



WORLD 6
BRAZIL JUDGE SETS FRESH TERMS FOR X TO RESUME SERVICES

SPORT 7
RAIN WASHES OUT SECOND DAY OF KANPUR TEST

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Terrorists burn Kashmir's dream



Security personnel stand guard after an encounter broke out between terrorists and security forces during cordon and search operation at Adigam village, in Kulgam district, Saturday

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ JAMMU

Ahead of the third and final round of polling on October 1, a joint team of security forces gunned down two unidentified terrorists on Saturday while five security personnel, including an officer, sustained injuries in an encounter in South Kashmir's Kulgam district. Based on specific intelligence about the presence of terrorists, a joint search operation was launched by security forces at village Kog (Mandli) (J/D of P/S Billawar) at Kathua. Contact has been established and a few rounds have been fired from both

sides. Area is cordoned off. ADG Police, Jammu range Anand Jain said in a statement. The gunbattle broke out in Arigam village in the Devsar area of the district after security forces launched a cordon-and-search operation there early in the morning. Srinagar-based Chinar Corps in a post on X said, "Based on specific intelligence input, a joint operation was launched by the Indian Army and Jammu and Kashmir police at Arigam, Kulgam. "During the search, terrorists fired indiscriminately and a firefight ensued. Two terrorists have been eliminated by the security forces in the ongoing Operation".

Confirming the recovery of two dead bodies from the encounter site, Kashmir Zone Police posted on X, "Two bodies recovered from the encounter site. Identification & affiliation are being ascertained. Incriminating materials, arms & ammunition recovered. Search in progress". The security forces also recovered two x AK Rifles, ammunition and other war-like stores from the terrorists. The security forces also suffered injuries during the firefight. According to official sources, three Army personnel and two police officers, including an Assistant Superintendent of Police (ASP), were injured in a gunbattle with terrorists in

Arigam. Additional Superintendent of Police (Traffic) suffered minor injuries due to a stray bullet near the encounter site, officials said. Earlier on September 14, three terrorists were gunned down by the joint team of security forces in the Kreeeri area of North Kashmir's Baramulla district. The security forces were able to neutralise a group of hiding terrorists after identifying their exact locations inside the building with the help of drone cameras. In this month, so far nine terrorists have been eliminated during anti-terrorist operations across different parts of Jammu and Kashmir.



India slams Pakistan at UN

PTI ■ UNITED NATIONS

In a strong retort, India has slammed Pakistan in the UN General Assembly, saying its "fingerprints" are on terrorist incidents across the world and the country should realise that cross-border terrorism against India will "inevitably invite consequences". India exercised its Right of Reply in the UN General Assembly on Friday in response to Pakistan Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif raising the issue of Jammu and Kashmir in his address at the General Debate of the 79th session of the UN General Assembly. "This Assembly regrettably witnessed a travesty this morning. A country run by the military, with a global reputation for terrorism, narcotics trade and transnational crime has had the audacity to attack the world's largest democracy," First Secretary in India's Permanent Mission to the UN Bhavika Mangalanandan said, delivering India's Right of Reply.

Israel decimates Hezbollah

AP ■ TEL AVIV

Lebanon's Hezbollah group has confirmed that its leader and one of its founders, Hassan Nasrallah, was killed in an Israeli airstrike. A statement on Saturday said Nasrallah "has joined his fellow martyrs." The statement says Hezbollah vows to "continue the holy war against the enemy and in support of Palestine." Nasrallah led the militant group for more than three decades. Earlier, Israel had said that it killed Hezbollah leader Hassan Nasrallah, dealing its most significant blow to the Lebanese militant group after months of fighting. Nasrallah is by far the most powerful target to be killed by Israel in weeks of intensified fighting with Hezbollah. Ali Karki, the Commander of Hezbollah's Southern Front, and additional Hezbollah commanders, were also killed in the attack, the Israeli military said. The military said it carried out a precise airstrike on Friday while Hezbollah leadership met at their headquarters in Dahiyeh, south of Beirut. Israel's Chief of Staff, Lt Gen Herzi Halevi, said Saturday that the elimination of Nasrallah was "not the end of our toolbox," indicating that more strikes were planned. He said that the strike targeting Hezbollah leadership was the result of a



Flames rise after an Israeli airstrike in the southern suburbs of Beirut, Lebanon, Saturday

long period of preparation. The Lebanese Health Ministry said six people were killed and 91 injured in the strikes Friday, which leveled six apartment buildings. The Israeli military said it was mobilising additional reserve soldiers as tensions escalate with Lebanon, activating three battalions of reserve soldiers to serve across the country. The call comes after it sent two brigades to northern Israel earlier in the week to train for a possible ground invasion. On Saturday morning, the Israeli military carried out several strikes in southern Beirut and eastern Lebanon's Bekaa Valley. Hezbollah launched dozens of projectiles across northern

and central Israel and the Israel-occupied West Bank. In Beirut's southern suburbs, smoke rose and the streets were empty after the area was pummeled overnight by heavy Israeli airstrikes. Shelters set up in the city centre for displaced people were overflowing. Many families slept in public squares and beaches or in their cars. On the roads leading to the mountains above the capital, hundreds of people could be seen making an exodus on foot, holding infants and whatever belongings they could carry. At least 720 people have been killed in Lebanon over the past week from Israeli airstrikes, according to the Health Ministry.

Stalin to succeed Stalin

A fresh political chapter?

KUMAR CHELLAPPAN ■ CHENNAI

In a late night development on Saturday, Tamil Nadu Governor R N Ravi has promoted Udhayanidhi Stalin, son of chief minister M K Stalin as the deputy chief minister and was allocated additional portfolios of planning and development. In addition to the promotion of Udhayanidhi as deputy chief minister, the Governor has inducted Senthil Balaji, who was released on bail by the supreme court after an incarceration of 471 days in jail in connection with prevention of money laundering case. It may be noted that Stalin is nit in the best of health if political grapevine is to be believed. Three more ministers have been inducted along with Balaji in the council of ministers and they would be sworn in on Sunday afternoon at Raj Bhavan Chennai, said a release by the Governor's office. It also said that three ministers were dropped from the council of ministers as per the recommendation of the chief minister Stalin. The promotion of Udhayanidhi Stalin as deputy chief minister was expected for quite sometime. There were reports that the elevation would happen prior to the foreign



tour of Stalin last month by it was rescheduled as per astrological directives. With Udhayanidhi Stalin getting elevated as deputy chief minister, the DMK and the Government has come under the full control of the Stalin family. Udhayanidhi, a first-time MLA was inducted in the council of ministers with the portfolio of Youth and Sports Affairs. Though there were resentment in the DMK senior leaders over the haste with which Stalin Junior was made a minister overlooking many seniors in the party, the Stalin clan has managed to hush up the issues.

"Now, Stalin will get enough time and space to revamp the DMK as well as the Government as there were many serious allegations about the functioning of the government. Moreover, small parties like VCK led by Thol Thirumavalavan have started as king for a share in the power," said Gauthaman Ramakrishnan, political critic and chief editor of Sree TV, a popular Tamil news channel. With the AIADMK, the main opposition, in total disarray and the BJP plagued with major infightings, Stalin hopes to make a smooth return to

power in the 2026 assembly polls which is less than two years away. The party is also getting ready to go for a clean sweep of the local body elections which are round the corner. The DMK's Delhi face is controlled by Stalin's step sister Kanimozhi with his grand nephew Udhayanidhi Maran acting as cheerleader. The revolt raised by senior leaders like T R Balau and Durai Murugan has been blown out as son Udhayanidhi Stalin has emerged as the DMK's new Raising Sun, the party's emblem.

Cockroach in meal shocks Air India passenger

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

In a shocking mid air discovery, an Air India passenger has complained of finding a cockroach in an omelette served onboard the flight from the national capital to New York, with the airline saying the matter has been taken up with the catering service provider for further investigation. The incident occurred on flight AI 101 on September 17, 2024, and was reported by the passenger on social media platform X. The incident has raised concerns about food safety standard prompting Air India to review its catering protocols. This is the second incident of a potentially dangerous foreign object being discovered by passengers in meals served on Air India flights over the past four months. In the statement, the spokesperson said the airline is concerned about the experience of the customer in the said instance and has taken it up with the catering service provider to investigate further. "Air India works with reputed caterers who supply to leading airlines globally and have stringent SOPs (standard operating procedures) and multiple checks to ensure quality of meals served to our guests. We are concerned about the experience of the customer in the



said instance and have taken it up with our catering service provider to investigate it further," the spokesperson said in a statement. "We will take necessary actions to prevent any recurrence of such instances in future," the spokesperson said. In a post on X, the passenger said a cockroach was found in the omelette served on the flight from Delhi to New York. "My 2 year old finished more than half of it with me when we found this. Suffered from food poisoning as a result," she said. The passenger also shared a short video and pictures of the food items served during the flight. She tagged Air India, aviation regulator DGCA and Civil Aviation Minister K Rammoohan Naidu in the post. In June, a passenger flying to San Francisco from Bengaluru on an Air India flight had found a blade-like metal piece in one of the meals served to him.

Gang shootouts on the rise in Delhi

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

Poising a serious threat to law and order situation, the national capital witnessed three separate firing incidents linked to escalating extortion bids by notorious gangs in the last 24 hours with the shooters attacking a luxury car showroom, a hotel, and a sweet shop. Fortunately, no injuries were reported in any of the incidents. While some unidentified shooters targeted a hotel at south Delhi's Mahilpapur area early Saturday, some assailants opened fire at a sweets shop in Sultanpur Mor in Nangloi later. According to a police officer, around 9.30 am on Saturday, two men with their faces covered came on a bike and opened three to four rounds of fire at 'Roshan Halwai'. No one was injured in the incident but there were some shattered glasses in the shop, the officer said. Police suspect the shooting was related to protection money of some gangsters. After the firing at the sweets shop, a note with "Deepak Boxer Bhai, Ankeśh Lakra Bhai and Vishal Bhai" --the names of gangsters -- written on it, police said. CCTV footage has been collected and a probe was underway, they said. Earlier around 2.30 am, two men came on a motorcycle and fired around five to six bullets at the main entrance gate of Impress Hotel in south Delhi. No one was injured in the incident but some glasses were damaged, police said. Hotel staff and some guests were present in their rooms when the incident took place. Police has initiated a probe into the case. The hotel's receptionist, Khalida said that she was not present during the firing as her shift started in the morning. She added, "They did not target anyone but they opened fire at the gate. Five to six rounds were fired they and fled," Khalida said. This attack is also believed to be part of an extortion attempt to take over the hotel. Last year, the hotel owner had been threatened by a man claiming to be connected to Canada-based gangster Goldie Brar. Brar, along with Lawrence Bishnoi - currently in custody in Gujarat - has been linked to previous high-profile extortion cases, including a shooting outside actor Salman Khan's Mumbai residence.

Railway tracks to be made cattle and reel free

DEEPAK KUMAR JHA ■ NEW DELHI

In order to tackle the rising incidents of cattle straying on to the railway tracks and two-wheelers crossing over, the Indian Railways has designed a new metal fencing termed as the W-Beam. It has been developed in such a way that it would also be difficult for humans to sneak and hence curb the menace of 'reel making' which is growing each passing day. These will be framed abreast the tracks that pass through the populated areas, railway officials said. "The gaps from the ground level and between the two beams have been designed in such a way in the new W-Beam metal fence



that cattle or two-wheelers cannot cross it and move over to the tracks," railway officials said. The decision has been taken since the concrete railway boundaries have been found not

be effective in preventing incidents, particularly the cattle run over. As of now the plans are to complete fencing of the New Delhi-Howrah and New Delhi-

Mumbai route to facilitate passenger train operations at a maximum speed of 160 kmph. The railways is mulling to increase the average speed of the passenger trains between 90

kmph to 110 kmph across its networks and the speed can be enhanced only after ensuring there are no animals and two-wheelers intrusion on the tracks. The new model W-Beam type metal fencing has been developed and being installed on Mumbai-Ahmedabad route where the train speed is being augmented to 160 kmph. All zonal Railways have also been advised to adopt the new fencing model. Further, to make train journey safer the latest version of Automatic Train Protection system, Kavach 4.0 is being finalised to work across railway network. While the officials claim, ever since specific safety measures have been taken, there has been a drop in accidents per day on the

railway network. An average of 2.6 accidents per day was recorded during 2012-14, which has come down to 0.5 (1 accident in 2 days) during 2022-24. The Centre is already working to secure the national highway network and work on bamboo crash barrier has been going on since last year which been named 'Bahu Balli'. The bamboo crash barrier underwent "rigorous testing" at various Government-run institutions like the National Automotive Test Tracks (NATRAX) in Pithampur, Indore and was rated as Class 1 during the Fire Rating Test conducted at the Central Building Research Institute (CBRI) in Roorkee and it has also been accredited by the Indian Road Congress.



Bhoo Kanon activists want strict land law in Uttarakhand

PNS ■ DEHRADUN

The assertion of the chief minister Pushkar Singh Dhama...

haven for land sharks from other States. He said that the people of the State will believe what is being promised only when a strict law protecting the interests of domiciled residents of the State is tabled in the Vidhan Sabha.

Land law activist Diwakar Gairola said that the government should also put a limit on purchase of land by outsiders in areas under the municipal bodies. He said

that the government is expanding the existing urban local bodies and large chunks of land are being purchased by outsiders in such areas of the State.

Senior journalist Jay Singh Rawat said that the State government should remove all the amendments in the Uttar Pradesh (Uttarakhand) Zamindari Abolition and Land Management Act 1950 made in the year 2017 and thereafter. He said similarly, the section 2 of the act incorporated during the tenure of chief minister Narayan Dutt Tiwari which allows outsiders to purchase land in the urban areas should be removed.

Cong demands white paper from Dhama Govt on land laws

PNS ■ DEHRADUN

The State unit of Congress party has demanded that the Pushkar Singh Dhama government should bring out a white paper on land laws.

Interacting with the media persons at the Congress headquarters here on Saturday the vice president of State Congress Suryakant Dhasmana said that the government headed by chief minister Narayan Dutt Tiwari in the year 2003 amended the section 154 of the Uttar Pradesh (Uttarakhand) Zamindari Abolition and Land Management Act 1950 which had a provision that the outsiders cannot purchase more than 500 square metre land for residential purpose in the State.

Dhasmana said that the government fiddled with this law

and made it ineffective and mortal blow to this law was delivered by Pushkar Singh Dhama government in 2022 when the provision of government permission for outsiders to purchase land in Uttarakhand was also removed.

