

**H**SBBC India and Indian Hotels Company Ltd. have come together to launch the HSBC Taj Credit Card, one of India's first premium co-branded hospitality credit cards, crafted for luxury enthusiasts, that aims to deliver bespoke experiences and services for discerning customers.

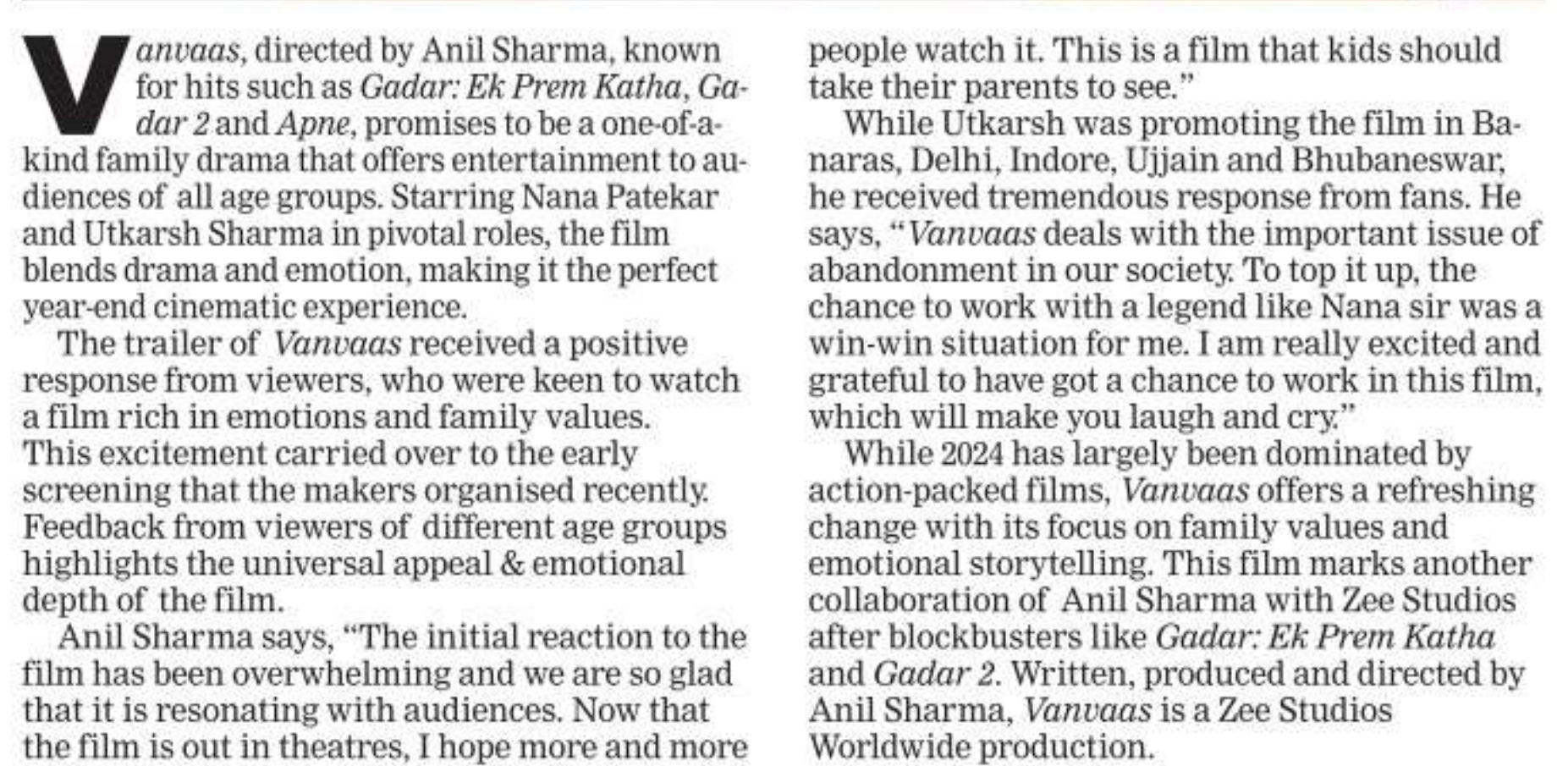
The exclusive co-branded premium metal credit card was unveiled by Hitendra Dave, CEO, HSBC India and Puneet Chhatwal, MD and CEO, The Indian Hotels Company Limited in the presence of Gauri Khan,

**This exclusive credit card crafted for luxury enthusiasts provides access to unparalleled hospitality benefits and exclusive privileges** – Sandeep Batra

Ananya Panday, VVS Laxman, Sandeep Batra, Head, Wealth and Personal Banking, HSBC India, and Sandeep Ghosh, Group Country Manager, India and South Asia, Visa.

Launched in collaboration with Visa, the metal co-branded credit card is specially curated for those who appreciate finer life experiences and services and are seeking unparalleled luxury and exclusive travel experiences. Also present at the launch were celebrities, industrialists and CXOs. Sitarist Rishab Rikhiram Sharma mesmerised the gathering with his soulful performance, which included his popular track Chanakya.

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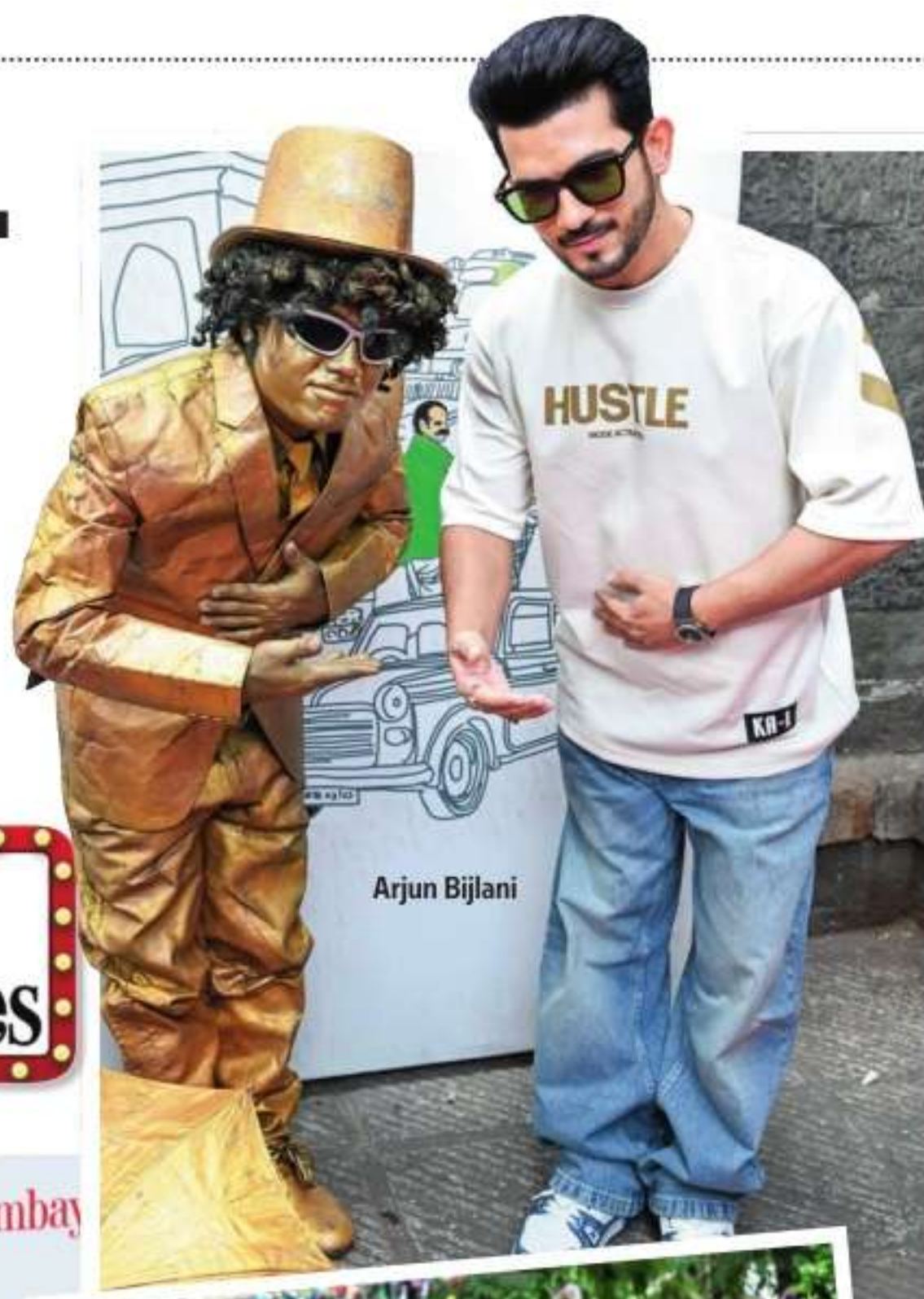
Pics: Prathamesh Bandekar, Tejas Kudtarkar & Prashant Jadhav



