomising the essence of India Modern. This collaboration not only set a new standard for luxury but also redefined innovation in the fashion landscape. On the final day, Shradha Kapoor took to the runway as the showstopper for KALKI, unveiling their exquisite new collection, Mushk. Rooted in rich heritage, this couture line showcased intricate hand woven embroidery in soft hues like antique gold and dusky pink.



With elegant silhouettes that included embroidered jackets and modern lehengas, the collection beautifully merged tradition with contemporary style. Dazzling in a baby pink lehenga made from luxurious brocade velvet, adorned with intricate embellishments, Shradha expressed her connection to the collection, stating, "Walking for KALKI was amazing! The Mushk collection felt personal and connected me to my roots." This stunning line not only emphasised sustainable practices but also celebrated the artistry of skilled artisans, serving as a homage to timeless tradition.

The House of Lakme Grand Finale brought the week to a breathtaking close with a spectacular showcase by the illustrious designer Rohit Bal, unveiling his collection Kaaynaat: A Bloom in the Universe. This captivating collection celebrated nature's beauty through flowing fabrics, intricate embroidery, and vibrant hues that mirrored the essence of blooming flowers. Lakme muse Ananya Panday graced the runway as the showstopper, embodying timeless elegance and ethereal grace. Rohit Bal described Kaaynaat as a journey through the wonders of nature, showcasing his artistry and vision.

The grand finale marked a fitting conclusion to an unforgettable season, leaving an indelible impression of creativity, tradition, and elegance in the ever-evolving world of fashion. With its enchanting showcases and pioneering spirit, Lakme Fashion Week reaffirmed its position as a beacon of innovation and artistry in the Indian fashion landscape, inspiring the next generation of designers and fashion enthusiasts alike.



REDEFINING LUXURY INDIAN WEDDINGS

Bandhan at Shangri-la is a personalised wedding experience that blends tradition with modern elegance, says ABHI SINGHAL

A wedding is a momentous occasion that signifies the beginning of a lifelong journey together, and couples cherish this day as a beautiful memory forever. It is a celebration of love, joy and togetherness, not only for the couple but also for their families and loved ones. The choice of venue plays a crucial role in setting the tone for this special event, and Shangri-La Group has elevated luxury Indian weddings with the grand unveiling of "Bandhan by Shangri-La." This exclusive wedding service is designed to create breathtaking, culturally rich celebrations across the globe. The newly launched ballroom at Shangri-La Eros New Delhi adds a touch of grandeur to luxury weddings in India. This service seamlessly blends timeless traditions, stunning settings, and Shangri-La's renowned hospitality, promising couples an unforgettable journey of love and celebration.



Bandhan by Shangri-La elevates the art of weddings by offering meticulously curated experiences that combine elegance with cultural authenticity. Whether it's a vibrant Mehndi ceremony surrounded by hues of yellow, a meaningful Haldi with touches of green, or a Sangeet illuminated by dazzling disco lights, the service ensures every moment reflects the couple's unique love story. Each celebration impeccably integrates age-old rituals with modern sophistication. To make the wedding day truly memorable, Bandhan provides

personalised services, including a dedicated wedding specialist at each participating property to cater to every need, a celebratory gift from the hotel, and attractive room and suite rates for the wedding couple and their guests. Shangri-La also offers couples the opportunity to create lasting memories with luxury experiences at stunning destinations such as the vibrant allure of Istanbul, the coastal charm of Sri Lanka, and the majestic landscapes of Muscat. Bandhan's bespoke approach ensures that every celebration, whether a private beachside vow exchange or a grand ballroom extravaganza, is crafted to perfection. In addition to luxurious settings, Bandhan offers an exceptional culinary experience for guests, featuring gourmet cuisine that delights the senses. The service also provides opulent accommodation, ensuring a comfortable and lavish stay for all attendees.

DO PATTI THE HARSH TRUTH OF LIVES

Kriti Sanon's Do Patti voices the social issue of domestic violence as a romantic thriller, says ABHI SINGHAL

Kriti Sanon shines in her dual role debut in the captivating romantic thriller, *Do Patti*. Released on Netflix, this film marks several firsts: Sanon's inaugural double role and her venture into production under her banner, Shaheer Sheikh's cinematic debut, and Kajol's maiden appearance as a police officer. The film is directed by Shashanka Chaturvedi and stars Sanon as the twin sisters Saumya and Shailee, Sheikh as Dhruv Sood, Kajol as the enigmatic police officer Vidya "VJ" Jyothi and Shah Paandya as Shobhana Pundir, Saumya and Shailee's mother. The movie commences with the past, a troubled childhood life of two twin sisters, Saumya and Shailee (both played by Kriti Sanon). Both the twins have a lack of love for each other, converting it into hate. Saumya, the first twin falls in love with Dhruv but Shailee the other twin comes in as the antagonist in the film snatching away Saumya's love.

The characters have aced their roles in acting and that adds life to the 127 minutes thriller. Kriti Sanon is a give star at both the double roles she has played beautifully with complete expressions which are horizons different. The flip between the two characters is smooth like slime and is Sanon's best performance by far. Shaheer playing Dhruv goes



completely in the element and doesn't make it look like his debut. His role as the aggressive husband to Saumya defines his acting skills. Kajol as the cop could have done better to overcome the flat performance. The film skillfully weaves a gripping social message of domestic violence, raised in the

movie and Shashanka Chaturvedi blends it perfectly with the film till the end. The major plot unveils itself in the end of the film with a message which is a voice for many women in a country like India.

Visually, *Do Patti* is a treat, with picturesque locations like Mussoorie, Nainital, and Manali providing a stunning backdrop to the story. The film's skillful direction and captivating cinematography enhance the overall viewing experience. The film starts to build the plot from the very beginning, engulfing the minds of the viewers. At some point with its emotional songs the movie will also be successful in touching the emotional corner of your heart.

The songs like *Raanjhan* by Parampara Tandon had already won hearts before the release and describes the emotion beautifully. Other songs like *Akhiyaan De Kol* by Shilpa Rao, *Maiyya* by Sachet Tandon and *Parampara Tandon* are a treat to the ears.

The climax of the movie is the hotshot scene with the restored love between the twin sisters. It is the climax you might have imagined but unfolds in a different way. *Do Patti* is a compelling film that offers a unique blend of romance, suspense, and social commentary with exceptional performances, coupled with a gripping storyline.

