



# Reviving ancient edu system could bring lost glory: CM

**STAFF REPORTER ■**  
RAIPUR

Chhattisgarh Chief Minister Vishnu Deo Sai on Saturday said the revival of the ancient educational system could bring back the country's lost glory and the country could become a Vishvaguru.

Sai said this while speaking at the fifth convocation ceremony of Atal Bihari Vajpayee University at Bilaspur. Governor Ramen Deka and Supreme Court justice Prashant Kumar Mishra were also present on this occasion. Mishra was honoured with an honorary doctorate. Lauding the New



Education Policy, Sai said that it was drafted by the experts and it would be instrumental in nurturing the youths. The Governor and Chief Minister earlier paid tribute to

the former Prime Minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee by garlanding his statue on the university campus.

The Governor and the Chief Minister also inaugurated several projects at the university.

As part of the 'Ek Ped Maa Ke Naam' campaign, both the Governor and the Chief Minister planted saplings at the university premises.

Union Minister of State for Urban Development Tokhan Sahu, Deputy Chief Minister Arun Sao, MLAs Dharamlal Kaushik, Amar Agrawal and Sushant Shukla along with Vice-Chancellor A.D.N. Vajpayee were present.

# NIA conducts searches in Chhattisgarh

**A Head Constable of the Indo-Tibetan Border Police (ITBP) was killed in the attack**

**STAFF REPORTER ■**  
RAIPUR

The National Investigation Agency (NIA) on Saturday conducted searches at multiple locations in Gariyaband district of Chhattisgarh over an IED blast during the 2023 Assembly polls.

The blast was carried out by the CPI (Maoist) while a



convoy of polling and security personnel was returning from Badegobra village after voting on November 17, a NIA statement said.

A Head Constable of the Indo-Tibetan Border Police (ITBP) was killed in the attack.

NIA teams on Saturday

conducted searches at premises linked with nine suspects in a Maoist case in Chhotegobra village.

The NIA, which took over the case in March, has identified certain overground workers of the banned CPI (Maoist) as suspects in executing the attack.

# Niyad Nellanar delivers essential services to Naxalite-hit villages



**STAFF REPORTER ■**  
RAIPUR

Under the Niyad Nellanar Yojana, which aims at enhancing basic facilities and welfare benefits in Maoist-affected areas, the Narayanpur

district administration on Saturday organized an inaugural camp in the tribal village of Mohandi in Chhattisgarh.

An official said a revenue camp was held on Saturday in village Mohandi in the Kutul

Gram Panchayat.

The camp saw significant participation from villagers and facilitated the distribution and application for important documents including caste, residence, income, birth and death certificates as well as

old-age pension scheme documents.

During the camp, 12 caste, 15 residence, 12 income and 16 birth certificates as well as applications for 26 Aadhar cards were processed.

In addition, 16 birth certificates, a death certificate and three old-age pension certificates were issued. The official said the scheme marks a significant step in fulfilling the commitment to extending the benefits of government schemes to individuals in Maoist-affected areas.

The scheme involves establishing 14 new security camps in Maoist-affected regions. Villages within a five-kilometer radius of these camps are benefiting from over 25 basic services and 32 beneficiary-oriented schemes, he added.

# Social media influencers to promote 'The Bastar Madai'

**STAFF REPORTER ■**  
BASTAR

Social media influencers from across the country have pledged their support to promote 'The Bastar Madai' as part of efforts to put Bastar on the global tourism map, an official communiqué said on Saturday.

The initiative aims to make tourists aware of everything Bastar has to offer.

The Madai will provide close insight to tourists about the historic Bastar Dussehra festival.

It also aims to promote tourism by showcasing the natural beauty, rich tribal culture, abundant mineral and forest wealth, as well as the archaeological importance of the Bastar region.



The Bastar administration orientated and honoured the influencers at the Badal Academy in Asana.

Collector Vijay Dayaram K. spoke about Bastar's

Dussehra rituals, which last about 75 days.

They have also released a tourist circuit map which contains information about 42 tourist spots and route

information with transport facilities.

The Madai begins when rice harvest is completed. It is a way of thanking the gods after a good harvest.



Talented students mesmerised the audience with performances at the 'Talent Tihar: Pratibha Ko Pankh' event in Chhattisgarh's Janjgir-Champa district on Saturday.



# Illegal hooch factory raided



**STAFF REPORTER ■**  
MAHASAMUND

The Chhattisgarh Excise Department busted an illegal liquor manufacturing operation in Mahasamund district, an official communiqué said on Saturday.

Based on a tip, the excise team raided a place near village Parsa Pali Gauthan and discovered that liquor was being made on five furnaces.

The accused fled the spot upon noticing the officials.

The team recovered 525 litres of mahua liquor valued at Rs 1,05,000, another 6,000 kg of raw materials worth Rs 3,00,000 and five sets of liquor manufacturing equipment.

# Six Maoists held in Bijapur



**STAFF REPORTER ■**  
BIJAPUR

Six Maoists were arrested on Saturday from two places and explosives seized from them in Bijapur district of Chhattisgarh.

Of the six, Metta Kursam alias Sukku, Bachchu Kursam, Rakesh Kursam and Sudru Hemla were apprehended by the District Reserve Guard and local police from a forest near Bandaguda and Gorna villages, Bijapur Superintendent of Police

Jitendra Kumar Yadav said.

The security personnel seized explosives, a tiffin bomb, a detonator and a safety fuse from them.

The Central Reserve Police Force and local police nabbed another Maoist, Modiyam Ayatu alias Rotel, from a jungle of Bhosaguda village.

Rotel was involved in murder, attempted murder, abduction, arson, firing on police parties and IED explosions. A Maoist militia commander, Somaru Madvi, was arrested from Potenar village.

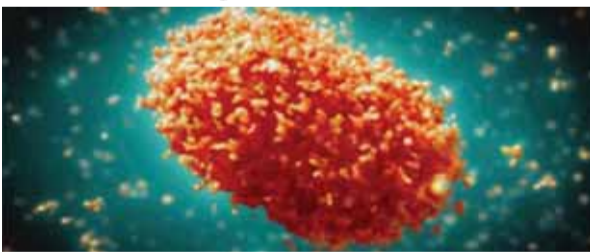
# Prioritising needs of children not only necessary but urgent: Unicef on Mpox

**AGENCIES ■**

As the World Health Organisation (WHO) asks countries to step up vigil against Monkeypox (Mpox), the United Nations Children's Fund (Unicef) has also sounded an alert, saying that in the fight against the outbreak, prioritising the needs of children is not only necessary but urgent.

A new variant of the mpox virus (clade 1b) is causing concern due to its potential for wider transmission across age groups, including young children. Mpox is affecting thousands of children across Africa.

According to the global humanitarian body, children who are malnourished or affected by other illnesses are also vulnerable to



complications from mpox.

The virus can spread through contact with lesions on the skin or infectious bodily fluids; contact with contaminated materials such as clothing, linen or sharps; injuries in healthcare settings; contact with respiratory droplets, from an infected person's mouth or throat contact with infected animals; pregnant women can pass the virus on to their unborn baby.

According to Unicef, children can be exposed at home or in the community

through close contact with people who are symptomatic with mpox including parents, caregivers, or other family members.

Mpox causes symptoms that are similar to smallpox, though less severe, like skin rash, fever, sore throat, headache, body aches, back pain, low energy, and swollen lymph nodes.

In the Democratic Republic of the Congo, children under 15 represent more than half of the cases. Across the most impacted countries, wide-spread

malnutrition, crowded living conditions, the presence of other infectious diseases, and limited access to healthcare make the spread of mpox a perilous situation for children.

Unicef said it is working with Africa CDC and WHO, as well as other partners such as USAID and FCDO, to support national governments.

"Our response is comprehensive, focusing on children, pregnant women and underserved communities, prioritizing the interruption of disease transmission and addressing the secondary impacts on children and communities, such as child protection and school closures," it stressed.

The WHO has also said it is working to accelerate access to and delivery of Mpox vaccines.

# National Nutrition Month from today

**STAFF REPORTER ■**  
RAIPUR

Chhattisgarh will observe the annual National Nutrition Month from September 1 to acquaint the general public the importance of nutrition and to teach healthy behavior with a well-nourished diet. It will end on September 30.

Tulika Prajapati, Director, Women and Child Development Department, in a letter to all the District Collectors and District Programme Officers, issued guidelines to organize the event.

The letter asks the officials to create awareness on health, nutrition and sanitation related services among the public.

The active participation of public representatives, representatives of Panchayati

Raj Institutions and local bodies as well as women self-help groups must be ensured to spread the message, an official communication said on Saturday.

In the current year, the focus is on women and health, child and education, child and nutrition, gender sensitivity, water conservation and management, and traditional diet for women and children of tribal areas.

The Anganwadi workers and Mitanin in villages will record the weight and height of children. They will discuss with villagers the importance of nutritional care. Workshops will be held at school level on women's health, nutrition and cleanliness.

Panchayats will ensure that prenatal and postnatal checkup is conducted among women to check anaemia.

# Man held with opium of Rs 32L



**STAFF REPORTER ■**  
RAIPUR

Chhattisgarh Police arrested a 49-year-old man and seized 2.10 kg opium valued at Rs 32.13 lakh from him here on Saturday.

Raipur Additional Superintendent of Police (Urban) Lakhan Pawar Patle identified him as Kuljinder Singh.

He hailed from Gurdaspur in Punjab and presently resided in Shyam Nagar in Raipur.

Singh was nabbed when he was looking for customers in Pandari area. The accused told the police he brought the consignment from Punjab.

# SOUTH EAST CENTRAL RAILWAY PASSENGER HALT AGENT FOR UNRESERVED TICKETS

Notification No. 2024/C/Chg/PH/II/R  
Dated: 28.08.2024

For appointment of Passenger Halt Agent at Udyog Nagar, CBD & Fair Ground PHs on MNDH-NRMH-KDRI Section & Baikunth Ph on R-BSP Section and Bhainsbodi Passenger Halt on Durg Dalli Rajhara - Rowghat Section over South East Central Railway/Raipur Division for issuing unreserved tickets.

Last Date & Time for Submission of Application Forms: Up to 15.00 Hrs. of 03.10.2024.

Opening of Application Box: At 15.30 Hrs. on 03.10.2024.

Applications are to be dropped in sealed cover addressed to Sr. Divisional Commercial Manager/ S.E.C. Railway, Raipur in the Application box kept for this purpose in the office of Sr. Divisional Commercial Manager, DRM Office Complex, S.E.C. Railway, Near Waitlai Level Crossing Gate, RVH Colony, Raipur (CG).

For further details, eligibility criteria & complete details for the above work please contact office of the Sr. DCM/SECR/Raipur or refer/download application document available on our website [www.secr.indianrailways.gov.in](http://www.secr.indianrailways.gov.in).

Divisional Railway Manager (Comm.), South East Central Railway, Raipur  
PR/RS/DCM/PC/119  
f South East Central Railway @seccrall



**WORLD 5**  
BRAZIL BANS X AFTER  
DISINFORMATION ROW

**SPORT 7**  
BHAMBRI AND BOPANNA WIN WITH  
RESPECTIVE PARTNERS, BALAJI EXITS

Published From  
DELHI LUCKNOW BHOPAL  
BHUBANESWAR RANCHI  
RAIPUR CHANDIGARH  
DEHRADUN HYDERABAD  
VIJAYWADA

RAIPUR, SUNDAY SEPTEMBER 1, 2024; PAGES 12 ₹3



# Established 1864 sunday pioneer

www.dailypioneer.com



## In Memoriam BOSS KAUN THA? DR CHANDAN MITRA

By **SIDHARTH MISHRA**

It has been three years since Chandan Mitra is gone. I left the *Pioneer* in 2012 summer but my phone still has his number saved as Editor. I last met him on January 19, 2019. I presented him a copy of my book *Delhi Political 1947-2013* and clicked a picture together. Since we both had French beards and sported similar glass frames, some commented that I was indeed a true disciple, since I did not simply follow him in his writings but also the style of his beard.

Covid followed, poor health got the better of Chandan's physical charm and our interactions got limited to exchange of messages on the phone. My last message to him was on 24 July 2021, on Guru Purnima. Somewhere I had this gut feeling that he may not be there to receive the customary message on Teachers' Day, September the 5th. It turned out to be true.

In 1992, I was working as a district correspondent in the Patna edition of the *Hindustan Times*. I remember reading a front-page review of Mani Ratnam's film *Raja* sitting in the dingy district bureau office. It was sometime then that somewhere inside me the thought arose, if I were to make a career in journalism, Chandan Mitra was the writer to follow.

Soon after, I came to Delhi and found a job at the newsdesk in *The Pioneer*. The newspaper then had a good number of feature and theme pages. The newspaper's then Editor, Ashok Bhattacharya, gave me somewhat of a license to write on these pages if it would not compromise with my desk work. I grabbed the opportunity with both hands.

In 1996, Chandan came as the Editor to Link House, the office of *The Pioneer*. In the first meeting with the newsdesk, then officiating editor Ajoy Bose introduced me saying that I was some kind of a specimen, who despite working till late in the night on the desk could still find time to write. Chandan responded, "I am surprised as I always thought of you to be in someone in the writing departments."

Soon he made me jump the fence, and I was part of the City reporting team. In less than two years' time I was heading the City unit. When I took over, my friends told me that the job was jinxed as, since the launch of the paper in Delhi, nobody completed a year as the Chief Reporter.

When I completed a year, I wrote a thanksgiving note to the Editor, and Chandan in a hand written reply said I survived not because of his benevolence but because of my work. He said I would have many more years in the office. I worked in *The Pioneer* for 18 years on a trot and of which 16 years were with Chandan.

We were ideologically not much aligned. Given my military school background I was never much amused by the life of glamour which he enjoyed but still we managed to work together. With time I came to look after the newspaper's editions in Dehradun, Chandigarh and Ranchi in addition to the Delhi City unit charge. Those were tumultuous years. The Thapars gave up on the newspaper and Chandan brought it back from the brink of closure. In those years many left for better opportunities; sometimes I ask myself what held me back. The charm of attending the evening news meetings with Chandan in the chair, things never got boring. They used to be great gatherings with Swapan Dasgupta and Kanchan Gupta, all *nahapandits* of right wing ideology, with poor me fighting to justify my sympathies for the then Sheila Dikshit Government. Chandan would face a lot of heat from Delhi BJP leaders like Madanlal Khurana for having me as the head of the paper's City unit.

The majority of the years that Chandan held the reigns of *The Pioneer*, the paper was in an adversarial role vis-à-vis the Government at the Centre. Not that under the Atal Bihari Vajpayee Government, Chandan mortgaged his right to criticise. There was this instance of a border skirmish with Bangladesh in which a BSF officer was killed. His corpse was returned in a most undignified manner. The images made one balk and at the same time angry even as the Government talked of peace. The front page editorial in the paper said, *Bend, don't genuflect*. Now this was a startling criticism coming from a newspaper known for its ideological proximity to the Government of the day. This must have required a lot of courage on the part of Chandan, and a real large heart on the part of the Government to take the criticism in the right spirit.

During those 16 years, Chandan gave me the freedom to make my team. The team had to be made every sixmonths as someone who had just started to shine would be poached by bigger media houses. Today these 'freshers' are the strength and backbone of many a media house across the country.

Whenever one gets to meet them, they show gratitude for giving them the break but I could do so because Chandan allowed it. That was Chandan!

*Sidharth Mishra is author & president Centre for Reforms, Development and Justice*

## Remembrance of things past

By **KUSHAN MITRA**

**Chandan Mitra, pursuing his doctorate at Oxford, with son Kushan**



Three years ago, on the night of the first of September, 2021, my father, Chandan Mitra, breathed his last. The last few months of his life had been hard for him, and also hard for those around him. Watching the cognitive decline of possibly one of the most intelligent human beings you have ever known is extremely tough and when that person happens to be your own father, it is so much worse. I write a lot, but I haven't ever written about Baba's passing or my relationship with him. Three years on, I think it is time. As I rode with his body in an ambulance to the cremation grounds, those 45 minutes gave me a lot of time to contemplate. Well, 45 minutes is nothing when you're trying to think over a 40-year relationship but there was some solitude inside the vehicle. I recall my fathers childhood friend from La Martinere, Paranjay Guha Thakurta being in the van with me, but I think that we were both lost in thought. I will be honest, ours was not a simple relationship. Most sons, particularly in India have deeply complicated

relationships with their fathers, but I would like to think mine was more complex than most. As many know, my parents were divorced and had separated when I was around 13 years old. While that is not something easy for a young teenager to process, as a 45-year old man today, I understand how relationships can wither away and die. But as a result of that, Baba was

not always around. However, my younger brother and I did spend time with him and also stayed nights at his place in Vasant Vihar. I would also like to thank his landlady, the journalist Shymala Shiveshwarkar, who herself passed away earlier this year, for helping him and keeping him on the straight and narrow. That said, through my later teens and early twenties,

we were barely on talking terms. Baba's place was a place I only dropped into to party. Could it have been better or different? I don't know, but I do know that by this time, he had found companionship with the first of his many Labradors, Loin. As I begun my career as a writer and journalist, Baba was always there to provide advice, and as he went beyond dipping his toes into politics, and started his time as a Member of Parliament, visits to his bungalows at Humayun Road and then Ferozeshah Road were common. He was someone I could always turn to for career advice and also talk about life and love. It was here I decided that I would help him in *The Pioneer*. This newspaper was his soul by then, he had revived it from a moribund newspaper, to one of Delhi's most reliable and trusted newspapers, and when the rest of the Indian english media had bent over during the UPA-era, which they have all conveniently forgotten today, *The Pioneer*, remained steadfastly right-wing, despite the newspaper

## PM Modi assures women of swift action against male predators

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

In the backdrop of the rape and murder of a Kolkata doctor and sexual assault on two kindergarten girls in Maharashtra's Thane region, Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Saturday reiterated the need and urgency to ensure safety of women, particularly at the workplace and called for quick disposal of cases of crimes against women. He said, "The faster justice is done in such cases, the greater will be the assurance of safety for half the population."

