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magazine



## BJP SLAMS AAP FOR ₹2,026 CR LIQUOR SCAM

RAJESH KUMAR ■ NEW DELHI

A leaked report of the Comptroller and Auditor General (CAG) on the now-scrapped excise policy of the Delhi government flagged several 'lapses' in the policy and claimed Rs 2,026.68 crore loss to the exchequer. This figure was put out for the first time to show the impact of the alleged liquor scam. The document of the government's auditor that has exposed the liquor scam is named, "Report of the CAG on Performance Audit on Regulation and Supply of Liquor in Delhi." The report has not been tabled in the Delhi Assembly so far. After the leak, the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) launched a scathing attack on the Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) government. According to a leaked report of the CAG on Performance Audit on Regulation and

Supply of liquor in Delhi, some retailers surrendered their licenses before the policy expired, and the government did not re-tender them which led to the loss of Rs 890 crores. It said that the government made exemptions for zonal licensees, which caused a loss of Rs 941 crores. For the purpose of retail vends, Delhi was divided into 32 zones (containing 849 vends) whose licenses were granted to 22 entities through tendering. Whereas during the old policy, 377 retail vends were run by four Government Corporations and 262 retail vends were run by the private individuals. The report revealed a loss of revenue to the tune of Rs 144 crore owing to irregular grant of waiver on account of COVID-19 to zonal licenses. It also revealed that incorrect collection of security deposit from zonal licenses leading to loss of revenue of around Rs



BJP leader Anurag Thakur addresses a press conference at the party headquarters, in New Delhi

27 crore. Citing the leaked CAG report, BJP MP Anurag Thakur on Saturday claimed the Delhi Excise Policy scam is worth Rs 2,026 crore and accused the Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) and Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal of misleading Delhi residents. Thakur told a press

conference the CAG report has arrived at 10 major findings about the policy, which was scrapped by the AAP government amid a row, asserting that former chief minister Arvind Kejriwal will have to answer the questions it has raised. "He will have to say who pocketed the money," Thakur said, alleging that Kejriwal is the kingpin of the scam. BJP president J P Nadda claimed the CAG report has exposed intentional lapses, leading to a loss of Rs 2,026 crore to the exchequer. Nadda said on X, "Intoxicated by power, high on misgovernance. 'AAP'DA model of loot in full display and that too on something like liquor." He said it is just a matter of a few weeks before the AAP government is voted out and punished for its misdeeds. "The CAG Report on 'Liquorgate' exposes @ArvindKejriwal and @AamAadmiParty Gov. Intentional 'Lapses' in Policy Implementation. Rs 2026 Cr Loss to Exchequer money," he alleged. Asked about the BJP allegations, AAP Rajya Sabha MP Sanjay Singh said, "Where is the report? The BJP itself keeps saying no CAG report has been tabled." AAP

leader Priyanka Kakkar on Saturday accused the BJP of fabricating false allegations against the Delhi government and dismissed the party's claims about a CAG report as "manufactured and baseless." Kakkar alleged during a press conference here that the report presented by the BJP was not authentic and had neither been seen by key stakeholders, including the chief minister and the LG, nor listed on the CAG's official website. "The report they are showing is fake and manufactured in their office. It holds no credibility. This is the same strategy the BJP uses repeatedly to mislead people with false allegations," Kakkar said. Referring to previous allegations levelled by the BJP, including those in the liquor policy case, Kakkar claimed even the Supreme Court had dismissed their claims as baseless.



Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath during the 'Pratishtha-Dwadashi' programme, marking the first anniversary of the consecration of the Ram Lalla idol at the Ram temple, in Ayodhya

## Yogi urges unity at Ram Temple event

BISWAJEET BANERJEE/ KAMLESH SRIVASTAVA ■ AYODHYA:

On the first anniversary of the consecration of the Ram Lalla idol at the grand Ram temple, Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath issued a stark warning about the dangers of societal divisions. "If we remain divided by caste or other ideologies, our religious places will bear the consequences, and our sisters and daughters will suffer," he said, urging unity to preserve the sanctity of India's spiritual heritage. The historic event saw thousands of devotees gathering in Ayodhya, which has been transformed into a vibrant spiritual epicenter for the three-day celebrations. "Pratishtha Dwadashi calls us to unify as a nation," CM Yogi said, recalling Prime Minister Narendra Modi's message: "If there is Ram, there is a nation; if there is a nation, there is Ram." He urged citizens to uphold this principle, linking

faith with national identity. The anniversary commenced with CM Yogi performing an 'abhishek' of the idol, followed by the chanting of Vedic hymns. He emphasized the need to strengthen Sanatan values as the foundation for unity and national integrity. "The Ramjanmabhoomi movement reflects the unwavering resolve of our ancestors, whose sacrifices have brought us to this historic moment," CM Yogi said, highlighting the 500-year struggle to reclaim Lord Ram's birthplace. "Today, Ayodhya feels like Treta Yuga, and in the coming years, the Ram Janmabhoomi complex will emerge as one of the world's most magnificent spiritual centers." Devotees from across the country echoed the Chief Minister's sentiments. Priya Sharma, a visitor from Delhi, said, "Being here feels like stepping into history. The energy and devotion in Ayodhya are unparalleled. It's an emotional experience to see Ram Lalla in his full glory."

## Building collapses at Kannauj railway station, 23 injured



Rescue operation underway after an under-construction building collapsed at the Kannauj railway station

## Strategic Z-morh tunnel in Valley tomorrow

MOHIT KANDHARI ■ JAMMU

With the opening up of the 6.4 km long Z-Morh tunnel, scheduled to be inaugurated by Prime Minister Narendra Modi on January 13, India is inching closer to fulfilling its dream of constructing the strategic corridor between Srinagar-Leh to provide all-weather connectivity and maintain defence and civil supply lines in adverse weather conditions. After dedicating the first leg

of the corridor to the Nation on Monday the focus will be shifted to the timely completion of the 13.15 km long Zojila Tunnel. The Z-Morh tunnel will link Kangan with Sonamarg, a famous tourist destination on the Srinagar-Leh highway. The Zojila tunnel will provide year-round connectivity between the Kashmir Valley and Ladakh, which will be extremely important for the development of Ladakh, the promotion of tourism, the free movement of local goods,



and the movement of Indian armed forces in case of emergency. Currently the average travel time to cross the Zojila Pass is three hours. After the completion of this tunnel, the travel time will come down to 20 minutes, resulting in fuel savings.

The total Project cost of the Zojila tunnel is Rs. 6,809.69 crore. The tentative deadline for the completion of the project at an altitude of over 11,000 feet is September-December 2026. To welcome the dignitaries visiting the venue of the Z-Morh tunnel project the Union Territory administration is making elaborate arrangements. The security personnel have been deployed in large numbers to secure the venue.

PNS ■ LUCKNOW, KANNAUJ

An under-construction building at the Kannauj railway station collapsed on Saturday afternoon, trapping around two dozen workers under the rubble. At least 23 people have been injured in the incident. Six of them were pulled out of the debris and rushed to hospital. The North Eastern Railway (NER) said it has constituted a three-member committee to probe the incident. "According to preliminary information, the incident occurred when the under-construction shuttering of the roof collapsed," said District Magistrate (DM) Shubhrant Kumar Shukl. Taking cognisance of the incident, Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath directed officials to ensure safe recovery of those trapped inside and their proper medical treatment. State Relief Commissioner Bhanu Chandra Goswami is in touch with the Kannauj district administration for all possible help in relief work, state government officials said. Teams of the National Disaster Response Force (NDRF) and the State Disaster Response Force (SDRF) have been deployed at the site where frantic efforts are underway to rescue the workers. Ambulances have been kept on standby to provide first aid and take the injured to hospital.

## MVA rift grows as Shiv Sena (UBT) announces independent poll strategy

TN RAGHUNATHA ■ MUMBAI

In a development that came close on the heels of its decision to support Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) in the Delhi Assembly polls and which reflected the widened rift within the Opposition Maha Vikas Aghadi (MVA) in Maharashtra, the Uddhav Thackeray-led Shiv Sena on Saturday announced that it would contest the forthcoming local body in the state independently. A day after he questioned the very relevance of the Opposition INDIA bloc at the national level, Shiv Sena (UBT) MP and spokesperson Sanjay Raut dropped a bombshell by saying that his party would go it alone in the local body polls. Talking to media persons, Raut said: "As already indicated by our party president Uddhav Thackeray, from Nagpur to Mumbai we will contest all the municipal corporation polls independently. Let's see what happens. We will get to know our party's strength across the state." "If we are to contest the polls as an alliance, when will our party workers get an opportunity to contest the polls? If our workers don't get a chance to fight polls, it will affect the party's growth. If we are to contest the municipal corporation, Zilla Parishad and Nagar Panchayat polls, our party will be strengthened," Raut said. However, the Congress and NCP (Sharad Pawar) have not yet come out with a formal statement on the decision of their alliance partner -- the Shiv Sena (UBT) -to contest the forthcoming local body polls independently. NCP (SP) chief Sharad Pawar, reacting to the Sena (UBT)'s decision to support the AAP in the Delhi Assembly polls, had expressed serious concerns that the Uddhav Thackeray-led party's



decision might have a negative impact on the prospects of the prospects of all three MVA partners in the polls. Raut's statement appeared to be in line with the stand taken by the Shiv Sena (UBT) on Friday, when he had indirectly slammed the Congress for its failure to keep the INDIA bloc together, and also questioned the very relevance of the all Opposition front at the national level. "We fought the Lok Sabha elections together, we got good results. After that it was the responsibility of all of us, especially Congress, to keep the INDIA alliance alive, sit together and guide the way forward. But till now not a single such meeting has taken place after the Lok Sabha elections. This is not right," Raut had said. "Leaders like Omar Abdullah, Mamta Banerjee, Akhilesh Yadav and Arvind Kejriwal have said that the INDIA bloc is no longer in existence. If people have begun to nurse such doubts, I would say the biggest party in the alliance - Congress -- is responsible for this. There is no coordination, there is no discussion. This means that there are serious doubts in the minds of the people whether everything is fine in the INDIA alliance or not... If this alliance breaks once, then the INDIA alliance will not be formed again," Raut had said.



## Four arrested for rhino horn trade in Delhi

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

The crime branch of Delhi Police have apprehended four people for possessing and dealing with horns of rare white rhinoceros usually found in African countries, valued at Rs three crore in the international market. As per the Wildlife Protection Act, 1972, greater one-horned rhino is listed under Schedule I which prohibits the capturing, killing, poisoning, or trapping of wild animals. Additional Commissioner of Police (Crime) Sanjay Kumar Sain, said, the police received a tip off about some persons dealing in illegal trade of rhinoceros horns and to unearth the whole nexus, a policeman was sent as a decoy customer. The police have registered an FIR under relevant sections of BNS at the Crime branch police station.

## Mushrooms bring ₹20 Lakh profit, inspiration for Gurugram farmers

SANJAY KUMAR MEHRA ■ GURUGRAM

A small time farmer of Gurugram has now become a source of inspiration for several farmers in the Delhi NCR for his 'mushrooming' business that has served him rich monetary harvest. Prahlad Singh of Daboda village in Gurugram now earns a profit of Rs 20 lakh annually from mushroom farm production. Prahlad Singh told that earlier he was producing millet and wheat as traditional farming in which the income was becoming negligible and the profit was also decreasing day by day due to increased expenditure and less production. In such a situation, inspiration was taken from Prime Minister Narendra Modi's ideas of doubling the income and emphasizing on commercial farming using modern technology. "If the farmer becomes modern and moves towards commercial farming, then along with doubling the income of the farmer, the face of agriculture and horticulture in the area will also change," Prahlad said. Gurugram ADC Hitesh Kumar Meena visited the village mushroom



production unit of Prahlad Singh on Saturday. After collecting information from District Horticulture Officer Neha Yadav, a plan was chalked out to set up a mushroom production unit by taking advantage of the schemes of the department. A complete setup prepared in about 8 kanal area costing about Rs 40 lakh was completed. While the farmer got 40 percent subsidy by the District Horticulture Department he also took a loan from bank for the remaining amount. The farmer told that he has set up a compost unit and four production units with government help. A production cycle of 90 days runs in each production unit. Prahlad informed that about 38 to 40 quintals of mushroom is being produced from one unit. The wholesale price of mushroom in the market is around Rs 140 to 150 per kg. Due to which all four units are earning Rs 20 to 22 lakh as net profit after deducting all the expenses in the whole year. Prahlad Singh said that most of the wholesalers in the area are coming to the farms and taking mushrooms. Due to this they do not even need to go to the market. He told that he is currently trying to get direct deals with other big food establishments in Gurugram and NCR. "The horticulture department is ready to provide them all possible help. Under the departmental scheme, the maximum unit cost of mushroom compost and a mushroom production unit has been fixed at Rs 20 lakh by the Horticulture Department, Haryana in the district. In which 40 percent amount will be given in the form of grant in General category and 85 percent amount in Scheduled Caste category," said district government official.

## Principal orders 80 schoolgirls to remove shirts as punishment

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ RANCHI/DHANBAD

The principal of a private school in Jharkhand's Dhanbad district was accused of ordering 80 girls of class 10 to remove their shirts for writing messages on them, prompting the administration to initiate an inquiry, an official said on Saturday. The girls were allegedly forced to return home in their blazers without shirts beneath. The incident took place in a prestigious school in Digwadih under Jorapokhar police station area on Friday, Dhanbad Deputy Commissioner (DC) Madhvi Mishra said. The parents complained to the DC that



complaints against the principal. We also talked to some of the victim girls. The administration has taken the matter seriously. A committee has been set up to investigate the matter," Mishra said. The committee consists of the sub-divisional magistrate, district education officer, district social welfare officer and the sub-divisional police officer. Action would be taken on the basis of the probe panel's report, the DC said. Jharia MIA Ragini Singh also accompanied the parents to the DC's office on Saturday when they lodged the complaints against the principal. Singh described the incident as "shameful and unfortunate."

## IMD warns of dense fog, rain, traffic disruptions in Delhi

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

Lashed out in parts of Delhi and the national Capital region on Saturday evening leading to traffic jams and cold wave conditions. The instant rain triggered traffic congestion at key routes in Delhi at the peak hours, frustrating commuters. ISBT Kashmiri Gate, ITO, Mehrauli Badarpur road, Anand Vihar road, Chirag Dilli, Dhaura Kuan, Sainik Farm, Azad Market road, Karol Bagh, Peeragarhi Road, New Rohtak Road are among those stretches that witnessed traffic jams during the peak hours in the evening. The weather department forecasts that weather is expected to remain the same on Sunday. The minimum temperature



A juggler with monkeys sits around a bonfire on a cold winter day

was recorded a low of 7.7 degrees Celsius. Meanwhile, moderate to dense fog continued to blanket parts of Delhi and its adjoining areas on Saturday, prompting the Indira Gandhi International Airport (IGI) to issue multiple advisories overnight, asking passengers to contact airline concerned to be updated about flight status. According to the India Meteorological Department (IMD), dense to very dense fog conditions likely to continue over North,

## WEATHER

AQI	(277)
MAX	17°C(-3)
MIN	7.7°C(+0.3)

East and Northeast India during next 2-5 days. According to the weather department, Safdarjung observed minimum visibility of 50 metre from 12.30 am to 1.30 am which improved thereafter becoming 200 metre and continues to remain so 7.30 am. The humidity was 100 per cent during the day. In comparison to recent days, early morning temperatures have dipped between 8 and 11 degrees Celsius, highlighting the ongoing cold conditions. The maximum temperature settled as 17 degrees Celsius,

three notches below the season's average, the IMD said. Parts of the national capital, including the Central Delhi area, received light rain. Forty-five trains were delayed as a thick layer of fog engulfed the city in the morning, reducing visibility which impacted train operations, officials said. In its advisory, the IMD has cautioned that dense fog may affect some airports, highways and railway routes in the areas of met- sub-division. It has advised travellers to be careful while driving or outing through any transport. "Unless taken precautionary measures, it may lead to some road traffic collisions," it said. The weather department also stated there are chances of tripping of power lines in the very dense fog routes.

# How Swami Vivekananda's Teachings Guided Mahatma Gandhi's Path

BY DR NIKHIL YADAV

Swami Vivekananda and Mahatma Gandhi are two towering figures who have profoundly influenced and inspired generations both during and after their lifetimes. Swami Vivekananda, born on 12th January 1863, and Mahatma Gandhi, born on 2nd October 1869, were somewhat contemporaneous. However, since Swami Vivekananda passed away at a young age of just 39 years and 5 months in 1902, he revolutionized the Indian freedom movement, spreading the message of Vedanta and Indian wisdom to a global audience. During this period, Mahatma Gandhi was in South Africa, making occasional visits to India.



The collected works of Mahatma Gandhi, spanning 98 volumes and available online, reveal several facts and insights that demonstrate the close connection between Gandhi and Swami Vivekananda. Although they never met in person, Gandhi had a deep desire to meet the Swami. **Gandhi wanted to meet the Swami**

The relationship between Swami Vivekananda and Mahatma Gandhi is seldom discussed or written about. The connection they shared, the influence the Swami had on the Mahatma, and how Gandhi perceived Vivekananda's teachings and work remain largely unexplored.

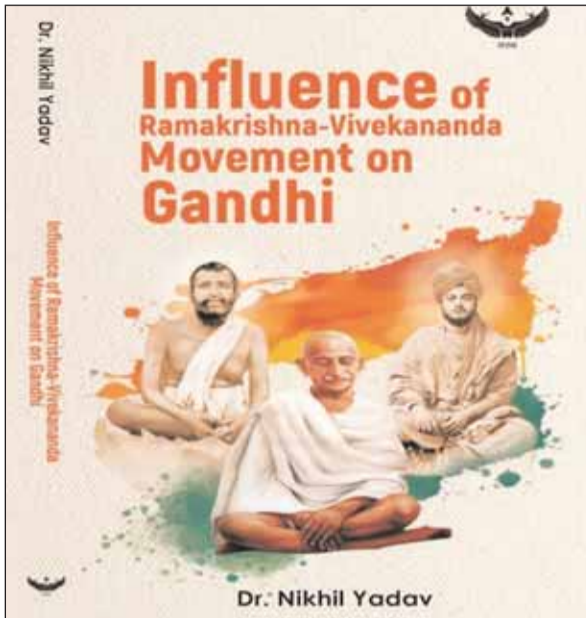
There were two instances when Swami Vivekananda and Mahatma Gandhi could have met. The first occurred in 1898, when Gandhi expressed his desire for Swami Vivekananda to visit

South Africa and preach his spiritual message there. This is revealed in a letter that Gandhi wrote to his friend Mr. B. N. Bhajekar in February 1898, in which he stated:

"A religious preacher is very badly wanted here but he must tower above all the priests here. He must be absolutely pure minded and unselfish & must not require money to support him.....Could not Swami himself be induced to pay us a visit? I shall do everything I can to make his mission a success. He can work both among Indians & Europeans. I take it he moves freely among the Indians the highest as well as the lowest. He is sure to do one thing if he comes. He will electrify the Europeans by his eloquence & possibly hypnotize [sic] them into liking the 'Coolies' in spite of themselves."

However, it is not clear whether Mahatma Gandhi's letter ever reached Swami Vivekananda, but it is certain that the Swami never visited South Africa.

The second instance



occurred a couple of years later, when Gandhi was in India for a few months and visited Calcutta in 1901. Gandhi was eager to meet the Swami, and to do so, he went to Belur Math. However, since the Swami was unwell, they could not meet.

## Gandhi reading Swami Vivekananda writings

Through the Swami's literature, Gandhi came closer to India's cultural traditions and wisdom. Rajyoga, the only book that Swami Vivekananda wrote during his first visit to the West, was a work that Gandhi kept

with him throughout his life. In a letter to Tiruppur Subramanya Avinashilingam (1903-1991) on July 22, 1941, Gandhi expressed his thoughts on the Swami's writings, where he wrote: "Surely Swami Vivekananda's writings need no introduction from anybody. They make their own irresistible appeal."