Rating - 4/5

"O Goddess Maa Lakshmi,
you are aware of
everything; you bestow
blessing upon all and
defend us from the evils"



As we illuminate our homes with lights and laughter, let us also extend our warmth to those who may feel isolated. This Diwali, let us celebrate not only the joy of togetherness but also the resilience of the human spirit, writes **SAKSHI PRIYA**

DIWALI

FESTIVAL THAT UNITES HEARTS AND HOMES

Where there is light, there is life." This sentiment resonates deeply during Diwali, a festival that holds unparalleled significance in the hearts of millions, especially in India. As homes begin to sparkle with twinkling lights and the scent of sweets fills the air, Diwali transforms into so much more than just a holiday. It becomes a celebration of life, love and togetherness, reuniting families eagerly awaiting the return of their loved ones. The festivities start with Dhanteras, the day dedicated to wealth and prosperity, when people purchase new items, often precious metals, to bring good fortune. This year, after much speculation and confusion about the dates, Diwali will be celebrated on the 31st of October. The thrill of homecoming resonates throughout the country, as people prepare to light up their homes and hearts. Each diya lit represents a moment of togetherness, a shared memory and the promise of brighter days ahead. Amidst the hustle and bustle, Diwali serves as a powerful reminder that the connections we cherish with family and friends illuminate our lives like nothing else. For many, Diwali is the one time in the year where homecoming is guaranteed. Students travel back from distant universities, workers journey long hours to be with their families and travel tickets are secured well in advance. In hostels, laughter and conversation fade as students depart, while homes come alive with the buzz of preparations, cleaning and decorating. The excitement of being together during this time makes the festival unforgettable.

DIWALI'S SPIRITUAL ESSENCE

Diwali, rooted in deep spiritual and religious traditions, marks Lord Rama's return to Ayodhya after defeating Ravana, symbolising the triumph of light over darkness. The festival also honours Goddess Lakshmi, the deity of wealth and Lord Ganesha, the remover of obstacles. Devotees seek their blessings for prosperity and joy. A key Diwali ritual is Lakshmi Puja, held on Amavasya, the new moon night. Families clean their homes, light diyas and offer prayers to welcome the Goddess. A clean, well-lit home is believed to attract her blessings for a prosperous year ahead.

A MONTH OF CLEANING AND SHOPPING

The excitement for Diwali builds up weeks, even months, in advance. The first step towards celebrating the festival is the traditional cleaning, known as Diwali safai. Families deep-clean their homes, shops, and offices, as it is believed that cleanliness is essential for welcoming Goddess Lakshmi. This act of cleaning is not just about tidying up; it symbolises getting rid of negativity and making space for positivity, peace and prosperity. From dusting the furniture to repainting the walls, no task is left undone. Many also take the time to paint their houses, creating a fresh and inviting environment.

Once the cleaning is complete, the shopping begins. Markets and shopping centres come alive with eager customers, browsing through colourful clothes, decorations, gifts, and sweets. The atmosphere is vibrant, filled with laughter and chatter, as families prepare to celebrate this joyous occasion together, ensuring that their homes are not just clean but also adorned with love and warmth. The spirit of Diwali resonates through the bustling crowds, as everyone eagerly gathers items to make their homes shine bright during this special festival.

CHANDNI CHOWK: THE HEART OF DIWALI CELEBRATIONS

As Diwali approaches, Delhi's famous Chandni Chowk becomes a lively and colourful marketplace filled with excitement. The narrow streets are bustling with people looking for lights and



was Suresh, a warm-hearted artist who welcomed me into his place, where the air was rich with the earthy scent of clay, a scent that spoke of history and tradition. "My grandparents started making diyas from scratch," he shared, his eyes sparkling with pride and a hint of nostalgia. "We've kept this tradition alive and it feels like a true blessing that the diyas we create will light up homes. Each diya carries a piece of our heart and our family's legacy." His words resonated deeply, reminding me that these diyas are more than just decorations, they are symbols of love, hope and the warmth of family gatherings. As I watched Suresh skillfully shape each diya, I felt the passion and devotion radiating from his every move. He and his family create thousands of these beautiful diyas daily, pouring their hearts into each piece. For them, Diwali is not just about making money; it's about spreading joy and contributing to the happiness of families celebrating together. Witnessing their craftsmanship was a humbling experience. The red diyas, adorned with intricate designs, symbolise the very essence of Diwali. The warmth of their hospitality and the richness of their tradition illuminated my understanding of Diwali. This festival is not just about the lights; it's about the hearts and souls that create them, the love they pour into each diya and the joy they bring to countless homes filled with laughter and celebration. As Diwali approaches, let us honour artists like Suresh, whose selfless dedication ensures that the spirit of the festival shines brightly, lighting up not just their own homes but thousands of others, filling them with hope, love, and the promise of togetherness.

SPREADING LIGHT AND KINDNESS

With Diwali just around the corner, the vibrant festivities stir a mix of emotions. For many, it's a time of joy, family reunions and shared traditions. Yet, there are those among us who find themselves away from home, whether due to work commitments, distance or other circumstances. To those individuals, remember: it's okay to feel a sense of longing during this time. Your feelings are valid and you are not alone. While the lights may not shine in the familiar corners of your childhood home, the spirit of Diwali can still flicker brightly within your heart. This festival is about more than just being physically present; it's a celebration of love, hope and the connections we share, no matter the distance. You can still find joy in the little things, perhaps by lighting a diya in your own space, reaching out to loved ones through video calls or even creating new traditions with friends and colleagues who are nearby.

As we prepare for the celebrations, it's essential to remember the well-being of our furry companions, both at home and on the streets. The loud noises of fireworks can be distressing for pets and street animals alike. Let us ensure a safe Diwali for them by creating quiet spaces away from the sounds of firecrackers. A comforting environment can help ease their anxiety and allow them to feel secure during the festivities. For those who are able to gather with family and friends, let us not forget those who are unable to join in the celebrations. A simple gesture, a call, a message or even a small gift - can make a world of difference to someone feeling isolated this Diwali. As we light up our homes with lights and laughter, let's also shine on the hearts of those who may feel left out. This Diwali, let us embrace the spirit of kindness and generosity, extending our hearts to those in need, whether human or animal. It's a time to celebrate not just the joy of togetherness but also the resilience of the human spirit. Wishing you all a safe, joyful and love-filled Diwali!

decorations to brighten their homes for the festival of lights. The energy is visible, with every corner filled with the sounds of bargaining, laughter and excitement. Upon entering Chandni Chowk, visitors are greeted by rows of vendors showcasing beautifully painted diyas. Classic red diyas are available in sets of six for just ₹60, while glittery designs in sets of twelve cost ₹120. These diyas are essential for every home during Diwali, accompanied by colourful candles and rangoli stickers featuring auspicious symbols like "Shubh Laabh."

