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Verma, Bhiduri vs Kejriwal, Atishi: High stakes Delhi polls

RAJESH KUMAR ■ NEW DELHI

With less than a week left before the announcement of Delhi assembly polls, the BJP has released its first list of 29 candidates, awarding tickets to four sitting MLAs, two former MPs, and eight former MLAs. The BJP's first list features eight prominent leaders who switched over from the Congress and AAP in recent months.

Former West Delhi MP Parvesh Sahib Singh Verma will contest against AAP Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal in the New Delhi constituency. The New Delhi seat, held by Kejriwal since 2013, will witness the former chief minister taking on the sons of two other former chief ministers. Verma is the son of Sahib Singh Verma, who had a two-year tenure as chief minister in the 1990s. Former West Delhi MP Verma started his preparations for contesting from the seat even before he was announced as the official candidate, saying he had been given the go-ahead by national leaders. The Congress candidate from the seat is former three-term chief minister Sheila Dikshit's son Sandeep Dikshit. "I thank my party's top leadership... I hope that the trust that the party has shown in me, I'll live up to it... When Delhi was facing COVID-19, when they needed Oxygen, Arvind Kejriwal Ji was distributing a 'free bottle on every bottle'... There are many works in Delhi - like cleaning



Yamuna, and curbing pollution... when the BJP forms the govt, we will do all these works," Verma said after the BJP released its first list. Former South Delhi MP Ramesh Bidhuri will face chief minister Atishi in Kalkaji. Congress has fielded Alka Lamba from here, making it a triangular contest.

Four former Delhi ministers - Kailash Gahlot and Raj Kumar Anand, who served in the outgoing AAP government, along with Arvinder Singh Lovely and Rajkumar Chauhan, who held key portfolios during Sheila Dikshit's government from 2003 to 2013 - have also been given tickets. Gahlot's seat has been shifted from Najafgarh to Bijwasan,

while Anand will contest from the reserved constituency of Patel Nagar. The two-time Najafgarh MLA resigned as minister and quit AAP to join the BJP in November.

Tarvinder Singh Marwah, a three-time former Congress MLA from Jangpura who joined the BJP in 2022, will contest from the same seat. He is pitted against senior AAP leader and former deputy chief minister Manish Sisodia.

Former Delhi minister Arvind Singh Lovely has been fielded from the Gandhi Nagar seat in east Delhi, replacing incumbent BJP MLA Anil Bajpai. Bajpai had defeated Lovely from the seat in the 2020 polls.

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Kejriwal promises water bill waivers post elections

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

As the Delhi Jal Board (DJB) debt accumulated to over Rs 73,000 crore, former Chief Minister and Aam Aadmi Party convener Arvind Kejriwal on Saturday made another promise to the people of Delhi that his party would waive inflated water bills if his party was voted to power in the upcoming Delhi Assembly polls likely to be held next month. Addressing a press conference, Kejriwal urged the people not to pay inflated water bills and said that 12 lakh families got bills of zero amount. "But when I went to jail, I don't know what these people (BJP) did behind my back." He assured that these erroneous bills would be waived off after the elections, offering relief to affected residents.

The AAP government is providing 20,000 litres of free water to Delhi households. Interestingly, Kejriwal's AAP is in the power in Delhi. This comes after announcing six freebies to the people of Delhi including Mahila Samman Scheme under which Rs 2100 per month to be given to every woman, Pujaris and Granthi's monthly salary and free treatment to senior citizens.

Insiders say the DJB's financial losses have jumped from Rs 344.05 crore in the 2019-20 fiscal to Rs 1,196.22 crore in 2021-22, while the board has a debt of more than Rs 73,196.55 crore, which includes Rs 37,366.59 crore in principal amount and Rs 35,829.96 crore in interest.

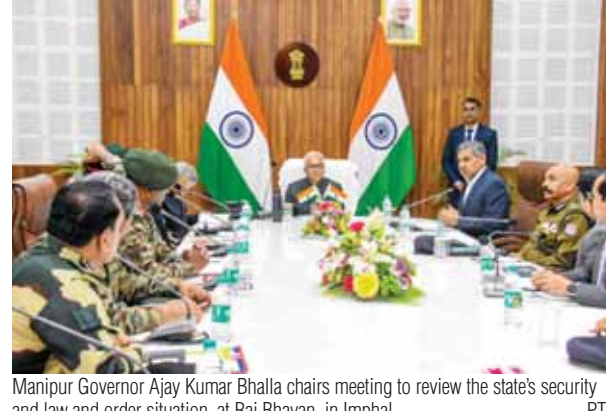
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Fresh violence erupts in Manipur

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ IMPHAL

After the apologies by Manipur chief Minister N Biren Singh, fresh violence were reported from the north eastern State as security was beefed up in Kangpokpi district where the Superintendent of Police was injured in a mob attack for failing to "remove" the central armed forces as per the demands of Kuki groups.

A mob on Friday evening attacked the office of M Prabhakar, throwing stones and other "projectiles" to vent their anger over the continued deployment of central forces, particularly the BSF and the CRPF, in the Saibol village. Vehicles of district police kept within the compound of the SP's office were vandalised. Prabhakar



Manipur Governor Ajay Kumar Bhalla chairs meeting to review the state's security and law and order situation, at Raj Bhavan, in Imphal PTI

was injured after being hit on the forehead by some projectile, officials said. Manipur Governor Ajay Kumar Bhalla who took over the charge chaired a meeting with senior police, CRPF, BSF, Assam Rifles officials on Saturday and reviewed the

comprehensive security situation in the state. The Governor of Manipur chaired a security meeting at Raj Bhavan in Imphal. Taking stock of the prevailing law and order situation, the Governor reviewed the security apparatus and its

arrangements throughout the state, with a particular focus on border areas," the release issued by Raj Bhavan said. More than 250 people have been killed and thousands rendered homeless in ethnic violence between Meitei and Kuki communities since May 2023. A senior officer in Imphal said a huge contingent of security forces have been deployed in the area. "Situation is now under control and being closely monitored," he added. In a statement, the police said that besides stones, the protestors attacked the SP office with petrol bombs. "Security forces retaliated against the mob and resorted to the use of adequate force to disperse the mob and the situation was brought under control," it said.

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Nagaland CM calls for end to factionalism in Naga talks

PNS ■ KOHIMA

Nagaland deputy chief minister Yanthung Patton, while emphasising that the Centre is willing to offer only one solution to the longstanding Naga political issue, on Saturday urged Naga underground factions and people to come together for a permanent resolution.

Addressing the 175th anniversary celebration of Lhisemia Thino, the amalgamation of different clans of Lhisemia Khel (sector) of Kohima village, Patton said, "The Centre,



under the dynamic leadership of Prime Minister Narendra Modi, is ready to give us a solution only if our Naga factions are united." The Centre has been holding political negotiations with the NSCN-IM since the signing of the ceasefire agreement in

1997 and also inked the Framework Agreement in 2015. It also entered into parallel negotiations with the Working Committee of Naga National Political Groups (WC NNPGs), composed of at least seven Naga factions, in 2017. They signed the Agreed Position in November 2017. Negotiations between the Centre and Naga groups were declared to have concluded on October 30, 2019, by the then interlocutor and Governor of Nagaland, R N Ravi.

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District hospital where injured army personnel are being treated after an army vehicle fell into a gorge in Bandipora district PTI

Two Army accidents in two weeks: 8 soldiers dead

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ JAMMU

Three Indian army jawans were killed and two others received injuries when their vehicle skidded off the road and fell into a deep gorge in the North Kashmir district of Bandipora on Saturday. According to preliminary reports, the accident occurred due to inclement weather and poor visibility conditions in the SK Payeen area of Bandipora. The locals in the area responded swiftly and launched rescue operations. This is the second incident in the last two weeks in which Indian army jawans lost their lives in a road accident. Five soldiers were killed in the Balnoi sector of Poonch when an army vehicle rolled down into a gorge on December 24, 2024. Srinagar-based Chinar Corps posted on X (earlier Twitter), "On 04 Jan 24, while performing duty in the Bandipora district, an Indian Army vehicle skidded and fell into the gorge due to inclement weather and poor visibility." Injured soldiers were promptly evacuated for medical care with assistance from Kashmiri locals, for which we express gratitude to the citizens for providing immediate succor. Tragically three bravehearts lost their lives in the unfortunate accident. Indian Army extends heartfelt condolences to the bereaved families."

Fog causes rail, air traffic disruption



A train moves on a Srinagar-Baramulla railway track amid snow on a foggy winter afternoon, on the outskirts of Srinagar PTI

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

Delhi airport on Saturday saw 19 flight diversions, many cancellations and over 400 flight delays as low visibility conditions due to dense fog impacted operations for the second straight day, reducing the visibility to zero in several areas for an unprecedented nine-hour stretch, the longest spell of the season. "Zero visibility prevailed for nine hours at Palam between 6 pm and 3 am (UTC), marking the longest spell of the season. The city's primary weather station, Safdarjung, recorded eight

hours of zero visibility, according to the India Meteorological Department (IMD). India's largest airline, IndiGo, temporarily halted both arrivals and departures. Airlines, including IndiGo and Air India, issued travel advisories urging customers to check their flight status before heading to the airport and allow extra time for travel. An official said 19 flights were diverted at the airport between 12.15 am and 1.30 am due to reduced visibility. Of them, 13 were domestic, four international and two non-scheduled flights. More than

WEATHER	
AQI	378
MAX	20°C
MIN	7.8°C

45 flights were cancelled due to bad weather conditions at Delhi as well as at the destination airports, the official said. As per information available on flight tracking website Flightradar24.Com, over 450 flights were delayed at the Delhi airport. "While landing and takeoffs continue at Delhi Airport, flights that are not

CAT III compliant may get affected. Passengers are requested to contact the airline concerned for updated flight information. "Any inconvenience caused is deeply regretted," the Delhi International Airport Ltd (DIAL) said in a post on X at 6.56 am. CAT III facility allows aircraft to operate in low-visibility conditions. Indira Gandhi International Airport (IGIA) in the national capital is operated by DIAL, handles around 1,300 flight movements daily. "# 6 E T r a v e l A d v i s o r y : Departures and arrivals at #DelhiAirport are currently on hold due to reduced visibility," IndiGo said in a post on X at 1.05 am on Saturday. Air India said in an update on X at 1.16 am that poor visibility due to dense fog was impacting flight operations in Delhi and parts of northern India. A thick blanket of fog had enveloped Delhi on Friday as well, delaying more than 400 flights. In an update on X at 10.58 am, IndiGo said dense fog continued to affect visibility in Delhi, Chandigarh, Amritsar, Srinagar, Guwahati, and Patna, even during daytime. "We assure you that our teams are working diligently to assist all impacted customers, ensuring your journey resumes as soon as the weather improves," it said in another post at 11 am.

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Delhi man scams 700 women using fake dating profiles

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

Delhi Police has arrested a 23-year-old man who allegedly scammed over 700 women after befriending them on dating applications by posing as a US-based model. The cyber police station of West district arrested Tushar Bisht on charges of exploiting online platforms such as Bumble and Snapchat to lure his victims, blackmail them using private photos and videos, and extort money. According to police, during the day, he works as a recruiter at a private company in Uttar Pradesh's Noida. At night he turns into a US-based model on a soul-searching trip to India. His day job offered him security, and his nocturnal activities brought in the money through manipulation and blackmail. Tushar Singh Bisht, 23, was arrested from the Shakarpur area of East Delhi on Friday for defrauding over 700 women by posing as a model on dating platforms. A resident of Delhi, Tushar has a bachelor's degree in business administration (BBA). For the past three years, he had been employed as a technical recruiter at a private company in Noida. His father works as a driver, his mother is a homemaker, and his sister is employed in Gurugram. "Posing as a US-based freelance model, the accused created fake identities using a virtual international mobile number and photographs of a Brazilian model," Deputy Commissioner of Police (West), Vichitra Veer, said in the statement. Bisht used the fake profiles to connect with women aged between 18 and 30 years on various online dating platforms. "His primary targets were users of Bumble, Snapchat and WhatsApp," the statement said. The DCP said Bisht gained his victims' trust by engaging in conversations, and convinced them to share private and intimate images and



REPRESENTATIVE PHOTO

videos."Once he obtained the content, he resorted to blackmail, threatening to leak the sensitive material online, or sell them to dark web unless the victims paid him," the DCP said. Preliminary investigation revealed that the accused interacted with over 500 women on Bumble and 200 others on Snapchat and WhatsApp, police said. The accused's mobile phone contained incriminating evidence, including objectionable data of victims, a virtual mobile number, and details of financial transactions involving extortion. The police also seized 13 credit cards linked to various banks, the statement said. The matter came to light on December 13, last year, when a Delhi University student filed a complaint with the cyber police station claiming that she had connected with the accused on Bumble earlier in the year. Posing as a US-based model visiting India for work, he gained her trust through consistent chats. As their interactions deepened, the accused persuaded her to share private photos and videos on Snapchat and WhatsApp. Despite repeated requests to meet in person, he always evaded with excuses, the DCP said.

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Six Indian Americans sworn-in as members of US House of Representatives

PTI ■ WASHINGTON

In a momentous occasion for Indian Americans, six of their leaders on Friday were sworn-in as the members of the US House of Representatives, the largest so far for this minority ethnic community in the United States. "When I was first sworn in twelve years ago, I was the sole Indian American Member of Congress and only the third in US history. Now, our coalition is six strong! I am excited to welcome even more Indian Americans to the halls of Congress in the years to come!" Congressman Dr Ami Bera said in a post on X. Bera, the senior most of them, who has been sworn-in for the seventh consecutive term as a representative of the seventh Congressional District of

California, also posted a picture of all the six Indian American Congressman from the floor of the House. Suhash Subramanian, who represents the 10th Congressional District of Virginia is the newest Indian American to be a member of the House of Representatives. "First day of work! Honoured to be sworn into the #119th Congress, and excited to get to work to deliver results for VA10," he said as he posted a picture of him along with his family and House Speaker Mike Johnson. "Ready to Serve," said Congressman Shri Thanedar who represents the 13th Congressional District of Michigan as he posted a selfie of his from the House floor. All the six Indian American lawmakers are from the Democratic Party and voted for



(Left to right): Ami Bera, Pramila Jayapal, Raja Krishnamoorthi, Ro Khanna, Shri Thanedar and Suhash Subramanyam

House Minority Leader Hakeem Jeffries in the election for House Speakership. Republican Mike Johnson was elected as the House Speaker. Congressman Ro Khanna represents the 17th Congressional District of California and Raja Krishnamoorthi represents the eighth Congressional District of Illinois. Congresswoman Pramila

Jayapal, representing the seventh Congressional District of Washington state, is the first ever Indian American woman to be elected to the House of Representatives. All the three - Khanna, Krishnamoorthi and Jayapal - have been sworn-in for a fifth consecutive term, during which they have emerged as powerful

lawmakers in their own way. Krishnamoorthi is a Ranking Member of the powerful China Committee and also a member of the House Intelligence Committee. Jayapal is leader of the highly powerful progressive group of lawmakers. Khanna is not only a member of several powerful House committees, but also is seen as a potential presidential candidate in

the years to come. All the six Indian Americans constitute an informal Samosa Caucus, a term coined by Krishnamoorthi. When sworn in for the first term in 2012, Dr Bera had then wished to have 10 Indian Americans in the House of Representatives. Several Indian Americans aspiring to be elected to the House lost

elections either during the primaries or in the November 5 general elections. At least three of them were women: Sushila Jaipal, Bhavani Patel and Krystal Kaul. Dalip Singh Saund was the first Indian American to be elected to the House of Representatives in 1957. Also, the first Sikh, he was elected for three consecutive terms. He was from the Democratic Party. It took nearly five decades for a second Indian American to enter the US House of Representatives. Bobby Jindal represented the First Congressional District of Louisiana from 2005 to 2008. He later went on to become the two-term Governor of Louisiana, making him the first Indian American to be elected as the governor of a US State. Jindal is the only Indian American to be elected to the House on a Republican ticket.

India faces major heart stroke care accessibility challenges

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

Highlighting a significant challenge in stroke care accessibility in India, particularly for ischaemic stroke patients, a study has found that such patients have to travel more than 100 km away from the nearest intravenous thrombolysis (IVT) treatment center and endovascular therapy (EVT) center.

This distance can severely delay crucial treatment. Overall, roughly a fourth of the Indian population has access to a rehabilitation centre within an hour of experiencing an ischaemic stroke -- caused when a blood clot affects supply to the brain, a study has found.

The research, published in the International Journal of Stroke, also estimated that there is less than one ischaemic stroke centre per million population and suggested that establishing stroke facilities equipped with intravenous thrombolysis and endovascular treatments in poorly served regions in India is urgently needed to increase access and improve outcomes for stroke patients. Ischaemic stroke is the most common, accounting for about 70-80 per cent of all strokes in India, according to a September 2024 study, published in the journal Scientific Reports.

In the recent study, researchers, including those from the US' Ascension Health and All India Institute of Medical Sciences (AIIMS), Hyderabad, found that a total of 566 stroke centres

equipped with the 'intravenous thrombolysis' method of treatment (which breaks up blood clots) were spread across 26 states and union territories.

Of the 566, over 60 per cent (361) were found to be also equipped with endovascular therapy for stroke patients, considered superior. Typically, an ischaemic stroke patient was 115 kilometres away from the nearest intravenous thrombolysis treatment centre and about 130 kilometres away from the nearest endovascular therapy centre, the researchers found. Further, a little over 26 per cent of the Indian population can access an intravenous thrombolysis centre in under an hour, while about a fifth can access an endovascular therapy centre, the team found.

For the analysis, data on "intravenous thrombolysis capable (IVT-C) and endovascular treatment capable (EVT-C)" stroke centres were collected in March 2021 from medical devices and pharmaceutical industry providers. Time taken to drive to the nearest stroke care centre was estimated using the application 'Google Distance Matrix API'. "Access within one hour to an IVT-C and an EVT-C centre was available to 26.3 per cent and 20.6 per cent of the Indian population, respectively," the authors wrote. "The average stroke centres per million (SCPM) population was 0.41 and 0.26 for IVT-C and EVT-C, respectively," they wrote.

Sikkim Bailey Bridge collapses

PNS ■ GANGTOK

A 25-year-old bailey bridge in Sikkim collapsed when an overloaded truck was crossing it on Saturday, officials said. The 200-foot bridge, located over Lachung Chu River, was on the Lachung-Katao Road. No casualties were reported in the incident as the bridge did not fall into the river and the driver of the truck was rescued safely.

An official in the North Sikkim district administration said vehicles

are being diverted through an alternative bridge, which can be used by tourists and locals till the collapsed bridge is repaired and restored.

"Officials of the district administration will visit Lachung and assess the damages caused by the collapse and plan repair and restoration work accordingly. All departments and agencies concerned, including Border Roads Organisation and Indian Army, will be consulted before restoration work on the bridge begins," he said.

Two more arrests in Beed Sarpanch murder case

TN RAGHUNATHA ■ MUMBAI

A Special Investigation Team (SIT) of the Maharashtra police on Saturday arrested two absconding accused in connection with the much-discussed murder of Sarpanch Santosh Deshmukh of Massjog village in Beed district of Marathwada region. Within days after its formation, the SIT of the Crime Investigation Department (CID) took two more accused Sudarshan Ghule and Sudhir Sangle into custody, taking the total number of arrests made in the case to six. The SIT is looking for the

seventh accused Krushna Andhale who is still at large. Santosh Deshmukh (45), a three-time Sarpanch, was allegedly killed for attempting to thwart the extortion bid on a local windmill company. He was first abducted, brutally tortured and later killed in the broad daylight near the windmill company office on the afternoon of December 9, 2024.

The Beed police had earlier arrested four persons -- Vishnu Chate, Jai Ram Chate, Mahesh Kedar and Pratik Ghule -- for the murder of Sarpanch Deshmukh. The sarpanch murder case is politically crucial as Walmi Karad, the prime accused in the Rs 2 crore extortion case

linked to the murder is allegedly close to Maharashtra Minister Dhananjay Munde. Karad, who surrendered before the State CID on Tuesday, is currently in 14 days' police custody. Various political parties in the state have also been clamouring for the arrest of Karad in the Sarpanch murder case as well. On its part, the Maharashtra government has instituted three probes -- one by the Crime Investigation Department (CID), the second by the SIT probe and third a judicial inquiry -- for the murder of the extortion-linked murder of Sarpanch Deshmukh.

BJP protests in Bengaluru, demands Kharge's resignation

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ BENGALURU

BJP staged a protest on Saturday demanding the resignation of Minister Priyank Kharge in connection with the alleged suicide of a Bidar-based civil contractor. BJP state president B Y Vijayendra, Leader of Opposition in the Karnataka Legislative Assembly R Ashoka, and Leader of Opposition in the Legislative Council Chalavadi Narayanaswamy led the protest.

The party leaders gathered at Jagat Circle in large numbers, holding placards and raising slogans against the minister amid a tight security presence. They later marched toward the minister's residence but were detained by the police midway.

According to the police, around 80 protesters were detained, including Ashoka, Narayanaswamy and MLC C T Ravi. "Around 80 protesters were detained while they were on their way to the minister's residence. They were taken into a police bus but were later released," a senior police officer said.

As the BJP planned to lay siege to Kharge's residence, the minister decided to counter them uniquely. Police personnel were also deployed outside the residence as a

precautionary measure to avoid any untoward incident.

Reacting to the protest, Kharge told reporters that neither he nor the government would succumb to the opposition's demands and pressure tactics. He pointed out that several cases were against BJP leaders, including a case under the POCSSO Act against former Chief Minister B S Yediyurappa.

