





# Four arrested in connection with Bharatmala project scam

STAFF REPORTER ■ RAIPUR

The Anti-Corruption Bureau/Economic Offence Wing (ACB/EOW) has arrested a couple among four persons in connection with alleged irregularities in the distribution of compensation for land acquisition for the Bharatmala project in Raipur district of Chhattisgarh, a senior official said on Saturday.

Kedar Tiwari, his wife Uma, Harmet Singh Khanuja and Vijay Jain have been taken into custody following the raid conducted on Friday at 20 locations in four districts of the state. ACB/EOW Additional Superintendent of Police Chandresh Thakur said. The couple was apprehended for allegedly getting a compensation amount of Rs 2 crore belonging to another



person. Khanuja, who was Uma Tiwari's aide, had allegedly received a compensation of Rs 2 crore for acquiring land and then handed it over to Tiwari. He also grabbed compensation amounts of several other farmers. Jain was also Uma Tiwari's aide who received the compensation amount and gave it to Tiwari.



The four were presented before the court of special ACB/EOW judge Neeraj Sharma, who granted their custodial remand to the ACB/EOW till May 1. The ACB/EOW on Friday raided the premises of 15 people, including public servants, persons who received compensation and others in four districts. The officials raided 20



premises in Raipur, Durg, Bilaspur and Mahasamund districts, he said. The action was taken following a case lodged against them under sections 467, 468, 471, 420 and 120 (B) of the Indian Penal Code and section & (C) of the Prevention of Corruption Act in connection with the irregularities in the project, the official said. As per the investigation,



the local authorities had paid more compensation than the required amount to the landowners of five villages of Raipur district to acquire their lands. It was for the proposed economic corridor road to be constructed between Raipur and Visakhapatnam under the Bharat Mala project. It caused a financial loss to the exchequer of Rs 48.03 crore.

# 13 services now under Public Service Guarantee Act

STAFF REPORTER ■ RAIPUR

The Chhattisgarh government has made a key reform and has included 13 services of major departments under the Public Service Guarantee Act, an official communicate said on Saturday.

These departments include the Chhattisgarh Environment Conservation Board, Commerce and Industry, Legal Metrology, Town and Country Investment and Water Resources Department.

This new system includes services like environmental clearance, industrial licence, measurement certification, town planning approval and water resources-related permissions.

Earlier, businessmen and people had to face trouble due to delays in these services. Now a time limit has been set for them.



Chief Minister Vishnu Deo Sai said that the goal was to ensure people and businessmen get government services in a fast and transparent manner.

This reform will not only ensure accountability but will also give new impetus to investment and development in the state, he said. This will make Chhattisgarh

more attractive for investment. This step will be especially beneficial for small and medium enterprises, which depend on timely services, he said.

The government plans to bring more services under the purview of this act in the future so that development in every sector in the state gets a boost, the communicate said.

# Amar Parwani made CAIT National Vice Chairman



STAFF REPORTER ■ RAIPUR

Chhattisgarh-based veteran businessman and leader Amar Parwani has been appointed the National Vice Chairman of the Confederation of All India Traders (CAIT), they said on Saturday.

The decision was made at the two-day meeting of the CAIT National Governing Council held in Bhubaneswar. More than

150 senior business leaders from across the country were present.

Parwani said, "I dedicate this achievement to the 12 lakh traders of Chhattisgarh."

"This is not just an honour but another big responsibility to protect the interests of traders across the country."

Parwani has previously served as the National Senior Vice President of CAIT and President of the Chhattisgarh Chamber of Commerce and Industries.

# ACB/EOW files 18K page chargesheet in CGMSC scam

STAFF REPORTER ■ RAIPUR

The Anti-Corruption Bureau/Economic Offence Wing (ACB/EOW) in Chhattisgarh on Saturday filed a chargesheet against six persons in alleged irregularities in the procurement of medical equipment and reagent chemicals in 2023, an ACB/EOW official said.

It had caused losses of about Rs 500 crore to the state exchequer.

The ACB/EOW has named Shashank Chopda and five government officials - Basant Kumar Kaushik, Chhirod Rautia, Kamalkant Patanwar, Dr Anil Parsai and Deepak Kumar Bandhe - in the massive 18,000-page chargesheet presented before the special court, he said.

Chopda is the director of



Mokshit Corporation, while five others were then posted in Chhattisgarh Medical Services Corporation Ltd (CGMSCL), he added.

"Kaushik was then posted as the In-charge General Manager, Equipment, and Deputy Manager

of Purchase and Operations of CGMSCL, Rautia and Bandhe were the then Biomedical Engineers. Patanwar was Deputy Manager, Equipment, and Parsai was Deputy Director, Store," he added.

Chopda was nabbed on

January 29 following a raid in connection with the case at more than a dozen locations in Raipur and Durg districts in Chhattisgarh and Haryana.

The five officials were apprehended last month.

They were arrested under sections 409, 120 (B) of IPC and sections 13 (1) (a), 13 (2), 7 (c) of the Prevention of Corruption Act, the official said.

On January 22, 2025, the ACB/EOW lodged a case against the officials of the CGMSCL (Raipur) and Directorate of Health Services department as well as four firms - Mokshit Corporation (Durg), CB Corporation (Durg), Records and Medicare System HSIIDC (Panchkula, Haryana) and Shri Sharda Industries (Raipur) and others - for causing loss of crores of rupees to the state exchequer.

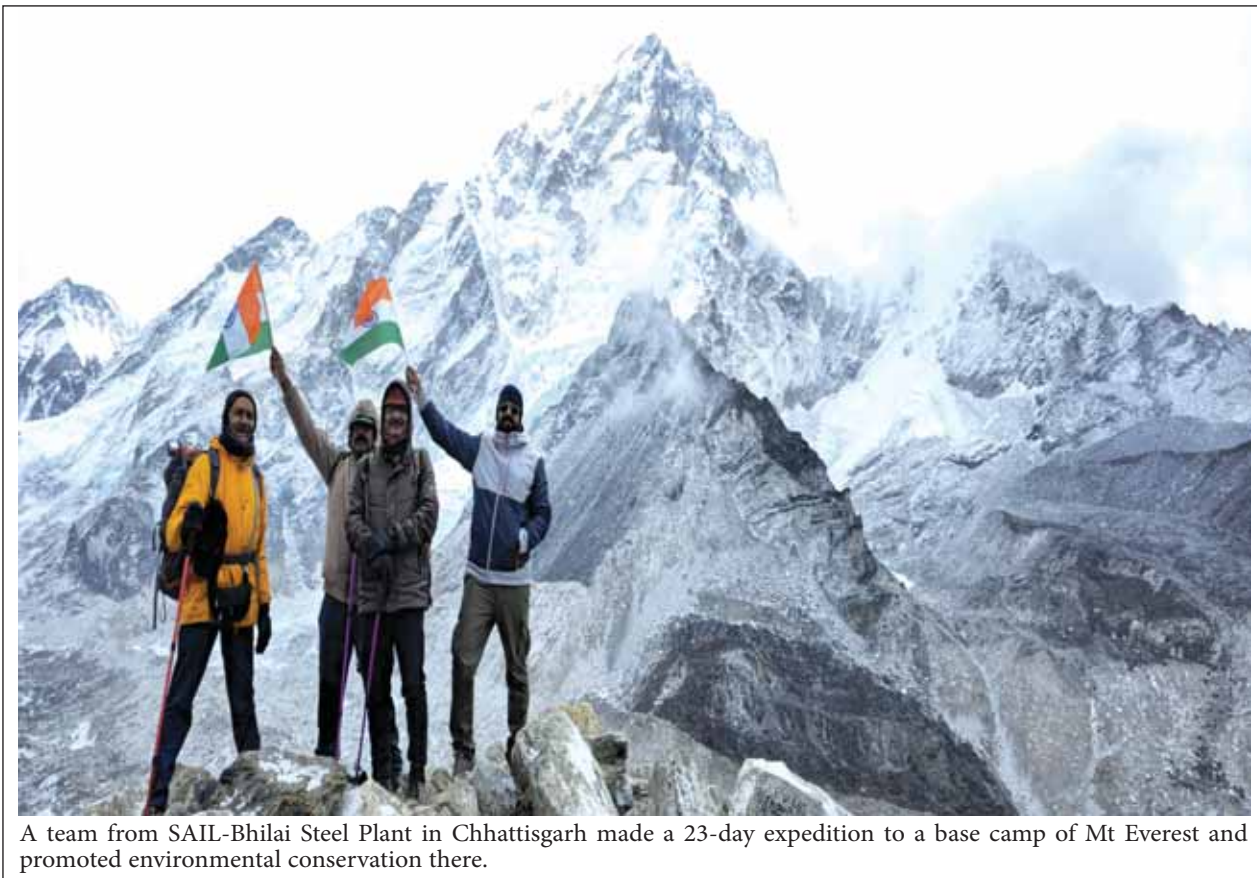
No one was named in the FIR.

The alleged scandal involves the purchase of reagents and equipment without ensuring the requirement or availability of these items in health centres at higher than market prices, the ACB/EOW had earlier said.

The CGMSCL has made purchases worth hundreds of crores of rupees between January 2022 and October 31, 2023, in collusion with Mokshit Corporation and its shell company, it said.

The EDTA tube used for collecting blood samples was purchased from Mokshit Corporation at the rate of Rs 2,352 per piece, while the same material was purchased by other institutions at a maximum rate of Rs 8.50, it said.

