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SportsManjrekar weighs in on India's BGT prospects **P.16****WORLD**

North Gazans told to evacuate

**readers' corner** Sir, you will always live in our hearts **P.8****Cinema** Alia's anxiety struggle **P.14****fp Briefs**

NEW DELHI

Iran warns oil rich US allies

Iran has issued a stark warning to its Arab neighbours and US allies in the Gulf, threatening severe retaliation if their territories or airspace are used to aid Israel in any potential attacks on Iran, the Wall Street Journal reported. The warning was conveyed through secret diplomatic channels, targeting oil-rich states like Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates, Jordan, and Qatar, all of which host US military forces, the WSJ report claimed.

SHIVPURI

Minor raped by father, bro

A 15-year-old girl was raped allegedly by her father and brother in Madhya Pradesh's Shivpuri district, a police official said on Saturday. The father-son duo has been arrested, Dinara police station in charge Vinod Bhargava said. "As per the girl, her father started raping her after her mother left three years ago. Her elder brother also raped her and shot a video to blackmail her. He also issued death threats to the victim and warned her against telling her ordeal to anyone," the official said. "She later confided in her second brother and the duo approached police," he said.

CBSE disaffiliates 33 MP schools

Our Staff Reporter

BHOPAL

Central Board of Secondary Education (CBSE) has disaffiliated 419 schools across the country, including 33 schools in Madhya Pradesh. Some of these schools have had affiliation revoked for the current academic session, while others will lose their affiliation in 2025-2026 session. The CBSE released the list of these disaffiliated schools on their official portal on Saturday.

The disaffiliation comes over violation of norms established by CBSE. Among the disaffiliated schools in Madhya Pradesh four are from Bhopal, six from Indore, and three from Jabalpur.

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Dr Zakir Naik, the Islamic preacher from Mumbai, is causing enormous embarrassment to the Pakistani government at whose invitation he is currently touring that country. He has been making one controversial statement after another in the name of Islam much to the anger of the Pak-

WORRISOME India expresses serious concern over attack on Puja mandap, theft at Bangladesh temple, calls for safety of Hindus

DEPLORABLE, FOLLOW SYSTEMATIC PATTERN

Agencies

NEW DELHI

India on Saturday said it has noted with "serious concern" the reported attack on a Durga Puja pandal and theft at a revered Kali temple in Bangladesh, as it requested Dhaka to ensure the safety and security of Hindus, all other minorities and their places of worship in the neighbouring country.

In a statement, the Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) described the incidents as "deplorable events" and flagged that these follow a "systematic pattern of desecration" of temples and deities in Bangladesh.

"We have noted with serious concern the attack on a Puja mandap in Tantibazar, Dhaka and the theft at the revered Jeshoreshwari Kali temple at Satkhira," the MEA said.

Bangladeshi daily "Prothom Alo" has reported an incident of a "crude bomb" allegedly thrown at a Durga Puja pandal in the Tantibazar

**35 INCIDENTS SINCE OCT 1, 17 HELD**

Seventeen persons have been arrested and about a dozen cases registered after Bangladesh witnessed about 35 untoward incidents related to the ongoing Durga Puja celebrations across the country this month, police said in Dhaka. The development comes a day after it was discovered that a hand-crafted golden mukut (crown) gifted by PM Narendra Modi was stolen from a Hindu temple in Bangladesh's southwestern Satkhira district amid Durga Puja celebrations, a theft over which India expressed concern.

'India portrayed as threat in B'desh'

Bhagwat said that a narrative is being spread in Bangladesh that India is a threat and they should join Pakistan as a defence against Bharat. Who is spreading such a narrative, he asked. The RSS chief said a tyrannical fundamentalist nature exists in Bangladesh. A sword of danger hangs over minorities, including Hindus. Hindus have come out to defend themselves, he said, adding that they will need the help of all those favouring humanity and harmony, especially Indian government.

Chief Adviser Yunus visits Dhakeshwari temple

Muhammad Yunus, the Chief Advisor to the interim government of Bangladesh, on Saturday visited the centuries-old Dhakeshwari temple amid reports of attack on another prominent Durga Puja celebration in the national capital. The government wants to build Bangladesh in such a way "where each and every citizen's right will be ensured," he said.

area of Old Dhaka. Though the bomb caught fire, nobody was injured, the report said, adding that the incident

took place on Friday night. Friday marked the ninth and last day of Navratri, the nine-day sacred period for

Hindus. Durga Puja is also celebrated during this time.

► Continued on | P6

NCP leader Baba Siddique shot in Mumbai, 2 shooters held

Two shooters held, one is from UP, another from Haryana. The third is on the run.

**Megha Kuchik**

MUMBAI

Eight people allegedly assaulted Jain monk Vishwanath Sagar in Ghuwara Nagar of Chhattarpur on Saturday, the police said. The accused were angry as one of monk's followers had eloped with a girl of their family on Friday night. All the accused were arrested, the police added.

Superintendent of Police (SP) of Chhattarpur, Agam Jain told Free Press that the incident took place in Ghuwara Nagar on Saturday morning. He added that all the eight accused belong to Jain community.

After the accused received information about a girl from their family eloping with one of the followers of the monk, they reached his Ashram on Saturday and allegedly assaulted him.

Following the incident, monk Sagar and his followers staged a sit-in at a marketplace.

Scores of people belonging to the Jain community flocked to the area in support of monk Sagar and condemned the incident. They then reached Bhagwa police station demanding the arrest of the accused. Later in the day, the police registered an FIR against the eight accused and arrested them, the SP said.

Bhagwa police station house officer (SHO) Ramswaroop Upadhyay said that the arrested accused were identified as Surendra Jain, Jindendra Jain, Mahendra Jain, Narendra Jain, and four of their sons.

With their faces covered they approached his car and fired at him. One of the bullets struck his chest. Because of the firecrackers it was not immediately noticed that he had been shot. One of Siddique's associates was also struck in the leg. He was immediately rushed to Lilavati Hospital for treatment, but succumbed to his injuries. Upon receiving the information, the police arrived at the site. Deputy Chief Minister Ajit Pawar contacted the hospital for information.

The police have arrested two assailants one from UP and the other from Haryana.

► Continued on | P6

Rahman's desi tadka to Harris' campaign

PTI

WASHINGTON

Legendary Indian music composer A R Rahman has recorded a 30-minute video performance in support of Vice President Kamala Harris, which is expected to give a big boost to her presidential campaign ahead of the November 5 general election.

Rahman, 57, is the first major international artist from South Asia to have endorsed Harris, who is of mixed Indian and African origin. The 30-minute show will feature some of Rah-

man's most beloved songs, interspersed with messages highlighting Kamala Harris's historic candidacy and commitment to the AAPI (Asian American and Pacific Islanders) community, a media release said.

"With this performance, A R Rahman has added his voice to a chorus of leaders and artists who are standing up for progress and representation in America," said Shekar Narasimhan, chairman of the AAPI Victory Fund.

► Continued on | P6



Iranian oil: Indian firm sanctioned

PTI

WASHINGTON

An Indian shipping firm is among the dozen-odd companies sanctioned by the US for allegedly carrying Iranian oil for sale to buyers in Asia days after slapping restrictions targeting Iran's energy trade for its October 1 attack on Israel.

Gabbari Ship Services, the India-based company, was involved in the transport of Iranian petroleum as the technical manager of crude oil tanker Hornet and knowingly engaged in a significant transaction for the transport of petroleum from Iran as part of a 'Ghost Fleet', the State Department alleged.

HAL upgraded to Maharatna status, is 14th PSU to join elite group

Agencies
NEW DELHI

Maharatna companies in India: The Government of India (GoI) has granted the 'Maharatna' status to the Indian PSU Hindustan Aeronautics Ltd (HAL). The Department of Public Enterprises informed us about HAL's upgrade to the 14th Maharatna company in India from its official 'X' channel account (formerly known as Twitter). The DPE said on Saturday that Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman has given her nod to upgrade the Indian PSU to Maharatna status.

The Department of Public Enterprises informed about the development regarding HAL from its official 'X' channel account saying, "Hon'ble Finance Minister has approved the upgradation of Hindustan Aeronautics Limited (HAL) to 14th #Maharatna CPSE. The proposal has earlier been recommended by Inter-Ministerial Committee (IMC) headed by Finance Secretary and Apex Committee headed by Cabinet Secretary.

According to the report, the exemption of madrasas from the RTE Act has deprived children attending these institutions of quality education. While Articles 29 and 30 of the Indian Constitution protect the rights of minorities to preserve their culture and establish educational institutions, NCPCR asserts that these provisions have inadvertently led to discrimination against

NCPCR TO STATES

Stop madarsa funding till RTI compliance

PTI
NEW DELHI

The apex child rights body has raised serious concerns about the state of functioning in madrasas and called for stopping state funding to them unless they comply with the Right to Education Act.

In its latest report titled 'Guardians of Faith or Oppressors of Rights?', the National Commission for Protection of Child Rights (NCPCR) said religious institutions operating outside the purview of the Right to Education (RTE) Act, 2009 had a negative impact.

According to the report, the exemption of madrasas from the RTE Act has deprived children attending these institutions of quality education.

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Religious education cannot come at the expense of formal education

NCPCR Report

children in madrasas, who miss out on formal education mandated by the RTE Act.

The report pointed out that while the primary focus of madrasas is religious education, many do not provide the essential components of formal education such as adequate infrastructure, trained teachers, and proper academic curricula. This leaves students at a disadvantage compared to their peers in mainstream schools. The report also noted instances where madrasa students have been denied basic entitlements such as textbooks, uniforms, and access to mid-day meal scheme.

► Continued on | P6

**victory of good over evil**

People in the city gathered at Dussehra maidan on Saturday for Ravan dahan Pic By Anand Shriv

Ahilya Lok, textile tourism village in Maheshwar: Yadav

CM honours tradition with Shastra Puja

FP News Service

MAHESHWAR/KHARGONE

On Dussehra, Chief Minister Mohan Yadav performed a ceremonial Shastra Puja in Maheshwar honouring the ancient tradition of arms worship.

Addressing attendees, he emphasised that weapons symbolise self-defence and the relentless fight against injustice, reaffirming their essential role in safeguarding both religion and the nation.

During the ceremony, the Chief Minister announced several significant development projects for the region, including the



construction of a Textile Tourism Village and 'Ahilya Lok', dedicated to the legacy of Lokmat Devi Ahilya Bai. His commitment to enhancing local infrastructure is expected to boost tourism and employment opportunities in

the area. CM Yadav praised Devi Ahilya's exemplary model of good governance, highlighting her commitment to public welfare and effective governance practices.

► Continued on | P6

offgrid

Optimus robot, humanoid friend who can do anything

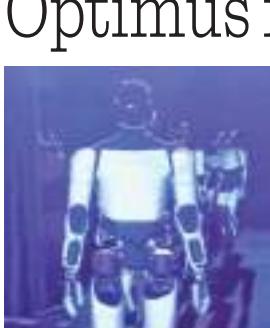
dees at Tesla's 'We, Robot' event held in California, United States of America, on Thursday.

"It will basically do anything you want. It can be a teacher. It can babysit your kids, walk your dog, mow your lawn, get the groceries, just be your friend, and serve drinks. Whatever you can think of, it

will do and it's going to be awesome," said Tesla CEO Elon Musk while introducing the latest launch.

In a demo video displayed at the event, Optimus was seen picking up packages and doing household chores like watering plants, cleaning the kitchen top, unloading groceries, and playing with

children. Proving his claims, Musk brought along a bunch of Optimus robots to the party and requested people to be nice to them. "You will be able to walk right up to them and they will serve drinks at the bar. It's a wild experience just to have humanoid robots. They are there, just in front of you."



ONLINE REPORT
He can serve. He can dance. He can take selfies. He can talk. He can do anything "you want". That is Tesla's Optimus robot, who can be your humanoid friend. Several humanoid Optimus robots were seen walking the ramp and serving drinks to the atten-

Unmarried women are public property: Naik



istani population, specially the educated ones. The 59-year-old Deobandi scholar, who is wanted on terror finance charges by the Indian government, fled to Malaysia and now he is on a month-long visit to Pakistan addressing large gatherings in Karachi and other cities.

► Continued on | P6

S Balakrishnan
MUMBAI

Dr Zakir Naik, the Islamic preacher from Mumbai, is causing enormous embarrassment to the Pakistani government at whose invitation he is currently touring that country. He has been making one controversial statement after another in the name of Islam much to the anger of the Pak-



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AMID FESTIVITIES Markets flooded with 'spurious ghee'

Samples of over 30 ghee brands collected, reports awaited

Our Staff Reporter

INDORE

While samples of a ghee brand, which was ready to be sold in a huge quantity across the city, failed to clear the quality test, there are over 30



'Pure Ghee' supplied for Rs 300-330 per kg

According to official sources, many brands are supplying spurious ghee in the name of pure ghee for Rs 300-330 per kilogram. "Price of real pure ghee is about Rs 600 per kilogram but these companies are flooding the market with spurious ghee and supplying it to the dealer for Rs 300-330 per kilogram. Many are giving fake bills of Rs 350-390 per kilogram but even supplying it for Rs 290 as well," sources said. Free Press accessed some of the bills of such rates at which the ghee was supplied in the city.

He added that under the supervision of Collector and ADM, the team of FSOs is spending days for more than a fortnight collecting over 300 samples to ensure safe and healthy food for the denizens.

Explaining the reasons of the surge in supply of spurious ghee, the senior food safety officer explained, "Indore is the city of celebration and various mass feasts (bhandas) are being organised between Navratri and Diwali. It was found that such spurious ghee is being utilised during such feasts in the name of pure ghee."

The officials also blamed the caterers for using such ghee for preparing food for big events.

"Out of 10 sample reports received in last 10 days, 3-4 samples failed the quality test resulting in the seizure of the ghee as well as destroying it as per the protocol," Swami added.

Major action against ghee

- Over 850 kg ghee of Mahashree brand seized by food safety officials, samples failed quality test

- 5,520 kg of substandard ghee, estimated to be worth about Rs 7 lakh, was seized. The ghee was prepared by mixing synthetic essence of ghee with palm oil, soybean oil and other edible oils.

- Over 1,015 kg of counterfeit ghee, supplied in the name of Sanchi, was seized in Malharganj. Sample reports are pending and Sanchi will also lodge an FIR against the accused.



File photo

Samples of Gujarat and Rajasthan ghee brands taken

As per the food safety officials, they have collected the samples of various ghee brands manufactured in Gujarat and Rajasthan. Samples of some of the brands like Pure Ever, Vastu, Vidhi, Shrimati, Shriman, Ratnashri, and other were collected and officials are waiting for the reports.

Path Sanchalan of RSS today

Indore: The grand and well disciplined Vijaydashmi Path Sanchalan (march-past) of RSS volunteers would be taken out on Sunday. The March past of all the Shakhas of the city will pass through the internal routes of the local settlements. Volunteers from all the four districts of the city and Mhow rural will participate. All

march pacts will start from their fixed place between 7 to 9 in the morning. This year, the March pacts will be taken out with Ghosh Dalpat a total of 410 places in the city, in which about 6,00,000 volunteers will participate in full uniform. The route of the march-past under each branch area will be about 3 to 4 km.

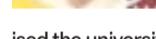
City Digest

INDORE

MS Sodha, visionary ex-VC of DAVV, passes away

Padma Shri Prof Mahendra Singh Sodha, renowned for transforming the financial landscape of Devi Ahilya Vishwavidyalaya (DAVV) through the introduction of self-financing courses, passed away on Saturday.

Sodha, widely regarded as one of the most visionary former vice-chancellors of DAVV, served in the top office of the university from 1988 to 1992 but his legacy continues to resonate within the institution to this day. During his tenure, Sodha implemented numerous groundbreaking initiatives, ensuring that his name remains etched in the corridors of DAVV. His forward-thinking approach not only stabilised the university's financial situation but also paved the way for the establishment of the prestigious International Institute of Professional Studies (IIPS), known for achieving the highest campus placement package in the state. Even after his tenure, Sodha's attachment to DAVV remained strong. He frequently visited the university, a testament to his enduring commitment and affection for the institution that he helped shape into a centre of educational excellence. "His passing marks the end of an era for DAVV, but his contributions will continue to inspire future generations," said DAVV media coordinator Chandan Gupta.



Otherwise, a penalty of Rs 1 lakh and 2+2% of the transaction value can be imposed. Therefore, it is necessary to investigate every transaction thoroughly and file an audit report in the prescribed form if necessary.

Provisions of transfer pricing are applicable on trade transactions

Our Staff Reporter

INDORE

Income tax experts have stated that in this era of globalization, the provisions of transfer pricing are applicable on international and domestic trade transactions and in relation to such transactions, an audit report has to be filed in Form 3CEB by October 31.

Tax Practitioners Association and CA Indore Branch organise a seminar on Transfer Pricing

Earlier, a penalty of Rs 1 lakh and 2+2% of the transaction value can be imposed. Therefore, it is necessary to investigate every transaction thoroughly and file an audit report in the prescribed form if necessary.

Tax expert CA Deepak Mantri and CA Chaitanya Madeshwar said it while addressing a seminar organised by the Tax Practitioners Association and CA Indore Branch. The



subject of the seminar was 'Transfer Pricing'. They said that the topic is covered under Income Tax Sections 92A to 92E. They said that the provisions of transfer pricing in Section 92BA will also be applicable on new domestic companies on which concessional tax is payable at the rate of 15%. The audit report has to be filed in Form 3CEB and reports have to be filed in Master File documentation, Form 3CEAA, 3CEAB, 3CEAC. They said that in case of non-compliance, the following penalties can be imposed-Rs 1 lakh in case of non-filing of Form 3CEB, 2% of the transaction value on non-reporting of transactions.

2% of the transaction value on not preparing transfer pricing documentation, Rs 5 lakh penalties can be imposed in

Dial 100 staff rescue abandoned infant girl

Our Staff Reporter

INDORE

The Dial 100 staff stationed in the Banganga area rescued an infant girl abandoned beside the road. The Dial 100 control room at Bhopal received information that an infant was lying near Hanuman temple in Banganga. The Dial 100 staff

consisting of constables Rinku Rawat, Kuldeep Singh and pilot Mohan reached the spot and rescued the infant and rushed her to the hospital. Later, she was handed over to child line officials after a preliminary treatment. Further investigation was underway to get information about her parents.

Indore: A woman was allegedly raped by her relative in the Tilak Nagar area, the police said on Saturday. The woman had come to the city to attend a function at a relative's place when the accused made physical relations with her. Additional DCP Amarendra Singh said the 45-year-old woman from Betma area has lodged a complaint that she came to the city to attend a function when the accused made physical relations with her. The woman was threatened with dire consequences by the accused.

Woman raped by relative

Our Staff Reporter

INDORE

Despite ongoing efforts to raise awareness, breast cancer cases are steadily increasing in Indore, with more than 3,000 women diagnosed every year.

According to data from various healthcare institutions, including Government Cancer Hospital and Ashtang Ayurvedic College, breast cancer rates are climbing by nearly 20 per cent annually. Experts believe that late marriages and lifestyle factors, such as smoking, stress, and poor dietary choices, are major contributors to this alarming rise.



Late marriages tied to increased risk

One of the primary reasons behind the surge in breast cancer cases is delayed marriages. As more women prior-

itize their careers and choose to marry after 30, they unknowingly increase their risk of developing breast cancer. Medical professionals suggest that marrying before 30 significantly reduces this risk, emphasizing the need for a balance between personal and professional life.

Government Cancer Hospital registers around 600 new breast cancer patients annually, while over 100 cases are reported at Ashtang Ayurvedic College. When considering the figures from private hospitals, the number of new cases in Indore exceeds 3,000 each year.

Metro going extra mile to get set for public, night trials start



Metro train at the track. PIC BY ANAND SHIVRE

Arsh Rafik Visaal

INDORE

The Madhya Pradesh Metro Rail Corporation has started a trial run of the metro rail every night for 4 to 5 hours to ensure that the train runs without any glitches, once the commercial run starts.

Metro officials said that recently the department has started a new practice that every night the metro train is being run over the super priority corridor from Gandhi Nagar to Super Corridor 3.

In this trial run the signalling system of the metro is being checked and glitches and errors corrected.

Officials said that during the trial run the train is operated both by the operator and in the automatic mode.

The speed of the train and its braking capacity is being checked by installing various signals at every station and even midway and the train is signalled to increase and decrease speed, halt etc.

The officials said that even though the train runs on automatic mode but initially it will be operated through an operator so that no mishaps occur.

Work progress of metro so far

The work of Indore Metro till Khajrana Square is in progress and the elevated corridor from Gandhi Nagar till Radisson Square is almost complete and girder launching will be done over the corridor till Khajrana Square. The work of

"We are operating the train during night hours so that its functioning can be checked properly. The commercial run of the train over priority corridor is expected soon"

Shobhit Tandon
Director (System)
Madhya Pradesh Metro Rail Corporation Limited

manded about 6 acres of land from the administration.

New stock of metro rakes arrives

Indore Metro's Yellow Line added the s 9th Rolling Stock (3-car train set) at Gandhi Nagar Depot. S Krishna Chaitanya, MD, MPMRCL congratulated the entire team.

The 9th set of rolling stock for Indore Metro's Yellow Line has arrived and has been successfully unloaded at the Gandhi Nagar Depot, pushing the city's rapid transit project closer to its goal.

In August, Indore Metro saw the safe arrival of a new 3-car train set, increasing the total count to six and in September two more sets also arrived. This is part of the continuous effort to expand the Yellow Line, which will provide efficient, reliable transportation for Indore's residents.

27 Metro coaches have reached the Indore depot so far. A total of 75 are to come for the Indore project, while 81 will be given for Bhopal Metro. MPMRCL has handed over the contract to Alstom India for Rs 3248 crore. These international-level state-of-the-art coaches are being manufactured at the company's plant near Baroda. Along with the communication-based train control signalling system, the company will also maintain these coaches for 15 years. The company's coaches are also running in London, Singapore and Stockholm.

Campaign to make farmer ID starts

Our Staff Reporter

INDORE

The making of the Farmer ID has started in the district as an important initiative for farmers. The Farmer Registry Implementation Campaign is to be completed in the district by 30th November, so that from the month of December, farmers can get the benefit of PM Kisan Samman Yojana only through Farmer ID.

On this occasion a large number of members including CA Manoj Phadnis, CA Vikram Gupte, CA Umesh Goyal, CA Avinash Agarwal, CA Tejendra Singh were present in the seminar. CA Abhay Sharma conducted the seminar. CA Rajat Dhanuka delivered the vote of thanks.

held by a farmer in a village will be available online.

Farmer registry will be prepared using these buckets in the state and if necessary, the account and land owner can be selected by selecting the district, tehsil and village. Using this app and portal, e-KYC proceedings will be completed by linking all accounts of the farmer and his consent will be obtained electronically.

Farmer ID of Pradhan Mantri Kisan Samman Nidhi beneficiaries will be generated on priority basis. Khasra, mobile number, Aadhaar number, e-KYC details of each account holder will be recorded in the Farmer Registry. In case of change in land records, the information in the Farmer Registry will be automatically updated. In the digital crop survey, information about the crop recorded in each Khasra will be available in a consolidated form. Farmer registry can be made by paying the prescribed fee by the landholder through Common Service Centre. The work of creating farmer registry will be done as a campaign by the local youth identified for digital crop survey.

48 pension cases resolved in special camp

Our Staff Reporter

INDORE

A total of 48 long-pending pension cases were resolved in a three days pension camp

Under the direction of Commissioner, Indore Division Deepak Singh and guidance of Director, Pension Provident Fund and Insurance Bhopal, the pension settlement camp was organised in the Divisional Pension Office from October 7 to 9.

Divisional Pension Officer, TS Baghel issued pension payment orders, resolving 48 cases pending from various departments of the district. With the promptness of the pension office, the cases received from the departments, mainly of Commercial Tax, Police, Education, Health, Public Works Department, Law and Legislative, Agriculture Department, Public Health Engineering, Tribal Affairs Department were resolved. On the instructions of Commissioner Indore, 100% settlement was done in the pension office for the first time.

world breast cancer day

City sees over 3K new cases annually, experts blame lifestyle

Smoking, junk food, and stress: Lifestyle contributors

Another growing concern is the increase in smoking among women, particularly professionals. Experts warn that smoking is a key factor in rising breast cancer cases, with many women unaware of its dangerous consequences. Additionally, the growing trend of consuming high-fat, low-fiber junk food is exacerbating the issue. Stress, a common aspect of modern lifestyles, also contributes to breast cancer risk. Health professionals advise women to adopt healthier lifestyles, reduce stress, and avoid smoking to lower their risk.

Early detection is key to the treatment. Women should seek medical attention at the first sign of symptoms. Early diagnosis can be life-saving."

- Dr Ramesh Arya
Superintendent, Govt Cancer Hospital

Recognising the Symptoms

Experts urge women to stay alert to the symptoms of breast cancer, which may include:

- Changes in breast size or shape
- Swelling near the nipple
- Lumps in the breast or arm pit
- Nipple retraction
- Swelling of the breast skin
- Discharge from the nipple, including blood or lymph
- Pain when touching the breast
- Lumps under the arm

AHILYABAI REMEMBERED Shastra pujan done on Vijayadashmi

State govt to launch skill devpt centres for youth: CM

Our Staff Reporter

INDORE

Chief Minister Mohan Yadav announced that the State government would open skill development centres named after Lokmata Devi Ahilyabai will be launched to connect the youth with employment opportunities. He was speaking at a Shastra Pujan programme on Vijayadashmi and to commemorate the 300th birth anniversary of Ahilya Bai Holkar on Saturday at DRP Line.

The chief minister worshipped both ancient and modern weapons including swords, spears and an AK-47 placed around a large picture of Mahakali on a stage in the city's police lines, accompanied by Vedic chants. Director General of Police (DGP) Sudhir Kumar Saxena was also present.

The event saw widespread participation of people in the very first initiative of Shastra Pujan by Indore police.

He remembered Devi Ahilyabai for good governance, diplomacy and construction of more than 150 Hindu pilgrim-



A police battalion in Indore to be named after Ahilyabai

sites across the country.

Speaking on the occasion,

Yadav, who also heads the home department, said, "Devi Ahilyabai ruled with a shastra (weapon) in one hand and a shastra (scripture) in the other. We have decided to name a police battalion in Indore after Devi Ahilyabai."

Yadav also welcomed the renaming of Ahmednagar district in neighbouring Maharashtra as Ahilyanagar. Ahilyabai was born in Choudni village in the district.

Yadav also participated in the worship of horses and ve-

hicles, rode a ceremonial horse and performed a ritual for the Vajra vehicle.

The ceremony was attended by Minister for Urban Development and Housing Kailash Vijayvargiya, Minister of Water Resources Tulsi Ram Silawat, Member of Parliament Shankar Lalwani, Mayor Pushyamitra Bhargava, Director General of Police Sudhir Saxena, Commissioner of Police Rakesh Gupta, Collector Ashish Singh and various legislators and public representatives.

Disproportionate action by police: Digvijaya on FIR against his nephew

Our Staff Reporter

INDORE

Congress leader Digvijaya Singh claimed on Saturday that his nephew, Aditya Singh, was booked by the Madhya Pradesh police on a petty issue. An FIR was registered against Aditya Singh, son of Digvijaya's younger brother

Laxman Singh, along with his driver, for allegedly obstructing a state government campaign in Guna district on Friday, police said. A video showing Aditya Singh holding a cigarette while arguing with government staffers, including a policewoman, went viral on social media. Aditya Singh was a former president of Ragho-

garh municipality.

"I enquired, it was a petty incident. He (Aditya) saw a street play on the road when he was going somewhere. He was not aware of the play. He had a minor altercation with the police," Digvijaya told reporters.

"Police will do their job. I have nothing to say on the

matter," the Rajya Sabha member added.

Digvijaya alleged internal disputes in the BJP are playing out in the open as some leaders who missed out on the Cabinet berth are unhappy and protesting. He said the recent MP drug haul bust in Bhopal is a big blot on the MP government.

Hoping against hope for a miracle

OJASVI GUPTA DISAPPEARANCE

INDORE



Ojasvi's father Nutesh Gupta holds her photo along with other family members (File Photo)

Aman Sharma

INDORE

It's been about a month since the 21-year-old Ojasvi Gupta disappeared from NIT Trichy. While hopeful about her return, the family is struggling on multiple fronts as her father is bedridden and her brother

has left his job in search of his sister. Once filled with laughter, their home now echoes with silence and grief with each passing day deepening the despair, as they wait for a miracle.

Her father Nutesh said that the only thing he wants is for his daughter to return home safely. "If she did not want to study, don't study, just return home. I don't blame anyone for her disappearance, I want my daughter back," said Nutesh.

Life on hold

Ojasvi's elder brother, Palash, has put his life on hold to help the search for his younger sister. Working in an IT company, he initially took a leave of absence to help the police with the investigation. But as days passed without any breakthroughs, he did not return to his job. Ojasvi's safety is now his only priority.

Palash has taken it upon himself to conduct his own investigation, scrutinising Ojasvi's friends and social media accounts, desperate for any clue that could lead to her. Despite his tireless efforts, a month has passed and there is still no word.

Financial hardship

Her father Nutesh said that the growing costs of maintaining the search for Ojasvi in Trichy have pushed the family into financial hardship. His son who is the only breadwinner in the family of six has left his job to search for his sister. The family is visiting Trichy at its expense but is not getting any leads to find their daughter.

Speeding car mows down woman

Our Staff Reporter

INDORE

A speeding car crashed into a pole after crushing a 57-year-old woman to death under the Bhanwar-kuan police station limits on Saturday morning. The incident happened around 6 am on Khandwa Road when she was going to do household work.



The deceased was identified as Nisha, wife of Shirat Pal, a resident of Sant Nagar. Her family members said that

Nisha was working as a cook. She was going to work when a speeding car ran over her and crashed into an electric pole. The eyewitness told family members that some students were sitting in the car and they were speeding. The police have launched a probe.

XUV hits multiple vehicles, woman critically injured

Indore: A speeding and recklessly driven XUV struck multiple vehicles on one of the city's busiest Jail Road, resulting in severe injuries to a young woman late on Saturday night. The incident occurred around 10 pm when the car driver was going towards MG Road from Jail Road.

The agitated locals vandalised the XUV and rushed the woman to the hospital where her condition is said to be critical. Meanwhile, the driver managed to flee the spot.

According to the information, the injured woman has been identified as Vedira, daughter of Madanlal Sawar. The XUV struck multiple vehicles before coming to stop, resulting in severe injuries to Vedira.

It is said that the driver was driving the vehicle under the influence of an intoxicant, though the police have not yet confirmed this. However, they have gathered information about the errant driver and have begun a search for him.

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Teenager stabbed by five over old enmity

Our Staff Reporter

INDORE

A 17-year-old boy was stabbed by five teenagers over an old enmity between them under Rajendra Nagar police station limits late on Friday. Police registered a case against the accused and detained three of them on the complaint of the victim.

Additional DCP Alo

Kumar Sharma said that Kanha Chauhan, a resident of Amar Palace Colony, lodged a complaint stating that he was with his family, when someone called him around 11 pm asking him to come to a nearby Garba Pandal. When he was going there, a teenager followed him who was joined by four more who thrashed Kanha over an old enmity. Later, two of them took out a knife and stabbed him on abdominal and ribs, resulting in severe injuries. He was admitted to MY hospital where an operation was performed on his injuries and his condition is currently said to be stable. The police registered a case against the accused under sections of attempted murder and detained three of them.

Flight to Surat to be stopped from Oct 27

Our Staff Reporter

INDORE

Air connectivity from the city to the diamond city of the country Surat is going to be terminated from October 27. Following the flight for Varanasi, Indigo Airline has decided to stop the Surat flight from October 27 and has stopped its booking.

The company has stopped the booking of this flight from October 27 and has removed it from the system. The flight departs from the city at

pm and lands at Surat at 2.15 pm and from there departs at 5.45 pm and reaches back to the city at 7.05 pm.

This flight was very convenient for the textile and diamond traders associated with the city, but now after the closure of this flight, passengers will have to travel to Surat via Ahmedabad, Mumbai or Delhi. This will also cost them more money and time. No clear reason has been given by the airline for stopping the operation of the flight.

Youth kills self over suspected failed love affair

Our Staff Reporter

INDORE

A 20-year-old youth committed suicide by hanging himself at his place in Hira Nagar area on Friday night. Preliminary investigation suggested that he allegedly took the drastic step over suspected failed love affair. He wrote in his diary while mentioning a girl that he could not live without her.

According to the police, the deceased was identified as Raja Malviya, a resident of Ishwar Colony. A diary was re-

covered from his place in which Raja mentioned about a girl and wrote that he could not live without her. He took the drastic step when he was alone at home. Family members said that he worked as a delivery boy.

Ravana effigies go up in flames across the city



Tilak Nagar and Chimanbagh Photo by: ANAND SHIVRE and PINTU NAMDEV

Our Staff Reporter

Indore

The city celebrated the Dussehra festival with great enthusiasm, marked by the burning of Ravana effigies across various locations. From small effigies to towering ones, the symbolic representation of the victory of good over evil was witnessed throughout the city.

Thousands of people gathered at the Dussehra Maidan, upholding the age-old tradition and marking the festival with joy and reverence. The Ravana effigies were burnt after Hanuman burnt Lanka. Ram-Lakshman shot Ravan with arrows.

A Ravana effigy 11 feet in height was set on fire at the Dussehra Maidan following a tradition of more than 50 years. According to tradition, a procession was taken out here, after which Lord Hanuman burnt Lanka and Ram-Lakshman burnt Ravana by shooting arrows. Tall effigies were

burnt at Vijay Nagar, Chimanbagh, Ushaganj and Tilak Nagar witnessed by a large number of people.

A 10-foot Ravan was set on fire at Vijay Nagar Square, a 10-foot effigy at Chiman Bagh Square, and a unique 10-foot

Ravana riding a horse was set on fire at Chawani.

People across the city came together to celebrate the festival with joy and reverence, ensuring that the traditions were upheld with grandeur at every location.

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**RAVANDAHAN**

Effigies of demon king Ravan were consigned to flames at Dussehra Maidan (T) and Kartik Mela Ground (B) in Ujjain on Saturday night FP Photos

**City Digest****CHIMANGANJ****2 held for using counterfeit currency**

Chimanganj Mandi police detained two individuals for attempting to circulate fake currency and have begun questioning them. According to police, Pintu Malviya, a resident of Nagjhiri and his brother-in-law Bherulal Solanki, a resident of Dewas, were caught with fake currency. Pintu Malviya attempted to purchase items at a shop in the Chimanganj area using a fake Rs 100 note. The police are continuing their investigation with both individuals.

BASI DUSSEHRA**101-ft tall effigy of Ravan to be burnt**

Shri Siddhavat Youth Forum will hold the traditional 'Basi Dussehra' on October 13, 8 pm at Siddhavat Ground in Bhairavgarh. The event will feature a spectacular fireworks display followed by the burning of a 101-ft tall effigy of Ravan. After the Ravan Dahan, a Dussehra Milan programme will be organised, where people from all communities will exchange greetings and best wishes. Forum president Raghvendra Chaturvedi stated that Ravan's effigy is being constructed by renowned Ravan maker Sunny Lot and his team. Firework artistes from Rau and Mhow have been invited to perform a dazzling fireworks display.

UJJAIN**Demand to establish Transport Nagar**

A delegation from the Ujjain Transport Association, under the banner of Goods Transportation Association, led by Sanjay Agrawal, met CM Mohan Yadav and raised the demand for establishing a Transport Nagar in Ujjain. While submitting the memorandum, they mentioned that the plan to build a Transport Nagar for transportation in Ujjain city has been under consideration for several years, yet the issue remains unresolved. Vehicle owners and transporters in Ujjain face numerous challenges. With the growing population in the region, transportation within the city causes significant traffic disruptions.

ROTARY CLUB**'Naiki ki Deewar' to be set up**

Before Diwali, families often gather items that are not in use, such as clothes, books, electronics, furniture and many more, which could be useful for someone in need. To facilitate this, the Rotary Club is setting up 'Naiki ki Deewar' at three locations in Ujjain from October 14 to 22. According to president Ishwar Chandra Dubey, the 'Naiki ki Deewar' will be set up at Ram Medical Store behind Khade Hanuman Temple in Sarafa, MP Books Stationery in Freeganj and Langer Petrol Pump on Dewas Road. The inauguration of the wall will take place on Monday at 11 am at MP Books Stationery in Freeganj.

JEEVANKHEDI**DISCOM MD visits Ujjain**

Rajni Singh, managing director, MP Western Region Power Distribution Company visited Ujjain district. She inspected the new 33/11 KV grid constructed in Jeevankhedi under the RDSS scheme and gathered information about the various categories of consumers who would benefit from it. She also reviewed the work related to power lines, power transformers, capacitor banks and distribution transformers in Pantiplai and Narwar.

COVID-19 EFFECT | City's medical architect paves way for much-awaited medical college

Credit goes to Dr RD Pathak for Medicity

Nirukt Bhargava

UJJAIN

After a gap of about 130 years, the much-awaited medical college is going to open in Ujjain at the government level in the middle of the city and formal work has also started for its construction. At a time when hospitals like AIIMS are functioning in the capital city, Bhopal and neighbouring Indore has already become a medical hub, a divisional headquarters like Ujjain is also going to get this facility.

Though the public representatives want to take credit for the venture, the reality is that the Medicity project is going to take shape in view of the upcoming Simhastha festival. In its background, Ujjain's first doctor and the founder of hospitals, Dr Ram Dayal Pathak, is also a key figure because when cholera spread in Ujjain during the Simhastha festival of 1872 and the event had to be shifted to Mahidpur, the then British government had sent him from Indore to control that epidemic. Later, during his tenure, a charitable hospital was built in Ujjain which was later named Civil Hospital or District Hospital.

Dr Pathak was born in Junsi village, district Jalaur in Uttar Pradesh in 1838. His father Pt Badal Prasad Pathak was the superintendent of the postal department of Malwa division under British rule at that time. After retirement, he did not accept the pension and requested the British government to do whatever it could for the progress of his only son Ram Dayal. Therefore, the British government arranged for Ram Dayal's education in Agra Medical School as per his wish. In those days, medical education was imparted through Urdu at Agra Medical



Existing District Hospital which was founded by Dr RD Pathak (INSET)

**FP
SPECIAL**

A witness of tragedies now demolished for modern birth

In last 100 years, District Hospital has seen many accidents and tragedies. On July 15, 1996, during the Bhasmarati at the Mahakaleshwar temple on Somvati Amavasya, officially 36 visitors were killed in a stampede and at that time the hospital courtyard was filled with bodies. There was mourning all around and bodies were kept outside Kavelu roofed post-mortem room. Even during Simhastha 2016, when the squall struck, the sequence of bodies coming to the hospital was not ending. In the two to three years of global devastation due to the COVID-19 epidemic, it seemed as if the medical system had come to a standstill. The work of demolishing the old building of the District Hospital for the Medical College (Medicity) has also started. It started from the old Sakhyaraje Maternity Home and Cancer Unit. The contract for demolishing the buildings has been given for Rs 1.81 crore. CMHO Dr Ashok Kumar Patel said that all types of patients are being treated in the Government Charak Hospital.



Maternity Home and Cancer unit sites where four 13-storey buildings to be built

School. After passing from there, he was admitted to Grant Medical College, Bombay to pursue higher education.