Yediyurappa is the father of BJP state chief B Y Vijayendra and Shivamogga MP B Y Raghavendra. Mounting pressure on the ruling Congress in Karnataka, the BJP has reiterated its demand for a CBI inquiry into the contractor's "suicide" and the resignation of Kharge.

Civil contractor Sachin Panchal allegedly died by suicide on December 26 by lying before a moving train in Bidar district. In his suicide note, he accused Priyank Kharge's close aide, Raju Kapanur, of compelling him to take the drastic step. He alleged that he was receiving death threats to pay Rs one crore to Kapanur, who rejected the charges.

Kharge also said he had no role in the case, as the suicide note did not name him. He also demanded an inquiry into the case to uncover the truth.

LG orders camps for DDA housing scheme

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

Delhi Lieutenant Governor Secretariat has written to the Chief Secretary to get special camps organized by concerned departments to make it convenient for

beneficiaries to avail of the recently announced Housing Scheme of the Delhi Development Authority (DDA), wherein certain sections will be able to avail buy Houses at a discount of 25 per cent. The identified categories include construction and other

workers, auto/tax drivers, women, Vir Nari, Ex-servicemen, Divyangjans, Gallantry & Arjun awardees and scheduled caste/scheduled tribes. The DSCFC will facilitate loans to applicants belonging to SC/ST category.

Nagaland CM Calls for End...

From page 1

However, the persistent demand for a separate Naga flag and constitution, as well as the integration of Naga-inhabited areas spread across four states-Arunachal Pradesh, Assam, Manipur, and Nagaland-and the neighboring country of Myanmar, has not been accepted by the Centre, thus delaying the final solution. Nonetheless, the WC NNPGs have declared their acceptance of the solution and continue talks for the remaining demands. But, the final solution remains elusive. The deputy CM appealed to everyone to spread the message of peace and unity among the Naga society, irrespective of tribe, clan, or region, for the progress and prosperity of the state and for the posterity.

Expressing concern over the existence of around 28 underground factions claiming to fight for a common Naga solution, the minister said, "Not every

faction is engaged in negotiations with the Centre as some are involved in anti-social activities, including extortion and illegal taxation from the public."

"It is sad to see that our political movement is broken into pieces with about 28 factions running parallel governments today, marred with illegal taxations and extortions, making life difficult for our Naga people and hindering any progressive and sustainable activities," he said.

"We need a strong and cohesive society for the growth and progress of the state," Patton said, adding that the state government, under the leadership of Chief Minister Neiphiu Rio, has formed an opposition-less government, bringing all sixty elected MLAs together under one umbrella, irrespective of political party affiliations, with the aim to bring unity among Naga society and work towards a permanent solution to the protracted Naga political issue.



Our population is still in a state of shock and trauma: Orli Weitzman

KUMAR CHELLAPPAN ■ KOCHI

It is more than a year since the Israel-Palestine war ripped through Israel. As the Jewish state enters the second year of losing hundreds of her sons, daughters and tiny tots to the dreaded Hamas terrorists, people are yet to come out of the trauma and shock of the October 7, 2023 attack. A group of Hamas terrorists struck at a musical and prayer congregation by the Jewish community as part of Simchat Torah, a religious occasion. More than 1,500 persons including Israeli soldiers were killed while nearly 250 Israeli citizens were kidnapped. The Israeli Defense Forces (IDF) are struggling to get the hostages released from the custody of the Hamas.

"Our population is still in a state of shock and trauma. Women and children are the worst affected ones and they have not slept well since that fateful day," Orli Weitzman, Consul General of Israel, told The Pioneer.

She said the Israeli population's grief has been aggravated by a section of the media that distorts the

happenings in her country. As international news agencies report from the frontlines, Israel is trying to gathering support across the world. "Delegations which include the victims and close relations of persons who lost their lives in the October 7 massacre are calling on countries in Europe, Africa, Asia and America to explain the ground realities," said Weitzman.

"The media persons do not check the authenticity of the campaign materials provided by the spokespersons of Hamas and such other organizations," said Weitzman.

Dr Joseph John, a septuagenarian medical doctor in Kerala, believes that the chances of Israel getting justice from international bodies such as United Nations look quite bleak. "The media has been bought over by Hamas, Hezbollah and even organizations like Lashkar and IS. The United Nations have become United Nonsense," he said.

Weitzman signed off by saying that Hamas, HUM, IS are out to finish the world once and for ever.

Seven arrested in Delhi school stabbing incident

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

A 14-year-old student was allegedly stabbed to death outside his school in east Delhi's Shakarpur area with police apprehending seven people, including three schoolmates.

The alleged incident took place around 6 pm on Friday after an altercation between the victim, who is in Class 9, and some other students, the police said. Deputy Commissioner of Police (East) Abhishek Dhania said seven people, including five juveniles, were nabbed. The suspects were planning to flee the city when they were apprehended. The police also recovered the knife used in the murder and other critical evidence, the officer said.

"Investigations revealed that during a break at 4 pm, a classmate of the victim allegedly borrowed a mobile phone and made a call. The accused classmate allegedly discussed a dispute with the victim and instructed the person on the line to 'send people'," the DCP said.

Fog causes rail, air traffic disruption

From page 1

The Northern Railway said a total of 59 trains were running late by up to six hours and 22 by around eight hours.

With the the maximum temperature in the city settled at 20 degrees Celsius, 0.7 notch above average and the minimum temperature was recorded at 7.8 degrees Celsius, 0.9 notch above the normal, according to the India Meteorological Department (IMD) said. Ayanagar recorded 7.2 degree Celsius, coldest area in the national capital.

In a related development, the air quality in the national capital remained in the 'very poor' category. Delhi's 24-hour average AQI was recorded at 378, according to data from the Central Pollution Control Board (CPCB). This is despite the fact that stage three of the Graded Response Action Plan has been revoked in Delhi and the neighbouring states. Transport is the key source of air pollution in the national capital.

The weather department has predicted dense fog conditions likely to continue over parts of North India from late night of Saturday to morning hours of Sunday and improve thereafter.

Verma, Bhiduri vs Kejriwal, Atishi: High stakes polls in Delhi

From page 1

Chauhan will run from the reserved Mangolpuri constituency. He was minister in the erstwhile Sheila Dikshit government. Raaj Kumar Anand, who resigned as a minister and quit AAP earlier this year, was fielded from the Patel Nagar seat.

Chhatrapur MLA Kartar Singh, who also switched to the saffron party from AAP, has been fielded from the same seat. ND Sharma, another former AAP MLA, will contest as a BJP candidate from Badarpur.

The BJP has fielded its national office-bearers Dushyant Kumar Gautam and Ashish Sood from the Karol Bagh and the Janakpuri seats, respectively. BJP national secretary Manjinder Singh Sirsa will contest from Rajouri Garden, which he had won in the 2015 elections.

Former Congress councillor Kumar Rinku is the BJP's candidate from Seemapuri. The BJP also retained incumbent MLAs OP Sharma (Vishwas Nagar), Leader of Opposition in the Assembly Vijender Gupta (Rohini), Ajay Mahawar (Ghonda) and Jitendra Mahajan (Rohtash Nagar).

The party has not yet announced its candidates for the two other seats it won in the 2020 polls -- Laxmi Nagar and the Karawal Nagar. Former Delhi BJP president Satish Upadhyay will contest from Malviya Nagar. The party has fielded former MLA Manoj Shokeen against Delhi minister Raghuvinder Shokeen from the Nangloi Jat seat.

The BJP's city unit chief Virendra Sachdeva said in a statement that the party had fielded "strong" candidates who would act as "catalysts"

for change. Elections to the 70-member Delhi Assembly are due next month.

After the list was released, Bidhuri expressed his confidence to defeat Atishi, saying, "he thank the BJP leadership for showing trust in me to reclaim the Kalkaji assembly seat. Delhi is suffering because of Arvind Kejriwal. The people of Kalkaji have also faced 'aapda' under CM Atishi..."

The BJP is pulling out all the stops to end AAP's hold on power in the city since 2013, except for a brief period when Delhi was under President's rule. The upcoming elections are being viewed as a fiercely contested battle between the BJP and AAP. The Congress, which was in power in Delhi for 15 straight years, has not been able to win any seat in the last two editions of the Delhi polls.

paramilitary forces to extend their fullest cooperation to the administration in maintaining law and order in the state.

Security Advisor to Manipur government, Kuldip Singh, DGP Rajiv Singh, IGAR (South) Maj Gen Ravroop Singh and senior officers of CRPF and BSF attended the security meeting, it said. Bhalla, a former Union Home secretary, took oath as the 19th governor of Manipur on Friday. After the violence erupted, Congress hit out at Prime Minister Narendra Modi and said he could not escape the constitutional culpability of not following "rajdharm". Congress president Mallikarjun Kharge alleged

that the BJP had some vested interest in keeping the border state on the boil.

"The BJP is the matchstick which burnt Manipur!" he said in a social media post. Kharge said fresh violence was witnessed recently when a mob attacked the Kangpokpi district superintendent of police, resulting in injuries. "Your incompetent and shameless chief minister has expressed regret but has conveniently brazened out your absence in the state," he alleged. Even the Supreme Court has said it was the primary responsibility of the Union and the state governments to ensure peace and normalcy, the Congress president noted.

Fresh violence erupts in Manipur

From page 1

The SP is "fine now and presently leading the joint security forces in tackling the situation", it added. A few protesters, who sustained injuries during the clashes, were also been admitted to hospital, officials said.

Kuki organisations have been protesting against central forces after women of the community were allegedly baton-charged on December 31 for blocking their way. Locals claimed that several people were injured in the action by the security forces that happened in Saibol village in Twiching, which is located in the so-called 'buffer zone' between the Kuki-held Hills

and Meitei-dominated Imphal Valley.

They said that the local women had gathered to protest what they described as the "forceful occupation" of community bunkers by security personnel. The security forces had conducted the operation at the village and its peripheral areas following gunfights between armed groups, which injured four people, including a police personnel. Protesting the December 31 action by security forces, the K a n g p o k p i - b a s e d Committee on Tribal Unity (COTU) blocked the critical transportation route of National Highway 2, disrupting the movement of goods to the Imphal Valley

where the Meiteis live. Meanwhile, the security forces recovered a large cache of arms and ammunition from the Loibol Khunou area of the district on Friday.

Among the items recovered were a modified 7.62 mm sniper rifle, an improvised long-range mortar, locally called 'pumpi', three 9mm pistols with magazines, a 12 bore Gun, an SBBL gun, 10 live rounds of ammunition, three hand grenades, three picket grenades, two tear smoke grenades and a wireless set, police said. The Governor directed the state DGP to prioritize the safety and security of the people and urged officers from the Army and

paramilitary forces to extend their fullest cooperation to the administration in maintaining law and order in the state.

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Kejriwal promises water bill waivers post elections

From page 1

The DJB is estimated to incur a loss of Rs 854.86 crore in the 2022-23 fiscal. The DJB had incurred a loss of Rs 344.05 crore in 2019-20, which rose to Rs 770.87 crore in the next fiscal and then to Rs 1,196.22 crore in the 2021-22 fiscal.

Slamming the surge in charges during his absence, Kejriwal assured residents that no one would need to pay erroneous bills under an AAP government. In a press conference, Kejriwal said that people were "distressed" due to water bills worth thousands and lakhs of rupees being sent to them by the Delhi Jal Board.

He alleged that the inflated water bills started arriving after he went to jail and urged people not to pay those bills. "I have said this earlier, but today I am making a formal announcement: when AAP comes back to power after the assembly polls, these inflated bills will be waived. Those who think their bills are incorrect need not pay them," the former Delhi chief minister said. The AAP government provides free 20,000 liters of water per

month and over 12 lakh households in the city have benefitted from the scheme, he added.

In a veiled attack on AAP led Delhi government, BJP leader Vijender Gupta revealed that the Chief Secretary of Delhi had prepared a report on financial irregularities in DJB detailing DJB's massive debt of Rs 73,000 crore and several instances of financial mismanagement. According to the report, from 2015 to 2024, ₹28,500 crore was allocated to DJB for various projects, but there is no record of how this money was spent.

On December 10, Kejriwal announced his first guarantee for auto drivers in Delhi, making five promises which include marriage assistance of Rs one lakh for the marriage of an auto driver's daughter, uniform allowance of Rs 2500 twice a year for new uniforms for auto drivers, Insurance of Rs 10 lakh life insurance and Rs 5 lakh accidental insurance for every auto driver, government sponsored coaching fees for children and Poocho App for them. Kejriwal announced Dr Ambedkar Samman

Scholarship which will offers full financial assistance to children from the Dalit community for pursuing higher education abroad. Once admitted to a foreign university, the Delhi government will cover all expenses, including tuition, travel, accommodation, and study-related costs.

To empower women, Kejriwal announced Mahila Samman Yojana, a monthly honorarium of Rs 2,100 for all women aged 18 and above who are residents of Delhi and listed on the voter roll. Women working in government jobs, serving as MPs, MLAs, councillors, or receiving pensions will not be eligible. Under Sanjeevani Yojana, free treatment to senior citizens aged 60 and above. Kejriwal has promised Rs 18,000 monthly honorarium to priests in temples and granthis in gurdwaras as recognition of their spiritual contributions and efforts to preserve cultural heritage. The AAP is seeking to return to power for the fourth consecutive term after the elections to the 70-member Delhi Assembly next month.

PM Modi to inaugurate 13 km Delhi section of Namo Bharat corridor today

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

Prime Minister Narendra Modi will inaugurate the additional 13 kilometre Delhi section of Namo Bharat corridor between Sahibabad and New Ashok Nagar on Sunday. The inauguration will take place around 11 am and PM Modi will likely to travel from Sahibabad to New Ashok Nagar. According to official, the passenger operations will commence from 5 pm onwards on Sunday and trains will be available to the public at a frequency of 15 minutes. The fare from New Ashok Nagar station to Meerut South is Rs 150 for standard coach and Rs 225 for premium coach, they said.

Of the newly inaugurated 13 km section, six km is underground and includes a prominent station on the corridor, Anand Vihar. This

marks the first time that Namo Bharat trains will operate in an underground section, the officials stated.

With this inauguration, Namo Bharat trains will now arrive in Delhi. The Prime Minister inaugurated the 17 km priority section between Sahibabad and Duhai Depot on October 20 last year.

Currently, a 42-km stretch of the corridor between Sahibabad and Meerut South, featuring nine stations, is operational. With this inauguration, the operational stretch of the Namo Bharat corridor will expand to 55 km, with a total of 11 stations, they said. With the commencement of operations on this section, Meerut city is now directly connected to Delhi. This will reduce travel time by one-third, enabling commuters to travel from New Ashok Nagar to Meerut South in just under

40 minutes, the officials said.

To date, Namo Bharat trains have served over 50 lakh commuters.

Further construction in other sections -- New Ashok Nagar-Sarai Kale Khan and Meerut South-Modipuram -- is progressing at a rapid pace, they said.

Anand Vihar underground station is one of the largest stations on the Namo Bharat corridor. Commuters will be able to travel from here to Meerut South in just 35 minutes.

As a special arrangement for the movement of vehicles and pedestrians at this station, three bridges have been built over the Ghazipur drain. Two of these bridges are to be used for vehicle entry and exit, while one is exclusively for pedestrians, they said.

New Ashok Nagar is the first elevated Namo Bharat station to be operational on the Delhi



section. Here, the corridor crosses the New Ashok Nagar metro station at a height of 20 meters.

Along with train services, a commercial centre has also been planned at the station for the convenience of commuters. This station is being connected to the Blue

Line of Delhi Metro through a 90-meter-long foot over bridge, the officials said.

The Namo Bharat project has been designed with passenger convenience at its core. Namo Bharat station premises offer free drinking water and washrooms.

One coach in each train is

reserved for women, and other coaches also have reserved seats for women, the elderly, and Divyaangians. Inside the Namo Bharat trains, specific spaces have been provided for wheelchairs and stretchers, they said.

A train attendant is available on each train to assist and ensure the convenience of all passengers. Additionally, a panic button has been provided inside the coach and on the platform screen doors to request help in case of an emergency.

Once the entire Delhi-Meerut Namo Bharat Corridor becomes operational, it is projected to remove over one lakh private vehicles from the roads and reduce carbon emissions by 2.5 lakh tonnes annually.

Covering 82 km, the Namo Bharat corridor originates at Sarai Kale Khan in New Delhi

and terminates at Modipuram in Meerut. It features 16 Namo Bharat stations along with nine additional stations for the Meerut Metro, making it a comprehensive and transformative regional transit solution.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi will on Sunday inaugurate the Janakpuri West-Krishna Park Extension stretch, the first section of the Delhi Metro Rail Corporation's Phase-IV network to open for public, officials said.

Passenger services will commence on the section on the Magenta Line from 3 pm Sunday, the DMRC's principle executive director Anuj Dayal said.

"With the addition of Krishna Park Extension Station, the Delhi Metro network now comprises 289 stations spanning a total length of

394.448 km. This new section is an extension of the already operational Botanical Garden-Janakpuri West on Magenta Line," Dayal said.

This extension ensures that metro services will now run up to Krishna Park Extension, offering enhanced connectivity to commuters in the nearby areas, he said.

The services between Janakpuri West and Krishna Park Extension will be available at a frequency of 16 minutes initially to ensure a smooth scaling up, he said.

"The Janakpuri West-Krishna Park Extension section will be inaugurated by the prime minister on Sunday. In addition, he shall also lay the foundation stone for the construction of the 26.5 kilometre long Rithala-Narela-Kundli (Sonipat) Metro corridor of Phase 4," Dayal said.

HM Shah inaugurates working women hostel Sushma Swaraj Bhawan and Veterinary Centre in city

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

Union Home Minister Amit Shah on Saturday inaugurated the working women hostel - Sushma Swaraj Bhawan and Veterinary Center (Modern Animal Care facility) in the capital and also recalled her 'fighting spirit' as an Opposition leader. To mark the inauguration of Sushma Bhawan - working women hostel, Shah handed over the keys of hostel rooms to three new inhabitants.

Highlighting the infrastructure developmental projects executed by the Modi government, Shah said he has come with a list of developmental works executed by the Modi government, worth Rs 68000 crore in the past 10 years.

"The Modi government has invested Rs 41,000 crores in road development, Rs 15,000 crores in railway-related projects, and Rs 12,000 crores to enhance services at the airport and its surroundings, Rs 8,000 crores were spent on the Delhi-Meerut Expressway and now, one can reach Meerut from Delhi in 45 minutes", he said.

"A high-speed corridor is being built to complete the



24-hour journey from Delhi to Mumbai in 12 hours; Dwarka Expressway has been built at a cost of Rs 7,500 crores, Eastern Peripheral Expressway at a cost of Rs 11,000 crores, Urban Extension Road at a cost of Rs 7,715 crores, Pragati Maidan Integrated Transit Corridor at a cost of Rs 920 crores and Delhi-Meerut RRTS Rail Corridor has been built at a cost of Rs 30,000 crores".

He said that a 7000-seat convention center and a 3000-seat amphitheater were built in Bharat Mandapam. Yashobhoomi Convention Center at a cost of Rs 5400 crore, Dwarka Golf Course at a cost of Rs 250 crore and Dwarka Sports Complex built

at a cost of Rs 92 crore. He said a scheme to give ownership rights to 40 lakh poor people by starting the process of regularizing 1731 colonies under PM-Uday Yojana, a scheme to give flats to slum dwellers, 29 thousand houses under Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana-Urban and 3000 EWS flats were built at a cost of about ₹354 crore. New Veer Savarkar College in Delhi University, Prime Minister Museum, Police Memorial, National War Memorial, development of India International Convention Center and Expo Center, Oxygen Park and many green initiatives have also been taken.

In a veiled attack on former

Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal, Shah said AAP convener should organise a 'Sheeshmahal Darshan', programmes for the people of Delhi referring to the 6 Flag Staff Marg bungalow where Kejriwal used to live during his tenure as chief minister of Delhi.

Shah, referring to the allegations regarding the construction of a Sheesh Mahal in Delhi on 50,000 square yards at a cost of Rs 45 crores, stated that the people of the capital are demanding accountability for this expenditure. He remarked that despite having the opportunity to focus on the development of Delhi's infrastructure over 10 years, the focus was shifted to constructing a Sheesh Mahal instead of prioritizing development.

At the event Lieutenant Governor Vinai Kumar Saxena, Member of Parliament, Bansuri Swaraj, New Delhi Municipal Council Chairman Keshav Chandra, Vice Chairman, Kuljeet Singh Chahal, Members Shri Anil Valmiki, Sarita Tomar and Dinesh Pratap Singh along with Secretary Tariq Thomas, Head of Departments, Senior officers and employees of

NDMC were present.

The Home Minister stated that the NDMC has provided safe accommodation for approximately 500 working women through the construction of Sushma Bhawan. He said that the inauguration of this building is a significant step in highlighting Prime Minister Narendra Modi's vision for urban development. He said that since assuming office in 2014, PM Modi has laid a strong policy foundation for transforming India's urban landscape. Shah noted that PM Modi stressed the importance of global-standard facilities and included them as a central element of the urban development policy.

Speaking on the occasion, Saxena said in this Sushma Bhawan, 39 well-furnished rooms have been built in a three-storey building, which are equipped with AC and Lift facilities where 78 working women will be able to get housing facility in this complex while Chandra said that this is an unforgettable moment for all of us that a new chapter has been added in the series of working women hostels of NDMC in the name of Sushma Bhawan.

BJP and Congress should finally declare their alliance, says Kejriwal

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

AAP national convener and former Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal on Saturday said the Congress and the BJP should formally declare their alliance, amid the two opposition parties sharpening their attacks on the former chief minister ahead of the Delhi Assembly polls. Kejriwal also took a dig at the Congress, saying barring a few mediapersons, people had stopped taking the party "seriously".

He alleged a "covert, behind-the-scenes" collaboration between the two parties for the assembly polls.

