

Cyclonic storm Fengal begins landfall: IMD



PHOTO: PTI

PTI ■ CHENNAI

Cyclonic storm Fengal has commenced making landfall close to Puducherry and it may approximately take four hours for it to cross the coast completely, an India Meteorological Department (IMD) official said here on Saturday. Citing data and observations, IMD-Regional Meteorological Centre, Additional Director General, S Balachandran told PTI that the process of the cyclone's landfall commenced at about 5.30 pm on November 30. On the area of landfall, he said it was close to 'Puducherry area' and that it may take approximately four hours for the completion of the landfall process and added that more related information would be made

available later. Puducherry experienced heavy rains on Saturday, prompting the union territory administration to send SMS alerts to around 12 lakh residents cautioning them to remain vigilant as cyclonic storm Fengal is expected to make landfall near here later in the day. Chief Minister N Rangasamy visited the rain-affected areas today to review the steps taken by the Disaster Management department, especially in accommodating those evacuated from low-lying areas into relief centres. The CM instructed officials to closely monitor the situation and ensure the safety of the residents. District Collector A Kulothungan briefed the chief minister about the distribution of food packets to

those staying in the shelter homes. Kulothungan told PTI that all necessary steps have been taken to ensure that people remained safe. "We have evacuated people from low lying areas and shelter homes are ready to accommodate them. Arrangements were also made to supply food packets," he said, adding that the National Disaster Relief Force from Arakonam had arrived to engage in relief and rehabilitation work. According to the official, cyclone Fengal was expected to cross the coast later in the day. Control rooms have been opened in the collectorate and also in the line departments. Toll free numbers 112, 1077 and also WhatsApp number 94889 81070 have been put in place to help people facing crisis to contact for help.

Cyclone Fengal is likely to cross between Karaikal and Mahabalipuram coasts close to Puducherry, official sources said. The government has advised people to stay indoors.

The entire stretch of beach road and also several tourist spots were closed to ensure that there was no movement of people near the sea shore. Schools and colleges remained closed. Daily wage earners, roadside vegetable vendors, and labourers were among those most affected by the heavy downpours caused by Cyclone Fengal, which is intensifying over the Bay of Bengal.

In response, under the Disaster Management Act 2005, all theatres were instructed to suspend evening and night shows to safeguard public safety and maintain law and order. Several shop owners in various areas shortened their business hours due to the heavy rains that began in the afternoon. Meanwhile, Chennai airport on Friday announced suspension of operations till 4 am on December 1 following heavy inundation of runways and the taxiway, due to the cyclone 'Fengal' triggered rains and the 'adverse weather condition,' with over 50 flights being cancelled and scores of passengers left in the lurch. Official sources here said the two runways and the taxiway were inundated and as many as 55 flights were cancelled and 19 others diverted, adding, the services include both domestic and international operations.

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MahaYuti swearing-in on Dec 5, but who is CM?

T N RAGHUNATHA ■ MUMBAI

Amid indications that the swearing-in ceremony of the Bharatiya Janata party-led MahaYuti government may take place on December 5, the ruling BJP and its allies, Eknath Shinde-led Shiv Sena and Ajit Pawar-headed Nationalist Congress Party (NCP), were on Saturday engaged in backroom negotiations over the power-sharing formula and distribution of portfolios. "We expect that the swearing-in ceremony of the new government will take place on December 5," BJP leader and former Speaker in the state Assembly Rahul Narwerkar said. However, informed sources in Raj Bhavan said that they had not received any communication from the Maharashtra government or the leaders of BJP-led MahaYuti as to when the swearing-in was being scheduled. Meanwhile, available indications within the Shiv Sena (ES) suggested that the care-take chief minister Eknath Shinde may return to the state capital late on Sunday night or on Monday. The earlier speculation was that the swearing-in ceremony would be held at Wankhede stadium. Now, the ruling alliance

leaders are indicating that the swearing-in may be held at Azad Maidan. Though there was no confirmation from the ruling BJP as to when it would hold its legislature party meeting to elect its leader who would take over as the chief minister of the state, a few BJP leaders indicated that the JP Nadda-led party may schedule the BJP Legislature Party (BJPLP) meeting on Monday. The front-runner for the Chief Minister's post is Devendra Fadnis. However, what has surprised many is that if Fadnis is the chief ministerial choice, why has there been such a delay in convening the BJPLP meeting. In the Maharashtra Assembly polls, results of which were declared on Saturday last (November 23), the BJP won 132 seats, while Shiv Sena and NCP (AP) bagged 57, and 41 seats, respectively. Strangely enough, it is not known yet as to what transpired at a joint meeting Union Home Minister Amit Shah had convened at his New Delhi residence to formalise details about the government formation, including the choice of the chief minister. Health and Family Welfare Minister and BJP President Jagat Prakash Nadda was also present at this meeting.

Outsiders barred from Sambhal till December 10



PTI

BISWAJEET BANERJEE ■ SAMBHAL

Amid rising communal tensions triggered by a survey of the Shahi Jama Masjid, the Sambhal district administration has imposed prohibitory measures, barring the entry of outsiders, including political leaders, activists, and social organisations, until December 10. The move comes in the wake of violent clashes on November 24 that left four people dead and several injured, including police personnel. District Magistrate Rajendra Pensiya, in a statement on Saturday, declared, "No outsider, social organisation, or public representative will be allowed to enter the district without prior permission from the competent authority." Officials say the decision is aimed at preventing further escalation of the volatile situation.

The restrictions coincided with a planned visit by a 15-member delegation of the Samajwadi Party (SP), led by Leader of Opposition in the Uttar Pradesh Assembly, Mata Prasad Pandey. The delegation was set to visit Sambhal to gather details about the violence but was forced to call off the trip after senior officials, including Home Secretary Sanjay Prasad and the District Magistrate, requested them to stay away. Pandey, addressing reporters in Lucknow, accused the government of attempting to suppress the truth. "The administration's ban is nothing but an effort to hide its own failures. Our visit would have exposed the lapses in handling the situation," he alleged.

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Winter in Kashmir: Security forces intensify anti-terrorist operations

MOHIT KANDHARI ■ JAMMU

Following a fresh spell of snowfall in the higher reaches of Kashmir valley including the areas along the line of control in North Kashmir, security forces are gearing up to intensify their anti-terrorist operations anticipating the movement of terrorists towards the plain areas. During heavy snowfall several high-altitude mountain passes and traditional infiltration routes in the region get blocked. The terrorists hiding inside the thickly forested areas of North and South Kashmir also relocate to safer hideouts to escape the adverse weather conditions. Anticipating the movement of terrorists in the coming days the security forces have further enhanced their vigil and also strengthened their intelligence network to neutralize them before they can execute their nefarious designs to target security forces in the region. At the same time, the security forces are facing the challenging task of extracting human intelligence due to a slight shift in the terrorist strategy. Sharing his assessment of the prevailing security scenario in the valley, Inspector General of BSF, Kashmir Frontier Ashok Yadav Saturday said terrorists have cut down on communications amongst themselves which is posing a



huge challenge to the security forces in tracking them down. Speaking to reporters on the sidelines of BSF's Raising Day celebrations at STC Humhama, Srinagar Ashok Yadav said, "Terrorists always try to strengthen their security protocol. They minimise communication which creates gaps in intelligence gathering. "But, all the agencies analyze whatever inputs they get to identify their hideouts and supporters to neutralise them". Asked whether the minimum communication among terrorists was posing a challenge to track them, the IG BSF said, "It is a huge challenge," but, he added, the security agencies will also implement new strategies to counter that. "The security and intelligence agencies are brainstorming to find ways to counter these new

challenges," he added. Yadav said there are continuous attempts of infiltration along the Line of Control (LoC) before the onset of the winter, but the security forces make their operational plans ahead to dominate the "vulnerable gaps". This year too, Indian forces are dominating and they endeavor to thwart any such attempts before the heavy snowfall, he said. Asked if there was information about the presence of terrorists at the launchpads across the LoC, the IG BSF said according to the intelligence inputs, there are people at the launchpads waiting to try to infiltrate "to vitiate the peaceful atmosphere here". "But the way we are alert on the LoC and conduct area domination, we are very confident that we will thwart such attempts," he asserted.

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Two associates of ISKCON leader arrested, claims organisation

PTI ■ DHAKA

Two associates of arrested former member of ISKCON Bangladesh Chinmoy Krishna Das have been arrested from the northeastern port city of Chattogram, a spokesperson of Kundalidham Monastery run by the Hindu leader said on Saturday. However, police have not confirmed the arrest. "Das' associates Adinath Prabhu and Ranganath Das were arrested as they were carrying some food for their jailed leader in the port city," Professor Kushal Barun Chakrabarty, spokesperson of the Kundalidham Monastery said. The two were arrested on Thursday. Hindu priest Das, a former member of the International Society for Krishna Consciousness (ISKCON), Bangladesh, was arrested from Dhaka's Hazrat Shahjalal International Airport on Monday. He was denied bail and sent to jail by the Chattogram's Sixth Metropolitan Magistrate court in a sedition case on Tuesday. Das heads the Kundalidham Ashram (Monastery) at Chattogram and is also a spokesperson for the Bangladesh Sammilita Sanatani Jagran Jote. His arrest and subsequent jail in a sedition case on Tuesday triggered clashes between his supporters and the security personnel that led to the killing of a lawyer. Following this week's anti-



Hindu incidents, including Das' arrest and attacks on Hindu temples and community members, India on Friday said the interim government in Bangladesh must live up to its responsibility of protecting all minorities as it expressed serious concern over the "surge" of extremist rhetoric and increasing incidents of violence against Hindus as well as attacks on temples. External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar told Parliament that India has taken serious note of incidents of violence against minorities in Bangladesh and that it is the primary responsibility of Dhaka to protect the life and liberty of all the citizens, including minorities. On the other hand, Bangladesh on Friday expressed deep concern over the violent protest at the Deputy High Commission in Kolkata and urged New Delhi to ensure the safety of all its diplomatic missions in India.

Would have campaigned if invited: Jyotiraditya Scindia on Vijaypur poll loss

GIRISH SHARMA ■ BHOPAL

Union Minister Jyotiraditya Scindia has indirectly pointed fingers at the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) for its defeat in the Vijaypur Assembly by-election. Speaking to the media in Gwalior on Friday night, Scindia suggested that his presence in the campaign trail may have influenced the results, stating, "I would have campaigned if I had been invited." Scindia's statement has raised eyebrows, given his name was prominently listed among the BJP's star campaigners for the by-election. Despite this, the Union Minister chose to remain absent from the campaign. Political observers suggest this deliberate distancing might indicate deeper tensions within the BJP ranks, particularly concerning Vijaypur's candidate, Ramniwas Rawat. Rawat, a former Congress MLA from Vijaypur, switched allegiance to the BJP in 2024, just before the Lok Sabha elections. His move to the BJP came after he reportedly declined to follow Scindia's defection from Congress in 2020. Subsequently, Rawat was rewarded with the Forest Minister's portfolio in the state cabinet, reportedly at his own request. However, his candidature in Vijaypur appears to have backfired, as local voters expressed dissatisfaction with his political maneuvering.



Union Minister Jyotiraditya Scindia, LoP in the Rajya Sabha Mallikarjun Kharge and LoP in the Lok Sabha Rahul Gandhi during 'Samvidhan Divas' function at Samvidhan Sadan

File photo: PTI

Congress spokesperson Dharmendra Sharma, told The Pioneer, "The voters were already annoyed with Rawat for joining the BJP. Even if Scindia had campaigned, it wouldn't have made much of a difference." Meanwhile, BJP insiders have dismissed Scindia's claims, accusing him of evading responsibility. Party sources allege that Scindia's campaign schedule was prepared well in advance but he failed to turn up. "His claim that he wasn't invited is baseless. The party had arranged for his participation, but he chose to stay away," said a senior BJP leader. Scindia's remarks are being viewed by many as an attempt to deflect criticism and save

face. However, the statement has exposed underlying fault lines within the BJP, with questions being raised about the coordination between party leadership and Scindia's faction. The Vijaypur by-poll loss has not only dented the BJP's confidence but also highlighted the challenges of managing leaders who defect from rival parties. For Scindia, this episode could signal a weakening influence within his new political home, especially as accusations of disloyalty swirl around him. For the Congress, the defeat may bolster its narrative that BJP's leadership is failing to win over disgruntled voters, particularly in constituencies with high-profile defectors.

Municipal Corporation of Delhi schools ready to screen happy toons

RAJESH KUMAR ■ NEW DELHI

Cinema can be a powerful tool for education and can serve as a valuable supplement to traditional teaching methods. In an effort to ignite creative faculties of young children, the Municipal Corporation of Delhi (MCD)'s education department has come up with an innovative idea to screen inspirational films for its school children and set positive goals in their life and move forward. This comes after the civic body started an initiative in which an oath, on moral issues, will be administered every day. For younger students of classes

one to three, motivational cartoon films will also be screened to suit their interests and comprehension levels. For class four and five, motivational and inspirational movies will be screened. The screening of movies will be followed by a brief discussion with students. "The movies identified include 'Chandu Champion', Srikant Bala's inspirational journey, 'Guthali Laddu', 'I am Kalam' and '12th Fail'. Besides this, other films can also be chosen according to the interest of the students which is inspirational and motivational," MCD officials said. In an order issued to all schools in

charge, the MCD's education department has asked to show motivational films to students class-wise using smart TVs or other audio-visual aids installed in their schools. The civic body has asked all teachers to help students understand the motivational message and moral values of the film so that students can imbibe that message and use it in their life journey. "Hosting movie screenings in schools can help to engage students who may be struggling to stay focused or motivated in traditional classroom settings. Movies have the ability to captivate students' attention and can



provide a welcome break from the monotony of lectures and readings," said officials. Earlier, to boost a sense of responsibility, commitment, and unity, the MCD started a new initiative in which every day an oath will be administered on moral issues. In this sequence, the 'Khelo India' oath is being administered on Monday, in which the children pledge to make sports a part of their lives and join sports events to create a healthy India, and boost the morale of players. On Tuesday, they will be administered an oath to dedicate themselves to maintain integrity,

unity and security of the nation under national unity. On Wednesday, they will take an oath to boycott single use plastic. On Thursday they will take an oath regarding cleanliness, and donate two hours of shramdaan every week. On Friday they take an oath to believe in the principle of One Earth, One Family and One Future. There are over 1,500 MCD schools in the state which cater to 8.76 lakh children. Of these, 342 schools run in double shifts. Of the total 1185 sites on which MCD runs its schools, 126 do not function out of pucca buildings, and around 200 need repairs.

Youth stabbed during altercation at hotel

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

A youth was allegedly stabbed during an altercation at a hotel in Gomti Nagar Extension on Friday night. The incident occurred when the youth, Apoorv Singh, had gone to meet his fiancée, who works at the hotel. He was allegedly attacked with a knife following a heated argument involving two men. According to reports, Apoorv's fiancée, a resident of Lodhi Bazaar in Khargapur, had asked one of the accused, identified as Akash Verma, to repay money he owed to the hotel. The conversation escalated into a quarrel. Apoorv, who was

present there at that time, intervened and objected to Akash's behaviour, urging him not to fight. This enraged Akash and his brother Ritesh Verma, who had accompanied him. The argument intensified, and the two accused moved toward the kitchen. Ritesh held Apoorv while Akash retrieved a knife from the kitchen and stabbed him in the stomach. Apoorv, bleeding profusely from the knife wounds, collapsed at the scene. He was rushed to a private hospital and was later discharged after receiving medical care. The police later arrested Akash Verma and Ritesh Verma, who owned up to their crime.

Meanwhile, two accused identified as Kamal Preet Singh and Ravindra Singh were arrested in Gosainganj on Saturday on the charges of smuggling illicit liquor. Police recovered 119

bottles (89.25 litres) of foreign liquor worth approximately Rs 90,000, hidden in a DCM loader. The accused had concealed the liquor inside multiple toolboxes built into the vehicle. During interrogation, the accused revealed that they smuggled liquor from Chandigarh, Haryana, and Punjab to Bihar, where alcohol is prohibited, and sold it at inflated prices. The accused had been allegedly engaged in this operation for a long time. On the night of the incident, the loader collided with a divider on the Purvanchal Expressway, injuring the accused. After receiving medical treatment, they attempted to flee but were apprehended by local police. Following the discovery of the hidden liquor and no relevant transport documentation, the accused were arrested and later sent to jail after legal proceedings.

Constables rescue man attempting to hang himself

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

Two constables from the Police Response Vehicle (PRV) saved a 40-year-old man attempting to hang himself at his home in Faizullahganj. Acting swiftly, they broke down the door and noosed the man down from the noose, preventing a tragic outcome. The man, identified as Sonu Gautam, a driver, reportedly returned home on Friday afternoon in an inebriated state. Following an argument, he allegedly assaulted his wife before locking himself in a room and attempting hang himself. Frightened by the scene unfolding before her through the window, Sonu's wife tried unsuccessfully to open the door. When Sonu began verbally abusing her, she immediately

called Dial 112 for help. Constables Akshay Bhati and Ajit Kumar Shukla quickly reached the scene. They forced their way into the locked room, pulled Sonu down, and administered first aid. Fortunately, the noose did not fully tighten and the constables' timely intervention ensured Sonu's survival. After receiving medical attention, the constables escorted Sonu back home and provided counselling to him and his family. The police also motivated him to abandon his substance abuse and focus on rebuilding his family life. Inspector Shivanand Mishra commended the constables for their prompt response, noting that their quick actions saved a life. A detailed report of the incident has been submitted to the authorities.

Customers duped of ₹12.7L by two delivery agents

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

Two delivery boys working for an e-commerce company in Lucknow have been accused of duping customers out of more than Rs 12.7 lakh. The delivery boys allegedly swapped iPhones with soap cakes and tiles and then returned the fraudulent packages. A case has been registered against the two employees, and police are currently investigating the matter. According to reports, the two delivery boys, employed by an e-commerce company, were involved in a scheme where they would take delivery of cancelled orders or returned products and replace the iPhones with soap bars or tiles. They would then seal the boxes

and return them to the company, causing significant financial losses. The fraud was uncovered when the company noticed discrepancies, leading to an internal investigation. The company's team leader, Shobhit Dixit, who works as an operations executive, filed a complaint. Dixit alleged that the accused, identified as Erar from Gandhi Nagar Telibagh and Momin from Sadar Cantonment, would manipulate the returned products by claiming defects, which allowed them to swap the iPhones with other items. They would often open the packages on their way back, remove the phones, and replace them with soap or tiles, sealing the boxes and depositing them back at the office. A complaint was filed at

the Chinhat police station. Inspector Bharat Pathak confirmed that raids were being conducted to apprehend the suspects. The investigation revealed that the two accused had stolen 13 iPhones, totalling a value of Rs 12.7 lakh. The company officials said that after conducting their internal probe, the full extent of the fraud was discovered, prompting them to report the matter to the police. This incident comes amid growing attention to crimes involving delivery boys, following the murder of a delivery boy in September over a mobile phone worth Rs 1.05 lakh. His body was found stuffed in a delivery bag and discarded in the Indira Canal, leading to further scrutiny of delivery-related crimes.



सूचना

मेरे भूखण्ड संख्या 20,एमओआईजीओल्लॉक आरओएन रतनलाल नगर कानपुर के प्रो होल्ड सेलडीड मूल दस्तावेज रास्ते में कहीं गिर गए हैं जिनका उपयोग अबैध होगा, सुप्रिया सिंह पत्नी श्री मनोज सिंह निग 74 E/24, दबौली, रतनलाल नगर कानपुर

AUCTION NOTICE

दिनांक 10-12-2024 प्रातः 9:30 बजे क्वार्टर मास्टर डिपार्टमेंट, कमान्ड अस्पताल (सेक्टर कमान्ड), लखनऊ में पब्लिक ग्रान्ट स्टोर्स के अनुषंगी/निष्प्रेषण घोषित सामग्रियों की नीलामी, सिक्कोरिटी रु 65,000/- नकद, जी. एस. टी. फंजीकरण, बैंकगारंट के साथ जमा होगी। आई. पी. सिंह एण्ड सन्स.

AUCTION NOTICE

दिनांक 12-12-2024 मध्याह्न 12:00 बजे मारनेन्दु नाट्य अकादमी, विकास खण्ड-1, गोमतीनगर, लखनऊ में लाईट एवं साऊन्ड स्टोर तथा अन्य स्टोर के निष्प्रेषण सामग्रियों की नीलामी, सिक्कोरिटी रु 10,000/- नकद, जी. एस. टी. फंजीकरण, बैंकगारंट के साथ जमा होगी। आई. पी. सिंह एण्ड सन्स.

NOTICE

My name is Pushpa Mishra W/o Shivanand Mishra and my DOB is 1 January 1954. By mistake, my DOB has been recorded as 1 July 1965 in the service documents of my son Sanjay Mishra, which is wrong. My DOB should be considered correct as 1 January 1954. Pushpa Mishra W/o Shivanand Mishra Vill. Russi, Post Parsadeapur, District Fatehpur 209402

NOTICE

My real name is Shivanand Mishra and my DOB is 1 January 1953. By mistake, Shivanand Mishra and DOB as 1 July 1965 has been recorded in my son's Sanjay Mishra service documents which is wrong. In future, I should be known and recognized only by the name of Shivanand Mishra. Shivanand Mishra Vill. Russi, Post Parsadeapur, District Fatehpur 209402

NOTICE

I Munni Devi M/o NK Praveen Kumar army no. 3012581X. 4 Rajput R/o Gondar (35) karnal haryana. in my son's army record my DOB entered 01.01.1974 which is incorrect my correct DOB is 01.01.79. vide affidavit dated 13.08.2024 before notary public. Lucknow.