His classmates in Mumbai were the famous doctors Ganpat Singh (Indore) and Sadas-

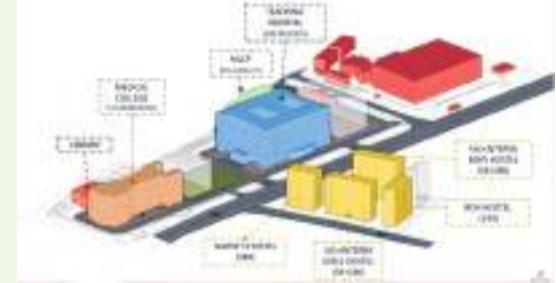
hiv Vaman Kane. After completing their surgical education there, Dr Pathak and Dr Singh returned to Indore together and at that time both of them worked for some time in the Charitable Hospital, Indore. The dispensaries and hospitals of Central India were run under the supervision of Indore resident surgeon Colonel Dr T Beaumont. Dr Pathak worked as a native doctor for eight years in the dispensaries and hospitals of Indore, Ratlam etc. Later, the then-resident surgeon Dr DF Keegan gave an order to Dr Pathak asking that he should be relieved from Indore Charitable Hospital and sent to Ujjain because at that time terrible cholera was spreading in Ujjain and there was no hospital in Ujjain. In such a situation, he came to Ujjain in 1872 and established cholera sheds. He had complete success in preventing cholera. The people of Ujjain and Maharaja Jayajirao Scindia of the then Gwalior State urged the resident surgeon, Indore to keep Dr Pathak in Ujjain. Then he started practicing medicine while staying in Ujjain.

Dr Pathak's grandson Harshvardhan Pathak said that after some time, Maharaja Jayajirao Scindia fell ill in Gwalior and was treated by his grandfather. Maharaja Scindia recovered and was very kind, he gave Rs 6,000 to Indore resident surgeon Dr Beaumont for building a government hospital in Dhaba Mohalla, Ujjain and accordingly a government hospital building was built. Dr Pathak worked in this government hospital for 20 years.

Dr Pathak built the Charitable Hospital, Ujjain in 1894, which is today famous as District Hospital Ujjain. Due to the increase in the number of patients, surgical and medical wards and operation theatres were built. The kings and Maharajas of the nearby areas like Maharaja Madhavrao Scindia of Gwalior and Maharajas of Ratlam, Jaora, Khilchipur, Rajgarh-Biaora States and Amlata Maharaja Raghunath Singh and the entire population of

Medicity to come up before Simhastha

Medicity is to be built in two phases and a budget of about Rs 700 crore has been allocated for it. Its construction is to be completed before Simhastha Mahaparva 2028. The responsibility of implementing the project has been handed over to MP Building Development Corporation. According



Map of the Medicity Project FP PHOTOS

to the corporation officials, all the buildings located in the existing District Hospital and the Sakhyaraje Maternity Home and Cancer Unit located across the road are being completely demolished. New constructions will be done on the 67,177.86 square metre government land vacated in this way. A medical col-

lege and super specialty hospital will be carried out in phase two. In the front portion, which has been named the second site, 3.1 acres of land will be used for building interns', boys' and girls' hostels, residential doctors' and nurses' hostels. All these buildings will have 13 floors apart from the ground floor.

He was a pensioner for 29 years. He died on 10 March 1934 at the age of 96.

According to Pankaj Pathak, the grand grandson of Dr Pathak, even while serving the British government in medical service, he did not give up his Indian attire. He always wore a turban, angarkha applied tilak on his forehead and was always in the company of the British rulers. One year after his retirement, in 1906, the District Hospital, Ujjain was given to Gwalior State.

CM to lay foundation stone for works worth Rs 658 crore today

FP News Service

UJJAIN

Chief Minister Mohan Yadav will visit Ujjain on October 13. As per the scheduled programme, he will arrive at the helipad in Ninora village at 10 am. He will participate in the inauguration programme of Pratibha Syntex Industries on Indore Road. At 11.20 am, he will arrive at Kartik Mela Ground to attend the Dussehra Milan festival and the foundation stone laying ceremony for projects worth Rs 658 crore. At 12.35 pm, he will reach Mungi Tiraha and participate in a local programme there. He will also participate in the programme organized at Shri Kshetra Valmikidham on Tilakeshwar Road, Kshipra bank at 8 pm.

During the programme at

Kartik Mela Ground, the CM will lay the foundation stone for development worth over Rs 658 crore under the public works department in Ujjain. The major projects include the construction of a four-lane road from Shankaracharya Square to Chandukhedi, including two 2-lane ROBs, and a two-lane bridge over Kshipra, costing Rs 225.96 crore; the construction of the Ujjain-Badrang Bypass two-lane Road (the remaining part of NH 148) for Rs 67.69 crore; the construction of the Badavada Kalsi Nagda to Dotru Road for Rs 22.61 crore; the Nagda-Gidhgarh-Vidkheda-Mokdi Road for Rs 31.88 crore; the Tapobhumti to Hamukhedi Road for Rs 35.65 crore and the Ralamandal Kankaria Chirakhani Lekoda Jhirolia Baroda Hamir Khedi Umaria Road for Rs 32.6 crore.

Vijayadashami celebrated with fervour



FP News Service

UJJAIN

The festival of Vijayadashami was celebrated with the worship of weapons at the District Police Lines located in Nagjhiri on Dewas Road. Public representatives and senior administrative officials, donning traditional attire of dhoti and kurta, performed worship of Goddess Kali, the embodiment of power, along with a havan. The weapons were worshipped as symbols of strength, courage and victory. After the worship, an aarti was sung in honour of Goddess

Ambey, the primal source of power.

MP Anil Firojia, MLAs Anil Jain Kaluheda, Satish Malviya, Tejbahadur Singh Chauhan, Mayor Mukesh Tatwali, UMC speaker Kalavati Yadav, IG Santosh Kumar Singh, divisional commissioner Sanjay Gupta, DIG Navneet Basin, collector Neeraj Kumar Singh, SP Pradeep Sharma, Jila Panchayat CEO Jayati Singh and others along with officers and staff of the Police Lines were present. After the worship, everyone extended warm wishes to the citizens for the Vijayadashami festival.



SEEMOLANGHAN SAWARI

Traditional procession of Lord Mahakal was taken out from Mahakaleshwar Temple up to Dussehra Maidan and vice-versa to mark the occasion of Vijayadashmi in Ujjain on Saturday evening. Thousands of people were seen showering floral petals on the silver palanquin of Mahakaleshwar's replica. Hundreds of welcome daisies were erected on either side of procession route. Police horses, bands, musical part

mhow

Rural police stations hold arms worship ceremonies

FP News Service

MHOW

On Vijayadashami, traditional worship and puja were performed at all police stations in the tehsil, following ancient customs and rituals. Station in-charge and police personnel conducted the ceremonies within the station premises.

At Mhow police station, ASP Rupesh Dwivedi, station in-charge Sanjay Dwivedi, and other officers and staff participated in the traditional worship of their arms.



Ravan effigies burnt at multiple locations

Mhow: Several Ravan Dahan programmes were organised in Mhow and Pithampur, symbolising the triumph of good over evil. Two Ram Leela events were held, followed by the burning of Ravan effigies. Thousands attended as Lord Rama fired an arrow to burn the 61-foot tall Ravan effigy at Dussehra Maidan and a 31-foot tall effigy at Azad Maidan.

PANCHANG 13.10.2024 (DAKSHINAYAN)

Saka 1946 Samvat 2081

Month : Ashwin Shukla 10 Sunday 09 A.M.

Nakshatra : Dhanistha 2.52 A.M. then Satabisaj

Yoga : Shub 9.25 P.M. then Ganesh

Karan : Vanji 8.00 P.M. then Bav

Moon : Makar 3.44 P.M. then Kumbh

Mercury 7 5

Ven 8 4

Sun, Ketu 9

Mars 3

Rahu, Nep 12 2

Jupiter, Her 1

Pluto, Moon 11 Sat

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MHOW

On World Habitat Day, a cleanliness drive was organ-

ised at the ancient Gambhir river in tehsil, with the participation of residents of Gwalipalasia village.

The 9 MP Battalion NCC

cadets of Bhervilal Patidar Government Postgraduate College, Indore, led by commanding officer Colonel Mohan Tiwari and principal Dr Praveen Ojha, conducted the drive. Under the guidance of NCC officer Major Dr Sanjay Sohni, the college's NCC

cadets undertook a massive

cleanliness campaign along the riverbank, removing silt

with the help of residents.



And Quiet Flows the Upper Lake in eyes of Sholokhov



The Don! The Don! The gentle Don! Our father, giver of our food! Hurrah! — And Quiet Flows the Don by Mikhail Sholokhov

The Upper Lake or Bhojtal lazily rolls through the west central part of Bhopal, the heart of the city. There are human settlements on the east and on the north. The verdant farmlands lie on the west.

If you have ever sifted through the pages of And Quiet Flows the Don by Russian Nobel Laureate Mikhail Sholokhov (1905-1984), you are bound to feel sad for not having a Sholokhov to pen a few words to capture the beauty of this lake.

The picture of the river Don, painted by Sholokhov in the novel displays to many extents, though loosely, the elegance of the Upper Lake surrounded by craggy chalky hills.

A recently built bridge across the lake recently adds classiness to the lake. An island, called Takia Tapu, in the middle of the lake, is covered with bottle-green grass and trees.

The grave of a well-known Sufi saint Hazrat Shah Ali Shah Rahmatulla Alaiyah, lies on the island. It is an embodiment of peace, harmony, and serenity.

If you stand on the bank of the lake, and if you are acquainted with And Quiet Flows the Don you may hear the ripples of the Don in the steely-grey water of the Upper Lake. Beyond the cement-iron fence of the lake, is the VIP road, like the back of a tortoise. As the lake is surrounded by moss-clad hillocks, it is soothing to your aching eyes. When the mosses turn grey in winters, the hillocks become chalky. In the rainy season, the Bhopal's Don becomes dreamier, greener, and pensive. Then it drinks rainwater to quench the thirst of the residents of Bhopal.

When clouds hover over the city, you would crave for snatching a handful of clouds from the firmament, standing on the top of the hills. Sholokhov brushed Don with the tinge of his imagination. You may also do so. But you need Sholokhov's imagination for it.

There is, however, a difference. The Don, the fifth longest river in Russia, flows from Central Russia to the Sea of Azov in Southern Russia. In terms of length, the Upper Lake is

smaller than the Don. But in beauty, it is no less than the Don. At night, when the stars and the moon pierce through the half-lit horizon and pours down dim light on its surface, its waves give off murmurs of a lovelorn queen.

At dawn, a thin mist rolls high over it. The sun rubs its eyes, looking down, but does not rise. Nor does it break the tranquility of his beloved lake.

As the sleepy sun emerges from the morning bed, the banks of the Upper Lake are echoed with the trills of winged pipers — perhaps they sing in praise of the king who was behind constructing this vast water body which protects the environment of the area and the life of people.

The past of the Upper Lake delineates the story of the tenth century king Raja Bhoj of the Parmar dynasty (1005-1055). His story is the story of progress and development of central India. It was the king who constructed the Upper Lake to snuff out the thirst of his people.

Lies a few kilometers away from it, the Lower Lake. These two sisters have created Bhoj wetland. They protect the environment, and are home to many water birds and animals.

The Upper Lake is blessed with hundreds of species of flora and fauna. Winged pipers begin to descend on the banks of the lake from the beginning of autumn and make it their home till the end of the spring.

In winters, a blanket of fog covers the lake and crawls towards the cliffs like a huge, grey serpent, and mingles into the horizon with the approaching afternoon which turns into ashen twilight. Then chilly evening falls.

So Quiet Flows the Upper Lake, unfolding its mysteries day and night, as the Don does in Russia. Yet, Bhopal is yet to have a Sholokhov to tell the Upper Lake's numerous stories to the world:

"All over the village slipped the days, passing into the nights; the weeks flowed by, the months crept on, the wind bowed, and glassified with an autumnal, translucent, greenish-azure, the Don flowed tranquilly down to the sea — And Quiet Flows the Don, Mikhail Sholokhov

— ARUP CHAKRABORTY

Vijayadashami celebrated with enthusiasm

FP News Service

MORENA

Vijayadashami was celebrated throughout the district on Saturday with enthusiasm.

The policemen worshipped arms and vehicles, too. Local MP Shivmangal Singh Tomar also took part in the event.

The residents also worshipped their machinery and arms. A large number of people bought decorative pieces from the shops set up on roads. Those who sell flowers also made some quick bucks as flowers were offered

KEEPING DATE WITH TRADITION | Vijayadashami celebrated with gusto

Shastra puja at police lines on Dussehra

Our Staff Reporter

BHOPAL

The shastra puja was performed at Nehru Nagar Police Lines on Vijayadashami on Saturday morning. The event was marked by chanting of mantras and sacred rites.

The ceremony was attended by deputy chief minister Jagdish Devda, police commissioner Harinaranchari Mishra and other senior police officials.

The ceremony included the worship of Goddess kali, fol-



Deputy CM Jagdish Devda performs shastra puja at police line, Nehru Nagar, on Saturday

lowed by havan and ended with the traditional worship of arms. On this occasion, the attendees extended Vijayadashami greetings and urged the public to celebrate the festival peacefully.

The tradition of arms worship is a significant part of Vijayadashami celebrations in the police department, with all district headquarters observing the ritual that includes worship of arms, vehicles, and other machinery, symbolising respect for the tools of duty.



CM performs shastra puja

Chief Minister Mohan Yadav at his residence on Dussehra on Saturday. He worshipped the arms in symbolic manner amid chanting of hymns.

23%-25% breast cancer cases reach metastatic stage

60%-70% survive up to 5 years if diagnosed timely

Our Staff Reporter

BHOPAL

Around 23 to 25 per cent of breast cancer cases reach metastatic stage (advance) just because of delay in diagnosis and negligence for treatment after diagnosis. This is the spread rate of metastatic stage in Bhopal and other major cities in the state because of delay in diagnosis, according to the Cancer Registry Gandhi Medical College (GMC).

Metastatic Breast Cancer Awareness Day is observed on October 13 every year. This day is dedicated to raising awareness for those fighting metastatic breast cancers, also known as advanced breast cancer, which has spread to other organs.

Metastatic breast cancer is considered incurable, though many treatments exist that can help manage the disease, improve quality of life and extend survival.

However, ongoing research is crucial to developing better therapies and hopefully, a cure. Dr Atul Shrivastava, Cancer Registry (Co-investigator) Gandhi Medical College

METASTATIC BREAST CANCER AWARENESS DAY TODAY

Objectives of the Day

- Raise awareness: Educate the public about metastatic breast cancer, its symptoms, treatment options and the importance of research.
- Promote research: Encourage scientists to investigate new treatments and potential cures.
- Support patients: Provide emotional support and resources to those living with metastatic breast cancer.

(GMC), Bhopal, said, "There is a need to raise awareness for timely diagnosis and once it is detected, patients should continue treatment. But the unfortunate part is that patients keep on changing doctors and they waste time. Till then, cancer spreads. As far as comorbidity like diabetes and hypertension can be managed. Co-morbidity like HIV, Tuberculosis (TB) are challenging for doctors as well as patients."

Woman declared dead, deprived of pension, rations

Now, the elderly woman seeks death certificate from the civic body

FP News Service

BUXWAHA

A 67-year-old woman has given an application to Nagar Parishad for her death certificate.

In the application, the woman said the widow pension and rations that she was getting from the government had been stopped.

She wrote to the adminis-

tration to restore her rations, widow pension, and issue a death certificate, as she was declared dead.

The woman Kusum Soni said she was getting Rs 600 a month under Indira Gandhi Rashtriya Widow Pension Scheme and rations under Deen Dayal Upadhyay Yojna, but she did not get either pension or rations for six months.

When the details about her were checked on the computer, it came to light that the woman had been declared dead by the civic body, so her pension and rations were stopped.

Telsildar of Buxawaha, Bharat Pandey, said he had come to know of the case, and the problems the elderly woman was facing would be solved.

Farmers' union demands action against police officials



FP News Service

ITARSI (NARMADAPURAM)

A delegation from the National Farmers Workers Federation (Rashtriya Kisan Mazdoor Majlis), led by district president Shivraj Rajoriya, submitted a memorandum to the Tehsildar and Station Inspector of Itarsi on Saturday. The federation expressed strong opposition to the use of force by the police against farmers during the fertiliser distribution at the District Marketing Office (DMO) warehouse on October 10.

The delegation called for the

immediate removal of the police officers involved and demanded that FIRs be filed against them.

A five-day deadline has been set by the federation for the administration to meet their demands. If no action is taken within this period, the federation warned of a potential large-scale protest in Itarsi, holding the government and administration responsible for any unrest. During the meeting, the Sub-Divisional Magistrate (SDM) assured the delegation via phone that a meeting with the federation's officials would be arranged on Monday to discuss the issue further.

'Weapons, scriptures necessary to protect existence'

Our Staff Reporter

BHOPAL

Chief minister Mohan Yadav, while referring to the deities, said that one should have shashtra (weapon) and shastra (scriptures) in their hands to safeguard existence.

He was speaking at Dussehra festival organised at Bittan Market, Kolar and Chhola in Bhopal on Saturday late evening. While participating in Dussehra Utsav in Bittan Market, he remembered the 500-year long struggle of Hindu community for the construction of Ram temple. Shedding the light on the personality of Lord Ram, he said Lord Ram could have fought demon king



Effigies of Ravan, Kumbhakarn and Meghnad torched at Bittan Market on Dussehra in Bhopal on Saturday

by summoning the army from Ayodhya. Instead, he decided to take help of everyone in the

battle and thus gave the message of walking ahead with the help of everyone.

Biggest Ravan effigy burnt in Kolar

The biggest Ravan effigy, 105-foot to be precise, in state capital was in Kolar locality, which was torched to mark Dussehra. Speaking on the occasion, CM Mohan Yadav said Rahul Gandhi always mocked Hindu deity. It is due to this reason that his leadership failed in Haryana Assembly election, he said. Yadav accused Congress of creating legal hurdles in Ram temple construction.

Temp fluctuation continues in MP

Rain to continue in many districts

Our Staff Reporter

BHOPAL

Temperature fluctuation continued in the state on Saturday. Day temperature is far below normal, while night temperature is above normal in Bhopal and other districts.

Bhopal recorded 31.1 degrees Celsius day temperature, which was 2.2 degrees Celsius below normal, while

it recorded 22.2 degrees Celsius night temperature, which was 1.8 degrees Celsius above normal.

Indore recorded 29.5 degrees Celsius day temperature, which was 3.6 degrees Celsius below normal, while it recorded 21.0 degrees Celsius, which was 1.8 degrees Celsius above normal.

According to the meteorological department, the well-marked low-pressure area over east central Arabian Sea off Karnataka-Goa coast now lies over east central Arabian Sea. It is expected to move in northwest direction and intensify into

a depression over central Arabian Sea during the next 2 to 3 days.

A cyclonic circulation is over southwest Bay of Bengal off Tamil Nadu coast. Western disturbance as a cyclonic circulation is over Jammu and adjoining Pakistan.

A cyclonic circulation is over East Assam. An upper air cyclonic circulation is expected to develop over central parts of southwest Bay of Bengal. During the last 24 hours, light to moderate rain with a few heavy spells occurred over east Assam-Arunachal Pradesh and

coastal Andhra Pradesh. Light to moderate rain occurred over south Madhya Pradesh.

Light to moderate rain is possible over south Madhya Pradesh.

An orange alert for a few spells of heavy rain has been issued for Betul, Khargone, Badwani and Dhar districts. A yellow alert has been issued for Harda, Burhanpur, Khandwa, Alirajpur, Jhabua, Indore, Ratlam, Ujjain, Dewas, Dindori, Chhindwara, Seoni, Pandhura, Sehore, Naramadapura, Shivpuri, Jabalpur, Narsinghpur, Mandla and Balaghat districts.

district

RSS volunteers take out path sanchalan

FP News Service

GANJ BASODA



The Rashtriya Sayamsevak Sangh (RSS) organised Path Sanchalan (parade) on the occasion of Vijayadashami on Saturday. Hundreds of Sayamsevaks clad in their uniform took part in the parade.

Flower petals were showered on the Sayamsevaks at different parts in the city.

The procession, which began from the premises of the CM Rise School in Rajendra Nagar in the city, passing through different places in the city, reached Savarkar Chowk.

From Savarkar Chowk, they reached Lal Parade ground where it ended.

The Sangh was established

on the Vijayadashami 99 years ago. Every year Sangh organises Path Sanchalan on this occasion.

Arms worshipped

Morena: The RSS worshipped arms at the Ashram of Satpal Maharaj in Morena on the occasion of Vijayadashami on Saturday. Sangh Sanchalak Vijay Bandi was on the stage, and Prant Samasta

head Harishchandra Sharma said that India has been teaching the world — Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam (The world is my country) since time immemorial. The RSS organised Path Sanchalan in Morena. The procession taken out from Town Hall in Jeewajiganj, after passing through different places in the city, returned to the place from where it started.

Sehore collector inspects new hospital buildings ahead of inaugural function

FP News Service

SEHORE

Sehore collector Praveen Singh conducted an inspection of the newly constructed hospital buildings in Sehore and Ichhawaran Saturday, in preparation for their upcoming inauguration ceremonies.

During the inspection, the collector directed the concerned officials to ensure that all necessary arrangements for

constructed 150-bed district hospital in Sehore has been built at a cost of ₹31.04 crore, including a 50-bed Critical Care Unit. Similarly, the community health centre in Ichhawaran has been upgraded to a 50-bed civil hospital at a cost of ₹29.80 crore. Both new hospitals are equipped with state-of-the-art medical facilities, aiming to offer better healthcare services to the public. The opening of these hospitals is expected to significantly improve the availability of medical services in the region, reducing the need for patients to seek treatment at distant hospitals. Additional Collector Vrindavan Singh, Joint Collector Nitin Tale, SDM Jameel Khan, Tanmay Verma, Janpad CEO Shivani Mishra, Chief Medical and Health Officer Sudhir Kumar Dehriya, and Civil Surgeon Praveen Gupta were also present during the inspection.

Two youths drowned in Tawa River while catching fish</h2

Political Punch**Up the creek**

A senior leader of the BJP, holding an important position, is up the creek these days. After the photographs of this leader with a man caught for running an illegal drug factory went viral on social media, he had to give explanations to the head of the state as well as to the party organisation. As the issue is highly sensitive, the party's central leaders have taken exception to the matter. They have sought information about whether the leader's relationship is confined only to clicking photo-



graphs with him or there is something more than meets the eye. The leader who usually maintains a low profile is in a difficult situation these days. He has been recently targeted for recruitments in a department. The leader has also courted controversy over an officer, part of his personal staff. There are reports that Netaji is planning to conduct some rituals to drive away evil forces troubling him.

Bhai Ho to Aisa...

A brother of a minister is enjoying a lot of clout in the department he is heading. His brother is always present in meetings held with the officials of the department. Instead of discussing the problems with the minister, the officers posted in his constituency also discuss all the problems with his brother who has returned from



abroad. He is well-educated. The junior officers have been told to discuss any important issue with the minister's brother before taking any decision. Ergo the minister has handed over most of his responsibilities to his brother. Those who wish to meet the minister are told to see his brother first. They are allowed to interact with the minister only after his brother's permission. The man has become so powerful that those who are close to the minister are angry. They feel the minister may be in trouble because of his brother.

Foul is fair

A politician who always courts controversy wants to enjoy power by all means. This leader's influence has waned in the party after his defeat in the election. He, however, wants to contest the assembly election again. To render his idea into reality, he is even ready to 'buy' the Congress legislator of his constituency. The politician has reportedly sent a message through a close aide of the Congress legislator that he should quit his present political party and join the BJP. The politician's plan is to contest a by-election in place of the Congress legislator and enter the House. He is even ready to part with any amount of money to meet his purpose, but the Congress legislator declined his offer. Now, he is trying to mount pressure on the legislator to resign from the Congress. The politician thinks a conspiracy was hatched to defeat him; and had he won the election, he would have become the Chief Minister of the state.

Angry with leadership

A senior leader of the Congress is angry with some top bosses of the party, for he is not getting any importance in the state organisation. He came to know that Congressmen were speaking against him in the party office. A few people who have recently joined the party's current team are openly speaking against him in the party office itself. But those who are in the driving seat of the party have barely made any efforts to shut the mouths of such Congressmen. The leader was recently told to hold a press conference on an issue at the party office, but he refused. Some party men allege that the leader is trying to weaken the Congress in the state. The leader has complained to the party's state in-charge about it. The party in-charge holds this leader in high esteem, so some steps can be taken to quell the anger of such partymen as are speaking against this senior leader.

Please, no photo shoot!

The ruling dispensation has incurred criticism from different corners after the photographs of a senior member of the cabinet with an illegal drug factory owner went viral on social media. As the party has invited dressing-down from the opposition for the photographs, its leaders have begun to chew over how to deal with such a situation in the future. The leadership has directed all members to keep away from clicking photographs with anyone, particularly with strangers. Or, in case they do so, they should check the credentials of those with whom they are taking photographs. But after the unearthing of a drug factory and the photographs of their owners with public figures going viral on social media, the ruling party is worried. Hence, they have issued instructions to their leaders. There is, however, a little suppleness in the instructions. As a politician is a public figure, he cannot avoid clicking photographs with people, and even with those unknown to them. Now, the question is whether they will be able to avoid getting photographed with a ragtag and boottail.

Rumour mongers fail

The assembly election-2023 was over and a government headed by a new Chief Minister formed. As soon as this happened, there were canards that the new head of the state would give a silent treatment to his predecessor. The rumour mills, however, seemed to have zonked out when both the leaders praised each other's work at a recent function. The way they usually speak to each other shows how deep their friendship is. There are reasons for it: both are down to earth and have achieved top positions through sheer hard work. This is the reason why the tattlers, despite their best efforts, have failed to create any rift between them. Whatever may have happened to the whisper network, people in the corridors of power are discussing the friendship between these two top leaders of the ruling dispensation.

■ Nitendra Sharma ■ Rajan Raikwar

BID TO SATISFY | Those who couldn't get ministerial berth

Stage set for political appointments, two dozen leaders to get place

Govt may declare transfer policy on October 15

Our Staff Reporter
BHOPAL

Chief Minister Mohan Yadav may give Diwali gifts to his party leaders. Yadav has already prepared a list consisting of the names of those who will be given political appointments after discussing the matter with the party organisation.

According to sources, the RSS functionaries have played an important role in political appointments.

The BJP leaders also discussed the issue with the RSS. The list of political appointments is being prepared after discussions at different levels.

Nevertheless, the RSS has played the most important role in selecting candidates for the political appointments.

The name of any politician

was included in the list only after the nod from the RSS.

Yadav, BJP's state unit president VD Sharma and organisational general secretary

Announcement likely before Diwali

Hitanand Sharma discussed the names for political appointments. According to sources, the political appointments will be a combination of old and new faces.

Sources further said Vinod Gotiya, Shailendra Barua, Ashutosh Tiwari, Rahul Kothari, Gajendra Singh Rajukhedi, and Pradeep Tripathi might get political appointments.

The names of a few leaders from the Malwa region may also be included in the list of

political appointments.

The state government cancelled all the appointments in February. Afterwards, the officers of various departments were given the charge of the corporations and the boards.

After opposition by ministers, the charge of the corporations and the boards were handed over to ministers.

The government has already made political appointments for three organisations. Shrikant Patil has been appointed the chairman of Centre for Research and Industrial Staff Performance, (CRISP). Similarly, Mohan Nagar has been appointed as deputy chairman of Jan Abhiyan Parishad.

As by-election will be held in Vijaipur, Sitaram Adiwasi has been made chairman of Sahayri Vikas Pradhikaran.

Our Staff Reporter
BHOPAL

As the BJP's membership

drive is about to end, its leaders have begun to mount pressure on the government to make a transfer policy.

Chief Minister Mohan Yadav

has to take a decision on lifting ban on transfers.

A cabinet meeting will be held on October 15, when the government may take a decision on lifting ban on transfers.

The General Administration Department (GAD) has

already prepared the transfer policy which may be put up before the cabinet after green signal from Yadav.

Nevertheless, the government employees are opposed to carrying out transfer policy in the mid-academic session.

Because of the Party's membership drive, Yadav refused to lift ban on transfers in September.

He assured the ministers that after the end of the membership drive, the ban on transfer would be lifted for 15 days in October.

Since the membership drive is completing on October 15, the ministers are talking about withdrawing ban on transfers.

Along with the BJP legislators, the leaders of the party organisation want lifting of ban on transfers at least for a few days.

Yadav directed the officials to prepare transfer policy in such a way that nobody should be shifted without reason.

According to sources, the Chief Minister's priority is to transfer staff to vacant posts.

Kabaddi helps Chhatarpur girls to resume studies

Smita
BHOPAL

Kabaddi has helped girls from Chhatarpur district to resume studies after dropping out from schools. The initiative has made girls aware and confident while their parents have realised the value and need for education.

About 40 dropout girls from Jaitupura and Kairavara vil-

COMING OUT OF THEIR SHELL

lage panchayats in Buxwaha block were drawn into campaign called Parwah. Initially, the girls in 13 to 17 years of age felt uneasy playing the game and so did their parents. Most of them belong to Pardhi community and were reluctant to wear shorts and T-shirts while playing.

Chhatarpur district in Bundelkhand region is known for its backwardness and feudal social order. It has a low sex ratio and high dropout rate of girls. The initiative was launched in January 2024 by Aawaj Sanstha, Bhopal. The objective was to prevent girls from dropping out of school mainly due to economic constraints and unwillingness or



inability of their parents to send them to schools outside their villages.

The people behind the campaign, however, did not give up and persuaded girls to continue playing. Eight months down the line, 20 of them were selected in block-level trials in U-14, U-16 and U-18 categories.

Seven of them even made it to the district level and will now try to join division-level team. About 26 of them have rejoined school. They include six from Jaitupura and 20 from Kairavara.

When the girls gathered to play, they were also told about how education would help them move forward in life. Social activist and kabaddi player Kaptan Singh Parmar said they won the confidence of

girls' parents. "They allowed their daughters to go to Chhatarpur and even Bilaspur to take part in trials and tournaments," he says.

Kiran and Rukmani, both 14 years of age, are now studying in Class 7. Both the girls from Pardhi community had dropped out after Class 5, as the middle school was located six kilometers away from their village. Their daily wage labour parents did not have money to pay for the fare. Back in school, Kiran wanted to become a teacher and Rukmani, a doctor. "I want to teach the children of my village," Kiran told Free Press. Both of them enjoy studying and playing. Sunita Adiwas, who has resumed studies in Class 6, wants to become a player.

CSR plan gets good response, BMC yet to finalise offer

Our Staff Reporter
BHOPAL

The Bhopal Municipal Corporation's (BMC) corporate social responsibility (CSR) plan has received tremendous response from educational institutes. However, these institutes are selective as far as rotaries are concerned and the BMC administration has not finalised any offer.

Mayor Malti Rai had put up a proposal in the Parishad Meeting of July 2 for CSR for beautification of rotaries and parks in the state capital. Many banks and educational institutes were to be considered. However, corporators said even their tenders have not been floated for which they are waiting for months.

The corporators raised the issue that when the BMC had not utilised its own fund on various heads, what is the utility of the CRS fund.

BMC Leader of Opposition Shabista Zaki said, "No tender has been floated so far over the BMC initiative for beautification and redesigning the rotaries. Even cor-



Civic body had floated CSR plan to beautify rotaries

porators' tenders have not been floated. However, the CSR plan is good as far as BMC interest is concerned, but so far no tender has been finalised."

Mayor-in-Council (MIC) member RK Baghel said, "The response is good as many players came forward for beautification."

BMC Leader of Opposition Shabista Zaki said, "No tender has been floated so far over the BMC initiative for beautification and redesigning the rotaries. Now, the BMC has to finalise one of these players."

CM at Jal Sanchay prog in Surat today

Our Staff Reporter
BHOPAL

Chief minister Mohan Yadav will participate in Jal Sanchay (water conservation) programme to be organised in Surat in Gujarat on Sunday.

This programme will be attended by chief ministers of Gujarat and Rajasthan besides deputy chief minister of Bihar. The programme is being

organised under guidance of union Jal Shakti minister CR Patil and will hold deliberations over how to increase the ground water level.

Chief minister Yadav will board the plane from Indore airport at 1.45 pm and will reach Surat at 2.30 pm. He will attend the programme at Surat Indore Stadium at 4.15 pm. He will leave Surat at 6.15 pm and will return to Indore at 7 pm.

SRBs provide opportunity to learn behaviour of cheetahs

Our Staff Reporter
BHOPAL

The Soft Release Boxes (SRB) provided an opportunity to learn about the behaviour of cheetahs, which will be of immense help in their future management in different sites.

Female cheetah raising cubs in these semi wild conditions of the SRBs provide great opportunity to learn and document how the cubs are raised, their requirements, health issues in different seasons, growth pattern, eating habits and mother-cub relations etc in Indian conditions.

This has been stated in the newsletter released by Kuno National Park on Saturday. The newsletter mentioned that learning from the death of three cubs due to extreme heat in May 2023 helped in saving 11 out of 13 cubs born during the 2024 summer. One of the aspects of learning the mother-cub relationship was managing cubs at the den site.

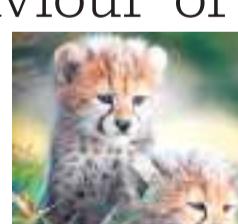
For the initial 45 days, cubs do not go out with mother and remain in the den waiting for their mother to return every

provides semi-wild conditions i.e. can hunt prey but without any competition from co-predators and limited space. At the same time, most of the cheetahs have experienced the wilderness of Kuno National Park from a few days (Prabhash, Pavak coalition) to several months (Veera).

They were in the wild in their country of origin. They have least contact with humans. "The experience of managing the cheetahs in enclosed space without making them lose their wild trait is new and unique," the newsletter read.

Change in water intake

Literature and African experience suggest that Cheetah does not drink water frequently. Maybe once or twice a week. But Indian experience tells a different story. During the summer months (March to June), Cheetahs require water daily and during peak summers may be twice a day. In Indian conditions, unavailability and lack of water intake leads to dehydration which may become fatal for cheetahs.

**Learning from death of 3 cubs helped in saving lives of 11 cubs**

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Regional Digest


BADNAWAR

555-ft-long Chunari Kalash Yatra held

Friends Group celebrated Navratri with a grand 555-foot-long Chunari Kalash Yatra, from Shri Baijnath Mahadev Temple and concluded at Ekveera Temple. The procession featured captivating performances by the Aghori team from Maharashtra and a Kathak group from Karnataka. Highlights included garba dances, Ujjain's cannon, and welcoming various leaders. In its ninth year, blessed chunaris and prasad were distributed to first-time women participants.

SANAWAD

Santosh Namdev appointed district project coordinator

Former teacher of Government Girls Higher Secondary School, Sanawad and currently the principal in Khandwa district, Santosh Namdev passed the district project coordinator (DPC) examination conducted by the state education centre, Bhopal. Following the achievement, he was appointed as the district project coordinator at district education centre, Burhanpur. Sanawad

Nagar Journalist Association and dignitaries congratulated him for taking up this challenging responsibility.



THIKRI

Shakti Abhinandan Abhiyan underway

The women and child development department of Thikri is organising the Shakti Abhinandan Abhiyan to raise awareness about women's and girls' empowerment. On Friday, a dialogue programme on women's safety was held at the Thikri police station, where sub-inspector Maya Alave emphasised respect for women and sensitivity towards crimes against them. The programme covered topics like good touch-bad touch, cyber laws, and laws against women's atrocities, aiming to educate local women and girls. The event saw contributions from supervisor Jamma Bhagwaria and block co-ordinator Vaishali Patil.

PITALRAWAN

Durga idols immersed

The immersion of Durga idols was celebrated in Peepalrawan, on Friday, with a lively procession featuring music band and dandiya dances by women and girls. Locals welcomed the event with prayers, followed by an evening aarti and sacred food distribution at Narmadiya Lake before the immersion. Committee president Shekhar Mukati expressed gratitude while TI Kamal Singh Gehlot ensured safety.

PROGRESS WITH HERITAGE | Arms worship emphasises self-defence, stance against injustice

CM moots industrial belt to create jobs

Yadav highlights tradition and development during Shastra Puja on Vijayadashami

FP News Service

MAHESHWAR / KHARGONE

On the auspicious occasion of Vijayadashami, Chief Minister Mohan Yadav joined Shastra Puja at historic Maheshwar.

Addressing attendees, he linked the event to the rich heritage of Shastra Puja, emphasising its significance as a symbol of self-defence and a stance against injustice and exploitation.

Yadav remarked that protecting both religion and the nation heavily relies on the preparation and availability of arms. During the ceremony, held in the karmabhoomi of Lokmata Ahilya Bai, the Chief Minister announced plans for notable local developments, including establishing an industrial belt to enhance employment opportunities for the youth.

He also introduced the proposal for a textile tourism village and the construction



Chief Minister Mohan Yadav during programme in Maheshwar on Saturday FP Photo

of 'Ahilya Lok' in honour of the local heritage.

Maheshwar, chosen for the Shastra Puja, exemplifies good governance and public welfare represented by Lokmata Devi Ahilya. Her leadership principles resonate with our current government's philosophy of inclusion, empowerment, and development,' Yadav stated.

He highlighted how Ahilya Bai employed artisans from various regions and signifi-

cantly contributed to women's empowerment, ensuring that Maheshwar emerged as a renowned centre for the iconic Maheshwari saree.

He expressed gratitude towards the Maharashtra government for renaming Ahmednagar to Ahilya Nagar, marking the 300th birth anniversary of Devi Ahilya, and credited this act with revitalising her vision for a welfare-oriented state.

The Chief Minister also discussed the establishment of a grand Ram temple in Ayodhya, connecting it to the historical tradition of taking up arms against injustice, which inspired the current series of weapon worship programmes across the state.

The Chief Minister's administration aims to rationalise district and tehsil boundaries, making governance more accessible to the general public.

Yadav inaugurated 43 construction works worth Rs 83.2 crore and released the 'Khargone Vaibhav Pustika' to promote tourism in Maheshwar, benefiting numerous local government scheme beneficiaries.

The ceremony was well-attended by local dignitaries, including MP Gajendra Singh Patel, Rajya Sabha member Sumer Singh Solanki, MLA Rajkumar Meo, and district panchayat president Anubai Tanwar, along with various officials.

In an emotional highlight of the day, Yadav paid tribute to the historic Maheshwar fort, where he offered flowers on the throne of Goddess Ahilya and worshipped a sword once wielded by the iconic ruler herself, underscoring the significance of this cultural heritage.

Earlier, Chief Minister Yadav was warmly welcomed and awarded a guard of honour.

In light of the impending Simhastha festival, Yadav announced several developmental projects, including:

- Upgrading Maheshwar's Community Health Centre to a Civil Hospital
- Construction of roads valued at Rs 5.5 crore in Jhapi and Rs 4.5 crore from Bangaria to Soma Khedi
- Naming Mandleshwar College after Maharsi Mandan Mishra
- Renovation of two temples in the area
- Expansion of Narsingh Ghat
- Promotion of the textile industry and the creation of an industrial zone near Maheshwar
- Construction of a divider on Barwan-Dhamod road

Heroes emerge as lives saved

5 people rescued from powerful water currents of Veda on Kamodwada culvert

FP News Service

BHIKANGAON

In a remarkable display of bravery and swift action, the lives of five individuals were saved from the powerful currents of the Veda River on the Kamodwada culvert late Friday night.

