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DECEMBER EDITION 2024 **Midlands**



10 NIGHTS

Return of award-winning, heartfelt and humorous play that explores faith, community, and self-discovery

See page 33

BIRMINGHAM LAUNCHES NEW CAMPAIGN TO INCREASE HEPATITIS TESTING

See page 8

University's international project helps communities to tackle inequalities and major challenges

A University of Birmingham community initiative is helping to deal with poverty, educational inequality, climate-related health threats, and pollution in Pakistan.

Discussions are now underway to incorporate global citizenship education into teacher education and school curricula.

The project is expected to influence policy changes and integrate sustainability mission statements into school action plans.

Continued on page 6

From Birmingham to Pakistan

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STROKE:

Dr Amir Khan's community call to action to help spot the signs of stroke

The first sign of a stroke might not seem like much – you could be struggling to smile (Face), you might not be able to raise your arm (Arm), or slurring when you speak (Speech).

Just one symptom could mean a stroke, and it could come on very suddenly.

Even if it doesn't seem like it, any sign of a stroke is always an emergency. But do you have the knowledge you need to detect a possible stroke, and would you know what to do?

NHS England's latest campaign



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Act FAST

shines a light on the vital importance of recognising stroke symptoms and urges people to call 999 when they notice any one sign. Strokes are the fourth single leading cause of death in the UK, with 38,000 stroke-related deaths each year.

Calling 999 immediately means that a stroke can be diagnosed and treated earlier. However, new data has found that the average time between someone first having symptoms and calling 999 was nearly an hour and a half.

We all need to know the signs of stroke

A stroke can happen to anyone at any age, but people from a South Asian background, or with existing conditions such as high blood pressure, diabetes or sickle cell disease, have an even higher risk.

This means that, as a community, we must rally together to empower ourselves with the knowledge - it's everyone's business to be able to spot

“It’s crucial that we’re all aware of the symptoms and that we call 999 without delay. The first sign of a stroke actually might not seem like much, but every minute is vital.”

potential stroke symptoms and to act quickly. Whether you may be at risk of having a stroke yourself, or are in a position to help someone else, we can all potentially save lives if we know what to look for.

Well-known medic, Dr Amir Khan, is fronting a new short video for the campaign, asking members of the community whether they think they would be able to recognise some of

the first signs of a stroke.

Dr Khan believes that bringing the community together, ensuring that everyone can spot the symptoms and knows what to do, is a very important step: “A stroke strikes every five minutes in the UK, and we know that our community is at greater risk of stroke, at a younger age.

“So, it’s crucial that we’re all aware of the symptoms and that we

call 999 without delay. The first sign of a stroke actually might not seem like much, but every minute is vital – getting quick access to specialist treatment can be lifesaving and can reduce long-term disability.

“Whether someone is unable to raise their arm, struggling to smile or slurring when they speak – any sign is always an emergency and you need to call 999 immediately.”

Act FAST

Face or Arm or Speech,
at the first sign, it's **Time**
to call 999

Symptoms of stroke can appear suddenly:

- Struggling to smile (Face)
- Not being able to raise your arm (Arms)
- Slurring when you speak (Speech)

Other signs & symptoms can include:

- Weakness or numbness down one side of your body
- Blurred vision or loss of sight in one or both eyes
- Finding it difficult to speak or think of words
- Confusion and memory loss
- Feeling dizzy or falling over
- A severe headache

Stories from our community



While at her daughter's house, Latika Patel was feeling unusually tired, and walking had become more difficult.

As a retired nurse, Latika thought it was something to do with her ongoing fluctuating blood pressure, but her daughter noticed that her mother was quieter than usual. Latika's speech was only mildly affected, but she found herself slurring slightly. She also found that she couldn't smile, or lift her left arm.

Latika says: “My daughter said that she knew I was having a stroke, but I had no idea and thought I would be fine. Even with my nursing knowledge, it took someone else to recognise the signs.

“Thankfully my daughter acted quickly and called 999.”

Latika had suffered a hemorrhagic stroke. If it had not been caught in time, there would have been a great risk to her health and her future. Thankfully, she is now on the road to recovery.

Niraj Shah wasn't sure exactly what was wrong when he called 999, but he knew he needed help. Niraj has made a full recovery since his stroke, and now knows that acting quickly can make a huge difference.

“I didn't know anything about strokes before I had one myself. I thought it only happened to ‘old’ people.

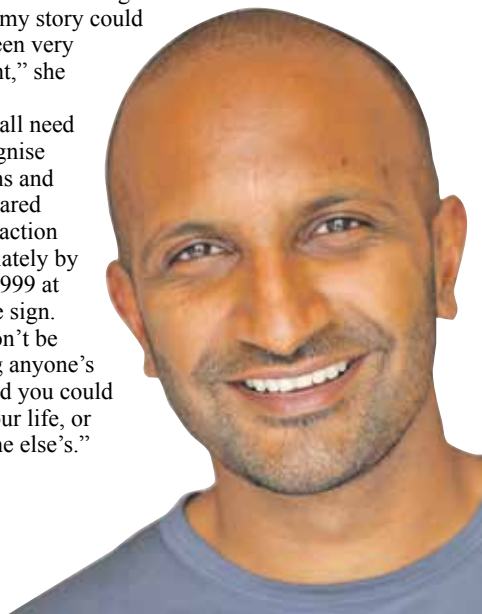
“If you spot anything that you think could be a sign of stroke, call 999 and describe what's happening. Worst case scenario, it's a false alarm, but it's always better to be safe than sorry.”

Latika counts herself lucky and wants everyone to be able to know what to look out for. “If my daughter hadn't known the signs of stroke, my story could have been very different,” she adds.

“We all need

to recognise the signs and be prepared to take action immediately by calling 999 at any one sign.

You won't be wasting anyone's time and you could save your life, or someone else's.”



Alnylam Pharmaceuticals funded the National Kidney Federation to develop this advert



Had kidney stones more than once?

Chat to your GP about kidney disease.



If you're of South Asian origin, you may be at higher risk for a genetic kidney disease, such as primary hyperoxaluria type 1 (PH1), a rare disease that can cause recurrent kidney stones.

Other signs of kidney disease can include weight loss and poor appetite, swollen ankles, feet or hands, shortness of breath, tiredness and blood in your pee.

Learn more about PH1 and access information in Urdu by using the QR code. Additional information on kidney disease is also available at www.kidney.org.uk.



Job number: PH1-UK-00036
Date of preparation: November 2024

Face or arm or speech, at the first sign, it's time to **call 999**.
For more information, visit www.nhs.uk/conditions/stroke/symptoms/



A woman's best friend

Support dog Rocky provides knockout aid for polio survivor Rajwinder (Credit: Josie Hunt Photography)



Loveable
pooch pet helps
his human to live
life more
independently

A woman who was left confined to her wheelchair is helping raise awareness of how support dogs can help change lives.

Rajwinder Kaur, was a one-year-old when contracted polio as a baby, which had a life-changing impact on her life. Until recently, the 44-year-old relied heavily on her husband and carer, Hardeep, for support and couldn't go anywhere on her own.

But thanks to a Yellow Labrador called Rocky – who has been trained by the national Support Dogs charity – Rajwinder has been able to regain her independence.

Rocky trained as a support dog to help Rajwinder with a range of tasks, and has helped her in feeling much

more optimistic about everyday life.

The three-year-old disability assistance dog helps out with a range of everyday tasks, from picking up dropped items and opening doors, to loading and unloading the washing machine, getting dressed and fetching help.

"Now, if I need to reach for something, I don't need to call for my husband," says Rajwinder, who lives in the Hockley area of Birmingham, and has an 18-year-old daughter called Jaskiran.

"If I drop something, I can't pick it up, especially if I'm in my electric wheelchair, which is quite high.

"But Rocky can pick things up, open and close doors, load and unload

"Rocky can pick things up, open and close doors, load and unload the washing machine, take off my socks, bring my shoes to me and he can pick up his leash, collar and harness."

the washing machine, take off my socks, bring my shoes to me and he can pick up his leash, collar and harness.

"I'm so proud of Rocky, and am so glad I found Support Dogs – it's absolutely brilliant."

The family have had Rocky as a family pet from being a pup and they applied to Support Dogs in late 2021. Following various assessments, Rocky and Rajwinder were accepted onto the charity's training programme in October last year.

After around a year of putting into practice what they had both learned, they graduated at the end of October this year and recently attended a glitzy awards bash.

Hardeep adds: "We are very grateful to Support Dogs. They have gone beyond expectations. Before Rocky, Rajwinder couldn't really go anywhere on her own. Now she can go for a wander around the park or wherever. Now I'm not worried if she goes out, as she has Rocky."

Polio symptoms include flu-like symptoms and weakened muscles, with a small percentage of people developing paralysis, and it can be life-threatening if paralysis affects muscles used for breathing.

To find out more about the work of Support Dogs, please visit <http://www.supportdogs.org.uk>

Historic outcome: Council reaches legal agreement with TUs over Equal Pay in Edgbaston

Birmingham City Council, UNISON and GMB have reached a framework agreement to settle the historic equal pay claims brought by the two unions on behalf of members working for the local authority and Birmingham Children's Trust.

The full terms of the settlement are confidential. But the cost of the settlement falls within the limit of the exceptional financial support (EFS) package agreed with the previous government in January 2024.

The council and the unions are committed to ensuring that all staff

are treated fairly and paid equally.

Councillor John Cotton, Leader of Birmingham City Council, said: "This framework agreement marks the end of an intense period of dialogue between the council and its unions. It is an important step on the council's improvement journey. I would like to put on record my thanks to GMB and UNISON for the constructive way in which they have approached these negotiations.

