

Come, immerse yourself in lifetime experience: Modi

The Prime Minister 'invites' public to attend Rann Utsav in Gujarat

ANI

New Delhi

Describing Gujarat's Rann Utsav as an "unforgettable experience," Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Saturday urged people to visit Kutch to immerse themselves in a "unique mix of culture, history and breathtaking natural beauty."

In a post on social media, PM Modi wrote "The White Rann beckons! An unforgettable experience awaits! Come, immerse yourself in a unique mix of culture, history and breathtaking natural beauty!"

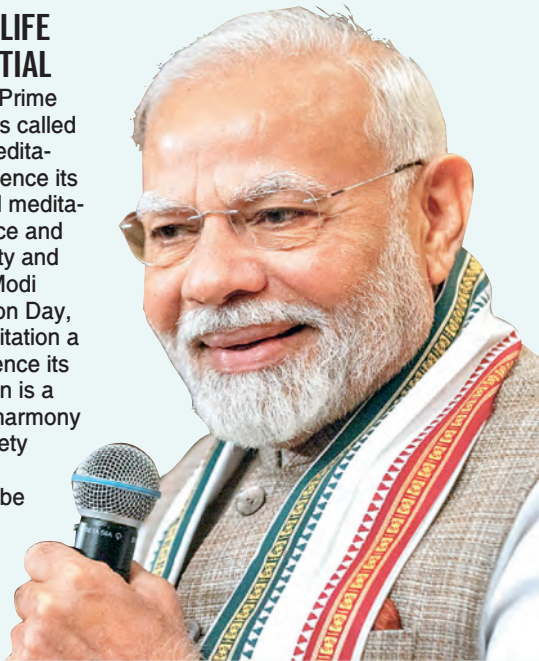
The festival, which began on December 1, 2024, will run until February 28, 2025, with the Tent City remaining open until March.

"Through this post, I am extending my personal invitation to all of you, dynamic, hard-working professionals, and your families to visit Kutch and enjoy the Rann Utsav. This year's Rann Utsav, which commenced on 1st December 2024, will go on till 28th February 2025, wherein the tent city at Rann Utsav will be open till March 2025. I assure you all that Rann Utsav will be a lifetime experience," he added.



MAKE MEDITATION PART OF LIFE AND EXPERIENCE ITS POTENTIAL

On World Meditation Day, Prime Minister Narendra Modi has called upon everyone to make meditation a part of their lives and experience its transformative potential. He called meditation a "powerful way" to bring peace and harmony to one's life and to society and planet Earth. In a post on X, PM Modi stated, "Today, on World Meditation Day, I call upon everyone to make meditation a part of their daily lives and experience its transformative potential. Meditation is a powerful way to bring peace and harmony to one's life, as well as to our society and planet. In the age of technology, Apps and guided videos can be valuable tools to help incorporate meditation into our routines." On December 6, the United Nations General Assembly declared Dec 21 as World Meditation Day.



Cong to hold 7-day campaign seeking Shah's resignation

Opposition demands his resignation for 'insulting' Ambedkar

PTI

New Delhi

The Congress will hold protest marches against Union Home Minister Amit Shah for "insulting" BR Ambedkar and observe a weeklong campaign on the issue, party leaders said on Saturday.

As part of the "Ambedkar Samman Saptah", Congress workers and leaders will hold marches



Congress President Mallikarjun Kharge with party MP Priyanka Gandhi Vadra protesting in Parliament.

and press conferences to remember the legacy of B R Ambedkar, they said.

The Congress and the BJP are at loggerheads over Shah's remarks on

Ambedkar during a debate in Parliament.

AICC general secretary K C Venugopal said party MPs and leaders will hold press conferences at 150 locations across the country on December 22 and 23 and workers will take out protest marches across nation on December 24.

The Congress has also decided to hold a CWC meeting on December 26 in Belagavi to mark 100 years of the 1924 Indian National Congress session, presided over by Mahatma Gandhi.

Shiv Sena (UBT) might go solo for BMC polls: Raut

PTI

Mumbai

Shiv Sena (UBT) leader Sanjay Raut on Saturday hinted that his party might go solo in the Brihanmumbai Municipal Corporation (BMC) election without exiting the Maha Vikas Aghadi.

Raut said party workers were insisting the organisation go solo in the local body polls, as there were more aspirants than for the Lok Sabha or state assembly polls.

"Talks are on between Uddhav Thackeray and other party leaders (about whether to go solo) for the BMC polls," he said.

Guard against those with evil designs towards our progress, says Dhankhar

Agencies

Chandigarh

Cautioning against elements looking to harm the country, Vice President Jagdeep Dhankhar on Saturday said citizens must "guard against people who have evil designs towards our progress".

Presiding over the inaugural session of the 5th Global Alumni Meet 2024 of Panjab University in Chandigarh, Dhankhar, who is ex-officio Chancellor of varsity, said, "As citizens of