Speaking at the National Conference of District Judiciary in Delhi, the Prime Minister emphasised that atrocities against women and the safety of children were a serious concern in society today. On this occasion, the Prime Minister also unveiled the stamp and coin commemorating 75 years of the establishment of the Supreme Court of India. The two-day conference was organised by the Supreme Court of India to discuss the issues related to the district judiciary such as infrastructure and human resources, inclusive courtsrooms for all, judicial security and judicial wellness, case management and judicial training.



Prime Minister Narendra Modi with Chief Justice of India DY Chandrachud during the inauguration of the National Conference of District Judiciary, in New Delhi, on Saturday

Modi pointed out that many strict laws were enacted to ensure the safety of women in the country. He added that in 2019, the Government had planned to establish fast-track special courts. Explaining further, he said that there was a provision for a deposition center for important witnesses under the fast-track special courts. He further emphasised the important role of district monitoring committees under fast-track special courts, consisting of the district judge, district magistrate and superintendent of police. "Judiciary is considered as the

Guardian of our Democracy", said the Prime Minister. Referring to the role of judiciary in protecting the Constitution and the spirit of law, the Prime Minister said the judiciary is considered the guardian of the Constitution, and that the Supreme Court and the judiciary have measured up to this responsibility. He added that the committee's role was important in promoting coordination between various aspects of the criminal justice system. Modi stressed on the need to make these committees more active. He

added that the quicker the decisions in cases related to atrocities against women, the greater will be the assurance of safety for half the population. The Kolkata incident has also become a flashpoint between the TMC Government in West Bengal and the BJP-led NDA Government at the Centre. On Friday, West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee wrote to Modi, reiterating her request for stringent Central legislation and exemplary punishment for heinous crimes like rape and murder. **Continued on Page 4**



## Anguished women of Kerala cry for help

KUMAR CHELLAPPAN ■ KOCHI

Radhika Sarathkumar, a highly respected movie artist in South India, dropped a bombshell on Saturday by accusing some of the leading stars of the Malayalam film industry of making nude visuals of female artists with hidden cameras and blackmailing them later.

Speaking to the media, Radhika, who is married to Tamil superstar Sarath Kumar and is daughter of the iconic Tamil actor M R Radha, said that she has seen these film stars videographing nude visuals with hidden cameras in the caravans hired for exclusive use by the female artists.

"It is done while the artists change their costumes or use the washrooms. I saw this with my own eyes and ever since stopped using the caravans. Though I alerted the director and other crew members, nothing happened. Malayalam film industry is not safe for female artists," said Radhika.

The revelations by the actress come in the wake of the #Me Too movement getting intensified after the release of the Justice K Hema Committee report about the murky happenings in Malayalam film industry. The committee was appointed by the CPI (M)-led Government in 2017 following reports of sexual harassment suffered by female film artists.

It may be recalled that a leading actress of Malayalam films was kidnapped by gangsters led by Pulsor Suni and raped as per the directive of reigning superstar Dileep. **Continued on Page 4**

## Haryana polls rescheduled

RAJESH KUMAR ■ NEW DELHI

Keeping in mind a centuries-old Festival of the Bishnoi community, the Election Commission of India (ECI) on Saturday deferred the polling date for Haryana Assembly elections to October 5. Earlier, voting was scheduled to be held on October 1. There has been no change in the polling date for the third phase of the Jammu and Kashmir elections slated for October 1. The election results for both Jammu & Kashmir and Haryana will be now declared on October 8 instead of October 4.

The change in the schedule was prompted by the ECI's decision to honour the centuries-old tradition of the Bishnois. The Bishnois, a prominent community in the region, observes the Asoj Amavasya festival, which holds religious importance as it commemorates the Guru Jambheshwar. The ECI

recognised the need to ensure that the community could fully participate in this important cultural and religious event without forgoing their voting rights. The poll body cited representations from national and State political parties, as well as the All India Bishnoi Mahasabha in this regard.

BJP leaders hailed the poll body's decision while the Opposition Congress and Aam Aadmi Party have slammed the move.

BJP MP Biplab Kumar Deb who is also the in-charge of Haryana BJP said, "...It is the duty of the Election Commission. At that time the main festival of the Bishnoi community takes place, so the Election Commission wants maximum voting in the elections and we welcome it... We have worked honestly in the State and the people will decide who will win..." **Continued on Page 4**

## Jammu votes on September 18 in first phase

MOHIT KANDHARI ■ JAMMU

With the completion of the scrutiny of the nomination papers for the first phase of the polling on September 18, the electioneering in Jammu and Kashmir has intensified. Different political parties have stepped up efforts to reach out to the voters to

win their support. Out of 24 Assembly seats going to the polls in the first phase, 16 fall in the Kashmir valley and eight in the erstwhile Doda district of Jammu province. According to the Election Commission of India, 64 candidates are left in the fray for eight seats in Doda, Kishtwar and Ramban

districts. They include 27 in Doda district, 22 in Kishtwar and 15 in Ramban district. In 2014, the BJP had won four Assembly segments of Kishtwar, Doda, Bhandarwah and Ramban while two Assembly segments of Interdwal and Banihal were won by the Congress party candidates in the region. **Continued on Page 4**



**Dr T R Paarivendhar**  
Founder Chancellor,  
SRM Group of Institutions

WELCOMES YOU TO THE  
**4th CONVOCATION**  
OF SRM UNIVERSITY-AP, ANDHRA PRADESH

Sep 02, 2024 | APJ Abdul Kalam Auditorium | 02:00 PM Onwards

**CHIEF GUEST**  
Padma Bhushan  
Senapathy Kris Gopalakrishnan  
Chairman-Axilor Ventures & Co-founder of Infosys

**GUEST OF HONOUR**  
Mr Rohit Kapoor  
Chief Executive Officer-Food Marketplace, Swiggy

**Dr P Sathyanarayanan**  
Pro-Chancellor  
SRM University-AP

**Prof. Manoj K Arora**  
Vice Chancellor  
SRM University-AP

SRM University-AP | Neerukonda, Mangalagiri Mandal, Guntur District, AP - 522240

SRMUAP | www.srmmap.edu.in | Watch the Convocation Live!

# Jayarajan ousted as LDF convener; CPI snubbed over Mukesh issue

KUMAR CHELLAPPAN ■ KOCHI

The internal group war in the CPI(M) reached new heights on Saturday as EP Jayarajan, former Minister and Kannur strongman of the party was ousted as the Left Democratic Front (LDF) convener and another former Minister TP Ramakrishnan, a sidekick of Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan Government was appointed to the coveted post. The removal of Jayarajan and appointment of Ramakrishnan was announced by party's Kerala state secretary M V Govindan while briefing the media after

the two-day long State Committee meet of the party held at Thiruvananthapuram. Jayarajan's ouster from the LDF convener is a sequel to his meeting with Prakash Javadekar, the BJP leader who is in charge of party's Kerala affairs. Sobha Surendran, a senior BJP leader had disclosed that Jayarajan, a former industries minister in the first Pinarayi Vijayan Government had held parleys with Javadekar during the run up to the 2024 Lok Sabha election. Govindan did not disclose the reason for Jayarajan's removal in an unambiguous

manner other than saying that the latter was not competent enough to continue as convener of the LDF. But Govindan stated that Jayarajan's meetings with Javadekar was one of the reasons that created a lot of controversy. "I'll react to the decision at the appropriate time," Jayarajan told the media persons. In yet another development, the CPI(M) gave a tight slap on the face of the CPI, its poor cousins, for that party's demand to oust movie actor Mukesh MLA from the party as well as the membership of the legislative assembly. Annie



Raja, former flame of the CPI, had demanded the



expulsion of Mukesh as MLA against whom many female

artists have raised serious charges of rape, sexual abuse and misdemeanor. Mukesh managed to get anticipatory bail from the district sessions judge in Kochi against possible arrest by Kochi City Police and has gone underground since then. Binoy Viswam, the CPI Kerala secretary and the intellectual face of the Communist movement, had called on chief minister Pinarayi Vijayan on Thursday and demanded that Mukesh should be asked to resign as MLA. "Our learned opinion is that there is no need for Mukesh to resign as MLA in connection with

some allegations. Some artists have accused him of misbehaving with them but these charges are yet to be proved in a court of law. If the court acquits him of all charges, are there any mechanism in the statute books to take back his resignation letter and reinstate him as MLA?" asked Govindan. Close CPI(M) observers like P Sujathan are of the view that the removal of Jayarajan would create a lot of ripples in the CPI(M) as well as in Kerala politics. "But I am not sure whether it would have any repercussions in the BJP in Kerala. This is because the present

BJP leadership in the State is incapable of accommodating him in the party as there are no leaders in the party capable of winning even panchayat election. Jayarajan is a seasoned political leader. Moreover, if rubbed the wrong way, he can put all CPI(M) leaders including Vijayan in major embarrassment," said Sujathan. Jayarajan being a member of the central committee of the party, only the polit bureau members are competent to take further decisions like ousting him from the primary membership of the CPI(M).

## Delhi Home Minister visits Tihar jail

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

Delhi Home Minister Kailash Gahlot on Saturday conducted a comprehensive visit to Tihar Jail, reinforcing the Government's commitment to prison reforms, inmate welfare and staff development. The visit highlighted the Government's dedication to improving the living conditions of inmates, enhancing staff welfare, and ensuring the overall betterment of the correctional facilities under the Government of National Capital Territory (GNCT) of Delhi. The Minister was accompanied by Home Secretary Chanchal Yadav, Director General of Prisons Satish Golcha, Additional Inspector General Ajay Kumar Bisht, Deputy Inspector General (HQ & Tihar Range) Rajeev Singh and other senior offi-



cers of Prison Department during the visit. The minister expressed satisfaction with the progress made so far and assured that the Government will continue to prioritize the welfare of both inmates and staff in all future initiatives. During his visit to Central Jail No. 6 (Women), Kailash Gahlot reviewed the voca-

Stitching & Block Printing Unit run with the help of Pearl Academy. In Central Jail No. 3, the minister visited the "Gausala" and observed its activities. He also inspected the "Langar," where food is prepared for inmates, and appreciated the quality and cleanliness of the facility. The Minister stressed the need to expand the capacity as well as the facilities of the hospital in the Tihar jail complex. He also provided his inputs towards overall improvement of general infrastructure of prisons. "I visited Tihar Jail, the largest prison complex in Asia, as part of the Delhi Government's ongoing efforts to improve prison conditions. During my visit, I inspected the basic facilities being provided to the prisoners and issued some corrective direc-

tions. Under the leadership of Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal, the Delhi Government is committed to prison reform." "Our visit to Tihar Jail is yet another step towards improving prison conditions and ensuring that inmates are given the necessary resources to reform themselves. We believe that every individual has the potential to reform, and it is our responsibility to provide them with the necessary resources to do so. I am confident that with the collective efforts of our government, prison authorities, and citizens, we can create a more just and equitable society," Gahlot said in a statement. Gahlot reiterated the Kejriwal Government's commitment to implement positive interventions in the lives of inmates.

## Delhi doctors gather at Jantar Mantar to protest against Kolkata horror

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

Doctors in the national Capital gathered at Jantar Mantar on Saturday to protest against the rape and murder of a trainee doctor at a Kolkata hospital, asserting that without a Central law to protect healthcare workers, female doctors would never feel safe during work. Protestors began gathering at Jantar Mantar from 3 pm onwards to demand justice for the victim of the incident at Kolkata's RG Kar Medical College and press the government to expedite the enactment of the Central Healthcare Protection Act, doctor associations said. Dr Deepika, a protesting doctor said, "I will never allow my daughters to become doctors here... Can you imagine that all of us female doctors are scared now? We feel fearful while

working, and we need protection. Can you imagine if she was raped and murdered at her workplace?" "We want protection so that all female doctors can work again without fear," she said. Chairman of Federation of All India Medical Association (FAIMA) Rohan Krishnan said they had earlier called off the protest due to the Supreme Court's intervention. "...Despite one arrest, there has been no significant progress in the case. That's why we want to continue our silent protest. We want our female doctors and nurses to feel safe again while working, and justice should be served," he said. The apex court constituted a task force, which will take note of suggestions of all stakeholders while formulating a national protocol for the safety of healthcare professionals,

including the associations representing resident doctors. A statement by FAIMA issued on Saturday said it "is profoundly disturbed by this heinous act, which has not only shattered the medical fraternity but also exposed the alarming vulnerabilities that healthcare professionals face daily." "Our fight will continue until justice is served," said Manish Jangra, founder and chief advisor of FAIMA. He added that members of the Resident Doctors of India (RDI) from hospitals around Delhi-NCR, such as Aligarh and Rohtak, will be part of the protest. Earlier this month, resident doctors across the country went on an indefinite strike on August 12 after the body of the trainee doctor was found on the premises of the state-run hospital in Kolkata on the morning of August 9.

## PM Modi assures...

From Page 3

In response, Union minister Annapurna Devi asserted that existing laws were stringent enough to tackle violence and crimes against women and urged the West Bengal Government to implement the same in "letter and spirit". The Government launched the Fast Track Special Court (FTSC) scheme in 2019 to tackle pending cases of crimes against women and those filed under Protection of Children from Sexual Offences (POCSO) Act, 2012. Since its inception, these courts have disposed of more than 2.53 lakh cases. Prime Minister Modi highlighted the crucial role of policies and laws along with infrastructural and technological advancements in the transformational journey of the nation. Therefore, Modi said, the nation has made such big and important changes in the legal framework for the first time in 70 years of Independence. Referring to the new Indian judicial system in the form of Bhartiya Nyaya Sanhita, the Prime Minister said that the spirit of these laws is 'Citizen First, Dignity First and Justice First'. He pointed out that India's criminal laws have been freed from the colonial mindset of rulers and slaves. He gave the example of repealing a colonial-era law like sedition. Throwing light on the idea behind the Nyaya Sanhita being to not punish citizens but protect them, PM Modi mentioned the implementation of stricter laws for crimes against women and children, and provisions of community service as punishment for minor crimes for the first time.

Modi also spoke about Bhartiya Sakshya Adhinyam and said that electronic and digital records have been recognised as evidence under the new laws. He also mentioned the Bhartiya Nagrik Suraksha Sanhita and said that a system is in place to send summons electronically to reduce the burden of pending cases on the judiciary. The Prime Minister also urged to take necessary steps to train the district judiciary in this new system under the guidance of the Supreme Court. He also suggested judges and lawyer colleagues become a part of this campaign. "Our lawyers and bar associations have an important role in making the public familiar with this new system," he added. Throwing light on the efforts in the past 10 years to facilitate delivery of justice, the Prime Minister referred to the work being done for the modernisation of courts at the mission level and highlighted the contributions of the Supreme Court and the judiciary. Pointing out the pendency of about 4.5 crore cases in the district courts, PM Modi said that work has been carried out at multiple levels in the last decade to eliminate this delay in justice. He said that the country has spent about Rs 8,000 crore for the development of judicial infrastructure. He further added that 75 percent of the funds spent on judicial infrastructure in the last 25 years took place only in the last 10 years. "In these 10 years, more than 7.5 thousand court halls and 11 thousand residential units have been built for the district judiciary," he added.

## NBCC board recommends bonus share in 1:2 ratio

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The Board of Directors of NBCC (India) Limited in its meeting held on 31.08.2024 has recommended the issuance of Bonus Shares to the Shareholders of the Company in the ratio of 1:2 i.e. 1 (One) new fully paid-up Equity Share of ₹ 1/- (Rupees One Only) each for every 2 (Two) existing fully paid-up Equity Share of ₹ 1/- (Rupees One Only) each to the eligible Shareholders of the Company as on Record Date, subject to the approval of the Shareholders in the forthcoming Annual General Meeting. This decision reflects the Company's strong financial health and its commitment to rewarding its shareholders. The Board has also fixed Monday, October 07, 2024 as Record date to

determine the eligibility of members to receive bonus shares. The eligible shareholders, whose names appeared in the Register of Shareholders or the List of Beneficial Owners maintained by the Depositories as of August 31, 2024, will receive these bonus shares. Consequently, the paid-up equity share capital of the company will increase from Rs. 180,00,00,000 to Rs. 270,00,00,000. The newly allotted bonus shares will hold equal status with the existing shares. They will be directly credited to the shareholders' demat accounts. The Company has a balance of Rs. 1,959 Crore being reserves & surplus available for capitalization as per Audited Financial Statements on March 31, 2024.

## Yogi Govt to expand contactless e-transport services across UP

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

The Uttar Pradesh Government is set to expand modern e-transport services across the state to enhance people's convenience. These services will be entirely faceless and contactless, streamlining the delivery of various services through an online platform. This initiative aims to provide a 'one stop solution' for citizens, eliminating the need to visit government offices for transport-related services. Already, the Transport department of Uttar Pradesh has implemented advanced facilities such as the Integrated Traffic Management System (ITMS) and e-challan services. Building on this foundation, the state is now accelerating efforts to introduce

Aadhaar authentication-based 'Vahan Faceless Services' and 'Sarathi Faceless Services'. The e-Transport Mission, spearheaded by the National Informatics Centre (NIC), is an ambitious initiative aimed at modernising the infrastructure and service delivery in India's transport sector. This mission is designed to enhance the efficiency, transparency, accountability and reliability of transport services, with a key focus on reducing the public's reliance on regional transport offices (RTOs) by expanding the availability of online services. The e-Transport Mission provides automated RTO operations, a nationwide transport database, and over 150 services tailored for citizens and businesses. Flagship programmes

under this mission include Vahan, Sarathi, e-Challan and pollution certificates, which play a crucial role in streamlining transport-related processes across the country. Through Vahan e-services, the project offers a range of services including vehicle homologation, registration, fitness and inspection, vehicle conversion and alteration, taxation modules, national permits, smart card issuance, and online fancy number checks. It also facilitates the management of check posts for vehicles from other states, payment gateway interfaces, and the national register of registration certificates (RCs), among others. Similarly, Sarathi focuses on driver-related solutions, offering services such as new learning licences, online tests, international permits, appoint-

ment management, driver training enrollment, conductor licences, driving test tracks, and access to the national register of driving licences (DLs). The range of initiatives being implemented across the state to modernise its transport infrastructure includes the integration of smart cities such as Saharanpur, Firozabad, Shahjahanpur, Moradabad, Jhansi, Gorakhpur and Ayodhya with the Integrated Traffic Management System (ITMS) and the e-challan portal. Additionally, ITMS-based overloading challan systems are being introduced in key locations like Noida, Agra and Mathura, along with a CCTV-based challan system on the Purvanchal and Agra-Lucknow expressways.