"The next phase of the equal pay programme will be to deliver a new pay and grading model and job evaluation scheme so that pay

inequality at the city council can end once and for all."

Alice Reynolds, GMB Organiser, said: "The women of Birmingham City Council have delivered an historic outcome... This agreement would not have happened without the determination shown by low paid women workers.

"In schools, offices and workplaces across our city, GMB members have led the fight for equal pay. Now this Framework Agreement sets out a cast iron plan to settle our members claims and pay back their wages after years of

discrimination.

"Pay justice for Birmingham's women workers is something that our union has long led the fight for; today this Framework Agreement brings that within touching distance."

UNISON West Midlands head of organising Claire Campbell, said: "This is a good day for low-paid women who work at the council. They will at last get the pay justice they deserve. This will hopefully be the much-needed turning point for staff, services and local communities across the city."



Raad Asmael: Arrests after man shot dead in Edgbaston

Three men have been arrested following the murder of Raad Asmael, who was shot dead in Edgbaston last month.

A 24-year-old man was arrested on suspicion of conspiracy to murder, while two other men, aged 25 and 31, were held on suspicion of assisting an offender.

Raad, aged 27, was sadly pronounced dead after he was shot inside a car in Rotton Park Road at the junction of City Road in Edgbaston just before 11pm on 22 November.

Det Ch Insp Laura Harrison said today: "Our investigation is progressing, and we have updated Raad's family with news of the arrests.

"It's still really important that we hear from anyone with information about what might have happened or why.

"We want to hear from anyone who was in the area at the time and anyone who may have dashcam footage."

Anyone who can help with our investigation is asked to get in touch via Live Chat on our website, or by calling 101, quoting log 5228 of 22 November.

Alternatively, contact Crimestoppers anonymously on 0800 555 111.

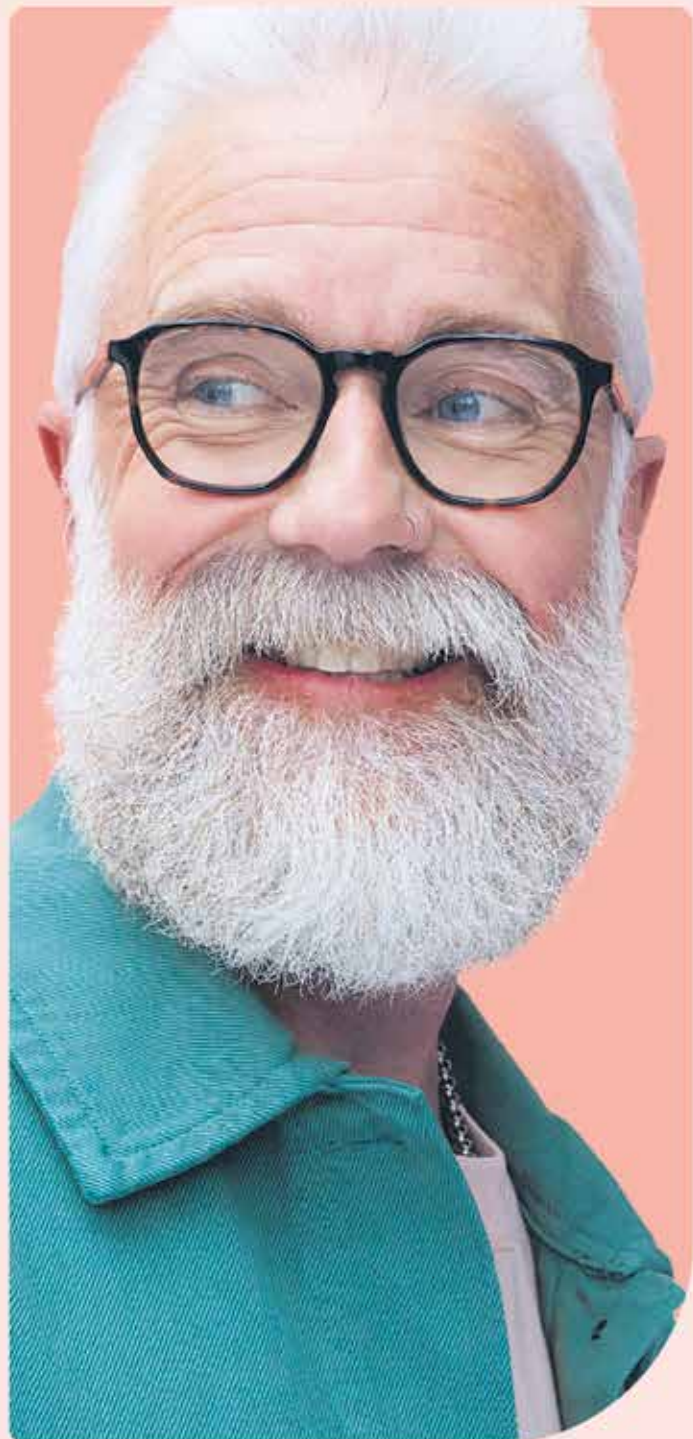


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From Birmingham to Pakistan

University's international project helps communities to tackle inequalities and major challenges



Cover story continued

The project received commendations from key policymakers, including the Federal Minister for Planning and Development Professor Dr Ahsan Iqbal Chaudhary, the Minister for School and Higher Education Punjab, Mr. Rana Sikandar Hayat, and the Special Advisor for the Higher Education Commission, Mr. Muhammad Raza Chohan.

It is now hoped to expand the project to train 250 university teacher trainers, potentially benefiting thousands of students and community members over the next 3-5 years.

Dr Meng Tian, Associate Professor in Educational Leadership at the University of Birmingham, commented: "The people of Pakistan face major challenges requiring both this and future generations to act quickly.

"Our project has laid strong foundations for promoting global citizenship education - delivering significant short-term achievements and

offering hope for sustained impact.

We worked with partners in-country to develop and deliver culturally relevant, practice-oriented, and research-informed solutions to these challenges. By fostering a sense of global citizenship, we believe our work in Pakistan can help to create a more inclusive, just, and peaceful world."

According to UNICEF (2024), 22.8 million children aged 5-16 in Pakistan are out of school - the second-highest rate in the world. Several cities, such as Lahore, are among the most polluted globally and hazardous smog continues to reach record levels, affecting millions of residents.

The project also saw an arts competition and exhibition in Lahore engaging over 150 students and young artists - raising awareness of the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) and global citizenship among over 500 community members.

In December 2025, the project team will host the Education Access and Equity with Global South Partners Conference in Dubai. Collaborators from Pakistan will share their ongoing activities, inspiring other Global South educators - exchanging ideas and educational resources with other projects in Malaysia, South Africa, and India.

"Our project has laid strong foundations for promoting global citizenship education - delivering significant short-term achievements and offering hope for sustained impact."



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Birmingham City Council (BCC) has launched a vital new social health campaign to promote testing for Hepatitis B and C, reinforcing the city's ongoing commitment to the Fast-Track Cities+ (FTC+) programme.

Birmingham officially joined the Fast-Track Cities initiative in October 2022, aligning with a global network of cities working towards the goal of ending new cases of Hepatitis.

While the Fast-Track Cities programme originally focused on HIV prevention and care, cities like Birmingham have broadened the scope to address other critical health challenges, such as Hepatitis and Tuberculosis, which continue to affect vulnerable populations.

The campaign aims to raise awareness of and encourage testing for Hepatitis B and C, focusing on men aged 35 to 49 within Asian and Asian British communities. This group has been identified by research as one of a number of communities at particularly high risk for contracting Hepatitis B and C.

Despite this increased risk, many within this demographic are less likely to get tested, leading to undiagnosed conditions that can cause serious, long-term health complications, including liver damage, cirrhosis, and liver cancer. By getting tested early, individuals can get the treatment they need sooner, improve their quality of life and increase their life expectancy.

Councillor Nicky Brennan, Cabinet Member for Social Justice, Community

Reduce the stigma

Birmingham launches new campaign to increase Hepatitis testing in support of the FTC+ initiative



Councillor Nicky Brennan

Safety and Equalities at Birmingham City Council, said: "In Birmingham, we are committed to preventing new cases of Hepatitis B and C by 2030, helping to reduce health inequalities by ensuring that everyone in our city has access to the help and support they need to live healthier lives.

crucially, get tested and get treated."

Azim Azam, Birmingham co-ordinator at the Hepatitis C Trust, said: "Having worked closely with individuals affected by Hepatitis C for a number of years, I know how vital it is to get tested at the earliest opportunity so that you can treated as

conversations we can reduce the stigma and ensure that individuals in our community are living longer, healthier and happier lives, which will also benefit their loved ones."

The campaign's central message - "Risk. Test. Protect." - encourages individuals to visit testtoprotect.co.uk

The 'Know Your Status' campaign is about reaching out to communities identified as being at higher risk of Hepatitis B and C

"The 'Know Your Status' campaign is about reaching out to communities identified as being at higher risk of Hepatitis B and C, and helping to reduce the stigma associated with these conditions by empowering them to find out about their health status and,

soon as possible.

"Also, as a member of the community that this campaign is aiming to reach to raise awareness, I understand how difficult it can sometimes be to take that first step to getting tested, but by having these

to determine their risk for Hepatitis B and C. The website offers information on how to get a free, confidential test, and underscores the importance of early detection in protecting both personal health and the health of their loved ones and their wider community.

Birmingham City Council hopes to raise awareness of Hepatitis and inspire individuals to take action by getting tested. To see more of the campaign, visit www.testtoprotect.co.uk.

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DEMENTIA: Music as medication

£183k grant to investigate alternative options to treat anxiety for people of South Asian backgrounds



CEO of MediMusic, Gary Jones, is a former music industry executive



Researchers from Anglia Ruskin University (ARU) and a British healthtech company have been awarded £183,682 to investigate how AI technology and music can ease anxiety amongst people of South Asian backgrounds who are living with dementia.

