



Dhami directs administration to intensify checking campaign in border areas

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ Dehradun
 Chief Minister Pushkar Singh Dhami reviewed the preparations of the State administration which are being done as per the directives of the Union government following the recent escalation of hostilities with Pakistan and Operation Sindoor launched by the Indian armed forces. The CM held the review meeting at his residence on Saturday.
 In the meeting, the CM directed that special focus should be on conducting intensive checking campaigns in the border areas and at the places of strategic importance.
 He said that at present things are normal in the State but all the departments and the officers should remain alert to deal with any situation. The CM said that proper security measures should be taken at the sensitive places, Char Dham Yatra spots and other routes. He directed that the verification drive should be intensified and suspicious people should be identified in the State.
 On a stern note, he said that action should be taken on the fake news and sensitive information in social media and other places.
 The CM said that mock drills should be organised in all parts of the State and arrangements for sirens in all the districts should be made to give warning of the suspected danger.
 The CM directed that the administra-

tion should set up a dialogue with the residents of the border areas. He said that all the residents of the State are standing firmly behind the soldiers. Dhami said that every family in the State has someone who is in the armed forces of the country. He said that the morale of the armed forces of the country will be boosted by the organisation of foot marches and Sarva Dharma Sabhas.
 The CM said that the strict vigil on the Char Dham Yatra routes should be done with the help of CCTV cameras and drones. He also directed the officers to ensure that the availability of the food grains, medicines and medical equipment is maintained in the State.
 Reiterating the commitment of his government on zero tolerance against corruption, the CM said that all the offices should take the complaints of corruption seriously and take necessary action. He warned that strict action on the corrupt will be taken.
 The chief secretary Anand Bardhan, director general police Deepam Sethi, principal secretary RK Sudhanshu, R Meenakshi Sundaram, secretary Shailesh Bagauli, Nitesh Jha, Sachin Kurve, Ravinath Raman, Pankaj Pandey, additional director general police AP Anshuman, director general information Bansidhar Tiwari and other officers attended the meeting. All the district magistrates attended the meeting in a virtual mode.

Heli services operating normally in the State: CM

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ Dehradun
 Chief Minister Pushkar Singh Dhami said that the operation of the heli services is going on in the State. In the meeting held at his residence on Saturday, he directed that

other religious Yatras. He said that the real time monitoring of the Char Dham should be made. Dhami said that all the secretaries will be sent for inspection of the Yatra routes. He said that a



proper security measures should be adopted for the Char Dham Yatra and safe and accessible Char Dham Yatra is going on in the State.

Authorities discuss security situation and emergency readiness in district

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ Dehradun
 The Dehradun district magistrate Savin Bansal and senior superintendent of police Ajai Singh held a meeting with senior officials of the armed forces, paramilitary and national and State-level institutions/ security agencies in the district. The meeting was held on

situation. While reviewing the security of important institutions, the officials were directed to prepare an action plan for further strengthening the security in case of an emergency situation. It was directed in the meeting that all security agencies will exchange information in a coordinated



Saturday on the directions of chief minister Pushkar Singh Dhami. The officials held discussions on preparations to deal with any emergency situation. The officials also reviewed the security arrangements at important institutions and decided to maintain coordination especially in sharing of information.
 The DM and SSP sought information from various departments about their preparations to deal with any emergency

manner while also strengthening their preparations for dealing with any emergency situation. It was also decided that the social media will be monitored, swift action will be taken and misinformation will be fact-checked in case of misinformation considering the current security scenario. The police officers were directed to take effective legal action against persons found spreading such misinformation.

Golden card scheme for State Govt employees, pensioners comes under cloud

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ Dehradun
 The State Government Health Scheme (SGHS), commonly called the Golden card scheme, has come under a cloud due to the refusal of many prominent private hospitals to treat patients under its cover. Under the scheme, cashless treatment is provided to the State government employees and pensioners in the empanelled hospitals. The scheme is operated by the State Health Authority (SHA) which also operates the Atal Ayushman Yojana for the common citizens. A sum of more than 130 crore is pending to be paid to private hospitals and in absence of the budget the SHA is unable to pay this huge sum to the hospitals. It is learnt that the Himalayan Hospital Jolly Grant, Kailash hospital, Kanishka hospital, Graphic Era hospital, Medanta hospital Gurgaon and others have refused the cashless treatment of patients under the SGHS.
 More than four lakh State government employees and pensioners are covered by the golden card scheme. Under the scheme, the employees get the benefit of

cashless treatment in the empanelled hospitals. A fixed amount of money depending upon their grade pays is deducted from the salaries of the employees for the scheme. Similarly, pensioners also contribute to the scheme and the contribution of both the employees and pensioners is used for cashless treatment under the scheme.
 The Health minister Dhan Singh Rawat had recently said that the expense under the scheme has far exceeded the contribution of the employees. He said that at present the State government gives no budget to operate this scheme. Rawat said that a proposal to operate the scheme will be brought before the cabinet.
 The president of the State Employees Joint Federation, Uttarakhand, Arun Pandey said that the State government should provide an additional budget to bridge the gap between the contributions of the employees and the actual expense incurred on the scheme of cashless treatment.

GDMC to seek action against street vendors outside hospital

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ Dehradun
 The administration of Government Doon Medical College (GDMC) hospital has decided to send a letter to the Dehradun senior superintendent of police and the Municipal Corporation of Dehradun (MCD) urging strict action against street vendors who set up stalls or park their carts outside the hospital's OPD building. This information was shared by the deputy medical superintendent Dr NS Bisht, during a discussion about the challenges faced by both hospital security personnel and patients entering the OPD for treatment.

front of the hospital.
 Dr Bisht said that the situation has become unmanageable. Recently, about five patients approached him to voice their frustrations about the difficulties they encounter when trying to enter the hospital due to the obstruction caused by street vendors. Consequently, he instructed the security guards to remove the vendors from the area. Although the guard complied, the vendors refused to leave and even confronted the guards. In light of this incident, the security guard has presented this issue to the hospital administration. In response, the hospital administration has decided to send a letter to the SSP of Dehradun and the MCD commissioner, urging strict action to ensure their removal.
 He stated that he would urge the SSP to assign police personnel outside the hospital during OPD hours to ensure that street vendors do not obstruct access. He also emphasised the importance of conducting police verification of those vendors, as many are not currently verified. Dr Bisht said that he would also request the MCD commissioner to take appropriate action against the vendors and work towards a permanent solution to this issue.

Dr Bisht said that hospital administration has long recognised the difficulties patients encounter when attempting to enter the OPD due to street vendors, including fruit sellers, among others occupying space just outside the facility, resulting in traffic congestion. In addition to traffic issues, these vendors contribute to unsanitary conditions, leaving packing materials scattered outside the hospital building, which poses potential infection risks for patients.
 He said that he has repeatedly advised them not to loiter just outside the hospital, as it obstructs access for patients. However, they have ignored his requests and continue to linger in

U'khand Govt slashes stamp duty on property transfer between promoter & RWS

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ Dehradun
 The Uttarakhand government has significantly reduced the stamp duty on transfer of property by registered deeds between the promoter and Resident Welfare Societies (RWS).
 The RWS is an association of allottees and the State government on Saturday reduced stamp duty chargeable under the Stamp Act 1989 on transfer of property between it and promoter to a maximum of Rs 10,000 per transfer deed.
 The Finance secretary, Dilip Jawalkar said that earlier the stamp duty on such

deeds was 5 per cent of the consideration value. Since this duty was considerable due to which the builders and the resident welfare societies to whom the assets were handed over, refrained from registering their assets. Jawalkar claimed that the decision to reduce the stamp duty will encourage registration of assets of the societies. The registration will also help in reducing litigation between builders and societies and remove complexities on administration of RWS.