NOTICE

THIS IS TO INFORM THAT MR. ASHOK KUMAR AGARWAL AND OTHERS WANTS TO AVOID LOAN FACILITY FROM BANK OF BARODA, SULTANPUR (U.P.) AGAINST MORTGAGE OF FLAT NO. A-2, GREEN HEIGHT APARTMENT, LAL BAHADUR SHASTRI MARG, MALL AVENUE, LUCKNOW. MR. ASHOK KUMAR AGARWAL TOLD TO BANK THAT ORIGINAL DEED DATED: 23.09.2009 DOCUMENT NO. 10670 HAS BEEN MISPLACED. IN THIS REGARD ANY OBJECTION TO PERSON/BANK/ETC MAY CONTACT TO BANK OR GIVEN BELOW MOBILE NUMBER. Mob:-840068502



I, Ram Vilas Shakya S/o Mihail Shakya R/o, Kila-Road Muhalla-Najafali Aliganj-Etah Aliganj, Uttar Pradesh-207247 changed my-minor Daughter's name Tanvi Shakya alias Akshita Shakya to Akshita Shakya aged-17-Years. PD(997)C

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

Two dozen workers from Moradabad were not paid their wages allegedly by the owner of a brick kiln in Mohanlalganj's Jabrauli village. After a social worker complained with authorities concerned, a team from the Labour department conducted a raid and rescued the workers on Friday. One worker alleged that he was held hostage at the kiln and reported the matter to the National Human Rights Commission and the National Scheduled Caste Commission through a social worker. Acting on the commission's

order, a joint team from the Labour department, district administration, and police freed the workers from the brick kiln and ensured they received their pending wages. The workers were then booked on trains and sent back to their homes. As per reports, 24 labourers from 10 families in Moradabad had been brought to the brick kiln in Jabrauli with the assurance of being paid Rs 600 for every 1,000 bricks they made. However, it is alleged that the kiln owner, his clerk, and the contractor failed to pay the workers their wages. Labourer Firoz complained about the matter to both the National Human Rights

Commission and the National Scheduled Caste and Tribes Commission, accusing the workers of being held hostage. The commission then instructed the district magistrate and police to take action. On Friday, a joint team, which included the naib tehsildar and Kankaha Chowki incharge, along with the Labour department officers, visited the brick kiln in Jabrauli. The workers explained their ordeal, and their wages were recovered. Naib Tehsildar Bhanu Prakash Tripathi confirmed that the workers were sent back to Moradabad after receiving their due wages of Rs 84,000 from the brick kiln's clerk.

They were also provided with 24 train tickets and food expenses. ACP Rajneesh Verma stated that the complaint regarding the unpaid wages was found to be true following a preliminary investigation. "All the workers have been sent home voluntarily after receiving their wages. Other legal action is being taken in the matter," he added. It further emerged that while the kiln owner had made the payment to the contractor who had supplied the workers, the contractor had not passed on the money to the labourers. The contractor is now being sought by the police for further investigation.

LU delegation invited to visit Tajikistan

Lucknow (PNS): The University of Lucknow has received an official invitation from the Embassy of the Republic of Tajikistan to India for a delegation visit to Tajikistan in January 2025. The visit aims to explore sustainable bilateral academic and cultural collaborations with Tajik higher education institutions. In a letter from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Tajikistan, the government has expressed its support for the academic collaboration proposal submitted by the University of Lucknow on September 26, 2024. The initiative seeks to strengthen ties between the educational institutions of both nations, promoting mutual growth and sustainability.

The Embassy has requested the university administration to submit the list of delegation members. Ambassador Lukmon Bobokalonzoda of Tajikistan expressed his gratitude to the University of Lucknow for its interest in collaboration and emphasised the mutual benefits of such cooperation. The visit is expected to enhance academic exchange programmes and lay the foundation for enduring ties between the two nations. Vice-Chancellor Prof Alok Kumar Rai stated that the University of Lucknow is eager to make this international collaboration a significant milestone in its journey toward academic excellence and cultural exchange.

Minister's bid to strengthen state's transport system

Lucknow (PNS): Minister of State for Transport (Independent Charge) Dayashankar Singh chaired a meeting with all divisional/regional managers and representatives from the Bus Association in Lucknow on Saturday. The aim was to strengthen and organise the state's transport system and increase the number of contracted buses within the Uttar Pradesh State Road Transport Corporation. The minister urged the association members to deploy as many buses as possible on a contractual basis to ensure the successful organisation of Maha Kumbh-2025. Association members from various districts highlighted the issues they faced with the UPSRTC's contracts. They pointed out the significant difference in taxes levied on private

buses compared to those on roadways buses. Additionally, they raised concerns over the frequent changes to rules and conditions without prior discussion, leading to the same tax being applied to both long-distance and short-distance buses. The members suggested that rules for operating unauthorised vehicles should be strictly enforced, with unnecessary fines avoided. They also proposed changes in the payment system and recommended dividing the prescribed operational distances into three categories (A, B, and C), with all contractual owners receiving routes from all three categories. The minister assured the Bus Association that their suggestions would be taken seriously, and a committee would be formed to review and submit recommendations.

Heavy metal contamination in Leh's groundwater linked to cancer cases

SHARMILA KRISHNA ■ LUCKNOW

A new study by the Birbal Sahni Institute of Palaeosciences (BSIP) has revealed concerning levels of heavy metal contamination in the groundwater of Leh district, which may explain the alarming rise in cancer cases in the region over the last decade. Published in Environmental Geochemistry and Health, this research is the first of its kind in Ladakh and sheds light on the health risks associated with the consumption of groundwater in this high-altitude region. Scientist Arif Ansari, who led the study, noted that Ladakh has witnessed a significant increase in cancer-related mortality over the past ten years, with deaths rising from 135 in 2013 to 171 in 2022—a 27% increase. "Unlike other parts of India, where lung and breast cancer are most common, Ladakh has a notably high prevalence of gastrointestinal cancer, accounting for 47% of all cancer cases in the region. Previous studies have linked this trend to factors like high UV exposure, extreme cold, rugged terrain, and the prevalence of Helicobacter pylori, a bacterium associated with poor hygiene. However, the exact cause of the surge in cancer cases has remained unclear. Our study suggests that heavy metal contamination in groundwater could be a critical, often overlooked factor

contributing to this health crisis," Ansari explained. The research team conducted a comprehensive assessment of groundwater from 26 different sites across the Leh, Nubra, and Indus-Puga regions, including towns and villages such as Leh, Thikshey, Ayu, Shey, Panamik, and Chumathang. Water samples were collected from hand pumps, bore wells, and government water supplies to analyse the presence of dissolved heavy metals such as chromium (Cr), arsenic (As), mercury (Hg), and uranium (U).

oment, better utilities, and changing vocational practices. Groundwater, available year-round, has become the main source for drinking, cooking, and irrigation. Unfortunately, this shift may be inadvertently exposing the population to harmful contaminants leached from the region's natural mineral deposits," Ansari added. He also pointed out that while heavy metal contamination in groundwater is a global issue, few studies have addressed the cumulative health impacts of multiple heavy metals. Ladakh's unique geological

This makes them more susceptible to both short-term and long-term health effects. Among adults, prolonged exposure to contaminated water is linked to an increased risk of gastrointestinal cancer, kidney disease, and neurological disorders. The study's findings have significant implications for public health and local policy. "Immediate measures are required to identify and mitigate heavy metal contamination in bore wells and other water sources. Public awareness campaigns should be launched to educate residents about the risks of consuming contaminated groundwater and to encourage the use of alternative water sources wherever possible," said Ansari. He emphasised the need for further research, particularly involving biological testing of heavy metal levels in the local population and among cancer patients. "We need to understand the full extent of exposure and its impact on human health. This research will help confirm the link between groundwater contamination and cancer and guide future interventions," he stated. Collaboration between government agencies, healthcare providers, and researchers will be essential in addressing this complex issue effectively. "This study is a reminder of the deep connection between environmental issues and public health," Ansari concluded.

BSIP STUDY

The results were troubling: between 46% and 96% of the groundwater samples had contamination levels exceeding safe limits, with a health hazard index (HI) greater than 1, indicating significant carcinogenic and non-carcinogenic health risks. The study found that 46% to 76% of the samples contained unsafe levels of chromium and arsenic, both of which are known carcinogens. Mercury and uranium were also detected at concerning levels, with potential links to kidney damage, neurological disorders, and other health issues. "Historically, Ladakh has relied on glacial meltwater and traditional water sources. However, in recent years, there has been a shift towards groundwater use, driven by increased demand

landscape, characterised by heavy mineral deposits and aquifer-rock interactions, increases the likelihood of such contamination. To further understand the broader impact, the research team conducted interviews with 59 residents across Leh district, aged 20 to 84 years. The survey collected data on water consumption patterns, including the intake rate, frequency, and quantity. The study assessed both adults (15-84 years) and children (2-14 years) separately to understand their respective exposure risks. The findings revealed that children are particularly vulnerable to the effects of contaminated water due to their higher water intake relative to body weight.

CITYBRIEFS

ACADEMIC SESSION



An academic session on 'Advancing Integrity Through Transparency and Governance through Collective Action' focused on the role of ethical leadership, good governance, and accountability in achieving Sustainable Development Goal 16 (SDG 16). The event, organised by the UN Global Compact Network India (UN GCNI) and the PHD Chamber of Commerce & Industry (PHDCCI), gathered leaders from academia, business, healthcare, NGOs, and media to discuss strategies for fostering peace, justice, and strong institutions. Keynote speakers included Special Secretary, UP, BN Ranjan, who emphasised systemic change and accountability, and Regional Commissioner, EPFO, Naveen Kumar, who advocated for collective action to advance ethical practices in both public and private sectors. Discussions also included academic contributions on the role of research and data-driven policies in enhancing transparency.

INNORAIL

The 6th InnoRail and International Conference 2024, which began at the RDSO campus in Lucknow November 28, concluded on Saturday. The event provided a platform for stakeholders across the rail-

way sector to network, showcase technological advancements, and expand the vendor base for Indian Railways. The event featured over 50 company stalls displaying innovative railway technologies. More than 100 visitors from various railways and industries attended, exploring new technological solutions. The event also featured discussions on software and sensor-based condition monitoring, predictive maintenance, and innovations in rolling stock. On the final day, Sanjay Kumar Pankaj, AM(PU), AM(ME), and Uday Borwanker visited the exhibition, interacting with industry representatives to explore collaboration opportunities. The event attracted a diverse crowd of entrepreneurs, vendors, students, and professionals, contributing to its success.

INT'L CONFERENCE

The second day of the 11th IEEE International Conference at Shri Ramswaroop Memorial College of Engineering and Management featured discussions on power grid optimisation, AI career counselling, and sustainable energy solutions. The conference, which brings together global researchers, academics, and industry experts, continues to foster innovation and collaboration. Parallel sessions showcased research papers, offering scholars an interactive platform to present ideas and engage in constructive feedback. Academics chaired the sessions, ensuring academic rigor. The vibrant campus atmosphere reflected the participants' enthusiasm for networking and collaboration, with SRMCEM's facilities enhancing the overall experience.



CUTTACK MUNICIPAL CORPORATION

C-1138

"e" PROCUREMENT NOTICE

Tender ID : 2024_ORULB_107699

Bid Reference No. MC(CMC)/CTC_Div-I_No18/2024-25

Tender Call Notice No. 9515 (PW) Date. 28.11.2024

Name of Works : Civil Works

No of Works : 07 Nos

Bid Value : Rs. 58.35 Lakh to Rs. 100.11 Lakhs

Period of Completion : Three Calendar Months to Eleven Calendar Months

Date and Time schedule :

Start	End	Opening
3.00 PM on dt. 02.12.2024	5.00 PM on dt.18.12.2024	11.00 A.M. on dt. 21.12.2024

Tender Details : can be seen from the procurement portal : www.tendersorissa.gov.in

OIPR-131338/11/0012/2425 Executive Engineer, City Div-I



बैंक ऑफ बड़ोदा

Bank of Baroda

Regional Office Kanpur Dehat Region : 118/330, 2nd Floor, Kaushalpur, Gumti No. 5, Kanpur -208012

Possession Notice

Branch : Station Road, Lalitpur

Whereas the undersigned being the Authorised Officer of Bank of Baroda under the Securitization and Reconstruction of Financial Assets and Enforcement of Security Interest Act, 2002 and in exercise of powers conferred under Section 13 (12) read with Rule 3 of the Security Interest (Enforcement) Rules, 2002 issued a demand notice calling upon the borrower & guarantor to repay the amount mentioned in the notice being with in 60 days from the date of receipt of the said notice. The borrower/guarantor having failed to repay the amount, notice is hereby given to the borrowers/guarantors and the public in general that the undersigned has taken possession of the property described herein below in exercise of powers conferred on him/her under section 13 (4) of the said Act read with rule 8 & 9 of the said rules.

The borrower/guarantor in particular and the public in general are hereby cautioned not to deal with the property and any dealings with the property will be subject to the first charge of Bank of Baroda for amount & interest thereon.

The borrower's attention is invited to provision of sub-section (8) of 13 of the act, in respect of time available to redeem the secured assets.

Name and Address of Borrower/Guarantor & Description of Mortgage Property and Out Standing Amount as per Demand Notice/Demand & Possession Notice Date

Borrower : Smt. Sapna Sengar W/o Shri Chali Raja, R/o House No. 153/1, Civil Lines, Bank Basti, Lalitpur.

Demand Notice Date : 18-09-2024 • Date of Constructive Possession: 25.11.2024

Property : Residential Plot Bearing Revenue Khata No. 01107, Revenue Survey No. 1576, Situated at Gram Panari, Pargana Lalitpur, Tehsil & Distt. Lalitpur in the name of Smt. Sapna Sengar W/o Shri Chali Raja, Area : 46.46 Sq. Mtr., Bounded : North : Plot of Sahu, South : Plot of Manish Patel Gadanpur, East : Plot of Meera Kushwaha, West : 6 Mtr. Wide Road.

Outstanding Amount as per Demand Notice : Rs. 26,07,499.55 + Intt. +Others Charges

Total Dues Amount as on Dated 22-11-2024 : Rs. 26,71,306.41 + Intt. +Others Charges

Date : 25-11-2024 Place : Lalitpur Authorised Officer


IDFC FIRST Bank Limited

(erstwhile Capital First Limited, amalgamated with IDFC Bank Limited and presently known as IDFC FIRST Bank Limited)

CIN : L65110TN2014PLC09792

Registered Office : - KRM Towers, 8th Floor, Harrington Road, Chetpet, Chennai- 600031.

Tel : +91 44 4564 4000 | Fax : +91 44 4564 4022



Notice under Section 13 (2) of the Securitization and Reconstruction of Financial Assets and Enforcement of Security Interest Act, 2002

The following borrowers and co-borrowers availed the below mentioned secured loans from IDFC FIRST Bank Limited (erstwhile Capital First Limited, amalgamated with IDFC Bank Limited and presently known as IDFC FIRST Bank Limited) The loans of the below-mentioned borrowers and co-borrowers have been secured by the mortgage of their respective properties. As they have failed to adhere to the terms and conditions of the respective loan agreements and had become irregular, their loan were classified as NPA as per the RBI guidelines. Amounts due by them to IDFC FIRST Bank Limited (erstwhile Capital First Limited, amalgamated with IDFC Bank Limited and presently known as IDFC FIRST Bank Limited) are mentioned as per respective notices issued more particularly described in the following table and further interest on the said amounts shall also be applicable and the same will be charged as per contractual rate with effect from their respective dates.

Sr No.	Loan Account No.	Type of Loan	Name of borrowers and co-borrowers	Section 13 (2) Notice Date	Outstanding amount as per Section 13 (2) Notice
1	10868691	Loan Against Property	1. JITENDRA KUMAR MISHRA 2. ANAMIKA MISHRA	11.09.2024	34,37,727.15/-

PROPERTY ADDRESS : ALL THAT PIECE AND PARCEL OF 1 KITA PLOT NO. 658, HOUSE NO. 117/K/658 (1-A) ADMEASURING345 SQ. YDS., I.E. 289 SQ. METER, SITUATED AT VINAYAKPUR (GEETA NAGAR), KANPUR NAGAR,KANPUR, UTTAR PRADESH, 208025, AND, BOUNDED AS: EAST: PLOT NO. 658, WEST: 6 FT. ROAD, NORTH: PLOT NO. 658 (1), SOUTH: 80 FT. ROAD

You are hereby called upon to pay the amounts to IDFC FIRST Bank Limited (erstwhile Capital First Limited, amalgamated with IDFC Bank Limited and presently known as IDFC FIRST Bank Limited) as per the details shown in the above table with contracted rate of interest thereupon from their respective dates and other costs, charges etc. within 60 days from the date of this publication, failing which the undersigned shall be constrained to initiate proceedings, under Section 13 (4) and section 14 of the SARFAESI Act, against the mortgaged properties mentioned hereinabove to realize the amount due to IDFC FIRST Bank Limited (erstwhile Capital First Limited, amalgamated with IDFC Bank Limited and presently known as IDFC FIRST Bank Limited). Further you are prohibited under Section 13 (13) of the said Act from transferring the said secured assets either by way of sale/lease or otherwise.

Date : 01.12.2024
Place : UTTAR PRADESH

IDFC FIRST Bank Limited (erstwhile Capital First Limited, amalgamated with IDFC Bank Limited and presently known as IDFC FIRST Bank Limited)

Yogi: UP becoming a hub for investment and employment

‘GIDA cornerstone of eastern UP’s industrial development’

PNS ■ GORAKHPUR

Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath stated that the crackdown on mafia, goondaism, and corruption in the state has paved the way for significant investment and increasing employment opportunities. He emphasised that UP is now the leading state in India for attracting investments, offering a secure environment for both investors and their capital. Chief Minister Yogi was speaking at the 35th Foundation Day celebration of the Gorakhpur Industrial Development Authority (GIDA). During the event, the chief minister inaugurated and laid the foundation stones for development projects worth Rs 209 crore in various sectors of GIDA. He also allocated land to five investors, marking the beginning of investment worth Rs 1,068 crore. Additionally, he distributed certificates to youth receiving skill development training at the NIELIT campus in GIDA and launched 20 new services integrated into the GIDA's Nivesh Mitra portal. The chief minister further revealed that Uttar Pradesh has attracted investment proposals worth Rs 40 lakh crore, which, when realised, will guarantee employment for 1.5 crore (15 million) youth in the state. He praised the state's robust infrastructure, ease of doing business, excellent connectiv-



CM Yogi Adityanath at the 35th Foundation Day celebration of the Gorakhpur Industrial Development Authority

ity, and land bank as key factors driving this growth. “Uttar Pradesh has created an environment where both security and opportunity are guaranteed for investors,” he said. The chief minister also shared plans for an industrial township spread across 36,000 acres in Jhansi-Bundelkhand, modeled after Noida. He highlighted how industries are now spreading beyond the typical hubs like Noida and Greater Noida, providing ample employment opportunities for local youth. Chief Minister Yogi described

GIDA as the cornerstone of eastern Uttar Pradesh's industrial development, with significant projects underway, including an industrial corridor on 800 acres and another on 5,500 acres in Dhuriyapar. “What once lacked investment is now attracting massive investment, thanks to the state's efforts to ensure robust infrastructure and favorable policies,” he added. Under the current government, investors receive incentives without barriers, interference, or favoritism, Chief Minister Yogi pointed out. “We

honour all investors, whether large or small,” he added. He also mentioned how previous governments failed to provide such incentives. The event also featured speeches by Industrial Development Minister Nand Gopal Gupta ‘Nandi’ and Chief Secretary Manoj Singh, who praised Chief Minister Yogi's leadership in driving industrial and economic prosperity in the state. GIDA, under his leadership, has emerged as one of the most preferred investment destinations in Uttar Pradesh, they stated.

Parliament must function in broader interest of people, says Mayawati

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

Bahujan Samaj Party president Mayawati, on Saturday, called on the Narendra Modi-led government at the Centre and the opposition to ensure that the Winter Session of Parliament focuses on the country's pressing problems rather than partisan clashes. The appeal of the former chief minister of Uttar Pradesh stemmed from controversies such as allegations against the Adani Group and the Sambhal mosque survey dispute, among others, which led to disruption in proceedings in both Houses of Parliament this week. “Both the government and opposition should ensure that the ongoing Winter Session of Parliament focuses on the country's pressing problems rather than partisan clashes,” Mayawati said, according to a BSP statement issued here. “Parliament must function in the broader interest of people. Both the ruling party and the opposition must demonstrate seriousness to address the challenges facing the nation,” she added. The BSP supremo on Saturday addressed a meeting of senior party leaders from Uttar Pradesh and Uttarakhand in Lucknow and stressed the need for Dalit and Ambedkarite communities to unite in their struggle for political empowerment.