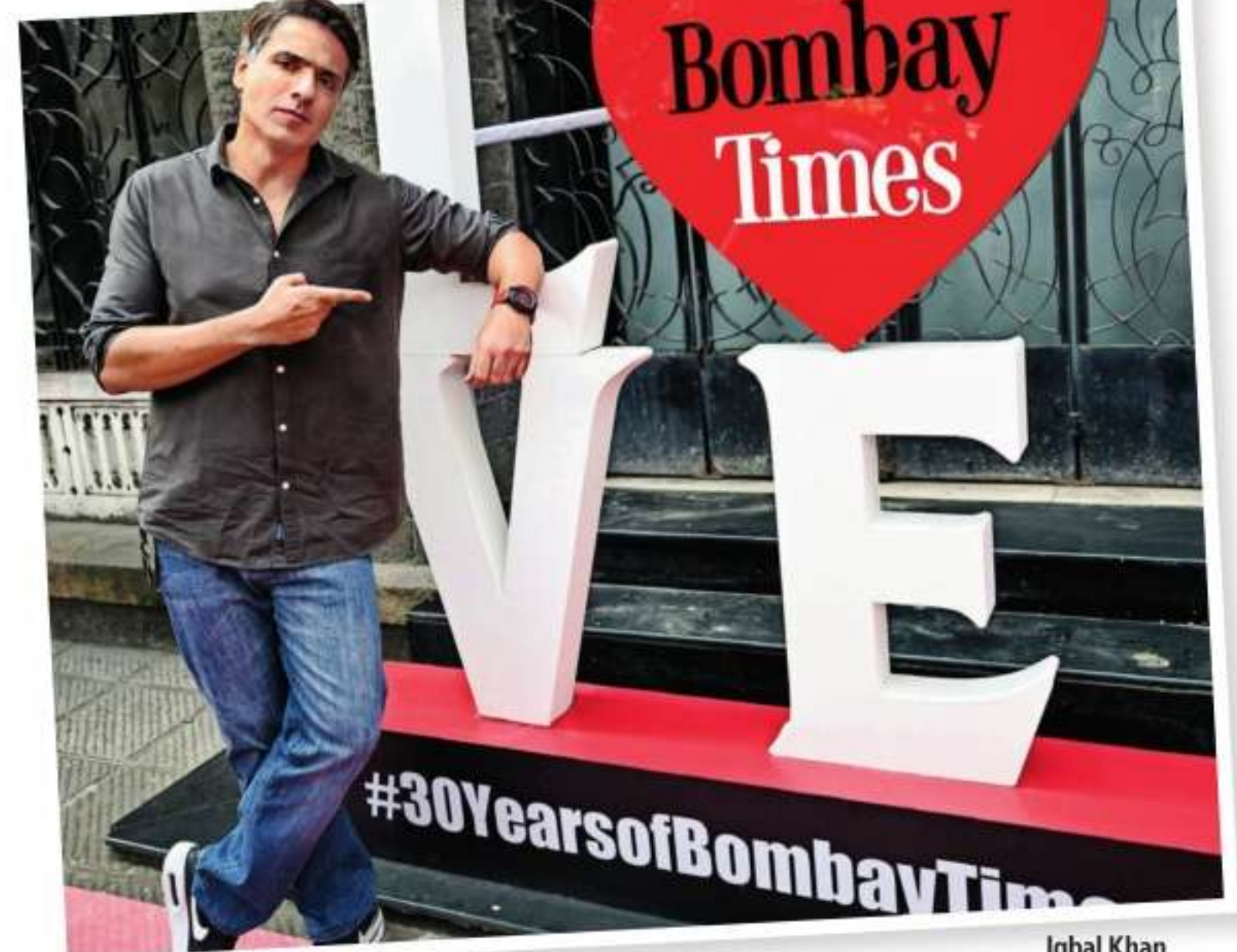
Gautami and Ram Kapoor

# A GRAND CARNIVAL TO CELEBRATE BOMBAY TIMES' 30-YEAR JOURNEY

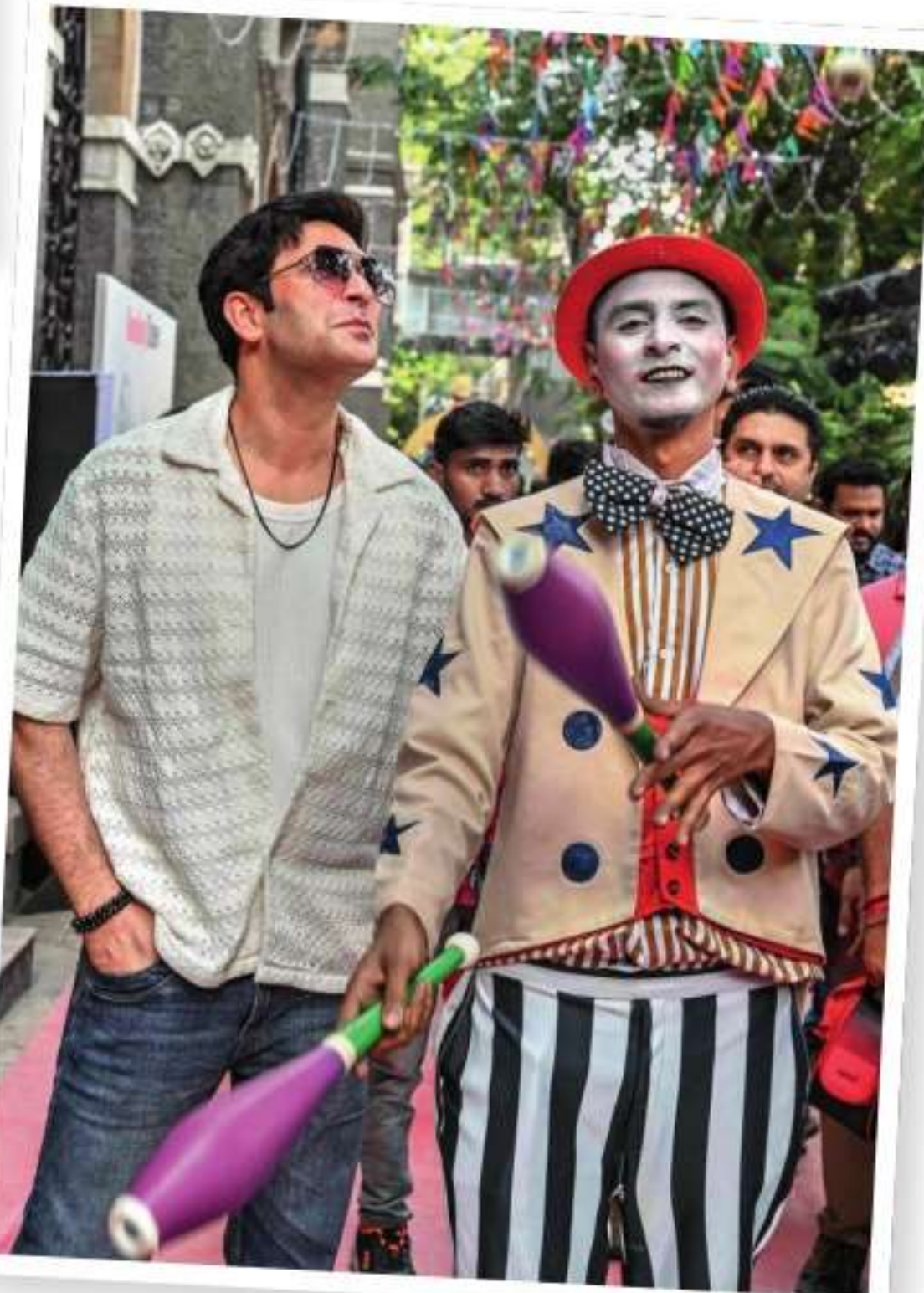
The Bombay Times 30th anniversary celebrations kicked off yesterday in style, with an exciting carnival showcasing interesting installations that celebrate the glory of the publication. The carnival also reflects the essence of Bombay Times, a daily which has been read and loved by Mumbaikars for three decades. A red carpet has been rolled out on the street where the carnival is taking place, and thousands of people have been soaking in the spirit of the celebrations. A host of stars participated in the revelry, becoming a part of this grand moment in the history of Bombay Times.



Arjun Bijlani



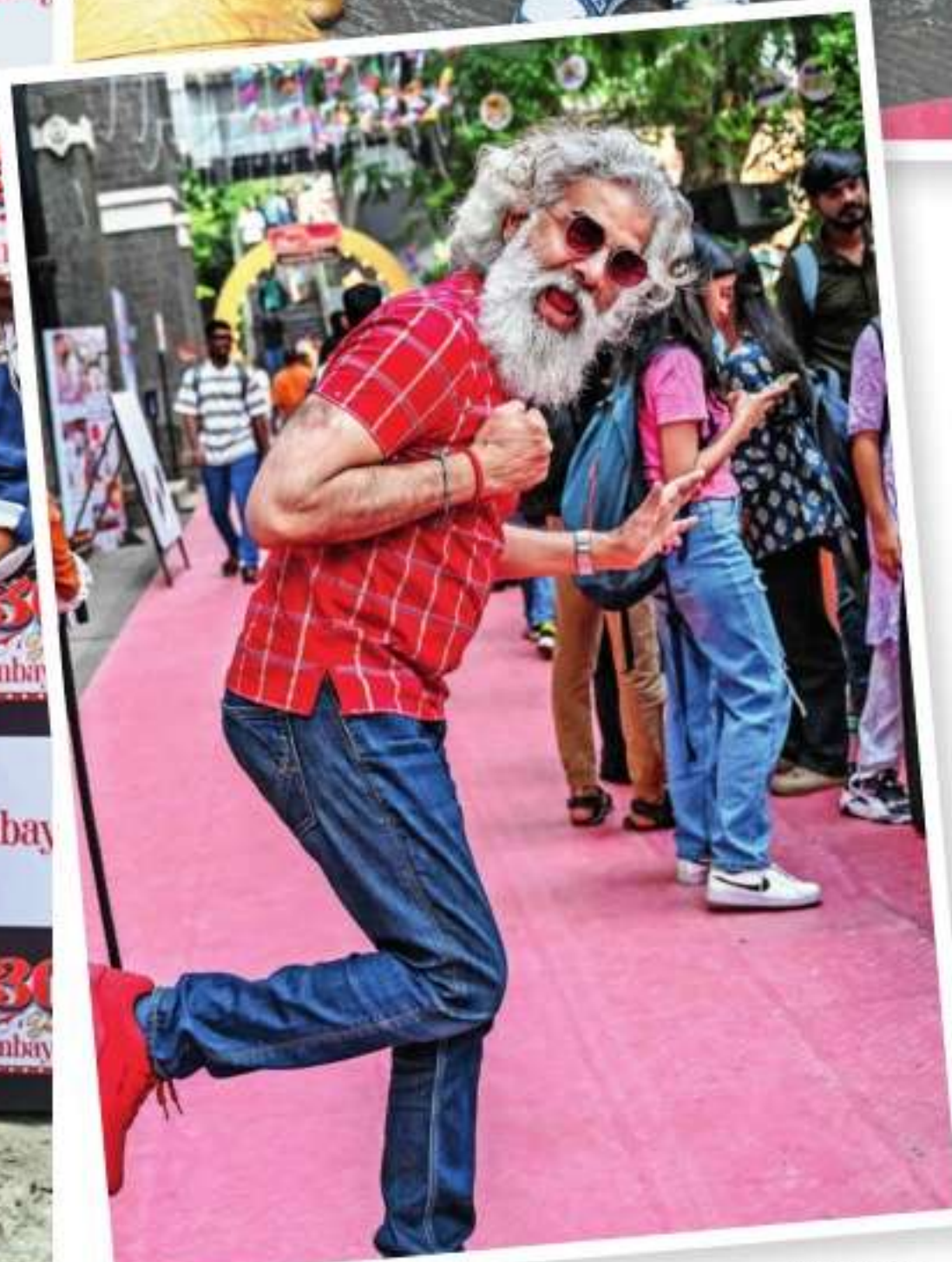
Iqbal Khan



Nandish Singh Sandhu



Sheeba



JD Majethia

## LEISURE

### SUDOKU CHALLENGE

Level: Medium

1	3	2	5					
9				7				
						9	5	
	8			5	7			
6			1				3	
	2	6				8		
8	1							1
				9				
				3	6	2	4	

#### HOW TO PLAY

Fill in the grid so that every horizontal row, every vertical column, and every 3x3 box contains the digits 1-9, without repeating the numbers in the same row, column or box. You can't change the digits already given in the grid. Every puzzle has one solution.

### TIMES HITORI

#### HOW TO PLAY

- A number may appear just once in each row or column. Eliminate repeat numbers by darkening cells. (see example)
- Darkened cells must never be adjacent in a row or column.
- Unmarked cells must create a single continuous area, undivided by darkened cells.
- Every time you darken a cell, you can automatically circle its vertical and horizontal neighbours, which means they cannot be eliminated.
- Any cell "sandwiched" between neighbours of the same value can be circled. (e.g. 646)
- A "triple" is a special case of sandwich. Circle the centre cells, and darken the ends. (e.g. 666)

1	2	2	8	5	1	2	7
1	4	2	3	5	8	9	6
1	1	2	4	1	2	9	3
4	9	3	8	7	4	5	7
3	2	8	1	4	5	7	2
1	8	1	8	2	1	4	8
8	7	8	2	5	9	3	5
3	3	7	9	6	4	3	8

8	5	5	7	3	5	4	6
4	5	1	6	7	6	5	2
2	5	7	1	5	4	6	8
2	7	5	6	1	7	2	7
1	6	6	4	3	5	7	
7	8	4	6	2	3	3	7
8	4	5	2	3	5	7	1

Example

### LOOP THE LOOP

#### RULES

- Connect adjacent dots with vertical or horizontal lines, creating a single loop (Fig A).
- Crossovers or branches are not allowed (As shown by dotted lines in Fig B).
- Numbers in the puzzle indicate the number of lines that should surround it, while empty cells may be surrounded by any number of lines.
- You can't draw lines around zeroes.
- Each puzzle has just one unique solution.

#### HOW TO BEGIN:

Example (Fig A) - Begin with the zero next to 3. Since no lines can be drawn around zero, mark crosses around it, as shown. Now there is a cross in one space around 3. So we know the three lines of 3 can only be drawn in the remaining three spaces. Next, these lines can only be extended in one direction each. Continue, using the same logic.