He said that the final and mortal blow to this law was delivered by Pushkar Singh Dhama government in 2022 when the provision of government permission for outsiders to purchase land in Uttarakhand was also removed. Dhasmana claimed that successive BJP governments have rendered the land law enacted by ND Tiwari government ineffective, due to which rich people from outside the State purchased large chunks of land in Uttarakhand from 2018 to 2024.

He said that the Dhama government should reestablish the provisions of the land law during Tiwari government and come out with a white paper informing the number of outsiders who purchased land in the State.

BJP committed to protecting Uttarakhand's form and demography: Bhatt

PNS ■ DEHRADUN

The Bharatiya Janata Party has welcomed chief minister Pushkar Singh Dhama's announcement about bringing a strict land law in the near future. Stating that this is because of the party's commitment to maintaining the basic character and demography of Uttarakhand, BJP State president Mahendra Bhatt said that the Congress should clarify its position on land laws and demographic change.

taining the regional identity and original character of Uttarakhand. Serious efforts were made for this whenever our governments were in office. During the terms of the Congress governments, cases of illegal deals by the land mafia and conspiracy to alter the demography came to light. This is the reason why the public is in favour of making the existing land law stricter in the State. Considering the limited land resources in the State, the BJP considers it vital to ensure its better management and protection according to public sentiments.

impact the land mafia and those purchasing land with the wrong intent," he said.

Referring to allegations levelled by the Congress, Bhatt said the land law made during the term of the Congress government was amended in 2007 and other amendments were also made in it. However, instead of questioning the utility of laws made in the past, the need today is for a strict land law. "At the same time, the reality of demographic change should not be ignored and the CM is serious on this issue. Instead of acknowledging the facts or supporting it, the Congress is raising questions on this issue. The Congress should clarify its position on land laws and demographic changes. They were demonstrating on the roads for land laws till yesterday and today they are citing a different logic instead of appreciating the government's initiative," the BJP State president said.

State to organise Pravasi Uttarakhandi conclave on Nov 7

PNS ■ DEHRADUN

The State government will organise a mega conclave for the natives of Uttarakhand residing in foreign countries. Chief minister Pushkar Singh Dhama directed the officers on Saturday at the secretariat that the conclave should be organised in Dehradun on the Pravasi Uttarakhandi Diwas on November 7. He said that the State government wants to take the cooperation of the migrants of Uttarakhand for the development of the State and to provide them every possible help to connect with their motherland.



expertise, experience and financial capabilities in the development of the State and to honour those with notable achievements," he said.

The CM added that the State government has set up a Pravasi Uttarakhand Cell for the non-resident Uttarakhandis. He said that the cell is collecting the contact details of migrant organisations

and eminent migrants and so far, contact has been established with migrant Uttarakhandis living in 18 countries.

The CM also launched the website of Pravasi Uttarakhandi Cell www.pravasiuttarakhandi.uk.gov.in on the occasion. The ITDA has prepared the website which will provide information about various policies, programs and activities of

the State government. Chief secretary Radha Raturi, secretaries R Meenakshi Sundaram, BVRC Purushottam, Dipendra Chaudhary, SN Pandey, director general of Information, Banshidhar Tiwari, ITDA director Nitika Khandelwal, Pravasi Uttarakhandi cell member Sudhir Chandra Nautiyal and others were present on the occasion.

Moderate rain brings maximum temperature down, heavy rain warning issued for today

PNS ■ DEHRADUN

Moderate rain on Friday night in Dehradun and other places caused a drop in maximum temperatures in various parts of the State on Saturday. Even as the monsoon is in the process of withdrawal, more rain is forecast in the State. The State meteorological centre has issued a yellow warning regarding the possibility of heavy rain likely to occur at isolated places in Pithoragarh and Bageswar districts on Sunday. Thunderstorms accompanied with lightning/intense to very intense spells of rain are likely to occur at isolated places in all districts of Kumaon region and in Dehradun, Rudrapur and Chamoli districts of Garhwal region today.

State. The provisional State capital Dehradun is forecast to witness a partly cloudy sky with the possibility of light rainfall/thundershowers in some areas. The maximum and minimum temperatures are likely to be about 30 degrees Celsius and 22 degrees Celsius respectively. The maximum and minimum temperatures recorded in various places on Saturday were 29.4 degrees Celsius and 22.6 degrees Celsius respectively in Dehradun, 30.4 degrees Celsius and 24.4 degrees Celsius in Pantnagar, 19.4 degrees Celsius and 13.1 degrees Celsius in Mukteshwar and 23.5 degrees Celsius and 16.2 degrees Celsius in New Tehri. The maximum temperature was one degree below normal in Dehradun, three degrees below normal in Pantnagar, two degrees below normal in Mukteshwar and three degrees below normal in New Tehri. Light to moderate rain was reported in a few places in the State on Saturday.

Khel Mahakumbh to start on October 4

PNS ■ DEHRADUN

The Sports minister Rekha Arya informed that the Khel Mahakumbh will commence in the State on October 4. She shared this information during a virtual meeting with all the district magistrates of the State on Saturday. Arya said that the Khel Mahakumbh will begin at the Nyaya Panchayat level from October 4 to 31. Following this, block-level games will be held from October 25 to November 15 while district-level games will

Mukhyamantri Udayiman and Mukhyamantri Protsahan Yojana. Further, students from all schools in the State, including those under the Uttarakhand board, can take part in the Khel Mahakumbh. Arya added that awards including medals, certificates and cash prizes will be given to the winning players. Apart from this, the DM of the district securing the highest number of medals will receive the chief minister's trophy.



take place from November 16 to December 10. The State level games will then be held from December 15, she said.

She further informed that players breaking national game records during the Khel Mahakumbh will be awarded a cash prize of Rs one lakh. She emphasised that this presents a golden opportunity for the players of the State to show their talent, adding that the players will be financially empowered by the Khel Mahakumbh and their sporting talent will also develop further.

Arya further stated that players between the ages of 14 to 23 years are eligible to participate. She instructed all district magistrates to ensure the preparation and participation of eligible players in the Khel Mahakumbh. She said that this is a great opportunity for players benefitting from the

State to clamp down on defaulters, step up focus on recovery

PNS ■ DEHRADUN

The State government is planning to clamp down on defaulters in the State. The Board of Revenue chairman Anand Bardhan has directed that the district magistrates/sub divisional magistrates should take effective action at their level for recovery from the 10 major defaulters in the State. Chairing a video conference on Saturday, he conducted a review of the Revenue department along with the commissioners of Garhwal and Kumaon, and all district magistrates. He directed all the district magistrates to ensure that the main dues and sundry dues

are recovered cent per cent within the fixed time limit. Special campaigns should be undertaken for recovery in the districts where it is not according to the standard. He also issued directions for swift redressal of revenue cases pending in subordinate revenue courts. Steps should be taken to ensure swift redressal of cases pending for three to five years in the revenue courts. All the district magistrates were also directed to ensure inspection of the revenue record rooms in districts and Tehsils to ascertain whether or not the revenue records are being updated on

time. They should also ascertain whether or not the land records are being maintained in a secure manner. Bardhan also directed the officials to make sure that the land consolidation and survey process underway in villages is completed properly. The district magistrates were further told to take steps regarding pending pension cases of retired personnel, submitting requisition for recruitment of personnel, ensuring services within the time limit under Right To Service, resolving audit objections and ensuring action on the announcements made by the chief minister.

Chief secretary Radha Raturi gets six-month service extension

PNS ■ DEHRADUN

The Union government has again given service extension of six months to the State's chief secretary Radha Raturi. She was slated to retire on September 30. The extension to Raturi has been given by the department of Personnel, Public Grievances and

on the request of the Uttarakhand government. In a letter to the secretary, general administration, Uttarakhand government, the department of Personnel, Government of India has extended the service of Raturi from October 1 to March 31, 2025. This is the sec-

granted to Raturi who was first set to retire on March 31, 2024. An officer of the 1988 batch of IAS, Raturi took over as the first woman chief secretary of Uttarakhand on January 31. She took over the charge from SS Sandhu who superannuated on January 31. In view of the smooth conduct of Lok Sabha elections, a service extension of six months was given to her on March 31, the day she was originally slated to retire. Another service extension to Raturi implies that the coveted post of CS of the State is still away from the additional chief secretary Anand Bardhan. The ACS will now have to wait till April 1, 2025 to become the next CS of the State.



Pensions, Government of India and six-month extension

Shuttle service from Kinraig to resolve traffic issues in Mussoorie

PNS ■ DEHRADUN

In order to alleviate traffic congestion in Mussoorie, the Dehradun district magistrate Savin Bansal has instructed the officials concerned to once again start operation of the Kinraig parking facility. Chairing a meeting with officials concerned on Saturday, the DM also directed that a shuttle bus service should be started from the Kinraig parking lot to Library and Picture Palace. Bansal told the officials to facilitate tender for this purpose within ten days. Further, he also instructed the Police department to establish its office and computer network at Kinraig. The police will have access to information regarding the maximum park-



ing capacity of all hotels, he said. The DM added that once a hotel's parking is full, vehicles will be stopped at Kinraig. The shuttle bus will then transport the persons from Kinraig. In the first phase, the authorities are planning to introduce two buses for the shuttle service.

In addition, he directed the superintendent of police

(Traffic) to enforce this system effectively. He stressed that the police will be provided funds by the district administration for any resources they require without delay. The Mussoorie sub divisional magistrate, Traffic SP and executive officer of the Mussoorie municipality were instructed to take action promptly in this matter.

It is pertinent to mention here that the popular hill station Mussoorie suffers from traffic congestion especially when the tourist footfall increases during the weekends, the summer and even during snowfall in the winter.

Woman & granddaughter fatally hit by goods train

PNS ■ LALKUAN

A woman and her granddaughter died after being hit by a goods train in Kashipur on Saturday. The police reached the spot on being informed and sent the two bodies for post mortem examination. According to sources, Moradabad resident Hajra (45) was carrying her granddaughter Halima (5), the daughter of Nadeem, who currently

resides in Bazpur, Udham Singh Nagar district. Carrying the girl in her arms, Hajra was crossing the railway tracks to board a train.

At this time, they were hit by a goods train coming from the direction of Moradabad and going from Kashipur to Rudrapur. The woman and the child reportedly died on the spot.

Advertisement for Siddhulal Real Estate, featuring a table with plot numbers, bid amounts, and processing fees. Includes contact information for Siddhulal.

Advertisement for ICICI Home Finance, featuring a table with borrower details, property descriptions, and dates. Includes contact information for ICICI Home Finance.

FIR against Siddaramaiah exposes Congress corruption: BJP

Youth will defeat BJP, says Kharge

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

The BJP on Saturday asserted that the registration of a case on several criminal charges, including corruption, against Karnataka Chief Minister Siddaramaiah has exposed the Congress, as it noted that the FIR was lodged following a court order and central agencies had no role in it. BJP spokesperson Sudhanshu Trivedi told reporters that it is a rare case of a sitting chief minister being made an accused in a corruption case and has unmasked the "corrupt face" of the Congress. Siddaramaiah is the accused number one in the case, he said and took a swipe at Congress leader Rahul Gandhi, asking if he stood with the chief minister accused of corrupt practices. The Karnataka Lokayukta police on Friday registered an FIR against Siddaramaiah and others in the Mysuru Urban Development Authority



(MUDA) site allotment case, following the court order. A special court in Bengaluru on Wednesday ordered a Lokayukta police probe against Siddaramaiah in the case, setting the stage for filing an FIR against him. With the Congress leadership accusing the BJP of targeting the chief minister for political reasons, Trivedi noted that central probe agencies had no role in this FIR.

He claimed that the case is an outcome of Siddaramaiah's own misdeeds, as he and his family abused government powers to acquire assets illegally. He said a Congress candidate in the Haryana assembly polls had recently said that his party leaders will use power to enrich themselves and their relatives, and alleged that the Karnataka chief minister had already been doing it.



While Congress leaders pocket thousands of crores of rupees, they give "lollypop" of a few thousands to people, he said. At the press conference, the BJP spokesperson also slammed the Trinamool Congress government in West Bengal for its "nexus" with criminals over the case of rape of an IAS officer's wife. He made a mention of the Calcutta High Court's critical observation of the police

investigation in the case to hit out at the regional party. It shows how dangerous the state has become for women, and a heinous nexus is visible between government officials and criminals, he alleged. Replying to a question about the poor had no place in the Ram temple inauguration ceremony, Trivedi accused the Congress of repeatedly disrespecting the temple and

noted that workers involved in its construction were felicitated by Prime Minister Narendra Modi and showered with flower petals.

He objected to the use of phrase like "naach gana" (song and dance) by Gandhi in the context of the temple's inauguration ceremony. He said three generations of Gandhi family had gone to Mughal king Babar's grave in Afghanistan to pay their respects, and claimed that their stand on the temple shows their real nature and contempt for Hinduism. Referring to Pakistani prime minister's comments in the UN targeting India over developments in Kashmir, Trivedi said the Congress-National Conference has also been speaking the same language. Noting that the anniversary of the surgical strikes targeting terrorists in Pakistan in 2016 fell on Saturday, he said the Congress and Pakistan have been echoing each other's views since then.

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

Citing Periodic Labour Force Survey (PLFS) data, he said despite all efforts, this Government data is not able to hide the helplessness of the youth. "There is no bigger issue in the country than unemployment. Modi ji has the biggest contribution in ruining the future of the youth. If we take a closer look at the latest data of PLFS, despite all efforts, this Government data is not able to hide the helplessness of the youth," Kharge said in a social media post in Hindi. "Narendra Modi ji must answer — Isn't youth unemployment at a frightening 10.2% in 2023-24? Instead of giving colourful slogans and doing photo ops, what did Modi ji do to provide jobs to the youth?" he asked. Is it not true that the number of women who have regular



salaried jobs is now the lowest in seven years at just 15.9 per cent, Kharge asked. "Has not the number of women engaged in unpaid labour in rural areas increased from 51.9% (2017-18) to 67.4% (2023-24), which reflects rural unemployment? Why has the Modi Government, which makes a lot of noise about the manufacturing sector, not increased employment in it in the last seven years?" the Congress president posed. How did this figure fall from 15.85 per cent in 2017-18 to just 11.4 per cent in 2023-24, he asked.