The significance and impact of Swami Vivekananda's work on Gandhi can be seen in the speech Gandhi delivered at Belur Math, the headquarters of the Ramakrishna Mission, in 1921. Gandhi said, "I have gone through his works very thoroughly, and after having gone through them, the love that I had for my country became a thousand fold. I ask you, young men, not to go away empty-handed, without imbibing something of the spirit of the place where Swami Vivekananda lived and died"

## Mahatma Gandhi Visits to Ramakrishna Mission

To express his admiration for Swami Vivekananda and his Guru Sri Ramakrishna,

Gandhi visited the Ramakrishna Mission, an organization founded by the Swami on May 1, 1897. In addition to Belur Math in Calcutta, Gandhi visited several other centres of the mission, including Vrindavan and Rangoon, among others. While delivering a speech at the Ramakrishna Mission in Rangoon (1929) on the special occasion of the birth anniversary celebration of Sri Ramakrishna Paramhansa, Gandhi said:

"My Sisters and Brothers, I thank the Ramakrishna Mission for the address they have so kindly presented to me. I want to tell you something about Ramakrishna Paramahansa and his mission.

He has left for us a great work. I have faith in his mission and I would ask you to follow him. Wherever I go the followers of Ramakrishna invite me and I know their blessings are on my work. Ramakrishna Sevashrams (people's service centres) and Hospitals are spread throughout India. There is no such place where their work

is not being carried on a small or large scale."

Gandhi's words about Swami Vivekananda, his Guru Sri Ramakrishna, and the Ramakrishna Mission reflect his deep admiration and respect for them. There is much more revealed in the 98 collected works of Mahatma Gandhi. These works include Gandhi recommending literature based on Swami Vivekananda to his foreign friends, advocating Swami Vivekananda's teachings in public lectures, and visiting societies and organizations named after the great saint. This has been documented in my book titled "Influence of the Ramakrishna-Vivekananda Movement on Gandhi".

**THE WRITER IS THE DEPUTY HEAD OF VIVEKANANDA KENDRA, NORTH ZONE, HOLDS A PH.D. FROM JNU, NEW DELHI AND IS THE WRITER OF THE BOOK "INFLUENCE OF THE RAMAKRISHNA-VIVEKANANDA MOVEMENT ON GANDHI" (2024).**

# EVALUATION OF STEEL WIRE ROPE NEED OF HOUR: EXPERTS

PANKAJ : DHANBAD

A one day workshop on "Advances in Non-Destructive Evaluation of Steel Wire Rope in Mining and Aerial Installations: Theory and Practice" organised jointly at CSIR-CIMFR and ASNT India NDT Network concluded on Friday late evening here. The event was attended by representatives from various ropeway construction and operation industries of the country including DGMS, BCCL, BIS, wire rope manufacturing industries, American Society of Non-Destructive Testing, experts from the field of non-destructive evaluation and students from various research institutes.

Deputy Director General (Mechanical), Directorate

General of Mines Safety D.B. Naik inaugurated opening session and Shri Prakash Gokulanandam, Director and General Manager, American Society for Non Destructive Testing India was the special guest. Director of CIMFR Prof. Arvind Kumar Mishra welcomed the dignitaries on the dais and all the distinguished guests and members of the Institute present in the auditorium Prof. Mishra said - With the expansion of mining operations and the rapid construction of ropeways under the Government's Parvatmala Yojana across India, the role of steel wire ropes has become extremely important for safe, efficient operations in the field of mining and air transport. Currently, ropeways are being constructed in various areas across the country,

which provide access to remote areas and also facilitate the transportation of materials to mining sites. This development underlines the need for robust non-destructive evaluation (NDE) methodologies to ensure the integrity and longevity of steel wire ropes. Advanced NDE technology will not only improve operational safety, but will also prove to be helpful in the maintenance and inspection of essential infrastructure. Establishing indigenous standards and best practices in wire rope NDE is an important step towards achieving self-reliance in this sector.

He drew attention to the growing innovation and increasing use of ropeways in mining and aerial installations. Prof. Mishra explained the critical role of ropes in

underground mining, rope-ways and bridges, highlighting the importance of safety, integrity and cutting-edge research. He also emphasized the need for smart, AI-driven and machine learning-based solutions in NDT and encouraged sharing of interdisciplinary knowledge. He urged the participants to carry out research that will not only benefit the industry but also contribute to the global future.

Dr. Debashish Basak, Advisor and Chief Scientist of the workshop, explained the objective of the workshop and said, "we all have gathered here to discuss a very important topic for safety, reliability and innovation in our respective industries."

Guest of Honour, Prakash Gokulanandam, compli-

mented CIMFR for organising this successful workshop and noted the significant advances being made in NDT technologies, particularly their application to steel wire ropes. Shri Gokulanandam also spoke about the important role of ASNT India in promoting NDT and its importance in various industrial sectors. Established as a professional society dedicated to the development of NDT technologies and methodologies, ASNT India provides a platform for industry professionals to collaborate, exchange knowledge and contribute to the development of NDT in various industries.

The souvenir of the workshop was also released by the scholars present on the stage.

# SAIL-CET & MTI organise Team Building Exercise and Felicitation Ceremony

PNS : RANCHI

Centre for Engineering and Technology (CET), the in-house engineering and technology wing of Steel Authority of India Limited (SAIL), organized a team-building exercise in association with Management Training Institute (MTI) at the RDCIS Auditorium.

The program, attended by employees and their families from CET, as well as faculty members from MTI was aimed at fostering teamwork, collaboration and bonding among participants.

The event also included the felicitation of winners under the SHABASH Scheme, recognizing and rewarding outstanding contributions and achievements of CET employees across a wide spectrum of domains.

Speaking on the occasion, ED (CET), Shri. Shrawan



Kumar Verma, emphasized the importance of team building and recognition of excellence in driving organizational growth and success.

The program was followed by a cultural event, showcasing the talent and creativity of the participants

and concluded with a dinner, providing an opportunity for socialization and networking.

The event was a resounding success, with participants expressing appreciation for the initiative and looking forward to more such future events.

# Continued action against illegal mineral transportation



PNS : JAMSHEDPUR

Under the directives of District Magistrate and Deputy Commissioner Ananya Mittal, a comprehensive

crackdown on illegal mining and transportation has been underway for the past three days. On January 9, 2025, the District Mining Office, East Singhbhum,

Jamshedpur seized a vehicle (registration number JH05AY-5242) involved in the illegal transportation of sand minerals under Kadma Police Station jurisdiction. The vehicle was handed over to the Kadma Police Station.

On January 10, 2025, Sub-Divisional Officer (SDO) of Dhalbhum, in coordination with the Governmentpur Police Station, seized one vehicle involved in illegal transportation of sand minerals. The vehicle was then handed over to the Governmentpur Police Station.

Furthermore, on January 11, 2025, the District Mining Office carried out another action and seized a vehicle (registration number BR10GA-7563) for transporting sand minerals illegally under MGM Police Station jurisdiction. A First Information Report (FIR) has been filed at MGM Police Station in connection with the incident.

# Exit of outsourcing agency inevitable in MMCH

PNS : DALTONGANJ

Outsourcing agency Balaji Detective Force here in the MMCH Daltonganj is most likely to be axed.

This outsourcing agency has been in this hospital since 2012. Following the upgradation of this hospital when medical superintendent was put in place this outsourcing agency again pocketed this contract in the year 2021 for the medicals college side and managed to get extension after extension till 2024 when the state minister of finance Radha Krishan Kishore detected a colossal economic crime committed by this agency.

Well placed sources said the days of this outsourcing agency are over now. An official communication is awaited.

The Medinagar municipal corporation is all set to take the reins of saaf safai of the hospital.

The inspection of the hospital by the additional chief secretary health Ajoy Kumar Singh took the lid off the negligence and apathy of this outsourcing agency which was indulging in stealing human resources but was pocketing huge 13 lakh per month for wages of its human resources which it never put on duty in that number.

As against the total of 135 human resources in the entirety of the three shifts this outsourcing agency managed to hoodwink the officials by putting only 30 or 40 manpower on duty the result of which was that the MMCH Daltonganj was a heap of dirt and filth.

# Residents complaint against ex-Minister for destroying road



AVINASH ANJAN : HAZARIBAG

Former minister Yogendra Sao blocked the road construction work of Munda Toli Bhadai Khap 2.2 of Keredari by cutting the road. The movement of the villagers of Jordag, Munda Toli has been completely obstructed due to the cutting of the road. There is a lot of anger among the villagers due to the forceful cutting of the road by the former minister. The villagers have complained about the cutting of the road to Hazaribag Deputy Commissioner Nancy Sahay.

The villagers have made a written complaint to the Deputy Commissioner in this regard and have demanded the construction of the 2.2 road. The villagers told the Deputy Commissioner that due to the cutting of the road, the villagers of Jordag, Munda Toli and other villages are facing a lot of problems in commuting. There is a possibility of accident due to the vehicles running on the transport road every day.

Villagers Anil Munda, Gyan Kumar said that former minister Yogendra Sao is obstructing the 2.2 road construction work for his person-

al interest. The work of blackening the road was going on last night. The former minister forcefully stopped the road construction work. Also got the road cut with a JCB machine. The villagers who travel on the road are very upset due to the cutting of the road. The villagers further criticized this act of the former minister. In this case, Chattabariatu GM Naveen Gupta has filed a case in Keredari police station by giving an application to Hazaribag Deputy Commissioner Nancy Sahay regarding the cutting of the road.

# Winners of Poetry, Story, and Painting Competitions Awarded

PNS : JAMSHEDPUR

To nurture the creative and artistic talents of children, winners of the poetry, story, and painting competitions were felicitated on Saturday. The prize distribution ceremony was organized by VR Media and Production at the Telco Theme Park premises on the occasion of Swami Vivekananda's 162nd birth anniversary.

The event was graced by several dignitaries, including Vivek Vidyalyaya Principal Awadhesh Kumar Singh, President of Jamshedpur Press Club Sanjeev Bhardwaj, Chairman of Jharkhand Human Rights Association Dinesh Kumar Kinu, social worker Anjani



Pandey, and others such as Prakash Sahay, Arijit Sarkar, Deepak Srivastava, and Deep Pal.

Vivek Vidyalyaya, Chhota Govindpur, was awarded the Overall Champion title for exceptional performance across all three categories—poetry, story, and painting. The award was received by

the school's Principal Awadhesh Kumar Singh, along with teachers Gargi Dharma, Sushma Namta, and Jeet Singh Rathore.

Individual Awards and Special Mentions

Most Active Participant: Bhavana Kumari (Class 5B, Vivek Vidyalyaya) First Entry Award: Debashree Gop (Class

1A, Vig English School) Special Appearance Award: Anurag Sawarn and Harshit Sinha

A total of 35 children were felicitated for their creative achievements across the three categories, with prizes distributed to the first, second, and third place winners in each class.

The guests praised the organizers for providing a platform to enhance the creative and artistic skills of students. They also encouraged the children to imbibe the ideals and values of Swami Vivekananda in their lives.

The event witnessed the presence of other notable personalities, including Naveen Mandal, Mohammad Rafiq, and Chirag Srivastava.

# Dishom Guru Shibu Soren's 81st birthday celebrated in Lohardaga

VINOD PRASAD : LOHARDAGA

The 81st birthday of Dishom Guru Shibu Soren was celebrated with great pomp under the leadership of District Secretary Anil Oraon at the JMM district office on Monday. On the occasion, ZIP member Radha Tirkey, Women District President Sarita Bhagat, City President Akash Kumar, Youth President Ajay Oraon, District Secretary of Minority Morcha Mansoor Ansari, Senior member Balmukund Lohra, Bhandra Block President Parvez Ansari, Kudu Block President Shankar Oraon, Kairo Block Secretary Dhanpat Oraon and many other party leaders and workers were present.

During this, everyone celebrated the birthday by cutting the cake and applying tilak on Gururji's picture and



blankets and sweets were distributed among the poor and helpless people. On the occasion, District Secretary Anil Oraon, while congratulating Gururji on his birthday, said that Dishom Guru Shibu Soren spent his entire life in the upliftment of the tribal people of Jharkhand. He campaigned for the abolition of money lending and usury along with the movement for

a separate state. During this period he also had to endure torture. A separate state of Jharkhand was established under the leadership of Gururji Shibu Soren. His son Chief Minister Hemant Soren is playing an important role in the progress of Jharkhand. On the occasion, JIP member Radha Tirkey said that we need to learn from Gururji to work in every way for the

welfare of the common people. Said that the indigenous people and tribals of Jharkhand have been exploited for centuries, but now there is a government of Jharkhand in Jharkhand, which is taking care of everyone. Said that Jharkhand of Gururji's dreams is being built. I pray that Baba lives long and his blessings continue to be with all of us. JMM women president Sarita Tana Bhagat said in her address that Dishom Guru became the Chief Minister of Jharkhand thrice. He contested elections for the first time in 1977, when he lost. After that he turned his attention towards Santal. In 1980, he won from Dumka for the first time. He won from here 8 times. Shibu Soren also became Rajya Sabha MP twice. He has also handled the charge of the Coal Ministry at the Centre.

# 100 girls of Dhanbad School made to strip for celebrating Pen Day

DIVYA MODI : RANCHI



In a shocking incident, more than 100 girls of Carmel School, Dhanbad had to face embarrassment when the Principal M Devashree asked them to remove their shirts, alleged parents.

According to parents of the students the girls had gathered in the school to make the last day 'Pen Day' a memorable one and an order by the school principal forever tarnished the good memories of the school in the minds of the children. The students were writing good wishes on each other's shirts, but the Principal who did not approve of this said that if the children come out of the school with such shirts, the image of the institution will

be tarnished and she forcibly made the students remove their shirts, they said.

When the parents came to know about the incident, they approached Dhanbad Deputy Commissioner Madhavi Mishra along with Jharia MLA Ragini Singh and alleged that around 100 students were sent home without shirts, only in blazers.

The students were asked to remove their shirts in front of male teachers in the school campus itself. Scared by the principal's attitude, the girls removed their shirts on the premises; when many students expressed their inability to do so, they were forcibly asked to remove their shirts. About 20 students had brought spare shirts with

them, but around 100 came out of the school campus only in blazers.

"On Thursday, the last day of the pre-board exam, the children were wishing each other on the occasion of Pen Day, but the management did not like this, I put this incident in the category of mental rape. We are ashamed to even say that such an incident happened with the girl students. Before this, their mobile phones were taken away from them so that the entire incident could not be recorded. We all demand the Deputy Commissioner to take action against the Principal under the POCSSO Act," said Dhanbad based social worker Ankit Rajgaria.

Dhanbad DC Madhavi Mishra said, "The district administration has taken this

very seriously and spoken to the parents and some girls. An investigation committee has also been formed which will go to the school and investigate the whole matter. We will take action on the basis of their report. Also, if needed, an FIR will also be registered. The sub-divisional officer, district education officer, social welfare officer, SDPO and local police station in-charge have been included in the investigation team and they will visit the school and submit the investigation report." "The investigation in this matter is on and the CCTV footage will also be checked in the process," said SDM Dhanbad Mahesh Kumar. Jharia MLA Ragini Singh said that the DC has assured of a thorough investigation in this matter.



JMM Chief Raja Sabha MP Shibu Soren cuts a cake to celebrate his 81st birthday at his official residence in Ranchi on Saturday. Chief Minister Hemant Soren and Kalpana Soren and family members are also seen in the picture. PNS

## DWA resumes charity work in New Year



PNS : RANCHI

The newly appointed office bearers of the Doctors' Wives Association for the year 2025 started with a noble cause on Saturday. Chairperson Vinita

Sharan, Co-Chairperson cum Founder Jhooma Sarkar, President Arti Singh, Secretary Anju Singh took the lead and assembled at RIMS around 1.00 pm today. Khichri was distributed to

several underprivileged patients and their attendants at the RIMS campus.

The members promised to carry on such charity work throughout the year. Other members who were present on the occasion included Rashmi Sinha, Rukhsana Bano, Bindu Prasad, Rekha Mishra, Amrita Biayda, Manju Khetan, Ranjana Jain, Nirmla Garodia, Shreela Choudhary, Madhu Gupta, Neelam Shekhar, Bibha Singh, Supriya Thakur, Shweta Ranjan, Deepa Chauhan, Pallavi Sharan and Taruna Chhabra.



## Guv inaugurates national convention on Women's discourse in Indian history writing

PNS : RANCHI

Governor Santosh Kumar inaugurated the "Two-day convention of All India Women Historians" on the theme "Women's discourse in Indian history writing" organised under the joint aegis of All India History Compilation Scheme, Ministry of Art, Culture, Archaeology, Tourism, Sports and Youth Affairs, Government of Jharkhand, Indian Council of Historical Research, New Delhi and Department of History, Ranchi University, Ranchi at Aryabhata Auditorium, Ranchi University, Ranchi on Saturday.

On the occasion, Gangwar said that the contribution of women in the history of India has been unique and inspiring. Savitribai Phule, Rani Lakshmbai and the brave heroines of Jharkhand, like Phool- Jhano, are symbols of the fact that women have always played an important role in giving direction to the society. The Governor also said that it is our responsibility to give these great women their due place in history for their contribution.

Gangwar further said that modern women historians are making significant efforts in this direction and presenting the role of women with a new perspective. This not only enriches history writing but is also helpful in the overall development of the society.

Referring to the dedication of Prime Minister Narendra Modi towards women empowerment, the Governor said that schemes like 'Beti Bachao, Beti Padhao' have not only provided rights and opportunities to women but have also established a new identity for them in the society and also emphasised that women should not only become a part of history but also play an active role in the creation of it.

The Governor appreciated the seminar organised by Ranchi University, Ranchi on the topic 'Heroines of Jharkhand in the Freedom Struggle' and called it a milestone in highlighting the historical traditions of Jharkhand and India.

Eminent historians, educationists and intellectuals from all over the country participated in the convention. Ranchi University Vice Chancellor Dr. Ajit Kumar Sinha, President of Women Historian Council Prof. (Dr.) Sushmita Pandey, National Organisation Secretary of All India History Compilation Scheme Dr. Balmukund Pandey and Ranchi University History Department Head Dr. Sujata Singh were present on the occasion along with other dignitaries.

## NATIONAL SCHOOL GAMES

### U-14 Athletics Competition kicks off in City

PNS : RANCHI

The Under-14 boys and girls athletics competition was inaugurated in a grand manner at the 68th National School Sports Competition on Saturday at Bhagwan Birsa Munda Football Stadium, Morhabadi in the State capital. Ranchi Deputy Commissioner Manjunath Bhajantri was the chief guest while Ranchi Sadar Sub-Divisional Officer Utkarsh Kumar was the special guest on the occasion.

Jharkhand Education Project Council Administrative Officer Sachidanand Di. Tigga, Jharkhand Olympic Association General Secretary Madhukant Pathak, State Program Officer Dheersen Soreng, Jharkhand Athletics Association President Chandradev Singh and Jharkhand Athletics Association General Secretary Shiv Kumar Pandey also attended the opening ceremony.

Addressing the gathering, chief guest Manjunath Bhajantri said that we are all very proud of this event. The work of giving a great platform to sports and art has been done here. Unity and diversity are also seen along with sports in such national events. Through

sports one develops a healthy body, discipline, leadership ability and teamwork. Bhajantri also said that sports are being continuously promoted by the central and state governments.

Deputy Commissioner Manjunath Bhajantri, Sadar Sub-Divisional Officer Utkarsh Kumar and other guests formally started the sports program by playing the drum and releasing a balloon.

The inaugural ceremony started with the traditional folk dance of Jharkhand. The students of Kasturba Gandhi Balika Awasiya Vidyalaya, Kanke, presented a group dance on the song 'Jharkhand Vandana and 'Kitte Sundar Hamar Jharkhand, Nadiya Hilar Mare Re' while Musician Madhavi Kumari and her team presented the song 'Mile Sur Mera Tumhara'. The artists of Bharatiya Lok Kalyan Sansthan, Chutia presented a traditional dance whereas Agni Dance Group performed on the song 'Jai Ho'.