She stressed that the fight for the “master key to power” must intensify to free society from the grip of “casteist and communal” forces, according to an official statement. Mayawati reviewed the party's organisational progress and directed the office-bearers to address shortcomings at the district and divisional levels. She hit out at the Bharatiya Janata Party, accusing it of diverting public attention from pressing issues like unemployment, poverty and inflation by using divisive tactics similar to the previous Congress governments. “The BJP's promises during the elections are forgotten once in power, leaving fundamental issues unresolved,” she said, according to the statement. Mayawati also slammed the Chief Minister

Yogi Adityanath-led government in Uttar Pradesh for prioritising religious agendas over constitutional responsibilities. She emphasised that economic struggles, unemployment and lack of education continue to affect millions in Uttar Pradesh and neighbouring Uttarakhand. “The government's failure to fulfil its responsibilities have pushed the public into deeper poverty and backwardness,” she said. Speaking on the legacy of Dr BR Ambedkar, Mayawati reiterated the BSP's commitment to his vision of a welfare-oriented and egalitarian society. She announced plans for programmes on December 6 to honour Dr Ambedkar's contributions. The BSP supporters will gather at prominent sites in Uttar Pradesh like the Ambedkar Memorial in Lucknow and the Dalit Prerna Sthal in Noida, while similar events will take place across other states. Mayawati also addressed the challenges posed by the opposition parties, urging the BSP workers to prepare for electoral battles with renewed vigour. Referring to the recent election results in Haryana, Jharkhand and Maharashtra, the BSP chief criticised the influence of money, muscle power and misuse of government machinery in undermining free and fair polls. She warned that “such practices erode public faith in democratic institutions”, and called for “stringent measures to restore trust”.

CM, Gadkari review progress of NH, road projects for Maha Kumbh 2025

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath reviewed the progress of national highways and road projects related to Prayagraj Maha Kumbh-2025 during a high-level meeting with Union Road Transport and Highways Minister Nitin Gadkari at his official residence on Saturday. During the meeting, officials were directed to ensure that all remaining works related to national highways, bypasses, the inner ring road, and bridge construction are completed by December 25 without fail. Emphasis was placed on maintaining the highest quality standards in construction and giving special attention to safety measures. Among the key ongoing projects is the widening of the 63.17 km Rae Bareilly to Prayagraj National Highway. Additionally, four-lane bypasses are being constructed at key locations along with the 7.6 km Prayagraj Inner Ring Road (Phase 1, Package-3). The ongoing developments also include the construction of a 10.98 km two-lane Pratapgarh bypass, a 5.10 km four-lane Jasra bypass, and a new six-lane bridge, along with its approach road, parallel to the existing bridge on the Ganga river at Phaphamau, located 24.2 km from Prayagraj. The chief minister stated that



UP Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath with Union Road Transport and Highways Minister Nitin Gadkari in Lucknow

among the four bypasses under construction on National Highway-30 (Rae Bareilly to Prayagraj section) at Jagatpur, Babuganj, Unchahar, and Alapur, two have been completed, and the remaining two must be finished on schedule. He emphasised that there should be no unnecessary delays in completing the ROB

under construction on the Unchahar bypass. Additionally, the new six-lane bridge and access road parallel to the existing bridge over the Ganga river at Phaphamau must be completed within the stipulated time frame. Moreover, the chief minister called for the provision of extra toilets near toll plazas along

Maha Kumbh routes along with the installation of drinking water facilities, medical assistance posts, and traffic assistance stations on the national highways. He stressed that all highways leading to Prayagraj should be free from potholes to ensure a smooth and pleasant experience for the pilgrims and tourists.

CPI (ML) stages protest against Sambhal violence

Lucknow (PNS): The Communist Party of India (Marxist-Leninist) on Saturday staged protests across the state against the violence in Sambhal, terming it to be state-sponsored. The protests were staged at the district headquarters and the party sent memorandums addressed to the President of India. The speakers said that the Sambhal violence was a conspiracy by the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh-Bharatiya Janata Party combine and the Yogi Adityanath government was responsible for the violence. In Lucknow, the CPI (ML) workers marched from Parivartan Chowk to the district magistrate's office with flags, banners and placards. When stopped by the police, they held a meeting on the road and submitted a memorandum addressed to the President of India. Protests were also held in other districts including Mirzapur, Gorakhpur, Lakhimpur Kheri, Pilibhit, Azamgarh, Ayodhya, Mau, Ballia, Ghazipur, Jalaun, Kanpur Nagar, Varanasi, Sonbhadra, Rae Bareilly, Sitapur, Chandauli, Bhadohi, Mathura, Gonda and Prayagraj. CPI (ML) state secretary Sudhakar Yadav led the protest at the Mirzapur collectorate. The party has demanded justice for the deceased. It said the Yogi Adityanath government responsible for the violence should be punished and murder case should be registered against the police officers. The CPI (ML) said there should be strict compliance with the Places of Worship Act, 1991 and fake cases registered against Muslims should be withdrawn, and those arrested should be released. The party said strict action should be taken against Vishnu Shankar Jain and the instigators who raised inflammatory slogans, and Sambhal district magistrate, district police chief and divisional commissioner should be brought under the ambit of investigation.

Waqf Board stakes claim over college land, mosque

PTI ■ VARANASI

The Uttar Pradesh Sunni Central Waqf Board has claimed that a mosque on a college campus here and the land in its vicinity are Waqf properties, a charge rejected by the college administration. A notice was sent to the Udai Pratap College in 2018, claiming that the mosque on its campus and the college land were donated to the Waqf Board by the nawab of Tonk and therefore, the college campus is Waqf property, principal DK Singh said. “The notice came from Varanasi resident Wasim Ahmed Khan. The then secretary of the college had responded to the notice, saying the mosque was built illegally and the property of the college belonged to a trust and it could neither be bought nor sold,” he added. Singh said the Waqf Board tried to build a mosque in 2022 but police stopped it after the college administration complained. The principal alleged that the mosque is stealing electricity from the college and using it illegally. Deputy Commissioner of Police (DCP), Varana zone, CK Meena, said the dispute dates back to 2022, when the mosque's construction was stopped on the college administration's complaint. Manaur Rahman, a regular visitor to the mosque, said the Waqf Board has staked claim over the mosque and a few acres of land in front of the structure. “This mosque was the property of the nawab of Tonk. The college had given us the electricity connection following

DCP), VARUNA ZONE, CK MEENA, SAID THE DISPUTE DATES BACK TO 2022, WHEN THE MOSQUE'S CONSTRUCTION WAS STOPPED ON THE COLLEGE ADMINISTRATION'S COMPLAINT

a mutual agreement between the college and the mosque administration. The college administration cut off the power connection a few days ago,” he said. “We have the documents related to electricity (supply) before this. There is no dispute here but a dispute is being created unnecessarily. We have been offering namaz here for a long time,” Rahman added. The Udai Pratap Autonomous College was conceptualised and created by Rajarshi Udai Pratap Singh Judeo to promote education to enrich the society with the value system of this region. Judeo founded the Hewett Kshatriya High School in Varanasi in 1909 and it was raised to the level of an intermediate college in 1921 and rechristened as Udai Pratap Intermediate College. The institution was further elevated to the level of a degree college in 1949, when it commenced undergraduate classes for Arts and Commerce. Recently, Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath addressed the 115th foundation day programme of the college.

All police stations in Kannauj to go fully digital by Dec-end

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

In a significant step towards Advancing Prime Minister Narendra Modi's Digital India Mission, the Uttar Pradesh government is accelerating digital transformation across Uttar Pradesh. By the end of December, all police stations in Kannauj will transition to a paperless e-office system, making it the first district in the state to achieve this milestone. This shift to a digital platform will streamline administrative functions and mark the end of the paper-based process at police stations. Superintendent of Police Amit Kumar Anand highlighted that the state government is consistently advancing the Digital India Mission, driving significant strides toward the technical enhancement and modernisation of the Uttar Pradesh Police. “As part of this initiative, Kannauj Police have set a target to become fully digital by the end of 2024. The transition to a 100 per cent e-office system will eliminate the need for bulky files, with all administrative tasks being conducted digitally,” he said. With this step, Kannauj will become the first district in Uttar Pradesh to have all its police stations and offices fully operational on the e-office platform,

he added. Recently, the Kannauj district police chief launched this digital transformation initiative at a ceremony at the police office, where laptops were distributed to all station-in-charges, jurisdictional officers, and gazetted officers to support the transition to a technology-driven system. SP Amit Kumar Anand also stated that police personnel are undergoing training to ensure the effective implementation of the e-office system. “The training, held at the District Training Centre, focuses on providing technical skills related to the e-office platform. Developed by the National Informatics Center (NIC), the e-office system is based on the Central Secretariat Manual (CSMeOP),” he said. He added that the district's digital infrastructure has been strengthened to successfully implement the e-office system, and all police stations and offices are being provided with the necessary technical equipment. The e-office system aims to bring transparency and efficiency to administration by digitising files and data management. This system will accelerate the resolution of pending complaints, speed up reporting processes and ensure timely delivery of justice to the public.

Kabaddi contest kicks off in Gkp today

Gorakhpur (PNS): The sixth edition of All India Prize Money Men's Kabaddi Competition will be held in Gorakhpur from December 1 to 4, in memory of the Late Mahant Avaidyanath. This prestigious event, organised by the Uttar Pradesh Sports Department, will feature 12 top teams from across the country. The winning team will be awarded a cash prize of Rs 2 lakh, while the runner-up will receive Rs 1 lakh, along with a certificate and trophy. Additionally, two other teams will each be awarded Rs 50,000. Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath will attend the closing ceremony on December 4 to honour the champions. The competition will take place at the regional stadium in Gorakhpur, and is scheduled to be inaugurated on December 1 by the state's Sports and Youth Welfare Minister Girish Chand Yadav. The 2024 edition will feature renowned teams from across the country, including representatives from Rajasthan, Andhra Pradesh, Haryana, Army Western Command (Delhi), Punjab, Chandigarh, Uttar Pradesh, Bharat Petroleum Mumbai, SSB (New Delhi), Northeastern Railway Gorakhpur, Army Red (New Delhi) and Army Green (New Delhi). Uttar Pradesh Sports Director Dr RP Singh said the competition would feature several international players,

Govt boosts mango production, export

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

Uttar Pradesh, the leading mango-producing state in India, is achieving significant progress. The state now accounts for nearly 25% of India's total mango production, yielding around 2.5 million tonnes annually. With a per-hectare yield of approximately 17.13 tonnes, the state aims to increase this to 20 tonnes per hectare through advanced horticultural techniques. Key initiatives include orchard renovation, canopy management, and intensive horticulture. The government has focused on managing older mango orchards, which are common in Uttar Pradesh, to improve productivity and fruit quality. This step addresses a major challenge faced by farmers and is expected to yield better results in the coming years. The government is working with central and state scientists to educate farmers on modern agricultural practices. This collaboration aims to boost both the quantity and quality of mangoes. In addition to production improvements, the Yogi Adityanath government has strengthened the mango supply chain by establishing pack-houses in Saharanpur, Amroha, Lucknow, and Varanasi, which ensure better post-harvest han-

dling and packaging. Exporting Uttar Pradesh mangoes is a key goal of the government. The export of Malihabad's Dusehri mango to the US, for the first time in 160 years, marked a significant milestone. The mango, which typically costs Rs 60-100 per kilogram in India, sold for Rs 900 per kilogram in the US. This demonstrates the potential for Uttar Pradesh mangoes in international markets. To further boost exports, the state government is setting up a radiation treatment plant near Jewar International Airport to meet international standards. Currently, North India lacks such facilities, forcing exporters to send their mangoes to Mumbai or Bengaluru, causing delays and additional costs. This new plant will streamline exports and reduce logistical issues, benefiting local farmers. In terms of infrastructure, Uttar Pradesh has invested in expressways like the Purvanchal and Bundelkhand Expressways, which ensure faster transportation of mangoes to export centres. The upcoming Ganga Expressway will further enhance connectivity, aiding the transport of agricultural produce. The government has also focused on breeding high-quality mango varieties tailored to international markets.

Over 150 bikes gutted at Varanasi Cantt railway station

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

Over 150 two-wheelers were destroyed in a fire that broke out at a parking stand in Varanasi's Cantt railway station, officials said on Saturday. There were no reports of any casualties. The incident took place on Friday night when the fire erupted near the platform one parking stand, according to railway officials. Upon receiving information about the incident, teams from the Railway Protection Force (RPF) and Government Railway Police (GRP) along with the fire department rushed to the spot to douse the flames, they said. The blaze was brought under control but over 150 vehicles were reduced to ashes, they added. Additional Divisional Railway Manager Lalji Chaudhary expressed regret over the incident. He said that the parking stand was set up for railway employees and because of the fire there has been a lot of damage. There has been no loss of life of any kind in the fire, Chaudhary said, adding that a committee has been formed to investigate the matter.

Muslim side says plea against Shamsi Shahi mosque in Budaun non-maintainable

Budaun (PTI): In yet another controversy over religious structures, the management committee of the Shamsi Shahi mosque on Saturday told a court here that a petition from a Hindu outfit which claimed that it was the site of an ancient Neelkanth Mahadev mandir was not maintainable. The Masjid Intezamia Committee of Shamsi Shahi mosque and Waqf Board completed their arguments before the fast track court which will now hear on December 5 the matter which first came up in 2022. The development comes close on the heels of the violence in the neighbouring Sambhal district where five people were killed and several people, including police personnel, were injured on November 24 during the violent protest against a court ordered survey of a mosque which the petitioners claimed was built after destroying an old temple. In the Budaun case, the then convener of Akhil Bharat Hindu Mahasabha, Mukesh Patel, had filed the petition seeking permission to worship there claiming that it was a temple. The Shamsi Shahi Masjid, which is built on an elevated area called Sotha Mohalla, is considered to be the highest structure in Budaun town. The mosque is also believed to be the third oldest existing and seventh largest mosque in the

country, with a capacity of housing 23,500 people. The defendants, advocates Anwar Alam and Asrar Ahmed, representing the mosque committee of Shamsi Shahi mosque and the Waqf Board respectively, completed the arguments on Saturday. They argued the case falls under Order VII Rule 11 of CPC which provides for rejection of plaint. Clause (d) of the provision specifies “where the suit appears from the statement in the plaint to be barred by any law”. Anwar Alam said after hearing the mosque side, Civil Judge (Senior Division) Amit Kumar Singh has fixed the date of December 3 for the next hearing. Shamsi Shahi Masjid Intezamia Committee's advocate Asrar Ahmed said the mosque is about 850 years old and there is no temple there. He said the Hindu Mahasabha has no right to file a petition in this matter. There is no justification for allowing worship in the mosque, he said. Earlier, the report of the Department of Archaeology was presented in the court and arguments on behalf of the government were completed. The petitioner's advocate Vivek Render said he has argued for permission to worship in the temple and claimed that he has presented ‘solid evidence’ in the court.

Complete Kajjakpura ROB soon: Pathak

PNS ■ VARANASI

Deputy Chief Minister Brajesh Pathak made a field inspection of the construction projects underway in Varanasi, including the Kajjakpura Rail Over Bridge (ROB), and directed the engineers of Public Works Department and UP Bridge Corporation to complete the works on a war footing. During his one-day visit to Varanasi on Saturday, Pathak directed the officers concerned to complete the remaining construction work of the 1355.51-metre-long rail over bridge being built at Kajjakpura at a cost of Rs 144.52 crore. He said that now there should be no delay in its construction. "When the construction projects are completed on time, people start getting their benefits," he said. The construction of the ROB was started in September 2019 at railway crossing number 23A at Kajjakpura. The construction work was to be completed in June 2022. However, there was delay in completing the work due to lack of coordination between departments as buildings, sewer lines, drinking water pipelines and electric poles came in the way. According to the engineers, the work has been almost completed by solving the problems that came in the way of construction and the remaining



Deputy CM Brajesh Pathak and BJP UP chief Bhupendra Chaudhary being welcomed at Varanasi airport on Saturday

work will be completed soon. They said that the work would be completed by December-end. The deputy chief minister also inspected the widening and strengthening of Parao-Ramnagar road at Tengra turn to four lanes at a cost of Rs 231.59 crore and gave necessary instructions to the PWD executive engineer. The deputy chief minister was informed that 77 per cent of the work has been completed, but the work of the railway underpass has not started yet. Pathak directed the engineers to ensure that the work was started

immediately by coordinating with the railway officials. The railway underpass was scheduled to be completed by January 24 next year, but now it would be completed by December-end. During the inspection, District Magistrate S Rajalingam gave necessary information to the deputy chief minister. Earlier, Pathak inspected the composite school located at Machhodari. During the inspection, apart from MLA Saurabh Srivastava, Chief Development Officer Himanshu Nagpal, other officials

were also present. Earlier, when Bharatiya Janata Party state president Bhupendra Chaudhary and Deputy Chief Minister Brajesh Pathak arrived in the city, the BJP workers welcomed them at Lal Bahadur Shastri International Airport. They were led by party's regional chief Dilip Patel. UP minister Dayashankar Mishra 'Dayalu', MLC and party district president Hansraj Vishwakarma, MLA Saurabh Srivastava, Zila Panchayat Chairperson Poonam Maurya, Suresh Singh, Naveen Kapoor, Jagdish Tripathi, Gaurav Rathi,

Shailendra Kishore Pandey, Ashok Rai, Shailesh Pandey and many other workers were present. During an informal chat with journalists, Brajesh Pathak condemned the statement of Samajwadi Party chief Akhilesh Yadav regarding the violent incident in Sambhal and said that his tweets exposed the real face of SP. He also said that Akhilesh Yadav should take responsibility for the Sambhal incident, because instead of taking action against the criminals, his party was giving various statements to hide their acts.

Teenager killed in road mishap

PNS ■ PRAYAGRAJ

A teenager was killed when the motorcycle he was riding was struck by a dumper near the Chheoki railway crossing in the Naini police station area on Saturday. Following the collision, the 18-year-old rider got trapped under the dumper and was dragged for about 100 metres. His head was severely mutilated in the process. Another youth riding with him was seriously injured. The police reached the spot and sent the body for a post-mortem examination. The deceased was identified as Ansh Nishad, son of Gyandhar Nishad and nephew of Muralidhar Nishad, former head of Mawaiya in the Industrial police station area. Ansh had gone to the market on his motorcycle to buy goods for his uncle's daughter's wedding procession, which was scheduled for the same day. His friend Bachcha, son of Kallu, was riding with him. The two were struck by the dumper near the Chheoki railway crossing. After the collision, Ansh got stuck in the dumper and was dragged for a long distance. SHO, Naini Industrial Area police station, Ghanshyam Singh confirmed the death of the teenager and stated that the other rider sustained serious injuries. In a separate incident, an elderly man was killed after being crushed by a government crane

in the Uncha Mandi area of Prayagraj on Saturday morning. A crowd gathered at the scene immediately after the accident. The crane driver fled the scene following the incident. The deceased was identified as Narottam Gupta, a resident of Uncha Mandi in Bahadurganj. Narottam had previously worked in the Public Works Department (PWD) but had to leave his job due to illness. He had also lost his eyesight. He was the youngest of three brothers. On Saturday, he had gone to Loknath market for some work. As he was returning, the first wheel of the crane, which was working on repairing streetlights, ran over him allegedly due to the driver's mistake. Narottam died on the spot. As a crowd gathered, the crane driver fled the scene. The police arrived and sent the body for autopsy besides informing the family of the incident.

GANG INVOLVED IN BIKE THEFT BUSTED; 4 HELD Meja police, in collaboration with the SOG team, claimed to have busted a gang involved in bike theft in Meja late on Friday night. Four accused, including the alleged gang leader, were arrested, and 21 stolen bikes were recovered. The police have launched a search for other gang members involved in the thefts. Meja SHO Rajesh Upadhyay

and SOG in-charge Naveen Singh reported that during routine patrolling near Naveen Mandi Samiti, Meja Road, on Friday night, three youths were apprehended under suspicious circumstances with three bikes in their possession. Upon interrogation, the suspects identified themselves as Vivek Kumar Pal and Nitin Patel, both residents of Payagpur, Manda police station area, and Aftab, a resident of Surwa Dalapur (Manda). The arrested men revealed they sold stolen bikes at throw-away prices. Acting on their information, the police then cordoned off Bashara Hill, where they arrested Om Prakash Dubey, a resident of Ulda, Manda. From a secluded spot on Bashara Hill, the police recovered 18 stolen bikes. All four arrested individuals are residents of the Manda police station area. According to the police, Vivek Kumar Pal, a resident of Payagpur, is the gang leader. He has multiple cases of bike theft registered against him in various police stations and has previously been incarcerated. During questioning, Pal revealed that the gang used master keys to unlock bikes parked in front of shops or at crossroads. They would then go to the market to get new locks installed. The gang predominantly targeted Hero Honda Splendor bikes.