BHISMA medical kits for Mahakumbh

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

Uttar Pradesh, which is readying to host one of the world's largest religious festivals, the Mahakumbh 2025, has sought at least 22 BHISMA kits—India's first indigenous state-of-the-art portable medical facilities housed in a cube—from the Centre to address medical emergencies and ensure prompt healthcare for the anticipated influx of devotees at the mega event. "The UP Government has requested at least 22 portable BHISMA (Bharat Health Initiative for Sahyog, Hita, and Maitri) Cubes to be installed at selected locations during the event in Prayagraj which is expected to attract around 40 crore devotees and visitors. Two Cubes will be set up in each of the 11 zones, covering a total of 43 zones," said an official from the HLL lifecare Ltd, a PSU of the Union Health Ministry which has been tasked with assembling the equipments enclosed in the innovative product under the Government's Project Arogya Maitri. Tailored to save the 'Golden Hour' for up to 200 individuals at once, the BHISMA Cubes have already found successful deployments in countries like Laos, Sri Lanka, Vietnam, and recently Ukraine when India had gifted four units during Prime Minister Narendra Modi's visit to the country. Back home in India, during Ram Mandir inauguration in Ayodhya, it emerged as a crucial lifesaver for a man during a medical emergency.

Dr Ankita, a member of the taskforce of the Union Defence Ministry for the Government's Project Arogya Maitri, shared that the Cubes are portable and rapidly deployable modular medical facilities intended to provide emergency lifesaving clinical care in event of disaster/public health emergencies. These can be deployed within minutes and entails operation theatre, mini-ICU, ventilator, blood test equipment, X-ray machine, cooking station, food, water, shelter, power generator and much more. Due to its modular design and ease of use, it can be transported by air, sea, land, or drone, ensuring timely medical assistance to even the most remote locations. The Cubes will help expedite treatment of the injured and save precious lives. These cubes can handle several severe injuries including 40 bullet injuries, 25 major bleeds, 25 major burns, around 10 head injuries, long limb fractures, spinal injuries, chest injuries and spinal fractures, she explained. The BHISMA cube is already finding huge takers. The Union Health Minister JP Nadda too recently announced that there are plans to set up BHISHM Cubes in 25 AIIMS and Institutes of National Importance (INIs) for rapid deployment in the respective region in case of disaster / health emergencies in the first phase. To enable operators to swiftly find items, track their usage and expiration dates, the cutting-edge BHISHM has a software system in a tablet along with the Cubes.



Modi pays tribute to Lata Mangeshkar on her birth anniversary

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Saturday paid tributes to renowned playback singer Lata Mangeshkar on her 95th birth anniversary, and recalled his "special bond" with her. He said in a social media post, "Remembering Lata Didi on her birth anniversary. She will always live on in the hearts and minds of people due to her soulful songs. "Lata Didi and I had a special bond. I have been fortunate to receive her affection and

blessings," he added. The Prime Minister also shared an article written by her brother and music composer Hridaynath Mangeshkar in a national daily, which highlighted the bond between Modi and the great singer. The unchallenged queen of playback singing for several decades, Lata Mangeshkar has been hailed by connoisseurs for her mastery of the intricacies of classical music and adored by the masses for her popular connect of her voice.

Justice system must respond to disabled children's vulnerabilities: CJI

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

Chief Justice of India DY Chandrachud on Saturday said it must be ensured that the justice system, from the police stations to the courtrooms, understands and responds to the compounded vulnerabilities of children with disabilities. Speaking at the ninth National Annual Stakeholders Consultation on Child Protection, the CJI said the challenges faced by persons with disabilities extend far beyond issues of physical accessibility and they must also contend with entrenched societal biases, stereotypes and misconceptions that permeate nearly every facet of life. "We must ensure that the justice system, from the police stations to the courtrooms, understands and responds to the compounded vulnerabilities of these children. The incorporation of restorative justice approaches is one such solution. The JJ Act (Juvenile Justice Act) outlines various and



reintegration measures for children in conflict with the law such as counselling, education, vocational training and community service. For children with disabilities, these measures can be adapted to ensure they receive the specialised support they need to thrive," he said. The two-day programme was organised under the aegis of Juvenile Justice Committee of the Supreme Court in association with UNICEF, India. Union Minister for Women and Child Development Annpurna Devi

gave the special address for the two-day programme, while the opening remarks was given by Justice BV Nagarathna, who is also the chairperson of the Juvenile Justice Committee of the Supreme Court. Country representative of Unicef, India Cynthia McCaffrey, gave the introductory address on the topic. The CJI said the challenges faced by persons with disabilities extend far beyond issues of physical accessibility and "they must also contend with entrenched societal

biases, stereotypes, and misconceptions that permeate nearly every facet of life." "When we talk about juvenile justice, especially in the context of children with disabilities, we cannot ignore the concept of intersectionality. Disability often intersects with other marginalised identities such as gender, caste, socio-economic status, and ethnicity, amplifying the discrimination children face," he said, adding the doctrine of intersectionality highlights how multiple identities intersect to create unique experiences of discrimination. Highlighting that for children with disabilities, these compounded vulnerabilities can have devastating effects, the CJI stressed the state must ensure that children with disabilities are provided additional safeguards, recognizing that they face heightened risks and unique challenges. "We must ensure that our legal, social and institutional systems are designed not just to accommodate, but to actively protect and empower these children," he added.

Special Gram Sabhas to guide Panchayat development plans

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

Special Gram Sabhas will be held on October two to guide panchayats on preparing their development plans for the 2025-26 financial year, officials in Panchayati Raj Ministry said. The sabhas (meetings) would engage over 2.55 lakh Gram Panchayats (GP) across the country, they said. The training and orientation programme is being conducted under the 'Sabki Yojana Sabka Vikas' Abhiyan of the Panchayati Raj Ministry, which is aimed at fostering participatory planning and timely preparation of Panchayat Development Plans (PDPs) across all panchayats in the country. It would involve 20,000 college students who will assist in the handholding and preparation of PDPs across



various gram panchayats, the officials said. According to a ministry official, the special Gram Sabhas would involve over 2.55 lakh gram panchayats, 6,700 block panchayats, and 665 district panchayats. Ahead of the October two programme, the ministry will also organise a national

workshop on September 30, which will bring together representatives from various Union ministries and departments, state departments, faculty members from training institutes, and elected representatives from different levels of Panchayats to share best practices for adoption

across states and UTs. The officials said the workshop will be inaugurated by the Union Minister of Panchayati Raj Rajiv Ranjan Singh 'Lalan'. "The Unnat Bharat Abhiyan (UBA), coordinated by IIT-Delhi, will play a critical role this year by involving over 20,000 students in the 'Sabki Yojana Sabka Vikas' Abhiyan,

also known as the People's Plan Campaign," another official said. These students will participate in the Special Gram Sabha on October two, and also assist in the handholding and preparation of GPDs across various Gram Panchayats, the official added. "The partnership between UBA and the Ministry of Panchayati Raj aims to engage young minds in grassroots-level planning, marking a first in the history of the campaign," the official said. Young Fellows working under the 'Project for Creating Model Gram Panchayat Clusters' as well as Fellows from Piramal Foundation, Aspirational Bharat Collaborative and Transforming Rural India Foundation will play a crucial role in co-facilitating the October 2 Gram Sabha, the official added. The sarpanchs (village head)

would be provided help in pre-planning and orientation on Localisation of Sustainable Development Goals (LSDG) and their themes, orienting Gram Sabha members on Panchayat Development Index (PDI) scores, and in identifying appropriate interventions. Additionally, special sabha-orientation programmes will be held in 750 Gram Panchayats, where senior citizens aged above 75 will share their experiences, the official said. A tree plantation campaign under the banner "Ek Ped Maa Ke Naam", involving the planting of 75 trees in each Gram Panchayat will also be undertaken, during which the participants will take pledges on "swachhata" (cleanliness), "Nasha-mukt Bharat" (drug-free India), Fit India, and youth-driven visions for the future, according to the official.

Health Ministry drafts guidelines for passive euthanasia

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

Brainstem death declaration, medical consensus on the patient's prognosis, documented informed refusal from the patient or surrogate, and adherence to Supreme Court protocols are some of the major specific conditions that have been outlined in the Union Health Ministry's draft guidelines for withdrawing life support in terminally ill patients. The 'Draft Guidelines for Withdrawal of Life Support in Terminally Ill Patients' come weeks after the Supreme Court refused to grant an aged couple's plea to

allow "passive euthanasia" for their 30-year-old son, who has been lying comatose at home for 11 years after a fall from the fourth floor of a building. In 2018 also an elderly couple from Maharashtra had written to the President's office, seeking permission for "active euthanasia", where a person is killed, usually by administering an overdose of pain-killers. The legality of euthanasia varies across the globe, with a small number of countries like Belgium and Australia permitting it under strict conditions. As per the Ministry, these guidelines aim to ensure

ethical decision-making while recognizing that many patients in critical care may not benefit from continued life support. The Ministry is seeking feedback from the stakeholders before finalizing the guidelines. As per the draft, the conditions are whether the individual has been declared brainstem death, if there is a medical prognostication and considered opinion that the patient's disease condition is advanced and not likely to benefit from aggressive therapeutic interventions, patient/surrogate documented refusal, following prognostic awareness, to continue life

support and compliance with procedure prescribed by the Supreme Court. It also states that doctors should take a considered decision to not start a life supporting measure in a terminally ill patient that is unlikely to benefit the patient and is likely to lead to suffering and loss of dignity. In such a case, three conditions — on whether the individual has been declared brainstem death, if there is a medical prognostication and considered opinion that the patient's disease condition is advanced and not likely to benefit from aggressive therapeutic interventions, patient/surrogate



documented informed refusal, following prognostic awareness — has to be taken into account. It also discusses the importance of Advance

Medical Directives (AMD), which allow patients to specify their treatment preferences in advance. However, IMA's national President Dr R V Asokan

stated that the proposed guidelines expose doctors to legal scrutiny and put them under stress. "Such clinical decisions have always been taken in good faith by doctors. The patient's relatives are explained and given all information, taken into confidence in a given case and decision is taken on merit in every single case. Putting it down in sort of guidelines and also alleging that inappropriate decisions have been taken or they have been prolonged is misunderstanding the situation," Dr Asokan told a news agency. "First the perception and

assumption that unnecessarily machines are used and lives are prolonged is wrong. It exposes the doctors to legal scrutiny. "More so what is left of a doctor-patient relationship... Trying to define it in four corners of black and white documentation which is legally scrutinised is nothing but exposing the doctors to further stress," he said. Terminal illness in the draft guidelines has been defined as an irreversible or incurable condition from which death is inevitable in the foreseeable future. Severe traumatic brain injury which shows no recovery after 72 hours or more is also included.

Mumbai on high alert ahead of Navratri, Diwali festivities

T N RAGHUNATHA ■ MUMBAI

The Mumbai police have placed the country's commercial capital on a high-alert on Saturday, after they received a tip-off from the central intelligence agencies about a possible threat of a terror strike in public places during the upcoming Navratri-Diwali festival season.

The police have beefed up security in and around the metropolis, particularly at the religious and crowded public places. The police stations across the city have been directed to maintain a strict vigilance at temples, tourist spots and other important locations.

The police on Friday conducted a mock drill at the Crawford Market area, where there are two famous religious sites including the Juma Masjid. "We are also conducting such mock drills in other parts of the city," a senior police officer said.

In a related development, the famous Siddhivinayak Temple at Prabhadevi in north-central Mumbai has come under a thick security blanket. Confirming that the Mumbai police had asked the temple management to beef up security in the temple, Sada Sarvankar, the chairman of the



Siddhivinayak Temple Trust, said: "We have been asked by Mumbai Police to increase the security at the temple. We have been told to pay attention to all the security arrangements." Similarly, the management of the major religious places including temples have been advised to increase their internal and external security detail. The Zonal Deputy Commissioners of Police have been asked to keep an eye in their juris-

dictions for any suspicious activities. Security has also been strengthened at railway stations and public installations keeping in view the safety and security of the people. Apart from the upcoming festivals like Navratri and Diwali, the authorities have also considered the forthcoming State Assembly as one of the reasons for increasing the security in and around Mumbai.

The Mumbai police are not taking any chances in matters relating to security in view of the recurring terror strikes that Mumbai has witnessed over the years. The country's commercial capital has witnessed 12 terror strikes ever since it had its first brush with international terrorism on March 12, 1993 when 257 people were killed and 713 others injured. The 12 terrorist strikes have collectively claimed a staggering 704 lives and left 2,300-odd people injured, besides a trial of destruction.

Among these terror strikes, the 1993 serial bombings, the twin blasts at Zaveri Bazar and Gateway of India on August 25, 2003, the July 11, 2006 suburban train bombings and the 26/11 Mumbai attack have been major ones both in terms of casualties and loss of property.

In all, 166 people were killed and 300 others injured in a brazen attack indulged in by the 10 Pakistani terrorists, including Kasab, on various prominent landmarks in the metropolis like Chhatrapati Shivaji Terminus, Taj and Oberoi-Trident hotels, Jewish centre Nariman House, and popular eatery Café Leopold, between the night of November 26 and the morning of November 29, 2008.

Rahul Gandhi asks Jaishankar to help TN fishermen arrested in Sri Lanka

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI



Leader of Opposition in Lok Sabha Rahul Gandhi on Saturday raised with External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar the issue of the arrest of 37 fishermen from Tamil Nadu and urged him to take up the matter with the Sri Lankan authorities to ensure the early release of the Indian nationals and their boats.

In a letter to Jaishankar, Gandhi said the "recurring incidents of small and marginal Indian fisherfolk being apprehended by Sri Lankan authorities and the unjust seizure of assets and imposition of hefty fines by them warrants strict condemnation". Referring to the arrest of 37 Tamil fishermen and the seizure of their boats by Sri Lankan authorities on September 21, 2024, the Congress leader said, "R Sudha, Member of Parliament (Lok Sabha) from Mayiladuthurai Parliamentary Constituency informed me that the arrested fishermen are small-scale fisherfolk operating close to the coast, and that

on the day of the incident they had attempted to rescue a Sri Lankan boat in distress." It was stated that despite contacting Sri Lankan authorities for assistance with the rescue, the fishermen were arrested on the grounds of crossing the International Maritime Boundary Line, he said. Furthermore, the fishing boats seized were community property purchased through pooled resources, he said. "A copy of Adv. R. Sudha's representation

is enclosed herewith..." he said. "I request you to kindly take up this matter with the Sri Lankan authorities and ensure the early release of the fishermen and their boats," Gandhi said in his letter to Jaishankar. Tamil Chief Minister M K Stalin had on Monday apprised Jaishankar of the arrest of the 37 Tamil Nadu fishermen by the Sri Lankan Navy and the seizure of three boats while seeking measures for their release.