In the inauguration ceremony, the piper band group of girls students of PM Shri Kasturba Gandhi Girls Residential School, Patmada, East Singhbhum, who were zonal award winners and have been selected for the National Pipe Band

Competition also performed. The team won the first prize in the Zonal Level Band Competition held in Guwahati on December 22, 2024. On January 20, all the students will go to Delhi by Anand Vihar train along with their teacher and coach for the national level band competition to be held on January 24 and 25. The team will also perform in the Republic Day Parade in Delhi.

A total of 16 bands from all over the country have been selected for the National Band Competition. The Jharkhand team members are all students of class 8 to class 12 at PM Shri Kasturba Gandhi Girls Residential School, Patmada while their teacher Saro Hansda and band coach Anish will also accompany them.

As many as 35 teams from across the country have come to the State capital to participate in the Under 14 Boys and Girls Athletics Competition. More than 900 participants, including team managers and coaches, will also participate in the competition. The maximum numbers of athletes- 38 are from the state of Kerala whereas 30 athletes from the host state Jharkhand who will be participating in the events.



State BJP President Babulal Marandi alongwith family members cut a cake to celebrate his birthday at his official residence in Ranchi on Saturday. Pix by Vinay Murmu

## Guv prays at Baidyanath Dham, inaugurates book fair in Deoghar



Governor Santosh Kumar offers prayers at Baba Baidyanath temple in Deoghar on Saturday. PNS

PNS : RANCHI

Governor Santosh Kumar today performed Puja-Archana at Baba Baidyanath Temple in Deoghar with due rituals. He prayed to Baba Bholenath for the happiness, prosperity, well-being and peace of the people of the state.

On this occasion, the officials of the Temple Management Committee welcomed the Governor.

Later, in the day, Gangwar formally inaugurated the '22nd Deoghar Book Fair' on the holy land of Baba Baidyanath. On this occasion, he described the book fair as an important platform for the dissemination of knowledge, culture and literature and described it as a symbol of

the rich cultural heritage of Jharkhand.

The Governor said that this land of Deoghar is not only famous for a spiritual centre like Baba Baidyanath Dham, but here the great saint Thakur Anukul Chandra Ji inspired the society with his thoughts and spiritual vision. This holy land is an inspiration of cultural, literary and historical heritage. Deoghar's contribution has been very inspiring even during the freedom struggle. The role of the people and revolutionaries here during the Non-Cooperation Movement and Quit India Movement has been incomparable. This land has always given inspiration and energy to the society. Describing this fair as an

excellent effort to revive the book culture in the digital age, the Governor said that books are not only a source of knowledge but are also the invaluable heritage of our lives. Today, when the young generation is distancing itself from books, such events will help in drawing their attention back towards study and writing. He also mentioned the library established by him in Bareilly, which is his personal effort towards building a studious society. The Governor released several books in the program and felicitated scholars who have made outstanding contributions in the field of literature.

He described the fair as an ideal platform to encourage the creativity of the youth and called upon the youth to participate in it enthusiastically. Referring to the mantras of the Prime Minister like 'Padhega India, Badhega India', the Governor said that this book fair is an important step towards realizing his thinking. The Governor congratulated the Book Fair Committee for its successful organisation and called upon all the citizens to take maximum advantage of this fair and be a part of this festival of knowledge.

On this occasion, Lok Sabha MP Dr. Nishikant Dubey, senior officials of the local administration, litterateurs, educationists and members of the Book Fair Committee were present.

# Budget of successful schemes for farmers will increase: Tirkey

## Unsuccessful schemes will be dropped, says Agriculture Minister

PNS : RANCHI

The Department of Agriculture, Animal Husbandry and Cooperatives has started preparations for the budget of the financial year 2025 - 26. In the discussion organized on the budget in Nepal House, Minister Shilpi Neha Tirkey asked officials to focus on the schemes that are proving beneficial for the farmers. The department will work to increase the budget amount of the beneficial and welfare scheme for the farmers, while the scheme which has got very little benefit to the farmers or the scheme which has not proved beneficial for the farmers will be dropped.

The Minister instructed the departmental officials during the budget discus-



Agriculture Minister Shilpi Neha Tirkey holds a meeting with senior officers at his office in Ranchi on Saturday. PNS

sion to reduce or drop the budget of all such schemes. The minister has clearly told the officials that 100 per cent of the budget amount allocated for the scheme has to be utilized properly. Under no circum-

stances should the budget amount be pending due to the scheme not being implemented on the ground. For this, it is necessary that the field staff and officers of the department remain serious for the success of the

scheme. She said that it should be ensured that all costs that the beneficiaries get maximum benefit of the department's scheme. In the financial year 2025 - 26, the department will focus the most on

the availability of seeds and seed distribution. The department has decided to establish 10 seed villages. Tirkey has talked about getting the irregularities in seed distribution in Lapung investigated. In fact, when information was taken from the beneficiary during the review regarding seed distribution, there was a big difference between the departmental claims and the ground reality. Many beneficiary farmers have also complained to the department about not getting seeds.

The Agriculture, Animal Husbandry and Cooperative Department has started preparing a report on the number of beneficiaries and the success of the scheme for determining the scheme-wise amount for the upcoming budget.

# PM Modi to spend entire day with 'Viksit Bharat Young Leaders Dialogue' participants

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

Prime Minister Narendra Modi will spend the entire day on Sunday with the participants in the 'Viksit Bharat Young Leaders Dialogue', being held as part of his efforts to bring one lakh youths having no political link in politics.

The programme is being held on National Youth Day, which marks the birth anniversary of Swami Vivekananda. An official statement said Modi will engage with 3,000 "dynamic young" leaders from across India.

Modi said on social media that he will spend the entire day with "my young friends" and over conversations and lunch, they will discuss various subjects aimed at building a 'Viksit Bharat'. The youths who he will be meeting have shown great passion for science, technology, innovation, culture and more, he added. The statement said the event



aims to break the 25-year-old tradition of holding the National Youth Festival in a conventional manner. It aligns with Modi's Independence Day call to engage one lakh youths having no political affiliation in politics and provide them with a national platform to make their ideas for Viksit Bharat a reality. Modi will participate in multiple activities designed to inspire, motivate, and empower the nation's future

leaders, it said. "Innovative young leaders will make 10 PowerPoint presentations representing the 10 thematic areas pivotal to India's development before the prime minister. These presentations reflect the innovative ideas and solutions proposed by young leaders to address some of India's most pressing challenges," it added. He will also release a compilation of the best essays written by participants on the ten themes. These themes

encompass diverse areas such as technology, sustainability, women empowerment, manufacturing, and agriculture.

During the dialogue, which starts on Sunday, the young leaders will engage in competitions, activities, and cultural and thematic presentations. It will also include deliberations on the themes led by mentors and domain experts. It will also witness cultural performances showcasing India's artistic heritage while symbolizing its modern advancements.

A total of 3,000 youths have been selected to participate in the Viksit Bharat Young Leaders Dialogue through the Viksit Bharat Challenge, a meticulously crafted, merit-based multi-level selection process to identify and showcase the most motivated and dynamic young voices from across the nation, the statement said. It saw the participation of around 30 lakh young minds.

# Rijju embarks on five-day visit to Saudi Arabia, to sign agreement for Hajj pilgrimage

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

Minority Affairs Minister Kiren Rijju on Saturday embarked on a five-day visit to Saudi Arabia to sign a bilateral agreement for the Hajj pilgrimage of 2025, where India is seeking an additional quota for 10,000 pilgrims. Rijju is scheduled to meet Saudi Arabian Minister Tawfiq bin Fawzan Al Rabiah on Monday when the two leaders are expected to sign the bilateral agreement.

"I look forward to visiting the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia to sign the bilateral agreement on Hajj 2025 and strengthen the people-to-people ties between our two great nations," Rijju said in a post on X.

Rijju will also meet Saleh Al Jasser, the Saudi Minister of Transport and Logistic Services and discuss Hajj flight operations and the pilgrimage-related bus and train services with him. Rijju will also visit the Jeddah Haj Terminal, used by Indian



pilgrims, where the government has dedicated an office space for facilitation. Some Indian pilgrims use the Jeddah Airport Terminal One, which also has a high-speed rail service, for transit. India's Hajj quota for 2025 is fixed by Saudi Arabia at 1,75,025 pilgrims and the government is seeking an additional 10,000 quota for this year's pilgrimage. Rijju will also visit Madina, where he will visit the mosques at Quba and Qublatain.

During his visit, Rijju will also meet Prince Khalid Al Faisal bin Abdulaziz Al Saud, Advisor to King Salman, the governor of Makkah Region and the chairman of the Central Hajj Committee and Prince Salman bin Sultan bin Abdulaziz al Saud, the Governor of Madina. Out of the total Hajj pilgrims quota allocated to India, 70 per cent would be handled by the Hajj Committee of India while the remaining 30 per cent will be allocated to private Hajj group organisers,

according to the government's Hajj Policy for 2025.

In 2024, the Hajj Committee of India (HCoI) was allotted 80 per cent while the private Hajj group organisers got 20 per cent of the quota.

While the order of priority was 70 plus applicants, ladies travelling without mehrams and the general category in 2024, the new Hajj policy has prioritised 65 plus applicants followed by women without mehrams and then the general category.

# Dark web, cryptocurrency and drones continue to be challenge for country: Shah

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

Home Minister Amit Shah said on Saturday that dark web, cryptocurrency, online marketplace and drones continue to be a challenge for the country and these have to be checked by strict measures.

Chairing a regional conference on 'Drug Trafficking and National Security' here, Shah also asserted that the country will not allow even a single kg of drugs to be smuggled in or out of the country. He said the government has not only been successful in eliminating many networks of drugs, but the terrorism linked with them too was also destroyed. He said many cases of narco-terrorism were busted in

Jammu and Kashmir, Punjab, Gujarat and Uttar Pradesh and these were major achievements.

"The use of dark web, cryptocurrency, online marketplace, drones continue to be a challenge for us even today," he said. Shah said a technical solution to these problems have to be found through joint efforts by the states and the central government and technocrats for the country's security and development.

He said the fight against drugs has gained a new strength under Prime Minister Narendra Modi's leadership. "In the last 10 years, there has been a seven-fold increase in the seizure of drugs which is a major achievement. The Modi government has given a strong message of destroying

the entire ecosystem of drugs through strict action," he said. The home minister said that in 2024, by seizing drugs worth Rs 16,914 crore, the Narcotics Control Bureau (NCB) and police across the country took the biggest action against drugs, which is a significant step in making a drug-free society.

"No country can move forward on the path of development with a young generation suffering from drug addiction. It is our responsibility that we all fight this challenge together and make all efforts to win this battle," he said.

Shah said that during 2004-14, a total of 3.63 kg of drugs were seized while during 2014-24, altogether 24 lakh kg of drugs were seized - a seven-fold increase as compared to



the previous decade. He said drugs worth Rs 8,150 crore were disposed off in 2004-14 but in 2014-24, drugs worth Rs 54,851 crore were destroyed - eight times more

special focus on eight states and Union Territories of northern India. Shah also launched the drug disposal fortnight starting from Saturday to January 25. He said that during this period, one lakh kg of narcotics worth Rs 8,600 crore will be destroyed. The home minister also inaugurated the new office complex of the NCB's Bhopal zonal unit and extension of the MANAS-2 helpline to all 36 states and UTs.

The main focus of the conference is on the sharing of real-time information from the National Narcotics Helpline 'MANAS' portal with the Anti-Narcotics Task Force (ANTF) of states and UTs, evaluating the progress of states in combating drug trafficking, and assessing the

effectiveness of the Narcotics Coordination Mechanism (NCORD). Other issues to be discussed at the conference include strengthening and enhancing the functionality of State Forensic Science Laboratories (SFLs), utilising the NIDAAN database to bolster efforts against drug trafficking, implementing provisions of the Prevention of Illicit Traffic in Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances (PIT-NDPS) Act, establishing special NDPS courts for the speedy trial of drug-related cases, and fostering a Whole-of-Government approach to ensure comprehensive collaboration among all agencies to combat drug trafficking and abuse effectively.

Under the leadership of Prime Minister Narendra Modi, the Government of India has adopted a zero tolerance policy against drug trafficking, an official release said. The Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA) is implementing a three-pronged strategy to achieve a drug-free India by 2047. This includes strengthening institutional frameworks, enhancing coordination among narcotics agencies, and launching a public awareness campaign. The conference is being attended by governors, lieutenant governors, chief ministers and senior officers from the eight participating states and UTs. Senior officers from various central ministries, departments, and law enforcement agencies also attended the conference.

# IMD looking to access data from CubeSats, IoT devices for better forecasts

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

The India Meteorological Department (IMD) is looking to access data from CubeSats, crowdsourcing, and Internet of Things devices besides conventional weather satellites to improve its forecast accuracy, a former official said.

The IMD has also sent a dedicated meteorological satellite in orbit and installed a new high power computing system (HPCS) last year that would allow it to issue more accurate forecasts. "IMD will soon move to an ensemble prediction system with a horizontal resolution of 6 km, which is an improvement over the current resolution of 12 km," Madhavan Rajeevan, Ministry of Earth Sciences former secretary, said in an article penned on the occasion of the 150th Foundation Day of IMD.

"The improvement of observation networks incorporating state-of-the-art technologies such as crowdsourcing, CubeSats, IoT devices and unmanned platforms will significantly improve data quality and forecast efficiency," he said. Rajeevan said the IMD was also setting up separate research testbeds in Bhopal and Mumbai to deepen the understanding of monsoon dynamics and cloud physics.

"As user expectations continue to grow, the IMD must continuously innovate and proactively address these demands," he said. The IMD has access to weather observations from over 6,000 surface observatories in addition to data from weather balloons, satellites, a network of radars which feed information to prediction models.

"By embracing cutting-edge technologies and continually improving forecasting systems, IMD can sustain its legacy as a global leader in weather and climate services and helping India navigate the



challenges of climate Change," Rajeevan said. In a separate article, leading meteorologist U C Mohanty said under the aegis of Ministry of Earth Sciences, significant scientific and technological advancements have been achieved across various domains of Earth system sciences, encompassing the atmosphere, hydrosphere, lithosphere, cryosphere, biosphere, and their intricate interactions.

The advances in computational resources allowed the use of advanced deterministic chemical transport models, leading to more accurate air quality forecast, replacing the previous empirical and statistical approach which has some limitations and misses to adequately represent the physical and chemical processes of pollutants.

The scientists at IMD and Indian Institute of Tropical Meteorology (IITM), Pune, Ministry of Earth Science jointly developed the advanced Air Quality Early Warning System (AQEWS), Rajesh Verma, Chairman of the Commission for Air Quality Management said. In the Power sector, timely weather forecasts helps in better management of electricity grids.

"There is trading in power sector in every 15 minutes. Thus, the 15-minute forecasts and hourly forecasts of basic weather parameters upto a few hours help in ensuring better management of power generation and distribution," a power ministry official said.

# Delhi HC denies bail to ISIS associate in terror case

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

The Delhi High Court has refused to grant bail to an alleged member of ISIS in a terror case by NIA over radicalisation of youths using cyber space. A bench of Justices Prathiba M Singh and Amit Sharma dismissed the bail plea by Md Heydaitullah, who allegedly used Telegram groups to propagate the ideology of the terrorist group in India and recruit other persons.

The accused challenged a trial court order declining any relief on the ground that mere association or support to a

terrorist organisation would not constitute an offence under the Unlawful Activities Prevention Act (UAPA).

The court rejected the contention, and said Heydaitullah, a qualified MBA graduate working at an IT company in Gurugram, was not a "passive" supporter as material showed that he advocated "Jihad in order to establish Khilafat" even through violent means.

"The Appellant admittedly in 2018 had taken an oath (Bayath) in the name of Abu Bakr al Baghdadi and Abu al-Hasan al-Hashimi al-Qurashi. Abu Bakr al Baghdadi is admittedly a well-known



leader of ISIS and as per the chargesheet had declared formation of 'caliphate' in June 2014," said the court in a judgement passed on January 10.

"ISIS had been declared to be a terrorist organisation and judicial notice can be taken of the fact that the world at large knows about the activities of ISIS," it added. Dismissing the plea, the court said the bar on grant of bail under the UAPA was clearly applicable in the case.

Following an FIR registered in 2021, the National

Investigation Agency arrested the accused on October 22, 2022.

The prosecution alleged that he disseminated the ISIS ideology through the cyber space and spread hatred against the Government of India by promoting enmity against Hindus on social media.

It was further alleged that he had transferred funds for the cause of ISIS from his bank account and various materials, including the oath of allegiance, methods for preparation of explosive material, etc were recovered from him during the investigation.

# CITU slams L&T chairman for urging employees to work 90 hours per week

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

Centre of Indian Trade Unions (CITU) on Saturday condemned the statement of the Chairman of Larsen & Toubro (L&T) urging for to extending the working hour to 90 hours per week. "Similar satanic statement was earlier made by the Infosys Head N.R. Narayan Murthy, urging for increasing working hour of 70 hours per week through statutory measure. It seems that there is a rogue competition among the corporate messiahs to rouse the blood and sweat of Indian workers and they are in active connivance and collaboration with the corporate-communal regime in governance by Modi-led NDA," said Tapan Sen, general secretary of CITU in a statement.

"Indian workers, even the permanent ones in the formal sector, are deployed in much more hours of work compared to more productive countries like China, Europe and even the U.S. The stretching of working hours is very disastrously impacting upon the health and social life of the Indian workers. Despite that, these sort of satanic exercise are being made by



the corporate class only to further minimize employment as well as labour cost with brutal working conditions to facilitate more intense exploitation on the workers for profit, cost cutting, in the guise of efficiency and productivity, which have led to 11486 suicides in 2022 as per records of Crime Bureau. The extent of severity of inhuman extraction from labour can be seen from the share of wages in net value addition going down sharply to 15.94% in 2022-23 from 27.64% in 1990-91 while share of net profit jumping from 19.06% to 51.92% during the same period as per Annual Survey of Industries report, besides aggravating 'joblessness,' pointed out CITU. The major Left trade union said that such desperate and

# Total number of HMPV cases reach 15 in country, states raise vigilance

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

The total number of cases of coronavirus-like human metapneumovirus (HMPV) in the country has reached 15. On Saturday, the first case was reported in Assam when a 10-month-old child was detected positive for the pathogen while in Gujarat, a fourth case was reported after a 9-month-old baby was found to be affected with the respiratory illness. Gujarat has the highest number of 4 cases of HMPV in the country. Maharashtra has 3 cases, Karnataka and Tamil Nadu have 2 cases each, and UP, Rajasthan, Assam and Bengal have reported one case each.

The 10-month-old child is undergoing treatment at Assam Medical College and Hospital (AMCH) in Dibrugarh. His condition is stable, said the State Health officials, adding that the child was admitted to the government hospital four days ago due to symptoms of cold and cough.

Even as the Centre and many health experts have maintained that there is no need to worry as the virus has been doing the rounds in the country for the past several



years, States are not leaving anything to chance given the rise in cases in neighbouring China. As a part of its vigilance measures, Punjab has issued an advisory urging the elderly people and children to wear masks. Meanwhile, isolation wards are being built in hospitals in Gujarat which have reported the highest number of cases, raising further concerns about the virus' spread. In Haryana too, the health department has been ordered to keep an eye on HMPV cases.

HMPV spreads through respiratory droplets released when an infected person coughs or sneezes. It can also be transmitted by touching contaminated surfaces or through direct contact with an infected individual. As per a recent study by

researchers from JIPMER-Puducherry, a leading national institute and tertiary care hospital, HMPV, which is known to cause respiratory issues in children, has not only been circulating in India for years but has also evolved. The virus is classified into two main genotypes, A and B, with subgroups such as A1, A2, B1, and B2, along with additional sub-clusters like A2a, A2b, and A2c. For the first time, JIPMER researchers have identified two new HMPV sub-clusters — A2.2.1 and A2.2.2 — within the A genotype in India. These newly identified strains show similarities to isolates detected in the United States in 2010 and Japan in 2018.

