

Mahayuti's win gives BJP shot in the arm ahead of city polls

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

With a victory secured in Maharashtra, the BJP received a shot in the arm ahead of the Delhi Assembly polls next year, with its local leaders saying the party is now set to dethrone the AAP government in the national capital with a massive win.

Even as the signs of the landslide victory of the party-led alliance emerged with counting of votes on 288 Assembly seats in Maharashtra, the BJP announced a "Parivartan Yatra" to end the 10 year-rule of Aam Aadmi Party in Delhi. BJP president Virendra Sachdeva said the Maharashtra election results were a stamp of public approval to the "Modi magic."

"The recent victory in Haryana polls and now, party's landslide victories in Maharashtra and the bypolls in Uttar Pradesh are big morale boosters for us. The party workers encouraged by these results will work with redoubled energy to wipe out the era of



corruption led by AAP in Delhi," Sachdeva said. He said the party will launch a "Parivartan Yatra" soon in Delhi, and that it has formed a nine-member committee headed by Satish Upadhyay to firm up the plan. A confident Delhi BJP posted an animation video on its X account with caption "The Lotus will bloom in Delhi also" and a background voice of late Atal Bihari Vajpayee saying "The darkness will wane, the Sun will rise and the lotus will bloom..." The BJP last won Assembly polls in Delhi way back in 1993.

The Arvind Kejriwal-led AAP has dominated the affairs in Delhi for the last one decade, registering back-to-back landslide victories in 2015 and 2020 elections. The BJP was routed both times, managing to scrape through with just three seats in 2015 and eight in 2020. This time, however, the party is confident of staging a comeback and end a long wait at the helm of affairs in the city. Another party functionary asserted that the signs of a "far better" performance of the BJP in the upcoming assembly polls

are clear.

"We won all the seven Lok Sabha seats this year and got more votes than AAP in 52 Assembly segments out of 70," said the Delhi BJP leader.

Also, the image of Kejriwal as an honest, capable leader has received a "major dent" with a string of corruption allegations like liquor scam in which he went to jail, "Sheshmahal" scam, and the problems faced by the people due to bad roads, water shortage, pollution, dilapidated public transport among others, he claimed.

South Delhi BJP MP Ramvir Singh Bidhuri said that the stunning performance of the party in Maharashtra and bypolls in UP and elsewhere proves that people have chosen a path of progress led down by the Prime Minister Narendra Modi. He congratulated the people of Maharashtra for the "historic victory" of the BJP-led Mahayuti in the assembly polls under Prime Minister Narendra Modi's leadership and said the government remains

committed to the state's holistic progress and the aspirations of its people. Leader of the Opposition in Delhi Assembly, Vijender Gupta said the "unprecedented and historic victory" in Maharashtra of the BJP-led alliance is a testament to the welfare-oriented policies of Prime Minister Narendra Modi and the capable leadership of BJP.

Gupta said that the "grand victory" symbolised the "relentless hard work, indomitable enthusiasm, and dedication" of every BJP worker, who took the party's "principles and development agenda" to every household.

The Mahayuti alliance according to updates was headed to a landslide victory leading on more than 220 seats out of 288 against the Maha Vikas Aghadi. As per the latest figures from the Election Commission, the BJP has so far won nine seats and is leading in 125, the Shiv Sena has won three and is ahead in 53 seats, while the NCP has won two and is leading in 37 seats.

Delhi Govt mandates colour-coded stickers on vehicles to combat pollution

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

Delhi government's transport department has mandated vehicle owners in the National Capital Territory to affix colour-coded stickers on their vehicles to help identify fuel types to combat rising pollution levels.

According to a public notice issued by the department, the directive is in line with the Supreme Court's order dated August 12, 2018, and subsequent amendments to Rule 50 of the Central Motor Vehicles Rules, 1989.

The vehicle owners in the National Capital Territory (NCT) of Delhi will now be required to install chromium-based hologram stickers, the notice read.

The colour-coded stickers are designed to assist enforcement personnel in visually identifying a vehicle's fuel type during road checks. The rule applies to both new vehicles, effective from April 1, 2019, and old vehicles, registered before March 31, 2019. Vehicle



owners must ensure the stickers are affixed on their windshields to comply with legal requirements, it said. Owners of older vehicles are advised to contact their respective vehicle dealers for sticker installation, it read. Additionally, an online booking facility is available for home installation of High-Security Registration Plates (HSRP) along with the fuel-based colour-coded stickers through the Society of Indian Automobile Manufacturers (SIAM)

website or via the Transport Department's portal, the statement said.

Non-compliance will attract penalties under the Motor Vehicles Act and Rules, and vehicle owners are urged to act promptly to avoid prosecution and ensure their vehicles meet the regulatory standards, it added. The stickers contain details like the registration number, registering authority, a laser-branded PIN, and the engine and chassis numbers of the vehicles.

1.64 lakh challans issued for vehicles lacking PUC certificates October onwards

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

More than 1.64 lakh challans amounting to Rs 164 crore were issued in the national capital against the vehicles lacking valid Pollution Under Control, or PUC, certificates from October 1 to November 22. According to traffic police data, a total of 3.87 lakh such vehicles owners were challaned for the offence this year. The challan for plying without PUCC is Rs 10,000.

Police have impounded 6,531 10-year-old petrol and 15-year-old diesel vehicles this winter season, it stated. Police also prosecuted 872 vehicles carrying construction and demolition waste and other allied material without proper covering this winter season, while the numbers stood at 1,413 for the whole year till November 22. The fine for the offence is Rs 20,000. Special Commissioner of Police (traffic) Ajay Chaudhary said, "The significant



increase in challans reflects our commitment to ensuring compliance with pollution norms. Strict enforcement is necessary to curb vehicular pollution and contribute to improving air quality in the city."

Since the implementation of GRAP-4 on November 18, a total of 20,743 challans were issued for not having PUC. Police have also impounded 736 overage vehicles during this period. Since October 15, a total of 13,762 non-destined trucks approaching Delhi were diverted through Eastern and Western Peripheral expressways. While the numbers stood at 2,944 since the implementation of GRAP-4, according to the data.

Rising city pollution levels impact health of animals

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

Rising pollution levels in Delhi are impacting pets and street animals, causing health issues and behavioural changes that have concerned pet owners and animal welfare activists, veterinarians said. Many animals are experiencing respiratory problems, with symptoms such as coughing, sneezing, vomiting, diarrhea, and chest congestion attributed to the city's worsening air quality, they said.

Sumit Nagar, a consulting veterinary doctor with the Delhi Forest and Wildlife Department, said that there has been an increase in cases of respiratory distress among animals. Animals face issues similar to humans, including suffocation, lung damage, and respiratory inflammation. During Diwali, there are additional cases of shock from noise pollution and burns, particularly in monkeys that accidentally touch wires, he said.

Pet owners are taking measures such as limiting outdoor walks to protect their pets from toxic air, but this has led to behavioural issues like pent-up energy and aggression in some dogs. "The morning smog makes it difficult to take my dogs for walks. Exposure to toxic air causes them to cough and vomit," Sujata Bhattacharya, a resident of Pitampura said.

"Since masks are not an option for them, we have reduced outdoor time, but this has made them more aggressive. Outdoor activities are crucial for dogs to release energy, but even bathroom



breaks expose them to harmful air," she said. Cat owners have also observed changes, with many reporting their pets experiencing eye irritation and sneezing while avoiding outdoor spaces. Ranjana Mukherjee, a pet owner from Gurugram said that her three cats have been sneezing and suffering from eye irritation. She said her cats have stopped going outdoors, which is unusual for them and they seem low on energy due to the prevailing conditions.

For street animals, the situation is even worse. Reduced visibility during smoggy mornings and nights has led to an increase in hit-and-run cases, some animal activists claimed. "Low visibility makes driving dangerous, and street animals often fall victim to accidents. Without shelter or protection, they are especially vulnerable," said Kanika Diwan, an animal welfare activist. Street animal feeders are also facing challenges. "The number of feeders has decreased because of the pollution. There's little awareness about how poor air quality impacts animals. Governments often ignore their issues because animals don't vote," said Gaurav, a feeder from Dwarka.