The timely intervention of local police and the State Disaster Response Force (SDRF) averted what could have been a tragedy, especially following the death of a youth due to sudden water flow earlier.

Those who were rescued include, Raju, 52, a resident of Aurangpura, Khargone; Lokendra, 32, a resident of Sanawad; Nitesh, 24, a resident of Balgaon, Nagjiri; Vaibhav, 21, a resident of Seenkheda and Nitin, 23, a resident of Seenkheda village.

At around 2 am, all of them were returning from attending a Katha event in Abhapuri with a sound system when their vehicle encountered the raging waters caused by heavy rains and the subsequent release of



Kamodwada culvert has been the scene of several accidents, as former BJP mandal president Vijay Patel pointed out. Last month, a young man drowned at the same location due to the hazardous conditions created by the rain and the consequent spill-over from the dam. Patel emphasised the pressing need for the construction of a safer culvert and called for immediate safety measures to prevent future accidents, especially during the monsoon season.

water from the Upper Veda Dam.

As they attempted to cross the culvert, the vehicle became stranded in the middle, unable to move forward or backward against the torrential flow, leaving the occupants in grave danger.

Upon receiving an emergency call, a team led by Bhikangao police station in-charge Rameshwar Thakur swiftly arrived at the

scene. Recognising the urgency, the police called in the SDRF team, which promptly joined the rescue efforts.

Under the leadership of SDRF team in-charge Shivaprasad UEK, the rescue operation began with the assistance of local villagers and a JCB. Battling the floodwaters and strong currents, the team managed to safely rescue all five individuals trapped in the vehicle.

girl's family, escalating the tension. Fearing for her life, the girl took the drastic step of self-immolation. The police have registered a complaint and are investigating the matter.

The molestation case was initially filed on October 7, with the girl accusing Mangilal, her neighbour, of inappropriate behaviour. Although the police arrested the accused, he was soon released on bail.

Following his return, Mangilal and his sons allegedly assaulted the victim's family, leading to the girl's suicide attempt. The victim's lawyer claims that she had initially

been raped but was too afraid to report it as such, choosing instead to file a molestation charge. The police recorded the victim's statement in court, where she maintained that she was molested, not raped.

However, the psychological pressure of the incident and the subsequent attack by the accused's family reportedly pushed her to the brink.

Police have confirmed that they will add the section of attempt to murder to the case following the assault on the victim's family. Further action will be taken as investigations progress.

Molested girl attempts suicide after assault by accused's family

FP News Service

KHANDWA

A tragic incident unfolded in Khandwa on Saturday when an 18-year-old girl, who had filed a molestation complaint four days ago, attempted to commit suicide by setting herself on fire.

The girl, who sustained 30% burns, was rushed to the hospital by her family and later referred to Indore for further treatment.

The victim's family alleged that after the accused, Mangilal, his sons allegedly assaulted the victim's family, leading to the girl's suicide attempt. The victim's lawyer claims that she had initially

fallen in just one hour contributed to a total of 775 mm recorded in Nalchha area this season. The heavy rainfall caused significant disruptions for drivers and residents alike. Roads became impassable, forcing vehicles, including those of tourists visiting Mandu, to navigate through flooded streets.

Amrit Sanchay campaign launched

Bagli: "For a prosperous future, conservation of water is essential," stated Dr Sameera Naeem during a conference held under the Amrit Sanchay campaign, guided by collector Rishabh Gupta. Scientist Dr Sunil Chaturvedi emphasised the urgent need for collective efforts to preserve water resources. Additionally, discussions on water conservation were conducted at CM Rise School, encouraging students and teachers to motivate parents in their villages to participate in conservation efforts.

Heavy rain causes severe waterlogging

FP News Service

NALCHHA

Heavy rain has led to significant waterlogging in Nalchha, causing major traffic disruptions and congestion.

The sudden rainfall transformed the roads, particularly along the Mandu main road, into pond-like conditions, leading to widespread waterlogging across the area. The day began with intense heat and humidity, but by late evening, dark clouds rolled in, bringing strong winds and a storm. The 36 mm of rain that

fell in just one hour contributed to a total of 775 mm recorded in Nalchha area this season. The heavy rainfall caused significant disruptions for drivers and residents alike. Roads became impassable, forcing vehicles, including those of tourists visiting Mandu, to navigate through flooded streets.

Shastra Puja conducted at Police Line



FP news service

JHABUA

On Vijayadashami, Shastra Puja was conducted at Jhabua Police Line, attended by women and child development minister Nirmala Bhuria, collector Neha Meena, and SP Padmavilochan Shukla? The officials performed the ritual with chanting of mantras, followed by celebratory gunfire. Similar worship ceremonies were held across police stations in the district. The leaders urged

residents to celebrate Dussehra peacefully, wishing them happiness and prosperity.

Vijayadashami celebrated with enthusiasm

Alot: Vijayadashami was celebrated in the city with numerous events. Highlights include a grand Jawara immersion after a havan at Bhadwa Mata temple, devotees walking on burning embers, and a procession by the RSS. A towering 51-foot Ravana will be burnt at the

Traditional weapon worship held

Khetia: Traditional Shastra Puja was conducted at the Khetia police station, led by station in-charge inspector Surendra Kanesh and Pandit Tarun Shukla? Attended by both policemen and community members, the ceremony included celebratory firing by head constables Rajendra Barde and Vikas Sen.

Additionally, the RSS held traditional weapon worship at Gayatri Shaktipeeth, raising slogans of victory.

Traditional celebrations and rituals will take place across the region, marking the joyous occasion.

Shastra Puja held at police station

Badnawar: A traditional Shastra Puja ceremony was conducted at Badnawar police station. The event was attended by SDM Deepak Chauhan, TI Deepak Singh Chauhan, Tehsildar Suresh Nagar, and led by Pandit Dilip Pathak. A large number of policemen, including

Ravan effigies burnt

Mahidpur: Mahidpur celebrated Dussehra with the ceremonial burning of Ravan effigies at two locations. A vibrant procession from Ramila Maidan, featuring joyful participants, paraded through the town, culminating in the burning of a 71-foot effigy at Dussehra Maidan. A 51-foot effigy was burnt at Devi Temple, where a fair and spectacular fireworks display entertained the crowd.

sub-inspector Hina Joshi and head constable Diwanji Santosh Yadav, participated in the ceremony.



Dussehra celebrated

Kukshi: Kukshi police station celebrated Dussehra with a weapon worship, on Saturday. The event included decorating vehicles for the ceremony and a priest tied protective threads on attendees. Station in-charge Rajesh Yadav emphasised that this day symbolises the victory of good over evil. The ceremony was attended by sub-inspector Gildar Singh Baghel, Vesta Suliya, Jitendra Kushwaha, Lokesh Raipuria, and other police officials.

RSS holds Path Sanchalan

Alot: Members of Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS) organised 'Path Sanchalan' in Alot. The event commenced with a motivational address by Sanghchalak Tejaram Mangrola, who guided the volunteers through a buddhi. The procession, began at the middle school premises, traversed various routes throughout the city. Before the procession, a weapon worship ceremony was held.



PANCHANG 13.10.2024 (DAKSHINAYAN)

Saka 1946 Samvat 2081

Month : Ashwin Shukla 10 Sunday 0.9 AM.

Nakshatra : Dhanshita 2.52 A.M. then Satabisaj

Yoga : Shul 9.25 P.M. then Ganesh

Karan : Vanji 8.00 P.M. then Bav

Moon : Makar 3.44 P.M. then Kumbh

PLU. MOON 11 SAT

RAHU, NEP 12 1

JUP. HER 2

MARS 3

SUN, KETU 4

MER 5

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VEN 7

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VEN 11

SAT 12

SAT 13

SAT 14

SAT 15

SAT 16

SAT 17

SAT 18

SAT 19

SAT 20

SAT

◆ INDORE ◆ BHOPAL ◆ UJJAIN ◆ MUMBAI ◆ PUNE

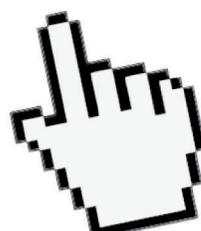
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**Free Press
Readers'
write**

**CASTLES IN
THE AIR**

Congress needs to introspect that why it cannot win a direct contest against the BJP in state elections. As such there is no alignment between words and actions, such humiliating results are inevitable. The grand old party cannot fool the voters every time. The Congress' "guarantee card" does not mean anything after its "false" promises to the voters in HP, Karnataka and Telangana. You can fool some people for some time, but it's now it is clear that the Congress cannot fool everyone all the time. Voters have decisively rejected the Congress, which relies on politics built on lies. Congress proved to be a Jumla Jokers in front of Janta Janardan and no one is ready to believe from just the word of mouth. Just building castles in the air and just looking for wins by fooling around the public is not in good taste and people are not going to pardon such a tricky attitude.

**CK Ramani Subbu,
Coimbatore**

**MUSLIM CARD
HELPS NC WIN**

In Jammu and Kashmir, NC won in the recent elections. Does it mean voters did not like removal of section 370 or, voters did not notice enhanced peace after removal of Section 370. I don't think so. I believe that NC was successful in convincing the Muslim voters that BJP and Modi were against Muslims and removal of Section 370 will, in due course, be disadvantageous for Muslims.

Lat Dube, Ratlam

**BRAND MODI
INTACT**

Haryana Elections delivered a surprising result with the BJP winning 48 seats against 40 in the present assembly and increasing its vote share from 36.5% to 39.9%. Key factors included PM Modi's enduring popularity, strategic change of CM, effective management of caste votes, combating internal factionalism, and addressing local concerns over national issues. The results have defied political predictions, marking major changes in the state's political landscape. BJP's promises of corruption-free govt,

combined with the central govt's outreach efforts, ensured that the "Brand Modi" appeal remained intact. While the BJP managed its internal conflicts effectively, the Congress seemed struggling with factionalism. Bhupinder Singh Hooda, an ex-CM and a prominent Congress leader, dominated the party's ticket distribution, favouring his loyalists over more deserving candidates. Also, the Cong's over emphasis on national issues, like the caste census and economic disparities, failed to attract Haryana's electorate, who were more focused on local concerns. This mis-step likely contributed to the party's failure to encash upon the anti-incumbency sentiments. One of the lessons from this election is that local issues matter significantly in Haryana. National rhetoric and large-scale policy debates, while important, do not necessarily translate into votes in state elections.

Sanjay Chopra, Mohali

**THREAT TO
WORLD PEACE**

After Iran supreme leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei's penchant claim that the "Zionist nation would not last long" and Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's vow of retaliation, "Whoever attacks, we will attack them," the two countries are closer to a destructive all-out war.

West Asia is being pushed into a nuclear firestorm by the challengers in conflict and the proxy groups. Israel is allied with the United States of America and NATO nations, while the Islamic militant groups, Hamas, Hezbollah and Houthis, are proxies of Iran. Hamas' failed missile attack gave Israel an opportunity to bomb of Gaza indiscriminately. Since then, Israel Defence Force has killed and injured thousands of innocent Palestinians. The mass annihilation of women and children served as a reminder of the genocide committed against European Jews during World War II. The United States seamlessly provides Israel with strategic support, advanced weaponry and manpower. Their occasional counsel for sanity is for the world to hear and not for Israel to heed. Neither side – Israel, America and other NATO nations, or Iran and the proxy groups – is seeking a lasting peace. This war threatens to wreck world peace and economies, with the chance of more countries being sucked into it. India is stuck between two stools.

**Haridasan Rajan,
Kozhikode**

**END OF
GOLDEN
ERA**

Rafael Nadal's place in history is assured with 22 grand slams to his name, including 14 French Open titles, and 92 tournament wins worldwide. He remained world No 1 for 209 weeks and within the world's top 10 for a record 912 consecutive weeks, a testament to his ability, not only with a racket, but also to bounce back from many injuries he suffered over the course of his career.

Certainly, his record of French Open titles seems destined never to be beaten as he dominated clay-court tennis even more than any other player. His vicious topspin forehand, unique movement, incredible tenacity and faultless attitude enabled him to bully anyone who dared to oppose him, including Federer and Djokovic. Some of his shots were unimaginable, his fab court coverage and his strength at full range making anything possible. Sometimes he stood miles back to return serve but before the opponent hit the next shot, he was up on the baseline, taking control. His footwork, scrambling around his backhand to hit forehands with precision, was breathtaking.



Nadal, Federer and Djokovic trio took tennis to another level, sharing 66 grand slams, mastering tennis to the extent that only a few were able to even get closer. Now, Djokovic is the last of the trio, to improve records. Nadal's exit marks the end of golden era, leaving tennis as one of the all-time greats. He will be remembered for his do-or-die spirit at every point, resolve, humility, and the heart he poured into every match.

Sanjay Chopra, Mohali

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**WORD LIMIT FOR ARTICLES IS 500 WORDS
AND FOR LETTERS 150 WORDS**

PS: ARTICLES ABOVE WORD LIMIT WILL BE REJECTED

ADIEU! Free Press Journal Readers pay homage to Ratan Naval Tata

Sir, you will always live in our hearts



1937-2024

In the passing of Ratan Tata we have lost a human being par excellence. A colossus among the world renowned industrialists and philanthropists, what made him stand tall among all of them is that he was humility personified. To sum up Ratan Tata, I wish to borrow few immortal lines from Mark Antony's funeral oration in Shakespeare's 'Julius Caesar':

His life was gentle; and the elements

So mixed in him that Nature might stand up And say to all the world 'This was a man!'

TS. Fernando, Chennai

II

I am too "aam" (common) an "aadmi" (man) to write words that will do justice to Ratan Tata, India's business icon and philanthropist, who bid adieu to this world on Wednesday. Ratan Tata's life and work is mirrored in this short poem by John Wesley, an English theologian and evangelist of the 18th century.

**"Do all the good you can,
By all the means you can,
In all the ways you can,
At all the places you can,
To all the people you can,
As long as ever you can."**

Avinash Godbole, Dewas

III

Ratan Tata's ethics and philanthropic activities made him one of the most popular Indians ever. He supported research and improvements in the field of education, medicine, and rural development. He will be remembered for his immense contribution in establishing a number of hospitals and research centres that helped advance cancer care. He

was a great visionary and was committed to make India a self-reliant nation. Even in the evening of his life, plan to build India's first indigenous semiconductor manufacturing facility in Assam was announced. He was truly a ratna of the nation.

The Modi Government must consider Maharashtra government's request to confer on him Bharat Ratna posthumously.

Manoj Parashar, Ghaziabad

IV

Ratan Tata has left behind a void, which could hardly be filled in the heart of India Inc. Widely admired for his visionary leadership, his business

acumen made a lasting impact on the global stage. His dedication to philanthropy and the development of society has touched the lives of millions. From education to healthcare, Tata's initiatives have left an indelible mark in the society. Reinforcing all of this work was Tata's humility in every individual interaction. Tata's vision, integrity, and commitment to social causes set him apart as a true leader. It is extremely tough to say "tata" to the "Ratan" of India, whose legacy will continue to inspire generations to come.

R Sivakumar, Chennai

V

Ratan Tata, a rare combination of wits and beauty who by dint of his innovative, visionary, ethical and philanthropical practices not only contributed to the development of diverse sectors like aviation, education, healthcare, rural development, engineering, industry, technology etc but had a lasting impact on the lives of many. His humility and gen-

erosity is well known. But, one instance of his generosity that transcended borders was when he donated USD 50 million to his alma mater, Harvard Business School. What sets him apart from other contemporary business leaders was his unwavering commitment to philanthropic activities that remained a part and parcel of his inheritance. He had a profound influence over politicians, industrialists, and millions of people in India alike. The world will remember him more for the grace, humility, compassion, always extending his helping hand to the poor and the marginalized, decency in public dealings more than for his business successes. In fact, through his social work he left an indelible imprint on the lives of millions of people.

Jayanthi Subramaniam, Navi Mumbai

VII

The truth is that 'The Death is Inevitable'. A person cannot live forever but can leave an image and legacy behind for others. This is true for the Ratan Tata, a gem we lost on October 9. The day he could no longer fly was a sad day for him, but the day he flew to the gates of heaven was a sad day for us.

Ratan Tata wished to be remembered as a leader who

but their calm, humble personality brought love and respect to countless people. Every step he took with his goalful thinking and dedication was for the welfare of the society. Not just as a great entrepreneur, but as a sensitive role model, he will never be forgotten. Centre must honour him with Bharat Ratna.

Dimple Wadhawan, Kanpur Nagar

X

Ratan Tata was a respected industrialist and philanthropist. He was instrumental in es-

tablishing and expanding steel, tea and chemical industries in our country. His cars Land Rover and Jaguar deserves mention. His cheap Nano car is a mile stone in the automobile history. His many start ups are an inspiration to the youth of today. In his death we have lost a pioneering industrialist. It is an end of era.

N. R. Ramachandran, Chennai

XI

The country lost a gem with the passing of Ratan Naval Tata, 86, one of the most influential industrialists and philanthropists of the modern era. He expanded Tata Group's global presence through key acquisitions like Tetley and Jaguar Land Rover. What set him apart was his deep sense of responsibility towards society. His commitment to philanthropy, education, and rural development transformed the lives of millions. Despite overseeing a multi-billion dollar empire, Ratan Tata remained humble and down-to-earth. His unwavering commitment to ethical business practices, promoting transparency and fairness solidified Tata Group's status as a trusted global enterprise.

Kirti Wadhawan, Kanpur

IX

Ratan Tata was truly the 'conscience keeper' of Indian industry and the nation. His partnership helped drive economic growth and community development. His immense contribution to the philanthropy and nation's service is always remembered. He not only contributed in stabilizing the economy but, also motivated a number of young professionals, students and women to empower themselves and make a desirable contribution. His guiding principles will always inspire us and boost the morale of the people.

Dimple Wadhawan, Kanpur Nagar

X

Ratan Tata was a respected industrialist and philanthropist. He was instrumental in es-

Tanisha Gupta, Ujjain

Stem cell therapy offers hope for kidney damage from cancer treatment

By Dr Shashank Chetty
Indore

A recent study led by Dr. Shashank Chetty at Stanford University has made exciting progress in addressing kidney damage caused by the chemotherapy drug cisplatin. This research, published in the Journal of Translational Medicine, explores the potential of using stem cells to heal kidneys affected by cancer treatment.

Cisplatin is a common chemotherapy drug used to fight various cancers, especially solid tumors. While it is effective, it can also harm the kidneys, leading to a condition known as acute kidney injury (AKI). Shockingly, nearly 46% of patients treated with cisplatin experience kidney problems. Currently, the main treatments for cisplatin-related kidney damage focus on supportive care, like dialysis, which can be invasive and isn't always effective. There's a pressing need for better treatment options.

Dr. Chetty's research looks into mesenchymal stem cells (MSCs), which are special cells that can develop into different types of tissue. MSCs have shown promise in treating various conditions, including AKI. However, their effectiveness has varied depending on their source—whether they come from bone marrow, fat, or umbilical cord tissue. Understanding which source is most effective is crucial for advancing treatment.

In summary, this groundbreaking study not only highlights the potential of UC-MSCs but also offers hope for better treatment options for those affected by the side effects of chemotherapy. As this research continues, it could lead to improved patient outcomes and a brighter future for those battling cancer-related kidney damage.

In their study, Dr. Chetty and his team used two different strains of mice to analyze how they responded to cisplatin. They also considered gender differences to create a reliable model for studying kidney damage. One important finding was that different mouse strains reacted differently to the same treatment, but gender didn't seem to play a significant role in the kidney damage caused by cisplatin. A significant discovery was the identification of a marker called CXCL1, which helps track inflammation in the kidneys. This marker could help scientists understand how well the MSCs are working to heal kidney damage.

Among the various sources of MSCs tested, umbilical cord-derived MSCs (UC-MSCs) showed the most promise. They effectively reduced inflammation and damage in the kidneys better than stem cells from other sources. This suggests that UC-MSCs could be a powerful tool in treating kidney issues related to chemotherapy. Dr. Chetty's findings represent a major step forward in regenerative medicine, especially for conditions like AKI, which currently have few effective treatments. By establishing a clear understanding of which MSCs work best, this research paves the way for more targeted and effective therapies for patients suffering from kidney damage due to cancer treatments.

Each dog bite incident leads to an average loss of 2.2 human workdays, with medical expenses amounting to approximately Rs252 per case.

For the poorest citizens, this adds significant financial stress. When extrapolated across annual dog bite cases, the cost balloons to around 2,000 crores.

LEGAL FRAMEWORK FOR STRAY DOG PROTECTION

India has stringent laws protecting stray dogs, including the Environment Protection Act of 1986 and the Wildlife Protection Act of 1972. These laws aim to shield stray dogs from cruelty, while the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Act ensures strict punishment for those who abuse them. Sections 428 and 429 of the Indian Penal Code make it a punishable offense to kill or maim any animal.

Legally, removing stray dogs from the streets is prohibited, though feeding them is fully legal. Current policies focus on sterilizing and vaccinating the dogs before releasing them back into their territories. But is this enough to address the problem?

STRAY ANIMAL MANAGEMENT IN DEVELOPED NATIONS

Many developed countries have taken a firm stance on managing stray animals to protect public safety and agriculture. For instance, Australia controlled its rabbit population through the use of myxomatosis between the 1950s and 1990s. Similarly, Canada culls seals to manage their numbers, while Scotland conducts annual culling of red deer.

In 2023, the United States launched a \$3.5 million campaign to tackle its rat problem using poison, traps,

Will We Keep Battling Stray Dogs and dry ice.

By H Askofenwala
Indore



India is grappling with a growing stray dog population, posing not just a public safety issue but a serious health crisis as well. According to government data, stray dog attacks result in over 20,000 deaths annually, with more than 2.8 million cases of dog bites reported each year. These alarming figures underscore the gravity of the problem that is spiraling out of control.

REPORT HIGHLIGHTS THE ECONOMIC BURDEN

The most vulnerable to these attacks are the poor, with 75% of the victims coming from low-income households, and a staggering 80.3% of these cases are reported in rural areas. Children are nearly twice as likely to be bitten compared to adults, making this issue even more distressing.

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In 2023, the United States launched a \$3.5 million campaign to tackle its rat problem using poison, traps, and dry ice. This brings us to a crucial question: can India effectively manage its stray dog crisis, or will we allow it to fester?

India, on the path to becoming the world's third-largest economy, faces a formidable challenge. Will our administrative capacity remain limited to dealing with stray dogs, or can we channel our resources to elevate the standard of living for our citizens to match our economic ambitions focusing on larger goals? It's crucial to reflect on whether our government has the political will to enforce necessary laws and address this issue, or whether we will remain stuck in bureaucratic limbo.

np Briefs

MORIGAON
Thieves decamp with Goddess Durga's ornaments
Gold and silver ornaments worth around Rs 10 lakh were stolen by thieves from a Durga Puja pandal



In Odisha's Jajpur district, police said on Saturday. The incident took place at Barunei temple under Korei police station area in the early hours of Saturday. When priests and members of the puja committee arrived at the temple around 3 am, they discovered the ornaments missing and the main gate of the temple left open, police added.

SAMBALPUR
Bodies of missing students fished out

The bodies of two students, who went missing while bathing in the Mahanadi river in Odisha's Sambalpur district, were fished out on Saturday, police said. A rescue team comprising personnel of the Odisha Disaster Response Force and the Fire Services recovered the bodies from the river this morning, a senior officer said. The two students had gone missing while taking a bath on Friday near the Dhobapada Ghat under the Khetrajpur Police Station limits, he said.

THANE
Man stabs wife to death

A 41-year-old man from Maharashtra's Thane district has been arrested for allegedly killing his wife over the custody of their children, an official said on



Saturday. The couple - Nadeem Khan and his wife Amrin (36) - from Mira Road have two children, aged 2 and 10, and was caught in a dispute over their kids' custody, the official said.

THANE
Man held for killing wife

A 29-year-old man from Thane city has been arrested for allegedly killing his wife, apparently suspecting her of infidelity, an official said on Saturday. Bhaskar Narayan Sadavare, a resident of Siddeshwar Talao locality, strangled his wife Pramila (27) on October 9, he said.

LOOKING AHEAD | It is for the second time BJP government is holding the oath-taking ceremony in Panchkula

Swearing-in of new Hry Cabinet on October 17

Rajesh Moudgil

CUTTACK



Haryana CM Nayab Singh Saini welcomes Union Minister JP Nadda at the house-warming ceremony of Union Minister Manohar Lal Khattar's new residence on the occasion of Vijayadashami in New Delhi on Saturday

The swearing-in ceremony of the new Haryana Cabinet would be held on October 17 at the Dussehra ground, Sector 5, Panchkula, near here, which would be attended by several of the top BJP leaders including Prime Minister Narendra Modi and party president J P Nadda.

The BJP media state head Arvind Saini told FP on Saturday that besides several Union ministers, the chief ministers of several BJP-ruled states would also attend the grand function.

Earlier, the said ceremony was likely to be held October 15, but, the availability of the Prime

Minister was said to be the reason behind the change in the date for the ceremony. Also, earlier, the Sector 5 parade ground was said to be the venue for the event, which would now be held at Dussehra ground, also in Sector 5, as

the latter is substantially bigger ground.

It is for the second time that the BJP government is holding the oath-taking ceremony in Panchkula, as the first BJP Cabinet led by Manohar Lal Khattar, then a first-time legislator, was

also held at the same ground in 2014.

The saffron party had at that time won 47 of the total 90 seats.

Meanwhile, party sources said that prior to the oath-taking ceremony, a meeting of the state BJP legislature party is likely to be held next week in which Saini - who was the CM face of the BJP in the recently held assembly election - is likely to be chosen as the leader of the legislature party.

Notably, BJP leadership had already held that Saini - who is from Other Backward Classes (OBCs) and who had replaced Manohar Lal Khattar as the chief minister in March this year - would be its choice for the top post if the party wins.

'Odisha govt to make Cuttack a smart city'

PTI
CUTTACK

Odisha Chief Minister Mohan Charan Majhi on Saturday said his government would take all possible measures to make Cuttack a smart city.

Majhi said this after visiting various puja pandals in the millennium city. The tradition of Durga puja at Balubazar in the city is said to have started in 1510. The chief minister offered 'pushpanjali' at some pandals. He also visited Gopalpur, Chauliaganj, and Khan Nagar puja pandals.

"Cuttack is widely known for grand celebration of Dussehra and massive arrangements for community puja of Goddess Durga. Cuttack is a historical city and known for its brotherhood. I am happy and thankful to the puja committees and people of the city for peaceful celebration of the Durga puja," Majhi said.

He said the double-engine government in Odisha has the blessings of PM Modi.

appointed a Dalit, Manoj Bharti, as the working president of Jan Suraaj Party. Bharti was an officer of Indian Foreign Service (IFS).

No political party can undermine the importance of Dalits in caste-centric politics of Bihar as they constitute 19.65 percent of the state's population.

JD (U) is organising such events, particularly in view of the fact that RJD is also trying hard to project itself as 'A to Z' party and eyeing Dalits votes aggressively. Besides RJD and other parties in the opposition camp, two union ministers - Chirag Paswan (chief of LJP-Ram Vilas) and Jitan Ram Manjhi (founder of HAM) claim to have the support of Paswan and Musahar respectively.

Both these two castes have been categorised as SCs. JD (U) has also decided to organise a 'Dalit Mahakumbh', a gathering of Dalits across the state on April 14, the birth anniversary of Dr B R Ambedkar.

Army chief launches Agniastra

GANGTOK

The Army Chief, General Upendra Dwivedi on Friday, officially launched "Agniastra," a portable multi-target detonation device, during the Army Commanders Conference in Gangtok.

This device was developed by Major Rajprasad RS from the Indian Army's Corps of Engineers and is seen as a major advancement in both conventional and counter-terrorism operations.

According to Indian Army officials, the device holds "tremendous potential" for use in room interventions, remote bunker or hideout destruction, and reserve demolitions.

BJP is a party of terrorists, says Kharge



Rajnath Singh performs Shashtra Puja on the occasion of Vijayadashami during a function at 33 Corps Headquarters, at Sukna, in Darjeeling district, on Saturday

CONTRACT KILLER HELD

Gaurav Vivek Bhatnagar

NEW DELHI

Congress president Mallikarjun Kharge on Saturday created a political stir by describing BJP as a "party of terrorists" while responding to Prime Minister Narendra Modi's remarks that the Congress has been taken over by "urban Naxals".

Kharge's strong comments came when he was asked to respond to Modi's remarks at a rally in Washim in poll-bound Maharashtra where he had said, "The



PROGRESSIVE people are being called urban Naxals, they also call the Congress urban Naxals, this is their habit

THEY LYNCH people, they urinate in the mouths of scheduled caste people, rape tribal women. So the terrorist party is theirs

Congress wants to keep Dalits as Dalits, the poor as poor; so, beware the Congress."

The Prime Minister had added that "Urban Naxals are running the Congress. The party wants to divide the nation and it is trying to

urban Naxals, this is their habit. They are themselves a party of terrorists. They lynch people, they urinate in the mouths of scheduled caste people, rape tribal women. So the terrorist party is theirs."

Kharge also charged that the BJP "supports people who commit all these atrocities and then on top of it they blame others." He said "Modi has no right to say all this. Wherever his government is in power atrocities are being committed on scheduled castes and especially on tribals."

Leopard found dead after attack on man in Rajasthan: Official



A man-eating leopard in Udaipur's jungles, who had attacked a farmer in the nearby village, was found dead on Friday with an injury mark on its neck, forest officials said.

Forest Department Officer Sunil Kumar said that the body of the leopard was found lying near the farmer Devaram's house who allegedly attacked him.

There is a major wound on the leopard's face, which sug-

gests that it was attacked with a sharp weapon or an axe.

According to the forest department, it is yet to be ascertained if this is the same man-eater leopard who has killed around eight people in the Gogunda area in Udaipur.

This incident was reported early Friday morning and comes under the Sayra police

station area, nearly 20 km from Gogunda in Kamol village. The leopard which entered the house of 55-year-old Devaram here first attacked cows and then the farmer.

Hearing the noise of the locals and the farmer's family, the leopard left Devaram lying on the ground and ran towards the forest following which the locals chased it with weapons. The injured Devaram was taken to the nearest health centre and was then referred to MB Hospital in Udaipur.

Devaram's condition is stable now, but due to fear, he is unable to speak.

| offgrid |

Delhi zoo's lone African tusker finds freedom



Union Minister of State for Environment Kirti Vardhan Singh had reviewed Shankar's health and habitat conditions on Wednesday with officials from the Environment Ministry and experts from Vantara, the Jamnagar-based wildlife facility of the Reliance Group

Environment Ministry and experts from Vantara, the Jamnagar-based wildlife facility of the Reliance Group. On Monday, the World Association of Zoos and Aquariums (WAZA) had suspended the membership of the Delhi zoo due to concerns over Shankar's welfare, as he had been living without a companion and "kept in chains".

The ministry said in a statement on Friday that Shankar was seen walking

freely in his enclosure after being released from chains.

Vardhan Singh shared a video on his official X account and said, "Following my visit to the zoo on October 9 and meeting Shankar, the lone African elephant, we brought together the Ministry of Environment, Team Vantara from Jamnagar, and expert veterinary doctors.

"I am happy to share that Shankar is finally free from chains. Thanks to the re-

lentless efforts of the team - including Neeraj, Yaduraj, Dr Adrian from South Africa, and Michael from the

Philippines -- rehabilitation is progressing as per the action plan." The minister's initiative aimed at improv-

ing Shankar's health includes 24/7 behavioural monitoring by veterinary experts and mahouts, the statement said.

Shankar was freed from his chains without any medication. Experts will continue to observe his behaviour over the next few days to ensure smooth progress, while zoo staff and mahouts will receive special training to interact with him, it added.

A personalised diet and activity plan for Shankar will be created based on his behaviour and daily routine, the ministry said.

NASHIK MUNICIPAL CORPORATION, NASHIK
Solid waste management department

Tender Notice No. 1/2024-25

Solid Waste Management Department, Nashik Municipal Corporation, Nashik invites tenders from experienced tenderers on E-tender system for the work

'Service of Sweeping and Cleaning of roads, Public and Community toilets, River bank, Auditoriums and NMC School Toilets in NMC area'

Tenderers who have been black listed or under process of black listing/ whose registration has been cancelled or under process of cancellation in government, semi-government, public undertaking, corporation, local government etc. are not allowed to participate in Tender process.

The qualification criteria are given in Detailed tender notice & Blank Tender documents are available on websites www.mahatenders.gov.in from date 11/10/2024 to 04/11/2024. The tenders have to be submitted on www.mahatenders.gov.in on or before date 04/11/2024 upto 3.00 Pm. by 'E' tendering procedure and the tenders will be opened on date 05/11/2024 upto 15.00 hrs., if possible in the presence of tenderer or their representative.

Jal Sanchar Akash / 24/10/2024 Date 9/10/2024
पाणी अडवा, पाणी जीरवा...
SD-
Commissioner,
Nashik Municipal Corporation

From front page

Deplorable, follow ...

It culminates with Dussehra or Vijaya Dashami on the 10th day. The MEA has taken strong exception to the two reported incidents in Bangladesh.

"These are deplorable events. They follow a systematic pattern of desecration and damage to temples and deities that we have witnessed over several days now," it said.

"We call upon the government of Bangladesh to ensure the safety and security of Hindus and all minorities and their places of worship, especially during this auspicious festival time," it added.

Stop madarsa ...

The NCPCR said a large number of Muslim children out of school, with an estimated 1.2 crore Muslim children not receiving formal education, according to UDISE 2021-22 data.

The report also said there was a lack of accountability in many madrasas, where physical safety concerns, such as poor infrastructure and cases of child rights violations, have been reported.

NCPCR has recommended a series of measures, including stopping state funding to madrasas and madrasa boards unless they comply with the RTE Act.

Additionally, NCPCR has recommended removing non-Muslim children from madrasas, as their inclusion violates Article 28 of the Constitution, which prohibits the imposition of religious instruction without parental consent.

The commission's report called for a balanced approach, where both religious and formal education can co-exist but not within the same institution.

"Religious education cannot come at the expense of formal education," the report asserted, emphasising that the state must prioritise the fundamental right of every child to free and compulsory education.

NCP leader...

While they are being interrogated, the third is absconding. The local police and crime branch have launched a manhunt. The motive behind the attack is believed to be related to a Slum Rehabilitation Authority (SRA) redevelopment project. Siddique had received threats 15 days ago, prompting an increase in his security.

Chief Minister Eknath Shinde said that the shooting of Baba Siddiqui is a "deeply unfortunate" incident. He said he has spoken to the doctors and the Commissioner of Police. "Two of the accused have already been arrested, one hails from Uttar Pradesh, and the other is from Haryana. The third suspect is on the run," said Shinde. "We have issued clear instructions to the Mumbai police, and no one should take the law into their own hands. There must be no gang war. Should anything arise, strict action will be taken immediately."

"Our police are renowned for maintaining law and order, and the third attacker will soon be arrested. Those responsible for this attack will face the consequences," Shinde said.

Baba Siddique, a leader from the Ajit Pawar faction, died after being shot by unidentified assailants in Bandra East on Saturday evening. The incident occurred as Siddique was leaving his office, where three attackers on a motorcycle opened fire while he was getting into his car. According to reports, the assailants fired two to three rounds, with one bullet striking Siddique in the chest. He was rushed to Lilavati Hospital for treatment, but succumbed to his injuries.

Baba Siddique was a seasoned politician from Mumbai, known for his long-standing association

with the Indian National Congress (INC). He began his political career in 1977 as a young member of the party, gradually rising through its ranks.

Siddique served as a Municipal Councillor in Mumbai and later as the MLA for the Bandra West constituency, holding the position for three terms—in 1999, 2004, and 2009. During his tenure, he also served as the Minister of State for Food & Civil Supplies, FDI, and Labour in Maharashtra from 2004 to 2008.

In February 2024, Siddique announced his resignation from the Congress after 48 years, marking a major turning point in his political journey when he joined the NCP, led by Deputy CM Ajit Pawar.

He was a vocal member of the Congress in the state assembly and raised several issues concerning Mumbai and the BMC affairs. He was chairman of Mhada between 2000 to 2004. He levelled serious allegations over awarding contract of Deonar dumping ground and the quality of road works in Mumbai. Prithviraj Chavan, the then CM had appointed a Swedish firm to check the quality of the roads.

Rahman's desi...

"This is more than just a musical event, it's a call to action for our communities to engage and vote for the future we want to see," he said.

The exclusive performance is set to be broadcast on AAPI Victory Fund's YouTube on October 13 at 8pm ET. It will also be shown across major South Asian networks, including AVS and TV Asia, as part of a strategic push to galvanise support for Kamala Harris among South Asian voters.

Ahilya Lok...

The event took place at the historic fort of Maheshwar, where the Chief Minister paid tribute to Devi Ahilyabai Holkar, further solidifying the connection between tradition and modern progress. This ceremonial worship not only celebrated the time-honoured customs of the region but also showcased the government's dedication to nurturing Maheshwar's cultural heritage while promoting sustainable development. The occasion resonated with the community, reinforcing the importance of upholding tradition in the face of contemporary challenges.

Unmarried women...

His latest statement made at the Governor House in Karachi on October 3 that unmarried women are "prostitutes" and "public property" has evoked sharp reactions in the local media. He said every unmarried woman should get married as soon as possible and if she does not find an unmarried man she should wed a married man else she risks becoming "bazaar aurat" or public property.

Influencers like Ali Abbas, Shafaat Ali, Absa Komal etc have slammed him for the highly insensitive remark about unmarried women.

What is making matters worse is that he has been projected as an Islamic "scholar." Some of the commentators have called him "nayak" (incompetent) and said he was doing a huge disservice to Islam by issuing such statements. Some of them said after Dr Naik's statements life would become hell for single women in Pakistan.

"Islam is so beyond and deeper than regressive ideologies and banter around such stuff," said RJ and host Anoushey Ashraf in reaction to a statement made by public orator and religious preacher Dr Zakir Naik in which he said single women have two choices in life — marry an already married man or become a "bazaar aurat," a term he translated as "public property."

VICTORY OF GOOD OVER EVIL | Delhi's 211-ft Ravan effigy took 4 months & ₹30L to complete

India celebrates Dussehra

FPJ News Service

NEW DELHI

Dussehra was celebrated across the country on Saturday with revellers coming out in large numbers to witness the burning of Ravana effigies, marking a spectacular culmination of 10-day of festivities filled with rituals, songs, dance and processions.

Effigies of the demon king, his brother Kumbhakarna and son Meghnad went up in flames at open grounds with the attending crowds erupting as the firecrackers from the burning effigies illuminated the night sky.

Social media platforms were awash with colourful, celebratory posts with people wishing each other health and happiness.

President Droupadi Murmu, PM Narendra Modi attended the festivities at the Red Fort Parade Ground where they were welcomed by the organisers of Sri Dhar-



RED FORT, DELHI

mik Leela Committee.

The festival celebrates Lord Rama's vanquishing the 10-headed demon king Ravana, and symbolises the triumph of good over evil.