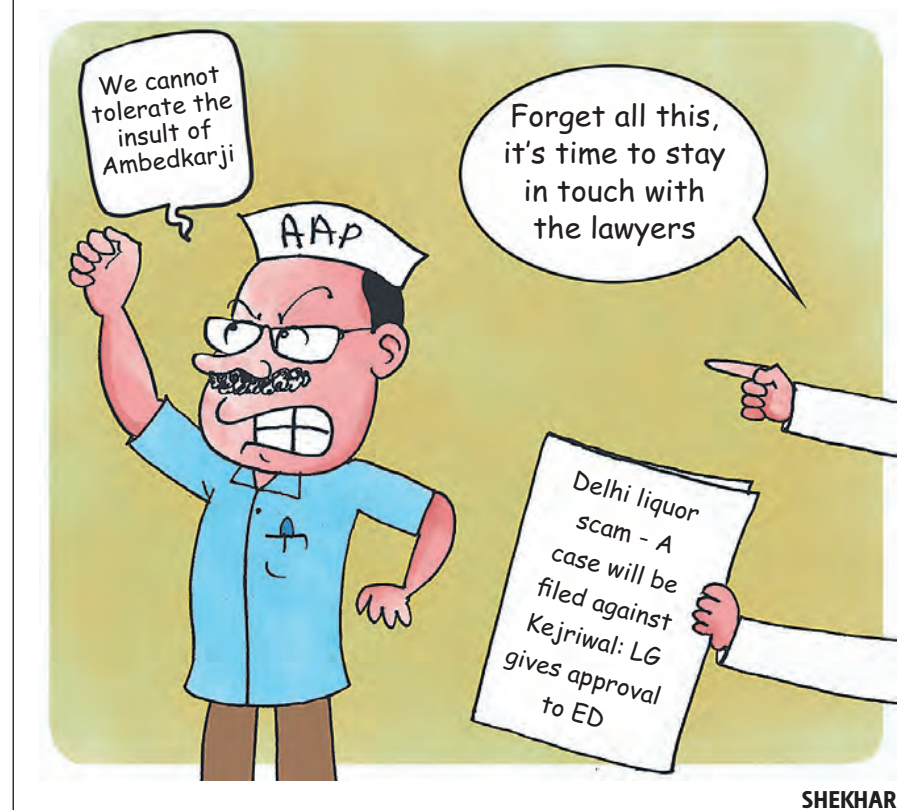
Vice President Jagdeep Dhankhar at Panjab University on Saturday. Also seen is Gujarat Governor Acharya Devvrat.

this country, it is our prime obligation to ensure that we do not allow the disorder to be order of the day. We must guard against people who have inimical instincts, inten-

tions, evil designs towards our progress."

"Such forces are powerful because they are fuelled by fiscal power which is very tempting," he said.

FI TOON



Manipur govt violating constitutional provisions by not holding winter session of assembly: Congress

PTI

Imphal

Senior Congress leader Okram Ibobi Singh on Saturday alleged that the Manipur government was violating provisions of the Constitution by not holding the winter session of the state assembly.

The Congress legislature party leader, while speaking to reporters at Congress Bhawan here, said, "The state government is violating the provisions and articles of the Constitution. As per the rules, three assembly sessions — budget, autumn and winter — must be held



at least once a calendar year. However, for Manipur, the winter session is yet to be summoned and held and the calendar year is almost over now." "Memorandums have been submitted to the governor, the Speaker and the chief minister in this regard yesterday," Singh said.

Memorandums have been submitted to the governor, the Speaker and the chief minister in this regard yesterday, Singh told reporters at the Congress Bhawan in Imphal

"We are compelled to raise this issue because of the failure of democratic institutions to function normally. As an opposition party, we will not remain mute spectators if the government does not discharge its duties timely and responsibly," the former chief minister added.

Mohan Bhagwat meets Boriya Baba in Nagpur



Aishwary Pradhan Nagpur

RSS Chief Mohan Bhagwat paid a courtesy meeting to Aghori Saint Boriya Baba in Nagpur.

Boriya Baba blessed the RSS Chief for the service to the nation. After visiting Govardhan, Boriya Baba traveled to Nagpur by private vehicle from the Chhinna-

masta Peeth in Ranchi.

Over the past week, several BJP representatives and leaders have also paid courtesy visits to Boriya Baba during his stay in Nagpur. According to his Aadhar card, Boriya Baba is around 104 years old. However, according to people from Rajrappa and the saint community, his actual birth was in 1901 in Bangladesh.

ALL FIVE TRADING DAYS END IN RED

Indian stock market caught in the grip of bearish trend, yet again

The Indian stock market once again fell into the grip of a bearish trend last week. All five trading days of the week ended in the red, marking the biggest weekly decline in the past two years. The impact of the downturn is evident from the fact that all sectors on the index showed a decline, with some sectors facing such deep falls that recovery could take time. Foreign Institutional Investors (FII) played a significant role in this decline, as they sold stocks worth ₹15,828.11 crore. On the other hand, Domestic Institutional

Investors (DII) attempted to stabilize the market by buying ₹11,873.92 crore worth of stocks.

The downturn has once again conveyed a crucial message to investors who were riding high on the bullish trend: profits are not just made by the increase in share prices but only when those profits are reflected in the bank account. At present, it is uncertain when the next phase of a bull market will begin, largely due to the ongoing turmoil in international markets. Since the U.S. and Europe will be on holiday during the last week of December for



Christmas, it is assumed that there might not be further sharp declines in the Indian markets. However, the chances of a market recovery in the short term seem equally slim. Traders believe that fluctuations will continue in the remaining days of December, and investors should focus on

companies with strong fundamentals. Whenever possible, they should seize partial investment opportunities. Given the current circumstances, investments made cautiously in the market will provide opportunities to earn profits.

On Friday, the market witnessed such a severe

downturn that even the most patient investors lost their calm. The BSE index recorded a decline of 4,091.52 points (4.98%) and closed at 78,041.59 points. Similarly, the NSE Nifty index dropped by 1,180.80 points (4.77%) and closed at 23,587.50 points.

The decline was also reflected in the midcap and smallcap indices. However, it is noteworthy that these indices closed with slightly lesser losses compared to the main indices, which suggests a potential recovery in the future. In the current situation, expectations are highest from select mid-

cap and largecap stocks.

As for the bullion market, international weakness led to a decline in the prices of gold and silver this week. In Jaipur's Sarafa market last week, the price of 24-carat gold fell by ₹500 per 10 grams, reaching ₹78,300 per 10 grams, compared to ₹78,800 per 10 grams the previous Saturday. Silver also saw a drop of ₹2,500 per kilogram, falling to ₹89,600 per kilogram from ₹92,100 per kilogram last week. Given the potential for instability in international markets and weak demand, further weakness in gold and silver prices is ex-

pected this week.