Healthtech company, MediMusic, has pioneered technology that digitally fingerprints music to develop relaxing playlists to help ease pain, anxiety and stress.

After first expanding the libraries of Indian and Pakistani music on MediMusic, the researchers explore how a machine learning-based music recommendation app can be used as a form of therapy to support Indian and Pakistani people with dementia, as well as their professional carers.

This new project, which is funded by Innovate UK, part of UK Research and Innovation, is believed to be the first time music therapy research has

been carried out specifically involving people of South Asian backgrounds living in the UK.

The algorithms extract the relevant features from the digital DNA of a piece of music, resulting in a “fingerprint” for healthcare use.

MediMusic works with the patient’s age, gender, nationality, and ethnicity, and then in seconds compiles a 20-minute playlist of music to influence multiple areas of the human brain to help reduce anxiety and pain.

The playlists can be listened to on a streaming device, called the MediBeat, using a pair of headphones, or on other devices such as smartphones.

Initial clinical trials at Lancashire Teaching Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust found the use of MediMusic saw a reduction in heart rate in patients living with dementia by up to 25%.

The Cambridge Institute for Music Therapy Research at Anglia Ruskin University has a team of 30 researchers, including PhD students, and is one of the largest and most influential research units

of its kind in the world.

Gary Jones, CEO and co-founder of MediMusic and a former music industry executive, developed the technology after trying to help the mother of a family friend who was living with dementia.

He said: “This is fantastic news for our team and our global mission to use music as medication to ease pain, anxiety and stress.

“The transformative power of music to make us feel more relaxed and healthier is truly extraordinary. Our initial clinical trials have yielded highly promising results, signalling a groundbreaking future in patient treatment.

“The potential to dispense music as a therapeutic intervention could revolutionise the care of people grappling with pain and anxiety, including for people in care homes and patients in hospital.

“We believe we will eventually see music prescribed on the NHS. Musical medicine would help the NHS save money on costly medications treating anxiety and stress.”

“The transformative power of music to make us feel more relaxed and healthier is truly extraordinary. Our initial clinical trials have yielded highly promising results, signalling a groundbreaking future in patient treatment.”



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Dancing away the pain

Honorary degree for choreographer Ria who's faced incurable chronic health conditions

A multi-skilled and multi-award winning artist and cultural entrepreneur is to be awarded an honorary degree for her outstanding contributions to the cultural industries.

Ria Meera Munshi, a Salford alumna, will receive a Doctor of Arts from the University of Salford in recognition of her numerous achievements as a dancer, choreographer, writer, director, speaker, actor, model, presenter and businesswoman, all whilst facing multiple strenuous health conditions.

The BA Performance graduate, 35, has built a remarkable career all whilst facing the significant challenge of performing and teaching whilst being diagnosed with Raynaud's syndrome, mixed connective tissue disease and systemic lupus erythematosus.

The latter was diagnosed only last year and is a long-term condition that causes joint pain, skin rashes and tiredness with no cure available.

Coupled with the other autoimmune and rheumatic conditions which affect's Ria's blood flow and cause serious tiredness, it extenuates her career successes as a performer, first and foremost.

A trained Bharatnatyam dancer, Ria is the holder of a Bollywood Guinness World Record, has worked as a celebrity choreographer for Hollyoaks, featured on Coronation Street as Dr Chatterjee and also performed as the lead in a British Airways India Commercial.

Ria said: "I really believe that by throwing myself into my work, I have been able to fight these conditions and have also allowed my body to heal.

"Since the age of 14, I have faced these long-term chronic conditions but faced every day with the resolve that by performing and working to the fullest of my potential that I would be making myself better.

"I get so much joy seeing someone smile whilst watching me dance and its motivated me to bring more smiles, kindness and love to all through dance, and the arts. I want my work to be magical, colourful and inspirational to others.

"Every day, I ask myself the question 'have I made someone feel positive, have I introduced them to a new feeling, a new culture, a new dance move,

did I make them smile?' That's been my focus every day and that's got me through it despite the fact my body was dealing with all these conditions at once."

Ria's further accolades include co-presenting at the Manchester Cultural Awards, being a guest speaker for the Department for Education and her work with educational, disadvantaged and under-represented groups which led to her receiving the Young Entrepreneur of the Year Award and a Certificate of Recognition from the British Citizen Award.

Her relationship with the University of Salford has remained strongly intact since graduation with Ria dedicating much of her time over the last 14 years to supporting and taking part in a wide range of University projects.

On receiving the news that that she would be receiving an honorary degree, Ria said: "I was quite speechless just thinking about it. It felt very surreal!

"For any student, I feel that they should always do what they can to keep the relationship going after graduating and I am very grateful to have met so many beautiful people and have hopefully inspired and enriched other people's lives. They have also equally been as inspiring to me."





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'Tidal Wave' of flu

Flu hit hospitals in England even harder last week, as a 'tidal wave' of infections led to a 70% increase in hospital cases across just seven days.

The NHS is encouraging eligible people to get vaccinated without delay if they haven't done so already to avoid "festive flu" with an average of 1,861 patients with flu in hospital every day last week – up from 1,099 in the previous week and a staggering 3.5 times higher compared to the same time last year.

Norovirus and RSV are also on the rise – norovirus cases are up by 10% from last week and almost two thirds since (64%) last year and 152 children were in hospital with RSV each day, up by over two fifths on the same period last year (107 w/e 10 Dec 2023).

The "tidal wave" of seasonal illnesses is prompting further "quad-demic" concerns across the NHS with staff pulling out the stops to deliver almost 28 million vaccines so far in convenient places like Christmas markets, football clubs, and supermarkets.

Professor Sir Stephen Powis, NHS national medical director, said: "The tidal wave of flu cases and other seasonal

viruses hitting hospitals is really concerning for patients and for the NHS – the figures are adding to our 'quad-demic' worries.

"While the NHS has plans in place to manage additional demand over the busy winter period, with one week left to book your vaccine, I cannot stress enough the importance of getting booked in to protect yourself against serious illness and to avoid 'festive flu.'

Health and Social Care Secretary Wes Streeting said: "Since the general election, we have been ramping up to delivering the extra 2 million appointments a year, ending the strikes, and investing more in the health service.

"As a result, the NHS today is delivering a record number of treatments and waiting lists have begun to fall. There's a long way to go, but through our Plan for Change we will get patients seen on time again.

"With A&Es facing record demand, we are continuing to encourage people to protect themselves, their family, and the NHS by getting vaccinated before it's too late."

Criminology expert comments on government's plans to open 14,000 more prison places

Dr Nasrul Ismail, Senior Lecturer in Criminology at the University of Bristol, is a leading expert and researcher on prisons.

Talking about the government's plans to open 14,000 more prison places, and whether this still won't be enough to meet demand over the next few years, he said: "Building more prisons are both financially unsustainable and ineffective approaches to alleviating the overcrowding issue that has persisted for over

three decades.

"Discussions on overcrowding must account for restrictive sentencing practices. Current sentencing guidelines often compel judges to impose custodial sentences, even when alternatives may be more appropriate.

"Moreover, the probation system, weakened by austerity, lacks the capacity to support large-scale prisoner releases, exacerbating strain on prisons.

"Discussions on prison expansion must consider the continual recruitment and retention challenges faced by prison officers. These shortages stem from austerity-driven workforce reductions in 2012 and continue to undermine prison safety and operations. Despite a 2% improvement in recruitment reported by HMPPS, over 3,000 officers had left the service by late 2024, with 34% departing within their first year.

"Rather than expanding prison capacity, the government should reduce its reliance on prisons and adopt alternative sentencing by using community sanctions for non-violent offenders, divert individuals with acute mental health or substance-use issues to treatment facilities, invest in community resources to ensure availability of alternatives to imprisonment, and prioritise early intervention programmes to reduce imprisonment."





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The University of Birmingham continues to perform strongly in the 2025 QS World University Rankings for Sustainability.

Now ranked 38th globally, Birmingham has maintained its position at 14th in the UK, demonstrating its commitment to ensuring its research, education and operations make major contributions to the UN Sustainable Development Goals and to the UK's 2050 Net Zero target.

The QS World University Rankings measures a university's global reputation and is the most used international league table. Marking universities with a score out of 100, the Sustainability category demonstrates

which institutions are leading the way in social responsibility and environmental sustainability.

With an overall score of 93.1 out of 100, Birmingham has improved its score by 4.3 marks. It has risen 30 places to eighth in the Governance category, is in the top 10 for Knowledge Exchange, and is in the top 50 for Equality.

David Hannah (Deputy Pro-Vice-Chancellor of Sustainability) commented: "The University is committed to embedding sustainability in everything we do. As a civic University, we support our community to meaningfully engage with our research, education and operational activities.

"The University of Birmingham is a community that cares about its positive impact on the planet, and we are committed to continuing to embed sustainability in our practices."

"We are delighted to see our efforts reflected with our position of 38th in the 2025 QS World Sustainability Rankings and look forward to actively and vigorously continuing our sustainability journey in the year ahead."

In the last year, the University has launched the Thriving Planet global research campaign and the groundbreaking report, 'Adaptation and Building Resilience in a Changing World' at the COP28 climate summit as well as contributing at COP29.

Research impact and real-world climate action has been enabled by the Birmingham Institute of Sustainability and Climate Action, sustainability is being embedded across all teaching

and 'sustainability focused' is now a University of Birmingham graduate attribute.

Across the staff and student community, a new Sustainability Champions scheme has been introduced, and a free four-week bus pass scheme was adopted by over 4,500 people to encourage low carbon travel.