The study is published in the International Journal of Infectious Diseases (IJID).

# VP Jagdeep Dhankhar stresses merit-based appointments, slams extensions and favouritism

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ BENGALURU

Vice President Jagdeep Dhankhar said on Saturday that extensions in service, in any form for a particular post is a setback to those who are in line. Dhankhar was delivering the inaugural address at the 25th National Conference of Chairpersons of State Public Service Commission being held in Bengaluru. Vice President also said that extension of service indicates that some individuals are indispensable.

"Indispensability is a myth. Talent abounds in this country. No one is indispensable. And therefore, it lies in the domain of Public Service Commissions (PSC) at the state and the central level that when they have a role in such kinds of situations, they must be firm," added the VP. He also said PSC's appointments cannot be driven by patronage, or by favouritism. "We cannot have a public



commission Chairman or a member, wedded to a particular ideology or an individual. That will be undoing the essence and spirit of the framework of the constitution," said Dhankhar. The Vice-President also frowned upon post-retirement recruitment and

said it is antithetical to what was visualised by framers of the Constitution.

"In some states, it has been structured. Employees never retire, particularly those in the premium services. They get a number of ad-hoc nomenclatures. This is not good. Everyone in the country must have due and

that due is defined by law," said the VP.

The VP also said fairness of selection has no meaning if paper leakages occur. "Paper leakage has become an industry, a form of commerce. This is a menace that must be curbed," he added. He commended the initiative the Government has taken in this

regard, with the Public Examinations (Prevention of Unfair Means) Bill, 2024.

The Vice President is also of the view that although it is "India's century", without a "calm political atmosphere" India will not really gain. A vitiated political climate is far more dangerous than the climate change we are facing, he pointed out.

"Our polity at the moment is too divisive, too polarised. Interaction is not taking place at the premium level in political organisations."

The solution, according to him, is harmony in polity. "Harmony is imperative.

If there is no harmony in polity, if the polity is polarized, deeply divisive, with no communication channels functioning, imagine you are in an earthquake, you are lost and you have no connection with the outside world, things will be terrible for you," he added. He also said for India to stand strong, we need strong institutions.

# Tamil Nadu Governor's actions 'childish' says CM MK Stalin

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ CHENNAI



Tamil Nadu Governor RN Ravi was unable to "digest" that the State was developing and his decision not to address the Assembly was "childish", Chief Minister MK Stalin said on Saturday. The state Legislative Assembly has been witnessing strange scenes for the last few years after Ravi took over as Governor, he said. "The Governor comes to the Assembly but returns without addressing the House. That's why I had said that his actions were childish," Stalin told the Assembly.

As per Article 176 of the Constitution, the Governor has to deliver his address to the Legislative Assembly at the commencement of the session. "But he appears to be keen on violating the rules in a planned manner," the CM said winding up the debate on the motion of thanks to the Governor for his address.

In 2022, this Governor delivered his address without altering the speech.

But in the following three years, he avoided delivering his customary address citing 'absurd' reasons, the Chief Minister said. Singing the Tamil anthem (Tamil Thai Valthu) before the session starts and playing the national anthem after the address has been the tradition for long. "I think, the Governor is unable to digest the fact that Tamil Nadu is developing. I may be an ordinary person but this Legislative Assembly came into existence due to the feelings of crore of people," Stalin said.

This House cannot bear to see the Governor doing something with political motives that drags the

position and responsibility he held by not respecting the dignity of this Assembly, not respecting the people's feelings, and 'daring' to insult the Tamil anthem. "We should not see such things again," the Chief Minister added.

On January 6, Ravi left the Assembly without delivering the customary address. The Raj Bhavan later said that he left 'in deep anguish' as the national anthem wasn't played. "Disrespecting the Constitution does not augur well for democracy," the Governor had then said. Reacting, Stalin had said, "it was childish of the Governor choosing not to read the government address."

# Congress MP Gaurav Gogoi seeks SIT probe into Assam mining tragedy

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ GUWAHATI

Congress MP Gaurav Gogoi on Saturday said he has written to Prime Minister Narendra Modi, seeking a SIT probe into the mining tragedy in Assam, which left several labourers in a coal quarry dead.

He also alleged that "illegal mining continues unchecked" due to "weak law enforcement and local complicity" in the northeastern state.

Nine workers were trapped inside a coal mine in Umrangsu in Dima Hasao district on Monday after a sudden gush of water



flooded the quarry. Of them, the bodies of four labourers have so far been recovered. "As of today, rescue operations have entered their sixth day, but the fate of coal

miners trapped in the illegal coal mine at Dima Hasao remains uncertain. Illegal mining continues unchecked in Assam, fuelled by weak law enforcement and local

complicity," said the Congress' deputy leader in the Lok Sabha. "I have written to the prime minister urging an urgent SIT probe to investigate this tragedy," he said.

Gogoi urged the prime minister that the proposed special investigation team (SIT) should not only look into the "illegal" operation of the mine and identify those responsible for this tragedy but also address the broader issues at play.

"This includes the failure to enforce the NGT's (National Green Tribunal) ban on rat-hole mining, the complicity of local authorities-including the district administration

and district police - who have enabled these illegal activities to persist, despite repeated accidents and warnings," the Congress leader alleged.

The SIT should also examine safety standards and working conditions in these mines, which are "consistently ignored", leading to deadly incidents, he claimed.

"The investigation should expand its scope to identify and map out other illegal mining sites across Karbi Anglong, Dima Hasao, and Upper Assam, areas where these activities continue unabated," he alleged in the letter.

Additionally, the

investigation must address the environmental impact of such "illegal mining operations and recommend necessary actions to curb the long-term damage to both human lives and the environment," Gogoi said.

"The people of Assam, and indeed all of India, deserve to know the truth and justice done. This must be a turning point in our collective efforts to end illegal mining and protect vulnerable workers from exploitation and harm," he said.

The families of the victims deserve justice, and "we must ensure that such incidents are prevented in the future," he added.

# Court relaxes bail conditions for Allu Arjun in stampede case

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ HYDERABAD

In a major relief to actor Allu Arjun, a court here has relaxed the conditions of his bail in the 'Pushpa 2' stampede case, exempting him from appearing before the investigating officer every Sunday. The court also permitted him to travel abroad to specified countries, with the condition that he must undertake to appear before the SHO of the Chikkadpally police station as and when required.

He has been directed to inform the SHO of his travel schedule for each trip and provide details of his place of stay in the destination country until the charge sheet is filed. The remaining bail conditions remain unchanged, the court noted in its order dated January 10.

The court's decision followed a petition filed by the actor seeking relaxation of the bail conditions. Previously, while granting regular bail to Allu Arjun on January 3, the court had instructed him to appear before the investigating officer every Sunday between 10 am and 1 pm for two months or until the filing of the charge sheet, whichever is earlier. He was also barred from leaving the country without prior court permission.



Additionally, the court had directed the actor to cooperate with the inquiry and refrain from interfering with the ongoing investigation or influencing witnesses in any manner.

Allu Arjun was arrested on December 13 in connection with the stampede case and released from jail on December 14 after the Telangana High Court granted him interim bail for four weeks, which ended on January 10.

The actor named Accused No. 11 in the case, subsequently filed a regular bail petition. A 35-year-old woman died, and her eight-year-old son was injured in a stampede on December 4 at the Sandhya Theatre in Hyderabad, as fans jostled to get a glimpse of the actor during the premiere of 'Pushpa 2'.

# CM N Biren urges Naga leaders to help resolve ethnic conflict



PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ IMPHAL

Manipur Chief Minister N Biren Singh on Saturday requested the church, community and other leaders of the Naga community to take a greater role in resolving the ongoing ethnic conflict in the state.

Clashes between Kuki and Meitei communities have left over 250 people dead and thousands homeless since May 2023. The Nagas were not involved in this conflict. Addressing a programme at Maram in Naga majority Senapati district, Singh said "I want to appeal to the Naga communities that a third party is required to resolve the

current issues and for restoration of peace. For this, church and community leaders needs to take responsibilities and initiatives." All grievances and problems can be resolved under the Constitution and the laws of the Manipur government, he said. "Whatever happened has happened. As I said during my New Year's message, it's time to forget and forgive. We need to jointly walk on the path of peace and bring back the former Manipur. We need to jointly work together to resolve this crisis. "I seek the support of all those gathered today including elected members, former elected members, and church leaders to overcome this crisis," Singh said.

# Juna Akhara expels Mahant over minor girl's induction as Sadhvi

BISWAJEET BANERJEE ■ MAHAKUMBH NAGAR

In a shocking development just days before the Maha Kumbh 2025 begins, the Juna Akhara has expelled Mahant Kaushal Giri for seven years after allegations surfaced that he accepted a 13-year-old girl from Agra as "daan" (donation) and initiated her as a Sadhvi (female ascetic).

The decision was taken on Friday during a meeting of the Akhara's top officials, held in the presence of the Ramta Panch. The girl, who had been seen in ascetic attire, was immediately sent back to her



family. The Maha Kumbh, starting on January 13 with the first holy dip on Paus Purnima, has already started drawing saints and devotees from across the

country. While the Akharas have settled into their camps, creating grand and regal setups, this disturbing incident has drawn widespread attention.

According to reports, Mahant Kaushal Giri claimed that the minor girl, Rakhi, was given to him by her family as a "donation." He initiated her as a Sadhvi and introduced her in the Akhara's camp in religious attire. He had planned to formally initiate her into ascetic life during the Maha Kumbh by performing rituals to dedicate her to the religious flag. Furthermore, he announced

that, as per tradition, the girl would perform her own funeral rites (Pind Daan) while still alive.

Kaushal Giri had stated that the girl, now named "Sadhvi Gauri," would completely renounce worldly life and dedicate herself to asceticism. The incident has raised serious questions about the ethical practices of some religious traditions and the protection of minors in such settings. The leadership of the Juna Akhara acted swiftly to address the matter, expelling Kaushal Giri and ensuring the girl was returned to her family.

# BSF foils smuggling attempt by Bangladeshi nationals in West Bengal's Malda district

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ KOLKATA

The Border Security Force (BSF) on Saturday said that its jawans thwarted a smuggling attempt by a group of Bangladeshis in West Bengal's Malda district. The incident occurred around 2.10 am at Border Outpost Nawada, under the 119th Battalion of the BSF's South Bengal Frontier.

BSF personnel observed a movement of 15-20 armed Bangladeshis approaching the



border. Several others were also spotted on the Indian side of

the fence, officials said. Despite being challenged by the

BSF, the smugglers advanced towards the fence. They used high-beam flashlights to blind the jawans.

The BSF initially fired two rounds in the air to disperse the smugglers, but the move proved to be ineffective.

"The smugglers then attacked the jawans with sharp weapons and sticks. In response, the BSF personnel fired two rounds at intervals in self-defence to halt the smuggling attempt," a BSF statement said. Reinforcements soon arrived,

causing the smugglers to flee. A subsequent search of the area resulted in the recovery of 572 bottles of a particular brand of cough syrup, a sharp weapon, and a high-beam flashlight. The BSF has not ruled out the possibility of smugglers injured in the firing.

In separate incidents in Murshidabad and Malda districts, the BSF foiled more smuggling and infiltration attempts at border outposts Nandanpur, Farjipara, and Harinathpur,

and Churiyantpur. BSF said it used stun grenades, pump action guns (PAG), and other weapons in self-defence to repel cattle smugglers and illegal intruders, leading to the seizure of illicit drugs, five cattle, and other contraband. The incidents and seizures were reported to the local police stations, and the confiscated items handed over to the appropriate authorities. A BSF South Bengal Frontier spokesperson said such attacks are a recurring challenge.

# Lecture on 'One Nation One Election' to be held on January 18 at Mahakumbh

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ MAHAKUMBH NAGAR

A series of thought-provoking lectures on contemporary issues, along with discussions on religion, spirituality, and culture, are being organized at the Mahakumbh in Prayagraj. The Divya Prem Seva Mission from Haridwar will conduct a special lecture on 'One Nation One Election - In the Context of Economic Political Reform and Developed India' on January 18, with former President Ram Nath Kovind invited as the chief guest.



on January 12 will be on Swami Vivekananda Sanatan

Dharma ki Vaishvik Drishti. The second, scheduled for

January 17, will address "Bharat ki Gaurav Gatha Banam Atmaheena ki Bhavana" (India's Glorious Legacy vs. the Spirit of Inferiority). The third, on January 18, will cover "One Nation One Election - Arthik Rajnitik Sudhar evam Viksit Bharat ke Sandarbh Mein" (One Nation, One Election: Economic and Political Reforms in the Context of a Developed India). The fourth lecture, on January 20, will discuss "Vaishvik Aatankvad Samadhan - Bharatiya Sanskriti ke Paripekshya Mein" (Global Terrorism Solutions - Indian Cultural Perspectives). The fifth, on

January 25, will focus on "Bharat ki Akhandta - Bhogolik aur Rajnitik Chunautiyan" (India's Geographical and Political Challenges to Integrity). The sixth, on January 31, will explore "Laingik Samaanata evam Mahila Sashaktikaran - Bharatiya Sanskriti ke Paripekshya Mein" (Gender Equality and Women Empowerment: An Indian Cultural Perspective). The seventh and final lecture, on February 6, will delve into "Social Media par Nijata aur Suraksha - Yuvaon ke Paripekshya Mein" (Privacy and Security on Social Media: Perspectives of the Youth).

# Nine Naxalites, with ₹43 lakh bounty, surrender in Chhattisgarh's Sukma district

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ RAIPUR

Nine hardcore Naxalites, allegedly involved in attacks on security forces and carrying a cumulative bounty of Rs 43 lakh, surrendered in Chhattisgarh's Sukma district on Saturday, police said.

The cadres, including two women, turned themselves in before senior officials from the police and Central Reserve Police Force (CRPF) here, citing disappointment with "hollow" and "inhuman" Maoist ideology and infighting within the outlawed outfit, Sukma Superintendent of Police Kiran Chavan said. He said the surrendered

Naxalites were also impressed by the state government's 'Niyad Nellanar' (your good village) scheme, which aims at facilitating development works in remote villages and stated that senior cadres were on backfoot with the increasing pressure of security forces and setting up of police camps in interior areas.

The official said Ransai alias Oyam Buska (34), the commander of platoon no 24 here, citing disappointment with "hollow" and "inhuman" Maoist ideology and infighting within the outlawed outfit, Sukma Superintendent of Police Kiran Chavan said. He said four other cadres carried a reward of Rs 5 lakh,

a woman Naxalite carried a reward of Rs 3 lakh, and two others, including a woman, carried a bounty of Rs 2 lakh each.

Chavan said Ransai was allegedly involved in attacks, including the Jhara Ghati ambush in Narayanpur district in 2007, wherein seven policemen were killed; the 2007 Ranibodli (Bijapur district) attack, in which 55 security personnel died; the 2017 ambush in Burkapal (Sukma), where 25 CRPF personnel were killed and the 2020 Minpa ambush (Sukma) that killed 17 security personnel. The other surrendered cadres were also involved in multiple attacks on security forces, he said.

Chinese FM makes surprise visit to Maldives, holds talks with Muizzu

Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi made a surprise visit to the Maldives, during which he held talks with President Mohamed Muizzu and discussed the state of bilateral relations...

'I would have beaten Trump,' says Biden

Outgoing US President Joe Biden on Friday said that he would have defeated Donald Trump in the November general elections, but he decided to withdraw from the race mid-way for the sake of the unity of the Democratic Party.

The US Presidential race against Trump after his disastrous performance at the presidential debate in Atlanta in June. Following a lot of criticism from his own party leaders, Biden decided to withdraw from the race mid-way and endorsed his running mate Vice President Kamala Harris to be the Democratic Party's presidential candidate.



out of mind?" he was asked. On January 20, Donald Trump, 78, would be sworn in as the 47th President of the United States.

don himself asserting that he has done nothing wrong. At the same time, he might be pardoning several others before he demits the office on January 20, he indicated.

"The idea that he (Donald Trump) would punish people for not adhering to what he thinks should be policy as related to his well-being is outrageous, but there is still consideration of some folks but no decision," Biden said in response to the question.

NOTICE INVITING EOI No. SSA-45035/1/2024-MIS-SEC-SSA/507157 Mission Director, Samagra Shiksha Axom, Kahilipara, Guwahati-19, invites Expression of Interest (EOI) through e-Tendering process from NSDC approved Training Partners or Govt. Institution...

Ukraine says it captured 2 North Korean soldiers

Kyiv (PTI): Ukraine's forces have captured two North Korean soldiers fighting alongside Russian troops in Russia's Kursk border region, Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy said on Saturday.

in August that resulted in the first occupation of Russian territory since World War II. Moscow's counterattack has left Ukrainian forces outstretched and demoralised, killing and wounding thousands and retaking more than 40 per cent of the 984 square kilometres of Kursk Ukraine had seized.

Venezuela's Maduro takes new oath amid protests, international rebuke

Venezuelan President Nicolás Maduro was sworn in Friday for a new term, extending his increasingly repressive rule in the face of renewed protests and rebukes from the United States and others who believe he stole last year's vote.



al sovereignty. "I have not been made president by the government of the United States, nor by the pro-imperialist governments of Latin America," he said, after being draped with a sash in the red, yellow and blue of Venezuela's flag.

Caracas on Friday contrasted sharply with the hundreds of Venezuelans who took to the streets Thursday to protest Maduro's power grab. The protest took place in relative calm but after it ended, aides to the popular former lawmaker María Corina Machado — the driving force behind what's left of Venezuela's beleaguered opposition — said she was briefly detained by security forces.

THE PIONEER CLASSIFIEDS

CHANGE OF NAME

I, Batheri Devi, Mother of No.2897858L. Hav Ram Kishan Yadav, R/o- Vill & Post- Chhadrara, Teh- Kotputli, Dist- Jaipur, Rajasthan- 303105, have changed my name from Batheri Devi to Bhatari, vide affidavit dated 11/01/2025 before Notary Public Delhi.

CORRIGENDUM NO. - 1 FOR TENDER NO.: N 10 HQ IDS 2024-25. DTD.: 09-01-2025 Tender Notice No.: N 10 HQ 2024-25. Name of work: Provision of Elephant Intrusion Detection System for detection of elephant movements with tracking and Level crossing alerts to increase Safety and capacity enhancement over N.F Railway in Kathihar and Alipurduar Division.

PUBLIC NOTICE Be it known to all that, Shri/ra Kanungo S/o Late Dr. Kissen Kanungo R/o- 241-A, Aerodrome Area, AT-Palaspali, Post Aerodrome Area, Bhubaneswar, Khordha, Odisha-751020, I am the allottee/legal owner of Flat No.27-B, FF, SFS Cat-II, with Scooter Garage in Pkt-A, Sukhdev Vihar, Delhi, FILE NO F-78(346)82/SFS/SV/II which is allotted by the DDA. I have lost the Original ALLOTMENT LETTER, POSSESSION LETTER, NOC FOR WATER AND ELECTRIC CONNECTION, SITE POSSESSION SLIP, INVENTORY of the above Flat. FIR/NCR to this effect has lodged in P.S. Crime Branch, Delhi vide LR No.2484274/2025 Dated 11-01-2025. Any person(s) claiming any right, interest, having any objection or found in possession of original documents, may get in contact with above named person at above address/phone No. 9937162130 with in 15 days from the date of publication of this notice.