Traders predict more volatility in the market this week. They suggest that the monthly settlement of futures markets is also approaching, and hence, the market direction will likely become clearer only after December.

Risk-taking investors may consider limited investments in companies like Suzlon, Vishal Mega Mart, Delivery Limited, Indian Hotels, Fcon Infra, NMDC, Chambal Fertilizers, State Bank of India, Sirma SGS Technology, Tata Motors, Tata Power, HAL, among others.

(The views expressed by the author are personal)

EDITORIAL

Karnataka woman minister who has senior BJP leader in a spot is no pushover: Meet Laxmi Hebbalkar

One of the commonly narrated stories about Karnataka Congress leader Laxmi Hebbalkar, 49, when she first emerged as a candidate for the Assembly elections over a decade ago in the Belagavi region, was that she had been identified by the Congress top brass as a leader for the future at a conference of young party leaders. The two-time MLA and Congress loyalist – who lost the state polls in 2013 and the Lok Sabha polls in 2014 from Belagavi – is now the sole woman minister in the Siddaramaiah-led Congress government in Karnataka on the back of two successive poll victories from the Belgaum Rural constituency in the 2018 and 2023 state polls. Over her years in public life, the state women and child development minister has shown a feisty streak below her demure demeanor. As president of the Karnataka Pradesh Congress Committee's women's unit from 2015 to 2018, Hebbalkar was at the forefront of many public agitations in Karnataka, and faced her share of controversies. In the latest one, Hebbalkar has accused BJP MLC C T Ravi, 58, of using a derogatory term against her during a round of verbal jousting on the floor of the Legislative Council by the Congress and BJP MLCs over remarks made in Parliament by Union Home Minister Amit Shah on Dr B R Ambedkar. Terms like "drug addict" and "murderer" are reported to have been exchanged by the two sides before Ravi allegedly used the term under contention repeatedly against Hebbalkar. Never one to turn away from a battle for women's issues, Hebbalkar took Ravi head-on and filed a complaint of sexual harassment against him. The Belagavi police arrested Ravi on Thursday night, though he has since secured bail. The Congress leadership has rallied behind Hebbalkar. "The words uttered by C T Ravi are an insult to women as a whole," Deputy Chief Minister D K Shivakumar, who is also the state Congress president, said.

When a big win means big problems

A month on after results, Mahayuti is struggling

From govt formation to swearing-in to now the delayed portfolio allocation, the BJP-led alliance has portrayed a picture of confusion and infighting.

At the week-long Winter Session of the Maharashtra Assembly in Nagpur that ended on Saturday, the euphoria of the Mahayuti's landslide victory was short lived. Instead, coalition conflict in the ruling alliance played out in the open, including the fact that the BJP, Shiv Sena and NCP are yet to work out portfolio distribution nearly a month after the results were declared on November 23. In the absence of a clear redressal mechanism, these issues may linger. What has been more surprising is the otherwise disciplined BJP's failure to stem the confusion that has prevailed despite the big win, starting with even swearing-in of the top three (Chief Minister and the two Deputy CMs) and then that of other ministers. Officially, there has been no explanation forthcoming, but BJP watchers are surprised at how the party has allowed junior allies Eknath Shinde and Ajit Pawar to play hard ball.

Officially, Fadnavis has maintained, "There are absolutely no differences. Everything is decided. And all three parties are working as a team." However, sources admitted that with all three Mahayuti parties winning Assembly seats beyond their expectations, all of them are facing a problem of plenty. A senior BJP functionary pointed out, "With the BJP winning 132 seats on its own, Sena chief Shinde knew he

stood no chance of retaining the CM's post. So, he pitched for the crucial Home ministry, which the BJP blatantly refused... Meanwhile, NCP chief Pawar has been unbudging on his demand for the Finance Ministry." There is also a tussle over other crucial portfolios such as the Public Works Department, Energy, Housing and Industries.

A political strategist in the BJP

tion issues, the BJP's decision to drop four sitting ministers, including senior leader Sudhir Mungantiwar, was not hassle free.

In the NCP too, senior leader Chhagan Bhujbal publicly expressed his disappointment after being denied a Cabinet berth. "I stood by the OBCs at a time when there were attacks from all sides. I fought activist Manoj Jarange Patil, who was seeking Maratha reservation in the OBC quota. I think the denial of a minister post is the reward for my hard work," Bhujbal said. The Sena hasn't been immune either, with former minister Tanaji Sawant saying, "I was promised a Cabinet minister post, which was not kept." An unhappy Sawant also replaced his Shiv Sena social media profile picture with a photo of party founder Bal Thackeray.



said, "When you have a coalition government, conflicts are in-built. Every decision takes time as you have to strike a consensus that requires adjustments and compromises... Apart from that, each party including the BJP had a tough time shortlisting candidates. There were at least 36 strong contenders for ministerial berths, of whom only 19 made it to the Cabinet." The Shinde Sena has 57 expectant MLAs and Ajit Pawar's NCP 41.

"Under one-party rule, the matter is resolved in minutes. With three parties, there are issues that require central leadership's intervention," a party insider said.

On top of the portfolio alloca-

Another former minister Vijay Shivtare said, "I am upset at how I have been treated."

Roles reversed?

After the poll results gave Mahayuti as many as 230 of the total 288 seats, leaving just 46 for the Opposition Maha Vikas Aghadi, questions had been raised over the potential efficacy of the Opposition. However, now the notes of dissent within the Mahayuti are resonating far louder. Shiv Sena (UBT) chief Uddhav Thackeray underlined, "With such a magnificent victory, one would expect rejoicing. What has come to the fore is discontent and differences within Mahayuti."

