



Established 1865 sunday pioneer

LUCKNOW, SUNDAY JANUARY 26, 2025; PAGES 12 ₹3



www.dailypioneer.com

PUBLISHED FROM: DELHI | LUCKNOW | BHOPAL | BHUBANESWAR | RANCHI | RAIPUR | CHANDIGARH | DEHRADUN | HYDERABAD | VIJAYWADA

76TH HAPPY REPUBLIC DAY

US SUPREME COURT PAVES WAY FOR EXTRADITION OF 26/11 ATTACKS MASTERMIND RANA

T N RAGHUNATHA ■ MUMBAI

In a major development, the US Supreme Court has paved the way for Pakistani-Canadian national and 26/11 attacks accused Tahawwur Hussain Rana's extradition to India where he will face trial in the Mumbai terror strikes case. The US apex court early this week dismissed Rana's review petition (writ of certiorari) filed on November 13, 2024 challenging his extradition to India. With the rejection of his petition, Rana has exhausted all his legal options to evade his extradition to India. Now, Rana's extradition to India has become imminent.

Elizabeth B. Prelogar had made a strong case for rejection of Rana's review petition on the ground that the Lashkar-E-Taiba (LeT) operative was not entitled for relief from extradition to India.

A former medical officer in the Pakistani army, Rana had migrated to Canada in 1990 where he became a citizen before moving to Chicago. As per US law, if he is not extradited to India, he will be deported to his home country Canada after the completion of his prison term in 2027. Rana is currently lodged in a Los Angeles prison for his involvement in plotting a terror attack on the Danish newspaper Jyllands-Posten.

Rana had contended that he was tried and acquitted by a federal court in Illinois (Chicago) on the charges pertaining to the 26/11 case, for which India sought his extradition. However, Prelogar had strongly opposed Rana's plea. Rana is accused of significant involvement in the 26/11 attacks case.

Ajmal Kasab was among the ten Pakistani terrorists who had carried out brazen



Pakistani-origin Canadian businessman Tahawwur Rana. The US Supreme Court has cleared Mumbai attack convict Rana's extradition to India, dismissing his review petition against the move. PTI

attacks on Mumbai. While nine of the ten terrorists were killed by the security forces during the attack, the remaining one-Mohammed Ajmal Kasab - was caught alive by the police at Girgaum Chowpatty on the intervening night of November 26-27, 2008. After his conviction in the case, Kasab was hanged to death in the 26/11 attacks case in Pune's Yerwada central prison on November 21, 2012.

Rana is one of the two masterminds who are yet to be brought to justice, while the other is Sayed Zabiuddin Ansari alias Abu Jundal, an Indian operative who worked for the Lashkar terror group. He was arrested in 2012 after being identified by Kasab and is currently behind the bars in Mumbai.

Welcoming the impending extradition to India, senior advocate Ujjwal Nikam, who was the Special Public Prosecutor in the 26/11 attacks case, said: "This is major success for India because the Supreme Court of America has dismissed the review petition of Tahawwur Rana. Tahawwur Rana and David Headley are

the close links behind the terror attack of the 26/11 Mumbai attacks. By extraditing Tahawwur Rana, India will get more information and evidence of the involvement of some of the Pakistani people, including the Pakistan security apparatus. I am very optimistic that the extradition of Tahawwur Rana will give more evidence about the involvement of some of the security apparatus of Pakistan."

Rana is a close aide of the Pakistani-American terrorist David Coleman Headley, who was also wanted by India for the 26/11 hit, carried out by 10 heavily armed Pakistani terrorists.

In an amended criminal complaint in the Illinois court against Headley and his accomplice Tahawwur Hussain Rana, on October 21, 2009, the FBI had given details about the reconnaissance done by Headley in India and his links with Rahul Bhatt, whom he (Headley) had befriended during his trips to India. Bhatt and his fitness instructor friend Vilas Pandurang Varak had subsequently confirmed having

met Headley during his visits to India. It may be recalled that on September 26, 2023, the Mumbai crime branch sleuths had filed a 405-page supplementary charge-sheet against Canadian businessman of Pakistani origin Dr. Tahawwur Hussain Rana based on fresh evidence against him. Among other things, the supplementary charge-sheet had alleged that Rana had stayed in India for 11 days - from November 11, 2008 to November 22, 2008. Of these days, he spent two days in Mumbai, where he stayed at Hotel Renaissance at Powai. In its charge-sheet submitted before the trial court, the crime branch police had added Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act (UAPA) section 39A (offence relating to support given to a terrorist organisation) against Rana in the case. "We have gathered some fresh evidence against Rana in the form of statements and documents," a senior crime branch officer said.

Continued on page 6

India-Indonesia sets new pace to bilateral ties

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

India and Indonesia on Saturday agreed to give a new momentum to the overall bilateral ties and especially concurred on working jointly in the areas of defence



manufacturing and supply chains, as Prime Minister Narendra Modi hosted Indonesian President Prabowo Subianto for wide-ranging talks. Subianto, on a three-day visit to India, will be the chief guest at the Republic-Day celebrations at Kartavya Path on Sunday.

In his media statement following the talks, Modi described Indonesia as an "important partner" of India in the 10-nation ASEAN bloc as well as in the Indo-Pacific, noting that both countries are committed to a rules-based order in the region. "We agree that the freedom of navigation should be ensured in line with international law," Modi said amid growing global concerns over China's increasing military muscle-flexing in the Indo-Pacific region. "We held extensive discussions on various aspects of our bilateral ties," the prime minister said, adding that India and Indonesia have agreed to work jointly on defence manufacturing and supply chains.

Continued on page 6

HOLIDAY NOTICE

The Offices of The Pioneer will remain closed on Sunday, January 26, 2025 on account of Republic Day. The next issue of the newspaper will appear on January 28, 2025.

BALANCE OF ART, SCIENCE, LITERATURE, REGION IN LIST

Government announce Padma Awards

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

The government on Saturday conferred with civilian awards including Padma Vibhushan awarded to former Chief Justice of India JS Khehar, noted doctor DN Reddy and Kathak danseuse Kumudini Lakhia and violinist L Subramaniam. Padma Vibhushan was also posthumously awarded to Osumu Suzuki, noted writer MT Vasudevan Nair and folk singer Sharda Sinha. As many as 19 persons were awarded Padma Bhushan including noted journalist A Surya Prakash who served as Chairman of Prasar Bharti



(L-R): Justice Khehar, Sharda Sinha, A. Surya Prakash and Sadhvi Ritambhara

and had a stint with 'The Pioneer' as consulting editor and columnist as well as founder Director of Pioneer Media School. Noted economist Bibek Debroy, former Lok Sabha Speaker Manohar Joshi, former Bihar Deputy Chief Minister Sushil Kumar Modi and noted singer Pankaj Udhas were also conferred the prestigious Padma Bhushan. Sadhvi Ritambhara, the firebrand leader of the Ayodhya Ram Temple movement, Hockey goal keeper PR Sreejesh, film director Shekhar Kapoor and veteran journalist Rambahadur Rai, actress Shobana were also given Padma Bhushan.

Continued on page 6

President Murmu bats ONOE

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

President Droupadi Murmu on Saturday advocated for the "One Nation One Election" initiative, asserting it has the potential to redefine "good governance" in the country by promoting consistency in governance, preventing policy paralysis, mitigating resource diversion, and alleviating financial burdens on the state.

In her address to the nation ahead of the 76th Republic Day, she emphasised the government's ongoing efforts to "eliminate remnants of a colonial mindset that have lingered in the country for decades" and cited the replacement of the British-era criminal laws with three new modern laws. "We have been witnessing concerted efforts to change that mindset... Reforms of such magnitude require an audacity of vision," she said.

Highlighting the significance of the proposed bill aimed at synchronising



election schedules across the country, Murmu noted, "The 'One Nation One Election' plan can offer numerous benefits, including enhanced governance and reduced financial strain."

In discussing legal reforms, she pointed out the need to replace the Indian Penal Code, the Code of Criminal Procedure, and the Indian Evidence Act with new

laws reflective of Indian traditions. She mentioned the introduction of the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita, the Bharatiya Nagarik Suraksha Sanhita, and the Bharatiya Sakshya Adhiniyam, which prioritise the delivery of justice over mere punishment and place a strong emphasis on addressing crimes against women and children.

Reflecting on the significance of the Constitution, the President highlighted the progress achieved over the past 75 years.

"At the time of Independence, many parts of the country faced extreme poverty and hunger. However, we maintained a belief in ourselves and created conditions for growth," she said. Noting the contributions of farmers and labourers, she said India's economy now plays a pivotal role in global economic trends, asserting that this transformation is rooted in the framework established by the Constitution.

Continued on page 6

Clean Yamuna in three years, metro rides for youth and 50,000 jobs: BJP

SAUMYA SHUKLA ■ NEW DELHI

Union Home Minister Amit Shah on Saturday came bearing nine poll-promises for the people of the national Capital by releasing the third and the final part of Bharatiya Janata Party's (BJP) 'Sankalp Patra' including development of Yamuna river front, ownership rights for residents of unauthorised colonies, 50,000 government jobs, metro and bus rides available throughout the day and Rs 10 Lakh life Insurance for gig workers for the upcoming Delhi assembly elections. Addressing a press conference, the senior BJP leader also launched an all out attack on AAP chief and former Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal, asking him to take a dip in Mahakumbh in Uttar Pradesh to wash out his sins and called him the biggest liar he has ever seen in his political career. Releasing the manifesto titled 'Viksit Delhi Sankalp Patra 2025', Shah mocked the ruling



Union Home Minister Amit Shah along with Delhi BJP President Virendra Sachdeva, Delhi BJP incharge Baijyant Panda and others releases third part of BJP's manifesto for the upcoming Delhi Assembly elections, in New Delhi. Photo: Ranjan Dimri/The Pioneer

party's seven-year-old promise to clean the Yamuna River and take a holy dip in it. "If Kejriwal cannot take a dip in the Yamuna, he should at least go to the Kumbh and wash away his sins. And he can come after three years and take a dip in the Yamuna river, with his family, that we will get cleaned," Shah remarked. He also said that while Kejriwal makes fake promises, Modi government delivers

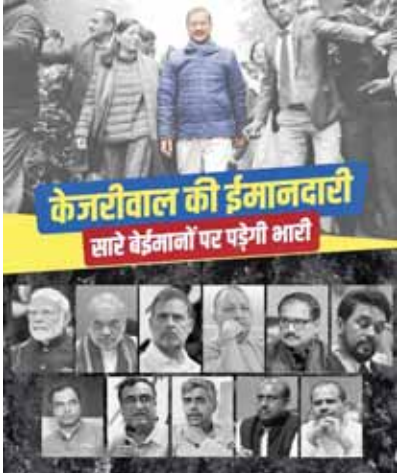
Continued on page 6

Modi, Rahul features in AAP list of corrupt leaders

RAJESH KUMAR ■ NEW DELHI

Days after former Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal said that he would not respond to Rahul Gandhi's attack on him, the Aam Aadmi Party on Saturday released a poster putting Congress MP Rahul Gandhi's name among a list of 11 "corrupt" people and claiming that the former Delhi Chief Minister will take on them. For the first time, Congress Leaders Rahul Gandhi, Ajay Maken and Sandeep Dikshit were featured prominently in the Arvind Kejriwal-led party's campaign poster.