The CBC machine, which is sold by the manufacturers in the open market for Rs 5,00,000, was provided to CGMSC for Rs 17 lakh by Mokshit Corporation, it added.



A team from SAIL-Bhilai Steel Plant in Chhattisgarh made a 23-day expedition to a base camp of Mt Everest and promoted environmental conservation there.

# Committee formed to investigate Dongargarh ropeway collapse

STAFF REPORTER ■ RAJNANDGAON

Authorities in Chhattisgarh's Rajnandgaon on Saturday constituted a district-level committee to investigate the technical aspects of the ropeway collapse, operated in the Maa Bamleshwari temple complex in Dongargarh.

The ropeway snapped, and a trolley fell to the ground on Friday. Many people were injured, including BJP state General Secretary Bharat Verma and Senior BJP leader Ramsevak Paikra.

The committee consists of Executive Engineer Chhattisgarh State Electricity Board Limited Division Dongargarh NK Sahu, Executive Engineer Public Works Department Electrical and Mechanical Division Durg RL Gaikwad and In-charge



Sub-Divisional Officer Public Works Department Electrical and Mechanical Division Durg

Panchram Thakur. They will complete their investigation and submit a

report to Collector Sarveshwar Narendra Bhure within seven days.

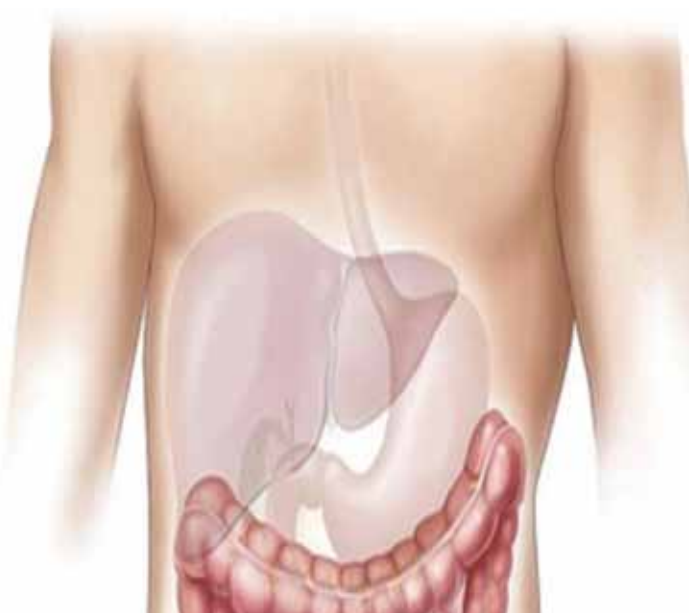
# Sleep well, avoid junk food to keep your liver healthy

AGENCIES ■

Having a good night's sleep and avoiding junk food is essential to keep the liver healthy, said Dr. S.K. Sarin, Director of the Institute of Liver and Biliary Sciences (ILBS). He said that junk food, as the name suggests, must be put in dustbins as its regular consumption can significantly affect liver health.

"The word junk food means it is junk. It has to be put in the dustbin. But if you think your stomach and intestines are dustbins, put that food inside. Otherwise, avoid, don't use it," Sarin said, in a post on social media platform X.

Junk food which is rich in unhealthy fats, sugars, and processed ingredients increases the risk of obesity, high cholesterol, and type 2 diabetes. These diseases then raise the chances of non-alcoholic fatty liver



**"The word junk food means it is junk. It has to be put in the dustbin. But if you think your stomach and intestines are dustbins, put that food inside. Otherwise, avoid, don't use it,"**

disease (NAFLD), and progress to more serious complications like cirrhosis and liver cancer. Sarin also urged people to sleep well and not eat late as it may affect the gut bacteria, critical for better health.

Studies have shown that people with poor sleep are at increased risk of fatty liver disease. Further, eating late at night has been linked to a higher risk of significant fibrosis — a sign of liver damage.

It is because the body is unable to process fat and carbohydrates during sleep, leading to their accumulation in the liver. "Sleeping late and eating late-night food is not a great idea, because the bacteria in your intestines which process the food, will also sleep late."

Restorative good sleep is the best thing," the leading hepatologist said. Sarin advised people to not lose their health by running after "money,

power and positions". Instead maintaining "a sound healthy body and good night's sleep" is essential as these are the "only two things which give happiness in life", the expert said.

NAFLD, currently termed metabolic dysfunction-associated steatotic liver disease (MASLD), is a chronic liver disease that occurs when fat builds up in the liver in people who don't drink much alcohol. It can affect people with diabetes, obesity, high blood pressure, or high cholesterol.

Fatty liver disease is emerging as an important cause of liver disease in India, affecting about three in 10 people in the country. In September last year, the Union Health Ministry released the revised operational guidelines and training module for MAFLD to promote early detection and help boost patient care and out-

comes related to the disease.

## SOUTH EAST CENTRAL RAILWAY E-TENDER NOTICE

E-Tender Notice No.: TRD-R-2025-E01 Dated: 22.04.2025  
**Name of the work:** Conversion of unregulated OHE into regulated OHE in Raipur Division.  
**Tender Value:** ₹ 5,12,81,407.35.  
**Bid Security:** ₹ 4,06,400.00.  
**Submission of Tender:** Upto 12:00 hours on Date 19.05.2025. **Opening of Tender:** At 12:30 hour on Date 19.05.2025.  
 For further details/purchase of tender documents, eligibility criteria and the complete details of the above work, please contact the office of the Senior Divisional Electrical Engineer (TRD), SECR, Raipur or refer / download the tender documents which is available on [www Ireps.gov.in](http://www Ireps.gov.in).  
**Sr. Div. Electrical Engineer-TRD, PR/RTD/MS/17 S.E.C.R., Raipur**  
 South East Central Railway @secrail





Mighty and meek attend Pope Francis' funeral

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA ■ Vatican City

World leaders and Catholic faithful bade farewell to Pope Francis in a funeral Saturday that highlighted his concern for the "most peripheral of the peripheries" and reflected his wishes as pastor.

Though presidents and princes attended the Mass in St Peter's Square, prisoners and migrants will welcome him at the basilica across town where he will be buried.

Perhaps because so many young people were on hand, the sombre ceremony still had a festive mood, with mourners taking selfies amid the hymns as Francis' simple coffin was brought out of St Peter's Basilica at the start of the Mass.

Cardinal Giovanni Battista Re, the 91-year-old dean of the College of Cardinals, delivered a lengthy, spirited and highly personal homily, or sermon. He eulogised Francis as a pope of the people, a pastor who knew how to communicate to the "least among us" with an informal, spontaneous style.

crowd when he recounted Francis' constant concern for migrants, including when he celebrated Mass at the US-Mexico border and travelled to a refugee camp in Lesbos, Greece, and brought 12 migrants home with him.

Francis had choreographed the funeral himself when he revised and simplified the Vatican's rites and rituals last year. His aim was to emphasize the pope's role as a mere pastor and not "a powerful man of this world."

US President Donald Trump and former President Joe Biden, Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy, UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres, and



The body of Pope Francis rests inside St Peter's Basilica at the Vatican

British Prime Minister Keir Starmer joined Prince William and European royals leading more than 160 official delegations. Argentine President Javier Milei had the

pride of place given Francis' nationality, even if the two didn't particularly get along and the pope alienated many Argentines by never returning home.

Trump and Zelenskyy met privately on the sidelines of the funeral. A photo showed the two men sitting alone, facing one another and hunched over on chairs in St Peter's Basilica.

The white facade of the basilica glowed pink as the sun rose Saturday and hordes of mourners rushed into the square. Giant television screens were set up along the surrounding streets for those who couldn't get close.

Police helicopters whirled overhead, part of the massive security operation Italian authorities mounted, including more than 2,500 police, 1,500 soldiers and a torpedo ship off the coast, Italian media reported.

Many mourners had planned to be in Rome anyway this weekend for the now-postponed Holy Year canonisation of the first millennial saint, Carlo Acutis, and groups of scouts and youth church groups nearly outnumbered the gaggles of nuns and seminarians.

said Miguel Vaca, a pilgrim from Peru who said he had camped out near the piazza. "It is a very great emotion to say goodbye to him," Francis, the first Latin American and first Jesuit pope, died Easter Monday

at age 88 after suffering a stroke while recovering at home from pneumonia. Following his funeral, preparations can begin in earnest to launch the centuries-old process of electing a new pope, a conclave that will likely begin in the first week of May.

Francis is breaking with recent tradition and will be laid to rest in St Mary Major Basilica, near Rome's main train station, where a simple tomb awaits him with just his name: Franciscus.

As many as 3,00,000 people are expected to line the 6-kilometre motorcade route that is bringing Francis' coffin from the Vatican through the centre of Rome to the basilica after the funeral.

Forty special guests, organised by the Vatican's Caritas charity and the Sant'Egidio community, will greet his coffin at the basilica, honouring the marginalised groups Francis prioritised as pope: homeless people and migrants, prisoners and transgender people.

NOTICE TO THE RESPONDENT TO SHOW CAUSE (SCR, Order XXII) IN THE SUPREME COURT OF INDIA...