Hints: Keep eliminating possibilities by marking crosses in spaces between dots where a line isn't possible, i.e., if you have already completed required lines or where a line extension may create a branch or cause a deadend (Fig B).

### THE DAILY CROSSWORD

By Rich Norris 20/12/2024

#### ACROSS

- Mishandle, as a grounder
- Accelerated sci. class
- Eats
- Colorful deepwater fish
- Hospital prep area
- Aviation milestone
- Hook
- Sentimentality
- IMO relative
- Orangutan, e.g.
- Chilly product prefix
- Line
- Basic decision-maker
- Weak poker hand
- Actress Zadora
- Sometime in the past
- Inconceivable
- Fantasy franchise letters
- Amanda Gorman's "An We Owe"
- dish
- Prefix with -genarian
- Sinker
- Plant sci.
- "A spider!"
- Take by force
- "Sadly, yes"
- Hook, line, and sinker
- New Rochelle campus
- Hook, line, and sinker, e.g.
- One on a seal
- "Yep, already spotted that"
- Hard to navigate
- John or Paul, but not Ringo or George

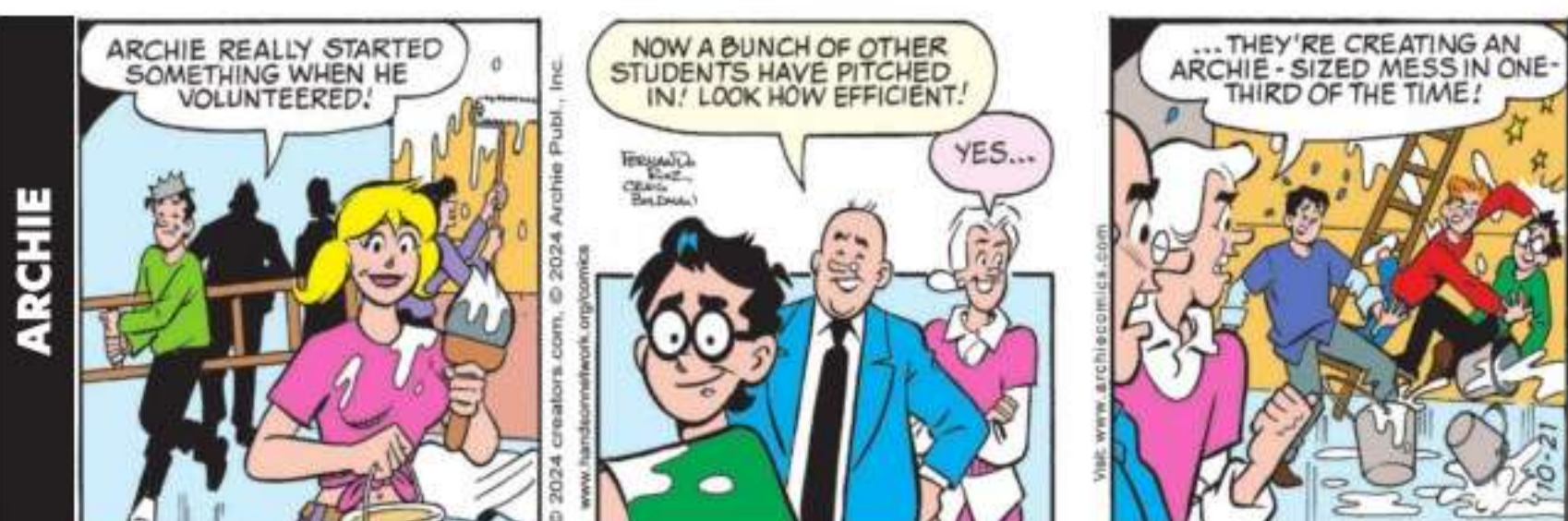
#### DOWN

- Danceable songs
- Gp. whose most popular member is Nigeria
- Citizenship recitation
- Ship in a late 19th century tragedy
- Simple program
- Lead-in to fall
- Julie who played Rita on "Dexter"
- Lithium- battery
- Reveal, in verse
- 10 tried to influence with
- Order (around)
- Director Kazan
- Good-looking?
- "Snow Angel" singer
- Renee
- Key type
- Barbecue rod
- Slide on a seat
- Vrbo listing
- The Owls of the NCAA
- Jumping chollas, e.g.
- Victor Vasarely's movement
- Frenzi
- Holocene, for one
- Tucci's "Road to Perdition" role
- Deck with kings and queens
- Equinox mo.
- "You have a dictionary, don't you?"
- Snap
- "Pygmalion" playwright, for short
- 45 Drinks with scones
- "Captain America: The First Avenger" backdrop, briefly
- 49 Spanish flowers
- 50 Italian volcano that's a UNESCO World Heritage Site
- Turquoise hue
- Low state
- Shape of some chicken nuggets, briefly
- First course, often
- Generous offer
- Young
- Long or short measure

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### SPELLATHON

Today's Ratings:  
08-average | 09-good | 11-outstanding

D	R	E
D	R	E
E	R	O

How many words of four or more letters can you make from the letters shown in today's puzzle? In making a word, a letter can be used as many times as it appears in the puzzle. Each word must contain the central letter. There should be at least one seven letter word. Plurals, foreign words and proper names are not allowed. British English Dictionary is used as reference.



### SCRAMBLE

Rearrange the letters in the four word jumbles, one letter to each square/circle, to make four ordinary words

DGAEE  
PPIIT  
GITWGY  
EELTVW

#### HOW TO PLAY

Now arrange the letters in the circles to form the answer to the riddle or to fill in the missing word as indicated

Many people despise wealth, but few know how to... - Francois de La Rochefoucauld (4,2,4)

### FINOLEX FORTUNE

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See what the stars have in store for you - according to your moon sign.

**ARIES:** Don't be disappointed if you aren't satisfied immediately. You have additional work to do to let go of your resentments, fears and insecurities. Set long-term goals and find satisfaction in your progress. You must practice patience on every level.

**TAURUS:** You may want to spend more time solo. You may make a confrontation of some kind between you and your partner inevitable. Don't be concerned with this change in yourself.

**GEMINI:** You may face difficulties at work, and you will have a tendency to be lethargic. Today you may be feeling a bit low emotionally. It is time to embrace the new and more sincere way of relating.

**CANCER:** This is a day to buckle down and take care of business. This day is forcing you to look at something that you have not wanted to acknowledge. You need to watch you are not trying to hang on to the past as far as a certain relationship is concerned.

**LEO:** Focus on details, hard work, and doing a good job. You spend too much time at work on a day. You suffer the pangs of passion, but by tomorrow you will be back to normal again.

**VIRGO:** If things have reached a critical point between you recently, then you will need to do something about this. You would rather run a million miles than have to deal with a situation today.

**LIBRA:** You may be almost paralysed when it comes to making up your mind about anything to do with your professional life. What a wonderful way to experience new things.

**SCORPIO:** You might receive a good fortune as an unexpected bonus or monetary winnings. There is every chance of shifting your partnership up to a new and more intimate level. The door is open for you to come to terms with yourself about who you are and what you want.

**SAGITTARIUS:** Today will find you calm and assured when all is chaos. You have a plan, a system and a way out. Everyone else will be so eager for you to bail them out that it could be a while before they get mad and come after you. Others will note your commitment. Don't ignore your obligations today. The important thing is for you to stay in the present moment.

**CAPRICORN:** You and you've been hesitant to reveal your concern because you're afraid of hurting their feelings. You have been feeling a touch obsessed by someone who seems to defy your natural charm and beauty. If you aren't careful you might end up working at cross-purposes to your own heart.

**AQUARIUS:** Past mistakes can create a brief panic. Steer clear of old rivals during the next few days. The difficulty is probably associated with an old pattern of behaviour that is limiting your emotional expression. You'll need to face reality with some items. You continue to get irritated and agitated.

**PISCES:** It isn't that you are avoiding an issue; it's just that your priorities are different than everyone else's. Your sombre demeanour can spur you on to work harder and make the changes necessary for your happiness. Minimise your own desires, you will be able to take advantage of the moment.

### SOLUTIONS TO GAMES/PUZZLES

#### TIMES SUDOKU

4	2	9	3	8	1	7	6	5
1	5	8	9	6	7	4	3	2
7	6	2	9	4	8	1	5	3
6	8	5	4	3	9	1	2	7
8	4	7	1	9	2	8	6	9
9	7	1	9	2	8	7	6	4
9	6	3	1	9	2	8	7	4
4	1	2	7	8	4	1	7	6
8	7	6	9	4	1	2	3	5

#### LOOP THE LOOP

3	2	2	2	3	3
3	2	2	2	2	3
2	2	1	3	2	2
2	2	2	3	2	2
1	2	1	2	0	2
3	3	3	3	3	3

#### TIMES HITORI

8	9	6	4	7	8
5	6	2	7	1	8
2	7	1	5	4	8
2	7	1	5	4	8
6	2	7	1	5	4
5	6	2	7	1	8
9	6	8	5	3	2
4	1	2	3	5	7
7	1	2	3	5	7

#### SCRAMBLE

Words: Adage, pipit, twiggy, twelve

Answer: Many people despise wealth, but few know how to give it away. - Francois de La Rochefoucauld



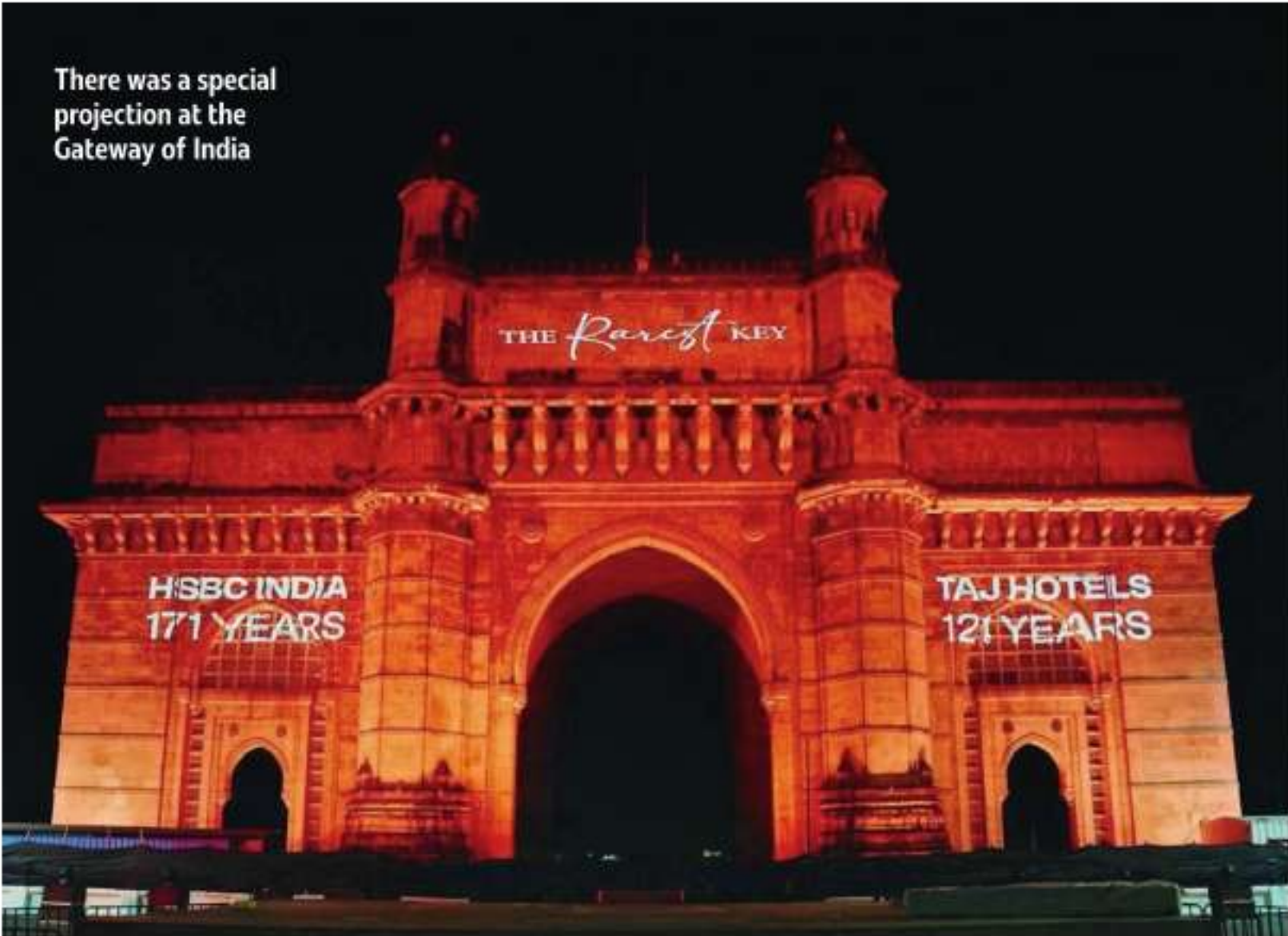
# Mumbai witnesses a night of glamour and all things luxury