Relations between AAP and the Congress, both partners in the opposition INDIA bloc, soured after the two sides failed to seal an alliance for the Haryana elections.

AAP has also demanded action against senior Congress leader Ajay Maken for allegedly calling Kejriwal "anti-national" and threatened to approach other parties of the INDIA bloc for removing the grand old party from the grouping.

Earlier on Saturday, some women protested outside Kejriwal's Firozshah Road residence, demanding



payment of a monthly honorarium of Rs 1,000 in Punjab, which is also governed by AAP. In a press conference, Kejriwal claimed the protesting women were from the Congress and the BJP. "These women belong to the Congress and the BJP, not Punjab. All women in Punjab stand with AAP. They trust us," he asserted.

He further said, "The Congress and the BJP should officially declare that they are contesting the elections against AAP in an alliance. This covert, behind-the-scenes collaboration is unacceptable."

Attacking the BJP, Kejriwal said the party had no chief ministerial face or agenda and

its leaders were trying to win the Delhi polls by abusing him in the absence of any achievement that they could talk about.

Now, the people of Delhi will decide whether they want those who work or those who only believe in abusing, he said.

"We are presenting our track record of 10 years and our plan for the next five while the BJP offers nothing but abuses," Kejriwal charged.

Elections to the 70-member Delhi Assembly are due in February. AAP has already announced all its candidates while the Congress and the BJP have so far declared nominees for 48 and 29 seats, respectively.

Eminent sports journalist Krishan Datta passes away

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

Eminent Sports journalist Krishan Datta passed away at the age of 93 at his south Delhi residence on Saturday morning. Datta served as Sports Editor of The Times of India and after his retirement continued with his passion of sports journalism by featuring in several magazines, online sports platforms and newspaper including The Pioneer.

Datta recently was honoured for significant contribution in the field of sports journalism from the prestigious Delhi Sports Journalist Association and DDCA. Datta gained more popularity for his regular column 'Different Strokes' which appeared for about three decades.

Datta is survived by wife Santosh, two daughters



Aradhana and Vandana and a son, Rahul, who is also a veteran journalist. Rahul said that his father passed away peacefully and that his body has been donated to AIIMS for organs and sources at AIIMS ORBO said that first beneficiary of his body will be a child who will get skin replacement from the deceased cadaver. "My father's dedication to

journalism has inspired us all, and we are immensely proud of his lifelong commitment. Feel proud to see several sports journalist today walking his path and we shall ever cherish the moments when several top sports personalities including cricketers used to visit our home to meet my father," grief-stricken Datta said.

In his condolence, former Union Sports and Youth Affairs Minister Ajay Maken too to social media and said "the doyen of Indian sports journalism, Shri K Datta passed away. Our generation grew up reading his splendid byline analysis on the Sports pages of The Times Of India. It's a significant loss to journalism and sports-loving people across the Nation. May his soul rest in peace".

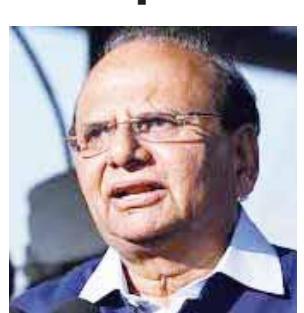
LG approves appointment of IAS officer Azimul Haque as new CEO of Delhi Waqf Board

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

Lieutenant Governor Vinai Kumar Saxena has approved the appointment of IAS officer Azimul Haque as the CEO of Delhi Waqf Board, and slammed the AAP government for its "callousness" in treating the issue in a "casual" manner without following legal provisions, officials said on Saturday.

The post of chief executive officer (CEO) in Delhi Waqf Board was lying vacant since November 28, 2024, the LG said in a statement.

"However, the (AAP) government sent a proposal to give additional charge of CEO (to an official) after a lapse of one month. Due to this callousness on the part of the government, the day-to-day functions of the Board such as releasing salaries to imams and other functionaries were held up,"



the LG said.

"Keeping in view the hardships faced by the imams/mutawallis who are poor people suffering due to non-payment of salaries in the absence of a CEO, I am approving the proposal," Saxena said.

"However, the proposal should be ratified by the Board before the appointment takes effect. Further, it is advised that in future, the proposal should be sent for my consideration strictly as per the provisions of law," the LG added.



New Delhi Municipal Council (NDMC) organized an Art Festival -Artathon on the theme of various Mantras mentioned in the book "Exam Warriors" written by the Prime Minister of India for NDMC school 4000 students to help them deal with the stress of examination at Shanti Path Lawn, Chanakya Park. The Artathon event was inaugurated by Ashwini Vaishnaw, Union Minister of Railway, Information & Broadcasting, Electronics and Information Technology, Govt. of India in the presence of Member of Parliament, Bansuri Swaraj, NDMC Chairperson -Keshav Chandra, Vice-Chairman -Kuljeet Singh Chahal, Member of the Council Sarita Tomar and Dinesh Pratap Singh and other senior officers, school teachers.

LG inaugurates redeveloped parks along ramparts of Walled City in Daryaganj

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

Creating another green vibrant urban hub, the Lt Governor VK Saxena, on Saturday inaugurated the redeveloped parks along the ramparts of the historical Walled City in Daryaganj, as Kranti Udyan. He had first visited the site about 18 months ago and had instructed for the areas beautification.

Kranti Udyan is part of the larger project of redevelopment of Four Parks contiguous to the Walled City along the Mahatma Gandhi Marg, opposite the Samadhi Complex. It aims to integrate and develop parks spanning 35 acres across approximately 1.7 kilometers along the Ring

Road. Inspired by the Kartavya Path near India Gate, the project is designed to offer similar recreational opportunities to the people in lush green settings, said a DDA Press release.

The project combines a formal garden, a neighborhood park, and a Mughal garden against the backdrop of heritage monuments. It has been redeveloped under the guidance and supervision of Hon'ble Lt Governor. Saxena had visited the four parks along Mahatma Gandhi Marg—Delhi Chalo Park, Ghata Masjid Park, Urdu Academy Park, and Sadbhavana Park. Because the site falls under protected and regulated zones of the



Archaeological Survey of India (ASI), all plans were formally approved by the ASI and the National Monument Authority. Two of these parks, Ghata Masjid Park and Urdu

Academy Park, were combined and have been renamed Kranti Udyan. Spanning nearly 10 acres, Kranti Udyan emphasizes organic forms and is designed



as a neighborhood park to meet the needs of the local Daryaganj residential area. Its key features include two seating pavilions, terraced lawns, a shaded senior

citizens' plaza, children's play areas, a multipurpose playground, an open gym, and other public facilities. The two pavilions feature distinctive sculptural

concepts, lending each its own identity. The park's design draws visitors closer to the adjacent old wall, enhancing appreciation of its heritage context.

One of the edge courts highlights its proximity to the Old City wall and one of the thirteen darwazas of Shahjahanabad. Construction materials include murrum, grit finish, and CC pavers, with the green areas divided into lawns and low-maintenance plantings that create a dramatic visual effect. The surrounding area has a strong heritage context, given the park's adjacency to the City Wall, Raj Ghat, and other samadhi sthal sites across Ring Road.

This series of parks also

caters to the recreational needs of the Darya Ganj residential colony. Adjacent sites on both sides of Kranti Udyan are under construction, each employing a different concept, and are expected to be completed soon for the benefit of the people of Delhi. The project is envisioned to become a vibrant urban hub where visitors can immerse themselves in nature while enjoying the amenities of a well-maintained park.

Under the guidance and supervision of Lt Governor, DDA has undertaken various redevelopment works of heritage structures, which include Mehrauli Archaeological Park, Sanjay Van and St James Church.

Delhi polls: BJP attacks AAP Govt over financial mismanagement, rising debt

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

A day after Prime Minister Narendra Modi dubbed AAP an "aapda (disaster)" for Delhi, the BJP on Saturday said it would highlight daily the crisis the city government had inflicted on different sectors, and began with its alleged financial mismanagement. BJP national spokesperson Sudhanshu Trivedi said Delhi used to be considered one of the better states and Union Territories in terms of its financial health but its budget was now likely to report overall losses under the AAP

government. Delhi had a budget surplus of 1.56 per cent in 2015-16, which has been falling since then and is now headed into the negative, he said. The city government has also been seeking more and more debt and has now proposed to take a loan of Rs 10,000 crore from the National Small Savings Fund, he claimed. Trivedi said the grant-in-aid by the Centre to Delhi had also risen three times to 1.53 per cent of its GDP and accused former chief minister and AAP supremo Arvind Kejriwal of setting a record in looting and emptying the treasury.

The BJP spokesperson said the city's revenue collection had seen a steady fall from 5.4 per cent during AAP's 10-year rule, adding that the national average stood at 6.27 per cent. AAP is all about financial irregularities and mismanagement of taxpayers' contribution, Trivedi alleged, claiming that things were in a bad shape in AAP-ruled Punjab as well. He noted that AAP claimed to have spent a lot of money in education and health sectors and questioned the output. If AAP comes to power again, there will be no money left, Trivedi said, adding that the



challenge for a BJP government, if elected to power, would be how to repair the damage caused by the Kejriwal-led party's rule. He said the central government led by Prime Minister Modi had shown how to provide electricity by creating a framework for solar power for domestic use. It will also cause no damage to the environment, he added. He also expressed confidence that voters would take the lead in ridding Delhi of this "aapda". Targeting Kejriwal after he questioned the BJP over its face for the Delhi polls, expected next month, Trivedi

said what was "amusing and peculiar" was that AAP had a chief minister in Atishi who was not its face for the chief minister's (CM) post. People are wise enough to know what AAP's face is and what its mask is, he said, taking a "super CM" jibe at Kejriwal. The BJP has not had a chief minister in Delhi since 1998, Trivedi said. Kejriwal, he added, made claims driven by political experience, noting that the AAP leader had sought pictures of Lord Ganesh and Goddess Lakshmi on currency notes during the Gujarat Assembly polls in

2022 and then forgot about it. People will take out their anger on AAP this time, he said. Trivedi, who was quizzed about the murder of a journalist in Chhattisgarh, said the state government would put out all the facts transparently and was handling the issue with sensitivity and alacrity. Three people have been detained in connection with the murder of a 33-year-old journalist whose body was found in a septic tank on a local contractor's property in Chhattisgarh's Bijapur district, police said on Saturday.

Some people trying to disturb peace in name of caste politics, says PM Modi

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Saturday said some people are trying to disturb peace in the name of caste politics and called for thwarting such designs to preserve the social harmony in rural parts of the country. Inaugurating the Grameen Bharat Mahotsav, the Prime Minister exuded confidence that villages will play a key role in pushing forward the dream of Viksit Bharat by 2047. Without mentioning any names, Modi said certain people are trying to disturb peace by spreading the venom of caste politics. "We have to work to strengthen the heritage of peace and harmony of villages," he said. Recalling the steps taken by the NDA government since 2014, for rural development, Modi, quoting an SBI research report, said poverty in rural India came down to below 5 per cent from 26 per cent in 2012. He said the previous government had neglected the people living in rural India, and even after decades of independence, villages



were deprived of basic necessities. But his government is empowering villages, and focusing on those who were neglected before, the Prime Minister said. Speaking on the occasion, Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman said banks have undertaken saturation drive for 16 government schemes, including Pradhan Mantri Jan Dhan Yojana, PM Mudra and PM SVANidhi. The Mahotsav, through

various discussions, workshops and masterclasses, aims to enhance rural infrastructure, create self-reliant economies, and foster innovation within rural communities. Its objectives include promoting economic stability and financial security among rural populations, with a special focus on North-East India, by addressing financial inclusion and supporting sustainable agricultural practices.

Govt's draft protection rules create balance between regulation and innovation while completely protecting citizen rights: Ashwini Vaishnaw

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

The draft protection rules released by the government create a balance between regulation and innovation while completely protecting citizen rights, Union minister Ashwini Vaishnaw said on Saturday. The Government issued draft rules for the Digital Personal Data Protection (DPDP) Act on Friday for public consultation till February 18. "Rules have to be within four walls of the Act. It is within the ambit of the Act passed by Parliament. These rules have been framed to ensure a balance between regulation and innovation while completely safeguarding the rights of citizens," Vaishnaw told PTI in an interview. The minister said earlier there was only one template available to the world -- the European data protection rule with a high level of regulation. However, Indian rules have attempted to balance the regulation with innovation to safeguard the boom in the innovation ecosystem developing among startups in the country. He said extensive consultations have been held



with the industry and systems such as complaint registration, their handling and distribution, interaction with digital platforms, have been put in place. The minister said the final rules will be placed before Parliament in the monsoon session for approval and all entities handling data digitally will get two years to calibrate their systems as per the law. "All the entities covered under the Act will have to review existing consent within two years after the rules are in place," Vaishnaw said. He said the rules will be improvised based on the experience of the new data

government", as per the draft rules. "We have also kept graded punishments to protect the interests of micro, small and medium enterprises. It is to save businesses who may be running their business using a single computer. However, Big Techs have higher obligations under the rules. Minor breaches will attract small penalties and big breaches will lead to higher penalties," Vaishnaw said. He said the penal provision will be implemented as per the Act and the rules prescribe the way to implement them. The Act has the provision to impose penalty of up to Rs 250 crore on data fiduciaries. "There is a provision on voluntary undertaking under the Act where an entity can voluntarily disclose any breach to authorities and the Data Protection Board (DPB) will deal with it as per Act," Vaishnaw said. As per the DPDP Act, the acceptance of the voluntary undertaking by the Board will protect an entity from proceedings under the provisions of this Act. However, the protection will be subject to the approval of the DPB.

If a person fails to adhere to any term of the voluntary undertaking accepted by the DPB, it shall be deemed a breach of the provisions of the Act and the board after giving an opportunity of being heard to the person may proceed to act as per the penal provisions. The minister said utmost precaution has been taken to protect small businesses as per the basic principle laid down in the Act. Vaishnaw said the rules for data processing overseas will be implemented while keeping in mind citizen rights and national interests. "The country should be able to take benefit of all the new opportunities that are emerging out of the digital economy," Vaishnaw said. The rules will not have an impact on existing rules under which news media operate, he said, adding, "Media rights will continue to remain as it is. Press will continue to function as per the current framework." Digital platforms will also have to be informed and they will need to take consent of people in English or official languages as mentioned in the Constitution, Vaishnaw added.

Entire country needs MSP, says fasting farmer leader

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ CHANDIGARH

Fasting Punjab farmer leader Jagjit Singh Dallewal on Saturday appealed to farmer outfits in other states to fight the agitation seeking legal guarantee to MSP strongly in their states to send a message to the Centre that it is not Punjab's fight alone. During his over 11-minute address at the "Kisan Mahapanchayat" at Khanauri, Dallewal tried to send across a message that his life was not more important than farmers. Seven lakh farmers have committed suicides in the country and he knows what their families have to go through, Dallewal said at the mahapanchayat called by the two forums which is spearheading the ongoing agitation. The 70-year-old farmer leader was brought out in a stretcher and addressed the gathering of farmers while lying on a bed from a stage at the protest site. He referred to farmers' demands, including the MSP guarantee, indicating that he understands the enormity of the task at hand but that does



not mean one will sit and do nothing. Dallewal, who is convener of the Samyukta Kisan Morcha (non-political), has so far refused to take any medical aid despite his prolonged fasting which completed 40 days on Saturday, which has caused his health to deteriorate. During the past few days, Dallewal had made an address to the farmers via short video messages, but this was his first public appearance after several days when he began his fast on November 26. Dallewal, whose outfit was earlier part of the Samyukt Kisan Morcha (SKM) during

its agitation against now repealed farm laws, said, "When we returned from Delhi (borders after the 2020-21 stir), farmer leaders from other states had said Punjab is going back after the repeal of three laws.... We had told them Punjab cannot betray anyone." "Now, Punjab is at the forefront again. I request organisations of other states with folded hands to fight agitation strongly in their states and send a message to the central government that this agitation is not of Punjab alone but of the entire country," he said. "The entire country needs MSP," said Dallewal, who in between took sips of water

and told doctors standing nearby to allow him to complete his speech and not worry about his blood pressure. He told the gathering, "The way you have come today in numbers. Now, from every village one trolley should reach Khanauri to strengthen this Morcha." "The battle which I am fighting, it is not me who is fighting. It is being said Dallewal is fighting... It is God's will. The way God wants one to do, we have to do accordingly," he said. During his brief address, Dallewal said, "The night we got information that police can evict us, the same night scores of youths reached Khanauri from Punjab and Haryana and took charge of the morcha..." The Punjab government recently made it clear that it had no intention to forcibly evict Dallewal from the present agitation site. "I have faith that we will win the Morcha. The government may try to use as much force, but they cannot defeat the morcha," he said. Then going into the enormity of the task at hand in fighting the farmers' battle for MSP guarantee and other

demands, Dallewal said, "It is not that I don't understand this... I have studied, and I know it is difficult. But seeing the difficulty or enormity of the task if we sit doing nothing, then how will things work". See how much loss we suffered, he said, referring to farmer suicides. "Seven lakh farmers have committed suicide in the country. If we sit and think it is a difficult task, it will not be achieved, should we let them die. We are farmer leaders, many of our colleagues are farmer leaders," he said. Dallewal said he does not even care about his life, but the battle has to be fought so that no farmer suicides happen again. "The Supreme Court recently said that Dallewal's life is important. I had said that day hon'ble Supreme Court I am also human, alright, but what about families of those 7 lakh farmers who have committed suicide. We have to stop suicides in future," he said. Dallewal thanked the farmers who came for the "Kisan Mahapanchayat" from far off places and said despite doctors not permitting, it was his desire to meet them all.

Eminent nuclear scientist R Chidambaram passes away

T N RAGHUNATHA ■ MUMBAI

Renowned nuclear scientist and crystallographer Dr Rajagopala Chidambaram - who played an integral role in the Pokhran-I and Pokhran-II nuclear tests - passed away on Saturday, following a brief indisposition. Dr Chidambaram, who had not been keeping well for some days, had been admitted to the Jaslok Hospital where he breathed his last in the early hours of Saturday. He was 89. A high-pressure physicist and internationally-renowned crystallographer, Dr Chidambaram will long be remembered for his contributions to establish India as a nuclear weapons power on the global stage besides and give a boost to India's nuclear power generation plan. He was a trailblazer, an inspirational leader, and a dedicated mentor to countless scientists and engineers in the country. His life's work has propelled India to the forefront of global science and technology, and his legacy will continue to inspire generations. Born

November 11, 1936, he was an alumnus of Presidency College, Chennai, and the Indian Institute of Science, Bengaluru, from where he also later got his D.Sc Degree. Dr Chidambaram joined the Indian nuclear establishment in 1962, when Dr Homi Jehangir Bhabha, the father of the country's nuclear programme, helmed the affairs. During his illustrious career as a scientist, Dr Chidambaram worked as the Director of Bhabha Atomic Research Centre (BARC) from 1990-93, Chairman of Atomic Energy Commission (AEC) and Secretary of Department of Atomic Energy (DAE) from 1993-2000. He was also the chairman of the board of Governors of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) during 1994-95. A Principal Scientific Adviser to the Government of India from 2001-2018, Dr Chidambaram also served as a member of the IAEA's Commission of Eminent Persons, contributing to the organisation's vision for 2020 and beyond. Apart from playing a pivotal

part in shaping India's nuclear capabilities, Dr Chidambaram played an integral role in the nation's first nuclear test in 1974, and led the DAE team during the Pokhran-II nuclear tests in 1998. He had worked with legends like Dr Vikram Sarabhai, Dr Homi Sethna, Dr Raja Ramanna, Dr M R Srinivasan, Dr P K Iyengar and groomed distinguished scientists like Dr Anil Kakodkar, who succeeded him. During the Pokhran-I test carried out on May 18, 1974 (Smiling Buddha), Dr Chidambaram worked closely with Dr Rammana, Dr Sethna and Basanti Dulal Nag Chaudhuri, then then Director General of Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO). During Pokhran-II on May 11 and 13, 1998 (Operation Shakti), Dr Chidambaram worked with then DRDO chief Dr APJ Abdul Kalam, who later became the President and Dr Kakodkar. A visionary leader, Dr Chidambaram believed in the power of science and technology to drive national development.