BFTS marks milestone with completion of pilot training courses

Prayagraj (PNS): The Basic Flying Training School (BFTS), a premier flying training establishment of the Indian Air Force (IAF) located at Bamrauli Air Force Station, Prayagraj, celebrated a significant milestone with the successful completion of the 214 ICG Stage-II, 214 APC (H), and ICG Stage-I courses on Saturday. Established on October 9, 1987, BFTS has been a beacon of excellence in imparting ab-initio training to pilots, preparing them for the challenges of modern military aviation. At the valedictory function on Saturday, Air Commodore Sagar Singh Rawat, Air Officer Commanding, 23 Wing Air Force, was the Reviewing Officer. He was received by Wing Commander Gagan Sikri, Commanding Officer of BFTS. The Reviewing Officer commended the graduating officers for their commitment and perseverance, noting that completing such a demanding course

was a testament to the high standards of the Indian Armed Forces and the trainees' relentless efforts. He expressed confidence that the graduates would continue to uphold the legacy of excellence as they begin their professional journeys. The ceremony included the presentation of certificates to the graduating officers and trophies to those who excelled during the course. Capt SK Singh was awarded first place in flying, while Lt Manas Shukla received the trophy for first in ground subjects and overall order of merit for Stage I. Assistant Commandant Sonmale Suraj was recognised as the best in ground subjects, while Assistant Commandant Abhineet Gupta earned first place in flying and overall order of merit for Stage II. The five-month training programme has equipped this new cohort of pilots with advanced knowledge and operational capabilities, essential for both combat and humanitarian missions.

UP leading producer of horticultural crops: Singh

PNS ■ VARANASI

Dinesh Pratap Singh, Uttar Pradesh's Minister of State (Independent Charge) for Horticulture, Agricultural Export, Marketing, Foreign Trade, emphasised that the state is the leading producer of horticultural crops in India, with its diverse climate allowing the cultivation of a variety of crops throughout the year. He made these remarks on the concluding day of the three-day 13th National Seed Congress (NSC-2024) held at the joint campus of the International Rice Research Institute (IRRI) South Asia Regional Centre (ISARC) and the National Seed Research and Training Centre on Saturday. Singh highlighted the importance of the programme, stating, "The discussions and recommendations made at this NSC will serve as a guide to strengthen the seed ecosystem of Uttar Pradesh and make the state a hub for high-quality seed production." He further explained that the state's diverse agro-climatic conditions, large agricultural areas, and dedicated

farmers offer a unique opportunity to improve productivity through better-quality seeds, including hybrid seeds, biofortified crops, and vegetable seeds. The minister expressed his enthusiasm for the discussions held on developing seed parks, promoting public-private partnerships, and empowering farmers as seed entrepreneurs. He assured that the state government is committed to implementing the outcomes of these discussions. IRRI Director General Dr Yvonne Pinto praised the global significance of the NSC, noting, "This event has reaffirmed the importance of fostering partnerships, promoting innovation, and strengthening regional cooperation. Addressing challenges like climate change, malnutrition, and food security requires collective efforts, and events like this lay the foundation for transformative solutions." She added that IRRI is committed to working with its partners in India to advance seed technologies and empower farmers. Economic Advisor to the Chief



UP Minister Dinesh Pratap Singh at closing day event of NSC-2024 in Varanasi on Saturday

Minister of Uttar Pradesh, Dr KV Raju, highlighted the potential for UP to become a global leader in seed production. He emphasised the need for strong distribution networks, public-private partnerships, and the empowerment of farmers, noting that with policies like Beej Bandhu Yojana and the SAATHI Portal, Uttar Pradesh can ensure quality and traceability in the seed ecosystem.

ships, and the empowerment of farmers, noting that with policies like Beej Bandhu Yojana and the SAATHI Portal, Uttar Pradesh can ensure quality and traceability in the seed ecosystem.

Chancellor of Rani Lakshmi Bai Central Agricultural University Dr Panjab Singh spoke about the critical role of seeds in agriculture, saying, "Seeds are the foundation of agriculture, and strengthening our seed system

is essential to ensure food security and sustainable development." During the closing ceremony, individuals and organisations were recognised for their outstanding contributions to the seed sector. In his vote of thanks, Dr Sudhanshu Singh, Director of ISARC, noted, "This event has set a benchmark of innovation and collaboration. The concrete strategies discussed here will help us build a stable and inclusive seed ecosystem that will ensure food security and sustainable development." The NSC saw significant discussions, knowledge sharing, and collaborative efforts to empower India's seed sector. It provided a platform for farmers, industry experts, researchers, students, and policymakers to explore the challenges and opportunities facing the agriculture sector and strategise on how to build a stable and inclusive seed ecosystem. The NSC, held under the theme 'Innovations for a Sustainable Seed Ecosystem', attracted over 700 participants from India and abroad, underscoring the event's importance.

BSF women rafting team cleans up Namo Ghat, leaves for Patna

Varanasi (PNS): Under the aegis of Border Security Force and National Mission for Clean Ganga (NMCG), BSF's women cadet rafting expedition left for Patna on Saturday after making Namo Ghat clean. To strengthen the revival of the Ganga river and women's empowerment, the 2,525-kilometre-long Ganga Yatra from Gangotri to Gangasagar is progressing by making people living on the banks of the Ganga in five states aware of the need to make the river pollution-free and keep the ghats clean. Before leaving for Patna from Namo Ghat, BSF IG KS Vanyal addressed the rafting team and others. During the event, swachhata brand ambassador of the nagar nigam and coordinator of Namami Gange (Kashi region) Rajesh Shukla, on behalf of the District Ganga Committee and Forest Department, awakened the spirit of cleanliness by administering



a pledge. Many waste items lying on the banks of Ganga from Namo Ghat to below Rajghat bridge were cleaned by the BSF personnel, Namami Gange activists, Varanasi Nagar Nigam workers, CRPF personnel, Srijan Samajik Sanstha workers, students of Mukularanyam English School and National Cadet Corps cadets. They collected the garbage

and put it in dustbins. The 53-day rafting journey of BSF women cadets, which started from Gangotri, will cover a distance of 2,525 km and conclude at Gangasagar in West Bengal. The main aim of the expedition is to raise awareness about Ganga river's revival and women empowerment. Priya Meena is leading the rafting expedition.

'Sports and Athletic Meet' organised

PNS ■ VARANASI

The annual 'Sports and Athletic Meet' of Holy Trinity School was held with enthusiasm. Principal DA Luke and Academic Supervisor CB Luke welcomed the chief guest, Col Ramneik Goswami, CO 2 UP Artillery, NCC. The event began with the ceremonial march past of the four houses, led by School Sports Captain Akshat Kushwaha, followed by Vice-Captain Aradhya Kesarwani, School Captain Raghav Makhija, and Vice-Captain Mysha Afzal. The chief guest took the ceremonial salute from the four house colours, officially declaring the athletic meet open. In his speech, Col Goswami emphasised the value of sports and teamwork in overcoming life's challenges. "Life is a marathon, not a sprint," he remarked, stressing the importance of consistency in one's endeavours. The junior field display, featuring a variety of drills, captivated the parents, showcasing the dedication of the teachers. CB Luke praised their hard work and thanked the parents for their support. She also commended the young athletes for their remarkable skills. Saint Andrew's House won the 'Athletic House Trophy 2024-2025' with 509 points, followed by Saint Patrick's House with 451 points and Saint Peter's House in third place with 326 points. The event concluded with a vote of thanks from Headmistress RS Mandal, who expressed gratitude to the principal, academic supervisor, teachers, and parents.

Power employees protest against privatisation move

PNS ■ VARANASI

On the call of Vidyut Sangharsh Samiti, UP, meetings were held at different places across the state on Saturday in protest against the privatisation move. At a meeting held at Bhikharipur here, the speakers said that the decision to privatise electricity distribution companies was not in the wider public interest. They said power discom privatisation move would not only make electricity expensive for the public, but would also be a big blow to the poor, farmers or other people whose children dream of getting a job in the electricity department after completing ITI and Polytechnic certificate courses and B.Tech. They requested the public representatives to write a letter to

the prime minister and the chief minister and urge them to withdraw the decision to privatise discoms in public interest, telling them about the disadvantages of privatisation. The power employees warned that if any unilateral action on privatisation was taken, they would be forced to launch an agitation in a democratic way. The management itself has accepted that privatisation of discoms of 42 districts, will lead to demotion and lay off of employees, they added. The Sangharsh Samiti office-bearers said that till the time of dissolution of the Uttar Pradesh State Electricity Board (UPSEB) in the year 2000, there was a loss of only Rs 77 crore in 41 years, which had now reached Rs 1.1 lakh crore in 24 years. According to them, the loss figures released by the Uttar

Pradesh Power Corporation Limited (UPPCL) management were misleading and were a bundle of lies. "In the presentation made by the UPPCL management, the arrears have been stated to be Rs 11,5825 crore, which includes Rs 24,947 crore of Dakshinanchal Vidyut Vitran Nigam Limited (DVVNL) and Rs 40,962 crore of Purvanchal Vidyut Vitran Nigam Limited (PuVvNL)," they said, questioning that if this revenue was recovered, the power corporation would be in profit of Rs 5825 crore, then why the privatisation conspiracy by spreading the lie of losses. They alleged that thousands of contractual employees receiving very low wages had come to the brink of starvation due to being fired and oppressive actions were also being taken against the regular employees.

PNS ■ VARANASI

Railway Board Member (Traction and Rolling Stock) Braj Mohan Agarwal visited Banaras Locomotive Works (BLW) here on Saturday. He was accompanied by Executive Director (Electrical Engineering, Rolling Stock) Avinash Kumar Kushwah. During his visit, Agarwal conducted an in-depth inspection of the Loco Frame Shop, Truck Machine Shop, Loco Assembly Shop, Loco Test Shop and New Block Shop. During the inspection, Agarwal reviewed the locomotive production process, production capacity, ongoing projects and technical advancements at BLW. Following the workshop

Railway Board member visits BLW

visit, a progress review meeting was held in BLW's Hall of Fame, where General Manager Naresh Pal Singh welcomed Agarwal with a sapling and a locomotive model. Principal Chief Electrical Engineer SK Srivastava gave a detailed powerpoint presentation highlighting BLW's achievements since its inception and its future plans. Agarwal appreciated BLW's production capacity, cleanliness, environmental initiatives and material management. He emphasised eliminating locomotive production errors, utilising advanced technology to maintain top-notch quality and



Railway Board Member BM Agarwal inspecting workshop at BLW in Varanasi on Saturday

enhancing supply chain management. The Railway Board member suggested ensuring the avail-

ability of spare parts and technical expertise for zonal railways apart from implementing an online monitoring dash-

board; conducting joint inspections and feedback collection; and upgrading the driver's cab for better functionality. The meeting was conducted by Chief Design Engineer (Projects) Anurag Kumar Gupta. It was also attended by Principal Chief Mechanical Engineer Subroto Nath, Principal Chief Materials Manager Rajneesh Gupta, Principal Financial Advisor Neeraj Verma, Principal Chief Engineer Vinod Kumar Shukla, Principal Chief Security Commissioner Nurul Hoda, Principal Chief Personnel Officer Janardan Singh, Chief Vigilance Officer Ankur Chandra, Deputy General Manager Anuj Katiyar and others.

150 bicycles distributed among girls

Varanasi (PNS): Under the chairmanship of District Magistrate S Rajalingam, 150 bicycles were distributed by the State Bank of India (SBI) administrative office near the district court premises here on Saturday under its Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) scheme. Fifty bicycles were distributed among the girls of Kasturba Gandhi Girls' Hostel at Chhapra, 50 at Kasturba Gandhi Girls' Hostel at Arzailine, 25 at Kasturba Gandhi Girls' Hostel at Samath, Chirgaon and 25 at Kasturba Gandhi Girls' Hostel at Devpur, Sewapuri.



On this occasion, Chief Development Officer Himanshu Nagpal, SBI Deputy General Manager Sanjeev

Kumar, Basic Shiksha Adhikari Arvind Pathak and other officers and employees of the SBI were present.

ECI invites Congress to discuss Maharashtra poll result concerns

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■
NEW DELHI

The Election Commission of India (ECI) on Saturday asserted that all poll procedures it followed in Maharashtra were transparent and assured that it would review all legitimate concerns flagged by the Congress, which alleged serious inconsistencies. In its interim response to the party, the poll authority invited a Congress delegation on December 3 to discuss concerns expressed by it.

The commission reiterated that the process was transparent with the involvement of candidates or their agents at every stage. It also assured of a review of the Congress' legitimate concerns and a written response after hearing the party's delegation in person.

The Congress on Friday raised with the ECI "serious and grave inconsistencies," which it said were being revealed in the data relating to the polling and counting processes for the recently concluded Maharashtra Assembly polls and sought an in-person hearing to present relevant evidence.

The poll-body asserted that a transparent electoral roll updation process was undertaken with the involvement of all political parties. Responding to the issue regarding the voter turnout data, the ECI asserted



Maharashtra Cong chief Nana Patole wrote to the ECI seeking details and evidence of voter turnout. PTI

that there was no discrepancy in it and the data was available with all candidates polling station-wise and is verifiable. The gap in the 5 pm polling data and the final voter turnout was due to procedural priorities, as presiding officers perform multiple statutory duties near the close of polling before updating the voter turnout data.

As an additional disclosure measure, an ECI press note at around 11:45 pm was introduced during the 2024 Lok Sabha election and followed subsequently during all Assembly polls thereafter, the poll body told the Congress.

The ECI said that total votes polled at each polling booth was given by the presiding officer, before leaving the polling station, to the authorised agents of candidates (Form 17 C Part I) at the end of polling on 20th November, the day of polling in Maharashtra and Jharkhand. This cannot be changed. This number aggregates to final voter turnout which all political parties and candidates can verify. For the conduct of elections, ECI takes employees on election duty from various departments of state government. The presiding officer near the completion of polling

at the polling station performs multiple statutory responsibilities like filling up of various statutory forms, record keeping of activities, sealing of the machines, etc. before winding up the polling at the polling station. "The Commission will convey its detailed reply to the issues raised in your letter at the earliest possible, but after suitably hearing from you further in-person, for which you have conveyed a request. Accordingly, INC delegation is welcome to the Commission at 5 PM on 3'd December 2024," the poll body said.

Mehbooba urges LG to rethink Vaishno Devi ropeway project

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■
NEW DELHI

Asserting that religious places should not be converted into tourism hotspots, PDP supremo Mehbooba Mufti on Saturday requested Jammu and Kashmir Lt Governor (LG) Manoj Sinha to reconsider constructing a ropeway on the trek leading to the Vaishno Devi shrine in Reasi district. The former chief minister also demanded immediate withdrawal of an FIR against anti-ropeway protesters over the recent violence in Katra town, the base camp for pilgrims visiting the revered shrine atop Trikuta hills.

"The livelihood of shopkeepers, labourers and others are linked to the pilgrimage and they are bound to face a lot of problems (after construction of the ropeway). The government should think that it is a religious place and be treated like one instead of converting it into a tourism spot," Mehbooba told reporters after meeting the protesters in Katra.

The People's Democratic Party (PDP) supremo said there were several places with tourism potential in Jammu and Kashmir.

"This is a place of reverence where a devotee comes with a



pure heart to seek blessings of the Mata. Construction of the ropeway will not only bypass three important locations enroute to the shrine but also snatch the livelihood of thousands of locals," Mehbooba said. Jammu and Kashmir is already grappling with the country's highest unemployment rate as government jobs are nowhere and private investment is not coming, she claimed. "Privatisation requires electricity. Though Jammu and Kashmir produces electricity, it is given free of cost to some states and we have nothing for ourselves. People who earn their livelihood by means of labour work with the blessings of the Mata will lose the oppor-

tunity after the ropeway's construction," she said. Mehbooba said the Baridar community, which managed the shrine's affairs before formation of the Shri Mata Vaishno Devi Shrine Board, were not happy with their ouster and were continuously protesting.

"The lieutenant governor (shrine board chairperson) should reconsider the decision and take the livelihood of the locals into account before starting work on the ropeway, which can be shifted somewhere else," she said.

The PDP leader also demanded the withdrawal of an FIR registered against the anti-ropeway protesters last week following a clash between them and law enforcing agencies. "The lieutenant governor has been there for the last five years and he should tell how many jobs were created and given to youngsters... When you snatch livelihood opportunities from people, protests are bound to happen. We are living in a democracy and it is the right of the people to protest," he said. Meanwhile, the Congress' Jammu and Kashmir president Tariq Hameed Karra visited Katra and met Shri Mata Vaishno Devi Sangharsh Samiti president and party leader Bhupinder Singh Jamwal.

CPI (ML) in Jharkhand not to seek ministerial berth in Soren cabinet

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■
RANCHI

The CPI (ML)-Liberation general secretary Dipankar Bhattacharya on Saturday said that they would not seek ministerial berth in the newly elected Hemant Soren government in Jharkhand. He said they would extend full support to the Soren government in its every right step and fulfil the guarantees given to the people during the election campaign.

"CPI (ML) L will not put any pressure for ministerial berth in the cabinet. We just have two legislators. So, we do not think we are ready for such responsibility. When we will have eight to ten legislators, we will take the responsibility," Bhattacharya told media persons here.

CPI (ML) L contested four seats as part of the INDIA bloc in the recently concluded Jharkhand assembly elections and managed to win two seats. Bhattacharya said, "We will extend our full support to the government for its every right step and fulfil the guarantees. Government is one front, while the struggle is another front. CPI (ML) L will continue to fight against wrong ideology, lies, hatred and corporate loot. We will be working to unite the society."

On the offer for ministerial berth, Bhattacharya said that there was no such offer in his knowledge. Chief Minister Hemant Soren



assumed office after taking oath as the 14th Chief Minister of Jharkhand in a grand ceremony here on Thursday. The CM, after the first cabinet meeting on Thursday, told the reporters that expansion of his cabinet would be done short-

ly. The JMM-led alliance last week stormed to power in Jharkhand for the second time in a row, securing 56 seats in the 81-member assembly, while the BJP-led NDA managed 24 seats.

Karan Singh urges Yunus to prevent carnage

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■
NEW DELHI

Veteran Congress leader Karan Singh on Saturday condemned the recent attacks on Hindu temples and community leaders in Bangladesh and urged the country's interim government headed by Nobel laureate Muhammad Yunus to take immediate steps to prevent the "carnage" as well as reassure the Hindu community of their security. "I urge the Nobel laureate Prof Muhammad Yunus, who heads the new (interim) government of Bangladesh, to take immediate steps to prevent this carnage and to reassure the large and widespread Hindu community that their lives, property and religious places shall be fully secure," Singh said.

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■
KOZHIKODE

Congress MP Priyanka Gandhi Vadra, on a two-day visit to Kerala after her maiden electoral win from the Wayanad hill constituency, on Saturday said the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) did not play by any rules or follow democratic norms in its political attacks.

Comparing the BJP's behaviour with the landslides that hit Wayanad in July, Priyanka contended that just like the natural disaster, the saffron party's conduct knows no rules, offers no explanations and follows no democratic norms that are normally adhered to in political fights.

"The political challenges we face (from the BJP) today are like landslides. There are no rules. There are no explanations."

"The behaviour of the ruling party (at the Centre), the BJP, knows no democratic norms, not even those we normally adhere to in a political fight," she said while speaking at a

joint public meeting, with her brother and Leader of Opposition in the Lok Sabha Rahul Gandhi, at Mukkam here.

She further said that institutions were being destroyed, leading to the wavering of the people's basic faith in the electoral process and "the institutions that held our country together".

Later, at a reception given to her in Karulai in Nilambur assembly constituency in Malappuram district, Priyanka reiterated -- "we are fighting against the BJP that has no rules, no respect for democracy and the Constitution".

"They have a negative and destructive agenda," she added. She claimed that the Parliament had not functioned for a week as the BJP was afraid to discuss certain issues on which the Congress-led opposition wanted to hold discussions in the Lok Sabha.

"We have a big battle before us in the Parliament and across India. We are fighting to safeguard our Constitution," she said.



She also said that there was a need for a "fair, balanced and strong judiciary that is not pressurised". Priyanka also assured the people of Wayanad LS constituency that she was in Parliament for them and it is their voice that she will raise there. "It is your voice that I will raise. It is your problems that I will try to resolve and it is your beliefs, values and aspirations that I will stand for each and every day from now till the end," she said.

Cochin shipyard to refit INS Vikramaditya

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■
NEW DELHI

Ministry of Defence on Saturday signed a contract with Cochin Shipyard Limited for Short Refit and Dry Docking (SRDD) of aircraft carrier INS Vikramaditya at an overall cost of Rs. 1207.5 Crore, a statement here said. INS Vikramaditya was commissioned in the Indian Navy in November 2013. After completion of the Refit, INS Vikramaditya will join the active fleet of the Indian Navy with upgraded combat capability. This project is an important step towards development of Cochin Shipyard Limited as Maintenance, Repair and Overhaul (MRO) Hub for supporting the industrial ecosystem of India. The project envisages the involvement of nearly 50 MSMEs and would lead to employment generation for more than 3500 personnel. The Project will provide a major boost to Government of India's vision of Atmanirbhar Bharat and Make in India initiative. The aircraft carrier was rebuilt in Russia according to Indian Navy specifications before it joined service.

BJP like landslides; does not follow rules, democratic norms: Priyanka Gandhi

Headaches, sleep disturbance, brain fog may be long COVID

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■
NEW DELHI

SARS-CoV-2, the virus behind the Covid-19 pandemic, can persist in the skull and its surroundings i.e. meninges for years after infection, leading to a long-lasting effect on the brain, according to a major German study.