In Chandni Chowk, the lighting options are endless. You can find warm yellow lights that create a cosy atmosphere or bright, multi-colored LED strings. Prices start as low as ₹80 for simple string lights and can go up to ₹300 or more for elaborate pieces. Many shoppers enjoy video calling family members to show them different lighting options, making sure everyone is involved in the preparations, even if they're far away. This year, a unique find in Chandni Chowk is the water diya, which lights up when you pour water into it. These creative diyas are

not only beautiful but also practical, adding a modern touch to traditional Diwali decorations. Vendors promote these eco-friendly options, encouraging customers to use them year after year. Chandni Chowk is always busy, but during Diwali, it truly comes alive. Shops and corners burst with colours and lights. Vendors and shoppers alike share in the excitement. The crowded streets, lively sounds and delicious smells make it a unique, festive experience. This is what makes Diwali in Chandni Chowk so special - it's a time of togetherness and joy as families, friends and even strangers come together to celebrate the festival of lights. Each diya tells a story of hope and every smile shared adds to the festive spirit of Diwali.

THE ARTISTRY OF DIWALI

The streets of Chandni Chowk shimmer with vibrant lights and colours, but it was in Uttam Nagar that I discovered the heart and soul behind Diwali, the artisans whose hands craft the beloved diyas that illuminate homes each year. Among them

THE FESTIVITIES START WITH DHANTERAS, THE DAY DEDICATED TO WEALTH AND PROSPERITY, WHEN PEOPLE PURCHASE NEW ITEMS, OFTEN PRECIOUS METALS, TO BRING GOOD FORTUNE. THIS YEAR, AFTER MUCH SPECULATION AND CONFUSION ABOUT THE DATES, DIWALI WILL BE CELEBRATED ON THE 31ST OF OCTOBER

AS WE PREPARE FOR THE CELEBRATIONS, IT'S ESSENTIAL TO REMEMBER THE WELL-BEING OF OUR FURRY COMPANIONS, BOTH AT HOME AND ON THE STREETS. THE LOUD NOISES OF FIREWORKS CAN BE DISTRESSING FOR PETS AND STREET ANIMALS ALIKE. LET US ENSURE A SAFE DIWALI FOR THEM BY CREATING QUIET SPACES AWAY FROM THE SOUNDS OF FIRECRACKERS



CELEBRATE INDIA'S DIVERSE CULINARY LANDSCAPE

A culinary destination for a fusion of traditional Indian flavours and modern innovation, is perfect for festive dining, says **SHARMILA CHAND**

IDYLL known for serving Regional Indian plates & craft cocktails in its most rustic, nostalgic & idyllic state, presents a unique dining concept that celebrates the essence of India's rich culinary heritage. The restaurant's menu, inspired by the diverse flavours of Rajasthan, Kashmir, Lucknow, Orissa, and Maharashtra, perfectly complements the festive spirit of Diwali. Each dish is a testament to the restaurant's commitment to honouring traditional recipes while infusing them with contemporary flair. The IDYLL experience goes beyond mere sustenance, offering a holistic sensory journey that resonates with the joyous atmosphere of Diwali. From the moment guests step in, they are enveloped in an ambiance that pays homage to Jaipur's celebratory structures. The interplay of textures, from polished surfaces to rough finishes, and the warm, earthy tones create an intimate setting ideal for festive gatherings.

Talking to *Namokar Jain*, the co-owner of IDYLL, I got to understand the philosophy that drives their innovative approach to Indian cuisine, as he explains their logo and what it stands for. "The five circles in the logo are reminiscent of the rings of a tree trunk. They symbolise the depth and richness of our commitment to reconnecting with tradition through food and beverages. Just as the ageing process of a tree trunk is slow and steady, so is our approach to crafting the perfect dining experience." He continues to explain, "At the heart of IDYLL's appeal is a reflective insight into the depth of Indian cuisine. Drawing inspiration from the age-old technique of fermentation, the menu offers a range of gut-friendly delights that are perfect for the

THE IDYLL EXPERIENCE GOES BEYOND MERE SUSTENANCE, OFFERING A HOLISTIC SENSORY JOURNEY THAT RESONATES WITH THE JOYOUS ATMOSPHERE OF DIWALI. FROM THE MOMENT GUESTS STEP IN, THEY ARE ENVELOPED IN AN AMBIANCE THAT PAYS HOMAGE TO JAIPUR'S CELEBRATORY STRUCTURES

indulgent Diwali season. From tangy handcrafted pickles to complex kombuchas, every dish and drink is designed to please both the palate and the gut."

FESTIVE AMBIENCE

The restaurant's two-level layout provides versatile spaces for different types of Diwali celebrations. The lower level offers an intimate fine dining experience, while the upper floor houses a vibrant cocktail room. Here, an open circular island bar becomes the epicentre of festivity, serving meticulously crafted cocktails that incorporate regional Indian ingredients, perfectly complementing the celebratory mood of Diwali.

IDYLL's commitment to nostalgia and tradition makes it an excellent choice for multi-generational Diwali gatherings. The culinary team, led by expert chefs, has infused the menu with their childhood favourites, creating dishes that evoke fond memories while offering a fresh, modern twist. This blend of the familiar and the innovative ensures that there's something for every family member to enjoy during the Diwali feast.

TO CONCLUDE

IDYLL offers a dining experience that honours tradition while embracing the new. With its thoughtfully crafted menu, ambient setting, and commitment to creating memorable experiences, IDYLL stands ready to make your Diwali celebration in Bangalore truly extraordinary. "It was our endeavour to create a space that would offer a sense of calm to our diners. We hope our IDYLL is that space - rustic and nostalgic, offering a holistic sensory experience! Echoing a story of tradition, innovation, and passion," quip *Namokar Jain* and *Jai Sharma*, the co-founders of the restaurant. (*Sharmila Chand is an Author, Columnist and Independent Journalist, who writes on Food, Travel and Lifestyle*)

A HEALTHY DIWALI!

WHOLESOME RECIPES FOR FESTIVE INDULGENCE

TEAM AGENDA

With Diwali approaching, it's the perfect time to enjoy homemade treats that are both delicious and healthier. This festive season, why not try recipes that bring a balance of taste and wellness to your table? Here are four simple and flavourful dishes that will brighten your celebrations and keep the indulgence guilt-free.

ALMOND DATE CHOCOLATE BALLS

(by Australian Almonds)

These Almond, Date and Cranberry Balls are a perfect energy-boosting snack. Easy to prepare, they're rich in nutrients, with a festive touch of dark chocolate and edible gold dust.

INGREDIENTS

- ½ cup whole blanched almonds
- 1 cup Medjool dates (seeds removed)
- 1/3 cup cranberries
- 3 tsp cacao or Dutch cocoa powder
- ¼ cup desiccated coconut
- 3 tsp almond butter

Method

- Blend almonds, dates, cranberries, cacao, coconut and almond butter in a food processor.
- Roll small portions into balls and coat with chopped or flaked almonds.
- Refrigerate before serving. For a special touch, drizzle melted dark chocolate and sprinkle it with gold dust.



SPECIAL COCONUT LADDOO

(by Bristhi Kumari, on behalf of Chilean Prunes)

A Diwali classic, these laddoos get a unique twist with prunes, adding a rich flavour to the traditional coconut and condensed milk combo.