## Jammu votes on September 18 in...

From Page 3

This time, the BJP will have to walk a tightrope to cross the hurdles before hitting the victory milestone. On the other hand, alliance partners Congress and the National Conference are trying their level best to put

up a united front to defeat the BJP. The candidates of the Peoples Democratic Party are also gearing up to improve their past performance while the rebel candidate of the Democratic Progressive Azad Party, GM Saroori, who won the Inderwal seat in 2014, is also aiming to retain the seat despite facing a credibility crisis after failing to get the mandate from the DPAP. The Kishtwar Assembly segment is turning out to be the real battleground as it is witnessing the most interesting contest in the poll arena. Kishtwar is set to witness a triangular fight between

BJP's Shagun Parihar, Sajjad Kitchloo of the National Conference and Firdous Tak of PDP. Shagun Parihar is the daughter of Ajeet Parihar, the elder brother of BJP leader Anil Parihar. Both the brothers were killed by terrorists in November 2018. While the BJP is hoping to retain the seat, Kitchloo, on the other hand, is aiming to wrest the seat from the BJP. He remained a two-time MLA in 2002 and 2008 but lost to BJP's Sunil Sharma in 2014. After delimitation, Sharma has shifted to the newly created seat of Paddar-Nagseni. A straight contest is on the

cards between Sunil Sharma and NC's Pooja Thakur, the sitting chairperson of District Development Council (DDC) Kishtwar though the PDP has also fielded Sandesh Kumar. Rakesh Goswami, a BJP rebel is also in the fray and he refused to withdraw on the last date of filing of nomination papers. The Inderwal Assembly segment in Kishtwar is also gearing up for the multi-cornered contest. Three-time MLA and former Minister GM Saroori is contesting the election as an Independent candidate after being denied the mandate by Azad's DPAP.

Saroori is facing Sheikh Zafarullah of Congress, Tariq Hussain Keen (BJP), Nasir Ahmed Sheikh (PDP) and National Conference rebel Pyare Lal Sharma. Saroori scored a hat-trick from the Inderwal seat by winning Assembly polls of 2002, 2008 and 2014 in a row. On the Baderwah seat, the contest is expected to be triangular among 2014 BJP MLA Daleep Singh Parihar, Nadeem Sharief (Congress) and Sheikh Mehboob Iqbal (NC). Vikram Rathore of Jammu Kashmir Apni Party and Meenakshi Bhagat of BSP are also in the fray. Nadeem Sharief is the son of

Mohammad Sharief Niaz, who won the Baderwah seat in 2002 for the Congress and was made the Cabinet Minister. Later, Niaz quit the seat and Ghulam Nabi Azad won it in the by-poll. NC's Mehboob Iqbal is a retired IAS officer. BJP's 2014 MLA and former Minister Shakti Raj Parihar is facing Pardeep Kumar (Congress), Tanveer Hussain (PDP) and Abdul Ghani (DPAP) among others in the multi-cornered contest from the newly created seat of Doda West. Doda Assembly segment also is facing a multi-cornered contest with two former Ministers Khalid

Najib Suhrawardy (NC) and Abdul Muejed Wani (DPAP) in the fray along with Gajay Singh Rana (BJP), Riaz Ahmed (Congress) and the PDP. Suhrawardy won the seat in a by-election after the death of his father and NC strongman Attaullah Suhrawardy. However, he failed to retain it in 2002 when Majid Wani won the seat as an Independent candidate and in 2008 as the Congress candidate. BJP's Shakti Parihar wrested the seat in 2014. Parihar this time has shifted to the newly created seat of Doda West. He had lost the District Development

Council election from two seats in Doda in 2020. In Ramban district, eight candidates are now left in the fray but the main contest is expected to be among Rakesh Singh Thakur (BJP), Arjun Singh Raju (NC) and Suraj Singh Parihar, a BJP rebel contesting the election as an Independent candidate. Banihal constituency in Ramban district is also expected to witness a four-cornered contest among Vikar Rasool Wani, a two-time MLA of Congress, Sajjad Shaheen (National Conference), Mohammad Saleem Bhat (BJP) and Imtiaz Shan (PDP).

## Anguished women of...

From Page 3

Since Dileep was busy raping other artists, he had outsourced the sexual abuse job to Sunil. Dileep was arrested by the Kerala Police and remained behind bars for three months before managing to get bail and come out of jail. The disclosures by some of the female artists in the wake of the release of Hema Committee report has seen the police registering nearly 20 cases against actors including Siddique, Mukesh, a CPM legislator, Jayasoorya, Edavela Babu and Babu Raj. Interestingly, Siddique and Babu Raj were elected as general secretary and vice president of AMMA (Association of Malayalam Movie Actors) last month.

Both have quit following the allegations. Meanwhile, Mohan Lal, who was the president of AMMA till last week broke his silence when he met the Press on Saturday and asked the journalists not to bay for the blood of some of the artists on the basis of isolated allegations. "Since I was busy fulfilling certain commitments, I could not meet you people earlier. I myself have appeared before the Hema Committee, which had asked me for some details. What I feel is that all should sit together, discuss the findings of the Hema Committee and present our version of the story to the Chief Minister and the civil society," said Lal while answering queries by a hostile media.

# Brazil bans X after disinformation row

AP ■ SAO PAULO

Brazil started blocking Elon Musk's social media platform X early Saturday, making it largely inaccessible on both the web and through its mobile app after the company refused to comply with a judge's order.

X missed a deadline imposed by Supreme Court Justice Alexandre de Moraes to name a legal representative in Brazil, triggering the suspension. It marks an escalation in the monthlong feud between Musk and de Moraes over free speech, far-right accounts and misinformation.

To block X, Brazil's telecommunications regulator, Anatel, told internet service providers to suspend users' access to the social media platform. As of Saturday after midnight local time, major operators had begun doing so. De Moraes had warned Musk on Wednesday night that X could be blocked in Brazil if he failed to comply with his order to name a representative, and established a 24-hour deadline. The company hasn't had a representative in the country since earlier this month.

"Elon Musk showed his total disrespect for Brazilian sovereignty and, in particular, for the judiciary, setting himself up as a true supranational entity and immune to the laws of each

country," de Moraes wrote in his decision on Friday.

The justice said the platform will stay suspended until it complies with his orders, and also set a daily fine of 50,000 reais (\$8,900) for people or companies using VPNs to access it. In a later ruling, he backtracked on his initial decision to establish a 5-day deadline for internet service providers themselves — and not just the telecommunications regulator — to block access to X, as well as his directive for app stores to remove virtual private networks, or VPNs.

Brazil is one of the biggest markets for X, which has struggled with the loss of advertisers since Musk purchased the former Twitter in 2022. Market research group Emarketer says some 40 million Brazilians, roughly one-fifth of the population, access X at least once per month. "This is a sad day for X users around the world, especially those in Brazil, who are being denied access to our platform. I wish it did not have to come to this — it breaks my heart," X's CEO Linda Yaccarino said Friday night, adding that Brazil is failing to uphold its constitution's pledge to forbid censorship.

X had posted on its official Global Government Affairs page late Thursday that it expected X to be shut down by de Moraes, "simply because we would not comply with his illegal

## STANDOFF CONTINUES



orders to censor his political opponents."

"When we attempted to defend ourselves in court, Judge de Moraes threatened our Brazilian legal representative with imprisonment. Even after she resigned, he froze all of her bank accounts," the company wrote. X has clashed with de Moraes over its reluctance to comply with orders to block users.

Accounts that the platform previously has shut down on Brazilian orders include lawmakers affiliated with former President Jair Bolsonaro's right-wing party and activists accused of undermining Brazilian democracy. X's lawyers in April sent a document to the Supreme Court in April, saying that since 2019 it had suspended or blocked 226 users.

In his decision Friday, de Moraes cited Musk's statements as evidence that X's

conduct "clearly intends to continue to encourage posts with extremism, hate speech and anti-democratic discourse, and to try to withdraw them from jurisdictional control."

In April, de Moraes included Musk as a target in an ongoing investigation over the dissemination of fake news and opened a separate investigation into the executive for alleged obstruction. Musk, a self-proclaimed "free speech absolutist," has repeatedly claimed the justice's actions amount to censorship, and his argument has been echoed by Brazil's political right. He has often insulted de Moraes on his platform, characterizing him as a dictator and tyrant.

De Moraes' defenders have said his actions aimed at X have been lawful, supported by most of the court's full bench and have served to protect democracy at a time it is imperiled. He wrote Friday that his ruling is based on Brazilian law requiring internet services companies to have representation in the country so they can be notified when there are relevant court decisions and take requisite action — specifying the takedown of illicit content posted by users, and an anticipated churn of misinformation during October municipal elections.

The looming shutdown is not unprecedented in Brazil. Lone Brazilian judges shut down

Meta's WhatsApp, the nation's most widely used messaging app, several times in 2015 and 2016 due to the company's refusal to comply with police requests for user data. In 2022, de Moraes threatened the messaging app Telegram with a nationwide shutdown, arguing it had repeatedly ignored Brazilian authorities' requests to block profiles and provide information. He ordered Telegram to appoint a local representative; the company ultimately complied and stayed online. X and its former incarnation, Twitter, have been banned in several countries — mostly authoritarian regimes such as Russia, China, Iran, Myanmar, North Korea, Venezuela and Turkmenistan. Other countries, such as Pakistan, Turkey and Egypt, have also temporarily suspended X before, usually to quell dissent and unrest. Twitter was banned in Egypt after the Arab Spring uprisings, which some dubbed the "Twitter revolution," but it has since been restored.

A search Friday on X showed hundreds of Brazilian users inquiring about VPNs that could potentially enable them to continue using the platform by making it appear they were logging on from outside the country. It was not immediately clear how Brazilian authorities would police this practice and impose fines cited by de Moraes.

# Indian embassy in Laos rescues 47 Indians from cyberscam centres

PTI ■ VIENTIANE

At least 47 Indians trapped in cyber scam centres in Laos have been rescued from the Bokeo province of the country, the Indian embassy in the Southeast Asian country said on Saturday.

Indian authorities have been cautioning its nationals against fake job offers in Laos and urged them to conduct thorough due diligence to avoid being deceived. The Indian mission has so far rescued 635 Indians from the country and ensured their safe return to India. In the latest case, the embassy rescued 47 Indians trapped in cyber scam centres at the Golden Triangle Special Economic Zone (SEZ) in Bokeo province, a statement from the Indian Embassy in Laos said.

"Of these, 29 were handed over to the Embassy by Laos authorities after their crackdown on illegal activities in Golden Triangle SEZ, while other 18 had approached the Embassy in distress, seeking help," the statement, which was posted on X, said. It said the embassy officials travelled from the capital Vientiane to Bokeo to liaise with local authorities for their rescue.

The statement added that

Prashant Agrawal, the Ambassador of India to Laos, met the group upon their arrival to discuss the challenges they faced and to advise further course of action.

The embassy has undertaken and completed all procedural requirements of Laos authorities for their repatriation to India, the statement said, adding that 30 of those have already safely returned to India or are on their way, while the remaining 17 are only awaiting travel arrangements to be firmed up and would be leaving the country soon.

Agrawal emphasised that "ensuring safety and well-being" of Indians was a matter of top priority for the Embassy, the statement said.

External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar last month discussed the issue of trafficking of Indian nationals with Laos Prime Minister Sonexay Siphandone during his visit to the Southeast Asian nation. The Indian embassy in Laos last month rescued 13 Indians, who were lured into certain cyber-scaming centres in the country and sent them back home.

In Saturday's statement, the Indian Embassy urged the Laos government to take action at their end against unscrupulous elements.

# Trump continues personal attacks against Harris

PTI ■ WASHINGTON

Republican presidential nominee Donald Trump has launched a fresh personal attack on his Democratic rival Kamala Harris, calling her "defective".

His latest attacks come after Harris sat for her first major interview with CNN as her party's presidential nominee on Thursday.

Fifty-nine-year-old Harris, who is of Indian and African descent, is the Democratic Party candidate in the November 5 presidential election in which she will contest against Trump, 78.

"I think she would've been better off if she just did interviews, even if they weren't great it would have been better ... because now everyone's

watching and now we see, she's defective," Trump said on Friday at the annual gathering of Moms for Liberty, a conservative nonprofit.

"She's a defective person." "And we don't need another defective person as president of the United States," Trump said, likely referring to President Joe Biden who dropped out of the race last month and endorsed Harris. He also said Biden was "sharp as a tack" during the presidential debate in June and complained that it was "unfair" he had to spend millions going after the wrong person during the Republican National Convention in Milwaukee (RNC) last month. Trump has unleashed personal attacks on Vice President Harris as her political star has

risen since she rose to the top of the Democratic ticket in recent weeks.

Earlier, Trump disparaged Harris' physical appearance and insisted that he was "much better looking than her".

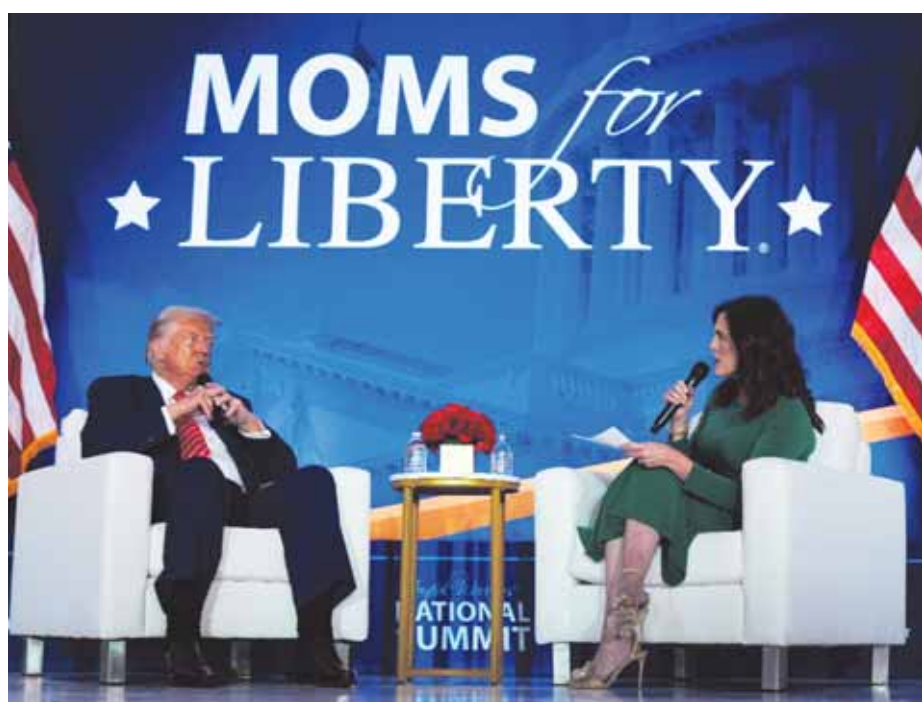
Trump earlier this month said he was "entitled" to personally attack Harris because he doesn't "have a lot of respect for her".

He has also questioned her racial identity.

Harris in the interview with CNN on Thursday brushed off Trump's remarks questioning her race.

"Same old, tired playbook. Next question, please," Harris responded.

During an election campaign in Pennsylvania earlier Friday, Trump briefly commented on



Republican presidential nominee former President Donald Trump speaks with Moms for Liberty co-founder Tiffany Justice during an event at the group's annual convention in Washington.

the interview. "Did you see her on television last night? This is gonna be the president of our country?"

I don't think so," he said. While the outlet aired the interview in its entirety, Trump and his allies criticised

CNN for pre-taping the interview instead of airing it live as a way to cover up potential Harris slipups.

# 5 killed by Russian strike in Donetsk region

AP ■ MOSCOW

Five people were killed by Russian shelling in the town of Chasiv Yar on Saturday as Moscow's troops continue their push on Ukraine's eastern Donetsk region.

The attack struck a high-rise building and a private home, said regional governor Vadym Filashkin, who said the victims were men aged between 24 and 38. He urged the last remaining residents to leave the frontline town, which had a pre-war population of 12,000.

"Normal life has been impossible in Chasiv Yar for more than two years," Filashkin wrote on social media. "Do not become a Russian target — evacuate."

Meanwhile, Russia's Ministry of Defence said that it had captured the town of Pivnichne, also in Ukraine's Donetsk region. The Associated Press could not independently verify the claim.

Russian forces have been driving deeper into the partly occupied eastern region, the total capture of which is one of the Kremlin's primary ambitions. Russia's army is closing in on Pokrovsk, a critical logistics hub for the Ukrainian defence in the area.

At the same time, Ukraine has sent its forces into Russia's Kursk region in recent weeks in the largest incursion into Russian soil since World War II. The move is partly an effort to force Russia to draw troops away from the Donetsk front.

Elsewhere, the number of injured following a Russian attack on the Ukrainian city of Kharkiv on Friday continued to rise.

Six people were killed, including a 14-year-old girl, when glide bombs struck five locations across the city, said regional Gov. Oleh Syniehubov. Writing on social media Saturday, he said that the number of injured had risen from 47 to 96.

Syniehubov also confirmed that the 12-story apartment block that was hit by one bomb strike, setting the building ablaze and trapping at least one person on an upper floor, would be partly demolished.