1. JASWINDER KAUR, D/O LATE HARBAJAN SINGH, R/O B-222, BHAI RANDHIR SINGH NAGAR, LUDHIANA (PUNJ)...

UNSC condemns in 'strongest terms' J and K attack

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA ■ United Nations

The UNSC has "condemned in the strongest terms" the terrorist attack in Jammu and Kashmir, stressing that those responsible should be held accountable and the organisers and sponsors of this "reprehensible act of terrorism" should be brought to justice.

The 15-nation Council issued a Press Statement on 'terrorist attack in Jammu and Kashmir' in which the members "condemned in the strongest terms the terrorist attack in Jammu and Kashmir" on April 22, during which at least 26 people were killed and many more injured.

"The members of the Security Council underlined the need to hold perpetrators, organisers, financiers and sponsors of this reprehensible act of terrorism accountable and bring them to justice," the press statement said.

"They stressed that those responsible for these killings should be held accountable, and urged all States, in accordance with their obligations under international law and relevant Security Council resolutions, to cooperate actively with all relevant authorities in this regard," it said.

A press statement is a declaration to the media made by the President of the Security Council on behalf of all 15 Members. France is President of the Council for the month of April and the press statement was issued by Council President Permanent Representative of France to the UN Ambassador Jerome Bonnafont.

It is learnt that the US had floated the draft statement, which was then discussed by Council members.

Pakistan currently sits in the UN Security Council as a non-permanent member. A press statement requires agreement from all Council members and is a negotiated text.

and condolences to the families of the victims and to the Government of India and the Government of Nepal, and wished a speedy and full recovery to those who were injured. In the April 22 terror attack in Pahalgam, 25 Indians and one Nepali citizen were killed.

The victims were mostly tourists from all across India. The UNSC members reaffirmed that terrorism in all its forms and manifestations constitutes one of the most serious threats to international peace and security.

They reiterated that any acts of terrorism are criminal and unjustifiable, regardless of their motivation, wherever, whenever and by whomever committed. They reaffirmed the need for all States to combat by all means, in accordance with the Charter of the United Nations and other obligations under international law, including international human rights law, international refugee law and international humanitarian law, threats to international peace and security caused by terrorist acts.

PUBLIC NOTICE

It is informed to all concerned that Pooja Kayat D/o Gopi Ram W/o Mahesh Chand Kayat R/o H. No. 7 Church Lane, Jaugrana, Bhopal (M.P.)...

PUBLIC NOTICE

Notice is hereby given that my client Pooja Chaudhary is in process to purchase the Property Plot bearing No. 102 area measuring 46 sq. yds., out of Kharsa Mustali...

THE PIONEER CLASSIFIEDS CHANGE OF NAME

I, Binay Kumar S/o Sri Ishwar Dayal Prasad R/o GF-02, Plot No. 469, Sector - 4, Vaishali, Ghaziabad, UP 201010, have changed my minor daughter's name from Aakarshi Kanak Aakarshi to Kanak Aakarshi DOB-25/9/25. Hence, she would be named Kanak Aakarshi for all future purposes. PD(1934)A

PUBLIC NOTICE

It is to inform to the public at large that Mr. Mahender Pal & Mrs. Urmila Devi who are the owners of the House No. 2L467 (adjoining to 2L466), area measuring 40 Sq. Yards, and same to be financed by mortgage by SMFG India Credit Co. Ltd. (Formerly Fullerton India Credit Co. Ltd.), Noida...

Singapore blocks voter-influencing Facebook posts

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA ■ Singapore

Authorities in Singapore, which goes to the polls next week, have directed Meta to disable user access to several Facebook posts intended to influence voters by foreigners — one a former Singaporean detainee-turned-Australian linked to the Islamic State and two Malaysian politicians.

The posts criticised, among others, the Singapore government's handling of sensitive religious issues and urged Singaporeans to vote along religious lines.

The posts have been targeted at Singaporeans, according to the statement. "They interfere with our domestic politics, which are reserved for our citizens. They also urge Singaporeans to vote on racial and religious lines, and have led to more social media postings of a similar nature."

All this has the potential to fracture the multi-racial and multi-religious harmony that is the bedrock of Singapore as a nation, according to the statement.

"We recognise that public policy may sometimes involve matters of religious concern," the MHA-ELD noted but assured the government would continue to engage widely, including with religious groups, to hear their views and ensure they were taken into account.

All this has the potential to fracture the multi-racial and multi-religious harmony that is the bedrock of Singapore as a nation, according to the statement.

The MHA-ELD also urged all political parties and their candidates, as well as religious organisations, leaders and members of the public to do "our part to safeguard the precious harmony we have in Singapore today."

Foreigners must not direct, fund or in any way influence Singapore's elections. It is an offence under the Parliamentary Elections Act for foreigners to participate in elections activity or publish online election advertising, according to the statement.

Under the Parliamentary Elections Act, online election advertising is defined as any material published online that can reasonably be regarded as intended to promote or prejudice the electoral success or standing of a political party or candidate.

Gurmit Singh, president of the Inter-Religious Organisation, said religion had to be kept out of politics "for the common good."

"In Singapore, we have witnessed the dangers of racial and religious conflicts in the past," Singh said in a statement posted on Facebook by the organisation's honorary secretary Lawrence Chong.

"This can come about when religion is mixed with politics, as witnessed in parts of the world," Channel News Asia quoted Singh as saying. A total 27,58,846 (27.58 lakh) people are registered to vote in the May 3 elections.

Indiabulls Enterprises Limited (CIN: U71290HR2019PLC077579)

Extract of Audited Consolidated Financial Results for the quarter and year ended 31 March 2025 (Rs. in Crores)

Table with 6 columns: Particulars, Quarter ended 31-Mar-25, Quarter ended 31-Dec-24, Quarter ended 31-Mar-24, Year ended 31-Mar-25, Year ended 31-Mar-24. Rows include Total Income from operations, Net (Loss)/Profit for the period, Total Comprehensive Income for the period, etc.

Table with 6 columns: Particulars, Quarter ended 31-Mar-25, Quarter ended 31-Dec-24, Quarter ended 31-Mar-24, Year ended 31-Mar-25, Year ended 31-Mar-24. Rows include Total Income, Net (Loss)/Profit before Tax, Net Loss/Profit after Tax.

Figures for the quarters ended 31 March 2025 and 31 March 2024 represent the balancing figures between the audited figures for the full financial year and published reviewed year to date figures upto third quarter of the respective financial year.

The above is an extract of the detailed format of quarterly / annual financial results filed with the stock exchanges under Regulation 33 of the SEBI (Listing and Other Disclosure Requirements) Regulations, 2015. The full format of the Quarterly / annual Financial Results are available on the Company's website (https://www.indiabullsentprises.com) and on the website of BSE (https://www.bseindia.com) and NSE (https://www.nseindia.com).

Registered Office: 5th Floor, Plot No. 108, IT Park, Udyog Vihar, Phase-1 Gurugram, Haryana 122016. For and on behalf of Board of Directors. Vijay Kumar Agarwal, Executive Director.

NOTICE TO THE RESPONDENT TO SHOW CAUSE (SCR, Order XXII) IN THE SUPREME COURT OF INDIA. APPELLATE JURISDICTION PETITION FOR SPECIAL LEAVE PETITION (CIVIL) No(s) 24317-24323 OF 2017.

ASSISTANT REGISTRAR



## PASTEL PLAY: Softest Style Power

BY SAKSHI PRIYA

August slipped away into a moment in time... Taylor Swift's lyric sets the tone for summer 2025 soft, romantic and full of feeling. This season, fashion is leaning into pastels with renewed purpose. From pistachio and butter yellow to powder pink, mint green and sky-blue, these shades have captured the spotlight across collections, editorials, and social feeds alike.

There's something undeniably fresh about the pastel palette this year. It speaks of calm confidence, easy elegance, and a desire for lightness after seasons of excess. Designers are embracing subtle colour in strong silhouettes — flowing skirts, tailored suits, cropped jackets — proving that softness can be powerful.

Pastels are dominating social media too. Influencers are styling them head-to-toe, mixing them into beauty and lifestyle content and making them the season's most coveted colour story. These tones reflect a collective shift — towards clarity, wearability, and charm that lasts.

**STYLE APPROACH**  
**Mix and Match:** Pair multiple pastel tones together for an effortless look that still feels curated.  
**Keep It Clean:** Let the colours speak, avoid heavy prints or over-layering.  
**Play with Contrast:** Add white, camel or denim to balance out the softness.  
**Tailored Softness:** Pastel suiting especially in pistachio or blush, is ideal for spring events and workwear transitions.

**SAGE GREEN: A CALM CONSTANT**  
Elegant and easy to wear, has found its place across spring collections. Style a sage green ankle-length skirt with a cotton blouse and tan leather sandals. Gold jewellery and a handbag to look effortlessly stylish.

**BUTTER YELLOW: LIGHT, BUT IMPACTFUL**  
Less vibrant than lemon and subtler than neon, this version of yellow adds warmth without overpowering. Pair a butter yellow. A line skirt with neutral-toned top with crossbody and gold hoops.

**SKY BLUE: POLISHED AND CALM**  
Cool and collected, sky blue made appearances in shirting, light knits and versatile summer suiting. A cropped jacket in sky blue over a white dress, paired with trainers or loafers, makes for a look that is as wearable as it is elegant.