Nation Remembers
Hind Di Chaadar
Sri Guru Tegh Bahadur Ji
on his
Shaheedi Diwas
November 24, 2024

“गुरु तेग बहादुर जी के बलिदान ने भारत की अनेक पीढ़ियों को अपनी संस्कृति के मान-सम्मान के लिए जीने और मर-मिट जाने की प्रेरणा दी है।”
- नरेन्द्र मोदी

Information, Public Relations & Languages Department, Haryana
www.prharyana.gov.in | Follow us on [social media icons] | @diprharyana

Team India take commanding 218-run lead against Australia

PTI ■ PERTH

Yashasvi Jaiswal combined game awareness with perfect shot selection while KL Rahul remained technically unflappable in an unbroken opening stand of 172 as India looked set to bat Australia out of the match with an overall lead of 218 runs on the second day of the opening Test here. After skipper Jasprit Bumrah's game-changing 11th five-wicket haul decimated Australia for 104, young Jaiswal (90 batting, 193 balls) and seasoned Rahul (62 batting, 154 balls) decided to grind it out with some old fashioned Test match batting by waiting for the loose deliveries and respecting good fast bowling. The Indians showed their compact defense by scoring 88 runs in 31 overs during the post-tea session as Jaiswal inched towards a coveted ton on his maiden outing on Australian soil. With enough time at their disposal and signs of cracks appearing on the surface,

this is going to be India's Test match to lose. The way Rahul wore down the Australian attack was a sight to behold. There was no chatter from the slip cordon and at one point, the stitches of the Kookaburra came out. The live grass died by the second afternoon and the seam movement also went out of equation making batting easier. But no one can take away any credit from the two who were hardly troubled except for a mix-up that could have led to Rahul's run-out. Jaiswal also showed that he had learnt his lessons from the first innings and curbed his urge to drive on the up initially, which was the best part about his batting. Each of his seven fours and two sixes were well-executed shots. Once he had defended enough deliveries, the Australian pacers didn't have any option but to try either short or full length which he utilised well. The whip over mid-wicket to hit Starc for one-bounce four and then induce a grin from



the pacer by telling him "you are slow," spoke volumes about how fearless the current generation of Indian cricketers is. In the final session, he flicked him for good measure for a maximum. Rahul's back-drive off Pat Cummins can easily be called the shot of the match but it was heartening to see

Jaiswal put in a big stride forward while driving Mitchell Starc through covers apart from getting under the bounce and playing the ramp shot. In case of Rahul, he kept a very loose bottom-hand and that helped with the deliveries, even the ones that took the thickish edge only to fall way in front of the slip cordon. There was a spell of play in the post-tea session when Indians were kept quiet by Nathan Lyon but neither Jaiswal nor Rahul ran out of patience. Jaiswal's half-century came off 123 balls, his slowest in 15 Tests and spoke volumes about his adaptability. For Rahul, it was about forgetting the unfortunate dismissal on Friday and concentrate, which he did splendidly. Any target above 300 would be very difficult to chase on this track and Washington Sundar can come into play if those cracks open up, not to forget the three quicks who can use the variable bounce to good effect. In the morning, India captain Bumrah deservedly got his 11th five-wicket haul while debutant Harshit Rana bowled a fiery opening spell to dismiss the hosts for 104 at the stroke of lunch despite a stiff last-wicket resistance from Mitchell Starc and Josh Hazlewood. Starc (26 off 113 balls) shielded Hazlewood (7 not out off 31 balls) admirably during their 25-run last-wicket stand that lasted 18 overs. The day began with Bumrah (5/30 in 18 overs) getting one to rear up from back of the length and Carey's edge carried at a good height to Rishabh Pant behind stumps. The skipper's celebration was understated as he purposefully strode back to his bowling mark even before Nathan Lyon had arrived. At the other end, the burly Harshit Rana (3/48 in 15.2 overs) carried on from where he had left off on the opening day. The rookie speedster used more short balls, and one such well-directed delivery accounted for Lyon, who was pounced at gully by KL Rahul.



I'll make Deepika world's best drag-flicker: Harendra

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Indian women's hockey team's chief coach Harendra Singh says fast-rising striker Deepika has the potential to be a brilliant drag-flicker as well and helping her realise that potential will be one of his primary targets along with ensuring that the team's fitness levels never fall on his watch. Unlike most dragflickers in the world, who are defenders, Deepika is a striker and showed her brilliance with field goals in the recently-concluded Asian Champions Trophy in Rajgir, Bihar. She emerged as the highest goal-scorer in the tournament with 11 strikes, mostly field efforts. "I am not concerned about PCs because I know we are working and we are going to eradicate this problem very soon. I know we are looking at instant coffee from Deepika but I am sure I will make her one of the best drag-flickers of the world in women's hockey just like I made Harman," Harendra told PTI in an exclusive interview referring to his stint with men's team and the work done with its star captain Harmanpreet Singh.

"We need to give her some time, she is just 21. She has already become a star. She is a good scorer from field play, and she will become a very good drag-flicker as well," he said. Harendra described Deepika as "special" but he said her approach to drag-flick needs to be worked on. "I am sure very soon she will get the results," he said. "Mentality matters and her mentality has changed and she wants to be the best player. But it's always a process, we can't jump so fast. I am working on small details with her." The chief coach, however, was satisfied with the performance of the players in the ACT and said it is just the first step towards his mission for the 2028 Los Angeles Olympics. "Whatever was the target, we have achieved but there are a lot of things which we need to achieve. We have improved on our attacking style, defence and circle penetrations. Whatever we took shots on goals were quality ones. "Paris is past...There was no point sitting and crying over it, rather it was important to move forward and work on the areas where we needed to

improve," he said. "We had one-on-one fruitful meetings with the players where we got in-depth details on all aspects and made a chart about what needs to be done and worked on what was in our hands." Fitness is one area which Harendra had emphasised on since taking over in April this year and he is quite happy with the results although he feels there is still scope for improvement. "The icing in the cake was the one-week camp in the INA (Indian Naval Academy) which Hockey India provided us. It played big role in team-building and team unity. But to be frank the journey has just started, we can't be happy," he said. "Fitness is the biggest concern. The first day I joined, I made it clear that whoever you may be, how bigger players you might be but if you are not fit you won't be part of the side. Whoever is not fit can't board this bus, this was my clear directive." Harendra said his vision is LA 2028 and earning a direct ticket to the quadrennial event through the World Cup, to be jointly hosted by Belgium and Netherlands and the Asian Games in Japan, both in 2026.

Harshit Rana has potential to become multi-format bowler for India: Coach Negi

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Harshit Rana's meteoric rise might have come as a surprise to many but not his coach in his formative years, NS Negi, who has seen the strapping youngster mature into a pacer with the "potential to become a multi-format bowler for India." Starting as a net bowler with Gujarat Titans in 2022, Harshit played a key role in guiding Kolkata Knight Riders to IPL glory in 2024, and announced his arrival on the international stage with a dream debut in the opening Border-Gavaskar Test at Perth, where he returned figures of 48 for 3 in the first innings. Negi, Harshit's coach from his U19 days in Delhi, couldn't hide his joy on seeing his ward's exploits on a bouncy and seaming Perth pitch. "Harshit is a very talented bowler. He had been bowling extremely well in the last two seasons of the Ranji Trophy. Last year, when I was the



fielding coach of the Delhi Ranji team, he made his debut and bowled extremely well. "It is just the beginning; he is one such player who should go on and play at least 70-80 Test matches for India... In fact he should go on and play all three formats for India," Negi told PTI Videos in an interview. Rana inclusion in the side raised many eyebrows given the fact that he had

just 10-odd first-class games under his belt. But Negi felt this was the right time to debut him in Tests given his amazing bowling statistics. In 10 first-class matches, Harshit has taken 43 wickets at 24.00 and has an impressive batting average of 42.63, including a blazing unbeaten 122 against North-East Zone. Negi and Rana met in 2018 when the fast bowler was selected to play for the Delhi U19 team. Negi, who has also been associated as a fielding coach with Gujarat Titans in the IPL, said that Harshit always had the drive to bowl fast but gradual improvements in fitness played a big role in his success. "In 2018, when I was the head coach of the Delhi U19 team, I noted that he had a very smooth action and a good rhythm. He could bat well. He worked on his fitness and pace and gradually improved as a bowler. "The most important thing is that he is a fighter. When I first picked

Mayank (Yadav) and Harshit in the team, they were both very raw but promising. I just hope that he continues to work on his fitness and gradually keeps increasing his pace," said Negi. Negi believes that Harshit has the ability to come good with the bat lower down the order. His advice to the youngster is to learn as much as possible from pace spearhead Jasprit Bumrah and keep bowling to his strengths to succeed in international cricket. "He is a good batter as well and in the coming years may perform well with the bat as well. He is someone who can easily score 30-40 odd runs batting lower down the order for India. "Harshit should keep a check on his fitness and try to learn a lot from the modern-day legend, Jasprit Bumrah. He just needs to back his strengths while bowling and that will help him succeed in the international cricket... He has the talent, bounce and pace," concluded Negi.