Besides Rahul, the poster also has images of Prime Minister Narendra Modi, Home Minister Amit Shah, Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath, BJP leaders Virendra Sachdeva, Anurag Thakur, Parvesh Verma, Vijender Gupta and Ramesh Bidhuri and Congress Ajay Maken and Sandeep Dikshit. The poster with an image of security personnel making way for Kejriwal and his wife Sunita has a tagline, "Kejriwal's honesty will be trouble for the corrupt."



The poster referred to Kejriwal as being "honest". "Kejriwal ki imandari sare beyimano par padegi bhari [Kejriwal's honesty will prevail over all the dishonest people]," reads the poster. However, the inclusion of Rahul Gandhi signalled that the gloves are off for AAP. The AAP and Congress

are part of opposition bloc 'INDIA', however, are not fighting the Delhi election together.

While Congress leaders have attacked Kejriwal on the corruption front, Rahul has not referred to graft allegations against AAP though he had likened Kejriwal to Modi on "propaganda and false promises". Rahul had targeted Kejriwal on the issue of development over his governance track record, claiming that he cannot match the achievements of former Delhi Chief Minister and Congress leader Sheila Dikshit.

Meanwhile Mahila Congress president Alka Lamba, who is contesting against Atishi from Kalkaji assembly seat hit out at Kejriwal after AAP in its poster labelled Congress leaders Rahul Gandhi, Sandeep Dikshit and Ajay Maken as "dishonest". "You (Arvind Kejriwal) insulted Sheila Dikshit and Manmohan Singh. Now, he says in the interview that Manmohan Singh was the most honest Prime Minister. He should apologise to Dr Singh's wife. You were begging Congress for an alliance. We made a huge mistake by allying with you on seven seats and supporting you during the Lok Sabha elections," Lamba said.

Continued on page 6

LIC advertisement for Republic Day. Text: "CELEBRATING THE CULTURES, PEOPLE AND TRADITIONS THAT COME TOGETHER TO FORM THIS REPUBLIC". Product basket includes: ENDOWMENT PLANS, PENSION PLANS, TERM PLANS, ULIPs, GROUP PLANS. Contact: 8976862090. LIC India Forever | IRDAI Regn No.: 512.

Maha Kumbh to contribute 10 pc to UP's GDP: CM

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath stated that the ongoing Maha Kumbh is set to contribute 10 per cent to the state's gross domestic product (GDP). In an interview to a TV channel, Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath said that the 45-day event was projected to draw a number of attendees equivalent to the world's third-biggest population. "Maha Kumbh has only one message and you must be seeing it too. There is no difference of caste, creed, sect or gender. Everyone is able to take bath in the same confluence. No one knows who is taking bath next to them. The message of Maha Kumbh is the message of unity and integrity. If we take the message of unity, then Sanatan dharma will be strong and if Sanatan is strong then the country will be strong," the chief minister stated. Recently, the chief minister along with his cabinet took a dip in the Triveni Sangam during the ongoing Maha Kumbh. Highlighting the significance of the ritual, chief minister described the Sangam bath as a pro-

found symbol of Indian culture and the Sanatan dharma, embodying spiritual peace, religious devotion, and social welfare. "Bathing in the sacred confluence is not just a personal act of purification but a collective call for the welfare of all," he said, according to an official statement. The chief minister also spoke about the youths who are coming to the Maha Kumbh in large numbers. "The previous governments had made it an event for the elderly. They did not provide facilities for it. For the first time we are seeing that cleanliness, security have been added as part of the vision of Prime Minister Narendra Modi. If there is a confluence of modernity and spirituality, the youth will join," he said. By 2029, Uttar Pradesh was set to achieve the milestone of a one trillion-dollar economy, the chief minister said. "Despite the impact of COVID-19, we have managed to double the state's economy over the last 7-8 years and are on track to meet this target," he said. Chief Minister Yogi categorically ruled out any division of the state, reasserting his earlier stand attributing the state's tremendous potential to its

unity in the current form. "UP is UP in itself. That is its potential. We should try to achieve our goals while keeping the state united. This is its strength, identity and pride," he said. In 2011, during the Mayawati-led Bahujan Samaj Party rule, the Uttar Pradesh assembly had passed a resolution for a four-way split of the state. The proposal was to divide Uttar Pradesh into Bundelkhand, Purvanchal, Awadh Pradesh and Paschim Pradesh. Chief Minister Yogi has principally been opposed to the idea and claimed that the people of Uttar Pradesh are proud of their history and the state has its own importance in the country. "We believe in uniting, not dividing," he said earlier. The chief minister further pointed to the government's focus on all-round development of the state and said special attention has been given to the development of the state's eastern parts and the Bundelkhand region. He also referred to the Purvanchal expressway and Bundelkhand expressway, claiming that the two projects will become the backbones of development in these areas.

Govt's claim on eco unrealistic, says Akhilesh

Lucknow (PNS): Samajwadi Party chief Akhilesh Yadav on Saturday said the Uttar Pradesh government was only capable of "a trillion lies" and its claim of making the state's economy reach the USD 1 trillion target in the next four years was "impossible". In a post on X, Yadav alleged the Bharatiya Janata Party government was plagued with corruption, and said there were no tangible investments that have left the farmers, traders, businessmen and industrialists struggling. "BJP can only make a record of telling one trillion lies and nothing else," he said in a Hindi post. "The BJP government in UP is again throwing around the slogan that UP's economy will reach USD 1 trillion in the next four years. According to today's 'growth rate', this is impossible, that is why this is 'mahajhoth' (big lie)," Yadav said. "If people do not have money, how will purchasing power come; if workers are migrating where will labour resources come from?" the SP president said. Yadav went on to highlight concerns regarding inflation, people's income, job creation for the youth, and the rising costs of medicine and education.

STF nabs murder accused absconding for 14 years

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

The UP STF apprehended a murder accused who had been absconding for the last 14 years, a senior official said here. The accused, identified as Jawwad Jabbar Syed, was arrested near Indiranagar metro station while he was en route to Charbagh railway station. He was named in a murder case from 2011 that occurred in the Nalasopara Police Station area of Thane, Maharashtra. A spokesman stated that the STF received a tip-off that the suspect was travelling in the city, prompting an operation to apprehend him. The accused, originally from Asiwan in Unnao district, had been residing in Nalasopara East, Thane. Earlier, the crime branch of Maharashtra Police had sought the assistance of the UP STF for the arrest of Jabbar in connection with the murder case.

Following this, the STF team carried out an intelligence-gathering operation. Upon interrogation, the arrested accused revealed to the police that on May 24, 2011, he had killed his maternal aunt, Rehana Khatoon, in the Sai Dwarika Chawl Police Station area of Nalasopara due to her illicit relations. Since then, he had been in hiding to avoid arrest. He had been working in zari (embroidery) while living in Nalasopara, where his maternal uncle's family also resided. He originally hailed from Unnao district. Meanwhile, three accused were arrested on Friday night for bludgeoning their neighbour, Deshraj, to death in the Gosainganj Police Station area. According to an official communiqué, the trio were arrested for

unintentionally killing their neighbour by beating him with a stick while under the influence of alcohol. The police said they recovered the stick used in the incident, which took place in Malouli village in the area. On January 23, one Jagjivan from Malouli, Gosainganj, informed the police that his brother Deshraj had been beaten by Jitendra, Rajesh, and Kripashankar, who live in the same neighbourhood, in a drunken state. He said that after the matter was initially settled, Deshraj returned to his house. "After two hours, when Deshraj came out again, the accused beat him with a stick, which resulted in his death. The accused threw his body into a wheat field outside the village and fled," the deceased's brother alleged.

4 killed, 2 hurt as car collides with truck

Lucknow (PNS): Four people were killed and two injured when a car collided with a truck in Shahjahanpur. According to Superintendent of Police Rajesh S, the victims, of Gora and Dahena villages under Allahganj police station, were travelling in a car which collided head-on with a truck coming from the opposite direction near Kateli village around 11 pm on Friday. "The deceased were identified as Rahul Kumar (25), Vinay Sharma (27), Akash (22) and Gopal (24). All of them were killed on the spot. Police seized the truck but its driver remains at large and efforts are on to arrest him. In a separate incident, two women were killed and three people injured when a tractor collided with an auto-rickshaw in Agra, police said on Saturday. The victims were returning from Bateashwar when the accident took place in the Pinhat police station area on Friday night.

BJP planning to create disturbance in Milkipur bypolls: SP president

Lucknow (PTI): Samajwadi Party chief Akhilesh Yadav on Saturday claimed that like the previous by-elections, the Bharatiya Janata Party is planning to create disturbances in the Milkipur bypolls by misusing the administrative machinery. In the by-elections held in nine assembly constituencies in UP in November last year, the BJP-led National Democratic Alliance candidates won seven seats, while the SP had managed to win only two seats. Yadav was addressing a meeting of party workers at the Dr Ram Manohar Lohia Auditorium at Samajwadi Party's state headquarters in Lucknow on Saturday. Accusing the ruling BJP, he said, "Like the previous bye-elections, the BJP is planning to create disturbances in the Milkipur election by misusing the administrative machinery." In a statement issued by the SP, Yadav said, "From now on, threats are being given to village heads. Opposition workers are being intimidated. False cases are being filed against SP workers, so that they cannot campaign in favour of SP, but not even a single ploy of BJP will succeed." However, in the February 5 Milkipur bypolls, the public has decided to trust the SP. Winning this by-election is also necessary for democracy. The results of the Milkipur bye-election will have an impact

on the next assembly elections," the SP chief said. He added that the public has understood why the BJP never speaks the truth. Lies and loot are its only mission and it has no vision for development. The former chief minister of UP also said, "By misusing power, the BJP gives false assurances and makes new excuses to defame the opposition. Now, the public has decided to give it a crushing defeat in the 2027 elections as well as in the Milkipur bye-election. Just as the BJP came to power in the state in 2017, it will be out of power in 2027." He said that despite the BJP's many conspiracies, the supreme power of the people cannot be denied. The SP is engaged in connecting everyone with the resolution of PDA (Backward, Dalit, Minority). Under this, everyone will have a stake in the success of social justice. The Samajwadi Party is committed to democracy, socialism and the Constitution. Ten candidates are in the fray in the February 5 bypoll for the Milkipur assembly seat in Uttar Pradesh's Ayodhya district. The main contest in the bypoll is expected to be between SP's Ajit Prasad and the BJP's Chandrabhanu Paswan. The SP would like to retain the seat, especially after delivering a blow to the BJP in the Faizabad parliamentary seat that houses Ayodhya, the home of the newly consecrated Ram mandir.