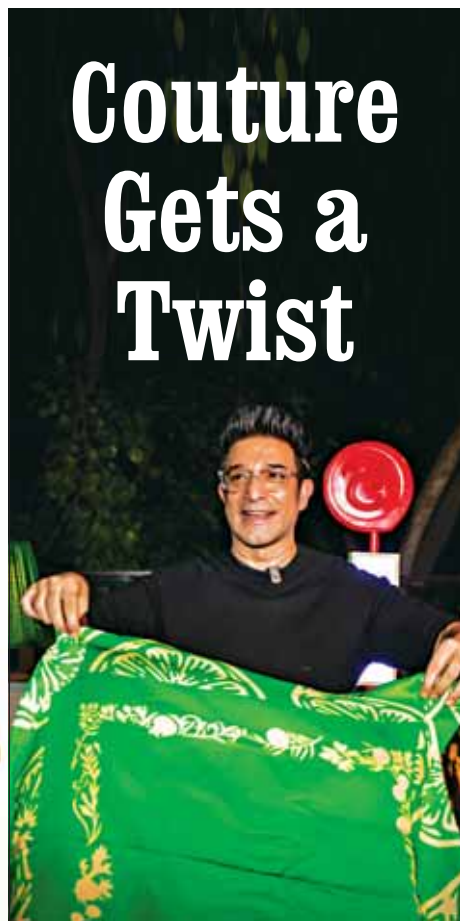
**MINT GREEN: THE COOL CLASSIC**  
Soft yet fresh, brings a touch of coolness to the pastel spectrum. Whether in flared pants, pleated skirts or summer tops.  
A mint green blouse tucked into white high-waisted trousers creates a breezy, polished outfit for sunny afternoons. Pair with white sandals and delicate jewellery for a balanced look.

**PISTACHIO GREEN: THE REFINED REFRESH**  
Once reserved for interiors and gelato menus, pistachio green is now one of fashion's leading colours. A pistachio green dress paired with off-white heels and minimal jewellery creates pinterest — worthy looks.

**COTTON CANDY PINK: ROMANTIC, REWORKED**  
This pink is tender, not theatrical. Far from overly sweet, it is being presented in tailored, wearable shapes that make it ideal for grown-up dressing with a soft edge. A knee-length pleated skirt in pink with a neutral knit and ballet flats adds polish without looking overly styled.

**KEY PIECES:**  
 ● Pistachio-toned mini shoulder bags  
 ● Sky blue ballet flats  
 ● Blush pink belts and hairbands  
 ● Lightweight scarves in tonal pastels

In recent years, wearing pastels has shifted from being seen as a just style choice to a statement of sophistication. People now find themselves moving towards these colours because they're considered "aesthetic." You can wear a loud red, but the moment you wear pastel tone, you are labelled as aesthetically in tune with the times. It's almost as if every thing, in some way, has become about being 'aesthetic.'



## Couture Gets a Twist

BY TEAM VIVA

When high fashion joins the art of refined indulgence, the result is bound to be enchanting. Celebrated couturier Suneet Varma and the iconic gin brand Tanqueray have presented "The OG Summer of Love," an evocative collaboration that exudes elegance and a touch of whimsy.

The highlight of the collection is the scarf, an artistic expression of Tanqueray's botanical roots. With motifs of juniper berries, citrus slices, and herbs rendered in delicate brushstrokes, the design is fresh, breezy, and undeniably chic. The palette — Tanqueray green offset by soft neutrals and bright botanical tones — makes it a perfect summer essential. It's a wearable poem, a nod to nature's fragrance and the joy of dressing up. You can imagine it fluttering softly in a sunlit garden party, paired with linen whites and laughter in the air.

Suneet Varma, known for his emotionally rich, opulent designs, lends his philosophy — celebration, storytelling, and connection to this collaboration. "The scarf is a wearable celebration," he says, and rightly so. It evokes the feeling of a summer evening where cocktails sparkle in crystal glasses and conversations meander like a favourite old melody — perhaps "All You Need is Love," playing softly in the background. The OG Summer of Love is an invitation — to pause, to sip, to drape, and to delight in the finer things.

Suneet Varma says, "My design philosophy has always been centered on celebration, emotion, and storytelling — values that align beautifully with Tanqueray's legacy of bold flavors and sophistication. This collaboration transcends fashion and spirits."

## A Spanish Romantic Thriller that Blossoms in Blood

When murder becomes just another business, you enter the familiar chilling world of Netflix thrillers, writes ABHI SINGHAL

There have many thriller TV series like 'You' that keep you numb and go damn but **The Gardener** is somewhere something different and very gripping created by Miguel Sáez Carral. The TV series is a Spanish romantic thriller streaming on Netflix.

The series opens with a tense scene: Elmer (Álvaro Rico) calmly approaches the sea and murders an unsuspecting swimmer. What follows in the first three episodes is a sequence of brutal killings of innocent people, all orchestrated for monetary gain. At the heart of this darkness is Elmer's mother, La China Jurado (played with unnerving precision by Cecilia Suárez), who manipulates her emotionally void son into becoming a killer-for-hire.

Elmer, traumatised by a childhood car accident, is portrayed as emotionally detached, unable to feel love, guilt or remorse. Álvaro Rico delivers a striking performance, capturing the paradox of a man wrestling with his emptiness. His stoic expressions and stiff tone give the series its haunting core.

The story gains emotional complexity with the introduction of Violeta (Catalina Soplana), a gentle nursery school teacher who unwittingly becomes a target for assassination due to a case of mistaken identity. Soplana brings warmth and vulnerability to the role, serving as the emotional counterbalance to Elmer's coldness. The romantic tension



### Highlights That Make The Gardener Stand Out:

- Unique blend of aesthetic beauty and darkness
- Strong performances, especially from Álvaro Rico and Cecilia Suárez

### Reasons The Gardener May Miss the Mark

- Emotionally heavy and morbid themes with cold-blooded murders and emotional detachment
- Predictable family murder drama

between the two adds a tender, human element to an otherwise dark narrative.

Cecilia Suárez is mesmerising as La China Jurado, a cunning matriarch with a murky past, who hides her criminal empire behind the façade of a garden centre. Her disdain for Violeta injects familiar dramatic tension, reminiscent of classic soap-style maternal possessiveness. Yet here, it is underscored with a far more sinister undertone.

Perhaps the most disturbing, and oddly poetic, element of the series is the use of the victims' bodies as fertiliser to enrich the garden. It is a macabre metaphor that adds a gothic flourish to the storyline. The garden itself becomes a silent witness to the horrors that unfold, lush, vibrant and fed by death.

The Gardener is a visually striking series, filled with aesthetic scenes of blooming flowers and rich colours, which juxtapose sharply with its grim subject matter. This contrast only heightens the emotional unease, making the viewer question the price of beauty and the cost of love.

In six tightly crafted episodes, The Gardener manages to blend romance, psychological trauma, family drama and crime thriller into a cohesive and deeply unsettling narrative. For fans of shows like You or Dark Desire, this series offers a fresh twist on a common storyline that is beautiful, brutal and strangely hypnotic.



RATING  
★★★★

### SUGGESTED BINGES



**Andor Season 2**  
OTT – JioHotstar  
Cast – Stellan Skarsgård, Genevieve O'Reilly, Adria Arjona, Forest Whitaker



**Jewel Thief - The Heist Begins**  
OTT – Netflix  
Cast – Saif Ali Khan, Jaideep Ahlawat, Nikita Dutta, Kunal Kapoor



**You Season 5**  
OTT – Netflix  
Cast – Elizabeth Lail, Penn Badgley, Zach Cherry, Charlotte Ritchie



**Veera Dheera Sooran**  
OTT – Amazon Prime Video  
Cast – SJ Suryah, Suraj Venjaramoodu, Dushara Vijayan



**Étoile**  
OTT – Amazon Prime Video  
Cast – Luke Kirby, Charlotte Gainsbourg



# AGENDA

"A person susceptible to 'wanderlust' is not so much addicted to movement as committed to transformation"  
— Pico Iyer



## When adventure is a way of life!



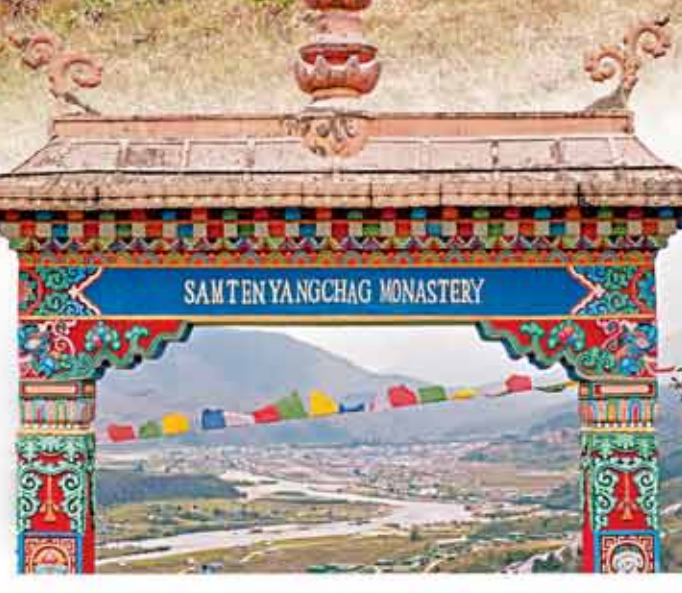
### The Mechukha Adventure Race in Arunachal Pradesh blended high-octane action with national pride, showcasing the region's beauty, writes GYANESHWAR DAYAL

The greatest challenge one can face often lies within — confronting and transcending personal limitations. Pushing these boundaries becomes one of the most rewarding experiences life can offer. This notion came to life both figuratively and literally when 22 teams converged in Mechukha for the 3rd National Adventure Racing Championship, a prestigious event under the Adventure Racing World Series — Asia Series.