Tilak Varma makes record-setting hundred; Shreyas smashes ton ahead of IPL auction

PTI ■ MUMBAI

Tilak Varma became the first batter ever to notch three successive hundreds in T20s, while Shreyas Iyer underlined his credentials with a smooth century ahead of the IPL mega auction, as the two Indian batters hogged the limelight in the first round of the Syed Mushtaq Ali Trophy on Saturday. In a Group A match, Tilak, who made hundreds recently against South Africa at Centurion and Johannesburg, added one more three-figure knock to the list against Meghalaya in Rajkot. The left-hander made 151 off just 67 balls with 14 fours and 10 sixes to guide Hyderabad to 248 for four in 20 overs. In the process, he also became the first Indian male cricketer to score a 150-plus score in T20s. India woman batter Kiran Navgire had made a 162 for Nagaland against



Arunachal Pradesh in the senior Women's T20 Trophy in 2022. Opener Tanmay Agarwal supported his skipper Tilak with a 55 off 23

balls. Anikethreddy and Tanay Thyagarajan shared seven wickets among them as Hyderabad bundled

out their rivals for 69 to celebrate a massive 179-run victory. Shreyas shines Shreyas, who was released by Kolkata Knight Riders despite leading them to the IPL 2024 title, made a timely reminder about his skills with an unbeaten 57-ball 130 (11x4, 10x6) for Mumbai against Goa in a Group E match. Shreyas' hundred led Mumbai to 250 for four, but Goa made a spirited chase before ending up at 224 for eight, going down by 26 runs. Suyash Prabhudesai was their top-scorer with a 52 off 36 balls. Brief scores Hyderabad 248/4; 20 overs (Tilak Varma 151, Tanmay Agarwal 55) beat Meghalaya: 69; 15.1 overs (G Anikethreddy 4/11, Tanay Thyagarajan 3/15) by 179 runs. Mumbai 250/4; 20 overs (Shreyas Iyer 130 not out) beat Goa 224/8; 20 overs (Suyash Prabhudesai 52, Vikash Singh 47 not out; Suyansh Shedge 2/18) by 26 runs.

Australia coach McDonald surprised about behaviour of wicket on day two

PTI ■ PERTH

The home team bowlers did not put a foot wrong but the pitch dried up quite quickly at the Optus stadium on the second day, eventually helping the Indian batters, reckons Australia head coach Andrew McDonald. India opens Yashasvi Jaiswal (90) and KL Rahul (62) frustrated the hosts with their dogged unbeaten 172-run stand that has put the game in firm control of the visitors, who now lead by 218 runs. While the wickets fell in heap on the opening day with as many as 17 batters getting out, only three Australian tail-enders were dismissed on the second day. "The surface looked considerably dry today. It dried out fairly quickly," said McDonald during the post-

day press conference. "We thought there may have been a little bit more there. So, I suppose if you want to say that we were a little bit surprised, yeah, there wasn't as much seam movement or swing. "The bowlers were presenting the seam in a similar fashion to they were yesterday. So I think the conditions may have had some say in that." McDonald said there was hardly any assistance for seam or swing, compared to the first day. "If you look at the seam and swing, it was down comparative to yesterday. Yesterday was difficult work, I thought KL (Rahul) and Jaiswal played extremely well also. "You need to ride your luck a little bit. Our guys got the balls in the right areas, and there was some plays and



misses as well, so anything can happen if you get some edges on that. It could be a totally different day, but I think the conditions have changed, I'll state that," he said. "In terms of the way that we bowled, I don't think it was too dissimilar, potentially early on we may have been a fraction short, if it was to be critical, but I thought they went about their work well, it could have been a different day." However, McDonald does not think Australia do not stand a chance in the series-opener, pinning hopes on the nature of Test cricket that keeps both

the teams in hunt till the end. "You've got the driver's seat at the moment, but that's not to say that tomorrow can't change very quickly. Test cricket ebbs and flows, we've all been a part of a game when you've been well ahead of the game and it can twist and turn, so we've got to get to work on what it looks like for us tomorrow morning," he said. "It's about 20 odd overs to the second new ball, we've got to work out a way to navigate through a few batters before that second new ball arrives and that could be our entry point back into the game." He though admitted that they have to "get tactics right." "If we're too aggressive then the scoreboard runs and then you put yourself right up against it. So it's a real combination about controlling the tempo of the

game and creating opportunities within that." From the situation that India have batted themselves into, it is real a possibility that the hosts maybe looking at stiff chase of beyond 400 but McDonald would prefer not to look that far ahead. "We're not looking that far ahead, we've got 10 wickets to take first, so that's our first focus. No, no targets, clearly 10 wickets to get, first priority, then we'll move from there." Talking about the frantic first day, the Australia coach admitted that it could be due to the nerves the players of both the teams felt due to the occasion. "No doubt both the teams would have had some nerves there leading into a big series, so there might have been some error on the back of that, but I think as a batting unit when you get a look at a

wicket and then obviously your bowlers go about their work and you get a second up opportunity, I think it looks a little bit different in terms of your mindset, your knowing what to expect and you can work from there." McDonald also backed Marnus Labuschagne, who consumed 52 balls for his two runs in the first innings. "He's working his game as hard as ever. There's no doubt he can learn some lessons from the first innings, like I think both teams' batters. "So he'll be the same in the nets this morning, working through what his method's going to be in the second innings. And clearly, your mindset changes based upon the conditions as well. So the game plan from the first innings is going to look different from the second innings."



THE SABARMATI REPORT



THE FILM UNVEILS THE INFLUENCE OF POLITICAL CLOUT AND JOURNALISTIC INTEGRITY IN THE WAKE OF A HISTORICAL TRAGEDY, SAYS **ABHI SINGHAL**

Directed initially by *Ranjan Chandel* and later helmed by *Dheeraj Sarna*, *The Sabarmati Report* intricately explores the interplay of political dominance and media influence against the backdrop of one of India's most contentious events—the *Godhra train* burning incident of February 27, 2002. This film, inspired by real-life events surrounding the *Sabarmati Express* tragedy, delivers a compelling narrative steeped in investigative journalism, political

dynamics, and the moral dilemmas of media reporting. The movie begins with an electrifying depiction of the bustling newsroom environment, immediately pulling viewers into the heart of the journalistic world. The talented cast, led by *Vikrant Massey* as *Samar Kumar*, *Raashii Khanna* as *Amrita Gill*, and *Riddhi Dogra* as *Manika Rajpurohit*, along with *Barkha Singh's* impactful cameo as *Shloka*, infuses life into the gripping storyline. The plot meticulously recreates the harrowing events of the

Godhra train incident, where 59 individuals, predominantly Hindu pilgrims and karsevaks returning from Ayodhya, tragically perished in a devastating fire. With a meticulous portrayal of the horrific aftermath, the movie confronts viewers with the sheer magnitude of the tragedy while shedding light on the media's struggle to strike a balance between truth and sensationalism. *Riddhi Dogra's* portrayal of *Manika Rajpurohit*, an English news anchor with an air of arrogance and confidence in her abilities,

adds depth to the media-focused narrative. The first half captivates audiences with its vivid storytelling and intricate character in a devastating fire. However, it is post-intermission where the film takes a gripping turn, delving into the core of the investigative efforts to uncover the truth behind the train-burning case. *Vikrant Massey* delivers a masterful performance as *Samar Kumar*, transitioning from an idealistic journalist to a relentless investigator with remarkable ease. His character's transformation is

riveting, offering a nuanced look at the challenges faced by those who dare to question authority. *Raashii Khanna* shines as *Amrita Gill*, a determined intern navigating the salted waters of media politics. Her journey alongside *Samar* not only drives the narrative forward but also marks a significant milestone in her acting career. While the film boasts strong performances and a compelling storyline, it does falter slightly in its attempt to inject humour into serious moments, which at times feels forced and disrupts the

intensity. The background score, however, compensates by effectively amplifying the gravity of each investigative sequence, adding a layer of immersion for the audience. *The Sabarmati Report* follows in the footsteps of recent titles like *The Kashmir Files* and *The Kerala Story* of having hits and more profits. The film has a crafting a fiery and provocative narrative designed to resonate with viewers on an emotional level. However, it stands apart by striving to present a nuanced perspective on media

ethics, to take out the truth and the complex interplay of truth and political agendas. With good performances which could have been improved while playing the characters, a thought-provoking storyline, and a reflection on the moral quandaries of journalism, *The Sabarmati Report* is a cinematic endeavour that not only entertains but also compels viewers to question the very fabric of truth and power in today's world. **RATING: 4/5**