Zoe Hurley, Head of Sustainability, added: "The University of Birmingham is a community that cares about its positive impact on the planet, and we are committed to continuing to embed sustainability in our practices. We are excited to continue working with our staff, students, and wider community to become a more sustainable University."

(Credit: birmingham.ac.uk)

Thriving

University of Birmingham achieves 38th position in the 2025 QS World Sustainability Rankings





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Scientist wins backing

A scientist and entrepreneur at the University of Wolverhampton has won support package from a global banking giant after completing a series of pitches before advancing to a National Finals competition.

Dr Abhishek Gupta, Senior Lecturer in the School of Pharmacy at the University and Director and Chief Scientific Officer at iNatural Ltd, won the £10,000 prize at the Santander X UK Awards after pitching an idea aimed to help revolutionise healthcare through innovative biomedical solutions.

The award will help iNatural Ltd accelerate critical areas of development and advance research into cutting-edge technologies that address unmet needs in the healthcare sector.

iNatural Ltd, based at the University's Science Park, specialises in the production and characterisation of biosynthetic polymeric materials for biomedical applications.

Reflecting on the prize win, Dr Gupta said: "Competing against some of the brightest minds and most innovative ideas was both a challenge and an inspiration. Securing second place validated the hard work, passion, and vision we've poured into our project.

"The recognition affirmed that we are on the right path, but it also left us hungry to aim even

higher. Finishing second isn't just a milestone, it's a stepping stone towards future success.

"Winning this prize will allow us to expand our team's capabilities, strengthen collaborations with key stakeholders and invest in the resources needed to bring our solutions closer to market.

"Every pound is an opportunity to innovate, test, and refine, and this prize represents not just financial support but a vote of confidence in our vision.

"Ultimately, this milestone empowers us to make tangible strides toward creating a meaningful impact in the biomedical sector. We're excited to channel this support into driving progress and bringing our innovative ideas to life."

On the future targets for iNatural Ltd, Dr Gupta said: "Our ambition is to bring our innovations to market, making them accessible to healthcare providers and patients worldwide. We also aim to continue pushing the boundaries of biomedical research, exploring new frontiers in personalised medicine and sustainable healthcare technologies.

"Above all, our goal is to create a lasting impact — transforming lives through science and innovation while establishing a company that leads with purpose and integrity. The journey is just a beginning, and we're excited for what's ahead."

Advice for new parents who could get their first payment before Christmas

Get your Child Benefit claim wrapped up

HM Revenue and Customs (HMRC) reveals more than one million families have claimed Child Benefit using the new digital service launched earlier this year. New parents are reminded if they claim online or through the HMRC app, they could get their payment in time for their baby's first Christmas.

Child Benefit is worth £1,331 a year for the first child and £881 a year for each additional child. It can be claimed online at GOV.UK or via the HMRC app just 48 hours after registering

a baby's birth and parents typically receive their first payment within 3 working days.

Parents are opting to claim for Child Benefit digitally because it is quick and simple to do. Latest figures show 87% of new claims each month are via the app or online — ensuring more parents are getting their cash quicker.

Downloading the free HMRC app makes managing claims even easier too.

Families can use the app to track payments and update their details on

the go — from changing their address or bank details, to seeing when their next payment is landing.

Myrtle Lloyd, HMRC's Director General for Customer Services, said: "Having a baby is a busy and expensive time but claiming Child Benefit online or via the app means you'll get cash in your bank account as soon as possible. Claim now and you could get your first payment in time for your baby's first Christmas. Download the HMRC app today."

Claims can be backdated by up to 12 weeks, so the sooner families claim, the better. Child Benefit is typically paid every 4 weeks.

There's more to Child Benefit than just payments though, as claimants receive National Insurance (NI) credits which count toward their future eligibility for the State Pension. This can help people who are not in paid employment and not receiving NI credits through their employer or other routes, such as Universal Credit.

Claiming Child Benefit also makes sure the child automatically gets their National Insurance number when they turn 16.

Visit: www.gov.uk/child-benefit/how-to-claim for more information.

To get started, parents will need to create an online account for HMRC services. To make a claim, families will need:

- child's birth or adoption certificate
- bank details
- National Insurance number for themselves and their partner, if they have one
- child's original birth or adoption certificate and passport or travel document, for children born outside the UK





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VAN SALES



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Fortnite to refund millions

What parents in the UK need to know

Gaming expert Adam Jones from Host Havoc weighs in on epic games' settlement

Epic Games, the developer of the globally popular game Fortnite, is set to refund millions of pounds to parents following a legal settlement.

This stems from concerns over in-game purchases made by children without parental consent and inadequate safeguards to prevent such transactions.

This landmark settlement offers affected families an opportunity to reclaim lost funds. According to Adam Jones, a gaming expert at Host Havoc, this is a vital moment for

parents to reassess their children's gaming habits and protect their finances.

The settlement brings attention to the growing risks in "freemium" games, where purchases are heavily integrated into gameplay.

Adam Jones' Gaming expert from Host Havoc says: "This settlement highlights a crucial issue: gaming companies must prioritise consumer protection. Families shouldn't have to shoulder unexpected financial burdens due to unintentional or deceptive purchases.

"I urge parents to use this opportunity to learn more about parental controls and educate their children about the value of money in digital spaces. Responsible gaming starts with awareness and proactive measures."

Families who experienced unauthorised charges by minors, are eligible for the refunds, as are individuals who reported fraudulent transactions but were denied refunds. This also includes players who felt "tricked" into making purchases due to unclear or misleading practices.

Key Takeaways for Parents in the UK

Refund Details: Epic Games will refund families for unauthorised in-game purchases. Refund eligibility requires proof of unauthorised spending, with claims reviewed on a case-by-case basis.

How to Claim

Parents can file claims directly on the official Fortnite refund portal: <https://www.fortniterefund.com/file-a-claim?portalid=0>. Clear guidance on documentation required and deadlines for claims is available on the portal.

Tips for parents to prevent future issues

- **Enable Parental Controls:** Platforms like Fortnite allow parents to limit in-game purchases or disable them entirely.
- **Monitor Accounts Regularly:** Keep an eye on linked payment methods and gaming activity.
- **Discuss Responsible Gaming:** Help children understand the real-world impact of in-game purchases.



Expert answers the most searched **Zakat** questions

Zakat is a key part of the Islamic faith, however, some people may have questions on the topic.

With 8.2K monthly searches for 'Zakat', UK charity National Zakat Foundation (NZF) has conducted research to find some of the most searched questions around Zakat, which have been answered by their CEO Dr Sohail Hanif.



What is Zakat?

"Zakat is the third pillar of Islam and a key part of the Islamic socio-economic system. It is a mandatory annual payment made by Muslims to give 2.5% of their surplus wealth to support the underprivileged in society.

By giving part of their wealth as Zakat, Muslims perform a religious duty, cleansing their wealth in the eyes of God, and helping to uplift the faith and standard of life of the entire Muslim community."

How to calculate Zakat?

"To calculate your Zakat, you must first work out the value of your net assets. Then take off what you owe before checking if your assets are equal to, or exceed, the Nisab value. You then work out 2.5% to get your Zakat amount.

There are handy Zakat calculator tools that you can use to calculate the amount of Zakat you need to pay."

Who is eligible for Zakat?

"Islamic teachings outline eight specific categories of people who are eligible to receive Zakat. These include the poor, the needy, those employed to collect and administrate Zakat, those reconciling hearts, those freeing slaves, those in debt, for the cause of Allah, and the stranded traveller."

Who is not eligible for Zakat?

"The recipient must not belong to your immediate family including your spouse, children, parents and grandparents. However, other relatives can receive your Zakat if they are eligible to take Zakat.

Zakat also can't be given to the rich, unless they are among the workers of Zakat, non-Muslims or the family of the Prophet (peace be upon him)."

Why is Zakat important?

"Zakat is a fundamental pillar of Islam. Therefore, it is an important duty to incorporate into the purpose of the everyday life of a Muslim, along with the other sacred pillars.

Zakat aims to purify the wealth of a Muslim, help to ensure the re-distribution of wealth, relieve suffering and strengthen the Muslim community."

Difference between Zakat and Sadaqah?

"While both Zakat and Sadaqah involve Islamic charitable giving, they are different in their own respects, with all actions of righteousness in Islam being considered as Sadaqah.

Zakat is obligatory upon every Muslim, whereas Sadaqah is an encouraged, voluntary deed. Zakat is to be paid once a year, while Sadaqah can be performed at any time. Zakat is also a fixed amount, however, with Sadaqah, a Muslim can donate as much or as little as they wish."

When is Zakat due?

"The moment your wealth equals or surpasses Nisab, that will initiate a new year for Zakat. You will then see a year after this new date whether your wealth equals or surpasses the Nisab.

Zakat can be pre-paid before your Zakat anniversary, however, if you do pay early, you still need to work out your Zakat due on your Zakat anniversary to ensure you've paid the right amount. Some people choose to pay their Zakat during Ramadan, although this is not necessary and can be paid all year round."

Can Zakat be given to non-Muslims?

"Most scholars agree that Zakat is to be paid and received by Muslims only. However, these rules are not restricted to other acts of charity to help non-Muslims in need such as Sadaqah which can be given to anyone."

What is Nisab of Zakat?

"The Nisab is the minimum amount of wealth a Muslim must possess before they become eligible to pay Zakat. This amount is often referred to as the Nisab threshold. Gold and silver are the two values used to calculate the Nisab threshold, however, as silver or gold is not used as a monetary exchange in today's day and age, you need to find out the equivalent of the rates in your local currency when calculating your Zakat. This can be done by checking the market rate of gold and silver."

Who has to give Zakat?

"Anyone who's a sane, adult Muslim is expected to give Zakat if they have the minimum amount of wealth."