Hitendra Dave  
and Puneet  
Chhatwal



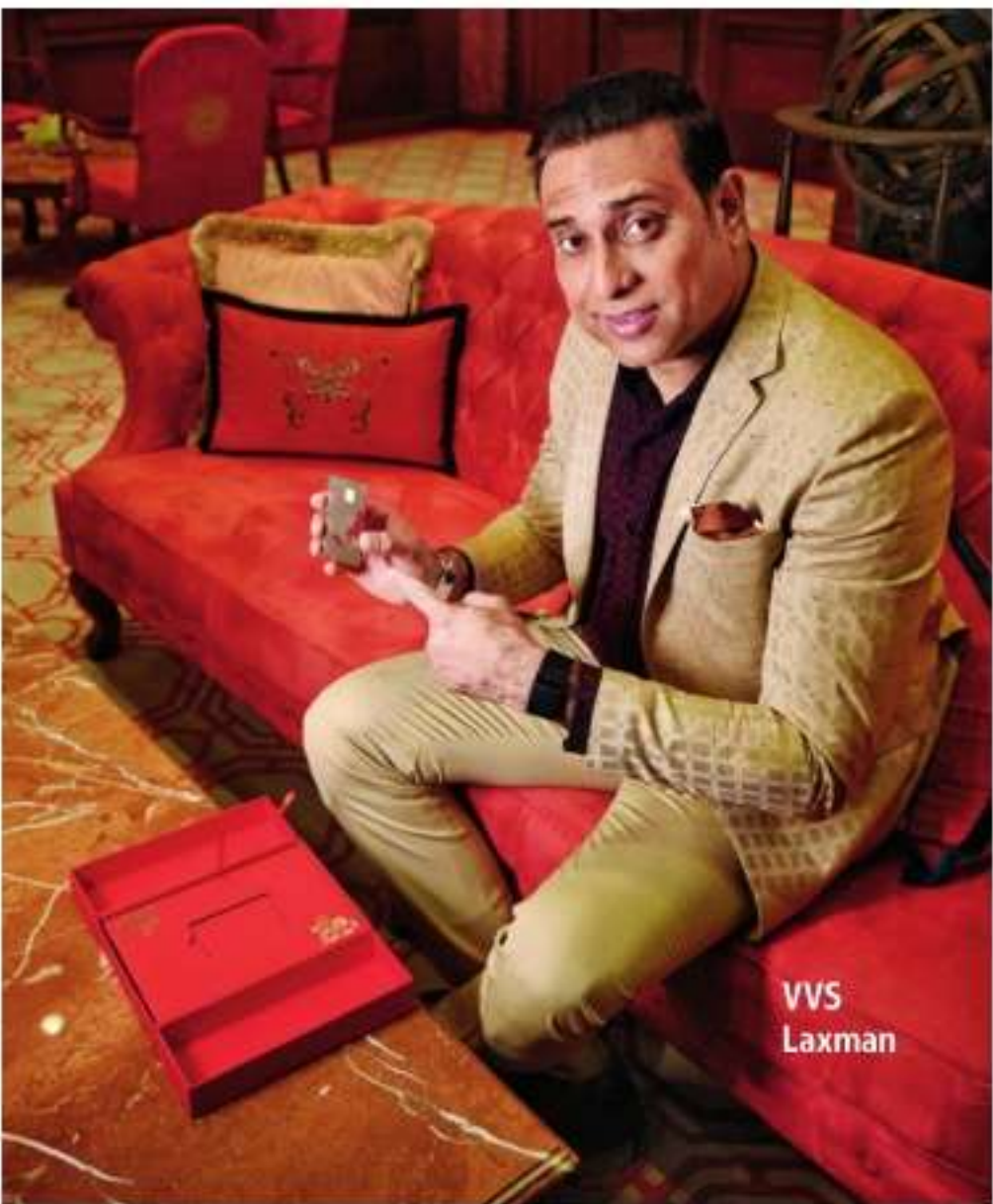
Sandeep  
Batra



There was a special  
projection at the  
Gateway of India



Gauri  
Khan



VVS  
Laxman

**W**ith Gauri Khan, VVS Laxman and Ananya Panday in attendance at the launch of HSBC Taj Credit Card at The Chambers, The Taj Palace Hotel in Mumbai, it was a night of opulence, glamour and all things luxury. Gauri said, "This is a one-of-a kind partnership — it is unique. Taj has beautiful dining experiences, lounges and more. I'd love to get my hands on this card. My family and I are very close to the hospitality brand."

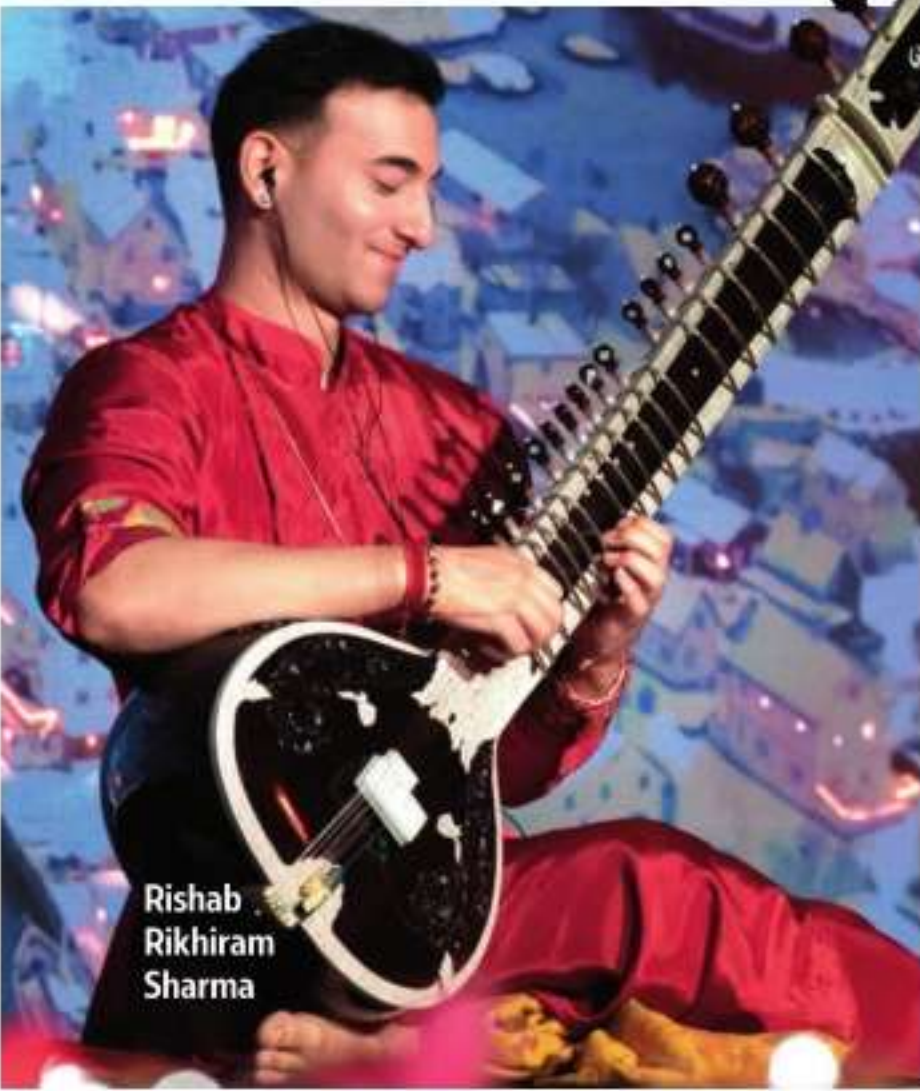
VVS Laxman added, "HSBC India and Taj have hit it out of the park. As a cricketer, I know the importance of partnership. Trust and respect are the strength of collaboration. 171 years of HSBC India and 121 years of Taj signify that they are leaders in their respective fields. The card is really classy."

For Ananya Panday, it was reliving her childhood memories. "So many of my memories are associated with this hospitality brand. I look for luxury and comfort, which both HSBC India and Taj bring in abundance," she said.

Commenting on the card launch, Sandeep Batra, Head, Wealth and



Ananya  
Panday



Rishab  
Rikhiram  
Sharma

**I look for luxury and comfort, which both these brands bring in abundance**

— Ananya Panday

**This is a one-of-a kind partnership — it is unique. I'd love to get my hands on this card**

— Gauri Khan

Personal Banking, HSBC India, said, "As India's wealth sector grows exponentially, there's a palpable sense of optimism and an undeniable zest for opulence amongst the country's elite. This buoyant outlook on the Indian economy is steering them towards a life of luxurious and high-end experiences. The HSBC Taj Credit Card, in partnership with Visa, is our tribute to the ambitions of discerning Indians, providing access to unparalleled hospitality benefits and exclusive privileges that align with their refined preferences."

Some of the benefits of this credit card include a voucher for one night for two with breakfast at a Taj Palace Hotel such as Taj Falaknuma Palace, Taj Rambagh Palace and more. Also, get two nights at any 5-star property of the brand or other IHCL hotel when you activate your card. You also get access to The Chambers including tea/coffee, Club Lounges with high-tea, invitation for exclusive Rendezvous events and more.

To know more, visit [www.hsbc.co.in/hsbc tajcreditcard](http://www.hsbc.co.in/hsbc tajcreditcard)

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Pics: Tathagata Ghosh; model: Ankita Singh; makeup and hair: Rohini Aich; styling: Ayan Hore; outfit and jewellery: Sujata Mukherjee

# Faux fur, boots and pashminas: Master the art of winter layering



## Fiery & fab

**Layering to perfection:** Red Benarasis are timeless favourites. Pair one with a Jamawar pashmina to look stylish

**Accessorise it right:** Gather the pashmina with a bangle and brooch for a chic look. Wear a choker and flowers in your hair for a glam touch



Ruman Ganguly

**W**inter is here, and so are wedding invitations and year-end parties. Ditch frumpy sweaters for faux fur, drape yourself in pashmina, or strut in boots to ooze confidence. We tell you how to stay warm and slay like a true diva at the same time.