By **SAKSHI PRIYA**

SHOWCASING THE FUTURE OF WEDDING FASHION

Shoppers Stop, one of India's premier destinations for fashion and lifestyle, recently unveiled its much-anticipated wedding collection with a show-stopping fashion event at Ambience Mall in Delhi. Choreographed by the renowned *Marc Robinson*, the runway was set ablaze with a stunning display of elegance, tradition and contemporary glamour, making it a night to remember for fashion enthusiasts and wedding planners alike. The fashion show was a celebration of the multifaceted world of Indian weddings. With each look carefully curated to reflect the different stages of a wedding celebration, the show presented a variety of styles, from vibrant Haldi attire to intricate Mehendi looks. There were regal Wedding ensembles, striking Reception pieces and chic Cocktail attire that perfectly balanced tradition with modern aesthetics. The collection also included sophisticated outfits for Destination weddings, catering to the growing trend of weddings in exotic locales. What truly stood out was the sheer attention to detail in every outfit. The models strutted down the runway in exquisitely crafted garments, flamboyant lehengas, royal sherwanis, and embellished sarees, each reflecting the intricacy of Indian craftsmanship. Rich fabrics such as silks, velvet and brocade were paired with delicate embroidery, beadwork and sequins, making the outfits feel both luxurious and timeless. The Haldi outfits in shades of yellow were a burst of joy, while the Wedding and Reception ensembles in regal reds and golds exuded grandeur and sophistication. The choreography of the show also played a crucial role in



enhancing the storytelling of the evening. Each segment flowed effortlessly into the next, with the models movements reflecting the celebratory mood of the wedding journey. The beauty of the outfits was complemented by the elegant styling, with hair and makeup that ranged from soft, natural looks for Mehendi to bold and glamorous statements for the Reception. Adding to the grandeur were the accessories statement jewellery, intricately designed clutches and shoes that perfectly matched the bridal looks. These final touches elevated the overall aesthetic, making each ensemble feel complete. The show wasn't just about clothes; it was about showcasing the essence of Indian wedding traditions with a modern twist. *Shoppers Stop's* new wedding collection, available across its stores and online, is more than just a display of luxury fashion; it is a celebration of every aspect of Indian weddings. From the first haldi ceremony to the grand reception, the collection offers something for every moment, ensuring that customers can find the perfect ensemble for every wedding occasion. With over 500 premium brands to choose from, it has positioned itself as the ultimate destination for wedding shopping, combining high-quality craftsmanship with contemporary flair. The fashion show was an impressive showcase of the brand's dedication to providing stylish, accessible and diverse options for wedding wear. **PHOTOS: PANKAJ KUMAR**

Preserving India's Constitutional Legacy

O.P. Jindal Global University inaugurates India's first Constitution Museum, writes **ABHI SINGHAL**



India's political history is a tapestry of landmark events, judicial milestones, and moments that merit broader recognition. Yet, a significant portion of the population, including children, remains unaware of the profound influence the Constitution has on their lives. To bridge this gap, *O.P. Jindal Global University (JGU)* has established India's *First Constitution Museum*, inaugurated on Saturday, at its *Sonapat* campus. The museum aims to deepen the understanding of the Constitution through diverse sections that highlight its historical significance and the pivotal debates shaping its formation. Designed to be a hub for education and reflection, the museum employs innovative approaches to engage visitors, offering a vivid narrative of the Constitution's 75-year journey. Through interactive installations, cutting-edge technology, and AI-driven displays, the museum will bring history to life. Visitors will get to experience 3D installations, progressive displays, and guided tours powered by the *S.A.M.V.I.D. Project*, a collaboration between *JGU* and *IIT Madras*. This advanced language model enhances the visitor experience by providing in-depth insights into every exhibit, including profiles of Constituent Assembly members and their contributions. The museum will integrate textual, audio-visual, and experiential formats, ensuring an engaging and immersive experience for all. Visitors can explore sections dedicated to each part of the Constitution, its evolution, and its

enduring significance. *The Constitution Gardens* would add an artistic dimension, with sculptures symbolising the core principles of liberty, equality, justice, and fraternity. Drawing inspiration from illustrated manuscripts and original excerpts, these artworks also celebrate India's geographical diversity while reflecting the unifying ethos of the Constitution. A highlight of the museum is the art display featuring pieces from the original handcrafted document and artworks inspired by it. The museum will also house an archive of expert interviews exploring various aspects of the Constitution, making it an invaluable resource for scholars and enthusiasts alike. As the first initiative of its kind at an educational institution, the *Constitution Museum* underscores *JGU's* commitment to integrating education, culture, and technology. Open to the public with free entry via app-based pre-registration, it promises to be a transformative space for growing constitutional awareness and pride in India's democratic heritage.

"A recipe has no soul. You, as the cook, must bring soul to the recipe"
- Thomas Keller



LOBSTERS TAKE CENTRE STAGE AT GRAPPA POP-UP

FOODFREAK



Pawan Soni
Food critic and founder of the Big F Awards



Exciting culinary happenings continue to enrich NCR's food scene, with innovative pop-ups and eateries introducing diverse menus. The latest buzz? The celebrated London-based chain *Burger & Lobster* has brought its famous flavours to Delhi with an exclusive pop-up at *Grappa, Shangri-La Eros Hotel*.
As a seafood enthusiast, I couldn't resist the allure of this pop-up, and I'm thrilled to say it didn't disappoint. These aren't the usual *lobsters* found locally, which primarily offer meat in the tail. Instead, these are exquisite *Atlantic lobsters flown* in from Canada, boasting sweet, chunky meat in both the claws and the tail. For the uninitiated, their texture and flavour might even be mistaken for crab—but one bite will make their unique charm unmistakable.
Served steamed or grilled, these *lobsters* are paired with a delightful *lemon butter garlic sauce* that compliments their natural sweetness without overpowering it. Every bite was pure indulgence. Priced at ₹5,800, they're a luxurious yet fairly priced treat, especially given the five-star ambiance. The European-style patio



PHOTOS: PANIKAJ KUMAR

(Left to right): Abhishek Sadhoo, General Manager, Shangri-La Eros New Delhi; Chef Brian Chang, Corporate Development Chef, Burger and Lobster and Chef Gagandeep Singh Sawhney, Executive Chef, Shangri-La Eros New Delhi

seating overlooking lush greenery further elevates the experience. For those who crave a pasta twist, the *Lobster Mac & Cheese* is a must-try. Even as someone who typically steers clear of pasta, I found it irresistible. Rich with *lobster meat* and coated in a decadent three-cheese sauce blended with *lobster bisque*, the dish is creamy and perfectly balanced. At ₹1,800, it's a satisfying portion worth every rupee.
The menu also offers a variety of burgers. I shared the *Waffle Chicken Burger* with a friend, and it was a delightful surprise. A *crispy fried chicken thigh* nestled in a Belgian waffle and drizzled with ranch sauce, simple yet satisfying.
If you're intrigued, don't wait too long. Book your slot before this pop-up ends, or you might find yourself chasing these lobsters all the way to London!



FOOD, IN THE END, IN OUR OWN TRADITION, IS SOMETHING HOLY. IT'S NOT ABOUT NUTRIENTS AND CALORIES. IT'S ABOUT SHARING. IT'S ABOUT HONESTY. IT'S ABOUT IDENTITY
— LOUISE FRESCO



COZY ESCAPE



Step into Melt House for a warm ambiance with culinary delights, from cheesy grilled sandwiches to delightful desserts, writes **ABHI SINGHAL**

Tucked on a road full of cafés and eateries, between the streets of Greater Kailash II, the Melt House café invites you to step inside and have the essence of a cozy vibes like you feel on the mountains while enjoying inside. The warm yellow colour mixed with brown, with bulbs hanging above the wooden tables, while the aroma of fresh ground coffee and wine mingles with the soft humming of acoustic music. Melt House is the kind of place where time seems to slow, promising a cozy experience with posters of coffee and scenic beauty giving you a beautiful time. From the dishes to the bar menu to malted milkshakes the Melt House caters everyone for a quality time and quality treat. Beginning with the grilled cheese speciality of the café, the Piri Piri Cottage Cheese Grilled Cheese sandwich is zesty containing pulled cottage cheese with onions, peppers, cheddar, mozzarella and American cheese. The Piri Piri Cottage Cheese Grilled Cheese sandwich gave a texture of firm and crunchy on the outside but the cheese enhanced the taste of the same. After the mouth-watering sandwich, you can embrace yourself and order the flavourful Smoky Cajun Penne Alfredo under the Big Plates menu. Indulged with a luscious blend of butter, heavy cream, and freshly grated