Pegasus ruling in the US could have reverberations in India

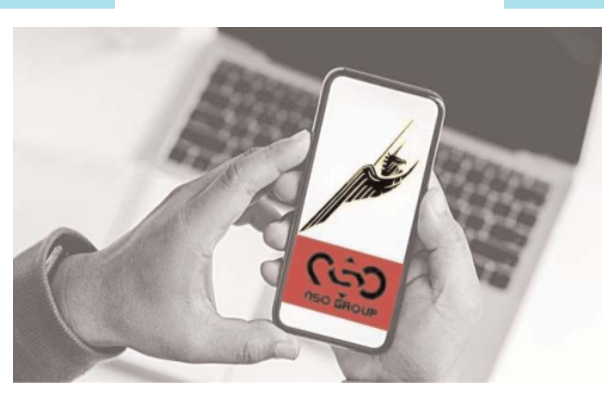
For the first time, a court in the US has held Israel's NSO Group liable for its intrusive spyware Pegasus, which could set up a measure of accountability for the company that it has, for long, allegedly downplayed.

The decision came in a case filed by Meta-owned WhatsApp against the NSO Group, with the judge in the case, Phyllis Hamilton, holding that the Israeli spyware maker was liable for targeting the devices of 1,400 WhatsApp users, and violating sections of the Computer Fraud and Abuse Act (CFAA), a federal cybersecurity law, and a similar state law in California called the California Computer Data Access and Fraud Act (CDAFA). Victims of Pegasus's

use included senior government officials, journalists, human rights activists, political dissidents and diplomats. The installation of Pegasus also extended to devices in India, including those allegedly belonging to journalists, politicians, Union Ministers, besides mem-

bers of the civil society.

In the US, President Joe Biden's administration put the NSO Group on a blacklist in 2021 and forbade US government agencies from purchasing its products. Pegasus has been implicated in hacks by authoritarian governments across the world.



In 2021, it was reported that Pegasus was used on more than 300 Indian mobile numbers, including that of two serving ministers in the Narendra Modi government, three Opposition leaders, one constitutional authority, several journalists and business per-

sons.

The revelations raised eyebrows over the Central Government and state government's involvement in the attacks, since NSO Group has repeatedly said that it only deals with governments and government agencies. However, it should be noted that as part of the WhatsApp vs NSO Group case, unsealed documents had shown that NSO Group, for years, downplayed its role in the deployment of Pegasus. Through interviews and an assessment of subpoenaed documents, WhatsApp contradicted this claim, alleging that Pegasus customers had "minimal role" in its deployment, with NSO Group managing a substantial part of the process. Following the media reports of 2021, the Indian government unequivocally denied all 'over the top allegations' of surveillance using Pegasus. In a statement to Parliament at the time, IT Minister Ashwini Vaishnaw said the reports had "no substance".

'Won't agree to play with lives' – Telangana CM lambasts Allu Arjun for attending 'Pushpa 2' premiere despite warnings

Telangana Chief Minister A Revanth Reddy Saturday lambasted actor Allu Arjun in particular, and the film fraternity in general, while discussing in the legislative assembly the stampede incident at the Sandhya Theatre on December 4 evening that left a woman dead and her 9-year-old son in coma. Making an impassioned speech on the events that led to the stampede during the premiere of Pushpa 2, the CM accused Arjun of disregarding police instructions and refusing to leave the theatre even after being told that a woman had died. "Aisa bhi log hote hain," the CM said, replying to All India Majlis-e-Ittehadul Muslimeen MLA Akbaruddin Owaisi, who asked if reports of Arjun's insensitive behaviour were true. The stampede left 39-year-old M Revathi dead. The CM said that the Chikkadpally Police Station did not give permission citing security and possible law and order problems. "There is only one entry and exit. In spite of being informed not to go to the theatre, the hero went

there. Not only did he go there, he came out from the sunroof of his vehicle and started waving to the thousands of fans who had gathered here while 50-60 bouncers of his private security team



pushed the fans. In the melee, police found the lifeless bodies of the mother who had not let her son's hand go even though she had passed away," he said. Authorities provided first aid and rushed the boy to the hospital where he's now in coma, Reddy said. "That family's income is only Rs 30,000 but as their son is a great fan of Arjun, they coughed Rs 3,000 per ticket, paying Rs 12,000 in total (for the family of four) to fulfil the boy's wish to see the movie.

Hashimpura massacre: Supreme Court grants bail to 2 more convicts, including 82-year-old

STORY

The Supreme Court on Friday granted bail to two more former members of the Uttar Pradesh Provincial Armed Constabulary (PAC), including an 82-year-old, whose acquittals by the trial court in the Hashimpura massacre case were reversed by the Delhi High Court. A bench of Justices A S Oka and A G Masih noted that they had spent six years in prison after the high court overturned their acquittal in 2018. On December 6,



the Supreme Court gave bail to eight convicts in the case, all of whom were former members of the PAC.

As per the prosecution's case,

communal riots took place in Meerut district in May 1987. As a result, the police, paramilitary and military forces were posted in Hashimpura mohalla for riot control and security. This included the 'C-Company' of the PAC's 41st Battalion. On May 21, 1987, the brother of an Army Major was killed in the mohalla adjacent to Hashimpura and two rifles belonging to PAC personnel were looted by certain anti-social elements.

On May 22 evening, the PAC personnel allegedly rounded up around

42-45 Muslim men and took them away in a truck. They were later shot and the bodies dumped in the Gang Nahar and Hindon canal. Some of those who were shot managed to survive. Of the 38 who were killed, the bodies of only 11 were identified by relatives later. The remaining bodies were not recovered.