PUBLIC NOTICE This is to inform to the public at large that Sh. Mohit Varshney is the Owner of the Flat No. 603, Block-C, on 8th floor, in the Exotica Eastern Court, P.O. No. 06, Sector-3, Crossing, Gurgaon, Haryana, India. He is hereby declared that the gazetted officer, I am the allottee/legal owner of the aforementioned Property with State Bank of India, RACPC Karkardoma, Delhi by mortgaging all Original Documents. In the entire chain of documents, the Original Allotment Letter dated 25.02.2012 and Original Possession Letter both issued by Exotica Developers are missing hence not traceable. Therefore, any person having any type of claim right/interest over the said property or Flat may inform in writing or contact at the address mentioned below about his/her objections within 15 days from today, failing which it shall be presumed that the said property is free from all type of Encumbrances, lien etc. or any claim. Navneet, Tripathi, Advocate (SC), Sector-3, Gurgaon, Haryana, India. Indrapuram, Ghaziabad, Mob No. 9698906717

PUBLIC NOTICE This is to inform the general public that Smt. Alka Suri is the Owner of Built-up Shop No. 1 on Ground Floor without roof area measuring 8 x 5.5 x 14.220 Sq. Mtrs. Built-up property bearing No. WZ-537, out of Kharsa no. 1575, situated at Old Lal Dora of 1908/9, village 'Inar', New Delhi - 110018. She is in possession through Regd. Sale Deed dated 30.12.2015 as doc. no. 26505 executed by Smt. Kiran in favour of Mrs. Alka Suri in respect of the said property.

Public Notice It is notified to the general public that Anara Homes had allotted the Unit No. J-1105 in Tower-J in the residential project 'Anara Homes' situated at Plot No. G1-03, Sector-15 B, Capital Vihar, District Gurgaon, Haryana. (UP) by M/s APV Realty Ltd. (hereinafter Company). The allotment letter dated 23.10.2010 to (1) Mrs. Sushma Gulati W/o Vijay Kumar Gulati (2) Gaurav Gulati S/o Vijay Kumar Gulati. (hereinafter 'Allottees') R/o A-524, Kamla Nagar, Agra, Uttar Pradesh-282004. Gaurav Gulati (Son) has informed the below mentioned company that Mrs. Sushma Gulati (Mother) had expired on 17.01.2018. Vijay Kumar Gulati (Father), Mrs. Nidhi Kasturia (Daughter) & Gaurav Gulati (Son), are the legal heirs of the deceased allottee and there is no other legal heir. They have no objection to transfer the flat/Unit in the name of Gaurav Gulati. In this regard, Gaurav Gulati has requested through affidavit that the allotment letter/sale deed of the above unit be executed and registered in the name of Gaurav Gulati. Therefore, it is notified to the general public that if any person has any objection in this regard, then he should personally appear at the mentioned below address on any working day between 11:00 am to 5:00pm within 15 (fifteen) days from the date of publication of this public notice and register his objection in writing on the basis of certificates and evidence, otherwise it will be understood that no person has any objection and the allotment letter/sale deed of the above unit will be registered in the name of Gaurav Gulati. By APV Realty Ltd. 801, 802, 8' Floor Iconic Corentium Sector-62, Noida-201301

AXIS BANK LTD. PUBLIC NOTICE FOR E-AUCTION OF PLEDGED ASSETS BEING GOLD ORNAMENTS THE BORROWERS, IN SPECIFIC AND THE PUBLIC IN GENERAL ARE HEREBY NOTIFIED THAT PUBLIC AUCTION OF THE GOLD ORNAMENTS PLEDGED IN THE BELOW ACCOUNTS IS PROPOSED TO BE CONDUCTED BY THE AXIS BANK AT THE BELOW MENTIONED BRANCH. THE BELOW MENTIONED BORROWERS HAS AVAILED THE CREDIT FACILITY FROM THE AXIS BANK LIMITED AGAINST THE PLEDGE OF GOLD ORNAMENTS ("GOLD LOAN FACILITY") IN FAVOUR OF THE BANK TOWARDS THE SECURITY. THE DEMAND NOTICES WERE ISSUED TO THE BORROWERS/GUARANTORS CALLING UP THE BORROWERS/GUARANTORS TO PAY THEIR OUTSTANDING AMOUNT TOWARDS THE GOLD LOAN FACILITY. AS THE BORROWERS/GUARANTORS HAVE FAILED TO REPAY THE OUTSTANDING LOAN AMOUNT, THE BANK IS CONSTRAINED TO INVOLVE THE PLEDGE AND PROPOSED TO CONDUCT AN E-AUCTION SALE OF PLEDGED GOLD ORNAMENTS MORE PARTICULARLY DESCRIBED IN SCHEDULE OF PROPERTY HEREUNDER ON 22.01.2025 AT 12.30 PM TO 03.30 PM ON "AS IN WHERE IS", "AS IS WHAT IS", "WHATSOEVER THERE IS" AND "NO RECOURSE BASIS".

PUBLIC NOTICE It is to inform to the public at large that Mr. Imran Ahmed who is the owner of the Plot No. 12A & 12B, measuring 70 sq.yds., Kharsa No. 1358/1min, New Hindon Vihar, Ardhala, Loni, Ghaziabad, Uttar Pradesh, owner vide Gift Deed dated 19.11.2024 (Document No. 14458) executed by Mrs. Hasina Begum and same to be financed & mortgaged by Fedbank Financial Services Limited. That, Mr. Zamil Ahmed was the owner through Sale Deed dated 20.12.2004. Further, Mr. Zamil Ahmed expired on 19-11-2012 leaving behind his legal heirs namely Mrs. Hasena Begum (wife), Mr. Imran Ahmed (son), Mr. Rizwan Saifi (son), Ms. Salma (daughter) but Mr. Rizwan Saifi and Ms. Salma were not present at the time of execution/registration of Gift Deed dated 19.11.2024. To comply the requirements of BANK/NBFC, we give this public notice that if any Person having any type of claim (right/interest/creating mortgage over the said property, may inform in writing, at the address mentioned below, about his objections within 7 days, failing which it shall be presumed that the said property is free from all type of Encumbrances, lien etc. or any claim. Navneet, Tripathi, Advocate (SC), Sector-3, Gurgaon, Haryana, India. Indrapuram, Ghaziabad, Mob No. 9698906717

PUBLIC NOTICE My client Smt. Saroj Devi W/o late Sh. Surender Kumar, residing at House No. A-599, New Ashok Nagar, Vasundhara Enclave, s.o. East Delhi, Delhi-110096, do hereby formally disown and debar her son namely Virender Kumar and his wife Gaurav along with their children, Piyush and Vidhi from all my movable and immovable properties. My client severed all relations with them. Any person/individual dealing with them, will do at their own risk, cost, and responsibility. My client shall not be held liable for any acts/dealings involving them as they are doing unlawful acts and not obeying my client. Tushar Malhotra (Advocate)

FORM No. 14 (See Regulation 33(2)) By Regd. Advt. Dated following by Publication. OFFICE OF THE RECOVERY OFFICER - (I) DEBITS RECOVERY TRIBUNAL DELHI - DRT 1 4th Floor, Jeevan Bhawan, Parliament Street, New Delhi-110001 DEMAND NOTICE NOTICE UNDER SECTIONS 25 TO 28 OF THE RECOVERY OF DEBTS BY BANKRUPTCY ACT, 1993 AND RULE 2 OF SECOND SCHEDULE TO THE INCOME TAX ACT, 1961. RC/1802/2024 08-01-2025

DEBITS RECOVERY TRIBUNAL DELHI (DRT 1) This is to notify that as per the Recovery Certificate issued in pursuance of orders passed by the Presiding Officer, DEBITS RECOVERY TRIBUNAL DELHI (DRT 1) in 14/02/2023 an amount of Rs 1040227.10 (Rupees Ten Lakhs Forty Thousands Two Hundred Twenty Seven And Paise Ten Only) along with pendentite and future interest @ 13.15 % Compound Interest Monthly w.e.f. 24/05/2019 (1st realization and costs of Rs 13000 (Rupees Thirteen Thousands Only) has become due against you (Jointly and severally) Fully/Limited. You are hereby directed to pay the above sum within 15 days of the receipt of the notice, failing which the recovery shall be made in accordance with the Recovery of Debts Due to Banks and Financial Institutions Act, 1993 and Rules there under. You are hereby ordered to declare on an affidavit the particulars of your assets on or before the next date of hearing. You are hereby ordered to appear before the undersigned on 14/01/2025 at 10:30 a.m. for further proceedings. In addition to the sum aforesaid, you will also be liable to pay: (a) Such interests as is payable for the period commencing immediately after this notice of the certificate of execution proceedings. (b) All costs, charges and expenses incurred in respect of the service of this notice and warrants and other processes and all other proceedings taken for recovering the amount due. Given under my hand and the seal of the Tribunal, on this date: 08/01/2025 Sd/- Recovery Officer DEBITS RECOVERY TRIBUNAL DELHI (DRT 1)

Panama Canal administrator rejects Trump's assertions of Chinese meddling

The administrator of the Panama Canal said Friday that the vital waterway will remain in Panamanian hands and open to commerce from all countries, rejecting claims by President-elect Donald Trump that the United States should take it over. In an interview with The Associated Press, Ricarue Vásquez denied Trump's claims that China was controlling the canal's operations, and said making exceptions to current rules concerning its operation would lead to "chaos."

this is to maintain the established rules." Requests for exceptions are routinely rejected, because the process is clear and there mustn't be arbitrary variations, he said. The only exception in the neutrality treaty is for American warships, which receive expedited passage. Some 70% of the sea traffic that crosses the Panama Canal leaves or goes to US ports. The United States built the canal in the early 1900s as it looked for ways to facilitate the transit of commercial and military vessels between its coasts. Washington relinquished control of the waterway to Panama on Dec 31, 1999, under a treaty signed in 1977 by President Jimmy Carter. Last month, Trump told supporters "We're being ripped off at the Panama Canal." He claimed that the US "foolishly gave it away."

Regarding the fees for using the canal, Vasquez said a planned series of increases had concluded with one this month. Any additional increases would be considered in the first half of the year to give clients certainty in their planning and would go through a public comment process, he said. "There's no discrimination in the fees," he said. "The price rules are uniform for absolutely all those who transit the canal and clearly defined." The canal depends on reservoirs to operate its locks and was heavily affected by drought during the past two years that forced it to substantially reduce the number of daily slots for crossing ships. With fewer ships using the canal each day, administrators increased the fees that are charged all shippers for reserving a slot. The canal bisects Panama, running 51 miles to end. It allows ships to avoid the longer and costlier trip around Cape Horn at the tip of South America.

# Gambhir, BCCI officials to meet to review Australia tour

PTI ■ MUMBAI

The future of leading batters Virat Kohli and Rohit Sharma will be discussed threadbare in a meeting that head coach Gautam Gambhir and chief selector Ajit Agarkar is scheduled to hold with BCCI officials to review the recent tour to Australia here on Saturday.

The back-to-back series defeats against New Zealand (home) and Australia (away) and the diminishing returns with the bat have put Kohli and Rohit under scanner. The PTI has learned that the powers that be will discuss in detail the future plan — whether to activate the transition switch from next month's Champions Trophy or wait for the cycle to end with the ICC marquee event. Though it's likely that the senior batters will get another chance to redeem themselves at the ODI Champions Trophy, a format in which they have always excelled.

They may also take into consideration the fact that both Kohli and Rohit have played just three ODIs in 2024 after the 2023 World Cup at home, and that could be too light a sample size to make a final call on their 50-over career. Both Kohli and Rohit endured different fortunes too in the series against Sri Lanka. While Kohli amassed 24, 14 and 20 in Colombo, Rohit walked away with scores of 58, 64 and 35 against the Lankans.

But overall, Kohli has been a champion performer in 50-overs, his staple format and a good outing in the Champions Trophy could bring him, and Rohit too, back into a good frame of mind.

However, their Test future is different. The next assignment is an away five-match series against England, and the mandarins will certainly assess the drying runs from Kohli and Rohit in the traditional format.



In the most recent outing against Australia, Kohli, despite a hundred at Perth, could garner only 190 runs at an average of 23.75 while Rohit, who skipped the first Test and opted out of the fifth match, made 31 runs at 6.2. Those performances will certainly be mooted thoroughly while seeking Gambhir's views on their desire to continue playing the longest version of the sport.

Similarly, it is possible that the performance of the Gambhir-led coaching staff too could be assayed, and asked about their vision to handle the transition period without any more hiccups.

Apart from the review meeting, the selectors, led by Agarkar, will also convene on Saturday evening to pick the Indian squad for the Champions Trophy. India will play all its matches in the UAE and will open the campaign with a match against Bangladesh on

February 20. However, it is unlikely that the team will be announced on this day itself, as the selectors have time till January 12 to release the squad.

They will assess the fitness level of star pacer Jasprit Bumrah, who is recuperating from back spasms, and veteran fast bowler Mohammed Shami. Shami, who has not played since the ODI World Cup 2023 because of an ankle surgery, is likely to get a green signal from BCCI's Centre of Excellence physics. Shami has played in the Ranji Trophy, Syed Mushtaq Ali Trophy and Vijay Hazare Trophy matches recently for Bengal to underline his increasing fitness levels and match readiness. The other interesting point will be to see whether Yashasvi Jaiswal will get the nod after doing well in 19 Tests and 23 T20I since making his debut in mid 2023. Team for England T20Is,

ODIs The selectors are also expected to discuss and pick the India squad for the five T20Is and three ODIs against England for the home series, beginning from January 22. There could not be many surprises as the team that did duty in South Africa late last year could be picked up again for the T20Is. Shami could be included in the ODIs depending on the fitness certificate from CoE, which is understood to be positive though it will be assessed deeply before taking a final decision. Bumrah and fellow pacer Akash Deep, who will also be in CoE in Bengaluru for recovery from a back niggle, will miss the white ball series against England. Jaiswal will certainly feature at least one of the squads though, along with Washington Sundar and Nitish Kumar Reddy, who impressed everyone with some gutsy outings Down Under.

# Satwik-Chirag lose Malaysia Open semifinals

PTI ■ KUALA LUMPUR

Satwiksairaj Rankireddy and Chirag Shetty's impressive run at the Malaysia Super 1000 badminton tournament came to an end following a straight-game loss to Korea's Kim Won Ho and Seo Seung Jae in the semifinals, here on Saturday.

Seeded seventh, Satwik and Chirag, who reached the finals last season, lost 10-21 15-21 in a 40-minute semifinal clash.

"They played really well, and we could have followed our game plan a bit better. Instead, we played some random strokes, but kudos to them for playing a solid game," Satwik told reporters.

"Today, the pace of the game was very slow compared to the last three days. It's part of the game. It was a valuable learning experience for us. It is disappointing, but we have a long way to go. Today's match showed that we can



still make it a good fight." The Asian Games champions struggled to get the right start and trailed 6-11 at the break in the opening game. Despite their efforts, the Indians could not make a comeback as Kim and Seo wrapped up the first game in just 19 minutes.

After the break, Satwik and Chirag showed better control and intent, making it 11-8 at

the interval. However, they couldn't maintain the momentum, allowing the Koreans to recover and seal the contest comfortably. Kim and Seo have reunited for the 2025 season after finding success with other partners. Seo previously partnered Kang Min Hyuk to the world title in 2023 and reached world No. 7 with Choi Sol

Gyu before that. Kim, on the other hand, claimed the mixed doubles silver medal alongside Jeong Na-eun at the Paris Olympics.

"They both are playing like a mixed doubles pair now, which is making it tougher," laughed Satwik.

"They are not giving away any easy points, and that's their best quality. We have to work hard for every point, and that's exactly what happened today," Satwik, who hasn't competed much after the Paris Games due to injuries, said a little more attitude and mind games could have helped against their opponents.

"We were working really hard, but they were taking easy points whenever they wanted, which kept the pressure off them. In the first game, and even in the second, despite us leading, they maintained their confidence. They could take any point at any time. I think maybe

some mind games could have worked here and there. We started a bit calmer, thought the game would come to us, but we could have shown a little more attitude on the court and played with a little more fire," he said.

Chirag added: "I think we started to be a little calmer in the second game. But credit to them, I think we gave away a few easy points from 11-8, but they were also serving quite well."

Satwik and Chirag haven't played much badminton since the Olympics.

They will next lead the home challenge at the India Open Super 750, starting January 14. The Indian pair will face Malaysia's Wei Chong Man and Kai Wun Tee in the opening round.

"Really excited. It's our home tournament and we would really want to go, play well there, and go as deep into the tournament as possible," Chirag signed off.

# Rani Rampal hopes Women's Hockey India League will inspire future Olympic stars

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Former captain Rani Rampal believes the Women's Hockey India League (HIL) can have a similar impact on the sport as the Indian Premier League (IPL) has had on cricket, providing a platform for young girls to earn national team spots for the 2032 Olympics.

The inaugural WHIL, scheduled from January 12 to 26 in Ranchi, will feature four teams: Delhi SG Pipers, Odisha Warriors, Shraichi Rarh Bengal Tigers, and Soorma Hockey Club.

"There may be four teams only this time but starting the league has been a long time coming. Hockey India needs to be complimented for this," Rampal, who will serve as a mentor and coach for the Soorma HC, told SAI Media.

"The men's hockey team won back-to-back bronze medals in the Olympics in Tokyo and Paris because the foundation



was laid by the men's Hockey India League years back," said the former India hockey captain.

"Now thanks to the introduction of the women's HIL, we will get to see a lot of talented young women showcase their mettle in the 2032 and 2036 Olympics. This platform will turn out immensely fruitful."

The 30-year-old from Haryana, who has played over 250 international matches, is embarking on her first stint as a support staff member. The Hockey India League (HIL) began in 2013 with six men's teams, running for five

years before it was discontinued primarily due to commercial challenges. It was revived after seven years with the addition of a women's league. Reflecting on the rise of women's cricket, Rampal drew parallels with the success of the Women's Premier League, which gave the sport a lot more prominence.

"Nobody knew much about women's cricket, but now you see, how the sport has become so popular in the nation. Through the women's IPL (WPL), people came to know about it and have started following the sport manifold." Rampal extended her wishes to former goalkeeper PR Sreejesh in his new role as coach of the Indian junior hockey team.

"Sreejesh has almost 20 years of international experience. The junior team will do very well because they will get to know how to perform in a high-level pressure situation," said Rani.

# David Moyes returns as Everton manager during 'pivotal time' for club

PTI ■ LIVERPOOL

Everton hired David Moyes for a second stint as manager at the Premier League club on Saturday.

Moyes replaces Sean Dyche, who was fired Thursday with the team just one point above the relegation zone.

The 61-year-old Moyes managed Everton from 2002-13, during which he led the Merseyside club to the 2009 FA Cup final and four European campaigns.

"It's great to be back," Moyes said. "I enjoyed 11 wonderful and successful years at Everton and didn't hesitate when I was offered the opportunity to rejoin this great club."

The storied club — a nine-time English champion which has been without a major trophy since 1995 — was bought last month by the



Texas-based Friedkin Group in a deal reportedly worth in excess of 400 million pounds (\$495 million).

Everton's next game is Wednesday at home against Aston Villa in the Premier League. "We are pleased that David is joining us at this pivotal time in Everton's history," club executive chairman Marc Watts said in the team's statement. "With

over a decade of experience at the club, he is the right leader to propel us through our final season at Goodison Park and into our new stadium. We look forward to working with David to build the foundation of a new era for Everton."

Dyche was fired hours before Everton hosted and beat third-division Peterborough 2-0 in an FA Cup third-round match.

# Mumbai eye return to winning ways, Jamshedpur FC target top-two spot

PTI ■ MUMBAI

Title holders Mumbai City FC will look to regain their footing at home when they face Jamshedpur FC in the Indian Super League here on Sunday.

The Islanders are determined to recover from a disappointing home defeat and will aim to avoid back-to-back losses at the Mumbai Football Arena for the first time since early 2023.

Mumbai City FC have lost two of their last five matches at the Mumbai Football Arena, including a 0-3 defeat to NorthEast United FC on December 30, 2024.

The last time they suffered a consecutive home losses was in early 2023.

The Islanders enter the match with concerns over their defensive structure.

After maintaining an impressive run of four consecutive clean sheets, Mumbai City FC have now



conceded multiple goals in back-to-back matches -- a worrying trend that head coach Petr Kratky will be eager to address.