Ingredients

- 1 tsp ghee
- 1 cup desiccated coconut
- ½ cup condensed milk
- 2 tsp milk
- ¼ tsp cardamom powder
- Prunes and chopped pistachios for garnish

Method

- Heat ghee in a pan, fry the coconut on low heat until lightly coloured.
- Add condensed milk, 2 tsp milk and cardamom powder, and mix well.
- Shape the mixture into small balls, placing a prune in the centre.
- Refrigerate for 30 minutes before serving.



PISTACHIO BAKLAVA CAKE

(by Chef Najmieh Batmangli, on behalf of American Pistachio Growers)

This cake is a delightful fusion of Baklava and cake, combining the flavours of pistachio, cardamom, and rose water for a unique Diwali dessert.

Ingredients: Glaze

- 1 cup honey
- ¼ cup rose water
- Zest of 1 orange
- 2 tsp fresh lime juice

Cake

- 3 eggs, separated
- ¾ cup sugar
- 2 tsp cardamom powder
- 2 tsp rose water
- ½ cup milk (or almond milk) and ½ cup oil
- 1 cup flour (with 1½ tsp baking powder)
- 1½ cups ground pistachios
- 1 apple, peeled, cored and chopped (optional)

Garnish

- Pistachios, almonds and dried rose petals

Method

- Mix all glaze ingredients and set aside. Preheat the oven to 350°F.
- Whisk egg yolks and sugar until creamy, add cardamom, rose water, milk, and oil. Fold in flour, pistachios, and apple.
- Whip egg whites to soft peaks and fold into the batter.
- Bake for 40-45 minutes, then pour half the glaze over the cake. Garnish with pistachios, almonds, and rose petals.



CARAMEL WALNUT KHEER

(by Chile Walnuts)
A rich and creamy kheer with a caramel twist, this dish is the perfect blend of traditional and modern flavours, enhanced with crunchy Chilean walnuts.

Ingredients

- 7-8 Chilean walnuts (roughly broken) + 3-4 for garnish
- 3 tbsp rice (soaked for 2 hours)
- 1 litre milk (divided)
- 1/3 cup sugar and 1 tsp butter (optional)
- Water

Method

- Cook soaked rice with ½ cup milk in a pressure cooker for 2 whistles.
- For caramel, heat sugar with water until golden brown, then stir in butter (optional) and 2 tsp warm milk.
- Boil the remaining milk, add the cooked rice, and cook for 5 minutes. Stir in walnuts and caramel.
- Garnish with more walnuts and serve.



These festive recipes not only bring vibrant flavours to your Diwali celebrations but also add a healthy twist to traditional treats. By incorporating wholesome ingredients like almonds, prunes and walnuts, you can enjoy the best of both worlds - delicious sweets and mindful indulgence. So, light up your home with joy and fill your table with these delightful dishes that everyone will love, guilt-free. Wishing you a bright, flavourful and health-conscious Diwali!

A Taste of Italy at Farmer's Basket

Chef Francesco Calvani showcased his finest creations at Farmer's Basket in Pullman. **GYANESHWAR DAYAL** describes the authentic Italian dishes as simply irresistible



Pullman New Delhi Aerocity is a culinary gem that recently unveiled an exclusive Italian pop-up that promises to whisk guests away to Italy through the exquisite flavours of its cuisine. The hotel's all-day dining restaurant, *Farmer's Basket at Pluck*, welcomes the esteemed *Chef Francesco Calvani*, renowned for his artistic flair in Italian cooking.

As I stepped into *Farmer's Basket*, the ambiance was inviting, infused with a warmth that hinted at the culinary delights to come. The collaboration with *Chef Calvani* is a testament to *Pullman's* commitment to offering memorable dining experiences, and I was eager to see how his mastery would shine through in the menu. *Chef Francesco Calvani*, a distinguished graduate of *Le Cordon Bleu*, possesses an impressive background in both Italian and French cuisines. His culinary journey began at the renowned *Gordon Ramsay's Bread Street Kitchen* in London, where he honed his skills and developed a passion for creating unforgettable dishes. Known for his dedication to quality ingredients and an elegant culinary style, *Chef Calvani's* approach is rooted in the belief that great ingredients can transform any dish into a masterpiece.

During my visit, I had the pleasure of sampling a signature menu which was specially curated for the dinner buffet and the exclusive Sunday Brunch, both showcasing *Chef Calvani's* culinary expertise. The dinner buffet was a lavish spread, featuring highlights such as *Corn Fed Chicken* with *Mixed Bell Peppers*,

Porcini Mushrooms Risotto, and the classic *Spaghetti Alla Carbonara*. Each dish was a celebration of authentic Italian flavours, infused with *Chef Calvani's* unique twists that elevated the dining experience to new heights. One standout was the *Pistachio Crusted Tuna Fillet*, perfectly seared and complemented by a delicate sauce that highlighted the fish's natural flavours. The *Walnut and Gorgonzola Gnocchi* was another revelation, with its rich, creamy texture enveloping the soft pillows of pasta - truly a dish that lingered in my memory long after the meal.

As I savoured each bite, it became evident that *Chef Calvani's* philosophy of using the finest ingredients