The number of injured also continued to rise in the Russian border region of Belgorod, where five people were killed Friday by Ukrainian shelling, said Gov. Vyacheslav Gladkov. He said Sunday that 46 people had been injured, of whom 37 were in the hospital, including seven children.

# Polio vaccine campaign begins in Gaza

AP ■ JERUSALEM

A campaign to inoculate children in Gaza against polio and prevent the spread of the virus began on Saturday as Palestinians in both the Hamas-governed coastal enclave and in the occupied West Bank reeled from Israel's ongoing campaigns in both regions.

Children in Gaza began receiving vaccines on Saturday, the Strip's health ministry announced in a news conference, a day before the large-scale rollout and planned pause in fighting agreed to by Israel and the United Nations World Health Organisation.

Associated Press reporters saw roughly ten infants receiving doses of vaccine in the Nasser hospital in Khan Younis on Saturday afternoon.

Hours earlier, Gaza's Health Ministry said hospitals received 89 dead on Saturday, including 26 who died in an overnight Israeli bombardment, and 205 wounded — one of the highest daily tolls in months.

Meanwhile, parts of the West Bank remained on edge Saturday as Israel's military continued its largescale military campaign, the deadliest since the Israel-Hamas war began, and two car bombings by Palestinian militants near Israeli settlements left three soldiers injured.

Two car bombs exploded early Saturday in Gush Etzion, a bloc of Israeli settlements in the West Bank. Israel's military killed both Palestinian attackers after the bombs exploded in a compound in Karnei Zur and at a gas station, Israel's military said. Three Israeli soldiers sustained minor injuries.

Palestinian health officials said Israel was holding the bodies of the attackers, naming the men as Muhammad Marqa and Zoodhi Afifeh.

Hamas did not claim the men as its fighters but called the attack a "heroic operation" and a "new slap to the occupation's security system" in a statement early Saturday. The Palestinian militant group said earlier this month after a bombing attack in Tel Aviv that it would continue such attacks. The bombings took place as Israel continued its largescale raid — which includes destruction of infrastructure, airstrikes and gunbattles — into urban refugee camps in the cities of Jenin and Tulkarem, in the north of the volatile West Bank. About 20 Palestinians have been killed since Israel's incursion started Tuesday, causing alarm among the international community that the war might widen beyond the Gaza Strip. Israel has described the operation as a strategy to prevent attacks on Israeli civilians, which since the start of the war have increased in the West Bank, including near settlements that the international community largely considers illegal. In return, the Palestinian Health Ministry noted a surge in Palestinian deaths by Israeli forces, with 663 killed in the West Bank in the nearly 11 months since the war began.

In central Gaza, Israeli airstrikes hit a multi-story building housing displaced people in and around Nuseirat, a built-up refugee camp in central Gaza, further south in Khan Younis and northward in Gaza City, officials at hospitals in the three areas said on Saturday morning.

Among the dead were a physician and his family and a child whose right leg had been previously amputated, according to an initial list of casualties from the hospital and footage released on Saturday by civil defense officials who operated under Gaza's Hamas-run government.

# 7 US troops hurt in raid with Iraqi forces targeting Islamic State group militants

AP ■ DUBAI

The United States military and Iraq launched a joint raid targeting suspected Islamic State group militants in the country's western desert that killed at least 15 people and saw seven American troops hurt, officials said Saturday.

For years after dislodging the militants from their self-declared caliphate across Iraq and Syria, US forces have fought the Islamic State group, though the casualties from this raid were higher than in previous ones.

The US military's Central Command allowed the militants were armed with "numerous weapons, grenades, and explosive suicide belts" during the attack Thursday, which Iraqi forces said happened in the country's Anbar Desert.

"This operation targeted ISIS leaders to disrupt and degrade ISIS' ability to plan, organise, and conduct attacks against

Iraqi civilians, as well as US citizens, allies, and partners throughout the region and beyond," Central Command said, using an acronym for the militant group. "Iraqi Security Forces continue to further exploit the locations raided."

It added: "There is no indication of civilian casualties."

An Iraqi military statement said "airstrikes targeted the hideouts, followed by an airborne operation."

"Among the dead were key ISIS leaders," Iraq's military said, without identifying them. "All hideouts, weapons and logistical support were destroyed, explosive belts were safely detonated and important documents, identification papers and communication devices were seized."

A US defence official, speaking on condition of anonymity to discuss details of the operation yet to be made public, told The Associated Press that five American troops were found

in the raid, while two others suffered injuries from falls during the operation. One who suffered a fall was transported out of the region, while one of the wounded was evacuated for further treatment, the official said.

"All personnel are in stable condition," the official said. It wasn't immediately clear why it took two days for the US to acknowledge it took part in the raid. Iraq did not say the US took part in the operation when initially announcing it, as politicians debate the future of having American troops in the country. There are approximately 2,500 US troops in Iraq. Since the US toppled dictator Saddam Hussein with its 2003 invasion of Iraq, the country has struggled to balance relations between America and neighbouring Iran. Since the Israel-Hamas war broke out, Iraqi militias allied to Iran have targeted US forces there, leading to American airstrikes

targeting them.

At its peak, the Islamic State group ruled an area half the size of the UK. It attempted to enforce its extreme interpretation of Islam, which included attacks on religious minority groups and harsh punishment of Muslims deemed to be apostates.

A coalition of more than 80 countries led by the United States was formed to fight the group, which lost its hold on the territory it controlled in Iraq in 2017 and in Syria in 2019.

However, the militants have continued to operate in the Anbar Desert in Iraq and Syria, while claiming attacks carried out by others elsewhere in the world inspired by the group. That includes the two suspects in a foiled plot to attack Taylor Swift shows in Vienna. Meanwhile, the IS branch in Afghanistan is known to carry out intensely bloody assaults.

# Helicopter with 22 onboard missing

Moscow (AP): Rescuers are searching for a helicopter that went missing in Russia's far east on Saturday with 22 people on board. The Mi-8 helicopter took off close to the Vachkazhets volcano in the Kamchatka region, but did not arrive at its destination as scheduled, Russia's Federal Air Transport Agency said in a statement. It said it believed that 19 passengers and three crew members were on board.

The Mi-8 is a two-engine helicopter designed in the 1960s. It is widely used in Russia, where crashes have been frequent, as well as in neighbouring countries and many other nations.

# British Sikh MP defends record as landlord amid tenant complaints

PTI ■ LONDON

A newly elected British Sikh Labour Member of Parliament has defended his record as a landlord after UK media reports highlighted anonymous complaints from his tenants of being subjected to poor living conditions in properties owned by him.

Jas Athwal, elected to Parliament in last month's general election from Ilford South constituency in east London, said he was "shocked" and "profoundly sorry" to hear of residents' issues after the BBC reported on mould and ant infestations on Friday.

Athwal, 60, is said to own 15 rental flats and says he had not been aware of the issues due to the properties being managed by an agency. He has now promised that repairs and maintenance will

be completed through immediate action. "I am a renters champion. I'm proud to rent out homes with secure tenancies at below-market rents," Athwal said in a detailed statement.

"I want every one of my tenants to have excellent accommodation; I'm shocked at the reported condition of a number of the seven properties and have asked the managing agent for an explanation and immediate action to rectify any issues. I know it's my responsibility to have issues addressed as soon as they arise and have met with the property management company to understand failures in communication," he said. "I'm profoundly sorry that tenants have been let down and will be reviewing the property management and how matters are escalated going forward," he added.

Athwal, previously a local politician as leader of Redbridge Council, is also required to have a selective property licence in order to rent out a block of seven flats — a system he introduced in 2017 when he was in charge of the council. However, the BBC found the council's public licence register indicated that none of the seven properties had a licence. Athwal admitted that he had "recently seen an email" which said the licences were due to expire. He added: "I am in the process of renewing all licences. As council leader I implemented the most rigorous landlord licencing scheme in London in 2017, and expanded the scheme in 2023 and 2024 — the scheme would've been even stronger if Conservative housing secretaries had not repeatedly watered it down. "In 2019, I led a campaign

calling on the government to abolish Section 21 evictions, further protecting tenants' rights, which was again blocked by the Conservatives."

According to the BBC investigation, in one block of seven flats owned by Athwal nearly half the tenants said they had to regularly clean their bathroom ceilings to remove mould.

The news corporation said it also saw evidence of ant infestations in a number of the seven properties. Andrew Boff, a Conservative member of the London Assembly who also visited the flats, is calling on the governing Labour Party and local Redbridge Council to investigate as the party's 2024 general election manifesto included a commitment to "prevent private renters being exploited and discriminated against".

# Houthi rebels fire missiles at container ship

AP ■ DUBAI

Two missiles suspected to have been fired by Yemen's Houthi rebels targeted a Liberian-flagged container ship in the Gulf of Aden late Friday, splashing down nearby without causing any damage, authorities said.

The attack comes after the Houthis repeatedly assaulted and then boarded a Greek-flagged oil tanker in the nearby Red Sea, planting explosives on it they later detonated. That attack, the worst in weeks, risked a major oil spill as the rebels' campaign disrupts the USD 1 trillion in goods that pass through the Red Sea each year over the Israel-Hamas war in the Gaza Strip, as well as halting some aid shipments to conflict-ravaged Sudan and

Yemen.

The attack Friday saw two missiles "exploding in close proximity to the vessel" some 240 kilometres east of Aden, the British military's United Kingdom Maritime Trade Operations centre said.

The ship "reports all crew are safe and proceeding to next port of call," the UKMTO said. "Investigations are ongoing."

The Joint Maritime Information Centre, a multinational body overseen by the US Navy, on Saturday identified the vessel targeted as the Liberian-flagged container ship Groton. The Groton came under attack August 3 as well in a similar Houthi assault off Aden that included two missiles fired at the vessel, with one causing minor damage.

# PM Modi flags off three new Vande Bharat trains, says nation advancing

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

The railways have made big strides in addressing long-standing issues and will not stop till it becomes a guarantee of comfortable travel for all sections of society, Prime Minister Narendra Modi said on Saturday. Flagging off three new Vande Bharat Express trains via video-conferencing, the Prime Minister said the nation was inching towards the goal of Viksit Bharat with modernisation and expansion of Vande Bharat trains. The three trains flagged off by the Prime Minister connect Meerut with Lucknow, Madurai with

Bengaluru, and Chennai with Nagercoil. "Through its hard work over the years, the railways have made big strides in addressing long-standing issues and offered new hopes and solutions. We will not stop until the Indian Railways becomes a guarantee of comfortable travel for everyone," Modi said. The Prime Minister said modern rail infrastructure was a strong pillar of the vision of Viksit Bharat. He said more than Rs 2.5 lakh crore was allocated to the railways in this year's Budget and the Government was connecting Indian Railways with high-tech services to transform its old image.

He underlined that the rapid development of southern States was imperative to accomplish the goal of Viksit Bharat. "Southern India is the land of immense talent, resources and opportunities," the Prime Minister said adding that the development of Tamil Nadu, along with the entire southern India, was the Government's priority. He said the development journey of the railways was an example of the Government's commitment. Modi said more than Rs 6,000 crore was allocated for Tamil Nadu's rail Budget this year, seven times more than in 2014. Similarly, a Budget of more than Rs 7,000 crore was allocated for



Karnataka in this year's Budget, which was nine times higher than in 2014. Eight Vande

Bharat trains are connecting different parts of Karnataka, he added.

The Prime Minister drew parallels from Budgets of the past and said the multiple-fold

increase in allocations further strengthened rail traffic in southern States, including Tamil Nadu and Karnataka. He said railway tracks were being improved, electrification of tracks taking place, and stations modernised. The Meerut City-Lucknow Vande Bharat Express will help passengers save around an hour compared to the current fastest train between the two cities. The Chennai Egmore-Nagercoil Vande Bharat Express and the Madurai-Bengaluru Vande Bharat Express will cut down travel time by more than two hours and around one-and-a-half hours, respectively. The Prime Minister said while the Regional Rapid Transit

System (RRTS) has helped connect Meerut with New Delhi, the distance to Lucknow has also been reduced with the introduction of the Vande Bharat Express. "The National Capital Region (NCR) is becoming an example of how PM Gatsihakti's vision will change the country's infrastructure with modern trains, network of expressways, and expansion of air services," Modi said. Railways Minister Ashwini Vaishnaw, Uttar Pradesh Governor Anandiben Patel, her Tamil Nadu counterpart RN Ravi and Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath, among others, were virtually present on the occasion.

## District judiciary crucial component of rule of law: CJ

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

Chief Justice of India (CJI) D Y Chandrachud on Saturday said district judiciary is the "backbone of the judiciary" and thus a crucial component of the rule of law and calling it subordinate must be stopped. Referring to the increasing number of women joining the district judiciary in the past few years, he highlighted that judges, despite being professionals, are affected by their own "brush with reality" and their mental health may suffer as a consequence. Speaking at the National Conference of the District Judiciary, which was inaugurated by Prime Minister Narendra Modi here, Justice Chandrachud said district judiciary is the first point of contact for a citizen in search of justice. "The district judiciary is a crucial component of the rule of law," he said, adding, "Data on the NJDG (National Judicial Data Grid) reveals a basic truth - the district judiciary is not just the first but is also the final point of contact for citizens." The CJI said the reasons may be numerous - many citizens are unable to afford legal representation, they have a lack of awareness about statutory rights, and there are geographical difficulties in physically accessing Courts. "The quality of our work and the conditions in which we provide justice to citizens determine whether they have confidence in us and is a test of our own accountability to society," he said. "The district judiciary is therefore called upon to shoulder tremendous responsibility and is aptly described as the 'backbone of the judiciary'," Justice Chandrachud said, adding, "The spine is the core of the nervous system. To sustain the spine of the legal system, we



must stop calling the district judiciary the 'subordinate judiciary'. He said 75 years after independence, the time has come to bury one more relic of the British era - the colonial mindset of subordination. Referring to the "multifarious responsibilities" of judges, the CJI said it was difficult for a judge not to be affected by the actual face of suffering that each of us encounters every day - a family which has faced a gruesome crime, an undertrial who is languishing for years or the children in a parental matrimonial dispute. "Judges, despite being professionals, are affected by their own brush with reality. Their mental health may suffer as a consequence. This aspect is of great consequence but it unfortunately does not receive the attention that it merits," he said. Justice Chandrachud said as a step towards a more open discussion on the topic, the third session of the conference on Saturday was on judicial wellness, with a focus on holistic wellness, stress management, mental health, and quality of life. Referring to the aspect of adoption of technology in the legal system, he said in 2023-24, 46.48 crore pages of court records have been scanned or digitised and 714 district court websites have been hosted on the SaaS of the Government of India. He said the NJDG is a mine of

data not only for lawyers but also for citizens and it reflects real time data of over four crore cases across the district Courts and the High Courts. The CJI said 970 e-sewa kendras were fully functional in district Court complexes, besides 27 in the High Court premises. He said e-sewa kendras assist lawyers and litigants with e-processes by providing assistance for e-filing, providing information regarding the case status and so on. He said e-Courts project has been responsible for computerisation of over 3,500 court complexes and more than 22,000 court rooms. The CJI also spoke about data on the changing demography of judiciary. "An increasing number of women have been joining the district judiciary in the past few years. Women consisted of 58 per cent of the total recruitment for civil judges in Rajasthan in 2023," he said. He said 66 per cent of judicial officers appointed in Delhi in 2023 were women while in Uttar Pradesh, 54 per cent of appointments for civil judge (junior division) in the batch of 2022 were women. "In Kerala, 72 per cent of the total number of judicial officers are women in the latest recruitment. These are a few examples which paint the picture of a promising judiciary of the future," Justice Chandrachud said.

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

In what remains a key factor in growth of the economy, India received around 16 per cent more rainfall than normal in August, with above normal rains forecast for September as well. The India Meteorological Department (IMD) said on Saturday that in addition to 16 per cent surplus rainfall in August, the Monsoon precipitation over Northwest India was recorded at 253.9 mm, the second highest in August since 2001. Addressing a virtual Press conference, IMD Director-General Mrutyunjay Mohapatra said the country recorded 287.1 mm of rainfall in August, compared to the normal 248.1 mm. Overall, India has received 749 mm of precipitation against the normal 701 mm since the start of the monsoon season on June 1. The lifeblood of a nearly \$3.5-trillion economy, the annual monsoon brings almost 70 per cent of the rain India needs to water farms and replenish reservoirs and recharge aquifers. Without adequate irrigation facility, nearly half the farmland in the country depends on the rain that is usu-



ally received from June to September. Several districts in the foothills of the Himalayas and the Northeast experienced below-normal rainfall as most of the low-pressure systems moved south of their usual position, and the monsoon trough also remained south of its typical position, the IMD chief said. Many States in the Northeast along with Kerala and the Vidarbha region of Maharashtra, experienced deficient rainfall, he added. The IMD chief said that six low-pressure systems formed in August, two of which intensified into monsoon depression or deep depression. There were 17 low-pressure system days this August, compared with the normal 16.3 days. From August 10 to August 22, the monsoon trough remained along its nor-

mal position, resulting in good rainfall over northern and adjacent central India, parts of eastern India, and the extreme southern peninsula, especially Tamil Nadu. From August 23 to August 31, the trough shifted south of its normal position, causing very heavy rainfall over central and western parts of India. No-break monsoon conditions were observed in August this year despite an increasing trend of break days during the month, Mohapatra said. He said the Madden-Julian Oscillation (MJO) was very active during the second half of the month, leading to good rainfall across the country. MJO is a large-scale atmospheric disturbance originating in tropical Africa and travelling eastward, typically lasting 30 to 60 days. Monsoon rainfall in September and October could be influenced by La Nina weather conditions, which are likely to develop from the next month, said another IMD official. In the past, when La Nina develops during the second half of the monsoon season, it has led to a delayed monsoon withdrawal, said the official, adding that "this year, we could see a similar pattern".