With their last two home matches yielding a defeat and a draw, the Islanders need a solid defensive display to secure three points.

Despite their defensive

Miners' resilient backbone. "Regardless of who we play, every game is important for me. We need to win and that's our No. 1 priority. We need to play good football, as it gives us more chances to succeed," Mumbai City FC coach Petr Kratky said.

Jamshedpur FC, with a poor away record this season, on the other hand will seek to break their streak of four consecutive road defeats and keep their momentum alive as they push for a top-two spot.

Jamshedpur FC thrive without dominating possession. The Red Miners have the lowest average possession in the league (41.1%) but are masters of the counter-attack.

By absorbing pressure and striking swiftly on the break, they've managed to keep pace with the league's top teams.

The key to their strategy is Muhammed Uvais, who has been instrumental in transitioning play from defence to attack.

His dual role makes him a crucial player for Jamshedpur's counter-attacking setup.

Adding further strength to their cause is Stephen Eze, whose aerial dominance and defensive prowess make him a standout performer.

"It's an away game. So, it's very important. We must take full responsibility and work hard to get a positive result," the Red Miners coach Khalid Jameel said.

The Islanders are sixth in the table, with 23 points from 14 games, courtesy of six victories and five draws.

Jamshedpur FC are positioned fourth, winning 24 points from 13 matches, taking all three points in four out their previous five clashes.

They are just three points short of the second-placed Bengaluru FC (27), and have a game in hand (13) compared to the Blues (14).

# Australian Open 2025: Carlos Alcaraz and Jannik Sinner have a real rivalry atop men's tennis

PTI ■ MELBOURNE

When Carlos Alcaraz is on court for a training session, perhaps working on his newly revamped service motion, he's doing so to buttress a game already good enough to claim four Grand Slam titles.

He's also got his young rival, Jannik Sinner, in mind.

"The good thing for me is, when I'm seeing him winning titles, when I'm seeing him in the top of the ranking, it forces me to practice even harder every day. In practice, I'm just thinking (about) the things that I have to improve to play against him," Alcaraz said Saturday, a day before the start of the Australian Open. "That, I think, is great for me: Having him (and) such a great rivalry, so far, just to (force me to) give (my best), every day."

Alcaraz, 21, and Sinner, 23, head into the 2025 tennis season at the top of the men's game, coming off a year that portended greatness for both. With Rafael Nadal now joining Roger Federer in

retirement, leaving 24-time major champion Novak Djokovic as the lone remaining member of the Big Three on tour, it appears as though Alcaraz and Sinner have separated themselves from the rest of the next generation, each taking two of the four Slam singles trophies in 2024. Forever, it seemed, the sport's most important laurels were dominated by Federer, Nadal and Djokovic, and anyone harboring hopes of claiming them needed to defeat at least one, and often two, of that trio. The names have changed, but the dynamic is similar.

"I feel like now, with Jannik and with Carlos, it kind of moved toward the same way, just with new guys. You have to go through them to win big tournaments. It's as simple as that," said Alexander Zverev, a two-time major finalist who is seeded No. 2 at Melbourne Park, between No. 1 Sinner and No. 3 Alcaraz. "They both won two Grand Slams (last) year. And they're the two best players in the world, for sure. And you have to beat them to win the tournament."

Sinner is the defending champion



in Australia, and went on to also win the U.S. Open in September, part of a season in which he went 73-6 with eight titles — but also dealt with a doping case in which he tested positive twice for trace amounts of an anabolic steroid, blamed it on accidentally being exposed to a banned substance via a massage from his trainer and was

exonerated. (The World Anti-Doping Agency appealed that ruling; a closed-door hearing will be held at the Court of Arbitration for Sport in Switzerland on April 16-17.) Alcaraz exited from the Australian Open in the quarterfinals against Zverev last January, but then triumphed at the French Open, getting past Zverev

in the final, and Wimbledon, where he won against Djokovic in the final for the second year in a row. On Sunday, Zverev faces wild-card entry Lucas Pouille at night, after defending champion Aryna Sabalenka takes on 2017 U.S. Open champion Sloane Stephens. Other top names scheduled for Day 1 action include 2024 Australian runner-up and Paris Olympic champion Zheng Qinwen and three-time major finalist Casper Ruud.

Alcaraz, Sinner and Djokovic, along with five-time major champ Iga Swiatek and 2023 U.S. Open winner Coco Gauff, all will get started Monday.

If Alcaraz, whose first major title came at the 2022 U.S. Open at age 19 and propelled him to a debut at No. 1, wins this Australian Open, he would be the youngest man in tennis history to complete a career Grand Slam, with at least one championship from each of the sport's four most prestigious events.

"It's truly remarkable," former player Feliciano Lopez said, "what

he has achieved in the last three years."

Alcaraz and Sinner already are establishing quite a head-to-head rivalry, one that already has shown glimpses of the potential to become as memorable as Federer vs. Nadal, or Djokovic vs. Nadal.

"You have more eyes on us," Sinner said, "because this is a match most people want to see."

Overall, Alcaraz leads 6-4. In 2024 alone, he went 3-0 against Sinner, who was 73-3 against everyone else, with setbacks only against Daniil Medvedev, Andrey Rublev and Stefanos Tsitsipas.

"When I'm playing against him, I have a different mindset, a little bit. I mean, when you're facing the ... Best player in the world, you have to do something different — different preparation or different mindset or whatever," said Alcaraz, who was 54-13 with four titles last season. "When I'm facing him, I just know that I have to play my best if I want to win. That's it. Probably if I have a bad day against Jannik, it's 99% that you're going to lose."

I, Basishtha Kumar Singh, S/o Late Muni Singh, R/o Ward No.2, Mehdi Nagar, Hussainabad, Palamu, P.S. - Hussainabad, Palamu, Jharkhand-822116. I have changed my daughter's name from Son Pari to Pari Kumari as per affidavit no. 641 dated- 21 December 2024. Now she will be known by her new name and will be used for all purposes.

कनारा बैंक Canara Bank

LOHARDAGA BRANCH CORRIGENDUM

Demand Notice published in this newspaper on 05.01.2025 for Borrower - Bindhya Srivastava & Sri Nitesh Prasad, the Date of Demand Notice will be read as 03.01.2025 instead of 30.01.2025. Rest content of the notice remain unchanged.

Place : Lohardaga Authorised Officer Date : 11.01.2025 Canara Bank

AFFIDAVIT



# A LEGACY PRESERVED

Celebrating 11 years, the museum hosts exhibitions blending art, history and imagination, says **GYANESHWAR DAYAL**



The **Heritage Transport Museum (HTM)** marked its 11th anniversary with two captivating exhibitions blending futuristic imagination and historical heritage. Running until 31 March 2025, the exhibitions, *Light Years Ahead* and *Prints of the Divine*, offer visitors a journey through artistic innovation and cultural history.

### A Legacy of Art and Vision

The event featured *Rama Varma Thampuran*, *Prince of Kilimanoor Palace* and a descendant of the iconic artist *Raja Ravi Varma*, and *Rajiv Lochan*, former *Director of the National Gallery of Modern Art (NGMA)*. *Rama Varma Thampuran*, a renowned musician and cultural advocate, celebrates the legacy of *Raja Ravi Varma*, while *Rajiv Lochan's* commitment to art underscores the exhibitions' significance in India's cultural landscape.

### A Vision of the Future

Curated by artist *Vishal K. Dar*, *Light Years Ahead* transforms the museum's experience room into a futuristic realm. Featuring luminous sculptural totems and tri-coloured coded messages, this installation invites visitors to ponder alternate realities and embrace boundless imagination.

### A Glimpse into India's Art History

*Prints of the Divine* celebrates India's artistic legacy through oleographs, lithographic plates, and postcards by *Raja Ravi Varma* and *M.V. Dhurandhar*. Curated by *Prem Kandwal*, this collection features rare works that highlight the evolution of early Indian print art, blending mythological themes with artistic innovation.

Reflecting on the exhibitions, *Rama Varma Thampuran* remarked: "Art and music have the power to heal and inspire. Sharing this passion with the world is truly an honour." *Rajiv Lochan* echoed these sentiments: "Art is a universal language that bridges cultures and fosters compassion. Creativity has the potential to unite us all."

### Honouring Raja Ravi Varma's Legacy

*Raja Ravi Varma* (1848–1906), a pioneer of lithographic printing in India, is celebrated for combining Indian aesthetics with European techniques. His iconic mythological depictions brought art to the masses and continue to inspire generations.

### HTM: A Journey Through Time

Reflecting on HTM's milestone, Founder and Managing Trustee *Tarun Thakral* said: "We are delighted to present these exhibitions to commemorate our 11th anniversary. They offer visitors a unique journey through time, one into the future, the other into the past." Since its inception in 2013, HTM has become India's first comprehensive transport museum, showcasing over 3,500 curated objects. Located in *Taoru-Gurgaon*, an hour from *New Delhi*, the museum combines historical exhibits with contemporary themes, offering visitors a unique blend of education and cultural engagement. *Through Light Years Ahead* and *Prints of the Divine*, HTM not only celebrates its anniversary but also reinforces its mission to merge history with innovation, creating a space where past, present and future converge.

PHOTOS: PANKAJ KUMAR



## SUGGESTED BINGES



**SUBTERAN**  
OTT: Netflix  
Director: Octav Gheorghe, Daniel Sandu, Anca Miruna Lazarescu  
Cast: Cezar Grumazescu, Ana Ularu, Florin Piersic Jr.



**THE SABARMATI REPORT**  
OTT: Zee5  
Director: Dheeraj Sarna  
Cast: Vikrant Massey, Ridhi Dogra, Raashi Khanna



**GOOSEBUMPS: THE VANISHING**  
OTT: Disney+ Hotstar  
Cast: Ana Ortiz, Elijah M. Cooper, Galilea La Salvia, Francesca Noel



**BLACK WARRANT**  
OTT: Netflix  
Director - Vikramaditya Motwane, Satyanshu Singh  
Cast - Zahan Kapoor, Rahul Bhat, Paramvir Cheema, Anurag Thakur



**AGRA AFFAIR**  
OTT: MX Player  
Cast: Harshita Gaur, Prateek Pachauri, Aakash Dahiya

Netflix's *Reunion* promises a murder mystery set against the backdrop of a high school reunion, but the execution leaves much to be desired. The movie has a decent cast, including *Chace Crawford*, *Jillian Bell* and *Nina Dobrev*. However, what could have been a gripping whodunit is weighed down by a mix of inconsistent writing, underwhelming performances, and a tone that fails to balance suspense and humour.

**THE PLOT: Potential Turned Mediocrity**  
The story begins with a high school reunion, where old classmates come together, bringing with them unresolved tensions, romantic entanglements, and deep-seated grudges. The film introduces *Mathew Danbury* (*Chace Crawford*), a charming yet flawed character, whose behaviour hints at trouble ahead. He flirts with the women at the party, dances as the high school football mascot, and generally becomes the centre of attention. Meanwhile, *Vivian Chase* (*Jillian Bell*) accuses *Mathew* of tormenting her in high school, adding a layer of confrontation to the gathering. A severe snowstorm traps the main characters *Evan* (*Billy Magnussen*), *Ray* (*Lil Rel Howery*), *Jasmine* (*Jamie Chung*), *Amanda* (*Nina Dobrev*), *Vivian* and *Mr. Buckley*



(*Michael Hitchcock*) in *Mathew's* house overnight. The next morning, *Mathew* is found dead, shot in the chest. The storm has cut off communication lines, making escape or calling for help impossible. As suspicions arise, it becomes clear that everyone had a motive tied to their high school grievances. The setup holds promise, combining classic mystery tropes with personal drama. Unfortunately, the film squanders this potential with a rushed and unsatisfying resolution.

**PERFORMANCES: Mixed Bag**  
*Chace Crawford's* portrayal of *Mathew* is engaging, but his character's untimely demise early in the film undermines any attachment the audience might have had. *Jamie Chung* and *Billy Magnussen* bring some charm as the budding romantic duo, but their chemistry feels underdeveloped. *Jillian Bell* as *Vivian* delivers an earnest performance, but her character lacks depth, and her emotional confrontation with *Mathew* feels forced rather than cathartic. *Lil Rel Howery's* comedic timing feels out of place in a story that should rely more on suspense than humour, making his character, *Ray*, come off as an unnecessary distraction.

**THE KILLER REVEAL: A Letdown**  
The film's climax is its most glaring weakness. The killer's identity is revealed through a tedious 15-minute monologue by one character, who conveniently "figures everything out" without any prior indication of



investigative situation. This lack of build-up or evidence makes the twist feel random and unearned, leaving the audience scratching their heads rather than gasping in surprise. A good mystery thrives on subtle clues and revelations, but *Reunion* opts for a nonsensical, last-minute info dump instead.

**DIRECTION AND WRITING: Where It Falls**  
The pacing is uneven, with long stretches of inconsequential dialogue that fail to build tension. The screenplay tries to blend humour and drama but ends up diluting the impact of both. The lack of meaningful character development makes it difficult to care about the characters' fates, while the attempts at dark humour often fall flat.

**VERDICT: A Missed Opportunity**  
*Reunion* is a film that had the ingredients for success with a strong cast, an amazing premise, and a confined setting perfect for suspense. Unfortunately, poor writing, lack of lustre direction, and a clumsy resolution turn it into a forgettable experience. If you're looking for a well-crafted murder mystery, this isn't it. While the film might appeal to those seeking light, mindless entertainment, it's unlikely to satisfy fans of the genre.

Rating: 2/5

Get in touch at [vivacity@dailypioneer.com](mailto:vivacity@dailypioneer.com)



“He was the king amongst the industrialists of India”  
— NARAYANA MURTHY



*“What I would like to do is to leave behind a sustainable entity of a set of companies that operate in an exemplary manner in terms of ethics, values and continue what our ancestors left behind.”*

— RATAN NAVAL TATA

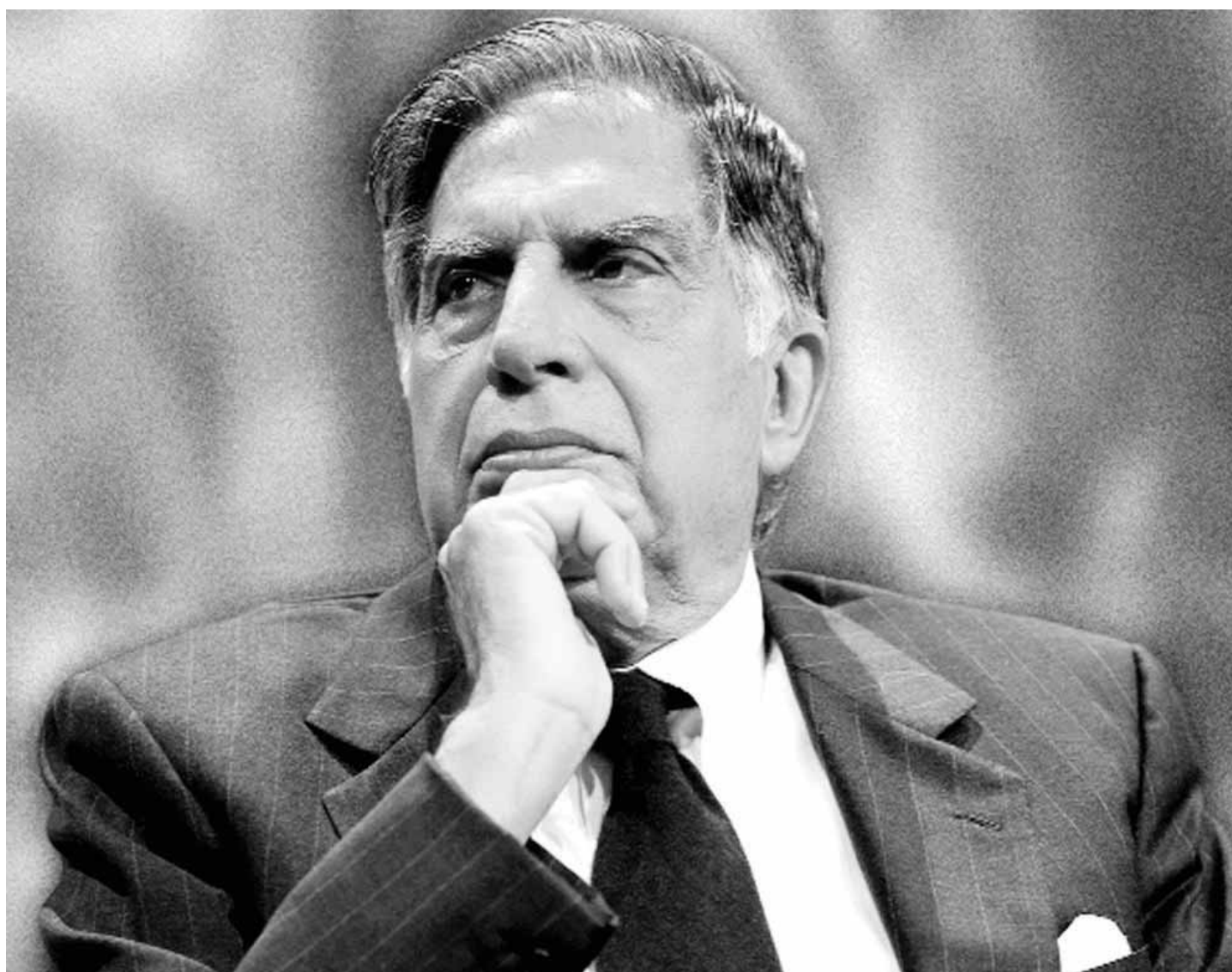
**P**ericles, the monumental Greek politician and statesman during the Golden Age of Athens in his historic Funeral Oration delivered in 431 BC (that is said to have influenced President Abraham Lincoln’s famous Gettysburg Address on 19th November, 1863!), said, “To famous men all the earth is a sepulchre: and their virtues shall be testified not only by inscription on stone at home but in all lands wheresoever in the unwritten record of the mind, which far beyond any monument will remain with all men everlastingly.”

On 9th October, 2024, at exactly 11.30 pm IST, the towering 5 feet 10 inches tall Surat born Parsee industrialist-philanthropist Padma Vibhushan Ratan (meaning “precious jewel”) Naval Tata, the Chairman Emeritus and the patriarch of the House of Tata, the largest business conglomerate in India (having a staggering annual revenue of over 165 billion US Dollars and encompassing a grand well knit family of over 1 million happy, well cared for and dedicated members worldwide!), breathed his last at the iconic Beach Candy Hospital nestled atop the Arabian Sea facing Cumballa Hill at the age of 86. He had been hospitalised on 7th October, 2024 owing to a critical combination of senescence and hypotension. Ratan held a meger 0.83 % cent stake in Tata Sons and had a net worth of Rs 7,900 crores, according to the Hurun India Rich List 2024. A large part of his wealth-nearly 75 per cent-was tied to his shares in Tata Sons. For Ratan, accolades poured in a torrential stream from across the country and from all corners of the world. In an impassioned eulogy that reflected the melancholy mood of a shattered nation, our Prime Minister Narendra Damodardas Modi tweeted on X - “Shri Ratan Tata was a visionary business leader, a compassionate soul, and an extraordinary human being.” On 13th October, 2024, the Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin “Bibi” Netanyahu in a post on X addressed to his friend Modi, condoled Ratan’s death and highlighted his stellar contributions in fostering Israel-India ties, “I and many in Israel mourn the loss of Ratan Naval Tata, a proud son of India and a champion of the friendship between our two countries.” In a post on LinkedIn on 14th October, 2024, Padma Bhushan Natarajan Chandrasekaran, (popularly known as “Chandra”), the most worthy successor of Ratan (he effortlessly stepped into Ratan’s distinguished shoes and proudly donned his enviable mantle on 12th January, 2017) and my personal friend for over 15 years since my heady days as a long term Advisor to Tata Consultancy Services Ltd. (“TCS”), the flagship of the prodigious Tata fleet, paid an effusive heartfelt homage to his former boss and mentor, “Anybody who met Mr. Tata came away with a story about his humanity, warmth, and dreams for India. There really was no one like him.” Joseph Bitner Wirthlin, the renowned American businessman and religious leader rightly observed, “Some memories are unforgettable, remaining ever vivid and heartwarming!” In a moment of helpless nostalgia, my mind goes back irresistibly to the rather sultry summer day in 1983. Thereafter, I often used to stay at the Taj Mahal Hotel (the second hotel built by the Indian Hotel Company Ltd. (“IHCL”) belonging to the Tata group after the iconic Taj Mahal Palace Hotel (“Taj Mahal Palace”) in Colaba, Mumbai, in 1903 and popularly known as the Taj Mansingh Hotel because of its strategic location at 1, Mansingh Road), the 5 star-deluxe hotel of 1978 vintage, characterised as the “Epicentre of Delhi”.