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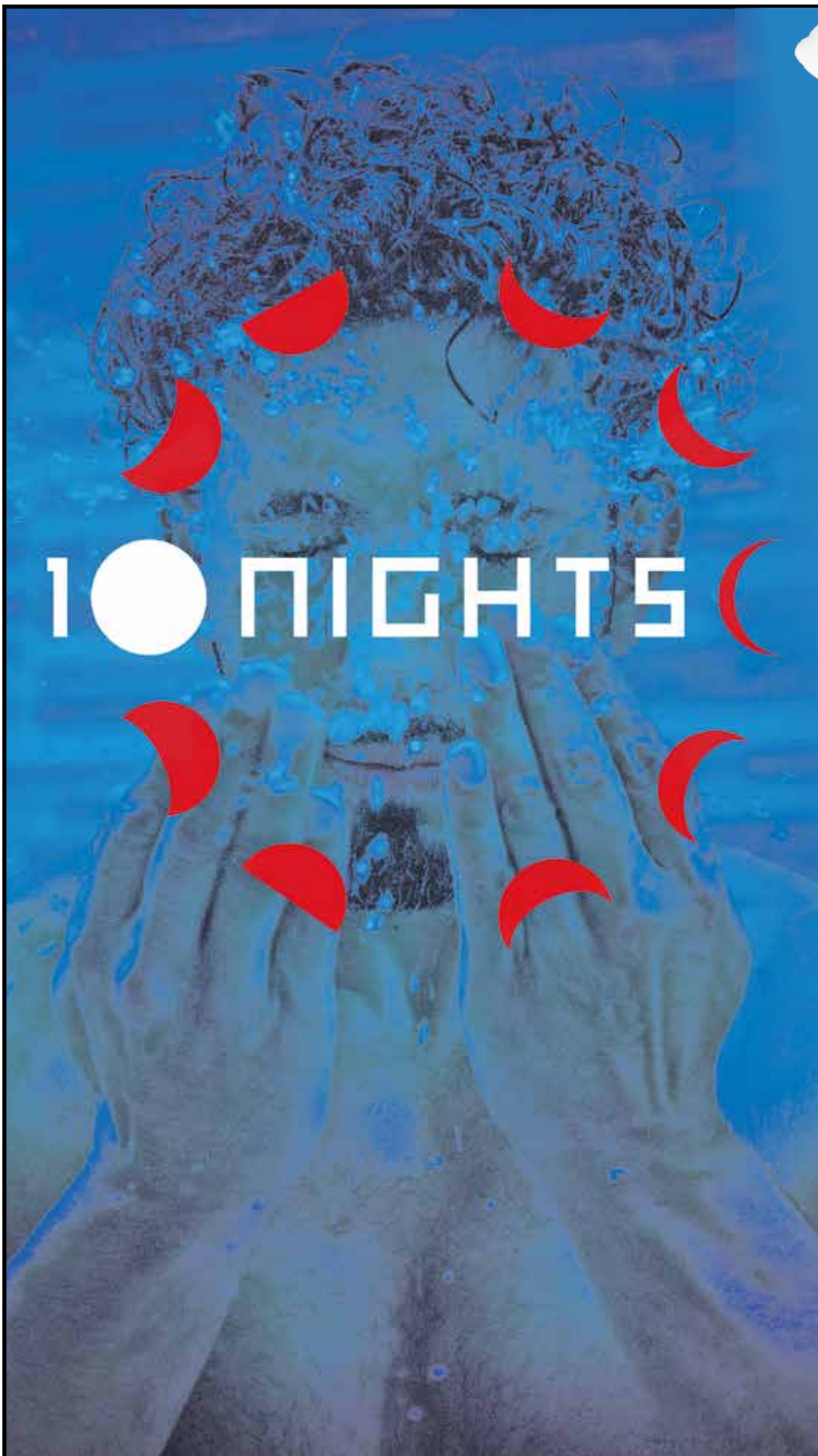
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Entertainment

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10 NIGHTS

Return of award-winning, heartfelt and humorous play that explores faith, community, and self-discovery

Phizzical Productions has just announced the return of Shahid Iqbal Khan's Olivier Award-nominated play '10 Nights', which will open at Riverside Studios on Wednesday 8 January 2025, ahead of a UK tour.

Sâmira Bhamra directs Adeel Ali in this heartfelt and humorous one-man play exploring themes of faith, community, and self-discovery.

When Yasser decides to take part in 'Itikaf' - spending the last ten nights of Ramadan in quiet reflection at a mosque, he encounters unexpected challenges.

Between navigating communal spaces, the quirks of his fellow worshippers, and cravings for chunky chips, Yasser's journey becomes one of reckoning with hidden truths about himself and his

relationships.

This gentle and powerful story blends humour and poignancy, offering a touching portrayal of a young man trying to reconcile his faith, personal struggles, and aspirations. At its heart, the play is a coming-of-age story about fractured friendships and a community striving to live with dignity, hope, and unity.

Shahid Iqbal Khan, writer of 10 Nights, said: "2024 began beautifully with Phizzical Productions' gorgeous production of 10 Nights.

"I am looking forward to their remount once more in 2025. It has become a festive tradition to watch 10 Nights while the month of Ramadan is nigh.

Continued on page 26

10 NIGHTS

Return of award-winning, heartfelt and humorous play that explores faith, community, and self-discovery

Continued from page 25

“I love that the 2025 tour will go even further north this time to places like Huddersfield and Greater Manchester. I am excited to see Adeel Ali in the role of Yasser - I can't wait to see what he comes up with!”

The role of Yasser will be performed by Adeel Ali, a versatile and classically trained actor with a breadth of experience across stage and screen.

Adeel has brought to life a diverse range of characters, from Shakespearean roles to contemporary works like Atiha Sen Gupta's *What Fatima Did*, appearing at major UK theatres. His screen credits include a recurring role in the upcoming series *The Family Man* and appearances in feature films such as *Jawani Jaaneman*.

Adeel Ali said: “I am thrilled to be cast in '10 Nights', a phenomenal play that will allow me to portray different characters, reflecting society, understanding religion, and celebrating a time of togetherness of community.”

Director Sâmir Bhamra added: “10 Nights is about more than just theatre - it's the kind of British Asian story we need right now - human, relatable, and unapologetically real, that truly reflects our diverse society.

“Shahid's play dismantles stereotypes about Muslim men with warmth, grace, and humour and I am delighted that our venue partners are working with us to welcome communities who have been constantly ignored.”

The voice and text coach is Salvatore Sorce, costume design for 10 Nights is by Simron Sabri, sound design is by Sarah Sayeed and Reuben Cook, video production is by Rudi Okasili-Henry with lighting design by Rajiv Pattani, movement direction by Hamza Ali with Samina Ali as creative producer.

2025 TOUR DATES

Wed 8 – Sun 26 January

RIVERSIDE STUDIOS

101 Queen Caroline Street, Hammersmith,
London W6 9BN

Visit <https://riversidestudios.co.uk/see-and-do/10-nights-137618/>

Mon 27 – Tue 28 January

DERBY THEATRE

15 Theatre Walk, St Peter's Quarter,
Derby DE1 2NF

Visit <https://derbytheatre.co.uk/event/10-nights/>

Thu 30 January – Sat 1 February

THE LOWRY

Pier 8, The Quays, Salford M50 3AZ

Visit <https://thelowry.com/whats-on/138//10-nights>

Tue 4 – Wed 5 February

LAWRENCE BATLEY THEATRE

Queen's Square, Queen St, Huddersfield HD1 2SP

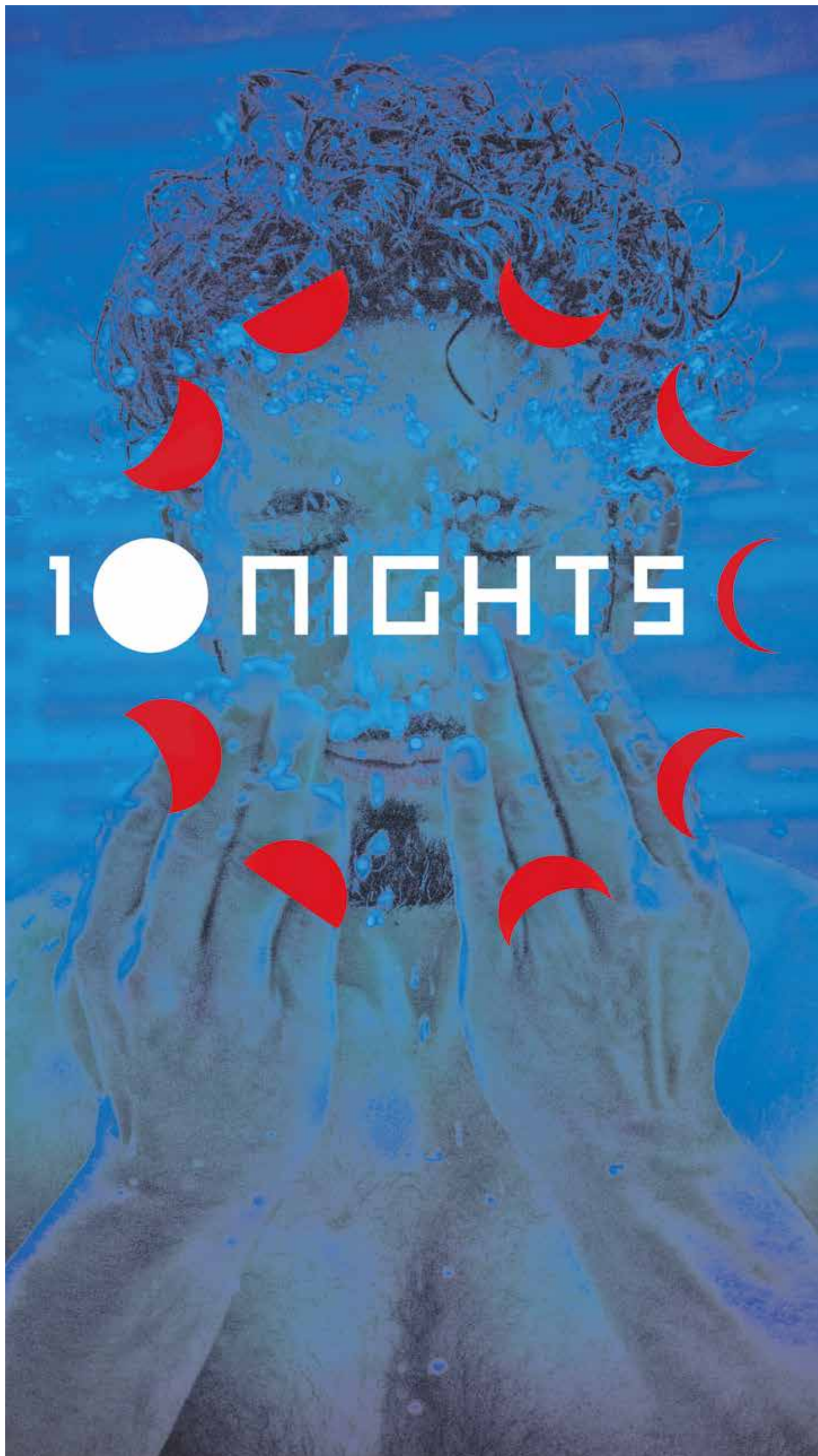
Visit <https://www.thelbt.org/what-s-on/drama/10-nights/>