## Expect more rainy September this year

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

After a wetter than normal August, India is likely to experience above normal rainfall in September too, with heavy to very heavy precipitation expected in Northwest India and the surrounding areas. Addressing a virtual Press conference, IMD Director-General Mrutyunjay Mohapatra said that the country was expected to receive above normal rainfall in September, at 109 per cent of the long-period average of 167.9 mm. Heavy to very heavy rainfall is anticipated in the Northwest region, including Uttarakhand, parts of Himachal Pradesh, Jammu and Kashmir, Rajasthan, and the adjoining areas of Madhya Pradesh. "Above normal rainfall is likely over most parts of India, barring some areas in the extreme Northwest, many parts of the southern



peninsula, northern Bihar, and northeastern Uttar Pradesh, as well as most of the Northeast India, where below normal rainfall is expected," the IMD Chief said. The monsoon trough is expected to remain in its normal position, with the possibility of several low-pressure systems developing in the Bay of Bengal, which may travel towards west-northwest up to Rajasthan. The trough could also shift towards the foothills of the Himalayas, and there is a potential for a western disturbance to affect the region in September, Mohapatra said.

## A wetter than usual August gets 16 per cent more rain :IMD

## Government to set up 10 new AYUSH institutes in 5 years

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

The Government on Saturday said 10 new AYUSH institutes will be set up over the next five years to expand traditional medical systems with an aim to improve healthcare access in underserved areas, enhance the doctor-patient ratio, and ensure that more citizens benefit from it in the country. Announcing the Government's plan, Union Minister of Ayush Prataprao Jadhav, noted that "Ayurveda and our traditional medical system suffered significant damage during the colonial period and foreign



invasions but today, there has been a global shift in perception towards Yoga and Ayurveda, and their acceptance is rapidly increasing. He was at the All-India Institute of Ayurveda (AIIA),

at Sarita Vihar here where he reviewed the facilities and the treatments being provided to the patients. Professor Tanuja Nesari, AIIA Director, said Minister Jadhav has played a significant role in

promoting Ayurveda, and "his guidance and support will continue to help in taking Ayurveda to the masses and establishing it on the global stage." According to AIIA officials, President Droupadi Murmu is expected to visit the institute, highlighting the sector's rising prominence and the Prime Minister's ambitious initiative to make Ayurveda accessible to every household. Minister Jadhav also announced an international conference, titled 'AAROHA-2024', scheduled to be held from October 17-19. According to a report by Ayurveda tech startup

NirogStreet, India's Ayurveda product market is expected to grow to USD 16.27 billion by fiscal 2028, up from the current USD 7 billion. This substantial growth is driven by increasing demand for natural and herbal remedies, a rise in Ayurvedic practitioners, supportive Government initiatives, and the emergence of new entrepreneurs in the sector. As per the Government data, about 12,121 Ayush Health and Wellness Centres (AHCs), renamed as Ayushman Arogya Mandirs (AYUSH), under Ayushman Bharat are functional in the country.

## IMA urges NTF for Central law to protect doctors

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

The Indian Medical Association (IMA) has once again written to the Supreme Court-appointed National Task Force (NTF), for a central law, seeking protection of healthcare professionals and declaring hospitals as 'Safe Zones' across the States. The NTF is tasked with creating protocols to ensure the safety and security of medical personnel. The IMA's request comes in response to the suggestions sought by the NTF, which is tasked with creating protocols to ensure the safety and security of medical personnel. The NTF has been set up following a series of protests by doctors, triggered by the tragic rape and murder of a female trainee doctor at RG Kar Medical College and Hospital in Kolkata. In their letter to the NTF, the IMA called for a uniform central law arguing that it acts as a deterrent and ensures consistent handling of violence across all states. They provided several documents to support their case, including a survey of 3,885 doctors, a draft legislation - "The Healthcare Service Personnel and Clinical Establishments (Prohibition of violence and damage to property) Bill, 2019", the Epidemic

Diseases (Amendment) Act September 2020 among others as annexures, and related legislative amendments. "The only preventive strategy that could be applied across the board and across all the States is deterrent central law in statute. Absence of such law has resulted in half-hearted actions by the police and less than optimum investigations and prosecution of the incident," it said. The IMA which is the largest body of the medical professionals from across the country contended that the lack of a national law leads to inconsistent enforcement and inadequate protection. The IMA has proposed that hospitals be designated as safe zones, with enhanced security measures. This designation, they argue, should be incorporated into the proposed central law, ensuring hospitals receive necessary security while maintaining a patient-friendly and culturally sensitive approach. "Declaration as safe zone entitles the hospitals with security entitlements. These security entitlements however should be tempered with patient friendly nature and cultural sensitivity," said the Association having presence in almost all the districts of the country with 1,800 local branches, 28 State branches and 3,85,000 members."

## UNICEF issues urgent alert on Mpox risk for children



ARCHANA JYOTI ■ NEW DELHI

As the World Health Organization (WHO) has called for increased vigilance against Monkeypox (Mpox), United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund (UNICEF) has issued an urgent alert regarding the heightened risk for children, especially those who are malnourished or suffering from other illnesses. The new variant of Mpox (clade Ib) is particularly concerning due to its potential for broader transmission, including among young children, especially in Africa. The Unicef said that in the fight against the outbreak, prioritising the needs of children is not only necessary but urgent. The children's body warned

that children can be exposed to Mpox through close contact with symptomatic individuals, including parents or caregivers. The virus spreads via contact with skin lesions, infectious bodily fluids, contaminated materials, respiratory droplets, and infected animals. Pregnant women can also pass the virus to their unborn babies. Mpox symptoms are similar to but less severe than smallpox and include skin rash, fever, sore throat, headache, body aches, back pain, low energy, and swollen lymph nodes. The virus poses a significant threat in areas with widespread malnutrition, crowded living conditions, other infectious diseases, and limited healthcare access. In India, while there have been no reported cases of Mpox so

far this year, authorities are taking precautionary measures with the AIIMS, RML and LNJP already allocating designated sites for the treatment of the patients in case if any. A 2022 study by Sir Ganga Ram Hospital, Delhi, noted the potential for Mpox resurgence in India due to the discontinuation of the smallpox vaccine, which had historically provided 85% protection. The study was published in the Indian Journal of Medical Microbiology. In 2022, at least 14 people with the disease were reported in the country out of which 9 were reported in the National Capital. Dr Chand Wattal, corresponding author and chairperson, ICMI, had said that waning immunity in humans due to the discontinuation of the smallpox vaccine established the scope for the resurgence of Monkeypox, demonstrated by the re-emergence of the outbreak after a break of 30-40 years. India declared itself smallpox-free in 1979 while it was officially eradicated all over the world around 1979-80. The study highlighted concerns about waning immunity and the potential for Mpox to re-emerge after a long absence.



## IAF jettisons helicopter in Uttarakhand, no casualties

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

An Indian Air Force helicopter airlifting a damaged Kestrel civil helicopter in Uttarakhand on Saturday had to "jettison the load" due to flight safety reasons, the IAF said. It said an inquiry has been ordered into the matter. "An #IAF Mi-17 V5, while airlifting damaged Kestrel civil helicopter in Uttarakhand today, had to jettison the load due to flight safety reasons. The crew safely released the load over an unpopulated area, ensuring no damage to life or property. An enquiry has been ordered, #AviationSafety," the IAF said in a social media post. The defective helicopter was being airlifted from Kedarnath to Gauchar airstrip, it was learnt.

## Rahul Gandhi to visit US for first time as LoP, to interact with diaspora

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

Leader of Opposition in the Lok Sabha Rahul Gandhi will visit the US from September 8-10 during which he will hold numerous interactions in Washington DC and Dallas, including at the University of Texas. Indian Overseas Congress Chief Sam Pitroda shared details of Rahul Gandhi's first visit to the US after becoming the leader of Opposition in the Lok Sabha in June. "Since Rahul Gandhi has become the Leader of Opposition, I, as chairman of the Indian Overseas Congress, which has a presence in 32 countries, (have) been bombarded with requests from the Indian diaspora, diplomats, academicians, businesspersons, leaders, international media and many others, for interactions with him," Pitroda said in a video statement. "Now, he (Gandhi) is coming to the US for a very brief visit. He will be in Dallas on September 8th and Washington DC on September 9th and 10th. In Dallas, we will have interactions with the University of Texas, (with) students, academic institutions and com-

munity people. We will have a very large community gathering. We will meet some technocrats and then we will have dinner with Leaders from the Dallas area," he added. The following day, Gandhi will travel to Washington DC where there is a plan to have similar interactions with a variety of people, including think-tanks, national press club and others, the Indian Overseas Congress chief said. "There are a lot of events planned with a variety of people because we find that people also have a lot of interest in the States we run with a Congress Government," he said. "We look forward to a very successful visit," Pitroda added. Rahul Gandhi, who turned 54 in June, has been an MP for five terms and currently represents the Rae Bareilly constituency previously held by his mother Sonia Gandhi. He won from two constituencies in the Lok Sabha polls but resigned from the Wayanad seat in Kerala, from where his sister Priyanka Gandhi Vadra will contest a bypoll. Rahul Gandhi entered the Lok Sabha for the first time in 2004 following his victory from Amethi in Uttar Pradesh.

# Defending champion Novak Djokovic is shocked at the US Open one night after Carlos Alcaraz's loss

AP ■ NEW YORK



Novak Djokovic did not go easy on himself when assessing the listless way he performed from the start of the U.S. Open, pointing to his sloppy serving as the main reason the defense of his 2023 title surprisingly ended in the third round.

With 14 double-faults, raising his tournament total to 32, Djokovic bowed out with a 6-4, 6-4, 2-6, 6-4 loss to 28th-seeded Alexei Popyrin of Australia, another shocking result at Flushing Meadows one night after Carlos Alcaraz exited.

that early at the U.S. Open came in 2005 and 2006. The man who defeated Djokovic 18 years ago, International Tennis Hall of Fame member Lleyton Hewitt, is now Australia's Davis Cup captain and was sitting in Popyrin's guest box in Arthur Ashe Stadium. Djokovic, who is 37, has reached the final in Ashe 10 times, leaving with the title in 2011, 2015, 2018 and 2023. On Friday, though, he was sluggish and emotionally flat, perhaps residual fatigue after collecting his first Olympic gold medal for Serbia by beating Alcaraz in the final at the Paris Games earlier in August.

that status didn't last long at all. For the 25-year-old Popyrin, this represents a real breakthrough: He had been 0-3 against Djokovic and 0-6 in third-round matches at majors. But the strong-serving Popyrin is playing as well as ever, coming off the biggest title of his career less than three weeks ago at a hard-court tournament in Montreal, where he picked up five wins against opponents ranked in the top 20. Everything was working against Djokovic. Popyrin was terrific at the net, going 10 for 10 on serve-and-volley approaches and 25 for 36 overall on points when he pushed forward. Djokovic, in contrast, only won the point on 19 of his 40 trips to the net, in part because Popyrin kept flipping passing shots by him. Popyrin took big cuts with his powerful forehand, accumulating 22 of his 50 total winners with that shot. And he broke Djokovic five times, including for a lead of 3-2 in the fourth. That game felt titanic, lasting more than 10 minutes and including four break chances for Popyrin, who converted the last with an inside-out forehand to close a 22-stroke exchange, then rocked back on his heels, clenched both fists and let out a roar. He took Djokovic's next service game, too, to make it 5-2. The first time Popyrin served for the match, he faltered, allowing Djokovic to break. The second time, Popyrin finished the deal, holding at love when Djokovic sent a forehand long. Now Popyrin will try to reach his first Grand Slam quarterfinal by getting past No. 20 Frances Tiafoe, who advanced Friday with a 4-6, 7-5, 6-7 (5), 6-4, 6-3 win over No. 13 Ben Shelton in a matchup between two Americans. "If he serves well, plays well, he can beat anybody," Djokovic said about Popyrin. "Look, Alcaraz is out."

# Bhambri and Bopanna win with respective partners, Balaji exits

PTI ■ NEW YORK

India's Yuki Bhambri and Albano Olivetti advanced to the men's doubles third round of the US Open with a hard-fought win over 15th seeds Austin Krajicek and Jean-Julien Roger here. The Indo-French pair defeated the USA-Dutch team 4-6 6-3 7-5 in the second round that lasted two hours and five minutes on Friday. This is only the second time that Bhambri has reached the third round at a Grand Slam, having reached the same stage at the Australian Open back in 2014. Second seeds Rohan Bopanna and Matthew Ebden also moved to third round with a 6-2 6-4 win over Spain's

Roberto Carballes Baena and Federico Coria from Argentina. Bopanna also won in the mixed doubles with Indonesian partner Aldila Sutjiadi. Seeded eighth, they won 7-6 (7) 7-6 (5) against Germany's Tim Puetz and Dutch player Demi Schuurs in the opening round. However, another Indian in the fray, N Sriram Balaji and his Argentine partner Guido Andreozzi exited the US Open after losing to Michael Venus of New Zealand and Neal Skupski of Great Britain. The Indo-Argentine pair lost 6-7 (4), 4-6 in the second-round match that featured just one break of serve in the second set. In total, Venus and Skupski received seven break points, and converted one, while Balaji and Andreozzi failed to capitalise on their lone opportunity for a service break. "The first step is to consistently play at this level. It's starting from here. Now the next step is to get my ranking higher slowly," Balaji told PTI, reflecting upon his campaign. "Game wise I'm feeling confident and moving in the right direction. I also have to keep working on certain aspects of my game and keep getting better. This year the main difference was a coach/trainer travelling with me almost every other week, thanks to the doubles program," he said.

# Pistol shooter Swaroop finishes 14th, fails to qualify for final at Paralympics

PTI ■ CHATEAURoux

Indian shooter Swaroop Unhalkar finished a dismal 14th in the men's 10m air rifle standing (SH1) qualification round to miss the eight-player final by quite a distance at the Paralympic Games here on Saturday.



# Samit Dravid in India U19 squad to face Australia in multi format series

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Samit Dravid, son of former India captain and head coach Rahul Dravid, was on Saturday drafted into the India under-19 squad for the upcoming multi-format series against Australia. The three-match one-day series will be held in Puducherry on September 21, 23 and 26, and India will be led by Uttar Pradesh's Mohammad Amaan. The series will then roll to Chennai for two four-day matches beginning on September 30 and October 7. The India squad for this leg of the tour will be captained by Soham Patwardhan of Madhya Pradesh. Samit, a pace-bowling all-rounder, is currently playing for Mysore Warriors in the ongoing KSCA Maharaja T20 trophy in Bengaluru. However, his outings so far have been underwhelming with the bat - 82 runs from seven innings with a highest of 33, and he is yet to bowl in the tournament. But earlier this year, Samit had a productive time in the Cooch Behar Trophy, playing an

important role in Karnataka's maiden title triumph in the event. The 18-year-old made 362 runs from eight matches and his 98 against Jammu and Kashmir stood out for its quality and fluency. Samit also had a memorable tournament with the ball, where he claimed 16 scalps in eight matches, including two in the final against Mumbai. **INDIA U19 SQUAD FOR ONE-DAY SERIES:** Rudra Patel, Sahil Parakh, Kartikeya KP, Mohd Amaan (Captain), Kiran Chormale, Abhigyan Kundu (wk), Harvansh Singh Pangalia (WK), Samit Dravid, Yudhajit Guha, Samarth N, Nikhil Kumar, Chetan Sharma, Hardik Raj, Rohit Rajawat, Mohd Enaan. **INDIA U19 SQUAD FOR FOUR-DAY SERIES:** Vaibhav Suryavanshi, Nitya Pandya, Vihan Malhotra, Soham Patwardhan (Captain), Kartikeya KP, Samit Dravid, Abhigyan Kundu (WK), Harvansh Singh Pangalia (WK), Chetan Sharma, Samarth N, Aditya Rawat, Nikhil Kumar, Anmoljeet Singh, Aditya Singh, Mohd Enaan.

# Jadeja is a complete all-round fielder, Raina too was brilliant: Rhodes

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

South African cricket legend Jonty Rhodes on Saturday called Ravindra Jadeja a "complete all-round" fielder in the world right now, and also spoke highly about former India player Suresh Raina's abilities on the ground. The 55-year-old Rhodes, regarded as one of the greatest fielders of all time who became the first South African cricketer to take 100 ODI catches, played for the national team from 1992 till 2003. Post retirement, Rhodes became associated with several IPL teams, including Mumbai Indians, Punjab Kings and most recently Lucknow Super Giants, as fielding coach. "I am a big fan of Suresh Raina. I enjoyed his playing days but now he has retired. In the past in India, the cricketing infrastructure wasn't there to support the passion and love for crick-



et. Suresh Raina was someone who used to throw himself around the field," said Rhodes, who was roped in as the brand ambassador of Hero Pro Corporate League cricket tournament on Saturday. "Unlike Raina, I had a very fortunate upbringing. I played football, hockey and cricket on

good grounds. So I was very fortunate. "I think Jadeja is at the next level, he doesn't dive as much but he is so fast to the ball. And his accuracy at throwing down the stumps is somewhat like Ricky Ponting. He fields on the boundary, he fields on the circle. He is a complete all-round fielder,"

hands in the world and the most magnetic hands but if you don't have the legs you cannot get there. "It's more about quick body positions. It's all about technique," he added. Rhodes said that at 55 he still doesn't think twice about diving on the field. "Flying is not the problem for me right now, the landing is the problem. When I am on the field I am not thinking about 'should I dive or should I not. I think that's what made me successful on the field," he said. "So, if you are thinking about (not) diving you can never stop the ball. My father, who was my coach, and a school principal used to tell me that the saying 'practice makes perfect' is not correct but what matters is perfect practice. Practice like you play in the match." he added. Former India pacer Chetan Sharma is the commissioner of the league.