Researchers from Helmholtz Munich and Ludwig-Maximilians-Universitat (LMU) found that SARS-CoV-2 spike protein remains in the brain's protective layers -- the meninges, and the skull's bone marrow for up to four years after infection. These spike proteins are responsible for triggering chronic inflammation in affected individuals and increase the risk of neurode-

generative diseases, the team found. The study 'Persistence of spike protein at the skull-meninges-brain axis may contribute to the neurological sequelae of COVID-19,' by Prof. Ali Ertürk, Director at the Institute for Intelligent Biotechnologies at Helmholtz Munich among others said that the long-term neurological effects include "accelerated brain ageing, potentially leading to a loss of five to 10 years of healthy brain function in affected individuals." The study, published in the journal Cell Host & Microbe, said that the patients may also have neurological symptoms of long Covid such as headaches, sleep disturbances, and "brain fog," or cognitive impairment.



About five to 10 per cent of people infected with Covid are likely to experience long

Covid -- approximately 400 million individuals may carry a significant amount of the

spike protein. Notably, vaccines against the deadly virus significantly

reduce the accumulation of the spike protein in the brain, said the researchers.

"Vaccination reduced but did not eliminate spike protein accumulation after infection in mice. Our findings suggest persistent spike protein at the brain borders may contribute to lasting neurological sequelae of COVID-19," said the researchers.

The reduction was "only around 50 per cent in mice, leaving residual spike protein that continues to pose a toxic risk to the brain".

For the study, the team developed a novel AI-powered imaging technique to understand how the SARS-CoV-2 spike protein affects the brain. The method, which offers a three-dimensional visualisation of viral proteins, was deployed to find

previously undetectable distributions of spike protein in tissue samples from Covid-19 patients and mice.

The findings revealed significantly elevated concentrations of spike protein in the skull's bone marrow and meninges, even years after infection. The spike protein binds to so-called ACE2 receptors, particularly abundant in these regions.

The study also suggested a mechanism for the virus's entry into the central nervous system. "In both mouse and COVID-19 human tissues, we found spike protein in the skull meninges connections (SMCs), which the virus or virus components could use to travel from the skull marrow to the meninges and the brain parenchyma," said the authors.

Winter in Kashmir: Security forces...

From page 1

In the Jammu region, the joint teams of security forces are already conducting massive search operations in the twin border districts of Rajouri and Poonch to track down the footprints of the foreign terrorists hiding inside the natural caves in the higher reaches. On Thursday, a terrorist hideout was busted during a combing operation by the Army in the Chajla area of Mendhar in Poonch. A huge cache of explosives and ammunition was recovered from the hideout, which was located under a bridge in upper Chajla in Mendhar. The Border Security Force (BSF) is likely to activate its Winter border management strategy to prevent any major infiltration bid from across the International border. Army Chief General Upendra Dwivedi also reviewed the current security situation in the Kathua district of Jammu region in the first half of November.

From page 1

Pandey further claimed that innocent individuals were being framed for the violence. "Even those who were not present at the site of the clashes have been named in the FIRs. This is a blatant misuse of power," he said. SP state president Shyam Lal Pal said that the delegation's primary aim was to prepare a comprehensive report on the violence for party chief Akhilesh Yadav. The delegation included prominent leaders such as Lal Bihari Yadav, MPs Ziaur Rahman Barq, Harendra Malik, and Ruchi Veera, along with MLAs Kamal

Akhtar and Ravidas Mehrotra. Adding to the political tensions, Congress state president Ajay Rai announced that a delegation from his party would visit Sambhal on December 2 to meet victims and assess the ground situation. "We will ensure the voices of the affected families are heard," Rai said. The current unrest in Sambhal traces its origins to a court-ordered survey of the Shahi Jama Masjid on November 19. The petitioner alleged that the mosque was built over an ancient Harihar temple, a claim that has reignited communal

sensitivities in the region. Protests erupted during the survey and culminated in violent clashes on November 24. Protesters reportedly gathered near the mosque, pelting stones and setting vehicles ablaze. The situation spiraled into chaos, with police and civilians sustaining injuries. While authorities have denied opening fire on the protesters, the violence claimed four lives, deepening the divide in the already tense atmosphere. In the wake of the violence, the district administration has imposed Section 144 of the CrPC, banning public gatherings and rallies across

Sambhal. Security has been tightened, with additional police forces stationed in sensitive areas to prevent further disturbances. The Samajwadi Party has pledged financial assistance of Rs 5 Lakh each to the families of those killed in the recent violence in Sambhal, Uttar Pradesh. MP Ruchi Veera stated that the party stands in solidarity with the bereaved families. Party chief Akhilesh Yadav has announced the aid, which will be disbursed to the families soon. The Samajwadi Party has also demanded that the State government provide a compensation of Rs 1 Crore to each victim's family.

Cyclonic storm Fengal begins...

From page 1

Earlier in the day, when the airport was operational, at least 12 flights were delayed. The Chennai airport in a post on 'X' said that a team of senior officials was closely monitoring the situation to facilitate the earliest resumption of operations as meteorological conditions improve.

"A WebEx meeting was conducted on 30th November 2024 at 1630 hrs, involving all stakeholders and officials from the India Meteorological Department (IMD). During the meeting, IMD provided updates indicating that the landfall is expected around 2030 hrs, with prevailing

weather conditions likely to persist until 2330 hrs. Following consultations with AAI Headquarters and considering feedback from stakeholders, it has been decided to extend the closure of operations through a NOTAM (Notice to Airmen) until 0400 IST on 1st December 2024. We recommend passengers check with their respective airlines regarding their flights," it said in a post on 'X'.

The complete disruption of services left the passengers in a lurch and according to ballpark estimates from official sources, over 10,000 people could have been affected due to cancellations and diversions. While the

services were hit, nearly 1,000 passengers continued to stay back inside the airport premises to take the first available flight from here to their respective destinations. As many as 20 flights were cancelled in Hyderabad as well which were services to and from Chennai and Tirupati. Initially, expecting an earlier landfall of the cyclone, airport authorities had declared suspension of operations till 7 pm starting from 12.30 pm. The cyclonic storm is expected to make a landfall tonight, close to Puducherry. Chennai airport said IndiGo Airlines temporarily suspended flight operations, which will resume once the weather improves.

Syrian insurgents inside Aleppo in major setback for Assad as government forces

AP ■ BEIRUT

Thousands of Syrian insurgents fanned out inside Aleppo in vehicles with improvised armour and pickups, deploying to landmarks such as the old citadel on Saturday, a day after they entered Syria's largest city facing little resistance from government troops, according to residents and fighters. Witnesses said two airstrikes on the city's edge late Friday targeted insurgent reinforcements and hit near residential areas. A war monitor said 20 fighters were killed. Syria's armed forces said in a statement Saturday that to absorb the large attack on Aleppo and save lives, it has redeployed and is preparing for a counterattack. The statement acknowledged that insurgents entered large parts of the city but said they have not established bases or checkpoints. Insurgents were filmed outside police headquarters, in the city centre, and outside the Aleppo

citadel. They tore down posters of Syrian President Bashar Assad, stepping on some and burning others. The surprise takeover is a huge embarrassment for Assad, who managed to regain total control of the city in 2016, after expelling insurgents and thousands of civilians from its eastern neighbourhoods following a gruelling military campaign in which his forces were backed by Russia, Iran and its allied groups. Aleppo has not been attacked by opposition forces since then. The 2016 battle for Aleppo was a turning point in the war between Syrian government forces and rebel fighters after 2011 protests against Assad's rule turned into an all-out war. The push into Aleppo followed weeks of simmering low-level violence, including government attacks on opposition-held areas. Turkiye, which has backed Syrian opposition groups, failed in its diplomatic efforts to prevent the Syrian government

attacks, which were seen as a violation of a 2019 agreement sponsored by Russia, Turkiye and Iran to freeze the line of the conflict. The offensive came as Iran-linked groups, primarily Lebanon's Hezbollah, which has backed Syrian government forces since 2015, have been preoccupied with their own battles at home. A ceasefire in Hezbollah's two-month war with Israel took effect Wednesday, the day the Syrian opposition factions announced their offensive. Israel has also escalated its attacks against Hezbollah and Iran-linked targets in Syria during the last 70 days. **Insurgents raise flag over Aleppo Citadel:** A witness in Aleppo said government troops remained in the city's airport and at a military academy but most of the forces have already filed out of the city from the south. Syrian Kurdish forces remained in two neighbourhoods. The redeployment "is a tempo-

rary measure and (the military central command and armed forces) will work to guarantee the security and peace of all our people in Aleppo," the military statement said. Abdulkafi Alhamdo, an teacher who fled Aleppo in 2016 and returned Friday night after hearing the insurgents were inside, described "mixed feelings of pain, sadness and old memories." "As I entered Aleppo, I kept telling myself this is impossible! How did this happen?" He said he strolled through the city at night, visiting the citadel, where the insurgents raised their flags, a major square and the university of Aleppo, as well as the last spot he was in before he was forced to leave for the countryside. "I walked in (the empty) streets of Aleppo, shouting, People, people of Aleppo, 'We are your sons,'" Alhamdo told The Associated Press in a series of messages. The insurgents launched their shock offensive in the Aleppo

and Idlib countryside on Wednesday and wrestled control of dozens of villages and towns before entering Aleppo on Friday. The pro-government Al-Watan newspaper reported airstrikes on the edge of Aleppo city targeting rebel supply lines. It posted a video of a missile landing on a gathering of fighters and vehicles, in a street lined with trees and buildings. Twenty fighters were killed in the airstrikes, said the Syrian Observatory for Human Rights. Aleppo residents reported clashes and gunfire. Some fled the fighting. Schools and government offices were closed Saturday as most people stayed indoors, according to Sham FM radio, a pro-government station. Bakeries were open. Witnesses said the insurgents deployed security forces around the city to prevent any acts of violence or looting. In social media post, the insurgents were pictured outside of Aleppo Citadel, the medieval



Opposition forces take control of areas outside Aleppo, Syria on Friday.

AP/PTI

palace in the old city centre, and one of the largest in the world. In cellphone videos, they recorded themselves having conversations with residents they visited at home, seeking to reassure them they will cause no harm. State media reported that a number of "terrorists," including sleeper cells, infiltrated

parts of the city. Government troops chased them and arrested a number who posed for pictures near city landmarks, state media said. On a state TV morning show Saturday, commentators said army reinforcements and Russia's assistance will repel the "terrorist groups," blaming Turkiye for supporting the

insurgents' push into Aleppo and Idlib provinces. Russia's state news agency Tass quoted Oleg Ignasyuk, a Russian Defense Ministry official coordinating in Syria, as saying that Russian warplanes targeted and killed 200 militants who launched the offensive in the northwest on Friday. It provided no further details.

War could end if Ukraine-controlled territory comes under NATO, says Zelenskyy

AP ■ KYIV

An offer of NATO membership to territory under Kyiv's control would end "the hot stage of the war" in Ukraine, but any proposal to join the military alliance should be extended to all parts of the country that fall under internationally recognised borders, President Volodymyr Zelenskyy said in a broadcast interview. Zelenskyy's remarks on Friday signaled a possible way forward to the difficult path Ukraine faces to future NATO membership. At their summit in Washington in July, the 32 members declared Ukraine on an "irreversible" path to membership. However, one obstacle to moving forward has been the view that Ukraine's borders would need to be clearly demarcated before it could join so that there can be no mistaking where the alliance's pact of mutual defense would come into effect. "You can't give an invitation to just one part of a country," the Ukrainian president said in an excerpt of the interview with Sky News, dubbed by the UK broadcaster. "Why? Because thus you would recognise that

Ukraine is only that territory of Ukraine and the other one is Russia." Under the Ukrainian constitution, Ukraine cannot recognise territory occupied by Russia as Russian. "So legally, by law, we have no right to recognize the occupied territory as territory of Russia," he said. Since the start of the war in 2022, Russia has been expending huge amounts of weaponry and human life to make small-but-steady territorial gains to the nearly one-fifth of Ukraine it already controls in east and southern Ukraine. "If we want to stop the hot stage of the war, we should take under the NATO umbrella the territory of Ukraine that we have under our control. That's what we need to do, fast. And then Ukraine can get back the other part of its territory diplomatically," he said. An invitation for Ukraine to join NATO is one key point of Zelenskyy's "victory plan," which he presented to Western allies and the Ukrainian people in October. The plan is seen as a way for Ukraine to strengthen its hand in any negotiations with Moscow. Earlier this week, NATO's new

Secretary General Mark Rutte said that the alliance "needs to go further" to support Ukraine in its fight against a Russian invasion. Military aid to Kyiv and steps toward ending the war are expected to be high on the agenda when NATO members' foreign ministers meet in Brussels for a two-day gathering starting on December 3. However, any decision for Ukraine to join the military alliance would require a lengthier process and the agreement of all member states. There is also uncertainty as to the foreign policy stance of President-elect Donald Trump. While Trump vowed on the campaign trail to end Russia's invasion of Ukraine in a single day, he has not publicly discussed how this could happen. Trump also announced Wednesday that Keith Kellogg, an 80-year-old, highly decorated retired three-star general, would serve as his special envoy for Ukraine and Russia. In April, Kellogg wrote that "bringing the Russia-Ukraine war to a close will require strong, America First leadership to deliver a peace deal and immediately end the hostilities between the two warring parties."

Meanwhile, during his only campaign debate with Vice President Kamala Harris, Trump twice refused to directly answer a question about whether he wanted Ukraine to win the war — raising concerns that Kyiv could be forced to accept unfavourable terms in any negotiations. Zelenskyy's statement comes as Ukraine faces increasing pressure along the 1,000-kilometer (620-mile) frontline. In its latest report, the Washington-based think tank the Institute for the Study of War said Saturday that Russian forces had recently advanced near Kupiansk, in Toretsk, and near Pokrovsk and Velyka Novosilka, a key logistics route for the Ukrainian military. Ukraine's air force announced Saturday that the country had come under attack from ten Russian drones, of which eight were shot down over the Kyiv, Cherkasy, Kirovohrad, Dnipropetrovsk, and Kherson regions. One drone returned to Russian-occupied territory, while the final drone disappeared from radar, often a sign of the use of electronic defences.

17 terrorists killed in Pak

AP ■ PESHAWAR

Seventeen terrorists were killed on Friday in two separate operations when Pakistani security forces' helicopter gunships targeted their hideouts in the country's restive Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province. The intelligence-based operations were conducted in the Bannu and the North Waziristan districts, according to security sources. In the Baka Khel area of the Bannu district, 12 terrorists affiliated with the Hafiz Gulbahadur group were eliminated as choppers struck their compound. The second operation was carried out in the Hasso Khel area of Mir Ali, North Waziristan, where five militants were killed. A large cache of weapons and ammunition was seized from the militants, sources said. Security forces also released images of the killed terrorists. The operation is ongoing, with reinforcements arriving for the security forces. The security forces launched a massive operation against terrorists in response to the fresh wave of attacks against security forces in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa's southern districts.

Israel says it struck Hezbollah weapons smuggling sites in Syria

AP ■ TEL AVIV

Israeli aircraft struck Hezbollah weapons smuggling sites along Syria's border with Lebanon, the Israeli military said Saturday, testing a fragile, days-old ceasefire that halted months of fighting between the sides but has seen continued sporadic fire. The military said it struck sites that had been used to smuggle weapons from Syria to Lebanon after the ceasefire took effect, which the military said was a violation of its terms. There was no immediate comment from Syrian authorities or activists monitoring the conflict in that country. Hezbollah also did not immediately comment. The Israeli strike, the latest of several since the ceasefire began on Wednesday, came as unrest spread to other areas of the Middle East, with Syrian insurgents breaching the country's largest city, Aleppo, in a shock offensive that added fresh uncertainty to a region reeling from multiple wars. The truce between Israel and the Iran-backed Hezbollah, brokered by the United States and France, calls for an initial two-month ceasefire in which

the militants are to withdraw north of Lebanon's Litani River and Israeli forces are to return to their side of the border. The repeated bursts of violence — with no reports of serious casualties — reflected the uneasy nature of the ceasefire that otherwise appeared to hold. While Israel has accused Hezbollah of violating the ceasefire, Lebanon has also accused Israel of the same in the days since it took effect. Many Lebanese, some of the 1.2 million displaced in the conflict, were streaming south to their homes, despite warnings by the Israeli and Lebanese militaries to stay away from certain areas. Lebanon's state-run National News Agency reported that an Israeli drone attacked a car in the southern village of Majdal Zoun. The agency said there had been casualties but gave no further details. Majdal Zoun, near the Mediterranean Sea, is close to where Israeli troops still have a presence. The military said earlier Saturday that its forces, who remain in southern Lebanon until they withdraw gradually over the 60-day period, had been operating to distance "suspects" in the region, with-

out elaborating, and said troops had located and seized weapons found hidden in a mosque. Israel says it reserves the right under the ceasefire to strike against any perceived violations. Israel has made returning the tens of thousands of displaced Israelis home the goal of the war with Hezbollah but Israelis, concerned Hezbollah was not deterred and could still attack northern communities, have been apprehensive about returning home. Hezbollah began attacking Israel on October 8, 2023, in solidarity with the Palestinian militant group Hamas and its assault on southern Israel the day before. Israel and Hezbollah kept up a low-level conflict of cross-border fire for nearly a year, until Israel escalated its fight with a sophisticated attack that detonated hundreds of paggers and walkie-talkies used by Hezbollah fighters. It followed that up with an intense aerial bombardment campaign against Hezbollah assets, killing many of its top leaders including longtime chief Hassan Nasrallah, and it launched a ground invasion in early October.

N Korea's Kim vows steadfast support for Russia's war

AP ■ SEOUL

North Korean leader Kim Jong Un vowed his country will "invariably support" Russia's war in Ukraine as he met Russia's defence chief, the North's state media reported Saturday. A Russia military delegation led by Defence Minister Andrei Belousov arrived in North Korea on Friday, amid growing international concern about the two countries' expanding cooperation after North Korea sent thousands of troops to Russia last month. The official Korean Central News Agency said that Kim and Belousov reached "a satisfactory consensus" on boosting strategic partner-

ship and defending each country's sovereignty, security interests and international justice in the face of the rapidly-changing international security environments in a Friday meeting. Kim said that North Korea "will invariably support the policy of the Russian Federation to defend its sovereignty and territorial integrity from the imperialists' moves for hegemony," KCNA said. North Korea has supported Russia's invasion of Ukraine, calling it a defensive response to what both Moscow and Pyongyang call NATO's "reckless" eastward advance and US-led moves to stamp out Russia's position as a powerful state.

Kim slammed a US decision earlier in November to let Ukraine strike targets inside Russia with US-supplied longer-range missiles as a direct intervention in the conflict. He called recent Russian strikes on Ukraine "a timely and effective measure" demonstrate Russia's resolve, KCNA said. According to US, Ukrainian and South Korean assessments, North Korea has sent more than 10,000 troops to Russia and some of them have already begun engaging in combat on the frontlines. US, South Korean and others say North Korea has also shipped artillery systems, missiles and other conventional weapons to replenish Russia's exhausted weapons

inventory. Both North Korea and Russia haven't formally confirmed the North Korean troops' movements, and have steadfastly denied reports of weapons shipments. South Korea, the US and their partners are concerned that Russia could give North Korea advanced weapons technology in return, including help to build more powerful nuclear missiles. Last week, South Korean national security adviser Shin Wonsik told a local SBS TV program that that Seoul assessed that Russia has provided air defense missile systems to North Korea. He said Russia also appeared to have given economic assistance to North Korea and various mil-

itary technologies, including those needed for the North's efforts to build a reliable space-based surveillance system. Belousov also met North Korean Defense Minister No Kwang Chol on Friday. During a dinner banquet later the same day, Belousov said the two countries' strategic partnership was crucial to defend their sovereignty from aggression and the arbitrary actions of imperialists, KCNA said. In June, Kim and Putin signed a treaty requiring both countries to provide immediate military assistance if either is attacked. It's considered the two countries' biggest defense deal since the end of the Cold War.

9 arrested for lawyer's murder in Bangladesh

PTI ■ DHAKA

Nine people have been arrested in connection with the killing of a lawyer during violence in Bangladesh's southeastern port city of Chattogram over the arrest of a Hindu community leader, police said on Saturday. They were arrested after 46 people were booked for their alleged involvement in the murder of Saiful Islam, who was in his early 30s, during Tuesday's clashes after Chinmoy Krishna Das was denied bail by a Chattogram court. Das, the spokesperson for Bangladesh Sammilita Sanatani Jagran Jote, was arrested from the Hazrat Shahjalal International Airport here on Monday in a sedition case. "Saiful Islam's father filed the case last night naming 46 people," said Abdul Karim, the officer in charge of the port city's Kotwali police station. Karim said most of the accused are residents of city's Sebok Colony, a hub of sanitation workers belonging to the Hindu community. He said nine of the accused were arrested and a manhunt to arrest the others was underway. He said the accused were identified through CCTV footage of the court premises, the scene of the violence on November 26. Police said one man identified as Chandan Das is the primary accused as he was seen attacking the lawyer with a sharp weapon. The incident sparked nationwide outrage with lawyers and political groups taking to the streets demanding stern punitive actions against Islam's killers while some groups wanted ISKCON Bangladesh to be banned.