Sports way to stay fit and face life's challenges: Arya

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ Dehradun
 Sports minister Rekha Arya stated that participating in sports not only keeps the body healthy but also teaches young people how to face the struggles and challenges of life. She made this remark during the inauguration of the first Hansraj Memorial Table Tennis Tournament at The Tons Bridge School in Dehradun on Saturday. Notably, teams from about 15 schools in Dehradun and surrounding cities are participating in this three-day tournament.
 She said that athletes learn to turn adverse circumstances into opportunities as they hone their skills. She said that under the leadership of Prime Minister Narendra Modi, India is on the path to becoming a sports superpower.
 This year marks the first time that the World Cup of India's traditional sports, like Kabaddi, is being organised. Arya assured that if the youth of Uttarakhand excel in sports, the government is committed to enhancing their career prospects. Whenever a young athlete

brings home a medal from a national or international event, the State government offers them an out-of-term job. Arya pointed out that even if youth go on to become successful professionals



after their studies, their recognition may still be limited. However, if they achieve fame through sports, their opportunities for recognition are limitless. She said that a great athlete becomes an ideal for everyone in the world.

Parking woes persist at district hospital

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ Dehradun
 The authorities need to take some action on the issue of patients and visitors parking their cars outside the hospital grounds, the parking contractor at the Deen Dayal Upadhyay district hospital said. Parking has consistently been a challenge at the district hospital. Previously, this concern was primarily raised by patients and their relatives due to limited parking space; however, the contractor responsible for hospital parking has expressed worries regarding patients parking outside, which affects their revenue. In response, patients have claimed that they choose to park outside to avoid the hospital's parking charge.
 A patient, Veena, said that she frequently visits the hospital with her son for regular check-ups. She said that she and her son often opt to park their vehicle outside, as they find the parking fees for one or two hours inside the hospital expensive. Additionally, another attendee, Ravi (name changed), said that he visited the hospital with his wife for a check-up. He expressed his preference to park his vehicle outside the hospital, as he was unable to find a way to avoid paying the parking fee at the hospital premises. He stated that parking fees should not be charged at the government hospital.
 Further, parking contractor Ishu expressed his observations regarding the

hospital's parking issue. He said that a fee of Rs 20 is charged by him for two-wheeler parking on the hospital premises. Ishu has grown weary of witnessing patients and their visitors parking their vehicles outside the hospital to avoid paying the parking fee. This trend not only impacts the hos-



pital's revenue but also leads to increased traffic congestion and disorder in the vicinity. He said that recently a resident near the hospital had entered into an argument with a patient who parks their vehicle outside her home. He said that he has presented this issue to the hospital administration, but no solutions have been implemented. He called upon the relevant authorities to take action and designate personnel who can enforce parking regulations, as this situation is financially detrimental to him and contributes to traffic problems outside hospital premises.

One more dengue case reported in Dehradun

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ Dehradun
 One new case of dengue was reported in the Dehradun district on Saturday. Informing about this, the Chief Medical Officer (CMO) of Dehradun, Dr Manoj Kumar Sharma said that one dengue patient was admitted to the hospital on Saturday and is currently hospitalised, undergoing treatment at Shri Mahant Indresh hospital. This raises the

Saturday, ASHAs and volunteers performed 22,080 house surveys to check for larvae, with 83 houses testing positive for larvae. It is important to mention that ASHAs and volunteers have conducted a total of 1,15,809 house surveys so far, of which 381 houses have tested positive for larvae.



total number of confirmed dengue cases (ELISA-positive) so far to 49, comprising 29 patients from Dehradun and 20 from other districts or States. Dr Sharma added that there are presently four individuals hospitalised: three at Shri Mahant Indresh hospital and one at Graphic Era Hospital. On Saturday, a total of 105 samples were collected, contributing to an overall total of 3,322 samples collected thus far. Additionally, there have been no reported deaths due to dengue so far. Moreover, on

Man shoots self in leg while attacking politician's son on road

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ Haridwar
 Three persons including a woman attacked a local resident late on Friday night. One of the assailants accidentally shot himself in the leg while beating up another man. The injured man was admitted to the hospital by the police who are searching for the absconding accused.
 The incident occurred near Chandracharya Chowk under the Jwalapur Kotwali area at about 10 PM on Friday. Three armed persons including a woman allegedly attacked a man in a car. During the altercation, one of the attackers accidentally shot himself in the leg. The shoot-

ing caused some panic among locals present at the scene. However, some of the bystanders apprehended the injured man and informed the police. Reaching the site of the incident, the police got the injured man admitted to the district hospital. Kotwali in-charge Pradeep Bisht said that footage from CCTV cameras in the area are being checked to trace the two absconding accused. The matter is being investigated and initially appears to have been a result of personal animosity, he said. The police booked three accused on Saturday, including the man who shot

himself. According to sources, Congress leader Rahul Chowdhary's son Abhinav drove with his friend to meet another friend at Ranipur Mod. It is alleged that Manish alias Kallu Rathi, Sumit and Barkha spotted them and then started beating them. While Barkha was allegedly wielding a knife, Sumit and Rathi were beating Abhinav with the butts of their pistols when Rathi accidentally shot himself in the leg. Meanwhile, locals, especially members of the business fraternity have cited the incident to question the security arrangements in public places.



Uniformed personnel participate in a mock drill held at Kainchi Dham in Bhawali area of Nainital on Saturday considering the recent escalation between India and Pakistan. Pioneer photo

In times of turmoil, it is often cinema that rekindles the spirit of national unity through stories of heroism and honour, says ABHI SINGHAL



CINEMA SALUTES

THE BRAVEHEARTS

"REAL HEROES DON'T WEAR CAPES, THEY WEAR UNIFORMS AND STAND AT THE BORDER" — INDIAN SOLDIERS DO NOT FIGHT FOR PERSONAL GLORY; THEY FIGHT FOR EVERY LIFE AND EVERY HEARTBEAT OF THEIR NATION. THEY STAND AS THE SILENT GUARDIANS OF OUR FREEDOM AND PEACE EACH HOUR AND DAY

Border (1997): Based on the Battle of Longwala during the Indo-Pakistani War of 1971. It features an ensemble cast including Sunny Deol, portrays the courage and sacrifice of Indian soldiers. The film's stirring music and patriotic narrative made it a major critical and commercial success.



Hindustan Ki Kasam (1973): Hindustan Ki Kasam (1973), directed by Chetan Anand, is a patriotic Hindi war film set against the backdrop of the Indo-Pakistani War of 1971. The story follows an Indian Air Force pilot who undertakes a covert mission deep into Pakistani territory after being presumed dead. The film stands out for its powerful portrayal of national duty, emotional intensity, and aerial warfare sequences, making it a tribute to the Indian armed forces. With music composed by Madan Mohan and a memorable title track evoking patriotic fervour, the film captured the spirit of the era and continues to resonate with audiences today.

unlawful captivity. With a gripping narrative and powerful performances by Manoj Bajpayee, Ravi Kishan, Piyush Mishra, and Deepak Dobriyal, the film highlights themes of resilience, sacrifice, and patriotism. Critically acclaimed for its authenticity and emotional depth, 1971 serves as a reminder of forgotten war heroes and unacknowledged suffering.

Few Good Men, set against the backdrop of the Indian Army. The film follows two army lawyers, Majors Siddhant Chaudhary and Akash Kapoor, as they defend a fellow officer accused of murder in Kashmir. As the case unfolds, hidden truths emerge, forcing the protagonist to confront his own values and fears. The film stars Kay Kay Menon, Rahul Bose, Javed Jaffrey and Deepak Dobriyal.



LOC Kargil (2003): War film based on the 1999 Kargil conflict between India and Pakistan. Featuring a vast ensemble cast, it recounts the bravery of Indian soldiers during Operation Vijay. The film emphasises patriotism, sacrifice, and the harsh realities of mountain warfare.