In a spectacular blend of adrenaline and assertion, Arunachal Pradesh played host to a high — octane adventure race set against the breathtaking backdrop of Mechukha, located in the Shi Yomi district. Spearheaded by the Government of Arunachal Pradesh, which aims to place Mechukha firmly on the global adventure sports map, the choice of location was as strategic as it was scenic.

Nestled near the Chinese border on the far eastern edge of India, Mechukha stands not only as a gateway to natural beauty but also as a testament to national pride and resilience. Pasang Dorjee Sona, the Sports Minister of Arunachal Pradesh and the visionary behind the event's conception, expressed his intent with candor and conviction: "This is our way of telling the world — we are here, waiting to be explored. What you'll find here is an India unlike any other. The race is merely a means to draw global attention and unveil this hidden paradise."

His words carry weight, for Mechukha offers boundless opportunities for adventure tourism — from soaring down one of India's longest zip lines and paragliding over pristine valleys, to braving wild rivers through rafting and kayaking, scaling rugged mountain faces, and trekking through untouched landscapes. Set against the backdrop of the Eastern Himalayas, the race included mountain biking, trail running, river rafting, and rappelling — challenging participants across some of the most



rugged and breathtaking terrain in the region. Mechukha, located near the Indo — Tibet border, offered a dramatic and fitting venue, with its raw beauty and strategic significance. The race covered a route that took participants through dense forests, across suspension bridges, over swift rivers, and into remote tribal hamlets, giving them a taste of the unique culture and unspoiled environment that defines Arunachal Pradesh.

#### Promoting Adventure Tourism

Organised by the state's Department of Tourism in collaboration with Nth adventure the race was a strategic move to boost adventure tourism in the region. Arunachal Pradesh, often referred to as the "Land of the Rising Sun," boasts immense untapped potential for eco and adventure tourism. Pema Khandu, the dynamic Chief Minister of Arunachal Pradesh, is deeply committed to positioning Mechukha and the state as a whole, as a vibrant tourism hub.

"As a border state, we face certain constraints," he noted, "but significant efforts are underway to enhance infrastructure — from roads to telecommunications — which will give a major boost to the tourism industry. Arunachal Pradesh is a peaceful state with 85 percent forest cover, offering visitors a rejuvenating experience amidst nature."

Speaking at the event, Arunachal Pradesh's Tourism Minister emphasised, "This is our home, and we are proud to showcase its beauty and resilience. Adventure tourism is our bridge to the world, and Mechukha is just the beginning." "It's not just about the race. It's about experiencing India's frontier, the people, the spirit, the message," said a participant from Mumbai.



#### ADVENTURE MECHUKHA: LET THE ADRENAL RACE

India's 3rd National Adventure Racing Championship came to Arunachal Pradesh for the first time. As part of the prestigious ARWS Asia series, the championship offered an experience that combined intense competition, breathtaking landscapes, and rich cultural immersion. Held in the remote and pristine Mechukha Valley, the event lived up to its promise of providing a race like no other. Nestled high in the Himalayas, 6,000 feet above sea level, Mechukha

welcomed competitors with its untouched beauty. The participants not only faced some of the toughest terrains in the country but also had the chance to immerse themselves in the culture and traditions of the region, discovering the warmth and hospitality of the local tribes, including the Membas, Ramos, Bokars, Libos, and Tagin.

The 3rd National Adventure Racing Championship also served as a qualifier for the ARWS Asia Championship 2025, adding an extra layer

of intensity to the competition. With national and international teams coming together to compete, the event attracted some of the best in the field. In addition to the race, the championship offered a generous cash prize pool of Rs 7 lakh, 5 lakh and 3 lakhs. But beyond the competition, the event allowed participants to fully immerse themselves in Mechukha's rich culture. It was an experience that went far beyond the race itself, offering a deep connection to the land.

#### EXPLORING THE LAST SHANGRI-LA

Nestled in the eastern Himalayas, Mechukha is a pristine valley in the Shi-Yomi district of Arunachal Pradesh, India. Often described as the "Last Shangri-La," this enchanting destination remains largely untouched by commercial tourism, offering an unspoiled glimpse into nature, culture, and thrilling adventures.

#### A TAPESTRY OF NATURAL BEAUTY

Mechukha is a dreamscape of lush meadows, dense pine forests, winding rivers, and majestic mountains. In spring and summer, the valley is blanketed with wildflowers, while autumn offers crisp air and golden hues. Winters, though chilly, transform Mechukha into a white wonderland, with snow-draped landscapes that look like they're lifted straight from a postcard.

#### ADVENTURE AWAITS

While tranquility is one of Mechukha's charms, the region also promises adrenaline, pumping adventure for thrill seekers.

#### TREKKING AND HIKING

Mechukha is surrounded by several unexplored trails that cut through dense forests and mountain passes. The Samten Yongcha trek is a favourite among locals, offering panoramic views of the valley. Hikes to nearby ridges reveal sweeping vistas of snow capped peaks and endless forests.

#### RIVER RAFTING

The Siyom River, though calm in places, also has rapids suitable for white — water rafting, especially during the summer. For the more laid, back adventurer, angling for local fish species in the river is a peaceful pastime.

#### PARAGLIDING

Mechukha has also become known as a paragliding hotspot, especially during the annual Adventure Festival organised by the Arunachal Pradesh tourism department. Soaring over pine forests and rivers offers a bird's eye view of the valley's breathtaking landscape.

#### MOUNTAIN BIKING

With its rugged terrain and offbeat tracks, Maichukha is perfect for mountain biking. Whether you're coasting downhill or navigating rocky trails, the combination of fresh air and scenic backdrops makes every ride memorable.

#### A SUBTLE YET STRONG MESSAGE TO CHINA

China has consistently refused to recognise Arunachal Pradesh as part of India, referring to it as "South Tibet" in its official maps. The Indian government has repeatedly reaffirmed that Arunachal Pradesh is and will always be an integral part of India. By organising a high-profile adventure event in a border village, India sent a quiet but firm message: governance, development, and public participation in the region are thriving. The presence of Indian security forces, civil authorities, and a large number of Indian participants underlined the reality on the ground.





# BHURI BHOJ Comes Alive In Delhi

Bringing the stories and spices of Bengal to life, Chef Ananya Banerjee curates an unforgettable menu for the Delhiites, for ten days, that celebrates the region's rich love for the food culture, writes ABHI SINGHAL



Chef Ananya Banerjee — The mind and magic behind the creativity and fusion of the Bengali food.

The Bengali culture always makes you feel so alive and the Bengali feast is to die for in the case of food lovers. So, for ten special days, the essence of Bengal will be live at the *The Suryaa, New Delhi* with "Taste of Bengal", that is a grand celebration of food, flavour and nostalgia. The heart behind the entire finger licking food is Chef Ananya Banerjee, whose love for Bengal's food traditions shines through every plate.

The buffet spread showcases an impressive lineup of Bengali classics. Start with *Bhetki Paturi*, where mustard-marinated fish is gently wrapped in banana leaves and pan-fried to perfection. For the savours of the non vegetarian you can try the ever-popular *Keema Egg Devil*, a favourite from Kolkata's street food scene that wraps

## THE SWEETEST GRAND FINALE

The dessert spread is a poetic end to the Bengali feast. You will get to relish the *Makha Shondesh* served in a crisp kunafa basket — soft, kneaded, and delicately sweet. Then, surrender to the charm of *Kheer Komala*, a silky milk pudding laced with fresh oranges and citrus zest. A gentle, flavourful finale that lingers on the palate long after the last bite.

spiced minced meat around a boiled egg, fried until golden and crisp.

In the starters you also have *Ghugni tart* — a contemporary take on Kolkata's classic yellow pea curry, served in a delicate tart shell, *Beetroot Croquette cylinder* — a crisp, deep-fried beetroot and potato croquette with subtle spice, served with delicate garnish. These will not let you keep up the space for the upcoming main course.

The main courses feature the much-loved *Kosha Mangsho*, a slow-cooked mutton dish rich with

spices. Pair it with puffed *Luchi* or the fragrant yellow *Basanti Pulao* for a truly satisfying plate. And for those with a sweet tooth, the *Baked Rasogolla* is a must — a gentle twist on Bengal's iconic sweet that's both comforting and indulgent.

The *Vegetarian Thali* had the *Lebu pata bhaat* — fragrant gobindobogh rice infused with citrusy gondhoraj leaves for refreshing aroma, *Bengali Aloo Dum* — baby potatoes slow-cooked in lightly spiced tomato cumin. The taste of *Chholar Dal* with *Narkel & Kishmish* made with thick Bengal gram dal cooked with coconut slivers and sweet raisin will become your favourite eventually.

The desert is the last and the best. You will have the sweetness of *Makha Shondesh* in kunafa basket — Soft, Kneaded Bengali sandesh delicately in a crisp kunafa nest. The *Kheer Komala* — A velvety milk pudding infused with fresh oranges

and citrus zest will make your taste buds

feel weak on food. But this festival is about more than just what is on the plate. *The Suryaa* has turned its dining space into a little slice of Bengal with Live kitchen counters let diners watch dishes come to life, while traditional music adds a soothing background, completing an atmosphere that feels like stepping into a Bengali home.