Huge Durga puja pandals were set up across venues showcasing designs based on a variety of innovative themes including on politics, paintings and iconic monuments.

Pandals were decorated abundantly and lit up colourfully as people came in with families and friends to cel-

ebreate the festival.

Ram Leela — a theatrical performance based on Lord Ram's life — was performed in cities, towns and villages, with actors dressing up as characters from the Ramayana and enacting scenes from the Hindu epic.

But two dreaded criminals took advantage of such a performance in the Haridwar district jail and escaped when Ram Leela was being staged. A search has been launched to nab Pankaj, who was serving life sentence for



JALANDHAR, PUNJAB

a murder, and Rajkumar, an undertrial.

An incident was reported from Odisha also where gold and silver ornaments worth around ₹30 lakh were stolen from a Durga Puja pandal at Barundei temple in Jajpur.

Defence Minister Rajnath Singh performed "Shastra Puja" (worship of weapons) at the Sukna military station in West Bengal, and said the ritual is a "clear indication that if need be, weapons and equipment will be used with full force".

cation that if need be, the weapons, equipment will be used with full force," he said.

A 211-feet tall effigy of Ravana has been installed in Delhi's Dwarka Sector 10, touted as the tallest Ravana effigy in India. This eco-friendly structure, created by over 40 people, took nearly four months and a budget of around ₹30 lakh to complete.

Dwarka Shree Ram Leela Society organiser, Rajesh Gehlot said, "It took almost 4 months to make this Ravana effigy. The expenditure was around 30 lakh. You will get to see the tallest and most beautiful Ravan effigy in Dwarka."



DWARKA, DELHI

₹15.39Lcr 208 infra projects recommended for approval

PM GatiShakti

PTI

NEW DELHI

As many as 208 big-ticket infrastructure projects of different ministries, including roads and railways, worth ₹15.39 lakh crore have been recommended for approval under the PM GatiShakti initiative so far, a government official said on Saturday.

The projects have been recommended by the Network Planning Group (NPG) constituted under the PM GatiShakti initiative launched on October 13, 2021. "So far, 208 projects have been assessed under the initiative worth ₹15.39 lakh crore," secretary, department for promotion of industry and internal trade (DPIIT), Amardeep Singh Bhatia told reporters.

There are several benefits of using the system, including significant cuts in time and cost for planning these infra-



structure projects, he added.

The maximum number of projects recommended by the group are related to roads (101), railways (73), urban development (12), and four from the oil and gas ministry.

The inter-ministerial NPG meets every fortnight and appraises infra projects to ensure multi-modality, synchronisation of efforts, and comprehensive development in and around the project location.

The initiative was launched to develop an integrated infrastructure to reduce logistics costs. All logistics and connectivity infrastructure projects,

entailing investments of over ₹500 crore are routed through the NPG.

The NPG's approval is required before the clearance of the project by the public investment board (PIB) or department of expenditure under the finance ministry.

The NMP (national master plan) has over 1,600 layers of geospatial data, showing all physical and social infrastructure of an area and land records in one place. It has been designed for faster planning and better design so that the impact of an investment is maximised.

The NPG has representations from various connectivity infrastructure ministries/departments, involving their heads of network planning division for unified planning and integration of the proposals. All the departments approach the NPG first for approval before making a DPR (detailed project report) at the planning stage. After the NPG's clearance, the project follows the normal procedure of approval by the finance ministry and the cabinet.

Over 1,600 layers of data, including those related to land, ports, forests, and highways, are available on the portal. Also, 156 critical infrastructure gaps to ports and for movement of bulk commodities like coal, cement, fertilisers and foodgrains, have been identified for intervention under the PM Gati Shakti initiative. The department is working with states for integration of updated land record data, the official added.

NIA begins probe into accident

CHENNAI

The NIA has initiated a probe into the Tamil Nadu train accident in which 19 people were injured. An NIA team arrived at the site where the Mysore-Darbhanga train collided with a stationary freight train.

On Saturday, Leader of Opposition in Lok Sabha Rahul Gandhi again questioned the record of the Railways following the Mysuru-Darbhanga train accident. In a post on "X", he wrote that it "mirrors the horrific Balasore accident -- a passenger train colliding with a stationary goods train."

Gandhi further charged that "despite many lives lost in numerous accidents, no lessons are learned." Stating that "accountability starts at the top", he asked "how many more families must be destroyed before this government wakes up?"

55 accidents in 126 days: Congress

Gaurav Vivek Bhatnagar

NEW DELHI

The Gandhi siblings — Rahul and Priyanka Vadra — on Saturday raised the issue of frequent train accidents taking precious lives and charged that despite a sharp rise in mishaps the Narendra Modi government has neither fixed any responsibility nor taken any action for such accidents.

Ever since the new government took over in June this year, the Congress has been raising the issue of train accidents becoming far too common. On completion of 100 days of the Modi 3.0 government in September too, the party had claimed that there were 38 railway accidents during the period and yet Railway Minister Ashwini Vaishnav had dismissed these as "minor incidents". The Congress on Saturday said that in the first 126 days of the Modi 3.0 government there have been 55 train accidents in which 21 people have lost their lives and over 131 have been injured.

'Madrasas protect oriental languages'

IANS

VARANASI

After the National Commission for Protection of Child Rights (NCPCR) recommended the government to discontinue funding to Madrasa Boards, various Muslim leaders on Saturday criticised the NCPCR over its recommendations, saying that they protect the oriental languages.

Stopping funding and ultimately closing down the madrasas is not a positive step. Sanskrit Patshals and Madrasas were set up in 1908 to promote and protect the oriental languages. They were established under an education system," Diwan Saheb Jamoun Khan, principal of a madrasa in UP, said.

Actor Sidhique questioned again

PTI

THIRUVANANTHAPURAM

Malayalam film actor Sidhique was on Saturday questioned again by the Special Investigation Team (SIT) in a rape case registered against him.

This is the second time he

has been questioned by the SIT in the case lodged on a complaint by a young woman actor.

RAPE CASE

Sidhique was questioned for close to two hours by the officials at the Cantonment police station here. He arrived for questioning around 10.40

AM and left close to 12.30 PM.

The actor was questioned for nearly four hours by the SIT earlier this week on Monday. The rape case was registered against him after a young female actor alleged that Sidhique sexually assaulted her at a hotel in Thiruvananthapuram under the pretext of offering her a role in a film.

AM and left close to 12.30 PM.

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CHEDDA NAGAR | Opened on Saturday, flyover comes as relief for those heading to Chembur, Thane; congestion impact rippled across suburbs Now, fly over annoying jams

Aishwarya Iyer

MUMBAI

The much-awaited Chedda Nagar flyover on the Eastern Express Highway (EEH) was opened to motorists on Saturday, after being inaugurated by Chief Minister Eknath Shinde.

The new infra comes as much respite for motorists, who struggled to navigate the Chedda Nagar Junction, a notorious choke point, where traffic from the Eastern Express Highway (EEH) and the Santacruz-Chembur Link Road (SCLR) converge. Ensuing congestion hits movement in both the eastern and western suburbs.

Following persistent complaints, the Mumbai Metropolitan Region Development Authority (MMRDA) initiated the 'Chedda Nagar Junction Traffic Improvement' project in 2017 at an estimated cost of Rs249 crore. The new flyover – a part of the project – will direct motorists towards Vikhroli, Mulund, Thane and further along connecting routes to Nashik, according to

Salman Ansari



signboards placed at the entry of the northbound lane.

As many took the maiden ride on the new flyover, The Free Press Journal spoke to some of them. Sanjeev Singh, a motorist, said, "I was unhappy with the concretisation. The ride was quite shaky" Sanjeev Tailang, another commuter, said, "The chances of congestion at the entrance are high as

heavy traffic from the SCLR converges at that spot. Still, it feels like a relief." Dr J Gada, a motorist from Mulund, added, "I expect traffic will flow smoothly since the road is wide, but the entrance is at a key intersection with traffic coming from the SCLR, Ghatkopar-Mankhurd Link Road (GMLR) and Sion. I hope it's managed well by the traffic police."

As per the 2017 plan, MMRDA was to build three flyovers and a vehicular subway. A three-lane Ghatkopar flyover, providing east-to-west connectivity between Chedda Nagar and the SCLR, was opened in 2022. However, congestion between Thane and Mumbai persisted as nearly 6,000 vehicles use the stretch daily.

In 2023, another flyover,

The entrance of flyover sees traffic from multiple routes. Hope, it's managed well by the traffic police

Dr J Gada
Motorist

passing above the Chedda Nagar Junction and connecting Thane, was opened. Vehicles arriving from Mankhurd via the GMLR further worsen the congestion at the Chedda Nagar Junction, especially for motorists heading towards Thane. Similar problems are faced by those traversing the Amar Mahal Junction, another major choke point. Now, the officials predict that the new flyover will help ease the woes of Thane, Chembur commuters.

According to the officials, another flyover connecting Amar Mahal in Chembur to Vikhroli is 95% complete and will likely be opened soon.

Replies to the video, X user Sahil Ghodivde posted, "Recently inaugurated Metro 3 Santacruz station entrance inundated with leaking water from the roof. Quality of work is questionable." Another X user #DharamSankat #VanJeevi asked, "What would happen during downpour in Mumbai during a normal monsoon day, wherein we get 200-300 mm of rain within 24 hours?"

Taking serious cognisance of the issue, Mumbai Metro Rail Corporation (MMRCL) spokesperson said, "At Santacruz metro station, a canopy gutter at one of the entries overflowed during heavy rains.

The problem was immediately fixed; there is no likelihood of recurrence. There is no impact on the functioning of the station and it remains fully operational."

Phase one of the 12.34-km-long Metro 3 between Aarey Colony and Bandra Kurla Complex (BKC) was inaugurated by Prime Minister Narendra Modi on October 4.

Raina Assainar
NAVI MUMBAI

Woman, 52, lost ₹12.77 lakh in KYC update scam; scammed citizen was duped of ₹4.54 lakh in another case

Failed to update the KYC. He then sent a link to the woman, asking her to visit the same for updating the KYC. Next evening, she lost the whopping amount.

In another case, a 67-year-old retired man was duped of more than Rs4 lakh, while he was trying to get his bank's helpline number from the

internet. In his complaint to the Panvel city police, the senior citizen said that he was trying to contact the SBI bank. As he couldn't reach the bank, he started looking for the SBI helpline on the internet. He later received a call from a person, who claimed to be a banker and offered help. He easily made him 'update' the bank app, took his privy details and siphoned Rs4.54 lakh.

The scammer also tried to siphon Rs3.75 lakh money from the sexagenarian's fixed deposit of Rs5 lakh. The latter sensed something amiss and disconnected the call immediately.

Report: Kalpesh Mhamunkar

THANE CREEK BRIDGE'S NORTH CHANNEL OPENS TODAY (OCT 14)



About Thane Creek Bridge 3

Location:
Sion-Panvel Highway
2 three-lane bridges
Work on south channel from Pune to Mumbai underway

Length
3,180 mt
Project cost
₹559 crore

Revas-Redi coastal road
498 km

Bridge over Agardanda creek
4.31 Km
₹1,315 crore
Timeframe 3 years

Bankot Creek Bridge
Bagmandla
1.71km; ₹408 crore

October 13

■ Chief Minister Eknath Shinde to inaugurate the north channel of Thane Creek Bridge 3 from Mumbai to Pune
■ CM to also lay foundation stones for 7 other creek bridges between Rewas in Raigad and Redi in Sindhudurg

October 14

Thane creek's north channel to open to traffic

Cons impersonate bankers, siphon lakhs in two frauds

Raina Assainar

NAVI MUMBAI

In separate frauds, two residents from Navi Mumbai, including a senior citizen, lost several lakhs to cons impersonating bankers.

In the first case, a 52-year-old woman from Kharghar lost Rs12.77 lakh after falling prey to KYC update fraud. In her complaint to the Kharghar police, she said that the fraudster called her on October 1, while posing as an employee of Axis Bank. The scammer warned that the woman would have to pay a fine of Rs3,500 and her account could get closed if she

failed to update the KYC. He then sent a link to the woman, asking her to visit the same for updating the KYC. Next evening, she lost the whopping amount.

In another case, a 67-year-old retired man was duped of more than Rs4 lakh, while he was trying to get his bank's helpline number from the

internet. In his complaint to the Panvel city police, the senior citizen said that he was trying to contact the SBI bank. As he couldn't reach the bank, he started looking for the SBI helpline on the internet. He later received a call from a person, who claimed to be a banker and offered help. He easily made him 'update' the bank app, took his privy details and siphoned Rs4.54 lakh.

The scammer also tried to siphon Rs3.75 lakh money from the sexagenarian's fixed deposit of Rs5 lakh. The latter sensed something amiss and disconnected the call immediately.



Loaded with devotion

On the auspicious occasion of Dussehra, shastra pooja was performed at the Mumbai Central Railway police station –Salman Ansari

Metro 3's Kalina stn fails rain test

Bhalchandra Chorghade

MUMBAI

The Aqua Line or Metro 3 services, which began operations on October 4, faced an early test of resilience as heavy downpour led to significant leaks at the Kalina station. Commuters shared images and videos of the waterlogged station, raising concerns about the line's durability and readiness.

Witnesses described the scene as chaotic, with water pouring from the ceilings and puddles forming on the ground. Many were seen navigating the slippery surfaces with caution. "Mumba's new Aqua Line can't even survive a week," activist Zoru Bhathena said along with a video of the leaking roof on X.

Commuters shared visuals of the waterlogged station; raised concerns about newly-opened line's readiness

Replying to the video, X user Sahil Ghodivde posted, "Recently inaugurated Metro 3 Santacruz station entrance inundated with leaking water from the roof. Quality of work is questionable." Another X user #DharamSankat #VanJeevi asked, "What would happen during downpour in Mumbai during a normal monsoon day, wherein we get 200-300 mm of rain within 24 hours?"

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The problem was immediately fixed; there is no likelihood of recurrence. There is no impact on the functioning of the station and it remains fully operational."

Phase one of the 12.34-km-long Metro 3 between Aarey Colony and Bandra Kurla Complex (BKC) was inaugurated by Prime Minister Narendra Modi on October 4.

BDD chawl lottery for cops

As a Dussehra gift, Chief Minister Eknath Shinde on Saturday announced that wives of 450 cops will be allotted homes in Worli's BDD chawl through a lottery tomorrow (October 14). The decision fulfills the long-standing demand of these women, who have been striving for housing in the same locality for the last 18 months. MP Shrikant Shinde had raised the matter with the CM, who is his father. Joyous women reached the CM's official residence, Varsha, and celebrated with Shrikant. The MP said that the CM has revitalized several long-stalled projects, including redevelopment of the Ramabai Colony.

Report: Kalpesh Mhamunkar

Activist cries foul as CM launches Aarey road works

Dhairyaj Gajara

MUMBAI

Chief Minister Eknath Shinde inaugurated the repair work of Aarey Colony's internal roads on Saturday morning. Within hours, the retired Navy official Binod Agarwal, who had drawn the Bombay High Court's attention to the condition of the roads, launched a scathing attack against the CM and a BJP worker for falsely taking credit for the work. He also alleged contempt of court, citing the order to refrain from using the work to gain political mileage.

In April, the Bombay High Court, on Agarwal's petition, had directed multiple authorities to urgently upgrade the internal roads of Aarey Colony. Agarwal himself is a resident of Aarey Colony's Royal Palms society. The Maharashtra Public Works Special Project Division issued an order on September 24 for the repair works at a cost of Rs47.98 crore.

In a letter to the CM, Agarwal said that the road work has started due to the area's residents who took the matter to the court. He included pictures of banners put up by state BJP coordinator Dr Chander Purswani, who claimed that the work is the result of his correspondence.

Agarwal told the FPJ, "Residents like me took the matter to court and got success after three years. It would have been apt if the event had been held in the honour of the residents."



CIDCO's 26.5k housing units up for grabs

Raina Assainar

NAVI MUMBAI

The registration for 26,502 housing units by the City and Industrial Development Corporation (CIDCO) opened on Saturday. This is nearly half of the 67,000 units being launched by the corporation. Its MD Vijay Singhal said it is the first time that they are offering the 'My preferred CIDCO Home' scheme in which the applicant can choose the floor in the building.

The registration for the scheme will remain open for the next 30 days. It offers affordable housing for the Economically Weaker Section (EWS) and Low-Income Group (LIG) at Vashi, Taloja, Khandeshwar, Panvel and Ulwe nodes.

These projects are close to both commercial hubs and railway stations.

Interested applicants can sign-up on www.cidcos.com and enter full name, Aadhaar Number and PAN Number. An OTP will be sent to a mobile number linked with the Aadhaar following which registered applicants will be prompted to submit project preferences. Potential buyers must choose from 15 options in three rounds with a maximum of three options per round.



Beverly Park Social and Cultural Organisation, Mira Road, celebrates 12th year of Durga puja

int'l sports event

'Ironman' cops make India proud at triathlon

Megha Kuchik

MUMBAI

Beating all odds, Dattatray Kale and Mohan Pawar – two cops from the state – proved their mettle and unfurled the tricolour at the Triathlon 2024, an international sporting event held in Gurye, South Korea. On September 29, both the 38 year olds won the coveted Ironman title after completing gruelling tasks in record time, while battling extreme cold weather. The feat of the duo, who serve with the Solapur city police, becomes more praiseworthy, given the fact that they come from small villages and prepared for the event, while simultaneously performing their duties.

Hailing from the Shindia Budruk hamlet in Man Taluka, Satara district, Kale was initially inducted in the State Reserve Police Force and made his way into Force One after the 26/11 attacks. During this time, he began taking interest in marathons and eventually ran the Mumbai Full Marathon. In 2012, he passed the Maharashtra



PSI Pawar in yellow jersey and API Kale in blue jersey

Public Service Commission (MPSC) exam and became an assistant police inspector. Last year, he competed in the Bergman Triathlon, a multi-sport event in which he performed exceptionally well.

Notably, Kale also served as the leader of the C-60 commando team in Gadchiroli,

where he took part in numerous anti-insurgency operations and eliminated several ultras. For his bravery, he was awarded the President's Police Medal for Gallantry and the anti-Naxal award in 2017. Similarly, Pawar, who comes from the Mendenpur village in Solapur, passed the MPSC exam in 2016. Before becoming a police sub-inspector, he participated in several marathons and ran 5km daily for

adjusted the time accordingly during night shifts. The going got even tougher when they had to travel to Pune or Mumbai for court work. They didn't lose grit and carried their training gear with them to continue practice whenever and wherever possible. Their coach, Kiran Sahu, was also instrumental in shaping their success, with a strict training schedule and diet plan.

Summing up the arduous journey, Kale said, "IPS officer Krishna Prakash, who completed the Ironman Triathlon, was my inspiration. It's essential to stay physically and mentally fit in our fast-paced lives." Pawar added, "The environment in Gurye was extremely cold, but our training helped us to adjust. However, I did face problems when it came to food because I am a vegetarian. Another challenge was my cycle, which was a regular one, while others had expensive bikes."

Draw for 12k flats across satellite cities

FPJ News Service

MUMBAI

The Konkan Housing and Area Development Board, a regional unit of MHADA, has commenced the registration and application process for the sale of 12,626 housing units through a draw. These flats are located across Thane, Kalyan, Navi Mumbai, Palghar, Raigad, Ratnagiri, and Sindhudurg. The 'Go-Live' ceremony to mark the start of the lottery was inaugurated by Maharashtra Housing and Area Development Board (MHADA) CEO Sanjeev Jaiswal on Friday.

Of the total flats, 10,428 will be allotted to those from the economically-weaker section followed by 1,981 (low-income group), 85 (middle-income) and 132 (high-income). Pointing out that the entire lottery system is computerised, Jaiswal alerted the citizens to verify the authenticity of the websites before getting registered.

Applications can be made through MHADA's official websites: <https://housing.mhada.gov.in> and <https://lottery.mhada.gov.in>. Jaiswal emphasised that the MHADA does not collect any advance payments apart from the earnest money deposit.

MCF's mental health helpline assists 10k+

Staff Reporter

PUNE-based Muktaa Charitable Foundation's (MCF) Mental Health Helpline is answering India's mental health needs through free and anonymous tele-counselling. From a 32-year-old man from a small village in Maharashtra unable to cope with being cheated on by his wife to a 27-year-old woman in Bihar who misses playing with her children as she suffers from tuberculosis, over 10,000 individuals have reached out to the helpline to seek support for their emotional distress.

Speaking about the initiative, Dr Rupa Agarwal, co-founder, Muktaa Mental Health Helpline, said, "The free and anonymous helpline supports callers from across the country for any kind of mental distress — whether it is suicide ideation, romantic relationships, family and relative dynamics, academic and career, sexual and reproductive health, or physical health concerns. 59% of the helpline's callers are men, 40% are women, and 1% are transgender. Notably, 4,668 callers have utilised our services multiple times and 2,213 have opted for a free callback, either due to calling outside of our operating hours or to avoid incurring telecom costs."

"Mental health may appear an individual's problem but it is not. Suffering is caused by social and cultural factors, and only when these factors are considered can help alleviate the suffering. Fostering a culture of mental well-being is a shared responsibility, and individuals and communities play a vital role in supporting each other's mental health. By engaging in open conversations about mental health, actively listening without judgement, and encouraging others to seek help, communities can create safe space for emotional support. Support groups, public mental health workshops, and promoting the use of helplines can strengthen mental health services within communities. When we rely on one another, we build trust, empathy and emotional resilience. Coming together to address mental health issues can help build a society that values well-being, encourages openness, and fosters a sense of collective healing," she added.

THE FALL | Nearly 70% fewer EVs have been registered in Pune during the festive season this year vis-a-vis those in 2023

EV sales during Dussehra significantly down in Pune

Ankit Shukla

PUNE



wheelers, 26 cars, 14 goods vehicles, five auto-rickshaws and nine taxis.

Recently, Union Minister of Road Transport and Highways Nitin Gadkari made a statement that dampened the optimism of the EV manufacturers, saying that there is no need to provide subsidies to electric vehicle makers as the cost of production has come down and consumers are now opting for EVs or CNG vehicles on their own.

However, this year saw a significant decrease in the number of electric vehicles (EVs) being purchased and registered. Last year, a total of 1,031 electric vehicles were registered, which included 903 two-wheelers, 120 cars, seven goods vehicles and one auto-rickshaw. This year saw a registration of only 363 electric vehicles.

Speaking at an event, Gadkari said initially costs of manufacturing EVs were high, but as demand has increased,

production costs have dropped, making further subsidies unnecessary.

"Consumers are now choosing electric and CNG vehicles on their own and I do not think we need to provide much subsidy for electric vehicles," he said.

Currently, there is a lower rate of GST on electric vehicles (5%) compared to petrol and diesel vehicles (28%).

"In my opinion, manufacturing of electric vehicles no longer needs to be subsidised by the government," Gadkari said, adding the demand for subsidies isn't justified any-

more.

Meanwhile, the Union government last month announced a Rs10,900 crore EV subsidy scheme, the PM E-Drive. The new scheme aims to boost the adoption of electric buses and bring the curtains down on subsidies for electric and hybrid cars. The scheme also aims to develop an extensive charging infrastructure. In his scheme, money has also been earmarked to provide subsidies for electric two-wheelers, three-wheelers, trucks and hybrid ambulances.

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Outstanding GST dues amounting to Rs1,400 crore from the Maharashtra government have led to a severe financial deficit for Pune Municipal Corporation (PMC), which is facing a severe annual financial shortfall of Rs200 crore, accumulating since 2019. This deficit is reportedly putting a significant strain on the PMC's capacity of delivering essential civic services and completing vital infrastructure projects in the Deccan city.

The financial challenge for PMC started with the merger of 34 villages in 2017, contributing to additional stamp duty collections, but the funds were not credited to the civic treas-

a senior Urban Development official raising concerns on the poor planning and management of civic funds.

The civic infrastructure and development demands of the newly-merged villages for critical civic services like drainage, sewage treatment and road improvement have been delayed due to a lack of funds.

PMC Commissioner Rajendra Bhosale has sent several reminders to the state government to clear outstanding dues for essential civic services and development of the rapid urban demands of the Deccan city.

The PMC letters demand the timely release of GST and stamp duty dues to face the rising financial hardship to manage the civic needs of Pune.



Outstanding GST dues of ₹1.4k crore affecting PMC's service delivery

FPJ News Network

MUMBAI

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Festive glitter

Pune's Laxmi Road dazzles with festive lights in celebration of Dussehra and Diwali. Pic: Anand Chaini

Deputy Chief Minister Fadnavis announces new ACP and DCP to manage Pune's traffic problems

Staff Reporter

PUNE

In a bid to tackle Pune's growing traffic woes, Maharashtra Deputy Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis, who is also the state's Home Minister, has announced that an additional commissioner-rank officer, along with an additional deputy commissioner of police, has been assigned to supervise and manage road traffic in the city. He was speaking at an event organised at Pune city police headquarters at Shivajinagar on Friday.

During the event, Fadnavis either inaugurated or performed ground-breaking ceremonies for various projects worth more than Rs700 crore. This included the inauguration



of seven new police stations in Pune city and four in Pimpri-Chinchwad.

Speaking on the occasion, Fadnavis said he has instructed the police department that there should be no slackness or compromise while dealing with crimes against women and children.

"As long as there are crimi-

nal tendencies in society, crime will take place. What is important is whether crimes get solved and criminals punished. When we assess policing, it is important to see how many cases have been solved and how many criminals have been punished. It is also important to see whether people feel safe or not, what is the safety per-

ception," he said.

Fadnavis also claimed that cases under the Protection of Children from Sexual Offences Act and crimes against women are now being reported, and drug rackets are being exposed.

"Though it looks worrisome,

if we continue to sweep these crimes under the carpet and suppress them, there will be challenges before future generations. That is why, I have asked police to concentrate on solving the crimes against women, and not to compromise against crime against women, children and drug offences," he said.

If a police officer is found to be involved in such cases, he or she is not suspended but dismissed on the spot, Fadnavis added.

The Manjari branch is located at Satyam Business Court on Pune-Solapur Road, while the Tathawde branch is at Azure Paranjpe Scheme, Bhumkar Chowk, near Vision-One Mall.

The two new branches of Cosmos Cooperative Bank Ltd, Manjari and Tathawde, were inaugurated by Chairman CA Milind Kale. With the opening of these branches, the total number of branches in Pune has now reached 45, Kale informed.

Manjari and Tathawde are rapidly developing areas, and Cosmos Bank has made the

Vanaz station, Warje Malwadi from Deccan Gymkhana and Nalstop stations, Lohegaon Airport from Yerawada and Ramwadi stations, etc.

However, the frequency of these buses ranges from 10 to 150 minutes. Therefore, many Twitter users are criticising the low frequency and demanding that these feeder buses be available every 15

minutes.

"150, 105, 50??? What kind of frequency is this? One can go up and down the metro line 3-4 times in 150 minutes. For the feeder route to be of any use it should have a frequency of 15 minutes at the max. Any lesser is useless (sic)," wrote an X user.

Other X users also criticised the long gap.

Light rainfall till October 17

Staff Reporter

PUNE

The India Meteorological Department (IMD) has predicted light rainfall in the city until Oct 17, accompanied by generally cloudy skies.

From today, Oct 13, until Oct 17, the IMD stated that there will be a "generally cloudy sky with thunder, lightning and light rain".

During this period, the maximum temperature is expected to range from 31-33 degrees Celsius, while the minimum temperature will be between 20-22 degrees Celsius.

Meanwhile, widespread moderate rains lashed the city on Friday. Pune city recorded 18.2 mm rainfall between 7pm and 8pm, IMD said.

Cosmos Bank inaugurates new branches

Staff Reporter

PUNE

and lauded the PCMC officials for their dedication and hard work at the Ramkrishna More Prekshagriha in Chinchwad. Here, an orchestra also played songs for the enjoyment of the staff.

Taking to X (formerly Twitter), Singh congratulated the civic body on its 42nd foundation day. He wrote, "As our Pimpri Chinchwad Municipal Corporation celebrates its 42nd anniversary, I extend my heartfelt gratitude to all citizens, staff members, and public representatives for being the driving force behind our city's extraordinary growth. From a modest

township to a vibrant urban hub, our progress reflects your dedication, resilience, and collective spirit. Let's continue this journey together as we strive towards a sustainable, innovative, and inclusive future. Here's to many more years of growth and success for PCMC! Happy 42nd Anniversary, PCMC!"

History

Pimpri Chinchwad came into existence after the state government decided to merge four gram panchayats of Pimpri, Chinchwad, Bhosari and Akurdi to form the Pimpri Chinchwad Municipal



PCMC marks 42nd Foundation Day with cultural & sports events

Staff Reporter

PIMPRI CHINCHWAD

The Pimpri-Chinchwad Municipal Corporation (PCMC) celebrated its 42nd foundation day on Friday with enthusiasm. On this occasion, various activities were held for the officers and employees of the civic body.

At the beginning, PCMC Commissioner Shekhar Singh offered floral tributes to the late Annasaheb Magar in the main administrative building premises. Later, a blood donation camp was organised on the premises of the main administrative building. Officers and

employees of various departments of the PCMC contributed to the social work by donating blood after Singh's appeal.

Following this, officers and employees of the municipal corporation enjoyed various sports and cultural programmes. Games like musical chairs and tug of war were organised for the PCMC staff. A special event titled "New Home Minister," exclusively for female employees, was held. The feature of the event was the prize of Pathani saree.

To conclude the event, Singh presented awards to the winners of the activities

and lauded the PCMC officials for their dedication and hard work at the Ramkrishna More Prekshagriha in Chinchwad. Here, an orchestra also played songs for the enjoyment of the staff.

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Quick Trail

UDUPI

Grassroots-level studies crucial for Western Ghats conservation

The Western Ghats, known for their rich biodiversity and extensive forest wealth, require in-depth study at grassroots level to ensure effective conservation efforts, said Ullas Karanth, a senior wildlife expert and former director of the Wildlife Conservation Society of India.

During an interaction with journalists here on Thursday, Karanth emphasised that environmental conservation cannot be accomplished by merely relying on broad reports or aerial surveys.

"Conservation efforts need to be grounded in field studies and on-the-ground assessments," he said.

He also highlighted the growing opposition from local communities towards environmental and wildlife conservation projects.

Karanth attributed this resistance to the controversial Madhav Gadgil Committee report, which proposed sweeping environmental protection that encompassed entire villages and talus without sufficiently engaging local populations.

"The absence of meaningful grassroots involvement in these studies has fuelled public resistance," he remarked.

MYSURU

Mysuru Royal family welcomes new baby boy



This year's Dasara celebrations have brought joy to the Mysuru royal family, as family scion and MP Yaduveer Wadiyar welcomed a baby boy on Friday.

The Wadiyars of the Mysuru royal family have a history spanning 415 years.

His wife, Trishikha Devi, delivered their second son at a private hospital in Yadavagiri in the city. Yaduveer's first son, Adyaveer Wadiyar, was born in 2017.

Amid discussions of "suthaka" on social media regarding this birth during the festival celebrations, the royal family continued their private Dasara celebrations uninterrupted, following the advice of astrologers who prayed for the peace and prosperity of the people.

The private durbar, or khas durbar, is a tradition carried out by the Mysuru royal family for 415 years, involving a puja to a banni tree at the goddess Bhuvaneshwari temple within the Mysore Palace premises. This marks the conclusion of all ten days of Navratri festivities.

Congress govt in Karnataka withdraws case against Hubballi rioters who attacked police

NT Correspondent

BENGALURU

The Congress government in Karnataka has decided to withdraw a criminal case registered against a mob which had attacked policemen with stones on April 16, 2022 in Hubballi town.

This was one of the 43 cases the state Cabinet decided to withdraw at its meeting on Thursday following a petition by the Anjuman-e-Islam to the Home Minister G Parameshwara, official sources said.

Union Minister Pralhad Joshi on Saturday described the Government's decision as "height of appeasement."

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withdrawn the case under the UAPA case, when the matter is before the NIA court. In normal course as far as I know, the state cannot withdraw it but still they have withdrawn it. This is the height of appeasement," Joshi said.

Chief Minister Siddaramaiah said: "The government has the powers to withdraw some cases. There is a Cabinet subcommittee under Home Minister's leadership, as per their discretion they have taken the decision and the Cabinet has approved it. I will see what it is."

On BJP planning a protest against the decision in Hubballi in north Karnataka, Siddaramaiah told reporters in Mysuru: "BJP always protests on false issues, not on true issues..."

According to the police, an accused had allegedly posted derogatory content on social media.

"Upset with the post, nearly 150 people from the minority community armed with stones and clubs gathered near the Old Hubballi



Kannada flag must on state formation day: Govt to bizmen

NT Correspondent

BENGALURU

Karnataka Deputy Chief Minister D K Shivakumar on Friday said Kannada flag should compulsorily be hoisted at all educational institutions, businesses and factories, including in the information technology and biotechnology sector, in Bengaluru on November 1, the state's formation day.

He said about 50 per cent of people residing in the city and Bengaluru Urban district are from other states, and they should also give priority to learn Kannada language," Shivakumar said.

Everyone should feel that one cannot live in Karnataka without knowing Kannada, Shivakumar said.

Schools and colleges, along with hoisting the Kannada flag on November 1, should also hold cultural programmes, like it is held on Independence and Republic Days. Respect should be shown towards the Kannada flag, he said.

The Minister said he was not asking factories and businesses to organise cultural events, but the Kannada flag should be hoisted compulsorily," Shivakumar said.

An order to this effect would be issued, he told reporters here.

He said: "I'm informing everyone that on this Kannada land, learning Kannada is their duty, we have made Kannada a subject compulsory at schools."

Politics of appeasement: BJP accuses Congress

NT Correspondent

NEW DELHI

The BJP on Friday accused the Congress government in Karnataka of indulging in "politics of appeasement" and asked how will the party protect the country's democracy if it cannot even protect the police personnel of the state under its rule.

This came after the Karnataka government decided to withdraw a criminal case registered against a group of people, who had attacked the policemen with stones in Hubballi town on April 16, 2022.

"I am absolutely flabbergasted. This is nothing but the politics of appeasement. There were extremely serious allegations. There was

an attack on a police station. Over 158 people were involved in this case of serious rioting," BJP MP Bansuri Swaraj told a press conference at the party headquarters here when asked for comment.

The police personnel had suffered injuries in the incident, she said and asked if

the Congress government in Karnataka cannot protect the "protectors of the country", how will it protect democracy.

"I am really shocked to see that Deputy Chief Minister D K Shivakumar wrote to the Karnataka Police department asking for withdrawal of these cases.

Cong MLA slams party, says govt did nothing for farmers

NT Correspondent

BELAGAVI

Ruling Congress MLA Bharamouda Kage alias Raju Kage on Friday accused the state government of doing nothing for farmers and he has been highlighting this for the last one year.

Alleging that no schemes were introduced in the state for the farmers to survive, he even threatened to end his life at Vidhana Soudha, the seat of state legislature and secretariat in Bengaluru, for the agrarian cause.

"No schemes for farm-

ers are being introduced. You must understand this. Should I tell you lies and do drama? What will the country eat if the rice and other crops are not grown? Should we eat currency notes? First help farmers to survive."

Kage said at an event in Tawashi village in his Kagawad constituency in Belagavi district on Thursday.

Stating that this country can progress only when farmers survive, the MLA said, this has been his only cry for the past one year.



Injustice meted out to Karnataka in tax devolution; will fight it out: Shivakumar

NT Correspondent

BENGALURU

Alleging that the Centre has done injustice by allocating less funds to Karnataka in the tax devolution, Deputy Chief Minister D K Shivakumar on Saturday said that the Congress government in the state would fight it out. Shivakumar, also the state Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman, they remain silent even though injustice is happening to the state. This is shameful," he said.

When pointed to the BJP's reported defence that the population of the states being used as a criterion for devolution of taxes and comparison to the figures due for Oct 2024.

Speaking to reporters here, he said, "We will formulate a programme to fight for our tax, our right".

"Why have BJP MPs and Central ministers not raised their voices? Despite having five Central ministers from the state, including Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman, they remain silent even though injustice is happening to the state. This is shameful," he said.

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Responding to a question on the opposition's criticism of the term "evil forces"

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Wp Briefs**NICARAGUA**
No diplomatic relations with Israel

Nicaragua is breaking off diplomatic relations with Israel, the Central American nation has said, calling the Israeli government "fascist" and "genocidal". Nicaragua's government, in a statement, said the break in relations was due to Israel's attacks on Palestinian territories. The nation's congress had, earlier in the day, passed a resolution requesting Nicaragua take action to coincide with the one-year anniversary of the Gaza war. The conflict, the Nicaraguan government said, now also "extends against Lebanon and gravely threatens Syria, Yemen and Iran". Iran is an ally of Nicaraguan President Daniel Ortega's administration. Nicaragua has become increasingly isolated in recent years after Ortega cracked down on anti-government protests in 2018, which rights groups say left around 300 dead.

PAKISTAN
101 killed for 'honour'

As many as 101 men and women were killed in the name of honour in Sindh from January - June 2024, according to figures released by the Sindh Suhai Organisation, a social and women rights body. Pakistan-based The Express Tribune reported. The organisation voiced concern regarding rising incidents of violence against women, including murder and sexual harassment, in the province. According to the data released by the women rights body on Friday, a majority of honour killings took place in the Jacobabad district of Sindh, where 22 women and 12 men were killed for honour. Numerous incidents remain unreported, and in instances where the state does register complaints, families of women killed for alleged dishonour often do not pursue legal action. Even when they do, they frequently reach a compromise later on, the report said.

UNITED STATES**Dogs maul man to death**

A 59-year-old man was mauled to death when a pack of dogs attacked him in a backyard next to a house where two dozen of the animals were kept, police said Thursday. Officers responding to a call found eight or nine mixed-breed pit bulls attacking James Provost of nearby Schenectady on Wednesday evening. One of the officers fired his weapon to stop the attack, killing one dog and dispersing the others, Albany Police Chief Eric Hawkins said. Provost was declared dead at the scene. A caretaker helped round up the dogs, which were taken to a shelter. Their fate will be determined by a judge.

CAMPAIGN AGAINST HAMAS | In the past week, the Israeli military used jets and artillery to pound areas in and around Jabaliya

North Gazans told to evacuate

Agencies

JERUSALEM/GAZA STRIP/BEIRUT



Palestinians flee Gaza following Israel's rampant attacks

- AFP

The Israeli military on Saturday renewed its orders for Palestinians in the northern Gaza Strip to leave their homes and shelters as troops press on a week-long offensive against militants. The orders were issued even as Israeli forces continued to strike northern Gaza's Jabalia town and refugee camp throughout the day. At least 30 people were killed in the strikes, Gaza's civil defence agency has said. Israeli military spokesman Avichay Adraee told people to leave parts of Gaza City's Sheikh Radwan neighborhood and other areas in and around Jabalia, the urban refugee camp where Israeli forces carried out several major operations over the course of the war and then returned as militants regrouped. In a post on X, Adraee asked people to head south to Muwasi, a packed area in southern Gaza designed by the military as a humanitarian zone.