1971 (2007): Directed by Amrit Sagar, is a Hindi-language war drama based on the true story of Indian soldiers held as prisoners of war (POWs) in Pakistan following the Indo-Pakistani War of 1971. The film follows six Indian Army officers who attempt a daring escape from a Pakistani camp after years of

Shaurya (2008): Directed by Samar Khan, is a courtroom drama inspired by the Hollywood film — A

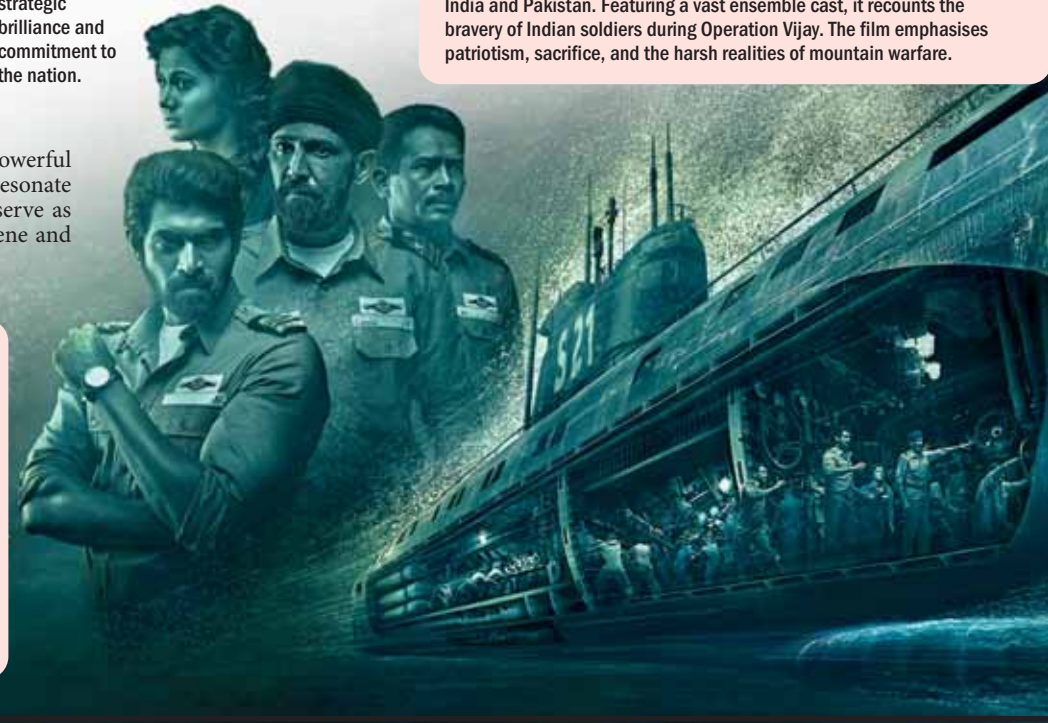
Sam Bahadur (2023): Directed by Meghna Gulzar, a biographical war drama that chronicles the life of India's first field marshal, Sam Manekshaw. The film traces his military career, from his early days at the Indian Military Academy to his pivotal role in the 1971 Indo-Pakistani War, which led to the creation of Bangladesh. The narrative showcases Manekshaw's strategic brilliance and commitment to the nation.

Uri: The Surgical Strike (2019): Based on India's 2016 surgical strikes in Pakistan-administered Kashmir the film follows Major Vihaan Singh Shergill of the Para (Special Forces) as he leads a covert operation to avenge a deadly terrorist attack in Uri, Jammu and Kashmir. The film has won four National Film Awards. The ensemble cast features Vicky Kaushal, Yami Gautam, Paresh Rawal, and Mohit Raina.



These films are more than just cinematic experiences as they are powerful chronicles of courage, sacrifice and patriotism. As they continue to resonate with audiences, especially during times of national reflection, they serve as emotional anchors and reminders of our shared history. In every scene and dialogue, they echo a united call: we stand together, always.

The Ghazi Attack (2017): Hindi-Telugu bilingual war film inspired by the mysterious sinking of Pakistan's PNS Ghazi during the 1971 Indo-Pakistani War. The film portrays the crew's tense underwater standoff as they attempt to thwart an enemy attack on India's aircraft carrier, INS Vikrant. The cast includes Rana Daggubati, Kay Kay Menon, Atul Kulkarni.



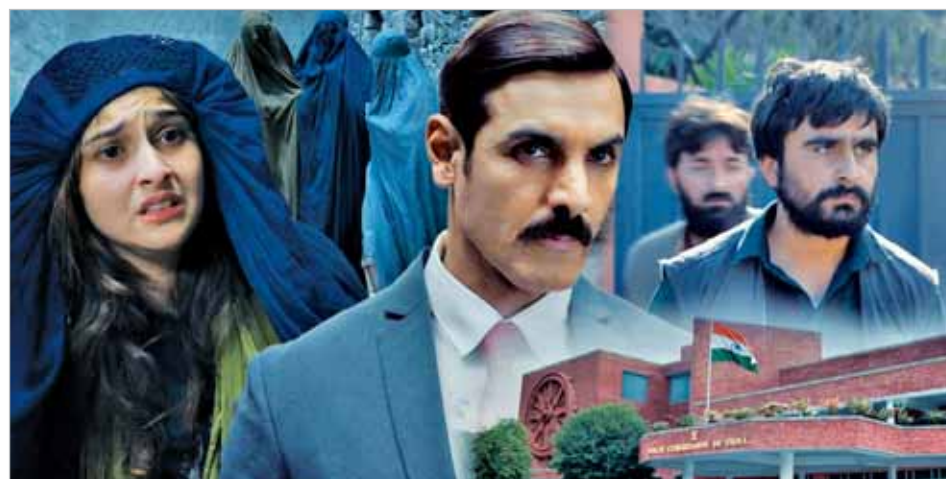
John Abraham shines again in a Patriotic Drama

A taut story of an Indian woman's fight for freedom in a foreign land finds its soul in *The Diplomat*, writes ABHI SINGHAL

When I hear the name John Abraham, a strong wave of patriotism rises within me. Over the years, he has become synonymous with roles that portray undying national pride and commitment to duty. Whether it is donning the uniform of an army officer, stepping into the shoes of a government official, or now taking on the role of a sharp and compassionate diplomat, his performances are so compelling that one might easily imagine John as an actual government representative, embodying the spirit of national service with conviction and intensity.

John's latest film, *The Diplomat*, now streaming on Netflix, takes that patriotic resonance to another level. The movie is based on the true story of Uzma Ahmed, an Indian woman who found herself trapped in Pakistan under distressing circumstances, only to be rescued through the bold efforts of Indian diplomacy. The film opens powerfully, with a distressed Uzma bursting into the Indian Embassy in Islamabad, pleading for help to return to her homeland, India.

The narrative then unfolds to reveal the events that led her to this desperate situation. Uzma, living in Malaysia, was lured into a trap by Tahir, a man from Pakistan posing as someone trustworthy. Fooled by his false promises and charm, she travelled to Pakistan only to discover the harsh truth behind his real intentions. The film cap-



tures her trauma and the fear of being held against her will, evoking empathy from the audience.

Cast — John Abraham, portraying JP Singh, the Deputy High Commissioner of India in Pakistan, delivers a power-packed performance. His body language, calm authority and nuanced dialogue delivery add immense weight to the character. John's ability to blend into such roles like a chameleon proves once again why he is a

favourite for films with patriotic themes. Sadia Khateeb, as Uzma Ahmed, gives a deeply moving performance. She portrays a range of emotions — from initial hope to fear to sheer desperation — with remarkable authenticity. Her portrayal of a woman caught in a foreign land, fighting for her basic right to return home, forms the emotional core of the film.

Kumud Mishra plays NM Sayeed as the Pakistani advocate adds a touch of much-needed humour and warmth in an otherwise intense story. Jagjeet Sandhu, previously known for his role in Paatal Lok, convincingly plays Tahir, the antagonist who traps Uzma. His menacing presence and powerful screen delivery make his character both believable and chilling. His performance captures the manipulative nature of his role, making the audience loathe him with every scene. Veteran actress Revathy appears as the late Sushma Swaraj, Union Minister of External Affairs.

Final Thoughts — The movie is well-paced, and the tension builds gradually with gripping courtroom scenes and powerful diplomatic exchanges. Also, the best part is doesn't have to prove again and again that it is a patriotic film and just leans on the story's timeline. The climax is especially stirring. As the tricolour unfurls and patriotic music swells in the backdrop, set dramatically at a border location reminiscent of Wagah, it is hard not to feel emotional, leaving viewers teary-eyed and proud.