I used to meet Ratan sporadically in the hotel lobby mostly in the company of its various General Managers and close personal friends belonging to the golden days of the hotel viz. Ravi Dubey, Ronnie Lobo (both Ravi and Ronnie are sadly no more in this world!), and Patu Keshwani or even otherwise. Ratan used to be invariably accompanied by his old faithful, close confidante, trouble shooter and quintessential out and out Taj-Man Devendra Kumar Beri (“DK” to his friends!). Ratan used to mostly stay at a spartan guest house in the Tata Apartments at 23, Prithviraj Road, New Delhi. In those heady days, Uncle PV, who used to live at 9, Motilal Nehru Marg, often dropped by at the famed coffee shop Machan to drink endless cups of freshly brewed sugar free piping hot filter coffee over steamed idlis and vadas soaked in mild sambar. Ratan never missed the opportunity to wish him if he happened to be around in the hotel. He was an indefatigable admirer of Uncle PV! After Uncle PV became the Prime Minister on 21st June, 1991 consequent upon Rajiv Bhai’s tragic assassination on 21st May, 1991, and before he moved into Prime Minister House at 7, Race Course Road (renamed Lok Kalyan Marg), a special Suite was booked in the hotel for his family members through the good offices of Ratan, which was guarded round the clock by the Special

# THE SHAH OF THE CORPORATE UNIVERSE

Ratan Naval Tata redefined corporate leadership with vision, ethics, innovation and unparalleled philanthropy, writes **ANOOP BOSE**



Protection Group (“SPG”). Ratan personally saw to it that members of Uncle PV’s family were well cared for in the hotel. I had the glorious good fortune of staying with Uncle PV at his residence even prior to his becoming the President of the Indian National Congress and was, naturally, a regular visitor to Suite where I used to meet and interact with Uncle PV’s two sons Rajeshwar and Prabhakar under the watchful eyes of the SPG personnel. One of my close friends Prashant Tewari, who used to work very closely with Uncle PV and Hansraj Bhardwaj, (the versatile lawyer and later rose to become India’s most famous law minister), both were closely known to Uncle PV’s family, used to co-ordinate crucial governance and political issues during the period of most dramatic transformation of the country. Again, I used to have the opportunity to meet Ratan in the hotel! Ratan used to take a very special interest in the JRD Tata Memorial Lectures. On 19th September, 2008, Somnath Chatterjee, eminent Barrister and the then Speaker of the Lok Sabha and a close personal friend, delivered the 11th JRD Memorial Lecture on “Economic Development and Political Consensus Building” at the Mansingh Hall in the Taj Mansingh. I was a special invitee to the event. After Somnath’s lecture, I met Ratan and Somnath at the adjacent Aftab Mahtab, the regal wood and marble panelled venue, over dinner. My old friend Dr. Jamshed Jiji Irani (popularly known as “Doc I”), the honorific Managing Director of Tata Steel, was also there at Ratan’s table. The tall and handsome Sanjay “Pole” Singh, Principal Resident Executive and Adviser, Tata Sons, came over to the table unobtrusively and recounted how I had saved Doc I’s life by forewarning the Tata Management that some evil people had plotted to attack Doc I with crude bombs in the heart of Jamshedpur with a sinister motive. My last Taj Mansingh encounter with Ratan was just before the outbreak of the Covid epidemic in 2020. I was standing outside one of the hotel lifts when suddenly as if by magic Ratan emerged from the lift along with his old Harvard educated friend Prince Shah Karim al-Husseini, Aga Khan IV (known by his religious

“TO FAMOUS MEN ALL THE EARTH IS A SEPULCHRE: AND THEIR VIRTUES SHALL BE TESTIFIED NOT ONLY BY INSCRIPTION ON STONE AT HOME BUT IN ALL LANDS WHERESOEVER IN THE UNWRITTEN RECORD OF THE MIND, WHICH FAR BEYOND ANY MONUMENT WILL REMAIN WITH ALL MEN EVERLASTINGLY”

title “Maulana Hazar Imam”), the founder and chairman of the Aga Khan Development Network, and DK of course. I wished him and walked with him to his waiting car. He bid me goodbye with a wave of his hand before getting into his car! As a Special advisor to the Marathon group of companies, I used to travel every year to Bengaluru to participate in Aero India, the biennial air show and aviation exhibition held by the Ministry of Defence at the Yelahanka Air Force Station, Bengaluru, along with my illustrious Israeli friend Hezi Bezalel, the Chairman of the group, and other top Israeli officials. The 2007 Aero India was a very special event for me as Ratan, who was 69 years old at that time, valiantly reached out for the skies in a

spellbinding saga of high adventure on 8th February, 2007. Clad in a G-Suit, he co-piloted a Lockheed Martin F-16 Falcon multi-role fighter jet in a historic 35 minute sortie. Ratan held licences to fly both jets and helicopters! Upon landing after what Ratan described as an “exhilarating” flight, I heartily congratulated Ratan shortly after he was greeted by my old friend William “Bill” Sebastian Cohen, former US Defense Secretary, Royce Keplinger and other senior Lockheed Martin officials. On 9th February, 2007, a G-Suited Ratan once again took to the skies co-piloting a Boeing F/A-18 Super Hornet fighter jet. I met Ratan shortly after his second flight in the Boeing Pavilion to felicitate him with a small bouquet of pink roses in the august presence of my close friends Thomas “Tom” Reeve Pickering, the former US Ambassador to India and the former Under Secretary of State for Political Affairs in the Clinton Administration, Dinesh Keskar, the senior Vice President, Sales in Asia-Pacific and India, Anil Srikhande, India President, and other top officials of Boeing Company. During that visit, I also had the golden opportunity of watching a scintillating aerobic display by the Hindustan Aeronautical Industries Ltd. manufactured fly-by-wire Light Combat Multi-Role Tejas Aircraft in the distinguished company of Ratan, Arackaparambil Kurien Antony, Union Defence Minister, Indru and Bookanakere Siddalingappa Yedyurappa, Chief Minister, Karnataka, amongst other important dignitaries. Ratan noticed to his enormous delight that I was smartly attired in a royal blue English blazer, grey English flannel trousers, a hand crafted boater hat from the reputed hatters K.R.Snoxell & Sons, Luton, and dazzling gold rimmed Zeiss sun glasses! On 26th November, 2008, “a date which will live in infamy”, Mumbai, the financial capital of India, witnessed a brutal, dastardly terrorist attack orchestrated by the Pakistani sponsored group Lashkar-e-Taiba, when the Indian Home Secretary Madukar Gupta, by an ominous coincidence, was enjoying Pakistan’s hospitality in Murree, a mountain resort city close to Islamabad. Ten highly trained and heavily armed

terrorists infiltrated the city, having stealthily landed in inflatable speed boats at Macchimar Nagar, in Mumbai’s Cuffe Parade neighbourhood, and heinously targeted several meticulously planned locations, including the Taj Mahal Palace. The Indian Government’s response to the attack was “pusillanimous”, as aptly observed by the Hindustan Times on 26th November, 2023! The attack claimed 166 lives, including 33 at the Taj Mahal Palace, and did not spare even the General Manager of the hotel Karambir Singh Kang’s wife Niti and his two young teenage sons Uday and Samar. Gautam Shantilal Adani, the Indian billionaire businessman (who has recently been in the eye of a storm!), by a superb stroke of luck managed to save himself by hiding in the kitchen of the hotel! Defying all odds, it was Ratan who in a truly Churchillian manner valiantly rose to the occasion and provided the much needed leadership to an embattled nation facing an “ordeal of the most grievous kind”! In the face of the attack watched by a shell-shocked nation, Ratan, who was then 70, displayed superhuman courage, resolve and determination. He strode like a colossus and stood like a Rock of Gibraltar at the Colaba end of the Taj Mahal Palace for 3 days, as security forces fiercely battled the terrorists in the Taj Mahal Palace. Everyone became just those inches taller, every back just that much broader, as Ratan’s own was. This was undoubtedly Ratan’s finest hour when he embodied the will, spirit and grit of our people..indomitable, undaunted, relentless! Ratan was imbued with the extraordinary, nay God given, ability and gift to pick out and support the ideal leader both for the House of Tata as well as the nation...he was the Kingmaker extraordinaire! Ratan backed Modi to the hilt before the General Elections in 2014 and on 19th May, 2014 tweeted on X, “Mr. Modi’s landslide victory echoes the people’s mandate for strong leadership and clear policies for growth and prosperity for India.” On 19th December, 2020 at the ASSOCHAM Foundation Week, Ratan ecstatically heaped praise on Modi for his leadership during the time of the COVID-19 pandemic, “I think if we all stand together and follow what you have said, what you have done and what you have shown, we will have a situation where the world will look at us and say this Prime Minister said it could happen and he made it happen.” In January, 2017, Chandra’s “mentor, guide and friend” Ratan cherry-picked Chandra to lead Tata Sons as its Chairman, the first non-Tata family member to hold the coveted post! On his appointment as the Chairman of Tata Sons, Chandra said, “I am humbled and honoured to be chosen to lead a truly great institution that occupies a unique position in hearts of the people in India and the world. I am proud to have been part of the Tata family for over 30 years and assuming this position is a great privilege. I want to thank the Tata Sons board and Mr Ratan N Tata for their confidence in me to lead this trusted institution that has a rich heritage.” Addressing the annual gala annual event at the National Centre of Performing Arts on the birth anniversary of JRD Tata on 30th July, 2018, Ratan expressed gratification with regard to the direction in which group companies were headed under the leadership of Chandra and said that he was confident that “Tata Group is in safe hands.” Yes, only a true leader can identify other true leaders! Both Modi and Chandra have proved to be phenomenal leaders of the 21st Century and have earned international acclaim, respect, adoration and admiration. I have a myriad of friends who knew Ratan intimately and worked with him closely. I am highly emboldened to single out only 5 names viz. Pole, Tanmoy, Raian, Suprakash and Zubin Mehta, the Managing Director of Uniforms Unlimited, Mumbai, who holds a Masters Certification from the internationally reputed Savile Row Academy, London. All of them are unquestionably ad idem about Ratan : “He was a genuinely good, dedicated and large hearted soul filled with the milk of human kindness and our age is hardly fit to understand him.” We should remember the stellar quality of Ratan’s character as well as the remarkable range of his achievements. In his love of adventure and his imaginative powers, he was far removed from the modern industrialist-philanthropist. Yet everyone who came in contact with him paid tribute to the unimaginable power of his mind. He had an aptitude for business which raised him far above the ordinary levels of our generation. He had a firmness of spirit which was not often elated by success, seldom downcast by failure and never swayed by panic. He loved life and was perfectly at peace with himself and the world around him. He could be helplessly uproarious. He wanted everyone to be happy. He wanted to taste and try everything that life could offer. Power never corrupted him, nor did success make him conceited, arrogant or pompous. Beyond his reputation as a business magnate and animal lover, Ratan’s tenure as Chairman of the Tata Trusts has left an inerascable mark on India’s cultural kaleidoscope. The trusts have spearheaded numerous initiatives across healthcare, education, environment and disaster relief and their manifold contributions to art and culture stand out as particularly noteworthy. With no thought of the length of time he might be permitted on Planet Earth, Ratan was concerned solely with the quality of the service he could render to his nation and to humanity.

— The author is an internationally reputed senior lawyer practising in the Supreme Court of India and various High Courts and Tribunals in India



PHOTO: PANKAJ KUMAR



# THE SPIRIT OF MAHA KUMBH

The *Maha Kumbh Mela 2025* in Prayagraj is a unique gathering where spirituality, culture and commerce come together, attracting millions from all walks of life to witness this incredible event, writes **BISWAJEET BANERJEE**

The countdown to the *Maha Kumbh 2025* has begun, with Prayagraj transforming into a bustling hub of spirituality, culture, and economic activity. From 13 January to 26 February, the city will host the largest human congregation on earth, drawing an estimated 40 to 45 crore pilgrims. This iconic event, steeped in Hindu tradition and faith, is more than a ritual, it is a celebration of India’s cultural and spiritual essence. The Sangam, where the Ganga, Yamuna, and the mythical Saraswati converge, is at the heart of this grand spectacle. Pilgrims believe that a dip in these holy waters during the auspicious period cleanses them of sins and paves the way to salvation. “The Maha Kumbh Mela is not just a religious gathering but a transformative experience,” said Acharya Ramkishore Tiwari, a spiritual leader. “It is where faith meets divinity.” At the heart of this grand celebration lies the belief in spiritual purification. According to Hindu tradition, a dip in the holy confluence of the Ganga, Yamuna, and the mythical Saraswati during this auspicious period is believed to absolve sins and pave the path to salvation. The origins of the *Kumbh* are steeped in the Puranic tale of the Samudra Manthan, where drops of divine nectar (amrita) spilled at four locations, Prayagraj, Haridwar, Nashik, and Ujjain, sanctifying these sites forever.



### A CITY REBORN

The banks of the Ganga and Yamuna have transformed into a temporary city, sprawling across the Sangam area. Colourful tents of all sizes and hues have sprung up, creating an awe-inspiring sight. These tents house spiritual discourses, yoga sessions, cultural programmes, and temporary dwellings for millions of devotees. The air is filled with the aroma of traditional Indian delicacies, as numerous eateries and food stalls cater to the surging crowds. Stalls selling Rudraksha beads, saffron garments, holy books, and souvenirs stretch along the pathways, adding vibrancy to the bustling atmosphere. The iconic Naga Sadhus, covered in ash and wearing Rudraksha beads, take centre stage, drawing devotees and curious onlookers alike. Aghories, known for their intense spiritual practices, are seen meditating near the riverbanks, adding a mystical charm to the gathering. “We are not just preparing for an event; we are crafting an experience that celebrates India’s cultural heritage,” said Divya Prakash Singh, a senior official overseeing the arrangements. “From smart surveillance through 10,000 CCTV cameras to a dedicated mobile app for route and ritual updates, technology is playing a crucial role in ensuring safety and convenience.” “The energy here is contagious,” said Abhilash Narain, a resident of Prayagraj. “You do not have to be Hindu to feel the magic of this gathering.” Among the pilgrims is Rajni Devi, a 62-year-old widow from Rajasthan making her third trip to the Kumbh. “The Kumbh is my escape,” she said. “It’s where I find peace and the courage to face life’s challenges.” Similarly, Sunil Mishra, a young IT professional from Bengaluru, sees the



*Kumbh* as a chance to reconnect with his roots. “In the hustle of corporate life, you lose touch with who you are. The Kumbh gives me clarity and a sense of purpose,” he shared.

### ECONOMIC DIMENSIONS

Beyond its spiritual significance, the *Maha Kumbh Mela* is a colossal economic engine. The Uttar Pradesh government has allocated a staggering ₹5,600 crore to infrastructure and event management, with the total budget projected at ₹6,382 crore. The local economy thrives on this influx, benefiting small vendors, hoteliers, and service providers alike. “During the Kumbh, my daily earnings triple,” said Shyam Lal, a shopkeeper selling puja items near the ghats. Hotels across Prayagraj are reporting record bookings, with many fully reserved months in advance. “The demand is unprecedented,” said Priya Mehta, the manager of a mid-range hotel in the city. The ripple effect extends beyond Prayagraj. Nearby religious hubs like Varanasi, Ayodhya, and Mathura also see a surge in tourism,



creating thousands of new jobs. “The Maha Kumbh 2025 could generate economic activity worth over ₹3 lakh crore,” estimated Awanish Awasthi, advisor to Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath.

### CHALLENGES AND INNOVATIONS

Hosting an event of this magnitude comes with its share of challenges. Ensuring the availability of clean drinking water, medical aid, and sanitation facilities for millions of pilgrims requires meticulous planning. “The key is vigilance,” said Ramesh Chandra, a senior police officer stationed at the Mela. “We’re deploying over 50,000 security personnel and using AI-enabled systems to manage crowds and prevent untoward incidents.” “The Maha Kumbh is a test of our organisational capabilities,” said Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath. “We aim to set a global benchmark in event management while preserving the spiritual essence of the gathering.”

### A GLOBAL CELEBRATION

The *Maha Kumbh Mela* is not just a religious event; it is a global celebration of India’s living traditions. Documentary filmmaker Lisa Reynolds, covering the event for an international audience, described it as “a story of humanity in its purest form.” For first-time visitors, the scale of the event is overwhelming. “I’ve never seen anything like this,” said Hiroshi Tanaka, a journalist from Japan. “The blend of chaos and harmony is fascinating. It’s a reflection of India itself.” As the countdown begins, the anticipation surrounding *Maha Kumbh 2025* is palpable. For millions, it is a journey of faith and a reaffirmation of humanity’s enduring spirit. For Prayagraj, it is an opportunity to shine as a beacon of tradition, resilience, and progress. Acharya Ramkishore Tiwari sums it up: “Kumbh is about coming together as one family, transcending divisions and reaffirming our shared humanity.”



MAYFAIR SPRING VALLEY (GUWAHATI, ASSAM)

Located amidst the lush greenery of Guwahati, Mayfair Spring Valley offers a luxurious escape from the city's hustle and bustle. This premium resort is designed to provide guests with ultimate comfort and relaxation, featuring elegantly appointed rooms, a rejuvenating spa, a dedicated kids' play area and top-notch dining experiences. Surrounded by picturesque landscapes, the resort offers serene views of rolling hills and verdant gardens, making it an ideal retreat for nature enthusiasts and luxury seekers alike. Guests can also explore nearby attractions, such as the famous Kamakhya Temple and Brahmaputra Riverfront, ensuring a blend of tranquillity and adventure during their stay.



VIVANTA MEGHALAYA (SHILLONG, MEGHALAYA)

Located in the vibrant city of Shillong, Vivanta Meghalaya is known for its proximity to exciting outdoor activities and cultural events. The resort offers 87 elegantly designed rooms and 14 spacious suites, providing comfort and luxury. It serves as a perfect base for exploring the region's natural beauty and music festivals. Known as the 'Abode of Clouds,' Meghalaya captivates one and all with its misty hills, living root bridges, and cascading waterfalls amidst lush greenery.

By TEAM AGENDA

Blessed with nature's bounty, Northeast India is a safe haven for many travellers who wish to escape the overcrowded and over-polluted city life from time to time. With the winter season worsening the pollution's threat to healthy living, Northeast India is the best place to take refuge in to revitalise your health and take a step back to recentre within. Here are a few of the many scenic vacation spots that can do just that.