Congress announces the launch of 'Jai Babu, Jai Bhim, Jai Samvidhan' campaign to press for resignation of Amit Shah

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

Congress has announced the launch of a 'Jai Babu, Jai Bhim, Jai Samvidhan' campaign to press for the resignation of Union Home Minister Amit Shah for "insulting" BR Ambedkar, the principal architect of India's Constitution. Congress head of media and publicity Pawan Khera said under the campaign, party leaders will organise 'Chaupals' in every district and tell people how the BJP-RSS has been insulting Ambedkar and demeaning the Constitution for decades. Launched on January 3, the campaign will culminate on January 26 with a grand rally at Mhow in Madhya Pradesh,

the birthplace of Ambedkar, commemorating 75 years of the Constitution and the Republic, Khera said. "To safeguard his legacy and values, a 'Samvidhan Bachao Rashtriya Padayatra' will be held from January 26, 2025, to January 26, 2026 -- connecting villages and towns across India with a powerful message of unity and social justice. We reiterate our demand to sack Home Minister Amit Shah for his derogatory remarks against Dr Ambedkar," Khera told reporters. The Congress leader also accused the BJP leadership of trying to "normalise the demonisation" of national leaders such as Mahatma Gandhi, Babasaheb Ambedkar and Jawaharlal

Nehru, who left an indelible mark in the country's history. "Make-up artists' cannot replace national icons whose contributions to the nation are immense. Such people have certainly created a name for themselves in the country's history. Icons like Mahatma Gandhi, Nehru and Ambedkar cannot be replaced," Khera said. He also said the campaign aims to awaken and tell the people of the country about BJP's actions and the "insult" to Ambedkar. Replying to a debate on the Constitution in the Rajya Sabha on December 17, Shah had criticised the Congress for repeatedly taking Ambedkar's name. "It has become a fashion to say Ambedkar, Ambedkar, Ambedkar... Had



they taken God's name so many times, they would have got a place in heaven," Shah had said. "We hoped that the home minister would apologise and the prime minister would intervene in this matter. But Prime

Minister Modi supported the home minister and became a partner in insulting Ambedkar ji," Khera claimed. The Congress leader said this issue was also raised at the Belagavi meeting where it was decided that the party will

launch a 'Jai Babu, Jai Bhim, Jai Samvidhan' campaign across the country. "Under this campaign, we will organise 'Chaupals' in every district and tell people how the BJP-RSS has been insulting Ambedkar ji and demeaning the Constitution for decades," Khera said. The Congress leader also recalled how on November 30, 1949, the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS) described the Constitution as "un-Indian" in its mouthpiece 'Organiser'. "When Ambedkar ji talked about equal rights for women, RSS burnt his effigy at the Ramliha Maidan. Not just Ambedkar ji, but Gandhi ji's legacy is also being attacked today," he alleged. He also claimed that BJP was confident of

changing Ambedkar's Constitution by winning more than 400 seats in the 2024 Lok Sabha elections, which didn't happen. "But, had this happened, not only would the Constitution have changed, even Mahatma Gandhi's picture would have been removed from currency notes. "Mahatma Gandhi, whom the whole world considers an ideal, is slowly being removed by the ruling party of his own country. That is why the Congress is moving ahead and preserving the legacy of Babasaheb Ambedkar and Mahatma Gandhi," he said. Khera also said the BJP cannot roam around speaking about the Constitution while keeping 'Manusmriti' in its armpit. "BJP not just openly

commits injustice against Dalits and Adivasis in the country, it also weakens their laws. The BJP is against constitutional and democratic institutions. It has always insulted Ambedkar ji, but we will not tolerate this anymore," he said. Khera also released a pamphlet for the 'Jai Babu, Jai Bhim, Jai Samvidhan' campaign, claiming the Congress seeks to reveal with historical background how the BJP has been conspiring against 90 per cent of India's population. "Insulting Babasaheb Ambedkar or conspiring against him is a violation of the rights of 90 per cent of the people of this country... It is an attack on them," Khera alleged.

MP Govt to appraise Court on Bhopal toxic waste shifting

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ BHOPAL

Amid protests over the planned disposal of 337 tonnes of toxic waste linked to the Bhopal gas tragedy in the Pithampur industrial town of Dhar district, Madhya Pradesh Chief Minister Mohan Yadav has decided to appraise the courts of the latest position on the issue and not proceed until further court orders. The decision was taken on Friday night during a high-level meeting to review the situation. "The state government stands firmly with the people. We will not allow any harm to the public. We will bring the matter before the court and proceed with any action only in compliance with the court's order," Yadav told reporters after the meeting. The chief minister has appealed to the citizens not to



Workers deployed for the collection of toxic waste for disposal from the Bhopal's Union Carbide factory at the Pithampur Industrial Waste Management Facility. PTI

believe in rumours. Yadav held discussions with senior public representatives, top officials from the administration and police, and legal experts in the meeting regarding the transportation of the Union Carbide waste and its dumping and disposal near Pithampur. He said that they have discussed various aspects of the work related to dumping of Union Carbide waste in the presence of deputy chief

ministers Jagdish Devda and Rajendra Shukla, senior MP and state president of the Bharatiya Janata Party Vishnu Dutt Sharma, Urban Development and Housing Minister Kailash Vijayvargiya, Chief Secretary Anurag Jain,

Additional Chief Secretary Dr Rajesh Rajora, Director General of Police Kailash Makwana, Principal Secretary Law and other senior officials in the Chief Minister's Office. Yadav said, "The Madhya Pradesh government is a government that gives top priority to the interests of the public. Therefore, we have always moved forward with the public interest in mind. In compliance with the Supreme Court's instructions and the High Court's order, the Union Carbide waste has been transported to Pithampur." He said they only transported it while complying with the safety parameters in line with the petitions and orders of the court. The court had given a deadline for the waste to be sent to the designated place before January 4. The court expected its report by January 6.

Bihar PSC exam retest held peacefully for 12,000 candidates amid paper leak allegations

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ PATNA

The retest for a select group of candidates who had appeared in the recent Bihar PSC exam, which has been embroiled over allegations of question paper leak, was held on Saturday afternoon at 22 centres here, officials said. Altogether, 12,000 candidates were scheduled to sit for the re-examination that started at 12 pm and continued till 2 pm, they said. The 70th Combined Competitive Examination (CCE) held on December 13 has been in the eye of a storm over allegations of leak of question papers, which has been denied by the Bihar Public Service Commission (BPSC), though a fresh test was ordered for 12,000 candidates, who had appeared for the exam at the Bapu Pariksha Parisar centre here. "The re-exam took place at 22 centres in Patna. Out of a total 12,000 candidates, around 8,200 aspirants had downloaded their admit cards. The authorities concerned will later provide the exact number



of students who appeared for the retest," District Magistrate Chandrashekhar Singh told reporters. "The retest was peacefully held at all the centres, where adequate arrangements were put in place. The district administration had issued strict guidelines. Unauthorised entry, gatherings and protests within a 200-metre radius of the centres were prohibited," he said after the exam. The clamour for cancellation of the Combined Competitive Examination held on December 13 by the BPSC has gained strength, as agitating aspirants found support from

various political parties, Independent MP Pappu Yadav and Jan Suraj founder Prashant Kishor. Yadav had on Friday led his supporters in blocking rail and road traffic in several areas of Patna as well as other parts of the state. Several MLAs and leaders of the Congress, CPI-ML (Liberation), CPI(M) and CPI also lent support to the protesting candidates, who have been demanding that fresh exams be held for all the five lakh candidates, who had appeared at more than 900 centres across the state, to ensure a "level-playing field".

Cold wave intensifies in Uttar Pradesh, dense fog disrupts normal life

BISWAJEET BANERJEE ■ LUCKNOW

The cold wave gripping Uttar Pradesh intensified on Saturday, with icy winds and dense fog plunging temperatures and disrupting daily life across the state. For the second consecutive day this season, a cold-day alert was issued in 10 districts, leaving residents shivering as they braved the harsh weather conditions. Kanpur recorded the lowest temperature in the state, with the mercury dipping to 4.6 degrees Celsius in the last 24 hours.



The cold snap was felt statewide, with temperatures in 20 cities falling below 10 degrees Celsius. The Meteorological Department issued a yellow alert for dense fog in 26 districts. In Lucknow, visibility dropped to less than 50 meters until 9 a.m., causing significant disruptions to air travel. Two flights to Lucknow from Bengaluru and Delhi were cancelled, while several outbound flights faced delays of up to eight hours. Visibility reached zero in

multiple cities, including Meerut, Auraiya, and Mainpuri, where vehicles struggled to navigate. Slow-moving traffic was reported in Sambhal, Ghaziabad, Hapur, and Ayodhya. In Agra, dense fog caused a tragic accident late Friday night in the Kiravali area, where three vehicles collided. One person died, and 30 passengers were injured in the mishap. In another accident, a passenger bus collided with a truck on the Agra-Jaipur

highway at 1 a.m. The bus, traveling from Gujarat, also struck a Max vehicle following the initial collision. Police arrived at the scene to rescue passengers trapped inside the bus. Four passengers and two individuals from the Max vehicle were critically injured. According to reports, the accident occurred after the driver of a trailer truck abruptly applied brakes, causing the bus to rear-end the truck amid low visibility. The police later used cranes to remove the damaged vehicles. Dr. S.N. Sunil Pandey, a meteorologist at CSA University in Kanpur, explained that the strong northwestern winds from the mountains have significantly intensified the cold. "The wind speed on Saturday is expected to range between 15 and 25 km/h, contributing to severe cold conditions," he said. Pandey predicted that Saturday would remain extremely cold, with minimal chances of sunshine. Some respite from the cold is expected on Sunday, with a slight rise in temperature and reduced fog. However, the cold wave is likely to return after Monday as a new western disturbance becomes active. This weather system could bring drizzle to parts of western Uttar Pradesh and the NCR, further intensifying cold winds. Authorities have urged residents to exercise caution while traveling and to stay indoors during peak fog hours to minimize risks associated with the severe weather.

Three arrested in connection with Chhattisgarh journalist Mukesh Chandrakar's murder

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ RAIPUR

Three persons have been detained in connection with the murder of a 33-year-old journalist whose body was found in a septic tank on a local contractor's property in Chhattisgarh's Bijapur district, police said on Saturday. Mukesh Chandrakar, a freelance journalist, went missing on January 1, and his body was found on Friday in the septic tank on a property owned by contractor Suresh Chandrakar at Chattanpara Basti in Bijapur town. "Three persons have been detained in connection with the murder and are being interrogated," an official here said. The police, however, did not disclose their names and said the details would be revealed later in the day. Mukesh worked as a freelance journalist for news channels, including NDTV, and ran a YouTube channel, 'Bastar Junction', which has some 1.59 lakh



subscribers. He had played a crucial role in the release of a CoBRA commando, Rakeshwar Singh Manhas, from Maoists' captivity in April 2021 following the Takalguda Naxal ambush in Bijapur, wherein 22 security personnel were martyred. He went missing on Wednesday evening, and his elder brother Yukesh Chandrakar lodged a complaint with the police the next day, a senior police official said. Tracking Mukesh's mobile number, police reached the property owned by Suresh Chandrakar and found the body in a septic tank, which was freshly cast with

concrete slab, he said. Police suspect the murder is linked to a recent report of irregularities in road construction work in the district the victim had covered. Suresh Chandrakar is said to be involved in the work. Journalists held a symbolic road blockade at Hospital Chowk on National Highway 36 in the city in the morning, demanding that the contractor's properties in Bastar division, including Bijapur, be attached and a case be registered against him. They also demanded a death sentence for the contractor and others involved in the murder, removal of security detail for him, and sealing of his bank accounts, among other demands. The protesting journalists also sought the suspension or transfer of the Bijapur superintendent of police. Protestors have warned of an indefinite road blockade from Sunday if their demands are not met.

UP Govt launches initiative to curb stubble burning, promotes sustainable farming

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ LUCKNOW

Uttar Pradesh Government has launched a unique initiative, "Parali Ke Badle Govansh Khaad" (cow manure in exchange for stubble) aimed at curbing stubble burning and promoting sustainable farming practices, officials said on Saturday. The initiative, launched on October 28, 2024, seeks to address environmental pollution caused by stubble burning while benefiting farmers through the distribution of cow manure for organic farming, a statement said. Under the campaign 2,90,208.16 quintals of straw were collected across the state and 1,55,280.25 quintals of cow manure were distributed to farmers. The manure is being used to enhance soil fertility and encourage sustainable agricultural practices, it said. Several districts including Varanasi, Banda, Budaun, Jalaun, Bareilly, Amethi, Siddharthnagar, and Bahraich performed notably well during the campaign with large-scale collection of straw and distribution of manure, the statement added. The campaign not only reduces environmental hazards but also lowers production costs for farmers contributing to long-term agricultural welfare and conservation efforts, the statement said. It also emphasizes the protection of destitute cows by facilitating the distribution of manure collected from cow shelters to farmers. This effort showcases the proactive and efficient functioning of the Animal Husbandry Department, the statement added. The 'Parali Ke Badle Govansh Khaad' campaign stands as a crucial step for the welfare of farmers, environmental sustainability, and society at large, the government said. It effectively curbs stubble burning and motivates farmers towards organic farming, this initiative marks a significant stride towards a greener revolution in the state, the statement added.

Devotees visiting Ayodhya during Mahakumbh should not face any inconvenience: CM Yogi

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ AYODHYA

Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath, on Saturday, said that over 40-45 crore devotees are expected to attend Prayagraj Mahakumbh-2025, with many likely to visit Ayodhya as well. In Ayodhya, devotees will visit prominent temples and sites, including Ramlala, Hanumangarhi, and Suryakund. He instructed the local administration to ensure all preparations are complete, focusing on visitor safety, crowd management, worship arrangements, and shelter facilities. The CM held a review meeting with administrative officials after meeting with BJP workers. He said, "No devotee should face any inconvenience during the cold season. In addition to maintaining



cleanliness, proper arrangements for bonfires and other necessities must be ensured." In the auditorium of Acharya Narendra Dev Agricultural University Kumarganj, the Chief Minister along with district senior officials gathered information about the security of devotees coming to Ayodhya during Mahakumbh-2025, cloud management, shelter and

more. Divisional Commissioner Gaurav Dayal gave a presentation on the preparations in Ayodhya for Mahakumbh-2025. The Chief Minister issued necessary instructions to the officials. The review meeting was attended by local administration officials, police personnel, and senior district authorities.

Six MLAs from Lakhimpur Kheri meet CM Yogi demand removal of SP

BISWAJEET BANERJEE ■ LUCKNOW

The demand for the removal of Lakhimpur Kheri's Superintendent of Police (SP), Ganesh Prasad Saha, has reached Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath. On Saturday, six Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) MLAs from the district met with the Chief Minister in Lucknow, alleging negligence and misconduct on the part of the SP. According to sources, the MLAs expressed their grievances, claiming that SP Saha does not address their concerns, frequently engages in phone conversations with mafia members, and has failed to maintain law and order in the district. "The SP does not listen to us. He prioritizes talking to the mafia and has deteriorated the city's security. We request



his immediate removal," one MLA reportedly said. Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath, after hearing the concerns of the MLAs, assured them that an investigation would be conducted, and appropriate action would follow. Lakhimpur Kheri district, which comprises eight assembly constituencies, saw six MLAs participating in the meeting, including Yogesh

Verma (Sadar), Vinod Shankar Awasthi (Dhaurahra), Saurabh Singh 'Sonu' (Kasta), Aman Giri (Gola), Manju Tyagi (Srinagar), and Shashank Verma (Nighasan). District BJP President Sunil Singh also accompanied them. Speaking to reporters after the meeting, MLA Saurabh Singh and District President Sunil Singh stated that their discussions with the CM also covered development initiatives in the district. "The Chief Minister assured us he would visit Lakhimpur on January 15 to review the progress of ongoing projects," said Singh. The MLAs had earlier raised their concerns with Principal Secretary (Home) Sanjay Prasad on Friday. During the meeting, they accused SP Saha of ignoring their calls and favoring mafia elements.

Sanjay Prasad, a trusted officer of CM Yogi, assured the MLAs that their complaints would be forwarded to the Chief Minister for review. SP Ganesh Prasad Saha, an IPS officer, took charge of Lakhimpur Kheri on January 12, 2023. Known for his sharp administrative skills, Saha has previously served as a Deputy Commissioner of Police in Noida and held positions in Gorakhpur, Banda, Prayagraj, and Deoria. He has also been awarded the prestigious Parakram Award for his service. Despite his accolades, Saha's tenure in Lakhimpur Kheri has been marked by allegations of favoritism and negligence. The MLAs have claimed that their inability to collaborate with the SP has hampered governance and development in the district.

Technological innovations likely to elevate 2025 Maha Kumbh

BISWAJEET BANERJEE ■ PRAYAGRAJ

The Maha Kumbh Mela 2025 in Prayagraj is set to embrace the digital era with groundbreaking initiatives aimed at enhancing the experience of millions of devotees. From advanced navigation systems powered by Google to a state-of-the-art AI Generative Chatbot, the event is making significant strides toward becoming a high-tech spiritual gathering. Google Navigation for Seamless Pilgrimage For the first time, Google has integrated the temporary city of Mahakumbh into its navigation system, marking a historic policy shift. An MoU has been signed between Google and the Mahakumbh Mela Authority to develop a



specialized navigation system tailored to the fair. This system will enable visitors to locate various sites, Akharas,

and prominent saints with ease. This innovative feature is expected to go live by late

November or early December. Additional Mela Adhikari Vivek Chaturvedi highlighted that while

Google has provided navigation for established cities worldwide, this is the first time it has developed navigation for a temporary event of this scale. Over 450 million domestic and international devotees are expected to benefit from this technology, allowing them to effortlessly reach their destinations, whether it be Sangam Ghat, specific Akharas, or temples. Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath emphasized the importance of leveraging digital technology to enhance the pilgrimage experience, aligning with his vision of a Digital Mahakumbh. With Google Maps, devotees will no longer need to ask for directions, making their spiritual journey smoother and more fulfilling.

AI Generative Chatbot: A Technological Marvel The Maha Kumbh will also feature the first-ever AI Generative Chatbot, an initiative championed by Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath. This high-tech chatbot provides real-time assistance and information on facilities such as food, lockers, washrooms, and changing rooms. Accessible in 11 languages, including Hindi, English, Tamil, and Bengali, the chatbot ensures seamless communication by responding to both spoken and written queries in the user's preferred language. Visitors can also receive a personalized Mahakumbh certificate with their photo by scanning a QR code or

visiting the link (https://chatbot.kumbh.up.gov.in). This unique feature allows attendees to create a lasting memento of their visit, either digitally or as a printed keepsake. Regional Tourism Officer Aparajita Singh noted that under CM Yogi's guidance, preparations are in full swing to make the Mahakumbh a spiritually enriching and technologically advanced event. The AI chatbot initiative is being extensively promoted on social media platforms such as X, WhatsApp, Facebook, and Instagram, creating a buzz among tech-savvy devotees worldwide. Enhancing the Visitor Experience The AI Generative Chatbot is not just a tool for

convenience; it aims to foster a personal connection with the event. By providing detailed information about every major program and event, it ensures that visitors stay informed and engaged throughout their pilgrimage. This initiative underscores the Mahakumbh's commitment to blending tradition with innovation, offering devotees a unique and memorable spiritual experience. With these digital advancements, the Maha Kumbh Mela 2025 is poised to set a new benchmark for religious gatherings, demonstrating how technology can enrich age-old traditions while catering to the needs of modern devotees.

Judge sets Trump's sentencing in hush money case for Jan 10

AP ■ NEW YORK
In an extraordinary turn, a judge Friday set President-elect Donald Trump's sentencing in his hush money case for January 10 — little over a week before he's due to return to the White House — but indicated he wouldn't be jailed. The development nevertheless leaves Trump on course to be the first president to take office convicted of felony crimes. Judge Juan M Merchan, who presided over Trump's trial, signalled in a written decision that he'd sentence the former and future president to what's known as a conditional discharge, in which a case gets dismissed if a defendant avoids rearrest. Merchan rejected Trump's push to dismiss the verdict and throw out the case on presidential immunity grounds and because of his impending return to the White House. The judge said he found "no legal impediment to sentencing" Trump and that it was "incumbent" on him to sentence Trump prior to his swearing in on January 20. "Only by bringing finality to this matter" will the interests of justice be served, Merchan

wrote. Trump was convicted in May of 34 counts of falsifying business records. They involved an alleged scheme to hide a hush money payment to porn actor Stormy Daniels in the last weeks of Trump's first campaign in 2016. The payout was made to keep her from publicising claims she'd had sex with the married Trump years earlier. He says that her story is false and that he did nothing wrong. After Trump's November 5 election, Merchan halted proceedings and indefinitely postponed the sentencing so the defense and prosecution could weigh in on the future of the case. Trump's lawyers urged Merchan to toss it. They said it would otherwise pose unconstitutional "disruptions" to the incoming president's ability to run the country. Prosecutors acknowledged there should be some accommodation for his upcoming presidency, but they insisted the conviction should stand. They suggested various options, such as freezing the case during his term or guaranteeing him a no-jail sentence. They also proposed closing

the case while formally noting both his conviction and his undecided appeal — a novel idea drawn from what some state courts do when criminal defendants die while appealing their cases. Trump takes office January 20 as the first former president to be convicted of a crime and the first convicted criminal to be elected to the office. His conviction left the 78-year-old facing the possibility of punishment ranging from a fine or probation to up to four years in prison. The case centered on how Trump accounted for reimbursing his personal attorney Alvin Bragg, a Democrat. Before Trump's November election, his lawyers sought to reverse his conviction for a different reason: a US Supreme Court decision in July that gave presidents broad immunity from criminal prosecution. That request was still pending when the election raised new issues. While urging Merchan to nix the conviction, Trump also sought to move the case to federal court, where he could also assert immunity. A federal judge repeatedly said no, but Trump appealed.

legitimately paid for legal services, and that Daniels' story was suppressed to avoid embarrassing Trump's family, not to influence the electorate. Trump was a private citizen — campaigning for president, but neither elected nor sworn in — when Cohen paid Daniels in October 2016. He was president when Cohen was reimbursed, and Cohen testified that they discussed the repayment arrangement in the Oval Office. Trump, a Republican, has decried the verdict as the "rigged, disgraceful" result of a "witch hunt" pursued by Manhattan District Attorney Alvin Bragg, a Democrat. Before Trump's November election, his lawyers sought to reverse his conviction for a different reason: a US Supreme Court decision in July that gave presidents broad immunity from criminal prosecution. That request was still pending when the election raised new issues. While urging Merchan to nix the conviction, Trump also sought to move the case to federal court, where he could also assert immunity. A federal judge repeatedly said no, but Trump appealed.

Japanese woman, world's oldest person, has died

AP ■ TOKYO
Tomiko Itooka, a Japanese woman who was the world's oldest person according to Guinness World Records, has died, an Ashiya city official said Saturday. She was 116. Yoshitsugu Nagata, an official in charge of elderly policies, said Itooka died on December 29 at a care home in Ashiya, Hyogo Prefecture, central Japan. Itooka, who loved bananas and a yogurt-flavoured Japanese drink called Calpis, was born on May 23, 1908. She became the oldest person last year following the death of 117-year-old Maria Branyas, according to the Gerontology Research Group. When she was told she was at the top of the World Supercentenarian Rankings List, she simply replied, "Thank you." When Itooka celebrated her birthday last year, she received flowers, a cake and a card from the mayor. Born in Osaka, Itooka was a volleyball player in high school, and long had a reputation for a sprightly spirit, Nagata said. She climbed the 3,067-metre (10,062-foot) Mount Ontake twice.