RATING
★★★★

SUGGESTED BINGES



Carème
OTT — Apple TV+
Cast — Benjamin Voisin, Jérémie Renier, Lyna Khoudri



The Royals
OTT — Netflix
Cast — Ishaan Khatter, Bhumi Pednekar, Sakshi Tanwar, Zeenat Aman



The Diplomat
OTT — Netflix
Cast — John Abraham, Kumud Mishra, Vishal Vashishtha, Sadia Khatib, Revathy, Ashwath Bhatt



Long Way Home
OTT — Apple TV+
Cast — Ewan McGregor, Charlie Boorman



Gram Chiktisalay
OTT — Amazon Prime Video
Cast — Vinay Pathak, Arno Parashar, Akash Makhija

The Pioneer AGENDA

"Reflecting on where I came from helps me to appreciate and balance what I have now"
— Meghan Markle

The root of conflict
The roots of the conflict lie in the McMahon Line, a boundary drawn during the 1914 Simla Convention between British India and Tibet, which China does not recognise. This disagreement led to the Sino-Indian War of 1962

The border
This is the closest point to the China border civilians are allowed. Yet, there are no visible Chinese posts - only a mountain separating the two sides.

The dispute
The Indo-China dispute over Arunachal Pradesh is a long-standing territorial conflict. Arunachal Pradesh, shares a 1,129 km border with China and has been a point of contention since the 1950s

All quiet on Eastern Front!

As we trace the winding roads, climb misty hills, and meet the soldiers who call this unforgiving terrain home, we begin to understand the true cost of peace, the quiet dignity of service, and the powerful contrast between performative nationalism and the real courage of standing a post, writes
GYANESHWAR DAYAL

As we prepare to leave Machuka in Arunachal Pradesh for the Indo-China border, there is a quiet thrill among us — the anticipation of witnessing firsthand how our borders are guarded, and what it takes to man some of the harshest terrains on Earth, where temperatures in winter can plummet to minus 50 degrees Celsius.

Our motorcade departs early. The road to the Palang border is smooth, winding through the hills in a journey that takes roughly two hours. The landscape is breathtaking. Arunachal Pradesh, after all, boasts the highest forest cover in India — nearly 85 percent of its area is blanketed in lush greenery.

As we ascend, human habitation becomes sparse. Villages dwindle to mere clusters of one or two houses. Along the way, we pass cascading waterfalls, jagged rock formations, and spiritual landmarks — a temple, a monastery, and a Gurudwara — their small prayer flags fluttering in the crisp April breeze. Our driver points to a rock formation said to resemble Lord Hanuman, believed by locals to guard the border.

We stop. The resemblance is uncanny. Some of us clasp our hands in awe, others close their eyes in silent prayer. Some simply marvel — it's more a matter of faith than reason. In such places, we often see what we believe.

The breeze turns colder, the road bumpier. At a check post, our permits are verified, and headcounts taken. We're reminded to

avoid photographing army installations. As we move on, the drizzle begins, but the weather remains pleasant enough to continue.

We halt briefly near a waterfall where an army post — resembling a cottage perched on the hillside — overlooks the path. After a few more vehicle checks, we arrive at the point where we must proceed on foot for the last kilometre. This is the furthest civilians are allowed. Soldiers are scattered across the area, many relaxed, and temporary army quarters dot the landscape.

A flat expanse, roughly the size of a football field, serves as both a helipad and an open-air gym. Today, it's a cricket pitch where soldiers are engaged in a friendly match, a large cutout of "I Love My India" standing behind them — a popular selfie spot for visitors. We are told this is the closest point to the China border. Yet, there are no visible Chinese posts — only a mountain separating the two sides. The actual border lies less than a kilometre away as the crow flies, but it takes eight days on foot for a patrol party to reach it due to the unforgiving terrain.

Our guide, a young soldier named Dinesh from Haryana, dressed in track pants and a jacket, walks with us, sharing valuable insights. The Indo-Tibetan Border Police (ITBP) and the Indian Army primarily man this area. Though the border has been mostly peaceful, the Galwan clash changed the equation, prompting both nations to increase infrastructure and presence.

Guarding such a remote frontier is no small feat, before confronting any adversary, soldiers must first withstand the brutal elements. I learn that the ground beneath my feet lies buried under six feet of snow in winter, the only colour visible then being white. Today, however, it is a vibrant green, with moss — covered trees and camouflaged posts that blend seamlessly into the landscape, invisible from even 100 meters away. Patrolling is conducted for six months of the year; during the harsh winter — from November to March — neither side sends patrols. When active, patrols consist of 20 or more soldiers and take eight days to complete a round. To mark

their presence, they leave behind biscuit wrappers and empty cans — a subtle, silent message acknowledged by the Chinese in kind.

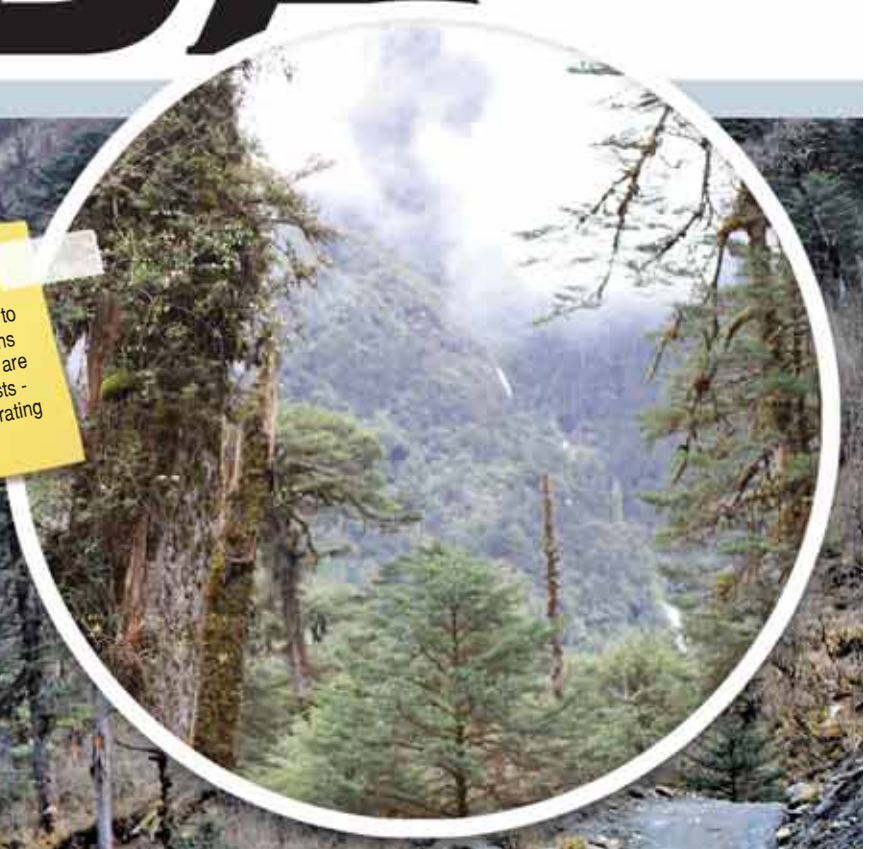
I ask Dinesh if he has ever seen Chinese soldiers up close, and whether they ever exchange words. He smiles: "Not usually. Sometimes from a distance. But we're not here for pleasantries. We do our job, they do theirs. The tension and vigilance, however, are constant." On our way back, we pass a riverbank where the remains of a crashed helicopter lie — a tragic reminder of a pilot who lost control two decades ago. The wreckage still rests there, undisturbed. We are now at the foothills of the mountain that separates two powerful nations. Even in an age of fighter jets and missiles, human presence on the ground remains vital.