The investigation was handed over to the Crime Branch, Criminal Investigation Department (CB-CID), Uttar Pradesh. The CB-CID filed a chargesheet before the criminal court

in Ghaziabad in 1996. Eighteen officers of the PAC were arraigned as accused in the first chargesheet. The 19th accused was arraigned in the supplementary chargesheet. Under the orders of the Supreme Court, passed in 2002 and 2007, the trial of the cases was transferred to Delhi. During the pendency of the trial, three of the accused died. The remaining 16 were acquitted by the trial court. On appeal, the high court permitted the National Human Rights Commission (NHRC) to intervene and on its plea.

PM Modi brought peace to northeastern states by signing 20 peace accords: Shah

NEW DELHI: Union home minister Amit Shah on Saturday said Prime Minister Narendra Modi brought peace in the northeastern regions by signing 20 peace accords in the last 10 years of his tenure, which led 9,000 armed militants to surrender. Shah said time has come for change in approach of the police to tackle and eliminate insurgency in the northeastern regions.

Addressing the 72nd plenary of the North Eastern Council (NEC) in Tripura, Shah further said that connectivity was no longer a problem in the region as the Centre "has spent Rs 81,000 crore for rail connectivity and Rs 41,000 crore for road network in the northeastern states."

"The police fought insurgency in the northeast for the past four decades. As insurgency has now ended, we need to change the approach of the force to ensure people get justice



within three years of lodging FIRs," the Union home minister was quoted as saying by news agency PTI.

Shah said northeast was always one of the key areas for the central government's developmental works as Union ministers "spent 700 nights" in the states of the northeastern regions since coming to power in 2014. "After the exchange of enclaves (land boundary agreements) with Bangladesh, the whole world will open for the northeast. This will change the investment ecosystem in the region," he said.

The Union home minister

also highlighted the efforts being put towards the upliftment of people in rural areas by promoting vegetable cultivation, milk, eggs and meat production.

"Only a hike in the GSDP (Gross State Domestic Product) is not enough for overall development. There is a need to attain self-sufficiency in vegetables, milk, eggs and meat," he said. He said that central government has been focusing on organic cultivation in the region "The Centre has already constituted the National Organic Corporation Ltd to boost the sector. I urge all the CMs (in the northeast) to sign agree-

The Union home minister inaugurated the 72nd plenary session of the North Eastern Council (NEC) at Prajna Bhavan in Agartala. Development of North Eastern Region (DoNER) Minister Jyotiraditya Scindia, along with governors, chief ministers of all the eight northeastern states, and senior officials, were also present at the event.

The council is the nodal agency for the economic and social development of the northeastern region, consisting of Arunachal Pradesh, Assam, Manipur, Meghalaya, Mizoram, Nagaland, Sikkim and Tripura.

ments with NOCL for packaging, marketing and exporting of organic products," he said while also acknowledging that more efforts were needed to curb narcotics smuggling in the region.

'Pushpa 2' stampede: Allu Arjun was denied police permission, says Telangana CM Revanth Reddy

NEW DELHI:

Telangana chief minister A Revanth Reddy on Saturday alleged that Telugu actor Allu Arjun attended the screening of his film Pushpa-2 on December 4 despite the police denying permission. Reddy claimed that even after a woman died in a stampede during the event, Allu Arjun did not leave the cinema hall until the police were forced to remove him. Reddy's remarks came after AIMIM MLA Akbaruddin Owaisi raised the issue in the Assembly. Referring to videos circulating on social media, Reddy criticised Allu Arjun for holding a roadshow and waving to the crowd despite the large gathering, which led to chaos. Reddy stated that the management of the theatre had submitted a request to the



police on December 2, seeking security for the visit of top actors and others on December 4. However, the police rejected the request due to concerns about managing the crowd. Before entering the theatre and upon exiting, the actor was seen waving to the crowd from the sunroof of his car, prompting thousands of fans to gather and push to catch a glimpse of him, Reddy noted. The CM also took aim at film personalities who, after Allu Arjun's arrest, visited his residence but did not show the same empathy for the young boy who is currently

receiving treatment in the hospital for injuries sustained in the incident. "I appeal to the top film personalities that they should not be inhuman," Reddy said. He emphasized that there would be no special privileges for anyone involved in incidents like the stampede death, adding that the government would not spare those responsible for troubling the common people. The stampede occurred at the Sandhya Theatre in Hyderabad when thousands of fans gathered for the premiere of Pushpa-2 to see Allu Arjun.

After UK, US and France, Russia reaffirms support for India's bid for permanent UNSC seat

DELHI. Russia reiterated its support for India's bid for a permanent seat on a reformed United Nations Security Council during the 13th meeting of the India-Russia joint working group (JWG) on counter-terrorism cooperation held in Moscow on December 19 and 20.

Both the nations also agreed to bolster joint efforts in combating radicalisation and terror financing during the meeting.

"In the 13th JWG on counter-terrorism, both sides shared their experiences in countering terrorism, including cross-border terrorism and extremism, and agreed to enhance cooperation to address problems of radicalisation as well as terror financing," the MEA said in a statement. Discussions also



On December 19, Lal also met with Russian deputy foreign minister Mikhail Galuzin to discuss pressing international and regional issues, including the ongoing Ukraine conflict. Russia's reaffirmation of support for India's permanent membership in the UNSC follows similar endorsements from global leaders. Earlier this year, UK Labour Party leader Keir Starmer voiced support for India's bid, aligning with statements from US President Joe Biden and French President Emmanuel Macron.

focused on current global and regional terrorist threats and the misuse of emerging technologies for terrorist purposes.