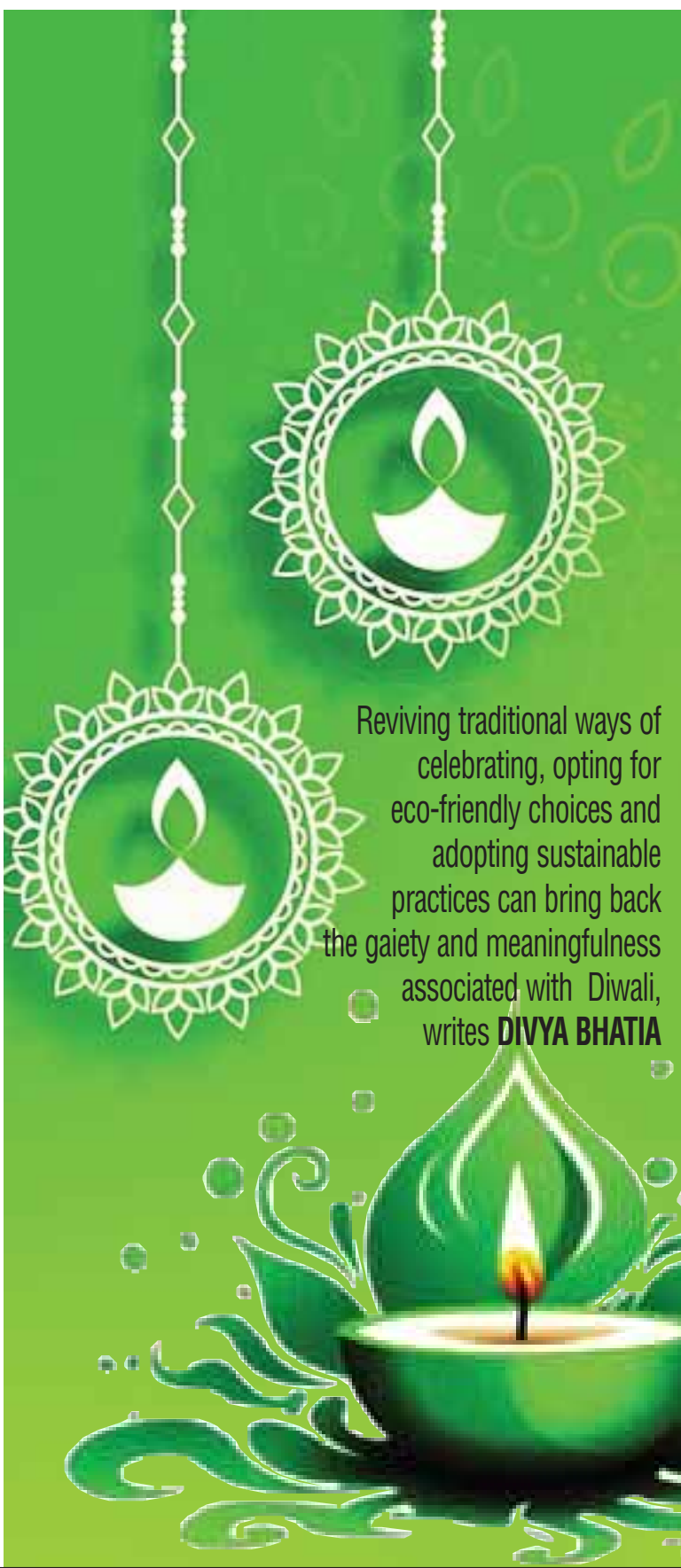
was at the heart of this dining experience. The attention to detail and the passion infused into every dish were palpable, making this not just a meal but a journey through the diverse landscapes of Italy. The exclusive pop-up at *Farmer's Basket* is not merely about dining; it is a celebration of Italian culture and culinary tradition. Reservations are highly recommended for those wishing to indulge in this exquisite gastronomic experience.

For an unforgettable evening that transports you to the heart of Italy, visit *Farmer's Basket at Pluck, Pullman New Delhi Aerocity*. Reserve your and prepare to embark on a

culinary adventure that showcases the very best of Italian cuisine. Strategically located near IGI Airport and the bustling business hubs of Gurgaon and New Delhi, *Pullman New Delhi Aerocity* stands as a stylish and modern destination. Combined together with *Novotel Aerocity* as a part of the same complex, the hotel boasts of 670 elegantly appointed rooms and suites, along with a state-of-the-art convention space featuring 13 meeting rooms and one of the largest ballrooms in the Delhi NCR region.

With six innovative dining outlets, the hotel draws on international and local culinary specialties, ensuring that every meal is a celebration. Leisure facilities, including a spa, a fully-equipped health club, and an outdoor swimming pool, complete the experience, making it a true sanctuary for both business and leisure travellers.





Reviving traditional ways of celebrating, opting for eco-friendly choices and adopting sustainable practices can bring back the gaiety and meaningfulness associated with Diwali, writes **DIVYA BHATIA**

GO GREEN THIS DIWALI

Diwali, the festival of lights, is one of the most anticipated and cherished celebrations in India. Traditionally, Diwali has been a time for family gatherings, sharing sweets, lighting oil lamps (diyas) and engaging in heartfelt festivities. However, in recent years, the essence of Diwali has been overshadowed by excessive noise, air pollution and a culture of pomp and show. Remember the days when Diwali was celebrated with genuine joy - families dressed in new clothes, shared homemade sweets, and children delighted in simple fireworks like chakris and phuljharis? But today, Diwali has become a commercial spectacle, where promotions overshadow tradition.

THE NEED FOR HEALTHIER CELEBRATION

During Diwali, health concerns often spike due to increased air pollution, skin allergies and burn injuries, largely from firecrackers and chemical-based rangoli colours. *Dr Vaibhav Kubal*, Consultant in Respiratory Medicine at Holy Family Hospital, notes, "Every year, we see a noticeable increase in hospital admissions, especially due to respiratory issues and firecracker-related injuries." Likewise, *Dr P Venkata Krishnan* from Artemis Hospitals advises that those with respiratory conditions stay indoors during peak pollution hours and use air purifiers. Advocating for animal safety, *Tarunjeet Rattan*, an animal welfare advocate, passionately encourages a cracker-free Diwali. "Firecrackers were never part of our tradition and are harmful to both animals and humans," she shares, urging people to "comfort pets and welcome stray animals seeking shelter."

THE DIFFERENCE GREEN CRACKERS CAN MAKE

Green crackers offer a viable alternative to conventional firecrackers. Developed with a reduced chemical composition, these eco-friendly options are designed to produce less smoke, lower noise levels, and minimise harmful emissions. Unlike traditional crackers, which release high levels of pollutants such as carbon dioxide, sulphur oxides, and nitrogen oxides, green crackers contain non-toxic materials that



THE JOY CAME FROM TOGETHERNESS, NOT FIRECRACKERS OR EXTRAVAGANT DISPLAYS. TODAY, MANY SEND WHATSAPP MESSAGES INSTEAD OF VISITING LOVED ONES, AND ELECTRONIC DEVICES HAVE REPLACED PERSONAL CONNECTION. REVIVING OLD CUSTOMS LIKE LIGHTING DIYAS TOGETHER AND SPENDING TIME WITH FAMILY CAN RESTORE THE TRUE SPIRIT OF DIWALI

produce a significantly smaller amount of air pollutants.

EMBRACING SUSTAINABLE GIFT-GIVING

Diwali is traditionally marked by gift exchanges as a gesture of goodwill. To help conserve the environment, opting for sustainable, eco-friendly gifts can make a big difference. Instead of plastic-wrapped sweets or mass-produced decorations, choose alternatives like reusable jute bags, handmade products, plantable stationery, bamboo decor, artisanal candles, or potted plants. *Pranay Pasricha*, Brand Head of Pakka Limited suggests opting for gifts that offer genuine value and support the environment, such as reusable cloth bags, stainless steel bottles, or items made from agri-residue. "Choosing sustainable gifts not only reduces waste but also reflects a deeper commitment to the planet," says *Pasricha*.