Imran Khan claims he was given chance to leave country on exile for 3 years

AP ■ LAHORE
Pakistan's jailed former prime minister Imran Khan has claimed that he was offered a chance to leave the country on exile for three years but he declined. In a post on X on Friday, the 72-year-old former cricketer-turned-politician said, "I was offered the opportunity of a three-year exile while I was in Attock Jail, but I will live and die in Pakistan." In conversation with media persons at Rawalpindi's Adiala Jail where he is incarcerated since August 2023, Khan said he has been "indirectly approached" with an offer to transfer him to his Bani Gala residence in Islamabad. However, he said on X that he refused the offer. "My stance is clear: release my detained workers and leaders first. Only then will I consider discussing my personal situation." The Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) founder further said that he believes Pakistan's decisions should be made within the country. "However, when it comes to basic human rights, voices will naturally rise globally. Institutions like the United Nations exist for this purpose.



Enlightened people all over the world raise their voices against violation of basic rights." Khan said during this "authoritarian era", the breach of personal freedoms, violation of fundamental legal rights, and destruction of institutions have not only disrupted the country's social and political systems but also its legal and economic frameworks. "The absurd manner in which Khalid Khurshid (former Gilgit-Baltistan chief minister) was sentenced to 34 years in prison demonstrates that there is no rule of law in our country any more, and a terrible undeclared dictatorship prevails," he said. "Even in Musharraf's era, we criticised military interference but never faced such oppression and fascism," he said.

On reports that the incoming Donald Trump administration will pressure the Shehbaz Sharif government for his release, he said: "I expect Trump to remain neutral, unlike Biden who, as the world knows, influenced by General Bajwa, played a role in ousting our government through a vote of no confidence, which was blatant interference." Regarding his party talks with the government, Khan said: "Our negotiation committee is engaging with the government. Our demands are legitimate — formation of a judicial commission on November 26, 2024 and May 9, 2023 incidents, release of political prisoners." On May 9, 2023, Khan's party supporters allegedly attacked several military installations, including the army headquarters in Rawalpindi and the ISI building in Faisalabad, to vent their anger against the arrest of their party founder in a corruption case. He also said the statements by the Director General ISPR (media wing of army) about the events of May 9 are untrue. "Whoever stole the CCTV footage had orchestrated the May 9 events (attack of state and military installations).

Soldier who blew up Tesla at Trump hotel left note, called it 'wake up call' for US

AP ■ LAS VEGAS
A highly decorated Army soldier who fatally shot himself in a Tesla Cybertruck just before it blew up outside the Trump hotel in Las Vegas left notes saying the New Year's Day explosion was a stunt to serve as a "wake up call" for the country's ills, investigators said Friday. Matthew Livelsberger, a 37-year-old Green Beret from Colorado Springs, Colorado, also wrote in notes he left on his cellphone that he needed to "cleanse" his mind "of the brothers I've lost and relieve myself of the burden of the lives I took." Livelsberger served

in the Army since 2006 and deployed twice to Afghanistan. "This was not a terrorist attack, it was a wake up call. Americans only pay attention to spectacles and violence. What better way to get my point across than a stunt with fireworks and explosives," Livelsberger wrote in one letter found by authorities and released Friday. The explosion caused minor injuries to seven people but virtually no damage to the Trump International Hotel. Authorities said that Livelsberger acted alone. Livelsberger's letters covered a range of topics including political grievances, societal problems and both domestic and

international issues, including the war in Ukraine. He said in one letter that the U.S. was "terminally ill and headed toward collapse." Tesla engineers, meanwhile, helped extract data from the Cybertruck for investigators, including Livelsberger's path between charging stations from Colorado through New Mexico and Arizona and on to Las Vegas, according to Assistant Sheriff Dorien Koren. "We still have a large volume of data to go through," Koren said Friday. "There's thousands if not millions of videos and photos and documents and web history and all of those things that need to be analyzed." The new details came as investigators were still trying to determine whether Livelsberger sought to make a political point with the Tesla and the hotel bear-

ing the president-elect's name. Livelsberger harbored no ill will toward President-elect Donald Trump, law enforcement officials said. In one of the notes he left, he said the country needed to "rally around" Trump and Tesla CEO Elon Musk. Musk has recently become a member of Trump's inner circle. Neither Trump nor Musk was in Las Vegas on Wednesday, the day of the explosion. Both had attended Trump's New Year's Eve party at his South Florida estate. "Although this incident is more public and more sensational than usual, it ultimately appears to be a tragic case of suicide involving a heavily decorated combat veteran who was struggling with PTSD and other issues," Spencer Evans, the FBI special agent in charge in Las Vegas, said Friday.

Biden to present Presidential Medal of Freedom to Hillary Clinton, George Soros and Lionel Messi

AP ■ WASHINGTON
US President Joe Biden has named former Secretary of State Hillary Clinton, fashion designer Ralph Lauren, football superstar Lionel Messi, former Defence Secretary Letitia Ash-ton Carter, and controversial investor George Soros, along with 14 others for the prestigious Presidential Medal of Freedom. The Presidential Medal of Freedom, which is the Nation's highest civilian honour, would be presented to the awardees at a White House ceremony by Biden Saturday afternoon. The prestigious award is presented to individuals who have made exemplary contributions to the prosperity, values, or security of the United States, world peace, or other significant societal, public or private endeavours, the White House said Saturday.

Biden believes great leaders keep the faith, give everyone a fair shot, and put decency above all else. These nineteen individuals are great leaders who have made America and the world a better place. They are great leaders because they are good people who have made extraordinary contributions to their country and the world, the White House said. Clinton made history many times over decades in public service, including as the first First Lady elected to the US Senate. After serving as Secretary of State, she became the first woman nominated for president by a major US political party, the White House said. Soros is an investor, philanthropist, and founder of the Open Society Foundations. "Through his network of foundations, partners and projects in more than 120 countries, Soros has focused on global initiatives

that strengthen democracy, human rights, education, and social justice," the White House said. Soros, 94, in the recent past has spoken openly against Prime Minister Narendra Modi. The ruling BJP believe that he tried to interfere in Indian elections. In the last session of Parliament, the BJP raised the issue of alleged "links" of Congress leaders with Soros-backed outfits involved in "anti-India" activities, triggering vociferous protests from the opposition. Congress, however, trashed these allegations. In 2020, Soros slammed the Modi government while addressing an event at the World Economic Forum (WEF) in Davos, saying nationalism was making headway and the "biggest setback" was seen in India. "Lionel Messi is the most decorated player in the history of professional soccer. He sup-

ports healthcare and education programmes for children around the world through the Leo Messi Foundation and serves as a UNICEF Goodwill Ambassador," the White House said. Fannie Lou Hamer, who transformed the struggle for racial justice in America, and Ashton Carter, who served as the 25th Secretary of Defence and devoted his career to making the nation safer for all, are being awarded the Medal of Freedom posthumously. Robert Francis Kennedy is remembered as an Attorney General who fiercely combatted racial segregation, and as a United States Senator who sought to address poverty and inequality in the country and George W Romney, a businessman who served as the chairman and president of American Motors Corporation, are also being awarded posthumously.

SUPERIOR FINLEASE LIMITED
CIN: L74899DL1994PLC061995
Regd. Off: NS-92, Kharsa No-33/21, Ranaji Enclave, Najafgarh, Near Arjun Park Bus Stand New Delhi -110043; Email: superiorfinlease@gmail.com; Website: http://www.superiorfinlease.com; Phone No.: +91-9953798335
NOTICE OF THE EXTRAORDINARY GENERAL MEETING AND EVOTING INFORMATION
Notice is hereby given that the Extraordinary General Meeting ("EGM") of the Superior Finlease Limited ("the Company") is scheduled to be held on Monday, 27th January, 2025 at 03:00 PM IST through Video Conferencing (VC) other Audio-Visual means ("OAVM") to transact the Business as set forth in the notice of the EGM dated 02nd January, 2025.
In view of the General Circular numbers 20/2020, 14/2020/17/2020, 09/2024 and all other applicable laws and circular issued by the Ministry of Corporate Affairs, the Company has decided to conduct the EGM of the Company through VC/OAVM.
In compliance with the aforesaid applicable Circulars, the Notice of the EGM along with the Explanatory statement have been sent only through electronic mode to those members whose email addresses are registered with the Registrar and share Transfer agents i.e. Skyline Financial Services Private Limited ("RTA") of the Company and Depositories. The Dispatch of notice of the EGM through email has been completed on 03rd January, 2025.
The notice of the EGM and explanatory statement is available on the website and can be downloaded from the Company's website i.e. https://www.superiorfinlease.com, the Bombay Stock Exchange of India Limited ("BSE") i.e. https://www.bseindia.com/ and Metropolitan Stock Exchange of India Limited website https://www.mseil.in. Alternatively members can send email to the Company at superiorfinlease@gmail.com or the Company's RTA at admin@skylinert.com to obtain the same.
Manner for registering email addresses with the depositories for procuring user ID and password and registration of email ids for e-voting for the resolutions set out in the notice:
1. In case shares are held in physical mode, please send a request to Registrar and Transfer Agents of the Company i.e. Skyline Financial Services Private Limited ("RTA") at info@skylinert.com providing folio No., Name of shareholder, scanned copy of the share certificate (front and Back), PAN (self-attested scanned copy of PAN card), Aadhar (self-attested scanned copy of Aadhar Card) for registering e-mail address.
2. In case shares are held in dematerialized mode, please contact your Depository Participant (DP) and register your email address and bank account details in your Demat account, as per the process advised by your DP.
3. Alternatively, shareholders/Members may send a request to evoting@nsdl.co.in for procuring user id and password for e-voting by providing above mentioned documents.
Voting through electronic means
1. In compliance with the provisions of section 108 of the Companies Act, 2013 read with Rule 20 of the Companies (Management and Administration) Rules 2014 (as amended) and Regulation 44 of the SEBI (Listing Obligation & Disclosure Requirement) Regulations 2015, (as amended) and applicable circulars, the Company is providing facility of remote e-voting to its members in respect of the business to be transacted at the EGM. The Company has engaged the services of NSDL as authorized e-voting agency and has made necessary arrangements with them for facilitating voting through electronic means. In order to cast votes through remote e-voting, the members may visit the website https://www.evoting.nsdl.com/
2. The Cut-off date for the purpose of voting (including remote e-voting) is Monday, 20th January 2025.
3. The remote e-voting facility will be available during the following period after which the portal shall forthwith be locked and shall not be available by NSDL:
Commencement of remote e-voting 09:00 A.M.(IST) on Friday 24th January, 2025
End of remote e-voting 05:00 P.M.(IST) on Sunday, 26th January, 2025
4. During the above period, members holding shares either in physical form or in Dematerialized form, as on Monday, 20th January 2025, i.e. cut-off date, may cast their vote electronically. Members who have acquired shares after the cut-off date may obtain the User ID and password by sending a request at evoting@nsdl.co.in or admin@skylinert.com or superiorfinlease@gmail.com.
5. Members who have cast their vote by remote e-voting prior to the EGM may also attend/participate in the EGM through VC/OAVM but shall not be entitled to cast their vote again. The detailed procedure and manner for remote e-voting is available on www.evoting.nsdl.com and in the EGM Notice.
Procedure for attending the EGM through VC/OAVM
Members are provided with a facility to attend the EGM through VC/OAVM by the Company. The instruction to attend EGM through VC/OAVM is available in the notice of the EGM. Those members who will be present in the EGM through VC/OAVM facility and have not cast their vote on the resolutions through remote e-voting and are otherwise not barred from doing so, shall be eligible to vote through voting system during the EGM.
In case of any query, you may refer the Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) for shareholders and e-voting user manual for shareholders available at the download links on www.evoting.nsdl.com or contact NSDL on 022-4886 7000 and 022-2499 7000 or send a request at evoting@nsdl.co.in.
For Superior Finlease Limited
Sd/-
Rajneesh Kumar
(Director)
DIN: 02463693

भारतीय प्रबन्धन संस्थान, रॉजी
Indian Institute of Management, Ranchi
Special Recruitment Drive for SC/ST/NC-OBC/EWS/PWD for Faculty Positions
IIM Ranchi invites applications from SC/ST/NC-OBC/EWS/PWD category candidates with exceptional academic backgrounds for faculty positions in the following areas:
• Finance & Accounting
• Economics
• Liberal Arts and Sciences (Business Administration, Philosophy/Business Ethics and Sustainability, Political Science/Sociology)
• Information Systems & Business Analytics
• Organizational Behavior & Human Resource Management
• Strategy & Entrepreneurship
• Marketing
• Operations Management
For further details regarding eligibility and the application process, please visit the website: https://iimranchi.ac.in Last date to apply: 08/01/2025

भारतीय प्रबन्धन संस्थान, रॉजी
Indian Institute of Management, Ranchi
Faculty Recruitment Drive
IIM Ranchi invites applications from candidates with exceptional academic backgrounds for faculty positions in the following areas:
• Finance & Accounting
• Economics
• Liberal Arts and Sciences (Business Administration, Philosophy/Business Ethics and Sustainability, Political Science/Sociology)
• Information Systems & Business Analytics
• Organizational Behavior & Human Resource Management
• Strategy & Entrepreneurship
• Marketing
• Operations Management
For further details regarding eligibility and the application process, please visit the website: https://iimranchi.ac.in Last date to apply: 08/01/2025

PUBLIC NOTICE
Be it known to all that my clients Shri Rajendra Kumar S/o Shri Arun Datta and Smt. Neelam W/o Shri Rajendra Kumar both R/o C-194, Dayanand Colony, Lajpat Nagar-4, South Delhi-110024 has disowned/debarred their son Siddharth Badhan from all their movable & immovable properties and have severed all relations from him due to his misconduct. Any person dealing with him shall be doing at his/her own risk.
PRAVEEN RASTOGI (Advocate)

German chancellor 'keeping cool'

AP ■ BERLIN
German Chancellor Olaf Scholz says he's staying "cool" against critical personal comments made by Elon Musk but finds it worrying that the US billionaire makes the effort to get involved in Germany's general election by endorsing the far-right Alternative for Germany (AfD) party. Scholz was reacting after Musk, a close aide to US President-elect Donald Trump, called the chancellor a "fool" after his coalition government collapsed in November and later backed the AfD in an opinion piece he wrote for a major newspaper in Germany. Scholz, head of the Social Democratic Party (SPD), told German magazine Stern on Saturday there is "nothing new" in criticism by "rich media entrepreneurs who do not appreciate social democratic politics and do not hold back with their opinions." "You have to stay cool," Scholz told Stern. "I find it much more worrying than such insults that Musk is supporting a party like the AfD, which is in parts right-wing extremist, which preaches rapprochement with Putin's Russia and wants to weaken transatlantic relations," Scholz said.

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PUBLIC NOTICE
It is to inform the public at large that Mrs. Shashi Kala who is the owner of the Plot No. D-119, Block-D, measuring 95 Sq. Yards, Kharsa No.267, Shivam Enclave Phase-2, Village Achheja, Dadr, Gautam Budh Nagar, U.P. owner vide Sale Deed dated 03.11.2017 (Document No. 15851) executed by Mr. Arvind and same to be financed & mortgaged by Fedbank Financial Services Limited, that at 27/3/2018 (Doc. No. 3471). All persons having any claim against or in respect of the said Property, or any part thereof, by way of sale, exchange, mortgage (equitable/registered or otherwise), gift, trust, inheritance, family arrangement, maintenance, legate, partition, possession, lease, sublease, tenancy, license, lien, charge, pledge, easement or otherwise whatsoever, are hereby requested to notify the same in writing to us with supporting documentary evidence at the address mentioned below within 07 days from the date hereof, failing which the claim or claims, if any of such person or persons will be considered to have been waived and/or abandoned. Kamal Kant Gupta (Advocate) Sec-4, Vaidh, Gb, J.P., Mob. 9810093351

PUBLIC NOTICE
This is to inform the general public that Mrs. Renu Devi, wife of Mr. Deepak Kumar, intends to purchase the entire first floor, with roof rights, built on freehold property bearing No. 306-B, Block-C, Gali No. 09, measuring 111 square yards (i.e., 92.81 square meters), out of Kharsa No. 262/268/21/74, situated in area of Village Baraga Cokle known as "Maljis Park", Delhi-110033, from Mrs. Ranjana Sharma, Mrs. Ranjana Sharma purchased by Mrs. Pramila Yadav through a sale deed dated 03/05/2016. The purchase will be financed by Mahindra Rural Housing Finance Limited, with its branch located in NSR New Delhi. The original Sale Deed, Doc. No. 11635, Book No. 01, Vol. No. 4359, on Pages 66-74, dated 01.10.2012, SRV-A, New Delhi, has been lost. An FIR (LR No. 2415736/2024) was registered on 20.12.2024 with the PS. Crime Branch, Delhi, regarding the loss of this document. Any person having information about the lost document is requested to inform the undersigned or the local police station. Any person found in possession of the original sale deed, or the copy thereof, kindly contact the undersigned along with original property document, within 07 days from date of this notice on below address, failing which, the claim as per aforesaid sale deed shall be treated as null and void in respect of the subject property.
ASHWAN KUMAR (Advocate) Chamber No. 122, Teshil Compound, Ghaziabad, U.P. 201085

FORM NO. URC.2
Advertisement giving notice about registration under Part I of Chapter XXI [Pursuant to section 374(b) of the companies Act, 2013 and rule 4(f) of the companies (Authorised to Register) Rules, 2014]
1. Notice is hereby given that in pursuance of sub-section (2) of section 366 of the Companies Act, 2013, an application is proposed to be made after 15 days hereof but before the expiry of thirty days hereinafter to the Registrar at NCT of Delhi and Haryana that Sparen Environmental LLP, a LLP may be registered under Part I of Chapter XXI of the Companies Act 2013, as a company limited by shares
2. The principal objects of the company are as follows:
i) To carry on the business of providing sustainable environmental services and solutions such as recycling and reuse of plant and equipment for wastewater treatment.
ii) To install, fabricate, manufacture, procure, purchase and sale of solar power plants, equipments, spares and accessories and its operation and maintenance services.
iii) To manufacture, sale, purchase, and indent chemicals and speciality chemicals, water/waste treatment plants.
iv) To act as dealer, importers, exporters of chemicals & speciality chemicals, water/waste treatment plants and allied products.
v) To act as consultant for water/waste treatment plant, chemicals & speciality chemicals.
vi) To carry out repair and maintenance and provide services related to water/waste treatment plant, chemicals and speciality chemicals.
3. A copy of the draft memorandum and articles of association of the proposed company may be inspected at the office at F-38/5A, Sadh Nagar part - II, New Delhi - 110045.
4. Notice is hereby given that any person objecting to this application may communicate their objection in writing to the Registrar at Central Registration Center (CRC) Indian Institute of Corporate Affairs, (IICA), Plot No. 6.7.8 Sector-5 (M.C), Manesar, Gurgaon, Haryana, India, 122050, within twenty-one days from the date of publication of this notice, with a copy to the company at its registered office.
Dated this 05th day of January 2025
Name(s) of Applicant
1 Abhishek Thakur
2 Ruchika Thakur

THE PIONEER CLASSIFIEDS
CHANGE OF NAME
I, Iramma, Mother of No.15437443Y Rank Sep//AA Chanabasappa B Hiremath R/O- Vill+PO- Cholahagadda, T/Q- Badami, Dist- Bagalkot, Karnataka- 587201 have changed my name from Iramma to Iramma Hiremath, vide affidavit dated 04/01/2025 before Notary Public Delhi.
PD(1198/C
I, Deepika Bhardwaj, W/o Dinesh Kumar Bhardwaj R/O 702-B, Gulmohur Greens, Mohan Nagar, Sahibabad, Ghaziabad (U.P.) 201007 have changed my name from Deepika Bhardwaj to Deepika Bhardwaj. Henceforth I would be known by the name of Deepika Bhardwaj for all further purposes.
PD(1199/C

PUBLIC NOTICE
To be known to all that we (1) SMT. INDIRA BISHOI, W/o Late DR. BINOD BHARI BISHOI, (2) SH. RAJESH KUMAR BISHOI, (3) SH. AJIT BISHOI, (4) LATE DR. BINOD BHARI BISHOI, (5) LATE DR. RAJESH KUMAR BISHOI, (6) LATE DR. RAJESH KUMAR BISHOI, (7) LATE DR. RAJESH KUMAR BISHOI, (8) LATE DR. RAJESH KUMAR BISHOI, (9) LATE DR. RAJESH KUMAR BISHOI, (10) LATE DR. RAJESH KUMAR BISHOI, (11) LATE DR. RAJESH KUMAR BISHOI, (12) LATE DR. RAJESH KUMAR BISHOI, (13) LATE DR. RAJESH KUMAR BISHOI, (14) LATE DR. RAJESH KUMAR BISHOI, (15) LATE DR. RAJESH KUMAR BISHOI, (16) LATE DR. RAJESH KUMAR BISHOI, (17) LATE DR. RAJESH KUMAR BISHOI, (18) LATE DR. RAJESH KUMAR BISHOI, (19) LATE DR. RAJESH KUMAR BISHOI, (20) LATE DR. RAJESH KUMAR BISHOI, (21) LATE DR. RAJESH KUMAR BISHOI, (22) LATE DR. RAJESH KUMAR BISHOI, (23) LATE DR. RAJESH KUMAR BISHOI, (24) LATE DR. RAJESH KUMAR BISHOI, (25) LATE DR. RAJESH KUMAR BISHOI, (26) LATE DR. RAJESH KUMAR BISHOI, (27) LATE DR. RAJESH KUMAR BISHOI, (28) LATE DR. 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India 141-6 at stumps, lead by 145 runs against Australia in fifth Test

PTI ■ SYDNEY

Staying true to his aggressive style of play, generational talent Rishabh Pant conjured up a spectacular 33-ball-61 to somehow keep India afloat even as Australia remained in driver's seat in the fifth Test, which is poised for an intriguing finish.