# Shuttler Mandeep wins first match in Group B, enters SL3 singles quarterfinals

PTI ■ PARIS

Indian shuttler Mandeep Kaur entered the quarterfinals of the women's singles SL 3 category in the Paris Paralympics after defeating Australia's Vinot Aurelie in the women's singles SL 3 event on Saturday. Mandeep regrouped to win her last group B match 21-23 21-10 21-17 against her Australian rival. She had lost her opening match to Nigeria's Bolaji Mariam. The Indian finished second in the three-player group B to book a quarterfinal spot. Mariam topped the group to enter the semifinals. The toppers of group A and C directly advanced to the semifinals. The top two teams in group B as well as second-place finishers in group A and C compete in the quarterfinal for the two remaining semifinal spots. SL3 class is for players with severe lower limb disability. They compete on half-width court. In Friday's late night matches, Suhass Yathiraj and Palak Kohli lost their opening mixed doubles SL3 contest 11-21 17-21 to top seeded Indonesian pair



of Hikmat Ramdani and Leani Ratri Oktia. In another group A SL3 mixed doubles contest involving Indians, Nitesh Kumar and Thulasinathi Murugesan lost 22-24 19-21 to the French team of Faustine Noel and Lucas Mazur. The only win in the mixed doubles came through Nithya Sivan Sumathy and Sivaraajan Solaimalai, who defeated Thailand's Natthapong Meechai and Chai Saeyang 21-7 21-17 in group B. Later on Saturday, Nitesh Kumar, Krishna Nagar, Manoj Sarkar, Sukant Kadam, Sivaraajan Solaimalai and Tarun will compete in different categories of men's singles. In women's singles, Manisha Ramdass and Nithya Sivan Sumathy will present their challenge.

# Kimi Antonelli named as Lewis Hamilton's replacement at Formula 1's Mercedes

AP ■ MONZA (ITALY)

Teenager Kimi Antonelli has been named as Lewis Hamilton's replacement next year at Mercedes, a day after his Formula One debut ended in the 18-year-old Italian driver hitting the wall. Antonelli took over for George Russell in the opening practice session for Sunday's Italian Grand Prix at Monza. But his much-anticipated first appearance lasted fewer than two laps, and only 10 minutes, after he lost control of his Mercedes at the Parabolica,



sliding backward through the gravel and into the tire barrier. Team principal Toto Wolff said Saturday the crash would have no impact on Antonelli's F1 chances, and confirmation of his elevation as a junior driver with the team was confirmed ahead of final practice at his home event. "It is an amazing feeling to be announced as a Mercedes works driver alongside George for 2025," Antonelli said in Saturday's announcement. "Reaching F1 is a dream I've had since I was a small boy." Antonelli has been with

Mercedes since he joined its junior program when he was 12. "I want to thank the team for the support they've given me in my career so far and the faith they've shown in me. I am still learning a lot, but I feel ready for the opportunity," said Antonelli, who only turned 18 last Sunday. "I'm also really excited to become George's teammate. He came through the team's junior program just like myself and is someone I have a huge amount of respect for." After titles in Karting and Formula 4, Antonelli only made the step up to F2 this year, winning two races. There were promising signs for the limited time he was on the track on Friday, with Wolff labelling it "astonishing." But Antonelli was keen to impress, perhaps too keen, and he crashed after seemingly taking

too much speed into the final corner of his second lap. The debutant had just set the fastest middle sector of the session and was looking to reclaim the fastest time from Hamilton, who had just beaten Antonelli's first lap by 0.6 seconds. It is Hamilton he is replacing, with the seven-time F1 champion departing for Ferrari at the end of the season. "Our new lineup is perfect to open the next chapter in our story," Wolff said. "It is also a testament to the strength of our junior program and our belief in homegrown talent.

**AUTHUM AUTHUM INVESTMENT & INFRASTRUCTURE LIMITED**  
 Regd. Off. : 707, Rahaia Centre, Free Press Journal Road, Nariman Point, Mumbai-21. Ph: (022) 6747 2117 Fax: (022) 6747 2118 E-mail: info@authum.com

**POSSESSION NOTICE**  
 (As per Rule 8(1) of Security Interest (Enforcement) Rules, 2002  
 Whereas the undersigned being Authorised officer of the Authum Investment & Infrastructure Limited ("AIL") (Resulting Company pursuant to the demerger of lending business from Reliance Commercial Finance Limited ("RCFL") to AIL vide NCLT order dated 10.05.2024), under the Securitisation and Reconstruction of Financial Assets and Enforcement of Security Interest Act, 2002 and in exercise of powers conferred under Section 13(2) read with Rule 3(2) of the Security Interest (Enforcement) Rules 2002, issued a Demand Notice dated 08th APRIL, 2024 calling upon the borrower and Co-Borrower KABIR SHIKSHAN SAMITI, NILESH SAHU, DEVNANDANI SAHU and PARDESI RAM SAHU to repay the amount mentioned in the notice being Rs. 80,68,562/- (Rupees Eighty Lakh Sixty Eight Thousand Five Hundred and Sixty Two Only) with further interest and costs within 60 days from the date of receipt of the said notices.  
 The Borrower having failed to repay the amount, notice is hereby given to the Borrower/Co-Borrower that the undersigned has taken **SYMBOLIC POSSESSION** of the property described herein below in exercise of powers conferred on him/her under Section 13(4) of the said Act read with Rule 8 of the said rules on this **28th day of AUGUST of the year 2024.**  
 The Borrower/Co-Borrower in particular and the public in general is hereby cautioned not to deal with the property and any dealings with the property will be subject to the charge of the Authum Investment & Infrastructure Limited for an amount of Rs. 80,68,562/- (Rupees Eighty Lakh Sixty Eight Thousand Five Hundred and Sixty Two Only) and interest thereon. The Borrower/Co-Borrower's attention is invited to provisions of Section 13(8) of the said Act, in respect of time available, to redeem the secured assets.

**DESCRIPTION OF THE MORTGAGE PROPERTY**  
 All that piece and parcel of property comprising out of: **Property 1** - Part of KH No 846/2, Khata No. 415, Measuring Area 3000sq. Ft., PH No 52, in exercise of Powers conferred under Section 13(2) of the Security Interest (Enforcement) Act of 2002, for an amount of Rs. 80,68,562/- (Rupees Eighty Lakh Sixty Eight Thousand Five Hundred and Sixty Two Only) and interest thereon. The Borrower/Co-Borrower's attention is invited to provisions of Section 13(8) of the said Act, in respect of time available, to redeem the secured assets.  
**Property 2** - All that Piece and Parcel of Property Comprising Out of Part of KH No 838/12, Measuring 2100 Sq. Ft. Ph No 106 B, Chiruhudi Ward No -2 Rammagar Rajpur, Boundaries: North: House Of Shriram Kevat, South: Road, East: Road, West: House Of Banwali  
**PLACE** - RAIPUR (Authorized Officer)  
**Date:** 01.09.2024  
 Authum Investment & Infrastructure Limited

**AU SMALL FINANCE BANK LIMITED**  
 A SCHEDULED COMMERCIAL BANK  
 Regd. Office: 19-A, Dhuleshwar Garden, Almer Road, Jaipur - 302001 (CIN:L36911RJ1996PLC011381)

**Demand Notice Under Section 13(2) of Securitisation Act of 2002**  
 As the loan account became NPA therefore the Authorized officer under section 13(2) of "The Securitisation and Reconstruction of Financial Assets and Enforcement of Security Interest Act 2002" had issued 60 days demand notice to the Borrowers/Co-Borrowers/Mortgages/Guarantors (collectively referred as "Borrowers") as given in the table. According to the notice if the borrowers do not deposit the entire amount within 60 days, the amount will be recovered from auction of the mortgage properties/secured assets as given below. Therefore you the borrowers are informed to deposit the entire loan amount along with future interest and expenses within 60 days from the date of demand notice, otherwise under the provisions of 13(4) and 14 of the said Act, the Authorized officer is free to take possession for sale of the mortgage properties/secured assets as given below. Borrowers to note that after receipt of this notice, in terms of Section 13(13) of the Act, 2002, you are prohibited and restrained from transferring any of the secured assets by way of sale, lease or otherwise, without prior written consent of the secured creditor.  
 Borrowers attention are attracted towards Section 13(8) r/w Rule 3(5) of The Security Interest (Enforcement) Rules, 2002 Act that the borrowers shall be entitled to redeem their secured asset upon the payment of the complete outstanding dues as mentioned below before the publication of auction notice, which thereafter shall cease to exist.

Name of the Borrower/ Co-Borrower / Mortgagor / Guarantor / Loan A/C No.	Date and Amount of Demand Notice Under Sec. 13(2)	Description of Mortgaged Property
(Loan A/C No.) L9001060718833159, Maa Gayathri Tradin Co Through It's Proprietor Mukesh Kumar (Borrower), Smt. Neha Vaishnav (Co-Borrower)	20-Jul-24 ₹ 35,38,908/- Rs. Thirty-Five Lac Thirty-Eight Thousand Nine Hundred Eight Only As On 20-Jul-24	Property Situated At P.H.No.- 18, Kh. No.-360/1, Mouja- Gondkhami, Block/ Teshil-Lormi, Dist-Mungeli, Chhattisgarh. Admeasuring 2160 Sq.Ft.

**Date:** 31/08/2024  
**Place:** Chhattisgarh  
 Authorized Officer  
 AU Small Finance Bank Limited

"If you want others to be happy, practice compassion. If you want to be happy, practice compassion"  
— Dalai Lama



## MOSCOW FILM FESTIVAL KICKS OFF WITH FOCUS ON INDIAN CINEMA

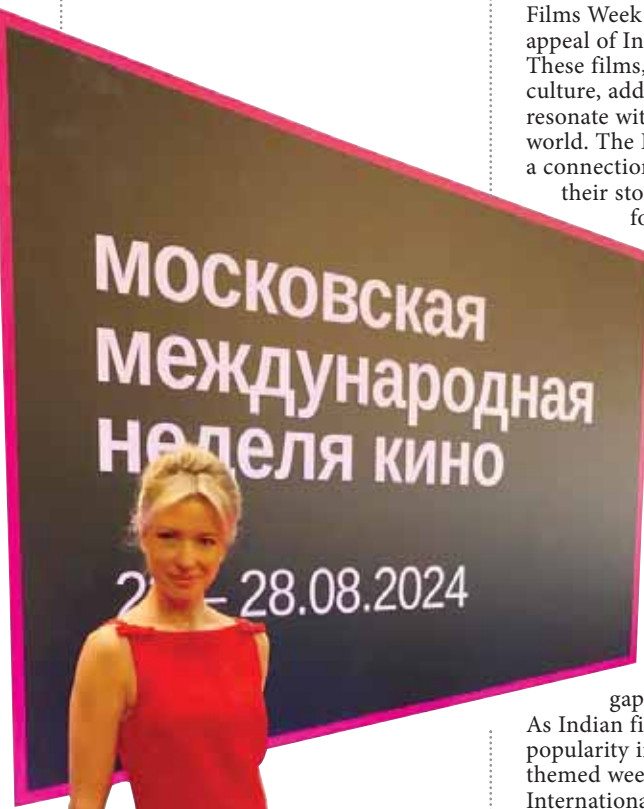
*Laapata ladies* and *Kalki* resonate with Russian audience, opening up huge possibilities for Indian cinema in Russia, writes **GYANESHWAR DAYAL**



The Moscow International Films Week, an event that has become a significant cultural bridge between Russia and the world opened up in Moscow with much fanfare at Khudozhestvenny Cinema and with people from film fraternity from around the world in attendance at the gala event. On the first day of the Film Week, screenings of both foreign and domestic films took place, including the nationwide premieres of the Indian sports drama *Field* and the philosophical-mystical drama *Alzheimer* from Iran. This year it is an Indian-themed week with focus on Indian cinema and celebrating Indian art of storytelling on celluloid. The film festival is hosting films from more than 40-countries but the flavour of the festival is completely Indian. The second day was completely dedicated to Indian cinema, with Russian artists performing on Indian songs and Indian cuisine being served at the venue with Bollywood songs playing in the background. The Indian segment of the festival is dedicated to celebrating the richness and diversity of Indian cinema, offering Russian audiences a taste of India's cinematic brilliance through a curated selection of films. Among the highlights are two remarkable Indian films, *Laapata Ladies* and *Kalki*, which have captivated the Russian audience with their unique storytelling and cultural nuances. Indian cinema has long been admired in Russia, with classics from Bollywood making their mark in the past. Ra Kapoor was a household name in Russia and 'mera joota hai Japani, an all-time hit. The Indian-themed week at the Moscow International Films Week is a testament to the enduring connection between the two cultures. This year's selection is not just about showcasing films; it's about highlighting the shared human experiences and emotions that transcend borders. As one Russian filmmaker quipped, "Indian and Russian films are made with heart, the most striking similarity between Indian and Russian films is that the songs are woven into the storyline." This is despite the fact that much is lost in translation and language barrier remains a significant impediment. But that is about to change as Swapna Dutt, the co-producer of *Kalki*, told the Pioneer that they would be releasing the film dubbed in Russian. "Indian films were once very popular in Russia, we want to open that bracket again. I am sure Indian films have a huge market here," said Swapna Dutt.

THE INDIAN SEGMENT OF THE FESTIVAL IS DEDICATED TO CELEBRATING THE RICHNESS AND DIVERSITY OF INDIAN CINEMA, OFFERING RUSSIAN AUDIENCES A TASTE OF INDIA'S CINEMATIC BRILLIANCE THROUGH A CURATED SELECTION OF FILMS. AMONG THE HIGHLIGHTS ARE TWO REMARKABLE INDIAN FILMS, "LAAPATA LADIES" AND "KALKI," WHICH HAVE CAPTIVATED THE RUSSIAN AUDIENCE WITH THEIR UNIQUE STORYTELLING AND CULTURAL NUANCES

*Laapata Ladies*, a film that delves into the complexities of womanhood in contemporary India, has struck a chord with Russian viewers. The film's narrative, which intertwines humor with social commentary, offers a glimpse into the challenges and aspirations of Indian women. The Russian audience, known for its appreciation of nuanced storytelling, has responded positively to the film's portrayal of universal themes such as identity, freedom, and societal expectations. *Kalki*, another standout film screened on the second day, explores themes of mythology and modernity, blending them in a way that is both thought-provoking and visually stunning. The film's exploration of Indian mythology, set against the backdrop of modern societal issues, has intrigued Russian viewers. The film's ability to weave together the old and the new, the mythical and the real, resonates deeply with a culture that values its own rich historical and cultural heritage. The success of *Laapata Ladies* and *Kalki* at the Moscow International Films Week highlights the growing appeal of Indian cinema in Russia. These films, while rooted in Indian culture, address universal themes that resonate with audiences across the world. The Russian viewers have found a connection with the characters and their stories, appreciating the films for their depth, creativity, and the way they tackle complex social issues.



The Indian-themed week has also opened doors for cultural exchange, with discussions and workshops that allow Russian audiences to engage more deeply with Indian cinema. This exchange of ideas and cultural narratives fosters a deeper understanding between the two nations, reinforcing the importance of art in bridging cultural gaps. As Indian films continue to gain popularity in Russia, the Indian-themed week at the Moscow International Films Week is likely to become a regular feature, showcasing the best of Indian cinema to Russian audiences. The success of *Laapata Ladies* and *Kalki* is not just a win for the filmmakers but also a testament to the universal appeal of Indian stories that, while deeply rooted in their own cultures, speak to the shared human experience. The Moscow International Films Week's Indian-themed week is more than just a showcase of films; it's a celebration of the cultural connections between India and Russia. The warm reception of films like *Laapata Ladies* and *Kalki* by the Russian audience is a reflection of the power of cinema to transcend borders and bring people together through the shared language of storytelling.





From leading corporate giants to shaping culinary excellence, **PAWAN SONI'S** journey is a celebration of passion and innovation in the food industry, says **SAKSHI PRIYA**

# FROM CORPORATE SUCCESS TO CULINARY STARDOM A JOURNEY INTO THE WORLD OF FOOD BLOGGING AND AWARDS

**I**n the culinary world, where flavours tell stories and meals become cherished memories, Pawan Soni has forged an extraordinary path. A former Vice President at global giants like HSBC and GE Capital, Soni made a bold yet passionate shift from the corporate boardroom to the vibrant food scene. Driven by his love for discovering hidden gastronomic gems, he founded Indian Food Freak, a blog that has since grown into one of India's most influential food and travel platforms. His journey took a remarkable turn in 2014 when he launched The Big F Awards, a celebration of culinary excellence that has now become one of Delhi NCR's most prestigious events. Now entering its 11th year, The Big F Awards have distinguished themselves with an unwavering

commitment to transparency and integrity. Built on the principle of not imposing any financial burden on nominees, these awards have earned a reputation as a fair and respected platform for recognising excellence in the food industry. Over the past decade, they have become synonymous with culinary credibility, highlighting the region's finest dining establishments and championing new talents, including home chefs and bakers who bring fresh flavours and creativity to the table.

This year, The Big F Awards embark on an exciting new chapter by expanding their reach to encompass the entire Delhi-NCR region, reinforcing their vision of inclusivity and growth. This grand event will showcase a diverse array of culinary talent, with new categories that reflect the latest trends and celebrate the art of both dining out and home cooking. Attendees can look forward to an immersive experience where innovation, artistry, and passion are celebrated in a truly memorable way. At the heart of this celebration is a distinguished jury, featuring some of India's most renowned culinary experts, such as Chef Kunal Kapur, Chef Nita Mehta, Rocky Singh, and many others. These esteemed judges will rigorously evaluate each nominee, visiting the restaurants and sampling the dishes before casting their votes. This commitment to fairness ensures that the awards remain a beacon of trust and excellence in the food industry.