EAT HEALTHY THIS DIWALI

Diwali sweets once captured the festive spirit with a blend of wholesome, homemade ingredients and traditional flavours. Today, however, mass-produced treats often come laden with sugars and unhealthy additives, which can lead to

increased health risks. *Chef Arokiya Doss*, Head Chef at The Malabar Coast, highlights the importance of mindful ingredient choices, saying, "Festive food tempts us with indulgent flavours, but balancing these with wholesome options is entirely possible. Opting for whole grains, legumes, and fresh vegetables adds fibre and reduces calorie density." *Chef Aditi Dixit* from CYK Hospitalities recommends "sweets that bring both indulgence and nutrition, like ladoos or halwas made with jaggery or dates instead of refined sugar. Baked gujyas filled with coconut and dry fruits keep the festive spirit alive with less oil, and ragi or millet-based bars offer fibre and wholesome ingredients."

TAKE CARE OF MENTAL HEALTH

Diwali offers the comforting sense that some things remain unchanged. Talking about handling this mental burden, *Jasneet Kaur*, Co-Founder & CEO of Unfazed Therapy Solutions, shared, "While it's natural to miss loved ones, taking time to appreciate what we have can uplift our mood. Finding ways to celebrate meaningfully, even through community activities or volunteering, can restore a sense of purpose."



A Night of Dandiya and Festive Cheer

This Diwali, Rajasthan Club brought the festive spirit to life with Dandiya Raas: Rhymes of Diwali at Major Dhyan Chand Stadium, featuring music, dance and vibrant celebrations.

BY SAKSHI PRIYA

Diwali - the festival that brings people together in joy, light and celebration - came alive in the heart of Delhi this year in a spectacular way. A grand cultural program, *Dandiya Raas* (Rhymes of Diwali), was organised by the Rajasthan Club, one of the city's leading social and cultural organisations, at the *Major Dhyan Chand Stadium*, also known as the National Stadium at India Gate. This vibrant event attracted thousands of people, turning the stadium into a lively hub of music, dance and festive cheer. From the moment you entered the stadium, the festive spirit enveloped you. Strings of lights decorated every corner, casting a warm glow that seemed to reflect the happiness in everyone's faces. Families, friends and even complete strangers came together to celebrate the essence of Diwali. The sounds of laughter and conversation filled the air, but it was the music that truly set the mood. As captivating tunes played, with singer and artist *Rahul Vaidya* setting the stage ablaze, people couldn't help but move to the rhythm. The beauty of this event lay in its ability to bring everyone together - no matter where you were from or who you were with, you were part of the same celebration. *Dandiya Raas* is more than just a dance;

it's a cherished tradition. Dressed in colourful ethnic wear, people of all ages twirled and clashed their Dandiya sticks in perfect harmony. There was a certain joy in the simplicity of it all. The bright colours of lehengas and kurtas, the clatter of sticks, and the smiles on people's faces created an atmosphere that was truly unforgettable. It didn't matter if you were an expert or a first-timer; the excitement was infectious, and everyone found themselves joining in the fun.

Beyond the dancing, the stadium was filled with the sights and smells of Diwali. Food stalls, with their tempting aromas of traditional sweets and savoury treats, were a popular spot throughout the night. Whether you were grabbing a plate of *hot jalebis* or a *bowl of spicy chaat*, the food was as much a part of the experience as the dancing. It added to the warmth of the evening, as people shared meals and stories, deepening the sense of community that Diwali always brings. What made this night truly magical was the feeling of unity. Diwali is a festival that symbolises the victory of light over darkness, and this event was a shining example of that. The energy of the crowd, the shared joy of dancing together, and the simple pleasure of being part of something bigger than yourself all came together to create an unforgettable Diwali experience. *Anurag*



Garg, the head of the Rajasthan Club, along with General Secretary *Sunil Prakash*, highlighted how the organisation, founded 56 years ago in 1968, has always aimed to carry forward cultural traditions while providing healthy entertainment to the community. As the night went on, the dancing only seemed to grow more lively. With every beat and every twirl, the crowd became more in sync, moving as one in celebration. It was a reminder of the beauty of togetherness and how, in moments like these, the true essence of Diwali shines through. Everyone left the event with full hearts, knowing that this night had captured the true spirit of the festival. This Diwali, Delhi didn't just light up with lamps and fireworks - it lit up with the smiles, laughter and joy of people coming together for a night of unforgettable celebration.

Photos: Pankaj Kumar



Dubai's Real Estate Boosting India's Tourism Industry This Diwali

BY TEAM AGENDA

As Dubai's real estate market reaches new heights, the benefits are spilling over to India's tourism sector. Real estate companies from Dubai are organising major events across various regions in India, leading to significant growth in both the hotel and tourism industries. A notable real estate event was hosted by *Tesla Properties*, a renowned Dubai-based company, at the *Royal Plaza Hotel in Connaught Place, Delhi*. Esteemed developers from Dubai showcased their projects and provided investors with comprehensive information on the advantages of investing in Dubai's real estate, which offers freehold ownership, excellent profitability, and attractive rental returns. Additionally, those residing in Dubai can obtain golden visas for their entire families. *Satish Balyan*, CEO of *Tesla Properties*, emphasised the company's commitment to contributing to India's development while residing in Dubai. "Delhi holds a special place in our hearts, which is why we choose it for our Dubai property events," he stated. He further explained that their team comprises citizens from various countries, whom they bring

to India to promote tourism and familiarise them with the local cuisine and culture. Interactions with Indian attendees help enhance the country's positive image globally. During the event, *Tesla Properties* experts highlighted how Indian investors can secure substantial returns by investing in Dubai. They addressed all real estate needs for individuals looking to start businesses, both residential and commercial. Moreover, the property management services offered ensure excellent appreciation in value. Investors benefit from a tax-free, crime-free, and pollution-free environment, coupled with a stable currency in Dubai. Various other developers, including the well-known Dubai-based firm *Binghatti*, also showcased their projects. *Tesla Properties* team members *Pershan* from Iran savored the rich flavours of Indian cuisine, while *Marta* from Poland was left craving more after trying the local dish "soya chaap" in Connaught Place. The events in Dubai's real estate sector are consistently providing profits to India's aviation, food, hotel, and tourism industries, contributing to the nation's goal of achieving a five trillion-dollar economy.



YOUR WEEK AHEAD

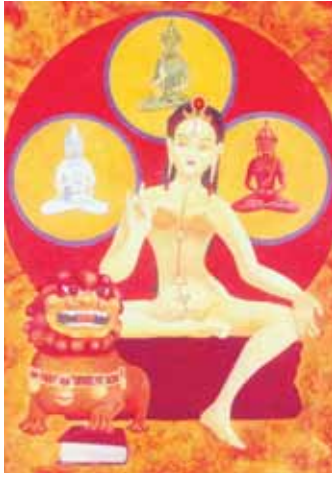


MADHU KOTIYA



ARIES March 21-April 19
This week, your emotions and romantic feelings will be particularly intense, drawing you towards serene natural settings or engaging deeply in artistic pursuits with a loved one. Expect interests like movies, drama, or poetry to be especially appealing, and you might even receive a significant romantic proposal. Midweek calls for letting go of a harmful habit to maintain harmony in your relationships. By the end of the week, you'll notice a transformative shift in your mindset and energy, prioritizing your professional aspirations. You may receive recognition and support from a mentor at work. This is an excellent time for teamwork and showing generosity, setting the stage for effective collaboration. Your creativity will soar, and you'll find yourself ready to tackle new challenges with a refreshed spirit.