Life here is grueling. Soldiers are posted for three years at a stretch. Though patrolling stops during the deep winter, the posts remain manned. Troops live in modest cabins, warmed by diesel generators, with minimal mobile connectivity, far from their families. Many hail from southern India — some have never seen snow before. Now, they must wear snow boots and brave temperatures reaching — 40°C in winter. It is a job like any other — but far tougher, far riskier. As I return, breathless from the climb back to base, a thought lingers: How many of our politicians — who so readily cry for war and challenge China or Pakistan — would be willing to send their own children here? Or come themselves? For that matter, how many of us would be willing to take up this ultimate duty of courage and endurance?

It's easy to indulge in armchair patriotism — to forward nationalistic messages on WhatsApp and challenge enemies from behind our screens. But it is here, at the post, where true patriotism is tested. We must ask ourselves: do we really mean it, or are we simply excusing ourselves by saying "it's not my job"? Fair enough if it isn't — but let us not make it harder for those who do. They have families too. They have children waiting. They have mothers — especially today, on Mother's Day — waiting with pride, and with prayers.

THE DISPUTE

China claims approximately 90,000 square kilometers of the state's territory as part of its "South Tibet" region, a claim India strongly rejects, asserting full sovereignty over the area. Tensions persist through periodic border incursions, diplomatic protests, and military standoffs, such as the one in Tawang in 2022. Despite several rounds of talks, both countries have yet to reach a permanent resolution. The issue remains a sensitive and strategic concern for India, especially as China continues to object to Indian infrastructure development and visits by Indian leaders to the region.



LIFE HERE IS GRUELING. SOLDIERS ARE POSTED FOR THREE YEARS AT A STRETCH. THOUGH PATROLLING STOPS DURING THE DEEP WINTER, THE POSTS REMAIN MANNED. TROOPS LIVE IN MODEST CABINS, WARMED BY DIESEL GENERATORS, WITH MINIMAL MOBILE CONNECTIVITY

"CAKES ARE HEALTHY TOO, YOU JUST EAT A SMALL SLICE"
— MARY BERRY

VINTAGE VIBES

MODERN MUNCHIES

Set against the colonial backdrop of Lutyens' Delhi, SOCIAL's new outlet celebrates bold tastes and bites, says ABHI SINGHAL

With already 56 outlets in operation, SOCIAL, the hyped café-bar has opened its 57th outlet in Connaught Place, and it is nothing short of a love letter to Delhi's past. The newest outlet has its walls in the heart of the capital, Lutyens' Delhi. SOCIAL blends the charm of India's postal legacy with the brand's signature edge, creating a one-of-a-kind dining and cultural experience.

Bold Flavours, Big Cravings

SOCIAL's food offering continues to impress, and Connaught Place SOCIAL is no exception. The menu is a mix of crowd favourites and exclusive new creations, catering to every mood and palate. The *Butter Chicken Biryani* is a must-try, rich, creamy and indulgent. The *Crispy Corn Chakka* and *Fully Loaded Nachos* are perfect bar snacks, while *Old School Chicken Tikka* and *Paneer Tikka* bring smoky, satisfying flavours to the table. The *Hot Tennessee Chicken Wings* in the Munchies section is delicious and juicy with fried chicken wings tossed in a delicious hot sauce. Vegetarians will also enjoy the *Bell Pepper Pizza*, a zesty and cheesy delight. From the momos section

SOCIAL SUBSTANTIALS

From the special section you have many options like the *Classic Mac N Cheese Pasta*, *Keema Spaghetti Pasta*, for the main course lovers — *Kadhai Paneer*, *Dal Makhani*, *Punjabi Kadhi Chawal* and much more to savour.



the momo lovers can enjoy *Classic Veggie Momos* and other variations, with street taste and dough softer like no other.

A Cultural Playground

More than just a café or bar, the Connaught Place SOCIAL is set to become a buzzing cultural hub like its other outlets. With plans to host live music, curated performances, and artistic pop-ups, it is designed as a space where Delhiites can connect, create and celebrate. It is not just about the food or ambience, it is an experience in itself.

FACT SHEET

Connaught Place Social
Address: First Floor, The Colonnade, Plot No 5, Middle Cir, Block B, Connaught Place, New Delhi, Delhi 110001
Price for Two: ₹1,600

BEVERAGES TELLING A STORY

No SOCIAL experience is complete without its legendary cocktails. Signature drinks such as *The Pink Pound*, *Trip on the Drip*, and the spa-inspired *Thai Malish* are just the beginning. The drink *LLITS* — (Longest Long Island Iced Teas) remains the crowd's favourite also delivering a potent punch and plenty of personality to the beverage lovers.

THE CRISPY CORN CHAKKA AND FULLY LOADED NACHOS ARE PERFECT BAR SNACKS, WHILE OLD SCHOOL CHICKEN TIKKA AND PANEER TIKKA BRING SMOKY, SATISFYING FLAVOURS TO THE TABLE

AMBIENCE: A POST OFFICE REIMAGINED

Inspired by the nostalgia of the Indian Post Office, this café-bar brings the bygone era of handwritten letters and telegrams alive through its immersive design. Every corner pays homage to the past, from vintage currency notes and old postal stamps to framed letters, telegrams, and even sorting tables repurposed as service counters. The grand oval-shaped bar draws inspiration from British-era teller windows, and the palette of deep reds, forest greens, and rich wooden textures instantly transports guests to a sepia-toned memory lane. The vibe is old-world yet electric, making it ideal for work, play or both.

CHOOSING IS YOUR POWER

The #Atmanirbhar China Box in the menu is where you can make your own combos by customising what you want to get added in there. You have the options of Fixes — paneer, chicken, prawn; Sauces — hot garlic, shezwan, social sexy and more; Carbs — fried rice, hakka noodles, steamed rice and the egg fried rice. Your choice, your taste!

If you are a shake lover you can go for the *Oreo Chocolate Shake* that would come in with a great presentation of a plant served in a mud pot. The *Ferrero Rocher Shake* is a bit thick and the after-taste is something different, chances only the Ferrero Rocher lovers might like it.



OFFERINGS AND VIBES AT SOCIAL

Connaught Place SOCIAL keeps on curating an exceptional lineup of events, featuring artists, musicians, and cultural experiences that reflect the soul of the city. From intimate performances, Mehfil Nights to thought-provoking gatherings, Connaught Place SOCIAL is where history and contemporary culture converge to create something truly extraordinary already loved and approved by the people at other outlets having the same fun and experience.



Flame-Kissed Feasts Worth the Hype

Although The Pit is undoubtedly a haven for non-vegetarians, even the vegetarians were left satisfied — a achievement in a meat-forward dining experience



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

while the *Mushroom Sando*, served in pillowy soft bread, was a savoury treat even the non-meat eaters couldn't resist.

Then arrived the true evening heroes. The *Buttery Garlic Prawns* were decadently rich, while the meatloaf provided the kind of comforting depth reminiscent of classic American diners. The *Philly Cheese Sub* was packed with flavour, the *Chicken Wings* had just the right kick, and the pork belly — simply outrageous. The smoked grilled chicken came with crisped, golden skin and melt-in-the-mouth meat. The *Lamb Chops* were cooked to tender perfection, and the *Humble Jacket Potato* stood out enough to be a main course.



Punjabi Food Passion on a Plate

At Pind-e-Zaika, the essence of Punjab wasn't just served but was celebrated in flavours, writes ABHI SINGHAL

The taste of Punjab came alive at *Shangri-La Eros New Delhi* during the much-celebrated *Pind-e-Zaika* pop-up at *Tamra*. This exclusive culinary event paid tribute to the lively food culture of Punjab — a land known for its robust flavours, warm hospitality, and rich culinary heritage.

At the heart of the experience was *Chef Tikka Manpreet Singh*, a master of Punjabi cuisine whose deep-rooted knowledge and royal kitchen experience shaped every dish served. *Chef Singh* brought his culinary magic to *Tamra*, presenting a feast that captured the soul of Amritsar and beyond. Guests were treated to a menu steeped in authenticity and nostalgia, each dish telling a story of Punjab's bold spices and traditional cooking methods.