## Green is in

**Layering to perfection:** Team up a chequered brown blazer with a silk, emerald green salwar kameez to balance comfort and style

**Accessorise it right:** Bold, chunky earrings and suede boots can add a new dimension to the soiree look



**I can't think of a glam winter look without my woollens. This year, being blingy is my style statement, be it with my jewellery, jacket or makeup**

— Ankita Singh, model



## Royal radiance

**Layering to perfection:** A cropped fur jacket with a lehenga choli can be a showstopper at any winter wedding. Opt for bright colours like emerald green, purple, or burgundy, and save the muted tones for summer

**Accessorise it right:** Choose layered neckpieces to keep the focus on your neckline. Complete the look with boots

**Styling tips:**

- Swap a shawl for a blazer or pair a short jacket with your salwar suit for a stylish, warm layered look
- Pair a pashmina shawl with a silk sari; accessorise with bold jewellery
- Trench coats and wool blazers add elegance to saris—perfect for a winter brunch, with minimal pearl jewellery such an outfit can look classy
- Polo-neck tees with saris keep you warm while looking sharp
- Fleece, wool, and polyester blends are perfect for winter
- Bomber jackets, pullovers, and blazers are winter wardrobe essentials

— Inputs by Ayan Hore, stylist



## ENTERTAINMENT

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• PS Balamurugan & Group	• S. Sowmya (Vocal)
• Sriram Parasuram (Lec-Dem)	• Dr. Chithira Madhavan (Lec-Dem)
• Anahita-Apoorva (Vocal Duo)	3:00 pm - 8:00 pm
3:00 pm - 8:00 pm	• U Rajesh (Mandolin)
• Girijashankar Sundaresan (Vocal)	• Sandeep Narayan (Vocal)
• Ramana Balachandran (Veena)	• Ganesh-Kumares (Violin Duo)
• Sudha Ragunathan (Vocal)	

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Cast: Lillete Dubey, Suchitra Pillai, Ananth Mahadevan & Joy Sengupta

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Cast: Lillete Dubey, Yateen Karyekar, Jayati Bhatia, Rishi Khurana, Gillian Pinto

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## Word weary? Let's bury these Buzzwords in 2024

**T**he Oxford Word of the Year 2024 is 'brain rot'—that delightful side-effect of doom scrolling your way into oblivion. Meanwhile, Merriam-Webster went with 'polarization' (a word splitting opinions, ironically), and Collins chose 'brat' (we're looking at you, reels tantrums).

But enough about them. Here's our list of words and phrases that need to meet their end. Let's call it a linguistic cleanse:

**ELEVATE** Ah, the magic word that promises to turn your morning chai into a transformative experience. From skincare to staycations, everything's being 'elevated'—and frankly, it's giving us altitude sickness. Some experiences are fine just the way they are, thanks.

**HIDDEN GEM** Spoiler alert: it's not hidden if it's

on every foodie YouTube channel. That Zomato-certified eatery with its legendary 50-year-old biryani recipe? It was 'discovered' long before hashtags existed. The real hidden gems are your mom's homemade pickles, and nobody's tagging those.

**HACK** What used to evoke images of old-school journalists now means "shortcut" for everything from folding sarees to peeling garlic. We're not saying life hacks aren't useful—but let's admit, the word's been hacked to death.

**WAIT FOR IT** Every time someone says this, what follows is almost always not worth it. A phrase that wastes time twice—once while waiting, and again when it lands with a thud. Let's skip the suspense in 2025.

**OBSESSED** Remember when obsessions were reserved for Kishore Kumar classics or Tendulkar's centuries? These days, it's tossed around for chai lattes and air fryers. Dial it down.

**ICONIC** Madhubala was iconic. Your weekend outfit is not. Overusing this word has robbed it of its, well, iconic status. Let's reserve it for the truly legendary, not the merely trendy.

**SLAY** You're slaying at work, in your kurta, at the gym, over chai. But if every day is a slay, does it even mean anything anymore? Maybe save it for the moments that genuinely deserve it.

There you have it—words to leave behind as we step into 2025. After all, language evolves, and it's time we did too.

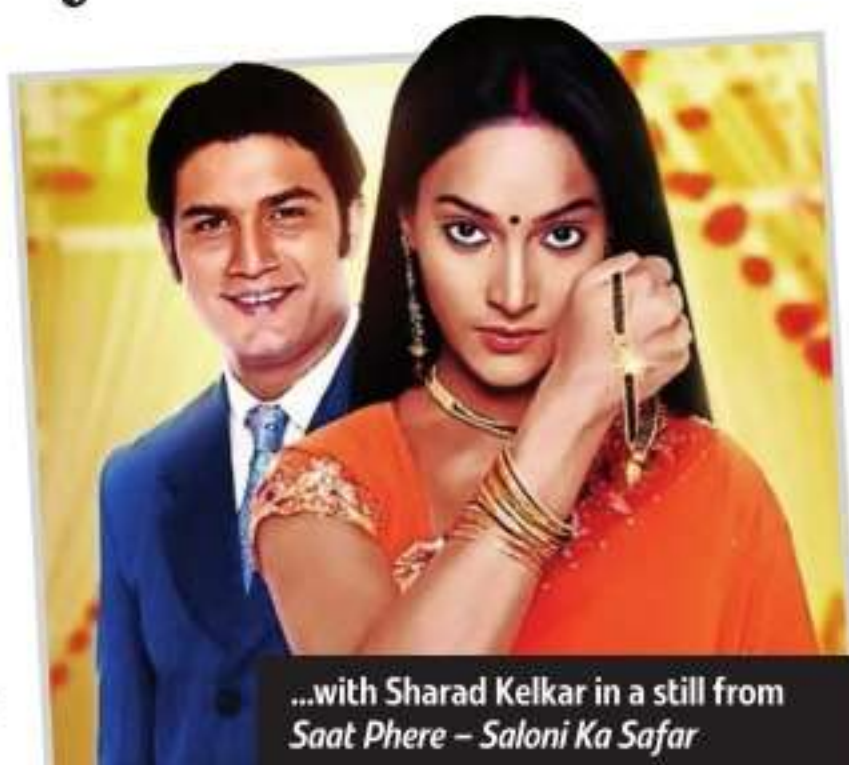
Agree? Disagree? Got a POV idea? Write to us at: pov@timesofindia.com

## After 17 years, I'm surprised that people still know me as Saloni: Rajshree Thakur



**R**ajshree Thakur became a household name with her TV show *Saat Phere - Saloni Ka Safar* almost two decades ago. The actress tells us that she is surprised to see that people even today remember her character. She says, "After *Saat Phere*, I did the historical show *Maharana Pratap*, but people continued to refer to me as Saloni. Recently, when I went for an outdoor shoot, I was surprised that even after 17 years, they remember me as Saloni."

Rajshree, who is currently playing the lead in the TV show *Bas Itna Sa Khwaab*, had taken a break from work for a while. She shares, "In 2020, I had to quit *Shaadi Mubarak* because I had



no house-help, but my daughter is older now, and my husband and I share parenting duties. Many people had assumed that I had quit the show then due to issues with the production house, but that was not the case. I am a family-oriented person and like spending time at home. Today, I am happy that I am able to balance work and my personal life."

— Tanvi Trivedi



# Devoleena-Shanwaz welcome baby boy

@devoleena



Devoleena Bhattacharjee had marked a baby shower in an intimate celebration with friends and family

Devoleena Bhattacharjee and Shanwaz Shaikh have officially embraced parenthood. The couple shared the news on Instagram, announcing the arrival of their first child, a baby boy.

"Thrilled to announce the arrival of our bundle of joy, our baby boy 18.12.2024. Elated parents, Devoleena and Shanwaz," the couple wrote. Devoleena had announced her pregnancy with a post in August. "Celebrating the divine journey to motherhood with the sacred Panchamrit ritual, where tradition and love blend to bless the mother and her unborn child with health, prosperity, and joy during this beautiful chapter of life (sic)," she had captioned the post.

The actress got married to her gym trainer-husband in December 2022. TNN

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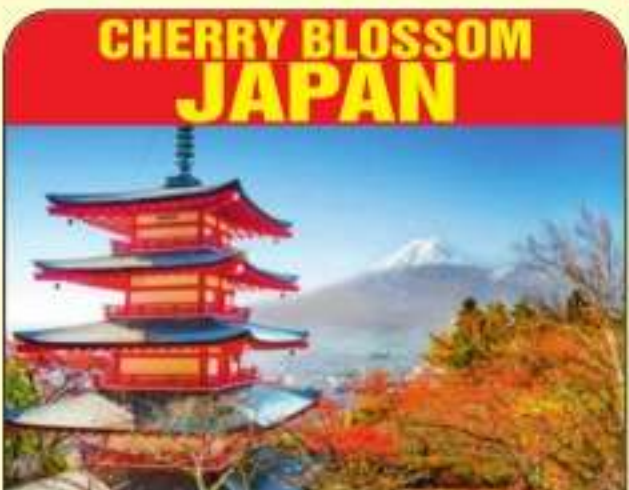
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markets for purchasing gifts and local specialities while savouring the delicious flavours of gingerbread and roasted chestnuts."

**SNOW MUCH FUN**  
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## Let it snow: The best Christmas escapes

If all you want for Christmas is a snow-kissed holiday, then head to these winter wonderlands for a dreamy experience

more commercialised destinations, Finland's festive season is rooted in tradition and simplicity—cosy log cabins, crackling bonfires, and serene snow-covered forests, feels

Mari Rasanen, the CEO of 50 Degrees North. "Whether it's baking gingerbread, relaxing in a sauna, tobogganing down the hills, viewing the aurora borealis from glass igloos, or simply marvelling at the snow-blanketed world outside, Finland embodies the season's

peaceful magic," she explains. Having celebrated Christmas in cities like London, Madrid, and Paris over the years, PR professional Souvik Choudhury is heading to Finnish Lapland this winter. "The highlight will undoubtedly be visiting Santa Claus's offi-

cial hometown, Rovaniemi, which offers more than just a Christmas fantasy. It's a gateway to unforgettable Arctic adventures, from gazing at the magical Northern Lights from a snow hotel to sleigh rides through snow-covered landscapes," he shares. Beyond the beautiful Nordic landscapes,

charming Christmas fairs, and quaint Yuletide traditions, what else can visitors expect? Saoni Mukherjee, the CEO and co-founder of JeeTravels OY, shares, "The main attraction is Rovaniemi, the capital of the northern region of Lapland. Thousands visit the Santa Claus Village every year to meet Santa in his home. Northern Finland is also one of the best places to catch the unique Northern Lights and witness stunning celestial displays of green, pink, purple, and blue in the sky, surrounded by Lappish wilderness. Additionally, icebreaker

cruises in the Gulf of Bothnia, snowmobile rides, and reindeer and husky sledding are popular activities during Finnish winters."

### A WINTER WONDERLAND TO REMEMBER

There's an undeniable charm to spending Christmas amidst India's northern landscapes. Devendra Parulekar, the founder of SaffronStays, suggests, "If you're looking for an offbeat destination, Chail in Himachal Pradesh is the perfect choice. History enthusiasts and adventure seekers alike will enjoy dis-

covering the Chail Palace, exploring the wildlife sanctuary, and visiting the world's highest cricket ground."

For a serene white Christmas, Parulekar suggests Naggar, a quaint Kullu Valley town known for Naggar Castle and its delightful local cuisine. "Whether it's trekking through snow-covered trails or soaring above the majestic Himalayas, the charming Bir Billing is also ideal for paragliding adventures and cosy glamping," he adds. Just like Santa's sleigh, may your Christmas getaway be packed with joy and sweet surprises.

■ Saundarya Jain  
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Imagine this: it's the most wonderful time of the year—snow blankets the ground, sleigh bells ring, and the scent of fresh pine fills the air. Whether you're cosy by the fire with hot cocoa or building snowmen with loved ones, there's no better place than a snowy destination to make your celebrations magical.