Parmesan for that perfect creamy Alfredo sauce, the pasta with garlic bread will activate your taste buds. If you are a pizza lover and a vegetarian, trying Burrata Margherita will be a delicious one. Bursting with vibrant, tangy flavour, balancing richness with just the right amount of acidity, Burrata Margherita is filled with Burrata cheese, red and yellow cherry tomato and fresh basil which will not be very visually appealing but is tasty and soft. Jumping into the small plates menu, Pink Garlic Aioli Parmesan Truffle Fries with russet potatoes cut into matchsticks with freshly grated Parmesan cheese, black truffle oil and mayonnaise for the aioli are moreish. Reflecting on the history and the aura of the café Chef Rohit Negi said, "The Melt House basically started from Gururam itself as an artisanal sandwich shop and then we have opened to big places having the speciality of cheese. There is the melted cheese concept we infuse in our dishes. Now, after we have all the totally cheesy flavours in our food, and we have differentiated it from any other restaurant you get on to. We have some Italian cuisine in it, and we have mixed it with cheese for the cheese lovers." The café also has different offerings in *Vodka, Tequila, Red Wines, White Wines, Gin* and more. For the milkshake enthusiasts and the



hot chocolate connoisseurs, the Classic Hot Chocolate at the Melt House is a must try beverage. The Cold coffee at the Melt House is a refreshing blend of smooth, chilled coffee, served with ice for an invigorating lift. Its rich, bold flavour comes alive with each sip, perfectly balanced between the sweetness and

the robust, aromatic essence of freshly brewed coffee for the caffeine kick. This signals a shift towards indulgence, setting the stage for dessert as the grand finale. So, Nutella lovers assemble as the Chocochip Walnut Nutella is a treat that combines the richness of Nutella with the satisfying crunch of toasted walnuts and the delight of chocolate chips. Each bite bursts with soft and nutty layers of flavour, balanced perfectly by the sugar content. The ones looking for mouth watery chocolate and high sugar Melt's Matilda Cake is a decadent masterpiece that promises to satisfy even the most discerning sweet tooth. With its spongy layers of chocolate sponge, every bite melts effortlessly in your mouth, leaving behind a trail of luxurious sweetness. In conclusion, the Melt House Café offers more than just a meal; it provides an experience. Whether you're seeking a cozy corner to unwind with a cup of freshly brewed coffee, wanting the cheesy delights, or treating yourself to decadent desserts, Melt House promises to deliver warmth and comfort with every visit.

Terrai attributes its inception to the terrain and rich historical culture and culinary legacy of the State of Telangana. Situated in the southern-central part of the Indian peninsula on the high Deccan Plateau, cuisine of Telangana is influenced by the region's rich history of Deccan and Telugu culture. Nizam culture is a blend of opulent traditions, art, and cuisine that reflects the historical grandeur and diverse heritage of Telangana. Founded by the visionary restaurateur, Rohit Kasuganti and the creative powerhouse, Anisha Deevakonda, Terrai derives its name from terrain defining the topography of the young-historical State. Reinventing traditional cuisine, propagating the culture and community is the ethos of this new restaurant, Terrai.



From terrain to table, Terrai presents the evolution of Telangana Cuisine, says **SHARMILA CHAND**



distinctive identity for Telangana's culinary traditions, free from the shadows of other Indian influences. Guests are invited to embark on a glorious culinary adventure, reconnecting with the land through an exquisite array of flavours.

A MELANGE OF FLAVOURS & TEXTURES

Picture indulging in the Karim Nagar Fried Chicken Wings, a fiery sensation complemented by tangy pickled onions, or experiencing the opulence of Terai Mutton Curry paired with spiced Masala Pooris. The Golichina Mamsam, crowned with crispy fried curry leaves, is a flavour explosion, while the refreshing Not So Mirchi Cocktail adds a zesty flourish. Round off your culinary adventure on a sweet note with the delectable Saffron Cheesecake, Kandha Doodh, adorned with delicate saffron pearls, each a testament to the glory of Telangana's rich culinary heritage. Terrai is more than just a celebration of exquisite flavours; it is a cultural sanctuary where the stories of Telangana come alive. Each dish encapsulates the region's unique traditions and customs, inviting diners to embark on a journey that honours the past while embracing contemporary flair. Here, every bite is a narrative, woven from the intricate tapestry of spices and age-old recipes passed down through generations, all set against a backdrop that resonates with the soul of the Deccan. In a world brimming with dining options, Terrai emerges as a splendid celebration of Telangana's heritage, inviting food enthusiasts to partake in an unforgettable journey that captures the very essence of the region. It's not merely a meal; it's a resplendent experience that delights the senses and nourishes the soul.

— Sharmila Chand is an author, columnist and journalist who writes on Food, Travel, Culture and Lifestyle

ADDRESS: Terrai, Sattva Knowledge Park, Silpa Gram Craft Village,HITECH CITY, Hyderabad

THE VISION
The objective of Terrai is simple - it aims to propagate the deeply rooted culinary culture of the State, becoming synonymous with it. Terrai is a glorious homage to the rich heritage, culture and culinary prowess of Telangana. At Terrai, every dish serves as a resplendent tribute to the land, celebrating local women farmers and tribal chefs who utilise time-honoured techniques and ingredients. Rohit Kasuganti, Founder and CEO, TSK Food Works, says, "Telangana food has been overshadowed by the popularity of its neighbouring cousin. Taking immense pride in our roots, our thought and vision behind Terrai is to simply showcase the tradition and history behind the food from our State, designed for the modern diner. We want Terrai to lead a revolution, of sorts and to propagate Telangana cuisine to the World and enlighten our colleagues and guests to the rich legacy that it represents."



you step in Terrai, you are enveloped in an ambiance that exudes sophistication and warmth. Influenced by and representing the rich crafts of the State, the terracotta walls, adorned with intricate Ikkat mouldings and exquisite Dokra art, radiate an earthy elegance, while the captivating Bhatukamma-inspired ceiling lights create a mesmerising glow throughout the space. Crafted by the renowned Sona Reddy Studio, every detail - from the repurposed traditional doors to the stunning original artworks by Narahari invites guests on an enchanting journey through Telangana's rich cultural tapestry. "Terrai is a creative canvas where we weave the rich cultural and artistic elements of Telangana into every detail. From collaborating with local artisans on the stunning Dokra art to sourcing textiles for our Ikat-inspired decor, every partnership reflects the soul of Telangana, bringing its stories to life. Our mission is to ensure that every guest experiences the essence of our heritage through innovative and traditional cuisine", adds Anisha Deevakonda, Creative Head and Partner, Terrai.



THE COMMUNITY NARRATIVE

Community is integral to the Terrai experience. The founders prioritise partnerships with local women farmers, artisans, and home cooks, ensuring that every ingredient is fresh, ethically sourced and imbued with the spirit of Telangana. This commitment to collaboration extends beyond the kitchen, celebrating the invaluable contributions these communities make to the state's culinary legacy, transforming each meal into a traditional story of connection. Terrai aspires to elevate Telangana's cuisine to its rightful place on the global gastronomic stage, offering a dining experience that transcends mere nourishment. It embodies a modern renaissance, a movement dedicated to establishing a



ELEGANT WITH LOCAL CRAFTS

spanning in 12000 sq. ft., here is the dining destination, offering a luxurious experience with seating for 250 guests across four distinct dining halls, each designed to provide a unique ambiance. As

THE ART AND SPIRIT OF CAKE MIXING

TEAM AGENDA

AT CROWN PLAZA, MAYUR VIHAR

The Crowne Plaza Mayur Vihar recently hosted its annual Cake Mixing Ceremony, embracing the charming theme of an English Country Christmas. This delightful event transformed the hotel into a festive wonderland, inviting guests to partake in a time-honoured tradition that has brought people together for centuries.

The roots of cake mixing trace back to 17th-century Britain, where this delightful ceremony marked the end of the harvest season. Farmers would gather to soak fruits and nuts in spirits, preserving them for the rich Christmas cakes that would grace tables during the cold winter months. This joyful gathering symbolised abundance, gratitude and the spirit of community, a celebration of nature's bounty and the warmth of togetherness.