Signature creations by *Chef like Ferozepur Railway Mutton Curry*, *Tikka Singh Da Meat Tarrwala*, and *Paneer Bharwein Aam Ras* delighted meat

lovers and vegetarians alike, while classics such as *2 Din Walli Dal* and *Murgh Dahi Kali Mirch Walla* offered comforting, hearty bites. The Vegetarian delicacies like *Chooran Walli Bhindi* and *Chakunder Moongphali Di Tikki* added earthy depth to the spread.

The last of the meal were the awaited desserts such as *Rau Di Kheer* that provided a sweet end to this cultural journey.



FLAVOUR REVIVAL

Guests were treated to a menu steeped in authenticity and nostalgia, each dish telling a story of Punjab's bold spices. *Chef Tikka Manpreet Singh* brought his culinary magic to *Tamra*, presenting a feast that captured the soul and ingredients of Amritsar. A celebration of Punjab's rich culinary legacy unfolded in New Delhi.

SPECIAL MENTION
First, the cocktails. The *Jamuntini* — a bold twist on a martini made with frozen fresh jamun was beautifully balanced. What impressed me most

was the Pit's refusal to cut corners: no artificial syrups, no pre-mixes — just real ingredients. This commitment to quality shone through every drink.



"TO DESCRIBE MY MOTHER WOULD BE
TO WRITE ABOUT A HURRICANE IN ITS
PERFECT POWER"

— MAYA ANGELOU

A LOVE THAT FILLS EVERY ROOM

There's a quiet moment that no one sees. When the child falls asleep and the house is finally still, she looks at the bills, the dishes, the dreams. Her body aches, her heart carries stories no one knows. But she smiles. She touches her child's head gently and the storm inside her calms. She's not just raising a child. She's building a future. She's breaking cycles. She's rewriting what family means. She is not "incomplete." She is overflowing with love, with grit, with grace.

WHAT THE WORLD DOESN'T APPLAUD

There are no awards for showing up every single day. No medals for enduring courtrooms, stigma, or sorrow. No headlines for skipping meals so the child can have music lessons. Yet her victories are real. It's in the child who says "Mummy, I'm proud of you." In the teacher who says "She's a confident girl." In the friend who whispers "You've raised a good human." She doesn't need applause. But she deserves reverence.

All in a mother's heart

Honouring the strength, sacrifice and love of mothers who shape lives everyday, says SAKSHI PRIYA

Behind every Princess is a mother who built the castle, her arms were walls, her love was the roof that sheltered us: She built a castle called home. She wasn't just my mother — she was my quiet warrior, my constant support, my compass. She carried the weight of the world with grace and never once let it touch us. In every small act of love, in every silent sacrifice, she became the hero I looked up to — strong, steady and endlessly giving.

She Plays Every Role

I've watched her for as long as I can remember. Every morning, she was up before dawn, while the rest of us still lay asleep. The clock had barely struck 5 and already, she was in the kitchen, kneading dough, stirring pots, packing lunchboxes. She worked so we could live well. By the time I was out of bed, she had already created a day's worth of meals, packed in containers, ready for the day ahead. Yet, it was never just about the food she cooked. It was about the sacrifices that went unnoticed, the sleepless nights when she stayed awake with her thoughts and fears, the extra hours at work to make sure there was enough to cover everything. She wanted us to rise above, to have a future filled with possibilities. She worked tire-

lessly, not just to earn a living, but to teach us how to make a living, to instil in us a sense of responsibility, and above all, to ensure that we knew how to survive on our own.

Home is where mother is

Behind every princess, there's a mother who builds the castle. And hers was no fairy tale. It wasn't made of gold or jewels, but of small moments, long days, late nights and endless sacrifices. It was built on love, hard work and the quiet promise to give us everything she never had. Her arms were the walls that held everything together and her love was the roof that sheltered us, no matter how heavy the storms outside. She didn't ask for recognition or reward.

There was no applause for the countless hours she spent working, no accolades for the patience she showed, no thank-yous for the love she gave. She did it because, in her eyes, this was what a mother does. This is what love looks like when it is unconditional. She stood for herself. She stood for us. She built a life out of nothing, piece by piece, brick by brick. She never faltered, never gave up, even when the world around her seemed to crumble. Her resilience was our inheritance. Her strength was our foundation. I think of her now

— how, even when her own dreams were delayed, she never let us doubt that we could chase ours. Her own struggles became lessons for us. She showed us what it meant to fight through life's challenges, to face hardship without complaint and to always, always rise above. Her courage wasn't loud, but it was constant. Her love wasn't flashy, but it was fierce. And every time she came home with hot meals, a tired smile on her face and no complaint on her lips, I saw the warrior she was. She wasn't just my mother — she was my hero.

Not all mothers were created equal

Some are widowed. Some are separated. Some walked away from violence. Some never married. But all of them made a decision: to protect, to nurture and to carry forward, alone. No woman dreams of doing it all by herself. But when life left them no choice, they stepped up. They didn't wait for rescue. They became their own rescue. And in a country where every festival, every form, every social event insists on a father's name or a husband's shadow, single mothers stand tall, unapologetic and unbroken. People question with stares not realising, how her child is thriving, happy, well-adjusted, deeply loved. Because presence matters more than tradition.

LET'S RAISE A TOAST

Single mothers don't want our pity. They want policies that recognise their reality. Workplaces must support single-parent households with flexible hours, maternity protections and empathy. Schools must stop insisting on a father's name. Landlords must stop asking questions. Society must stop staring. Because the truth is, she's doing the work of two, often better than both. So this Mother's Day, forget the marketing fluff. Let's raise a toast not just to mothers, but to her struggle, to her tears, her to-do lists, her tucked-away dreams. To the child she is raising, not despite the odds, but because of them. She doesn't need the world's permission to feel whole. She is the world.

SHE CREATES A COCOON OF NORMALCY IN A WORLD THAT OFTEN REFUSES TO ACCEPT. BUT SHE DOESN'T NEED THEIR APPROVAL. HER CHILD'S SMILE IS HER STAMP OF SUCCESS

WRAPPED IN LOVE

Maneyoon (name changed) is a woman whose life in the remote hills of Arunachal Pradesh is a quiet yet powerful story of resilience and love. She works for an NGO, dedicating her time to helping others and her greatest responsibility is the tiny bundle she carries every day. Wrapped securely in a simple towel, her baby rests close to her chest as she moves through her work, a reminder that she balances a carer and motherhood, fiercely protective and unyielding in her devotion. The towel holds not just a baby, but the weight of her dreams, the sacrifice of every moment spent away from her child, and the quiet strength that allows her to keep going. As she walks from task to task, with her little one cradled in that cloth, she shows what it means to love fiercely, to fight for her family, and to never stop, no matter the odds. Her journey is one of quiet determination.

The world does not pause for her, but she continues, motivated by the soft breaths of her baby against her chest. Every step she takes is a reminder of the sacrifices she makes and the strength she draws from her love for her child.

Balancing work and motherhood is never easy, but for Maneyoon, it's a daily act of love, and each moment is a treatment to her resilience. Her story is one of unspoken heroism, filled with sacrifices, tears and moments of vulnerability. She seeks neither applause nor recognition. Her quiet strength, her devotion to her family and the love she carries in her heart show that even the smallest acts of courage can create lasting impact.

IN HER OWN WORDS

Aastha Kumari (name changed), a teacher and single mother, lives alone with her 10-year-old son and 15-year-old daughter in Pakur, Jharkhand. Balancing work, family and the emotional weight of raising two children on her own, she navigates the daily struggles with strength and determination.

What's the hardest part of being a single mother?

"Not having someone to share the daily decisions with. Big or small, I have to figure it out alone, whether it's school fees, health scares, or just what to cook for dinner when I'm exhausted."

What do you wish people understood?

"People assume things or ask too many personal questions. But over time, I've learnt to tune it out. My focus is my child and our life. That's what matters and single mothers don't need sympathy. Just understanding and basic respect. We're doing our best, just like everyone else."

What keeps you going?

"My kids smile. When I see them going to school in their uniforms, laughing and learning, I feel everything is worth it."