It was largely due to Pant's breathtaking knock that India finished the second day at 141 for 6 for an overall lead of 145. Pant entrained the packed SCG with four monstrous sixes and six boundaries.

His back-to-back sixes off Mitchell Starc into the heritage Ladies Members Stands were for posterity.

Pant's knock prevented Indian second innings from falling apart with the visitors top and lower order struggling to negotiate Aussie attack on a track that was aided seam and bounce.

This was after unheralded bowling duo of Prasidh Krishna (3/42) and Nitish Reddy (2/32) complemented Mohammed Siraj



at the MCG, Pant perhaps cleared his mind about what he needed to do. He came in at a time when not just Boland but even debutant Beau Webster was getting the ball to move a proverbial mile off the deck. There was steep bounce available at the Randwick End (far end) where Kohli got out. Boland pitched it on hard length and got

both seam and bounce. The result was a now familiar dab towards slips as Kohli's future beyond 123 Tests looks doubtful.

This was after both KL Rahul and Yashasvi Jaiswal got a couple of rippers.

However once Pant came out, he was a man-on-a-mission as the first ball disappeared into the long-on stand. The fallen pull shot also came out of the closet. It was exhilarating stuff.

Pant rode on bounce and hit Webster over point but the two sixes off Starc do take the cake. It was understood that Pant was mentally not in frame due to unsolicited sermons from a coaching staff member, who despite knowing the dashing southpaw's game told him to play otherwise.

At one point, a clueless Pat Cummins was forced to put six fielders near the boundary ropes. The skipper himself who saw the back of Pant, inducing edge from a ball that rose. Indian and Australian fans gave a standing ovation to the diminutive southpaw.

Third pacer steps up

In the post lunch session, Prasidh and Reddy more than made up for skipper Bumrah's absence as India took 51 overs to bowl out the hosts.

Steve Smith's (33) dismissal off Prasidh just before lunch disturbed Australia's rhythm.

Post lunch, Prasidh came from round the wicket from the Paddington End and removed Alex Carey (21) with an angled-in delivery. Carey was looking good but once Karnataka speedster found his length, he was literally unplayable.

Debutant Webster (57) justified his selection with a half-century but it was Reddy, coming for his second spell, sparked a collapse with wickets of Cummins and Mitchell Starc, both done in by subtle movement off the surface.

The final blow was dealt by Prasidh. He used the uneven bounce and cracks off the surface to get one bounce awkwardly at Webster and Jaiswal snaffled the catch.



Enough variable bounce to keep us in the game: Prasidh Krishna

PTI ■ SYDNEY

India's overall lead is not even close to the 200-run mark but pacer Prasidh Krishna says the unpredictable nature of the SCG track will keep them in the hunt since batting won't be easy for Australia in the fourth innings because of the variable bounce.

India ended the second day at 141 for six for an overall lead of 145. A win in the Sydney Test will ensure that India retain the Border Gavaskar Trophy.

"It is getting difficult in some areas. The ball is keeping low sometimes but there is enough bounce for us to be in the game and look for those edges. Try and beat them on either side of the bat," Prasidh said during the media interaction. He didn't put a number on what would be a defendable total for the visitors.

"There is no particular number in mind but then as many runs as we score would be great. We are ready to bowl them out for whatever," the Karnataka speedster, who got the prized scalp of Steve Smith in the first innings, said.

Prasidh got Smith at the stroke of lunch but during his spell in the first session, he was guilty of missing his length. He either went too full or too short.

"The difference was when I got back from lunch, I actually looked at where I was bowling. I sat with the analyst and we had a better idea of what my reference point is. When I came in to bowl next, that really helped."

Prasidh came to Australia at least three weeks earlier

McDonald surprised by Pant's subdued play in first innings

PTI ■ SYDNEY

It was not at all surprising that Rishabh Pant bulldozed the Australian attack with his stroke-play in the second innings but his ultra-defensive approach on the opening day indeed was, Australia head coach Andrew McDonald said on Saturday.

Pant had laboured to 40 off 98 balls, taking multiple blows on his body during his 149-minute stay on the wicket. Pant had said that he was not in a frame of mind to attack.

Pant, though, changed the gears effortlessly in the second innings, hitting Mitchell Starc for two massive sixes. Scott Boland and Beau Webster were not spared either as they too were lofted for a six each.

"First of all, it's not surprising, the way he plays. We were in fact a little bit surprised in the first innings, the way he went about his work. He's got an incredible ability to put pressure back on to bowlers," McDonald said, doffing his hat to India's biggest match-winner in Test cricket in recent years.

However, Australia didn't allow Pant to completely walk away as Pat Cummins dismissed him just when things looked like getting out of hand.

"We're planning for that though, we'll plan leading into the summer. We bounced in and out of a few plans there and clearly kept taking on the boundary riders and was getting away with it and no, it was an innings that you would say was right for that time."

Boland has been difficult match-up for Kohli

Virat Kohli has been out eight times in his nine innings while fishing at deliveries on or outside the off-stump and

Australia head coach praised his bowlers, especially Scott Boland, who sent back the India stalwart four times in five Tests.

Does it seem easy to get Kohli out?

"No, it's never easy to get Virat out," McDonald, trying to contain his smile of satisfaction.

"I give full credit to the bowlers and the execution of the plan. It's one thing to have a plan, but then to be able to execute is another thing. It's put him (Kohli) under immense pressure. And, look, he's tried some things."



"He's tried walking out of his crease. He's tried different tactics as well. But clearly that relentless nature of our bowlers, in particular, Scottie (Boland), the 'match-up' has been incredibly difficult for him to combat. But he's never an easy wicket, no."

This is a pitch for even contests

The traditional SCG wicket is usually a batting paradise and also helps the spinners towards the end but the ongoing Test has unfolded on a green top with variable bounce on offer.

McDonald did not hide his appreciation for the ground staff for preparing a fair track.

"The ground staff have done an incredible job in terms of, creating a wicket with something in it. Traditionally here it's quite benign and we've had a lot of draws, so a lot of people have been talking about the draws, so you're damned if you do it and damned if you don't. So this game's sped up."

"I think he's trying to produce an even contest between bat and ball. There's no doubt about that. It's made for interesting cricket."



I am not going anywhere, I just stood down from this Test: Rohit Sharma

PTI ■ SYDNEY

Senior India batter Rohit Sharma on Saturday firmly dismissed his retirement rumours, saying he is "not going anywhere" and offered poor form as the reason for him "standing down" from the ongoing Sydney Test against Australia.

Grappling with modest form, Rohit "opted to rest" from the Sydney Test, handing over the leadership duties to Jasprit Bumrah, sparking widespread speculations about his future.

"I have not retired. I stood down, that is what I would say. Basically the chat that I had with the coach and the selector was very simple. I am not able to score runs, there is no form, it is an important match and we need a player with form," Rohit told Star Sports.

"As it is, in our batting, the form of the boys is not that good. So you cannot carry a lot of out of form players in the team. This simple thing was going on in my mind. I am not going anywhere," he added.

The 37-year-old said the team management and selectors backed his decision.

"I wanted to tell the coach and the selector that this is what is going on in my mind. They backed my decision. They said that you have been playing for so many years. You know what you are doing."

"So for me, it was difficult to take this decision. But if everything is kept in front, then this decision was sensible. I will not think much further," he added.

In Rohit's absence, Shubman Gill was included in the India eleven for the crucial fifth match of the Border-Gavaskar Trophy as India is trailing 1-2. The Mumbaier endured a tough time in Test cricket in

2024, accumulating just 619 runs in 26 innings across 14 matches averaging 24.76.

Before standing down, he had scored just 31 runs across five innings in three Tests in this series after joining the team following the Perth Test.

Rohit's bold call triggered speculations that he might pull the plug on his Test career after this series.

"This is not a retirement decision. I am not going to leave the game. There is no such decision. But I am out of this game because the bat is not working."

"But there is no guarantee that the bat will not work after 5 months. There is no guarantee that the bat will not work after two months or six months down the line," Rohit said.

He hoped for a turnaround in his fortunes sooner than later.

"We have seen a lot in cricket. Every minute, every second, every day life changes. So, I have a belief that things will change."

"But, at the same time, I have to be realistic as well. So, if a person has a mic inside, or a laptop, or a pen, what he writes, what he says, it does not change our life. We have played this game for so many years."

"So, these people cannot decide when we should go or when we should not play. I am a sensible man. I am a mature man. I am the father of two children. So, I have a little brain to decide what I want in life," he noted.

Asked if he took this decision after the Melbourne Test defeat, Rohit said: "No, I took this decision after coming to Sydney. Because after the match, we had only two days in between. And one day was New Year's eve. So on New Year's, I did not want to tell this to the coach and the selector."

Novak Djokovic beaten by big-serving Reilly Opelka in quarterfinals of Brisbane International

AP ■ BRISBANE

Novak Djokovic was beaten 7-6 (6), 6-3 by big-serving Reilly Opelka in the Brisbane International quarterfinals.

The 37-year-old Djokovic was playing his first tournament of the year. The 24-time Grand Slam champion is preparing for the Australian Open, which starts on Jan. 12 and which he has won 10 times.

"Amazing tennis, Reilly. Absolutely deserved," Djokovic wrote on Instagram.

Opelka served 16 aces — including one to finish off each set — to earn one of the biggest wins of the American's career.

"I was just focused on my way that's how it works out."

New coach Andy Murray will join Djokovic in Melbourne. Opelka achieved a career-high ranking of No. 17 in Feb. 2022 before undergoing hip surgery later that year to remove a benign tumor. He's now No. 293.

"It was tough. A lot of uncertainty, a lot of doubt," Opelka said.

In the semifinals, Opelka will face Giovanni Mpetshi Perricard, who beat Jakob Mensik 7-5, 7-6 (5). The other semifinal will feature Jiri Lehecka against Grigor Dimitrov.

Lehecka beat Nicolas Jarry 6-4, 6-4 and Dimitrov advanced when Jordan Thompson retired while Dimitrov was ahead 6-1, 2-1.

Opelka said. "If I hit them, it's hard to get them back. If there's anyone that can, it's him."

"We have nothing to lose coming in against him. He's the greatest player ever," Opelka added. "So you end up playing more free and you take a lot more risk. If you play your normal level or even above a normal level, he's going to win every time. So it's tough in his position because he gets guys that are good players that they roll the dice. And on a on a day like this when a lot of things go



my way that's how it works out."

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It's an answer to all those who made fun of me: Para shuttler Nithya on Arjuna Award

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Paralympic bronze medalist and Arjuna Award winner Nithya Sre Sumathy Sivan still remembers those tearful days at school when relentless bullying left her devastated and depressed.

Now a successful shuttler, the 19-year-old believes the prestigious award has come as a just reward for those days of turmoil.

"When I was in 6th or 7th standard, there was not much growth in me. In schools, there was bullying. I used to be very sad. I used to cry for every small thing. So, yeah, it's kind of an answer to them that I can also do something and achieve big," Nithya told PTI.

Reflecting on her achievements, she added, "I have seen so many of my co-athletes who are winning awards and are achievers. So, getting one of the national awards is something very prestigious."

"It is a proud moment for me. All the medals and awards are like a gift for me — a recognition of my hard work, dedication to the game, practicing every day, following everything, and being disciplined."

Born and raised in Hosur, Tamil Nadu, Nithya had lost her mother when she was just one year old. Her father and grandmother became her unwavering support system, with her brother standing by her side as a constant companion.

"I used to stay inside the house a lot, So just to get me



However, when I considered taking up cricket, there were no female athletes," said Nithya.

She watched badminton for the first time during the Rio Olympics, and everything changed. The racquet sport

soon became her chosen sport, turning into an all-consuming passion.

"My brother took up badminton for fitness, and I joined him. Watching Sindhu in 2016 inspired me, and my friends and I started playing badminton in the streets. This sparked my interest in training, and I started practicing twice a week, gradually increasing to daily sessions."

"When COVID hit, I couldn't train, but once it was over, I resumed and discovered Para badminton. That's when I moved to Lucknow (under Gaurav Khanna, Head Coach of Team India) for training," added Nithya, who has recently started training at the Prakash Padukone Badminton Academy

(PPBA) due to its proximity to her hometown.

A fan of Chinese legend Lin Dan, Nithya discovered the world of Para-Badminton in 2019 before the outbreak of COVID-19 and started competing in international events from 2021.

"Looking ahead to 2025, the Asian Championship will be one of the key Paralympic events this year. Next year, we have the World Championship. My target is to peak by 2028 Los Angeles Games, so there are no shorter goals now—only focusing on the World Championship each year leading up to 2028," said Nithya.

Recently, there was a controversy when two-time Paris bronze medalist shooter Manu Bhaker's name

didn't figure in the initial list of nomination for the national award due to lapses in applying on time.

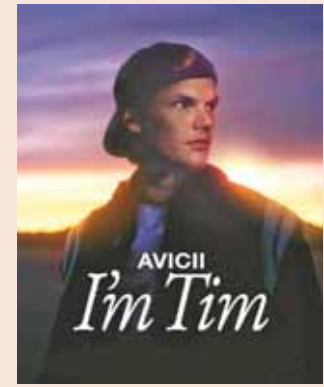
Asked about her opinion, Nithya said the government should recognise them without athletes having to apply.

"When I got a call from my team telling me I had to apply for a national award, I was surprised. I didn't know that athletes had to apply themselves. I always thought the government would recognise and honour athletes directly."

"Government supports us a lot, and they must be aware of our achievements. They back us in tournaments and training, so I believe they should recognise athletes without us having to apply," she signed off.



SUGGESTED BINGES



AVICII - I'M TIM
IMDB Rating: 8/10
OTT: Netflix
Director: Henrik Burman
Cast: Tim Bergling, Chris Martin



CUNK ON LIFE
IMDB Rating: 7.9/10
OTT: Netflix
Director: Al Campbell
Cast: Diane Morgan, Michelle Greenidge, Charles Aitken



STAR WARS: SKELETON CREW
IMDB Rating: 7.2/10
OTT: Disney+ Hotstar
Cast: Jude Law, Robert Timothy Smith, Ryan Kiera Armstrong, Dominic Burgess, Tunde Adebimpe



MISSING YOU
IMDB Rating: 6.3/10
OTT: Netflix
Director: Sean Spencer
Cast: Rosalind Eleazar, Ashley Walters, Richard Armitage, Charlie Hamblett



GUNAAB SEASON 2
IMDB Rating: 7/10
OTT: Disney+ Hotstar
Director: Anil Senior
Cast: Gashmeer Mahajani, Tanmay Nagar, Surbhi Jyoti



Phool Khilein Hai Gulshan Gulshan

"Flowers are the music of the ground, from Earth's lips they speak" - Edwin Curran

Delhi's winter gardens bloom with vibrant colours, offering a peaceful, rejuvenating escape amid chilly mornings, writes SAKSHI PRIYA

As winter settles in, Delhi transforms into a canvas painted with nature's brightest colours. In January and February, the city bursts into bloom, with vibrant flowers filling the air with fragrance and painting the streets in shades of red, pink, white and yellow. The cold breeze brushes against your face, but it's the sight of flowers scattered across parks, streets and gardens that brings warmth to the season. Wrapped in woollen layers, people venture out, eager to experience the charm of Delhi's winter gardens. The city, known for its bustling streets and busy markets, becomes a space of natural beauty, offering a tranquil escape for those who wish to experience the quieter side of life. The streets are alive with flower vendors, their carts brimming with bright blossoms. The colours of the flowers stand out against the grey of the streets, giving a joyful touch to the city's landscape. From Daisies to roses, every flower seems to tell its own story, contributing to the lively atmosphere. Parks and gardens are filled with families, children and friends, all taking time to marvel at nature's work. Among the many spots where Delhiites gather, the Brics Friendship Rose Garden stands out. Its endless varieties of roses, red, pink, white, and yellow, fill the garden with their elegance. A walk through this garden feels like stepping into a painting, where every bloom is carefully placed to create a masterpiece. The roses, with their soft petals and vibrant colours, seem to tell the story of the



season, a season of beauty, growth, and renewal. Not far from here, Lodi Garden offers its own magic. The soft winter sunlight filters through the trees, casting long shadows on the ground while highlighting bursts of colour from the flowers below. Daisies, with their cheerful white petals, brighten up garden beds, adding a light touch to the winter gloom. Poppies sway gently in the breeze, their bold red petals creating a striking contrast against the muted backdrop. Dianthus barbatus, with its detailed patterns, draws curious gazes from those who pass by. It's a place that invites

you to pause and appreciate the little things, like the texture of a flower's petals or the way the wind makes them dance. The quiet hum of the park, combined with the gentle presence of flowers, creates an atmosphere of calm, offering a break from the city's constant rush. One of the highlights of the season is Amrit Udyan, formerly known as the Mughal Gardens, at Rashtrapati Bhavan. Open to the public for a brief period at the end of January and the beginning of February, the garden offers a breathtaking experience. The garden, with its grand pathways and symmetrical design, is home to a variety of

flowers, each more stunning than the last. Hyacinths, with their soft pastel shades and soothing fragrance, line the walkways, offering a moment of tranquillity in the midst of the garden's grandeur. The roses - carmosine, bonica and bush roses, stand out as the garden's crown jewels. Their delicate petals, in varying shades of red, pink, and white, add an elegant touch to the space. The golden blooms of the yellow sibiruna trees brighten the garden, their cheerful colour lighting up even the quietest corners. Together, these flowers create a space where nature takes centre

stage, inviting visitors to slow down and immerse themselves in the beauty around them. The flowers in Amrit Udyan and other gardens around the city don't just beautify the landscape, they also bring a sense of togetherness. Families walk hand in hand, children run along flower-lined paths, their laughter echoing through the air. Couples sit on benches, quietly enjoying the view, while elderly visitors bask in the warmth of the sun. The flowers provide a peaceful backdrop for these moments, adding a sense of calm to the busy lives of the city's inhabitants. It's a time when Delhi feels slower, gentler, and more inviting, with nature offering its own reminder to take a break from the fast pace of modern life. Even in the busiest corners of Delhi, there are small moments of beauty to be found. Flower vendors, with their colourful carts, brighten up the busiest streets. Roundabouts are dotted with flower beds, each one a small oasis of colour in the midst of the traffic. Trees adorned with golden flowers seem to lift everyone's spirits, their bright blooms creating a cheerful atmosphere even in the most crowded areas. These small touches of nature add an unexpected layer of beauty to the city, offering a gentle reminder of the season's charm. While Delhi's streets can often feel chaotic, its gardens offer a peaceful reprieve. Whether you're in the Brics Friendship Rose Garden, Lodi Garden or Amrit Udyan, the flowers remind you to slow down, to appreciate the beauty around you and to find moments of stillness in the hustle of everyday life.