Most of the fighting in the

past week was centered in and around Jabalia that was pounded by Israeli war jets and artillery. Residents said they have been trapped inside their homes and shelters. The military also ordered the three main hospitals in northern Gaza to evacuate patients and medical staff. The civil defence agency's spokesperson, Mahmud Bassal, said a strike

that occurred before 9:40pm local time on Friday killed 12 people, including women and children, while 14 were missing and likely trapped under the rubble. Before that incident, Ahmad al-Kahlut — director of the agency in northern Gaza, said 18 people had been killed by several strikes, including hits on eight schools in the camp that were

serving as shelters for displaced people. In total, the day's strikes left at least 110 injured, according to figures provided by Bassal and Kahlut. The Israeli military did not respond to questions posed by the news agency AFP about the strikes on schools in Jabalia, the largest of Gaza's historic refugee camps.

Earlier, medics told Reuters

that at least 61 Palestinians were killed across the Gaza Strip on Friday. The charity Médecins Sans Frontières (MSF), meanwhile, said thousands of people remained trapped in the camp while one staff member said people trying to leave are being shot. "Nobody is allowed to get in or out; anyone who tries is getting shot," MSF project coordinator Sarah Vuylsteke said on X. Five MSF staff were trapped in Jabalia, she said.

"I don't know what to do; at any moment we could die. People are starving. I am afraid to stay, and I am also afraid to leave," she quoted Haydar, an MSF driver, as saying. At least 15 of the fatalities in Jabalia since dawn on Friday were due to Israeli strikes targeting various areas, including a school sheltering displaced individuals, the official Palestinian news agency Wafa said.

In Lebanon, an Israeli airstrike killed two Lebanese soldiers and injured three, hours after the Israel fired upon the headquarters of a UN peacekeeping mission in Lebanon for the second time in as many days.

Don seeks military cover with missiles

FPJ News Service

WASHINGTON

As the electioneering for the US presidential election entered the sprint phase, the Republican camp has put up a strange request: a military aircraft with deterrent systems to protect against surface-to-air missiles for former president Donald Trump in view of the two attempted assassinations and an ongoing threat from Iran. The camp also wanted additional security measures on the ground at the former president's campaign stops, CNN quoted sources familiar with the discussions.

In a tongue-in-cheek response, President Joe Biden said, in response to a query, that Trump's requests would be fulfilled — "as long as he doesn't ask for F-15s". "I've told the department to give him every single thing he needs ... as if he were a sitting President. If it fits into that category, that's fine," Biden said. Trump's team has also been informed that some of the requests aren't feasible for any presiden-

tial candidate. Federal officials said the request for additional resources could hit roadblocks given constitutional limits on the military operating inside the US. The requests from Trump's camp also include access to Camp David vehicles for Trump's primary motorcade as well as



such as drones with thermal monitoring. In the list is also a request that the US Secret Service increase stockpiles of ballistic glass across several key swing states that the agency now uses to encase Trump at his outdoor rallies. A spokesperson of the Secret Service said "the former president is receiving the highest levels of protection which include unmanned aerial vehicles, counter unmanned aerial surveillance systems, ballistics and other advanced technology systems."

Trump dusters up 1798 Act

After falsely claiming that Haitians in Springfield were eating the pet dogs and cats of their

White neighbours, Trump dustered the 1798 Alien Enemies Act to deport the "Venezuelan gangs" who are ruining the "beautiful city of Aurora" in Colorado. Trump did

not realise that the US does not have a deportation treaty with Venezuela.

Trump pointed to Aurora as evidence that immigrants are "violently" taking over the town. "You look at Aurora in Colorado. They are taking over the towns. They're taking over buildings," he said, calling for the death penalty for migrants who kill US citizens. Standing in front of alleged members of the Venezuelan gang Tren de Aragua, Trump also said that if elected, he would launch a national "Operation Aurora" to target the gang members. Colorado Gov. Jared Polis said Trump was only spreading lies about a wonderful city.

Vance again ducks question

After falsely claiming that Trump's running mate JD Vance has continued to skirt the issue on the 2020 polls which Trump tried to overturn. During a podcast interview with The New York Times, Vance ducked questions about Trump's 2020 defeat no less than five times, according to the newspaper. When pressed on the outcome of the election, Vance claimed censorship may have cost Trump millions of votes.

Harris in 'excellent health': Doc

AP

WASHINGTON

Kamala Harris is in "excellent health" and "possesses the physical and mental resiliency" required to serve as president, her doctor said in a letter released Saturday that summarizes her medical history and status. Dr. Joshua Simmons, a US Army colonel and physician to the VP, wrote that Harris, 59, maintains a healthy, active lifestyle and that her most recent physical last April was "unremarkable."

She "possesses the physical and mental resiliency required to successfully execute the duties of the Presidency, to include those as Chief Executive, Head of State and Commander in Chief," he wrote in a two-page letter.

Starmer's rocky 100 days as UK premier

AP

LONDON

British Prime Minister Sir Keir Starmer marks 100 days in office Saturday with little cause for celebration. Starmer's center-left Labour Party was elected by a landslide on July 4, sweeping back to power after 14 years. But after weeks of stories about feuding, freebies and fiscal gloom, polls suggest Starmer's personal approval rating has plummeted, and Labour is only slightly more popular than a Conservative Party that was rejected by voters after years of infighting and scandal.

One of the government's first acts was to strip millions of retirees of a payment intended to help heat their homes in winter. It was intended to signal determination to take tough economic decisions, but it spawned a



sharp backlash from Labour members and the public.

It also sat awkwardly with news that Starmer had accepted thousands of pounds' worth of clothes and designer eyeglasses.

The new government also faced days of far-right fueled anti-immigrant violence that erupted in towns and cities across England and Northern Ireland in summer.

Starmer's most intractable problem is Britain's sluggish economy, hobbled by rising public debt and low growth of just 0.2% in August.

Robotaxi fails to rev up interest

Agencies

SEATTLE

After Elon Musk unveiled Tesla's new Robotaxi, Wall Street surprisingly reacted with disappointment, with the company's shares falling around 6% in Friday's premarket trading session, according to a Wall Street Journal report, which added that this led to a \$40 billion slump in Tesla's valuation. The



Musk unveiled the highly anticipated self-driving taxi at a flashy event that was light on specifics

Robotaxi was a two-seat stage five autonomous car without a steering wheel or pedals.

"Investors we spoke to at the event thought the event was light on real numbers," the report quoted Tom Narayan, an analyst at Royal Bank of Canada as saying. "(The event) seemed focused on branding and marketing Tesla's vision."

Musk painted a picture of a sunny future with autonomous cars eliminating parking lots and rush-hour traffic, with only one brief mention that the vehicle would enter production in 2026 and cost less than \$30,000.

Charles III is OK if Australia replaces him as head of state

Agencies

LONDON



Britain's King Charles III has said he will not stand in the way if Australia wishes to replace him as the country's head of state, it has been reported. Ahead of his visit later this month, the King is said to be adopting an "anti-confrontational approach" to Australian republican campaigners, the Daily Mail reported. In response to the Australian Republican Movement's (ARM) request for a meeting with the monarch, the King's assistant secretary is understood to have emphasised his "deep love and affection" for Australia.

King Charles has said he will not stand in the way if Australia wishes to replace him as the country's head of state, the Guardian reported. Nathan Ross reportedly told the anti-

monarchs: "His majesty, as a constitutional monarch, acts on the advice of his ministers and whether Australia becomes a republic is, therefore, a matter for the Australian public to decide." The ARM says it is "the people's body advocating for an Australian republic with an Australian as our head of state". Australia held a referendum in 1999 on the issue of becoming a republic, in which 54.9% voted against. PM Anthony Albanese had previously said "Australia should have an Australian as our head of state", but recently indicated that a second referendum was not a priority.

Satellite images captured the astonishing rebirth of Lake Iriqui, a dry lake bed untouched by water for half a century, now refilled in the wake of the deluge. Morocco's meteorology officials called it an unparalleled event, with meteorologist Houssine Youabeb noting that it had been decades since such intense rainfall hit the region in such a short time.

The deluge, caused by an extratropical storm, raises questions about the future of Tagouit, a remote

Woman kills parents, lives with bodies

Agencies

ESSEX

A woman who murdered her parents and lived with their bodies for four years has been jailed for life with a minimum term of 36 years. Virginia McCullough, 36, poisoned her father, John McCullough, 70, with medication that she crushed and put into his drinks, the prosecutor Lisa Wilding KC told Chelmsford crown court. She then murdered her mother, Lois McCullough, 71, the following day, by attacking her with a hammer before stabbing her with a knife multiple times.

the Sahara's weather patterns. As atmospheric moisture increases, so does the potential for more frequent and powerful storms in this once dry landscape. The impact was devastating—claiming 18 lives and even extending into regions still reeling from an earthquake.

The Sahara Desert, a vast stretch covering over 9 million sq km, faces growing threats from extreme weather, driven by global warming. With dammed reservoirs refilling at unprecedented rates, scientists warn that such dramatic weather events may happen often. Celeste Saulo, Secretary-General of the World Meteorological Organization, stressed that rising global temperatures are disrupting the planet's water cycles, leading to severe floods and worsening droughts. "A warmer atmosphere holds more moisture, which is conducive to heavy rainfall. More rapid evaporation worsens drought conditions," she said.

Sahara Desert faces first floods in over 50 years

Agencies

RABAT

For the first time in over 50 years, the Sahara Desert—a place synonymous with arid landscapes and endless sand—has been struck by catastrophic floods. In a dramatic twist, two days of relentless rainfall in southeastern Morocco unleashed torrents that transformed the parched desert into a flooded expanse, a sight unseen for decades. Tagouit, a remote

village 450 kilometers south of Rabat, was at the center of this extraordinary event, recording more than 100 mm of rainfall in just 24 hours, far exceeding the region's yearly average.

Satellite images captured the astonishing rebirth of Lake Iriqui, a dry lake bed untouched by water for half a century, now refilled in the wake of the deluge. Morocco's meteorology officials called it an unparalleled event, with meteorologist Houssine Youabeb noting

SCO SUMMIT

Imran's party to hold protest on October 15



A protest held by the PTI party last month

- AFP

Such incidents are a replica of 2014-15, when a protest continued despite the Chinese president's visit

Shehzad Sharif
Prime Minister of Pakistan

leaders." The SCO Summit is set to be held in Islamabad from October 15-16. Earlier, Pakistan Prime Minister Shehzad Sharif said that the allegations were levelled against the government and attempts were made to create chaos at a time when the Chinese Premier was scheduled to pay a bilateral visit to the country.

He called the PTI's recent protest a replica of the 2014 sit-in by the party and asserted that the repeat of a "gory tale" would not be allowed at any cost, according to ARY News report.

Sharif said, "Such incidents are a replica of 2014-15 incidents when a sit-in was staged for months and was not called off despite the announcement of the Chinese president's visit to Pakistan without bothering about its impact on the country's image and national economy... We will not allow it to be repeated. We will not tolerate it at any rate, at any cost. This is my promise. I will not let it happen."

Deepali Dhangra

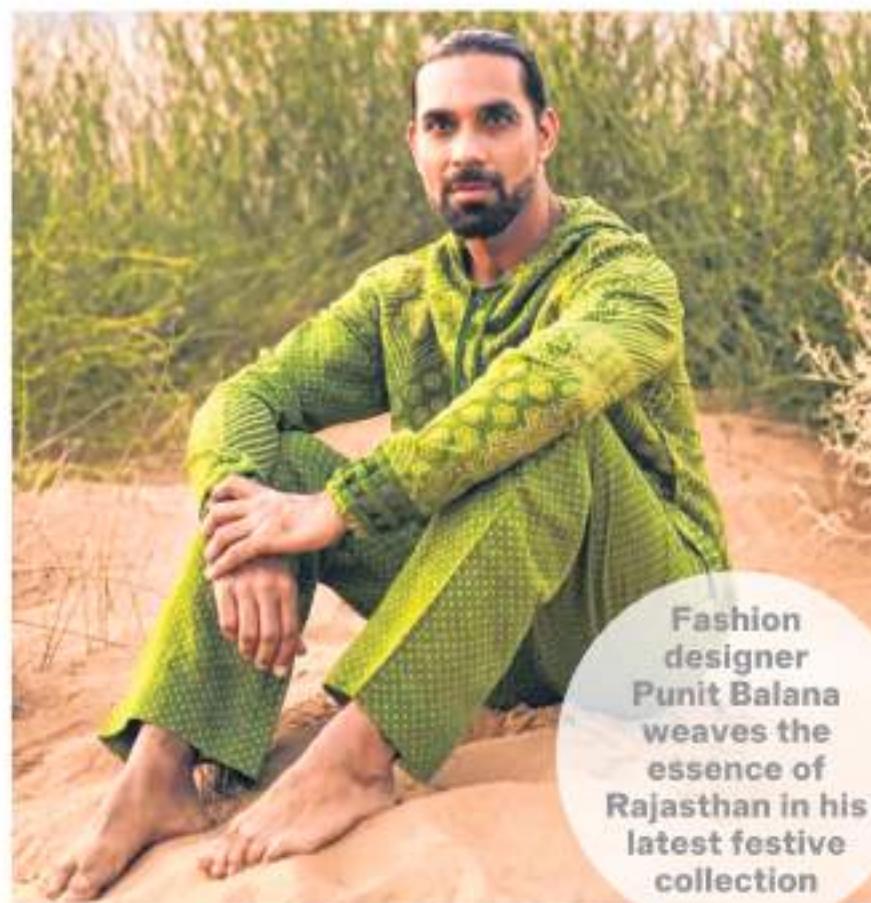
Hailing from Bikaner in Rajasthan, Punit Balanaimbibes within him the very essence of the city he lives in. Rajasthan has almost always been his muse and he has never really needed to look too far for inspiration. His latest collection Johari Bazaar, too embodies the spirit and vibrancy of the Rajasthani culture. Yesterday, the designer showcased his collection at Lakme Fashion Week with the stunning Sobhita Dhulipala wearing one of his exquisite creations as show stopper.

In a candid chat, Balana reveals his thoughts on his inspirations and festive trends for the year:

Excerpts from the interview:

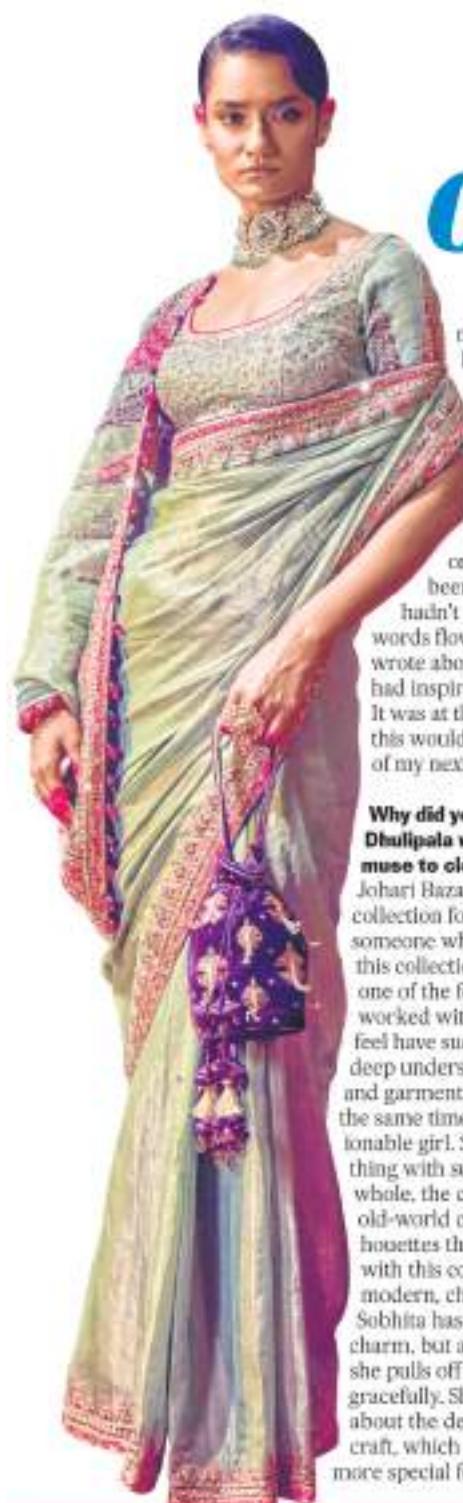
What made you focus on Johari Bazaar as your latest collection?

Jaipur has always been at the heart of my creative journey, with Rajasthan's vibrant culture continuously inspiring every collection I craft. This time, it was a seemingly casual evening walk through Johari Bazaar, the beating heart of Jaipur, that sparked an artistic revelation. I had set out with friends, eager to show them the city's charm. But that evening, something about Johari Bazaar felt different, almost magical. As I wandered through the narrow streets, with the intricate *jali* work and the dazzling *jhalaras* around me, I couldn't shake the feeling that these small, everyday details were speaking to me in a new way.



Fashion designer Punit Balana weaves the essence of Rajasthan in his latest festive collection

Razzle & dazzle of Johari Bazaar



The energy of the marketplace, which I had seen countless times before, suddenly stirred something within me. When I got back home, I couldn't help but pour my thoughts onto paper. I had been moved in a way I hadn't expected, and words flowed effortlessly as I wrote about everything that had inspired me that evening. It was at that moment I knew this would be the foundation of my next collection.

Why did you think Sobhita Dhulipala was the perfect muse to close your show?

Johari Bazaar is a very special collection for me, and I wanted someone who is as special as this collection is for me. She is one of the few celebrities I've worked with in past, who I feel have such a strong and deep understanding of textile and garment construction. At the same time, she is such a fashionable girl. She carries everything with such grace. As a whole, the collection has an old-world charm, and the silhouettes that we have done with this collection are super modern, chic and boho. I feel Sobhita has that old world charm, but at the same time, she pulls off modern looks so gracefully. She wants to know about the details and about the craft, which makes it even more special for me.

Can you take us through the collection?

Inspired by the vibrant streets of Jaipur, the Johari Bazaar collection captures the essence of the city's evolving spirit through bold fabric choices and a contemporary palette. Metallic tissue adds an unexpected shimmer, while handwoven silks and raw silk infuse a tactile richness. The colours — sage, gulabi, and gulal — offer a modern twist on Rajasthani hues, bringing a fresh vibrancy. Mughal motifs and playful puppet-inspired khakha patterns blend tradition with modernity, creating timeless festive pieces that feel both rich in heritage and distinctly forward-looking, perfect for the upcoming season.

Your designs are rooted in Indian culture and heritage. Where do you look for inspiration and how do you find it each time?

Living in Jaipur feels like sitting on a gold mine of inspiration. I never have to look beyond this vibrant city or Rajasthan itself. Every corner,

every street of the Old City offers endless creativity. Johari Bazaar, which inspired my latest collection, is the very heart of Jaipur's charm. With such rich cultural heritage at my doorstep, I don't need to search far for inspiration—Jaipur and Rajasthan provide everything I need for my designs, making each collection a true reflection of this incredible region.

The festive and wedding season is coming up. What are some of the trends you foresee?

This festive season, there's a refreshing shift toward minimalist Indian ethnic wear, where quality and thoughtful design take center stage. Young women are embracing fabrics and silhouettes that are light, comfortable, and elegant, prioritising well-crafted, timeless pieces over just photogenic styles. It's not about sacrificing style for comfort but rather finding the perfect balance. The beauty of ethnic wear truly shines when it's effortless and sophisticated. As the trend leans toward more discerning choices, festive fashion becomes a celebration of elegance and ease, allowing you to immerse yourself fully in the joy of the occasion.



Aapta leaves are exchanged on Dussehra as tradition. Let's find out why

Sapna Sarfate

Most Hindus know that the auspicious day of Dussehra is when good conquers evil. This day is celebrated in many ways all over India. One way in Maharashtra is by distributing the Aapta leaves.

Know the why

Dr Jai Madaan, a Celebrity Astrologer and Motivational Speaker, discusses the mythological part. "Kautsa, a devoted student of Guru Varantu, insisted on offering a Guru Dakshina after completing his education. Though Varantu refused, Kautsa persisted, so the Guru requested 140 million gold coins. Without the means to fulfill this, Kautsa sought help from King Raghu, a generous ruler. Though the

king had just given away his wealth, he approached Indra for assistance, who in turn asked Kubera, the God of wealth. Kubera showered Raghu's kingdom with gold coins, on the Aapta trees lining the kingdom. Kautsa collected the coins, and fulfilled his Guru's wish. Since this shower happened on Dussehra, the tradition of exchanging Aapta leaves as a symbol of prosperity was started."

Dr. (Hon) Anusha Seinivasan Iyer, Founder, Aham Bramhasmi, adds, "These leaves, exchanged as symbols of prosperity and well-being, embody more than a mere ritual—they are reminders of our rich cultural heritage. Known as Sonpatra, or leaves of gold, they carry the blessings of abundance and health. Beyond its mythic origins, the Aapta tree also offers nature's healing touch, celebrated in Ayurveda for its medicinal virtues. As the Vedas remind us, *Sarve Bhavantu Sukhinah, Sarve Santu Nirauyasya*— May all be happy, may all be free from illness. In its simplicity lies the wealth of tradition and wellness."

Follow the method

There are ways to pick and give these aapta leaves. Dr Madaan mentions the tradition of offering the four-leaved branchlet to the deities before giving them to your family's elders. Additionally, these leaves can be exchanged with friends and neighbours as a gesture of wishing them a happy Dussehra. The Aapta tree is known for its unique twin leaves, which have a rough texture. It is good to pluck these leaves from the tree and

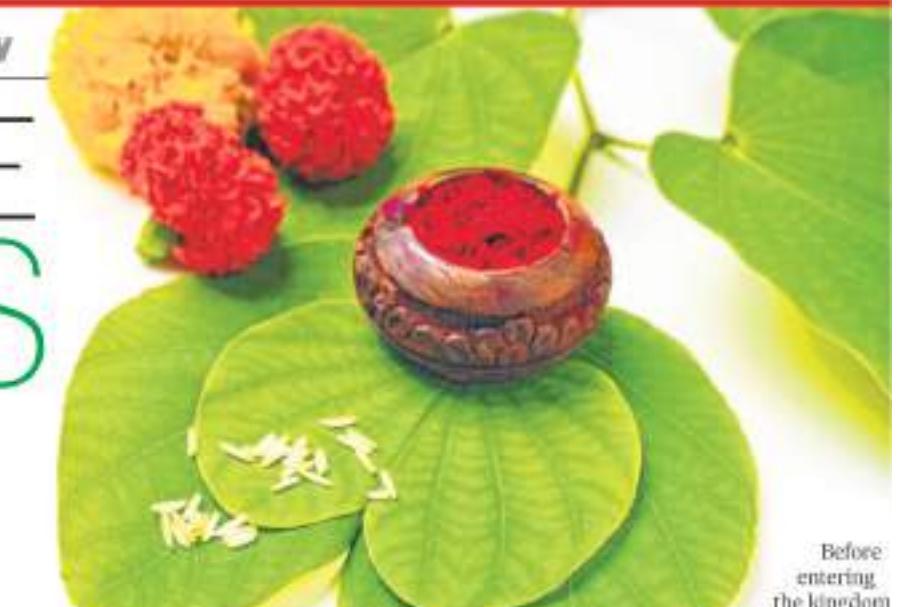
exchange them with one another, or symbolically take them from each other."

Importance of Dussehra

The festival is a time to remember that positivity always is the winner. Ashwin Shuddha Dashmi was the day when Ram defeated and killed Ravana and therefore it is also referred to as Vijayadashami.

Dr. (Hon) Iyer speaks of the festival as the time to self-reflect and give back to nature. "The day marks the victory of Lord Rama over Ravana, symbolizing the defeat of negative forces. We can let go of our own Ravaanas—anger, ego, or anything that holds us back. Dussehra is also a time for renewal and cleansing, an opportunity to let go of negativity and embrace positive energy. Burning effigies of Ravana, as part of the festivities, serves as a powerful reminder to destroy our inner demons—be it pride, anger, or jealousy."

It is also the time when seasons change. This change serves as reminder of the life cycle. Many feel that Mother Nature is at its celebratory best this time after the rains. "It's an opportunity to give back to the earth: a celebration of balance between humans and nature, between the spiritual and the material," suggests Iyer.



Before entering the kingdom of Virat during the final year of their exile, they hid their weapons in a Shami tree. After completing their exile, they retrieved their weapons from the tree on Ashwin Shuddha Dashmi, worshipped them under the tree and went on to defeat the Kauravas after that. Since then, both Shami trees and weapons have been revered and worshipped on Dussehra.

Our festivals always have a story to tell. And most often it is about victory of good over evil.

Dussehra, however, has an interesting twist in form of Kautsa. Let us come together, share the Aapta leaves and celebrate Dussehra while understanding what the festival truly stands for.

Mi Marathi

Marathi content creators are using social media platforms to elevate the language and highlight recently achieved classical status

Saachi Shinde

The recent recognition of Marathi as a classical language has brought a surge of pride and enthusiasm among its speakers, and in no small part, social media has played a crucial role in making this possible.

From budding artists and storytellers to regional influencers, social media platforms have empowered Marathi content creators like never before. Their work not only connects communities but also helps to preserve and celebrate the language in a digital age where regional languages often risk being overshadowed by global tongues.

Amplifying voices

In today's world, digital platforms like YouTube, Instagram, and Facebook provide a massive opportunity for content creators to reach global audiences. But for Marathi creators, these platforms have become the new-age mediums to elevate their language and culture. Whether it's Marathi poetry, comedy skits, or educational content, the vast reach of social media has enabled creators to showcase their talent and creativity, while nurturing an audience that appreciates content in their native language.

Before social media, creators in regional languages faced a significant barrier—limited reach and platforms that catered predominantly to urban or Hindi-speaking populations. Now, thanks to algorithms that support regional content and the rise of user-generated videos, creators can gather millions of views, proving that Marathi content has a solid market both in India and internationally.

Today, popular Marathi YouTube channels like *BhaDIPa* (*Bhartiya Digital Party*) and social media influencers are tapping into this trend by producing relatable, quirky, and vibrant content that resonates deeply with the Marathi-speaking population.

One notable example of such efforts is the Instagram page *Khalbutta Vyaspith*, which takes a creative approach to teaching Marathi. Through reels and posts, the platform breaks down words, idioms, and cultural phrases, making language learning both engaging and accessible. By offering simple explanations and fun content, they not only appeal to native Marathi speakers but also attract non-native learners. Their efforts bridge cultural gaps and preserve the richness of the language in a way that resonates with younger audiences.

Meanwhile, Pooya Sawant, 32, who enjoys regional content, shares, "Watching Marathi content feels like a small escape—whether it's folk songs, funny skits, or language lessons. It's like nostalgia with a dose of learning, especially for someone like me living away from Maharashtra."

Recognition

The acknowledgment of Marathi as a classical language has given it a renewed stature. This recognition has provided Marathi creators with a greater sense of purpose. The ability to promote the language's deep heritage and literary culture has been amplified by digital platforms. Creators are finding ways to blend the traditional with the contemporary, preserving classical Marathi literature, folk songs, and theatre through new digital formats that appeal to younger generations.

"Marathi memes, reels, and educational content have a unique vibe that really resonates with me. It's amazing how I'm absorbing so much knowledge without even realising it, all while having fun. What's even better is how this content deepens my connection to my Marathi roots and heritage," shares Aakash Sharma, 23, a Gen Z viewer who follows multiple Marathi content creators online.



Content creators like comedian Sahil Khattar and actress Prajakta Mali often emphasise their Marathi identity, attracting viewers who feel represented and acknowledged. By weaving Marathi dialogue and cultural references into their content, these creators bridge the gap between traditional and modern, ensuring the language remains relevant and engaging to millennials and Gen Z.

"I enjoy watching stand-up comedy by Mandar Bhide on YouTube. He is hilarious and unapologetic about his regional status," says Radhika Pai Kane. "I am sure that the current recognition as Classical Language will help these Marathi digi content creators in garnering more hits."

The road ahead

The popularity of regional content creation coinciding with the recognition of Marathi as a classical language hints at an exciting future. There are increasing opportunities for collaborations between creators, cultural organisations to promote Marathi culture on a global stage. For instance, the recent inclusion of Marathi language films at global film festivals like Cannes proves that the international community is also taking note of this dynamic shift.

Conclusion

In essence, social media platforms have done more than just allow Marathi creators to grow—they've given Marathi a dynamic and global voice. The recognition of Marathi as a classical language further boosts this movement, providing motivation to creators to continue their efforts in promoting the language. In the years to come, we can expect to see even more Marathi content across platforms, offering the world a deeper insight into the rich cultural and linguistic tapestry of Maharashtra.



LIVING THE LEAVES

exchange them with one another, or symbolically take them from each other."

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It is also the time when seasons change. This change serves as reminder of the life cycle. Many feel that Mother Nature is at its celebratory best this time after the rains. "It's an opportunity to give back to the earth: a celebration of balance between humans and nature, between the spiritual and the material," suggests Iyer.

Dr Madaan speaks about the association of Mother Nature with our festivals. "For instance, certain trees hold immense significance for Dussehra. The Ashoka tree holds a special significance during the festival of Dussehra. In Hinduism, the Ashoka tree is regarded as sacred. It is frequently mentioned in Indian epic poetry, most notably in the *Ramayana*, where the Ashoka Vatika is the setting for Hanuman's first encounter with Sita."

The *Shami* tree is known for its medicinal properties. In Indian tradition, the *Shami* tree holds great significance on Dussehra day due to its connection to the *Mahabharata*. After losing a dice game to the Kauravas, the Pandavas were forced into exile in the forest.



Men, beware!

Soumya Prabhu

Men face unique challenges when it comes to recognising and addressing depression. They are also less likely to seek help due to societal expectations and the stigma associated with mental health issues.

Let us discuss the overlooked signs of depression in men. By recognising and addressing these issues, men can improve their mental health and overall well-being.

Dr Sheryl John Senthilnathan, a consultant psychiatrist at L.H. Hirunandani Hospital, Powai, says, "Depression is one of the most common mental health problems. Unfortunately, men who have clinical depression may not reach out for help or are unable to recognise that they have depression."

It is important to recognise that depression can have a significant impact on physical health and to seek medical attention if you are experiencing persistent physical issues.

Loss of interest

A significant loss of interest in activities that were once enjoyable is a common sign of depression. Men may find themselves withdrawing from hobbies, social interactions, or work.

Fatigue or low energy

One of the most common symptoms of depression is persistent feelings of fatigue and low energy levels. Even with adequate rest, individuals experiencing depression may find themselves struggling to get out of bed or complete daily tasks. This fatigue can be so severe that it interferes with work, and social activities, leading to a significant decline in quality of life.

Changes in appetite, sleep

Depression can significantly disrupt sleep patterns and appetite. Individuals experiencing depression may struggle with insomnia, difficulty falling asleep, or waking up frequently throughout the night. Additionally, changes in appetite are common, with some overeating as a way to cope with their emo-

tions, while others may lose their appetite entirely. These sleep and appetite disturbances can further contribute to feelings of fatigue, low energy, and overall discomfort, exacerbating the symptoms of depression.

Suicidal thoughts

The most severe symptoms of depression are having suicidal thoughts. If someone is experiencing it, it is advisable to seek immediate help. Suicide rate in 15 to 29 year old Indian men is estimated to be twice that of the global average (25.5 vs 13.1 per 100,000).

"It's important to be vigilant for the changes in behaviour that may indicate depression. Early detection and timely treatment are essential for improving quality of life and preventing tragic outcomes like suicide," says Dr Senthilnathan.

Irritability, aggression

Men experiencing depression may become more irritable, angry or aggressive. This can manifest as snapping at loved ones, engaging in reckless behaviour or increased conflict.

"Men often experience depression differently than women do. They may exhibit behavioural changes like increased irritability, anger, or withdrawal. They might find themselves snapping at loved ones," Dr Senthilnathan explains. "It's important to note that depression can present itself in various ways. While some men may experience classic symptoms like sadness and hopelessness, others may exhibit more subtle changes in behaviour."

Substance abuse

Men may also turn to alcohol or drugs as a way to cope with depression, leading to substance abuse problems. If someone suddenly increases the consumption of alcohol or drug use, it could be a sign of underlying depression.

Loss of concentration

Depression can significantly impair cognitive function, making it difficult for individuals to concentrate, remember things, and make decisions. Men might struggle to focus on tasks, or feel overwhelmed to take simple decisions, or experience memory lapses. These cognitive difficulties can further exacerbate feelings of frustration and hopelessness, contributing to the cycle of depression. "Nowadays we see a lot of high functioning cases of depression where they don't come with sadness but with complaints of difficulty in focus, concentration. They carry out all their responsibilities but not with the same vigour and vitality," shares Dr. Senthilnathan.

Loss of libido

One of the lesser-known symptom of depression is loss of sex drive or troubles in having an orgasm. And it can be a vicious cycle. "Reduced libido often leads to anxiety and, consequently, performance anxiety," Dr. Senthilnathan says.

Physical complaints

Depression can manifest not only in emotional and cognitive symptoms but also in physical ailments. Men with depression may experience a variety of physical complaints, including aches and pains, digestive problems, or chronic fatigue.

Research proves that depression is a pro inflammatory disease so can present with inflammation in different organs. It could aggravate pre-existing metabolic diseases like diabetes, hypertension, thyroid issues. These symptoms are often mistaken for other medical conditions, leading to delayed diagnosis and treatment. It is important to recognise that depression can have a significant impact on physical health and to seek medical attention if you are experiencing persistent physical issues.

It is crucial for men to be aware of the signs of depression and to seek help if they are struggling. Remember, you're not alone. By seeking help and taking steps to address your mental health, you can overcome depression and lead a more fulfilling life.

PARENT TALK

Riddhima Kapoor Sahni

Why playdates are important

Today, almost every child is on a device — be it phone, tablet, laptop, or a gaming console. Thus, it is becoming increasingly important to get children off the screens and onto the playgrounds.

One way to encourage children to play would be arranging playdates with their friends or children of same group. These playdates play a crucial role in helping children develop essential life and communication skills.

Make friends

One major benefit of playdates is that they help children make new friends and strengthen existing ones. For example, the child might invite others to come over for play or join a group if s/he is alone. It instills confidence in them and fosters positive social interactions.

Communication

Playdates also enhance children's language and communication skills. Engaging in conversations with other children encourages them to use language to express thoughts, ask questions, and solve problems.

Whether they are playing hide-and-seek or negotiating roles in pretend play, communication allows them to get what they want. It improves their vocabulary and speech. Playdates provide an informal environment for this crucial development, making communication a fundamental part of the fun.

Problem-solving

Another key aspect of playdates is the opportunity they provide for problem-solving. During playdates, children might encounter challenges — whether it's deciding which game to play or being stuck at something while playing. Such challenges teach them how to overcome obstacles independently.

Working with friends to solve problems not only encourages teamwork but also nurtures their self-reliance and critical thinking. It's through these small yet significant experiences that children grow to become independent adults.

Exercise

Playdates offer a break from devices and the digital world and encourages them to engage in physical activities. For example, running around in a park, climbing on playground equipment, which only improves motor and cognitive skills but also makes them physically healthy. As children are increasingly drawn to sedentary activities, organising playdates ensures they remain physically active, developing coordination and stamina while having fun.

Emotional well-being

Playdates also build emotional resilience. When children play together, they experience a wide range of emotions — joy, excitement, frustration, and sometimes even disappointment. Learning to get a grip over these emotions in a safe and supportive environment helps them develop emotional intelligence. Moreover, being part of a group teaches them empathy and patience, key traits that will serve them well throughout life.

Social interaction

These dates are a great way to instill social confidence in children from a young age. By meeting and interacting with new friends, children learn how to adapt and collaborate in group settings. This lays the foundation for interpersonal skills that benefits them in school and when they become adults. Social well-being is as important as academic success and playdates naturally nurtures it.

As parent, I made it a point to arrange playdates for my daughter when she was younger. I ensured there were no devices during playdates — just old-fashioned, outdoor activities like the ones I enjoyed growing up. I took my daughter and her friends to parks and encouraged them to play outdoor games. Not only did they get plenty of fresh air and exercise, but they also bonded with other children, forming friendships that continue to this day. This 'unplugged' play allowed them to engage in imaginative play, problem-solving, and teamwork in a way that screen-based entertainment simply cannot match.

In today's digital age, playdates are more than just fun; they are a critical part of a child's social, emotional, and cognitive development.

From fostering friendships to encouraging problem-solving and active play, these playdates provide children with valuable life lessons. As parents, making time for regular playdates can help improve child's overall well-being.

Riddhima Kapoor Sahni is a jewellery designer, and daughter of veteran actors Rishi Kapoor and Neetu Kapoor.



ETFs, bonds, or physical?

Planning to buy gold this festive season? Here's what you should know

Anjali Kochhar

With the festival of Dussehra, gold takes centre stage in many households, symbolising prosperity and wealth. Traditionally, people flock to purchase physical gold during this time, but today, investors have to decide: Should they invest in Gold Exchange-Traded Funds (ETFs) or sovereign Gold Bonds (SGBs) or stick with the time-honoured choice of physical gold?

With the rise of modern financial products offering new ways to invest in the yellow metal, it's important to weigh the benefits and limitations of each.

In July 2024, investors deployed Rs 1,387.4 crore into gold ETFs according to data released by the Association of Mutual Funds in India, the highest since August of the previous year, with net assets under management at Rs 37,380 crore as of August 2024. We spoke to investors, industry leaders and educators to make your purchasing decision easier this year. First of all, let's understand in simple terms—each of the investment options.

Gold ETFs

Gold ETFs are financial instruments traded on stock exchanges like BSE and NSE, like company stocks. They track the price of gold and offer a practical and liquid way

for investors to gain exposure to gold. Gold ETFs come without the need for safekeeping, unlike physical gold, which requires storage and is often subjected to concerns about purity and theft. Mohit Gang, CEO, of MoneyFront, says, "Gold ETFs are increasingly favoured by investors for their transparency, cost-effectiveness, and ease of trading compared to physical gold."

Veer Mishra, founder of PLUS Gold, explains, "Gold ETFs provide liquidity, as they can be traded on major stock exchanges just like stocks. This means investors can buy or sell shares quickly during market hours, ensuring ease of access to their investments."

These ETFs often come with lower management fees compared to traditional gold mutual funds, enhancing cost-effectiveness. Furthermore, they serve as a hedge against inflation and currency fluctuations, making them an attractive choice in uncertain economic times.

Dr Swati Shrikant Godbole, Associate Professor at K.J. Somaiya Institute of Management, explains the practical side of Gold ETFs. "The benefit of Gold ETFs is the minimum amount of investment — a minimum of ₹500 is required to invest in Gold ETFs, and one can also use the SIP route. While the absence of physical ownership is an advantage for many, it may not suit investors who prefer tangibility."

Sovereign Gold Bonds

For those with a long-term outlook, Sovereign Gold Bonds (SGBs) offer a compelling alternative. Launched by the Government of India, SGBs combine the benefits of gold price appreciation with a fixed 2.5% annual interest. According to Shashank Shekar, Head of Product Strategy in SahiBandhu Gold Loan, a leading aggregator platform, "SGBs are a great option for long-term investors looking for security and growth, with the added advantage of no capital gains tax if held until maturity."

Unlike Gold ETFs, SGBs offer a steady income stream, which makes them attractive to risk-averse investors seeking a stable return. However, they come with a lock-in period of five years, making them less liquid. While tradable, SGBs generally don't offer the same flexibility or ease of access as Gold ETFs. Despite this, Gang notes that for long-term planners, SGBs remain a top choice, especially since they're backed by the government. Plus, their tax benefits make them even more appealing to those who don't need immediate liquidity.