Yuva Sena sweeps Mumbai University Senate polls

T N RAGHUNATHA ■ MUMBAI

In a mini elections of sorts held ahead of the Maharashtra Assembly polls, the Yuva Sena - the youth wing of the Shiv Sena (UBT) - swept the Mumbai University (MU) Senate polls from the Graduates' constituency by bagging all the 10 seats and handing a humiliating defeat to the ruling BJP's students wing Akhil Bharatiya Vidyarthi Parishad (ABVP) in the polls.

In a repeat of its sweep posted in the March 2018 Mumbai University Senate polls when it had won all the ten seats from the Graduates' constituency, the Yuv Sena - led by Sena MLA and former state minister Aadiya Thackeray - scored a perfect ten when the counting ended in a vast electoral constituency spread over 850-odd affiliated colleges Mumbai and neighbouring districts of Thane, Palghar, Raigad, Ratnagiri and Sindhudurg. The ABVP drew a blank in the MU Senate polls - in which there were 28 candidates for the ten seats. Nearly 55 per cent of 13,406 graduate-voters had cast their votes in 38 polling stations and 64 polling booths. Candidates required a minimum of 1,114 votes to win in the open category. "Once again! 10 on 10 it is! We have not only repeated but bettered our performance at the Mumbai University Graduate Senate elections. 100 percent strike rate. From here we start the election victory stream," Aadiya Thackeray wrote on micro-blogging site "X" early today, thanking all his colleagues in the Yuva Sena and SS (UBT).

The Yuva Sena not only walked away with all the five open-category seats in the Graduates' constituency, but it also posted



a victory in all five reserved-category seats which included candidates from Scheduled Castes, Scheduled Tribes, Nomadic Tribes, Other Backward Classes, and women. The ten Yuv Sena candidates who romped home in the polls were: Sneha Gawli, Sheetal

Sheth Devrukhkar, Mayur Panchal, Dhanraj Kohchade, Kisan Sawant, Pradeep Sawant, Shashikant Zore, Milind Satam, Alshesh Bhoir and Paramatma Yadav. Yuva Sena supporters celebrated their victory, chanting slogans in favour of their leaders

after the Bombay High Court stayed a directive from Maharashtra's higher and technical education department seeking postponement of the elections. The counting of votes that took place at the Cowasjee Jehangir Convocation Hall in Mumbai University's Fort campus ended in the small hours of Saturday. Accepting the defeat in the Mumbai University Senate polls, the ABVP's Konkan region head Sankalp Phaldesai said: "It was an election between political giants and the student union. We did our best. There may have been some strategic faults, which we will surely introspect. The ABVP congratulates the winning candidates and wishes them the very best. We hope they will now focus on solving the issues of the student fraternity rather than on political agendas."

4.78 million tourist arrived in India this year 2024

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

During the first six months this year, India welcomed nearly 4.78 million foreign tourist arrivals (FTAs), with Bangladesh and the US being the top source countries, according to data available from the Union Tourism Ministry. This reflects a 9.1 per cent increase from the same period in 2023, although it still trails pre-pandemic levels from 2019, which recorded over 5.29 million FTAs.

The FTAs in June 2024 were 7,06,045 as compared to 6,48,008 in June 2023 and 7,26,446 in June 2019 registering a growth of nine per cent and a fall of 2.8 per cent with respect to 2023 and 2019 respectively, according to the data released by the Ministry on the occasion of the World Tourism Day marked on Friday.

"The FTAs during the period January- June 2024 were 47,78,374 as compared to 43,80,239 in January-June 2023 and 52,96,025 in January-June 2019 registering a growth of 9.1 per cent and -9.8 per cent with respect to 2023 and 2019 respectively," it added.

According to the data on the percentage share of FTAs in India during January-June 2024, among the top five source countries were -- Bangladesh (21.55 per cent), the US (17.56 per

cent), the UK (9.82 per cent), Canada (4.5 per cent) and Australia (4.32 per cent). The FTAs trend for the month of June 2024 was similar with Bangladesh (28.49 per cent) occupying the first spot among the top five source countries, followed by the US (22.59 per cent), the UK (6.10 per cent), Australia (3.74 per cent) and Canada (3.01 per cent), as per the data shared by the ministry. In June 2024 alone, FTAs reached 706,045, up from 648,008 in June 2023 but slightly down from 726,446 in June 2019. The increase in foreign exchange earnings, which rose to USD 15,339 billion for January-June 2024, suggests that spending per tourist is higher despite the overall lower number of arrivals.

Leisure travel remains the primary motivation for visitors, with the ministry emphasising the need for vigilance in monitoring and encouraging travellers to report symptoms of illnesses. Notably, recent geopolitical tensions could impact the recovery of inbound tourism. The Ministry also announced the winners of the Best Tourism Villages Competition 2024, recognising 36 villages for their contributions to tourism.

Overall, while inbound tourism is on the rise, it continues to face challenges in fully recovering to pre-pandemic levels, said the experts in the sector.

Sitaram Yechury kept INDIA bloc united: Rahul Gandhi



PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

Leader of Opposition Rahul Gandhi paid emotional tribute to late CPI(M) leader Sitaram Yechury on Saturday terming him as a glue between

started my political journey, and I observed him quite carefully. What I found was someone who was flexible and who listened," he said. Whatever he did, he always acted in the best interest of our country. Every single time, his

starting point was India, said Rahul. He shared memories of Yechury's habit of smoking cigarettes, something Yechury was never able to quit.

Rahul also reminisced on the time the two leaders would talk about BJP or the RSS and said that the late leader wouldn't say that they were doing this and that, just that "this is a danger to the country". Congress president Mallikarjun Kharge also paid tribute to Sitaram Yechury and noted his "huge role" in the formation of INDIA bloc.

Left leaders Prakash Karat, Brinda Karat, D Raja, Pinarayi Vijayan, Dipankar Bhattacharya, other opposition leaders Supriya Sule, Kanamozhi, Feroze Abdullah, Gopal Rai and Ram Gopal Yadav also spoke on the condolence meet.



Three Mpox cases in India till October

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

This year till date India has reported three Mpox cases with two from Kerala who have been infected with the fast spreading Clade One B variant, all the three had traveled abroad.

The first case that the country reported was of a 26-year-old resident of Haryana's Hisar, who had tested positive last month for the West African Clade 2 strain, similar to the earlier 30 cases reported in India from July 2022 onwards. He was admitted to a government hospital in Delhi and later discharged after being fully recovered.

However, the two cases reported from the Southern State have been found to be infected with the fast spreading virus that led the WHO to issue an advisory about the public emergency about the outbreak of the pathogen. The youth diagnosed with Mpox (Clade One B) in Ernakulam, Kerala, is reported to be in satisfactory condition while receiving treatment at a private hospital in Kochi, said the health official from the State Government.

He exhibited symptoms after returning from the UAE and tested positive following an examination at Kochi airport. This marks the second Mpox case in Kerala; the first involved

a 38-year-old resident of Malappuram who had tested positive for Mpox. Tests revealed that he was infected with the Clade One B variant. Both cases highlight the importance of monitoring and swift testing for travellers showing symptoms like Mpox. In response to these cases, health authorities stress the importance of monitoring symptoms and encourage anyone feeling unwell after travel to seek medical attention. The World Health Organization has declared Mpox a public health emergency in Africa, with symptoms including fever, headache, sore throat, and muscle aches.

To enhance awareness, health camps have been set up at airports, and isolation facilities are established in 14 districts across the state. Kerala's Health Minister Veena George told reporters in the State. She confirmed that a contact list for the latest patient has been created and that preventive measures are in place. Since Mpox was declared a Public Health Emergency of International Concern by the WHO in 2022, India has reported a total of 30 cases. In view of the present situation, health authorities are emphasising on vigilance in monitoring symptoms and discouraging anyone feeling unwell after recent travel to seek immediate medical attention.

FIR against Nirmala Sitharaman over electoral bonds

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

In an interesting development, Karnataka police on Saturday registered a case against Union Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman and others on the directions of a court here, following a complaint relating to the now-scrapped electoral bonds scheme. According to police, an FIR was registered under IPC sections 384 (punishment for extortion), 120B (criminal conspiracy) and 34 (acts done by several persons in furtherance of common intention) against Union Minister Nirmala Sitharaman, ED officials, BJP leaders JP Nadda, BY Vijayendra, Nalin Kateel, based on the order of a special court.

The complaint was lodged by Adarsh R Iyer, Co-President of 'Janaadhikaara Sangharsha Parishath' (JSP) alleging that the accused "committed extortion under the guise and garb of electoral bonds and benefited to the tune of 8,000 and more crore of rupees. "The complainant further alleged that Sitharaman through the clan-



destine aid and support of ED officials facilitated extortion of thousands of crores of rupees for the benefit of others both at the state and national levels. "The entire extortion racket under the garb of electoral bonds has been

orchestrated hand in glove with officials of BJP at various levels." The Supreme Court in February had struck down the electoral bond scheme, saying it violates the right to information and the freedom of speech and expression under the

Constitution. Karnataka Chief Minister Siddaramiah, whose resignation is sought by the opposition BJP as an FIR was registered against him over the Mysuru Urban Development Authority (MUDA) site allotment

case, said: "According to BJP leaders' argument, Nirmala Sitharaman should resign now, right?" Responding to this, JD(S) leader and Union Minister H D Kumaraswamy, said: "Why should Nirmala Sitharaman resign? Has electoral bond funds gone to Nirmala Sitharaman's personal account to resign? Has she misused power and benefited herself like you (Siddaramaiah)?" Leader of Opposition in Legislative Assembly and BJP leader R Ashoka said the Congress doesn't have moral right to comment on the Union Finance Minister, and there can be no comparison between the electoral bond issue against her and MUDA case against Siddaramaiah. "...[electoral bond] issue is over, it has been decided by the Supreme Court, and our leader will take necessary action in accordance with law (in connection with FIR). Where is the comparison to a case where you (Siddaramaiah) used the Government (land) for personal benefit, to this (electoral bonds case)..." he said.



RAIN WASHES OUT SECOND DAY OF KANPUR TEST

PTI ■ KANPUR
The second day of the second Test between India and Bangladesh was on Saturday called off without a ball being bowled due to persistent downpour. The drizzle in the morning turned into heavy rain, not letting the action begin on day two at Green Park Stadium. The groundsman put the three super soppers to work around 11:15 am after the rain stopped. The visibility was also poor. As conditions did not improve, the second day's play was called off officially at 2:15pm. As per the weather forecast,

the city is expected to receive rain even on Sunday but Monday and Tuesday are likely to be sunny and warm. In that scenario, the match seems to be headed for a draw. Bangladesh had ended the rain-curtailed opening day at 107 for three as only 35 overs could be bowled. India pacer Akash Deep accounted for Bangladesh opener — Zakir Hasan and Shadman Islam — while off-spinner Ravichandran Ashwin sent back rival skipper Najmul Hossain Shanto. India are leading the two-match series 1-0, having won the Chennai.



NorthEast United FC aims to rebound against Kerala Blasters in ISL showdown

PTI ■ GUWAHATI
NorthEast United FC will look to bounce back from their recent defeat as they host Kerala Blasters FC in the Indian Super League at the Indira Gandhi Athletic Stadium on Sunday. The Highlanders secured a 1-0 victory in their season opener against Mohammedan FC but faced a setback with a 2-3 loss to Mohun Bagan Super Giant in their last match. In contrast, Kerala Blasters come into this fixture after a 2-1 win over East Bengal FC. In their previous 20 encounters in the ISL, NorthEast United has won five matches, while Kerala Blasters have emerged victorious eight times, with seven matches ending in a draw. NorthEast United has previously kept clean sheets at home, with a 3-0 win over Odisha FC and a 2-0 victory against Kerala Blasters. However, they have never managed to achieve three consecutive clean sheets at home in the ISL, making this an important opportunity for the hosts.

Canadian striker Larin scores against old club as Mallorca win 2-1 to maintain good start to season

AP ■ MADRID
Canadian striker Cyle Larin scored against his old club as Mallorca kept up its promising start to the Spanish league season with a 2-1 win away at Real Valladolid. It was the third win in a row for Mallorca, which moved into fourth place with 14 points from eight games. Valladolid, meanwhile, has not won a league match since the opening day of the season and has now taken only two points from its last seven games. Although all five of its points this season have come at



home, the newly promoted side was unable to make much of an impact in front of 20,000 fans. Yet it took almost an hour for Mallorca to make its dominance count when Larin, who signed from Valladolid last month, controlled a nice ball from Dani Rodríguez and then converted with poise from close range. Substitute Valery Fernández made it 2-0 with seven minutes remaining, before Iván Sánchez got one back in stoppage time for Valladolid. "We're very disappointed because we've been strong at home," Sánchez said.

Barcola scores twice as PSG extends unbeaten run in France with 3-1 win over Rennes

AP ■ PARIS
Bradley Barcola scored two goals in each half and Lee Kang-in added a third as Paris Saint-Germain beat Rennes 3-1 to extend its unbeaten run in the French league. Barcola took a pass from Ousmane Dembélé after half an hour on Friday and steered a right-foot shot inside the far post. Lee got his third goal of the season to double the home side's advantage 12 minutes into the second half and Barcola added his second with a simple tap in after 68 minutes. Arnaud Kalimuendo scored a consolation goal for Rennes from the penalty spot. Rennes had a second goal chalked off by VAR with two minutes to end any hopes of a comeback. Barcola's fifth and sixth goals of the



season take him to the top of the Ligue 1 scoring charts, one clear of Marseille's Mason Greenwood. PSG has 16 points from its first six games. Marseille is also unbeaten and has 13 points from five games. The south coast club plays at Strasbourg on Sunday. Rennes is in eighth place with seven

Sinner rallies for win in Beijing as WADA appeals his steroid case

AP ■ BEIJING
Top-ranked Jannik Sinner rallied to beat Roman Safiullin 3-6, 6-2, 6-3 in the second round of the China Open on Saturday and learned afterward that his steroid case is far from over. While Sinner was on court in Beijing, the World Anti-Doping Agency (WADA) announced it was seeking a ban of one to two years for the U.S. Open champion who tested positive twice for an anabolic steroid in March but was not suspended in a decision by an independent tribunal announced by the International Tennis Integrity Agency on Aug. 20 because the ITIA determined he was not to blame. Sinner's fate will now be determined by the Switzerland-based Court of Arbitration for Sport after WADA said it filed an appeal on Thursday. On court Saturday, the two-time Grand Slam champion again found himself behind in the Chinese capital after Safiullin broke serve twice to claim the opening set. Sinner's power and laser-like accuracy from the baseline gradually chipped away at his Russian opponent and helped the Italian to win seven straight games from 2-2 in the second set to take the ascendancy and close out a gritty win. Sinner, who has reached at least the quarterfinals at every



tour-level event he has played in 2024, will next play Jiri Lehecka, who earlier defeated Roberto Bautista Agut 3-6, 6-2, 6-1. Also Saturday, Italy's Flavio Cabolli advanced after a 6-4, 6-2 win over Pavel Kotov. Third-seeded Daniil Medvedev played his second-round match against French veteran Adrian Mannarino later Saturday. In the women's draw, U.S. Open champion Aryna Sabalenka advanced to the third round with a 6-4, 6-1 win over Thai qualifier Mananchaya Sawangkaew. "In the first set, I was struggling a little bit with the rhythm," said Sabalenka, who's best run in Beijing has only been to the quarterfinals.