Tanmaya Lal, Secretary (West) in the MEA, led the Indian delegation during the JWG on counter-terrorism cooperation and the

UN-related consultations. The Russian delegation was headed by Sergey Vershinin, deputy minister of foreign affairs of the Russian Federation, with representatives from various departments and agencies of both nations participating in the meetings.

Quashing FIR of sexual assault, Delhi HC says some use provision to 'harass' men

NEW DELHI: The Delhi high court dismissed a rape case against a man, stating the law can be misused for harassment. The man had been accused of sexually assaulting a woman he was previously involved with. The court determined the case lacked evidence of rape, citing con-



sensual physical involvement between the two. Justice Chandra Dhari Singh stated, "It is true that the provision

under which the FIR has been lodged is one of the most heinous crimes against women. However, it is also an established fact that some people use it as a weapon to unnecessarily harass the male counterpart." The court reviewed recordings, WhatsApp messages, and

magistrate statements, concluding the relationship was consensual and not based on false marriage promises. The court said the case exemplified how the law could cause undue hardship for innocent individuals. The woman had reportedly been in contact with the man.

Arvind Kejriwal claims BJP equated purvanchalis with Rohingya

NEW DELHI: Accusing BJP national president JP Nadda of equating Purvanchalis with Rohingya and Bangladeshis and admitting to the deletion of their votes in the capital ahead of the assembly polls, AAP national convener Arvind Kejriwal on Friday said the party workers would go door to door to tell the community of the "conspiracy" of the saffron party. Kejriwal said senior AAP functionary Sanjay Singh, a Rajya Sabha member and a Purvanchali face of the party, would undertake "ratri pravas" (night stays) in Purvanchali-dominated areas of the city to expose the "BJP's conspiracy". "BJP president JP Nadda openly admitted in Parliament to the deletion of names of Purvanchalis.

Delhi liquor case: BJP calls Kejriwal 'kingpin', AAP cries conspiracy after LG nod on ED action

NEW DELHI: The Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) on Saturday expressed shock over the reports that lieutenant government (LG) VK Saxena had given the Enforcement Directorate (ED) approval to prosecute party chief Arvind Kejriwal in a liquor policy case, with the rival BJP calling the former Delhi CM "kingpin" of the "scam". Fresh trouble mounted for AAP convener Arvind Kejriwal on Saturday when LG Saxena



gave his sanction to the ED to prosecute Kejriwal in a case that has trapped the party in a legal labyrinth for the past few years. The central investigating agency sought Saxena's nod to prosecute Kejriwal earlier this month after it allegedly

found a "huge level of corruption in framing and implementation" of the excise policy, which was mentioned in prosecution complaint no. 7 filed in the Rouse Avenue court on May 17 this year. The court took cognisance of the complaint on July 9. Reacting to the development, Delhi health minister Saurabh Bhardwaj expressed shock over the reports and claimed there was no prosecution sanction issued in this regard.

'Ambedkar Samman Saptah':

Congress to hold nationwide marches over Amit Shah's remark

NEW DELHI: The Congress party on Saturday announced plans to intensify its campaign against Union home minister Amit Shah by taking to streets in the coming week over his alleged 'disrespect' to Babasaheb Bhimrao Ambedkar



during the Winter Session of Parliament. The party also declared the upcoming week as "Ambedkar Samman Saptah." Congress General Secretary KC Venugopal stated that party MPs and senior leaders will hold

press conferences in various cities across the country on December 22 and 23. On December 24, Congress will organize Ambedkar Respect Marches in every district, in honor of the Dalit icon. Venugopal posted on X, "Our

agitation demanding Home Minister Amit Shah's resignation will continue! We will fight to protect Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar's legacy against the Manusmriti worshippers!" The party also plans to reaffirm its commitment to

Ambedkar's ideals at the upcoming Congress Working Committee (CWC) meeting in Belagavi next week. He further announced, "INC will mark the upcoming week as Dr. Ambedkar Samman Saptah." Venugopal mentioned that all

Congress MPs, senior leaders, and CWC members will address press conferences in their constituencies and home districts across the country on December 22-23. "On December 24, all across the country, we will hold Babasaheb Ambedkar Samman Marches and submit a memorandum to President of India through District Collectors demanding Amit Shah's resignation," Venugopal added. Venugopal also noted, "All INC workers will garland Babasaheb's statue, hold his giant portrait.

AAP leaders Balbir Singh and Sukhbir Dalal join BJP, criticise Delhi govt

NEW DELHI: Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) leaders Balbir Singh and Sukhbir Dalal joined the BJP on Saturday in the presence of Delhi BJP president Virendra Sachdeva and Union Minister Harsh Malhotra. Balbir Singh, a six-time member of the Delhi Sikh Gurdwara Management Committee, accused the Delhi government of neglecting Punjabi language education. "Despite LG Saxena's orders, Punjabi teachers aren't being appointed in

government schools, affecting Sikh students," he said. Singh praised BJP leaders for their responsiveness and support in public service. Sukhbir Dalal, voicing discontent over stalled projects, said, "The act for a sports university was passed five years ago, but no work has begun. The Rs 2,100 crore budget claim is a lie." He also criticized AAP's leadership, calling the chief minister's residence a "Sheesh Mahal" and alleging restricted access for party members.

Santosh Trophy

HOLDERS SERVICES QUALIFY FOR QUARTERS

HYDERABAD



DEFENDING champions Services qualified for the quarter-finals of the 78th National Football Championship for Santosh Trophy with a 2-0 win over Rajasthan at the Deccan Arena on Saturday.

This was Services' third straight victory as they beat 10-man Rajasthan to move to nine points and confirm their place in the top four of the six-team group.