Physical gold

Even with the rise of modern investment tools, physical gold continues to hold immense cultural and emotional value, particularly during festivals like Dussehra. Whether it's gold jewelry, coins, or bars, the tangibility of physical gold remains its biggest selling point. Many families see it as a secure, long-lasting asset to be passed down through generations.

Which to choose

The ideal gold investment this festive season depends on your financial goals. Edul Patel, CEO of Modrex rightly says, "Gold ETFs, Gold Bonds, and physical gold each serve distinct purposes in an investor's portfolio."

If you're a short-term trader looking for liquidity, Gold ETFs are the best bet. For those focused on long-term returns, SGBs provide a mix of price appreciation and a steady interest income, with the added perk of being tax-free upon maturity. Vinnayak Mehta, the founder of The Infinity Group adds, "The choice between SGBs and ETFs depends on your financial goals, risk tolerance, and engagement with the gold market. For flexibility, Gold ETFs are the way to go, while SGBs offer a more secure, long-term option."

This Dussehra, consider your investment horizon and liquidity needs. A balanced approach could be the best way to shine this festive season.

Read the full article on www.freepressjournal.in/weekend

For quick learning

The RockED App

The RockED App is designed to provide users with effective, bite-sized learning experiences through its microlearning model. It features daily content crafted by industry experts, making learning accessible and convenient. Personalized learning paths adapt to users' skills and goals, offering a unique learning journey for each individual. The app includes:

interactive activities to make learning more engaging and to reinforce new knowledge. Video-based assessments replace traditional tests, ensuring that learning remains interesting.

Available on: Android, iOS

Nerdish: Daily Micro Learning

This is an educational app designed to make learning accessible and engaging. It offers concise articles on diverse topics such as science, history, and culture, allowing users to absorb knowledge in just a few minutes each day. With a focus on micro-learning, Nerdish helps users expand their general knowledge without overwhelming them, promoting curiosity and personal growth in a user-friendly and time-efficient manner.

Available on: Android, iOS

Micro learning & facts: Clevio

Micro Learning Facts by Clevio is an educational app that delivers quick, interesting facts across various fields, from science to pop culture. Tailored for busy learners, the app provides short, engaging content that can be consumed in minutes, promoting effective learning without time constraints. Micro Learning Facts helps users stay informed and curious, transforming idle moments into opportunities for intellectual growth.

Available on: Android, iOS

OttoLearn

OttoLearn is a microlearning app that delivers quick, daily training bursts known as "Mastery Moments," designed to enhance knowledge retention and mastery. Each session lasts about two minutes, allowing users to answer questions while gauging their confidence in their answers. Ideal for compliance and certification training, OttoLearn makes learning efficient and accessible for busy professionals.

Available on: Android, iOS

JUGAAD

DIY hacks for a clean home

Shikha Jain

Dusting can be a tedious and time-consuming chore. These dusting hacks will help cut down on dusting time and help with indoor air quality.

Material required: Newspaper
 • Lint roller • Hairdryer
 • Tongs

Always dust from top to bottom: Since gravity pulls everything down, a time-saving dusting hack is to always dust from the top to the bottom. Walls, high light fixtures, chandeliers and ceiling fans should all be at the top of your dusting list before moving to lower areas. Dust the ceiling fan last and

you'll be re-dusting the floor below. When it comes to dusting the right way, saving time is a priority.

Use newspaper to prevent buildup: Another dusting trick is to use newspaper to cover high shelving. When the time comes to dust, you can simply remove and replace the newspaper, knowing all the dust has settled into the newspaper. Best of all, this hack uses all recyclable materials.

Use a lint roller for hard-to-reach spots: Lint rollers are one of the best cleaning hacks around, but the tool can also be useful when dusting. Use the lint roller on areas with odd shapes that are hard to reach like lamp shades or items that are not machine-washable like decorative throw pillows.

Use a hairdryer on house plants:

Festivals symbolise light over darkness, community over isolation, and love over material wealth

THE MILLENNIAL PILGRIM

Somi Das

Festivals, across cultures and traditions, are meant to bring people together, create moments of joy, and offer opportunities for reflection and gratitude. However, in recent years, there's been a noticeable shift. The quiet, introspective spirit of festivals has often been overshadowed by an aggressive culture of consumption. The rush to buy the latest gadgets, clothes, or decor has taken precedence over personal reflection and connection with the very essence of the festival.

Whether it's Durga Puja, Diwali, Christmas, Eid, or any other festival, the bombardment of advertisements, shopping discounts, and social pressure can make it feel like the true meaning of the celebration has been lost. Rather than being a time for reconnecting with our loved ones, offering gratitude, or focusing on spiritual growth, festivals are becoming synonymous with shopping sprees and excessive consumption. This not only unsustainable for the environment but also deeply disconnected from the core values these festivals stand for.

Overconsumption

The marketing around festivals makes it seem as if happiness can be bought — that purchas-

DITCH OVERCONSUMPTION

ing the right outfit, the fanciest gift, or the latest home decor item is the way to create a memorable festival. But once the immediate thrill of consumption wears off, we're left feeling the same — or sometimes even emptier than before. Festivals, which should inspire feelings of contentment and joy, are now linked to stress, anxiety, and exhaustion from social pressure and financial burden.

On the environmental front, this overconsumption leaves behind a hefty footprint. Tons of non-recyclable waste, packaging material, and unwanted items are discarded in the aftermath, adding to already overwhelming pollution levels. Festivals that were once rooted in eco-friendly practices and mindful traditions are now associated with consumer waste and ecological damage. The production of cheap goods, sourced to meet the seasonal demand, exploits natural resources and often results in harmful environmental practices.

Essence of festivals

This year, it's time to hit pause. Festivals have always been about more than what meets the eye. They symbolize light over darkness, community over isolation, and love over material wealth. But how often do we stop to think about the inner darkness we need to confront, the aspects of our personality we wish to nur-



ture, or the ways we can meaningfully connect with our loved ones?

Instead of chasing after material satisfaction, what if we used the festival season as an opportunity to reconnect with ourselves? A festival is a time for introspection — an invitation to

realign with our personal values, to ask ourselves what we truly need, and to move closer to our spiritual or emotional goals. It's about turning inward, examining our thoughts, behaviors, and relationships, and rediscovering what makes us feel genuinely content.

Reframing the festive season this way can create lasting joy and fulfillment that goes beyond the short-lived excitement of buying something new. By reconnecting with ourselves, we can recognize that fulfillment often comes from simplicity — from shared meals, moments of reflection, or conversations that deepen our relationships. When we turn our focus from outer distractions to inner clarity, we find that the most valuable gifts are those we give to ourselves — self-awareness, peace, and personal growth.

Moving forward mindfully

This doesn't mean renouncing gifts or celebrations altogether. It means approaching them with more intention. Can we gift something handmade or meaningful instead of simply something expensive? Can we choose experiences over things — time spent with loved ones, memories created together, or contributions to causes we care about? Can we seek joy in community, gratitude, and mindfulness rather than in the accumulation of goods?

Festivals should be a time for reflecting, and remembering what truly matters. They are an opportunity to break free from the mundane and reconnect with our higher purpose. Instead of being swept up by the tide of consumerism, use the festive season to connect with the deeper essence of celebration — gratitude, joy, introspection, and love. The most important journey during a festival is the one that leads us inward, to better understand ourselves and the world around us.

PLAY & PAUSE

Beyond established boundaries

Rachna Virdi

Kitchen of Cafe Spice Namaste, London, is stocked with limited edition condiments, oils, spices, blends and sauces all handcrafted by chef Cyrus Todiwala. The cuisine boasts of a personalised fusion menu with strong Goan influences and the chef's signature style.

Born and raised in Mumbai, Todiwala was inspired by his mother's cooking at a young age. Having completed his education at a boarding school in Maharashtra, he took his classic chef's training and began his career with the Taj Group where he rose to be the Executive Chef of Taj Holiday Village in Goa. Armed with culinary skills, he migrated to London with his family in the 90's where he spread his knowledge of Indian cuisine.

In 1995, Todiwala established Cafe Spice Namaste along with wife Pervin. Known for his sophisticated cooking and innovative approach, Todiwala has cooked for the royalty, presidents and international celebrities. He holds the coveted Michelin Bib Gourmand for 22 years, is an advisor on HRH The Prince of Wales Mutton Renaissance Movement, The Marine Conservation Society and is on the London Food Board. Today, he runs four restaurants - Cafe Spice Namaste, Mr. Todiwala's Kitchen at Hilton London Heathrow Airport Terminal 5, Mr. Todiwala's Kitchen at Lincoln Plaza London, and Mr. Todiwala's Petticos in the London-Essex border.

Excerpts from the interview:

How do you look at the way fine dining has evolved in India?

I left India in 1991, and over these 32 years, I see the evolution in India has been unbelievable. Indian fine dining has completely evolved and is considered on top today. There is competition all around, the levels and standards of food have changed, the availability of raw materials have gone up 100 per cent. In our times, we used to struggle to get things and could only rely on cookbooks. Nowadays, the chefs find thousands of recipes and videos online. They can just look up and do things their style. Indian restaurants, their food, service and standards are all just getting fabulous.

How is Indian food breaking boundaries globally?

Indian food is breaking big boundaries. Today, we do weddings for British young couples with Indian food. There are mixed marriages happening where the hosts ask to serve Parsi food, and we are happy to do that. Back in the UK, the English man wants Indian food for special occasions. The food landscape is evolving and how. Previously, the chefs added too much onion and oil in the food which made the world think that Indian food is very oily - which is not true. In which Indian house do we see the mother cooking oily food?

Michelin Bib Gourmand for 22 years, Cyrus Todiwala is not just breaking boundaries with Indian cuisine but also inspiring a generation of young Asian chefs

Like her family's health is precious to her, so is the customers' health to chefs. I tell my staff that the customer is always the king, if he is happy you will be happy'.

What's the future of Indian and Asian food?

Indian food will still evolve because regionalism will become more prominent. Initially, we had one *Karwar* restaurant or just this one type of curry or thali, but there are different regions within the state. Bengali food is just famous in Bengal, but hasn't reached the world. Assam, Mizoram, Nagaland have not come in yet. Nepal, and the Far-east have not come in too. There is a lot more to explore in India and around. I always say, if I could live for 10,000 years, I would have learnt just a little about India.



What is your favourite Indian food?

I am a Parsi boy. As a chef, I have eaten varied cuisines, from French to Italian but personally I am a *dal-roti* man. I eat in different restaurants and I'm always carrying a pen and paper for ideas and inspiration from other chefs but at the end of the day *dal* is heaven for me. *Parsi moru dal charwali* is my favourite food. It is simple and is my mum's food. Before my death, I would like to have that as my last meal.

How will you take forward your passion for cooking and changing perceptions of people?

My passion for cooking goes on. We have opened a school in New York to teach cooking, but I have included Asian and Oriental food too. We need to use the whole of Asia to raise its profile on the global map. Sometime back, we started this food competition called Zest Quest Asia where I inspire students by taking the winning team to an Asian city, and showing them the smell, taste, etc. of food for their exposure. This year's winning team is coming to India for 10 days. They will go to Haryana for a first-hand experience of rice harvesting. I will also do a Parsi feast with them in Delhi.

How do you look at the young Asian chefs coming on the scene?

Today, global chefs are being funded by companies that work around a PR and marketing strategy. They look for chefs with skills, sponsor them to go to other countries, put them in big restaurants, promote them and expect them to create magic. People are talking about food and the chefs that are creating them. It is amazing as that is exactly what is needed.

Tell us about the learning from your journey.

My learning comes from myself. I work individually. We do not have the money to put into massive marketing so we have to do it ourselves. I am an old school chef, but there is a new school coming and they are creating a path which is going to be interesting.



Nisha JamVwal

It seems like yesterday that I cheered and applauded as the dynamic Ratan Tata, who transformed the Tata Group into a global behemoth, towered on stage at Tel Aviv University as he received an honorary doctorate. KRS JamVwal was with his mentor as part of the delegation that worked on Tata synergies with Tel Aviv University. It was one of those joyous evenings one remembers for rare one-on-one inspiring interactions I have had over the years. He had already begun to show his age but the good looks had not waned. The spark and wry humour, that was so much part of his charm, came across in his acceptance speech.

Sometime before that, a Tata delegation had gone to Washington DC as Obama hosted a dinner at the White House for our then prime minister. Ratan Tata was one of the key

LEGENDS DON'T DIE, THEY MOVE ON



guests. My heart swelled with pride when even cabbies on Capitol Hill were excited about this 'Hollywood star-like business tycoon' coming to town. The then Prime Minister, Manmohan Singh, paled in comparison.

I've seen this titan at close quarters and had some special interactions through 25 years of being a Tata wife, and have cherished the memorable words and laughter we shared. But it is the magical stories my husband related about this dozen of business and industry in India that make this man so enigmatic to me. It would be an understatement to say KRS was special to Ratan Tata and vice versa. My husband shared the most amazing vignettes that made this ammol Ratan's towering persona tangible [in association]. He has been as a true game-changer of immense vision, innovation, and daring that made the Tata Group a global giant, and a lot of it came from his innate curiosity about things.



Says KRS, "India, and much of the world, knows him for the great visionary business person and philanthropist he was, and I was privileged to have worked for him when he balanced both those roles, and several others, including representing India in global fora and in government committees. There are so many wonderful memories and so much I have learnt because of his generosity and affection."

Humanitarian Celeb Queen



Meera Gandhi's LinkedIn status is: I am a humanitarian, mother, author and businesswoman committed to creating a more just world. I believe in the quote: 'we are to the universe only as much as we give back to it.'

And she lives that to the core. A celebrity in her own right, Meera Gandhi lives in a town house in New York that once belonged to Eleanor Roosevelt. She attends the Oscars, gets clicked on the Red Carpet with Elon Musk and others.

This Mumbai bred woman has carved herself a niche position across the world and is known for philanthropic work in more than three countries. She has always believed in giving back more that she receives and considers herself lucky to be in a position that she can 'give'. Her Give Back Foundation proves that.

"I don't do anything to prove myself or anyone anything. I sincerely believe that it is the purpose of my life. I am born to give. That's my calling," says Meera Gandhi, whose social work started at a young age at Ashdiana in Mumbai when she was still a teenager.

In India to meet family, Meera is overjoyed to see the Navratri celebrations kick off last week, just before she flies back to US. How does she connect to Navratri? "The festival of Navratri celebrated over nine nights and pays homage to the Goddess Durga. It is a reminder of the triumph of good over evil. And it resonates with my tips - Be truthful as the truth always prevails, Be good and practice good as

good always triumphs over evil. Live a balanced life! These tips help regain our mental balance and confidence in the almighty. Similarly, Navratri too promulgates these principles. The Mahishasur mardini Durga sticks to her true form despite Mahishasur's constant changing of forms and deceptions... and finally kills him."

Currently, Meera is on another journey after authoring a bestselling book last year: "My son, Kabir, inspired me to take this journey," shares Meera. "My book, 3 Tips, speaks about life's balance and mental wellness. It did well. And I am getting it translated in other languages to reach out to more and more people in India and abroad," she adds.

"However, my son brought it to my notice that to get the attention of the younger people, it is important to use the tools that they use. He also pointed out that they, probably, need the awareness more."

Taking Kabir's advise Meera is now working zealously towards varied mental awareness programmes using social media tools like podcast, Instagram reels, 3 Tips app among others. "Learn meditation and it helped me resolve my issues and gain balance in life. I hope to introduce the same principles to the younger generation and help them."

Meera also underlines that it is important for the woman of the house to aware of mental health. "The woman is the wheel and the fulcrum of all families. When a mother or sister or any woman is in a great mental space she can take entire families, cities and countries ahead! Women cater to needs and are the steering life force on our planet, so their mental health is crucial. Also, once they are aware, they can be a catalyst of awareness and spread it to the entire family and world," she concludes.

How can one use principles of Navratri to tackle everyday issues?

Each day of Navratri reinforces very important life qualities that are essential in tackling day to day issues and living our lives in a happy and balanced manner.

Day 1: Symbolises and celebrates the extraordinary strength of a human that is possible.

Day 2: Reminds us that Conscious behaviour is very essential to healthy life on the planet.

Day 3: Teaches us to Consolidate life force energy.

Day 4: Is about honouring mothers and women as they bring all of us into this planet.

Day 5: Says treat everyone with motherly affection.

Day 6: Emphasizes a balanced life.

Day 7: Reminds us to honor the universal energies in all other planets and galaxies that we are a part of.

Day 8: Is when we give thanks for freedom and movement and beauty.

Day 9: Is about understanding the impossible is indeed possible.

Neelkanth bird's connect with Dusshera

Amisha Shirogave

Dussehra, also known as Vijayadashami, marks the victory of good over evil. On this day, people celebrate the triumph of Lord Rama over the Ravan, symbolising the victory of righteousness. Spotting a Neelkanth bird [Indian Roller] on Dussehra holds special significance in Indian culture.

Good luck and victory

Witnessing the Neelkanth bird on Dussehra is more than watching a bluebird. The Neelkanth bird is believed to bring good luck. According to Hindu mythology, it is linked to Lord Shiva, who is often called 'Neelkanth' because of his blue throat. The Neelkanth bird is considered a reminder of Lord Shiva's powers and blessings.



On Dussehra, the sight of the Neelkanth bird is thought to bring victory and success in personal or professional

battles, just like Lord Rama's victory over Ravan. In olden times, kings and warriors would seek the blessings of Lord Shiva and pray for the sight of the Neelkanth bird before heading into the battlefield. They believed it would lead them to triumph over their enemies.

Nature and spirituality

Dussehra is also a time to connect with nature and the divine. Spotting a Neelkanth bird symbolises the presence of spiritual energy and the natural world's blessings, reminding us to live in harmony with nature. This bird is also called the farmer's friend since it acts as a pest controller, and farmers welcome this bird during this time.

Thus, seeing a Neelkanth bird on Dussehra is a positive sign of good fortune, victory, and divine blessings for the year ahead.

It was in Japan that I had the rare privilege to view first-hand his enthusiasm for technology at a large electronic store, not realising that for this inveterate entrepreneur, this was a benchmarking mission for the idea of Cromia, which he was already incubating. Until then, we in India made do with mom-and-pop strip mall stores and floundered for technology. Being a hardcore techie fond of gadgets from myriad types and styles of vacuum cleaners to hi-fi televisions, Cromia was a game-changer not only for me but for this country. I can't believe I was fortunate enough to witness this dream and its fruition in front of my eyes.

A humorous moment at Tokyo airport occurred when he offered to help with my heavy handbag, and at that very moment, I was trying to catch his bag and offered to carry it as KRS looked on, amused and a tad embarrassed as he is wont to do. What a man! Hollywood good looks intertwined with integrity and charm and a million-dollar smile.

Speaking of dreams, it was only after he stepped down as Chairman of the Tata group that he seemed to be having a blast investing in young startups that excited him because intrinsically he has been a techie at heart. Technology and new innovations excited him, and he sat for hours with KRS creating new businesses for Tata Industries.

Today, it's difficult for me to believe he's gone. And I had no idea I'd be so impacted and feel so much anguish. I'm thinking it's by association to my husband who felt like he'd lost a parent one more time. But it's more than that. It's also a public personality that impacts an entire country with his magnanimity in serving others impacting lives through dedicated philanthropy over years, artless humility with the little people. From his houseboy to even the newspaper vendor he gives a ride to. I was chatting with the Cuffie Parade newspaper vendor who said Mr Tata would stop his car and give him a ride ever so often. His acts of humane compassion make him a legend that will live on in the hearts of generations to come. And, continue to fire our souls with dreams and inspiration beyond his lifetime.

One car at a time!



Suvasit Shrivastava

Ratan Tata's name is synonymous with innovation and ambition, especially in the Indian automotive sector. Long before Tata Motors became a global name with acquisitions like Jaguar Land Rover, the company was a key player in shaping the Indian car market. Under Ratan Tata's leadership, Tata Motors introduced vehicles that not only met the needs of Indian customers but also redefined what an Indian car company could achieve. A look at the revolutionary models that changed auto sector.

Tata Sierra: First step towards innovation

In the early 1990s, India's car market was dominated by foreign manufacturers and old models. Ratan Tata, however, had a different vision. He wanted to create vehicles that reflected the aspirations of a modernizing India. The Tata Sierra, launched in 1991, was the company's first attempt at making a personal vehicle. Tata Sierra was the first Indian-made SUV with features that were ahead of its time. With its three-door design and powerful engine, it was aimed at an audience that wanted more than just a basic utility vehicle.



PIC: WIKIMEDIA COMMONS

Tata Nano: The people's car

One of Ratan Tata's most audacious and heartfelt projects was the Tata Nano. Launched in 2008, the Nano was a car designed to make personal mobility accessible to millions of Indians. The idea was a car designed to make personal mobility accessible to millions of Indians. The idea came to Tata when he saw families of four or five precariously balancing on two-wheelers, exposed to the risks of traffic. He envisioned an affordable, safe alternative, and the result was the world's cheapest car—the Nano, priced at just Rs 1 lakh.

The Tata Nano, while not a commercial success, became a global talking point. It was an engineering marvel in cost-effectiveness, compact design, and innovation. The Tata Nano may not have achieved the widespread success that was hoped for, but it undoubtedly left an impact on global automotive engineering and reinforced Tata's dedication to democratizing car ownership in India.



Legacy of innovation

Ratan Tata's journey in the Indian automotive industry is not just a story of business success—it is a story of passion.

resilience, and humility. He built an empire, but more importantly, he built trust. He has always believed that businesses should operate with integrity and

a sense of responsibility towards society.

In a world that often measures success by profits and market shares, Ratan Tata has shown that true success is measured

by the impact you leave behind. His journey is a tribute to the power of vision, compassion, and unwavering determination.

New additions to Ducati's Scrambler lineup



Ducati has announced two exciting new additions to its Scrambler lineup for 2025: The Icon Dark and Full Throttle models. These new bikes were revealed at the Ducati World Premiere 2025 and are already listed on the company's India website, with plans for a launch next year.

The Ducati Scrambler Icon Dark is designed with eye-catching matte black finish, making it distinct from the original Icon model. This model version features a matte black fuel tank, mudguard, and headlight covers for a sleek look. Meanwhile, the Scrambler Full Throttle is aimed at sport riders, inspired by US Flat Track racing.

It includes special side number plates with the number 62, celebrating the model's debut in 1962. Both motorcycles are packed with modern technology, such as cornering ABS, ride-by-wire systems, and two riding modes—Rain and Sport. Additionally, the Scrambler Icon Dark can be equipped with an optional bi-directional quick-shifter for improved gear shifting. Ducati also offers a range of accessories, like custom exhausts and high-quality parts, which can be easily viewed through their new

online configurator.

The Ducati Scrambler Icon Dark and Scrambler Full Throttle are both equipped with an 803cc L-Twin engine, producing 72 bhp at 8,250 rpm and 65.2 Nm of torque at 7,000 rpm. This engine is paired with a six-speed gearbox, providing a smooth ride. Weighing in at 176 kg, both models feature a standard seat height of 795 mm, making them accessible to a range of riders. Ducati also offers optional accessory seats that can adjust the height to 810 mm or 780 mm, catering to individual preferences and comfort levels.

Ducati Scrambler provides a variety of clothing and accessories for motorcycle enthusiasts to showcase their personal style. Riders can choose from a range of options, including custom exhausts, seats, and colored covers. The lineup also features many high-quality components like footrests, mirrors, and tank caps, all of which can be easily explored through the new online configurator. Additionally, soft bags are available to enhance the riding experience, allowing owners to personalize their bikes to match their individual tastes.

New Mercedes-Benz E-Class LWB launched in India



Remembering Ratan Tata, the visionary who transformed India's auto industry

Tata Indica: India's first truly indigenous car

The real game-changer, however, came in 1998 with the launch of the Tata Indica. At a time when the idea of an Indian car competing with global brands seemed far-fetched, Ratan Tata made it a reality. The Tata Indica was India's first fully indigenous car, designed and manufactured in the country. It was the car that many middle-class Indian families could finally call their own. Ratan Tata's personal commitment to the Tata Indica project was evident in the way he handled early challenges. When the car initially struggled with quality issues, Tata Motors quickly addressed them, showing that the company was not just about profits but also about delivering value to its customers.



PIC: WIKIMEDIA COMMONS

Tata Sumo: Utility vehicle for every Indian road

Launched in 1994, the Tata Sumo was designed as a rugged, multi-purpose utility vehicle that could tackle India's diverse and often challenging terrains. Its spacious design and tough build made it an instant hit, especially with government agencies and large families. Tata Sumo's popularity extended to rural and semi-urban areas, where it became a trusted vehicle for everything from transporting goods to carrying passengers. The Sumo's success further cemented Tata Motors' place as a leader in the Indian auto market.



PIC: WIKIMEDIA COMMONS

Jaguar-Land Rover acquisition: Global vision

While Tata Motors was busy making strides in the Indian market, Ratan Tata had his sights set on global ambitions. In 2008, Tata Motors made international headlines by acquiring the British luxury car brands Jaguar and Land Rover (JLR) from Ford. At the time, many questioned the wisdom of the deal, as both brands were struggling financially. However, Ratan Tata's faith in the iconic brands and his long-term vision proved to be a masterstroke.

Under the Tata Motors' stewardship, Jaguar and Land Rover experienced a remarkable turnaround. With renewed investment in product development and focus on quality and innovation, JLR became profitable within few years. They stand as a testament to Ratan Tata's bold decision-making and global outlook. This acquisition not only expanded Tata Motors' global footprint but also marked the arrival of an Indian company on the international luxury automotive stage.

Limited edition Grand Vitara Dominion



Maruti Suzuki has rolled out the Grand Vitara Dominion Limited Edition, available in petrol and CNG across Alpha, Zeta, and Delta variants. This special edition enhances the SUV's appeal with stylish updates and is aimed at drawing in customers during the festive season. Along with exciting offers, Dominion Edition includes free accessory kits, providing additional value and a unique touch to the popular Grand Vitara.

The Maruti Suzuki Grand Vitara Dominion Edition offers a set of exclusive accessories to elevate its appearance and comfort. On the outside, it comes with features like side steps, rear skid plates, door visors, and body side moulding, adding a more rugged look. Inside, it provides dual-tone seat covers, durable 3D mats for all weather, and an interior styling kit.

Maruti Suzuki has introduced the Grand Vitara Dominion Edition as a limited-time offer for October 2024, targeting customers who value exclusivity and personalisation. Known for its impressive performance and bold design, the Grand Vitara has won over customers with its multiple powertrain choices, including a Strong Hybrid option. Equipped with Suzuki's renowned ALLGRIP SELECT technology, the SUV provides drivers with the confidence to tackle challenging ter-

rain, making it an appealing choice for adventure enthusiasts during the festive season.

Commenting on the introduction of Grand Vitara Dominion Limited Edition, Partho Banerjee, Senior Executive Officer, Marketing & Sales, Maruti Suzuki India Limited, said, "The Grand Vitara has redefined the mid-SUV segment, and the Dominion

Known for its impressive performance and bold design, Grand Vitara has won over customers with its multiple powertrain choices, including a Strong Hybrid option.

Edition builds on this success by offering options that cater to the evolving preferences of our customers. It features distinct styling with added comfort and a more premium interior, meeting the growing customer inclination towards stand-out appearance and superior in-cabin experience."

According to the company, the Maruti Suzuki Grand Vitara has achieved a significant milestone, becoming the fastest mid-size SUV to surpass two lakh sales in India.

Local people on carts pulled by bulls ride down a dusty road in rural Cambodia



A woman travels through the flooded forest near her floating village of Kompong Phluk on the great Tonlé Sap lake, Cambodia



Maasai tribesman herding his goats and cattle back to the protection of his village at sunset. South-east Kenya, Kenya



I am a trustee for an amazing charity called Spotlight on Africa www.spotlightonafrica.co.uk and I am responsible for telling the stories of those in need of help in rural Uganda. It is something I am very passionate and committed too. I love sharing what I have learnt and so I give workshops around to world to those interested in how I make my images and the thought process that goes behind them. Photography is 90% in your head, the camera is only the tool.

philiplee Harvey.com
[@philip_lee_harvey_photographer](https://www.instagram.com/philip_lee_harvey_photographer)



Wind Bridge, Fenghuang, Hunan Province, China



Djenne Market, Djenne, Mali, west Africa



Kovalam, Kerala



Kudle, Karnataka

TRAVEL PHOTOGRAPHER EXTRAORDINAIRE

Girish Mallya

How would you describe yourself as a photographer, would it as a travel or documentary photographer? What do you enjoy the most about these to aspects of your photography?

People always want to label you as a certain type of photographer; different clients see me as a specialist in different genres, but to me, it's about a way of seeing, whether it be for a luxury brand advertisement or a charity film in remote parts of Africa. I love story telling and creating a mood that suits the narrative.

Can you share with us your photography journey, did you always want to be a travel photographer?

I come from a creative background, my father is an artist so I grew up with an understanding of light and composition. I studied Graphic Design and

Art School which gave me an insight into how images are used. After assisting various advertising photographers in London, I went out on my own aged 24 working for magazines and advertising agencies. I used the money I made to travel and develop my portfolio. I have always been interested in the history of art and exploration, which has had a big influence on my work. In the beginning I just wanted to have an adventurous yet creative career, but over time I became known as a travel photographer. I think it's really important to take your influences, not from others that work in the same arena, but from a wider pool. For example, before I travel on an assignment, I always make up mood boards, listen to music from the region, watch films made there and try to develop an understanding of the emotions I want to convey. I look at more paintings than photography as this lets my imagination wonder.

Which is your favourite destination for travel, and what makes it so special for you?

I actually don't have a favourite destination, although I'd say I generally prefer countryside to cities. Places can delight and disappoint you in equal measure. It sometimes



Sunrise in a temple at Angkor, Siem Reap Province, Cambodia

takes a while to see past the surface of a place and discover the stories. For example, I was once sent to Casablanca for a travel feature and after a few days I realised that the story of this complex city was best shown at the Grand Mosque. It is a place, not only of worship, but also where the young and old meet. It is a real life theatre and somewhere I could record life.

How do you see technology changing photography, both social media and AI, especially on travel photography?

Everyone has cameras now, so that isn't what makes you a photographer. You have to put your own personality and interests into your work. It's not about presets and Photoshop, it's about the decisions you make whilst creating images, what you include or leave out, an understanding of the story you want to tell. An image should leave you wanting to know more, the viewer should make up the last part of any image with their own imagination. The use of AI will not go away, but as soon as the viewer disbelieves what they see, you have lost the audience. Travel photography is about encouraging people to want to learn about places and environments that are unknown to them. To better understand the differences and similarities of our planet and those that inhabit it. We, as humans, are one species after all.

Ganpati immersion in a village



Harshal Surve, the Founder and Owner of MerakivisionPhotography, is a seasoned freelance Travel and Corporate Photographer with 12 years of global experience. From triumphing in the IFP 50 Hours Photography Challenge to clinching 35 International Photography Awards and the esteemed Veena World Photography Contest, his talent knows no bounds.

"While Mumbai and Ganpati festival have a special bond, celebrations in Kokan village have a truly different and beautiful perspective. Just 2 months before the Ganesh Utsav I saw a video on Instagram of Ganpati celebration from Kokan in which people were seen carrying Ganpati's on their head from the rice fields and since then I was desperate enough to watch that. Tried gathering information from social media but there was no revert."

While this was my first ever visit to Kokan especially for the Ganesh Festival post marriage, I gave it my all to find this place. While roaming around in Kokan and gathering information some said that the Visarjan might have already happened as it was 5:30pm and usually these kinds of visarjan take place in day light.

By the time I reached it was 8:15, but the visarjan had not started and it felt like bappa was waiting for me to arrive. It was destined to be worth the effort. Thanks to my wife and father-in-law who were constantly roaming around with me to make this thing possible."



Natural Beauty

Puneet Verma is an IT professional and passionate Travel & Fine Art Landscape photographer based in Bangalore, India.

Puneet is self-taught and loves to create evocative imagery using long exposure techniques. His work has been exhibited nationally and published in print media in

addition to being awarded at TIPA, Epson Pano & Monochrome Awards amongst others. He also conducts astro landscapes photography workshops across India through his initiative, VisCapades. Furthermore, Puneet is the brand ambassador for Nisi and Vanguard India.



Mount Bromo, Indonesia



Kudle, Karnataka



Bali, Indonesia



Gadsar, Kashmir

FEAR FACTOR

Manasi Y Mastakar

Known for his ability to craft spine-tingling tales that delve into the darkest corners of the human mind, author K. Hari Kumar has become a prominent voice in the horror genre. Whether it's supernatural forces, psychological terror, or real-world fears, his stories leave a lasting impact. Kumar is back with another bone-chilling horror book, *Dakini*, which releases on October 17 and is published by HarperCollins. Inspired by real-life witch-hunting that's still prevalent in rural India, Kumar's *Dakini* blends folklore, mythology, and supernatural elements. Kumar talks about the inspiration behind *Dakini*, what it takes to create truly unforgettable horror, and plans ahead.

Excerpts from the interview:

What inspired you to write story of *Dakini*?

The inspiration for *Dakini* came from reading about the witch-hunt cases that still occur in parts of India, where it is often women who are targeted and accused of witchcraft. The fact that such practices persist today is both disturbing and thought-provoking. Around the same time, I experienced a personal loss that left me grappling with grief. The intersection of these two ideas—how society hunts down women in the name of superstition and how we cope with personal tragedy—eventually merged into the concept of *Dakini*. It became a way for me to explore how myths, fear, and grief intersect in the darkest corners of our lives, blurring the lines between superstition and reality.

Are there any real-life events or places that inspired *Dakini*?

Yes, *Dakini* is inspired by real-life incidents, particularly the witch-hunt cases that tragically continue to occur in various parts of India. While the story itself is entirely fictional, it draws heavily from these unsettling realities. To create an authentic narrative, I conducted extensive research into tribal folklore, the dynamics of life in tribal villages, and the phenomenon of fear psychosis and its impact on the human psyche. Additionally, my research for *Dauva* played a crucial role in helping me understand totemism, which I used as a foundation to build the world within *Dakini*. This combination of research allowed me to create a rich, nuanced environment that reflects the complexities of belief systems and cultural practices, ensuring that the story resonates with both authenticity and depth.

K. Hari Kumar takes us on a spooky ride with his new horror book, his creative process, and more



Why are people drawn to horror?

"Horror entertainment activates the fight-or-flight response, leading to a surge in adrenaline, endorphins, and dopamine. Certain personality traits, such as sensation-seeking, predispose individuals to enjoy this excitement. Sensation-seekers are characterised by their stimulating experiences. They face potential stressors as challenges to be overcome rather than threats that might scare them. They recognise that this experience is in a safe and controlled environment which often makes them gravitate toward different types of horror films for more similar experiences," says Sumanpreet Kaur Khanna, Counselling Psychologist and Founder, Mind Unwind, Mumbai.

Additional research for *Dauva* played a crucial role in helping me understand totemism, which I used as a foundation to build the world within *Dakini*. This combination of research allowed me to create a rich, nuanced environment that reflects the complexities of belief systems and cultural practices, ensuring that the story resonates with both authenticity and depth.

How did you balance fear and discomfort while writing *Dakini*? Is there anything that's 'too much' for horror?

I have written eight books till date, out of which six are horror. Out of four screenplays, three are horror. Having experience in writing horror has given me a certain comfort level with fear and discomfort, and I believe it actually helped me find closure during the creative process. In my view, there is no such thing as 'too much' horror as long as it serves the narrative and adds depth to the story. Horror can be a powerful tool for exploring complex emotions and societal issues.

Are there any challenges you faced while writing *Dakini* or your other works?

Yes, I faced several challenges while writing *Dakini*. I was going through a personal loss, which made it difficult to navigate the emotional landscape required for crafting a horror narrative. Additionally, I was juggling my film career with the on-ground research needed for my previous book, *Dauva*. This combination of responsibilities extended the writing process for *Dakini* to over two years. I found myself rewriting the manuscript at least a dozen times to capture the right tone and depth, ensuring that the story resonated authentically with readers. It was a demanding journey, but one that ultimately enriched the narrative.

Do you have any rituals or habits to get into the right headspace for writing horror? What do you do to come out of that headspace?

To get into the right headspace for writing horror, I often read similar books or watch films in the genre. This helps immerse my mind in the atmosphere and themes I want to explore. Additionally, I like to listen to appropriate music while writing, as it enhances the mood and fuels my creativity. To transition out of those intense writing sessions, I sometimes watch movies from the opposite genre. This shift helps clear my mind and allows me to return to a more balanced state. Engaging in light activities, such as going for a walk or reading something unrelated, also aids in that transition. Temple visits and meditation also helps.

You mentioned in one of your social media posts that *Dakini* is your last horror novel. Why is that?

Horror writing can take a significant toll on mental health, and *Dakini*, with its personal elements, has been particularly intense for me. Each time I sat down to write a chapter, it felt like I was losing a piece of my mind. I believe it's better for me to focus on writing non-fiction and mytho-fiction for a while—genres that are not too far removed from horror but offer a different creative outlet. I'm also happy to contribute to Indian literature through important works like *Dauva*, which allow me to explore different themes while maintaining a connection to my roots.

What's the most difficult part about writing horror?

The most challenging aspect of writing horror lies in effectively conveying the sense of horror itself, as it can vary significantly from person to person. What terrifies me might not elicit the same reaction in someone else. Additionally, Indian authors have to avoid clichés and ensure they are not just slapping Indian names on Western supernatural entities. A *chudai* is not a vampire, and vice versa. It's crucial to honour the rich Indian folklore and create something that resonates authentically with readers.

What initially drew you to the horror genre?

What initially drew me to the horror genre were my dad's folktales about *rakshasas*, *pretas*, *dakinis*, and *yakshis*. They were also because of the stories my mother would narrate from *Chandamama* and *Bala Ramayana*.

Quick takes

Favourite horror writer(s) and book(s)?

Ira Levin and Stephen King; *Rosemary's Baby* and *Semetary*.

Scariest horror book that messed up your mind?

I think *Rosemary's Baby* messed with my mind. The fact that your neighbours can be part of a Satanic cult and do weird things to you really crepted me out.

Favourite horror trope?

The gothic manor at the edge of a forest with large trees and restless souls.

Which horror villain would you have a conversation with? Why?

Dracula, because I want to understand him in a way only Francis Ford Coppola did.

What's your biggest fear?

Enclosed spaces.

Read the full interview on www.freepressjournal.in/ weekend

Get, set, go...

Shruti Pandit

President APAC and MD India of Landor, one of the top brand and design studios, Lulu Raghavan's book *Go Further, Faster: Shaping a Life That Matters*, gears you up to be there and participate in the race of life and win



Book
Go Further,
Faster:
Shaping a Life
that Matters

Author
Lulu Raghavan

Publisher
Bloomsbury
India

Pages
200

Price
₹499

The book is like a guide based on Lulu's personal experiences. Like PV Sindhu says in the foreword of the book: She offers practical advice on how to develop yourself, promote yourself and evolve yourself to achieve your goals and live a fulfilling life. (sic) Lulu's book is divided into four parts: Develop, Promote, Evolve and then a Handy How-Tos list.

Lulu believes that in today's world, self-promotion and personal branding are essential to manage the tightrope walk of work-life balance and climb the ladder while doing it.