Lucky number 12 | Lucky colour Coral
Lucky day Tuesday



LEO July 23-Aug 22
This week, your heart takes precedence over your mind, immersing you in feelings of love and romance. You'll find new opportunities emerging that boost your optimism. While you may feel unusually whimsical and deeply connected to your emotional and spiritual sides, your readiness to help others shines through. You possess a blend of gentleness and compassion, coupled with a rich imagination and artistic flair. You seek peace and harmony, avoiding conflicts and disturbances. Midweek, you may be unsettled by the unexpected dishonesty of someone close, which could leave you feeling betrayed. However, as the week progresses, you'll gain a strong command over both your theoretical knowledge and practical applications, balancing logic with emotion effectively. Your confidence in your abilities will grow, enhancing both your professional interactions and potential for advancement.

Lucky number 20 | Lucky colour Mint
Lucky day Saturday



SAGITTARIUS Nov 22-Dec 21
You possess a genuine and sincere heart, especially when it comes to matters of love. Your ability to tolerate and find balance is remarkable, allowing you to understand and integrate contrasting aspects of life. By facing and understanding the challenges before you, you often discover solutions during your learning journey. This week may bring travel opportunities or significant movements. Be prepared for potential conflicts in your professional environment, where patience will be your greatest asset, allowing you to navigate through disputes gracefully. You are fortunate to experience a deep and meaningful connection with someone who resonates deeply with you, offering unconditional love. This period highlights the joy of a harmonious relationship, inviting you to savor the beauty of a loving and committed partnership.

Lucky number 11 | Lucky colour Mustard
Lucky day Monday



TAURUS April 20-May 20
This week, your desires, especially in relationships, will be intense, with your outward calm belying a passionate inner nature. This duality might lead to an internal struggle, tugging you between fervent impulses and deeper emotions. Navigating these conflicting feelings might leave you feeling torn. Embracing diplomacy and tolerance will help you manage potential conflicts more effectively than resorting to confrontations. Beware of becoming too engulfed by your emotions, as it could leave you feeling overwhelmed. Striving for balance will keep you grounded. Midweek brings a surprising twist in your career or business prospects. Take these developments seriously and consider them carefully. Financially, the period looks promising, with potential unexpected gains through gifts or bonuses, and possibly a boost in earnings.

Lucky number 18 | Lucky colour Fuchsia
Lucky day Thursday



VRIGO Aug 23-Sep 22
This week calls for patience as you await outcomes from recent endeavors. You may feel a spiritual inclination to organize a serene gathering at home, reflecting and discovering your inner strengths. This introspection could lead to more creative and constructive activities. By mid-week, a new project will emerge that requires your swift action and courage, energizing you with renewed initiative and vigor. Health-wise, you'll find yourself in a robust state, ready to tackle challenges that previously intimidated you. Now is the time to embrace these opportunities for maximum benefit. Professionally, the week looks promising, although romantic relationships might need more attention. Some might experience a sense of disappointment in love, but clear communication can prove beneficial. For those dealing with complexities in personal connections, thoughtful gestures like giving a thoughtful gift could help smooth things over.

Lucky number 3 | Lucky colour Saffron
Lucky day Friday



CAPRICORN Dec 22-Jan 19
This week, your primary focus should be on your health as seasonal conditions could pose a challenge. Financially, it's a tricky period with disruptions in income and an increase in expenses, potentially leading to stress. Additionally, the declining health of an elder might add to your concerns. Relief comes midweek when you discover rejuvenating practices like meditation and yoga, alongside spiritual pursuits that offer solace. Support and encouragement from maternal figures will bolster your confidence significantly. Your relationships may feel a bit stagnant, prompting a need to reevaluate and refresh emotional connections to prevent one-sided dynamics that lead only to discomfort. It's a period for introspection and adjustment, encouraging you to explore new paths and more fulfilling directions in life.

Lucky number 23 | Lucky colour Peach
Lucky day Saturday



GEMINI May 21-June 20
This week heralds a time of significant abundance, touching both material and spiritual aspects of your life. You'll find yourself well-equipped with the necessary resources and deep contentment. It's an opportune moment to leave a meaningful legacy, perhaps passing on wisdom or assets that will leave a lasting impression beyond mere financial value. Family discussions may revolve around financial inheritances or property matters. Midweek could bring sudden changes, requiring swift adaptation. Navigate these with careful thought and fairness to maintain harmony and ensure productive outcomes. Be cautious in your decision-making, avoiding rash actions that could undermine your efforts. You may also find yourself amidst conflicts or facing opposition, necessitating a balanced approach to debates or discussions to preserve your interests and relationships.

Lucky number 6 | Lucky colour Indigo
Lucky day Monday



LIBRA Sep 23-Oct 22
This week, you will find yourself brimming with energy and creativity, ready to embrace positive developments and joyous celebrations. A significant personal milestone, such as welcoming a new family member, might occur, adding to your excitement. Your imaginative powers will serve well in creative ventures, and you'll feel driven to achieve ambitious goals while upholding strong ethical standards. Life will seem to flow smoothly, inspiring you to create and maintain a balanced lifestyle. This period also hints at significant relational developments, whether through engagements or deepening friendships. You may find opportunities to make long-term investments, like acquiring or upgrading a home, come to fruition. Support and blessings from elders will uplift you, enhancing a sense of familial joy. Social events will fill your schedule, though caution is advised in financial dealings, particularly with acquaintances at work.

Lucky number 2 | Lucky colour Teal
Lucky day Sunday



AQUARIUS Jan 20-Feb 18
This week, your decisive actions are set to yield significant long-term benefits. With clarity and a strong focus, you're poised to initiate successful new relationships or ventures. Your life's different aspects will align, offering you a comprehensive view of your path forward. Travel by air may feature prominently, marking a period of celebration. You'll find yourself feeling complete, bolstered by enhanced wisdom, strength, and courage. Relationships, both romantic and platonic, will take center stage, reinforcing the importance of teamwork and mutual support. Your self-confidence and personal virtues will provide the strength needed to lead and inspire others. As you guide those around you, this period will become reliable pillars in your own times of need. This week is ripe for launching actions that will not only succeed but also spark further creative endeavors.