Protesters clash with police in Georgia, over 100 arrested

AP ■ TBILISI (GEORGIA)

More than 100 demonstrators were arrested overnight in Georgia as protesters clashed with police following the government's decision to suspend negotiations to join the European Union, the country's Interior Ministry said Saturday. It was the second straight night of protests after Prime Minister Irakli Kobakhidze of the country's ruling Georgian Dream party announced the decision the previous day. Demonstrators faced off against police late Friday in a number of major Georgian cities, including the capital, Tbilisi, and the Black Sea port of Batumi. The Associated Press saw protesters in Tbilisi being chased and beaten by police as demonstrators rallied in front of the country's parliament building. Riot police used water cannons to push protesters away from the building and later moved to force them farther back along Rustaveli Avenue, the city's main boulevard. Police also used heavy force against members of the media and used loudspeakers to shout profanities and insults at the crowds. Georgian Dream's disputed victory in the country's October 26 parliamentary election, which was widely seen as a referendum on Georgia's aspirations to join the European Union, has sparked massive demonstrations and led to an opposition boycott of the parliament. The opposition has said that the

vote was rigged with the help of Russia, Georgia's former imperial master, with Moscow hoping to keep Tbilisi in its orbit. Georgian President Salome Zourabichvili joined protesters on Thursday after accusing the government of declaring war on its own people. In an address to the nation Friday, she urged police not to use force against protesters. "This is evident in every way — no one is willing to accept a Russified Georgia, a Georgia deprived of its constitution, or a Georgia in the hands of an illegitimate government and parliament," Zourabichvili said. "That is why so many of you are out here today: I see you. I see you on Rustaveli Avenue and in cities across Georgia: Batumi, Kutaisi, Zugdidi, Akhmeta, Lagodekhi, Telavi. It is unprecedented for citizens of Georgia to rise up simultaneously and spontaneously in this way." The government's announcement that it was suspending negotiations to join the EU came hours after the European Parliament adopted a resolution that condemned last month's vote as neither free nor fair. It said the election represented another manifestation of Georgia's continued democratic backsliding "for which the ruling Georgian Dream party is fully responsible." European election observers said October's vote took place in a divisive atmosphere marked by instances of bribery, double voting and physical violence.

3 parties battle for top place as counting starts in Ireland

AP ■ DUBLIN

Vote counting got underway on Saturday in Ireland's national election after an exit poll suggested the contest is a close-fought race among the country's three largest political parties. Ballot boxes were opened at 9 a.m. (0900GMT) at count centres across the country, kicking off long hours, or even days, of tallying the results. If the exit poll is borne out, that could be followed by days or weeks of negotiations to form a coalition government. The exit poll suggested voters' support is split widely among the three big parties — Fine Gael, Fianna Fail and Sinn Fein — as well as several smaller parties and an assort-

ment of independents ranging from the left to the far right. The poll said centre-right party Fine Gael was the first choice of 21 per cent of voters, and another centre-right party, Fianna Fail, at 19.5 per cent. Left-of-centre opposition Sinn Fein was at 21.1 per cent in the poll. Pollster Ipsos B and A asked 5,018 voters across the country how they had cast their ballots. The survey has a margin of error of plus or minus 1.4 percentage points. The figures only give an indication and don't reveal which parties will form the next government. Ireland uses a complex system of proportional representation in which each of the country's 43 constituencies elects several lawmakers and voters

rank candidates in order of preference. As a result, it can take some time for full results to be known. The result will show whether Ireland bucks the global trend of incumbents being ousted by disgruntled voters after years of pandemic, international instability and a cost-of-living pressures. The cost of living — especially Ireland's acute housing crisis — was a dominant topic in the three-week campaign, alongside immigration, which has become an emotive and challenging issue in a country of 5.4 million people long defined by emigration. The outgoing government was led by the two parties that have dominated Irish politics for the past century: Fine Gael and Fianna Fail. They have similar policies but

are longtime rivals with origins on opposing sides of Ireland's 1920s civil war. After the 2020 election ended in a virtual dead heat, they formed a coalition. Before polling day, analysts said the most likely outcome was another Fine Gael-Fianna Fail coalition. That remains a likely option, but the parties would need the support of smaller groups or independents to achieve a majority in the 174-seat Dail, the lower house of Parliament. Sinn Fein achieved a stunning breakthrough in the 2020 election, topping the popular vote, but was shut out of government because Fianna Fail and Fine Gael refused to work with it, citing its leftist policies and historic ties with militant group the Irish Republican Army dur-

ing three decades of violence in Northern Ireland. Though Sinn Fein, which aims to reunite Northern Ireland with the independent Republic of Ireland, could become the largest party in the Dail, it may struggle to get enough coalition partners to form a government. During the election campaign, both Fine Gael and Fianna Fail maintained they would not go into government with it. The party, which had urged people to vote for change, hailed the result after the exit poll was released. "There is every chance that Sinn Fein will emerge from these elections as the largest political party," Sinn Fein director of elections Matt Carthy told broadcaster RTE on Friday night.



The curtains fell down at the Dr. Shyama Prasad Mukherjee Indoor Stadium in Goa for the *International Film Festival of India (IFFI)*, marking a significant few days in the universe of cinema and cinema lovers. As the festival came to an end, it left an indelible mark on the cinephiles, celebrating the art of storytelling and the creative forces behind it.

2024 marked the 55th edition of the *International Film Festival of India* that took place on 20 to 28 November, 2024 at Panaji, Goa. The festival showcased around 200 films from 75 countries, including 15 world premieres, 3 international premieres, 40 Asian premieres, and 106 Indian premieres. Featuring celebrated titles and award-winning films from around the world, this year's festival promised to make a powerful impression on the audience. The nine day film festival brought together pioneers from the film industry including directors, actors, cinephiles and awarded the best ones in the game. The festival concluded with the Closing film, "Dry Season", directed by Czech filmmaker Bohdan Sláma, encapsulating the story of humanity, sustainability, and generational bonds. The closing night's most awaited segment was the presentation of the prestigious awards, recognising exceptional talent and storytelling. The highest honour *Golden Peacock for the Best Film* presented by Pramod Sawant, Chief Minister of Goa and Ashutosh Gowariker, Jury Chairperson of the International Competition was bagged by Lithuanian film *Toxic*. Toxic is a film by Lithuanian filmmaker and screenwriter Saule Bliuvaite. His debut feature film delivers a raw and haunting coming-of-age story of friendship. The Jury praised the film for exploring adolescence and the harsh realities of growing up in an economically deprived society, with so much sensitivity and empathy. The *Silver Peacock for Best Director* was awarded to Romanian writer and director Bogdan Muresanu for his film, *The New Year That Never Came*. The accreditation recognised his outstanding direction and exquisite storytelling on screen with that film.

Claiming the *Silver Peacock Award for Best Actor* in the *Male* category was Clément Faveau. He was recognised for his incredible and compelling performance in the French film *Holy Cow*, expressing the emotional ups and downs of the protagonist, while traversing from ages of innocence to maturity. For the same, the Jury also made a special mention to actor Adam Bessa for his portrayal of Bilal, in the Tunisian film *Who Do I Belong To*. The actor was lauded for his nuanced and restrained performance in the film. The actors Vesta Matulyte and Ieva Rupeikaite jointly were bestowed with the *Silver Peacock for Best Actor* in the *Female* category for their extraordinary debut performances for the film "Toxic".

The *Special Jury Award* was handed over to French filmmaker Louise Courvoisier. The actor was acknowledged for the creative excellence in filmmaking for the film 'Holy Cow'. The film shows that after losing his father, 18-year-old Totone (Faveau) must mature quickly to care for his younger sister and manage their family farm in Jura. The film showcases how his responsibilities grow further as he competes for the title of the region's best Comté cheese.

Familiar Touch by Sarah Friedland was bestowed with the Award for the *Best Debut Feature Film of a Director*. The film has been marketed as a coming-of-(old)-age story. 'Familiar Touch' centers on an octogenarian woman (Kathleen Chalfant) navigating the challenges of transitioning to assisted living. The film has explored her evolving relationship with herself and her caregivers as she faces the realities of cognitive decline.

Director Navjyot Bandiwadkar bagged the *Best Debut Director of Indian Feature Film* for his exceptional storytelling in the Marathi Film *Gharat Ganapati*. The award marked the IFFI's commitment to nurturing the emerging Indian filmmakers. The film has been selected from the list of other five feature-films, the Jury chaired by cinematographer and director Santhosh Sivan, agreed that the film was well crafted with robust performances and captures the complexities of familial bonds, the deep emotional resonance



makes the film a standout debut.

The prestigious *ICFT-UNESCO Gandhi Medal* to celebrate the cinematic works that promote peace, tolerance, and dialogue, was awarded to the film *Crossing* by *Levan Akin*. The Jury praised the film for its stunning cinematic qualities and its thought-provoking exploration of gender equality with social understanding.

The *Best Web Series (OTT) Award* went to *Lampan* airing on *Sony Liv*. The web series was recognised for the transformative shift in storytelling, innovation and artistic merit in the digital space. 'Lampan' has been directed by Nipun Dharmadhikari.

The *Satyajit Ray Lifetime Achievement Award* was presented to Australian Filmmaker *Phillip Noyce*. Coming to the last but not the least, making the Indian Film Industry proud, Pramod Sawant, Chief Minister of Goa and Sanjay Jaju, Secretary, Ministry of Information & Broadcasting presented *Indian Film Personality of the Year* to actor *Vikrant Massey*. On receiving the award Vikrant said, "This is really a special moment for me; I never imagined I would get this award. There will be ups and downs in life but we should be ready to restart as my character did in the

film, 12th Fail. I am a storyteller at heart, I choose the scripts to be able to become the voice of the common people." Massey also further said that, "Own yourself, own your stories, own your roots wherever you come from. Indian Film industry is one of the spectacular industries to be part of." There was special felicitation for the Iconic Indian Director *Ramesh Sippy* and celebrated actor *Jaya Prada* for their contribution to the Indian Cinema in the ceremony by the Chief Minister of Goa and Sanjay Jaju. Embracing the enriching power of the cinema, extending hand to young filmmakers and ending the IFFI 2024, Ashutosh Gowariker, Jury Chairperson of the International Competitions, said, "All the movies selected for the competition stood tall. A great film doesn't just tell us a story, it changes us. To all the young filmmakers, let the light inside you burn brighter so that one day your vision will be seen by the world."

With the theme of 'Young Filmmakers: The Future is Now', 55th IFFI ensured a platform for young filmmakers, said Sanjay Jaju, Secretary, Ministry of Information & Broadcasting. The evening reached its zenith with a mesmerising finale by actress and dancer Shriya Saran, titled as "Rhythms of India" showcasing the richness of Indian classical and folk traditions. The IFFI 2024 was not just a cinematic showcase but was a festival that soared with cultural exchange, artistic celebrations, and an undying commitment to the future of films in the country and globally. From illuminating conversations to inspiring mentorship, from India and other countries, unifying pioneers in cinema and unforgettable screenings, IFFI 2024 offered a transformative experience for film lovers worldwide.



CINEMA IS A MATTER OF
WHAT'S IN THE FRAME AND
WHAT'S OUT
— MARTIN SCORSESE

The 55th *International Film Festival of India (IFFI)* concluded recently in Goa, celebrating the magic of cinema. The festival showcased over 200 films from 75 countries, honouring exceptional talent with an enriching global cinematic dialogue. The event came to a climax with the presentation of prestigious awards, recognising the best in films from around the world, writes **ABHI SINGHAL**

IFFI 2024 CONCLUDES



"Music is the tool to express
life and all that makes a
difference"
- Herbie Hancock



A VOICE THAT HEALS



KAILASH KHER'S journey from humble beginnings to Padma Shri is truly inspiring. Through his music, he has touched millions, sharing the struggles and moments that shaped his path and the deep connection he holds with his fans, says **SAKSHI PRIYA**

"जो टूट कर बना, जिसे मौत ने जाना,
वो क्या टूटे, वो और क्या मारे"
(What was broken and revived,
what death tried to take away,
how could it be broken again?)

These words, spoken with quiet strength, hold the raw truth of Kailash Kher's life. A life that, much like the music he creates, has been a journey of hardship, healing and everything in between. He has faced loss, endured difficult times and seen some of the darkest days. Yet, his songs are always filled with hope. This is what makes him not just a singer, but a storyteller of the human experience, a poet of strength. His music isn't just sound; it's a conversation with the soul. A conversation that comes from the heart of Kailash Kher, a man whose very being is felt in every note he sings. When he speaks about his journey, you can almost hear the weight of each experience in his voice, as if every word he shares is filled with emotion, shaped by years of struggle and success. In December 2016, a moment that would forever change his life arrived, though it took another few months for the reality to sink in. By April 2017, it was confirmed, he was to receive the Padma Shri, one of India's highest civilian awards. The news was a whirlwind of emotions, not just for him, but for his family. "I first told my sister," he recalls with a soft smile. "It was a moment of joy because, in Delhi, we had suffered a lot. We left our homes, lived like orphans and went through many different experiences. We saw the world changing, relationships changing and people's attitudes changing, all of these shifts happened at a young age." His journey from hardship to honour is one of resilience. He talks about his childhood in Delhi, a city that seemed to change before his very eyes, as people, relationships and even attitudes shifted. Yet, despite the hardships, Delhi, in all its complexity, gave him the opportunity to realise his dreams. The recognition came not just for his music but for the spirit with which he has approached life. From a young age, music was more than just a

passion, it was his way of being. "As a child of 4 or 5, I was already curious about music, but I didn't sing the popular songs of the time," he shares. Instead, he gravitated toward unique sounds that defied the norm. "I didn't sing filmi songs, ghazals, bhajans or qawwalis. I didn't sing what was already there. People were curious, what does this child sing and how?" It was this originality that later led to the birth of Kailasa, a name that would become synonymous with spiritual and soul-stirring music. As his career grew, his live performances became a way for him to connect deeply with his audience. "In Kota, Rajasthan, a girl came to one of my shows with a blade, saying she would harm herself if she didn't get to meet me. She was a devotee and my music was more than entertainment to her, it was her lifeline," he remembers. "When I found out, I asked her to drop the blade, and she did. It was one of those moments that reminded me of the emotional power music holds. It's not just about melodies; it's about healing." Every song he writes, sings and composes holds a piece of his soul. "When I sing, it's a reflection of my own emotions. But once it's out there, it becomes part of someone else's story too," he explains. His music resonates with listeners in a way that breaks through language and culture, offering a universal connection. Despite his success in Bollywood, he differentiates the impact of film music from his non-film compositions. "Film audiences are looking for light entertainment but non-film music carries deeper emotions," he says. "Non-film music touches the soul, while film music is more fleeting. Each platform has its unique audience and I enjoy the challenge of catering to different frequencies." But no career comes without its challenges and his own journey wasn't without rejection. He remembers the time when his song "Allah Ke Bande" was initially dismissed. "At the time, I didn't understand the film industry very well. They told me it was a film song but it didn't have the usual budget. I had doubts. But when the song became a hit, the same people who rejected it came asking for collaboration. That song did become a turning point in my career and it was



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a lesson that sometimes the smallest beginnings lead to the biggest breakthroughs." Reflecting on his career, he is humble about his influence. "People often ask me which of my songs defines me. It's difficult to choose. Life is so full of shifting emotions. Each song represents a different phase. Take 'Piya Ghar Aavenge,' for example, it's about the anticipation of a reunion. Or 'Teri Deewani,' which is about the intensity of love. And then there's 'Saiyyan,' a song about surrendering to something greater than yourself. Each one reflects a part of my journey but none can define it entirely." As for the impact of his music, he says that whether he is performing in India or abroad, the connection is the same. "Wherever I go, people connect with my music because it speaks to their hearts. Whether in the US or India, our indian audience understands the joy of life. But in Delhi," he adds with a mischievous grin, "there's a certain energy here, a special 'dhamaal' that is unmatched." He may not have imagined this journey when he first started singing as a child, but today, his music has touched the hearts of millions. It is the story of a boy who didn't follow the conventional path, a boy who sang from his heart and whose voice continues to resonate with the world. The Padma Shri award is just one chapter in his extraordinary journey, a journey that continues to inspire and uplift. Kher's journey is a beautiful reminder of the power of music to connect us to something deeper within ourselves. Kailash Kher doesn't just make music; he shares pieces of his own story, inviting us all to reflect on our own. Every track, Kher insists, is a piece of his soul. "They're not just songs," he says. "They're my prayers, my truths. And once they're out in the world, they take on lives of their own." Much like the lyrics of Piya Ghar Aavenge, "आज मेरे पिया घर आवेंगे, हे-री, सखी, मंगल गाओ री, धरती-अंबर सजाओ री, उतरेगी आज मेरे प्यो की सवारी", they speak of waiting, of anticipation, of the quiet joy that comes from knowing something beautiful is about to happen. Waiting isn't always celebrated, but his music shows us that there is beauty in the moments in between. The stillness and hope that accompany the wait remind us that sometimes the most profound moments in life aren't the arrivals, but the journeys we take while waiting. In his own way, Kailash Kher teaches us that there is an art to waiting. It's in those moments of anticipation when we hold our breath and trust that what we're waiting for will be worth it. Just like the joy in the song, the waiting itself is part of the magic, making the reunion all the more meaningful when it finally arrives.

FROM THE MAN HIMSELF

What one piece of advice to your younger self, the Kailash Kher just starting out, what would it be and why?
I would say, "You have never slept for 12 years, nor eaten properly. How did you survive without eating and sleeping? Eat a little, sleep a little and embrace life fully. Be human." I lived like this, living many lives within one birth.

Is there any collaboration or project you have been wanting to do but haven't had the chance yet?
I have no desires or plans. I am a man with no plan and I cherish that state of being. My only "want" is that I have no wants and my only "desire" is to have no desires. I believe life flows best when you're not tied down by endless aspirations. Instead, I would advise others to focus on taking care of themselves first physically, mentally and spiritually, before chasing desires.

What message will you give to the younger generation who are coming into music?
I don't give advice often because I believe when you give something valuable, it should be respected. Because when you give something that holds value, it is respected. If you give it for free, it is not. If someone truly wants it, they will take it. If they don't want it, they won't. That's why I believe one should stay true to themselves, neither giving nor taking. If someone insists and asks me for advice, my advice would be this: "Never give advice to anyone. Neither give nor take. Just stay within yourself, and truly be true to yourself."

Who do you think would be the right person to portray your entire journey, from childhood to the present, in a film?
I don't look at it from that perspective and that's why I never have. Most people aren't fully honest in their work. In creativity, too, many people repeat the same things in the name of "new." They claim to be creating something very unique, but it's already been done. Everyone's life and story are unique and to capture that uniqueness, you need a creator who's equally different. It's possible that someone who's never done it before, or even if they have, can bring something fresh to it because they understand the nuances of art and craft. If they can get it right, then it will have that newness and originality.





(left to Right) - Chef Matteo Nasi and Chef Alessandro Liberatore

perfection, with the prawns' sweetness melding beautifully with the risotto's rich texture. Every plate seemed to have the same meticulous attention to detail, leaving no palate unfulfilled. Throughout the evening, the service was impeccable, attentive without being intrusive. The vegetarian focus of the menu was a refreshing change, with every dish crafted with the same thought and care as any meat or seafood counterpart. It felt as though the vegetables were the stars of the show, celebrated for their natural flavours and textures rather than treated as just substitutes.

Dessert was another highlight: a *Chocolate Cocoa Short Crust Pastry* filled with raspberry cream and chocolate ganache. The sharp tartness of the raspberry paired beautifully with the velvety richness of the chocolate, creating a harmony that felt like the perfect conclusion to an already outstanding meal. Yet, it was the final offerings under *Until We Meet Again* that left me in wonder.

The Selection of Tea and Coffee was perfect to wind down, but the real treasures were the petit fours. These weren't just bite-sized treats; they were flavour bombs that delighted and surprised. My personal favourites, *Cabosse*, *Noisette*, *Mango & Coconut Petit* each carried a distinct personality, but together, they created a symphony of textures and flavours that blew my mind. The Signature *Lemon, Chocolate & Coffee Petit Four* were as indulgent as they were unique, leaving a sweetness that felt like a parting gift.

Zanotta's charm lies not only in its food but in how every aspect of the experience is curated to perfection. Chef Liberatore's collaboration was a reminder of why Michelin stars matter, not for their prestige, but for the heart and soul they demand from a chef. Whether you're a vegetarian, a seafood enthusiast or simply someone looking to experience an unforgettable meal, *Zanotta* delivers on every front. It's not just a meal; it's a memory, a moment and a masterpiece rolled into one. For me, it was proof that fine dining isn't just about eating, it's about truly living.

PHOTOS: PANKAJ KUMAR

MICHELIN MAGIC ON A PLATE

Imagine indulging in a meal where every bite feels like a discovery where flavours, textures and creativity come together in perfect plate. That's exactly what you can expect at *Zanotta*, where Michelin-starred Chef Alessandro Liberatore's culinary genius takes fine dining to a whole new level, says **SAKSHI PRIYA**

For anyone who considers themselves a foodie, there's an unmistakable thrill in the promise of a Michelin-starred experience. It's not just about eating; it's about savouring stories told through food, each dish a chapter of creativity, tradition, and mastery. As a vegetarian, I've often found myself navigating the labyrinth of fine dining, where plant-based options can sometimes feel like an afterthought. But my recent visit to *Zanotta* at *The Leela Ambience*, for a unique collaboration with Villa Cora's two-Michelin-Key Chef Alessandro Liberatore, turned all my expectations on their head.