"The world we live in is a dog-eat-dog world. I mean you go to the grocery store; you have hundreds of brands. You know, there's a sea of sameness, even in an organization. There are so many engineers and so many journalists.

For you to move ahead in your career to have great opportunities, you have to be perceived as having a particular. And that's what developing your personal brand is. It is choosing how you want to be remembered.

You want to be known for representing certain values or having certain characteristics so that personal branding piece." Lulu explains the philosophy behind her book.

Part One of the book is probably the biggest part. Lulu starts part one by defining the three different people that she has observed—the Cruisers, The Workaholics, and The Miserables. She categorically points out that holistic development is essential for not being a part of these three and that a

fourth more satisfying, soul-satisfying approach is possible. The first part is further segregated into three—mind, body and soul. "I believe if you don't have a holistic foundation for growth, just promoting yourself and your achievements will not help you," she says. "Mind, Body, Soul are all connected. It's important to bring that in the context of work because when you have that strong foundation, you develop yourself from within, then your personal brand that emerges is not just lipstick on a gorilla as we say, but something that is authentic and is an external manifestation of truly who you are, what your superpower is," Lulu elaborates.

It is interesting to note that Lulu endorses reading as an exercise for the mind. I have become a better speaker, a better writer, a better leader and a better mentor—all thanks to books, especially all the non-fiction ones I have read. Fiction has increased my empathy, broadened my perspective and made me a more expansive thinker. (sic) She also reiterates the importance of Silence and Journaling as tools for the growth of the mind.

Lulu talks about how the soul's harmonious balance is imperative and how it serves as a catalyst for success in personal and professional relationships. She discusses fears, vulnerabilities and measures to overcome them in the part dedicated to Soul. She does that by giving examples from her own life and makes it more relatable for the reader.

Moving on to the Promote part, Lulu shares the secrets of her success. She writes about how networking is important in today's world and why it is critical to promote yourself in today's world. She introduces the 5D concept—Discover, Define, Design, Deploy and Deliver. Here she pushes you to face your demons and gives you exercises that will give you a peek into your own psyche if you do them honestly.

It is intriguing when she says 'keep swimming in one's own lane' while emphasising that continuous growth and development are essential. Wouldn't that restrict growth? "Swimming in the lane metaphorically means staying focused on your objectives and goals. This is not about learning or not having new experiences. It is about remaining focused on your own goals and not being impacted by the laurels or failures of your peers or competitors. Not get depressed or allow those things to get to you and therefore come in the way of your own productivity, focus and mission that fits your lane and that's where the swimming in your lane comes from."

The Handy How-Tos part is a practical guide with case studies and expert opinions about several problems that arise every day at the workplace. It discusses things like how to handle rejection, how to build a tribe and more.

Lulu's *Go Further, Faster: Shaping a Life That Matters* is a great read written in lucid language for young people, especially women who want to get ahead in their organisations. This book will help them find their core and promote themselves correctly.



Scripting of pain



Alpana Chowdhury

Sahal, a Palestinian, and one of the key characters of Sheela Tomy's heart-rending novel, *Do Not Ask The River her Name*, was only eight years old when he rushed home from a bombed-out school, with his younger brother and sister, to see the horrifically maiming sight of his parents' bodies, charred to death. Tomy's book was originally published in Malayalam, in 2022, but seems, surprisingly, like a chronicle of lives caught in the current conflict between Israel and its neighbours. Its excellent translation into English by Minithy S. was published this year.

If Sahal lost his childhood on that fateful day, David Menahem, a Jew old enough to be Sahal's father, never forgot the twilight evening in Baghdad when, as a six-year-old, he witnessed his uncle being brutally tortured. On that harrowing night, the Menahems fled to a neighbouring village in a cattle truck. For a long time thereafter, within David's heart, a little boy would sit trembling in a dung-stinking truck, expecting a murderous mob to attack any moment.

World War II was raging when the Menahem family joined the exodus to Israel, fleeing for their lives. Only to face utter bleakness there. The Ashkenazi European Jews treated Jews from Arab countries as epidemic-spreading vermin; and David saw

his father wither away, like a transplanted tree failing to take root. "Which is my land?" he wondered.

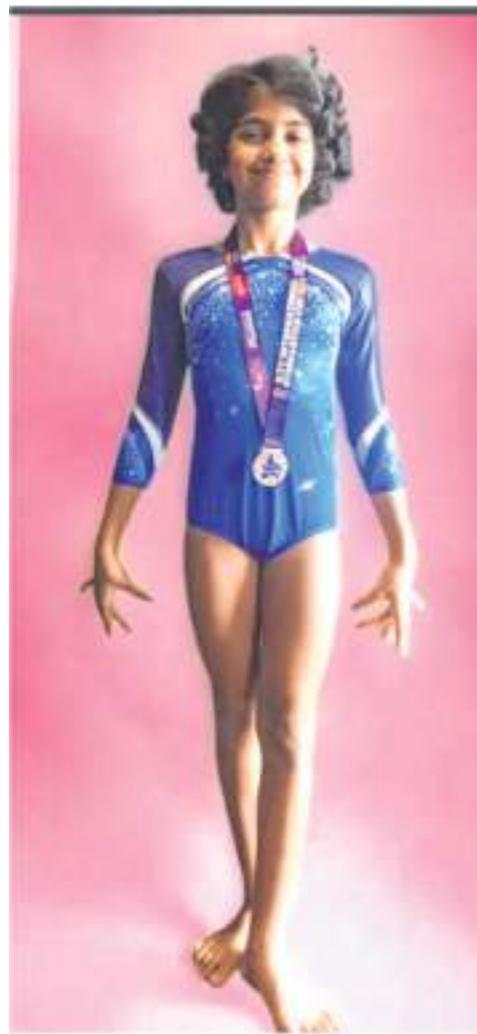
However, slowly but surely, David overcame the agonies, learnt to speak Hebrew, got married to an Ashkenazi Jew, became a professor at the Hebrew University in Jerusalem and reared two children without bitterness.

David's son, Asher, an archaeologist, is a devoted friend of Sahal, ever-protective and helping him dodge Israel's all-seeing intelligence agency and ruthless police who have him on their radar from his school days, when he lost his brother in a mine explosion and was found wandering through the night looking for him. "Afterwards, a hundred stones lay waiting for me by the wayside, whenever an army vehicle came in sight," jotted Sahal in his memoirs. But he did not pick them up. Rather, he dreamt of better times, of children flying like birds over a country without check-posts. Sahal yearned to leave West Bank and move to Malaysia to research about drones. Drones that would shower olive leaves on the hills of Jerusalem.

Do Not Ask The River Her Name is deeply layered. While the stark irony of Holocaust survivors and their descendants subjecting other humans to starvation, thirst, tear gas and bombardments hits you throughout the book, it is also true, as Tomy points out, that the leaders who don the role of savours of Palestinians grow fatter on the generous funds received from across the world while fulfilling to unite a hundred different factions.

Sahal can never forget the sight of his charred parents or the blood-splattered body of his little brother. Neither can Asher's mother forget Hamas' cruelty that killed her mother. Yet, like a nameless river, the love between Asher, a Jew, and Sahal, a homeless Palestinian, flows unchecked through the book.





YOUNG ACHIEVER

Priyanka Puranik is a 12-year-old International Gymnast from Pune representing India, and has now taken up weight-lifting.



Hello Priyanka, welcome to BOOKTERN! Hope you are doing well. Firstly, congratulations for your achievements. Let's start by knowing a little bit about your childhood.

Thank you for considering me for this interview. Yes, I would love to share my journey with you all. I have always been a very super active. As my mummy describes, I would jump all over the house without getting hurt or tired. Then my Pooh aunty (owner of a very renowned gym in Kothrud) suggested my mother, to put me into Gymnastics to channelize my energy. That's how my journey in sports started.

How old were you? And what was your training like?

I was 6 years old when I first started training. It started at recreational level and slowly shifted to competitive, looking at my progress. But then my parents realized that with 2 practice sessions in the morning and evening, along with a full day of school would hamper my progress. Though I was a bright student, during Covid times, it became difficult for me to con-



centrate on Online studying and my practice. Then my parents took a big risk by pulling me out of a formal school so that I could completely focus on sports. I have been homeschooled since then.

When you say home-schooled, how did you prepare yourself for self-learning? How different was it from attending school?

I was fortunate enough that my parents could find a perfect home schooling option for me. Sanskrit Gurukul, whose belief was that learning should be limitless for a child.

As we can see, you have won so many gold and silver medals in various national and international competitions for gymnastics. What made you go for weight-lifting?

Though I was really doing well in Gymnastics, it became difficult for us to find coaching that would help me get better at my skills. Then, one of my mentors suggested my parents to consider weightlifting as it beautifully complements with Gymnastics. Many international weightlifters have been great

gymnasts in the beginning! Thus I found my new sport and I feel very lucky that I could take it up.

What are your goals for the upcoming competitions?

I have now made a choice to focus entirely on weight-lifting and hope to participate in many national and international competitions. I am practicing for 4 hours everyday along with a balanced diet to build strength and also maintain a lean body to achieve my goals. My mother Manjushree Puranik, helps me plan my diet and fulfil my nutritional requirements. She herself is an international cricketer and a powerlifter as well.

Do you miss school and having fun with friends?

Yes I do sometimes, but then I know what I have to achieve. This drives me each day to practice and perform. Also, I am lucky to have a big sister and cousins living with us who are like friends to me. The society where I stay has many kids of my age so I don't feel the need to find new friends. I also have a cat named Butter who is very dear to me.

India's Temple Architecture

One sunny afternoon, a curious boy named Siddhartha wandered through an ancient village filled with towering temples. "How did these amazing temples get built?" he wondered.

As he walked, he saw an elderly scholar, Acharya Vishvanatha, sitting under a tree. Gathering his courage, Siddhartha asked, "Acharya, how were these magnificent temples made?"

The Acharya smiled. "These temples have a long history! Long ago, around the 4th century, temples were simple structures made from wood and stone. Over time, builders became more skilled, and the temples grew taller and more beautiful."

Acharya pointed to the temples around them. "In India, there are two main styles: Nagara and Dravida. Nagara temples have tall towers shaped like mountain peaks, while Dravida temples have pyramid-like towers."

He continued, "Temples were not just places to worship. They were the heart of the community, where people gathered for festivals and celebrations!"

Siddhartha's eyes widened. "Wow! That's amazing. Why did they build the temples so tall?"

"Good question!" Acharya replied. "In the North, the Nagara temples have tall, beehive-like towers, called shikhara, that reach toward the sky. In the South, the Dravida temples have layers that get smaller as they rise, like steps."

Acharya drew a small picture in the dirt. "These designs have meanings. People believed the taller the temple, the closer they were to the heavens, and to the gods."

Siddhartha nodded. "That makes sense! But what about all these carvings? They look like they tell stories!"

"You're right!" Acharya said, smiling. "The carvings on these temples tell stories of gods, goddesses, and even scenes from everyday life. Artists back then were not just builders; they were storytellers."

Siddhartha leaned in, fascinated. "And are there more temples like these?"

"Yes!" Acharya said. "In some parts of India, you'll find temples that mix both Nagara and Dravida styles. Every temple is unique, and each one tells a story about the people who built it, the kings who supported it, and the gods they honored."

Acharya placed a hand on Siddhartha's shoulder. "Remember, these temples are more than just stone. They are the heart of our culture and history. When you visit a temple, you are walking through history itself."

Siddhartha couldn't help but feel a new sense of wonder. Temples were no longer just beautiful structures; they were living stories of India's past, waiting to be explored.

Written by: Neha Kulkarni - Research Assistant (Sambhasha.in)



PIC: PEXELS

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PIC: WIKIMEDIA COMMONS

Do you want to write and Draw?



Students, Parents and Teachers, Do you know that the Booktern team gives fun story prompts for all the students, and drawing prompts for K-3 students every month and invites them to write stories and draw pictures based on them?

Here are some fun prompts for the Booktern issue of November '24. What do you do next?

■ Write an original story using your imagination in your own words (without the assistance of AI tools)

■ For K-3 students, draw and paint using your imagination (without using printouts or tracing)

■ Send your stories and drawings to us on admin@booktern.com

■ Make sure you send it before 25th October, 2024

■ We will publish selected entries in the November issue.

What's more, we also conduct story-writing workshops online to discuss how to use story prompts, design characters for your stories, and write some wonderful stories.

Story Prompt: The Great STOP Sign Disappearance

In a big town, all the STOP signs suddenly go missing! Detective Manish takes on the case to find out where they've gone. Along the way, he teaches everyone why

STOP signs are important for road safety.

Drawing Prompt (Std K-3): The Secret Door

Imagine you find a secret door in your classroom that leads to a magical jungle. Draw and paint what you see! Are there animals that talk, shiny treasures, or maybe a big treehouse? Use lots of colors and have fun making your jungle!

QUIZ TIME!

Use the given clues to find the answers. Avoid using the Web.

1. In which sport did independent India win its first Olympic gold medal in 1948?

Clue: Team event; 6 letters; the last 3 letters form a word of something that can open a lock.

2. Which famous inventor's statue overlooks the Niagara falls?

Clue: Name of Elon Musk's electric car; unit of magnetic flux density. July 26th was International Tiger day. The Siberian tiger is the biggest species of tiger in the world. In which country would you find them?

Clue: Moscow; largest country in the world.

4. Which Asian country's emperor sits on the chrysanthemum throne?

Clue: Nippon ; Suzuki ;



PIC: FREEPIK



Raadha and Siddharth Rahalkar

Bizzie, the little honey bee with a heart full of courage and curiosity, fluttered back to her hive after her longest forest adventure. The hive resonated with a mix of concern and excitement as she made her way through the bustling corridors. Upon her arrival, the Queen Bee, a figure of nurturing authority, welcomed Bizzie with a warm, motherly embrace.

"Bizzie, my dear, we've been so worried. Tell us about your journey," the Queen

hummed softly, her voice a soothing melody amidst the hive's activity.

Gathering around, the bees listened intently as Bizzie recounted her encounters with the forest's diverse inhabitants. Her tales of playful monkeys, watchful deer, swift antelopes, wise bears, mighty boars, and disciplined dholes captivated her audience. With each story, Bizzie's eyes sparkled, reflecting the wisdom she had gained.

The Queen listened thoughtfully and then spoke, "Bizzie, you have learned much from our forest friends. Now, reflect on what we bees contribute to this vast green world with the insights you've gathered."

Taking this advice to heart, Bizzie began to observe her own kind with newfound interest. She shared her realizations with the hive, explaining the crucial role of their pollination in the life cycle of plants and the seamless collaboration within the hive that mirrored the teamwork she admired in the dhones.

Taking this advice to heart, Bizzie began to observe her own kind with newfound interest. She shared her realizations with the hive, explaining the crucial role of their pollination in the life cycle of plants and the seamless collaboration within the hive that mirrored the teamwork she admired in the dhones.

laboration within the hive that mirrored the teamwork she admired in the dhones.

The Queen then addressed Bizzie, "Your journeys have opened our eyes to the greater purpose we serve in the forest. Tell us more about how our daily tasks contribute to this grand design."

Bizzie replied, "Our role in pollination is crucial for plants to grow and reproduce. It's more than gathering nectar; it's about being guardians of the forest's growth."

A young bee, intrigued, asked, "So, our work with flowers is more than just making honey?"

"Exactly," Bizzie affirmed. "Every flower we visit gets a chance to bear fruit and seeds because of our pollination."

An experienced forager added, "We always felt a connection with the flowers, but I never knew our impact was so significant."

The Queen nodded. "Every role in our hive contributes to this great cycle of nature. We are integral to maintaining the balance of the ecosystem."

Bizzie continued, "In the forest, I saw the dhones working together, just like we do. Their teamwork ensures their survival and benefits their entire pack."

A worker bee, inspired by the conversation, said, "That's really inspiring. Our teamwork here in the hive reflects the interconnectedness of nature!"

"That's right," Bizzie confirmed. "Our collaboration is part of something much larger than just our hive."

An elder bee, reflecting on Bizzie's words, said, "Your insights shed new light on our daily tasks, Bizzie. It's a reminder that our efforts have a wider impact than we might have realized."

The Queen concluded, "Bizzie, your observations have enlightened not just you, but all of us. You've shown us that even the smallest of our actions can have a significant impact in preserving the balance of our ecosystem."

With these words, the hive buzzed with a newfound appreciation for their role in the forest, united by Bizzie's enlightening journey and the wisdom it had brought.

— S.A. Shirranjani, Coimbatore

Varun Kelkar

The tourism industry is an integral aspect of any country; it generates revenue, creates jobs, brings in foreign currency, and supports the local ecosystem if managed responsibly. Additionally, tourism fosters cultural exchange and international understanding, strengthening diplomatic relations and promoting peace. It also drives infrastructure development, leading to improved transportation, accommodation, and public services, which benefits both tourists and local communities. Tourism helps preserve cultural heritage and natural resources by raising awareness and funding for conservation efforts. A robust tourism sector can diversify a country's economy, reducing dependence on traditional industries and enhancing resilience against economic downturns. For example, pristine beaches bring to mind the Maldives or Australia, deserts evoke images of the Middle East, and hi-tech cities remind us of Hong Kong, Singapore, and Dubai. But what comes to mind when you think of India?

India's Touristic Identity

India's tourism identity is multifaceted, encompassing vibrant cultural heritage, diverse landscapes, and historical landmarks. However, a critical aspect of India's tourism potential remains underutilised: its pilgrimage sites. While these sites draw significant domestic tourism, particularly among older age groups, younger travelers often seek different experiences. Bridging the gap between traditional pilgrimage and modern tourism is crucial for elevating India's tourism sector, especially to cater to the growing number of young travelers seeking meaningful, yet contemporary experiences.

Domestic tourism in India sees older age groups flocking to pilgrimage sites, while younger travelers prefer weekend getaways and relaxed treks. Cities like Rishikesh attract youth with yoga and adventure sports rather than traditional pilgrimage. So, why aren't younger audiences visiting sites like Kashi, Mathura, or Somnath?

Addressing disconnect

The younger generation's fast-paced lifestyle need for constant internet connectivity, and limited vacation days steer them away from traditional pilgrimage sites, which often lack modern amenities. Additionally, infrastructure at these sites is either overcrowded or under-utilised, highlighting the need for a market-driven approach post-infrastructure development, similar to the successful model around the Statue of Unity.

Modernising Pilgrimage

In an effort to reimagine India and Bharat, the government has made significant efforts to promote the various things India has to offer digitally but has failed to showcase the same. Young travelers seek experiences that allow them to connect and learn about history in engaging ways. Providing high-speed internet and mobile apps offering virtual tours and real-time updates can make these sites more appealing. Developing packages that combine pilgrimage with yoga, meditation, and Vedic workshops would cater to the interests of younger travelers seeking both spirituality and modern comforts. Highlighting festi-



TRAVEL TALES

Bridging pilgrimage and modern experiences for young tourists in India



vals and local traditions, and offering volunteer opportunities can add meaning to travel and deepen the cultural experience. Combining traditional pilgrimage with trekking, camping, and local excursions can make the journey more appealing to younger travelers seeking both adventure and spirituality.

Optimising Infrastructure
Using technology for crowd control and infrastructure optimisation can help manage visitor flow better. Slot booking, special entry allowances, and seamless experiences will encourage young and foreign travelers to experience India, who otherwise would avoid places of

extreme importance due to discomfort and inconvenience. Encouraging eco-friendly accommodations and local businesses to offer sustainable products and services will attract environmentally conscious young tourists and ensure the responsible use of resources.

Enhancing Accessibility

Improving transport links to pilgrimage sites and introducing special trains and flights will make travel more convenient. Developing budget-friendly lodging options like youth hostels near pilgrimage sites will cater to the needs of young travelers who prioritise affordability and comfort.

Product-based approach

Innumerable sites of great importance have failed to become major pilgrim destinations due to a lack of infrastructure and promotion. Sites such as the Hazratbal Shrine in Kashmir see fewer visitors compared to others due to inconvenience. Creating immersive experiences, such as following the great epics of India, can attract more tourists. For example, a journey starting from Ayodhya, retracing the exile route to the southern tip of the peninsula and into Sri Lanka, can teach travelers about the revered aspects of the epic Ramayana. Alternatively, a tour following the footsteps of the princes of Kuru, learning ancient Indian weaponry, and playing games like those in the Mahabharata, can enhance exposure to India's history and culture.

Revitalising pilgrimage tourism to appeal to younger generations requires modern amenities, cultural immersion, and strategic promotion. By integrating technology, optimising infrastructure, and creating curated engaging experiences, India can make its sacred sites more attractive to young travelers, balancing spiritual essence with contemporary needs. This approach not only preserves cultural heritage but also ensures the sustainability and growth of the tourism sector in a way that resonates with the values and preferences of younger generations.

Sheena Chohan Star's glistening saga

The actress shares an insightful peek into her illustrious journey



Actress Sheena Chohan has carved a specialty for herself within the entertainment industry with her noteworthy versatility and wide-ranging portfolio. She has captivated groups of onlookers over different film businesses, including Malayalam, Telugu, Hollywood, and Bollywood, exhibiting her talent and versatility in each.

Sheena's career is stamped by her collaborations with some of the greatest names within the industry. She has shared the screen with luminaries like Madhuri Dixit and Kajol, winning her a place among the industry's elite. Her extraordinary performances have not gone unnoticed; at the prestigious Dubai International Film Festival, famous filmmaker Shekhar Kapur lauded her acting ability, a testament to her skill and commitment.

Reflecting on her journey, Sheena said, "Acting is not just about playing a part; it's about living the character and telling their story with authenticity and enthusiasm." Her commitment to her craft is evident in each execution. Sheena's capacity to drench herself in different roles and bring them to life on screen has made her a sought-after actress within the industry. As she proceeds to explore new horizons in her career, gatherings of people enthusiastically anticipate the following captivating performance from this multifaceted talent.

"Acting is not just about playing a part; it's about living the character and telling their story with authenticity and enthusiasm." —Sheena Chohan

DECODING FORM 17C

Understanding its importance and the ongoing legal debate surrounding it

Poojitha Nakul

Over the last few years, there has been a lot of discussion in print media and social media on Form 17C. It all began with the judgment of the Supreme Court on 24th May 2024, which declined Association for Democratic Reforms (ADR)'s request to direct the Election Commission (EC) to upload polling station-wise voter turnout data (Form 17C) during the ongoing Lok Sabha elections. Café Social tries to deconstruct this issue for the readers to understand and form an informed opinion.

What is Form 17C?

Form 17C records all the votes polled in a polling station. Under rule 496 (2), the presiding officer has to provide a copy of the data entered in Part I of Form 17C to the candidates' polling agents at the time of the close of polling. The data recorded in Part I of Form 17C includes:

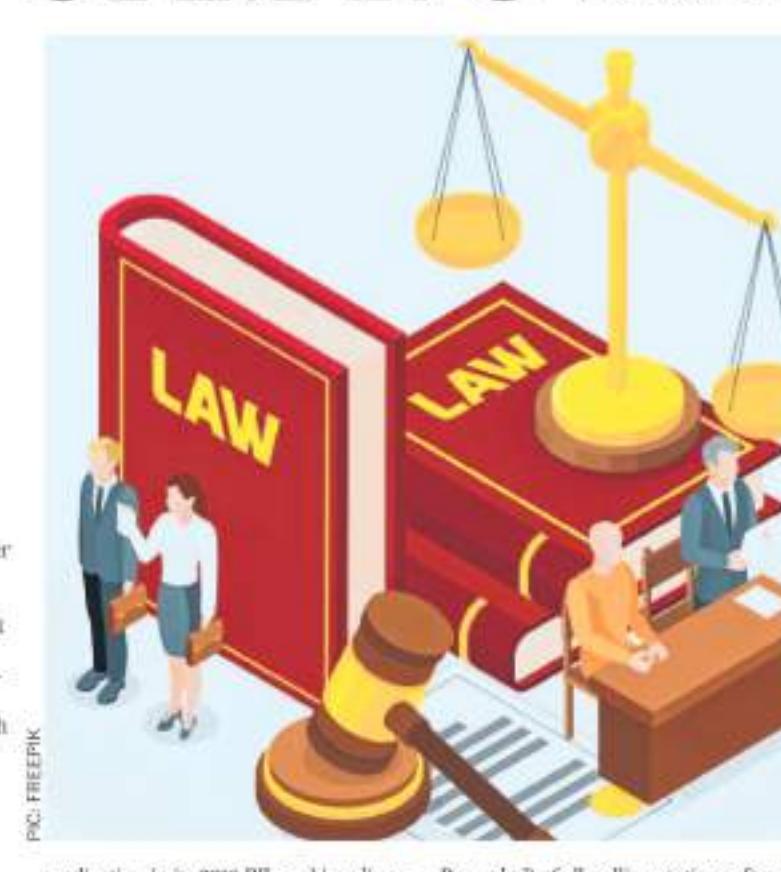
- The unique ID number of the EVM used at a particular polling booth.
- The total number of voters enlisted at that booth.
- The total number of voters who entered the polling booth and whose details were validated on Form 17A.
- The number of voters who did not vote despite signing on the register.
- The number of voters who were not allowed to vote.

What makes Form 17C data important?

The data in Form 17C is used by candidates to verify the details provided during counting, such as the ID number of the EVM and the number of votes polled per polling station. The candidates can challenge a result if there is a discrepancy between the data in Form 17C and the data emanating from the counting center. They can also file petitions in the high court challenging the election result based on the mismatch between the counting data and the figures in Form 17C.

ADR interim application in the Supreme Court

The Association of Democratic Reforms (ADR) had filed an interim



application in its 2019 PIL seeking directions to the poll panel for the immediate uploading of scanned, legible copies of Form 17C Part-I (Account of Votes

Recorded) of all polling stations after the polls.

The ADR claimed that there was a "5-6 percent" discrepancy between the ini-

tial voter turnout data released on the day of polling and the final data published later.

The NGO argued that the delay in publishing accurate voter turnout data raises concerns about the transparency and integrity of the election process.

EC's Response

The Election Commission raised several concerns, including potential chaos and disruption of the electoral process.

Form 17C records all the votes polled in a polling station. Under rule 49S (2), the presiding officer has to provide a copy of the data entered in Part I of Form 17C to the candidates' polling agents at the time of the close of polling.

The EC argued that "indiscriminate disclosure" of polling station-wise data could "vitiate" the electoral space and increase the risk of data misuse.

It stated that there is no legal mandate to provide Form 17C to any person other than the candidate or their agent and that public posting of such data is not provided in the statutory framework.

EC in its 225-page affidavit submitted to the Supreme Court said:

"It is submitted that a wholesome disclosure of Form 17C is amenable to mischief and vitiation of the entire electoral space. Currently, the original Form 17C

is only available in the Strong Room, and a copy only with the polling agents whose signature it bears. Therefore, there is a one-to-one relationship between each Form 17C and its possessors."

ADR's plea to upload voter turnout data

The Supreme Court refused the plea because issuing such a directive during the ongoing election process would be challenging. It noted, "Granting any

relief in Interim application (IA) will amount to granting relief in the main petition which is pending."

The court emphasized that five phases of polling had already concluded, and mobilizing the necessary manpower for this task would be difficult.

The Supreme Court has adjourned the interlocutory application filed by ADR to be listed before a regular bench after the elections.

This means the matter will be revisited once the election process is complete, allowing for a more detailed examination of the issues raised by the ADR.

ALIA'S ANXIETY STRUGGLE

Actress reveals being diagnosed with clinical anxiety

CJ Desk

Alia Bhatt recently disclosed that she has been diagnosed with clinical anxiety. During Kareena Kapoor Khan's chat show *What Women Want*, Alia opened up about how her husband, actor Ranbir Kapoor, casually suggested that they let the paparazzi click pictures of their daughter Raha during Christmas 2023, triggering her anxiety.

The *Gangubai Kathiawadi* actress shared, "Initially, I had a different perspective about Raha being photographed. We both were together, and I felt she's too young. I didn't want her to become a reel on Instagram. But just before the Christmas lunch in 2023, while we were driving, Ranbir asked, 'Should we take a picture with Raha today?' And I was like, 'Are you sure?' Because I experience clinical anxiety, and every moment feels like the worst-case scenario."

Alia mentioned that Ranbir understood her fears and suggested they discuss her worst concerns. They eventually talked it through during a drive from Bandra to Juhu, and by the end, she agreed.

"It's true, this is our life, and I didn't want people to assume we were hiding Raha's face. That was never the intention," she clarified.

She also recalled a heartwarming moment: "When we clicked that picture, Raha held both our faces, and it was such a cute moment."

On the work front, Bhatt's latest film *Jigra*, featuring Vedang Raina in the lead, hit theatres on October 11, 2024.

Dull opening for *Jigra*

Despite Alia Bhatt's star power, her latest release *Jigra* did not manage to garner huge footfall on the release day. As per trade analyst Taran Adarsh, the film, which is helmed by Vasan Bala, raked in Rs 4.55 crore on the opening day in India. *Vicky Vidya Ka Woh Wala Video* minted Rs 5.71 cr on Friday.



Ananya's podcast is named 'So Positive Podcast'. Through this podcast, she will promote healthy online habits and talk about positivity



Ananya launches podcast

CJ Desk

Ananya Panday, who is receiving positive feedback for her recent streaming film *CTRL*, has ventured into the podcasting space. The actress will engage in discussions on positivity and healthier online behaviours through her new podcast, *So Positive*. The series aims to address mental health challenges in the digital era. The podcast trailer was released on Thursday, coinciding with *World Mental Health Day*.

In candid conversations about mental health and social media, Ananya will interact with popular influencers such as Prakta Koli, Sumukhi Suresh (also a dialogue writer for *CTRL*), Yashraj Mukhate, Ankush Bahuguna, and BeYouNick. Each episode will feature personal stories and practical strategies from these creators, helping listeners maintain mental well-being in a hyperconnected world. The first episode of the *So Positive* Podcast premieres on October 15.

Each episode of this podcast will feature many stories that will provide users with practical strategies to maintain mental balance in the hyperconnected world.



In today's digital age, our lives are so intertwined with social media, and while it brings many positives, it also comes with its own set of challenges. Through the *So Positive* Podcast, I hope we can all take a step back, reflect on our online habits, and prioritise our mental well-being. It's a conversation we all need to have—about the ways we engage online and how we can create a more positive space for ourselves and others

— Ananya Panday

Pics: Varinder Chawla

CAUGHT ON CAM

The much-anticipated *Lakme Fashion Week 2024* began on October 9, focusing on sustainable fashion. A-list celebrities graced the runway as showstoppers, presenting renowned designers' latest haute couture collections to excited audiences



Shilpa Shetty



Sobhita Dhulipala



Diana Penty

Unmasking the darkness

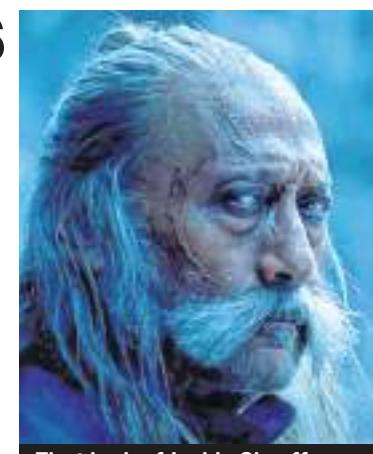
Jackie Shroff turns into deadly Babbar Sher in action-packed sneak-peek of *Baby John*

IANS

The makers of *Baby John* on the occasion of *Dussehra* on Saturday unveiled the look of veteran actor Jackie Shroff, who looked every bit deadly as Babbar Sher in the film starring Varun Dhawan. Varun took to Instagram, where he shared a glimpse of Jackie's edgy look with grey long hair, vintage rings, and chains around his neck.

The clip showed that the actor is behind-the-bars. He is carrying a weapon in his bloodied hand.

Later in the video, Jackie is seen punching into a mirror, where only



First look of Jackie Shroff

his intense eyes are visible. The video was captioned: "Get ready to meet the darkness you never saw coming... The evil of #BabyJohn! #BabbarSher is coming for you!"

Directed by Kalees, *Baby John* is an action-packed mass entertainer.

The film also marks the Hindi film debut of Keerthy Suresh and features Wamiqa Gabbi, making her silver screen debut. The film also stars Rajpal Yadav.

From PR to acting

Kabir Singh Bhandari

Tamara Dsouza's latest project is *Love, Sitara*, an emotional family drama about love, acceptance, and family secrets, streaming on ZEE5. Directed by Vandana Kataria and produced by Ronnie Screwvala, she plays a photographer who is the lead's (Sobhita Dhulipala) best friend.

Her journey, however, has been an unconventional one, as she started out as a celebrity public relations executive, working with actors like Vidya Balan, Jacqueline Fernandez, and Shruti Haasan. From there, she shifted gears to TIPS Industries, where she tackled marketing and promotions, before landing a role as a Creative Producer at Viking Media. In 2018, Tamara decided to dive into acting. A regular face in ad commercials, she has been seen in over 75 advertisements for brands such as Tanishq, IKEA, Maggi, Vodafone, and Titan. Her previous projects have been *Attack*, where she starred alongside John Abraham and Jacqueline Fernandez; Class of '83 with Bobby Deol; and web series *Little Things* and *Hello Mini*. Along with that, she's also a professional makeup artist and hairstylist, voice-over artist, and has done backup vocals with names like Pritam, Shaan, Neeti

Actress opens up about her journey, the shift from PR to acting and more



Mohan, and A. R. Rahman.

Speaking with us, she opened up about her journey, the shift from PR to acting, and more:

From PR to Acting

"In 2014, a friend asked me to join him for an audition for a Titan TV commercial as a background actor. I remember how thrilled I was to perform in front of a camera and the absolute joy I felt on set. After being spotted in that ad, several auditions came my way, and I managed to balance a full-time job with acting. At one point, I had to choose, and I knew acting was something that would bring me joy every single day. I'm glad I chose that."

The Waiting Game

"As an actor, you're constantly going through highs and lows. When I first started, I realised how much an actor needed to wait: wait in line for an audition, wait for a call to confirm the part, wait on set for your shot, wait for your cheque, wait for the release of your project, wait to get called again for work. It's a cycle, and if you learn the art of being patient, you've won half the battle."

On Love, Sitara

"Working with Sobhita was one of my most memorable experiences. I had a complete fan-girl moment when I met her for the first time at a workshop before our film. But right from the get-go, she was the girl next door. Since we were

shooting during peak lockdown, we were stuck in one hotel for a month, so we did eventually spend a lot of time together. And I loved our conversations. They were warm, grounded, and real."

"There was a scene in the cow shed where Sanjay had to face the back side of a cow and had to be sprayed with mock cow dung. I remember how hilarious it was to see him get sprayed over and over again because the cow refused to position itself correctly. By the end of it, we needed to break for a bit because none of us could control our laughter. It just proved that animals have a mind of their own on set. In the end, we got the perfect shot."



Actress
reveals
why
she is
praying
for
Alpha

Sharvari prays for **Alpha**

IANS

On the occasion of *Dussehra* on Saturday, actress Sharvari revealed that she is praying for the upcoming film *Alpha* starring Alia Bhatt. She said that on this day worship all means of fighting injustice, ignorance and evil.

Sharvari took to Instagram, where she posted a picture of herself looking gorgous in a salmon and gold hued *lehenga*.

She completed her look with heavy temple jewelry. "Happy *Dussehra* and *Vijayadashami* Today I'm praying for *Alpha* because on this day we worship all weapons, tools, instruments, books, pens & pencils as they are the means of fighting injustice, ignorance and evil," she wrote as the caption.

Earlier last week, Sharvari credited her films *Munjya*, *Maharaj* and *Vedaa* for giving her courage in her acting journey.

"I'm so grateful for the love I have received this year for my films *Munjya*, *Maharaj* & *Vedaa*.. These films and your love has given me courage and faith in my journey!" she wrote as the caption.

On October 4, the makers of the upcoming spy film *Alpha* starring Alia Bhatt and Sharvari have finally revealed the release date.

The movie will hit the screens on *Christmas* - December 25, 2025.

The banner Yash Raj Films took to Instagram, where they made the announcement along with a poster carrying the release date.



Armaan makes waves

Singer nominated for Best India Act at MTV Europe Music Awards for the 3rd time

CJ Desk

Singer-songwriter Armaan Malik, who is widely recognised as an Indian pop icon, has once again been nominated for the prestigious *MTV Europe Music Awards* (*EMA*) in the category of Best India Act. This marks the third time that Malik has been nominated for this prestigious award in the past 4 years.

Previously, Armaan Malik won the *MTV Europe Music Award* for Best India Act in 2020 for his debut English single '*Control*' and again in 2022 for his English single '*You*'. His latest nomination is for his hit single '*Always*', featuring the renowned British singer-songwriter, Calum Scott. This collaboration showcased Malik's versatility and ability to seamlessly blend different musical styles, further solidifying his position as a global music sensation.

I'm beyond ecstatic to be nominated once again for the *MTV EMA's* 'Best India Act'. Having won this honor twice before, this third nomination feels especially meaningful. As an Indian artist, representing my country on such a prestigious global stage is both humbling and surreal. There are so many incredible artists alongside me, and I wish everyone the best of luck! Now, it's over to the fans and the *MTV EMA* voters!"
— Armaan Malik

CJ Desk

The much-anticipated *Superboys of Malegaon*, produced by Amazon MGM Studios, Excel Entertainment, and Tiger Baby, made a strong impression at the 68th BFI London Film Festival.

The film, directed by Reema Kagti and written by Varun Grover, was showcased on October 10 at London's Vue West End theatre.

It had its world premiere earlier on September 13 at the Toronto International Film Festival (TIFF).

With a stellar cast including Adarsh Gourav, Vineet Kumar Singh, and Shashank Arora, the film delves into the filmmaking culture of Malegaon, a small Indian town known for producing creative parody films.

Superboys of Malegaon tells a heartwarming story about friendship, resilience, and the joy of filmmaking. It highlights how a group of amateur film-

A 'Super' Moment

Superboys of Malegaon earns acclaim at 68th BFI London Film Festival



makers comes together to bring their dreams to life.

The London screening received enthusiastic praise, with

audiences appreciating the film's humor, creativity, and emotional depth.

The event saw key members like Ritesh Sidhwani, Zoya Akhtar, Reema Kagti, and Adarsh

Gourav walk the red carpet.

The film is set to release in Indian theatres in January 2025, followed by a global release and streaming debut on Prime Video.

Breaking barriers

CJ Desk

On the International Day of the Girl Child, celebrated on Friday, ZEE5 India highlights the power of storytelling to inspire change and promote social awareness. The streaming platform, known for its diverse content, aims to move beyond entertainment by en-

couraging meaningful discussions around critical societal issues.

The platform underscores the impact of narratives focusing on the empowerment and rights of young girls. Successful titles like *Sirf Ek Bandaa Kaafi Hai* and *Ayali* demonstrate how such stories resonate with viewers, igniting conversations around justice and personal empowerment.

Sirf Ek Bandaa Kaafi Hai and Ayali inspire social change

As an actor, I've always been deeply committed to addressing issues like children's safety, even during my early days in theatre when I worked closely with several NGOs. With *Sirf Ek Bandaa Kaafi Hai*, we set out to tell an important story about justice for the oppressed, especially young girls who face abuse.