Thu 6 – Sat 8 February

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Visit <https://www.birminghamhippodrome.com/calendar/ten-nights/>



WHAT'S ON

in cinemas this month



Mufasa: The Lion King

Starring: Aaron Pierre, Kelvin Harrison Jr., Seth Rogen, Billy Eichner, John Kani, Mads Mikkelsen, Thandiwe Newton, Blue Ivy Carter, Beyoncé Knowles-Carter, Keith David, Anika Noni Rose, Donald Glover, Lennie James, Tiffany Boone, Preston Nyman

Director: Barry Jenkins

Cert: TBC

Genre: Animation/Family/Adventure

Release Date: 20/12/2024

'Mufasa: The Lion King' enlists Rafiki to relay the legend of Mufasa to young lion cub Kiara, daughter of Simba and Nala, with Timon and Pumbaa lending their signature schtick.

Told in flashbacks, the story introduces Mufasa as an orphaned cub, lost and alone until he meets a sympathetic lion named Taka - the heir to a royal bloodline.

The chance meeting sets in motion an expansive journey of an extraordinary group of misfits searching for their destiny - their bonds will be tested as they work together to evade a threatening and deadly foe.

WHAT'S ON

in cinemas this month



Paddington in Peru

Starring: Olivia Colman, Emily Mortimer, Antonio Banderas, Ben Whishaw, Jim Broadbent, Imelda Staunton, Hugh Bonneville, Julie Walters, Madeleine Harris, Samuel Joslin, Carla Tous
Director: Dougal Wilson **Cert:** PG
Genre: Comedy/Family
Release Date: 8/11/2024

Paddington in Peru brings Paddington back home to the Peruvian jungle to visit his beloved Aunt Lucy, now a resident at the Home for Retired Bears. With the Brown Family and Mrs Bird in

tow, a thrilling adventure ensues when a mysterious disappearance plunges them into a n unexpected journey from the Amazon rainforest to the mountain peaks of Peru.

Wicked

Starring: Cynthia Erivo, Ariana Grande, Jonathan Bailey, Marissa Bode, Ethan Slater, Michelle Yeoh, Jeff Goldblum, Keala Settle, Bronwyn James, Bowen Yang, Peter Dinklage
Director: Jon M. Chu **Cert:** PG
Genre: Fantasy/Musical
Release Date: 22/11/2024

Wicked, the untold story of the witches of Oz, stars Emmy, Grammy and Tony winning powerhouse Cynthia Erivo (Harriet, Broadway's The Color Purple) as Elphaba, a young woman, misunderstood because of her unusual green skin, who has yet to discover her true power, and Grammy-winning, multi-platinum recording artist and global superstar Ariana Grande as Glinda, a popular young woman, gilded by privilege and ambition, who has yet to discover her true heart.

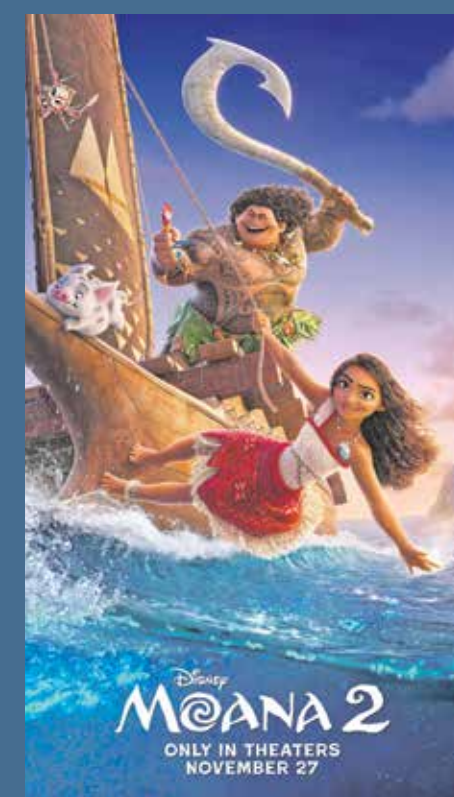
The two meet as students at Shiz University in the fantastical Land of Oz and forge an unlikely but profound friendship. Following an encounter with The Wonderful Wizard of Oz, their friendship reaches a crossroads and their lives take very different paths. Glinda's unflinching desire for popularity sees her seduced by power, while Elphaba's determination to remain true to herself, and to those around her, will have unexpected and shocking consequences on her future. Their extraordinary adventures in Oz will ultimately see them fulfill their destinies as Glinda the Good and the Wicked Witch of the West.



Moana 2

Starring: Dwayne Johnson, Auli'i Cravalho, Alan Tudyk, Rachel House, Temuera Morrison, Nicole Scherzinger, Rose Matafeo
Director: Dave Derrick Jr.
Cert: TBC
Genre: Animation/Family/Musical
Release Date: 29/11/2024

Walt Disney Animation Studios' epic animated musical "Moana 2" takes audiences on an expansive new voyage with Moana, Maui and a brand-new crew of unlikely seafarers. After receiving an unexpected call from her way-finding ancestors, Moana must journey to the far seas of Oceania and into dangerous, long-lost waters for an adventure unlike anything she's ever faced. Directed by Dave Derrick



Jr. with music by Grammy® winners Abigail Barlow and Emily Bear, Grammy nominee Opetia Foa'i, and three-time Grammy winner Mark Mancina, "Moana 2" opens in theaters on Nov. 27, 2024.



Red One

Starring: Dwayne Johnson, Chris Evans, Lucy Liu, Bonnie Hunt, Kristofer Hivju, Kiernan Shipka, Mary Elizabeth Ellis, Wesley Kimmel, Nick Kroll
Director: Jake Kasdan
Cert: 12A
Genre: Action/Comedy/
Family
Release Date: 6/11/2024

After a villain kidnaps Santa from the North Pole, an E.L.F (Extremely Large and Formidable) operative (Dwayne Johnson) must partner with the world's most accomplished tracker (Chris Evans) to find Santa and save Christmas.



Conclave

Starring: Ralph Fiennes, Merab Ninidze, Isabella Rossellini, Brian F. O'Byrne, Lucian Msamati, Sergio Castellitto, Carlos Diehz, John Lithgow, Stanley Tucci
Director: Edward Berger
Cert: 12A
Genre: Thriller
Release Date: 29/12/2024

'Conclave' follows one of the world's most secretive and ancient events – selecting the new Pope. Cardinal Lawrence (Ralph Fiennes) is tasked with running this covert process after the unexpected death of the beloved Pope.

Once the Catholic Church's most powerful leaders have gathered from around the world and are locked together in the Vatican halls, Lawrence uncovers a trail of deep secrets left in the dead Pope's wake, secrets which could shake the foundations of the Church.



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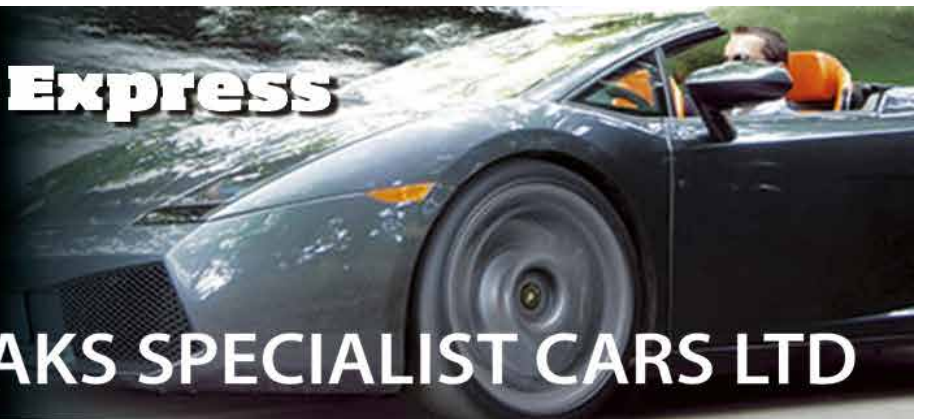
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McLaren 750S named 'Performance Car of the Year'

The McLaren 750S has won Top Gear Magazine's Performance Car of the Year at the annual Top Gear Awards, with McLaren being presented with the trophy at the awards event held in London.