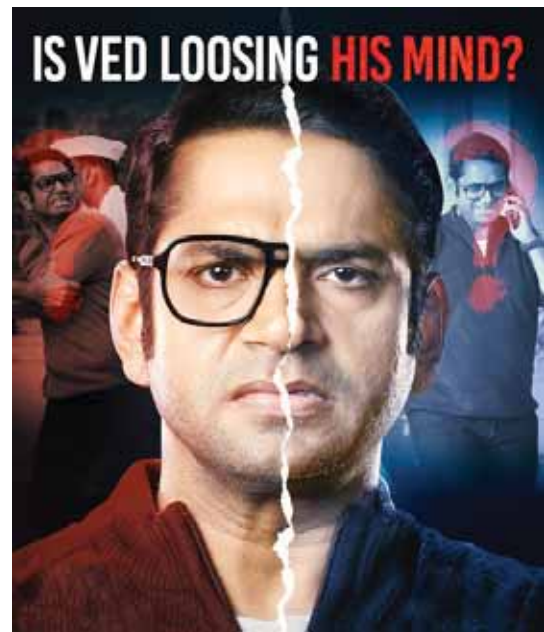
PHOTOS: PANKAJ KUMAR



In 1989, the movie Khoj brought together Naseeruddin Shah and Rishi Kapoor in a suspenseful tale of deceit and mystery. The story revolved around a man whose wife mysteriously vanished, only to have another woman claim to be his wife. While the film's climax fell flat, its premise remained exciting. Fast forward to the present, and Khoj - Parchaiyo Ke Uss Paar attempts to reimagine the suspense in a web series format. Directed by Prabal Baruah and produced by Juggernaut, this Zee5 thriller stars Sharib Hashmi, Anupriya Goenka, and Aamir Dalvi in pivotal roles. Unfortunately, it struggles to deliver the nail-biting tension audiences expect from such a genre. The story follows Ved played by Sharib Hashmi, a man desperately searching for his missing wife, Meera, played by Anupriya Goenka. As he goes deeper into her disappearance, Ved encounters bizarre events and clues that challenge his grip on reality. A sceptical police officer complicates matters, questioning Ved's narrative and leaving him to prove that the woman posing as Meera is not, in fact, his wife. While the first three episodes, particularly Aar Ya Paar, maintain a semblance of intrigue, the series begins to lose steam soon after. The narrative

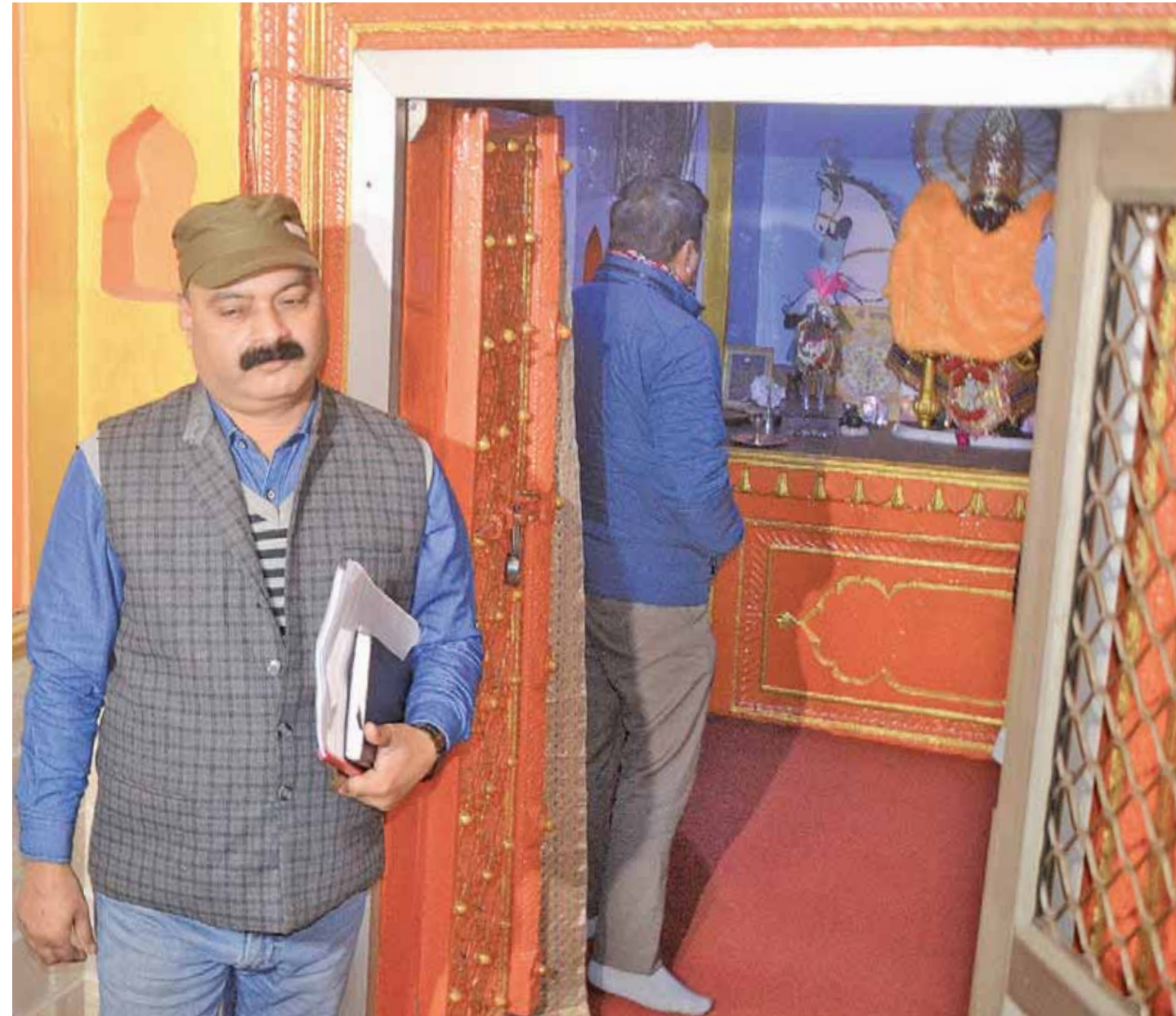
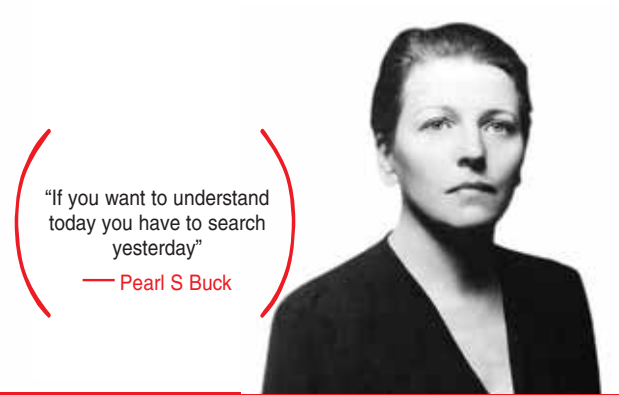
IN KHOJ OF THRILL

Khoj - Parchaiyo Ke Uss Paar falls bland in the mystery and thriller genre despite commendable performances, writes ABHI SINGHAL



feels unnecessarily stretched, adding little value to the plot. Despite a strong performance by Sharib Hashmi in a rare lead role, and Anupriya Goenka's stellar portrayal, the storyline fails to capitalise on its potential. The biggest letdown is the predictability of the plot. The absence of genuine twists and an underwhelming climax detract from what could have been an interesting watch. The final episode abruptly resolves the mystery, leaving viewers dissatisfied. Moreover, the police inspector's role is underdeveloped, adding little to the progression of the narrative. Another notable drawback is the lack of an impactful background score, which could have significantly enhanced the suspense. The awkward cliffhanger endings to each episode feel forced, especially for a series with a mere 140-minute runtime, which would have been better suited as a film. Despite its flaws, the performances by Sharib Hashmi and Anupriya Goenka are the saving grace of the series, making it a tolerable one-time watch. However, the lack of originality and engaging drama keeps it from standing out. Rating: 2/5

Get in touch at vivacity@dailypioneer.com



What began as a routine inspection by district officials to check noise levels from loudspeakers and illegal electricity connections in the Muslim-dominated *Khaggu Sarai* area of Sambhal has turned into a historic archaeological discovery. On 14 December, a team led by the District Magistrate (DM) and Superintendent of Police (SP) stumbled upon a locked structure. Breaking open its doors revealed not just an abandoned Shiva temple but also a wealth of history hidden beneath layers of soil and silt.

The discovery of the temple, which had been locked for 46 years, has prompted a flurry of activity, including surveys by the *Archaeological Survey of India* (ASI). Early reports suggest the temple, and other relics unearthed nearby, may date back several centuries, providing invaluable insights into *Sambhal's* rich cultural and religious history.

DISCOVERY IN SAMBHAL:

UNEARTHING ANCIENT TEMPLES AND WELLS

A historic discovery in Sambhal reveals ancient temples, wells, and stepwells, offering valuable insights into the region's cultural heritage, say **BISWAJEET BANERJEE** and **SAJID KHAN**



Locked Temple, Unlocked History

DM *Dr. Rajendra Pansiya* recalled the unexpected nature of the find. "This discovery was purely accidental. We were investigating noise and electricity issues near a mosque, but what we found behind the locked doors was remarkable," he said. The temple, which had been shut since the 1978 communal riots, housed a Shiva idol and a statue of Hanuman. Nearby, a well contained three additional statues that were uncovered during excavation.

The riots of 1978, which displaced many from the local Hindu community, had led to the temple being abandoned. "Local accounts suggest the temple is over 500 years old," *Dr. Pansiya* added. To confirm its antiquity, the district administration reached out to the ASI for carbon dating and further investigation.

The ASI Steps In

Following the DM's request, a four-member ASI team from Meerut and Delhi conducted an extensive eight-hour survey of the site last week. The team examined the temple, the adjacent well, and five other pilgrimage sites, including *Bhadrak Ashram*, *Swargdeep*, and *Chakrapani*. During their survey, they documented their findings through photography and collected evidence for further analysis.



In addition to the temple, the ASI team identified 19 wells, including the historically significant *Chaturmukh Koop*, *Moksha Koop*, and *Dharma Koop*. The ASI's investigation aims to establish the historical and cultural significance of these sites.

Dr. Pansiya expressed optimism about the findings. "Once we have the ASI's report, we will have a clearer picture of the historical importance of these sites. Based on their recommendations, we will prepare a plan for their preservation and development," he said.

The Stepwell of Laxman Ganj

Adding to the list of discoveries, a 250-foot-deep stepwell, believed to date back to the First War of Independence in



ONCE WE HAVE THE ASI'S REPORT, WE WILL HAVE A CLEARER PICTURE OF THE HISTORICAL IMPORTANCE OF THESE SITES. BASED ON THEIR RECOMMENDATIONS, WE WILL PREPARE A PLAN FOR THEIR PRESERVATION AND DEVELOPMENT — **DR. PANSIYA**



1857, was unearthed in *Sambhal's* *Laxman Ganj* area last week. Named *Rani ki Bawdi*, the stepwell came to light after the ruins of an ancient *Banke Bihari temple* were discovered earlier this month.

Kaushal Kishore, the state publicity chief of the *Sanatan Sevak Sangh*, had written to the DM, pointing out the historical significance of the site. "The stepwell and the ruins are remnants of the royal family of Sahaspur. These finds are a testament to our history," *Kishore* said.

The excavation, which involved two bulldozers, also revealed a two-storey structure near the stepwell. Work at the site is ongoing, with authorities halting operations at night due to visibility issues.

"Encroachments on the site have been identified, and notices will be issued to families occupying the land illegally," *Dr. Pansiya* said, adding that the administration is committed to restoring and beautifying the area.

The discovery of the ancient stepwell, or *Bawdi*, in *Sambhal* has brought to light the rich history of the region, linked to the erstwhile royal family of *Sahaspur State in Bilari*. Official records list the *Bawdi* as a pond spanning 400 square metres. However, recent excavations have revealed much more—a well-preserved three-storey structure featuring intricate architecture and significant historical relevance.

"The *Bawdi* was constructed during the reign of the king of *Bilari* and is believed to be approximately 150 years old," *Dr. Pansiya* said. The structure includes two marble floors and one brick floor, along with a well and four rooms, all part of an elaborate underground complex. Signs of encroachment on the site have also been identified, and the

administration plans to address this issue promptly.

The site, once a vital part of the *Sahaspur State*, served as a rest stop for soldiers and the royal family during their travels. *Shipra Gera*, a relative of the royal family, recounted the historical importance of the *Bawdi*. "This place was a strategic stopover for soldiers travelling from *Sahaspur (Bilari)* to villages under the State's control, which now fall in the *Badaun* district. The royal family also used the underground complex during their journeys to escape the scorching summer heat," she said.

The *Bawdi's* corridors were manned by soldiers, and the site served both functional and leisure purposes. The underground chambers provided a cool retreat for the royals, while the stepwell itself ensured a steady water supply for their needs.

As restoration and research continue, the *Bawdi* and its surrounding structures are set to become a beacon of *Sambhal's* historical legacy, offering locals and visitors alike a chance to reconnect with the region's storied past.

A Shared History Unearthed

The discoveries in *Sambhal* are a poignant reminder of the region's layered history, which is often obscured by present-day tensions. The proximity of the temple to the *Shahi Jama Masjid*, where violence had erupted during a protest against a court-ordered survey, underscores the intertwined histories of communities that have lived together for centuries.

Local historian and archaeologist *Dr. Arvind Sharma* highlighted the significance of the finds. "These discoveries provide a window into the past, showcasing *Sambhal's* role as a cultural and religious hub. The preservation of these sites is not just about protecting relics but also about understanding our shared heritage," he said.

The district administration, in collaboration with the ASI, is now focused on ensuring that these historical sites are preserved and developed responsibly. Plans include creating tourist-friendly infrastructure while maintaining the integrity of the sites.

The discoveries have sparked excitement and curiosity among locals. "We've always heard stories about these places, but seeing them come to light is incredible. It feels like a part of our history has been revived," said *Sunil Kumar*, a *Sambhal* resident.

As excavation and research continue, the findings in *Sambhal* are expected to shed more light on the region's past, offering lessons for the present and inspiration for the future.

The accidental unearthing of the Shiva temple and subsequent discoveries serve as a reminder of the hidden treasures that lie buried beneath the surface, waiting to be rediscovered and celebrated.



"IF YOU REALLY WANT TO MAKE A FRIEND, GO TO SOMEONE'S HOUSE AND EAT WITH HIM... THE PEOPLE WHO GIVE YOU THEIR FOOD GIVE YOU THEIR HEART"
—CESAR CHAVEZ

EXQUISITE DINING WITH A VIEW

When it comes to food that excites the senses, *Resaca* in the heart of Central Delhi offers an experience that perfectly balances sophistication with flavour. This newly opened 12,000 square-foot space is a culinary palace where every dish is designed to captivate both the eyes and the taste buds. Whether you're craving an intimate dinner or a lively gathering with friends, *Resaca* has it all.

The indoor dining area, affectionately known as the "Resaca Playground," is a chic and stylish setting, offering sleek, modern furniture that's both practical and comfortable. With spacious tables thoughtfully arranged to cater to different dining styles, guests can enjoy private, intimate meals or social gatherings with equal ease. Each corner of the restaurant is designed to create a relaxed yet refined ambiance, perfect for any occasion.

However, what truly sets *Resaca* apart is its stunning rooftop - 'Resaca Aero.' This rooftop has quickly become the talk of the town, offering guests panoramic views of the Delhi skyline. Whether you're dining in the golden light of day or under the twinkling stars at night, the experience is nothing short of magical. The breathtaking views and elegant atmosphere create the perfect setting for a memorable dining experience.

Behind this visionary space is *Mayank Sehgal*, a renowned menswear designer who has brought his creative flair to the world of fine dining. As the creative director, *Mayank's* attention to detail and aesthetic sensibilities are

A sophisticated dining experience with flavours, stunning views and elegant ambiance for every occasion, says **TEAM AGENDA**

reflected in every aspect of *Resaca*, from the décor to the curated dining experience. *Resaca* is a destination where food lovers can indulge in both culinary delights and a beautiful atmosphere. When it comes to the food, *Resaca* excels in offering an array of innovative and mouthwatering options. For those who enjoy small plates, the *Kataifi Dahi Kebab* (spiced yoghurt and crispy kataifi kebab) is a must-try. The *Magnum Kebab*, featuring panko crumbed assorted veggies with warm tomato chutney, promises a delightful burst of flavours. If you're a fan of rich and smoky flavours, try the *Lababdar Paneer Tikka*, silky chunks of cottage cheese served with house-special gravy and fried shallots. For a lighter yet equally satisfying option, the *Stuffed Mushrooms*, served with roasted red pepper coulis, are divine.

The menu also includes delectable platters for sharing. The *Arabic Mezze* is a fantastic choice for anyone who loves Mediterranean flavours, with an assortment of *falafel*, *hummus*, *baba ganoush* and warm *pita bread*. For a meatier version, the *Arabic Platter* with *chicken shish tawook* and *lamb fatayer* is equally tempting.

No meal at *Resaca* is complete without indulging in their sweet offerings. The *Rum-Based Tiramisu*, a no-bake dessert soaked in rum, offers a rich, indulgent finish to your meal. Other fan favourites include the *Mango Cheesecake*, *Banoffee Pie* and the innovative *Kunafa Cheesecake*, which combines the best of both worlds. Of course, no visit to *Resaca* is complete without sampling their signature cocktails, such as the *Katana*, made with vodka, coconut and matcha or the refreshing *Green Park*, which features Hendricks Gin, celery infusion, and elderflower syrup. *Resaca* offers an experience that goes beyond a meal. From its stunning interiors to its carefully crafted cocktails and mouthwatering dishes, this restaurant has quickly become a go-to destination for those looking to indulge in style.

PHOTOS: PANKAJ KUMAR



FROM THE ITALIAN FEASTS

At *Toscano*, traditional flavours and premium ingredients transport you to Tuscany, writes **TEAM AGENDA**



With its gates in the centre of Saket's Select City Walk Mall, *Toscano* welcomes you on a Tuscan food adventure. *Toscano* offers a genuine dining experience that satisfies the sophisticated palates of its esteemed patrons by fusing traditional culinary methods with premium, fresh ingredients and unusual cheeses. *Toscano* offers a warm and inviting atmosphere, where handcrafted pastas, carefully selected wines, and dishes inspired by Italy's heritage take the centre tables. The cosy setting is uplifted by soft yellow lighting, a striking wine wall, and painted patterned walls, creating the perfect backdrop to savour delightful moments with your loved ones.

You can initiate the tasty food by starting with the *Antipasti*, the small plates menu offering you *Arancini e Mozzarella Fritta* (Arborio rice balls & fried mozzarella) that has golden fried cheesy Italian rice balls, crumb fried fresh mozzarella, carrots, zucchini, broccoli and haricot verts served with arrabiata sauce as they melt in your mouth, enticing you to consume an increasing amount. Also, in *Bruschetta* you can go forward with *Pomodoro Classico* made out of fresh tomatoes, olive oil, basil & parmesan cheese. From the *Insalata*, the salad menu, *Insalata di Quattro Fagioli con Cereali* (four bean salad with mixed grains) with selection of four beans, mixed grains, roasted pumpkin, cherry tomatoes, red onion, romaine lettuce, roasted

pumpkin seeds, feta cheese & sweet balsamic dressing to keep up with your fitness and taste. In the *Pane all'aglio*, the garlic breads menu you can go for *Classic Baguette Garlic Bread* with melting mozzarella cheese and *Rosemary Bread* with rosemary, pesto, olive oil made with rock salt pizza bread. For pasta lovers, the *Artisan & Signature Special Pasta* menu is a feast of flavours that will leave you craving more. A recommendation is the *Ravioli di Spinaci e Ricotta*, featuring handmade spinach and ricotta ravioli, served in a fragrant basil-flavoured tomato sauce with olives, melting deliciously in every bite. The *Dolce* (Dessert) menu at *Toscano* is a paradise for dessert lovers. The highlights include the *Classic Tiramisu*, perfectly paired with coffee ice cream, and the indulgent 55% *Couverture Chocolate Hazelnut Brownie*, served warm with creamy vanilla ice cream. Saving the best for last, the *Signature Chocolate Kahlua Mousse*, complemented by a delicate almond tuile and velvety crème anglaise, promises to be an unforgettable treat for your taste buds.



FACT SHEET
Restaurant Name: Resaca
Address: No. 7, 3rd Floor, Building, Pusa Rd, Block 11, WEA, Karol Bagh, Delhi, 110005
Price for 2: Approx. ₹2000
Cuisine: Multi-cuisine (Indian, Mediterranean, International)
Dining Experience: Indoor and Rooftop seating

FACT SHEET
Restaurant Name: Toscano
Address: S-44, 2nd Floor, Nexus Select City Walk, MGF Saket Driveaway, Saket, New Delhi.
Price for 2: Approx. ₹1800



SMALL PLATES LEAD THE WAY

Small eateries deliver bigger and tastier joys than mega restaurants



When it comes to dining out, bigger isn't always better. In a world where restaurants compete to offer a vast array of dishes, there's something uniquely charming and rewarding about *small eateries* that focus on just one or two specialties. They may lack the glitz of fine dining or the variety of a multi-page menu, but what they offer goes far deeper. Here's why these unassuming establishments are not only worth visiting but may also offer a far superior dining experience.

more attention on the quality and less temptation to rely on pre-made or frozen components. *Small eateries* usually shop locally and in small quantities, ensuring that what you eat was likely bought that very morning. It's not uncommon to see these modest eateries sourcing their produce from the local market, even chatting with their vendors to get the best pick. This personal touch translates directly to the plate, where each ingredient retains its flavour, offering a sensory experience.

MASTERY OVER MEDIOCRITY: The biggest problem with an expansive menu is that it's almost impossible to do every dish justice. When a kitchen has to juggle diverse cuisines or multiple complex recipes, something inevitably gets lost in translation. Food often becomes standardised, stripped of any distinct personality, and made to cater to the average palate. Conversely, small eateries that specialise in a single dish or a couple of items have the luxury of focusing all their energy and skill on perfecting those few offerings. Each plate becomes a labor of love, honed through years of repetition and refinement.

CONSISTENT FLAVOURS, EVERY TIME: In smaller places, it's usually the same set of hands working in the kitchen day in and day out. There's no confusion, no passing the recipe from one chef to another. The cook knows exactly how much salt to sprinkle or how long to simmer the gravy. There's a sense of reliability, a promise that every time you visit, the dish will taste exactly as you remembered it. This consistency is one of the hardest things to achieve in a large restaurant where new chefs or cooks are frequently cycling in and out.

THE ART OF FRESHNESS: *Small menus* often mean fresher ingredients. When a kitchen isn't overwhelmed with a long list of ingredients for a sprawling menu, there's

THE PRICE OF CONVENIENCE: QUALITY VS. QUICK FIXES: In large eateries, the pressure to churn out diverse dishes at a rapid pace often means sacrificing freshness and authenticity. Many big restaurants, in an effort to streamline operations and manage



such extensive menus, have begun to rely on pre-made sauces and packaged ingredients laced with preservatives. These shortcuts may save time, but they take a serious toll on both flavour and nutritional value. A *small eatery*, with its focus on fresh, daily-prepared dishes, naturally provides a far more nourishing experience than the one that supports both health and taste without compromising quality.

dish can seem limiting. But there's joy in simplicity. Knowing you're about to eat a dish that's the pride and focus of an establishment, there's an unspoken promise of quality.

A PERSONAL TOUCH THAT'S HARD TO FIND: Eating at a *small eatery* often means connecting with the person behind the food. They take pride in their craft, in the stories that accompany each dish, and in the relationships they build with regular customers. The proprietor might greet you by name, share the origins of a recipe, or remember just how spicy you like your curry. This connection adds a personal dimension to dining that large restaurants struggle to offer.

SMALL IS THE NEW BIG: As the trend toward slow, intentional dining gains momentum, small eateries with limited menus are emerging as champions of true culinary craftsmanship. These spots may lack the expansive spaces and curated ambiance, but they don't need it. They deliver exactly what matters: real, unforgettable food, born from expertise and commitment, served with the kind of warmth you can't find on any restaurant's oversized menu. In the end, it's about quality over quantity, simplicity over spectacle. And maybe, just maybe, finding the heart in what's on the plate over the number of options in a menu.