Earlier in the day, Jammu & Kashmir kept themselves alive with a 3-0 blanking of Telangana in a do-or-die match. As a result, the hosts, who only have one point so far, became the first team to be eliminated in the group stage. Jammu & Kashmir are now in fourth place with four points. Rajasthan, also with a point, are fifth, and can qualify for the last eight if they beat Jammu & Kashmir on Monday. After suffering a setback with a defeat to Manipur in the first match, it's been plain sailing for Services. On Saturday, they

made a quick start again as Sreyas VG converted a brilliant low cross by Thingnam Bidasagar Singh from the left with a deft finish in the 20th minute. An already difficult task was made tougher for Rajasthan when their forward Youraj Singh picked up two bookings in the 50th and 57th minute to be sent off, giving Services a player advantage. It was one-way traffic for the remainder of the match as Services looked to widen the winning margin. They finally got their second goal when Vijay J put his in-

dividual prowess on display. Picking up a ball from captain Christopher Kamei with his back to the goal, Vijay turned swiftly, blazed past two red shirts to enter the box and tucked it away into the bottom-left corner. Jammu & Kashmir, who led at half-time thanks to Hayat Bashir's fifth-minute opener, also had it straightforward against hosts Telangana. Captain Aakif Javaid did the hard work for the first goal, cutting a cross from the by-line with his left foot. An incoming Bashir had

the simplest of tasks to score from a couple of yards out. The second goal arrived from a short corner routine, with Dimple Bhagat swinging in a left-footed delivery in a crowded six-yard box for Arun Nagial to nod it in for his second goal of the final round. Javaid also got his second goal in as many matches in the 88th minute when the Telangana defenders failed to contain him at the top of the box, allowing him to rifle a left-footed shot into the bottom corner.

'Hard to contain' Head is in the form of his life: Shastri

NEW DELHI: Former India head coach Ravi Shastri said a 'hard to contain' Travis Head is currently playing the best cricket of his career, adding that the left-handed batter's success in short ball has been a standout factor.

Despite being dismissed for just 11 in his first innings of the ongoing Border-Gavaskar Trophy series, Head has gone on to smash 89, 140 and 152 in his next three outings. Head had previously hit centuries against India in the 2023 World Test Championship final and ODI World Cup final to give Australia title wins.

"I think he is very smart. From what I saw of him three years ago, he has improved immensely. Especially with the way he plays the short

ball. He prepared to leave it. He has learned to leave it well at times."

"It's not a big shot all the time off a short delivery angled at his armpits or something. He's prepared to either ride it or go for the big shots. And if it is middle, middle and off, then he hits it in front of square as well."

"He picks up length very well. That's one of his great strengths. And he has a flashing blade for the off-side. So he's a hard man to contain. And he's in the form of his life," said Shastri on The ICC Review show.

Though Head has been dismissed by India's fast-bowling spearhead Jasprit Bumrah, he has also scored 83 off 91 balls while facing him. Shastri recalled of a particular shot

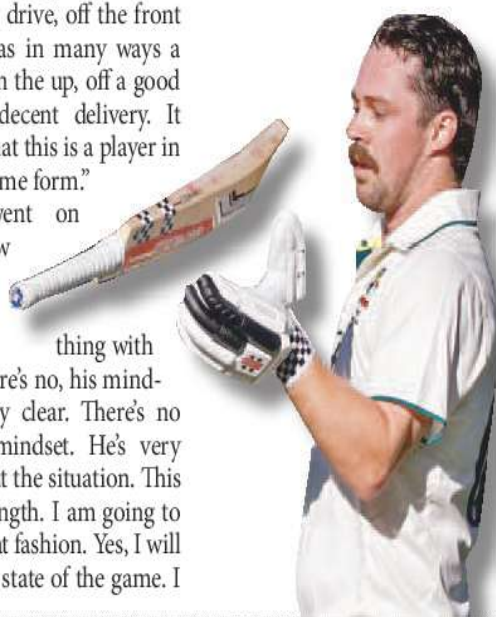
from Head against Bumrah early in one of his innings which told him the left-handed batter was in great touch.

"We all knew he was dangerous, but that first shot he played off Jasprit Bumrah, that cover drive, off the front foot. It was in many ways a little bit on the up, off a good delivery, decent delivery. It told me that this is a player in prime, prime form."

"He went on to show exactly that. And the thing with him is there's no, his mindset is very clear. There's no clouded mindset. He's very clear about the situation. This is my strength. I am going to play in that fashion. Yes, I will watch the state of the game. I

might shift from fourth gear to third gear. But I will always be in third and fourth gear once I get my eye on."

Shastri signed off by jokingly giving Head a new nickname. "Because his new surname is Travis Head 'ache'. They are looking for balms in India. For foot problems, ankle problems (and) even a headache they are looking for a balm.



ASIAN YOUTH WEIGHTLIFTING C'SHIPS

Koyel, Nilam win silver medals

DOHA

INDIA'S Koyel Bar and L. Nilam Devi won silver medals in the 55kg Youth and Junior categories to take the country's tally to six in the Asian Youth and Junior Weightlifting Championships here on Saturday.

Koyel heaved 79kg in snatch and 103kg in clean & jerk for an aggregate lift of 182kg for her silver, while Nilam lifted 86 in snatch and 104kg in clean & jerk for an overall 190kg, which won her a silver in the junior category.



With this, India's medal tally in the continental event swelled to six.

On Friday, India's Jyoshna

Sabar had created a youth Asian record for total lift on her way to winning the gold medal in the 40kg weight cat-

egory. Jyoshna had won the top prize in the 40kg youth girls category by heaving 135kg (60kg snatch + 75kg clean and jerk).