For Pawan Soni, The Big F Awards are more than just an event, they are a community and a platform for supporting genuine connections and inspiring culinary creativity. As he prepares for the upcoming awards in September, Soni envisions an evening that brings together the best of Delhi NCR's food scene, offering an opportunity to celebrate, connect and elevate the standards of culinary excellence. With a legacy of integrity and innovation, The Big F Awards continue to shine as a cornerstone of the region's vibrant food culture. Founded in 2014, The Big F Awards have become a symbol of credibility and fairness, consistently upholding the highest standards in the industry. This year's edition promises to build on this legacy, with new surprises, new talents, and new stories to be told. Join Pawan Soni and his esteemed panel in this grand celebration of culinary brilliance, where the finest in food artistry come together to create an unforgettable experience.

With a legacy of integrity and innovation, The Big F Awards continue to shine as a cornerstone of the region's vibrant food culture. Founded in 2014, The Big F Awards have become a symbol of credibility and fairness, consistently upholding the highest standards in the industry. This year's edition promises to build on this legacy, with new surprises, new talents, and new stories to be told. Join Pawan Soni and his esteemed panel in this grand celebration of culinary brilliance, where the finest in food artistry come together to create an unforgettable experience.

## A CONVERSATION WITH PAWAN SONI

Pawan Soni shares insights into his transition from corporate life to food blogging, the challenges he faced in

the early days and his commitment to transparency and excellence in The Big F Awards. He provides valuable perspectives on the growth of his blog, the influence of his corporate background and what to expect from this year's prestigious event.

**You left a successful career as Vice President at MNCs like HSBC and GE Capital to follow your passion for food. What motivated this career shift, and how did your corporate experience shape your approach to food blogging and awards?**

Back in our day, social media wasn't a thing. Like many, I followed the conventional route—completing an MBA and then diving into the corporate world. But food was my escape. Traveling the world, I discovered hidden culinary gems and started writing for newspapers and magazines. Eventually, I launched my own blog, Indian Food Freak. Before I knew it, my passion for food had grown into a full-blown career.

**MY CORPORATE EXPERIENCE WAS THE YEAST THAT HELPED INDIAN FOOD FREAK RISE. THE BIGGEST CHALLENGE IN ORGANISING THE AWARDS WAS SECURING SPONSORS WHO BELIEVED IN THE VISION BUT DIDN'T INFLUENCE THE RESULTS.**

In foodie terms, my corporate career was a recipe for success, but my love for food was the secret ingredient. I traded PowerPoint for paprika and now, I'm serving up a plate of purpose. Jokes aside, my corporate experience was invaluable. It taught me critical skills in sales, operations, and more, which I still use in my second career. Having worked with ethical companies, I've always prioritized transparency. Even after 11 years of running the food awards, I ensure there's no money exchange involved, whether for nominations, attending the awards or in any other aspect.

**When you started Indian Food Freak food blogging was relatively new in India. How did you introduce the concept to an unfamiliar audience, and what strategies did you use to build your initial following?**

Introducing food blogging to India was like adding a new spice to a traditional recipe—initially unfamiliar, but now indispensable. I focused on creating content that was relatable, authentic, and sprinkled

with humor. I remained honest and objective in all my reviews, even if it meant ruffling a few feathers among friends in the industry. By avoiding fancy jargon and staying true to my readers, I built trust and loyalty. My guiding principle has always been to write for my readers, not for the restaurants.

**How did you address the skepticism or resistance from both the public and industry professionals during the early days of food blogging, especially when it was an emerging field?**

Skeptics are like stale spices - they need to be replaced with fresh perspectives. I proved that food blogging wasn't just a flash in the pan by consistently delivering quality content and building a loyal community. Facebook played a significant role in this, as I created a space where food enthusiasts could exchange opinions and learn from each other.

**What were some of the biggest challenges you faced in creating content for your blog in the early days, and how did you overcome issues related to resources, technology or audience engagement?**

The early days were like cooking with limited ingredients—creativity was key. I tackled challenges by infusing my content with storytelling, leveraging social media, and engaging with my audience like a master chef. Content was never an issue because food is something we encounter daily. To improve the visual appeal, I invested in a DSLR. As the saying goes, a picture is worth a thousand words.

**Indian Food Freak has grown into one of the largest food and travel blogs in India. What were some of the initial challenges you encountered when starting your blog and organising The Big F Awards, and how did your corporate experience help you navigate these obstacles?**

My corporate experience was the yeast that helped Indian Food Freak rise. The biggest challenge in organizing the awards was securing sponsors who believed in the vision but didn't influence the results. My sales and marketing skills were crucial here. Convincing people of the brand visibility that our awards could offer was key, and looking back, I'm proud to say that I delivered on those promises.

**This year, The Big F Awards has expanded to cover the entire Delhi-NCR region. What motivated this expansion, and what new opportunities and challenges do you anticipate?**

Expanding The Big F Awards to Delhi-NCR was like adding a new course to the menu—a natural progression. Since it takes nearly six months to organize the awards, with our jury visiting each restaurant to taste the food before

delivering a verdict, venturing into other cities wasn't feasible. However, Delhi-NCR should be treated as one city, with people frequently traveling for work and pleasure. Including Delhi has given us broader and, in some cases, better choices, helping foodies make informed decisions when they dine out.

**The introduction of categories for home bakers and home chefs is a unique and thoughtful addition. What inspired these new categories, and how do they reflect current trends in the food industry?**

Home bakers and home chefs are the new spice merchants—they're driving innovation and shaping trends. These categories reflect the democratisation of food and the rise of culinary entrepreneurship. I'm pleased to see that home chefs and bakers are now taken seriously. Not only have their businesses expanded, but many new ventures are focused solely on this segment, helping them grow by organising pop-ups at five-star hotels, developing apps for delivery, and introducing them to wider audiences.

**Winning the Best Influencer Award by BBC Good Food in 2018 is a significant achievement. How did this recognition impact your career and the growth of Indian Food Freak and The Big F Awards?**

We all seek acknowledgment and appreciation. Winning the award was a validation that I was on the right path. It boosted my morale and increased confidence in the products and content I deliver.

**The Big F Awards are known for their transparency and integrity. How are you ensuring these values are upheld in this year's expanded edition, especially with the addition of new categories?**

Transparency and integrity are the secret ingredients in The Big F Awards' recipe. We ensure fairness by using a robust judging process, clear criteria, and a commitment to accountability. From selecting the right jury to deliberating each result, we remain steadfast in our dedication to honesty and transparency.

**As you prepare for the 11th edition of The Big F Awards, what are your personal goals for the event, and what do you hope attendees and participants will take away from this year's awards?**

My personal goal for The Big F Awards is to foster a culinary community that's the icing on the cake. I hope attendees and participants leave inspired, with new connections and a renewed passion for the food industry. People don't mind losing as long as they know they lost to a worthy opponent. Our aim is to be fair and just while building camaraderie among all industry professionals.

**PAWAN SONI**  
Food critic and founder of the Big F Awards



A TRIBUTE TO TRADITION

GURU SHOVANA NARAYAN'S 75 YEARS OF KATHAK MASTERY

Sharanyam, a heartfelt tribute to the legendary Guru SHOVANA NARAYAN on her 75th birthday, beautifully celebrated her extraordinary journey in Kathak. The evening was a touching tribute to her life's work, showcasing the profound impact she has had on the art form and her disciples, says SAKSHI PRIYA



Photo: Pankaj Kumar

In the world of Indian classical dance, few names resonate with as much reverence as Padmashri Guru Shovana Narayan. Her journey is not just a tribute to her unparalleled dedication to Kathak but a living legacy that has inspired generations. As she steps into her 75th year, the Asavari Centre for Kathak honoured this icon with an evening titled "Sharanyam," a celebration as vibrant and profound as Guruji herself. Padmashri Guru Shovana Narayan is a celebrated icon in Kathak, with a remarkable career spanning over six decades. Her innovative approach and deep understanding of Indian culture have redefined the art form. With prestigious awards like the Padma Shri and Sangeet Natak Akademi Award, her influence extends beyond performance to visionary choreography, dedicated teaching, and cultural leadership. On this unforgettable evening, the Stein Auditorium at India Habitat Centre in New Delhi was transformed into a space of dance and devotion. The evening was not just an event; it was a vibrant expression of love, respect and admiration from her disciples worldwide. Each performance honoured not just Kathak but the essence of Guru Shovana Narayan - the artist, the mentor and the visionary. From the moment the lights dimmed and the

first note echoed through the auditorium, it was clear that this evening was extraordinary. The performance of "Taal Pancham Sawari" was a masterful display of rhythm and precision, perfectly embodying the discipline and expression that Guruji has always emphasised. Beyond the technical brilliance, it was the sheer emotion that captivated the audience. "Chaand" was not just a dance; it was a poetic journey that moved everyone present. Similarly, "Malika" seamlessly fused song and dance, creating a blend of beauty that felt almost otherworldly. One of the most memorable moments of the night was "Moonlight Impressionism," a performance that seemed to slow time itself. The dancers moved with such grace that the stage became a peaceful space, where the silence of moonlight was captured in every gesture and step. The soft strains of the piano added an extra layer of

elegance, making it feel as though the audience was witnessing a dream come to life. The evening was a reflection of the profound bond between Guruji and her disciples, a connection that was evident in every movement and gesture on stage. This wasn't just a series of performances; it was a living reflection of the relationships built through years of shared passion, dedication, and mutual respect. As the video presentation played, featuring heartfelt birthday messages from her students, the emotion in the auditorium was overwhelming. These messages were more than just words of



“ONE OF THE MOST MEMORABLE MOMENTS OF THE NIGHT WAS 'MOONLIGHT IMPRESSIONISM,' A PERFORMANCE THAT SEEMED TO SLOW TIME ITSELF. THE DANCERS MOVED WITH SUCH GRACE THAT THE STAGE BECAME A PEACEFUL SPACE, WHERE THE SILENCE OF MOONLIGHT WAS CAPTURED IN EVERY GESTURE AND STEP.”

admiration; they were living proof of the deep, enduring love and gratitude that have grown over the years - a love that extends far beyond the art of Kathak. As the evening drew to a close with the powerful performance of "Dhwani-Pratidhwani," the energy in the auditorium reached its zenith. The audience's applause was more than just appreciation; it was a collective outpouring of respect, love, and admiration for a woman who has devoted her life to the pursuit of art and the nurturing of others. In the words of Guruji's first disciple, Shruti Gupta Chandra, "Sharanyam is a small tribute from all of us who have learned so much from Shovana Didi - dance in its purest form and, with it, many life lessons. And the learning continues..." Guruji herself reflected on the evening with emotion, saying, "The air rebounded with the pure love and sublime devotion of all the disciples that touched every heart and left everyone emotional. The programme was meticulously planned and executed." As her disciples paid tribute through their performances, it was clear that Guru Shovana Narayan's influence extends far beyond the stage. She has touched lives, instilled values, and inspired a generation of dancers who carry forward her legacy with pride and reverence. For them, she is not just a guru; she is a mother, a confidante, and a guiding star. Guru Shovana Narayan represents both tradition and innovation. She embodies the continuity of creativity, demonstrating that art is not just about preserving the past but about creating a future rooted in tradition yet open to new possibilities. As we celebrate her 75th year, it's evident that Guru Shovana Narayan is much more than a dancer; she is a visionary whose life has been dedicated to Kathak. Her legacy extends beyond performances to the hearts of her students and the countless lives she has touched. She is not just a mentor and guide but an inspiring figure whose dedication continues to elevate the art form and inspire those who learn from her.

A CELEBRATION OF INDIA'S TIMELESS CRAFTSMANSHIP

Naayaab highlights India's rich craftsmanship through over 100 masterpieces by renowned artisans. This exhibition blends tradition with innovation, presenting a unique cultural celebration, writes SAKSHI PRIYA

Naayaab, a groundbreaking exhibition platform, is set to become a beacon of India's rich heritage, showcasing over 100 masterpieces by the nation's most celebrated artisans. Spanning three major cities New Delhi, Hyderabad and Mumbai. This exhibition is more than just an exhibition, it is a profound celebration of India's artistic legacy, bringing together over 40 traditional art forms under one roof.



A SHOWCASE OF INDIA'S ARTISTIC DIVERSITY

Naayaab's significance lies in its ability to bring together an extraordinary collection of art forms, each representing a unique aspect of India's cultural fabric. With works from over 70 master artists, including several Padma Shri and Shilp Guru awards, this exhibition is a rare opportunity to witness the pinnacle of Indian craftsmanship. The exhibition highlighted the exceptional craftsmanship of several renowned artisans. Sudarshan Sahoo captivated with his intricate stone carving while Jai Prakash Lakhiawal impressed with his detailed miniature paintings. Khaleel Ahmad showcased his exquisite kilim carpets and Bhuri Bai presented her vibrant Bhil art. Durga Bai Vyam contributed her intricate Gond paintings. The visionary leaders behind Naayaab were Ajay A Singh, Founder Director and Akansha Dixit, Founder & Chief Curator. One of the most captivating pieces is the Inlay Artistry Chest by

Rupan Matharu, a work that exemplifies the exhibition's ethos of blending tradition with modernity. Crafted from Indian rosewood using traditional Hoshiarpur inlay techniques, Matharu's chest replaces the historically used ivory or bone with acrylic, making it both environmentally conscious and a stunning piece of art. The intricate patterns and meticulous detailing make it a true testament to the mastery of Indian artisans. Another powerful piece is Durga Bai Vyam's Gond Painting "Climate in Crisis", which uses symbolic imagery to address the resilience of nature in the face of human activity. This painting not only showcases the intricate detailing typical of Gond art but also delivers a poignant message about environmental conservation. Jai Prakash Lakhiawal's Shrinathji in Tanjore and Miniature Fusion painting is another highlight, merging Tanjore and Pichwai styles

to create a resplendent depiction of the Hindu deity. The use of gold leaf and natural pigments elevates this piece to a new level of artistic brilliance. The Heritage Red Sozni Shawl by Bashir Ahmed Bhatt is a must-see for those interested in traditional Indian textiles. This exquisite shawl, with its intricate embroidery of 600 stitches per centimeter, took four years to complete and is a tribute to the time-honored skills of Kashmiri Sozni artisans.

MASTERPIECES OF CRAFTSMANSHIP

Among the many remarkable pieces, Shiva Kumar's Tri Panel Mythic Tales stands out as a masterpiece of wood inlay and carving. Spanning six years in the making, this wooden set depicts narratives from the lives of Lord Rama and Lord Krishna across three panels, showcasing scenes like Sri Rama Pattabishekam,



Vishwaroopa and Krishna Leela. The craftsmanship is so intricate that concealed handles reveal a hidden third panel, an engineering feat in itself. The use of different woods and seashells for vibrant hues, along with hand-carved Yali motifs on the outer frame, make this artwork a true marvel. Another notable piece is Mukesh Kumar Soni's Maharaja Brooch Pendant, a stunning example of Meenakari on gold. Inspired by the regal bearing of Rajput personages, this pendant cum brooch combines uncut diamonds, baroque freshwater pearls, glass, spinels, and gold to create a piece that is both opulent and refined. The intricate designs on both sides, along

with the use of vibrant enamel colors, reflect the rich tradition of Meenakari, an art form passed down through generations since the Mughal era.

A PLATFORM FOR PRESERVATION AND INNOVATION

Naayaab is more than just an exhibition; it is a movement aimed at preserving and reviving India's traditional art forms. The long-term vision of making Naayaab an annual event, both in India and globally, is commendable. By doing so, the organizers hope to inspire the next generation of artisans and ensure that these invaluable skills continue to thrive. As an art enthusiast, witnessing Naayaab is both a privilege and a profound reminder of the richness of Indian heritage.



Photos: Pankaj Kumar

The exhibition not only showcases the exceptional talent of Indian artisans but also serves as a platform to elevate these crafts to the global stage, ensuring they are celebrated for generations to come. Naayaab is not just an exhibition, it is a celebration of India's artistic heritage, a platform for master artisans and a beacon of hope for the future of traditional crafts. In an age where digital and mass-produced art often takes center stage, Naayaab stands as a beautiful contradiction, a reminder of the beauty of handcrafted excellence and the importance of preserving cultural legacies. For collectors, connoisseurs and art lovers alike, Naayaab offers a rare opportunity to connect with the soul of Indian culture, to witness the legacy of its artistic heritage, and to support the artisans who dedicate their lives to preserving these traditions. It is an unmissable event that promises to leave a lasting impact on anyone

who values the intersection of history, culture and creativity. Naayaab is not just an exhibition but a profound celebration of India's rich artistic heritage. By bringing together over 100 masterpieces from acclaimed artisans across the country, it offers a unique platform that honors and revives traditional crafts. The intricate works displayed, from the innovative Inlay Artistry Chest to the evocative Gond Painting, illustrate the extraordinary skill and creativity of Indian artisans. This event is a tribute to the enduring significance of these art forms and serves as an inspiring reminder of the beauty that emerges when tradition meets innovation. Naayaab stands as a pivotal moment for both art lovers and cultural enthusiasts, marking a significant step in preserving and promoting India's invaluable artistic legacy.



YOUR WEEK AHEAD

MADHU KOTIYA



**ARIES** March 21-April 19

This week, you'll experience a surge of emotional renewal and inspiration, leading to significant personal growth and the opportunity for meaningful connections. Embrace the new beginnings in your life with confidence and enthusiasm, allowing yourself to be open and vulnerable. This openness will deepen your relationships and enhance your sense of fulfillment. The current energies are encouraging you to explore your emotional needs and desires more deeply, guiding you toward a greater understanding of yourself. Engage in activities that truly resonate with your values and bring you joy. To maintain balance, take time for introspection, ensuring that your excitement and drive are rooted in authentic, meaningful connections.

**Lucky number 8 | Lucky colour** Sky Blue  
**Lucky day** Friday



**LEO** July 23-Aug 22

This week, focus on maintaining fairness, balance, and accountability in your actions and decisions. It's an opportune time to resolve any disputes and strive for harmony in your relationships and projects. Be mindful of the importance of acting with integrity, as this will be crucial in your interactions and endeavors. You may encounter situations that require careful consideration of your options or addressing imbalances. Trust in your ability to advocate for what is right and true. Reflect on how your actions impact others and ensure that you proceed with honesty and clarity. By aligning your goals with a commitment to fairness, you'll navigate any challenges that arise with grace and effectiveness.