When you order from a restaurant with a lengthy menu, there's a transactional air to it. You're just another customer, another order to be fulfilled. But at a small, specialised eatery, you're part of a community, one of the lucky few who get to experience the authenticity that food can bring.



FOODFREAK

Pawan Soni
Food critic and founder of the Big F Awards

MEDIEVAL MARVEL IN BARCELONA



don't let that deter you—this serene sanctuary is worth the extra steps. Inside, the décor has evolved from vibrant, bold palettes and plush velvets to a soothing symphony of creams and greys adorned with elegant black and white photos. My lucky pick was an Apartment with a breath-taking medieval ambience and charming views of the cobbled street buzzing with tapas bars. Talk about living the fairy tale! The room's ambience, a mix of sophisticated neutrals and delicate fabrics, made the stay luxuriously cosy. The sleep preferences menu—offering sheets in cotton, satin, or linen, and a variety of pillows—felt like a dreamy personal touch. And the bathroom! A peaceful oasis with both a bathtub and rain shower, mood lighting, and Molton Brown products.

HISTORICAL CHARM AWAITS
Strolling through the Gothic Quarter, where the Romans once settled, feels like stepping into a storybook. Winding cobblestone streets lined with cosy shops, cafes, and residences lead to hidden plazas, each more picturesque than the last. *Hotel Neri's* central location is a dream for explorers. Just around the corner, the bells of the *Barcelona Cathedral* serenaded us from our room. Within a 5–10-minute stroll, we reached *Placa de Sant Jaume* and the iconic churches of *Santa Maria Del Mar* and *Santa Maria Del Pi*, famously featured in *Tom Holland's* 'Uncharted.' The waterfront and the bustling *Las Ramblas* were also close by, ensuring we never missed a beat of the city's vibrant life.

Hop on the metro, only five minutes away, and the rest of Barcelona unfolds at your feet. And for those with a sweet tooth, a quick five-minute amble took us to *Calle Petritxol*, a pedestrian haven brimming with chocolate and churro shops, including the famed *La Granja Dulcinea*. It is not just a place to stay; it's a historical adventure waiting to be experienced.

THE LITTLE LUXURIES
Dining at the A Restaurant was a gastronomic delight. The menu, brimming with Catalan dishes and global influences, featured gems like the 'fougasse and Rum Baba.' It was a true feast for the senses. The rooftop, *Roba Estesa*, transformed into a romantically lit, lush retreat, was the perfect spot to unwind under the stars. Living in a medieval castle, even for a short while, feels like a vibrant, whimsical dream. *Relais & Chateaux* boasts nearly 600 luxury hotels and fine dining restaurants worldwide, renowned for unique accommodations, exquisite cuisine, and impeccable service. President Laurent Gardinier aptly described them as paragons of 'excellence, food, experience, and culture.' After the delight of staying in *Hotel Neri*, I can confirm this commitment is nothing short of remarkable. If you crave a unique and romantic historical refuge in the lively heart of Barcelona, *Hotel Neri* is your match. Though it comes with a boutique five-star price tag, the magical experience it offers is simply priceless. It's the little things that elevate

a hotel stay from pleasant to unforgettable. At *Hotel Neri*, these thoughtful touches were on par with the world's finest hotels, such as the *Ritz Carlton*, *Four Seasons*, and *Six Senses*. From the cosy throw blanket on the bed—so handy when we left the heat off—to the fresh clementines awaiting us upon check-in, each detail made our stay special. Turn-down service with chocolates, and our stylish glass water pitcher refilled twice daily, all contributed to a feeling of home away from home. Though our next visit to

Barcelona might be a few years away, *Hotel Neri* will be my go-to choice. I wholeheartedly recommend this gem—and any *Relais & Chateaux* property—to fellow travellers seeking a truly memorable experience.
— She is an independent food & travel writer, a chef and a catalyst and is the first Indian to have trained at Osteria Francescana, in Modena, Italy, rated as the world's best restaurant in the World's 50 Best Restaurants, in 2016 and 2018 and currently in the Best of The Best Category

By AKANKSHA DEAN

Imagine stepping back in time without sacrificing an ounce of modern comfort. At *Hotel Neri*, nestled in a 17th-century mansion and the only *Relais and Chateaux* property in Barcelona, my stay was a delightful blend of history and luxury. Picture this: a 17th-century mansion turned chic boutique hotel with just 22 rooms. This is *Hotel Neri*, where each corner oozes charm and every stay feels

like a time-travelling adventure. This enchanting 12th-century palace-turned-hotel, located beside the quaint *Placa de Sant Felipe Neri*, retains its historical charm with stone walls and archways that whisk you back in time. Though it lacks a gym, its distinct style and unbeatable location make up for it tenfold. The terrace overlooking a quaint, atmospheric square and the lush rooftop bar are just a couple of quirky touches you'll love. Given its quiet pedestrian street setting, you might have a slight hassle with heavy luggage, but

WINTER WONDERS OF DARJEELING



Darjeeling's misty mountains, scenic bus ride, and cosy Radhakunj Homestay offered the perfect winter escape amidst nature's charm, writes VISHESH SHUKLA

In winter, the mountains are always beautiful, and hill stations are also enjoyable. So, I decided to visit one of the most beautiful hill stations in India, *Darjeeling*, West Bengal. I boarded the *Falaknuma Express* from *Cuttack to Howrah*, and then I changed trains to the *Paharia Express*, heading to *New Jalpaiguri (NJP)*. The weather was very humid in nature, and for a moment, I thought I had chosen the wrong time to come to *Darjeeling*. But *Darjeeling* proved me wrong—cold waves and fog made me feel at ease. I took an auto to the *Siliguri* bus stand for ₹50, then boarded a bus to *Darjeeling* for ₹105. The 4-hour bus journey, with its beautiful views and

winding turns, made my heart swell with excitement. Finally, I deboarded and headed to my homestay, which was near *Batasia Loop*. I checked in at *Radha Kunj Homestay*, which offered very cheap accommodation, ₹4500 for three nights. The rooms were beautiful, and the window view in the morning, with *Kanchenjunga* in the distance, was nothing short of breathtaking. It was around 5 PM, so I decided to visit *Mall Road*. I took a taxi for ₹50 and went to explore the beautiful area. First, I roamed around the market, soaking in the lively atmosphere. Then, I visited the very famous *Glenary's Bakery* and enjoyed some delicious snacks



there. Coincidentally, the *Darjeeling Melotea Fest 2024* was happening nearby. I got to enjoy some amazing music by the famous singer *Girish Chand*. After that, I had dinner at a local restaurant near *Mall Road*. The meal was simple and tasty, costing me around ₹200. Feeling satisfied, I took a taxi back to my homestay for ₹100. Once I reached, I had a good sleep, ready and excited for the adventures the next day would bring.

MIRIK'S SERENE SHORES
On Day 2, I woke up early in the morning and rented a scooty from 'Bike Wale Bhaiya' for ₹1500 for two days. I planned to visit *Mirik*, 34 km away,

to see the famous *Sumendu Lake*. However, I missed the main route and ended up taking a secondary road, which stretched the distance to 50 km and took me around 4 hours to reach. The ride was not wasted, though, as I passed through beautiful tea gardens and stopped at a viewpoint called *Lepchajagat*. Finally, I reached *Mirik Lake*, spent some peaceful time there, and then started my journey back to *Darjeeling*. On the way, I also visited the Nepal border at *Pashupati Nagar* and enjoyed a quiet dinner before returning to my homestay.

DARJEELING'S ICONIC LANDMARKS

Day 3 was all about sightseeing in *Darjeeling*. I started my day at *Tiger Hill* to witness the stunning view of *Kanchenjunga*. Next, I visited the serene *Ghoom Monastery* and felt the peaceful vibes of Buddhism. After that, I stopped by the *Peace Pagoda*, built to promote harmony, and had my lunch. My next destination was the *Rock Garden*, located 3000 ft below the main road, which had some dangerous turns but was worth the experience. Finally, I ended my sightseeing with a visit to *Batasia Loop* to watch the toy train and the *Zoological Park*, which had some unique animals. In the evening, I did some shopping at *Mall Road*, treated myself to ice cream at *Keventer's*, and enjoyed delicious momos. I returned the scooty to the shop and headed back to my homestay to pack my bags because it was time to leave for home. On the last day, I took a shared taxi for ₹400 to *NJP*. From there, I boarded the *New Delhi Poorvottar Sampark Kranti Express* to *Kanpur*. The 17-hour journey brought me back home, and I ended my vacation with empty pockets but a heart full of beautiful and tremendous memories.

YOUR WEEK AHEAD

MADHU KOTIYA



ARIES March 21-April 19

This week presents numerous opportunities for joy, with financial gains expected from various endeavors. You may find yourself busy, perhaps with work-related travel, which could lead to some stress. Midweek brings sudden shifts that might challenge your current plans or expectations. It's a crucial time to release any unproductive bonds, clearing the path for a more meaningful existence. As the week progresses, you may feel a strong pull towards acquiring material possessions, which could lead to unrealistic expectations. Caution is advised against starting new projects or making impulsive decisions, as these could lead to setbacks. Maintaining a positive outlook will be challenging, yet essential to navigate this period effectively.

Lucky number 3 | Lucky colour Green
Lucky day Tuesday



LEO July 23-Aug 22

This period promises to be exceptionally favorable, marked by a profound sense of blessing and personal achievement. You'll find yourself at the center of your universe, reveling in a phase rich with joy, amazement, and rejuvenation. A harmonious alignment of mind, spirit, and body will emerge, enhancing your social standing. This time will usher in newfound bravery and inspiration, leaving you relieved as certain challenges conclude. Expect transformative shifts in your perspectives and plans, paving the way for a brighter future. Changes may include adopting a new routine, dietary adjustments, or exciting career opportunities. Fresh beginnings are indicated, perhaps in personal commitments or professional partnerships, bringing a refreshing change to your life's narrative. As the week closes, familial happiness will increase, and a feeling of complete fulfillment will envelop you emotionally and spiritually.

Lucky number 5 | Lucky colour Sky Blue
Lucky day Thursday



SAGITTARIUS Nov 22-Dec 21

This week centers on inner resilience rather than physical prowess. Your strength will stem from a disciplined approach to your emotions and desires, grounded in a firm moral backbone. This foundational inner strength will navigate you through deceptive circumstances to clarity. You may find inspiration and guidance from a notable woman known for her deep understanding and intuition. Considering her advice or emulating her approach could be pivotal in shaping your life's direction. An urgent call to action encourages you to embrace spirituality—engage in meditation, practice yoga, and connect with your spiritual beliefs. It's a time to move away from idle fantasies and ground yourself in reality, letting go of unproductive daydreams to focus on what truly matters.

Lucky number 4 | Lucky colour Magenta
Lucky day Monday



TAURUS April 20-May 20

This week, those who are naturally resourceful will find themselves thriving financially through their inventive abilities. You possess the strength to transform your visions into reality. Choices made during this time are likely to lead to beneficial outcomes. Gifted with a flair for articulation, your words will captivate and persuade those around you, marking an exceptionally successful week. However, midweek may present some challenges with potential delays. Despite these obstacles, your perseverance and resolve will guide you through, ensuring you meet your objectives. Expect communication from afar that could influence your financial and emotional stability positively. This period promises both security and satisfaction as you navigate through the highs and lows with grace.

Lucky number 10 | Lucky colour Yellow
Lucky day Saturday



VIRGO Aug 23-Sep 22

This week begins with decisive actions on both personal and work-related fronts, reflecting your resilient nature as you navigate life's challenges with courage. Expect some confrontations and issues arising from stubborn attitudes, necessitating a thoughtful and tactful approach. Embracing new perspectives and letting go of outdated beliefs will be crucial. Changes could unfold in various areas, such as your job, living situation, and close relationships, and you might encounter health challenges that could lead to feeling overwhelmed. Despite these struggles, the latter part of the week heralds a shift toward positivity, bringing a sense of relaxation, improved well-being, and financial satisfaction. You will find yourself in a position to indulge in life's comforts and will likely extend your support to those in need due to your compassionate nature.

Lucky number 11 | Lucky colour Orange
Lucky day Wednesday



CAPRICORN Dec 22-Jan 19

This week promises to be a whirlwind, touching every facet of your life—from personal finance and home life to social and professional engagements. It begins with a focus on household matters, and for those not currently in a partnership, significant life changes such as marriage may be on the horizon. Midweek, travel could play a role, adding variety to your routine. Professionally, expect to dive deep, as a drive for excellence pushes you to refine your abilities and commit fully to your projects, often extending your work into the night. Joyful family news, such as the arrival of a new member, may also grace the week. As the days progress, the fruits of your labor will become apparent, notably through substantial financial gains. Opportunities for career advancement are likely to emerge, featuring appealing terms.

Lucky number 1 | Lucky colour Rose
Lucky day Tuesday



GEMINI May 21-June 20

This week, individuals born under Gemini will find numerous reasons to smile. An aura of optimism surrounds you, illuminating your path and attracting positive vibes in all your endeavors. Your ability to highlight the positive aspects of life makes you a beacon of warmth, drawing others towards you. However, midweek might bring a few challenges that could disrupt your peace temporarily. Despite this, rest assured that this phase will pass swiftly, paving the way for abundant blessings and a sense of fulfillment. Your efforts toward your goals are bearing fruit, marking significant strides towards completing your success cycle. You'll likely notice substantial improvements in ongoing projects and may find opportunities for recognition, public acclaim, or international connections.

Lucky number 8 | Lucky colour White
Lucky day Sunday



LIBRA Sep 23-Oct 22

This week brims with opportunities and inventive energy, marking a period of great enthusiasm and readiness to embrace new challenges. An inspiring new concept may captivate your imagination, reinforcing that you're following the right path. You'll find yourself adeptly handling both personal and professional responsibilities. Midweek brings family gatherings and celebrations, possibly related to home-related milestones, children's achievements, or exciting career developments. These events will add to the joyous atmosphere around you. As the week concludes, your resolve and tenacity serve as an inspiring testament to others, showcasing the foundation of your accomplishments. Enjoy this vibrant period, as it promises both fulfillment and success and remain open to the unexpected joys it may bring.

Lucky number 2 | Lucky colour Teal
Lucky day Friday



AQUARIUS Jan 20-Feb 18

This week, individuals born under the Aquarius sign can expect a vibrant period filled with personal satisfaction and grandeur. There will be significant progress in business ventures, accompanied by generous expenditures that not only meet family expectations but also bring joy. This generosity extends to caring for others, demonstrating a warm and compassionate nature. Relationship dynamics, especially with a partner, may involve some heightened demands, yet responses will be heartfelt and giving. Children are likely to bring joy into the household, with possible achievements in academics or career advancements for a son. However, there's a note of caution for Aquarian women to attend to their health, as they might face some challenges related to emotional well-being or other physiological concerns, which could affect their mood during this period.

Lucky number 7 | Lucky colour Purple
Lucky day Sunday



CANCER June 21-July 22

During this pivotal period, the actions you take will lay the foundation for future developments. Although progress may seem gradual, your perseverance will ensure that significant strides are made. Energize yourself to tackle necessary tasks effectively, as your hard work is likely to gain recognition and yield rewards. Utilize your diverse skills optimally this week, as your resolve and tenacity will leave a lasting impression on those around you. Your role as an inspirational figure will uplift others. Effective communication will enhance your relationships with both superiors and colleagues. As the week closes, a fresh burst of innovative thinking will illuminate your projects. Your productivity will soar in your chosen field, accompanied by vibrant energy and a zest for life. This is a time to relish and optimize the joyful moments.

Lucky number 9 | Lucky colour Brown
Lucky day Monday



SCORPIO Oct 23-Nov 21

Despite your significant efforts across various sectors to secure employment, the outcomes you've anticipated have not yet materialized. Your dedication and zeal are commendable; however, financial gains may be challenging to come by this week. Fortunately, as the week unfolds, promising opportunities are likely to emerge, potentially leading to substantial achievements. Supportive figures in your life, such as father figures or mentors, are keen to see you succeed and will play a crucial role in your progress. Remember, patience will be your greatest ally during this period. Building on a solid foundation will inevitably lead to favorable results. Remain steadfast, as you are on the verge of a breakthrough, where success promises to be significant and enduring.

Lucky number 12 | Lucky colour Golden
Lucky day Saturday



PISCES Feb 19-March 20

This week heralds a period of financial growth and satisfaction. You'll find yourself drawn towards seeking inner peace through practices like yoga, meditation, and chanting. Expect to feel compelled to arrange spiritually uplifting events at home, enhancing the serene atmosphere. However, midweek might present challenges in your personal relationships, possibly leading to misunderstandings or disagreements with a partner. Such conflicts may lead you to reflect on your deeper desires and life goals. Remember, your perspective may lean towards seeing the negative rather than appreciating what you have. This inclination could lead to a sense of being overwhelmed by negativity. It's crucial during these times to stay resilient and confront these challenges with courage rather than succumbing to despair.

Lucky number 16 | Lucky colour Mint
Lucky day Friday

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Discovering the Purpose of Life

THE LIFE GUIDANCE



Seerat Kaur Marwaha

The interplay between karma and dharma is like a dance. To align with our life's purpose, we must first understand the karmic lessons presented to us

There are moments in life when the usual rhythm of existence comes to a halt—moments when a deep, unshakable question emerges from within: "Why am I here?" This question often arises not during our triumphs but in the quiet aftermath of loss, failure, or self-reflection. It is as though the universe gently nudges us to look beyond the surface of our achievements and seek a deeper truth. Ancient Vedic wisdom holds that the answer lies not in chasing fleeting goals but in understanding and aligning with our karma and dharma, our cosmic purpose and the path uniquely meant for us. Through this alignment, we embark on the sacred journey of discovering the true purpose of life. Karma, often misunderstood as mere cause and effect, is a deeper law of action and reaction. It is not just about the actions we perform but the intentions and energy behind them. Our karmic blueprint, shaped over lifetimes, serves as both a map and a mirror. It reflects the lessons we are here to learn and the experiences we must navigate to grow spiritually.

The challenges we face are whether in relationships, health, or career, are not random but karmic threads woven into the fabric of our existence. They are opportunities to confront our shadows, resolve past debts, and refine our souls. Recognising this truth transforms our perspective. Pain becomes a teacher, and every obstacle, a stepping stone to self-realisation. While karma represents the lessons we carry, dharma is the unique path we are meant to walk in this lifetime. Derived from the Sanskrit root "dhri," meaning to sustain, dharma is that which upholds the harmony of the universe. It is our duty, our responsibility, and our spiritual calling. Dharma is not a rigid set of rules but a dynamic expression of our truest self. For one, it may manifest as nurturing a family; for another, it may mean creating art that inspires the world. When we align with our dharma, life feels purposeful and fulfilling. We experience a flow where our actions serve not just personal gain but contribute to the greater good. The interplay between karma and dharma is like a dance. To align with our life's purpose, we must



first understand the karmic lessons presented to us. This requires deep introspection, self-awareness, and a willingness to confront our fears and patterns. Astrology, a profound tool rooted in Vedic wisdom, offers a roadmap to our karmic imprints. The positions of the planets at the time of our birth reveal the energies influencing our journey and the areas of life that demand growth. For instance, Saturn often points to the karmic debts we must repay, while Jupiter illuminates the areas where dharma can flourish. Once we identify our karmic lessons, the next step is to align with dharma. This alignment is not an overnight process but a

journey of gradual awakening. Meditation, gratitude journaling, and practices like EFT tapping can help clear the emotional and mental clutter that obscures our path. Aligning with dharma requires inner work. It demands peeling back the layers of societal expectations, inherited fears, and self-imposed limitations. Practices such as chakra balancing and mindfulness allow us to connect with our authentic selves. For example, the throat chakra governs communication and self-expression. If this chakra is blocked due to past wounds, one may struggle to voice their truth, hindering alignment with their dharma. Healing this energy

centre through affirmations and meditation can restore balance and clarity. Similarly, gratitude is a powerful practice in this journey. When we appreciate life's blessings, no matter how small we shift our focus from lack to abundance. This shift creates a fertile ground for dharma to emerge, as we are no longer trapped in the narrative of unworthiness or scarcity. Discovering life's purpose begins with self-reflection. Journaling about one's strengths, passions, and the activities that bring joy can provide valuable insights. Reflecting on recurring challenges and patterns often points to unresolved karma. Meditation and silence are equally crucial. Quieting the mind allows one to hear the whispers of the soul. Tools like astrology or guidance from spiritual mentors can illuminate karmic lessons and dharmic paths. Acts of service also play a vital role. Serving something larger than oneself connects one with the universal rhythm of love and abundance. Trusting the process is perhaps the most vital step. Life's purpose is not a destination but a journey. Every experience, even the challenging ones, is part of this

unfolding story. Ultimately, the purpose of life transcends personal success or happiness. It is about contributing to the greater cosmic order, uplifting others, and leaving the world better than we found it. When we align with our dharma, we become instruments of divine will, radiating love, compassion, and wisdom. Every soul's journey is unique, yet interconnected. Your alignment with your karmic path and dharma not only brings you peace but also creates ripples of positivity in the collective consciousness. In this way, the purpose of life becomes a shared endeavour that is a dance of individual and universal harmony. Discovering the purpose of life is not about seeking answers but about aligning with the divine rhythm within us. By understanding our karma and embracing our dharma, we transcend the superficial and connect with the infinite. Life, then, becomes not just a series of events but a sacred journey that is a dance of the soul with the cosmos. And in that dance, we find not only purpose but also the deepest joy of simply being. — She is a Life Coach and Founder of Soulful Wellness

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