At the Crowne Plaza, the atmosphere was filled with excitement and laughter as guests rolled up their sleeves and joined in the festive fun. The delightful aromas of dried fruits, fragrant spices and rich spirits filled the air, creating an inviting and warm environment. This year's theme of an 'English Countryside Christmas' was beautifully reflected in the décor, featuring the traditional red, white and green colours that evoke feelings of warmth and festivity. The venue was adorned with charming elements reminiscent of the British countryside, where cosy cottages and snow-covered landscapes create a magical setting for the holiday season. This theme perfectly encapsulated the simplicity of nature, celebrating the spirit of family and community gatherings that are central to the festive season. As guests stirred the mixture, they shared stories and laughter, reinforcing the bonds of friendship and family. This camaraderie mirrored the gatherings of the past, where communities would unite to prepare for the joyous celebrations ahead. Once the mixing was complete, the cakes created during the ceremony would be set aside to mature in their rich blend of flavours, ready to be enjoyed during the Christmas festivities. The sharing of these cakes with the wider community reflects the



essence of the occasion, joy is amplified when shared with others. The Cake Mixing Ceremony at Crowne Plaza embodies the essence of tradition, community and connection. In our fast-paced world, such events encourage us to pause, reflect and appreciate the simple pleasures that life offers. As attendees departed, they left not only with a sense of festivity but also with cherished memories of laughter and connection.

AT LE MERIDIEN, NEW DELHI

In recent years, cake mixing has become a much-anticipated ritual in the culinary calendar, where the joy of the holiday season is brought to life through the vibrant mixing of ingredients that will eventually turn into Christmas cakes. Traditionally marking the beginning of Christmas preparations, cake-mixing ceremonies have their roots in the mediaeval custom of feeding the Christmas cake with spirits and fruits, infusing it with rich flavours that are synonymous with the festive season. In hotels, restaurants and homes around the world, cake mixing symbolises warmth, joy, and a shared experience of holiday spirit. The cake mixing ceremony serves as a festive kick-off, celebrating togetherness and the joy of giving. This tradition often includes the blending of dried fruits, such as raisins, cherries, apricots, and

nuts, along with a blend of warming spices and a generous pour of spirits. The ingredients are then left to mature, allowing the fruits to soak in flavours, adding depth and complexity to the Christmas cakes and other holiday treats that will be shared with family and friends. Each year, Le Meridien New Delhi joins in this timeless tradition, creating a unique and memorable experience for guests and locals alike. This year, the hotel launched its #WinterOfJoy celebration with a magical cake mixing ceremony at their elegant venue, Longitude. The event drew food enthusiasts, media, and hotel guests together, where they witnessed the rhythmic blending of exotic fruits, spices, and luxurious ingredients, building anticipation for the holiday treats that await. Meena Bhatia, Vice President and General Manager of Le Meridien New Delhi, remarked on the occasion, "We are thrilled to embark on our #WinterOfJoy celebration with this heart-warming timeless tradition. We invite everyone to join us in experiencing a symphony of flavours, sights, and sounds as we embark on a festive journey." The cake-mixing ceremony at Le Meridien New Delhi symbolises more than just the beginning of Christmas preparations; it represents a celebration of life, tradition and community.



Envision a captivating tale of luxury and sophistication in the heart of Hong Kong. This exquisite five-star harbour front gem has been a beacon of elegance since its inception over a decade ago, hosting a prestigious clientele of celebrities, dignitaries, and CEOs. Its allure knows no bounds, boasting flawless service, state-of-the-art amenities, and a culinary experience that is simply unparalleled.

LUXURY CONVERGE AT HONG KONG

HARBOUR VIEWS, URBAN VIBES

Nestled against the stunning backdrop of Victoria Harbour, with the vibrant pulse of Hong Kong Island at its core, Four Seasons Hong Kong effortlessly combines opulence with convenience. Step outside to breath-taking views of the harbour, while being seamlessly connected to the glamour of the IFC mall via air-conditioned walkways. Stroll along these pathways to access the Central Ferry and Star Ferry piers, the bustling Central business district, the Macau ferry terminal, as well as the Airport Express and Central MTR subway station. A flawless fusion of luxury and accessibility awaits at this unforgettable destination. As I approach the hotel's majestic entrance, I am immediately enveloped by the brilliance of its gleaming surfaces and soaring three-story windows, illuminated by the warm embrace of the sunlight. It feels as though I am stepping directly into the vibrant heart of the harbour itself. I find the hustle and bustle of people-watching utterly delightful—there are elegantly attired billionaires in Ferragamos gliding gracefully across the polished marble, while men in dark suits engage in hushed, intense negotiations, their powerful presence palpable. The air is rich with accents from around the globe, creating a symphony of cultures converging in this one place. Settling into



the Glass Room lobby lounge with a steaming cup of coffee in hand, I immerse myself in the spectacle of Hong Kong at its glamorous, cosmopolitan best.

INDULGE IN LUXURY

Stepping into my superior harbour front suite feels like entering a serene sanctuary bathed in natural light. The elegance of the space is unmistakable, with its clean, contemporary lines and a harmonious palette of neutral tones. I am instantly drawn to the inviting textures—the pale gold lozenge-patterned headboard, the sleek glossy lacquer cabinetry, and the softly striped carpeting that added warmth beneath my feet. The sumptuous bed beckons, flanked by high-tech panels equipped with sockets, USB ports, and intuitive touch-button controls for lighting and curtains, making it easy to transition from day to night. The bathroom is a lavish escape, adorned in rich honey marble that tempted me to



Experience an unparalleled luxury at the prestigious harbour front 'Four Seasons' hotel in Hong Kong, where elegance meets world-class amenities and panoramic views of Victoria Harbour, writes **AKANKSHA DEAN**



indulge in long, relaxing soaks. As a guest with access to a suite, I also enjoy the privilege of the Four Seasons remarkable 45th-floor Executive Club Lounge. It is an absolute delight, offering complimentary breakfast and afternoon tea, along with all-day refreshments, including beer, wine, soft drinks, and hot beverages. As evening approaches, the lounge transforms into a vibrant social space, serving champagne, cocktails, and a delightful array of both hot and cold buffet options—truly one of the city's best-kept secrets.

SIP, SAVOUR, CELEBRATE

The Four Seasons is an extraordinary culinary haven, boasting an impressive eight Michelin stars spread across three of its exceptional restaurants. I am fortunate enough to indulge in Lung King Heen, the first three-Michelin-star Chinese restaurant, delivering exceptional Cantonese cuisine through teamwork, quality ingredients, and outstanding hospitality, presenting

each dish as a masterpiece. Caprice, under Chef Guillaume Galliot, masterfully blends classic French cuisine with global influences, showcasing fresh ingredients, inventive techniques, and an exceptional wine and cheese selection for a remarkable dining experience. The French fine dining restaurant mesmerises me with a stunning visual and culinary symphony, also graced with three stars. Then there is the renowned Sushi Saito, where the expertise of Japanese seafood truly shines, earning its well-deserved two stars. Each morning, I savour a sumptuous international breakfast served in The Lounge on the ground floor. The offerings are nothing short of delightful: a vibrant selection of tropical fruits, delicate dim sum, eggs cooked to order, and an endless array of breads and pastries that set a luxurious tone for the day ahead. In the evenings, I discovered cocktail bar Argo, one of the world's best bars, presenting a new cocktail menu featuring 12 creations that celebrate familiar Hong Kong fruits and botanicals, showcasing their versatility. Its deco-inspired interior of glass and mirrors creates an enchanting atmosphere as I relish some sensational mixology. The Silver Fox, a remarkable concoction featuring Havana Club rum, fig leaf, oak lactone cordial, preserved lemon, and tonka, feels like drinking a piece of bliss. Each moment at The Four Seasons Hong Kong is a celebration of the finest flavours and experiences.



— The author is an independent food & travel writer, a chef and a catalyst and is the first Indian to have trained at Osteria Francescana, in Modena, Italy, rated as the world's best restaurant in the World's 50 Best Restaurants, in 2016 and 2018 and currently in the Best of The Best Category

Discovering the World's True Essence

In a landmark celebration, Mercure Hotels recently unveiled its 1,000th address worldwide at Mercure Dubai Deira last month. This flagship location introduced the innovative '1,000-Hours of Local Flavours,' a 42-day culinary experience designed to showcase the rich tapestry of local food and beverages. This initiative underscores Mercure's commitment to unveiling the authentic tastes of each destination.

By RUPALI DEAN

Since its inception in 1973, Mercure has been a champion of wanderlust, inviting globetrotters to embrace their inner local in every corner of the world. With a footprint spanning 65 countries and boasting 1,000 distinctive addresses, Mercure is dedicated to enveloping guests in a tapestry of local charm while upholding the highest hospitality standards.