Lucky number 8 | Lucky colour Turquoise
Lucky day Sunday



CANCER June 21-July 22
This week, you'll find yourself brimming with creativity, which will align your spirit, mind, and body, leading to successful outcomes. Your energy levels will be high, and you may experience significant personal milestones such as the announcement of a pregnancy or a new addition to your family. You'll enjoy an increase in both material and spiritual prosperity. However, mid-week, you might notice an uptick in your expenses. Your desires and needs are expanding, requiring careful management of your finances and relationships. Embracing love, compassion, and humility will strengthen your connections with those close to you. By the week's end, travel is on the horizon. Be mindful of your possessions during your journey. This trip is poised to be enriching, offering positive long-term benefits. Embrace this wave of inspiration and positivity.

Lucky number 10 | Lucky colour Lavender
Lucky day Wednesday



SCORPIO Oct 23-Nov 21
You are currently experiencing a burst of positivity and brightness, eager to celebrate recent achievements with those close to you. Drawing inspiration from the past, you find yourself wrapped in nostalgia, radiating joy that enhances your everyday experiences. As the week progresses, your professional life will demand more of your attention through additional responsibilities. Expect an increase in assignments, projects, and meetings. Your work will be recognized for its potential, inspiring you to devote your energy passionately, spotting opportunities others might miss. However, it's crucial to maintain a balance between your professional duties and personal joys. Focusing on a balanced approach will be key to managing both aspects effectively without sacrificing the seriousness your career requires.

Lucky number 14 | Lucky colour Burgundy
Lucky day Wednesday



PISCES Feb 19-March 20
This week, embrace the theme of transformation. You may find yourself relocating or redecorating your living or workspace. A significant shift in lifestyle or personal environment is likely. Prepare for a deep spiritual awakening that may lead you to discard outdated beliefs. This period serves as a wake-up call to explore new directions and better paths, especially if current situations, including painful relationships, are holding you back. At times, the best course of action is to let go and trust in a higher power, understanding that not all battles are meant to be fought actively. Sometimes, patience is necessary to resolve challenges. By the week's end, a sense of stability will return. You'll find strength in teamwork, possibly leading to recognition or advancement in your professional endeavors.

Lucky number 11 | Lucky colour Mauve
Lucky day Thursday

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Meditation - The essence

THE TUNING FORK



C V Srikanth

The state of mind and emotional balance are significant. It can be paradoxical. While emotional turmoil and stress call for calming, reflective practices, it can obliterate the ability to converge thoughts and reach quietness.

Meditation as a therapy is an advice freely distributed as the antidote for all issues - particularly for mental and psychological wellness. The origin is Latin 'Meditatum' meaning 'to ponder'. Of course, doing 'Dhyana' regularly - correctly and appropriately - improves awareness of how our minds work and how thoughts are processed. There is but a serious catch - one size does not fit all. The effect of various techniques varies and often, can be counter-productive. Personally, I have seen this occur during my sessions. Whether to and how to meditate is individualistic. The preparation is often given a go-by, a primary reason why we are unable to get the purchase of this exalted practice. The Shrutis themselves emerged and manifested through deep contemplation and reflection. Meditation is seen as a path to uncover the true nature of the self, described in the Upanishads as immortal and beyond limitations. In the Vedic tradition, dhyana is considered an imperative tool for spiritual growth, self-discovery, and achieving inner balance and peace. It is acknowledged that meditation may not suit everyone due to various factors deeply rooted in the individual's disposition, mindset, and importantly - Emotional and Spiritual Readiness. Each individual has a unique disposition,

mindset, constitutional fabric (Prakrit) comprising genetic, physical, mental, and spiritual attributes - influencing a person's response system and agreeability to different practices, including meditation. Generically, while a calm and introspective nature, makes meditation more welcoming and beneficial, a restless or extroverted disposition, can find it challenging to quieten the mind and experience the deeper states. The key here is a deep desire and intent to be learned and absorbed, making it a nature. The state of mind and emotional balance are significant. It can be paradoxical. While emotional turmoil and stress call for calming, reflective practices, it can obliterate the ability to converge thoughts and reach quietness. The preparation - preparing the soil for planting is crucial. Pranayama (breath regulating) or relevant mantra chanting assist to bring stability. Getting into meditation is preparing to start a long spiritual journey. A spiritual readiness and background greatly help. Dhyana in the Vedic tradition is an important part of evolving to next levels of learning and growth - which involves contemplation on spiritual principles, self-inquiry, and connecting with higher states of consciousness. For individuals who are not spiritually inclined, meditation practices may seem abstract or lack context.



Krishna teaches in the Bhagavat Gita ... योगयुक्तो विशुद्धात्मा विजितात्मा जितेन्द्रियरु द्र सर्वभूतात्मभूतात्मा कुर्वन्मपि न लिप्यते द्रद्य योग-युक्तो विशुद्धात्मा विजितं तम विजितं द्रद्य sarva-bh^t tma-bh^t m kurvanmap-inalipyate Bh Gita 5.7

The Karma yogis, of purified intellect, who control the mind and senses, see the Soul

of all souls in every living being, the self who acts but is not attached. Though performing all kinds of actions, they are never entangled. This verse highlights the qualities cultivated through Dhyana Sadhna - purification of the vishuddha-atma purified (intellect & mind) jitendriya (conquering the senses), lead to self-realization and non-attachment. The body and mind are interwoven as one. One disturbs the other. Imbalances in nadis subtle energy channels or chakra energy centres affect the flow of Prana vital energy - essential for a comforting and real experience. The Vedas elaborate on how our current life is totally influenced by karmas past actions and samskaras impressions stored in the mind that travel with us from birth to birth. These play a central role in spiritual growth like meditative practices. They can be highly supportive. However negative impressions and carry-overs like unresolved conflicts or deep-seated fears may surface causing inner discomfort or resistance. A commitment and resolve is essential - to cultivate and nurture into a habit. A responsibility to the self and an experience that cannot be described. Erraticism or a mundane effort is a waste of time. Practices like dhyana are deeply entwined with spiritual beliefs and ritual-

with specific purposes. Proper guidance from experienced Gurus or mentors are imperative - customized to one's nature and purpose to navigate correctly. The Yoga Sutras of Patanjali outlined dhyana as a critical practice for achieving mental and emotional stability. तदा द्रष्टृत्वरूपोऽवस्थानम् Then the seer abides in its own nature. Through meditation, the practitioner transcends the fluctuations of the mind and attains a state of pure awareness. In the Vedic tradition meditation is a transformative practice for spiritual evolution and self-fulfillment. It offers profound benefits. Its suitability varies among individuals due to diverse factors. Recognizing these factors allows individuals to approach meditation with greater awareness, to resonate with their unique needs for positive results. Ultimately, it is a journey within into our self. — The writer is a versatile professional with 3 decades in corporate experience & leadership roles, excelling in several areas as a ICF Certified Mentor Life Coach, Corporate Coach, Spiritual Intelligence Coach & CXO Coach. Spiritual counselor, Astro & Vastu consultant (25+ years of grounding in Vedanta philosophy) and a Motivational speaker. He is a Dale Carnegie's T3 graduate

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