**WHERE YULETIDE DREAMS TAKE FLIGHT**  
The Christmas in Switzerland is nothing short of a fairy-tale come to life. Among

the many crowd-pleasers, Carolyn Schönafinger, the founder of Holidays to Switzerland, encourages visitors to explore the Christmas markets and shares, "The Flying Santa Claus show in Montreux, where Santa's sleigh flies across the sky above the Montreux Christmas Market, is unmissable. Basel's Christmas Market, the oldest in Switzerland, features over 180 stalls in the picturesque square in front of Basel Cathedral. Visitors can climb to the top of the Cathedral for magical views of the twinkling lights strung across the fair. Zurich is also home to six different

### STARRY NIGHTS

A UNESCO World Heritage Site, the Swiss city of St. Gallen transforms into the 'City of Stars' during the festive season, with 700 sparkling stars illuminating the snowy alleyways of its old town in a mesmerising light display. Travellers can explore a vibrant Christmas market filled with delectable treats, handcrafted gifts, and the enchanting melodies of choirs, offering a truly magical holiday experience.



# An engaging annual sports meet for the differently abled



Jairaj Thacker and Minal Thacker

Urvashi and Jairaj Thacker of the Narsee Monjee Educational Trust hosted the 21st Sports Meet for Differently Abled Children recently. More than 1,400 children from over 60 schools in and around Mumbai participated. The morning began with a synchronised march-past featuring contingents from all participating schools, followed by a memorable Mallakhambh performance by visually impaired students. The Athletes' Oath was taken by last year's winners, setting the tone for the event. The Torch Run symbolised unity and strength, leading to a variety of athletic and festive races tailored to the abilities of the participants.

Adding a special touch to this year's sports day was actor and Jamnabai Narsee School alumnus Vedang Raina. Reflecting on the moment, Vedang shares, "Being back at my own school for this inspiring event is a full circle moment. These children show us what resilience and true spirit means. I am so proud to see Jamnabai Narsee School continue to host this incredible sports day every year."

Trustee Sujay Jairaj says, "Every race run and every cheer shared is a testament to the extraordinary strength of the human spirit at this differently abled sports day. It's a celebration of perseverance, heart and the incredible power of believing in oneself."

Trustee Jairaj Thacker added, "Each year, this sports day brings together extraordinary talent and showcases incredible sportsmanship. It is a joy and an honour for the Jamnabai Narsee Campus to host this event,

where every child's effort is celebrated. Our aim is to make it better every year, ensuring that every participant leaves with a sense of pride and accomplishment."

The event concluded on a heartwarming note with every participant receiving a gift and certificate to honour their efforts. Winners were presented medals and trophies, but the true victory lay in the smiles, connections, and memories created throughout the day. This annual sports meet continues to remind us all that inclusion and support can make a world of difference.



Vedang Raina and Sujay Jairaj



The school hosted its 21st Annual Inclusive Sports Day uniting differently abled children

# Another viral pup: Tupi, a baby capybara wraps up the year



A zoo in Texas announced Tupi's birth on its social media accounts late last week, getting an outpouring of internet love

As the largest rodents in the world, most capybaras spend their days munching on grass and water plants in dense vegetation around bodies of water. At a zoo in Texas, however, one capybara has stepped up as the latest in a series of baby animals to capture the internet's attention this year.

Tupi - pronounced two-pee - was born on December 3 at the San Antonio Zoo, and is the first of the species, scientifically known as Hydrochoerus hydrochaeris, to be born at the facility in 25 years, according to a statement from the zoo. Thanks to the power of social media, he is already famous.

The zoo announced Tupi's birth on its social media accounts late last week, getting an outpouring of internet love. But in a twist that seemed perfect to close out 2024, less than an hour after the announcement, the zoo followed its post with a statement that Tupi and the zoo are not affiliated with a memecoin - \$TUPI - that had been named after the animal.

In Tupi's case, the zoo gave him a mantra to head into the new year: "Unbothered. Moisturized. Happy. In My Lane. Focused. Flourishing."

New York Times

**Their births are not super rare. However, we haven't had capybaras at the zoo since 2018, we got them back this year and we haven't had babies since 2000, so we are excited**

- Jacob Downing, zoo's spokesperson



iStock

# Music may boost plant growth

Playing a monotonous sound stimulates the activity of a fungus that promotes plant growth, says a study, raising the possibility that playing music could be good for gardens. According to a study, the role of acoustic stimulation in fostering ecosystem recovery and sustainable food systems remains under-explored. Based on previous work that exposed E. coli bacteria to sound waves, a team of Australian researchers set out to assess the effect sound has on the growth rate and spore production of the fungus Trichoderma harzianum. Researchers built little

sound booths to house Petri dishes full of fungi. Instead of pop bangers, they were played Tinnitis Flosser Masker at 8 kHz. Study author Jake Robinson of Flinders University said, "We chose this monotone for controlled, experimental reasons, but it might be that a more diverse or natural soundscape is better."

The petri dishes were played with this sound at a level of 80 decibels for half an hour a day. After five days, the growth and spore production were higher in the fungi that were played the sound, compared to those that sat in silence.

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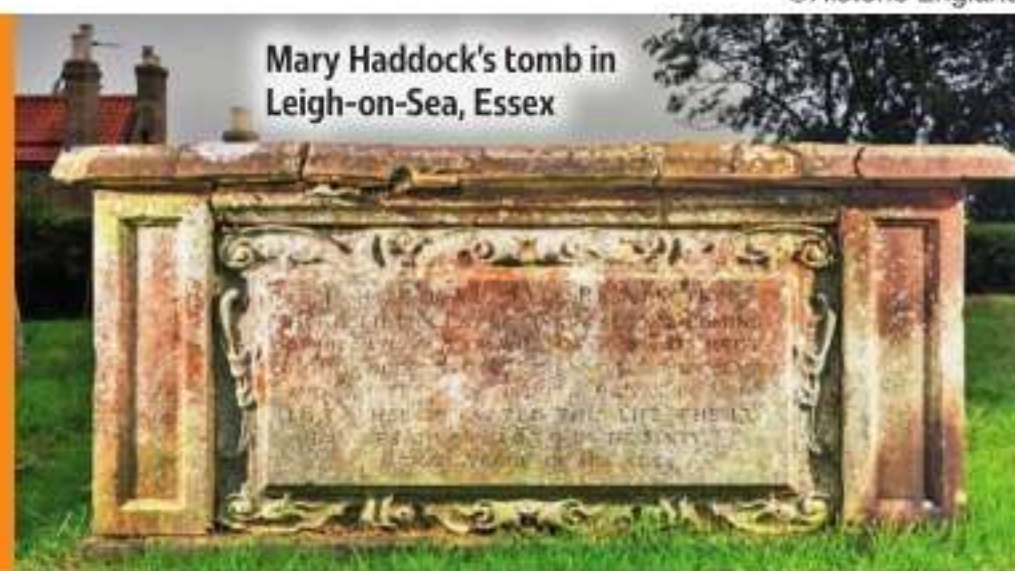
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# Tintin-linked Haddock tomb makes it to 'unusual historic places' list



Mary Haddock's tomb in Leigh-on-Sea, Essex

@Historic England

A 17th-century English tomb linked to the beloved *Tintin* comics has been granted official protection as a "remarkable" historic place by heritage chiefs. In sleepy Leigh-on-Sea, Essex, far from the snowy mountains of Tibet where the intrepid young reporter Tintin roamed, lies the tomb of Mary Haddock, mother of Admiral Richard Haddock. The admiral is believed to have inspired the character of the ill-tempered Captain Haddock in Belgium author Hergé's *Adventures of Tintin*. Known for his inventive expletives like "blue blistering barnacles!", the comic captain was a seafarer like Richard Haddock.

Mary Haddock's tomb is "notable as a single monument dedicated to a named woman in a period of gender inequality", according to Historic England, which announced "17 remarkable and unusual historic buildings and places" listed this year on Wednesday. The annual round-up highlights little-known heritage sites among the 211 buildings and sites of historic interest listed in 2024. Other quirky additions include a Baptist church in Bristol, southwest England, which has a Tesco supermarket on its ground floor and is known locally as the "church above the shops".

Heritage Minister Chris Bryant said it was a celebration of the "hard work to preserve truly unique buildings & places that have helped shape our cultural history." AFP

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The thyroid gland is an essential part of the endocrine system, producing hormones that regulate metabolism, growth, and development. "When these

hormone levels become imbalanced, they can cause health issues. Hence, diagnosing and treating thyroid disorders is crucial for maintaining good health," mentions Dr Shaila Nadkarni, a retired endocrinologist.

#### KNOW THE DIFFERENCE

Simply put, hypothyroidism occurs when the thyroid gland is not sufficiently active, slowing down metabolism. "Common symptoms of hypothyroidism include weight gain, dry skin, hair, and nails, as well as constipation. Additionally, those with hypothyroidism often struggle with fatigue and increased sensitivity to cold. These symptoms can often develop slowly, making hypothyroidism difficult to detect at first, but they significantly impact overall well-being in due course," cautions Dr Aarya Somani, a senior endocrinologist.

Hyperthyroidism, on the other hand, is characterised by an overactive thyroid, which speeds up metabolism. "This not



## Is your thyroid in balance?

Discover how thyroid-related issues can impact health and why early diagnosis and treatment are essential for improving one's quality of life

only leads to weight loss, insomnia, and loose stools but also excessive sweating and anxiety. The symptoms associated with hyperthyroidism reflect the heightened activity within the body, as the thyroid gland produces too many hormones, overstimulating various bodily functions," adds Somani.

**WHAT'S THE CAUSE?** Both conditions differ significantly. Hyperthyroidism is commonly caused by Graves' disease, an autoimmune condition in which the immune system attacks the thyroid. Other causes may include toxic nodular goitre (small masses within the thyroid), thyroiditis (thyroid

inflammation, often due to a virus), postpartum thyroiditis, or taking too much thyroid hormone. Hypothyroidism, on the other hand, occurs when the thyroid either stops functioning correctly or is removed or destroyed due to medical conditions like cancer. "Other potential causes include prior radi-

iodine or surgical treatments for hyperthyroidism or thyroid cancer, previous radiation for cancers in the head and neck, certain pituitary gland disorders, congenital hypothyroidism (present from birth), and medications such as amiodarone, lithium, and anti-epilepsy drugs," explains Dr Yogesh Shetye, a general physician.

#### THE ROLE OF REGULAR MONITORING

Blood tests are crucial for an accurate diagnosis. "For hypothyroidism, the primary test measures the level of thyroid-stimulating hormone (TSH) in the blood. If TSH is elevated, a follow-up test can check thyroid hormone levels, specifically T4. If TSH levels are high and T4 levels are low, hypothyroidism is confirmed. In some cases, T3 levels are also measured. If TSH levels are elevated but T4 and T3 levels are normal, it may indicate subclinical hypothyroidism, a milder form of the condition. Besides, TSH testing is used to monitor and

adjust treatment for hypothyroidism over time," adds Shetye. Typically, the treatment for hypothyroidism requires a patient to take a thyroid hormone replacement dose daily. For hyperthyroidism, treatment options include anti-thyroid medications, radioactive iodine therapy, or surgery (known as thyroid-

ectomy) to excise a part of the thyroid gland or remove it entirely. "After surgery, patients may require thyroid hormone replacement medicines since many often develop hypothyroidism," concludes Nadkarni. All things considered, regular monitoring and appropriate treatment plans can help improve your thyroid health.

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Yoga is more than just a trendy fitness hashtag or a class you squeeze into your busy week. From the calming flow of asanas (postures) to the mindful focus of pranayama (breathwork), it offers a path to physical and mental well-being. Here's how you can ace this ancient practice.

#### THE EBB AND FLOW OF TRENDS

Historically, yoga practitioners wore loose-fitting garments during their practice. "Thanks to technological advances, yogis can now choose from a wide array of fabrics—moisture-wicking and bamboo cotton and

stretchy lycra, for instance—that provide flexibility without the need for overly loose garments," notes Varun Das, a yoga teacher.