RYAN INTERNATIONAL SCHOOL
48 YEARS OF EDUCATION EXCELLENCE
WORLD'S BEST SCHOOL

EXPERIENCE-FOCUSED MOMS CHOOSE RYAN SCHOOLS

Our experiential learning covers music, arts, literacy, social skills and much more.

ADMISSIONS OPEN CALL 7600 800 500

Ryan International School, Shahjahanpur, CBSE: Plot No. 294, Misraur, Near Roza Mill Chauraha, Sitapur - Bareilly Bypass
Ryan International School, Raebareilly, ICSE: Raha Village, Sultanpur Road, Raebareilly

श्री शक्ति डिग्री कालेज
सांसाहरी, घाटमपुर, कानपुर नगर

D.E.L.Ed. (B.T.C.)

Mob.: 9565870073, 8299738040, 9598535799
Web: sadckanpur.org • Email ID: info@sdc@gmail.com

IFFCO Nano Urea Plus & IFFCO Nano DAP LIQUID

- Enhance Crop Productivity & Quality
- Reduces fertilizer cost and increases Farmer's income
- Ease of Storage & Transportation
- Improves Nutritional Value
- Reduces Input Cost
- Environment friendly

Order Now: www.iffcobazar.in

इंडियन फार्मर्स फर्टिलाइजर कोऑपरेटिव लिमिटेड - फूलपुर इकाई
पोस्ट- वियालगर, फूलपुर, प्रयागराज - 212404 उ.प्र.
Tel: (0522) 24234, 25250, 25251, EMail: phulpur@iffco.in, website- www.iffco.in

Kin protest after e-rickshaw driver's body found in river

Lucknow (PNS): A day after the body of e-rickshaw driver Himanshu was recovered from the Gomti river, his family's anger erupted on Saturday, leading to a protest. The family blocked the 1090 Crossing Road near Balu Adda, placing the body there. Samajwadi Party MLA Ravidas Mehrotra joined the protest, expressing solidarity with the grieving family. The protesters demanded the arrest of Himanshu's wife, Payal, and her lover, Ayush, accusing them of murder. After a brief discussion with police, the family agreed to proceed with the last rites. Mehrotra, who arrived after hearing about the disturbance, promised to ensure justice for the family and criticised the police for not acting sooner. He expressed regret that the police had failed to take timely action while the family had been searching for Himanshu for several days. The police assured the family that the suspects would be arrested soon. According to sources, Payal and Ayush have been taken into custody for questioning. Himanshu's sister, Rita Sonkar, alleged that while the family was desperately searching for Himanshu, Payal had been in frequent contact with Ayush, raising suspicions. Rita called for the police to check their mobile records to uncover the truth and suggested that other individuals may also be involved in the crime. Himanshu, 27, a resident of Balu Adda, was found dead in the Gomti river near Hanumant Dham on Friday evening. The Wazirganj police recovered his body with the help of divers and sent it for post-mortem. In her preliminary questioning, Payal stated that Himanshu had left the house on January 21 after receiving a phone call. She claimed the last GPS location showed his e-rickshaw near Hanumant Dham. Payal has accused an LMC employee from Kaiserbagh and his friends of killing Himanshu and throwing his body in the river. Himanshu and Payal had a love marriage in 2018, and it was later revealed that Payal and the LMC employee had previously planned to murder Himanshu. However, the plan was exposed, and Himanshu persuaded Payal to abandon it.

एनटीपीसी NTPC 50 YEARS OF POWERING GROWTH

औरैया AURAIYA SAFE PLANT

Greetings on the 76th Republic Day!

50 Golden Years of NTPC and Steps Towards a Green Future

By 2022, the company aims for 60 GW from RE sources, making up 45% of its total power capacity

50 Years of Power - Empowering Society and Building a Green Future

Democracy should be strengthened through voting: Haque



Voter awareness rally being taken out in Varanasi on Saturday.

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ VARANASI

To mark National Voters' Day on Saturday, Principal Aarti Devi flagged off a voter awareness rally at the Chiraigaon block primary school...

youth who have completed 18 years of age should register their names in the voter list and vote 100 per cent to make the country stronger, she said.

Kumari, Shakti Kumari, Reena, Rita, Soni, Asha, Triloki Prasad Gupta, parents, students were also present.

Students made aware of importance of voting

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ PRAYAGRAJ

A programme under the aegis of Rashtriya Sewa Yojana was organised on the 15th National Voters' Day at Handia PG College here.



Ravindra Kumar. On the occasion Handia naib tehsildar Anupam Tripathi, Dhanapur naib tehsildar Ashok Kumar Srivastava and Inter College Principal Ajay Mishra besides a large number of students were present.

us of our rights and responsibilities so that we can make the future of our country better. Describing the right to vote as the biggest power of democracy, he said the vote of every citizen is priceless.

NDRF'S SWIFT RESPONSE: A team of National Disaster Response Force (NDRF) dis-

played unparalleled promptness and humanitarian service at Dashedwamedh Ghat on Saturday when they assisted a 54-year-old woman from Pali, Rajasthan, who fell on the ghat while preparing to take a holy dip in the Ganga.

Operation Control Centre at Prayagraj Jn inspected

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ PRAYAGRAJ



Principle Executive Director (Traffic Transportation) Movement, Railway Board, Prabhas Dansana, conducted an inspection of the Operation Control Centre (OCC) at Prayagraj Junction on Saturday.

(DFCCIL) network in consultation with RDSO (Research Design and Standards Organisation). The goal is to achieve optimum utilisation of rolling stock and improve the overall efficiency of freight movement.

Gati Shakti cargo terminals under DFCCIL. Dansana advised implementing the ABC analysis approach to classify issues and tasks based on their priority and impact on operations.

Various aspects of cyber security highlighted

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ VARANASI

A workshop on 'Cyber Security Awareness' was conducted at the Faculty of Commerce, Banaras Hindu University (BHU), under the auspices of the National Service Scheme (NSS).

dents. Senior cyber expert Dr Anand Prakash Dube from the SMS also drew attention to different types of cyber crimes. He discussed technical measures to combat cyber threats and focused on the importance of being vigilant while using banking and financial applications.

during their studies and would also be given detailed information on how to prevent others from falling victim to it. The speakers said cyber fraud has become a major issue, with almost every second person being deceived and cyber security education is the need of the hour and it is crucial to stop the rising incidents of cyber fraud.

Mauni Amavasya: Rlys to run over 150 specials

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ PRAYAGRAJ

The Railways will run more than 150 special trains for the biggest Amrit Snan of Maha Kumbh, Mauni Amavasya. The Railways has decided to run special trains from Prayagraj Junction, Chheoki, Naini, Prayag, Prayagraj Rambag stations.

22 mela spl trains to run today

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ VARANASI

As many as 22 Maha Kumbh Mela Special trains will be run from/through Varanasi Division of North Eastern Railway (NER) on January 26. Giving this information, Public Relations Officer (PRO) Ashok Kumar said these Mela Special trains running from Banaras are train number 05109 Banaras-Jhusi Mela special train that will depart from Banaras at 8 am and reach Jhusi at 10.45 am; 05105 Banaras-Prayagraj Rambag Mela Special train will depart from Banaras at 12.30 pm and reach Prayagraj Rambag at 3.45 pm; 05111 Banaras-Jhusi Mela Special train will depart from Banaras at 4.45 and reach Jhusi at 7.45 pm; 05107 Banaras-Prayagraj Rambag Mela Special train will depart from Banaras at 8.30 pm and reach Prayagraj Rambag at 11.45 pm; 04114 Banaras-Prayagraj Rambag Mela Special Ring Rail train will depart from Banaras at 4.25 am and reach Prayagraj Rambag at 7.43 am.

from Ayodhya at 10.50 am and reach Prayagraj Rambag at 8.40 pm; 05173 Bhatni-Prayagraj Rambag Mela Special Train will depart from Bhatni at 5.30 am and reach Prayagraj Rambag at 1.00 pm; 05133 Ballia-Prayagraj Rambag Mela Special train will depart from Ballia at 4.45pm and reach Prayagraj Rambag at 11.55 pm; 05129 Chhapra-Jhusi Mela Special train running from Chhapra will depart from Chhapra at 6.30 pm and reach Prayagraj Rambag at 2.25 am on the next day; 05185 Gorakhpur-Prayagraj Rambag Mela

Special train running from Gorakhpur will depart from Gorakhpur at 8.30 pm and reach Prayagraj Rambag at 5.30 am the next day; 05119 Gorakhpur-Prayagraj Rambag Mela Special train running from Gorakhpur will depart from Gorakhpur at 8.30 am and reach Prayagraj Rambag at 5.45 am and 05110 Jhusi-Banaras Mela Special train will depart from Jhusi at 12.45 pm and reach Banaras at 3.50 pm.

Meanwhile, 16 Maha Kumbh Mela Special trains were operated from/through Varanasi Division on Saturday.

'Cyber crime is distorted form of misuse of science & technology'

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ VARANASI

A one-day workshop on Cyber security was organised on Saturday under the Cyber Security course being run under the aegis of UGDCA, Computer Centre, operated under IQAC at DAV PG College. Chief guest and Inspector in-charge of Cyber police station, Varanasi Rajeev Kumar Singh said that cyber fraudsters make people their victims by taking advantage of greed and ignorance.



ple their victims. According to the report of the Home Ministry, the area from Sigra to Bhelupur in Varanasi has become a hot spot of cyber fraud as 8-10 cases are being registered daily and out of which we are able to dispose of many cases quickly. He said that the police never does online inquiry, so there is no need to be afraid of calls coming in the name of police.

race to earn quick money traps us in their net. Presiding over the function, the acting principal of the college Prof Mishral said cyber crime is a distorted form of misuse of science and technology, awareness about it is necessary for all sections of the society. Before this, the secretary/manager of the college Ajit Kumar Singh Yadav welcomed the guests by presenting them with mementoes and shawls. The programme was coordinated by course coordinator Dr Shantanu Saurabh. It was conducted by Najam Ujj Jamal. Vice-Principal Prof Rahul, Prof Sangeeta Jain, Prof Satyagopal, Prof Vijaynath Dubey, Prof Sanjay Sah, Kavari Sharma, Sandhya Shrivastava, Rozina Bano etc were also present. SEMINAR: An interactive seminar on 'From Isolation to Connection: Understanding peer support system' was held in the Institute of Management Studies, Banaras Hindu University on Friday. The event was led by psychological counsellor Divya Singh. The session was organised by Student Wellbeing Committee.