EMBRACING COMMUNITY THROUGH CUISINE:

I was absolutely delighted to join the celebration at Mercure Dubai Deira for the grand occasion of their 1,000th hotel opening worldwide. With 1,000 locations under its belt, Mercure's mid-scale brand truly excels in forging authentic connections to local cultures around the globe. The evening's theme, 'Discover Local Elements,' set the stage for an exquisite culinary experience brimming with dishes crafted from locally sourced ingredients. The standout moment for me was savouring the cinnamon-infused UAE rack of lamb, clay-cooked to perfection, delivering unmatched tenderness and flavour. For dessert, we indulged in a delicious pistachio honey cake—a refreshing take on the beloved pistachio chocolate trend. To heighten the excitement, we got a sneak peek at the '1,000 Local Flavours' menu, launched on 1st November and delighting taste buds for 42 days. A highlight was

the desert salad, featuring the iconic ghaf leaves of the UAE, a beautiful homage to local culture and heritage. This gathering not only celebrated Mercure's unwavering commitment to showcasing local flavours but also strengthened community connections in a vibrant and fulfilling way. Paul Stevens, the chief operating wizard at Accor for the premium, mid-scale, and economy realms across the Middle East, Africa, and Türkiye, exclaimed, "Hitting the 1,000-address mark isn't just a number; it's a vibrant badge of Mercure's unwavering commitment to authentic, locally-inspired hospitality around the globe! The '1,000-Hours of Local Flavours' is a delightful dive into cultural richness and community bonds, whisking guests away on a culinary



adventure that truly captures the heart and soul of each destination. And the excitement doesn't stop there—Mercure is rolling out the welcome mat for over 200 new hotels by 2028!"

SUSTAINABLE LUXURY REDEFINED:

Julia Schamne, cluster general manager, has truly transformed Mercure Dubai Deira into a beacon of sustainability since its January opening. With an unwavering commitment to eco-friendly practices, the hotel has embraced compostable materials, bid farewell to plastics, and ensures guests enjoy unlimited, filtered water right in their rooms. The garden-to-table concept in the main restaurant beautifully showcases partnerships with local suppliers, including Hatta's Honeybee Farm, emphasising our dedication to sustainability. Nearly half of the menu is dedicated to delightful plant-based options, underlining our focus on health and environmental care. Moreover, Mercure's diverse team, representing 31 nationalities, embodies the 'heartiest' spirit, highlighted by strong female leadership in critical roles such as HR and rooms management. The changes instigated under Julia's guidance reflect a holistic approach to hospitality, integrating sustainability and inclusivity at every level.

COMMUNITY-DRIVEN FUTURE AHEAD:

Having learned about the hotel's future

plans, I am truly excited about what lies ahead! The focus remains firmly on members, ensuring their needs are never overlooked. "The fantastic feedback we've received from our loyal Accor members speaks volumes about our robust loyalty programme. In fact, we rank among the top contributors in terms of member stays and direct bookings, thanks to Mercure's well-recognised and widespread brand. As one of the largest and fastest-growing mid-scale brands, we thrive on strong storytelling and high standards. Looking forward, we're committed to enhancing our personalised approach for members, providing them with dedicated attention and individual spaces," shares Julia Schamne. Accor is also eager to increase their community contributions, which is essential for them as a group. Additionally, they are exploring ways to deepen their involvement in charity work, allowing them to give back in significant ways. Their vision is to become the go-to spot for the community, whether it's for a cosy cup of coffee or laundry services. They want to be a place where neighbours can comfortably connect to Wi-Fi or hold quick meetings. Ultimately, the goal is to be the neighbourhood hub where everyone feels at home, capturing the essence of 'Discover Local' for the community.

— Awarded the "Best food writer in the country" by the Indian culinary forum, WACS and the Ministry of Tourism, Rupali Dean writes on food and travel

"A SACRIFICE TO BE REAL MUST COST, MUST HURT, AND MUST EMPTY OURSELVES. GIVE YOURSELF FULLY TO GOD. HE WILL USE YOU TO ACCOMPLISH GREAT THINGS ON THE CONDITION THAT YOU BELIEVE MUCH MORE IN HIS LOVE THAN IN YOUR WEAKNESS"
— MOTHER TERESA

YOUR WEEK AHEAD

MADHU KOTIYA



ARIES March 21-April 19
This week, you'll find yourself in a joyful state of mind, feeling content and complete. There's a chance for unexpected success, such as coming out ahead in a competition or achieving a significant milestone. Your efforts and dedication are about to bear fruit, bringing both material gains and spiritual fulfillment. Previous limitations will fade away, ushering in a sense of liberation and tranquility. Travel might be on the horizon, particularly journeys abroad. Mid-week provides a perfect moment for relaxation. You might step back from certain activities during this time of reflection. In the coming weeks or months, opportunities to resolve disputes or engage in crucial negotiations will arise. By week's end, there might be a slight sense of disappointment regarding anticipated gains, yet the overall progress remains substantial.
Lucky number 9 | Lucky colour Mustard
Lucky day Thursday



LEO July 23-Aug 22
Last week was bustling with activity for you, balancing home duties and professional demands efficiently. Your determination to handle every task methodically ensured high-quality outcomes and a positive environment. Having navigated through these challenges, it's now time for you to unwind and reap the rewards of your efforts. Congratulations on a successful period! The dedication you showed is about to pay off beautifully. You'll find yourself in a prosperous phase, enjoying both material gains and harmonious relationships. Your ability to foster cooperation and understanding among those around you bolsters your business and personal connections, boosting your reputation as an influential figure. Expect mid-week opportunities for expansion and work-related travel, returning with accomplishments that will fill your loved ones with pride.
Lucky number 20 | Lucky colour Sapphire Blue
Lucky day Wednesday



SAGITTARIUS Nov 22-Dec 21
This week signals a time of fair outcomes in your pursuits, despite not being straightforward. You may encounter several challenges, including disputes and significant opposition, which could leave you feeling mentally and physically constrained, disheartened, and agitated. It's essential to focus on nurturing healthier habits and making thoughtful choices that prioritize your well-being. Taking ownership of your decisions and interpersonal connections is crucial. Assessing the advantages and disadvantages of your situation will guide you. Despite the hurdles, you will navigate through these testing times successfully and gain the strength to handle upcoming challenges. As the week concludes, the opportunity for new beginnings or travel may arise, leading to resolutions in personal and professional relationships or issues related to personal assets, steering you towards a more positive path.
Lucky number 7 | Lucky colour Turquoise
Lucky day Friday



TAURUS April 20-May 20
This week is shaped by a profound emotional awareness and a tendency to express your feelings openly, enhancing personal connections. For those already in partnerships, there's an opportunity to deepen bonds through greater intimacy and mutual understanding. This period also brings a potential for gaining knowledge or authority, possibly through established educational or mentoring avenues. Seeking guidance could be beneficial as you contemplate significant life decisions. The impact of your choices is emphasized, reminding you that you have considerable control over your destiny. Your effective communication skills likely contribute to a positive impression on others, adding to your sense of productivity. For those in leadership roles, recognition and success are within reach, marking a notable period for career achievements.
Lucky number 3 | Lucky colour Yellow
Lucky day Monday



VIRGO Aug 23-Sep 22
In your current circumstances, you face an immediate need to make a critical decision. This period promises recognition and success for professionals like doctors and judges in their fields. To navigate through challenges effectively, adopting a disciplined approach is crucial. Health concerns might arise, potentially leading to moments of frustration. It's important to focus on the positives during such times. Midweek brings a subtle yet positive shift, marking a renewal of energy and a return to equilibrium. You will likely experience a surge of optimism and revitalization. A calm and joyful atmosphere prevails, paving the way for personal benefits. Collaborations may prove fruitful, enhancing your achievements. Expect to receive what is justly or rightfully yours, including tangible rewards.
Lucky number 22 | Lucky colour Amber
Lucky day Saturday



CAPRICORN Dec 22-Jan 19
This period calls for a rejuvenating break, allowing for recovery and reflection. Some may need to heal from recent health setbacks. You might soon discover solutions and insights that were previously obscured, so stay observant of your environment. Navigating through such challenges often requires patience as they can initially lead to confusion or a standstill. Yet, the latter part of the week promises a shift towards positivity. You'll feel energized to embark on a new venture that demands quick action and daring decisions. This is your moment to pursue achievements with your inherent capabilities. There might even be signs of new beginnings in your personal life, perhaps hinting at major family developments. Embrace this surge of vitality and creativity, using it to maximize your advantages and seize the emerging opportunities.
Lucky number 17 | Lucky colour Blush Pink
Lucky day Tuesday



GEMINI May 21-June 20
This week, your emotional landscape may feel overwhelming, overshadowing your usual pragmatic approach. Minor domestic challenges could escalate into significant stressors, leading you to contemplate disengaging from day-to-day concerns. Thoughts of drastic changes in your personal life could divert your focus from current responsibilities. However, recognize that these feelings are transient. As the week progresses, the efforts you've put forth recently will begin to show positive outcomes, particularly in areas where you've recently invested energy or resources. To navigate through this period of uncertainty, strive to clear the fog of confusion. Gaining a clearer understanding of your goals will enhance your effectiveness. A fresh approach and unbiased thinking will guide you toward a more balanced path.
Lucky number 13 | Lucky colour White
Lucky day Friday