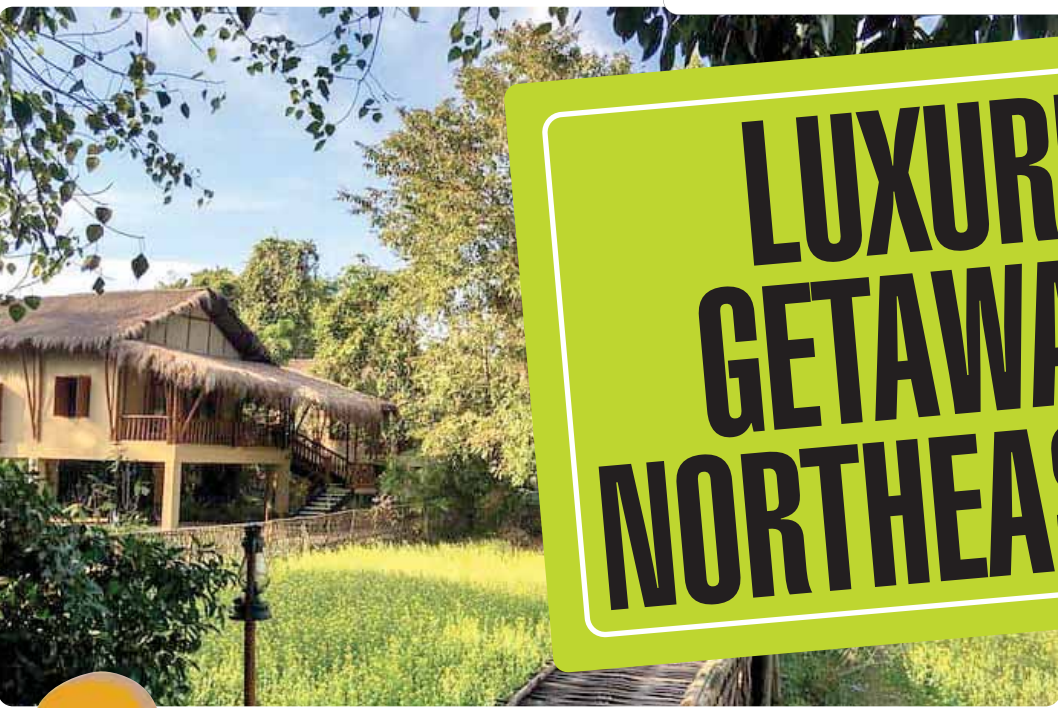


HOTEL CLASSIC GRANDE (IMPHAL, MANIPUR)

A part of the Radisson Individuals group, Hotel Classic Grande provides cosy accommodations in Imphal. With 171 rooms and suites featuring modern amenities, this hotel offers warm hospitality infused with local culture. Guests can enjoy exquisite dining options while taking in views of the Baruni Hill range. Manipur, known as the 'Jewel of India,' boasts of the world's only floating lake, 'Loktak Lake' and the serene Keibul Lamjao National Park, home to the endangered Sangai deer. It is also celebrated for its classical dance and handwoven textiles making it a true treasure of the Northeast.

TAKEAWAY

From the serene hills of Shillong and Gangtok to the wildlife-rich Kaziranga and Tawang, these destinations offer both luxury and tranquillity. The aforementioned resorts offer that entire one can dream of in a staycation that rejuvenates the mind and soul. Whether you're seeking a luxurious resort or a more rustic retreat, Northeast India provides the perfect haven for anyone looking to get away from the hustle and bustle of city life and reconnect with nature.



DIPHLU RIVER LODGE (KAZIRANGA, ASSAM)

Situated on the outskirts of Kaziranga National Park, Diphlu River Lodge offers an authentic experience with its rustic ethnic design. The lodge features comfortable accommodations and a range of activities such as bird watching, vehicle safaris, and village treks, making it an excellent choice for nature lovers. A land of rolling tea gardens, the mighty Brahmaputra, and rich wildlife, Assam is brimming with its natural beauty and vibrant cultural heritage.



SUMMIT NORLING RESORT AND SPA (GANGTOK, SIKKIM)

This resort is set in a picturesque location with beautiful gardens and a serene atmosphere. Summit Norling Resort & Spa offers 27 well-appointed rooms, including luxurious chalets with stunning views of the Himalayas. Guests can enjoy various recreational activities and unwind by the pond or around a campfire. A serene paradise, Sikkim is adorned with snow-capped peaks, alpine meadows, and vibrant monasteries, offering breathtaking views and spiritual tranquillity.

LUXURIOUS GETAWAYS IN NORTHEAST INDIA

The pressure of waiting for my admission results was becoming unbearable. My friend, Vishesh Shukla, suggested a short trip to Mathura and Vrindavan, known for their spiritual aura and rich heritage. Without much planning, we packed our bags and boarded the Lucknow-Agra Intercity Express in the evening. The train reached Agra late at night, and from there, we caught another train to Mathura. By the time we arrived in Mathura, it was around 1 a.m. A short auto ride costing ₹50 took us to Vrindavan, where we stayed at the Tourist Facilitation Centre. After a long journey, we finally got some rest, excited about the day ahead. In the morning, we checked into a modest hotel that charged ₹1,300 for 24 hours. After freshening up, our first stop was the famous Banke Bihari Temple. The temple's energy and devotion left us amazed. We continued our exploration with visits to the ISKCON Temple, Radha Raman Temple and Nidhivan, each offering a unique spiritual experience. Walking through the streets of Vrindavan, surrounded by the sound of bhajans and the sight of devotees, was truly calming. After a simple lunch at a local eatery, we returned to the hotel for a quick nap. The evening was reserved for the magnificent Prem Mandir, which looked breathtaking under the evening



SOULFUL TRAVEL DIARIES

Mathura's sacred temples, peaceful ghats and lively streets provided the perfect getaway from the stress of admission results, writes MANOJ SINGH NEGI



lights. The intricate architecture and devotional atmosphere made it a highlight of the trip. Dinner was at the newly opened Bikanerwala Restaurant on Chhatikara Road. The delicious food was the perfect end to the day. That night, I received the news I had been eagerly waiting for, I had been admitted to my dream institute, IIMC Dhenkanal! The happiness and relief were indescribable. I couldn't help but thank the positive energy of this spiritual trip for making this moment even more special. The next morning, we visited the Shri Krishna Jannabhoomi Temple, the birthplace of Lord Krishna. The early morning peace at the temple was soothing. We also stopped by the Dwarkadhish Temple, which is known for its vibrant morning rituals. The temples of Mathura left a deep impression on us with their history and devotion. After breakfast near Yamuna Ghat, we boarded a bus from Mathura Bus Stand to Tundla. We had a hearty lunch at Tundla before catching the Gomti Express, which took us back to Lucknow. This trip was much more than just a getaway. It gave me the clarity and positivity I needed, along with the joy of achieving my dream. The spiritual vibe of Mathura and Vrindavan, combined with their timeless charm, made it a journey I will never forget.



**YOUR WEEK AHEAD**

MADHU KOTIYA



**ARIES** March 21-April 19

This week brings multiple reasons for joy, with financial gains flowing from various channels. Your earnings are likely to be satisfying, though a busy schedule may cause some mental strain. Work-related travel is also on the horizon. Midweek may bring sudden, unforeseen shifts, urging you to release any unhealthy emotional ties to make space for meaningful growth and deeper fulfillment. As the week progresses, you may experience a strong urge for material possessions, which could cloud your judgment. This period isn't favorable for starting new ventures, as impulsive decisions could lead to setbacks. Maintaining a positive mindset may feel challenging, but staying grounded and focused will help you avoid falling into a cycle of negativity and keep you aligned with your true goals.

**Lucky number 6 | Lucky colour Amber**  
**Lucky day Saturday**



**LEO** July 23-Aug 22

You will feel a deep sense of blessings and divine favor surrounding you. This is a period of joy, renewal, and healing, where you take center stage in your personal and professional life. Inner harmony and well-being will align, enhancing your confidence and reputation. Newfound inspiration and courage will lead you to embrace positive changes, marking the conclusion of old chapters. There may be shifts in your perspectives or lifestyle choices, ushering in fresh beginnings. Whether it's a career opportunity, personal goal, or significant purchase, exciting developments await. The latter part of the week promises familial joy and celebrations. Partnerships, whether romantic, professional, or contractual, may also flourish. A wave of positivity will bring emotional and spiritual fulfillment, leaving you content and energized for the future ahead.

**Lucky number 8 | Lucky colour Golden**  
**Lucky day Tuesday**



**SAGITTARIUS** Nov 22-Dec 21

This week emphasizes inner resilience and emotional balance. It's about harnessing your inner power with grace and staying composed amidst challenges. Strength comes from self-control and the courage to see through illusions, enabling you to navigate situations with clarity. Guidance may come from a wise and insightful individual, likely someone you admire for their wisdom and intuition. Their perspective may inspire you to make significant life decisions. This period serves as a reminder to awaken spiritually—practice mindfulness, meditate, and reconnect with your higher purpose. Focus on grounding yourself through meaningful rituals. It's essential to move beyond fantasies and wishful thinking, as they can distract you from your true path. Embrace the present with focus and determination to make lasting progress.

**Lucky number 22 | Lucky colour Green**  
**Lucky day Wednesday**



**TAURUS** April 20-May 20

This week presents an excellent opportunity to channel your innate creativity into financial growth. You possess a remarkable ability to transform your aspirations into reality through focused efforts. Decisions made during this time are likely to bring favorable outcomes. Your communication skills are at their peak, allowing you to express your thoughts with clarity and make a lasting impression on others. Midweek may bring some delays and restrictions, but your resilience and unwavering determination will keep you moving toward success. A significant message or opportunity from afar may arrive, bringing new prospects. By the end of the week, you are likely to experience a sense of financial stability and emotional fulfillment. Trust in your ability to overcome challenges and embrace the positive outcomes headed your way.

**Lucky number 21 | Lucky colour Black**  
**Lucky day Wednesday**



**VIRGO** Aug 23-Sep 22

The week begins with firm decisions concerning both home and work matters. You exhibit resilience and face life's challenges with unwavering strength. Potential disagreements or ego clashes may arise, requiring patience and wisdom for resolution. It's a time to reconsider outdated perspectives and embrace necessary changes, especially regarding career, family, or relationships. You may experience emotional stress or health concerns, emphasizing the need for mental balance and spiritual reflection. A sense of well-being and financial improvements uplift your mood. You'll feel inspired to indulge in life's comforts and display generosity toward those in need. This period encourages finding harmony between ambition and compassion, fostering both personal success and inner fulfillment.

**Lucky number 13 | Lucky colour White**  
**Lucky day Sunday**



**CAPRICORN** Dec 22-Jan 19

The week ahead brings a whirlwind of activity across multiple aspects of life, requiring your focus and commitment. Domestic matters may take center stage initially, with important decisions shaping your personal environment. Romantic prospects may lead to significant developments for singles. Travel could feature mid-week, while professional ambitions drive you to work tirelessly, refining your expertise to meet your aspirations. Family news related to a new addition may arise, adding joy to the atmosphere. As the week concludes, the rewards of your dedication become evident, with promising financial gains enhancing your sense of stability. Job seekers may receive a lucrative offer that aligns with their goals. Overall, this period invites you to celebrate progress and embrace contentment as efforts bear fruit.

**Lucky number 17 | Lucky colour Pine**  
**Lucky day Friday**



**GEMINI** May 21-June 20

This week promises plenty of reasons for joy and fulfillment. A wave of optimism surrounds you, bringing a sense of ease and progress in your pursuits. Your natural charm and positive outlook uplift those around you, making you a source of inspiration. Midweek may present some emotional challenges, causing momentary unrest. However, this phase is fleeting, and soon you will feel the divine blessings restoring your inner peace and balance. Your hard work will yield visible results, and you'll be pleasantly surprised at how far you've come. The goals you've been working toward will show signs of accomplishment, bringing recognition and rewarding opportunities your way. There is also a potential for significant progress in expanding your horizons, possibly with meaningful connections that elevate your professional growth.

**Lucky number 4 | Lucky colour Beige**  
**Lucky day Monday**



**LIBRA** Sep 23-Oct 22

The week unfolds with a surge of motivation and creativity. You feel inspired and energized, ready to embrace new beginnings and meaningful pursuits. A fresh spark propels you toward personal and professional growth, allowing you to manage your commitments with ease and confidence. Midweek brings moments of joy and togetherness, as celebrations and achievements within the family create a harmonious atmosphere. Milestones such as career advancements, personal projects, or family accomplishments bring pride and excitement. The positive energy around you uplifts your spirit, making each moment more enjoyable. As the week concludes, your resilience and dedication stand out, serving as a source of inspiration for others. Your efforts pave the way for well-deserved success, reinforcing your belief in your ability to overcome challenges and achieve your goals.

**Lucky number 11 | Lucky colour Jade**  
**Lucky day Monday**



**AQUARIUS** Jan 20-Feb 18

This week will keep you occupied with various aspects of life, requiring your full focus and dedication. Domestic matters may take priority at the start, and significant life events could unfold for some, bringing important commitments. Travel plans may emerge midweek. Professionally, your determination to excel will drive you to work tirelessly toward your ambitions. There is also a possibility of a joyful addition to the family. By the week's end, your efforts will bear fruitful results, with financial gains bringing relief and security. Those seeking career opportunities may receive an offer that aligns with their expectations, presenting a promising future. Overall, the week concludes with a sense of achievement and contentment, offering moments of joy and celebration.

**Lucky number 13 | Lucky colour Pink**  
**Lucky day Tuesday**



**CANCER** June 21-July 22

Progress may seem gradual, but your perseverance will lead to significant accomplishments. By channeling your inner strength, you'll complete your tasks efficiently and gain recognition for your dedication. Your versatility will shine, so leverage your skills to the fullest. Your determination will inspire those around you, and your ability to communicate effectively will earn admiration and support from both peers and mentors. As the week concludes, a surge of creativity will illuminate your ideas, boosting your productivity. Your passion for life will be contagious, enhancing both your personal and professional experiences. Embrace this period as an opportunity to live fully, enjoy your journey, and create moments of bliss that uplift your spirit and those around you.

**Lucky number 10 | Lucky colour Lilac**  
**Lucky day Thursday**



**SCORPIO** Oct 23-Nov 21

You have been putting in immense effort in various areas, striving for progress, but the outcomes may feel delayed. Your dedication and determination are undeniable, though financial gains might appear slow this week. However, do not lose hope—better prospects are on the horizon as the days advance, bringing the potential for significant achievements. Guidance and encouragement from elders or mentors will prove invaluable as they genuinely wish to see you excel. Trust that your hard work will pay off at the right time. The key this week is to embrace patience and trust in your journey. Remember, a solid foundation leads to lasting success. You're closer to your breakthrough than you think, and perseverance will turn your aspirations into long-term accomplishments.

**Lucky number 19 | Lucky colour Opal**  
**Lucky day Friday**



**PISCES** Feb 19-March 20

This week promises financial growth and material comfort, bringing a sense of stability to your life. Alongside these gains, you may feel drawn towards spiritual practices such as meditation and mindful breathing, finding solace in moments of inner peace. You might also feel inclined to host or participate in religious ceremonies at home, seeking harmony and positivity. However, midweek could bring some emotional turbulence, particularly in your personal relationships. Misunderstandings with your partner could lead to feelings of disconnection. It's important to reflect on your desires and clarify your priorities to regain control. Guard against a pessimistic mindset, as negative thinking may cloud your perspective. Instead of dwelling on what's lacking, focus on what you've achieved and confront challenges with resilience and courage.

**Lucky number 9 | Lucky colour Aqua**  
**Lucky day Thursday**

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# The Science of Mindfulness

THE LIFE GUIDANCE



Seerat Kaur Marwaha

We are perpetually in pursuit of the next thrill of happiness. Perhaps it's a luxurious Bentley, an exclusive beach getaway, or that coveted Birkin bag. These indulgences certainly light up our lives for a moment. But then, like clockwork, the novelty wears off. The stresses of life take over, and we find ourselves once again in the relentless pursuit of the next object of happiness. In the 1970s, Richard Easterlin observed that an increase in income over time did not lead to a long-term increase in happiness. This paradox is often referred to as the Easterlin Paradox—remains a cornerstone in discussions about material wealth and its limited capacity to deliver sustained joy. While material comforts undoubtedly bring fleeting satisfaction, they fall short of providing the enduring happiness we so desperately seek. Moreover, your happiness level is genetically influenced. If your mother isn't a happy person, chances are you aren't either. A study by Lucas, Clark, et al. in 2003 found that major life events such as marriage, divorce, or widowhood brought temporary changes in happiness, but most people returned to their baseline levels within a few years. This gave rise to the Set Point Theory, which explains that individuals' happiness levels are remarkably stable over time. Within our brains, there's a division of duties: the 'Stress Brain,' tackling worries and tensions, and the 'Happy Brain,'

spreading joy and fostering connections. Genetically happier individuals show higher activity in the 'Happy Brain' and lower activity in the 'Stress Brain,' shaping their positive outlook on life. So, are those not genetically predisposed to higher happiness levels doomed to a negative state of mind? Not at all! Our brains have an amazing ability to reorganize themselves by forming new neural connections throughout our lives—a process called neuroplasticity. This dynamic ability of the brain means that our mental state is not set in stone, offering hope to those who wish to elevate their happiness levels. One proven way to increase activity in the happy brain and reduce activity in the stress brain, thus raising the happiness baseline, is consistent meditation (Fredrickson et al., 2008). Beyond altering neural activity, meditation helps to cultivate a deeper sense of awareness, allowing us to separate fleeting desires from what genuinely brings contentment. Our minds carry deep-seated traumas from childhood, parental influences, past relationships, and more. These emotional scars often go unnoticed or unaddressed, yet they dictate much of our behaviour. Rather than addressing these issues, we often suppress them and seek distraction in new pursuits. However, as Bessel van der Kolk explains in 'The Body Keeps the Score,' buried trauma doesn't disappear; it can lead to physical ailments, mental health challenges, addictions, relationship



difficulties, and self-esteem issues. Meditation acts as a tool for healing and unwinding old negative patterns and traumas. It provides a safe space to clear emotions of sadness, fear and stress held in the body for weeks, years or even since childhood. In doing so, it allows the mind to focus and work through these issues. Consider this: meditating for just 20 minutes every day for a year accumulates 7.3k minutes of dedicated self-care and introspection. Over the years, this consistent practice allows significant time for the mind to process and resolve deep-seated issues. This builds a more resilient, confident, and calm version of ourselves, better equipped to navigate life's inevitable challenges. Supporting this, research by Davidson et

al. (2003) found that an 8-week mindfulness meditation program significantly improved emotional regulation and immune function, demonstrating meditation's profound impact on both mental and physical health. The ripple effects of this practice can extend far beyond the individual, improving relationships, decision-making, and even workplace productivity. Meditation doesn't make you happy. Rather, it alleviates what blocks you from finding and appreciating happiness. This distinction is crucial. Happiness isn't something you attain—it's something you uncover once you remove the mental and emotional clutter. The key, however, lies in consistency. Just as you cannot achieve a sculpted physique by working out strenuously for four hours once a month, you cannot see significant results by meditating for two hours sporadically. A few minutes of daily practice, however, can profoundly impact your well-being. The benefits of mindfulness and meditation go beyond personal happiness. Communities practicing mindfulness often report lower crime rates and greater social cohesion. Families that meditate together strengthen their bonds, developing empathy and understanding for each other's perspectives. Imagine the collective impact if more people embraced mindfulness as a daily practice—it could transform societies, one individual at a time. Furthermore, meditation enhances our

ability to live in the present moment. In a world constantly pulling us in a hundred different directions—emails, deadlines, social obligations, and endless to-do lists—it is easy to lose sight of what truly matters. Mindfulness brings us back to the now, allowing us to savour the small joys we often overlook: the warmth of a morning sunbeam, the taste of a perfectly brewed cup of tea, or the laughter of a loved one. Another compelling aspect of meditation is its accessibility. Unlike other tools for self-improvement, meditation requires no special equipment, expensive memberships, or even a lot of time. It is universally available, adaptable to any lifestyle, and backed by centuries of practice across cultures. Whether through guided meditations, breathing exercises, or silent self-reflection, there is a form of meditation suitable for everyone. In conclusion, as Lao Tzu, an ancient Chinese philosopher, said, "To a mind that is still, the whole universe surrenders." Meditation may not provide the instant gratification of a material purchase or the thrill of a vacation, but it offers something far more valuable: a pathway to inner peace, resilience, and enduring happiness. By embracing mindfulness and making it a consistent part of our lives, we can transform not only our personal well-being but also contribute to a more compassionate and harmonious world. — She is a Life Coach and Founder of Soulful Wellness

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