Central team visits UPHC Manduadih

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ VARANASI

A two-member central team comprising Colonel Dr Manas Roy and Dr Pawan Singh evaluated the Urban Primary Health Centre (UPHC) Manduadih on 12 parameters under the National Quality Assurance Standards (NQAS) here on Friday. Chief Medical Officer (CMO) Dr Sandeep Chaudhary said that medical and health facilities are being continuously expanded and strengthened in the community and primary health centres (CHCs/ PHCs) operating in the district.



Central team for NQAS evaluation at UPHC Manduadih in Varanasi

important suggestions were given. Divisional Quality Assurance Consultant Dr Tanveer Siddiqui said the NQAS certificate is given to the PHCs and CHCs for doing better work on the 12 parameters set by the Central government, such as infectious diseases, emergency services, family welfare services, general administration, external diseases, vaccination, laboratory, delivery room, newborn and child health, non-infectious diseases, pharmacy and regional services. Nodal officer of the programme, Dr YB Pathak, nodal officer of the city area Dr Amit Singh, in

charge of the UPHC Dr Nidhi Pandey and coordinator of the urban area Ashish Singh were present. DIRECTION: As per the instructions given by the Director General (Medical and Health Services), Uttar Pradesh, Chief Medical Officer (CMO) along with Additional Chief Medical Officers and Deputy Chief Medical Officers will see patients in various hospitals of the district. In this direction, an instruction was issued by the CMO Dr Sandeep Chaudhary on Friday. He informed that along with discharging his administrative responsibilities,

ties, he and ACMOs and DCMOs will do medical work for two hours per day as far as possible three days a week. All the ACMOs and DCMOs working in the district have been allotted various hospitals for giving medical advice while examining patients in OPD for two hours three days a week. The CMO informed that medical consultation will be given by him at Urban Community Health Centres (UCHCs) Durgakund, Chowkaghat and Shivpur, by Dr Sanjay Kumar Rai at Urban Primary Health Centre (UPHCs) Madanpura, Bhelupur and SVM Hospital Bhelupur, by Dr SS Kanaujia at CHC Cholarpur, by Dr AK Maurya at CHCs Shivpur, Sarnath and Chowkaghat, by Dr Rajesh Prasad at UPHCs Manduadih and Durgakund, by Dr Harishchandra Maurya at UPHCs Pandeypur, Orderly Bazaar and Shivpur, by Dr Piyush Rai at TB Unit Kabirchaura, by Dr YB Pathak at UPHCs Manduadih, Bajardiha and Durgakund and by Dr Amit Singh at TB Unit Kabirchaura from 9 am to 11 am on different working days.

Amavasya, then the passengers will be stopped at the shelter built in Khurso Bagh. There too, food will be provided to the passengers by ISKCON. If the crowd increases at Subedarganj station on Mauni

Seven hurt as truck hits Bolero

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ PRAYAGRAJ

Seven persons, including three women, were seriously injured when the Bolero in which they were returning after Kumbh Mela snan was hit by a speeding truck at Bharauti intersection near IFFCO police post in the Phulpur Kotwali area here on Saturday. According to a report, the accident took place when the truck driver suddenly tried to turn and collided with the Bolero coming from behind. The collision was so severe that the diesel tank of the truck burst and oil spilled on the road due to which the bike riders started slipping. The villagers took all the injured to the Community Health Centre (CHC) Phulpur in private vehicles. Inspector Phoolpur Deendayal Singh said all the injured were sent to a private hospital and the matter is being investigated.

Workshop on superannuation planning held

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ LUCKNOW

A one-day workshop on superannuation planning was organised at NTPC-NRHQ, Lucknow on Friday. The aim of the session was to prepare the employees for a secure and well-planned retirement.



Regional Executive Director (North), NTPC Northern HQ, NS Rao, graced the event as the chief guest. Speaking at the inaugural session, Rao empha-

sised the importance of such workshops in equipping employees with practical financial management strategies and raising awareness about the significance of retirement planning. He appreciated the HR team for their efforts in organising the event.

The workshop featured T Suresh, Founder of CEBR Financial Planners Pvt Ltd., Hyderabad, as the esteemed facilitator. It covered essential

aspects of financial planning, including importance of diversified investments for maximising retirement benefits to ensure a seamless transition from active employment to retirement. The event saw active participation from GM (Operation Services) Amreek Singh Bhogal, GM (HR) Samiran Sinha Ray, along with other heads of departments, senior officials and employees contributing to its success.

IFFCO Phulpur: Empowering farmers & strengthening food security

Prayagraj (PNS): IFFCO, a multi-state cooperative society focused on the production and distribution of fertilisers, was established in 1967 by 57 Indian cooperatives with the goal of improving the livelihoods of Indian farmers and ensuring the country's food security. Today through more than 35,000 cooperative societies across India, IFFCO directly serves over five crore farmers. Over the past 57 years, IFFCO has consistently met the needs of farmers by offering high-quality agricultural inputs and expert technical

guidance thereby empowering them at every stage of their farming journey. IFFCO produces approximately 9.6 million metric tonnes of conventional fertilisers annually from its five state-of-the-art manufacturing facilities across India. This contributes around 32 per cent of the country's phosphatic fertilisers and 21 per cent of nitrogenous fertilisers. IFFCO has expanded its global presence through joint ventures in Oman, Senegal, Jordan, and Dubai. In addition to its core fertiliser business, IFFCO is actively

involved in diverse sectors such as food processing, organics, e-bazaars, general insurance, special economic zones (SEZs) and international trade. By offering a wide range of nitrogenous, phosphatic, biofertilisers, water-soluble fertilisers and specialty products, including nano fertilisers, IFFCO has consistently contributed to increasing food productivity. IFFCO has proved testament of its dedication towards enhancing farmers income, developing new highly advanced agri-technologies and deepening cooperative engagements.



Family Drama on Stage

Shailesh Lodha's theatre debut delivers humour, emotion and family chaos, says **SAKSHI PRIYA**



When I first heard that Shailesh Lodha was making his debut on the theatre stage in *Dad's Girlfriend*, I was intrigued. Known for his wit and charming presence on television, particularly for his role in *Taarak Mehta Ka Ooltah Chashmah*, Lodha's transition to theatre seemed like an exciting challenge. His comedic timing and subtle humour have made him a household name, but how would that translate to the stage, where the dynamics are different and every performance is live? The play *Dad's Girlfriend* turned out to be a delightful mix of humour, family dynamics and emotional complexity. Lodha plays Animesh, a successful author and professor who returns to his estranged daughter Diya and her husband Kanav after years of emotional distance. From the outset, it becomes evident that the story is not only about comedy but also about reconnecting, understanding, and navigating personal challenges within a family. Lodha brings a grounded yet comedic presence to Animesh, capturing his complexity with both humour and a hint of vulnerability. He's not just the larger-than-life character you might expect; there's a human side to him that makes his emotional journey relatable. Kanav, played by Aman Bajpai, adds a refreshing comic energy to the stage. His character starts out trying to navigate the awkwardness of having his father-in-law around, and his reactions provide much of the laughter throughout the play. But

what stands out is how the character develops, revealing deeper layers of insecurity and emotional turmoil as the story progresses. Then there's Avni, a fan of Animesh played by Megha Mathur. She brings a surprising element to the play, stirring emotions and creating a sense of jealousy and tension, especially between her and Diya, played by Anumeha Jain. Their interactions bring a mix of comedy and conflict, creating a dynamic that keeps the audience engaged. Under the direction of Atul Satya Koushik, *Dad's*

Girlfriend strikes a balance between humour and emotional depth. The play effectively captures the complexities of family relationships, the generational gaps that often create misunderstandings, and the awkward yet beautiful ways love can play out in the midst of it all. It's not a light-hearted farce; instead, it offers a deeper reflection on how we navigate family bonds, often balancing humour and pain. What I found most striking about the performance was how humour blended with

moments of genuine emotional depth. The comedy is sharp, but it's the emotional weight of the story that stays with you. It's a reminder that, despite the challenges and complexities of relationships, the desire to reconnect and understand each other remains at the heart of family dynamics. The actors, especially Lodha, deliver performances that are both engaging and thought-provoking, making *Dad's Girlfriend* a memorable experience for anyone who's ever tried to bridge the gap between love, laughter, and the misunderstandings that come with it. As the curtain fell and the audience slowly made their way out, there was one thing on everyone's mind. *Dad's Girlfriend* is a reminder that life, like theatre, is full of unexpected twists, laughs and those cringe-worthy moments that we can't help but love. After all, if you can survive family drama, flirtations and a father-in-law with a slightly over-the-top personality, you can survive anything! Just like the play, sometimes the best moments come when you least expect them and in this case, it was a delightful mix of humour, heart and a little bit of chaos. It left me thinking, maybe we should all take a page from Animesh's book and learn to laugh at the absurdity of life.

PHOTOS: PANKAJ KUMAR

Play: *Dad's Girlfriend*
 Director: Atul Satya Koushik
 Lead Actor: Shailesh Lodha
 Cast Members: Anumeha Jain, Megha Mathur and Aman Bajpai



QUIETER BUT IMPACTFUL SEASON

Jaideep Ahlawat returns to the world of *Paatal Lok* in a more sombre way, yet the season remains compelling, says **ABHI SINGHAL**