LIBRA Sep 23-Oct 22
At times, you may feel as if harmony, beauty, and the finer things in life are just out of reach, causing you to experience excessive worry or fear. You might be dealing with sleep disturbances, unsettling dreams, and emotional turmoil. However, it's important to remember that hope is never truly lost. Soon, you'll find fresh opportunities and beginnings that could reignite your spirit and bring light to your situation. Midweek brings promising developments that could include affectionate messages, romantic gestures, or new ventures. Any current relationships you have will also start to strengthen, enhancing your emotional and physical resilience. Remember, maintaining patience is crucial; everything will settle into place in due time.
Lucky number 18 | Lucky colour Ivory
Lucky day Thursday



AQUARIUS Jan 20-Feb 18
This week is characterized by fluctuating emotions and heightened tensions between rationality and passion. You might experience a temporary dip in financial stability at the week's onset, suggesting a period where income flows may be disrupted. Patience is essential during this transient phase. Engaging in meditation, yoga, or creative pursuits could prove beneficial in restoring your inner balance and navigating through these challenges effectively. It's crucial to avoid confrontations with superiors or colleagues, as an overly assertive demeanor could jeopardize the progress and goodwill you've previously established. The period calls for caution, urging you to maintain a grounded perspective. Distance yourself from misconceptions and consider adjusting your viewpoint to better adapt to the current circumstances.
Lucky number 4 | Lucky colour Yellow
Lucky day Friday



CANCER June 21-July 22
This week, individuals born under the sign traditionally associated with the crab will notice a significant shift in their emotional disposition, transitioning from reflective and serious to warm and caring. Those in leadership roles may find their capacity for empathy challenged as they encourage others to become more self-sufficient. Loyalty defines their relationships, and they respond sharply to any perceived threats. By midweek, their creative and dreamy side takes precedence, allowing them to reveal in a personal transformation. Balancing the tangible and intangible aspects of life, they will find themselves feeling fulfilled and joyful, experiencing a satisfying blend of material success and spiritual peace. This newfound equilibrium enhances their relationships and personal growth.
Lucky number 2 | Lucky colour Coral
Lucky day Sunday



SCORPIO Oct 23-Nov 21
You are on the brink of a transformative period, signaling both a physical move and a rise in your current circumstances. You possess a dynamic energy, eager for progress and quick results. This phase also hints at the potential for a new, invigorating romantic or creative chapter in your life. The middle of the week promises joy, celebrations, and success, enhancing your social connections and bringing cherished memories to the forefront. Encounters with old friends and family are likely, adding a warm, nostalgic touch. The atmosphere around you will be uplifting, infusing you with vitality. Expect harmonious family dynamics and significant gatherings, possibly marking new beginnings at home. This period offers a wonderful opportunity for meaningful engagement with those close to you.
Lucky number 10 | Lucky colour Maroon
Lucky day Tuesday



PISCES Feb 19-March 20
This period marks the conclusion of a challenging phase, and you'll find yourself feeling relieved and unburdened. Family matters will capture more of your attention, and the overall environment may not be optimal. You might have been grappling with a tough choice or holding on to something that wasn't beneficial for you, and now it's time to release it. This is a significant moment where the choices you make will shape your future. If you're feeling tested, it could be due to unresolved issues or negative feelings towards someone. The week ahead offers a chance to address and settle these conflicts once and for all. Embrace the power of affection and understanding—it has the strength to overcome even the most profound challenges. Trust your instincts, embrace your creative side, and approach situations with enthusiasm.
Lucky number 6 | Lucky colour Copper
Lucky day Monday

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

Manage stress



Sri Sri Ravi Shankar
Spiritual Guru

As times are getting tougher in the corporate world, many feel the pinch. Stress impacts the way we think, feel and behave, thus, affecting all aspects of our life. The consequences of letting stress rule are nothing short of disastrous and tragic. First of all, do you know what stress is? Stress is too much to do and too little time or energy. So either you reduce your workload — which doesn't seem to be a possibility these days. Or you increase your time — which is not possible either. So let us look at some ways to not only increase our energy levels but also to change our mind and outlook, just a little bit. This will enable a less stressful and more productive work life. Here is an easy and simple 10-point solution.

❑ **Strike a work-life balance:** It's like riding a bicycle. What is the secret to riding a bicycle? Balance! It's about staying at the centre: not letting it fall to the right or left. When it's falling on one side, you bring it to balance. When you go out of balance, you feel the pinch. Listen to that. Don't just ignore it, acknowledge it and come to the centre. Whenever you go out of balance in any aspect of life, listen to your inner voice, and come to the centre. If you have ignored your family, it pinches you. If you have ignored your social commitment, it pinches you. If you are ignoring your business, it pinches you. If you are ignoring your spiritual practices,

it pinches you. So wherever anything pinches you, come back to the centre.

❑ **The right amount of food and sleep:** Not too much and not too little. A balanced diet with enough carbohydrates and proteins along with six-eight hours of sleep is advisable.

❑ **Meditation:** Learn some deep breathing exercises to increase your energy level, relax your mind and relieve all types of stress. Meditation also enhances your abilities, strengthens your nervous system and mind and releases toxins from the body. Usually, I recommend afternoon meditation and meals in the workplace. When people sit together and meditate for a few minutes and then share a meal together, they find it so refreshing and are able to carry on through the day with the same energy which they came to the office.

❑ **Don't let time manage you:** First of all, you must see to it that you have the feeling that you have time. When you put this thought in your mind that you don't have time, then that itself becomes a block. Everybody has only 24 hours, whether it is the Prime Minister or a clerk working in the bank. You have to hold on to this aphorism 'I can do it' because the pressure of time is more when you do not feel confident of accomplishing your work. Even when it appears to be impossible, even then you should have confidence; probably give miracles a chance. This very confidence



in yourself that 'I will be able to manage' will take you through.

❑ **Take interest in some art form:** In the corporate world, you are loaded with left-brain activities like logical thinking, planning, analysis and so on. So you need to balance the left-brain activity with the right-brain activity. Painting, music, poetry or any other kind of creative and recreational activities activate the right brain. When the two hemispheres of the brains are balanced, you can experience higher clarity, creativity, relaxation, efficiency and productivity.

❑ **Establish a congenial work atmosphere:** Peace and prosperity are interlinked. Prosperity cannot flourish in a disturbed atmosphere. While working with others, you need to function as a team. Have a sense of respect for your

team members, and do not indulge in blame games. Create an atmosphere of trust, cooperation, a sense of belonging, and celebration. Nothing can last if the focus is only on productivity and net result.

❑ **15-second gap:** Another clue, another technique you can follow. Whenever you have to do any important job, good or bad, give a fifteen seconds gap. A C.E.O. once wrote a very nasty letter to his boss. He was going to sign off and send it, when suddenly he remembered to give a 15-second gap. When he went through the letter again it was so nasty, he himself could not read it. That time lag made so much of a difference! Take home this technique. From today or tomorrow, practise this technique. The mind has a very strange tendency. Anything wrong it wants to do immediately. From now on, you postpone it. If you want to shout at somebody, postpone it to next week. We have a tendency of postponing doing something good. Anything that is good we tend to postpone it to later, to our next lifetime. So, we postpone doing something good and do immediately something that is harmful. So leave a 15-second gap and just pause and reflect. Be calm. Can you do it?

❑ **Do not worry about gaining position:** Remember that the respect which you gain through virtue and the respect you gain through position are different. The respect you get through a

position is short-lived and temporary. But the respect that you gain just because of your smile, your attitude, your virtues are with you for all time. Are you a chairman of this committee, president of that committee, a barrister or governor of a state? These are all momentary and temporary. They come and they go. And the respect you get because of this position is short-lived, it is not genuine, it is not from the heart, it is not true. But the respect you gain because you are a nice person is genuine, it lasts long. It is spontaneous.

❑ **Extend your comfort zone:** Anything creative, dynamic and great things can happen when you stretch beyond your comfort zone. We are often stuck in our little comfort zone and we cannot go beyond that. And we think we cannot just make an effort and put one step ahead, and you will see that you can expand your comfort zone and not shrink it. Creativity expands your comfort zone. Or, when you step out of the comfort zone, your creativity comes into play.

❑ **Do acts of service:** Be useful to people around you. It's the best antidote to stress. You must contribute to society. When you do some act of service and kindness, it brings an immediate feeling of inner rejuvenation. So, believe in yourself and remember that success is an attitude, not just a phenomenon.

Now you can write to us at agendapioneer@gmail.com