MOTHERHOOD WITH STRENGTH AND GRACE

Nitu Singh is a single mother of two daughters, from Ranchi, Jharkhand, who has built her life with strength. She is someone who finds joy in the little things, the quiet presence of animals. Life hasn't always been kind, but she has met each challenge with steady resilience and a generous heart. Her roles are many, animal activist, organic farmer, social worker, and a dedicated member of the Khadi Board.

But beyond the titles, she is simply a woman who gives herself fully to whatever she does. In her presence, there is calm. In her silence, there is strength. And in her daily acts of service often unseen, often unspoken, there is the quiet courage of a woman who has chosen compassion as her path. She stands not in the spotlight but in the light of her own making, built from years of selfless care, honesty, and a belief in doing good — quietly, steadfastly, beautifully.

WHAT'S THE HARDEST PART OF BEING A SINGLE MOTHER?

The hardest part of being a single mother is being oneself. You want a companion to live your single life with and that person is nowhere to be found so sometimes, it hurts. But once you understand this, it becomes easier to handle yourself.

AND THE BEST PART?

The best part you show your children what it means to love oneself. How to trust oneself. Sometimes it can be difficult, but when you learn to trust yourself and teach your children the same, everything becomes easier.

ARE SOCIETAL EXPECTATIONS DIFFERENT FOR SINGLE WOMEN IN THE WORKPLACE?

Definitely yes. Society does not look at a single mother from the lens of motherhood. She is judged as a woman. Instead of helping her, people keep a sharp eye on her every activity. People judge you, create difficulties, or present



you differently. Men do not respect women, they often engage in character assassination.

HOW DO YOU HANDLE ASSUMPTIONS ABOUT YOUR PERSONAL LIFE?

Only assumptions can be made about my personal life, it cannot be interpreted. The one who has not even seen a glimpse of my struggle, what can they guess? I follow the theory of "Let it go" and "less communication, less reaction."

WHAT ADVICE WOULD YOU GIVE TO OTHER SINGLE MOTHERS?

Being a single mother is a matter of pride. Surely, we must have some special capability—that is why God chose us for this role. And I am happy with it.

HOW DO YOU BALANCE WORK LIFE?

Balancing between both, raising growing children and working, is the most difficult part. It depends on the situation. Time management is the key, which makes coordination easier. This is my life, and I have the right to live it while setting boundaries.

ARE YOU JUDGED AND HOW YOU REACT?

I don't care what others think about my life, because those who haven't stood with me in my struggle, what opinion can they have about my life?

A MOTHER WHO DOES EVERYTHING ALONE IS A WOMAN WHO HAS LEARNED THAT PERFECTION IS A MYTH. IT'S THE EVERYDAY EFFORT, THE ENDLESS LOVE AND THE BELIEF IN YOUR OWN STRENGTH THAT COUNT

STORIES OF LOVE AND SACRIFICE

Motherhood, in all its forms, is a journey of love, sacrifice, and resilience. Whether it's a protective single mother rediscovering her identity, a woman navigating the harsh realities of poverty, or a surrogate learning the true meaning of love, these four films and series explore the multifaceted nature of being a mother. From Helicopter Eela to Mimi, each story delves into the emotional complexities and transformative power of motherhood, showing that no matter the circumstance, a mother's love knows no bounds.

Helicopter Eela (2018)

Starring Kajol, Helicopter Eela follows a single mother who, after dedicating her life to her son, returns to college to rediscover her dreams. The film explores the balance between motherhood and personal growth.

Maid (Netflix Series, 2021)

Maid is about Alex, a young single mother who, after

escaping an abusive relationship, becomes a maid to support her daughter. The series highlights the struggles of poverty, trauma, and resilience in single motherhood.

Gilmore Girls (2000-2007 and 2016)

This beloved series centers on the close relationship between single mother Lorelai and her daughter Rory. It celebrates unconditional love, sacrifices and the complexities of being a mother and daughter.

Mimi (2021)

Mimi tells the story of a young woman who becomes a surrogate mother and faces unexpected challenges. The film explores themes of motherhood, sacrifice, and societal judgment, showcasing the strength of a woman's love.





YOUR WEEK AHEAD

MADHU KOTIYA



ARIES March 21-April 19

This week heralds a wave of good vibes that deepens your connection with your higher self. You'll feel a presence with you that is encouraging and shifting you towards greater awakening and understanding. The challenges you face will be resolved as you listen to your inner wisdom which is guiding you towards trust and confident decisions. The festivities, whether through new relationships, personal milestones, or fortuitous events will result in a bountiful amount of love and inspiration. Creative inspiration will also pour forth, bursting forth like a fountain overflowing with color. As you make progress on your goals, it will be evident that your deepest desires were indeed fulfilling. In love and friendship, even career — in all aspects of life, you will flow without friction and with immense ease, joy and effortless beauty.

**Lucky number 2 | Lucky colour Mint
Lucky day Monday**



LEO July 23-Aug 22

This week starts with some emotional strains with your close connections. As much as you wanted to stay optimistic, the actions of people around you may leave you feeling bitter. A wish to be alone may emerge as you want to hide from the rest of the world in order to find your footing again. Progressing through the week, challenges remain, needing you to be alert and concentrated on your tasks. An upcoming trip is likely, maybe with friends or family, changing the tempo and offering a good distraction. You could undergo a transition from deep thoughts caused by solitude to enhanced levels of enthusiasm which will inspire a shift in perspective mid-week. Personally, you will be sensitive, warm, and caring, whereas, in the professional life, your strengths as a go-getter will stand out.

**Lucky number 17 | Lucky colour Mustard
Lucky day Sunday**



SAGITTARIUS Nov 22-Dec 21

You are eager to expand your skills and explore new opportunities, with a strong focus on your material well-being. It's important to pay attention to practical matters, gather useful information, and reflect on your values. A new business venture or project is on the horizon, so keep organized by making lists and securely storing important documents. Your commitment and patience will lead to a growing awareness. Midweek brings favorable conditions for your career, with potential for a business increase, a new assignment, or even a job offer. A new income source or a romantic opportunity could also arise. Towards the end of the week, be cautious—there may be some tension or disagreements, but a relative may come through with support. If you're facing any medical tests, the results will be positive.

**Lucky number 9 | Lucky colour Lavender
Lucky day Saturday**



TAURUS April 20-May 20

This week, you will face the truth head-on, even when it's difficult, quickly assessing situations with sharp insight. Your strong intuition allows you to detect hidden motives and understand others' desires, giving you the ability to get straight to the heart of the matter. You value honesty and directness, steering clear of games and deception. However, there is a need for balance—ensuring that work and action are harmonized with self-care, emotional control, and healthy habits. Trust your judgment and choose what is best for your well-being. If there are any legal matters, expect a fair resolution. You will soon be recognized and rewarded for your hard work, gaining the respect you deserve while restoring order to any chaos that once surrounded you.

**Lucky number 19 | Lucky colour Peach
Lucky day Wednesday**



VIRGO Aug 23-Sep 22

Explore unconditional and trust based bonds this week. A more emotionally nurturing and balanced connection is opening up, bringing with it peace and a sense of security. Release self doubt. Your actively frustrating career is growing. Heightened expectations arrive midweek, and with them the determination to take charge of one's fate. You are successful as a partner, father, and leader, so long as your authority is not questioned. The current phase is good for 'out for blood' investments and hard work. Towards the end of the week, expect to be thrown into the deep end of unfamiliar territory all at once. Support at work will come from coworkers as well as family, but one of your family members is likely to need to head out of town for a bit.

**Lucky number 3 | Lucky colour Navy Blue
Lucky day Wednesday**



CAPRICORN Dec 22-Jan 19

A fresh perspective will emerge regarding a lingering concern, bringing clarity. While intellectual achievements are important, it's essential to balance knowledge with compassion. You're steadfast in pursuing your goals, undeterred by obstacles, conflicts, or challenges that may arise. In your professional sphere, be prepared for competition, as someone may show interest in your field. The atmosphere at home could become tense, with strained communication leaving you feeling like walking away. However, stay grounded—change is on the horizon, working in your favor. With a blend of courage and sharp intellect, no obstacle will stand in your path. There are guiding forces at play, especially willpower and self-discipline. A consultation with a seasoned leader will offer invaluable guidance, providing the support needed to turn your dreams into reality.