Taking away all the popularity even in the pandemic era, *Paatal Lok* has shined with its first season making the audience give a reaction of great, awesome and what not. The second season of *Sudip Sharma's Paatal Lok*, a multi-layered crime drama that builds upon its predecessor is back. This season takes a more subdued and contemplative approach making its shape deeply into the human condition, the nature of violence, and the brittle links that bind individuals and communities together. All this is showcased in contrast to the first season's plot on caste, class, and corruption. Jonathan Thom, a well-known Nagaland leader, was shockingly assassinated in Delhi at the start of the story. His ruthless murder starts a series of events that jeopardise peace negotiations in Nagaland. Inspector *Hathi Ram Chaudhary*, played expertly by Jaideep Ahlawat, is drawn into a web of political plots and personal grudges as a result of the

crime. In order to track down a strange woman named *Rose Lizo* (Merenla Imsong), whose existence connects several story threads, *Hathi Ram* and his former coworker *Ansari* (Ishwak Singh) work to catch her. *Paatal Lok Season 2* chooses a slow-burning plot that puts character development and emotional resonance first, in contrast to the previous season's relentless pacing and incisive societal satire. In addition to examining issues of trauma, sorrow, and the cyclical nature of violence, *Sharma's* writing digs deeply into the emotional lives of its protagonists. *Hathi Ram Chaudhary* remains the emotional core of the series. Jaideep Ahlawat delivers a powerhouse performance, portraying the world-weary inspector with the same grit and vulnerability that made him a standout in the first season. This time, *Hathi Ram* is not just chasing criminals but grappling with his own insecurities as a father and a man. His interactions with *Ansari*, now a

successful IPS officer, form one of the show's most poignant arcs with themes of fellowship, professional jealousy, and unspoken respect. Additionally, *Sharma* defies the standard police procedural rules. The genre gives depth and dignity to side characters, who are sometimes reduced to mere story gadgets. Every



subplot enhances the overall story, from *Rose's* heartbreaking search for comfort to *Meghna Barua's* played by *Tillotama Shome*, battle to be accepted as an Assamese woman in a system that is controlled by men. Director *Avinash Arun's* cinematography captures the duality of *Paatal Lok*: the grimy chaos of Delhi and the landscapes of Nagaland. The visuals serve as more than just backdrops; they echo the themes of division and alienation that permeate the story. The action sequences are tightly choreographed serving only justice to the story rather than overshadowing it. The writing, too, deserves special mention for its ability to balance the personal and the political. While the first season was a hammer blow to societal structures, this season is more of a scalpel, dissecting issues like the migrant crisis, unemployment, and the fragile peace in conflict-ridden regions. *Abhishek Banerjee*, who played *Hathoda Tyagi* in a killer Season 1, has also written two

episodes in the series. The cast shines across the board. *Ahlawat* is, as expected, a tour de force, but it's the supporting cast that truly elevates this season. *Tillotama Shome* delivers a nuanced performance as *Meghna*, a character who challenges both societal and viewer biases. *Merenla Imsong's* *Rose* is hauntingly tragic, while *Nagesh Kukunoor's* turn as a shadowy bureaucrat adds a layer of intrigue. *Paatal Lok Season 2* is a long-form narrative accomplishment. It may not have the same initial effect as the first season, but it makes up for it with a deeper, more complex examination of its subjects. Every character, no matter how small, feels real in *Sudip Sharma's* world, and every violent act has significance and repercussions. The series offers a moving reflection on the human cost of cruelty and the fading prospect of forgiveness, and it requires patient but rewards it abundantly.

RATING: 4/5

SUGGESTED BINGES



HISAAB BARABAR
 IMDB Rating: 7.1/10
 OTT: ZEE5
 Director: Ashwini Dhir
 Cast: R Madhavan, Neil Nitin Mukesh, Kirti Kulhari



THE NIGHT AGENT SEASON 2
 IMDB Rating: 8/10
 OTT: Netflix
 Cast: Gabriel Basso, Luciane Buchanan, Fola Evans-Akingbola



PRIME TARGET
 IMDB Rating: 6.7/10
 OTT: Apple TV
 Director: Brady Hood
 Cast: Leo Woodall, Quintessa Swindell, Sidse Babbett Knudsen



SWEET DREAMS
 OTT: Disney+ Hotstar
 Director: Victor Mukherjee
 Cast: Anmol Parashar, Mithila Palkar



DIDI
 IMDB Rating: 7.4/10
 OTT: JioCinema
 Director: Sean Wang

Get in touch at vivacity@dailypioneer.com

Although every possible care and caution has been taken to avoid errors or omissions, this publication is being sold on the condition and understanding that information given in this publication is merely for reference and must not be taken as having authority of or binding in any way on the writers, editors, publishers, and printers and sellers who do not owe any responsibility for any damage or loss to any person, a purchaser of this publication or not for the result of any action taken on the basis of this work. All disputes are subject to the exclusive jurisdiction of competent court and forums in Lucknow only. Readers are advised and requested to verify and seek appropriate advice to satisfy themselves about the veracity of any kind of advertisement before responding to any contents published in this newspaper. The printer, publisher, editor and any employee of the Pioneer Group's will not be held responsible for any kind of claim made by the advertisers of the products & services and shall not be made responsible for any kind of loss, consequences and further product-related damages on such advertisements.

Printed and Published by Shobori Ganguli for and on behalf of CMYK Printech Ltd., 4th Floor, Sahara Shopping Centre, Faizabad Road, Lucknow-226016 and Printed at The Indian Express Pvt Ltd., C-26 Amais Industrial Area, Nadarganj, Lucknow. Editor-in-Chief Shobori Ganguli, Resident Editor Vijay Prakash Singh, RNI No. 2016/57. Lucknow Telephones: EPABX: 4036600 Fax: 2345582. Allahabad Office: (0532) 2420818, 2421018, 3290460. Kanpur Office: (0512) 2304006, 2304416. Varanasi Office: (0542) 2414294, 2414295. Delhi Office: 100K, Milap Bhawan, 8/A, Bahadur Shah Zafar Marg, New Delhi-110 002, Phone: 011-40110455. Corporate Office:- 201-205, 2nd Floor, Pratap Bhawan 5, B.S.Z. Marg, New Delhi-110002 Phone: 011-69342500.

"Everything you've ever wanted is on the other side of fear"

— GEORGE ADDAIR



Tihar is more than just a correctional facility, it is a microcosm of society, brimming with stories of resilience, redemption and raw humanity. Following the excerpt from the book *355 Days: Pursuit of Freedom*.

With *Black Warrant* topping Netflix charts as the No. 1 show, the enigmatic world of Tihar Jail has captured the public's attention once again.

As one of Asia's largest and most complex prison systems, Tihar holds within its walls stories of resilience, despair, redemption and raw humanity. This newfound interest highlights society's fascination with the lives hidden behind prison walls, narratives that often remain untold but carry immense significance.

Tihar Jail is more than just a prison – it is a world within a world, housing individuals from all walks of life. From petty criminals to high-profile offenders, from activists to political prisoners, it is a microcosm of society where identities collide and stories unfold. Beneath the label of "convict" or "undertrial" lies a human being, grappling with remorse, survival, and perhaps even hope. Both *Black Warrant* and *355 Days* aim to shed light on this humanity, challenging the stereotypes often associated with prison life.

While *Black Warrant* provides chilling insights into executions and the inner workings of the prison system as a first-hand account by the former *Tihar Superintendent* and *ex-Legal*

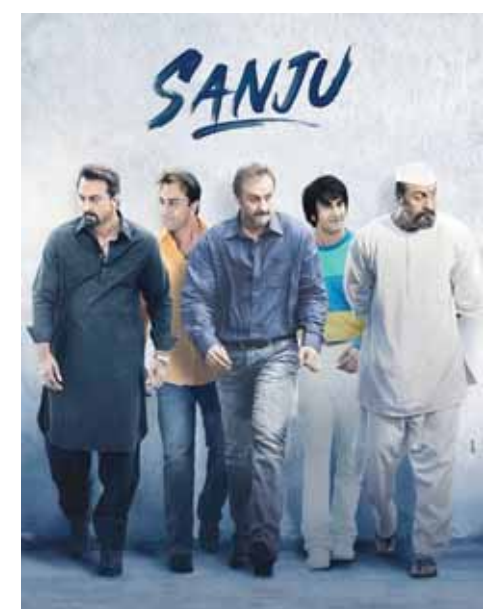


The Changing Perception of Prison Life

Advisor of Delhi Jails, Sunil Gupta, the novel *355 Days*, inspired by true events, delves into the emotional and psychological journeys of inmates. Together, these narratives as well as other stories inspired by true events compel us to confront questions about justice, survival, and the power of redemption.

355 Days, an Amazon bestseller, delves into the complexities of life within *Tihar Jail*. The novel, which features a quote from Sunil Gupta on the cover stating it offers "A writing about a sensitive subject. An emotional journey with in-depth research of Tihar life," reinforces its commitment to authenticity. The endorsement highlights the novel's connection to the realities of life within *Tihar Jail*, appealing to readers interested in stories inspired by true events. *355 Days* transcends the typical crime story, weaving together legal drama with profound exploration of the protagonist's inner journey. This unique blend positions the novel within the sphere of philosophical prison drama. *Tihar Jail*, in many ways, serves as a mirror to

larger socio-economic and judicial systems. It reveals the inequities that plague our society, the struggles and resilience of the marginalised. While the prison itself is often viewed as a place of punishment, it also serves as a crucible of transformation. Sunil Gupta's tenure as Superintendent of *Tihar Jail* was instrumental in bringing significant reforms, including the establishment of legal aid cells, the streamlining of jail procedures with the *Delhi Jail Manual*, and the introduction of yoga and meditation programs for inmates. The rehabilitation initiatives and the skill-building workshops offer inmates a chance to rediscover themselves and have been instrumental in improving the lives of those incarcerated. When asked about the recent success of *Black Warrant* on Netflix, he said, "I believe in the power of selfless acts! I firmly hold that when you work towards the betterment of others, the universe rewards you in abundance. God's blessings and gratitude from those you've helped are the greatest rewards. Keep spreading



I BELIEVE IN THE POWER OF SELFLESS ACTS! I FIRMLY HOLD THAT WHEN YOU WORK TOWARDS THE BETTERMENT OF OTHERS, THE UNIVERSE REWARDS YOU IN ABUNDANCE. GOD'S BLESSINGS AND GRATITUDE FROM THOSE YOU'VE HELPED ARE THE GREATEST REWARDS. KEEP SPREADING KINDNESS, AND MAKING A DIFFERENCE!



kindness, and making a difference!" Literature and media have the unique ability to humanise even the most vilified. By presenting detailed, empathetic narratives, they remind us that every prisoner has a story, a past and, perhaps, a chance at a better future. Stories like *Black Warrant* and *355 Days* do not shy away from the darkness but instead bring to light the glimmers of hope and humanity that exist even in the bleakest environments.

Recent years have seen several films inspired by real-life incidents. Notably, *Shahid* (2012), a critically acclaimed biographical drama based on the life of human rights lawyer *Shahid Azmi*, garnered numerous awards for its portrayal of his fight for justice for the wrongfully accused. *Lucknow Central* (2017), exploring the realities of life within Indian prisons, received positive reviews and praise for *Farhan Akhtar's* performance. However, it was the 2018 biopic *Sanju* – depicting the life of *Sanjay Dutt*, that achieved blockbuster status, breaking several box office records. Through literature and media, we can begin to bridge the gap between perception and reality, inching closer to a more nuanced understanding of the world behind bars.

Title: *355 Days: Pursuit of Freedom*
Author: Deeba Salim Irfan
Publisher: LiFi Publications Pvt. Ltd.
Language: English
Paperback: 239 pages



MISSION BAY HAS SOME AMAZING DISHES:

KIMCHI BRUSSELS SPROUTS: *Kimchi Brussels Sprouts* is a fusion dish that combines the earthy flavour of Brussels sprouts with the bold, spicy, and tangy notes of traditional Korean kimchi. The Brussels sprouts are usually roasted or sautéed, then tossed with kimchi, adding a satisfying crunch and depth to the dish.

BUTTERNUT SQUASH: *Butternut Squash* is a rich and creamy dish that highlights the natural sweetness and smooth texture of roasted butternut squash. It is served as a soup, puree, or roasted, offering a comforting and nutritious side or main.