The award is presented to the winner of Top Gear Magazine's annual Speed Week event, which gathers the year's best performance cars, as rated by the publication, for a week-long test on road and track.

The 750S was tested on the Navarra circuit in northern Spain before heading to the picturesque and challenging roads in the Pamplona region, along with other Speed Week finalists.

The 750S was crowned Speed Week winner after impressing the Top Gear judges, who were vocal in their praise of the 750S' abilities on road and track, particularly its huge performance, scintillating driver feedback and

connection, engaging character and strong quality.

These achievements informed the reasoning behind the 750S taking victory expressed by Top Gear's writers: "Very few cars engage your senses like the 750S – not because of any vices, but simply because the forces coming at you are so alien. It is outrageously fast and agile, it communicates so clearly and it's so willing to adjust its line and angle of attack according to driver inputs. There's shock and awe but also fingertip subtlety."

Top Gear Magazine, December 2024: "Thank you to Top Gear for naming the McLaren 750S its Performance Car of the Year. This award is recognition of its incredible performance and class-leading supercar credentials. The verdict is also testament to McLaren's determination to consistently push boundaries and beat our own exceptional benchmarks in driver exhilaration and desirability."



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Pinnacle of luxury

KAHN commissioned for the Ineos Grenadier Grandmaster

Following the success of the Series II Expedition Grenadier, The Chelsea Truck Company proudly unveils its latest Ineos transformation—The Grandmaster.

This exclusive model redefines luxury, elevating the Grenadier to unprecedented standards of sophistication, comfort, and style.

Commissioned through the renowned KAHN® design house, The Grandmaster offers a masterful blend of clean, bold design and exquisite craftsmanship.

Premium materials and meticulous detailing elevate this Ineos to the pinnacle of the luxury 4x4 market, setting a new benchmark in refined off-road elegance

Premium materials and meticulous detailing elevate this Ineos to the pinnacle of the luxury 4x4 market, setting a new benchmark in refined off-road elegance.

Where the Series II Expedition showcased a bold, rugged spirit ready for any terrain, The Grandmaster captures

that same soul but with a refined, more road-focused aesthetic that embodies the OEM+ philosophy of design.

Crafted for those who favour luxury and sophistication over wilderness exploration, The Grandmaster seamlessly merges performance with elegance.

Signature exterior details, like wide wings and wheel arches, now boast a satin body finish with exposed carbon fibre accents for a subtle yet striking look. The utilitarian front and rear bumpers feature refined colour splits, creating seamless harmony with the Grenadier's original design.

This exclusive prototype also debuts a Central Roof Light with integrated LED light, drawing inspiration from Formula 1 air intakes for an aerodynamic, high-performance edge. This F1-inspired feature not only enhances functionality but also pays homage to Ineos's distinguished history within Formula 1.

Inside, the cabin has been completely reimagined with our exclusive comfort leather interior, elegantly finished in Volcanic Blue.

The bespoke Italian Nappa leather upholstery delivers a seamless blend of luxury and comfort, providing an experience as indulgent as it is refined.

The Grandmaster stands as the ultimate expression of sophistication—the most luxurious and distinguished Ineos Grenadier on the road today.



The Grandmaster features

- Exterior Specification:
- Exposed Carbon Fibre Dakar Central Lamp Grille
- 3-Piece Front Outer Grille
- 3-Piece Front Bumper Valance in Carbon Fibre
- 40mm Wide Wheel Arches in Exposed Carbon
- Wide Wings with integrated Bolt Apertures in Exposed Carbon Fibre
- Central Roof Light with integrated LED Light in Exposed Carbon Fibre
- Alpine Window Covers
- Large Upper Roof Wing
- 3-Piece Rear Bumper Valance in Carbon Fibre
- Chelsea Truck Co. Hard Spare Wheel Cover in Piano Black
- 100mm Crosshair Exhaust System In Satin Black
- 9x20" Mondial Retro Deep Concave RS-Forged Light Alloy Wheels in Satin Black
- 35" All Terrain Tyres
- Satin Body Colour Coded Paint
- Gloss Black Contrast Roof
- Exposed Carbon Fibre Details

Interior Spec

- Front Seats Upholstered in Volcanic Blue Nappa Leather with CTC Branding
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- The Ineos Grenadier Grandmaster brings together formidable engineering and sophisticated luxury, highlighting Chelsea Truck Co's mission to enhance the 4x4 market and elevating the 4x4 experience. This vehicle blends the practicality of the Ineos Grenadier with KAHN's signature craftsmanship.

• Every detail shows a dedication to excellence that never wavers. The Grandmaster is more than just a vehicle—it's a statement of prestige that combines classic heritage with modern elegance. It proves that luxury, performance, and design can come together naturally, turning every drive into something special.



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Behind the gaze of the Cupra Terramar

The brand's unmistakable three-triangle light signature shines brightly and stands out from the crowd, illuminating the road ahead. Over and above their design, these headlamps are the result of painstaking research and development that positions the model as a top-of-the-range vehicle.

“With its 25,000 pixels and high-definition Matrix LED Ultra technology, the CUPRA Terramar has achieved the highest standards of light output” explains Magnolia Paredes, head of Lighting Electronic Development at CUPRA. These are the keys behind the CUPRA Terramar's gaze.

One of the biggest innovations is the automatic Glare-free High Beam function, which detects oncoming traffic or cars in front and shields them to prevent glare, all without reducing visibility on other areas of the road.

“Our technology works with millimetre precision thanks to the compartmentalisation of the light emitted by the LEDs into twelve separate segments” says Maite Paris, head of Headlight Development at CUPRA.

“Starting at 30 km/h and with the high beam activated and in automatic mode, these light sectors intelligently regulate themselves and switch off independently, adapting to the needs of the

road” she adds.

In the precise location where the system detects another user, this creates a shadow that eliminates glare while still lighting up the surrounding areas.

Equipped with high-definition technology, the low beams offer further innovative lighting functions. For example, on roads with more than three lanes, the Lane Light Basic Function comes into play.

Meanwhile, the Lane Line Indicator Function aims to facilitate lane changes, with a more powerful line of light on one side or the other, synchronised with the indicator signals. But the driving assistance of the headlights doesn't end there - there's also a Lane Change Assist, which works in coordination with the car's Side Assist.

Other lighting innovations range from the Coming/Leaving Home Ceremonies, which project animations onto the surface in front of the vehicle when opening and closing the door, to the Orientation Light Basic Function, which displays lines on the ground that correspond to the vehicle's width, making it easier for the driver to navigate very narrow roads.

The CUPRA Terramar is equipped with all these breakthroughs in lighting technology, and they'll soon also be available on the new CUPRA Leon and Formentor.

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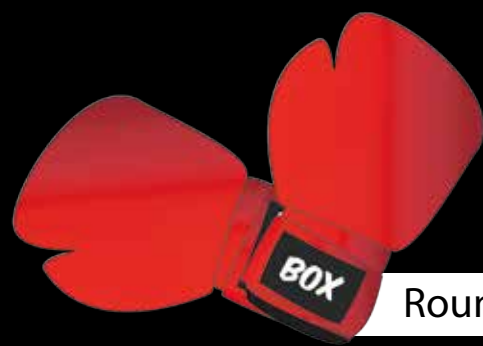
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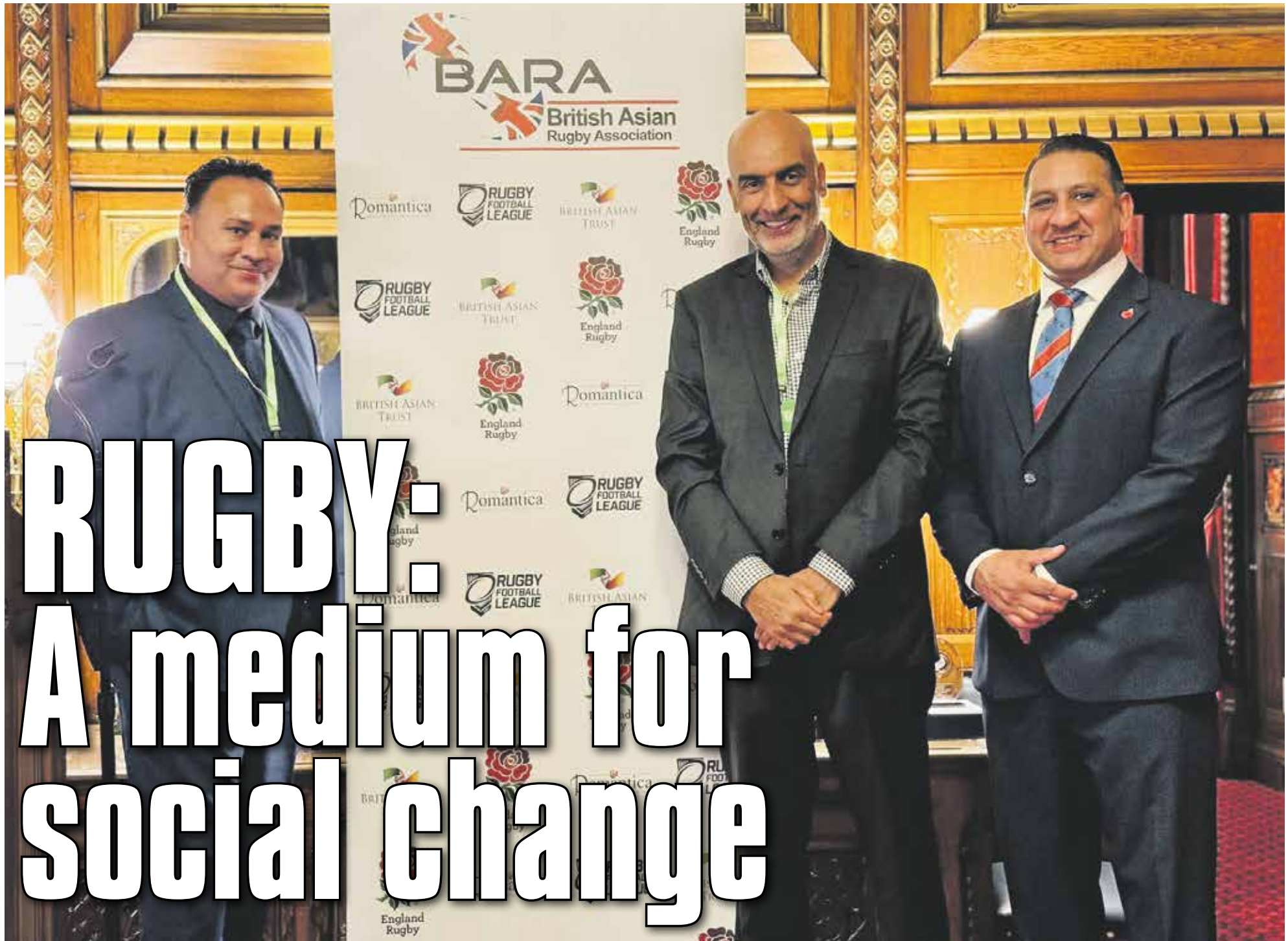