Payal too had claimed a gold medal, in the youth girls 45kg section with a total lift of 155kg (70 snatch + 85 clean and jerk). Another Indian athlete named Payal had won bronze in junior girls 45kg competition, while Babulal Hembrom had ended third in the 49kg youth boys section after lifting 197 (88 snatch + 109 clean and jerk). (PTI)

India to host ISSF Junior World Cup for first time in 2025

NEW DELHI

INDIA will be hosting the International Shooting Sport Federation (ISSF) Junior World Cup for the first time in the second half of 2025. The ISSF awarded the hosting rights for the top junior international shooting competition for Rifle/Pistol/Shotgun to the National Rifle Association of India (NRAI), making it another achievement for the country in shooting sport.

This will be the third top ISSF-level event to be held in India after the senior World Cup in Bhopal in 2023 and the season-ending ISSF World Cup Final earlier this year, reinforcing India's stature as one of the sport's top destinations in the world, the NRAI informed in a release on Saturday.

Reacting to the development after the NRAI received the official confirma-



tion letter from the ISSF on Friday, NRAI President Kalikesh Narayan Singh Deo said, "We had a very fruitful executive committee meeting of the ISSF in Rome last month and all member federations as well as the ISSF President Luciano Rossi were all praise with the way India has been hosting top international Shooting competitions and helping to grow the sport globally."

"We obviously got the sense then but now that the official confirmation has come, we are excited and en-

ber-beginning November period. We will, after meeting internally, share the same with them at the earliest so that member federations can prepare accordingly. The world's top future champions and stars of Shooting are going to converge in India for a blockbuster showdown and we are confident that it will give the sport another grassroots boost in the country."

This will be the ninth top-level shooting championship to be held in India over the past decade, and it will be the first ISSF Junior World Cup.

Before this India had hosted continental championships and six ISSF competitions, including two World Cup Final competitions besides four senior ISSF World Cups.

The ranges in India will be busy throughout 2025 with the first-ever Shooting League of India (SLI) also planned in the first half of the year, besides regular national competitions which take place throughout the year culminating in the nationals, the NRAI informed in the release. (IANS)

ISL: MUMBAI CLIMB TO 4TH SPOT WITH WIN OVER CFC

MUMBAI: Nikolaos Karelis' early strike earned Mumbai City FC a 1-0 victory over Chennaiyin FC, marking their fourth consecutive clean sheet in the Indian Super League here on Saturday. With this victory, the home team moved from the seventh place to the fourth spot in the points table, accumulating 20 points from 12 games with five victories.

This match also marked the third straight away game where the Marina Machans were unable to find the back of the net. Karelis capitalised on a loose ball in the eighth minute after Yoell van Nieff's shot was partially deflected, calmly slotting it into the bottom right corner. Six minutes later, Karelis set up Vikram Partap Singh for a chance, but the latter's effort went wide. Just before the 20th minute mark, Lukas Brambilla tried to pull one back for the Marina Machans, interlinking with Kiyan Nassiri and receiving the ball on the left side of the 18-yard box.

Ajeetesh secures Asian Tour card

HUA HIN

AJEETESH Sandhu was the sole Indian to secure an Asian Tour card for 2025 despite a tense bogey-bogey finish at the Final Qualifying school, here on Saturday.

The Chandigarh golfer, who a week earlier won on his home tour, shot 1-over 72 to finish T-23. The top 35 and ties secured their playing rights for 2025 and will join those who have kept their cards through Order of Merit.

Sandhu, who shared the lead after day one, was in the top-10 with two holes to go. He finished with two bogeys but managed to gain the all-important card.

The Asian Tour's new season starts with the Philippine Open at Manila Southwoods Golf and Country Club, from January 23-26, and is followed the week after by the International Series India. Japan's Ta-kumi Murakami took top spot.

Murakami, the leader at the start of the day, fired a one-under-par 70 to finish on 20-under and beat Korean Kyungnam Kang by one. Kang shot a 69, while his compatriot Doyeob Mun claimed third, another shot back following a 68. Australian Jack Thomp-



son (68) tied for fourth with China's Bai Zhengkai (67). In a dramatic finish to secure the 35th card, Thailand's Charn-Tai Sudsom birdied his final two holes to fire a brave 65 to finish on 10 under and hence avoid an 11-man sudden-death play-off for the final place.

China's Wu Ashun, a four-time winner in Europe, was one of the players on nine under to miss out. He bogeyed his last three holes to end a season of great disappointment as he also failed to keep his card on the DP World Tour by the narrowest of margins. He finished 115th on the Order of Merit, just nine points behind Ross Fisher from England who made it through in 114th place. (PTI)

Tendulkar praises young girl's 'smooth, effortless' bowling; Zaheer echoes admiration

NEW DELHI

CRICKET legend Sachin Tendulkar has lauded a young girl's "smooth and effortless" bowling action, likening it to former India pacer Zaheer Khan, who too praised her technique in a social media ex-change that created a lot of buzz.

On Friday, Tendulkar shared a video on X featuring the young girl, Sushila Meena, delivering a ball with an extraordinarily fluid left-arm pace bowling action, reminiscent of Zaheer's signature style.

Tendulkar also tagged his longtime India teammate Zaheer in his video, which was in slow motion. "Smooth, effortless, and lovely to watch! Sushila Meena's bowling action has shades of you, @ImZaheer. Do you see it too?" the Indian batting legend said in his post.

Responding to the post, Zaheer said: "You're spot on with that, and I couldn't agree more. Her action is so smooth and impressive—she's showing a lot of promise already!" The barefooted Sushila, a Class 5 student from Rajasthan, showcased her

natural flair and passion for the game, with her action, including a signature jump before delivery, bearing striking similarities to Zaheer's bowling style.

The video highlights the immense raw talent emerging from rural India, underscoring the country's potential in nurturing future cricket stars.

The interaction between Tendulkar and Zaheer has drawn widespread attention on social media, garnering lakhs of views and an outpouring of appreciation for the young bowler. (PTI)