THAI STYLE CORN SOUP: *Thai Style Corn Soup* is a vibrant, flavourful dish that blends sweet corn with the fragrant spices of Thai cuisine. It typically includes ingredients like coconut milk, lemongrass, ginger, and chili, creating a savoury-sweet soup with a perfect balance of heat and creaminess.

SHIMEJI MUSHROOMS FLATBREAD: *Shimeji Mushrooms Flatbread* is a savoury appetizer or main dish that features the delicate, nutty flavour of shimeji mushrooms. The mushrooms are sautéed and served on a crisp flatbread base, often garnished with herbs, cheese, and a drizzle of sauce for added flavour.

RICOTTA RAVIOLI: *Ricotta Ravioli* is a classic Italian dish featuring soft, pillowy pasta filled with creamy ricotta cheese. The ravioli can be served with a variety of sauces, from simple butter and sage to rich tomato-based sauces, highlighting the delicate filling.

APPLE BERRY CRUMBLE: *Apple Berry Crumble* is a comforting dessert that combines the sweetness of apples with the tartness of berries, all topped with a buttery, crumbly topping. Baked until golden and bubbling, it's often served warm with a scoop of vanilla ice cream or whipped cream.

TOFFEE DATE CAKE: Yet another sinful delight, *Toffee Date Cake* is a rich, moist dessert made with dates and a toffee-flavored sauce, creating a dense, caramel-like sweetness. Often served warm with a drizzle of toffee sauce and a side of cream, it offers a decadent treat perfect for dessert lovers.

A TASTE OF SAN FRANCISCO

The *Mission Bay* Restaurant recently opened in Malviya Nagar Delhi. It has some great cuisine and authentic American wining and dining experience for the connoisseurs, writes **GYANESHWAR DAYAL**

Ever imagined to have American experience in Delhi, authentic and cosy ambiance with a service with smile. A tall order really but that is exactly what *Mission Bay* is offering in South Delhi. *Mission Bay* Restaurant stands as a delightful oasis of flavour, design, and American hospitality. Inspired by the vibrant and eclectic spirit of San Francisco, this restaurant offers an immersive experience that takes you straight to the Bay Area, all while keeping you grounded in the comfort of cozy, inviting interiors. As you step into *Mission Bay*, you are immediately greeted by the distinctive atmosphere reminiscent of the Californian city. The restaurant's interior is thoughtfully designed to capture the essence of San Francisco, featuring chic industrial elements, vibrant murals, and elegant wooden accents. The open, airy spaces and warm lighting evoke the feeling of walking through a trendy Bay Area neighbourhood. With high ceilings, large windows, and a touch of vintage charm, *Mission Bay* provides an inviting environment that feels both contemporary and comfortable. The

design masterfully blends rustic and modern elements, allowing guests to feel like they are dining in the heart of San Francisco. *Mission Bay* is not just about the ambiance, it's about bringing a slice of American dining to the capital. The restaurant offers a curated menu inspired by the best of American cuisine, with everything from hearty burgers and fried chicken to succulent steaks and fresh seafood. Each dish is crafted with care, using the finest ingredients to bring out authentic American flavors. The American-inspired cuisine is rich in diversity, just like San Francisco itself, with touches of California's innovative food scene and classic diner favorites. What stands out at *Mission Bay* is its commitment to quality and innovation. From comfort food to indulgent desserts, the menu offers a variety of options that cater to every palate. Whether you're craving the comfort of a juicy burger or the richness of a gourmet salad, *Mission Bay* delivers with an authenticity that transports you straight to the West Coast. One of the restaurant's most commendable aspects is its exceptional



service. The staff at *Mission Bay* are attentive, friendly and dedicated to creating a welcoming atmosphere. Their knowledge of the menu is impeccable, and they take the time to ensure that every guest feels special. Whether it's a

casual lunch, an intimate dinner, or a celebratory meal, the team at *Mission Bay* ensures a personalised dining experience. Their commitment to excellence in service sets *Mission Bay* apart from other restaurants in the area.

Despite the bustling energy of Delhi, *Mission Bay* manages to create a cosy environment that feels intimate and relaxed. The restaurant is the perfect spot for a romantic date, a family gathering, or a meal with friends. The ambiance is

unpretentious yet sophisticated, making it a great place for both casual dining and special occasions. *Mission Bay* has rapidly become a sought-after destination for food lovers in Delhi, offering not just a meal but an experience. With its innovative concept, stylish design, and impeccable service, it offers a little taste of San Francisco without leaving the city. For anyone seeking a unique dining experience in Malviya Nagar, *Mission Bay* is a must-visit. Whether you're a local or just passing through, *Mission Bay* Restaurant is a gem that promises a truly memorable American dining experience with a touch of West Coast flair, all while providing the warmth and comfort that makes you feel right at home.



A CULINARY REVIVAL

By **GYANESHWAR DAYAL**

XO & Mi @ Le Belvedere Opens its Doors: In the vibrant heart of Delhi, *Le Meridien New Delhi* recently opened legendary *Le Belvedere* as *XO & Mi @ Le Belvedere*. This exciting culinary destination blends the iconic restaurant's storied past with an innovative, modern twist, promising to captivate diners with a unique fusion of tradition and creativity. For decades, *Le Belvedere* has been a symbol of sophistication and elegance, a cherished venue for diplomats and dignitaries who delighted in its signature *Szechuan Chinese cuisine* and refined ambiance. With the unveiling of *XO & Mi @ Le Belvedere*, the space embarks on a new chapter, fusing cherished memories with a fresh, dynamic vision for the future.



Tradition Meets Innovation: At *XO & Mi @ Le Belvedere*, the restaurant elevates Asia's rich street food culture, combining traditional flavours with contemporary flair. Far more than just a dining experience, it celebrates the artistry of cuisine, blending innovation with timeless tradition. With inspiration drawn from the bustling street markets of Thailand, Vietnam, Korea, Japan, Singapore and China, the menu offers a harmonious balance of authenticity and modern creativity that will delight discerning food lovers. The culinary philosophy at *XO & Mi @ Le Belvedere* is rooted in honoring the bold flavours and techniques of Southeast Asia, while also adapting to the evolving tastes of today's global palate. Each dish tells its own story, inviting guests to explore the vibrant world of Asian cuisine through a lens of imaginative reinterpretation and impeccable craftsmanship.



A Journey Through Flavour: The menu at *XO & Mi @ Le Belvedere* is a sensory journey that promises to captivate from the first bite. Guests can indulge in an array of dishes, from playful twists on classic favorites to bold new creations, each thoughtfully crafted to engage the senses and spark curiosity.

With a focus on diverse textures and punchy flavours, the restaurant invites diners to savor the spirit of discovery with every course. Whether you're enjoying an intimate dinner or hosting a celebratory gathering, *XO & Mi @ Le Belvedere* offers a culinary adventure that is both exciting and accessible. The restaurant's ambiance, where tradition and modernity intertwine, enhances the experience, making each meal a memorable occasion.

An Invitation to Explore: *XO & Mi @ Le Belvedere* is now open, ready to welcome guests to explore a world where history, culture and gastronomy come together. From its reimaged take on Southeast Asian street food to its dynamic blend of traditional flavors and contemporary techniques, this new dining destination at *Le Meridien New Delhi* promises to be a must-visit spot for food enthusiasts in the city.

To take you to the mouth watering taste of Kashmir, *Shangri-la Eros New Delhi* hosted a culinary journey with the *Chef pin pop-up* at Tamra. The pop up showcased the spicy flavours of Kashmir, expertly handpicked by *Chef Archana Dhawan*. Apart from the Kashmiri flavours, desserts took the show with the pastry *Chef Dakshata Agarwal*. Guests were treated to a symphony of Kashmiri delicacies, beginning with a selection of signature appetisers. *Chef Dhawan's* creations included the crispy *Nadur Monji*, a delightful fried snack made from lotus stems and gram flour. The delicate *Chaman Kanti* and aromatic *Nadur Aloo Adrek Mond* further tantalised the palate. For non-vegetarians, succulent *Chicken and Mutton Kanti* alongside the traditional *Talite Gaad* offered a taste of local specialties. The live theatrical kitchens added a touch of drama, where skilled chefs artfully prepared *Kabar Gah* and the classic *Kaladi Kulcha*, each dish carrying a unique story of Kashmir's rich culinary heritage.



The main course was a grand celebration of flavours, where traditional Kashmiri recipes were brought to life with timeless cooking techniques. Vegetarian delights included the famed *Dum Aloo*, aromatic *Chaman Tamatar*, and the distinctive *Chaman Rogan Josh*, all complemented by the hearty *Haak* and *Kashmiri Bhaderwah Rajma*. Non-vegetarians were equally indulged with the legendary *Mutton Rogan Josh*.

FROM ROGAN JOSH TO KASHMIRI KAHWA

Tamra was brought alive with the aroma of Kashmir and the soul satisfying taste of the desserts, writes **ABHI SINGHAL**

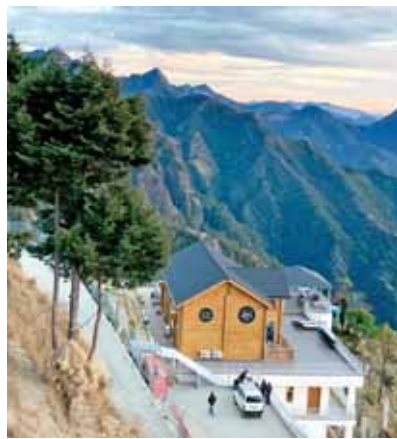


delicate *Yakhni*, and unique *Masch Aloo Bukhara*. Fish enthusiasts savored both *Tamatar* and *Nadur* preparations. Each dish was served with a selection of breads, including *Kashmiri Phulka*, accompanied by authentic *chutneys* - from the nutty Walnut to the tangy *Muli* and *Anardana Pudina* variations. To complete the dining experience, guests were invited to savour the royal *Saffron Kheer* and enjoy a warming cup of *Kahwa*, Kashmir's beloved spiced tea. While *Chef Dhawan* delighted palates with her authentic Kashmiri creations, Pastry *Chef Dakshata Agarwal* added a touch of sweetness with her signature dessert collection. The sweet finale featured delicate *Chiffon Cakes* in two variations - a fresh Strawberry Kiss topped with Chocolate Strawberry Panna Cotta and the rich Chocolate Kiss adorned with Dark Chocolate Cookie Soil. The indulgence continued with a velvety *Chocolate Mousse Caramel* embellished with dark chocolate elements, and the standout *Bailey's Chocolate Egg*, which guests could enjoy at their table or take home as a memorable treat. Each dessert showcased a perfect blend of classic techniques and contemporary presentation, offering a delightful conclusion to the culinary journey. The *Chef Pin pop-up* at *Shangri-la Eros New Delhi* provided a unique opportunity for guests to experience the essence of Kashmir through its flavourful cuisine and taste.