**Lucky number 15 | Lucky colour** Ivory  
**Lucky day** Monday



**SAGITTARIUS** Nov 22-Dec 21

This week invites you to balance multiple responsibilities effectively. Embrace the challenge of managing various tasks with flexibility and adaptability. It's a time to harness your enthusiasm and organizational abilities to keep everything moving smoothly. The current cosmic influences emphasize the importance of maintaining equilibrium in your busy schedule. By prioritizing and adjusting as needed, you can handle the demands of the week without becoming overwhelmed. Stay focused on your goals while remaining open to making necessary adjustments. Your resourcefulness and ability to adapt will be key in navigating through the week with efficiency and maintaining a sense of harmony among all your commitments. Keep a steady pace, and you'll find that your efforts align beautifully with your objectives.

**Lucky number 12 | Lucky colour** Palm  
**Lucky day** Saturday



**TAURUS** April 20-May 20

This week, you're stepping into a role that demands leadership and ambitious endeavors, making it a perfect time to take charge of your goals with confidence and creativity. You'll find yourself exuding a magnetic energy that draws others to your ideas, giving you the opportunity to inspire and guide those around you. This is a time to harness your inner drive, pushing forward on important projects with a mix of passion and practicality. While your determination is strong, remember to balance your ambitions with a steady, grounded approach. Your natural perseverance will serve you well as you navigate this dynamic period, allowing you to lead with both vision and stability. This is your moment to shine in your pursuits with unwavering determination.

**Lucky number 4 | Lucky colour** Brown  
**Lucky day** Wednesday



**VIRGO** Aug 23-Sep 22

This week highlights a period of recognizing and addressing personal barriers and unhealthy behaviors. You might find yourself grappling with issues of control or repetitive negative patterns that are limiting your growth. The influence of current cosmic energies encourages you to identify and confront these challenges, urging a break from the constraints of fear or excessive desire. This period is crucial for regaining your independence and strength. Reflect on any habits or situations that may be limiting you and make a concerted effort to release them. Though the process might be demanding, it provides a substantial opportunity for personal evolution and development. Seize this moment to free yourself and cultivate a more wholesome and balanced life approach.

**Lucky number 9 | Lucky colour** Emerald  
**Lucky day** Friday



**CAPRICORN** Dec 22-Jan 19

This week calls for a period of deep reflection and navigating through areas of uncertainty. It's a time when hidden aspects of your life or underlying emotions may surface, requiring careful exploration. The influences surrounding you are pushing towards relying on your inner instincts and looking beyond obvious appearances. You might face situations filled with ambiguity or even deceptive information, making it crucial to evaluate circumstances with a keen sense of awareness. This phase is ideal for delving into your deeper self, addressing any underlying anxieties or misconceptions. Embrace these moments for self-exploration and foster a connection with your own guiding voice. Although this time may feel unstable, it presents an opportunity to gain significant personal insights and growth. Let your internal compass lead you through less clear paths.

**Lucky number 1 | Lucky colour** Amber  
**Lucky day** Thursday



**GEMINI** May 21-June 20

This week, focus on establishing order and discipline in your life. You'll benefit from setting clear boundaries and creating a structured approach to your tasks. The current energies support your efforts to take control and make strategic decisions, allowing you to lead with confidence. This is an opportune time to take charge of projects or situations that require a strong and authoritative presence. Utilize this time to establish long-term objectives and apply practical approaches. By balancing your need for intellectual engagement with a disciplined approach, you can achieve greater stability and success. Trust in your ability to organize and guide others, and you'll find it easier to navigate any challenges that arise.

**Lucky number 19 | Lucky colour** Coral  
**Lucky day** Sunday



**LIBRA** Sep 23-Oct 22

This week promises a period of emotional satisfaction, harmony, and strengthened connections. You may find a profound sense of joy and completeness in your personal relationships and household. The current influences are conducive to fostering closer ties with those close to you. It's an ideal time to nurture your family dynamics and cultivate a nurturing atmosphere. Enjoy the benefits of positive exchanges and collective joy. Additionally, this is a favorable moment to pay attention to your emotional health and explore methods to develop enduring happiness. Appreciate the splendor of these experiences and utilize them to enhance the love and delight in your life. These enriching experiences can be a foundation for future stability and joy.

**Lucky number 14 | Lucky colour** Mint  
**Lucky day** Tuesday



**AQUARIUS** Jan 20-Feb 18

This week ushers in a period marked by intense curiosity and the birth of fresh ideas, presenting an excellent opportunity for intellectual growth. You are poised to make remarkable discoveries due to your heightened analytical abilities. This is the perfect time to immerse yourself in research projects or initiate stimulating intellectual pursuits. The current influences inspire you to look at things from innovative angles and engage in meaningful dialogues. Your ability to think critically will serve you well, but it's important to avoid being overly sharp in your interactions. As you navigate through this period of dynamic thinking, remember to balance your keen enthusiasm with tact and patience. Let your inquisitive nature guide your journey of exploration and learning.

**Lucky number 6 | Lucky colour** Turquoise  
**Lucky day** Monday



**CANCER** June 21-July 22

This week brings a surge of mental clarity and a strong drive to take swift action. You may find yourself propelled into new ideas or projects with a sense of urgency, feeling a heightened determination to get things done. This is a time to approach tasks with a clear and assertive mindset, making the most of the dynamic energy around you. However, it's important to remain mindful of the impact of your words and actions; avoid being overly reactive or impulsive. Strive to balance your focused determination with a sense of emotional awareness. By doing so, you'll be able to navigate this active period effectively, embracing the momentum while staying connected to your inner guidance.

**Lucky number 3 | Lucky colour** Pink  
**Lucky day** Thursday



**SCORPIO** Oct 23-Nov 21

This week may bring moments of conclusion and opportunities for significant breakthroughs. It's a time when you might encounter challenging situations or harsh truths. These experiences suggest a need to address and let go of elements that no longer contribute positively to your life. While this period can be demanding, it offers a valuable chance for closure and rejuvenation. Take this opportunity to release any old grievances or burdensome circumstances. Confronting these issues directly allows for healing and transformation. Although the process may be intense, it is clearing the way for fresh starts and personal advancement. Use this period to reevaluate your direction and emerge more robust and adaptable.

**Lucky number 5 | Lucky colour** Silver  
**Lucky day** Wednesday



**PISCES** Feb 19-March 20

This week is ripe with opportunities for fresh beginnings and the pursuit of exciting ventures. You are encouraged to embrace your imaginative side and take bold steps toward your goals. You may find yourself inspired by new ideas or projects that ignite your passion. This is an excellent period for launching new endeavors or diving into creative interests. However, it's important to balance your enthusiasm with practical considerations to ensure your plans are well-founded. Embrace this time of exploration and allow your curiosity and creativity to guide you. Trust in your capabilities and remain open to the possibilities that unfold. This approach will help you harness the energy of the moment and channel it into productive and fulfilling activities.

**Lucky number 11 | Lucky colour** Saffron  
**Lucky day** Sunday

Madhu Kotiya is a tarot card reader, spiritual healer, and Founder, MShezaim Institute of Tarot and Divination. Contact details: madhu@indiatarot.com, www.indiatarot.com, M: 9873283331

THE TUNING FORK



C V Srikanth

The one constant from my School, to my Corporate, to my family has been- hearing 'You are not thinking' | 'You are not applying yourself' | 'You are not invested enough in what you are doing' - phrases we have all grown up listening to and perhaps continue to. *Manasa Budhi Chitta Ahankara*. - embodied in the quotients - IQ | EQ | SQ. **IQ (Intelligence Quotient):** A relative measure of the Intelligence of the person expressed in number. Can be seen as the ability to understand complex concepts and apply it effectively. Aligns with the concept of 'Buddhi' the higher intellect or discrimination (Viveka). It includes intellectual discernment, wisdom (Prajna) through practise. **EQ (Emotional Quotient):** Relative measure of Emotional intelligence - having a heightened sense of emotional and social awareness, including skills like ability to understand, use, manage your own emotions in positive ways, communicate empathetically, self-regulation. Indian ancient texts see it as qualities like emotional balance, compassion (karuna), non-attachment (vairagya), and equanimity (samata). **SQ (Spiritual Quotient):** Relative measure of Spiritual intelligence. Encompasses placing our actions and our

lives in a wider, richer, meaningful context. mindfulness, self-awareness, and connection to a higher purpose or reality. Indian scriptures describe it as the work towards and capacity for transcending the ego and realizing one's true nature (atman) or universal consciousness (Parabrahman), the aptitude to enter into heightened spiritual states of consciousness, the ability to invest in everyday activities, events, and relationships with a sense of the devotion (bhakti) and non-attachment (aparigraha), to engage in virtuous behavior (forgiveness, gratitude, humility, modesty, compassion). **They are distinct concepts** - but inseparable by nature for any holistic development or application. Only a judicious combination of Intellectual clarity + emotional maturity + spiritual insight (SQ) can result in fulfilment. Our scriptures emphasize the need to cultivate and practise these through self-discipline and self-inquiry (Jijnāsa) Ultimately, the goal is defined by us - a comprehensive embracing awakening to the Universe. Krishna teaches us in The Bhagavad Gita that both EQ and SQ are integral aspects of a balanced and meaningful life.

कर्मण्येवाधिकारस्ते मा फलेषु कदाचन।  
मा कर्मफलहेतुर्मा ते सद्गोस्त्वकर्मणि ॥ 47 ॥

IQ EQ and SQ

*karmāṇy-evādhikāras te mā phaleṣhu kadāchana mā karma-phala-hetur bhārmā te saṅgo 'stvākarmaṇi* (2.47)

You have the right to perform your prescribed duties. 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.

प्रजहाति यदा कामान्सर्वान्पार्थ मनोगतान्।  
आत्मन्येवात्मना तुष्टो स्थितप्रज्ञस्तदोच्यते ॥  
*prajāhāti yadā kāmān sarvān pārtha mano-gatān ātmany-evātmanā tuṣṭhaḥ sthita-prajñas tadochate* (2.55)

When one discards all selfish desires and cravings of the senses that torment the mind, and becomes satisfied in the realization of the self, such a person is said to be transcendently situated.

दूरेण ह्यवरं कर्म बुद्धियोगाद्धनञ्जय।  
बुद्धौ शरणमन्विच्छ कृपणाः फलहेतवः ॥  
*dūreṇa hy-avarāṇi karma buddhi-yogād dhanāñjaya buddhau śharaṇam anvichchha kṛpāṇāḥ phala-hetavaḥ* (2.49)

The recourse is divine knowledge and insight. Discard reward-seeking actions that are certainly inferior to works performed with the spiritual intellect established in divine knowledge. Miserly are those who seek to enjoy the fruits of their works. These 2 Shlokas are examples of SQ. When we tune in and nurture our SQ, we move towards happiness, peace and a tranquil state of mind because we do everything in a state of gratitude and devotion.

**None of the 3** - IQ EQ or SQ can be underestimated and under rated. They compliment each other. We need to farm their working together in coherence and balance. IQ helps rational and logical thinking. Emotional stability and maturity help individuals maintain

equanimity amidst life's apparent contradictions or dualities, facilitating focused spiritual practice. The Spiritual quotient is the provides the overarching context and purpose for life. Understanding one's true nature as a spiritual being (atman) and cultivating faith and devotion (shradhha), sensitivity and detachment helps us transcend to lasting inner tranquillity, gratitude and contentment. Emotional stability supports spiritual practice by reducing distractions and mental turbulence, while spiritual understanding provides a higher perspective that enriches emotional experiences with depth and meaning. As someone said 'The world is a contradiction and the Universe is Paradox.' To understand, navigate and rise above - Deep Breathe, Soak in, Experience Life!!

— 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



# KINWANI HOUSE: YOUR ABODE THAT SHINES AMIDST HIMALAYAN FOOTHILLS

A peaceful retreat with old world charm and stunning views beckons travelers for a luxe, exclusive vacation, writes **SHARMILA CHAND**

**N**estled in the foothills of The Himalayas, Kinwani House is a charming retreat that offers guests a rare opportunity to immerse themselves in the rich heritage of Tehri Garhwal. One remarkable aspect of Kinwani House is its geographical significance, with its longitude nearly aligning with 79 degrees east, passing through all twelve Shiva temples from Kedarnath to Kanyakumari, enhancing its spiritual aura, making it a unique destination.

### WHERE CULTURAL HERITAGE MEETS NATURAL SPLENDOR

About 40 minutes uphill drive from Rishikesh, took us to the stunning home of the Royal family, 'Kinwani House'. The estate, built in 1954, now stands as an architectural gem, a testament to passionate restoration, regal grandeur and a beacon of warm luxe hospitality. It offers a unique blend of modern comfort, natural beauty, and cultural richness, making it a perfect choice for discerning travellers.

From the moment of arrival, the warmth of Marisha Chheda, Resort Manager and her team sets the tone for a truly memorable stay. That exactly is the sentiment as expressed by Aditya Paul Lakhanpal, Chairman, JPL Group, when he tells me, "Our goal is to seamlessly blend the regal charm of the past with modern luxury, offering our guests a stay that is as memorable as it is meaningful. We invite you to explore the spiritual treasures of Rishikesh and experience the tranquil beauty of Kinwani House—a place where history and luxury meet in harmony."

I stepped into my Princess Suite with smiling Aryan escorting me, and was captivated by the aesthetics infused with traditional and contemporary touches, featuring signature Aalia Collection amenities. Spread over two floors, the tastefully re-done House



comprises six large suites, each with their own ensuite baths, drawing rooms and private decks. Each suite is a harmonious blend of old world charm and contemporary elegance, offering a unique blend of art deco design and modern luxury, providing guests with an enriching and tranquil experience. The house also boasts lush gardens, sweeping views of the holy river Ganges, breathtaking panoramic vistas of the majestic Himalayan foothills, creating a captivating backdrop for moments of serenity and reflection. I loved my High Tea at the beautiful conservatory with a bar and sitting area for an indoor evening under



the stars or a special evening of cocktails by candlelight. Every detail, from the room amenities to the dining options, is designed to ensure guests feel truly at home.

### DINING: CELEBRATION OF LOCAL FLAVOURS!

I was happy to see the menu that blends local regional dishes and world cuisine. Be it a hearty



breakfast featuring both Indian and international favourites, or meals, the food caters to every palate. Here you celebrate both global flavours and the rich

tapestry of Pahari cuisine. No wonder, the star of my meal was 'Pahari Thali' with local ingredients and specialties of the region. Chef Arvind Negi, Aalia Collection pointed out, "Our culinary offerings blend local flavors with global influences, ensuring a delightful gastronomic journey. From fragrant biryanis and robust curries, to succulent kebabs and the authentic Pahadi thali, our menu across celebrates the diverse culinary heritage of India. For our discerning global travelers, we present a thoughtfully curated selection of international dishes. Whether one wishes to experience Oriental, Continental,

Italian, or Thai flavours, we love to create exquisite dishes. Our sweet offerings are the perfect finale to your dining experience enhanced by homemade fresh ice creams."

### ROOTED IN WELLNESS

**S**tart the day with a serene Sunrise Yoga session, followed by an indulgent spa treatment featuring varied therapies. What better way to unwind, than the temperature-controlled outdoor pool, a perfect de-stress mantra.

### IMMERSIVE EXPERIENCES

**F**or those seeking varied activities to engage themselves, the team crafts special experiences, including both cultural and adventure immersions. A visit to the iconic Parmarth Niketan Ashram to evening arti at Triveni Ghat on the banks of the Ganga in Rishikesh is a must for those spiritually inclined. For trek lovers there are several trails, the most beautiful being hiking up to the ancient Kunjapuri Devi Temple. Weather permitting, river rafting and bungee jumping are adventure sports one could partake in for those seeking thrills. Hike through pristine mountain trails, soak in the beauty of nature, or indulge in yoga and mindful meditation amidst the serenity of the Himalayas. The choice is all yours!

### TO CONCLUDE

**I**f you looking for a tranquil getaway enveloped in natural splendor, The Kinwani House is the perfect answer. Here is a peaceful retreat away from the touristic crowd with experiences that are both enriching and indulgent. Whether it's enjoying a curated menu under the stars, relaxing in the temperature controlled pool with breathtaking views of the Himalayas, or embarking on a bespoke adventure with Kinwani Concierge, every aspect of Kinwani House is designed to leave a lasting impression.



## Building Suposhit Bharat Together Rashtriya Poshan Maah

From 1 to 30 September 2024

Why is Poshan Maah important?

It will free us from malnutrition

6 Successful Years of the POSHAN Abhiyaan

- » Over 100 crore nutrition-related activities conducted under the Jan Andolan
- » Monthly growth measurements of over 8 crore children
- » Integration of Shree Anna (Millet) into supplementary nutrition programme

“ Better nutrition in childhood leads to better mental development. It is essential for mothers to receive proper nutrition for the proper nourishment of children ”

- Narendra Modi  
Prime Minister



### Activities at Anganwadi Centers during 7<sup>th</sup> Poshan Maah

**Breastfeeding and complementary feeding**  
Workshops to promote breastfeeding and provide correct information on complementary feeding

**Nutrition-related Competitions**  
Competitions on meal planning and healthy cooking

**Anaemia**  
Understand and combat anaemia together

**Community-Based Programs**  
Community radio activities, cycle rallies, morning processions, Haat-Bazaar (market) activities, and street plays/folk shows

**Ek Ped Maa Ke Naam**  
Plant a tree to honour your mother and protect the environment

**Growth Monitoring**  
Understand growth monitoring and get accurate weight and height measurements for your children at Anganwadi centres

**Poshan Bhi, Padhai Bhi**  
Workshops on how nutrition helps education. Learn about government's Poshan Bhi, Padhai Bhi scheme

**Nutrition Workshops and Seminars**  
Expert-led nutrition seminars addressing key health concerns