Modern yoga mats have also undergone significant evolution. Das explains, "They're now grippier, made from materials like PU that are waterproof, sweat-resistant, and antimicrobial, featuring self-cleaning capabilities that require less frequent washing. Enhanced grip ensures the mat stays put during complex poses, allowing practitioners to delve deeper into their practice."

Technology has transformed yoga accessories as well. "Wooden blocks and heavy props have given

### Pose with purpose

As you begin your yoga journey, embrace comfort and confidence with the right apparel and accessories



way to lightweight options like cork and synthetic materials, which are portable and offer a firm grip without the risk of fungal growth. Yoga wheels and straps provide additional support, while tech innovations and apps further enhance the yoga experience, making it more accessible and effective

than ever before. These advancements not only facilitate greater mobility and protection during practice but also reflect the ongoing evolution of yoga in the modern world," points out Das.

#### THE VERSATILITY OF ATHLEISURE

Today, activewear goes beyond mere gym

wear, seamlessly blending fitness with everyday fashion. According to fashion designer Renu Walia-Malhotra, the key factor is comfort. She emphasises, "Whether it's yoga or any workout, your clothing should enhance your movement and comfort. However, that doesn't mean sacrificing style. Look for innovative designs with pockets for practicality and consider timeless neutral colours and patterns."

#### COMFORT COMPANIONS

Stepping onto a yoga mat for the first time can be daunting. You might wonder, "What else do I need besides this?" With just a few simple props, you can unlock a whole new world of possibilities in your yoga practice. "In my seven-month yoga journey, starting with a basic yoga mat, I've come to appreciate the art deeply. To enhance my practice, I

added key accessories: a yoga block for better alignment and stability; grip socks for secure footing; a cylindrical bolster for comfort in restorative poses; gloves for grip during intense sessions, and a resistance

band for strength training. Each tool has made my journey smoother," reveals Aaron Alvares, a marketing professional. So, unroll your mat, grab your props, and leverage the benefits of yoga.

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# CURATE AN ENTICING CHRISTMAS PLATTER

Masumi Shah

**H**osting a Christmas party? Check out expert tips to curate an oh-so-indulgent Christmas platter to leave your guests wanting more! Gaurav Lavania, executive chef at a premium luxury hotel brand, shares, "A perfect Christmas platter is a delightful centerpiece that combines festive flavours, textures and

visual appeal. Balancing flavour profiles and textures is all about creating harmony and contrast to make the experience interesting yet cohesive. Include a mix of the five primary flavours, and textures like crunchy, chewy, creamy and firm. Pair elements that complement each other – such as creamy brie and a crunchy cracker. And use holiday colours like red, green and white as your base."

## Add these to your Xmas platter

- A mix of cheeses – hard (cheddar, gouda), soft (brie, camembert), and blue cheese.
- Fruits like grapes, pomegranate seeds, figs or apples, and dried fruits like dates, apricots, or cranberries.
- Crackers, breadsticks, baguette & sourdough.
- Dips and spreads like hummus, herbed cream cheese or pâté.
- Seasonal jams or chutneys like cranberry or fig.
- Fresh veggies like cherry tomatoes, cucumber slices, and bell pepper strips. Roasted veggies like baby carrots, brussels sprouts, or sweet potato.
- Mini gingerbread cookies, choco truffles, spiced nuts, candy canes or macarons.
- For garnish, a dusting of powdered sugar or cinnamon on sweets.

– Inputs by executive chef Gaurav Lavania

## Style it right

- Use garnishes like rosemary sprigs, cranberries, and pomegranate
- Create a Christmas tree using a pineapple and cutting it into a conical shape, and then adding a variety of cheese on it to create a pattern
- Red, green, and white with gold or silver accents evoke the classic Christmas spirit. Deep burgundy and emerald green look elegant
- Create a wreath by placing tomato, mozzarella with basil salad on the periphery of a plate
- Use wooden boards, ceramic platters. Earthy tones, handmade ornaments evoke memories
- Bows are a huge trend this year

– Inputs by table stylist Ami Kothari

**A well-curated Christmas platter balances aesthetics, variety, and functionality**

– Ami Kothari, table stylist

## Trends to look out for

- **Grinchmas:** Emphasises bold red and green combinations with whimsical decorations
- **Tropical tidings:** Offers a twist with vibrant greens, pinks, and golds, inspired by exotic locales
- **Nordic-inspired platters:** Muted tones, wooden accents, and natural textures like pale greens, light browns
- **Interactive food counters:** Build-your-own mini desserts, deconstructed cheese boards, or DIY hot cocoa stations
- **Ice enchantment:** White, silver, icy blue hues with frosted decorations. Glitter desserts or crystal-like sugar toppings enhance the effect

**Balancing flavour profiles and textures is all about creating harmony and contrast**

– Gaurav Lavania, executive chef

## Unique pairings

- **Blue cheese and spiced honey:** Tangy blue cheese is balanced beautifully with spiced honey infused with cinnamon or chilli. Serve with crackers or apple slices
- **Dark chocolate and aged parmesan:** Break aged parmesan into chunks and pair with squares of dark chocolate
- **Brie and cranberry relish:** Creamy brie with a tangy-sweet cranberry relish or chutney. Serve on a baguette slice for an indulgent bite
- **Roasted veggies and whipped feta:** Pair roasted carrots or sweet potatoes with a dip made of whipped feta and a drizzle of olive oil
- **Goat cheese and fig jam:** Smear creamy goat cheese on crackers and top with sweet fig jam. Add crushed pistachios for extra texture

# Easy-to-make dips for your Xmas party



## CRANBERRY CREAM CHEESE SPREAD

**INGREDIENTS:** Cream cheese, cranberry sauce, orange zest and chopped walnuts.

**METHOD:** Spread softened cream cheese on a plate, layer with cranberry sauce and sprinkle walnuts and zest on top. Perfect with crackers or crusty bread.

## HERBED GOAT CHEESE SPREAD

**INGREDIENTS:** Goat cheese, cream cheese, garlic, fresh herbs (parsley, chives, thyme), and olive oil.

**METHOD:** Blend goat cheese and cream cheese with herbs and garlic. Drizzle olive oil on top. Serve with baguette slices or crackers.



## CARAMELISED ONION DIP

**INGREDIENTS:** Caramelised onions, sour cream, cream cheese, mayonnaise, and garlic powder.

**METHOD:** Sauté onions until golden, mix with other ingredients, and chill. Excellent with chips or crudites.

## ROASTED RED PEPPER HUMMUS

**INGREDIENTS:** Canned chickpeas, roasted red peppers, tahini, garlic, lemon juice, and olive oil.

**METHOD:** Blend all ingredients until smooth. Adjust salt and lemon to taste. Pair with raw vegetables, breadsticks, or pita.



## PESTO AND RICOTTA DIP

**INGREDIENTS:** Ricotta cheese, store-bought pesto, lemon zest, parmesan cheese.

**METHOD:** Whisk ricotta and pesto together, top with parmesan and zest. Serve with breadsticks or toasted baguette.

## SPICY BLACK BEAN DIP

**INGREDIENTS:** Black beans, salsa, lime juice, cumin, chilli powder, sour cream. Blend all ingredients, adding water if needed to adjust consistency. Serve with tortilla chips or vegetable sticks.

– Inputs by executive chef Gaurav Lavania



# Risalamande, Barszcz: Xmas dishes from around the world

Traditional Christmas dishes are delicious as they are timeless. Here's a look at some of the most popular delicacies that grace tables across the world during the festival



**MINCE PIES: ENGLAND** Mince pies are small, round pies filled with a sweet mixture of dried fruits, spices, and suet (a type of fat). The filling is often flavoured with alcohol and can include ingredients like raisins, currants, candied peel, and spices like cinnamon, nutmeg, and cloves. These are typically served with cream or custard.



## BARSCZ: POLAND

A Christmas Eve dinner staple, Barszcz is a traditional Polish beet soup. It's a clear, ruby-red soup with a tangy flavour, and is often served with uszka (small dumplings filled with mushrooms).



## STOLLEN: GERMANY

Stollen is a traditional Christmas bread that is popular in Germany and other parts of Europe. A rich, dense fruit bread, it is flavoured with candied citrus peel, raisins, and nuts. Stollen is typically dusted with powdered sugar and sometimes decorated with almonds or candied fruits.

## RISALAMANDE: DENMARK

The traditional Danish dessert, often served at Christmas, is a simple creamy rice pudding made with rice, milk, sugar, vanilla, and whipped cream. Served cold topped with a warm cherry sauce, the pudding is typically flavoured with almond extract and often includes chopped almonds.



## CHILES EN NOGADA: MEXICO

These are poblano peppers stuffed with a variety of fillings along with candied fruits and spices, with a white walnut sauce (nogada) poured all over it. The garnish of red pomegranate seeds and parsley leaves represents the colours of the Mexican flag.



# 'I was surprised that Sandhya trusted me for this role after Panchayat'

Niharika Lal

Sandhya Suri's critically acclaimed crime thriller *Santosh*, a cop drama about the investigation of a rape and murder case, has been shortlisted for the Oscars' International Feature Film category. The British Academy has officially selected *Santosh* as the UK's submission for this category. The film stars Shahana Goswami and Sunita Rajwar as police officers. Following its success at Cannes, the Oscar selection marks a dream run for the film.

We caught up with Sunita, who has received widespread acclaim for her roles in *Gullak* and *Panchayat*. Did she ever imagine something like this would happen? She says, "Aapka kya status hai industry mein, aapka kya wajood hai, uss hisaab se aap sapne dek-hoge na! Aapko bas yeh lagta hai ki kaam mil-ta rahe. Humko toh isse bhi fark nahin padta ki koi pehchan raha hai ya nahin. For me, everything changed after *Gullak* and *Panchayat*."



SUNITA RAJWAR In a still from Santosh

## 'At Cannes, we got a standing ovation for 5-6 minutes - I had tears'

The movie recently won Best Screenplay and Best Breakthrough Producer at the BIFAs after making its global premiere in Un Certain Regard at this year's Cannes Film Festival. She shares, "Cannes was weird because even in my dreams, I never ever thought it would happen. Even getting film selected for the Un Certain Regard at Cannes was a big thing for me."

She recalls, "At Cannes, after the screening, when we got a standing ovation for 5-6 minutes, taaliyan band hi nahin ho rahi thi. I was no one for them, and still, they were appreciating my work and the character. I had tears in my eyes - I'm getting so much love for my work. Yeh toh sapnon mein bhi nahin sochte ho. And now, this Oscars shortlist - it is beyond my dreams. Kahan kaise likha hai mere naseeb mein, I'm so shocked. There are goosebumps - I'm this close to the Oscars."

Now I wish that I get more such projects, more characters, thoda respect mile, aur achha kaam mile

**'IT WAS A SURPRISE THAT AFTER WATCHING PANCHAYAT, SANDHYA TRUSTED ME FOR THIS ROLE'**

Talking about her role in *Santosh*, where she plays an SHO, Sunita says, "I have been doing very light-hearted roles - Bitu ki mummy (in *Gullak*) and Kranti Devi (in *Panchayat*). People see me in those roles and think I can only do those kinds of roles. It was a surprise that after watching *Panchayat*, Sandhya trusted me for this role."

She shares that, prior to this, she had only seen SHOs and police *thanas* in films. She adds, "I had this image that they must be talking to their juniors arrogantly. After meeting real-life women police officers, however, I realised they are just like any of us." Talking about the brief Sandhya gave her for the role, she says, "The thing she told me was to not play loud and not try to be what I have been doing. She wanted me to change my body language and speak in lower tones."