FINDING SOUL CONNECTIONS AT SOUL STORIES

Whether you're an avid bird watcher or someone looking to escape the chaos of urban life, Soul Stories promises an unparalleled blend of adventure and soulful experience, writes **GYANESHWAR DAYAL**



Soul Stories - Luxury Villas and Resort, Mussoorie, the bird-watching resort and retreat offers a haven for nature lovers and peace seekers alike. Surrounded by dense oak, deodar and rhododendron forests, this retreat is not just a destination but an experience that reconnects you with nature, tranquility, and yourself. Whether you're an avid bird watcher or someone looking to escape the chaos of urban life, Soul Stories promises an unparalleled blend of adventure and solace. Located near Dhanaulti, in Tehri Garhwal district, Uttarakhand, India. Dhanaulti is located on the popular tourist circuit of Landour, Mussoorie, Kanatal, Chamba and New Tehri. Soul Stories is easily accessible from Delhi and other parts of the country via *Dehradun*, followed by a scenic two-hour drive.

THE ALLURE OF SOUL STORIES' BIRD-WATCHING RETREAT

One of the retreat's standout features is its rich biodiversity. Dhanaulti, perched at an altitude of around 2,250 meters in the vicinity of Mussoorie, is home to an astonishing variety of avian species. From the vibrant Himalayan monal, the state bird of Uttarakhand, to colourful flycatchers, woodpeckers and thrushes, the retreat is a paradise for ornithologists and casual bird watchers alike. Guided bird-watching trails led by local experts ensure you don't miss out on spotting rare and exquisite birds. The retreat is carefully designed to



for personal rejuvenation. Unlike traditional retreats, it combines the joy of bird watching with holistic wellness practices such as yoga, meditation and mindfulness walking on the pathways around. For those seeking deeper connections, there are bonfire evenings where guests can share their experiences and bond with like-minded individuals. The idea is to create a community where stories and nature blend to form lasting memories.

ESCAPE FROM THE MADDENING CROWD

In an increasingly chaotic world, finding peace can feel like an elusive goal. Dhanaulti's remoteness makes it an ideal destination for those looking to unplug. With limited connectivity and a deliberate emphasis on slow living, Soul Stories encourages guests to step away from their screens and immerse themselves in the present moment. The serene environment fosters introspection, creativity and a sense of calm that lingers long after you leave.

SUSTAINABILITY AT ITS CORE

Soul Stories is committed to sustainable tourism. The retreat employs eco-friendly practices such as rainwater harvesting, solar energy, and organic farming to minimise its ecological footprint. Additionally, they actively engage with the local community by employing local guides and sourcing ingredients for their delicious, wholesome meals from nearby farms.

WHY SOUL STORIES SHOULD BE YOUR NEXT GETAWAY

Whether you're a seasoned birder, a wellness enthusiast or simply someone yearning for a break from the daily grind, Soul Stories offers something for everyone. Its combination of natural beauty, thoughtful amenities, and enriching experiences makes it a sanctuary where you can find peace, inspiration, and joy.

In the words of a recent visitor, "Soul Stories is not just about luxury and finding solace amidst nature; it is about discovering your own self. A place where you can hear silence and listen to your inner voices." So pack your bags, leave your worries behind, and let the hills of Dhanaulti and the birds of Soul Stories guide you to a state of blissful serenity.



harmonise with its natural surroundings. Rustic cottages with large windows offer panoramic views of the forested hills, creating the perfect backdrop for morning coffee or an evening of stargazing. The soft chirping of birds replaces the noise of traffic, allowing visitors to immerse themselves in the calming sounds of nature. Madhavi Madan, the visionary behind this resort, is a dynamic individual who has personally curated every detail visitors experience here. From the paintings and artifacts to the designer furniture, each element reflects her passion and impeccable taste, seamlessly harmonising with the natural surroundings.

A PLACE TO RECONNECT AND RECHARGE

Soul Stories stands out for more than its natural beauty; it offers an opportunity



ROVING THROUGH DUBAI'S ARTFUL HEART

As I arrived at *Rove City Walk Dubai*, anticipation coursed through me. Touted as a modern gem in this cultural capital, I was eager to see if it would live up to the remarkable reviews, says **AKANKSHA DEAN**



As I stepped into the vibrant realm of *Rove City Walk*, the first thing that struck me was the energy of the lobby. It wasn't just a reception area; it was a hub of creativity and warmth. I was immediately enveloped by a design philosophy that blended harmoniously with its lush surroundings. Channelling the spirit of the local environment, the hotel intertwines the tales of Dubai's rich culture with modern touches, creating captivating backdrops that demand to be photographed. This isn't just a hotel; it's a canvas where every corner tells a story waiting to be shared on Instagram. This artistic flair was a delightful prelude to the stylish experience awaiting me. **STYLISH COMFORT IN DOWNTOWN DUBAI:** The check-in was seamless, thanks to the friendly and engaging staff who made me feel at home from the moment I arrived. Located in the heart of the city, I felt the pulse of Dubai within my reach. Just a 15-minute journey from Dubai International Airport, the hotel's strategic location makes it ideal for both business travellers and holidaymakers alike. My home for the stay was one of the 560 spacious rooms, each designed with the modern traveller in mind. My room, with its innovative décor and local

artworks, was a cosy retreat. Looking out the window, the view of the majestic Burj Khalifa was awe-inspiring, creating a perfect backdrop for my stay. I loved that 30 percent of these rooms are interconnected, a thoughtful feature for families or groups. With complimentary Wi-Fi, plush designer mattresses, and sofa beds perfect for unwinding after a day of exploration, it felt like the ideal sanctuary. The modern bathrooms, complete with power rain showers, were the cherry on top, offering a refreshing escape. The sense of ease continued beyond the room. The 24-hour gym kept me motivated, while the inviting pool and sun deck offered a tranquil refuge for relaxation. A self-service laundromat and a boutique convenience store added to the sense of independent living, making it feel like I could call this place my own. The hotel also features co-working spaces that are both functional and inspiring for creativity, making it an excellent choice for business gatherings and social celebrations. The Daily, an all-day neighbourhood hangout, was the perfect spot to unwind. Whether dining in or grabbing something for later, I was never disappointed. Quality coffee paired with globally-



inspired, nutritious dishes kept me fuelled for my adventures, and the vibe was just right for casual conversations with fellow travellers. **DOWNTOWN'S VIBRANT CHARM:** One of the best aspects of staying at *Rove City Walk* is its prime location, coupled with the convenience of a complimentary shuttle service to various attractions. A leisurely stroll led me to the iconic Coca-Cola Arena at City Walk, and it was just as easy to dip my toes in the sparkling waters of Jumeirah Beach. I hopped on the hotel bus, which whisked me away to the sprawling Dubai Mall. As I arrived at one of the world's largest shopping destinations, the sheer

scale and opulence of the mall took my breath away. I strolled past luxury boutiques, indulged in some retail therapy, and marvelled at the massive aquarium teeming with vibrant marine life. While at the Dubai Mall, I also experienced the mesmerising Dubai Fountain show. The synchrony of water, light and music created an unforgettable spectacle, an enchanting performance that lingered in my mind long after the final splash. Another day, I visited City Walk, brimming with chic boutiques and eye-catching street art. I lost myself in the colours of the art installations and enjoyed a leisurely meal at one of the trendy cafés. Nearby, the Green Planet, an extraordinary indoor rainforest, invited exploration among its lush greenery and exotic wildlife. It was a refreshing change of pace, showcasing the diversity of ecosystems right in the heart of the city. When evening approached, I made my way to the Dubai Opera House for an enriching cultural experience. The performances held there were world-class, each one a captivating expression of artistry and creativity. **LAST MOMENTS OF BLISS:** After several exhilarating days of exploration, it was time to wrap up my Dubai adventure. Late check-out at 2 PM

was a blessing, allowing me to linger longer in this oasis before heading out. However, I extended my experience with a last-minute visit to the Plaza Premium Lounge at the airport, a tranquil haven before my departure. As I settled into the lounge's plush seating, the welcoming ambience provided the perfect setting to reflect on my unforgettable trip. I treated myself to gourmet snacks and beverages, relishing the peaceful environment. The lounge's modern décor and views of the airport buzz were a gentle reminder of the journeys that lay ahead. As I bid farewell to Dubai, I took one last glance at the cityscape. In my time at *Rove City Walk*, I discovered more than just a temporary home; I found a vibrant community hub that embodies the essence of Dubai while delivering comfort and convenience. Every moment spent here was a reminder of why I love exploring the world, one hotel at a time. — Akanksha Dean is an independent food & travel writer, a chef and a catalyst and is the first Indian to have trained at Osteria Francescana, in Modena, Italy, rated as the world's best restaurant in the World's 50 Best Restaurants, in 2016 and 2018 and currently in the Best of The Best Category

Australian Open: Keys upsets Sabalenka in women's final for first Grand Slam title

PTI ■ MELBOURNE

Madison Keys of the United States upset two-time defending champion Aryna Sabalenka 6-3, 2-6, 7-5 in the Australian Open final on Saturday night to collect her first Grand Slam title at age 29. By adding this win over the No. 1-ranked Sabalenka to an elimination of No. 2 Iga Swiatek in the semifinals on Thursday — saving a match point along the way — Keys is the first woman since Serena Williams in 2005 to defeat both of the WTA's top two players at Melbourne Park. Keys, ranked 14th and seeded 19th, was playing in her second major final after being the runner-up at the 2017 U.S. Open. She prevented Sabalenka from earning what would have been her third women's trophy in a row at the Australian Open — something last accomplished by Martina Hingis from 1997-99 — and her fourth major title overall. When it ended, Keys covered her

face with her hands, then raised her arms. Soon, she was hugging her husband, Bjorn Fratangelo — who has been her coach since 2023 — and other members of her team, before sitting on her sideline bench and laughing. Sabalenka chuckled her racket afterward, then covered her head with a white towel. The men's final is Sunday, with defending champion Jannik Sinner against Alexander Zverev. Sinner is seeded No. 1, Zverev No. 2. Sinner eliminated American Ben Shelton in the semifinals, while Zverev advanced when 24-time Grand Slam champion Novak Djokovic stopped playing because of an injury. Keys is the oldest woman to become a first-time major champion since Flavia Pennetta was 33 at the 2015 U.S. Open. This was the 46th Slam appearance for Keys, which ranks as the third-most major tournaments before winning a trophy in the Open era, behind only Pennetta's 49 and Marion Bartoli's 47 when she won



Wimbledon in 2013. It was the more accomplished Sabalenka who was shakier at the outset. Keys broke three times in the first set, helped in part by Sabalenka's four double-faults and 13 total unforced errors. Don't for a moment think this was merely an instance of Sabalenka being her own undoing. Keys certainly had a lot to do with the way things were going, too.