## FACT SHEET -

Taste of Bengal  
Where: The Suryaa, New Delhi  
When: 25th April - 4th May 2025  
Timings: 7:00 PM - 11:00 PM  
Price: Dinner Buffet at INR 2399++



From street snacks to heirloom recipes, "Taste of Bengal" brings Kolkata's kitchen to Delhi under the culinary guidance of Chef Ananya. It promises a meal to remember and is an invitation to connect with a part of India that is rich in warmth, tradition, and taste. So, prepare for a nostalgic food journey as The Suryaa.



THE VEGETARIAN THALI HAD THE LEBU PATA BHAAT, BENGALI ALOO DUM, CHHOLAR DAL, GOLDA CHINGRI MALAI KARI AND MORE TO ENJOY.

PHOTOS: PANKAJ KUMAR



## Passport to World's Street Food



From Tokyo to Mexico, it's a flavourful food world tour at Cafe Delhi Heights, writes ABHI SINGHAL

Street food is an extra happy taste buds experience, a cultural adventure that brings together the flavours and traditions of distant lands. Imagine embarking on a food journey around the globe, all without leaving your seat. With the *International Street Food Festival 2025 at Cafe Delhi Heights*, you can do just that, as this exciting celebration of global cuisine unfolds across all their outlets from April 15 to May 1.

Step into the warm and aesthetic atmosphere of Cafe Delhi Heights, where the scents of sizzling spices, grilling meats, and fresh ingredients fill the

air, setting the stage for a food adventure. The festival's specially formed menu promises to take you on a whirlwind tour across continents, offering a unique twist on iconic street food dishes from around the world.

You can start your journey in Asia with a steaming bowl of Japanese ramen, its rich, savoury broth paired perfectly with tender noodles and a medley of fresh toppings. If you're craving something with a bit of heat, the spicy, tangy kick of Mexican tacos will leave your taste buds dancing. For a touch of Middle Eastern warmth, savour the juicy, flavourful shawarmas, packed with a delicious mix of meats and spices that transport you straight to the bustling streets of Beirut or Cairo.

But the adventure doesn't stop there. Want to travel more? Now, CDH takes you to Spain with a bite of the crispy, sugar-dusted churros, or you can sink teeth into a tender Turkish kebab that captures the essence of Turkey's street food culture. For those who prefer something lighter, the Vietnamese spring rolls offer a refreshing crunch with a burst

of herbs and dipping sauce that's simply irresistible. And for the perfect comfort food, there are American sliders, mini burgers packed with bold flavours that are both familiar and exciting.

The festival adds an interactive twist to the experience with the *Dart World Board* — a fun, paid activity where you throw a dart at a world map that highlights the countries featured in the festival menu. Wherever the dart lands, that's the street food dish you must try. It's an adventurous way to discover new flavours, bringing an element of surprise to your dining experience.

Taste the global street food and something new with the *International Street Food Festival at Cafe Delhi Heights*. Hours of spending time and savouring food will take you through culture, flavour, and the joy of sharing a meal.

## FACT SHEET

Location - All Outlets  
Café Delhi Heights  
Availability - 15th April - 1st May



## A Night of Artful Mixology

Bangkok's Rabbit Hole Brings Cocktail Magic to Gurugram at The Leela Ambience, writes GYANESHWAR DAYAL



The art of mixology extends far beyond simply combining drinks — it's a creative craft that merges flavour, balance, technique, and storytelling. A superb cocktail is a sensory journey, where each ingredient is selected with intention and precision to evoke a mood, a memory, or an emotion. From the clink of ice to the swirl of citrus oils, mixology is where culinary science meets artistic expression, turning a simple sip into a memorable experience.

In a dazzling display of global mixology, The *Leela Ambience Gurugram Hotel & Residences* hosted one of Asia's most iconic cocktail destinations for an unforgettable evening. On 23rd April, the celebrated *Rubicon Bar & Cigar Lounge* opened its doors to a special bar takeover by *Rabbit Hole* — Bangkok's legendary speakeasy known for its inventive cocktails and chic, understated charm.

Tucked away behind a nondescript wooden door in Thonglor's vibrant nightlife district, Rabbit Hole has earned a reputation for pushing the boundaries of mixology while maintaining a relaxed elegance. For one night only, this distinctive Bangkok spirit was brought to Gurugram, infusing the capital region's cocktail culture with an international flair.

At the heart of the takeover were Rabbit Hole's star talents — Depp, the Group Beverage Manager, and Bite, a master mixologist known for

## RABBIT HOLE'S SIGNATURE STYLE

Tucked away behind a nondescript wooden door in Thonglor's vibrant nightlife district, Rabbit Hole has earned a reputation for pushing the boundaries of mixology while maintaining a relaxed elegance. For one night only, this distinctive Bangkok spirit was brought to Gurugram, infusing the capital region's cocktail culture with an international flair.

his flair, finesse, and storytelling. The duo took over the bar with a menu of meticulously curated cocktails that highlighted their signature creativity, precision, and deep understanding of flavour. Each drink told a story, bridging cultures and delighting the senses of everyone in attendance.

The *Rubicon Bar & Cigar Lounge*, with interiors designed by Japan's renowned Studio Spin, provided an opulent yet intimate backdrop for the evening. Featuring rich wood panelling, maroon leather seating, warm ambient lighting, and the refined atmosphere of a private cigar lounge, *Rubicon* served as the perfect stage for Rabbit Hole's artistic libations.

This collaboration marks yet another milestone for The *Leela Ambience Gurugram Hotel & Residences* in its mission to deliver world-class hospitality experiences. By partnering with global tastemakers such as Rabbit Hole, the hotel continues to elevate Gurugram's luxury scene, offer-

# Beyond the Beaten Path, Into the Quiet

A peaceful getaway in the hills, perfect for relaxing, exploring nature, and enjoying quiet moments

Tucked away in the lush folds of the Kumaon hills lies a lake of nine corners, **Naukuchiyatal** — an emerald secret that still shimmers in its serenity, away from the better-trodden paths of Nainital and Bhimtal.

And now, it has a luxurious new address: Naukuchia House, a recently renovated 42 — room property by the Indian Hotels Company Limited (IHCL), the custodians of the iconic Taj brand.

Standing elegantly by the lake, Naukuchia House is not just a hotel — it's a sanctuary. Designed with understated charm and heritage echoes, the property offers panoramic lake views, with a private entry that takes you straight to the shimmering waters. Step out of your room, and you can hop directly onto a boat. I did. A slow ride in the morning mist, a fishing line tossed casually into the glassy lake surface — this isn't just vacationing; it's soul-deep unwinding.

For those chasing rejuvenation rather than adventure, I recommend their signature full-body spa therapy. My masseur was a magician with years of training in her fingertips, and the steam bath that followed was the kind of cleansing city souls long for.

But Naukuchia House doesn't stop there. On one of the afternoons, the hotel arranged a guided walk into the forest, leading to an enchanting village clearing where warm tea and quiet conversations replaced Wi-Fi signals and screens.

And then there's **Kainchi Dham** — just a scenic 30-minute drive away. This modest ashram has turned into a magnetic spiritual hub, drawing global figures like *Mark Zuckerberg*, *Julia Roberts*, and closer to home, *Virat Kohli* and *Anushka Sharma*.

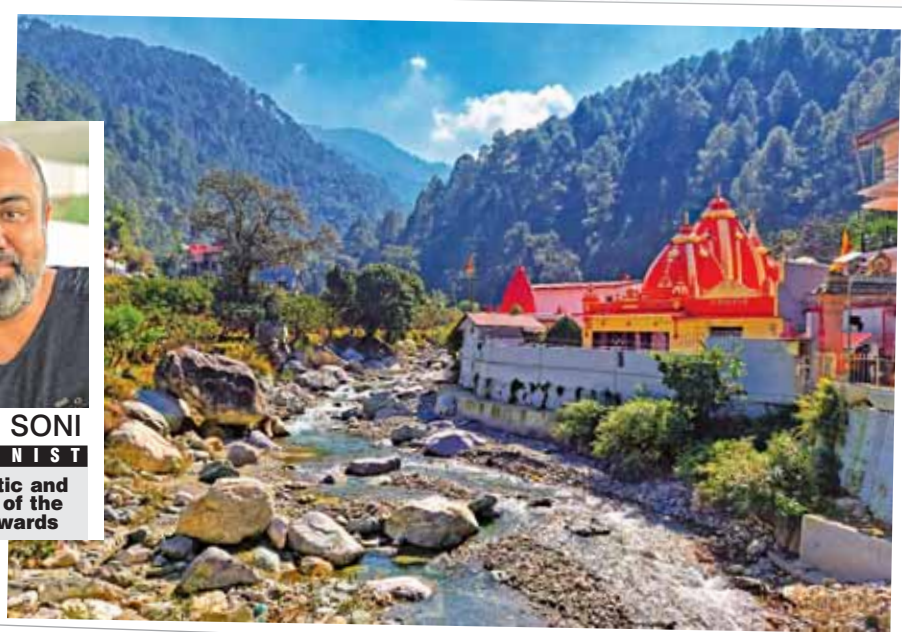
Whether you're a believer or a curious wanderer, the calm of *Shri Neem Karoli Baba's* temple will stay long after you leave. Back at the hotel, there's plenty to indulge in. The temperature — controlled pool makes a dip possible even when the air gets crisp.