— Manoj Bajpayee



Cinema and OTT platforms hold a power to talk about topics that are often overlooked, paving the way for crucial dialogue and action.
— Manish Kalra,
(Chief business officer for ZEE5 India)



Cooking Up A Storm With Suhasini Mulay

Five-time National Award winner, film and TV actor Suhasini Mulay smilingly says, "My lunch is predictable (I order a tiffin), but my dinner is unpredictable. I like to have different cuisines." She has very strong tastes: over-spiced food is a no-no, while ice cream has to be from Natural.

Anita Raheja

When I wake up: I drink half a bottle of water. I make sure to take a one-litre bottle to bed, and if there's anything left, I drink it in the morning. After that, I have some almonds soaked overnight, followed by my morning tea, which my husband makes for me. I like a pot of Orange Pekoe — it's a very light tea — and I have it with two biscuits.

My breakfast: I have an incredibly healthy breakfast: a small bowl of fresh sprouted *moong*, followed by an apple or a seasonal fruit, and a small banana because it's a good source of potassium. After that, I have cereal, a mix of muesli and cornflakes, with milk and more fruit. It's a very fruity, healthy start to the day.

My lunch: It's fairly predictable because we get a tiffin from Poonam Kapoor, who makes healthy food. The meal is essentially Punjabi: one dry *sabzi*, one *sabzi* in gravy, one *dal*, four *rotis*, salad, and rice. I eat some of the vegetables and *dal*, one *phulka*, and loads of salad.

My favourite desserts: *Jalebi*, *gulab jamun*, *rasmalai*, and *sandesh*. I don't like my desserts to be overly sweet. When I travel abroad, I turn up my nose at Haagen-Dazs and all that fancy stuff, because I think Natural ice cream is the best. My favourite flavours are coconut, walnut, and coffee.

My favourite restaurants: In Mumbai, I really enjoy the food at Yauatcha and Kofuku — both serve Japanese-Chinese fusion cuisine. I recommend O Pedro in BKC; they offer a modern take on Goan food. And I can't forget Ram & Shyam chaat-wala!

In Pune, Le Petit Amour serves some of the world's best bistro food. For a good old Maharashtrian fish *thali*, Fish O Fish is my go-to place. In Delhi, my favourite chat place is Nathus. The *tikkis* at a joint run by two brothers, Ra-

jendra and Jeetendra, are to die for. In Kolkata, I love the sweetmeats at Balaram Mullick and Radharaman Mullick.

My favourite food: I could eat Bengali food every day — there's so much variety! I also enjoy Assamese, South Indian, and UP cuisines. However, if I have to eat Indian food for five days straight, I get bored. So, I prefer mixing it up with Italian, Spanish, Mexican, Chinese, or Japanese cuisine.

I cook: I think I'm a pretty good cook. However, I'm not great at making *dosas* or *idlis*, but I don't mind since I can always eat them at a restaurant. I usually cook one meal a day.

An honest admission: I can't make *rotis*.

My childhood food memories: My grandmother was a traditional Maharashtra Brahmin. During Diwali, she would make *anarsa*, *puran poli*, *ukadiche modak*, *gud poli*, and spoil us. When she made *anarsa*, she would have us grind the soaked and dried rice on a hand *chakki*.

My favourite recipe: Tomato Cha Saar. A Marathi spiced tomato soup that I learned to make during COVID, when fresh ingredients were hard to find. It can also be made with fresh tomatoes.



Instagram/@mulay.14

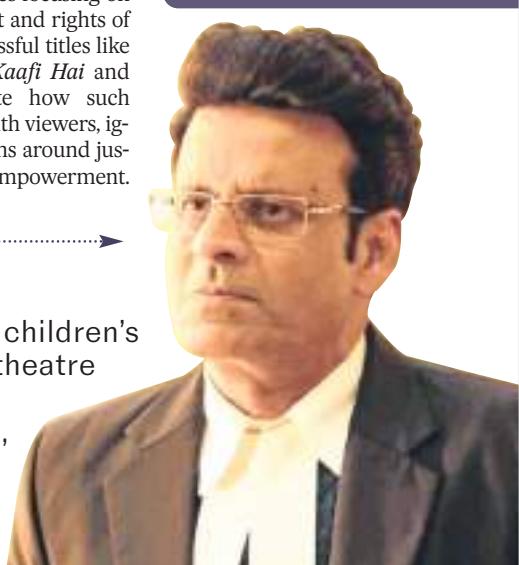
Tomato Cha Saar Recipe

INGREDIENTS:

- 2 tablespoons clarified butter or oil (avoid olive oil)
- 1 teaspoon cumin seeds
- 1 large can of crushed tomatoes
- 1 whole hot chili (if available)
- Some curry leaves (dry ones will work, optional)
- A handful of coriander leaves (optional but preferred)
- 2 tablespoons yogurt
- 1/4 teaspoon turmeric powder
- 1/4 teaspoon red chili powder
- Salt to taste
- 1/2 teaspoon sugar
- Sufficient water



Representative image



Blend the crushed tomatoes until smooth. Heat the clarified butter or oil until hot. Add cumin seeds and let them sizzle, followed by the whole chili, turmeric, and red chili powder. Be careful not to burn the spices. Pour in the blended tomatoes and stir well. Add water to achieve a thin soup-like consistency. Bring the mixture to a boil and add curry leaves and chopped coriander. Season with salt and add 1/2 teaspoon sugar if the tomatoes are sour. Stir in the yogurt just before serving. Serve it hot with rice.

sp Briefs

BENGALURU
Rishabh visits Bengaluru



Fans in Bengaluru enjoyed a unique experience with Indian cricketer Rishabh Pant as part of the 'Star Nahi Far' initiative on October 12. Fans engaged in gully cricket activities at the Manipal Academy and UB City, creating lasting memories. Pant will lead the Indian team against New Zealand starting October 16 in a Test series.

LONDON
Vantika aims for GM title



Gold-medalist Vantika Agrawal, now 21, is gearing up to become a Grandmaster after recently helping India secure its first Olympiad gold. Despite facing challenges, she has competed in 28 events since 2022 to earn rating points. Vantika's determination is bolstered by her mother's unwavering support.

SHANGHAI
Alcaraz upset by Machac

Carlos Alcaraz's 12-match winning streak ended with a quarterfinal loss to Tomas Machac at the Shanghai Masters, with scores of 7-6 (5), 7-5. Machac advanced to face Janik Sinner, who defeated Daniil Medvedev in straight sets. Meanwhile, Aryna Sabalenka rallied to beat Yulia Putintseva in the Wuhan Open, maintaining her unbeaten record.

GENEVA
FIFA closes Valcke ticket investigation

The Swiss attorney general's office has concluded a nine-year investigation into former FIFA official Jérôme Valcke regarding World Cup ticket sales. While other proceedings are still open, Valcke has been declared innocent of specific ticket-related charges. His suspension from soccer by FIFA remains in effect until 2023.

BERLIN
Germany wins again in Nations League

Germany secured a 2-1 victory over Bosnia-Herzegovina, fueled by Denis Undavi's two goals, extending their unbeaten Nations League run. Meanwhile, the Netherlands managed to draw 1-1 against Hungary after being reduced to ten players. Ukraine also achieved a 1-0 victory against Georgia, ending the latter's unbeaten streak.

AUSTIN
Pochettino debuts with US soccer



Mauricio Pochettino will make his debut as U.S. soccer coach against Panama on October 12. The Argentine's focus is on building team cohesion and evaluating player performances ahead of the 2026 World Cup. Key players, including Christian Pulisic, are eager to adapt to Pochettino's intense training style.

INDIA'S DOMINANCE: Samson's blazing ton powers India to 133-run triumph, sweeps series 3-0 over Bangladesh

Samson sets Hyderabad ablaze with a fiery ton

Sanju Samson tees off: one over, five sixes

9.1, Rishad Hossain to Samson, no run

Good length, no turn, beats his slog, hits the pad, but headed down leg

9.2, Rishad Hossain to Samson, SIX runs

Too full as he often was last match. Samson clears the front leg, and eases him back over his head for another nonchalant-looking six

9.3, Rishad Hossain to Samson, SIX runs

He is having his way with Hossain. Again, right in the drop zone. This is poor spin bowling. You can't bowl so full that a batter can hit you down the ground without using his feet. Goes over long-off this time

9.4, Rishad Hossain to Samson, SIX runs

Dead straight, lower in trajectory, but a third straight six. Again Samson doesn't even have to stretch himself. Not a half-volley but this is a true pitch

9.5, Rishad Hossain to Samson, SIX runs

Goes slower in the air, but gives him another half-volley. This is just average bowling. He clears the front leg, and goes over long-on for the fourth six in a row

9.6, Rishad Hossain to Samson, SIX runs

That is five sixes in a row. Not a bad ball, but Samson goes deep in the crease to manage to pull it with a vertical bat, and goes over deep midwicket for a small six.



Sanju Samson celebrates after scoring a century during the third and final Twenty20 international match against Bangladesh at the Rajiv Gandhi International Stadium in Hyderabad on Saturday AFP

PTI HYDERABAD

Sanju Samson's ebullient maiden T20 International hundred doted India's resounding 133-run victory and 3-0 series sweep over a listless Bangladesh here on Saturday.

Once India broomed away records like rotten twigs while posting 297 for 6 after electing to bat, it was always a case of eventual margin of win and Bangladesh never really offered a meaningful fight, ending up at 164/7 in the third and final T20I.

Pacer Mayank Yadav (2/32) and leg-spinner Ravi Bishnoi (3/30) led the hosts' bowling effort.

Samson (111, 47 balls, 11x4, 8x6), who hammered the second fastest T20I century by an Indian after Rohit Sharma (35 balls), and skipper Suryakumar Yadav (75, 35 balls, 8x4, 5x6), biffed 173 runs during an electrifying second wicket stand, propelling the hosts past several runs.

The total was second in the all-time list of the highest T20I team totals behind Nepal's 314

and ahead of Afghanistan's 278/3, and also India's highest in the shortest format. They were purely amazing stats even taking into account a barren pitch and lighting quick outfield.

But beyond that cold realm of numbers, Samson's innings was touched by his esoteric genius, the ingredient that makes him compelling and frustrating in equal measure. But the Kerala right-hander chose to display his captivating side on the field on a clement Hyderabad night and Bangladesh desisted withered quickly.

Samson needed a big effort after lukewarm outings in the first two matches in Gwalior and New Delhi and, oh boy, did he make it count here! Samson's brand-new purpose found an immediate on-field expression as he pummelled pacer Taskin Ahmed for four consecutive fours – two cover drives and as many flicks – in the second over of the innings. It was the perfect teaser for the blockbuster action that unfolded in the next 10.3 overs.

The rapid start also helped India move past the early dis-

missal of opener Abhishek Sharma (4), falling to a poorly-timed pull off slinger quick Tanzin Hasan.

Suryakumar was a mere spectator once Samson slipped into top gear with an array of mind-spinning shots. That could be the biggest tribute for the 29-year-old's knock.

It is quite tough to put Suryakumar to shade in T20Is but Samson did that with a knock of rare brilliance as India raced to 82 for 1 in Power Play and 152 for 1 after 10 overs. No bowler was spared during the batting extravaganza that was based on the single-minded and simple philosophy of naked aggression.

It was so glaring in the 10th over when leg-spinner Rishad Hossain came to bowl. Hossain erred in line and length and Samson creamed him for five consecutive sixes, including a 105-meter monster. But the most stunning shot in Samson's innings was a six off the backfoot off pacer Mustafizur Rahaman.

Waiting deep inside the crease, Samson judged the slower ball to perfection, and whacked it over extra cover for a maximum, eliciting a dejected shrug and shake of head from the experienced bowler. Soon, he brought up his hundred off 40 balls with a boundary off off-spinner Mahedi Hasan and celebrated with a roar and punch before getting melted into a tight embrace by his captain.

Suryakumar reminded the gallery of his presence, smashing Tanzin for three fours and a six while reaching his fifty in 23 balls. But both the batters fell in the space of adding 10 runs. Samson was jettisoned by Mustafizur's well-directed bouncer and Suryakumar became Mahmudullah's last T20I victim, giving a simple catch to Rishad in deep.

With India's net run rate at +0.567, every run counts in the race for the last-four spot. If the scenarios align unfavorably, the Women's T20 World Cup could witness a tight finish with all three teams potentially stuck on four points. Hence, the 'Women in Blue' are eager not only for a win but also for another net run rate boost to fend off challenges from New Zealand.

India eye big win against injury-hit Oz

PTI SHARJAH

A confident India aims to secure a vital victory in their upcoming Women's T20 World Cup match against an injury-stricken Australia this Sunday? Following a commanding win over Sri Lanka, India's hopes of reaching the semifinals have been reignited, despite an earlier setback against New Zealand.

Australia currently sits on six points from three matches, having largely qualified for the knockout stage. However, the defending champions face challenges as two key players, skipper Alyssa Healy and fast bowler Tayla Vlaeminck, were injured during their match against Pakistan. This raises uncertainties about their availability for the crucial game against India.

India's recent 82-run victory over Sri Lanka marked the team's largest margin of victory in tournament history, substantially improving their net run rate and confidence. Currently, India holds four points in Group A and must secure a win to keep their semifinal aspirations alive, as New Zealand poses a threat with an additional game to play.

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As India's batting lineup re-

SQUADS

INDIA: Harmanpreet Kaur (c), Smriti Mandhana, Shafali Verma, Deepti Sharma, Jemimah Rodrigues, Richa Ghosh (wk), Yastika Bhatia, Pooja Vastrakar, Arundhati Reddy, Reenuka Singh Thakur, Dayalan Hemalatha, Asha Sobhana, Radha Yadav, Shreyanka Patil, Sajana Sajeevan

AUSTRALIA: Alyssa Healy (c), Darcie Brown, Ash Gardner, Kim Garth, Grace Harris, Alana King, Phoebe Litchfield, Tahlia McGrath (vc), Sophie Molineux, Beth Mooney, Ellyse Perry, Megan Schutt, Annabel Sutherland, Tayla Vlaeminck, Georgia Wareham

Match starts at 7:30 PM IST.

gains form with Shafali Verma, Smriti Mandhana, and Harpreet Kaur finding their rhythm, much will depend on their performance, especially at a venue known for its difficulty for batters. Meanwhile, Australia must adapt quickly if Healy is unable to play, with vice-captain Tahlia McGrath prepared to lead a squad rich in depth.

"The thing about this Australia team is the depth we have. It's time to use it," McGrath asserted, highlighting their readiness for the upcoming challenge.

As both teams prepare, all eyes will be on the pitch as India seeks to take control of their destiny in this crucial showdown.

Pak selector in USA for T10 league amid crisis with national team

PTI KARACHI

Pakistani selector and former Test player Asad Shafiq has been participating in a T10 league in the USA at a time when the national side is undergoing a crisis which has deepened further with a historic Test defeat against England in Multan. Pakistan became the first team in Test history to have lost a Test - by an innings and 47 runs to England - after scoring 500 or more in the first essay.

Shafiq has been in Dallas

since October 4 for the USA national championship T10 league with the blessings of the Pakistan Cricket Board.

However, a PCB source informed that Asad had been involved in all selection matters online after leaving for the USA.

"Asad had sought permission to be in Dallas from October 4 to 14 before the series against England," a source in the board said.

Shoaib Malik, who has been appointed a mentor by the PCB, was also lined up to play in Dallas but he changed his plans at the last moment.

Plimmer's fifty steers NZ to win

ANI

DUBAI

In a thrilling match at the ICC Women's T20 World Cup 2024, Georgia Plimmer's quickfire half-century of 53 runs off 44 balls guided New Zealand to a convincing eight-wicket win over Sri Lanka, boosting their chances for a top-two finish in Group A. Chasing a target of 116 runs, New Zealand reached a winning score of 118 for 2 with 2.3 overs to spare, showcasing their strong performance on Saturday.

This significant victory positions New Zealand favorably as they head into their final group match against Pakistan on

taking 2 wickets for just 13 runs in four overs and curbing their scoring in the middle overs.

New Zealand's top order demonstrated formidable batting prowess, with Plimmer and opener Suzie Bates forming a substantial partnership. Bates was the first to fall, bowled by Sachini Nisansala for 17, ending their partnership at 49 runs. Upon her arrival, Kerr seamlessly continued the momentum, contributing significantly to the team's score. Plimmer's well-paced innings featured four boundaries before being dismissed by Athapaththu just before reaching her century.

While Sri Lanka has already been eliminated from contention after suffering three consecutive losses,

India, Australia, New Zealand, and Pakistan are all in the running. India's journey has been rocky, with a significant setback in their opener against New Zealand, resulting in a 58-run loss and a drop in their Net Run Rate (NRR) to -2.9. However, after a six-wicket victory against Pakistan and a commanding 82-run win over Sri Lanka, India's NRR has improved to +0.57.

To enhance their chances of qualifying, a victory against Australia on Sunday would be ideal, allowing India to finish with six points. In this scenario, India could secure advancement without further

concern for NRR, provided New Zealand loses at least one of their remaining two matches.

In the event of a three-way tie on six points, the NRR will come into play. Currently, Australia boasts a strong NRR of +2.78, while New Zealand's stands at -0.05. If New Zealand wins their matches against Pakistan and Sri Lanka by a combined margin that exceeds India's margin of victory over Australia, they could surpass India's NRR and complicate the standings.

Pakistan finds itself in a precarious position with an NRR of -0.48, capable of reaching a maximum of four points only if they secure a win against New Zealand. This leaves them with a slim chance of advancing to the semifinals.

India's hopes remain alive due to their recent performance against Sri Lanka, but a win against Australia is crucial. If they avoid a substantial defeat, the competition for the second semifinals spot could ultimately hinge on NRR calculations among India, New Zealand, and Pakistan. As the tension mounts, fans eagerly await this crucial clash, which promises to be a decisive moment in the Women's T20 World Cup journey.

India's path to semis hinges on key showdown

ANI

DUBAI

The race to secure a spot in the Women's T20 World Cup 2024 semifinals is intensifying, with just a few games left in the group stage. Among them is a pivotal Group A match between India and Australia scheduled for this Sunday at the Sharjah Cricket Stadium. The outcome of this encounter will play a critical role in determining which two teams from Group A advance to the semifinals.

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New blood needed; legends redefined

Manjrekar weighs in on India's BGT prospects

ANI

NEW DELHI

Ahead of the much-awaited 2024-25 edition of the Border-Gavaskar Trophy between Australia and India, former cricketer Sanjay Manjrekar shared his thoughts on batters like Rohit Sharma and Virat Kohli saying that they have lost their prime in the longest format of the game. Over the years, India has regained an upper hand

over Australia in the series. India has won its previous four series against Australia in a row, including two wins in Australia in the 2018-19 and 2020-21 seasons.

This has made India a much more successful side in the series, with India winning the BGT 10 times and Australia winning it five times, with their last series win coming in during the 2014-15 season. Their last series win in India was in 2004-05.

Sp Briefs

NEW DELHI

Uthappa to captain India in Hong Kong

World Cup winner Robin Uthappa has been named captain of India for the Hong Kong Cricket Sixes tournament next month. The tournament returns after seven years, featuring teams from 12 countries, with India set to face Pakistan in their opening match on November 1.

LONDON

Triveni reaches chess league finals

Triveni Continental Kings triumphed over Alpine SG Pipers with a score of 9-7 to advance to the finals of the Global Chess League. Despite early struggles, Triveni mounted a comeback, securing crucial wins in pivotal matches, and will defend their title against PBG Alaskan Knights.

LUCKNOW

UP Rudras hires Dutch coach

The Lucknow franchise in the Hockey India League will be named UP Rudras, with Dutchman Paul van Ass appointed as chief coach. The 64-year-old led the Netherlands women's team to Olympic gold and aims to nurture young talent in India. The franchise, owned by Yadu Sports, emphasizes development in the hockey-rich state of Uttar Pradesh.

NEW DELHI

Ross Branch crowned rally champion

Ross Branch of Hero MotoSports has been named the FIM World Rally-Raid Champion, becoming the first African rider to earn this title. This marks a significant milestone for Hero MotoSports as they clinched their first-ever FIM World Championship.

Branch's strong season included a podium finish at Dakar 2024 and consistent top performances throughout the championship.

SHANGHAI

Saigo Leads LPGA Shanghai

Mao Saigo of Japan shot a 7-under 65 to take a one-shot lead at the Buick LPGA Shanghai, totaling 18 under overall after three rounds. Ruoning Yin of China follows closely, carding a 63. Sei Young Kim trails by three strokes after a 69, while Yelimi Noh is five back with a 68. Notably, top players Nelly Korda and Lydia Ko are absent this week, preparing for the BMW Ladies Championship in South Korea.

BENGALURU

26 probables named for Blind T20 WC

The Cricket Association for the Blind in India has announced 26 probables for the national camp ahead of the Blind T20 World Cup in Pakistan, set for November-December. Participation is contingent on receiving a No Objection Certificate from the Sports Ministry. CAB chairman Mahantesh G Kivadasanavar emphasized the significance of the World Cup for blind cricketers, hoping for swift approval to ensure team readiness.

RESILIENCE AND SPIRIT: Farukh shines as India battle to 1-1 draw against hosts Vietnam

Blue Tigers roar back from behind

ANI

NAM DINH

The India senior men's national team played an inspired second half to hold hosts Vietnam to a 1-1 draw in an international friendly at the Thien Truong Stadium in Nam Dinh, Vietnam, on Saturday.

According to the AIFF's press release, Bui Vi Hao put crowd favourites Vietnam in the lead in the 38th minute, but India pulled back through comeback man Farukh Choudhary's 58th minute goal. The last time Choudhary played for India was in October 2021.

Overall, India produced an all-round performance, with heroes from the defence, the attack, and the midfield.

Goalkeeper and skipper Gurpreet Singh put up a stellar performance, which included a penalty kick save in the 27th minute. While Vietnam are ranked 116 in the FIFA table, India are 10 places behind them.

Champion Manvi calls for recognition of sports beyond cricket

Our Sports Reporter

INDORE

In a compelling address at a dialogue programme, Manvi Jain, a medalist from the Junior World Championship, highlighted the urgent need for greater recognition of sports outside of cricket in India. The young shooter, who brought pride to the nation by securing a bronze medal in the 25-meter shooting event and a gold in the team competition at the Junior World Championship in Peru, called for equal celebration of athletes across various disciplines.

"Cricket overshadows many other sports in our country. While it is wonderful, we must also celebrate our athletes in disciplines like shooting, who work equally hard and achieve remarkable feats," Manvi expressed passionately. She pointed out that at the Junior World Championship, where 51 countries participated, Indian shooters won about 30 medals, surpassing China, traditionally a dominant force in the sport.

Manvi has enrolled in the Journalism and Mass Communication program at DAVV, balancing her academic pursuits with her sporting career. She shared that her journey in shooting, fueled by her family's encouragement, required tremendous commitment, with over 100 days annually spent in competitions and training. Her father, Vivek Jain, and sister, Suryani Jain, both former national-level shooters, played a significant role in shaping her career.

Investment in resources: A call for support

Manvi also shed light on the financial challenges athletes face in shooting, emphasising that it is a resource-heavy sport. She owns more than ten pistols from Italy, Switzerland, Germany, and Austria, each designed for specific distances. Additionally, she has been granted permission to fire up to 100,000 cartridges annually, many of which need to be imported.

The limited availability of shooting ranges is another hurdle for many aspiring athletes. To ensure proper training, her father set up a range at their home and later in a godown in Musakhedi. Recently, she gained special permission to train at the Army Marksman Unit's range in Mhow, allowing her to hone her skills further. She practices at the range three times a week, sharpening her competitive edge as she sets her sights on the 2028 Olympics, inspired by Indian shooting legend Abhinav Bindra.

Manvi voiced her concerns about the lack of financial backing from the Sports Ministry, explaining that athletes in shooting bear most of the expenses, including travel, accommodation, and equipment costs. "I urge the government and corporate sponsors to extend their support to other sports," she earnestly appealed.

All India IPSC Basketball Competition

Our Sports Reporter

INDORE

Host Emerald Heights International School emerged as champions of the All India IPSC Basketball Competition, showcasing excellent teamwork and skill throughout the tournament.

In the final of the Under-17 Girls category, the host team faced off against YPS Mohali, demonstrating strong dominance on the court and ultimately securing a convincing victory with a score of 74-44.

From the outset, the girls of Emerald Heights played aggressively, keeping the Mohali team under pressure and disrupting their game strategy.

Vietnam were on the attack from the starting whistle and were looking to pry open the India defence with quick short passes in the attacking third. Hoang Duc and Nguyen Van Toan, the two focal points in the Vietnam attacks, were combining well in their efforts to get behind the India defence.

Hoang Duc had the first opportunity of the match after Van Toan produced a snaky run before releasing the former, whose left-footed shot went wide.

India, on the other hand, had fielded five defenders but were not shy of setting up chances on the break for striker Farukh Choudhary.

Breaking on the counter just a few minutes later, Lalitnauza Chhangte released Choudhary, who made a swift decoy movement before nutmegging his marker. Once in some space, he fired a left-footer from outside the box, which was saved by Vietnam goalkeeper Nguyen Filip.

The Blue Tigers had their hearts on their sleeves when Rahul Bheke brought down Bui Vi Hao as the referee pointed to the spot. Vietnam captain Que Ngoc Hai stepped up, but his shot was easily smothered by Gurpreet's massive frame.

Buoyed by their captain's save, India looked to funnel their attacks to Choudhary. The 27-year-old, in the 27th minute, stole the ball from Ngoc Hai, played a one-two with Brandon Fernandes, and found himself in a position where he just had to beat the keeper. However, the angle was too acute, and his effort was parried away.

The hosts began to claw their way back into the game, however, enjoying large periods of possession as per the AIFF's press release.

The concerted pressure finally paid off in the 38th minute, when a clearance off a Vietnam corner fell to Vi Hao, whose deflected volley was blocked by Gurpreet, but the ball

hovered around the goal line before rolling in.

The hosts were content with their lead and slowed the pace of the game in their efforts to get the half-time whistle.

If India head coach Manolo Marquez was looking for a reaction from his wards, he definitely had one after the change of ends. The Blue Tigers came out with waves of attacks in the second half. Chhangte's low cross from the right was cleared, and Farukh was shoved off the ball after he ran in behind the defence.

Despite the pressure on the attacking third, it was an aerial through ball that brought the goal for India. Suresh hung it up behind the defence, as Farukh shrugged off the Vietnam captain before chipping it on the volley over keeper Filip, to put India back on level terms.

The momentum was now well and truly with the visitors, who kept using their

wings to produce swift counterattacks.

Farukh had a golden chance once again when Chhangte chipped it over the Vietnam defence to the former, who tried to spoon it over the onrushing keeper again but missed it by inches.

Marquez, in the ensuing minutes, made a few changes. Edmund Lalindika, Liston Colaco, and Vikram Partap Singh replacing Farukh, Fernandes, and Chhangte, respectively.

However, towards the closing exchanges, the hosts, buoyed by the 22,000-odd home support, created a few chances, and it took some reflex saves by Gurpreet and a goalline clearance by Anwar Ali to keep them out.

The Indians had their last chance to steal the victory in the fifth minute of extra time when Liston Colaco was played through on the counter. The forward cut in from the left and let fly, but his effort was blocked.

The championship features categories for boys and girls

MP yoga c'ship kicks off with enthusiastic showcase of talent**Our Sports Reporter**

INDORE

The 42nd Madhya Pradesh Yoga Championship commenced with great enthusiasm, organized by the Indore District Yogasana Sports Association at St Norbert School.

The inauguration ceremony brought together esteemed guests, including additional deputy commissioner of police Rajesh Dandotiya and social worker Virendra Gupta, who honoured the event by garlanding the portrait of Maharsi Patanjali Muni and lighting the ceremonial lamp.

The event was further graced by the presence of key figures from the Madhya Pradesh Yoga Association, such as secretary Gulab Singh Chauhan, along with Naveen Gaur, Ishwar Singh Chauhan, Durgasankar Moyal, and Anurag Tiwari. Their involvement underscored the support and recognition of yoga as a valued sport in the region.

The championship features categories for boys and girls



across mini, sub-junior, junior, and senior age groups, with a remarkable participation of 240 players representing 16 different units. This extensive participation highlights the growing interest in yoga as a competitive sport in Madhya Pradesh.

As the event unfolds, it promises to be a platform for showcasing remarkable talent and promoting the importance of yoga in enhancing physical and mental well-being among the youth. The championship serves not only as a competition but also as a celebration of the art of yoga and its cultural significance in India.

Reet's remarkable comeback helps DC emerge champion

All India IPSC Girls Tennis Competition

Our Sports Reporter

INDORE

Indore's Daly College has claimed victory in the All India IPSC Girls Tennis Competition, showcasing exceptional talent and determination throughout the tournament.

Competing against teams from various states, Daly College athletes, particularly in the 17-year age group, excelled on the synthetic courts, securing both the team and overall championship titles.

Competing against teams from various states, Daly College athletes, particularly in the 17-year age group, excelled on the synthetic courts, securing both the team and overall championship titles.

Indore's Daly College has claimed victory in the All India IPSC Girls Tennis Competition, showcasing exceptional talent and determination throughout the tournament.



Daly College girls tennis team celebrating their title victory after final of All India IPSC girls tennis competition

In a thrilling individual final, Reet Arora of Daly College faced off against Tamanna Walia from YPS Mohali, the latter being the I2th

ranked player in the country and favored to win. Arora started the match trailing at 0-40 in the first game, but swiftly turned the tide. She

National badminton championship culminates with stellar performances

Our Sports Reporter

SENDHWA

The National Badminton Championship held at Raghuwan Public School, Sendhwa, concluded with exceptional displays from players, as the finals took place recently. The championship saw participation from 135 teams representing 105 schools across India, as well as international schools from Kuwait, Qatar, UAE, Saudi Arabia, Bahrain, and Oman.

A remarkable total of 439



Chief guest presenting trophy and medals to the winner after National Badminton Championship

matches were played, with 259 players competing in open singles and mixed doubles. The finals featured nine critical matches in various categories, showcasing thrilling gameplay for all attendees. In the Under 14 Boys category, Velammal Vidyalaya, Chennai emerged as the winner, while Bal Bharti Public School, Noida was the runner-up.

Other notable winners included Jain Public School, Chennai in the Under 17 Boys and G.R. International School, Delhi in the Under 19 Boys. In the girls' events, Bosco Public School, Delhi triumphed in Under 17 and Under 19 categories. The championship also recognized several singles winners, including Shaurya Singh Rana in Under 14 Boys and Ranveer Singh in Under 17 Boys, among others.

During the closing ceremony, director Harish Raghuwanji emphasised the importance of hard work in achieving success. He, along with principal SK Singh, expressed gratitude to the dignitaries and all participating institutions for their support throughout the event. All winning players and teams were applauded with medals and trophies, marking a successful culmination of the championship.

Manan, Shashwat, Khushvin progress to next round

MP state-level ranking tennis tournament

Our Sports Reporter

INDORE

The PUNEET Memorial second Madhya Pradesh state-level ranking tennis tournament, organised by the Madhya Pradesh Tennis Association, continues in full swing at the Indore Tennis Club. Several players have successfully advanced to the next round in both the men's and boys' categories, showcasing intense competition and impressive talent.

In the men's singles qualifying round, Indore's Manan Navlani secured a thrilling victory against fellow Indore player Akshat Sangal, clinching a closely contested match with a score of 6-5. Another standout performance came from Shashwat Munir, also from Indore, who triumphed over Aditya Sharma in a hard-fought match, winning 6-4.

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strong statement by defeating Vishruth Sharma (Indore) with a decisive 5-1 victory.

Other notable matches in this category included:

Gaurang Gangrade (Indore) defeated Hussian Ruby (Indore) 5-0.

Vatsalya Porwal (Indore) secured a 5-1 win against Rhythm Dhaka (Indore).

Siddharth Dahiwala (Indore) beat Ishaan Mishra (Bhopal) 5-2.

Ruhan Talreja (Indore) defeated Daksh Pagare (Khandwa) 5-2.

Vishal Chaudhary (Indore) won against Savayaskshi Sharma (Indore) 6-1.

Shivraj Sen (Indore) overcame Siddhpreet Singh (Indore) 6-3.

Suvigya Chaudhary (Indore) beat Nikhilnath Mishra (Jabalpur) 6-2.

Japneet Singh Bedi (Indore) showcased outstanding skill, defeating Atul Bhakhdkar (Singrauli) 6-0.

In the boys' category for players aged 14 and younger, Yug Jain of Indore made a

All India IPSC Basketball Competition

Our Sports Reporter

INDORE



Victorious Emerald Heights International School with All India IPSC Basketball competition trophy

The Indore players exhibited a relentless attack, which proved effective in dismantling the opposition's defence.

Pawan Dubey was instrumental in the win, scoring the highest points of the match with 20, while Rutwa Khan-

delval added 12 points, solidifying their path to the trophy.

Unique noodles you must try

Discover diverse noodle varieties from around the world, each offering its own unique flavours and textures

FPJ Web Desk

Noodle is a widely loved food item and is consumed in various parts of the world in various styles. Here are the few types of noodles you should know about.

PIC: FREEPIK



Ramen noodles: Thin, curly noodles usually served in a flavourful broth. They're popular in Japanese dishes and come in both instant and fresh forms.

PR: FREEPIK



Udon noodles: Thick, soft, and chewy noodles made from wheat flour. They're often served in soups or stir-fried, and have a mild taste.

PR: FLICKR



Vermicelli noodles: Very thin rice noodles, often used in soups, salads, or spring rolls. They cook quickly and absorb flavours easily.

PR: FLICKR



Rice noodles: Thin, flat noodles made from rice flour, often used in dishes like stir-fries and soups. They're light and gluten-free.

PR: FREEPIK



Somen noodles: Thin wheat noodles typically served cold with a light dipping sauce. They're refreshing, especially in the summer.



Glass noodles: Transparent noodles made from starch (like mung bean or sweet potato starch). They become see-through when cooked and are common in salads and soups.

PR: FLICKR



INTERESTING FACTS ABOUT OUTER WORLD

Amisha Shrivastava

The space is a wide, vast void that is full of unexplored stars, planets and even galaxies. It is mysterious and often makes you question the possibility of its existence. Has it ever got you wondering about Earth and how so many people exist on single sustainable planet that is perfectly floating in the wide space you're not aware of?

Even when science and technology have evolved and have made numerous achievements in exploring different, the space still remains very unknown to humans. Here are five facts about space you might not know about.

Space is completely silent
In space, no one can hear you scream. This is because sound needs a medium, like air or water, to travel through. In the vacuum of space, there are very few particles to carry sound waves, which make it completely silent. So, astronauts communicate with each



As Ravan in
Jai Shri Ram



life Bapu sir's vision. I played, among others, Jay and Vijay, gatekeepers of the Vaikuntha, who after being cursed are born as Hiranyaksha and Hiranyakashipu in the Satya Yag, as Ravan and Kumbhakarna in Treta Yag, and Shishupal and Dantavakra at the end of the Dwapara Yag before being finally liberated.

Reportedly, BR Chopra had offered you the role of Bheem in his epic serial?

That's right. After the unfortunate accident on the first day's shoot of my debut film *Coolie*, which resulted in Amitabh Bachchan being gravely injured, I earned the reputation of a Black Belt martial arts fighter and was offered only inconsequential roles as the antagonist's henchman. Even *Pulay Khan*, in

of the rut and went to meet him. At six-feet-three-inches, with a physique to match and a husky voice, I was immediately offered the role of Bheem. When I told him I had come to audition for the role of Duryodhan, his writer, Dr. Rahi Masoom Raza, exclaimed incredulously, "We are offering you the role of a hero and you want to play the villain!"

And why did you want to play Duryodhan?

I had read the *Mahabharat* and while each character is distinct, I wanted to make a career as a villain. As Bheem, I would have been just one of the five Pandavas, as Duryodhan, I would be taking them all on.

Chopra saab cautioned me, saying, "Beta, as Duryodhan, you will have to act and deliver long dialogues too." I knew Ramdhari Singh Dinkar's epic poem *Rashmirathi* and Maithili Sharan

Gupti's *maha kavya Jayadruth Vadh* verbatim. I recited verses from the latter, and impressing everyone present, ended up playing Duryodhan which made me a household name.

How different is Duryodhan from Ravan?

Duryodhan is an obstinate brat, *kaan aur akal ka kuchchhu*, who often reacts without thinking. He is venomous and vindictive with his cousins, but *Karan ke lyé jaan bhi haazir hai*. Even after he is dead, when Yudhishtir sees him on the way to heaven and asks him to forget their enmity, he roars, "I'm waiting to be reborn so I can fight for my rights."

Ravan, on the other hand, is a learned and wise man. He tore his veins to make the *veenut*, got a boon from Shiva by cutting his head and presenting it to him, invented chess so he could play the game with his wife who always beat him. He was angry and arrogant too, but was never influenced by what others said. He consciously did what he thought was right, and while not repentant for having kidnapped Sita for his sister's honour, regretted betraying her in the saffron robes of a *rishi* (mendicant) thereby breaking the trust people reposed in mendicants. For committing this *maha paap*, he believed that death was his only punishment.

If you had to choose between the two, who would you opt to play?

It's impossible to choose. I've played Duryodhan in Chopra saab's *Mahabharat* and my play *Mahabharat: An Epic Tale*. I'm playing Ravan on stage in *Jai Shri Ram*. Both are uniquely different.

What can we learn from them in these turbulent times?

Ramayan shows us *kya hona chahiye aur humein kya chahiye* (what should be and what we should do). *Mahabharat* underlines what should not be and what we should not do.

None of the characters in the *Mahabharat* are completely white or black, but have shades of grey, and even Krishna does some *chal kapat*. For that matter, all the other avatars of Vishnu use their godly powers to vanquish evil, but not Ram even when confronted by the omnipotent Ravan. There's a lesson to be learnt here. We human beings have great powers, if we put them to good use, nothing is impossible!

What's next in this epic journey?

I have played both epics, on stage and on television. Now, I'd like to be a part of an epic extravaganza on screen, helmed by a director like SS Rajamouli.

Ramayan to Mahabharat

Puneet Issar, who has convincingly played both Ravan and Duryodhan, tells us what sets the villains apart and what we can learn from the epics today

Roshmila Bhattacharya

While the rest of us are celebrating Navratri, Puneet Issar lords it on stage every year for nine days till *Ravan Dahan*, as Lankapati. In between hectic rehearsals, the actor opens up about his journey.

Excerpts from the interview:

When was the first time you played Ravan?

It was in 1992. After the successful run of BR Chopra's epic serial *Mahabharat* on Doordarshan, I got a call one day from Hyderabad. A man in a soft-spoken voice introduced himself as Bapu Guru and told me that Usha Kiran Movies was making a devotional show titled *Sri Bhagavatam* on the 10 avatars of Vishnu and wanted me to play all the negative characters. When I realised he was my idol Bapu, the director of the 1976 Telugu mythological *Seetha Kalyanam* and the Hindi film *Hum Paanch*, I was overjoyed.

Over the next two years, I was among the first actors to shoot at Ramoji Rao Studio which was still being built, bringing to

which I had a good role for a change, didn't work, and 1982 to 1988, was a period of great churning and learning.

When I heard that Chopra saab was making *Mahabharat* and wanted actors who could give bulk dates, I figured this was my chance to break out

As Duryodhan in
Mahabharat: An Epic Tale

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