Picture this: a sparkling Gurugram skyline, soft live music and the kind of atmosphere that makes you lean in just a little closer to hear the clink of glasses and the hum of conversation. That's the setting at *Zanotta*, perched elegantly on the sixth floor. *The Leela Ambience Gurugram Hotel & Residences* proudly presented this iconic pop-up featuring VillaCor, the prestigious two-Michelin-Key hotel from Florence. The stage was perfectly set for a menu promising innovation, comfort, and the finest ingredients, all tied together with a ribbon of Italian finesse. It began with what could only be described as edible art: a

Deconstructed Bruschetta, forget the standard fare of toasted bread and diced tomatoes; this was a vivid celebration of marinated cherry tomatoes, bursting with flavour and delicately balanced with a drizzle of herbaceous olive oil. It was light, refreshing and a reminder that sometimes, the simplest ingredients hold the most potential. The next dish, *Millefeuille Aubergine*, was a revelation. A delicate layering of eggplant, tomato coulis, buffalo mozzarella and basil pesto transformed the humble aubergine into something extraordinary. Each bite was an orchestra of smoky, creamy and tangy notes that remained long after the plate

was cleared. It felt like comfort food, but with the refinement you expect from an Italian maestro. Then came the *Potatoes Gnocchi*, a dish that, quite frankly, stole the show. The *gnocchi* were soft, pillowy, and bathed in a luxurious cacio e pepe sauce. But what set it apart was the addition of sour vegetable brunoise, which

provided a sharp, tangy contrast to the creamy richness. It was bold yet understated, the kind of dish that makes you pause and appreciate the skill behind it. And then, the pièce de résistance: *Tomato Tarte Tatin*. If there's a dish that can truly redefine your perception of vegetarian food, this was it. Caramelised tomatoes, their

natural sweetness amplified, rested atop a perfectly flaky pastry. The balance between the sweet and savoury flavours was brilliantly done, showcasing Chef Liberatore's ability to surprise and delight. For non-vegetarians, the feedback I heard was just as glowing. The *Red Prawn Risotto* was singled out as a showstopper, cooked to



Immersing the Italian cuisine in his own taste and style, Michelin-starred Chef Mattia Bianchi made his India debut with the Italian restaurant *Sorrento* at *Shangri-la, New Delhi*. The feast was filled with the signature collection of dishes by Chef Bianchi himself and was made available for the people for five days.

Being known for their artistic composition, Chef Bianchi's food was a culinary delight. Bringing a slice of authentic Italian cooking, his pop-up dinner was a symphony of flavours, textures, and impeccable artistry, designed to tantalise the most refined palates. The menu was a love letter to Italian cuisine, featuring dishes that showcased Chef Bianchi's innovative



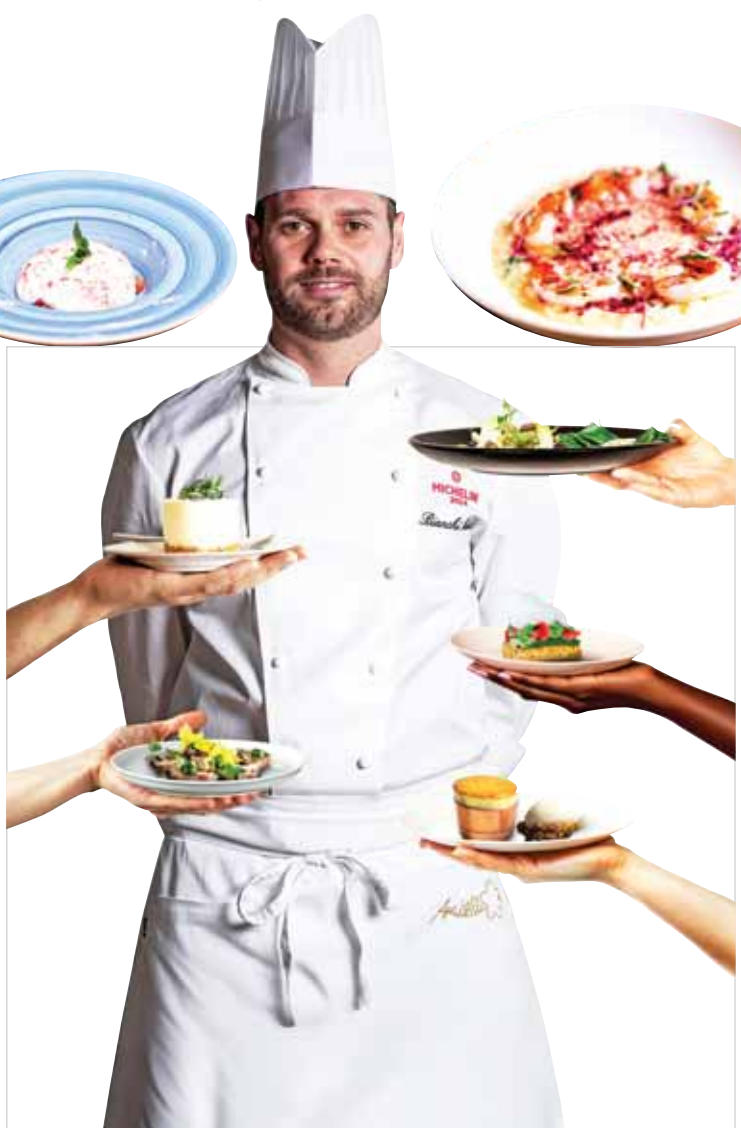
techniques and passion for fresh, locally sourced ingredients. The meal started with Chef Mattia's *Degustation Menu* with the *Caprese Cloud* for the vegetarian and *Mediterranean Fantasy* for non-vegetarian. *Caprese Cloud* served with *Fratelli Noi* had delicate foam of Buffalo Mozzarella paired with a medley of roasted cherry tomatoes, garnished with basil leaves with a mouth-watering taste. *Mediterranean Fantasy* on the other hand was a luxurious blend of shabu shrimps and salmon eggs atop silky potato foam, dusted with tomato powder and infused with Mediterranean aromas for a sensory delight served with *Fratelli Noi*.

Then came the *Risotto* with the dish *Herbs Whisper's* *Risotto* as the signature dish served with *Fratelli J'Noon White*. It was a Creamy risotto in a wild herbs infusion, topped with crunchy smoked umami almonds powdered with tangy sumac. *Pastas* entered the third round of the menu with *Fusilli Rock n Roll* which had vibrant fusilli infused with beetroot extract,



CHEF MATTIA'S ITALIAN TREATS

Chef Bianchi's Culinary Debut in India was a delight to the tastebuds at *Sorrento* in *Shangri-la, New Delhi*, writes **ABHI SINGHAL**



crowned with tangy goat cheese crumble and aromatic rocket pesto, perfectly paired with the rich notes of *Fratelli Sette* wine. *Fusilli Citrus* was served with *Fratelli Sette* wine with lime scented fusilli cooked in beetroot extract and garnished with raw marinated scallops. The main course showcased a togetherness of flavours, led by the *Sunlit Chicken Rhapsody* with Chicken supreme with butternut squash and *Medley Feast*, a culinary masterpiece perfectly paired with *Fratelli J'Noon Red* wine. The addition with the same wine glasses was *Bitter Bliss* with roasted baby gem, caper fruits, pine nuts and beurre blanc sauce, making the plate look like a painted canvas.

The end was saved for the best: the dessert with three types of symphonies, namely *Autumn*, *Summer*, and *Winter*. The *autumn* was the *Tiramisu Delight*, with traditional Tiramisu with mascarpone cream and marsala-kissed sponge cake veiled in the coffee crumble. The *Winter* Symphony featured *Midnight Silk* with dark chocolate cloud, gilded almonds, and frozen hazelnut cream. The *Summer* symphony had *Summer Ode* with exotic fruits soup-bathed yogurt pearls on vanilla sable. The overall experience of the dessert was a unique one blended with music. There were cards explaining how the desserts explain the personalities of the people. The experience at *Sorrento* was more than just a meal; it was an unforgettable journey through the heart of Italian gastronomy, curated by Chef Mattia Bianchi's masterful touch. Each dish was a testament to his ability to merge tradition with innovation, creating a dining spectacle that celebrated the art of food. The guests were left in awe, their taste buds delighted and their senses elevated. Chef Bianchi's debut in India with his pop-up at *Shangri-la, New Delhi*, left an indelible mark on every diner who had the privilege to partake in this symphony of flavours.



World Food Carnival

By TEAM **AGENDA**

Worldmark Aerocity in New Delhi recently hosted the *World Food Carnival*, a feast for the senses that brought together food lovers from across the city. With over 30 stalls offering a wide range of cuisines, Mexican, Italian, Indian, Middle Eastern, and more there was something for everyone. Renowned restaurants like Kampai, Cafe Delhi Heights, and Monsoon showcased their signature dishes, elevating the food experience to new heights. The carnival opened with a lively performance by "The Artictern," setting an upbeat tone for the day. Cultural performances like the Dragon Dance and a saxophonist added a magical touch to the atmosphere. Guests enjoyed live face painting and an instant GIF creator, which kept everyone entertained and added a fun element to the event. The Kids' Zone was a family-friendly highlight,

offering activities to keep children busy while parents could indulge in the food offerings. On the second day, the excitement continued with live bands "The Gus Band" and "The Cherish," whose performances had the crowd swaying to their beats. An African Dance performance added a vibrant touch, and the food stalls kept everyone's taste buds satisfied. The carnival also featured plenty of activities for children, from magic shows to face painting. What stood out was the way the event brought people together. It wasn't just about the food; it was about creating an experience that celebrated culture, community and fun. The carnival's vibrant atmosphere, combined with delicious food and entertainment, made it a memorable event. For anyone who loves good food and a lively atmosphere, the World Food Carnival at Worldmark Aerocity was an experience not to be missed.



COORG: WHERE COFFEE CULTURE MEETS ASPIRATIONAL AVOCADOS



Coorg’s lush landscapes are evolving, with century-old coffee plantations now sharing space with thriving rows of avocado trees, writes **GYANESHWAR DAYAL**

As I pack my bags in Delhi the AQI is reading staggering 430, the smog has dawned on the city and there is heaviness in the air, eyes burning, breathing is an effort to be undertaken. The touchdown in Kempegowda International Airport Bengaluru is smooth the temperature is almost at par with Delhi but air is breathable. The five hours journey to Coorg is tiring but relaxing scenery changes from rocky to green to lush green, on the way you get to see the Gabbar Singh’s den, the place where Sholay film was shot some 40 years back. On the way we have elephant family waiting for us by the roadside and snake crosses the road as drives pushes the brakes. Yes, all of us have right to live, even snakes!

It is night already and the day is done without much fuss as we retire in 140-year-old property a British bungalow now a tata property -Taneerhulla in ama coffee trail. The morning view from the window is fascinating, Delhi smog has given way to Coorg fog, and AQI has dropped to 43! I take a deep breath, as if to store this purity and carry it back home.

Coorg, or Kodagu as it is known in Kannad is nestled in the heart of the Western Ghats, has a fascinating history shaped by its strategic location, natural resources, and the allure of its spices. This region has been a magnet for traders, rulers, and explorers, each drawn by its bounty and beauty.

The history of Coorg dates back to ancient times, with its mention in early Indian texts like the Sangam literature. The region was originally home to indigenous tribes like the Kodavas, who developed a rich culture centered around nature and agriculture. Kodavas are known for their martial traditions, unique customs, and close-knit community life, which continue to define Coorg’s identity today. Over centuries, Coorg saw the rise and fall of several South Indian dynasties, including the Cholas, Gangas, Hoysalas, and Kadambas. These rulers left their imprint through temples and forts, which stand as silent witnesses to the region’s historical significance.

By the 15th and 16th centuries, the fame of the Western Ghats and their riches spread beyond India’s borders. The spice trade was the primary lure, as Coorg, along with other parts of the Western Ghats, became a significant source of black pepper, cardamom, and other exotic spices. The Portuguese were among the first Europeans to set sail for India, with Vasco da Gama’s arrival in 1498 marking a new era of trade and conquest. Soon, Dutch, French, and British traders followed, vying for control of spice routes. Coorg, though a landlocked region, became an integral part of these trade networks due to its fertile hills and spice plantations.

In the early 19th century, the British annexed Coorg after defeating the local ruler, Chikka Veerarajendra, in 1834. Recognising Coorg’s agricultural potential, the British transformed its economy by introducing coffee cultivation alongside spices. This was the beginning of coffee plantation on



commercial scale in Coorg and has stayed that way since. Coffee thrived in the region’s climate, and Coorg became one of India’s premier coffee-producing areas. The planters were of course the British who lived near their plantations. Their Bungalows dot the place and the one we stayed was of course belonged to a British. The British also admired Coorg’s natural beauty. Coorg is often referred to as the "Scotland of India" for its rolling hills, misty valleys, and temperate weather. Under British influence, the Kodavas were granted special privileges, including exemption from the Arms Act, which allowed them to retain their traditional firearms—a legacy still continues. The Western Ghats, a UNESCO World Heritage Site, are among the most biodiverse regions on the planet. Stretching over 1,600 kilometers from Gujarat to Kerala, these ancient mountains are home to an astonishing

variety of flora and fauna. In Coorg, the Western Ghats reveal their most enchanting side. Dense forests, gurgling streams, and cascading waterfalls dominate the landscape, making it a paradise for nature enthusiasts. The forests host an incredible range of plant species, from ancient trees to medicinal herbs. They are especially known for sandalwood, teak, and bamboo. The Western Ghats are a haven for wildlife, including tigers, elephants, gaurs, and numerous endemic species like the Lion-tailed Macaque and Malabar Civet. The Ghats are also critical for the region’s agriculture, providing a fertile environment for growing coffee, spices, and now avocados. Coorg’s history is a blend of ancient traditions and modern influences. Its spice heritage continues to thrive alongside its renowned coffee plantations. Now, with the introduction of avocado



cultivation by Westfalia Fruit, Coorg is stepping into a new chapter of agricultural innovation. Tourists visiting Coorg can trace its history through ancient temples, forts, and colonial-era bungalows, all while enjoying its natural beauty and rich culinary traditions. The intertwining of the Western Ghats’ biodiversity with the cultural tapestry of Coorg makes it one of India’s most enchanting destinations. Coorg’s identity is deeply intertwined with its coffee plantations, which have been the backbone of its economy for decades. Introduced by Baba Budan in the 17th century, coffee found an ideal home in Coorg’s rich soil and temperate climate. Today, the district is one of India’s leading coffee-producing regions, renowned for its Arabica and Robusta beans. The plantations, often set against misty hillsides, not only produce world-class coffee but also create picturesque

landscapes that attract tourists. Coffee estate tours allow visitors to learn about the journey of coffee beans from farm to cup, making them an integral part of the Coorg experience. Located in southwestern Karnataka, Coorg is a verdant hill station known for its cool climate, scenic views, and pristine environment. It is part of the UNESCO-listed Western Ghats, one of the world’s biodiversity hotspots. The region’s dense forests, cascading waterfalls and diverse wildlife make it a haven for eco-tourism and outdoor activities such as trekking, birdwatching, and nature photography. Some must-visit spots include the Abbey Falls, Raja’s Seat, Dubare Elephant Camp, and the Brahmagiri Wildlife Sanctuary. The Kaveri River, originating from Talakaveri in Coorg, adds to the district’s charm, serving as a lifeline for the southern states of India. While coffee remains Coorg’s hallmark,

the region is now witnessing a burgeoning avocado revolution, led by Westfalia Fruit, a global leader in avocado production. Recognising Coorg’s favourable climate for cultivation, Westfalia has established a state-of-the-art avocado nursery in collaboration with Sam Agri and Dvori-Or Nursery. The initiative focuses on growing high-quality Hass and other commercial avocado varieties. The saying, "Where tea and coffee grow, avocados can grow better," perfectly describes Coorg’s potential. Its tropical climate, high elevation, and fertile soil make it an excellent location for avocado farming. Westfalia’s meticulous approach to planting, nurturing, and harvesting ensures that the avocados meet global quality standards. Westfalia has already contributed to planting over 500 acres of avocado farms across India, with a target to exceed 1,000 acres by 2026. The Coorg nursery plays a critical role in supplying premium rootstock and planting material, ensuring sustainable practices and high yields. For coffee farmers, avocados offer a promising diversification crop, creating additional income streams and contributing to rural development. Westfalia, in partnership with the World Avocado Organisation (WAO), is driving efforts to educate Indian consumers about the health benefits and culinary versatility of avocados. Campaigns like "Avocado Ki Paatshaala," led by celebrity chef Sanjeev Kapoor, have been instrumental in popularising the fruit. We get hands on lessons on avocado grafting and cloning the techniques Westfalia is introducing in Coorg for avocado plantation sooner than later Coorg avocados would be available across the country. Avocados is one of the healthy diet options which can served in several avatars from avocado-on-toast to guacamole and even avocado shake and ice cream. This is going to benefit the local farmers as well as they can four to five times the amount they make on coffee. Coorg’s transformation from a coffee giant to a hub for avocados signifies its adaptability and progressive approach to agriculture. Visitors to Coorg can now enjoy not only a cup of freshly brewed coffee but also a taste of locally grown avocados, blending wellness with indulgence. Whether you’re exploring its lush landscapes, learning about coffee cultivation, or witnessing the avocado revolution, Coorg offers a unique journey through nature and innovation. This jewel of Karnataka remains a must-visit destination for travellers and a shining example of India’s agricultural potential. As the time to leave draws near, I find myself reflecting on the air of Delhi and take one last, deep breath of Coorg’s pure, refreshing atmosphere. The aroma of spices beckons us to the local market, where we gather handfuls of fragrant treasures and, naturally, Coorg’s signature Arabica and Robusta coffee. With our bags filled with spices, coffee, and the newfound delight of avocados, we bid farewell to this enchanting land and set out on the highway to Bengaluru. As we journey home, our hearts are brimming with memories that promise to call us back. Coorg is a place one longs to return to-sooner rather than later.



**YOUR
WEEK
AHEAD**

MADHU KOTIYA



ARIES March 21-April 19

This week may not meet your expectations, particularly regarding finances, which seem less favorable. Initially, you'll find yourself grappling with indecision at work, leaving tasks incomplete and documents disordered. You might even delay work-related travel due to uncertainty. As the week progresses, a sense of stability will emerge, allowing you to tackle your responsibilities more effectively. You could benefit from connections at a distance, and those you work with will expect more engagement on your part, enabling you to contribute significantly. Confidence will grow, encouraging more social interactions. However, the week may conclude on a challenging note with family tensions or significant health issues within your household requiring both your presence and financial support, potentially causing setbacks at work.

Lucky number 11 | Lucky colour Burgundy
Lucky day Sunday



LEO July 23-Aug 22

This week presents a challenge with heightened assertiveness and a push towards relentless productivity. Emotional considerations take a back seat as a demanding workload leaves little room for ease. The path to achieving your goals may seem particularly distant and challenging. Mid-week could bring unexpected changes in personal connections, possibly involving the arrival or departure of a key figure, which might stir up impulsive or forceful reactions. Amidst this whirlwind, there may be moments of confusion leading to precipitous decisions. Consider integrating meditation into your routine to enhance clarity and boost confidence. While your ability to make unbiased decisions stands out, caution is advised against making rushed choices that could negate your efforts.

Lucky number 3 | Lucky colour Crimson
Lucky day Tuesday



SAGITTARIUS Nov 22-Dec 21

This week will be centered on prioritization, self-control, and meticulous planning. The atmosphere is clouded with ambiguity, and misunderstandings are arising between partners. A situation presents itself where clarity and insight are available, yet there is a conscious avoidance of acknowledging the reality due to apprehension that it might worsen circumstances. As the week progresses, you may encounter challenges, potentially including authoritative scrutiny or legal setbacks that could lead to frustration. It's important to focus on your well-being. Hold back from expressing yourself too forcefully and avoid conflicts with adversaries. This period calls for a retreat to reassess and rejuvenate. Take this time to heal and prepare to return rejuvenated, ready to tackle upcoming obstacles. Exercise patience—this is merely a transitory phase.

Lucky number 6 | Lucky colour Lavender
Lucky day Saturday



TAURUS April 20-May 20

This week brings a flurry of positive developments for those born in late April and early May. If you've been eagerly awaiting the completion of a long-standing project, expect to see it come to fruition. Additionally, the possibility of acquiring a new residence through a lottery, scheme, or by moving into a newly constructed home is strong. Social gatherings with family, relatives, and friends will fill your days with joy. Your aura radiates positivity, boosting your confidence to inspiring levels. Your communication skills are particularly effective now, drawing others to your magnetic presence. Expect to be seen as a source of inspiration and a leader within your community, as others are drawn to your cooperative and sincere approach. As the week closes, your spiritual side emerges stronger.