## The food?

Their Asian fare is well-balanced, and the Indian kebabs-succulent, smoky, and served with Himalayan charm-are memorable. A chef's nod to modern tastes without losing sight of tradition at Ija, their all — day dining restaurant that means 'Mother' in Kumaoni, is worth a praise. Naukuchiyatal is just 5.5 hours by road from Delhi, making it ideal for a 2-3 night escape. Unlike its over-touristed cousins, it offers silence, stars, and stories. And with Naukuchia House now writing its own, there's never been a better time to visit.



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



## REJUVENATION

Naukuchiyatal Lake, with its nine serene corners, offers peaceful boating and fishing. Nearby, **Kainchi Dham** — home to *Shri Neem Karoli Baba* — draws seekers and celebrities alike for its calm, spiritual aura. Surrounded by pine forests and misty hills, the lake is a hidden gem for nature lovers. Birdwatchers often flock here to spot rare Himalayan species in the tranquil surroundings. Cozy homestays and lakeside cafés add charm to the quiet retreat.

## NOT TO MISS

The Kumaoni thali is a flavourful ode to the hills. It features aloo ke gutke, lahsuni palak and hearty gehat dal, paired with the region's signature lal bhaat. The tangy Kumaoni raita and spicy bhaang ki chutney add layers of taste. For meat lovers, there's tender chicken and a rich shikari mutton curry. The meal ends with a comforting bowl of rice kheer — soulful and satisfying.

# Footsteps in the Halls of Genius

A literary journey in an English town unites two voices across continents and centuries

The exterior shows the historic charm of the house and its surroundings



## AU REVOIR

It's amazing how such a humble space gave rise to one of the greatest writers ever. Quiet but meaningful. The setting adds to the magic — it's like the whole street tells a story. We drove back with memories of two great poets and writers — *William Shakespeare* and *Rabindranath Tagore*, born centuries and continents apart, yet brought together by little effort and fate at Shakespeare's Birthplace! No wonder that *Rabindranath Tagore* is referred to as the Shakespeare of India! *Rabindranath Tagore's* birth anniversary — 7th May — is celebrated annually at Shakespeare's Birthplace by the Shakespeare Birthplace Trust.

## Tagore at Shakespeare's Birthplace

On the occasion of the upcoming birth anniversary of Nobel Laureate *Gurudev Rabindranath Tagore* on 7th May, I recall my visit to Shakespeare's Birthplace House fondly. After the Shakespeare house tour, we stepped out through one of the back exit doors, wandered through its five gardens attached to the main house, and spotted the bust of *Rabindranath Tagore* — the great Indian poet and writer — it stood there majestically, as a true homage to him. We were at a quiet garden corner of the house and there it was — a fine sculpture on a stone plinth carved with *Tagore's* poem to Shakespeare, which he wrote on the tercentenary of Shakespeare's death — completion of 300 years in 1916 — titled 'In Honour of William

Shakespeare'. In the poem, he praises Shakespeare as an English poet as well as a world poet — an accolade to Shakespeare's work that inspired *Tagore's* literary work too! Little did he envision that less than 50 years later, the poem would be back in the limelight when the Calcutta Art Society presented an ivory tablet of the poem at the newly opened Shakespeare Centre in 1964!

— The author is a travel writer and researcher

Shakespeare's House on Henley Street. This timber — framed house is where Shakespeare was born



Shakespeare's Birthplace Room. A small, modest room believed to be where Shakespeare was born



Shakespeare's Birthplace Museum

## Shakespeare's Birthplace

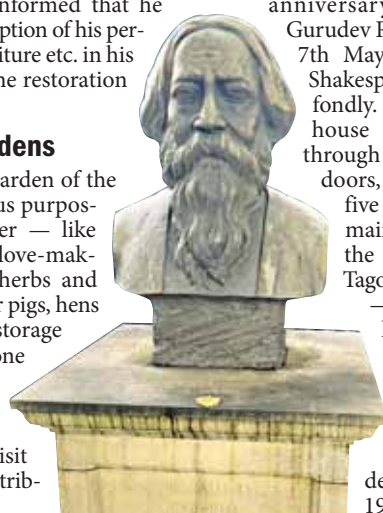
Subsequently, we reached Shakespeare's birthplace, which is quite lively with radiant colours welcoming all who enter it, echoing the lifestyle of the 16th century. Shakespeare lived here with his parents and many more brothers and sisters. The par-

lour, hall, workshop, bedrooms and the furnishings have been reinstated too.

Also noteworthy is Shakespeare's bedchamber and birthing room from the year 1564, recreated to perfection! We were informed that he sometimes wrote the description of his personal domestic items, furniture etc. in his plays, which has helped the restoration work to a great extent!

## Discovery in the Gardens

In the 16th century, the garden of the house was used for various purposes by Shakespeare's father — like wool-dealing activities, glove-making, growing vegetables, herbs and medicinal plants, a barn for pigs, hens and more and also as a storage area. Wandering through one of the five gardens attached to Shakespeare's house, we made a discovery that added excitement to our visit and it was an icon of a true tribute to the 'Voice of India'.



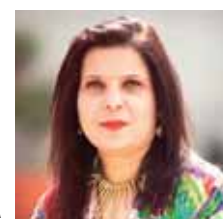
BY SEEMA ANAND CHOPRA

Trying to take a step backwards into history, on a cool September autumn afternoon I stood looking at the birthplace of Shakespeare and wondered what it was that had drawn me here at this time of the year.

It is just another English house, but for its resident who made it extraordinary — this was home to one of the greatest English writers who hold a universal appeal. His plays and poems continue, till times today, to entice readers and audiences, transcending borders of countries and languages. Undoubtedly, this celebrated author is remembered even after 450 years, for his literary works have proudly, since ages, been imbibed in most school and university syllabuses. So, I went visiting the English town of Stratford-upon-Avon where the historic and skillfully restored house of William Shakespeare is located.

## Shakespeare's Birthplace Museum

The Shakespeare Birthplace Trust was founded in 1847, almost three centuries after his birth, and has been able to preserve his legacy and the five Tudor houses associated with Shakespeare's lifetime. By the 19th century, the house had decayed and was falling apart, but the timely restoration attempts by the famous writer — *Charles Dickens*, helped to save it. He organised performances in towns of England to raise funds to renovate the memorial house! We gathered this infor-



**ARIES** March 21-April 19  
As your work life blooms this week, be careful not to neglect personal connections due to your sharpened wit and a plethora of advanced ideas coming to the forefront. Your productivity becomes an asset, but may trigger feelings of emotional neglect from family and loved ones if left unbalanced. Mid-week could present chances to represent your organization or to travel for business after an initial period of basking in neglect from other employees, so try remaining vigilant around opposing coworkers as envy may lead others to seize the credit you rightfully deserve. Such ventures are bound to guarantee success and return value as they will serve to improve your standing and reputation in the organization.  
**Lucky number 3 | Lucky colour** Midnight Blue  
**Lucky day** Tuesday



**LEO** July 23-Aug 22  
Possibly this week, you might feel pulled toward a more flexible and unusual way of going about your life. A valuable lesson comes from this sign, and it is that you possess freedom of your choices, all the reason to unapologetically choose the route you want irrespective of what others think. But at the same time, freedom seeking ambition might lead you to careless attitude, particularly when it comes to work matters. This could cause friction with authority and limit your progress or acknowledgement in the workplace. In any case, the solution lies in staying resolute and decluttered. As you make greater plans, try to bear in mind that fulfillment in achievements arises from consistent effort as well as the right intention.  
**Lucky number 18 | Lucky colour** Ocean Blue  
**Lucky day** Wednesday



**SAGITTARIUS** Nov 22-Dec 21  
In the first two days, you might feel mentally drained and have a hard time making decisions. This conflict inside of you could cause tension and anxiety. As a means for relief, you might look to art, books, or even some religious texts. You actively seek people, and thus, become very social, as relationships become the new focus. A person's balance of intuitive and wise actions is very active at this time. The middle of the week is marked with solitude which can help provide an aid to personal reflection. This self-enlightenment is zen-like and very deep at this point. By the end of the week, there are some thrilling prospects waiting for you such as starting a new business, changing jobs, or even new developments in the family.  
**Lucky number 17 | Lucky colour** Brown  
**Lucky day** Thursday



**TAURUS** April 20-May 20  
In the area of career and family, this week may present more challenges than usual. Disputes and misunderstandings may crop up among your colleagues, and interpersonal relationships may become even more strained. Remember to remain calm and to seek refuge from volatile confrontations. Calmly reflect on your behavior and attempt to approach the affected issues constructively. It is very likely that your energy and confidence will suffer a downturn on mid-week. Attending to personal health and relaxation is vital during this period. Greater insight could be derived from a consultation with a medical professional. By the week's end, a gradual improvement will be noticed. Personal matters, along with financial issues, will begin resolving and confidence will return gradually. Engaging in spiritual activities will aid in attaining tranquility and achieving equilibrium.  
**Lucky number 7 | Lucky colour** Copper  
**Lucky day** Thursday