She compiled an 11-4 edge in winners in that first set, managing to out-hit the big-hitting Sabalenka repeatedly from the baseline. For a stretch, it seemed as though every shot off the strings of Keys' racket — the one she switched to ahead of this season to protect her oft-injured right shoulder and to make it easier to control her considerable power — was landing precisely where she wanted. Near a corner. On a line. Out of Sabalenka's reach. Also important was the way Keys, whose left thigh was taped for the match, covered every part of the court, racing to get to balls and send them back over the net with intent. On one terrific defensive sequence, she sprinted for a forehand that drew a forehand into the net from Sabalenka, capping a break for a 4-1 lead. Never one to hide her emotions during a match, Sabalenka frequently displayed frustration while trailing on the scoreboard, kicking a ball after netting a volley, dropping her racket after missing an overhead, slapping her leg after an errant forehand. Sabalenka took a trip to the locker room before the second set, and whether that helped clear her head or slowed Keys' momentum — or both — the final's complexion soon changed. Keys' first-serve percentage dipped from 86% in the first set to 59% in the second. Sabalenka raised her winner total to 13 in the second set and began accumulating, and converting, break points. When she sent a backhand down the line to force an error by Keys for a break and a 2-1 lead in the second, Sabalenka shook her left fist and gritted her teeth as she walked to the sideline. When she broke again to go up 4-1, Sabalenka marked the occasion with a long and loud scream while looking in the direction of her team. By the time the last set arrived, the action was tight and tense, without so much as a single break point until its final game, when Keys came through with one last forehand winner.



Gukesh holds Abdusattorov; Praggnanandhaa stays in lead

PTI ■ WIJK AAN ZEE

World champion D Gukesh played out a draw with overnight joint leader Nodirbek Abdusattorov of Uzbekistan, while R Praggnanandhaa signed peace with defending champion Wei Yi of China in the sixth round of the Tata Steel chess tournament here. With only decisive game in the 14-players round-robin tournament at the De Morian on Friday, Abdusattorov and Praggnanandhaa continued to share the lead on 4.5 points out of a possible six and Gukesh is right on the toes of the leaders with four points. Seven rounds are still left in the first major tournament of the year. P Harikrishna, Alexey Sarana of Serbia and Vladimir Fedoseev of Slovenia share the fourth spot on 3.5 points each and are within the striking

distance of the leaders. Gukesh held his ground in a challenging endgame against Abdusattorov, escaping with a draw after 64 moves. The game began with the Italian Opening, leading to an equal middlegame. However, as complications arose, Abdusattorov seized a persistent advantage and handled the position skillfully. In the endgame, Gukesh was forced to concede a pawn, and the situation worsened when Abdusattorov sacrificed his knight for three pawns, putting the Indian under significant pressure. Despite being in a difficult position, Gukesh once again showcased his defensive resilience, capitalising on an inaccuracy by his opponent to salvage a hard-fought draw. Praggnanandhaa tried to make a foray with white pieces against Wei Yi out of a Ruy Lopez opening.

Arshdeep named ICC Men's T20I Cricketer of the Year

PTI ■ DUBAI

Indian left-arm seamer Arshdeep Singh was on Saturday crowned the ICC Men's T20I Cricketer of the Year 2024 for his influential role in the team's World Cup title triumph, which cemented his reputation as one of the leading short format bowlers. The 25-year-old took 36 wickets in 18 matches last year. He was also named in the ICC T20I Team of the Year 2024 earlier in the day alongside Rohit Sharma, Jasprit Bumrah and Hardik Pandya. In the T20 World Cup in the Americas, Arshdeep showcased his mastery in both powerplay and death bowling and ended the tournament as the joint highest wicket-taker alongside Afghanistan's Fazalhaq Farooqi with 17 scalps at an average of 12.64 across eight matches. His standout performance was one of the major factors behind India's campaign culminating in a dramatic seven-run victory over South Africa in the final in Barbados. In the final, he claimed 2/20, dismissing South African captain Aiden Markram early and breaking a threatening



partnership by removing Quinton de Kock during the middle overs. Tasked with bowling the penultimate over, Arshdeep conceded just four runs, setting the stage for Hardik Pandya to seal the win. A Stellar Year Arshdeep's T20I record in 2024 further underscores his dominance — 36 wickets in 18 matches at an average of 15.31 and an economy rate of 7.49. His strike rate of 10.80 was a testament to his wicket-taking prowess, especially given his challenging role in the powerplay and at the death. Only four players in the world took more T20I wickets than Arshdeep in a calendar year — Saudi Arabia's Usman Najeeb (38), Sri Lanka's Wanindu

Hasaranga (38), UAE's Junaid Siddique (40) and Hong Kong's Ehsan Khan (46) — with all four playing more matches. Of those bowlers, only Hasaranga featured for a full-member nation. His best figures of the year, 4/9, came against the USA during the World Cup group stage, a performance emblematic of his brilliance on varied surfaces. With 97 scalps, Arshdeep is now the highest wicket-taker in the format for India. Since his international debut in 2022, Arshdeep has steadily risen as one of India's most reliable pacers. Arshdeep had a number of impressive displays in the year, not least when he ripped through the USA in New York during the T20 World Cup group stage, bagging remarkable returns of 4/9 in his four overs. But Arshdeep's most significant performance of the year came on the biggest stage of all, as he played a huge part in helping India successfully defend their total of 176 in the final in Barbados. Excellent with the new ball up top, Arshdeep struck in the powerplay to have the dangerous South African skipper Markram caught behind in just the third over. And when India were in need of a wicket in the middle overs it was Arshdeep that provided the breakthrough, dismissing a set Quinton de Kock when the Proteas looked to be in control of the chase. India's collective effort at the death was astonishing as South Africa pulled up seven runs short of their target, and Arshdeep played a huge role in that, returning to the attack to bowl the penultimate over with South Africa requiring 20 from 12 deliveries. Arshdeep delivered a near-perfect death over under the greatest pressure, conceding just four runs to leave Pandya with 16 runs to defend in the final over, a job that he spectacularly did.

Sinner plays Zverev in the men's final

PTI ■ MELBOURNE

It's not often that a man is able to follow up his first Grand Slam title by repeating as the champion at the same tournament a year later, which is what Jannik Sinner will be trying to do Sunday when he faces Alexander Zverev in the Australian Open final. The last time it happened was nearly 20 years ago: Rafael Nadal accomplished that sort of repeat at the 2005 and 2006 French Opens. He turned out OK. For the No. 1-ranked Sinner, the past year also included the doping case that is still unresolved. He tested positive for a trace amount of an anabolic steroid twice in March, which didn't become public until his exoneration was announced shortly before the start of play at the U.S. Open — which he won. There is a hearing in the World Anti-Doping Agency's appeal scheduled in April. "He finds playing tennis matches to be his safe place. That's where he can go and do his thing and feel like this is what he knows, this is what he understands, what is what he's good at. It become a home for him to step on to the court and play tennis," said one of Sinner's two coaches, Darren Cahill, who will leave the team after this season. "There's been a lot of pressure around him for the last nine months now, since April last year. He deals with it as well as anybody that I've ever seen deal with pressure," Cahill said.

Rohit named captain of ICC's T20 International Team of the Year 2024

PTI ■ DUBAI

Rohit Sharma was on Saturday named captain of the ICC's T20 International Team of the Year 2024, which was predominantly Indian in its composition thanks to the side's memorable World Cup triumph in the format. The other Indian members of the all-star XI were pace spearhead Jasprit Bumrah, who also featured in the ICC's Test Team of the Year, all-rounder Hardik Pandya and left-arm seamer Arshdeep Singh.

both as a leader and a batter. The seasoned opener amassed 378 runs in 11 matches at an impressive average of 42.00 and a strike rate of over 160. Rohit played a pivotal role in India's triumphant T20 World Cup campaign in the USA and West Indies, with three half-centuries, including a sensational 92 against Australia in the Super Eight stage. "His astute leadership was instrumental in guiding a young Indian side through high-pressure situations, cementing his legacy as one of

figures of 3/20 in the final underlined his ability to deliver under pressure. Bumrah has exemplified perfection in Indian cricket this past season across formats and T20 was no different. He led India's bowling attack and claimed

15 wickets in eight matches at an astonishing average of 8.26, making him a nightmare for opposition batters. His lethal yorkers and impeccable control at the death overs played a pivotal role in India's success, and his performances earned him a

nomination for the Sir Garfield Sobers Trophy as ICC Men's Cricketer of the Year. The winner of that honour will be unveiled in the next three days. Young left-arm pacer Arshdeep Singh emerged as India's most

prolific wicket-taker in 2024, scalping 36 wickets in 18 matches at an average of 13.50. Arshdeep's ability to swing the ball early and deliver pinpoint yorkers in the death overs made him indispensable to the Indian squad.



The standout performers from other nations to make the line-up were Australian marauder Travis Head, England's Phil Salt, Pakistan's Babar Azam, West Indies' Nicholas Pooran, Zimbabwe's Sikandar Raza, Afghanistan's Rashid Khan, and Sri Lanka's Wanindu Hasaranga. Rohit the Test captain and Test batter has been under considerable pressure in the past few months owing to a series of debacles for the team as well as him personally. But the 37-year-old's credentials in the shorter formats remain strong. In T20 Internationals, Rohit had an unforgettable 2024,

India's greatest T20I captains," the ICC stated in a tribute to the 37-year-old, who was recently forced to show up in domestic red-ball games to reignite his Test career. Likewise, Pandya reaffirmed his stature as one of the world's finest all-rounders, playing a crucial role in India's successful campaign. In 17 matches, he scored 352 runs and claimed 16 wickets, finishing as the top-ranked ICC men's T20I all-rounder. His standout performance came in the T20 World Cup final against South Africa, where he defended 16 runs in the last over, securing India's title victory. His best bowling

HINDALCO
Salutes the Unity in Diversity of India

HAPPY REPUBLIC DAY

www.hindalco.com

RENUPOWER
SYMBOLISES

- Leadership in Power Generation
- Environment friendly operation of the Plant
- Highly focused on Safety of Plant & Personnel
- Job Satisfaction to all Employees
- Resources Conservation
- Taking proper care and providing support to the nearby community
- Accredited with ISO-9001, ISO-14001, ISO-45001, ISO-27001, ISO-50001.

ADITYA BIRLA
HINDALCO

Hindalco Industries Limited Renuagar Power Division, P.O. Renuagar-231218, District: Sonbhadra (U.P.), India Tel : +91 5446- 277161, E: hindalco@adityabirla.com I W: www.hindalco.com
Registered Office: Ahura Centre, 1st Floor, B-Wing, Mahakali Caves Road, Andheri (East) Mumbai : 400 093, India
Tel : +91 22 66917000 I Fax : +91 22 6691 7001
Corporate ID No. L27020MH1958PLCO11238