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British Asian Rugby Awards take place in Parliament highlighting achievements of individuals and organisations

The British Asian Rugby Association C.I.C. (BARA) held its inaugural British Asian Rugby Awards in the Palace of Westminster; honouring achievements of British South Asians in rugby, highlighting their contributions and driving positive change.
Dr Ikram Butt, BARA founder and the first British Asian to represent England in either code of rugby, stated: "The British Asian Rugby Awards are a landmark moment to recognise the success of South Asians who have

inspired others, transformed perceptions, and impacted their communities."
"BARA has always sought to use rugby as a medium for social change and cultural understanding, fostering community cohesion.
"At a time when society faces challenges like race riots and Islamophobia, sports can unite people, break down prejudices, and promote a sense of belonging.

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British Asian Rugby Awards take place in Parliament highlighting achievements of individuals and organisations

RUGBY: A medium for social change



Continued from page 37

“This milestone moment not only recognises the achievements of South Asians in rugby but also underscores the power of sport to unite communities and challenge societal divides.

“Hosting this event in Parliament demonstrates the importance of inclusivity and the growing acknowledgment of representation in sport.

“As BARA approaches its 20th anniversary next year, this inaugural awards evening lays

the foundation for continued progress, ensuring South Asian representation thrives in rugby for generations to come.”

Stephanie Peacock, Minister for Sport, Media, Civil Society, and Youth, praised BARA’s efforts in her message of support: “Like all sport, rugby has the power to change lives and bring communities closer together. I’d like to pay tribute to all those honoured tonight and to the British Asian Rugby Association for their fantastic work promoting diversity and representation across both

codes.”

Sir Lindsay Hoyle, Speaker of the House, commented: “It is a privilege to host the British Asian Rugby Awards in Speaker’s House.

“This event is a testament to the growing representation and success of British South Asians in rugby. Such an initiative celebrates athletic achievement and highlights the power of sport in fostering unity, respect, and diversity in our society. I commend BARA for their dedication to inclusivity in rugby and am honoured to support their efforts.”



Winners

- Rising Star Award – **Nimrah Gul (Halifax Panthers)**
- Outstanding Talent Award – **Hamza Butt (Wigan Warriors)**
- Excellence in Schools Awards – **Parkinson Lane Primary & Olive Tree Primary**
- Inclusion Awards – **Manjinder Nagra & Beena Chadha**
- Grassroots Excellence Awards – **Mick Johal & Humayun Islam B.E.M.**
- Professional Club Awards – **Huddersfield Giants & Bradford Bulls**
- Coach of Excellence Award – **Navneet Sembi**
- Community Excellence Awards – **Zeinab Drabu & Starr Zaman**
- International Excellence Award – **Nasser Hussain**



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Mural tribute planned for city's unsung sports stars

A record-breaking local swimmer and a legendary Leeds Paralympian are among the city's unsung sporting heroes set to be honoured in series of eye-catching new murals.

Doris Storey, who smashed the record for the 220yds breaststroke in 1938, and Kadeena Cox, who has brought home a remarkable string of Paralympic gold medals in sprinting and cycling, have been chosen by a panel of volunteers to be commemorated in the exciting new arts project.

They will be joined by a tribute to the Leeds Caribbean Cricket Club, which became the first club of its kind in the UK when it was established in 1948, as well as murals depicting the city's rich dance heritage and its new wave of skateboarding

stars.

And the search is now on to find the perfect spot for each artwork, with project bosses appealing for local businesses and venues to come forward to host one of the colourful creations.

Each of the subjects were chosen by a panel of volunteers working with Leeds Museums and Galleries as part of the On the Pitch, Off the Pitch project, which aims to explore some of the city's lesser-known sporting triumphs and how they link with the city's museum collection.

Made possible by a £210,665 grant from The National Lottery Heritage Fund through their Dynamic Collections programme, the project will also record a series of sporting interviews which will become part of the museum collection.

Leeds Museums and Galleries' project curator Catherine Robins said: "Discovering the stories behind these remarkable individuals, teams and sports has been an absolutely fascinating journey for the group and has really helped us all understand more about the unsung sports stars who have blazed a trail for others over the decades.

"Seeing their legacy honoured by these new artworks will be a very proud moment for us and for the city. We'd love to hear from any buildings, businesses or venues who think they'd be a fitting place to host a mural and who might be able to help us create a lasting tribute to these incredible Leeds stories."

Sporting murals already in place around Leeds include a stunning tribute to former

Leeds United manager Marcelo Bielsa in Hyde Park, a mural honouring Leeds Rhinos legend Rob Burrow on the side of Leeds Beckett University, and an artwork of former world champion boxer Josh Warrington under the A58 flyover.

Councillor Salma Arif, Leeds City Council's executive member for adult social care, active lifestyles and culture, said: "Leeds has its own completely unique sporting story which has been written by those individuals and competitors who have blazed a trail through history.

"It's great to see local volunteers and our museums working to ensure some of our city's unsung sporting heroes are recognised so they can inspire future generations of Leeds athletes."



Footballer Rahman dreams of playing at the highest level

After suffering a health setback, which sidelined an aspiring footballer for twelve months, in August 2024 returned to training and was signed up with Coppull United FC. He now intends on playing professionally.

The Rochdale-born footballer represented Burnley's Youth team from 2018 to 2021. Rahman also trained with Jack Wilshere's NCF Elites London between 2018 and 2019.

He says: "At Burnley's Youth team, it was a great opportunity for my development. I learnt new things from great coaches and it definitely improved me as a player".

He says "For me, it was a great chance to develop as a player, play alongside amazing players and receive some of the best coaching available. It was one of the best experiences of my life. I gained experience and knowledge that will help me in the years to come."

Rahman also represented Panjab FA in a historical match against Barry Town United on June 2019. He comments: "I am grateful to the coaches for giving me the opportunity to have represented Panjab FA. It was an amazing experience playing against a team who had just qualified for the Europa league at the time."

Rahman then joined Bolton County FC in 2021 till 2023, when he had his health setback. He says "A tough period overall. I definitely needed to look at things and I question myself, you know, in terms of improving and my development."

Now that he's back on form, he now looks to climb the football ladder, in a sport where his dreams lie. Rahman says: "Anything is possible. If you work hard, have faith, give it your best shot - the sky is the limit. There's ups and downs but it's important to stay strong during the tough periods."



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Embarking on an epic 550 Km desert ride to save children with heart defects

A team of cyclists will once again undertake an awe-inspiring 550-kilometre journey from Mecca to Medina to raise vital funds for children suffering from Congenital Heart Defects in Africa.

This is the fourth annual challenge for the H&K Cycle Club in East London, which sees the team aiming to raise an unprecedented £500,000, building on the £350,000 they have already secured through past rides.

This gruelling expedition will push the cyclists through the heart of the Saudi desert, where they will brave headwinds, scorching 40°C heat, and over 550 kilometres of rugged terrain.

For many riders, this marks their fourth ride between these iconic cities, bringing their collective total to over 2,000 kilometres ridden under some of the harshest cycling

conditions on earth.

Shamsul Abdin, Head of H&K Cycle Club, commented: "This ride goes far beyond a test of endurance. Every kilometre symbolises hope and life for children in critical need.

"I am incredibly proud of the team - many of whom have dedicated themselves to this journey year after year. With each push of the pedal, we are funding life-saving surgeries for children who otherwise may not survive. It's the strength of these children that drives us forward through the most challenging moments."

The route, first conquered by the H&K Cycle Club in 2022, has only ever been completed by this team. They have faced unrelenting desert heat, crowded highways, brutal headwinds and the exhaustion that comes from cycling for days in extreme conditions.

Yet, the goal - saving children's

lives - makes the hardship worth enduring, they say.

Funds raised from the event will support Muntada Aid's Little Hearts project, a vital initiative that has been transforming lives since its founding in 2012.

Little Hearts delivers free, life-saving surgeries for children from disadvantaged backgrounds across Africa and beyond, reaching nearly 3,000 children across 15 countries to date.

Kabir Miah, Programmes Manager at Muntada Aid, added: "The dedication and resilience of the H&K Cycle Club serve as a beacon of hope.

"Every single pound raised provides a fighting chance for a child who may otherwise face a life cut short. This ride isn't just about cycling - it's about giving children a chance to live long and healthy lives."



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