**VIRGO** Aug 23-Sep 22  
In matters of love and even in your profession, the week starts with some disappointments along with missed opportunities. You might feel lonely or alone in a crowd which rises from an underlying dissatisfaction. For those already in relationships, work obligations may entail unscheduled absences from one's loves. However, midweek brings a change of pace. A new business venture or an increase in income might be on the way. An assignment may have been given to you and your success will depend on how hard you work and commit yourself. Towards the end of the weekend, you should watch your temper which may lead to rage, or you falling into some emotional temptation that alters your sense of judgment. You can greatly benefit from paying attention to your subconscious through dreaming, remaining within the boundaries of logical and rational aspirations.  
**Lucky number 5 | Lucky colour** Pink  
**Lucky day** Friday



**CAPRICORN** Dec 22-Jan 19  
Get ready for the week because you will feel an extreme level of happiness and satisfaction this week. Everything from your emotional state, health, and finances will bring deep fulfillment and satisfaction. You will be able to achieve everything you want while being grateful. You will start receiving better health and will feel more at ease during your day to day activities. All the burdens that felt impossible to overcome before will now seem like an easy task. From a personal point of view, you will receive lots of warmth and support from your family which underscores the importance of true love. Be grateful for the affection you do get, as it provides great strength. The reality you construct during this week will turn into a source of great strength and success in the long run.  
**Lucky number 12 | Lucky colour** Purple  
**Lucky day** Friday



**GEMINI** May 21-June 20  
The clarity that you gain during this period will help you to navigate smoothly through any challenges converting negativity into positivity, and not the other way around. Instead of avoiding your difficulties, open yourself towards a new and deeper pursuit that is sustainable deep-rooted in lasting happiness and fulfillment. You may experience emotional struggles or physical imbalances, but learn to ride their wave instead of trying to stifle them. Release any attachments to the past and focus entirely on resolving conflicts within yourself in the present moment. By the end of the week, a decision, probably yours, will restore clarity on travel or family issues. Expect holistic healing on a mental and physical level as the week closes.  
**Lucky number 14 | Lucky colour** Grey  
**Lucky day** Monday



**LIBRA** Sep 23-Oct 22  
Your determination, along with other factors this week, is sure to guide you to achieving all of your set goals. Embracing the strong focus is sure to yield inviting results. Turning those dreams into achievements is going to be a walk in the park now. Growth would be accompanied with opportunities in family or new endeavors. Towards the middle of the week, your memories are bound to wash over you like a wave alongside old friends or places which hold value bringing joy and happiness into your life. By the end of the week, focus from the outside world transforms into the inner self allowing an equilibrium shift to be attained via meditation, spiritual reflection, or simple prayer leading your introspective thought.  
**Lucky number 20 | Lucky colour** Mint  
**Lucky day** Saturday



**AQUARIUS** Jan 20-Feb 18  
This week, your initiative and ability to lead are reasonably high. You become the source of strength for others, offering help and assistance where it is needed. You show great affection and might need to be a bit loving at times to set the right balance. You may get an impetus of some sort in the middle of the week which can stir some conflict or argument of sorts. You will want things settled your way and even though this isn't physical battle, it can feel like an emotional one. Either way, in this period of time, you won't be moved, focusing instead on everything sound and put together. No matter Ma, there are always mixed results and in this case, your capability of noticing every single detail will make it easier for you to make money. You stay safe with your wit.  
**Lucky number 2 | Lucky colour** Lime  
**Lucky day** Monday



**CANCER** June 21-July 22  
Feeling apprehensive and fearful of what others think could dominate your life this week. This may also lead to internal conflict and self-doubt. Unproductive conversations that can spiral into useless confrontations are also a possibility. Although it may seem like others are the issue, the real struggle is within yourself. In this case, you need to work on forgiving yourself which will help you channel your energy towards these unconstructive conflicts. With a positive attitude, success can be attained. The beginning of the week will allow you to feel motivated and strong achieving goals. If there is anything that needs to be worked on, now is the time to put in the effort with the extra energy to attain them.  
**Lucky number 1 | Lucky colour** Fuchsia  
**Lucky day** Friday



**SCORPIO** Oct 23-Nov 21  
This week, you will lead with your natural ability to be a strong marker of confidence and attract all sorts of positive attention. The week will start off with your desires being fulfilled, and a feeling of satisfaction will also accompany you as you experience the joy of family and new beginnings. You would feel an inner calmness and sense of calm after an important life cycle is finished. This would allow you to rest and enjoy the moment. However, some outdated beliefs or practices stemming from the past may be hindering your growth so do remember this. With this in mind, new perspectives that positively change your life are a must here. By the end of the week, strive to be neutral about challenges; exercise clear judgment, unwavering integrity, and strongly articulate elements of your truth.  
**Lucky number 9 | Lucky colour** Orange  
**Lucky day** Tuesday



**PISCES** Feb 19-March 20  
This week begins with a powerful urge towards spiritual development, driving you toward seeking enlightenment. You may find peace in meditative techniques like prayer and even participate in group spiritual activities. Enjoying your own company brings calm and quiet moment, reflecting back towards your milestones, and accepting the efforts you have put in. In projects like constructing a house, there is a feeling of closure. The joy that comes from family get-togethers and other celebrations will be significant, and relationships including those with spouses will deepen through understanding, caring, and affection. Along with these, this week contains chances of buying movable or immovable assets which combine external achievements with internal satisfaction. This enlightening journey will be taken with the guidance and support of elders. During this period, embrace the phase that brings ample growth.  
**Lucky number 15 | Lucky colour** Lilac  
**Lucky day** Sunday

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## Dilemmas and Decision-Making in the Pursuit of Life

THOUGHTFUL INSIGHTS



Dr. Tanu Jain

While destiny may chart the broad course, confusion is often a creation of our own minds. I eventually understood — clarity is not external; it's the power of one's inner being

How often do we find ourselves at the crossroads of decision-making — hesitant, confused, or gripped by the fear of making the wrong choice? The mind echoes with questions: Am I doing the right thing? What if this backfires? Would life have been better if I had chosen the other path?

These are not rare thoughts. Many of us revisit decisions, wishing we had taken more time or acted differently. But then again, is the course of our life truly in our hands? Or are we being gently steered by the unseen currents of divine will?

While destiny may chart the broad course, confusion is often a creation of our own minds. In one of my encounters, I met a respected justice, a spiritually inclined man with decades of experience in law. I asked him earnestly, "Sir, how do you make such critical decisions about others' lives without hesitation or emotional burden?"

He smiled and replied, "I have never had a problem making decisions. My mind is clear, and I have no biases. I serve my duty with sincerity, and that anchors me."

That statement lingered with me for days. How could someone remain untouched by the emotional weight of decision-making? I eventually understood — clarity is not external; it's the power of one's inner being. His spiritual grounding and absence of personal attachment gave him freedom from confusion. He had transcended personal likes, dislikes, and ambitions. His work was not a job, it was his dharma —



his sacred duty.

The spiritual texts speak deeply about this inner clarity: "Yada te moha-kalilam buddhir vyatitarishyati, tada gantasi nirvedam shrotavyasya shrutasya cha."

— Bhagavad Gita 2.52

"When your intelligence has passed out of the dense forest of delusion, you shall become indifferent to all that has been heard and all that is to be heard."

This verse emphasises that clarity comes

when the fog of delusion lifts — when ego, attachment, and fear no longer influence your thoughts. So, what really brings that clarity?

### Clear Priorities is the Key

Confusion creeps in when we are torn between our personal attachments and our responsibilities. When your priorities are aligned with your higher purpose — not temporary pleasures or emotional biases — decisions become smooth.

"Na karmanam anarambhan naiskarmyam puruso'snute"  
— Bhagavad Gita 3.4

"One does not attain freedom from action by abstaining from work; nor does one reach perfection merely by renunciation." The key lies in understanding your role and walking it without ego or expectation.

### Mental Clarity Through Devotion

When the mind is purified through sadhana — dedicated spiritual practice, service, and sincerity — clarity arises naturally. Decisions are no longer a burden; they become expressions of your inner purpose.

### No Favourites, No Bias is a Blessing

When you stop playing favourites — be it people, outcomes, or even ambitions — you rise above confusion.

"Udaasina-vadaaseeno gunair yo na vichaalyate"  
— Bhagavad Gita 14.23

"He who remains like one unconcerned, unshaken by the modes of nature — such a person gains peace."

Seeing Work as Worship Finally Leads to

### Liberation

When your office, your duty, your contribution to the world becomes your tapasya (austerity), then your entire being aligns with it. Work stops being a burden. It becomes seva — sacred service.

In the end, life will always present us with choices. The roads may diverge, dilemmas may arise, and uncertainty may knock on our doors time and again.

But when we are anchored in purpose, detached from outcome, and aligned with our inner truth, the fog clears.

True clarity is not about always knowing the right answer — it's about being so rooted in your dharma that even the toughest choices feel light. It is the silence of the soul, not the noise of the world, that guides the wisest decisions.

As the Upanishads remind us: "Dharmam chara, satyam vada"  
— Taittiriya Upanishad  
"Walk the path of righteousness; speak the truth."

When decisions come from a place of truth, integrity, and surrender, even the unknown becomes sacred.

You may not always control the path, but you can choose to walk it with clarity, devotion, and grace. And in doing so, you don't just make decisions — you shape your destiny.

— The author's views are personal. The author is a civil servant at the Ministry of Defence and a spiritual speaker