Kasatkina of Russia beat Croatian Jana Fett 6-1, 6-2. She will play Amanda Anisimova, who beat Camila Osorio of Colombia 1-6, 6-3, 6-4. Wimbledon champion Barbora Krejčíková was upset 1-6, 6-4, 7-5 by Romania's Jaqueline Cristian. **JAPAN OPEN:** Tomas Machac upset fifth-seeded Tommy Paul 2-6, 6-3, 7-6 (4) to advance to the quarterfinals and continued a disappointing week for the top-seeded players in Tokyo. Top-seeded Taylor Fritz, third-seeded Casper Ruud and fourth-seeded Stefos Tsitsipas were all beaten in the first round, before second-seeded Hubert Hurkacz was also eliminated as he lost to U.S. Open semifinalist Jack Draper 6-4, 6-4 in the second round. Sixth-seeded Holger Rune is the highest-ranked seed remaining in the draw. Rune, from Denmark, beat home favorite Yoshihito Nishioka 6-2, 6-4. Defending champion Ben Shelton, the No. 8 seed, is the only other seeded player left in the quarterfinal draw. Alex Michelsen of the U.S. Also advanced after a 6-1, 6-4 win over Australian Christopher O'Connell to set up a quarterfinal match against Machac. Kei Nishikori beat Jordan Thompson 6-2, 6-3 and will play Rune in the quarterfinals. Ninth-seeded Daria



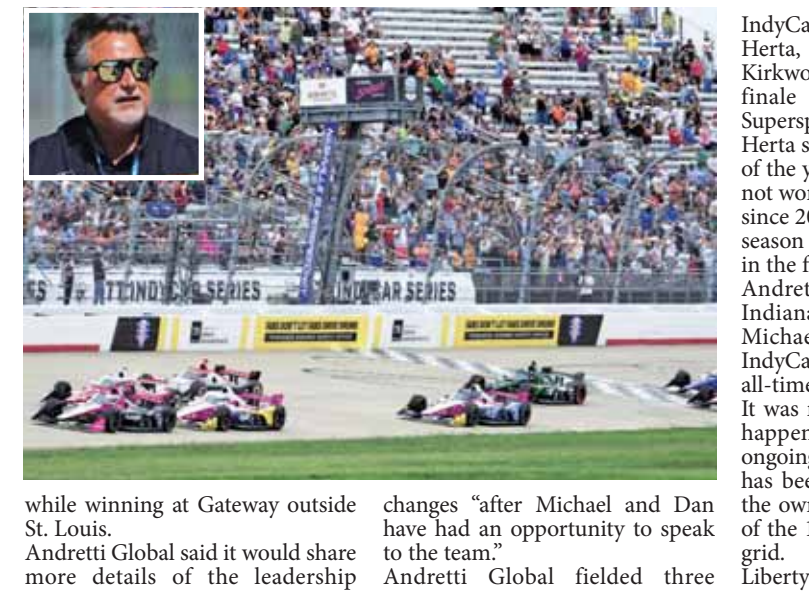
Wimbledon's plans for expansion approved by London authorities despite residents' concerns

AP ■ LONDON
A proposal by Wimbledon organizers to expand the site of the Grand Slam tournament with 39 new tennis courts has been given the green light by local authorities. The All England Club's plans — which include a new 8,000-seat show court with a retractable roof — were approved Friday by the Greater London Authority despite protests by local residents. The planned expansion in Wimbledon Park, which is adjacent to the All England Club, would allow Wimbledon's qualifying tournament to be held on site rather than at nearby Roehampton Community Sports Centre. But some locals have objected to the plans over concerns about the environmental impact. Protesters assembled outside City Hall ahead of the hearing on Friday and a number spoke in the chamber during a morning session lasting more than three hours. But Jules Pipe, London's deputy mayor for planning, said "the proposed development would facilitate very significant benefits. I agree with my officers that these benefits clearly outweigh the harm." Debbie Jevans, the chair of the All England Club, promised that the project "will be delivered with a meticulous attention to detail and the utmost respect for both our neighbours and the environment." The All England Club says the benefits of the expansion will include a 23-acre public park where there used to be a private golf course, and a minimum of seven grass courts that will be open for community use. "We look forward to working with all parties to bring this vision to life, delivering one of London's greatest sporting transformations since the 2012 (Olympic) Games and securing Wimbledon's future at the pinnacle of world sport," Jevans said.

Michael Andretti hands over control of race team to business partner

AP ■ WASHINGTON
Michael Andretti has restructured Andretti Global to give co-owner Dan Towriss control of the organization while Andretti will stay on as a strategic advisor of the team he has led since 2002. Andretti in early 2023 confirmed he'd sold part of the company to Towriss, owner of Gainbridge and holding company Group 1001. Gainbridge is one of the largest sponsors in IndyCar and also sponsors Andretti driver Colton Herta's car and the Indianapolis 500. The team has rapidly expanded with Towriss' influx of cash, and Towriss has been part of Andretti's push to join Formula 1. Andretti is still listed as CEO and chairman of Andretti Global, which is the name

the team changed to when Towriss became part of the ownership group. Towriss is listed on the team's official website as a partner who "with a genuine passion for motorsports and deep partnerships in the industry, Dan is changing the way people look at the business of motorsports." "Michael's goal has been to transition to a more strategic role with Andretti Global and focus less on the operational side of the race team," the team said in a Friday statement. "Michael and Dan Towriss have been working closely on developing this new structure, one which Michael is excited to see take shape under Dan's guidance. "Michael remains engaged and will continue to serve as a strategic advisor and key ambassador."



The transition was first reported by Sportico, a publication owned by Roger Penske's son. Andretti and Penske have been at odds the entire season with Andretti complaining that Penske was not spending enough to properly market the series and if he wasn't willing to pump in the needed cash, he said Penske should sell IndyCar and Indianapolis Motor Speedway. The comments infuriated Penske, and his leadership group slowly began dealing more directly with Towriss instead of Andretti. The amplification of the resentment between Andretti and Penske grew as the season went on and in late August, Andretti leadership noted there was a clear conflict of interest when Penske driver Josef Newgarden was not penalized for various maneuvers changes "after Michael and Dan have had an opportunity to speak to the team." Andretti Global fielded three IndyCar teams this season - for Herta, Marcus Ericsson and Kyle Kirkwood - and won the season finale with Herta at Nashville Superspeedway. Herta scored the only two victories of the year for the team, which has not won an IndyCar championship since 2012. With Herta's win in the season finale, he surged to second in the final IndyCar standings. Andretti drivers have won the Indianapolis 500 five times. Michael Andretti's 42 career IndyCar victories ranks fifth on the all-time list. It was not immediately clear what happens next with Andretti's ongoing effort to enter F1, which has been heavily blocked by both the owners of F1 and the majority of the 10 existing teams on the F1 grid. Liberty Media, which owns F1, has admitted it is under investigation by the Department of Justice for possible antitrust violations in not allowing Andretti into F1. Andretti and his father, Mario, in 2021 formed a special purpose acquisition company (SPAC) that was separate from Andretti Global and called Andretti Acquisition. The SPAC was designed to raise cash in an IPO to buy and take public another business. Andretti in March closed a merger with Zapata Computing Holdings, a generative AI company. Andretti Global is Zapata's largest customer, while Zapata is a sponsor of the motorsports team. Zapata, per filings, is paying Andretti Global \$9 million under the agreements while Andretti Global is paying Zapata \$6 million. The agreements expire at the end of 2024, per Sportico.



ELEGANCE REDEFINED

Experience the joy of fashion

Ravi Bajaj, renowned for his elegance in fashion, recently unveiled his redesigned store at DLF Emporio, New Delhi. This event showcased his latest collection, celebrating the blend of traditional craftsmanship and modern design, writes SAKSHI PRIYA



From the Man Himself An Exclusive Interview with Ravi Bajaj

Ravi Bajaj's redesigned store is not just a new chapter in his fashion journey but also a clear example of his commitment to innovation and excellence. As he continues to shape the future of fashion with his unique vision, one thing is certain: his influence and creativity will remain at the forefront of the industry for years to come. He talked to Sakshi Priya about his passion. Excerpts: **What story do you want to convey through your new store?**

Well, it's somewhat art-inspired. You can see it up to the ceiling. It's art-inspired but very subtle - not in your face. If you notice it, you notice it. The entire ceiling features French and Italian masks, symbolising Mars and Venus. We also have Iris and Morpheus, the god of sleep, and the famous depiction of Adam and God. The rest is quite modern with clean lines - that's my style. There's a touch of grandeur as well, with handmade chandeliers combining elements from Firozabad and Swarovski. So, it's a blend of modernity and subtle artistry.

Which piece from your latest collection are you most excited about?

Oh, that's a tough one. It's like choosing a favourite child! I probably like about 20% of my work and not the other 80%. That's how you keep yourself motivated. The day you like 100% of your work, I think you're done.

What challenges did you encounter in shaping the final design?

Ravi Bajaj: There weren't any significant challenges in terms of ideas. The challenge usually comes with execution. Conceiving an idea is easy; the germ is always there. But translating it into reality - that's the tough part. Once it's done, it's beyond your control, and then it's about how it's perceived. What's in my control are the initial idea and its execution.

How do you foresee the intersection of fashion and retail experiences evolving over the next few years?

It's difficult to say. The biggest challenge is staying relevant. There's so much happening in the industry, and I've been in this business for 37 years. Staying persistent and maintaining your grit is essential.



Ravi Bajaj has always been synonymous with style and sophistication in the fashion industry. His unique ability to blend traditional craftsmanship with modern sensibilities has made his designs timeless and appealing to a wide audience. As the festive season approaches, there was a strong sense of excitement surrounding the grand unveiling of his newly redesigned store at DLF Emporio in New Delhi.

Upon entering, guests were welcomed by a warm and inviting atmosphere. The stunning wall art and soft, warm lighting created a comfortable yet elegant setting. The store's transformation was impressive, with every detail thoughtfully curated to highlight the exquisite fabrics and intricate designs on display. The ambience was perfect for an evening dedicated to celebrating fashion and creativity.

The new collection was nothing short of a visual delight, showcasing a captivating range of colours and designs. One standout piece was a beautiful blue saree adorned with intricate red lacework. Its vibrant shade and delicate detailing instantly captured the attention of the guests, who couldn't help but admire its elegance. Nearby, a striking black saree with white lacework also drew admiration. The classic contrast of black and white offered a timeless elegance that resonated with many. But it was a stunning lavender saree embellished with silver and gold embroidery that truly left a lasting impression. As it caught the light, one enchanted guest described it as "simply gorgeous," perfectly echoing the sentiments of those around. The teal colour of the sarees also captured attention, their



stunning shades receiving numerous compliments. One guest perfectly expressed the sentiment with a single word: "Outstanding."

The collection also featured a range of warm-toned kurtas in various colours, designed to beautifully blend traditional and modern styles. The bandis and coats, crafted with great attention to detail, provided a sophisticated touch to the ensemble. There was something for everyone, making it clear that these were not just garments but pieces meant to be treasured and worn with pride. As the evening unfolded, the atmosphere was filled with lively conversations and laughter. Guests moved around, appreciating the intricate details of the collection. One particular item that caught many eyes was a striking white saree, decorated with designs of

musical notes in black and shimmering glitter that sparkled beautifully in the store. At first glance, its simplicity was striking, but a closer look revealed delicate embroidery that showcased its craftsmanship. It served as a reminder that sometimes, the most understated designs leave the biggest impact.

As the night came to a close, it became evident that this event was about more than just launching a store. It was a celebration of elegance, creativity, and the joy of fashion, perfectly timed for the festive season ahead. Ravi Bajaj's redesigned store is more than a shopping destination; it's a place where people can experience the beauty and artistry of fashion in a welcoming environment. With his signature blend of tradition and modernity, Ravi Bajaj continues to be a favourite for those who appreciate style and craftsmanship.

NEW OFFERINGS

JOIN THE DJGF CELEBRATION!

Don't miss the 12th edition of the Delhi Jewellery and Gem Fair (DJGF) at Pragati Maidan! This premier B2B jewellery exhibition features over 650 exhibitors showcasing 150,000 stunning designs, including gold, silver, diamonds and more. Enjoy networking opportunities, informative sessions and the exciting DJGF Silver Show. Connect with industry leaders and explore the latest trends in jewellery.

EVENT DETAILS

Dates: 29th September-1st October, 2024

Location: Pragati Maidan, New Delhi

Time: 10 AM - 6 PM

SCULPTING MASTERCLASS

Atelier Della Firenze by Niyamat Mehta is hosting a Masterclass series led by renowned sculptor Niyamat Mehta. This four-session course offers personalised attention with only 7 seats per class, focusing on sculpting the human portrait. Perfect for anyone aged 16+, this is a unique opportunity to master the anatomy and proportion of the human skull. Don't miss out!

COURSE DETAILS

Dates: 5th, 12th & 19th October, 2024

Time: 11:00 AM - 1:00 PM

Location: Top Floor Studio, Sector 3, Noida

Price: Rs. 50,000 (materials included)



YUDHRA: A HIT OR MISS ACTION

Action scenes come to the rescue for an unhooked plot for Yudhra, says ABHI SINGHAL

Yudhra is an action thriller film directed by Ravi Udyawar. Its script is done by Shridhar Raghavan and dialogues are written by Farhan Akhtar and Akshat Ghildial. The film stars Siddhant Chaturvedi in the title role, alongside Malavika Mohanan, Raghav Juyal, Gajraj Rao, Ram Kapoor, Raj Arjun and Shipra Shukla.