**'THERE WAS NO SPECIAL TREATMENT FOR ANYONE ON THE SET OF SANTOSH'**

Sunita has worked in numerous TV

The thing Sandhya told me was to not play loud. She said, 'I don't want any smiling either with your eyes or expressions, nothing. This lady won't smile'



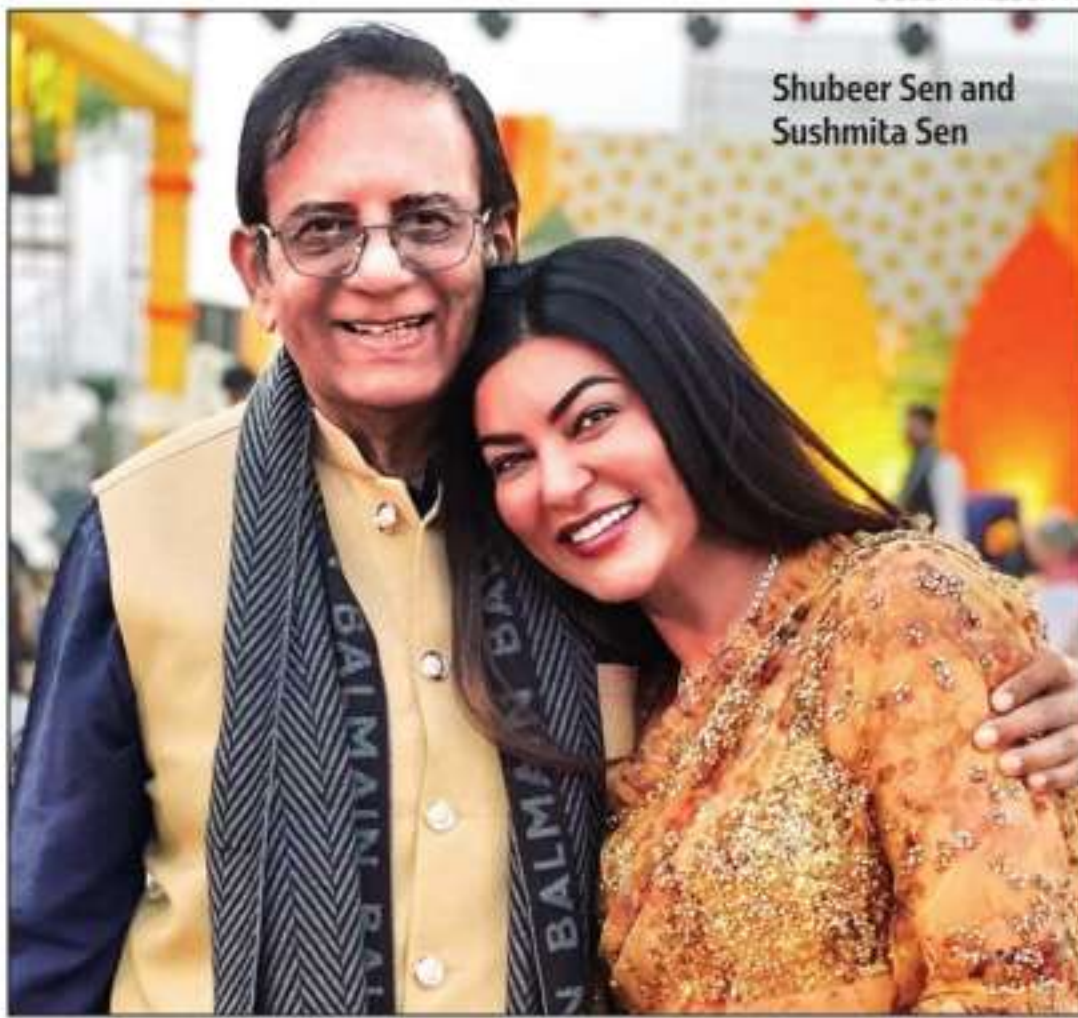
Sunita in Panchayat (above) and in Gullak

serials, films, and web series, and now this international project. So, how was the shoot different from her experience on the sets of Indian productions? She says, "Kaam toh same hi hota hai. When we were shooting for *Santosh*, it was so normal. Our team was all from other countries. But they are a little more disciplined."

She continues, "Shahana is also very down-to-earth. Jo star wala ek feel hota hai set pe - jo hierarchy hoti hai ki star ke aane ke hisaab se shoot hota hai, unka shoot pehle hota hai aur aapka band mein - woh saari cheezien nahin hoti thi. There was no special treatment for anyone."

# Sushmita's sweet birthday wish for her father

@sushmitasen47



Shubeer Sen and Sushmita Sen

Sushmita Sen took to social media to shower birthday love on her father, Shubeer Sen. The *Aarya* actress shared a heartfelt note accompanied by a sweet picture of them together, calling him the "nicest human being". Sharing a series of photos, she wrote, "Happy birthday to the nicest human being, I am blessed to call my Father!!! Happy 80th Baba. Here's to a life filled with glorious milestones & divine grace!! To your health & happiness always. I love you soooooo much!!! (sic)."

# Christopher Nolan is a knight now

Christopher Nolan and his wife, Emma Thomas, have received knighthood and damehood, respectively. The *Oppenheimer* director and producer received the honours at Buckingham Palace on December 18. The Royal Family's official Instagram handle shared pictures from the ceremony and the caption read, "Arise, Sir Christopher Nolan and Dame Emma Thomas!"

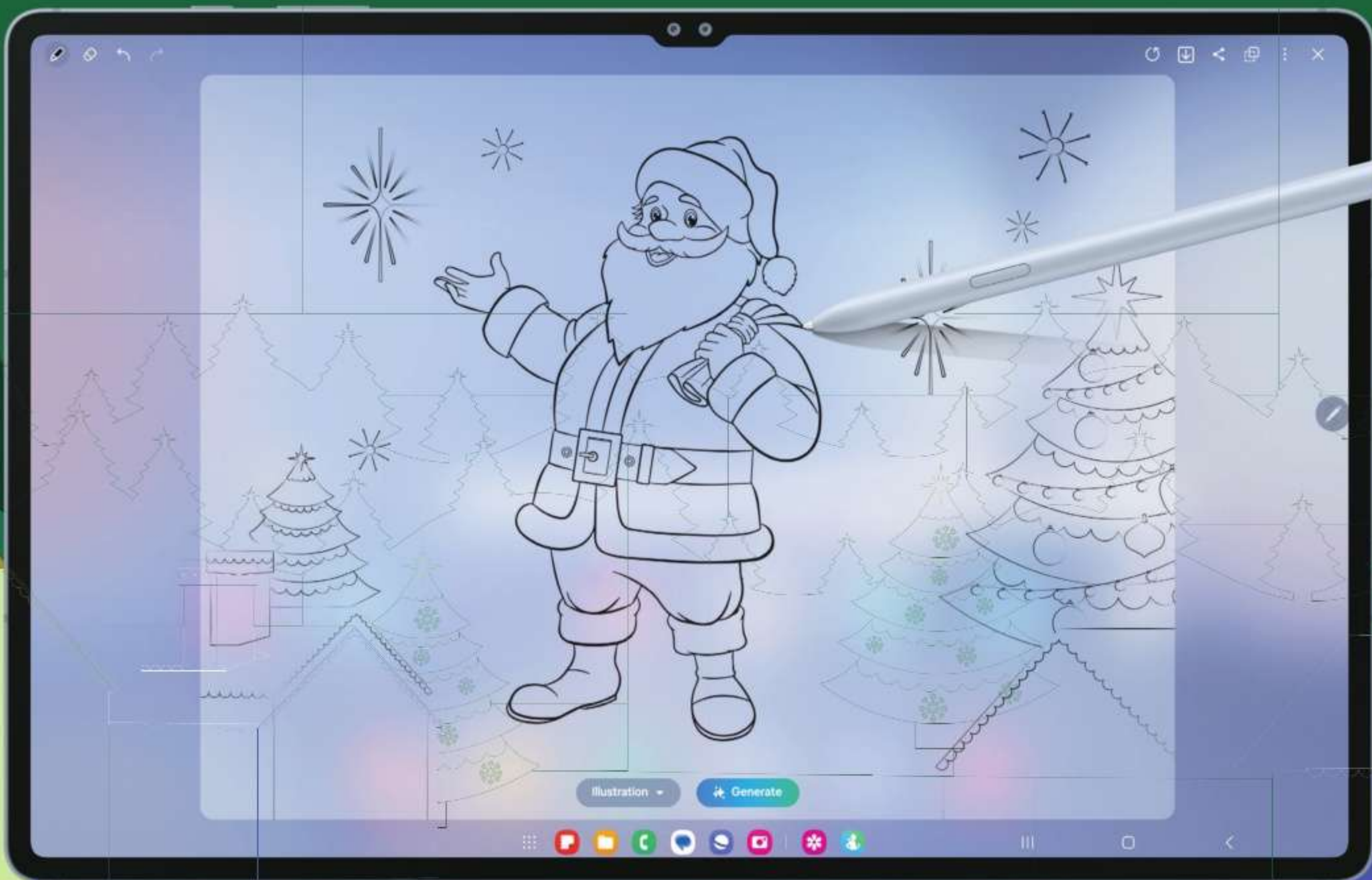
"He (the King) mentioned he had seen *Oppenheimer* and enjoyed it. It was wonderful to know he was familiar with our work and supportive of it," Nolan said.



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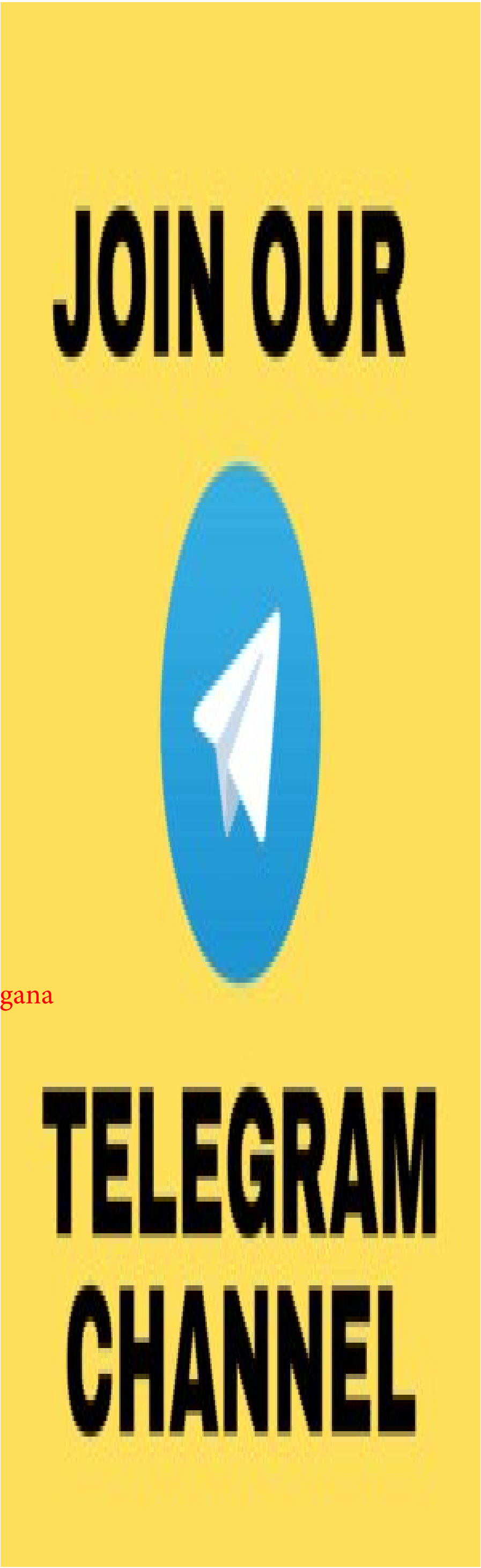
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