Lucky number 8 | Lucky colour Powder Blue
Lucky day Friday



VIRGO Aug 23-Sep 22

This week promises substantial financial growth and contentment. Excelling in your professional sphere, you effectively apply your expertise in practical ways. Your approach is characterized by responsibility and fairness in interactions, adherence to schedules, and compliance with rules and regulations. This disciplined approach lays the foundation for financial stability, security, and comfort. There's a possibility of receiving significant financial gains, potentially from unexpected sources. Advancements in your career, such as promotions, are likely, which will boost your confidence further. This period is an excellent opportunity for self-reflection and celebrating your achievements. You might find yourself embarking on new professional ventures, such as a new job or project. Harness your resources effectively and embrace a zeal for acquiring and implementing innovative ideas, which could enhance your professional pursuits.

Lucky number 7 | Lucky colour Beige
Lucky day Thursday



CAPRICORN Dec 22-Jan 19

This week heralds a fruitful period, beginning with diligent efforts aimed at enhancing both your professional skills and personal growth. You'll focus on meticulous work, showcasing persistence and intense concentration. The challenges ahead may seem daunting, requiring you to intensify your efforts, yet this commitment will enrich your professional capabilities and broaden your knowledge base. Success will soon follow these dedicated endeavors, allowing you to take pride in your achievements and the tangible results of your hard work. As the week progresses, a period conducive to profound personal healing emerges, offering opportunities for spiritual reconnection and significant emotional recoveries. By week's end, the culmination of these powerful dynamics might facilitate meaningful personal commitments or the deepening of romantic bonds.

Lucky number 18 | Lucky colour Black
Lucky day Wednesday



GEMINI May 21-June 20

This week promises a rich tapestry of experiences encompassing deep emotional fulfillment and an array of satisfying personal interactions. As the days unfold, you'll notice a distinct uptick in your financial situation, with gains accumulating as you move forward. Embrace a leadership role with both moderation and generosity at work; this approach will foster a harmonious and productive atmosphere. Travel also appears on your horizon, potentially to distant shores or via sea, blending business with leisure or providing a delightful getaway with loved ones. Midweek brings a focus on home life, where you'll adeptly juggle professional responsibilities and domestic harmony. As the week draws to a close, you'll reap the rewards of your diligent efforts, enjoying robust health, a surge of creativity, and an overall sense of well-being.

Lucky number 15 | Lucky colour Olive
Lucky day Monday



LIBRA Sep 23-Oct 22

The week begins with a quest to navigate through challenges to reach a successful conclusion. You'll find yourself on the brink of completion, poised to overcome any obstacles that arise. Midweek brings a shift towards emotional connections, encouraging quality time with loved ones. As the week progresses, favorable circumstances emerge for investments in long-term assets. Many will discover themselves in a fortunate phase, with promising opportunities at their doorstep. You'll feel vigorous and buoyant, with a sense of well-being enhancing your outlook. The support and cooperation from family will elevate your confidence. The weekend invites you to enjoy memorable moments with those dear to you, making the most of the joyful atmosphere.

Lucky number 2 | Lucky colour White
Lucky day Monday



AQUARIUS Jan 20-Feb 18

This week heralds a period where aspirations are likely to materialize, bringing an influx of joy, prosperity, and affection. It's a time rich with blessings and favorable outcomes across various aspects of life. The atmosphere is ripe for enhanced organization, sparking creative ideas and heightened intuitive senses. Harness the week's beneficial energies to bolster your intellectual and strategic abilities. In terms of financial, spiritual, and emotional aspects, expect gratifying developments. Connections in relationships are especially significant during this period, aligning smoothly with your goals. Opportunities for new professional ventures or roles may emerge, promising growth and advancement. Overall, your health and influence are robust, supported by effective communication and leadership skills, enhancing your ability to navigate and succeed in various endeavors.

Lucky number 5 | Lucky colour Cream
Lucky day Tuesday



CANCER June 21-July 22

Life is about to take an unexpected turn, bringing a wave of pride and confidence that will have you ready to face the world's challenges. You will find yourself achieving success in an area where you once lost hope. Recognition and envy from others mark your achievements, but those who genuinely wish you well will celebrate your triumphs. This is a time of progress and fulfillment of your true interests. You have overcome a significant struggle, and your achievements are now being publicly celebrated. Joy stems from connections to your past. As the week concludes, you will find comfort in cherished memories of childhood and camaraderie, choosing to spend time with the younger generation and reconnecting with the lighter side of life.

Lucky number 12 | Lucky colour Pink
Lucky day Thursday



SCORPIO Oct 23-Nov 21

This week is highly focused on professional endeavors, with risks presenting themselves as gateways to potential gains. You are brimming with creative energy, enabling you to embrace challenges with confidence and innovative approaches. This is an excellent period to leverage your unique skills for financial success. A significant challenge that has been looming in your thoughts is now within your capacity to overcome with grace and effectiveness. Midweek brings a phase where adhering to the guidance of a respected elder in your family, especially a maternal figure, could prove advantageous. Her stringent standards and wise counsel will likely steer you towards positive outcomes. Enhance your cognitive abilities through intellectual activities such as reading enriching literature and engaging in challenging puzzles, which may also lead to profound revelations in your personal growth journey.

Lucky number 13 | Lucky colour Orange
Lucky day Friday



PISCES Feb 19-March 20

Collaboration and teamwork are crucial for achieving success, fostering enhanced understanding and synergy within professional settings. Acknowledging your self-worth energizes your career and lifestyle with vibrant ideas. The outlook for upcoming opportunities appears promising, with signs pointing towards the success of recent ventures and flourishing business activities. In your professional life, expect potential offers that could advance your position. Effective cooperation and successful negotiations are currently vital. There's also a touch of spirituality in the air. For those anticipating additions to the family, joyful news may soon arrive. Your visionary nature drives you to explore expansive possibilities confidently and fearlessly. As the week concludes, any concerns you have will dissipate, thanks to your ability to tap into your inner strengths.

Lucky number 14 | Lucky colour Indigo
Lucky day Sunday

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C V Srikanth

Anger is natural but fleeting; holding onto it shapes emotions and disrupts peace.

Driving along on a cool morning, a constant honking, and my focus on it got it under my skin and pronto - I was ready to get off the car to confront. My senses compromised. Alternatively - in a similar situation, I shifted my focus to the music in my car. Gave way. All good. Am still in-charge of me - uncompromised with my peace. The difference was the unconscious self-consent to the conscious management of the self.

Anger is capacious, corrupt, and an exaggerative natural human emotion, mostly manipulative and intelligently applied, contaminating our holistic functioning.

The triggers can be many. We often allow them to grow develop over time - unattended and unacknowledged. Broadly speaking there are 10 primary causes of anger

1. Personal loss / Feeling short changed
2. Feeling Not-in-Control
3. Disconnect from Reality / Denial
4. Lack of Acceptability
5. Expectations and Reciprocity
6. Twisted Entitlement
7. Fear / Insecurity
8. Living in Ingratitude / Distorted vision of wants and needs
9. Ego
10. Genetic

Remarkably - Anger, most of the time is a translation or by product of fear, uncertainties and need for control. It is



all about - Inappropriate Attitudes and Lack of acceptance
The average neurological response to anger lasts for just a few seconds. It is the "holding on to" that creates the issue. Goes against the Universal essence

of flowing. It leads to a false sense of our self or situation, making us vulnerable. As a Feeling - lasts Moments
Holding on - converts to an "Emotion" (the nest of negative hormones starts building) ... Minutes

Further can become a "Condition" (The nest transforms to a dwelling) ... Hours
Leading to what medical science calls "Intermittent Explosive disorder" ... Long Term Distortion needing help
Anger changes the cerebral cell structure and wiring. Recurrence causes permanent irreversible changes. The Real you is - naturally far more compassionate, kind and accepting - the instinctive, inherent, innate human nature.
The Bhagavat Gita sums up beautifully how - desire and attachment lead to anger and this further leads to clouded judgement, loss of our discerning abilities and debilitation of thought. The "Yaksha Prashna" ... (Aaranyaka Parva of the Mahabharata), has a couple of answers by Yudhishtira - The Invincible enemy - Anger
Renunciation of greed, anger, untruth lead to peace.
The "Chaos Theory / The Butterfly Effect" is a classic example of a cascading effect in other life segments. A Butterfly fluttering its wings in Brazil can cause a tornado in Texas a month later!! This incredulity reveals the horror of the Butterfly effect.
"Control" of emotions eventually manoeuvres to disturb something else. It is about consistent, conscious, and authentic efforts to acknowledge and address it ... "Managing" is the key.

There are NO Thumb Rules. Coping mechanisms are individualistic but can include ...

- ❑ Let go. Go with the flow
 - ❑ Naivety is to think, we control everything. Maturity is to realise what we control and what controls us
 - ❑ Things happen for a reason. Trust the Universe and Respond with Gratitude
 - ❑ Have the Faith. Recognize You are the product of your Karmas
 - ❑ Stop embracing upsetting thoughts. Step Back. Observe
 - ❑ Accept. The Universe is "Perfectly Imperfect."
 - ❑ Being a Perfectionist is a Unrealistic
 - ❑ Everything is Unique. Don't become a yardstick
 - ❑ Be Mindful. Be in Now
 - ❑ Be Picky with your battles. Learn to Ignore
 - ❑ Practise Snapping out. Shift attention to the pleasant and fulfilling
 - ❑ There is always a trade-off. Keep expectations real and moderate
 - ❑ Stop Correcting the world. Start Correcting yourself
 - ❑ We are Not entitled to anything in the outer world. Only to our Inner Universe
- Anger has a character
If "You" manage it ... it can be Creative
If "It" controls you ... you become Destructive
Happiness - Unhappiness Coexist.
Sagacity - Stupidity Coexist. Accept and Balance it

Post Perth, Aussie bowlers likely to tweak their bowling plans: Boland

PTI ■ CANBERRA

There will be few tweaks in Australia's bowling plans against Yashasvi Jaiswal and KL Rahul for the day-night Test in Adelaide after their defeat in Perth, revealed Scott Boland, who is set to replace injured Josh Hazlewood in the playing eleven. Hazlewood has been ruled out with a side strain and 35-year-old Boland, who has played 10 Tests since his Test debut in 2021, is top contender to bowl those hard lengths against an Indian batting line-up oozing with confidence after their second innings effort in the opening game. "We've spoken as a team about our plans for all the different Indian batters. I won't tell you those, but

we've got pretty set plans. They might have a little bit of a tweak after the guys have seen them again from Perth," Boland told reporters after the first day's play between India and Australian Prime Minister's XI was washed out. Jaiswal (161) and Rahul (77) added 201 runs in a record opening stand on Australian soil followed by Virat Kohli's 30th Test hundred. "Obviously (Yashasvi) Jaiswal batted really well there. KL Rahul batted well in the second innings as well and really dugged in. "So we'll probably have a chat over the next week and our plans might slightly change, but I'm pretty confident what we did in the first games was good," Boland said as much without letting out elaborate plans.



The troika of Pat Cummins, Mitchell Starc and Hazlewood couldn't make much of an impact in India's second innings but Boland defended the three senior stars. "I think our bowlers bowled really well as well. Maybe the only difference was that the Indian bowlers got a really nice long break between their first innings and second innings where our break wasn't as long." "Thought my chance has passed" Boland can't be held wrong if at a certain time during the last season the pacer felt that he won't be able to make a comeback since Starc, Cummins and Hazlewood have been so dominant at home. "Obviously those guys (the three fast bowlers) have

been so resilient, they don't miss too many and no one must give up their spot at any stage," Boland said. "And they were so dominant that last summer (even when) they weren't bowling a heap of overs, but we're still able to win most of those games, so yeah, I probably thought maybe the opportunity had passed." Boland credited his intense rehabilitation for getting him back in the national reckoning. "I have worked really hard in the off-season to get my body in a spot where I am confident that if I get another chance I will be able to perform for Australia again." "I just knew if I put the conversations I had with Ron [Andrew McDonald, the head coach] and George [Bailey, the chief selector]

over the pre-season - when I was rehabbing a lot was to try and get my body in the right spot - that I didn't want to rush anything and then re-injure something and then push back my return to play date. So, we took it pretty slow with my rehab." "There are chats but no panic as such" Boland accepted that individual performances will be discussed but the Australian dressing room isn't panicky after the heavy defeat in the opening Test. "There's definitely no panic stations in our change rooms. There's obviously going to be some chats around individual performances and everyone wants to perform really well every game they play. "But yeah, it's like, we've lost one game," he added.

Sindhu cruises past Hooda to reach Syed Modi final

PTI ■ LUCKNOW

Two-time Olympic medallist PV Sindhu cruised into the women's singles final with a dominating straight-game win over fellow Indian Unnati Hooda at the Syed Modi International Super 300 badminton tournament here on Saturday. Top seed Sindhu outclassed the 17-year-old Hooda 21-12 21-9 in just 36 minutes in the semifinal. Hooda struggled to challenge Sindhu, committing a series of unforced errors that allowed her illustrious opponent to maintain control throughout the match. "I am happy with today's performance. From the beginning, I maintained the lead. I was just trying out a few strokes and overall, I was confident with the way I was playing," Sindhu said after the match. "I think Unnati played her best, but I didn't give her a chance to overtake me. I was leading from the beginning to the end. She is an upcoming player, and I wish her all the very best. "I need to go back and prepare for tomorrow because it's not going to be easy. From the beginning, I need to give my best," Sindhu added.



A former world champion, Sindhu, currently ranked 18th, will face either Thailand's Lalinrat Chaiwan or China's Wu Luo Yu in the final as she chases her third Syed Modi International title. Earlier, India's mixed doubles pair of Tanisha Crasto and Dhruv Kapila advanced to the final with a

convincing straight-game victory over China's Zhi Hong Zhou and Jia Yi Yang. The fifth-seeded Indians secured a 21-16, 21-15 win in the 42-minute semifinal. They will meet the winner of the other semifinal between Chinese duo of Pin Yi Liao and Ke Xin Huang and Thailand's sixth-seeded pair Dechapol Puavaranukroh and Supissara Paewsampran. Sindhu's semifinal contest saw her gradually take control as she moved to a 5-3 lead with a precise cross-court drop shot, while Hooda initially kept pace with well-placed pushes and drops. However, the 17-year-old's errors, particularly in the length of her lifts, allowed Sindhu to lead 11-8 at the break. Hooda's determination to stay in rallies often resulted in smashes and drops going wide. Sindhu extended her lead to 15-8 without relying on her trademark baseline smashes. Unforced errors continued to plague Hooda, enabling Sindhu to close out the first game comfortably. After the change of sides, Sindhu continued to dominate the

proceedings, surging to 8-3 lead before extending it to 11-4 at the interval. She continued her aggressive play with a smash, an overhead cross-court drop, and a body smash, taking the score to 18-7. Hooda saved one of Sindhu's 12 match points but ultimately faltered with another error, handing Sindhu the match. Reflecting further on her game, Sindhu said: "I am definitely happy with the way I am going. Definitely, there is a scope for a lot of improvement... It's not just that if we finish training or if we are at the top, we don't have to train. Every day is a new process, and I am doing that." Addressing her recent struggles, including her Paris Olympics campaign, Sindhu said, "I know Paris was not a good one for me. I have tried my best, but it doesn't matter. I need to get back stronger. So, I am working on myself." Sindhu, who has been working with coaches Anup Sridhar and Korea's Lee Hyun-il, also spoke about adapting her fitness regimen. "Every athlete has a different style of fitness.

Williamson makes another half-century but England dominate on day 3

AP ■ CHRISTCHURCH (NEW ZEALAND)

Kane Williamson completed his second half-century of the match and passed 9,000 Test runs on Saturday as he led New Zealand's faltering resistance to England's control on the third day of the first Test. Williamson followed his first innings 93 with 61 and was one of five batsmen to fall before New Zealand erased England's 151-run first innings lead. At stumps, New Zealand was 155-6, four runs ahead and with only bowlers yet to bat. Daryl Mitchell was 31 not out and Nathan Smith was on one. Brydon Carse had 3-22 and seven wickets for the match. England applied Bazball principles to take charge of the match almost from the resumption Saturday, dashing past New Zealand's

first innings of 348 and building a commanding first innings lead at almost six runs per over. Harry Brook resumed at 132 and went on to 171 in a 159-run partnership with Ben Stokes who was 37 not out overnight and finished with 80. Dashing late contributions from Gus Atkinson who made 48 from 26 balls and Carse who made 33 from 24 with three monstrous sixes piled more pain on New Zealand late in its innings as it made 499 all out. In total, England added 180 runs in 33 overs Saturday at a tempo set by Brook who posted his seventh century and third-highest score in tests and Stokes who reached his 35th half century from 105 balls, then added his next 30 runs from 41 deliveries. New Zealand then lost both openers, Tom Latham (1) and Devon Conway (8), with

only 23 runs on the board and Rachin Ravindra (24) with 46 runs still needed to erase England's lead. Ravindra continues to show enormous promise but was out to rash shots in both innings. Williamson provided an example of application to the rest of the New Zealand top order, continuing in his usual unflappable manner even after he was struck on the helmet by Stokes when on 26. In contrast, Ravindra was lured into an unnecessary shot at a short ball by Carse, knowing that the trap had been set and was sprung when he was caught in the deep by Jacob Bethell. Williamson passed 9,000 test runs in his 103rd test at an average of 54 when he reached 26. He went on to a half century from 74 balls when New Zealand was 117-3.

Unfair to judge Gambhir so early in his coaching role: Jadeja

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Former India middle-order batter Ajay Jadeja on Saturday defended head coach Gautam Gambhir from the criticism he has received following the 0-3 drubbing against New Zealand, saying it's "unfair" given the short time he has been in the new role. Gambhir, the hero of the 2011 World Cup title triumph, took over the reins of the India team in July after Rahul Dravid's tenure ended. Following a bright start against Sri Lanka in the T20I series, India lost the ODI series to the home side. The Test team then thrashed Bangladesh 2-0 before a nightmare outing against New Zealand put Gambhir under massive scrutiny. "I think you are being unfair to him... If you will start judging people on the basis of their coaching role or whatever way it is being looked at, it is too short a time to for people to be judged," Jadeja told PTI Videos in an exclusive interview on the sidelines of FICCI Turf event here on Saturday. "If you are not convinced that he is good, then one performance here or there will be able to convince anyone. I don't think it is the time to judge him, it is the time we should enjoy him,"



added Jadeja, known for his exploits in the 50-over game where he scored over 5000 runs in 196 ODIs. India's massive 295-run win against Australia in the first Border-Gavaskar Test at Perth following the no-show against the Kiwis has come as a huge morale-booster for the side and Jadeja felt Gambhir should not be judged within six months of his appointment. "So, there are phases and it will come, sometimes you win and sometimes you lose. So, I won't go into that direction and start judging him

(Gambhir) in six months. "You knew what you were asking for and what you were getting. He is a very clear-cut person and he has made it clear throughout his life. So, what you are seeing now is what everyone expected of him to do." Jadeja said that regular Test skipper Rohit Sharma's return for the second Test at Adelaide from December 6 after missing the opening game will boost India's confidence. "Him (Rohit Sharma) coming back to the team will surely boost India's confidence, for

sure. He is a leader, when the chips were down, team was going down, he stood up there as the leader and now when the team is going up, he will be again there as the leader." Asked whether KL Rahul and Rohit should swap batting slots in the second Test after the former had a formidable outing in the Perth game, Jadeja said, "I have no details of what the team is thinking right now, no views on who should bat at what number. Rohit Sharma has always been an asset to the side wherever he bats."

Southampton denied by VAR, Brighton rises to second in Premier League

AP ■ BRIGHTON (ENGLAND)


Southampton was denied a priceless victory by a controversial VAR decision and ended up drawing with host Brighton 1-1 in the English Premier League. Kaoru Mitoma spectacularly headed Brighton into a first half lead and Flynn Downes hammered the equaliser an hour in. Then minutes later teammate Cameron Archer converted a cross from Saints substitute Ryan Fraser. A VAR check of more than four minutes eventually




decided Archer was onside but then penalized Adam

Armstrong, who was offside but did not touch the ball, for

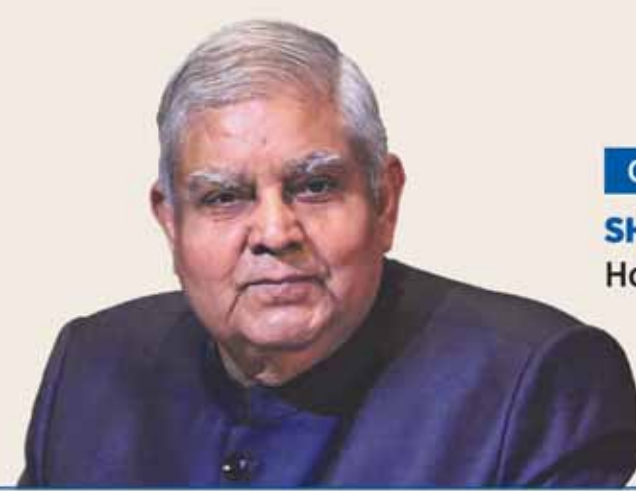
interfering with goalkeeper Bart Verbruggen. "I find it hard to accept," Southampton manager Russell Martin told broadcaster Sky Sports. "We were told it affects Bart Verbruggen's ability, and if Adam's run moved Verbruggen from his position then I would understand the decision, but he hasn't moved. I cannot see how it has affected the goalkeeper. "It is still human error in my opinion. The mistake is, it's not clear and obvious enough to be corrected. The on-field decision carries weight. I am frustrated."

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