Yudhra, who is struggling with anger issues, is assigned an undercover mission to bring down a powerful drug syndicate headed by Firoz and his son Shafiq. Yudhra accepts the responsibility as he wants to exact revenge against Firoz for his parents's death.

The film commences with a loose narrative from the start and revolves around the character's anger issues. The movie opens with an over aggressive orphan kid played by Siddhant. It is the point from where action packed role of Chaturvedi as Yudhra starts.

To counterbalance Yudhra's irascible demeanour and immense power, the film features Gajraj Rao as his foster father who plays his deceased father's friend. Gajraj is a senior and experienced actor but unfortunately his role does not add weight to the movie. Siddhant who made his electrifying debut in Gully Boy, tries to experiment with the action cinema.

The scenes in the film are set with a narrative of high octane action and Siddhant Chaturvedi is seen pushing his limits with the role. The bike chasing scene raises expectations but only to be dashed shortly after. The romantic subplot in the film between Yudhra and

Nikhat (Malavika Mohanan) remains underdeveloped and fails to resonate with the audience. Their chemistry does not work and disappoint to say the least. Yudhra lacks a distinctive quality that sets it apart from other action films. The storyline could have been more engaging to keep the audience interested. There are some violent scenes that captivate the audience.

Raghav Juyal, playing the antagonist in the film. His entry could be more powerful. His presence does help you to sit through the film.

Siddhant could have shone but the sloppy storyline snatches away that from him. But Raghav Juyal does prove himself despite short screen time he gets and that too spaced by an hour. Gajraj Rao and Ram Kapoor have played their roles in a decent manner and have adjusted well to their roles. Raj Arjun as Firoz plays Yudhra's father's killer's rival and fits in well.

The music of the film is also average, and was not expected from someone like Shankar Ehsaan Loy. He has composed two songs in the film.

The film can be considered a one time watch but it lacks clarity to Siddhant Chaturvedi's character and is a bit blunt and intimidating to understand. The film's duration of two hours and thirty minutes is rather long and could have been much less.

That would have made it crisp and tight. As an action genre lover you would want to like Yudhra. Despite its fast-paced action sequences it fails to captivate audiences. While action lovers may watch it for its action but they could well be

disappointed with its storyline and mediocre performances.

Rating: 2/5



NATIONAL COFFEE FESTIVAL 2024!

Calling all coffee lovers! Join this October for the India International Coffee Festival featuring the National Barista Championship across three cities. Experience thrilling competitions, tastings and workshops celebrating coffee culture. Don't miss out on this caffeinated celebration!

EVENT DATES:

Delhi: 4th-6th October, 2024

at Pacific Mall, Tagore Garden

Mumbai: 11th-13th October, 2024

at Phoenix Marketcity, Kurla

Bangalore: 28th-30th October, 2024

at Bangalore International Centre, Domlur



"The best way to approach Navratri is in a spirit of celebration. This is the secret of life: to be non-serious but absolutely involved"
— Sadhguru



Over the centuries, Durga Puja has evolved from a private affair of Zamindars to a mass celebration on a global scale. It is now much more than just a religious festival – it's a cultural spectacle, writes **GYANESHWAR DAYAL**

DURGA PUJA

A SYMPHONY OF TRADITION AND TRANSFORMATION

Come September and everyone is busy making plans for the 'Puja', a festival dedicated to Goddess Durga, in eastern India. Of course it is Kolkata which is the epicentre of all celebrations. Over the years, *Durga Puja* has evolved into a pan-Indian and global festival. With unmatched fervour and devotion, people across the world now come together to honour the goddess, celebrating her victory and divine power.

Durga Puja, one of the most revered and vibrant festivals in India, particularly in West Bengal, celebrates the victory of the goddess Durga over the demon Mahishasura, symbolising the triumph of good over evil. Rooted in Hindu mythology, the festival commemorates the goddess as the embodiment of Shakti, or divine feminine power. Over the years, *Durga Puja* has transformed from a primarily religious observance into a grand socio-cultural extravaganza that has few parallels.

Durga Puja marks the victory of Goddess Durga, a fierce yet compassionate deity, over Mahishasura, who threatened to disrupt the balance of the universe. According to legend, Mahishasura received a boon that no man could defeat him. As he unleashed terror, the gods united to create Durga, a divine warrior goddess, who fought and eventually killed Mahishasura. The festival celebrates Durga's strength, resilience, and protective nature, while also invoking blessings for peace, prosperity, and protection against evil forces. That is mythology for one and all but it is a metaphor which might have fewer takers but nevertheless the message is crystal.

The metaphor and hidden message of Goddess Durga lie in her embodiment of divine feminine power, resilience, and protection. As a multi-armed warrior goddess, Durga symbolises the shakti (cosmic energy) within all beings, representing the strength needed to overcome life's obstacles. Each weapon she holds signifies various tools required to defeat inner and outer evils like fear, ignorance, pride and injustice. Metaphorically, Durga's battle with Mahishasura, the demon king, is a reflection of the ongoing struggle between good and evil, not just in the cosmic realm but within individuals and society at large. Her victory underscores that evil - be it oppression, greed or violence - can only be defeated through righteous action, courage and the collective strength of the divine and human will.

It is the triumph of dharma (righteousness) over adharma (immorality), a reminder that good eventually prevails even in the face of insurmountable odds. Furthermore, Durga, as a motherly figure, embodies compassion and protection, highlighting the balance between fierceness and nurturing, teaching that strength does not negate love and compassion. Goddess Durga conveys the message of empowerment, particularly for women, demonstrating that power and authority lie in embracing one's true self and purpose. In a broader sense, Durga's story speaks to the need for balance between action and patience, destruction and creation, power and empathy.

The festival is observed during the Hindu Calendar month of Ashwin



DURGA PUJA IS AN ELABORATE AND COLOURFUL FESTIVAL, TYPICALLY SPANNING FIVE DAYS - SHASHTHI, SAPTAMI, ASHTAMI, NAVAMI AND VIJAYADASHAMI. EACH DAY IS MARKED BY RITUALS, PRAYERS, CULTURAL EVENTS AND, OF COURSE, THE UNVEILING OF THE IDOL OF GODDESS DURGA IN PANDALS (TEMPORARY, ARTISTICALLY DESIGNED STRUCTURES). THE CELEBRATION BEGINS WITH THE RITUAL OF BODHON, OR THE WELCOMING OF THE GODDESS, ON THE SIXTH DAY



(September-October), culminating on Vijayadashami, the tenth day when Durga's victory is celebrated and her idols are immersed in water, symbolising her return to Mount Kailash, her celestial home.

Durga Puja is an elaborate and colourful festival, typically spanning five days - Shashthi, Saptami, Ashtami, Navami and Vijayadashami. Each day is marked by rituals, prayers, cultural events and, of course, the unveiling of the idol of Goddess Durga in pandals (temporary, artistically designed structures). The celebration begins with the ritual of Bodhon, or the welcoming of the goddess, on the sixth day.

FROM ZAMINDAR PUJA TO PUBLIC CELEBRATIONS

Historically, *Durga Puja* was a private affair, celebrated within the homes of wealthy zamindar (landlord) families. However, during the late 18th century, it began to shift towards community-based celebrations. In Kolkata, the first publicly organised *Durga Puja*, known as the Barowari Puja, was held in 1790, and since then, the practice has spread across Bengal and beyond.

The first major move toward a community-based *Durga Puja* or Barowari Puja, took place in 1790 in Hooghly district, near Kolkata. A group of twelve friends organised this puja to make the festival more inclusive and community-oriented, free from the exclusivity of the zamindar class. This concept of collective worship was revolutionary at the time and set the foundation for public celebrations of the festival. The term "Barowari" comes from baro (twelve) and yari (friends), representing this group's efforts to democratise *Durga Puja*. Raja Nabakrishna Deb, an influential zamindar of the Shobhabazar Rajbari in Kolkata, played a critical role in popularising *Durga Puja* beyond the private confines of aristocratic families. In 1757, following the British victory at the Battle of Plassey, Nabakrishna Deb invited British officers, including Robert Clive, to his *Durga Puja* celebration, creating a hybrid of Indian tradition and colonial influence.

In the late 19th century, Swami Vivekananda and the Ramakrishna Mission also played a pivotal role in giving *Durga Puja* a broader, more public dimension. Through the Ramakrishna Mission, *Durga Puja* became associated with nationalistic and cultural identity, with an emphasis on social service and community welfare. Swami Vivekananda himself performed

Durga Puja at Belur Math in 1901, marking the festival as both a spiritual and community event.

PANDAL HOPPING

The centrepiece of the festivities is the pandals, where elaborate idols of Durga, along with her children - Lakshmi, Saraswati, Kartikeya and Ganesha - are displayed. These pandals often feature intricate themes that range from mythological tales to contemporary social issues.

Durga Puja pandals have evolved far beyond simple religious displays, becoming powerful platforms for artistic expression and social commentary. Every year, these temporary structures turn into creative masterpieces that reflect not just devotion to Goddess Durga but also highlight contemporary issues ranging from politics to global events and pressing social concerns.

Some pandals artistically engage with local and national politics, offering thought-provoking critiques or support for political movements. For example, some recent themes have explored elections, portraying the goddess battling forces of greed and dishonesty, metaphorically addressing societal upheaval. Several pandals focus on international matters, such as climate change, world peace or refugee crises. They utilise innovative materials and designs to depict how these global challenges affect humanity. For instance, some recent installations have depicted the Amazon rainforest fires, the pandemic or refugee struggles, merging Durga's fight against evil with the global battle for environmental protection or humanitarian aid. Many pandals are now powerful vehicles for raising awareness about social issues. They have addressed women's rights, child labor, education and even mental health. Some pandals creatively use Durga's weapons to symbolise the tools needed to fight social evils like gender inequality or poverty, aligning the goddess's mythology with contemporary societal struggles. Themes such as women empowerment, gender justice and communal harmony are depicted with a blend of artistry and symbolism.

In recent years, with growing awareness about environmental conservation, eco-friendly pandals have gained popularity. Artists use biodegradable materials like clay, bamboo and jute to create these installations, while themes often focus on

sustainability and environmental consciousness. These efforts not only contribute to reducing pollution during idol immersion but also send a strong message about the urgent need to protect nature.

These innovative pandals transform *Durga Puja* into not just a religious celebration but a cultural forum where tradition and modernity intersect, sparking dialogue on critical societal and global issues. Through artistry, they encourage introspection, inspire change, and bring communities together in shared reflection.

RITUALS AND PRAYERS

Devotees perform elaborate rituals, such as the pushpanjali (flower offerings) and aarti (lamp offerings), invoking the goddess's blessings. On Ashtami, the main day of the festival, the Sandhi Puja, symbolising the transition from Ashtami to Navami, is performed with great fervour. Kumari Puja, where young girls are worshipped as manifestations of the goddess, is also a key ritual.

CULTURAL PERFORMANCES AND FEASTING

Beyond its religious aspect, *Durga Puja* is also a cultural celebration. Communities organise music and dance performances, theatrical productions and art exhibitions. The festival is a time for feasting, with special foods like bhog (a sacred offering) and traditional Bengali sweets such as sandesh, rasgulla, and mishti doi adding to the festive charm. While *Durga Puja* retains its core religious significance, the festival has undergone significant transformations over the centuries, evolving into a social, artistic, and commercial spectacle.

GLOBALISATION OF DURGA PUJA

Today, *Durga Puja* is not confined to Bengal. Thanks to the global Bengali diaspora, the festival is celebrated with grandeur in cities like London, New York and Dubai. Modern technology, social media and live streaming of rituals have expanded the reach of *Durga Puja*, allowing devotees from across the globe to participate.

Durga Puja has also seen commercialisation, with sponsorships and advertisements driving the festival economy. The shopping, food, and tourism sectors receive a massive boost during this time, as people from across the country and the world flock to experience the grandeur of the celebration. *Durga Puja* is more than just a religious festival; it is a vibrant, living tradition that has evolved with time. While the core message of the triumph of good over evil remains intact, the festival has grown to embody the cultural and social heartbeat of Bengal, touching the lives of millions across the globe. As *Durga Puja* continues to transform, it serves as a powerful reminder of the enduring strength of faith, community and creativity. In today's society, with the increasing disregard for women's dignity, the timeless message of Goddess Durga appears to be lost in the din. People seem more focused on indulging in the festive revelry rather than embracing the deeper significance of Durga's empowerment. Yet, this is the fate that most festivals eventually meet - a shift from reflection to celebration.

A TASTE OF HOME AWAY FROM HOME

Durga Puja brings feeling of home for everyone. For those in Delhi, *Oh! Calcutta* offers the flavours of Bengal. It Celebrates 25 years, serving authentic Bengali food, making it a perfect spot to enjoy the festival in all its grandeur, writes **SAKSHI PRIYA**



Photos: Pankaj Kumar



Durga Puja is more than just a festival; it's an emotion, a time when everyone feels an irresistible pull towards home. The smell of incense, the rhythm of the 'dhak' and the sight of the majestic idols fill hearts with nostalgia. For those who find themselves far from Kolkata during this time, there's a place that offers a slice of home: *Oh! Calcutta*.

Oh! Calcutta has been serving the flavours of Bengal for 25 years. As the city prepares to welcome Durga Maa, this iconic restaurant remains a favourite for all those hoping for the familiar taste of home-cooked Bengali food. Recently celebrating its silver jubilee, *Oh! Calcutta* has not only kept the essence of Kolkata's cuisine alive, showing that the spirit of Bengali food remains strong and proud, no matter where you are.

Established in 1992, *Oh! Calcutta* was born from a passion to showcase the unique flavours of Kolkata's 300-year-old culinary traditions. The restaurant's menu is a tribute to the city's gastronomic legacy, influenced by British, Armenian, French and Mughal cultures. This blend of influences captures Kolkata's essence as a melting pot of communities. The founder, *Anjan Chatterjee* and his team of chefs envision their cuisine as a tribute to the rich and diverse culinary heritage of Kolkata, which has been shaped over centuries. As they say, "Kolkatay khabar mane sudhu peth bhora noi, eta hriday bhora" (In Kolkata, food is not just about filling the stomach but the heart).

As part of its silver jubilee celebrations, *Oh! Calcutta* has introduced a special anniversary menu that beautifully captures Kolkata's culinary heritage. The menu, curated by *Chatterjee*, marries traditional recipes with a contemporary touch, ensuring that the authenticity of Bengali cuisine remains at its heart. Signature dishes such as *Aam Ada Grilled Bhetki*, *Jackfruit Tikki* and *Prawn Malai Curry* are shining examples of the restaurant's dedication to preserving the old while embracing the new.