**Lucky number 1 | Lucky colour Maroon
Lucky day Thursday**



GEMINI May 21-June 20

Sharing your work with a partner can lead to growth, provided they match your dedication and responsibility. Your schedule will be filled with new projects and tasks, demanding focus and teamwork. Strategic planning, resource coordination, and tapping into the collective strengths of your team will be essential for success. You are in harmony with your emotions and exude a deep sense of wisdom. Your nurturing side shines as you offer support and healing to others through gentle gestures and understanding. In both personal and professional realms, you maintain a calm, composed demeanor. You have a strong presence in the business world, valuing structure. A spiritual journey may beckon, leading you to practices like meditation or community prayers, bringing transformative growth.

**Lucky number 7 | Lucky colour Turquoise
Lucky day Saturday**



LIBRA Sep 23-Oct 22

As the week progresses, you feel a deep sense of happiness and satisfaction seeing the fruits of your efforts. Emotional release and new unexpected ties mark deepening relationships. While heart and mind seem in conflict, resolving one will clarify the other, unfolding towards success. An exploration or a different form of imaginative expression may capture your interest midweek which promises taking revolutionary steps towards your goals. You feel full of energy and in the best of health, ready to take on any challenges. By the week's end, you find yourself in a state of equilibrium and savoring the bliss in all aspects of life — financial, emotional, material and spiritual. Your social bonds are healthy and the relationships you have are fulfilling.

**Lucky number 11 | Lucky colour Teal
Lucky day Thursday**



AQUARIUS Jan 20-Feb 18

You exhibit emotional balance, confidence, and selflessness because you tend to think about other people. In relations, whether it be dialogue, friendship, or romance, you display a distinctive combination of charm, passion, and stimulation. But, it's crucial to make certain you keep that energy at its highest peak. Getting lost way too far into the deep end's either getting consumed by intense passion, or feeling waaay too overwhelmed by emotional depth could spin the wheel of unwanted consequences. Especially from midweek, there might be hurdles tied around your workplace that introduce rivalry and competition. Be careful as some might try to take credit for your work. Concentrate on your profession, remember to use your diplomacy, tact, and 'executive politeness' to sail through toughest of situations. Defuse the blame approach and instead be more receptive to other possibilities.

**Lucky number 16 | Lucky colour Charcoal
Lucky day Sunday**



CANCER June 21-July 22

You are at a stage of profound balance and coherence in which trust and understanding provide support to deal with challenges. A choice or an action will require one to deliberate deeply on the most prudent option. While some situation may seem hindering at first, in the end it will always come up as a valuable lesson or a set of opportunities. Your creative energy is at its peak, and because of your natural self-belief you will be able to assume control of affairs. Participation in social events and other activities will be energizing and beneficial to you in ways that you did not anticipate. By the close of the week, you will receive some form of recognition or supportive remarks that will not meet, but exceed, your expectations.

**Lucky number 14 | Lucky colour Lilac
Lucky day Tuesday**



SCORPIO Oct 23-Nov 21

This week, you remain focused on your spiritual journey your heart and head guiding you. A mentor or a trusted guide might be required to help you with your inner self and the divine within you irrespective of what you believe in. Prayers and group activities make you feel part of a community which you are comfortable in. As the week develops, your work life comes into focus and you handle it with a great deal of confidence and courage. You will participate in spirited auctions and take on new projects. There is bound to be new development in your career and you shall continue to enjoy good healthy relations with your peers. At the moment, you seem to be enjoying a position of great power and .

**Lucky number 6 | Lucky colour Olive
Lucky day Monday**



PISCES Feb 19-March 20

This week offers exceptional warmth, love, and support from family and friends. The environment around you is upbeat and balanced within the household. Your imagination and creativity are at their best, and family gatherings are enjoyable. Children bring so much of this joy into your life as most of them are doing wonderfully. For those wishing to expand their families, there is good news coming in terms of birth or conception announcements. By midweek, expect some newfound discipline, where you will apply it to both your professional and personal life through imposed routines. Stay on target but be careful not to put too much attention on a single issue. Obtain calmness and surety but accept that old habits are hard to break during the growth and renewal stages.

**Lucky number 2 | Lucky colour Emerald
Lucky day Wednesday**

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THOUGHTFUL INSIGHTS



Dr. Tanu Jain

Free yourself from emotional bondage — it is not worth sacrificing your mental and emotional well-being for relationships that are one-sided or draining

Moving From Inner Struggle to Conscious Evolution

Shifting from negativity to positivity is perhaps one of the most daunting journeys in life. Through personal experience, I have realised that while everyone advises us to “stay positive,” “be patient,” and “trust that things will change,” the real challenge lies much deeper than mere words or passing motivation.

Negativity is deeply ingrained in all of us, often in ways we don't fully comprehend. Our first thoughts are frequently clouded with doubt, fear, or hesitation — rarely are they purely positive or hopeful. Why is this so? Because we are socialised to see life through the lens of scarcity, struggle, and comparison. From a young age, we are taught to strive, compete, and measure our worth through external achievements.

As children, our needs are simple and our joys are spontaneous. But as we grow older, our desires become more layered, shaped by societal expectations and personal ambitions. Life, however, does not always align with these aspirations. We realise early on that it does not hand us everything we long for. Over time, the widening gap between desire and reality moulds our learned behaviour, breeding compromises, self-doubt, and the belief that life is full of unavoidable limitations.

We encounter strained relationships, financial hardships, career uncertainties, and a fiercely competitive world. Friends change, perceptions shift, and our notions of permanence are tested. Life teaches us many lessons — often the hard way. We



come to understand that even people we once believed were truly “ours” may, in fact, be part of a largely transactional world, where emotional loyalty is rare and self-interest often prevails.

So, what do we do? We must carve out a life for ourselves — consciously, courageously, and without fear of solitude. It is in those solitary moments that we begin to discover who we truly are. Strength does not always roar; sometimes, it whispers quietly in the background, guiding us through chaos. First, strengthen your emotional quotient.

You cannot constantly seek emotional validation from others. It's an exhausting cycle that leaves you unfulfilled. Begin by recognising your triggers and learning to self-soothe. As Sri Aurobindo profoundly said: “Emotion must not govern the intellect, nor the intellect stifle the soul's deeper feelings; all must harmonise in the light of the Spirit.”

Let your feelings exist, but don't let them control you. Be rational, be practical. Understand the emotional needs of others — not to absorb them, but to protect your own peace. With that understanding, lib-

erate yourself. Create healthy distances. Free yourself from emotional bondage — it is not worth sacrificing your mental and emotional well-being for relationships that are one-sided or draining.

Second, master a skill with passion. Learning should not feel like a burden; it must be a fulfilling pursuit. Whether it's writing, coding, painting, or gardening, immerse yourself in something that sparks joy. Learning can become your greatest anchor in uncertain times. As Osho beautifully reminds us:

“Learn as if you have all the time in the

world — relaxed, playful, joyous. Then the learning becomes not just a means, but an end in itself.”

In a world obsessed with instant results and quick success, find peace in becoming a student of life. Be curious. Let learning become a lifestyle, not a task.

Third, and most importantly, invest in building yourself. That is the greatest and most reliable investment you can make. This includes developing your character, expanding your wisdom, and nurturing your spiritual and emotional foundations.

God has created you with immense potential. Strive every day to reach the highest version of yourself — not out of competition, but out of love for who you are capable of becoming. Be grateful for your body, your mind, your breath — for you already have everything you need to perform, flourish, and inspire. The journey from negativity to positivity is not about blind optimism. It is not about denying pain, or pretending that everything is fine. It is about conscious evolution — living with awareness, with resilience, and with gratitude.

It is about showing up for yourself each day, even when the world feels heavy. It is about refusing to let bitterness win, choosing instead to move forward with faith, and a belief that light always follows darkness.

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