One of the highlights is the crispy *Hilsa Fish Fingers*, served with a tangy mustard mayo that brings back memories of home-cooked meals. The *Calcutta Fish Fry* is another star, with its tantalising blend of spices that capture the essence of family gatherings. And, of course, there's the *Bhetki Machher Paturi*,



"KOLKATAY KHBAR MANE SUDHU PETH BHORA NOI, ETA HRIDYOY BHORA"
(In Kolkata, food is not just about filling the stomach, but the heart)

where fish marinated in mustard and coconut, wrapped in banana leaves, and steamed to perfection.

Mutton dishes hold a special place in Bengali cuisine, and *Oh! Calcutta's* offerings don't disappoint. The rich, slow-cooked *Kosha Mangsho* (mutton curry) is simmered with spices that warm the soul, while the *Railway Mutton Curry*, inspired by the classic railway-style preparation, evokes nostalgia and comfort.

These are dishes that remind you of home-cooked meals during Pujo and family journeys. The vegetarian fare at *Oh! Calcutta* is

equally delightful. Dishes like *Mochar Ghonto* (Banana Floret Subzi) and *Cholar Dal* (Bengal gram lentils cooked with coconut and spices) highlight the rich vegetarian tradition of Bengal.

And let's not forget the *Begum Bhaja*, deep-fried slices of eggplant that are the perfect accompaniment to the *Cholar Dal*.

For seafood lovers, there's the *Prawn Malai Curry*, a creamy and indulgent prawn dish cooked in coconut milk and lightly spiced. And for those seeking something lighter, the *Maacher Dom Jhol* (fish curry) with luchi offers a delicate blend of spices with fresh

vegetables and fish. This simple yet heartwarming dish is a staple in Bengali households and is often served during Durga Puja feasts.

No Bengali meal is complete without a sweet ending, and *Oh! Calcutta* makes sure this tradition is upheld. The restaurant offers a range of traditional sweets, including *Sandesh*, *baked Rasgulla* and *Mishti Doi* is a staple at the end of every Bengali meal.

As they say, "Bangalir mishti priyo, eta toh shobar jana" (Everyone knows that Bengalis love sweets).

What sets *Oh! Calcutta* apart is its tireless commitment to authenticity. The restaurant sources key ingredients directly from Kolkata, ensuring that every dish retains its traditional flavour. From the *Kakra Chingri Bhapa* in the fragrant *Gobindobhoger Bhaat* (a special variety of rice), every ingredient is carefully chosen to maintain the integrity of Bengali cuisine. This attention to detail ensures that each dish not only tastes authentic but also evokes a sense of nostalgia.

The atmosphere at *Oh! Calcutta* further enhances the dining experience. The decor, featuring traditional Bengali art and nostalgic photographs of Kolkata, creates a warm and inviting setting. The staff, always attentive and knowledgeable, make sure that guests feel at home, guiding them through the menu and sharing the stories behind each dish.

As the festivities unfold, the connection between food, culture and family shines brightly at *Oh! Calcutta*. It's a place where both Bengalis and non-Bengalis can celebrate the rich and diverse cuisine of Kolkata. This Durga Puja, let the flavours of Kolkata fill your heart and your plate as you indulge in the culinary brilliance that has delighted guests for 25 years. As they say, "Banglar khabar mane sudhu taste noi, eta hriday er kotha" (Bengali food is not only about taste, but it's also a matter of the heart).

So, this Pujo, if you find yourself longing for the flavours of home, head over to *Oh! Calcutta* in GK-2, New Delhi. With dishes like *Kosha Mangsho*, *Mochar Chop* and *Gol Morich Chicken*, you will be treated to a culinary journey that's as close to Kolkata as you can get without leaving Delhi. Let the food fill your heart with joy, warmth, and a taste of home, reminding you that the spirit of Durga Puja can be felt wherever you are.

SIP THE ESSENCE OF ASIA: A UNIQUE BEVERAGES EXPERIENCE

Yauatcha's 'Asia In A Glass' is more than just a cocktail menu, it is an homage to the traditional flavours and modern techniques that define Asian cuisine, says **SHARMILA CHAND**

Yauatcha, the well-known contemporary Dim sum Tea House in Bengaluru is celebrating a unique cocktail menu, 'Asia In A Glass'. It is a vibrant celebration of Asian ingredients, masterfully crafted into exquisite cocktails that promise to transport guests on a sensory journey across the continent. I was thrilled to see how they have gone beyond their culinary fare to extend their philosophy seamlessly into the heart of their bar program, where mixology transforms into an art form.

THE DRINK'S NARRATIVE

Ranging from classic cocktails with a unique twist to refreshing fruit-forward and tea-infused concoctions, each libation at this London-style bar is a meticulously crafted narrative. The carefully designed cocktail menu embodies innovation and sophistication in showcasing Asian ingredients.

"When I was working on the 'Asia In A Glass' article, I had the pleasure of meeting with Merwyn and gained a deeper understanding of the evolution of *Yauatcha's* cocktail scene. *Yauatcha* has always been at the forefront of mixology trends, being one of the pioneers in implementing an innovative ice program. Sitting down with Merwyn provided invaluable insights that helped shape the story. It's truly gratifying to see this meticulously crafted menu come to fruition with this article," said **Aslam Gafoor**,



who inspired the creation of this article in the *Yauatcha Life* magazine, titled 'Asia In A Glass'. As the name suggests, Asian ingredients take the spotlight in *Yauatcha's* cocktail program philosophy, turning every cocktail into a distinctive masterpiece. From the invigorating zing of lemongrass to the

comforting warmth of ginger, *Yauatcha's* Head Mixologist, Merwyn Alphonso has curated a sensory experience that reflects Asian culinary heritage in every sip. Furthermore, the glassware and ice story transform into canvases for expression, enhancing visual allure and turning the bar into a dynamic masterpiece where flavours dance and

evolve. Sharing his excitement about the launch of the new cocktail menu, Merwyn said, "Discussing the beverage program at *Yauatcha*, it's clear that it's more than just a dim sum restaurant. When *Allen Yau* founded *Yauatcha*, it was built on the four pillars of hospitality, patisserie, dim sum, mixology and tea. To this day, these pillars

guide us in crafting every cocktail that we put on our menus. The 'Asia In A Glass' menu was created with this ethos in mind, and we hope our guests enjoy these beautiful libations. The cocktails draw inspiration from across the Asian continent, incorporating traditional Asian ingredients such as *Yuzu*, *Lychee*, *Pandan* and *Lemongrass*. The result is a series of exclusive beverages

that are as visually stunning as they are delicious, each one telling a story of its own."

HIGHLIGHTS FROM THE MENU

- **Tian Shang:** A refreshing blend of Gin, Vodka, raspberry liqueur, lemon, fresh raspberries, elderflower foam.
- **Jian Mei:** A tea twist with Gin, sake, floral tea liqueur.
- **Around The World:** A delightful concoction of White rum, limoncello, Aperol, lychee, homemade apricot compote, rosemary twig.
- **Ginger Martini:** A zesty, aromatic blend with White rum, ginger, green apple, orgeat, lime.

Each cocktail is a testament to the skill and creativity of *Yauatcha's* mixologists, who have drawn inspiration from the diverse culinary landscapes of Asia. Experience the vibrant flavours and innovative creations that set *Yauatcha* apart. The drinks echo *Yauatcha's* ethos, embodying innovation and sophistication in showcasing Asian ingredients. The concoctions are more than just drinks, they are conversation starters and memory makers. Step in, have your pick from the 'Asia In A Glass' menu and see how a world of flavours is waiting to be explored by you! Cheers!

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Sharmila Chand is an author and consulting editor. She writes on food, travel, lifestyle, Culture.

IF ATHEISM SOLVED ALL HUMAN WOE, THEN THE SOVIET UNION WOULD HAVE BEEN AN EMPIRE OF JOY AND DANCING BUNNIES INSTEAD OF THE LAND OF CORPSES
— JOHN C WRIGHT



MOSCOW

A JOURNEY THROUGH TIME: FROM SOVIET SHADOWS TO MODERN MARVELS

From the historical depths of Red Square to the majestic Kremlin, each corner of this sprawling metropolis reveals layers of history - burnt, rebuilt and revived - beckoning travelers to explore its rich tapestry of culture and heritage, writes **GYANESHWAR DAYAL**

As I step off the plane at Moscow's Sheremetyevo Alexander S. Pushkin International Airport, the brisk, cold breeze is a refreshing change from the humid warm air of Delhi. This is my second trip to Moscow; my first visit occurred shortly after the Soviet Union disintegrated and Russia emerged as a new entity. Indeed, Moscow has transformed significantly since then. The city's infrastructure has improved dramatically, making it almost unrecognisable; the roads and the cars on them wear a fresh look. Yet, amidst this change, Moscow retains its unique character—inviting yet inherently private. Over its 877-year history, the city has withstood a lot. Moscow lives fully, with its history woven into every brick and stone. Each regime has left its imprint, manifesting in monuments and relics scattered throughout the city, which now stand in contrast to modern architecture.



MOSCOW, THE CAPITAL OF RUSSIA, BOASTS A RICH AND COMPLEX HISTORY THAT SPANS AROUND 800 YEARS. FOUNDED IN 1147 BY PRINCE YURI DOLGORUKY, THE CITY INITIALLY SERVED AS A MINOR TRADING POST. ITS STRATEGIC LOCATION ON THE MOSKVA RIVER FACILITATED TRADE AND COMMUNICATION, CONTRIBUTING TO ITS GRADUAL RISE IN IMPORTANCE

Moscow, the capital of Russia, boasts a rich and complex history that spans over 800 years. Founded in 1147 by Prince Yuri Dolgoruky, the city initially served as a minor trading post. Its strategic location on the Moskva River facilitated trade and communication, contributing to its gradual rise in importance. By the 15th century, under Ivan III (Ivan the Great), Moscow emerged as a significant political and cultural centre, ultimately overthrowing Mongol dominance. In 1547, Ivan IV (Ivan the Terrible) was crowned as the first Tsar of Russia, marking the official establishment of the Tsardom. This period was characterized by territorial expansion, the consolidation of power, and the construction of iconic structures like St. Basil's Cathedral, which symbolizes Moscow's architectural heritage. Red Square, the iconic heart of Moscow, was established in the late 15th century, specifically during the reign of Ivan III (Ivan the Great). Originally, the area served as a marketplace and a central hub for various activities, but it gradually evolved into a political and cultural centre. It is now a must visit tourist attraction. And if one wants to understand Moscow brace up for a long walk. Red Square transports you to the 15th century. Our guide, an enthusiastic and energetic lady tells us Red is not for colour though the bricks and stones used are Red, Red in Russian means beautiful so it is a beautiful square and I couldn't agree less. You have colourful St. Basil's Cathedral overlooking the square, commissioned by Ivan IV (Ivan the Terrible) in 1555 to commemorate the conquest of Kazan. Done in Disney style (or maybe it is the other way round). This style of structure painting is categorical of Russia and is called "Russian patterning." It is the place to click selfies. Red square is also the place where Lenin's embalmed body is kept and many other Generals were buried. We don't get a chance to go inside as it is closed by the time we reach. Vladimir Lenin, leader of the October Revolution and the first leader and founder of the Soviet Union, died in Gorki aged 53 after falling into a coma on January 21,

reflect both tradition and innovation. From elegant restaurants serving classic Russian fare like 'borscht' and 'pelmeni' to trendy eateries embracing global influences, the city's food scene is diverse and sophisticated. In the heart of Moscow, Café Pushkin stands as a symbol of elegance, offering a nostalgic ambiance reminiscent of 19th-century aristocratic Russia. For those seeking modern Russian cuisine with a twist, White Rabbit is a must-visit, famous for its innovative take on local ingredients and breathtaking views of the city. For a more casual yet equally delightful experience, LavkaLavka, a farm-to-table restaurant, emphasizes sustainable dining, offering dishes made from fresh, locally sourced ingredients. Meanwhile, Dr. Zhivago of course presents a chic, contemporary take on traditional Soviet-era dishes in a stylish setting. For travellers and locals alike, these eateries are more than just places to dine—they offer an immersive experience into Moscow's rich cultural heritage and evolving modern palate. Moscow has a good number of Museums too; they are a must visit if you have taste beyond Malls and Restaurants which Moscow has plenty. The guides are funny and knowledgeable at the same time. Moscow has a huge collection of paintings from bygone eras. Mostly of the Christ, kings but also of the people their life and woes. One could spend a day just watching the masterpieces. For the intellectually inclined, Moscow has a number of libraries with excellent collection of books. Russian libraries are not just repositories of books but vital cultural institutions that embody the country's rich literary and intellectual tradition. The most iconic among them is the Russian State Library in Moscow, one of the largest in the world. Founded in 1862, it holds millions of volumes, including rare manuscripts, maps, and other historical documents, making it a treasure trove for researchers and scholars. The library's architectural grandeur reflects its significance, with vast reading rooms and meticulously curated collections covering a wide range of disciplines. Beyond the Russian State Library, Moscow is home to numerous other libraries, such as the Lenin Library, which is also highly regarded for its expansive catalogue of works. But the best thing about Moscow is its people; friendly courteous and always willing to help. The warmth of the Russian people is often a pleasant surprise for those visiting the country for the first time. Once you break through the initial formalities, you'll find that Russians are deeply hospitable, warm-hearted, and generous, especially when it comes to welcoming guests into their homes. The tradition of hospitality runs deep—guests are treated with great respect, and hosts often insist on sharing hearty meals and meaningful conversations, making you feel genuinely at home. As we pack bags, they are filled with souvenirs and memories one would share back home. As you board the flight and bid goodbye to Moscow you are still yearning for more.

a smoking burning building. They were restored and did not look burnt now. We moved on to the churches where Tsars were baptised, crowned and laid to rest. All have shining brass tops. Don't know how they keep them so shiny. I can't keep my small Buddha statue that shiny anyway. Moscow became the capital of the new socialist state, undergoing rapid industrialisation and significant urban development, exemplified by the construction of grandiose structures like the Seven Sisters skyscrapers. These seven huge buildings still stand tall and are landmarks. They now house a university, a government ministry, a hotel and no idea about the others. Interestingly the underground in Moscow was used as bunkers by the Muscovites during the second world war. The stations are indeed nothing short of a palace with large murals exquisitely done and preserved. We decide to take a ride. The coaches are neat and people are friendly. We exchange smiles with fellow passengers. Our short but sweet journey comes to an end we are back to our hotel. The dissolution of the Soviet Union in 1991 marked another pivotal moment in Moscow's history. The city transitioned from a socialist regime to a market economy, leading to significant social and economic changes. Modern Moscow has seen extensive urban development and globalisation. Moscow has now become a business hub and opened to inter cultural relations and tourists from all over the world. Today, Moscow stands as a vibrant metropolis that beautifully blends its rich historical heritage with modernity, attracting millions of visitors each year who come to explore its vast cultural treasures, including historic churches, museums, and vibrant neighbourhoods. Each brick and stone of this ancient city tells a story of resilience and transformation, reflecting the enduring spirit of its people. Moscow is a foodie's paradise. I enjoyed Zhivago's food, excellent food served with a charming smile. Apart from Dr Zhivago there are many restaurants that dot the city and have amazing food and vibes. Moscow is a vibrant city where culinary culture thrives, offering a rich tapestry of dining experiences that

1924. It has been 100 years since he died. The GUM Department Store is a major shopping destination nearby. It is beautiful no doubt and has best brands on offer. I buy nothing but being it is an experience; the aura of the place is awesome. Nearby there is a souvenir shop which has a good collection of memorabilia and offers discounts and prices are negotiable, feels like home. I buy a few souvenirs. Red Square has been the site of numerous significant events throughout Russian history, including military parades, public gatherings, and political demonstrations, making it a symbol of both the historical and contemporary Russian state. Then there is a change of guards where every two hours Presidential guards change their duty. They say you have to be the best to be presidential guards. Three tough looking guys come and replace the three guards on duty and walk beating their boots on the ground. The Moscow Victory Day Parade is an annual military parade of the Russian Armed Forces on Moscow's Red Square on May 9 during the Victory Day celebrations and is a big draw with the tourists and locals alike. The other most visited complex in the world is perhaps the Kremlin, the seat of power, where you still have the president's office. We walk through the door rather easily. Our guide is smart; tells us the President is not there else it would not be that easy. There is the president's office and a broken bell which never rang once as it broke while making it. Then there were buildings that were set on fire when Napoleon attacked. People abandoned them and went to jungles. All Bonapart found was

I HAVE BECOME MY OWN VERSION OF AN OPTIMIST. IF I CAN'T MAKE IT THROUGH ONE DOOR, I'LL GO THROUGH ANOTHER DOOR - OR I'LL MAKE A DOOR. SOMETHING TERRIFIC WILL COME NO MATTER HOW DARK THE PRESENT
—RABINDRANATH TAGORE

YOUR WEEK AHEAD

MADHU KOTIYA



ARIES March 21-April 19
This week, focusing on financial discipline is crucial as managing your budget becomes a priority. Assess your spending habits and income, noting that while your earnings are substantial, your outlays may exceed them. Aim to establish equilibrium not just in your finances but across all areas of your life that are rapidly evolving and require your focus, such as home matters, property dealings, educational pursuits, and professional growth. Consider limiting social engagements and leisure activities for the majority of the week to concentrate on these pressing issues. As the week progresses, you'll find the weight of stress lifting, allowing you to move forward more freely. You'll end the week feeling vibrant, joyful, and full of zest, ready to embrace your journey with caution and awareness of potential challenges.
Lucky number 2 | Lucky colour Coral
Lucky day Tuesday



LEO July 23-Aug 22
This week may present a series of challenges, including unexpected obstacles, misunderstandings with friends, and financial delays. Despite these difficulties, your resilience will shine through as you confront each issue with calm and determination. Financially, returns on past investments or repayments may be underwhelming, prompting careful consideration and planning. However, this is only a temporary setback. Prioritizing health through timely medical consultations, meditation, and yoga will contribute to overall well-being. Engaging in spiritual practices can provide additional solace and strength during this period. Stay proactive and remember that your choices have the power to alter your path forward. You are equipped to handle any disruptions, drawing strength from spiritual connections to navigate this complex time.
Lucky number 11 | Lucky colour Tangerine
Lucky day Saturday



SAGITTARIUS Nov 22-Dec 21
Individuals with boundless energy need to channel it effectively to achieve optimal results. There are some immediate adjustments required in your approach. Prioritize delegating tasks and organizing your schedule efficiently, as effective time and resource management is key. A career advancement may be on the horizon this week, accompanied by financial benefits. Work-related travel could be fruitful, providing opportunities to establish long-term connections. Confidence and determination will propel you toward success. By week's end, expect significant financial rewards and the satisfaction of tangible accomplishments. This period also presents a favorable opportunity for investing in assets, though cautious decision-making is advised. Don't be overly concerned about your professional trajectory; you're nearly at your goal. Maintain your focus to ensure you reach your full potential.
Lucky number 12 | Lucky colour Grey
Lucky day Friday



TAURUS April 20-May 20
This week might start on a positive note with new possibilities ahead, but be prepared for some unexpected sharp exchanges from a coworker or a close one. Your romantic overtures could face setbacks, potentially leading to feelings of isolation and sadness. It's wise to keep your expectations realistic and maintain a practical outlook. You may find yourself on the brink of ending a relationship that hasn't fully begun. It's important to manage your emotions and keep your temper in check to avoid feeling overwhelmed and drained. Remember, this challenging period is only temporary, and you'll soon regain control of the situation. A maternal figure or a more experienced female relative in your life could offer the support and guidance you need during this time.
Lucky number 10 | Lucky colour RFuchsia
Lucky day Sunday



VIRGO Aug 23-Sep 22
This week may find you feeling deeply emotional, with nostalgic thoughts urging you to reconnect with old friends or visit your family. You might find yourself exchanging gifts or reliving cherished moments with loved ones. However, matters of the heart could prove challenging, possibly leading to feelings of disappointment or heartache, especially for those anticipating significant commitments in romantic relationships. An inclination towards possessiveness might also surface, suggesting a need for emotional balance and calm. To navigate this period, consider engaging in meditation or other calming practices. Focusing on creative or spiritual activities can be particularly beneficial, offering a productive outlet for your emotions and helping to shift your perspective towards optimism.
Lucky number 4 | Lucky colour Indigo
Lucky day Thursday



CAPRICORN Dec 22-Jan 19
This week presents a spectrum of outcomes. Guidance from a mentor or family elder will help clarify your life direction. High ambitions may lead to confusion, especially concerning property matters. Beware of potential deception and criticism from others. Stay grounded to avoid complications, particularly in relationships. Practicality is key in overcoming these challenges. Give yourself and your significant other adequate space and time before making decisions. Emphasize honesty and use your intellect to discern realities. There's a need to cleanse a negative influence affecting your well-being, enabling you to embrace positivity. Trust in your own capabilities and proceed with confidence. Cultivating patience and resilience will fortify your journey through uncertain times. Focus on nurturing your inner peace to ensure you can make balanced and thoughtful choices.
Lucky number 9 | Lucky colour Turquoise
Lucky day Thursday



GEMINI May 21-June 20
This week promises an uplifting journey filled with heartfelt connections and personal triumphs. The initial days bring a deepening bond with your partner, marked by a nurturing love that enhances your vitality and encourages your best efforts. Your positive outlook will help you overcome challenges that previously seemed overwhelming. Your abilities and determination are set to earn your admiration, even from those who have doubted you, marking a significant victory. Your inspiring presence motivates others, and your own well-being—both physical and emotional—sees significant improvement. As the week progresses, you will experience a profound sense of vindication and fairness that reaffirms your path and choices. This period culminates in a joyful realization of your desires and goals, illuminating the rewards of your perseverance.
Lucky number 8 | Lucky colour Lavender
Lucky day Wednesday



LIBRA Sep 23-Oct 22
This week you're infused with a dynamic drive to excel in your career. An awaited piece of positive news from afar is likely to arrive, bringing joy and potential opportunities. Financial matters will demand your focus, with transactions, payments, and investments taking center stage. Remember, sharing your prosperity with those in need can bring profound rewards. You'll also find satisfaction in disseminating the knowledge you've accumulated, providing guidance to those around you. Embrace this phase of abundant possibilities, but consider a significant shift in your perspective or approach. Making these adjustments will lead to gratifying outcomes. Challenges may arise, yet your seasoned judgment and keen intellect will enable you to overcome them and thrive.
Lucky number 3 | Lucky colour Teal
Lucky day Monday



AQUARIUS Jan 20-Feb 18
This week presents promising opportunities for career advancement and personal connections. You might unexpectedly receive a promotion or pay increase. Be prepared for potential work-related travel, which is likely to yield significant benefits in the future. If you're renting, this period may also bring changes to your work or living spaces. Midweek, emotions run high, enhancing your romantic and passionate pursuits. However, you might find yourself conflicted about a particular relationship or decision, torn between differing inner voices. Trusting your instincts will serve you well. As the week closes, you'll find greater emotional equilibrium and control over your feelings, leading to a broader perspective on potential opportunities. These could be linked to professional growth, significant personal milestones, or creative inspiration, igniting a strong drive to achieve notable goals.
Lucky number 8 | Lucky colour Orange
Lucky day Thursday



CANCER June 21-July 22
Regulate your emotions! Your emotional responses are currently heightened, possibly leading you to dwell on past mistakes or express frustration toward those close to you. To navigate away from disappointment and a gloomy mood, engaging in mental wellness activities can be very helpful. Consider practices such as meditation, yoga, breath work, or immersing yourself in inspiring literature. Remember, the past is behind you, and focusing on the present can illuminate the path to a brighter future. This week, embrace the closure of old chapters and start anew with a fresh perspective. Being proactive rather than avoiding issues will foster strength and wisdom. Embrace optimism and maintain faith to achieve your aspirations.
Lucky number 5 | Lucky colour Yellow
Lucky day Monday



SCORPIO Oct 23-Nov 21
This week brings a series of delightful events and laughter-filled moments. You'll find yourself deeply invested in a challenging project, pouring your energy and passion into it. This experience is unique as teamwork amplifies its benefits, enhancing your virtues and introducing you to new skills and untapped potential. Your focus and determination will make it easier to stay on track and meet your objectives. There may be opportunities for international connections, either through friendships or potential travel plans. Your ambitions keep you driven, and undistracted by romance or leisure as you aim for significant financial and professional achievements. Expect recognition for your dedication, possibly in the form of a raise or promotion. Be grateful for these blessings and savor the rewards of your hard work.
Lucky number 6 | Lucky colour Saffron
Lucky day Wednesday



PISCES Feb 19-March 20
This week starts with a focus on reflection and growth as recent efforts and challenges are reviewed. Despite considerable dedication, you may find that the rewards of your labor are yet to be fully realized. It's a period where doubts could cloud your judgment. By midweek, a sense of satisfaction emerges as unexpected professional opportunities present themselves, offering the potential for financial gains. This phase is ideal for initiating new ventures or investments. Throughout the week, various propositions will appear, necessitating careful selection to align with your goals. Financial prudence is advised to avoid unnecessary expenditures. As the week concludes, the desire for travel or leisure activities may arise, leading to plans for enjoyable outings or romantic escapades with a significant other.
Lucky number 1 | Lucky colour Mustard
Lucky day Sunday

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THE TUNING FORK



C V Srikanth

The Kriyamana Karma encapsulates theincrediblybrilliant dynamism of how Karma works. While living our Karmas, we continue to createmore in the present life, influencingour future

Actions Have Corresponding Consequences

One does not merely earn Karma. One seeds it and grows it. And then - it grows on you. Everything connects with everything else - and Karma is the connect. It is in thought - not only in action. Neither fate nor destiny. A matrix that includes our choices, samskaras and more. Our conscious and unconscious acts, ideas and deeds determine our karma. It is about ownership and deliverance. Simplistically it means the idea of cause and effect, where thoughts, emotions, actions (karma) have corresponding consequences (karma-phala). It comes around as an energy that originates with us. It shapes individual destinies, influences rebirths, and underscores the ethical framework of traditions. It is almost impossible to comprehend the cycle of Karma in a unidimensional way. The limitations of human comprehension restrict our understanding of this extremely complex but immensely beautiful concept.

With its roots in the intention of the action, Karma is also defined as our prescribed duties towards our ecosystem. Krishna asserts in the Bhagavat Gita ...

tasmād asaktaḥ satataṁ kārati karma samāchara asakto hyācharan karma param āpnoti pūruṣhaḥ

"Therefore, always perform your duties efficiently and without attachment. By performing duties without attachment, a person attains the highest."

Performing duties conscientiously (Sattvik Karma) without attachment to the results, leads to liberation (Moksha). We travel through births, with our accumulated karma due to our past actions. This Sanchita Karma and plays a major role in shaping one's life circumstances. The portion of Sanchita Karma that has to be inescapably experienced in the present life is Prarabdha Karma. It determines the significant conditions and events of one's current life.



The Kriyamana Karma encapsulates theincrediblybrilliant dynamism of how Karma works. While living our Karmas, we continue to createmore in the present life, influencingour future. One of the purposes of spiritual study and growth is to discern right from wrong action. As Krishna explains in the Bhagavat Gita

karmaṇo hyapi boddhavyam

boddhavyam cha vikarmaṇaḥ akarmaṇaḥ cha boddhavyam gahanā karmaṇo gatih

"One must understand what is action, what is inaction, and what is forbidden action. The path of action is very mysterious."

We must understand the nature of different types of actions (karma) and inactions, discerning right actions (Dharma) from wrong

actions (Adharma). In daily life, understanding karma influences decision-making, virtuousconduct, and spiritualapplication in our actions and duties. It encourages us to uphold principles of righteousness (Dharma) and avoid harmful actions, perform our duties selflessly, and practice mindfulness by reflecting on our intentions. Karma grows with intention, and reflects in your volition. It is not merely the content but the context. It is complex. It is not linear and it is Real and authentic. We have the right to it through our choicesand yet are urged not to consider ourselves as the cause of the results. It is about staying connected to the action with commitment but not attached thereafter. One of the most popular shlokas of the Bhagavat Gita, that has been a guiding principle

karmaṇy-ewādhikāras te mā phaleṣhu kadāchana mā karma-phala-hetur bhūr mā te saṅgo ṣtvakarmaṇi

"You have a right to perform your prescribed duties, but you are not entitled to the fruits of your actions. Never consider yourself to be the cause of the results of your activities, nor be attached to inaction."

Karma entwines spiritual evolution, and the interconnectedness of all beings. It is not a punishment. It is a consequence of our choices. It is a reminder to be mindful, conscious, aware, and selfless. As Lord Buddha asserted - it is not possible to avoid experiencing the result of a karmic deed once it has been committed. Karma has no standard Menu - you get served what you deserve.

— 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